

PM Pashinyan And Country Celebrate 100 Days in Office

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan strongly defended his government's track record on Friday, August 17, as tens of thousands of people rallied in Yerevan to mark his first 100 days in office.

Pashinyan claimed to have practically eradicated corruption in Armenia, ensured continued economic growth and established the kind of "people's direct rule" that had existed in ancient Greece. He also blasted the country's former leaders highly critical of the government formed as a result of last spring's mass protests.

"One hundred days ago your will prevailed and the international community still does not understand what happened in Armenia, why and how it happened," Pashinyan told huge crowd that filled Republic Square, the main scene of the protests that brought him to power. He referred to himself as a "direct representative of the will of the Armenian people."

"In Armenia, there is no coalition government. In Armenia, there is no parliamentary majority. In Armenia, supreme power directly belongs to the people and the people carry out direct rule. This is the key meaning of the revolution that took place in Armenia," he declared in a more than hour-long speech.

Accordingly, Pashinyan went on, crowds gathering in the sprawling square must now be regarded as the "supreme body of the people's rule." "This means that from now on this government will be accountable to this square, will obey this square, and all key decisions must be made here at this square," he declared.

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Zareh Sinanyan reading to children at Kotayk's Regional Library in Hrazdan, Armenia in July, 2018 (photo from Zareh Sinanyan's Facebook site)

Mayor Zareh Sinanyan Working to Improve Glendale While Strengthening Ties with Armenia

GLENDAL, Calif. – Glendale continues to play an important role in the Armenian diaspora with its large Armenian population. This means it is also a launching pad for Armenian-American politicians. Zareh Sinanyan, the current mayor, is one such public servant. He is one of the few American elected officials born in Armenia.

Sinanyan was 14-years-old when he came with his family to the US in 1988. He double-majored in history and political science at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and says he is still a history buff. After graduating from law school at the University of Southern California, he specialized in business litigation.

He has his own law firm in Glendale which primarily did professional liability defense for companies like accounting and law firms, as well as real estate litigation. Now that he is mayor, he said, "Due to the volume of my responsibilities, my practice is down to a shadow of its former self." Three-quarters of his time is spent on matters concerning the city of Glendale, he said. While the office of mayor only pays a modest stipend, fortunately, his wife is also a professional attorney who is supportive of his political career.

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Merkel in the South Caucasus: A Thorny Diplomatic Agenda

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – German Chancellor Angela Merkel will visit Armenia at the end of August as part of a regional tour that will include Georgia and Azerbaijan. She is expected to arrive in Yerevan on August 24 (after press time) for a two-day working visit, during which she will meet with both Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Armen Sarkissian. Following her talks with the former, which should deal with bilateral relations, economic issues

and the European Union, the two are scheduled to hold a joint press conference.

Foreign policy themes are also on the agenda, and high among them will certainly be the tensions with Azerbaijan around Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). Germany is a permanent member of the Minsk Group within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has been tasked with finding a negotiated solution to the conflict. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier made his fourth visit to Yerevan in 2016, at the time in his capacity as foreign minister. In talks with then-Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, he spoke of the need to melt "frozen con-

flicts," like the one between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and called for direct negotiations between the two sides. Recently, in early July, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, from the Russian Federation, France and the United States, met in Brussels with the two foreign ministers, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov, in pursuit of confidence building measures.

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Kocharyan's Home, Office Searched by Investigators

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's Special Investigative Service (SIS) has searched the offices and private residence of former President Robert Kocharyan as part of its ongoing inquiry into the 2008 post-election unrest in Yerevan, it emerged on Monday, August 20.

The SIS spokeswoman, Marina Ohanjanyan, gave no details of the operation when asked.

One of Kocharyan's lawyers, Hayk Alimonyan, said SIS investigators did not find anything that could shed more light on the dramatic events of February and March 2008. "I wasn't

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel with Russian President Vladimir Putin



Armenian Militant Leader Freed

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The leading member of the armed opposition group that stormed an Armenian police base in 2016 was set free on Friday, August 17, pending the outcome of his ongoing trial.

A court in Yerevan agreed to release Varuzhan Avetisyan as well as another jailed militant, Arayik Khandoyan, from custody at least until a verdict in the high-profile case. The decision was requested by three Armenian parliament deputies who guaranteed in writing that Avetisyan and Khandoyan will not obstruct justice if freed. Trial prosecutors did not object to it.

The two men have been standing trial along with more than two dozen other members and supporters of a radical opposition movement, Founding Parliament, who seized the police base in Yerevan's Erebuni district in July 2016.

The gunmen led by Avetisyan demanded that then President Serzh Sargsyan free Founding Parliament's jailed leader, Zhirayr Sefilian, and step down. They laid down their weapons after a two-week standoff which left three police officers dead.

Shortly after becoming prime minister on May 8, Nikol Pashinyan publicly listed Sefilian, but not the jailed gunmen, among the individuals who he believes were imprisoned for political reasons. Pashinyan said the Erebuni attack case is "a bit different" because of the three casualties.

Avetisyan condemned Pashinyan's remarks. He again strongly defended the 2016 attack, saying that casualties are inevitable during such "rebellions."

On June 5, Avetisyan and other members of the group calling itself Sasna Tsrer issued a statement in which they voiced support for Pashinyan's government and renounced violent methods. Armenian courts began freeing them the following day.

Immediately after his release, Avetisyan, Khandoyan and a group of their supporters headed to Republic Square where Pashinyan held a rally dedicated to his 100 days in office. Avetisyan reaffirmed his and Sefilian's plans to set up a political party that will participate in snap parliamentary elections planned by Pashinyan.

Only three members of Sasna Tsrer remain under arrest. Pashinyan met with relatives of the slain officers in late June.

1,000 Children Born in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT, Artsakh – A total of 1057 babies – 552 boys and 505 girls – were born in Artsakh in the first half of 2018, Artsakh's health-care ministry announced.

Of the total, 878 were born in Stepanakert's medical center, 89 in Martakert, 56 – Martuni, 13 – Hadrut, 15 – Kashatagh and 6 – Shahumyan.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Former President's Nephew on Wanted List

YEREVAN (Arka) — Former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's nephew Narek Sargsyan was put on the international wanted list, police chief Valery Osipyan told journalists on August 21.

Speaking at a news conference, he said Armenian law-enforcement authorities are cooperating closely with Interpol to track down the fugitive.

"I do not want to disclose the details of the investigation, but Narek Sargsyan is already in sight of law-enforcers," Osipyan said. He said Narek Sargsyan might have crossed the Armenian border before he was put on the international wanted list.

The nephew of the ex-president is accused of committing crimes stemming from kidnapping committed by a group of persons by prior conspiracy with the use of violence dangerous to life or health, or threats to use violence and for mercenary motives and committing large-scale fraud.

On July 4 Armenian police searched an apartment, belonging to Narek Sargsyan, discovering stolen paintings, as well as \$155,000, 27,000 euros.

Raffi Hovannisian to Run for Mayor

YEREVAN (Arka) — The US-born first post-Soviet foreign minister of Armenia, Raffi Hovannisian, was nominated on August 21 by his Heritage party as a candidate for the post of mayor of Yerevan in the snap election to the Council of Elders, slated for September 23.

The post of the mayor became vacant after former mayor Taron Margaryan resigned on July 9 amid a corruption scandal.

The second number in the Heritage's list is the acting chairman of the party and former MP Armen Martirosyan, who will lead the electoral campaign, the third is a human rights activist Hovsep Khurshudyan.

On August 16, the Armenian government terminated the powers of the Council of Elders. Elections to the Council of Elders are held by party lists. The deadline for parties' nomination is August 29. The deadline for registration is September 3. The 10-day election campaign is to start a week after the registration is completed.

If a party wins more than 50% of the seats in the Council of Elders, the first number in the party's list is considered elected mayor.

The Civil Contract party nominated actor Hayk Marutyan as a mayoral candidate.

Premier Meets Families Of Slain Soldiers

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received on August 21 the family members of the servicemen killed during the four-day war in April 2016 and listened to the problems raised by them.

"It's an honor for me to meet with you. I want to thank you on behalf of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people for the bravery and self-sacrifice of your children. I believe that their behavior and courage was first of all due to the upbringing they received in the families. I planned to meet you earlier, but I also wanted to postpone the meeting in order to manage to make some comforting decision and that decision was made two weeks ago", Pashinyan said, adding that the decision is about expanding the number of beneficiaries of the Soldier Insurance Fund, which will give an opportunity for servicemen injured or the families of servicemen killed after January 2015 to become beneficiaries of the Fund.

"This means that the families of the servicemen killed during the April war and the servicemen disabled as a result of the war will receive continuous state assistance. We hope that this will somehow ease your troubles," Pashinyan said.

The parents thanked Pashinyan for receiving them and listening to their troubles. They expressed confidence that as a result of the velvet revolution and the ongoing changes it will be possible to reveal a number of criminal cases, including the one committed during the war.



A huge throng gathered at Republic Square to mark the 100th day of Pashinyan's rule.

PM Pashinyan and Country Celebrate 100 Days in Office

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"In the future, the Republic of Armenia could be cited in the historical context just like ancient Greece is cited now and Yerevan could be cited like ancient Athens," he added.

Turning to his first 100 days in power, Pashinyan said that despite the recent political turmoil Armenia's economy has not only avoided a downturn but is continuing to grow robustly thanks to his government's efforts to improve the business environment. "I want to assure you that we will have very serious successes in the economy," he said.

Pashinyan did not make any growth forecasts. Instead, he touted the government's crackdown on corruption and tax evasion and said it has already succeeded in breaking up economic monopolies that had long hampered faster growth. "Money stolen from the people will be recovered fully," he said, citing recent audits of some companies that have resulted in tens of millions of dollars in additional tax revenue.

The 43-year-old premier rejected critics' claims that the new authorities are scaring away investors with those audits and undermining Armenia's strategic relationship with Russia. "I can say for sure that Russian-Armenian relations are not only not bad but ... are good and will get even better," he said.

In a rare diplomatic dispute with Yerevan, Moscow strongly criticized late last month criminal charges brought against several former Armenian officials for their alleged role in the deadly breakup of 2008 opposition protests in the Armenian capital. Russian Foreign

Minister Sergey Lavrov described the charges as politically motivated.

The accused individuals include former President Robert Kocharyan and Yuri Khachaturov, the secretary general of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Both men strongly deny the accusations.

Kocharyan has claimed that they are part of a political "vendetta" waged by the new government.

In a clear reference to Kocharyan, Pashinyan said: "I want to make clear that no one will avoid responsibility for killing 10 people and staging a coup d'etat in Armenia on March 1 [2008] ... All murderers will go to prison." He defended the ongoing criminal inquiry into the 2008 unrest conducted by the Special Investigative Service (SIS).

Kocharyan was arrested on July 27 on charges of "overthrowing the constitutional order" in the final weeks of his decade-long rule. Armenia's Court of Appeals freed him from custody more than two weeks later. The SIS condemned the court's decision as "illegal."

In his fiery speech, Pashinyan again insisted that his administration is not exerting any pressure on courts. Still, he slammed unnamed judges who he said are still taking "orders from representatives of the former corrupt authorities." "Come to your senses and don't mess with the people," he warned them.

Pashinyan was elected prime minister on March 8 by the Armenian parliament then controlled by the Republican Party (HHK) of former President Serzh Sargsyan, who was forced to resign on April 23. His government's policy program calls for the conduct of snap elections within a year.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Under Armenia's constitution, such elections can be held only if the prime minister resigns and the National Assembly twice fails to elect his or her replacement.

Pashinyan on Friday for the first time spoke of a possibility of the HHK and other parliamentary forces installing another prime minister and thus preventing snap polls in case of his resignation. He said his political team will therefore come up with constitutional amendments that would allow the parliament to dissolve itself. He told his supporters to be ready to force lawmakers to enact those amendments.

Pashinyan again gave no possible election dates.

Pashinyan Visits Tavush, Boasts an Image of 'Green' Country

BERD, Armenia (Panorama.am) — During his visit to Tavush Province, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on August 10 called at the Berd subsidiary of Tavush Textile Company, the PM's office said.

Accompanied by the company's top executives, the premier toured the facility to get acquainted with the production of working gloves. He was told that 520 people are currently employed at Tavush Textile's local workshops with an average salary of 145,000 drams. The company exported AMD 2 billion-worth output to Russia and Georgia last year. The exports are supposed to increase by 40-50 percent this year, and steps are being taken to extend the geo-

graphical coverage of exports.

Tavush Textile has invested about 10 million dollars since 2015. As a result of a \$1 million investment, the number of machine tools has been increased by 600, which will augment the number of jobs by 150-200. Overall, the company plans to provide 1000-1500 new jobs over the next few years.

Pashinyan next visited a livestock farm established with funds available from Himnatavush Development Foundation in Lusadzor community. It has a high milk yield of 200 cows. Various types of French cheese are produced there. Most of the output is exported to Russia. The company representatives advised that 800,000 euros are annually invested in the farm. At the

same time, they noted that milk and forage are being purchased from neighboring farms.

The PM attached importance to the development of light industry and farms in Tavush province, stressing that the government is prepared to possibly support the development and expansion of business programs in the region.

Highlighting the imperative of having ecologically clean food products produced in our country, Pashinyan said Armenia should boast an image of an environmentally clean country in the international arena. He expressed the hope that the aforementioned companies will soon reach industrial levels to generate new jobs.



ARMENIA

Armenia: There is No Workplace in the Village

By Armine Avetisyan

YEREVAN (*Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso*) – According to the State Employment Agency, more than 82,000 people are currently looking for jobs in Armenia. The number of unemployed in rural areas is 18.3 percent of the total, which increased by 26.6 percent compared to the same period last year.

The work of Gayane Sargsyan, a resident of Aygek village, Armavir region, for the past 10 years has been working from early spring and ending in mid-autumn. She works in the field of agriculture and is engaged in seasonal work.

“As soon as the agricultural season begins, I already have a job: I am engaged in collecting various crops, beans, strawberries, apricots... My working year begins with the harvest of beans, and then I collect different vegetables, fruits and berries in turn. Well, my job is not easy, but I have no alternative. It's difficult to find a job in the village. If I didn't have these seasonal jobs, I would be completely unemployed,” says Gayane.

Gayane works on a daily fee. The working day lasts 8 hours, but during it she also has the right to rest. She earns a salary of 5,000 drams (about 9 euros) for a day's work.

“My employer and I mainly work on the basis of a verbal agreement. We don't sign a labor contract, but there hasn't been any problem so far. I have been working for the same person for many years; he has always paid my salary regularly, and I do my job responsibly,” says Gayane, adding that she is the only employee of her household and that she feeds a family of 5 people.

“It is very difficult to find another job except a seasonal one in the villages. Most rural population goes to work abroad, and mostly the men go. That is, if you're a woman and you've lived in the village, you have to sit at home, or do seasonal work, or think and start your business, which is very difficult. I know very few successful businesswomen,” says Gayane.

From shy girl to tractor driver

30-year-old Hripsime Petrosyan lives in Krashen village of Shirak region. Just three years ago she was known as a shy and timid girl in the village. Today she has found a stable job not only for herself, but she also thinks about her fellow villagers.

“About 6 years ago a training course was organized in our village by the Women for Development NGO. I took part in it, and then I took part in another training course. I began to go out of the village and participate in various projects. Gradually my life and worldview changed,” says Hripsime. Thanks to the participation in such projects, she received 2 million drams by means of the grant program announced by the Kasa foundation, by which she bought a tractor.

“There was a point in the program saying that the money was given to relieve the burden

of the community. And I bought a tractor. Many people rejoiced, because they were doing field work by hand, and with my tractor I was a real savior for the peasants. I was also happy because I was providing myself with work. True, at first it was unusual for me to be a tractor driver in our traditional country of Armenia where

it does not mean you should stay at home and only deal with your household.

Unemployment, a reason for migration

The lack of jobs in rural areas has led to migration. Many young men are currently looking for a job abroad. Although there is no clear data on how many people go abroad, in some



Hripsime Petrosyan (Photo: Armine Avetisyan)

they say that the place of a woman is the kitchen, but now I cannot imagine myself without a tractor,” says Hripsime.

The fact that Hripsime became a tractor driver was easily accepted by the villagers, because she had already started driving an UAZ car before that.

“I was driving my dad's car. Many people looked at me in the village, as it was very unusual. Gradually they got used to my image; after I sat down on the steering wheel of the tractor, they just smiled,” recalls the girl.

Hripsime provides agricultural services also to neighboring communities with her tractor. She says she is satisfied with her current life. She already has a stable income, and in the past she could only dream about such work.

“I collected money and set up a children's playground in our village. It was still a childish dream. My fellow villagers also dreamed about that playground. Now the children of our village play there, and tomorrow my child will play,” says Hripsime, who is still unmarried, but dreams of building a strong family and having a baby boy.

Hripsime does not only drive a tractor but is also actively engaged in social activities. “Our women are very passive. I try to involve them in various projects, and also bring projects to our village through which we can create a workplace and live an active life. Life in the villages is very sad. We must add color to our lives. We must also create a workplace for us,” says Hripsime, noting that if you live in the village,

rural areas of Armenia it is difficult to find a young man in the middle of the year.

“There is nothing to do in our village. Every year in January, my husband goes to work abroad and returns in December. It turns out that I see my husband only a month during the year,” says Rima, a resident of Gegharkunik region. The regions of Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik and Kotayk are the most affected by migration processes.

Speaker Babloyan Meets with Slovak Counterpart in Bratislava

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Speaker of Parliament Ara Babloyan and his delegation met with Andrej Danko, Speaker of the Slovakian Parliament on January 29 in Bratislava.

The delegation included Vice Speaker Eduard Sharmazanov, MP Marina Margaryan, MP Aram Sargsyan and MP Armenuhi Kyureghyan, the Parliament's press service said.

During the meeting Babloyan spoke on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties between Armenia and Slovakia, and mentioned that during these years the countries formed warm partnership, based on cooperation and political dia-

logue in different areas. “I have always dreamed that I wake up in the morning, take my children to school, go to work, and then at home they tell me about their lessons at dinner, and I share my impressions of the working day. It has remained only a dream. There is not even a small factory near our village where I could work,” mentions Rima.

Rima has decided to move to the capital Yerevan next year, saying that she has already spoken to her husband and he agrees.

“Instead of working in Moscow, capital of Russia, my husband will work in Yerevan, capital of Armenia. Before it was difficult, you had to pay a bribe or have a good acquaintance to find a job, but now there has been a change of power in our country, I think at least we can find a job in Yerevan,” says Rima.

The issue of unemployment, in the spotlight of the state

The problem of unemployment is of concern to the Armenian government, which has been implementing a number of programs in the past several years to solve it – for example, the project called “Providing Agricultural Economic Assistance through Seasonal Employment Promotion.”

Also, together with international organizations, steps are being undertaken aimed at developing small businesses in different settlements of Armenia. This should contribute to alleviate the unemployment problem.

After the change of power in the spring of 2018, the issue of unemployment was touched upon in a new government program, which says: “The non-violent, velvet, people's revolution in Armenia in April-May 2018 resulted in positive economic and investment expectations. The government intends to direct investments to the regions and encourage the investments which are aimed at creating the largest number of new positions.”

Kocharyan's Home, Office Searched by Investigators

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there during the search and can't give details,” Alumyan said. “I can only say that nothing significant for the case was found.”

The search was reported just hours before Armenia's Office of the Prosecutor-General appealed Kocharyan's release from custody which was ordered by the Court of Appeals on August 13.

The court ruled that the Armenian constitution gives the ex-president, who ruled the country from 1998 to 2008, immunity from prosecution for decisions made in his capacity as head of state. The SIS condemned the decision as “illegal” and urged prosecutors to appeal to the Court of Cassation.

Article 140 of the constitution says: “During the term of his or her powers and thereafter, the President of the Republic may not be prosecuted and subjected to liability for actions deriving from his or her status.”

Kocharyan was arrested on July 27 on charges of illegally using the armed forces

against opposition supporters protesting against alleged fraud in a presidential election held in February 2008. Eight protesters and two police personnel were killed when security forces broke up those demonstrations on March 1-2, 2018.

Kocharyan has denied the accusations as politically motivated, saying that Armenia's current government is waging a “vendetta” against him. He said last week that even if he is sent back to prison he is confident that the European Court of Human Rights will clear him of any wrongdoing.

Kocharyan stands accused of illegally using the armed forces against opposition protesters who demanded a rerun of a disputed presidential election held in February 2008. Eight protesters and two police personnel were killed when security forces broke up those demonstrations on March 1-2, 2008.

The ex-president denied the accusations as a politically motivated “vendetta” the day before his arrest. His lawyers have likewise dismissed

them as baseless. They have also said that the Armenian constitution guarantees their client's immunity from prosecution.

In an interview with the Yerkir Media TV channel, Kocharyan again rejected as politically motivated the charges stemming from the deadly breakup of opposition protests which he had ordered more than a month before completing his second term in April 2008.

He also attacked the new Armenian government, saying that is dominated by inexperienced and incompetent individuals who are endangering the country's national security, undermining its relations with Russia and lacking economic programs.

“Let's say that I have returned [to the political arena.] I definitely have,” declared Kocharyan. But he declined to specify his political plans or allies. He only said vaguely that he will make “different contact with different people.”

The 63-year-old attributed his comeback to growing geopolitical challenges facing

Armenia, rather than the risk of his imprisonment.

He said he is particularly concerned about a worsening of Russia-Armenian relations that followed the recent launch of criminal proceedings against him and two other former senior officials accused of using the armed forces against opposition protesters in February and March 2008.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced those accusations as politically motivated late last month.

Kocharyan strongly defended his track record, however, denying that corruption was widespread during his presidency. He argued that the Armenian economy grew fivefold and living standards improved considerably in the ten-year period. “Money again appeared in people's pockets,” he said.

He also laughed off long-standing claims that he made a huge personal fortune while in office, challenging the current authorities to prove his alleged enrichment.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Yazidi Survivor of Brutal Assaults to Marry Man Who Helped Her Escape

BERLIN — Nadia Murad, who was captured and brutally gang-raped by Islamic State militants in Iraq is set to marry the US Army interpreter who helped her escape.

New Delhi: Nadia Murad, the Yazidi woman who was subjected to brutal sexual torture by Islamic State (IS) kidnappers in Iraq is set to marry the US Army interpreter who helped her escape the ISIS captivity. The Yazidi sex slave, who was brutally gang-raped by IS members in 2014, will be tying a knot with Abid Shamdeen, who once worked as an interpreter for the US Army in Iraq.

"Yesterday was a special day for @AbidShamdeen & I. We are very thankful and humbled for all the wishes & support from our family & friends. The struggle of our people brought us together & we will continue on this path together. Thank you for your support everyone!" Murad said on Twitter on Monday, August 21.

Murad was kidnapped in Northern Iraq at the age of 21 by the Islamic State militants who brutally assaulted her and repeatedly gang-raped her. Following a daring escape she jumped over the wall of her captor's house and she was later offered asylum in Germany.

While her horrifying ordeal and the daring escape made her the face of women who have been captured by IS, Murad returned to run a group which aims to rebuild the Sinjar region. Today, she is the goodwill ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

According to reports as many as 7000 women have been kidnapped and subjected to atrocities by ISIS fighters in Iraq.

Mesale Tolu Can Finally Leave Turkey

ISTANBUL — German journalist Mesale Tolu, who was held in prison in Turkey from April to December 2017 and released only on strict conditions including a travel ban, is now allowed to leave the country.

Tolu still faces the next stage of her trial in October 2018 which could result in her being sent to prison for up to 20 years. The European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) demands that all further constraints against her and her husband be dropped.

Dr. Lutz Kinkel, managing director at the ECPMF, said: "It's good news Tolu can finally leave the country. But we must remember that the threat of the next trial still hangs over her. And many journalists in Turkey remain under threat."

Tolu's supporters in Germany have welcomed the removal of the travel ban, and they look forward to welcoming her on August 26.

The ECPMF granted financial legal support to Tolu's case in July.

Deputy PM Receives World Bank Reps

YEREVAN — Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan received this week a delegation led by World Bank Country Manager for Armenia Sylvie Bossoutrot.

Pleased with the ongoing cooperation between Armenia and the World Bank, the parties touched upon the programs implemented in different spheres. Highly appreciative of the WB's consulting and research services, the Deputy Prime Minister said they promote the development of Armenia's socioeconomic systems.

The two sides exchanged their views about activities in Armenia and the prospects for gradual improvement. In this context, Grigoryan assured that small and medium enterprises are kept in focus by the government of Armenia, and there is great potential in this area that the government can tap in cooperation with international partners.

The deputy prime minister and the World Bank representatives expressed readiness to continue with the ongoing close and productive cooperation with a view to providing favorable conditions for the development of Armenia's economy.

Trump Vows 'No Concessions' with Turkey over Detained US Pastor

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — US President Donald Trump on Monday ruled out agreeing to any demands from Turkey to gain the release of a detained American pastor and said he was not concerned that his tough stance could end up hurting European and emerging market economies.

Trump said he thought he had a deal with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan when he helped persuade Israel to free a detained Turkish citizen. He had thought Erdogan would then release pastor Andrew Brunson, who denies Turkey's allegations that he was involved in a plot against Erdogan two years ago.

"I think it's very sad what Turkey is doing. I think they're making a terrible mistake. There will be no concessions," he said.

Turkey has demanded that the United States hand over Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric in the United States suspected in the coup plot against Erdogan, but the United States has balked at this.

Trump has imposed tariffs on imports of Turkish steel and aluminum in response to Erdogan's refusal to free Brunson, raising concerns of economic damage in Europe and in emerging market economies.

"I'm not concerned at all. I'm not concerned. This is the proper thing to do," he said, when asked about the potential damage to other economies.

Trump said Erdogan had wanted the Turkish citizen returned from Israel.

Trump and Erdogan met in Brussels for a NATO summit in mid-July where they discussed Brunson's case and what could be the way forward to release the pastor, a senior White House official said earlier.

Turkey had sought US help to persuade the Israelis to release a Turkish woman who was being held in Israel, the senior official said. In exchange Turkey would release Brunson and other Americans being held in Turkey.

Trump said he kept his side of the bargain.

"I got that person out for him. I expect him to let this very innocent and wonderful man and great father and great Christian out of Turkey," Trump said.

The dispute threatens to intensify a split between the United States and Turkey, a key NATO ally that plans to buy Russian missiles.

Israel, which confirmed that Trump had requested Ebru Ozkan's release, deported her on July 15. Ankara has denied ever agreeing to free Brunson in return.

Trump added: "I like Turkey. I like the people of Turkey very much. Until now I had a very good relationship as you know with the president. I got along with him great. I had a very good relationship. But it can't be a one-way street. It's no longer a one-way street for the United States."

Trump drew a barrage of criticism at home and abroad after he stood side by side with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a July 16 summit in Helsinki and cast doubt on his own intelligence agencies' findings that Russia meddled in the 2016 US elections.

In the Reuters interview, he ticked off areas that he discussed privately with Putin, including security for Israel, Syria and Russia's annexation of Crimea and incursion into eastern Ukraine, and the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany that will supply natural gas to Germany.

Trump said Putin did not raise with

him the issue of US sanctions on Russia but that he would consider lifting them if Russia took steps on such areas as Syria or Ukraine.

"I would consider it if they do something that would be good for us. But I wouldn't consider it without that," he said.

Turning to Iran, Trump showed little interest in meeting Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to discuss the dispute over Iran's nuclear program after earlier this month expressing a willingness to do so.

The Iranians, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, have dismissed the offer. Trump said it did not matter to him whether he met Iran's leaders and that there had been no US outreach toward Iran to discuss talks.

Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers earlier this year has raised tensions between Washington and Tehran.

"If they want to meet that's fine, and if they don't want to meet, I couldn't care less," he said.

Trump cast doubt on whether he will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping during an international Asia-Pacific summit in Papua New Guinea in November. Trump again talked up the warmth of his relationship with Xi, but said little progress has been made on his drive to rebalance the US-Chinese trade relationship.

"Maybe. I'm not sure that it's been set up yet. We'll see," he said, when asked about a possible meeting with Xi.

He also said he had "no time frame" for resolving his administration's trade dispute with China.

"I'm like them, I have a long horizon," he said.

Merkel in the South Caucasus: A Thorny Diplomatic Agenda

CAUCASUS, from page 1

Mediation Undesired

Merkel's diplomatic tour was supposed to bring new momentum into the process. But an extraordinary move by the Azerbaijan government just days prior to her departure has raised concerns that Berlin's peace-seeking mission is not welcome in Baku. On August 20, Albert Weiler, a CDU Bundestag member from Thuringia who is scheduled to accompany Merkel on the trip, announced that the authorities were not allowing him to enter the country. As first reported by the online edition of the mass daily tabloid BILD and covered by other major press, Weiler was informed that he was considered an "undesirable person" and mediation attempts undertaken by the German Foreign Ministry with the Azerbaijan embassy led nowhere. The embassy, citing decisions taken at the highest government level, made clear to the parliamentarian that he would be arrested at the airport. (The similarities to practices one usually associates with Turkey and President Erdogan are striking.) Weiler decided to go ahead with the travel, but to return to Berlin after visiting Georgia and Armenia.

Why the fuss? Weiler is deputy chairman of the German-South Caucasus Group in the parliament and has been active in seeking a solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. He visited the region in 2014 and 2016. As he commented following the ban on his

visit, "I am greatly concerned about peace in the region and would have been glad to mediate." What is not mentioned in the press coverage of the outrageous diplomatic affront is that Weiler has become prominent in promoting relations with Armenia. In May 2015, he founded the German-



Albert Weiler, a member of the German Bundestag (Parliament) barred from entering Azerbaijan

Armenian Forum, dedicated to helping Armenians and Germans learn more about each other, by facilitating contact and exchanges at all levels — from the politicians to the students and civil society. (See "German-Armenian Forum Launched in Berlin," *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, May 29, 2015.)

While in Yerevan, Merkel plans to visit the Genocide monument and museum at Tsitsernakaberd, as Steinmeier did before her. In July 2016, the German Bundestag (Parliament) passed a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide of 1915.

In talks with government officials on her first day in the region, August 23 in Georgia, it is expected that relations with NATO and the European Union will be discussed. On the last day of her tour, August 25, she will be in Baku, where gas deliveries to Germany and the EU will be on the agenda.

The Role of Putin

It is important to note that on Saturday, August 18, just a day after her Caucasus trip was officially announced, Merkel held substantial talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the government guest house at Schloss Meseberg in Brandenburg. It was their second meeting in three months. What became public from their three-hour session was that their talks included the situation in Syria, Ukraine, Iran and the North Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. Merkel faced considerable criticism for meeting Putin, but responded by stressing the need for cooperation between Germany and Russia to find solutions to pressing international crises. These certainly include the South Caucasus; not only Georgia's delicate position but also the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Community News

Holy Trinity Church's Trinity Family Festival And Opening of Church Schools on September 9

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — All are invited for an afternoon of fantastic food, fabulous music, fun, family and friends! Always an anticipated event on the fall calendar, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston's annual Trinity Family Festival will be held on Sunday, September 9, 2018, beginning at 12:00 noon, on the beautiful grounds of the church at 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge.

Co-chairing the Festival Committee are David Dorian and Richard Diranian who invite everyone to come ready for a day of fun and fellowship. "Our Trinity Family Festival is always a wonderful afternoon as parishioners and friends come together to kick off the fall season with delicious food, great music, and especially the camaraderie that day offers as we reconnect with family and friends after the summer hiatus," state Dorian and Diranian.

Armenian food will be available throughout the afternoon as well as an a la carte menu, take-out meals, beverages, Armenian coffee and a variety of pastries and desserts. There will be lots of activities for children including the popular Moonwalk all afternoon. For your listening and dancing pleasure, enjoy Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; George Righellis and Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals; Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet; Charles Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine. And, new this year, is Holy Trinity's Gourmet Shack featuring many seasonal items for your enjoyment.

The ancient tradition of the Blessing of the Madagh will take place at 4 p.m., followed by the Raffle drawing for cash prizes. This year's raffle cash prizes are \$1,000, first prize; \$300, second prize; and \$200, third prize. Tickets are \$5 each, 6 for \$25 or 12 for \$50, and can be obtained by calling the Holy Trinity Church office or buying on the day of the Festival.

Holy Trinity Church's Armenian and Sunday Schools will kick-off the 2018-2019 year on the morning of Sunday, September 9, with registration for both schools at 10:15 a.m., in the Peter Adamian Hall of the church complex. We look forward to the return of our current students and to warmly welcoming new ones.

Sunday School classes, which will start on September 9, meet weekly from 10:30 a.m. to noon, in the Peter Adamian Hall. The Sunday School program, which ranges in grades from Pre-School through 12, is open to all children and youth, ages 3 to 17. To be eligible for Sunday School, a child must be three years of age by September 1, 2018, and toilet-trained. Parents may register their child(ren) on Opening Day on September 9, or request a registration form and submit prior to the first day of classes. For information regarding the Sunday School program, please contact Yn. Arpi Kouzouian, Sunday School Superintendent, at youth@htaac.org, or call the Church office.

The Armenian School program is for children ages 3 through 17, and meets weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., for students registered in the Sunday School, and from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., for students registered in the Armenian School only. The goal of the program is to introduce the children to the Armenian language, history and culture. During the school year, there are lessons in singing, painting and dancing. Classes are taught in Eastern Armenian in three grade levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Armenian School classes will begin on Sunday, September 16. For further information about the Armenian School program, contact Naira Balagyozyan, Armenian School Director, at nairab3@gmail.com.



Some of the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program 2018 participants on Capitol Hill

Armenian Assembly Completes Another Summer Internship Program in Washington

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America's Washington, D.C. summer internship program ended on a high note in a year that motivated interns experiencing an unusually rich calendar of events, such as the Centennial Celebration of Armenia's First Republic and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Featuring "Armenia: Coming Home." This summer was especially valuable to our community's next generation of promising leaders. This year's participants interacted with government officials, policymakers, local leaders from various fields and organizations, and internship program alumni.

Founded in 1977, the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program in Washington was the first internship program offered by an Armenian organization in our nation's capital, and has over 1,000 intern alumni. For eight weeks each summer, the program gives college students of Armenian descent an opportunity to learn about the policy-making process.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program class of 2018 included:

- * Tamar Barsamian from Sherborn, Mass. attending Loyola University of Maryland, interned at the Smithsonian Institute's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.
- * Franklin Chelebian from Palos Verdes Estates, Calif. attending Chapman University, interned with Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA).
- * Catherine Conrow from Ross, Calif. attending University of California Berkeley, interned with Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA).
- * Ariana Cruickshank from Edgewater, NJ attending Ramapo College, interned with Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ).
- * Artin DerSimonian from Kittery, Maine attending Champlain College, interned at the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the United States.
- * Robert George from Bethesda, Md. attending Fairfield University, interned at the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
- * David Karamardian from Newport Coast, Calif. attending Duke University, interned at Applied Predictive Technologies.
- * Victoria Khederian from Bloomfield Township, Mich. attending University of Michigan, interned with Congressman Paul Mitchell (R-MI).
- * Alexander Keledjian from Los Angeles, Calif. attending Southwestern Law School, interned with Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI).
- * Aidan Mussalli from Glendale, Calif. attending Glendale Community College, interned with the Armenian National Institute (ANI).
- * Azniv Nalbandian from Andover, Mass. attending Pennsylvania State University, interned at the Eurasia Foundation.
- * Nick Norian from Corte Madera, CA attending California Polytechnic University, interned at the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the United States.
- * Lena Richardson from Shaker Heights, Ohio attending University of Dayton, interned at the Armenian Assembly of America's Public Affairs Department.
- * Mireille Samra from Boca Raton, Fla. attending Lynn University, interned with Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL).
- * Gorgen Tadevosyan from Yerevan, Armenia attending New York University in Abu Dhabi, interned with the Armenian National Institute (ANI).
- * Lincoln Zaleski from Boston, Mass. attending the College of William and Mary, interned with Senator Ed Markey (D-MA).

"As the summer comes to an end, so does my internship for Armenian Caucus Co-Vice Chair Representative Gus Bilirakis. This internship was invaluable and truly exceeded all of my expectations. I was able to learn so much being in a fast-paced environment with an office of Floridians, who made the office feel like home," stated Mireille Samra.

Through the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program, participants are offered extensive educational opportunities via the Capital Ideas program, which provides interns a forum to ask questions to elected officials about current topics, national and international. This summer's participants met with

see INTERNS, page 7

Western Diocese To Honor Dr. Vahram and Polina Biricik

BURBANK, Calif. — The Armenian Apostolic Church of the Western Diocese and the Stewardship Committee will honor Dr. Vahram and Polina Biricik, Leading Stewards of Faith and Benevolence, on Sunday, September 16. This tribute is in recognition of their dedication and transformative influences in fulfilling the objectives of clergy preparation at the Western Diocese. This celebration will begin at 10 a.m. at St. Leon Cathedral, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Divine Liturgy, under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate.

The church services will be followed by an Appreciation Benefit Luncheon in the Nazareth and Sima Kalaydjian Hall, 3325 No. Glenoaks Boulevard, Burbank.

Derik Ghookasian, Organizing Committee Chairman, stated that Dr. Vahram Biricik has been an invaluable asset to the Stewardship Program since 2003 when it was revitalized for maximum efficiency. Biricik's concern about the future of the Armenian Church and the salvation of our people in Christ resuscitated and redefined the Stewardship mission, and clergy preparation became a top priority. Dr. Biricik and his wife Polina, spared no detail in their commitment to lay the groundwork for success in clergy education and preparation as qualified spiritual leaders.

Dr. Biricik was a founding Parish Council member and later Parish Council Chairman of St. Mary Armenian Church in Orange County. He has devoted increasing amounts of time to the Western Diocese, serving four terms on the Diocesan Council; organizing pontifical Divine Liturgy celebrations of the Catholicos; and serving as interim Parish Council Chairman of St. John Garabed Church in San Diego.

He has also had a distinguished career in the aerospace industry following his graduation from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania with a PhD in Applied Mechanics and Mechanical Engineering. In 1971 he accepted a position as a member of the Senior Technical Staff at Northrop Corporation. While he was at Northrop he worked on sensitive and innovative military applications, such as High Energy Lasers and the B2 Stealth Bomber. At the same time he received his MBA in Product Development from the University of Southern California. His hard work at Northrop was rewarded by a series of promotions, culminating with his appointment in the early 1990s as director of technology for the Electronics and Systems Integrated Division, a division with over two billion in sales and responsible for the development of a number of military applications, including the development of the E2-C Hawkeye aircraft for the Navy and Joint Stars aircraft for the U.S. Air Force.

At the same time, Dr. Biricik's wife Polina, received her nursing degree and began working in the neonatal unit of Torrance Memorial Hospital.

The Divine Liturgy and Appreciation Benefit Luncheon will offer both the Armenian and American community the opportunity to express their love and appreciation for Dr. Vahram Biricik and his wife Polina, for their unwavering and exemplary dedication to fulfill the stewardship promise of unselfishly giving their time, talents and treasures for the growth, progress and development of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church. Donations made on this occasion, as well as the net proceeds, will go towards fulfilling the objectives and mission of the Stewardship Program of the Western Diocese.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Small Procedures Yield Major Results for Doctor on Pro Bono Mission in Armenia

By Maria Azizian, M.D.

FALMOUTH, Mass. — As any physician can tell you, one of the best and most rewarding aspects of this profession is the ability to make a positive change in peoples’ lives by helping them with their health problems. As a general surgeon, I have always been interested in philanthropy. However, my imagination would usually paint a major life-saving or life-improving procedure, such as resection of intestinal cancer or repair of a large and complicated hernia. Several years ago two events happened that have shifted my view.

A friend of mine who lived far away told me of her child who has had a large dark mole on his face. The child was ostracized and teased. My friend was afraid of addressing it surgically, as she had felt it may be dangerous. She was conflicted between having the mole removed and possibly jeopardizing her child’s health by a possible complication from the procedure, and just letting it be, and thus extending the discomfort and teasing that the child had encountered on a daily basis.

Finally, at some point, her child underwent this procedure. I was very happy that my professional advice helped and she made the right choice for her child, which also boosted his self-confidence.

At the same time, I don’t believe that every skin lesion on the face or body needs to be removed. Many of them add character and become a person’s “beauty marks.” However, when the mole is unsightly to the patient or uncomfortable in any way, such as causing bleeding, itching, irritation, or pain, then its removal is much more justified.

The second event was a conversation with my colleague, a fellow general surgeon, who went on a humanitarian mission to Nepal. Like me, he had also thought that he would be performing major surgeries, but, ended up, removing skin tags, moles, soft tissue masses, such as lipomas and cysts.

Surprisingly, he found this extremely rewarding. He wasn’t saving lives, but he became a mechanism for renewal and hope. It was extremely rewarding for him to have young women and men with large facial lesions, who now started regaining their confidence and getting ready to find a mate.

Holy Trinity Men’s Union To Welcome Boston Celtics Great Sam Jones On September 10

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — David Dorian, Holy Trinity Men’s Union Chairman announced recently that the group will organize an event featuring Boston Celtics great Sam Jones on September 10.

Everyone is welcome to attend this special evening, another Holy Trinity event celebrating Books of Courage and Legends, on September 10, beginning at 6 p.m., in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church complex located at 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge.

Drafted in 1957, 10-time NBA Champion Sam Jones was called “Mr. Clutch” by many of his peers. His uncannily accurate bank shots, lightning quickness, and cool demeanor helped the Celtics win 10 NBA championships in the 12 years he played with the team, second only to teammate Bill Russell, and an accomplishment that still holds true today. Jones was a five-time NBA All Star, named to both the NBA’s 25th and 50th anniversary teams, had his No. 24 retired by the Celtics, and was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1984.

The Story of Basketball Legend Sam Jones, Ten Times A Champion, by Mark C. Bodanza who will accompany and introduce Jones, will be available for purchase and signing by the basketball great.

Social Hour begins at 6 p.m., followed by dinner for \$15. Reservations are required. RSVP by calling the Church Office or emailing tmuh-taac@gmail.com.

These events provided a background for my own philanthropic journey. My birth country is beautiful Armenia, an ancient country that prides itself on surviving wars, genocides and economic corruption.

Over the centuries, its lands have shrunken, and at the turn of the 20th century after another genocide by Turks, all there left was a small country of 11,000 sq. miles.

My family immigrated to the States at the dawn of the collapse of Soviet Union in 1990. It was a hard decision for my father who was a prominent psychiatrist during the difficult Soviet times. Prior to asking for a political asylum in the United States, he had a position of psychiatric expert and thus was forced to label dissidents and enemies of the Communist party as mentally unstable or, simply, crazy. He had refused to do so and was hounded by the KGB. The Soviet policy was that labeling somebody crazy would devalue his/her political views and eliminate the serious threat they posed.

My grandfather, who had started our medical dynasty, was a trauma surgeon during World War II, and a chief physician at one of the largest Yerevan hospitals later in his life. In his older age, he worked as an attending physician. Despite being a war hero, he completely supported my father’s decision, as he was always anti-Soviet in private, but never in public, as any disagreement with a Communist party agenda would lead to severe punishment/persecution.

In 1990, when we came to the States, I was a teenager. My dream was to live in a free society with freedom of speech and lack of oppression. My professional dream was to become a surgeon. I had spent the 1990s going through college as a biochemistry major at Clark University and then going through medical school at the University of Vermont.

Meanwhile, in Armenia, the 1990s were economically harsh years remarkable for the blossoming of corruption, nepotism, and a resultant massive emigration out of the country.

Currently, Armenia is an independent country with a newly elected prime minister who is keen on fighting the corruption.

It was coincidental that my philanthropy trip coincided with such an amazing event as the election of an idealistic and honest leader, who conducted a completely bloodless “velvet revolution” that resulted in the resignation of an established and corrupt previous leader.

My friends and relatives urged me to cancel my trip, but I was incredibly excited to be with my people, in my country of birth at such an important time.

I decided to have the first mission in Yerevan, a city which is, incidentally, 2,798 years old.

My father’s medical school classmate, the owner of a Vladimir Avagyan Medical Center, kindly allowed me to use a room at this hospi-

tal. (Interestingly, it is the first hospital in Armenia that had performed a gender reassignment surgery.) I was asked to submit all my diplomas, and other credentials verifying that I was a board-certified general surgeon with medical licenses in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The mission was approved after all the paperwork was verified by the hospital.

The mission was called Armenia Cosmetic Beauty Philanthropy.

My trip was relatively short – about 10 days: 4-5 days of work, 2 days spent in travel, and some time for a set-up/preparation.

The focus of this trip would be a consultation of skin lesions, and removal of benign, cosmetic ones.

I decided not to remove any suspicious lesions, and also not to deal with larger excisions – this was due to the fact that I would not be in the country to provide a free follow-up care for these patients. I did not feel comfortable leaving them with sutures, as it meant that they would have to find another doctor to do so. The odds of finding somebody who would do it for free were not known to me.

In my future mission, this could be alleviated by being with a group of doctors and working in tandem, meaning that somebody would be available for an immediate post-op care.

Upon arrival, I acquired the names of local dermatologists and surgeons at the Avagyan Center to whom I could refer patients with suspicious lesions to undergo a biopsy and workup.

If patients qualified on the phone while they were describing their skin lesions, then, they were asked to e-mail a photo/photos of these lesions to a confidential email address that was created only for that purpose.

I would review the photos and let the representative in Yerevan know if the patient could be scheduled or politely declined. Since many patients were providing multiple lesions, it was decided to have one main lesion chosen by the patient with a potential to address others, if there is enough time.

All the consent forms were already translated in Armenian by several very helpful people here in the States, such as St. James Erebuni School Principal, Arminé Manukyan, and my kids’ Cape Cod-based Armenian teacher Elya Gevorkian.

The room was perfect, as it had a partition that had separated the consultation area from the procedure area.

When I had arrived, I had felt like a pioneer, and had realized how spoiled I had become in my office in the US. Now I had to think of every little detail, such as a large trash can, saline bags for washing, containers for different sizes of gauze, etc. From the beginning, I had made it clear to the hospital that I did not expect any-

thing from them. I think that if it were not so, I would not have been allowed to be there.

I even purchased a large glass container for grains that I used for sharps: syringes, blades, etc., since there was no red box for sharps. Most of my equipment was disposable since there was no autoclave. The disposable equipment is, unfortunately, is usually more expensive.

It goes without saying that there was no nurse or medical assistant provided for me.

In one day, I had trained an amazingly talented young woman, who had helped me with the disposal, instrument set-up, and many more aspects of a surgical pre-procedure preparation.

The best part of this mission was seeing patients. People were so graceful and kind.

I was told that Armenians are usually scared and reluctant to have any, even minor, procedures due to old wives’ tales that removing moles was dangerous.

I was surprised to find out that it was only partially true – people were, indeed, more contemplative prior to deciding to undergo the procedure, but most of them were psychologically ready to have them removed. If they were not ready, then I would not proceed with or even offer a procedure, even if it were a very simple one (from the surgical standpoint). Some of them only asked for consultation, as all there were looking for was a reassurance.

One of the most touching patients was an older woman who came a long way from one of the remote villages, with a large skin tag hanging over her upper eyelid. She told me that it had been obstructing her vision for more than 10 years. She was scared but brave and full of spirit.

As I had helped her to a somewhat high exam table, she tolerated the worst part of the procedure, an injection of the numbing medication, very well. When I was done, she had asked for my hand for what I thought was help in getting up. Instead, he gently took it and kissed it with the words of blessing. “I don’t have this thing in front of my eye anymore, and I can see so much better – thank you so much. I hope you come again and help more people.”

This sentiment was shared by many, who had asked me if I would come again.

In 4.5 days, I saw 62 patients and did 26 procedures. It was wonderful that friends and relatives of our patients, as well, as the hospital workers came and asked to be seen. We ended up seeing far more patients than the initial number in our already full schedule.

I am open to going solo or with a group of other doctors. In order to turn this into an annual operation and make a positive impact on many who need help but cannot afford, I am open to work with the local organizations who would be interested to support this mission.

For more information, contact maria.azizian@yahoo.com

HELP AN ARMENIAN MOTHER SAVE HER HOME

ZHANA GAGIKYAN OF YEREVAN HAS GIVEN HER HOUSE AS COLLATERAL TO PAY HIS SON, 37 YEARS OLD VLADIMIR GAGIKYAN’S QUADRUPLE HEART BY-PASS OPERATION

SHE NEEDS TO PAY BACK \$15,000 TO ARTSAKH BANK

PLEASE HELP



VLADIMIR GAGIKYAN

Beneficiary Bank: Artsakhbank CJSC
Swift Code: ARTSAM22
Bank Address: 3 Kievyan Street, Yerevan 0028, Armenia
Beneficiary: Zhana Gagikyan
Account Number: 22317006353902
Address: Leningradyan 20, Yerevan, Armenia



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly Completes Another Summer Internship Program in Washington

INTERNS, from page 5

Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Representative Ed Royce (R-CA), Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Ranking Member and Armenian Caucus Co-Vice Chair Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), Armenian Caucus Vice Co-Chair Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), and the office of Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI).

With the backdrop of recent developments in Armenia, this summer's class had the opportunity to meet with Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian and First Lady Nouneh Sarkissian. In addition, Armenia's First Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan also met with the Armenian Assembly summer internship participants and engaged in a conversation about democratic developments in Armenia and the Velvet Revolution.

The group met and heard directly from Ambassador of Armenia to the United States Grigor Hovhannissian and Artashk (Nagorno Karabakh) Representative to the United States Robert Avetisyan. These Representatives offered their insights on the development and goals for the future, and held in-depth conversations with the participants.

"The experience of working in Washington, D.C. this summer with the Armenian Assembly of America was truly unmatched," stated Lena Richardson. "The opportunity to learn so much about U.S.-Armenia relations in the nation's capital through meeting with numerous prominent leaders and professionals was a very unique experience, especially right after the Velvet Revolution in Armenia. The Assembly provided us interns with unparalleled experiences that taught us so much," she added.

The students were in Washington, D.C. for an exceptional year, including the chance to see Armenia featured on the National Mall as part of the Smithsonian Institute's 2018 Folklife Festival. They attended the Folklife Festival's

narratives and talks about important topics, participated in traditional dancing, and enjoyed the cooking demonstrations of food most familiar to them.

"Working at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival was really touching and special to me. I had the opportunity to introduce Armenian culture to everybody, both Armenian and non-Armenian,

As part of the Assembly's Lecture Series, the intern class learned about U.S. foreign policy toward Armenia and Artsakh. The Armenian Assembly invites experts and leaders in their fields to review current political issues, with a focus on the South Caucasus. This year's group met with U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection

interned in the Armenian Assembly of America's office.

"Being interns at the Armenian Assembly of America, we are provided with many opportunities to get a close look at what is happening in our world today. We were also fortunate enough to visit the Library of Congress and attend the 22nd Vardanants Day Armenian



Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program 2018 participants with (top) members of the House, including Rep. Adam Schiff and Rep. Gus Bilirakis

who came to visit Washington, D.C. It was heartwarming to witness Americans learning about and appreciating Armenian culture," stated Tamar Barsamian.

Program Manager Noris Balabanian, Library of Congress Armenian and Georgian Specialist Dr. Levon Avdoyan, Federal Communications Commission Attorney-Advisor and Armenian Assembly intern alumna (class of 2002) Lauren Garry-Boggio, Eurasia Foundation Program Manager Hrach Topalyan, American Jewish Committee (AJC) Political Outreach Director Julie Fishman Ryman and Assistant Policy Director Benjamin Rogers, and Armenian

Lecture Series," Nishanian and Martirosian said. "Opportunities like this one, which we would not have been given without the Armenian Assembly, occur once in a lifetime and are extremely valuable in building our future careers," they added.

The Armenian Assembly of America Summer Internship Programs - both in Washington, D.C. and Yerevan, Armenia - have been celebrated and strongly supported by the Armenian

community with major gifts from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, Ann Hintlian, Ann Nahigian, James and Connie Melikian, the Knights of Vartan, the Estate of Haig J. Boyadjian, and the Estate of George Judge Karabedian (George Kay), as well as generous contributions in memory of former Assembly Board Members Dr. Lionel Galstaun, Peter Kezirian, and John O'Connor. In 2003, the Armenian Assembly's Summer Internship Program was renamed in honor of Aram and Florence Terjenian and Annie Thomas after the

announcement of their pace-setting \$1 million donation to the program.

"It has been an honor for me to coordinate the Armenian Assembly of America's Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program this summer. I am very happy to have witnessed how rich the Armenian American community is with the next generation of active and inquisitive students, and how passionate they all are about strengthening U.S.-Armenia relations. These interns proved to be wonderful young professionals, and all performed wonderfully at their individual internship placements," stated this summer's internship program coordinator, Milena Davtyan. She is a Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program alumna (class of 2017) from Salt Lake City, Utah who attends the University of Utah.



(Clockwise) Lincoln Zalenski and Senator Ed Markey (D-MA); Rep. Paul Mitchell (R-MI) and Victoria Khederian; Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Catherine Conrow; and Franklin Chelebian and Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA)

National Institute (ANI) Director Dr. Rouben Adalian.

The students explored Washington with special tours of the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, and the U.S. Department of State. They attended hearings, briefings, and conferences, including the 22nd Vardanants Day Lecture at the Library of Congress, the Congressional Briefing to Commemorate the 44th Anniversary of the Illegal Turkish Invasion of Cyprus, The Wilson Center's Annual Haleh Esfandiari Forum: Protecting America's Global Leadership with Senator Chris Van Hollen, and more.

Following the success of last year's week-long high school internship pilot program, Colette Nishanian from Newport Beach, California and Tiffany Martirosian from Ashburn, Virginia



Knights and Daughters of Vartan

Public Discussion

"At The White House With President Reagan and The Current Affairs In The White House Today"

Guest Speaker



Aram Bakshian

Speech Writer for Presidents Nixon, Ford and Director of Presidential Speech writing for Ronald Reagan

Tuesday, September 11, 2018, 7:00 PM Sharp

St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall

4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington DC

Free Entrance- Reception



COMMUNITY NEWS

Mayor Zareh Sinanyan Working to Improve Glendale While Strengthening Ties with Armenia

SINANYAN, from page 1

Sinanyan began his involvement with politics as an undergraduate, both on the student body government and as president of the UCLA Armenian Students Association, and it gradually expanded from there to local American politics. He said, "Initially it started with just being active on various campaigns, helping out different candidates and elected officials to get elected or reelected."

His political involvement was closely connected to his work with the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). He served on the boards initially of its Burbank chapter, then the Glendale chapter, and finally the ANCA Western Region, and only resigned as treasurer of the latter in 2013 when starting his campaign for a seat on the Glendale city council.

Sinanyan began volunteering on campaigns with ANCA in 2000, straight out of law school. He pointed out that in 1999-2000 a shift in local American politics took place. Previously Glendale was a Republican-voting city and the congressman was Republican. The Armenian community there also was more Republican-leaning, according to Sinanyan, but, he said, "I don't think we saw too many results from Republican elected officials."

A shift towards voting Democratic took place, Sinanyan said, explaining: "I think we [Armenian-Americans] as a community made the transformation from being purely immigrants who just arrived to being part of society at large, and as that society was shifting towards the left so did our community."

He said, "Not only did I come at the right time [on the Glendale political scene], but I was one of many people who played a role in this transformation." He noted that Armenians have become much more politically mobilized over the last 18 years, creating a larger voter base as

more Armenians obtained US citizenship and became registered. They now are a distinct electoral group, he said.

Through the support of Glendale City Council member Raffi Manoukian, Sinanyan was appointed to the Glendale Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission in 2006. In 2008, he was appointed to the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Commission, which he chaired from 2009 to 2011.

Glendale City Politics

A year after his election to the Glendale City Council, he was elected as mayor for a first term in 2014-15. He worked for more transparency and openness, and said, "I think I achieved that at some level in simple things." He allowed people to speak at length at council meetings without being strict with time limits and allowed people to get their grievances off their chests. He began the "City Council in Your Neighborhood" program, which periodically held council meetings in different parts of Glendale. The meetings are also televised live and available as recordings afterward. Sinanyan said that this tradition will be continued in his second term on a quarterly basis, while the rest of the weekly meetings will be held at city hall as usual.

Sinanyan changed the city's contract practices to ensure that contracts that did not go through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process or that were no-bid contracts did not make it to the council's consent calendar for routine acceptance.

A focus of his first mayoral term was the reduction of accidents involving vehicles or pedestrians. Glendale was a city with a reputation for safety, so that its significant number of accident casualties stood out. Sinanyan and his



Zareh Sinanyan at his office in Glendale City Hall (photo: Aram Arkun)

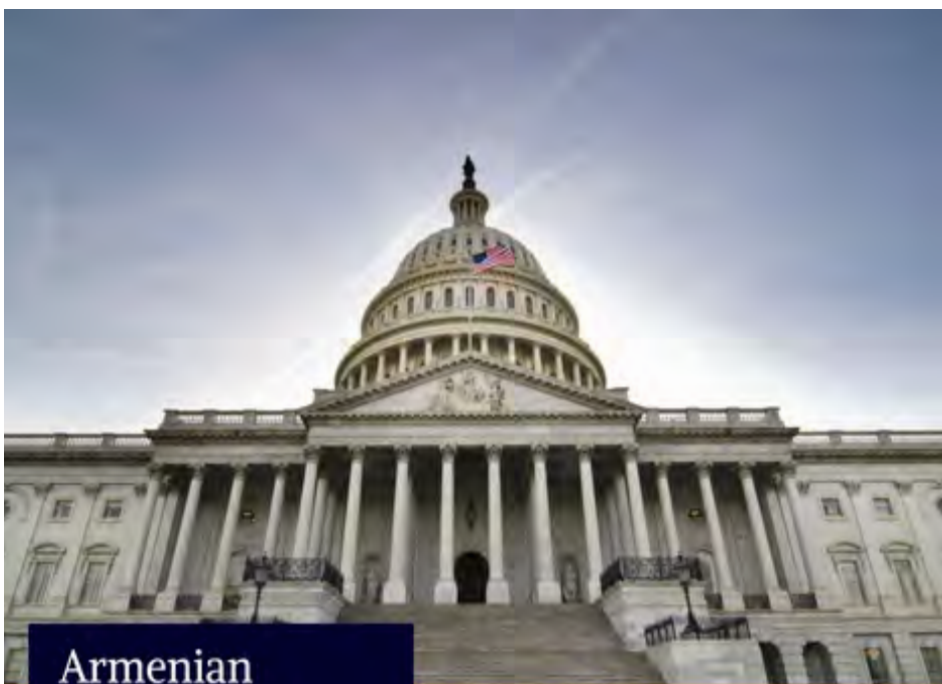
council, he said, exerted great effort and invested resources to improve the situation, including in community meetings, traffic engineering, public education and more enforcement, and indeed casualty numbers declined significantly.

He said that he felt he could not really accomplish much in his first mayoral year on local transportation, though he strongly believed in improving mass transit in Glendale as well as in greater Los Angeles, where, he said, "it is actually pretty atrocious." He pointed out that, for example, Glendale only has one train station at the very southern edge of the city, so it does

not serve 99 percent of the population.

One year after being reelected to city council, Sinanyan was elected to his second term as mayor in April 2018. He said his primary focus "always has to be maintaining the level of services that the residents expect and improving them to the extent possible." At the same time, the cost must not be excessive, he qualified. Transportation is still a key issue on which he will keep pushing, he said, but the issue which he called "paramount" at this point is the housing crisis, which is a state-wide problem.

continued on next page



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COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

Sinanyan said that it is explained by a decades-long imbalance between the numbers of people moving to California and the number of new housing units being built. He said, "Clearly, if you are a good city, a safe city, with good schools and a lot of jobs, you become a victim of your own success, and that is where Glendale is at. We are having elderly, economically disadvantaged, and working-class families being squeezed out of Glendale because they can't pay their rent. It is really unfortunate, very terrible." Furthermore, new investors in what appears to be a lucrative field are imposing 50-70 percent rent hikes to try to immediately recover their expenses.

He confessed that there was little he could do to fight these trends, saying, "The tools that we have are quite limited." Lack of sufficient funding and the complex California state bureaucratic process necessary to create new low income housing means that this housing only is being added "at a snail's pace," he said. Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937, a federal program which pays money to landlords to provide housing to low income families, is not being actively pursued with the present climate in Washington. Sinanyan said that "as you may imagine, they are not very eager nowadays to increase funding for anything that has to do with poor people. I am being cynical of course, but it is true; it is true."

The city has changed its ways of soliciting proposals for low income housing projects and now instead of preparing its specific Request for Proposals is casting a wider net by asking for proposals from the private sector and hoping for creative solutions.

Rent control is a possible solution. Sinanyan said, "I am not jumping immediately into it because there are consequences to rent control. There are negative consequences to rent control. Clearly there are a positive consequences too, but I am concerned about the negative con-



Zareh Sinanyan, left, meets the Governor of California, Jerry Brown, for lunch on August 2. Sinanyan wrote on his Facebook site: "It was kind of fun to be grilled by the Governor as to what's going on in Glendale, at the Hollywood-Burbank Airport, on the Metropolitan Water District, and Eco-Rapid Transit."

sequences." He said, "As a general rule, there is a libertarian streak in me, where I don't want too much interference with the market...the last thing I want to do is for the government to dictate every minutia of economic policy, but we have come to a point where it is a dire, dire situation for a lot of people, a lot of our constituents, a lot of our voters, and it is no easy problem to deal with."

Instead, he said, "I am hoping for a slowdown in rent increases and that the market stabilizes, because things have been growing since 2013 nonstop. At some point, I hope it comes to an end, and when it does, by that time, that we have not lost too many of our residents and this does not become a city that is reserved for only wealthy people. This seems to be the direction in the entire state at this point."

When asked whether real estate owners have a preponderant influence in the council, he replied that there are at least two members who are involved in real estate professionally, but he is not. He has some tenants in the building in which he lives but otherwise owns no other real estate.

Another important focus for Sinanyan is to

create the conditions allowing the retention of existing jobs and the attraction of new ones to Glendale. He said that over the past twenty years industries came and left Glendale, including banking, insurance and various corporate headquarters, without the city having much control over this process. Three years ago, in response, he promulgated the Glendale Tech Initiative to focus on high tech companies and just two weeks ago approved the proposals for an accelerator operator in Glendale. Thousands of jobs now come from tech, with billion-dollar companies as well as many small and medium size ones operating there. Some large companies are Armenian-owned, such as Service Titan, founded by two young Armenian-American entrepreneurs who graduated the Glendale public school system.

Among the major challenges Sinanyan said he faces is maintaining a balanced budget, and more specifically, the problem of pension obligations escalating over time while sufficient investments had not been made in the past. He said the years 2024 and 2025 will be the worst years, after which changes made in 2010 and 2013 will make the increases taper off.

The city is increasing taxes, but for a different reason than the pensions. He explained that when the county puts a tax measure on the ballot, if it passes, city residents are forced to pay into it without getting equivalent returns. For example, last year Glendale residents paid \$10 million towards Measure H, meant to deal with homelessness, but only received roughly \$280,000. This led Glendale, and neighboring Pasadena and Burbank, to put a tax increase on their local ballots in order to reach the maximum ceiling for taxes. This will allow these cities to keep their revenues and not give them to the county for its measures.

Sinanyan serves on several important boards while on the City Council. He recently became president of the board of directors of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority, which operates the Hollywood Burbank ("Bob Hope") Airport. One important project is to build a new terminal, which will take until 2024 or 2025. A second is to maintain a nice airport experience there. Three more flights to New York City are being added in September, along with direct flights for the first time to Boston and Chicago.

He is also the chairman of the Eco-Rapid Transit Board, which includes representatives of communities in a 40-mile corridor from the Bob Hope Airport to downtown Los Angeles and Artesia, where transportation is to be improved. Glendale is part of the southern leg of its rail project, funded under Los Angeles County's Measure M tax measure.

Sinanyan is one of 38 board members of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, where he supported the controversial Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta twin tunnel project, he said, "because it is good for Glendale, because we don't have our own water." Though it does not bring any new water into town, it ensures that water will continue to get there, Sinanyan explained. Governor Jerry Brown supported the project, which was opposed by many environmentalists as well as Delta landowners and Sacramento-area elected officials.

Armenian Relations

Sinanyan said that as at least 40 percent of his constituents were of Armenian ancestry, he had to take their concerns into account irrespective of his personal background. He stressed that "the key as an elected official is not to do things specifically for the community because if you are making things better in Glendale in general, you are already indirectly benefiting the [Armenian-American] community." In other words, good governance benefits everyone.

However, he noted that until around six or seven years ago, only a small minority of city employees were Armenian, meaning that there was a great disconnect between the former and the population. For example, he said, less than five percent of police officers were Armenian-American, and less than one percent of the fire department, while overall at best ten percent of the city employees were Armenian Americans. Sinanyan said this situation has been ameliorated, with upwards of 18 percent of the city employees being Armenian American, over 30 police officers and 6 or 7 firefighters. He said,



Zareh Sinanyan at Nor Kyank village, Armenia, delivering the tractor donated by Armen Vahanyan and Alexander Markaryan. Sinanyan on his Facebook account declared, "I hope this act of giving sets an example to others who want to take their step and make the positive results of the Velvet Revolution immediate and apparent to all." (photo from Zareh Sinanyan Facebook site)

"That is something that I have been able to influence, I think."

Connections with the Republic of Armenia are important for Glendale due to its Armenian population as well as Sinanyan, who still has many close relatives there. The first time Sinanyan returned as a young man, in 1993 while at UCLA, he went alone to volunteer at the American University of Armenia. He volunteered again in 1995, and afterwards continued to visit Armenia for personal reasons. Since 2010, he has gone every year, and sometimes twice a year. After marrying, he and his wife bought an apartment in Yerevan, and take their children there every summer.

Sinanyan said that whether council member or mayor, when in Armenia, he had frequent opportunities to speak to the media. He said, "I had a clear, critical approach to the government. I looked at it as, I have a homeland, and you are ruining it, and I don't like it." He noted that despite his close relationship with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) in the US, not once did any media source from the ARF invite him for an interview in Armenia, whereas with the exception of the directly government-controlled public channel, he was invited by nearly all other media.

During the five years prior to 2018, he met with only three government officials, including Yerevan mayor Taron Margaryan, at his invitation, and Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan. He said he decided not to meet again with them because it would not lead to anything productive and he did not want to associate with them.

On the other hand, he was in contact with the opposition movement. He met the current prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, at the Electric Yerevan protests of the summer of 2015, through a mutual friend, Romanos Melikyan, who was on the board of Pashinyan's Civic Contract. Sinanyan said, "We became friends immediately." They kept in touch, and Pashinyan visited the US once as a parliamentary deputy.

Sinanyan said, "He always was a prominent political figure in Armenia, but on a personal level, I saw a lot of strength in him. I had come to a point where I was starting to lose hope like many, many Armenians. He wasn't. That always struck me as remarkable."

When movements sprouted in Glendale to support Pashinyan, Sinanyan helped. He said, "The goal was twofold. One was to show our support to our brothers, that they are not alone, and that we care and are watching, and to show the government [of Armenia] that they are alone and rejected, even in the diaspora. I did speak officially as mayor, both at the first demonstration, which was on April 18 and the big one on April 22, when Nikol was abducted. In both I made sure that I said I am speaking as a fellow Armenian, who is worried about what is happening in Armenia." The April 18 Glendale demonstration had a good 800-900 people, Sinanyan said, while the April 22 one was much bigger, with perhaps as many as five thousand.

During this period, Sinanyan said, "Something remarkable happened." During the April 18 demonstration, he asked Pashinyan on the telephone whether his friends could donate a brand new tractor to Nor Kyank village, the only village in all of Armenia which officially had announced its adherence to the revolution. This would express their gratitude to the villagers and encourage others to join the movement.

Pashinyan agreed on condition that it would be announced publicly. It was, so Sinanyan and some of his friends came to Armenia in early May to deliver the tractor. A documentary was filmed about this which is available through Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty on the internet (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpdyxptUGFc>). Sinanyan arrived in Armenia in time also to be present in Yerevan for the second parliamentary debate on May 8, which ended with Pashinyan's victorious selection as prime minister.

Sinanyan went a second time this summer to take his children on their annual summer trip, but also met with many of the new government officials, including the new prime minister Pashinyan. He said, "One of the purposes of spending a lot of time there was planning a California State Assembly and Senate delegation trip to Armenia which is going to take place on September 4." This is going to have a focus on tech and agriculture, and many major tech companies in Silicon Valley will send representatives. Sinanyan noted that California State Senator Anthony Portantino, whom he took to Armenia for the first time in 2016, is the muscle behind this forthcoming trip.

In addition to these relations of the mayor directly with Armenia, the city of Glendale has sister city relations with two cities in Armenia, Ghapan and Gyumri. The relationship with Ghapan dates from 2002, but it has cooled off over time. Sinanyan said, "It is not due to our laziness or unwillingness to do anything, but these sister city models work only if you have a community group that has a plan and mediates between the two cities and stokes these relationships...That hasn't been the case basically."

The Gyumri case is more recent. The mayor of Gyumri invited Sinanyan to visit and create the sister city relationship while Sinanyan was in his first term as mayor. He said that he agreed, on condition that a Gyumri community group be created in Glendale to push this forward. The group was created and the memorandum signed, but not much was done afterwards by the group. However, Sinanyan said, "The potential is there. With this [Velvet] revolution, the people are more motivated, so people are more likely to get involved and do good deeds for Hayastan and Glendale."

As an active and energetic young politician, who seems to be devoting most of his time to public service, Sinanyan seems to have a promising future in this field. However, when queried about what lies next for him, he cautiously answered, "I have no idea. I don't have an answer for that."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Appreciation and Promotion Event for 100 Pillars of AUA Campaign Held in US

By Taleen Babayan

ORANGE COUNTY, Calif. — Dedicated supporters of the American University of Armenia (AUA) gathered to promote the 100 Pillars of AUA campaign in an event hosted by Dr. Kris Mirzayan and Pamela Ascher Mirzayan on Saturday, August 10, at Zov's Bistro.

The afternoon was filled with camaraderie and conversation, as guests learned more about the university — the only one in the Caucasus region with US accreditation — as well as recent updates and accomplishments of students and faculty.

"I am bringing greetings from a New Armenia," said AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian in his remarks. "The changes are momentous, from rule of law to transparency to principles of



Event Hosts, Dr. Kris Mirzayan and Pamela Ascher Mirzayan



Rev. Moushegh Tashjian, AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Yn. Sylva Tashjian, Dr. Kris Mirzayan and Pamela Ascher Mirzayan, Peggy Barsam and Charles Barsam

democracy."

He spoke of the student body's engagement and participation in the Velvet Revolution last April, giving them the chance to become civic activists and ultimately help turn the tide in the country. Der Kiureghian noted that the homeland is moving in the right direction with many AUA alumni in the new government serving as ministers and deputy ministers.

"AUA is the best investment the Diaspora has made in Armenia," said Dr. Der Kiureghian. "We select based on merit, not connections, and prepare the leaders of Armenia."

During this symbolic moment in Armenia's history, AUA continues to thrive, strengthening its significant affiliation with the University of California, which also manages the institution's endowment, receiving high level management at no cost to the university through its in-kind support. Der Kiureghian highlighted that the endowment has tripled in the last four years and is currently at a healthy \$60-million mark. Under the careful guidance of the board, many of whom are high-ranking academics, AUA has grown tremendously since its inception 27 years ago, attracting top students and international faculty in a technologically-advanced academic environment.

These positive developments have occurred because of the support of donors, particularly the 100 Pillars of AUA campaign, as



AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian addresses the guests.

committed benefactors come together to provide \$50,000 over the course of five years in unrestricted funds to meet the institution's highest needs, which, according to Der Kiureghian, "allows the university to stay true to its promise of need-blind admission policy." Thanks to the pillar campaign, more than half of AUA students receive scholarships and benefit from new academic curricula, such as the recently established Bachelor of Science degree in engineering and data science, along with courses on data mining and artificial intelligence, ensuring AUA is on the pulse of technology and education.

Lifelong educator and philanthropist Kris Mirzayan said it was "love at first sight" when he first connected with AUA. While teaching business as a visiting professor at the Manoogian Simone College of Business and Economics (CBE) during the Fall 2017 semester, he became closer to the students.

"I could see the potential in their eyes," said Mirzayan. "I realized they are not only students, but they are the future of Armenia."

Mirzayan taught theory while also bringing valuable real-world experience into the classroom through his experience as a seasoned professor of business and marketing in the California State University system, as well as running a successful plastic manufacturing company in Orange County.

He has been a dedicated member of the Armenian community throughout his life, serving on the St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church Parish Council in Orange County and also on the Diocesan Council of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church.

Demonstrating his compassion to the University, Mirzayan concluded his remarks by presenting a check fulfilling his pillar commitment to Der Kiureghian and encouraged everyone in the room to learn more about AUA and "its impact on a new Armenia."

"We all love Armenia and we all give to Armenia," said Mirzayan. "But this isn't just for Armenia today, this is for the Armenia of tomorrow."

In the positive spirit of the afternoon, Der Kiureghian announced a new pillar who joined this influential group of leaders, AUA supporter Dr. Maral Dabaghian-Anjargolian, who has an annual scholarship in her name, providing educational funding for AUA students. In addition, her daughter Sara Anjargolian, Esq. is the founder of the innovative Impact Hub Yerevan and has also taught at AUA.

Der Kiureghian recognized and thanked the pillars in attendance, including Albert and Terry Bezjian, Dr. and Mrs. Noubar and Tracy Ouzounian, Dr. and Mrs. Kris and Pamela Mirzayan and Charles and Peggy Barsam, whose father, Vartkes Barsam, was one of the university's founding trustees and a major donor to the institution.

The support linked from the Diaspora to the homeland through the paintings of Yerevan-based artist Arev Petrosyan, who has pledged to donate half the proceeds from each of her sold artwork to benefit the "Yes, Armenian Women Can!" campaign, which provides scholarships for female AUA students studying computer science, technology and engineering. Mr. and Mrs. Barsam purchased the mixed media piece, "Energy Harvest," consisting of gold and silver leaves, during the silent auction, contributing even further to AUA.

Director of Development Gaiane Khachatryan thanked guests for promoting AUA's pillar program and encouraged them to become more involved in the University. She introduced the Development Team, including Aline Barsoumian and Marianna

Achemian, Assistant Directors of Development, and Taleen Babayan, Associate Director of Development, Communications and Stewardship, while highlighting the team's commitment to AUA's mission and enthusiasm to serve as a bridge connecting the diaspora with AUA students.

Praising the efforts of Mirzayan and his wife, Der Kiureghian presented them with gifts, including a hand-painted AUA scarf and an engraved glass award, in appreciation for hosting the pillar event and for their ongoing dedication to the university.

"A pillar is what a university stands on and the 100 Pillars of AUA campaign serves as the foundation of this leading academic institution," said Dr. Mirzayan. "It is a pleasure to be a pillar and I thank you for giving me that pleasure."

Bringing to life the support of pillars were two AUA students who exemplified, through their presence and words, the true spirit of the University and its contributions to society as a whole. Karine Mkhitarian, a sophomore studying business with plans to pursue an MBA, said she appreciates the opportunity to express



AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Diane Barsam and Doctors Armine and Vahe Meghrouni

her opinion and the motivating environment of her academic institution. She is working toward not only a degree, but the opportunity to advance her birthplace.

"I want to see justice and to be able to contribute to the prosperity of my country," said Mkhitarian. "I ask you to believe that together we can build a better Armenia, our dream Armenia."

Hailing from the southern Armenian province of Syunik, Lilia Mamikonyan, a rising senior majoring in the rapidly developing field of computer science, said she has thrived during her years as an undergraduate.

"For me AUA creates a productive, challenging and creative environment where I am able to grow every day," said Mamikonyan.

She expressed appreciation for her scholarship, funded by AUA donors Laura and Ara Dirdadian, which gave her the chance to attend college and to achieve her academic goals.

"I am thankful to walk into AUA every single morning," said Mamikonyan. "The support we are given by all of you is priceless."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway 'A Living Piece of Art'

BOSTON – The annual reconfiguration of Abstract Sculpture heralds the start of a new year of programs at Armenian Heritage Park on Boston's The Greenway. This annual reconfiguration is symbolic of the immigrant experience, all of whom pulled away from their countries of origin and came to these shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways. In the early Spring, a crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of the split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The park's Charles G. and Doreen Bilezekian Endowed Fund supports the annual reconfiguration. A&A Industries, led by Anahid and Aurelian Mardiros, which fabricated the abstract sculpture, their very generous gift-in-kind, oversees the annual reconfiguration. Each configuration is detailed in the manual prepared by the park's architect/designer.

The abstract sculpture is dedicated to lives lost in the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 and all genocides that have followed. How fitting, that programs at the park begin in April with the Genocide Commemoration, planned by the Boston Armenian Genocide Committee and also the Walk Against Geocode, planned by the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur, which begins at the Holocaust Memorial and ends at the Park.

Programs during May showcase the Park's two features, the Abstract Sculpture and Labyrinth, a circular winding path to celebrate life's journey. A single jet of water at its center, representing hope and rebirth, reemerging from the Reflecting Pool upon which the Abstract Sculpture sits; Art, Service, Science, Commerce etched around its circle in tribute to contributions made to American life and culture.

The two-part ArtWeek Boston featured program on the first Saturday in May begins with World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One at 1, with all ages participating in cities and towns in 35 countries worldwide. For the first time, Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city, joined this international initiative of The Labyrinth

greet at the Park where a community leader shares his/her immigrant experience. All walk the labyrinth, many for the first time, and then walk to The KITCHEN at the Boston Public Market where a Boston chef prepares a signature seasonal dish celebrating his/her heritage for participants to enjoy for lunch and conversation. Leo Romero, Chef/Owner, Casa Romero, prepared signature dishes for the June program. Nina Festekjian, chef/owner, anoush'ella a saj kitchen is the featured chef at THE KITCHEN for October's Celebrating What Unites Us!

Nina and Raffi Festekjians, owners of anoush'ella in Boston's South End, are among the park's major benefactors.



ABOVE RIGHT: Walking the labyrinth. ABOVE: Aerial view of Armenian Heritage Park as seen from above



The sculpture of the Armenian Heritage Park throughout the years

Society.

A reception to view the abstract sculpture's new configuration follows the walk. Sarah Baker, Art New England editor, offered brief remarks including "I love this sculpture... this living piece of art." Tea and Desserts were hosted by Eastern Lamejun Bakers and MEM Tea Imports.

Tea & Tranquility, the late afternoon monthly summer series, continues to bring people together to meet and greet, walk the labyrinth and enjoy ice teas and desserts, hosted by the MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel.

Under A Strawberry Moon, a first-time evening event in June, had it not been for the downpour, would have featured chocolate-dipped strawberries, hosted by Vicki Lee's. Many programs at the park not supported by one of the park's endowed funds, depend on the generosity of gifts-in-kind.

"Today we are celebrating what binds us together. This togetherness, this celebration and the embrace of our difference, is how we not only survive but thrive", shared Tania Del Rio, executive director, City of Boston Office of Women's Advancement, during brief remarks at the park to launch Celebrating What Unites Us!

This new collaborative initiative celebrates the immigrant experience while building community and cross-cultural understanding. The innovative, monthly program is collaborative initiative of the City of Boston, Age-Friendly Boston, Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement, The KITCHEN at Boston Public Market, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Friends of Heritage Park.

Each month participants first meet and

Under the August Moon, a first-time evening event at the Park for supporters, partners, and friends will also feature anoush'ella signature tastings. During the August 23 evening, all will also enjoy refreshing ice teas hosted by MEM Tea and cool sounds of the Berklee All-Star Jazz Ensemble while meeting and greeting. Advance reservations are required.

Welcome Reception for New Citizens, Their Families and Friends at the Park, supported by the Park's Anna and Noubar Afeyan Endowed Fund, follows the Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall on September 13. "By appealing to a range of new American citizens, the Welcome Reception contributes decisively to the Armenian Heritage Park's core mission of inclusion," comments Armine Afeyan, founding chair, Welcome Reception. "As a celebration of the immigrant experience in Boston, the Welcome speaks directly to central themes of the Park and the Rose Kennedy Greenway. The Welcome acknowledges the history of Boston as a port of entry for immigrants worldwide and celebrates those who...contribute to the richness of American life and culture," which is the Park's intent."

The Welcome Reception is offered in partnership with City of

Boston/Office of Immigrant Advancement, International Institute of New England, Irish International Immigrant Center, Project Citizenship, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Bostonian Society, Armenian Museum of America, Greenway Conservancy among others.

Geometry as Public Art: Telling a Story, a newly developed school-based curriculum, has been inspired by the Park and its two features. The intent of the curriculum is to spark greater awareness of geometric shapes as a creative expression of ideas and thoughts and to celebrate what unites us and connects us – the immigrant experience, while building common ground. This September The Eliot K-8 Innovation School, Boston Public School in the North End will continue to pilot the curriculum. The Boston Public Schools has requested that the curriculum be made available to all schools.

Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB-TV5, is emcee for Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends on September 16 with live music, dancing, face painting and games for all ages. This year features the music of Boston Hye Guys Ensemble.

This year's HUBweek featured program, Walking the Labyrinth: Reducing and Managing Stress, is on Tuesday, October 9, with a reception following at Hollister Staffing, 75 State Street.

The annual Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, supported by the Park's K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. Endowed Fund, is on November 14. "Incarceration: Untangling the web of injustice" is this year's topic. Featured speakers are Andrea Cabral, former Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety and author, Enforcing and Defending Chapter 209A Restraining Orders in Massachusetts; Marc A. Levin, Director, Center for Effective Justice and the Right to Crime, an initiative of the Texas Public Policy Foundation with moderator Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian, Sheriff of Middlesex County and President, Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association. The purpose of the Najarian Lecture on Human Rights is to advance understanding of human rights issues and the societal abuses worldwide, and to increase awareness of the work of individuals and organizations so that we are all more actively involved. A reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel.

"Boston's Newest Holiday Tradition" (METRO), the Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk on December 16 perfectly wraps the year-long series of programs and events.

For further information, visit ArmenianHeritagePark.org and follow us on social media or email us hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org



The 2018 sculpture at the Armenian Heritage Park



Arts & Living

Saroyan’s Unpublished Plays Set for World Premiere at L.A. Central Library on September 15

LOS ANGELES – Never-before-staged scenes from William Saroyan’s unpublished plays will be performed in a world premiere production at the Los Angeles Central Library’s Taper Auditorium on September 15. “William Saroyan: The Unpublished Plays in Performance,” created by award-winning playwright and director Aram Kouyoumdjian, will be staged by Vista Players, “a boundlessly talented” ensemble that “set the standard by which others were judged” (*Sacramento News & Review*).

Kouyoumdjian was granted special permission by Stanford University, where Saroyan’s unpublished manuscripts are housed, to stage the excerpts. Selections from such works as “The Armenian Play (or Opera),” “Home to Hayastan,” and “Ouzenk Chouzenk Hai Yenk” (Like It or Not, We’re Armenians) will explore a wide array of themes, including immigrant life, the trauma of genocide, and the notion of repatriation.

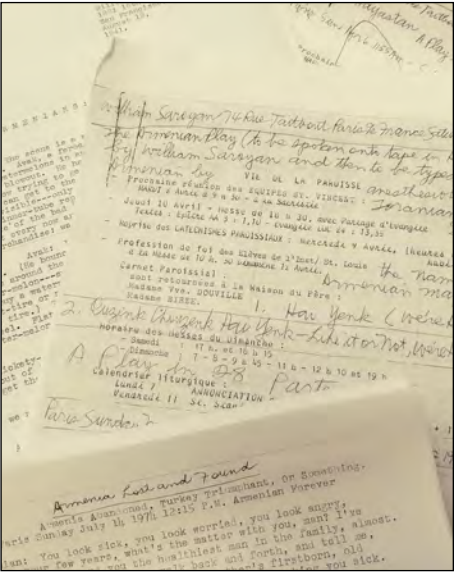
The performance at the Central Library is being presented as part of the Library’s “L.A. Made” series and is co-sponsored by Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian. Krekorian will make a special presentation to the L.A. City Council on August 31 about Saroyan, as well as the commemorative Library event, which he is scheduled to attend.

August 31 marks the occasion of Saroyan’s 110th birthday: the impetus to present the renowned playwright’s unknown works at venerated venues in Southern and Central California. The production is slated for additional performances in Fresno and in Orange County, as well as an encore performance in L.A.

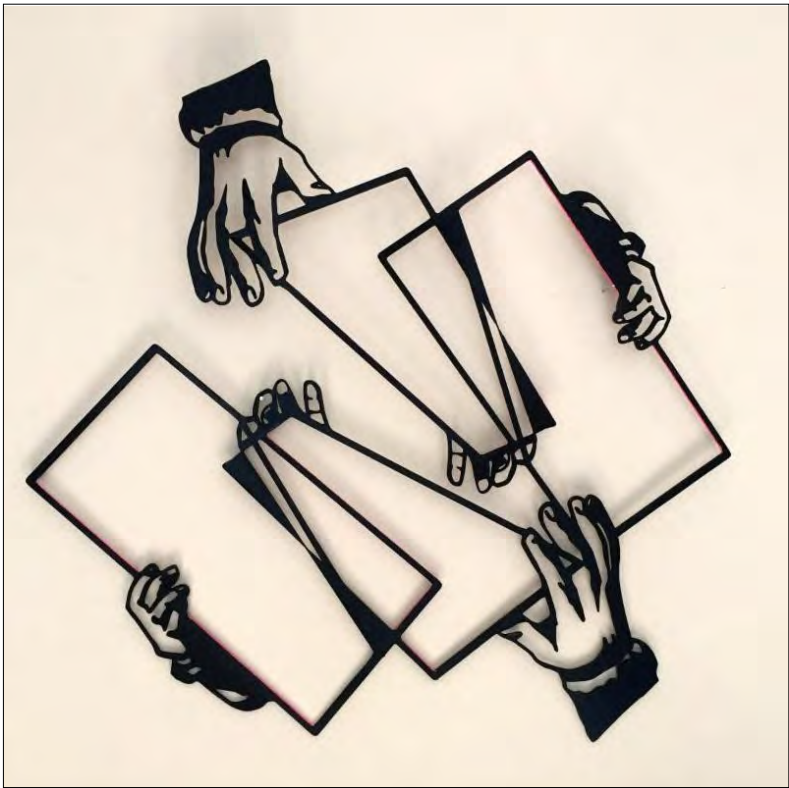
Admission to the L.A. Central Library event is free, but seating is limited and will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors open at 6:30 pm, and the performance will begin at 7 p.m.

Saroyan is the pre-eminent Armenian-American author who rose to prominence in the 1930s and went on to have a prolific career for five decades. A writer of short stories, novels, plays, and memoirs, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his most famous dramatic work, “The Time of Your Life,” and an Academy Award for his screenplay of “The Human Comedy.”

Kouyoumdjian, who wrote his master’s thesis on Saroyan’s unpublished plays, is the winner of Elly Awards for both playwriting (“The Farewells”) and directing (“Three Hotels”). His feature plays and solo pieces have been performed in half a dozen cities, from Los Angeles (Fountain Theatre) to London (Finborough Theatre). His most recent work has included an adaptation of Levon Shant’s “Ancient Gods” (2014); “Happy Armenians” (Los Angeles, 2015; Sacramento, 2016); and “i Go On,” an open-air, site-specific performance piece in conjunction with the iWitness installation of Genocide survivor portraits (DTLA’s Grand Park, 2015; Glendale Central Park, 2017).



Some of the pages from the unpublished plays of William Saroyan



Jessica Sperandio, Crooked, acrylic on laser cut hardboard, 32 x 32 in., 2017

Galatea Fine Art Presents ‘Resiliency And Resistance’

BOSTON – Beginning September 4 and running through September 30, Galatea Fine Art in Boston’s South End will present “Resiliency and Resistance”, paintings, laser cuttings, and mixed media by four Armenian women.

The works on exhibit include gouache and watercolor paintings by Talin Megherian, onionskin dye and acrylic paintings by Marsha Nouritza Odabashian, hard wood and acrylic laser cuttings by Jessica Sperandio and mixed media assemblage by Arevik Tserunyan. The exhibit explores identity, history, displacement, fantasy and protest through the artists’ rich and complex Armenian culture. Through their work, the artists embrace strength and question stereotypes of Armenian identity.

A gallery talk and reception featuring the artists and sponsored by the Armenian International Women’s Association New England Affiliate will take place on Sunday, September 16 at 1:30 p.m. at Galatea Fine Art, 460 Harrison Ave., #B-6.

The exhibit will also be open during gallery hours, Wednesday to Sunday 12-5 and on First Friday in the South End on September 7, when galleries and see GALATEA, page 13

Works by Four Armenian Women Take Center Stage



Talin Megherian, Zeitoun (Well Series), gouache, ink, liquid watercolor, Strathmore Beau Brillant, 12.25 x 19.75 in., 2016

Armenian American Museum Ground Lease Agreement Approved

GLENDALE – On Tuesday, August 14, the Glendale City Council approved the Armenian American Museum’s ground lease agreement, officially marking Glendale Central Park as the future site of the cultural and educational center. The decision marks a milestone for the landmark project, culminating four years of collaboration and partnership between the Museum and City of Glendale.

The \$1-per-year ground lease agreement will locate the Armenian American Museum in the southwest corner of Glendale Central Park near the intersection of Brand Boulevard and Colorado Street. The museum will be near the Downtown Central Library, Adult Recreation Center and The Americana at Brand. The initial term of the lease will be 55 years with options to extend the lease term for four 10-year periods, totaling 95 years.

The museum will rise to three stories with approximately 60,000 square feet dedicated to a Permanent Exhibition on the Armenian-American experience, traveling exhibitions on diverse cultures and subject matters, performing arts theater, learning center, demonstration kitchen, museum archives, and museum store and café.

Museum and city officials held a joint press conference on Wednesday, August 15, to celebrate the historic decision.

“It is a proud day for the City of Glendale and we are excited that the Armenian American Museum’s future home is going to be in our Jewel City,” stated Glendale Mayor



Rendering of the interior of the Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California. (Courtesy Alajajian Marcoos)

Zareh Sinanyan.

“The museum is going to be a landmark for our city and a great addition for the entire community, especially our younger generation,” stated Glendale Councilmember Vartan Gharpetian.

“The Armenian American Museum is going to be a jewel in our city and a world class center that we are all going to be proud of,” stated Glendale Councilmember Paula Devine.

The joint press conference concluded with a signing ceremony to celebrate the historic partnership between the Armenian American Museum and City of Glendale.

“The museum will be a legacy for the next generation and we have taken a great step towards making the project a reality,” stated Glendale Councilmember Ara Najarian.

“Education is the key in appreciating cultural diversity,” said Glendale Councilmember Vrej Agajanian in a statement following the joint press conference. “I hope that the Armenian American Museum will promote understanding of the Armenian American experience and strengthen community ties.”

Museum officials will soon announce the next phase of the landmark project and opportunities for the public to get involved with the community project.



ARTS & LIVING

‘Genocides of the 20th Century’ Exhibition to Open at Fresno State’s Madden Library

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program, the Henry Madden Library, and the Mémorial de la Shoah are hosting a reception on Thursday, September 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m., to mark the official opening of the exhibition “Genocides of the 20th Century.”

The reception, which is free and open to the public, will take place at the Leon S. and Pete P. Peters Ellipse on the 2nd Floor of the Madden Library on the Fresno State campus. Those who would like to attend are asked to register at library.fresnostate.edu by August 31.

A brief program will begin at 7:30 p.m. with keynote speaker Dr. Clint Curle, senior advisor to the president at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Among those in attendance at the reception will be Delritta Hornbuckle, dean, Henry Madden Library; Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, dean, College of Arts & Humanities, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, coordinator, Armenian Studies Program; Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens, Consul General of France in San Francisco; and Deborah Sinclair, head of touring exhibitions in North America, Mémorial de la Shoah.

The showing of the exhibition “Genocides of the 20th Century” is sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, the Henry Madden Library, and the Mémorial de la Shoah. This exhibition was designed, created, and distributed by the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, France (curators Georges Bensoussan, Joel Kotek, and Yves Ternon), and made possible through the generous support of SNCF.

Often referred to as the “Century of Genocides,” the 20th century was marked by the will of certain governments in power to carry out the planned physical annihilation of a human group.

The genocide is a specific breach of international criminal law and a very individualized concept. The specificity of this violation and the precision of this concept are underlined by the comparative approach of three mass murders perpetrated during the 20th Century, which



Eleanor Roosevelt, President of the Redaction Committee for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lake Success, New York, November 1949, Public Domain

have been proven beyond any reasonable doubt to be genocides. In chronological order, they are the destruction of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, of the Jews of Europe, and of the Rwandan Tutsis.

More than 70 years after the discovery of the death camps, knowledge about the Holocaust

helps to fight against all forms of racism and intolerance. The Mémorial de la Shoah, memorialdelashoa.org, is the largest information center in Europe on the subject of the Holocaust, and offers guided tours, public programs, permanent and special exhibitions.

This exhibition was made possible through

the support of Fresno State’s College of Arts & Humanities, College of Social Sciences, the Jewish Studies Program, SNCF, the Consulate of France in San Francisco, and the French Embassy in the United States.

The exhibit will be on view starting September 1 through October 31.



TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
MIHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

20th Anniversary Banquet

20

CELEBRATING
20 YEARS
OF THEATER

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018 - 7:00PM

The Palisadium
700 Palisadium Drive, Cliffside Park, NJ 07010

Special Entertainment by
KRIKOR SATAMIAN

Master of Ceremonies
GERALD PAPASIAN

Presentations by MMTG Directors
TAMAR HOVHANNISIAN - Armenia | GAGIK KARAPETYAN - Armenia | GERALD PAPASIAN - France
KRIKOR SATAMIAN - California | HOVHANNES BABAKHANYAN - California
VARTAN GARNIKI - New Jersey | HAROUT CHATMAJIAN - New Jersey

*Special musical performance by **HOVHANNES BABAKHANYAN***

Donation: \$150pp

For more information and tickets please contact
MARIE ZOKIAN 201-745-8850 / TALAR SARAFIAN 201-240-8541

Galatea Fine Art Presents ‘Resiliency and Resistance’

GALATEA, from page 12
boutiques in Boston’s South End are open to the public in the evening hours for shopping and artistic inspiration.

Talin Megherian, Marsha Nouritza, Odabashian and Jessica Sperandio are familiar to the New England Armenian community from the 2015 exhibit “Kiss the Ground: A New Armenia” at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, which sought a new Armenian aesthetic in the context of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Odabashian has also recently exhibited solo at the Armenian Museum of America; her show *Skins* examined the relationship of people, animals, and terrain, using paint, clay, and onionskin dye. Arevik Tserunyan is artist-in-residence at the Armenian Museum of America, where she teaches studio classes and recently exhibited *The Lost Empire*, a series of mixed media works exploring Armenia’s political culture through the lens of a surreal folk tale. An exhibit of her new work *Clouds* will open at the Armenian Museum of America in September.

The “Resiliency and Resistance” exhibit is sponsored by the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) New England Affiliate. Art work, postcards, posters, and scarves will be for sale at the gallery. A portion



Arevik Tserunyan, *Clouds* (Detail, size varies), mixed media installation, 24 x 24 in., 2018

of the proceeds of the sale of artwork from the exhibit will go to support the Women’s Support Center in Yerevan, Armenia.



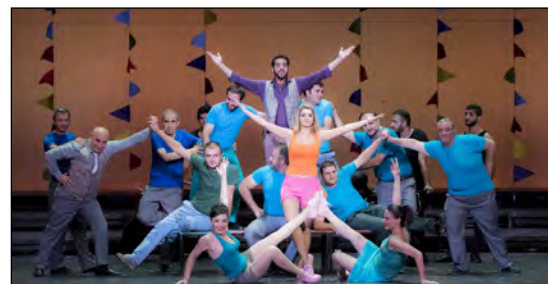
LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Papasian's 'Gariné' Operetta Premiere in Yerevan Well Received

YEREVAN - The premiere of a new production of the Dikran Tchouhadjian two-act operetta "Gariné" took place in Yerevan at the Aleksandr Spendiaryan Armenian National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet on August 16. Gerald Papasian of Paris, France, was the stage director as well as author of the new version.

Papasian has been working for months with young actors and singers on his new version. The premiere was received with great applause and shouts of appreciation, while initial reviews have been positive, praising the energy and new life given to this complex 19th century work.

The conductor was Harutyun Arzumanyan and the music director was Levon Javadyan. The choreographer was Armen Grigoryan. The sets, costumes, lights, and video designer was Viktoria Riedo-Hovhannisyan, while the chief choirmaster was Karen Sargsyan.



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Dalian

Yogurt, Cucumber and Radish Salad

INGREDIENTS

3 cups plain low-fat white or Greek yogurt
1 cup sour cream
3 medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded, sliced, diced or grated or 4-6 Persian cucumbers, finely chopped or grated
1 small white or red onion, minced
1 cup thinly sliced or julienned radishes
2-3 large cloves garlic, grated
1/4 cup each chopped fresh mint and parsley
1 teaspoon dried or fresh dill
Sea or Kosher salt, white pepper
Olive oil, white or red vinegar (or lemon juice to taste)
Dash of paprika, sumac or za'atar
Sprigs of fresh mint for garnish
Pita bread, cut into quarters if large, halves if small, and warmed
1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts, optional
2-3 tablespoons toasted pine nuts, optional

PREPARATION

In a medium bowl, whisk together the yogurt and sour cream until smooth. Add cucumbers, onion, radishes, garlic, mint, parsley and dill, and toss. Add salt, pepper, olive oil and vinegar, and toss to coat. Check seasonings, cover, and chill for 2 hours.

To serve, add walnuts or pine nuts, if desired, and stir to combine. Serve on top of crisp lettuce leaves, drizzle with olive oil and garnish with paprika and sprigs of fresh mint.

Serve with warm pita bread and grilled meats and vegetables on the side. Makes a great side dish or summer salad.

Serves 4-6.

Suggestion: Best if served within 24 hours of making. Make sure grated cucumber is well-drained. Finely chopped cherry tomatoes, green onions, bell pepper, grated zucchini or garbanzo beans may also be added to this salad.

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





ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 17 — Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its Annual Gala at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA. The fun-filled evening will begin at 6:30pm with a cocktail hour and silent auction followed by a delicious Mediterranean-inspired meal, live music and dance entertainment, and an exciting live auction. Tickets are \$500 per person and for those 35 and under, \$250 per person. To RSVP or for more information, please call 949-933-4069, email leslie@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 26 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic, 12 to 5 p.m., to be held at our new Family Life & Cultural Center, 1280 Boston Road (RTE. 125) Haverhill. Music by the fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyma, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash Prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. For more info visit www.hypointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227. Take RTE. 495 N to exit 48, bear right at the end of the ramp and follow the signs. Additional parking at Osgood Landing, 1600 Osgood Street, North Andover, with free shuttle bus to the picnic grounds.

SEPTEMBER 9 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Sunday. Delicious Armenian food — shish, losh, and chicken kebab — paklava, khadaif, and more with take-out available. Armenian music for your listening and dancing pleasure featuring the Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; George Righellis and Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals; Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet; Charles Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine. Lots of activities for children including the Moonwalk. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/575/, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

SEPTEMBER 10 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting Monday: social hour, and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speakers will discuss the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research’s exciting plans for its new global center for Armenian Studies now under construction in Belmont, MA. They are Sarah Ignatius, NAASR Executive Director, Yervant Chekijian, NAASR Chairman of the Board, and Marc A. Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$16/person. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

SEPTEMBER 10 — Holy Trinity Men’s Union welcomes Boston Celtics’ Great Sam Jones, Monday, 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. Everyone Welcome for this unique opportunity to meet a Boston sports legend. Book signing following talk. Donation for losh kebab and kheyma dinner: \$15 per person. RSVP required, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email tmuhtaac@gmail.com. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/584/.

SEPTEMBER 13 –7th Annual Surf, Turf & Cigar Evening hosted by Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge. Doors open at 6pm at Armenian Cultural & Education Center (ACEC), 47 Nichols Ave, Watertown, MA, Tickets are \$165.00

SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, 2-4 p.m. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV5, Emcee; Boston Hye Guys-Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion; ADD At 2:30pm “Match the Pair”: Game for all ages! Face Painting: For Kids by Kids, Hoodies RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 16 — Armenian Church of the Holy Translators invites you to the annual Armenian Food Festival. Come and enjoy a day filled with traditional Armenian food, music, dancing, and fun children’s activities! Sunday, from noon – 5 p.m. at The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators 38 Franklin Street, Framingham. For further information, contact the church office: 508-875-0868.

SEPTEMBER 21 — St. James Hye Café. Join us for delicious food and fellowship! Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15pm. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 23 — LIGHTS, CAMERA, STORIES! An Evening with Award-Winning Filmmaker BARED MARONIAN. Screening of “Women of 1915,” exclusive footage of Armenia’s Velvet Revolution, reveal of Maronian’s “Titanic Love.” Reception to follow. Proceeds to benefit Women’s Support Center (Yerevan) and Hanganak Elderly Project (Stepanakert). Co-sponsored by AIWA and AWWA. 5:00 PM. Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library – 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA Tickets: \$75 (Students with ID \$25). For tickets: E-mail: lightscamerastories@gmail.com or Online: aiwainternational.org/lightscamerastories

SEPTEMBER 29 — The 7th Annual Benefit Dance to benefit Syrian Armenian Relief and Fund for Armenian Relief. Saturday, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Dance to the music and vocals of the Mugrditchian Ensemble with local favorites Mark Der Mugrditchian, Kevin Magarian, Arthur Chingris, with special guest artists Greg Krikorian and George Reghellis. Sponsored by the Armenian Churches of Worcester County: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church. Doors Open at 7.30 p.m. For tickets, reservations or information contact Jay Kapur (508) 740-4464, Eva Kopoyan (508) 757-6195, Magdy Faltalous (508) 278-3805 or Donna Barsamian (508) 769-3279. Donation \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door. Deluxe Mezze, coffee and dessert, with cash bar.

OCTOBER 12-13 — St. James 71st Annual Bazaar. Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children’s Activities, and more. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

OCTOBER 20 – Hye Kef 5: Onnik Dinkjian Performs at DoubleTree by Hilton in Andover, MA, with Ara Dinkjian and local ensemble, for Armenian Friends of America, 7 pm to midnight. All proceeds benefit the Armenian churches of the Merrimack Valley. For tickets: John Arzigian – 603-560-3826; Lucy Sirmaian – 978-683-9121; Peter Gulezian – 978-375-1616; Sharke Der Apkarian – 978-808-0598; Kathy Geyer 978-475-8309.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER – Armenian Museum of America is planning a bus trip to view the upcoming Armenia! exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC; Join us for a special tour of the show, which includes two very unique and beautiful illuminated manuscripts from our own collection! Stay tuned for dates and details. Contact: Stephanie Garafolo, sgarafolo@armenianmuseum.org. (617) 926-2562, ext. 4 (web-site www.armenianmuseum.org)

NOVEMBER 4 — Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanessian, Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Armenian General Benevolent Union-New England, Armenian International Women’s Association, Hamazkaine-Boston, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, New England Poetry Club, Tekeyan Cultural Association. Sunday, November 4, at 4 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street (Route 3) , Arlington.

NOVEMBER 14 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall, Boston Wednesday. Doors open at 6:45 pm, Program at 7:30 pm. Reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway.

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 23 — St. Leon Armenian Church Women’s Guild hosts a 90th anniversary celebration on Sunday. With a commemorative luncheon following the Divine Liturgy, at 1 p.m., in Abajian Hall. Honoring 22 Women’s Guild Members with between four and six decades of service. Reservations by September 15.

Contact Margaret Ajemian, 201-914-0354 or lynnberberian@gmail.com. Send checks to Lynn Berberian at 823 Peachtree Lane, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417. Cost is \$30 per person, \$15 for children 12 and under. St. Leon Armenian Church, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn.

SEPTEMBER 29 – TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group 20th Anniversary Banquet Celebrating 20 Years of Theater at 7 pm. at the Palisadium, 700 Palisadium Dr. Cliffside Park, NJ. Featuring Special Entertainment by Krikor Satamian. Master of Ceremonies Gerald Papasian. Presentations by past and present MMTG Directors. Special Musical Performance by Hovhannes Babakhanyan. Donation: \$150 pp. For more information and tickets please call, Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Talar Sarafian 201-240-8541.

SEPTEMBER 30 — Armenia Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and Band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia on Sunday, 4 p.m. Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendary Armenian singer Aram Asatryan! Proceeds will benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. Location: Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St, Englewood, NJ. Tickets: \$50, \$70, \$90. Please call Box Office 201-227-1030 or visit www.bergenPAC.org

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 15 — Oceania Street Armenian Festival. Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs’ annual Oceania Street Armenian Festival will take place on Saturday, from noon until 8 p.m. Rain or shine. Ample outdoor covered seating. Street parking available. Come and enjoy delicious Armenian delicacies, musical entertainment by the Tarpinian Ensemble, dance performances, Book-Tique, Attic Treasures, street vendors and much more. Many chances to win great prizes. For more information, call church office at (718) 225-0235.

September 22 - January 13, 2019 – ARMENIA! at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Armenia! is the “first major exhibition to explore the importance of Armenians and their remarkable achievements in a global context...” <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2018/armenia>

SEPTEMBER 30 — “Armenia Way” Official Street Co-Naming Ceremony. Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan and the Parish Council of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs are happy to announce that the official ceremony to co-name 210th Street between Horace Harding Expressway and 58th Avenue in Bayside, New York as “Armenia Way” will take place on Sunday, at 12:30 p.m. Please join us as we celebrate this historic occasion with the participation of politicians and community leaders. Special celebratory fellowship will follow the ceremony.

OCTOBER 13 — Concert: “Armenian Songs From My Heart.” On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Martyrs, Ruthann Turekian (soprano) dedicates this concert to Dn. Onnik Dokmecian, Dn. Edward Karnikian and Mary Selvinazian, for their support of her musical pursuits and to her late mother, Margaret Bedrossian Turekian. Concert includes works by Gomidas, Alemshah, Hekimian, Suni, Khachaturian and others. Concert in Holy Martyrs Church sanctuary to start at 7:30pm (doors open at 6:45pm). Tickets \$40 (advanced purchase), \$45 at the door. For tickets, please call (718) 225-0235. Reception to follow concert in Kalustyan Hall.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SEPTEMBER 24-25 — Armenian Assembly of America’s National Advocacy Conference will take place in Washington, D.C. Join us on Monday for the conference and welcome reception, and on Tuesday for the advocacy day on Capitol Hill, cocktail reception, and gala honoring Annie Simonian Totah. Special hotel rates are available at the Marriott Marquis. Visit www.aimhye.com for tickets and more information.

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.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Is Erdogan Running out of Moves?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Technology has been changing the world at a rapid pace. Once, the way to conquer a country was to invade and overrun it. Today, physical borders no longer can defend a country, as there are more potent weapons to do the job: economy and technology. The US in particular has weaponized its tremendous economic power and has been using it these days effectively against Russia, Iran and Turkey.

The first two are adversaries, while Turkey is a NATO ally, which is being subjected to US economic sanctions.

The other weapon being deployed is technology, which can wreak havoc in the hands of industrialized nations. Governments can also weaponize social media through which they can penetrate the borders of other countries, shape public opinion, feed misinformation to foment upheavals in societies and bring down targeted regimes.

Of course, technologically poor countries are immune to these kinds of invasions.

Turkey, whose economy scored remarkable gains in recent years, has devised its own particular defense against weaponized electronic warfare: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has polarized Turkish society, playing partisan groups against each other. He has either exiled or jailed the cream of the crop among the elite, educated segment, whose lives revolve around cyber technology. Since Erdogan has savagely deposed the educated elements of Turkish society, he can depend on the fanatically indoctrinated (i.e. less educated and poorer segment of Turkish society) which is delivering one electoral victory after another for him.

The brain drain does not concern him, nor does the collapse

was the fourth largest source of imports to Turkey the previous year, accounting for \$12 billion in imports according to the International Monetary Fund.

Turkey in turn doubled its tariffs on US imports such as cars, alcohol and tobacco.

We may wonder why this crisis has erupted at this juncture and not two years ago, when Brunson was first jailed. It appears the pastor's case was the straw that broke the camel's back, since grievances had been accumulating over several years, with Turkey increasingly leaning toward Russia, buying S-400 missile defense systems from Moscow, challenging Israel in the Middle East and fighting the Kurds who had stood up with the US forces in the Syria battlefields supporting Washington's strategic goals in that conflict.

The other reason is that the Trump administration has its eyes on the November elections, where many Republican Congressional seats are at risk and the Bible Belt in the US has to be mobilized. What better way than to make the case for the release of a North Carolina pastor held in faraway Izmir for his preaching? Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have been instrumental in rallying the Evangelical vote.

Since the Trump administration interjected the religious element in the ongoing conflict with Turkey, Erdogan retaliated in kind by forcing minority religious leaders in Turkey to sign a declaration, stating that religious minorities enjoy total freedom in Turkey. Armenian Parliament Member Garo Paylan responded by asking why Armenians can't elect their own patriarch if they are free in Turkey, or why churches and other charitable institutions are not allowed to elect their boards. Of course, other restrictions on minorities may also be cited: The Armenian Surp Khatch Seminary and the Greek Orthodox Seminary are closed, thereby denying religious education to aspiring members of the clergy.

President Erdogan further threatened the US by stating: "If the American officials fail to correct their one-sided policy, Turkey will begin to look for other allies." In truth, Turkey has already found other allies and has been collaborating for some time now.

Turkey has begun to court some countries in Europe. Mr. Erdogan has toned down his rhetoric against Germany, expecting some help in return. Until now, Germany, France and Russia have sympathized with some lip service. Only the Emirate of Qatar has come up with cold, hard cash. Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar has pledged \$15 billion in investments and loans to stabilize Turkish banks. One would think too little and too late, since the Turkish economy is large enough to rank that country in the G-7 economic club members. One of the Erdogan achievements was to develop the country's poor economy, which in turn built the middle class, which is in jeopardy at this moment.

The US-Turkish row has raised hopes among the Armenians that they may see the Trump administration recognize the Armenian Genocide. That hope is further fanned by calls from US legislators to recognize the Genocide. If recent history can teach us anything, it is that the US and Israel will threaten Turkey with Genocide recognition, but will never take that ultimate step of carrying out the threat.

In addition, some Armenians believe that Turkish-Armenian antagonism may somehow help Armenia. But as we watch the other side of the political equation, we find that that antagonism will be offset by a Russo-Turkish rapprochement. Turkey is a prized political friend for Russia, making it more valuable than Armenia, especially when Armenian-Russian relations have been experiencing some strains.

In theory, Russia is Armenia's defender against a potential Turkish attack. However, Russia can afford to hedge its bets. It is of interest for Armenians to watch how the Turkish-American relations shape up. Can they reach a breaking point when Turkey is asked to leave the NATO structure?

Brinksmanship has always well served Mr. Erdogan. We have to remember the standoff with Russia after Turkey shot down the Russian fighter jet over the Syrian border. After some grandstanding, when Russia used economic sanctions by cutting off trade and tourism with Turkey, Erdogan blinked. He not only blinked but he bowed and apologized. And he hailed that indignity as diplomatic flexibility.

Erdogan always has a similar trick up his sleeve.



of the middle class which forms the backbone of a healthy society. All Erdogan needs is the group galvanized by Ottomanist dreams and armed with religious fervor.

The truth of Erdogan's strategy was revealed when he challenged President Trump's punitive measures in the wake of the latter's hostile actions in response to Turkey's jailing an American pastor. Erdogan announced to a cheering crowd: "If they have dollars, we have Allah with us."

To further encourage his followers, Erdogan has ordered them to crush their iPhones publicly, as if to defy the US and its exported technology.

The standoff between the US and Turkey hit a boiling point when a Turkish court in Izmir failed to release American pastor Andrew Brunson.

President Trump said Turkey "has not acted as a friend," adding, "Turkey has taken advantage of the United States for many years. They are now holding our wonderful Christian pastor, who I must ask to represent our country as a great patriot hostage. We will pay nothing for the release of an innocent man, but we are cutting back on Turkey."

President Trump raised the tariffs by 50 percent on the import of Turkish steel and aluminum, causing the Turkish lira to take a nasty stumble. The Turkish currency has lost its value by 40 percent since the beginning of this year. The United States

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Fox-TV's Devastating Attack On Turkey and President Erdogan

As the conflict between Turkey and United States is heating up, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is too stupid to realize that by continuing to hold American Pastor Andrew Brunson on trumped-up charges, he is undermining Turkey's economy and its membership in NATO. Any other intelligent Turkish leader would have released Pastor Brunson a long time ago and maintained military and trade relations with the United States.

Even though the Turkish government is paying millions of dollars a year to hire high-powered American lobbying and public relations firms, none of them can protect Turkey's reputation from Erdogan's erratic behavior. Every time he opens his mouth and takes an inept action, Erdogan further damages Turkey's relations with other countries, reminding the world and reinforcing the long-established image of the "Barbarian Turk."

Here is an example of the negative PR generated by Erdogan against his own country in the American media. Lisa "Kennedy" Montgomery on Fox Business TV, President Trump's favorite channel, delivered the following devastating attack against President Erdogan on August 16, 2018. In addition to millions of Americans who watched her commentary on TV, 662,000 others saw it on Facebook and many more on Twitter. Kennedy even mentioned the Armenian

Genocide, as a way of getting back at Turkey!

"How do I despise thee Erdogan? Let me count the ways. The Turkish president is putting his country in a diplomatic pickle by refusing to free an American Pastor over 'terrorism charges.' The fake crime is a bunch of hot malarkey, a rancid plate of Turkish non-delight; and although Erdogan has been concentrating his power to fake elections, imprisoning journalists, and purging academics, he didn't bet that he would be strong-armed by another strong man. Our president has had it up to his eyeballs with Turkey trolling, and instead of empty words, President Trump is offering a full-throttled digital slap to Erdogan, tweeting: 'I have just authorized a doubling of Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum with respect to Turkey as their currency, the Turkish Lira, slides rapidly downward against our very strong Dollar! Aluminum will now be 20% and Steel 50%. Our relations with Turkey are not good at this time!'"

Kennedy continued her criticism by stating: "When were they [relations with Turkey] ever good? The Turkish government is a disgrace, and past administrations have either coddled them or sat idly by while they've rolled out the welcome mat and threw the door open for ISIS, all while cozying up to Russia. This is not our strategic partner. This is a corrupt, murderous regime that should be kicked out of NATO for a host of human rights violations, not to mention deep kissing the Russians who are supposedly the biggest regional threat. Now, sure, there have been counter-threats. Now Erdogan is saying he will pull the iPhone off the market as if the people there can use the device to mobilize, enrich themselves or seek freedom from a murderous regime that wants total control, and is willing to tank the global economy to prove a childish point! And while we are at it, and while the president [Trump] is hot under the collar, if he really wants to make his new party pal Kim Kardashian happy, he should officially, and once and for all, acknowledge the Armenian Genocide which was not 'an issue' or 'a series of unfortunate events,' but a cold-blooded slaughter of 1.5 million people whose memory will not be erased by any Napoleonic nincompoop. Release

Pastor Andrew Brunson, President Erdogan, and fear [President Trump's National Security Advisor John R. Bolton's] moustache [as] Bolton is mongering, so for the sake of world peace put up and shut up so you don't get blown up!"

To make matters worse for Erdogan, President Trump told American journalists on August 17, 2018: "Turkey has been a problem for a long time. They have not acted as a friend. We will see what happens. They have a wonderful Christian pastor. He is a wonderful man, Pastor Brunson. They made this phony charge that he is a spy, and he is not a spy. He is going through a trial right now, if you call it a 'trial.' They should have given him back a long time ago. And Turkey has, in my opinion, acted very, very badly. So we have not seen the last of that. We are not going to take it sitting down. They can't take our people. So you will see what happens!"

Before Armenians get too impressed with President Trump's threatening words, they must remember that despite Turkey's anti-US and anti-NATO policies for several decades, the West has kept heaping praises on Turkish leaders. No one in the West has had the guts to put Turkey in its place. If tomorrow, the unpredictable Erdogan releases Pastor Brunson, I am afraid President Trump will start praising Erdogan once again, as he has done with Kim Jong Un of North Korea and Vladimir Putin of Russia.

President Trump should not forget that in addition to holding Pastor Brunson, Turkey invaded and occupied Northern Cyprus in 1974, banned the crossing of American troops into Northern Iraq from Turkey during the Iraq War, attacked the Kurdish allies of the United States in Northern Syria, is planning to purchase the Russian S-400 missile system contrary to NATO's admonition, helped circumvent US sanctions on Iran, and supported the entry of ISIS terrorists to Syria from Turkey.

Even after Pastor Brunson is liberated, Turkey should not be forgiven for its many indiscretions. As numerous analysts have recently suggested, Turkey should be immediately kicked out of NATO!

A Caretaker, Or One in Need of Care?

By Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian

The 100 days of the Nikol Pashinyan government and the Velvet Revolution has arrived. It is a time for reckoning as there are so many questions people have been asking. In fact, there is no end to these questions.

What started as a welcome and overdue movement and widely supported both in Armenia and the Diaspora is showing signs of losing focus and the lack of experience in governing and politics is showing its ugly head. The recent news of the arrest and accusations against the former president Robert Kocharyan and Yuri Khatchaturov, the Armenian secretary-general of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the worrisome and thought-provoking declaration of Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, makes one wonder as to what is the long term strategy of this government – if there is one, particularly since thus far there is no explicit political ideology behind the activities nor is there a cohesive program of action. The rule of law should be implemented; but other considerations such as timing, prioritization and circumspection should not be ignored in real politics. The prevailing situation is compounded by the church-related problems that also have a far reaching implication for both Armenia and particularly the Diaspora since shaking its foundations risks collapsing a major unifying bridge between the Diaspora and Armenia.

This should be a time for a reality check, and of reflection and corrective action if necessary. It is one thing to focus on internal Armenian affairs in a reforming and compromising spirit but another thing to venture into external politics without taking into account the geopolitical realities of the region. The debate of a pro-East or pro-West policy, if it gets out of proportion, does not bode well for Armenia, particularly since

there is a bellicose atmosphere along the Azeri borders, where after so many years a no-war no-peace situation prevails. This in itself should send a signal advising the authorities that this is not the time for even thinking of changing the status quo or shaking the boat.

Artsakh once again grabs the headlines and the names of former leaders are thrown into the debate. If one has the time or the inclination to review what is being written in blogs, social media and many online publications one can gauge the heartbeat of the people. My general take on these is that people are in general unforgiving and even vindictive. There is no need for irresponsible declarations and political analyses by armchair politicians and strategists. Cool heads are needed to take over. In such a situation one looks at the prime minister and others in authority such as the president, whose silence is noticeable in the recent debates that have taken hold of people's imaginations.

In an article earlier this year, I welcomed the Velvet Revolution and the new leadership but concluded by saying we are not out of the woods yet. I believe the salvation of Armenia lies in strengthening its democracy and focusing on good governance above all other considerations. All the problems Armenia is facing today from wealth distribution and corruption, the judiciary and accountability, electioneering and vote rigging, etc., stem from the absence of good governance. The judiciary again seems to be subservient to authorities, tolerance seems to have given way to vindictiveness thus endan-

ALL THE PROBLEMS ARMENIA IS FACING TODAY FROM WEALTH DISTRIBUTION AND CORRUPTION, THE JUDICIARY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, ELECTIONEERING AND VOTE RIGGING, ETC., STEM FROM THE ABSENCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE.

gering the stability and future of the country and once again opening the possibility of external interference in our affairs and the danger of war with our neighbours. Fortunately, such thinking remains a major concern for at least one of the traditional parties that promotes democratic and liberal values, and good governance so much so that these values and aspirations are integrated in its new vision and strategy. Unfortunately, under the prevailing conditions such aspirations are doomed to stay only on paper unless there is a shift in the paradigm both in the mother land and the Diaspora.

One notes sadly that the Diaspora, like the traditional political parties that have provided guidance to it for over 100 years, seem to be in disarray and in semi-paralysis as a result

of the unfolding situation in Armenia. The last Armenia-Diaspora conference in 2017 is still fresh in people's mind; but recent events have overtaken it, even though, the single theme constantly stressed and trumpeted then was the oneness of the Armenian nation: Armenia and the Diaspora together.

It is here that major fault lines still exist. One does not see in the horizon any action which would give birth to a new thinking and strategy. The reasons are many, some being found in Armenia and others in the Diaspora. For one, the constitution and the legislation of Armenia do not encourage the involvement of Diasporans in Armenian affairs other than probably in investment and business spheres even though the relevant legislation is wanting. As regards the Diaspora and the Diasporans, in particular those with dual citizenships, one notices the inability to shift gear in order to add value to this privilege by innovative and creative action. There is an acute need to organise the diaspora in order to be able to suggest and even demand changes in the Armenian constitution as the moral price for active engagement. Unfortunately the varied resources of the Diaspora are not being made use of efficiently by the motherland.

The Diaspora sadly remains fragmented with the clan mentality still pervasive. One searches for a unifying cause, other than probably the Genocide, in vain. After the recent emigration from Armenia in the last decade, even the language has stopped being the unifying glue. It is time for people to demand that their affiliated organisations put forward pan-diasporan agendas and start advocating it whenever and wherever possible in order to make participation in the social, cultural and even political life in Armenia on tangible and legal footing.

In this context one cannot help but mention once again the Church and its recent woes. Once the situation calms down, the leaders of the Church should not sit on their laurels but engage in an active dialogue with their constituencies and the wider public in order to resolve the problems that have dogged the Armenian Apostolic Church for over half a century and introduce the overdue and necessary reforms to make the Church relevant to the 21st century.

In the meantime, one has to accept that under such conditions one should continue to be optimistic and share in the spirit of the Velvet Revolution, be inspired by it, and continue to expect from the new leadership the changes it had heralded. Political analysts were widely in agreement that this first post "revolution" government would be a caretaker government until the promised new elections with a revised electoral system. In the meantime, we the people, including myself, will have to cherish it and take care of it.

(Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian lives in London.)



Pashinyan Needs to Succeed, But Questions Remain about Methods



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

The first 100 days of Nikol Pashinyan's government are puzzling as to the political realism of his government, on the one hand, and the existing global and strategic view of the issues, on the other.

Nobody can question the benefits of the fall of the "contemptible regime" and the joy that we could finally see in the eyes of the inhabitants, but we can wonder about the motivations of the new government.

This author takes the risk of being labelled "counter-revolutionary," but the challenge is well worth it. Nikol Pashinyan needs to succeed; political failure would be unthinkable, leading to many terrible options: from crushing the spirit of the youth, to increased emigration and even the chaos of civil war.

The immense hope raised by the fall of Serzh Sargsyan and the coming to power of Nikol Pashinyan were rewarded by a new discourse – the will to restore a just society, free from corruption, and respecting its citizens. As well, concrete actions started to take shape: a police at the service of its citizens and democracy, the first prosecutions or forced resignations of former senior officials allegedly corrupted or suspected of personal enrichment, the release of political prisoners (pending appeal of their judgement), and fair judicial handling of the more delicate case of members of the Sasna Tsrer commando (release on bail pending their trial).

This commentary was written before the August 17 speech of Prime Minister Pashinyan and intentionally delayed its publishing. Positive elements from Nikol Pashinyan's speech corroborate this analysis, but many fears are also confirmed. If the first part of the speech was faithful to his wise, moderate, and inclusive behavior that brought him to power, the second part revealed a completely different face: vindictive, threatening, authoritarian.

The first measures in both domestic and foreign policy are contrasting, raising serious questions about the future of the "velvet revolution."

We search in vain for strategic reflection; the legislative elections are long overdue and the August 17 speech reinforced the vagueness of both the date and the procedure to hold it; the diaspora is excluded from the management of the country and the call upon diaspora for investment is no different from that of its predecessors; there is a form of arrogance in the affirmation of a unique and undisputable model; and the tolerance towards those opposing the revolution totally absent. Worse, court decisions are challenged when they do not go in the desired direction. The general impression is that of a toughening of discourse in order to satisfy the base of popular support.

Parliamentary Democracy Dead for Now

Pashinyan decided to personalize his rule, relying on the mandate entrusted to him by the "people." He rules without intermediate filters, which can lead to massive disappointment, as the needs of the population are enormous and immediate. The people who support him believe that he is the only one who can satisfy their demands. Direct communication is refreshing for the "people," but can a state be run on the street or on Facebook? Populism is certainly a trend, beginning with that practiced by the president of the world's leading power.

Pashinyan said on August 14 on Facebook that democracy was now established in Armenia. His public speech made us better understand what he meant: the confirmation that he had decided to establish in the name of the People's Revolution a direct democracy at the expense of parliamentary democracy.

Having come to power by the street, the Prime Minister should legitimize that victory by democratic means, namely the ballot box. Direct democracy, as originally conceived by the Greeks, is long gone. The direct dialogue with the people of the street cannot be transformed into a model of governance. The debate on major decisions would no longer be held in Parliament, but on the proclaimed Armenian Agora: Republic Square. What would happen to accountability in case of wrong decisions or mismanagement? Would the "people" be responsible for it?

This lack of political legitimacy also creates discomfort among foreign representatives in Armenia.

Mob Justice

It is in this transitional context that the attention of the "people" has come in favor of the fight against corruption. Finally, all voices can be raised freely that criminal offenses, some of a shocking level of immorality (Manvel Grigoryan), have taken place and now are the subject of investigations.

The detention of Robert Kocharyan has unleashed repressed feelings. Journalists and analysts, some of them usually moderate, have also vented against the second president. There is no

doubt that the contempt and humiliation endured by the citizens (see article of March 15, 2018) during 20 years, as well as the events of March 1, 2008, explain this visceral hatred against Kocharyan and his designated successor.

However, there are several areas of concern in Kocharyan's case.

The first is that of the risk associated with this type of lynch mob. No offense to all the commentators, but all have the right to fair treatment.

The day after the decision to release Kocharyan from detention, Nikol Pashinyan made a vehement statement reminding his audience that the culprits will not escape justice. He questioned the judiciary and magistrates. He even warned those among them who would receive instructions from "other forces."

Even more striking was questioning the principle of non-retroactivity of penal repressive laws, a fundamental right guaranteed by international legal instruments binding Armenia. This challenge related to the law on illicit enrichment of public officials in the performance of their duties, only applicable to facts subsequent to its adoption, i.e. in July 2017.

The judges of the Court of Appeal, who released Robert Kocharyan, relying on the constitutional provision conferring immunity on the president for acts performed in connection with his office during the period of his term, seem to have taken a reasoned and independent decision. The litigant's defense team has been able to make the good arguments. If there is any reason to be satisfied with this functioning of justice, it is not excluded that the diplomatic reaction of Russia could have influenced this process.

The Special Investigation Service (SIS), even before having read the judgment, declared the decision as "illegal," and the Prosecutor vowed to appeal it.

As a result of this decision and official reactions, young protesters came to claim that the judges' decision was "illegal" and that the magistrates had to be dismissed!

The idea of "revolutionary justice" is unhealthy and dangerous. Robespierre and the post-revolutionary episode of "Terror" in France resulted in large-scale massacres and summary executions (about 200,000 dead). After World War II, liberated France witnessed a shameful purge, associating arbitrary judgments and summary executions (about 10,000 people). The National Committee of Resistance did nothing to stop it initially, but reacted afterwards because it lost control of the situation. Many innocent people fell victim to this hidden episode of French history. Many cowards, even collaborators of the Vichy regime, mainly civil servants, were among the informants and accusers.

The Bolshevik Revolution is another historical example in which justice was diverted in the service of political interests, that of the dictatorship of the single thought and single party doctrine.

If evoking these examples in the light of the present situation in Armenia seems exaggerated, it is nevertheless necessary to contain the precursory signs of a summary justice that would be dictated by the street. Violence and intolerance are omnipresent in social relations; physical aggression against the LGBT community is the latest example. In the same vein, it is appropriate to denounce the unacceptable smear and threatening campaign against Kocharyan's lawyers. (Ruben Sahakyan, Hayk Alamyanyan who defend Kocharyan, and also Vahe Grigoryan, who defends the families of the victims of March 1, 2008, are among the personal friends of this author.)

The government must take care of the interest of justice in all circumstances, and its public speech must be controlled in such a way as to not incite to such excesses.

Finally, the deleterious and divisive words have been transported into the diaspora. Whatever one may think of the ARF Dachnaktsoutioun's political posture in Armenia, their willingness to govern is a political choice for which they assume responsibility. But nothing authorizes and justifies the spectators or passive opportunists to become public prosecutors, even less so when they insult the memory and the action of thousands of activists who worked selflessly for decades to build political, cultural, educational, and sports institutions at the service of the Armenian nation. They have also been the pioneers, defenders, even "fighters" for the Armenian cause, and today they defend the interests of the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh.

Former Prime Minister Vasken Manoukian has expressed his fear that Armenia will become the theatre of a single actor without counter powers. The rampage against the "counter-revolutionaries" is part of this fear. The August 17 speech and its staging have unfortunately confirmed this.

The Armenian National Congress (CNA) has also used this divisive language between revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries to call for the rally.

At the same time, it is worrying but unfortunately common to watch how quickly the administrative system of the previous regime has been aligned with the policy of Armenia's new

strongman. The same police officers, SIS (Special Investigation Service) investigators, NSS officers (National Security Services), prosecutors and judges, operating with the same methods, turned against the very ones they served with zeal.

This is an additional reason for a profound reform of the system, where the service of the State must take precedence over any other consideration.

Maintaining the system is also a matter of concern for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The bureaucratic apparatus of municipalities has always been at the center of fraud and pressure on voters. Who can guarantee that this system will be inoperative in the upcoming parliamentary elections for or against Pashinyan? The Chief of Police has made a personal commitment to ensure genuinely free elections. Will the threat of sanctions be sufficient?

The Need to Identify Priorities

It is essential that the two dramatic events of exceptional gravity throughout Armenia (March 1, 2008 and the killings in the Armenian Parliament in October 1999) be studied truthfully. But it should be noted that if Armenia embarks on such a process, it must be so objectively, a process which will call for introspection and uncovering ugly truths. In the past 27 years, political assassinations, illicit enrichment of ruling clans, electoral fraud, and repression of demonstrators were common markers over the rule of three presidencies.

But is confronting the past a priority, when economic, social and military issues require more immediate attention?

Similarly, if the fight against corruption and against monopolies is laudable and necessary, the method for it must be thought out properly.

Corruption exists everywhere, including in Western democracies, in more sophisticated forms but equally reprehensible, in the private sector as well as in the public sector. It is impossible to eradicate it completely. The best way to effectively fight corruption or economic monopolies is to ensure that ad hoc laws are adopted and that they are fairly applied. That is why the priority of the new governance must be the establishment of a solid rule of law and of an independent judiciary.

The rule of law is also the fundamental guarantee expected by international investors. The case of the Amulsar gold mine, whose rights were transferred to Lydian Armenia, illustrates the tension to be managed by the government between a private company that bought rights and invested in the exploitation, on the one hand, and environmental activists, who impose their will by blocking access to the mine. The resolution of this case will be closely monitored by international investors. An overall strategic reflection is needed beyond this particular case.

Restored justice will make it possible to investigate and prosecute all individuals whose wealth and patrimony have increased abnormally rapidly, whether illegally or through favoritism.

Armenia is heavily indebted and needs to recover capital. On August 9, Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan announced his referral to international institutions to identify capital flight to tax havens. It is likely to be a much more effective and strategic approach to solve the financial equation of state's debt repayment and strategic investment in the Armenian economy. While the freezing of these assets is easy, the seizure and return of capital is a much more complex and time consuming. It requires specialized skills and transnational cooperation.

Justice will have to discriminate between enrichment that is fraudulent and that which is a simple benefit of entrepreneurship.

Promote National Unity

Armenia is experiencing its second political transition in 27 years: the rejection of the post-Soviet system and the emergence of a new generation more open to Western values. History has taught us that revolutions can take sinister forms when unrestrained hatred is unleashed. The popular vengeance against Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan relies on stigmatization and alienation of "Karabakhtsis."

This element undermines national unity and the attitude toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijani side can only look favorably at the side-lining of the former Armenian team. On July 25, Elmar Mammadarov, a permanent and privileged negotiator on the Azerbaijani side, said his new colleague, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, was a more professional diplomat than Edward Nalbandian. This astute remark (no matter how relevant it is) speaks volumes about their intention to take advantage of internal divisions in the Armenian side.

Need for Creation of a Truth and Justice Commission

Societies in transition, emerging from conflict and seeking to restore the rule of law and the sound administration of justice,



LETTERS

Alexanian Responds: Diocese Statement, Letter, Still Leave Questions Unanswered

To the Editor:

I am responding to Rebecca Bakalian Hachikian's letter to the editor regarding the sale of the Diocesan air rights in last week's *Mirror-Spectator* (8/18/18). She mentioned my father's name, Yervant Alexanian, along with Haik Kavookjian and Dadour Dadourian as one of the community leaders and questions how he/they would respond to the sale/lease of Diocesan property.

As his daughter, I feel the need to respond.

I also read the long overdue report disseminated by the Diocesan Council regarding the sale/lease of the Diocesan land with great interest. Simply put there was absolutely no clarification of the so-called "misinformation" which was causing the community's widespread, broad based backlash against "the project." Actually, the community at large pushed back against the project based on their understanding of it. There were, however, contradictions as Ms. Hachikian states.

One of them, according to the report, was that the delegates "overwhelmingly" supported "the project" at the May delegate's assembly but the reality is that discussion of the plan to sell the Diocese wasn't on the agenda and was discussed at the end of the meeting when several of the delegates had already left as Ms. Hachikian stated. It's my understanding that there's also some confusion amongst the delegates as to what they were supporting since they weren't given any written information about "the project." Another contradiction, as she stated was that the sale of the land was in fact already decided upon by the Diocesan Council and the Board of Trustees and if the community hadn't pushed back, the contract would have been signed this summer without consulting with the delegates.

Do those who are pushing "the project" to sell/lease the Diocesan land realize that the

builders of a 32-story-high-rise can sell the building to Turks or Azeris or can rent/sell the apartments to the aforementioned who can wreak havoc on those Armenians attending church or working at the complex? No contract can prevent any ethnic groups from renting or buying property since there are strong laws preventing this kind of discrimination.

According to the deal, the Diocese won't receive 10 percent of the income from the building until the value of the apartments are at \$90 per square foot. At present, according to a realtor, the value of apartments in the area of the Diocese/Cathedral is around \$67 per square foot. How many years will it take to reach their target given the fact that dozens of high rises are being built on West 34th Street flooding the area with new apartments, not to mention the potential downturn in the real estate market.

Do those who are pushing this deal realize that the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, like my father(subject of the memoir *Forced into Genocide*) who sacrificed for decades to raise money to build St. Vartan Cathedral as a symbol of the survival of the Armenian Nation chose the block between 34th and 35th Streets so that there wouldn't be any high rises overshadowing St. Vartan Cathedral which the proposed high rise does?

Do those who are pushing "the project" realize that not only is the Armenian community at large against it but so too is the Community Board?

Most viable organizations have 5-, 10- and even 20-year plans but evidently not our Diocese. Why didn't the Diocesan Council realize years ago that they should plan for the future by securing the funds to make the necessary repairs to buildings that are 50+ years old that would surely need them?

Members of the Diocesan Council are willingly elected to their positions and members of the Board of Trustees are willingly appointed. The members of these Boards not only have a responsibility to help the Primate and administration run the Diocese efficiently but also have a fiduciary responsibility to honor the sacrifice and financial contributions of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and those who followed...the donors... who have contributed the money to establish and maintain the Diocese/Cathedral, to make sure that the funds are spent responsibly. Most years the Diocese was in the red. Why wasn't a balanced budget insisted upon years ago? Why can't the Council find an executive director

with good administrative abilities?

Whenever anyone criticizes "the project" to sell/lease the Diocesan land, the response is that they should come up with an alternative plan to secure the funds to make the needed repairs...in other words, the community should again be put upon to dig down into our pockets to donate the money needed to mitigate the lack of foresight by those in charge.

A respected member of the Council already resigned because of this debacle. Despite the fact that the majority of the Armenian community at large is against the sale/lease of Diocesan land certain members of the Diocesan Council and the Board of Trustees are still pushing it. It begs the question... WHY?

Adrienne Alexanian
New York, NY

Diocese Actions Are in Response to Financial Needs

To the Editor:

I am responding to Adrienne Alexanian's recent letter to the editor of the *Mirror Spectator* and point out few realities that would help us appreciate the dilemma of the Diocesan Council.

The primary mission of the Diocese is to support the parishes with creative programs, including the preparation and development of competent clergy, to make the Armenian Church relevant in the lives of young generation of American Armenians. This requires substantial financial resources.

Every Armenian organization or institution, including the Diocese and their respective parishes, are constantly facing difficulty in raising the required funds from the public. There are very few benefactors today like the Manougian, Karagozian, Alexanian, Mugar, etc. willing to step up with their millions to provide the required funds to the Diocese, its parishes and its affiliated institutions.

The Diocese is badly in need of substantial funding immediately to upgrade the dilapidated utilities and the building of the cathedral, as well as more funding for badly needed programs to support its mission to help its expanding parishes. It is irresponsible of the leadership and the Armenian community not to utilize its valuable air-right asset, valued at ninety or more million dollars.

The 2nd Avenue cathedral is surrounded by sky scrapers and in few years, there would be another big one facing the cathedral on the West side of the 2nd Avenue. A nice cathedral without the financial resources to invest in the many badly needed programs to implement its mission is of no value.

Invoking the Genocide, the Turkish threat of having a nearby skyscraper or suggesting

reducing the budget or embarking in more fundraising is easy talk and playing on emotions. I am sure if the old patrons were around, they were smart enough to either step up and support the church with their millions, as they did in the past, or make use of this valuable unutilized assets, or even both.

The Diocese should be open to professional help from experts to maximize the value of this asset.

Kevork Toroyan
New Canaan, CT

Age Should not Count Against Church Leadership

To the Editor:

Miran P. Sarkissian's criticism of the church leadership because of their "age and time in office" is a case of indiscriminate disparagement. Elder Statesmen, over the ages, have been held in high regard for the wisdom that their life experiences, due to age incidentally, have given them. Trying to fix any problem affecting the Church by changing its leadership would be an act of desperation.

The Church is an ancient institution and any perceived problems in it are not something that could be corrected by precipitant actions. Who, after all, are more qualified to fix any such problems than those with the most knowledge of them? Of course, they are free to consult expert opinion on any particular decision.

Berge Tatian

Eastern Diocese Needs to Heed Calls for Transparency

To the Editor:

The calls for transparency today are now louder than they have ever been. The Diocesan Council of the Eastern Diocese must act in accordance to good faith, but will Mr. James Kalustian, chairman, allow that to occur?

In "A Statement from the Diocesan Council Regarding the Diocesan Development Plan Proposal" (August 14, 2018 *Mirror-Spectator*), the Diocesan Council of the Eastern Diocese asserts what they perceive as "harsh attacks based on misinformation" have driven the discussion about the potential sale of the Diocesan Center in New York City.

Why would the whole community be in uproar, if they had the proper information to see for themselves if this sale would be beneficial in the first place?

Mr. Kalustian adds to the confusion with his own misinformation during his interview with the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* " (August 14, 2018) when he stated, "We are still negotiating the terms of the two options. When those are done we are going to go back [to the Diocesan Assembly]. We intend to do that anyway."

Huh? What? Really?

If this was actually the intent of the chairman of the Diocesan Council, why would Diocesan Delegates have signed a petition calling for a

Special Assembly Session of the Eastern Diocesan Assembly to discuss this very matter?

The "Statement" by the Diocesan Council noted that "appraisals [plural] have been completed." The Diocesan Council, the Board of Trustees and the Diocesan Delegates have not yet received a current appraisal.

Financial transactions in New York real estate are known to be grimy, based on politics and bribes, and most notably run by a handful of powerful elites. We must not allow the Diocesan Center to be sold off without the most strenuous of due diligence. With the exception of the lands owned by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, there is no more valuable property owned by the Armenian Church in the diaspora today.

No excuse can be tolerated, especially the one about the costs of paying for outside auditing. If you truly care about your community, donate to insure transparency and accuracy of your institution.

If we cannot trust our leaders to lead, then we must find new ones. As President Lincoln said "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

Deacon Armand Yerjian
Los Angeles

Show Support for Marilyn Petitto Devaney on September 4

To the Editor:

Marilyn Petitto Devaney, a great friend of Armenian Americans, is running for re-election for the post of Massachusetts Governor's Councilor.

I encourage Armenian Americans to vote for her in the Democratic Primary on Tuesday, September 4, 2018.

There are 8 elected Governor's Councilors. They vote to approve or disapprove the individuals that the Governor nominates to be judges.

Marilyn was formerly a Watertown Town Council member.

Marilyn has attended every April 24 Armenian Genocide commemoration at the State House and countered the Armenian Genocide actions of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

She led the Watertown Town Council to condemn Armenian Genocide denial and to demand land and reparations from Turkey.

She also introduced a winning resolution in the Governor's Council that asked the U.S. President to require Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and pay reparations.

Marilyn's Democratic opponent, who is from Newton, MA, has wealthy backers.

Marilyn's district includes Watertown, Belmont, Lexington, Arlington, Waltham, Brookline, Wellesley, parts of Boston, and about two dozen other cities.

She has been endorsed by Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and Rep. Michael Capuano.

Because there is no Republican in this race, whoever wins the primary automatically wins the general election.

Again, let's support Marilyn Petitto Devaney on September 4 and ask family and friends to do so too.

Berge Jololian
Watertown, MA

Read News in Armenian at:





Diocesan Development Revisited: 'God Is in the Details'

By Garo Gumusyan, AIA

"Less is More" is the famous quote the legendary German architect Mies Van der Rohe is known for. Be that as it may be, his lesser known dictum, "God is in the details," appears to be guiding principle for us mere mortals, Armenians in particular.

In the case of the proposed development of the Diocesan property, these details take on epic, ungodly proportions, for, being in the original Diocesan development council myself many years ago, I had a close-up view of the same issues that appears to be as much relevant today as it was then.

The "Legacy" issue. This was the issue that effectively ended the proposed development then and it appears that the history will repeat itself now. The fact that the Church was built by the enormous efforts of a group of deeply faithful Armenians, with no outside help or funding, was and still is an unparalleled achievement, which we all Armenians are rightly proud of. However, this achievement has also brought its own heavy legacy, banishing any and all thoughts of altering it. The thought process "if they were able to built under such dire circumstances then, how come the Diocese can't maintain it now" runs deep. Probably more so then, since some of the spouses of these great men were alive and their vehement opposition to any development echoed more vibrantly among the community.

The "Real Estate Valuation" issue. This, in my opinion, was another issue that hindered any meaningful real estate negotiation then, as it will do now. With so much emotional legacy invested, I thought that we had overestimated the value of

what we had to offer to the developers. In the reality of New York Real Estate, not in our virtual reality, from a Real Estate developer's point of view, the site is not that great as we think it is, and what would be some of the desirable attributes for a development from the Developer's point of view conflicted with the Diocese's requirements. Subsequently, the first tier real estate developers showed no interest and walked away. That was the case then, and it appears to be the case now.

The "Architectural" issue. A disciple of Mies Van Der Rohe, another legendary architect, Philip Johnson, wryly commented that "In New York, we don't build architecture, we just build buildings." Any casual observer, looking at the recent crop of buildings will agree. Sadly, this ordinariness is more obvious with Apartment Building developments, whether they are Condominium or Rentals, Rentals

being more so. In rare occasions, a top tier developer will make an attempt to bring in a so called "starchitect" to make an architectural statement which will add value to his development, however, if those developers are not there, unfortunately the end result will inevitably turn out to be the current rendering. This rendering will be a tough sell as a backdrop to the landmarks qualities of the cathedral itself.

The "Engagement of the Community" issue. I can't think of a more important issue than this, and time and time again we have failed to address it. I thought that a poor job was done then, as it appears to be the case now. The inherent conflict of "the necessity of privacy with Real Estate negotiations" and "community's right to know" could have been avoided then with a more professional approach, providing "transparency" and addressing the community's concerns along the way with briefings and hearings, rather than giving the appearance of a "fait-accompli." A project of this scope cannot

move ahead without the active participation and engagement of the community at large.

The "Timing" issue. As fickle as Real Estate is, it's even more so in New York, where the inevitable boom and bust cycle of development reigns supreme. As a recent article in Crain's points out, the boom cycle is over, the vacancies are rising as thousands of new apartments are entering the market. A classic definition of the beginning of a bust cycle. This was another major issue that we got caught up with then, which will happen now.

The "Leadership" issue. Imagine that, at that time, the great, legendary Archbishop Torkom Manoogian was head of the church. A spiritual man of the highest order, a most eloquent orator, a poet, beloved and respected by the New York Mayor, Governor and all the leaders of other faiths. A truly extraordinary man, who I believe supported this project and with his leadership could have moved the project ahead. But, facing the vehement opposition of a community, incensed by also being kept in the dark most of the way, he, in his infinite wisdom, recused himself. Any endeavor requires effective leadership, which we lacked then, and appears to be lacking now.

I started with Mies Van Der Rohe's dictum, that "God is in the Details," as appropriate that may be for this endeavor, let's also remember another famous architect's, this one being Mies's nemesis, Frank Lloyd Wright, who said of New York's skyline, "A great monument, I think, to the power of money and greed." For, it is what it is, this skyline is indeed built upon money and greed. The challenge is to acknowledge it, face the challenges and chart a course that will serve the church's best interests.

(Garo Gumusyan is a practicing architect in New York. He was in the original Building Committee of the Diocese.)

COMMENTARY

Pashinyan Needs to Succeed, But Questions Remain about Methods

KALFAYAN, from page 18

favor transitional justice mechanisms. Transitional justice consists of both judicial and non-judicial processes and mechanisms, including prosecution initiatives, facilitating initiatives in respect of the right to truth, delivering reparations, institutional reform and national consultations. Criminal justice comes to supplement those when serious mass crimes have occurred, which is not the case.

The Prime Minister evoked positively the transitional justice mechanism during his speech and he has somehow prepared the population to accept this idea.

To justify his policy of truth, forgiveness and reconciliation, Nelson Mandela stated: "Personal resentment is irrelevant: it is a luxury that South Africa simply cannot afford."

Prime Minister Pashinyan would be well inspired to reflect on this because the end of his speech revealed unfortunately all his personal resentment against Robert Kocharyan.

Armenia is a small country, where interpersonal relations are deep and strong. Corruption is a phenomenon affecting all layers of society, and it is even less possible to consider punishment as a remedy for the wrongs of the past.

All institutions and administrations should be "cleansed." Almost all executives have a "file" at the NSS. The responsibility for the failure of these last 30 years is collective.

In the name of the strategic interests of Armenia and Artsakh, this author suggests the

creation of a truth and justice commission, much like that in South Africa. In the long run, this scheme may lead to reconciliation. It promotes what is desirable for the future of Armenia, namely the guarantee of non-repetition of wrongs. The judicial recording of wrongs and responsibilities is central to its success.

Facing the past while imagining the future is the challenge of such an approach.

There are many skilled, experienced, and still young executives who have worked or cooperated with the last three administrations, and their exclusion would be detrimental to the future of Armenia.

Armenian society must go through an examination of its collective conscience. All responsibilities must be established, but in a detached and organized way. This approach has worked in countries that have suffered fates worse than Armenia, such as South Africa and Morocco as well as Latin American countries at the end of bloody dictatorships.

Despite the assertions, Armenia and the Diaspora remain largely in a wait-and-see position and the candidates for emigration are still numerous. Imagining and building the future rather than devoting energy to retaliating for the past should take priority. Otherwise, Armenia will face an even more difficult road.

[Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is a Lawyer, Lecturer in International Law and a former Secretary General of FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights). He is a regular columnist for the Mirror-Spectator.]

YEREVAN — King Philippe of Belgium together with his family members arrived in Armenia on a private visit on August 21, acting press secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia Anna Naghdalyan announced. "I can affirm that the Belgian Royal Family is in Armenia on a private visit," Naghdalyan said.



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