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# Vartan Gregorian Receives Carnegie Hall Medal of Excellence from Mayor Bloomberg

**By Florence Avakian**  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – He ranks with the outstanding immigrants of America who have risen to great heights in designing the intellectual landscape of this country. Especially noteworthy is his special commitment to the arts, education and humanity through philanthropy.

On Monday, June 10, former New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg presented Dr. Vartan Gregorian with the coveted Carnegie Hall Medal of Excellence for his many accomplishments and his inspiring story. The event commemorated both New York City's festival of migration as well as the 100th anniversary of the passing of another legendary immigrant, Andrew Carnegie.

More than 230 people braved all-day thunderstorms to attend this gala presentation at the elegant Grand Ballroom of New York's Plaza Hotel. This extraordinary event raised \$1.9 million for Carnegie Hall's program of music education and social impact projects.

Every year more than 600,000 students, teachers and individuals are served



The honoree, Vartan Gregorian

through these programs.

Among the prominent guests present were top officials of Carnegie Hall, the Carnegie Corporation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Starr Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Stephen

Kellen Foundation, as well as former New York Governor George Pataki, former New Jersey Governor Tom McKean, PBS television news anchor Judy Woodruff, and Caroline Kennedy.



From left, Judy Woodruff, Michael R. Bloomberg, Vartan Gregorian

Also, attending were several well-known Armenian dignitaries, including Armenia's Ambassador to the United States Varuzhan Nersesyan, Ambassador to the United Nations Mher Margaryan, and Ambassador to the Vatican Garen Nazarian, as well as philanthropists Ruben Vardanyan, Noubar Afeyan, Aso Tavitian, Garo Armen, Edward Avedisian and Sarkis Jebejian.

As the guests filed into the ornately decorated Grand Ballroom, replete with huge baskets of ferns and branches hanging from the frescoed ceiling, there was an air of palpable excitement.

### A Stellar Trajectory

The host, Clive Gillinson, Carnegie Hall's executive and artistic director, in calling Gregorian "a great educator, leader and

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## Russian Envoy Warned After Meeting with Kocharyan

YEREVAN (RFE-RL) – Russia's ambassador to Armenia was summoned to the

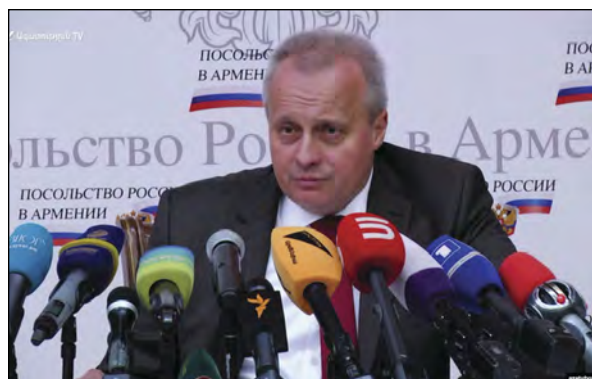
Foreign Ministry in Yerevan last week after meeting with the indicted former President Robert Kocharyan, a senior Armenian lawmaker revealed on Monday, June 17.

Ambassador Sergey Kopyrkin and Kocharyan met on Thursday nearly one month after the latter was controversially released from prison pending the outcome of his trial. The ex-president was charged with overthrowing the constitutional order in 2008 shortly after last year's Armenian "velvet revolution." He denies the accusations as politically motivated.

The Russian Embassy in Yerevan said Kopyrkin spoke to Kocharyan "within the framework of his regular meetings with representatives of social-political and business circles" of Armenia.

Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan dismissed this explanation on Sunday when he spoke at a congress of the ruling Civil Contract party. Mirzoyan said he does "not welcome" the

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Armenia – Russian Ambassador to Armenia Sergey Kopyrkin speaks at a news conference in Yerevan, Jun 11, 2019.

## Soccer Star Henrikh Mkhitaryan Marries Fiancée Betty Vardanyan in Venice

VENICE (*Daily Mail*) – Arsenal midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan married Betty Vardanyan in a romantic ceremony in Venice, Italy on Monday, June 17.

The pair, 30, were the picture of true love when they boarded a water taxi to head to their wedding reception.

Betty, the daughter of Armenian politician Mikael Vardanyan, was every inch the blushing bride with her stunning ivory dress, glistening tiara and extravagant veil.

With the picturesque backdrop of the floating city, the lovebirds didn't miss the opportunity to get stunning wedding photographs for the memory book.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July as part of its annual summer break.

The last issue published before the vacation will be that of June 29, and the first edition back would be that of July 20.

The office will be closed July 1 through 12.

### Locum Tenens to Be Elected in Istanbul Patriarchate

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople will elect a Patriarchal Locum Tenens on June 27, the church synod has decided. The synod's meeting was chaired by Archbishop Aram Atesian, the Patriarchal Vicar.

The patriarchate has requested that the Turkish government allow holding elections of a new patriarch, a requirement by law.

### Karen Khachanov Breaks into ATP Top-10

LONDON (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Russian-Armenian tennis player Karen Khachanov has for the first time broken into the Top 10 of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Rankings.

Khachanov, 22, enjoyed an impressive breakthrough season in 2018, climbing to world No 11 – having started the season ranked 45th – and winning the biggest title of his career at the Paris Masters in November.

The Russian NI's success in the French capital, where he defeated four top-10 players including top seed Novak Djokovic in the final, was his third title of the year following wins at the Marseille Open and Kremlin Cup.

Khachanov won his first match as a Top-10 player on Monday, June 17, at the Noventi Open in Halle, Germany.

### New Vicar at Georgia Armenian Diocese

TBILISI (Panorama.am) – By a Pontifical Order of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, Rev. Vasken Mirzakhanyan, completing his service as Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Georgia, will return to the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

By another Pontifical Order, Rev. Kirakos Davtyan, completing his service as Vicar of the Diocese of Gegharkunik, has been appointed to serve as Vicar in the Armenian Diocese of Georgia

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Foreign Ministry Welcomes Pallone's Call For US-Artsakh Ties

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Spokesperson of the Artsakh Foreign Ministry Ani Sargsyan has commented on the statement made by Congressman Frank Pallone on June 13 in the US Congress on the need to lift the ban for US officials to visit Artsakh.

“We highly appreciate the consistent efforts of US Congressman Frank Pallone aimed at establishing direct ties between Artsakh and the United States, which, we believe, will become a signal that the isolation of Artsakh is unacceptable,” she said in comments to Aparaj Agency published by the Artsakh Foreign Ministry.

“We are convinced that the dialogue between Artsakh and the United States, as well as the other two OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing states through direct official contacts at various levels will create favorable conditions for comprehensive discussions and for finding ways for the final settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict and become an important contribution to the establishment of stability in the South Caucasus,” the Artsakh official said.

Last week Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ) took to the US House floor for a colloquy with House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) in support of his legislative efforts to end arbitrary and outdated State Department restrictions on US engagement with Artsakh.

## Vahe Grigoryan Elected To Constitution Court

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The Armenian National Assembly voted to support Vahe Grigoryan's candidacy to occupy the vacant seat of a judge at the Constitutional Court. The head of the parliamentary Calculating Commission Vahagn Hovakimyan announced the results of the closed voting with Grigoryan's candidacy approved by 99 votes in favor and 22 against.

Grigoryan was nominated as a candidate for the Constitutional Court judge for the second time. In autumn 2018 his candidacy was rejected by the previous parliament dominated by the Republican party. Grigoryan's nomination for the second time by the President raised speculation about the legality of another nomination.

Critics also point to political impartiality of the candidate who has been an opposition lawyer largely associated with the current ruling party in the parliament.

## Armenia's Population Expected to Dwindle to Roughly 2 Million

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenia's population will dwindle to a little more than 2 million in 2100 from today's almost three million, says a UN population report released on Monday, June 17.

“The World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights” estimates that the next 30 years will see the global population add an extra 2 billion people to today's figure of 7.7 billion, and, by the end of the century, the planet will have to sustain around 11 billion.

In Armenia, however, the number of permanent residents will first grow to 2.967 million by 2030, then drop to 2.816 million in 2050 and 2.039 million in 2100.

Life expectancy at birth is currently 75 for both sexes in the country, with those under the age of 25 accounting for 33 percent of the total population.

The populations of Georgia (3.997 million now) and Azerbaijan (10.048 million now) are, too, expected to diminish by 2100 to 2.514 million and 9.192 million, respectively.

The report says India will show the highest population increase between now and 2050, overtaking China as the world's most populous country, by around 2027. India, along with eight other countries, will make up over half of the estimated population growth between now and 2050.



Artur Aleksanyan at Khor Virap

## Olympic Champion Alexanyan Lights Pan-Armenian Games' Torch

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian Greco-Roman wrestler, Olympic Champion Artur Aleksanyan lit the XII Pan-Armenian Games flame on June 17 from St. Gregory the Illuminator's torch at Khor Virap, an Armenian monastery in Ararat Province where the patron saint of the country spent more than a decade imprisoned in a pit.

Three different flames are to be lit and taken to Stepanakert, Artsakh for the inauguration ceremony of the multi-sports event.

The first one has already been lit and is traveling to its destination. The third and final one will be lit in the coming days in Tigranakert, Artsakh. On August 6, these three torches will be united during the grand opening ceremony, symbolizing the Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora unity.

The XII Pan-Armenian Games will take place August 5-17.

## PM Pashinyan Receives New High Commissioner For Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received newly-appointed High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan on June 14, the premier's office announced.

“I have signed a decision on appointing you as High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs and I am happy that we are going to work together in Armenia. The events of the last year in Armenia showed that major changes have taken place not only in Armenia, but also the Diaspora. I can state for sure that last year the Diaspora was the complete participant of the peaceful, velvet and democratic revolution in Armenia. Also thanks to several visits I came to the conclusion that we should change the policy run with the Diaspora and make it more effective the main goal of which should be Diaspora's greater engagement in Armenia, its economic, public and political life, in Artsakh, and the works on forming and implementing our new Armenian agenda in general.

Thank you for agreeing to leave you work in Glendale and return to Armenia, this is very symbolic. For all those who are unaware, let's tell them that you were born in Yerevan, studied at a Yerevan school until the 7th grade, know Armenian, English, Russian very well and Spanish to some extent, which

means that you have a chance to fully communicate with the Diaspora. I think there is a good opportunity to solve our new tasks in the new times. I wish you success, today you already assume your duties, I wish good luck to all of us. I hope the time will prove that this structural change we made also thanks to you is really effective,” Pashinyan said.

In his turn Sinanyan thanked Pashinyan for appointment and

just very good both for Armenia and the Diaspora.

“The diaspora is a ready potential for Armenia which should be used in a simple and best way, for the benefit of the homeland. Armenia in its turn is the guarantor of strengthening and enriching the Diaspora in some sense. There are also many problems, and I have no doubt that today's Armenia is ready to support its compatriots in the Diaspora,



Zareh Sinanyan, left, meets with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan

added: “I feel obliged and consider assuming this office a great honor, also a great responsibility, because as you stated the relations of our homeland, Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora have a huge potential. As a result of our peaceful, velvet revolution, real and deep cooperation doors opened between Armenia and the Diaspora, the results of which can be

like our Diaspora compatriots are ready to support Armenia and Artsakh. Thank you for the trust. I will do everything to justify this trust,” he said.

During the meeting the sides discussed issues relating to the future activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs.

Zinanyan has served as Mayor of Glendale twice.



## ARMENIA

# Russian Envoy Warned after Meeting with Kocharyan

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meeting because Kocharyan is facing coup charges and cannot be considered a politician in these circumstances.

The pro-government chairman of the Armenian parliament committee on foreign relations, Ruben Rubinyan, similarly described Kopyrkin's conversation with Kocharyan as "bewildering." Rubinyan's deputy, Hovannes Igityan, went farther, denouncing it as "ludicrous."

"Look, newspapers write that Kocharyan is backed by Russia's [ruling] elite," Igityan told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "Kocharyan's entourage is spreading such claims. In this context, the ambassador's meeting was ludicrous to say the least."

A pro-Western opposition parliamentarian, Arman Babajanyan, also deplored Kopyrkin's meeting with Kocharyan at a session of the parliament committee attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Grigor Hovannisian. The latter insisted that the Russian envoy did not break the diplomatic protocol.

"The ambassador did not do anything wrong within the bounds of the diplomatic protocol and norms," said Hovannisian. "That [meeting] cannot be deemed condemnable or be the subject of a special examination by our ministry."

Rubinyan announced later in the day that he has discussed the matter with Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan. "The minister informed me that in fact the Russian ambassador was invited on Friday to the

Foreign Ministry where a conversation took place with the ambassador in the context of not interfering in Armenia's internal affairs," he wrote on Facebook.

"Deputy Minister Hovannisian did not speak about this at the committee meeting because at that point he did not have a permission to publicize the information," added the lawmaker.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced the prosecution of Kocharyan as well as other former Armenian officials shortly after the ex-president was first arrested in July 2018.

Kocharyan was set free in early August two weeks before Russian President Putin telephoned him to congratulate him on his 64th

birthday anniversary. A spokesman for Putin said at the time that the two men "have been maintaining warm relations that are not influenced by any events taking place in Armenia." Kocharyan, who ruled Armenia from 1998-2008, described the phone call as a show of "serious support" for him.

The ex-president was again arrested in December. Three weeks later, he received New Year greetings from Putin.

Kocharyan, his former chief of staff Armen Gevorgyan and two retired generals went on trial last month. The judge presiding over the trial, Davit Grigoryan, ordered Kocharyan released from jail five days later. The decision was strongly condemned by Pashinyan's political allies and supporters.

# Armenia Begins Probe of 2016 War

By Ani Mejlumyan

YEREVAN — Armenia's parliament has established a commission to investigate the circumstances of the 2016 "April War" with Azerbaijan. The move comes amid a widening battle against the country's former authorities and their allies who continue to govern Nagorno-Karabakh.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced the formation of the commission on May 20. "The time has come [...] to get answers to a number of questions that are of concern to us all," he said.

Pashinyan did not specify what questions would be probed. But suspicions have long swirled around the event, a four-day spurt of violence in 2016 that was the worst fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over Nagorno-Karabakh since a ceasefire was signed in 1994. It was also the first time that the Armenian side lost territory since the ceasefire, and raised concerns in Yerevan and Stepanakert about the ability of their armed forces to counter an aggressively growing Azerbaijani military.

After the clashes, there were reports of a lack of weapons and allegations that the political leadership in Yerevan — possibly by request from Moscow — told military commanders to halt their offensive even when they had the advantage.

"The commission can at least clear up some basic facts, for example how many soldiers were killed and when, but of course I am not sure this is the point of this commission," Emil Sanamyan, a Washington, DC-based Armenia analyst, told Eurasianet. "The point is to discipline Serzh and Bako," he said, referring to Serzh Sargsyan, the former leader of Armenia whom Pashinyan ousted last year, and Bako Sahakyan, the de facto leader of Nagorno-Karabakh and a Sargsyan political ally.

Pashinyan announced the commission just after former president Robert Kocharyan — another ally of Sargsyan and Sahakyan — was released on bail while he awaits trial on charges related to the violent suppression of protests in 2008. Sahakyan posted bail for Kocharyan, along with another former Karabakh leader, and Pashinyan reacted with a double-barreled broadside against the country's judiciary system and the Karabakh leadership, both of which he accused of acting in the interest of the former authorities. Pashinyan's first mention of the commission was during that speech.

"This is a pure retaliation," Sanamyan said.

The commission will be led by Andranik Kocharyan, a former deputy defense minister and a member of parliament from Pashinyan's "My Step" alliance, and includes 11 MPs, with some from the opposition. It has held one hearing so far, on June 4, in closed session. "The commission's work will be mainly closed. The commission will decide which part of the materials should be public," Lilit Makunts, the head of the "My Step" faction in parliament, told RFE/RL.

At a press conference the day of the first hearing, Andranik Kocharyan said the commission's work is expected to last about six months, covering a wide range of issues, including whether the armed forces were properly equipped, whether they had sufficient intelligence, and the decisions made by military commanders during the fighting. "The victims' families should not have any questions," he told reporters.

The commission will be able to examine classified documents and question witnesses, though it will not have the power to force witnesses to testify, he added. One key witness could be Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan, who was first deputy defense minister during the 2016 war.

Asked for further comment from members of the commission, Vahan Kostanyan, the press secretary for Pashinyan's Civil Contract party,

told Eurasianet that there was nothing to add about the commission's work other than what had already been made public.

Members of the former government have complained that they are being unfairly targeted. "Pashinyan will try to corner the [former ruling] Republican Party, Serzh Sargsyan and Bako Sahakyan, in general all those people who can falsely be prosecuted for this," said Armen Ashotyan, a senior official in the Republican Party, in an interview with the TV station 5th Channel.

The involvement by parliament in military oversight "offers a degree of promise and potential that the Armenian parliament will adopt a more active and assertive role as an institutional counterweight to the executive branch," Richard Giragosian, head of the Yerevan think tank Regional Studies Center, told Eurasianet. The commission also could determine "critical lessons learned" that could drive future reforms, he said.

But he cautioned that the makeup of the commission was cause for concern. "Although the process of the investigation is reasonable, the parliamentary committee in charge of the investigation does not have the military experience or even the resources to conduct a comprehensive and impartial investigation," Giragosian said. He warned against the investigation being used as a "vendetta" against the former authorities. "If that were to happen, it would not only damage the current Defense Ministry but would also diminish trust and confidence in both the military and would weaken parliament itself," he said.

By showing a willingness to air its dirty laundry, "there might be an indirect message to Azerbaijan, that in post-revolutionary Armenia sensitive issues pertaining to the military and security sector — usually a taboo in countries at war — can be scrutinized," said Anahit Shirinyan, a political analyst. It also showed, she told Eurasianet, that "issues of good governance are now of higher priority to Armenia

than military-patriotic rhetoric which is often used to conceal mismanagement and corruption."

Several Defense Ministry officials were fired shortly after the fighting on charges of corruption.

This is not the first time Pashinyan has addressed the need to investigate the April 2016 fighting. During an October 2017 hearing, when he was an opposition MP, he called for a commission to look into the event. But then he appeared to try to implicate Russia.

"After joining [in 2014] the Eurasian Economic Union [a Russia-led trade bloc], Armenia lost a significant portion of territory," Pashinyan said then. He accused the then-ruling Republicans of justifying membership in the EAEU, which Pashinyan's bloc opposed, by tying it to Russia's security guarantees for Armenia. "You say there is a security issue involved, then how did it happen that an EAEU member was fighting with weapons from the 1980s?" he asked.

(Ani Mejlumyan is a reporter based in Yerevan. This piece was originally written for Eurasianet.)

## Pashinyan Explains Party Ideology

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said his Civil Contract party does not espouse any of the traditional political ideologies as it held its first congress since coming to power one year ago, on Sunday, June 16.

"We are a party that has rejected 'isms' because hardened ideologies no longer exist in the contemporary world," Pashinyan told delegates of the congress. "In the political sense, we are not liberal, we are not centrist, we are not social democrat; we are a civil party."

"This means that we place ourselves beyond ideological standards and are forming a new ideological plane based on four pillars: statehood, citizenship, national identity and personality."

Pashinyan set up Civil Contract in 2013 after splitting from former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress. It operated as a non-governmental organization mostly uniting young civic activists before becoming a full-fledged political party in 2015.

Civil Contract served as Pashinyan's core support base during the April-May 2018 velvet revolution. It is also the dominant force in a more broad-based My Step bloc which Pashinyan formed following the revolution.

Despite being the party's top leader, Pashinyan has never headed it officially. Civil Contract stuck to this tradition at its weekend congress in Yerevan which elected the party's new governing board. The board in turn appointed Minister for Local Government Suren Papikyan as its chairman.

Sasun Mikaelyan, the ruling party's chairman until now, unexpectedly failed to get elected to the new board.

## Armenian Church Commemorates St. Gayane and Her Companions

ECHMIADZIN (Panorama.am) — The Armenian Apostolic Church honors the memory of St. Gayane and her companions on June 18. All churches across the country are set to celebrate a Divine Liturgy during the feast. On the eve of the feast ceremonies are held, which start after the evening service, and church hymns and songs, dedicated to the nuns, are sang.

St. Gayane lived during the period of the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305 years) who subjected Christians to persecutions. She was one of the 37 nuns who left Rome for Armenia.

During the first 20 years of his reign Diocletian didn't persecute Christians. However, after the year 303, under pressure from Caesar Galerius, he subjected Christians to severe persecutions. He issued 4 edicts against Christians which envisaged Christians'

removal from the army, confiscation of church property, first of all buildings and ritual books, church servants' arrest and capital punishments, subjecting Christians to torments pursuing the goal to make them to give up their beliefs and faith. Persecutions agitated the whole empire, Christians were martyred for the sake of Christ. It was during this difficult period that Gayane and her companions left Rome.

Diocletian informed about it the Armenian King Tiridates suggesting him either to return one of the nuns — Hripsime, or to get married to her. Becoming aware of the nun's story, himself wished to get married to Hripsime. King's servants searched and found Hripsime and started to convince her to obey the king's will who was captivated by her dazzling beauty and wished to get married to her. Hripsime rejected him saying that she as well as the other nuns

had already become the bride of Christ and couldn't marry.

Becoming angry, the king ordered to subject her and the other nuns to severe torments. Her tongue and womb were cut, eyes were put out and her body was dismembered. Abyss Gayane and two of the nuns also were subjected to severe torments for encouraging Hripsime to endure tortures for the sake of Christ. Executioners pierced their feet, hang them, tore off their skin, cut their abdomens and afterwards beheaded them. The remaining 33 nuns were put to sword and parts of their bodies were thrown to the beasts for eating.

Nine days later St. Gregory the Illuminator found the relics of the nuns and burying the relics, built martyriums in those sites, where in the future the Monasteries of St. Hripsime, St. Gayane and St. Shoghakat were erected.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## First Turkish-Armenian TV Station Launched

ISTANBUL (Anadolu Agency) – Turkey's first Turkish-Armenian television station has hit the airwaves, according to the journalist spearheading the project.

"Every Friday night, for the first time in Turkey we're broadcasting news in Western Armenian," said Aram Kuran, the station's chief, referring to one of the two branches of the Armenian language.

"We also have live broadcasts two days a week," he told Anadolu Agency, adding that they hope to expand the program schedule.

The station's team started work on Luys TV- meaning "light" in Armenian nearly two years ago, Kuran explained.

Most of the programs will be in Armenian, he explained, but some will be in Turkish as well.

## Armenian De-Miners Organize Event for Children in Aleppo

ALEPPO (Armenpress) – The Armenian Center for Humanitarian De-mining and Expertise (CHDE), which currently has sappers and medics deployed in Syria, has organized an event for children in Aleppo.

Earlier, the Center for Humanitarian De-mining and Expertise had carried out a campaign in Armenia and collected gifts that were donated for Syrian children, and on June 17, the donations reached their destination. More than 100 Syrian children were given the presents during the festive event.

The event was attended by Aleppo Province Vice Governor Kunit Aasi, Aleppo City Mayor Maad al-Madlaji, Armenia's Consul General in Aleppo Armen Sargsyan, Commander of the Armenian humanitarian mission in Syria Arkady Tonoyan, Center for Humanitarian De-mining and Expertise spokesperson Nazeli Elbakyan and the team's sappers and medics.

The Syrian side was happy to note that "a new and historic chapter has opened in the Armenia-Syria friendly relations, the foundation of which is humanitarianism," CHDE said in a news release.

Earlier in April, two-time heavyweight European Weightlifting champ Simon Martirosyan was among those who donated presents for the cause.

## Council of Europe Reaffirms Support for Judicial Reforms in Armenia

STRASBURG (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, June 17, hosted a delegation led by Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni, who conveyed readiness of CoE Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland's support to the judicial reform in the country.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the Council of Europe, including the advancement of a democratic development agenda. Nikol Pashinyan noted that the judicial reform is a priority on his government's agenda. Pashinyan expressed his appreciation for the steps taken by the Council of Europe in support of the ongoing reforms, including the CoE high-ranking representatives' recent visit to our country.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni conveyed warm greetings and the readiness of CoE Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland to support the judicial reform. In this context, she evoked the Armenia-Council of Europe Action Plan for 2019-2022, which officially kicked off Monday. While introducing the key directions specified in the Action Plan, Battaini-Dragnoni assured Armenian leaders that the Council of Europe is ready for close cooperation in implementing the reforms initiated by the Armenian authorities.

Pashinyan said the ultimate goal of the ongoing reforms is to strengthen citizens' confidence in the judicial system. He stressed that the government seeks to achieve real changes in various fields of public life.

## Pompeo Hails Georgia's NATO Aspirations, Backs Territorial Integrity

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) – US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has praised Georgia's "leadership role as an aspiring NATO nation" and condemned "Russia's ongoing occupation" of the South Caucasus country's territory.

"Georgia has fought to maintain its territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression, and Russia's unlawful occupation of the Georgian territory, and its failure to adhere to cease-fire obligations," Pompeo said on June 11 in Washington as he met with visiting Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze.

"Russia's belligerence is just one reason we're proud of our military to support to the Georgia Defense Readiness Program. We are helping train and equip a self-sufficient force that will ensure Georgia's territorial defense," Pompeo added.

The country of some 3.7 million people fought a brief war with Russia in August 2008, and Moscow's continued military presence on the country's territory adds to tensions in the region.

Moscow has stationed thousands of troops in breakaway Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia since it recognized their independence following the 2008 war.

Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili on June 10 predicted that Tbilisi will regain control over the two regions, saying, "Gradually, I think, the population in the occupied territories, are understanding that the perspective

is not in the north," that is, with Russia.

In a statement, the State Department said Pompeo and Bakhtadze "discussed Georgia's partnership with NATO, cooperation on issues of regional security, and reforms necessary for Georgia to ensure the rule of law and fair elections."

At a 2008 summit in Bucharest, NATO agreed that Georgia will eventually become a member, but no firm date has been set, although the membership perspective for the country has been reconfirmed at every summit ever since.

In March, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reiterated that the South Caucasus country will eventually join the Western military alliance, despite the Kremlin's fierce opposition.

In his comments, Pompeo said that "Georgia's leadership role as an aspiring NATO ally is just one reason we're so enthusiastic to work together. President [Donald] Trump has called for all nations to do more to resolve global challenges, and Georgia is doing just that in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan."

"Even as we speak, 32 brave Georgian soldiers know that they have given their all while serving alongside Americans [in Afghanistan], and 870 Georgian soldiers serve in support of NATO's mission there," Pompeo added.

The top US diplomat said the "prime minister and I also had the chance to discuss Georgia's parliament's responsibility to make sure government agencies act lawfully and deliver what they

promise to their citizens."

Bakhtadze said that Georgia, with "expanded interoperability with NATO and defense spending – 2 percent of our GDP," has all the practical tools to prepare for NATO membership.

He also asserted that Georgia "is a stable democracy with strong state institutions, with a growing and attractive economy and vibrant civil society."

In a recent ranking Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Georgia led the way for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region with a score of 58, making it 41st on the list of 180 countries.

But the report also warned that Georgia "faces democratic backsliding, making it both vulnerable to high-level corruption and a country to watch moving forward."

"This downturn is due to a lack of accountability of law enforcement, corruption, and political interference in the judiciary, state capture, and government-sponsored attacks on independent civil society, among other issues."

By contrast, Russia's score fell to 28 from 29 the previous year, leaving it in 138th place, the same as Iran.

The grouping for Eastern Europe and Central Asia includes Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

## Armenia, China Facilitate Cargo Transportation at bilateral directions

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Conducting cargo transportation from Armenia to China and vice versa without any logistic problem is becoming closer to reality. The issue was included in the agenda of the Armenian delegation's visit to China led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Minister of High Technological Industry of Armenia Hakob Arshakyan, who was also in the Armenian delegation during the China visit, recently spoke about the topic.

"During the visit we discussed the issue that Armenia and China should have a transportation agreement according to which the Armenian carriers will be able to depart for China, and the Chinese carriers to Armenia. We do not have such an agreement with China, and in fact certain difficulties, logistic problems, emerge. There is a concrete agreement that we are moving on the path of signing a deal. The draft agreement is ready, and we are in contact with the Chinese side through our foreign ministry in order to sign the agreement," the minister said, adding that during the visit a meeting was held with the two major Chinese companies – CCC (China Communications construction company) and China railway.

Among a number of important meetings of the PM's delegation, the minister highlighted the meeting with the Chinese Transportation Minister during which they discussed considering Armenia's North-South project as part of the Chinese One Belt One Road project.

"The issue was being discussed for our project not only to be viewed as a program linking Armenia's north and south, but also connecting the countries of the Persian Gulf and Black Sea basin. Serious discussions were held, and the Chinese side expressed readiness to consider the North-South

project as part of the One Belt One Road project, and therefore, to implement cooperation programs with the Armenian side," he added.

As for the technological sector, the cooperation directions in communication and technologies were discussed during the meeting with China's minister of communication and industry. The Armenian minister informed that the One Belt One Road project includes a spatial information corridor project which consists of several parts. The first



Minister of High Technological Industry of Armenia Hakob Arshakyan

part operates via Russia's territory which supposes huge infrastructure of digital connections and joins Europe.

"The other part is planned for Afghanistan and Iran. And now its continuation is being discussed: they should decide whether this spatial corridor should pass through Turkey, Azerbaijan or Armenia. I have introduced our opportunities to the minister," Arshakyan said.

"We are at discussions stage. Why this is important? Armenia should not be viewed as a small island, but as a region where our country will be integrated into many directions and programs as much as possible by increasing its role," he added.

## HDP Submits Queries to Interior Minister on Armenian Woman Attacked in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Ahval) – Turkey's pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) have submitted written queries to the interior minister after an Armenian woman was stabbed in Istanbul last month, left-wing news site Gazete Duvar reported on Wednesday, June 12.

HDP lawmaker Hüda Kaya submitted a series of written inquiries in parliament to Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu in connection with the woman from Armenia, who was attacked on May 31 in the Samatya district of Istanbul.

Fellow HDP Deputy Garo Paylan also brought up the attack in parliament on Wednesday, asking why the assailants, who had committed a hate crime, had not been caught.

The woman, identified as Arpine T., was hospitalized after masked men stabbed her at the entrance to her house in Samatya. The two men told the woman the attack was only the beginning, according to reports. Arpine T., who had moved to Istanbul from Armenia, is relocating back to Armenia, the newspaper said.

The written queries included questions whether work had been done to identify the attackers and to prevent similar attacks, and how many people who targeted Armenians' homes have been arrested, Gazete Duvar said.



## INTERNATIONAL

## Exiled Turkish Journalist Reunited with Family in Germany After 3 Years



Can Dunder

BERLIN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The wife of one of Turkey’s most prominent exiled journalists has been reunited this week with her family in Berlin three years after her passport was confiscated, Deutsche Welle reports.

Can Dunder, the former editor-in-chief of the main opposition newspaper Cumhuriyet, fled to Germany in 2016 after being convicted of espionage for publishing a story about Turkish arms shipments to Syria rebels.

Turkish authorities stripped his wife, Dilek Turker Dunder, of her passport in September 2016. She was unable to reunite with her husband or son, who studies in London.

On Friday, she posted a picture on Twitter standing together with her family in Berlin.

“For three years, my passport was illegally taken from me and I was prevented from leaving the country even though there was no investigation. I tried all legal avenues with

no results,” she wrote on Twitter. “The Constitutional Court didn’t take up my case for two years. They did not comply with the constitution and the price I paid for trusting the legal system was being away from my family for three years.”

“I finally used my right as a mother and rejoined my family. I hope that in the shortest time Turkey will return to the rule of law and other separated families will reunite with each other,” she added.

Dilek Toker Dunder told Germany’s DPA news agency that she arrived in the country on Tuesday. The travel ban against her is still in effect. She did not discuss how she fled Turkey without a passport.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had warned Can Dunder that he would “pay a heavy price” for the 2015 Cumhuriyet report revealing Turkey’s intelligence agency sending arms shipments to Syrian rebels.

## EU Boosts Aid to Armenia

BRUSSELS (RFE/RL) – The European Union on Thursday, June 13, announced 25 million euros (\$28 million) in additional assistance to Armenia and expressed its readiness to finance large-scale infrastructure projects proposed by the Armenian government.

The EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, hailed “democratic reforms” implemented in Armenia after chairing, together with Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, a second session of the EU-Armenia Partnership Council.

The council is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the landmark

Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed by the two sides in 2017.

The CEPA offers the South Caucasus state the prospect of a closer relationship with the EU in return for major political and economic reforms. It commits Yerevan to gradually “approximating” Armenian economic laws and regulations to the EU’s legal framework.

“The implementation of our agreement is proceeding well,” Mogherini told a joint news conference with Mnatsakanyan in Brussels. “The dialogue, cooperation and partnership we have on different issues ... is excellent, and we also have good plans for the future.”

“Based on the country’s performance, democratic reforms during the last year, the EU will allocate an additional 25 million euros this year, bringing the total allocation for this year to 65 million euros, to support Armenia in its reforms and in implementing effectively our agreement,” Mogherini said.

She said the EU is also “identifying funding possibilities for the priority projects that Armenia has recently presented to the European Commission.” They relate to not only public infrastructures but also energy efficien-



Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan (L) is welcomed by EU Foreign Policy chief Federica Mogherini at the start of an EU-Armenia Partnership Council meeting in Brussels, June 13, 2019.

cy, police reform and women’s rights, she added.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan requested EU funding for his “mega projects” when he visited Brussels in March. Pashinyan said after that trip that the EU is ready to support them provided that they are co-financed by the Armenian government.

The head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, Piotr Switalski, said last month that some of these projects are “very costly and very complicated.” “But we are very seriously considering how best to implement them,” he told RFE/RL’s Armenian service.

According to Mogherini, the EU is also ready to provide “substantial support” for sweeping judicial reforms planned by the Pashinyan

administration. “We support the ongoing work aimed at a comprehensive judicial reform in Armenia in line with the Armenian constitution and with international standards,” she said. “An independent, efficient and accountable judiciary benefits all.”

Mnatsakanyan described the Partnership Council meeting as “very productive.” He reaffirmed Yerevan’s commitment to closer ties with the EU, saying that Armenia and the 28-nation bloc share a “common civilizational heritage” and commitment to democracy.

Pashinyan has also repeatedly stressed the importance of closer ties with the EU for Armenia. He has made clear at the same time that his country will remain part of the Russian-led alliances of former Soviet republics.



President Armen Sarkissian, right, with Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al-Jarwan

## President Sarkissian Meets with Global Tolerance Council Member Ahmed Bin Mahammed Al-Jarwan

YEREVAN – President Armen Sarkissian received on June 17 the President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace, member of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al-Jarwan. He has arrived to Armenia to discuss the of the RA National Assembly to the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace.

The main mission of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace is to deal with global social and humanitarian problems.

Sarkissian welcomed Bin Mohammed Al-Jarwan and said that the areas, which the organization is engaged in, are important for our state.

The two spoke also about the friendly Armenia-UAE relations. Underscoring the will to expand the bilateral cooperation, Sakrissian said that the time has come to make more practical steps.

## Greek PM Tsipras Warns Turkey of EU Sanctions

ATHENS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said on Sunday, June 16 that Greece and Cyprus will push their European Union (EU) partners to penalize Turkey, including the possible option of sanctions, if Ankara is verified to have started drilling for gas west of Cyprus, the Greek Reporter reveals.

Addressing the nation after an extraordinary meeting of the Government Council for Foreign Affairs and Defense (KYSEA), the supreme decision-making body on issues of foreign policy and national defense of Greece, Tsipras said that Greeks should feel “totally safe.”

“We have agreed ... to prepare the ground in the coming week that the [European Union] summit take the relevant decisions, even sanctions against Turkey, if it is verified that there has been a drill (by Turkey) in the Cypriot EEZ,” Tsipras told reporters.

Nicosia has said that Turkey has moved materials and equipment for drilling activity to the area west of Paphos where it has stationed its drillship Fatih, but the government can’t confirm the information, the Cyprus News Agency

reported on Sunday.

Government spokesman Prodromos Prodromou told the news agency: “We have been following statements of Turkish officials for several days and often with conflicting information. There is information on the transport of drilling equipment and equipment. However, we are not in a position to confirm this information.”

Tsipras cancelled his scheduled visit to the islands of Kos and Nisyros and returned to Athens to chair the KYSEA meeting late on Sunday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense has denied it moved any troops to the Eastern Aegean Islands close to Turkey as a reaction to any emergency.

“Recent webpage postings according to which Greek troops have been moved to Eastern Aegean islands in an emergency do not correspond to reality,” the ministry said in a statement Sunday.

“The operational deployment of the Greek Armed Forces is the usual one. Any movements were made as part of (an exercise) that was completed on Friday, June 14,” the ministry said.

# Community News

## Armenian Bar Association Turns 30

### Marks Anniversary with Flair and Education

LOS ANGELES – Gracing the 30th anniversary of its establishment, the Armenian Bar Association will convene a fascinating annual conference and celebrate its red-letter day in dramatic fashion on June 28-29, in downtown Los Angeles. The conference program and the ensuing evening ball are expected to draw record numbers from the legal community and from the public at large. All functions are open to the public, with free admission for non-lawyers to the continuing legal education program and tickets-for-purchase for the gala banquet.

Appearing at the top of the marquis will be Judge Dickran Tevzizian Jr. (retired) whom the Armenian Bar will honor with its Lifetime



Judge Dickran Tevzizian Jr.

Achievement Award at the gala banquet to be held at the stately and super-impressive California Club. In the words of Armenian Bar Chairman Gerard Kassabian, "Rare are the lives of men who have done so much for so many in the legal profession. What Judge T. has shown us over the years is just how right it is to be proud and expressive of our Armenian heritage on a broad, multi-cultural platform here in Los Angeles and throughout the country. Please join us as we raise our glasses and fill our hearts in humble tribute to the historic career of one of our iconic founding members."

Tevzizian was the first Armenian-American to be appointed to the federal bench, a position he held with an abundance of dignity and decorum for more than 30 years. A worthy recipient of numerous awards and recognized as a "shining star, great judge, kind human being, and 13 or 14 on a scale of 10," Tevzizian is widely respected for faithfully following the law and steering feuding parties towards informal resolution as opposed to contentious litigation. Since his retirement from the bench, he has become one of the prized neutrals at JAMS and was recently selected to the 2019 Southern California Super Lawyers list in the alternative dispute resolution category.

The annual conference program at the Sheraton Grand Los Angeles will open with a Saturday morning wake-up call about the plunder of historic Armenia's native culture and civilization and then will touch upon the legal challenges and opportunities in restoring dimensions of it. Moderated by Armenian Genocide Reparations Committee Chairman Armen K. Hovannisian, two experts in the field will weigh in with their practical, hands-on experiences on the ground itself of the Armenian homeland and in US and international tribunals.

The first discussant will be trail-blazing attorney Matthew Karanian, who

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Stonehill students at the Opera and Ballet Theatre of Armenia with the Aram Khachaturian statue

## Stonehill College Students Join Theory and Praxis in Armenia Program

EASTON, Mass. – Stonehill College faculty members Anna Ohanyan and Todd S. Gernes have created a new version of an innovative travel and internship program for their students in Armenia. It focuses on the theory and practice of global security through the lens of Armenian experience. The new three-week summer version is part of Stonehill's Learning Community programs, while several years ago Ohanyan had already started the

longer version of a Learning Inside Out Network (LION) (<https://www.stonehill.edu/offices-services/learning-inside-out-network/>) program, where students spend four to five months in Armenia (see <https://mirrorspectator.com/2016/04/21/prof-ohanyan-hopes-to-build-bridges-for-peace-in-the-caucasus/>). The Stonehill students are of non-Armenian backgrounds for the most part.

### The Origin Story

Ohanyan, Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College, said that in the past she had always separated her research from her teaching. She was at the time looking at post-conflict regions like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, the Balkans in general and the South Caucasus. Peter Ubertaino, then director of the Martin Institute for Law and Society and now founding dean of Stonehill's School of Arts and Sciences came to her office and suggested she take students with her to some of these regions. Initially, they thought of developing internships in Rwanda, the Balkans and Armenia, with Armenia serving as a base for a conference.

Instead of Rwanda, they started in 2016 with four students in a longer program from February to the end of June in Serbia and Armenia, with two students interning in the former country coming to Armenia for a conference. They decided to limit it to Armenia for 2017, again February to the end of June, because so many opportunities were to be found there. There were three students in 2017.

In 2018, Stonehill reassessed the program by means of a steering committee with several professors and two students who had participated in the program, and this was when Gernes joined it. The Eurasia Partnership Foundation was

continued on next page



Anna Ohanyan

## New Members Join Armenian Caucus, Sponsor Genocide Resolution

WASHINGTON – New Members joined the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues and more members co-sponsored the bipartisan Armenian Genocide resolution as a result of successful meetings led by the Armenian Assembly of America.

The Armenian Assembly, along with its state chairs and grassroots activists, met with a host of congressional offices to discuss strengthening US-Armenia relations, co-sponsoring House Resolution 296, and joining the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. As a result of these meetings, Representatives Nanette Barragan (D-CA), Gil Cisneros (D-CA), Kevin Hern (R-OK), Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ), Katie Porter (D-CA), and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) joined the Armenian Caucus, bringing it to 116 Members, and over 100 Members supporting H.Res.296.

"For years, the Armenian community's vibrant culture has been an integral presence in Los Angeles and across the country. I'm honored to be a member of the Armenian Caucus and look forward to joining my colleagues in working on issues that matter to Armenian-Americans," Barragan told the Armenian Assembly.

"As a new member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I look forward to working with this bipartisan group of lawmakers as we



Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Congresswoman Ann Kuster, and Armenian Assembly Massachusetts State Chair Herman Purutyan



Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program participant Armen Kaprelian, Armenian Assembly Communications Director Danielle Saroyan Ashbahian, Congressman Mike Levin, and Armenian Assembly Pennsylvania State Chair Paul Sookiasian

build stronger economic, cultural, and diplomatic ties with the people of Armenia," Spanberger said to the Armenian Assembly. "I'm also proud to represent many Armenian Americans across Virginia's 7th district."

Throughout April and May, the Assembly met with numerous offices on Capitol Hill as well as in their districts, including Reps. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Judy Chu (D-CA), Dan Crenshaw (R-TX), John Curtis (R-UT), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Lois Frankel (D-FL), Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), Ann Kuster (D-NH), Debbie Lesko (R-AZ), Mike Levin (D-CA), Grace Meng (D-NY), Seth Moulton (D-MA), Richard Neal (D-MA), Joe Neguse (D-CO), Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Chris Pappas (D-NH), Katie Porter (D-CA), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Dutch

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

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identified as a third-party provider for the internship in Armenia. This year, 2019, for the first time there is a three-week summer learning community version with the third-party provider. It is called Swords, Saviors, and Saints: Global Security and Humanitarianism in Practice. The longer program is not presented this year, but in 2020 both the longer and short programs will be available.

Stonehill, a small liberal arts Catholic college south of Boston, promotes the integration of different disciplines or perspectives for its second-year students through its Learning Community programs, which address real-world problems requiring broad and multiple approaches, and often feature travel or learning in communities. In the Armenian case, Gernes explained, "We created a new structure for the Learning Community for this. Instead of having two courses linked to the integrative experience, we have five feeder courses connected with the learning experience. I will be linking a new course in Progressive Era history to that." The feeder courses are on international politics (introductory), peace and conflict studies, conflict analysis and resolution, development economics, and environmental studies. There are other professors interested in preparing new feeder courses in different fields, including literature and Arabic, while Ohanian and Gernes have been discussing creating a new course connected to empire in a global context.

Ohanian said that the three-week summer program this year has an environmental studies component for the first time, with an internship at the Acopian Center for the Environment at the American University of Armenia. There are eight students in all and in the evenings they will be taking a seminar to prepare for their conference talks during the last week, on June 21-22 in Yerevan.

This year, Ohanian said, applications for the conference were received from a large variety of countries, such as South Africa, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Georgia, Iran and Turkey. The conference is hosted by Eurasia International University of Yerevan, which provides all facilities and technology. Ohanian serves on the board of that university.

### Todd Gernes

Ohanian's collaboration with Gernes in creating the summer program began when Gernes was Dean of General Education at Stonehill and doing a lot of programming for students with short-term travel components. Gernes, an associate professor of history and Writing Program Director at Stonehill, is an interdisciplinary historian of American culture, primarily concentrating on the 19th and 20th centuries. Ohanian approached him to serve on her committee for the longer LION program. He suggested creating a short-term Armenian travel and internship experience that allowed students to connect with the Stonehill curriculum, and, Gernes said, "We got to talking, and I started getting more and more interested in the topic. I said, you know I grew up in Watertown and absorbed a lot of this [Armenian] history through osmosis. I studied with a wonderful musician and guitar teacher, John Baboian (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2016/08/25/john-baboian-armenian-soul-in-new-englands-jazz-world/>), who also grew up nearby." Not only that, but Gernes's alternative high school, the Home-Based School, was located at the time in the basement of St. James Armenian Church and he grew up with Armenian children in public schools.

Gernes recalled that as a child growing up in the 1970s, he experienced anti-Semitism and developed empathy for Armenians experiencing similar discrimination in school. He said people would say the latter were "fresh off the boat," "your father is a fruit vendor," and worse, because, he said, "Watertown was kind of a tough white ethnic town growing up. Everybody was discriminated against."

Gernes said, "I have a Russian-Jewish back-



Todd Gernes



Eight Stonehill students at Boston's Logan Airport in Boston with Prof. Anna Ohanian, far left, and Prof. Todd S. Gernes, far right, on their way to Yerevan, Armenia early this June

ground. There are a lot of parallels with Armenian culture and genocide and immigration. As an American historian of the 19th century, I saw much of this history intersected with work that I had already done with the American progressive movement, and connected very neatly to the history of Near East Relief and the birth of modern humanitarianism."

Ohanian chimed in and said that Gernes was the one to push her to work with first- and second-year students in General Education learning community courses, while she initially wanted to only take upper level students to Armenia.

"This course developed as a dialogue between Anna and myself," Gernes said, "and it still is this wonderful dialogue that we have. In working together we almost complete each other's sentences. I have been reading for the last year in Armenian history and literature and am really excited to travel in a few days to Yerevan. It is my first time."

The wedding of theory, practice and experiential learning is fairly unique. Gernes said that many institutions now outsource these types of programs to third-party providers, making them much more homogenous. The problem is that they are labor intensive and require such great personnel resources. Gernes said, "I have to be willing to go all in, essentially, and devote a chunk of my life to it. ... It is not a one-year commitment, it is not a two-year commitment. It is probably more like a ten-year commitment. It is a career choice." He will be writing two or three articles as a result of the summer program. He concluded, "For me, it was an easy choice. It allowed me personally to put my historical work into a very immediate global and international context so that was a breath of fresh air for me personally."

Gernes reflected that one of the things he personally adds to the overall program is the dimension of past and present and connections between Armenian and American societies. As an American historian, he said, "I really began to see Armenia as an idea and a lens through which we can observe history and culture. So when we are studying Armenia we are also studying the Bolshevik Revolution, World War I and II, the pogroms in Russia, the situation of the Middle East, the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of the Soviet Union, the relationship between American, Europe and the Middle East, and the history of immigration. It is so incredibly rich that we can really use Armenia both as a place and as an idea to talk about world history. That is what is so exciting to me. Of course, I am both interested in history and literature, and making those connections." In particular, Gernes is interested in the connections between the history of the American anti-slavery movement, the women's suffrage movement and humanitarian efforts in Armenia at the turn of the last century.

He is studying World War I era posters raising funds for Near East Relief, often prepared by well known Madison Avenue illustrators. He is deconstructing one image in particular which will be the topic of his keynote talk at the Armenian conference and later an article. It is a Middle Eastern waif in traditional dress looking out longingly to her audience, with the headline

"Lest we perish." This is a 1918 poster by Ethel Franklin Betts. He will look at the discourse of turning true stories into very powerful images that were part fiction and part fact, and how those images were used. Gernes also just wrote a short essay on Zabel Yesayan's *In the Ruins* comparing it with Emily Dickinson's poetry that talks about grief.

### Theory and Praxis

Ohanian said, "There is a very deep connection between the coursework and the internships. It is theory, practice, theory. We essentially built a loop — a self-reinforcing loop. We think that is the future of learning. In the classroom they do take the theory, but when we place them in internships we place them in a tightly mentored internship environment with practitioners."

She saw that "there is a lot of learning that is occurring with practitioners which I cannot teach to my students as a trained academic."

It is designed so that the students choose the topic of the paper they will write in coordination with their prospective internships. Ohanian and Gernes find out from the internship providers what projects they have at the moment and then take these ideas to the students, who will write papers in the course in an applied context. Ohanian stressed, "They do realize that the stakes of learning are really high." They work directly with the community on the abstract theories that they have studied. After the internship is finished, the students take a course which tries to integrate practice and theory. This integrative seminar includes participation in the annual international student conference on global security studies in Yerevan. At this conference, undergraduate and graduate students from all around the world present papers. Practitioners come to organize professional development seminars.

Ohanian highlighted that her field of studies, political science and international relations, is heavily ethnocentric and Eurocentric. For example, theories developed to explain great power competition are downscaled to explain relations between Armenian and Azerbaijan. The Stonehill program shows the value of studying from the so-called peripheries of the world. To understand Russian foreign policy it helps to look at countries like Armenia.

"Armenia," she said, "is such a central puzzle to study world history," and it should be focused on "not as an extension of a bigger conversation

for the theory, but with analytical independence, with its own agency." Furthermore, students get to realize this by working with organizations like the Armenia office of the Transparency International, Civilnet or the Women's Resource Center, because they all, Ohanian said, "grapple with common problems of human insecurity...They learn better and more about those issues in Armenia than if they spend a few months in Spain or France, even if interning at the United Nations. That would give them the experience but they would not get close to the actual project implementation."

The Velvet Revolution in Armenia has added a different sort of value to the Armenian internships. Gernes said, "Many American students are naïve about the value of democracy and civil engagement. Armenia is kind of a crucible for that. Our hope is that they go to Armenia and see democracy in action with fresh eyes." Ohanian said that the LION program originally was built on a liberal island of civil society, but now many of the program partners are actually part of the government.

This year's learning community has its own online blog created by Gernes, [https://textmuseum.typepad.com/armenia\\_and\\_america\\_a\\_sha/](https://textmuseum.typepad.com/armenia_and_america_a_sha/), where students (and Gernes) write their impressions of Armenia and post useful information.

### Helping Armenia

While the program primarily caters to Stonehill students, it also helps Armenia. It gives it additional recognition as a sought-after site for international internships while highlighting the positive recent changes in Armenian society. Furthermore, Ohanian stated, "It really should be acknowledged that Stonehill College does an enormous service to Armenia. It creates an opportunity for Armenian students to participate in an international conference. Younger voices who do not have a space to present their work get feedback. All in English, it is built as a way to help these Armenian students but also provide professional development seminars for professors."

Gernes runs a workshop for Armenian faculty on integrating writing into the curriculum. He said, "It is commonplace in the United States but less so in Europe. I will be working with no more



Stonehill students with Professor Todd Gernes, far right, at the History Museum of Armenia

than 12 faculty and giving them an intense workshop on how to incorporate sequence writing into their syllabi. We have another one called the pedagogy of controversy: how do we teach controversial subjects in the classroom? How do we use it as a learning moment?"

The primarily non-Armenian students who come to Armenia from Stonehill also get very attached to the country and culture. Ohanian exclaimed that after living there for four or five months in the longer original program, "essentially they are coming back with tears in their eyes." Though they do not have formal Armenian language courses, they pick up many words, learn Armenian dances, and become, as she called it, "culturally competent."



COMMUNITY NEWS

# New Members Join Armenian Caucus, Sponsor Genocide Resolution

CAUCUS, from page 6

Ruppersberger (D-MD), David Schweikert (R-AZ), Ross Spano (R-FL), Norma Torres (D-CA), and Rob Wittman (R-VA), among others.

Assembly's State Chairs Herman and his wife Laura Purutyan from Massachusetts, Armineh Ghazarian from Maryland, Paul Sookiasian from Pennsylvania, Meganoosh Avakian from Virginia, along with members and supporters such as Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program participant Armen Kaprelian from Arizona and Drs. Alice and Ara Apkarian from Orange County, Calif. were instrumental in encouraging US Representatives to join the Armenian Caucus and co-sponsor the Armenian Genocide resolution.

Rep. Susie Lee, who also joined the Armenian Caucus earlier this year, stated: "Nevada's Third District is unique thanks to our diversity and strong ties among different communities that call Southern Nevada home. I'm proud to join the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues so that we can



Armenian Assembly delegation speaking with Congressman Jeff Fortenberry



Armenian Assembly delegation speaking with Congressman David Schweikert



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Congresswoman Grace Meng, Armenian Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan, Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, and Armenian Assembly Massachusetts State Chair Herman and his wife Laura Purutyan

continue advocating for the unique issues facing Armenia and continue to support Nevada's Third District Armenian people."

"Thanks to the efforts of our state chairs and activists, we are gaining momentum with more Representatives joining the Armenian Caucus and co-sponsoring the bipartisan Armenian Genocide resolution," said Mariam Khaloyan, director of Congressional Relations at the Armenian Assembly. "To support the Armenian Assembly's efforts, we encourage everyone to reach out to their elected officials as well as plan to attend the Armenian Assembly's National Advocacy Conference this year, set for September 16-17," she added.



Armenian Assembly Maryland State Chair Armineh Ghazarian, Armenian Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan, Armenian Assembly Communications Director Danielle Saroyan Ashbahian, Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger, Armenian Assembly Virginia State Chair Meganoosh Avakian, Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program participant Armen Kaprelian, and Armenian Assembly Pennsylvania State Chair Paul Sookiasian



## SPONSOR A TEACHER IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Soccer Star Henrikh Mkhitaryan Marries Fiancée Betty Vardanyan in Venice

WEDDING, from page 1

Love was well and truly in the air as the newlyweds shared a smooch on the back of the boat, in front of three photographers.

The couple showed their close bond as they entwined their fingers while holding hands at the back of the boat together.

Crowds of people stopped to watch on as the footballer and his new bride enjoyed the ride in the private water taxi underneath the bridges of Venice.

The sports star excitedly posted a picture of the couple at the wedding venue after the ceremony, not wanting to wait long to share the happy news on Facebook.

Accompanied with a heart emoji, he wrote: "Marry me and stay with me forever."

The newlyweds have previously kept their romance tightly under wraps and have yet to speak publicly about their love story.

It is known the couple decided to get engaged in November, only tying the knot just seven months later.

Their love story appears to be something of a whirlwind romance, with the pair first being linked in the summer of 2018.



# Armenian Bar Association Turns 30, Marks Anniversary with Flair and Education

ANNIVERSARY, from page 6

will display a mesmerizing, virtual journey entitled, The Armenian Highland, From Riches to Ruins to Rehabilitation. The second panelist, Thaddeus Stauber of Nixon Peabody LLP, comes to the Armenian Bar to talk candidly about the hitches and hurdles in efforts to reclaim vestiges of cultural heritage through the court and arbitral systems.



Thaddeus Stauber

His presentation is titled, "The Road to Recovery is A Winding Path." Stauber advises the world's leading cultural institutions, foreign sovereigns, international art collectors, dealers, artists, universities, foundations, estates and individuals.

The afternoon panel discussion will be – in itself – a prodigious and historic event. In an

unprecedented presentation in the Diaspora, the Human Rights Ombudsmen of the Republic of Armenia (Arman Tatoyan) and the Republic of Artsakh (Artak Beglaryan) will take the stage side-by-side to share their views, respond to questions about the protection and restoration of human rights, and chart new lines of cooperation with the Diaspora.

Bringing this truly arrangement into perspective, Garo B. Ghazarian, co-chairman of the Armenian Rights Watch Committee and the panel's moderator, commented that "the rights of women and men, of friend and foe, of Armenians and non-Armenians settled

long ago at the base of our organization's code and credo. We carry an extensive legacy of reciprocal reinforcements with the homeland and as the guardians of the personal and collective rights of our communities in the diaspora. And now we are thrilled to have the personifications themselves of the primacy of human rights, the right honorable Ombudsmen of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh."

To RSVP for the conference (required) and for tickets to the gala banquet, contact [info@armenianbar.org](mailto:info@armenianbar.org). For further program and weekend details, visit [www.armenianbar.org](http://www.armenianbar.org)



Artak Beglaryan

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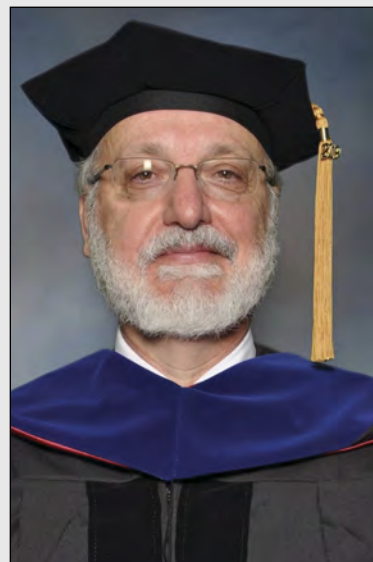
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**NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Shahé Navasart Sanentz, son of Paren (Kazanjian) Sanentz and Nazely (née Partamian) Sanentz, has earned his PhD in information science from the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Based upon an extensive analysis of interview and other data from English-Armenian adult bilinguals, his doctoral dissertation, titled Information Seeking and Utilization Behaviors of Adult Bilinguals, explores the largely uncharted territory of how individuals with more than one language or dialect at their disposal – half of all humanity – interact with information.**

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Vartan Gregorian Receives Carnegie Hall Medal of Excellence

GREGORIAN, from page 1

philanthropic visionary," added, "Vartan's story is a reminder of what is possible with remarkable talent, tireless dedication, and limitless imagination. No one is more deserving of this honor."

The speaker revealed to the mostly non-Armenian elite audience that the honoree was born to Armenian parents in Tabriz, Iran, "his maternal grandmother, Vosky (Gold) being his greatest teacher and inspiration. She encouraged him to pursue his studies in Beirut at 15 years of age."

The two greatest lessons he learned from his grandmother Vosky were "dignity is not negotiable," said Gillinson, and that "one must do good without expectation of reward." Amidst a tumultuous childhood, the speaker continued, "Vartan found refuge in the Armenian library above the local Archbishop's residence."

When he came to this country at age 22, he knew virtually no English. Attending Stanford University, education had become the cornerstone of his life from an early age.

He quickly advanced, and his storied career included Gregorian becoming the second foreign-born provost of the University of Pennsylvania, the first foreign-born president of the New York Public Library, the first foreign-born president of an Ivy League University (Brown) and later the president of the



The glittering gathering



Mayor Michael Bloomberg presents Vartan Gregorian with the medal.

Carnegie Corporation.

Noted novelist Robert Caro, with humor, described how Gregorian brought the NY Public Library "back to life, how he advanced education at Brown University with warm communication, and how he "embodies the true spirit of generosity as a philanthropist."

PBS news anchor Judy Woodruff recalled her 20-year friendship with the honoree, describing him as "this handsome bear of a man, with his big smile and open arms who used to bound into my office, giving of himself. He made a huge impact on public media, especially PBS, and he has been a man of inspiration, boundless energy and special warmth both with the powerful and the not powerful."

World famous violinist Pinchas Zukerman, accompanied by

Canadian pianist Bryan Wagnon, delighted the guests with several classical and popular selections.

Former Mayor Bloomberg, in awarding the Carnegie Hall Medal of Excellence to the honoree, stated that Andrew Carnegie and Vartan Gregorian "are alike, both as extraordinary immigrants, in helping others, as gifted writers, and in reshaping philanthropy. As an optimist and a realist, Vartan knows how to bring people together."

In expressing his gratitude, first to his late beloved wife Claire, his family, and to all who

made the evening possible, Vartan Gregorian who is the recipient of 75 honorary degrees, and 19 medals, said with obvious emotion that "this medal is the sweetest, happiest medal I have ever received."

He revealed that he has tried to shape his life to legendary writer Alexis de Tocqueville, and his Principles of Democracy. Then, revealing his deeply held belief, he declared, "Any wealthy person who has died rich did not have the sense on how to invest for the people," bringing the huge crowd to a standing ovation.

### Feelings Abound

Following the celebratory occasion, many attendees were anxious to reveal their feelings.

Former Governor George Pataki declared that "there is no bet-

ter public servant than Vartan Gregorian."

Dr. Levon Nazarian, representing the philanthropic Nazarian family, asked rhetorically, "What Armenian has achieved more in America than Vartan?"

Dr. Raffi Hovanesian commented, "as a nation we are being honored."

Ruben Vardanyan called Gregorian, "my mentor."

Judy Woodruff gushed, "I am in such awe of this man that I have been privileged to know for 20 years."

Noubar Afeyan noted, "if he wasn't Armenian, and if I didn't know him, I would still be here."

Aso Tavitian declared, "I feel honored to be where he is honored."

Sarkis Jebejian was "so proud on how highly respected Vartan is in all communities and cultures."

And the man of the hour Vartan Gregorian himself humbly commented, "this is Carnegie's honor."



Governor George Pataki and his wife, Libby

(All photos by Julie Skarratt)



Ruben Vardanyan, Dr. Vartan Gregorian and Veronika Zonabend



Maral and Sarkis Jebejian with the honoree



Anna and Noubar Afeyan flank Vartan Gregorian.



Vartan Gregorian flanked by Ina and Robert Caro



From left, Nazareth Festekjian, Ruben Vardanyan, Anna Afeyan, Vartan Gregorian, Noubar Afeyan and Garo Armen



Society doyennes Annette de la Renta and Marina Kellen French with Vartan Gregorian



COMMUNITY NEWS

# ATP Opens Charles G. Bilezikian Greenhouse Where Plants and Minds Will Grow

By Ani Melkonyan

MARGAHOVIT, Armenia – On June 15, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) opened the Charles G. Bilezikian Greenhouse in Margahovit Village, Lori. Attending the opening ceremony were the Bilezikian Family of Boston, ATP Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian and team, the Deputy Governor of Lori, the Head of Margahovit community, Margahovit school principal, and guests.

The greenhouse complex is situated beside the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies, where more than 2,000 students are hosted annually. Features include a 250 square meter experimental greenhouse, a two-story building, and ATP's first outdoor classroom.

The outdoor classroom will advance ATP's environmental education programs and enable

children to increase their practical knowledge of the environment. As a green space for active learning, it creates the opportunity to experience nature up close and personal so that students may value and come to love it. Students will build new skills, try their hands out at gardening, and actively monitor the progress of their work. They will also be able to do research projects and explore the ecosystems and biodiversity they find in their surroundings.

"Our students are ecstatic about this new space. We envision our outdoor trainings leading to the creation of similar green areas in schools where our students and teachers come from. This will greatly contribute to peer-to-peer education in communities," says Environmental Education Program Manager Kristine Hovsepian.

The new experimental greenhouse will enable ATP to grow healthier trees for forestry plantings and increase tree survival rates. The greenhouse has the capacity to produce around 30,000 seedlings annually. It is supported by



The late Charles G. Bilezikian's widow Doreen officially opens the greenhouse in Margahovit Village on June 15



The Bilezikian Family in front of the Charles G. Bilezikian Greenhouse in Margahovit Village

the adjacent building, which includes a laboratory for seed quality testing, a storage room for seeds and plants, and a third room for staff. The upstairs floor serves as lodging, where visitors can spend the night and enjoy the magic Lori has to offer.

"ATP was one of Chuck's favorite non-profits. He would be pleased to know that the greenhouse was built and that it is being dedicated to him. He always appreciated a good landscape. He would have been thrilled to participate in greening a country," said Doreen Bilezikian, wife of the late Charles G. Bilezikian.

The greenhouse complex was gifted to ATP in memory of Charles G. Bilezikian, who was the son of Armenian immigrants from the Boston area. With his wife Doreen, Charles developed a successful business known as The Christmas Tree Shops. He was a generous philanthropist who loved Armenia and had a special place in his

heart for Armenia Tree Project's mission to use trees to improve the standard of living in Armenia. After his death in 2016, Charles' wife and sons Gregory and Jeffrey decided to honor his commitment to a green Armenia by sponsoring this project in his memory.

"We are so grateful to the Bilezikian Family for funding this project as it will not only create new learning opportunities for our students and help develop Margahovit community, but also enhance the quality of our forests," said Papelian.

Armenia Tree Project has planted more than 5,700,000 trees since its inception in 1994. It is one of the major tree planting programs in the country and in its 25 years has successfully established four nurseries, two environmental education centers, and has greened community areas in every province of Armenia as well as in Artsakh.

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# Arts & Living

## BOOKS

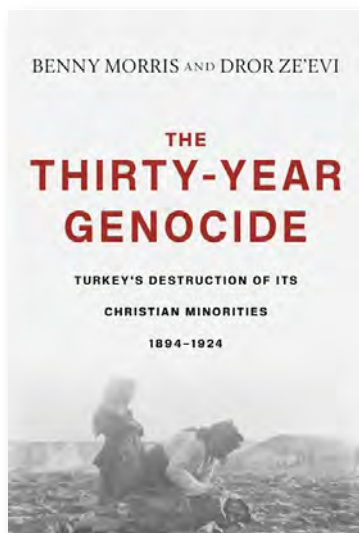
### Jewish Reflections On Our Genocide

By Gilbert Bilezikian, ThD

We Armenians have reached a point in the history of our nation when the survivors of our Genocide, our parents and grandparents, have left us for their eternal destiny, taking with them their sufferings, their sorrows and their secrets. We, their children, have often deplored the conspiracy of silence which, for whatever reasons, caused them to conceal from us the atrocities they had witnessed and suffered during the Armenian Genocide.

I must confess here how I cheated on my parents to learn what I had never been intended to know. The following excerpt from another book conveniently relates the story:

"Little boys are supposed to sleep soundly. I never did and, as an old man, I still don't. The only place available to go to bed in the tiny apartment of the Montmartre neighborhood in Paris where our small family lived was the sofa



*The Thirty-Year Genocide, Turkey's Destruction of its Christian Minorities 1894-1924*

By Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi.  
656 pages, Harvard University Press  
Published April 24, 2019

in the front room. My parents were survivors of the Genocide inflicted upon the Armenian religious-ethnic minority while the world was busy doing war during the early part of the last century. World War I had become the occasion for the first occurrence of ethnic cleansing in modern times as it was perpetrated with consummate efficiency while the Western nations were busy destroying each other. A million and a half Armenian Christians were systematically massacred while the rest of the population managed to flee their bloodied Homeland. My parents escaped the carnage and made it to Paris where I was born and raised.

One of my earliest memories has me trying to conceal under my blanket the fact that I was awake when my parents and their guests thought that I was safely asleep. They met around the table, under a hanging bulb that cast a weird orange light reflected from the lampshade above it. They gathered periodically and, unaware that I could hear them, they whispered among themselves the horrifying stories of the depredations they had suffered during the Genocide as families, towns and villages. When they were all gone, I kept staring in the dark, eyes wide open, teeth chattering, tight little body, shaking irresistibly, deep into the night.

see REFLECTIONS, page 16



Diana Adamyanyan (violin) and Mamikon Nakhapetov (piano)

## Concert Series in Brussels To Benefit Rising Talents In Armenia

BRUSSELS, Belgium – Over the weekend of May 24, three concerts were performed in the city of Brussels, Belgium featuring Armenian musicians of various musical backgrounds. The concert series, organized by the AGBU Performing Arts Department (PAD) of France/Europe, took place at the Boghossian Foundation, with its magnificent Art Deco venue the Villa Empain, and the Armenian Cultural Center of the Armenian community of Belgium.

Duduk legend Lévon Minassian, who introduced the authentic Armenian instrument to the world through his collaboration with international artists and contributed to the soundtracks of major feature films, performed on Friday evening at the Villa Empain. He was accompanied by his longtime keyboarder Serge Arribas, along with Brussels-based guitar player Tigran Ter Stepanian, French cellist Pierre Nentwig, and Belgian pianist Philippe Navarre. The non-Armenian audience was won over by Minassian's unique sound and mastery of the genre.

The following evening, the Boghossian Foundation welcomed Diana Adamyanyan, the 19-year old rising-star violinist who won the 1st Prize of the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition in 2018, in Geneva. Accompanied by pianist Mamikon Nakhapetov, Adamyanyan performed works by Bach, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, Kreisler and Komitas.

The musical weekend concluded on Sunday at the Armenian Cultural Center with a special presentation of the works of Hayrik Mouradian, followed by a concert of the Lisbon-based Dellalian Trio. The musicians emphasized the accomplishments of Mouradian over the course of the 20th century in collecting, transmitting and promoting the musical heritage of Western and Eastern Armenian culture. Dellalian sisters Nariné and Marina, along with cellist Levon Mouradian were accompanied by guest violist Artur Mouradian from Rotterdam. They performed for a world premiere Vache Sharafyan's Goodlights, a work mixing Hayrik Mouradian's voice recordings and a piano quartet, as well as Belgian premiere works by Harutiun Dellalian, Tigran Mansurian and Komitas arrangements by Arakelian.

True to the AGBU mission to expand educational and cultural horizons for see BRUSSELS, page 15



Dellalian Trio and Guest

## Trump Has not Ruled out Bannon Campaign Return, New Book Claims

WASHINGTON (*Guardian*) – Donald Trump has not ruled out asking former White House strategist Steve Bannon to help run his 2020 presidential campaign, according to a new book about the Trump administration.

Bannon has recently been in Europe, seeking to boost populism across the continent. But judging by *The Best People: Trump's Cabinet and the Siege on Washington*, a book by Alexander Nazaryan of Yahoo News which was published this week, he could soon be on his way back to Washington. The *Guardian* obtained a copy.

Like Michael Wolff's pair of books about the Trump campaign and White House, *The Best People* is heavily reliant on interviews with Bannon, demonstrating the former adviser's continued influence in crafting public perceptions of Trump and Trumpism.

Last year, Bannon was banished from circles close to Trump after, among other things, he called the president's eldest daughter "dumb as a brick" and his eldest son "treasonous" in Wolff's first book, *Fire and Fury*.

But Nazaryan reveals that just in time for what looks to be a desperate re-election fight, and notwithstanding Bannon's controversial comments to Wolff for his new book, *Siege*, Bannon appears to have returned to Trump's good graces.

In an interview with Trump carried out in February 2019, Nazaryan asks the president if he would rehire Bannon, a former Breitbart News executive who has extolled the political usefulness of anger and fear, for his 2020 campaign.

Trump "almost welcomed" the idea, Nazaryan writes.

"I watched Bannon a few times, four or five times over the last six months," Trump is quoted as saying. "Nobody says anything better about me right now than Bannon ... I will say this. Bannon, there is nobody that has been more respectful of the job I'm doing than Steve Bannon."

After *Fire and Fury*, Trump declared Bannon had "lost his mind" and the billionaire Breitbart backer Rebekah Mercer dumped Bannon as a beneficiary, leading to him losing his post at Breitbart. But Trump has also shown an elastic ability to make nice with former antagonists, from Ted Cruz to Kim Jong-un, particularly if they are willing to praise him in public.

In March, Bannon delivered a memorable reaction to special counsel Robert Mueller's submission of his report on Russian election interference, links between Trump and Moscow and potential obstruction of justice by the president.

"It looks like they have nothing," Bannon told Yahoo, predicting that Trump was "going to go full animal ... come off the chains" and "use it [the Mueller report] to bludgeon" his political enemies.

A return by Bannon could be politically significant. He has been credited with helping Trump sell voters on a dark vision of encroaching national apocalypse, an "American carnage" in the phrasing of the inaugural address Bannon co-wrote, deliverance from which only Trump can provide.

In the acknowledgments to *Siege*, Wolff calls Bannon "the man arguably most responsible for making [Trump] president," a "Dr. Frankenstein" see TRUMP, page 15



Journalist Alexander Nazaryan



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## 'New High for Armenian Music': Glendale Reception Held for UCLA Armenian Music Program

GLENDALÉ — Dr. Hovsep and Hilda Fidanian, together with the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Herb Alpert School of Music, hosted a salon at their home to present Armenian classical and contemporary music performed by UCLA's VEM

Krouse, former Academic Associate Dean of the UCLA School of Music, and Helen Haig, senior policy adviser for the late Gov. George Deukmejian.

Krouse, composer of Armenian Requiem, the first Armenian requiem ever created, declared: "We at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music are proud to host the groundbreaking and important Armenian Music Program, and will do everything we can to ensure it will thrive for many years to come."

The guests responded enthusiastically to Pogossian's vision for the Armenian Music Program, to the superb musical performances, and to UCLA's strong support of Armenian culture. As one guest said, "I have been proud of being a UCLA Bruin countless times, but today sets a new high, thanks to the Armenian Music Program!"

Since 2013, Pogossian and the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music have celebrated Armenian music and culture through the

Armenian Music Program, which is dedicated to public outreach through community performances and scholarship opportunities for students. The cornerstone of the program, the VEM Ensemble, includes a group of music students who perform Armenian classical and con-



From left, Helen Haig, Ian Krouse, Jan Chen

temporary music for community audiences.

Ensemble, composed of top graduate students at the school. Prior to this intimate concert, guests enjoyed remarks from event hosts the Fidianians, Prof. Movses Pogossian, director of the Armenian Music Program, Professor of Composition Ian



From left, Violinist Aiko Jimena Richter, Violist Morgan O'Shaughnessey, Diana Fidanian, Dr. Moves Pogossian, Mrs. Hilda Fidanian, Dr. Hovsep Fidanian, mezzo-soprano Danielle Segen, violinist Ji Eun Hwang, and cellist Jason Pegis

temporary music for community audiences.

The School of Music is working to grow the Armenian Music Program with increased class offerings, student scholarships, community per-

formances, academic lectures, and publications.

To learn about how to get involved, contact Valentina Martinez at [v.martinez@schoolofmusic.ucla.edu](mailto:v.martinez@schoolofmusic.ucla.edu).

## Make Room For Grandma

### Architects Design Homes For Multiple Generations

By Joann Plockova

NEW YORK (*New York Times*) — Every Thursday, Henk and Elly Oving take care of their young grandchildren. They don't have to travel far. They just go downstairs.

The Oving's share a five-story home in Amsterdam — two apartments stacked on top of each other and joined by a central staircase — with their daughter Jantien and her husband, Auguste van Oppen.

"It's two fully independent houses that are intertwined with one another," said van Oppen, an architect who could just as easily be describing the 4,900-square-foot home's two households.

The van Oppen's and the Oving's are among a growing number of families sharing multigenerational residences. From Amsterdam to Australia, architects like van Oppen and his team at BETA, the local firm he co-founded with Evert Klinkenberg, are designing striking homes that make cross-generational care for aging baby boomers and overworked parents as easy as a walk down the hallway.

"It's about being there together," said van Oppen, who designed the home along with Klinkenberg. "It's about being there for one another."

The trick is coming up with designs that incorporate privacy, senior-friendly spaces and flexibility for the future. At the same time, the concept can help address one of today's more stubborn issues — housing affordability.

Multigenerational homes allow family members to maintain their independence while benefiting from interdependence.

In the 3 Generation House, as it is called, the van Oppen's opted for the 1,750-square-foot lower level to take advantage of direct access to the garden for the children, while the in-laws, retired and in their 60s, chose the 1,870-square-foot upper level with an elevator. "We wanted more privacy and the roof terrace," Oving said.

Including subtle details like wider doorways and level, uninterrupted floors, their apartment has been designed to be senior-friendly — but

discreetly so.

"It doesn't look like a senior apartment, but it is," van Oppen said.

Similarly, in Helsinki, the actors Vilma Melasniemi and Juho Milonoff built House M-M, a three-story home that includes a ground-floor apartment for Melasniemi's grandmother.

"We had long conversations about degrees of privacy," said Tuomas Siitonen, who designed the timber-clad home, "so they could all live quite close to each other, and the grandparents could take care of their kids, and they could take care of the grandmother, but still everyone could live their own lives."

The house is on land owned by Melasniemi's parents, who still live nearby in the 100-year-old home where she grew up.

The fully accessible 270-square-foot ground-floor apartment, which was financed by Melasniemi's parents, includes its own entrance and sheltered outdoor space. There is also a common garden area that can be shared by all members of the family.

"When we were building the house, I asked my father to draw the line on paper: Which is the land that we pay for, which is our common space and which is the land of their house," Melasniemi said. "I liked that he made it, as he knows the garden and he knows what he likes to think is their space."

Melasniemi's grandmother, who was 91 when she moved in, has since died.

"My father got the opportunity to visit and talk to his mother every day," said Melasniemi, who has two children.

But the home is already being used for another phase in its planned long life.

"We discussed the kind of life span of the house," Siitonen said. "We thought of how they could use the space when the kids move out, and then when the grandmother passes away. And of course, in the future the parents, one or both of them, might move in there. So it was kind of like we thought of things in five years and 10 years and 50 years."

As with the 3 Generation House, which was designed to allow for expansions and conversions as the family evolves, House M-M was designed so that the children's rooms, on the second floor, could be combined. Melasniemi and Milonoff could then move down and turn the spaces on the upper floor into a studio. "And then maybe one of the kids could move into the apartment where the grandmother used to live," Siitonen said. "Now it's rented."

In Kent, England, Caring Wood is another multigenerational home built with the future in mind. Commissioned by the in-laws of the architect James Macdonald Wright, of London-based Macdonald Wright Architects, it was designed by Wright and Niall Maxwell, of the firm Rural

Office for Architecture, as a country house for the 70-year-old couple and the family's three daughters and seven grandchildren. "There's 15 of us," Wright said. "The idea really was that we would all spend as much time as possible there."

Set on 84 wooded acres, the family home takes a pinwheel shape with four corner apartments, one per family.

These are connected to the home's common spaces, including a central inner courtyard where a family tree cast in glass by the artist Colin Reid sits in the center of the courtyard's shallow pond.

"Internal walls are all partitions, so they can be reconfigured," Wright said. In terms of lifetime use, he said, "there is a lift that gives access to all levels of the house."

While privacy is built in, Wright said the children, ages 3 to 17, have no qualms about breaking it down. "They kind of just charge in between all of the individual apartments," he said.

In Torekov, Sweden, a coastal village north of Malmo, the firm Maka Arkitektur designed a multigenerational weekend home for a mother and the families of her three children, currently including three grandchildren.

"Torekov has always been a kind of generational meeting point for the entire extended family," said Daniel Hedner, the home's architect along with Ylva der Hagopian.

Forming an outdoor courtyard that serves as a connecting social space for the family, the 1,740-square-foot home comprises a main building with two wings.

A slightly detached 280-square-foot guesthouse has its own kitchenette and bathroom.

"Access to separate rooms, nooks and corners for privacy are essential in multigenerational houses," said Ms. der Hagopian, Hedner's associate, "as well as generous social space that can gather a lot of people."

Though large families living together is not a new idea, and mother-in-law apartments are common in many places, purpose-built multigenerational homes are largely "a new phenomena in Western society," van Oppen said. But they have a strong tradition in Asian society.

That figured into the thinking of a couple with Asian roots who commissioned Charles House, a multigenerational home in Melbourne, Australia. "For them it was kind of a natural way to have a house," said Andrew Maynard, whose firm, Austin Maynard Architects, designed it.

For this project, Maynard turned the traditional Australian "granny flat" (normally akin to a shed out back) on its head by incorporating it into Charles House as an adaptable space



Sylva der Hagopian

on the ground level. Although multigenerational homes are not typically part of Australian culture, Maynard said the country could certainly benefit from them.

"Sydney and Melbourne are among the top 10 of the most unaffordable cities to own a home in the world. And there's a whole generation of younger people, millennials, who just can't even buy into the market," he said.

Designers and builders have responded to these challenges with a range of less conventional dwellings, including so-called tiny houses. But Maynard is not a fan of such extreme downsizing.

"I think multigenerational housing is a beautiful way for people to live, if you design it well," he said. "What I don't want it to be is another way to basically jam lots of people into a small space. Because nobody's solving the economic equation of affordable housing" that way.

For van Oppen and his in-laws in Amsterdam, the only challenge of multigenerational living is the uncertainty of what's to come. "The challenge is when they get older — how we will organize it," he said.

Oving added, "We can't expect them to care for us 24 hours a day."

But for the moment, the family is enjoying the benefits of living so close.

"We have dinner together at least once a week, but usually more often," van Oppen said. "And we hang out throughout the entire house. So, in the garden, on the roof terrace, in the kitchens."



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Concert Series in Brussels to Benefit Rising Talents in Armenia

BRUSSELS, from page 13

Armenians worldwide, the concert series helped support the PAD Musical Instruments Fund in collaboration with Musicians for Musicians, an association led by well-known cello player and friend of AGBU Sevak Avanesyan. The Fund lends high quality musical instruments to young musicians in Armenia. As PAD France-Europe's manager Christian Erbslöh explained, "While Armenia is known for its musical excellence, unfortunately too many young musicians with the ambition and talent to reach the top of their field are deprived of the proper instruments to achieve their dream."

The fund lends the instruments to deserving students to help improve their musical practice, participate in international competitions, and perform on prestigious stages. Thanks to the support of concert patrons, the Fund is now in a position to acquire its first instruments: French and German instruments from the last Century, including bows made by Charles-Nicolas Bazin.

Inspired by the success of the musical weekend, AGBU Central Board Member and President of AGBU Europe and France Nadia Gortzounian is looking forward to further developing the Fund, saying, "Armenia has many gifted artists who are the pride of our global nation. The Musical Instruments Fund makes it possible for these great artists of tomorrow to showcase their talents to the world, just as they have during this special weekend in Brussels."



Lévon Minassian & Friends

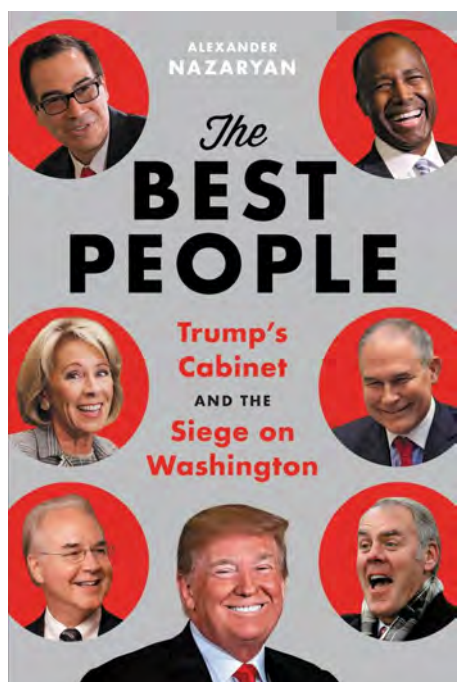
## Trump Has not Ruled out Bannon Campaign Return, New Book Claims

TRUMP, from page 13

nursing "deep ambivalence about the monster he created" and "the Virgil anyone might be lucky to have as a guide for a descent into Trumpworld."

In fact, Bannon remains in professional limbo and his remarks about Trump in *Siege*, including suggesting the Trump Organization could be described as "criminal," may have steered his relationship with the president back towards the rocks. But Wolff's descriptors are suited to Bannon's grandiose sense of his might and mission.

"I've got my hands back on my weapons,"



he said after leaving the White House in August 2017. "I built a f\*\*\*ng machine at Breitbart. And now I'm about to go back, knowing what I know, and we're about to rev that machine up. And rev it up we will do."

Bannon left Breitbart but he remains capable of firing damaging shots. *The Best People* presents his version of Chris Christie's work on the Trump transition, which has been presented favorably by the former New Jersey governor in his own book, *Let Me Finish*, and by the bestselling writer Michael Lewis.

Famously, Bannon was given the job of firing Christie. Nazaryan quotes Bannon trashing Christie's transition plans as the work of aides he describes as "the New Jersey mafia" and wondering if the former governor's aggrieved reaction to being fired shows him to be "psychologically f\*\*ed up."

"He's not an adult in the way he thinks about things," Bannon is quoted as saying. "I don't know if it's because he's so grossly overweight or if it's something else. There's something that is psychologically not right with this guy."

# Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Homemade Apricot Leather



Recipe and photos contributed by Robyn Kalajian at [thearmeniankitchen.com](http://thearmeniankitchen.com)

Apricot leather is one of Robyn Kalajian's daughter's favorite treats, so whenever she is in a Middle Eastern store, she always picks up a package for her. However, when a cousin contacted her in search of an Apricot Fruit Leather recipe Robyn thought it was "Hye" time to make some from scratch. There are very few ingredients, and it's really easy to make – it just takes a bit of time. For the record, two sources state that the official name for the fruit leather is "pestil" or "basteil" (spellings can vary greatly within Armenian circles) – the general meaning, "fruit pulp."

### INGREDIENTS

8 ounces dried apricots  
2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
Confectioner's sugar

### PREPARATION

1. Place apricots in a medium saucepan; add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, about 30 minutes or until soft. Drain and cool slightly.
2. Place drained apricots in a blender or a food processor fitted with a metal "S" blade; add granulated sugar. Cover and process until smooth. Add lemon juice and process until blended.
3. Preheat oven to 175°F (or up to 200°F since oven temperatures vary).
4. Line two rimmed baking pans with silicone baking mats or parchment paper. Spoon half of the apricot mixture onto each baking mat or parchment-lined pan. Thinly and evenly spread apricot mixture into a 12 x 8-in. rectangle; repeat with remaining fruit.
5. Bake 2 to 2-1/2 hours or until almost dry to the touch. Leaving the fruit leather on the mats or parchment paper, cool completely on a wire rack.
6. Carefully remove the leather from the silicone mat – or – cautiously tear away the parchment paper. Transfer each apricot leather rectangle to a cutting board, which has been lightly sprinkled with confectioner's sugar. Lightly dust the top of the leather with confectioner's sugar, too.
7. Cut into 1/2 x 8-in. strips using a pastry wheel, pizza wheel or knife. If the fruit leather sticks to the cutting tool, air dry for about 15 more minutes then slice and roll.
8. Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place. If stored properly, fruit leather should keep for about one month.

Approximate yield: 40 rolled pieces.

See the original recipe at:  
<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2014/08/homemade-apricot-leather.html>



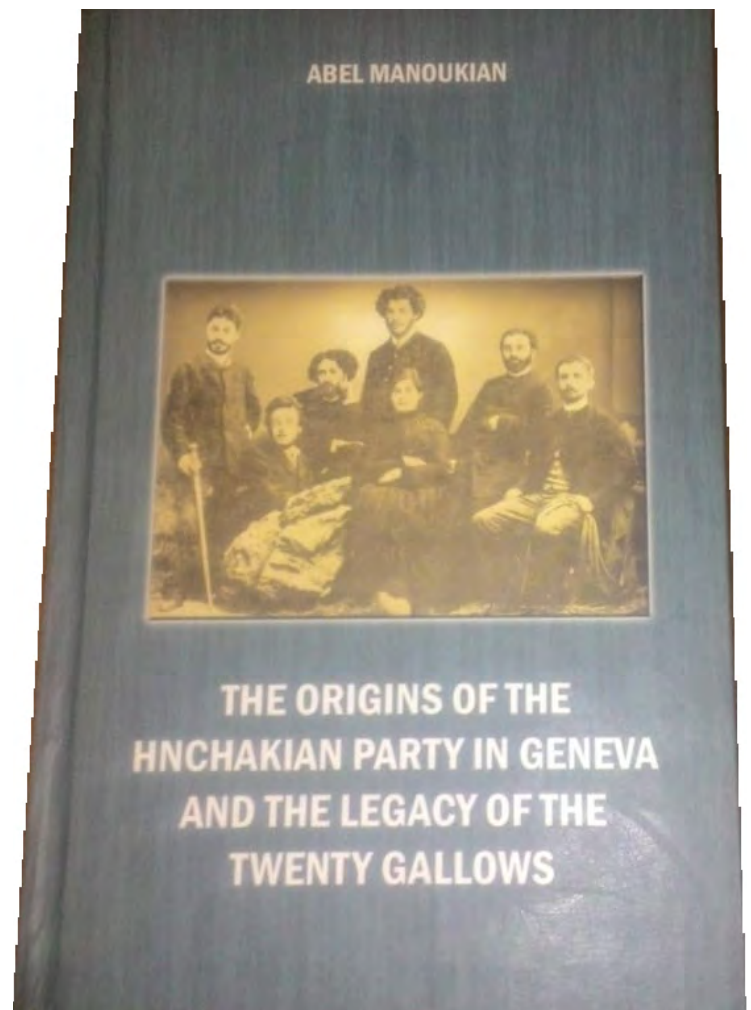
## New Book on *Origins of Hnchakian Party and Legacy of Twenty Gallows*

GENEVA – Dr. Abel Manoukian has recently released a book titled *The Origins of the Hnchakian Party in Geneva and the Legacy of the Twenty Gallows*.

The Hnchakian Revolutionary Party was the first socialist party in the Ottoman Empire and Persia. All its founders and theorists were Marxists. It was formed by seven Armenian students who had left the Caucasus to continue their higher education at universities in Western Europe, mainly in Paris, Montpellier, Lausanne, Zurich, Geneva and Leipzig. They were young persons, in their 20s, and were from well-to-do bourgeois families who were financially supporting them. None of them ever were Ottoman citizens, yet they were personally concerned with the living conditions of their ethnic brothers and sisters in Western Armenia. For the purpose of furthering revolutionary activity in Western Armenia, the seven young Armenians formed what was later to be called the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party in Geneva, Switzerland, in August, 1887.

The current volume explores in detail the historical Event of the Hnchakian Twenty Gallows, specifically from the perspective of the extensive reports and communications which appeared in the Swiss press, as well as Imperial German diplomatic correspondence. It highlights the Hnchakian Twenty Gallows as the first victims of the Armenocide, in an event that can be described as a chilling and alarming prelude to full-scale genocide.

The book was published in Armenia.



# Jewish Reflections on Our Genocide

REFLECTIONS, from page 1

It is a documented fact that the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, now practically extinct, have not spoken to their children about it. Their silence has been explained as an attempt to spare their progeny the trauma they themselves experienced, or as their inability to come to terms with the magnitude of the devastation they suffered. But they spoke about it freely among themselves, as if attempting to glean from each other an understanding of what happened to them.

Frozen with terror, I strained to hear every word they spoke. While simulating sleep, I clenched my teeth on my blanket to prevent them from chattering and thus betraying my awareness. I remember hearing accounts about fathers being tortured to death in front of their families, of women and children forced out by the ten thousands on one-way death marches into the Syrian desert of Der-Zor, of churches set on fire with hundreds of refuge-seeking innocents trapped inside, of my maternal grandfather Garabed Kupelian, a beloved pastor, killed with eighteen Christian leaders on their way to a church convention in the city of Adana."

And now, decades later, this newly published book makes a thunderous landing on my desk. Hardly cracked open, it forces me to re-examine my understanding of the Armenian Genocide. Instead of the formal academic book review I was assigned to turn in, here are a few observations thrown together which I hope will motivate readers to grapple themselves with the story.

*The Thirty-Year Genocide* was written by a team of two Jewish professors at the Ben Gurion University in Israel for the purpose of transforming "how we see one of modern history's most horrific events." At first thought, the available Armenian Genocide literature is so extensive that it does not seem that much can be added to its understanding. However, the reader quickly discovers that the thoroughness and the minute attention given to the research challenges traditional insights and breaks new ground in several areas of Genocide theory. It is generally agreed that the designation "Armenian Genocide" refers to the campaign of spasmodic destructive frenzy that caused the Ottoman government to decimate the Armenian population that had occupied the land of Anatolia long before the Turkish hordes from central Asia had invaded it during

the eleventh century. This book makes a persuasive case for the proposition that the Genocide was not primarily a systematic program of ethnic cleansing aimed at eliminating the Armenian population in one massive strike under the rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid. More accurately, it unfolded in three stages that led to the horrors of extermination inspired by the anti-Christian jihadist expressions of religious



Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian

fanaticism that found their fulfillment in the policies of Mustafa Kemal. The book chronicles the evidence that the Armenians in Turkey suffered a protracted agony of extinction that stretched over three decades which culminated with the ascent to power of the founder of the Turkish Republic.

By cleverly exploiting the disarray of his country's government, Kemal, the victor of the battle of Gallipoli, was able to exploit to his own advantage the turmoil of his time to secure a position of dominant military and political power. I remember sitting in class during the 1940s in my Parisian public school where he was depicted with reverence as the iconic revolutionary hero who delivered the Turks from the colonial ambitions of the Great Powers to lead his people from backward medieval conditions into the magic and the wonders of the modern world. Again, this book

comes to our help by providing the elements of a realistic profile for Kemal that depict him as a somber, calculating, perfidious opportunist who manipulated the jihad option to bring the thirty-year Genocide to a climactic conclusion that was extended to include the Christian Greek and Assyrian minorities, and that surpassed in cruelty and savagery what had already been inflicted on the Armenians.

The existence of the Armenian Missionary Association of America bears witness to the emergence of a missionary movement among churches and denominations a century or more ago. Once the task of nation-building had been achieved in the Western countries, the eyes of Christians, especially Protestants, turned beyond their home-shores toward the spiritual, educational and medical needs of peoples on all continents that were devoid of the Christian message. As a result, missionaries from America and Europe were already present and active in Turkey when the Armenian massacres began in 1894. The authors of our book have taken time to describe and carefully reference scores of stories of interventions by dedicated Christian foreigners who reached out to harassed Armenians as protectors, intercessors, conciliators, providers, rescuers, first-responders, caregivers, doctors, nurses, guardians of orphans, chroniclers and gravediggers. This witness to the self-sacrificing dedication of the apostles of mercy gains credibility in consideration of the fact that it is borne in this book by two objective non-Armenian and non-Christian distinguished Jewish scholars. As a matter of fact, some of the readers who are holding this book in their hands at this instant, whether they know it or not, owe their existence to the altruism of those heroes who have now passed away in anonymous obscurity—many of them buried in nameless graves in the faraway land where they served. The authors of the book are to be congratulated for this tribute to the missionaries, carriers of mercy caught in a monstrous nightmare of rampaging inhumanity.

But primarily, the authors are to be congratulated for the inception and, after many years of meticulous research and writing, for the publishing of this book. It will stand in both the historical records of nations and in the field of Genocide studies as a monumental marker of excellence. The incentive for the commitment to this task could have naturally devolved from the chronology between the

Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust. Indeed, the spacing in time of the two events calls for the comparative study of historical contexts and causality which is available in the book. But there may be more to it. It is well known that a number of Israeli intellectuals view the present policies of their government critically, as if calculated to build a capital of hatred so intense that it may not be containable through diplomacy. Like the Armenians were in Turkey, they realize that they constitute a tiny religious and ethnic minority surrounded by Muslim nations committed to their annihilation. They consider that their leaders' policies of colonization through territorial expansion and military oppression do not bode well for the future of their country. They also realize that their reliance on American power and nuclear weapons would not withstand the attack by the dozen surrounding, equally armed nations, numbering half a billion Muslims tightly gathered together, three circles deep, as a formidable siege fortress with little Israel in the middle. Although its authors do not touch on this notion, it may well be that their book could serve as a cautionary warning to alert their people to the dangers that loom ahead.

Finally, the words at the end of the book may be the most important. Astoundingly, there is no discussion in the book about the multitude of Genocides that have occurred across the planet since the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust. No suggestions are made for possible recourse to international agencies to adjudicate conflicts that become genocidal, for the recourse to sanctions and boycotts, and for the intervention of peace alliances. In particular, no instructions to bring to reason those guilty of Genocide except for confrontation with facts in the face of denials and cover-ups, in the hope that the truth can prevail and bring restoration to honor and to good-will in the family of nations. The dispirited mood reflected in this fish-tail ending of the book may find explanation in the last five words of the concluding sentence of the whole volume:

"We hope that this study illuminates what happened in Asia Minor in 1894-1924, that it will generate debate and, in Turkey, reconsideration of the past."

(Gilbert Bilezikian, Th.D., is Professor Emeritus at Wheaton College.)



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## ARIZONA

**NOVEMBER 2-3 — ARMENIAFest at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church.** Weekend food and cultural festival featuring traditional Armenian foods, beverages, exhibits, music and dance performances. 8849 E. Cholla St., Scottsdale.

**NOVEMBER 16 — SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) Annual Golf Tournament.** Saturday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stonecreek Golf Club, 4435 E. Paradise Village Pkwy, Phoenix. This is a fundraising event for Armenian orphans. For more information, contact Dr. Alan Haroian, 603-540-1961.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JUNE 22 — Armenian Food Fair, 11 a.m. -7 p.m., St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church Ladies Guild.** Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main Street, No. Andover. Serving all day. Lamb Shish Kebab, Chicken & Losh Kebab, Kheyma, Vegetarian plates. Pastry, Boregs, Choreg, Khadaif, Paklava, Gift Table, Country Kitchen, White Elephant, 50/50 Raffles and much more.... Take out available. Call the Church @ 978-685-5038 Ann @978-521-2245 or Sossy @ 978-256-2538.

**JUNE 27 — Under a Strawberry Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Meet & Greet. Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Luscious Chocolate Dipped Strawberries, hosted by vicki lee's and refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and the fabulous Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**JUNE 27 — Reading of "Zabel in Exile."** 6 pm reception followed by 7 pm reading in the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Reading of a new play "Zabel in Exile" based on the life and writings of early 20th century Armenian writer and political activist Zabel Yessayan. The play, written by R. N. Sandberg and directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian, will feature six actors live in the Museum's newly renovated Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Tickets are free, email or call to reserve a seat (Email or call to reserve a free seat: info@armenianmuseum.org, 617.926.2562 ext. 101). Co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America, Armenian International Women's Association, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, also supported by Project SAVE.

**JUNE 28 - July 10 - St. James Armenian Church 7th Pilgrimage to Armenia.** Led by Fr. Arakel Ajalian. Join us and Discover the Land of our Ancestors. All are welcome. Registration deposits due March 1; Full Payment due April 1. For full details visit www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia.

**JULY 5 — Armenian Church of Cape Cod presents Third Annual Kef Time - Dinner & Dancing Friday, 6 to 11:30 p.m.** at The Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Chicken Kebab & Losh Kebab dinner Leon Janikian band with special appearance by Harry Minassian and a DJ \$65/person, children 7 to 14 \$15 For tickets/tables contact Andrea Barber (617)201-9807

**JULY 17 — Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**AUGUST 6 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian editor of her father's memoir** Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier In the Ottoman Turkish Army, 7 p.m. Falmouth Public Library, Herman Foundation Meeting Room, 300 Main Street, Falmouth. Book sale/signing following the presentation. For information: Sue Henken (508) 457-2555 ext. 7 or www.falmouthpubliclibrary.org

**AUGUST 14 — Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**AUGUST 22 — Under the August Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Thursday from 7:30- 9 p.m. Delightful evening for supporters, partners & friends featuring fabulous signature dishes, hosted by anoush'ella and the Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Registration is now open for the 2019-2020 sessions of the Abaka Dance Academy,** 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, MA. Principal/director Apo Ashjian. Classes begin September 16 for grades Nursery II - Grade 10 students. Check the schedule and enroll today at www.abakadanceacademy.com. For more info, email abakadanceacademy@gmail.com or call 617-283-2010.

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation's Immigrants – Gala Benefit for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway** Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Leader & Philanthropist Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants & Refugees InterContinental Hotel Boston. Advance Reservations only. For information, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**SEPTEMBER 22 — Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 2-4 pm. Wonderful afternoon with The Hye Guys Ensemble featuring Ron Sahatjian and Joe Kouyoumjian. Hoodsies, Face Painting and more RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

**OCTOBER 3 — Cigar Night sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** 6 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**OCTOBER 19 — The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley.** The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke' Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.Armenia-FriendsofAmerica.org

**NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting,** NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR's new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius,

columnist for the Washington Post and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration.** 6:30 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program. The Westin Waltham - Boston, MA \$150 per person.

**DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.;** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Church Sanctuary,** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

## MICHIGAN

**NOVEMBER 16 — The Knights of Vartan, Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 and the Daughters of Vartan,** Zabelle Otyag #12 will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Vartan & the 70th anniversary of the Daughters of Vartan. St. Mary's Cultural Hall. 18100 Merriman Rd, Livonia. This is a fundraiser Dinner/Kef Dance to celebrate Knights and Daughters as well as a chance for future members to observe how our community puts our heritage on display. All proceeds to fund renovation project of school 106, located in Armenia.

## NEW JERSEY

**JUNE 23 — Summer Picnic, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to ??? St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church,** 1184 Ocean Avenue, Long Branch. Chicken, Lamb Kebab, Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Cheese Beoreg Pastries, Paklava and more. Armenian Music and Children's Games.

**OCTOBER 25 — Banquet Honoring Dr. Taner Akcam Abajian Hall St. Leon complex Fair Lawn, NJ** Sponsored by Knights & Daughters of Vartan- Under the Auspices of His Grace Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate. For Reservations please call Sona Manuelian 551-427-8763. \$125 p.p. early reservations recommended.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**JULY 21 — Special viewing of the award-winning "The Stateless Diplomat," a film about Diana Apcar,** a 19th century Armenian writer living in Japan who became the de facto ambassador of a lost nation. Historical documentary done by her great-granddaughter Mimi Malayan. 2-4.30 p.m., at the Phillips Mill Theater, a mile outside of New Hope, Penn.

## RHODE ISLAND

**JUNE 23 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church (Providence) will present the first in a series of talks, "Meet with Armenian Doctors,"** on Sunday, June 23, at 12 noon, in Hanoian Hall of the church complex. ( 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI ). Dr. Stephen S. Kasparian, obstetrician-gynecologist will speak and take questions. Admission is free and open to the public.

## Seeing a 15-th Century Venice Building in a New Light

VENICE (*Designboom*) – Armenian artist Narine Arakelian has transformed Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo, one of Venice's iconic landmarks, and its 15th-century spiral staircase into a multi-colored lighthouse. Presented as part of the Venice Art Biennale 2019, the installation sees colorful rays of light emerge from the spiraling tower, each hue emanating from a different architectural aperture. The light installation, visible across the city's skyline, seeks to play on spectators' ideas of perception and time, as the 'lighthouse' becomes a singular moment linking the past, present and future.

Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo was built in the 15th century by Giovanni Candi for the powerful Contarini family, who had their home tucked away down a narrow Venetian street. In order to give the dwelling a touch of prestige, architect Giorgio Spavento designed a staircase that spiraled five stories upward across the building's facade. The staircase leads to an arcade that offers some of the most impressive views across the city. Inspired by this architectural marvel and its rich history, Arakelian adopted the building as the center piece of her exhibition, the pharos flower, for her presentation at the Venice Art Biennale.



The lights which have transformed the palazzo

## COMMENTARY

## Talking about Peace, Worrying about War

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan are heading to Washington for another round of talks within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These talks have become routine rituals, where diplomats spin their wheels, while on the ground a serious confrontation between the parties develops.

Historically, these encounters have proven futile, particularly when they are held in a major capital. During those meetings in high-profile centers, instead of focusing on finding a resolution, the issue becomes the rivalry between these capitals. In this case, it is not in the interest of Moscow for a sudden breakthrough to take place in Washington. Consequently, no breakthrough could be achieved in Moscow for the same reason.

However, the parties are far from reaching any agreement or breakthrough, since storm clouds are gathering, while the parties prepare to talk about peace. A military analyst, Hayk Nahapetyan, commented recently in the Armenian press on the developing situation in the region by stating: "Azerbaijan is slowly but steadily closing the circle around Artsakh," referring to the Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercises in Nakhichevan. "Such a growth in intensiveness," Nahapetyan said, "was observed also in February-March 2016, on the eve of the military operations in April."

Azerbaijan had previously announced plans for seven joint exercises with the Turkish military, but that number was raised to 13, signaling a worsening of the situation.

Warned by this buildup, Armenia has also increased its military preparedness, to avoid a repeat performance of the stealth attack by Azerbaijan on Artsakh of April 2016.

chase of Russian S-400 missiles, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has already a plan B to avert catastrophe.

Ever since the West concocted and executed the "Arab Spring," Turkey was the first beneficiary after Israel.

In concentrating its forces in Nakhichevan, Mr. Erdogan is counting on the war rhetoric of National Security Advisor John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who seem ready to unleash a war with Iran.

In the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" in Iraq, Turkey was able to station its forces in that country, under the pretense of protecting the Turkoman minority there, but in reality to curb the activities of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) from Iraq. While maintaining friendly relations with the Kurdish regional government, the Turkish government is on guard there to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdistan which can inflame the aspirations of all the Kurds in the Middle East.

Also as part of the "spring," Turkey moved its forces into Syria and has been tenaciously holding on to chunks of territory there.

Last but not least, the "spring" also swept through Libya, where a war of attrition is currently raging and Turkey has been siding with the Islamist forces there. One should not forget that Libya once was also under Ottoman rule, along with Syria and Iraq.

In view of all these developments, it would be naive to think that Turkey is an innocent, disinterested party at the doorstep of Tehran.

The two major forces which historically have fought many wars in the region with the Ottoman Empire have been the Russian and Persian empires.

In the midst of all these alarming regional and international developments, it is reported that the rift between Yerevan and Artsakh is deepening. According to various sources, the resignations of Vitaly Balasanyan, secretary of the National Security



A more alarming development is the massive troop buildup by Turkey in Nakhichevan.

While Turkey is in bed with Moscow and Tehran on the Syrian issue, it is seeking alternative goals in the Caucasus.

One short-term goal is to boost the morale of the Azerbaijani army in confronting Armenian forces. But it looks like Ankara is after long-term goals as well, extending its focus further east.

The push of Turkish forces into Nakhichevan is particularly telling, as it is coinciding with the US military buildup in the Persian Gulf. We have yet to learn of any plausible explanations about the parallel moves of those forces, which allow the US to confer certain strategic tasks to Turkey.

On the one hand, the Turkish push toward the east has historic motives. Turkey has not given up its Ottoman dreams of bringing Central Asian Turkic nations under its sway. During the 1921 Kars Treaty negotiations, Turkey was able to open a 15-mile territorial corridor with Azerbaijan to allow contiguous access to territory along that plan.

On the other hand, Turkey is acting as a NATO member, never mind its current standoff with Washington.

American-Turkish relations have experienced turbulent times in the past and Ankara has realized that brinkmanship pays off. At this time, when the pundits have been collectively holding their breaths regarding Washington's ultimatum to Turkey on the pur-

Council of Artsakh and Arthur Aghabekyan, an advisor to the president in Artsakh, were requested by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia. It is the worst time to destabilize Artsakh in light of the imminent peril surrounding it.

Washington has never made a secret of its plans to divide Iran along its ethnic fault lines. That, of course, will benefit Azerbaijan and achieve the dream of one of its late leaders, Abulfaz Elchibey. Turkey is also waiting in the wings to take its share of the spoils, both as a NATO partner and as a "legitimate" heir to the Ottoman legacy.

The complexities of the Caucasus region amplify the potential of war there and create the possibility for it to become a global problem, well beyond the confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The world is watching this explosive situation with apprehension. Any minor incident – or major accident – may lead to a wider conflagration.

The wars in Iraq and Syria demonstrated that there are many false-flag operations in support of inciting wars; the recent tanker attacks in the Persian Gulf are certainly of that nature.

After recovering pieces of Ottoman territory from Cyprus, Iraq and Syria, Ankara is hoping for a disaster in Iran.

The Turks' plans and actions are in the open. It remains to find out the positions of Russia and China, which may end up on the losing end, should the war machine move to the Caucasus.

## Mirror Spectator

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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Turkey's Membership in NATO Could be Ending Soon...

Patrick Shanahan, Acting Defense Secretary of the United States, sent on June 6, 2019, a harsh letter to his counterpart, Hulusi Akar, Turkey's Minister of Defense. Shanahan threatened to end Turkey's participation in the most advanced US air force jet F-35 program and implement sanctions should Turkey persist in acquiring S-400 missiles from Russia next month. The Russian missiles are incompatible with NATO's weapons system and risk to compromise the F-35 jets operations, thus jeopardizing US national security.

Turkish President Erdogan has repeatedly rejected US complaints and insisted on acquisition of the Russian missiles for which Turkey has signed a \$2.5 billion loan agreement with Russia. Several Turkish military officers are already in Russia learning how to operate the new missiles. In the meantime, the United States has informed Turkey that Turkish pilots who had been training on the F-35 jets in the United States for several months have to depart from the country by July 31, 2019.

Acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan's letter sent shock waves into Turkey's foreign policy and security establishment as Turkey doesn't yet know "how to reply," a senior Turkish security source told Al-Monitor. In the meantime, Turkey had paid over \$1 billion to acquire 100 F-35 jets. President

Erdogan announced that he will demand the payment back from the United States. Furthermore, Turkey, as a partner in the F-35 program, has been producing certain parts of the jets which will no longer be sourced from Turkey.

Shanahan wrote to Turkey's Defense Minister: "All actions taken on the F-35 are based on risks the S-400 presence in Turkey would have and they are separate from Russia-related Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) sanctions. There is strong bipartisan US Congressional determination to see CAATSA sanctions imposed on Turkey if Turkey acquires the S-400. In addition to threatening the security of platforms like the F-35, Turkey's procurement of the S-400 will hinder your nation's ability to enhance or maintain cooperation with the United States and within NATO, lead to Turkish strategic and economic over-dependence on Russia, and undermine Turkey's very capable defense industry and ambitious economic development goals. Pursuing this path will cause a loss in jobs, gross domestic product, and international trade. President Trump committed to boost bilateral trade from \$20 billion currently to more than \$75 billion, however that may be challenging if the United States imposes CAATSA sanctions."

On June 14, 2019, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu threatened that Turkey will retaliate to US sanctions: "One country cannot give instructions to another on how to act. The US should abandon this behavior. Everyone is concerned about this. How far can it go? If the US takes steps against us, then we will be forced to take reciprocal steps," he stated in an interview with NTV channel.

What are the next steps? President Erdogan has learned from previous experiences that President Trump does not always listen to his Cabinet members or to members of Congress. Erdogan has had several phone conversations to convince Trump to form a joint study group which will buy time for Turkey. In the meantime, naturally-occurring or arti-

ficially-created world events may change the present situation. The Presidents of Turkey and the United States are scheduled to meet on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Tokyo at the end of June. That would be Erdogan's last chance to persuade Trump to change his decision on the Russian missile acquisition in July.

If unable to change Trump's mind, Erdogan will go ahead and acquire the Russian missiles in order to avoid being humiliated by the United States. However, that would only be the beginning of a larger conflict. The United States would impose sanctions on Turkey, seriously damaging its economy. Erdogan could retaliate by banning NATO from using the Incirlik air base in Turkey. The United States would then relocate its jets to Jordan (as Germany has done) or Greece (a NATO member) or Cyprus.

This vicious cycle of punches and counter punches could end up by either Turkey withdrawing from NATO or NATO deciding to expel Turkey.

The removal of Turkey from NATO is a step that has been anticipated for a long time, ever since Erdogan has been acting contrary to the letter and spirit of the NATO agreement. Even though expelling Turkey from NATO is a serious decision fraught with major consequences, Erdogan is the cause by repeatedly violating Turkey's commitments to NATO and ignoring all its warnings.

The obvious winner in this situation will be Russia which will succeed in weakening NATO by excluding Turkey – the country with the second largest military in NATO, while earning from the sale of the missiles desperately needed income for its collapsed economy.

However, Russia's success may be short-lived. As soon as a geo-political conflict arises between Russia and Turkey, the newly-formed love-fest will fall apart, putting an end to Turkish acrobatic moves between East and West, and getting abandoned by both.

# Is NATO's Future at Risk over US-Turkey Rift?

**T**URKEY currently has military personnel in Russia learning how to operate the new surface-to-air missile system it says will be delivered next month. In the United States, Turkish pilots are training on the F-35 fighter jets their government has ordered from Lockheed Martin.

Washington has made clear to Ankara that if it continues trying to play both sides by going through with the delivery of the Russian S-400, Turkish pilots will leave the US and the F-35s will stay home.

So far, the Turkish government isn't blinking. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu repeated Friday, April 14, that the agreement is going through. "We have no hostility against anyone but we are not living in a rose garden," Cavusoglu said in a news conference. "Our neighbors are not Mexico and Canada like America's neighbors. There have been serious threats in our region and we need to take necessary steps for Turkey's interests."

As for the US threats of possible sanctions, the foreign minister said: "We will certainly respond."

### Do Trainers in Turkey Pose a Threat?

NATO observers say there's a much bigger threat with regard to this deal than the admittedly genuine concerns about Russian personnel possibly siphoning off Western secrets during their S-400 training sessions once in Turkey. "The implications are both military and political," former US Ambassador to NATO Doug Lute told DW. "Turkey has slipped farther and faster from NATO's core values –



democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law – than any other NATO member. We see again that when states drift from core values the door opens for Russian influence."

But in Turkey's case, the door was opened by Ankara itself. Cavusoglu raised plenty of eyebrows at NATO's 70th anniversary celebrations in Washington in April with his candid remarks saying his country balances its relations with "everybody," which he said caused no contradictions. "Turkey doesn't have to choose between Russia or any others," he said at a public event. "We don't see our relations with Russia as an alternative to our relations with others and nobody, neither West nor Russia, should or can ask us to choose between."

Vago Muradian, editor-in-chief of the Defense & Aerospace Report, was in the room when those remarks were made and he says there was a palpable ripple of surprise. The stark comments laid bare the bigger issues about where Turkey's loyalty lies in an alliance founded on mutual defense, Muradian says. "That is a far bigger question than just whether Ankara wants to have its S-400s and eat its F-35 cake," he warns. "At the end of the day it's about the reliability of a nation that's been seen as a key part of the NATO alliance throughout the Cold War and the post-Cold War era and now as we reenter an era of great power competition, that's the question I think everybody's focused on."

Some observers believe the Turkish government has

already answered such queries. "What kind of NATO member is this," asks Martens Centre Deputy Director Roland Freudenstein, "if they have to balance between their existing alliance and a hostile power which has proven many times, especially since 2014, its aggressive intentions? To me that's a no-brainer. The very fact that Turkey claims that it has to somehow 'balance' between those two means that it's not a full ally anymore."

Jim Phillips, senior research fellow for Middle Eastern affairs at The Heritage Foundation, told DW Turkey has the most to lose in the game of "chicken" that will play out between now and the July 31 deadline set by US Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan. And Phillips doesn't believe Washington will be the one to swerve.

"The US has to stand by its present position," Phillips says. "I don't think it should make compromises on its own security with a Turkish leader determined to pull Turkey away from the West."

While it's better for NATO overall that Turkey has fighter jets of an F-35 quality, he says, it's just not worth the vulnerabilities it would entail under the circumstances.

The US has already excluded Turkey from participating in multilateral meetings about the F-35 program. However, after a Thursday phone call, Shanahan and Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar announced they'll meet face-to-face at the NATO defense ministers' meeting in late June.

(Deutsche Welle)



Young fans are wowed by the "My Hero!" exhibits at the Pearl S. Fincher Museum.

# New Art Exhibit Reimagines Superheroes

By **Mayra Cruz**

SPRING, Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) – A new art exhibit at the Pearl S. Fincher Museum of Fine Arts is seeking to find superheroes in unexpected places.

On June 1, the museum debuted more than 130 pieces of art depicting superheroes at its exhibit named "My Hero! Contemporary Art & Superhero Action."

"It's all about superheroes, but it goes so much deeper. It really explores the ideas of superheroes from so many angles," said museum director Ani Boyajian.

The exhibit features paintings, sculptures, photography and other mediums depicting Batman, Wonder Woman, the Hulk and other well-known characters.

The collection, which is originally from Walnut Creek, Calif. was first noticed by the museum's curator, Terry Capps.

"She instantly knew that it would be perfect for the Pearl and that the community would love it," Boyajian said.

Some of the pieces seek to show more diverse and inclusive images of superheroes.

One series of photographs by artist Dulce Pinzón has workers dressed up in costumes as they go about doing their daily work of cleaning, caring for children or delivering food.

A giant 6-foot, 7-inch terracotta statue of Batman weighing 420 pounds that was created by Lizabeth Eva Rossos is also part of the exhibit.

Paintings by artist Winston Tseng depict Superman and other characters as different ethnicities.

"A lot of the art goes much deeper and has a lot of social commentary and just absolute humor," Boyajian said.

As part of its summer programming, the museum will also host summer art camps for children between the ages of 8 to 18.

The daily activities will be three hours long and the camps will run from Monday, June 10 until Friday, July 26.

Like the exhibit, the theme for the weeklong camps will feature superheroes and villains with participants being encouraged to create their own characters.

"There really will be explorations of trying to get the campers to really think about the heroes in their lives, effect of superheroes in popular culture and how it becomes so embedded in our culture," Boyajian said.

The "My Hero!" art exhibit will be available for the public to view until Saturday, August 17.

## Flynn's Turkish Lobbying Client Surfaces, through Lawyers, in Virginia Case

By **Josh Gerstein**

WASHINGTON (Politico) – A Turkish businessman charged with hiring Michael Flynn as part of a secret, illegal US lobbying scheme on behalf of the Turkish government during and after the 2016 presidential campaign is still at large and wanted by the FBI, but has now dispatched lawyers to try to fight prosecutors in an ongoing criminal case in a Virginia federal court.

Ekim Alptekin was indicted last December on charges he conspired with former Flynn business partner Bijan Rafiekian in the lobbying campaign aimed at buttressing Turkey's effort to extradite Fethullah Gulen, a Muslim cleric who won asylum from the US and lives in Pennsylvania.

Alptekin is believed to be in Turkey and had become something of an afterthought as prosecutors prepared for a scheduled July 15 trial for Rafiekian, also known as Kian.

However, on Thursday, June 6, attorneys for Alptekin abruptly surfaced in the case and asked US District Court Judge Anthony Trenga to allow them to seek to block a prosecution effort to pierce the confidentiality of Alptekin's

communications with an earlier legal team at law firm Arent Fox.

The move by Alptekin's current lawyers, Rodney Page and Jennifer Mammen of the law firm Bryan Cave, is an edgy one because courts are traditionally very reluctant to hear from lawyers from a defendant who is beyond the reach of US law and, arguably, a fugitive.

"Although Mr. Alptekin was indicted in this case, he has not appeared before this Court and no proceedings have moved forward as to Mr. Alptekin in this matter," Page and Mammen, noted gingerly in a motion asking permission to make a "special appearance" on Alptekin's behalf solely to address the attorney-client privilege issue.

Prosecutors appear to want to use some information from Arent Fox against Kian, but Alptekin's counsel implied that disclosure could impact Alptekin if he ever goes to trial.

"Once the privilege is waived and information is released, the Government's knowledge of that information cannot be erased," Page and Mammen wrote. The lawyers also asserted their client's innocence, even though he has yet to appear to enter any plea. "Alptekin committed no crimes," they wrote.

A spokesman for federal prosecutors in Alexandria who are handling the case did not

immediately respond to a request for comment, but Alptekin's filings indicate the government plans to resist his attorneys' attempt to be recognized by the court.

The indictment returned last year accuses Alptekin of repeatedly lying to the FBI in a May 24, 2017, interview, including by denying Turkish government involvement in the hiring of Flynn and his firm, and by asserting that money allegedly kicked-back to Alptekin was actually the result of poor performance on Flynn's part.

The new filings claim Alptekin's Arent Fox lawyers set up the meeting voluntarily with former special counsel Robert Mueller's team, just a week after Mueller was named.

It's unclear precisely when Alptekin parted company with Arent Fox, but the Bryan Cave legal team appears to have been quietly monitoring the government's interest in him for more than a year. One of the filings Thursday says that "a few months" after Alptekin's May 2017 interview, the firm had a dialogue with Mueller's team on the Turkish national's behalf.

"The Special Counsel's colleagues informed Mr. Alptekin's current lawyers that the Special Counsel disbelieved some of what Mr. Alptekin had told them. They said that neither side had

been prepared for the previous unsolicited meeting and that if Mr. Alptekin changed his rendition of events and told them the truth (that is, conformed his rendition of the facts to what they believed), they would operate on a clean slate and all would be forgiven," Page and Memmen wrote. "Mr. Alptekin refused to conform his facts to their beliefs, and months later this indictment ensued."

Alptekin and his attorneys did not respond to messages seeking comment for this story.

Flynn was not charged in the case filed against Kian and Alptekin. However, as part of a plea deal hammered out in 2017, the former national security adviser admitted to lying about his knowledge of the Turkish government's involvement in the lobbying effort.

Flynn – who is awaiting sentencing on a felony false-statement charge – had been expected to be the prosecution's star witness against Kian, but some uncertainty has developed on that front in the past day or two after Flynn fired his lawyers. That move could be a precursor to him taking a less cooperative and more combative stance towards prosecutors, potentially complicating plans to have him be the linchpin of the government's case against his former business partner.