

## UN Questions Turkey on the Fate Of Armenians During Genocide

NEW YORK – Recently the Holy See of Echmiadzin, the Great House of Cilicia, Armenian Evangelical World Council, the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the AGBU together welcomed an effort by various bodies of the United Nations, which called for a probe into the fate of millions of Armenians who were forcibly deported by the Ottoman Empire.

The working group submitted its query to the UN office in Geneva on March 25. It is signed by Bernard Duhaime, Chair-



Bernard Duhaime

Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and Fabian Salvioli Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of nonrecurrence

Below is the text of the announcement from the joint Armenian organizations:

Guided by pan-Armenian interests on behalf of our respective organizations and institutions, we welcome the joint action of multiple human rights bodies. The United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, which, in the framework of their mandates, addressed a Joint Allegation Letter to the Government of the Republic of Turkey.

This Joint Allegation marks an important step in the process of demanding from the Republic of Turkey to come to terms with the past, and primarily to fulfill its duty of investigation and to ensure the right of victims to the truth, justice, and reparations.

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Alex and Talar Sarafian with two of their children in the vineyard

## Vineyard Taps into Artsakh's Past to Help Its Future

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Armenia and Artsakh have a long history when it comes to wine; in fact, the oldest winery in the world, dating back more than 6,000 years, was found in Areni, Armenia. However, until the past decade, Armenia did have much success with wine, unlike its brandy, which has gained fame the world over.

Now, however, a new crop of wineries are pushing Armenia and Artsakh to be regional producers of top-notch wines.

The newest entrant in this field is Aran Winery, founded by New Jersey native Alex Sarafian and his wife, Talar Sesetyan Sarafian. Come fall, he is going to release his first batch of red and rosé wines.

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## Lex Najarian Visits NY with the Tekeyan Cultural Association

NEW YORK – The greater New York chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) hosted Miss Nebraska USA Alexis “Lex” Najarian 2019 on a visit to New York on June 11. TCA New York chair Hilda Hartounian and her daughter Nanor Hartounian accompanied Najarian to the Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, where they met with Ambassador Mher Margaryan, the Permanent Representative to the US and Sophia Simonyan, Deputy Permanent Representative. They then visited St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral and the headquarters of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, where they met with Bishop Daniel Findikyan, the Primate. The visit concluded with a lunch.

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Lex Najarian and Bishop Daniel Findikyan



Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan (right, at back) and Azeri Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov (left, at back) with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in Washington

## Armenian, Azeri Foreign Ministers Meet in DC

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL and Armenpress) – The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers met in Washington on June 20 under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs.

US, Russian and French diplomats urged the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to prevent further ceasefire violations. The three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group said the talks focused on recent armed incidents around Karabakh and “core issues of the settlement process.” Neither they nor the conflicting parties reported major progress towards a long-awaited peace accord.

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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.

This issue is the last before the vacation; the first edition back would be that of July 20.

The office will be closed from July 1 – July 12.

### Commissioner of Diaspora Gets to Work

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of Armenia Zareh Sinanyan has prepared the strategic plan of the structure.

He told reporters on June 25 that the first step of the program is going to be the work with the Armenian community of Russia.

“This community is the largest and the most spread geographically. It has the most ties with Armenia both psychologically and physically. In case of right and good work, they are not only the greatest potential for Armenia, but also Armenia can get many other dividends, and we can help them,” Sinanyan said.

Sinanyan stated that he has created many connections in the US, where he had lived for more than 30 years. He was a former mayor of the city of Glendale, which he said he hopes will help him in his current position.

### Armenian Embassy to Appeal Arrest of Citizen in Georgia

TBILISI (Panorama.am.) – The Armenian Embassy of Georgia reports that Armenian diplomats met on Saturday, June 22, with Armenian citizen Minas Minasyan, who has been detained in the Georgian capital following Thursday’s clashes between protesters and law enforcement outside the parliament building.

“The Citizen of Armenia has no complaints and ensured he is treated with respect. The representatives of Georgia’s Public Defender Office visited him on Saturday,” the statement by the Embassy said. According to the source the Embassy representatives have arranged a telephone conversation between the detainee and his relatives and talks are underway with representatives of the detention facility to organize a meeting of the detainee with his parents as soon as possible. The Embassy has also petitioned the Court to reduce the detention period for Minasyan.

On Thursday, June 20, 240 people, including 80 police officers were injured, as police dispersed protesters through massive use of tear gas and rubber bullets during the demonstration outside the Georgian parliament, while a total of 305 protesters were detained for various criminal offenses.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Parliament Passes Tax Reform Package

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Armenian National Assembly on Tuesday, June 25, adopted in the second reading and in full a massive bill package proposing amendments and supplements to the country's Tax Code.

The bill package was backed by 72 lawmakers and opposed by 32 others in an extraordinary session.

The amended law would transform Armenia's personal income tax code from progressive taxation to a flat tax system.

## Artsakh President Hosts Ceremony in Honor of Young Scholars

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Artsakh Presidential Palace hosted on Tuesday, June 25, a ceremony to award pupils who have received diplomas in the final stage of the subject Olympiads in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan congratulated the schoolchildren, their teachers and parents on the results achieved in the subject Olympiads wishing them peace, sound health and new victories, the presidential press service reported.

"Tomorrow you will protect, develop and strengthen our country, you will be its masters. I am confident that you will be worthy descendants of your hero fathers and grandfathers. I am confident as I see the very courage, patriotism and enthusiasm in you. Continue learning with the same diligence, be confident of your strengths and abilities and you will succeed," Sahakyan stressed in his speech.

## Court Adjourns Hearing After General Falls Ill

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A Yerevan court had to adjourn the hearing in the trial of Manvel Grigoryan, a retired Armenian army general and a former Republican lawmaker facing various criminal charges, after the latter fell sick at the courtroom on Monday, June 24.

President judge Mnatsakan Martirosyan announced a 30-minute break after the ex-official's lawyer Arsen Mkrtchyan made such a request. The judge said the hearing may be possible to resume after Grigoryan receives medical care.

The retired general, who has been receiving treatment in a civil hospital for several months, was brought to the court building with an ambulance and taken to the courtroom on a wheelchair.

He is charged with embezzlement of army supplies and illegal procurement and possession of firearms and ammunition in large quantities.

## Court Rules to Arrest Ex-President

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Yerevan Court of Appeals ruled on Tuesday, June 25, to arrest ex-president Robert Kocharyan, granting the prosecutors' appeals against a lower court's decisions to release Kocharyan from custody.

Judge Armen Danielyan, presiding over the high-profile trial, announced the decision in the absence of Kocharyan and the members of his defense team.

In a statement released later, the defense lawyers claimed Danielyan did not allow them to present their arguments in the previous hearing and immediately left for the deliberation room to decide on the matter in a "gross violation" of the adversarial trial principle.

On 18 May, Davit Grigoryan, a Yerevan first instance court judge presiding over the ex-president's case, had suspended Kocharyan's trial citing a "suspicion of discrepancy" between the Armenian Constitution and the charges brought against him two days after ordering his release from custody and forwarded the case to the Constitutional Court for a review.

The judge's decisions were appealed by the Prosecutor General's Office and the representatives of the legal successors of the victims of March 2008 post-election events Kocharyan is standing trial for.

# Tekeyan Awards Ceremony in Yerevan

By Gevorg Gyulumyan

YEREVAN — The Vahan Tekeyan Awards ceremony of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), supported by the Shake Tekeyan-Ghazarian Fund of the TCA of the United States and Canada, took place on May 30 at the Tekeyan Center. These annual awards recognize and encourage the best work in various fields of Armenian culture. During its existence, more than 100 worthy individuals have been recognized. This year, was present, along with Rouben Mirzakhanyan, president of the TCA of Armenia, and many Armenian intellectuals and writers.

The event began with a performance of the Armenian Philharmonic's chamber group. Mirzakhanyan declared that the prizes intend to encourage the creative element to develop Armenian culture further, and announced the four



The Tekeyan award recipients: from left, Ara Hakobyan, Sofya Aznauryan, Ashken Bakhchinyan representing her husband Artsvi Bakhchinyan, and Bakhtiar Hovakimyan.

who is the president of the literary jury, declared, "If we judge by current stan-

her husband's novel, finally return home and take care of their homeland.

(A feature by Bakhchinyan appears on page 13 of this issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.)

The drama prize was won by Bakhtiar Hovakimyan's study, *Nor Jughayi tatrone, 1887-2017* [The Theater of New Julfa, 1887-2017]. Hovakimyan is one of the best specialist of the history of Armenian theater and can be considered its last Mohican. Jury head Armen Elbakyan praised Hovakimyan's legacy in his field. Elbakyan said, "Our cultural figures need not only financial aid but also [supportive] behavior for their sedulous labor. For all this is invested in the future. All that is created now has the goal of enriching and insuring those who come after us. This valuable work of Bakhtiar Hovakimyan intends this too."

Hovakimyan then greeted and thanked everyone, in particular the organizers of the awards, and declared that with the financial gift he would print his work on Persian-Armenian theater. He also said that today there is no place to publish drama criticism, and expressed his gratitude that the newspaper *Azg* gives space for this.

Painter Ara Hakobyan won the prize for visual arts for "Arevatsaghikner" [Sunflowers]. Painter Karen Aghamyan, who is head of the jury for this category, said, "Ara Hakobyan's art creates a mood, an intimate social atmosphere. He, I am confident, still will have his distinct voice in the world of fine arts."

Hakobyan, in giving his thanks, said this prize was unexpected, considering that he had serious competition for it.

Sofya Aznauryan won the music award for her mono-opera "Hayastan" [Armenia]. Head of the music jury Hagop Avedikian pronounced it a unique work, stating "There lyrics and music find themselves in a quite wonderful fusion. In its result, we receive a very pure musical creation which is based on Osip Mandelstein's Armenia work and the various testimonies given in his circles. I see complete worship in this work of Armenia. It truly is a valuable work with musical originality of its lyrics." Aznauryan's words of thanks concluded the ceremony.

The TCA awards, since 1991, have been given to many noted poets, like Silva Kaputikyan, Lyudvig Duryan, Hrachya Tamrazyan; painters like Varuzhan Vardanyan, Ruben Abovyan, Gevorg Yeghiazaryan; sculptors like Emil Kazaz and Levon Tokmajyan; composer Tigran Mansuryan; song composer Ruben Hakhverdyan; conductors Hovhannes Chekijyan, Kostandin Orbelyan, Eduard Topchyan; actors Vardan Petrosyan, Yervand Manaryan; journalists Hagop Avedikian, Artur Bakhtamyan; writers Levon Khechoyan and Sarkis Vahakn.



Ashken Bakhchinyan receives award from Edmond Azadian

categories of prizes for this year: literature, music, fine arts and drama.

Author Artsvi Bakhchinyan won the award for literature for his novel *Aylastantsi Muchik hayastantsin*. Edmond Y. Azadian, president of the TCA of the United States and Canada,

dards, then this novel, without a doubt, lays claim to be a best seller."

As Bakhchinyan was absent, his wife accepted the prize in his stead and thanked Tekeyan. She said she hoped that Armenians scattered around the world would, like Muchik, the hero of



Rouben Mirzakhanyan



Hagop Avedikian speaking at the Tekeyan awards

(Translated from the Armenian)





## ARMENIA

## 2019 Aurora Prize Ceremony on October 20 to Feature Concert by Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra

YEREVAN — The fourth Aurora Prize Ceremony will take place in Yerevan on October 20, and will be divided into a two-part ceremony, featuring the Aurora Prize itself and a concert by the remarkable Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Valery Gergiev. This unique global humanitarian Prize is awarded annually by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors. The ceremony will showcase Aurora Humanitarians – individuals who have done extraordinary work and had exceptional impact on human life by saving the desperate and abandoned and advancing the cause of humanitarianism in the face of adversity. One of these three Aurora Humanitarians will receive a \$1 million grant to



Conductor Valery Gergiev (Chris Christodoulou photo)

continue the cycle of giving by supporting the organizations they have chosen.

The novel structure of this year's event has two parts: the 2019 Aurora Prize Ceremony itself and the charity concert of Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra's conducted by Valery Gergiev.

Gergiev is a prominent Russian conductor and a representative of the St. Petersburg conducting school, as well as the founder and director of several prestigious international festivals. In the early 1980s, Gergiev worked in Armenia where he was the chief conductor of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1988, he was appointed music director of the Mariinsky Theatre, and in 1996 he became its artistic and general director. Since 2015, he has also headed the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra.

"I am deeply grateful to Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra for their participation in this year's Aurora Prize Ceremony, and delighted that on October 20, in Yerevan, we will honor not only the best of human courage and commitment, but also the

splendor of musical genius," said Aurora Forum Co-Founder Ruben Vardanyan.

The Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra is one of the oldest orchestras in Russia. It dates back to the St. Petersburg Imperial Opera Orchestra that was created at the turn of the 19th century. Under Gergiev's direction, the orchestra has reached new heights, and its repertoire expanded significantly to include symphonic works, in addition to operas and ballet. In 2008, the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra was ranked 14th among top orchestras in the world, according to *Gramophone* magazine (UK).

On May 6, 2016, the Mariinsky Theatre Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev, held a unique concert in Syria, titled "Pray for Palmyra. Music Revives Ancient Ruins." The event took place on the stage of historic amphitheater in Palmyra, one of the world's most ancient centers of civilization, liberated from ISIS only a few days before the concert.

"To me, Armenia is a special country, and I wholeheartedly salute the diverse, interesting and valuable activity of the Aurora humanitarian award that takes place worldwide. I would like to encourage those who want their children and grandchildren to have a better life to take a more proactive approach to their ideas. What we need right now are people who tell the truth – they are the real heroes who can really make a difference. I urge you to help the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative become a success in any way you can," said Gergiev.

Gergiev is also a member of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, which includes Nobel Laureates Oscar Arias, Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former president of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former foreign minister of Australia and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans; former president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo; Médecins Sans Frontières co-founder and former foreign minister of France Bernard Kouchner; human rights activist and Founding Director of Enough Project John Prendergast; Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London Professor the Lord Ara Darzi; former US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power; President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney.

This year's ceremony will take place during the inaugural Aurora Forum to be held in Armenia on October 14–21.

Further information is available at [www.auroraprize.com](http://www.auroraprize.com)



Members of the ARF and the ADL in Armenia meet.

## Ramgavar and ARF Armenia Leaders Meet

YEREVAN — The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Supreme Council of Armenia continued its discussions with Armenia's parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces, with whom issues related to the country's socio-political situation are deliberated.

To that end, the ARF Supreme Council of Armenia members met with leaders of the Central Executive of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party—the Ramgavar party at the latter's headquarters on Monday, June 24.

During the meeting the parties discussed a broad range of issues related to the political situation in Armenia, particularly recommendations on certain legislative initiatives, revitalization of networking of the two political parties abroad, preservation of national values, as well as issues on changes in Armenia's judiciary, which has been in the spotlight recently.

The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing to meet on a regular basis and to advance the cooperation between the two party by creating professional task forces that would target items of the agenda that were discussed on Monday.

The ARF Supreme Council of Armenia chairman Ishkhan Saghatelian was accompanied by the body's professional network coordinator Artsvik Minasyan and member Shaghik Maroukhian. The ADL was represented by Central Executive Chairman Hakop Avetikyan; secretary, Souren Sarkysyan; member Vahe Darbinyan; and the chairman of the ADL Alex Manougian Center, Armen Sakapetoyan.

## Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian

YEREVAN — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian on June 14. The newly appointed Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan also participated in the meeting.

Pashinyan praised the mission and service of the AMAA in the United States and Armenia. He expressed the hope that the programs of the AMAA will continue to expand and develop in Armenia.

Khanjian noted that the association intends to give a new impetus to the economic, social and educational programs implemented in the Homeland and added that, inspired by the processes taking place in Armenia, they are ready to do their utmost for the sake of pre-



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan welcomes AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian

## Armenian, Azeri Foreign Ministers Meet in DC

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"Noting with regret recent casualties, the co-chairs urged the sides to take immediate measures to restore an atmosphere conducive to peace and favorable to substantive talks," the mediators said in a joint statement.

"They called on the sides to reaffirm their commitment to observe the ceasefire strictly and to refrain from any provocative action, including the use of snipers and engineering works along the line of contact and the international border," they added.

There is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan told reporters following his meeting with Azerbaijani FM Elmar Mammadyarov.

According to the statement, Mnatsakanyan and Mammadyarov agreed on the need to "reduce the risk of escalation" and pledged to meet again "in the near future."

"The ceasefire violations are key challenges. It is necessary to reduce the threat of increase of tension thanks to which it will be possible to ensure a respective environment for moving forward," Mnatsakanyan stated.

For its part, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said the mediators "shared ideas aimed at pushing the peace process forward, including in the

humanitarian sphere." Speaking to journalists in the US capital, Mnatsakanyan stressed the importance of strengthening the ceasefire regime in the conflict zone and thus creating an "appropriate environment" for a peaceful settlement.

Truce violations along the Karabakh "line of contact" escalated in late May and early June after several months of unusual calm. They had decreased significantly since Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev first met in September. The two leaders also talked on four other occasions in the following months, raising some hopes for progress in the protracted peace process.

"The recent developments [tension in the NK conflict zone] have their impact on the negotiation process. We should be cautious and remain committed to the agreements we have reached in the previous months. And this was the very important part of our negotiations of today," the Mnatsakanyan said.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister noted that the ideas and provisions existing in the debated document have not changed. The Armenian and Azerbaijani sides have disagreements on several provisions and details. A political will is necessary for moving forward. According to

him, even the existing ceasefire violations should not hinder moving forward the process. "The idea is the same. We are moving forward based on the same peace program which is on the table already in the past 15 years," Mammadyarov said.

The Armenian service of the Voice of America quoted Mammadyarov as saying after the meeting that the mediators presented the two ministers with "additional substantive proposals." He did not disclose them.

Mammadyarov also told reporters that the two sides continue to disagree on details of a peace formula which he said has been advanced by the United States, Russia and France for the last 15 years.

It calls for Armenian withdrawal from virtually all seven districts around the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast which were fully or partly occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces during the 1991-1994 war. In return, Karabakh's predominantly ethnic Armenian population would determine the disputed territory's internationally recognized status in a future referendum.

Mnatsakanyan and Mammadyarov have also negotiated on a regular basis. Ahead of their talks in Washington the two ministers met separately with US National Security Adviser John Bolton and senior US State Department officials.

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## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Charles Aznavour Square Inaugurated in Chaville, France

CHAVILLE, France (Panorama.am) — A square dedicated to legendary French-Armenian singer Charles Aznavour was inaugurated in the town of Chaville on June 21, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported.

Armenia's Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian, Chaville Mayor Jean-Jacques Guillet and Hauts-de-Seine Member of Parliament Jacques Maire attended the inauguration ceremony.

The Chaville municipal choir performed several songs by Charles Aznavour. The national anthems of Armenia and France were also played during the event.

Tolmajian expressed her gratitude to the local authorities for the initiative dedicated to "the great Armenian's and the great Frenchman's memory" which is also a tribute to the Armenian-French friendship.

## FM Meets UN Human Rights Commissioner

GENEVA (Armenpress) — Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on June 24 met with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Michelle Bachelet in Geneva, the Armenian Foreign Ministry announced.

During their talk the two parties praised the closed cooperation between Armenia and the UNHCHR and outlined future actions to further expand it. The sides stated that human rights are universal and the cooperation on the protection of these rights should be universal as well.

Introducing the ongoing reforms in Armenia and the existing achievements, the foreign minister highlighted the reforms of the judiciary as a priority of the government aimed at raising the level of public trust towards the judicial system. Mnatsakanyan thanked the UNHCHR for providing support coordination for international and regional partners in this process.

The sides attached importance to the international community's ongoing actions aimed at promoting the agenda of preventing genocides and crimes against humanity. Mnatsakanyan said for the past 20 years the issues have been one of Armenian foreign policy's main goals.

## Armenia Seeks Closer Relations with Vietnam

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan received on June 25 a delegation led by the Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Manh Tien.

Highlighting the parliamentary relations between Armenia and Vietnam, Mirzoyan said he hoped that the visit of the parliamentarians will give new impetus to the expansion of partnership between the legislatures of the two countries. According to him, in contrast to parliamentary relations, bilateral relations in other spheres are not on the desired level given the significant potential in the spheres of economy, culture, tourism and many other spheres. The head of the legislative hoped that in the near future an official Vietnam embassy would open in Armenia to further bilateral relations.

Nguyen described this inaugural visit by a Vietnamese delegation as proof that his country is interested in cooperation with Armenia. "We salute the relations between the parliaments of the two countries, and we expect that similar mutual visits will give an opportunity to utilize the huge potential in other spheres," he said.

He added that they see Armenia as a bridge linking Asia with Europe, therefore they expect the Armenian side will be actively engaged in a number of regional institutions.

Mirzoyan emphasized that Armenia is deeply interested in expanding relations with Vietnam and other regional countries. He added that it's time to set to practical steps for deepening the partnership.

# Turkey's President Suffers Stinging Defeat in Istanbul Election Redo

By Carlotta Gall

ISTANBUL (New York Times) — President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey suffered the biggest defeat of his political career on Sunday, June 23, as his candidate for Istanbul mayor conceded defeat in a repeat election.

The result wrests control over Turkey's largest city from Erdogan and ends his party's 25-year dominance there. Opponents say such a loss cracks the president's aura of invincibility, showing that his grip on power after 16 years is weakening.

The defeat also puts Erdogan in a diminished position at a time of tense relations with the United States and other countries as he heads to the Group of 20 summit meeting this week, where he is planning to have talks on the sidelines with President Trump to address various disagreements.

Two hours after polls closed, Erdogan's preferred candidate, Binali Yildirim, conceded defeat on national television. Erdogan acknowledged the result an hour later.

"The national will was manifested today one more time," the Turkish president said on Twitter. Referring to the opposition candidate, he wrote, "I congratulate Ekrem Imamoglu, who won the election, according to unofficial results."

The ANKA news agency reported that with all votes counted, Imamoglu led with 54 percent, compared with 45 percent for Yildirim. The semiofficial Anadolu Agency showed a similar result with 99 percent of the votes counted.

"As of now, my competitor Imamoglu is leading," Yildirim said in his concession speech on television. "I congratulate him, wish him success. I wish our friend Ekrem Imamoglu will bring good services to Istanbul."

Officials from the main opposition party, the People's Republican Party, said they did not expect Erdogan's party to challenge the result at the High Election Council because Yildirim had conceded so early.

Appearing at a news conference on Sunday evening, Imamoglu said that "16 million Istanbul residents refreshed our belief in democracy and confidence in justice."

He also called on Erdogan to work with him. "I am ready to work with you in harmony," Imamoglu said. "I put myself up for that, and I announce this in front of all Istanbul people."

Imamoglu won the first vote in the mayoral race, on March 31, by a small margin. But Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, or A.K.P., contested the results, and the High Election Council ordered the do-over.

In addition to acknowledging Sunday's result on Twitter, Erdogan, in other Twitter posts, sought to move the agenda beyond the election, saying he would be attending to foreign and domestic issues at the Group of 20 summit meeting, which will be in Osaka, Japan, and during a meeting with China, and at a South European and Balkans summit meeting.

He told international journalists last week that he thought his rapport with Trump should be enough to ease a disagreement over his purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system — and possibly avoid sanctions. But this election result could well change the dynamics of that meeting.

The mood had been tense in Istanbul during the day as people voted. But later, opposition supporters whistled as

they caught the results on their cell-phones at outdoor cafes. A car raced through the streets, honking its horn as if celebrating after a soccer match.

Imamoglu himself celebrated late Sunday night before a huge crowd in the park of his home district, Beylikduzu, where he has served as mayor for the past five years. Families were out with small children, and groups broke out in dancing.

"We will build democracy in the city, we will build justice," Imamoglu said. "Nobody's lifestyle and how they dress is a concern for us. We came to embrace everyone."

"I thank the president and my opponent who congratulated me," he said. "We will make the nation embrace each other. We will succeed in this despite everything."

The vote "shows democracy is resilient and elections still matter," said Soner Cagaptay, the director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Imamoglu won with a landslide — a 10-point lead — even though Erdogan mobilized all the state resources in this election."

While Erdogan has acquired sweeping powers under a new presidential system and controls all of the levers of power, a degree of democracy has remained as he has always sought legitimacy through the ballot box and assured citizens of the integrity of the process.

Imamoglu, 49, was backed by an alliance of opposition parties, united by their rejection of Erdogan's increasingly authoritarian grip on Turkey.

Besides the blow to Erdogan's image and prestige, the loss of Istanbul has practical political consequences for him, analysts said. The city is Erdogan's home and political base, where he began his political career as mayor.

"Losing Istanbul would mean losing a significant revenue source for A.K.P.'s political machinery, ranging from subsidies to the party faithful to construction contracts and funds for pro-government media," Asli Aydintasbas, a senior fellow with the European Council for Foreign Relations, said before the vote.

"It would set off a chain reaction that can herald early elections later this year or in 2020," she said.

Former President Abdullah Gul and former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu are both committed to breaking away and starting their own conservative movements, Aydintasbas said.

Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, the Ankara director for the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a research organization, predicted before the election that the A.K.P. would grudgingly accept the results. But he said the party would seek to manage the change of power in Istanbul by "hollowing out the powers of metropolitan mayors in time."

Mr. Erdogan grew up in a working-class district on the Golden Horn in Istanbul and embarked on his political career as a popular and energetic mayor of the city in the 1990s.

The city has remained in the hands of his party ever since, and he transformed it with extensive infrastructure projects and grandiose signature constructions, including a vast hilltop mosque, high-rise towers and expanding suburbs.

But Erdogan's popularity in Istanbul, which derived largely from delivering services to city residents, has waned in recent years as the construction boom has stalled and the economy has slipped into recession, although growth rebounded somewhat earlier this year.

Unemployment and inflation have

angered Turkish voters and cost Erdogan several of the largest cities, including the capital, Ankara, in local elections in March.

"Erdogan lost his magic touch," said Cagaptay, the analyst. "Erdogan was this politician who came from the other side of the tracks, representing the voice of the common man, the pious, the dispossessed, making this his brand for nearly two decades. That is gone."

Mr. Imamoglu has been compared to a young Mr. Erdogan because he comes from the same Black Sea region known for its fighting spirit, and for his personable and energetic attitude. He won voters' support by offering a clean and all-embracing administration, tapping into a general weariness with the governing party and complaints of corruption and cronyism.

He promised that municipal workers' jobs would be secure and that his administration would be nonpartisan.

"Nothing sticks to Imamoglu," Cagaptay said. "He became the new Erdogan."

Yildirim has been a close ally of Erdogan's throughout his career, holding posts like transportation minister and prime minister and, most recently, president of Parliament. He had seemed a reluctant candidate in the March campaign, but after the shock of losing, he adopted a new campaign style, meeting people on squares and in neighborhoods, and emphasizing his years of experience and knowledge.

The opposition faced an uneven playing field throughout both mayoral campaigns, with Erdogan maintaining control over the mainstream news media and blatantly using government and municipal resources to support his candidate.

A week before the election, the two candidates faced off in a live television debate — the first Turkey had witnessed in 17 years — though it did not seem to tip the balance definitively. Imamoglu remained narrowly ahead in the polls.

Tensions rose in the final days before Sunday's vote as Erdogan excoriated the opposition candidate while never uttering his name, and blasted the Republican People's Party as undemocratic and the source of years of discrimination against religiously conservative citizens.

"What we have been having since March is a psychological war," Ilayda Kocoglu, a spokeswoman for the Imamoglu campaign, said ahead of Sunday's vote.

On Thursday night, Erdogan ramped up the pressure, warning that even if the opposition candidate won the mayoralship, legal action could remove him from office for an insult that Imamoglu allegedly made to a regional governor during a recent argument.

"If the justice decides, his mayoralship will be revoked," Erdogan said in a live television interview on Thursday night. Imamoglu has denied uttering any insult.

Both of the main campaigns fielded ranks of lawyers to watch the voting at every ballot box across the municipality. Opposition lawyers went through exhaustive training in the weeks before the election and were told to avoid arguments over the ballot box but to make written objections for every irregularity.

Lawyers from both campaigns said they had agreed on new lists of polling station officials, all certified public officials, to prevent a repeat of the accusations that caused the March 31 election to be annulled.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Teaching Genocide

## Where There's a Political Will, There's a Way

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

HANOVER, Germany – The resolution passed in Berlin in 2016 recognizing the Armenian genocide was a watershed. Not only did the Bundestag (Parliament) take the final step in acknowledging that what occurred in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 was a genocide, but it outlined provisions for educating the population on this crucial chapter in modern history.

In the text of the document, it is stated that “Today it is the responsibility of school, university and civic education to take up and work through the expulsion and extermination of the Armenians as part of the process of dealing with the history of ethnic conflicts in the 20th century, in curricula and teaching materials, and to pass this on to the next generations. In this respect, the federal states have a special role to play.”

In the German system, curricula for public schools are the responsibility of governments at the federal state level. Prior to the passage of the resolution, it was up to the individual teacher to decide what examples to use in courses on genocide and mass murder in modern history. Brandenburg, which introduced instruction on the Armenian Genocide in 2005, was followed a decade later by Saxony-Anhalt, which made teaching materials on the subject available. But it was only with the Bundestag's action that legislators redefined the matter, spelling out provisions for implementation.

What has occurred since then? At public events commemorating the victims of the genocide on April 24 each year, speakers have lamented the fact that very little has changed. This year, Dr. Elke Hartmann, speaking in Berlin, stressed that it was not only a matter of reorganizing curricula, but of providing educators with the in-depth knowledge required to teach competently. She called for the establishment of university chairs as well as the preparation of scientific materials for the classroom.

### Politics at the Federal State Level

If educating the educators is a precondition for intellectual development, political will is mandatory to providing the forum to engage young minds in study. On June 6, a conference took place in Hanover, capital of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, which faced the political issue head on.

It was organized by the Hanover Historical Museum, the Municipal Culture of Memory, the German-Armenian Society (DAG) and the Ada and Theodore High School, to examine the issue and make an assessment. Dr. Christoph Bergner, a Bundestag member until 2017, delivered the main speech, which was followed by a round table discussion. Those participating included Dr. Jochen Walter from the Lower Saxony Culture Ministry, DAG President Dr. Raffi Kantian, retired Headmaster Dr. Martin Stupperich, who was Chairman of the Lower Saxony Association of History Teachers for many years, and Nils Vollert, who teaches German and History and has authored textbooks and teaching materials. Dr. Christin Pschichholz, from the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam, was the moderator.

The event was dedicated to the theme, “The Armenian Genocide: From the Bundestag Resolution to its Implementation in Lower Saxony.” Since federal states are responsible for school policy, the conference organizers decided to call on their state legislators directly and ask them to define their positions on the matter in writing. The parties represented in the state parliament are the Green Party (Bündnis90/Die Grünen), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Liberal Party (FDP) and the Social Democrats (SPD). Each party was to reply to the following questions:

- How does your group evaluate the Bundestag resolution's formulation cited above?
- Has your group taken steps thus far to implement it in Saxony Anhalt? If so, what steps and with what result?
- If not, what were/are the grounds for your reserve?

• Can your group envision active commitment to the issue in the foreseeable future? What would your group like to undertake concretely?

The responses were disappointing, to be polite. On the DAG website they will be available in full (<http://www.deutsch-armenische-gesellschaft.de/>). In an article prepared by Dr. Raffi Kantian, the replies are summarized with commentary.

All the factions expressed agreement with the formulation – no surprise, considering the resolution had passed with an all-party vote. When it came to concrete steps taken locally, the answers became evasive. The Green Party pointed to a scientific dossier on the Armenian Genocide which the (German government) Federal Agency for Civic Education has published online, adding that the party has reestablished the comparable office on the state level, in hopes it will address the genocide issue. If the Greens have not done anything themselves, it was due to “other priorities.” The CDU was content to recall an experts' seminar held back in 2012 on “Genocide as a Classroom Topic.” The FDP focused on the foreign policy aspects of the resolution (Armenian-Turkish relations) to argue against action on the federal state level, and, as for

in the state legislature, whose responsibilities include participation in addressing all political realms.” They want to “delegate the task to the State Agency for Civic Education. No mention of involving schools.” And the FDP's passing the buck to those responsible for foreign policy “is a crass error, as one can immediately recognize by reading the passage quoted from the Resolution.” The CDU believes the entire affair was sufficiently dealt with in the 2012 seminar. “Evidently,” Kantian concluded, “this problem has low priority in the Lower Saxony legislature, as openly stated in one answer and indicated between the lines in the rest.”

### Identifying the Nodal Points

Participants in the round table discussion did analyze the matter in some detail. Stupperich, who had organized the 2012 event in question, expressed the view that it had remained without consequence. In seeking solutions, one has to take into consideration that the organization of school instruction has changed. Instead of the earlier teaching plan, with a syllabus, or list of subjects for study, now one works with a curriculum which is oriented more to the goals and the learning process. Thematic anchors



Raffi Kantian

classroom instruction, opined that nothing would prevent it from being taught in the upper schools; for younger pupils, the experts should decide. The FDP doesn't think much of political influence on textbooks or the like. The SPD was in essential agreement; respect for academic freedom at the university level limits political influence,

SINCE THE  
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SUBJECT

and lower schools have their own responsibilities; that said, one might however show teachers how they could introduce the theme of the Armenian genocide into the classroom.

In his comments to the parties' responses, Kantian was direct. If the Greens saw no possibility to act in their official capacity, “That is astounding for a party represented

or reference points exist, and could be used to treat the theme of the Armenian Genocide, but this is not explicitly named in the so-called core curriculum. Furthermore, since the Armenian Genocide is not available as a course of study for university students, future teachers have no access to the subject. Nor do they have access to scientific literature on it in standard textbooks.

In the round table discussion, Nils Vollert, a teacher and author of textbooks, said he probably never would have dealt with this subject if he had not learned about it at the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Studies at the Bochum University, one of the rare locations in Germany to offer such disciplines. This dilemma is precisely what Hartmann identified in her speech last April in Berlin; the institutions of higher learning have to exist and provide the facilities, in courses, research facilities, published materials, handouts and so forth. Other aspects debated in the discussion were the concept of teaching the Armenian genocide as a predecessor to the Holocaust, and how to relate it to the issue of German complicity.

If the written contributions that political party representatives had submitted in answer to the questionnaire earned Kantian's critical commentary, the conference deliberations offered a sober assessment of what has and has not been achieved thus far. Most importantly, it generated discussion of the path to be followed, if the 2016 resolution is to be implemented with respect to genocide studies. Kantian appreciated the contribution to the round table of Dr. Jochen Walter, deputy director of the Department for Civic Education in the state Culture Ministry. “From his remarks one could gather that people in the Ministry are thinking about changes. We are full of expectation!”

(Material for this report has been drawn from an article by Dr. Raffi Kantian, to appear in the *Armenische-Deutsche-Korrespondenz* (ADK 183), the publication of the German-Armenian Society (DAG). Translations from the German are those of the author.)



# Community News

## Key Amendments for Armenian and Artsakh Pass House of Representatives with Help From Speier and Cox

WASHINGTON — On June 18, the US House of Representatives adopted amendments by Representatives Jackie Speier (D-CA) and TJ Cox (D-CA) to H.R. 2740 — the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Legislative Branch, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2020 — to include \$40 million to Armenia for democracy assistance and \$1.5 million to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) for mine clearance efforts, as well as support for regional rehabilitation services, reported the Armenian Assembly of America. Speier's amendment passed 268 to 152 and Cox's amendment passed as part of an en bloc amendment by a vote of 231 to 187.

"The images of Armenia's Velvet Revolution bring a smile to my face every time I think of it... The amazing part of all of this is that this democracy occurred with not one drop of blood being shed. So it is very important at this point in time that we do everything in our power to support this new democracy. Since the revolution, Armenia has held fair and free democratic elections that swept Nikol Pashinyan to power. Recently, his government signed an agreement with the United States providing up to \$60 million over two to three years to promote economic growth and good governance in Armenia," said Speier, the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, while introducing the amendment on the House floor.

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) stated: "The progress made in Armenia's transition to democracy and the Velvet Revolution is a refreshing development at a time when so many other countries are headed in the opposite direction." She added: "I am prepared to work to provide the necessary resources to encourage continued progress in Armenia."

Earlier this year, Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs and called for additional US assistance towards Armenia's democratic and economic development as well as funding for Artsakh. During his testimony, he urged Subcommittee Chairwoman Lowey to "reward people who have made progress towards democracy."

Cox's (D-CA) amendment to ensure "funding for de-mining projects in Nagorno-Karabakh, and support for regional rehabilitation services for infants, children, and adults with physical



Representatives Jackie Speier (D-CA) and TJ Cox (D-CA)

and cognitive disabilities" was included as part of an en bloc amendment offered by Lowey.

"Children and families in Nagorno Karabakh shouldn't have to live under the constant threat of a crippling injury or death from exploding mines," Rep. Cox said to the Armenian Assembly. "My amendment will ensure continued funding for de-mining and rehabilitation projects in Nagorno Karabakh. I'm committed to working to restore communities in Nagorno Karabakh and ensure the region is landmine free."

"The Armenian Assembly applauds Rep. Speier for her commitment in support of Armenia's democracy as well as Rep. Cox's initiative regarding the safety of the citizens of Artsakh," stated Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "In addition, we also appreciate the

see AMENDMENTS, page 7



Placing the cross at the church (Kenneth Martin photo)

## Hye Pointe Armenian Church Holds Ceremony For Consecration of Cross

HAVERHILL, Mass. — A brand-new Armenian Church in Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley now has a brand-new cross to adorn its steeple. The cross was consecrated on Thursday, June 20, the gift of the Boston-based Knights of Vartan Ararat Tahlij No. 1 and the Daughters of Vartan Arpie Otyag No. 9. Many of the lodge and Otyag mem-

bers were on hand with their families as Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), consecrated the large gold cross which now stands atop the Haverhill church.

The occasion marked Findikyan's first visit to the church since recently being elected Primate of the Armenian Church of America's Eastern Diocese. Also participating in the consecration service were Armenian Church pastors from across Massachusetts as well as the dean of the Saint Nersess Armenian Seminary in New York.

During the early evening service, the cross was held upright by former lodge leader Nighogos Atinizian and current leader of Ararat Tahlij No. 1 Argishti Chaparian of. In his remarks following the service, Chaparian described how, as plans were announced to construct an Armenian Church in Haverhill, Ararat Lodge formed a committee to investigate the plans to determine how best it could help. Chaparian said that once construction on the church began, lodge members saw a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a significant contribution to the new structure. He cited the many personal sacrifices made by members

see CROSS, page 9



The cross arrives at the church. (Kenneth Martin photo)

## MIT Solve' Enables Tech Entrepreneurs To Conquer Global Social Challenges

By Randy Bean

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (*Forbes*) — How do you address the global demand for social impact initiatives — ensuring healthy cities, creating social inclusion through community-driven innovation, and providing opportunity for early childhood development? This is the mission of MIT Solve, a global initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that enables technology entrepreneurs to create solutions that address the most pressing global social challenges.

In a recent *Boston Globe* article, titled "A World-Changing Forum at MIT," London-based freelance writer Linda Rodriguez McRobbie describes the program selection process and offers vivid examples of some of the "world changing" global initiatives that MIT Solve is enabling.

Launched in 2015, MIT Solve supports social entrepreneurs and innovators — known as "Solver teams" — from 32 countries through annual open innovation Global Challenges. Alexandra Amouyel is the executive director of MIT Solve, where she assumed responsibility in September 2016.

Amouyel brings a rich background in social impact initiatives. The Parisian-raised and Cambridge University educated Amouyel completed an advanced degree in international affairs from The London School of Economics, before serving with Save the Children International and as director of program for the Clinton Global Initiative. Amouyel speaks of needing to "bridge the innovation gap" in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which could serve to "decrease the unit cost of solving problems," noting that MIT Solve functions as a marketplace to connect social entrepreneurs with resources to accelerate their impact. In May, MIT Solve hosted 33 Solver teams representing 15 countries on the MIT campus. The participants met with cross-sector leaders and mentors who helped them build partnerships to accelerate their growth and social impact.

Critical to the sustainability of social impact initiatives like MIT Solve is the ability to identify and tap into alternative forms of innovation funding from a community of financial backers. Notably, MIT Solve is striving to tap into the growing market of Donor-Advised Funds (DAF), a rapidly growing philanthropic vehicle for giving, accounting for over \$110 billion of capital across the United States.

Today, only a small percentage of this \$110 billion is allocated to venture-backed social impact investing. The Solve Innovation Fund seeks to serve as a model to unlock DAF capital in support of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals. On May 7, MIT Solve announced the launch of the Solve Innovation Fund, a DAF vehicle. The Fund is planning to raise \$30 million from philanthropic donors who contribute through tax-deductible gifts to MIT. Returns from fund investments are reinvested in the fund, enabling donor contributions to be recycled for future investment. MIT Solve is the first dedicated venture fund structured as a DAF that is committed to funding early-stage global social entrepreneurs.

Noubar Afeyan, Founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, is the founding anchor of the Solve Innovation Fund, having pledged a commitment of up to \$3 million. Afeyan received his PhD in biochemical engineering from MIT in 1987, and today serves as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Institute. During the course of his scientific and investment career, Afeyan has co-founded more than 30 biosciences firms.

see MIT, page 7





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian-American Maine House Speaker Sara Gideon Is Officially Running For Susan Collins' Senate Seat

By Hayley Miller

FREEPORT, Maine (Huffington Post) — Maine House Speaker Sara Gideon has officially jumped into the state's U.S. Senate race, joining two other Democrats in their quest to unseat Republican Susan Collins.

She'd been expected to announce her run after the scheduled June 19 close of Maine's legislative session, several sources told HuffPost earlier this month.

Whether it's been on the town council, as a state representative or as Maine's speaker of the House, I've learned that if you listen and if you are willing to work with others, it's still possible to get things done," Gideon said in a video announcing her campaign on Monday, June 24.

On June 24, she Tweeted, "I'm running against Susan Collins for U.S. Senate because

Mainers deserve a senator who will always put our state first. Let's build this campaign together. Will you join us?"

Gideon, the daughter of an Indian immigrant father and a second-generation Armenian mother, has served in the Maine House of Representatives since 2012, representing the towns of Freeport and Pownal.

The 47-year-old mother of three has focused her legislative tenure on boosting the state's economy, tackling the opioid crisis, investing in sustainable energy and increasing access to universal health care.



Maine House Speaker Sara Gideon

In the last few weeks of Maine's first regular legislative session of 2019, Gideon oversaw the passage of several progressive bills, including automatic voter registration and expanding abortion access for women across the state.

Her anti-poverty legislation to address the state's "benefits cliff" and provide training for adults to qualify for higher-paying jobs received unanimous support in the state's House and Senate on Tuesday. The bill is awaiting Democratic Gov. Janet Mills' signature.

Defeating Collins, the Maine moderate who infuriated liberals with her vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, is key to Democratic hopes of winning back control of the Senate in 2020.

"Susan Collins has been in the Senate for 22 years and at one point maybe she was different than some of the other folks in Washington," Gideon said in her campaign video. "But she

doesn't seem that way anymore."

Collins' support for Kavanaugh despite the multiple sexual misconduct allegations raised against him from the 1980s drew outrage from Democrats and abortion rights activists. Gideon hinted at a potential run in October following the vote.

"Maine deserves a champion in the US Senate," Gideon wrote in a Facebook post at the time. "After November I will be seriously considering how I can elevate the voices of people who deserve and demand to be heard and represented in Washington, DC."

Two other Democrats have formally announced bids to defeat Collins. Betsy Sweet, who came in third during her run for Maine governor last year, is expected to be Gideon's most direct competition in the Democratic primary. Bre Kidman, an attorney, is also running.

The Maine primary will be held on June 9, 2020.

## Bridge to the Future Gala to Take Place on Nov. 9 in San Diego

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The 7th Bridge to the Future Gala Dinner and Dance will be held on November 9, at the Hyatt Aventine, La Jolla. The gala will feature celebrity guests, entertainment and dancing, to celebrate starting to

build the first phase of the church campus near Del Mar that is the new spiritual and cultural home for the Armenian community of San Diego and beyond.

Entertainment headliners this year include

the Allen G. Orchestra from Los Angeles, and Sinatra-styled performer Mark Verabian from Las Vegas. Miss Nebraska 2019-2020 Alexis Najarian will be in attendance; incidentally she is running for Miss USA. The popular Chef's Appetizer Affair will return during the cocktail reception, featuring delicacies from San Diego's best restaurants like Aladdin, Meze, and Parc Bistro, with complimentary wine and champagne, as well as the signature live auction.

The St. John Garabed Armenian Church Building Committee is organizing the event

under the auspices of Parish Priest Very Rev. Fr. Pakrad Berjekian. The goal is to raise \$2 million toward construction of a new church campus near Del Mar, California. Table sponsorships are available with generous donor benefits for each level. A "Fund a Need" presentation will also enable patrons to support the new church campus. Individual tickets are \$250 per person, and \$100 for juniors ages 10-25. Special hotel rates will be available to ensure no one misses this unforgettable event.

For tickets, visit [www.stjohngarabed.org](http://www.stjohngarabed.org) or [stjohngarabedsd@gmail.com](mailto:stjohngarabedsd@gmail.com). Also look for "Bridge to the Future" on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BridgetotheFutureSD/> or @BridgetotheFutureSD.



The Allen G. Orchestra

## Key Amendments for Armenian and Artsakh Pass House Of Representatives with Help From Speier and Cox

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strong support of Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Frank Pallone, Jr. and Vice Chair Adam Schiff in these efforts," Ardouny continued.

During consideration of H.R. 2740, Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) discussed the need for the US to take a more engaged role to help resolve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, strengthen the cease-fire, and remove barriers to dialogue. Rep. Pallone also thanked Chairwoman Lowey for being a "champion of the region," and for supporting Armenia and protecting Artsakh. Earlier this year, Rep. Pallone introduced H.Res.190, a resolution supporting United States-Artsakh relations, which calls for free and open communication, as well as travel between the two nations at all levels of civil society and government.

In addition to its House testimony, the Armenian Assembly also submitted testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee for FY 2020 this month reiterating key priorities including assistance to democracy-building in Armenia and assistance to Artsakh. In its Senate testimony, the Assembly also raised the danger of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent justification of the Armenian Genocide, which is a dangerous signal requiring US intervention.

"The Armenian Assembly will continue to advocate for robust assistance for Armenia as the appropriations process moves to the Senate," Ardouny added.

With passage in the House, the next step in the legislative process is consideration by the Senate before both chambers can reconcile the bill.

## MIT Solve' Enables Tech Entrepreneurs To Conquer Global Social Challenges

MIT, from page 6

Today, his passion is transforming human health and sustainability. As a philanthropist and humanitarian, Afeyan serves as a co-founder and board member of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity among several other social and economic development projects focused on Armenia. His interest and commitment to social impact investing arose out of his philanthropic activities. Afeyan is now focused on understanding where the highest opportunity for social impact can be achieved.

Afeyan's experiences as a co-founder and investor in the life sciences have convinced him that extending the limits of science and technology in healthcare can have a profound social impact. He is a believer in convening marketplaces and creating incentive systems for social impact entrepreneurs — what he describes as "enabling for-profit activities that have social impact." Afeyan sees Donor Advised Funds as providing a mechanism to "jump start philanthropic investment", describing the fund as a "perpetual evergreen structure" that provides a source of equity capital from local investors. He believes the new fund will serve as a much-

needed "catalyst for deploying capital." Afeyan concludes, "The Solve Innovation Fund will serve as a pioneering innovative philanthropic vehicle. It will unlock capital to support early stage social entrepreneurs anywhere in the world."

MIT President L. Rafael Reif, outlined the original vision for accelerating innovation to "shorten the full span from idea to impact" in a May 2015 Washington Post op-ed. Reif adds, "Solve's mission is to tackle global challenges by helping early-stage innovators from all around the world connect with each other, tap the strength of MIT's innovation ecosystem and, crucially, gain the resources to transform their ideas into impactful solutions." Today, the Solve ecosystem comprises 58,000 active platform users, hundreds of judges and mentors, 99 "Solver teams" from 32 countries, more than 100-member organizations, and a staff of 20 that operate out of an office located in the heart of the MIT campus in Cambridge. MIT Solve Executive Director Amouyel sums up, "We are excited to address the early-stage innovation gap that will help us conquer the most pressing social problems across the world."

# 12TH ANNUAL ARMENIA FEST

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A community-wide event to bring Metro Detroit Armenians and friends together to showcase our rich Armenian heritage.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Appoints Chair, Welcomes New Members to Endowment Committee

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America appointed Life Trustee Vahan Janjigian as the Chair of the Assembly's Endowment Committee and welcomes two new members to the Committee, Sheila Kahyaoglu and Vahe Stepanian.

"The Armenian Assembly appreciates the dedicated commitment and hard work of all the members of the Endowment Committee, and is proud to welcome longtime Assembly supporter Vahan Janjigian as Committee Chair, and Sheila Kahyaoglu and Vahe Stepanian as the two newest members of the team. They will be great additions to the Committee, and we look forward to working with them," Assembly Board of Trustees Treasurer Bianka Kadian Dodov said.

Vahan Janjigian, PhD, is Chief Investment Officer (CIO) at Greenwich Wealth Management, LLC and a member of the CFA Institute's Corporate Disclosure Policy Council. He occasionally teaches a class on equity investment management to executives in New York



Armenian Assembly of America Endowment Committee Chair Vahan Janjigian, Ph.D.

and Singapore. He previously served as editor of the Forbes Special Situation Survey and was identified by Hulbert Interactive as the #1 stock picker during one of the worst 10-year periods in the market. Janjigian frequently appears as a commentator on various television and radio networks. He is the author of Even Buffett Isn't Perfect and co-author of The Forbes/CFA Institute Investment Course, as well as the author of numerous academic research papers. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Villanova University, and both a Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Philosophy in finance from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

"It is an honor to be asked to chair a committee of such highly qualified and accomplished investment professionals. I look forward to working with all of our members in helping the Armenian Assembly achieve its investment goals," Janjigian said.

Kahyaoglu is a senior vice president in Equity Research at Jefferies covering the aerospace and defense sector. Her coverage includes pub-



Armenian Assembly of America Endowment Committee Member Sheila Kahyaoglu

lic equities such as Boeing, Honeywell and United technologies. She joined Jefferies in March 2012. Kahyaoglu was ranked Rising Star by Institutional Investor's All-America Research poll in 2015 and 2014. Prior to Jefferies, she was a research analyst at Credit Suisse covering the Electrical Equipment and Multi Industry (EE/MI) space. From 2005 to 2008, Sheila was a Leveraged Finance analyst at JPMorgan.

Kahyaoglu holds a Bachelor of Arts in economics from New York University.

"I am honored to be a part of the Endowment Committee and join my esteemed colleagues in ensuring the best possible asset management for members of the Armenian Assembly who are creating a legacy through endowments," Kahyaoglu stated.

Stepanian is a vice president in the New York office of J.P. Morgan's Private Bank. Stepanian focuses on providing comprehensive wealth management solutions to ultra-high net worth individuals, family offices, executives, and entrepreneurs. He works with a team of professionals to advise on asset allocation, capital and liquidity strategies, wealth transfer opportunities and banking needs. Prior to joining J.P. Morgan, Mr. Stepanian spent nearly nine years working at Deutsche Bank in New York, most recently on the Key Client Partners team, where he was responsible for relationship management and coverage for select U.S. family offices and ultra-high net worth individuals. In this role, he was focused on direct investment opportunities and providing clients access to the global resources of DB's Corporate & Investment Bank. Prior to that, he was a member of Wealth Investment Coverage, a cross-asset investment solutions team within the Private Bank. Stepanian holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.



Armenian Assembly of America Endowment Committee Member Vahe Stepanian

"I look forward to this opportunity to help the Armenian Assembly enhance the growth of its investments and further develop its mission and vision for the future, and am eager to apply my experience and perspective alongside fellow members of the Endowment Committee," Stepanian said.

In addition to the three, the Armenian Assembly's Endowment Committee includes Seta Kiremidjian and Seth Setrakian, as well as

Assembly Board Treasurer Bianka Kadian Dodov.

A financial services professional, Seta Kiremidjian leads Business Development at Aptigon Capital, an equity long-short strategy which was part of Citadel Investment Group. Prior to joining Aptigon, Kiremidjian was a senior salesperson at Bank of America Merrill Lynch for over 10 years. As a hedge fund specialist, Kiremidjian was responsible for developing key relationships with large Long/Short Equity, Multi-Strategy, and Event Driven Funds. Kiremidjian had previously served as Chief Operating Officer (COO) to the America's Head of Sales after starting at the bank in Relationship Management. Before her tenure at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Kiremidjian worked at Kelmoore Investment Company. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in international management from Franklin College, Switzerland.

Setrakian is a managing member and board member of Merus Global, a family office focused on macro investing. From 2001-2016, he was a partner and CIO of First NY Securities, a global proprietary trading firm. In addition, he was a partner at Seneca Capital from 1996-2001 and a contributor to the Ira Sohn Investment Conference. Setrakian graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, and is also a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).



## SPONSOR A TEACHER IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Hye Pointe Armenian Church Holds Ceremony For Consecration of Cross

CROSS, from page 6  
during the fundraising process, including time away from their families and jobs. Ararat Lodge, along with its sister Arpie Otyag lodge, raised the \$50,000 needed to cover the cost of the cross that now stands atop the church which overlooks Merrimack Valley.

It was Chaparian who, after thanking the Knights and Daughters for their support and sacrifice, presented the check to the Hye Point



Bishop Daniel Findikyan (David Medzorian photo)



Members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, with Bishop Daniel Findikyan at the consecration (David Medzorian photo)



The pastor of the Hye Pointe Church Rev. Vart Gyozyan (David Medzorian photo)

Church's pastor, Rev. Vart Gyozyan. Father Vart, as he is lovingly known by friends and parishioners, thanked Ararat Tahlij No. 1 as well as Arpie Otyag No. 9 for their generosity and their continued dedication to the Armenian Church.

Those sentiments toward the Ararat Lodge and Arpie Otyag were echoed by Findikyan. During a dinner and reception that followed the consecration ceremony, the Primate reminded the guests that the cross is a unifying symbol of the Armenian church.

Among the scores that came together for the consecration service and dinner were parishioners of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church in North Andover, and other surrounding churches, Knights and Daughters from



The Knights of Vartan's Argishti Chaparian (David Medzorian photo)

Ararat Tahlij and Arpie Otyag in Boston as well as Knights from Arakadz Tahlij No. 35 in North Andover. Following the dinner, the guests were treated to a performance by the Erebuni Dance Ensemble.

(David Medzorian is an asbed at the Ararat Tahlij No. 1, Boston.)



Bishop Daniel Findikyan blessing the cross (David Medzorian photo)



Young dancers from the Erebuni Dance Ensemble at the consecration (David Medzorian photo)

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## COMMUNITY NEWS



The Sarafian Vineyards

# Vineyard Taps into Artsakh's Past to Help Its Future

VINYARDS, from page 1

Sarafian and his wife had owned Sarafian Vineyard for 14 years in Artsakh, and they sold their grapes to other wineries.

He explained, "While our vineyards produced tons of grape in the ensuing years since the vineyard's founding, at the time the Armenian wine industry wasn't well developed and we decided to sell the crop to other wineries or distilleries. It wasn't until 2018 that we recognized the enormous progress that the Armenian wine industry had made over the prior 5 or so years. During a family trip to Armenia that year, we decided that the time was right to launch our own wine brand: Aran Wines."

"Both my wife Talar and I are wine lovers," he said.

Sarafian Vineyards is now 15 acres of lush Sireni (also known as Khndoghni) vines. The Sireni grape is only found in Artsakh and makes a full-bodied red wine. This will be the first-ever rosé wine with the grape.

The name of the winery is symbolic. As he explained, according to local legend, the two river valleys (Kur and Arax) in Artsakh were among the first to be settled by Noah's descendants. A local chieftain named Aran was appointed by Armenian King Vagharsh I in the second-century AD to be the first governor of this province.

"Folk etymology holds that the name Artsakh is derived from 'Ar' (Aran) and 'tsakh' (woods, garden)," he added. "We decided to name our wine 'Aran' in honor of the Armenian heritage of this region."

The vintage will include a rosé, a red and a reserve red.

"We produced approximately 13,000 bottles in 2018 and intend to double our production in 2019. We are actively working to bring these wines to market in both Armenia and the US and expect availability in Fall 2019," he added.

## IT and Economy

The third-generation Armenian-American is the founder of the Sarafian Group, specializing in software and IT.

He and his wife, Talar, live with their three children, a son, 16, and two daughters, 15 and 13.

He and his wife have been involved in helping Armenia's economy for many years. In fact, he first went to Armenia in the

early 1990s and continued in the subsequent years, as part of and later the co-director of the Armenian Youth Federation summer internship program in Armenia.

"It was during these years that I got the opportunity to experience life in Armenia, along with the hardships experienced by the local population during those transitional years," he explained.

"Both my wife and I have been actively involved in the Armenian community in the US for years, volunteering in a broad range of Armenian organizations spanning the entire community," he added.

"We certainly intend to spend more time in Armenia as our business ties increase. One day, we hope our children can get involved in the winery and take the reins from us," he noted.

Their Artsakh came about in 2005. "My business background is in IT, but our first investment was to establish a vineyard in the liberated territories, at a time when there was little foreign investment in the region. The vineyard was founded on barren land in the village of Ughtasar (Camelback Mountain) in the Askeran region."

Sarafian noted that the various sectors, such as wine and tourism, have helped Armenia's economy. "We are both extremely excited to be able to be part of the revival of Armenia's 6,200-year-old wine tradition. The wine industry, along with tourism and IT, has really taken off and will play a growing role in Armenia's economy. Since the Velvet Revolution, there is new optimism in Armenia that the business climate will improve and we're excited to see how this develops."

Sarafian expressed his joy that many Armenians have repatriated to Armenia, though he said for the time being, he and his family will continue living in New Jersey.

## Investments in Artsakh

But the vineyards were only the start. "Soon after, we embarked on other investments. Along with three other partners, we built the Shushi Grand Hotel in the historic Armenian city of Shushi."

At the time, Shushi was a shell of its former self, bearing the marks of a brutal war. "The infrastructure at the time was still in shambles, as Shushi had seen little reconstruction back then since being liberated on May 9, 1992, a day that will always be remembered as a great Armenian victory and turning point in the Artsakh liberation struggle," Sarafian noted.

"We faced enormous challenges in building the hotel, from clearing the rubble of the previous ruins, to assembling



Talar and Alex Sarafian

teams of experts to complete the construction. The Government of Artsakh was extremely supportive, as the reconstruction of Shushi was considered a national priority at the time."

Priority was given to making the structure as organic as possible, and therefore local materials were used, marble from the Hrav region of Artsakh and felsite stone from quarries in Ijevan, Armenia.

And he noted, "We opened on September 2, 2011 on the same day as Artsakh's Independence Day."

Sarafian explained that he and his wife go to Armenia and Artsakh three to four times a year and spend increasing amounts of time there.

Sarafian said he was pleased with the "development of the nice scene" with regard to wine culture in Yerevan. "Armenian wine during the Soviet days was not particularly good. It started to gradually change and it is growing and exciting."

He added, "It is a burgeoning industry. I am really pleased that the market is big enough for everyone."

So far, Sarafian said, the reaction to the wine has been great. "Not a lot of people have been able to try it but those who have really like it," he said.

"We are likely to expand the vineyard and plant other grape varieties," he added, while noting specific plans are not in motion yet.

Next is creating a website for Aran wines. We can drink to that.



The renovated Grand Shushi Hotel





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Lex Najarian Visits NY with the Tekeyan Cultural Association

VISIT, from page 1

Najarian declared afterwards, “I visited New York hoping to learn more about Armenian culture and history. I got so much more out of the trip, organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association! I was honored to meet Armenia’s Ambassador Mher Margaryan and Deputy Permanent Representative Sophia Simonyan. We had the chance to talk about Lyme disease as well as brainstorm about ways for me to get more involved in the Armenian community. Hilda and Nanor Hartounian then brought me to the Armenian cathedral, where I had the chance to meet Bishop Daniel Findikyan and get a tour of the beautiful St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral. We ended our day with a visit to Almayass (<http://almayass.com/>) for the best food I have ever had! I cannot thank everyone enough for being so welcoming and willing to teach me more about Armenian culture!”

For more on Najarian, see “Miss Nebraska Lex Najarian Vies for Miss USA 2019” (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/03/14/miss-nebraska-lex-najarian-vies-for-miss-usa-2019/>).



Lex Najarian in front of Michael Aram’s sculpture titled “Migrations” at the Diocesan complex in New York



Lex Najarian in discussion with Bishop Daniel Findikyan



From left, Nanor Hartounian, Hilda Hartounian and Lex Najarian at Almayass Lebanese-Armenian restaurant



Lex Najarian at the UN Armenian Mission. From left, Sophia Simonyan, Lex Najarian, Mher Margaryan, Hilda Hartounian, Nanor Hartounian

## Congressional Resolution Praises Democratic Changes in Armenia, Urges Closer Ties with US

WASHINGTON — Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Co-Chair Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) along with Armenian Caucus leaders, Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Peter King (R-NY), Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) on June 20 introduced bipartisan legislation praising Armenia’s democracy and reaffirming the critical importance of the partnership between the United States and Armenia, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

The House Resolution calls for bilateral visits, defense consultations, increased cooperation on international peacekeeping operations, targeted trade and investment promotion, and support for political party development, transparency, rule of law, civil society development, and media freedom.

The bill highlights the “longstanding friendship of the American and Armenian people” and the “mutually-beneficial bilateral political, economic, military, democracy, and development partnerships” established between the two countries.

“Over the past year, Armenia has been transformed through the organic, grassroots movement that led to the nonviolent ‘Velvet Revolution’ and free and open national elections in December. These momentous events are a testament to the Armenian people’s commitment to democracy and show why it is so important for the United States to elevate our engagement with

the Pashinyan government,” Pallone said.

“Armenia is at a critical moment where US support can help foster the growth of pro-democratic and civil society institutions. I am hopeful that this resolution is the beginning of a broad-based strategic upgrade of the US-Armenia partnership based upon our shared interests and common values. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues and with House Leadership to pass this important bipartisan legislation. Additionally, I will continue to work with my colleagues toward official US recognition of the Armenian Genocide,” he added.

“As Co-Chairman of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I am proud to co-sponsor a resolution celebrating the strategic alliance between Armenia and the United States. The two nation’s continued friendship and cooperation promotes regional stability and is mutually beneficial for both parties,” said Bilirakis.

The introduction of the bill follows the successful passage of Congresswoman Speier’s amendment to provide \$40 million in democracy assistance to Armenia. “I appreciate the important work of the Armenian Assembly of America in helping advance US-Armenia relations and urging support for Armenia’s democracy. The United States and Armenia have very strong shared democratic values, which is what inspired my amendment,” stated Speier.

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# Arts & Living

## Remembering Artist Gayane Khachaturian In the Decade Since Her Passing

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Many consider Gayane Khachaturian the greatest Armenian female artist ever. The late painter and graphic artist, who was born and lived all her life in Georgia, remained an Armenian artist (even if there is nothing particularly Armenian in her works), being a part of the Armenian fine art family, signing her paintings in Armenian.

Armenia and Armenians have assessed Gayane Khachaturian from the very beginning of her career. She was just 20 when another noted Armenian artist from Georgia, Alexander Bazhbeuk-Melikyan, supported her endeavors, while the patriarch of Armenian painting, Martiros Saryan, appreciated her works very much.

Meeting Sergei Paradjanov was a turning point in Gayane's life. Two extraordinary Tiflis-Armenians, both unusually talented and "alien," were kin souls. "Gayane is a shamaness, who creates her amazing world of magic," Paradjanov said.

At his initiative, in 1967, her first non-official exhibition was opened in Yerevan, followed by official exhibitions in Moscow and Tbilisi. Outside the USSR, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation organized her personal and group



Gayane Khachaturian and Sergei Paradjanov

exhibitions in Lisbon, Beirut and cities of France.

Generally, Armenians were not indifferent to their talented compatriot. Two documentaries about Khachaturian were filmed at Hayfilm Studio. One documentary about the then-29-year-old artist, titled "Gayane," was shot in 1971 by Yuri Yerznkian, and seven years later, Ruben Gevorgyants screened "Blue Wind, Almond's Aroma" about the artist. In 2006 Levon Grigoryan made a third documentary about the artist, "I, Gayane from Tiflis."

She was recognized and loved, but was not part of the official Soviet art world. It is not a coincidence that Khachaturian's supporters were mostly the young Soviet-era population that felt outside the mainstream. Paradjanov had introduced many of his friends to Khachaturian, and also thanks to him, Gayane was recognized and appreciated by Marc Chagall, Andrey Tarkovsky, Federico Fellini, Tonino Guerra, Vladimir Spivakov, Yuri Lyubimov, Eldar Ryazanov, Françoise Sagan, Yves Saint Laurent, Bella Akhmadulina, Otar Iosseliani, Gia Kancelli, Alla Demidova, Yevgeny Primakov and Mikhail Tumanishvili. Many bought works by Khachaturian.

Like another great Khachaturian, born in Tiflis — Aram — Gayane Khachaturian's roots also go back to the historical Armenian Goghtn province (now in Azerbaijan), the city of Agulis.

Gayane was named in honor of her grandmother, whose piety was revered by all of Goghtn. Having gained a brilliant education in Tbilisi, Gayane led an intensely productive life. She had almost no other interests. The tiny payments she received for her paintings she

see SHAMANESS, page 15



Manuel "Manny" Hagopian

## Musical Comedy 'Assistants' Cowritten by Hagopian Pays Tribute to Unsung Heroes

NEW YORK — Manuel "Manny" Hagopian and Bryan Blaskie have written the book, lyrics and music to a one-act musical comedy called "Assistants," which premiered on June 20 and is running until July 21 at the Players Theater in Greenwich Village.

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

The show originally premiered at the Hollywood Fringe Festival in 2015, where it won Best Full-Length Musical of the Fringe from StageSceneLA.com, while being listed by Time Out Los Angeles as the Number One Can't-Miss Show at the Fringe and named as one of the top five musicals at the Fringe by the LA Music Blog. However, Hagopian said, it has been reworked over the past few years and workshopped in Los Angeles and Philadelphia before its Off Broadway debut.

Hagopian said the show, looking at the lives of Hollywood assistants, was basically about "that balance between trying to do something for yourself while doing everything for someone else and the sacrifices you make to accomplish those goals." It is not primarily based on his own experiences because he became friends with his boss, Jesse Stern, while an assistant, and that boss now is the executive producer of this show. However, many of his friends had grueling jobs while assistants trying to manage their bosses' lives.

Hagopian and his cowriter are also both producers and wear a lot of different hats. Hagopian also deals with some of the marketing, video editing and raising money for the show. He pointed out that "doing these shows is not an easy task."

Hagopian is well known as a writer for an award-winning series of video games from Respawn Entertainment and EA, including "Titanfall," "Titanfall 2," "Battle Royale Apex Legends" and soon a "Star Wars" game called "Jedi: The Fallen Order." He writes the story, characters and dialogue.

"Titanfall 2," for example, Hagopian explained, was basically "a story between a guy and a giant robot, and their adventure as they try to escape a planet after a mission gone wrong. Anything can happen." The designers create the broader structure, which can include elements like time travel or fighting, while Hagopian focuses on the story

see MUSICAL, page 17



Scene from "Assistants" dress rehearsal

## 'Armenia! And Its Aftermath'

Slide Lecture by Dr. Helen Evans  
Draws Capacity Crowd in Detroit

By Alice Nigoghosian

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On June 12, the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum and Richard Manoogian, chairman of the Board of the Armenian Apostolic Society, hosted a special event at the St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall featuring Dr. Helen Evans, curator of the "Armenia!" exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Elizabeth Brazilian, a member of the organizing committee for the event, was master of ceremonies for the evening and identified the committee members: Lucy Ardash [Director of the Manoogian Museum], Edmond Azadian [Advisor to the Museum, author, and journalist], and Alice Nigoghosian [public relations and



Dr. Helen Evans (Mike Savitski Photo)



Honorary Award plaque for Dr. Evans (Mike Savitski Photo)

publishing consultant]; Mike Savitski [graphic designer and photographer]; and Steven Volk [videographer].

The Very Rev. Aren Jebejian welcomed everyone to the "The Holy Land" — recalling the expression he heard first from the late Dyana Kezelian when he first visited the Manoogian School. "Over the past three years I have come to know the true value and the legacy we have inherited in a place that we call 'The Holy Land.' Other than the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin in our ancestral homeland, it is going to be difficult to find a sanctuary, a pre-K to 12 school, and an Armenian museum in one complex."

see EVANS, page 16



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Sargis Gavlakian's Book *Moruk-Tzuki hekiatnere* and His Poetic Spirit Celebrated By Tekeyan Cultural Association at the Armenian Cultural Foundation

ARLINGTON, Mass. – Sargis Gavlakian's book *Moruk-Tzuki hekiatnere: hekiatner bolori hamar* [Tales of Beardo: Tales for All] was celebrated on June 15 in a program presented by the

**By Aram Arkun**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Tekeyan Cultural Association [TCA] Greater Boston Chapter and cosponsored by the Armenian Cultural Foundation at the latter's Arlington building. It was an emotional evening, as the publication of this book represents the triumph of Gavlakian's will, and the creative will in general, over prolonged adversity, with the ongoing support of Gavlakian's family and friends.

Aram Arkun, TCA Executive Director, served as master of ceremonies and presented the biographies of the author as well as keynote speaker Avik Derentz Deirmenjian.

Gavlakian, born in Yerevan in 1962, graduated High School No. 139 and received his higher education at the Valery Bryusov Pedagogical Institute for Foreign Languages. He worked in Nerkin Sasnashen village in the region of Talin as an English teacher in high school from 1986 to 1989, but in 1990 moved to the United States with his family. He taught Armenian in Boston at the Armenian General Benevolent Union school, and published two books of his poems, *Karkarot erkri aghotknere* [The Prayers of a Rocky Land] (1991) and *Inch sarn es lusin* [How Cold You Are, Moon] (1993).

In 1996 he moved to Fresno, Calif., where he published through his own means the monthly *Yergink* from 1997 to 1998, and initiated a radio program called "Arpy," while working from 2001 to 2007 in the state welfare department in Fresno. In 2004, he completed a master's degree at Fresno National University in public administration. He moved back to Boston in 2010. He was a member of the TCA executive in Boston in the 1990s and is again an active member in the reorganized Boston chapter today.

Arkun praised his devotion to Armenian literature and his perseverance in the face of all types of obstacles over many years to continue to write and promote his literary vision. He did what he had to in order to support his family, but never gave up on literature.

Derentz, the owner of Deirmenjian Real Estate LLC, lives in Bedford, Mass. and is a well known figure in the Armenian community. He is a prolific author, having published 15 collections of poetry. His works have been translated into English, Russian and Georgian. He has been published in many periodicals, including *Grakan tert* of Armenia, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, the *Armenian Weekly* and many periodicals in the Near East. He has prepared CDs which contain recitations by Nvard Mnatsakanyan and Nune Avetisyan, and a CD with songs. Derentz is a member of the Writers Union of Armenia, the Journalists Union of Armenia, Boston's Armenian Independent Radio Hour board and the Writers Union of California. He has received a medal for faithful participation from the Journalists Union of Armenia and an honorary certificate from the Pan-Armenian Convention of Journalists for aiding in the preservation of Armenian identity in the Diaspora and the development of Armenia-diaspora relations.

Derentz said that Gavlakian's motto was to live not to survive but to create. He read sections from the poetic stories of *Moruk-Tzuk* and interpreted their morals.

A series of video messages from various places around the world were played wishing Gavlakian well, including from his cousin Vatche Kavakyan, CEO of NDigitec, who published *Moruk-Tzuk* in Dubai. Margarit Dumanyan, teacher of Armenian language and literature at the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School and principal of the St. Paul Armenian Church Saturday School, both in Fresno, worked on *Yergink* monthly with Gavlakian when *Moruk-Tzuk* was being written. Tigran Nikoghosyan, editor-in-chief of Hayastan newspaper, knew



Sargis Gavlakian, left, with Avik Derentz

Gavlakian when he was a teacher in Talin and was present in Boston at the presentation of Gavlakian's first book. Khachik Melekyan was a childhood friend who now is a teacher in Los Angeles, journalist in *Asbarez* and a former editor of *Yerevan* monthly. Melekyan pointed out that *Moruk-Tzuk* is for adults as well as for children. Samvel Yervinyan, a violinist living in Las Vegas, also spoke words of congratulation via video.

A written message from Edmond Y. Azadian, the president of the TCA Central Board and a well known literary critic, was read by TCA Boston executive member Masis Parunyan. Azadian wrote, "Sargis Gavlakian in this volume of his successfully enters into the world of children and by means of his rich imagination leads them to remote places. His language has a Toumanian-like fluidity and his rhymes and versification are simply wonderful. *Moruk-Tzuk* is a new treasure in our children's literature, where masters are few."

Gavlakian's wife, Vardouhi Karajian, thanked her husband not only for educating his own children but also the children of many other families. He was tormented by his desire to promote Armenian culture on foreign shores and among other Armenians living in the US. She promised to remain by his side for all his future labors for this goal. She called *Moruk-Tzuk* his spiritual child, and then read an excerpt, to the piano accompaniment of Gegham Markarian.

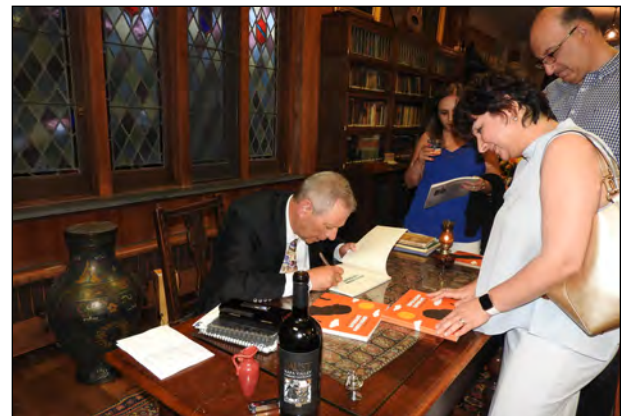
Emma Arwen, a talented young singer who also happens to be a dentist by profession, only arrived two hours prior to the event from Armenia in order to sing two songs with lyrics by Gavlakian. The music of the first song was written by Artem Arpinyan and the second by Gavlakian himself. Arwen is a graduate of Yerevan State Medical University who furthered her education in Germany and has also studied psychology.

The second musical portion of the program was provided by Gegham Margarian, a graduate of Yerevan's Polytechnic Institute, and an accomplished musician. He performed pieces by Arno Babajanian and Tigran Mansurian.

Gavlakian took to the podium and began by thanking his wife and three children for their support and understanding of his poetic calling. His eldest son, Hovik, together with his wife, Lusine, initiated the publication of this book. He spoke of the difficulties of a writer in Armenian of poetry living in the United States, which makes the circle of readers extremely narrow and small. Nonetheless, Gavlakian said he continues in this work of

"holy crazy men." He thanked TCA and Ara Ghazarians of the Armenian Cultural Foundation for making the evening possible along with all the participants of the program, and Sarkis Antreassian and Mihran Minassian for giving him the idea of the book presentation.

Gavlakian then surprised the crowd by reciting a new poem, "The Light of Existence," which he recently wrote. This was the first poem he had been able to write since 2015. He then read several of his older poems, with Margarian softly providing the accompaniment of piano music.



Sargis Gavlakian signing copies of his book for purchasers

After he finished speaking, he answered questions from the audience. In response to how he started writing, he said that his mother's father was a writer, but not of poetry. He began to write poems from the sixth grade. He declared, "I felt there was a world in me where I felt good....It was not by choice. God put this candle in me."

He said that this August for the first time in over 31 years he will go to Armenia, and hopefully will have meetings with literary circles there, including with the Writers Union. He hopes to publish several more volumes of his poetry in the future.

The formal program concluded with the baptism with wine of the book. Gavlakian called up his family members, program participants, TCA executive members and Ara Ghazarians to participate. Afterwards, guests enjoyed a reception.



Singer Emma Arwen pouring wine on Gavlakian's new book





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Remembering Artist Gayane Khachaturian in the Decade Since Her Passing

SHAMANESS, from page 13

often distributed to needy families, continuing to live more than an ascetic life, never thinking about material goods, sleeping on the floor. And in such conditions she used to create her colorful, vivid, imaginary worlds, the street masquerades with the colorings of Agulis and Tiflis, her mysterious, yet simultaneously simple and ordinary characters. Art specialists categorize Khachaturian's painting style as "magical realism," rarely seen in painting, the few representatives of which are Belgian René Magritte, Mexican Frieda Kahlo, French-Jewish Marc Chagal and English Peter Doig.

Paradjanov's friend, Russian-Armenian documentarian Vasily Katanyan, wrote in his memoirs: "On the first day he [Paradjanov] took us to her protégée, Gayane Khachaturian. We met her on the street; she was going to the empty shop with an empty bag. Seeing Seryozha [Paradjanov], she suddenly turned back and took us to her poor room/studio and showed the paintings that Sergei asked her to show. We saw marvelous paintings from which we could not move away. In general, Gayane Khachaturian has been officially recognized only recently, but Seryozha had discovered her long time ago. The artist argued that 'if it were not Sergei Iosifovich, I could not do anything; he helped me, and I listened to him very much.' Seryozha was sitting importantly. Today, Gayane's paintings cost thousands, they are shown in the museums, but it does not matter for her. She is a little bit not from this world and is like Novella Matveeva [Russian poet]. She speaks with a bass voice, loves singing psalms,



Gayane Khachaturian

but, alas, never became a singer." (Vasily Katanyan, *Touching the Idols*, Moscow, 1997, p. 227, in Russian).

Khachaturian was also remembered this way by Russian writer Vladimir Moshchenko. "She was not from this world. She was living in poor conditions, but was not complaining. They say, Tarkovsky devoted poems to Gayane. We should find them. She was poetry herself. Her paintings mesmerize. "Veil of Wine," "Elephant - A Purple Bow," "The Procession of Orange's Day," "Morning: the Violet's Whisper," "In the Evening: the Harp Night of Blue Night" (Vladimir Moshchenko, *The Voices Disappear, the Music Remains*, Moscow, 2015, p. 112, in

Russian).

In 2009, the Armenian pavilion in Venice International Biennale was presented only by Gayane Khachaturian's 15 works. Unfortunately, the painter passed away two months before the Biennale. On April 14, 2009, the artist said in a conversation with Moscow curator and collector Valery Khanukayev at the Tbilisi Oncology Hospital: "I have always wanted to show my world, the world of magic realism, but the illness and the nerves have exhausted my strength and my health. Soon it is Venice Biennale, I know, and when my paintings and drawings will be exposed, they will have great success, the late success that I

earned before my death, but I don't care, as I do not consider my paintings masterpieces..."

Ten years ago, at the Venice Biennale, I was watching Gayane's magical paintings and seeing the admiration of visitors of different nationalities, remembering my only meeting with the artist a few years ago in front of the Contemporary Art Museum in Yerevan. I have taken her hands that created so many wonderful canvases and said that we are always waiting for her in Armenia and expect her constant return, which, unfortunately, did not happen...

In 2008 Khanukayev with the artist's consent and her personal leadership, founded and chaired the Gayane Khachaturian International Foundation, which organizes exhibitions, creates an archive and studies the heritage of the artist. By the way, by Khanukayev's initiative Austrian ballet master Michael Fichtenbaum has staged in Moscow one action ballet titled "Gayane," devoted to the life of the artist...

Certainly, we are grateful to this non-Armenian collector and curator who take care of the heritage of the Armenian artist, but we also regret that Paradjanov's kin friend, unlike him, does not have her own museum in Yerevan...

In the Armenian Pantheon of Tbilisi (Khojivank), mostly destroyed during the Stalin era, 10 years ago a new, humble gravestone appeared. The great Armenian female painter has been lying near the tombs of our great writers: Raffi, Sundukyan, Tumanyan... And as the signature of her canvases, the gravestone is also Armenian, something rare in modern Georgia, which is actively erasing Armenian traces.

## AGBU Central Board Visits Québec to Promote Cross-Cultural Education

MONTREAL — Coinciding with their board meeting in Montreal over the weekend of June 20-22, AGBU President Berge Setrakian, along with central board members from around the world and representatives of the organization, completed a full agenda of public engagements.

On June 20, Setrakian met with the Premier of Québec Francois Legault at his government offices to discuss ways to promote La Francophonie in Armenia and strengthen Québec-Armenia relations through mutual efforts to safeguard language and identity in the global age. Premier Legault reaffirmed his stance that education is one of the top priorities of his government and was gratified to know that AGBU shared the same conviction, observing, "The Armenian community in Québec is a great model of integration. Every day Armenians contribute to the prosperity of our society."

Attendees saw the AGBU Alex Manoogian School's effective curriculum for orienting newly arrived students from war-torn countries like Syria into the Canadian community — a model program that has been adopted city wide.

Moreover, just a day prior to the meeting with the premier, AGBU school principal Chahé Tanachian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Québec Chess Federation for the purpose of promoting and teaching chess through coursework, tournaments and workshops via AGBU Armenian Virtual College (AVC).

On June 21, a town hall attended by over 200 members of the Armenian community featured a distinguished panel moderated by retired Canadian Ambassador to Lebanon and Libya Haig Sarafian with opening and closing remarks by Chair of AGBU Montreal chapter Chahé Tanachian.

During the question-and-answer session with Armenian youth, topics ranged from providing programs for children with special needs, a new e-tool called Atlas by AGBU that curates and aggregates online resources in Armenian Education, and other alternative learning products that complement traditional formats. Other questions touched upon the changes in Armenia since the Velvet Revolution in 2018 and how AGBU is fostering self-empowerment among the women of Armenia through its Women's Entrepreneurs (W.E.) program.

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Nothing but Asparagus

### INGREDIENTS

1 large onion, sliced  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 large carrots (or 1 1/2 cups of baby carrots), peeled and diced into pieces  
2 medium zucchini, sliced in rounds  
2 medium yellow squash, sliced in rounds  
1 each medium yellow and red bell pepper, diced or sliced into rings  
1/2 pound asparagus, cut on the diagonal into bite-sized  
1/2 pound fresh cut green beans, broccoli florets or cauliflower  
1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced  
2 medium tomatoes, sliced  
1/2 cup tomato sauce (optional)  
1/4 cup chopped parsley  
1 1/2 cups fresh bread crumbs or cracker crumbs  
1/2 stick unsalted melted butter, to taste  
Salt, pepper, dried or fresh chopped basil  
1 cup grated Parmesan or Mozzarella cheese (or shredded Gruyere or Swiss cheese)  
Unsalted butter or olive oil



### PREPARATION

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees.  
Combine the bread or cracker crumbs and melted butter until crumbly; set aside.  
Sauté the onions and garlic in butter (or olive oil) until onions are translucent; set aside.  
Combine the onion and garlic mixture with the carrots, zucchini, squash, bell pepper, asparagus, green beans, mushrooms, tomato sauce, parsley, and spices and pour into a prepared 2-quart casserole dish; toss a few times.  
Top with the sliced tomatoes and bread crumb mixture, cover, and bake for 35 minutes or until golden brown.  
Uncover, add the cheese for the last 10 minutes, and bake until bubbly.  
Garnish with parsley, cilantro, sliced avocado, fried onions, or chopped fresh mint.  
Serves 6.

\*1/4 cup sherry or dry white wine may be added to this recipe. Two cups of diced fresh spinach may be added to this recipe.  
\*\*Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee newspaper, Sunset magazine, Cooking Light magazine, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# ‘Armenia! And Its Aftermath’: Slide Lecture by Dr. Helen Evans Draws Capacity Crowd in Detroit

EVANS, from page 13

The St. John Armenian Church complex includes the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School, the Edward and Helen Mardigian Library, the Veterans Recreation Building, and the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum.

Brazilian acknowledged the presence of special guests, including Detroit Institute of Arts Director Salvador Salort-Pons and his wife Alex May, Eugene A. Gargaro, Jr. [Chairman of the Board, Detroit Institute of Arts], Dr. Richard Marburger [President of the AGBU Manoogian School Board], members of the School Board, and the 2019 Fall Senior Class.

The Manoogian School will celebrate its 50th anniversary this fall.

Brazilian then introduced Dr. Sylvie Merian from the Morgan Library and Museum, and a contributor to the exhibit catalog. Merian received her PhD in Armenian studies from Columbia University. She has published and lectured on Armenian codicology, book bindings, manuscript illumination, and the history of the book. She also contributed to the Manoogian Museum book, *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures*.

Merian read a specially-written colophon in honor of Evans and also introduced her. From the colophon: “This so-called Colophon was written in the year of the Armenians, 1468, and the year of our Lord 2019, by the miserable and untalented scribe Sylvie, to introduce and honor Dr. Helen Evans, whose tireless efforts . . . innate intelligence . . . profound knowledge . . . enabled her to create the spectacular exhibition, ‘Armenia!’ at that great temple of world art and culture, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.”

Evans is well-known in the world of art history, museums, and Armenian studies as she has produced many spectacular exhibitions.



Dr. Sylvia Merian (Mike Savitski Photo)



Richard Manoogian (Mike Savitski Photo)

Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians presented Evans with the Order of Saint Sahak-St. Mesrob Award at the opening of the exhibition and the Great House of Cilicia presented her with the Mesrob Mashtots and Queen Zabel Award and also with the Spirit of Armenia. Evans received the 2019 Friend of the Armenians Award at the Diocesan Assembly in May.

Evans began her talk by referring to “a Met survey taken during the event which indicated that 93 percent of those people surveyed said that they learned so much from the art and



Dr. Evans and Eugene A. Gargaro, Jr. (Mike Savitski Photo)

from the labels. So our goal to make the world know of the importance of Armenian art and culture is at least to a degree started.

“We opened the show with Gregory, the Illuminator, the converter of the Armenians as a people to Christianity, then the Middle Ages, and merchants and traders. One way we can tell how really impressive you [Armenians] were – in Amsterdam in 1695 one of the popular luxury goods was gigantic maps of the world in the language of the people who are rich enough to pay for them. And one of the languages those maps are published in is Armenian. There is a world map that looks like everybody else’s world map, but every word on it is in Armenian and it’s altogether up to date including the fact that California is an island!

“Three of the works came from the Manoogian Museum – a hexagonal tile and the large ceramic egg [mid-to late 18th century]. Armenians were important at the ceramic manufacturing center of Kütaya by 1501. The third work came to be one of my favorite works in the entire exhibition is the reliquary container and the hand relic [from the eighth century] of St. Abulmuse. People mentioned that reliquaries were most meaningful to them. . . what I was trying to do in this gallery was to give people a sense of the Church in which we played liturgical music and then the objects that would fit within the Church. The music which came out from around the photographs was described as ‘incredibly moving’ by a number of people in their survey of the show.”

As part of Evans’ commentary about the Khatchkar [cross-stone] in the exhibit, she mentioned that “when the Armenian government decided to gift one to the United Nations, Archbishop [Khajag] Barsamian made a special trip to Armenia to help select a Khatchkar.”

Evans spoke at the special ceremony at the UN when the Khatchkar was officially blessed and installed at the UN Headquarters in New York on April 17, 2015.

“So I’ve come to the end of my talk and I did-



Edmond Azadian (Mike Savitski Photo)

n’t have any fantastic conclusion for you, but I wanted to make a point that matters a great deal to me and to people like Sylvie—that you [Armenians] are relevant in many ways that are not yet fully understood.



Richard Manoogian, Salvador Salort-Pons and his wife Alex May (Mike Savitski Photo)



Elizabeth Brazilian (Mike Savitski Photo)

“There is so much to learn about our medium and so many people were moved by the show and what they learned. I would encourage a lot more scholarship, a lot more support, a lot more Armenian exhibitions and a lot more supportive Armenian objects going into museums so that people can know about your art and culture. I think that as a non-Armenian it is a great honor to be able to study – what for most of you in this room is your own historical background. I thank you for having me here today to tell you what we hope we’ve done for it with our media.”

Brazilian then introduced Richard Manoogian, chairman of the Board of the Armenian Apostolic Society. Manoogian praised Evans for her touching speech.

“My father, Alex, believed that to inspire pride and respect among the next generation of those of Armenian heritage, they must be exposed to the best of their history and traditions. What can inspire the next generation and all generations for that matter is to read at the main entrance of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art – the word ‘Armenia!’ on the facade of the recent landmark exhibition. . . . Many thousands of Armenians and non-Armenians were

treated to the marvels of Armenian medieval art on beautiful display at the MET. Despite many adversities in history, the creative impulse of the Armenian people has always been active. As a consequence of the sad destiny of the Armenians, many manuscripts and artifacts have been scattered around the world, making it a daunting task to build a museum or to organize even a single exhibition.

“That is why it was a painstaking challenge and endeavor to venture into the organization of the magnificent Met display, bringing together the resources of many museums and monasteries in Armenia, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Venice, and the United States. This beautiful exhibition entitled Armenia! was planned, developed and executed by a learned scholar, our guest speak-



Very Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian (Mike Savitski Photo)

er – Dr. Helen Evans – and her colleagues.

“It takes thoughtful and sensitive diplomatic skills to convince the directors of leading institutions to loan their valuable artifacts to other museums, no matter how reputable those museums may be. Then it takes the knowledge of an academic coupled with an artistic taste to give it a coherent face, an identity to the exhibition. We are very proud that the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum participated in the exhibition at the Met by loaning three significant items from our collection.”

He continued, “We are privileged that she graciously accepted our invitation to afford us this evening an opportunity to offer her our own share of gratitude for elevating and placing the Armenian cultural heritage on so visible and revered a venue as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.”

He then presented her with a memento in honor of her achievements.

The presentation was greeted by a standing ovation. Brazilian thanked Richard Manoogian for hosting the evening and stated “This presentation was filmed and will be available for



Richard Manoogian and Salvador Salort-Pons chat over dinner (Mike Savitski Photo)

viewing on our website—[manoogianmuseum.org](http://manoogianmuseum.org).”

Prior to blessing the food for the reception, the Very Rev. Aren Jebejian addressed Dr. Evans: “Everything you said in your presentation was 100-percent true except for the fact that ‘you are not Armenian.’ You are Armenian by choice. We claim you, you are ours. When I first walked in, you came up to me and gave me a kiss on both cheeks. You are Armenian!”

All the guests were treated to a complimentary reception that included Armenian wine and Armenian hors d’oeuvres.

(Alice Nigoghosian is a publishing consultant to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum.)



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## C A L E N D A R

## 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

**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 Nevart 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

**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 Aparcar, 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.

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

## Musical Comedy 'Assistants' Cowritten by Hagopian Pays Tribute to Unsung Heroes

MUSICAL, from page 13  
between this boy and the robot.

## Background

Hagopian, 32, grew up in Lexington, Mass., and after going to community college a short while, decided to go straight to work and moved to Los Angeles to be a writer. Within a month, he said, he got a job on a television show and then climbed the career ladder. As an assistant to a writer himself, he learned a lot.

Hagopian's father Roger Hagopian, well known to Armenians as a documentary film maker, is a musician too, and Manny and his brother were in a band growing up, for about ten years. Hagopian ran rock festivals in Waltham, Mass., for three or four years.

In Los Angeles, he combined his knowledge of music with his writing skills to create four or five musicals before this one. While he sometimes works alone (e.g. "Earhart: A Musical Flight"), his collaborator for this one has been working with him for five or six years. Among their creations was "Tonya Harding: The Musical."

Hagopian said he derives inspiration from filmmakers like Billy Wilder, while as a musician, he said, he comes from a rock and roll and punk rock background. Consequently, he said, "my sort of songwriting is a mix between punk

rock and pop rock." His collaborator, Blaskie, comes from a full musical theater background so together they produce something unique, including some jazzy blues songs in the present show.

Hagopian left Hollywood to move to New

York City in February of this year because his fiancée got a job for the "Daily Show with Trevor Noah" last year.

While so far none of his musicals deal with Armenian themes or have Armenian characters, Hagopian is working on developing a character

of Armenian or Armenian/Middle Eastern descent for a game called "Apex Legends," for which he is a senior writer. He said that the character will be given context so his/her appearance will not come as a shock but as something natural. He pointed out that "There are people who have never even met an Armenian," so this will have a type of educative effect.

He learned some Armenian from his father, and intends to visit Armenia with the latter. One of Hagopian's biggest supporters in Los Angeles has been Rev. Ron Tovmassian, senior pastor at the United Armenian Congregational Church, who is a good friend of Hagopian's parents and will conduct his marriage ceremony soon.

## The Show Must Go Nn

After "Assistants" completes its run, the show will be published, which will allow local theater to license the show and thus both encourage its distribution as well as produce some revenue. Its visibility may also lead to new writing jobs for Hagopian and Blaskie.

In the meanwhile, for those in New York, performances at the Players Theater (115 Macdougall Street) are Thursdays and Saturdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. (July 5 instead of July 4). To obtain tickets, visit www.assistantsmusical.com.



Scene from a dress rehearsal for "Assistants"





COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

# A Delicate Georgian Balance

By Edmond Y. Azadian

We have always characterized Armenia’s neighbor, Georgia, as a “friendly foe,” which Armenia has to treat with kid gloves.

Historically the two nations share many traits and experiences; at times, they have been ruled by the same king and at other times, they have both been colonized by the same empires.

Armenians have the propensity to build other countries and Georgia has been one of the major beneficiaries of that trait. Throughout the 19th century, Armenians turned the sleepy Georgian capital of Tbilisi (Tiflis) into a major cosmopolitan cultural hub. With the Bolshevik takeover, the Georgians were all too happy to seize the properties of wealthy Armenians under the guise of a proletarian revolution.

Ever since, they have treated Armenians there as an underclass, even during the Soviet period which preached egalitarianism.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet empire, the Armenian minority has experienced discrimination and repression in Georgia, despite the fact that the regime aspires to join the European Union and NATO, which require different standards of governance from their members.

Armenia’s major trading partner is Russia and goods and people traveling between Armenia and Russia have to traverse Georgian territory. In addition, any trade with Europe needs access through Georgian seaports. The Georgian authorities know how to implement subtle methods to stifle the trade, particularly with Russia.

When Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan assumed power, his

levers of power behind the scenes, has blamed the disturbance on Russia, claiming that it is in the interest of Moscow to see these destabilizing developments in Georgia “because Russia is an occupying power and our enemy.”

Russia has not been oblivious to the developments there; President Vladimir Putin, in response to the violent outburst of anti-Russian sentiments, has ordered the cancellation of Russian flights to Georgia.

President Zurabishvili’s anger is equally directed toward Azerbaijan, which supported by Turkey, has laid territorial claims on land in Georgia, however, she has not verbalized that sentiment.

Ivanishvili, the founder of the Georgian Dream party, is the power behind the throne in Georgia. He has realized that in its drive towards the west and NATO, Tbilisi has yielded too much political influence to Turkey and Azerbaijan, so much so that the friendship between the parties has hurt rather than help his country. Turkey has all but monopolized Georgia’s economy and Azerbaijan now has been raising territorial claims.

The showdown between Georgia and Russia also has benefited the Turkish-Azeri axis, because they disrupted low-level negotiations between Tbilisi and Moscow. One of the outcomes of those negotiations was to be the resumption of rail traffic between Armenia and Russia over the Abkhazian territory.

As Armenia is beholden to Georgia for its traffic with Russia over the border passage of Lars, the Abkhazian alternative would have loosened the Azeri-Turkish stranglehold over Armenia’s regional trade.

Now the government in Tbilisi is in a bind. Despite the stifling bearhug from the Turkish-Azeri forces, some in the country pushing toward the West still support close relations with the two, despite the obvious damage that the country has suffered thus far.

One such proponent is the foreign minister, David Zalkaliani, who announced recently that the joint military exercises carried out between Georgia and Azerbaijan are in line with the interests of the US, the European Union and Turkey. He has stated that Azerbaijan is Georgia’s strategic partner, adding: “At the moment, when our territories have been occupied by Russia, we cannot jeopardize our relations with our major strategic partner.”

Policy planners in Tbilisi are well aware of Armenia’s predicament and vulnerability, and therefore,

they do not expect any dramatic reaction from Armenia.

Last week’s meeting between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, did not yield much of a result except for the usual generic statements from both sides to keep the negotiation process going and resolving the conflict through peaceful means.

However, despite those statements, the threat of war is gaining momentum. The Georgians clearly seem to expect a war and have pegged Armenia to be on the losing side, and as weaklings. Last week, they denied an entry visa to an Armenian scholar, Ashod Melkonyan. In the past they have denied entry to Shirak Torossyan, an MP in Armenia. All those provocative actions have gone without any reaction from the Armenian side, as have their repressive measures against Javakhhk Armenians.

Responding to a journalist from Aysor.am, an academic specializing in Georgian studies, Alik Eroyantz, stated: “In light of the situation in the Caucasus region and the delicate nature of Armenian-Georgian relations, the military cooperation between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia must serve as a cause for concern. ... However, Armenia’s reaction must be a measured one.”

The Armenian government must therefore calibrate its policy towards Georgia with extreme caution, first to secure its trade routes to the outside world open and not to provide any cause or excuse to the Tbilisi government to further veer towards the Turkish-Azeri axis.

With “friends” like Georgia in the region, Armenia does not need any enemies.



first official visit was to Georgia. He also held friendly meetings with Georgian leaders on border towns. During his last visit, Pashinyan reminded his Georgian counterparts that Armenia and Georgia are the only Christian nations to exercise and preserve Christian values in the region. But Georgia’s antagonism toward Russia places the country at odds with Armenia, the latter being a strategic ally of Moscow.

Georgia almost always has voted against Armenia at the United Nations. However, during a recent vote at the UN about Georgian refugee rights to return to their historic habitat, Armenia abstained as a friendly gesture to Georgia. In addition, Armenia has recognized the Crimean annexation by Russia but not the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, whose independence was recognized by Russia, of course, and also Syria, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru and Artsakh.

Armenia’s trade and much of its regional politics are affected by Georgian-Armenian relations.

On June 20, massive protest rallies took place in Tbilisi as a result of Russian presence at a parliamentary session. Indeed, a Russian member of parliament, Sergei Gavrilov, took the podium and spoke in Russian at an Orthodox interparliamentary session. That triggered violent protests resulting in 240 injured people, 80 of them police officers.

That is how deep anti-Russian sentiments run in Georgia.

The disturbance also cost the speaker of the Georgian Parliament, Irakli Kobakhidze, his job, as he was forced to resign.

President Salome Zurabishvili, handpicked by the billionaire former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, who still controls the

# Mirror Spectator

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

**SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:**  
Edmond Y. Azadian

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

**CORRESPONDENTS:**

**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian  
**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian  
**Los Angeles** - Taleen Babayan  
**Berlin** - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

**Contributing Photographers:**  
Jirair Hovsepian

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

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

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## UN Sends a Stunning Letter Questioning Turkey on the Armenian Genocide

Twenty-nine years ago the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a report acknowledging the Armenian Genocide as a case of genocide. Until recently, there has been no other activity at the UN on this issue. Unexpectedly, on March 25, 2019, a surprising letter was sent to Ambassador Sadik Arslan, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, by three UN entities: Bernard Duhaime, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and Fabian Salvioli, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

The joint UN letter asked the Turkish Ambassador to provide answers within 60 days to the following seven questions:

“1. Please provide any information and/or comment(s) you may have on the allegations: ...violations attributable to Turkey in relation to the tragic events that affected the Armenian minority from 1915 to 1923, and their consequences for the population concerned.

2. What policies have been put in place by your Excellency's Government to respond to these allegations?

3. What measures has Turkey taken to establish the facts, including the fate or whereabouts of Armenians who were subjected to forced internal displacement, detention, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances during the period of 1915-1923?

4. What measures have been taken to ensure the right of victims and of society as a whole to know the truth about these events, and to ensure the right of victims to justice and reparations for the damage suffered?

5. What measures have been taken to locate, insofar as possible, the bodies of Armenians who died as a result of these events?

6. Please provide information about the reasons for the adoption of the 2017 legislation preventing lawmakers from making certain expressions. Please explain how this is com-

patible with international human rights law, in particular with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

7. Please provide detailed information about the cases in which Article 301 of the Criminal Code has been applied to punish individuals for statements made alleging crimes against Armenians.”

The joint UN letter described in detail the atrocities committed against Armenians “from 1915 to 1923” by “the Ottoman Empire and its succeeding Turkish Republic [which] implemented a policy of mass relocation of the Armenian minority living in the eastern part of the country. Hundreds of thousands (estimates range between 600,000 and 1,500,000) of persons belonging to that minority were subject to that policy, which resulted in widespread violence against that population. Their forced deportation reportedly started in March 1915 mainly in Anatolia but also in other parts of the country. Armenians were expelled from their ancestral lands. On the night of 24th April 1915, hundreds of political and intellectual leaders were arrested in Constantinople and then transferred to other places. As a result, Armenian elites disappeared almost completely. This was followed by a systematic policy targeting the entire Armenian population in each province and in each Vilayet, the official objective of which was to displace by force the Armenian population from the eastern provinces of Anatolia to Aleppo and camps in the Syrian desert. Armenians were subjected to forced marches. Most of them allegedly died progressively from exhaustion, starvation, diseases or from massacres, and in most cases their remains were abandoned. Upon arrival, the few surviving people were detained in camps in conditions which may have amounted to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; most of them were subsequently killed. The process persisted through 1923. It is alleged that these actions could constitute enforced disappearances to the extent that:

(i) Armenians in Turkey were subjected to arrests, detentions, or abductions or were otherwise deprived of their liberty;

(ii) These acts are reportedly attributable to officials or different branches or levels of government;

(iii) The Government has not disclosed so far the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned.”

The UN letter also criticized Turkey's denial: “It is also reported that Turkey not only refuses to acknowledge these events, but also intentionally engages in denial and obstruction of the truth about the fate or whereabouts of the victims.... While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to express our concern at the reported denial, and ensuing lack of progress in establishing the truth and ensuring justice for the forcible deportation of Armenians between 1915 and 1923, which resulted in massive suffering, ill-treatment and deaths. The lack of progress in establishing and acknowledging the relevant facts, not only

affects the dignity of victims and their descendants, but can also hinder the possibility of initiating measures aimed at preserving the memory and establishing the truth.”

On May 17, 2019, within 60 days of the UN request, the Turkish Ambassador responded with a three-page letter stating that the UN letter “will be left unanswered by the Government of Turkey”! Ambassador Arslan further stated that “my authorities were rather baffled by the communication” which he described as “ill-intended and politically motivated.”

Besides denying the statements contained in the UN letter, Ambassador Arslan also quoted the UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon and his spokesman Farhan Haq claiming that the UN had never taken a position on events that took place before the UN was established. Both the Secretary General and his spokesman are wrong because the UN had set a special day to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust which had occurred before the UN was founded in 1945. Furthermore, I interviewed Ban-Ki Moon's spokesman Farhan Haq and asked him about the 1985 UN Sub-Commission's Genocide Report which had acknowledged several genocides, including the Armenian Genocide, all of which had taken place before the UN was established. Haq told me that he was aware of the UN Sub-Commission's Genocide Report, but he was referring to the lack of acknowledgment by the UN General Assembly.

In addition, the UN authors attached to their letter an annex quoting from the International Humanitarian Law which stated that: “Principle 2 of the updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity establishes the inalienable right of all persons to know the truth about past events concerning the perpetration of heinous crimes and about the circumstances and reasons that led to them. Full and effective exercise of the right to the truth provides a vital safeguard against the recurrence of violations. Principle 4 stipulates that victims and their families have the inalienable right to know the truth about the circumstances in which violations took place and about the victims' fate.”

Finally, Ambassador Arslan repeated the same untruth about Armenia not responding to a letter from Turkey in 2005 proposing “to establish a joint commission consisting of historians and other experts to study the events of 1915.” This is a lie. Armenia did respond, suggesting that the proposed commission review all outstanding issues between the two countries, not just the Armenian Genocide. Turkey was the one that never responded.

As a next step, now that the Armenian Genocide issue has been raised at the UN once again, it is incumbent on the Republic of Armenia to formally place the UN letter and the Turkish denialist response on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council and pursue compensation and justice for the million and a half victims of the Armenian Genocide.

# For Erdogan, the Bill for Turkey's Debt-Fueled Growth Comes Due

By Peter S. Goodman

ISTANBUL — The shocking rebuke of Turkey's governing party in Sunday's mayoral election in Istanbul resonated as more than a yearning for new leadership in the nation's largest city. It signaled mounting despair over the economic disaster that has befallen the nation under the strongman rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Through the course of a 16-year run as Turkey's supreme leader, Erdogan has time and again delivered on his promises of potent economic growth. Yet not unlike an athlete who puts up record-shattering numbers through performance-enhancing drugs, he has produced expansion by resorting aggressively to debt. He has unleashed credit to his cronies in the real estate and construction industries, who have filled the horizons with monumental infrastructure projects.

The bill has come due. Over the last two years, financiers have taken note of the staggering debt burdens confronting Turkey's major companies and grown fearful of the increasingly dubious prospects for full repayment. Investors have yanked their money out of the country, sending the value of Turkey's currency, the lira, plunging by more than 40 percent against the American dollar.

The result is inflation running at an annual rate of about 19 percent, besieging ordinary people and companies alike. Farmers are stuck paying sharply higher prices for imported fertilizer and fuel for their tractors. Families are paying more for vegetables and eggs. Factories are paying extra for imported components like electronics and parts. The official unemployment rate exceeds 14 percent.

Of gravest concern, the companies that enabled Erdogan's construction bonanza have watched their balance sheets deteriorate with the fall in the lira. Much of their debt is priced in dollars, meaning their burden expands as the Turkish currency loses value. Most of their revenues are in lira, a potentially lethal mismatch that threatens insolvency.

Turkey was staring at some \$328 billion worth of medium and long-term debt in foreign currencies, most of that in dollars, as of the end of 2018, according to official data. Private companies were responsible for about two-thirds. Private companies owed another \$138 billion in foreign currency debt payable in the next year.

Given that Turkey's overall economic production was about \$766 billion last year, these debts are enormous. They have given Turkey claim on an unwanted distinction: Only Argentina looks to be at greater risk of next descending into a full-blown crisis.

More than economic factors explain the deepening dismay over Mr. Erdogan's tenure. Having cultivated power by diminishing the role of the military in national life, enabling Muslims to practice their faith free of a state-enforced mode of secularism, he has in recent years attacked democratic institutions by crushing dissent, seizing the property of his enemies and muzzling the press.

In opting to entrust the main opposition party, the People's Republican Party, with control of Istanbul — the city where Erdogan's political career began a quarter-century ago — voters appeared to be expressing general unhappiness with this means of governance.

But the common denominator in Turkish life, the factor that cuts across traditional political divides, is the uncomfortably decisive force of economic decline.

“Inflation is so high, and real wages are falling, and people are thinking they have to save their money instead of spending,” said Nafez Zouk, lead emerging markets economist at Oxford Economics in London. “They have lost faith in their currency and their spending power.”

Turkey is endowed with formidable economic strengths — a relatively young population of about 80 million, a growing middle class, a location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and glorious scenery underpinning a major tourism industry.

But Turkey has long been dependent on imported goods and cash borrowed in foreign currency, making the drop in the lira especially painful.

The economy descended into recession over the last half of 2018. Modest growth resumed during the first three months of 2019, as the economy expanded by 1.3 percent compared to the previous quarter. But most economists viewed that as a temporary phenomenon, the result of public spending that Erdogan delivered to boost fortunes ahead of local elections in late March.

The fundamental situation appears grim, with no clear path toward better days.

The central bank has maintained short-term interest rates at 24 percent to prevent more money from heading for the exits. High interest rates entice investors with enhanced rewards for accepting the risk of keeping their cash in Turkey.

But high rates also make borrowing more expensive for Turkish businesses and consumers, depressing sales of cars, discouraging new ventures and constraining economic activity in general.

Erdogan has famously railed against high interest rates as the supposed cause of inflation, which is something like blaming sobriety for the smashed furniture left in the wake of the last boozy bender, and has called for them to fall to get growth back on track. His installation of his son-in-law as paramount economic overseer last year damaged what meager confidence remained in the independence of Turkey's central bank.

Erdogan could use his powers to engineer a reduction in interest rates, sending another surge of credit through the economy and — at least for a time — making businesses feel better about their prospects. He could add to the festivities with government spending, taking advantage of Turkey's still officially low levels of public debt.

But that would invite another drop in the lira while further denting faith in Turkey's economic stewardship. The result would be more inflation, exacerbating the pressures on consumers and businesses.

Or Erdogan can accept what he has long rejected as intolerable — much lower growth rates than the 6 and 7 percent a year to which he has become accustomed, perhaps muddling through as the corporate sector finds its way to solvency.

see ERDOGAN, page 20,





# Georgia’s President Calls for ‘De-escalation’ after Unrest

By Katy Darfford & Daniel Bellamy

TBILISI (Euronews and Reuters) – Georgia and Russia have blamed each other for the outbreak of protests and unrest in Tbilisi which was sparked by the visit of a Russian member of parliament to Georgia’s parliament.

And in an exclusive interview with Euronews on Monday, June 24, Georgia’s president Salome Zurbichvili called for a “de-escalation”

Georgia and Russia fought a brief war over the provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008. The provinces remain under Russian military control even though the international community recognizes them as part of Georgia.

Thousands gathered outside parliament where opposition leaders gave the floor to young activists and students.



Georgian President Salome Zurbichvili

in the protesters’ standoff with her government.

The call came as protesters gathered for a third night in the capital.

Zurbichvili had earlier blamed Russia for the unrest, suggesting a “fifth column” loyal to Moscow had stirred up trouble.

But Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev dismissed her claim as a distortion of reality.

“What this country needs more than anything else is quietness and internal stability because that’s our real strength. There is a political problem with Russia and everybody hopes that this will be solved one day,” Zurbichvili told Euronews.

Violence flared in the Georgian capital late on Thursday, where police used tear gas and rubber bullets to stop crowds furious about the visit of a Russian delegation from storming parliament.

Hundreds of people were injured, some seriously, as demonstrators pushed against lines of riot police, threw bottles and stones, and grabbed shields, drawing a tough response.

Though the protests began over Georgia’s diplomatic relationship with Russia, opposition parties have also begun to call for wider reform.

Zurbichvili also hinted that the unrest was an attempt at destabilizing her country.

“There are attempts for destabilization and that is something that we should be very wary about and be careful. It is very easy in a country like this to play on the feelings of the population and to agitate those feelings,” she told Euronews.

On Friday President Vladimir Putin signed a decree suspending Russian passenger flights from Russia to Georgia from July 8 to protect people from what the Kremlin called “criminal actions.”

Putin also recommended Russian travel agencies suspend tours to Georgia and ordered the government to bring Russian tourists already there home.

On Saturday he also banned flights coming from Georgia to Russia.

Over one million Russian tourists holiday in Georgia each year and the bans are likely to significantly hit the tourist sector.



Yerevan Young Minds group with award, from left to right: Artyom Stepanyan, Anna Grigoryan, Hripsime Mkrtchyan, Gayane Karapetyan Davit Aslanyan

## Young Minds – Armenia and Artsakh Branches, Awarded European Physical Society Prize

YEREVAN – A recent article, “Unseen Armenia - CRD: Students Mentoring Students” described the Young Minds project which was established by the European Physical Society (EPS) to foster science education among youth. The Yerevan branch, consisting of undergraduate and post-graduate university students, has brought hands-on science experiments and lectures to interested high school students in Armenia and Artsakh. The local Young Minds committee includes a number of students and researchers at Armenia’s Cosmic Ray Division of the A. Alikhanyan National Laboratory (Yerevan Physics Institute) and other Armenian universities. The European Physical Society cited the Armenian Young Minds group with the “2019 Best Activity of the Young Minds Project” prize. The award reads:

By Hovsep Daghdigian

“European Physical Society, Prize: The EPS/Young Minds has decided to award the 2019 Best Activity of the Young Minds Project to ARTSAKH YM SECTION and YEREVAN YM SECTION for providing a stimulus for new generations of scientists and increase the awareness for the importance of scientific research amongst the widest public.”

It is signed by Anne Ruimy and Roberta Caruso of the Young Minds Committee.

## Armenian Lawmaker Denies Voting Against Russia in PACE

STRASBOURG (RFE/RL) – A senior Armenian pro-government lawmaker said on Tuesday, June 25, he did not vote against reinstating Russia in the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) contrary to voting results reported by the human rights body.

The PACE voted on Monday to restore Russia’s voting rights which were revoked in 2014 following Moscow’s takeover of Crimea and its backing of militant separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine’s delegation to the PACE walked out in protest, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy voiced his “disappointment” with the decision.

The decision was backed by 118 members of the Strasbourg-based assembly, including two of

the four members of the Armenian delegation: Naira Zohrabyan and Edmon Marukyan. The latter are affiliated with Armenian opposition parties.

The two other Armenian members of the PACE, Ruben Rubinyan and Hovhannes Igityan, represent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s My Step alliance. According to voting results posted on the PACE website, Rubinyan voted against the pro-Russian measure, while Igityan did not vote at all.

“My vote was registered as a vote against, rather than for [Russia’s voting rights,] for technical reasons,” Rubinyan claimed in a Facebook post. He said he made a statement to that effect on the PACE floor on Tuesday morning.

Rubinyan, who is the chairman of the Armenian parliament’s foreign relations committee, said he “welcomed the Russian delegation and its head Pyotr Tolstoy that returned to the PACE.”

“Much to the chagrin of some doomsayers, no problems whatsoever arose with our Russian colleagues and we are now considering organizing an acquaintance party,” he added.

Earlier in the day, Armen Ashotyan, the deputy chairman of the former ruling Republican Party, denounced the Armenian vote in the PACE as a “disgrace.”

“Pashinyan’s efforts to break up the Russian-Armenian strategic alliance could cost our country dearly,” he charged.

## For Erdogan, the Bill for Turkey’s Debt-Fueled Growth Comes Due

ERDOGAN, from page 19

The verdict in Istanbul’s mayoral election suggests that the people of Turkey’s largest city are not crazy about their choices, and not reassured by the man in charge of the country.

International markets appeared pleased by the likelihood of a weakened Erdogan, with the lira climbing modestly as trading began on Monday. Those in control of money have apparently lost trust in the Turkish president and relish the prospect that another party is seizing some of the economic levers.

(This analysis originally appeared in the *New York Times* on June 24.),

## UN Questions Turkey on the Fate of Armenians During Genocide

UN, from page 1

It stresses the alleging violations attributable to Turkey in relation to the tragic events that affected the Armenian minority from 1915 to 1923, and their consequences for the population concerned.

It expresses concern at the reported Turkish State denial, at the legislation restraining freedom of opinion and of expression related to some wording, and ensuing lack of progress in establishing the truth and ensuring justice for the forcible deportation of Armenians between 1915 and 1923, which resulted in massive suffering, ill-treatment and deaths.

It also emphasizes that this situation affects the dignity of victims and of their descendants.

The Mandates holders solicited the observations of the Government of Republic of Turkey concerning the submitted allegation, in particular:

What measures has Turkey taken to establish the facts, including the fate or whereabouts of Armenians who were subjected to forced internal displacement, detention, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances during the

period of 1915 – 1923?

What measures have been taken to ensure the right of victims and of society as a whole to know the truth about these events, and to ensure the right of victims to justice and reparations for the damage suffered?

What measures have been taken to locate, insofar as possible, the bodies of Armenians who died as a result of these events?

To provide information about the reasons for the adoption of the 2017 legislation preventing lawmakers from making certain expressions. To explain how this is compatible with international human rights law, in particular with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

To provide detailed information about the cases in which Article 301 of the Criminal Code has been applied to punish individuals for statements made alleging crimes against Armenians.

The Government of Turkey, on May 17, bluntly refused to answer those questions by UN human rights mechanisms.

We praise the special procedures engaged by

the WGEID and the two Special Rapporteurs and we support the pursuit of this unprecedented and important process.

While this effort is not a substitute for genocide recognition or full and adequate reparations for the mass atrocities and confiscations of properties suffered by the Armenians during this period, actions by the relevant United Nations human rights organs would constitute significant steps toward the disclosure of the truth and redress for this open wound on humanity.

Holy See of Echmiadzin–His Holiness Karekin II (Vagharshapat, Republic of Armenia)

Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia–His Holiness Aram I (Antelias, Republic of Lebanon)

Armenian Evangelical World Council (US)

Armenian General Benevolent Union (US)

Armenian Missionary Association of America (US)

The full text of the Joint Allegation letter is available at the following link: <https://spcomm-reports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24294>