

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Sherman Encourages Kerry to Support Affirmation of Armenian Genocide

**WASHINGTON** — *Raises Concerns Over Azeri Hostilities*  
During a hearing this week before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) praised Secretary of State John Kerry for his Senate record on the Armenian Genocide and encouraged him to continue to advocate for US affirmation.

"I commend you as Senator Kerry for your incredible record fighting for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and hope that as Secretary Kerry you will do likewise," stated Sherman.

Inviting Kerry to submit his answers for the record, Sherman also raised concerns about Azerbaijan's hostile acts against Armenians and recounted the brutal murder in Hungary at a 2004 NATO

Partnership for Peace training program of Armenian Army Lieutenant Gurgen Margaryan by Azeri Army Lieutenant Ramil Safarov, as well as continued threats by Azerbaijan's president to shoot down any planes flying in and out of the Stepanakert airport in the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh.

see SHERMAN, page 16



Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA)

## Scholar Captures Tragedy, Miracle Of Aurora Mardiganian's Life Story

**By Alin Gregorian**  
Mirror-Spectator staff

**ARLINGTON, Mass.** — In the 1920s, the name and face of Aurora Mardiganian were well known in the United States and beyond. Her autobiography, *Ravished Armenia; the Story of Aurora Mardiganian*, was a bestseller and the movie based on it, "An Auction of Souls," was a hit too. However, in the ensuing decades, she was forgotten, becoming another one of the anonymous casualties of the Armenian Genocide.

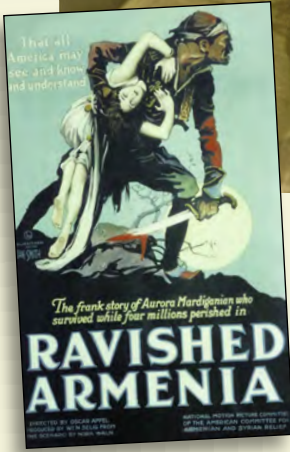
She is now being reclaimed by the Armenians in an effort led by Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan.

Demoyan presented an illustrated lecture about Mardiganian on March 8 at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, at a program co-sponsored by the foundation, the Armenian International Women's Association and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research.

see MARDIGANIAN, page 12



Above: A photo from 1929, when Mardiganian was 28. Below: A movie poster for "Ravished Armenia," previously titled, "Auction of Souls"



## Turkey Suspends Ex-Police Intelligence Head for 'Negligence' in Dink Case

**ISTANBUL (Hurriyet Daily News)** — A former police intelligence head accused of "negligence" over the murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink has been suspended from duty following a long internal investigation, even though an



Ramazan Akyürek

administrative court initially rejected demands for his removal.

Ramazan Akyürek, who served as the head of police intelligence between May 2006 and October 2009, received a notice of suspension on the grounds that he "erased information in his past duties" in a manner that was contrary to regulations.

Dink was murdered in January 2007. Inspectors allegedly determined that some of that information Akyürek erased may be related to the period during which Dink was assassinated after receiving increasing threats.

The Interior Ministry was seeking

Akyürek's dismissal on the basis that he "tarnished the image and credibility of the police department" due to his negligence in Dink's murder.

Police officers who notified Akyürek of his suspension March 16 also seized his police identity and gun.

Akyürek had controversially received two promotions after serving as the head of police intelligence, despite claims of wrongdoing during Dink's murder.

He was first appointed as the head of the Department of Strategy Development and then as the head of the Inspection Board in the Police Department Headquarters — despite being the subject to an investigation himself. The Interior Ministry discharged Akyürek from his post in connection to those accusations in October 2013 and appointed him as an expert to the Department of Strategy Development, where he served until being removed as part of the mass purges in the wake of the December 17, 2013, graft probe.

Akyürek also served as the head of the police in the Black Sea province of Trabzon between December 2003 and May 2006. Father Andrea Santoro was murdered at a church in the area on February 2006 under his watch.

It has been claimed that former Istanbul Governor, Erol Çakir, made a note in see SUSPENSION, page 16

## Switzerland Files Suit in ECHR Grand Chamber In Perinçek Case

**BERN (Armenpress)** — Switzerland requested that the European Court of Human Rights have the case of Dogu Perinçek referred to the Grand Chamber for review, the Federal Office of Justice (FoJ) announced. A review would clarify the scope available to the Swiss authorities in applying Swiss criminal law to combat racism.

In the Grand Chamber's judgment in the case of Perinçek v. Switzerland, which is not final, the European Court of Human Rights held, by a majority, that there had been a violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case concerned the criminal conviction of Perinçek for publicly challenging the existence of the Armenian genocide. The ruling of December 17, 2013, where the competent chamber of the European Court of Human Rights determined that the Swiss courts' rulings violated the appellant's right to freedom of expression, is not final. According to the 43rd and 44th articles of the European Convention, in three months the sides may demand that the case is reviewed by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights. Employee of the Information Department of the Swiss Federal Office see SWITZERLAND, page 16

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Panel on Genocide Held in Istanbul

**ISTANBUL (Armenpress)** — A conference was held in Istanbul on March 16 devoted to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide titled "One Minute to 2015: Our past and future."

The Turkish Demokrathaber.net reported that the participating panelists called on Turkey to face its history. The first session of the conference was entitled "2015 woman's face" and was dedicated to the events held against the women during the Armenian Genocide. It was stated that about 200,000 women were kidnapped or violently killed.

### Anniversary of Tehlirian Assassination Of Talaat Marked

**BERLIN (PanArmenian.net)** — March 15 marked the 93rd anniversary of the assassination of Talaat Pasha by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin. The assassination was part of Operation Nemesis, a covert effort by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

Tehlirian assassinated Talaat in front of witnesses as an act of vengeance for his role in orchestrating the Armenian Genocide. Tehlirian was tried for murder, but was eventually acquitted by the German court. The trial of Tehlirian was a sensational event at the time. It examined not only Tehlirian's actions but also his conviction that Talaat was the main person behind the Genocide. The defense attorneys made no attempt to deny that Tehlirian had killed a man, and instead focused on the influence of the Armenian Genocide on Tehlirian's mental state.

It took the jury slightly over an hour to render a verdict of "not guilty" based on the account of Tehlirian's experience during the Genocide.

Tehlirian died in 1960 in San Francisco.

### Villagers in Turkey Seek Renovations for Church Used as Barn

**VAN (Hurriyet Daily News)** — A historical structure here which once was an Armenian church, has been converted into a hayloft after serving as a school for some time.

Villagers filled the former church in the Korlu village of the Çatak district, 18 miles from Van, and appealed to the authorities to renovate it.

Van Culture and Tourism Provincial Director Muzaffer Aktug said the renovation could be started soon.

Villagers have attached a wooden door to the church, some parts of which are about to collapse, and tried to restore it to prevent it from collapsing.

Tourists had come to the village to look at the church, but it was mostly neglected.

Many of the villagers had been students attending the school.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Armenia Participates in MITT International Tourism Expo

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, along with 10 tourism companies, is representing Armenia at the MITT International Travel & Tourism Expo in Moscow, March 19-22. The Press Service of the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia told Armenpress that MITT is Russia's largest travel exhibition with more than 1,800 participating companies from 198 destinations. In 2013, the event recorded an attendance of 37,000 visitors.

Armenia's rich cultural, historical and Christian heritage is being presented in travel guides and maps in Russian during the exhibition. The Russian market is one of the target destinations of NCF's tourism promotion. Thus, Armenia's participation in this travel show aims to increase the growth of inbound tourism flows from Russia, while maximizing the potential of Armenian-Russian cooperation in the tourism sector.

## Armenian and Azeri FMs May Meet in Hague

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs have offered the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers to meet on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague. The Azerbaijani APA news agency reported that the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov spoke about it at the press conference in Baku.

"The co-chairs have a proposal. They will attend the Hague summit. We will probably meet there," Mammadyarov said.

The Nuclear Security Summit will be held in The Hague on March 25-26.

## Turkish Citizen Stabbed to Death in Gumri

GUMRI (Hetq) – Police report that Evilya Gümüstek, a citizen of Turkey, died in a Gumri hospital as a result of stab wounds, on March 15.

Police add that the deceased had allegedly been stabbed by Maksim Bakoyan during an argument. Bakoyan has since been arrested by police.

## Stepanakert Concert Devoted to Crimea

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – A concert titled "Artsakh is for self-determination" was held in Stepanakert on March 18, dedicated to the self-determination of Crimea, Nagorno Karabagh presidential spokesman Davit Babayan announced.

"Such concerts are very frequently organized in Stepanakert. And since Crimea has recently received self-determination, the first concert of this year is devoted to Crimea. In this way Artsakh expresses its position to the most important issue of self-determination of countries," Babayan said.

## Emergency Airlift to Be Set up in Armenia

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.net) – Armenia's Emergency Ministry plans to set up an emergency airline. The draft decision, submitted by Emergency Minister Armen Yeritsyan, was scheduled to be discussed at the cabinet meeting due on March 6.

The aim of the airline will be to participate in the humanitarian mission of the Armenian-Russian Humanitarian Center; to prevent, reduce and liquidate possible consequences of emergency situations; to carry out air transportation of rescuers and rescue crews; to transport rescue equipment; to carry out firefighting operations with the help of planes and helicopters; to prevent and reduce possible consequences of other emergency situations; to transport and evacuate population and victims and to transport humanitarian cargos.

## Habitat for Humanity Armenia Team Visits US

(Luiza Vardanyan, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Armenia, and Seda Arzumanyan, resource development manager, are taking part in a fundraising trip in the US April 25 through May 9, with stops planned in Massachusetts, California, Ohio and New York. This online interview with them was conducted by the Mirror-Spectator last week.)

**Q:** What has the HFH Armenia accomplished during its years in Armenia?

**A:** Habitat for Humanity International is a global nonprofit Christian housing organization that seeks to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. In Armenia Habitat aim is to eliminate poverty housing by serving low-income families and improving their living conditions.

Since its establishment in the year 2000, Habitat for Humanity Armenia has served more than 3,200 low-income families at housing need in Armenia. With an average family size of four, that is more than 12,800 people whose living conditions have been improved through Habitat's work.

Habitat for Humanity Armenia tackles poverty housing through a variety of efforts, including home renovation; completion of half-built homes; implementation of water and sanitation facilities; residential buildings commonly used spaces renovation and energy efficiency; advocacy of housing policies for low-income families; engagement of volunteers and other like-minded partners; and more. Through Global Village program Habitat Armenia has hosted more than 850 volunteers that have worked hand in hand with partner families/local communities taking part in construction activities.

We are proud of the partnerships that we have forged; for example the Residential Energy Efficiency (EE) for Low Income Households Project in partnership with USAID and we look forward to making a dramatic impact in the energy market in years to come through our learning and coalition building. We started new project (funded by Visegrad Foundation) to improve legislative and policy environment for the management of condominiums (multi-unit apartment buildings).

There is still much to do and as leaders in the housing field we are devoted to our work so that each Armenian family can have a safe, affordable and decent place to call home.

**Q:** What is your goal during the tour of the US? What is your relationship with the Knights of Vartan?

**A:** Our US Trip main goal is to connect and develop fruitful partnership with Armenian active individuals and communi-

ty to help us to mobilize resources and efforts to fight against poverty housing in Armenia. Luiza Vardanyan, executive director, and me, Seda Arzumanyan, resource development manager, from Habitat for Humanity Armenia will take part in the US Fundraising trip. We'll travel from April 25 till May 9, 2014 and we schedule different meetings in Massachusetts, California, Ohio and New York.

Our US fundraising trip plan plans to raise at least \$60,000 to support another 20 low-income families in Armenia to have decent, safe and affordable homes.

USAID; also HFH Armenia has cooperation and collaboration with more than 20 UN agencies and local NGOs being a member of Disaster Management Country team and within framework of National Platform.

**Q:** What is the cost of an average dwelling that you build there?

**A:** It is various and depends on the construction work. For the renovation and half build completion projects, per family support average cost is \$3,000.

**Q:** Are you in urban or rural settings?

**A:** Habitat Armenia national office is



Volunteers help construct a home.

We also would like to fundraise another \$150,000 to start new buildings (core home) project and build new 3 homes for the homeless families in 2014. Besides donations we are interested to find investors who are willing to do social investments in housing improvements projects.

Several lodges of Knights of Vartan and Daughters of Vartan have supported to Habitat for Humanity Armenia a few years.

**Q:** What areas of the country are you focusing on?

**A:** The housing need exists in all regions of Armenia that is why through our partners we work in all regions of Armenia. However we host our volunteers in Tavush and Gegharkunik regions.

**Q:** Is HFH Armenia cooperating with other NGOs in Armenia?

**A:** Habitat Armenia welcomes cooperation and partnerships. HFH Armenia cooperates with other International and local NGOs, such as European Commission's INOGATE Project on energy saving initiative in buildings, Urban foundation for Sustainable development,

located in Yerevan, but we serve the families in all regions of Armenia.

**Q:** Who gets a dwelling from HFH Armenia?

**A:** Currently Habitat Armenia implements home renovation, repairing and half-built completion projects, also residential buildings energy efficiency and common spaces (such as change and upgrade roofs, elevators, entrances, windows & doors, etc.) renovation projects.

Our main target groups for those projects are: Low-income families living in substandard housing, low-income women-headed families living in housing need and tenants living in residential buildings. For the new build (Core) home project our target group will be low-income homeless families.

Habitat for Humanity International is a tax-exempt 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization. HFH Armenia has always received Unqualified Audit Opinions.

You can donate online at [www.habitat.org/donate/armenia](http://www.habitat.org/donate/armenia) or send checks to Habitat for Humanity International; 121 Habitat Street Americus, GA 31709-3498, with "815000 Armenia" in the memo section of the check.

## Sculptor Ara Shiraz Dies

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Sculptor Ara Shiraz died on March 17 at the age of 73 in the intensive care unit of Nairi Medical Centre. Shiraz was rushed to the hospital on February 24 having lost consciousness.

Shiraz was the son of Armenian literary legends, Hovhannes Shiraz's and Silva Kaputikyan.

He was born in Yerevan in 1941. He graduated the Yerevan Theatre and Fine Arts Institute in 1966. He had participated in numerous exhibitions in Armenia and the Soviet Union. Since 1968 he was a member of the Artists' Union of Armenia. His works had been exhibited in Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and Tbilisi as part of solo and group shows. He took part in the Festival of Armenian Art "From Urartu to the Present"



Ara Shiraz

(Paris, 1970).

Shiraz was known for his monumental sculptures, such as the monuments of Paruyr Sevag (Yerevan, 1974), Yeghishe Charents (Charentsavan, 1977), Alexander Miasnikyan (Yerevan, 1980) and William Saroyan (Yerevan's Pantheon, 1991).

In 1979 he received the State Award of Armenia for his ornamental sculptures decorating the facade of Dvin Hotel in Yerevan. In 1977 he received

the title of Meritorious Artist of Armenia. In 1987 he was elected the president of the Artists' Union of Armenia, and a member of the Secretariat of the Artists' Union of the USSR.

Shiraz's most renowned works include the busts of Pablo Picasso, Yervand Kochar, Hovhannes Shiraz and Vruir Galstian. Many of his sculptures are in permanent exhibit in the Modern Art Museum of Armenia

and the State Gallery of Armenia in Yerevan, the Tretyakov Gallery and the Eastern Nations Museum of Art in Moscow.

His paintings and sculptures are found in many private collections throughout the world.

One of his more recent works was a statue of General Andranik, finished in 2002, sitting on two horses symbolizing Western and Eastern Armenia united.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Lawmakers in Crimea Move Swiftly To Split From Ukraine

By David M. Hersezenhorn and Alan Cowellmarch

SIMFEROPOL, Ukraine (*New York Times*) – In the face of stern international criticism a day after a disputed referendum, the Parliament of the breakaway republic of Crimea declared its independence from Ukraine on Monday, formally asking Russia to annex it and moving swiftly to cement its rupture with the authorities in Kiev.

Officials in Simferopol, the regional capital, jubilantly announced that almost 97 percent of voters on Sunday had supported secession.

Hours later, in the first Western response, both the Obama administration and foreign ministers from the 28-nation European Union announced that they had imposed travel bans and asset freezes on people they blamed for the moves to wrest Crimea from Ukrainian control.

The European ministers did not immediately identify the 21 names on their list, which is most likely the first stage in an escalating schedule of sanctions. But an executive order signed by President Obama targeted several named officials in President Vladimir V. Putin's inner circle, and the White House threatened to go after more if Russia did not back down.

Diplomats said the European measures would affect 10 people in Russia, eight Crimeans and three Russian military officers connected to the Black Sea Fleet, which is based in the Crimean port of Sevastopol. The tally fell short of a more expansive list supported by the United States and more hawkish European nations but nonetheless was the first time the European Union had adopted economic sanctions against Russia.

Moscow has embraced the result of the voting Sunday, but Putin has not formally declared his intent to annex the strategic territory.

The Russian leader was scheduled to make a speech on developments in the region on Tuesday.

On Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry published a lengthy statement outlining its proposals for resolving Ukraine's political crisis, saying that Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov had presented the plans to his counterparts in Europe and the United States a week earlier.

The proposals – including the recognition of Crimea's right “to determine its own destiny” – contradicted many American, European and Ukrainian positions, making it unlikely that Russia would win broad diplomatic support even though it endorsed the creation of a “contact group” of diplomats to mediate.

The ministry called for a return to the agreement of Feb. 21 arranged by three European foreign ministers, although it has been overtaken by events. It called for a national assembly to draft a new constitution creating a federal system of government that would shift significant power to the regions “reflecting the cultural and historical specificity of each of them.” The document also urged that Russian be made a second official language.

In Simferopol, the Crimean capital, celebrations continued Monday and officials declared a day off from work. Legislators, however, were moving assertively to set the break from Ukraine in motion, announcing that the authorities in the Ukrainian capital had no power in Crimea.

The legislators adopted a resolution

declaring that the laws of Ukraine no longer applied to Crimea and that state funds and all other state property of Ukraine in Crimea had been transferred to their new entity.

On Sunday, the referendum on the status of Crimea divided the population of the multicultural region.

The Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was renamed the State Council of the Republic of Crimea, and legislators formally appealed to Russia to accept Crimea as part of the Russian Federation.

In Sevastopol, the City Council took similar steps, voting to confirm the referendum result.

Without questions or debate, the Council passed a unanimous resolution to request that Sevastopol become part of the Russian Federation as a “city of federal significance,” a status now held by Moscow and St. Petersburg that grants special administrative and budgetary privileges.

Meanwhile, a stalemate continued at military bases around Crimea where Ukrainian forces have been surrounded and blocked by Russian troops but are refusing to surrender.

The Parliament in Kiev approved a presidential decree authorizing the call-up of 20,000 reservists to the armed forces and another 20,000 to a newly formed national guard. The interim government in Kiev also increased the military budget with an emergency allotment of about \$680 million that will be disbursed over the next three months.

Though it signaled a muscular military stance, the significance of the call-ups was unclear as the Ukrainian government had announced a general mobilization of reserves two weeks earlier.

The Ukrainian defense minister, Ihor Tenyukh, said Monday that he had negotiated a truce with the commanders of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the Russian Defense Ministry, affecting Ukrainian military units stationed in Crimea and surrounded by Russian troops wearing uniforms without insignia.

The truce will extend through March 21, he said, and will allow the Ukrainian military to resupply bases, which have been running low on food. Most important, the truce appears to reduce the possibility of an immediate confrontation over any of the bases if Russia formally annexes the peninsula in the coming days.

The European foreign ministers meeting in Brussels made clear that they were not considering a military response. “We are not looking at military options here,” Foreign Secretary William Hague of Britain said in a radio interview. “This is not about a Crimean war.”

The referendum on Sunday – in which 96.77 percent of voters supported breaking from Ukraine and joining the Russian Federation – was greeted as a triumph in Moscow on Monday, and lawmakers there promised to move quickly to adopt legislation to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation. “Crimea returns to Russia!” a headline in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* said, while *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* declared that “Kiev lost Crimea.”

Putin told President Obama on Sunday that the referendum in Crimea was legal and cited the independence of Kosovo – which Russia has not recognized – as the precedent for Crimea's

secession, the Kremlin said in a statement.

“The referendum was organized in such a way as to guarantee Crimea's population the possibility to freely express their will and exercise their right to self-determination,” the Kremlin's statement on the latest of a series of conversations between the two leaders said.

Putin also continued to raise the issue of violence and protests in other parts of Ukraine, which have stoked fears that Russia could move forces beyond Crimea.

He told Obama that “the current authorities in Kiev have so far failed to demonstrate the ability and desire to rein in the ultranationalist and radical groups that are destabilizing the situation in the country and terrorizing ordinary people, including the Russian-speaking population and Russia's compatriots,” the Kremlin statement said.

Crimea's new prime minister, Sergei Aksyonov, told Russian state television that a delegation from the region would arrive in Moscow to begin discussions on the process of annexation. The deputy speaker of Russia's lower house of Parliament, Sergei Neverov, said that Russian lawmakers would act shortly.

“The high voter turnout and the vast support for Crimea's accession to Russia speak for themselves,” he was quoted by Interfax as saying.

One of the ministers attending the Brussels meeting, Sebastian Kurz of Austria, gave a strong indication that the punitive European measures would not initially reach into the highest echelons of Russia's powerful energy companies, which are close to the Kremlin.

In a radio interview, Kurz said the referendum would trigger an array of measures including visa bans and the freezing of assets held by political and military figures who orchestrated Russia's intervention in Crimea, Reuters reported.

Asked whether the list would include the heads of the energy giants Gazprom and Rosneft, as reported on Friday in Germany, Kurz replied, “This is not expected at this time.”

Germany on Monday forcefully demanded that European observers be dispatched “as soon as possible” to prevent further destabilization in eastern Ukraine and reiterated that Berlin and its European partners considered Sunday's referendum illegal and its results null and void.

While calling for a “clear reaction” from the European Union, and stressing that Germany supports sanctions, the government spokesman, Steffen Seibert, indicated that Germany – which stands to lose perhaps the most if sanctions are imposed on Russia – is still pursuing diplomatic avenues.

Putin gave a “positive assessment” on Sunday when Chancellor Angela Merkel urged the dispatch of observers from the Organization for Security and StIRRing up further trouble in eastern Ukraine, Seibert added, is “dangerous and unacceptable.”

Meanwhile, the ambassador of Kiev in Armenia said that the country will continue its cooperation regardless of the situation in Ukraine, Armenian media reported.

At a March 13 news conference in Yerevan, Ivan Kukhta pointed out the cooperation and increasing trade turnover between the countries, with Ukraine home to an extensive Armenian community presented in Ukraine's state and local governance bodies.

(PanArmenian.net contributed to this report.)

## International News

### Ivory Auction Breaks French Price Records

NICE, France (AFP) – A French auction of legal ivory broke records on Saturday, with prices reaching up to 1,000 euros a kilogram (\$630 a pound), according to Alexander Debussy, associate director of auction house Cannes Encheres.

All of the lots were acquired before 1976 – the only type of ivory that can be legally sold since a global ban on the trade in 1989.

The top lot – two tusks weighing 120 kilograms (265 pounds) from an elephant that was “shot in 1966 by an Italian fighter in Kenya” – went to a wealthy Qatari for 125,000 euros, the auction house said.

An Armenian collector paid almost 69,000 euros for another lot, which included two tusks around 230 centimeters (90 inches) long from an elephant killed in the Central African Republic in the 1960s.

### Hungarian Ombudsman Slams Govt. over Azeri Killer's Extradition

BUDAPEST (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Hungarian ombudsman Laszlo Szekely addressed a report on extradition of Azeri murderer Ramil Safarov to his Armenian counterpart, Karen Andreasyan.

In his report, the human rights defender slammed the actions of Hungarian government, specifically those of the minister of justice, leading to Safarov's extradition. He also criticized the government for failing to demand guarantees that the criminal will continue serving his sentence in Azerbaijan.

“The minister's actions jeopardized the principle of the supremacy of law, undermining his compatriots' trust in justice in his own country,” he wrote.

Lt. Gurgen Margaryan, 26, was hacked to death by a fellow Azerbaijani participant, Safarov, in Budapest.

On April 13, 2006, Budapest District Court sentenced Safarov to life in prison for murdering Margaryan. In 2012, Safarov was extradited to Azerbaijan and pardoned by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev immediately.

According to some reports, Safarov was extradited to Azerbaijan in exchange for Azeri purchase of Hungarian securities worth Euro 2-3 billion, an information official Budapest denies.

### Argentine Senate Honors Dr. Daniel Stambouljian

Buenos Aires (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – The Argentine Senate honored Dr. Daniel Stambouljian on Thursday, March 13, with the “Senator Domingo Faustino Sarmiento” award in recognition for his work in the field of health.

The award, an initiative submitted by Senator Dr. Maria Laura Leguizamón, has been awarded since 2004 to those who improve the quality of life of people in the community through cultural, athletic, professional and academic work, and is the highest distinction given by the Argentinean Senate. The former President of Argentina Carlos Saul Menem attended the event.

Stambouljian graduated with honors from the University of Buenos Aires in 1962. He was a pioneer in founding the Infectious Diseases section in hospitals of Argentina. He created the Foundation Center of Infectious Diseases Studies (FUNCEI) in 1987 and the Fighting Infectious Diseases in Emerging Countries (FIDEC) in 2001, a non-profit organization based in Miami that is focused on emerging markets. Stambouljian is also the director of Stambouljian Health Services and the president of Helios Health, dedicated to HIV patients.

Leguizamón explained that “the Senate should give a space to medicine” and stressed the importance of “the life story” of Dr. Stambouljian, who was “son of Armenian immigrants and studied in Argentina.”

In addition to his work in his native Argentina, he frequently visited Armenia to provide help through vaccination campaigns and training of professionals in different areas and regions.



# Community News

## Saintly Women's Day Program Raises Awareness

By David Luhrssen

GREENFIELD, Wis. — The statistics are startling. According to statistics quoted by Rev. Vazken Movsesian, one woman is physically assaulted every nine seconds in the US and three women die in America each day at the hands of husbands and boyfriends. Movsesian was speaking at the annual Saintly Women's Day, sponsored by the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church and hosted on March 15 by St. John the Baptist Armenian Church in Greenfield. Some 80 women and men from southeast Wisconsin and northern Illinois gathered for worship service, lunch and Movsesian's talk on Datev Outreach, the social service organization he founded to assist abused Armenian women in the Los Angeles area.

Movsesian has been a well-known activist in the Armenian Church's Western Diocese. Currently the pastor of St. Peter Church in Glendale, Movsesian was a pioneer in bringing the Armenian Church to the worldwide web and has worked to put the church at the forefront of human rights issues. He has raised money and awareness for genocide survivors in the Sudan and other troubled regions.

"What does it mean to be Genocide survivors?" he asked the Saintly Women's Day audience. "It shouldn't still be 'Please help us!' It should now be, 'We'll help you!'"

That spirit of helping infuses Datev Outreach, run out of the Western Diocesan headquarters under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate and staffed by volunteers. The project was sparked by a shocking incident several years ago when a Glendale Armenian woman, beaten by her husband, was refused help by her Armenian neighbors. Her Good Samaritan that day was African American. Datev ("to give wings" in Armenian) Outreach, was organized to provide support and resources for abused women through the power of love, as expressed in the Armenian Church. Datev Outreach reaches out to equip victims and families through education to lead independent lives and to break the wall of shame that has kept spousal abuse from being discussed in the Armenian community. To that end, Movsesian organized a Walk Against Violence whose marchers bore signs with Datev Outreach's motto: "Violence Hurts, Love Conquers."

Datev Outreach has also begun to aid Armenian children of abuse by finding Armenian foster parents. In what Movsesian described as "a miracle of God," the Patriarch of Jerusalem happened to be visiting the Western Diocese and witnessed the conclusion of the Walk Against Violence. He pledged assistance.

Movsesian's talk was preceded by a vegan potluck prepared according to the traditional Armenian Lenten fast and a church service conducted by Movsesian and clergy from the Midwest including Rev. Nareg Keutelian, Very Rev. Aren Jebejian, Rev. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyun and Rev. Sahag Kashian.

For further information on Datev Outreach, visit its website ([www.datevoutreach.org](http://www.datevoutreach.org)).



Rev. Vazken Movsesian addresses the assembled.



Connie Koumjian and other AVC volunteers recycling flowers at Tsitsernagaberd on April 26, 2013 as part of annual program spearheaded by the Fund for the Protection of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC)

## AVC Professional Corps: Getting Intimate with Armenia Through Service

YEREVAN and NEW YORK — In her application to Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC), Connie Koumjian, 59, wrote "The desire to serve the people of Armenia came to me gradually." After many years in New York City, she had just recently started to attend Armenian Church where she also sang in the choir; and this awoke her interest in Armenia, the land and the people, the culture and traditions. It didn't take long for her to decide that she needed to learn more, so she signed up for a volunteer trip to Armenia through the Fuller Center for Housing.

Connie spent one month in Armenia in the summer of 2011, working on a house-building project in Vanadzor and then discovering the art of iconography in Yerevan. But it wasn't enough. Back in New York, she realized that the trip had given her great joy and that learning about her heritage as an Armenian was a very enriching experience. And so the decision was made; she would return to Armenia for a longer-term stay to live and work with her brethren, this time through Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC).

Connie arrived in Armenia in March 2013 with a keen desire to serve her homeland. Over the course of 10 months, she was able to experience life as a resident of Armenia. For the first two months, she lived with a host-family, but once she was acclimated and confident that she could get by independently, she moved into her own apartment and began living like a native — paying rent, shopping and cooking for herself, chatting with neighbors, making friends...and of course, going to work.

Work in Koumjian's case involved multiple volunteer placements. Based on her background as a social worker in New York City where she had worked in a variety of settings with disadvantaged and immigrant populations in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan, assisting them with family issues and addiction-related problems, as well as her extensive volunteer work, AVC was able to arrange service opportunities that would benefit from her years of experience.

In Yerevan, Koumjian spent part of each week helping at a soup-kitchen and a center for the elderly. She admits that at times the work was quite hard, but it was always very fulfilling. "The workers at the jasharan (soup-kitchen) were very warm and kind; I developed rewarding friendships there with both the staff and the guests and had many interesting conversations — and they helped me practice my Armenian! I was welcomed at the dzeranots (senior center) and made some very meaningful contacts there; that experience gave me interesting cultural insights into Armenia."

Koumjian also volunteered at Real World Real People (RWRP), a non-governmental organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV and their families through social, psychological and legal support, and improved access to treatment, care and prevention. Although Connie's Armenian skills limited the amount of direct consultations she could have with beneficiaries at RWRP, her extensive experience enabled her to focus her efforts on program development — specifically working on developing and implementing a 12-step recovery support group for people recovering from substance abuse (alcohol/drug abuse), a first for Armenia. The process included obtaining the donation and delivery of the necessary books and training materials to Armenia, which she secured through her global network of contacts.

In her free time, when she wasn't studying Armenian or out exploring, Koumjian also found time to pursue her love of iconography/miniature painting through weekly classes, independent practice and meetings with some of the best iconographers in Armenia today.

see AVC, page 5

## ATP May 4 Event in LA Will Kick off 20th Anniversary Commemoration Activities

WATERTOWN — Twenty two years ago philanthropist Carolyn Mugar witnessed the cutting and burning of thousands of trees in Armenia so that families could survive the severe shortages the country faced in the aftermath of the earthquake, and during the conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan. Committed to preventing further deforestation, Mugar and her husband, the late John O'Connor, decided to do something. By 1994, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) was established.

Today, the organization has planted more than 4.4 million trees during 40 seasons of planting, established three nurseries and two environmental education centers and has greened villages, churches, parks and open spaces throughout Armenia. "In the process, ATP has provided employment for hundreds of people," explains Managing Director Tom Garabedian. "We are grateful for the vision of our founder, and the many partners with whom we have worked over the years."

To celebrate ATP's 20th anniversary, volunteer committees are organizing events in Los Angeles, Boston, and Yerevan. The first of these celebrations will take place on the grounds of the historic Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California on May 4,



Carolyn Mugar

2014. Mugar will attend the program.

In Boston, the Atrium of the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse overlooking Boston Harbor will be the site of a November 8 celebration, headed by committee co-chairs Nina Festekjian and Nicole Babikian Hajjar.

As details about the celebrations in Los Angeles and Boston are released in the coming weeks, ATP will also unveil a new logo and website to give the organization a new look and broaden its scope in Armenia and the Diaspora.

"Our traditional base of support has been the Armenian-American community with donors in all 50 states, but we hope to expand our network throughout the Diaspora," continues Garabedian.

"We hope to further internationalize the work of ATP. Over the past 20 years, we have received support from 57 countries and have had strong ties in places like Buenos Aires, Australia, Germany, Norway and Cyprus, but we know there is much more to do."

For additional details about the May 4 gala at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, contact Western Region Development Director Maral Habeshian at [maral@armeniatree.org](mailto:maral@armeniatree.org).





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Merrimack Valley Genocide Committee Honors Movsesian

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — Long active in Armenian Genocide issues, Albert S. Movsesian left no stone unturned when it came time to educate the public. Whether it was addressing a class of students in some high school or senior citizens at the Council on Aging, Movsesian would speak to his audiences on the Armenian Orphan Rug and Near East Relief — two topics that have remained near and dear to his heart.

These days, he sits inside a rest home, reliving the good old days and regaling his fellow residents with stories of Armenian history and culture.

Members of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley turned out at Ashland Farms to pay Movsesian his due accord.

They presented the activist with a framed photograph of his beloved Armenia, along with some choice words from his colleagues.

“Few have done more to perpetuate the Armenian heritage in Merrimack Valley than Al,” said Chairwoman Sossy Jeknavorian. “He’s been an inspiration to our community in many ways. He’s never failed to answer the call.”

It has been a career that has manifested itself



Albert S. Movsesian is honored by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley for his diligent service to the Armenian community over the years. Presenting him with a token of appreciation is Chairwoman Sossy Jeknavorian.

over 30 years with the Merrimack Valley Genocide Committee. As a member of the Knights of Vartan, he has helped dispatch medical supplies to Armenia through the International Medical Equipment Collaborative (IMEC).

Among his other associations have been the Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley; Armenian Museum of

America and Hye Pointe Armenian Church, where he taught Sunday School and served as a Diocesan delegate and Parish Council member for more than 55 years.

His efforts earned him a St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal for Distinguished Service.

A World War II veteran with the Army Air Corps, Movsesian served as a radar technician before graduating from Boston University on

the GI Bill. He worked at Liberty Mutual for 38 years, winning several awards for salesmanship.

For 22 years, Movsesian was an active volunteer and chapter president with Northern Essex Elder Transport, reaching out to 14 communities throughout the North Shore of Boston. Simply put, for many it became a transportation of last resort.

As an active member of the Boston Rotary Club, among his golden deeds was serving meals to deprived people and catering to their essential needs. He was also a Big Brother for 44 years and member of Saggahew Lodge of Haverhill over five decades.

He’s been a board member for 15 years with the North Andover Council on Aging. He often reminisced about his days as a competitive tennis player; his passion for bee-keeping (apiculture) and the arboretum he maintained on his property in North Andover.

In recent years, he lost his beloved wife Charlotte and sister Nancy, both active in Armenian affairs. The double tragedy took its toll on the individual.

Whether it was a “handout” or simply a “hand,” Movsesian always had his arm extended.

“I’ve always tried to remain upbeat and positive, no matter what the circumstances,” he told his friends. “We must serve our nation and church with dignity and honor. It’s been a very humble and rewarding experience.”

## Archbishop Barsamian Visits St. James Church, Ordains Acolytes

WATERTOWN — On Sunday, March 2, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited St. James Armenian Church, where he ordained young altar servers.

Rev. Arakel Aljalian, parish pastor, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with the Primate presiding. Also taking part in the service were the Very Rev. Krikor Maksoudian and Rev. Arsen Barsamian.

Archbishop Barsamian gave a sermon on the significance of the fifth-century Battle of Avarayr, which the Armenian Church commem-

orated on Thursday, February 27. He encouraged young people to draw lessons from the perseverance demonstrated by St. Vartan and his soldiers, who were outnumbered by the Persian enemy, but nonetheless stood firm in their resolve to protect their faith.

“The Battle of Avarayr changed the course of Armenian history. At a time when Christianity was under great threat in our homeland, St. Vartan and his brave soldiers came forward to defend their faith,” Archbishop Barsamian said. “Today we are fortunate to live in a society where we are free from persecution, but even so

our Christian identity is not invulnerable. It is something we must strengthen and safeguard each day, as we strive to follow in the example set for us by Christ.”

During Sunday’s services, Archbishop Barsamian ordained Nareg Kalaydjian, Jivan Purutyun, and Haig Yeterian to the rank of acolyte. Aaron Derderian, Ari Kazanjian, Raffi Kazanjian, William Musserian, James Najarian and Simon Tacvorian were ordained acolytes and sub-deacons.

“I’m proud of our youth for their dedication and willingness to serve in the Armenian Church,” Aljalian said. “These young men have been active in our parish for many years, and I look forward to them continuing their service

at the altar and expanding their knowledge and experience.”

The Primate also congratulated the newly ordained altar servers and their families. In addition, he expressed his appreciation to members of the ACYOA Juniors, who recently joined the St. James choir and sang the hymns of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

Later that afternoon, the Sunday School and Armenian School jointly hosted a Poon Paregentan celebration, featuring a guest ventriloquist whose performance highlighted stories from the Gospels. Parish children received this year’s Diocesan Lenten Resource—an interactive activity wheel and guide produced by the Diocese’s Christian Education staff.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian with the young altar servers

## Getting Intimate with Armenia through Service

AVC, from page 4

Of her experience, she said, “As a Christian, I have always considered it important to serve. I enjoy sharing with others their experiences, learning about their needs and being in a caring relationship with others. Serving in Armenia was extra special for me as it afforded me the opportunity to know the country and culture of my heritage more intimately. I am proud to have served as an AVC volunteer in Armenia and to have been able to share my love, concern, skills and time.”

Koumjian is now back in the United States where she has resumed her work with the marginalized and less fortunate. Before she left Armenia, she promised that she would

practice her Armenian as much as possible and, more importantly, that she would return very soon!

Founded in 2000, AVC invites individuals 21 years of age and older, of all backgrounds from across the globe, to volunteer in Armenia for two weeks to one year. In addition to placements, AVC provides all logistical support from airport pick-up, to host-family living arrangements, Armenian language classes, and more, in partnership with its sister organization Birthright Armenia. To date, more than 550 volunteers from 34 countries have served in hundreds of organizations throughout Armenia. For more information, visit [www.armenianvolunteer.org](http://www.armenianvolunteer.org).

## Evening of Music & Dance

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Providence Church Celebrates Centennial

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The parish of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob is preparing for a season of celebrations in honor of its centennial year, which will culminate the weekend of June 14, under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America, Eastern.

The weekend of festivities begins on Friday, June 13. Conductor Konstantine Petrossian will lead the Armenian Chorales and Orchestra of Rhode Island and Greater Worcester in a concert celebrating a century of faith, hope and light. The concert, held at the new Sts. Mina and Mary Coptic Orthodox Church in Cranston, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Saturday, June 14 features the Gala Centennial Banquet at the Marriott Hotel on Orms Street in Providence. The Mistress of Ceremonies for the evening will be Rhode Island state Rep. Katherine Kazarian. Father Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Seminary, who is originally from Providence, will give the keynote address.

Barsamian will celebrate the Divine Liturgy on the morning of Sunday, June 15. Following the service, the Centennial Khatchar will be consecrated and a reception will be held in Egavian Hall.

Centennial Celebrations officially began on January 26, when the parish gathered for the



Rep. Katherine Kazarian

Centennial Divine Liturgy in honor of the first Badarak celebrated on January 20, 1914. After the service, parishioners gathered outside for a commemorative photo. The parish's youth organizations organized a program of performances by the ACYOA Juniors, Armenian School, Sunday School, Junior Choir and Nazeli Dance Group. Brunch and fellowship followed the presentation.

– Jacqueline A. Kazarian



Armenian Chorale and Orchestra of Rhode Island

## Rouben Shougarian, Armen Baibourtian to Speak On UN, Armenia and Karabagh at BU Event

BOSTON – Former ambassadors Rouben Shougarian and Armen Baibourtian will speak at Boston University on Wednesday, March 26, at 5:30 p.m., at the Castle, 225 Bay State Road, as part of the Kenosian Chair Current Issues Series, on “The United Nations, Armenia, and the Sovereignty of Nagorno Karabagh.” The event is organized by the Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University and co-sponsored by the Department of History, the Department of International Relations, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Shougarian will speak on “The Internationalization of the Nagorno Karabagh Peace Process: The Concept of Remedial Sovereignty.”

Shougarian served as post-Soviet Armenia's first ambassador to the United States (1993-1999), as deputy foreign minister (1999-2005), and as ambassador to Italy, Spain, and Portugal (2005-2008). He was a senior staffer for the Armenian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs (1991) and a senior foreign policy aide and spokesperson for President Levon Ter-Petrosian (1992). He is the author of two books: *West of Eden, East of the Chessboard* (2010) and *The Politics of Immaculate Misconception: The Ides of the Post-Secular Age* (2013). He is a lecturer at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Baibourtian will address “The United Nations on the Ground in Armenia: Human Development Impact Assessment.” Baibourtian served as post-Soviet Armenia's deputy permanent representative to the UN in New York (1993-1995), as the first consul general in Los Angeles (1995-1997), as well as first ambassador to India, Nepal, Sri Lanka



Armen Baibourtian

and Indonesia (2000-2004). He has held the posts of deputy foreign minister (1997-2000; 2004-2008), Armenia's first chief negotiator with the EU (2005-2006), and senior advisor to the UN resident coordinator in Armenia (2008-2013). He has written numerous articles on Armenian diplomacy and regional politics and is presently a lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

This event is open to the public free of admission. A reception will follow.

For more information contact Prof. Simon Payaslian, Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature, at payas@bu.edu or NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

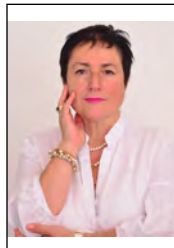
## Jacqueline Karaaslanian of Luys Foundation to Speak at St. James Men's Club

WATERTOWN – Jacqueline Karaaslanian, executive director of Luys Foundation Education, headquartered in Yerevan, Armenia will speak at St. James Armenian Church's Men's Club dinner meeting on Monday April 7. Jacqueline Karaaslanian's topic will be “Luys empowers transformation in Armenia.”

Karaaslanian has experience in leading collaborative design, strategy development, capacity building, and management of large-scale educational programs worldwide. She worked with the founding members of the MIT Media Lab at its initial inception, where she worked for over 25 years as director of Special Projects for the Future of Learning Group, Opera of the Future and the Media Fabrics Group. She has been

instrumental in building projects with the MIT research teams, going from design to full implementation of avant-garde technology rich learning environments.

Since 2009 she has been living and working in Armenia where she heads the Educational mission of the Luys Foundation. She simultaneously manages the granting of Scholarships to students worldwide, and the development of projects that Luys scholars are seeing in the country. The projects



Jacqueline Karaaslanian

cover a vast range of expertise and create effective networked collaborations between people who are both thinkers and doers.

“Luys scholars are creating the indispensable “brain circulation” needed for growth in every sector of our economy. In addition to the best education that one can get from studying at the world's top 10 universities, our scholars also bring to Armenia the latest know-how to implement through projects they design with local communities around the country,” she has said.

During the entire duration of their studies, Luys scholars implement their newly acquired knowledge in Armenia. They make the transition from academic life into real life achievements that enriches their personal maturity as a thinker

and doer, in addition they develop a special attachment to Armenia, discover its amazing and so far untapped potential. Today Luys scholars affirm their role as agents of positive change for social, economic, and cultural growth. During this talk, we will look at the many success stories and the strategy and path that the new generation is actively building for positive and thriving future and how we can all join.

The social hour starts at 6:15 p.m., followed by a complete Lenten dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$14 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church, Charles Moseian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St. Open to the public and women are welcome.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Young Students of Sisters' Academy Pay Tribute to Vartan Mamigonian

RADNOR, Penn. – Remembering the past while preparing for the future is one of many values taught at the Armenian Sisters' Academy. Following these principles, Academy



Ani Dardarian

students celebrated Vartanantz Day and the heroic struggles of Vartan Mamigonian who fought against the Persians to maintain Christianity. Although the battle took place in 451, it is still celebrated as a religious and national holiday.

At the academy, the principal, Sister Emma Moussayan, welcomed the audience of clergy, students, parents and friends to this annual celebration. "At the academy we instill in the child's heart the importance of religion by celebrating Vartanantz Day. Our past is always present and our present is our future. With this theme we must work to ensure the existence of our nation," she explained. Following tradition, the Montessori students opened the program with songs and poems honoring St. Vartan. The sight of the young students waving the Armenian flag and singing brought a smile to all.

The play, performed entirely in Armenian, not only recognized the memory of Vartan and his soldiers, but also the priests who died defending their faith and the Armenian women who gave their worldly belongings to help their husbands, brothers and sons in battle. Performed by students in grades fourth through eighth, the production depicted the lives that were lost,



Vartanantz

yet the triumph that Christianity was sustained. Shant Sarkahian played the role of Vartan and Ani Dardarian sang a rendition of Bulboolen Avarayri as Vartan's mother and Sona Bardakjian sang Yerik Vartanantz as his daughter.

Sister Emma thanked upper-grade Armenian teacher Tamar Panosian and music teacher and accompanying pianist Maroush Paneyan-Nigon. Ovsanna Sadjonian, Armenian teacher for the younger grades, was also acknowledged.

Father Nishan Bakalian from Holy Martyrs Congregational Church then spoke stressing the importance of this event and that the battle of Vartan should remind us all how much Armenians love our faith. He stressed that the students should use this love to carry on our Armenian traditions and customs.



Sona Bardakjian

## UAF Ships \$26M in Aid to Armenia, NKR

GLENDALE – The United Armenian Fund (UAF) delivered \$26 million of humanitarian assistance to Armenia and Artsakh from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013, a recent audit showed.

The UAF spent 1 percent of its revenues on administrative expenses.

The UAF itself collected \$18 million of supplies donated by several charities, including Direct Relief International (\$9.1 million), AmeriCares (\$6.7 million), Catholic Medical Mission Board (\$1.3 million), Feed the Children Fund (\$504,000), MAP International (\$283,000) and Health Partners International of Canada (\$95,000).

Other organizations which contributed goods were: World Vision – US (\$2 million), Armenian Christian Mission of Australia (\$613,000), Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (\$564,000), Knights of Vartan (\$354,000), Armenian Lighthouse Charitable Foundation (\$277,000), ARDA Organization (\$250,000), Garni Foundation (\$231,000), Focus on Children Now (\$213,000), St. Vartanants Armenian Apostolic Church of Mahwah, NJ (\$201,000), Dr. Stephen Kashian of Winnetka, IL (\$200,000), Project Agape (\$178,000), Armenian EyeCare Project (\$157,000), Dr.

Nishan Goudsouzian (\$155,000), Politecnico di Milano (\$154,000), Birthlink of U.K. (\$145,000), Foundation SemraPlus of Switzerland (\$127,000), Juliette Serabian of France (\$127,000), Dr. Peter Kojian (\$106,000), Medical Lions Club of France (\$101,000), and Dr. Israel Charny (\$100,000).

Also contributing major supplies were: Armenian Missionary Association of America (\$93,000), Achot Schemavonian/Association de Soutien aux Patriotes

Armeniens of France (\$93,000), Armenian Relief Society – West (\$91,000), Saint Lazare Order of France (\$85,000), Dr. Vartkes Najarian (\$73,000), Friends of Armenia (\$72,000), International Medical Outreach (\$71,000), Pyunik Charitable Foundation (\$62,000), ARPA Institute (\$52,000), Canadian Blood Services (\$50,000), Armenian International Ophthalmic Association (\$44,000), Michael Ohanian (\$37,000), Hrach Gevrikyan (\$30,000), Free Wheelchair Mission (\$29,000), Armenia Fund USA (\$28,000), Hologic Corporation (\$25,000), and Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corp. (\$24,000).

## Wyoming House Votes Down Pro-Azerbaijan Measure

CHEYENNE, Wyo. – By a vote of 35 to 25, the Wyoming House of Representatives recently voted down consideration of a Pro-Azerbaijan resolution (HJ 002), with opponents citing Baku's repression of free speech and religious intolerance as primary reasons to block the measure.

"We are proud to see the Wyoming House of Representatives join the a growing number of US States in standing strong on the fundamental American principles of democracy, freedom of speech and freedom of religion by rejecting such flawed measures," stated Elen Asatryan, ANCA WR executive director. "Wyoming legislators have sent a powerful message to Azerbaijani dictator Aliyev that a partnership with Baku is impossible as long as its oppressive tactics and campaign of hate against Armenians, and indeed all Christians, continues" added Asatryan.

Wyoming joins Hawaii and South Dakota in voting down measures backed by Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev and his mouthpieces in the US, attempting to whitewash Baku's dismal human rights record. Similar measures currently under consideration in other states are facing tough opposition.

Rep. Nathan Winters who led opposition to Wyoming said, "I am against introduction of this bill. Azerbaijan has a repressive and authoritarian government, which restricts freedom of expression and assembly and other religious rights."

"This government has become more active in controlling religion; fewer and fewer churches

can function legally. In 2012, a number of raids on churches and Christian houses were reported. Under 2010 legislation, it is illegal for unregistered churches to meet, yet registration is nearly impossible. Many Christians are unable to find or keep jobs and are watched closely by secret services. By illustration, three men were charged and detained and threatened with criminal prosecution for their faith just last year. While the country is growing in its exploration of minerals, I would not endorse its repression of freedom of expression and assembly," added Winters.

Rep. Thomas Lockhart was also influential in defeating this measure, saying given Azerbaijan's negative track record, it would be premature to consider such legislation.

Audio from the Wyoming consideration of the measure is available at: <http://youtu.be/KXniXJCwCo>

In February, ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian issued an open letter to all U.S. state legislatures urging them to take a stand against foreign interference in American civic life by corrupt Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev. "It is truly a tribute to our great American democratic tradition that even a regime as flagrantly corrupt as Ilham Aliyev's is allowed to operate freely within our open society," explained Hamparian. "But that does not mean that American citizens need to remain silent in the face of meddling by foreign leaders who neither respect our rights nor share our values - especially when they try to export their intolerance to our shores."



CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION  
Armenian Communities Department

The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is seeking a Senior Programme Officer (Western Armenian Language).

The closing date for this position is 15 April 2014.

To find out more please visit [www.gulbenkian.pt/ArmenianCommunities](http://www.gulbenkian.pt/ArmenianCommunities)

## Reporter Wanted

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is seeking an assistant editor, working 20-25 hours a week.

The ideal candidate should have a good grasp of journalism and be willing to cover a variety of subjects. Some editing will also be required.

Salary commensurate with experience.

Send resumes and writing samples to [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com).




**New York**  
**METRO**

# Enrollment Approaching for Armenian Virtual College Spring Term

## Free Chess Course, Praised by President Sargisian, Offered Again

NEW YORK – Spring registration for AGBU's Armenian Virtual College (AVC) will begin on March 14, 2014. The free AVC chess course is back by popular demand for the third consecutive term, in addition to AVC's for-credit classes in Armenian language, history and culture.

The AVC chess course was met with widespread praise when it first launched in the fall, most notably from Armenia's President Serge Sargisian. President Sargisian and his delegation visited the AVC booth at the annual Digitec Expo, which draws thousands of individuals and international businesses to Yerevan. There, AVC founder and AGBU Central Board member Dr. Yervant Zorian demonstrated the chess program's user-friendly features, includ-



AVC representatives Maral Levonian, Anna Yengibaryan and Naira Gasparyan welcome students, entrepreneurs and international businesses during the Digitec Expo in Yerevan.



Armenian Virtual College founder Dr. Yervant Zorian (left) presents AVC's recently launched, free chess course to President Serge Sargisian at the October Digitec Expo, as FIDE master and AVC chess program specialist Aghasi Inants looks on.

Sargisian wasn't the only one to take notice: during last year's World Chess Federation (FIDE) Presidential Board meeting in Armenia, Smbat Lputyan, vice president of the Armenian Chess Federation, also applauded the AVC model. The Federation's chess grandmasters are among the narrators who offer step-

by-step instruction to students of all ages and levels throughout the AVC course. Their expertise, and AVC's multimedia approach, has been key to the initiative's success.

Zorian, who saw the program's enrollment increase after its pilot semester, remarked on its

quality: "We are pleased that the AVC chess course was so well-received in the fall and winter terms. Through events such as the Digitec Expo, and our growing community of online subscribers, we've shown that AVC is truly at the forefront of the e-learning movement. We look forward to continuing to expand our reach, and connecting with even more chess talents, in the spring."

The AVC spring term will run from April 21 – June 24. To register for the AVC chess course and other AVC classes, email [enrollment@avc-agbu.org](mailto:enrollment@avc-agbu.org). Or, visit the AVC portal at [www.avc-agbu.org](http://www.avc-agbu.org) to create your login and submit your enrollment application.

The chess course is offered free of charge. Standard rates apply for all other AVC courses. AGBU's Armenian Virtual College (AVC) is the world's first accredited online learning pro-

gram that aims to facilitate Armenian studies through new technologies. Courses in Armenian language, history, and culture, are offered in seven languages of instruction: Western and Eastern Armenian, English, French, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. Launched in 2009, AVC classes are open to anyone who is interested in Armenian studies, delivering a virtual classroom to students who do not have access to traditional, face-to-face Armenian educational programs, while supplementing the curriculum of those who do. Lessons are tailored to each student's individual needs – regardless of their age, country of residence or knowledge level – to ensure that all can benefit from this unique resource. To date, more than 3,000 students have enrolled from over 65 countries, offering an Armenian education—anytime, anywhere!

ing exercises, puzzles and quizzes – the product of an ongoing partnership with the Armenian Chess Federation. The state delegation welcomed the course as a way to further promote chess in public schools, keeping in line with the Ministry of Education's mission.

## WALK AGAINST GENOCIDE

### 20th Anniversary Commemoration of Rwanda

Sunday, April 13, 2014  
1:00 - 2:30 pm

Armenian Heritage Park to New England Holocaust Memorial

Observe Genocide Prevention Month for April 2014 in Boston

Start at the Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, near the Aquarium T-station, for a gathering and speakers, followed by a walk to the New England Holocaust Memorial and a closing speaker program.

#### Sponsors

Friends of Rwandan Genocide Survivors (FORGES) - Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur  
JCRC of Greater Boston - Armenian Assembly of America  
Coalition to Recognize the Armenian Genocide



99<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATION  
**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**  
ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԱՄԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ  
TURKEY IS GUILTY OF GENOCIDE • DENYING THE UNDENIABLE IS A CRIME

**TIMES SQUARE**  
43<sup>rd</sup> Street & Broadway  
New York City  
**Sunday, April 27, 2014**  
**2:00-4:00 PM**

Sponsored by the Knights & Daughters of Vartan

Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, and Armenian Council of America

With the participation of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, Mid-Atlantic ACYOA, AYF-YOARF, Armenian Youth Organizations, and University Armenian Clubs

#### FREE BUS TRANSPORTATION TO & FROM TIMES SQUARE

##### New Jersey Churches

Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church  
461 Bergen Blvd., Ridgefield, NJ  
Church Office (201) 943-2950  
Kostan Charkhutian (201) 741-9789  
St. Thomas Armenian Church  
Highway 9 & E. Clinton Ave., Tenafly, NJ  
and  
St. Leon Armenian Church  
12-61 Saddle River Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ  
Sona Manuclian (551) 427-8763  
Armenian Presbyterian Church  
140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ  
Andrew Torigian (201) 368-2791

##### New York Churches

St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church  
38 65 234<sup>th</sup> St., Douglaston, NY  
Edward Barsamian (917) 885-9729  
Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs  
209 15 Horace Harding Expwy., Oakland Gardens, NY  
John Kasarjian (718) 631-2247  
St. Vartan Cathedral  
630 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., New York, NY  
Church Office (212) 686-0710  
**Brooklyn**  
Chase Bank (@ Coney Island Ave.)  
1002 Brighton Beach Ave., Brooklyn, NY  
Tigran (718) 891-8486 (347) 291-7765

For more information about the commemoration, please visit  
<http://kofv.org> and click April 24 or <http://www.facebook.com/events/TBD-in-2014>  
To learn more about the Armenian Genocide, please visit  
[www.theforgotten.org](http://www.theforgotten.org), [www.armenian-genocide.org](http://www.armenian-genocide.org), [www.twentyvoices.com](http://www.twentyvoices.com)




**New York**  
**METRO**

# Vartanantz Day Commemorated at New York's St. Vartan Cathedral

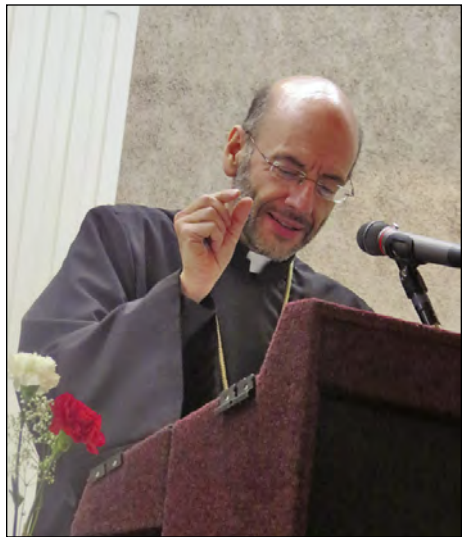
By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Despite the passage of 15 centuries, Vartanantz remains one of the most significant events in Armenian history. Vartan Mamigonian and his comrades – vastly outnumbered against a well-armed Persian empire – lost the battle but were morally victorious, preserving their religion and convictions.

On Thursday, February 27, the feast day of the decisive Battle of Avarayr was observed, under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and the Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, with the participation of the Mid-Atlantic Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in St. Vartan Cathedral by Rev. Abraham Malkhasyan, pastor of the Holy Martyrs Church of Bayside, NY, a dinner prepared and served by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Mid-Atlantic Lodges and Otyags took place in the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium.

Master of ceremonies Edward Barsamian warmly welcomed the more than 300 people gathered to mark the importance of the event. Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian offered the invocation and the American and Armenian national



Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan speaks about the significance of the Battle of Avarayr.

anthems were sung by Christina Haroutunian and Nicholas Bompert, respectively.

In a powerful message, keynote speaker, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Diocese's Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, called on all Armenians to reflect on the significance and relevance of Vartanank for today's world.

Findikyan, a noted church scholar who teach-

es at St. Nersess Seminary and Notre Dame University, focused on the true meaning of Vartanantz put forth by the historian Yeghishe, whose "extremely refined interpretation is overwhelmingly theological. Through Yeghishe's profound reflection on Vartanantz, we find the key to understanding and addressing some of the most central issues in Armenian community life and consciousness today," he stated.

"Yeghishe calls what St. Vartan and his companions did 'holy martyrdom, a valorous self-sacrifice.' They knowingly sacrificed their lives for the sake of Christ. To go to battle against the Persians was to imitate Christ," he continued. "Therefore, what we do as Armenians and Christians represents much more than ancient and colorful traditions, and is higher than merely preserving the nation."

Today, we too face the same "invisible enemy" – exemplified by the "disintegration of our communities, our church parishes in the United States with their declining numbers of attendees, [and] declining enthusiasm and zeal."

The invisible enemy "fragments our families, lures our children away from family and church, and fosters anxiety, loneliness, depression and addictions," he related.

But "the most dangerous enemy of our people and community is our own ignorance," Findikyan stressed. "We must rediscover the unique expression of Christ's gospel as revealed in the lives and writings of our Armenian saints, and through the mystical beauty of our sacred music and art. All of these are unique expressions of the Christian soul of the Armenian people, monuments that hold vast significance for our lives today," said Findikyan to thunderous applause.

Dr. Edward Sanossian, speaking in the absence of Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Nigoghos Atinizian, called the Battle of Avarayr "one of our greatest spiritual and moral victories, commemorating a great defining moment for the Armenian nation and spirit. Let us live by [Vartan's] example of bravery and heroism in standing up for our beliefs, and never giving up on our vision. Vartan Mamigonian built the foundation of our existence as Christian Armenians, and we will forever declare and honor his memory as his devoted and proud Knights of Vartan."

Emma Artun was present as the representative of the Daughters of Vartan Grand Matron

Lisa Kradjian.

In a memorable interlude, the Shnorhali Choir under the direction of Vagharshak Ohanyan, accompanied on the piano by Nevart Dadourian, presented several songs including *Norahrash*, *Plpuln Avarayri*, *Sardarabad* and *Diramayr* – the latter a soulful work sung with great feeling by soloist Shakeh McMahon.

The final offering, Vartanantz Aspetner, with soloists Alyne Corrigan and Nicholas Bompert, was offered with great enthusiasm, bringing on a repeat performance as the audience stood and joined in rhythmically clapping and singing



Rev. Abraham Malkhasyan delivers a sermon at St. Vartan Cathedral.

with the choir.

In an inspiring message, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian called the Vartanantz battle, "a turning point of Armenian Church history. We celebrate this momentous event before Lent. It is not a coincidence. The story embodies the Christian way of life, the life of Christ. It is a supreme example of trial and decision."

Like Christ, the heroes of the Vartanantz battle and those who survived the Genocide endured hardship and sacrifice, the Primate declared.

And finally, the virtue of patience was illustrated by Christ, Vartan, and those in the Genocide.

"We will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Genocide next year – not as a cause for weeping, but for celebrating, and also for judging our own lives," noted the Primate. "How much do we follow the examples of Christ and Vartan? Let us sing our own haghdanag (victory)," he declared with strong feeling, to a standing ovation.

The evening concluded with a benediction by the Primate, and the singing of the Hayr Mer by all present.

## Unlocking the Mysteries of Church Calendar

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The activities of many people are guided, and even directed, by their adherence to their calendars. But calendars around the world are different. The Armenian Church calendar is one of these unique calendars with mystery and hidden meanings.

On Thursday evening, February 13, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), used pictorial slides to reveal the fascinating clues that decipher the ancient, complicated Armenian calendar.

Findikyan, who is also professor of Liturgical Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and a visiting professor at Notre Dame University, began by explaining that Armenians always had to "balance conflicting calendars."

He noted that February 14 – celebrated in America as St. Valentine's Day – has complex meanings for the Armenian Church. It is the same day as "diantarach" which marks Christ's presentation to the Hebrew Temple 40 days after his birth. For Armenians, it involves lighting a fire after prayer services, walking around the fire, and blessing the four corners of the world. For a Jewish family of the first century AD – such as Joseph and Mary – it meant taking your newborn son (in this case, Jesus) to the holy Temple.

"Why did the Armenian Church develop and maintain a separate calendar?" he asked.

The answer seems to be: To mark important chronological milestones. "We today are separated from the natural cycles; but in ancient times, people were not. The calendar is a marker of ideology, of value and of meanings. For Armenians, it's a theology, a Christology, an expression of our most cherished beliefs in Christ."

The Roman calendar, he related, begins with Monday. For Armenians, it starts with Sunday, the Lord's Day: "the center of gravity of all time, the manifestation of Christ himself over evil, and the day of renewal and light."

Sunday "is also the feast day of Mary, the Mother-of-God, because Jesus is both human and divine." The Armenian calendar also includes saints' days and fasting days (penitential days), he disclosed. Sundays "are never days of fasting, or days of penance. All these days are different from each other."

Findikyan offered a further question: "How can the church's calendar help one to live the Gospel of Christ?"

First, he advised, parishioners should "synchronize" their daily lives with the Armenian Church calendar. Second, they should read the Biblical passages appointed for each day.

Third, he urged people to discover the approximately 1,200 poetic hymns (*sharagans*) of the church – translations for which can be accessed at the St. Nersess Seminary website, [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu).

Finally, he said, we must "delve beneath the surface. God is always with us. And the Armenian Church shows us a path to Him."

"We are not reaching out to a God far away. He has to come to us, which we celebrate together through communion," he said in conclusion.

A question-and-answer period followed the lecture, which continued during the wine and cheese reception.



The Shnorhali Choir performs.



# Arts & Living

## New Film About Komitas and the Armenian Genocide

Select screenings have been announced for the new feature length documentary film, "Music to Madness - the Story of Komitas," about the life of the Armenian priest and composer Komitas, who tragically went mad after witnessing first-hand the horrors of the Armenian Genocide. The film is written and directed by David Robert Deranian, PhD and produced by Salient Clear.

Consider the life of Komitas; a peaceful and brilliant man with prolific musical ability who witnessed the Armenian Genocide first hand, with the result of causing him an eventual breakdown and hospitalization in France.



Komitas Vartabed

The aim of this film is to let the world see and learn about Komitas, his beautiful life and his tragedy, that the gifted and innocent are not spared atrocities. The film is also intended as a reminder to not forget the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and the

ensuing consequences of genocide that haunt the world today.

Special preview screenings, ahead of the general worldwide release of the film, have been scheduled for the month of April.

•April 4 - screening at the Millersville University's 33rd Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide (see <http://www.millersville.edu/holocon/> for more details)

•April 12 - screening in Chicago that is sponsored by the Chicago Armenian Community.

•April 21 - screening in Fresno under the sponsorship of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Fresno

•April 22 - screening at San Diego State University (see <http://religion.sdsu.edu/docs/komitas.pdf> and <http://religion.sdsu.edu/events.htm> for more details).

Additional details about the April screenings and the film, including a trailer, can be found on the film's website at [www.KomitasTheMovie.com](http://www.KomitasTheMovie.com)

## Armenian Museum Hosts Composer Boyadjian

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America presents Grammy-nominated composer Hayg Boyadjian who will make a presentation on Sunday, March 23, at 2 p.m., in the Contemporary Art Gallery.

Boyadjian will discuss the general development of Armenian classical music as well as the development of his own music. He will play the piano as part of the lecture. An integral part of his talk will be to demonstrate how historical Armenian musical idioms influenced past and present composers. Boyadjian will also discuss the influences that western music had on Armenian composers, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Tickets are \$7 for non-members, \$3 for seniors and students and free for members and children under 12.



USC Students Syuzanna Petrosyan (center) and Greg Irwin (right) shared the top prize at this year's Student Voices Short Film Contest sponsored by USC Shoah Foundation. Presenting the awards is USC Shoah Foundation Executive Director Stephen D. Smith.

## USC Student of Armenian Descent Shares Top Prize in Film Competition

LOS ANGELES — A student from the University of Southern California (USC) who describes herself as a descendant of survivors of the Armenian Genocide shared the top prize at this year's Student Voices Short Film Contest sponsored by USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual Learning and Education.

Syuzanna Petrosyan and fellow student Greg Irwin won the award March 6 for their short film, "Play for your Life," which looks at the orchestras organized by the Nazis in German concentration camps during World War II.

Petrosyan said the film was inspired by Alice Herz-Sommer, a pianist who, until her death at 110 in February, was the oldest living Holocaust survivor. Music factors heavily in Herz-Sommer's testimony in the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, which contains nearly 52,000 recorded testimonies of survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides.

In April 2010, the institute signed a historic agreement with the Armenian Film Foundation and the late filmmaker Dr. J. Michael Hagopian to incorporate 400 testimonies of survivors of the Armenian Genocide. The interviews, which are set to come out in April 2015, will be used for educational purposes through the Visual History Archive, where they will be stored in perpetuity.

Petrosyan said her interest in entering Student Voices comes from her own Armenian background and interest in exploring the various dimensions of genocides. As a public diplomacy master's candidate, she said, "it is important to understand not only the big picture and history of genocides, but also to observe the smaller and personal stories of survivor's of the biggest crimes in history."

The film was the second movie featuring Herz-Sommer to win an award in one week. She is also the subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary, "The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved my Life."

Student Voices is a chance for all USC graduate and undergraduate students, regardless of major, to create short films that incorporate survivor's testimony from the Visual History Archive.

Shirin Raban won the Viewer's Choice Award for her film, "There is No Other Way." Rebecca Baugh received an honorable mention for "Love, Noemi."

"it is important to understand not only the big picture and history of genocides, but also to observe the smaller and personal stories of survivor's of the biggest crimes in history."

—Syuzanna Petrosyan

## Toronto Agency Hired for Armenia's Tourism Rebrand

By Susan Krashinsky

TORONTO (*Globe and Mail*) — For a country trying to advertise itself to the world, the anniversary of a genocide would not seem to be the ideal PR opportunity.

But for Armenia, which is conscious of how little awareness it has in many other countries, major news coverage represents a relatively rare opportunity. In 2015, the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, more foreign media than usual will tell stories about Armenia. That is why the country has set a strict timeline for a rebranding project that will seek to attract more investment and tourists to its borders — starting in 2015, when it will be the focus of more attention. And it is bringing a Canadian advertising agency on board to help.

Last week, the Toronto-based Cundari Group announced that, in partnership with New York agency GK Brand, it has won the contract for Armenia's brand development project.

The contract is with the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia, a public-private partnership between the government and Armenian business leaders, both within the country and abroad.

A team from Cundari will be travelling to Armenia in a couple of weeks to begin the process of developing the country's brand strategy. It's not unfamiliar territory: Cundari helped to create a new brand strategy for Washington, DC, in 2008, and has done similar projects for the city of Calgary, Ontario's Niagara region, and Yonkers, NY, among others. Armenia is the farthest-flung project it has yet tackled.

"We understand that place branding is very different from product or service branding," said Kelly Frances, Cundari's senior vice president of sales and marketing. "You really have to take in the perspective not just of residents of the place, but of businesses, potential visitors, potential investors. You have to look at the brand from many different vantage points."

The team will be designing a new logo for Armenia, but the project goes far beyond that. It will be developing a strategy to attract foreign investment and also to transform the country's growing tourism industry.

At the moment, the vast majority of tourists come from the Armenian Diaspora — a welcome segment to be sure, but also one that tends to stay with family and not to spend as much during their visit. In the first quarter of 2013, for example, only about 16 percent of tourists visiting Armenia stayed in hotels or other parts of the "lodging industry" while the rest stayed with friends or relatives, or in rented apartments.

A key goal will be an advertising campaign to attract more lucrative, foreign tourists. The key target markets will be Russia, Georgia and Iran, which are all nearby. It will also be doing some promotion in urban centers in Germany and France.

But it will have to combat low brand awareness. In an interview with a local news agency last month, the chief executive officer of the National Competitiveness Foundation highlighted this challenge.

"When we speak of Armenia, the first things that come to mind are Christianity, Armenian genocide, churches, Armenian apricot[s]," Arman Khachatryan told the Mediamax news agency. "... Our goal is to present Armenia not only to people who have some idea of our country but particularly, to those people who have no idea at all."

Because it is not a beach destination, it will be advertising itself to tourists who are interested in culture and history. A project is under way, for example, to revitalize the more than 1,000-year-old Tatev monastery. The ad agencies will now be charged with creating a communications plan by the time Armenia is in the public eye next year.

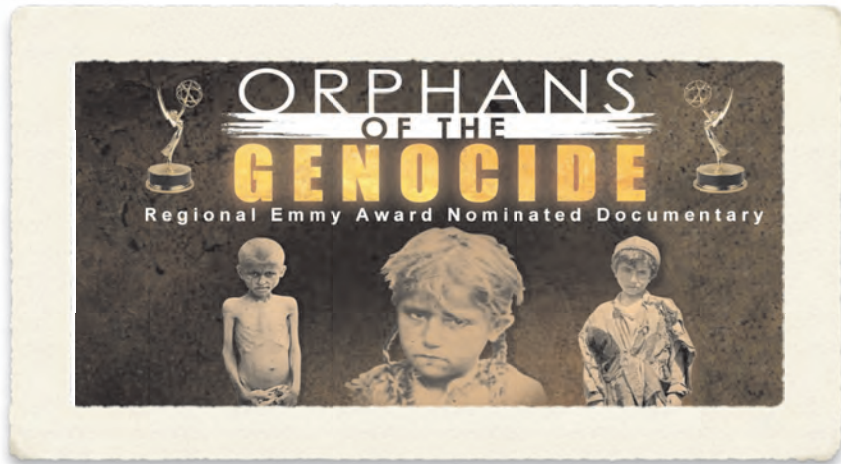




## ARTS &amp; LIVING



TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NY



90 Minute Documentary Presented By  
FOUR-TIME REGIONAL EMMY® AWARD WINNER  
**BARED MARONIAN**

Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
2:00pm  
**TCA Center**  
560 Sylvan Avenue  
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\$10 admission fee should be sent to TCA by April 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Space is limited. No tickets will be sold at the door.  
For information, please call Hilda at (201) 405-1702

Tax-Deductible Donations are Strongly Encouraged  
All Proceeds Will Be Used for the Promotion of this Project

Search **"Orphans of the Genocide"** on YouTube for trailer

## Anahid Literary Awards Celebration At Columbia University

NEW YORK – Five authors will be honored at the Anahid Literary Awards celebration on Friday, April 4, at Columbia University.

Hosted by the Armenian Center at Columbia University, recipients Arthur Nercessian, (*Chinese Take-Out*); Patricia Saraffian Ward, (*The Bullet Collection*), Michael Zadoorian, (*Second Hand*), Aris Janigian, (*Blood-Vine*) and



Aris Janigian

Lydia Peele (*Reasons For and Advantages of Breathing*) will be honored for their significant contributions to Armenian culture and American literature.

"The Anahid Award has been an occasion for the Armenian communi-

ty to be self-aware, to take note of the works of literature that are being written now, to celebrate those works, and to affirm the horizons they open up for each writer and for the broader Armenian community and culture," said Dr. Peter Balakian, who will serve as the evening's master of ceremonies.

The Anahid Award was founded in 1988 by an anonymous donor who wanted to honor

emerging Armenian-American writers. The prize is given by the Armenian Center at Columbia University and comes with an award of \$5,000. Since its founding, there have been

more than a dozen winners in poetry, fiction, playwriting, and screenwriting, including Leslie Ayvasian, Peter Balakian, Eric Bogosian, Diana Der Hovanesian, Atom Egoyan and Nancy Kricorian.

The celebration will be held at 6:30 p.m. at Faculty House, Presidential Rooms 2 and 3, located at 64 Morningside Drive (at 116th Street) on Columbia University's campus. A reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres will follow the program. This event is free and open to the public.

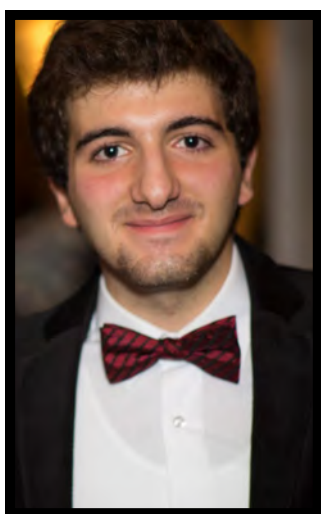


Lydia Peele

– Taleen Babayan



## Artun Miskciyan, Pianist



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Michael Zadoorian

## Jewels by American-Armenian Designer Displayed in Armenian Museums

By Hasmik Harutyunyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The first time I saw the handmade jewels by designer Yeva Adalyan was at the Cafesjian Centre here. These jewels were unique; the combination of the metals, stones and glass was so harmonically designed that it was impossible not to notice them and not to admire them. Each of them is a small masterpiece of art with unique solutions and consonant colors. One cannot call them just jewels. As Adalyan states, they are the creating of her love and warmth.

Then I found Adalyan online and got in touch with her via facebook. Thus I discovered the kind of an individual, who is not afraid of novelties and difficulties and who celebrates solely triumphs in all situations.

Her life looks like a Hollywood story and the designer, who is very popular in the United States, confesses that she will not be able to record any achievement in her life without her dream, dedication and diligence.

Adalyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia and has been living in Los Angeles since 1992. She works and creates in a few genres, including jewelry, poetry, graphic, interior and floral design. Designed and created by Yeva Adalyan, the unique designs have many influences fusing industrial and ethnic, bold and dainty, simple



Yeva Adalyan

and complex shapes in a brave modern statement.

Designer and owner of YevArts, Adalyan discovered her passion for making jewelry in 2002, and hasn't stopped creating since. YevArts specializes in handmade custom jewelry.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Scholar Captures Tragedy, Miracle of Aurora Mardigian's Life Story

MARDIGIANIAN, from page 1

Introducing Demoyan was the director of the Armenian Cultural Foundation, Dr. Ara Ghazarians. He said in his opening remarks, "We are a nation resurrected on the shoulders of orphaned grandparents." He said Mardigianian was a "young woman of exceptional courage who awakened humanity on these shores." Her autobiography, he added, was one of the first books on the Armenian Genocide.

Mardigianian has become a focal point for Demoyan, who said he feels that not only is she remarkable on her own, but that she can serve as a microcosm of the Armenian experience.

Now, the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute is home to the largest collection of Mardigianian materials in the world.

Mardigianian's story, as Demoyan explained, is the stuff of Greek tragedy. Aurora Mardigianian was born Arshaluys Mardigian in Chmshgatsak, in 1901. The town has deep Armenian roots, Demoyan said, going back to the Urartian times. In 1915, her family was slaughtered by Ottoman

Nikolayevich, a cousin of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. She made her way to Kars, Gumri and Tbilisi (Tiflis, back then), where she stayed at Hovhanness Toumanyan's house. From there, she went to the Russian capital, St. Petersburg, in October 1917, when the Russian Revolution was underway. As Demoyan said, she feared for her life. She said, "I survived these killings and now we are in this big capital where people are killing each other."

She went from Russia to Norway and then to the US, with help in the latter part of the journey from the Near East Foundation.

While in the US, in 1918, her book, *Ravished Armenia; the Story of Aurora Mardigianian, the Christian Girl, Who Survived the Great Massacres*, was published, with eventual sales of half a million copies.

At the same time, William Selig, a Chicago native, moved to Los Angeles to make movies, becoming in the process the founder of modern Hollywood. He became interested in Mardigianian's story, but, as Demoyan said, "the problem was who would star as Aurora."

Selig decided that the real heroine should star in the movie, based on the book and titled "Auction of Souls." The film was later called "Ravished Armenia." Thus, Demoyan explained, "Aurora was the star and consultant for costumes and story."

Just 19 by this point, she showed evidence of her mental anguish by screaming in fear when seeing actors in Turkish costumes, forgetting she was on a movie set. After all, she had gone through so much trauma not too long ago, and she was forced to reenact going through the crimes on film.

Mardigianian's suffering seemed not to have an end. During the making of the movie she suffered from broken bones and a case of the Spanish Flu. Still, she soldiered on through the pain and fever, feeling duty bound to get the story of the Armenians out.

Demoyan showed a one-minute snippet of the movie featuring Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, playing himself, who in the scene was arguing with the Sultan. No intact copy of the one hour and 20 minute film has survived. Only an 18-minute portion remains, thanks to the foresight of Yervant Setian, who found the reel in the



Original Cover of *Ravished Armenia*

garbage by chance. He sent it to Armenia, where he eventually repatriated from the US.

The film, like the book, was a hit from coast to coast. It was shown in cities big and small, and the story of the film and its tragic and beautiful star, covered in all the major papers in the US, as well as smaller outlets in places as far flung as Honolulu and Alaska. The film was also a hit in Canada, Cuba, Australia and Europe. Here, in Boston, the film was shown at Symphony Hall and the opening was attended by Harvard University President Charles Eliot. In London, the film was shown at Albert Hall.

The film's producers tried to make Mardigianian into a real Hollywood star, but she refused to do other films.

In the early 1930s, the book and the film just dropped off the public's radar. Demoyan said that the sudden and complete silencing of the film could be in part the result of an agreement between Hollywood and the Nazis in Germany, which saw that movies were not anti-German or anti-Nazi. Mardigianian had written about being raped by a roving gang of German soldiers in Turkey before being sold into a harem.

Mardigianian eventually married and had a son, but happiness eluded her. She never found her brother who had immigrated to the US before the Genocide and her own son abandoned her. The waning years of her life were dominated by

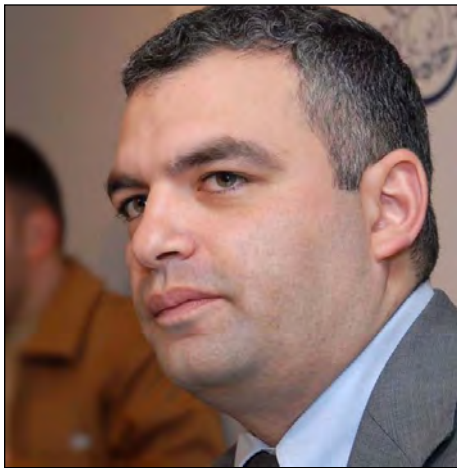
paranoia about Turkish soldiers finding her. The reclusive Mardigianian only allowed one woman to deliver food to her through her window. When she died in 1994, at age 93, no one claimed her body and she was buried in a mass grave, forgotten by all and without even a headstone.

The rapt audience in Arlington was also treated to a few minutes of an interview of Mardigianian in 1984 by Dr. Rouben Adalian, as part of the Zoryan Institute's Oral History Project. Neither was apparently aware that the camera was on. Speaking with clarity and charm, Mardigianian replied to questions on why she changed her name from Mardigian to Mardigianian (better pronounced in the US and protecting relatives in Turkey).

Demoyan explained that many in the Armenian community turned their backs on her possibly because of the "shameful" part of the story, namely rape and trafficking, pain that they wanted forgotten and unmentioned. Another possible explanation was that the hero was in fact a heroine, a young girl.

Demoyan is currently compiling further new material on Mardigianian in the US. He plans to publish a book on her as well as put together a traveling exhibit in time for the Genocide centennial. He also said that as a member of the Yerevan Council of Elders, he is going to petition the city to have a street named for her and postage stamps to commemorate her life.

He noted proudly that this year the Turkish



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

forces, as were most other Armenians in the town and elsewhere in Western Armenia. She and many other young women there were rounded up for a forced march toward Diyarbakir. According to her story, the Turkish soldiers decided to nail the 17 girls in the group to crosses but they miscounted and only constructed 16 crosses; she was the lucky one who was not crucified.

She endured much, being sold into a harem as a teen, for 85 cents. She was plucky, however, and managed to escape, eventually meeting up with Russian soldiers who took her to Armenians in Erzincan. There, she was pressed for the names of other Armenian girls in captivity. Eventually, she made her way to Erzurum and met up with General Antranik and Nikolai



Aurora Mardigianian's smile did not let on about her tragic past.

version of the book was published after he gave the English version to a visiting Turkish journalist.

"This is a part of Turkish history," he said.

Copies of her book were sold at the ACF function, with all proceeds donated to the Syrian-Armenian Relief.

Demoyan, barely able to contain his admiration, said that Mardigianian would be judged a winner by history. "Her mission was to tell the story of the Armenian Genocide worldwide. This was a hero, a winner. This one young lady proved what we can do for our nation."

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## Chefs Party for Our Park!

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Wednesday, May 21, 2014

**Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston**

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Advance Reservations required.

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[Info@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:Info@armenianheritagepark.org)  
or call 617 803.8785

Grateful appreciation to the Royal Sonesta Hotel and the Chefs for hosting the Benefit



Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway Boston, Massachusetts

### MASSACHUSETTS

**MARCH 23** — Publication party, Armenian International Women's Association celebrates release of two books by Zabel Yessayan newly translated into English: *The Gardens of Silihdar* and *My Soul in Exile and Other Writings*. 2 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington. Open to the public, free of charge. For info, [info@aiwainternational.org](mailto:info@aiwainternational.org) or 617-926-0171.

**MARCH 29** — Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents a Musical Evening featuring Janet Khalian, with the participation of the Hamazkayin Erebuni Dance Ensemble, St. James Armenian Church, Mosesian Cultural Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Donation \$20. For tickets, call (617) 926-6268 or Meri Memirjian at (781) 273-2770.

**APRIL 7** — St. James Men's Club, Monday, Speaker **Jacqueline Karaaslanian**, executive director of Luys Educational Foundation, speaking on "Luys Empowers Transformation in Armenia." Vosbov Kheyima & Imam Bayeldi Dinner. Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person, St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

**APRIL 10** — A Place Far Away — Book Talk with Author **Vahan Zanoian**, 7:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. The Greater Boston area community is invited to a compelling book talk with Vahan Zanoian on his new novel, A Place Far Away, a powerful portrayal of the heart-breaking realities of human trafficking in Armenia. Reception to follow talk. Signed books will be available for purchase that evening. All proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to organizations devoted to protecting children and fighting human trafficking. For further info, contact the church office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**APRIL 11** — Beginning at 10:30 a.m., for the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which will take place at the Massachusetts State House, at the House Chamber. Keynote speaker will be attorney Mark Geragos. A joint House and Senate resolution will be presented to architect Donald Tellalian, who designed the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston. In addition, Anahis Kechejian will help lead young people remembering their ancestors who are genocide victims, as part of Stand up for Your Survivor. Also, children from St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School and the Armenian Sisters' Academy will sing America the Beautiful and the Armenian National Anthem. The program will end by noon, followed by a catered reception in the Great Hall. Complimentary bus service, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will be available from the St. Stephen's and the St. James Churches for the round trip transportation. This is a free event and open to everyone. For more information, contact Lalig Musserian at 617-319-2651 or [lalig@musserian.com](mailto:lalig@musserian.com)

**APRIL 27** — Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley observance, 3 pm, North Andover High School, 430 Osgood St., Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble performing; joint requiem service by MV Armenian churches; reception to follow; complimentary admission.

**MAY 10** — Unveiling of a new genocide memorial by Lowell City Hall, sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Monument Committee of Merrimack Valley; 10 a.m., downtown procession, followed by program at City Hall and reception in St. Ann's Church Hall at noon. Musical interlude by soloist Sevan Dulgarian; Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, MC.

**MAY 10** — Third Annual Benefit Dance with ALL proceeds being donated to the following Armenian Charities: Mrgashen Village School, Akhourian Mother and Child Clinic and Armenians in Syria. 7 p.m. to Midnight, Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Der Mugrditchian Ensemble to perform. Donation, \$30 (\$25 Students), music, mezza, cash bar, raffle, surprises.



**Renowned attorney Mark Geragos will be the featured speaker at the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which will take place at the Massachusetts State House, on April 11, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Architect Donald Tellalian will receive a proclamation. A reception will follow the program in the House Chamber. Buses, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will leave from St. Stephen's and St. James Churches in Watertown. The event is free and open to the public.**

**MAY 21** — Chefs Party for Our Park! Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care., Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix, mingle and enjoy. and mingle. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the invite, email [info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

### MICHIGAN

**MARCH 29** — Young Turkish-Armenian pianist **Artun Miskciyan** will perform at 7 p.m., Steinway Piano Gallery, 2700 E. Maple Road, Commerce Township. The program will include pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Bartok and Khachaturian. The concert is sponsored by the Metro Detroit Tekeyan Cultural Association and dedicated to Margaret Benian. RSVP Diana Alexanian 248-334-3636 Leslie Balian 248-303-4690 Nora Azadian 248-303-7171. Tickets are \$15 per person. A reception will follow the concert.

### NEW YORK

**MARCH 31** — AGBU Ararat and Armenian Network of America, Inc.-Greater New York Region & Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of NY present "Bolis" Screening and Conversation with **Eric Nazarian**, 7 p.m., AGBU Central Office, 55 E 59th Street, 7th Floor, New York. Free admission and reception to follow. To RSVP, please email your full name to [rsvp@agbu.org](mailto:rsvp@agbu.org) or call AGBU 212-319-6383 x140

## New Journal Announcement: Genocide Studies International

TORONTO — The editors of *Genocide Studies International* (GSI) are pleased to announce the relaunching of the journal, continuing the publishing efforts of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute) (IIGHRS) and the University of Toronto Press since 2006. GSI is the official journal of the IIGHRS.

In keeping with the objectives of the IIGHRS to raise awareness by being a bridge between

academia and civil society, as well as policy-makers, GSI is a journal devoted to innovative research, analysis and information. GSI is a forum for the academic study and understanding of the phenomena of genocide and the gross violation of human rights and various approaches to preventing them. It strives to raise awareness of the necessity of genocide prevention and the promotion of universal human rights. It serves as a critical voice for analyzing governmental and supra-governmental efforts in the prevention of genocide.

This peer-reviewed journal is interdisciplinary and comparative in nature. It welcomes submissions on individual case studies, thematic approaches, and policy analyses that relate to the history, causes, impact, aftermath, and all other aspects of genocide.

The editors are Maureen Hiebert, Herbert Hirsch, Roger W. Smith and Henry Theriault. GSI is available online in March and in print in April.

The first issue will deal with "The Failure of Prevention," focusing on Sudan — Darfur, the

Nuba Mountains crisis — and on the politics of prevention or the lack thereof.

The second issue will be a general issue on all aspects of the phenomenon of genocide, and is scheduled to appear in September.

The third issue, due out in March 2015, will be a special issue on the Ottoman Genocide of Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks. April 2015 will mark the 100th anniversary of what is generally considered the start of this genocidal process.

The fourth issue, to appear in September 2015, will be a special issue on "The Political Economy of Genocide."





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Crimean Crisis Creates Political Maze for Armenians

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The facts are already well known about the crisis in Crimea, whose population just voted in a referendum with 96.6 percent approval to join the Russian Federation.

For world leaders, the situation is rather simple, political facts being perceived in black and white. For the West – and especially the US – it was a violation of international law. For Moscow and for the Russian residents of Crimea, it was a legitimate expression of people's right to self-determination.

But for the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian residents of the former Soviet territories, a political maze of sympathies and interests is being engendered by these new developments.

Armenians have been living in Ukraine since the Middle Ages and their ranks have been replenished with recent emigration from the homeland. Many oligarchs and business leaders have emerged in the Ukrainian-Armenian community, generously supporting many projects in Armenia.

By necessity, Ukrainian-Armenians will support the new government in Kiev, while the Union of Armenians in Russia has come up with a declaration sympathizing with Moscow's strong-arm tactics in Ukraine and Crimea.

Russian Armenians have been equally supportive of the Armenian Republic in larger measures than is even known in the diaspora.

The government in Armenia has been treading more cautiously about the developments in the region. Although a strategic partner to Moscow, Yerevan has been reluctant to refuse recognizing the new government in Kiev and has not yet rushed to embrace the result of the vote in Crimea.

Armenians have been living in Crimea since the eighth century AD and have enjoyed a prosperous cultural life in the peninsula, which has suffered two major wars between tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

There were almost half a million Tatars in Crimea, left over from the Mongol invasions of Genghis Khan who were later decimated when in 1941 Stalin deported 200,000 of them to Central Asia, accusing them of collaborating with the Nazis. That move changed the ethnic balance in Crimea, whose 2-million population is 53 percent Russian. The Tatars now constitute only 12 percent of the population, although the new constitution allows them 20-percent participation in government institutions.

By contrast, Armenians in Crimea constitute only .5 percent of the total population, but traditionally, they have been a vocal minority. The Crimean Armenian community National Council

adopted a resolution calling on Armenians to participate in the referendum and voting in favor of the peninsula joining Russia. The Council's chairman, Vagharshak Melkonian, indicated that the new Crimean constitution will guarantee the Crimean Tatars 20 percent quota in the governing bodies of the peninsula and has continued to state that, "We Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Germans have united under one association and we demand that they be guided by the same principles also with respect to us, if the said principle is applied for the Crimean Tatars."

As we can see, the Crimean crisis reflects in a different and sometimes contradictory way on Armenians, who are scattered in different parts of the former Soviet Union. This is a microcosm of the nature of the Armenian people, who because of a variety of assaults as well as a full-scale genocide, have become scattered across the world.

The major question for us remains how this referendum will impact on the destiny of the people of Karabagh.

Like the other unrecognized republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Foreign Ministry of Karabagh has released a communiqué which "considers the referendum held on March 16 in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea as yet another manifestation of the realization of the right of people to self-determination ... as it is enshrined in the UN Charter and a number of fundamental international documents, is a key principle of international law."

Since the inviolability of the borders in the former Soviet bloc was broken in Kosovo and – with a counter measure – continues today in Crimea, political observers are waiting to see what actions Moscow may resort to next in Trans-Dniester and Karabagh.

At this point, the destiny of Karabagh hinges on two main factors:

- Thus far, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) co-chairmanship has been consistent in maintaining the principle of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity versus Karabagh people's right to self-determination, making a solution impossible. Therefore, if the Crimean crisis undermines the consensus within OSCE, Moscow may resort to unilateral action.

- Crimean Tatars have received assurances from Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu that their rights will be guaranteed. The Tatars have vocally opposed to Crimea joining Russia. They have also appealed to Ilham Aliyev for support. Should Azerbaijan engage in any policy contravening Moscow's interests in the peninsula, Putin may use his options in Karabagh.

Thus far, the political upheaval has not extended its ramifications to the peripheral issues which affect Armenia and Karabagh; however, it has already created a political maze which can move in any unpredictable direction.

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## What Does the New Global Forest Watch Website show for Armenia?

By Jason Sohigian

Last month's launch of the Global Forest Watch (www.globalforestwatch.org) website was big news. Google, World Resources Institute and a few dozen other partners are part of the effort. The site allows users to monitor deforestation in "near real time." The big takeaway: global tree cover loss far exceeds tree-cover gain. Data shows that the world lost 2,300,000 square kilometers of tree cover between 2000 and 2012, or the equivalent of losing 50 soccer fields' worth of forests every minute of every day for the past 13 years. By contrast, only 800,000 square kilometers have regrown, been planted or restored during the same period.

We welcome initiatives like GFW, which use cutting-edge technology to make forestry data available to the public. This kind of transparency is essential to shine a spotlight on forest loss and to show areas where natural regeneration or reforestation has been successful. This information empowers citizens and is even valued by corporations that want to use sustainably-harvested wood.

Now, what does the site show for Armenia? GFW shows that there was forest loss in Armenia over an area of 2,089 hectares and a gain of 1,276 over the period of 2000 to 2011. It's interesting to note that the data relies on Landsat satellite imagery which has become an accepted source to measure forest cover globally. According to this data, Armenia has

seen a loss of approximately 813 hectares of forest over this 12-year timeframe. For reference, a hectare is 2.47 acres or an area the size of a soccer field.

Armenia Tree Project (ATP) has been planting in urban areas and towns since 1994 and launched its forestry program in 2004. ATP has planted a total of 4,455,869 trees to date at more than 925 sites in all regions of Armenia. Most of our forestry has been focused around 30 sites in Northern Armenia. Our forestry department has planted approximately 3,500,000 tree seedlings over an area of 850 hectares.

However, our seedlings have not even formed into forests with a canopy that would be recognized by satellite data at this resolution. There is no question we are losing forest cover and ATP is trying to turn the tide along with other partners. It's also worth noting that Armenia's Hayantar forestry department has been planting during this timeframe.

There have been other efforts to monitor forest cover in Armenia and the general conclusion was that there has been a net gain in forest cover, consistent with that we have seen in other parts of Europe. However some experts in the environmental community have pointed out that the regrowth of forest has been a lower quality "coppice" tree, which is almost like a shrub that has grown out of tree stumps. Setting the statistics aside, there is a consensus that Armenia needs to curb forest loss and that reforestation should be accelerated in order to restore our historic tree cover. Some of the drivers of forest loss have been

industrial logging, unsustainable livestock grazing and the use of wood for cooking and heating fuel. Of course we recognize that people in rural areas rely on wood. At the same time forests are a renewable resource when they are sustainably managed and not overexploited. In addition to planting there are other strategies that may be deployed in order to reduce the pressure on forests. These include subsidizing the cost of natural gas for households, enforcing a ban on wood exports and reducing tax on imported wood.

In general, we are in favor of initiatives like GFW that make the information about our forests transparent and publicly accessible. In the end we hope this draws attention to the issue of deforestation in Armenia and globally and that it shows the importance of investing resources in protecting and restoring this important part of our natural infrastructure.

Clearly there is a lot left to be done in Armenia to reverse deforestation. One thing we know is that sustainable management of our natural resources like forests will be more cost-effective than depleting the reserves and trying to fund environmental restoration programs. Particularly when some environmental impacts – like desertification caused by deforestation – are irreversible.

(Jason Sohigian is deputy director of the Armenia Tree Project. He has a master's degree in Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard. His research on Payments for Environmental Services was adapted for a talk at TEDx Yerevan on "Redefining Our Economic Systems.")





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Turkey's Hypocritical Threat Against Syria over Ancient Grave

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's threat to retaliate against anyone in Syria who dares to damage the tomb of Suleyman Shah, grandfather of Osman I, founder of the Ottoman Empire, is the latest manifestation of the Turkish government's utter hypocrisy.

Here is a country that has committed genocide against millions of its Christian subjects (Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks), confiscated their possessions, occupied their lands, destroyed thousands of churches, cemeteries and cultural monuments and yet has the audacity to warn Syrians before any damage is done to an ancient Ottoman grave!

While the tomb of every human being must be protected and treated with respect, Davutoglu's threat is a flimsy excuse to interfere in internal Syrian affairs. Ironically, Suleyman Shah's grave is located in an area not controlled by the Syrian government, but by al-Qaeda Jihadists and other rebel groups who have been aided and armed by

Turkey to topple President Bashar al-Assad's regime. The al-Qaeda fighters, who have been clashing with other anti-Assad factions in the region where the Ottoman tomb is located, are the ones destroying graves, since radical Islamists believe that the veneration of tombs is idolatrous.

Turkey considers the plot of land in Syria where Suleyman Shah's grave is situated to be sovereign Turkish territory based on the 1921 Treaty of Ankara signed between Turkey and France, which was occupying Syria at that time. According to that agreement, Turkey had the right to station guards and hoist its flag at that site. Ever since 1921, two-dozen Turkish soldiers have been guarding the tomb around the clock.

Article 9 of the Ankara Treaty allocated to Turkey around 80,000 square feet of Syrian territory, 60 miles south of the Syrian-Turkish border. When the area around the tomb was flooded in 1974 by the newly-built Lake Assad, the grave was moved to a new location, 20 miles from the Turkish frontier. Despite the ongoing hostilities in Syria, Turkey has continued to maintain a contingent of its soldiers at the tomb.

In return for giving Turkey territorial rights over this ancient site, France obtained several economic concessions, including the right to have French companies manage the railroad traffic in parts of Turkey and exploit iron, chrome and silver mines for the next 99 years. This questionable trade-off may not be legal under international law, since a colonial power is bartering with someone else's territory!

The 1921 Treaty also established "a special administrative regime" for Turks living in the district of Alexandretta,

which was Syrian territory under the French mandate. In 1939, Alexandretta was completely severed from Syria and officially ceded to Turkey as the Hatay Province. After its independence from France in 1946, the Syrian government acknowledged Turkish sovereignty over the land where Suleyman Shah's grave is located, but never accepted the give-away of Alexandretta to Turkey.

In a press conference held in Van last Friday, Foreign Minister Davutoglu warned that any attack on the Ottoman-era tomb in Syria "from the [Syrian] regime, radical groups or anyone else would be subject to retaliation from Turkey. In defending its sovereign territory, Turkey will take all necessary measures without any hesitation.... At the present time, there is no question of any intrusion targeting our territory [the tomb in Syria] and our soldiers, but we stand ready to take whatever steps needed in the event of a threat. The Turkish public need have no doubt in this regard." Meanwhile, officials from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, General Staff, and National Intelligence Organization (MIT) met on March 13 to discuss the security of the Shah's grave. Although Davutoglu did not specify what measures Turkey would take, the Turkish media speculated that it might send additional troops to guard their revered site.

In my view, Davutoglu's threat is simply an exercise in saber-rattling against Syria in order to draw the Turkish public's attention away from Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent scandalous and possibly criminal behavior, on the eve of the March 30 municipal elections in Turkey.

# Turkish Divisions And the Armenian Question

**L**ike a cell dividing itself into two, then each new cell further dividing itself into two, Turkey keeps being divided. Divisions always existed but remained mostly suppressed, but now they are emerging. In this article, I would like to outline the old and new divisions in Turkey and the divided Turks' perception of us the Armenians.

Ever since the founding of the republic in 1923, Turkey was governed by a secular, Kemalist and nationalist ideology, with the single-minded objective of creating and maintaining a single-nation state. Regardless of which party was in power, leftist or rightist, the deep state dominated by the armed forces, big business, big state bureaucracy, media and academia, directed all the affairs behind the scenes. The deep state leaders and their backers emerged as the elite of the society, aptly named as the nationalist White Turks, who basically inherited and further developed a state built on the economic foundations of plundered and confiscated Armenian and Greek wealth and assets. The masses in Anatolia were mainly utilized as free bodies for the military elite, as cheap labor for the industrial elite,

or remembered only at election time to vote for the political elite. The pious Sunni Moslem majority in Anatolia was condescended to by the White Turks and defined by the term "takunyali" or clog wearers. The disappearance of the

Armenians and Greeks from these lands was fiercely denied. The existence of other ethnic people in Turkey, such as Kurds, was also continuously denied. "Turkey is only for Turks" was their motto; accordingly, since Armenians and Greeks were already wiped out, all the other ethnic groups were told that they are now Turks, or else.

The supremacy of the White Turks ended in 2003, with the election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his moderately Islamic party. Despite all attempts of the deep state to topple him, he outmaneuvered the White Turks, thanks to the religious Sunni Moslem masses of Anatolia and the recent arrival of underprivileged masses from Anatolia to the big cities. The provincial and religious Turks quickly secured and strengthened their grip on power. Influential fundamentalist religious leader Fethullah Gulen, who had had to leave Turkey during the previous nationalist secular regimes, cooperated with Erdogan and his followers, quickly filled the cadres of bureaucracy, including key posts in the police, security, judiciary and academia. Based on charges of attempted coup d'etat against the government, hundreds of deep state leaders and elite White Turks in the military, media and academia were arrested and jailed. Although less intolerant toward minorities than the White Turks, the attitude of the new leaders toward the minorities and the Kurds did not change much. Many White Turks started leaving the country.

The alliance and cooperation of Erdogan and Gulen ended in late 2013, when Erdogan felt secure enough to discard Gulen, and decided to shut down the numerous supplementary educational facilities controlled by Gulen. As the education system in the state high schools is not sufficient to secure admission to state universities, most parents in Turkey depended on these facilities for the advancement of their children. These facilities were used as a power base by Gulen, a major source of income as well as recruitment for new followers. Soon after Erdogan announced the intention to close these facilities, state prosecutors and police controlled by Gulen revealed uncovering a major corruption scandal against four of Erdogan's ministers, involving hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes, with all the juicy details of money counting machines and millions stashed in shoe boxes in ministers' homes. Erdogan counter attacked by swiftly removing, replacing and firing thousands of state prosecutors, judges and police officers deemed to be followers of the Gulen

movement. In the last few weeks, at least ten taped telephone conversations were leaked on the internet involving Erdogan, where Erdogan directs his son to get rid of hundreds of millions of cash in Euro and dollars from the family homes, orders several businessmen to pay \$100 million each toward buying a media empire that he wants controlled, demands another media owner to fire several journalists, decides how much certain contractors must pay in bribes or properties in return for getting large contracts involving construction of airports and bridges. In the western world, even a hint of attempted bribery or corruption may be sufficient to bring down governments, but in Turkey, Erdogan carries on, dismissing the evidence as plots hatched by his one-time ally and now-mortal-enemy Gulen, as well as other virtual enemies such as "parallel states" within Turkey, and predictably, external enemies such as Israel, US, EU and the "interest lobby" jealous of the fast growth of Turkey. Erdogan's latest move is to try to win back the nationalists who were charged and jailed for attempting to topple his own government; as a result, most of the jailed deep state leaders are immediately released this week, including the former army Chief of Staff and other commanders, the intelligence spy and one of the masterminds of the Hrant Dink assassination, the racist lawyer who hounded Dink for "insulting Turkishness," the politician who was charged for stating "the Armenian Genocide is a lie" in Switzerland but the European Court of Human rights had recently sided with him in the name of freedom of speech, the murderers of a German and two Turkish Protestant missionaries in Malatya, several ultra nationalist/racist journalists, and an organized crime leader who arranged contract killings of anti-nationalists and Kurds. It seems that the stage is set for a potential settling of accounts.

While these divisions took place among the Turks of Turkey, the Kurds of Turkey made major advances toward their goals of greater autonomy, language rights and self-determination, a struggle on going since the 1980s first as a guerilla movement and from the 2000s on as an emerging political movement. The imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan imposed his will on Erdogan, who conceded to start peace talks with him in exchange for a ceasefire.

Even though these four major divisions within Turkey keep fighting and plotting against one another, they come together and close ranks when it comes to the Armenian issue, past and present. The Turks themselves categorize Armenians into three distinct groups, in a completely misguided manner – the Good, the Bad and the Poor. The small Armenian community remaining in Turkey is the "Good," easily controllable, not a threat anymore, with neighborly memories of shared dolma or topik. But these Armenians in Turkey are "Good" as long as they don't demand much about the past or present, like Hrant Dink dared. The Diaspora is the "Bad, the evil presence in every country poisoning the locals against Turks and Turkey, spreading lies about the 'alleged' genocide of 1915. Finally, the Armenians of Armenia are the "Poor," who leave their country and come to Turkey to find bread. The Kurds relatively have more empathy toward the Armenians; however, it is more a case of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Although Ocalan came close to acknowledging the genocide, he has empathy only for the "Good" Armenians in Turkey and he continues defining the Diaspora as part of the external lobby threat against both Turks and Kurds. While the Kurds acknowledge the sufferings of the Armenians in 1915, they see themselves only as manipulated tools of the Turks and cannot bring themselves to acknowledge their active role in the Genocide, nor open the subject of returning the vast properties seized from the Armenians, barring a few exceptions.

Armenians who believe in meaningful dialogue with the peoples of Turkey, now face the additional challenge of choosing one or more of these groups at the expense of alienating the others, and on the eve of the centennial in 2015, the prospect of any productive results becomes dimmer by the day. But dialogue does continue, with the help of various civil society organizations, intellectuals, and more significantly, through the facilitation of the new emerging force of Islamized Armenians of Turkey. Dialogue must and will continue until all four groups in Turkey start to see that all Armenians, whether in Turkey, Diaspora or Armenia, whether good, bad or poor, are all equally impacted by the genocide and equally demand acknowledgment and restitution.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)





## PKK Leader's Life Sentence 'Rights Violation,' European Court Rules

ISTANBUL (*Today's Zaman*) – The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) announced a ruling on Tuesday on an application filed by Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan, indicating that Turkey partly violated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and calling on the country to create the possibility of conditional release for life sentences, or even abolish them completely.

Öcalan's application mainly concerned his irreducible life sentence and the conditions of his detention. He was captured in 1999 in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi and is currently serving a life sentence on the island of Imrali near Istanbul. He was convicted of leading the PKK in an armed struggle against the Turkish military.

Citing Articles 2, 3 and 8 of the ECHR, Öcalan filed complaints on his social isolation inside Imrali Prison and the restrictions imposed on his phone communications, his correspondence and his visits from members of his family and lawyers. He also claims that he is being gradually poisoned.

In the judgment given by the court on Tuesday, the ECtHR ruled that there had been a violation of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman

or degrading treatment) of the ECHR regarding the conditions of Öcalan's detention up until November 17, 2009. Öcalan was in solitary confinement at the Imrali prison from February 1999 to November 2009. By six votes to one, the court ruled that there had not been any violation of the same article during the period subsequent to November 17, 2009.

However, the court also ruled that there had been a violation of Article 3 regarding Öcalan's sentence to life imprisonment without parole but, by four votes to three, the court decided there had been no violation of Article 8 (right to respect private and family life). It also ruled that there had been no violation of Article 7, titled "No punishment without law."

The exceptional part of the ruling concerns the life imprisonment of the PKK leader without any prospect of release. The court stated that the sentence should not be "irreducible," which means that a prisoner serving life should be allowed the possibility of being released.

The ECHR argued that its ruling was adequate to compensate for the harm done, indicating that Öcalan did not file a request for any form of compensation. The court ruled that Turkey should pay Öcalan 25,000 euros for court costs and expenses.

## Switzerland Files Suit in ECHR Grand Chamber In Perinçek Case

SWITZERLAND, from page 1

of Justice Folko Galie informed Armenpress that usually it takes for several months till the five-judges commission makes a decision if the case will be reviewed by the Grand Chamber or not. If the appeal case is rejected, the verdict by the court becomes final and is transferred to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers to control its implementation.

The European Convention on Human Rights provides for referral to the Grand Chamber in cases including those which raise a serious question affecting the interpretation or application of the Convention. In the present case, Switzerland's primary interest is in clarifying the scope available to the domestic authorities in applying the criminal anti-racism provision laid down in the Swiss Criminal Code (Art. 261bis CC). Switzerland created this penal provision, which entered into force on 1 January 1995, to close loopholes in criminal law and enable the country to accede to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

On March 9, 2007, Turkish national Perinçek received a fine and jail sentence under Art. 261bis CC for denying the Armenian Genocide. The Cantonal Court of Canton Vaud and the Federal Supreme Court both rejected appeals against the judgment. In its ruling of December 17, the chamber of the European Court of Human Rights determined that the Swiss court's rulings violated the appellant's right to freedom of expression.

Perinçek, the leader of a minor Turkish political party, had traveled to Switzerland in 2005 with the intention of daring the Swiss authorities to punish him for denying the Armenian Genocide. He brazenly called the Armenian Genocide an "international lie". In response to a criminal complaint filed by the Switzerland-Armenia Association, Perinçek was tried and fined for racial discrimination by the Lausanne Police Court in March 2007. A Swiss Appeals Court confirmed his sentence, ruling that he had violated Article 261bis of the Criminal Code. The National Council (parliament) of Switzerland had already recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2003. Perinçek then appealed his case to the Federal Tribunal, the highest court in Switzerland, which reconfirmed his sentence.

## Turkey Suspends Ex-Police Intelligence Head for 'Negligence' in Dink Case

SUSPENSION, from page 1

Akyürek's record that he was close to the movement of US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen.

Akyürek's stellar ascension within the police continued despite a very poor record and a number of criminal events occurring under his responsibility.

One of the key suspects in Dink's murder, Erhan Tuncel, became a police informant with

Akyürek's approval when he was serving in Trabzon. Tuncel was one of the perpetrators of the bombing of a McDonalds in the city in 2004, immediately after Akyürek was appointed to the Black Sea province.

Tuncel claimed he warned the local police about a plot to murder Dink in Istanbul in 2007. It subsequently came to light, however, that Akyürek had conveyed only one out of 11 notices to the Istanbul Police Department.

## Sherman Encourages Kerry to Support Affirmation of Armenian Genocide

SHERMAN, from page 1

"The Azeri soldier that murdered a sleeping Armenian soldier at a NATO exercise has been promoted and praised and in light of that and other aggressive actions, I hope that you will review and perhaps withdraw any military assistance to Azerbaijan," stated Sherman. He added, "I hope that you will also warn the Azeris that it is simply outrageous for them to threaten to shoot down civilian aircraft that try

to fly into the Nagorno Karabagh airport."

"We commend Congressman Sherman for raising these critically important issues with Secretary Kerry," stated Armenian Assembly of America Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "On the eve of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Congressman Sherman's remarks serve as a timely reminder to the Administration to fulfill its commitment," Ardouny continued.

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