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NEWS IN BRIEF

Catholicosate of Cilicia to Sue Turkey Over Historic Headquarters in Sis

YEREVAN (Panorama) – Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia announced at the Armenia-Diaspora Conference here last week that his office will initiate legal claims against Turkey to regain ownership of the historic headquarters of the catholicosate, which is in Sis, now part of Turkey.

“The Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia will soon present its legal claims to Turkey’s Constitutional Court, demanding the return of its historic seat,

the Sis Catholicosate, to its rightful owners—the Armenian Church and the Armenian people,” said His Holiness.

Aram I’s message was delivered before the attendees of the fifth Armenia-Diaspora Pan-Armenian meeting at the Yerevan Opera House on September 19, organized and hosted by Armenia’s Ministry of the Diaspora.

The city of Sis (modern-day Kozan) was where the headquarters of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia
see SIS, page 3



Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I

Genocide Memorial, Church in Deir Zor Damaged by ISIS

DAMASCUS (SANA/Tert) – The Armenian Genocide monument and the Holy Martyrs Church of Deir Zor were substantially damaged as a result of a direct attack by the group Islamic State (ISIS).

The i24news.tv website reports that the dome of the church, with a cross atop, has remained standing. The terrorists did not allow anyone to take pictures of the destroyed church.

After ISIS occupied the territory, they laid mines round the church and destroyed it. The sound of the explosion was heard in different parts of Deir Zor.

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reports that the terrorists have desecrated the holy places and tombs in Syria.

The church was built in 1989-1990, and consecrated a year later. A genocide memorial and a museum housing the remains of the victims of the genocide were also built in the church compound.

Thousands of Armenians from Syria and neighboring countries gathered at the memorial every year on April 24 to commemorate the genocide.

Moreover, numerous records of the

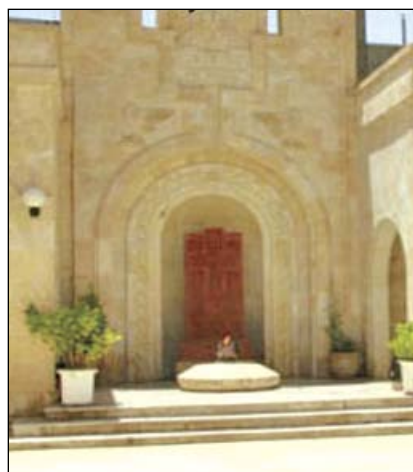
Armenia-Diaspora Conference

The fifth annual Armenia-Diaspora Conference, organized by the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, took place last week. See story and photos on pages 8 and 9.

Armenian Genocide are kept in the Armenian Genocide museum.

Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and the President’s Chief of Staff Vigen Sargsian condemned the

attack. “We strongly condemn the explosion by terrorists of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Church in Deir el-Zor, dedicated



The Armenian church in Der ez-Zor substantially damaged

Armenian Independence Day Celebration Is Held in New York Diocesan Center

NEW YORK – The 23rd year of independence of the Republic of Armenia was celebrated at Kavookjian Hall of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) on September 21 under the auspices of the Diocese and the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations (UN). The event was organized by Noyan Tapan, Inc., with the participation of the Knights and

Daughters of Vartan, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Ramgavars), the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian Assembly of America.

Tigran Sargsyan of Noyan Tapan served as master of ceremonies, and Vagharshag Ohanyan accompanied Dr. Lloyd Ariola in the presentation of the American and
see INDEPENDENCE, page 16



Speakers and participants in the NYC Armenian Independence Day Celebration

to the memory of the Armenian Genocide, which housed the remains of its many victims,” Nalbandian said in a statement.

“This horrible barbarity against a holy site yet again demonstrates the savage nature of the so called “Islamic state” terrorist group,” he added.

“The international community should immediately stop and eradicate this plague, which threatens the civilized world and should uproot the channels of its financing, support and sponsorship,” Nalbandian concluded.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I both expressed their outrage about the attack.

Meeting of Erdogan And Primate Cancelled

NEW YORK – Turkish newspapers such as *Daily Sabah* had reported that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey was to meet with Jewish and Armenian leaders in New York as a part of his trip to participate in the United Nations General Assembly Climate Summit, between September 22 and October 1.

According to Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), the request for a meeting came from the Turkish side. The Diocese however was later informed that the meeting was cancelled, with no reasons given.

The meeting with a World Jewish Congress (WJC) committee led by Ronald Steven Lauder was also cancelled. *Daily Sabah* stated that its cancellation was due to Erdogan’s “busy schedule.”

– Aram Arkun

TCA Condemns Attack On Armenian Church

The Tekeyan Founders’ Committee, The Tekeyan Trust of London, Tekeyan Cultural Association of Armenia and the Tekeyan Cultural Association of USA and Canada vehemently condemn the terrorist act of destroying the Armenian Holy Martyrs Church in Deir Zor, Syria.

The church complex, built to commemorate the 1.5 million Armenian Martyrs of 1915 Genocide, served as a church, museum, archive center and exhibition that contained relics and historical documents.

This act should be condemned by all civilized countries, including Turkey.

Tekeyan Founders’ Committee
The Tekeyan Trust of London
Tekeyan Cultural Association of Armenia,
Tekeyan Cultural Association of USA and Canada
September 23, 2014



Catholicos Receives Baroness Caroline Cox

ECHMIADZIN – On September 17, in Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, received Baroness Caroline Cox and her delegation, accompanied by writer and publicist Zori Balaian.

The catholicos noted that cox had become a familiar and cherished person for the Armenian people. The patriarch also conveyed his great appreciation to the baroness for her efforts toward the protection of the rights of Armenians in Artsakh and a fair resolution of the Karabagh conflict.

Cox also expressed her gratitude to the catholicos for the warm reception, and presented her impressions of her 82nd visit to Armenia.

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News From Armenia

NKR Foreign Minister Receives President of France-Armenia Friendship Group

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress)— On September 23, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic (NKR) Karen Mirzoyan received President of the France-Armenia friendship group of the French Senate Philippe Kaltenbach.

Mirzoyan expressed his satisfaction with the French legislators' frequent visits to Artsakh. He emphasized that such visits not only contributed to the intensification and development of the traditionally warm relations between Artsakh and France, but also played an important role in forming a full and comprehensive picture of Artsakh in the world.

During the meeting, issues related to the cooperation between Artsakh and France in various spheres, as well as the activities of France-Artsakh Circle of Friendship were touched upon. The sides also exchanged opinions on the current stage of peaceful settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh, as well as a range of issues related to the regional developments. NKR Permanent representative in France Hovhannes Gevorgyan was also present at the meeting.

32-Person Contingent of Armenian Peacekeepers To Go to Lebanon

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A 32-people contingent of the Armenian peacekeepers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia will leave for Lebanon for a mission, Commander of the Peacekeeping Brigade of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, Major-General Arthur Simonyan said. “We are getting prepared, but do not know when we will get the order,” he said.

Negotiations were conducted with the United Nations and Defense Ministry of Italy on involving the Armenian brigade in the UNICEF peacekeeping mission related to deployment position, contingent's structure, technical support, etc.

Armenia is involved in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

Lucineh Kassarjian Joins ATP Team as Country Director

YEREVAN – Armenia Tree Project (ATP) announced recently that Lucineh (Gaifedjian) Kassarjian has been appointed director of the ATP operations in Armenia.

Kassarjian has a degree in Linguistics and Pedagogy from Yerevan State Linguistics University and she studied in the New Media department of the San Francisco Academy of Art. She has served in many educational and developmental non-profit organizations including the Bay Area Friends of Armenia, the KZV Armenian School in San Francisco, the Armenian Virtual College Board, the National Ballet of Armenia Foundation, The Paros Foundation and the Yerevan chapter of the Awesome Foundation.

Kassarjian is the founder of MolorakArts, a company specializing in digital and traditional media products for children of all ages. In 2009, she co-founded ReAniamania, an acclaimed international animation film festival in Yerevan. Lucineh marked her debut as an author with “Someone Else's Cloud,” a children's book about a fun, engaging way to address childhood anxiety.

“On behalf of ATP staff and executive committee, we are excited to have a professional like Lucineh join our leadership team,” stated Managing Director Tom Garabedian. “We are confident that Lucineh will move ATP forward with new ideas and approaches that will engage an entirely new constituency in Armenia and in the diaspora.”

“I am thrilled to join the ATP team to make a global impact locally in Armenia,” she noted.



President Serge Sargisian Meets with Pope Francis I

Armenian President Visits Vatican

VATICAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – On an official visit to the Holy See (Vatican), Armenian President Serge Sargisian attended the opening of the exhibit “A Fable of the East: Christianity Facing the Challenges of the New Millennium” at the Vittoriano Museum Complex. The aim of the exhibition is to draw the attention of the international community to the state of thousand-year-old endangered Christian communities in the Middle East, as well as to the need for preserving the Christian cultural heritage in the region. The exhibition includes photos taken in nine Middle Eastern countries and a separate section devoted to a documentary film about the destruction of Jughha's Armenian *khachkars* (cross-stones).

The exhibition has been organized at the initiative and under the patronage of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in the Holy See within the framework of the annual Rimini Festival for Friendship among Peoples launched on August 24. After Rome it will appear in other cities.

At the opening of the exhibition Sargisian delivered a speech in which he described the photographs presented as a “silent scream,” and raised the question of whether enough is being done in a correct fashion to encourage tolerance and resist xenophobia. He pointed out that after the destruction of Jughha's *khachkars*, which was not opposed, many could and did conclude “that in fact the age-old cultural monuments of an entire people can be razed to the ground with picks and [the perpetrators] simply remain unpunished.” It might be thought “in that case, why not repeat such an easily implemented act in Iraq, Syria and other places?”

Sargisian stressed that the world cannot remain silent but must double efforts to inculcate tolerance. He said, “Those who live today are directly responsible for making the tie between the future and the past indestructible, and for the perpetuation of our values.” Modern technology created mobile phones with videos, but these phones can be used to transmit horrific images of beheadings. There is a gap between our values and our technology. He then pointed to Azerbaijan by asking “Are we able to overlook the oil pipelines and

inexorably point out the dictator who keeps all his people in servitude and threatens to drown his neighbor in blood?”

Sargisian finally mentioned the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, still often not properly characterized. He said: “The truth is that we can't ensure a peaceful and safe future without condemning the crimes of the past. For this very purpose we cannot allow using faith in the name of xenophobia or

of the church in the history of the Armenian people. Underscoring that the Armenian people did not have statehood for a long time – the last Armenian kingdom faded away 600 years ago – Sargisian said that in the absence of statehood, the church undertook many state functions. This helped the Armenian people survive to the 21st century.

Sargisian underlined that St. Bartholomew after whom this church



President Serge Sargisian Meets with Pope Francis I

against other religions. We cannot allow using religion as a crutch to wage war and use violence. Rather, we must make use of religious power and strength to promote dialogue and tolerance in all corners of the world.”

Mikayel Minasyan, the Armenian ambassador to the Holy See, Marco Impagliazzo, the president of the Community of Sant'Egidio and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, the president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, spoke at the opening about the importance of the topic of the exhibition, the state of Christians in the Middle East, as well as their deep concern over the existence of Christianity and protection of social and cultural values in general.

The president of Armenia also visited St. Bartholomew Church, the chapels of which contain records about Christian martyrs, including those of the Armenian Genocide. Sargisian laid a wreath at the main altar of the church and paid tribute to the memory of martyrs. Addressing the believers gathered in the church, the Armenian president noted the special significance and role

located on the Tiber Island is named, is considered one of the founders of the Armenian Church. “May God give us the strength and ability to be able to pass on our Christian values to our generations,” Sargisian exclaimed.

Levon Aronian to Participate in World Mind Games

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The leader of the Armenian national chess team Levon Aronian is going to participate in the World Mind Games to be held on December 11-17, 2014 in Beijing, China.

He will be competing against fellow grandmasters Grischuk, Nepomniachtchi, Mamedyarov, Vachier-Lagrave, Ivanchuk, Dominguez Perez, Ponomarev, Radjabov, Gelfand, Leko, Bacrot, Giri, Wang Yue, Wojtaszek and Wang Hao.



INTERNATIONAL

European Court of Human Rights Processes Request Return of Remains of Armenian Victim in Azerbaijan

YEREVAN – On September 10, a working group representing the family of Karen Petrosyan, an Armenian civilian killed under Azerbaijani custody, applied to European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) with a request under the Rule 39 of the Rules of Court, requesting the ECHR to intervene in this case with interim measure of indicating the respondent state, Azerbaijan, immediately to return the remains of Petrosyan to his family, taking all relevant and necessary steps to return the body in a dignified state.

"International law requires that the remains be returned without any preconditions," said Larisa Alaverdyan, executive director of the Foundation against the Violation of Law (FAVL) and one of the members of the working group. "This illegal delay serves to compound the already tremendous suffering felt by this innocent civilian's family."

"The request was lodged aiming at prevention of irreparable and continuous violation of the right to respect the family and private life of Petrosyan family members" as one of the members of the working group, advocate Vahe Grigoryan said.

A working group has been composed of experts in the field of international human rights law to represent the interests of Petrosyan family in both domestic proceedings in Armenia and in the ECHR. Human rights lawyers Kristina Gevorkyan, Ara Ghazaryan and Vahe Grigoryan together with human rights defenders Larisa Alaverdyan and Artak Zeynalyan are representing Petrosyan family before ECHR.

In response to the request of the representatives of the Petrosyan's family, on September 12, the ECHR communicated the request to the government of

Azerbaijan requesting to explain its "official position in connection with the return of Petrosyan's body and to provide information on the reasons for the delay in returning of the body to his relatives". The deadline for the information request was indicated as 26th of September.

Petrosyan, who lived in a border village in northeastern Armenia, was taken cap-



Karen Petrosyan in captivity

tive on August 7 after mistakenly straying into Azerbaijan. Shocking images of him being dragged by masked soldiers were distributed to the media by authorities in Azerbaijan, in which Petrosyan was brutally forced to beg pardon from the president of Azerbaijan. The next day, the Defense Ministry announced that he had "suddenly" died of "heart failure." The circumstances surrounding the death of Karen Petrosyan raise serious doubts as to the cause of the death announced by Azerbaijani authorities.

Despite calls from the United States, France, Russia, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Azerbaijan has not yet returned his body.

In a second similar case, the family of Mamikon Khojayan, an elderly Armenian villager who died after being abused

under Azerbaijani captivity, was officially sent to the ECHR on Thursday. Khojayan's three children filed the suit with support from FAVL and the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC).

"This is a striking example of outrageous cruelty against a helpless 77-year-old man," said EHRAC Legal Consultant Vahe Grigoryan, who will be representing the family in the case. "We are assisting our local partner FAVL before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, in order to seek justice for the family of Mr. Khojayan."

Plaintiffs in the case plan to present evidence of Khojayan's torture, as well as to demonstrate the systematic pattern of abuse practiced by authorities in Baku against such innocent Armenians.

"Mr. Khojayan was abused from the very beginning of his captivity, eventually leading to his tragic death," said FAVL's Lawyer Kristina Gevorkyan. "We're turning to the ECHR to hold the government of Azerbaijan accountable for this grave crime and ensure that such treatment is brought to an end."

After the capture of Khojayan in January, several other Armenian civilians have fallen under Azerbaijani captivity, facing public humiliation and severe abuse. In one of the most recent cases, a villager from Chinari named Karen Petrosyan was captured near the border, paraded on TV as a 'saboteur', and killed one day after being taken into custody.

Khojayan's family is demanding prosecution of the Azerbaijani government under articles 2, 3, 5, 13, and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibit killing, torture, inhumane treatment, and discrimination.

Senate Confirms John Bass as Next US Ambassador to Turkey

WASHINGTON – This week the Senate voted 98-0 to confirm John R. Bass as the next US ambassador to Turkey. Bass' nomination received stiff questioning on Armenian-American concerns from Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) Chairman Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Ed Markey (D-MA) prior to his confirmation.

"We commend Chairman Menendez, and Senators Barbara Boxer, Mark Kirk and Ed Markey for their stance on issues concerning Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish-Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia, and other critical issues affecting the region," stated Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "Following in the footsteps of Henry Morgenthau, the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire who in 1915 alerted the world to the Armenian Genocide, it is important that our Foreign Service officers execute a foreign policy that appropriately reflects America's values."

In addition to the full Senate vote on Bass' nomination, the SFRC held a hearing today on the nomination of Richard M. Mills and Robert F. Cekuta to serve as US ambassador to Armenia and Azerbaijan, respectively.

During the SFRC hearing, Subcommittee Chairman for European Affairs Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Subcommittee Ranking Member Ron Johnson (R-WI) questioned the nominees for U.S. ambassador to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Chairman Murphy noted that Russia has sometimes played a constructive role in the Nagorno Karabagh peace process, while at other times not. He asked the nominees how they see Russia in this regard. Both Mills and Cekuta indicated that the US Ambassador to the Organization for Security and

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) James Warlick has a good working relationship with his Russian counterpart. The United States, Russia, and France serve as co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The Minsk Group "remains the best process" to achieve peace in Nagorno Karabagh, Mills said, while Cekuta stated that the Minsk Group process enjoys the confidence of all parties. Cekuta emphasized that "there is no military solution to this conflict." Mills reiterated that "any settlement will require respect for basic principles contained in international law, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act, and three principles will be key to any settlement: the non-use of force, non-threat of use of force; respect for territorial integrity; and respect for the self-determination of peoples."

Senator Murphy noted concern about

the increasing number of individuals imprisoned in Azerbaijan, which seems to be politically motivated. Murphy indicated that he, along with Senators Dick Durbin and Ben Cardin, recently sent a letter outlining their concerns to Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev. The Assembly, for its part, in a letter to Chairman Menendez also outlined concerns with respect to Azerbaijan.

Later in the hearing, Senator Johnson expressed his disappointment with Turkey on several fronts, including its refusal to allow the US airbase in Turkey to be used to help combat the growing Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant threat, as well as its move toward an Islamic, autocratic government.

Murphy indicated that the SFRC may vote to approve Mills and Cekuta as early as Thursday, September 18.

Catholicosate of Cilicia to Sue Turkey Over Historic Headquarters in Sis

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were located from 1293 to 1921. During the Armenian Genocide, the Armenians of Cilicia were subjected to massacres. The last Catholicos in Sis was Sahak II, who fled to Syria with the surviving Armenian population of Cilicia in 1921.

During the speech, he said, "We cannot remain indifferent towards the abuse of the rights of the Armenian nation. Indifference amounts to the betrayal of the nation."

He stressed, "It is now time that we move the Armenian Cause efforts beyond the recognition of the Armenian Genocide into the legal sphere."

The catholicos also added that during the past two years, under his supervi-

sion, work has been done towards that goal in collaboration with international law experts.

"If Turkey's Constitutional Court rejects our claims, we will immediately present our case to the European Court of Human Rights," declared Aram I. "If we win the case, the honor and victory will belong to our nation and Church. And if we lose the case, that will also be a victory, because in presenting our case we will have reminded the perpetrators and the international community that the Armenian nation remains committed to demanding its rights no matter the number of years that distance it from the onset of the Genocide."

International News

'Talaat Pasha' Group Visits Greece Hoping to Change Genocide Law

ATHENS – According to an article published in Turkish newspaper *Aydinlik* on September 17, a committee named "Talaat Pasha Committee," after the mastermind behind the Armenian Genocide and other genocides in Asia Minor, will visit Athens so they can "require" the deletion of the provision of the "anti-racism" law, voted in the Greek Parliament last week, which refers to the punishment of those who deny the Genocide. The Pontian and Armenian genocides, they said, as well as those of the Assyrians, are "fairy tales."

The chairman of this committee, Ismail Hakki Pekin, a retired lieutenant-general of the Turkish Army, in an interview he gave in Ankara, announced that the committee will go to Greece to ... require the Greek side to remove the "lies" on the Turkish genocide as suggested in the bill.

This committee appears to enjoy the support of the Turkish State.

Qatar Donates \$88.5 Million for Darfur

NEW YORK – Qatar signed a \$88.5-million grant agreement with the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund, administered by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to finance recovery and reconstruction in Darfur, Sudan. It is the single largest donation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations.

"We are very grateful to the State of Qatar for its unwavering support to the efforts for peace and recovery in Darfur, where too many people have lost their lives and livelihoods," said Helen Clark, Chair of the United Nations Development Group, and UNDP Administrator. "It is our firm belief that investing in development in Darfur can help to break the cycle of violence and begin to sow the seeds of peace in this region of Sudan."

This support is one of the main outcomes of the Darfur peace agreement, signed in Doha in 2011, and will kick-start the implementation of the immediate priorities outlined in the Darfur Development Strategy, launched at the international Donor Conference in April 2013. The three pillars of the Darfur Development Strategy are Reconstruction; Governance, Justice and Reconciliation; and Economic Recovery.

Foreign Minister Nalbandian Receives Poland Senate Member

YEREVAN – On September 20 Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received Lukasz Abgarowicz, Member of the Polish Senate and Head of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with Armenia, who arrived to Armenia to participate in the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference.

Minister Nalbandian welcomed Senator Abgarowicz's visit to Armenia and Karabagh underlining that such visits give an opportunity to get a first hand information and objective impression about regional processes.

Expressing gratitude for the reception Senator Abgarowicz assured that he will continue his work towards enhancement of relations with Armenia. Polish Senator told the Minister about his impressions from his visit to Karabagh.

The two discussed the ways of development of Armenian-Polish relations, emphasized the role of inter-parliamentary ties and stressed the necessity of their intensification.

The interlocutors touched upon the steps, aimed at further expansion of Armenian-Polish economic relations, in this context they underlined the role of inter-governmental commission, whose next session is planned for the end of this year in Warsaw.

Nalbandian and Abgarowicz also exchanged views on intensification of cultural contacts and widening of decentralized cooperation.

Nalbandian presented the guest Armenia's approaches to the regional issues and the ways towards their solution.



Community News

Saying Ayo! to Keeping Children Safe in Tavush

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – “It is an urgent and top priority that Tavush schoolchildren study in a safe environment. Not only are they in constant danger but the village people are as well,” said Ayo! Community Director Helena Melkonyan.

Planned and organized by Ayo!, an initiative of Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), the Protective Walls Project <https://www.weareayo.org/all-projects/> consists of building barriers around schools in Aygepar, Chinary and others villages located along the Armenian-Azeri border. Situated in Tavush, one of Armenia’s poorest regions, these villages continue to be victims of sniper fire.

“It is an urgent and top priority that Tavush schoolchildren study in a safe environment. Not only are they in constant danger but the village people are as



An Azeri sniper bullet

well,” said Ayo! Community Director Helena Melkonyan.

While a ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been in effect since 1994, violations have occurred since then, even escalating over the past year. The recent crisis in Ukraine has proceeded to further divide the two nations based on their relationships with Russia, and more shootings were reported over the summer. Two houses struck by sniper fire even recently burned to the ground. “When [snipers] see movement they shoot in that direction,” Ayo! Project Director Armen Anmeghikyan said.

Staff members of FAR who work closely on development initiatives in the Tavush region through the organization’s Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Project (BCPP), first came up with the idea for the wall after sniper fire killed two people last winter. The government shut down some of the roads and then constructed alternative routes between Berd and Ijevan with protective walls around them.

“If there was a need for a protective wall for the road, what about those villages along the border?” said Eric Baghdasaryan, economic development manager for BCPP, who engaged with local communities that supported the idea of constructing a wall around the communities’ schools. “The mayors I spoke with said it was especially dangerous as children cannot play freely because of the fear of being shot at.”

Baghdasaryan, along with other FAR staff members proposed the idea as an Ayo! project in order to raise the funds needed to carry it out. Ayo! is a crowd-see TAVOUSH, page 7



Pilgrims light candles near the Tomb of Mary during Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Assumption.

Watertown Pilgrims Visit Holy Land

WATERTOWN and JERUSALEM – On August 21, 31 pilgrims from St. James Armenian Church in Watertown made a 12-day pilgrimage to Jerusalem to embark on a spiritual journey to explore the foundations of their faith, walk the lands of the Bible and to support the Armenian Christian population in the Holy Land. The group, led by pastor Fr. Arakel Aljalian, consisted of several families traveling together and pilgrims of all ages.

Each morning, the pilgrims started their day in the Holy Land by reflecting on scripture and reciting the Lord’s Prayer. With Jerusalem as their base, the pilgrims made day trips to visit Holy sites central to their Armenian Christian Faith.

Commencing with the birth of Christ, the pilgrims journeyed to Bethlehem to visit the Church of the Nativity, the birthplace of Christ where they participated in the Divine Liturgy and received Holy Communion. In the Holy Grotto of the Nativity, the pilgrims knelt before the silver star that marks the place where Christ was born in Bethlehem. The pilgrims toured the Armenian section of the Church of the Nativity complex, and the Shepherd’s field where the Angels announced the joyous news of Christ’s birth, and read Scriptures highlighting the story of the nativity. Refreshments were provided by the Armenian monks who are the caretakers of the Armenian presence in Bethlehem.

The stories of the Bible were brought to life as the pilgrims visited Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation where the Angel Gabriel visited Mary at her home. Taking turns, the pilgrims recited the Scripture readings, recounting the story of the Annunciation as well as visiting the site of Joseph’s carpenter’s workshop.

At the Sea of Galilee, the pilgrims took a boat ride to the middle of the Sea. The captain turned off the motor and after taking in the tranquility of the waters, the story of Christ calming the seas and the wind and walking on water was read and meditated on.



The St. James group pose for a photo with Archbishop Nourhan Manougian after a visit with the Patriarch.

Following the path of the Lord in His ministry, the pilgrims took a winding bus ride with hairpin curves up to the very top of Mt. Tabor, the site of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, to meditate and sing the Lord’s Prayer (Hayr Mer) and other hymns, led by Aljalian at the beautiful Catholic Church, built in the 12th century under the mosaics and murals depicting the Holy Transfiguration.

A highlight for many pilgrims was the beautiful Church of the Beatitudes and surrounding grounds, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Here as see PILGRIMAGE, page 6

California Governor Brown Signs Genocide Education Act into Law

SACRAMENTO – On Thursday, September 18, California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed AB 1915, the Armenian Genocide Education Act, into law reported the Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region.

The bill adds Armenian Genocide survivor and witness oral testimonies into the teachings of human rights in California public schools and encourages professional development activities and resource development for teachers to teach about the Genocide. Authored by Assembly member Adrin Nazarian, AB 1915 builds upon the first legislation passed in 1985, AB 1273, which led to the incorporation of the Armenian Genocide into the History-Social Studies Curriculum Framework

“ANCA WR commends Governor Brown for his unyielding support throughout the years on issues of importance to the Armenian American community and for making history today by signing this critical bill into law, and co-authors Assemblymembers Nazarian and Katcho Achadjian along and Senators De Leon and Mark Wyland for their leadership in moving this bill through the Calif. State Assembly and the Senate with unanimous support,” stated Nora Hovsepian, ANCA WR chair.

On August 12, representatives of the ANCA WR met with the Governor’s office to urge Brown to sign the bill into law. The meeting, which was facilitated by Nazarian’s office, included ANCA-WR Education Committee Chairperson Alice Petrossian; Legislative Affairs Director Haig Baghdassarian; Genocide Education Project Board Member Roxanne Makasdjian; Hrag Kitsinian, Legislative Aide to Nazarian and Cathy McBride, senior education policy adviser to the Governor. During the meeting, Petrossian, Baghdassarian, Makasdjian and Kitsinian advocated for the enactment of the proposed law, pointing out to McBride that contrary to its inclusion in the History-Social Science Curriculum Framework, the Armenian Genocide has not been taught in the majority of public schools.

“The Armenian Genocide Education Act (AB 1915) is an issue near and dear to my heart, having myself descended from survivors of the horrific atrocities befallen the Armenian people. Only through education and remembrance can we heal our pain and never repeat the mistakes of the past,” stated Nazarian. “I would also like to give a special thanks to several champions of this bill, Governor Jerry Brown, Assemblymembers Katcho Achadjian, and Scott Wilk, Ms. Kay Mouradian, and my dear friends at the Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region,” added Nazarian.

In late August, AB 1915 received unanimous support in the California State Senate with a vote of 36-0.

“This is yet another example of what is possible when we unite and make our collective voice heard. Our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude goes out to our grassroots for their unprecedented level of activism, which resulted in this bill becoming law. Your voice, through the action alerts, phone calls, meetings with officials, social media posts, and participation in our Advocacy Day in Sacramento made this victory possible,” stated Elen Asatryan, Executive Director of ANCA WR. “The ANCA Western Region, its Education Committee, and local chapters look forward to working with the Department of Education and school districts across the State to ensure that future generations learn about the Armenian Genocide of 1915,” added Asatryan.

Currently, California is one of 11 states, including Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island and Virginia, which have the Armenian Genocide included in their curriculum.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Clark University and Worcester State University to Host 'Manufacturing Denial and the Assault on Scholarship and Truth'

WORCESTER – The conference “Manufacturing Denial and the Assault on Scholarship and Truth” will take place on Friday and Saturday, October 24-25, 2014, at Worcester State University and Clark University in Worcester. The conference is co-sponsored and organized by the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University; the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marion Mugar Chair at the Strassler Center; the Armenian Genocide Program at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University; the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research; and Worcester State University (Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity, and other departments and offices).

The academic conference represents the first time that social scientists and natural scientists will meet to analyze the analogous and interrelated, though not always identical, phenomena of genocide denial – of the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust, Rwandan, and other cases – and the denial of scientific truth – from evolution to climate change.

Since the 1980s, genocide denial, particularly of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, has generated a substantial body of literature analyzing and documenting the methods and rhetoric of those who seek to negate or obscure documented cases of mass violence. More recently, an impressive amount of literature has explored the ways in which various industries and political operatives have used the strategy of “manufacturing doubt” to undermine the scientific consensus on smoking, pollution, evolution, and global warming. Nonetheless, the corruption and co-opting of scholarship for the purposes of fomenting denial continues.

The conference will open at Worcester State University’s Ghosh Auditorium on Friday,

October 24, at 7 p.m., with a keynote address by Prof. Brendan J. Nyhan, professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College, titled “The Challenge of Denial: Why People Refuse to Accept Unwelcome Facts,” and a response by Prof. Henry Theriault, chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Worcester State University. Khatchig Mouradian, PhD candidate at Clark’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and coordinator of the Armenian Genocide Program at the CGHR at Rutgers University, will offer welcoming remarks. This event is open to the general public.

On Saturday, October 25, beginning at 8:30 a.m., there will be four two-hour sessions held at Clark University. These sessions are primarily for conference participants but a limited number of seats are available to the public by reservation only.

Session 1, “Modern Strategies and Rhetoric of Denial,” will be chaired by Dr. Lou Ann Matossian (independent scholar) and will include presentations by Marc A. Mamigonian (National Association for Armenian Studies and Research), Sara Brown (Clark University), and Shawn Olson (Utah State University).

Session 2, chaired by Dr. Taner Akçam (Clark University), will examine “The Political Uses of Denial.” Participating in the session will be Dr. Jennifer Dixon (Villanova University), Dr. Alex Hinton (Rutgers University), and Dr. Mark Gottlieb (Northeastern University).

Session 3 will take up the question “Countering Denial: How and When?” with Dr. Dikran Kaligian (Worcester State University) as chairman. The panelists will be Dr. Keith Watenpaugh (University of California, Davis), Dr. Ken Maclean (Clark University), and Emma Bloomfield (University of Southern California).

The conference will conclude with a summing up panel featuring Dr. Debórah Dwork

(Clark University), Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian (University of California, Los Angeles), and Dr. Massimo Pigliucci (City University of New York-Lehman College), fol-

lowed by open discussion.

For more information, contact Sarah Cushman, Strassler Center Academic Program Liaison Officer, at scushman@clarku.edu.

Watertown Pilgrims Visit Holy Land

PILGRIMAGE, from page 4

well, pilgrims read the scriptures and had a few moments of silence to contemplate the words of the Beatitudes.

At the traditional site of Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist, Aljalian performed the Blessing of the Water Service using five crosses from Jerusalem. He then presented the blessed crosses to each of the five young pilgrims as a gift of remembrance of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

In one of the most moving experiences, the pilgrims left the hotel at 3:30 a.m., to walk through the Old City of Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of Christ’s crucifixion, burial and resurrection to participate in and witness Divine Liturgy

and tomb of Mary. After a break for dinner hosted by the Armenian Patriarchate in the Garden of Gethsemane, the group was invited to attend the evening vigil service. The group then woke up early the next morning to attend Divine Liturgy and celebrate the Feast. Many said they were honored to be in the Holy Land to witness the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of Holy Mary.

The pilgrims visited the Armenian Patriarchate and were welcomed by His Beatitude Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who spoke to them about the importance of preserving the Armenian presence in the Holy Land.

The group was then given a unique privilege to visit the chapel of St. Toros within the St.



Pilgrims pose for a photo at the Jordan River after the Blessing of the Water Service.

(Badarak), celebrated by Aljalian, at the empty Tomb of Christ. Pilgrims described this unique experience to participated in the Badarak by singing, serving at the altar, and receiving Holy Communion at one of the most holy sites in the Christian faith as spiritually uplifting, moving, inspiring, fulfilling and emotionally overwhelming.

The focal point of the pilgrimage was to witness the feast of the celebration of the Assumption of Holy Mary. On Saturday afternoon, the pilgrims joined the Patriarch, clergy and seminarians in a procession to the church where Mary was buried. The impressive procession then descended over 30 steps to the altar

James monastery to see where the Armenian manuscripts are kept. They had the opportunity to see a beautiful illuminated Gospel dating from the 13th century. There was also an opportunity for an added excursion to Tel Aviv to do some sightseeing and swimming in the Mediterranean Sea, and they also visited St. Nicholas Armenian Church in old Jaffa.

On the last day, some of the pilgrims got the traditional hadji tattoo as a symbol of our pilgrimage. Later that evening, they gathered for our farewell dinner at Bulghourji restaurant in the Armenian quarter of the Old City. They returned home with fulfilled and happy hearts, touched by their pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



Pilgrims attend Divine Liturgy at the Sts. James Cathedral in Jerusalem.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Teachers Symposium Held at Diocesan Center

NEW YORK – Close to 60 Armenian educators gathered at the Diocesan Center in New York for the Armenian Teachers Symposium on Saturday, September 6.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian opened the day with a prayer. Educator Vehanoush Tekian gave the keynote address on the Armenian alphabet. Her presentation ended with quotes from famous poets Zahrad and Jacques Hagopian.

Armenian Studies director Gilda Kupelian introduced new resources, spoke about best practices and Diocesan standards, and recommended requirements for graduates of Armenian schools. She congratulated three new principals in attendance as well as a new teacher who is a recent graduate of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School and the Diocese's Khrimian Lycuem.

Teachers shared practices and programs implemented at their local schools and took part in a workshop during which they discussed the criteria for the ideal Armenian school.

Khoren Mekanejian, the Diocese's director of Music Ministry, shared Vahan Tekeyan's poem, "Yegeghetsin Hayagan" put to music, and encouraged teachers to teach it to their students. He was accompanied by longtime educator and



Participants listen to a presentation during the Armenian Teachers Symposium.

mezzo soprano Maro Partamian.

Other highlights included the recitation of Armenian poetry, including an original poem by

participant Barbara Hovsepian, and the presentation of awards to accomplished teachers.

Maro Partamian, Anahid Mateossian, Barbara Hovsepian, Hagop and Marie Ghajanian, and Haikaz Gharakanian were recognized for more than 25 years of service to the Armenian school. Helen Minassyan, Hasmik Kadamian, Anoush Makarian, and Maryann Utucyan were honored for 10 years of service. The Kirikian Armenian School of Tenafly, NJ, was recognized as the school with the highest enrollment.

Archbishop Gizirian closed the symposium with heartfelt words of encouragement to Armenian School teachers. "We have two anchors," he said, "The Illuminator's lamp and Mesrob Mashdots' torch. Continue your work so

that the new generation proudly says, 'We are Armenian,' and carries forward these treasures passed down to us from our forefathers."

Representatives from the following eight Armenian schools attended this month's symposium: St. Vartan Armenian School and Khrimian Lyceum of New York, NY; Holy Martyrs Language School of Bayside, NY; St. Gregory the Enlightener School of White Plains, NY; St. Gregory Armenian School of Brooklyn, NY; Kirikian School of Tenafly, NJ; St. Leon School of Fair Lawn, NJ; and Holy Resurrection Armenian School of New Britain, Conn. Also present was Armenian scholar Vartan Mateossian, director of Armenian National Education Committee.

Mass. Bar Association Leader Kazarosian To Speak at St. James Men's Club

WATERTOWN – On Monday, October 6, Marsha Veron Kazarosian, the president of the Massachusetts Bar Association, will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of St. James Armenian Church Men's Club. The topic will be "Lawyer/Client Relationships."

Kazarosian is a partner in the firm of Kazarosian Costello & O'Donnell, with offices in Haverhill, Salem and Lowell. She has been named by *Massachusetts Super Lawyers* magazine as one of the top lawyers in

disputes, personal injury, and lender liability in the Superior, Probate and District Courts.

In 1999, Kazarosian and her associate, Janet E. Dutcher, successfully sued a membership-based country club for gender discrimination. This was the first such case tried in the country, winning a multi-million dollar verdict. As a result of extensive post-trial litigation and appeals that reached the highest court in the Commonwealth, their victory in *Borne, et al. v. Haverhill Golf and Country Club, Inc.* became a landmark case in the nation.

In addition to protecting the rights of women and minorities, she has also defended clients wrongfully accused of discrimination. In 2001, she defeated claims of disability discrimination against the manager of a health club who was sued under the Americans with Disabilities Act in the case of *Kuketzy v. Petronelli*.

Kazarosian has also been involved in a number of high-profile criminal cases, including one in which she defended a member of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club in multiple federal criminal indictments. In 1990, she represented one of the young boys charged in what has become known as the Pamela Smart murder case in NH. The national attention of the murder case inspired tremendous media coverage including two movies, one with Helen Hunt, titled "Murder in New Hampshire, the Pamela Smart Case," and one with Nicole Kidman, titled "To Die For."

Kazarosian is past president of the Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys (MATA) and the Essex County Bar Association. She is currently a delegate to the American Bar Association and serves on the ABA's Gender Equality Task Force and Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section Plaintiff's Policy Task Force. She is also a member of the National Council of Bar Presidents' and serves on the Supreme Judicial Court's Access to Justice Commission's Committee on the Bar Examination as well as MA Trial Court's Domestic Violence Education Task Force. A Trustee of the Massachusetts Bar Foundation and Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, she is also a member of the Federal Bar Association and serves on the Board of Editors of *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*.

Kazarosian is an advocate of continuing legal education for lawyers and has participated in panels in both MA and NH and such national organizations as The American Association for Justice, (formerly ATLA), and the American Bar Association.

The social hour starts at 6:15 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m. \$14 per person.

The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. The program is open to the public and ladies are welcome.



Marsha Veron Kazarosian

Massachusetts each year since 2006 and has been identified as one of the top 50 Women Lawyers in Massachusetts and New England. In 2006, she was *Massachusetts Super Lawyer* magazine's cover story titled "The Power of Marsha Kazarosian," featuring her career biography and her climb to national recognition. Attorney Kazarosian enjoys a 5.0 AV Preeminent Rating from Martindale-Hubbell, and is rated 10.0 Superb by AVVO.com. Most recently, Suffolk University featured Kazarosian in its statewide campaign to exemplify the high standards of its degree programs and graduates.

A regular legal commentator for FOX 25 News in Boston, Kazarosian has provided legal commentary on a regular basis for numerous media outlets and publications. In 2011, she was selected by *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* (MLW) as a "Top Woman in the Law." MLW also named her as one of Massachusetts' Top Ten lawyers in 1999, noting that she obtained one of the 10 highest jury verdicts in the Commonwealth that year. Over the past three decades she has built a national practice representing clients in high profile media cases, making case law with precedent-setting issues in areas such as gender and disability discrimination, Dodd-Frank Whistleblower Retaliation, and police excessive force/civil rights litigation in the Federal Court. Kazarosian is also an experienced mediator and conciliator, having conciliated or mediated such issues as contract

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Saying Ayo! to Keeping Children Safe in Tavush

TAVOUSH, from page 4

funding initiative, which seeks to support local solutions for local problems in Armenia. www.weareayo.org/about-us/ And it has garnered great attention.

Since its launch the Protective Wall Project has raised more than \$4,000 in Armenia alone. This includes the roughly \$350 collected in just 1.5 hours during a fundraiser in front of Yerevan's Moscow Theater over the summer. The No. 128 school in Yerevan raised roughly \$800 on September 1 when students brought in donations of at least 1,000 drams each in lieu of flowers for their teachers for Knowledge Day.

The action was encouraged by the news agency Yerevan Production (www.imyerevan.com), which had previously profiled Ayo! as one of the 10 best startups of 2013. Famed Olympic wrestler Arsen Julfalakyan even declined the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and instead pledged to donate to Ayo!'s Protective Walls Project, while nominating the Ayo! team to do the same. They eagerly took up the challenge with flair by jumping into a swimming pool <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CxbBtmOHUc>, which sparked responses and donations and further inquiries about how to help.

"You know immediately when a project really speaks to you and this is one of those projects," said Melkonyan, who spent a great deal of time with villagers in the area. Melkonyan, together with the rest of the Ayo! team, has been integral in taking support for this project to new, unprecedented heights. "This project has the purpose of not only protecting but also saving lives."

Following consultations with Armenia's Defense Ministry, it was decided that the wall would be made of tufa stone and would be 70 meters long, 3 meters high and 30 meters thick. Once the necessary funds are secured it is expected that the wall will take less than a month to build.

Tensions on the border particularly escalated over the summer and the situation has been called a "mini war," increasing the urgency for assistance. Along the border, fear is pervasive. "When they use big weapons, the mothers come weeping. We're scared, too.



A window damaged in Tavush

What if a mother picks up her child and they get hit on their way home? So, we tell them to wait here. We want peace. We don't want war," said Rita Gabrielyan, a resident of Aygepar who works at the local school. "If they put a wall by our courtyard, we could take the kids out to play. Otherwise, we never take them outside. The children would at least be protected from the automatic gunfire. Soldiers shoot indiscriminately and one weapon could kill a child. What can I say? That would be terrible."

Once completed the wall will serve as a first

layer of protection against firefighting and will also successfully obscure children from the sight of anyone firing from across the border.

"This is the most crucial project Ayo! has ever had," said Anmeghikyan. "Every day mat-

ters. The sooner we raise the necessary funds, the sooner we can sleep knowing that the children who have nothing to do with the war will have a safe environment to study."

Each day, village residents and their children are at greater risk of being injured or killed by gunfire. The Ayo! team is working hard to see that more awareness is raised and that this wall is constructed as soon as possible. But it's not enough. Greater support for this project is crucial and we ask you to take a stand. Go to <https://www.weareayo.org> and protect vulnerable Armenians today.

Haidostian to Address USC Audience on Middle East Crisis

LOS ANGELES – Rev. Paul Haidostian, president of the Beirut-based Haigazian University, will be the guest of the University of Southern California (USC) Institute of Armenian Studies at a lunch-time conversation to be held on Monday, September 29, at noon at the Doheny Memorial Library Room 244, on campus.

Titled "A Middle East Without Minorities?" Haidostian will speak about the recent turmoil in the Middle East and its impact on the various ethnic and religious minorities of the region. USC Professor of International Relations, Dr. Laurie Brand, will be guiding the discussion.

Haidostian has been president of Haigazian since 2002. In addition to his local and international responsibilities in educational, religious and ecumenical organizations, he teaches, lectures, and writes in Armenian, Arabic and English on a wide variety of topics including Armenian identity, ecumenism, youth, social issues, theology, religion and community.

Haidostian is currently the chair of the Central Committee of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. He will be a guest at the Institute's anniversary gala to be held at the Beverly Hilton on September 28.

Brand is a professor of international relations at the University of Southern California School of International Relations. She specializes in the international relations of the Middle East, including political economy of the region and inter-Arab relations. She is the author of several books on the region, including most recently, *Official Stories: Politics and National Narratives in Egypt and Algeria*, published by Stanford University Press. She is a past president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America in 2004.

Salpi Ghazarian, the newly-appointed director of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, says, "We invite the community to the USC campus to this program. This is not a lecture. It's a conversation between two people who know the region well. Dr. Haidostian's intimate knowledge of the Middle East, and his readiness to share his insights are very valuable, now, at a time when we are all trying to understand what is happening in the Middle East, and why. Dr. Laurie Brand heads USC's Middle East Studies Program and we're grateful for her participation."

Lunch will be served.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Fifth Armenia-Diaspora Conference Concludes

YEREVAN – The 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference, organized by the Ministry of Diaspora, concluded on September 20.

The event brought together more than 1,000 attendees from around the world, including 741 leaders and representatives of Armenian organizations from nearly 60 countries, a 20-member delegation from Artsakh, as well as 310 state, political, cultural figures, scientists and journalists from Armenia. There were participants from Russia (129), Syria (103), Lebanon (74), US (77), Georgia (45), France (31), Iran (25) and Canada (22), Australia (15), Argentina (11), Chile (3) and the South African Republic (1).

The Tekeyan Cultural Association of US and Canada was represented by Kevork Marashlian and Baydzig Kalaydjian. Among others from the US were Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian from Massachusetts, Knights of Vartan Commander Steve Kradjian, painter Daniel Varujan Hejinian, Rita Balian and Knights of Vartan former Grand Commander Dr. Dennis Papazian.

Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamian kicked off the plenary session. In his speech, he said, “We are strong when we stand united as one. Armenia is strong with its two ‘wings’ – the two Armenian states and the diaspora. All



Group photo of the participants of the conference



Prime Minister Hovik Aprahamian at the opening of the Conference

Armenians share the same interests.”

He added, “It’s very important for Armenians to remain in Armenia and shape their future in the homeland.”

The prime minister mentioned that Armenia no longer expects diasporan Armenians to carry out charity acts and that the Armenian government is calling for a mutually-beneficial partnership between Armenia and the diaspora.

Reflecting on the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, he explained his frustra-

tion that Turkey isn’t coming to grips with its past. “Nevertheless, we are taking measures to make sure the international community expresses the right position on the issue. What connects Armenians? What connects Armenians is their historical memory, but what connects them more are the free and independent Armenia and Artsakh and the idea of strengthening our two states.”

In his welcoming remarks, President of the Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh) Republic Bako Sahakian said, “We must do everything possible to make sure the Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora triumvirate remains strong and helps strengthen our two countries. Our coordinated efforts, the high level of readiness of Armenian soldiers and our will during the tension on the border between Karabagh and Azerbaijan in the summer made the opponent fail.”

Among other speakers were Patriarch-Catholicos Nerses Petros XIX (Catholic Church), Rev. Dr. Hovel Mikayelian (Evangelical

Church) Hrant Margarian (ARF) Hagop Dikranian (Hunchakian), Vasken Yacoubian (AGBU), Vickie Marashlian (ARS), Ara Abrahamian (World Armenian Congress), Megerdich Megerdichian (Hamazkayin) Ken Hachikian (ANC), Armine Darbinyan (Armenian Assembly), Gagik Gevorgyan (Armenian Jewelers), Karnig Megerdichian (Homenetmen), Kevork Marashlian (Tekeyan Central Board).

The second plenary session included speeches by Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan; Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan; Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Diaspora Firdus Zakaryan and editor-in-chief of *Aztag* daily, Shahan Kantaharian.

Meeting with Foreign Minister of Nalbandian

After summing up the panel sessions, the participants of all the sessions listened to a speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Nalbandian who said: “Under the leadership of

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COMMUNITY NEWS

the president of Armenia, Armenia's diplomats continue to defend and represent the interests of our nation in the international arena. The fact that Armenia has established diplomatic relations with nearly 160 countries, has joined nearly 90 international organizations, has signed nearly 1,800 international treaties and agreements says a lot about the large-scale efforts made by Armenian diplomats serving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the more than 60 diplomatic representations abroad. This would be impossible, if it were not for the support of all Armenians around the world."

The minister talked about the achievements and current challenges of the Foreign Ministry.

Nalbandian attached importance to the five joint statements made by the leaders co-chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict settlement between 2009 and 2013, reaffirming the fact that the international community completely understands Armenia's principled position.

Nalbandian touched upon the efforts being made by the ministry for recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide and elimination of the consequences.

Nalbandian praised the role of the Armenian Diaspora in raising the profile of Armenia in the world and noted: "We enjoy the support of diasporan Armenian structures, organizations and individuals in the implementation of many initiatives, and the guarantee of our success lies in that."

Defense Ministry Visit

The participants of the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference met with Minister of Defense Seyran Ohanian at the Ministry of Defense.

Ohanian in his speech said, "The conferences help us gather and discuss the issues facing the nation and find ways to solve those issues. The



President Sargisian speaking during 23rd independence anniversary celebration

in those countries. Those events were followed by the crisis in Egypt and the latest events unfolding in Ukraine. This makes us become more united to help our compatriots living in countries in a state of war," Ohanian noted. "Armenia's armed forces were in tense situations this year. Artsakh and the bordering



President Serge Sargisian at the closing of the fifth Diaspora-Armenia Conference



Tekeyan Cultural Association London Trust President Vartan Ouzounian with Diaspora Minister Hranush Hagopian, and Kevork and Vartiter Marashlian

only way to carry out activities is by uniting as one. The collaboration between the Ministries of Diaspora and Defense are also important, and Hranush Hakobyan's working style has helped make that collaboration a success over the past years."

regions of Armenia were in tense situations due to the events that took place in January, July and August. With its attacks, our opponent put the ceasefire signed in May 1994 and the OSCE Minsk Group's efforts at risk, but the Armenian army fulfilled its duty with honor and managed to push the opponent back."

President Sargisian at Closing Ceremony

On September 20, President Serge Sargisian participated in the final plenary session of the conference. In his speech, he said, "The free and independent Republic of Armenia hosted the Armenia-Diaspora Conference once again. The people gathered in this hall are clergymen, leaders and representatives of pan-Armenian organizations and



Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian addresses the conference.

Ohanian also touched upon the events taking place globally, which have an impact on Armenian communities and Armenia. "The geopolitical crises cause a threat to not only Armenia, but to Armenian communities of the diaspora as well. The tragic events in Iraq and Syria caused a serious blow to our communities

community organizations, journalists, as well as reputable individuals who play a huge role. I cordially welcome all of you to the Homeland. No matter how difficult the road is, all children return to their families, and this fifth meeting is like a family reunion."

Reflecting on the Centennial of the

Armenian Genocide, the President mentioned: "In 2015, we will be commemorating the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. This will reaffirm the will and determination of the Armenian nation deprived of its homeland to live and create and will show our unity and how consistent we are to make our wishes come true. The year 2015 will become a year of serious events and initiatives for the Armenia-Diaspora-Artsakh triumvirate."

President Sargisian added: "I would like to suggest, and I would like you to give your opinion, that after April 24, 2015, the State Committee of the Centennial, which is comprised of the leadership of Armenia, Artsakh, and the heads of major Armenian organizations worldwide, be named Pan Armenian Council

(Hamahaykakan Khorhourt), to oversee all the problems of the Armenian nation."

The audience met this suggestion with prolonged applause.

Hagopian concluded the two-day conference by announcing that the Pan-Armenian Council will be formed and that steps are being undertaken for the creation of a pan-Armenian television channel.

At the end Hampig Mardirossian read the declaration adopted by the participants of the 5th Armenia-Diaspora Conference.

During their stay in Armenia, conference participants visited Dzidzernagapert, Echmiadzin, Yerablour and celebrated the 23rd anniversary of the independence of Armenia by attending a presidential reception.



From left, Tekeyan Armenia Chairman and Rector of Apovian Pedagogical University Rouben Mirzakhanian, Dennis Papazian, Steve Kradjian, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian from Massachusetts and Kevork Marashlian

Arts & Living

Solo Photography Exhibition Focuses on Tibetan Monastic Community in Nepal

NEW YORK – Photographer Haik Kocharian is going to have a solo photography exhibit at Judson Memorial Church, with the opening reception on Thursday, October 16, 7 to 10 p.m.

Award-winning photographer and filmmaker Kocharian traveled to Nepal for a unique photography project of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries, documenting a humanitarian healing mission. Kocharian had unprecedented access to the intricate aspects of spiritual and daily life in three monastic institutions in Nepal: Pullahari Monastery, Tek Chok Ling Nunnery and Thranqu Tara Abbey.

Sponsored by the Chödrön Foundation, the project was spearheaded by Dr. Ara Bagdassarian, who provided free chiropractic services to the Tibetan monastic community in exile. Once a year Bagdassarian organizes mission trips across the world so that individuals may benefit from uniquely combined physical and spiritual healing techniques.

The result of Kocharian's work will be presented to the public for the first time in an exhibition of 33 images that capture the private and intimate rituals of Buddhist monks and nuns, including prayers and spiritual dances; intimate portraits of monks and nuns during transformative healing sessions; as well as the unique architecture and breathtaking nature surrounding



"Nuns preparing for an exam" by Haik Kocharian

the temples. Also on display are photographic reproductions of astonishing hand-drawn artwork on the walls of the Pullahari Monastery.

The selection of images invites the audience to enter the temple, drawing the viewer inward into the spiritual and intimate world of these Buddhist monks and nuns.

Tibetan Monastic Community in Nepal will be held at the historic Judson Memorial Church, a sanctuary for progressive activism and artistic expression. It is located at 55 Washington Square South.

Additional viewing dates are Sunday, October 19, 3 to 6 p.m., Tuesday, October 28, 4 to 7 p.m., Sunday, November 2, 3 to 6 p.m., Tuesday, November 11, 4 to 7 p.m. and Saturday, November 15, 7 to 10 p.m.

A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the photographs will be donated to Tek Chok Ling Nunnery and Thranqu Tara Abbey.

Armenian Carpets Presented in Vienna And Budapest

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The next Carpet Tour program and the International Conference on Oriental Carpets took place September 15 to 21 in Vienna and Budapest. The Department for Public Relations of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia announced that for the first time this event was attended by Armenian and Karabagh delegations, assisted by the Ministry of Culture of Armenia, Arthur Telfeyan, a specialist in culture and technology of Vienna University, and other individuals.

The event was also attended by a representative of the Armenian Rug Society from the US, Berdje Achdjian of Paris, who has his own collection, Peter Gmur from Switzerland, members of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Vienna, and representatives of the Georg and Azniv Gallery from Vienna.



Dogan Akhanli, left, with Fatih Akin

Creating a Transnational Memory Space

Dogan Akhanli Honored in Cologne

COLOGNE, Germany – If post-war Germany was able to acknowledge the Holocaust and work through its implications, politically and psychologically, why cannot the present Turkish establishment do the same regarding the 1915 Genocide? It is not only Armenians in and outside Germany who raise this question, but also Germans of Turkish descent, first among them Dogan Akhanli, who

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

received the Georg Fritze Memorial Award in Cologne, Germany on September 19. The festive ceremony took place in the Kartäuserkirche (Carthusian Church), where Georg Fritze (1874-1939), in whose memory the prize was established, served. In his opening remarks, Superintendent Rolf Domning, the current Protestant pastor and regional church leader, greeted the large audience, which included representatives of several faiths, political and civil society figures as well as a descendant of Fritze. Quoting the passage in Chronicles, "Be not afraid..." he honored the Protestant theologian and activist who "had the courage to oppose dictatorship and violence" in the Nazi period. Akhanli, he said, has shown in his person and works similar courage, especially in his recognition of the Genocide against the Armenians. Cologne's Mayor Jürgen Roters characterized Akhanli as a man with "a great passion for human rights."

Most appropriately, it was Fatih Akin, the Turkish-German filmmaker whose latest work "The Cut" deals with the Genocide, who was invited to deliver the laudatio, a speech in honor of Akhanli. He began by characterizing Fritze as a "traitor to his fatherland" and one who scorned power, – "that is, a good man," and used the same terms to describe Akhanli. When novelist Akhanli designated the mass murder of Armenians in 1915 a genocide, "those in power in Turkey shouted out 'A traitor to the fatherland!' and threw him in prison in 2010." In fact, Akhanli "was the first Turkish writer to report on the Armenian Genocide," he stressed. And his novel, *The Judges of the Last Judgment*, which appeared in 1999 in Turkey and 2007 in a German translation, provoked such rethinking and self-questioning, that he "was declared persona non grata in his native country."

Akin described how Akhanli, whom he met a year ago in Hamburg, had conducted seminars and trips to sites commemorating the victims of violence and genocide, during which participants, whether German, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish or Jewish, could "work through their intertwined histories with respect." He emphasized that, to "achieve a clear vision of the crimes against the Armenians," Akhanli had to "fight his way through the forest of lies of Turkish historiography," and that included wrestling with "the indifference of the Turkish leftists" who "themselves had grown up in the Turkish lying to themselves." What makes Akhanli's educational activities so convincing is the fact that he too has been victimized by brutality and violence, but has not responded with violence. "People like him," Akin stated, "... can tolerate the pain because in dealing with the injustice they themselves have experienced and that others have had to endure, they display care and sensitivity."

see MEMORY, page 12

Jack Kevorkian Biographer Releases First Novel

By Laurien Atkin

DETROIT (*Oakland Press*) – Former West Bloomfield Township resident Harry Wylie hit the big time when his nonfiction book, *You Don't Know Jack*, was made into a TV movie starring Al Pacino as Jack "Dr. Death" Kevorkian.

Kevorkian became world famous and influenced euthanasia laws in the US when he assisted a number of people in committing suicide. He created a portable machine that allowed a person to self-inject a drug cocktail that stopped the heart. He first assisted Alzheimer's patient Janet Adkins of Portland, Ore., to die in 1999. He later claimed to have helped 130 people die.

The Royal Oak resident was convicted of second-degree murder in Pontiac, after CBS's "60 Minutes" aired a videotape of him assisting the death of Thomas Youk, 52, who had ALS. Kevorkian served eight years of a 10-to-25-year prison sentence and was released on parole in 2007, on condition that he not promote or participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide. He died four years later at age 83.

The 1968 VW van in which Kevorkian first performed what he called "medicide," was recently loaned to Les Gold's American Jewelry and Loan, seen on the "Hardcore Pawn" reality show.

Wylie wrote another Kevorkian biography, *Between the Dying and the Dead*, before releasing his first novel

this summer. The speculative fiction book, *The Second Fathers of Confederation* (TouchPoint Press), follows the journey of Henry Ford IV and the chairman of the board of General Motors as they merge their common interests to form a third political party.



Harry Wylie

"It's a story that I created every day," Wylie says, explaining he spent two hours each morning writing before putting the work out of his mind until the next day. "The research I did was on the political parties in the US and elsewhere ... to determine what their platforms are or were. I came to the conclusion that so many of the platforms have a lot of complaints and a lot of hopes and dreams and aspirations, but they have very few ideas of how to get there."

Wylie first considered writing after retiring from his career as an automotive engineer. With time on his hands and Kevorkian as his next door neighbor, the timing seemed right.

"I got the [writing] bug when I wrote the biography of Jack," he says. "It was just something I picked up. I'm an avid reader and always have been. You learn something through osmosis."

Wylie draws on his life experiences for inspiration, commenting that at 74 years old, he has a lot of experience behind him. His future endeavors include a book of humor, which he expects will be much more difficult to write than his previous work.

A dual citizen of the United States and Canada, he was an officer in the Canadian army and represented the United States Curling Association in Scotland in 2001. His retired as president of Hallmark Strategies, an automotive engineering support company. He and his wife of 48 years have three children in Michigan, Georgia and Missouri, and the couple splits time between homes in Mexico and Canada.

The Second Fathers of Confederation is available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, iTunes and other major retailers.



ARTS & LIVING

D.C. Shorts Film Festival: 'Ziazan,' an Armenian Girl's Adventure in Geopolitics

By Celia Wren

WASHINGTON (*Washington Post*) – Sometimes chocolate speaks of geopolitics. It does just that in Turkish director Derya Durmaz's film "Ziazan," part of the D.C. Shorts Film Festival.

In the 15-minute movie – which screened earlier this September – a 4-year-old Armenian girl stows away in the enormous suitcase of her uncle, a traveling merchant who has brought her Turkish chocolate in the past. She is greedy for more. International tensions turn Ziazan's surreptitious journey into a pint-size version of *The Odyssey*.

Because of a closed border between Armenia and Turkey (which have a history of troubled relations), her uncle regularly has to take 36-hour detour through another country, Georgia, to obtain his Turkish merchandise. This time, even that strategy may falter.

Speaking by phone from Istanbul, where she's based, actress-turned-filmmaker Durmaz, 41, recalls reading a 2011 news report about a circuitous trans-Georgia route that was de rigueur for vendors traveling between Armenia and Turkey. "I thought this was very ironic and absurd," she says. After all, "if you go to eastern Turkey and stand close to the border and yell," you can be heard in Armenia.

These reflections eventually generated "Ziazan," which is "a short film for those who believe in a world without borders," she remarks in a post-interview e-mail.

She developed the film project with assistance from the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform, an organization that was launched by cinema lovers in the two nations and whose aims include promoting mutual understanding.

All the "Ziazan" filming was done in Armenia, and Durmaz's partners in that country helped set up kindergarten visits so that she could scout for likely young actors. (Chubby-cheeked Emy Vardanian eventually landed the title role.) Her Armenian colleagues also translated her script (which she had written in English) into Armenian; she created Turkish subtitles for Turkish-speaking audiences.

The shoot, in the summer of 2013, coincided with protests over plans to raze a park in Istanbul – protests that tested the government of then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip

Erdogan, who is now Turkey's president. A police crackdown on the demonstrators turned violent.

The Turkish nationals involved in the "Ziazan" film were all too aware of those events. "It was very emotional for us to be away from Istanbul, being at the set all day, then com-

she has in the Dominican Republic, Spain, Venezuela and elsewhere crowdsourcing the project.

"There is this quote of my favorite novelist, Tom Robbins: 'Our similarities bring us to a common ground; our differences allow us to be fascinated by each other,'" says



A naive Armenian girl gets more than she bargained for when she stows away in her uncle's suitcase in pursuit of chocolate in the film "Ziazan" by Derya Durmaz and starring Emy Vardanian. (Courtesy D.C. Shorts Film Festival/Courtesy D.C. Shorts Film Festival)

ing home late at night to follow, on social media, the violent crackdown on protests," Durmaz says.

International cooperation on the movie didn't end with the Armenia shoot. At the age of 18, as an exchange student in the United States, Durmaz had made friends with people from around the world. When she wanted to submit "Ziazan" to a Spanish festival and needed subtitles in Spanish, a plea for help via social media resulted in contacts

Durmaz. "Even when we think we are so different from each other, we experience so many similar things in this life. And, yes, I really do agree that our differences bring such richness of perspective into each other's lives."

The "Ziazan" screenings join an array of offerings scheduled for Turkish Cultural Heritage Month, a celebration organized by the American Turkish Association of Washington, D.C., in partnership with other entities.

Elyse Semerdjian to Speak at NAASR on Armenians in Aleppo, Then and Now

BELMONT, Mass. – Dr. Elyse Semerdjian will give a lecture titled "The Armenian Presence in Aleppo: Glorious Past, Uncertain Future," on Thursday, October 9, at 7:30 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave.

The growth of Aleppo's Christian quarter coincided with migration of Armenians from

Anatolia and Iran beginning in the sixteenth century. By the twentieth century, more Armenians were forcibly deported to Aleppo during the Armenian Genocide. As part of a larger reconstruction of the early history of Aleppo's Christian quarter based on archival documents from the shari'a court archives in Syria and the Ottoman archives in Turkey, this

paper explores the mostly unknown history of Armenians in the formative years of Aleppo's Christian quarter. The talk will also include references to twentieth century migration after the Armenian Genocide which greatly altered the composition of Armenians in Aleppo and will examine the implications of the current war on the future of Syria's Armenian community.

Semerdjian is associate professor of Islamic World/Middle Eastern History and the director of Global Studies at Whitman College. A specialist in early modern Ottoman history and Syria, she wrote *Off the Straight Path: Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo* (Syracuse University Press, 2008) as well as several articles on gender, non-Muslims and law in the Ottoman Empire.

She received her MA in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and her PhD in history from Georgetown University. She is a two-time Fulbright awardee



Elyse Semerdjian

and is currently writing on Islamicized Armenians and the collective memory of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey and Syria. Semerdjian continues to research the social history of the Armenians of Saliba Judayda, the Christian quarter of Aleppo, focusing on the formative seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

For more information about the lecture contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

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London



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Diocese of the Armenian Church of Great Britain


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Creating a Transnational Memory Space

MEMORY, from page 10

Akin described the impact that Akhanli's drama, "Anne's Silence," has had, a story of a Turkish girl raised in Germany who learns after her mother's death that she was Armenian. This piece, he said, "is like a metaphor" for all sides, not only a personal, individual story, but one that has mass dimensions, something Akin himself experienced when dealing with the Genocide. "Doghan Akhanli," he concluded, "has encouraged many to follow this path. He has thus started a social discourse and made healing possible, even between victims and perpetrators."

Following the official delivery of the prize, accompanied by loud cheers and clapping, Akhanli delivered his remarks. In a speech entitled, "We Need a Transnational Memory Space," he presented the process through which he came to develop an understanding of the relationship between the Holocaust and the Genocide. But first, he delivered his thanks to many associates, several of whom were present. First was his "friend and mentor, Albrecht Kieser," who coordinated the campaign for his release from his "Kafkaesque imprisonment in 2010," as well as the many supporters who participated in the mobilization. Akhanli dedicated his speech to two individuals no longer alive. One was Adnan Keskin, a childhood friend with whom he began political activity in Turkey, and who, like himself, was twice jailed. Keskin managed to escape by digging a tunnel with his own hands, and reached Germany in 1987, then four years later facilitated Akhanli's own escape and flight to German exile. Keskin was a co-founder of the Turkish human rights association Tüday in Cologne, and in 2007 joined Akhanli to establish the Raphael Lemkin Library in the same city. The other person was a woman

Akhanli never met, but learned about in a film by Eric Friedler (the man who produced "Aghet"). Her name was Elisabeth Käsemann, a German who, while providing support for the poverty stricken in Argentina was arrested by the military regime, jailed, tortured and killed. Akhanli cited her case, because she had been left in the lurch by German authorities, despite public protests. He, on the other hand, was not left in the lurch; during his 2010 imprisonment, in fact, the German consul even visited him in prison and brought him German language magazines, books and newspapers. "During my sleepless nights in my cell," he said, "I was therefore able to take refuge in the German language, which I had learned as a foreign language after my flight to Cologne in the 1990s. It was a bitter experience," he went on, "to experience how my mother tongue, which is also my professional or artistic language, in the mouths [between the teeth?] of the prosecuting attorneys, judges, police and prison guards became a foreign language for me." He expressed his gratitude also to the numerous German politicians, including Cologne's Lord Mayor, who had intervened on his behalf, and reported that his defense attorney "almost fainted from joy, when he reported to me during a visit that Christians had prayed for me" in a local church.

Although in prison he enjoyed certain privileges, he witnessed the misery and solitude reserved for the Kurds, whose imprisonment he characterized as "the last stage in the national project of the Young Turks, that was constructed over 100 years ago." He explained: "The Turkish national project, which in the words of today's Turkish President Erdogan is updated as 'One nation, one flag, one religion!', drove the elimination of the Armenians and the

Arameans, the killing and expulsion of the Pontus Greeks, the massacre of the Dersim Kurds and Alevites and the emigration of ninety per cent of the Turkish Jews. The denial of Kurdish identity is no coincidence, but the continuation of the national project, which has sacrificed and demanded hundreds of thousands of victims and which is condemned to failure."

His own good fortune did not begin with his release in 2010, he said. He had survived "the 1970s civil war and the 1980s military coup, the underground and military prison." With his wife and son, he also survived torture: "I am grateful to my former wife Ayse,"—present at the ceremony — "who went through hell with me," he said. "If I did not come out of the torture chamber a broken man, it is thanks to her courage and resistance."

It was in Cologne that Akhanli began his writing, and writing "completely changed my life," he said. "I turned from a convinced activist who thought he knew all about the world into a person who had more questions than answers." He discovered the link between what he and his family had endured and the "historical violence" in his native country, and asked what it had to do with the Genocide. In this connection, the way the Germans worked through their own historical past helped him work through the history of his own country. After completing his novel, it was clear to him that "the Genocide victims of 1915 were subjugated to the absolute, total despotism of Young Turk power. They had been collectively condemned to death." Akhanli expressed his thanks that the "community of Armenian survivors" had not rejected his book.

His experience with Germany's approach to the Holocaust helped him understand the issue of identity as well. After his daughter, raised in Germany, was shocked by a film about the Holocaust, she reacted by wanting to shed her German identity. Akhanli asked himself, "What will happen if I tell my children about the Armenian Genocide, what identity can they flee to?" This led him to seek a way to tell both stories in such a manner as to make clear that "The Holocaust is not only a German-Jewish history, it is an international story." For this reason he started touring Germany and all its memorial sites, reading books and watching

films about the Holocaust. A visit to Auschwitz was traumatic for him, he felt that "victim and perpetrator were melded together" in himself, and this experience led him to redefine his life's task.

Quoting Walter Benjamin's notion that the past can be changed, Akhanli said he understood this not as undoing the deeds of the past, but as "changing the meaning of the past" and writing the history of the victims anew. Here, in the case of 1915, he said Lemkin had given it a name and historians had documented that and subsequent genocides; yet "Turkish policy wants to erase the past and pursue its murderous national state project, in order to rob the future of its memory and thus destroy it." Pointing to the documented facts about German complicity in the Genocide, Akhanli raised the question why, having drawn the lessons from its own history, German foreign policy does not intervene in defense of human rights in Turkey and why educational policy does not see the need to deepen knowledge of Germany's complicity. Why shouldn't this be part of education on the Holocaust? This, he said, would not mean relativizing the Shoah or diminishing its significance, but would be a way of expanding and deepening the process of working through the German experience, "which should no longer remain German. In order to shape the future," he said, "we need a transnational memory space. Here and everywhere."

In conclusion, he thanked Akin, whose film "The Cut," has created such a "transnational memory space." "It is a courageous idea, a great idea of yours," he said, addressing Akin, "to have the film begin in 1915 and end in 1923. In choosing this time frame you have placed in question the founding myths of the Turkish Republic. It is glorious that with your leading character, who was put to silence through violence, you have broken the global silence and given back to the Genocide victims their voices."

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is the author of Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia - Iraq - Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation. She can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com)

RECIPES

Spicy Southwestern Tabbouleh

By Christine Vartanian Datian

Inspired by friends who adore Mexican flavors, Christine Vartanian Datian decided to reinvent traditional Middle Eastern *tabbouleh* with Southwestern spices. After substituting cilantro for parsley and adding peppers, cumin, and chili powder, she knew she had a unique dish that was quick and easy to throw together. "If you're working, you can do a lot of prep before, when you do have time," she says. Vartanian Datian recommends buying pre-chopped vegetables from the grocery store for a fast weeknight meal. If necessary, you can even soak the bulgur overnight.

From *Cooking Light Magazine*
July 2010

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 3/4 cup)

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup uncooked bulgur
1 1/4 cups boiling water
1 1/2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 cup vertically sliced red onion
3/4 cup diced seeded tomato
1/2 cup sliced green onions
1/2 cup diced yellow bell pepper
1/2 cup chopped peeled avocado
1/4 cup diced seeded peeled English cucumber
1/4 cup (1 ounce) crumbled queso fresco (or feta cheese)
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2-3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2-3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 teaspoons diced seeded jalapeño pepper



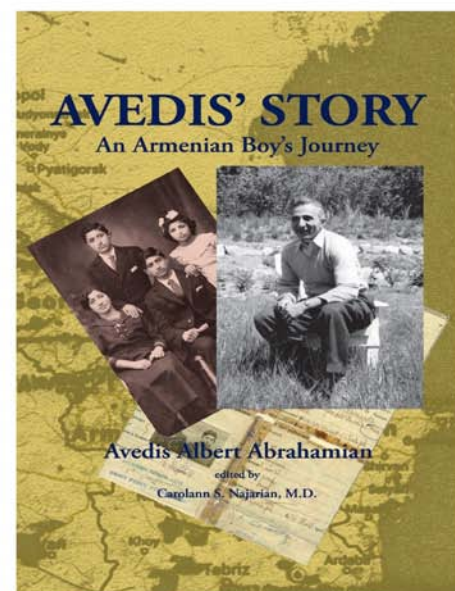
3/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
1/4 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon chili powder
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1 garlic clove, minced
Dash of hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)

PREPARATION

1. Combine bulgur, 1 1/4 cups boiling water, and 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil in a medium bowl; cover and let stand 20 minutes.
2. Drain bulgur through a fine sieve; place drained bulgur in a large mixing bowl.
3. Add cilantro and all remaining ingredients, toss well and check seasonings.
4. Add more olive oil, lemon or lime juice, salt and pepper to taste.
5. Serve with crackers, sliced bread, pita chips, and Armenian *peda* or cracker bread.

(Christine Vartanian Datian was born in Fresno, CA and is a resident of Las Vegas)

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church
Hosted by Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge
Saturday, September 27, 2014 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Wine and cheese reception
Presentation by Avedis' daughter, Carolann Najarian, M.D.



Avedis' Story is a captivating story about an Armenian boy's experiences growing up in a rural village in Turkey, surviving the genocide, escaping to Russia, and then being caught in the middle of the Communist revolution. The author, Carolann Najarian, M.D. is a retired medical doctor who spent years researching and editing Avedis's Story before deciding to publish this book, her father's memoir. Book sale and signing following the event.

Contact Jake Boumazian for further info. Email: jboumazian@verizon.net 202-380-6948

St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, 4125 Fessenden St NW Washington DC 20016



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 15 — SAVE THE DATE: AMAA-Haigazian University Celebratory Banquet in honor of Dr. Mihran Agbabian and George R. Phillips, Esq.; Saturday, November 15, 2014, 6 pm, Beverly Hills Hotel, \$200; Information: Julie Aharonian 818-368-5266; Katia Kermoyan 818-242-5064.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 29 — Party for Our Park! Friends of Armenian Heritage Park September Social. Hosted by Abby Lane, 253 Tremont Street, Boston. 7-10 p.m. Shake it Up with Great Friends and Cool Drinks while supporting the ongoing care of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. For details and tickets, visit www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org. Advance Tickets only.

OCTOBER 4 — YerazArt, a group committed to young musicians from Armenia, will hold a dinner and benefit concert. Belmont. Venue, time and ticket prices to be announced soon.

OCTOBER 4 — Concert, A Memorial Tribute to Aram Gharabekian. Performances by Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano; Suren Bagratuni; cello; Lilith Karapetian Shougarian; Ara Sarkissian, composer, piano and Ismail Akhmuradov, clarinet. 8 p.m. Free Admission. Post-performance reception. Pickman Hall, Longy School of Music of Bard College, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. For inquiries contact Armand @ 617.962.0049

OCTOBER 11 — Armenian Friends of America presents Hye Kef 5, 7:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Michael's Function Hall, 12 Alpha St., Haverhill; tickets, \$50, students 21 & under, \$40, proceeds to benefit Armenian churches of Merrimack Valley; individually served mezza platters and pastries; musicians, Mal Barsamian (clarinet), John Berberian (oud), Bob Raphalian (violin), Bruce Jigarjian (guitar), Jason Naroian (dumbag & vocals); tickets, call either John Arzigian, 603-560-3826; Lucy Sirmaian, 978-683-9121; Peter Gulezian, 978-375-1616, or Sandy Boroyan, 978-251-8687. No tickets sold at the door.

OCTOBER 12 — Holy Trinity Tailgate, immediately following church services, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Join us to watch the New England Patriots vs. Buffalo Bills game on Holy Trinity's new 12-foot screen or outside on a TV near the grill. Admission: \$15, which includes sandwich (choice of losh kebab, sausage or hot dog), chips and drink; \$10 for Armenian and Sunday School students wearing Patriots or football attire. Additional food items available for purchase. For further info, contact the church office, 617.354.0632.

OCTOBER 17 and 18 — St. James 67th Annual Bazaar — 11 a.m.-9 p.m. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Delicious Armenian food; Fabulous delicacies and pastries; booths and vendors, including the Farmer's Market, Silent Auction, and more. Attic Treasures, APPLE© Raffle, \$100 Raffle, Children's Activities. All are welcome! For more information, contact the church office at 617.923.8860 or info@sthagop.com.

OCTOBER 23 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, Boston. 7:30 p.m. Topic: Truth to Action: Media Freedom - Protecting Human Rights Globally. Introduction: Courtney Radsch, PhD, Advocacy Director, Committee to Protect Journalists. Speakers: Ray Suarez, Host, "Inside Story" on Al Jazeera America and "America Abroad" on Public Radio International; Stephen Kurkjian, founding member and former chief, Investigative Spotlight Team of the *Boston Globe* and editor of its Washington Bureau; and Thomas



Fr. Vasken Kouzouian of Holy Trinity Armenian Church will be marking the 20th anniversary of his ordination, on Sunday, October 26, immediately after church services at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass.

Mucha. Editor, GlobalPost. A reception follows at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel for all who attend the lecture to continue the discussion with the speakers and the lecture's leadership. Free and open to the public. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 25 — Ararat Center Boston Harbor Cruise on the Odyssey, Boston, Rowe's Wharf. Embarkation 7 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, dinner, live Kef, premium complimentary bar. Adults 21 and over - \$175; Under 21 - \$100; For more information contact Pam at 617-645-2781 or pamtalmc@aol.com.

OCTOBER 25 — Fall Harvest Bazaar, First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont, noon to 8 p.m. Handmade choreg, manti, Armenian pastries and more. Grilled kebab all day. Marketplace treasures. All are welcome, rain or shine. MBTA and handicapped accessible. Call 617-484-4779 or visit www.facbelmont.org/ for more info.

OCTOBER 26 — Fr. Vasken Kouzouian's 20-Year Pastoral Journey — Join us as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Pastor's Ordination, immediately following church services, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 1 — Third annual Mer Doon Benefit Dance, in loving memory of Julie Ashekian, 8 p.m. Featuring Onnik Dinkjian, John Berberian and more. mid-night dessert table. St. James Armenian Church Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Adults \$40 Students \$20. Please call Mark Kashgegian to reserve tables of 10 and purchase tickets at 617-256-5358.

NOVEMBER 2 — "Musical Benches," an organ and piano concert presented by Glenn "Ananian" Priest and Christopher Garven on the occasion of the dedication of

the recently restored sanctuary of the First Armenian Church of Belmont, at the church sanctuary, Sunday, 3 p.m.

NOVEMBER 7 and 8 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St., Haverhill, Friday, noon to 8 p.m. and Saturday noon to 7 p.m. Lamb, losh, chicken kebab and kheyma. Diner served all day. Pastry table, Armenain cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit www.hypeointearmenianchurch.org or call 978-372-9227.

NOVEMBER 8 — Armenia Tree Project's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Reception and dinner at the Grand Atrium of the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse overlooking the Boston Harbor. Reserve the date, additional details to follow. For information about ATP's programs, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org

NOVEMBER 15 — The 39th Annual Luncheon/Auction of the Armenian Women's Welfare Association will be held at the Burlington Marriott Hotel. Funds raised will support programs at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain, Mass and Hanganak NGO Health Clinic in Stepanakert, Karabagh, for senior women in need. For more information, call Karen Hovsepian at 617-898-8619.

DECEMBER 14 — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Christmas Holiday Concert, 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 3 — TCA Family Movie Night, "Sunrise Over Lake Van," at 7:30 p.m., AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Multipurpose Room, 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. \$3 per person includes snack. Film is in English. The proceeds from program go toward Tekeyan Schools in Armenia and Karabagh. For information call Diana or Hagop Alexanian, 248-334-3636.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 28 — Sip on French wine, nibble on delectable hors d'oeuvres, meet talented artists and cinematographers, and network with kindred spirits, all in a cozy salon at "Château Village," Alouette's home in Greenwich Village. This exclusive soirée will benefit SR Socially Relevant Film Festival New York. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. 1 Minetta St., 2E (STREET, not Lane, NE corner of Bleecker St & Sixth Ave, W 4th St subway stop). Donation: \$60 Early Bird, \$75 Regular. SR is a film festival that focuses on socially relevant human stories and raises awareness to social problems by offering positive solutions through the powerful medium of cinema. SR believes that through raised awareness, expanded knowledge about diverse cultures, and the human condition as a whole, it is possible to create a better world free of violence, hate and crime.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 18 — The Cultural Committee & ACYOA Proudly Present The Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Centennial Ball, Saturday, 8 pm - ? Inspired by Dr. Herman Aqvazyan, Battle of the Bands, Joe Kouyoumjian Ensemble and the Sevan Band, Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Mezze - Cash Bar - 50/50 Raffle. Tickets \$35 - Under 16 \$25. For Tickets and Table Reservations Please Call: Ann Ayrassian Seven Janigian 401-272-4743, 401-533-4147

Vahik Pirhamzei's Film 'Guardian Angel' Set for Release on October 17 in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — The suspense-thriller "Guardian Angel" is set to open in theaters in Los Angeles and throughout California on October 17. The film stars Bokeem Woodbine ("Riddick," "Total Recall"), Justine Wachsberger ("Divergent"), Houshang Touzie ("Argo," "Homeland"), Vahik Pirhamzei ("My Uncle Rafael"), Colin Cunningham ("Falling Skies") and Ray Wise ("Jeepers Creepers") to name a few.

Written and directed by popular Iranian-

Armenian playwright, award-winning screenwriter, and accomplished actor-director, Vahik Pirhamzei, the film captures the dangerous criminal underworld of human trafficking and organized crime in Los Angeles.

Richmond Media Entertainment (RME) is distributing the movie.

The film follows a veteran security specialist Ray (Pirhamzei), who, after the tragic death of his wife, must protect the daughter (Wachsberger) of a businessman who embezzled

millions from a crime boss (Cunningham) in Los Angeles. Uncovering more than he bargained for, Ray must risk his own life to protect and save the lives of two innocent women.

Teaming up with LA-based marketing and servicing company, Lore d'Morrow Entertainment (LME) for the release, RME has partnered with indie marketer and filmmaker, Marc Fusco, to bring the film to the big and small screens.

"It's a great pleasure to work with one of our most talented indie filmmakers, Vahik Pirhamzei,

who ups the ante each time he creates a new work whether it's on screen or on stage," said LME's Fusco. "After repeatedly witnessing the film keep its audience members at the edge of their seat, we're excited to join Richmond Media to bring 'Guardian Angel' to the masses."

With a platform release, RME is building a targeted marketing campaign to expand the film's reach into the mainstream domestic market. The film will open in Los Angeles on several screens and then expand from there.



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Untrustworthy Conduct of Our 'Trusted' Ally

By Edmond Y. Azadian

How long can the United States tolerate the shameful conduct of its "trusted" ally, Turkey? The answer may be complex, since Turkey is involved in many roles in the Middle East, Caucasus and Europe, and Ankara pretends to advance NATO policies in all those complex – and sometimes contradictory – issues while pursuing its own narrow interests to the detriment of the policies of its partners and patrons.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, the US and Europe have helped build Turkey's armed forces and economy, only to realize that all that build-up would end up in the self-serving goals of the Turkish government.

A case in point is the meteoric rise of ISIS, which Turkey nurtured and developed, only for it to direct its wrath against the West and neighboring countries.

Turkey's rise as a regional power has also emboldened its leaders to challenge its patrons in Washington by defying America's closest ally, Israel. And amazingly, Washington's policy with regards to Ankara has been to kowtow to its leaders and beg them to behave, a policy which has fueled Turkey's arrogance and undermined US objectives in the region.

Secretary of State John Kerry has engaged in shuttle diplomacy to build a coalition to fight ISIS, the scourge of human civilization. While President Obama proudly announced that 40 nations have joined the coalition against this group, Turkey has publicly refused to be part of that coalition. Ankara has even had the temerity to signal to the butchers of ISIS that US airstrikes do not originate from the US airbase in Incirlik, on Turkish territory.

The US airstrikes strategy is a contradiction in itself. While understandably President Obama reassures the war-weary public that there will be no US boots on the ground and he has to find a substitute to complement the airstrikes. The Iraqi ground forces were devastated by ISIS hordes, which took possession of large quantities of armaments left behind. That defeat was blamed on former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's non-inclusive government. After the nomination of the new prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, the situation does not seem any more promising.

While the US forces can rout the ISIS army regardless of how ferocious it may be, in a very short period, President Obama has allowed the US and its allies three years to achieve that goal, because horse trading is going on in the region.

All of a sudden, Hezbollah, which has long been considered a terrorist organization by the US, and Iran, have found out that they are on the same side of the political equation. They both have an interest in the destruction of the ISIS forces which have occupied large swaths of territories in Syria and Iraq. Any cooperation or even contacts between the US and those forces is anathema to Israel, which has the proprietary position in formulating and shaping the US's Middle East policy. Strategically, they could provide the boots on the ground to complement US airstrikes to wipe out the Islamist forces.

The US State Department and Israel have encouraged Tehran to engage single-handedly the ISIS forces, to be drained and weakened while performing a necessary task for them. But Iran's diplomacy is not as naive as some in the West may assume. Therefore, Iran has refrained from full-fledged engagement in the war against ISIS forces, which are expanding the territories under their control.

Turkey and Qatar have been benefiting from the stalemate to supply and encourage ISIS.

Another thorny issue in this organized chaos is the airstrikes on targets in Syria. Although the US Congress has authorized funding and arming the "moderate" forces in the Syrian opposition, no one has yet been able to determine who the "moderates" are and to distinguish them from their "extremist" brethren. Ironically, the thugs which Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) hugged for a photo op in Syria, turned up amongst the more deadly enemies of the US.

Incidentally, those "moderates" are supposed to assume dual roles: to fight the ISIS forces and to topple President Bashar al-Assad's government. These goals are well beyond the capacity of those forces and also are opposed by Russia, which considers air strikes in Syria as a ruse to use the US forces against the Syrian regime while Turkey is continuing its strategy in Syria unabated. Turkey is solving several issues at a time. It is continuing to arm and train ISIS forces on its territory and allowing them to cross freely into Syria and Iraq. Although ISIS's declared goal is to establish a caliphate, most of its actions are benefitting Turkey.

Turkey is pursuing the following goals:

A) To demonstrate its independence from the US and its NATO partners

B) To keep war raging in Syria, even if the Assad regime does not collapse, because it will be discounted as a force influencing the Middle East for a long time. One of the indirect results is the weakening of Russia's foothold on the Mediterranean.

C) As a main policy goal, to destroy the emergence of a Kurdish enclave on Syrian territory, which eventually may

become an autonomous or independent state to fan the aspirations of the Kurds in Turkey. Thus far, the Kurds in Syria have found an accommodation with the rebel forces as well as the government forces. ISIS's recent onslaught has dislocated 100,000 Kurds who have found refuge in Turkey, which conveniently will disarm them and keep them under tight control. On the other hand, there are reports now that Ankara has banned the support of Kurds in Turkey to rescue their kin from Islamic forces in Syria.

D) Another objective is to teach a lesson the Armenians. Although Ankara received a black eye as a result of the Kessab campaign and its destruction by the Islamist forces, it still pursues the same goal, this time sending the barbarians to Deir Zor to destroy the Martyrs' Memorial. By destroying the Martyrs Memorial, they have massacred the martyrs yet another time.

The monument is an eyesore for Turkey and it could have been used as a powerful symbol during the Genocide centennial commemorations.

One may discount it as a coincidence that the destruction of the Deir Zor church and memorial coincided with Aram Catholicos' announcement at the fifth Armenia-Diaspora Conference on September 19 that the Catholicosate of Cilicia will sue the government of Turkey at the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights, but it cannot be denied that if one of Turkey's initiatives to blunt the centennial thrust, this is a good way to attain it.

The attack was deplored by Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian as "barbaric." Also, President Serge Sargsian's Chief of Staff Vigen Sargsian wrote, "If Turkey has nothing to do with the terrorist attack at St. Mary's Church, it should come up with a corresponding statement of condemnation."

Further down, he continued, "This is yet another proof that the crime of Genocide continues as long as it is not fully recognized and punished."

While Turkey is taking concrete steps to deny the Genocide and strangulate Armenia through its blockade, on the other hand, it is undertaking superficial public gestures to dupe the quarters ready to look for excuses to see good intentions.

Turkologist Rouben Melkonyan, deputy dean of the Oriental Studies Faculty at Yerevan State University, said he thinks that Turkey will not revise its policy on Genocide denial. He thinks that President Recep Erdogan's expressed intention to meet with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) should be considered in this context.

Melkonyan believes that Turkey may return some buildings and land plots in Sis to the Armenian Church. "However, Sis lacks both an Armenian community and Armenian churches, i.e., the cost-effectiveness of that decision may be too low for us while diplomatic effect for Turkey may be much more significant," he said.

This brings us to the long-term prospects of Turkish-Armenian relations. Knee-jerk reaction to the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement is also unhealthy, because that rapprochement is a political necessity. While Turkey continues its adversarial policy, cosmetic gestures must not substitute for genuine rapprochement. During his election campaign, Mr. Erdogan insulted the Armenians a few days after he had offered his condolences to the descendants of the "relocated" Armenians in 1915. Former foreign minister and current prime minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, has vowed to eclipse the centennial commemoration, on the other hand inviting Armenians to "build" on Erdogan's condolence.

The duo was in Baku recently, where it offered military assistance to Azerbaijan and in a joint press conference with President Aliyev, they stated that together they will set the agenda in the Caucasus and establish peace on their own terms. Mr. Davutoglu added that before the last inch of Karabagh territory is returned to Azerbaijan, there would be no improvement in Armenian-Turkish relations. And he means it.

This statement behooves us not to jump on the symbolic gestures, which will provide Turkey disproportionate political dividends at the expense of our naiveté. Had our Primate refused to meet Erdogan as a protest against the destruction of Deir Zor monument, it would have greater impact in the media for Armenians, denting in the meantime Erdogan's ploy.

Recently, Republic Sen. Ted Cruz was trying to lecture the heads of Christian Churches in the Middle East that their salvation can only come from Israel and he was booted. The church leaders knew the terrain better than a senator with his eye on the White House. It was a courageous stance by the religious leaders.

As we can see, Armenian history, genocide recognition, Armenia's future are all intricately associated with world politics, over which we have no control but vigilance can help us avoid some traps.

At this point, Armenian interests coincide with those of the West, in its drive to destroy the growing "evil empire" of ISIS.

The battle against that scourge can be won if the US can tame Turkey, the supplier and the mentor of that terror group. The term "trusted ally" has long outlived its usefulness. It is time to call Turkey the "self-serving ally," and treat it accordingly.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenia Supports Catholicosate's Lawsuit Against Turkey

Over 1,000 attendees of the Armenia-Diaspora Conference in Yerevan, organized by the Diaspora Ministry, cheered loudly when Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia made the surprising announcement that the Catholicosate would file a lawsuit in a Turkish court demanding the return of its properties confiscated during the 1915-1923 Genocide. His Holiness explained that before taking this important decision, he had consulted with international legal experts during the past two years.

Stating that remaining indifferent towards the violation of Armenian rights is tantamount to treason, the Catholicos urged Armenians to take the genocide issue out of the narrow confines of genocide recognition and condemnation, and transcend the mindset that genocide recognition is the ultimate goal of the Armenian Cause. Considering that it is high time to transfer Armenian demands from Turkey to the legal field. His Holiness announced that the See of Cilicia would file shortly a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court of Turkey, seek-

ing the return of its erstwhile headquarters, the Catholicosate of Sis. Should the Turkish Court reject the lawsuit, which is likely, the Catholicosate will then appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, said the Catholicos. He also expressed the hope that this lawsuit would pave the way for other legal demands from Turkey for the return of public, private, and religious properties belonging to Armenians.

While this is great news to all those who have been advocating for years taking legal action against Turkey, such lawsuits require painstaking preparation by top notch international lawyers. Moreover, regardless of how just one's cause may be, no one can guarantee a positive outcome in court, given various external influences on the judiciary, and technicalities used as an excuse for rejecting a lawsuit emanating from a century-old grievance.

The Catholicos hinted at some of these obstacles in his remarks, acknowledging that "the framework of international law is not that favorable to our Cause." More alarmingly, he seemed to dismiss the devastating effect the loss of such a court case would have on the Armenian Cause by claiming that "if we lose the lawsuit, we would still be winners, because we would have reminded the genocidaire and the international community that the Armenian people continues to demand its rights, no matter how much time has elapsed since the Genocide."

The Turkish government would certainly exploit such a negative judgment by misrepresenting its victory around the world as a rejection of all Armenian genocide claims.

Going beyond the Catholicosate's initiative, His Holiness urged the Armenian government to file its own lawsuit against Turkey in the International Court of Justice (World Court), where only states have the right to

sue. At the international Armenian lawyers' conference sponsored by the Diaspora Ministry last year, a task force was formed under the auspices of the Gagik Haroutunyan, Chief Justice of Armenia's Constitutional Court, to study the legal ramifications of filing a lawsuit against Turkey in the World Court. The task force is reportedly assessing the various legal options available to the Republic of Armenia.

Given the Armenian government's cautious approach to suing Turkey, it was quite surprising that Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, during the Sept. 20, 2014 Armenia-Diaspora conference, when asked by a reporter about his reaction to the news that the Catholicosate of Cilicia would file a lawsuit against Turkey, enthusiastically and without hesitation responded: "there could be no two opinions about it. Such an important initiative must only be supported."

Coincidentally, the conference attendees were handed the executive summary and introduction of a lengthy report entitled, "Resolution with Justice: Reparations for the Armenian Genocide." Funded initially by a grant from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the report was prepared by the Armenian Genocide Reparations Study Group, composed of Alfred de Zayas, Jermaine O. McCalpin, Ara Papian and Henry C. Theriault. George Aghjayan served as a consultant. The extensive report examines the case for reparations from legal, historical and ethical perspectives.

It is clear that on the eve of the genocide centennial, several serious efforts are underway to seek justice through various courts for the massive human and economic losses suffered by the Armenian people during the 1915-1923 Genocide.

Comment: Israel's Most Valuable Muslim Ally

Jews worldwide will soon mark the onset of a Jewish New Year with the specter of rising anti-Semitism in Europe and the Middle East. Amid the preponderance of daily bad news, it is uplifting to celebrate narratives of tolerance and respect. Earlier this month, I was one of 12

rabbis meeting with two distinguished Los Angeles-based diplomats, Consul General of Israel David Siegel and Consul General of Azerbaijan Nasimi Aghayev. We broke bread together and discussed our shared goal of shining a positive light

By Mark Diamond

on the unique story of Azerbaijan, a Muslim nation that enjoys positive relations with the United States, Israel and its own Jewish community.

World Jewry has a special relationship with Azerbaijan, home to a nearly 2,000 year-old community of approximately 15,000 Jews. Azerbaijan has been a haven of tolerance and respect of Jews through centuries of persecution and exile in many other countries. It remains so today, a remarkable achievement given the current state of Muslim-Jewish relations in the Middle East and elsewhere. Azerbaijan is a predominately Shia Muslim nation that sits directly north of Iran and has enjoyed more than two decades of diplomatic relations with Israel.

During the luncheon, we learned a great deal about how and why Azerbaijan invests in and supports its Jewish community and Jewish heritage. The republic is home to one of the largest all-Jewish towns outside Israel, the centuries-old Red Village of Azerbaijan, whose Mountain Jews meet and pray in several stately synagogues. Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku features a state-of-the-art Jewish day school with more than 300 students. Baku's Chabad rabbi, born and raised in Israel, recently decided to become a citizen of Azerbaijan, a nation he is proud to call his new home. Baku has a beautiful new synagogue for the Mountain Jews, built in 2011 and paid for by the Azerbaijan government.

"Azerbaijan serves as a critical link for outreach to the Muslim world for our partners like the United States and Israel," said Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, addressing American Jewish Committee's 2013 Global Forum in Washington, DC. His nation's close, friendly relations with Israel are "reinforced by the strong bonds between our peoples."

Indeed, the foreign minister said, the bilateral relationship goes "well beyond" diplomatic ties. Azerbaijan is Israel's biggest trading partner in the South Caucasus, and some 40 percent of Israel's oil imports come from Azerbaijan.

We do well to celebrate the bonds that link Azerbaijan and the Jewish people. Our social media is inundated with alarming news about anti-Semitic violence in Germany, France and Belgium, and Islamic terrorism in Gaza, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. Azerbaijan is a rare blessing and a ray of light in our deeply troubled world. It is unfortunate that most Jews have never heard of Azerbaijan and the positive example it could be for other Muslim nations. A nation that has protected its Jews for two millennia and is an ally of Israel and the United States deserves our friendship and support.

Storytelling lies at the heart of Jewish life, lore and tradition. Jews discuss and debate the Akedah — the narrative of Isaac's near sacrifice — on Rosh Hashanah. Yom Kippur highlights tales of Temple sacrifice and Jewish martyrdom. This year, let's include the modern-day tale of Azerbaijan, an inspiring true story of harmonious relations between Jews and Muslims. Our world would look much brighter if other nations would emulate Azerbaijan's historic model of peaceful coexistence.

(Rabbi Mark Diamond is director of the Los Angeles region of the American Jewish Committee. This commentary originally appeared in the *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*.)

Crucial Choice: Armenia Mulling over 'Geopolitically Important' Energy Deals

By Naira Hayrumyan

Armenia's energy sector is facing a crucial choice. At its July 24 sitting the Armenian government considered but did not yet approve several major deals in this sphere. The ArmRosgazprom company, which owns almost the entire domestic gas distribution network in Armenia and earlier this year was renamed Gazprom-Armenia, has considerable debts. In particular, the company owes money to Vorotan Hydropower Plant (HPP) Cascade Closed Joint Stock Company (CJSC), which is to be sold to an American company, Contour Global, although the deal is not completed yet.

The government is considering the possibility of transferring the assets of Gazprom in Armenia in order to settle part of the debts to Vorotan HPP and the Armenian government. In particular, it plans to transfer 53.3 percent of the assets of Nairit-2 and 3.6 percent of the assets of the Nairit Plant to Vorotan HPP CJSC. The budget loans and other liabilities of ArmRosgazprom to the Ministry of Finance of Armenia will be repaid through the transfer of the Tegh-Stepanakert gas pipeline, as well as 46.73 percent of the assets of Nairit-2.

These planned deals have raised a number of questions in Armenia. First of all, will Vorotan HPP, already with over half of the shares of Nairit-2 (which is an operating chloroprene rubber production shop), finally be sold to an American company. The problem is that the deal, which was concluded last November, has not been finalized yet. Moreover, Russian energy giant Rosneft also aspired to obtain Nairit, but it apparently set the condition that it would buy Nairit only together with Vorotan HPP.

The Armenian government has not yet specified who will get the two major energy enterprises — an American company or a Russian one. U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern believes that the transfer of

Vorotan HPP to an American firm will be a powerful message for Western investors that Armenia is ready to work with them.

Meanwhile, if Armenia reconsiders the deal and sells debt-free Nairit and Vorotan to a Russian company, it will be another powerful message that Armenia has finally "surrendered" to Russian companies. Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan gave the government several days to "think" about what to do.

But there is also another issue here — the transfer of the Tegh-Stepanakert pipeline from Gazprom to the Armenian government. This is the only pipeline through which Nagorno-Karabagh receives natural gas. It is possible that Gazprom has given up this asset at the request of Azerbaijan, which is doing everything for foreign companies not to work in Karabakh official-

ly.

On the other hand, there is an opinion that Rosneft is simply ousting Gazprom also in Armenia. As is known, in Russia these two giants are engaged in tough competition, and Rosneft is aggressively trying to acquire the assets of Gazprom.

The deal on the sale of Vorotan HPP,

already with Nairit, may be an indicator of Armenia's foreign-policy orientation. Armenia will either diversify its energy system by letting Americans into its mostly Russian-dominated market or will admit that it has completely lost the sovereign right to take even economic decisions.

If Armenia takes a step towards the Americans, it may be followed by a visit of the Armenian energy minister to Iran, where he can negotiate about the transit of Iranian gas to Europe via Armenia and Georgia, buy cheap Iranian gas and, accordingly, refuse to buy more expensive gas from Gazprom. If Armenia chooses the Russian company, however, it will have to forget for a long time about its being a political entity even on a regional scale.

...if Armenia reconsiders the deal and sells debt-free Nairit and Vorotan to a Russian company, it will be another powerful message that Armenia has finally "surrendered" to Russian companies.

(This commentary originally appeared in ArmeniaNow.)



Sayat Nova Dance Company Performs at 30th Annual Peabody Festival

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

PEABODY, Mass. — The Sayat Nova Dance Company performed at the 30th annual Peabody International Festival on September 14. The festival is sponsored by the City of Peabody in order to showcase its ethnic diversity. This year, according to the mayor's office, attendance at the festival was the largest it has ever been. The police estimate that there were somewhere between 65,000 and 75,000 visitors. Performers appeared on three different stages, while there were over seventy booths selling various types of foods and specialty items. In addition to dancing, Sayat Nova members manned the Armenian booth, which had all kinds of Armenian delicacies and desserts.

A number of government officials spoke at the event, which was televised live on a local cable station. Peabody Mayor Edward

Bettencourt declared to the crowd that Peabody could serve as a model for much of the world in its tolerance and promotion of different cultures. He told the Mirror-Spectator later that he was very proud of the Armenians who have lived for a long time in Peabody, and who have made such great contributions to its development.

The festival was started in 1984 by Mayor Peter Torigian. This year, Jackie Torigian, the widow of the late Peabody mayor, Peter Torigian, introduced Sayat Nova by stating that of course it was her husband's favorite. Eight male and eight female dances from the group dressed in heavy velvet costumes performed a number of lively Armenian traditional dances in front of more than 150 spectators. Sayat Nova Dance Group of Boston, founded in 1986, is directed by Apo Ashjian.

In addition to Armenians, some of the ethnic groups participating in the festival included Greeks, Portuguese, Brazilians, Jews, Italians, Hispanics and Poles.

VIKEN KARAGUESIAN PHOTO



The graceful women of the Sayat Nova Dance Company



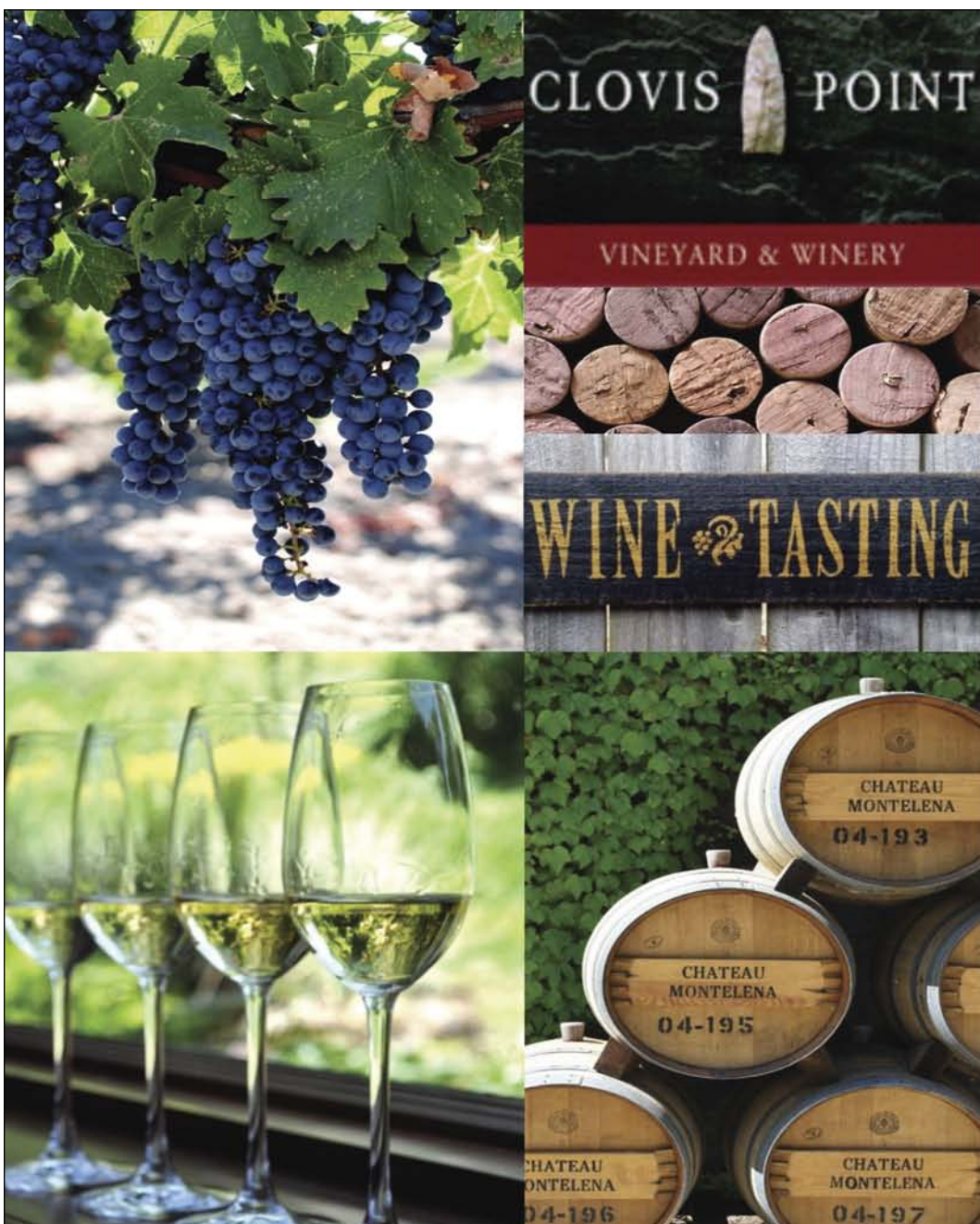
The members of the Sayat Nova Dance Company in Peabody

Armenian Independence Day Celebration Held in Kavookjian Hall at Diocese

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Armenian national anthems. The keynote speaker was newly appointed UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatzaganian. Dr. Mary Papazian spoke on behalf of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Hagop Vartivarian for the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, and Artyom Sahakyan for the Noyan Tapan organization. Executive Director Bryan Ardouny of the Armenian Assembly of America spoke on behalf of his organization. The Armenian General Benevolent Union's Antranig Dance Ensemble, with Gagik Karapetian as choreographer, performed dances. Singer Maria Sahakyan, accompanied by Lina Pantilova on piano, performed classical music pieces, and soprano Anoush Barclay accompanied on piano by Lucine Vahradian performed Armenian music for the audience.

A video on the independent state of Armenia was screened, and Archbishop Eghishe Gizirian gave the closing remarks and prayer.



TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION



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