

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Massachusetts State House Hosts Armenian Genocide 101st Anniversary Commemoration

Governor Baker, Senator Markey, Speaker DeLeo, Ambassador Flynn Speak

By **Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – The Armenian community of the Boston area and many prominent government representatives from Massachusetts came together for the 101st anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the Massachusetts State House on April 22. As many as 275 people filled the House Chamber. Massachusetts State Rep. Jonathan Hecht of Watertown and Cambridge served as the master of ceremonies for a nearly two-hour program of music, awards and speeches.

The commemoration began with the procession of elected officials and clergy led by Homenetmen scouts. After an invocation in Armenian by Monsignor Andon Atamian of Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Cross, state Rep. John Lawn of Watertown (standing in for Rep. David Rogers whose mother was



Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker addresses the crowd, with, seated, from the left, State Rep. James Miceli, State Sen. Will Brownsberger, and Ambassador Raymond Flynn.

sick in Philadelphia) led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance, and the children of St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School sang America the Beautiful and Mer hayrenik, the Armenian national anthem.

Hecht summed up the goal of the program after first recalling the centennial

commemoration last year. He said, "seeing that huge crowd, and that see of American and Armenian flags, was one of the most moving and powerful experiences of my public life. This year we are back in the House Chamber with a continued, indeed, see **COMMEMORATION**, page 10

## Armenian Heritage Park Event Commemorates Genocide Anniversary

By **Alin K. Gregorian**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – On Sunday, April 24, hundreds of members of the local Armenian community gathered at the Armenian Heritage Park to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide and demand justice at a program organized by the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee.

Under clear skies, speaker after speaker recited history, combining optimism about the community's strength with concern about the situation in Artsakh (Nagorno see **ANNIVERSARY**, page 11



Banners at the Armenian Heritage Park



Marguerite Barankitse from Burundi accepts her prize.

## George Clooney Presents \$1-Million Aurora Prize to Marguerite Barankitse in Yerevan

YEREVAN – Actor and human rights activist George Clooney arrived in Armenia to participate in the giving out of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, and while there, he also participated in somber ceremonies marking the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

He and all the Aurora Prize founders, members of the jury, the nominees and guests visited the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide monument and laid flowers at the Eternal Flame with President Serzh Sargsyan and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Afterwards George Clooney visited the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute with other Aurora guests.

see **AURORA**, page 7

## Armenia's Minister of Diaspora Receives ADL Delegation

YEREVAN – Minister of the Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Hranoush Hakobyan received a delegation of Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) leaders on April 21 in Yerevan. The guests informed the minister about the ADL assembly taking place in Yerevan at that time, which was discussing the situation in Artsakh, development of Armenia-diaspora relations and issues concerning the reorganization of the ADL. The minister welcomed the movement for a revitalization of the political party. She expressed the hope that it would aid in the consolidation of the party, and its more active participation in steps designed to strengthen Armenia, in important pan-Armenian matters, and in the programs of the ministry for the preservation of Armenian identity. (See related photos and story on Page 2.)



Armenia's Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobyan received Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Delegation

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Amal Clooney Takes on Case of Azeri Journalist

STRASBOURG, France (Public Radio of Armenia) – Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney is representing award-winning Azerbaijani reporter Khadija Ismayilova at the European Court of Human Rights.

Ismayilova, an outspoken critic of the government, was jailed 18 months ago.

"I've represented many journalists in the court, by this case really moved me," Clooney said, speaking to the BBC.

"The fact that the government of Azerbaijan, a Council of Europe member country, put her behind bars, because they didn't want her to tell the truth, made me very angry, and I thought I could do something to help her," Clooney said.

### Demirtas: Remember Victims of 1915

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Selahattin Demirtas, cochairman of the Peoples' Democratic Party of Turkey assessed the events of 1915 as genocide in his speech delivered in Izmir.

"Today we commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenians want to prove that they were killed on this soil and that they used to live here. Events of 1915 are a real arena for resistance in this country, and we all must stand with the Armenian living on this soil. Equality must be established here. We remember all the Armenians that fell victim to the 1915 genocide," according to haber07.com.tr.

In 2014 Demirtas had announced that if he were elected as the President of Turkey in 2014, he would recognize the Armenian Genocide.

### Uruguayan Calls for NKR Recognition

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – Uruguayan Deputy Daniel Radio asked authorities here to recognize the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh, on April 25.

Radio called for the recognition of Nagorno Karabagh by Uruguay, since "there are features that allows our country to make this choice. This is not an utopia: it is time for Uruguay to seriously consider this possibility and hopefully undertake that path."

"I would love that in 50 years, the grandson of any of us could hear a Legislator express their pride because Uruguay was the first country to recognize Nagorno-Karabagh," added Radio.

The ceremony, led by the Speaker of the House of Representatives Gerardo Amarilla, was held in the Legislative Palace of Uruguay and was attended by several senator.

The event was also attended by Foreign Minister Rodolfo Nin Novoa and the Ambassadors of Russia and Israel.

## INSIDE

### Marking Genocide

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Tensions high on the Frontline, Karabakh says

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Azerbaijani side continues the intensive shelling all along the frontline and in the direction of populated areas, using mortars of different caliber, 85, 100, 122 and 152 mm cannons, MM-21 Grad multiple rocket launches and 9M33 M3 missile complex, the NKR Ministry of Defense reported.

The front divisions of the NKR Defense Army take retaliatory measures to pressure the amativeness of the rival, inflicting losses in human force and equipment.

The situation remains tense, the Ministry said.

## Armenian and Russian FM's Discuss Prospects of Karabakh Settlement

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia, Eduard Nalbandian and Sergey Lavrov, held a phone conversation on April 26. Issues of bilateral and international agenda were discussed during the conversation. The ministers exchanged ideas over the prospects of Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement and issues of maintenance of the ceasefire regime in the conflict zone.

## Czech Parliamentarians Pay Tribute to Memory Of Soldiers Killed

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Deputy Speaker of the Senate of the Czech Republic Zdenek Skromach and the Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Jan Bartosek visited Yerablur Pantheon in Yerevan on April 22.

The Czech members of parliament paid tribute to the memory of the Armenian servicemen who died as a result of the military aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan's armed forces in early April and laid flowers at their tombs.

In answer to a question, Skromach said, "What we saw on the photos completely reminds me the handwriting of ISIL."

## Armenian Police Identify Chief Suspect In Yerevan Bus Blast

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Authorities said on April 26 that they have identified the main suspect in a bus explosion in Yerevan that killed two people.

Armenia's Investigative Committee said a SIM card found at the scene of the April 25 blast belonged to an Armenian who had served time in prison and that they found explosives and detonators at his home in a search. They did not name the suspect and his whereabouts are unknown, but officials said it is possible the suspect was one of the two people killed in the blast.

Identification of one of the bodies is now under way using DNA analysis.

Meanwhile, President Serzh Sargsyan has ordered police to tighten security after the massive blast, which wounded seven others.

National Police Chief Vladimir Gasparian said the blast occurred on or under a second-row bus seat.

Meanwhile, investigators have "fully rejected" the possibility that the explosion was a terrorist act and said the suspect had a "grudge" against his relatives.

An AFP correspondent at the scene reported that the bus was gutted by the blast, which blew out the windows of nearby houses.

In a statement on the incident issued shortly after midnight, Sargsyan's press secretary, Vladimir Hakobian, said the Health Ministry was "taking necessary measures to provide medical assistance to the wounded persons," it added. "We call on the public to refrain from spreading unverified information."

Two of the passengers, boys aged 14 and 15, suffered particularly serious wounds and underwent surgery in a Yerevan hospital. Doctors there said their lives were not at risk.



ADL representatives in Yerevan at the second convocation of the ADL Reconstruction and Unity Movement

# Second Convocation of the ADL Reconstruction and Unity Movement

YEREVAN – Representatives from different parts of the world convened in Yerevan on April 19 to 21 for the second Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Reconstruction and Unity Movement. The opening session took place on April 19 in the Tekeyan Center with 50 such representatives, as well as the leaders of the ADL of the Republic of Armenia and the Democratic Liberal organization of Artsakh.

The coordinator of the Reconstruction and Unity committee, Vartan Nazerian, conducted the official opening of the convocation. He presented the work conducted by the committee since the first convocation last November.

Deputy Minister of the Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Vahagn Melikian introduced Minister of the Diaspora Hranoush Hakobyan, who praised the decades of patriotic work of the ADL in the diaspora which continue today, and in particular noted its work to strengthen ties between the diaspora and the homeland. She wished the party success in achieving full unity.

ADL leaders Edmond Azadian (USA), Hagop Avedikian (Armenia) and Ardavazt Melkisetian (Lebanon) spoke about the responsibility of the ADL in

Video messages from Montreal ADL leaders Drs. Arshavir Gundjian and Haroutiun Arzoumanian were viewed. Reports from various regions including the numbers of their membership and future plans were presented together

of diasporan community life. Relations with other organizations, especially those sympathetic to the ADL, were examined.

The strengthening of ties between ADL structures in Armenia and the



Meeting with the Catholicos

with financial information. Representatives from the Western and Eastern districts of the US, Canada, Great Britain, France, Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, the Arabian Gulf and Austria spoke.

diplomacy was examined, including the goal of transferring the world headquarters of the party to Armenia, like the other two traditional Armenian political parties have done.

Various paths in the forthcoming months toward full ADL unity and reconstruction were discussed. All representatives felt that full unity was an imperative.

Azadian announced that the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada will donate 50,000 dollars to the families of martyred soldiers.

The meeting issued a communiqué based on the decisions that had been made there. It reconfirmed Nazerian in his post as coordinator.

On April 21, a press conference was held in the office of the ADL center in Yerevan, at which party leaders Avedikian, Vartivarian and Azadian presented the decisions and plans of the two-day assembly.

During the days of the convocation, official meetings took place with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Minister of the Diaspora Hranoush Hakobyan, soldiers of the officers' military academy, staff of the Armenian General Benevolent Union office in Armenia, and the leadership of the Armenian Assembly of America's office in Yerevan.

The participants of the convocation visited the Armenian Genocide memorial in Tsitsernakaberd, and participated in a ceremony at St. Hripsime Church in memory of recently deceased party member Antranik Kechichian of Valence, France.

After the formal conclusion of the meetings, participants enjoyed a final encounter with each other at the Triumph Restaurant.



Leaders of the ADL Reconstruction and Unity Movement with some members visit the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Armenia and the Vazgen Sargsisian Military School on April 21 to express their support

forthcoming years in Armenia and abroad.

Hagop Vartivarian spoke about the role of the ADL press in preserving Armenian identity and pride in disparate communities throughout the world, as well as their faithful link to the Mother See of Echmiadzin. Bartugh Galstian, representative of the Democratic Liberal Party of Artsakh, spoke about the current critical situation facing the homeland.

The convocation elected its executive with Vartan Nazerian and Yervant Azadian as co-chairmen, and Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, Ardavazt Melkisetian and Baydzig Kalaydjian as secretaries.

The second session took place on April 20 at Yerevan's Congress Hotel. Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian of London presented the strengths and weaknesses of the ADL, and analyzed its difficulties. Representatives at the convocation from different districts presented their own concerns and evaluations. Together they came up with a resolution summarizing their discussions.

Ideas were exchanged about uniting the ADL around a new ideal with new inspiration and energy. Urgent changes in the party bylaws were discussed, based on two different studies of prior periods as well as current imperatives



## ARMENIA

# Backyard Nurseries Provide Much-Needed Income in Rural Areas

By Kristine Hovsepyan

AGHAVNAVANK, Armenia – In Armenia, the life of a border village farmer comes at a price. The average farmer working close to the border relies on a soldier guarding the country from dusk till dawn, as he continues to work and provide for his family.

In the days just before the recent tragic clashes on the eastern border of Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) visited Aghavnavank, a village in Tavush 130 kilometers from Yerevan. This stunning village is adjacent to the Getik River Valley where ATP's Backyard Nursery Micro-Enterprise Program was launched in 2004.

Some of the best tree growers were in Aghavnavank, therefore ATP concentrated its efforts there in recent years. In this program, families are trained to grow tree seedlings on plots of land in their backyards, and ATP purchases the seedlings when the trees are ready to be planted in the nearby forests.

"This model is appealing because it rewards family farmers for good work, when we pay for trees that have been well cared for," explains ATP Manager Arthur Harutyunyan who oversees this program. "We even received an Energy Globe Award for Sustainability at the European Parliament because of this program's positive



Kamo Mirzoyan with some of the new tree seedlings he is growing for ATP's Backyard Nursery Micro-Enterprise Program

impact on the three aspects of sustainability: people, profit and planet."

The program also has a presence in the Shiraz and Gegharkounik regions. Six families in Keti village are growing trees which should produce seedlings in two years, and four families in the mountainous village of Jambarak are part of the program. The uniqueness of this village is the climate. These seedlings mature

much later because of the high altitude of 2,000 meters above sea level, which allows ATP to plant the trees later into the season when work in the southern regions is completed.

"The Backyard Nursery Program serves several needs," adds Harutyunyan, "providing additional varieties of seedlings for communities with different weather conditions, educating people about planting and tree care, and com-

pensating them for growing high quality seedlings for our new forests."

In Aghavnavank, the program has created jobs for five households and continues to be a steady source of income for them. Nearly 80 percent of residents were relocated from Azerbaijan in the early 1990s.

Kamo Mirzoyan, a tree grower living in Aghavnavank recounted how he moved there with his family after the Baku pogroms. The steady income provided by ATP has helped him renovate his house and begin constructing a guesthouse for tourists who pass through this scenic village.

"Each family in Aghavnavank is growing about 800 trees, and our goal is to expand the program as we train new families on tree growing," concludes Harutyunyan. "As the recent four-day Karabagh war proved, while soldiers watch the border a nation stands behind him and continues to grow and prosper. We're proud that ATP plays some role in this cooperation with rural communities."

Since its inception in 1994, ATP has planted more than 4.9 million trees, established three nurseries and two environmental education centers, and has greened villages, churches, parks, and open spaces throughout Armenia. In the process, the organization has provided employment for hundreds of people and provided vital resources to thousands of villagers. For more information, visit [www.armeniatree.org](http://www.armeniatree.org).

## Armenian Assembly of America Participates in Genocide Commemorations in Armenia

By Danielle Saroyan

YEREVAN – The Armenian Assembly of America partook in the Armenian Genocide Commemorations this past weekend in Yerevan, Armenia. The commemorations began with a wreath laying ceremony, following by the Global Forum, a special ceremony at the Armenian Genocide Memorial, and concluded with the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity.

On April 22, the Assembly staff laid a wreath

Karekin II, and other officials, along with the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity founders and delegation, diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia, and many other guests from all over the world visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial to pay their respects. Tens of thousands of people paid their respects to the Genocide Victims and visited the Genocide Museum-Institute.

During the evening, Assembly Yerevan Regional Director Arpi Vartanian attended the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity's Inaugural Award Ceremony.

Catena, from Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan; Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central African Republic.

Serving as co-chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee with Elie Wiesel was Clooney, who had previously commented on the opportunity to highlight and reward the relentless work of individuals who have made personal sacrifices to help other less fortunate people around the world."

Clooney announced Marguerite Barankitse from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi as the inaugural Laureate of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. She was recognized for the extraordinary impact she has had in saving thousands of lives and caring for

orphans and refugees.

"Our values are human values. When you have compassion, dignity and love then nothing can scare you, nothing can stop you – no one can stop love. Not armies, not hate, not persecution, not famine, nothing," Barankitse said, as she was accepted the award.

The theme music for the ceremony was written by Serj Tankian, titled *Aurora's Dream*. Ignatius – whose paternal grandparents were from Agin, near Kharpet – and Hasmik Papian – one of the most successful lyrical-dramatic sopranos in the world – were the emcees of the evening. At the event, the State Youth Orchestra performed. "Two Suns Valley," a ballet performance composed by choreographer Roudolf Kharatian, based on St. Gregory of Narek's *Book of Lamentations*, was also presented.



Armenian Assembly of America Yerevan Regional Director Arpi Vartanian laying a flower at the Armenian Genocide Memorial.

at the Armenian Genocide Memorial to pay their respects, on behalf of the Assembly, to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The memorial was filled with wreaths and flowers, with schoolchildren reciting poems and singing songs.

The next day, on April 23, the Second Global Forum, titled "Against the Crime of Genocide," took place. This forum featured The *Washington Post* Associate Editor and Columnist David Ignatius, George Clooney, International Association of Genocide Scholars President Dr. Andrew Woolford, 100 Lives Co-Founder Vartan Gregorian, and International Court of Justice Ad hoc Judge Dr. Joe Verhoeven, among other scholars.

On Sunday, April 24, a morning ceremony was organized at the Armenian Genocide Memorial. President Sargsyan, His Holiness

"This monumental, amazing initiative undertaken by founders Noubar Afeyan, Ruben Vardanyan, and Vartan Gregorian is an inspiration to all of us," Vartanian said. "It was an incredible, moving ceremony. Throughout the ceremony, you could hear a pin drop. People were riveted to their chairs."

Clooney, one of the Selection Committee Co-Chairs, gave a speech at the award ceremony. He spoke about the current refugee crisis and honored the victims of the Armenian Genocide. "Hitler once famously said, 'But, who remembers Armenia?' The answer is the whole world. That's who," Clooney stated in his speech.

The Selection Committee received 113 unique stories and 186 nominations from 27 countries. The four Aurora Prize finalists were Marguerite Barankitse, from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi; Dr. Tom

### Armenian Genocide Museum Acquires Original Photo of the Heroic Battle of Van

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) has acquired an exceptional original photo of the heroic battle of Van, AGMI Director Hayk Demoyan informs in a Facebook post.

The photo presents the participants of the battle of April 1915 and the cannons confiscated from the Turkish regular army on these days 101 years ago.

The photo taken by an American missionary doctor in Van was once published in the American press, but the original photo had long been considered lost.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Tigran Hamasyan wins ECHO Jazz Award 2016

HAMBRURG, Germany (Public Radio of Armenia) – Tigran Hamasyan has been named a winner of ECHO Jazz 2016 Awards.

Hamasyan was named International Instrumentalist of the Year, Piano, for his Nonesuch Records debut album, “Mockroot.”

The ECHO Jazz awards are conferred by the Deutsche Phono-Akademie (German Recording Academy), akin to the Grammy Awards in the United States.

The organization has handed out the ECHO Music awards annually since 1992 and the ECHO Classic awards since 1994. The ECHO Jazz prizes are the latest addition, having launched in 2010.

The ECHO Jazz 2016 Awards ceremony will take place in Hamburg on Thursday, May 26.

## Swedish Minister ‘Had Dinner with Turkish Fascists’

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (The Local) – The Swedish Minister of Housing, Mehmet Kaplan, has sparked controversy after a photograph of him emerged having dinner with members of the far-right Turkish organization, Grey Wolves, according to Swedish daily newspaper, Aftonbladet.

In the photographs leaked to the Swedish media, Kaplan, a member of the Green Party which forms part of the coalition administration with the Social Democrats, can be seen sitting at the same table as notorious extremist Barbaros Leylani and Ilhan Senturk, the president of the Swedish branch of the Grey Wolves.

According to Aftonbladet, the pictures were taken at a dinner last year.

Leylani caused controversy earlier this month by making inflammatory remarks when speaking to a small crowd of Turks in Stockholm’s central square. Leylani urged Turks to “awaken” and to kill “the Armenian dogs.”

Leylani also said, “Let us show Sweden, Scandinavia and Europe what Turkey stands for. We do not like blood, but we can let the blood flow when it is needed,” the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter reported.

## Garro Paylan Reads Names of Genocide Victims in Parliament

ISTANBUL – On April 24, Garro Paylan, a parliamentarian of Armenian origin, had the courage to remind his fellow MPs of the dozen Armenian members of the Ottoman parliament whose tragic fate was decided by a similar policy.

Paylan, a member of the opposition HDP party, read the names of Krikor Zohrab, Ohannes Vartkes Serengulyan, Garabed Pasayan, Nazaret Dagavaryan, Onnik Tertsakyan (Arsak Vramyan), Isdepan Cirincinyan and Hampartsum Boyacian.

According to a translation in Agos newspaper, he started his address at the parliament with “Barev Dzez,” and went on to say that the Turkish republic should come to terms with its past.

He said, “After the beginning of the second constitutional period in 1908, many Armenians served in the Chamber of Deputies.”

He then named each as well as where they represented and when they were killed.

“Krikor Zohrab was arrested in Istanbul on May 21, 1915 and put on a train along with Erzurum Deputy Ohannes Vartkes Serengulyan for standing trail in court in Diyarbakir. First they were sent to Konya, then to Adana and finally to Aleppo. Ultimately exiled to Urfa, Zohrab and Serengulyan were killed in the Karakopru province of Urfa by partisans,” he noted.

He noted another one, Hampartsum Boyacian, was taken from his home in Beyoglu on April 24, 1915, he said. He was executed in Kayseri.

“In the period that started with the arrest and killing of Armenian politicians and opinion leaders and its aftermath, Armenians, Syrians, Greeks and Jews were turned into ‘minorities’ by mass killings, exiles and pogroms,” he added.

# 100 Writers Call for Release of Turkish Journalists on Eve of Espionage Trial

ISTANBUL (*Guardian*) – More than 100 leading international writers, including Monica Ali and Margaret Atwood, have called for espionage charges against two of Turkey’s leading journalists to be dropped on the eve of a trial, which could see them jailed for life.

In a letter to the Turkish prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu, published in the *Guardian*, the writers, who also include JM Coetzee, Yann Martel, Elif Shafak, Colm Toibin and Mario Vargas Llosa, call for the all charges against *Cumhuriyet* editors Can Dündar and Erdem Gül to be dropped, and also demanding an end to the crackdown against free expression in the country.

The campaign, organized by free speech charity PEN International, comes the day after sister organization English PEN published a report warning that Turkey’s independent media now faces “an unprecedented crisis” due to the erosion of their rights.

The letter states: “In recent years, the Turkish authorities have made extraordinary efforts to silence critics and dissent. This has had an impact on all areas of Turkish society. Current legislation and surveillance practices not only diminish freedom of speech for the country’s writers and journalists but seriously threaten the fundamental rights and freedoms of tens of millions of individuals.”

The writers urge the prime minister to “release all writers imprisoned in Turkey simply for their peaceful exercise of free speech, to drop similar charges against all others ... and to amend or repeal all legislation which unduly restricts freedom of expression.”

Dündar, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper editor-in-chief, and Ankara bureau chief

Gül have been charged with revealing state secrets over a report alleging that Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s government tried to ship arms to Islamists in Syria.

They were formally charged with obtaining and revealing state secrets “for espionage purposes” and seeking to “violently” overthrow the Turkish government as well as aiding an “armed terrorist organisation”

“The fact that Can Dündar and Erdem Gül are facing life in prison simply for fulfilling their responsibilities as journalists demonstrates the sorry state of freedom of expression in Turkey,” said PEN International president Jennifer Clement.

“Sadly their cases are not unique. There are over 20 other writers languishing behind bars as well as scores

of others who are under investigation or on trial simply for peacefully exercising their right to free expression.”

One of the letter’s signatories, Yann Martel, author of *Life of Pi*, said he had “grave concerns about the erosion of civil society in Turkey.” He added: “The country could flower as multicultural democracy. It has such incredible potential. Instead it is going down the path of authoritarianism. We must do everything we can to avoid this tragedy.”

The English PEN report, *Journalism Under Siege*, said press freedom in Turkey has suffered an immense and systematic assault under Erdogan, with journalists and media outlets subjected to imprisonment, intimidation, harassment and assault.

## Canada, US Issue Statements On Armenian Genocide

### Canada: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



On this day, we mark the 101st commemoration of the tragic loss of life of the Armenian population during the waning days of the Ottoman Empire in 1915.

Both the Senate of Canada and the House of Commons have adopted resolutions referring to these events as genocide. We preserve the memory of those who lost their

lives, and those who suffered during this genocide and pay our deepest respects to their descendants, including those who now call Canada home.

In solemnly acknowledging this event, let us use this moment as an opportunity to look forward and strengthen our collective resolve to ensure such acts are never again repeated.

While we must never forget the lessons of history, we must also be reminded that past injustices do not serve our communities if they divide us. Canadians of all backgrounds and faiths stand together in reaffirming our collective commitment to the values of pluralism, human rights, and diversity.

On this anniversary, please join me in my hope for a peaceful future based on tolerance, respect, and reconciliation.

### US: President Barack Obama



Today we solemnly reflect on the first mass atrocity of the 20th century – the Armenian *Meds Yeghern* – when one and a half million Armenian people were deported, massacred, and marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman empire. As we honor the memory of those who suffered during the dark days beginning in

1915 – and commit to learn from this tragedy so it may never be repeated—we also pay tribute to those who sought to come to their aid. One such individual was U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr., who voiced alarm both within the U.S. government and with Ottoman leaders in an attempt to halt the violence. Voices like Morgenthau’s continue to be essential to the mission of atrocity prevention, and his legacy shaped the later work of human rights champions such as Raphael Lemkin, who helped bring about the first United Nations human rights treaty.

This is also a moment to acknowledge the remarkable resiliency of the Armenian people and their tremendous contributions both to the international community as well as to American society. We recall the thousands of Armenian refugees who decades ago began new lives in the United States, forming a community that has enormously advanced the vitality of this nation and risen to prominence and distinction across a wide range of endeavors. At a moment of regional turmoil to Armenia’s south, we also thank the people of Armenia for opening their arms to Syrian refugees, welcoming nearly 17,000 into their country.

As we look from the past to the future, we continue to underscore the importance of historical remembrance as a tool of prevention, as we call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts, which would serve the interests of all concerned. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. I have also seen that peoples and nations grow stronger, and build a foundation for a more just and tolerant future, by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. We continue to welcome the expression of views by those who have sought to shed new light into the darkness of the past, from Turkish and Armenian historians to Pope Francis.

Today we stand with the Armenian people throughout the world in recalling the horror of the *Meds Yeghern* and reaffirm our ongoing commitment to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Armenia.

## Parliament of Sicily Recognizes Armenian Genocide

PALERMO, Sicily – On April 21, the Sicilian Regional Assembly unanimously recognized the Armenian Genocide, reports the Press Service of the Armenian Foreign Ministry. Thus, Sicily has become the 105th regional structure of Italy to recognize the Armenian Genocide at the level of local governments.

By the adopted resolution Sicily expresses its support and solidarity with the struggle of the Armenian people for the recognition of the historical reality. The document was presented by deputies Kordaro Salvatore, D’Azero Antonino, Papale Alfio Grasso and Bernadette Felice.

The agreement on the resolution was reached at the end of November of 2015 at the meeting of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Armenia to Italy Sargis Ghazaryan with Chairman of the Regional Council of Sicily Giovanni Arduzzone.

The Sicilian Parliament is one of the oldest parliaments of the world (founded in 1097) and compared with the parliaments of other autonomous regions in Italy it has the most extensive powers.

Up to this date, the Armenian Genocide of 1915 has been recognized by 22 countries. The first country to officially recognize it was Uruguay in 1965. The Parliament of Italy recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2000.

# Community News

## St. Thomas Church Celebrates 51st Anniversary of Consecration

By Hagop Vartivarian

TENAFLY, NJ. — St. Thomas Armenian Apostolic Church, which may be the most beautiful and modern representation of Armenian architecture in New Jersey, continues to uphold its national and religious traditions, against the efforts of some who want to Americanize the church in spite of the warnings and recommendations of high-ranking religious leaders. St. Thomas Armenian Church persistently remains one of the most traditional communities of this vast Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

It has become tradition on Palm Sunday — a day which also marks the anniversary of the church's consecration — for the Primate to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and preside over the celebratory banquet. On Sunday, March 20, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, was the celebrant. Following church services, close to 400 guests gathered in Mekhjian Atrium for the anniversary banquet luncheon, hosted by mistress of ceremonies Marylynda Bozian-Cruickshank. Taking the podium, dedicated Parish Council Chairman Dr. Levon Capan delivered opening remarks, welcoming the archbishop and all present to the annual event.

Under the direction of Diana Bourghol, the St. Thomas Youth Orchestra presented a brief artistic



Very Rev. Papken Anoushian presents the St. Thomas Award to Deacon Vicken Demirjian.

program with musical selections featuring international classics and Arno Babajanian's Azk Parabandz.

In keeping with tradition, Mr. and Mrs. Haig Ariyan, chairpersons of the annual cake sale, were invited to cut the banquet cake, after which members of the parish's ACYOA Juniors presented a donation to the church.

Words of gratitude were delivered by the church's beloved pastor, Very Rev. Papken Anoushian. In his remarks, he recognized the deacons and acolytes for their devotion and service to the church, as well as the unwavering participation of the parish council members and parishioners in the life of St. Thomas Armenian Church.

This year's traditional St. Thomas Award was presented to Deacon Vicken Demirjian, a dynamic individual who serves on the Holy Altar. He received his Armenian education at the Hovnanian Armenian School and Kirikian Armenian Saturday School. He is also a member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, through which he has graced stages in numerous performances of its theater group. Vicken's volunteer participation in the church's various events and activities is exceptional. Delivering his acceptance speech in both Armenian and English, he expressed his gratitude to Anoushian, his parents Nerses and Sirvart Demirjian, as well as all present.

In his benediction, Barsamian acknowledged the national and religious accomplishments of St. Thomas Armenian Church, and extended best wishes for continued success.



Osep Sarafian

## Tekeyan Cultural Association and Cultural Association of Armenians From Istanbul Pay Tribute to Osep Sarafian

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On Sunday, April 10, the St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall was filled with family and friends at a tribute luncheon to honor prominent architect and community activist Osep Sarafian for his tireless humanitarian work in Armenia.

The luncheon was hosted by Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and the Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul. Tekeyan Chair Diana Alexanian opened the program by inviting Father Aren Jebejian of St. John Armenian Church, to offer a welcome prayer and the blessing of the food. Father Jebejian being informed in advance of the talent of the Sarafian grandchildren, invited them to recite the *Hayr Mer*, "The Lord's Prayer." Their voices in the mother tongue touched the hearts of every attendee.



Diana Alexanian & Vahe Akaraz

A highlight of the celebration included a musical interlude provided by the renowned, New York-based, Armenian-Argentinian mezzo soprano, Solange Merdianian, accompanied by pianist Doris Hall. The audience was treated to a repertoire of Armenian folk, Baroque and contemporary operatic songs.

Edmond Azadian was the keynote speaker, who outlined the honoree's biography describing him as one of the "descendants" or representative of the prominent Balian family of architects who have designed most of the palaces, mosques, fortresses and parks in Istanbul, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire.

Further, Azadian described in detail Sarafian's charitable mission in Armenia, achieving many essential projects in the rural areas. He stated that the honoree has served as a one-person committee conducting fundraising, negotiating projects with ASIF (the Armenian Social Investment Fund) and personally supervised the execution of those projects. Azadian characterized Sarafian's mission as "constructive patriotism" which was implemented against all odds and negative currents. That is why Sarafian was awarded with a Medal of Honor by Hovik Abrahamian, the Prime Minister of Armenia.

see SARAFIAN, page 8

## EyeCare Project Launches Partnership with Ucom in Armenia for Free Eye Exams

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. and YEREVAN — Armenian EyeCare Project's Armenia Director, Nune Yeghiazaryan, along with Ucom Director, Hayk Yesayan, announced on March 24 their plans for a partnership as part of the EyeCare Project's ongoing campaign, "Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes."

This year the EyeCare Project and Ucom will work together to coordinate free eye exams for more than 12,000 Armenians throughout Armenia — approximately 8,000 adults and 4,000 children — and will include these services to residents of the Ararat, Vayots Dzor, Syunik and Armavir regions.

Ucom will sponsor these eye exams in an effort to continue the cooperation with the EyeCare Project, which was originally started by telecommunications company Orange Armenia and its charitable sub-group, Orange Foundation, in 2011. Last year, Ucom bought Orange Armenia and has decided to continue its charitable contributions.

"The mission of our company is to help our compatriots, to assist the formation of a sustainable and safe community, to create development opportunities and to educate a new, healthy and well-developed generation," Yesayan said. "This is one of those unique projects that has had only a positive impact and that changes the lives of people fundamentally."

Since the Project initiated "Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes" in 2002, nearly 600,000 Armenian children and adults have received eye care services at no cost through the EyeCare Project — 500,000 eye examinations, 20,000 surgeries and laser treatments and 70,000 eyeglasses.

This year, in addition to the more than 12,000 Armenians who will receive eye exams at no cost through the AECU-Ucom partnership, the EyeCare Project is also planning to perform nearly 800 laser eye surgeries and to distribute eyeglasses to more than 400 adults and 200 children — all at no cost.

"Thanks to the Project's 'Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes' program, which was launched throughout Armenia in 2002, tens of thousands of people have received high-quality eye care at no cost — including examinations, laser treatment and surgery," Yeghiazaryan said. "Tens of thousands of eyeglasses have been provided and thousands of children have participated in public education programs about eye care. Thanks to the Project, many people have had their vision restored, avoiding preventable blindness."

The project's mission is to eliminate preventable or avoidable blindness in Armenia — 80 percent of all blindness is preventable or treatable — and to provide access to quality eye care for all Armenians regardless of their financial circumstances.

As Ucom, and Orange before them, have "adopted" Armenian villages and marzes (provinces) and provided eye care at no cost, so have many of the Project's donors in America through its "Adopt-a-Village" program. Individual donors have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of Armenians in need through the Project's Adopt-a-Village and Adopt-a-School programs, which allows groups and individuals to sponsor the screening and treatment of residents of a specific region or village in Armenia or a school that the Mobile Eye Hospital will visit. The cost of adopting ranges from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the population and the number of days the Mobile Eye Hospital stays in the village or at the school.

To be a part of this vital movement to end preventable blindness in Armenia, contact the AECU and learn more about its Adopt-a-Village and Adopt-a-School programs. By contributing to the cause, you will join thousands of other humanitarians who have made such a lasting impact in their ancestral homeland by "bringing sight to Armenian eyes."

To make a donation, mail a check to P.O. Box 5630, Newport Beach, CA 92662 or visit [www.eyecareproject.com](http://www.eyecareproject.com).

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Tens of Thousands Rally in Los Angeles to Commemorate Armenian Genocide

By Sarah Parvini

LOS ANGELES (*LA Times*) – Tens of thousands of protesters rallied outside the Turkish Consulate on Wilshire Boulevard on Sunday afternoon, waving flags and holding signs to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Dressed in purple and black shirts scrawled with messages calling for justice, the activists demanded reparations. Los Angeles police estimated the crowd at 60,000.

“Get your hands off our land!” they chanted.

“Eastern Turkey is western Armenia!”

“Today, we are all Armenian,” said U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) as he addressed the crowd from the stage. “We have one cause and that cause is justice.”

The crowd, filled with protesters of all ages, roared in agreement. Some carried their children on their shoulders, using the day to teach them about their history.

Abraham Arakelian, 42, came from the Valley with his son so he could keep the memory of the genocide alive.

“We want to show the youth what April 24 is about,” he said as he held a large Armenian flag overhead.

“Obviously, we want justice. If we don’t do this, it will be forgotten.”

Eventually, Arakelian said, he will tell his son more about the genocide, when he’s old enough to stomach the painful details. For now, it was enough just to bring him.

Armenians gathered for vigils last week in Glendale and in Montebello at the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument, and many Armenian churches hold services to recognize the fallen.

Nora Hovsepien, chair of the western region of the Armenian National Committee of America, said Armenian people will continue to gather each year until the genocide, which began in 1915 and resulted in the death of as many as 1.5 million Armenians, is recognized by Turkey and the U.S.



Armenian protesters, foreground, and a group of Turkish protesters, top, yell back and forth to each other during the rally outside of the Turkish Consulate on Wilshire Boulevard.

Southern California is home to the largest Armenian community outside of Armenia, with Los Angeles seen as a kind of Armenian cultural mecca. More than 200,000 people of Armenian descent live in Los Angeles County, according to U.S. census data.

The county remains a point of entry for Armenian immigrants and each year, as April 24 approaches, locals drape Armenian flags over the hoods of their cars, wave them from their car windows and hang them from their businesses.

Most stores post signs in both English and Armenian telling customers they will be closed in remembrance of the genocide.

Last year, officials designated the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Avenue as Armenian Genocide Memorial Square, an area that is part of Little Armenia. And in March, Glendale Unified became the first school district in the country to establish a day in remembrance of the genocide.

Remembering the genocide is also a part of the curriculum at some schools in Glendale, where many of the county’s Armenians live. Schools teach units and hold assemblies on the genocide in the weeks leading up to the anniversary.

Morris Sarafian, a student at UCLA, said the 101st anniversary marks a pivotal time for the Armenian community.

“There is not a statute of limitations on our demands. It’s not contingent on a deadline,” the 21-year-old said. “This is our unapologetic way of saying you are not going to get away with this.”

Sarafian, whose great grandfather was a survivor of the genocide, said he learned about the killings and their consequences when he was a little boy.

“At 9, my grandfather had to bury his own twin sisters,” he said. “They were his younger sisters.”

Such stories – handed down from generation to generation – leave a lingering sense of trauma, he said.

“I shouldn’t have to validate my own history,” Sarafian said. “This is a lived experience.”

Mikael Matossian, 21, can also trace his family back to the Genocide. His grandfather was a survivor who fled the city Aintab and found refuge in a Turkish farmer’s home.

Eventually, he emigrated to America.

Matossian said the stories his grandfather told him influenced his decisions to participate in the Armenian Student Association at UCLA, as

well his desire to protest for recognition.

“I spent 15 years of my life with him,” Matossian said. “That is what drives me and a lot of young Armenians to protest. It’s very real to us.”



Gohar Ghazaryan, left, and Alvina Sayabyan, listen to a speaker during a rally Sunday afternoon outside the Turkish Consulate to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

“It remains a crime unpunished. It is a crime against humanity, and there’s no statute of limitations on that,” Hovsepien said.

President Obama referred to the deaths as genocide before his election, but he has not done so since he took office. The move maintains his predecessors’ reluctance to alienate Turkey, a highly valued ally in the Middle East.

Still, more than 40 states – including California – have recognized the Genocide, according to the Armenian National Institute.

“We’re not asking for much,” said Anasheh Megerdichian, 31, as she stood with a group of friends near the Turkish Consulate. “We want them to admit what they did.”

Megerdichian said she wasn’t surprised that Obama did not call the deaths a genocide, but she was disappointed. She understands the president made the decision for political reasons, she added, but wishes he had never promised to call the massacre a genocide in the first place.

“He went back on his word,” she said.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# George Clooney Presents \$1 Million Aurora Prize in Yerevan

AURORA, from page 1

Marguerite Barankitse from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi was named as the inaugural Laureate of the \$1 million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. At a ceremony held in Yerevan, Armenia, Barankitse was recognized for the extraordinary impact she has had in saving thousands of lives and caring for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi.

As she accepted the award from Aurora Prize Selection Committee Co-Chair George Clooney, Barankitse said: "Our values are human values. When you have compassion, dignity and love then nothing can scare you, nothing can stop you – no one can stop love. Not armies, not hate, not persecution, not famine, nothing."

As the first Aurora Prize Laureate, Barankitse will receive a \$100,000 grant and continue the cycle of giving by donating the



Marguerite Barankitse from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi accepts her prize.

Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan; Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front in Pakistan; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic Priest in Bossemptele, Central African Republic (CAR). To mark the occasion of the inaugural Aurora Prize Ceremony, these exceptional humanitarians will be presented with a \$25,000 award from the Aurora Prize co-founders to support the organizations that have inspired their work.

Leading humanitarian figures and Aurora Prize Selection Committee members, including Gareth Evans, Hina Jilani, Leymah Gbowee, Shirin Ebadi and Vartan Gregorian, attended and participated in the Aurora Prize Award Ceremony.

"During the selection process for the Aurora Prize, we came across truly remarkable stories of the human spirit, and an extraordinary number of inspiring individuals who are out there mak-



Noubar Afeyan

Barankitse emphasized: "I chose them because these people supported me and never abandoned me, even in difficult times. They have the same values as me and as the Maison Shalom – compassion, friendliness, dignity, and a generosity which costs nothing."

"Marguerite Barankitse serves as a reminder of the impact that one person can have even when encountering seemingly insurmountable persecution and injustice," said Mr. Clooney. "By recognizing Marguerite Barankitse's courage, commitment and sacrifice, I am hopeful that she can also inspire each one of us to think about what we can do to stand up on behalf of those whose rights are abused and are in most need of our solidarity or support."

Barankitse saved thousands of lives and cared for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. When war broke out, Barankitse, a Tutsi, tried to hide 72 of her closest Hutu neighbors to keep them safe from persecution. They were discovered and executed, whilst Barankitse was forced to watch. Following this gruesome incident, she started her work saving and caring for children and



George Clooney paid tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

accompanying \$1,000,000 award to organizations that have inspired her work. Barankitse plans to donate the award to three organizations in order to advance aid and rehabilitation for child refugees and orphans, and fight against child poverty. These organizations are: the Fondation du Grand-Duc et de La Grande-Duchesse du Luxembourg, Fondation Jean-François Peterbroeck (JFP Foundation), and the Fondation Bridderlech Deelen Luxembourg.



## OPENING FOR PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - QUEENS, NEW YORK

Celebrating nearly 50 years as a pillar of the New York Armenian American community, Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) of Bayside, Queens, has earned a well-deserved reputation for academic excellence and for inspiring a love of Armenian heritage in her students. Combining the best elements of American education with an added emphasis on Armenian Studies, the small classroom settings and focus on individual abilities has allowed the dedicated staff of this private elementary school to provide a nourishing learning environment for students in grades N-6.

### HMADS seeks experienced administrator for position commencing August 2016.

Qualified candidate should possess:

- Exceptional leadership qualities and effective interpersonal and communication skills
- Knowledge of current best practices and the ability to implement and support staff professional development
- Interest in supporting the school's mission to provide an exceptional academic education for a diverse student body, while promoting knowledge of the Armenian language, history and culture
- Ability to work collaboratively with parents, School Board, auxiliary bodies and the greater community to foster student success
- Degree in Education, Educational Leadership and/or Administration, School Counseling or related field
- Valid New York State administrative certification or equivalent
- Fluency in English with knowledge of written and spoken Armenian strongly preferred

Qualified candidates are invited to send a letter of interest, résumé, and copy of administrative certificate to mailbox@hmads.org by June 1, 2016.

refugees. She has saved roughly 30,000 children and in 2008, she opened a hospital which has treated more than 80,000 patients to date.

Guests also celebrated the exceptional contributions of the other three finalists for the Aurora Prize: Dr. Tom Catena, from Mother of

ing a significant difference," said Vartan Gregorian, member of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee and co-founder of 100 Lives. "We are proud to be able to recognize Marguerite Barankitse and support the impactful work she is doing in a concrete way. She

proves the tremendous impact one person can have on so many."

The Aurora Prize Selection Committee included Nobel Laureates Elie Wiesel, Oscar Arias, Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former President of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former Australian Foreign Minister and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans; President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian; and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney.



Ruben Vardanyan and George Clooney



George Clooney is showed around at the Ararat Brandy Museum.



COMMUNITY NEWS

# Tekeyan Cultural Association and Cultural Association of Armenians from Istanbul Pay Tribute to Osep Sarafian

SARAFIAN, from page 5

Following Azadian's remarks, Diana Alexanian invited the honoree to the podium, where he thanked Azadian for his kind remarks and acknowledged all who had ventured to come in spite of the inclement weather. Sarafian stated that he alone could not have accomplished much had he not been lucky enough to have had well-to-do relatives and friends who trusted him and shared his dreams about the urgent need to help Armenia. He humbly wanted to share the honor with them.

He said "Instead of giving a lecture, today I want to tell you about my love story with

than \$10 million to benefit projects such as rebuilding Yerevan State University; the American University of Armenia; AGBU Soup Kitchens; the Nork Children's Center; the Cosmic Ray Division of the Physics Institute; the Philharmonic Orchestra; Echmiadzin and the American Armenian Wellness Center.

Since 2003, in partnership with ASIF and the World Bank, Sarafian has focused on rural area projects, particularly in the border regions to help keep the villagers on their land and curtail depopulation. He said, "If we want to keep Armenia alive we have to pay attention to the Villages where you can see and feel the purity of the Armenian nation."

In the last thirteen years working with ASIF and the World Bank he has been able to raise more than \$19.9 million for projects completed in 131 villages that includes 59 schools, 35 community centers, 37 water supply projects, road construction and health centers.

He ended his remarks by reminding those present that by working hand-in-hand we can overcome all challenges in the homeland and create a bright future for generations to come.

To close the event, a benediction was given by the Very Rev. Diran Papazian.



The Sarafian Family



Edmond Azadian



Osep Sarafian and Diana Alexanian

Armenia which began in 1986 during a three week Educator's Conference in Yerevan, while accompanied by my wife, Dr. Nadya Sarafian, as principal of the AGBU School in Southfield."

Since then, the call of the homeland and the urgent need for help has taken him to Armenia more than 40 times over the last 30 years. He was there after the 1988 earthquake; in 1991 he witnessed the independence of Armenia which was followed by incredible hardships due to the lack of electricity and heating and the breakout of war with Azerbaijan and the liberation of Artsakh.

During this period, Osep Sarafian, who had taken an early retirement in 1994, raised more



Sarafian grandchildren sing Hayr Mer

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# First-Ever Service Dedicated to Armenian Genocide Martyrs at Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – About 800 people gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross of the Boston Catholic Archdiocese, on Saturday, April 23, for the first-ever ecumenical service commemorating “the Holy Saints and Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide.”

The head of the Boston Roman Catholic

Francis to the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily, where he met and prayed with migrants from Syria and Iraq who had barely survived the crossing. Many had fled simply because they were Christian and were targets.

“Thanks for coming together to honor those who have fallen victim to the Medz Yeghern,” he said.

In his homily, O’Malley said it was his “immense pleasure” to meet with Catholics of All Armenians Karekin II when the latter had visited Boston.

O’Malley, who has served as an advisor to Pope Francis, said that the latter had visited San Lazzaro, the Armenian island monastery outside Venice belonging to the Mkhitarist Catholic Brothers.

Francis to the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily, where he met and prayed with migrants from Syria and Iraq who had barely survived the crossing. Many had fled simply because they were Christian and were targets.

“Unity is a gift we need to ask for,” he said to fight the systematic attacks Christians face in the Middle East, Egypt and India.

As part of his prayer, Barsamian said, “You are the Light to be praised, the holy and first Light. Darkness flees from you. Let your living light dawn in our hearts, Lord.”

Choloyan, in his prayer, said, “O Lord Our God, hear our voices and receive our requests, the lifting up of our hands, and the words of our prayers as you sanctify this evening offer-

ing that we have prepared as a sweet fragrance for your pleasure.”

All those gathered recited a prayer for “intercession of the Holy Armenian Martyrs,” in which they asked, “Hear us from your holy and heavenly realm by the intercession of the holy Mother of God and by the prayers of all your saints, especially the holy martyrs who gave their lives during the Armenian Genocide for faith and for the homeland, whom we commemorate today.”

Several hymns were performed by a large chorus composed of members of Armenian choirs, led by Artur Veranian.

A reception followed in the Cathedral High School Gymnasium.



All the religious leaders present at the Holy Cross Cathedral Service (Boston Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee picture)

Archdiocese, Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley, was accompanied by dignitaries from various churches and organizations, including Archbishop Khajag Barsamian of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), as well as clergy from all local Armenian Churches, and heads of the local Eastern Catholic Churches, and others for the service, titled “Remembrance, Witness, and Resurrection.”

“It is a special day to welcome so many of our Armenian brothers and sisters and Rev. Laura Everett,” the executive director of the

He urged that his parishioners and others to fight blindness and stop judging people by appearances. He called apathy “spiritual Alzheimer’s” and said, “even though at times we forget about God, God never forgets about us. Our faces are engraved on the palms of God’s hands.”

He added, “Our goal is to pass on the Gospel to the next generation. We must never forget how much God loves us.”

The then spoke about the Armenian Genocide, saying that “the love and power of God is stronger than death.”

Similarly, he urged that the events not be forgotten “so that the future is safer.”

He recited Hitler’s famous quote, in which he said he expected the mass killings that he was about to launch against the Jews should not cause a problem since the Armenians were similarly wiped out earlier without causing a global outcry. “If the world had reacted differently to the Armenian Genocide, would the Holocaust of World War II have been averted,” O’Malley asked.

He added, “No true civilization can afford to falsify its historical

record.”

O’Malley then spoke about the current onslaught of ISIS and other groups and urged that everyone speak up about the victims. O’Malley recited the quote by the late Martin Niemoller, the Protestant pastor who spent seven years in a concentration camp during World War II because of his activities against the Nazi rule.

“Today we are all Armenian,” he said. “We must learn to see human suffering with the eyes of compassion.”

Similarly, he praised the visit of Pope



From left, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Cardinal Sean O’Malley and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

Massachusetts Council of Churches, as well as the many Armenian pastors, O’Malley said.

The service started with mournful music of the Armenian *duduk*, setting the mood for a somber ceremony. Welcoming those assembled, Vito Nicastrò, the associate director of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Archdiocese, thanked all those present and said that the day’s events were dedicated to those who have suffered genocide and mass murder, including the Armenians, of course, the Pontic Greeks, as well as the victims of the Holocaust and now ISIS.

## Houry Boyamian Speaks at Peabody Armenian Genocide Commemoration

PEABODY, Mass. – On the morning of April 25, Armenians of Peabody, Mass. and their friends assembled to commemorate the Armenian Genocide with the participation of many local elected officials. At the start of the program, the Armenian flag was raised outside of town hall. Approximately 60 people attended the program.

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt, Jr. of Peabody was ill, and was represented by State Rep. Tom Walsh of the 12th Essex District. Fr. Antranig Baljian of St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church opened the event with a prayer. His son Fr. Stephan Baljian of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley was also present. Mary Bellavance of the mayor’s office welcomed the guests.

Houry Boyamian, principal of St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, was the keynote speaker. She summarized the events of the Armenian Genocide through the story of her father Karnig Panian, a genocide survivor who managed to overcome the extreme trauma and obstacles of his early life to become an educator and vice-principal at an Armenian school in Beirut, Lebanon. His life serves as an example of both the brutality of the Genocide and the resilience of the Armenian people.

Boyamian and her sister recently had their father’s Armenian-language memoirs translated into English and published under the title *Goodbye, Antoura*. Copies were given to several of the officials present at the event.

Walsh presented the proclamation from Bettencourt which proclaimed April 25 to be the day to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Peabody



From left, Fr. Antranig Baljian, Houry Boyamian holding the proclamation of the Peabody mayor’s office, Rep. Tom Walsh, Jackie Torigian, and Fr. Stephan Baljian

and to remember “the 1,500,000 people of Armenian ancestry who lost their lives in the Genocide of 1915-1923.”

Peabody has commemorated the Armenian Genocide annually since 1991. Then-mayor Peter Torigian wanted to provide an opportunity for Armenians living in the North Shore area to come together locally on the model of the annual commemoration in Boston proper. His successors, Michael J. Bonfanti and Bettencourt, fortunately continued this tradition, and the Torigian family has helped support it, along with various Armenian community leaders. In a sense, the event now is also a tribute to the popularity and legacy of Torigian. His wife Jackie was present at the program, which concluded with a reception with a variety of delicious foods provided by Peabody town hall and the Armenian community.

Dignitaries present in the audience included Massachusetts state Sen. Joan Lovely of the 2nd Essex District, State Rep. Theodore C. Speliotus of Danvers, Peabody City Councilors Tom Gould, Dave Gravel and James Moutsoulas, and School Committeeman Jarrod Hochman. There was strong Greek support for the event, as exemplified by the presence of Fr. Anthony Pantilyan from Saint Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church of Peabody as well as several of the officials present of Greek origin.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Massachusetts State House Hosts Genocide 101st Commemoration

COMMEMORATION, from page 1

a strengthened commitment, to honor the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, to demand recognition and justice for the Genocidal crimes committed by the Ottoman Empire, to dedicate ourselves to prevent the recurrence of genocide anywhere in the world, and to celebrate the remarkable triumph and spirit of the Armenian people."

Before handing over the podium, Hecht praised Speaker Robert A. DeLeo for his enormous assistance with holding the commemora-

tion to Armenia which they need even today." He added, to great applause, that the US should immediately condemn the recent upsurge in aggression by Azerbaijanis against Armenians in Nagorno Karabagh. A robust monitoring program by a trusted legitimate third party should be put into place, he said.

After mentioning that last year Pope Francis referred to the Armenian Genocide as the first genocide of the 20th century, he said that all of us should heed the pope's words, as "it is always the right time to tell the truth about



Zankagner Performing Arts Ensemble at the State House.

tion in the State House and for personally participating every single year.

DeLeo said that he was introduced to the Armenian Genocide through leaders like his predecessor George Keeverian. He referred to Peter Balakian's book, *The Burning Tigris*, which informed him about American aid to Armenians during World War I, and his encounter with Armenian Heritage Park architect Donald Tellalian. Like the symbolism of the sculpture there, DeLeo said, he hoped that events such as the State House commemoration will allow people throughout the world to fully recognize the atrocities which befell the Armenians as genocide, as that would allow "a new phase of healing."

DeLeo concluded, "While we remember those who perished, we must vow to carry on

what happened in Armenia." The senator called for fighting denial, and this process must begin with President Barack Obama.



Dusty Rhodes of Conventures, second from right, and her team receive Joint Senate/House Resolution from Lali Musserian, speaking at podium.

Markey said, "This year is his final opportunity as president to do the right thing and call the Armenian Genocide what it was." He exclaimed, "The United States must be the moral leader of the world if we expect the rest of the world to follow our leadership."

Markey turned very blunt in his opposition to paid advertising and denial, saying, "We are here today to say that we will never let it happen again, because there is one clear truth about this issue: The Armenians are right and Turkey is wrong." He said that in particular, he would never stop working on this subject in the Senate until a resolution was passed unambiguously affirming the Genocide.

Markey frequently became lyric in his apparently extemporaneous speech. He said that the Armenian people in the US have a particular responsibility to speak out, since "We are the privileged, who carry on the lives not lived, the voices not heard, the dreams not realized, that is what the Armenian people in America represent, those voices that were never heard." Markey spoke words of praise about "that great man," George Keeverian, who educated so many about the Armenian experience.

State Rep. David K. Muradian, Jr., serving the communities of Grafton, Northbridge and Upton in the Ninth Worcester District, read the



Amb. Raymond Flynn speaking with Sen. Edward Markey to the left.

proclamation by Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito marking April 24, 2016 as Armenian Martyrs Day. The proclamation stated that the "mass genocide of the Armenian population," with more than half the Armenian population killed in the Ottoman Turkish empire, was "repulsive and abhorrent in civilized society," and "our thoughts offered in memory of the Armenian martyrs of 1915 will serve to remind everyone that persecution, torture and killing must cease forever."

Lali Musserian, chair of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Planning Committee which organized the State House program, presented Joint Massachusetts Senate and House Resolutions recognizing three enti-

Ambassador Raymond Leo Flynn. First, however, Muradian declared, "We will not ever forget our history, and it is incumbent upon us to never let the world forget, either. But, it is also incumbent upon us to highlight our successes. Try as it might, the Turkish government failed. We are succeeding, and no one is going to stop us from being proud Armenians."

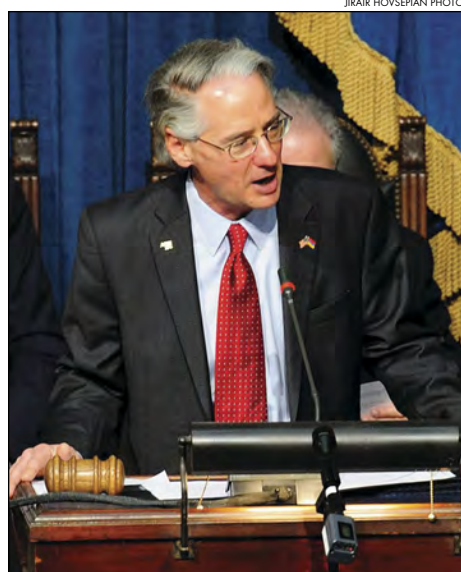
Muradian pointed out that Flynn had been a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1971 to 1979, mayor of Boston from 1984 to 1993, and US ambassador to the Vatican from 1993 to 1997. He said, "Ambassador Raymond Flynn has long been a friend of the Armenian community." Flynn raised millions of dollars for medical aid and assistance for victims of the 1988 Armenian earthquake and helped organize a humanitarian tour to Armenia.

Flynn reminisced that in his childhood he grew up with a number of Armenian Americans in Boston neighborhoods who were family friends and became familiar with Armenian culture. He said, "This was a culture we came to respect and understand." He read studies about Armenia, and learned from George Keeverian. Flynn said he was proud that he was able to raise money for aid from many non-Armenians as well as Armenians for the Armenian earthquake victims.

He stressed the power of one voice, and the importance of each person in the struggle against injustice in the world. He related an anecdote about a retired telephone worker setting in motion a movement to rectify an injustice in the US.

On a different level, Flynn said, "I have never been more proud to be a Catholic than I was when Pope Francis called the atrocities of 1915 Genocide – that opened up the door!" This happened, he continued, because of people who refused to forget about the past.

He pointed out that genocide continues to



State Rep. Jonathan Hecht serving as master of ceremonies.

their legacy, to ensure that the world never forgets. As humans, as Americans, we must ensure that human spirit outshines inhumanity. Today's commemoration will help us renew that commitment."

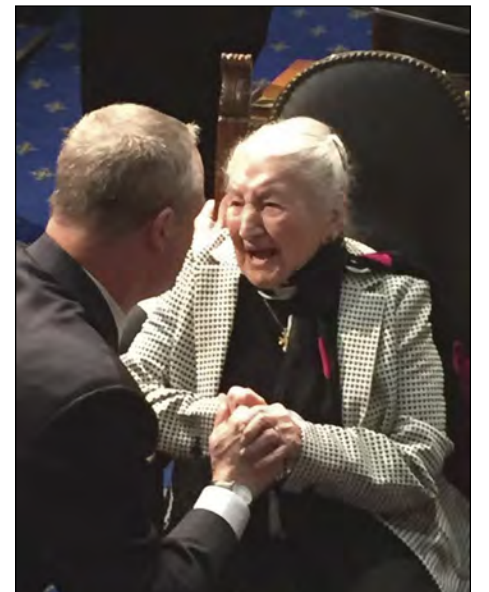
Sen. Edward Markey, a strong and vocal supporter of recognition of the Armenian Genocide, spoke next. As a US Representative, he represented Waltham, Belmont and Watertown, the heart of the Armenian-American community, and, he said, "Thus far, in my life, I have never met an unsuccessful Armenian-American in our country. Our job is to help to insure that there are no unsuccessful Armenians in Armenia. We are here to continue this effort, to make sure that we give the sup-

ties for their work on behalf of the Armenian community. Dusty Rhodes and her team at Conventures were recognized for their efforts planning the Armenian Genocide centennial events and the recent visit of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan. Conventures Director of Special Projects David Balfour joined Rhodes on the stage.

The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1 was recognized for its support for numerous Armenian events on a local, national and international level when called upon. Among other things, it consistently underwrote transportation costs for the State House Armenian Genocide commemoration and provided volunteers to ensure its success, as well as supported the Armenian Heritage Park. Present Ararat Lodge Commander Armen Bogossian, and two former Grand Commanders, including Haig Deranian, represented the Knights.

The Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley, founded in 2008, was recognized for efforts to educate students in the Merrimack Valley area in public schools about the Armenian Genocide. Tom Vartabedian, Dro Kanayan and Dr. Ara Jeknavorian were present to receive the commendation.

Muradian introduced the keynote speaker,



Governor Charlie Baker on his Facebook account wrote: "Maybe my favorite moment last week - meeting Starrie Alemian, a 106-year-old survivor of the Armenian Genocide - after my remarks during the Armenian Genocide Commemoration ceremony at the State house. What a very special person."



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Heritage Park Event Commemorates Genocide Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

Karabagh) as well as the plight of forced immigrants around the world. Many speakers referred to the symbolic location of the park, in a city that had so many ties to the early promoters of democracy in the US as well as people who helped Armenians during their darkest times.

Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian paid tribute to the unity and the strength of the Armenian community which had led to the taking down of an anti-Armenian billboard right outside the park only days before.

Angrily, he accused various newspapers where just this week full-page ads were placed with the same design as the billboard, as having taken "blood money."

"It all started with the billboard here," he said.



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian



From left, Rev. Krikor Sabounjian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Rev. Arakel Aljalian

The area, Koutoujian said, twins Armenian history with that of the progressive Bostonians who in nearby Faneuil Hall, during the days of the Genocide, had advocated for and succeeded in sending help to the victims.

"The park is a testament to our survival, to our saints and martyrs," he said. He added it was a special place visited by President Serzh Sargsyan (alternately spelled Serge Sargisian) and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II during their visits to the US.

He said the ties between Boston and Armenia were strengthened by the work of the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City group as well as the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy where about a dozen diplomats from Armenia come to study regularly.

Koutoujian stressed that Armenians, along with Assyrians and Greeks, all Christian minorities, were decimated by the Ottoman and later Turkish authorities.

He gave special thanks to the North End community and former governor, Deval Patrick, for their support for the creation of the park.

Adam Strom, director of scholarship and innovation at Facing History and Ourselves in Brookline, spoke about the importance of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, not just for Armenians, but for people everywhere.

"I am not Armenian yet this history affects me profoundly," he said. "It is an Armenian story and a human story."

Strom said that he regards himself as a human being "who lives on this planet with responsibilities."

He added, "Some acts are so terrible that all of us are injured" as a result, and the Armenian Genocide is one such act.

Strom then recited the story of how attorney Raphael Lemkin, who himself has lost many family members to the Holocaust, came up with the word "genocide" to describe what had happened to the Armenians.

Dr. Suzanne Moranian, the president of the Armenian International Women's Association, combined history, psychology and poetic imagery in her comments. She said her talk was in memory of her family, many of whose members had perished in Aintab.

"Armenian ghosts are wandering and haunting Anatolia," she noted.

The genocide has left a lingering affect, an "intergenerational trauma," as psychologists refer to it, she explained.

As a result of this trauma, she said Armenians must choose to be "upstanders" rather than bystanders. Thus, she explained, Armenians must take the paradoxical position of keeping the Genocide memory alive within us, so that we can hold on to the empathy needed to help other peoples who have similarly suffered.

She quoted Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

She then asked, "We know when it [the Genocide] began,



Many bunches of flowers were left at the abstract sculpture of Armenian Heritage Park.

but the question is, when does a genocide end?"

Armenian arts, industry and language, all are vanishing from Turkey to this day, she said. Thus, she said, "I would suggest that it has not ended."

The final speaker, Shant Mardirossian, Near East Foundation Board Chairman Emeritus, spoke about the history of the Armenian Genocide, the Near East Foundation and New England.

Several women from the region, he said, were instrumental in helping Armenian orphans. In addition, he said it is important to remember the legacy that those Armenian survivors conveyed to those who came after them. "They taught us how to laugh, sing and pray again," he said.

The day's activities had started with several hundred young people protesting in front of the Turkish Consulate on St. James Avenue at 1.30 p.m., before making their way to the Heritage Park, walking all the way with their signs and flags. The protest had been organized by the local Armenian Revolutionary Federation and Armenian Youth Foundation chapters.

While the Armenian Heritage Park program hit many somber notes, Armenian music, poetry and dance brought a smile to all and injected a dose of energy into the day.

Several young girls next recited a poem by Gevorg Emin, titled "Zarmanali Hay," or wondrous Armenian. In addition, two girls sang patriotic songs about Armenia and Artsakh. And finally, the Sayat Nova Dance Company performed three energetic numbers.

Ani Zargarian served as emcee for the program.

(All photos courtesy of the Boston Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee and Ken Martin)

take place in the world. The killings of Christians in the Middle East is one example. Armenians must continue to bring their story to the public's attention in a grassroots movement for freedom and justice today, he added.

Rep. James Miceli introduced the musical program presented by the Zankagner Performing Arts Ensemble, with Artistic Director Hasmik Konjoyan, and a moving performance by Emily Gasparian on violin and her mother Jasmin Atabekyan on piano. Miceli proudly stated that he was Armenian on his mother's side.

Dr. Jack Keveryan then announced that the Keveryan family was organizing an annual scholarship program in memory of former Massachusetts Speaker George Keveryan. Jack, brother of the late Speaker, said that the family intends to create an award "that will be truly inspiration in a world...that must never forget that certain basic principles of humanity and justice are critical to the survival of our society and civilization."

Keveryan said that in his family, the Armenian Genocide and the Great Depression were "the most important events that shaped our lives," though they happened either before or just after the Keveryan children were born. Even as a high school valedictorian, Keveryan said, his brother George had identified his core beliefs. As a politician, George became known as "the speaker who believed in democracy," and one who "helped countless people in need...without expecting anything in return."

He also was the one to institute the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the State House 31 years ago.



Sen. Edward Markey about to shake hands with Sheriff Peter Koutoujian at left.

State Sen. Will Brownsberger introduced Gov. Charlie Baker. The governor initially directed part of his speech to the many children in the audience. He said that there are some people who refuse to acknowledge history, and the terrible things that were done to Armenians 101 years ago. It is important to honor and recognize that history, he said.

Turning to the broader audience, Baker said, "The Armenian community has been an incredible asset, culturally, economically, and in almost every way that I can think of, to the rich tapestry that is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And we are honored and pleased that so many people from the Armenian

community has done for the people here in Massachusetts and for the culture and the community that is Massachusetts, and we will always, always have your back."

Before leaving, he went over to speak with the lone Armenian Genocide survivor at the event, Asdghig "Starrie" Alemian, 106 years old, and asked what she was thinking of today. He then told the audience that she said it was her parents, and that this shows the personal nature of genocide. It affects families and individuals, who lose their loved ones.

Afterwards, Brownsberger thanked the participants and organizers of the event. Fr. Mikael Der Kosroffian of Soorp Asdvadzadzin

community chose to make Massachusetts their home." He described the recent visit of the president of Armenia to the State House, with a special ceremonial reception followed by lunch in the State House. He said, "It was a glorious day, and we were thrilled to have him here."

The governor ended with the following very touching and heartening words: "I just want you to know, speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the people of Massachusetts, that we are truly grateful for everything the Armenian

Armenian Apostolic Church, gave the benediction and closing prayers.

The event officially was hosted by Brownsberger and Representatives Hecht, Rogers, Lawn, Muradian, and Miceli. The presence of members of the consular corps, leaders of human rights groups, and a number of other Massachusetts officials gave added gravity and community support to the occasion. The following were publicly recognized: State Rep. Kevin Honan of Brighton; State Rep. James Kelcourse of Amesbury; State Rep. Joseph W. McGonagle, Jr., of Everett; Massachusetts Councilor Marilyn Devaney; Watertown Town Council Vice President Vincent Piccirilli and Town Councilor Lisa Feltner; Vice Chair of the Belmont Board of Selectman Sami Baghdady and Selectman Jim Williams; Canadian consul general David Alward; Honorary Consul of Poland Marek Le niewski-Laas; Acting Consul General of Germany Helmut Landen; Consul General of France Valéry Freland; Honorary Council of Chile Dr. Philip Charles; Amy Grunder, representative of the Massachusetts Immigrants and Refugee Advocacy Coalition; Robert Trestan of the Anti-Defamation League; and Eric Cohen from the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur.

After the formal event concluded, a reception was held at the Grand Staircase at which Kanayan and Deranian offered thanks informally for the Joint Senate and House Resolutions to their organizations. Filmmaker Roger Hagopian screened a video, "Armenia: Survival of a Nation," which he created especially for this event.

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO

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# Arts & Living

## NAASR's 62nd Annual Assembly To Feature Talk By Ambassador Shougarian

BELMONT, Mass. – The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will hold its 62nd Annual Assembly of Members on Saturday, May 14, at its headquarters, 395 Concord Ave. The assembly will be convened at noon and lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m.

After the luncheon, the featured speaker at the Assembly will be Rouben Shougarian of Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Armenia's first ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Shougarian will give a talk entitled "Building a New Generation of Armenian Leaders: The Tavitian Scholarship Program at the Fletcher School." Current Tavitian Scholars as well as alumni in the Boston area will be present as NAASR's guests for the luncheon and lecture.

"We're honored to have Ambassador Shougarian with us to talk about developing new leaders for Armenia through the Tavitian Scholars at Tufts' Fletcher School," said NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius.

Shougarian served as Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister (1999-2005), Ambassador to Italy, Spain and Portugal (2005-2008), and Armenia's first Ambassador to the United States (1993-1999). He also served as a senior staffer for the Armenian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs (1991), and a senior foreign policy aide and spokesperson for



Rouben Shougarian

President Levon Ter-Petrosian (1992). He teaches conflict and area studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Following the luncheon and lecture, those attending the 62nd Assembly of Members will be informed about NAASR's ongoing efforts to further Armenian studies, research, and publication. Reports will be presented by the Board of Directors on organizational, informational, academic, and financial matters; and the election of Directors will be held. In addition, there will be reports by the Assembly's special committees on Nominations, Constitution and Rules, New Business and Resolutions, and Auditing.

The assembly will be chaired by NAASR Board Chairman Raffi P. Yeghiayan of Lexington, and Stepan Piligian of Westford will serve as Secretary of the Assembly.

The sessions are open to all NAASR members in good standing (with dues paid for the current calendar year), who "have the right to attend, be heard, and vote."

NAASR welcomes non-members to attend the luncheon and subsequent program. However, luncheon reservations should be made by May 9.



Geoffrey Robertson

## Armenian Assembly of America Holds Sold-Out Program with Geoffrey Robertson

LOS ANGELES – On Wednesday, April 20, the Armenian Assembly of America hosted a book presentation of *An Inconvenient Genocide: Who Now Remembers the Armenians?* by United Kingdom's leading human rights attorney and author Geoffrey Robertson QC in Universal City. The event sold out, reaching over capacity.

"The Armenian Assembly of America was proud to feature a giant in the field of international human rights to speak to us about his findings while researching the history that led to the indisputable Armenian Genocide," Assembly Board of Trustees Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian said. "The Armenian Assembly is eager to keep this momentum going as the Assembly's Western Region office continues to do similar substantive work. Mihran Toumajan and Aline Maksoudian went above and beyond to ensure this event was a success."

During the event, Barsamian discussed the Assembly's work in Washington, the Nagorno Karabagh Republic's right to self-determination, and Turkey's irresponsible actions in the region, with a direct message to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"Mr. Erdogan, stop killing your own people. Stop killing your Kurdish population. Stop killing Christians in the region, and stop promoting violence against Karabagh Armenians," Barsamian stated during his speech.

see ASSEMBLY, page 13



Armenian Assembly of America Southern California Regional Council (SCRC) Member Al Cabraloff, Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, Western Region Manager Aline Maksoudian, SCRC Member Jim Melikian, Board of Trustees Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Key Note Speaker Geoffrey Robertson, Board of Trustees Assistant Secretary Lisa Kalustian, SCRC Member Margaret Mgrublian, Board of Trustees Member Taline Yacoubian, and SCRC Member Richard Mushegian.

## Prof. Richard Hovannisian Speaks At Cleveland Humanities Festival

CLEVELAND – Richard Hovannisian, Professor Emeritus at UCLA, Chancellor's Fellow at Chapman University, and Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Southern California as a consultant for the Shoah Foundation, was in Cleveland in April 4-6 for back-to-back events relating to remembrance of and learning from the Armenian Genocide.

At Case Western Reserve University, Hovannisian was a key speaker at the inaugural Cleveland Humanities Festival organized by the University's Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities. Prof. Peter E. Knox, the new Director for the Center, selected "Remembering War" as this year's theme for the Festival.

Hovannisian's topic was "Under Cover of War: The

Armenian Genocide and Its Continuing Ramifications." The capacity audience of more than 200 people was captivated as they learned about the relationship of the Armenian Genocide to



Richard Hovannisian

World War I and its relationship to the Holocaust one generation later and continuing crimes against humanity. The Q & A that followed included brisk discussions and possible international measures to deal with the scourge. A reception of Armenian pastries ended the event.

On April 5, Richard Hovannisian was invited to speak at the Federal Building in Cleveland to connect the Armenian Genocide and its lessons with the Holocaust and massive civil rights violations in its annual Holocaust Remembrance Observation program. John Luckas, chief of staff for Finance and Accounting Service, Department of Defense, opened the program. Dzaghigh Pounardjian, a Department of Defense employee and chair of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee, introduced the speaker after sharing her own personal family's past and current impact of the continuing turmoil in Syria today.

Hovannisian delivered a powerful message on the theme of "Learning through Acts of Courage." Several hundred employees in Cleveland, and remote connections, listened as the speaker integrated the experience of the Armenian Genocide into the daily lives of students and the public today.

Cleveland Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee's Ara Bagdasarian and Kevan Asadorian initiated conversations with Case Western Reserve University to include Hovannisian in this inaugural Cleveland Humanities Festival on April 4. Pounardjian invited Hovannisian and organized the April 5 talk at the Federal Building.

Richard and Vartiter Hovannisian were guests of honor at a reception at the Armenian Church of St. Gregory of Narek on the evening of April 5. Ara Bagdasarian and Father Hratch Sargsyan welcomed the couple and reflected on the importance of the recent programs relating to the Armenian Genocide, before presenting Hovannisian with a beautiful commemorative plaque. The church's chorale group enriched the evening prior to enjoyable reception.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Call of The Crane

A Genocide Chronicle by  
Haygan Mardikjan

By Arthur Hagopian

"Who remembers the Armenians?," Hitler once taunted.

History has made a mockery of his infamous claim, for who does not remember and mourn the destruction of a million and a half innocent Armenians a century ago? Dispossessed, driven out of their homes, cast out into the desert, annihilated for no other reason other than that they worshipped a different God.

April 24, 1915, a blot on the history of mankind, a dark, damning episode in the annals of the Turkish nation that still has problems admitting culpability for the genocide.

While Germany beats its breast and bewails its horrent Nazi past, Turkey continues to wallow in denial, despite the relentless thunderstorm of documentary evidence categorically incriminating it.

*The Call of the Crane*, by Haygan Mardikjan, a descendant of Genocide survivors, is one of the latest to jolt the consciousness of man.

The book, artfully translated into English by Sarah Owen, traces the blood-splattered footsteps of Mardikjan's grandparents, Hayganoush and Zakar, on their forced, doomed march towards their Calvary.

Prodded and pushed by their merciless Turkish herders along the burning sands of the desert, they were to endure a harrowing ordeal before their miraculous salvation and eventual sanctuary in foreign lands.

There, they would hear again the call of the crane, the *groong* as it sang:

"The heart of the wanderer (*gharib*) has turned to blood

"The heart full of longing

"When autumn comes, go to my land, 'groong,' and give greetings to my love."

Mardikjan admits it was not easy to coax the story of survival out of her grandparents' traumatized memories. They had survived only through the intercession and col-

lusion of some decent, sympathetic Turks, a fact the author does not shy away from acknowledging.

"I would like to thank the Turks who helped the Armenians during the deportations. I would like to thank the Turks who helped my family. Without them, my family would probably not have survived the genocide."

The Turkish soldiers had driven her grandparents, their friends, kin and neighbors from their ancestral village on a predetermined trek towards oblivion and perdition. There was no coming back home.

In the security and serenity of their adopted home in the Netherlands, Hayganoush and Zakar wanted to forget the horrendous inferno in which they had been engulfed. Both victims and eyewitnesses, they did not want to remember the unspeakable terror and despair that gripped mothers as they tried to save their children from the grasp of butchers and rapists by throwing them into the waters of a river, their shrieks of anguish drowning the gurgle of the turbulent waters.

As her appalled grandfather looked down upon the watery grave in the bosom of the Euphrates, "he could not see the water in places, there were so many children in the river ..." At the foot of the bridge over the river that they were crossing, three little ones were tangled in the rocks: "you could clearly see they were triplets," Zakar told Mardikjan.

Her grandmother's aunt Mariam resorted to another desperately drastic bid to save her three children from the Turks: she poisoned them, preferring a quick and painless death for them to the certain torment and suffering that lay in store for them at the hands of the soldiers.

At one well where the deportees had stopped, two women tried to commit suicide and end their misery by pushing their heads under the water.

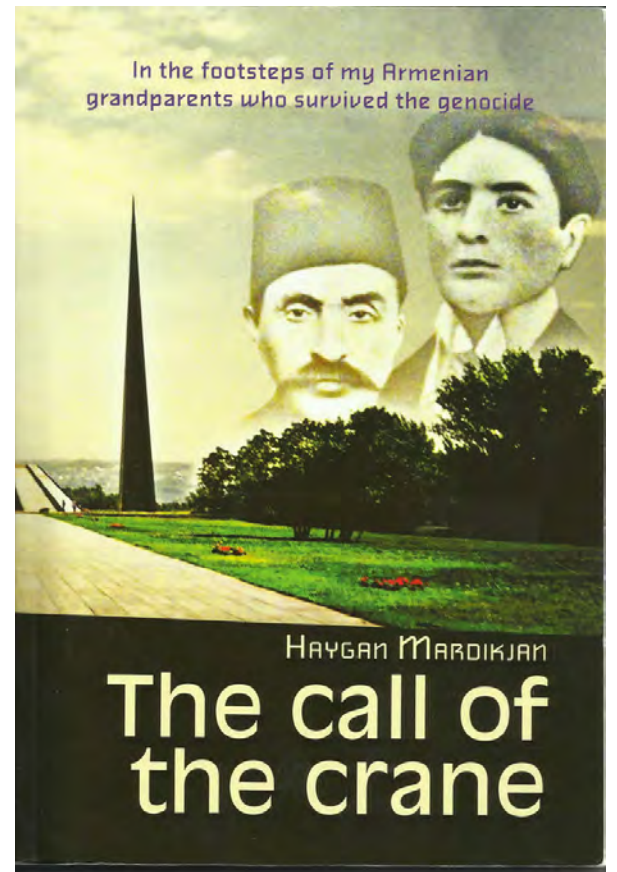
One morning, the soldiers spread out their handkerchiefs at everyone's feet and demanded that the deportees contribute towards their "upkeep," preferably in gold coins.

Two of her grandfather's older cousins tried to dupe the soldiers by swallowing the few coins they had hidden in their clothing. When the soldiers found out, they slashed the women's throats with their bayonets, intent on getting at the treasure one way or another.

Understandably, the author wanders why the deportees did not offer any resistance, or put up a struggle, against their vastly outnumbered captors.

The answer, she finds out, is that even if they had succeeded in overpowering the soldiers and escaping, there was nowhere they could go to find refuge.

In homage to the memory of the Armenian martyrs, Mardikjan decides on a courageous and risky undertaking: she ventures into Turkey and retrace her grandparent's footsteps, visiting all the "places of which they had



spoken with love, but also with great sadness."

It is a plaintive and painful journey but she comes back with a semblance of hope for the future.

In the spirit of magnanimity and nobility that characterizes Armenians, she can also see beyond the darkness and the evil.

"My grandfather always knew that he would never see the day on which Turkey admitted to the genocide. However, it has been his hope and wish that his grandchildren would live to see this event... Only then may the victims rest in peace and the bereaved be able to give the past a place. Then too, the Turks can finally put behind them a dark page in their history and focus on a peaceful future living in harmony with the many ethnic minorities that have their roots in the land currently known as Turkey, going back to a time long before Turkey even existed."

The 164-page book published last year by Uitgeverij Boekscout.nl Soest of the Netherlands, is adorned with 40 pages of pictures and genealogical information.

Owen dedicates it to Raffi Hagopian, a classmate of her brother, whose dreams were nipped in the bud at a tender age.

## Armenian Assembly of America Holds Sold-Out Program with Geoffrey Robertson

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The Assembly co-chair introduced Robertson, who spoke about the latest edition of his book. *An Inconvenient Genocide: Who*

*Now Remembers the Armenians?* was originally published in 2014, and then released for a second printing in 2015 to reflect the Armenian community's achievements and

developments as a result of the centennial year commemorations of the Armenian Genocide. He applauded the Armenian American community's tireless efforts to incorporate the

Armenian Genocide in school education.

"Unless we learn from the Armenian Genocide, we will not understand the Holocaust and genocides that follow," Robertson explained.

Robertson also spoke about the rights of the citizens of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic and believes "independence is possible."

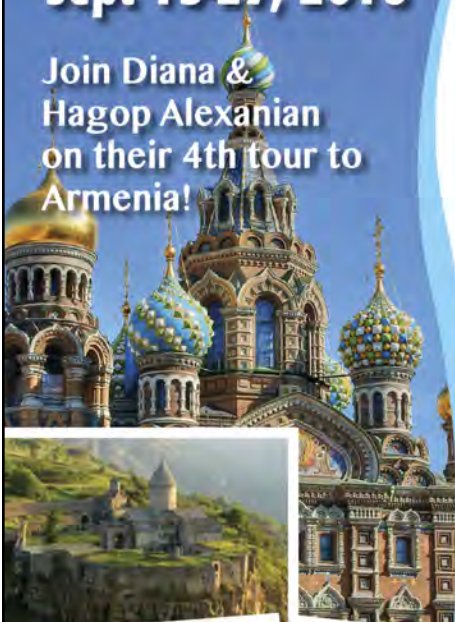
"Armenians, the world over, are grateful for [Mr. Robertson] for bravely speaking the truth in the face of systematic denials and obfuscation of historical facts by Turkey and Azerbaijan not only on the veracity of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian nation's rightful case for restitutive justice, but also as a champion for the self-determination and inviolability of the basic human rights of the heroic and proud Armenians of Artsakh," Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan said.

"It was an honor to host Mr. Robertson and to not only hear his presentation about his book but also his thoughts and feelings regarding the current conflict in Nagorno Karabagh, which so many in our community are concerned about," Western Region Manager and Community Relations Coordinator Aline Maksoudian added.

Special guests in attendance include designer Michael Aram, Deputy Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles Valery Mkrtooumian, Facing History and Ourselves Los Angeles Office Director Liz Vogel and Advisory Board Member Charlene Achki-Repko, and Congressman Adam Schiff's (D-CA) District Representative Pamela Marcello.

**Sept 13-27, 2016**

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During your 10 nights in Armenia visit Yerevan, standing in the shadow of Mt. Ararat, & the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial; Khor Virab, which began as a chapel venerating St. Gregory in 642 AD; the 10th century monastery of Gandzasar housing relics of St. John the Baptist, the

9th century Tatev Monastery on a plateau overlooking a breathtaking river gorge; the 7th century Fortress of Amberd; the medieval monastery of Geghard, partially carved out of the mountain; St. Echmiadzin Cathedral, and much much more!

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Phone: (248) 334.3636

Not included are fees & arrangements for Russian visa (approx. \$275pp), optional but highly recommended travel protection (\$289pp), lunches in Armenia, gratuities to tour guides & drivers, and personal expenses.



ARTS & LIVING

# City of Orphans Tells Story of Largest Orphanage in the World

BOSTON – In her new book, *The City of Orphans*, Nora Nercessian tells the story of the largest orphanage in the world, established in what was known in 1921 as Alexandropol, the largest and once prosperous city in Russian Armenia. After two six-months-long occupations in three years by Turkish forces, Alexandropol (later Leninakan and now Gumri) had become host to the largest orphanage in the world, housing around 25,000 orphans, almost all of them from Western Armenia.

This is the first time that the full story is being told. In the 640-page volume, Nercessian traces the events that led up to the formation of the City of Orphans, its expansion in the early 1920s, and eventual closing in 1931, in dramatic interludes.

The book centers on the unique enterprise Near East Relief initially launched in 1919, collecting Armenian orphans into a group of military barracks the Czar had built in Alexandropol to accommodate thousands upon thousands of imperial soldiers as well as a significant military arsenal to be used in wars against the Ottoman Empire. When the barracks were abandoned following the Russian Revolution in 1917, in agreements with the government of the First Republic of Armenia and subsequently with the Soviet

insisting on its prerogative to transform the Turkish Armenian orphans into citizens of a new Armenia.

In the aftermath of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, *The City of Orphans* may be seen as yet another study of the youngest remnants of the Armenian Genocide. It is that, but much more. It provides a micro history of the encounters between Western values and practices and societies in the cusp of development.

This new book looks at life in the orphanage through many prisms: quotidian details, necessary for the operation of such a vast enterprise; the interaction of orphans with American relief workers and Armenian employees; the unremitting negotiations between Near East Relief and Armenian government officials, all recreated through the use of official archives in Armenia and the US, diaries, memoirs and letters by orphans and relief workers, most of them hitherto unpublished, and the worldwide press. Most importantly, the author places special emphasis on the feelings, perceptions and world-views of the orphans themselves while at *The City of Orphans*.

The volume names (with photographs if available) more than 700 American and Armenian personnel who ran the vast orphanage, with short biographies when possible. In addition, *The City of Orphans* lists the names of over 12,000 of the orphans, including date and place of birth and father's name. The volume is also enriched by more than 200 photographs.

*The City Of Orphans* is a multifaceted and fast-paced history of the interaction between philanthropy, its potential and limitations, sparing no detail, positive or negative. Among the orphans was such later Soviet Armenian literary and artistic luminaries as the writers Khachik Dashtents, Hovhannes Shiraz, Sarmen and the singer Shoghik Mkrtchyan, and many more.

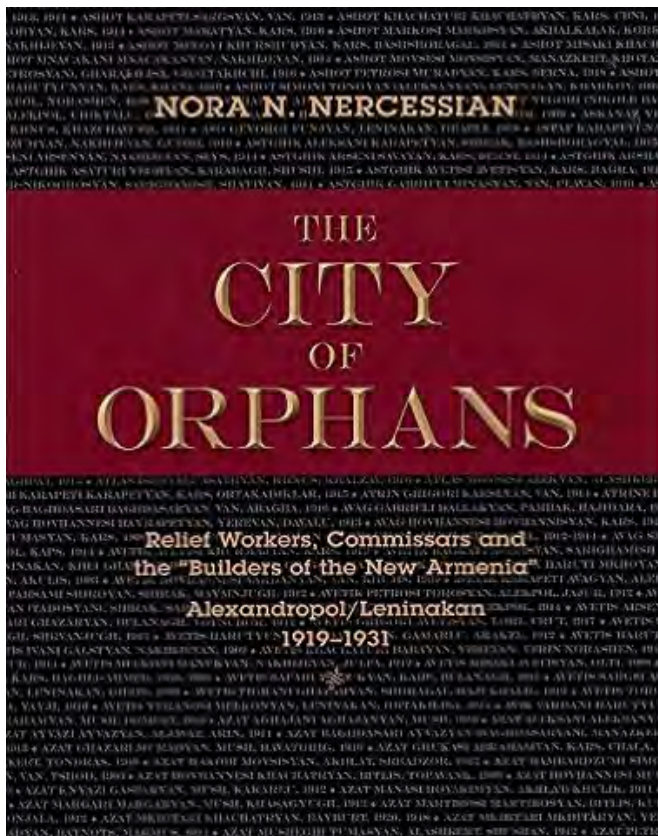
The easy to follow narrative is more than relevant today as it provides, in the words of Prof. Muge Göcek of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, “deep insights into the potential of philanthropy, as well as its limitations and the complex interaction of violence, childhood and survival.”

Author and actor Eric Bogosian describes Nercessian's *The City of Orphans* as “full of intense surprises as some twenty thousand war orphans survive (and thousands of others don't) under the watchful eye of the American Protestant aid workers who themselves are being watched by the Communists.”

Much is known about the orphanages in the Middle East, but little about the most populated one in Alexandropol. This is also a much more detailed study of the day-to-day operations of orphanages and the larger politics involved in its continuing operations in Soviet Armenia than previously known.

Nercessian, formerly of Harvard University and author of a number of works, brings to life the orphans whose often-strong identities have not been fully appreciated. From seemingly lifeless and almost nameless bodies, the orphans developed their own voices even before they left the orphanage. The volume offers an experience or an encounter of universal significance on every page and in every story.

The book may be ordered on line at <http://cityoforphans.myprintdesk.net/DSF>



Armenian government, the Near East Relief populated the barracks with orphans collected from locations in Armenia and the southern Caucasus.

The close to 170 military barrack buildings, if lined back to back, would extend over two miles. These barracks were transformed into dormitories, workshops, classrooms, and hospitals for the orphans. By 1922, the “City of Orphans” was described in hundreds of newspapers and journals in the US, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, as the largest orphanage the world had ever seen and the centerpiece of Near East Relief's monumental humanitarian effort in orphan care in the Near East in the early 1920s.

The city of orphans expanded and flourished just as Armenia became a Soviet state. While the US had no diplomatic mission to the Soviet Union during the 1920s, the American Near East Relief and the Soviet Armenian Commissars engaged in a unique collaboration that lasted until the full ascendancy of Stalin. Near East Relief withdrew permanently in 1931, against the background of the early Moscow show trials, which foretold Stalin's purges a few years later.

Shrouded in a complex political reality, these 25,000 orphans grew up in the former military barracks of the Czar, under the tutelage of American Near East Relief workers and Soviet Armenian Commissars, each party



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Garbanzo and Red Onion Salad with Tarragon Dressing

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans garbanzo beans (chick peas), washed and drained
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced thinly
- 1/2 medium green or yellow bell pepper, sliced thinly
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped (plus top greens)
- 2-3 green onions or spring onions, sliced or chopped
- 1 small jar pimento, drained and chopped
- Fresh chopped mint

### Tarragon Dressing

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2-3 tablespoons red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon (or 1 teaspoon dried tarragon leaves)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- Juice of one lemon
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar or honey
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika or cayenne pepper
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste

#### PREPARATION:

Make salad dressing in a small bowl or container, chill, or set aside. Place salad ingredients in medium bowl, toss with some of the dressing, add or garnish with some chopped mint, and serve. Serve extra dressing on the side, if desired.

Serves 4.

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

For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>

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Keith Lockhart  
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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**APRIL 29 — United for Artsakh.** 7:30 p.m., Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. The list of performers is growing, as is the list of the event sponsors. As of now, the event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, ARF Sardarabad Gomideh, Leola Sassouni and Shushi chapters of the ARS, the AYF Greater Boston Nejdeh Chapter, Hamazkayin-Boston, Boston Homenetmen, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church and School and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. The performers' list includes: Jasmine Atabekyan, Arev Ensemble, John Berberian Ensemble, Hamazkayin Ereboundi Dance Ensemble, Sevag Khatchadourian, Maroukian Trio, Gegham Margarian, Meghri Choir, Shahan Nercessian, Markos Shahbazyan and Zangakner Children's Choir. All proceeds collected through this benefit concert will go to the NKR Ministry of Finance's bank account to support fellow Armenians in need

**APRIL 30 — Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble** will present a vocal concert featuring Armenian children at 5 p.m., Ellsworth Theatre, Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill. New production to pay tribute to mothers and the Motherland. 400 Heath St., Chestnut Hill. Tickets \$25.

**APRIL 30 — Armenian / American Dance,** Saturday, 7 p.m. - 12 a.m., 1 Market Street, Lawrence, Complimentary Coffee & Dessert, Cash Bar, 50/50 Raffle, Armenian music provided by Jason Naroian Ensemble, American music provided by DJ Kory Sirmaian. Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. Melanee Naroian:(978) 683-0613, Lucy Sirmaian: (978) 683-9121. Sponsored by The Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Women's Guild.

**MAY 1 — The Armenian Museum of America (ALMA),** 2 p.m., Direct Help for Armenian People (DHAP) and the Amaras Art Alliance are hosting a concert: "Tribute to Armenia." Songs will be performed by the finalists of the annual Armenia Youth Talent competition. The concert is dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia. Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the opening. This event is free and open to the public. This event is made possible by a contribution from the Dadourian Foundation.

**MAY 2 — St. James Men's Club meeting, with speakers Tom Vartabedian and E. Philip Brown.** Vartabedian is a writer and photographer and Brown is a world history teacher and historian. They will speak about their new book, Armenians of Merrimack Valley. Social Hour and mezza at 6.15 p.m., Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner, 7 p.m. \$15 per person. St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA. Ladies welcome.

**MAY 5 — St. Gregory Armenian Church Avak luncheon,** noon, Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main St., North Andover. Speaker, Lisa Kouchakdjian, originator, "Love on a Plate." Come share and appreciate some wonderful Armenian recipes. Public invited.

**MAY 5 — "Can Feminists Revive a Nation? Afterlife of Armenians in Post-Genocide Turkey."** Reception and illustrated talk with MIT Professor Lerna Ekmekcioglu on her new book, Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey. 7:30 p.m. Armenian Museum of America, Watertown. Co-sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association, National Association for Armenian Studies & Research, and Armenian Museum of America. Info: 617-926-0171 or info@aiwainternational.org; 617-489-1610 or hq@naasr.org.

**MAY 7 — The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe in Haverhill will have a one-day food festival** on Saturday at the church hall. 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Armenian Pride Food Festival. Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Hall, 110 Main St.,

Haverhill. Meal Choice of One: Losh/Chicken/Kheyma, with pilaf, salad, and hot/cold garnish Additional children's meal of hot dog & chips: also available will be pastry, choereg, Armenian cheese, and cold drinks.

**MAY 7 — Experience Public Art! during ArtWeek Boston.** Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. At 1 p.m. - World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One At 1 Together with people in cities and towns worldwide, walk the labyrinth at 1pm joining this annual international initiative of The Labyrinth Society in collaboration with the Labyrinth Guild of New England and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park. For first-time walkers at 12:45pm, an Introduction to walking a labyrinth with Chiara Meghian Zenati, Certified Labyrinth Facilitator. At 1:30 pm - Reception to View The 2016 Configuration of the Abstract Sculpture Welcome: Nanore Barsoumian, Editor, *Armenian Weekly*; Public Art: Lucas Cowan, Public Art Curator, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy; Personal Perspective: Alin Gregorian, Editor, *Armenian Mirror Spectator*; Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and Eastern Lamejun Bakers. All are invited.

**MAY 12 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents the Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series,** with John Prendergast, "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Lessons Learned and Hope for the Future." 7 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. John is founder of "The Enough Project," an initiative to end genocide and crimes against humanity and co-founder of "The Sentry," a new investigative initiative focused on dismantling the networks financial conflict and atrocities. Reception and book signing to follow talk. Open and free to the public. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**MAY 14 — RESCHEDULED — Presentation of a book by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian** on the life and legacy of Armenian American pioneer and philanthropist Hagop Bogigian. Saturday, at 4 p.m. at Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street (Rte. 3) Arlington.

**MAY 14 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston continues its 30th anniversary celebrations** with a night of song and dance with beloved singer Arabo Ispiryan, direct from Armenia. Don't miss out on this night of pure Armenian entertainment. Come and celebrate with us as we sing and dance all night with Arabo. Generous appetizers (mezze) will be provided. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. To be held at St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mt, Auburn Street, Watertown. Tickets are available by calling Apo at 339-222-2410 or Hagop at 617-780-6295. VIP table seating at \$100/person (includes 1 free drink/person and a bottle of champagne for the table); Premium table seating at \$75/person (includes a bottle of champagne for the table); General seating: \$65. Please reserve your tickets early.

**May 15 — Annual Meeting & Program, Armenian International Women's Association.** Presentation by Anaide Nahikian, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, "The Challenges and Opportunities of Humanitarian Efforts in the Face of International Conflict." 2 p.m. Business Session; 3:30 p.m. Program; 4:15 p.m. Reception. Open to the public. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington. Info: 617-926-0171; info@aiwainternational.org.

**MAY 18 — Chefs Party for Our Park!** Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs, presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix, mingle and support a great cause. Advance Reservations only. To be acknowledged in the Evening Thank You, please respond by May 6. To receive an invitation, please email your name and email address to

info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**MAY 21 — Book Tour Schedule for Armenians of the Merrimack Valley.** Authors E. Philip Brown and Tom Vartabedian are embarking on a presentation tour and book signing of their new book. Vermette's Market, 6 Pond St., Amesbury, 10-2, book-signing only

**MAY 22 — Sunday, 2 p.m.,** the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) and the Composer's Union of Armenia are proud to present a concert: **Anmorats Yerker-Unforgettable Songs.** The concert, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of composers Alexander Ajemyan and Khachatur Avetisyan, will feature the voices of Nouné Karapetian, Michael Calmés, Knarik Nerkararian, and Garo Nichanian, accompanied by Nuné Hakobyan on piano. Maestro Konstantin Petrossian will serve as Music Director for the concert. Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the opening. This event is free and open to the public. The concert is made possible by a contribution from the Dadourian Foundation.

**MAY 27 — 65th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops,** Featuring Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart, Conductor; presenting Edvard Poghosian, cello. Presented by Friends of Armenian Culture Society. Symphony Hall, 301 Mass. Ave., Boston. For tickets and information, visit facsboston.org

**JUNE 20 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament** sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; Monday, 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf, as a sponsor or just for dinner. Details to follow. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

**SEPTEMBER 10 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston 30th anniversary gala.**

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park.** For families and friends. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Boston. 2-4 p.m. All are invited.

**SEPTEMBER 30 — OCTOBER 2 — 25th Anniversary Celebration.** Armenian International Women's Association. Charles Hotel, Cambridge.

**NOVEMBER 15 — Thank You Reception for All Supporters of Armenian Heritage Park.** Armenian Cultural and Educational Center. Watertown. 7:30 p.m. During the evening, supporters will receive the Armenian Heritage Park Commemorative Book, which will acknowledge all supporters in the category of giving that combines all their contributions since the campaign's inception. Deadline for first time supporters and for supporters to increase their contribution is September 22. Contributors are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All supporters are invited.

**NOVEMBER 19 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association will hold its 40th annual luncheon/auction.** Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont St., Watertown. Details to follow.

**DECEMBER 18 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk,** Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. 5-6:30 p.m. All are invited.

## NEW YORK

**JUNE 4-5 — Tekeyan Cultural Association's Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents the AGBU Satamian Theater Group from LA, in "Funny Money,"** (in Western Armenian). Written by Ray Cooney. Translated and Directed by Krikor Satamian. Saturday, June 4th, at 8pm and Sunday, June 5th at 4pm at Oradell Elementary School, 350 Propect Avenue Oradell, NJ 07649. Tickets: \$35 & \$50. For tickets please call: Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Talar Sesetyan Sarafian 201-240-8541, or Missak Boghosian 212-819-0097.

AGBU Nubarian Library Publishes New Issue of *Études arméniennes contemporaines*

PARIS — In March 2016, the AGBU Nubarian Library released the sixth issue of its *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, a bilingual, biannual and multidisciplinary journal published in Paris. The articles in the latest issue — subtitled "Towards Inclusive Art Histories: Ottoman Armenian Voices Speak Back" — focus on Armenian arts in the Ottoman Empire.

The latest issue goes beyond art history to

reflect on the way Ottoman history has been treated by historians. The articles advocate challenging conventional understandings of history and critique dominant nationalist discourses. They also introduce into the historical debate silenced voices that have been deliberately excluded from history. In so doing, this volume aims to contribute to the discussion on creating inclusive, nuanced and just representa-

tions of complex pasts.

All articles are available for free on the journal's website: <https://eac.revues.org/>. As part of the revues.org database, *Études arméniennes contemporaines* is part of web-based versions of more than 400 humanities and social science journals in French and other languages. This editorial evolution enables the journal to contribute more substantively to the field of

Armenian studies. Contributors to this issue include Helin Anahit, Eray Çaylı, Vazken Khatchig Davidian, Aikaterini Gegisian, David Low, Gizem Tongo and Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan.

For more information on *Études arméniennes contemporaines* and to access its current and past issues, please visit <https://eac.revues.org/>.



## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

## Armenia in the Cauldron of Caucasian Politics

By Edmond Azadian

(Part II)

Azerbaijan is the cornerstone of Armenia's relations with Turkey.

As long as the Karabagh issue is not settled with Azerbaijan, it seems that there will be no improvement in the relations between Armenia and Turkey.

Since 1994 when a tenuous cease fire regime was established through the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk group-co-chaired by the US, France, and Russia has been handling the issue. On the surface it seems that all co-chairmen are on the same page, but since no solution has been found yet, it seems clear that the parties involved have conflicting interests and agendas.

Thus far the proposed legal framework is defined under Madrid principles, which in turn call for self-determination within the concept of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Even friendly countries, like Russia and Iran have been endorsing the principle of territorial integrity. The position of the Armenian side is that Karabagh attained its independence through the same process that Azerbaijan implemented using the provisions of the Soviet constitution extent at the time. Also the historic fact is that Karabagh has never been within the territory of Azerbaijan, even during the Soviet era. It has been an autonomous oblast, under the administrative jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, very much like the autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan.

Based on the principle of territorial integrity, Azerbaijan was able to pass four resolutions maligning Armenia at the United Nations Security Council through Ankara's leadership and with the solidarity of Islamic states.

The ceasefire on the contact line is violated on a daily basis and generic reprimands by the OSCE are directed to both parties, regardless of the facts on the ground.

Azerbaijan has been threatening to solve the conflict by force, and President Aliyev does not seem to be satisfied by the return of Karabagh and seven adjoining regions to Azerbaijan. He even claims that the territory of the Armenian Republic has been historic Azeri land.

The recent escalation was indicative of Baku's aggressive intentions. Every time Azerbaijan moves closer to Moscow, Ankara offers a bait by using the Armenian factor.

When Georgia attained its independence, there were 400,000 Armenians living in its territory, half of that number in the historic Armenian region of Javakhk. The central governments in Tbilisi have tried to depopulate the Armenian enclave through direct and indirect policies. At one point the Metzkheth Turks were invited back from Central Asia to settle in Javakhk. Also economic deprivation and political repression were used to force Armenians to abandon their historic territory.

During President Mikhail Saakashvili's administration, the same reckless policy resulted in the loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Tbilisi government has colluded with Turkey and Azerbaijan to isolate Armenia in all economic development projects. Energy pipelines and railway systems have been designed to bypass Armenia.

Georgia has made its intentions very clear: it wants to join NATO. But the West has been moving cautiously so as not to aggravate matters any further with Russia.

As a first step, the Georgian government has decided to host a Turkish military base on its territory. That plan will benefit Turkey more than the West, promoting its pan-Ottomanist designs.

Turkish money has inundated Georgia; especially as the region of Ajaria is under the indirect control of Turkey.

Recently Javakhk political activist Vahagn Chakhalyan issued an appeal under the title "No to the Turkification of Georgia."

Georgia is Armenia's main viable economic outlet to the world, the government in Armenia is forced to put up with all political indignities.

Iran is the only country with whom Armenia does not have any territorial dispute. With the lifting of the sanctions, some economic plans have been reactivated: a hydroelectric dam and the railway system, the latter to be financed by China.

During the Elchibey administration, the Baku government threatened to conquer and integrate Northern Azerbaijan in Iran with its own territory. It is estimated that 25-30 million Azeris live in Iranian Azerbaijan. That plan also was very handy for the West, which would benefit from the partition of a powerful Iran.

Israel and the West have long been planning to use Azerbaijan's territory as a launching pad for an attack against Iran. But the recent nuclear deal and Iran's strategic partnership with Russia have disrupted the implementation of that plan.

At this time, Armenia is looking to improve its economic ties with Iran. Iran-Azerbaijan relations have always a potential of flare up, especially when Baku keeps harping on the "one nation two states" political formula with Turkey.

The Caspian basin is also a bone of contention between Iran and Azerbaijan. Russia is also a party to that conflict. An unresolved issue is the status of the Caspian Sea; whether it is a lake or sea, so that international law can be fashioned accordingly. Once Azerbaijan began exploring gas deposits under uncharted waters of the Caspian Sea, Iran sent its warships to halt the explorations.

Armenian-Iranian relations do not have such underlying tensions.

**Armenia's Future**

Caught in the Russian sphere, Armenia will face all the dangers that threaten Russia's interests in the region. Although Armenia suffers for the consequences of its alliance with Russia, the economic benefits are not commensurate with the risks. The major benefit is Armenia's security in that dangerous neighborhood.

At this time, Armenia faces a grave situation of losing the critical mass of its population. The number-one priority is to improve the plight of the common citizens, which in turn will stir hope for the future. During the first year of independence, despite the darkness, lack of heat and bread, there was fervent hope for the future. It seems as if hope disappeared when the lights were turned on.

Only the improvement of the lives of people there can stop the flow of emigration and rekindle the hope for a better future.

## LETTERS

### ADL Tries to Sneak Back into Newton

To the Editor:

The recent incidents of anti-Jewish graffiti in Newton are deplorable. But for Mayor Setti Warren and School Superintendent David Fleishman to invite in the Anti-Defamation League's so-called "Peer Leadership Program" to purportedly educate students about bias is equally deplorable.

In September 2007, the Newton Human Rights Commission and Mayor David Cohen cut ties with the ADL's "No Place for Hate" program due to the national ADL's colluding directly with Turkey to defeat an Armenian Genocide resolution in the US Congress. Similarly for over a dozen other cities and the Massachusetts Municipal Association. They all understood that the ADL thereby lacked the moral authority to teach about human rights.

For proof directly from Jewish and Israeli media, see "Press Kit: Lobbying against

Recognition" at NoPlaceForDenial.com.

The national ADL, playing word games, still hasn't formally and unambiguously acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. And it still opposes US recognition of that genocide.

Newton students attending ADL programs are no doubt unaware of its collusion with Turkey, a well-known human rights violator.

Suppose an Armenian-American organization worked with Holocaust deniers against Holocaust acknowledgment. The mayor and superintendent would never invite it to Newton.

Former New England ADL Executive Director Andrew Tarsy acknowledges that the ADL "maintains an awkward state of semi-silence" regarding the Armenian Genocide. "Its vast education and inter-group relations programs continue to exclude the Armenian experience" (*Jewish*

*Journal*, March 17).

Newton School Superintendent David Fleishman condemns "cultural insensitivity" (Newton Tab, "Eliminating hate in our schools", March 23). Yet he himself appears insensitive to the national ADL's pitiless, unapologetic assault upon Armenians.

Jews in Newton and around the world have long rightfully condemned the ADL for repressing Armenian Genocide recognition. Newton's Human Rights Commission, however, seems to have conveniently forgotten its and Mayor Cohen's 2007 decision.

Moreover, as many fine organizations have anti-bias programs, there's no need for Newton to invite the ADL. A perfect alternative: Brookline-based Facing History and Ourselves, which also teaches about the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide.

David Boyajian  
Belmont, MA





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Who Should Be Pitied More: President Obama or Naive Armenians?

For eight years now, President Obama has failed to keep his campaign promise to call the Armenian Genocide a genocide. Yet, for some incomprehensible reason, which can only be described as naïveté, many Armenians in the United States and around the world have kept up the vain hope ever since 2009 – President Obama's first year in office – that he will use the term Armenian Genocide in 2010 or 2011 or 2012.

When he did not utter those words at the end of his first term in office, these naive Armenians were convinced that President Obama would pronounce them during his second and final term, starting in 2013. They wrongly reasoned that President Obama would be more likely to say genocide then, as he would not run for reelection, and therefore not worry about criticism from either Turkey or his domestic political opponents.

When President Obama continued his refusal to say Armenian Genocide, these same naive Armenians came up with a new reason to keep up their wishful thinking. They thought that since President Obama had dared to reverse the

long-standing restrictive US policy on Cuba, he would act with similar boldness on the Armenian Genocide issue. This, of course, proved to be a baseless speculation.

Finally, when all else failed, the naive Armenians expected President Obama to pronounce those two forbidden words on April 24, 2016; his last opportunity to do so. That prediction also did not materialize. In his latest statement, President Obama used every euphemism in the dictionary to describe what happened to the Armenians in 1915, except for the word genocide! Here are the results of the latest verbal gymnastics practiced by President Obama: “mass atrocity; deported; massacred; marched to their deaths; suffered; dark days; tragedy; violence; and horror.” Why is the leader of the most powerful country on earth torturing himself and his aides to come up with so many words, when a single word – genocide – would suffice?

Incredibly, some Armenians crossed all bounds of naïveté, by claiming that since President Obama used “Meds Yeghern” in his annual commemorative statements, that term should be viewed as a fulfillment of his campaign promise and an acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide. The problem is that Obama, as a presidential candidate, did not promise that if elected he would say “Meds Yeghern.” On the contrary, he promised to say Armenian Genocide and even insisted that “America deserves a President who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide; I will be that President.” Furthermore, “Meds Yeghern” is not a legal term and has no meaning for non-Armenians. If “Meds Yeghern” is the equivalent of Armenian Genocide, why would President Obama for eight years always use the former and never the latter? While Armenians may be naive, the same cannot be said about President Obama and his aides who know what they are saying and why!

There are two culprits in this nonsensical situation: The first is President Obama who gave a promise that he did not

keep, thus misleading all those who trusted him and voted for him; some twice! If President Obama does not mind leaving a legacy of not telling the truth to the American public, that is his problem and not that of the Armenian-American community.

The second culprit consists of all those who desperately, year after year, hoped that President Obama would use the words Armenian Genocide, even though there was no need for such a statement. The Armenian Genocide has been repeatedly recognized by the United States: in a legal document submitted by the US government to the World Court in 1951; two resolutions adopted by the House of Representatives in 1975 and 1984; and President Reagan's Presidential Proclamation of April 22, 1981. Why do Armenians seek the words Armenian Genocide, when it has already been stated by a previous president? Does every American president have to use that term before Armenians are satisfied that the Armenian Genocide is indeed recognized by the United States?

Unfortunately, most Armenians confuse the issue of genocide recognition with US governmental policy on Turkey. None of the other countries that are considered to have recognized the Armenian Genocide have an antagonistic policy vis-à-vis Turkey. Nor does the US. All of these countries balance genocide recognition with maintaining normal and even cordial relations with Turkey. The United States should not be construed as not having recognized the Armenian Genocide just because its leaders avoid using that term for misperceived political or economic reasons! One can condemn US policy towards Turkey without questioning its recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In fact, accusing the US government of not having recognized the Armenian Genocide, as many Armenians often do, casts doubt on the veracity of the Genocide and does a great disservice to the Armenian Cause.

# Why the Martyrs of the Armenain Genocide Unite Us Today

By Vito Nicastro

On April 23, in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, an historic event took place. There have been ecumenical services commemorating the Armenian Genocide before and that is good; this one was unique in the way we brought the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis to the Armenian people to life on the local level here in Boston. It was also a welcoming, an opening of our church, our house, to our Armenian brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the service, we acknowledged the vast and fruitful spiritual life of the Armenian people, first nation to become Christian in 301 A.D: over seventeen centuries of faithful witness; fidelity in the face of every sort of invasion and persecution; your saints, martyrs, monks, nuns, clergy, faithful, churches, monasteries, liturgy, hymnody, traditions, devotions, arts, and spirituality; St. Gregory the Illuminator, key to converting a nation; the alphabet invented by St. Mesrob to disseminate the Good News; the Church's corporal works of mercy set up by St. Nerses the Great; St Gregory of Narek, newest doctor of the Church; their history and influence on other countries throughout the world; an entire civilization that has grown up in the light of the Gospel. We revered their beautiful Christian heritage, adorned by God with spiritual treasures for all the Christian world: “a treasury from which” we in the Western Church have “drawn extensively- in liturgical practice, spiritual tradition, and law (Unitatis Redintegratio, 14).” Their tradition is given to enrich us all, and the light which St. Gregory the Illuminator sparked- the light of Christ- is the same light we all gather around. We all desire to gather closer to Him, as we gathered around the Easter Candle which symbolized the Light of Christ.

Another part of our desire to complete the real though imperfect unity we share already is that Christ in us recognizes Christ in our Armenian Christian brothers and sisters. Light calls to light. Christian unity is a mandate based upon the nature of that light, the nature of God, as ontologically One. This is why when Pope St. John Paul II wanted to celebrate the Eucharist for the Catholics in Armenia His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II invited him “with a brother's love” to do it on the altar of Holy Echmiadzin (Sept. 27, 2001). This is why the Holy Father Pope Francis plans to visit Armenia this June.

The service had the theme, “Remembrance, Witness, Resurrection.”

### Remembrance

Last year Pope Francis called the Genocide a true martyrdom of the Armenian people. “Take up your cross,” said the Lord, and witness to the love of God from which nothing can

separate us. And the Armenian people has given that witness. This was what Pope St. John Paul called “genocide (Common Declaration, September 27, 2001),” and what our Holy Father Pope Francis called “genocide (April 11, 2015, quoting Pope St. John Paul II's statement).” It was the event which inspired international lawyer Raphael Lemkin to define the crime for which he created the word “genocide.” This is the event that Hitler thought gave him permission to get away with genocide, when he said “Who speaks today ...of the Armenians? (August 22, 1939)” The answer is, “We do.” Pope Francis, the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Boston, and so many around the world who care about justice and the dignity of every human person: We speak today of the Armenians. We welcome all

WE SPEAK TODAY OF THE ARMENIANS. WE WELCOME ALL WHO CARE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE VALUE OF EACH PERSON, EACH LIFE. WE STAND TOGETHER AGAINST ALL THOSE WHO WOULD ACT WITH IMPUNITY AGAINST A PEOPLE OR AGAINST ONE PRECIOUS HUMAN LIFE, AND WE SPEAK TODAY OF THE ARMENIANS.

who care about human rights and the value of each person, each life. We stand together against all those who would act with impunity against a people or against one precious human life, and we speak today of the Armenians.

### Witness

This day also stands for our commitment to all martyrs, confessors, prisoners of conscience, all who are persecuted, past or present. Sadly, these are not realities only from the past. There were some with us in the Cathedral who personally know it. Armenian Catholic Msgr. Atamian's cathedral was blown up while he was saying Mass in it. It has been three years since Bishops Mar Gregorios and Boulos were abducted, and we pray for their release.

Pope Francis has said we are in the age of ecumenism of blood. Christians of all denominations are suffering for the faith. The theological differences between us are tiny compared to the differences between us and the cultures we live in. This is another reason our progress toward the unity Christ wills for all His followers must continue.

And it does continue. Even right now, our churches are continuing the dialogue and the relationship to ultimately restore full communion. But in the meantime, we have a foretaste in the case of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. They are already fully united- Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox- because all the Christians of what-

ever church who die for the faith live right now with God in Heaven together. Armenian Catholic Archbishop Blessed Ignatius Maloyan was killed in the genocide. Under torture he was told to renounce the faith and responded, “I've told you I shall live and die for the sake of my faith and my religion. I take pride in the cross of my Lord and God.” His infuriated captors shot him on the spot (Golgotha of the Armenian Catholic Church, p.18.). In 2001 the Catholic Church beatified him. Armenian Apostolic priest Father Khoren Hambartzumian of Bourhan died in 1915 because, under unthinkable torture, he refused to blaspheme (The Window, Vol. 1, N. 3). Exactly one year ago at Holy Echmiadzin the Armenian Apostolic Church canonized him. It is my hope that from this day on our children, Apostolic and Catholic, may know these heroes of the faith and know they share a full communion which is intended for all of us. May we and our children feel already connected through these two and all the other martyrs of 1915. We pray for completion of that unity, so we may bring the Gospel more unanimously to the world which needs to hear it. “Discord among Christians is the greatest obstacle to evangelization,” said the Holy Father (April 27, 2014). Jesus prayed we might be one, “so the world may believe.”

### Resurrection

The martyred witnesses of the Armenian Genocide are crowned right now in Heaven. And the Armenian civilization has arisen, resurrected because, as His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian has said, “the cross is the light by which we understand suffering.” The presence of over a thousand believers in the Cathedral on April 23 was a sign that the genocide ultimately failed, that persecutions fail. There are ten million Armenians in the world today, three times what there were before the genocide. There are over 1 billion Christians in the world despite persecutions. Furthermore, every single one of us must carry on the song of the martyrs, speak the message they testified to, and multiply their “cloud of witnesses.” For their suffering, the least can do for them is to pass on what was most important to them, what they counted more valuable than their lives: the Good News of God's Love and Sovereignty. Today we hold up their witness because it glorifies God. We hold up their message and multiply it to the Glory of God. Remembrance, Witness, Resurrection. We take up the sufferings of our brothers and sisters persecuted around the world because we are all taking up the cross together to follow Jesus and testify to the message that there is something stronger than the violence of humanity: the Love of God.

(Vito Nicastro, M.Div., Ph.D, is Associate Director of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.)



## COMMENTARY

# The Forgotten Hero Who Killed The Armenian Genocide's Mastermind

By Chris Bohjalian

**L**AST FRIDAY morning, Rep. Jim Costa placed a wreath in Fresno, California's Masis Ararat Cemetery at the grave of an Armenian who died peacefully in San Francisco 56 years ago.

Most Americans are more familiar with the Peloponnesian War than they are with the fellow Costa remembered. Even in the San Joaquin Valley, home to roughly 50,000 Armenian-Americans, most Californians would be hard-pressed to pronounce the man's name correctly.

And yet for Armenians around the world, Soghomon Tehlirian's name inspires pride and awe in equal measure. On a March morning in 1921, in broad daylight and on a main street in Berlin, he shot and killed Mehmed Talat Pasha, one of the three rulers of the Ottoman Empire during World War I and the architect of the Armenian genocide. That year he would be tried for murder and the German jury would find him innocent. The New York Times would announce the verdict with the headline, "They had to let him go!"

Yesterday, April 24, marked the 101st anniversary of the start of the Armenian genocide. It was on that night in 1915 that the Armenian intellectuals, professionals, editors and religious leaders in Constantinople were rounded up by the Ottoman authorities, and almost all of them were executed. In the years that followed, three out of four Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were sys-

tematically annihilated by their own government: 1.5 million people. The majority of Armenians alive today are descendants of those few who survived.

I knew bits and pieces of the Tehlirian story growing up, but it wasn't until last year when Eric Bogosian published "Operation Nemesis" that I understood what a remarkable and complex tale it really is.

Bogosian, an award-winning actor, playwright and novelist, did monumental research to piece together how a reserved, young Armenian from a village in what is today northeastern Turkey would become a central figure in the plot to exact revenge on the masterminds of the slaughter.

Bogosian's story is as riveting as any spy thriller, and all the more remarkable because it's true. (In two photos of Tehlirian taken in the 1920s, the nattily dressed assassin looks more like a silent film star than a man who had grown politicized in 1915 while rounding up the orphans of butchered Armenians and trying desperately to get them help.)

As the individual chosen to execute Talat Pasha - a man the first postwar Turkish government had sentenced to death in absentia for his monumental crimes, and was hiding in Berlin under an assumed name - Tehlirian no doubt hoped he would be acquitted of the crime, but knew also that he was risking his own life and freedom.

Obviously Talat Pasha's death could not bring back the dead or return the Armenian homeland. If you want to see the definition of ethnic cleansing, visit the eastern half of Turkey where the Armenians once lived. Today there are remnants of Armenian churches and monasteries and unmarked mass graves, but you will find no living Armenian communities.

But Tehlirian took the risk and he succeeded. With a single bullet, he had done what the victorious allied nations had failed to do: punished a war criminal. David had slain Goliath.

After the trial, Tehlirian would move to Serbia and, later, San Francisco, where he would die in 1960. (He is buried in Fresno because at the time Masis Ararat Cemetery was the only Armenian cemetery in America.) He understood he was viewed as a hero by his people, but he and his wife lived without ostentation. Nevertheless, his grave in Fresno is magnificent, a monument befitting a war hero: a 22-foot-high obelisk with an eagle on top and a pair of cypress trees behind it.

Invariably, the 101st anniversary of any event is a shadow of the centennial. That's especially true when it is the anniversary of an occasion as solemn as the commencement of a genocide.

But there are links between the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the Cambodian killing fields, Bosnia, Rwanda, Darfur, and the violence that ISIS has unleashed on the Armenians and Yazidis in Syria.

The last stage in a genocide is often the first stage of the next one. Moreover, Turkey still refuses to acknowledge the crimes of the Ottoman Empire, leveraging its geographic and geopolitical clout to bully its allies - including the United States - into euphemism or silence. The fact is, the Armenian nation is statistically a diaspora nation, with seven of every 10 Armenians in this world living outside the nation state.

Consequently, the genocide is, as Pope Francis eloquently described it last year, an open wound for Armenians. We all know what happened to our ancestors - our own parents, grandparents or great-grandparents.

And so while we are now at the centennial plus one, remembering the Armenian genocide is as important as ever. Friday's wreath-laying and remarks at the Tehlirian grave were especially meaningful. It may not have marked the first time that a U.S. congressional representative had visited the monument, but it seems to be the first time in memory. Speaking and standing beside Costa was Raffi Hamparian, chairman of the Armenian National Committee of America.

Whenever we speak of genocide, we begin first with the numbers. The 6 million. The 1.5 million. But it is not merely the souls that are lost; it is the stories. It is the sense of self. It is the dignity that comes with being human.

There was a good crowd on Friday. Tehlirian, after all, is the closest thing the Armenians have to an avenging angel. Tehlirian gave something to the Armenian people that was taken from even the survivors: a small taste of the pride that walks hand in hand with justice.



(This essay originally ran in the Fresno Bee on April 21, 2016. Chris's most recent novel is "The Guest Room.")

# Why Did Ilham Aliyev Stop the War?

By Vicken Cheterian

In the early hours of April 2 a sudden war erupted in the Caucasus. All-along the heavily fortified Karabagh war-front, where Armenian fighters defend their highlands, while Azerbaijani soldiers are posted in the dry lowlands, heavy artillery fire pounded the defenses of the opposite side. Next, elite troops attacked enemy lines, supported by tanks and helicopters. One would have thought that two brigades of the same Soviet army were fighting each other if it was not for the Israeli-made drones used by Azerbaijan.

Under the fog of war and nationalist enthusiasm, information flows largely mixed with propaganda, it is necessary to scrutinize the facts to understand who started the war? Why did it stop after five days? And what are the long-term consequences of this short but intense war?

The fact that in the first 24 hours the Azerbaijani side advanced in eight different positions on the frontline, including the overrunning the village of Talish in the northeastern corner, clearly shows that this war was initiated by Baku. The scale of the attack, the usage of combined arms - infantry, artillery and air force - testifies that the attack was carefully planned.

Why this war? In case the timing of the war was a surprise - both Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents were in the US for

Nuclear Security Summit - yet it was largely expected. Ilham Aliyev inherited the presidency of Azerbaijan from his father in 2003, but he radically shifted policies towards Karabagh. His father, Heidar Aliyev, had spent the last few years of his life negotiating with his Armenian counterpart to find a peaceful solution based on recognizing the self-determination of Karabagh Armenians, in return for the occupied Azerbaijani provinces, and had indeed come very close to signing an agreement in 2001. But Ilham Aliyev overthrew past diplomatic initiatives and hardened his position: he repeated that in case Armenians do not surrender Karabagh Azerbaijan would take it by war.

Ilham Aliyev was lucky; two years after he came to power the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline construction was completed. Oil flew to the west, and petrodollars into his pockets. Oil financed social stability in Azerbaijan, as well as high level of corruption as the most recent Panama Papers reveal. It also made Azerbaijan one of the major military spenders. In 2003 Azerbaijani military budget was 175 million dollars; this was increased to 4.8 billion in 2015. The young Aliyev promised to make his military spending more than twice the entire state budget of Armenia. As he bought more and more weapons, his threatening discourse became louder and louder. While his father had promised "the highest for of autonomy" to Karabagh Armenians, the young Ilham started claim-

ing that Armenia itself was ancient Azerbaijan.

Yet the business model of Azerbaijan is in crisis since a little while. Oil production started prematurely decreasing five years ago. Worst, the international oil prices collapsed in 2014, falling from \$110 a barrel in mid-2014 to just \$33 in early April. The state income, heavily dependent on oil exports, was cut four to five times. This forced the central bank to liberalize the national currency (manat) exchange rate, which immediately lost a third of its value in December 2015. The economic difficulties caused much social unrest. Many observers expected a military escalation to divert attention of the public attention from the real internal problems. Yet the scale of the attack proves something else: Ilham Aliyev intended to bring significant change by occupying land under Karabagh control to boost his legitimacy tarnished by the collapse of his oil-based economy.

Why did the war stop? In spite of billions spent on armament, modern weapons bought from Russia and Israel, the Azerbaijani army failed to bring change on the frontline, apart from advancing 200-300 meters over several places. Yet, no locality had been "liberated" by Azeri army at the time of cease-fire. In case Azerbaijan had continued the attack, the consequences would have been heavy, as the increasing number of casualties would have caused political instability in Baku. Since 1991 three leaders of Azerbaijan lost

their power as a result of military defeats, and Ilham Aliyev risked the same.

International reaction: World leaders called for immediate stop to the war, with only one exception: Erdogan who declared that he supported Azerbaijan "to the end". But Turkey has no real influence on this conflict. Russia is the key player here, and Moscow made "balanced" declarations. But the war also revealed that Azerbaijani army has bought advanced Russian weapons, which made Yerevan ask the question: how could Armenia's military ally sell modern weapons to the enemy? What is the value of being a Russian ally anyway?

Diplomacy: The military escalation, and the brutal violence against elderly civilians mutilated by Azerbaijani army, poses the question: can we continue the past diplomatic initiatives by simply inviting two sides to talk to each other? The last fighting made it clear: One is fighting for "territorial integrity", the other for "self determination." Azerbaijan is fighting to take land, while Armenian side is fighting to defend its people.

In spite of the unnecessary losses, there is one very positive side to this war: now Ilham Aliyev is freed from any illusion that his army is able to take Karabagh in a short heroic war. May be it is time to get serious.

(This commentary originally appeared in the April 13 edition of *Agos* in Turkey.)



## COMMENTARY

**President Sargsyan:****We Will not Allow Another Armenian Genocide**

**P**RESIDENT Serzh Sargsyan issued a statement on April 24, 2016 to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Below are his comments in full.

Today, we commemorate the sacred memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Over one hundred years passed since the Mets Yeghern. What has changed? Firstly, we have changed. We were reborn as a nation and as a state. We proved to ourselves and to the world that the genocidal plans of the Turks had failed. Our struggle for justice still goes on. What has not changed? The policy of denial of the official Turkey has not changed, as has not changed its hostile stance toward everything that is Armenian. This is nothing short of a direct continuation of the crime in our times. The Turkish society has partly changed. Today it knows about its own history a little more than it knew yesterday. Tomorrow, it will learn more than it knows today unless the free word and media is not strangled, unless members of the parliament, public figures and editors are not shot. The truth, though slowly, but opens the eyes of the people...

Nowadays, emotions and worries, discussions and analyses related to the war actions of April 2-5 have not subsided yet. Azerbaijan unleashed another war against Artsakh. And once again after suffering great losses, was thrown back. The true objective, or rather the true dream of Azerbaijan is the occupation of Artsakh and its cleansing of Armenians which means its population will be partly purged, partly deported.

Today, on April 24, 2016, I declare for the entire world to hear: there will be no purging or deportation of the Armenians of Artsakh. We will not allow another Armenian Genocide. We – meaning the Armenian nation, all its segments, we – means our Armenian consolidation...

“Today, as we bow to the memory of our innocent victims, we witness the unprecedented consolidation and resolve of our nation to build a free, peaceful, and modern state, a powerful Fatherland of all Armenians where the generations of the victims of the Armenian Genocide and of those who survived miraculously are returning.”

# Israel Needs to Recognize the Armenian Genocide – And the Nakba

By Louis Fishman

ONCE AGAIN the official day commemorating the 1915 Armenian Genocide, April 24, has passed without Israel issuing a statement of official recognition. As a country that inherited the legacy of the European genocide of Jews – the Holocaust – its recognition of the systematic killing of Ottoman Armenians would not only amount to a historically just move, but would also be an important step in promoting the study of comparative genocides, and giving a special meaning to the important motto of “never again.” Further, it could lead to the understanding of how Turkish denial has only prevented the country from moving forward, and show Israel the need to end the denial of its own injustices.

Israel’s decision not to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide is directly connected to its attempts to maintain ties with Turkey, in good times and bad. At the height of Turkish-Israel relations in the 1990s, Israel sustained this policy in order not to risk jeopardizing its strong ties with the Turkish state, not to mention its arms deals. Shamefully, US Jewish lobbies were coopted as a way to block American recognition of the Armenians’ tragedy as well.

Simply, Turkish tank deals trumped the moral and historical obligation of genocide recognition. Despite this, the internal debate surrounding the non-recognition emerged in 2000 when the liberal leftist education minister, the late Yossi Sarid (Meretz), attended Jerusalem’s 85th Armenian Genocide memorial ceremony. There he stated, “The Armenian Memorial Day should be a day of reflection and introspection for all of us, a day of soul-searching. On this day, we as Jews, victims of the Shoah, should examine our relationship to the pain of others.” He mentioned the word genocide no less than 10 times in the speech.

Despite years of strained relations that hit bottom with the 2010 Gaza Flotilla affair, Israel still has not recognized the genocide. Ironically, the new reason was that Israeli policymakers believed this could lead to a complete break in rela-

tions. However, before reaching this conclusion, U.S. Jewish lobbies had already opted out of taking their usual role in blocking Armenian Genocide recognition, and the Knesset debated the matter. While both groups denied this was related to the flotilla, the tone was clearly one of punishment. Even I argued against this, since recognition of genocide as a punishment against Turkey equaled no less of a farce than the previous situation.

After Reuven Rivlin, a longtime advocate of recognizing the Armenian Genocide, became Israel’s president in the summer of 2014, it seemed that Israeli recognition would finally come at the 2015 centennial commemoration of the mass killings. However, this too fell through due to pressure from the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Despite this, Rivlin came close to offering official recognition, saying that “the Armenian people were the first victims of modern mass killing,” and stressing that many Jews in Ottoman Palestine witnessed the horrors of the killings, a known fact. Rivlin’s words reiterated the reality that few in the Israeli public doubt it was a genocide: It is known in Hebrew as the Hashoah Ha’armenit – the Armenian Shoah.

Perhaps now that Israel and Turkey have made numerous statements that they are close to renewing full diplomatic ties, Israel should make clear that its relations cannot be held hostage to Turkey’s intractable stance on this topic, and that Armenian Genocide recognition is not about being a friend or enemy of Turkey. Additionally, Turkey needs to realize that in Israel the debate is only remotely related to Ankara. Rather, it holds a special place in the greater debate of the “uniqueness of the Holocaust” and the question of Jewish victimhood, which hits at the heart of Israeliness and the question of how to memorialize the Holocaust.

With April 24 falling on Passover this year, it important to remember that denial is also inherent in the Israeli narrative. Passover, a holiday that celebrates the ancient Israelites’ liberation from slavery, embeds a sense of freedom within its modern meaning, and sets into motion the national observation of Holocaust Memorial Day, followed by Memorial Day for fallen soldiers, and finally culminates in Independence Day. However, for Israel, freedom and independence amounted to the Nakba – the Catastrophe – for the Palestinians.

Even if they are different in scope, it can be argued that Israel has adopted Turkey’s stance of denial as a model toward the Palestinian Nakba, the 1948 ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians from the land. By denying not only the existence of the event itself, which led to the forced expulsion or flight of 750,000 Palestinians, Israel also subsequently erases the memory of a Palestinian past and physically erases their presence in the geographical landscape of the country. In both countries, legislation and courts have also been used to block the memory.

It is time that Israel take the moral high ground and recognize the Armenian Genocide. No less important is the need to do away with its denial of the Nakba. Otherwise, like Turkey, it will remain raveled in conflict. In both cases, the long road to reconciliation starts with the recognition of the crimes that paved the way for the founding of these subsequent nation-states. Only by recognizing this will it allow Israel – and Turkey – the much-needed opportunity to move forward.

*Louis Fishman is an assistant professor at Brooklyn College who has lived in Turkey and writes about Turkish and Israeli-Palestinian affairs. Follow him on Twitter: @IstanbulTelaviv*

## Search for Mechanisms to Prevent New Hostilities in Karabagh

By Naira Hayrumyan

A serious shift has taken place in the Karabagh conflict settlement process after last week’s visit to Yerevan by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov – proposals for a final settlement have been postponed, and now only measures to strengthen the ceasefire are being discussed.

The message from the Yerevan meetings of Lavrov is that while Nagorno-Karabagh is under fire and there is a threat of use of force there cannot be a normal negotiating process. Therefore, efforts should be made to strengthen the ceasefire.

“Lavrov said that not only at the co-chairs’ level, but also turned to Germany as the OSCE chairman-in-office to implement these mechanisms,” Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan explained.

The matter concerns investigation mechanisms, which the United States has been offering already for more than a year. The essence of these mechanisms is to install spe-

cial equipment in the zone separating the conflicting sides to monitor incidents, as well as the expansion of the mandate of the OSCE observers.

Russia for a long time did not expressly consent to the placement of such equipment. As experts say, Moscow itself does not have such equipment, while the emergence of American or other Western equipment in Karabagh would be undesirable for Russia. Besides, it would strengthen the status quo and the existing boundaries.

Meanwhile, Russia insisted on a political settlement of the conflict based on the principles of Kazan (the capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan where Armenian-Azerbaijani high-level talks were hosted by the Russian president in 2011), which involve an Armenian withdrawal from several districts near Karabagh and the deployment of Russian peacekeepers at the new border. There is an opinion that Moscow has been arming Azerbaijan and not delivering the promised weapons to Armenia for the implementation of this plan.

However, the four-day war in early April

almost did not change the boundaries. Moreover, the Armenian forces were apparently preparing to counter-attack, but Russia urgently stopped the war, “leaving” Azerbaijan with a small portion of conquered land.

It not only failed to essentially change the boundaries, but also failed the Kazan plan. The Armenian side firmly declared that it is not going to cede anything. The same was also stated in Karabagh and in the army and it was also said after the visit of President Serzh Sargsyan to Karabagh earlier last week.

After that, in order to change boundaries in favor of Azerbaijan Russia would have to instigate a new war, but this would put an end to the presence of Russia in the region itself. After the April war a wave of anti-Russian sentiments was raised in Armenia – three times during a week protests were staged near the embassy of Russia in Yerevan.

Apparently, based on this, Russia agreed to temporarily waive the Kazan plan and pass the initiative to Germany, which currently

holds the rotating presidency of the OSCE.

“There are two plans – the Madrid document and the discussions around it, which led to the Kazan document that was rejected by Azerbaijan. And the second plan is the proposals which are aimed at compliance with the ceasefire. We are talking about the introduction of mechanisms for investigating incidents,” Armenia’s deputy foreign minister explained.

On April 24, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, answering questions of journalists at the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial to Armenian Genocide victims, also confirmed that the matter concerns the introduction of the investigation mechanisms and the search for such mechanisms. Obviously, what is now being discussed is which country is going to install its equipment in Karabagh.

It is noteworthy that immediately after the April war President Sargsyan visited Germany and called on Chancellor Angela Merkel to help with the placement of equipment for investigating border incidents.

(This analysis was originally written for ArmeniaNow.)



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