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## Pashinyan Backs Major Mining Project In Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Citing the findings of an independent environmental audit commissioned by his government, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced on Monday, August 19, his intention to allow an Anglo-American company to restart a controversial gold mining project in Armenia disrupted a year ago.

Pashinyan said that the company, Lydian International, will have to stick to “unprecedentedly high environmental standards that have not been applied in Armenia until now.”

He said that the government will also force other mining companies operating in the country to gradually comply with those standards. He claimed that some of those companies have sponsored environmentalists’



Environmental activists protest against the Amulsar gold mining project, Yerevan, August 19..

campaigns against Lydian in an effort to kill the Amulsar project and thus avoid spending large sums of money on improving their notoriously poor environmental records.

Work on the massive gold mine located in the southeastern Vayots Dzor province

started in August 2016 following a lengthy licensing process. But it ground to a halt in June 2018 as several dozen protesters blocked all roads leading to Amulsar. The roads have remained closed since then, with the protesters saying that gold mining and smelting operations there would pollute air, soil and water resources.

Lydian, which claims to have already invested \$400 million in the project, dismisses these concerns, saying that it will use modern and safe technology.

Early this year, the Armenian government hired a Lebanese environmental consultancy, ELARD, to conduct an environmental assessment of what would be one of the biggest foreign investment projects ever implemented in Armenia. Pashinyan and other officials indicated that Lydian’s renewed operations will depend on the results of that audit.

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## US Sanctions Two Armenian Firms

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) – The United States imposed sanctions on two Armenian companies on Wednesday, August 15, saying that they have acted against US national interests.

The Yerevan Telecommunications Research Institute (YETRI) and the Markel company are among 17 Canadian, Russian, Georgian and other firms blacklisted by the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS),

which is part of the US Department of Commerce. They will now be banned from purchasing US products.

“These 17 entities have been determined by the US Government to be acting contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States,” the BIS said in a statement.

The agency explained that YETRI has see SANCTIONS, page 3



Girls practice the Qanun during a folkloric festival in Gémenos, a village north of Marseille. (all photos Killian Cogan)

## In France’s Second City, a Vibrant Outpost of Armenian Culture

By Killian Cogan

MARSEILLE, France (Eurasianet.org) – On a breezy Sunday morning, families walk hurriedly into Marseille’s Armenian Cathedral. A miniature replica of Echmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Church of the Holy Translators on Prado Avenue was built in 1928 to receive refugees fleeing a genocide. Nowadays, the place is teeming with immigrants from the Republic of Armenia.

In France’s second-largest city, Armenian culture is thriving. And though the metropolis has long hosted a diaspora, recent arrivals have invigorated the community.

“Marseille is the cradle of our diaspora,” said Pascal Chamassian, 53, a politician whose grandparents came from Anatolia. “Everyone who escaped from the genocide passed by here.” Numbering about 100,000, people of Armenian descent are said to make up close to 10 percent of Marseille’s denizens.

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## Aronian Wins St. Louis Rapid and Blitz Tournament

ST. LOUIS, Mi. (Chessbase) – Levon Aronian emerged as the winner of the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz leg of the Grand Chess Tour on August 16, after a tumultuous day of blitz games here at the Saint Louis Chess Club. The day almost belonged



A beaming Levon Aronian at the conclusion of the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz tournament

to the wildcard participant from China, Yu Yangyi, who excelled and barely missed tying for the title – which would have forced an eagerly awaited tiebreak match – as well as winning the blitz tournament. The day was disappointing for the overnight leader Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and for World Champion Magnus Carlsen, as they could score only 4 and 4½ points respectively.

To keep things in perspective, there was almost no one who managed to score heavily on the last day, with Yu (6 points out of the final nine rounds) the top scorer of the day, followed by Levon Aronian, Ding Liren and Sergey Karjakin with 5 points each. It underscores the tough level of this tournament, as well as the great battles seen throughout.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Chief Advisors to Armenia PM Dismissed

YEREVAN (news.am) – By a decision of Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, Arsen Gasparyan was dismissed on August 15 from the position of Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister.

By another decision of the Prime Minister, Aram Gharibyan will be dismissed from the position of Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister starting September 2, 2019.

### Remains of Dadrian to Be Moved to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Genocide scholar Prof. Vahagn Dadrian’s remains will be moved from the United States to Armenia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on August 15.

“Taking into account world famous Professor Vahagn Dadrian’s unshakeable fight for justice and great scientific contribution to the study of Armenian Genocide, it was decided to move his remains to Armenia. Works in this direction are already underway,” the Armenian foreign ministry said.

Dadrian, a renowned sociologist and historian and genocide scholar, died on August 2, 2019 at the age of 93 in the United States.

### Church Celebrates Feast of Apparition

ECHMIADZIN (Panorama.am) – The Armenian Apostolic Church celebrated on Saturday, August 17, the Feast of the Apparition (Shoghakat) of Holy Echmiadzin commemorating the inauguration of the Cathedral of the Mother See, Qahana.am reports.

The fifth-century Greek historian Agathangelos wrote of St. Gregory the Illuminator’s divine vision, wherein Jesus Christ descended from Heaven and struck the ground with His golden hammer. In view of biblical Mount Ararat, in the city of Vagharshapat, He identified the site for the foundation of the new cathedral of the Christian Armenian Nation. The vision of Gregory became known as “Shoghakat” as the Saint saw a fiery column descending from the sky.

The foundation was laid in 301 AD and the Cathedral was consecrated in 303 AD on the day of the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God. Archbishop Malachia Ormanian said that as the Mother Cathedral and nation is dedicated to St. Mary, the feast of her foundation and inauguration is celebrated in the Armenian Church on the Saturday preceding the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God.

For 1,700 years, the Mother See has been the spiritual heart and center of the Armenian Church, and is its most sacred sanctuary.

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## News From Armenia

### 6% Economic Growth in Second Quarter

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia's economic growth in the second quarter of 2019 amounted to 6.5 percent, with trade and service mainly contributing to the growth, the government announced on August 20.

Data published by the Statistical Committee of Armenia, Armenia's GDP in the second quarter of 2019 amounted to 1.481 trillion drams. Trade and services, industry and construction growth contributed to the growth by 4.91, 1.82 and 0.06 percentage point respectively.

Agriculture had a negative impact on the GDP growth by - 1.01 percentage point.

Trade and services had the greatest share in the GDP with 55 percent.

Economic growth in the first quarter of 2019 amounted to 7.2 percent compared to the same period of the previous year.

### Wounded Heroes Fund Calls for Donations to Help Disabled Soldier

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund is seeking support for a soldier wounded in the April war, through a six-week therapy program to walk normally again.

In a statement on Facebook the fund reports that Hayk Sekhlyan was wounded in April 4, 2016 as part of a small unit of Armenian heroes who fought against a large number of Azeris and successfully liberated an overrun position in Talish.

"He has lived with a severely injured spine and can't walk without a cane. He has already been evaluated by a hospital in Germany and will require 6 weeks of therapy at a cost of \$35,000 to walk normally again. With your help, we can thank him for this sacrifice and actual liberation of a strategic part of our homeland," the statement said.

The fund seeks donations through its Facebook page.

### Armenia Again Top Travel Spot for Russians

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – For the second consecutive summer Armenia has become the most popular tourist destination for Russians, according to OneTwoTrip's survey which was conducted for TASS.

Almost 9 percent of all sold airline tickets were for Armenia.

Italy and Turkey are also among the top tourist destinations for Russians.

Georgia, which was earlier the third top destination, is now ranked fifth after direct air communication with Russia was suspended on July 8.

The top-10 popular destinations also include Spain, Uzbekistan, Germany, Tajikistan, France and Kyrgyzstan. RedCross 8-24

### OSCE to Monitor Contact Line Again

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – On August 21, in accordance with the arrangement reached with the authorities of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh Republic), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission will conduct a planned monitoring of the ceasefire regime on the Line of Contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan at the Omar pass.

From the positions of the Defense Army of the Republic of Artsakh, the monitoring will be conducted by Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, Field Assistant to the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) Ghenadie Petrica (Moldova) and Personal Assistant to the CiO Personal Representative Simon Tiller (Great Britain).

The authorities of the Republic of Artsakh have expressed their readiness to assist in conducting the monitoring and to ensure the security of the OSCE Mission members.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meets with local government officials and environmental activists to discuss the Amulsar mining project, Yerevan, August 19, 2019.

### Pashinyan Backs Major Mining Project In Armenia

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ELARD was specifically tasked with looking into the project's potential impact on Jermuk, a famous spa resort located around 20 kilometers from Amulsar, and the more remote Lake Sevan.

According to ELARD's final report publicized by an Armenian law-enforcement agency last week, underground water at Amulsar is not connected with mineral water sources in Jermuk or rivers and canals flowing into Sevan.

The 200-page report says that gold mining poses greater environmental risks for other rivers flowing through Vayots Dzor. But it says they can be minimized if Lydian takes 16 "mitigating measures" recommended by ELARD. Lydian has expressed readiness to take virtually of all those measures.

In an 80-minute live broadcast aired through Facebook, Pashinyan insisted that the Amulsar project does not carry any environmental risks for Jermuk and Sevan.

"We will carry out constant monitoring and if we see that Lydian does not ensure zero emissions of contaminated water from the mine we will first warn and give it 90 days to rectify things," he said. "If that is not done [within 90 days] the mine will be closed. The government has all the levers to solve this issue."

Pashinyan argued that right from the

beginning his government made Lydian's renewed operations at Amulsar primarily conditional on the environmental safety of Jermuk sources and Sevan. "We must today honor our own condition [set for Lydian,]" he said, adding that failure to do so would make Armenia look like an "unserious state" in the eyes of the outside world.

Pashinyan made the comments hours after meeting with parliament deputies representing his My Step alliance. Some of those lawmakers make no secret of their continuing opposition to the Amulsar project.

Earlier on Monday, Pashinyan held a separate meeting with local government officials from Jermuk and nearby rural communities as well as local and Yerevan-based environmental activists also hostile to the project. The latter seemed dissatisfied with Pashinyan's statements made at the meeting. They insisted that gold mining at Amulsar would wreak havoc on the national ecosystem.

The activists then joined about 200 protesters that rallied outside the venue of the meeting with Pashinyan. They marched to the nearby parliament compound in Yerevan but were not allowed to enter it.

The crowd responded by trying to block an adjacent busy street. Riot police were quick to forcibly restore traf-

fic though the street. Several protesters were detained on the spot.

In his video address, Pashinyan did not say whether the authorities are now also ready to use force against the people continuing to block Lydian's access to Amulsar.

The company has repeatedly condemned the blockade as illegal and criticized the Armenian government for not lifting it. In March, it openly threatened international legal action against Armenia.

The Amulsar project has been supported by the US and British embassies in Yerevan. US diplomats have warned that continued disruption of Lydian's operations could scare away other American investors interested in Armenia.

Lydian is registered in a British tax haven, headquartered in the US state of Colorado and listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Its shareholders include US, Canadian and European investment funds as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The company planned to produce 210,000 ounces of gold, worth over \$315 million at current international prices, annually at Amulsar. It also pledged to create about 800 permanent jobs and pay about \$50 million in annual taxes.

### Another Judge to Take Over Kocharyan's Trial

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A court in Yerevan formally replaced the judge presiding over the stalled trial of former President Robert Kocharyan, on August 20.

The trial began on May 13, with Kocharyan facing accusations of bribery and a violent overthrow of the constitutional order strongly denied by him. A few days later, the judge in the high-profile case, Davit Grigorian, ordered the ex-president freed from custody and suspended the trial, questioning the legality of the charges.

Prosecutors appealed against both decisions strongly condemned by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's political allies. Armenia's Court of Appeals overturned them on June 25, leading Kocharyan's lawyers to appeal to the higher Court of Cassation. Meanwhile, Grigorian was charged with forgery and suspended.

The case has now been assigned to another district court judge, Anna Danibekyan, meaning that the trial should resume within two weeks.

One of the defense lawyers,

Hovannes Khudoyan, said on Tuesday, August 20, Danibekyan will have to first and foremost decide whether Kocharyan must remain in custody.

Khudoyan again claimed that his client's detention is illegal because the trial should have resumed immediately after the Court of Appeals ruling.

Khudoyan and other defense lawyers have repeatedly accused the authorities of deliberately dragging out the trial to keep the ex-president in jail as long as possible. The head of Armenia's Judicial Department, Karen Poladian, dismissed those claims last week. Poladian argued that Kocharyan's legal team itself sent the case to the Court of Cassation.

The coup charges, which have also been leveled against two retired army

generals, stem from the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan which left eight anti-government protesters and two police servicemen dead. Prosecutors



Former President Robert Kocharyan

claim that Kocharyan illegally ordered Armenian army units to break up street protests against alleged fraud in a presidential election.

Kocharyan, who ruled the country from 1998-2008, rejects the accusations as politically motivated. The indicted generals also deny them.



## ARMENIA

# Unseen Armenia From Avarayr To Getikvank

By Hovsep Daghdigian

## Vayots Dzor

Traveling south from Yerevan towards Artsakh, after passing through Ararat province, the main highway enters Vayots Dzor. Shortly thereafter there is the village of Areni, famous for its wine, and where the world's oldest shoe was found in a cave. Nearby is the spectacular Noravank Monastery.

Vayots Dzor has an abundance of other sites of scenic beauty and historical significance, such as the 14th c Spitakavor monastery, near the village of Vernashen. In 1987, during the Soviet era, the remains of Armenian hero and freedom fighter Garegin Njdech were secretly smuggled onto this site from the soviet prison camp where he died, and reinterred in his sacred Armenian soil. From near the monastery, the fortress of Boloraberd / Proshaberd is clearly visible and accessible to hikers.

This region is also home to Smbataberd, an impressive fortress which was considered impregnable, sitting atop a mountain with a spectacular view and command of the surrounding valleys and villages. A narrow dirt and gravel road,



A man wisely protected from the sun greets a visitor.

with the valley below to the right, leads to the fortress. We ascended to the fort in a four-wheel drive Niva, but there is no room for error here, and no room to turn around if another vehicle approaches from the opposite direction. At the summit of the hill near the entrance to the fort, however, there is room to turn around. Invading Turks, unable to capture this fort militarily, took the fort by interrupting its water supply.

There are a number of other interesting sites nearby, accessible by car. In the beautiful village of Yeghegis are a number of churches, the most unusual being Sp. Zorats Cathedral, 1303; a unique open air church. Armenian cavalry detach-



Children smiling

ments would attend church service on horseback, facing the altar from the field in front of the church. They, and their weapons, would receive blessings before riding off to battle. During medieval times this area was under the jurisdiction of the Orbeli dynasty, which produced a number of outstanding clergymen, diplomats, military leaders, and scholars.

## Getikvank

My map of Armenia showed a road ascending the local heights following the course of the Yeghegis river, ending at Getikvank, with a church icon on my map marking the end of the road. A poor but passable dirt road brought us to the destroyed village which, for a long time, remained uninhabited. From spring until fall, however, local villagers encamp here in this "yayla" with their families, pasturing their livestock on nearby fields. Most of the families are from Shatin, a nearby village with the scenic Shativank monastery in the hills above the village, accessible via a poor dirt road. In the "yayla", women sitting in the shade of a stone wall initially declined to be photographed, until I convinced them that I was worse dressed than they were. Children were playing; a young boy posing for me while his older cousin kept an eye on him. A gentleman from Shatin, with an interest in this region's history, took me to the few stones that remained from the church's foundation. The church was surrounded by beehives to the left, and yeghinj (stinging nettle plants) to the right. I chose passage through the nettle; at least the nettle would not fly after me to sting me repeatedly! Nearby were some tombstones, including those of clergymen. The date and name of the church is unknown but the village historian indicated that this was probably from the dawn of Armenian Christianity – perhaps from the 4th c.

Much of this area was emptied of Armenians around 1604 by Persian Shah Abbas' decree to forcibly deport the Armenians to Persia; a scorched earth policy intended to prevent Turkish invaders from living off the land and its Armenian population during Turkish – Persian conflicts to dominate this area. Without Armenians, Armenian monuments were neglected or vandalized when Turkish tribes moved in. Later, the Treaty of Turkmanchi (1828) between Persia and Russia, allowed Armenians whose families were forcefully deported to Persia to return home. As Armenians returned, many Turks and other non-Armenians moved out.

The Russian writer and diplomat who helped negotiate the right of return, Aleksander Griboyedov, is credited with helping to restore the Armenian population here. He was subsequently murdered by a Persian mob. He is a hero in Armenia, with his statue standing on Tigran Mets street in Yerevan and with a village named after him.

In a nearby village one resident indicated that his ancestors came from Persia (Iran). "But", he insisted, "we're not Barsgahyes!" (we're not Persian-Armenians), signifying his ancestors were from this area, forcefully deported to Persia, with subsequent generations of his family returning to Armenia.

## Retreat from Avarayr

Pointing to the mountains about 40 km to the Northeast, our village historian in Getivank indicated that there

were graves of Vartan Mamikonian's soldiers there who survived the Battle of Avarayr (451 AD) and were withdrawing towards Artsakh. He indicated that in his youth he hiked there and saw the gravesites. As far as I know, there have been no archaeological investigations of that site. But, according to a number of medieval histories, survivors from Avarayr, pursued by Persians, retreated through this area.

Stepanos Orbelian (1250-1303), in his History of Sisakan (excerpt of translation by Robert Bedrosian below) relates how Armenian survivors of Avarayr were relentlessly pursued by Persians as the Armenians were seeking safety. The nearby Tsaghatskar (Tsakhatskar) monastery originally was a memorial built on or near the site of the slaughter of Avarayr warriors. Historian Stepanos Orbelian states:

"[The Persians] advanced farther and killed 300 more [Christians] by the waters located between [the villages] called Ostink' and Artaboynk'. Subsequently the residents of the area built a church over this spot. Then the Persians crossed a gorge on the left, overlooking the holy convent called Ts'aghats'k'ar, situated on an elevation between the two villages mentioned above, and there they massacred a very large number of sepuhs and elite warriors."

Artaboynk village is in a mountainous area which surely must have been an attractive site from which to present a military defense. Also our village historian told us of a nearby monument dedicated to Vartan and his soldiers. It was not clear if this was an ancient monument or a more recent one, but we were unable to find it.

## The Vartanantz War

The Vartanantz war with Persia was fought over the right of Armenia to remain a Christian nation, with Armenia refusing to obey Persian demands to abandon Christianity and convert to Zoroastrianism. Vartan Mamikonian, the hereditary commander in chief of Armenian forces, was killed in the Battle of Avarayr and subsequently sainted. The numerically smaller Armenian army, however, inflicted disproportionately large casualties on the Persian forces but lost the battle. Armenians continued to wage a guerilla war for decades under the leadership of Kayl Vahan (Wolf Vahan), the nephew of Vartan. The conflict ended with the Treaty of Nvarsak (484 AD) which guaranteed Armenia religious freedom, the first known treaty to guarantee freedom of religion. The Mamikonians continued as hereditary commanders of Armenia's armed forces, though the Armenia continued to pay tribute to Persia in the form of taxes and military service.

## IMF Reaffirms Support For Yerevan's Reform Agenda

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior official from the International Monetary Fund reportedly reaffirmed on August 20 the IMF's approval of the Armenian government's macroeconomic policies and reform agenda during a visit to Yerevan.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan discussed what his press office described as an "ambitious" agenda with Jihad Azour, the director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department.

According to a statement issued by the office, Azour expressed the Washington-based fund's readiness to assist Pashinyan's government in "making reforms a success."

"Jihad Azour stated that the IMF supports the Armenian government's efforts to reform the country's economy," read the statement.

Another senior IMF official, Hossein Samiei, also voiced support for those efforts at the end of a two-week visit to Yerevan in February. "The new government's ambitious structural reform agenda appropriately focuses on fighting corruption, improving the business environment, and developing human capital and infrastructure," he said at the time.

In May, the IMF's Executive Board approved the release of a "precautionary" \$248 million loan to

Armenia aimed at "providing insurance against shocks." An IMF statement said the Armenian government will draw on the three-year "stand-by arrangement" only in the event of such shocks.

"Armenia has continued to make progress in recent years in maintaining macroeconomic and financial stability and in implementing structural reforms to promote growth," the statement quoted Mitsuhiro Furusawa, the IMF's deputy managing director, as saying. "Economic activity has strengthened, and public debt has started to decline. Inflation is under control, the financial system remains stable, and international reserves are assessed to be adequate."

"Nonetheless, continuing reform efforts are needed to support a more balanced and inclusive growth, by reducing imbalances, improving the business climate and strengthening governance, and advancing measures to reduce poverty and unemployment," added Furusawa.

The IMF's previous lending program for Armenia, worth roughly \$115 million, was launched in 2014 and completed in 2017. The fund promised more funding for the country shortly before the 2018 "Velvet Revolution" that brought Pashinyan to power.

## US Sanctions Two Armenian Firms

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been sanctioned because it had obtained unspecified sensitive items and re-exported them without BIS licenses. "And the person who is both Executive Director of YETRI and President of Markel has been engaged in a business relationship with a sanctioned Iranian organization," its statement added without elaborating.

That person, Mher Markosian, described the sanctions as unfair and unfounded. He insisted that YETRI has never sold any equipment to Iranian firms.

"As for Markel, it had signed contracts and done business with Iranian enterprises until 2009," Markosian told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "It hasn't signed any further contracts since 2009."

"Any export operation, especially to Iran, is examined under the microscope," he went on. "If there is even a slight suspicion [of wrongdoing] rest assured that the [Armenian] state will not permit it. Knowing

all this, we have never gone down that path."

Markosian also said that officials from the US State Department have regularly visited and inspected his companies designing telecommunication equipment. "They praised and told us to keep up the good work," he claimed.

Markosian added that he will therefore appeal to the US Embassy in Armenia to help lift the sanctions.

The Armenian Ministry of Economy said, meanwhile, that it is looking into the US announcement and will comment later on.

US National Security Adviser John Bolton discussed Washington's renewed sanctions against Iran with Armenian leaders during an October 2018 visit to Yerevan. Shortly afterwards a team of officials from the US departments of state and treasury visited the Armenian capital to give Armenian government officials and business executives more detailed information about the sanctions.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Turkish-Armenian Lawmaker Addresses Argentine Congress

**BUENOS AIRES (PanARMENIAN.Net)** – Turkish Parliamentarians Garo Paylan, who is of Armenian descent, and Ebru Günay of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) of Turkey delivered strong statements during a conference at the National Congress of Argentina on Wednesday, August 15, reports Agencia Prensa Armenia.

"The same Genocide against the Armenians 105 years ago, could be repeated today against the Kurds," said Paylan. "I am very grateful for Argentina's recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Many countries recognized it, but did this stop our pain? We will achieve justice when the Turkish Parliament recognizes the Armenian Genocide," said the Deputy. "Only a truly democratic Turkey will recognize the genocide against the Armenian people."

Günay said that the HDP has gender parity and that those accused of gender violence or those who exercise polygamy are not allowed to participate in it.

"We are fighting for women in a region where patriarchy is very strong," said Günay. "It is very difficult to fight for the rights of different peoples in an almost fascist environment."

Paylan and Günay are touring South America – Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. They met with Uruguayan Vice President Lucia Topolansky and former President Jose "Pepe" Mujica on August 13-14.

## Artsakh Leaders Meet With Red Cross Officials To Discuss Fate of Soldier

**STEPANAKERT (Armenpress)** – On August 19, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh Republic) Masis Mayilian received the head of the Stepanakert Office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) mission Pierre-Emmanuel Ducruet.

An exchange of views took place on the fate of serviceman of Artsakh Republic Defense Army Arayik Ghazaryan, who had found himself on the territory of Azerbaijan under still unclear circumstances. In this context, the need for parties to the conflict to fulfill their obligations on complying with international humanitarian law was emphasized.

During the meeting, the sides also discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest.

The Foreign Minister noted the importance of continuation of the current cooperation and reiterated the readiness of Artsakh Foreign Ministry to do its utmost to assist to the activities of the Red Cross.

## Armenian President Meets Manchester City Chairman in UK

**LONDON (PanARMENIAN.Net)** – Armenian President Armen Sarkissian met Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, the chairman of Manchester City football club and the chief executive officer and managing director of Mubadala Development Company, in Manchester, on August 20.

The two discussed the prospects of cooperating with Mubadala and the latter's possible investments in Armenia.

The Abu Dhabi-headquartered company mainly operates in the fields of high technologies, telecommunications, energy, healthcare, real estate, infrastructure, education and science.

Mubarak briefed Sarkissian on the activity of the City Football Group, a holding company whose flagship club is Manchester City F.C.

Also, the possibility of implementing projects aimed at the development of football in Armenia were discussed at the meeting in Manchester.

Once the meeting was over, Sarkissian toured the Manchester City Academy to learn more about training programs of various age groups.

The Armenian leader also watched the match between Manchester City and Tottenham.

# Armenian Military Reports 'Important' Agreements With Moscow

**MOSCOW (RFE/RL)** – Defense Ministers Sergey Shoygu of Russia and Davit Tonoyan of Armenia agreed on fresh arms deals at their latest talks held in Moscow, the Armenian Defense Ministry indicated on Sunday, August 18.

The ministry spokesman, Artsrun Hovannisyan, said they discussed, among other things, Russian-Armenian "military-technical cooperation," an offi-

ments on the implementation of bilateral military-political, military and military-technical programs," Hovannisyan wrote on his Facebook page. He did not give any details of those understandings.

Hovannisyan said the two ministers also agreed on the importance of continuing joint actions by their armed forces and "reinforcing the combat readiness" of Russian troops stationed

tion" were on the agenda of Saturday's talks but did not elaborate. It quoted as Shoygu noting "the strategic level of relations" between the Russian and Armenian militaries.

The Russian minister also praised more than 80 Armenian demining experts, army medics and other non-combat military personnel serving in Syria in close coordination with the Russian military.

Russian and Armenian defense officials signed unpublicized agreements on fresh Russian arms supplies to Armenia at the end of a five-day session of a joint commission on "military-technical cooperation" held in Yerevan in early June.

The session began four days after the head of Russia's Rosoboronexport state arms exporter, Alexander Mikheyev, visited Yerevan and met with Tonoyan. The two men also held talks in Moscow in late April. Tonoyan said afterwards that Armenia will continue to acquire Russian weapons "very vigorously."

In February, Yerevan confirmed the signing of a Russian-Armenian contract for the purchase of four Sukhoi Su-30SM fighter jets to the Armenian Air Force. The multirole jets are due to be delivered by the beginning of 2020. The Armenian Defense Ministry plans to buy more such Russian warplanes in the following years.

Russia has long been the principle supplier of weapons and other military equipment to the Armenian army.



Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu (L) meets with his Armenian counterpart Davit Tonoyan, Moscow, August 17, 2019.

cial euphemism for arms production and supplies.

"Davit Tonoyan and Sergey Shoygu reached a number of important agree-

in Armenia.

A statement by the Russian Defense Ministry likewise said "joint projects of military and military-technical coopera-

## Dublin Philosophy Professor Baghramian Gets 3-Million Euro Grant to Study Trust in Experts

**DUBLIN (Daily Nous)** – Public trust in expert opinion will be put to the test as a part of a new 3-million euro (\$3.3 million) Horizon 2020 project lead by researchers at University College Dublin.

Dubbed 'PERiTIA – Policy, Expertise and Trust in Action', the three-year research project, led by Professor Maria Baghramian of UCD School of Philosophy, will investigate the role of science in policy decision making and the conditions under which people should trust and rely on expert opinion that shapes public policy.

The project is a follow up to the Irish Research Council funded 'When Experts Disagree', led by Professor Baghramian and Professor Luke Drury (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies).

It investigates the nature and conditions of public trust and aims to provide a framework that can be used to gauge the trustworthiness of policy related expert opinion.

"Given the central role assigned to expert bodies and organizations in social and political governance, (justified) trust in the information provided by scientific bodies and advisory organizations, by both the general public and policy makers, is a fundamental condition of good governance," said Project Coordinator Professor Baghramian.

"Conversely, good governance in many areas depends on receiving reliable advice from experts; thus, the trustworthiness of the experts is essential for the effective running of complex modern societies.

"In democratic societies, trust in the provenance and rationale of policy measures are essential for their implementation. The current unprecedented turbulent social and political conditions in Western democracies have thrown into relief the precarity of trust.

She added: "The rapid changes in technology and methods of communication have further highlighted the need to reassess and understand the requirements of trustworthiness. At the same time, the rise of populist politics with its anti-elitist mantra, has brought the trustworthiness of experts and their areas of expertise into question.

"Our aim, in this project, is to better

public and actors with a central role in the decision-making processes of governance," said Professor Baghramian.

Beginning in February 2020, PERiTIA will bring together over 20 philosophers, social and natural scientists, policy experts, ethicists, psychologists, media specialists and civil society organisations to study trust in and the trustworthiness of policy related expert opinion. ALLEA (All European



UCD Professor Maria Baghramian with Baroness Onora O'Neill, who received a UCD Ulysses Medal in 2017

understand the nature and conditions of trust in the public domain and to discover indicators which can be used in measuring and establishing the trustworthiness of those involved in social and political decision making."

Using climate change and climate science as a test case, the investigation will be carried out in three theoretical, empirical and ameliorative phases.

"The most ambitious feature of the current project is the application of its theoretical and empirical findings to active attempts at establishing trust, where warranted, between the general

Academies) is a major partner of the project.

Other key partners include Professor Bobby Duffy of King's College London, Professor Gloria Origgi of CNRS in Paris, Professor José Van Dijk of Utrecht University. Professors Onora O'Neill, Cass Sunstein, Susan Owens, and Dan Sperber are among the advisory group.

Research in UCD will be carried out in the UCD Centre for Ethics in Public Life and UCD Geary Institute. The group's work will be supported by Jenny Knell of UCD Research Office.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey: 3 Kurdish Mayors Removed from Office

LONDON – The Turkish Interior Ministry's removal of three democratically elected mayors in the major municipalities of the Kurdish southeast and eastern regions blatantly violates the rights of voters and suspends local democracy, Human Rights Watch announced on August 20.

The Interior Ministry on August 19, removed the mayor of Diyarbakır, Adnan Selçuk Mızraklı; the mayor of Mardin, Ahmet Türk; and the mayor of Van, Bedia Özgökçe Ertan, accusing them of supporting terrorism. All three mayors are from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). The three mayors should be allowed to resume their posts immediately.

"President Erdogan's government has effectively cancelled the results of the March local elections in the three main cities of the Kurdish southeast and east by removing voters' chosen mayors, all valid candidates, and taking over these municipalities," said Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Smearing the mayors by alleging vague links with terrorism to deprive the Kurdish population of their chosen representatives endangers everyone in Turkey who is committed to democratic elections, human rights, and the rule of law."

The Interior Ministry justified substituting government-appointed provincial governors in each municipality because the mayors face investigations and legal proceedings under terrorism laws for their speeches and non-violent political activities. None have received a

final conviction.

Abusive prosecutions and investigations for overly broad and vague terrorism offenses are widely used in Turkey to silence and arbitrarily detain government critics, journalists,



The elected mayors from the main southeastern municipalities removed by Turkey's interior ministry on August 19, 2019; from left to right: Mardin mayor Ahmet Türk; Diyarbakır mayor Adnan Selçuk Mızraklı; Van mayor Bedia Özgökçe Ertan.

human rights defenders, and opposition politicians, Human Rights Watch said.

The European Court of Human Rights has harshly criticized Turkey for its actions in pursuing baseless terrorism charges against elected members of parliament. In one exam-

ple, the unlawful detention of Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-chair and HDP member of parliament, the court found in 2018 that his detention "pursued the predominant ulterior purpose of stifling plural-

and Özgökçe Ertan 53 percent. It is the second time that elected mayors in the southeastern part of the country have been removed from office and replaced with Ankara appointees.

In September 2016, the Law on Municipalities was changed under a state of emergency decree to facilitate the removal of mayors accused of terrorism links and their substitution with provincial governors. Ninety-four mayors from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP) were subsequently removed, and many were held in prolonged pretrial detention. Türk, a veteran Kurdish politician, was previously stripped of office as elected mayor of the Mardin greater municipality under that decree and arrested in November 2016. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a speech in February, in advance of the March elections, in which he stated that mayors found to be linked with terrorism could be removed once again.

These moves by Erdogan's government against democratically elected officials violate Turkey's obligations under international and regional human rights law, Human Rights Watch said. The moves violate the right to political participation, the right to free elections, and the right to freedom of expression under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights.

## Masoud Barzani: Kurdish Blood Should not Be Shed by Fellow Kurds

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – The bombardment of the Kurdistan Region's borders by neighboring states should end without resulting in Kurdish infighting, Masoud Barzani, the President of the leading Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), said on Monday.

Barzani's comment came during a visit to the Balakayati area in Erbil province to congratulate the people on the occasion of Eid al-Adha and commend their historic role in the Kurdish revolution against the former Iraqi regime.

The KDP leader, who previously served as president of the autonomous Kurdistan Region, currently holds no official or governmental posts but continues to play a vital role in the political situation in the Kurdistan and Iraq.

He expressed his concerns about the bom-

bardments of the Kurdistan Region's borders by neighboring Iran and Turkey.

"If excuses are not given to them here [within our borders], there won't be bombardments or airstrikes [by Turkey and Iran]," Barzani said in a speech to locals in Balakayati, referring to the presence of Kurdish fighter groups on the borders who oppose the two neighboring governments of Ankara and Tehran.

"Therefore, this situation should be resolved in a way that people in this area no longer pay the price for the conflict," he continued.

"We're working on it. A solution should ensure Kurdish blood is not shed by the hands of fellow Kurds. But the situation of the [Kurdistan] Region should be considered. The Kurdistan Region is the only place that has become a hope for its people [Kurds]. If this

hope ends, everything will end."

Kurds have gone through intense civil wars from the early 90s until late 1997 with thousands of people killed.

Since then, Barzani has repeatedly promised on different occasions that he would not let civil wars take place between the Kurds once again as long as he lives.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) maintains a friendly relationship with Iran and Turkey, who regularly bombard the autonomous Kurdish region's borders targeting Kurdish opposition groups present in the area.

The KRG has repeatedly called on the two countries and the Kurdish opposition groups to stop their fight or take the battle elsewhere because local villagers continue to fall victim to these conflicts.

## Macron, Putin Discuss Artsakh

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Dmitry Peskov, the press secretary of the Russian President, on August 20 presented the results of a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Peskov noted that the two presidents discussed regional conflicts, including Nagorno Karabakh conflict during their meeting in Brégançon.

According to Peskov, the talks were constructive and trustworthy. He noted that the Presidents referred to regional conflicts in the Balkans, Nagorno Karabakh, as well as had a rather serious conversation over climate change and the situation in Arctic.

## In Marseille, A vibrant Outpost of Armenian Culture

MARSEILLE, from page 1

The first major influx came in the early 1920s when throngs of refugees from a crumbling Ottoman Empire disembarked onto Marseille's port. Around 60,000 of them were settled into squalid camps, causing unease among Marseillais at the time. "The Armenian is like a plant that grows between the pavements of a city," wrote the journalist Albert Londres in a 1927 travelogue.

Still, in the following years, these émigrés blended into the city and contributed much to its character. A local pizza was even baptized l'arménienne in their honor. The son of genocide survivors, filmmaker Henri Verneuil, born Ashot Malakian, captured the journey in his autobiographical "Mayrig."

Despite that, in 1947, in a startling historical twist, a few thousand of these exiles heeded a call from Soviet dictator Josef Stalin who urged the diaspora to help build the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. Around 3,000 Armenians decamped from Marseille seeking a cherished motherland. But faced with dismal living standards and the brutish reality of Stalinist socialism, many flocked back to the Mediterranean metropolis as soon as they could. That was several decades

later, when Soviet borders were relaxed.

"It took them three days to get to Armenia but 40 years to come back," quipped Jean Kéhayian sitting in his apartment overlooking a Provençal garden abundant with olive and cypress trees. A local intellectual, Kéhayian served for a brief stint as an advisor to Levon Ter-Petrosian, Armenia's first president following independence in 1991.

Later, in the 1950s and '60s, the Marseillais diaspora grew with the arrival of Armenians escaping anti-Christian pogroms in Turkey and, later still, the civil war in Lebanon. Since the early 1990s, Marseille has attracted a continuous flow of economic migrants from the Republic of Armenia.

"This immigration has enlivened Armenian culture in Marseille," contended Chamassian with the distinctive twang of southern France. "It is a new breath that has revived our identity. Our cultural centers, churches and schools are filled with recent migrants."

Péno Aynedjian, the sports director of UGA Ardziv, a local Armenian football club, said he has also witnessed the community's expansion. "There is a great mix of provenances in our club, we have Armenians from all horizons," he maintained. "More and

more Armenian restaurants are opening. When I was younger, there was one or two at most. Now you see many, all with regional specificities: Armenian-Russian, Lebanese-Armenian." Aynedjian himself came from Beirut in 1976.

Yet upon arrival, many of these newcomers received a tepid reception from their established counterparts.

"It was very difficult when we arrived here," said Lida Badalyan, an accountant who left Yerevan in 1999 with her parents and brothers because of poverty. "We didn't know anyone and the historic Armenian community accused us of having turned our backs on the homeland. But it's not as if they wanted to live there themselves!"

Such tensions reflect a broader conflict between a nationalist diaspora that pushes for recognition of the 1915 genocide at all costs and the citizens of a small Caucasian republic that are more concerned about bread-and-butter issues.

"The Armenian community here was built by successive waves of immigration. But with each wave, integration into the local networks was not easy," said Kéhayian, who has written several books about connections

between Marseille and Armenia.

"After the outbreak of the war in Lebanon, the Lebanese-Armenians who came here were a lot more militant than we were," he added. "And whereas the Armenians from Turkey [who arrived in the 1950s] were regarded as collaborators with the Turkish enemy for having continued to live there after the genocide, Armenians from Armenia were rejected as they were seen as having betrayed the motherland."

For Aram, 42, whose wife came from Armenia in 2008, the only barrier with recent immigrants was the language differences between eastern and western dialects. His own parents were among those who followed Stalin's exhortations only to return in the 1980s.

After mass has ended on Prado Avenue, the street fills up with the clamor of people chattering away in Armenian. "In Marseille, at times, it feels like we are in Armenia itself," beams Irena, who came from Yerevan in 2002. Had it not been for the nearby Mediterranean coast and bougainvillea trees, the scene could have been a village in the Caucasus.

(Killian Cogan is a freelance journalist based in Istanbul.)

# Community News

## California Superintendent Thurmond Highlights Need to Include Armenian Genocide in Model Curriculum

GLENDALE – The Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region (ANCA-WR) welcomed the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond's support for the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide in the Instructional Quality Commission's (IQC) ethnic studies model curriculum.

"We welcome comments made by Superintendent Thurmond at a press conference on August 15 in regard to the inclusion of the Armenian experience in the ethnic studies model curriculum and thank him for being responsive to the specific concerns we have voiced," remarked ANCA-WR Chair Nora Hovsepian, Esq. "The California history and social studies framework makes specific reference to the importance of teaching students specifically about the Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. It is our hope and expectation that the new Ethnic Studies curriculum will build upon this framework, and we have offered all resources at our disposal to ensure that the topic is appropriately covered."

During a press conference on Wednesday, addressing the concerns of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, Thurmond noted, "We're being contacted by many other groups that feel that their story also needs to be told. I'll just say, as it relates to the Armenian Genocide, for example, we've heard from the leaders in the Armenian community and many other communities." He went on to continue,



Tony Thurmond

"While ethnic studies has a historical framework, the task for us will be to establish California's version of what ethnic studies looks like... we have to make sure we create a place for all who have experienced oppression to share that."

In March of this year, ANCA-WR representatives had met with Thurmond to discuss the importance of genocide education in public schools and its significance in combating denialist efforts that continue today. At this meeting, Superintendent Thurmond expressed his deep understanding of the need for genocide education and his support for the Armenian community of California, promising to be a strong advocate for the needs of Armenian Americans in the sphere of education.

Additionally, the ANCA-WR has partnered with the Armenian Assembly of America, American Hellenic Council, American Jewish Committee – Los Angeles, American Jewish Committee – San Francisco, Hindu American Foundation, Korean American Coalition - Los Angeles, and Faith And Community Empowerment (formerly KCCD) to share the concerns of the major ethnic and faith communities in California that have been left out in the initial draft version of the ethnic studies model curriculum.



Jean-Marie Atamian flanked by his family at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the first and second buildings on the school campus that were renovated in the fall of 2017.

## Atamian Family Announces \$100,000 Investment in Tavush Initiative

NEW YORK – Jean-Marie and Lori Atamian recently announced their sixth major gift of \$100,000 to the Paros Foundation's Prosperity on the Border Initiative. This contribution will be used to rebuild a large two-story school building in the village of Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur (population 1,380) ("NKA"). NKA was the most heavily shelled village on the Tavush border during the war for the liberation of Artsakh. This third and final wing of the secondary school will house a new science classroom and laboratory, an exercise and dance studio, a home economics classroom, a wood and metal shop, a library, additional offices and classrooms and new bathrooms.

"The Atamian's leadership on our Prosperity on the Border Initiative has helped us make more than \$1 million worth of needed infrastructure economic development programs in these vital border communities," said Peter Abajian, Executive Director of the Paros Foundation.

This investment is the latest infrastructure project underwritten by the Atamians in NKA. Specifically, since 2013, the Atamians have financed the reconstruction of the village's medical center, kindergarten, secondary school (three large two-story buildings), emergency services building and water pipeline. The Atamians have also awarded over 20 individual family agricultural and home renovation grants to improve the standard of living of numerous households. The impressive economic progress of NKA has prompted the Atamians to make additional long-term commitments to ensure the village's continued growth and prosperity for future generations.

Based on the success of this model village, and the generous support of our expanding base of donors, The Paros Foundation is replicating this strategic approach to rural development by undertaking these types of life changing projects in eight additional villages along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border in Armenia's Tavush Region.

Construction at the school in NKA was launched last week with the goal of completing work on one of the two stories prior to the start of the new school year in September.

Paros Foundation launched its Prosperity on the Border initiative in 2015. It is currently working in 11 villages throughout the Tavush region, but primarily in communities along the Armenia-Azeri border. Thanks to the support of Paros founder and chairman, Roger Strauch, underwrites all administrative expenses, allowing all donor contributions to be allocated in their entirety to the projects. To support this and other projects of the Paros Foundation, visit [www.parosfoundation.org](http://www.parosfoundation.org).



## Armenian Bar Association Marks 30th Anniversary With Weekend of Activities

LOS ANGELES – Celebrating the 30th anniversary of its founding, the Armenian Bar Association returned to the place of its provenance, exhilarated with the energy and excitement of the Los Angeles metropolis, to convene its annual meeting on the weekend of June 28-30, 2019.

The conference showcased the association's activism and valuable output in one of its seminal dimensions: the protection, respect and importance of the human and civil rights of Armenians around the world and, in particular, in Armenia and Artsakh. The special guests from abroad were Arman Tatoyan, Ombudsman and Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Artak Beglaryan, Ombudsman and Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Artsakh, and Robert Avetisyan, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Artsakh to the United States of America.

"We were incredibly honored that Dr. Tatoyan, Mr. Beglaryan and Mr. Avetisyan graciously accepted our invitation to attend and participate as our keynote speakers for our 30th annual meeting where our attendees learned of their outstanding and ground-breaking work in the field of human rights. A very special added bonus was the presence and participation throughout the weekend of our Association's founding father, Raffi K. Hovannisian," said Chairman Gerard V. Kassabian.

The conference schedule began on Friday, June 28, with a meeting of the 18-member Board of Governors, where the Association's leadership rolled up their sleeves and examined, with an eye towards improvement and innovation, the work of its robust collection of committees. Following the board meeting, members and guests were treated to a festive and entertaining reception at the Sheraton Grand Hotel. In a true reflection of the association's broad and all-embracing appeal, gathered together in the spirit of fun and fellowship were our founding members, judges, law professors, law students, friends and family.

The meeting on Saturday morning began with a plenary session where the workings of the association's affairs were shared and discussed. Reports were provided by Student Affairs Committee Co-Chairs Aleksan Giragosian and Zepur Simonian, Scholarship Committee member Saro Kerkonian, Armenian Rights Watch Committee and Artsakh Law Initiative Committee Co-Chair Karnig Kerkonian, Armenian Genocide Reparations Committee Chairman Armen K. Hovannisian, Pro Bono Committee member Lucy Varpetian. The Nominations Committee then presented the slate of recommended members to the Board of Governors. The nominees, two accomplished newcomers and four incumbents, were unanimously approved by the membership.

"We are thrilled that Deputy District Attorney Hrag Alex Bastian of San Francisco and esteemed civil litigator Souren Israelyan of New York City, along with a team of veteran members, were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Governors. They bring the passion and energy to carry forward the positive momentum that the Armenian Bar Association has developed in the past several years," said Co-Vice Chairwoman Lucy Varpetian.

After the business portion of the meeting, the first signature panel discussion explored the plunder of historic Armenia's native culture and civilization and an examined the legal opportunities and challenges in restoring some of what was wrongfully taken. Moderated by Board member Armen K. Hovannisian, the panel opened with a riveting visual presentation by

see ANNIVERSARY, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Bar Association Marks 30th Anniversary with Weekend of Activities

ANNIVERSARY, from page 6

attorney Matthew Karanian rooted in his monumental pictorial and documentary work of critical acclaim, "The Armenian Highland." Karanian presented a photographic simulation of his travels through Western Armenia documenting the evidence of religious sites, cultural artifacts and the remains of the heart-breaking ruins throughout the region.

Then, in a most timely and illuminating presentation for the attendees, Thaddeus Stauber of Nixon Peabody, LLP spoke candidly about the often winding and uphill road to recover articles and areas of cultural heritage. His perspective was thought-provoking, sobering and constructive insofar as Stauber is known to represent successfully the world's leading cultural institutions and foreign sovereigns in connection with Nazi looted art claims. His candid view from the other side of the litigation divide provided valuable lessons which will go a long way in informing future Armenian Genocide-related restitutions efforts.

The morning session was followed by luncheon where the guest speaker was Gassia Apkarian, Judge of the Superior Court of California for the County of Orange. Following a light-hearted, engaging, and endearing introduction by Superior Court Judge Maria Daghljan-Hernandez, Judge Apkarian offered



Members of the organizing body of the Armenian Bar Association and guests

her personal and professional insights with respect to former governmental administrations

of the Republic of Armenia and posed constructive critiques of the current state of the

Republic's judiciary.

After the luncheon, the nearly one hundred people in attendance listened and engaged with great interest the second signature panel moderated by Board member Garo B. Ghazarian. The audience heard of the extraordinary work of the Ombudsmen and Human Rights Defenders of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh. Tatoyan and Beglaryan each provided a comprehensive overview of the purpose of their offices and how they and their staff members go about achieving their institutional objectives. Both Ombudsmen emphasized that their positions are non-partisan and that they do not serve at the whim or direction of the government in power, but rather are independent investigatory and advocacy bodies. They also described how their professional independence is safeguarded by the fact that they are not subject to recall by any of the branches of government.

The weekend ended with a big bang and beautiful tribute. A celebration of the monumental lifetime achievements of Judge Dickran Tevzizian took place at the California Club where more than 300 guests came to honor the pioneering work and regal influence of Tevzizian and to mark and revel in the association's 30 years of excellence and virtue.



## Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

### Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

#### ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com).
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com), The Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

**Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.**  
**Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund**  
 755 Mt. Auburn Street  
 Watertown, MA 02472  
 USA

but electronic application is preferred.

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2019**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2019** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2019**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

**Watertown, MA, July 15, 2019**

## AEF Accepts Applications For Scholarships

GLENDALÉ – The Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) has announce that it is accepting applications for the Richard R. Tufenkian Scholarships for the 2019 - 2020 academic year. Three \$3,000 scholarships will be awarded to Armenian undergraduate students at an accredited United States college or university. To qualify for this scholarship, students must be of Armenian descent, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, show financial need, and be actively involved in the Armenian community.

Students who meet the above criteria should visit [www.aefweb.org](http://www.aefweb.org) for scholarship application and more information. All completed scholarship application packages must be postmarked no later than July 31, 2019, and mailed to the AEF office at 600 West Broadway, Suite 130, Glendale, CA 91204.

The Richard R. Tufenkian Scholarship Fund was established by Ralph and Savey Tufenkian in memory of their son. The \$230,000 endowed fund has provided over \$470,000 in scholarships since 1991. Currently, \$17,500 in scholarships is awarded each year, including \$2,500 to a student attending the American University of Armenia and six full tuition scholarships for students attending public universities in Armenia.

Only students interested in applying for the scholarship should contact the AEF office at email [aef@aefweb.org](mailto:aef@aefweb.org).



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Diocesan Sunday Schools Help Fight Malnutrition in Armenia



Sunday School students launched a Lenten drive for children in Armenia.

NEW YORK – Every Lenten season for more than 50 years, Sunday School students, staff, and families throughout the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America have joined in an effort to raise money for the world's needy.

Refugees of war and famine, America's poor, children in distress on every continent, and dozens of good causes in Armenia (including campaigns devoted to foster care, war victims, domestic abuse, and comforting the elderly) have all been recipients of these Lenten collections.

In 2019, 23 Sunday Schools contributed close to \$21,000 to the Fund for Armenian Relief's "First Thousand Days" campaign, which addresses child malnutrition through healthy food packages, parent and teacher education, and school meal programs.

Sunday schoolers were ambitious and creative in their fundraising. They prepared and

served food at parish fellowships, washed cars and cleaned houses, memorized Bible verses, made and sold Easter baskets, and simply passed the hat at family gatherings.

Diocesan Christian Education director Elise Antreassian congratulated the students by echoing the words of the Gospel: "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) Executive Director Garnik Nanagulian expressed FAR's gratitude to the students in a letter extolling their compassion for their fellow Armenian children.

The sentiment was echoed by Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel. "This is the kind of inspirational effort that goes on in our parish communities year in and year out," he said. "Our Sunday School students are children, but they contributed something significant, and important, to help our homeland. They are truly doing our Lord's work."

## OBITUARY

### Sculptor Soghoyan, Creator of Armenian Monument near White House, Passes Away

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

MOSCOW – Sculptor Frid Soghoyan (Sogoyan in Russian) passed away at the end of July. He was born in 1936 in the town of



"Motherland" by Frid Soghoyan, Bronze, 1990, Washington D.C.

Gyumri (back then Leninakan).

As a schoolboy Soghoyan would often miss

classes in order to go out onto the streets to see how master craftsmen were carving ornaments on stone. As an adult, having grown up to be a sculptor, he was invited to Moscow by the Academy of Fine Arts of the USSR in 1970.

In Moscow and Kiev, Soghoyan was a part of groups that created famous monuments dedicated to World War II.

Soghoyan received several awards from the Armenian, Russian and Ukrainian governments. Works crafted by this prominent sculptor are displayed in the museums of Russia, Germany, United Kingdom, France, United States and certainly Armenia.

However, in America he is best known for the monument which stands in front of the American Red Cross's national headquarters next to the White House. It symbolized the gratitude of the Armenian people to the Red Cross in particular and to the United States in general for the enormous humanitarian aid to devastated Armenia after the 1988 earthquake. "To the American people from grateful Armenian people," the inscription on the monument says.

Soghoyan reflected on this: "I am from Gyumri and I did lose 32 close friends in the 1988 earthquake. During my visit to Washington, I realized how important U.S. aid was to the earthquake victims. I had to do something in appreciation for what the American people had done for Armenia."

As prominent Armenian-American journalist David Zenian reported, "...Soghoyan began work on a large statue depicting a mother with a child in her arms. Through his new American friends and the help of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow Soghoyan contacted former Senator Bob Dole and the American Red Cross and arrangements were made to transfer the life-



size structure."

The statue is made out of bronze and is 140

inches long. It exists on the Red Cross's website.

# Giragosian

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## Maik Murkidjanian

Worked at Stella's Pizza

WATERTOWN – Maik Murkidjanian of Watertown died on August 14, 2019. He was the husband of the late Virginia (Varteresian) Murkidjanian.

He leaves his sons, Paul Murkidjanian, Michael Murkidjanian and his wife Marianne and Lisa Ghazarian and her husband Vrej; grandchildren Samira, Marisa, Tanya, Nicole, Sean, Danielle, Michael, Andrew, Gregory, and Tiffany and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He started his career as a chocolatier at Deran's Confectionary in Cambridge. Upon retiring from Deran's Confectionary, Maik worked alongside his son Michael at Stella's Pizza in Watertown.

Funeral service was at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, 558 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown on Tuesday, August 20. Interment at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# A Gathering of Greek and Oriental Orthodox Bishops

NEW YORK – Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, joined fellow bishops of the Oriental Orthodox churches to congratulate the recently installed leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Elpidophoros.

Their visit to the Manhattan headquarters of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America took place on Monday, August 12. Bishop Daniel, representing the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, was part of the delegation that included Archbishop John Kawak of the Syriac Archdiocese, Archbishop Titus Yeldho of the Malankara Archdiocese, Archbishop Silvanos Ayoub of the Syriac Knanaya Archdiocese, and Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese.

Bishop David, as president of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches (SCOOC), led the delegation. It was the first formal meeting of the Oriental Orthodox bishops with Archbishop Elpidophoros since the latter's enthronement in late June.

"The Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America holds an extremely important and influential position," explained Bishop Daniel, "not only within his own church, but also for all the Eastern Orthodox churches in America. Among them he is essentially considered 'first among equals.'"

## Towards Unity and Communion

The longstanding relationship between the Greek Church and the Armenian and other Oriental Orthodox churches is also vitally important. During the August 12 meeting, the bishops discussed the urgent necessity of drawing their respective "families" of churches – the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox – into greater union with one another.

"Our people are ahead of us clergy in their insistence that our churches be in full communion," said Elpidophoros to his fellow bishops.

To that end, the bishops considered various prospects for bringing their people and clergy together for prayer, fellowship, and ultimately joint ministry. One concrete result of the meeting was an agreement to jointly hold an evening of sacred music and prayer, for Friday, December 27. The service, which will incorporate liturgical forms from each of respective Orthodox Christian traditions, will take place in the New York metro area, in a location to be determined.

"We must press ahead toward full Christian unity and sacramental communion among all of the Orthodox churches, Eastern and Oriental," said Bishop Daniel, reflecting on the meeting. "Such communion would celebrate the diversity of our liturgical traditions and our distinctive Christian witnesses, while encouraging us to more ardently bring the love of Jesus Christ into the lives of all people. I will always support



Hierarchs of America's Oriental Orthodox churches met at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York, to congratulate the new leader of the Greek Orthodox Church. Pictured are H.E. Mor Silvanos Ayoub (of the Syriac Knanaya Archdiocese), H.E. Mor Titus Yeldho (Malankara Archdiocese), H.G. Bishop David (Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese), H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese), H.E. Mor Dionysios John Kawak (Syriac Archdiocese), and H.G. Bishop Daniel (Armenian Church, Eastern Diocese).

every sincere effort toward this end."

He added: "That goal is central to the mission of the Armenian Church, as it has been since our people received the Gospel from the Apostles."

In October, Findikyan will be hosting a follow-up meeting at the Diocesan Center in New York, which will be a broader meeting of Oriental and Eastern Orthodox bishops in the New York region.

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## Journalist Duncan White to Speak at Trinity Men's Union and St. James Men's Club Joint Dinner Meeting

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Trinity Men's Union of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the St. James Men's Club of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church will present Duncan White as their guest speaker at their joint dinner meeting, hosted by the Trinity Men's Union, on Monday, September 9.



Duncan White

White, an award-winning journalist and academic is assistant director

of studies in history and literature at Harvard University and a lead book reviewer for the *Daily Telegraph*. His talk will focus on "Writers on the Front Line of the Cold War," and his newly-published book, *Cold Warriors: Writers Who Waged the Literary Cold War*.

In the Cold War, literature was a battleground and books were weapons. Publishing the right story at the right time could make you a hero; writing the wrong story in the wrong place could get you shot. Novels and poems could win hearts and minds of those caught between the competing creeds of capitalism and communism, and vast propaganda operations were initiated to ensure the right books got to the right readers and that the wrong books were kept out of cir-

ulation. So seriously was literature taken that the clandestine intelligence services of America, Britain and the Soviet Union all had agents dedicated to its exploitation as cultural warfare.

Drawing on archival research, the latest declassified intelligence files, and a deep understanding of the lives and works of writers of the period, *Cold Warriors* is the first definitive account of its kind. White vividly chronicles how this ferocious intellectual struggle was waged on both sides of the Iron Curtain. That the stakes were high as the world stood on the brink of nuclear destruction is well-known; what is less well understood is just how important writers were as players in the game.

*Cold Warriors* focuses on five major writers – George Orwell, Stephen Spender, Mary McCarthy, Graham Greene, and Andrei Sinyavsky – but the full cast includes a dazzling array of literary giants.

Some of the many highlights of the book include:

- Ernest Hemingway leading a band of guerrilla fighters in the march on Paris during the Second World War;

- George Orwell trying to get *Animal Farm* published in wartime London, little realizing an undercover KGB agent was pressuring publishers to reject the book;

- Anna Akhmatova refusing to bow to Stalin as he makes her the scapegoat in his Cold War purge on any writer with connections to the West;

- Graham Greene, drawing on his clandestine meetings with revolutionaries in Cuba to write *Our Man in Havana*, a novel that anticipated the Cuban Missile Crisis;

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn taking on the Kremlin and the KGB, with the publication of *Gulag Archipelago*, his explosive history of the Soviet labor camps; and

- John le Carré working as an M16 spy in Germany being sent to Berlin as the Wall goes up, and drawing on the experience to write *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*.

*Cold Warriors* is a welcome reminder that writers and books can change the world.

The dinner meeting will be held in the Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. All are welcome to attend. The social hour begins at 6 p.m., and dinner at 7 p.m. Donation for the losh kebab and kheyma dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP is requested by September 6 by emailing David Dorian at [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com), or contacting the Holy Trinity Church Office, [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenians Found Community in This Plymouth Neighborhood on the Beach

By David Kindy

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (*Old Colony Memorial Newspaper*) – This is a story about summer, baseball and a joyful clash of cultures on the beach. It's about food, dances, music, sleepovers and a close-knit neighborhood. It's about kids playing outside well after dark and parents making sure no one got hurt or crossed too far over the line.

This is a story about summer, baseball and a joyful clash of cultures on the beach. It's about food, dances, music, sleepovers and a close-knit neighborhood. It's about kids playing outside well after dark and parents making sure no one got hurt or crossed too far over the line.

For a time, a four- or five-block section around the Idlewild Inn in Manomet was a glorious mixture of ethnicities and eccentricities. This quaint collection of cottages and summer homes was awash in the cultures and customs of a different land that many in other parts of Plymouth would have found unusual, to say the least.

From the 1930s through the 1970s, the sounds of curious music echoed from the Idlewild every Saturday night during the summer. Unusual aromas of ethnic food cooked by elderly women who barely spoke English wafted around and through nearby homes, tantalizingly teasing neighbors and passersby alike.

Yet, no one seemed to mind or care about the differences. In fact, they were celebrated and embraced at neighborhood parties, on sandy beaches, around backyard grills and on the local



The Asadoorian family of Worcester and Manomet have placed several benches dedicated to their deceased family members at the top of the bluffs across from the Idlewild Hotel.



Steve Kurkjian, right, with his extended family in Manomet



In Manomet home of Anna Kalajian, (seated) with her son Arthur Kalajian who grew up in Belmont and is now an engineer in Michigan, and his wife Debra

baseball field, where the community came together to celebrate the warm weather and relaxed atmosphere that was Manomet in this era.

For Steve Kurkjian, summers here as a young boy were heaven on earth. He was part of the new culture that was absorbed into this neighborhood. As a first-generation Armenian American, he was proud of both his heritage from the old country and his citizenship in this land. Mostly, he loved baseball and going to the beach.

"We played baseball all summer long at Briggs Field," he says of his time coming of age in Manomet in the 1950s and '60s. "If we weren't on the baseball diamond, then we were on the beach chasing girls. It was a glorious time. I have so many memories."

Now 75, Steve once worked for the Boston Globe on the Spotlight investigative team, where he won three Pulitzer Prizes. One was for his work on uncovering sexual abuse cases related to the Catholic church in Boston. He is also the author of the book *Master Thieves: The Boston Gangsters Who Pulled Off the World's Greatest Art Heist*, which chronicled the \$500-

million theft of paintings at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

More than 70 years ago, Steve's family lived in Dorchester and started spending summers in Manomet. At first, they stayed at the Idlewild Inn, which had been purchased by an Armenian family in the 1930s. The Sarafians welcomed all guests to their beautiful facility on Manomet Avenue, and many Armenians stayed at the inn and later bought nearby cottages and homes.

How the Sarafians found this cozy coastal community is a bit of mystery, though there is a tantalizing clue at the Second Church of

reverend in Manomet.

The inn still stands on the bluff above Manomet Beach and offers a stunning vista of the seashore and beyond. To the south lies Cape Cod. Across the bay is Provincetown, clearly visible when the humidity is low and the sun is at your back. To the north, where Manomet Beach curves toward Cape Cod Bay, are Stone Horse Rocks, a rough outcropping that is a favorite for local swimmers.

"I've traveled around the world and to me, this is the most beautiful place I've ever seen," Steve says. "It's breathtaking. Not a bad place at all."



The Idlewild as it exists today.

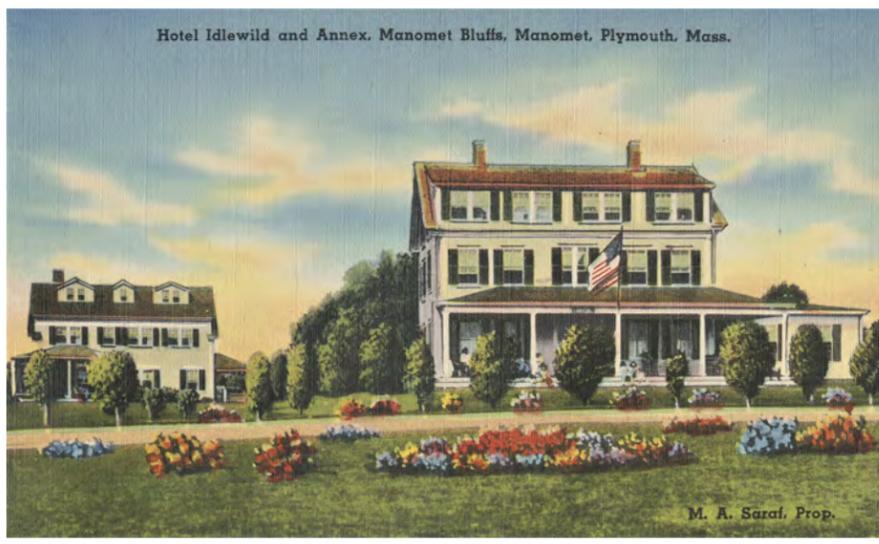
Plymouth. Records show that in 1897 the church hired a young Armenian minister, Haig Adadourian, who led the parish until 1904 and again from 1916 until 1923. He sponsored numerous people from the old country and helped them emigrate to America. It is believed some of those newly landed émigrés, including the eventual owners of the Idlewild, visited the

The Kurkjian family bought a cottage in Manomet in 1948. The father, Anoshavan, was a toddler during Armenian Genocide by Turkey in 1915, when as many as

1.5 million are believed to have died. He came to America with his mother, the only surviving members of their family. He grew up to become a respected commercial artist and portrait



## COMMUNITY NEWS



Hotel Idlewild and Annex. Manomet Bluffs, Manomet, Plymouth, Mass.

M. A. Saraf, Prop.



The Sarafians owned the Idlewild Inn from the 1930s through 1968 (courtesy of Project Save)

painter in Boston. Anooshavan and his wife Rosella wanted their children Stephen, Karolyn and Elizabeth to enjoy all the fruits this new and exciting country bore.

"We didn't even own a car when we first started coming here," Steve recalls. "We would get a ride from cousins and friends. We would stay for the summer and my father would come down on weekends and for his vacation. I remember there always people at the house - 25 or so at a time. The women were constantly cooking. I don't know where all those people slept because the cottages were tiny back then!"

Affable and athletic, young Steve made friends easily and played with other children in the neighborhood. Baseball and epic late-night games of tag ranging across the neighborhood filled their summer. One of his younger companions was Miriam "Mimi" O'Neal, who still visits the family home in Manomet during the warm-weather months.

"I always thought I was Armenian," says Mimi, who is as Irish as the day is long. "All my friends were Armenian. I loved the language and the food. I didn't know ethnicity as a child. Steve's father cooked pancakes every Saturday morning for the neighborhood kids. We spent time together and all blended as one."

Like an extended clan, everyone in the community kept an eye on the younger ones. Neighbors dutifully watched out for the children to make sure everyone was safe and would report youthful indiscretions. Once, Anooshavan caught Mimi's older sister smoking and told her parents about her illicit activity.

"She was horrified," she recalls. "But that's what happened here. It was very family-oriented."

Mimi also attended the Idlewild dances with Steve's sister Elizabeth. Well, they didn't really go into the dance hall since children were prohibited. Rather, they sat outside in back of the inn and listened to the lively and strangely enjoyable music as it poured forth from doors and windows left open in a futile attempt to cool sweaty bodies from the summer heat.

"Elizabeth never really wanted to go, but I made her," she says. "I think she was uncomfortable because it was the older generation of her family, but I loved it."

Manomet's Armenian enclave also mingled

with neighbors on the beach. The community gathered together on the shore to bask in the sun and enjoy the salt water. Steve still remembers all the Armenian women holding hands and walking tentatively into cold Cape Cod Bay.

"The women were always busy cooking and running the home," he says. "This is where they could rest and bond together. They would walk arm and arm into the water and hold hands in a circle. No one ever swam because it was too cold."

One of those women was Ann Kalajian. She started coming to Manomet in 1947 with her husband Charles and later her three sons, Edward and twins Arthur and Peter. They also stayed at the Idlewild Inn before purchasing a cottage on Vinal Avenue. Ann, 91 and an ethnic Armenian who was born in Syria, lives year-round in the home now.

"It was a nice community," she says. "You could hear the music from the bands at the Idlewild all over the neighborhood. The inn had good food and service."

For Arthur, summers in Manomet were all about the beach and swimming. His family would head down the stairs in the morning to enjoy as much time as possible in the surf, sand and sun.

"We would spend a full day at the beach," he remembers. "It was a lot fun. My mother taught me how to swim. How she learned to swim, I

still welcomes all guests, but no Armenian bands play music late into the night on weekends anymore. The nearby summer cottages were replaced with expansive year-round homes.

Families moved away seeking better opportunities. New people arrived in and made those houses their own. Nothing bad about that; just different.

Today, a few Armenians live in the neighborhood, which now has a much more diverse population. People are still friendly and care about their neighbors, but the ambiance has changed. Bigger homes and the increased demands of 21st century life mean less opportunity to rub elbows and to connect as a community.

Manomet is now Steve Kurkjian's full-time address. He loves the casual feel of the neighborhood and cheerfully greets everyone he sees while around - whether he has known them for 70 years or met them last week at the beach. For him, the place is home. He wrote about it recently in a reflection of his recollections growing up in that friendly corner of Plymouth:

"I spent my boyhood summers in Manomet

"When people asked me why I didn't know more about the attractions of the Cape, I would answer if you knew the enjoyment I gained with friends and family from my patch of sand on Manomet Beach, swimming at high tide in the freezing cold water out to House Rock, or marveling at the Bluffs to the north knowing that the Pilgrims would have taken in the same breathtaking vista as the Mayflower sailed from Provincetown to America's Home Town in 1620, you would understand why I was fine just where I was.

"And at some later point, I began to understand what this same expanse of sand and the neighborhood around the Idlewild Inn had meant to that generation of older Armenians who had found their way to Manomet when it was acquired in

the 1930s, and thrived during the years of my youth. And as I have grown older, so many different Armenians whom I have met realize that we're really not strangers but that our families knew each other from the vacation weeks they had spent in Manomet. But it was the older generation, the one that had survived the Armenian



A painting by Anoosh Kurkjian, the father of Steve Kurkjian, of the cottage that they bought in 1948, and was a summer home until it was destroyed by fire in 1980.

and though I delighted in growing up in a vibrant Dorchester neighborhood, my favorite memories come from the weeks spent here between the last day of school and Labor Day. From making it all the way through the list of 20-plus flavors of ice cream offered at Gellars to playing hours of baseball with great friends at

Genocide of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey and had had lost their parents, siblings, cousins and even children to it, that Manomet meant the most to.

"These mostly older women had gained safety in America, and though most never had spoken about their suffering or what they had lost, you could see them drawing comfort and strength in Manomet's



Painting by Anoosh Kurkjian of Manomet Beach

don't know. She grew up in Damascus, where there is no water."

Of course, all things must change. Just as the summer winds give way to the cool breezes of autumn and the carefree days of childhood drift into the endless demands of adulthood, Manomet would begin to evolve again.

The Sarafians sold the Idlewild Inn in 1968. It

Briggs Field to hearing the calliope music announcing the arrival of another two-week stint of Colbert's Fiesta on the empty lot beside St. Bonaventure's Church, my growth from boyhood to young adult wended along that stretch of Route 3A from Rogers (now Luke's) and Lisa Jean's ice cream shop where now Marshland is located.

summer warmth. I can still see them, small groups of older Armenian women, all dressed in their billowing black bathing suits, walking together down the long flight of stairs onto the warm sands, then wading hand in hand into the water, conversing in soft somber tones in their native Armenian, yet shouting, almost with laughter, as another cold wave came splashing towards them."



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# Arts & Living

## Four Scholars to Speak on 'Western Armenian in the 21st Century: Challenges And New Approaches'

FRESNO – Four scholars from the University of Southern California (USC) and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) will discuss their research on Western Armenian in a panel discussion titled “Western Armenian in the 21st Century: Challenges and New Approaches” at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, September 6, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, at Fresno State. Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian will moderate the discussion.

The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Fall 2019 Lecture Series and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

For the past few years, scholars have discussed how to best teach Western Armenian and to transmit the language to future generations. In November of 2017, the Society for Armenian Studies and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation organized a conference on “Transmitting Western Armenian to the Next Generation,” with the participation of six scholars. The conference was organized based on this discussion and from the 2010 report that UNESCO had placed Western Armenian on the list of the world’s endangered language. The scholars at the conference presented the latest research in the field of language acquisition, which benefits from theoretical and practical approaches in the field of teaching minority languages in a diasporic situation.

In 2018, the Press at California State University, Fresno published *Western Armenian in the 21st Century: Challenges and New Approaches* as part of the Armenian Series at Fresno State. The book was edited by Bedross Der Matossian and Der Mugrdchian. Four of the contributors to the volume will present their conclusions on September 6.

Dr. Shushan Karapetian is deputy director of the Institute of Armenian Studies at USC. She received a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and



Shushan Karapetian

Cultures from UCLA in 2014, where she has taught Armenian Studies courses for the past nine years. Her dissertation, “How Do I Teach My Kids My Broken Armenian?: A Study of Eastern Armenian Heritage Language Speakers in Los Angeles,” received the Society for Armenian Studies Distinguished Dissertation Award in 2015.

Jesse Siragan Arlen is a PhD Candidate of Armenian Studies in the Near Eastern Languages & Cultures department at UCLA. see SCHOLARS, page 17



Jesse Arlen



Alin Demirdjian, right, sings with a collaborating artist.

## Alin Demirdjian Is Looking for Songs in Armenian Provinces

YEREVAN/BUENOS AIRES – Alin Demirdjian is an Argentinian-Armenian singer-songwriter. She has two solo albums with her own songs in Spanish, and she has also been part of different Argentinian and Armenian musical projects in Buenos Aires. She is always curious about different artists and places, and most of the time she is touring around Argentinian provinces, singing and meeting new local artists.

That’s why last year while she was visiting Armenia for the fourth time, she had the idea to do the same in Armenia and Artsakh, and she developed a project called “One province, one song,” which she is implementing this year with the support of Birthright Armenia [www.birthrightarmenia.org](http://www.birthrightarmenia.org)



Alin Demirdjian and her team of “One Province, One Song” or Mek Marz, Mek Yerk in Armenia

see SONGS, page 17



Alin Demirdjian, right, sings in Armenia.

## Goethe Medal For Cultural Exchange

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – If there is one name that calls to mind the conflict-laden relationship between Germany and Turkey, it is Dogan Akhanli. The Turkish-born German writer has lived in the Federal Republic since 1992, after he fled political persecution in his homeland, and received asylum, then citizenship. Since then, several of his books have been published in German translations, and have received literary prizes.

Yet, even as a German citizen and acclaimed author, he has not escaped harassment from the Turkish authorities. In August 2010, when he flew to Istanbul to visit his dying father, he was seized at the airport, and jailed on hoked-up charges of participation in armed robbery and murder. An international mobilization of



Dogan Akhanli

intellectuals and political activists led to his eventual acquittal and release. But in Spring 2013 an Appeals Court in Ankara reversed the ruling, reopened the case and issued an international warrant for his arrest. Akhanli responded by refusing to return to Turkey. In 2016 his book, *The Days without Father* appeared in German, and told the story of a politically persecuted exile in Germany.

In 2017, while on vacation in Grenada, Spain he was hauled out of his hotel room by police and transferred to Madrid, on the initiative of Turkish authorities, who hoped to extradite him. The case escalated into an international scandal and brought German-Turkish relations to a boiling point (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/SEPTEMBER-2-2017.pdf>)

Again, the writer regained his freedom; and, again, he found refuge in literature. His account of his most recent Kafkaesque experience appeared in a new book, *Arrest in Grenada, or Is Turkey Drifting into Dictatorship?*

### Enhancing Cultural Exchange

Considering his political-literary adventures and the strain they have left on relations between Berlin and Ankara, it is not without a touch of irony that Akhanli is to receive this special award from the Goethe Institute. The Goethe Institute is named after Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who, like Friedrich Schiller, is a national poet of Germany. In addition to his own literary works, Goethe was instrumental in building cultural bridges to the Islamic world; this year marks the 200th anniversary of the publication of his *West-Eastern Diwan*, a collection of his lyrical works see MEDAL, page 17

## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# With Passing of Mike Vosbikian, Original Member Of Pioneer Dance Band, An Era Ends

By Harry A. Kezelian III

PHILADELPHIA — Eighty years ago, in 1939, three teenage Armenian-American brothers, Sam, Mike, and Joe Vosbikian, from St. Gregory's Armenian Church in North Philadelphia, started a band with their two friends Charles Mardigian and Peter Endrigian. The Vosbikian brothers were the children of Genocide survivors Bedros and Vartanous Vosbikian, and what they did truly marked a rebirth of Armenian culture in the Diaspora.

The "Fabulous" Vosbikian Band was the first Armenian band whose members were born in the United States. They were pioneers. They were the instigators of an entire movement. They were copied by many, but equaled by few. And in the nativist atmosphere of early-20th century America, what they did was bold.

Mike Vosbikian, the last living survivor of the original band, passed away Wednesday, August 14, peacefully, at his home in Medford, New Jersey. His death marked the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Vosbikian Band, and truly the end of an era.

It can honestly be said that the history of dance music in the Armenian-American community would not be the same without the Vosbikians. Unlike other immigrant ethnic groups in America, who turned their attention to Big Band Swing in the 1930s, the Vosbikians turned to Armenian folk music — jazzed up to their liking and to the enthusiasm of their young Armenian-American peers. Through them and through the genre they gave birth to — now known as "kef music" — the survival of Armenian folk dance in a social setting was secured in America.

Emulating the earlier immigrant-generation bands, such as Bernard Kondourajian's Arziv Orchestra, which played at the picnics, weddings, and hantesses of 1930s Philadelphia, the Vosbikians played a combination of folk, popular, operetta, and both Western and Eastern



The original Vosbikian Band of 1939: From left, Charlie Mardigian, Sam Vosbikian, Joe Vosbikian, Mike Vosbikian and Peter Endrigian

"Manny" or "Mike." His father Bedros Vosbikian who arrived in America as a stow-away in 1913 and brought his brother Thomas and his fiancée Vartanous to America in 1916 out of the clutches of the Young Turks, was an amateur clarinet player, lover of music and dancing, founder of Quickie Manufacturing, and pillar of the Armenian community in Philadelphia. Vartanous, matriarch of the Vosbikian family, was a Genocide survivor and, like Bedros, was born in Malatya.

Mike Vosbikian, a saxophone player and occasionally a vocalist, started the first Vosbikian Band with his two brothers Sam and Joe, and buddies Charlie and Peter in 1939, at the age of 18. We can presume he was fresh out of high school. The line-up was clarinet, drum set, dumbeg, banjo/violin, and saxophone. "Manny" played the alto saxophone, which introduced an American vibe to the band's traditional Armenian folk songs. As the guitar or keyboard is today, in the 1940s and 1950s the saxophone was considered the key ingredient differentiating Armenian-American music from the actual music of the old country, and made the Vosbikian Band modern for their time.

Growing up as typical American kids of the 1930s, the Vosbikian boys were fans of Big Band Swing, and enjoyed the sound of the sax, which was increasingly popularized by the likes of the Benny Goodman Orchestra or the Count Basie Orchestra featuring saxophone player Lester Young. Later, in the 1940s, Charlie Parker would gain popularity as the top sax man in jazz. So why not put that sound into Armenian music? Old timers like Udi Hrant and Kanuni Garbis were probably shaking their heads in disbelief, not to mention the classical conductors of the Gomidas school like H. Mehrab and K. Proff-Kalfayan — though one gets the feeling that the iconoclastic archrival of Gomidas (and notorious Communist) Grikor Mirzayan Suni, the leading Armenian classical musician in Philadelphia, was barely suppressing a grin.

Who else but Mike Vosbikian, would, in 1950, think of playing an introductory solo to Saro's aria from "Anoush," *Partzer Sarer*, on the saxophone! Few would consider doing something like that even today, but Mike Vosbikian was ahead of his time. Is it any wonder that almost every Armenian-American band of the 1950s had to have a saxophone in their lineup? Everybody wanted to be like the Fabulous Vosbikians. Mike wailed on the sax memorably on the recording *Vosbikian Special II*, and soloed on *Partzer Sarer*, but all of the 22 songs the band put out in 1949-1951 prominently featured Mike's saxophone — except an oud solo by Sam. Mike's sax was an integral part of the band's sound and is still remembered as such

today by Armenian music fans.

When Mike was drafted in 1942 during World War II, he served his country with honor, as did his brother Joe. Older brother Sam got home leave to take care of the family, and he kept the band going while he was at it. Sam got a hold of an oud which he learned to play, and told his younger cousin Jimmy (son of uncle Thomas Vosbikian, a violinist), who was practicing jazz clarinet with friend Hank Mardigian on saxophone, that the two of them were Armenians and therefore "should play Armenian music!" The two joined the band and help keep it alive through the war years until Mike returned to take over on saxophone duty. Jimmy stayed in the band, while Hank branched off to form the Gomidas Band and managed to replicate the Vosbikian Sound while discovering oud legend George

Mgrdichian.) Charlie Mardigian and Peter Endrigian were no longer with the band after the war. The new band, the one which cut the 22 tracks at 78 rpms and which was destined for fame, featured Albert "Junior" Santerian on *dumbeg* (son of Bedros Vosbikian's *dumbeg* player, Harry), Steve Ajdaharian, a crossover from the local ACYOA, playing piano and introducing numerous new songs, and a switch for vocalist Joe Vosbikian from drum set to a special oversized *dumbeg* custom-made in the Vosbikian manufacturing facility. New brother-in-law and recent arrival from Baghdad, vocalist Jirair Hovnanian was the only band member not born in the US but he too was a post-Genocide diasporan child, born to distant relatives that had ended up in Iraq — Philadelphia's answer to Onnik Dinkjian. By the way, Onnik has stated on the record that it was seeing the Vosbikian Band play for the first time at an engagement in New York, that inspired him to want to learn to play the *oud* and sing "that kind of music" — and we know that his desire to sing, at least, was a smashing success.

On the Vosbikians' 1957 LP, "Vosbikian Presents Armenian Folk Dances," Mike furthered his musical influence by the band's recording of his own composition, *Tepo Jan*, an ode to Jirair Hovnanian's father, Stepan, and now a Vosbikian band classic. It's an Armenian-American tale of a father berating his American born son to find a suitable bride, only to be told that *Tepo* has already invited a girl over for dinner, *vaghe irigoon*. The charm of this simple but catchy tune is only increased by being sung entirely in Malatyatsi-Armenian-American dialect.

Jimmy Vosbikian, as lead vocalist, sang on the original recording of *Tepo Jan*. Mike was never featured on vocals in the band's early recordings, but he eventually became a solid vocalist in the band's later, post-1970 sessions, with an off-the-cuff bluesy delivery reminiscent of jazz legend Jack Teagarden. *Tepo Jan* was a favorite, but of all the songs that Mike made popular, the most famous was no doubt *Dolarjee*, a number which as Steve Vosbikian Jr. has put it, is a "Vosbikian-ized version of *Kh Im Anoush Yar*." How much of the song Mike wrote himself and how much he got from an earlier parody ver-



The Vosbikian Brothers, from left, Sam, Mike and Joe

Armenian tunes, with the true Western-Armenian beat that they learned from their parents' generation, born in the town of Malatya in Kharpert Province. They gained popularity in their hometown and made their first out of town appearance at a 1940 AYF jamboree in Union City, New Jersey.

Though elder brother Sam (Sahag) Vosbikian, who started out on clarinet and later switched to oud — both traditional instruments in the old country — was the instigator and leader, and younger brother Joe (Hovsep) gave the band its soul with his impassioned, intense Armenian vocals, the heart of the band was the man referred to by surviving family as "Uncle Mike," who introduced the jazzy sounds of the saxophone to Armenian folk music.

Manuel Vosbikian, born May 29, 1921, in Philadelphia, was known to his friends as either



TEKEYAN  
CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
MHER MEGERDCHIAN  
THEATRICAL GROUP



PRESENTS  
A HILARIOUS NEW  
COMEDY BY *Ray Courney*

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# CAUGHT IN THE NET



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PERFORMED IN ARMENIAN  
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

sion of the classic Armenian folk song (and it had many parody versions), is a question whose answer he took with him (along with the song's actual lyrics). But essentially, the tune is a warning directed at a wealthy, older Armenian man (the *Dollarjee*) about the perils of looking for a bride later in life simply on the strength of money. Though the *Dollarjee* foolishly persists in looking for a *dasnuyen ver, ksanen var, har-suntsoon*, Uncle Mike tells him to just take a shot of oghi and "*ays yerke ganche boralov!*"

Many have noted that not only were the Vosbikians a musical inspiration, but that their music crossed all barriers, generational as well as political, in the Armenian community. It didn't matter how old or young you were, or what church or *agoump* you went to — everyone loved the Vosbikians. I hesitate to say it, but perhaps they were part of the reason that Philadelphia is known to this day as the most unified large Armenian community in North America. Their popularity inspired not only Onnik Dinkjian, but the growth of all the other bands in the Armenian-American community, such as the Nor-Ikes of New York, the Ardziv of Detroit, the Artie Barsamian Orchestra of Boston, the Aramites of Worcester, the New England Ararats of Providence, the Gomidas Band of Philadelphia, the Barrites of Los Angeles, the Hye-Tones of Detroit, and more. Surpassing the earlier regional-based Armenian folk music prominent at *hayrenagtsagan* picnics, the new pan-Armenian-American style of music originated by the Vosbikians helped the youth and even the older people to come together and form one Armenian-American community. The rise of prominent virtuosos like George Mgrdichian, Chick Ganimian, John Berberian, Hachig Kazarian, and Richard Hagopian would not have happened without the "kef music" scene that the Vosbikians helped create.

The Vosbikian's fame was such — and this was one of Uncle Mike's favorite stories to tell — that in 1949 the Vosbikian Band was contacted by the US State Department for a very important mission. The government was hosting the Shah of Iran, here on a state visit to meet with President Harry Truman. They were throwing a grand reception ball for the Shah at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Since there were no Persian musicians to be found to play for His Highness, the State Department chose the hottest Armenian band in the land — the Fabulous Vosbikians. As Uncle Mike told it, the Shah had recently divorced his first wife, and women were paraded before him in his search for a new queen, as the Vosbikians played from a balcony area, heavily guarded by Secret Service agents. Incidentally, the Shah met actress Grace Kelly that night, whom he unsuccessfully began wooing. Can you imagine Hollywood starlets dancing before Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to the 10/8 rhythm of the Armenian Highlands? Mike Vosbikian lived it.

Uncle Mike, with his cool-dude sunglasses, saxophone, and still-brown 1950s hairdo, ended his days at age 98 as an icon for younger Armenian musicians, especially his son Mike Jr., nephews Sam, Steve, Greg, and John Vosbikian and Steve and Peter Hovnanian, grand-nephews Chris and Steve Vosbikian Jr., and grand-niece Karinne Hovnanian Andonian, who are all active in music. Predeceased by his beloved wife Viola, his brothers Sam and Joe, and his sisters Sarah Hovsepijan, Elizabeth Hovnanian, and Virginia DerHagopian, he was the last remnant of the Original Vosbikian Band, and almost the last remnant of the entire generation of Armenian-American musicians active in the 1940s and 1950s.

He leaves behind his sons Mike Jr. and Mark, their wives, his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and his vast extended family.

Though his death marks the true end of an era, as Armenian-American musicians we will always have, "enti temen" (from the other side), the voice of Uncle Mike "ganchel-ing" "ad yerkere" in our ears, with the style that only he possessed. May that voice and that beloved saxophone, and most importantly, the spirit he brought to the music, which was the beating heart of the Vosbikian Band, remain with us and inspire us for years to come as we proudly continue what he and his brothers started 80 years ago.

Long live Uncle Mike, and long live the music of the Armenian People!

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Armenian Lahmajoun

(Recipe and photos contributed by Robyn Kalajian, a retired culinary-arts instructor, head chef and recipe tester at [thearmeniankitchen.com](http://thearmeniankitchen.com), a popular Armenian cooking website created by her husband, Douglas Kalajian, who is an author and retired journalist.)

### INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 package (1/4 ounce or 2 1/4 teaspoons) dry yeast
- 1 cup lukewarm water (105 to 110 F)
- 1/4 cup oil (vegetable or olive)

For the topping:

- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 small bunch of parsley, washed and patted dry, thick stems removed
- 1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 pound lean ground lamb or beef or a combination of the two. (Note: ground turkey may be substituted)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons dried mint, crushed
- 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons flour
- Thinly sliced sweet onion and lemon wedges as garnish

### PREPARATION

For the dough:

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and salt.

Dissolve the sugar and yeast in the lukewarm water. Stir well. Add the liquid mixture to the flour and mix well with a wooden spoon or electric hand mixer. You can also use a stand mixer with the dough-hook attachment. Add a little more warm water if necessary.

On a lightly floured work surface, knead the dough until smooth and elastic. (Note: If using a stand mixer with a dough hook, this step isn't necessary.)

Lightly oil a clean large bowl. Place the dough in the bowl and lightly oil the surface of the dough. Tightly cover the bowl with plastic wrap and cover with a towel large enough to surround the bowl. Place the bowl in a draft-free location and allow dough to rise for 2 hours.

After the dough has risen, pat the dough, then divide it into 12 small, evenly sized balls. Lightly flour the work surface and a rolling pin. Keep additional flour handy for the rolling process. Working with one ball of dough at a time, roll each ball into a thin 7-inch disc. Keep the rolled discs covered with plastic wrap while assembling to keep them from drying out.

For the topping:

If preparing the vegetables by hand, be sure to finely chop the onion, peppers, and parsley. Leave some parsley aside to chop for garnish. To save time, cut onion and peppers into chunks, then put them with the parsley and diced tomatoes in a food processor, using the metal S blade. Do not over process. Vegetables should still be a bit chunky, not pureed.

Using a sieve or strainer, squeeze out any excess liquid. (Note: Too much liquid in the topping will make the dough soggy.) In a large bowl, combine the ground meat, tomato paste, seasonings, flour, and processed vegetables. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Assembly and baking:

Heat oven to 425° F. Place three rolled discs of dough on a parchment-lined or lightly oiled baking sheet. Make sure the discs don't overlap.

Add topping in a thin, even layer, spreading it almost to the edge. (Note: An easy way to spread the topping evenly—and keep your hands clean—is to place about 1/4 cup of the filling in the center of the rolled dough and spread it with the back of a spoon.)

Bake on the lower rack of the oven for about 6 minutes. Move it to the upper rack and bake for another minute or until the meat topping has browned and the bottom and edges of the dough are golden. Serve immediately, topped with thin slices of sweet onion, chopped parsley, and a squeeze of fresh lemon. Then fold and eat.

Freezing:

After baking, cool the lahmajouns completely on wire racks. Once cooled, stack lahmajouns, separating them with plastic wrap or parchment paper. Place in plastic freezer bags, label, and seal tightly. They should keep nicely for about one month.

Reheating:

Heat oven to 350° F. (Note: There is no need to defrost the lahmajouns before reheating.)

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Carefully separate lahmajouns and remove any plastic or paper wrapping and stake them in pairs, meat sides facing each other, and place on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes or until heated through.

Yields 12.

For a short-cut version for this recipe, go to: <https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2009/07/hungry-for-lahmajoun-take-short-cut.html>





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## ARIZONA

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

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

## CONNECTICUT

**AUGUST 25 — Armenian Church of Holy Resurrection Annual Armenian Festival, 12-5 p.m.** Traditional Armenian and American food and activities. Harry Bedrosian oud band and ensemble. 1910 Stanley St., Route 71, New Britain.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**AUGUST 25 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic. 12 to 5 p.m.,** to be held at the new Family Life & Cultural Center, 1280 Boston Road (RTE. 125) Haverhill. Music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyma, Pastries, & Beverages. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. For more info visit [www.hypepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hypepointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227. Take Rte. 495 N to exit 48, bear right at the end of the ramp and follow the signs. Additional parking at Osgood Landing with free shuttle bus to the picnic grounds.

**SEPTEMBER 9 — Trinity Men's Union and St. James Men's Club Joint Dinner Meeting, hosted by the Trinity Men's Union,** Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Monday; 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. Guest Speaker: Duncan White, "Writers on the Front Line of the Cold War." All are welcome to attend. Donation for Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner is \$15; RSVP requested by September 6 to David Dorian, [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com), or the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org). For further information, log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/721/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/721/).

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Armenian Church of the Holy Translators will hosts its annual Armenian Food Festival.** Come and enjoy a day filled with traditional Armenian food, music, dancing and fun children's activities. Sunday. Noon to 5 p.m. The Armenian Church of Holy Translators, 38 Franklin St, Framingham. For further info, contact the church office at 5-8-875-0868.

**SEPTEMBER 15 — Trinity Annual Picnic, 12-5 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St.,** Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food – shish, losh, and chicken kebab - paklava, khadaif, and more with take-out available. Armenian music for listening and dancing, featuring the Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals, Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet, Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals, Arthur Chingris, dumbeg, and Steve Surabian, tambourine. Activities for children including the Moonwalk. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. For information, [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/716/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/716/), contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

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

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

**SEPTEMBER 20 — St. James Hye Café. Friday. Join us for delicious food and fellowship – with LIVE ARMENI-**

**AN MUSIC!** Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15pm. For more information visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org). St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

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

**SEPTEMBER 29 — Sunday, 6 p.m., the screening of "The Stateless Diplomat," a documentary by Mimi Malayan** on the heroic life and legacy of Diana A. Apar (1859-1937), Armenia's Honorary Consul to Japan in 1920 at Mosesian Center for Arts, Watertown. Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Arlington International Film Festival, co-Armenian International Women's Association, Armenian Museum of America, Armenian Women's Welfare Association, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, and Tekeyan Cultural Association. The tickets will be available in the Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts through the following link: <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe/10450012>

**OCTOBER 2 — Joint Sts. Vartanantz – Hye Point Golf Outing at the beautiful Butter Brook Golf Club in Westford.** Proceeds to benefit scholarships to Diocesan youth programs. 10 a.m. Shotgun start. Golfers with all skill levels most welcome. Single players will be grouped into foursomes. \$150 for Golf, lunch, and Dinner. \$165 will include 25 raffle tickets. Awards dinner to follow golf outing at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. For registration and sponsorship information, please contact Steve Sarkisian at 978-808-2820, [Stsgolf@earthlink.net](mailto:Stsgolf@earthlink.net).

**OCTOBER 18-19 — St. James 72nd Annual Bazaar, Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction,** Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children's Activities, and more. Friday and Saturday. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com) or visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org).

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

**OCTOBER 20 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** Celebrating the 58th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity and honoring Bruce Newell as the "Parishioner of the Year," 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting,** NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR's new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

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

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

**DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 3:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater

Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

## MICHIGAN

**OCTOBER 26 — Kef Time Keghi IV 6:30 p.m. Saturday, at St John Armenian Cultural Hall, Southfield,** headlined with Traditional Keghetzi Pagharch feast, full buffet dinner with dancing, music by the Keghi All-Star Armenian Band. Reservations call Laura Negosian Lucassian at 248-376-3794 or email at [Llucassian@TBEonline.org](mailto:Llucassian@TBEonline.org). Donation: Adults \$45, Children under 17, \$20. Cash Bar. Mail checks to Karen Nigosian, 21919 Michigan Ave, Dearborn. MI 48124 Checks payable to Nor Keghi Association. Proceeds to support continuing renovations at public schools and community projects in Nor Keghi, Armenia. Supported by parishioners of the four Armenian churches in Greater Detroit.

**NOVEMBER 16 — The Knights of Vartan, Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 and the Daughters of Vartan,** Zabelle Otyag #12 will celebrate their respective 100th and 70th organization anniversaries. Featuring: Kevork Artinian and his All Star Band at St. Mary's Cultural Hall, 18100 Merriman Rd, Livonia. This is a fundraiser Dinner/Kef Dance to celebrate Knights and Daughters as well as a chance for future members to observe how our community puts our heritage on display. All proceeds to fund renovation of school gymnasium, Knights of Vartan #106, Elementary School, Yerevan, Armenia. For Reservations Contact: Laura Lucassian, (248) 376-3794, Cost \$75 per person, \$40 after 9:30 pm

## NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 22 – Annual Picnic, Sunday, 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church,** 1184 Ocean Avenue, Long Branch. Louleh and Shish Kebab, Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Cheese Boereg, Pastries, Baklava and more. Armenian Music and Children's Games.

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

## NEW YORK

**SEPTEMBER 17 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir** Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Luncheon at 12:00 noon (\$45) sponsored by the WNRC Foundation located at 3 West 51st. St., New York City. Book sale/signing following the presentation. All proceeds to be donated to the foundation RSVP: [anna@snapandstyle.com](mailto:anna@snapandstyle.com) or (615) 934 – 3873

## RHODE ISLAND

**AUGUST 27 — The Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island (AHARI) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)** present The Armenian Legionnaires: Sacrifice and Betrayal in World War I, a lecture by Dr. Susan Pattie, honorary senior research associate, University College, London. Tuesday, 7 p.m., 245 Waterman St., 5th floor conference room, Providence. Admission is free. Doors open at 7 p.m. Reception before and after program. Copies of The Armenian Legionnaires will be available for purchase.

**SEPTEMBER 20 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence will host a book presentation, "The World of Konstantin Petrossian" (English and Armenian), Published by Institute of Arts National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, and Composers Union of Armenia. Friday at 7 p.m., Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson street, Providence. Details to follow.

**SEPTEMBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Martin Papazian, ear, nose and throat specialist. Steven *continued on next page*



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Four Scholars to Speak On 'Western Armenian In the 21st Century

SCHOLARS from page 13

He has taught Western Armenian at a Sunday School since 2016, and his creative prose and poetry in Western Armenian has appeared in literary journals such as *Inknagir* and *Pakine*.

Elizabeth Mkhitarian graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in English and Armenian Studies in 2018. She is a published writer of prose and poetry in English and Armenian. Her first book of poetry in Armenian is forthcoming.



Elizabeth Mkhitarian

Dr. Hagop Gulludjian received his PhD with highest distinction from the Jesuit University of Buenos Aires. He has been teaching modern Western Armenian at UCLA for many years. His area of research is in poststructural rereading of medieval mystical poetry and in languages without a country: language vitality programs and their replicability.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Free parking is available in Lot P6 or P5 near the University Business Center.



Hagop Gulludjian



## The Rock Marries Girlfriend Lauren Hashian in Hawaii

LOS ANGELES (CNN) — Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson’s new movie “Hobbs & Shaw” is in theaters now, but it’s another partnership that he’s most excited about.

The actor announced on Monday that he has married longtime love Lauren Hashian.

Johnson posted a picture on his official Instagram account showing the pair dressed in wedding finery and arms raised in celebration on a rise overlooking the ocean in Hawaii.

“We do. August 18th, 2019. Hawaii. *P maika i* (blessed),” the caption read.

The star tagged his new wife in the photo as well as his former brother-in-law Hiram Garcia, who heads up the production company

founded by Johnson and his ex-wife, Dany Garcia.

Johnson, 47, and Hashian, 34, are the parents of two daughters: Jasmine, 3, and Tiana, 1. He has an 18-year-old daughter, Simone, from his marriage to Garcia.

The international film star reportedly met the singer/songwriter/producer in 2006 and the couple started dating in 2007, following his divorce from Garcia.

In July 2018 Johnson told “Entertainment Tonight” that he was in no rush to wed Hashian.

“I just refer to her as my wife all the time. So a lot of people are like, ‘Oh, did you get married?’” he said. “I’m like, ‘No. Easy. Don’t rush big daddy.’”

## Goethe Medal For Cultural Exchange

MEDAL, from page 13

inspired by the Persian poet Hafez. As Germany’s cultural representative, the Goethe Institute is active in almost 100 countries with over 150 offices. An official institution, it promotes not only study of the German language but—in the spirit of its namesake—also exchange between different cultures, and supports a vast array of programs in all the arts ([www.goethe.de/en/index.html](http://www.goethe.de/en/index.html)).

As a press release announcing this year’s recipients explains, the Goethe Medal is awarded annually to personalities “who have performed outstanding service for the German language and for international cultural relations.” Akhanli’s contribution to “cultural relations” between his place of birth and Germany is of a special kind. Not only was he an opponent of the military regime in Turkey during the 1980s, for which he spent three years in prison, but he broke the taboo on the Armenian Genocide,

which some official figures in Erdogan’s Turkey may regard as an even more serious crime. His prize-winning novel, *The Judges of the Last Judgment*, is dedicated to the story of the genocide, and his monodrama, “Anne’s Silence,” portrays the personal crisis of a Turkish-German girl who discovers her mother was Armenian. In addition, the author has played a leading role in conferences, seminars, historical tours and other civil society activities dedicated to educating people about the Armenian Genocide and the Shoah.

### A Gathering of Luminaries

The selection process leading to the nomination of the candidates for the honor involves members of the various Goethe Institutes abroad, “in close collaboration with Germany’s diplomatic representation offices.” Prominent representatives from science, art and culture make up the Conferment Commission which makes the initial selection of

individuals, and the Board of Trustees confirms the winners. The chair of the Goethe Medal Conferment Commission is the cultural scientist and Vice President of the Goethe Institute Christina von Braun.

The prestigious award was established in 1954, and in 1975 it became the official decoration of Germany. The ceremony will take place on Goethe’s birthday, August 28, in Weimar. Among the 348 individuals who have received the honor since 1955 are Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Bourdieu, David Cornwell AKA John le Carré, Sir Ernst Gombrich, Lars Gustafsson, Ágnes Heller, Petros Markaris, Sir Karl Raimund Popper, Jorge Semprún, Robert Wilson, Neil MacGregor, Helen Wolff and Irina Shcherbakova. This year, along with Akhanli, are the publisher, bookseller and political journalist Enkhbat Roozon from Mongolia and artist and filmmaker Shirin Neshat from Iran and the US.

## CALENDAR

from previous page

Zaroogian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

**OCTOBER 20 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church,** Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and “Meet with our Armenian Doctors” Dr. Herman Ayzvazyan Internal Medicine. Topic: New Trends in Primary Care Medicine. Ara Boghigian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

### WASHINGTON, DC

**SEPTEMBER 16-17 — Armenian Assembly of America’s National Advocacy Conference and Gala** will take place. It will include the Conference, Gala honoring Armenian American

Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, and a Congressional Reception celebrating U.S.-Armenia relations. Special room rates available at The Wharf InterContinental Hotel. Visit [www.aimhye.com](http://www.aimhye.com) for tickets, sponsorships, special hotel room rates, and more information.

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

## Alin Demirdjian Is Looking For Songs in Armenia

SONGS, from page 13

The project is aimed at sharing the current musical scene of Armenia and Artsakh while showing its landscapes and traditions. It consists of exploring every province and searching for a local musician or a band with whom she can sing a song in Armenian and record a music video.

Regarding the songs, the goal is to record artists of all ages, styles, -both in traditional and modern genres. All videos will be filmed on-site and, later on, edited and shared individually (on YouTube and all social media platforms) as episodes. They’ll all be available in Spanish and in English subtitles.

Alin’s desire is to know more, discover artists and share songs in each region of Armenia and Artsakh. She expects to create bridges through music and generate musical exchanges in the future!

The trip started on July 30 and end in December of this year.

To follow her, go to:

IG <http://instagram.com/alinmusica>,

FB <http://facebook.com/alinmusica.ok>,

TW <http://twitter.com/alinmusica>,

YT <http://youtube.com/alinmusica>

# Mirror Spectator

Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

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## 'Abandoned' Armenian Properties Around the World

### Part III

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Jerusalem is one of the most hotly-contested cities in the world. Consequently, to discuss any issue relating to the Armenian presence in that holy city is equally controversial. However, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem is a badge of honor before the world thanks to its history as well as its location in one of the most important cities in the globe.

In addition to its religious, cultural and educational role, Jerusalem plays a significant political one.

Incidentally, during the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat negotiations in the 1990s to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the fate of the Armenian Quarter became a sticking point, because each side had been insisting on bringing the quarter under its jurisdiction.

The Armenian Patriarchate dates back to the 7th century AD, when the first patriarch, Abraham I, served from 638 to 669. Ever since then, its place in the Christian world has expanded exponentially, along with its real estate portfolio, which has helped to sustain its existence.

The Patriarchate and its St. James Monastery have survived under Arab, Crusader, Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Israeli rules, thanks to the monks' ingenuity and political maneuvering.

Armenians all around the world have supported the St. James Brotherhood to expand its real estate holdings, which have reached a size that is fairly unmanageable.

At times, its fortunes have ebbed and the debts of the Patriarchate have endangered its existence; in those instances, the monastic brotherhood has appealed to the greater Armenian community.

One Patriarch in particular has symbolized the degree of sacrifice the clergy have endured in order to salvage the Patriarchate and the brotherhood. His name was Krikor VI the Chain Bearer (1715-1749) or Krikor VI Shiravantzee, who had decided to wear heavy chains around his neck as a symbol of the difficulties he was willing to endure in his efforts to help the Patriarchate recover from its debts.

Jerusalem also served as a safe haven for the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, who were housed, protected and fed for a long time by the Patriarchate. There were 25,000 Armenians sheltered at the St. James Brotherhood compound at that period. When the war broke out in 1948 between the Arabs and Israelis, there were 8,000 left in the wake of war and today their numbers hardly reach 800. Perhaps with other cities such as Haifa, Ramallah and Bethlehem, they may total 2,000-2,500.

The St. James Brotherhood has educated many generations of clergy who then served churches in Armenian communities around the world.

For many centuries, different churches and religions have fought to maintain their turf. Finally, a firman by the Ottoman Sultan defined the delineation of the property in 1757. The document is called the Status Quo, which was ratified and finalized by Sultan Abdemecid in 1853 and ever since, the ruling governments have respected it. According to the clauses of the Status Quo, the Old City of Jerusalem is divided into four quarters: Muslim, Latin (Catholic), Jewish, and Armenian. The Armenians control valuable real estate as well as major religious sites, to the envy of the other Christian denominations.

The status of Jerusalem has provided full authority to the Armenian Patriarchate to conduct its own affairs. They are not overseen by any authority and they are not accountable to any hierarchy, like the Greek Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church are to their leaders.

For many centuries, most of the patriarchs and the members of the Brotherhood have managed the Patriarchate conscientiously. But sometimes, the baser instincts of human nature have taken over the members of the clergy in power who have committed outrageous crimes in full view of an impotent world.

The Patriarchate owns 4,000 Armenian-language manuscripts, second only to the Matenadaran Armenian Repository in Yerevan.

The Patriarchate owns invaluable real estate, with some putting the estimated price at billions of dollars.

For centuries, the Patriarchate in Istanbul played a role of

government in the Ottoman government and had control over Jerusalem. Istanbul has amassed large volumes of documents and statistics. Those documents are of fundamental value any time a compensation issue is raised. These documents have been transferred and are housed in Jerusalem, along with many manuscripts and documents about the Genocide.

The Jerusalem Patriarchate has not been immune to scandals and sometimes by members of the clergy who have otherwise contributed meaningfully to the church and the culture.

As Jerusalem was accountable to the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Periodically, delegations were sent from Constantinople to Jerusalem to settle disputes or dissipate controversies. In 1914, one such delegation was composed of former Patriarch Malachia Ormanian, an intellectual giant whose monumental contributions to church history could only be achieved by an entire institution. The other member was poet Vahan Tekeyan.

Ormanian was prone to intrigues while Tekeyan was the epitome of integrity. As soon as the delegation arrived in Jerusalem, Ormanian joined the corrupt clergy and dissociated himself from the other member of the delegation, using the excuse that lay people have no business in getting involved in settling clergy disputes.

That excuse is alive even today when corrupt members of the clergy seek refuge in hiding their misdeeds.

Ormanian's transgressions paled by comparison to the conduct of other members of the clergy in Jerusalem since then.

A very particular and colorful case was that of Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian, a gifted poet in his own right but corrupt to his very bones.

Before ascending to the Patriarchal throne, he had served as locum tenens, during which he connived with Jordanian authorities to expel from Jerusalem Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, a towering figure in the Church and legally-elected patriarch. Then he elected himself as Patriarch in 1960 and served for 30 years. Since a relatively small number of Brotherhood members are left, it has become almost the norm for any member of the clergy to bribe his way to the seat of Patriarch.

Patriarch Yeghishe was a skillful diplomat to be able to navigate through the political jungle of Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians to preserve the prestige of the Patriarchate. But he ruled the Brotherhood as if the Patriarchate were his own personal fiefdom, surrounding himself with his concubines.

In the early 1970s, 27 Armenian manuscripts emerged on the auction block of Sotheby's in London. Thanks to historian Dr. Sirarpie Der Nersessian's detective work which tracked down the provenance of the manuscripts. The Patriarch cynically blamed the disappearances of these manuscripts on a saintly member of the clergy, namely Patriarch Shnork Kalustian, and a certain antique dealer of ill repute. Thanks to Alex Manoogian's involvement and contributions the manuscripts were returned to the Patriarchate.

The Patriarchate has properties outside Jerusalem, in Israel and elsewhere.

Archbishop Derderian ceded two properties to the Catholicos of Cilicia in Lebanon: St. Nishan Cathedral in Beirut and the Hovivadoon (Pastor's residence) in Aleppo, Syria.

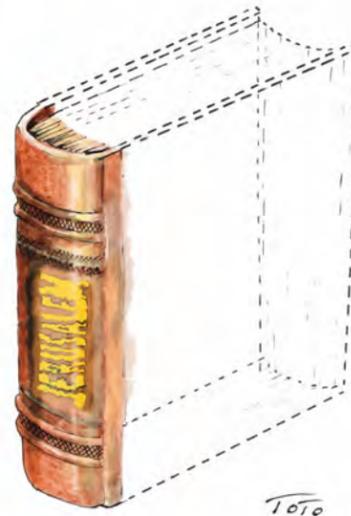
The current leadership at the Patriarchate is pursuing other pieces of property in Turkey, diligently and diplomatically.

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian succeeded Derderian and served from 1990 to 2012. He was the quintessential clergyman, a poet and a musicologist of Armenian divine liturgy. Under his watch, a real estate scandal broke out and a valuable piece of property was sold for a pittance by his underlings in charge of real estate. The Patriarch had to confess publicly that "our attorneys duped us."

Now and then, stories break about the loss or sale of properties in Jerusalem. It is horrendously difficult for the clergy, most of whom lack the expertise, to preserve the vast holding in an era when President Trump can slice a piece of land, such as the Golan Heights in Syria, and donate it to Israel.

In October 2018, the Christian Churches were alarmed that a bill was introduced at the Israeli Parliament by Rachel Azaria, of the centrist Kulanu party, which was meant to "solve the problem

*continued on next page*





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## US Armenians Sue Turkey to Visit Their Native Land Without a Passport

A unique lawsuit, not based on the Armenian Genocide, was filed on May 29, 2019, by two Armenian-Americans against the Turkish government in the United States Federal Court, Central District of California.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Barkev Ghazarian, 88, and his son Garo Ghazarian claiming “statutory elder abuse, intentional affliction of emotional distress, violation of international law, breach of fiduciary duty, and intentional interference with expectation of inheritance,” according to a 44-page complaint filed by the law firm of Kerkonian Dajani LLC.

Plaintiff Barkev Ghazarian is a United States citizen born in Kaladouran, Turkey on April 20, 1931. He currently resides in Glendale, California. His son Garo born in Beirut, Lebanon, is also a United States citizen who lives in Glendale.

The complaint alleges that the plaintiffs suffered personal injury caused by tortuous acts or omissions of the Turkish government’s employees or agents in the United States.

In the 1930s, Kaladouran was a small Armenian village on the outskirts of Kessab, Syria. Barkev Ghazarian was baptized as an Armenian Christian “at a sacred ceremonial site in Ballum, Turkey, in 1931,” according to the lawsuit. Ballum or Barlum is the ancient site of Greco-Roman ruins, located a short distance from Kaladouran. For centuries local Armenians, including Barkev’s family, went on pilgrimages to Ballum to perform their religious and cultural rites.

In 1939, Kaladouran was divided between Syria and Turkey, leaving Barkev’s home on the Syrian side, while his family’s fields and lands remained on the Turkish side. Since Ballum was also left under Turkish control, the Armenians of Karadouran could no longer practice their rituals in that locality.

On October 11, 2017, Barkev decided to go to Turkey to visit Ballum. He submitted his visa application to the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., indicating that his expected entry date would be December, 23, 2017. In the visa application, under the category of “Type of passport,” he checked the box for “Other,” and under “please specify,” he wrote, “Armenian minority Christian (Treaty of Lausanne).” Barkev also indicated that he was born in Karadouran, Turkey, and was seeking entry “for religious pilgrimage” purposes. He intended “to pass native religious and cultural traditions to his son, Plaintiff Garo, and progeny,” according to the lawsuit.

Coincidentally, on October 8, 2017, Turkey suspended issuing visas to US citizens in retaliation to a similar ban by the United States to Turkish citizens until December 28, 2017. Barkev did not possess a US passport, but even if he did, Turkey would have refused to issue him an entry visa under the ban. The Turkish Embassy received Barkev’s visa application 71 days prior to his arrival in Turkey, whereas the Embassy required that such applications be submitted at least 30 days prior to his expected date of departure. Having received no response from the Turkish Embassy, Barkev sent a reminder on December 6, 2017, inquiring about the status of his visa application.

On December 11, 2017, an employee of the Turkish Embassy called the office of Barkev’s son Garo, indicating that the Embassy did not know what type of visa Barkev was requesting, even though it was clearly marked “short stay” on the visa application. In response, Barkev sent an email to the Embassy on December 18, 2017. Then on December 21, 2017, he sent a reminder to the Embassy by overnight mail. On December 22, 2017, on the same day that Barkev was supposed to fly to Turkey, the Embassy’s Consular Section sent an email to Barkev instructing him to reapply to the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles with a passport. The complaint filed by Barkev’s attorneys stated that Turkey’s representatives “harassed, agitated, confused and thwarted Barkev, intending to devalue his identity as an Armenian Christian born in Turkey.”

The lawsuit also quoted Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, proclaiming: “Armenians have no rights at all in this prosperous country. The land is yours, the land belongs to the Turks. In history this land was Turkish, therefore it is Turkish and will remain Turkish forever. The land has finally been returned to its rightful owners. The Armenians and the others have no rights here at all. These blessed regions are the native lands of the true Turks.”

The lawsuit further stated that “by such proclamations, and then through a series of legislative, executive, administrative, and other official and/or unofficial acts, Defendant established the Targeted Policy at the very founding of the Republic of Turkey. The core purpose of the Targeted Policy was to strip native Armenian Christians of their rights and identities by dehumanizing, degrading, expropriating, alienating, disenfranchising, liquidating and otherwise severing Armenian Christians from their native lands and their native customs and religious practices on such lands. This Targeted Policy has been pursued, institutionalized, enhanced and adhered to by Defendant’s successive governments and agents.”

The lawsuit accused Turkey and its agents of violating the following international agreements by their mistreatment of Barkev:

- The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights;
- The United Nations Principles for Older Persons;
- The Treaty of Lausanne;
- The European Convention on Human Rights;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing;
- The Madrid International Plan on Ageing;
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Unfortunately, Barkev’s health has deteriorated since his planned visit to Turkey in 2017 to the extent that he is no longer able to travel. This was the last chance Barkev had to visit his native land and practice his religious rites as a Christian Armenian. The Turkish government deprived Barkev of that opportunity by not granting him a visa.

On June 10, 2019, the US Federal Court asked the Plaintiffs to show cause, in writing no later than June 28, 2019, as to why the case should not be dismissed for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. As requested by the Court, the Plaintiffs filed a 25-page memorandum on June 28, 2019, explaining that Turkey, as a foreign Sovereign, does not have the right to violate US and international humanitarian laws, particularly on American soil.

On July 11, 2019, the Federal Court decided that it would “defer a determination about its jurisdiction until after Turkey has been served and had an opportunity to provide its views on the issue.”

This lawsuit provides a unique opportunity to affirm the rights of Armenians to visit their native lands now occupied by the Turkish government without a visa!

## ‘Abandoned’ Armenian Properties around the World: Part III

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of thousands of Jerusalem residents who would leave their homes due to the demands of developers.”

The Armenian and Greek Patriarchates wrote a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu, asking “To block the draft legislation, which was aimed at expropriating their properties.”

The bill was frozen but not rescinded.

In the meantime, the government stated that “the government of Israel has no intention to confiscate church lands or cause any economic damage to the churches. The goal of the government is to protect the rights of the churches, of investors and tenants.”

There is obviously a struggle for a land grab.

If the expropriation of Palestinian lands is an indication, the Christian churches cannot expect any better outcome. Particularly if and when corrupt members of the clergy are involved in the matter.

Historically Jerusalem Patriarchate has appealed to the worldwide Armenian communities for assistance, but they have never felt any obligation to present a transparent accounting.

Also, the mindset of the ruling Patriarch determines whether the unity of the Armenian Church will be preserved or not. The irreverent public diatribe by the current Patriarch, Nourhan Manougian, against his superior, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, is an indication of that status.

The gradual weakening of the clergy and the extended legal and illegal assaults leave the Patriarchate in a vulnerable position.

One cannot be assured if the integrity of the Genocide and other valuable documents have not yet been compromised.

The Armenian government nor the Supreme head of the church in Echmiadzin are not legally entitled to ask for any accountability.

And so it goes.

## From John Alabilikian To El Paso to Mehmet

On August 3, a hate-driven heinous mass shooting targeting immigrants in El Paso, Texas left 22 people dead and added another chapter to the saddest of American stories.

The tragedy made me reflect on the lives lost. They came to the US in search of a better future. Their deaths reminded me of the stories and tragedies of so many who look for the same thing.

By Ismail Akbulut

I came to America over a decade ago with my young family. Both my wife’s and my family had emigrated from Turkey to Germany in the 1970s. The US meant opportunity for us. We were young and idealistic.

The history of the US is well-known. This country has traditionally been a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge for the persecuted, and a land of hope for people fleeing tragedies that range from discrimination to famine.

From 1892 to 1954, Ellis Island was the gateway for about 12 million of these people. They all went through a tough vetting process that included a myriad of tests and examinations, but about 98 percent of them were allowed in.

A few weeks back, my family and I decided to visit Ellis Island as part of our first road trip to the East Coast. We are an immigrant family and we wanted to learn about those who entered the US a century ago.

We talked about how difficult it must have been back then to leave the only place you know by ship and travel for weeks under cruel conditions to a new land, hoping desperately that you’d finally find peace, freedom and prosperity upon arrival.

Our tour included audio stories from these men and women who took a chance on America so many years ago. To my delight, I saw that one of those stories belonged to a person from Turkey. His name was John Alabilikian. The surname gave away his Armenian background.

I was instantly curious about why Alabilikian came to the US in 1922.

As it turns out, Alabilikian’s story is heart wrenching. He was born in Yozgat. In 1915, when Alabilikian was 7, most Armenian men in Yozgat were rounded up by the Ottoman army and disappeared; that’s what happened to Alabilikian’s father. Then the same thing happened to his mother and sister. He lost his family because they were Armenian.

In order to survive, his aunt married a Turkish man. They adopted Alabilikian and raised him as a Muslim. Since his step-father’s family was well off, they could afford to immigrate to the US in 1922.

Alabilikian was able to celebrate his Armenian identity and heritage when he arrived in the US. In the Ottoman Empire, it was this very identity and heritage that got his parents killed.

That tragedy never left him, but he always carried gratitude in his heart for what the US gave him.

John Alabilikian’s story reminded me about a dear friend who also came from Turkey to the US. Let’s call him Mehmet. Of Turkish descent, Mehmet lived in Western Turkey until he was 15. His family enjoyed a comfortable life in Turkey. Mehmet moved at the age of 18 to pursue his education in the US.

But the good times didn’t last.

What started as the American Dream turned into a nightmare for Mehmet and his family on the night of July 15, 2016.

On that day, a faction within Turkish military tried unsuccessfully to overthrow the government, headed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Much like Hitler’s reaction after the Reichstag fire, Erdogan called for a press conference while the coup attempt was still happening. He used the occasion to call this attempted coup “a gift from God” and, with no evidence, readily designated the perpetrators behind the failed coup as Fethullah Gulen and the famed Gulen Movement.

The Gulen Movement (GM) identifies itself as a peace movement that started in the 1960s in Turkey. The group initially supported the Erdogan government until he turned into an autocrat and shut down a corruption probe involving him, his family and his government.

Erdogan used the failed coup to target his political opponents. He’d already hollowed out much of Turkish civil society, including academia and the news media – incidents that have been thoroughly documented by international human rights groups and think tanks. Now he had the GM in his cross-hairs.

Like millions of other Turks, Mehmet and his family anxiously followed the coup attempt on TV and social media. Afterwards, a neighbor reported Mehmet’s father as a Gulen follower. This resulted in him doing five months in a concrete cell.

Then his father learned that the Turkish government had a warrant out for him, accused of being part of a terrorist organization that had tried to overthrow the Turkish government. He’d get 16.5 years in prison for that.

Mehmet’s father didn’t give in. He knew that the police were torturing GM members as well as those accused of being participants or supporters. So he and his family went into hiding in a rural area, eventually becoming farmers.

Last October, Mehmet was driving on the highway when his mother called him and asked him to start FaceTime. He felt that somet

see AKBULUT, page 20



## Armenian Government Fighting for Ratification Of Convention on Violence against Women

By Ani Meljumyan

YEREVAN (eurasianet.org) – The Armenian Church made a rare intervention in politics to publicly oppose the convention, and the government has appealed to European officials for guidance.

The Armenian government's efforts to ratify an international convention to prevent violence against women are running up against opposition from conservatives in the country, including the influential church.

At issue is the Istanbul Convention, a Council of Europe document that requires signatories to implement specific measures to protect women from violence. It also contains provisions forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and specifies that gender is a social construct rather than a biological fact.

Armenia signed the convention in January 2018, under the previous government, but has yet to ratify it. The new authorities, however, have declared their intention to finalize that process. On May 8, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Zaruhi Batoyan, in a meeting with a Council of Europe official, said that Armenia intended to ratify the convention, and eight days later the parliament passed a five-year government action plan that formally announced that intention.

That launched a nationwide debate on the convention, with many conservative voices complaining that attempts to regulate domestic violence represent an imposition of foreign values on Armenia's traditional family model. The debate was heightened by a #metoo-style movement in which Armenian women for the first time in large numbers shared their experiences with sexual violence. Some conservatives claimed that the movement was a smoke-screen aimed at easing the way for ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

On July 26, those voiced were joined by the Armenian Apostolic Church, which rarely wades into political matters but made an

exception to criticize the convention. "Irrespective of the biological differences created by God, all people enjoy the same care of God," the church leadership said in a statement. The church also claimed that the convention "defines a third sex apart from female and male," which it does not do. "There are extremely concerning points in the Convention from the perspective of our national-spiritual identity and security, we urge our authorities to refrain from ratifying the document," it concluded.

The Ministry of Justice subsequently issued a lengthy statement explaining its position and complained about "manipulative" information about the convention put forth by opponents.

"The Justice Ministry wants to assure the public that the Convention in no way contradicts the concept of family or sex enshrined by the Constitution, the Convention doesn't regulate family life or the composition of the family, and no state is obliged to change its traditional view of the family," the July 30 statement said. "The Convention in no way endangers national traditions and values."

The ministry also announced that it had sought guidance from the Venice Commission, a Council of Europe body that advises on legal and constitutional issues, on the "constitutional implications" of the ratification of the convention. Assuming that the Venice Commission rules favorably, ratification appears inevitable given the fact that the overwhelming majority of members of parliament from the ruling "My Step" coalition support it.

Among the opponents of ratifying the Istanbul Convention are members of the Republican Party, under whose rule the document was signed. Eduard Sharmazanov, a Republican spokesman, announced on Facebook that he had signed a petition against the convention, writing: "No to perversion."

The petition was created by the chairman of Armenia's Chamber of Advocates, Ara Zohrabyan, but it was later taken down by the host, change.org, because it was considered to have included hate speech.

## From John Alabilikian to El Paso to Mehmet

AKBULUT, from page 19

hing was wrong but kept his composure. He FaceTimed and smiled.

Then, in tears, Mehmet's mother gave her 22-year-old son the awful news: his father just died in a tractor accident. He was just 56 years old.

His mother found out later that Erdogan's government now had a warrant out for her. They used the same baseless accusations. This forced her into perpetual hiding. Mehmet's older brother and sister finally decided to flee Turkey because warrants were issued for them as well.

His older siblings and their families fled to Greece by boat. To get there, they swam across the Evros River where they almost drowned. From Greece, his siblings managed to travel to Germany and the Netherlands where they filed for political asylum.

Mehmet prays every day that he'll be able to rescue his mother and younger brother from Erdogan's tyranny. They're still hiding from authorities, on the run.

Mehmet is the only one in the family who has a decent job. He works as an IT specialist by day and drives a Lyft by night in order to provide for all his family members.

I'm grateful to be in the US. The challenges we face today, including mass violence, makes me think about how we got here. I don't have all the answers, but I know one thing: as a privileged member of society and a successful immigrant, I am responsible for welcoming and assisting those who reach our shore in search of a better life.

They may be our friends. They might even have been our ancestors. We can never forget about them.

(Ismail Akbulut resides in Colorado, where he is President of the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation.)

## LETTERS

### Melkonians Expresses Appreciation for Editorial

To The Editor:

I was extremely touched by your recent editorial ("Abandoned Armenian Properties," August 17 issue, by Edmond Y. Azadian) on the systematic closure of our sacred Armenian institutions, as it really hit home.

What hits home the most is that I was a product of the Melkonian Educational Institute as an American student in the 1980s.

In my short time there, this school has produced innumerable accomplished Armenian alumni, many of them finding their fate at the school due to desperation. With too many instances to count, these children would come from war battered or displaced situations and almost always catapult to very high levels of excellence and success later in life.

This didn't happen on its own. It was the result of the extreme nurturing on the educational side but ultimately the formula they used for close to a century proved its approach in the preservation of Armenian Heritage.

Being an industrialist, I can appreciate the early lessons I learned being on my own at 13 in Cyprus. Between the ethics and priceless skills instilled in the students, as well as the friendships that were formed, these all have played a very important role in my success.

It's an inexplicable feeling to be anywhere in the world, just to pick up the phone and immediately find a "Melkonians" as they say ... and poof, just like that we create a new Armenia... How can this level of sacredness be monetized?

Ara Tcholakian  
Las Vegas

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### 2019 NATIONAL ADVOCACY CONFERENCE & GALA

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### Monday, September 16

8:15 am - 9:15 am | Registration

9:30 am - 4:00 pm | Advocacy Conference

• Keynote Speaker OPIC CEO David Bohigian

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm | Cocktail Reception

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm | Gala Dinner

• Honoring Congresswoman Jackie Speier

### Tuesday, September 17

8:00 am - 9:00 am | Advocacy Recap

10:00 am - 5:00 pm | Hill Meetings

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm | Reception on Capitol Hill

• Celebrating United States-Armenia Relations,  
Hosted by Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues

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