

THE ARMENIAN  
**Mirror-Spectator**  
Volume LXXXVII, NO. 1, Issue 4445 \$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

# Armenia Hostage Crisis Continues

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Pro-opposition gunmen are holding four police officers hostage, officials said Tuesday, July 19, two days after they seized a police building, killing one officer and taking several hostages.

The gunmen seized the police station on Sunday, before demanding Armenians take to the streets to secure the release of jailed opposition politicians.

(PHOTOLUR PHOTO)



Jirair Sefilian, second from left, as he was arrested in June

They released two hostages on Sunday and three more on Monday, the security service said. Negotiations to end the situation peacefully were under way.

“Talks are underway with the hostage-takers. We are doing our best to resolve the



Demonstrators in Yerevan (Russia Times Photo)

situation without bloodshed,” Armenia’s first deputy police chief Hunan Pogosyan told AFP.

Lines of police in flak jackets and helmets gathered outside the building Tuesday as parked trucks blocked off surrounding streets, an AFP photographer said.

The gunmen, who have also captured a large arsenal of police weapons, have so

far refused to surrender.

The hostages include Armenia’s Deputy Police Chief General Major Vardan Yeghiazaryan and Yerevan Deputy Police Chief Colonel Valeri Osipyan.

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## Two Citizens of Armenia Die In Devastating Nice Attack

NICE, France (Public Radio of Armenia) – According to the Foreign Ministry of Armenia, two Armenian citizens died during the terror attack in Nice on July 14.

“We inform with sorrow about another Armenian citizen died in Nice,” the statement said. Earlier the Foreign Ministry reported that an Armenian citizen was killed in the July 14 terrorist attack in Nice.

“Details are being clarified. The Armenian Consulate General in Marseille is in contact with the family of the victim for providing necessary assistance,” the MFA said.

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## President Sargsyan, US Secretary of Kerry Hold Karabagh Talks in Warsaw

WARSAW, Poland (PanARMENIAN.Net) – President Serzh Sargsyan on July 8 met with US Secretary of State John Kerry on the sidelines of the NATO Summit to discuss the Nagorno Karabagh conflict settlement.

Starting the meeting, Sargsyan expressed condolences over the deadly shootings in Dallas, Texas.

As for the Karabagh issue, the president hailed the efforts of the United States as a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group in establishing peace and stability in the South Caucasus region.

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Secretary of State John Kerry, left, with President Serzh Sargsyan and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian



Henrikh Mkhitaryan

## Henrikh Mkhitaryan Debuts for Manchester United

MANCHESTER, UK (Independent) – Henrikh Mkhitaryan is confident he can play a leading role at Manchester United after delivering an encouraging display in the 2-0 pre-season friendly victory against Wigan Athletic.

The Armenian joined the 20-time champions of England from Borussia Dortmund for £26m this summer as Jose Mourinho continues to renovate the squad he inherited from Louis van Gaal.

Mourinho gave Mkhitaryan 45 minutes in the first-half at the DW Stadium on Saturday afternoon to prove himself ahead of the trip to China for the International Champions Cup next week.

Will Keane and Andreas Pereira scored the first goals of the Mourinho era as United strolled to victory against Wigan in a match which also featured a debut for £30m defender Eric Bailly and a return from injury for Luke Shaw.

Mkhitaryan said: “I would say it was a good game. The first half was a little bit difficult because we couldn’t score a goal.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### French Senate to Discuss Armenian Genocide

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The French Senate will discuss the bill to outlaw the denial of the Armenian Genocide in September, Armenia’s public TV reports.

The French National Assembly on July 1 voted unanimously to penalize denial or trivialization of all crimes against humanity, including the Armenian Genocide.

The amendment of a previous law, adopted in the first reading, criminalizes denial with one year imprisonment and a 45,000 euro fine.

The crimes included in the text are genocides, “other crimes against humanity,” “the crime of enslavement and exploitation of an enslaved person” and “war crimes.”

### City of Ani on UNESCO World Heritage List

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cultural agency on Friday, July 15 added a ruined Armenian city inside Turkey’s border to its World Heritage list, as it elevated eight other sites across the world to the list ranking, AFP reports.

The ruins of Ani, which lie outside the Turkish city of Kars, was the capital of an Armenian kingdom around the end of the first millennium, before its conquest in 1064 by Seljuk forces hastened a decline then completed by the Mongol conquest and an earthquake.

In another sensitive inscription, UNESCO elevated to World Heritage status caves once inhabited by Neanderthals in Britain’s overseas territory of Gibraltar, which is claimed by Spain.

They joined seven other sites including in Iran, India, China, Micronesia and Spain in being added to the World Heritage list at the meeting of UNESCO in Istanbul.

The ruined churches and secular buildings of Ani are a hugely sensitive site, lying directly on the other side of Turkey’s closed border with Armenia.

### Arthur Abraham Defeats Lihaug to Win WBO Middleweight Title

BERLIN (Boxingnews24.com) – Former two-division world champion Arthur Abraham defeated #15 WBO Tim Robin Lihaug (15-2, 8 KOs) by an 8th round knockout in super middleweight action on Saturday, July 16, at the Max Schmeling Halle, Prenzlauer Berg. With the victory, Abraham captured the vacant WBO International super middleweight title.

Abraham is 36.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Examination Reveals Azerbaijanis Decapitated Armenian Serviceman When He Was Alive

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The preliminary investigation of criminal cases that violated the international humanitarian law during the Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno Karabagh in early April is underway at the General Military Investigative Department of Armenia.

Under the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-office, the 18 bodies of Armenian soldiers were handled to the Armenian side on April 10.

The external examination of the bodies showed evidence of torture. Forensic examinations have been conducted to find out the causes of the death of each Armenian soldier.

“By now we have the conclusions of the forensic examinations of 7 soldiers, which prove the violation of international humanitarian law by the Azerbaijani side,” reads the release issues by the investigative committee. The conclusion suggests that the 30-year old Armenian major was beheaded while he was alive. Both hands of the major were also cut off when he was alive.

The evidence also shows that two more Armenian servicemen were beheaded after being killed. Additional information will be provided after the conclusions of the forensic examinations of the other servicemen are completed.

## Prominent Bacteriologist Evrik Afrikyan Dies

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prominent bacteriologist, Doctor of Biological Sciences (1970), Professor (1972), Academician at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia (1982) and Honored Science Worker Evrik Afrikyan passed away at age 91.

Born on May 14, 1925 in Yerevan, Afrikyan graduated from the Medical University of Yerevan in 1947.

## Import of Turkish Goods To Armenia May Shrink by 20 Percent

YEREVAN (Arka) – If Armenian government bans the import of 50 varieties of Turkish commodities, imports from Turkey may shrink 15-20 percent, Vazgen Safaryan, the head of the Union of Domestic Commodity Producers, told journalists on Monday, July 18.

In recent days, Artsvik Minasyan, Armenian economy minister, unveiled the government’s intention to put new requirements to the quality of Turkish commodities imported into Armenia.

Currently Armenia imports from Turkey some 700 varieties of goods. There are not raw materials or goods of social necessity.

“We import commodities worth \$130-150 million, on average, from Turkey every year, and in some years the amount reached \$200 million,” Safaryan said. “Along with that, our exports total only \$1.5-1.8 million.”

Safaryan said that knitted fabric, washing powders and other chemical products will be among the banned imports.

The economic entities which imported these products should be attracted to appropriate local industries to prevent vacuum at market and not to leave business people without profits, he said.

In his opinion, the government has created maximally beneficial conditions for producing goods inside the country.

“Time has come to mobilize the economic policy and use domestic resources more effectively,” he said.

According to the National Statistical Service, Armenia-Turkey trade turnover amounted to about \$50 million in Jan-May 2016 showing a 1 percent year-on-year decline. a



Police outside the police station where the hostages and hostage takers are holed up. (Photolur photo)

# Armenia Hostage Crisis Continues

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Meanwhile, the friends of Colonel Artur Vanoyan, killed during the attack of the police regiment in Yerevan on July 17 by gunmen as well as colleagues and MPs laid him to rest.

Vanoyan, 49, was married and had three children.

The attackers have demanded the resignation of President Serzh Sargsyan and the release of detained opposition leader Jirair Sefilian.

More than 1,500 anti-government protesters rallied in Yerevan on Monday, calling for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Sefilian – the leader of small opposition group the New Armenia Public Salvation Front – and six of his supporters were arrested in June after authorities said they were preparing to seize government buildings and telecoms facilities in Yerevan.

A fierce critic of the government, he was arrested in 2006 over calls for “a violent overthrow of the government” and jailed for 18 months. He was released in 2008.

Last year, Sefilian and several of his supporters were arrested again on suspicion of preparing a coup, but released shortly afterwards.

(Stories from AFP, Reuters, Radio Free Europe and Armenpress were used.)

The hostage-takers’ main demand is to free Jirair Sefilian, an opposition leader whom authorities in the ex-Soviet republic have accused of plotting civil unrest. Sefilian was jailed in June over allegations of illegally possessing weapons.

The security service said talks were deadlocked so far.

“The armed group is refusing to release other hostages, including high-ranking officials, to lay down their weapons, or to surrender,” the National Security Service said in a statement, saying the group posed a direct threat to society.

Protesters marched to the police station seized by the gunmen. Police detained some activists but released

them later.

The Armenian government has made a new proposal to gunmen holding four police officers hostage at a police station in Yerevan, a member of their radical opposition group said on Tuesday.

Alek Yenigomshian said he has been acting as a go-between in negotiations held the National Security Service

for now. Those guys said they will respond to it tonight at 7 p.m.”

Both the NSS and the Armenian police have branded the attackers as “terrorists” and demanded their unconditional surrender.

Yenigomshian said that although the gunmen’s mobile phones were no longer reachable on Tuesday morning



A scene from outside the station (BBC Photo)

(NSS) and the armed members of the Founding Parliament movement that seized the building on Sunday, killing one senior police officer, wounding several others and taking the hostages.

“Those negotiations continued yesterday and the National Security Service (NSS) submitted a demand-proposal to the ‘Sasna Tsrer’ armed group,” Yenigomshian told reporters.

“Yesterday I met with NSS officials, Zhirayr Sefilian [in prison] and members of ‘Sasna Tsrer’ group,” he said. “I gave them the NSS’s demand-proposals, details of which I won’t publicize

he received assurances from the NSS that the talks with them will continue. “I’m very happy with that,” he said, speaking on a blocked street leading to the seized police compound.

In a statement issued at 5 p.m., the NSS said law-enforcement officials are continuing “intensive negotiations” with the gunmen in an effort to ensure their surrender and the liberation of the hostages. “Armenian law-enforcement bodies are doing everything to hold the armed group back from further bloodshed,” it said.

## President Sargsyan, US Secretary of Kerry Hold Karabagh Talks in Warsaw

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Also, the parties discussed an earlier phone conversation between the Russian and US Presidents, during which the leaders addressed the Karabagh conflict among other issues.

The parties also stressed the importance of implementing the agreements, reached at summits in Vienna and Saint Petersburg.

Sargsyan and Azeri leader Ilham Aliyev met on June 20 in Saint Petersburg to address the conflict, with Russian President Vladimir Putin mediating the talks. The Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents confirmed their commitment to the implementation of agreements reached at a Vienna-hosted meeting on May 16. To that end, they have

agreed to increase the number of international observers in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict zone. Also, they expressed satisfaction that the ceasefire was now holding.

Prior to that, a meeting between both leaders was organized on May 16 in Vienna, with top diplomats from the MG co-chairing countries hosting the summit.



## ARMENIA

## Mer Doon Residents Participate in US Embassy Women's Mentoring Program

ECHMIADZIN, Armenia – Four residents of Mer Doon recently met their mentors as participants in the US Embassy's Women's Mentoring Program. They are Margarita Grigoryan, Alisa Harutyunyan, Nelly Shaghbatyan and Hayarpi Ghahramanyan. The young women are either currently enrolled as full-time university students or, as in Margarita's case, has completed a master's degree.

The purpose of the US Embassy program is to engage professional women as mentors to provide career advice, share personal experiences, and serve as role models to promising young students. In 2016-2017, 61 women from a variety of professional fields will mentor 62 women who are B.A. and M.A. students from different universities in Armenia.

Mer Doon's participants attended the kick-off of the fourth annual Women's Mentoring Program at a press conference held at the American University of Armenia (AUA). Keynote speakers were US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills, and mentors Hasmik Sahakyan, President of Women and Youth Development and Support Center, and Shushan Doydoyan, Head of Personal Data Protection Department, Ministry of Justice. Sahakyan highlighted the importance of mentoring and said that Armenian students are very interested in getting mentoring experience.

"This program is meant to once again prove that mentoring also has a place in our society. Its role is especially important and significant in the development of young women," said Sahakyan.

Lusine Mkrtychyan, a coordinator of the Mentoring Program, explained that each young participant has been paired with a mentor whose professional experience and expertise



Mer Doon resident, Hayarpi Ghahramanyan, meets her mentor, Alice Adamyan, a violinist, pedagogue and public figure.



Richard M. Mills, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, welcomes all of its mentors and mentees at the U.S. Embassy's kick off of the Women's Mentoring Program.

"This program is meant to once again prove that mentoring also has a place in our society. Its role is especially important and significant in the development of young women."

-Nelly Shaghbatyan

match the field of study and career goals of the mentee.

The 2016-2017 mentoring program is organized in partnership with AUA PSIA (Political Science and International Affairs) Program and the Women and Youth Development and Support Center. On May 18, the mentors assigned to the four young women visited Mer Doon for an initial meeting and orientation.

Many corporate, organizational, and individual supporters help advance Mer Doon's mission. Advisory Board members are Chris Bohjalian, internationally acclaimed and best-selling author, and Vahan Zanoian, global energy expert and author. Mer Doon's corporate and organizational partners include U.S. Embassy Women's Mentoring Program, Embassy of Lithuania, Microsoft Armenia, Megerian Carpet, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR), Echmiadzin Municipality, Gavar Orphanage, Vanadzor Orphanage, Armenia Tree Project, SOS Children's Village, and St. John Armenian Church - Detroit Women's Guild.

Mer Doon provides orphaned and disadvantaged young women (ages 18-24) a loving and nurturing place to call "home." Our mission is to educate and empower them with skills to live independently in mainstream society. The organization's Co-Founder and Executive Director, Tigranuhi Karapetyan, manages the daily operations of the program.

Mer Doon is located in Echmiadzin, Armenia. It is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the State of Connecticut and a nongovernmental organization registered in the Republic of Armenia.

## Supreme Spiritual Council Meeting Convenes at Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN – On June 25-30 under the presidency of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, a Supreme Spiritual Council (SSC) meeting was held in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

The co-chairman for the meeting were Archbishop Parkev Martirosyan, Primate of the Diocese of Artsakh; Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of

the Armenian Church of North America and Bishop Haigazun Najarian, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand.

Issues related to ecumenical relations, intra-church life and ecclesiastical councilor structures were discussed during the meeting.

During the meeting, they reflected on the Pope's visit to Armenia. The catholicos expressed his satisfaction in the process, that in

2014, Pope Francis was invited to Armenia, and confirmed his visit through a letter in 2015, and finally made a fraternal visit to the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin from June 24 to 26, which was held in a warm spiritual atmosphere. Bishop Arshak Khachatryan, Chancellor of Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, presented a report on the visit.

The SSC members noted that the three-day visit of the Pope to Armenia was the best confirmation of the existing fraternal relations and cooperation between the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic Churches. The members of the Supreme Spiritual Council also expressed their appreciation to the Visit Organizing Committee and all those who participated in the organizational activities.

During the meeting, the SSC members were made aware of a request from Archbishop Nurhan Manookian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, asking for the participation of the Armenian Church in the renovation of the Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Stressing the importance of Jerusalem in the nation's life and the responsibility of the Armenian Church for the preservation of sacred places, the Supreme Spiritual Council, under the presidency of the Catholicos of All Armenians, committed to support the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and secure the necessary amounts with the Dioceses around the world.

Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissyan, chairman of the Diocesan Representative Assembly Committee, reported on the organizational works for Assembly, which will be convened from October 31 to November 4 in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, presented a report from the Assembly Charter Drafting Committee, on the progress of the Draft Charter Project of the Armenian Church Representative Assembly. Various suggestions and considerations regarding the draft articles were made during the discussions, based on which the Committee was instructed to finalize the draft charter and present it at the next SSC meeting.

Rev. Markos Mangasaryan, director of the Social Services Office, gave a report on the Assistance to Artsakh Program, noting the donations organized by the Mother See in the Dioceses of the Armenian Church around the world, as well as the humanitarian aid rendered by various departments and dioceses of the Mother See; that were sent to Artsakh.

Expressing satisfaction regarding the support provided by the ecclesiastical institutions and dioceses, the Supreme Spiritual Council stressed the importance of continuing efforts in this direction, assisting the Armenians of Artsakh and aiding in their needs.



James Kalustian, left, with Ruben Vardanyan and one of the Brotherhood members



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Azerbaijan Fires Shots Toward Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Azerbaijani side violated the ceasefire 20 times at the line of contact with Karabagh forces last night, Artsakh Ministry of Defense reports.

The rival used firearms of different calibers as it fired more than 240 shots in the direction of Armenian positions.

The front divisions of the NKR Defense Army refrained from responding to the provocative actions of the rival and continued with the reliable protection of the military posts.

## Tour Groups Say No Russia-Turkey Charter Flights This Year

MOSCOW (news.am) – Maia Lomidze, executive director of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, reported this week that charter flights between Russia and Turkey will not be reinstated in the current year, according to *Izvestia* newspaper of Russia.

She said that, during the talk between a delegation from Turkey and the management of relevant Russian departments, the Russian side raised the matter of safety of tourists.

As a result, the parties decided that Turkey will provide a list of dangerous places for tourists.

## Azerbaijan Shuts TV Station after Gulen Interview

BAKU (Public Radio of Armenia) – Azerbaijan on Tuesday, July 19, shut down a private television channel over plans to broadcast an interview with Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara accuses of being behind the failed coup in Turkey, AFP reports.

Baku is an ally of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has furiously pointed blame at his archenemy Gulen for the weekend's botched military takeover. The US-based preacher denies any involvement.

Azerbaijan's National Television and Radio Council said in a statement that it has "ordered temporary suspension of broadcasting by the ANS TV channel in order to avoid provocations aimed at damaging the strategic partnership between Turkey and Azerbaijan and to prevent obvious promotion of terrorism."

Erdogan wants Washington to extradite Gulen to Turkey, but US Secretary of State John Kerry has said that Ankara must produce evidence to support the extradition request.

The reclusive Muslim cleric lives in self-imposed exile in a mountain town in Pennsylvania. His Hizmet movement has a powerful presence in Turkish society, including the media, police and judiciary.

## Russia Tries to Maintain Arms Parity

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) – Russia is taking efforts to maintain parity both in absolute terms and in the quantity and quality of the basic weapons systems it supplies, TASS reports.

Russia is committed to maintaining parity in the supply of military equipment to Armenia and Azerbaijan in the conditions of the intensified Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Director of the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSMTC) Alexander Fomin said in an interview with *Izvestia* on Monday, July 18.

"Conflicts begin regardless of the fact that one side may be armed better than the other," Fomin said. "However, it is necessary to seek parity, so Russia is taking efforts to maintain parity both in absolute terms and in the quantity and quality of the basic weapons systems."

Fomin also said that the main purpose of military-technical cooperation is to preserve peace and stability in a given country, in a region and in the world in general.

# Thousands Detained as Turkey Vows To Smoke out Gulen Supporters

ISTANBUL (*Guardian*) – As the dust settled on an attempted coup in Turkey, a crackdown has ensued. Thousands of judges and soldiers have been detained and Turkish officials have vowed to "cleanse" a bureaucracy that they say has entrenched supporters of an exiled cleric, Fethullah Gulen, in positions of power.

It is a hunt that the government fully expects the opposition in parliament to stand behind – now that their warnings and enduring paranoia over a coup by Gulenists have, they say, become manifest.

But how did it come to this?

The Gulenists once found common cause with Recep Tayyip Erdogan, supporting his Justice and Development (AK) party when it was founded on a realist, pro-European and business-friendly platform in the wake of a 1997 coup. They remained allies as Erdogan initiated peace talks with the separatist insurgency of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and through the liberalization of the economy and EU accession talks.

"There was an overlap [with] Erdogan's political party," said a journalist and sympathizer of the Gulenist movement, also called Hizmet, who said he opposed the coup attempt but requested anonymity amid the tense political situation in Turkey.

Gulen's acolytes were allies of Erdogan, partners in purges of the military over the last decade that turned into witch hunts, and ironically led to the promotion of officers who would later take part in Friday's attempted coup. Gulen's supporters were instrumental in prosecuting two wide-ranging investigations and trials, known Ergenekon and Sledgehammer affairs, targeting "deep state" structures that were accused of planning to remove the AK party from power.

"Let me put it this way," said one Turkish government official. "Nobody, I mean nobody, was aware at the time that the Gulen movement had a secret agenda. Let's keep in mind that [in 2007] it was a very different situation, with the armed forces openly threatening to overthrow the government."

Since then, the relationship has steadily declined. Both sides accused each other of wanting to consolidate control. Drawing on grassroots support, the Gulenists continued to stack the judiciary and police forces with followers loyal to the movement. Erdogan also consolidated power, growing more powerful and populist as prime minister, and espousing a political view that saw a resurgent Turkey as a geopolitical leader in a troubled neighborhood.

Various skirmishes erupted between the two camps. The Gulenists led an ultimately unsuccessful smear campaign against Hakan Fidan, the head of the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, with various accusations ranging from him being sympathetic to Iran to espousing the ideology of Sayyid Qutb, the godfather of modern jihadist movements, to a

nationalist-centered attack claiming he was promoting too many Kurds to positions of authority because of his own family heritage.

Government officials claim the Gulenists were probably behind the leaking of footage showing MIT trucks that were carrying arms to rebels in Syria under the guise of humanitarian aid, in an effort to embarrass the agency's chief.

After the 2011 elections, Hizmet supporters grew increasingly frustrated with what they saw as a pivot towards a more assertive political Islamist agenda – they felt Erdogan had grown invulnerable, buoyed by landslide victories that meant he no longer needed his allies. In the autumn of 2013, Erdogan ordered the closure of preparatory schools around the country – a significant source of income for the Gulenists, who operated about a quarter of them.

But the serious break came in December 2013, when a wide-ranging investigation into corruption in Erdogan's inner circle led to the resignations of several ministers and the arrest of many of their associates. The president declared the investigation was an outright attempt at a judicial "coup" by a parallel authority within the state. "That was the final nail in the coffin of the relations," said the journalist who is sympathetic to Hizmet.

Erdogan's supporters insist the corruption investigations were an attempt to bring down the government, but others sympathetic to the Gulenists said the investigators were simply doing their jobs, and could not have turned a deaf ear to increasingly flagrant corruption and nepotism in the bureaucracy.

"Hizmet doesn't have the means to execute a coup d'etat," said another journalist linked to the movement who was interviewed before the coup attempt. "The corruption investigation was an important turning point, the government thought it was done by prosecutors and officers linked to Hizmet, and what they claim is correct. The question is whether there is corruption or not."

Whether or not the Gulenists hoped to bring down the government with the corruption allegations, there was no going back. They were accused of orchestrating various conspiracies and setting up terror networks. Thousands of police officers were fired. TV stations and newspapers belonging to the movement were either shut down or prevented from distribution, including one of the country's largest newspapers, *Zaman*, which was taken over by the government.

But despite repeated accusations against Gulen of masterminding terror operations from his exile in Pennsylvania, no formal extradition request was submitted to the US. But then the coup attempt was launched.

Turkish officials allege the putsch was led by a Gulenist core supported by other military officers. They say it was accelerated when members of the military faction that backed the coup became aware that authorities were

investigating them as part of a broader effort against Gulen sympathizers in the military.

Since the coup, thousands of people have been fired from their positions in the bureaucracy. A senior counter-terrorism official said it had previously been difficult to root out alleged Gulenist cells because they operated across various government organizations. Now the challenge was to find what the official described as "sleepers" that hadn't taken part in the coup.

"Moving forward, no tolerance or compassion will be shown to supporters of Fethullah Gulen's terrorist group or any other terrorist organization," Erdogan said in a statement on Monday. "Without compromising democratic principles and the rule of law, we shall



Fethullah Gulen

combat all terrorist organizations that place the future of our nation and the state at risk."

The president's crackdown on Gulen's supporters will raise numerous concerns about the government's efforts to consolidate its power. But his supporters say that their warnings have been fulfilled, even though the evidence of Gulenist orchestration has not yet been made public beyond the statements of officials, and the widespread detentions and arrests have meant that Hizmet is at least temporarily crippled in Turkey.

"They have lost their operational ability, their headquarters and their organizing minds," said one official close to the prime minister. "We will have to clear all the bureaucracy, whether those who supported the intervention or who are leaning towards intervention."

Gulen himself has rejected all accusations against Hizmet, and suggested that the coup may have been staged, while some of his supporters say the putsch was likely orchestrated by secularist military officers who were unhappy with the flare-up of tensions with the Kurds and the instability on the border with Syria and they question the extent of the purges.

"Shaaban Disli, an AKP member whose brother gave the order to begin the coup, has a right to distance himself from the coup," said the journalist who is sympathetic to Hizmet. "But now you are dismissing thousands of civil servants and teachers and bureaucrats for a coup they have no relation to."

## Henrikh Mkhitaryan Debuts for Manchester United

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"But we made a good game and thank you to my team-mates. I was trying to feel comfortable. I think day by day it will be better. I am trying, because the first days are always very difficult.

"You have to get to know your team-mates and their qualities, so I am trying to learn everything very quickly. Game by game it will be better and better. Of

course we're getting ready for the new season so we are trying to do everything the coach is asking."

The former Shakhtar Donetsk midfielder's manager was delighted with his display, too, lauding him as a "top-class player" whom he considers invaluable to his Old Trafford project being a success.

Mourinho told MUTV: "Mkhitaryan is a top-class player and currently at

the best stage for a footballer - 27/28 years old.

"He is magnificent the way he thinks about football, he thinks very quickly and it's so sweet how he touches the ball.

"He can play in different positions behind the striker. He doesn't have the sharpness yet but his performance was very positive."



# Commitment at the Heart of AUA's 25th Anniversary Celebrations

YEREVAN – A series of exciting events were organized in Yerevan recently in honor of AUA's silver jubilee. These included a special art exhibition featuring the works of 25 artists, the opening of the Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC) along with a conference reflective of AUA's role in entrepreneurship and innovation, a concert and awards ceremony at the Aram Khachaturian Grand Concert Hall, and an elegant gala dinner at Florence Restaurant.

The anniversary theme, "More Than An Education - A Commitment," was the central theme of the festivities, reflective of AUA's crucial role in providing world-class teaching, research, and service programs that prepare students and enable faculty and researchers to address the needs of Armenia and the surrounding region for sustainable development. AUA opened its doors to 101 students on the same day the Republic of Armenia was declared on September 21, 1991 and has evolved into one of the country's most esteemed institutions, successfully creating a setting that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society.

The kick-off event was the "A Quarter Century. A Salute to Education" art exhibition held at AUA's Akian Gallery featuring the works of 25 artists. The exhibit, a joint collaboration with the Antikyan Gallery, reflected the diversity of media, styles and narratives of the Armenian nation. Proceeds from the sale of the artwork supported the University's liberal arts education programs.

The opening of the newly renovated state-of-the-art AUA Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC) was also a highlight of the celebrations. EPIC will serve as a platform for promoting entrepreneurial education, cross disciplinary collaboration, and startup incubation at AUA. Congratulatory remarks were delivered by U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills. EPIC's opening was preceded

by a special conference aimed at exploring Armenia's technology and innovation capabilities, as well as challenges and opportunities for collaboration. The conference also examined AUA's role in developing Armenia's entrepreneurial ecosystem and EPIC's future goals in

A Medal of Gratitude was awarded to Zaven Akian, a member of the AUA Board of Trustees, benefactor of the AUA Akian Gallery and sponsor of 200 scholarships to AUA students. A second Medal of Gratitude was awarded to Tom Samuelian, Dean of the AUA College of

AUA benefactors Berj Kalaidjian of Monaco and Zaruhi Chitjian of Los Angeles in honor of their significant contributions to education and science. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia also conferred a Gold Commemorative Medal to Director of the AGBU Papazian Library Satenik (Bella) Avagyan. Prestigious Gold Medals were also awarded to Director of Financial Services and Chief Accountant Mnatsakan Mkrtchyan, and Registrar Chaghig Arzrouni-Chahinian.

The following day, AUA celebrated the graduating class of 2016 with a commencement ceremony led by AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian. A highlight of the ceremony was a speech delivered by one of this year's valedictorians, Setrag Hovsepian. Setrag, originally from Damascus, is a recipient of the Akian Family Foundation Scholarship, along with several other Syrian-Armenian students enrolled at AUA. Footage of Setrag's touching speech describing how this was the first time in his life he had the opportunity to take part in a graduation ceremony went viral on the internet.

AUA's 25th anniversary celebrations in Yerevan concluded with a memorable Gala dinner where AUA faculty, staff, alumni, benefactors, and board of trustees from all over the world gathered to celebrate AUA's achievements.

AUA 25th anniversary celebrations will also be organized in Los Angeles with a special Gala being held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel on November 19. Longtime AUA benefactors Mihran Agbabian and Elizabeth Agbabian and Jerry and Patricia Turpanjian will be honored for their ongoing generosity and commitment to the University. The evening's keynote speaker will be entrepreneur/philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan. An exclusive clip previewing the upcoming film "The Promise" (directed by Terry George and starring Christian Bale, Oscar Isaac and Charlotte Le Bon) will also be shown. Please contact Lorraine Alexander at lalexander@aua.am for sponsorships and tickets.



AUA President Armen Der Kiureghian, left, with US Ambassador Richard Mills, right

this sphere.

Later that evening, guests attended a special Gala Concert held at the Aram Khachaturian Grand Concert Hall. Awe-inspiring performances were delivered by the Hover State Chamber Choir and the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra. The evening, emceed by Armen Amiryanyan, also showcased a presentation of awards and decorations in honor of individuals who have supported the University. The civil decorations are bestowed by the Armenian Government for acts of accomplishment benefiting the Armenian nation as a whole.

Humanities and Social Sciences. The Medal of Gratitude is in recognition of an individual's efforts in state, economic, social, scientific-technical and public activities, as well as significant contributions aimed at developing the health, education and culture spheres.

The Movses Khorenatsi Medal, awarded for outstanding achievements in the spheres of culture, art, literature, education, social sciences, and sports, was bestowed upon Chairman of AUA's Board of Trustees Dr. Lawrence H. Pitts and Assistant Vice President Anahit Ordyan. Commemorative Medals were also awarded to

## Armenians Celebrate to Help Artsakh Victims

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOCHUM, Germany – For Nathaniel Ullmann, a journalist for the largest regional newspaper in Germany, the response of participants at a concert in Bochum on July 8 showed just "how different German and Armenian culture are." He explained: "Whereas Germans at an elevated cultural event sit there in silent wonder, Armenians sing, dance and clap in happy enthusiasm." And that is the case, even if the occasion might be a sad one.

This was a benefit concert in the Christ's Church in Bochum-Linden, organized by the Armenian-German Association 1860, and the proceeds will go to the families of soldiers killed in the Artsakh war last April, as the organization's head Azat Ordukhanyan said. Thus, a sad occasion, indeed; and yet, the mood was one of celebration. The ensemble "After Our Era," which had traveled from Armenia for this concert and for a folk festival near Frankfurt, performed on traditional instruments – duduk, tar (sitar), cylinder drum and Armenian bagpipe – while Madlena Galstyan sang. Selecting from a repertoire that spans the centuries, the musicians (virtually all graduates of the Yerevan Conservatory) presented works by the 10th-century monk Gregor of Narek, other medieval composers and, from the modern era, Makar Yekmalyan and Komitas Vardapet.

"And we have good reason to celebrate," said Heide Rieck, while introducing the performers to the hundreds of guests. Rieck, who is a leading figure in Bochum's literary milieu, has been engaged in several Armenian initiatives over the past years. Cause for celebration, she said, was the German Bundestag's recognition of the genocide on June 2 of this year. The music of Komitas, she said, who studied in Berlin and

Paris, "has not been silenced and it has won out over the murderers, it lives on."

The church was filled to capacity, as hundreds of Armenians from the Ruhr region had come, as well as several from as far away as Hamburg and Toulouse. Traffic jams had delayed the concert but once all had arrived, the musicians marched onto the elevated altar area to the sound of rolling drums and the shrill tones of a flute. The parishioners of this church feel a special relationship to Armenia and the fate of its people, for a historical reason: a nurse from Bochum-Linden who had served in the Second World War bequeathed her life's savings – 50,000 deutsche marks – for the church to erect a statue on its premises, dedicated to the cause of peace. In 2005 a minister of the Christ's Church traveled to Armenia, and in Gumri met sculptor Albert Vardanyan. The following year, his statue,

"Pulsar – Ode to Peace," was unveiled in front of the church. In his words of welcome, church representative Rudolf Skibinski Palmer highlighted this special relationship, and said that Armenia would figure as a theme next year in the context of festivities to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's theses.

Then the music began, and as Rieck described it, "marvelous sounds rang out from a faraway world, first melancholic, then soon with wit and swing," both so familiar to the Armenian soul; "and they let themselves be carried away, they clapped, they swayed in rhythm, and soon five young women (along with two little girls on the sidelines) could no longer sit still, and they danced, hips moving, arms raised and hands swirling – softly and yet strong, like wild flowers in the winds..."

When the concert concluded, the applause

was enough to make the church walls shake. Ordukhanyan said it was a "unique feeling to hear Armenian songs in this setting." But the evening was not over. Groups gathered to talk and enjoy refreshments, then one of the musicians sat down at the organ and began to play, a flute joined in and even a German musician on hand took up his instrument, a German-Armenian duduk duet rang out, to shouts of "long live the Armenian-German friendship." It was midnight when the doors to the church finally closed. The journalist from the Westfaelische Allgemeine Zeitung summed up: "The Armenian people have not had an easy time of it in their history – but despite that, or perhaps because of that, they have never lost the joy of life."

(The author can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com)

## US, Russia Working Together on Karabagh Settlement: Kerry

WASHINGTON (PanARMENIAN.Net/CNN) – US Secretary Of State John Kerry said on July 17 that Washington and Moscow are working together on the settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.

"...We're working on a number of different issues," he told "Meet the Press" on NBC.

"We're working on Nagorno Karabagh. But with respect to Syria, nothing in what we talked about is based on trust. I'm not sitting here naively trusting what the Russians may or may not do. What we have done is laid out a series of steps concretely."

"We're still working on the issue of Ukraine and we still haven't resolved the issue of Ukraine. And frankly, we've spent a good deal of time in the conversation with President Putin laying down the steps that we need to

take to deal with Ukraine, also," Kerry added.

In addition, Kerry said on Friday that the US and Russia had agreed to cooperate in Syria against the al Nusra Front, al Qaeda's Syrian branch, in an effort to "restore the cessation of hostilities, significantly reduce the violence and help create the space for a genuine and credible political transition" in Syria.

But Kerry, appearing alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow, declined to provide details of the cooperation, saying "the concrete steps that we have agreed on are not going to be laid out in public in some long list because we want them to work."

Proposals to deepen military cooperation with Russia in Syria have sparked a rift at the highest levels of the Obama administration, with the Pentagon openly challenging the idea

that Russia could be trusted to uphold its end of the bargain.

"I want to emphasize, though, they are not based on trust," Kerry said, referring to the key parts of the agreement. "They define specific, sequential responsibilities all parties to the conflict must assume with the intent of stopping all together the indiscriminate bombing of the Assad regime and stepping up our efforts against al Nusra."

Both the US and Russia have aircraft that conduct operations over Syria, and a draft of the proposed agreement would allow for targeting and carrying out joint air strikes against ISIS and al-Nusra, the al Qaeda branch in Syria.

The draft also said that the air force of the Syrian regime would largely be grounded as part of the agreement.

# Community News

## Camp Armen Supporters Get Boost from Armenia, AMAA

YEREVAN and PARAMUS, N.J. – In early July, Rev. Kirkor Agabaloglu, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasa, Istanbul, was in Armenia, along with a delegation comprising members of the Committee for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Istanbul's Camp Armen (Kamp Armen), including engineer Nazareth Binatli, architects Aleen Pontioğlu, Zhan Gavrilov, representative of the Hrant Dink Foundation Delal Dink (Hrant Dink's daughter) and benefactors Harout and Talar Khorozoglu.

They came to Yerevan to get acquainted with creative centers for children and youth, and learn some positive things that they can implement at Camp Armen, where children and youth will come during their summer vacations and develop their creative thinking and artistic abilities.

The guests met with Armenia's Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan. She welcomed the guests warmly and expressed her gratitude to all the Armenians of Istanbul, for staying true to their national identity and setting an example of how to live as an Armenian. During the meeting, the Minister also touched upon the school for children from Armenia, based under the roof of the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Gedik Pasa. She expressed her gratitude to Rev. Agabaloglu for his attention and heartfelt attitude for this school, as well as to the school's sponsors, Harout and Dalar Khorozoglu for their financial assistance.

They later visited TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and got acquainted with creative and skilled education of the students and the control system of the center led by the qualified educators and technical experts. The guests also visited the Armenian Missionary Association of America's Nor Nork District's Shogh Day Care Center and got acquainted with the activities of the children who come from families with social issues and problems. They also talked with the teachers, the social worker and the psychologist of the Center. The guests familiarized them with all the activities that are carried in Istanbul among Armenian children.

Rev. Kirkor Agabaloglu spoke about all the difficulties that they went through last year for the return of Camp Armen to its right owner, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Gedik Pasa.

"The AMAA commends and whole heartedly supports the community efforts in Istanbul exerted to reconstruct Camp Armen," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "It is our sincere wish to see the mission of the audacious hero, Hrant Guzelian, and the legacy of Hrant Dink, reignite at Camp Armen with new generations of Armenian Youth walking the path of the faith and may the 'homecoming of the remnants' vigorously resume."



Members of the Committee for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Istanbul's Camp Armen (Kamp Armen), with Armenia's Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian addresses a Merrimack Valley crowd during an Armenian Genocide observance in Lowell.

## Merrimack Valley Armenians Rally Around Peter Koutoujian

By Tom Vartabedian

LOWELL, Mass. – Over the years, Peter Koutoujian has been a good friend to the Armenians of Merrimack Valley, back when he served as a State Representative and now as Sheriff of Middlesex County.

He has come aboard as a powerful speaker and more recently as honorary chairman of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee at Lowell City Hall. He has fought for identity and resolution, touching other political figures and inspiring them to become connected.

Now, it's time for Merrimack Valley to offer its own appreciation and support toward his re-election campaign.

A committee called Armenians for Merrimack Valley has joined together to sponsor a fundraising reception on Thursday, August 4, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 4 Highwood Drive, Tewksbury.

Members include: Dr. Florence Bejian Bahtiarian, Mike Bahtiarian, Peter Bogosian, Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, Dr. Ara Jeknavorian, Aram Jeknavorian, Armen Jeknavorian, Paul Ketchoyian, Greg Minasian, Mimi Parseghian and Tom Vartabedian.

Koutoujian will be opposed in the primary election on September 8 by Barry Kelleher, a career corrections professional. Kelleher has worked in the Middlesex Sheriff's office for the past 18 years. There is no opponent for the general election in November.

Koutoujian was sworn in as Middlesex County Sheriff in 2011 by Gov. Duval Patrick to fill a vacancy. In November 2012, he won the election, representing 1.5 million residents with 77 percent of the vote.

Koutoujian hit the ground running, utilizing his legal and legislative experience to implement his vision toward law enforcement inside his district. His first action was to institute new policies designed to increase public confidence in the historic department.

Included was a policy that prohibits employees from donating to the sheriff's political campaign and mandating campaign political finance education classes for all employees.

Koutoujian has also created new inmate vocational courses in environmentally-friendly janitorial services and digital print shop design, thus increasing opportunities for men in his custody to gain essential job skills and becoming more marketable.

Prior to the sheriff's appointment, Koutoujian represented the 10th Middlesex District in the Massachusetts State Legislature where he was the lead sponsor for annual Armenian Genocide Commemorations at the Statehouse.

He spent several years spearheading efforts to win the approval of Armenian Heritage Park which opened May 2012 along the newly-created Rose Kennedy Greenway.

For his efforts, he was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor as well as the Mkhitar Gosh Medal for exemplary service in the field of diplomacy, law and political science.

Koutoujian's grandparents immigrated to the US from Turkey during the genocide and settled in Waltham. His dad became a fixture in the community, serving as City Councilor and later as City Clerk. Peter followed his father into elected office and made Armenian-American issues a central focus throughout his political career.

Contributions may be made to the Koutoujian Committee and mailed to 293 Ash Street, Waltham, MA 02453 or persons can donate securely on-line to: <https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/mvarmenian>.

## Breakthrough in Wound Care in Armenia Thanks To US Doctors

BOSTON and YEREVAN – Wound care remains a considerable medical and surgical concern in Armenia and the world, and, with the introduction of new technologies, it has evolved considerably during the past decade. At the initiative of Dr. Gevorg Yaghdjian, an Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery, at the Yerevan State Medical University Heratsi Hospital, a wound care project was launched in April, 2016, in Yerevan. Its goal was to improve wound care in the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh by identifying, acquiring, and distributing modern equipment, an improving the education of surgeons and other health care professionals at major medical institutions.

The implementation of the program required the collaboration of several organizations. Boston, Massachusetts, area physicians, Drs Carolann Najarian and Shahe Fereshetian, accepted a donation of modern V.A.C. VERAFLOR™ and V.A.C. ULTA™ units from Acelity, which help in treatment of wounds in the safest and most effective way. Christine Grogan of Acelity was instrumental in making the donation of 12 machines in total sum of \$717,344 happen. The Boston area Armenian-American Medical Association, funded the project. The Armenia-Artsakh Fund organized the air delivery of the devices, and the Fund for Armenian Relief ensured their receipt in Yerevan and distribution in Armenia and Artsakh.

Acelity, an American company based in San Antonio, is a world leader in advanced wound care and regenerative medicine and was created by uniting the strengths of three companies, Kinetic Concepts, Inc., LifeCell Corporation, and Systagenix Wound Management, Limited (formerly Johnson & Johnson). Acelity started as an operation in a 1-bedroom apartment in San Antonio, Texas, in 1976 by an emergency room physician who saw the value of kinetic therapy in dealing with spinal cord injuries, multiple trauma, and severe pulmonary condition. From 13 original employees, Acelity now employs 5,800. Acelity is committed to restoring people's lives around the world, and is proud to have the opportunity to donate V.A.C. VERAFLOR™ and V.A.C. ULTA™ Therapies for the treatment of wound care in Armenia. Each year, Acelity donates millions of dollars and products to help heal people involved in the aftermath of global tragic disasters, including Haiti, Ecuador, San Bernardino, Paris, Brussels, and the recent horrific attack in Orlando.

Based on a previously established plan, the distribution of equipment started on June 22, and eight medical centers, including the St. Astvatsamayr Children's Hospital, received V.A.C. VERAFLOR™ and V.A.C. ULTA™ equipment.

In parallel with the distribution of the equipment, training of medical personnel started on June 16, 2016. Dr. Allen Gabriel, from Portland, Oregon, gave a first teleconference presentation to teams of physicians in Gumri, Stepanakert and Yerevan.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Youth Pilgrimage to the Holy Land Inspires Leadership, Enriches Faith

NEW YORK — A group of 29 young adults from parishes across the Eastern Diocese traveled to the Holy Land from June 6 to June 14. The sixth annual Youth Leadership Pilgrimage to the Holy Land was led by the Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of St. Mary Church of Washington, DC, and Arpi Nakashian, a recent graduate of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and a Jerusalem native.

Their pilgrimage began in Bethlehem, where the young people visited the Church of the Holy Nativity. They descended into the Holy Grotto, where they took part in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the site where Christ was born. At the conclusion of the service, the group proceeded to the Armenian monastery and later gathered for Bible study at Shepherds' Field, where the angels announced Christ's birth.

The following day, the pilgrims traveled to the Jordan River where Karapetyan performed a Blessing of Water ceremony and the group engaged in a Bible study on the significance of Christ's baptism. The pilgrims touched upon the symbolism of participating in Bible Studies at the holy sites, in which the passages were tied to momentous periods in Christ's life.

"I learned so much about Biblical events and it was inspiring to have stood on the grounds of such important historical and spiritual sites," said Sophia Yedigarian of St. Mary Church of Washington DC. "I feel blessed to have had several moving experiences, which continually felt more emotional and spiritual as the week progressed."

The pilgrims traveled to the Church of the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin, which marks the site where Mary was buried by the apostles before her assumption into heaven. Karapetyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the site, where Armenians hold services daily at the church.



In church in Jerusalem

"When we visited the Church of the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin, I had an indescribably moving experience," said Yedigarian. "This was the pinnacle of my trip, and was such a significant turning point in my faith. I had never felt God's presence more in any other holy site or place in my life."

Following a Bible Study on the Mount of the Beatitudes — where the group reviewed the Beatitudes of Jesus and considered how these teachings can help them become better leaders in their parishes — they took a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, where Karapetyan encouraged everyone to experience a private meditation as they traveled on the waters where Christ

calmed a sudden storm when he was crossing the sea with his disciples.

On several occasions, the group visited the Armenian Quarter and spent time with local Armenians in Jerusalem enjoying fellowship. One highlight included meeting the students at the Sts. Tarkmanchatz School.

"It was beautiful to see the strong presence of

Caves, the Dead Sea and the Upper Room.

At the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations, the pilgrims prayed before the rock upon which Jesus prayed on the night of his arrest. During a Bible study session, they discussed the importance of both individual and communal prayer.

The young adults concluded their pilgrimage with a farewell dinner where they celebrated their new friendships and renewed sense of faith. They expressed appreciation to the Diocese, Archbishop Barsamian and benefactor Aso Tavitian, who from the inception of this annual pilgrimage has been a major supporter of the Primate's vision to take promising young adults to the Holy Land.

"Walking through Jerusalem along the same paths that Jesus walked, being in the land of my Lord and Savior was just what I needed to renew my Christian faith," said Parnagian.

"This year's pilgrimage to the Holy Land was rewarding and uplifting," said Karapetyan. "Our young pilgrims traveled through the footsteps of the Lord, which undoubtedly left the mark of the Holy Spirit on their souls and the pride of their Armenian identity in their hearts. This unforgettable journey has enriched them and will guide them in the future as faithful Armenian Christians and leaders of their own communities."

"A pilgrimage is a chance for people of faith to experience the presence of something greater than themselves," said Keleshian. "It was a duty for me, as an Armenian Apostolic



A group of the young pilgrims in Jerusalem

the Armenians in the Holy Land," said Njeh Keleshian of St. Sarkis Church in Dallas, Texas. "The Armenian Quarter, the Patriarchate, many of the Holy Sites that belong to the Armenians and the Sts. Tarkmanchatz Armenian School are all continuing the mission of Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew."

The pilgrimage culminated in a Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The pilgrims woke up in the early hours of the day and walked through the dark streets of the Old City of Jerusalem until they reached this holy place—the site of Christ's crucifixion, burial, and glorious resurrection. Fr. Karapetyan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at sunrise, as the young people sang in choir and assisted on the altar.

"The most moving experience of all was celebrating Holy Badarak at the Holy Sepulcher," said Christina Parnagian of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church in Providence, RI. "As I was waiting to enter Jesus' tomb, an overwhelming feeling of peace came over me. In that moment, my entire being was filled with God's love."

Among the other sites the pilgrims experienced were the Mount of the Temptation, the Mount of Olives, the Wailing Wall, the Garden of Gethsemane, Nazareth, Jericho, the Qumran

Christian, to go visit the Holy Land, to be able to walk in the very places where Christ performed miracles, taught his people, lived, died, and then resurrected."

"The faithful youth who participated in the pilgrimage to the Holy Land are an inspiration to me personally," said Archbishop Barsamian, reflecting on the six-year history of the



One of the pilgrims' many stops

Diocese's Youth Leadership Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. "They are our assurance that the mission of the Armenian Church will continue in the future."



## Administrative Director Position

Manoogian Manor, Livonia, MI

The Manoogian Manor is currently taking resumes for the position of Administrative Director to head up our premier assisted care program. Founded by Alex and Marie Manoogian, we are a fully licensed non-profit 90 bed facility, providing assisted living and personal care services to seniors. With our recent multi-million dollar renovation we are an industry leader known for our outstanding resident care programs. Potential candidates should have extensive experience in the industry. An Assisted Living Administrator's License will be required. Knowledge of the Armenian language is a plus. Interested candidates should email resumé with cover letter to: Manoogian Manor, Attn: Gregory Jamian at [jamiang@americaremedical.com](mailto:jamiang@americaremedical.com)



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Two Deacons to Be Ordained as Priests

NEW YORK – Deacon Vahe Bagdasarian and Deacon Saro Kalayjian will be ordained together by the hand of Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, in services on Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24.

The Saturday evening Service of Calling will take place at St. Leon Church in Fair Lawn, NJ. On Sunday morning, the Divine Liturgy and Ordinations will take place at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York City.

The faithful are encouraged to attend these spiritually

uplifting events. Click here to download a flyer with information on the services.

Also, please note that reservations are being accepted for a celebratory banquet that will follow the ordinations on Sunday, July 24. Click here for details about reserving a place at the Sunday banquet.

Provisions are being made for a livestream broadcast of the Sunday ordination service, so that people beyond the New York-New Jersey region can share in this stirring event. Details

on that broadcast will follow shortly.

Fr. Mardiros Chevia and Krikor Kucukyuan will serve as the sponsoring priest and godfather for Dn. Vahe. For Dn. Saro, those roles will be taken up by Fr. Vasken Kouzouian and Dr. Zaven Kalayjian.

Following their ordinations, both new priests will spend their 40-day seclusion period at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, in Armonk, NY. Subsequently, they will go to their new assignments as parish pastors. Bagdasarian will serve as pastor of the Soorp Haroutian Church in Orlando, Fla., effective September 1. Kalayjian will serve as pastor of the St. Mesrob Church in Racine, Wis., where he has been serving as deacon-in-charge since July 1.

## OBITUARY

### Dr. Albert Momjian Legal Pioneer

PHILADELPHIA (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) – Albert Momjian, 82, of Huntingdon Valley, a nationally known expert on family law, a dedicated civic volunteer, and a leader of the Armenian community in America, died Monday, July 11, of an infection at Einstein Medical Center Montgomery.

Momjian was a partner in the Philadelphia law firm of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis, where he worked for 24 years before retiring in 2012. He led the firm's family law department.

In 2015, he was honored by the American Jewish Committee as the recipient of the Judge Learned Hand Award, meant for "outstanding leaders in the legal profession who exemplify the high principles for which Judge Learned Hand was renowned." He also served as Honorary Consul to the Republic of Haiti.

A funeral service was held on Saturday, July 16 at Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, located at 100 N. Edmonds Avenue, Havertown.

Over the years, he attracted many high-profile clients, including the actor Will Smith, the TV and radio host Larry King, the late Phillies relief pitcher Tug McGraw, and the late Flyers owner Ed Snider.

Win or lose, he was not shy about expressing his opinions on cases.

In 2009, when a Delaware County judge ordered Main Line lawyer H. Beatty Chadwick released after 14 years in prison – he had refused to pay his ex-wife the \$2.5 million he owed her under a divorce decree – Momjian, her lawyer, said he was disappointed.

"Here's a guy who thumbed his nose at a court order for 14 years," Momjian told the *New York Times*. "There should be some kind of sanctions for doing that."

Regarded by his peers as the dean of the Pennsylvania family-law bar, Momjian's practice dealt with divorce, custody, alimony, child sup-

port, surrogate parenting and prenuptial agreements.

Not only did he try cases, he also was a revered force behind the development of the state's family law. He co-chaired the Committee to Consolidate Pennsylvania Family Laws, and lent his expertise to the Pennsylvania House and Senate Judiciary Committees during passage of the 1980 Divorce Code.

The author of numerous articles on his specialty, he wrote *Pennsylvania Family Law*, a treatise often cited by appellate courts. He also collaborated with his son, Mark, on *Pennsylvania Family Law Annotated*.

He received many honors, including the Cecil B. Moore Award from the Barristers' Association of Philadelphia, the Eric D. Turner Award from the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Family Law Section for Outstanding Service as a Teacher and Mentor, the Judge Learned Hand Award from the American Jewish Committee, and the Columbia University Alumni Medal for Distinguished Service.

Born in Atlantic City, he was the son of Armenian parents, Garabed and Johar Momjian, who had emigrated from Turkey. In America, the Momjians became confectionery manufacturers during and after the Great Depression. The family operated the Atlantic Candy Co. on Virginia Avenue.

Momjian graduated first in his class from Atlantic City High School in 1951, and received special recognition for never having missed a day of school since the first grade.

He attended Columbia College and Columbia Law School on full scholarships, completing his undergraduate degree in three years. After graduating from law school, Momjian joined the Pennsylvania National Guard. Eventually, he rose to major and vice president of the guard's First Regiment Infantry.

His only foray into politics was his 1975 elec-



tion to the Lower Moreland Township school board. He was the first Democrat elected to the board, his family said.

Since 1974, Momjian was honorary consul for Haiti in Pennsylvania. After the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, he helped local Haitians contact relatives on the stricken island and obtain passports to visit them. He also arranged for the shipment of tents and medical supplies.

Momjian was widely known for his dedication to the Armenian community in America and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, of which he was variously president, solicitor and board member.

He also was active in the Armenian Evangelical World Council, serving as its treasurer. For more than a generation, Momjian was active in the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian Sisters Academy in Radnor.

Momjian and his wife, Esther, celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary in June.

Besides his wife and son, Momjian is survived by daughter Carol Momjian Hanamirian; son Thomas; five grandchildren; and a brother, Set, a former US ambassador to the United Nations. All of the couple's children became lawyers.

He was an Armenian Assembly of America Fellow Trustee for more than 25 years and served on the Assembly's Board of Trustees as Solicitor from 1990 to 2015, until his son Mark Momjian took over his position.

"Albert Momjian's dedication and invaluable counsel to the Armenian Assembly will be deeply missed. He served the legal profession and the Armenian American community with merit and grace, setting standards for exceptional leadership," stated Armenian Assembly Board of Trustees Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian. "His spirit and character have helped shape many of our successes, inspired by his ongoing commitment and tireless efforts. Our hearts and prayers go out to his wonderful family," they added.

### Jacques Sahman Merian

SARASOTA, Fla. – Jacques Sahman Merian, 91, of Sarasota, FL and Pittsburgh, Penn. passed away on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at Forbes Hospital in Monroeville, PA. Born Sahman Merametdjian, but nicknamed Hagop, he was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, the son of Oshin and Alice (Babikian) Merametdjian. He left Bulgaria in the late 1940s and went to France, where he enrolled at the University of Caen in Normandy and studied chemical engineering, and where he met his future wife, Simone. He immigrated to the United States in 1953 and married Simone in 1955. They moved to Pittsburgh in the late 1960s where he worked for Westinghouse until his retirement, and for whom he developed a number of products which were patented. He was active in the Armenian Club of Pittsburgh, which successfully completed a project to build the Armenian Nationality Room at the University of Pittsburgh, dedicated in 1988.

He was predeceased by his two brothers, Krikor Merametdjian and Leon Miller (Levon Merametdjian). He is survived by his wife Simone, his two daughters, Sylvie Merian (and her partner Leon Tatevossian) and Nadine Ciappetta (and her husband Russ), three grandchildren, Lauren, Marco, and Marisa, and one



great-granddaughter, Kovia, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins in the United States, France, Argentina, and Brazil.

A private memorial lunch was held in his memory on March 5.

# Giragosian

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Fulbright Specialist Helps Refugees in Armenia

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – Clinical psychologist Dr. John Saroyan, has recently returned from Armenia where he served his second assignment as a Fulbright Specialist for Public and Global Health, specifically focused on the trauma and mental health issues of refugees in Armenia. The Fulbright program was established in 1946 by Sen. J. William Fulbright and is administered by the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It sends US faculty and professionals to serve as expert consultants on curriculum, faculty development, institutional planning and related subjects to overseas academic institutions.

Armenia has recently experienced a significant number of refugees entering the country, the third largest number proportionately in the world. Currently it is estimated that there are between 17,000 to 20,000 refugees from Syria as well as others (up to 1,000) from Iraq and Ukraine due to war. Most of the refugees residing currently in Armenia arrived from various



Dr. John Saroyan (back, second from the left) at KASA in Yerevan, Armenia with psychologists and Syrian-Armenian refugees.



US Embassy Cultural/Education Specialist Hasmik Mikayelyan, Dr. John Saroyan, and Gladys Saroyan at the US Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia.

cities of Syria such as Damascus and Aleppo, and are of Armenian descent.

In collaboration with Yerevan State Medical University, Saroyan provided lectures and presentations to students and faculty members about trauma and mental health treatment methods. He also visited clinics and sites where various modes of assistance are made available to refugees.

He met with psychologists, social workers and NGO administrators from a number of local and international organizations such as the UNHCR and UNICEF, as well as Komitas Action Suisse-Armenie (KASA), and praised their valuable and sincere contribution to the mental well-being of the refugees and their families.



Dr. John Saroyan meeting with psychologists and mental health providers at INTRA Centre in Yerevan, Armenia.



Dr. John Saroyan (center) at the UNHCR Office in Yerevan, Armenia.

“There is a need to recognize that local staff and psychologists must also be supported for the highly intense work that they provide when assisting refugees. Many are hard workers, giving of their time and energy on an almost voluntary basis, sometimes feeling that they have not given enough,” he said.

In addition to the educational component of his grant, Dr. Saroyan met with refugees and worked directly with them. One of his visits was

at the AGBU Vahe Karapetian Center, where he met with refugees who were provided medical care by volunteer Armenian physicians, including some who were physicians in Syria and carry refugee status.

“I expect to return again in the near future and continue to support and train colleagues who specifically work with uprooted and traumatized adults, children and families,” Saroyan said.



## Scholarships Distributed In Watertown

WATERTOWN – On Sunday, June 21, St. James Armenian Church of Watertown, held its annual Scholarship Sunday event, presenting 25 scholarships totaling more than \$22,000 to St. James' college-bound students. These scholarships, made possible thanks to various endowment funds at St. James Church, are awarded to young parishioners enrolled in a full-time undergraduate or graduate program. Following Divine Liturgy, Rev. Arakel Aljalian, together with donors who have established the endowment funds, presented the scholarships to the recipients, and congratulated them on their achievements. “Work hard this year, and don't forget that St. James is always your home,” he said to the college students. “We support you and wish you success in your studies.”

This year's scholarship recipients are: Alyssa Bogosian, David Boloyan, Lucine Boloyan, Alex Bresnee, Arlin Cimen, Shant DerTorossian, Natalie Eskici, Aram Gurekian, Ari Kazanjian, Raffi Kazanjian, Dylan Madden, Shane Madden, Shant Melkonian, Tania Melkonian, Matthew Reppucci, Julia Samuelian, Ari Shirinian, Hagop Toghramadjian, Thomas Toghramadjian, John Bogosian Trocchi and Lori Yeterian.



## COMMUNITY NEWS



AECP Physician Anna Hovakimyan administering an eye exam



A patient climbing aboard the Mobile Eye Hospital to be treated

## Armenian EyeCare Project Launches New Website in Anticipation of 25th Anniversary

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. – Dedicated to the prevention of avoidable blindness and to providing quality eye care to all Armenians regardless of their economic status, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECP) is excited to introduce their new website to friends and supporters. The new website kicks off a year-long celebration of the project's 25th Anniversary next year – 1992 - 2017 – at [www.eyecareproject.com](http://www.eyecareproject.com).

In discussing the new website Dr. Roger Ohanesian, founder and president of the Armenian EyeCare Project, said “We’re doing big things in Armenia and we want to share them with the world. At a time of such activity and excitement at the EyeCare Project, we are thrilled to tell our story to friends and supporters.”

With a colorful design and an Armenian flair, the new and enriched site shares the Project's latest programs, along with its 25-year history and accomplishments. “What We Do” includes the Project's five-point strategy – medical education and training, direct patient care, public education, research, and capacity building – with its four major programs – Five for Five, the

development of Five Regional Eye Clinics throughout Armenia for \$5 million; Subspecialty Clinics – eight clinics directed by the project's US-trained Fellows; the Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Infant and Childhood Blindness; and the Project's hallmark – the Mobile Eye Hospital.

In addition to articles and stories, the organization encourages visitors to explore the “Grand Opening” of its new website by watching some of its more than 40 powerful videos – patient stories, physician biographies and more – and taking virtual tours of the Mobile Eye Hospital, the Center of Excellence, and other facilities.

The EyeCare Project would also like to take this opportunity to introduce everyone to its Board of Directors; the Armenian and U.S. professional staffs; and the Armenian and U.S. ophthalmologists along with all others who constitute the Project's team through their website biographies.

The new AECP website has a section on Armenia – the cradle of civilization – a tiny country the size of Maryland with a tumultuous past, a rich heritage and a beautiful culture whose

artistic expressions are at the very heart of its identity. Learn about everything from the geography of Armenia to traditions, history, music and dance, textiles and more – with each section highlighted with beautiful photographs.

The new website will also introduce visitors to the wonders of the eye and the magnificence of eyesight, how eyes work like a camera, about the anatomy of the eye and important information on eye safety at home, when playing sports and in the workplace as well as first aid for the eye with special sections for children, teens and parents.

The project encourages everyone to visit its website often as the organization embarks on its 25th anniversary year. Visitors



AECP Physician Asatur Hovsepian having some fun with a colleague aboard the Mobile

will learn about the many activities planned throughout the year and across the country in celebration of 25 years of Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes so they can participate in its endeavors.

So whether friends and visitors want to explore the project's many accomplishments through the years, learn about the organization's history, meet its doctors and staff, discover more about Armenia's heritage or the wonders of eyesight, its new website is a wealth of interesting and fun information including myths about the eyes, optical illusions and eye care statistics.



A line of patients outside of the Mobile Eye Hospital



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Caucus in Washington Expands

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America welcomed the bipartisan expansion of the leadership of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues with the addition of Representatives David Valadao (R-CA) and Jackie Speier (D-CA) as Co-Chairs and Adam Schiff (D-CA) and David Trott (R-MI) as vice chairs. These Members of Congress join current Co-Chairs Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Robert Dold (R-IL).

“Representatives Speier, Valadao, Schiff, and Trott have all proven to be dedicated and integral Members of the Armenian Caucus. We are excited to see them take on this new leadership role,” Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny said. “As more Members of Congress take the lead on Armenian issues, the more we can accomplish, especially in these challenging times. The Assembly welcomes the expanded Caucus leadership team and looks forward to working with them throughout the remainder of this Congress,” Ardouny continued.

During a recent meeting with Congressman Pallone, Armenian Assembly Board Co-Chair Van Krikorian expressed the importance of strengthening the Caucus in view of recent developments in the region as a result of Azerbaijan’s attacks against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

Valadao serves on the House Appropriations Committee and is the Vice Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies.

“My Congressional District is home to a very large Armenian population that has a very strong presence throughout California’s Central Valley. As a result, the positive contributions Armenian-Americans have made to our society are evident. It is important

that I do my part to represent this community while in Washington,” Valadao said. “As Co-Chair of the Armenian Caucus, I am excited to continue my work raising awareness of the contributions of the Armenian people and the importance of strong bilateral ties between the two nations,” he added.

Speier, who participated in the US delegation that traveled to Armenia last year for the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, also hails from California and serves on the House Armed Service Committee as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

“As one of only two Armenian members of Congress, I couldn’t be more proud to co-chair the Congressional Armenian Caucus. I was raised to take pride in my Armenian background, and learned at an early age the rich history of our Armenian people – including the horrors my ancestors and others suffered at the hands of the Ottoman Empire as part of the Armenian Genocide,” Speier said to the Armenian Assembly. “I look forward to representing Armenian Americans and all Americans in building a robust US-Armenia relationship. By celebrating our strong heritage, and ensuring atrocities of the past are never forgotten, we can ensure that America and Armenia will enjoy a peaceful and prosperous future.”

Schiff, who met with the Assembly’s 2016 intern class, has long been a leading Democratic sponsor of the House resolutions affirming the Armenian Genocide.

Schiff previously served on the House Appropriations Committee, and presently serves as the Ranking Democrat on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Republican Member Trott was also part of



Rep. David Valadao (R-CA)



Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA)



Adam Schiff (D-CA)



David Trott (R-MI)

the US delegation to Armenia for the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. He serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Committee on the Judiciary.

The Congressional Armenian Issues Caucus has worked to strengthen the ties between the United States and Armenia and

keep members engaged on Armenia-related issues. The Caucus continues to advocate for increased trade and assistance to Armenia, self-determination for Nagorno Karabagh and supporting US recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

## Armenian Genocide Billboards Greet Delegates to RNC in Cleveland

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America embarked on an Armenian Genocide billboard campaign prominently displaying the statement of President Ronald Reagan affirming the Armenian Genocide in Cleveland, Ohio, the site of the Republican National Convention.

With nearly 50,000 people expected at the Convention in Cleveland, the billboards are part

of the Assembly’s ongoing public awareness initiative. They serve as a reminder about the need to affirm the truth and learn from the past so as to prevent future genocides.

During his first term in office, Reagan issued a proclamation which read in part: “Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it – and like too many other such persecutions of

too many other peoples - the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.”

The first two billboards, located on I-77 northbound near Grant Avenue (close to where the Convention will be held) and Carnegie Avenue westbound, features an excerpt from President Ronald Reagan’s proclamation on April 22, 1981.

“The Cleveland Armenian community, and,

particularly, our parishioners, are overjoyed with respect to the presence of both billboards,” Rev. Hratch Sargsyan, pastor of St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Apostolic Church, said. “The billboards are the talk of the Armenian community. Folks are simply ecstatic.”

The billboards’ media campaign was overseen by the Assembly’s Ohio State Chair Ara Bagdasarian, who is also a member of the Cleveland Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee.

“Ronald Reagan, one of the most revered Republican leaders, is the only sitting president to recognize the Armenian Genocide and use the term genocide. With these billboards, we will reiterate Reagan’s statement and help ensure that the next president – whether it be Republican or Democrat – reaffirms the Armenian Genocide,” Bagdasarian said. “We wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to share our message about the Armenian Genocide with the visitors coming to Cleveland during the Republican Convention. The world’s spotlight and media will converge here, and we have the chance to be heard.”

Donated by Debbie Abdalian-Thompson, owner of Cleveland Outdoor Advertising, the Assembly put up two of the billboards to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and to promote public awareness during the Convention. A third billboard was added following Germany’s affirmation of the Armenian Genocide on June 2. The most recent billboard reads: “Truth vs National Interest” and “Thank You Germany for Recognizing the Armenian Genocide,” designed by Peace of Art and located on I-77 southbound near mile marker 157.

“I would also like to give special thanks Debbie Abdalian-Thompson and Cleveland Outdoor Advertising for her generous support,” Bagdasarian added.

Armenian EyeCare Project  
Grand Opening  
New Website  
Visit [www.eyecareproject.com](http://www.eyecareproject.com)  
Help Bring Sight to Armenian Eyes



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# MV Knights of Vartan Honor High School Graduates

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — This year's crop of high school graduates in Merrimack Valley certainly made the Armenian community quite proud of its achievements throughout local schools.

As it does annually, the Arakadz Lodge, Knights of Vartan, paid tribute to these fine students during a recognition night June 21 held at St. Gregory Armenian Church.

In all, seven graduates were singled out for exemplary service. Each was presented with an historic Armenian coin marking the genocide centennial, along with other tokens of appreciation.

A biographical sketch was presented on each honoree by Charles Kochakian prior to the presentation. Students were joined by their parents and families.

"Our students are the leaders of tomorrow," said Hamboyan. "They have brought honor and esteem to our communities and we join in their attributes. It's a tradition we have maintained down through the years and its impact has been marked. We commend them all as they climb the ladder of success."

The students:

Alexandra Sirmaian of Salem, NH, High School; varsity field hockey; basketball; 2-year captain; member of Best Buddies, a club that did activities with disabled children; will attend University of New Hampshire; daughter of Stacy & Steven Sirmaian.

Michelle (Mouradjian) Ryan of Chelmsford High School; Student Government; National Honor Society; Thomas Jefferson Forum; soccer; will attend University of New Hampshire as a nursing major; daughter of Scott & Cheryl Ryan.

Ani Minasian of Andover High School; Interact

Club; Recycling Club; Body Positive Club; cross country and track teams; will attend St. Anselm's College after spending the summer as a counselor at Camp Haiastan; daughter of Greg and Carol Minasian.

Robert Couyoumjian of North Andover High School; varsity basketball and track; will attend Fordham University; son of Myles and Robin Couyoumjian.

Kristina Bebirian of Pelham, NH, High School; Yearbook Staff; volunteer for various school events; will attend Rivier College as a public health major, hoping to make a difference with health conditions in various communities; daughter of Michael & Elaine Bebirian.

Benjamin Balian of Westford Academy; varsity soccer captain; Business Club; National Honor Society; youth basketball coach; Sunday School teacher; ACYOA chairman; camp counselor; son of John and Kristin Balian.

Charlie Rachel Sirmaian of Portsmouth, NH, High School; concert choir; National Honor Society; Madrigal Singers; theater (four shows a year for four years); will attend Emerson College as a business major, leaning toward creative enterprises; daughter of Ilyse and Kory Sirmaian.

Prayers were offered by Rev. Stephan Baljian, chaplain and pastor.

Other activities inculcated by the Arakadz Lodge over its six decades of service include: library and

movie programs; teaching genocide in public schools; cultural programs, monthly dinners, along with a host of charitable endeavors both inside and outside the Armenian community.



Arakadz Lodge, Merrimack Valley Knights of Vartan, honored its area high school graduates June 21 at St. Gregory Church, North Andover.

## Dr. Richard K. Babayan Named President of American Urological Association

BOSTON — Richard K. Babayan, MD, Professor and Chair of the Department of urology at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and Chief of Urology at Boston Medical Center (BMC), was recently appointed as the 2016-2017 president of the American Urological Association (AUA), which has more than 22,000 members.

As part of his presidency, he will preside over the AUA Annual Meeting to be held in Boston May 12-16, 2017. Additionally, he will make an official AUA visit to the Republic of Armenia on September 23, 2017 for the Armenian Association of Urology's 25th Annual Meeting. As the event's guest of honor, Babayan will provide on-line AUA membership for all Armenian residents, allowing them access to AUA University, AUA guidelines and other educational services aimed at enhancing their clinical competencies.

Babayan has been an active participant in local, national and international urological associations. He was the New England Section representative to the AUA Board of Directors from 2005-09 and served as President of the Massachusetts Association of Practicing Urologists from 2012-14. He received the AUA's Distinguished Service Award, and in 2013, received the Joseph B. Dowd Lifetime Achievement Award from the New England Section. Babayan is a past president of the Armenian American Medical Association of Boston and was Chairman of the Armenian Medical World Congress in Boston in 1995.

A 1970 graduate of Tufts University, Babayan received his medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1975. He completed his surgical training at Yale-New Haven Hospital and his urology residency at the former University Hospital, now BMC. Dr. Babayan was awarded an AUA Research Scholar, performing basic science research in the field of hyperthermia at both Massachusetts Institute of Technology and BUSM. He joined the BUSM faculty in 1980 and has been chairman of Urology since 2000.

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# Arts & Living

## Pianist and Composer Karén Hakobyan Becomes Armenia Fund USA's New Cultural Program Advisor

PARAMUS, N.J. — Armenia Fund USA Eastern Region Affiliate announced recently the addition of the Armenian-American pianist and composer Karén Hakobyan as their new cultural program advisor.

On behalf of the board of Armenia Fund USA, Executive Director Lisa Stepanian explained their decision on the addition of a cultural program advisor, "As a non-profit organization focused on building infrastructures, many of which include the cultural arts, as well as holding concerts in both Armenia and the United States, we thought it would be beneficial to have someone like Karén Hakobyan who is experienced within the cultural arts to help advise us when making decisions on the topic."

Hakobyan has become a prominent influence in the international musical scene since his Carnegie Hall debut at the age of 17. He has received multiple different professional studies degrees at the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music and the University of Utah. He has performed in major concert halls in Armenia, the United States, Mexico, Germany, France and Argentina. Hakobyan has appeared as a soloist in the United States with the University of Utah Philharmonia, the Salt Lake Symphony, Summer Arts Festival Orchestra, the New American Symphony, and the World Festival Orchestra. Internationally he has appeared as a soloist with the Tucuman Philharmonic Orchestra in Argentina, the Monterrey Symphony Orchestra in Mexico, and in Armenia the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Serenade Chamber Orchestra, and the National Chamber Orchestra. He is currently the Artistic Director of World Peace Sinfonietta, a New York-based orchestra.

On May 6, Armenia Fund USA collaborated with Hakobyan and the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra to present

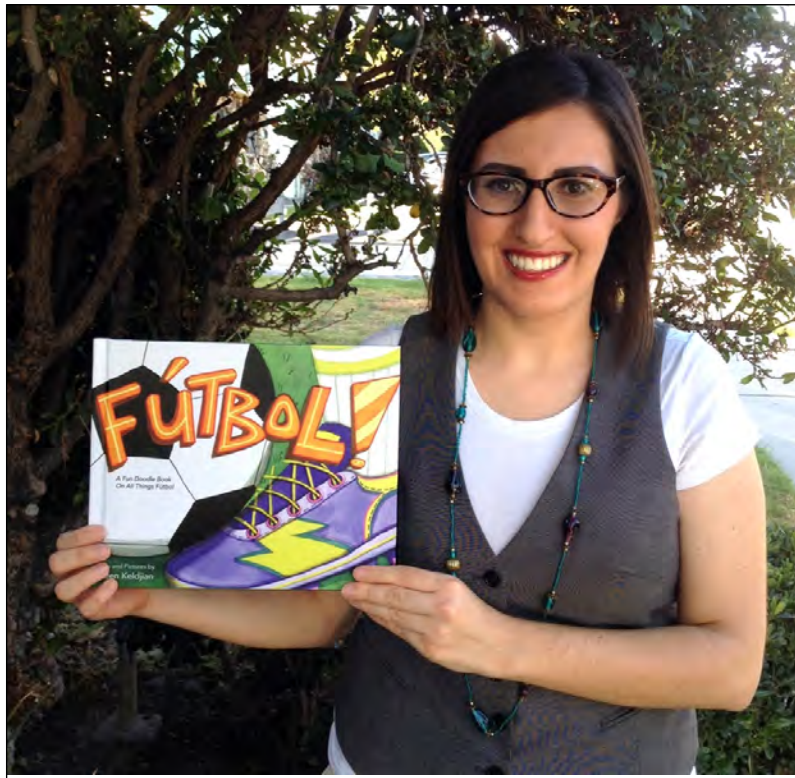


Karén Hakobyan

a concert dedicated to the cultural and diplomatic relations of Armenia and Japan. The concert was held in Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall in Yerevan. It was well received and laid the groundwork for future cultural exchanges between the two countries. It was also the start of new beginnings between the pianist and Armenia Fund USA.

On May 24, Hakobyan, along with the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia, held a concert at the Armenian National Gallery to honor Hyebridge Telehealth Telemedicine Program, which is one of the Armenia Fund USA's major projects since 2009.

"Music has been my passion and purpose since my early childhood. Growing up in  
see HAKOBYAN, page 15



Taleen Keldjian holds a copy of *Fútbol!*

## Taleen Keldjian's *Fútbol!* Scores a Goal with Kids

LOS ANGELES — Author and artist Taleen Keldjian has written and illustrated her first book, *Fútbol! A Fun Doodle Book On All Things Fútbol*, published by Banian Labs' Blue Wonder Books, in the San Francisco Bay Area.

An educational "doodle" book for kids ages 4-9, *Fútbol!* engages kids with the basics of *fútbol* (soccer) and its international appeal. Despite its Spanish title, the 27-page hardcover book is written in English. *Fútbol!* touches on everything from uniforms and game rules to how fans celebrate and cheer the game, enabling kids to color, doodle and solve puzzles along the way.

*Fútbol!* also pays tribute to those widely considered to be two of the finest female and male *fútbol* players in the world, Alex Morgan (US) and Lionel Messi (Argentina).

By emphasizing how *fútbol* is for both girls and boys, and for all countries and cultures, Keldjian's book unifies all those who love and play the sport, including those who perhaps are just exploring it for the first time. Her exuberant illustrations show both the joy of playing and following *fútbol*, as well as the respect owed to the world's most popular sport.

Keldjian reflects on how the book came to be: "My publisher asked if I could write and illustrate a doodle book especially for multiracial and multicultural children. There are not too many resources available for those kids in the market today. The subject was free reign, which is quite rare for a young writer/illustrator to be presented with early in their career. Illustrating sports subjects had always excited me, and I had been wanting to work on a professional sports-themed project for a while. I thought to myself, what better subject to appeal to most kids than sports — and the sport which most unites the world today?"

Having already made appearances at the Bay Area Kids Book Festival and other signing events, Keldjian is making inroads to new generations of readers with her work. "The sport of *fútbol* unites us all no matter our background," said Keldjian. "Every nation in the world comes together to participate, pause for the love of the game, and learn unique cultural traditions from each other."

She also encourages students to try their own hand at writing and illustrating. "When I visit schools, the message I like to share with kids is if you like writing, then keep writing. If you like drawing, then keep drawing. Start out by writing

see KELDJIAN, page 15



Taleen Keldjian signs copies of her book at the Bay Area Kids' Book Fair.

## Hymns and Ceremonies Keys To Revive Ties Between Church And People, Pidedjian Says

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — In a recent lecture, ethnomusicologist, composer and conductor Krikor Pidedjian spoke about the disintegrating connection between the Armenian Church and its people. The event, sponsored by the Zohrab Information Center and held at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, was also the occasion to introduce his latest book, *The Music of the Armenian Church*, a first-ever scholarly survey of the Armenian Apostolic Church's music.

Pidedjian noted that "Church-related issues were interwoven with the daily lives of the people in the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries." But this all changed after the dispersion of the Armenian people following the Genocide. "Though the survivors held tightly to their spiritual values and traditions, the Soviet regime's persecution of the clergy and the forbidding of religious church activities in Armenia, as well as the need to survive and the lifestyles in the new world, took its toll.

The music scholar defined "church" as not merely its physical structure, but also to the "ceremonial content created by our church fathers, the hymns and prayers. While the community worldwide continues to build churches, they have lost much of their past sacredness, he said, because our people have little knowledge of the church's ceremonial content. This lack of knowledge has resulted in passivity and indifference, and thus the church cannot transmit its essence and mission," he explained.

"Today, although Armenians go to church, how many of them walk in with knowledge and belief," he asked. "To do so, the literature needed for this spiritual nourishment is lacking. And the new world with its emphasis on material acquisition and the advantages money provides have taken away many of the values of our spiritual culture, and will continue to take more."

It is this spiritual "history" that links together the diasporan communities, and "in turn the diaspora to our fatherland, Armenia, he stated. Today in the new world, the church is not able to nourish our people's spiritual inner life, and our people are not familiar with the spirited, sparkling, entrancing hymns and prayers created by our church fathers," he lamented.

To illustrate the indifference also permeating the clergy, he related the story of a retiring priest who told the new young pastor that he wished to take with him his hymnary which had always been on the stand throughout his long service to the church. To his shock, the young priest replied, "Der Hayr, take it. I don't use it anyway." His voice in a whisper, the speaker commented, "How can something like that be said. The church hymnary was created over the span of 1,000 years, and contains 1812 hymns. It is the backbone of our church services. They are sung prayers, our spiritual legacy."

He pointed out that non-Armenians are familiar with, and highly evaluate these spiritual treasures, and quoted Russian scholar and poet Valery Brussov. "Medieval Armenian lyric poetry is the supreme and most unique accomplishment of the Armenian people in the realm of poetry creation. It is the true victory of the Armenian spirit in world history,"

see HYMNS, page 15



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Ruben Mirzakhanyan: I Have not Created the Book with a Pen, I Have Created it with My Heart

YEREVAN – The Tekeyan Center here in June hosted the presentation of the Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU) Rector Ruben Mirzakhanyan's trilingual illustrated album, *Impressionism: Armenian Painters*. The event was attended by public and political figures, representatives of the sphere of education and culture, art lovers and guests.

The book published with the help of philanthropist Hrachya Poghosyan includes 280 color reproductions presenting Impressionism, one of the movements in art that has many followers and a wide response in the history of world art. The study is valuable for it familiarizes readers with emotional content of some 37 Armenian Impressionists who lived at the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century, their stylistic improvements and advancement, as well as their unique approaches to color variety. The book also gives a detailed and comprehensive description of the development of Impressionist movement, as well as leading movements in aesthetics and fine arts their interaction. For the first time, the 414-page book describes in detail the works of Armenian Impressionists. Near each artist's name one can find excerpts from his written heritage and opinions of famous people. "Despite the availability of digital information and sources, the album stays and never loses its demand and significance at all times," said Karen Aghamyan, president of the Artist's Union of Armenia. He added that similar initiatives are a real holiday for art lovers.

Eduard Sharmazanov, vice-speaker of the Armenian National Assembly, also expressed his opinion about the trilingual study that contains enormous historical and documentary material. He says the work is of cultural value. "Armenian people have reached the 21st century, preserving their cultural and spiritual val-



Ruben Mirzakhanyan addresses the attendees in Yerevan.

ues. *Impressionism: Armenian Painters* is a treasure not only in the Armenian fine arts, but also in the history of world culture," Sharmazanov said.

Speaking about Impressionism and its manifestations in Armenian culture, the speakers also valued the publication as an important source for future cultural studies. "Never before have Armenian Impressionists, their famous and sometimes not-so-famous works been presented so thoroughly," said Ararat Aghasyan, director of the Institute of Arts of the National Academy of Sciences.

He added that the book laid reliable and solid foundations for further large-scale studies.

Prof. Paravon Mitrzoyan, head of the ASPU Fine Arts Department, added in turn that we would not have the current edition but for the first and second republics of Armenia, because the school which laid the foundations of Impressionism was created during that historic period.

Based on his own experience, the professor said when sitting in the studio lost in the book, one wants to look through it again and again.

David Muradyan, rector of the Yerevan State Institute of Theater and Cinema, in his speech introduced Impressionism as an art movement as "an art in freedom, outburst of art, change in outlook, a culture that does not follow the time, but keeps up with the times."

He also noted that in the book Mirzakhanyan presented Armenian painters in a new light, through the prism of new perception.

Mirzakhanyan spoke about the objective and motives of the book. He says the book presents, in particular, prominent Impressionists, people who have their rightful place in the history of world art and who are united in one thing – their Armenian origin.

Mirzakhanyan thanked St. Petersburg-based Armenian philanthropist Hrachya Poghosyan, editors Ara Hakobyan, Artashes Martirosyan, translator Tigran Mikaelyan and Vrej Markosyan, director of the Tigran Mets publishing house.

## New Issue of *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* Released

FRESNO – The Society for Armenian Studies announces the release of Volume 24 of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS), edited by Dr. Sergio La Porta. JSAS Volume 24 includes five articles, four communications, an addendum, a review essay, and three book reviews. The articles in this issue address topics in art history, the Armenian Genocide, Armenian identity and contemporary church history.

The volume begins with an essay by Cristelle Baskins that analyzes the representation of the Armenian merchant Khoja Sefer in the Quirinal Palace in Rome. Based upon a wide array of archival documents, Baskins provides a vivid depiction of Khoja Sefer's travels to Italy as well as of the variety of identities he could embody.

In his article, Dickran Kouymjian investigates the book illuminations of the somewhat overlooked book artist, Grigor Marzvanec'i. Working in the first half of the eighteenth century, Grigor produced a number of large illuminated works that continued to be used and copied after the artist's death.

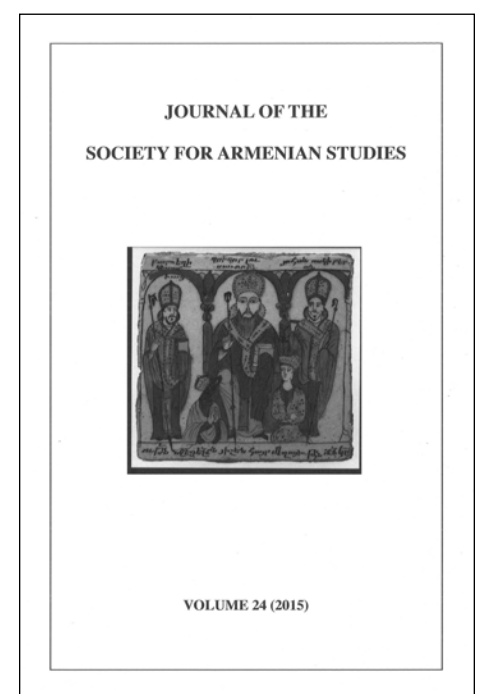
Khatchig Mouradian's examination of the Meskeneh concentration camp presents the camp as a case study of how prisoners collaborated with, appeased, manipulated or resisted the system in order to survive. In doing so, Mouradian explores the dynamics of camp life and restores agency to the deportees who inhabited them.

In his essay, Daniel Fittante examines the theoretical debate surrounding the question of Armenian identity and argues that theorists of Armenian identity have borrowed the terminology of nationalists who often use rigid models of national identity to describe a dynamic and fluctuating phenomenon.

In the first part of his two-part study of the last three catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Levon Petrosyan examines the policies of Vazgen I and Karekin I and how these two catholicos faced the challenges of the end of Soviet rule and of the early years of the Republic of Armenia.

In addition to these articles, vol. 24 contains four communications on a wide range of topics. The first, by Albert Stepanyan, is a reexamination of the famous passage in Plutarch's *Life of*

*Crassus* that describes the defeat of the Roman general at Carrhae. The second by Smbat Hovannisyan is a reflection on how Braudel's theory of civilizations can be applied to



Armenian early modern history. In his communication, Stefan Ihrig emphasizes the utility of German sources as evidence for the perpetration of the Armenian Genocide. In their study, Russell Kashian and David Luhrssen use the Armenian settlement in South Milwaukee as a case study to examine patterns of ethnic clustering and dispersion.

Vol. 24 also contains a review essay by D. Kouymjian on the recently published catalogue of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Detroit and three books reviews.

The *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* is a peer-reviewed journal and is published annually by the SAS. Copies of the latest volume, and back issues, are available by contacting the SAS Secretariat by email at [barlowd@csufresno.edu](mailto:barlowd@csufresno.edu). Copies may also be ordered online at [societyforarmenianstudies.com](http://societyforarmenianstudies.com).



Some of the Pokémon guests at the Armenian Museum of America

## Pokémon Creatures Take over Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Museum of America is taking advantage of its new status as a "Pokéstop" to invite Pokémon Go players through its doors.

Every Thursday, starting on July 21, ALMA is hosting #Luresday Thursday by attracting Pokémon and visitors to the Museum. By dropping a lure in the game on the museum, Pokémon will be easily found outside and inside the galleries.

Pokémon Trainers will be welcomed inside with a discounted admission rate, as well as the opportunity to complete a Poké-themed scavenger hunt through the Museum.

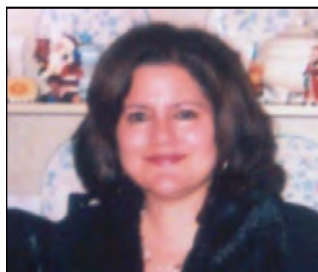
This Thursday, the first 10 players to complete the hunt will earn an Armenian Museum Pokébadge, and the first person to find the four rarest Pokémon hidden throughout the museum will earn a special prize.

The hunt will be changed every week, and the Museum is excited to help Trainers "Catch 'Em All" at ALMA on Thursdays.

For any questions about the Scavenger Hunt, or the Museum's role in Pokémon Go, contact the Museum Program Manager, Anna Kaczmarek.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Onion, Bulgur and Tomato Summer Salad (or Appetizer)

### INGREDIENTS

1 large yellow or red onion, finely diced or chopped  
 1 medium red bell pepper, seeded, diced  
 1 medium green bell pepper, seeded, diced  
 2 stalks celery (and tops), diced  
 2-3 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
 1/2 cup olive oil  
 1 (8 oz.) can low sodium tomato sauce  
 1 cup water  
 1 cup fine bulgur  
 1 medium tomato, seeded and chopped  
 Juice of 2 or 3 fresh lemons  
 Chopped fresh mint, green onions, parsley, radishes, and black olives as garnish  
 Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, paprika, cayenne pepper, or Aleppo pepper

### PREPARATION

In a large pan, sauté the onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic in the olive oil. Add the tomato sauce, water, and choice of salt, pepper, paprika, cayenne pepper or Aleppo pepper, and bring to a boil, tossing all ingredients, for 5-8 minutes.

Remove pan from heat. Fold in the bulgur and the tomato, and let all ingredients absorb the liquid for 10 minutes; add lemon juice and extra olive oil, if desired, and toss a few times.

Serve salad warm or cold mounded on a large platter, and garnish with chopped mint, green onions, parsley, radishes, and black olives. Serve with Armenian peda bread, garlic bread, or cracker bread, and with large Romaine lettuce leaves to 'scoop up' the salad.

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

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

## Hymns and Ceremonies Keys To Revive Ties Between Church And People, Pidedjian Says

HYMNS, from page 13

Brussov said, and far more advanced than the European poetry of the 13th and 14th centuries.

"These treasures are ours and can be kept only by Armenians," Pidedjian said. "We must approach them with understanding. If we don't take care of them, and maintain them, who will?"

Pidedjian was born in 1935 in Alexandria, Egypt. Throughout his education at the Boghosian National School, the Armenian Theological Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon, and the Beirut National Conservatory, he was dedicated to learning and mastering the many dimensions of religious music.

Coming to New York in 1962, he formed the Kousan Chorus, which became the foundation of the Armenian Cultural Association, now Hamazkayin. Two years later, with Nevart Hamparian, he organized the first Armenian song and dance ensemble with 120 members which performed at the World's Fair that year, garnering him a Certificate of Commendation by Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Throughout the 1960s, Pidedjian furthered his music education, graduating with a bachelor's in choral conducting from the Mannes College of Music where he was assistant conductor of the school's choir, a master's degree from Hunter College. He taught music in the New York City public school system for several years.

In 1970, he established the professional choir at New York's St. Vartan Cathedral, conducting it for 11 years. His arrangements and compositions of religious, patriotic and folk music have been heard by concert audiences in Armenia, Argentina, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and throughout the US.

Pidedjian is the author of four books in Armenian, and the recipient of numerous

awards, plaques and a gold-plated baton. His honors include the encyclical and St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal by Catholicos Karekin II in 2007, a gold medal in 2008 by the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, and membership in the Society of Composers and Musicologists in Yerevan that same year.

In October 2010, his 75th birthday and 50th anniversary of his musical contributions were celebrated in grand style by Yerevan's Komitas State Conservatory. He received the Conservatory's Honorary Professor Diploma, capping a long life dedicated to his musical heritage.

Among the close to 100 in attendance were the Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Vicar General Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Zohrab Center Executive Director Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, St. Vartan Cathedral Dean Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, and musicians, pianist Sahar Arzruni and choral director Rubik Mailian, who introduced the speaker.

## Pianist and Composer Karén Hakobyan Becomes Armenia Fund USA's New Cultural Program Advisor

HAKOBYAN, from page 13

Armenia, which has such a rich cultural and musical tradition, was the perfect environment for a young aspiring musician. I was fortunate to study with some of the brightest minds in Armenia such as composers Edvard Mirzoyan and David Sakoyan among others. In 2001, I graduated from Tchaikovsky School, which had an enormous impact on my early development, and briefly attended the Komitas Conservatory before moving to the United States in 2002 at age of 16. I had always followed Armenia Fund's caring involvement in the community but it wasn't until about a year ago when I established a personal connection by meeting with Lisa Stepanian to discuss the Tchaikovsky Music School Reconstruction project. Being an Alumnus of Tchaikovsky, I knew exactly how much it was in a need of a major reconstruction and could fully appreciate the impact such a project would have on the development of the future generations of students," he explained.

He added, "Going through the challenges of becoming a professional taught me humility and hardworking ethics, but most importantly the appreciation for opportunities in education and professional growth. Armenia Fund does exactly that, by building sustainable infrastructure and investing in cultural and humanitarian programs. I am honored to be selected as the Cultural Program Advisor of Armenia Fund USA, Eastern Region and will work tirelessly towards contributing to Armenia Fund's mission and helping to implement impactful cultural projects."

## Smithsonian Guest Scholar from Armenia Dr. Marutyun Speaks with Armenian Assembly Interns

WASHINGTON – On July 11, Dr. Harutyun Marutyun visited the Armenian National Institute (ANI) and spoke with the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) interns as well as ANI Director Dr. Rouben Adalian. Marutyun was invited to Washington as a guest of the Smithsonian Institution to participate in their Folklife Festival, which is held annually on the National Mall.

Marutyun spoke to the interns about the transformation of Armenian national identity, the survivors' memory of the Armenian Genocide, modern national movements, iconography, and traditional Armenian culture. He emphasized the importance of a new ideology regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Most importantly, he focused on the attitude of the younger generations and the message for the future. He is the author of three monographs and more than a hundred scholarly articles, as well as his book entitled *Iconography of Armenian Identity: The Memory of Genocide and the Karabagh Movement*, published in 2009. He is also the recipient of the President of the Republic of Armenia Prize for his valuable contribution to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

"As a former intern with the Armenian National Institute, it was refreshing to hear about Dr. Marutyun's progressive approach towards international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. After coming

across many of his articles, it was truly an honor to meet the author himself," Assembly Intern Coordinator Mariam Khaloyan said.

Marutyun is a leading research fellow at the Department of Contemporary Anthropological Studies at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, a visiting professor of Anthropology at Yerevan State University, and was previously a Diane and Howard Wohl Fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). For his Diane and Howard Wohl Fellowship, Marutyun conducted research for his project "Memory Based on Politics: Comparative Study of Jewish and Armenian Experience." He is also an IREX/RSEP (Michigan University, 1998), Fulbright (MIT, 2003-2004) and DAAD (Berlin, 2013) alumnus.



Dr. Harutyun Marutyun and Armenian National Institute Director Dr. Rouben Adalian.



Dr. Harutyun Marutyun speaking with the Armenian Assembly of America interns.

## Taleen Keldjian's Fútbol! Scores a Goal with Kids

KELDJIAN, from page 13

and/or drawing your favorite things and create stories out of it. Practice by writing several drafts and draw layers of sketches. You will get better and one day as a career, creating your own book will become possible. Let your imagination wander and most importantly, just have fun!"

Keldjian is a Los Angeles-based artist and illustrator. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with Honors in illustration from Art Center College of Design, with awards from the Society of Illustrators in New York and Creative Quarterly 37. She has illustrated for *Good Magazine*, *Nautilus Magazine* and *Caltech Connect*. She gravitates towards playful, poetic and kid-friendly illustration subjects, painting in gouache and acrylic ink. *Fútbol!* is her doodle book debut and can be found on amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/gp/offer-listing/099743970X>.

# Kharpert Cultural Association Raises Funds for 'Daybreak'

PASADENA, Calif. — On June 26, a kickoff fundraising event for the Los Angeles production of a new play about the Armenian-American experience was held at the Pasadena home of Margaret and David Mgrublian. The elegant evening was sponsored by the Kharpert Cultural Association of America, Inc., under the leadership of the board, Dr. Garbis Der-Yeghiayan, Hasmig Agemian, Sato Karajerjian, Tamar Krekorian, Eve Mekerdichian, and board member emeritus, Mary Najarian.

Written by playwright Joyce Van Dyke, the play had a sold-out production in Boston under its earlier title, "Deported/ A Dream Play," and was honored by the Massachusetts State Legislature for its commemoration of the genocide. The play was subsequently produced at Tufts University, and had staged readings in New York, London, and Yerevan. In 2015 the Armenian Ministry of Culture funded its translation into Armenian.

"Daybreak" is inspired by the true stories of the playwright's grandmother and her best friend, the mother of Dr. H. Martin Deranian. The two women were deported together from Mezireh in 1915. Dr. Deranian is the well-known author of *The Armenian Orphan Rug* and *Hussenig*, among other books, and he collaborated with the author in

developing the play.

"Daybreak" is slated for a fall 2017 production in Los Angeles, produced by Gary Guidinger and Linda Toliver, and directed by Jules Aaron. "This play is what we look for in the theater. It is compelling, adventurous and extremely relevant. It can open doors to a dis-



Joyce Van Dyke



Guests at the event

ressed world," Van Dyke said.

Van Dyke and the play's producers were special guest speakers at the dinner party which was also attended by members of the play's production advisory board, including host Margaret Mgrublian, Helen Haig and Diana Hekimian; two other board members who were unable to attend were Maggie Goschin and Joan Agajanian Quinn.

"When our grandparents found their voice and told their story, little did they know that we would be here today talking about the future of

Joyce's play — or how relevant it would be to today's issues," Haig said.

According to Diana Hekimian, the party gave a boost to the fundraising goal. "Now that people know about this exciting project, we're hopeful that it will generate more interest and, in turn, more donations to bring it to fruition." The next step will be to reserve a Los Angeles venue for fall 2017.

For more information about "Daybreak", or to make a contribution, visit [joycevandyke.com/daybreak-in-la](http://joycevandyke.com/daybreak-in-la).



From left, Martin Eskijian, Dr. Gregory Ketabgian, Effie Eskijian, Alice and Greg Garakian and Deran Tashjian



From left, Eve Mekerdichian, Salpy Akaragian, Margaret Lulejian, Mary Zoryan, Mary Najarian and Hasmig Agemian

## Mosaic of Armenian Heritage Collected in Book Educates and Celebrates

By Olya Yordanyan

BOSTON — Lena Maranian Adishian had been mulling over raising awareness about the Armenian history and culture for a couple of years, before she initiated the 100 Years, 100 Facts project that culminated in a book.

*Impact of an Ancient Nation: Bridging the Past, Present, and Future with 100+ facts about Armenia and Armenians* — a new book by Lena Adishian and Nareg Seferian — was published in June 2016. It is a collection of 105 short articles, written for the 100 Years, 100 Facts project, a non-profit online initiative aimed to educate Armenians about their culture and history.

The idea for 100 Years, 100 Facts fully

developed in Adishian's mind on the threshold of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. She knew that the centennial would trigger curiosity of foreigners, and they would turn to Armenians for answers. She kept wondering how "knowledgeable" Armenians were on various historical and cultural subjects to be "good representatives and ambassadors" of their communities.

"The idea was to develop something that was educational," Adishian said. "The other part was to really celebrate the vastness and depth of our heritage."

Former corporate employee Adishian, of Los Angeles, teamed up with her friend, Seferian, a Yerevan-based writer and researcher, in 2013 to make 100 Years, 100 Facts a reality. The first article was posted on April 24, 2014, and 99 stories about the Armenian Genocide, language, literature, cul-

ture, history, sports, religion and Diaspora followed each other throughout the year, until April 24, 2015.

"We've exchanged some 3,000 e-mails over the past three years," Seferian said describing their cooperation. "It's just been e-mails back and forth, writing, editing, re-writing, publishing..."

Each story offers a glimpse into a subject matter.

Topics were carefully selected, and, according to Seferian, they "had to get rid of some great ideas and consolidate some others."

*100 Years, 100 Facts* soon gained popularity and became available in five other languages - French, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish and Russian.

For the authors, however, only online presence and success was not "tangible" enough.

"We decided in the end that, yes, it would be something that we could put together as

a more lasting, more tangible item that, we hope, will make its way into living rooms and classrooms, having an impact in a different way than a website or a Facebook page," Seferian said.

"When you read something on a website you just look at it quickly, and you look at one fact at a time. When you are holding a book, leafing through the pages, it feels like the vastness and the depths of our culture, it feels the variety," Adishian said.

100 Years, 100 Facts also became a personal journey for Adishian, who studied the story of her family more profoundly.

"It gave me the encouragement to have my great-great-uncle's memoirs translated from French into English," Adishian said. "And I learned that he was at the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian, the first to kiss and hug him, when Tehlirian was acquitted."



# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JULY 31 — Sunday, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, Annual Church Picnic**, 12 pm to 5 p.m., Camp Haiastan, 722 Summer St., Franklin.

**AUGUST 4 — Armenians for Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian reception**, 7-9 p.m., Holiday Inn, Tewksbury, off Route 133. Fundraiser to re-elect candidate as sheriff of Middlesex County. Persons can donate securely on-line at: <https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/mvarmenian>.

**AUGUST 7 — Annual Church Picnic, Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church**, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford, 12:00p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Food, Music, Drinks. For more information go to [www.stsvartanantz.com](http://www.stsvartanantz.com)

**AUGUST 28 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic** to be held at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill MA (take Rte. 495 to Exit 51 B onto Rte. 125 N), 12 noon to 5 pm. Music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyra, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash Prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs. For more info visit [www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227

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

**SEPTEMBER 11 — Trinity Family Festival**, 12-5 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food with take-out available; Armenian music for your listening and dancing pleasure; fun activities for children. Blessing of the Madagh, raffle drawing and more. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the church office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**SEPTEMBER 11 — Picnic Festival sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian Church of Merrimack Valley**, noon-5:30 p.m., 158 Main St., North Andover; music by Leon Janikian, John Berberian, Jason Naroian and John Arzigian; celebrating Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; shish, losh, chicken kebab, vegetarian dinners, take outs; family games and activities. For further information, visit [www.saintgregory.org](http://www.saintgregory.org) or by call (978) 685-5038.

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

**SEPTEMBER 23 — St. James Hye Café**, Friday, Join us for delicious food and fellowship! 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.



**The group Armenians for Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian will host a fundraising reception on Thursday, August 4, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Holiday Inn in Tewksbury, Mass. Koutoujian, the current sheriff of Middlesex County, is seeking reelection in a tough race. Those interested in making a donation can send it to <https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/mvarmenian>**

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

**OCTOBER 1 — 35th anniversary of Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston.** Celebration at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACED), 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Details to follow.

**OCTOBER 14-15 — St. James 69th Annual Bazaar** - Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children's Activities, and more. 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 15 — Banquet to mark the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church of Lowell-Chelmsford,**

**Massachusetts** with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presiding. Kazanjian Memorial Ballroom, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Details to follow.

**OCTOBER 22 — Armenian Friends of America presents Hye Kef 5**, a 5-hour dance, 7 p.m. to midnight with buffet; Andover Windham, 123 Old River Road, featuring musicians Onnik and Ara Dinkjian, Johnny Berberian, Mal Barsamian, Jason Naroian and Paul Mooradian, with proceeds benefiting area churches. Advance tickets before Sept. 1 @ \$55, call either John Arzigian, (603) 560-3826; Sharke Der Apkarian, (978) 808-0598; Lucy Sirmaian, (978) 683-9121, or Peter Gulezian, (978) 375-1616.

**OCTOBER 23 — Save the Date. YerazArt** will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Concert followed by reception, Cambridge.

**OCTOBER 23 — Opening reception marking joint photograph exhibit titled: "East Meets West,"** compiled by Tom Vartabedian and Sona (Dulgarian) Gevorgian, featuring eclectic pictures of Armenia and Artsakh, 2-5 p.m., at Armenian Museum of America (AMA), 65 Main St., Watertown, co-sponsored by Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives. Exhibit will be displayed during the entire months of October and November.

**NOVEMBER 3 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., "Justice & Equality: My Life as an Activist."** Speaker: Harry Belafonte, Activist & Entertainer. Reception follows at Bostonian Hotel. All are invited; free and open to the public. Further information: [ArmenianHeritagePark.org](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

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

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

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

**DECEMBER 2 and DECEMBER 3 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar**, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

## Versatile Armenian Artist: Celebrating Life with a Brush

By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM — Since early childhood, Sarkis Antikajian had nurtured one paramount dream: to paint, to be an artist, to give expression to the creative urges in him by metamorphosing them into landscapes, portraits, still lifes.

But the fact that he was growing up in a part of the world where art took last place to the struggle for survival, did not prove easily conducive to the realization of that dream. So he had to bide his time and be satisfied with continuing to study, hope and plan.

He was born in the Jordanian capital of Amman, but spent part of the formative years of his childhood across the (Jordan) river, in Jerusalem.

Walking along the cobblestoned alleys of the Armenian Quarter of the Old City, Antikajian absorbed the unique ambience of the holy precinct, his keen eyes taking detailed note of the rarefied palette of the gold and copper of the ancient walls, the virginal blue of the skies, the red sunsets over the domes, minarets and towers.

It was a heady education, an experience he would later translate into his prolific output as

he experimented with the immense variety of artistic expression, a lifelong delight and accomplishment that resulted in a formidable portfolio of paintings, and a book, evidence of an artist who is "extraordinary gifted and versatile, equally facile in several genres from impressionism, expressionism to nonobjective or abstract art," in the words of Shannon Ray, director of the Lawrence Gallery in Oregon where Antikajian now lives.

It was no easy task to gain acceptance, as is usually the way of life with art: but assiduous work and self-motivation, backed by timely opportunity, provided by the workshops with leading contemporary artists that he attended, helped propel him into the mainstream.

"After years of uncertainty, at this part of my journey, I am pleased to call myself a painter - and sometimes, with a smile, an artist," he says.

After graduating, Antikajian worked as a pharmacist for more than 30 years, and raised a family.

"I cannot recall a day during those years that I did not attempt to find ways on my own to learn the craft of drawing and painting," he said. "Throughout this process of learning I stressed the need to draw, not so much to render accurately, but to lean towards the gestural

quality that I desire. This was accomplished through my persistent drawing of the outdoor landscape, still life setups, or years of weekly drawing from live models."

Looking at his paintings, one is inescapably drawn to a comparison with Van Gogh. There is the same symphony of color, the same, call it "abandon", of ritualism.

Examine his nudes. There is no trace of lasciviousness in the contours of their limbs, rather a mysterious essence that is as old as humanity.

Antikajian believes in giving the viewer a mere suggestion of what is, or can be, in tender watercolor strokes, the way the child puts out its hand and touches its mother's cheek — can the viewer's response be anything but the feeling of a mother for her child?

Some of his pencil sketches are also reminiscent of Norman Rockwell. In his "Girl in Green" he has dwelt a little longer on the face of his model as if coaxing the child concealed within the folds of the canvas to come forth, and manifest itself.

In "Girl with Puppy," all Sarkis has to do is angle one of the girls' posture slightly, to convey the depth and nature of affection for the animal.

Sarkis showcases some of his work in a website,

<http://www.sarkisantikajian.com>, and has encapsulated an impressive gallery in a book, "Paintings, Drawings and Images in Words," (available from Amazon), a celebratory exposition where he frames his pictures with flights of poetry that reinforce his love of nature.

He remembers one particular outing that says it all:

"It must have been sometime  
"in March, on a Saturday afternoon,  
"the crocus had broken the soft fertile soil  
"to usher a new beginning."

But it is Jerusalem where the heart returns, and he pays tribute to it with bold, eloquent strokes of a brush that has succeeded, with a minimum of line, color and shade, in absorbing the mystique of that remarkable city and conveying it onto the canvas: see how economically he has depicted the stones of Jerusalem, letting his brush caress its walls, streets and gates with soft fascination: Antikajian does not want to influence or instruct you, but rather to invite you to discover and experience Jerusalem for yourself, by offering you a portal into its heart.

And what joy will you find in that journey and the exploration.



## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

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**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator  
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA  
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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## COMMENTARY

## A World in Turmoil

### From Nice to Yerevan, a Bloody Summer

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As if the police shootings in Dallas and Baton Rouge did not shock us enough, even more grotesque atrocities followed in Nice, France, and Turkey, with shockwaves arriving from Armenia to further numb our sense of outrage.

#### Dallas and Baton Rouge Mourning

There is almost no relation or causality among the violence we witnessed around the world recently, except that in all the cases, human life has become so disposable that it is wasted, often without even the benefit of an excuse.

A series of police killings apparently triggered the July 5 killing of a black man, Alton B. Sterling, which was caught on video, thus not giving another chance to police to hide behind the claim of self-defense. However, with the abundance of guns in the hands of citizens, police have the right to worry about their own safety. Violence may erupt when the police stop a person for any reason. The freedom guaranteed under the Second Amendment and its abuse by the gun lobby does not auger well for our society.

Micah Johnson, the killer of five officers on July 7 in downtown Dallas, and Gavin Long, who assassinated three officers in Baton Rouge, have something in common: they both have military backgrounds and they both have witnessed battleground violence and have returned to civilian life as broken individuals, like so many other veterans. It is revealing that Long said about himself: "I wonder if this city loves me. In uniform, I got nasty, hateful looks, and out of uniform, some consider me a threat."

It is no wonder that especially among Iraq War veterans, the suicide rate is alarming; 4,500 youth in uniform were killed during the war and an equal number have become victims of suicide. The carnage is continuing. These numbers do not include, of course, some 50,000 wounded or maimed.

When veterans return home, many cannot shake off the horrors they have seen or have had to live with. Therefore, some have suicidal urges and not surprisingly, some many also wanted to take the lives of innocent people with them. The blood of these victims is on the hands of the leaders who launched these wars based on manufactured lies. British Premier Tony Blair's belated apology, after he got a verbal thrashing by a British investigative commission recently, cannot bring back those victims nor heal the wounds of those handicapped permanently with physical or psychic wounds. The Bush-Cheney tandem has yet to apologize for their blunder. At least, they have demonstrated the decency of no longer claiming that "the world is safer without Saddam Hussein," after Donald Trump told the ugly truth to their faces.

#### France, Again

France suffered its third and worst mass shooting in 18 months, on July 14, Bastille Day. A 31-year-old Tunisian immigrant, Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, plowed his 19-ton truck through a crowd gathered on Nice's Promenade des Anglais to watch festive fireworks, killing 84 people and wounding many more. The investigation proved that he was a radicalized admirer of the Islamic State, filled with antipathy toward his adopted nation.

France's vulnerability to such frequent attacks has weakened its government and almost doomed Francois Hollande's presidency, the poll ratings of which have dropped to a rock bottom 11 percent. Of course, terrorism is not the only factor for the country's problems, which have been compounded by a drop in economic stability and labor unrest.

These murderous rampages in France have sent shockwaves throughout Europe, triggering a right-wing whiplash and anti-immigration and anti-Islam sentiments.

The security situation in France has emboldened the ultra-right National Front party of Marine Le Pen, who once appealed only to a marginal portion of the country's voters. Terrorism and immigration issues now have catapulted her into the mainstream as a viable presidential candidate. An article in the *New York Times* by Alison Smale and Stephen Castle, said, "Shutting off immigration was one of the most powerful motives behind the [recent British] vote to leave the European Union."

Another politician in Holland, far right leader Geert Wilders, said on Twitter: "This is a war and it will not stop until we close our borders for Islam and de-Islamize our societies. No more terror. No more Islam."

Germany and Austria will soon be holding elections and the political pendulum is heading to the right there as well. In a related vein, Poland and Hungary have tightened their immigration regulations.

Different immigration policies applied by the 28 countries of the European Union have caused fractures within that union, rendering visa-free Schengen travel within the union more difficult.

As far as the immigrants themselves are concerned, they are

bringing with them a host of social and economic problems. On top of that, some express their desire to bring Sharia law to many parts of Europe and eventually Islamize Europe.

The Europeans, however, deserve what they have been experiencing now and for the foreseeable future. They brought on the problems upon themselves, first by destroying the countries from which those immigrants hail and then not developing a coherent and economically sustainable immigration policy. They have opened wide the floodgates. They have destroyed stable societies in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and, to a certain extent, Lebanon.

Because of wars, constant bloodshed, violence and economic collapse have rendered these countries practically uninhabitable: never mind that some "wise" people pontificate that those nations could not govern themselves.

#### Coup Who?

The attempted military coup in Turkey was the most improbable event that took place on July 15, shaking the Middle East and ironically consolidating President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's political support.

On that day Turkish land forces and members of the gendarmerie seized key positions in Ankara and Istanbul as well as the Turkish General Staff Headquarters. The coup plotters turned out to be mid-level officers led by Col. Muharrem Kose and Gen. Akin Ozturk. The three main opposition parties – Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the People's Democratic Party (HDP) – publicly denounced the coup.

The Turkish military has experience enough to carry out coups, since they launched well-organized takeovers in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997. But the most recent one failed, fueling suspicions that it was a false-flag operation to smoke out Erdogan's suspected enemies. By the time it was over, the attempted coup had resulted in more than 265 dead and 1,440 wounded.

It seemed that Erdogan's government was better prepared, since it was able to take sweeping measures within just a few hours, leading to the arrest of 2,839 military personnel. And 140 judges from the Court of Appeals and the Council of Judges, two of the highest legal institutions in the country, were taken into custody. Another 2,475 judges were also purged, giving credence to the speculations that those lists had been prepared far in advance.

At the beginning of the coup, Erdogan was vacationing in Marmaris. His hotel was bombed right after he left the premises. Also, rebel military planes were following the jet that took Erdogan safely to Istanbul, yet no attempt was made to shoot it down.

That Turkey knows how to stage a false-flag operation no one doubts. At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, news was leaked about Hakan Fidan, head of the Turkish secret service, who was planning such an operation to create an excuse to invade Syria. The tomb of Fatih Sultan Mohammed's father is located in Syria, guarded by the Turkish military. Fidan was to plant a bomb at the tomb in order to blame the Syrian government, much like how Turkish intelligence officers planted a bomb at Ataturk's birthplace in Salonika to stage the pogroms of 1955 against the Greeks and Armenians in Istanbul.

Some journalist even compared the coup with Hitler's burning of the Reichstag in 1933, which led to his ascension. Even recent bombings in Istanbul are suspected of being false-flag operation to deflect criticism that Turkish government has been in cahoots with ISIS.

Whatever the case, President Erdogan was able to get the masses into the streets and mosques, to protest against the revolt and to express support for him.

Journalist Cengiz Candar posted an article in *al-Monitor*, the title of which read, "Was Turkey's Coup Attempt an Elaborate Hoax by Erdogan?"

For Turkish leaders, human lives are dispensable; all Ottoman sultans except one have murdered their children. Ahmet Simsek, deputy prime minister, once announced that "the Armenian Genocide [deportation] was justified and we have to do it again if necessary." Therefore, 265 deaths are immaterial in staging a political game.

Erdogan has been a polarizing figure but he plays to the worst instincts of his Muslim majority to stay in power. There is genuine resentment against his authoritarian rule but it looks like the coup attempt, rather than having a moderating effect, will embolden him.

The *New York Times* editorial on July 18 states: "After the chaotic and bloody events of the weekend, Mr. Erdogan is becoming more vengeful and obsessed with control than ever, exploiting the crisis not to just punish mutinous soldiers, but to further squash whatever dissent is left in Turkey. 'They will pay a heavy price for this,' he said chillingly. 'This uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army.'"

see TURMOIL, page 19



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Turkish Coup D'état Still in Progress: Conflict Keeps Turkey In Turmoil

Most Armenians became ecstatic last Friday upon hearing that a military coup was in progress to topple Turkey's President Erdogan.

Even I was caught up in a momentary euphoria, until I recalled that while Erdogan is a fascist leader, the Turkish military is far worse. During the past four military coups d'état in Turkey – 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 – when generals shot their way to power, wholesale jailing, torture, and killings ensued. By no means is Erdogan a democratic leader, but his military opponents could be far more vicious. This is the reason why none of the opposition parties in Turkey, not even the oppressed Kurds, have supported the coup plotters, realizing their dreadful fate under a military regime.

Rather than rushing to welcome the attempted coup, Armenians should have hailed the Turkish leader's survival. One should consider that Erdogan is primarily an Islamist, whereas the military officers are rabid nationalists. Erdogan, of course, is no friend of Kurds, Armenians, Turkish human rights activists, journalists, and political rivals. Military rule,

on the other hand, would have been an absolute nightmare for everyone in and out of Turkey, particularly for Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) next door. One does not have to go all the way back to 1915 to remember the murderous acts of the Turkish army against 1.5 million innocent Armenian men, women and children. As recently as the 1974 Cyprus invasion, the Turkish military committed despicable war crimes against thousands of Greek civilians.

Erdogan's continued hold on power may be the greatest gift for all those who wish Turkey to remain the laughing stock of the world. His extremist views on social, political and religious issues appeal only to his radical followers, but antagonize all people of compassion and common sense.

When the initial news of Erdogan's downfall turned out to be false, those celebrating his presumed departure turned to rumor-mongering, insisting that the Turkish President had staged the coup himself to get rid of his opponents. To believe such a far-fetched notion, one has to ignore that the coup was staged by a considerably weakened group of senior officers after Erdogan had spent the better part of a decade purging the military. It is a miracle that after being threatened, prosecuted, jailed or forced into early retirement, there are still putschists left in the Turkish military. Experienced commanders were replaced by amateurs whose only skill was total submission to Sultan Erdogan's every wish and whim.

Furthermore, the coup d'état was poorly organized, allowing Erdogan to avoid arrest after getting wind of the plot, and going on TV to incite his fanatical followers to confront the tanks in the streets.

The American mass media, as usual, misled the public by repeatedly calling Erdogan a "democratically elected leader" who supposedly has a "massive public following" and is an "important US ally in fighting ISIS." All of these statements are untrue. The Turkish President is a fascist; his followers,

albeit more vocal, are barely half of the voting public; and his regime has been an enabler of ISIS terrorists.

What will happen next? Erdogan will now exploit this golden opportunity to tighten his grip on power by becoming even more vengeful and autocratic than before, and smashing with an iron fist anyone who dares to disagree with him.

The Turkish leader is now aggressively eliminating all suspected opponents by arresting thousands of military officers, including 102 Generals, dismissing over 10,000 security officials and 3,000 members of the judiciary who had nothing to do with the attempted coup. They will certainly be replaced by Erdogan's obedient servants to ensure that his political rivals would receive the harshest court verdicts, most probably the death penalty, which would preclude Turkey from ever joining the European Union.

Erdogan's only out of his reach adversary is Islamic Cleric Fethullah Gulen, an erstwhile ally, who has been living in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania. The Turkish President is falsely accusing the Muslim cleric of orchestrating last week's attempted coup to eliminate his major opponent. It remains to be seen if Erdogan will succeed in bullying Pres. Obama to extradite Gulen to Turkey.

Contrary to the Turkish government deceptive reports, the coup has not been fully crushed. As of the printing deadline of this column, four days after the start of the insurrection, Erdogan is still cooped up in Istanbul, unable to return to his colossal empty Palace in Ankara.

All those fed up with Turkey's meddling in the neighboring countries' affairs would certainly prefer prolonged internecine clashes between the coup plotters and the regime's autocratic leadership. This would keep Turkey preoccupied with its own domestic troubles, diminishing its ability to threaten the security of Armenia, Artsakh, Cyprus, Greece, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

## From Nice to Yerevan, a Bloody Summer

TURMOIL, from page 16

Erdogan is contemplating the return of the death penalty, EU objections notwithstanding, but his mobs have already slit the throats of mutinous soldiers in the streets, IS style.

### Erebuni Standoff

Among the countries shaken recently by violence is Armenia, which can ill afford any shake up and yet it is caught in the grip of political turmoil.

The situation there is desperate; economic disparity continues, the application and enforcement of laws are selective, no remedy has been found to curb the emigration depopulating the country and by all standards, Armenia remains one of the most corrupt countries in the region. The leadership is either insensitive to the plight of its citizens or it is plainly inept. On top of all those problems, the four-day Karabagh war in April disillusioned the people. All in all, a very combustible situation where anything can happen has been created. It is perfectly understandable that some people or groups may resort to take desperate measures.

It is under those conditions that a group calling itself Sasna Dzerer has occupied a police compound in the Erebuni district of Yerevan, taking as hostages some officers and demanding the release of Jirair Sefilian, who was arrested on June 20 on charges of possession of arms and planning to mount an insurrection and finally the resignation of the president. Already one officer, Arthur Vanoyan, has been killed and there are three others who have been wounded.

The appeal by this group for a general uprising has not met any results yet. This could mean two things: either the people have lost their political will or they feel instinctively that any disruption in a volatile situation may bring a greater catastrophe to Armenia.

The government is in an untenable position, since the rumors about the territorial concessions in Karabagh as a result of Russian pressure. The government is accused of being weak at the negotiation table. But any internal disturbance may further deteriorate the government's position and bring about the dreaded surrender in Karabagh.

The people who have resorted to violence believe that freedom fighters can also become effective leaders. Indeed, Jirair Sefilian has been one of the commanders who saved Shushi from the Azeris and ever since, he has become a rabble-rouser and political activist.

As the standoff continues, there is a heated debate in the media and among the public. Most organized media are financed by foreign sources and they certainly have to serve their masters' interests, which may not benefit Armenia. They have been inciting people under the guise of giving voice to ordinary people.

Change must come to Armenia. But change through violence may destroy the entire country.

One member of parliament, Heghine Bisharian, who advocates for change, has come up with an appeal that no matter how difficult, change has to come through the democratic process.

This hostage standoff continues as of this writing; may God save Armenia and bring peace there and elsewhere gripped by war.

## The Export Other Countries Would Rather Do Without: The Russian Mafia

By Armine Sahakyan

**R**USSIAN OFFICIALS began talking about diversifying the economy years before the price of oil began tanking in 2014.

But there's one commodity that Moscow has done a great job of exporting to the rest of the world since the early 1990s.

The trouble is, the rest of the world doesn't want it – because it's the Russian mafia.

I began reading stories about organized-crime syndicates from the former Soviet Union taking root in other countries in the mid-1990s.

Now the syndicates' presence overseas is so pervasive – particularly in rich nations like the United States and Europe – that not a month goes by when you don't read a story about the havoc that gangs from the former Soviet Union are wreaking.

Although the Russian mafia is the biggest overseas crime network from the former Soviet Union, gangs from a number of other countries – including Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia – have an overseas presence as well. So I'll refer to the crime syndicates from places in the region besides Russia as CIS mafia – CIS for Commonwealth of Independent States.

Those who study overseas mafia say two key differences between CIS gangs and, say, Sicilian gangs is that many CIS gangs get their marching orders from crime bosses back home and – critically important – governments in their homelands protect the gangs.

Western investigative journalists have written many stories about Russian politicians and government officials being on mafia payrolls – and reciprocating by protecting the mobsters.

That's why Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian intelligence officer whom the Russians poisoned with radioactive polonium 210 in London in 2006, coined the term "mafia state" to describe Russia.

One of the most outrageous signs of Moscow's protection of mafia is its refusal to extradite Russians to countries where they are wanted for organized-crime activity.

Spanish prosecutors made international headlines a year ago by issuing arrest warrants for 12 Russian officials they contend have helped the Russian mafia in Spain pull off their crimes. All 12 were close to Russian

President Vladimir Putin, Western journalists noted.

At the top of the list were Vladislav Reznik, a member of parliament from Putin's United Russia Party; Nikolai Aulov, the deputy director of Russia's federal narcotics service; and Igor Sobolevsky, former deputy head of the Investigative Committee, Russia's FBI.

Spain spent a decade looking into the way the Russian mafia bought Spanish property to launder money made illegally in Russia. It recently filed money-laundering charges against a half dozen Russia mobsters living in Spain, with expectations there will be more arrests.

Spain issued its arrest warrants for the 12 officials close to Putin on grounds that they helped crime bosses in Russia make the illegal money that was laundered in Spain.

Russian authorities reacted by calling the charges in the Spanish warrants preposterous – the typical Russian reaction when other countries accuse Russian big shots of crimes. And, of course, Moscow refused to extradite the officials to Spain.

If it was just Spain, the story of the Russian mafia could be dismissed as a one-off. But it isn't just Spain.

Russian crime syndicates have become so entrenched in the United States – particularly in the New York area and south Florida – that the popular American cop drama "Blue Bloods" often features plots about police dueling with Russian baddies.

Germany is so concerned about what it sees as the growing threat of the CIS mafia on its soil that the head of its equivalent of the FBI took the unusual step of discussing the matter publicly this month.

Holger Munch noted that "Russian-Eurasian" organized crime has been expanding both in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

One Russian mafia group alone has up to 40,000 members in Germany, he said, and CIS mobsters account for 8 to 10 percent of Germany's over-all prison population.

The Armenian mafia's grip on the United States has surfaced in shocking fashion with a series of mass arrests over the past five years.

In February of 2011 federal and state authorities arrested 70 members of the Armenian Power crime syndicate on charges that included kidnapping, extortion, bank fraud, aggravated identity theft, credit card fraud, marijuana distribution, conducting illegal gambling operations, and conspiracy.

Most of the arrests were in Los Angeles, which has the world's second-largest Armenian diaspora, although some occurred in other cities.

The majority of the suspects were Armenians, not Armenian-Americans, law-enforcement officials noted.

Unfortunately, the kingpins of the Armenian mafia are in the homeland, not the United States, authorities said in announcing the arrests.

Assistant U.S. Attorney General Lanny Breuer summed up the difficulty of exterminating the Armenian mafia on American soil by saying that its tentacles go beyond "international borders, reaching all the see MAFIA, page 20



# Two Citizens of Armenia Die in Devastating Nice Attack

NICE, from page 1

Scores of people were killed Thursday night when a large truck plowed through a Bastille Day crowd in Nice, France, in what President Francois Hollande called a terror attack.

The French Interior Ministry reported about 84 people being dead and 18 in critical condition. The driver opened fire on people in the crowd. Police fired back and the driver was eventually shot dead. The perpetrator of the attack was Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, a 31-year-old French Tunisian.

The Armenian woman killed in the Nice attack saved her baby by covering the carriage with her body, witness Susan Mkhitarian said.

Members of the Armenian community came together at St. Philip Church in Nice this week, where the Primate of the Armenian Church of France and of Europe, Bishop Vahan Hovhannisyian celebrated a Holy Mass in memory of victims of the attack in Nice, *Nouvelles d'Armenie* reports.

He was accompanied by Fr. Krikor Khachatryan.

The faithful then went to the Promenade des Anglais to pray. "We came to honor the victims and show our solidarity, our compassion and share the pain of Nice. To pray is an act of faith but also of resistance, because there must be hope in life," Hovhannisyian said.



Bishop Vahan Hovhannisyian and others mourn the deaths of 84 people in Nice, France.

## Help us to relocate Syrian Armenian families to Armenia from the conflict zone. Donate Now — Save a Life

"Save a Life" is humanitarian campaign, aimed at providing support to Syrian Armenian refugees, who escaped the war in Aleppo and moved to Lebanon, to obtain one-way ticket to travel to Armenia. Since the launch of the "Save a Life" campaign, the Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable Organization (ACCO) has successfully relocated more than 221 Syrian refugees from Lebanon to Yerevan.



Currently, there are more than 550 requests registered at Aleppo CCO. People are in despair and are seeking ways to flee for a safer life in Armenia.

The cost of saving one Armenian life is \$500, which includes:

- Ground transportation from Aleppo to Beirut;
- Exit visa to leave Syria and enter Lebanon;
- Transportation from the Lebanese border to Beirut International Airport;
- Flight from Beirut to Yerevan;

ACCO calls on the Armenian community and to join its life-saving mission by donating to the "Save a Life" initiative to help remove Syrian-Armenians to safety in the motherland.

Detailed information on people and families relocated to Armenia will be provided to each contributor and sponsor. Aleppo CCO is ready to answer to all the questions regarding the campaign.

### Donations by wire transfers:

Beneficiary's Bank: Converse Bank CJSC  
SWIFT: COVBAM22

Beneficiary: Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable NGO  
Beneficiary's account No: 1930048910350101

### Donations by mail:

Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable NGO  
PO Box 155  
Belford, NJ 07718

For inquiries please call Ani Bakhian  
(+374) 77-260-715

## St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Holds Graduation Ceremonies

WATERTOWN — In June, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) completed its 32nd academic year. The graduation ceremonies were held on June 16 (K) and June 17 (Elementary).

In her remarks the principal, Houry Boyamian, focused on the 13th Graduating Class Trip to Armenia, the annual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Week and the Science Fair, the school's 30th anniversary and the visit to the school of the President of the Republic of Armenia and his delegation.

She thanked the faculty, the administrative staff, the PTO, the parent volunteers, the school board and committees, the St. Stephen's Church board of trustees, Rev. Antranig Baljian, as well as all the organizations and individuals that contribute to the advancement of the school.

On June 16, Boyamian honored Maral Derderian for 25 years of dedicated service in the preschool and on June 17, she honored two administrators. Nora Hackett received the Golden Logo of the school for her 15 years of service as assistant treasurer and Arlet Ashjian received the Silver Logo of the school for her 10 years as administrative assistant.

This year, the kindergarten graduation program was dedicated to peace, while the Elementary graduation program focused on the 30th anniversary of the school, the 25th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia, as well as on Community Service.

On both days, Baljian expressed his appreciation to the administration and faculty for their dedication and effort.

On June 16, 21 students graduated from Kindergarten. They are: Nellie Aghajanyan, Gianna Alexanderian, Harout Artinian, Nara Behbahani, Avedis Bell, Ariana Bouthiete, Emma Fontes, Isabel Fontes, Armen Galaian, Stepan Guzelian, Julia Kebabdjian, David Oganessian, Lori Panossian, Gassia Sarkissian, Tatevik Sarkissian, Liana Seraderian, Arman Stepanian, Belissa Tamburrini, Chloe Tinkjian, Gacia Tokadjian and Nairi Yacubian.

On June 17, 13 students graduated from the elementary school. They are: Taline Antoine, Chris Ashjian, Alec Der-Sirakian, Alique Haserjian, Sophia Kahvejian, Vana Karaguesian, Alexander Nalbandyan, Andrew Sarkissian, Sevan Soukiasian, Alique Stepanian, Sevana Stepanian, Benjamin Surenian and Izabell Tenekedzhyan.



The kindergarten students dance.

## The Export Other Countries Would Rather Do Without

MAFIA, from page 19

way back to the former Soviet bloc."

Underscoring the Armenian mafia's continuing threat to the Los Angeles area, the FBI and local law enforcement agencies have organized a Eurasian Organized Crime Task Force to investigate the crimes of mobsters from Armenia, Georgia and other countries in the neighborhood.

It's embarrassing to law-abiding citizens in the former Soviet Union that the word "mafia" is the one of the first things that pops into the

minds of a lot of people whose countries have substantial populations of immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States.

I understand how they feel. The only consolation I can offer is that makes for good TV cop shows.

(Armine Sahakyan is a human rights activist based in Armenia. A columnist with the Kyiv Post and a blogger with The Huffington Post, she writes on human rights and democracy in Russia and the former Soviet Union. Follow her on Twitter at: [www.twitter.com/ArmineSahakyann](http://www.twitter.com/ArmineSahakyann))