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## Standoff with Police Continues in Yerevan

### All Hostages Released

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Thousands of demonstrators were marching in Yerevan late on July 25 in support of a group of gunmen who have occupied an Armenian police station for more than a week.

The demonstrators chanted “unity” and called for bystanders to join them, swelling their numbers as the march progressed along the streets of the Armenian capital and the demonstrators arrived at Yerevan’s central Republic Square.

It was the largest gathering of support for the gunmen since the crisis began on July 17.

The march began on July 25 after military helicopters were seen flying over the occupied police building.

The presence of the helicopters prompted speculation that a military raid against the gunmen was imminent.

The gunmen set a police van on fire near the building earlier that day.

Meanwhile, Armenian law enforcement agencies called on the gunmen not to take any steps that would “risk the lives of citizens or that stir up tensions.”

One police officer was killed on July 17 when the gunmen, linked to the radical Founding Parliament opposition movement, stormed into the Erebuni police station.

The gunmen took seven police officers as hostages but released the last of them on July 23 after negotiations with a senior officer in Armenia’s armed forces.

The gunmen are members of a little-



A spokesman for the insurgents

known group called Sasna Tsrer, dubbed by some the Daredevils of Sassoun, which is loyal to Founding Parliament Party leader, Zhirayr Sefilian.

They say they have no intention of laying down their arms until their demands are met. Those demands include the resignation of President Serzh Sargsyan and the release of Sefilian, who was arrested along with six of his supporters on June 20 on illegal weapons charges.

Police initially accused Sefilian of preparing a plot to seize government buildings and telecommunication facilities in Yerevan.

Most of Sefilian’s supporters in Sasna

Tsrer are veterans of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Founding Parliament is sharply critical of the way Armenia’s government has dealt with the long-running conflict over Nagorno-Karabagh, a territory that both Armenia and Azerbaijan claim.

#### Two Wounded

Two of the opposition gunmen locked in a standoff with the Armenian authorities were wounded by security forces early on.

Both men surrendered to the Armenian see STANDOFF, page 2

## Boston Innovation Summit Encourages US-Turkish Commerce

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Usually the *Mirror* reports on Armenian efforts to rally American political and economic support for Armenia. This time, I thought it would be interesting to see how one of Armenia’s neighbors, the Republic of Turkey, does it, especially in light of the dramatic events of the recent failed coup and its aftermath. On July 21, the Washington DC-based American-Turkish Council (ATC) sponsored the US-Turkey Innovation Summit at Harvard University’s Knafel Center. Its stated goal was “connect private companies, universities, and government institutions to facilitate partnerships in research and see ECONOMICS, page 16



Dr. Nicholas Negroponte

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Egypt Parliament May Recognize Genocide

CAIRO (Armenpress) – More than 300 Egyptian lawmakers have signed a survey on putting up to vote a bill recognizing the Armenian Genocide, RIA Novosti reported, citing Youm7.

The initiator of the measure is noted Egyptian reporter and Member of Parliament Mustafa Bakri. According to his colleague, Faiza Barakytay, in case the bill passes, it will be “a response to Turkey’s hostile actions against Egypt and official Ankara’s attempts to interfere in Egypt’s internal affairs.”

### Iran Proposes to Triple Gas Exports to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – After discussions with Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Minister L. Yolyan in Tehran, Minister of Petroleum of Iran Bijan Zangeneh announced that Iran will triple the volumes of exported gas to Armenia, Iranian state media reported.

According to the Iranian Minister, the main topic of discussion with Yolyan was the issue of transit for Iranian gas through Armenia.

The Armenian side has proposed to create a new organization for the export of Iranian gas to Georgia, IRNA reported.

### Armenian Soldier Killed by Azeri Sniper On Karabagh Line

STEPANAKERT (Mediamax) – Arsen Arakelyan, a soldier serving with the Artsakh Defense Army, received a fatal gun wound on the Southeastern direction on Saturday, July 23 as a result of shots fired across from the border.

NKR Defense Army expressed its condolences to the family of the killed soldier.

On 23 July President Bako Sahakyan signed a decree according to which the medal “For Service in Battle” was posthumously awarded to Arakelyan for courage shown during the defense of the NKR state border.

### Explosions in Azeri Munitions Plant

BAKU (Armenpress) – According to eyewitness accounts, blasts took place on July 26 at a munitions plant in Shirvan, Azerbaijan, RIA Novosti reported.

“Blasts are heard from time to time. There is smoke at the scene,” eyewitnesses said. Earlier the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said a fire broke out which resulted in explosions.

Twenty people have been hospitalized, with no fatalities reported so far.

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State Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian with some students in her district.

## Idealism and Love for Rhode Island Drive Young Politician

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – State Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian (D-East Providence) is just right for these tense, polarized times.

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

She is young, driven and ambitious – not necessarily for herself, but for her constituents.

In language that seems increasingly rare, the young Kazarian, 26, during a recent interview rattled off ways in which she wants to improve life for the people in her district.

Her passion is to try to do best for her constituents by trying to return “vibrant store fronts.”

“I felt I needed to do something to help,” she said, after graduating from college.

Kazarian graduated from Columbia University’s Barnard College in 2012 with a degree in urban studies, with a concentration in economics. She won her first political race later that year.

see KAZARIAN, page 11



## News From Armenia

### Armenia Welcomes Closer Ties with Bulgaria

YEREVA (Armenpress) – On July 14, President Serzh Sargsyan received outgoing Ambassador of Bulgaria to Armenia Georgi Karastamatov.

Sargsyan expressed his gratitude to the Bulgarian ambassador for his input in the development of the Armenian-Bulgarian relations and said in recent years the political dialogue between the two states has been intensified.

Sargsyan expressed hope the next ambassador would also make efforts to deepen relations between the two friendly states and to develop mutually beneficial cooperation at several directions.

Karastamatov expressed his gratitude to Sargsyan for the kind words as well as for the support provided during his diplomatic mission in Armenia.

### Sargsyan Congratulates UK's May

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serzh Sargsyan sent a congratulatory message to Prime Minister of United Kingdom Theresa May on the occasion of assuming the post of prime minister.

“I am sure that due to your many years of political experience you will guide the United Kingdom through the path of development and prosperity, withstanding all challenges and achieving new successes. Armenia attaches importance to the development of cooperation with the United Kingdom in fields of mutual interest, as well as further deepening of friendship between our peoples. I hope that through joint efforts we will be able to lift our friendly ties to a new qualitative level and give new impetus to the bilateral agenda for the benefit of our countries,” the congratulatory message reads.

### 1,600 Houses Damaged, 7 Civilians Killed in Tavush in Last 1.5 years

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Over the last 1.5 years, as a result of the Azerbaijani shelling and bombing nearly 1600 houses were damaged, 7 civilians were killed near the bordering area of Tavush province, Tavush Governor Hovik Abovyan said at a meeting with the delegation of the US Senate led by Thomas Goffus.

Abovyan also talked about the damages caused to the agriculture which occur both during the organization of the agricultural works at spring, as well as during the harvest. He told the delegation members that there are numerous cases that Azerbaijanis have targeted kindergartens and schools of the bordering communities.

Although certain defensive measures were taken, however, the children's safe movement is still in danger.

### Nalbandian Receives US Congressman Jim Costa

YEREVAN – On July 21, Eduard Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, received US Rep. Jim Costa, the Foreign Ministry reported.

Nalbandian praised the partnership between Armenia and the United States, as well as the added steps being undertaken in that direction. He stressed the importance of cooperation established between the legislative bodies of the two countries. Nalbandian thanked Jim Costa for his efforts towards the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Costa mentioned that for years he has been pursuing issues of importance for Armenia and the Armenian people in the US Congress, and he is glad to visit Armenia to get first-hand information and exchange views on the regional problems.

During the meeting a range of issues on the expansion of cooperation was discussed.

Nalbandian informed Costa on the efforts being undertaken towards the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh issue and overcoming of consequences of the military attack by Azerbaijan against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) this April.



Some of the militants in the standoff in Yerevan

## Standoff with Police Continues

STANDOFF, from page 1

police and were hospitalized shortly afterwards.

A police statement said that security forces opened fire when a police SUV driven by one of the gunmen unexpectedly emerged from the station and approached a police cordon about 100 meters away.

“The vehicle almost reached the cordon, after which law-enforcers fired on its engine and tires in order to stop the car and stave off a serious danger emanating from three armed men seated inside it,” said the statement. Two of them were wounded in the leg as a result, it said.

Video of the incident separately circulated by the police shows the car's visibly wounded driver running back towards the police station. Another gunman can be seen dragging away the second wounded man.

Hospital officials confirmed that the men, identified as Ashot Petrosian and Hovannes Harutiunian, are undergoing medical treatment there.

Armenian police made public the names of an armed group that seized the police regiment in Yerevan on July 17.

The 31 members of the group are: Pavel Manukyan, Tigran Manukyan, Hakob Hakobyan, Armen Lambaryan, Gagik Yeghiazaryan, Areg Kyureghyan, Smbat Barseghyan, Edward Grigoryan, Armen Bilyank, Varuzhan Avetisyan, Ashot Petrosyan, Toros Torosyan, Mkhitar Avetisyan, Tatul Tamrazyan, Vardan Geravetyan, Gevorg Igityan, Sedrak Nazaryan, Martirosya Hakobyan, Arthur Soghomonyan, Arayik Khandoyan, Sergey Kyureghyan, Hovhannes Harutyunyan, Hovhannes Vardanyan, Ruben Grigoryan, Arayik Hakobyan, Gevorg Melkonyan, Garnik Hovakimyan, Arthur Melkonyan, Edgar Soghomonyan, Aram Manukyan and Tigran Sargsyan.

#### Clemency Offered

The armed members of the opposition group holed up in a police station Yerevan may well avoid imprisonment if they surrender to law-enforcement authorities, Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) said on Monday.

“In case of the existence of conditions defined by Armenian legislation, individuals voluntarily backing away from a crime can be exempted from criminal liability,” the NSS said as its standoff with the gunmen entered into a second week.

“In this regard, the militants were handed on July 25 written clarifications and explanations on the sequence of actions which must be taken by them and the route for their surrender,” it added in a statement.

The NSS note delivered to the gunmen was publicized by the Armenian police. It lists articles of the Armenian Criminal Code that allow individuals taking hostages or seizing government buildings to avoid prosecution.

“You still have time to lay down your arms and surrender,” says the document.

The NSS did not specify whether the authorities would also not prosecute anyone in connection with the killing of a senior police officer carried out during the July 17 attack on the police station. A leader of the gunmen has claimed that Colonel Artur Vanoyan was shot dead “by accident.”

The NSS said at the same time that it is seeking to resume negotiations with the armed members of the Founding Parliament opposition movement which were mediated until this weekend by Vitaly Balasanian, a Nagorno-Karabakh politician.

The talks resulted in the release on Saturday of four police officers held hostage by the attackers. The latter refused to negotiate with Balasanian after he claimed that Founding Parliament's arrested leader, Zhirayr Sefilian, no longer demands President Serzh Sarkisian's resignation.

The authorities appeared to have stepped up pressure on the gunmen following the release of the gunmen, reportedly halting food and electricity supplies to them and blocking access to their mobile phones. As a result, the standoff escalated on the night from Sunday to Monday, with the gunmen setting fire to a police van commandeered by them. A military helicopter briefly hovered over the seized police premises early in the morning.

Alek Yenikomshian, a Founding Parliament figure, said the vehicle was burned down in protest against the blockade imposed by the authorities. He said that the authorities have also stopped providing medical assistance to one of the gunmen wounded during the July 17 assault.

The NSS statement insisted, however, that the authorities offered to hospitalize the man but were rebuffed by the armed group. The security agency also said it has arrested several more individuals suspected of aiding the gunmen. It did not name any of them or

specify the total number of people detained in connection with the armed attack.

Speaking to journalists on Monday morning, Yenikomshian accused the authorities of deliberately heightening tensions. “Serious developments may occur at any moment,” he warned. “We hope that prudence will prevail within the ruling regime.”

#### Sargsyan Offers to Meet Sefilian

President Serzh Sargsyan is ready to meet the jailed opposition leader Zhirayr Sefilian if the armed member of his organization occupying a police station in Yerevan lay down their arms, a politician who has negotiated with them said on Sunday.

Vitaly Balasanian, a retired Nagorno-Karabakh army general, also insisted that Sefilian no longer supports the gunmen's key demand – Sargsyan's resignation – and has set other conditions that have been communicated to the president.

“[Sargsyan] has expressed readiness to invite Zhirair Sefilian and explain to him the reality and prospects immediately after the guys lay down arms and surrender,” Balasanian said in a statement cited by the Armenpress news agency.

#### Ter-Petrosian Appeals to Gunmen

Former President Levon Ter-Petrosian appealed on Friday to Sefilian for a speedy resolution of the protests.

“I want to express hope that he will make use of that ability this time as well and place the fate of Armenia and Karabagh above everything else,” he said.

Ter-Petrosian thus seemed to imply that Sefilian should tell the two dozen Founding Parliament gunmen who seized a Yerevan police station on July 17 to lay down their arms. He argued that the unprecedented hostage crisis is only aggravating Armenia's grave national security challenges emanating from the recent escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The 71-year-old ex-president, who leads the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) party, had been a bitter critic of the government ever since returning to active politics in 2007.

(Public Radio of Armenia and Radio Free Europe reports contributed to this story.)



## ARMENIA

# Ruben Vardanyan Is Thinking FAST For Armenia

YEREVAN – Ruben Vardanyan, social entrepreneur and philanthropist and co-founder of Initiatives for the Development of Armenia (IDeA), is working on launching the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology or FAST.

As he said, “FAST must become the platform for a technological breakthrough.”

The IDeA Foundation, along with its partners, is finalizing requirements for the launch of IDeA’s new project, aimed at developing the means for technological innovation in Armenia and the mobilization of scientific, technological and financial resources of the Armenian and international communities.

FAST has to become a platform for bringing about the technological breakthrough in Armenia in the areas of IT and computer science, artificial intelligence, high-tech materials, robotics, biotechnology, advanced engineering and manufacturing technologies.

He explained, “The main lesson of the April war is obvious – we must strengthen Armenia, and no one will do it apart from us. Only a strong Armenia can avoid another war and be able to defend our interests through peaceful means, finding acceptable compromises for the sake of the country and the nation. This is the only way we can ensure that the opposing side will uphold its obligations instead of waiting for the right moment to undertake yet another military escapade, and international mediators will respect the positions of Armenia and Artsakh.”

He added, “I think that Armenia’s priorities, as a nation must be the rebirth of Armenian science and the creation of a technology industry. It is vital that we become objective and truthful in the shadow of April’s events. Tangible results could be on the horizon in 5-10 years, but it must be started today. We must give the opportunity to Armenian scientists, especially young ones, to undertake basic and applied research, development and discovery, use their scientific and research potential to address critical national issues. We can see around the world that the consistent implementation of scientific development creates a syner-



Ruben Vardanyan

gistic effect, developing all areas of the economy.”

IDeA is looking at the possibility of providing \$10 million towards developing the fund and then launching the fund globally with the end goal of raising \$200 million within three years.

The established Advisory Board will undertake the fund’s management. Within this board, besides the founders, there will be prominent Armenians from Armenia and abroad with a successful track record in science, technology, venture capital and industry. The fund will be subject to high standards of effectiveness, transparency and independence.

Vardanyan said, “The work of the fund will only be effective in a public-private partnership and at the moment we are intensely discussing these questions with Armenia’s leadership. In our view, this partnership means engaging with the government on multiple levels, from the selection of promising scientific programs to the formation of government orders for important work. There are on-going talks on the creation of a systematic support for science and technology on every level within every day activity of the government.”

We have to try our utmost to make FAST interesting for an elite international talent, first and foremost from our own Diaspora. We have to rediscover ourselves as a nation of innovators and entrepreneurs, fulfilling our creative potential in our own country and not only outside of its borders.

Vardanyan explained, “The main purpose for introducing FAST – is to unite the government and the private sector, the Church, the general public and the elite, the citizens of Armenia, the Diaspora and our partners in other countries, donors and international organizations, so that through our joint efforts we can create the conditions and mechanisms for turning Armenia into a regional technology and innovation center.”

He concluded, “Yes we have set ourselves a very difficult task, but we know that we have to overcome many obstacles and difficulties, in order to find the solution. The alternative – to be a mediocre player – is not only unacceptable, but also dangerous. We are rightly proud of our past, but it is not enough. Only by acting together we can create a future where we reclaim our leading position, and break the mold in science and technology.”

## New Academic Year Sees 33 Young Fellows From Teach For Armenia Begin Teaching

DILIJAN, Armenia – On July 4, Teach For Armenia (TFA) together with Scholae Mundi Armenia Foundation (SMA) and Initiatives for Development of Armenia Foundation (IDeA) held Teach For Armenia’s 2016 Fellowship Fellow Inauguration Ceremony at the campus of UWC Dilijan College. Armenian Minister of Education and Science, Levon Mkrtchyan, representatives of Teach For Armenia’s partner schools, regional governors, and educational experts took part in the event.

Thirty-three highly-qualified young specialists – Fellows – selected by Teach For Armenia, will begin their teaching assignments at schools across Armenia’s regions during the upcoming academic year. Teach For Armenia currently cooperates with 40 schools in five regions across Armenia.

The thirty-three Fellows will join the 2015 cohort who began teaching last year at schools in Lori, Tavush, Armavir and Gegharkunik regions across Armenia. This year’s Fellows will also teach at schools in the Aragatsotn region.

Co-founder of the Scholae Mundi Armenia Charity Foundation, IDeA Foundation, UWC Dilijan College and Chair of the TFA Board of Trustees Veronika Zonabend, and CEO and Founder of Teach For Armenia Larisa Hovannisian, shared their words of encouragement with the Fellows.

“Each of you has assumed a great responsibility, and we are more than sure that you will

successfully complete your mission. Remember that you have a unique opportunity to contribute towards the development of Armenia’s future generations. It is your responsibility not only to lead your students to greater academic heights, but to also unlock every child’s full potential,” said Larisa Hovannisian after the official inauguration of the Teach For Armenia 2016 Fellowship.

In 2016, Teach For Armenia and Scholae Mundi Armenia joined forces to ensure accessible and equitable education for every child in Armenia. Scholae Mundi Armenia’s mission is to promote the most advanced educational practices, which in the long run will become catalysts for social change in Armenia. Scholae Mundi Armenia Foundation currently sponsors other educational projects in Armenia, the largest of which is UWC Dilijan, which welcomed Teach For Armenia’s 2016 Fellows.

“Education is built on trust, and today we see an example of this trust: the trust of the ministry in this new initiative which has come to Armenia, the trust of young people who have agreed to devote two years of their lives to children, working in schools, in places where it is not easy to live and work, and the trust of the regional governors and school principals who agreed to take in a completely new set of people, which is unusual for schools. And I hope that in 2-3 years we will see that this trust is justified. Teach For Armenia, as part of the exten-

sive international network Teach For All, brings to Armenia advanced ideas in the field of education, relevant in the modern world”, said Veronika Zonabend.

She also underlined that the Teach For Armenia programs could not be realized without private donors’ support. “Grants and the TFA summer school 2016 were organized with financial assistance,” Veronika added.

Armenia’s Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan congratulated the participants and organizers with the launch of the 2016 TFA grant program.

“I am proud that we have young people who see their duty in educating children in regional schools of Armenia. Through dedicating your time and effort to help schools who are experiencing an acute shortage of teachers, you show your commitment to serving the people for whom education has always been a priority,” added the Minister.

Teach For Armenia’s recruitment efforts are made both locally (from Yerevan and regions) and the Armenian diaspora. Teach For Armenia seeks versatile and passionate individuals with the academic, leadership, and interpersonal expertise necessary to be transformational teachers in Armenia’s most underserved schools. Teach For Armenia’s Recruitment and Selection team, with the ongoing expert support of its global partner Teach For All, has uniquely designed a rigorous admissions process that can identify applicants

who possess the characteristics that will make them successful in the Fellowship, and ultimately, as teachers in classrooms across Armenia.

Before leaving for their designated regions, the Fellows will participate in Teach For Armenia’s intensive training program called Summer Institute, which thoroughly prepares them for their two-year teaching commitment. In addition to sharing their knowledge, skills and values with their students and colleagues, Fellows will also become active members of their respective communities.

Teach For Armenia’s mission is to improve educational outcomes for all children in Armenia by recruiting and training exceptional individuals to teach in underserved schools for a minimum of two years. The organization is officially partnered with Teach For All, a network of independent, locally led partner organizations in over 40 countries worldwide, who share common approaches and values in improving educational opportunities for children in their respective countries.

Scholae Mundi Armenia (SMA) is a charity foundation established by entrepreneurs and philanthropists Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend. Scholae Mundi Armenia together with Scholae Mundi Russia and Scholae Mundi UK comprise an international platform aimed at promoting the most advanced educational practices, which in the long run will become catalysts for social change in the world.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Armenian Team Won't Participate in Baku-Hosted Chess Olympiad

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) —

The Armenian men's chess team won't be leaving for Baku to participate in the 42nd Chess Olympiad in the Azerbaijani capital, Aravot cited deputy chairman of the Chess Federation of Armenia, grandmaster Smbat Lputian as saying.

According to some sources, the Greek team has no intention of going to Baku either, although FIDE's deputy president Georgios Makropoulous is Greek.

The international conference Theoretical and Practical Issues of Chess Education in Schools will be held in Armenia's Tsaghkadzor from September 30 to October 3.

## Armenia Ready for Bigger Trade with Iran

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Armenian ambassador to Iran said this week that his country is willing to make investments in the Iranian jewelry industry, Mehr News Agency reports.

Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Islamic Republic of Iran Artashes Tumanyan made the remarks during a meeting held in the Iranian capital with the head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture Masoud Khansari.

The Armenian official said Yerevan is a pioneer in area of jewelry, adding "Armenian traders are also eager to participate in Iran's IT industries."

He also noted that Armenia's Central Bank has offered proposals for monetary and banking ties between the two countries.

Khansari, for his part, referred to great economic and industrial potentials held by the two parties noting "identifying venues for cooperation can play an important role in expanding bilateral relation between Tehran and Yerevan."

## Putin, Erdogan to Meet In Russia August 9

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkey's deputy prime minister says President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is to travel to Russia next month to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin — the first meeting between the two leaders as relations between the two countries mend following Turkey's apology for the downing of a Russian fighter jet last year, the Associated Press reports.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency reported that Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek said Tuesday, July 26 that Erdogan and Putin would meet in St. Petersburg on August 9.

Erdogan sent a letter of apology to Putin in late June. Since then, the two countries have moved to normalize relations, restoring anti-terror cooperation and military contacts and lifting Russian restrictions on tourism to Turkey.

## ECHR Verdict against France Concerns Armenian Child

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The European Court of Human Rights has made a decision against France regarding the procedure of separating minors from their parents during the study of asylum applications. The Court viewed the procedure as inhumane and humiliating treatment contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Nouvelles d'Armenie reports. The Court has studied five similar cases, one of which concerns a 4-year-old Armenian child, who had been kept separated from his parents for 18 days in an administrative protection center in 2012. During the same period two Chechen girls were treated similarly. Another case was documented with a Romanian child. French authorities will have to pay 1,500-9,000 Euros moral compensation to the affected families. Ombudsman of France Jacques Toubon also announced that the practice of separating minors from their parents is contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights, and the law in this regard must be changed.

# Report: Erdogan Warned of Incoming Coup by Russian Alert

TEHRAN (FNA) — Arab media outlets quoted diplomats in Ankara as disclosing that Turkey's President Erdogan was alerted by Russia against an imminent army coup hours before it was initiated on Friday, while a western media outlet said Erdogan asked his supporters to remain in the streets after receiving advice from Tehran.

Several Arab media outlets, including Rai Alyoum, quoted diplomatic sources in Ankara as saying that Turkey's National Intelligence Organization, known locally as the MIT, received intelligence from its Russian counterpart that warned of an impending coup in the Muslim state.

The unnamed diplomats said the Russian army in the region had intercepted highly sensitive army exchanges and encoded radio messages showing that the Turkish army was readying to stage a coup against the administration in Ankara.

The exchanges included dispatch of several army choppers to President Erdogan's resort hotel to arrest or kill the president.

The diplomats were not sure of the Russian station that had intercepted the exchanges, but said the Russian army intelligence unit deployed in Khmeimim (also called Hmeimim) in Syria's northern province of Latakia is reportedly equipped with state-of-the-art electronic and eavesdropping systems to gather highly sensitive information for the Russian squadrons that are on an anti-terrorism mission in Syria.

Khmeimim in Northwestern Syria is the only Russian air force base in the war-ravaged country that provides cover for Syrian army and popular forces in multiple fronts across the country, in addition to bombing missions against terrorist targets. The Russian naval fleet, including its only aircraft carrier, are deployed along the coasts of Latakia border province to provide logistical aid to the air base in a short time. Meantime, Russia has deployed its highly sophisticated S-400 air defense shield at Khmeimim and announced that it covers the entire Syrian skies with the same air defense system.

Last year, Turkey shot down a Russian Sukhoi bomber over Syrian skies and President Erdogan who was then a staunch enemy of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad rejected extending an apology to Moscow for about a year, although economic sanctions by Russia as well as growing victories by the Syrian army, popular forces, Hezbollah fighters, Iranian advisors and Russian air force that cornered the terrorists in Syria and similar victories against ISIL in Iraq convinced the Turkish president to not just apologize for the Sukhoi incident, but also show signs of a U-turn in foreign policy, saying that he is dropping his opposition to President Assad.

Four days after the coup, officials in Ankara announced that the two Turkish pilots who played a role in the downing of the Russian plane in November were in custody over the recent failed coup. "Two pilots who were part of the operation to down the Russian Su-24 in November 2015 are in custody," a Turkish official told journalists on Tuesday, adding that they were detained over links to the coup bid.

Russian President Vladimir Putin called his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday, describing the attempted coup as unacceptable and voicing hope for a speedy return to stability.

The diplomatic sources said the shift in Erdogan's foreign policy stated only a week before the coup has been "a major cause pushing several foreign states to

provoke and promise support for the army to stage the coup, and the same shift also saved him" as it was not clear if the Russians would provide Ankara with their intel, otherwise.

Officials of neither country have made any comment on the report yet. In Ankara, official sources, including the Army itself, confirmed that the Turkish army's top generals had been informed of last week's coup by the MIT hours before the plot came into action.

A statement issued by the army on July 19 described the events that took place on July 15, saying a majority within the military managed to suppress the coup attempt due to information provided by the MIT some five hours before the coup plot became public, national newspaper *Hurriyet* reported.

"The information given by the National Intelligence Organization on July 15, 2016, at around 4:00 p.m. was evaluated at the General Staff headquarters with the attendance of Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar, Chief of the Army General Salih Zeki Colak and Deputy Chief of Staff General Yasar Guler."

In order to counter the coup, high ranking officials within the Turkish army gave orders for all air and ground forces around the country to immediately cease operations including military vehicles such as tanks, planes and helicopters.

A report by Al-Jazeera Arabic suggests the coup plotters initiated the operation six hours ahead of time as they had previously planned to launch the coup at 3:00 a.m. local time on July 16.

While the report does not indicate the reason for the coup being initiated ahead of time, the revelation by the military suggests the coup plotters understood their plans had been compromised and decided to act.

Reports also suggest the coup plotters had orders to kidnap or kill President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as helicopters headed toward the hotel he was staying in at the holiday resort of Marmaris. But Erdogan had left 44 minutes before they arrived, according to Al-Jazeera's report.

The official statements coming out from Ankara are in full compliance with the Arab media reports quoting the diplomatic sources on the Russian intel.

Only four days after the coup, Erdogan appeared on the media saying that he plans to declare a crucial turn in foreign policy that would "end differences with Turkey's neighboring states."

Less than a day later, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov announced that President Erdogan would visit Russia early in August to meet with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Meantime, Iran rushed to condemn the Turkish army coup only two hours after it started. Several top security and foreign policy officials in Tehran were in constant contact with President Erdogan and his cabinet ministers all throughout Friday.

As July 15 was coming to an end in Tehran, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was on the phone with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, whose government was under the threat of being overthrown by a military coup. Meanwhile, Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), was on another line with security officials in Ankara. All the while, Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, Iran's regional military arm, was busy pursuing and reviewing various scenarios that might emerge.

"It's not a secret anymore," an Iranian official told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity. "Zarif, Shamkhani and Soleimani were executing higher orders.

The whole establishment was too concerned. Turkey is a neighboring state. President Erdogan and his government are strong partners of Iran. Our nations enjoy strong brotherly ties, so it's the least we can do to show solidarity and try to offer any help they might need in such critical times."

"Another Iranian official saw parallels between the successful coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 and this year's coup attempt in Turkey," Al-Monitor said.

The official told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, "What we know is that this move was triggered by foreign hands. We went through the same in the past, and because Mr. Erdogan is today looking forward to playing a better role in the region, they want him down." The Iranian official said, "There was a message that was conveyed to Turkish security officials: Don't leave the streets. This coup might be made up of several waves; it happened in Iran in 1953. When the first coup failed, they had another one ready — and they succeeded."

In Ankara, the government claims the coup and the generals behind it are loyal followers of US-based Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen, who was once Erdogan's key ally before a major fallout in 2012. Many believe that Gulen is the main cause of why Ankara officials have repeatedly accused the US of masterminding the plot.

Gulen is running a multi-billion dollar enterprise in Saudi Arabia and has grown into a serious bone of contention in Ankara-Riyadh ties. Saudi Arabia reserved condemnation of the coup in a suspicious move. Later, reports surfaced the media that the top brass in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi — two strong allies of the US with unbreakably intimate ties with each other in the Persian Gulf — were involved in the coup.

Saudi whistle-blower Mujtahid, who is believed to be a member of or have a well-connected source in the royal family, disclosed that senior government officials in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi had been informed of the coup in Turkey long before it took place.

Mujtahid wrote on his twitter page on Monday that the UAE leaders had played a role in the coup and the Turkish spy agencies have come to decode this involvement, adding that the UAE leaders had also alerted the Saudis about the impending coup.

"Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman had been informed of the military coup in Turkey," Mujtahid wrote on his twitter page on Monday.

"There are reasons to prove that given his intimate relations with Mohammad bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces), Mohammad bin Salman had been filled with information about this coup," he added.

According to Mujtahid, Turkish intelligence agencies had received information about some negative collaboration between bin Salman and bin Zayed, but the Saudis managed to convince the Justice and Development party to rest assured and be optimistic about Riyadh's actions.

He revealed that bin Salman has been trying to convince the Turks to conceal the UAE's role in the coup and has promised a large amount of cash in retribution.

The last week coup in Turkey is now growing into a major regional confrontation over Turkey's shift in its Syria policy now. If confirmed, the Russian and Iranian aid to Erdogan would mean the power balance and equations in the region ought to be redefined.



## INTERNATIONAL

# World's Largest Yazidi Temple under Construction in Armenia

YEREVAN (Guardian) – A huge Yazidi temple is under construction in a small Armenian village, intended as a symbol of resilience for a persecuted religious tradition.

The temple is being built in Aknalich, about 35km from Yerevan, the Armenian capital. Seven domes will surround a central arched roof, crowned with a gold-plated sun. At 25m high, it will be built from Armenian granite and

organisation.

The complex in Aknalich is not intended to overshadow Lalish, the most holy Yazidi temple, about 36 miles north of Mosul in northern Iraq. Followers of the Yazidi faith are expected to make a pilgrimage to Lalesh once in their lifetime.

“There will only ever be one Lalish,” Khdr Hajoian, vice-president of the Yazidi National

they were besieged.

In June, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria said Islamic State was committing genocide against the Yazidis of northern Iraq.

Thousands of Yazidis now live in squalid refugee camps in northern Iraq and Turkey, or have scattered across Europe.

“People are suffering from psychological and medical problems in the camps, with no work and no future,” said Burjus. “Even in Europe, no country has recognised Yazidis as a distinctive group. Our fate is not in our hands.”

Germany is home to western Europe's largest diaspora community. According to Burjus, there are fewer than 700 Yazidis in the UK. European governments classify Yazidis as Kurds, he said.

The Yazidi faith is derived from Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. They have been denounced as infidels by Islamic extremists, and unfairly accused of being devil-worshippers.

They do not accept converts, and Yazidis are not permitted to marry non-Yazidis or even Yazidis from a different caste.

As well as being persecuted for their religious beliefs, Yazidi communities are dispersing because of economic pressures.

“Yazidis are not well placed to handle the challenges they face,” said Christine Allison, professor of Kurdish studies at Exeter university. “They are fragmented, vulnerable and face big socio-economic difficulties.”

“There is a risk of Yazidis not surviving – or at least being a much smaller community within a generation.”



Site of new Yazidi Temple in Armenia

Iranian marble and house a 200-square-metre prayer hall.

The complex will also include a conference hall, seminary and museum.

Named Quba Mere Diwane, this will be the largest Yazidi temple in the world, although there are relatively few contenders. The project is being funded by Mirza Sloian, a Yazidi businessman based in Moscow, according to EurasiaNet, and is scheduled to be completed next year.

“This temple is important for us because our community is facing extinction. Our community is displaced around the world, and we need temples in each place for our children to keep their culture and identity,” said Ahmed Burjus of the UK branch of Yazda, a global Yazidi

Union, told EurasiaNet.

Yazidis are the largest minority group in Armenia, with a population of about 35,000, although many have left or are leaving to find work elsewhere, particularly in Russia.

They originated in eastern Turkey and northern Iraq, but many were killed or driven out of Turkey during the bloody rule of the Ottoman Empire. Yazidis describe themselves as “a people of 72 genocides”.

The most recent onslaught was in northern Iraq – until recently, home to 90 percent of Yazidis – in 2014. Islamic State killed thousands of Yazidis in and around Sinjar, abducted young girls and women to be used as sex slaves, forced people to convert to Islam, and drove an estimated 50,000 into the mountains where

## Can Syria's Kurds Realize Territorial Ambitions?

By Lina Sinjab

BBC News

When the Syrian protest movement started in 2011, it was young Kurds in Amouda, in the north of the country, who took to the streets, calling for freedom and democracy.

President Bashar al-Assad soon announced he would recognize some of the rights demanded by the Kurds and allowed them to register as citizens and hold an identify card, a right they have been deprived of since 1962.

But the Kurds rejected the concessions, saying they would wait to get their rights once all Syrians achieved freedom and democracy.

Five years on the scene is different. As the war has dragged on in Syria, Kurdish groups have taken the opportunity to gain more power.

The PYD (the Democratic Union Party) declared self-administration in the Kurdish region of Syria in November 2013.

Other Kurdish parties formed the Kurdish National Council, which is part of the main anti-Assad opposition group, the Syrian National Coalition.

The PYD is close to the Kurdistan Workers' Party – the PKK – which is banned in Turkey and regarded by many Western governments as a terrorist organization.

“The PYD had popularity on the ground as they were addressing the Kurdish population's concerns. They are pragmatic and organized, unlike other Kurdish parties who failed to deliver,” says Farooq Haji Mustafa, a Syrian Kurd journalist and founder of the Barchav Centre for Media and Freedom in Turkey.

“The Kurds were attacked by some Islamist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, therefore they felt they were not part of the Syrian revolution. They thought they should seize the opportunity and protect Kurdish interests.”

“The PYD delivered and were supported by regional and international agreements since they were the only force that is reliable in the fight against Islamic State,” he added.

But Haji Mustafa says the PYD is a totalitarian party, doesn't like opposition to its rule and has acted violently against some in their community.

The PYD later came to form the Syrian Democratic Forces, along with some Arab tribes, and it's the SDF which has become one of the main powers inside Syria fighting so-called Islamic State (IS) – with support from Western coalition forces.

But there is criticism of the SDF over how they have allegedly acted towards Kurdish opponents and civilians.

Shero Alo is an opposition activist from Aleppo province. He was part of the Kurdish opposition but had to leave his town due to, he said, threats from the PYD.

“They threatened, arrested and beat us up during our protests. Anyone who opposes them is sent to prison,” Alo said.

This view is shared by some Arab activists

who say they witnessed abuses in Tal Abyad, a predominantly Arab town on the outskirts of Raqqa.

“When the PYD entered Tal Abyad in 2015, they pushed all the Arabs out of their homes,” said Ahmad Haj Saleh, who has been documenting the activities of the PYD since 2015.

“They looted and tortured and imprisoned people. They used a hole to bury people alive in the same place that Islamic State fighters used to have mass graves.”

“Most of the Arabs who were pushed out were not allowed into certain parts of Tal Abyad and families of the Kurdish fighters now inhabit their houses,” he said.

However, a PYD spokesman, Dr. Juan Mustafa, told the BBC that Kurdish forces had not carried out any abuses.

“There are no violations at all in Tal Abyad. All the families who left came back,” he said.

“When Syrian Democratic Forces enter a town or an area it is due to calls from the families to come and liberate them from the atrocities of IS.”

A picture of alleged abuses has not emerged in the current battle for Manbij – a predominantly Arab city held by Islamic State fighters near their stronghold of Raqqa.

This offensive is being carried out by forces including the US-backed SDF and SDF-allied Manbij Military Council (MMC).

The PYD has made calculations in its own long-term interest. It seized control over most territories with a Kurdish population in Syria and now considers them as a federal region.

It has presented itself as a partner for the international community in fighting terrorism and just recently announced a constitution that would govern what it calls Rojava – the Kurdish areas of Syria – as well as other parts of northern Syria in partnership with some Arab tribes there.

But it alarms Damascus and the Turkish government, a foe of President Assad.

Recent reports say that Algeria is brokering talks between Damascus and Ankara over a common Kurdish threat.

Although some believe that the Syrian government helped facilitate the PYD's role in the north at the start of the conflict, the fact that the group has become more powerful now makes Damascus wary.

Turkey does not want a Kurdish state on its own border and the PYD is linked to the PKK – which Ankara blames for many attacks in Turkey.

While the Kurds have proven to be reliable in the fight against IS in the north of the country, there is some unease about their ambition to separate entirely from the rest of Syria.

Ismail Sharif is a Kurdish journalist from Amouda. He wants a democratic and united Syria and left his town due to fears of reprisal attacks from the PYD.

“Unfortunately now there is a proxy war and there are many dictators in Syria. I don't think there will be a division of Syria,” he said.

## Turkey's President Orders Closure of 1,000 Private Schools Linked to Gülen

ISTANBUL (Guardian) – Recep Tayyip Erdogan also uses state of emergency powers granted after coup attempt to extend detention period of criminal suspects

Turkey's president has signed a decree that allows for the extension of the pre-charge detention period and the closure of institutions linked to Fethullah Gülen, the exiled cleric blamed for masterminding last weekend's failed military coup.

According to Recep Tayyip Erdogan's office, the decree will close 1,043 private schools, 1,229 foundations and associations, 35 medical institutions, 19 unions, and 15 universities. Their assets will be seized by the treasury. The presidency said that parliament will be able to vote on the measure.

This is the biggest witch-hunt in Turkey's history

It is the first presidential decree since the announcement of a three-month state of emergency on Wednesday. This enables Erdogan's cabinet to bypass parliament and suspend rights as they deem necessary. Decrees passed during the state of emergency have the force of law and cannot be appealed.

The government says the measure is necessary to prevent further unrest and insists it will only target those immediately associated with the coup attempt. However, there are concerns that the crackdown has been widened to root out all potential sympathizers of Gülen's movement, turning the investigation of coup plotters into an all-out witch hunt.

The decree also extends the current maximum pre-charge detention from four to 30 days, a move that was criticized by human rights groups who have recently flagged up an increase of cases of severe ill-treatment of soldiers currently in detention.

“The decision to extend the detention period to 30 days is disproportionate,” said Andrew Gardner, Turkey researcher for Amnesty International. “It is too long and given the reports we have received so far it will facilitate torture and undermine the right to a fair trial.”

He added that the extension was a worrying sign of measures to come. “This decree is a telling indication of what the authorities have in store and might hint at more mass detentions.”

Since the bloody coup attempt last Friday, which killed at least 265 people and injured more than 1,000, tens of thousands of soldiers, security officers, judges, prosecutors, civil servants and academics suspected of ties to the movement founded by Gülen, who lives in the US, have been detained or suspended from their jobs.

Erdogan has vowed to “cleanse” all Gülen supporters from the state apparatus and civil services, drawing concern from Turkey's western allies over his increasingly authoritarian stance.

# Community News

## Holy Virgin Mary And Shoghagat Church Marks 60 Years

BELLEVILLE, Ill. – In June, parishioners at Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church observed the 60th anniversary of the consecration of the area's original church in nearby East St. Louis. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy, ordained altar servers, and joined the community for a banquet.

The weekend's events began on the afternoon of Saturday, June 11, when the Primate met with the parish council and the Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, parish pastor, to discuss current programming and plans for the future. The parish council has been working on a five-year strategic plan called "Vision 20/20," which they shared with Archbishop Barsamian, who commended them for their hard work and gave his blessing for the successful implementation of the plan.

On Saturday evening, a special reception was held in the church's Jamjamian Cultural Hall. Parishioners had an opportunity to meet with Archbishop Barsamian in an informal setting, to hear about the work of the Diocese, and to ask questions and share ideas about strengthening the Belleville parish.

On Sunday, June 12, Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with Parsamyan assisting on the altar. Also taking part in the service was the Rev. Yeprem Kelegian, who was deacon-in-charge when the community made the move from East St. Louis to Belleville.

The Primate ordained three altar servers – Ron Leap and brothers Mark and Gregory Marifian – to the sub-diaconate. The three have been working closely with Parsamyan in the past year to prepare for this new role in the Armenian Church.

In his sermon, Archbishop Barsamian spoke about the endurance of the Armenian people in the face of setbacks, and noted how an abiding faith in Christ has helped Armenians persevere and emerge to build anew. Turning to the Diocese's theme for the year, "Legacy of Our Martyrs: A Gift to Carry Forward," he encouraged parishioners to consider how they might continue to pass down the Armenian Christian heritage to new generations.

"Here, at the Holy Shoghagat parish, the spirit of our martyrs—the divine spirit of 'overcoming'—has been exemplified by the people of this parish, through your service on the altar, your efforts in parish organizations, your outreach to the community and your ministry to each other," Archbishop Barsamian said.

"Now we must look to the future, and share our rich Armenian Christian identity with our young people."

Later that day, some 200 guests gathered at see ANNIVERSARY, page 8



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian celebrates mass at the Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church.



From left, Bennett Tellalian, Kate Weisel and Anna Tellalian in front of Roche Brothers in Wellesley

## A Lesson and an Inspiration: FAR's Children's Center

BOSTON and YEREVAN – "Lively, warm, colorful – a happy place," that's how Anna Tellalian described her visit to the Children's Center in Yerevan, Armenia. The Children's Center is a program of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Inspired to raise funds to support the work of the center, Anna Tellalian set out to develop a plan. But first, she arranged a second visit to learn more about the center. Her mom and dad, Leslie and Haig Tellalian, joined her.

Anna, with her parents and brothers, Owen, Evan and Bennett, and grandparents, Don and Barbara Tellalian, were visiting Armenia with parishioners and friends of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Cambridge led by the pastor, Rev. Vasken Kouzouian. The trip, planned by Sima Tours, included visits to pre-Christian Roman Temples, and early Christian churches and monasteries, some dating back to the 5th century.



Anna Tellalian in Armenia

Interspersed were visits to centers of innovation including the much-celebrated Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, the Cascade with the Cafesjian Center for the Arts as well as social service programs. Of course, evenings in Yerevan were filled with good food, music and interesting walks.

During the second visit to the center, Anna's resolve deepened. Much to her delight, she met several of the children. The children showed Anna how to make the bracelets that she would offer to sell to raise funds. They were all smiles. One child pointed to Anna's freckles and her own, delighted with the discovery. Another child was so excited that they shared the same name, Anna. The warmth was palpable. With the opportunity to speak with the center's Programs Manager Manane Petrosyan about the center, and armed with brochures and bracelets made by the children, Anna was almost ready.

The day after her return home, Anna prepared *paklava* with her grandmother. Now, with a poster prepared, she was ready. With the bracelets and hand-painted scarves created by the children, the *paklava* and the poster, Anna with her friend, Kate Weisel and brother, Bennett, set up a table outside Roche Brothers in Wellesley. Each item was offered with a suggested donation to the center. The response was enthusiastic. Much to her delight, they raised just over \$300. Anna is so pleased that that the funds raised will help to make a difference in the lives of the center's children.

FAR Children's Center in Yerevan provides a safe haven for at-risk children, many of whom have suffered from physical and sexual abuse, abandonment, poor nutrition and homelessness are being cared for by a dedicated staff of committed professionals. In addition to helping children, the center also helps families by offering them medical and economic assistance.

Headquartered in New York, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) gives hope, guidance and opportunity to those in need, empowering them to create a better present and helping them pave the way to a stronger future. For further information about the Children's Center and FAR other programs, visit [farusa.org](http://farusa.org).

## Elie Wiesel Remembered By ANI

WASHINGTON – The Armenian National Institute (ANI) mourns the passing of human rights activist Elie Wiesel (1928-2016), and recalls one of the most vocal opponents of the crime of genocide. Holocaust survivor, author, and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wiesel evoked the compelling authority of a victim who triumphed over his oppressors by writing and speaking about the importance of remembrance and prevention. His works became the voice of the millions of Jewish victims of Nazism and racism that raged across Europe when Wiesel was a young man and which destined him to a concentration camp.

Wiesel's powerful denunciation of denial as a form of double killing of the victim introduced a critical concept in understanding the problem and legacy of genocide and played a major role in appreciating the dilemma of Armenian Genocide survivors and their descendants who were confronted with the implacable policy of the Turkish government. By challenging denial and upholding the importance of memory, Wiesel created new bridges between the Jewish and Armenian communities in the United States, France, and elsewhere.



Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel and UCLA Professor Emeritus of History Richard Hovannisian at Chapman University in 2013

Wiesel, who served as the first chairman of the United States Holocaust Council appointed by President Jimmy Carter, approved the recommendation to include reference to the Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. He was among the 126 prominent signatories, all Holocaust scholars, holders of academic chairs, and directors of Holocaust research and studies centers, who in 2000 "signed a statement affirming that the World War I Armenian Genocide is an incontestable historical fact and accordingly urge the governments of Western democracies to likewise recognize it as such. The petitioners, among whom is Nobel Laureate for Peace Elie Wiesel, who was the keynote speaker at the conference, also asked the Western Democracies to urge the Government and Parliament of Turkey to finally come to terms with a dark chapter of Ottoman-Turkish history and to recognize the Armenian Genocide."

In 2000, Wiesel voiced his strong support for the Armenian Genocide resolution during the 106th Congress. In a letter to then International Relations see WIESEL, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## ACYO Central Council Holds Seminar

ARMONK, N.Y. – Thirteen current and former Central Council members from across the Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYO) of the Eastern and Western Dioceses came together in late June at St. Nersess Seminary for the 2016 ACYO North American Conference.

The weekend began with a quotation-and-answer session led by former ACYOA Central Council chairs, Ani Grigorian and Jonathan Pelaez. Adrienne Ashbahian led the group in a Bible study that focused on cultivating leadership. The group read several verses from the four gospels and engaged in discussion about

Diocese.

On the following day, Dn. Diran Jebejian spoke about the history of the ACYO. The participants engaged in an open discussion about what they would like to see in the ACYO and opened the floor to suggestions on ways the Central Councils can improve their respective organizations. The second session was led by Dn. Saro Kalayjian who discussed the responsibility of the youth as Armenian Christians living in the Diaspora. The afternoon continued with a team building exercise.

In the evening, Grigorian and Pelaez led a discussion about building the future of the

ACYO. Newly graduated seminararian Dn. Narek Garabedian provided the group with a guided reflection which focused on the question, "Who are we?" When asked why our roots are important, Sofia Dilsizian, ACYO Central Council chair, shared a powerful response: "Trees cannot grow without roots." The night ended with evening service and a community service project organized by Lauren Piligian, which involved assembling care packages for New York City's homeless. The packages were distributed by the young people on the following day.

On Sunday morning, participants travelled to St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City for the Divine Liturgy. Later that day, they met with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the

Eastern Diocese, and the Very Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Atajanyan, a visiting priest from Jerusalem.



ACYO participants stand with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, and the Very Rev. Emmanuel Atajanyan.

what it means to be a leader. Friday night concluded with evening worship led by the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Vicar of the Eastern

## Prime Healthcare Donates \$777,000 Of Medical Equipment to Artsakh Through AAF

GLENDALE – Prime Healthcare Management, Inc, a division of Prime Healthcare Services, one of the largest hospital management companies in the U.S., has teamed up with Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF) to donate and deliver \$777,000 of medical equipment and supplies to all hospitals in Artsakh. The donation includes hundreds of valuable medical items, including Defibrillators, Electrosurgical units, Infant warmers, Infusion pumps, Sterilizers, and Temporary Pacemakers.

"In the last three years, our company has provided to Armenia and Artsakh close to \$5 million of medical equipment in eight 40 ft. containers," said Michael Sarian, President of Hospital Operations at Prime Healthcare Management, Inc., an award-winning Hospital Management company that operates 34 hospitals across the United States. "In 2014 and 2015, we provided \$3.8 million of equipment for hospitals throughout Armenia, and this year, \$777,000 of medical equipment to Artsakh, including \$50,000 of various medical supplies donated by Medline Industries, Inc."

Since December 1, 2015, AAF delivered to Armenia and Artsakh a total of \$16 million worth of humanitarian aid on board 15 air shipments and 30 sea containers.

"The Armenia Artsakh Fund is regularly offered free of charge millions of dollars worth of medicines and medical supplies. We would welcome your generous contributions to be able to transport these life-saving medical items to Armenia and Artsakh," stated Harut Sassounian, President of Armenia Artsakh Fund.

For more information, contact the AAF office at 117 South Louise Street, #315, Glendale, CA 91205.

## Elie Wiesel Remembered by ANI

WIESEL, from page 6

Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Operations Chair Chris Smith (R-NJ), Wiesel stated: "It is my hope that the House will go on record calling upon the President to make sure that all U.S. officials dealing with human rights are educated about the memory of the Armenian Genocide." Wiesel explained that the hate which drove the Ottoman Empire to kill Armenians and the Nazis to murder Jews is still present in today's world. "Violence is the language of those who can no longer express themselves with words," Wiesel added.

In 2007, the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity issued a statement signed by 53 Nobel Prize laureates that called for the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border, civil society cooperation, increased official contacts, and an improvement in basic freedoms, noting that "Turkey should end discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities...Turks and Armenians have a huge gap in perceptions over the Armenian Genocide." To address this gap, we refer to the 2003 "Legal Analysis on the Applicability of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to Events which Occurred During the Early Twentieth Century," corroborating findings of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

More recently Wiesel joined as co-chair with actor George Clooney for the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity Selection Committee. The new award annually bestowed in Yerevan, Armenia, "on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors is granted to individuals whose actions have had an exceptional impact on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes."

Perhaps Elie Wiesel's most important legacy in Armenian-Jewish relations is located in the vital leadership role he played in persuading major Jewish organizations to step forward in support of Armenian Genocide recognition. After consulting with Wiesel, who had long bewailed governments remaining silent in the face of genocide, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) dropped its hesitation in 2007. In 2016, ADL's CEO spoke forcefully, stating:

"We have a similar responsibility to talk more broadly and recall that in our own lifetime the world did not stand up against the horrors happening in Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda. Too often, the response to genocide has been global silence.

So, let me be crystal clear: the first genocide of the 20th century is no different. What happened in the Ottoman Empire to the Armenians

beginning in 1915 was genocide. The genocide began with the ruling government arresting and executing several hundred Armenian intellectuals. After that, Armenian families were removed from their homes and sent on death marches. The Armenian people were subjected to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre and starvation.

What happened to the Armenian people was unequivocally genocide."

The Romanian-born Wiesel who wrote in French contributed a preface to the 1986 French edition of Franz Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* that had served as a source of inspiration to Jewish fighters to resist certain death during the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Wiesel said: "This novel is a masterpiece...This Armenian community became very close to me. Written before the coming of Hitler, this novel seems to foretell the future. How did Franz Werfel know the vocabulary and the mechanism of the Holocaust before the Holocaust - artistic intuition or historic memory?"

In 2013 Wiesel, who had been Professor of Humanities at Boston University since 1976, sat with Richard Hovannisian, Professor Emeritus of History at UCLA, for an encounter at Chapman University in California that was billed as a "Conversation" between the two eminent educators to discuss the moral obligation of mankind to honor and preserve the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust. With the unresolved case of the Armenian survivors in mind, Hovannisian, who also served as founding chairman of ANI, posed the question whether there can ever be real justice for Holocaust victims, to which Wiesel responded with a single word: No.

In his acceptance speech of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, Elie Wiesel, reflecting upon his own commitment to standing witness to himself, a young man who was sent to die in Auschwitz and Buchenwald, said:

"And then I explain to him how naïve we were, that the world did know and remained silent. And that is why I swore never to be silent whenever wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe."



## 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

## Realtor Nahigian Lectures Across Country

NEWTON, Mass. — During the Spring of 2016, Rob Nahigian of Auburndale Realty Co., was invited and spoke at a number of regional commercial real estate events throughout the U.S. as an industry subject matter expert and commercial industry leader.

Nahigian delivered the program “Commercial Lease Negotiations: When Know to Hold and Know When to Fold” to the Greenville (SC) Association of Realtors Commercial Division on March 11. More than 60 of the top commercial brokers, SIOR and CCIM members attended this full morning event in Greenville, SC. The course dissected the top 5 commercial lease clause issues for a landlord and for a tenant in today’s turbulent world of commercial lease negotiations. The lender’s perspective was incorporated into the subject issues as well and the pros and cons were debated.

On April 26, the Central Massachusetts Association of Realtors Commercial Alliance engaged him to present the new NAR Commercial course “Discovering Commercial Real Estate.” This four hour program was deliv-

ered in Auburn, MA at the Board’s office and covered all phases of commercial real estate from marketing, to investment trends, industrial real estate and leasing nuances. This course was presented to new commercial brokers and was a good refresher for the seasoned attendees.

Nahigian taught his Boston University Executive Semester Course “Commercial Lease Analysis” from April 29 to May 1, to industry real estate practitioners. The course was delivered at Boston University in a 28-hour format to a sold out class and included industry experts from both Brookline Bank, Stonewood Co., and former directors from SunMicro and Fidelity. The course dives into 55 commercial lease clauses from the perspective of the landlord, tenant and lender as well as the leasing process and financing/investment implications. The class attendees included real estate lenders, real estate directors of end-users, New England developers and brokers.

He then was invited to deliver “From Shanghai to Your Shelf” on May 4, for the Seattle Commercial Broker’s Association and the SIOR Washington Chapter. More than 60 attendees were present from economic developers to the premier industrial brokers and developers. He also toured the Seattle Port on a private presentation made to him in preparation for this presentation. His four-hour program was delivered to its members in downtown Seattle. The presentation reveals how corporations use mathematical formulas in the site selection decision-making in the world of logistics/supply chain when importing from Shanghai to U.S. distribution centers and retail locations. Over 280 slides include presentations of a dozen U.S. ports, inland ports, intermodal pros and cons, 3PL, logistic hubs and internal building technology that has revolutionized industrial real estate.

He again delivered “From Shanghai to Your Shelf” on June 8, for the Houston Association of Realtors and the SIOR Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter. The Port of Houston sponsored this event and more than 55 attendees were presents.



Realtor Rob Nahigian speaks in Seattle.

## OBITUARY

### Barrett G. Haik

NEW ORLEANS (*The Advocate*) — Dr. Barrett G. Haik, a key figure in establishing the well-known Hamilton Eye Institute in Memphis, Tennessee, died Friday at his boathouse in New Orleans. He was 64.

Haik worked to find treatments for various types of eye cancers and partnered with institutions such as St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and Baptist Memorial Healthcare to advance a mission of preventing blindness.

He once helped treat former Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco after she was diagnosed with choroidal melanoma, a rare and dangerous eye

cancer.

The New Orleans native also had deep ties to his hometown. His sister, Suzanne Haik Terrell, formerly served on the City Council and became the first and only Republican woman elected to statewide office in Louisiana. From 2000 to 2004, she was the state’s commissioner of elections.

Haik graduated from Metairie Park Country Day High School, Centenary College and LSU Medical School. In 1986, he joined Tulane University as a professor of ophthalmology and became medical director of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital.

In 1995, he was named chairman of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center department of ophthalmology, which he helped transform from a small department into the world-known Hamilton Eye Institute.

In an interview with the Memphis Commercial Appeal, Dr. Ralph S. Hamilton commended Haik for raising \$100 million for the institute.

He also credited Haik for vastly improving the survival rate of children with retinoblastoma, a specific eye cancer. The diagnosis used to be a death sentence, Hamilton said, but now 90 percent of those children live.

“That really is his legacy, I’d say,” Hamilton told the Memphis newspaper.

He also traveled twice a year to Panama to operate field clinics to help poor people with eye problems and diseases such as retinoblastoma.

Besides his sister, survivors include his children, Christopher Barrett Haik and Claire Marie Haik; two brothers, George M. Haik Jr. and Kenneth Haik; and his companion Blanca Phillips.

A funeral was held Wednesday, July 27 at Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home, 5100 Pontchartrain Blvd., New Orleans.

### Anahid M. Zerdelian

WATERTOWN — Anahid (Partamian) Zerdelian, 89, of Watertown, died on July 11, 2016.

She was born in Boston and was the former manager of a retail photo shop.

She was the wife of the late Ohaness Atam Zerdelian and daughter of the late Dickran and Yeranig (Aghayan) Partamian.

She leaves her son, Stephen Zerdelian of Watertown; brother Harold Partamian and his wife Gladys of Arlington; nephew Mark Partamian of Arlington and niece Donna Partamian Kutzer and her husband Ken of Westwood.

Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown on Saturday, July 16. Interment was in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in her memory to St. James Armenian Church.

## Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church Marks 60 Years

ANNIVERSARY, from page 6

the Bellecourt Manor banquet hall in Belleville for a celebratory program. Master of ceremonies Garen Vartanian gave welcoming remarks and introduced the guests seated at the dais: Archbishop Barsamian, Fr. Parsamyan, Diocesan Council member Richard Norsigian, Parish Council Chair Paul Nersesian, Dn. George Marifian, and Anniversary Committee Chair Maggie Colliflower.

Nersesian recalled the original church in East St. Louis and the sacrifices made by the immigrant generation of Armenians who were determined to build an Armenian Church in the greater St. Louis area.

“Our church was founded by the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. The formation of this church was part of the healing process for the survivors, and they took pride in it,” he said. “Today we are not without our challenges, but we are moving forward, and I feel like we are gaining momentum in our efforts.”

He went on to speak about the community’s dedication in taking up the project of building a new sanctuary in Belleville, and noted the contributions of individuals and church organizations in realizing this dream in the 1970s. Today, he said, the community is looking forward to passing the torch to a new generation of Armenians.

Reflections were also offered by Kelegian, who was instrumental in the early efforts to secure land and begin construction of the current sanctuary in Belleville, and Norsigian, who is originally from the Holy Shoghagat community.

The newly ordained sub-deacon

Gregory Marifian thanked Pasamyan for working closely with the altar servers to help them become better acquainted with the Divine Liturgy. He also recalled the late Very Rev. Shnork Kasparian, a longtime pastor of Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church, who he said first inspired him to serve on the altar.

“We take pride every week in seeing you in the pews, worshipping, praying, and participating in the Eucharist as our ancestors have taught us, and it is a blessing and a privilege that we get to serve you every week,” he said on behalf of the altar servers.

A short film highlighting the history of Holy Virgin Mary and Shoghagat Church and its present-day community was screened. Armenian musical selections were performed by parishioners Susan Norsigian, Ani Kramer and Giselle Krikorian.

Pasamyan expressed his gratitude to the community for their warm welcome over the past year.

“Our ancestors built, sustained, and grew this parish with vision, determination, and love,” he said. “Let us carry this legacy into the future with their blessings.”

Archbishop Barsamian said he was heartened to see the energy in the local community, from the enthusiasm of the three altar servers to the dedicated preparation of the anniversary committee and all the parish organizations.

“I pray that God will continue to bless this community,” the Primate said. “May He continue to strengthen you and inspire you as you embark to write a new chapter in the history of this wonderful parish.”

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## California State Board of Education Adopts Expanded Armenian Genocide Curriculum

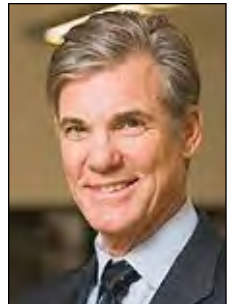
SACRAMENTO – During its July 14 meeting, the California State Board of Education (CSBE) adopted a new History-Social Studies curriculum framework which will serve as a guideline for public school teachers. This framework provides improvements and expanded language and scope of information regarding the Armenian Genocide, according to the Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region (ANCA-WR).

The additions regarding the Armenian Genocide were a result of collaborative work between the ANCA-WR, the Genocide Education Project (GenEd), the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), Superintendent Tom Torlakson and a culmination of the initiative taken by Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (D – San Fernando Valley) and the Armenian Legislative Caucus beginning with the Armenian Genocide Education Act (AB 1915), initiated by principal author Nazarian, which was signed into law in 2014.

“Genocide education has been a top priority for the ANCA-WR and the adoption of the new curriculum framework, with the additional language regarding the Armenian Genocide, will further students’ understanding of crimes against humanity and provide them with greater context regarding the interconnection of such historical events, beginning with the Armenian Genocide. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the State Board of Education, the IQC, Superintendent of Public Schools Tom Torlakson, our Education Committee, GenEd, Assemblymember Nazarian, and the Armenian Legislative Caucus for their commitment and leadership as well as UTLA, SEIU, LAUSD, President Zimmer and the thousands of organizations, officials, leaders, and community members who submitted letters of support, making the language additions possible,” stated ANCA-WR Executive Director Elen Asatryan. “We look forward to continuing our work with the Department of Education, Superintendent Torlakson and GenEd through our Education Committee to make the necessary changes in the textbooks that are reflective of the new cur-

riculum framework and ensure that the Armenian Genocide is taught in every classroom throughout the Golden State and beyond,” added Asatryan.

“I want to thank all the groups and individuals from the Armenian community who took the time to get involved in this process, make so many great comments and attend numerous meetings,” said State Superintendent of Public



Superintendent Tom Torlakson

Instruction Tom Torlakson. “This was an inclusive public effort to broaden knowledge of this terrible period in history, learn more about world events, and deepen our students’ understanding of the Armenian experience. California students will be better prepared to succeed in 21st century careers

and college because of the contributions made in our updated History/Social Science Frameworks,” he added.

Representatives of the Armenian American community and the ANCA – WR, including Asatryan and Chief Legislative Consultant Haig Baghdassarian were in Sacramento to testify when the Board of Education deliberated adoption of the History-Social Studies Curriculum Framework. Assemblyman Nazarian traveled especially to Sacramento, in the midst of the legislature’s summer recess, to have his voice and those of his constituents heard by the Board.

The ANCA – WR, the Genocide Education Project, and the Armenian Legislative Caucus, in coordination with GenEd, led the way in ensuring that the IQC proposed, and that the Board of Education adopted an accurate and comprehensive treatment of the Armenian Genocide. Nazarian led the efforts of the Armenian Legislative Caucus, and his efforts were supported by Assemblymen Katcho

Achadjian (R – San Luis Obispo) and Scott Wilk (R – Santa Clarita).

Beginning in September of 2015, the ANCA-WR, Genocide Education Project, Assemblymember Nazarian and the Armenian Legislative Caucus submitted proposed language changes and additions to the current curriculum framework and attended the IQC hearings to advocate for those proposals. Submitted proposed language additions and changes may be found online at [www.ancawr.org/CAGenocideEducation](http://www.ancawr.org/CAGenocideEducation). Just days before the July 14 meeting, the ANCA-WR also launched a letter campaign, which resulted in over 2,000 support letters being submitted to the SBE on the subject from elected officials, organizations, educators, officials, and residents throughout California.

“This is a watershed moment; education and vigilance are the keys to banishing the act of genocide to exist solely in the pages of history books,” stated Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian. “I am proud to have lead the legislative charge to pass the Armenian Genocide Education Act (AB 1915). The decision by the State of California Board of Education will allow students across California to understand and learn from the Armenian Genocide.”

The revised and newly adopted curriculum framework include:

The addition of key facts regarding the Armenian Genocide and its causes;

Reference regarding the clear link between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust; and

Information regarding the unprecedented American humanitarian response to the Armenian Genocide—during which time, through the first US Congressionally sanctioned humanitarian organization, the Near East Relief, the United States and the American people from every state, raised over 117 million dollars, saved over 1 million refugees, and over 132,000 orphans.

“The Social Studies Framework is critical to the teaching of all content related to Social Sciences, and most important for all Armenians is the factual teaching of the Armenian Genocide and the support role provided by the USA Near East Relief. To effect change on any framework takes years. The ANCA-WR Education Committee started this work 2 years ago, and has teamed up with leaders in Genocide Education and elected officials to make certain that students learn the true facts about Genocide. Committee members have taken responsibility to write letters and meet

and work with text book publishers to effect the necessary changes. We are proud of the ANCA-WR staff, elected officials and individuals who gave days and hours of their time to reach this critical goal. This is a milestone for California Genocide Education and one that should be celebrated. The work now begins, not only to change the text books to match the frameworks but to also make certain that teachers teach the Genocide content and teach it thoroughly,” noted ANCA-WR Education Committee Chair Alice Petrossian.

Roxanne Makasdjian, a GenEd board member, played an integral role in the process and particularly in recommending language, and was instrumental in obtaining assistance from an authority on Armenian History, Professor Stephan Astourian who is Director of the Armenian Studies Program at UC Berkeley, in order to make sure that the language in the framework will be accurate. Professor Keith Watenpaugh, an Armenian Genocide scholar at UC Davis who specializes in Modern Islam, Human Rights and Peace, offered his expertise to the California History Social Studies Project, which is the organization within the UC Davis History Department which has been tasked with revising the Curriculum Framework.

“The Armenian Genocide is a significant and instructive moment in modern world history, said Makasdjian. “We’re gratified that our work to insure California’s History-Social Studies teachers are given more appropriate guidelines for teaching about it have been successful.”

Asatryan expressed appreciation for the many voices who have lent their support in an effort to enhance Armenian Genocide education in California’s public schools. She stated that “it was heartening to have the full support of exemplary leaders like Superintendent Torlakson and Steve Zimmer, President of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, among many other prominent education leaders and organizations lend their support to our efforts.” In his letter to the IQC committee, Zimmer noted that “Our curriculum quite literally shapes our students’ understanding of the past and even more significantly prepares them to be the change agents who can build a better future.”

Administrators and educators may obtain lesson plans and teaching materials on the Armenian Genocide by contacting GenEd [info@GenocideEducation.org](mailto:info@GenocideEducation.org) or visiting [teachgenocide.org](http://teachgenocide.org).



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### PGA Club Professional Qualifies for 2016 PGA Championship

WINDHAM, N.H. (*Open Post*) – Local PGA Golf Professional, Rich Berberian of Windham Country Club will be fulfilling a lifelong dream when he tees it up in the 2016 PGA Championship, July 28-31 at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, NJ.

Berberian is one of 20 PGA club professionals to qualify for the PGA Championship where he will compete alongside defending champion Jason Day, Rory McIlroy, Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth and some of the greatest golfers in the world, in a major championship.

Competing on tour each week is the primary job of professional golfers, however, Berberian is a PGA club professional and his day job responsibilities are vastly different than a PGA tour player. His responsibilities consist of teaching lessons, overseeing member programs, executing player development programs and growing the game at the grassroots level, among other professional duties.

This will be Berberian’s first appearance in a PGA Championship.



Rich Berberian



COMMUNITY NEWS

# Rep. Jim Costa Visits, Speaks at American University of Armenia

YEREVAN and FRESNO – Congressman Jim Costa from California’s 16th Congressional District toured the American University of Armenia (AUA) on July 20, as part of a four-day visit to Armenia, which included meetings with Armenian lawmakers. Over 150 people joined US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills and Honorary Consul of Armenia to Fresno Berj Apkarian in hearing Rep. Costa speak about US-Armenia relations and the role of AUA.

In his remarks, Costa announced the establishment of an endowment at AUA by Fresno resident Edward Kashian, reflecting the close existing relationship between California State University, Fresno (CSU Fresno) and AUA. He also touched upon his efforts in Congress, the worldwide political climate, the 2016 US presidential election, the realities of today’s Armenian-American community in Fresno, as well as the current situation in Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh).

“You should just call me Jim Costigian” stated Rep. Costa, noting that while he may not be

for being one of the Central Valley’s top real estate development and asset/property management leaders. Kashian’s developments are renowned throughout the Central Valley for their beauty as well as their operational efficiency. With a focus on developing his community, Kashian has become an iconic figure in the social, political and developmental fabric of Fresno. Long active in civic affairs, Kashian has applied vision along with his fiscal and financial management expertise to many groups including Community Hospital Medical System, University of California, Fresno Madera Agency on Aging, San Joaquin River Trust and has served as the environmental appointee to the San Joaquin River Conservancy.

Securing scholarships for promising students is a priority for AUA and will be a focus of the 25th Anniversary Gala being held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel on November 19. Longtime AUA benefactors Dr. Mihran and Elizabeth Agbabian will be among those being honored for their ongoing generosity and commitment to the University. The evening’s keynote speaker will be entrepreneur/philanthropist Ruben Vardanayn. Los Angeles community leaders Zaven Akian and Sinan Sinanian will serve as co-chairs. 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.



Rep. Jim Costa with students at AUA



Rep. Jim Costa

Armenian, he has grown up with Armenians. He continued his remarks by talking about his close relationship with Armenians in the Central Valley of California. “When I think of my first visit to Armenia, stepping foot on Armenian soil yesterday, I think in some ways I have come home,” stated Costa. He continued, “I have a special concern or relation because I grew up in Fresno, California, and I affectionately refer to the land I grew up as the Land of William Saroyan.”

Costa reasserted the fact that the Armenian Genocide was in fact genocide and remains hopeful the House of Representatives will recognize it as such. The congressman emphasized a stronger Armenia will develop as a result of close partnerships with American institutions such as AUA and CSU Fresno. He stated in his closing remarks, “It is why we educate young people at this fine University, as well as others around the world, about facts mattering and how you can make a difference. And that you are the future. Each and everyone one of you are the future. You do well, Armenia does well.” Throughout his talk, Rep. Costa stressed hoe facts matter when it comes to politics and that democracy isn’t easy, it’s a work in progress.

Costa represents California’s 16th Congressional District which includes all of Merced County and parts of both Fresno and Madera Counties. Costa’s grandparents immigrated to the United States from the Azores, and he is very proud of his Portuguese roots. Raised on a dairy farm in Fresno’s Kearney Park area, Congressman Costa is a third-generation family farmer. Costa is a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and during his time in Congress, he has continually urged the Administration and Congress to appropriately recognize the Armenian Genocide. Costa has a close working relationship with Armenians throughout the US.

Philanthropist Edward Kashian is known



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Idealism and Love for Rhode Island Drive Young Politician

KAZARIAN, from page 1

Two people have helped shape the young legislator: her mother, Michele Kazarian, and President Barack Obama.

Kazarian recalled the effect of the words of Obama, her graduation's surprise speaker.

"He was calling on everybody to take part in public service, especially young people. It really sat well with me," she recalled in a recent interview. She noted that Obama himself had taken part in community activism after graduation and thus, his words inspired her.

She said she decided to return back to East Providence and take part in a political cam-



State Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian

paigned as a volunteer. However, she soon saw that the seat for her district was open and decided to seek the office herself. She won the four-way Democratic primary, being the only woman and the youngest aspirant.

"It was a long journey," she said.

Her mom, Michele, she said, always inspired her and her sister, Jackie, to do better and to give back to the community.

"My mom raised us as a single mother. Education was always so important," she said. "It was also important to be involved, to read. The big thing in our household was to be a good member of the community. Really it is a big reason as to why I am in what I am in."

Kazarian said that it is important for her to interact with her constituents.

"Facebook and Twitter make all the differ-

ence," she said.

Education is important for her and she tries to volunteer at schools whenever she can. "Reading Week at the local elementary school is one of my favorite things," she said. She also interacts with the students through mock legislative sessions at the school. "It makes me proud that more and more young girls raise their hands" and show interest in politics, she said.

One bill that has meant much to her has been the bill about mandating the teaching of the Armenian Genocide at schools in Rhode Island. Gov. Gina Raimondo signed a bill in June, which mandates that beginning in fall 2017, school districts will have to educate middle or high school students about the subject at least once before they graduate from high school. An earlier bill made curriculum materials available on the subject. Now, teaching the subject is mandatory.

The passage of the bill, Kazarian said, "was one of my proudest moments. It mandates the teaching of all genocides and the Holocaust."

"I am glad that Rhode Island is such a wonderful state and recognizes the Armenian Genocide," Kazarian said.

"My hope is that this increases awareness. I was really so happy to work on that bill,"



State Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian with some of her constituents

she said. "We were even able to pass it on Yom Hashoah," Holocaust Memorial Day. "All of our common ties had gone through so

much and were able to come together and introduce this bill on the House floor."

The entire House, she said, supported the measure.

She explained that when she initially ran, she wanted to plow through legislation and enact change quickly. Now, she said, she has realized that the long process for a bill, from start to finish, actually serves a purpose. "When we quickly pass things and they are not vetted, it is not the best solution," she said. It is better to thoroughly go through a bill and make sure that it can stand.

Kazarian said that she was especially proud that last year, during the Genocide centennial, that so many Armenians came together around the world to mark the historic anniversary.

"I love our home country, but I cannot forget the Armenian Genocide," she said.

According to her office, she received a legislative award from the National Association of Social Workers for her bill which would require all public schools to have at least one full-time certified school social worker for every 400 students. She also sponsored a bill that prohibits insurance companies from varying the premium rates charged for health coverage based on the gender of the policyholder.

She currently serves as a member of the House Corporations Committee and the House Rules Committee. In addition, she is the chair of a legislative commission tasked with examining care administered to individuals with rare diseases, a committee created as a result of her efforts.

In Rhode Island, the job of a state representative is part time, from January through June. Her "day job," so to speak, is at Upserve, a tech start up in Providence.

She also hopes to set a positive example for many millennials to stay in Rhode Island.

"More young people are involved in politics," she said. "It changes the game."

She also encouraged more Armenian Americans to participate in politics, as they can make issues important to them so much more visible.

Kazarian, now a two-term veteran, is up for reelection on November 8. She has one opponent in the general election, but she hopes to win and represent her beloved community. She explained, "The reason I ran initially was that I know my district. As far as running for other office, I'll never count it out, but I am happy to serve my community."

The humble Kazarian also notes on her reelection website that yes, she attended Columbia and was a member of the university's PEACE volunteer organization, traveling to homeless shelters and public schools in Harlem to teach conflict resolution skills and conduct community workshops, but she has also worked as a waitress to pay the bills.

To learn more about Kazarian, visit her page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/katherine.kazarian63/> or visit <http://www.votekazarian63.com/>



State Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian with some students in her district.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Auction Bids Get Technology Boost

By Doreen Leggett

BOSTON (*Wicked Local Chatham*) – When Jonathan Kazarian's little cousin got cancer several years ago Kazarian put on a fund-raiser for Dana Farber Cancer Institute and naturally, his childhood pal Zach Hagopian was there helping him out.

The event was held at New England Aquarium and raised \$67,000, Kazarian remembers, and he said it went very well. Except for one detail.

"The paper ticket raffle was a nightmare," Kazarian said.

Afterwards Kazarian and Hagopian were talking and thought wouldn't it be great if folks could bid online or by text message – even if they weren't at the event.

"We ended up building a company around it," he said.

That company is Acelevents and is handling the silent auction for the Great Shark Gala on July 24 at Chatham Bars Inn.

The gala is a first for the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, which has now merged with the Chatham Shark Center. Kazarian's mother, Ronna, who lives in East Orleans, is a supporter of the Conservancy's president, Cynthia Wigren, and she told her son to reach out and see if they wanted to use Acelevents.

They did.

"The fact that they created this software, are helping non-profits, and have a local connection, it's a perfect fit," Jennifer Allard, who is organizing the gala, said.

She said the gala is sold out but Acelevents allows them to put the auction items – which include everything from artwork from local artisans to Red Sox tickets to shark trips – online so they can reach more people. And that means a better chance to raise more funds for the white shark research the Conservancy is doing in Cape waters.

Plus, the price is right.

"Two of our biggest goals were to create an experience that was both easy to use and affordable. Luckily, most of the feedback we've received has revolved around these two qualities," said Hagopian.

The co-founders also said another problem with paper bids is people have to constantly check the bidding station to see if they have been outbid. With Acelevents, people receive an instant text message when they are outbid and they can sim-

ply respond to submit a higher bid. This, ideally, creates competition leading to bidding wars and thus driving the proceeds up.

Acelevents also streamline the payment process so people can pay on their own device which minimizes the checkout line, Kazarian explained.

Although it's a computer- or phone-based experience, Hagopian and Kazarian will be on hand the night of the gala helping people if they need it. It's another reason to get to the Cape. (They also did another event on the Cape recently – the Figawi Ball.)

"I've spent summers in the Harwich/Chatham area since I was about 8 years old. One place that is extremely special to me in North Beach Island. While the beach changes each year, I have been going there with my family and friends since I was a child. Jon and I actually met on that beach when we were kids (15 years ago). Since then, we've shared tons of great memories on the island including pig roasts and clambakes," said Hagopian, whose dad still lives in Harwich.

Kazarian said he has fond memories of working at Sundae School and also teaching sailing at the Orleans Yacht Club and he and Hagopian hold fund-raisers, albeit without silent auctions, regularly on the beach. This July 3 they held one for the Wounded Warriors Project on Nauset Spit.

"I've always been obsessed with the water," he said.



Acelevents co-founders Jonathan Kazarian and Zach Hagopian at the Figawi Charity Ball.

From the age of 7 on he wanted to get his Scuba license and was thrilled that when he turned 14 he could finally get it. But Kazarian said it was only two years later that sharks began to make more and more frequent appearances off the shores of the Cape. As a "Shark Week" buff with his brother he is very impressed with the animal but knows he is sharing the ocean with them so he may be diving a bit less.

"I am a little scared of sharks," he said with a small laugh, saying he was willing to give them their space.

## Armenian Society of Los Angeles Celebrates 60th Anniversary with Various Events

GLENDALE – The Board of Trustees of the Armenian Society of Los Angeles (ASLA), on behalf of its 1,500 members, will celebrate the Society's 60th anniversary with four spectacular events. On this occasion, the headquarters of ASLA will be named after Ludovica and Agop Aintablian. In addition

On August 27, a Gala Dinner is planned to celebrate the 60th anniversary of ASLA and the 50th wedding anniversary of grand benefactors Ludovica and Agop Aintablian. On that day, the library and conference room will be named after Audrey and Vaughn Gregor; the VIP and Reading Room, after Galust Babakhanian and family and the main lobby, after Sinan and Angela Sinanian.

Next, on September 24, ASLA will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

On October 2, a Grand Concert is planned featuring internationally-known violinist Sergey Khachaturian accompanied by the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra. The concert, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia's independence and the 60th anniversary of ASLA, will be held at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena.

And finally, on November 19, ASLA will honor its past and present presidents during its Annual Dinner Dance.

ASLA, a non-profit organization, was established in 1956. It aims to preserve and develop American and Armenian cultural traditions and promote good citizenship and respect for government.



Ludovica and Agop Aintablian

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# Arts & Living

## Authors Bohjalian, Zanoian Join Mer Doon Advisory Board

ECHMIADZIN, Armenia – Internationally acclaimed and bestselling author Chris Bohjalian and global energy expert and author Vahan Zanoian have joined Mer Doon's new Advisory Board. Their role will be to impart strategic advice and non-financial support to the organization.

Bohjalian has penned 18 novels, most of which were *New York Times* bestsellers. His work has been translated into over 30 languages and have been turned into movies three times. His books have been chosen as Best Books of the Year by the *Washington Post*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Hartford Courant*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Bookpage*, and *Salon*.

His awards include the ANCA Freedom Award for his work educating Americans about the Armenian Genocide; the ANCA Arts and Letters Award for *The Sandcastle Girls*, as well as the Saint Mesrob Mashdoots Medal. His novel, *Midwives*, was a number one *New York Times* bestseller, a selection of Oprah's Book Club, and a New England Booksellers Association Discovery pick. He is a Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences.

He lives in Vermont with his wife, the photographer Victoria Blewer. Their daughter, Grace Experience, is a young actor in New York City. Among the audiobooks she has narrated are *Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands* and *The Guest Room*.



Chris Bohjalian, Vahan Zanoian

Bohjalian shared, "I was so impressed by the young women I met at Mer Doon last year and so moved by their stories. These are smart, courageous, remarkable young people. And I was so honored to glimpse the incredible work of Mer Doon. It is a home, with all that word connotes, and it is changing lives in meaningful and important ways."

Vahan Zanoian is an author, traveler and global energy expert. With more than 35 years of experience, he served as the Chief Executive Officer of First Energy Bank, and President of PFC Energy International, a part of PFC Energy, Inc. Zanoian serves as a consultant to numerous international and national oil companies, banks, and other private and public organizations throughout the United States, the Middle East, the Far East and Latin America. He has travelled extensively throughout the world in both his professional and personal life. Zanoian has published two volumes of poetry.

Most notably, he published a debut novel in 2013, called *A Place Far Away* and its sequel, *The Doves of Ohanavank* in 2014, both of which tackle the horrifying activities of trans-national criminal organizations engaged in human and sex trafficking in Armenia and the Middle East. Zanoian is widely regarded as one of few writers with extensive knowledge and understanding of trafficking. He currently divides his time between Southern California, Armenia and the Middle East.

Zanoian stated, "Mer Doon is a formidable organization which performs a critical function in Armenia, by providing a nurturing home to young girls as they get dismissed from orphanages upon turning 18. My wife and I have visited Mer Doon in Echmiadzin on several occasions, and love seeing the wonderful and talented residents there as often as we can."

see MER DOON, page 14



Charlie Boghosian, owner of Chicken Charlie's, holds an order of his creation, steak and lobster nachos, on July 16 at the Orange County Fair.

## What You Should be Eating at the Orange County Fair: Nutella, 'Game Of Thrones'-Inspired Hot Dogs

COSTA MESA, Calif. (*LA Times*) – The Orange County fair opened this week in Costa Mesa, and its new food additions have already taught us several lessons: You can fry anything if you set your mind to it, fusion knows no bounds and bacon belongs on everything. Here are several of the newest additions to the fair's food scene:

If you're with the fair's early crowd and want to try some breakfast, you may want to check out Bacon A-Fair's new French toast bacon bombs. These balls of sweet dough are filled with cream cheese, wrapped with bacon, deep-fried and topped with whipped cream, syrup and cinnamon sugar. And each one comes on a stick, in case you want to share.

Biggy's owner Dominic Palmieri said last year's bacon-wrapped pork belly went over well with the fair crowd. And that's why this year he decided to step it up a notch by debuting a bacon-wrapped pork belly corn dog. It's pork belly on a stick wrapped in two feet of bacon, breaded and fried with your choice of dipping sauce.

If hearing "fried butter" makes you want to eat a salad and run around the block, you aren't alone. But in reality, eating a fried butter ball is like eating a mini rolled-up pancake, unless you actually eat the glob of butter in the middle, by itself. To make fried butter or "butter balls," butter is frozen, slathered in batter, fried and then topped with syrup and powdered sugar.

For \$8, you get four butter balls or one fried Nutella. To make fried Nutella, the chocolate hazelnut spread is frozen, dipped in batter, fried and served on a stick.

Staying true to its Hollywood theme, both of Pink's Hot Dogs' new items are pop culture-inspired. The Daenerys Mother of Doggies is a not-so-subtle nod to "Game of Thrones" character Daenerys Targaryen. The owners Dale and Celia Smith are fans of the show who said they wanted to create something inspired by the fireproof character. So they took their spicy Polish dog and made it hotter with Sriracha, sauerkraut, onions and red radish. They top it with some sour cream to cool it down, but you still need water with this one.

The Lord of the Rings Dog consists of a beef hot dog, onion rings and barbecue sauce. Because the super spicy dog isn't for everyone, the Smiths said they've sold more Lord of the Rings Dogs.

If fried food isn't on your diet, Dara and Dane Baldwin's smoothie booth has a new pineapple drink on the menu. It's a blend of pineapple juice and cream of coconut topped with coconut shavings (there's no added sugar). And you drink it right out of an open pineapple, complete with an umbrella. Next to the smoothie booth is the couple's cinnamon roll booth, where they are sticking to the traditional cinnamon rolls.

"We don't mess with that," Dara said.

There's nothing wrong with classic fried chicken either, so why doesn't Chicken Charlie's just serve that?

"I wanted to have fun with it," said owner Charlie Boghosian, also known as Chicken Charlie.

New to Chicken Charlie's this year are bacon-wrapped fried chicken legs; chicken in a waffle on a stick; and steak and lobster nachos. Yes, you can eat steak and lobster at the fair – grilled steak and fried lobster are tossed with Doritos and nacho cheese.

Fair food is a family business for the Boghosians. Chicken Charlie's brother, Tony Boghosian, runs the Pineapple Express booth, which has a new creation of its own. The brothers decided to put their own spin on their favorite restaurant dish – shrimp fried rice. Rice balls are breaded and fried and placed on a stick with fried shrimp. You can dip them in soy, cocktail or teriyaki sauce.

Texas Donuts has a new doughnut, and just like all its other doughnuts, it's definitely meant to be shared. The "s'moreo" has everything a s'more has – marshmallow creme, chocolate and graham cracker – but this booth added crushed Oreos to the mix.

see FOOD, page 14

## INTERVIEW

## Geoffrey Zakarian

### Broadway Jazz Fest at Lambs Club in Manhattan

NEW YORK (Total Food Service) – Geoffrey Zakarian could never be accused of having idle hands or resting on his laurels.

He trained at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in New York before working under Daniel Boulud at Le Cirque in the 1980s. Fast forward 30 years and Zakarian is a published author, owner of six restaurants and a hospitality company in addition to his TV appearance as a judge on "Chopped" and "Iron Chef America."

The Massachusetts native's latest endeavor is the Broadway Jazz Fest, a brunch series where attendees can enjoy a great meal at the Lambs Club in Manhattan while watching some of Broadway's brightest stars perform show tunes and jazz standards. The series consists of six Sunday performances that kicked off with Tony Yazbeck from the Broadway show "Neverland."

Where did this idea come from? What was the inspiration behind it?

Since opening The Lambs Club has been a supporter of the Broadway community in part because of our location but also because of the history of the building. We have worked with many shows throughout the years and



Geoffrey Zakarian

because of our existing live music programming we felt that combing the two was a perfect fit.

**Why is a series like this important to you?**

It is always important to me to be a part of the communities that my restaurants are in, and as a New Yorker the arts have always played an important role in my life.

**How did you come to decide on a charity to donate funds to?**

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS does such great work. It has always been a charity The Lambs Club supports and is a near and dear charity to the entire Broadway community. It was a natural fit.

**Did you decide on who you wanted for Broadway musicians or did you have some finding top talent?**

We collaborated with the advertising, marketing and branding agency Spotco, who represent many of the leading Broadway shows.

**What makes the Lambs Club an ideal place for this sort of event series?**

Since its inception six years ago The Lambs Club has supported up and coming New York City artists through events, hosting them post-show and weekly music nights. The arts community feels endeared to the restaurant and bar as it is a place that they often call "home" when they are away from their own home.

**When you say you are curating, to what point are you involved in things like menus and drinks?**

As chef partner, I oversee every aspect of the food and beverage, as well as guest experience. I have a great team in the kitchen and front that makes it all come to life. It is just like a Broadway show every day. We all work together to get ready for "curtain!"

**Is this the first year of the event? If so, what are the plans for the future?**

This is the inaugural year of what we hope will be an annual series for the Broadway community and enthusiasts to enjoy.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## 'Music for Moderns: The Partnership of George Avakian and Anahid Ajemian'

By Will Friedwald

NEW YORK (*Wall Street Journal*) – The central image of the exhibition “Music for Moderns: The Partnership of George Avakian and Anahid Ajemian” shows the young couple traveling somewhere in Europe in 1949, standing next to both a train and an automobile. Somehow that seems like a perfect metaphor for the Avakians: He is one of the greatest record producers in the history of jazz, while she was a concert violinist and a leading figure in the world of contemporary classical music. A locomotive and a car are inherently different kinds of vehicles, but they both can transport you from one place to another and, ultimately, get you to where you're going.

“Music for Moderns,” at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts through September 24, is an exhibit of personal photographs, album covers, contracts, vintage news releases, concert programs and other items from the couple's papers. The exhibition is dedicated to Ajemian, who died on June 13, a few weeks before it was scheduled to open.

The most striking feature of the show is an impressive sequence of larger-than-life reproductions of classic albums produced by Avakian that line the upper walls of the Astor Gallery – from his pioneering 78 rpm collections (he is generally credited as having produced the very first jazz albums), starting in 1940, to his heyday as the head of multiple divisions at Columbia Records in the 1950s and later work with such notable jazz post-modernists as Charles Lloyd and Keith Jarrett.

Avakian has an impressive track record in producing what are widely regarded, in many cases, as the greatest works by the major names in jazz, such as “Ellington at Newport,” “Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy” and Miles Davis's “Miles Ahead,” as well as two of the most celebrated live albums ever, Benny Goodman's classic 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert (which gave us the essential version of *Sing, Sing, Sing*) and Erroll Garner's “Concert by the Sea.”

The exhibition is organized largely around Avakian's relationships with these jazz giants, starting with a 1936 interview he did with Goodman for his high-school newspaper, the Horace Mann Record. Then there are sections



Anahid Ajemian and George Avakian in Europe in 1949.

devoted to his work with Goodman, Armstrong (including Satchmo's original lyric sheet to Mack the Knife, a hit single produced by Avakian), Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Sonny Rollins and others.

There are also photographs and materials relating to his personal life, from his early days in Armavir (then part of Armenia, now part of Russia), where he was born in 1919, to his World War II service and his marriage to Ajemian in 1948. She had been born in Manhattan to Armenian immigrant parents in 1924 and was already famous as part of a duo with her sister, Maro, a concert pianist.

Anahid was an indefatigable supporter of new composers, such as the avant-gardists John Cage and Henry Cowell, and, most successfully, the Armenian-Scottish-American composer Alan Hovhaness, whose work was more straightforwardly melodic but no less strikingly original. It was Hovhaness, the exhibition reveals, who

introduced Avakian – then head of world music at Columbia – to the Hindustani virtuoso Ravi Shankar, whom Avakian summarily recorded for Columbia (and whom the label photographed posing on a rug borrowed from Avakian's father, a carpet merchant).

Possibly the most rewarding section of the show is a series of concert programs and photos devoted to the Avakians' most successful work together professionally, a 1957 concert series at Town Hall that combined jazz and classical music – Duke Ellington (premiering his *Such Sweet Thunder*) alongside Dimitri Mitropoulos and the Ajemian sisters. Like the primary photo, which is also on the cover of the brochure devoted to the exhibit, those concerts are symbolic of a remarkable couple who, though they may have dwelled in different areas of music, traveled together to reach the same destination.



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Grilled Caprese Sandwiches

Here's a gourmet marriage of grilled cheese sandwiches and Caprese salad, best made in summer, when tomatoes and basil are at their peak.

#### INGREDIENTS

8 slices (about 11 oz.) rustic sourdough or Italian country bread  
2 large garlic cloves, halved  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
8 slices (6 oz.) mozzarella cheese  
2 ripe heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced  
1/2 cup thinly sliced roasted red peppers  
16 large basil leaves  
About 1/2 tsp. kosher salt  
About 1/2 tsp. pepper

#### PREPARATION

1. Rub a side of each slice of bread with a cut side of garlic and brush with oil. Layer the plain side of half the bread with cheese, tomatoes, and peppers, dividing evenly. Top with remaining bread, garlic side up.
2. Cook 2 sandwiches at a time in a large frying pan over medium-low heat, covered, turning sandwiches once, until golden brown and cheese is melted, 6 minutes.
3. Tuck 4 slices basil into each sandwich. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

–Originally published in *Sunset Magazine*, August 2010.

Go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/grilled-caprese-sandwiches>

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>

### What You Should be Eating at the Orange County Fair

FOOD, from page 13

Tasti Burger added two new burgers to its menu this season, including the bacon cheddar brat burger. It has your burger basics: meat, cheese, lettuce and tomato. But this burger is topped with a bratwurst, bacon and barbecue sauce as well.

Also new this year: Bacon Nutella pickle (Pickle O' Pete's), deep-fried pizza log (Apple Fries), Diablitto sundae (Fruit Caboose), Kool-Aid hot wings (Chicken Charlie's), Dole whip (Crutchee's Ice Cream), bacon-wrapped

baked potato (Bacon A-Fair), All American Reuben burger (Grant's Tasti Burger), pickle fries and pickled Cheese on a stick (Pickle O' Pete's), Som-Mor-Bacon (Fruit Caboose), bison burger (Juicy's), lasagna sandwich (Pignotti's Pasta), Oreo churro (Dutchmen's Funnel Cake).

The Orange County Fair is open noon to midnight Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday and Sunday. The fair will continue until August 14 at 100 Fair Drive in Costa Mesa.

### Authors Bohjalian, Zanoian Join Mer Doon Advisory Board

MER DOON, from page 13

Stephen Ashekian, Chairman of Mer Doon, stated, “We are truly honored that Chris and Vahan have agreed to become Advisory Board members. I believe when great people support a great cause, it's a win-win for everyone.”

Many corporate, organizational, and individual supporters help advance Mer Doon's mission. 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, Armenian Eyecare Project (AACP), 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. It has no political or religious affiliations. Tax-deductible donations can be made by going to [www.mer-doon.com](http://www.mer-doon.com) and clicking on “Donate.” For information, please email [www.mer-doon.com](http://www.mer-doon.com). Visitors are always welcome!



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# No Reconciliation Without Recognition:

## A Personal History of the Armenian Genocide

By Robert Kazandjian

On April 24, 2015 Armenians worldwide commemorated the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. In 1915, Ottoman authorities arrested approximately 250 prominent Armenian community figures and intellectuals in Constantinople, the majority of whom were executed. The great poet Daniel Varoujan was disemboweled before his eyes were gouged out. The carnage spread like a malignancy across the land; cultural leaders were rounded up and murdered, silencing voices of resistance and leaving communities vulnerable to attack. Tens of thousands of able-bodied Armenian men serving in the Ottoman Army were forced to disarm, transferred to labor battalions and then butchered by bayonet or gunshot while performing work duties. Wholesale deportation of all Armenians from Eastern Anatolia to concentration camps in the scorching Syrian Desert was ordered. Deportation was code for massacre. Men, women and children were slaughtered. The barbaric methodology varied. Those who survived the death marches were left to starve in the camps. One and a half million lives were lost.

Fuelled by a pan-Turkic ideology, the chauvinist nationalist wing of the Young Turk Movement, under the banner of the Committee of Union and Progress, planned and conducted the Armenian Genocide. The First World War created ideal conditions for systematic annihilation to take place, allowing the Armenian minority to be cast as a threat to national security. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's modern Turkish republic, soaring from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, was built on the myth of resistance against the imperial powers. The truth was that his immediate predecessors had expunged minority peoples from their homeland, creating the monolithic state Atatürk desired. Kemalists initiated the vehement denial of the genocide, refusing to acknowledge that large Armenian communities ever existed in Turkey. Propaganda depicted the Armenian minority as a rebellious, violent insurgency and attributed deaths to internal conflict. This has been the Turkish governmental line of argument from Atatürk to Erdogan.

Coupled with the ideological reasons behind the Turkish state's perpetual denial of the Armenian Genocide are the practical reasons. Recognition of the Genocide would strengthen the

argument for reparations to be paid to the families of Armenians who had property expropriated and redistributed by the Ottoman government. If Turkey were deemed to bear legal responsibility for the meticulously calculated theft that took place, the financial implications would be monumental.

The politics in this context have a deeply personal foundation for all Armenians. This is not just about history. This is about our lives, our identities, and our very existence. I have previously written of how our battle for recognition and against denial continues. I have addressed the wounds inflicted upon our collective consciousness from a safe distance, occupying myself with the big picture. However, when I consider the details of my own family's survival of the genocide, the unrelenting weight of history becomes too much to bear. It is when I pause and reflect on their suffering that I feel the blade of the Ottoman gendarme's bayonet wedged between my own shoulder blades.

My father, Armenag, first son of Vahe and Rebecca Kazandjian, was born in Cairo in 1951. He carries the middle name of Abraham, in honor of his maternal grandfather, Abraham Tudjarian. The holy city of Urfa was the birthplace of the prophet Abraham/Ibrahim. In the 5th century, Mesrop Mashtots created the Armenian alphabet there, signaling the dawn of Armenian literature and ensuring the survival of our ancestors as a distinct people. On the eve of the Genocide, Urfa was home to the Tudjarian family and 45,000 other Armenians. In the scorching summer of 1915, Ottoman soldiers arrived at the Tudjarians' property. Abraham was 6 years old and the youngest of four brothers. His parents were taken away. He would never again play backgammon with his mother. He would never again feel his father's kiss on his forehead. The soldiers returned. Abraham's brothers suggested that as he was so small and slight, he hide in the barn. The older boys insisted that no matter what he heard or saw, Abraham must remain hidden amongst the straw. Cowering in his hiding place, Abraham looked on as his brothers' young lives ended beneath the shade of olive trees.

Abraham conquered the terror that gripped him, emerging from the barn a day or two after his brothers were murdered. He stumbled through the broken, bloody ruins of his community. On the brink of exhaustion, Abraham was offered shelter and warmth by a Turkish family who were repulsed by the Ottoman government's brutal campaign. From there he was sent to one of many orphanages for Armenian children in Greece. One imagines this decision was made with his safety in mind, given the fervor and fanaticism with which the genocide was undertaken. In total, orphanages in Greece became sanctuaries for around 15,000 Armenian children. It was in this safe space that Abraham would meet Ovssana, a fellow orphan from Urfa. We know nothing of the trauma she endured, of the horrors her childish eyes witnessed. Armenian women often carried the burden of their suffering in silence. Patriarchy created the space for misplaced shame, meaning the sexual abuse that took place during the genocide was seldom discussed openly. United in grief, the two would eventually fall in love, only to be separated when Ovssana joined relatives in Cairo who had escaped the killing.

Perhaps it was written by the gods that my great-grandfather was never supposed to live a long life; he contracted gastroenteritis and died at the age of 42. Abraham's body succumbed to illness during the months preceding my father's birth. Armenag would never be held by the man to whom he ultimately owes his existence.

I find it painfully humbling that I too am here because of Abraham's bravery, because he didn't cry out in terror when he witnessed his siblings' throats being cut. I am here because of the selflessness of three teenage boys, who spent their final moments directing their little brother away from the suffering that awaited them. I am here because of the kindness of a nameless Turkish family. I exist because Ovssana defied societal expectation and refused to persist with loveless matrimony; my great-grandmother would not allow true happiness to escape her. I exist because of the love that grew and blossomed in the darkness.

The story of my family's survival is not unique. The Armenian diaspora in its entirety is directly descended from genocide survivors. Families are bound as one by separate tragedies that form the arching narrative of our suffering, rubbing the denialist arguments proposed by successive Turkish governments.

I have been researching my family's experiences with my cousin, Michelle Magarian. Her great-grandparents on her mother's side of the family, Flora and Minas Kuyumjian, lived in the town of Albāstan. They had three

children together; two boys and an infant girl. The Kuyumjians were forced from their home and ordered in to separate deportation marches towards the concentration camps surrounding Deir-*ez-Zor*, in the Syrian Desert. Deportation marches became death marches. Ottoman gendarmes escorting caravans of Armenians were ferocious in their violence, bayoneting and shooting whomever they pleased. The gendarmes also allowed members of the Special Organization, a special forces unit under the War Department, to massacre and rape deportees.

Minas was able to escape; hiding amongst the corpses that littered the Anatolian countryside, he survived the passage to Syria alone. Flora was made to undress by her tormentors. It is likely that she was raped, though she would not talk about that aspect of her ordeal. Then, on the lush banks of the Euphrates, Flora's hands and feet were bound with rope. She watched as the gendarmes drowned her children. Begging to die, she too was hurled into the water. However, Flora's instinctive desire to preserve her own life was strong and she was able to cling to the vegetation that fringed the river. A Turkish peasant rescued her, offered her clothes and then concealed her amongst the produce in the back of his cart. He personally facilitated Flora's transit to Syria. Fate then intervened; Flora and Minas were miraculously reunited in Deir-*ez-Zor*. They survived together, finally emigrating to Brazil. In Sao Paulo they had five children and lived long lives.

It is a sad fact that the Armenian Genocide and the ongoing battle against the forces of denial have been decisive in shaping my identity. I can only look to the past with profound grief. The extreme violence my family endured is the foundation of our narrative. What existed before 1915 was stolen from us. If I were to return to my ancestral homeland, it would be near impossible to trace our roots; our history has been erased. I am frozen in time. I cannot move forward until our suffering is recognized. The denialist arguments proposed by successive Turkish governments are a continuation of the crime itself. Governmental denial reshapes history and demonizes the victims, successfully replicating the anti-Armenian sentiment that was rife when the genocide occurred. It is a fallacy to believe that the Armenian Genocide has two legitimate histories, one for the perpetrators and one for the victims. The genocide is not an allegation, it is a fact.

Malcolm X said, "If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, that's not progress ... The progress comes from healing the wound that the blow made. They haven't even begun to pull the knife out. They won't even admit the knife is there."

There will be no progress without recognition. (Robert Kazandjian is an educator and writer. He works with vulnerable children in North London. His writing seeks to challenge inequality, in all its guises. He has previously written for *Ceasefire Magazine* on racism in Israel, gender politics and hip hop music, and the necessity of Armenian Genocide recognition. He blogs poetry at makemymark.tumblr.com. He cites Douglas Dunn, Pablo Neruda, James Baldwin and Nas as major influences. He tweets from @RKazandjian. This article was edited by Sunili Govinnage. This article originally appeared in Media Diversified.)

At the age of 18, Abraham embarked on the pursuit of happiness and followed his soul-mate to Egypt, only to discover that she had been coerced into marrying an older man. Armenian culture was, and still is, steeped in patriarchal attitudes, and this hideous practice was not uncommon. The star-crossed pair would not be denied, lobbying Ovssana's family until the forced union was annulled. My great-grandparents, orphaned by the Genocide, were finally joined in marriage. Together they had eight children, one of whom was my grandmother, Rebecca.



Abraham and Ovssana Tudjarian



Forced march of Armenians

argument for reparations to be paid to the families of Armenians who had property expropriated and redistributed by the Ottoman government. If Turkey were deemed to bear legal responsibility for the meticulously calculated theft that took place, the financial implications would be monumental.

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# Magnum Photos Announces Two New Nominee Members Following Its 69th Annual General Meeting

By Simon Bainbridge

LONDON (*British Journal of Photography*) – British photographer Matt Stuart and Armenian photographer Diana Markosian join the world's most prestigious photography agency.

London-based street photographer Matt Stuart and 26-year-old Armenian-American Diana Markosian have been named as the latest members of the legendary Magnum Photos agency.

The pair, both supported by Magnum's current president, Martin Parr, were announced as nominee members today following the agency's Annual General Meeting, which took place in east London last week. Nominees are invited to apply for full membership having proved themselves after a period of usually one or four years. Jérôme Sessini and Bieke Depoorter, who both became nominees in 2012, have now both progressed to full member status.

Markosian is well known to *BJP* readers as one of the brightest new talents in the field of documentary photography, first featuring as one of our Ones To Watch in 2015.

Born in Russia and growing up in California, she's since returned to her homeland to make work, including a series of portraits of the almost grown-up survivors of the Beslan school massacre.

For *Inventing My Father*, she created a highly charged series about finding and reconnecting with her estranged father from whom she was separated when she was seven. Markosian's mother abandoned the marital home in Moscow one day, emigrating to California with Diana and her young brother; she never even

had the chance to say goodbye to him. Her mother cut her father's image out of all the family photos and in time Markosian forgot what he looked like.

"I stopped thinking about him and instead invented my own father," she told *BJP* in an interview. "I had a cast of characters; the black man on TV who wore bright sweaters. He lived in New York or Chicago. Then there was Jason Seaver from the TV show 'Growing Pains,'" says Markosian. At 22, she eventually travelled to Armenia, where her father had settled, in search of the man whose face had been all but wiped from her memory. And so begins *Inventing My Father*, a project she doubts will ever be finished."

More recently she has been exploring the consequences of the Armenian genocide of 2015, photographing some of the few remaining survivors who fled as children, but who through her photographs of landscapes from present day Armenia, are reunited with their homeland.

"My work comes from within," Markosian said of her developing photography career in an interview with *BJP* last year. "I am constantly searching for a moment of silence between myself and whatever it is I am photographing. It is an emotional process that transcends anything else I've experienced. It is ultimately an expression of myself: all of my feelings, revealed in a moment, in an image."

Skateboarder turned photographer, Stuart has been shooting on the streets of London for two decades, claiming her gets through at least three rolls of film per day.

"I am not sure which came first, being nose-y or an interest in 'street photography', but a fascination with people and the way they live their lives is why I enjoy the business so much," he

says. "I can't hide behind lights and technology, I am reliant on a small camera, patience and lots of optimism. But what I get in return is the chance to make an honest picture which people know immediately is a genuine moment and which hopefully burrows deep into their memories."

He recently published a book of his work in London shot between 2002 and 2015, titled *All That Life Can Afford*. Solo exhibitions of his work have been staged in London, Helsinki, San Francisco and Washington, and he was featured in the 2010 book and travelling show, *Street Photography Now*.

Sessini just his teeth during the Kosovo conflict in the late 1990s, and over the next decade spent five years in Iraq as well as covering events in Palestine, President Aristide's fall in Haiti, the conquest of Mogadishu by Islamic militias and the war in Lebanon.

In 2008, he began working on a longterm project, *So far from God, too close from the US*, focusing on the war among drug cartels in Mexico, which was supported by an F-Award and a Getty Images Grant. More recently he has been working in the Ukraine.

"I don't like rigid categories," says the French photographer, who was named among *BJP*'s Ones To watch in 2011. "Sometime there is art in journalism and journalism in art. Conscience, heart, beauty, balance and loss of balance are essentials for me."

After graduating seven years ago, Belgian photographer Depoorter has embarked on a series of personal projects, the first of which, *Ou Menya*, saw her travel throughout Russia, photographing the people whom she stayed with one night at a time.

The work won several prizes, including a Magnum Expression Award, and was published

as a book in 2011. Her second book, *I Am About To Call It A Day*, shot in the US, was published two years later.

More recently she has been working on a project Egyptian families, titled *In Between*. Of her practice, she says: "Photography guides me into the routes where I can stay amazed."

The Annual General Meeting takes place in June each year, alternating between its main offices in London, Paris and New York. The 69th AGM took place over four days last week, led by Parr and London-based executive director David Kogan, with much to discuss regards the agency's recent change in direction, soft-launching a consumer-facing website aimed at engaging directly with a wider public.

It's 'Pro' website remains, with a focus on image sales. The AGM meetings were complemented by program of public events, including a book fair, quiz (led by Parr, and reportedly rather difficult) and an exhibition of the work of Peter Marlow, who died in February, as well as a lively party, all held at Protein Studios.

"It's been another hugely exciting year for Magnum," says Parr. "The refocus of the agency led by our executive director, David Kogan, has manifested in both the launch of our new content-first website and over 20 self-commissioned stories. Another two full members and two new nominees mark our commitment to both supporting new talent and expanding the agency."

Kogan comments: "This year's AGM marked a significant change for Magnum as we begin to plan out our 70th anniversary in 2017. Our investment in Magnum's digital future realises our ambitions of becoming a self-publishing entity and a renewed commitment from our photographer members future proofs our endeavors over the last year."

## Boston Innovation Summit Encourages US-Turkish Commerce

ECONOMICS, from page 1

development, and address related topics including innovation ecosystems, methodology, risk and legal considerations."

Indeed, American and Turkish government officials and various industry specialists as well as academics spoke at the event, which appeared to be attended by as many as 150 people of various professional backgrounds, including representatives of the Swiss government and of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Intriguingly, perhaps the two most famous speakers, including the keynote speaker, were a Greek-American and an Armenian-American.

Sponsors included the Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Boston, the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of the Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Airlines, dFA (a Turkish engineering and consulting company) and Uber. MassChallenge was listed among the media partners, though it is primarily a nonprofit accelerator supporting entrepreneurs and startups in various industries both in the US and abroad.

According to its website, ATC is a bilateral non-profit association "founded in the mid-1980s by US diplomats personally devoted to the US-Turkey relationship. ATC staff continue to emphasize the friendship and professionalism that has shaped the bilateral partnership for decades." At present it has evolved into a business association with large multinationals as well as smaller American and Turkish firms in 15 business sectors as members. Its website declares that it "exists to help member companies achieve their bilateral business and investment objectives and to facilitate stronger US-Turkey relations."

Judging by its staff, it seems to be a part of what often is called the US military-industrial complex. The chairman of its staff since January 2014 is a high-ranking US general, James L. Jones. Jones is the former commander of the US European Command and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, where, according again to the ATC website, he led all military operations

for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He also is a former US National Security Adviser. Its president and chief executive officer since February 2015 is Howard G. Beasey, an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran and retired United States Marine. Beasey studied Turkish and worked as a Turkish Area Officer. After retiring from the Marines in 2014, he joined Goldman Sachs as a Corporate Security Associate.

ATC, according to its website, "routinely hosts leading government officials for special events and private meetings with member companies." It sponsors seminars, workshops and conferences in the US and Turkey, and "educational trips" to Turkey for members of Congress and their staff, as well as separate trips for US business leaders.

After an introduction from Beasey, inaugurating the summit and stressing the need to work to increase trade between Turkey and the US, Turkish Consul General Ömür Budak of Boston spoke. He first dealt with the startling recent violence in Turkey. He condemned the abortive coup as contrary to democracy. "This coup attempt was staged by a terrorist organization, named the Fethullah Gülen terrorist organization. ... Those who were part of this organization will be duly investigated, prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law." He then lumped together the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and YPG (People's Protection Units) as another type of terrorism – "Kurdish terrorism" – and declared that the Turkish government was simultaneously fighting both, as well as the Islamic State.

He switched gears to make an optimistic presentation concerning the fast growth of the Turkish economy. He said that the markets responded positively to efforts to reassure them after the coup events. The Turkish business community, he continued, was strongly opposed to the coup attempt and it would not have lasting effects on economic indicators. The Turkish economy was resilient, he stressed, and the government was continuing to introduce reforms.

He presented basic information about the



"Opportunities and Challenges for Innovators Exploring Foreign Markets" panel with, from left, social entrepreneur and investor Hakan Satioglu, entrepreneur and author Elmira Bayrasli, former managing director of the MIT Entrepreneurship Center and chairman of Entrepreneurship Ventures, Inc. Kenneth Paul Morse, CEO of Blippar Zehra Öney, and president of Acoustic Technology, Inc. Roy Bassiouni

economy, some of which was repeated later by other speakers and included in printed literature. For example, since 2002, a largescale transformation of the Turkish economy has taken place, with an annual 5 percent growth. Exports have increased from 36 billion to 144 billion dollars. National income has grown 3.5 times. He said, "gigantic" infrastructure investments are being made. Turkey wishes to increase its investment in research and development to the level of developed countries. Budak said that the consulate, opened in Boston in 2010, naturally focuses on science, technology and innovation.

After pointing out Turkey's economic progress, he said, "Do you see what damage this coup attempt is trying to make on [sic] our

country? Do you see why we are here, why we are trying to say no to this?" However, he again changed focus, saying "I hope today we can focus on the positive."

The majority of the one-day conference consisted of speakers in panels or solo providing a wide range of talks on business and innovation. Some talks were general surveys of fields such as patent law (by Michael Belliveau, partner in Clark and Elbing LLP), or robotics (Taskin Padir, Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Northeastern University). Dr. Greek-American Nicholas Negroponte, founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s Media Lab, gave a general talk called

*continued on next page*





# 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, Kheyma, 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**, Sunday, 12-5 p.m., 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 featuring the Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; George Righellis, guitar and vocals; Bob Raphalian, violin; Charlie Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine. Fun activities for children. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m.; raffle drawing and more. For further information, log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/303/>, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or [emailoffice@htaac.org](mailto:emailoffice@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 18 — Armenian Independence Day Celebration**, Dinner and Program. Guest Speaker: Dr. Anna Ohanyan, Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Studies at Stonehill College. Topic: "The Republic of Armenia, Twenty-five



**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>**

Years of Independence: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future." Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main St., No. Andover, 12:30 p.m. Adults - \$20 and Students - \$5. For further information and reservations, contact Armen Jeknavorian, 978-256-2538, [armenj@comcast.net](mailto:armenj@comcast.net). Sponsored by the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

**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.

**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) Gevorkian, featuring eclectic pictures of Armenia and Artsakh, 2-5 pm, at Armenian Museum of America (AMA), 65 Main St., Watertown, MA, 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.

from previous page

"Maintaining Big Thinking in an Entrepreneurial Economy."

Other talks more specifically dealt with Turkey. For example, Zehra Öney, part of the panel on "Opportunities and Challenges for Innovators Exploring Foreign Markets, is chief executive officer of Blippar Turkey, an augmented reality platform, and she provided one example of expansion of a company into the Turkish market.

The keynote speaker was Daron Acemoglu, an Armenian born in Turkey who now is Killian Professor of Economics at MIT. Co-author of the bestselling book *Why Nations Fail*, he spoke on the factors supporting innovation and creativity in society in general, but also addressed the contemporary economic situation of Turkey.

Acemoglu stressed the importance of allowing people the opportunity to create. He said that most people in Turkey do not have this opportunity due to lack of access to the necessary education and other resources. Openness to disruption by entrepreneurs is a second important necessary factor for innovation.

He stated that there is nothing specifically

cultural, whether American or Turkish, to make you open to new ideas. Norms develop over history shaped by formal institutions. Democracy is important for openness. Acemoglu found a correlation between democracy and economic growth.

When it comes specifically to how well Turkey is doing with these two important factors of opportunity and openness, Acemoglu declared, "not great." He said that "Turkey is a work in progress," but despite advances and fast economic growth in the mid 2000's, at present "there is some significant worsening." During the early period, there were market reforms, increased transparency, and less corruption, partly due to World Bank reforms, and greater government accountability and rule of law.

Some of these institutional foundations were "rolled back" later, he said. There have been some improvements in opportunity such as the availability of education, but not in openness to disruption. Part of the problem seems to be that the government is too involved in the business environment on all levels.

In general, the American-Turkish Council's conference provided a smorgasbord of talks and panels at various levels of specificity in the



Dr. Daron Acemoglu

august setting of Harvard University. As in many such events, the networking behind the scenes probably is the most useful product for the sponsors. American venture capitalists and

entrepreneurs are introduced to Turkish businessmen and scientists. US and Turkish government officials on the state and national level are present and approachable.

## COMMENTARY

# Armenia Caught Between a Rock And a Hard Place

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenia's current domestic crisis could not have come at a worse time, when the country is still licking its wounds after the four-day war in early April.

Azerbaijan has been emboldened by its success during the latest flare-up, which was condoned by Russia and encouraged by Turkey.

Meanwhile, Turkey is more and more acting like a superpower rather than a regional one, flexing its political and military muscles way beyond the Middle East, over the Balkans and Central Asia. It has already established military bases in Qatar, Somalia, Georgia and most recently, in Azerbaijan, near Sumgait, despite official denials. This is where President Ilham Aliyev's intransigence stems from at the negotiation table.

Many plans to resolve the Karabagh conflict have been promoted but then have crumbled. One thing is clear: time is not on Armenia's side. That is why pressure is building on Yerevan from the international community to compromise at the cost of impossible concessions.

At this point, the Kazan plan has been revived, whose terms postpone the referendum on Karabagh's status to the last stage, while requiring territorial concessions first.

After the April attack, a trial balloon was floated that Armenia was ready to withdraw its forces from the five extra territories in Azerbaijan it had taken as insurance, in exchange for some vague promises, while suggesting that the Azeri population could return to those lands.

That scenario alarmed the Armenian public and maybe became the straw that broke the camel's back and led to a revolt.

That revolt was in the offing even without pressure from external powers. The successive administrations of Presidents Robert Kocharian and Serzh Sargsyan have failed to improve the economy, reverse the course of emigration, keep the hands of the oligarchs off every enterprise that is founded and so much of the money entering the country, and create rule of law. Almost all elections have been won through coercion and corruption, allowing the affluent superclass to remain obscenely opulent while the standard of living for the general public declines.

Scandal after scandal was covered up. The authorities have delighted in their shortsighted success in breaking up the political opposition without realizing that after shutting down an organized opposition, they force the creation of an underground radical one.

The people have been pushed against the wall, where reactions may not always become rational ones. It is a miracle that it has taken this long for such a reaction.

Jirair Sefilian, Varoujan Avedisian and the other members of the group who had won hero status during the Karabagh war became activists and they formed their own political party, the Founding Parliament, with the radical ideology of overthrowing the government and restoring democracy. The ideology is derived from the concept that war heroes are entitled to dictate their will to the government or better yet, they deserve to replace the elected government.

And this ambition is always fueled by the hero worship of the public.

But history has demonstrated time and again that revolutionary heroes become the most atrocious rulers. Take, for example, the leaders of the French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Zimbabwean, and Cambodian revolutions. The list goes on and on.

Only Nelson Mandela served as an exception in South Africa. Of course, his successor, Jacob Zuma, and the ruling ANC, are mired in corruption.

Incidentally, all revolutionaries and their admirers need to read a book by our celebrated satirist, Yervant Odian, *The Parasites of the Revolution*, to gauge the measure of revolutionaries' political acumen.

At the present time, Armenia is in the middle of a serious crisis. An armed militant group called Sasna Tserer, which is an offshoot of the Founding Parliament, has taken over a police station at Erebuni. One officer has been killed and four have been

wounded. The militants, 31 in number, have released their four remaining hostages and they are now holed up in the police station, with a huge arsenal of arms and ammunition.

Their demands vary on a daily basis. Initially they demanded the release of Sefilian and other political prisoners and the resignation of President Sargsyan.

Last Monday was the ninth day of the standoff, which did not give any indication of resolution anytime soon.

People have been gathering around the police station to air their grievances. One thing is obvious: there is no love lost toward the authorities. The level of hatred and the rhetoric, mired in base foul language, is remarkable.

Clearly there is a certain level of freedom of expression in Armenia, where the authorities are insulted so openly and defied so publically. That, however, is just a novelty. Instead of hurling insults, a true platform of demands is needed which will help the country move forward, and not just one or two people.

People are also fed up with the political parties, which try to take advantage of the current political climate. The mob is moving rudderless. An atmosphere of anarchy is reigning. People are calling for the overthrow of the government and giving rule back to the people. The demand is clearly one that cannot take place. How can a mob take over the governance of a country? If, God forbid, these ruffians take over and overthrow the authorities, God save Armenia.

Armenians have a victim's mentality concerning all the calamities that have befallen them. The Seljuks are blamed for overrunning the Kingdom of Ani in the 11th century; the Mamluks are blamed for destroying the Cilician Kingdom in 1375; the Bolsheviks are blamed for the loss of our First Republic, never mind that we had staged a bloodbath before that, and so on.

We never factor in our own self-destructive instincts and lack of respect for the rule of law and authority. That self-destructive instinct is alive and well today. The Turks and Azeris are determined to wipe out Armenia. Our internal crisis can only help their intentions.

In any civilized country, the government would not tolerate an armed insurrection this long. They would have found ways to overcome the situation. In Armenia's case, that would have led to more bloodshed. The government has precedents in mind. The October 1999 massacre in the parliament and the 10 lives lost before Sargsyan took power in March 2008 have remained political liabilities for the ruling elite.

Further bloodshed would only add to that list of liabilities.

That is why the government is moving cautiously. The president has given a stern warning that the crisis must be solved lawfully.

The militants are equally adamant in their demand.

Mediators abound, with most of them seeking political mileage for their political careers: Vartan Oskanian, founder of a new political party; Nikol Pashinian, who quit Levon Ter-Petrosian's HAK to head his new party; Vitali Balassanian, one-time presidential contender in Karabagh, and a war hero. Yet the stalemate continues.

President Sargsyan is ready to meet the jailed opposition leader Sefilian, if the armed members of his organization occupying a police station in Yerevan lay down their arms, a negotiator said on Sunday.

In a written statement, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, who is not very fond of Sargsyan, said that Sefilian of the Founding Parliament movement, is capable of making "sensible decisions" despite his views being seen as "extremist" by some Armenians. He argued that the serious hostage crisis is only aggravating Armenia's grave national security challenge rising from the recent escalation of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.

Karabagh's security "overshadows all other issues preoccupying the Armenian people," Ter-Petrosian concluded on Friday.

If the voice of reason prevails, bloodshed may be avoided, but Armenia will emerge weaker from its self-inflicted wound. Although one of the goals of the insurrection was to prevent territorial concessions, ironically that may exacerbate the situation if a weakened Sargsyan has to sit down at the negotiation table.

This is a lose-lose proposition because Armenia is between a rock and a hard place.



# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Which VP Candidate has a Better Record On Armenian Genocide Recognition?

Now that Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have selected their vice presidential candidates, Armenian Democrats are claiming that Sen. Tim Kaine has the better record on recognition of the Armenian Genocide, while Republican Armenians are insisting that Gov. Mike Pence is the clear-cut favorite on this issue. The more important question is: does it really matter?

During his years as Mayor of Richmond and Governor of Virginia, Kaine was supportive of various Armenian issues, including Armenian Genocide recognition. As U.S. Senator, he did not cosponsor the Armenian Genocide Resolution, but voted for it in the Foreign Relations Committee in April 2014, only after demanding that all references to Turkey be removed from the Resolution. He wanted to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, without offending the Turkish government! Senator Kaine has also not cosponsored the currently pending Armenian Genocide Resolution.

Senator Kaine received a C+ grade from the Armenian National Committee of America in 2014 because he:

1) Insisted that the text of the Armenian Genocide

Resolution be watered down before he voted for it;  
2) Did not make remarks in remembrance of the Armenian Genocide in the Senate;  
3) Did not participate in the Capitol Hill Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide;  
4) Did not cosponsor the Haiti and Armenia Reforestation Act.

Gov. Pence of Indiana, Donald Trump's vice presidential nominee, also has a checkered record on Armenian Genocide recognition, while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, 2001-13. As a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, he voted for the Armenian Genocide Resolution in 2005, but voted against it in 2007 and 2010 out of concern for its possible fallout on US-Turkey relations, while acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. In 2012, his last year in Congress, Pence received a C grade from the Armenian National Committee of America.

Below are excerpts from Representative Pence's remarks in the Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 4, 2010:

"...I believe a genocide was committed against the Armenian people in the early part of the last century and it should never be forgotten.... The fact that more than 1 million Christians were killed makes the loss even more personal to me."

Representative Pence continued: "While we should never forget this genocide and the lives that were lost and the lives that are still marred to this day, I sadly cannot support this Resolution.... Now is not the time for this Committee or the American Congress to take up the measure that is before us.... Turkey is a strategic partner in our ongoing efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. They share our interest in defeating international terrorism.... I rise today in respectful opposition to this Resolution, but I do so with deep respect for those on this Committee and those who would be looking on that would have the Armenian people be heard on this point. While I cannot

support this Resolution, let them at least note that this American identifies with their loss, acknowledges those tragic events of so many years ago and offers my condolences to the families who still bear the burden of what was in fact a genocide. I urge my colleagues to oppose this Resolution...."

Having reviewed the records of both candidates on this issue, one should keep in mind that:

- 1) Vice Presidents do not decide policy; Presidents do!
- 2) There is no need to argue over which candidate would recognize the Armenian Genocide, since it has been repeatedly recognized by the US government as follows:
  - a) Official document was submitted to the World Court in 1951;
  - b) President Ronald Reagan issued a Presidential Proclamation in 1981;
  - c) House of Representatives adopted two Resolutions in 1975 and 1984.

Consequently, Armenians should no longer seek Genocide recognition, but justice! The candidates' position on this issue matters only if they have either denied the Armenian Genocide in the past or promised to recognize it, but did not keep their word!

There are, however, several other important Armenian issues that should be discussed with political candidates, such as, supportin Artsakh (Karabagh), pressuring Turkey to restore confiscated Armenian properties, providing larger U.S. foreign aid to Armenia and Artsakh, hiring qualified Armenian-Americans, and improving trade and economic relations with the Republic of Armenia.

Unfortunately, regardless of what the issues are, one can never be sure that promises made by presidential candidates during the campaign will be remembered and kept, once the President is elected and comfortably installed in the White House!

# Reflections on Pope Francis's Visit to Armenia



What follows is a reflection by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, on the visit of Pope Francis to Armenia in June 2016.

"I have greatly desired to visit this beloved land, your country: the first to embrace the Christian faith. It is a grace for me to find myself here on these heights where, beneath the gaze of Mount Ararat, the very silence seems to speak. Here the khachkars recount a singular history bound up with rugged faith and immense suffering, a history replete with magnificent testimonies to the Gospel, to which you are heir. I have come as a pilgrim from Rome to be with you and to express my heartfelt affection: the affection of your brother, the fraternal embrace of the whole Catholic Church, which esteems you and is close to you."

When Pope Francis spoke these words in Yerevan's Republic Square last month, my heart filled with a spirit of good will and optimism. Here was a man exemplifying genuine piety, humility before God, and down-to-earth humanity. Here was a man held in admiration by the entire world, expressing his personal admiration for the Armenian Christian heritage. Thousands of people came out to be with the Pope and our Catholicos on that day, and we were all blessed to witness something rare and hopeful—something that will have echoes well into the future.

Pope Francis's visit to Armenia (June 24-26, 2016) was a sequel to last year's magnificent service in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. On that earlier occasion the Pope memorialized the holy martyrs of 1915, and spoke forthrightly about the meaning of martyrdom on the centennial

anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, which he explicitly named "the first genocide of the 20th century." Authorities and people around the world took notice of the Pope's words at that time; indeed, his forthright recognition of the Armenian Genocide seemed to liberate others to do likewise — with results that we saw throughout the subsequent year.

The Pope's presence in Armenia last month also gained wide notice — and we have His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and His Excellency Serge Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia, to thank for the invitation they personally extended to Pope Francis, and for the excellent arrangements throughout the visit.

The Pope responded with grace and enthusiasm, and in many ways his visit marked a watershed moment in the relationship between the Roman Catholic and Armenian churches. Let me share some of the images and words that left indelible impressions on me:

To begin the welcoming service at Holy Echmiadzin, Pope Francis and Catholicos Karekin II entered the cathedral together, knelt down side-by-side before the Altar of Descent, and both kissed the holy altar. It set the tone of brotherly, mutual respect among peers that could be seen throughout the visit.

At the Dzidzernagapert Memorial, spoken words took a back seat to the Pope's meaningful, lingering silence as he prayerfully meditated before the eternal flame. It was here that he venerated the holy icon of the sainted Genocide Martyrs, planted a tree, and signed the Book of Remembrance with the words: "Here I pray with sorrow in my heart, so that a tragedy like this never again occurs; so that humanity will never forget and will know how to defeat evil with good.... May God protect the memory of the Armenian people. Memory should never be watered-down or forgotten. Memory is the source of peace and the future."

The visit to our homeland's second largest city, Gumri, was memorable for the way it revealed the Pope's warmth and

humanity, the simplicity of his personality, in his personal contact with the people. I was privileged to travel to Gumri in the company of Catholicos Karekin II and Pope Francis, where the two church leaders were warmly received. In a moving moment during the Latin Mass there, Pope Francis asked Catholicos Karekin to join him in blessing the crowds.

The Ecumenical Prayer for Peace in Republic Square was an especially moving occasion. The Pope delivered a message of peace to the world. But to the Armenian faithful he delivered a message reminding us of our roots, of who we are, of the great figures in our past and the role they played, not only in the affairs of our people, but in the larger story of Christian civilization. He quoted St. Gregory of Narek — whose Book of Lamentations he called the "spiritual constitution of the Armenian people" — and drew from Narek's words a challenge to all humanity to seek mercy for all, even for those we regard as enemies. "Do not destroy those who persecute me, but reform them," he said, quoting Narek; "root out the vile ways of this world, and plant the good in me and them." He closed with a bold plea to the Armenian people: "The whole world needs this message, it needs your presence, it needs your purest witness. Khaghaghoutiun amenetzoun!"

The final badarak at the outdoor altar of Holy Echmiadzin drew the largest crowd I have ever witnessed for the Divine Liturgy. This showed the great respect the Armenian people hold for the Pope. Famously, it was on this occasion that Pope Francis dramatically showed his deep respect for our people in turn. During the Voghchouyn (the Kiss of Peace), the Pope and Catholicos embraced, and later Pope Francis spoke directly to his brother in Christ: "We have met, we have embraced as brothers, we have prayed together and shared the gifts, hopes and concerns of the Church of Christ. We have felt as one her beating heart, and we believe and experience that the Church is one." Calling for peace, unity, and communion among our two churches, Pope Francis prayed that unity

must not mean "the submission of one to the other, or assimilation, but rather the acceptance of all the gifts that God has given to each."

Even after the beautiful affirmations of the previous days, this message of unity in the universal church without imposing hierarchy, his asking for Catholicos Karekin's blessing — these were unexpected, profound assertions from the Pope. They had the force of spontaneous outbursts from the deepest part of his heart; and I believe they will be considered genuine breakthroughs in the centuries-old relationship between the Roman Catholic and Armenian churches.

The trip ended at Khor Virab: the site of St. Gregory's imprisonment, now converted into a shrine overlooking the majestic Mount Ararat. The Catholicos Karekin II and Pope Francis released doves towards Armenia's western frontier. It was a symbolic message of peace from a man of peace.

Gazing at Ararat, I thought back on the Prayer for Peace two days earlier. A highlight of that service came when columns of children, refugees from various countries, approached a sculpture of Noah's Ark with soil from their native lands. Together, the Pope and Catholicos planted a tender vine in the soil, watered it, and prayed that it would grow and bear fruit.

Pope Francis' visit to Armenia had this character. It nourished the seed of spirituality embedded so deeply in our homeland. I witnessed the effect it had on our faithful people, on our clergy, on all who watched the trip in person or at home. It is in our power now to make that seed grow, blossom, and bear fruit. With our Lord's help and blessing, we will do so.

And we will do so secure in the knowledge that we are not alone in this world; indeed, we enjoy the support and solidarity of others who share our faith, and who draw strength from our story. As Pope Francis said in his words of gratitude to Catholicos Karekin: "You have opened to me the doors of your home, and we have experienced 'how good and pleasant it is when brothers live in unity.' [Ps 133]."



# Erdogan Has Military Troubles of His Own, but He Still Defends The Ottoman Army over the Armenian Genocide

By Robert Fisk

If Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wasn't so busy right now trying to emasculate his 600,000-strong Turkish army, he'd be raging about the contents of a new book that – with judicious research and painfully ironic timing – has just appeared in Australia with irrefutable proof of the 1915 Armenian genocide at the hands of Turkey's (then) 500,000-strong army.

The Turkish army, in the 1914-18 war, was intimately involved in the Nazi-like persecution and slaughter of one and a half million Armenian Christians. And it neither knew nor apparently cared that Australian prisoners of war were witnesses to the greatest war crime of the conflict. But now along comes a small Australian publisher with a highly researched volume, by Vicken Babkenian and Peter Stanley, in which the reader can find the testimony of Australian and other Allied prisoners who witnessed the dispossession and mass murder of the Armenians.

Some were survivors of the 1915 siege and surrender of Kut al-Amara in present-day Iraq, whose death march to prisons in Anatolia matched in brutality if not in numbers the killing of the Armenian population of Ottoman Turkey. Other Australian troops were captured at Gallipoli. Several were submariners whose vessel was seized by the Turkish navy.

They were Allied servicemen, not propagandists, and their attempts to help the doomed Armenians were as brave as they were innocent. Turks who still deny the knifing, beheading, mass executions and rape of the Armenians in a deliberate campaign of genocide – and Sultan Erdogan is one of them – will find it hard to challenge these witness statements.

Though he has other worries on his mind right now, Erdogan is so strong a defender of the old Ottoman army that he rearranged the date of last year's 1915 Gallipoli commemorations to obscure the anniversary of the start of the far bloodier destruction of the Armenian people on the same day. But when he's eventually finished destroying the army,

judiciary, civil service and academic freedoms of present-day Turkey – perhaps on a subsequent, more relaxing holiday at Marmaris – Erdogan should take a look at the 324-page Armenia, Australia and the Great War.

Here, for example, is Lieutenant Leslie Luscombe of the Australian 14th Battalion at Gallipoli, captured by the Turks and sent to Angora province where he saw “a sad and depressing sight” on a railway station platform: “a considerable number of Armenian women and children were huddled together” while “Turkish soldiers armed with whips” drove them onto sheep trucks “to transport them to some distant concentration camp.” Just before Luscombe's arrival, the monks of the Armenian monastery in which he was to be held “had doubtless been liquidated.” All the Australian prisoners were housed in abandoned Armenian houses.

One of Luscombe's colleagues, Corporal George Kerr, was sent to work on the uncompleted German Taurus mountain railway and lodged on the upper floor of a house whose occupants included “60 miserable creatures” (as he recorded in his secret diary), both Armenians and Greeks.

Captain Thomas White of the Australian Flying Corps, arriving under Turkish guard in the Ottoman city of Mosul (now, of course, the Isis “capital”), saw “Armenian women, reduced to beggary”, pleading for food. He was marched to the abandoned Armenian town of Tel Armen where – although a few Armenian women and children were still present – the men were absent. After climbing a low hill, he found “36 newly made graves which spoke eloquently of what had become of the Armenian men.” White described himself as “horrified at the Turks' handiwork,” noting later that these massacres had been “simultaneous and to order throughout the entire country.”

At this time, the Armenians of Ras al-Ein (a village now in the hands of the American-armed YPG anti-ISIS militia) were being prepared for their death march to Deir ez-Zour and White wrote of seeing “a large camp of Armenians herded together after the general round-up from their homes, and waiting to be sent on marches that had always the same ending”. After a train ride to Afion, White and others were housed in a church from which Armenian survivors had been driven to make way for them. “Their menfolk had been killed and furniture confiscated” and now “they were being turned into the street from their last possible sanctuary.” He found a burial ground of Armenians, some of whose bodies were “so close to the surface that their bones protruded.”

On the British-Australian-Indian prison-

ers' 2,000km death march northwards to Anatolia from Kut, two POWs discovered a well at the back of a village house filled with “the mutilated remains of the murdered Armenian women and children”. In total, 70 per cent of the British POWs who surrendered at Kut and 30 per cent of the Indians died in captivity. By September 1916, the dead Allied POWs were themselves being buried in the Armenian cemetery at Afion. At Yozgat, Allied prisoners were placed in empty Armenian houses whose owners had been “massacred” and their shops pillaged, according to engineer Captain Kenneth Yearsley.

The Armenian massacres continued long into 1918 in the east of Turkey – where, to the credit of the books' authors, they record the slaughter of Muslim villagers by Armenians – but in the north of Mesopotamia, Colonel Stanley Savige, an Australian Gallipoli veteran, and his men found themselves fighting 10-to-one against Turkish and Kurdish cavalry killing the stragglers from an Armenian refugee column. They had found them – “old men, weak and wounded women, deserted infants and crippled children” – and, under fire, pulled women and children onto their horses, leaving, “with aching hearts”, cripples and infants to their fate. Captain Robert Nichol, a New Zealander, was killed as he fought for the Armenians' lives.

As General Allenby's victorious army surged through Palestine and into what is now Syria in 1918, they found thousands of Armenians, starving and dying, most of them women and children, up the long road from Damascus to Homs and Hama and Aleppo – a melancholy highway in today's ghastly Syrian conflict – and then again around the Turkish city of Diyarbakir. Australian cavalrymen emptied their supplies and water bottles for the Armenians.

Ancient Diyarbakir still existed then; much of it has now been destroyed by the present-day Turkish army (including those who plotted against Erdogan last week) in their battle against the Kurdish PKK.

Quite a volume for Sultan Erdogan to dip into, then, once he's finished purging his broken country.

But I suppose he can always claim – evidence notwithstanding – that the Ottoman government wasn't responsible for the Great War Armenian genocide on the grounds that its soldiers, like his own, simply took the law into their own hands.

(Robert Fisk is the award-winning chief Middle East correspondent for the *Independent* (UK) daily. This column originally ran in the July 21 edition of that paper.)

## 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

## Armenian Street Festival Takes Place in London

LONDON (Public Radio of Armenia) – Armenians from all over the UK gathered in London on July 17 Sunday for the sixth Armenian Street Festival in London.

The London Armenian Street Festival is an annual celebration of Armenian culture and heritage that takes place at St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Kensington/Chelsea. The family-friendly event features Armenian cuisine, live street entertainment, special guests and vendors, and a concert at the church.

Attending the events were a number of foreign guests, British officials, clergymen, representatives of the Armenian Embassy in the UK and guests from Armenia.

The Iverna Gardens in South Kensington had turned into a small Armenian district with traditional songs and dances.

“The festival aims to bring together Armenians from different parts of Great Britain at least for one day,” said Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Great Britain. He attached special importance to the involvement of young people. “This year is special, as we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of Armenia's independence,” he said.

The festival featured performances by violinist Levon Chilingaryan, the Komitas choir, the Akhtamar folk ensemble and others. Duduk player Gevorg Karapetyan and singer Iveta Mukuchyan were special guests at the festival.