

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Former Aide Disrupts Armenian Minister's News Conference

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Health Minister Arsen Torosyan cut short a news conference on Tuesday, September 3, after it was gatecrashed by one of his former aides who

ter refused, leading Torosyan to end the news conference.

“I have no problem with him,” Torosyan told reporters as he left the room. “But he probably has a problem with me because he is pursuing some other interests. I won’t say who I’m talking about.”

Tamamyan then read out his questions to the minister in the presence of the journalists and a dozen doctors from the state-run clinic specializing in treatment of childhood leukemia. Ester Demirchian, the executive director of a charity helping the

Hematology Center’s patients, was also in attendance.

The charity called the City of Smile was founded last year by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s wife, Anna Hakobyan. Tamamyan is a member of its board of trustees headed by Hakobyan. (A massive fundraising effort was conducted in the US. See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/04/11/city-of-smile-banquet-is-great-success-with-headliner-anna-hakobyan/>)

The former official, who now works at the Hematology Center, accused Torosyan of disrupting government-funded treatment of cancer in Armenia. In that regard, he deplored the sacking of the head of the National Oncology Center, Armen Tananyan. The minister has alleged corrupt practices in the hospital.

Tamamyan also decried the fact that after taking office last year Torosyan sharply increased government funding for a medical center owned by his wife. The center performs computer tomography and magnetic resonance imaging.

The health minister apologized to the journalists for cutting short his news conference in a live video address aired through Facebook later in the day. “I couldn’t concentrate in that tense atmosphere,” he said.

Torosyan also accused his former subordinate of staging the “show” in a bid to discredit him.

## Amulsar Mine Operator Slams Environmental Consultants

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A British-American mining company has accused a Lebanese-based consultancy of misleading the Armenian government about the environmental risks of its project to develop the Amulsar gold deposit in southeastern Armenia.

In a statement released late on Friday, August 30, the company, Lydian International, also challenged the government to name rival mining firms that have allegedly helped to disrupt the multimillion-dollar project.

“The Government of Armenia has said publicly that Lydian and the Amulsar Project have been the subject of a campaign by rival mining companies providing support to opponents of the Amulsar Project ... When will the Government of Armenia identify the rival mining companies conducting this campaign, how much has been paid to oppose the Amulsar Project and who has been paid?” read the statement.

see MINING, page 3



Health Minister Arsen Torosyan, center, and Dr. Tamamyan, at right

accused him of mismanagement and corruption.

Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan, who until recently advised the Armenian Justice Ministry on child oncology, entered a conference room of the Yerevan-based Hematology Center where Torosyan met the press. Tamamyan said he too wants to ask the minister questions.

Torosyan suggested that Tamamyan hold a separate news conference instead. The lat-

## Armenians In Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – “Berlin ist eine Reise wert” – that’s a saying every German knows and few would disagree with; yes, it is always worth it to take a trip to Berlin. I realized this once again last week when I went for a few days, just to visit friends I hadn’t seen for a long time. Among them, Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, an Armenian actress and teacher who invit-



Katerina Poladjian by Henning Fritsch

ed me to join her at the Academy of Arts, in the beautiful Pariser Platz, to attend a book reading on August 29.

see BERLIN, page 17

## Rex Kalamian Turns Laser Focus on NBA’s LA Clippers

LOS ANGELES – The National Basketball Association (NBA) is one of the most popular sporting leagues in the world; in the United States, the NBA is on its way to eclipsing the National Football League (NFL). Its growing popularity leads to some of the greatest coaching minds in sports vying for a shot to lead a team in the league. With only 30 NBA teams, there are 30 head coaching slots in contention along with staff positions, making it an exclusive club – and Rex Kalamian has earned his highly coveted spot as an assistant coach.

His intense passion for the sport, his strategic mind, and unmitigated dedication have led him to take part in some of the sport’s most monumental events, including coaching a game in the NBA Finals and the fan favorite NBA All-Star games.

Kalamian is a second-generation Armenian-American, born and raised in Los Angeles. He is currently an assistant coach for the Los Angeles Clippers.   
see KALAMIAN, page 20



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Erdogan Meets with Armenian Community Leaders

ISTANBUL (Agos) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Bishop Sahak Mashalian, the locum tenens of the Istanbul Patriarchate of the Armenian Church, and Bedros Sirinoglu, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Holy Savior Armenian Hospital of Istanbul, on September 2.

Erdogan was interested in the organization process of the election of an Armenian Patriarch, and in response, Mashalian said they are waiting for the government to release the rules of procedure.

Erdogan said he required information from the Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly, who in turn said the government will release the rules of procedure within a week.

Istanbul’s Armenian Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan died on March 8, 2019, at the age of 64, after which Mashalian was elected locum tenens.

### Armenia Not Pressured To Stop Aiding Syrian Civilians

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian Foreign Ministry has denied a media report purporting that the United States Government has demanded the Armenian Government to withdraw its team of de-miners and medics from Syria.

Currently there are a few dozen de-miners and medics from the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise deployed in Syria on a humanitarian mission.

“We have already denied this information many times. Currently an attempt is being made to re-circulate with new made-up details – which are also false – information which has already been denied by a governmental agency,” foreign ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said in response to an inquiry from Aysor, an online Armenian newspaper.

Armenian doctors in Syria have provided medical aid to 4870 people since February, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Facebook, and performed 394 surgeries.

### Events Dedicated to Composer Mansurian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Tigran Mansurian’s music will be played from September 1 to 13 in all stations of the Yerevan subway in honor of the composer’s 80th anniversary of birth.

The initiative is part of the Mansurian 80 series of concerts organized by Yerevan City Hall in honor of the composer.

Mansurian turned 80 in January 2019.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## PM Presents Awards to Winners of Kangaroo-2019 Math Contest

YEREVAN (news.am) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan hosted the recipients of the 2019 Kangaroo International Math Contest at his residence on August 30.

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Arayik Harutyunyan also attended the event.

This year, 38,616 schoolchildren from 940 schools in Armenia and 97 schools of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) participated in the contest, 1,474 third to twelfth graders received awards, and out of those 1,474, 653 had the best results and also received certificates, while 3 were recognized as winners. Let us mention that all 1,037 participating schools had at least one award recipient.

The first time Armenia participated in the contest was in 2009. Nearly 50 countries participate every year.

## MP from Ruling My Step Faction Quits

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A member of parliament from the ruling My Step faction at Armenian National Assembly, Eduard Arakelyan, resigned from Parliament on Friday, August 30, saying the decision was made after much apprehension. In Arakelyan's words, the decision is of a personal character and is not enforced by anyone.

"The one who is engaged in politics should possess certain qualities. I am confident I lack some of them which makes it impossible for me to continue staying in politics," Arakelyan said.

He next clarified that his resignation is neither connected with the possible exploitation of Amulsar gold mining nor the ratification of Istanbul convention, although coincided with the above processes in time.

As for future plan, Arakelyan said he would return to IT sphere he had worked before the snap parliamentary elections. "I am sure I will be more useful there to serve to the country."

Arakelyan was elected a member of parliament in the December 2018 snap parliamentary election through the proportional party list of My Step alliance led by Nikol Pashinyan.

## Parliament Takes on Animal Abuse

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Parliamentary Committee on State-Legal Affairs has approved the bill on amending the Criminal Code to make animal abuse a crime in Armenia.

"There is no significant difference between a potential murderer and someone who deliberately tortures, abuses and destroys animals," opposition MP Naira Zohrabyan, a co-author of the bill, told lawmakers at the committee, said on September 3.

The proposed regulations will enable to protect animals from torture, cruel treatment, and will maximally prevent such actions against animals.

## Gyumri Will Be Free Economic Zone

GYMRI (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Eurasian Logistic Park is an upcoming free economic zone set to be built in the Armenian town of Gyumri in Shirak province.

The government has already approved the project, citing the availability of logistics infrastructure, in particular the existence of an operating international airport, the North-South Road Corridor, the operating railway network.

According to information posted on the future FEZ's website on August 29, the Eurasian Logistic Park will serve as an Air Logistic Hub of the entire Eurasian Economic Union. The major part of its cargo flow will be transported from Gyumri airport by air freight.

The logistic park will be located on the two sides of the road leading from Gyumri to the village of Marmashen.

# Aurora Prize Laureate Catena to Speak At the 2019 World Health Summit

YEREVAN — Dr. Tom Catena, Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Chair and 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate, will participate as speaker at the 2019 World Health Summit to take place on October 27-29, 2019 in Berlin, Germany. Dr. Catena will join leading healthcare experts and decision-makers from around the globe to discuss ways to advance global health agendas and promote science thought leadership.

Catena, an American physician, joined the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative as its inaugural Chair in December 2018. He is also the founder and Medical Director of the Mother of Mercy Hospital in Sudan where for the past decade he has served as the only surgeon permanently based in the war-ravaged Nuba Mountains region.

"As part of the Aurora community of humanitarians, it is a great honor to attend the World Health Summit and speak about issues so close to our hearts and essential to Aurora's mission. The World Health Summit brings together people who are keen on finding efficient solutions and eliminating obstacles so that no man, woman or child is ever left behind," said Dr. Catena. "In Nuba, I've witnessed the power of that philosophy with my own eyes."

Dr. Catena will speak at a keynote session titled "Transforming Human Capital: Investing in Health and Education," along with representatives



Dr. Tom Catena

from KPMG, the World Bank and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Dr. Catena will also join the former German Minister of Health, Hermann Gröhe, and Siemens Healthineers CEO, Dr. Bernd Montag, at a side event titled "Breaking the Silos - Improving Global Health through Collaborative Action."

Attracting 2,500 high-level participants from 100 countries, the World Health Summit has become one of the preeminent annual forums for opinion leaders from politics, academia, civil society and the healthcare industry to discuss joint opportunities and respon-

sibilities in improving global health.

Catena's participation at the World Healthcare Summit is part of a broader agenda of speaking engagements spanning Europe, North America and Africa. In Europe, Dr. Catena will be participating at the inaugural Aurora Forum and the 2019 Aurora Prize Ceremony to take place in Yerevan, Armenia in October. In November, he will attend the Paris Peace Forum, among other events.

Catena's speaking commitments in Africa include the AidEx Nairobi Conference, a high-profile event focused on aid and development within Africa, and his participation in the 25th anniversary of Maison Shalom, an organization founded by 2016 Aurora Prize Laureate Marguerite Barankitse that works with orphans and victims of violence.

In the United States, Catena will give lectures at the Columbia University and Duke University and participate in the Annual Conference for the Catholic Medical Association (CMA) in Nashville, Tennessee.

Founded on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative seeks to empower modern-day saviors to offer life and hope to those in urgent need of basic humanitarian aid anywhere in the world and thus continue the cycle of giving internationally.

## My Step Foundation Gives out Scholarships to Students

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Fifty four young people who have been accepted to the world's leading universities received scholarships this week from the My Step Foundation in a ceremony at the Yerevan Matenadaran.

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Arayik Harutyunyan, My Step Foundation and City of Smiles Charity Foundation Board of Trustees President Anna Hakobyan — the spouse of the Armenian prime minister — were present at the ceremony.

Minister Harutyunyan noted that the students have the chance to open a new chapter in their lives, where they will obtain new knowledge and skills for a lifetime.

"It is good that this kind of foundations exist which first of all support our youth and second of all our state, because at this stage of reforms we mostly need the kind of professionals who will have the skills to create and analyze, will have new knowledge and success in innovations. This is important for the Republic of Armenia. The state, in turn, is making certain efforts, but our partners are also assisting on this path," he said. Harutyunyan said they will consider the possibility of expanding the



Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Arayik Harutyunyan, My Step Foundation and City of Smiles Charity Foundation Board of Trustees President Anna

program in the future.

Anna Hakobyan emphasized that she is proud of the young people who enrolled in the leading universities of the world.

In her remarks she reminded how her My Step Foundation got involved in the program.

"After the revolution the Luys Foundation, which was providing scholarships to Armenian students who

enrolled in various universities worldwide, halted its operations. My Step Foundation was established to fill in this gap. Last year we were able to provide students with scholarships very quickly and in a crisis situation," Hakobyan said.

She said Armenia is awaiting the students' return to their homeland with hope that they will use their knowledge to develop their country.

## Pashinyan Says Processing Holds Key to Economic Success

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Processing industry should develop in Armenia and become one of the key pillars of the country's economy, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said during the meeting with the exporters and businessmen in Yerevan on August 31.

The premier said the government is attaching importance to ensuring the export tendency of Armenia's economy.

"We want Armenia's exporting branches to develop and be one of the key characterizers of our economy. One of our program provisions is also to assist the processing industry. Of course, we have worked quite seriously on this topic and will continue to work, but this issue is not so clear because

while implementing any assistance program it's necessary to be convinced that that assistance really contributes to the fields to develop and become more competitive. We should be convinced that we are providing assistance which will lead to a chain reaction and will become an assistance for other spheres. Otherwise, if we take non-calculated actions, it will mean that we are taking steps which do not lead to overall welfare, diversification of state budget revenues, and as a result we will have to refuse from these programs which will bring more harms, than benefits," Pashinyan said.

According to the premier, this is the reason that the government is organizing such meetings in order to clearly

understand the signals coming from the concerning sides and to be able to manage and react them in a right way.

Talking about the construction sector Nikol Pashinyan said here as well the government has a very serious interest so that right formulas will be introduced in this area.

"When we look at what is happening in our real estate market, in fact, we face a situation when the demand is growing, whereas the supply isn't. In such circumstances great increase in prices is noticed. Here it's important for us to be able to balance the market with our cooperation so that there will be a right balance between the demand and supply in order to avoid shocks in the market," Pashinyan added.





## ARMENIA

# AGMI to Host Exhibition on Fate of Armenian Soldiers in World War I

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – A new trilingual (Armenian, English, German) exhibition on “Far from the Fatherland, in the Fatherland: Fates of Armenian Soldiers in World War I” opened at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) on August 31.

Welcoming speeches will be delivered by Dr. Harutyun Marutyan, the Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jasmine Dum-Tragut, the author of the exhibition, Armenian studies scholar, the Head of the Center for the Study of the Christian East at the University of Salzburg, as well as Alfred Bratranek, the representative from the Austrian Embassy (residence in Vienna).

The opening ceremony will be attended by the descendants of the POWs, guests, state officials, diplomats, academics, journalists and other guests from Armenia and Austria as well.

The exhibition consists of two main headings; Tracing Armenian Prisoners of War from Austria-Hungary and Far from the Fatherland, with No Return, as well as, 10 auxiliary headlines: World War One: Reasons and Consequences, Millions in the Enemy's Hands, POW Camps in Austria-Hungary: Barack Towns, Work and Employment, Illness and Death, Freedom and Return to the Fatherland, Rudolf Pöch and Anthropological Research, Carrying Out the Anthropological Research, Phonogram (Sound) Recordings, Rudolf Pöch and Armenians.

The exhibition is equipped with unique archival photos, videos and exhibits, through which and through accompanying explanatory texts an attempt is made to reveal the unusual life of the sol-



Armenian soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army



Some of the exhibits at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

diers. Soldiers' songs and poems of 100 years old are an important part of the exhibition. Protocol of POW Arshak Manukyan's phonogram recording is especially touching. It tells: An Armenian born in Ltsen, lived in Yekaterinoslav, 30 years old, by profession confectioner, recites and sings the Armenian folk song *The Armenian Crane*. Arshak labeled this song as “The bird of an unfortunate POW” 15.08.1915.

Visitors will be able to listen to the above mentioned and other

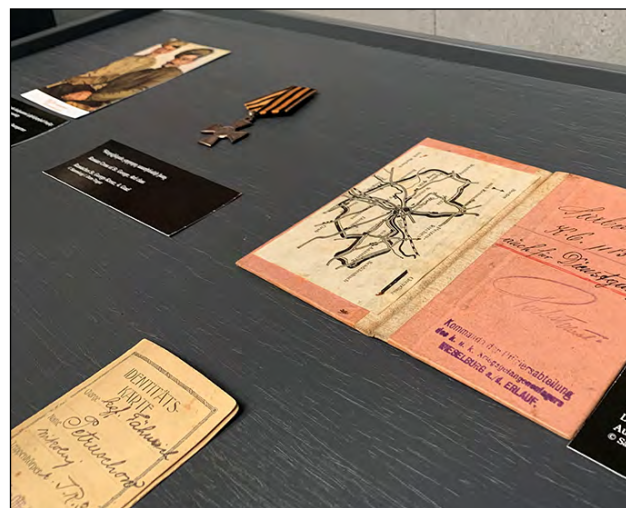
recordings through headsets.

Hand-made items made by the prisoners during their captivity, as well as, maps depicting the period, postcards, little soldiers made of tin representing various types of Russian combat arms, ID cards of POWs, permissions for moving in a limited area, camp currencies and camp newspapers have a unique place in the exhibition.

Most of the exhibits used in the exhibition, as well as in the catalogue, were obtained from the archives of Austria, Armenia and Russia.

The research team managed to visit countless villages in Armenia in search of traces of the immediate heirs and relatives of these prisoners of war. Their narratives and memories, pictures from family albums, along with the historical documents from various archives, allow us to compose the life stories of these Armenian prisoners of war. Many families knew about their relatives' time in captivity, while for the others it was completely new.

The guests will be able to obtain examples of the exhibition catalogue with the author's signature.



Leave documents for some of the soldiers

## Amulsar Mine Operator Slams Environmental Consultants

MINING, from page 1

It apparently referred to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's comments made during an August 19 video address to the nation.

Pashinyan suggested that some of the other mining companies operating in the country have sponsored environmentalists' campaigns against Lydian in an effort to scuttle the Amulsar project. He said they thus hope to avoid spending large sums of money on complying with “unprecedentedly high environmental standards” which the government is planning to enforce in Armenia's entire mining industry.

Pashinyan signaled his government's plans to allow mining operations at Amulsar, citing the written findings of an environmental audit of Lydian's project conducted by ELARD, a consulting firm contracted by the government in February.

ELARD submitted a 200-page report on the Amulsar project to Armenia's Investigative Committee earlier in August. The committee cited the report as concluding that toxic waste from the would-be mine is extremely unlikely to contaminate mineral water sources in the nearby spa resort of Jermuk or

rivers and canals flowing into Lake Sevan.

According to the law-enforcement agency, ELARD found greater environmental risks for other rivers in the area but said they can be minimized if Lydian takes 16 “mitigating measures” recommended by ELARD. Lydian expressed readiness to take virtually of all those measures.

However, ELARD experts offered a different interpretation of their report during a video conference with Armenian government officials and lawmakers moderated by Pashinyan on August 29. They said that they cannot definitively evaluate the Amulsar project's potential impact on the environment because Lydian had submitted flawed and incomplete information to the Armenian authorities.

Armenian environmental activists said the experts' latest statements substantiate their long-standing assertions that the Amulsar project is too dangerous for the country's ecosystem. According to one of those activists, Anna Shahnazaryan, those statements mean that some Armenian officials sided with Lydian to give Pashinyan inaccurate information about the issue.

“State bodies must now investigate to find out whether the Investigative Committee or others have done a bad job in this process or whether Lydian has continued to mislead [the government,]” Shahnazaryan said during an interview.

Lydian charged, however, that it was the ELARD consultants who mislead Pashinyan.

“While Lydian welcomed ELARD's rightful conclusion about the lack of impact on Lake Sevan and the Jermuk water source, yesterday's regrettable performance by ELARD reveals more about an apparent lack of capacity to review and analyze complex details of more than 20,000 pages of professional studies provided to them by leading global experts than it does about Lydian or the Amulsar Project,” said its statement.

“ELARD'S comments regarding available data appear to be about a ‘wish list’ of what they would have preferred to be able to review,” it added. “When asked, ELARD did not give any reference to any industry standards that Lydian did not comply with.”

Lydian again argued that its environmental impact assessments submitted to the authorities had been certified by more authoritative

Western environmental consultancies. The company also stressed that it had been granted the mining license in line with Armenian law and has been “illegally deprived” of its ability to mine gold at Amulsar since June 2018.

In July 2018, Pashinyan instructed the Investigative Committee to launch a criminal inquiry in order establish whether a government body that issued Lydian's operating license in April 2016 broke any laws or regulations. The committee said it has no evidence of such violations when it publicized the ELARD report on August 16. The head of the law-enforcement body, Hayk Grigoryan, and the man leading the inquiry, Yura Ivanyan, stood by that conclusion during the video conference.

Still, it emerged on September 2 that the Investigative Committee has launched an internal inquiry into the impartiality of Ivanyan's actions. A spokeswoman for the committee pointed to a media revelation that Ivanyan is related to Aramays Grigoryan, who was Armenia's environment minister at the time when Lydian won the license. She said the committee will clarify whether this fact influenced the Amulsar probe.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Cilicia Catholicosate Renews Demand for Return of Site

BEIRUT – On July 30, the legal team of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, under the leadership of Catholicos Aram I, filed a case in the 2nd Kozan Court of First Instance against the Kozan Municipality and the Turkish State Treasury for the return of the Monastery and Cathedral of St. Sophia, the historical center of the Cilician Catholicosate of the Armenian Church since 1297.

This follows a decision by the European Court of Human Rights in 2017 ruling that the 2015 claim by the Catholicosate must be submitted once more before the Turkish courts to make its claim before proceeding to the European court.

In the current application, which follows the original claim submitted in 2015, Catholicos Aram I asks that the property in question be registered in the name of “the Sis Monastery, the Religious Center under the Authority of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia” and that it be immediately returned to the legal owner. The court has not yet decided on a hearing date. Should the Turkish courts give a negative response it will be possible once again to submit the Catholicosate’s claim to the European Court of Human Rights.

## Georgian Premier Resigns

TBILISI (Armenpress) – Georgia’s Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze resigned on September 2.

“The circle of development has been created, therefore I have decided to resign because I think I have fulfilled my mission in this stage,” Bakhtadze said on Facebook.

“It has been a great honor and at the same time great responsibility to serve the interests of our country as Georgia’s Prime Minister. I have been and will be a member of Georgian Dream and a loyal soldier of our country,” he said.

According to Georgian law, the entire government must resign in the event of the prime minister’s resignation.

Cabinet members will continue serving until a new government is confirmed.

## Armenia on List of Largest Wine Exporters

YEREVAN (Arka) – Armenia is included in the list of largest wine exporting countries in 2018. The list comprising 80 countries was made public by the American Association of Wine Economists (AAWE)) on its Facebook page on September 4.

Armenia is ranked 51st with wine exports totaling \$9.4 million. Of other former Soviet republics Russia is ranked 56th, Azerbaijan 55th, Georgia 17th, Ukraine 31st, and Belarus 50th.

The list is topped by France, whose wine exports in 2018 brought it \$11 billion – significantly ahead of its nearest export rival – Italy, whose export value amounted to approximately \$7.3 billion.

The third place in the ranking is occupied by Spain, for which wine exports generated revenues of more than \$3.5 billion. Australia, which earned over \$2.2 billion in exports, ranked fourth, and Chile ranked fifth with over \$2 billion.

## 235 Syrians receive Armenian Passports

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A total of 235 Syrian Armenians received Armenian citizenship in the second quarter of 2019, including 34 in Damascus and 201 in Aleppo, the government announced late in August.

All of them were exempted from paying state duties.

The Armenian government on Thursday, August 29 decided to allocate AMD 14.1 million (\$30,000) to reimburse the state duties.

“The government tries to support all foreign citizens of Armenian nationality and Armenian citizens whose country of residence is caught in an emergency that threatens their life or health.”

# Russian Opposition Activist Granted Asylum in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia has granted political asylum to a Russian opposition activist who spent four years in custody for his role in anti-government protests in Russia.

Vitaly Shishkin, an activist of Russian nationalist persuasion, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service in Yerevan on September 3 that he arrived in Armenia in January, days after he was released from prison.

Writing on his Facebook account on September 2, Shishkin said he was “grateful to Armenia for granting [him] refugee status as a politician who is being persecuted in Russia for political motives.”

The Armenian State Migration Service confirmed that Shishkin had been granted refugee status, citing a “real and grounded risk” that he could be mistreated for his political views if he goes back to Russia.

In February 2015, a Russian court sentenced Shishkin, 47, to four years in prison for allegedly inciting hatred and calling for mass disorders after he had called on Russians to take part in anti-government protests.

The Moscow-based Memorial



Russian opposition activist Vitaly Shishkin

Human Rights Center recognized the activist as a political prisoner, saying his prosecution was conducted “exclusively in connection with the non-violent implementation of his right to free expression of his opinion.”

Shishkin told RFE/RL that he left Russia legally using a domestic identification document known as an internal passport.

Armenia allows Russian citizens to travel to the country with such documents.

“I could not go anywhere besides Armenia, where great events took place a year ago. And I thought that it is a different country here, not the one that used to be before,” said Shishkin, referring to a change of government in Armenia following weeks of nonviolent street protests.

## US ‘Understands’ Iran’s Importance for Armenia

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) – The United States is not pressuring Armenia to curtail its relations with neighboring Iran because of the US sanctions against Tehran, according to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In an interview with the French-Armenian magazine Nouvelles d’Armenie publicized by his press office on Saturday, Pashinyan was asked whether the sanctions are causing Armenian serious problems.

“I don’t want to make grandiose statements but our diplomats have succeeded in scoring a very important victory in this regard,” he replied. “Our American partners seem to have gotten a good grasp of the issue. They have started to understand that Iran is one thing for Washington and another for Armenia.”

“I can say that at the moment we are not subjected to any pressure [from the US,]” added Pashinyan.

Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, a close associate of Pashinyan, made similar comments when he visited Washington and spoke at the Atlantic Council think-tank in July.

“We don’t want the United States to put pressure on Armenia for joining in its Iran sanctions agenda,” Mirzoyan said. He argued that Iran serves as one of his landlocked country’s two conduits to the outside world due to closed borders with the two other Muslim neighbors: Azerbaijan and Turkey.

US National Security Adviser John Bolton discussed the US sanctions with Pashinyan during an October 2018 trip to Armenia. Bolton said traffic through the Armenian-Iranian border will become a “significant issue” because Washington will be enforcing the sanctions “very vigorously.”

Pashinyan made clear afterwards that his government will “deepen not only economic but also political relations” with Tehran. He paid an official visit to the Islamic Republic in February.

Pashinyan reaffirmed Yerevan’s strong interest in the implementation of Iranian-Armenian energy projects in an interview with leading Iranian media outlets cited by the Armenpress news agency on Monday. He noted with satisfaction the ongoing construction of a third transmission line that will link the

Armenian and Iranian power grids.

The Armenian leader also pointed out that he has invited Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani to a summit of the Eurasian Economic Union that will be held in Yerevan next month. Iran and the Russian-led trade bloc signed a preferential trade agreement last year.



Henrikh Mkhitaryan with his new Rome colors

## Mkhitaryan Heads to Rome

ROME (Armenpress) – Henrikh Mkhitaryan has joined Armenia national football team. The Armenian team started trainings on September 2 ahead of games against Italy and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mkhitaryan joined the trainings on September 3, because he was in Rome to sign a contract with the team “Roma.”

Armenia-Italy match will take place on September 5 and Armenia- Bosnia and Herzegovina on September 8 in Armenia.

Mkhitaryan will be on loan to Roma, providing the Italian football club with the opportunity to purchase Mkhitaryan’s transfer right for 15,000,000 euros next summer. Roma will pay Arsenal 4,000,000 euros for a one-year loan.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who transferred from Manchester United for 34,000,000 euros in January 2018, has a contract with Arsenal that will end in June 2021.

Mkhitaryan will play for Roma under the number 77.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Khachaturyan Sisters Who Killed Father Touch Russian Hearts

By Nina Nazarova

MOSCOW (BBC Russian Service) – In July 2018 three teenage sisters stabbed and battered their father to death in his sleep, in their Moscow flat.

Investigators have confirmed the girls' father abused them physically and psychologically for years.

Charged with murder, the sisters and what should happen to them have become one of the hottest topics of debate in Russia and more than 300,000 people have signed a petition calling for their release.

On the evening of 27 July 2018 Mikhail Khachaturyan, 57, summoned Krestina, Angelina and Maria, who was a minor at the time, one by one to his room. He scolded them for not cleaning the flat properly and sprayed pepper gas in their faces.

Soon afterwards, when he had fallen asleep, the girls attacked him with a knife, hammer and pepper spray, inflicting fatal wounds to his head, neck and chest. He was found to have more than 30 knife wounds.

The young women then called the police and were arrested at the scene.

The investigation soon uncovered an extensive history of violence in the family. Khachaturyan had regularly beaten his daughters over three years, torturing them, keeping them as prisoners and sexually abusing them.

That evidence against their father is cited in their indictments.

The case quickly became a cause celebre in Russia. Human rights activists argued that the sisters were not criminals but victims, as they had no means of getting help and protection from their abusive father.

However, there are no laws protecting victims of domestic violence in Russia.

Under legal changes introduced in 2017, a first-time offender who beats a family member, but not badly enough to put them in hospital, will face only a fine or up to two weeks in custody.

Police in Russia usually treat domestic

abuse as a "family issue", providing little or no help at all.

The sisters' mother, who had also suffered beatings and abuse from Khachaturyan in the past, had approached the police years before. So did the family's neighbours, who were highly afraid of him. But there is no evidence that the police acted on any of these appeals for help.

Image copyrightGETTY IMAGESImage captionThe girls' mother, Aurelia Dunduk, says Mikhail expelled her from the flat in 2015

At the time of the murder the girls' mother was not living with them and Khachaturyan had forbidden his daughters from contacting her.

According to psychiatric assessments, the girls lived in isolation and had been suffering from post-traumatic stress (PTSD).

The Khachaturyan sisters' case has moved slowly. They are no longer in custody, but they are subject to restrictions: they cannot speak to journalists, nor to each other.

Prosecutors insist the killing of Khachaturyan was premeditated murder, as he was asleep and the sisters coordinated their actions, snatching the knife earlier that morning. The motive was revenge, they argue.

If found guilty under that charge the sisters face up to 20 years in jail. It is alleged that Angelina wielded the hammer, Maria the hunting knife and Krestina the pepper spray.

However, the sisters' lawyers say the killing was in fact an act of self-defense. Indeed, the Russian criminal code allows self-defence not only in cases of immediate aggression, but also in cases of "continuous crime," such as a hostage situation where the victim is being tortured.

The defence insists that the sisters were vic-

tims of "continuous crime" and should therefore be released. The sisters' lawyers are hopeful the case could be dropped, as the investigation has confirmed extensive abuse by Khachaturyan towards his daughters dating back as early as 2014.

Human rights activists and many other Russians now want the law changed and measures introduced such as state-funded shelters,

killed a domestic abuser in self-defense.

There has been something of a backlash against the Khachaturyan sisters among more conservative parts of Russian society. An association called Men's State, which cites "patriarchy" and "nationalism" as its two main values, and boasts almost 150,000 members on social media, organized a campaign called "Murderers behind Bars," insisting that the sis-



At the time of their father's killing, Angelina (L) was 18, Maria (C) was aged 17 and Krestina 19

restraining orders and courses for managing abusers' aggressive behavior.

How widespread is domestic abuse?

There is no hard data on how many women suffer from domestic violence in Russia, only estimates, but according to human rights activists it could involve as many as one in every four families.

A number of other shocking cases have made headlines, including that of Margarita Gracheva, whose husband cut off her hands with an axe out of jealousy.

Some experts say that up to 80 percent of women held in Russian prisons for murder

ters should not be released.

In addition to a change.org petition calling for the sisters' case to be dropped, there have been solidarity poetry readings, rallies and theatre performances.

Daria Serenko, a feminist and activist from Moscow who helped organize a three-day support rally in June, says the main goal of the public events is to keep the story in the news and give everyone a chance to speak out safely.

"Domestic abuse is a reality of life in Russia. We can ignore it, but it affects our lives even if we have never had to experience it personally," she says.

## Erdogan Says It's Unacceptable that Turkey Can't Have Nuclear Weapons

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday, September 4, it was unacceptable for nuclear-armed states to forbid Ankara from obtaining its own nuclear weapons, but did not say whether Turkey had plans to obtain them.

"Some countries have missiles with nuclear warheads, not one or two. But (they tell us) we can't have them. This, I cannot accept," he told his ruling AK Party members in the eastern city of Sivas.

"There is no developed nation in the world that doesn't have them," Erdogan said. In fact, many developed countries do not have nuclear

weapons.

Turkey signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1980, and has also signed the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which bans all nuclear detonations for any purpose.

Erdogan hinted that he wanted the same protection for Turkey as Israel.

"We have Israel nearby, as almost neighbors. They scare (other nations) by possessing these. No one can touch them."

Foreign analysts say Israel possesses a sizable nuclear arsenal. Israel maintains a policy of ambiguity around the nuclear issue, refusing to confirm or deny its capabilities.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan

## OSCE Representative Raises Concern over Recent Detentions of Reporters in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) – The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir, expressed his concern regarding the recent detentions of several journalists in Turkey, following public demonstrations in different Turkish cities after the removal of several mayors in south-east Turkey, OSCE said in a press release on September 3.

"Journalists should be guaranteed safe working conditions at all times, including while covering protests, and no journalist should be imprisoned in retaliation for their work," said Désir.

Journalist Ziyen Karahan, who works for the Kurdish service of the Mezopotamya News Agency, and Jinnews reporter Yelda Özbek were detained in Diyarbakır on 19 and 20 August, respectively, and were released a few days later. Also on 20 August, the correspondents of Mezopotamya News Agency, Ahmet Kanbal and Mehmet ah Oruç, as well as Jinnews reporter Rojda Aydın and journalists Nurcan Yalçın and Halime Parlak, were taken into custody by the police in Mardin. They were later released on 27 August.

In addition, on August 22, Taylan Özgür Özta, a reporter for the Özgür Gelecek newspaper, and Tunahan Turhan, a reporter for the Etkin news agency, were detained in Istanbul. A writer and columnist for the Evrensel Daily, Ay egül Tözere, was taken into custody by the police on 20 August, following a midnight raid on her Istanbul home. All three were released from custody under judicial control measures on August 23.

## Trump Picks Career Diplomat Degnan as New Envoy to Georgia



Kelly Degnan

TBILISI (RFE/RL) – US President Donald Trump on September 4 announced his intention to nominate career diplomat Kelly Degnan as the new US ambassador to Georgia, a post that has been vacant for nearly a year and a half.

Degnan currently serves as a political adviser to the commander of the US Naval Forces Europe-US Naval Forces Africa, according to a September 3 White House statement.

Diplomatic relations with Georgia were officially established in 1992 after that country's 1991 independence from the Soviet Union.

Washington has been an ally of Georgia, having provided technical assistance and aid for democratic reforms and economic development.

On August 8, the United States and five European countries marked 11 years since a five-day war between Russia and Georgia over two breakaway regions of Georgia by urging Moscow to withdraw its military forces to the

positions held before the outbreak of those hostilities.

In a joint statement, the UN ambassadors of the United States, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Poland, and Britain expressed support for Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

A native of California, Degnan's career has spanned 25 years and has included senior diplomatic postings to Italy, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Turkey.

Degnan also served as the deputy executive secretary of the State Department, political counselor at the US mission to NATO, and special assistant to the secretary of state.

Degnan speaks Italian, French, Turkish, and Urdu.

Elizabeth Rudd has served as acting ambassador to Georgia since Ambassador Ian Kelly departed in March 2018.





# Community News

## Summer Conference Welcomes Students From Armenia and Jerusalem

ARMONK, N.Y. — From July 26 to August 4, St. Nersess Seminary welcomed students to the annual High School Summer Conference. This year, participants represented parishes in Washington, D.C., Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Florida, Rhode Island, Canada, Armenia and Jerusalem. The conference was directed by Rev. Ghevond Ajamian, pastor of St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Dallas, and a graduate of the seminary.

For the 13th year, students from the Sts. Tarkmanchatz Armenian School in Jerusalem were invited to attend, thanks to the support of several benefactors who cover their expenses. And for the third year, students from Armenia attended a summer conference. “We are happy to offer our American students the opportunity to interact with their peers from Armenia and Jerusalem,” remarked the Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean.

The main benefactors of the project this year were Russell and Susan Kashian (WI) with generous support by Vicken and Rosette Arslanian (NJ), Joseph and Kristine Casali (NJ), George and Lorraine Marootian (NJ), Steven and Karen Nargizian (NJ), Gregory and Meline Toufayan (NJ), Sara Andonian (MI), Keith and Karen Bilezerian (MA), and Paul Derderian (NY).

Traveling from Jerusalem were Nareg Sevan and Ardashes Hekimian and from Armenia were Sargis Hovsepyan, Armanush Andreasyan, and Diana Baghumyan. “Even though I had heard positive experiences from my friends who previously attended the summer conferences, I couldn’t wait to see for myself!” exclaimed Nareg Sevan. “We are very happy to be a part of the High School Summer Conference. It is very important for the Armenian youth to have opportunities like this,” said Hekimian.

The three students from Armenia were also proud to experience the High School conference. Andreasyan expressed that what she had experienced was beyond her expectations. “The warm and open-armed welcome of the staff and the participants made us feel at home, especially when it is easy to become disengaged and feel homesick in a country and an environment that is not familiar,” she reflected.

Hovsepyan commented, “I am so happy and very grateful for this opportunity of making new connections.” And Baghumyan added excitedly, “I can say that my conversational



Students from Jerusalem and Armenia with Bishop Daniel Findikyan and Fr. Mardiros Chevian.

English improved significantly.”

Each of the students from Jerusalem and Armenia was impressed at how serious and deep the Christian education was during the conference and all were going to cherish the memories and knowledge received.

The St. Nersess Summer Conferences have attracted thousands of students. Clergy and lay leaders instruct the participants in the fundamentals of the Armenian Church’s faith and traditions. In addition, sports and recreation, daytrips, and other activities add to a well-rounded experience.

The next conference will take place January 2-6, 2020 for college-age students. Information and registration for the College Winter Conference can be found on stnersess.edu.



George Bournazian, left, with John Knight

## New Equipment for Berd State Vocational College

RALEIGH, N.C. — Through funding from ArmeniaTools4Schools, the Berd Vocational State School in the Tavush region in Armenia received \$25,000 in tools, equipment, and supplies from December, 2018 through April 2019. This support re-establishes a welding department at the school, re-supplies the electrical department, and doubled the equipment in their sewing and tailoring department.

Founded in 1972, the Berd Craftsman State School was a top vocational education and training institution with functioning workshops and laboratories that provided training in many fields. Tuition is free at the school and the average age of students ranges from 16-20 years. It is the only vocational school in the Berd region and its graduates work in the 16 villages surrounding the town of Berd. After the transition to a market-based economy and increasing budget costs to the government because of the war, funding to the school declined and some departments became nonoperational.

The equipment comes at a key time when enrollment at the school declined 33 percent from 2013-2018. The principal, Anna Avalyan, explained “we have good instructors to teach welding, we just don’t have the tools and equipment to teach that trade.”

The new shipment of tools restores the welding department at the school. Armenia Tools4schools is a North Carolina non-profit charitable organization dedicated to supporting vocational schools in Armenia. George Bournazian, President of ArmeniaTools4Schools in Raleigh, said “We’re proud to be helping the Berd Region rebuild and it starts with empowering the students by giving them the tools and equipment to start their professional careers. We look forward to continuing this program with more regions throughout Armenia.”

Knight Electronics in Dallas, Texas, worked with ArmeniaTools4Schools to provide the equipment, tools and supplies at substantially reduced prices for charitable and educational purposes through their Knight Educational Products Division. “I have known George Bournazian for 15 years and when he came to us with this plan to provide support to Armenian vocational schools, we were ready to support him and the next generation of Armenian trade professionals” said John Knight, president of Knight Electronics.

This effort is in part, to help re-build economic infrastructure and strengthen the social institutions in the Berd region. After enduring 20 years of devastating war, the Armenian villagers along the Azerbaijan border in the Berd region continue to suffer deaths and injuries from sniper fire.

“...When [George Bournazian] came to us with this plan to provide support to Armenian vocational schools, we were ready to support him and the next generation of Armenian trade professionals”

## Judge Hurries US Naturalization as Pregnant Woman Gets Contractions

By Lucy Nicholson

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — A judge in California had to speed up the naturalization of a pregnant immigrant on Thursday, August 22, when the woman, anxious to become a US citizen because of President Donald Trump’s immigration policies, started experiencing contractions.

The 31-year-old Armenian-American woman, who was scheduled to give birth to her second child next week by cesarean section, said she started to feel contractions after a walk to a Los Angeles convention center where the judge was naturalizing about 3,200 immigrants.

She refused to leave until she was sworn in as a US citizen, said US District Judge Cormac Carney, who performed an impromptu naturalization ceremony before the official event began for immigrants from 114 different countries.

The woman, who asked to be identified only by her first name, Tatev, said she returned home and the contractions stopped once she rested.

Tatev said concerns about Trump’s hard-line stance on immigration prompted her to accelerate her 6-year-long naturalization process.

“I sped up this process because of the fact of the current president, because the immigration laws are under attack,” said Tatev, a former California high school history teacher, adding she was fearful her green card, which makes her a legal permanent US resident, would be taken from her.

Trump said on Wednesday his administration



Tatev, 31, who is from Armenia and has lived in the US for 17 years, went into labor before her US citizenship ceremony and refused to go to hospital until she was sworn in as a US citizen, according to Judge Cormac J. Carney who is seen performing a quick impromptu naturalization ceremony before the official event in Los Angeles.

was seriously looking at ending the right of citizenship for US-born children of non-citizens and people who immigrated to the United States illegally.

He has made cracking down on legal and immigration a central plank of his presidency and re-election campaign, but many of the administration’s sweeping rule changes and executive orders have been stymied by the courts.

“I don’t want my kid to face these issues growing up in this country and having this be his home and not legally being part of this country,” said Tatev, who stays home to care for her 2-year-old daughter.

Tatev said in a phone interview that she arrived in the United States from Armenia when she was 14 and it took her 17 years to first get a green card and then citizenship.

“If he (Trump) doesn’t like what’s happening, why don’t we pass better policies that make it a little easier for people to go through this process instead of having to sneak into this country and go through so many horrible experiences?” she said.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# What It's Really Like To Go Plastic-Free

By Jen Babakhan

NEW YORK (*Readers Digest*) — Our plastic obsession is harming the planet. But by making a few tiny tweaks, you can help combat this environmental crisis in a big way.

Every product is independently selected by our editors. If you buy something through our links, we may earn an affiliate commission.

America, we have a plastic problem. Each year, Americans use a whopping 100 billion plastic bags. Believe it or not, they would circle the equator 773 times if tied together. Every minute, people around the world buy a million plastic bottles, and less than half of them are recycled. And that's just the tip of the

iceberg. The plastic in landfills can take up to 1,000 years to decompose, and it's not just clogging our landfills—it's killing our sea life and devastating coastal ecosystems.

Experts estimate that there are 46,000 pieces of plastic per square mile of ocean, and plastic bags are the most devastating item among the 5.25 trillion pieces now in the sea, according to the Australian eco-organization Ocean Crusaders. Why? Plastic packaging and bags can kill one animal after another. Just one bag may kill an animal that ingests it, which then decomposes, freeing the bag for another animal to ingest and creating a never-ending death cycle. Here are 50 more facts that will make you want to stop using plastic for good.

## One woman's path to living plastic-free

Stephanie Seferian, founder of the Mama Minimalist <http://mamaminimalist.com>), has always cared about the environment. "Even as a 5-year-old, I followed my mom throughout the house turning the lights off behind her to save electricity," she recalls with a laugh. But when Seferian became a mother herself in 2014, she began to take a closer look at her own plastic consumption and disposal. "That was when I began reading the news about climate change and basically the impending doom," she says. "I realized how bad plastic was and how overfilled our landfills are."

That realization sent Seferian on a quest to do more, for the sake of the planet she would leave to her daughters. The changes she



Stephanie Seferian

made, though small, have added up, and she shares that journey on her podcast, *The Sustainable Minimalist*. These are the swaps that she made in her life—that you can make, too.

## Trade paper for cloth

"I tell people to start with the low-hanging fruit," Seferian says. "Paper towels aren't plastic, but they're wrapped in it. Switching to rags made from old clothing can be a great first step. I cut up stained kids clothing and put it in a basket in our kitchen. That led us to using cloth napkins instead of paper, too." When it comes to altering your lifestyle, she advises trying one

change at a time until it becomes second nature before moving on to something else. "You can't do it all at once," she explains.

## Make zero-waste coffee

"I can't live without coffee, but I knew there had to be a way to make it without waste and plastic. I switched to a French press, and I buy the coffee loose and put it in a reusable cloth bag," she says. "There's no waste, and you can compost it. It also tastes a lot better."

## Grow your own berries

"I couldn't find berries at the store that weren't wrapped in a plastic clamshell, which are made of soft plastic—one that's really hard to recycle," she explains. "So I began growing my own berries." She grows her own blueberries and raspberries and freezes what she can. When she does shop, she chooses brands that are eco-friendly.

## Compost without bags

Most people throw food scraps into a plastic bag, but composting eliminates the need for that plastic bag. "It reduces what goes to the landfill and reduces your overall trash," she explains. "This is one way to save plastic bags."

## Brush away plastic

"We use bamboo toothbrushes instead of plastic ones. And when we go to the dentist and the dentist offers us the free toothbrushes and floss, we politely decline," says Seferian. "The ones we use can be composted, once we break the heads off [since] they contain nylon bristles." You can also buy brushes with boar bristles that are completely compostable, but Seferian says, "That's too far, even for me."

## Opt for non-plastic dental floss

"Most people don't know that plastic floss can be replaced with silk floss," she says. "It can be composted, and you can find it at any health store." Another alternative to flossing: using a Waterpik. Seferian also opts for toothpaste tablets instead of toothpaste in a plastic tube. That swap, she adds, "takes some getting used to, especially if you like the creamy texture of a paste."

## Just say no to plastic bags at the grocery store

Bringing your own reusable bags when shopping is an easy-to-implement tweak. In fact, more and more grocery stores are insisting on it, with some forgoing plastic bags and others charging extra for even for paper bags. That said, some stores and workers aren't quite there yet. "While some swaps have technically been easy, I find myself dealing with pushback from others which, in turn, creates anxiety," Seferian says. "For example, I shop at a supermarket with an in-house bakery. Every week, I ask the baker at the counter (always the same woman) to place my loaf in a repurposed pillowcase instead of a plastic bag. Although her and I have been dancing this dance for over two years, she continues to roll her eyes each and every time. I swear she works slower on purpose, too."

## Go green for baby

"With my first daughter, I was too stressed about new motherhood to go with cloth diapers, but by the second, I was able to make the swap," Seferian says. "It did make extra laundry, but I did it happily, knowing that we were saving so much money." She adds that hand-me-downs are also smart for the environment, not to mention your wallet. She kept everything from her first daughter to use for her second. And since most baby items are wrapped in plastic, she either reuses what she has or doesn't buy it new. "I don't purchase new items as often as possible," she says.

## Use natural items as beauty products

"The hardest swap so far has been using coconut oil as my makeup remover, especially for my eye makeup," Seferian admits. "It doesn't remove it completely. It also doesn't absorb well, and it doesn't work well with my skin. I don't love it, but I use it."

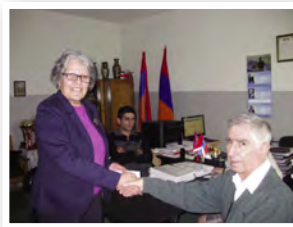
## Skip that bottle of shampoo

Believe it or not, your hair-care products don't have to come in a bottle. "I made the swap from shampoo and conditioner in a bottle to one in a bar," she says. "It wasn't an easy or quick process. I had to try several different bar brands, just like you would with bottled shampoo or conditioner."

## Be merciless in your medicine cabinet

"I use bar soap instead of liquid, and there are bamboo Q-Tips instead of the plastic ones," says Seferian. "There's a swap for just about everything if you want to find one."

see PLASTICS, page 9



## SPONSOR A TEACHER IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Holy Trinity's Annual Picnic and Opening of Church Schools to Be Held on Sept. 15

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — All are invited for an afternoon of food, music, fun, family and friends at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston's annual Trinity Church Picnic on Sunday, September 15, beginning at noon, on the grounds of the church at 145 Brattle St.

Once again co-chairing the Picnic Committee are David Dorian, Richard Diranian and Jack Ekchian. "Our Trinity Annual Picnic is always a wonderful afternoon as parishioners and friends come together to kick off the fall season

carte menu, take-out meals, beverages, Armenian coffee and a variety of pastries and desserts. This year again will feature the Gourmet Shack featuring Armenian delicacies, sweet and savory, produce and many more delicious goodies. There will be lots of activities for children including the Moonwalk all afternoon, cotton candy, popcorn and slush. The Greg Krikorian Armenian Ensemble will perform, featuring Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet; Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals; Arthur Chingris, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine.

The Ancient Tradition of the Blessing of the "Madagh" will take place at 4:00 p.m., followed by the Raffle drawing for cash prizes. This year's raffle cash prizes are \$1,000, grand prize; \$300, second prize; and \$200, third prize. Tickets can be obtained by calling the Holy Trinity Church Office, or emailing [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org), or buying on the day of the Picnic.

The morning will begin with the Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m., celebrated by Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church. On this morning, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the last major Feast Day (Daghavar) of the calendar year, will be commemorated. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, the Antasdan Service (Blessing of the Four Corners) and Basil (Rahan) Blessing will take place. According to the canons of the Armenian Church, no Requiem Service (Hokehankisd)

will be held on this morning.

Holy Trinity Church's Armenian and Sunday Schools will kick-off the 2019-2020 year on the morning of Sunday, September 15, with registration for both schools at 10:15 a.m., in the Peter Adamian Hall of the church complex.

Sunday School classes meet weekly from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon in the Peter Adamian Hall. The Sunday School program, which ranges in grades from Pre-School through 12, is open to all children and youth, ages 3 to 17. To be eligible for Sunday School, a child must be three years of age by September 1, 2019, and toilet-trained. Parents may register their child(ren) on Opening Day on September 15, or request a registration form and submit prior to the first day of classes, which will be held on September 22. For information regarding the Sunday School program, contact Yn. Arpi

Kouzouian, Sunday School Superintendent, at [youth@htaac.org](mailto:youth@htaac.org), or call the Church Office.

The Armenian School program, for children and youth ages 3 to 16, meets weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., for students registered in the Sunday School, and from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., for students registered in the Armenian School only. The goal of the program is to introduce students to the Armenian language, history, culture and current events. During the school year, there are lessons in singing, painting and dancing. Classes are taught in Eastern Armenian in three grade levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Armenian School classes will begin on Sunday, September 22. For further information about the Armenian School program, contact Naira Balagyozyan, Armenian School Director, at [nairab3@gmail.com](mailto:nairab3@gmail.com).



Picnic Co-Chairs, from left to right, Jack Ekchian, David Dorian and Richard Diranian

with delicious food, great music, and especially the camaraderie that day offers as we reconnect with family and friends after the summer hiatus," state the co-chairs.

Delicious Armenian food will be available throughout the afternoon as well as an a la

## Society for Armenian Studies Banquet on Oct. 12 Will Honor its Past Presidents

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) will mark the 45th anniversary of its founding with a Banquet recognizing and honoring its past Presidents. Sponsored by the Organization of Istanbul Armenians (OIA), the Banquet will take place on at 7 p.m. on Saturday, October 12, at the OIA's Banquet Hall at 19726 Sherman Way, Winnetka, California. The banquet is part of the two-day international conference to take place at the University of California, Los Angeles on October 12-13 marking the 45th Anniversary of SAS. Entitled "Diaspora and 'Stateless Power': Social Discipline and Identity Formation across the Armenian Diaspora during the Long Twentieth Century," the conference is in honor of Khachig Tölölyan.

"The 45th anniversary Banquet is an important event where we will honor for the first time

all the past presidents of the Society. Those are the scholars who played a dominant role in shaping the Society over the past four decades. This will also be a unique opportunity where SAS will represent its new vision of the Society and the novel path that it has been pursuing. I encourage people to attend the Banquet and to learn more about the latest projects of the SAS," said SAS President Bedross Der Matossian.

Tickets for the Banquet are available at \$50.00 per person. If you are interested in attending the event contact SAS Treasurer Barlow Der Mugrdichian at [barlowd@csufresno.edu](mailto:barlowd@csufresno.edu). The deadline for reservations is Friday, September 20. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

For more information visit the SAS website at [societyforarmenianstudies.com](http://societyforarmenianstudies.com) or their Facebook page @societyforarmenianstudies.

## OBITUARY

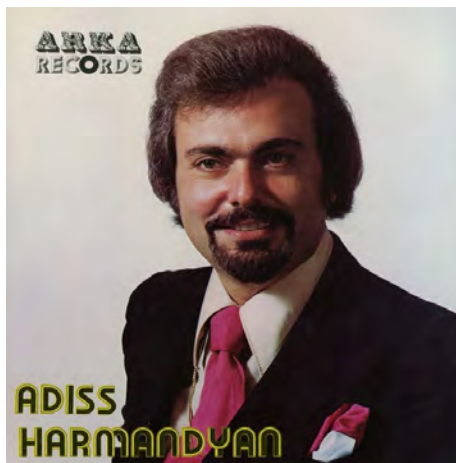
### Singer Adiss Harmandian Dies

LOS ANGELES (Combined Sources) — Renowned Armenian singer Adiss Harmandian passed away on Sunday, September 1, at the UCLA Santa Monica hospital. He had been battling cancer for 15 years. He was 74.

Harmandian, a Lebanese-Armenian, born to Armenian Genocide survivors on January 14, 1945 in Beirut, began his career as a singer in the 1960s. His first single, Dzaghigner, quickly gained popularity among Lebanese and Diasporan Armenians.

Harmandian is considered a pioneer of the estradayin genre of Armenian music. Songs in the genre, such as Harmandian's own Nouné or Karoun Karoun were primarily sung in Armenian, and were influential in the formation of the Armenian identity in Lebanon and the Diaspora.

Harmandian released more than 30 albums



and around 400 songs throughout his career and had received numerous awards, both internationally and within the Republic of Armenia.

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## Giragosian

F U N E R A L H O M E

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC  
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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Findikyan Ordains Deacons in Charlotte, NC

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel spent the Feast of the Holy Assumption (August 18) at the St. Sarkis Church of Charlotte, NC—marking his first visit as a bishop to the parish he formerly served as a visiting pastor. For many of the parishioners, seeing their long-time friend enter the church to the hrashapar hymn was a moving experience.

During the badarak, the Primate ordained two parishioners to the diaconate. Sub-deacon Serop



Bishop Daniel Findikyan with Serop Krajekian and Daniel Zalinov

Krajekian was ordained as a full deacon—making him the first of such rank to serve the Charlotte parish. Daniel Zalinov was ordained as a sub-deacon, and is the first altar server raised in the local community to be ordained as such.

**Most Joyous Day**  
“I think this might be the most joyous day I have experienced in the six years I have served at this church,” said parish pastor Fr. Samuel Rith-Najarian. “These two new deacons are exemplary models of faith

and dedication to the church. I had no hesitation in saying, Arzhanee en: ‘They are worthy.’”  
After his ordination, Krajekian reflected: “One of the reasons I decided to live in Charlotte with my family was the existence of an Armenian Church. It’s a blessing for me to be ordained as a deacon at St. Sarkis, sur-

rounded by the lovely mosaic of this Armenian community, whose people live together as a big family.”  
Following the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Daniel led the blessing of grapes service and joined the community for a luncheon in the church hall.

## What It’s Really Like to Go Plastic-Free

PLASTICS, from page 7

### Try a different feminine-hygiene product

“I switched from tampons to a silicone menstrual cup (silicone is a type of rubber, in case you’re wondering), and it’s changed my life,” she says. “I want to shout from the rooftops how easy this swap is.” Here are 11 “disposables” you should stop buying now.

### Ditch the plastic wrap

Instead of plastic wrap, Seferian suggests using beeswax wrap, which is a piece of cotton covered in melted beeswax. The melted wax dries, and you’re able to press the fabric around your container, just like plastic wrap. You can make it yourself, but Seferian says it’s not worth your time. “I tried to make my own, and it was a flop—it didn’t stay on the bowl,” Seferian says. “I ended up buying the commercial brand online; you can use them hundreds of times. I wish I had done that from the start.”

### Cut down on convenience items

Yes, they’re convenient (hence, the name), but they’re not particularly eco-friendly. “Most people love the prepackaged snack options for kids’ lunches, and it makes sense because it’s so easy—especially things like cheese sticks or bags of popcorn,” says Seferian. “I have found a way to do this, too: I have the deli slice up a block of cheese

into sticks and then place them in a glass container I bring from home. I’ll also buy loose popcorn kernels, pop it at home, and then put the popcorn into silicone bags.” Here’s the easiest way to recycle the plastic bags that you still have.

### Get rid of plastic food containers

Most people get hung up on food storage, says Seferian, but they shouldn’t. “I switched out my Rubbermaid items for glass containers, even those I send with my kids to school. The little glass jars I send fruit in are pretty indestructible; we’ve had ours for about five years now,” she says. “Glass wasn’t allowed at my daughter’s summer camp this year, so we sent stainless steel items for that instead. I prefer glass simply because I started this journey with it. I also saw how great glass is to freeze items in.”

### A final note on going plastic-free

Seferian says the biggest surprise along her plastic-free journey has been the reaction of those unfamiliar with her lifestyle. “When people see me doing strange things, like washing foil, they’re genuinely curious,” she explains. “I expected people to write me off as a hippie. So it makes me think that if people know there’s a better way, they’ll want to go that direction.” Going plastic-free isn’t the only way to help the environment—or yourself.



During the service in Charlotte



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Merdinian Evangelical School Opens Doors for 2019-2020 Academic Year

By Louisa Janbazian

SHERMAN OAKS, Calif. — It's another new school year. Teachers, students, and parents, after a two-month break, have enthusiastically returned to their daily lives and challenges at Merdinian School. For the 38th year, by the grace of God, the school opened its doors to Armenian children and embraced them with the promise of a safe environment, where the students will grow up and develop in spirit and mind.

On Wednesday, August 21, at Merdinian School welcomed 36 full-time faculty members and 230 students, who were ready to start the new academic year. As the “First Bell” rang, students, faculty, parents, and Board members gathered at the Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall for the opening Ceremony of the current school year. The program started with National anthems led by music teacher Alice Der Kevorkian, followed by the recitation of Psalm 121 by three 6th grade students led by Religion Department Chair Lena Ekmekjian.

Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Merdinian School Board member and Senior Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, addressed the students, parents, and the teachers and emphasized that



Merdinian School Opening Ceremony for 2019-2020 Academic Year

as Christian and Armenian heritage. As such, when they successfully complete their schooling, they will be able to find favor from God and from men.”

Board Vice Chair Rita Meneshian addressed the students, faculty, and parents on behalf of the School Board, and thanked the parents for entrusting their children’s education to Merdinian School.

In her remarks, School Principal Lina Arslanian gladly announced the increase in student numbers and made a quick overview of the summer camp activities as well as current and new programs to be implemented in the coming school year, such as the revamping of the technology curriculum and the new Technology Lab equipped with new computers, 3D printers (which were gifts from departing 8th grade students), a Robotics table, and Chromebooks to be used by the 5th-8th

grade students in their classrooms and at home.

After introducing the teaching staff and their responsibilities for the 2019-20 academic year, Arslanian concluded her remarks and said “We continue to find new ways to live our mission, educate our students, and pursue excellence. Together we are transforming teaching and learning.”

The Opening Ceremony ended with the singing of the Lord’s Prayer “Hayr Mehr” and Benediction offered by Megerditchian.

The Merdinian Preschool held its opening ceremony on Monday, August 19. Arslanian

welcomed the students and expressed her enthusiasm over the expansion of the Preschool to accommodate 74 preschool students. She thanked the Preschool Director Marijan Kevorkian for her input and valuable leadership and wished the preschool faculty the best for a productive and successful year. The parents then visited the classrooms for an orientation session with their children’s teachers.

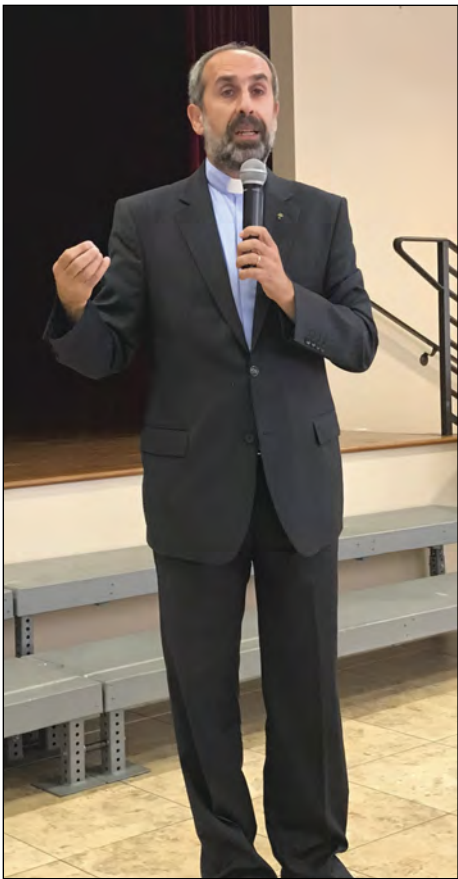
Established in 1982 by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.



Principal Lina Arslanian

“Merdinian’s students are called upon to develop and grow not only physically, but also in academics, education, wisdom as well

(which were gifts from departing 8th grade students), a Robotics table, and Chromebooks to be used by the 5th-8th



Rev. Serop Megerditchian



Merdinian School Board Vice Chair Rita Meneshian

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Sato Moughalian, flute

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October 2nd to [Tekeyannynj@aol.com](mailto:Tekeyannynj@aol.com)  
Ms. Shames's appearance is graciously underwritten  
by the Jarrin and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation

Copies of the book will be  
available for purchase and signing.  
The presentation will be held in English.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## ANCA Local LA Chapter Members Meet with Rep. Adam Schiff

BURBANK — Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR) as well as Glendale, Burbank, Hollywood, and Crescenta Valley chapter representatives met with Congressman Adam Schiff as part of the 2019 August Recess Month to discuss the latest developments and policy priorities of the Armenian American community.

“We greatly value the relationship with Rep. Schiff, who represents the largest Armenian American constituency in California’s 28th District,” remarked ANCA-WR Vice Chair Raffi Kassabian, Esq. “For many years, Rep. Schiff has been one of the leading advocates of the Armenian Cause in the U.S. Congress and we continue to work closely with Rep Schiff in identifying new avenues to further deepen the U.S.-Armenia strategic partnership and the U.S.-Artsakh relations.”

During the meeting, local chapter representatives provided with an update and overview of the ongoing activities in their respective cities as well as some of the current needs of the community. The current Armenian Genocide Truth and Justice resolution H.Res.296, co-authored by Rep. Schiff, was a focal point of discussion. The continued U.S. assistance to the Republic of Artsakh was another agenda item. Rep.



Rep. Adam Schiff, center, with representatives of the ANCA

Schiff reaffirmed his commitment to advancing the Armenian American policy priorities in the U.S. Congress, including H.Res.296 and continued assistance to Artsakh.

The Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region is the largest and most influential nonpartisan Armenian American grassroots advocacy organization

in the Western United States. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout the Western United States and affiliated organizations around the country, the ANCA-WR advances the concerns of the Armenian American community on a broad range of issues in pursuit of the Armenian Cause.

## Hye Pointe Holds Picnic

HAVERHILL, Mass. – On Sunday August 25, the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe held its annual picnic on its own grounds. The picnic started with church services performed by pastor Fr. Vart Gyozyan. The weather was warm and sunny and drew crowds from three different states for attending and sampling the Hye Pointe cuisine.

The attendees enjoyed an excellent Armenian kitchen cuisine of lamb, chicken, and losh kebab, and, of course, the famous *kheyma* prepared by the church’s kitchen crew. The Women’s Guild bakery and pastry table featured paklava, and the Hye Pointe



choregs, which are much sought after and desired by not only local parishioners, but also non-Armenians. Music for the event was provided by Hye Pointe’s own Jason Naroian Ensemble.

Representatives from the city government were in attendance to meet the crowd and sample the cuisine. The Hye Pointe picnic drew over 800 attendees from the Merrimack Valley, North Shore, Metro-Boston, New Hampshire, and Maine. Building Committee members also updated the attendees on the construction of our Sanctuary. The picnic was covered in the local *Eagle-Tribune* paper: [https://www.eagletribune.com/news/haverhill/tradition-continues-at-armenian-church-picnic/article\\_010b53ad-53f3-5d11-a1f0-94fe9fb5f38f.html](https://www.eagletribune.com/news/haverhill/tradition-continues-at-armenian-church-picnic/article_010b53ad-53f3-5d11-a1f0-94fe9fb5f38f.html)

For further information on the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, visit <https://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org/index.html>






### Knights and Daughters of Vartan

## 28<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia

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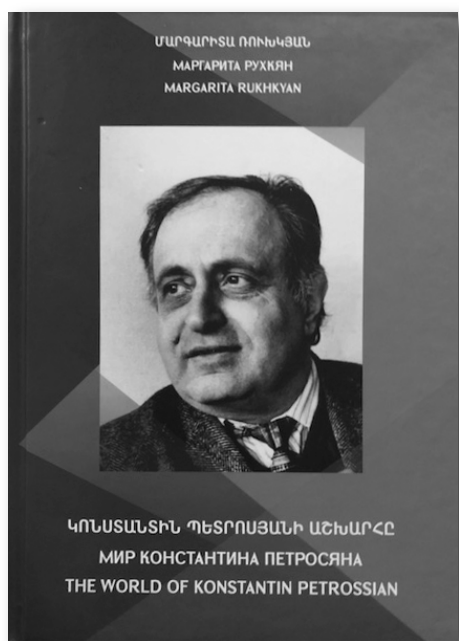
# Arts & Living

## BOOKS

### New Book, *Konstantin Petrossian's World*, to Be Presented Sept. 20

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Upon the initiative of the Art Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia, the book *Konstantin Petrossian's World* was published, which tells about the creative and patriotic activities of the famous Armenian composer.

The author of the book is musicologist Dr. Margarit Rukhkyan. The foreword was written by Dr. Anna Asatryan, deputy director of the Institute of Arts. The book has been published in three lan-



guages: Armenian, English and Russian.

The book contains photos of Konstantin Petrossian's life.

The original presentation of this book took place in June in the hall of the Union of Composers of Armenia in Yerevan.

The US Book Presentation will take place on September 20 at 7 p.m. at Providence's Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI.

There will be a performance, as well as wine and refreshments. Donations are greatly appreciated.

For more information visit: [www.stsahmes.org](http://www.stsahmes.org)

### Agajanian Quinn and Bengston To Talk Art on September 7

CULVER CITY, Calif. — Journalist Joan Agajanian Quinn and artist Billy Al Bengston will come together on September 7 at 4 p.m. in Culver City's Arcana book shop for a conversation about the latter's career.

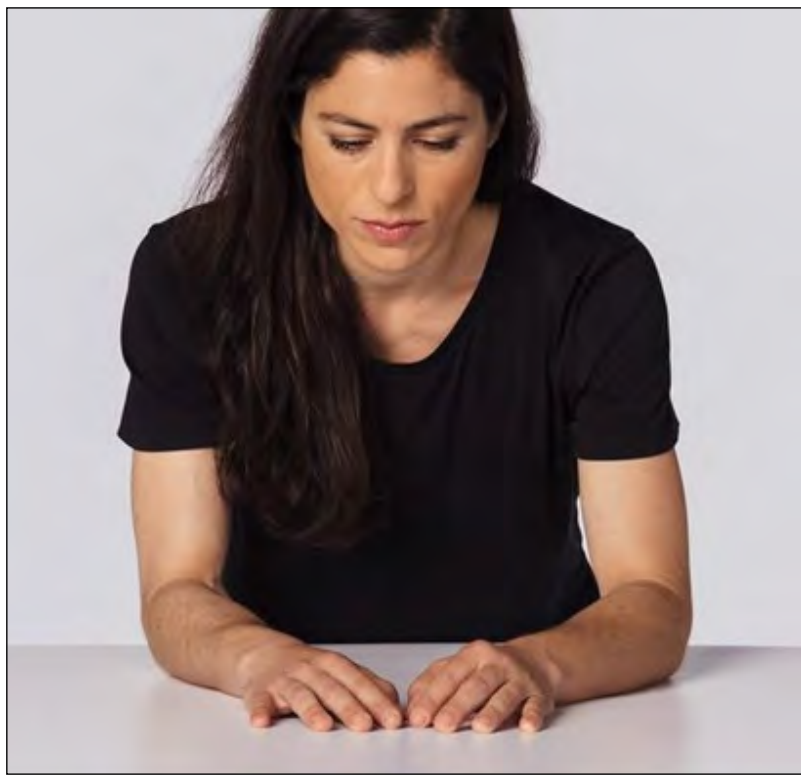
Bengston and Quinn have been an integral part of the Southern California's cultural scene for 60 years. They will discuss the decades of his work from the Ferus Gallery, dirt bike racing, surfing and his worldwide museum exhibitions.

Bengston, who is famous for his prolific body of work which includes *Dentos*, *Finish/Fetish* pieces, canvases and watercolors, has never before been featured in a comprehensive book.

Hans Neurendorf from Berlin's Galerie Neurendorf has published that tome: *Billy Al Bengston: Paintings & Watercolors!*

The artist will be signing the lavishly illustrated book which consists of personal photos and his history of works from 1957 to 2016.

The bookstore is located at 8675 Washington Blvd., Culver City.



Iris Karayan

## Iris Karayan

### 'My Work Looks at Memory and Re-enactment...'

YEREVAN/ATHENS — Iris Karayan is a dancer, choreographer and teacher living in Athens. She studied dance at the Greek State School of Dance and completed a Master of Arts in Performance and Culture: interdisciplinary perspectives at Goldsmiths College, UK. She is the founding member and choreographer of ZITA Dance Company. Her works have been presented in Greece and around Europe.

**By Artsvi Bakhchinyan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In 2010 she was awarded with the 1st prize of the Jarmila Jerabkova Award in New Europe Festival 2010 in Prague for her choreographies, "A Time to Mourn" and "Leg Agy." In 2013, ZITA and Iris Karayan were selected by the international dance network Aerowaves with the work "Mothers" and in 2014, Dancenet Sweden selected and supported a tour of "Mothers" in Sweden. The program has been widely presented in European Festivals and venues.

"Alaska" (2016), an Onassis Cultural Centre commission, premiered in Athens on February 2016 and has also been presented in the Dansfabrik Festival de Brest, France.

She collaborates with other artists from the fields of dance, music, theatre, cinema and the visual arts and has been actively involved in two collectives, Syndesmos Chorou and the Collective Choreography Project. Since 2013, she has been leading a movement and improvisation workshop for people with and without visual impairment, part of the Onassis Cultural Centre's educational program.

She is a Fulbright grantee for the year 2018-2019, planning to continue her research in affiliation with Movement Research in New York City. She teaches choreography and improvisation at professional dance schools.

**Dear Iris, I am a great fan of contemporary dance. However, I know almost nothing about it in Greece. How will you describe it?**

Contemporary dance in Greece and dance education has been developing over the past years. The situation in Greece has been following the trends in Europe and the US, with a lag. There are professional dance schools that offer vocational training to dancers. The students study ballet and contemporary techniques such as Graham, Limon, release techniques, improvisation and eurhythmics, ballet and contemporary movement analysis, history of dance, music, choreography, etc. There are some festivals that present contemporary dance and other festivals and venues that have in their programming contemporary dance and live performance works. There are a lot of contemporary dancers and fewer choreographers who create and produce their works. They could get funding from the Ministry of Culture, when there is a call and a state budget to subsidize contemporary artistic production, and/or by some private institutions that support and produce the contemporary live arts. A lot of Greek dancers travel mostly to Europe (Belgium, Germany, UK etc.), to continue their studies and look for work as dancers, choreographers and teachers. There are no dance or performance studies departments at the state university, meaning at a higher education level, therefore the educational status for dance studies offered in Greece is a dance teacher diploma.

**Cultures with rich folk traditions always use elements of their national heritage in what now is called contemporary art. Is the same with Greek contemporary dance?**

Yes, some choreographers work with the issues of historical identity and tradition. It depends on the specific work, but I would say that there are choreographers who are interested in looking at the Greek folk tradition and its elements through their contemporary works, while they develop a movement vocabulary that is influenced by traditional dancing, music, literature, folk songs, poetry etc.

see KARAYAN, page 14

## Nasher Sculpture Center Honors Another Artist It Thinks Is Pretty Great

**By Peter Simek**

CHICAGO (*Front Burner*) — The Nasher Sculpture Center has announced the recipient of its 2020 Nasher Prize, Michael Rakowitz, a Chicago-based artist who also teaches art at Northwestern University.

Rakowitz, who grew up on Long Island and is of Iraqi and Jewish descent, works across a variety of mediums, and his conceptual art practice, as the Nasher's release puts it, involves "intensive research, resulting in an array of objects, environments, films, and publications that seek to reclaim, reposition or refocus complicated aspects of material and cultural histories or events." That's a bit abstract, so let's simply try to describe what Rakowitz does.

Now in its fifth year, the Nasher Prize is an international award for sculpture, established to honor a living artist who elevates the understanding of sculpture and its possibilities. Rakowitz will be presented with an award designed by Renzo Piano, architect of the Nasher Sculpture Center, at a ceremony in Dallas on April 4, 2020.

He will also receive \$100,000.

Rakowitz first began to garner attention after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology by creating plastic, inflatable shelters for the homeless and, later on, an inflatable recreation of a failed St. Louis housing project designed by the architect of the World Trade Center. During the Iraq war, he set up mail drops for free shipments of donated food and clothing for Iraqis. In a project supported by Creative Time, he set up a storefront in Brooklyn to import dates from Iraq, in defiance of UN sanctions, and the difficult, convoluted travels of the "refugee" dates became the first items clearly marked "Product of Iraq" to be imported into the US in 25 years.

In the mid-2000s, Rakowitz began using food packaging from Iraq to recreate some of the statues and artifacts that were destroyed or stolen by looters or ISIS during the war. One of these creations, a replica of Lamassu, a winged deity that once guarded the gates of Ninevah, still stands in a plinth in London's Trafalgar Square. In Chicago, Rakowitz created a food truck manned by Iraqi war veterans who served traditional Iraqi recipes.

A recent, well-receive retrospective at Whitechapel Gallery in London included more objects made of Iraqi foods stuffs, drawings of lost or destroyed artifacts, and plaster casts of the reliefs from buildings in Istanbul—reliefs that were originally cast in animal bone and designed by Armenian craftsman who would later be murdered in the Armenian genocide. A through-line emerges in Rakowitz's work that suggests an interest in the way materials carry a multiplicity of hidden and often contradictory meanings, obscure or distort memory, and silently embodying historical ironies, social hypocrisy, and human suffering. Rakowitz's work also returns often to considerations of the way consumerism, globalism, and neo-colonialism twist and distort the meanings of cultural artifact and identity.

Which is all very cool, but why Dallas and why now? To answer that question, we have to look at the Nasher Prize in its proper context. The prize is the Nasher's tricky attempt to raise the profile of the sculpture center and leverage the Nasher's ambitious institutional authority by shining a light on significant contemporary artists whose practice often directly involves challenging institutional authority and the nature of sculpture. The Nasher's desire to use

see NASHER, page 15





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Pianist Sofya Melikyan in Concert at Fresno State

FRESNO — Award-winning pianist Sofya Melikyan will perform in recital as part of the “Young Armenian Talent” series of the Philip Lorenz Memorial Keyboard Concert Series at Fresno State. The performance will take place



Sofya Melikyan

at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, September 27 in the Concert Hall on the Fresno State campus. Melikyan will perform works by Chopin, Rachmaninov, Komitas, and Geghuni Chitchyan.

The concert is co-sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program of Fresno State and the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

Melikyan has recently performed in recitals at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the American Liszt Society in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Guangzhou Opera House in

China, Bulgaria Concert Hall in Sofia, Santiago de Compostela Auditorium in Spain, “Chopin+” Festival in Luxembourg, as well as debuts with the North Shore Symphony Orchestra in Chicago and Vancouver Symphony.

Born in Yerevan, Melikyan began her musical studies at the Tchaikovsky Special School of Yerevan with Anahit Shajbazyan. She complet-

ed her further training at the Royal Conservatory of Madrid with Joaquin Soriano (graduated with Honors), Ecole Normale de Musique Alfred Cortot in Paris with Ramzi Yassa (graduated with Honors) and Manhattan School of Music in New York with Solomon Mikowsky.

Hailed for her “magnificent singing line and

exquisite artistic sensibility,” this Armenian-born pianist is recognized as an artist with a unique voice combining “high-wire virtuosity” with “deep musical intuition and the ability to connect with the audience” (Mundoclasico).

Tickets may also be purchased online at the following website: <http://www.keyboardconcerts.com/concert-sofya-melikyan.aspx>.

## Recipe Corner



*by Christine Vartanian Dalian*

### Aunt Arpie’s Celery Stew (*Geragoor*) with Kufteh Balls



Retired culinary teacher Robyn Kalajian received this recipe from her beloved Arpie Vartanesian, who lived in Florida, and who passed away in 2014 at age 89.

One day, Aunt Arpie said she was craving Celery Stew with Kufteh Balls, which she had made many times through the years.

“The way in which my Aunt Arpie described this recipe was sheer poetry. Her description of this delicious celery stew was so heavenly, she made my mouth water. Since she was not cooking so much at the time, I promised to prepare her celery stew recipe, making enough to share with her. Aunt Arpie put away her rolling pin and pans a few years before she passed away, but she never lost interest in eating a good meal or just talking about it.”



#### PART 1: KUFTEH BALLS

Combine the following ingredients in a bowl until well-mixed:

1 lb. lean ground lamb, beef or turkey  
1/3 to 1/2 cup fine (#1) bulgur  
1/4 cup finely chopped onion, optional  
Salt, pepper, ground coriander, cayenne pepper, allspice, paprika to taste

#### PREPARATION

Shape into balls the size of large marbles. Place on a plate. Cover and refrigerate until ready to add to the stew.

Yield: Makes about 24 kufteh balls.

#### PART 2: STEW AND SAUCE

##### INGREDIENTS FOR CELERY STEW

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium bunch celery, thoroughly washed, and cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped  
2 or 3 cloves garlic, minced  
4-5 cups broth (chicken, beef or vegetable), add more, if needed  
Salt and pepper to taste

##### INGREDIENTS FOR SAUCE:

2 egg yolks, beaten  
Juice of 1 lemon

#### PART 3: CELERY STEW:

In a large pot, heat olive oil, and sauté celery, onions and garlic for 5 minutes. Add broth and the kufteh balls. Bring to a full boil, and then reduce heat to low. Partially cover pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until vegetables are tender and kufteh balls are cooked through.

#### PART 4: DIRECTIONS FOR THE SAUCE

In a small bowl, mix together the egg yolks and lemon juice.

Spoon a little of the hot broth into the egg-lemon mixture, stirring briskly to prevent the egg from coagulating. (This process is called tempering.)

Slowly stir the tempered egg-lemon mixture into the large pot of celery stew. Cook gently for another 5 minutes. Serve immediately with Armenian bread or a crusty Italian or French bread.

#### RECIPE VARIATION

The celery stew can also be made with lamb neck bones with meat instead of the kufteh balls. This procedure should be done a day in advance.

The procedure follows.

#### RECIPE VARIATION

If using lamb neck bones, cook them in a pot with enough water to cover the bones. Bring to a boil, skimming-off any scum that rises to the surface. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partially covered, for about 1 hour, or until the meat is tender. Remove neck bones from the broth. Allow to cool enough to handle so that the meat can be removed from the bones. Discard bones. Cover and store meat in the refrigerator until ready to add to celery stew.

Photos and recipe contributed by Robyn Kalajian: <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>

Serves 6-8.

## Iris Karayan: ‘My work looks at memory and re-enactment...’

KARAYAN, from page 13

**What are your inspirations for creating new dances?**

I am inspired by everything around me, the socio-cultural context that I live in, works by other artists, readings and ideas I am interested in the internet and generally my way of living and everyday practice.

**Please tell us about your background.**

I am what might be called a Greek Armenian. Actually I am a third-generation Armenian living in Greece. My grandparents came to Greece when they were very young, around the 1920s. Both sides of my family sides are Armenian. We come from different areas and places in the wider region of Anatolia.

**Has your Armenian origin somehow influenced on your art?**

I am certain it has in subtler and esoteric ways. Being of an Armenian origin is a mixture of experiences and feelings I have throughout my life as an Armenian of the Diaspora: my upbringing was full of stories narrated by my grandparents about the past and our origins, the experiences and the genocide, the way they survived and created a new life in Athens, the need not to forget and keep history and memory alive. I think it has influenced me as a person in general, and I can describe myself as a fighter, someone who values hard work and commitment, relation to history, culture and society, justice and freedom.

**Through Greek-Armenian dancers I know also the names of the Dakessian sisters from the 1950s, Alis Furundjian and Anah Sari (Anahis Saribekyan). Do you know if there are other Greek dance professionals of Armenian origin?**

Occasionally I come across an Armenian last name, but most of the times it is just the name of one of the parents.

**Do you have any plans to do an Armenian project?**

Yes, I am very much looking forward to coming to Armenia for an artistic residency where I can research and work with local artists, make and present a performance. My work looks at memory and re-enactment of events and the ways digital media stimuli become the material for a new work. I would love to come to Armenia study and research recent social events and make a work in collaboration with other artists.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Nasher Sculpture Center Honors Another Artist It Thinks Is Pretty Great

NASHER, from page 13

the prize to insert itself in a more global artistic conversation is reflected by the museum's decision to host its announcement this year not in art collector Howard Rachofsky's Warehouse, a private art space near the Galleria and the usual setting for the reveal, but at the Soho House New York. Rakowitz is the fifth artist to receive the Nasher Prize. Past recipients include Isa Genzken (2019), Theaster Gates (2018), Pierre Huyghe (2017) and Doris Salcedo (2016).

We could tally up the genders, cultural backgrounds, artistic styles, political interests, position in the contemporary art market, and divergent approaches to materials and medium demonstrated by these five artists to begin to piece together a coherent profile of the Nasher Prize—to understand what the prize's esteemed collection of jurors are trying to say about the state of art, the state of sculpture, the state of artistic institutions, or the state of the world. Perhaps, at some point, we will. For now, what is important is that Rakowitz is an interesting artist, and Dallas art lovers will have an opportunity to learn a lot more about him when his work and career are highlighted in a block of programming this spring—all capped by a gala fundraiser where Rakowitz will receive a cool \$100,000 and the Nasher Prize trophy, designed by Renzo Piano.

"In Michael Rakowitz, the Nasher Prize jury has selected a laureate whose work wrestles in unique and revelatory ways with many of the complex questions of history, heritage, and identity that are so much at the forefront of contemporary culture and politics," says Director Jeremy Strick. "Interrogating objects and materials—their history and associations—Rakowitz weaves dense webs of meaning in distinct bodies of work rich with insight and surprise."

Rakowitz's earliest works established his place within conversations about art's possibilities as a material and conceptual spur for social change. In 1997, he developed the first examples of his ongoing series paraSITE, custom-built, inflatable shelters designed for and in collaboration with homeless individuals. By attaching to the exterior outtake vents of a building's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, the small provisional structures allow the warm air leaving the building to simultaneously inflate and heat the personal shelter. In addition, the structures made visible the enduring presence of homelessness at a time when cities were using architectural barriers and new laws to limit the homeless population's access to public space. More than 90 paraSITE structures have been made and dis-

tributed in cities including Boston and Cambridge, New York City, Baltimore, Ljubljana, Berlin and Chicago.

Following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Rakowitz's work shifted to consider his own heritage as an American descendent of the Iraqi

refugees displaced by the Iraq War, most notably in a project called RETURN (2006) for which he reopened his grandfather's former import/export business in a Brooklyn storefront, where packages and letters could be sent and received from Iraq, and world-renowned

he has maintained a project called Enemy Kitchen, an Iraqi cooking workshop presented in various places, including New York City public schools and a food truck in Chicago staffed by Iraqi refugees and émigrés as chief chefs and US combat veterans as sous-chefs and servers. "Preparing and then consuming this food opens up a new route through which Iraq can be discussed—in this case, through that most familiar of cultural staples: nourishment. Iraqi culture is virtually invisible in the US, beyond the daily news, and Enemy Kitchen seizes the possibility of cultural visibility to produce an alternative discourse," says the artist. He also recently published a cookbook of recipes, all utilizing Iraqi date syrup, called A House with a Date Palm Will Never Starve. With contributions from his mother and 40 prominent chefs, the cookbook extends the space of Rakowitz's reconstruction of the lamassu, built from 10,500 Iraqi date syrup cans, beyond the Fourth Plinth and into cupboards and bellies as a way to taste the sculpture.

Rakowitz is the fifth artist to receive the Nasher Prize; previous winners are Isa Genzken (2019), Theaster Gates (2018), Pierre Huyghe (2017) and Doris Salcedo (2016). The 2020 Nasher Prize jury that selected Rakowitz is comprised of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Director of Castello di Rivoli, Italy; Phyllida Barlow, artist; Pablo León de la Barra, Curator at Large, Latin America, Guggenheim Museum; Lynne Cooke, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Art; Briony Fer, Professor, History of Art, University College London; Yuko Hasegawa, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; Hou Hanru, Artistic Director, MAXXI, Rome; and Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair, Arts Council England.

"Michael Rakowitz's work bridges, on the one hand, social sculpture—what we've come to call relational aesthetics—and embodied material work on sculpture, with a great sense of humor and a great sense of empathy," says Nasher Prize juror Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. "Michael's work is about healing and about how to take the problem of cultural destruction and transform that into a resource for a very optimistic vision of the reconstruction of our society."

In conjunction with the Nasher Prize, the Nasher Sculpture Center annually presents a series of public programs exploring the climate of contemporary sculpture. Called Nasher Prize Dialogues, the talks gather interdisciplinary luminaries to discuss the most compelling topics regarding contemporary sculpture. By galvanizing international discourse, Nasher Prize Dialogues are an apt extension of the Nasher Prize's mission to advocate for and advance a vital contemporary art form. The most recent talks have taken place in Copenhagen, Denmark in partnership with CHART; Reykjavik, Iceland in partnership with the Reykjavik Art Museum; in Glasgow, UK in partnership with The Common Guild and Glasgow International 2018; and in Dallas in partnership with The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza.

The 2020 Nasher Prize is co-chaired by Nancy Carlson and Adriana Pareles who help garner support for the prize and its attendant programs, including the Nasher Prize Dialogues.

Rakowitz has exhibited in venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; MoMA/PS1, New York; Tate Modern, London; MassMOCA; Castello di Rivoli; the 10th and 14th Istanbul Biennials; the Sharjah Biennials 8 and 14; the Tirana Biennale; and Transmediale 05. He was invited to exhibit in the 2019 Whitney Biennial but withdrew in protest of the museum's vice chairman, Warren G. Kanders, who is chief executive of a company that manufactures body armor and tear gas, before the Biennial's participating artists were announced; after additional protests by other artists and activists following the exhibition opening, Kanders resigned.

Rakowitz is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the 2018 Herb Alpert Award in Visual Arts, a 2012 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, a 2008 Creative Capital Grant, the Sharjah Biennial Jury Award, a 2006 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship Grant in Architecture and Environmental Structures, the 2003 Dena Foundations Award, and the 2002 Design 21 Grand Prix from UNESCO.



Michael Rakowitz

Jewish diaspora. His mother's parents left Iraq when the country's Jewish population began to face discrimination and violence in the early 1940s, eventually settling in New York. Rakowitz began to investigate both his family's history within the scope of recent events, as well as that of other immigrants, exiles, and

Iraqi dates were imported to the US for the first time in nearly three decades. After the looting of the Iraq Museum shortly after the US invasion, Rakowitz also began to research the archaeological artifacts and sites that were being destroyed or compromised due to political conflict.

Rakowitz's latest iteration of "The Invisible Enemy Should not Exist" is currently on view, until 2020, in London's Trafalgar Square as part of the city's Fourth Plinth commission. The work features a recreation of a lamassu – a figure resembling a winged bull with human features, which guarded the gates of the ancient city of Nineveh since 700 BCE, until it was destroyed in the 2015 destruction by ISIS. Rakowitz's lamassu is made using Iraqi date syrup cans, in reference to a substance that is not only a cornerstone of Iraqi cooking but had also been the second most important Iraqi product after oil and an industry that was nearly crushed due to embargoes against the country and the decimation of Iraq's date palms during the war and its aftermath.

In addition to his use of its packaging for "Invisible," food itself plays a key role in Rakowitz's work. Since 2003,



"The invisible enemy should not exist," on the Fourth Plinth. Getty Images



**Armenian Church of the Holy Translators**  
invites you to the annual

## Armenian Food Festival

Come and enjoy a day filled with traditional  
Armenian food, music, dancing, and fun children's activities!

**Sunday, September 15 from noon – 5 PM**

**at The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators**

**38 Franklin Street, Framingham MA**

For further information, contact the church office: 508-875-0868.







ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

ARIZONA

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

CALIFORNIA

**NOVEMBER 23 — Armenian EyeCare Project Gala. Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its annual Gala** celebrating another year of great accomplishments in Armenia. Held at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA at 6:30pm. Evening begins with stunning cocktail reception and silent auction followed by an exquisite five-course dinner, live Armenian music by the Hosharian Brothers Band, an exciting live auction and more! Tickets are \$450/person if reserved by Oct. 10; \$500/person after Oct. 10; and \$250/person for those age 35 & under. All proceeds to benefit the AECF’s many sight-saving programs in Armenia. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email info@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

FLORIDA

**DECEMBER 13, 14, & 15 — Friday, Saturday, & Sunday - Friday - 6pm to 10pm; Saturday - 9am to 10pm; Sunday - 1pm to 6pm; - St. David Armenian Art & Food Festival, 2300 Yamato Road, Boca Raton, FL.** Join us for an afternoon of delicious homemade Armenian food, fun, fellowship, raffles, and children’s activities while you shop for Christmas gifts at our vendors. For more information, call the church office at 561-994-2335. Admission is free and there is ample parking on the church grounds.

MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

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

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

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation’s Immigrants – Gala Benefit for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway** Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Leader & Philanthropist Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants & Refugees InterContinental Hotel Boston.

Advance Reservations only. For information, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**SEPTEMBER 20 – St. James Hye Café. Friday. Join us for delicious food and fellowship – with LIVE ARMENIAN MUSIC!** Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15pm. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

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

**SEPTEMBER 28 — Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) New England 8th Annual Walk of Life.** Registration 10:30-11:00am at Armenian Educational and Cultural Center (ACE), Nichols Avenue, Watertown. Walk begins promptly at 11 am and goes down to Watertown Square. Registration is \$25 (\$10 for students). For more info, visit www.abmdr.am/ne

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

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

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

**OCTOBER 19 — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) 100th Annual Meeting Banuquet** celebrating the Armenian Evangelical Church. Westin Hotel, Waltham, 70 Third Ave., Watlham. 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. Dinner, \$125. RSVP by October 5. Tickets and sponsorships available online at amaa.org. Checks payable to the Armenian Missionary Association of Ameirca, and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652

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

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

**NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting,** NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR’s new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary

Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration.** Keynote speaker: Dr. Diran Apelian, Professor of Engineering & Former Provost, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Distinguished Professor, UC Irvine. Entertainment: singer Artur Hakobyan (Mister X). Emcee: Lisa Gulesserian, Ph.D., Harvard’s Preceptor on Armenian Language & Culture.@ The Westin Hotel Waltham-Boston. 6:30pm Cocktails / 7:30pm Dinner and program. More to follow...

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

**DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 3:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

MICHIGAN

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

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

NEW JERSEY

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

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

NEW YORK

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

**SEPTEMBER 26 – A GREEN Evening Celebrating Armenia Tree Project’s 25th Anniversary.** Wine, hors d’oeuvres, and a brief update from Executive Director continued on next page





ARTS & LIVING

Armenians in Berlin

BERLIN, from page 1

It was the premiere of the novel, *Hier sind Löwen* (There are Lions Here) by Katerina Poladjan, who was born in Moscow and has lived in Germany since 1979. She has already published two novels and has earned an impressive array of scholarships and grants, as well as literary awards. Her new book, published by S. Fischer, is on the long list for the 2019 German Book Prize. This event was to kick off a series of 15 presentations going into the autumn and including some at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October.

The hall filled up rapidly, a good number of attendants were Armenians. The well-known literary critic Meike Fessman moderated the event, which unfolded in the form of a lively dialogue with the author. Poladjan read sections of her novel with dramatic force and humor, bringing her characters alive as if they were on stage. Saxophonist Angelika Niescier provided a powerful musical counterpart, accompanying the literary dialogue from beginning to end with contemporary Armenian music.

We learned that the novel deals with one Helen Mazavian, a young woman who leaves Germany for Yerevan, where she will work as a book restorer at the Matenadaran. She is eager to learn about new restoration techniques there and, through her work on an old Bible, she ends up discovering far more.

The Bible was what two children, Hrant and Anahid, had taken with them in 1915 when they fled the Genocide. There are handwritten phrases on the pages, including a cryptic note mentioning Hrant, something to the effect that he will not wake up. Poladjan read passages describing the flight of the children, as well as Helen's arrival in Yerevan, her work on the restoration, and episodes in a love relationship.

The author explained that Armenian bibles are often very small, some of them have a clasp, and have a very personal character. Families would inscribe their names, and place personal items, letters, tickets, photographs, inside. For Heike Fessman, this seemed to be an encounter of the sacred and the profane. Poladjan spoke of "memory writing," and how the Bible was considered almost a member of the family.

Through her work on the Bible, the character Helen delves into its history. She comes to learn about Armenia, its past and present, and in the process, she rediscovers her own personal identity. One passage in the novel reads: "Dikranian. Abovyan. Petrosian. Mazavian. My last name was suddenly in phonetical company. Until then I had carried it like an unsuitable piece of clothing, like a dented hat that I didn't take off even for dinner." Why should she marvel at this fact? Poladjan explained that in the Soviet Union, names, personal names were not considered important, since "they were all socialist brothers and sisters," but in Yerevan, it was different, the character Helen realizes what her identity is through her Armenian name.

The novel tells the story of the Genocide and emigration, the story of the Armenian people, within it, that of a woman and her family.

Following the presentation, visitors took their fresh copies of the novel and lined up to have them signed by the author, before moving upstairs to the vast rooftop terrace where they could enjoy the magnificent view of the Brandenburg Gate, and sip a glass of wine.

We were surely not the only ones to reflect on the images from our own childhood that Poladjan's reading had called up to consciousness: how your mother would insist you took that small, tattered little bible with you on your trip, or how she arranged for it to accompany your father on his final journey. Or, how you marveled as a youngster at those magical characters of the alphabet, with their mysterious curves and crosses, painted in autumnal shades of green or maroon, and delicately lined in gold.

From the Word to the Image

Two days later, Bea and I visited another Armenian artist and mutual friend, Archi Galenz, at his new gallery. The vernissage had already taken place, but the artifacts and installations were still on display. The exhibition entitled, "Discourse on Revolution and Power," deals with the Armenian pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale. (See next week's *Mirror-Spectator*).

Not far from Wolf&Galentz gallery, we visited the Galerie Kuchling, which is hosting a solo show by Kevork Mourad, titled "Fears & Dreams." The artist, who lives in New York, was born in Qamishli, Syria in 1970, his Armenian family having relocated there. He graduated from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts and has worked as a teaching artist in residence at Brandeis, Harvard and Holy Cross.

Some of Mourad's themes are historical, others may be mythological or related to fables. In a video on display at the gallery, the artist explains the influence of his experience in Syria, a land that his ancestors had reached after having fled a hundred years ago. One of the exhibits on display, a work in acrylic on canvas entitled "Uprooted," depicts the drama of expulsion, deportation and flight. Now, as Syria suffers the ravages of war and destruction, again its people must seek refuge abroad.

The works on exhibit present several artistic media with which he has worked, from drawing to painting, multi-layered sculptural paintings and animation films. In his video, Mourad demonstrates how he experiments with new techniques, which include integrating music into his art. He transposes painting and drawing into live performances, by composing to live music.

Four years ago, he won the Robert Bosch Foundation film prize for International Cooperation with a short animation entitled "Four Acts for Syria." He has performed at the Nara Museum in Japan, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Ismaili Centre in London, among others.

Both graphic artist Mourad and author Poladjan come from faraway lands, Syria and Russia, both deal artistically with the drama of earlier generations, who had been forced to leave their homeland and seek a new life abroad. For both, it is a question of identity, one which finds its solution in literary or artistic form.

(Sources: Background material for this article has been taken from websites of the artists, <http://katerinapoladjan.de/> and <https://www.kevorkmourad.com/>, German press, and gallery literature. German quotations have been freely translated into English by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach.)

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CALENDAR

NEW YORK

from previous page

Jeanmarie Papelian. Proceeds will support ATP's new Forestry Fund. 7:00 to 9:30 pm at Affirmation Arts, 523 West 37th Street, New York. A minimum donation of \$100 is requested. Please RSVP via [www.getrootednyc.eventbrite.com](http://www.getrootednyc.eventbrite.com) or call (617) 926-TREE.

RHODE ISLAND

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

SEPTEMBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Martin Papazian, ear, nose and throat specialist. Steven Zaroogian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

SEPTEMBER 29 — The Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island (AHARI) will host an afternoon with Susan Lind-Sinanian, renowned museum curator and educator at the Armenian Museum of America as she presents her upcoming book. Sunday. Refreshments 12.30 p.m., lecture at 1 p.m. Attendees are invited to bring their own family textile treasures with them for an "Antiques Road Show" style evaluation. AHARI,

245 Waterman St., fifth floor conference room, Providence.

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

WASHINGTON, DC

SEPTEMBER 16-17 — Armenian Assembly of America's National Advocacy Conference and Gala will take place. It will include the Conference, Gala honoring Armenian American Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, and a Congressional Reception celebrating U.S.-Armenia relations. Special room rates available at The Wharf InterContinental Hotel. Visit [www.aimhye.com](http://www.aimhye.com) for tickets, sponsorships, special hotel room rates, and more information.

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





COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

# Azerbaijan: The Undesirable Neighbor Of the Caucasus

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The news that Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev is suffering from poor health and has not made a public appearance in the last two weeks does not bother that country’s citizens too much, because their government apparatus is on auto-pilot; it is teleguided from Ankara, following the policies of its Big Brother.

Indeed, Ankara, particularly during the era of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has set its sights on its neighbors’ territories. After occupying 38 percent of Cyprus, Turkey has been involved in a landgrab rampage in Iraq and Syria.

Similarly, Azerbaijan, after occupying the historic Armenian territory of Nakhijevan, has targeted Artsakh and very recently, some areas in Georgia. The second Azeri president, Abulfaz Elchibay, had set his sights on gobbling up northern Iran (the Iranian province of Azerbaijan); that dream remains alive and well and currently is at the center of some strategic plans by the US and Israel.

Turkey and Iran have been perennial competitors and enemies in the Caucasus and that latent antagonism is still extant.

Today, Turkey’s ambitions in the Caucasus are perfectly in step with its status as a NATO member. The recent military buildup in Nakhijevan expands NATO’s power right to Iran’s borders. In essence, the militarization of Nakhijevan has also coincided with US plans to contain Russian influence in the region.

It may sound odd that Russia and Turkey have political harmony on Syrian territory and yet they are at odds in the Caucasus. This is the paradigm of the post-Cold War political fragmentations; while the Soviet Union was a superpower, political divisions in the world had an ideological tilt. Following the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the major powers have been micro-managing their regional strategies. Even the US has subscribed to Turkey’s policy of listing the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) as a terrorist organization, all the while supporting the same Kurdish allies on Syrian territory, to Ankara’s chagrin.

Within the short span of one week, Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry issued two official denials of accusations that the US has stationed Israeli drones in Azerbaijan to be used against Iraq and Iran. The evidence of those Israeli drones has appeared in a Lebanese news outlet. Regardless of the denials, where there is smoke, there must also be some fire.

Tehran has lodged a diplomatic protest against Baku regarding the issue.

It is no secret that Azerbaijan has been using Israeli drones against Armenian forces and there is no earthly reason that it would refrain from using them against Iran. In fact, the

last time was exactly a year ago that the Israeli drone manufacturer Aeronautics launched the Orbiter 1K at the request of the Azerbaijani government toward the Armenian border, leading to two Armenian soldiers getting injured.

Additionally, President Aliyev, referring to the purchase of \$5 billion in military hardware from Israel, had boasted that 95 percent of the Azerbaijani-Israeli cooperation is below the surface.

From time to time, the Azeri government demonstrates its inherent mistrust of the Shia community in that country, which pledges its allegiance to Iran. The Tehran government, while maintaining a neutral stance in the region, harbors suspicions with regards to the Baku government. That is why it has been delaying the application of the visa regime and also it has halted plans for a rail link which would connect the two countries.

It is utterly possible that Nakhijevan eventually may also serve as a parking ground for the S-400 defensive missile system Turkey purchased from Russia over Washington’s vociferous objections.

However, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, ignoring all calls to dump Turkey from the NATO alliance, extended a fig leaf to Ankara, by asking them to leave the system inoperable for the time being, to get a dispensation from sanctions. That is why those systems may end up in Nakhijevan, a few miles from Armenia’s capital, Yerevan. Over time, Erdogan has learned that

his brinksmanship with fellow NATO members will pay off and he will be able to have his cake and eat it too.

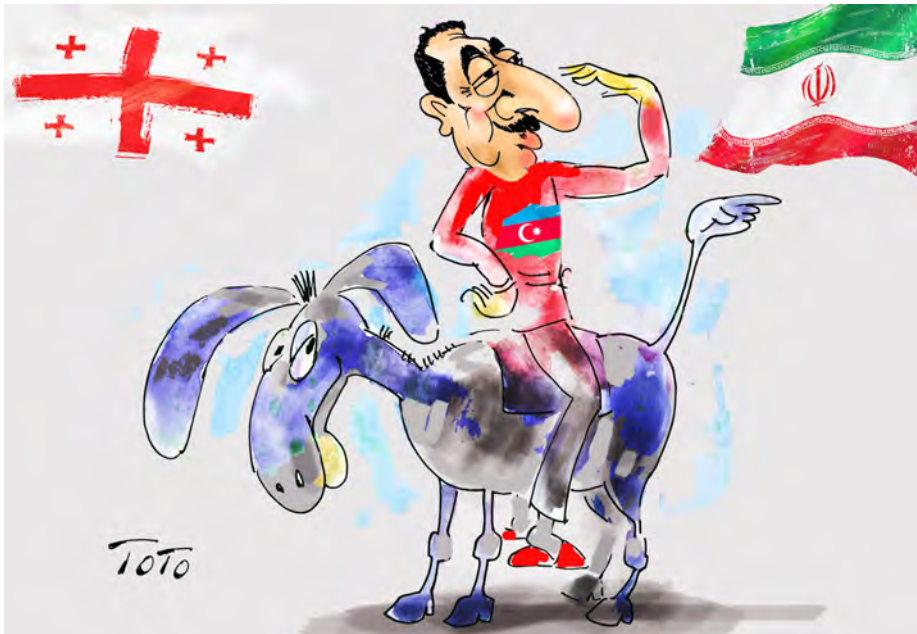
Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has problems with its Georgian neighbors. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the two countries had been cooperating with each other to bypass Armenia regionally. Former President Mikheil Saakashvili, during a visit to Baku, had announced that Azerbaijan’s enemy is also Georgia’s enemy. At this time, however, although the Tbilisi government has been trying to maintain a cooperative policy by participating in military drills involving Turkey and Azerbaijan, it has begun to demonstrate some unease, because of Azerbaijan’s territorial claims and Turkey’s overwhelming presence in Ajaria, a region of Georgia.

The Front News outlet had reported recently that Azerbaijan had stationed its forces in the area of Red Bridge, on the Georgian side of the land. Azerbaijan has also banned Georgian pilgrims from visiting David Gareja monastery complex, which remains a contested historic site between the two countries. Adding insult to injury, the Azerbaijani Academy of Science has claimed that the southeast corner of Georgia is Azerbaijani territory. The Tbilisi government has been trying to solve the problems quietly but to no avail. During the 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, the Tbilisi government had pinned its hopes on the US and NATO, which offered little more than lip service. Therefore, the Georgians know they will be on their own should the conflict with Azerbaijan intensify.

Georgia is also alarmed that the port city of Batumi is gradually becoming an Azerbaijani-Turkish town. Turkey has heavily invested in the region’s economic infrastructure, particularly in the tourism industry.

Incidentally, the Treaty of Kars of 1921 stipulated that Turkey should be entitled to free transport of goods and people without any customs duties. Turkey has revived that claim after the fall of the USSR by colonizing Georgia’s Ajarian province, while denying the same right to Armenia, which is promised the same right in the same treaty, in Turkey.

Recently, Tbilisi has moderated its policy with regards to



Yerevan, not only expecting better treatment from the Pashinyan government, but also discovering that the Turkish-Azerbaijani embrace has become too suffocating. Yerevan has been mitigating some of the tensions driving Tbilisi and Moscow apart.

Armenia’s government also continues to serve as a backchannel diplomatic track with Moscow to solve some transit issues.

After assuming power, Pashinyan took his maiden trip out of the country to Georgia and that may have paid off well.

Another feather in his administration’s cap is luring Iran to partner with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) states. For a long time, Moscow was trying to lure other neighboring countries to cooperate with that economic union. Indeed, Armenia’s prime minister has invited President Hassan Rouhani, who will visit Yerevan in turn on October 1, to participate in the Eurasian Economic Council meeting. Thus, Yerevan has been serving as a conduit to attract other partners to that economic club. That also sits well with Moscow.

Stirring problems with Georgia and Iran, Azerbaijan has become a pariah nation regionally. Its relations with Armenia have been tense since the Karabakh war, to say the least.

The Baku government has been emboldened by its association with Ankara and that situation does not promise a peaceful outcome in the foreseeable future for the Caucasus.

# Mirror Spectator

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Armin Wegner Asked Franz Werfel Not to Write His *40 Days of Musa Dagh*

(Part I)

Armin Wegner, a German soldier and medic, was sent to the Ottoman Empire during World War I, while the two countries were allies. Wegner was stationed along the Baghdad Railway in Syria and Mesopotamia, where he witnessed the deportations and mass killings of Armenians, subsequently known as the Armenian Genocide. He wrote several books describing his eyewitness accounts.

Contrary to the Ottoman prohibition of taking pictures during the Armenian Genocide, Wegner took hundreds of rare photographs and smuggled them into Germany. At the Ottoman government's request, he was arrested and some of his photographs were destroyed. He succeeded, however, in hiding many other negatives in his belt. In 1919, Wegner sent a letter to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson at the Peace Conference, advocating for an independent Armenia. In 1921, Wegner testified at the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian who was accused of assassinating in Berlin Talaat Pasha, the Turkish mastermind of the Armenian Genocide. Tehlirian was found not guilty by the German court and released from jail. Along with his wife, Wegner visited the Soviet Union and Soviet Armenia in 1927-28. In 1968, he was invited to Soviet Armenia by the Catholics of All Armenians and awarded the Order of St. Gregory the Illuminator. Wegner died in Rome in 1978, at the age of 91. Some of his ashes are buried in Armenia.

Wegner's illustrious counterpart was Franz Werfel, a Jewish-Austrian novelist, playwright, and poet. He was well-known for his novel, "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," which

described the Armenian resistance to the Ottoman troops during the Genocide.

Werfel visited the Middle East twice in 1925 and 1929. While in Damascus, Syria, he encountered Armenian children, survivors of the Genocide, who were in destitute condition, which inspired him to write "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh." The world famous novel was published in Germany in 1933. Werfel lectured throughout Germany about the Armenian Genocide, as a result of which he was accused of spreading anti-Turkish propaganda. The Nazi newspaper *Das Schwarze* denounced him for carrying out propaganda against "alleged Turkish horrors perpetrated against the Armenians." The same German newspaper, suggesting a link between Armenians and Jews, condemned "America's Armenian Jews for promoting in the U.S.A. the sale of Werfel's book." His books were burned by the Nazis. He was forced to flee and eventually settled in Los Angeles where he died in 1945. His body was reburied in Vienna in 1975.

Interestingly, these two distinguished pro-Armenian writers clashed with each other when Armin Wegner wrote a lengthy letter on December 14, 1932, asking Franz Werfel not to write his novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, because he was in the midst of writing his own four-volume book on Armenians. Werfel responded to Wegner with a short letter on December 23, 1932, explaining that their planned books did not conflict with each other, as they were about different aspects of the Armenian Genocide. I would like to thank Zaven Khatchaturian, President of Armin T. Wegner Society of USA, who translated both letters from German into English. The German original of both letters are kept at the Shiller-Nationalmuseum und Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach/Neckar, Germany. Here are excerpts from these two historic letters:

Wegner wrote from his home in Berlin to Werfel in Vienna: "When I returned to Berlin from Meran, a few days ago, after a long and serious illness, the first thing my friends told me, and what I read in the newspaper soon after, was: Franz Werfel is writing a novel about the downfall of the Armenian people. I saw, in the eyes of my friends, that they were afraid to upset me with this news, which they didn't want to keep from me.

You must know dear comrade and master that I myself have been writing a voluminous novel about the fate of the Armenian people. I am surprised that you have not heard of

it through my numerous publications, if not otherwise, by my letter to the Prussian Academy of the Arts, Department of Poetry. In the fall of 1930, I set out in more detail the project of my Armenian novel. This letter became the reason that the Academy gave me more support for my work on it. Or, perhaps, because of my writings on Armenia, and the well-known fact, in literary circles, that I was involved with the development of the fate of the Armenian people, inspired you to turn to this huge thing on your own way.

You can justifiably reply that history is the field of every man and artist, and that no one can deny them the opportunity to choose the area for his artistic work that appeals to them and entices them. However, you will understand that the message of your plan filled me with a certain anxiety, when you hear the lifelong attachment of fate between me and the demise of the Armenian people as a human and artistic experience.

It may happen, and it has repeatedly occurred, that two poets simultaneously and independently of each other (or even knowingly) grab the same substance. It happened recently - two dramatists almost concurrently, wrote a play about the Panama Canal (likewise two writers wrote the play *The Captain of Köpenick*). Such is the misfortune of the one who comes later, even if he is perhaps the stronger artist, and, as a result, the success of his creation suffers. In such a case, it is one work among other of the artist's works, which he may or may not give up easily. However, sooner or later he must cope with the flop. In my case it is the work of my life.

In the years 1915 to 1917, I was a member of the Turkish Army in Turkey, and became one of the few individual European eyewitnesses to one of the most terrible tragedies of humanity in the course of the millennia - perhaps, only surpassed by the tragedy of World War I, of which it was a part. As my relationship with Armenia goes back to my boyhood days, and my family's ties to the Middle East have been around for generations, I did not feel caught up in this shattering experience. The first testimonials I wrote were more human than poetic. In the spring of 1919, before the books of Lepsius could appear in open bookshops, Theodor Wolff published, in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, my then well-known letter to Wilson on the demise of the Armenian people. I am sending you a copy.

(To be continued next week)

## LETTERS

### Bravo Bari Mama for Helping Mothers and Children

To the Editor,

Abris Bari Mama! Thank you *Mirror-Spectator* for "Bari Mama - Supporting Disabled, Underprivileged, Abandoned Children and Mothers", 8/17/19. The published interview here gives great hope that some truly neglected of Armenia are finally being embraced. This program and others like it deserve our attention, support and prayers.

However, as I read this article I was struck with a harrowing question: "Where is the Armenian Church in the service of the neglected, suffering and abandoned in Armenia?" Instead of guarding their coffers of money, political power and prestige, why not actually represent the heart of Christ? Why are the *Der Hayrs* and *Vartabeds* not spearheading such programs?

With the fine reporting of the *Mirror-Spectator*, the Armenian Apostolic Church cannot possibly be unaware of grievous plights in Armenia such as the tragic abortion epidemic, shameful domestic violence, ongoing homeless crisis of Gyumri, and the neglect of poor elderly and disabled. The Apostle James declares, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." He goes on to admonish against favoritism of the rich and worthlessness of faith without good works, urging believers to meet the needs of suffering brethren and show mercy. Hasn't Echmiadzin a Bible?

Notably, it seems Bari Mama is missing a vital life component. While it admirably provides vital psychological, medical, and provisional needs of the mothers and children, one might ask, what about the spiritual needs? Might these folks, however neglected by others, find strength and hope in the promises of God? Might they come to know their heavenly Father?

Tragically, it seems they will not find it from the Armenian Church. Perhaps a priest will come with religious regalia, to ceremoniously bless the program. I beg them, don't go. It is far worse to misrepresent the Lord than it is to do nothing.

For sure, there are some heroes of faith in the Armenian Church, many whose services are hidden in shadows. Some, such as Archbishop Barkev Martirosyan, are better known, serving God and man with great courage and sacrifice. Sadly however, the lifeline of the Church as a whole is not the Holy Spirit but rather worldly venues of political power and influence. Does anyone really trust them, or are they now just a spiritual figurehead?

I pray that the Armenian Church, *Der Hayrs* and *Vartabeds*, see the shame of adorning themselves with outward piety and align themselves with God's broken heart for the people.

The folks of Bari Mama surely deserve our accolades and may well have reward in heaven. But what tremendous loss for the supposed men of God! May the clergy of Armenia see beyond puffs of incense and powerless rituals and offer themselves to be the hands and feet of Christ in Armenia.

Lisa Stepanian  
New York City, NY

## ISIS May Be Gone, But Are We Handing Them a Victory Over the Yazidi People They Tried to Destroy?

By Mirza Dinnayi

This month marks the five-year anniversary of the beginning of the genocide against the Yazidi - a religious minority - at the hands of Isis across Syria and Iraq. Most of the atrocities committed against the Yazidi people - especially its women and young girls - are too abhorrent and extensive to recount. While the genocide itself might have ceased, this is only the first part of the challenge; the consequences are bitter and painful in their own right.

It was a horrific story of systematic sexual violence and coordinated military persecution. Jihadis marched thousands of men to slaughter before transporting thousands more women and children to Isis slave markets to be bartered and sold.

The fighting in many Isis strongholds has now ceased, but 2,900 women and children are still missing, and thousands of Yazidi women and children who lived under their sadistic regime are struggling to reintegrate back into their communities.

This is because there is a striking disparity between how local and international communities focus on properly assimilating genocide survivors, psychologically as well as physically.

Their physical scars may be more visible, but the mental traumas inflicted are much more enduring. A lack of rehabilitation services and mental health support is preventing the 6,500 women and children who were taken captive by Isis to meaningfully integrate back into their communities.

Self-harm, PTSD and poor mental health impact more than 80 per cent of women and girls who were held captive during the conflict.

The psychological damage inflicted is exacerbated by the serious challenges they face upon return. Many of them realize that they have other relatives still trapped in captivity; whole communities are displaced into miserable camps outside their homeland; women who have suffered physical and sexual abuse are ostracized; and the Yazidi children who have been brainwashed by

their captors are shunned and denied access to education.

The result is perverse: those who have managed to survive rape, torture and genocide are being denied the fundamental tools for rehabilitation and to begin rebuilding their lives. We must empower the survivors of the Yazidi genocide to successfully rebuild themselves and their communities so that their generation is not forgotten and lost.

This requires supporting community-led initiatives to rebuild schools, provide access to PTSD treatment and discrete health services for victims of conflict-related sexual violence, and providing expertise and resource on the complexities of psychological treatment, given this field is uncommon to the communities in question.

For the most severe cases, we must provide for appropriate resettlement projects so that these survivors can live the rest of their lives in peace.

During a mission to rescue Yazidi civilians fleeing Isis advances in 2014, our helicopter crashed, and I barely escaped with my life. It was while lying in the wreckage, surrounded by the carnage of Isis's occupation, that I realized more than ever what was at stake, and was spurred on even further to commit my life to saving those most in need from my community. Now, outside of the intensity of the events of five years ago, I realize that escape from their captors is only the start of a long journey back to normality.

If we do not address the woeful lack of psychological provisions for the Yazidi people, we risk losing a whole generation women and children who have survived the horrors of genocide but who face being lost to its aftermath. It will depend on collaboration between local and international communities to empower them to live safe and successful lives.

(Mirza Dinnayi is a Yazidi activist who works with victims of ISIS, and who helped save hundreds of women and children during the Iraqi war. He is one of three humanitarians speaking at the inaugural Aurora Forum this October in Yerevan. This commentary was originally published in the *Independent* newspaper in August.)





# Rex Kalamian Turns Laser Focus on NBA's LA Clippers

KALAMIAN, from page 1

Angeles to parents born in the Bronx. His grandmother, Yevkine Yermanian, was from Amasya and Sapastia, in Western Armenia (now Turkey), who survived the Genocide — unfortunately, her father, mother, and the rest of her siblings didn't. Yermanian ran away from the village and was taken in by a Turkish family, who then placed her in the Armenian orphanage for girls. At the age of 18, Kalamian's grandmother left the orphanage and managed to get onto a boat to Ellis Island, where she started her new life and a family.

Kalamian is married and he and his family live in Los Angeles.

## Early Love of Basketball

Kalamian's passion for basketball took hold when he was a child. He has played the game religiously since he was in the fifth grade and loved every minute. "As a kid, I didn't do what most other kids would do which is to watch cartoons all day," Kalamian said. "I watched mostly basketball."

The moment which led to Kalamian's transformative love for the game was during the 1980 NBA finals, in which the Los Angeles Lakers and its rookie player, Magic Johnson, managed to win the championship against the talented Philadelphia 76ers team led by its star player Julius Erving.

"I was mesmerized with basketball and the NBA after the Lakers won their championship in 1980. From that point forward, I set my

game of basketball," Kalamian said. "I also enjoy the game planning and embracing the challenge of having to switch up your system for every team."

Kalamian worked as an assistant coach for the L.A. Clippers until 2003, then moved to the Philadelphia 76ers, Denver Nuggets, Minnesota Timberwolves and the Sacramento Kings. In 2009, Kalamian joined an up-and-coming Oklahoma City Thunder team, helping propel them to the NBA Finals and earning a spot as coach in the 2012 and 2014 NBA All Star Game.

"We had a special team that NBA Finals year with incredible talent, led by Kevin Durant, Russell Westbrook, James Harden, and Serge Ibaka," Kalamian said. "Unfortunately, we just were too young that year and didn't have enough experience to get us over the top."

Kalamian was candid in his description on what it was like to gameplan for LeBron James during those NBA Finals. "You have to give so many different looks defensively because he's so smart and is one of the best passers I've ever seen and it takes a total team effort to slow him down and try to confuse him. Unfortunately, we weren't able to do it in a seven-game series."

Kalamian also mentioned the leadership of five-time NBA champion Derek Fisher, who played for the Thunder for three seasons, as one of the factors leading to their success. "Fisher was one of the best leaders I've seen in a locker room," Kalamian said. "His message to the players after games was always positive and



Kalamian at the All Star Game with Kevin Durant

he's just a master communicator and knows how to motivate his players."

Kalamian's first season with the Clippers exceeded all expectations, as he helped lead a team many had counted out into the playoffs in the tough Western Conference and even managed to win two away games in the playoff series against the defending champions, the Golden State Warriors. This past season marked Kalamian's 23rd year of coaching in the NBA, a remarkable achievement. Kalamian credits his dedication and hard work for his success.

"To be an NBA coach requires you to have an impeccable work ethic," Kalamian stated. "The NBA season might be from October to June for players, but as a coach the season lasts for twelve months a year. A good coach must also always bring positive energy into a gym every day. Not every day is a great day in the NBA, especially when coming off tough losses, so to bring that positive energy to a locker room is essential for me and every assistant coach."

Kalamian said he thought coaching in the NBA Finals, the NBA All Star Game, and helping mentor players who later became superstar level talent were his greatest achievements.

"Getting to the NBA Finals has been one of

the highpoints of my career so far," Kalamian said. "Winning the Finals would have been the pinnacle of my coaching career but nevertheless being able to coach in that scenario was special. Being able to also coach future hall of famers like Russell Westbrook, Kevin Durant, and James Harden were also special moments in my career, which I hope to top off eventually with an NBA championship."

For Kalamian, the next big step for him would be a head coach position in the NBA, but for the time being, Kalamian likes to take it day by day.

"Every day of the season, I'm focusing on our next game and when that's over, I'll look at the next day and the next game", Kalamian said. "You always have to play for what's in front of you and not get too far ahead of yourself. The best thing I can do is prepare myself to be the best assistant coach I can be and possibly be a head coach someday."

The veteran coach is now gearing up for his 24th season in the NBA as an assistant coach with the Clippers. With the addition in the off-season of Kawhi Leonard and Paul George to the team, the Clippers are considered the best team in the league, which makes Kalamian one step closer to completing his life goal of winning an NBA Championship.



Kalamian with his head coach, Scott Brooks during his stint with the Oklahoma City Thunder

sights on doing something in the field of basketball," Kalamian said.

Kalamian continued playing basketball through his school years, including high school, followed by playing for two seasons at East Los Angeles College before being sidelined with an injury. Instead of sitting out that year, he took a staff job as a graduate assistant where he attended the coach's meetings, watched game footage, evaluated and created plays. Kalamian discovered working on the coaching side to be more gratifying than playing. Realizing he could have a career in coaching, he continued to work at the college for two years, working long hours for very little pay while learning a lot. This experience led to a job working as a scout for the Los Angeles Clippers where Kalamian evaluated game and player videos, helped the coaching staff on the practice floor with rebounding and assisting with whatever they needed, and worked on special projects.

Kalamian's work ethic caught the attention of head coach Bill Fitch, who promoted him to assistant coach in 1995, and thus launched his coaching career.

"It was a great feeling knowing that I was going to be coaching full time in the NBA," Kalamian said.

## Rising in the Ranks

Being an assistant coach however came with important responsibilities and expectations, including creating a game plan for every opponent and updating those plans as the game of basketball progressed and changed. "I enjoy the x's and o's [fundamentals] of coaching the

helped inspire the locker room in every situation. Fisher also brought a massive amount of NBA experience with him and always preparing the locker room on the difficulty and physicality of playoff basketball."

## Toronto Beckons

After his success with the Thunder, Kalamian moved on to be an assistant coach for the Toronto Raptors from 2015 to 2018, helping to lead the team to multiple playoff runs, including an Eastern Conference Finals appearance. Based on his performance, he was selected as a coach for the 2018 NBA All Star Game.

Kalamian then left the championship contending organization of the Raptors, who then went on to win the NBA championship the following season, to a Clippers team that many thought were in rebuilding mode. When asked why he moved from a successful Raptors team to the Clippers, Kalamian listed his two main incentives: Doc Rivers and Steve Ballmer.

"The opportunity to work under Doc Rivers, one of the best coaches in the NBA, was a big pull for me," Kalamian said. "To also work for a great owner with a cutting-edge organization surrounded by incredible management also swayed me to rejoin the Clippers."

Not surprisingly, Kalamian added that Rivers might just be the coach that stands out to him the most for leadership and management qualities.

"Doc is right up there with the best coaches when it comes to leading his team and preparing them to play every night," Kalamian said. "It's not something I can really put a finger on,

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