



Diana Alexanian and Hagop Alexanian of the TCA Detroit chapter present William Terian's portrait of Vahan Tekeyan

## Tekeyan Convention in Watertown Is Both Productive and Forward Looking

WATERTOWN – The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada held its 35th annual convention at its almost fully renovated Baikar headquarters on November 23 with a full day of reports, culminating in a dinner program with various awards and performances. Delegates from various Tekeyan centers and TCA Central Board members were hosted by the newly reformed TCA Boston chapter.

Prior to the formal meeting, delegates met for dinner November 22. The next morning they went to pay their respects at the grave of Dr. Nubar Berberian in Mt. Feake Cemetery of Waltham, with a ceremony officiated by Fr. Arakel Aljalian of St. James Armenian Church of Watertown. Dr. Berberian, aside from his decades of service to the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, was a founding member of TCA in North America and served as the secretary of the Central Board until the last days of his life.

The group then went to the Baikar Building, where they were welcomed by TCA Boston chair Dr. Aida Yavshayan. Central Board president Edmond Y. Azadian declared to the delegates that there was a resurgence in Tekeyan activities in see CONVENTION, page 9



Dr. Aida Yavshayan, chair of the TCA Greater Boston Chapter, welcomes guests.

## White House Directed Block Of Armenian Genocide Resolution

WASHINGTON – Many were perplexed and outraged when, right after clashing with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a heated Oval Office meeting on November 13, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham hurried back to the Senate floor and did something that likely delighted Erdogan. Graham blocked a resolution that would have formally recognized Turkey's genocide of the Armenian people.

Erdogan pulled out his iPad and showed the Oval Office group a propaganda video depicting the leader of the primarily Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces as a terrorist.

The South Carolina Republican then chided him over the clip. “Well, do you want me to go get the Kurds to make one about what you’ve done?” he said.

What happened next, which has not been previously reported: As Graham was leaving the Oval Office, senior White House staff asked him to return to the Senate and block the Armenian genocide resolution – a measure that would have infuriated Erdogan.

Graham confirmed this in a phone interview on Saturday.

“After the meeting, we kind of huddled up and talked about what happened,” he said. A White House legislative affairs official told Graham that Bob Menendez (D-NJ.) was going to bring up his Armenian genocide resolution and asked if Graham could “please object.”

“I said sure,” Graham said. “The only reason I did it is because he [Erdogan] was still in town. ... That would’ve been poor timing. I’m trying to salvage the relationship if possible.”

see RESOLUTION, page 20

## Murder of Priest Raises Fears for Syria's Christians

LONDON (Catholic Herald/Zenit) – Violence this month in Syria has raised the specter of renewed Islamist persecution against Christians, especially in the northeast of the country. Armenian Catholic Fr. Hovsep Bedoyan and his father Abraham were shot dead in an ambush in the province of Deir Ezzor. A deacon, Fati Sano, was also injured.

The group were travelling to the province to view progress on the restoration of the local Armenian Catholic church.

Amid reports that ISIS had claimed responsibility for the attacks, Armenian Catholic Archbishop Boutros Marayati of Aleppo told the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need: “Fr. Hovsep was dressed in his priestly attire ... Consequently [he was] recognizable as a priest, in addition to the fact that his car was clearly marked, in large letters, with the words ‘Armenian Catholic Church.’”

The incident coincided with an explosion near the Chaldean Catholic church and a market in nearby Qamishli, Fr. Bedoyan's home city. Local clergy reported that seven people were killed and at least 70 others injured in an attack involving three bombs in two cars and on a motorbike.

The funeral of Father Petoyan and his

father Hanna Petoyan took place on the morning of November 12 in Qamishli, reported Fides News Agency.

“For us they are martyrs. And what happened to them is a confirmation that the war is not over here, as we had hoped,” Boutros Marayati, Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo, told Fides.

The funerals of the priest and his father were celebrated in the Armenian Catholic Church of St. Joseph, in the presence of priests, religious, and faithful of all the Christian communities present in the area. Father Antranig Ayyazian, Episcopal Vicar of the Armenian Catholic community of Upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria presided over the funeral liturgy.

Father Hovsep, 46, was married and a father of three children, ordained a priest 5 years ago, was the priest of the Armenian Catholic community of Qamishli, in the northeastern Syrian province of Hassake. “In the city of Qamishli,” says Archbishop



Fr. Hovsep Bedoyan and his young charges

Marayati, “many Christian refugees also fled from Deir ez-Zor, when that city was devastated by war. He also carried out his pastoral work among them, and for a long time, he also followed the projects implemented with the help of international groups to rebuild the church and the houses of the Christians in Deir ez Zor, destroyed by the war. For this reason, he went to Deir ez Zor every two weeks to check the progress of the work. He had see FEARS, page 20



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Constantine Orbelian Nominated for Grammy

LOS ANGELES – It was announced this week that a recording featuring Stephen Costello and the Kaunas City Symphony, led by Constantine Orbelian, has been nominated for the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

The album is titled “A Te, O Cara: Stephen Costello Sings Bel Canto.”

A review in *Opera News* by Maria Mazzaro said “the tenor sounds better than ever on his latest album, featuring bel canto's greatest hits.... The Kaunas City Symphony, under the fine baton of Constantine Orbelian, plays with aplomb...”

The 62nd Annual Grammy Awards ceremony is scheduled for January 26, 2020, at Staples Center in Los Angeles. It will recognize the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, running from October 1, 2018, to August 31, 2019.

### Armenian Assembly Commends Menendez, Cruz for Pressing Genocide Resolution

WASHINGTON – On November 21, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Robert Menendez (D-NJ) requested unanimous consent to pass S.Res.150, and was joined by the lead Republican on the bill, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), reported the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly). Introduced in April, the bill enjoys the bipartisan support of 28 Senators.

“We commend Senators Menendez and Cruz for their bipartisan efforts to bring S. Res. 150 to the Senate floor. Senator Menendez, in recalling the U.S. diplomatic efforts to help the Armenian people at the time, also highlighted the overwhelming approval of a similar measure last month in the House of Representatives by a vote of 405 to 11. Senator Cruz stated that the Armenian Genocide is a fact and, with respect to Turkey, noted that friends and allies can speak the truth,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Regrettably, the request for unanimous consent was objected to by Sen. David Perdue (R-GA). After this latest development, Sen. Menendez vowed not to relent, and to continue fighting until the Senate adopts the Armenian Genocide resolution.

“The objection by one Senator claiming that now is not the time to consider S. Res. 150 rings hollow. It is always the right time to shine a light on crimes against humanity and speak the truth,” Ardouny continued. “We urge the Senate to act and join the House of Representatives’ overwhelming and historic bipartisan vote standing up against genocide denial.”

## INSIDE

### Arpa Film Festival

Page 13

#### INDEX

Arts and Living . . . . .	13
Armenia . . . . .	2,3
Community News. . . . .	6
Editorial . . . . .	17
International . . . . .	4,5





## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Pashinyan Says Helping Syria Is Moral Obligation for Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia is worried about the Turkish invasion of Syria, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper in Italy in an interview on November 25. He added that the international community should take measures to force Turkey to withdraw its forces from Syrian territories.

Speaking about the refugees resulted by the Syrian war, Pashinyan noted that during this period Armenia gave shelter to 20,000 Syrian refugees.

“Taking into account the population-refugees ratio, we rank third in terms of receiving the refugees. We have a population of 3 million. Giving a helping hand to the Syrian refugees is something like a moral obligation for us. Syria is a country that needs help. First of all this is an issue of humanitarian aid for us. At the beginning of the year our country sent a special mission there composed of doctors, civilian de-miners,” Pashinyan added.

Asked why helping Syria is a moral obligation for Armenia, Pashinyan answered that during the era of the Ottoman Empire the Syrian people saved numerous Armenians from the military forces of the empire.

“For that reason, now when the Syrians suffer, we cannot stand aside. I am glad we have the opportunity to pay back our moral debt,” Pashinyan said.

## EU Supports Karabakh Settlement Efforts

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The European Union (EU) fully support the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-chairs’ efforts aimed at the settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Deputy Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia of the European External Action Service Luke Devine said at a press conference on November 26 dedicated to the second anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU.

“We always support peaceful settlements of conflicts. We think there are no military solutions, but there are only military demagogies,” he said.

## National Gallery of Armenia to Host Exhibition Dedicated to Great Patriotic War

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The National Gallery of Armenia will launch an exhibition paying tribute to the Great Patriotic War participants on November 12, ahead of the 75th anniversary of victory in the war.

The exhibition, titled “Flowers to Fighters” and organized by the National Gallery of Armenia jointly with the National Archive and Mother Armenia Military Museum, will display 17 paintings, memoirs and personal items, the gallery’s official website reported.

“The Armenian people have had a great contribution to the victory in the Great Patriotic War, and, of course, our artists could not remain unattached either. The heroic pages of war, the joy of victory and the pain of loss have been vividly reflected in Armenian fine art,” the gallery said.

The exhibition features works by Martiros Sarian, Eduard Isabekyan, Sargis Muradyan, Suren Safaryan, Mariam Aslamazyan, Mkrtich Sedrakyan, Ara Bekaryan and others.

Also, on display are Soviet Union twice Hero, Marshal Hovhannes Baghramyan’s military uniform and parade sword, Major-General Askanaz Karapetyan’s military uniform, photos and exclusive documentaries some of which are showcased for the first time.

The gallery stressed “Flowers to Fighters” is yet another opportunity to “pay tribute to the undefeated heroes and to commemorate the great deeds of our grandfathers and fathers.”

The exhibition runs through December 12.

## Raspberry Fields Forever...

DEBET, Armenia — Is there anything common between a school principal, a garment factory mechanic and a chemistry teacher? Yes, all of them live in Yeghegnut community in Lori region and are involved in an effective backyard farming project conducted by the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) GEF Small Grants Program.

The Sustainable Income through Effective Household Management project was launched in September 2018. Since then, many COAF beneficiaries living in Debet, Yeghegnut and Dzoragyugh communities have been trained in raspberry farming and effective agriculture. Raspberry bushes and irrigation systems have been provided to 150 households.

Apart from that, within the framework of the project, a park has been established at the COAF Smart Campus, where more than 20 varieties of raspberries, blackberries, and currants are currently being developed. The park is equipped with hail, string, and drip irrigation systems.

A while ago COAF provided 55



Some of the berries from the rural communities COAF serves

households with more raspberry bushes in order to support sustainable income generation.

Hovik Hambardzumyan, the Yeghegnut school principal, received the new bushes a couple of days ago. “My wife and I have been working hard and we expect good harvest and a bit of income for the next year,” he says.

Marusya Sargsyan has been teaching chemistry at the local school for many years. “I have a full-time job, but my family and I decided to take the bushes because a little bit additional income will help a lot,” she says. “After all, we live in a village, so agriculture works are not something unusual for us.”

Gegham Arakelyan has worked as a factory mechanic for a long time. “The

factory was shut down and I had to go back to agriculture and cattle-growing. When I enrolled in the raspberry project, I knew I could expect harvest in 2020. I like the old saying He who does not work, neither shall he eat. We have been working hard, so I think we can expect income,” Gegham says, smilingly. “And we are very thankful for the raspberry bushes!”

COAF is a promoter and implementer of rural economic development programs in the region of Lori. “Supporting rural households and providing families with effective agriculture training courses will definitely contribute to the advancement of communities,” says Krist Marukyan, the COAF Smart Center Manager.



The COAF Smart Center

## PM Warns Against Making Threats Over ‘Thieves-in-Law’ Bill

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on November 14 issued a stark warning to “all those who dare threaten lawmakers” working on a bill that the government says is aimed at uprooting “widespread criminal subcultures” in Armenia.

The government-proposed measure, in particular, envisages outlawing the highest rank in the criminal hierarchy common to most post-Soviet countries — the so-called thieves-in-law.

The subculture that has existed in prisons throughout the Soviet Union since the times of gulags appears to continue to thrive in modern-day Armenia where top criminals are believed to control cash flows in the underworld.

Pashinyan, who said he has first-hand knowledge about the subculture as a former prison inmate, reiterated his government’s strong determination to fight the phenomenon, which he said underpins corruption and affects the lives of hundreds of families in Armenia who have their relatives in jail.

Addressing parliamentarians, the premier also condemned alleged threats to pro-government lawmakers who present the bill in the chamber.

“If there are people, including political figures and parliament members, who think that they can indirectly threaten lawmakers over this bill, then I say directly that we will take them down on the ground and slam them up against a wall,” said Pashinyan, dropping hints that the threats had been coming from former Gyumri mayor Vardan Ghukasyan, who is a member of parliament with the opposition Prosperous Armenia Party today.

Earlier, talking to media, Ghukasyan spoke against the bill, describing thieves-in-law as “well-behaved people.”

The pro-government *Haykakan Zhamanak* daily wrote that it was Ghukasyan who made threats against My Step faction member Nazeni Baghdasaryan, who also comes from Gyumri.

Baghdasaryan in an interview did not deny that she had heard threats, but she did not name names. “It was done not directly, but through other people. I was urged to back off, because ‘some people in Gyumri have long arms’. They reminded me that I have a child. But in any case our policy and position remain unchanged — we have zero tolerance towards criminal subcultures and people who bear these subcultures,” the

lawmaker said.

Later, adviser to Armenia’s prosecutor-general Gor Abrahamyan said that a report on threats to MP Baghdasaryan had been filed with the police.

Ghukasyan, who served as Gyumri’s mayor in 1999-2008, denied having threatened anyone. Talking to RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on the phone he repeated his thoughts about thieves-in-law.

“Give me the name of a single thief-in-law who has committed any act of hooliganism or any violation of law over the past 50 years,” he said. “I am absolutely against this bill. I support prosecution based on concrete crimes [and not for the status].”

Human rights activist Nina Karapetiants welcomed the prime minister’s tough rhetoric on the matter, but disagreed with his “vocabulary.”

“The reaction should be tough, but the vocabulary that perhaps was tolerable after the revolution is no longer appropriate, because the new government has a very high level of prestige and legitimacy today and the prime minister should understand that he must not go beyond certain boundaries,” she said.





## ARMENIA

# Pashinyan Visits Italy, Makes Stop at Flood-Ravaged Mekhitarist Monastery in Venice

ROME (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who visited Italy in an official capacity, held high-level talks in Rome with Prime Minister of Italy Giuseppe Conte on November 22.

The meeting between the prime ministers of Armenia and Italy took place at Kigi Palace in Rome, the official residence of the Italian premier.

The Italian prime minister welcomed his counterpart before the national anthems of the two countries were played.

Later, the prime ministers held a private meeting, during which they discussed the course of the Armenian-Italian relations and prospects for development.

During the wide-ranging talks following the private conversation, the Armenian and Italian prime ministers referred to a wide range of issues of bilateral cooperation. The Italian Prime Minister expressed his country's support for Armenia's democratic agenda, underlining that Italy is ready to cooperate closely with Armenia and provide the necessary assistance in the rule of law, justice reforms and democratic institutions.

Expressing gratitude for such readiness and Italy's already significant participation in the formation of the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Armenian Prime Minister also emphasized the active participation of Italian companies in the economic activity. Nikol Pashinyan expressed confidence that such initiatives will be continued,



San Lazzaro degli Armeni, the island home to the Mekhitarist Monastery, is flooded.

and the Armenian government intends to promote investment projects in every possible way.

The Armenian Prime Minister expressed satisfaction with Italy's stance on launching negotiations with the EU on visa liberalization, presenting the improving migration picture in Armenia.

Nikol Pashinyan and Giuseppe Conte also expressed satisfaction with the Armenian-Italian cultural and educational cooperation and noted the effectiveness of the exchange programs between the universities of the two countries. In the context of deepening cultural ties, Prime Minister Pashinyan attached importance to the exchange of rich experience with Italy in the field of archeology.

The heads of governments of Armenia and Italy have had extensive discussions on current issues of international security, the situation in Syria. Prime Minister Pashinyan presented the humanitarian mission carried out there by Armenia. The sides have agreed their positions on restoring stability in Syria. The prime ministers of Armenia and Italy also touched upon other regional security issues, exchanged views on EU-Iran relations, Armenia-Iran relations and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement. The two prime ministers stressed the importance of cooperation in the UN Human Rights Council.

Italy is interested in the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict and establishment of stability in the region, Conte announced following the meeting with Pashinyan.

"We are confident it's possible to achieve a solution only by dialogue. The political will can lead to a lasting solution. The peoples should prepare for peace and realize the advantages

glad to mentioned that this year we have recorded tangible improvement in this direction. I recorded that at the moment Italy is our 2nd trade partner in the EU. I am glad to note that there are all the necessary preconditions for giving new breath to Armenian-Italian economic relations. Armenia's membership to the Eurasian Economic Union and close cooperation with the EU create good opportunities for



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the Mekhitarist Monastery

attracting investments," Pashinyan said.

He discussed with Conte the Armenian-Italian economic forum that had taken place on November 21 in the financial and industrial capital of Italy, Milan.

"We both praised the works of the Armenian-Italian intergovernmental commission and expressed confidence that by joint efforts it will be possible to hold the second session of the commission in Yerevan in a short period of time. We referred to the opportunities of developing tourism cooperation. We highlighted the implementation of direct Rome-Yerevan and Milan-Yerevan flights by Ryanair, which will greatly contribute to the development of tourism and business relations. We also highlighted the importance of maintaining the cultural heritage of one another," Pashinyan said.

Pashinyan was pleased with the visit.

"I am glad to be in Italy for the first time on an official visit. I want to thank Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte for the warm reception of the Armenian delegation," Pashinyan said.

He emphasized that he highly appreciates the decision of the Chamber of deputies of Italy made in April of this year to recognize the Armenian Genocide. By this step the Italian side reaffirmed its devotion to universal values and contributed to the prevention of genocides and other crimes against humanity.

An unexpected issue affecting both the Italian and Armenian governments was the flooding in Venice, home not only to untold Italian treasures, but the San Lazzaro degli Armeni, the island home to the Mekhitarist Monastery. The Italian government will provide assistance to a number of structures affected by floods in Venice, including the Armenia's Ambassador to Italy Victoria Baghdasaryan told reporters.

"At this moment it is difficult to mention specific figures regarding the inflicted damages by floods at the San Lazzaro island, however two days ago the Italian parliament adopted a law which has listed the structures and buildings whom the Italian government will provide support for restoration," she said.

The recent floods in Venice were the most severe ones in the past 50 years.

When Pashinyan arrived in Italy on an official visit on November 20, his first stop was the Mekhitarist Monastery on the flooded San Lazzaro island to express support.

The role of the Mekhitarist Congregation is invaluable, Pashinyan said at the meeting with Papal Legate for the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice, Primate of the Armenian Catholic Church of Turkey, Archbishop Levon Zekian.

"It's a great honor for me to be here. I am sorry that the reason for my visit is connected with the recent flood, but on the other hand I am happy that no irreversible damage was caused. The Mekhitarist Congregation plays a great role. At a time when our identity was about to be eliminated in the homeland, the

## Armenia's SNKH to Design Garage Screen Movie Theater in Moscow

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The winner of the architectural competition to design the next Garage Screen summer movie theater near the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow was announced on November 19, with an expert jury selecting SNKH studio from Yerevan, Armenia, *Strelka Mag* reports.

The competition, organized by Strelka KB for the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, received 136 applications from architects across Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Each application was reviewed by a technical commission which considered factors including ecological sensibility and spatial, function, construction, and engineering solutions. Once the review process was completed, the jury chose six finalists.

"The team from SNKH came up with an unusual idea of turning the pavilion inside out. Such innovation is the very purpose for which the competition was organized," Garage director Anton Belov said.

That idea features a complete absence of walls and hard barriers, instead boasting a cloth covering and a light frame which resembles the architectural traditions of nomadic peoples. As such, the winning project fits organically and seamlessly into the Gorky Park space.

Influences behind the project span from Bedouin tents to Shigeru Ban and Ivan Leonidov, SNKH director Ashot Snkhchyan explained.

The movie theater will be built in spring 2020 in front of the main building of the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, which was designed by renowned architect Rem Koolhaas and completed in 2015. It will screen premieres and special programs and collaborate with Russian film festivals.



Prime Minister of Italy Giuseppe Conte, left, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Rome

that the peaceful settlement of the conflict will give. We are ready to contribute to the continuation of the negotiations and bringing stability to the region by all means. Italy is interested in de-escalation of situation and productive negotiations," Conte announced.

Trade and economy were also major components of the official visit.

Italy is Armenia's second largest trade partner in the European Union, Pashinyan told Conte.

"We dedicated an important time of our negotiations to trade and economic relations. I am

Congregation became the place where our history, science, language and art were studied. It became an important scientific center to communicate with our roots. I am very excited to be here. I am confident that the Mekhitarist Congregation, as a symbolic monument of science and culture, will continue playing its practical role for a long time," Pashinyan said.

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan also traveled to the island with Pashinyan.

The Armenian delegation was greeted by Federico Caner, Veneto regional minister EU Programs, Tourism and International Trade, Armenia's Ambassador to the Holy See Garen Nazarian and Armenian Honorary Consul to Veneto Gagik Sarukhanyan.

A narrow-format meeting was held with the Mekhitarists. Then, the prime minister toured the monastery and signed the "Golden Book".

To note, the Mkhitarian or Mekhitarist Congregation was founded by Mkhitar Sebastatsi at Constantinople in 1701. The Congregation found its way to Saint Lazarus Island in Venice in 1717, turning the island into a unique religious, educational, scientific and cultural place.

As part of his visit, Pashinyan met with the members of the Armenian community in Milan.

At the end of his tour, Pashinyan invited Conte to pay an official visit to Armenia.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Putin to Visit Turkey in January

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — Russian President Vladimir Putin may visit Turkey in January 2020, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on November 25, according to TASS.

“During one of the latest phone calls, Putin and [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan have agreed that in the first 10 days of January 2020, the surface portion of the Turkish Stream will be ready. They were discussing Putin’s potential visit to Turkey. This trip is currently planned,” he said.

The Kremlin spokesman did not provide the specific date of the visit.

Earlier, Gazprom informed that the Turkish Stream pipeline would begin to function by the end of 2019.

The offshore section of the pipeline runs along the bottom of the Black Sea to the coast of Turkey. Its length is 930 kilometers. The pipeline will be continued by a 180-kilometer land transit line to the border of Turkey with neighboring countries.

## NSS Wants to Seize Lawyer’s Computer

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The National Security Service (NSS) of Armenia wants to confiscate a computer belonging to lawyer Hovhannes Chamsaryan as part of a criminal case where he was a witness representative.

Shushan Tadevosyan, a senior legal consultant at Avenue Consulting Group, broke the news on Facebook.

“The computer contains confidential information, which is inviolable by law. This is an outright violation of the lawyer’s activity,” she said.

Following the report, the rapid response team of the Human Rights Defender’s Office headed to Chamsaryan’s law firm where a NSS investigator is to seize his computer.

## Three Arrested on Drug Charges

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Three citizens of Armenia were arrested in Georgia on November 23 following an incident at the Upper Lars border checkpoint when drug was found in the bus traveling to Armenia.

The Armenian Embassy in Georgia says it is doing everything possible to organize the quick transportation of the remaining Armenian citizens on the bus to Armenia.

“As we have earlier reported a bus traveling to Armenia was stopped at the Georgian side of the Upper Lars border checkpoint in suspicion of transporting a banned item. The Georgian law enforcement agencies informed that three Armenian citizens were arrested. Investigation is underway, and the Embassy will make additional statements on the future developments. All passengers of the bus are being questioned. The diplomats of the Armenian Embassy, who are in the Upper Lars, provided food and first necessity items to the Armenian citizens”, the Embassy in a statement.

Law enforcement agencies found 149 grams of cocaine and 64 grams of hashish in the bus.

## Armenian Wines Presented at Polish Expo

KRAKOW, Poland (Armenpress) — Through an initiative of the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, Armenian wines were presented at the 17th ENO-EXPO 2019 international wine fair in here November 20 to 22, the Ministry of Economy announced on November 25.

Every year ENOEXPO is attended by wine producers from nearly 150 countries, such as Bulgaria, Germany, Georgia, Bulgaria, France, Kosovo, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine. The exhibition annually hosts 14,000 visitors, wine specialists and buyers.

A tasting session of Armenian wines took place in the hall of the Krakow Slow Wines on November 21 and 23 for companies involved in import and sale of wines.

# Germans in Dialogue with Armenia

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BENSHEIM, Germany — When the German-Armenian Forum came into being in 2015, the founding members stressed that its purpose was to help Germans and Armenians become acquainted, and to learn about their respective history, culture and country. CDU parliamentarian Albert Weiler launched the initiative with the idea that people from the two countries should meet at all levels — from political leaders, to legislators, university students, pupils, musicians, artists, people from all walks of life.

During the founding meeting four years ago in a room of the Bundestag (Parliament), the initiators formulated the new association’s statute and voted up a presidium. According to the press release, the members of this body were “individuals familiar with issues related to the southern Caucasus, and pursue the aim of promoting German-Armenian relations at various levels. The Forum should support Armenia in its democratic development, strengthen economic relations, support cultural and scientific exchange and build new bridges between the two societies.” They pledged to organize conferences, seminars, workshops and working groups, and cooperate with existing organizations which pursue similar aims.

Weiler had visited Armenia in 2014, and the experience left a lasting impression on him. “Armenia is a country with a very ancient Christian tradition, which since its independence in 1991 has charted a democratic path, which



Armenia’s Ambassador to Germany  
Ashot Smbatyan

deserves support,” he said at the founding meeting. “True, Armenia lies in a difficult geographical position, but it has an enormous spiritual and economic development potential. We would like to exhaust and further develop these synergistic possibilities.”

Since its inception, the Forum has lived up to its pledge, actively promoting dialogue and exchange with Armenia at various levels. This year, it has been organizing events on the local level under the rubric, “Dialogue with Armenia,” engaging students in their schools. On November 19 one such meeting took place at the Goethe Lyceum in Bensheim, which is the congressional district of the Forum’s vice-president Till Mansmann. There and in collateral meetings in the Hesse region, Mansmann was joined by the honorary consul for the Republic of Armenia, Dr. Brian Fera, and the Armenian ambassador from Berlin, Ashot Smbatyan.

Smbatyan delivered a lecture to the students about Armenia, its culture and history, and then took questions. In the course of the dialogue, proposals took shape for longer-term projects to engage students as well as teachers in an exchange program.

Following the school visit, the group visited City Hall with a local representative Philipp-Otto Vock and the City Councillor Adil Oyan. The discussion centered on the positive effects of city partnerships and how they contribute to mutual understanding and cultural exchange. To conclude their tour, the group met with the chairman of a firm promoting regional economic development (Wirtschaftsförderung Bergstrasse), Dr. Matthias Zürker and discussed economic perspectives locally and in Armenia.

## Iran Warns of Consequences for Interference in Unrest

GENEVA (Reuters) — Iranian Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri on November 23 warned regional countries of consequences if it is proven that they meddled to stoke recent unrest in Iran.

“Some countries in the region should know that they will not have an easy life in the region if clues are found that show they intervened to create unrest in Iran,” said Jahangiri, quoted by the semi-official news agency Fars.

Iran has blamed “thugs” linked to exiles and foreign foes — the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia — for stirring up unrest following hikes in gasoline prices which led to the some of the worst violence in a decade.

Saudi Arabia and Israel have backed U.S. moves to reimpose sanctions that have crippled Tehran’s economy, after Washington withdrew from the Islamic Republic’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Meanwhile, police said 180 “ringleaders” of the unrest had been detained by its agents across the country, state television reported. On Friday the judiciary said the Revolutionary Guards had arrested about 100 leaders of protests.

About 1,000 demonstrators have been arrested, Iranian media said.

The Center for Human Rights in Iran, a New York-based advocacy group, said on its website that a tally based on official figures and credible reports suggested that “a minimum of 2,755 people have been arrested with the actual minimum number likely being closer to 4,000”.

Iranian troops and members of the elite Revolutionary Guards helped police quell violent unrest in Kermanshah province this week, Iranian officials said on Saturday, accusing “U.S. agents” of being among the armed protesters.

The unrest appears to be the worst violence at least since Iran stamped out a “Green Revolution” in 2009, when dozens of protesters were killed over several months.

Rights group Amnesty International said at least 30 people were killed in Kermanshah, making it the worst-hit by the protests and it updated its death toll

to 115 from 106.

Iran rejected the death toll figures as “speculative”.

Bahman Reyhani, the Revolutionary Guards’ commander in Kermanshah, said “the rioters belonged to anti-revolutionary (exiled opposition) groups and America’s intelligence services,” the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

He did not name the groups. Armed Iranian Kurdish militants have long operated near the province’s border with Iraq.

Guards spokesman Brigadier General Ramezan Sharif said the protests had been initiated by royalists seeking the return of the Pahlavi dynasty toppled by the 1979 revolution, and the exiled Mujahideen Khalq armed opposition group, Tasnim reported.

He said “secessionist” groups were also involved.

Protests began in several areas on November 15 after the government announced gasoline price hikes of at least

50 percent and imposed rationing. The unrest spread to at least 100 towns and cities as demonstrators demanded senior officials step down.

Iran condemned a U.S. decision to impose sanctions on the Iranian information minister on Friday for his role in a nationwide Internet shutdown.

“Everyone knows that the current U.S. administration does not value the principles of democracy, transparency and human rights, including freedom of the internet, for others,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said, according to state media.

On Thursday, Iran’s National Security Council that had ordered the shutdown approved reactivating fixed-line internet in some areas after a five-day outage.

The restoration of the Internet, slow on the first two days, sped up on Saturday, with observatory NetBlocks indicating that network data showed connectivity was up to 72 percent of normal levels.



## Bath House Designed by Ottoman-Armenian Architect for Sale

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) — A 16th-century bath house designed by renowned Ottoman-Armenian architect Mimar Sinan has been put up for sale in Turkey at 2.5 million euros, Ermenihaber reports. The building, pictured above, is located in the historic Balat neighborhood of Istanbul.

Turkish citizens oppose plans to sell the 437-year-old building, in light of its historical importance. The building currently serves as a car service center.





## INTERNATIONAL

# International Conference on Armenian Diaspora Studies Held at Haigazian University in Beirut

BEIRUT – The international conference on “Dominant Themes in Armenian Diaspora Studies” was held at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Armenia on November 14, 2019, organized by the Department of Diaspora Studies (DAS) at the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of NAS and the Haigazian University-based Armenian Diaspora Research Center (ADRC).

Participants were researchers from Yerevan, Beirut and Paris, along with a number of state and public sector representatives from Armenia.

In his opening words, Dr. Rupen Garabedian, director of the Department of Diaspora Studies, welcomed the audience and the participants and expressed his pleasure in the growing cooperation between DAS and ADRC. He noted that steps were also in progress to include other centers of the Diaspora.

Dr. Yuri Souvarian, secretary of the NAS Armenian Studies and Social Sciences section, Dr. Pavel Avedisian, NAS correspondent and director of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, as well as the president of Haigazian University Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, stressed the importance of Diaspora Studies, and focused on the multidisciplinary aspects of Diaspora Studies.

During the three sessions of the conference extensive discussions were held in an open, academic and friendly atmosphere. The ten papers presented were intended to establish the ground work for a better understanding of the collaboration between these two centers and the addition of other such centers in due time.

During the first session titled “Dominant Themes in Armenian Diaspora Studies,” Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian presented a paper on “The imperative of inter-Diaspora and Armenia-Diaspora collaboration.” Dr. Antranik Dakessian’s paper was titled “Which parts of

the Armenian Amazon should we study.” The third panelist, Dr. Vahram Hovian touched upon the quantification aspect of the mainstream themes in Armenian Diaspora Studies.

The second session was titled

Dork Dalalian discussed the launching of the newspaper Haratch in France and its impact on national identity formation. The session was concluded by Rev. Dr. René Levonian who examined the features of the different French-

“Methodological issues of Diaspora Studies,” a joint paper written by Suzanna Parseghian, Sona Nersissian and Danadjian.

Garabedian concluded the conference stressing the importance of applying the scientific



The participants with the Haigazian administration members

“Interdisciplinary Approaches of Diaspora Studies: Fields of Study and Concerns.” Dr. Hagop Cholakian highlighted the basic issues, concerns and challenges of teaching Armenian language in the Diaspora. Dr. Mihran Kalesdian focused on “Labor migration and the basic features of the formation of new Armenian Diasporas in the Russian Federation,” while Dr.

Armenian generations of the last one hundred years.

The third session was dedicated to the “Methodology of Diaspora Studies: Methods and Tool Boxes.” Dr. Roupen Ohandjanian discussed the application of the method of social distance in interethnic studies. Lusiné Danadjian presented a paper on

knowledge in the development of national projects. Concluding remarks and suggestions were made by Drs. Kalesdian, Samuel Megerdchian, Dakessian and Haidostian.

The conference was closed with the launching of the book, *The Lebanese Armenians Today: An Ethnological Study*, the result of a two-year collaboration between DAS and ADRC.

## Georgian Police Use Water Cannons to Scatter Protesters Outside Parliament, Detain Activists

TBILISI (RFE/RL) —After issuing a 30-minute ultimatum before dawn, Georgian police used water cannons to disperse protesters near parliament and detained several activists, hours after thousands assembled in the capital demanding electoral reforms.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement early on November 26 that 28 protesters were detained for “disobedience to police and hooliganism.” Earlier reports said two members of the opposition United National Movement, Ako Minashvili and Gia Tevdoradze, were among those detained.

The Health Ministry said four people were injured, three of whom remain hospitalized. Local media report that a journalist from the Mtavari Alkhi TV channel, Vasil Dabrundashvili, was among the injured. It is not clear if he is among those still in the hospital.

Police now control the entrances to parliament, while dozens of demonstrators remain at the site, saying that their goal is to prevent lawmakers from entering the building.

The leader of the opposition New Georgian party, Giorgi Vashadze, said in a televised interview on November 26 that the ruling Georgian Dream party “is capable of holding a parliamentary session only by using the police.”

“If the police cordon gives us a chance, we will enter parliament,” Vashadze said.

Protesters gathered the previous day after the ruling Georgian Dream party refused to change the electoral system from a mixed to a proportional one beginning next year.

Supporters of about 20 opposition groups marched from Tbilisi’s Republic Square to parliament, blocking traffic in Rustaveli Avenue, the city’s main thoroughfare.

The protesters called on the government to step down and for early elections to be held, and vowed to prevent lawmakers from entering parliament, where a plenary session was scheduled for November 26.

On November 25, the ruling party’s secre-

tary-general, Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze, said after a party meeting that “the issue is closed and there will be no changes in the electoral system.”

The status quo, according to the opposition, benefits the Georgian Dream party, which has been in power since 2012.

The matter has been a hot topic for weeks after a constitutional amendment on the transition to a proportional electoral system was rejected by parliament on November 14.

The reform was one of the demands of thousands of demonstrators who rallied for weeks in Tbilisi in June and July and then again in recent weeks.

One of the protests was violently dispersed by police on November 18 with 37 protesters arrested in the demonstration.

The legislature currently has proportional representation for about half of the body’s seats, a system which opposition parties say unfairly favors the Georgian Dream party.

Concern that the new protest could spill over into violence has risen among Western diplomats.

After 20,000 people rallied in Tbilisi on November 17, the United States and the European Union called on the Georgian government, political parties, and civil society to engage in a “calm and respectful dialogue.”

An EU delegation to Georgia and the U.S. Embassy said in a joint statement on November 17 that they “recognize the deep disappointment of a wide segment of Georgian society at the failure of parliament to pass the constitutional amendments.”

The halting of the transition to proportional elections “has increased mistrust and heightened tensions between the ruling party and other political parties and civil society,” the statement said.

The vote has also prompted criticism from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

## Legendary Soviet intelligence officer Gohar Vardanyan Dies

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — Soviet intelligence officer Gohar Vardanyan, the wife of the Hero of the Soviet Union Gevorg Vardanyan, died at age 93, the Armenian Embassy in Russia said in a released statement on Monday, November 25.

Gohar Vardanyan was companion in arms with her prominent husband for 45 years of service.

She was born in 1926 in Gyumri. In the early 1930s, her family moved to Iran. At age 16, she entered her future husband’s anti-fascist group along with which she led an active intelligence work. She participated for thwarting Operation Long Jump, concocted by Adolf Hitler, headed by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and led by Otto Skorzeny, which was an attempt to assassinate



Gohar Vardanyan

Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt at the Tehran conference in 1943.

Vardanyan and his wife worked as intelligence agents in several countries between the early 1950s and 1986.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also issued a statement. “It was with deep grief that I learned about the death of prominent Soviet spy Gohar Vardanyan. A legendary spy, real patriot and bright and unique individual has left us. She participated in outstanding intelligence operations. She had a great spirit, who, together with husband Gevorg Vardanyan devoted her entire life to the service and protection of the fatherland. During their entire



Gohar and Gevorg Vardanyan

life, the Gevorgyans kept contact with Armenia, helping the strengthening of their country in all ways. The memory about the legendary spy and her feats will remain alive in the hearts of many generations of the Armenian people, giving real lessons of patriotism to the future generations. I extend deepest condolences on behalf of the entire Armenian people and personally me to all the relatives and friends of Gohar Vardanyan.”





# Community News

## Turkey's Targeting Of Minorities Highlighted at Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — Speaking at the Ninth Annual St. Andrew's Human Rights and Religious Freedom Reception on Capitol Hill, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights David L. Phillips addressed the subject of "Turkey's Targeting of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Syria."

"I want to thank David for coming and taking part in this event. His outstanding scholarship in this area and his experience as a practitioner of diplomacy and foreign policy is well-documented," Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD) said in his welcome statement.

"We are doing it this year in the leg of this incredible and terrible assault by Turkey into northern Syria. And while it makes these issues very raw and ripe, what David will be speaking to in terms of the targeting of ethnic and religious minorities in Syria is something that is a longstanding problem when you look at Turkey and the behavior of this president," he added.

Honorary hosts of the reception include the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Ranking Member Michael McCaul (R-TX); Helsinki Commission Chairman Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL), Co-Chairman Senator Roger F. Wicker (R-MS), and former Chairman Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD); Hellenic Caucus Co-Chairs Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), and John Sarbanes (D-MD); Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Co-Chairman James P. McGovern (D-MA); and International Religious Freedom Caucus Co-Chairs Juan Vargas (D-CA) and Bilirakis.

"Instead of placating Turkey, US officials should reject Erdogan's war-mongering and genocide denial," Phillips said. "The victims of Turkey's past and present genocide cry out for justice."

Citing the devastating attack recently in Deir el-Zor where Turkish-backed forces executed Father Hovsep Bedoyan, the pastor of the Armenian Catholic community of Qamishli, and



David L. Phillips

his father while they were on their way to inspect the Armenian Catholic Church in the city, Phillips illustrated that "Turkey's invasion has put Syria's Christians at-risk."

Phillips shared other examples of attacks on Christians in the area. He noted that in 2014 the Armenian Christian town of Kessab in northwest Syria was attacked by jihadists with support from the Turkish military and that the attacks were launched from Turkish territory, resulting in 675 families being uprooted, 15 families taken hostage, and 3 Armenian churches damaged and desecrated.

see MINORITIES, page 7



The ribbon-cutting at the school

## AEF Hosts Annual Scholarship Reception and Opens Renovated Village School in Armenia

LOS ANGELES/YEREVAN — October has become an exciting and inspiring time for the Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) throughout the years and this year was no exception. This October, 35 AEF members and supporters traveled to Armenia to meet with AEF scholarship recipients and alumni and witnessed firsthand the many successes of AEF's programs.

Established in 2007, the AEF scholarship program provides full tuition scholarships to students attending universities in Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk. This year, AEF's scholarship sponsors awarded scholarships to 430 deserving students.

On October 2, 450 attended the scholarship reception, including scholarship recipients, recent graduates, AEF members and scholarship sponsors.

The formal program commenced with a buffet reception where scholarship sponsors had the opportunity to connect with their respective students and discuss with them their achievements and future plans.

Zareh Sinanyan, High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, welcomed the benefactors and students and identified AEF's initiatives as a significant contribution to the future of the Armenian nation. Sinanyan concluded, "As an Armenian, I am truly grateful that we will enjoy the results of AEF's work for a long time. Dear students, our benefactors believe that by supporting you, they are building the Armenia we all dream of and in turn, good citizens."

Representing the AEF Scholarship Alumni, Taguhi Ghazaryan, a member of the National Assembly (Parliament), and Tigran Asatryan, a member of Yerevan City Council, thanked AEF and the scholarship sponsors for providing the much-needed financial support for students to complete their higher education.

Scholarships are given as a four-year investment in these students. The sponsors alleviate the students' financial concern which allows them to focus and excel in their studies.

Scholarships donated through AEF create a unique bond between recipients and their sponsors, creating relationships that develop and grow over the four-year period. Donors witness and revel in the achievements of their sponsored students.

"It was particularly exciting when Vahik Petrossian, the chair of the AEF Scholarship Committee, invited scholarship recipients who had served in the Armenian military to stand, and were given a standing ovation by their peers. We all thank them for their service," stated Apo Boghigian, Director of Civilnet. These 50 military veterans, whose studies had been interrupted by their military service, were able to return and continue their education with the help of AEF.

On October 4, a group of members and sponsors participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony of the newly renovated Saratak Village School.

The school, attended by 205 students, was chosen to be the home of a new Armath laboratory. Unfortunately, the school's roof was heavily damaged by winds and rain, causing extensive damage to the classrooms and gymnasium.

AEF Members, Vahik and Alice Petrossian, sponsored the funding for the renovations in memory of George and Tania Petrossian.

During the unveiling, the school principal and staff thanked the Petrossian family and AEF for their dedication to renovating the school and providing the students with new classrooms and a gymnasium. The students welcomed the guests with dance and poetry performances, followed by a tour of the school's facilities, including the newly installed AEF Armath Engineering Laboratory.

For 70 years, AEF has been providing financial assistance to Armenian students and educational institutions. AEF's 70th anniversary will be celebrated on January 26, 2020 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. For more information, email [aef@aefweb.org](mailto:aef@aefweb.org).

## A New Generation of Huntsman Family Stakes Out a New Path For Charitable Giving

By Paul Sullivan

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (*New York Times*) — This week, the Huntsman family — one of the most philanthropic in the United States — made a \$150 million gift to the University of Utah to establish the Huntsman Mental Health Institute.

The gift was a continuation of the large-scale charitable giving by the family's patriarch, the billionaire industrialist Jon Huntsman Sr., who died last year, and his wife, Karen. Huntsman was one of the most philanthropic men of his generation. He was among the first to give away over \$1 billion in his lifetime — long before Warren Buffett and Bill Gates created the Giving Pledge to induce billionaires to commit to donating at least half of their fortune to charity.

This week's donation continues the family's legacy of giving to health-related charities in Utah, but it also signals a subtle shift in their philanthropy, reflecting a new generation's priorities.

Jon Huntsman Sr. gave hundreds of millions of dollars to cancer research, including \$650 million to the University of Utah, where the cancer research center is named for his family. His son Peter R. Huntsman, who has assumed leadership of the family's charitable arms, said the family would continue to donate to cancer research but was also adding mental health research and care.

"It reminds me about where cancer was 30 years ago when my father got involved," Huntsman said. "Men didn't talk about prostate cancer because it was emasculating, and women didn't talk about breast cancer. The workplace now rallies around you if you have cancer. But you wouldn't come into work and say, 'I have a real problem with bipolar disorder.'"

All parents hope their children are going to know how to handle money, and families in a position to leave an inheritance want to make sure that their money isn't squandered or doesn't cause problems in their children's lives.

But when it comes to a charitable bequest — money that is sitting in a private foundation or a public charity like a donor-advised fund and must be given away — transferring those family values can be trickier. If the children don't want to give to the same organizations as their parents, is that all right? Parents may try to make sure that particular areas or institutions are earmarked for donations, but are their children obligated to follow their lead? Is it better if parents let their children give as they wish?

"The question is what is the purpose of our wealth," said Alexandre Monnier, the head of the Hawthorn Institute for Family Success, a new advice offering within Hawthorn, the ultra-high-net-worth arm of PNC Family Wealth. "It's easy to look back and ask what are some of the values you're inheriting from the past that you're carrying forward. But also what are some of the values you want to strike from the records?"

In the case of the Huntsman family, with two charitable arms under the control of the next generation, change was inevitable.

Jon Huntsman Sr.'s philanthropy started early. As he recounted in a 2013 interview, he began giving to charity before he had much money to give.

He started when he was making \$320 a week as a naval officer in the late 1950s. By the time he had made his first \$1 million, he said, he had given a quarter of it to charity.

As he accumulated wealth, he said, he began to narrow his charitable giving. Cancer became his focus when he survived a bout in 1992. "My wife and I determined that it was better to see HUNTSMAN, page 7





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Turkey's Targeting of Minorities Highlighted at Capitol Hill

MINORITIES, from page 6

Phillips explained at the congressional event that Turkey has been a lifeline for ISIS, and has continued the genocidal policies of the Ottoman Empire by openly supporting jihadist terrorism. Some of the Christians targeted in northern Syria include Armenians and Assyrians whose ancestors survived the Armenian Genocide at the beginning of the 20th century, and are themselves experiencing the same type of ethnic cleansing today by Turkey and ISIS.

He pointed out that Turkish-backed Islamists has been targeting "apostates" – Shiites, Kurds, Yazidis, and Christians in Syria and Iraq – over the past five years.

"Mosul's 60,000 Christians were executed, displaced, or trafficked as sex slaves. The same fate befell Christians in the Nineveh Plains and northern Syria. ISIS converted ancient churches into mosques, madrassas, and prisons. They tore down crosses and used chisels to deface tombstones in church graveyards," Phillips said.

"Christian churches and institutions, including schools and hospitals, were destroyed by Turkish-backed militias. ISIS execution videos showed the beheading of priests and community leaders, which included images of eleven desecrated churches."

Phillips also turned to the Christians under attack within Turkey's own borders.

"The Armenian and Greek communities are targeted in Turkey. The Turkish authorities have seized and failed to return Armenian Church properties. The Turkish government controlled even the election of the next Armenian Church leader, the Patriarch, in Turkey," Phillips remarked.

Others in the human rights community have also raised the concerns voiced by Phillips.



Armenian Assembly of America Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan, Board Member Annie Simonian Totah, and Armenian National Institute Director Dr. Rouben Adalian speaking with Rep. John Sarbanes

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) sounded the alarm on Patriarch elections in Turkey, which is scheduled to take place on December 11, 2019.

USCIRF Chair Tony Perkins said: "The Turkish government has increasingly interfered in the internal affairs of religious communities by placing gratuitous conditions on electoral processes for religious leaders." Perkins urged US policymakers to raise the importance of this election with the Turkish government.

"This latest interference is just one of many that has deprived the Armenian Apostolic Church of its right to choose its spiritual lead-

East at its 2019 National Advocacy Conference, with remarks provided by USCIRF Commissioner Kristina Arriaga.

The Assembly has also been acutely concerned about the situation of the Armenian community in Syria. Following the numerous terrorist attacks in northern Syria supported by Turkish-backed forces, such as in Qamlishi and Kessab, the Assembly has repeatedly called for the United States to take immediate action to protect the religious minorities in the region.

As Phillips pointed out, evangelist Reverend Pat Robertson had previously stated: "As the US prepares to draw down, Syrian Christians fear they'll be wiped out. It appears US policy has the potential to put 2,000 years of Christian tradition and history at risk."

"David Phillips has always been a great friend of the Armenians. In his remarks on the occasion of the ninth annual St. Andrew's Human Rights and Religious Freedom Reception, he strongly alluded to all the war crimes that Turkey, under Erdogan's dictatorship, has committed, targeting different ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and elsewhere, including the abuse of human rights and lack of freedom. He also mentioned how Turkish-backed forces assassinated the Armenian priest and his father on November 11th in Deir el-Zor," Armenian Assembly of America Board Member Annie Simonian Totah stated. "We are very grateful to Congressman



David L. Phillips, Armenian Assembly Board Member Annie Simonian Totah, and Rep. John Sarbanes



Rep. John Sarbanes and David L. Phillips at the Ninth Annual Saint Andrew's Human Rights & Religious Freedom Reception

ership for almost a decade," said USCIRF Vice Chair Gayle Manchin.

The Assembly has addressed the importance of safety for Christians in Turkey with the US Department of State and government officials. And in September, the Assembly held a panel on religious freedom in Turkey and the Middle

John Sarbanes for sponsoring this annual event which brings together different Christian groups and makes sure their voices are heard."

In his welcome remarks, Sarbanes also acknowledged Totah as a longtime friend and "an advocate really unrivaled on issues she feels passionate about."

## New Generation of Huntsman Family Stakes Out New Path for Charitable Giving

HUNTSMAN, from page 6

select a few number of charitable organizations and make a bigger difference," he said.

Peter Huntsman said he and his siblings had adopted that strategy.

"My father preferred a rifled approach and not a shotgun approach," he said. "The first time we met as a family after his passing, we talked about whether we wanted a shotgun or rifled approach."

Mr. Huntsman, who is one of nine siblings and is the chief executive of the company his father created, said the family had decided to continue with the focused, or rifled, approach to giving that his father and mother had practiced. But the family broadened out the health category to mental health.

Personal reasons motivated Jon Huntsman Sr. and, now, his children. He survived multiple bouts of cancer, and several members of his family died of it. His son Peter said mental health issues had affected the broader family.

"Our commitment to cancer will continue for the next generation at least," Mr. Huntsman said. "With mental health, there

were enough experiences in our own family that if we didn't have the name or the wealth we wouldn't have gotten nearly the care we got."

He said a study showing that Utah ranked last for adult mental health care among the states and the District of Columbia accelerated the family's donation to a mental health cause. He would consider the \$150 million gift a success if people in Utah and the surrounding states began to look to the Huntsman Mental Health Institute for care, the way they do with the cancer center.

"When we think about mental health longer term, we will have succeeded if a single mother in rural Nevada or Idaho has a teenage child they're worried about and they come to us," he said. "The real result will be: Is the world going to be any different for that single parent? Or is real psychiatric health the domain of the rich and powerful? If that's the case, then we've really lost the battle."

While he has taken the lead among his eight surviving siblings, Mr. Huntsman said they were very much involved. Their opinions on philanthropy also sometimes differ from

their father's approach.

Mr. Monnier said the next generation must determine its path: "Do we want to do what Dad did, or do we want to do our own thing?"

The risk in just following parents' lead, he said, is that family members won't be engaged and will feel as if they're being controlled from the grave, as it were.

After the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, for example, Jon Huntsman Sr. said he was moved by what he had seen on television and began donating to aid groups there. He eventually gave more than \$50 million to help rebuild the country's infrastructure. He also gave scholarships to bring Armenian students to the United States to study.

"I don't know what took hold of me or why I gave," he said in 2013. "It just got to my heart."

But Peter Huntsman said the family could have spent the money given to Armenian relief more efficiently. "When Dad went for the first time, he was over there meeting with the Armenian prime minister," he said. "He didn't know the difference between an Armenian and Romanian, but that was entre-

preneurial philanthropy."

"Sometimes it would have incredibly positive results," he added. "Sometimes he should have stepped back and said if we had a process in place maybe we would have gotten more bang for our buck. But those things don't happen with emotion."

Mr. Huntsman said he was making sure proper processes were in place. The siblings, for example, are seeking advice from the foundation's board of directors, something his father didn't do.

"It was his money, and he made the decisions," Mr. Huntsman said. "When he passed, the foundation and board came to life."

Yet the family foundation was set up with flexibility built in. The second generation was able to donate to mental health because the mandates included donating to causes in the Western United States and helping the needy – in addition to continuing to finance cancer research.

The mandates can also be changed with a vote of the board, Mr. Huntsman said. "I hope the day comes when we cure cancer and divert it all over to mental health."





## OBITUARIES

## Lucy (Barmakian) Dabagian

### Dedicated to Armenian Church

FAIR LAWN, N.J. — Lucy (Barmakian) Dabagian, age 93, died on Sunday, November 10. Born and raised in East Orange, NJ, she resided in Fair Lawn for 64 years.

An accomplished musician who began studying music at the age of 6, Lucy attended the Juilliard School and was a church organist since the age of 15 being deeply inspired by Armenian liturgical music. A faithful and active member of St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, she served as the organist and accompanist for 35 years



becoming the organist emeritus in 1975 and continuing to play at various occasions until the age of 83.

She was also a 69-year member of the St. Leon Women's Guild, serving as chairwoman for several terms. With her life deeply rooted in the Armenian faith, she was the first chairwoman of the Women's Guild Central Council at the Diocese of New York as well as being the chairwoman and committee member of various functions for the Armenian Council, Armenian General Benevolent Union and St. Leon. Proud of her Armenian heritage, Lucy enjoyed preparing Armenian foods and entertaining.

She was the wife of the late George

Dabagian; mother of Rick Dabagian and wife Chris, Donna Philibosian and husband Alan and Linda Silverstein and husband Charlie; grandmother of Rich, Rick, Christina, Matthew, Michael and Kim; great-grandmother of Samantha, Ryan and Luke. Dear sister of the late Dorothy Boyajian and Arax Barmakian.

The family will receive relatives and friends Thursday, November 14, 2019, 4-8 pm at St. Leon Armenian Church, 1261 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410. The funeral service is planned for Friday, November 15, 2019, 10 am at the church. Interment will follow at George Washington Memorial Park in Paramus. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Lucy to St. Leon Armenian Church would be appreciated.

The Eastern Diocese issued a statement, mourning the loss of Dabagian, lifelong servant of the church and a pioneer in the organization of the Diocesan Women's Guild Central Council.

In the statement, the Diocese noted that "Dabagian was well known throughout the Diocese, and especially in her native New York region, where she was a parishioner and long-time organist at the St. Leon Church of Fair Lawn, NJ. Together with her husband George, the Dabagians were great benefactors of the Diocese and deeply involved in its every undertaking. In the 20 years following George's death, Lucy remained active in the church, and as recently as a year ago was honored for her ongoing work with the St. Leon Women's Guild."

In a condolence message, Bishop Daniel Findikyan reflected that "when the Women's Guild Central Council was formed to organize the disparate guilds across our Diocese, Lucy was a natural choice to be one of its founding members — and in fact she was chosen to be its first chairwoman. Through that office and others, our entire community got to know Lucy, and had the blessed opportunity to experience her warmhearted kindness and encouragement."

Lucy Dabagian is survived by her children Rick, Donna, and Linda and their families.

## Haigh Jamgochian

### Noted Architect in Virginia

RICHMOND, Va. (WTVR) — Haigh Jamgochian, the acclaimed architect whose work included the eye-catching Markel Building off West Broad Street, died this week, according to an obituary printed in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*.

He was 95.

Jamgochian, known to friends as "Jam," told Greg McQuade in 2017 that his architectural talents were a natural gift.

"I couldn't read or write," he said. "I could draw and build."

Jam, a Richmond native who studied at Princeton and Virginia Tech, always thought outside the box. While his apartment building on Franklin Street that resembled a treehouse

bunch of mushrooms made of concrete wrapped in glass."

"I drew it up and the Markel's didn't understand, so I said 'I make you a model.' So I made a model."

After several redesigns Jam's creation was born.

"It is circular. It has three levels," Jam said.

His inspiration?

"Have you ever seen a baked potato wrapped in aluminum? That's it," he said.

Since opening in 1965 the Markel Building has been both celebrated and scorned.

"It got a lot of attention," Jam said. "It was all in my mind. I had never done it before. I just had a feeling. It makes me sound like a somebody. I'm a nobody."



The late architect Haigh Jamgochian and a replica of his most famous creation in Richmond.

never materialized, his big break arrived in 1960 when the Markel Corporation hired him to create its headquarters.

"It was a sketch that was no bigger than the palm of my hand," Jam said. "I thought of a

But many think otherwise.

Jamgochian's collection of drawings, photos and models is currently housed in the Library of Virginia's Special Collections. Jam donated the collection to the Library in 2004.

## INSURANCE FOUNDATION FOR SERVICEMEN

A not-for-profit insurance foundation meant to serve military families recover from the loss or injury of their sons.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP



**Share:**  
Help spread the word in your community by sharing our story on social media.



**Donate:**  
No amount is too small. Please consider contributing to the Foundation at [www.1000plus.am](http://www.1000plus.am)



**Learn:**  
Visit our website at [www.1000plus.am](http://www.1000plus.am) to gain a deeper understanding of who we are and what we do.

[WWW.1000PLUS.AM](http://WWW.1000PLUS.AM)

### Read News in Armenian at:



Telephone (617) 924-7400

## Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET  
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN  
PAUL BEDROSIAN  
LARRY BEDROSIAN

## Giragosian

F U N E R A L H O M E

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC  
Mark J. Giragosian  
Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606  
[www.giragosianfuneralhome.com](http://www.giragosianfuneralhome.com)

## DENNIS M. DEVENNEY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in  
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543  
(781) 891-9876 [www.NEMonuments.com](http://www.NEMonuments.com)





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Tekeyan Convention in Watertown Is Both Productive and Forward Looking

CONVENTION, from page 1

recent years, and that its mission of promoting Armenian culture was as important as ever in the diaspora, as well as in Armenia. In turn, TCA Executive Director Aram Arkun said that the convention was an opportunity for exchanging information and new ideas among delegates and direct communication with Central Board members.

As TCA Central Board Treasurer Maro Bedrosian was unable to be present, Assistant Treasurer Kevork Marashlian reported in her stead. He revealed the healthy state of the TCA portfolio, which provided both growth and income for activities over the past four years. The organization has met all its fiduciary responsibilities.

Marashlian also spoke about the Sponsor a Teacher program's successes in Armenia and Artsakh and encouraged



TCA Metro Los Angeles Chapter Chairman Carl Bardakian, who was elected as a new member of the TCA Central Board

chapters to create opportunities for their communities to learn about this extremely helpful program which has helped staff and teachers of five key schools for several decades.

Central Board member Arto Manoukian from Montreal explained how TCA has renovated many classrooms of the Tekeyan school in Berdzor, Artsakh, which lies at a very strategic point in the Lachin or Kashatagh corridor linking Artsakh to Armenia. Manoukian said that visitors who see the concrete results become so enthusiastic that they too often decide to join as sponsors and have the opportunity to name a classroom there.

Central Board Secretary Hagop Vartivarian told the group about the publications program of TCA, which is an important means for Armenian-language writers, as well as English-language ones, to have their works made available to readers. He



Tekeyan Central Board members and delegates visit the grave of Dr. Nubar Berberian.

spoke about 12 recent books in the TCA series, of which 8 were published in Armenia, 3 in Los Angeles and 1 in Lebanon. TCA financially helped some additional authors, he said.

The various TCA chapters presented their activity reports, along with Greater NY TCA's Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group. TCA representative in Armenia Gayane Muradyan sent her report, which was read in absentia. Muradyan oversees TCA programs in Armenia, which are extensive. In particular, the TCA annual literary and cultural awards are major events in Yerevan.

Elections were held for the three non-permanent positions on the TCA Central Board. Diana Alexanian headed the Nominating Committee. Kevork Keushkerian of Pasadena and Arto Manoukian of Montreal were reelected to their seats, while a new board member, Carl Bardakian, who is the chair of the new Metro Los Angeles chapter, and great-grand-nephew of the famous Armenian Democratic Liberal leader Hrach Yervant, was added to the board. Bardakian, a deacon of the Armenian Church, is a former member of the Diocesan Council of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America as well as former Head Men's Basketball Coach of the Armenian National Basketball Team (of the Republic of Armenia).

It was announced that the West Coast will soon have an executive secretary, in the person of experienced administrator

*continued on next page*



Edmond Azadian



From left, Hagop Vartivarian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian and Edmond Azadian at the convention



Treasurer Ani Chatmajian of the Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group of the TCA Greater NY Chapter





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Tekeyan Convention in Watertown

from previous page

Mayda Kuredjian Kelechian, who will help local chapters and expand TCA activities in the region.

The Courtesies Committee, headed by Kevork Keushkerian, praised the work of the Central Board and the efficacy of the Sponsor a Teacher program. It voted to give the Dicran Simsarian Trophy to the TCA Detroit chapter as most active chapter in 2018. Though a small chapter in numbers, compared to the Los Angeles or New York chapters, Keushkerian said, it does a great deal of significant cultural, social and fundraising work.

After a brief break, the convention moved to the newly renovated Baikar hall downstairs in the evening for a banquet and brief program. Arkun served as master of ceremonies and after pointing out the historical and emotional importance of the building to the community, introduced some local guests, the Central Board members, and delegates. TCA Boston Secretary Vatche Der Torossian welcomed the guests on behalf of the local chapter.



Financial advisor Mike Norehad

Fr. Norayr Kazazian, a member of the St. James Brotherhood of Jerusalem who had moved to New York within the last year, performed the invocation. He will most likely become an official member of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of



From left, TCA Greater New York Chapter delegates Secretary Shoghig Medzadurian and Vice Chairman Vartan Ilanijian flank Greater New York Chair and Central Board Member Hilda Hartounian.

American shortly. He attended the Vahan Tekeyan School in Beirut but left at age 12 for the monastery in Jerusalem where he remained for over 30 years.

The Detroit TCA delegation presented the gift of a new painting by William Terian of the poet Vahan Tekeyan to the Baikar center. Terian has worked 32 ½ years for the Internal Revenue Service as an illustrator and previously worked five years at the *Detroit News*. The painting was received with great applause and will be placed in the TCA headquarters.

Edmond Azadian spoke about the many people who worked and had important experiences connected with the Baikar Center, and hoped that this will continue in the future after its renovation and after the successful and enjoyable convention this year. He praised the TCA Boston chapter's efforts in hosting the delegates, Central Board members and guests.

TCA Central Board Secretary Hagop Vartivarian formally gave the Simsarian Cup to the Detroit delegation, praising their activities.

Arkun presented special trophies to Apet Torosian and architect Norair Kherlopian which were inscribed in recognition and profound appreciation of their tireless service and dedication in the renovation of the Baikar Building from the Tekeyan

GreaterCultural Association of the United States and Canada, and dated November 23, 2019. Torosian, Arkun said, would come at even at the earliest hours during the week or weekends to open the doors of the center to various workers, and supervise their work closely. His advice was critical to the early stages of the renovations because of his great experience. Kherlopian took over and planned and executed the final stages of the renovations, sacrificing much time to find various teams of workers to carry out his design as an architect for the hall and the upstairs. He too would come mornings and nights, Arkun said, to make sure the work continued.

Arkun told the audience that this was not an official opening for the renovated Baikar Center but rather the continuation of the TCA convention. When the building will be completed, a special event or reception will be held for the friends of Tekeyan and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* who have been so supportive in the past.

Montreal violinist Dr. Nuné Melik performed several solo pieces, which entranced the audience and led to a request of an encore, which she was kind enough to accept. Melik, who was born in Siberia and studied in Moscow, began playing the

*continued on next page*



TCA 35th Annual Convention participants





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Is Productive and Forward Looking

from previous page

violin at the age of 6. She moved to Montreal in 2009. In 2010 she began the Hidden Treasure International Project to explore and promote rarely heard music, including that of Armenia. She had her solo debut in Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium in 2016 and in 2019 even shared the stage with Jimmy Buffett. She is also the author of poetry and has a doctorate from McGill University.

An unexpected talent turned up in the audience, interestingly again from Montreal. A talented young medical student Chloe Balian, though not prepared to perform, was spontaneously convinced to sing for the friendly audience, and so winningly performed an Armenian song that she too was asked for an encore.

The 25-year-old Balian has sang and danced since she was 3-years old. She is also a pianist with vocal training by a McGill University music professor. She has performed in several plays with Montreal's Tekeyan HayPem theater group and in many other shows. She can sing in four languages (Armenian, English, French and Spanish). Balian holds a master's degree in pathology, and is in medical school at the University of Montreal.

The final element of the cultural program was a heartfelt recitation of two of his own rhythmically inspired poems by TCA Boston executive member Sargis Gavlakian.

The entire evening was made all the more enjoyable by the culinary talent of caterer and longtime Tekeyan supporter Sarkis Antreassian.

While the convention ended late that night, the Tekeyan Central Board held a meeting the next morning to discuss forthcoming activities.



Hagop Vartivarian presents the Dicran Simsarian Trophy Cup to members of the Detroit delegation, including, from left, Diana Alexanian, Hovhannes Rafaelyelian, and Karine and Hovsep Koundakjian.



Apet Torosian, left, receives award from Aram Arkun



Chloe Balian singing



TCA Greater Boston Secretary Vatche Der Torossian



Architect Norair Kherlopian



Nuné Melik performing a violin solo



Fr. Norayr Kazazian



Sargis Gavlakian reciting one of his poems



TCA Central Board member Arto Manoukian of Montreal





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Nairi Demirchian-Gazarian Receives Armenian American Pharmacists' Association's 2019 Member of the Year Award

By Sossy Yogurtian

BELMONT, Mass. – During my 20 years working at Osco Pharmacy in Belmont, I had the privilege of training many student pharmacists and one student stood out to me the most, Nairi Demirchian-Gazarian.

Demirchian-Gazarian started to work at Osco Pharmacy at the age of 18 as a technician. Nairi always wanted to be a pharmacist. She attended the Massachusetts College Of Pharmacy and Health Sciences University (MCPHSU), graduated, and became a pharmacist herself at Osco Pharmacy. She also joined the Armenian American Pharmacists' Association (AAPA) as a member and held the position of secretary for 2 years.

At Osco Pharmacy, she was an excellent pharmacist and a team player. She provided great customer service (still does), and was an asset to the pharmacy.

Several years passed and Demirchian-Gazarian transferred to Osco Pharmacy in Waltham, where a technician named Elizabeth Bekelian, had a Bachelor's Degree in science and wanted to work in healthcare, yet was undecided.

Demirchian-Gazarian realized her potential as a pharmacist and suggested she consider the accelerated pharmacy program at MCPHSU in Worcester. Bekelian was not sure if that was the path she wanted to pursue, so Demirchian-Gazarian offered to drive her to Worcester for an interview with an advisor. Three years have since passed and Bekelian is currently studying to take her pharmacy board exam to be a licensed pharmacist. Demirchian-Gazarian's guidance, mentorship and offer to help secured a future for Bekelian.

Demirchian-Gazarian is a good example of how a small act of commitment and faith in another person can change a person's life.

Demirchian-Gazarian's work did not end there. Varteni Aroyan, another pharmacy student working at the same pharmacy, was having difficulties getting hired after graduating due to the saturation of the market. Demirchian-Gazarian took it upon herself to meet Aroyan outside working hours to help her with other possible options. She advised her to apply for internship and fellowship programs instead, which the latter did. In the end Aroyan got hired by Osco Pharmacy, as it was her preference to work in a retail pharmacy setting helping customers.

Both former students, now pharmacists, are very thankful to Demirchian-Gazarian for the mentorship and all the advice and help she gave them through the years.

On October 16, the AAPA committee members awarded Demirchian-Gazarian the organization's very first recognition award, the Member of the Year Award, because of her commitment

and dedication to help lead future pharmacists. We hope her story will inspire more pharmacists or other professionals to mentor students and guide them to help make their journey successful.

The AAPA was founded in 1981, and is a charitable, cultural and educational organization with more than 30 members practicing in all fields of pharmacy – retail, academia, research, clinical, hospital, corporate – and includes the next generation of pharmacy students. With the ongoing changes in the pharmacy profession, AAPA provides professional programs and continuing education opportunities. The organization is focused to help future Armenian American pharmacy students with mentorship, networking and scholarship opportunities.

The AAPA is committed and proud to participate in a number of Armenian community outreach programs and annually donates to an orphan in Armenia. In April 2019, AAPA was one of the greater Boston community sponsors of the benefit gala for Armenia's Children Cancer Clinic, City of Smile. For the past six years, the AAPA has also been sponsors of and participants in the annual Armenian Bone Marrow Donor

Registry, raising funds and awareness of the donor registry.

On October 12, the AAPA also hosted their annual event entertaining the residents of the Armenian Nursing Home in Jamaica Plain with pianist Levon Hovsepien.

Any Armenian-American pharmacy students



From right, Sossy Yogurtian RPH (President) Tanya Iliadis PharmD (Chair) Nairi Gazarian PharmD (award recipient) Ripsime Guyumdzhyany PharmD (Vice President) Elizabeth Bekelian PharmD (AAPA member).

## 2019 Trinity Christmas Bazaar to Be Held Dec. 6, 7

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Always an anticipated event, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will usher in the holiday season with its 2019 Trinity Christmas Bazaar, on Friday, December 6 and Saturday, December 7, in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St. Bazaar hours are Friday, from 12 noon to 9 p.m., and Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Co-Chairing this year's bazaar once again are Gregory A. Kolligian, Jr. and Karen Hovsepien, who have been working with their committees since the summer to ensure that this year's bazaar offers something for everyone from the young to the young-at-heart including new booths and menu options. "Our parishioners, neighbors and the community always look forward to attending each year to see friends, enjoy delicious food and browse the many booths. This year's bazaar continues to be the perfect place for people to do their Christmas shopping as there will be a wonderful selection of gift items to purchase," state the two.

The bazaar's traditional favorites will include the ever bountiful "Farmer's Market" with fresh fruits and vegetables; the "Country Store;" the exciting Silent/Sports Silent Auction, where you will be able to bid on an array of fabulous items, Boston's favorite team tickets and sports memorabilia; The Punch is Right Game, which has always been popular with children; Jewelry and Accessories; Poinsettias and beautifully decorated Wreaths and much more!

Making his annual visit to the Bazaar is Santa Claus who will be stopping by on Saturday, December 7, from 12:00 p.m. to 2 p.m., in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, to greet children of all ages.

The Trinity Christmas Bazaar would not be complete without the scrumptious Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries that will be sold at various booths.

Delicious Armenian dinners of traditional dinners will be served on Friday from 12 to 7:30 p.m., and on Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Take-out meals and an a la carte menu will also be available. Once again, the bazaar will offer optional seating for families with children.

The Bazaar Committee invites the entire community to halls decked with boughs of holly, trees twinkling with lights, the aroma of food wafting through the air, and the spirit of Christmas evident everywhere at the Trinity Christmas Bazaar, as we usher in the Christmas season.

For further information, email office@htaac.org, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar



The members of the Armenian American Pharmacists' Association (AAPA)

## ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA



## SUMMER 2020 INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

✓ WASHINGTON, D.C.

✓ YEREVAN, ARMENIA



APPLY ONLINE AT [AAAINC.ORG/STUDENTS](http://AAAINC.ORG/STUDENTS)



# Arts & Living



## Odette Nikgol Drawing and Animating in Norway

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

OSLO/YEREVAN - Odette Nikgol is a Norway-based Armenian painter, animator and translator. We have been in touch since 1997. "I have worked hard to be able to present myself as an Armenian both in Iran and in Norway," she wrote in her first letter addressed to me. We met about 20 years later during her first visit in Yerevan while we conduct this interview through the Internet.

**Dear Odette, where does your surname come from?**

My father's name was Hayrapet Berjikian. He was born in Urfa and joined the Armenian Volunteer Army at a young age and also served in the French Army. He later obtained French citizenship, but, moving to Iran, married my mother, Emily Shahverdyan, and received a Persian citizenship. In memory of his mother, Vardanush he changed his surname into Nikgol, translating his mother's name into Persian...

**Your biography gives the impression that you have studied your all life.**

You are right. First I studied at the Bustan Armenian School, then at Shahnaz Gymnasium. I have always been involved in painting, so I received my higher education at the department of plastic arts, drawing, photography and design of Tehran University. In the 1970s I studied also instructional technology at Iran's Television Educational School in Tehran, which consisted of a collected program created by American universities for Iranian students. Then I continued my studies at Farabi University in Tehran, earning a master's degree in animation and filmmaking.

While studying, I was a painting teacher and animator at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, then I worked in Iranian Radio and Television and for two years I taught photography and animation film at Tehran's Al-Zahra University. I came to Norway to continue my education in cultural diversity and in-depth gender training. In 2001-2006 I studied media and communication studies and interdisciplinary cultural studies majoring in gender research and finally in 2012-2013 I studied how to become an interpreter. Here I also worked in various places, including teaching at Dragvoll

see NIKGOL, page 14



Eric Roberts

## 22nd ARPA International Film Festival Wraps Up

HOLLYWOOD - The 22nd Arpa International Film Festival (Arpa IFF), one of Hollywood's longest running film festivals, showcased features, documentaries, shorts, animated films and music videos from 15 different countries at Hollywood's historic American Legion Post 43 theatre from November 8-10. This year's festival once more highlighted a diverse range of films that explored themes such as genocide, war, environmentalism, music, art, and variety of issues.

Opening night on Friday, November 8 kicked off with a special reception and the screening of "Sand and Fire." The film's background music, *Dle Yaman*, was performed live before the film's screening by none other than the amazing Alene Aroustamian who thrilled the audience with her magical performance.



Jesper Aero, Director

"Sand and Fire" was a film from Morocco, directed by Souheil Ben Barka, a noted Moroccan director who has studied the craft in Italy. The audience found out that his Armenian grandmother raised him singing *Dle Yaman* to him which was very dear to his heart. The film tells the story of a Spanish army officer who is sent to Morocco as an explorer with a mission to overthrow the Moroccan Sultan.

The festival's centerpiece program featured two films, "Lorik," by Alexei Zlobin and Michael Poghosyan, and "Armenia Uncovered" by Andy Simon and Raffi Tanielian, with host Kev Orkian.

The weekend was the home of full house audience with films such as Ani Hovannisian's "Hidden Map," Lilit Pilikian and Jared White's "100 Years from Home," Jasper Aero's "Dead Soldier." The amazing film "Coming Home" by Daria Shumakova, stole everyone's heart, including the Jury.

The closing night ceremonies were a great success. The Mistress of Ceremonies, Maria Cozette opened the evening with her two songs O Kami Kami and The Light of Day, then proceeded gracefully into mc'ing the evening.

Celebrity guests throughout the weekend included with celebrities such as Fern Champion, Sonya Eddy, Kev Orkian, Paul Fisher, Esai Morales, Michelle Alexandria, Jack Betts, Alex Kalognomos, Armen Ra, Leonardo Foti, Chuck Harter, Sofia Shinas, Ken Davitian, Maria Elena Infantino, Ara Keshishian, Kamal Moumad, Micky Levy, Paul Fisher, Michael Poghosyan, Sofia Milos, to name a few, also with our amazing special honorees Eric Roberts, actor; Sally Kirkland, actress; Albert

see ARPA, page 15

## BOOKS

### Berberian's and Zeitlian Watenpaugh's Books Chosen for SAS Outstanding Book Award

FRESNO - The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) announced that Houri Berberian's *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds* (Oakland: UC Press, 2019) and Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh's *The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice* (Stanford University Press) have been chosen as the recipients of the Der Mugrdchian SAS Outstanding Book Award for 2018-2019. An honorable mention has been awarded to James Barry's *Armenian Christians in Iran: Ethnicity, Religion, and Identity in the Islamic Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Established in 2015, the "Der Mugrdchian SAS Outstanding Book Award" accepts nominations for works that advance knowledge and scholarship on Armenian society, culture, and history from ancient times to the present. Professor Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno and a past President of SAS, has generously offered to sponsor the award for the next five years.

According to the selection committee, both *Roving Revolutionaries* and *The Missing Pages* demonstrated substantive knowledge and an overall high level of scholarship. The "Der Mugrdchian SAS Outstanding Book Award" covered works published in 2018 to 2019. Berberian and Zeitlian Watenpaugh will each receive a \$500 monetary award from SAS and receive a certificate of recognition.

SAS President Bedross Der Matossian commented on the awards stating, "I would like to congratulate Houri Berberian and Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh for this great achievement. This year we received more than a dozen books for the award. All of them were excellent books from different disciplines in the field of Armenian Studies. The level of competition was very high and a testament to the fact that the field of Armenian Studies is evolving in a very positive manner. I would like to thank the four senior scholars of the selection committee who rigorously examined all of the books."

In her book *Roving Revolutionaries*, Berberian probes the interconnected aspects of the Russian Revolution of 1905, the Iranian Revolution 1905-1911, and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the role of the Armenian revolutionaries. The movements of these Armenians and their participation within and across frontiers provides us a unique global insight into the major transformations that shaped the modern period.



Houri Berberian

Through extensive archival work, Berberian examines the circulation of revolutionary ideas, revolutionaries, and printed material. By doing so she provides a novel approach to our understanding of revolutions and revolutionary movements.

Houri Berberian is professor of history, Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies, and Director of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of California, Irvine. She is the author of a number of articles on Armenians and revolution, Armenian women and identity. She is the author of *Armenians and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911: The*

see BOOKS, page 16





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Odette Nikgol: Drawing and Animating in Norway

NIKGOL, from page 13

Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, where I was a guest lecturer of the knowledge of the influence of the colors in the teaching methods.

**After an active Armenian community life in Tehran was it difficult to move to a country with very few Armenians?**

In 1988 I married an Iranian. We got married in a Russian church in Tehran. People considered my husband a traitor because he had converted to Christianity. For this reason we left the country. It took years before we adjusted. We did our best to integrate. It was difficult to work outside of your own country. I am a Christian from Persia, and the Armenian culture was with me, so we were able to integrate more. In Norway my family experienced many things, both good and difficult, even though we had moved to a peaceful country. We felt very lonely in a foreign environment. We moved to a city where there was not a single Armenian family around us. There were many Iranian families in this city but none who were Iranian-Armenian. My two sons lived far away from Armenian culture and the language, but this was not our main problem because I spoke to them in Armenian and in addition, I had been given assignments as a job to teach my children their mother tongue. According to the law in Norway, all children who have a different mother tongue are required to receive education in their mother tongue at school. So during these years, I had taught my sons two cultures, and now not only they, but also my husband speaks Armenian. My father was the only one who survived the Genocide; he always said we should keep our language.

**Your drawings are mostly inspired from Persian folk art; am I right?**

Yes, you are, combined with the look of a child. I am inspired by Iranian folk art like, miniature, and its arrangement of space in non-linear perspective, in a two-dimensional plane. Persian miniature developed and formed within Iranian ancient history and stories, and the highest point in the tradition was reached in the 15th and 16th centuries. Politically there have been many events in this country that leave its mark on each individual and especially those who practice and think artistically. The 1979 revolution changed the dynamics of the art scene, changing all artistic practices such as film, painting, literature and music in Iran. I am inspired from children's art and the way children express themselves, with the help of colors, simple shapes and informal dimension and perspective. Children's viewpoint on the world has a common feature with miniature art, and the blending of these two artistic worlds helps me to express my thoughts to my surroundings. This is an artistic form that I feel at ease with. As I work with children, I use their colors. Abstraction and animation are very close to me. When I paint, I figure out animated movements. Some of my computer drawings (Simorgh Bird; Happy Cleanliness; Environment and Nature) are on display at various exhibitions.

**You have made 15 animated films in Iran and three in Norway. Some years ago participating in Roshd film festival in Tehran I was delighted to reveal to the world Iranian animation. What about the Norwegian one? The only Norwegian animation I have seen is "The Angry man" by Anita Killi, which is very impressive...**

While in Iran, I participated in the creation of many animated films, including "Amir Hamzeh," "Atal Matal Tutuleh," "Solidarity, One, Two, Three," etc. In 1990 I co-animated two Norwegian cartoons and in 1994, I worked in Oslo for a feature animation film at the "Film Kamerater As" studio. Norwegian animations has some great films, like Flåklypa Grand Prix, Jakten på nyrestenstein and Gurin med Reverompa, that I highly recommend to watch.

Creativity seems to be in your family. Your sister Hilda Nikgol has also participated in Iranian cinema as an artist and actress, and another relation, Armen Melkonian, is a layout artist of animation film in Canada.

To the names you enumerated I will add the name

of my cousins René Gabri, who is a political conceptual artist living in New York, Sirak Melkonian, who is also an artist, and Alek Melkonian, an opera singer. Actor Narbe Vartan from Iran is also my relative; he acted in the Armenian-Iranian joint production "Apricot Groves."

**And your sons also inherited talents from their parents.**

My husband Mansour Eslami is an artist and an architect. My son Karen is a painter and performance director, and my oldest son, Armin, is an architect who lives in Copenhagen. My husband and I share an atelier with Karen in Oslo.

**I am in touch with Karen - please tell us about his activities.**

He studied at the Fine Arts Universities in London and Norway, and also studied religion and philosophy. Karen has participated in more than 25 group exhibitions around the world, and his solo exhibitions have opened in Spain, Denmark, Italy, Norway and the United States. Karen works at the Oslo Museum of Contemporary Art, observing Norwegian cultural life. Two years ago he staged Petrarch's



"Massacre"

"Satyricon" by his own dramatization and design with contemporary interpretation. The performance received a lot of praise. He says he is mostly influenced by literature and films and among the Armenians he loves Sergey

Paradjanov and Atom Egoyan. He is also one of the founders of the No Plays showroom, where he presents young Norwegian artists. Karen has organized various performances influenced by English rappers. And when the Norwegian royal family visits the Museum of Modern Art, he is entrusted to explain the exhibition. Karen's last performance was "Ghetto Justice," shown five times last September in Oslo.

**You have been in Armenia once - do you have any new projects?**

Yes I have plans to travel to Armenia again. I have an ambition to travel with my husband and son to Armenia to find the opportunity to exhibit our family artwork in an exhibition there. The exhibition can be painting, installation and performance...

## Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Bijug (Bulgur Patties in Tomato Sauce) A recipe contributed by Sonia Tashjian

Sonia Tashjian, a noted Armenian food expert and cooking enthusiast, is a never-ending source of interesting, delicious, and easy-to-prepare recipes from numerous Armenian regions. Here is a tasty dish which Sonia was kind enough to share from the Sasun region. Sonia currently lives in Yerevan, Armenia. She has had a TV cooking program, although she insists she's not a cook. Sonia has spent many years studying and researching all about Armenian traditional cuisine, gathering whatever information and traditional recipes she could discover from the various villages. She is in the process of preparing a dictionary of Armenian



#### INGREDIENTS FOR BULGUR PATTIES:

1 cup fine bulgur (#1)  
1/2 cup flour

#### PREPARATION

Measure the following to suit your taste: garlic (mashed or powder), red and black pepper, dry basil, dried thyme, and salt.

#### INGREDIENTS FOR THE SAUCE:

3 medium onions, chopped  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
Salt to taste

#### PREPARATION

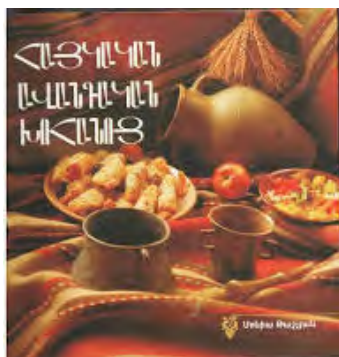
Combine the flour, bulgur, and seasonings to taste; knead with just enough water for the ingredients to hold together well. Pinch-off pieces and roll into balls the size of walnuts.

Flatten the balls and cook them in gently boiling salted water. Remove from water and place on a plate lined with paper towels. Place patties in a serving bowl; cover to keep them warm.

Fry the chopped onions in the oil; add the tomato paste that's been diluted with enough water to create a sauce; add salt to taste. Bring to a boil and pour over the flattened balls; serve.

References:

<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>  
<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/search/label/Sonia%20Tashjian>



*Haygagan Avantagan Khohanots (Armenian Traditional Cuisine)*

By Sonia Tashjian

Sonia's cookbook is written in Armenian, consists of 223 pages and has eight parts: soup, main dish, dolma, kololak - or- kuftha, pilaf, salad, bread, and dessert. It contains 200 traditional recipes that have never been improvised; Sonia presents these as they are. She has gathered the recipes from villagers, old historical books and dictionaries. Each recipe has its picture, a brief explanation about its origin, a traditional explanation, if any was available, and mentions the regional name to which it belongs. At the end of the book there is an index and a small dictionary. The book is published by MARANIK LTD, which is a food (specially beans and herbs) production company in Armenia. For pricing and ordering information, please contact MARANIK LTD directly at: [info@maranik.am](mailto:info@maranik.am).





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# 22nd ARPA International Film Festival Wraps Up

ARPA, from page 13

S. Ruddy, producer of "The Godfather," "Million Dollar Baby" and many others including filmmakers, directors, producers from all over the world.

The 2019 Arpa International Film Festival's

award winners are:

Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking: "Sand and Fire (The Impossible Dream)," directed by Souheil Ben Barka

Best Short Film: "The Sea," directed by Cameron Richards



From left, Carla Garapetian, Lilit Pilikian, Jared White, Vahe Berberian and Ani Hovannisian



From left, Sylvia Minassian, Eric Roberts, Maral Kazazian, Eliza Roberts and Sonia Keshishian



Actors Eric Roberts and Kamal Moummad

Best Music Video: "South Central State of Mind," directed by Timur Bootzin

Best Animated Short Film: "Anacronte," directed by Raúl Koler and Emiliano Sette

Best Documentary Film (a tie): "The Dead Soldier," directed by Jesper AERØ  
"Reinventing Rosalee," directed by Lillian Glass

Best Screenplay: "Lorik," directed by Alexey Zlobin

Best Director: "Coming Home," directed by Daria Shumakova

Best Feature Film: "Coming Home," produced by Makar Zaporozhskiy and Anna Gasparyan

Special Honorees 2019 Arpa International Film Festival

Lifetime Achievement Award in Producing: Albert S. Ruddy

Career Achievement Award in Directing: Joe Berlinger

Lifetime Achievement Award: Eric Roberts

Icon Award: Sally Kirkland

The 2019 Arpa International Film Festival Jury were: Kimberly Fox- Partner at Mad River Productions; Michael Mandaville- Producer; Fern Champion- Casting director; Darren Boghosian- Agent, UTA; Sonya Eddy- Actress; JD Larson- Founder, Larson and Associate music Management; Sofia Shinas- Writer, Director; Karen Ryan- Commercial Casting Director; Chuck Harter- Producer and Robert Giardina- Actor.

To date, AFFMA has awarded more than 150 individuals with grants in support of their creative endeavors. Through its Arpa International Film Festival, AFFMA has recognized industry legends, with Lifetime Achievement, Career Achievement, Humanitarian, Icon and Breakthrough Artist Awards. Arpa International Film Festival takes great pride in working toward recognizing the diverse tapestry of international talent and presenting it to an appreciative audience. We place a strong emphasis on filmmakers' unique artistic vision, cultural diversity and social understanding.



Music Video award winners



Maral Kazazian, Sally Kirkland, Actress, Sonia Keshishian, Valery McCaffrey, Agent, Casting Director

"This new Armenian CD, **"Echoes of the Past"** features the exciting sounds of the New Mugrditchian Band.

The artists are, Mark DerMugrditchian-Clarinet/ Def; Greg Krikorian, Oud / Vocals; Kevin Magarian ,Guitar/Vocals, Arthur Chingras- Dumbek.

The smooth and mello sounds of the songs played on this CD for your listening and dancing pleasure will bring back memories of the past.



A CD can be purchased by contacting Mark at 508-887-2847, or by E-Mail at mdermugrditchian@gmail.com.

or Greg at gregkrikor@aol.com.

The band is available for bookings by calling Mark at 508-887-2847 or Greg at 508-485-1506.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



CALENDAR

FLORIDA

**DECEMBER 1 — Thanksgiving Luncheon hosted by the Women’s Guild in Boca Raton,** welcoming Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian and his family to St. David Armenian Church as the new pastor. 2300 NW 51st St. Boca Raton.

**DECEMBER 3 — Social hosted by St. David’s Armenian Church’s Women’s Guild** inviting all card and tavloo players for an enjoyable day of socialization (11 am to 4 pm) and dinner (4 pm to 7 pm) 2300 NW 51st St, Boca Raton.

**DECEMBER 7 — Saturday, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Women’s Guild of St. David Armenian Church in Boca Raton,** invites all members, spouses & friends to their Annual Christmas Luncheon & Fashion Show at the Wyndham Deerfield Beach Resort, 2019 NE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, FL, to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship, delicious food, and exciting fashion provided by Mario Pucci, among others. For reservations (deadline Nov. 29th) and additional information, please call Diane Azarian (401) 556-3886, Ginny Kyvelos (781) 789-9169, or the church office (561 994-2335).

**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.

**FEBRUARY 15, 2020 — SAVE THE DATE for the Annual Dinner Dance** hosted by the Women’s Guild of St. David Armenian Church, 2300 NW 51st St, Boca Raton

MASSACHUSETTS

**DECEMBER 1-22 — Saturdays and Sundays, December 1-22,** Members-only Holiday Gift Shop Sale. 12-6pm, Armenian Museum of America , 1st floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Join us Sundays in December for afternoons of Christmas cheer! We welcome members of all levels to enjoy a special sale each Sunday before Christmas in which they receive an additional holiday discount of 25 percent (some exclusions apply)! Find that special gift or book to make this an extraordinary Armenian Christmas as you enjoy holiday music and refreshments. Renew, sign up, or give a gift membership to those you love.

**DECEMBER 1 — A cappella Christmas Concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project.** 5 p.m. at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester. The venue has plenty of free parking. Event will feature an a cappella performance, refreshments, raffle, and silent auction. Tickets are \$30 each and a family four-pack of tickets is available for \$100. Tickets available via Eventbrite at [www.armeniatree.org/acappella](http://www.armeniatree.org/acappella)

**DECEMBER 2 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting** - social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m., St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Guest speaker will be Christopher F Bator, retired US attorney. Bator’s topic will be “Violent Crime in the Greater Boston Area.” Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St. James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598.

**DECEMBER 5-29 — Thursdays – Sundays, December 5-29. End of the Year Book Sale.** 12-6 p.m. Armenian Museum of America , 1st floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Looking for the perfect gift or a treat for yourself that won’t break the bank? Come to the Armenian Museum Gift Shop and explore our End of the Year Book Sale. Great titles on sale for \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$1!

**DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston.** Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. 145 Brattle Street. Cambridge. Friday, 12 to 9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Delicious Armenian dinners (lamb shish, losh, chicken kebab, and combo dinners), an a la carte menu and take-out meals. The Bazaar is the perfect place to do your Christmas shopping or just get into the spirit of the season! For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office at 617.354.0632 or e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**DECEMBER 8 — Second Sundays! Traditional Armenian Dance Lessons** 2-4 pm at the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor 65 Main Street, Watertown. Back by popular demand! On the second Sunday of every month, join Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian for a workshop on Armenian dance in our staple program of the Second Sundays Cultural Series! Gary and Susan have collected over 100 village dances and shared these with the community for the last 42 years. Learn Armenian dances performed at American picnics and traditional dances from the old country. Follow in the footsteps of our ancestors to help keep these elegant traditional dances alive. Members free! Non-members \$15. Register online or call Education Coordinator, Garin Habeshian at 617.926.2562 Ext. 103. (The Museum’s elevator is being upgraded and is currently out of service. For info: <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/classes>)

**DECEMBER 8 — Candlelit Labyrinth Walk: In Peace & Harmony** “Boston’s Newest Holiday Tradition.” Sunday, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Meet & Greet. Celebrate. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon with Your Wish on the Wishing Tree. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Luscious Cookies. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**DECEMBER 14 — Children’s Christmas Workshop. 1-4 p.m. at the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries,** 3rd floor. This year we are welcoming children ages 7-12 to celebrate the season of giving by making Christmas ornaments and cards decorated with traditional Armenian motifs. Armenian Christmas Workshop allows kids to express their creativity by designing Armenian ornaments to adorn treed, and heartfelt cards to give to family and loved ones. After all, this is the true meaning of Christmas! Guiding the children through the spirit of sharing will be Artist-in-Residence Arevik Tserunyan. We will also be making cards for seniors at the Armenian Nursing Home and Rehab Center. The class will conclude with a tree lighting and decorating party in which the children help decorate the Museum’s Christmas tree and enjoy refreshments. Members \$16. Non-members \$20. (Note: The Museum’s elevator is in the process of being upgraded and is currently out of service. For more information visit: <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/classes>)

**DECEMBER 15 — St. James 88th Anniversary Name Day Celebration - Honoring Hripsime Parsekian and Leslie Cristello, Parishioners of the Year.** 10 am Divine Liturgy. Name Day Banquet to follow. Keljik Hall. St.

James’ Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. \$45 per person. \$15 for children 12 and under. Advanced Reservations Required – purchase tickets online at [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org). 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown 617.923.8860 [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com)

**DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra.** 3 p.m. Church Sanctuary. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. 145 Brattle Street Cambridge. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, founded by the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian (1930-2008) and now under the direction of Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, will present their annual Christmas Holiday Concert. The program will consist of a variety of beloved Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office at 617.354.0632 or e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**DECEMBER 31 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston invites the community to welcome the New Year together,** at its New Year’s Dinner-Dance celebration. St. James Church’s Charles Mosesian Center/Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Entertainment will be provided by popular singer Arabo Ispiryan and his band from Armenia, and community’s very own DJ Rams! Cocktail hour is at 7 pm, with dinner served promptly at 8 pm. And of course, there’ll be dancing ‘til 2am! Donation: Adult - \$125; children (5-12): \$75 For tickets please call Alina Ashjian (617) 852-1816 or Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or go online [SNDCNYE2020.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/venue/sndcny2020) Tickets are advance purchase only.

NEW JERSEY

**JANUARY 11, 2020 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York presents “A Children’s Song and Dance Show,”** starring Joelle. 2-4 p.m., Saturday, the Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford. Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Children 2 and under free. Joelle of Montreal will perform her first children’s show in New Jersey. Light reception to follow. For tickets text or email Talia, 917-238-3970, [rsvptaliab@gmail.com](mailto:rsvptaliab@gmail.com) or Salpie 516-413-4178, [Salpimegerian@gmail.com](mailto:Salpimegerian@gmail.com).

RHODE ISLAND

**NOVEMBER 30 — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church ACYOA Alumni-Providence Chapter-48th ANNUAL HOLIDAY KEF.** Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Featuring Johnny Berberian, Mal Barsamian, Jay Baronian, Kenny Kalayjian. Cash Bar, Raffle, Coffee, Dessert-Adults \$25, Students \$20. For reservations contact Rena Megrdichian (401)57305731, Dorothy Martiesian (401)749-0269 or church office (401)272-7712. [office@stsahmes.org](mailto:office@stsahmes.org) Sponsors & Donations accepted if you cannot attend.

*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.*

Berberian’s and Zeitlian Watenpaugh’s Books Chosen for SAS Outstanding Book Award

BOOKS, from page 13

*Love for Freedom Has No Fatherland* (Westview, 2001).

Thanking the Society of Armenian Studies and the selection committee, Berberian commented: “Please accept my most sincere gratitude for selecting my book, *Roving Revolutionaries*, as a co-recipient of the ‘Der Muğrdechian Armenian Studies Book Award.’ I am doubly delighted and

honored that I share the recognition bestowed by the Society for Armenian Studies with my University of California colleague Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh. The award acknowledges the significance of studying Armenians within a broader regional and global context and of engaging with theoretical approaches such as connected histories. Through their geographic and ideological boundary crossings, Armenians serve as ideal subjects who connect early twentieth-century revolutions. Please extend my thanks to the jury members and to the donor who made the prize possible.”

In *The Missing Pages*, Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh reconstructs the life of the *Zeytun Gospel* from the medieval period until its final destination in the J. Paul Getty Museum. Though an

analysis of the biography of the manuscript, she tells the larger story of the Armenians and the suffering they endured during the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath. Following the journey of the missing pages of the manuscript, Zeitlian Watenpaugh weaves together a beautiful story of an art work from resilience to the will to survive extermination against all odds.

Zeitlian Watenpaugh is professor of art history at the University of California, Davis. She is the award-winning author of *The Image of an Ottoman City: Architecture in Aleppo* (2004). Her writing has also appeared in the Huffington Post and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Thanking the Society of Armenian Studies and the selection committee, Zeitlian Watenpaugh commented, “I am honored to have received this

award, and I am thrilled to be a co-winner with the brilliant scholar and my friend, Professor Hourii Berberian. That this award comes from the Society for Armenian Studies is deeply meaningful, as the members of the Society know first-hand the challenges and obstacles of researching Armenian topics. I am honored to be a member of a Society that not only promotes excellence in research, but also fosters a supportive and convivial community of scholars from around the world. To me, this award celebrates Armenian art history in general, and the wonderful exhibitions and books on Armenian art that have appeared in the last couple of years. I hope this award inspires people to discover and re-discover medieval Armenian art, its astonishing beauty, and continued contemporary relevance.”



## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Armenia Caught in the Pincer of Iran And Georgia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

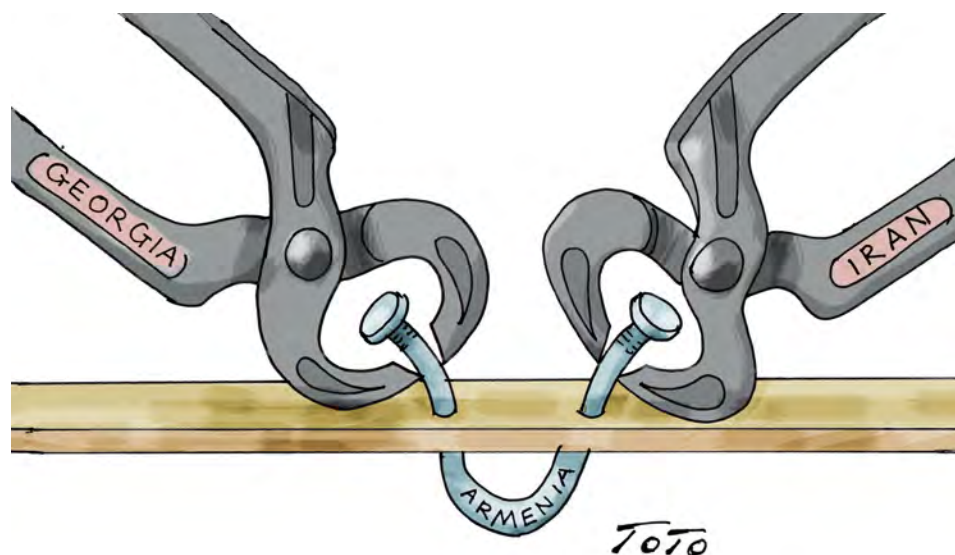
Following the Velvet Revolution, Armenia has been consolidating its domestic stability, improving its economy and recalibrating its foreign policy. But Armenia's prosperity is at the mercy of its interactions with the outside world.

As a consequence of the blockade imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia's choices have become dramatically restricted. In fact, only two neighbors remain which allow Armenia to communicate and trade with the rest of the world: Iran and Georgia.

Ironically, both countries are gripped by internal turmoil and instability concurrently and Armenia is caught in the pincer of those events.

Certainly, there have been no hostile actions by those countries against Armenia, but their internal problems will spill over to affect Armenia.

The riots in Iran are caused by bread-and-butter issues, triggered by the sudden increase in the price of gasoline by 50 percent. In Georgia, the problems stem from the more abstract issues of democracy and electoral reforms. At this time, the causes are not as important from the Armenian perspective as the consequences of the riots in the two countries.



Destabilization in Iran not only affects Armenia but will have a tectonic impact throughout the region.

In light of the gathering storm, the reinforcement of the Russian military base in Armenia has become a reassuring factor not only for Armenia but also for Iran and Azerbaijan.

The riots in Georgia broke out because the ruling Georgian Dream Party had promised to introduce constitutional reforms to allow opposition parties to have a chance for equitable representation in the parliament. The current constitution heavily favors the ruling party. However, the parliament refused to pass the promised legislation, triggering the current crisis, which the former Speaker of the Parliament Nino Burjanadze calls "destabilizing." Thousands have taken to the streets to demonstrate, chanting slogans like "Georgia is facing the end of a dream."

Meanwhile, 12 members of the ruling party have resigned. One of them, Tamar Chugoshvili, who had served as first deputy speaker of the parliament, stated: "For months, my role was to convince everyone that those amendments would pass, but because we have not delivered on this commitment, I decided to take the responsibility for the failure."

Unlike the Armenian situation, the Georgian church and in particular its patriarch, Ilia II, have great political influence and helped to bring to power the current administration. At this time, it seems that the church is sympathizing with the disgruntled parties.

The current crisis will certainly hamper Armenia's foreign trade and particularly its trade with Russia. Recently, Georgian-Armenian relations were improving, partly because of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's friendly gestures, but also because of Azerbaijan's hostile actions against Georgia, including a territorial dispute, and Turkey's heavy penetration and control of the Georgian seaport of Batumi.

Incidentally, the Treaty of Kars of 1921 had given Turkey free access to Batumi port (in Ajaria) at no charge. That particular proviso was not used by Turkey during the Soviet period. But today, Turkey is in Ajaria with a heavy hand, controlling the economy of the region, to the chagrin of all Georgians.

The crisis in Georgia will affect Azerbaijan, because all

pipelines which carry Azeri oil traverse Georgia.

The riots in Iran erupted when the government increased gasoline prices. But that was the straw that broke the camel's back; the imposition of strict religious rules on the citizens, compounded by continued economic hardships as a result of US-imposed sanctions, plus Iran's regional political ambitions were all factors, leading to the current public uprising.

Of course, all of the above needed a spark, which came through the Internet. In today's world, most governments do not fully control their populations, as major forces are able to undermine that control through the Internet, which can be a blessing in many ways but also a powerful weapon in cyberwar. We have seen the scenario repeated in many countries. But even the major powers blame each other for weaponizing the Internet and influencing election results.

The riots began on November 16 and swept through the country, with Amnesty International estimating that 106 people were killed by the government forces during the crackdown.

Interference by foreign entities to destabilize the country is designed to feed on existing grievances, brought about through economic hardships.

In Iran's case, the ethnic fault lines come in very handy as well, as Iran's population of 80 million includes 20 million Azeris. For a long time, the partition of Iran — breaking off the north — has been part of US strategic plans.

The destabilization plans begin with fanning discontent which is already brewing among the population. When the government retaliates, each victim is a "blessing" for the powers interested in regime change. It is no surprise that US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has appealed to Iranians to send pictures, videos and other documents to be used against the government. Jon Gambrell, at the AP, reports that "the acting commander for the Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Ali Fadavi, repeated the allegation that America was behind the protests, without offering any evidence to support his claim."

One would wonder what evidence one needs after the public obsession of the Trump administration to punish Iran.

And since the Internet has been weaponized, the Iranian government shut down the Internet on November 16.

"Why did [the Americans] get angry after we cut off the Internet?" asked Favadi, adding, "because the Internet is the channel through which the Americans wanted to perform their evil and vicious acts."

Currently, there is a lull in the protests after the arrest of more than 2,000 demonstrators.

Since President Trump has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal unilaterally, Tehran has resumed its race toward nuclear weapons, further aggravating the situation.

Israel will not tolerate a nuclear Iran. Therefore, today's crisis may be considered a prelude to a more violent confrontation.

From the Armenian perspective, losing Iran as an outlet pales compared to the larger problems engulfing the entire region should that happen.

Aharon Vardanyan, an expert on Iranian studies in Yerevan, warns of potential catastrophe south of Arax River should the government of Iran lose control of the area, which is populated by Turks and Azeris.

"The Turkish and Azerbaijani propaganda machine has been very active using cultural factors, as well as people-to-people diplomacy along with other covert operations. Today, the Artsakh-Iran border is considered the safest area. Should the scenario change, it will become the most dangerous area."

In view of Iran's current problems, some circles in Azerbaijan are gleefully preparing for a change of fortunes. A group named Pan-Azeri Movement has already planned a symposium to study the topic, titled "Iran's Future and the Turks."

The speakers will focus on the situation in southern Azerbaijan, developments in Iran and their impact on "our compatriots." This group considers northern Iran to be southern Azerbaijan and the citizens there as "our compatriots."

Unbeknownst to the respective governments in Tbilisi and Tehran, which are engulfed in their internal problems, these issues in their turn have caught Armenia in their pincers.

# Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

## SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Y. Azadian

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

## CORRESPONDENTS:

**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian  
**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian  
**Los Angeles** - Taleen Babayan  
**Berlin** - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

## Contributing Photographers:

Jirair Hovsepian

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

## Baika Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509  
Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

## Baika Association, Inc.

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





## COMMENTARY

# Gomidas Vartabed

## The Distinguished Armenian Musicologist of All Time (1869-1935)

By Father Zaven Arzoumanian, PhD

This year the Armenians worldwide are most worthily celebrating the 150th year of Gomidas Vartabed's birth, the internationally distinguished Armenian talented musicologist of all times, who revived the Armenian art of music and placed it on highest pedestal. He stands the first who introduced the Armenian authentic music to the West through his performances in Paris and Berlin. Gomidas Vartabed studied at the Kevorkian Seminary in Holy Echmiadzin, went to study first in Tiflis under Makar Ekmalian, an Armenian composer and conductor, and soon after to Germany where he specialized in music and piano performance. He finally went to Constantinople at the dawn of the 20th century and organized unprecedented choral groups and numerous performances.

In his four accomplishments, vocal, instrumental, composition, and as a conductor of large choral groups in major metropolises in the Middle East, Gomidas' talents radiated lights through the mirrors of a clear crystal as it were, ever illuminating both the Armenian generations and the European international art of music in the last one hundred years. Gomidas Vartabed was the unique musicologist who gathered our popular songs from ancient provinces of Armenia by hundreds, placing them on highest echelons, both in Armenia and Europe.

### Double Fields

Gomidas cultivated double fields of music. The Armenian Church music from ancient sign notes of music written above each word, known as khaz, by way of revising the performance of the Holy Mass which has always been the pride of our past generations, as it is today. The second field was the fertile land of Armenian ethnic music, kept in the dark at a very low key, for which Gomidas Vartabed felt most ambitious in touring remote villages and collecting those remnants personally, qualifying them before giving his seal of approval with a European touch, so that the entire world seriously and with admiration would recognize the ethnic nature of the Armenian folk music, now expressed in highest classical format from the very source of the Armenian people.

In his own words, Gomidas has stated quite simply that "One single and pure musical note is worth a thousand lectures, because a speech must be clearly heard, understood, and digested, in order to get some nutrition from it, and that requires some time, whereas a musical note penetrates directly in one minute." He gave many lectures before international critics and composers, but he also sang, using the piano, and teaching the Armenian music transferring it from the East to the West. In his own words, "recently I read two lectures in the Conservatory of Berlin on the Armenian music in general. It was truly a success, as I added to it special data on the Eastern music. Both lectures revealed my reputation in front of the world of music as a qualified musicologist."

### Internationally Acclaimed

Hearing his lectures, European music scholars elected



Gomidas member of the International Musical Society. The focal subject of Gomidas has always been repeatedly, in speeches and in performance, the authenticity of the Armenian Music from its sources. The Chairman of the Society Oscar Fleischer wrote to Gomidas in 1899: "By way of your in-depth lectures, you have taught us the one music that was a closed book for us, and that they can teach us further, the Westerners, a whole lot more." While in Paris, Gomidas had lectured and conducted choral groups. Speaking in French, he had made it clear the underlying characteristics of the Armenian music through his melodic voice as stated by his contemporaries.

It was on October 1, 1906 when Gomidas Vartabed conducted a concert in the presence of a large audience full of French intellectuals. This is what we read: "Gomidas conducted a series of songs stirring the souls of French professionals himself accompanying on the piano when singing his melodious *Diramyre* song." In 1914 Gomidas was again invited Paris to deliver a lecture before the International Musical Assembly. Returning to Constantinople with great enthusiasm, Gomidas was looking forward to attend the 1915 Assembly, this time in Berlin, where he was invited to deliver a speech. The year for the Armenians was tragic as we know, and hundreds of intellectuals, among them Gomidas Vartabed, were rounded and sent into exile. Most of them were massacred, while Gomidas returned to Constantinople, but alas in a mentally shaken condition that remained with him, leading to his eventual death in 1935, 20 years later.

### Greatest Legacy

The greatest legacy of Gomidas Vartabed is his persistent research as he personally toured to meet with villagers all over Armenia to hear the songs as well as the ethnic dance music right from the source. He crystalized all he heard patiently, converting them into European musical notes, and saving all from final demise. Whatever we now have from Gomidas comprise the fruitful harvest of his talented treatment of those original songs.

### One Consideration

I wish to bring up an important case for consideration. Gomidas' music is and has been all along so authentic that his

music excels over and beyond the text and its significance, especially when soloists sing without paying attention to the words and phrases inherited from the past. This means that when they sing from Gomidas, they are always overwhelmed by the music, overlooking the words and the meanings. They concentrate on the music passionately, leaving the words in jeopardy, thus creating incorrect translation of the text, a case that has happened unfortunately.

One example is Gomidas' famous song *Andouni* (Homeless) with its unmatched music, one in its kind, melancholic and sensational, expressed with variable half and quarter musical notes. The soloist no doubt sings correctly. However, when reciting the words in their local dialect of archaic villagers, one can easily miss a word or replace another unknowingly, paying attention only to the overwhelming music. Especially when we try to translate the *Andouni*, we miss the central point and do not see how the poor villager had left his home and went far away, feeling totally homeless. He recalls his house collapsed like his heart is, where inside the broken ceiling wild birds have found refuge.

The second verse refers to a "Black Sea" which we ordinarily take as the one we know from geography. Whereas, the text does not read "the Black Sea," as most soloists repeat incorrectly, but it reads "a black sea" (*Sev dzov me yem deseh*.) (I have seen a black sea,) referring to his emigrant's eye, inundated with storms of tears. The white stormy waves have surrounded the black pupil of the eye, while both colors do not mix with each other, as the song reads.

This follows with the hopeless homeless trying to throw himself in the river to be eaten by the fish. Here again the words are totally misunderstood when singing "I want to take myself and go to the river." The first word wrongly understood could collapse the whole scenario. The word is "tsi tanem" (take myself) and not "grab a horse, ride on it, and take the suicidal trip with galloping ceremony to the river." This is what we read in an English published translation. Obviously, the poor homeless and the galloping horse are calculated mistakes from that one word "tsi" (horse), which originally meant "indzi" (myself).

Another example from the famous Holy (Mass), composed by Gomidas, who studied under Makar Ekmalian who had composed his own Holy *Badarak* much earlier. For more than a hundred years the Ekmalian *Badarak* is sung by all Armenian Churches up to this day. The Mass by Gomidas has ever since reserved for solemn occasions. If one sings the *Soorp Soorp*, the holiest part of the Mass, one discovers that the Ekmalian version is more heavenly, with notes gradually climbing high, rather than slowing down as it is with Gomidas, and rightfully so. However, as we continue singing Gomidas, we see some drastic changes instead, as he selects some of the spiritual songs and gives them highest notes in amazing articulation, such as "Krisdos ee mech mer haydnetsav, Hoki Asdoudzo, and Krisdos badarakyal." This means that Gomidas Vartabed had the choice wherever the high notes were appropriately demanding.

The case is repeated when singing the *Lord's Prayer* (Hyre Mer). Ekmalian begins with highest notes to elevate "Our Father" to the highest level possible from the outset which makes a true sense. We sing it every time and we raise our voice to elevate Him to reach the heavens, as the text reads "Our Father who art in heaven". Whereas, with Gomidas the entire Prayer is sung low key from the start with intermittent touches of higher notes. Obviously, in both cases he has tries to avoid repeating the previous composition and to introduce a different variant.

### Famous Testimonies

Here are some internationally famous composers' testimonies on the music of Gomidas Vartabed:

"If Gomidas had written only the *Andouni* (Homeless), it would have been sufficient to include him among the famous composers." Debussy

"As often as I listen to the *Badarak* (Mass) composed by Gomidas, I feel spiritually revived. It is a masterpiece. It is beyond imagination and most difficult what Gomidas has undertaken. It requires unending patience, vigor, and work of love. It is a work of a genius, and I wonder if the Armenians realize the greatness of Gomidas' accomplishments. Luc Andre Marcel

"While listening to the finale of Beethoven's ninth symphony, I was often reminded of the Gomidas' horovels." Sovetakan Arvest 1969

Further, "Who says that mountains don't walk, Gomidas' concert moved and we saw them." Al Ahram Daily, Cairo

Indeed, the Armenian people was enriched by Gomidas' creative art for generations, who always sang, is singing today, and will sing in the future, those songs wholeheartedly, such as *Groong, Andouni, Horovels, Karoun a tziun a arel, Hayasdan yergil trakhdavrye*, and many others which made the Great Gomidas Vartabed immortal and ever present in the life of the Armenian people.

## LETTERS

## We Need to Support Each Other

To the Editor:

The many achievements Armenians have accomplished, both before and after the 20th century gives credence to our cultural identity. Despite our loss of independence as a nation until recent times, Armenians have contributed enormously to whatever nations they lived in.

The achievements accomplished by all Armenians mentioned in this article gives pride to our heritage. However, we lack the type of communal loyalty that Israelis demonstrate toward their people. If one in their community excels in music, art or science, the Jewish cheering chorus becomes active, whether it be by attending their concerts, art shows, or by expediting appointments to prestigious positions to confirm their excellence. Both as individuals and as a community this trait is lacking in our Armenian circles.

In order to better acquaint the public about the Armenian Genocide my most recent novel, *Givers and Takers* gives an intimate insight into the generational survivors of the Genocide hoping to give the lay public a better understanding of the personal sacrifices and accomplishments of those that lived. Letters and cards on the cover and a summary was sent to all Armenian churches in the country, to both priests and chairmen of their boards, encouraging them to help promote the novel to their parishioners and friends. It was my intent to personalize the tragedy hoping to bring greater awareness to a generally ignorant lay public. Only one priest from Las Vegas responded. In addition, all profits were to be donated to the Armenian church. Had this been a pressing Israeli issue, the Jewish community would have instantly pledged it's support.

The son of famed Armenian author Harold Arlen commented about this lack of communal pride. He felt it was due to our submerged guilt about not having our independence as a nation for those so many years.

In order to inspire our young and the future, our churches and organizations must direct efforts to enhance the achievements of our community by supporting whatever accomplishments have been put forth. We now have an independent Armenia, and it's critical we protect our identity and values as a people in order to guarantee the hidden potential for future generations.

Dr. Richard Berjian





## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Senator Graham Shows his True Colors In Phone Call with Fake Turkish Minister

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R, SC) has become infamous for blocking a motion by Sen. Bob Menendez (D, NJ) urging the Senate to vote on the Armenian Genocide Resolution by bypassing the Foreign Relations Committee.

The AXIOS news website reported that as Senator Graham was leaving the White House meeting with Pres. Erdogan on Nov. 13, 2019, one of Pres. Trump's aides asked him to object to the Armenian Genocide Resolution being taken up by the Senate without first going through the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Graham told AXIOS he agreed to block the Resolution "because he [Erdogan] was still in town. ...That would've been poor timing. I'm trying to salvage the relationship, if possible." When asked if he felt uncomfortable blocking the Armenian Genocide Resolution, Senator Graham told AXIOS: "Yeah, because I like Bob [Menendez]. He's been working on this for years, but I did think with the president of Turkey in town that was probably more than the market would bear." Senator Graham then added: "I'm not going to object next time."

Politico online magazine revealed last month that in a phone call with a Russian prankster Alexey Stolyarov, who presented himself as the Defense Minister of Turkey Hulusi Akar, Senator Graham told him that he was more than willing to work with Turkey to improve its relations with the United States.

Senator Graham's spokesman Kevin Bishop confirmed to POLITICO that the Senator had in fact been deceived by the Russian prankster: "We have been successful in stopping

many efforts to prank Senator Graham and the office, but this one slipped through the cracks," he said. "They got him." Actually, the Russia prankster had fooled Senator Graham on more than one occasion.

Contradicting his public statements, Senator Graham told the fake Turkish Defense Minister that he agreed with Turkey's position that the Kurds were a 'threat'. Graham also said that he and Pres. Trump were opposed to placing sanctions on Turkey for buying the Russian S-400 missile system.

Here are some excerpts from the phone call:

Prankster: "So as far as I understand, President Trump has entrusted you with these negotiations," the man Graham assumed to be Akar said, according to the audio of the 16-minute call.

Senator Graham: "Yeah, sort of. Let me tell you what he [Pres. Trump] told me: 'I don't wanna impose sanctions on our ally Turkey.'"

Prankster: "Yes, but what has President Trump said about the free-trade agreement?"

Senator Graham: "Okay. So, he told me to call President Erdogan and make this offer. ... I don't know what to tell you other than I am doing all I know to do and President Trump is very sympathetic to the situation of President Erdogan, but the Congress is not sympathetic. Democrats are not sympathetic at all, and we've lost some Republicans here when it comes to Turkey. And Turkey is too valuable of an ally to get in a dispute with."

According to GQ Magazine, the Russian prankster had called Senator Graham earlier in July from a Turkish cell phone he had bought especially for this occasion. The prankster told Senator Graham that he would serve as the point of contact for him with the Turkish government. Senator Graham agreed to call the prankster back after he spoke with Pres. Trump.

On August 12, Senator Graham called the prankster back and boastfully told him: "I met with the president; I spent the weekend with him. We played golf yesterday and had dinner over the weekend, and we talked about our friends in Turkey, and I told him my desire was to change the conversation and to get you back in the F-35 program and sign a free-trade agreement and move it in a new direction, and that's what he would like to do."

"And did you tell him about our conversation?" the prankster asked.

"Yes," said Senator Graham. "...We want to have a stronger relationship with President Erdogan. I personally like President Erdogan. I think President Trump likes President Erdogan. I think he's a strong man, and we need to deal with strong people. So, I think the next thing to do is to have the two presidents talk with each other."

The prankster then asked what he should report to Pres. Erdogan.

"Here's what we should do," Senator Graham said. "Let me call the president back this afternoon. I'll call you tomorrow, and here's what I think we should do. We should have a call between the two presidents...and I think the conversation should be — you can tell President Erdogan that I spent the whole weekend with him, and the president does not want to sanction Turkey. He thinks that's crazy. I personally think that's crazy. We need to find a way around that."

Senator Graham also confirmed in his phone call with the Russian prankster that Pres. Trump has a personal interest in the Turkish state bank that had violated US laws by trading with Iran! According to a Bloomberg report, Pres. Trump had told then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to ask the Attorney General to drop the case of the Iranian-Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab who was arrested in the US for his role in the Turkish bank's fraudulent transaction. Erdogan had lobbied US officials for Zarrab's release.

While the disclosures in the phone calls are not stunning, it is a serious security risk that a Russian prankster, who is allegedly connected with the Kremlin, is able as the Defense Minister of Turkey to talk to Pres. Trump's close ally, Senator Graham, who then conveys the Russian's messages to Pres. Trump. Senator Graham then reports his conversation with the US President back to the Russian.

It is often said that "politics makes strange bedfellows." This is so true in the case of Trump and Graham, who have gone from being vicious enemies to close friends. During the 2016 presidential campaign, candidate Trump called Graham "crazy," "a nut job" and "one of the dumbest human beings I've ever seen." And, in turn, Graham called Trump, a "kook," "crazy" and "jackass." Now they are close friends and play golf together.

# Turkey Keeps Denying the Truth

By Mitch Kehetian

Through the years Armenian Americans have sought recognition of the 1915-23 genocide that swept through Turkish occupied Western Armenia — but international power politics blocked every move.

Readers of my personal editorial expressions got to know me as "the mustachio Armenian" thanks to my friend the late Neal Shine — editor of the *Detroit Free Press*. So my comments fit the international scene and admission I might come across as being biased. When the House of Representatives voted a near unanimous vote for a resolution recognizing the 1915-23 carnage that killed 1.5 million Armenians and sent thousands to their deaths in forced marches into the torrid hot sands of the Der Zor desert in northern Syria. Only 11 opposed. It was a victory for justice recognition with House Democrats and Republicans joining forces in the resounding vote.

Armenian Americans cheered. Finally the most powerful nation in the world was about to practice what we preach to others, justice for my ancestors.

But justice was not at the altar for my mas-sacred grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins.

Senator Lindsey Graham a South Carolina Republican and Senate majority leader, brushed aside the House vote to deny 99 other senators a chance to endorse or oppose the House resolution, including Michigan's Democrat Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters.

Did Graham act on his own or did he get a phone call from the White House to block a vote in the upper chamber?

Had the Senate backed the House vote it would have gone to President Donald Trump.

In 1969 I spent two weeks in historic Armenia, Just a handful still in the interior as if this nation never existed. I invite Trump and Graham to join me for a pilgrimage to see for themselves before they utter leave it to the historians. Maybe they'll stop playing politics to build more "towers" over the restless, voiceless souls of my ancestors.

After meeting with Turkish President Recep Erdogan at the White House, it was apparent Trump had embraced his ally as a political friend — the same Turkish leader who denied the Ottoman leaders enacted the genocide to erase the Armenians on the land they had lived on for centuries — while the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks were still living in central Asia.

By refusing to place the House resolution before the full Senate, Graham would protect Trump from having to veto a Senate-House approved genocide vote.

Some folks ask why Turkey still denies the genocide that was enacted by the then Ottoman Turkish regime and why Armenians still raise the issue after 100 years. Simply because present-day so-called Turkey says it never happened. Others say leave it to the historians. After World War II the United Nations assigned Raphael Lemkin, a renowned history professor of Polish-Jewish origin to define the term genocide. In his conclusion the intellectual Lemkin said the wholesale massacre of the Armenians was an act of "genocide." Historian author Arnold Toynbee defined the genocide as "Murder of a Nation."

Why does Turkey still deny what happened 100 years ago?

The crime against humanity — like first degree murder — has no expiration of time or years. And includes reparations and seizing territorial land — as the Turks did to Western Armenia by depopulating its rightful owners.

Present-day Armenia, a mere fragment of the boundaries of the country as designated by President Woodrow Wilson has little to entice Trump's business world.

While he dodges taking a stand for the first state Christian nation in the world, even before the Roman Empire, Trump may pay the price in the 2020 election. We can see him losing Michigan's prime electoral votes and several other states he barely won over Hillary Clinton to win the presidency via the Electoral College route after being swamped by Clinton in the popular vote.

In Michigan alone the Armenian American vote is estimated more than 25,000. Trump also won Pennsylvania and Florida by a scant margin.

Will his pro-Turkish stand agitate enough Armenian voters to pull the switch in favor of Joe Biden if he's the Democrat nominee.

Biden announced formally in November that it's time for the United States to recognize the Armenian genocide.

As an added factor it has been learned that the sons-in-law of Trump and Erdogan have organized a global business partnership.

And the day after Trump announced he was pulling our troops out of northern Syria, Erdogan sent his tank led troops into Syria against the Kurds. Talk about a betrayal of an ally that helped Trump claim we had broken the backs of the Islamic (ISIS) terrorists.

Is there any hope Trump can avoid an anti-Trump Electoral College debacle vote by Armenian Americans?

Yes. On April 24, 2020 he can proclaim it as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and call the leaders of Turkey and Armenia to come to Washington to resolve a century old human rights-territorial issue. It was on that day the planned genocide ignited in Istanbul.

We need to remind voters that when Barack Obama was seeking the presidency he pledged when "I'm president I will recognize the Armenian genocide. I'll be that kind of president. Well after winning his first term he took off to address the Turkish parliament for being a great NATO ally and friends with America," then off to Egypt to proclaim we are "not a Christian nation, we have many religious faiths,"

Before that President Bill Clinton called Illinois Congressman Dennis Hastert to put off a House vote on the Armenian genocide bill working its way through the House. Years later Hastert was imprisoned for several years over a sexual abuse allegation.

(Mitch Kehetian is a retired editor of the Macomb Daily and former trustee at Central Michigan University.)

THE CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY — LIKE FIRST DEGREE MURDER — HAS NO EXPIRATION OF TIME OR YEARS. AND INCLUDES REPARATIONS AND SEIZING TERRITORIAL LAND — AS THE TURKS DID TO WESTERN ARMENIA BY DEPOPULATING ITS RIGHTFUL OWNERS.





# Fugitive Armenian Ex-Lawmaker Arrested in Russia

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — A notorious businessman and former parliamentarian who had close ties to Armenia’s former leadership has been arrested in Russia one year after being charged with organizing an armed robbery in Yerevan.

According to the Armenian police, Levon Sargsyan was tracked down and detained on Thursday, November 21, in Zelenograd, 47 kilometers northwest of Moscow. A police statement issued the following day said his arrest was the result of “large-scale” joint investigative actions taken by Russian and Armenian law-enforcement bodies.

Sargsyan, known to Armenians as “Alraghatsi Lyov,” held a seat in the Armenian parliament from 1999 to 2012. The 51-year-old businessman officially represented former President Serzh Sargsyan’s Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) in the National Assembly from 2007-2012.

Sargsyan has been on the run since another Armenian law-enforcement body, the National Security Service (NSS), indicted him in October

2018. The NSS said that he masterminded the 2008 robbery at the house of Armen Avetisyan, a former chief of the Armenian customs service. It claimed that Sargsyan hired an armed gang to break into the house and steal cash and precious items kept there because of his personal feud with Avetisyan.

Ten alleged members of the gang were arrested, tried and given lengthy prison sentences in 2011.

Armenian media outlets for years linked Sargsyan to various scandals, violent incidents and electoral fraud mostly reported in a Yerevan district where he lived and held sway.

Sargsyan denied those claims. He avoided prosecution even after investigators effectively implicated him in a police cover-up of a murder committed in 2010. A police general was arrested and jailed for that crime in 2012.

The Armenian police now seem confident that Russian authorities will extradite Sargsyan to Armenia. “The issue of his extradition is being solved right now,” said the police statement.

# White House Directed Block of Genocide Resolution

RESOLUTION, from page 1

Asked whether he felt uncomfortable blocking the Armenian genocide resolution, Graham replied: “Yeah. Because I like Bob [Menendez]. He’s been working on this for years, but I did think with the president of Turkey in town that was probably more than the market would bear.”

“I’m not going to object next time,” Graham added.

The “next time” happened last week. Menendez and his Republican Senate colleague Ted Cruz introduced the Armenian genocide resolution again. This time, the White House asked another Republican Senate ally, David Perdue, to block it.

“Senator Perdue objected due to concerns that passage of the resolution would jeopardize the sensitive negotiations going on in the region with Turkey and other allies,” said a Perdue spokesperson.

The big picture: The Trump administration is pushing Turkey to give up its Russian-made S-400 air defense system. While they’re negotiating, they’re trying to block Congress from calling out Turkey’s human rights atrocities.

Trump has also been reluctant to sign legislation — which Congress passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities — to punish China for its repression of Hong Kong. Trump tells aides he wants to get a trade deal first.

But Trump will probably have no choice but to sign the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. As Sen. Cruz said, Congress has enough votes to override a presidential veto.

# Azerbaijani Journalists Visit Gandzasar Monastery, Shushi and Stepanakert

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) — From November 17 to 21, under the mediation of the Office of the Personal Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, mutual visits of journalists from the Republic of Artsakh, the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place.

As the Artsakh Foreign Ministry noted in a press statement, on November 20 and 21, within the framework of their visit to Artsakh, the Azerbaijani journalists visited the Gandzasar Monastery Complex, took a tour of Shushi, visited the Yeznik Mozryan Vocational College, the State Museums of Geology and Fine Arts, as

well as other places of interest in the city.

In the capital city Stepanakert, the journalists visited the Karabakh Carpet Company, the Artsakh Information Technologies Center, the Artsakh Bio Canned Food Production Company, as well as met with representatives of the Artsakh civil society and the mass media.

This initiative is a pilot step aimed at creating favorable conditions for promoting the peace process within the framework of the implementation of confidence-building measures. Over the past 20 years, the Artsakh side has repeatedly come forward with proposals on confidence-building, including on mutual visits of journalists.

# Murder of Priest Raises Fears for Syria’s Christians

FEARS, from page 1

already carried out six trips to that city so dear to the memory of the Armenians, where there is the shrine of the martyrs of the genocide, also devastated during the conflict.”


Bishop Georges Abou Khazen, the Latin Bishop of Aleppo, said in a report published by the Assyrian International News Agency: “The devices have exploded near the church and this, according to us, has a very precise meaning: they want to target Christians.”

The bishop blamed the resurgent violence on problems created by last month’s military offensive by Turkey into north-east Syria, a move which followed President Donald Trump’s decision to remove troops from the area. Describing ISIS militants as “tools in the hands of the United States and Turkey” to stir up unrest, he said the Turkish incursion “has generated greater instability, ending up involving

Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syro-Catholics ... all already victims of the Turkish genocide in the past.”

Syrian state TV SANA called the killing of the Armenian Catholic priest and his father “martyrdom”, while the Kurdish media presented the resurgence of bloody attacks attributable to Daesh as an indirect consequence of the Turkish military intervention in Syria, which forced Kurdish militias operating in the area to review their strategies and suspend military operations against jihadist cells still present in the north-east of Syria.

While indicating that Syrian government forces were now working to restore law and order, Bishop Abou Khazen said: “If these episodes are repeated, it is inevitable that the fear will grow among the population and there will be thousands of other people who will want to flee.”



TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
GREATER NEW YORK



### Captain Hrair Hawk in Cilicia

Video presentation of his travels

Thursday, December 19, 2019  
Tekeyan Center, 7:30pm  
560 Sylvan Avenue  
Englewood Cliffs NJ 07632

Hrair Hawk’s published works and his new book “Armenia: Heaven on Earth” will be available for sale.

Free Admission





TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
GREATER NEW YORK

Presents  
**A Children’s Song & Dance Show**  
Starring: Joelle

Saturday, January 11, 2020 | 2-4 PM  
**Hovnanian School**  
817 River Road  
New Milford, NJ 07646  
Tickets: \$25 paid in advance and \$30 at the door  
Children ages 2 and under free



Joelleentertainment.com



Come join us for a fun afternoon of singing and dancing with the much loved Armenian children’s singer Joelle from Montreal for her first show in New Jersey.

Light reception to follow!

For tickets, please text or email:  
Talía 917-238-3970  
rsyptaliab@gmail.com  
Salpie 516-413-4178  
Salpimegerian@gmail.com

Our Sponsors

