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Patriarchate Objects to Public Tender for Iconic Building

ISTANBUL (Ahval) – Turkey’s Armenian Patriarchate said on Friday, January 24 that the authorities’ decision to hold a tender to rent the Sanasaryan Han was unjust as the legal process over the ownership of the iconic Istanbul building was still underway, the *Agos* Armenian newspaper reported.

The General Directorate of Foundations said the inn was to be put out to tender on January 28 to rent it out for the next 35 years and make it a five-star hotel, in an announcement published in the *Official Gazette* on December 31.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey said in its statement that such a move would be wrong as Turkey’s Constitutional Court had been examining the appeal of the Patriarchate about the conflict on the ownership of Sanasaryan Han.

Sanasaryan Han in the Sirkeci district is one of the oldest Armenian buildings in Istanbul. The historic building was built in 1881 thanks to Mkrtich Agha Sanasaryan in order to support the Sanasaryan School in Erzurum. Sanasaryan Han building was seized first by the Ottoman and then the Turkish Republic governments and converted into the General Security and Police Headquarters of Istanbul.

The building was put under the adminis-



Prince Charles at the Armenian Church of Nativity in Bethlehem

Prince Charles Visits Bethlehem Armenian Church

JERUSALEM (Combined Sources) – On January 24, Prince Charles of Great Britain visited the Armenian Church of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem.

Prince Charles was welcomed by Archbishop Sevan Gharibian, the Canon Sacrist of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and presented him the history of the Armenian presence in the Holy Land and the mission carried out by the Armenian Patriarchate. On behalf of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem His Eminence gifted HRH an Armenian ceramic handmade plate. He also recited the famous sentence of Hitler “Who

Armenian President Attends Auschwitz Program

see CHARLES, page 5

tration of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul in 1920, but the Turkish state confiscated it in 1928.

The Armenian Patriarchate filed a lawsuit in 2014, asking authorities to return the building. After years of legal battle, a Turkish appeals court last year ruled to return the title deed of Sanasaryan Han to the General Directorate of Foundations.

The Patriarchate’s lawyer, Ali Elbeyoglu, took the case to the Constitutional Court as a result. Elbeyoglu also filed a legal see SANASARYAN, page 5

Kobe Bryant Pilot Special Permission to Fly Being Analyzed by NTSB

By Christina Maxouris, Holly Yan and Darran Simon

LOS ANGELES (CNN) – As investigators scour for clues in the helicopter crash that killed nine people, including NBA legend Kobe Bryant, the pilot’s last words with air traffic control illustrate a foggy scene in the sky.

Pilot Ara Zobayan said he was climbing to avoid a cloud layer, the National Transportation Safety Board said. But when air traffic control asked him what he planned to do, there was no response, NTSB board member Jennifer Homendy said.

see PILOT, page 7



Pilot Ara Zobayan (CNN)



Guests assembled at the TCA event, with Mayda Kuredjian standing at the center.

New Tekeyan West Coast Executive Secretary Installed at TCA Beshgeturian Center

ALTADENA, Calif. – Representatives of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) introduced their new executive secretary for the West Coast, Mayda Kuredjian, to local Tekeyan executive members and leaders of various Los Angeles Armenian organizations on January 16 at the TCA Beshgeturian Center in Altadena. Leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the Social Democratic Hunchakian Party were present along with cultural figures and media representatives such as editors from the California Courier, Massis, Baikar and Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

TCA Executive Director Aram Arkun served as master of ceremonies. He and TCA Central Board President Edmond Y. Azadian spoke highly of Kuredjian’s background and experience. She grew up in Beirut with her life intertwined with TCA’s activities. She attained leadership positions in ADL and TCA at a young age due to her energy and passion, two characteristics which remain inextricably associated with her to this day.

see KUREDJIAN, page 8



TCA West Coast Central Board Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Offers Condolences to Turkey Over Deadly Earthquake

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – “We express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims following yesterday’s terrible earthquake in Elazig,” the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in a Twitter post on January 26.

“We wish speedy recovery to the injured and rehabilitation of affected areas of Turkey,” the Ministry added.

There are no direct reports from Armenia so far mentioning any impact of this earthquake within the republic or Artsakh.

The following paragraph from Associated Press has been reported by many publications with no further detail: “The Kandilli seismology center in Istanbul said the quake measured 6.5., while the U.S. Geological Survey gave the preliminary magnitude as 6.7, and said the quake affected not only Turkey but also Syria, Georgia and Armenia.”

New Baltics Diocese Established

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian Diocese of Baltic States was established by the Patriarchal Epistle of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II on January 24. The Diocese of the Armenian religious communities of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia was established through their separation from the Armenian Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan.

Bishop Vardan Navasardyan has been appointed the Primate of the newly established Diocese.

Armenia Foreign Ministry Discourages Trips to China

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia has urged Armenian citizens to avoid all but essential travel to China amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The Foreign Ministry announced on January 28 that they are monitoring the developments together with the Embassy of Armenia in China, the Armenian Healthcare Ministry and other specialized bodies and are in touch with international organizations, the Chinese authorities and other countries.

“Necessary information exchange is being carried out. Based on the current situation regarding the coronavirus infection, we urge Armenian citizens to temporarily avoid all but essential travel to China”, the foreign ministry said January 27. “We call on our citizens who are currently in China to maintain constant contact with the Armenian embassy and the Armenian Foreign Ministry.”

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Around 42,000 Tourists Visited Artsakh in 2019

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) – Around 42,000 foreign tourists arrived in Artsakh in 2019, the Minister of Culture, Youth Affairs and Tourism Lernik Hovhannisyanyan of the Artsakh Republic told a press conference on Wednesday. The minister informed that the number of the visiting tourists has increased by 46.7 percent to compare with the number in the indicated period of the previous year.

The hotel infrastructure has grown buy 29 amounting to 92 hotel units with total accommodation capacity of 1830. Some 2,254 used Tourist bus service in the republic in the period from June 1 to September 1, while tourism attractions of Artsakh were presented at number of international fairs.

The minister spoke about the ongoing efforts toward the preservation of historical-cultural monuments and historical environment.

Yerevan Council Member Resigns Amid Outcry

YEREVNA (RFE/RL) – Armenia's ruling bloc forced a member of Yerevan's municipal assembly to resign on Monday, January 27, after he seemingly urged fellow government supporters to attack Constitutional Court Chairman Hrayr Tovmasyan's daughter on social media.

The 20-year-old member, Henrik Hartenyanyan, posted a link to Sara Tovmasyan's Facebook page and wrote: "Come on, dear guys!"

Hartenyanyan's Facebook post came amid a renewed war of words between Hrayr Tovmasyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. It was widely construed as an appeal to his followers to make abusive comments, causing outrage among both supporters and critics of the Armenian government.

The pro-government majority in the city council was quick to issue a statement condemning Hartenyanyan. The latter announced his resignation from the council after a three-hour meeting with the other council members representing Pashinyan's My Step bloc.

"We reaffirmed that this does not befit our value system and runs counter to the principles espoused by us," Suren Eiramjian, the leader of the My Step group in the city council, said after the meeting. "In keeping with those principles, we asked, urged Mr. Hartenyanyan to resign his seat."

Hartenyanyan, who declined to talk to reporters, is also a member of Pashinyan's Civil Contract party, the dominant component of the ruling bloc. His social media post was condemned by a Civil Contract commission monitoring actions of party members.

"Hate speech and intolerance are extremely condemnable," the commission said in a statement.

Armenia to Ban Plastic Bags by 2022

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The use of plastic bags will be banned in Armenia starting on January 1, 2022, but with some exceptions, the government announced on January 23.

Deputy Minister of Environment Irina Ghaplanyan said the exceptions will include the bags for food packaging, trash bags which are made of a secondary raw material. The alternative to plastic bags is going to be the paper and cloth bags.

"At this period we are actively working with all concerned. We held discussions with the representatives of bag producers, restaurants, stores and NGOs. We introduced them the program details. We have started the awareness campaign two years before the launch of the ban so that the producers can revise their work and consume the production volumes," Ghaplanyan said.

The head of the department of environmental strategy programs and monitoring at the ministry, Lusine Avetisyan, said a large volume of plastic bags is circulated in Armenia annually. But after this ban comes into force it is expected to get 4,000 tons of plastic bags out of circulation.

The ministry will carry out an active awareness-raising work among the public to make them know what negative impact the plastic bags, the plastic in general have on the human health and the environment.

Armenian Chief Justice to Sue Pashinyan For 'Slander'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan doubled down on his verbal attacks on Hrayr Tovmasyan on Monday, January 27, after the embattled chairman of Armenia's Constitutional Court decided to file a defamation lawsuit against him.

Pashinyan again lambasted him at a weekend news conference held in the southeastern town of Kapan. In particular, he charged that Tovmasyan

tograph of an expensive pen which he said Tovmasyan gifted him at a 2018 meeting in Yerevan of the governing board of a pan-Armenian charity. He portrayed the gift as proof of "the weirdest flattery I've ever seen."

Tovmasyan responded through one of his lawyers, Amram Makinyan, later on Sunday. "Constitutional Court Chairman Hrayr Tovmasyan has read Nikol Pashinyan's 'disproportionate

Tovmasyan court chairman as a result of an illegal seizure of the judicial authority by a "group of officials." It said that took the form of forgery committed by former parliament speaker Ara Babloyan and one of his top staffers, Arsen Babayan. Both men strongly deny relevant accusations leveled against them.

In late December, a senior prosecutor declined to endorse those accusations, ordering the SIS to conduct an "additional investigation."

A few days later, Tovmasyan was indicted on other, unrelated charges. Prosecutor-General Artur Davtian said that he unlawfully privatized an office in Yerevan and forced state notaries to rent other premises "de facto" belonging to him when he served as Armenia's justice minister from 2010-2014.

Tovmasyan rejects the accusations as baseless, saying that they are part of the Armenian government's intensifying efforts to force him to resign. SIS officers searched his Yerevan apartment on Friday.

Pashinyan effective demanded in August 2019 the resignation of Tovmasyan and other Constitutional Court judges who were installed before the "Velvet Revolution." He accused them of maintaining links with Armenia's former leadership and impeding reforms which he says are aimed at creating a "truly independent judiciary."

Pashinyan's critics, notably senior members of the former ruling Republican Party, say that he is simply seeking to gain control over all Armenian courts.

Tovmasyan was indicted on December 27 one day after President Armen Sarkissian signed into law a government bill giving seven of the nine Constitutional Court judges financial incentives to resign before the end of their mandate. None of those judges has accepted the proposed early retirement so far.

Pashinyan strongly defended the controversial law during his four-hour news conference.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (R) and Constitutional Court Chairman Hrayr Tovmasyan shake hands ahead of a 2018 meeting in Yerevan.

"offered his services" and cozied up to him following the 2018 "Velvet Revolution." He said he rebuffed those overtures because he did not want to cooperate with "representatives of the corrupt former regime."

Tovmasyan, who has been under strong government pressure to resign in recent months, rejected the claim as untrue and slanderous while challenging Pashinyan to come up with "credible evidence" of it. He said will take legal action if Pashinyan fails to do that.

The prime minister was quick to promise to provide the kind of evidence that will constitute a "disproportionately strong response" to the chief justice. He went on to post on Facebook a pho-

response' and asked us to prepare the [defamation] lawsuit," Makinyan wrote on Facebook.

Pashinyan stepped up his verbal attacks in a live video address broadcast on Facebook the following day. He accused Tovmasyan of involvement in what he called a failed "hybrid" plot to overthrow him.

Pashinyan also said that law-enforcement authorities' allegations that Tovmasyan illegally became the head of the country's highest court shortly before the 2018 revolution are "effectively proven and irrefutable."

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) claimed in October that the former Armenian parliament elected

Pashinyan Claims 'Hybrid' Coup Attempt

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan claimed over the weekend that Armenian law-enforcement authorities have thwarted a "hybrid" conspiracy to discredit and overthrow him which he said was hatched by former and current state officials.

"We can call it hybrid preparations for a coup, and we can now talk about that because that process is fully and irreversibly defeated and crushed," he said at a news conference held in the southeastern town of Kapan, on January 25.

Pashinyan said that the alleged conspiracy involved "tens of millions of dollars" spent on the spread of "false information" about him, his family members and associates.

"And that was done through the criminal underworld, various forces, corrupt figures," he went on. "Why does the word 'coup' match this process? Because this process was joined by serving officials who acted against the government while being inside the government. Former officials and some representatives of the judicial system were also involved in that."

Pashinyan did not name anyone or give other details of the alleged plot,

saying only that it was "neutralized" by Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) and police several months ago.

"Don't ask me to name names because I did name names," he said. "Just save me from the displeasure of uttering concrete names and surnames."

In a January 11 article, a newspaper controlled Pashinyan's family, Haykakan Zhamanak, accused former NSS Director Artur Vanetsyan of organizing a smear campaign against the family. It said that the campaign was masterminded by a former senior official linked to Mikael Minasyan, former President Serzh Sargsyan's son-in-law.

Hrachya Hakobyan, a pro-government parliamentarian and Pashinyan's brother-in-law, alleged afterwards that Vanetsyan was sacked in September because he was plotting a coup. Commenting on that statement, the NSS said that it is not aware of any coup attempts and will not look into Hakobyan's claims.

Vanetsyan, who has not been charged

with any crimes so far, denounced the Haykakan Zhamanak article as slanderous and threatened to file a libel suit against the paper.

The former NSS chief also scoffed at



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan holds a news conference in Kapan, January 25, 2020.

Pashinyan's latest remarks, tweeting later on Saturday that such "emotional outbursts" are fraught with "very undesirable consequences" for Armenia. He went further in another tweet posted on Sunday, saying that the ruling Civil Contract party should consider replacing the prime minister.

Vanetsyan was an influential member Armenian Military To Get More Russian Warplanes



ARMENIA

Two Opposition Activists Arrested, Released Without Charges

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – At least three activists highly critical of Armenia's current leadership were briefly detained in Yerevan on Tuesday, January 28, in what they denounced as a government attempt to intimidate them.

They all were set free without charge after spending several hours in police custody.

The Armenian police said two of the outspoken activists, Narek Maliyan and Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan, were detained on suspicion of illegal arms possession. Both men shrugged off the explanation.

An amateur video posted on the Internet showed masked officers of a special police unit toppling Maliyan to the ground outside his

airing a live video address on Facebook. Danielyan said after his release later in the day that two of his associates were also forcibly taken to a police station. He said they were told that they are suspected of drug possession.

Some opposition figures and other critics of the Armenian government condemned the detentions as arbitrary, saying the authorities are trying to stifle dissent in the country.

Danielian and Ter-Nakalyan are the leaders of the nationalist Adekvad movement, while Maliyan leads a separate group called Veto. Both groups rely heavily on social media in their campaigns against the government and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in particular.

They also take a dim view of the 2018 "Velvet Revolution" that toppled Armenia's former leadership and brought Pashinyan to power. Maliyan worked as an adviser to the former chief of the national police, Vladimir Gasparyan, before the revolution.

Maliyan ridiculed the police actions against him when he spoke to reporters after his release. He accused the authorities of making "last-ditch attempts to keep the situation under control."

He also claimed that his arrest was demanded by the Armenian branch of US billionaire George Soros's Open Society Foundations (OSF).

The OSF and its alleged ties to the Pashinyan



Narek Maliyan

office in downtown Yerevan, handcuffing him and pushing him into a car.

Another activist, Artur Danielyan, was stopped by policemen while driving his car and



Konstantin Ter-Nakalyan

government have been the main target of Maliyan's and Veto's activities. In September last year, the group for weeks picketed the OSF offices in Yerevan, deriding its employees and recipients of OSF grants.

Earlier in 2019, the head of OSF-Armenia, Larisa Minasyan, held a news conference to deny "false allegations" about its activities made by Maliyan and other anti-government activities.

Armenian PM Urges Gold Mine Protesters to Lift Blockade

YEREVAN (Reuters) – Armenia's prime minister called on Saturday, January 25, for environmental protesters to end their 18-month-old blockade of a foreign-owned gold mine, saying the protest was not in the national interest.

The Amulsar gold mine, which is located in a remote mountainous region, has been in development by Anglo-American mining firm Lydian International since 2016, with an investment of nearly \$500 million so far.

The company says the project meets all the legal and environmental requirements, and would generate hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in tax revenues.

But a group of local residents and environmental activists have prevented access to the mine by blocking a road to the site since June 2018, putting pressure on the government to act in order to safeguard a major foreign investment.

"I consider their (protesters) actions are not logical ... and not in the interest of Armenia," Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told a news conference. "This issue will not be resolved as long as the roads are blocked."

Pashinyan said he suspected there were some hidden economic interests stirring up the protest.

"They hope that some changes will happen in the stock exchange so they can get shares, but we will not let such processes happen," he said.

Toronto Stock Exchange said earlier this month it would delist Lydian from Feb. 5 because the company did not meet the necessary requirements. The firm has been granted temporary protection from creditors' claims as a result of the blockade.

Lydian said last year that the blockade had forced it to cut more than 1,000 jobs and caused losses of more than \$60 million.

The protest has divided locals. Some say the mine will provide much-needed employment in Jermuk, a town of about 3,000 people, and to rural communities in the area about 170 km (105 miles) southeast of the capital, Yerevan.

Minerals and metals make up about half of Armenia's exports.

Yerevan Gunman in Custody

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A man who burst into an office building in Yerevan and opened fire there last week was formally charged and remanded into pre-trial custody on Sunday, January 26.

The man, Artur Torosyan, surrendered to police on Thursday, January 23, after a two-hour standoff at the Erebuni Plaza Business Center which did not leave anyone wounded. The chief of the Armenian police, Arman Sargsian, personally negotiated with Torosyan and drove him to a police station in his car.

Torosyan's motives remain unclear. His lawyer, Eduard Aghajanian, on Monday refused to reveal why 32-year-old fired gunshots and briefly held a hostage in the building's lobby.

Aghajanian told RFE/RL's Armenian service that his client rejects the accusations of life-threatening assault and hostage taking leveled against him. He said Torosyan must be set free because under the Armenian Criminal Code gunmen freeing hostages and dropping their demands can avoid prosecution.

Erebuni Plaza houses the offices of the United Nations, several private companies as well as the jailed former President Robert Kocharyan and two media outlets sympathetic to him. So far Kocharyan's office has not linked the armed assault with the criminal case against the ex-president. The latter is currently standing trial on coup and corruption charges strongly denied by him.

Torosyan worked from 2017 to 2019 for a private security firm in Yerevan. Vahagn Harutiunyan, the director of the Berkut firm, said that before being hired as a security guard he had passed a police exam and produced documents certifying that he is mentally sane and has no history of drug abuse.

Torosyan himself decided to quit his job in October, Harutiunyan said. He described the arrested gunman had a "quite intelligent and calm" individual.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan sit in the cockpit of a Su-30SM fighter jet at an airbase in Gyumri, December 27, 2019.

Armenian Military to Get More Russian Warplanes

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's Air Force will receive more Sukhoi Su-30SM fighter jets from Russia soon, Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said on Tuesday, January 28.

Four such multirole jets were delivered to an airbase in Gyumri late last month less than a year after the signing of a relevant Russian-Armenian contract. Financial and other terms of the deal are still not known.

Tonoyan said in February that Yerevan plans to buy eight more Su-30SMs in the coming years.

The minister was asked on Tuesday by reporters when the next batch of the advanced warplanes will be delivered to Armenia. "Soon,"

he replied. He did not elaborate.

The Armenian Air Force had no fighter jets until this year. It largely consisted of 15 or so low-flying Su-25 aircraft designed for air-to-ground missions.

Su-30SM can perform a much broader range of military tasks with more long-range and precision-guided weapons. It is a modernized version of a heavy fighter jet developed by the Sukhoi company in the late 1980s. The Russian military first commissioned such jets in 2012.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan described their acquisition as a "turning point for the security of Armenia" when he spoke at the Gyumri airbase on December 27. He also noted

that the Armenian military has received the "first batch" of Su-30SMs.

According to Tonoyan and Pashinyan, Armenia also acquired large quantities of other Russian-made weapons in the course of 2019. Those include sophisticated Tor-M2MK air-defense systems. The Defense Ministry in Yerevan has said that they will "considerably" strengthen Armenia's air defenses.

Russia has always been the principal source of military hardware supplied to the Armenian army. Membership in Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) allows Armenia to acquire Russian weapons at knock-down prices and even for free.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

New Yerevan-Paris Air Route Possible

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Saturday, January 25 that Transavia Airlines could soon start flying from Armenia to Paris Orly Airport.

Pashinyan said several new airlines have already confirmed or applied for flying from Yerevan or Gyumri in 10 new directions—Paris, Orly Airport (Transavia), Vienna and Vilnius (Wizz Air), Berlin, Memmingen, Rome, Milan, Athens, Thessaloniki (Ryanair) and Riga (airBaltic).

Mexican Lawmaker Weighs in on Armenian Genocide Recognition

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Mexican lawmaker Adolfo Torres Ramirez said on Monday, January 20, that “work is underway” in Mexico to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Ramirez was meeting Armenian parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan in Yerevan.

He promised to make effort to help clear the situation in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), stressing that peace is the only solution.

Mirzoyan expressed hope that the Mexican parliament will join a number of other legislative bodies in recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

The president of the National Assembly also stressed the importance of maintaining a balanced approach to the Karabakh conflict.

Armenian Soprano Accepts Offer to Perform In Dresden

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian soprano Ruzan Mantashyan will perform at the SemperOpernball February 7 theater concert in Dresden as scheduled initially.

“I was offered to perform at the concert. After lengthy deliberations I accepted the offer. That itself will be a victory, Mantashyan told Armenpress on January 23.

On January 13, media reports quoting Azerbaijani singer Yusif Eyvazov to say he refused to perform with Mantashyan due to “political concerns.” The two singers were scheduled to perform together on February 7 at Semper Opernball.

Afterwards, the Azerbaijani singer claimed on his social media account that the reports are fake news. He published a news release by Semper Opernball which reportedly showed that the festival didn’t even have a contract with Mantashyan regarding her performance.

However, a December 2019 news release included Mantashyan in the list of performers and the final contract wasn’t technically yet signed because the negotiations weren’t yet completed. But organizers and Mantashyan had agreed around her performance.

The Armenian soprano then publicly said she expects an apology from the organizers.

Armenia Elected Chair Of UNESCO IBE Steering Committee

PARIS (Panorama.am) – On January 21, by a decision of UNESCO International Bureau of Education Council, Armenia was elected chair of the IBE steering committee.

On November 21, within the scope of the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, Armenia had been elected as a member of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) Council (for the period 2019-2023) and a member of the Legal Committee of the General Conference (for the 41th session), the ministry of education, science, culture and sport reports.

The International Bureau of Education is a first category institute of the UNESCO which provides vocational assistance and expertise to all the UNESCO Member-States in the sphere of education.

Netherlands Foreign Minister Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received on January 23 a delegation led by Foreign Minister of the Netherlands Stef Blok, who is in Armenia on an official visit.

Pashinyan welcomed Blok’s visit to Armenia and expressed confidence that it will give a new impetus to the development and expansion of the relations between the two countries. Highlighting the organization of high-level visits, the premier added that this year he also plans an official visit to the Netherlands, which will be the first visit of a leader of Armenia to that country since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

According to Pashinyan, the government of Armenia highlights bilateral cooperation in politics, economy, as well as the humanitarian sphere.

Pashinyan talked about the development of democracy in Armenia, struggle against corruption and reforms in the judicial and other spheres and emphasized that the government of Armenia has set an ambitious agenda in the mentioned directions and makes consistent steps to bring it to life.

Pashinyan saluted the ratification of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU by the parliament of the Netherlands.

Stef Blok noted that the democratic developments and reforms in Armenia are obvious and emphasized that the Government of his country is ready to cooperate with Armenia for bringing them to life. The Foreign Minister of the Netherlands noted that there are opportunities for economic cooperation, par-

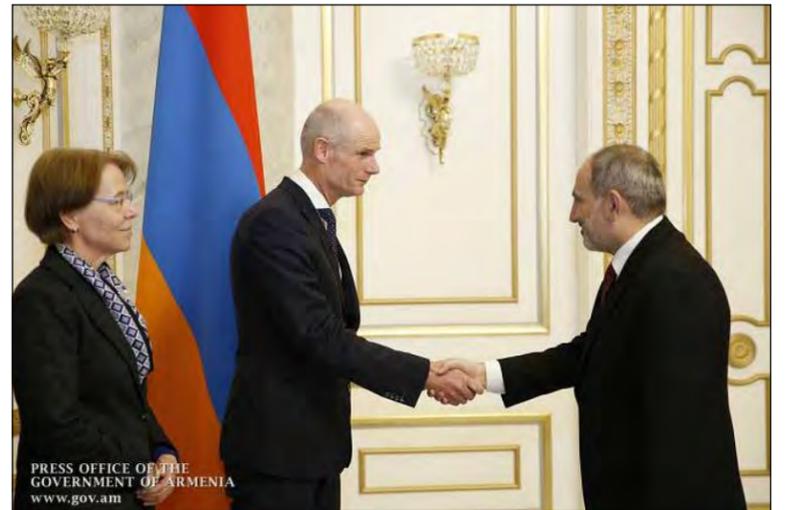
ticularly in the spheres of agriculture and IT. Stef Blok expressed confidence that Pashinyan’s visit to the Netherlands will promote the bilateral agenda between the two countries.

The sides also exchanged views on Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process and other regional issues.

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan his Dutch counterpart dis-

the peaceful resolution of the conflict within the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship format,” Mnatsakanyan said.

Asked whether there is any information regarding the negotiations being held to enable relatives of Azerbaijanis who are imprisoned in Artsakh and Armenians who are in Azerbaijani cap-



Foreign Minister of the Netherlands Stef Blok, center, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

cusSED the peaceful settlement process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict during their meeting in Yerevan, the former told reporters during a joint press conference.

“I introduced my counterpart on the latest developments around the peace process. In this context I want to highlight the balanced position of the Netherlands which supports exclusively

activity to carry out mutual visits, the Armenian FM said: “This is an agenda issue over which I hope to finalize the necessary actions which will allow to conduct such a humanitarian initiative. I hope it plays its role in the context of mutual trust measures. For me, eventually returning our compatriots to Armenia is a priority,” he said.

Azerbaijan’s Notorious Ideologue Suffers Precipitous Fall

By Durna Safarova

BAKU ((Eurasianet.org) – Amid the ongoing turmoil within Azerbaijan’s political elite, one of the biggest names to fall has been Ali Hasanov.

Long one of the Azerbaijani government’s most notorious officials for his vehement attacks against government critics, both domestic and abroad, he was dismissed on November 29. The two-sentence announcement of his firing by President Ilham Aliyev did not provide any explanation, but in an interview the same day with BBC Azeri, Hasanov said that he had been asking to be relieved of his duties for three years and that he will continue to be an “Aliyevist.”

What has happened since, however, suggests that Hasanov’s departure was far from amicable.

Hasanov was a longtime senior presidential adviser with special responsibility for the media; his most recent formal title was “assistant to the president for public and political issues.” He began his political career in 1994 as the head of the ideology department for the ruling New Azerbaijan Party when it was headed by Ilham’s father and predecessor, Heydar Aliyev.

Hasanov was known for his national-ist-tinged vitriol against government opponents, which he labeled “anti-national elements” or “foreign anti-Azerbaijan forces.” One of his most common targets was Western-funded democracy promotion efforts, which “mislead some of our young people to act against the state, funded from various filthy sources which push them to act in an unhealthy, anti-national way,” he told a pro-government youth group in 2013.

In 2010, he went so far as to propose the adoption of a “national” ending for

Azerbaijani surnames, like the Russian “-ov” or the Georgian “-adze.” He suggested “-az,” but it never caught on.

His main responsibility, though, was dealing with the press. “Journalists, public servants, and everyone involved in the field considers him a friend,” wrote the news site Azertaym in a feature on Hasanov, crediting him with “creating successful relationships between the state, media, and civil society.”

While developing media policy and frequently acting as a government spokesman, Hasanov and his family at the same time secretly built a small media empire of their own that benefited from the policies he enacted.

Hasanov also was widely believed to be behind the government’s use of internet trolls to attempt to discredit its opponents. “The order to attack is coming from Ali Hasanov and his group,” said Habib Muntezir, a member of the board of the Berlin-based Azerbaijani news network Meydan TV, in a 2019 interview.

But he denied the allegations. “They claim that I am the head of the troll army, and if I leave the troll activity will stop,” he said in his exit interview with BBC Azeri. “This is false and slanderous. There is simply the public supporting the president.”

Hasanov was part of the old elite, associated with Nakhchivan and Heydar Aliyev, that has been systematically sidelined over the past two years or so, in favor of younger, technocratic officials associated with Ilham Aliyev’s wife and first vice president, Mehriban Aliyeva, and her family.

“The vast majority of those who have been removed from office are those who are not loyal to, or oppose, Mehriban Aliyeva,” said political analyst Arastun Orujlu in an interview with Eurasianet. But Orujlu said that Hasanov’s own growth as a businessman and his power

over the media world could also have led to his being pushed aside.

At a cabinet meeting in October, Aliyev complained that “some who are in power” opposed the “reforms” that he said the government was carrying out. “They are criticizing the reform-minded people in the media,” Aliyev said, in what many interpreted as a reference to Hasanov, given his curation of the media-government relationship.

In any case, after his departure, Hasanov very quickly became the target of attacks and denunciations from his former government allies.

The state newspaper *Respublika* published a lengthy editorial at the end of December, headlined “Boomerang,” accusing the “treacherous” Hasanov of a litany of sins including corruption and mismanagement.

And a month before his firing, a photo was leaked of Hasanov with Gurban Mammadov, one of the most notorious examples of a murky world of quasi-opposition bloggers who live abroad and criticize the government while also criticizing the country’s traditional opposition.

Hasanov responded with a statement that the two had been classmates at Moscow State University.

Following his firing, several of Hasanov’s media outlets have been shut down or transferred to new owners. Just days after his ouster, the Electronic Security Service, part of the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and High Technology, issued an order that access be “limited” to several Hasanov-linked websites.

Hasanov’s former role of managing the government’s media policy has been transferred to Anar Alakbarov, a former director of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which is headed by Aliyeva, the first lady. “They want a reliable hand in charge of the political and media issues,” Orujlu said.



INTERNATIONAL

Prince Charles Visits Bethlehem Armenian Church

CHARLES, from page 1

after all remembers the Armenian Genocide?" And hoped that instead of might the justice will become right.

Prince Charles, as well as many leaders from around the world, were in Jerusalem to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp

On January 23, the Fifth World Holocaust Remembrance Forum was held in Jerusalem. It was attended by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, the head of the Israeli government Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as the heads of state and government of about 50 countries, including Russia and France.

Among those leaders was Armenian President Armen Sarkissian, who held talks with US Vice President Mike Pence, Prince Charles, French President Emmanuel Macron, German President Frank-Walter

tims of the Holocaust were citizens of the USSR. He also noted that before the trip, descriptions of the camps, made by Soviet officers. And that the Soviet command is not allowed revenge in the liberated territories.

Sarkissian raised the issue of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Knesset.

Sarkissian said at a meeting with Knesset President Yuli Edelstein and his wife Irina Nevzlin that condemning the shameful pages of history should not depend on today's political interests.

"The recognition of the Armenian Genocide is first and foremost a moral obligation and a tribute to the memory of the innocent victims," Sarkissian said.

"At the same time, it's an important contribution to the global effort to fight genocides and crimes against humanity."



President Armen Sarkissian with Palestine National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas

Steinmeier and Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

Sarkissian participated in the wreath-laying ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial, created by sculptor Nathan Rapoport.

The forum was held in the memorial complex of the history of the Holocaust Yad Vashem, before its opening, Israeli leaders met with foreign guests as part of bilateral and multilateral meetings. Speaking at the Forum, Russian President Vladimir Putin recalled that about 40 percent of Jewish vic-

Edelstein said, meanwhile, that the Armenian President's visit and Yerevan's decision to open an embassy in Israel will boost the development of relations.

The Armenian government approved the opening of an embassy in Israel in September 2019. Armenia and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992 but have only had non-resident ambassadors so far. Israel is home to a large Armenian community.

Also, Sarkissian hailed Israel's experience in advanced technologies and innovation and



President Armen Sarkissian with Archbishop Sevan Gharibian

said he is visiting the country to identify areas of cooperation.

On January 25, Sarkissian met with Palestine National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Sarkissian's Office said in a news release.

During the meeting Sarkissian thanked Abbas and the Palestine National Authority government for "everything they are doing for the Armenian church."

Sarkissian said that the Armenian church of the Church of the Nativity is not only a

On behalf of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Archbishop Gharibian welcomed the visit of the President and his spouse to the holy town of Bethlehem and noted that Armenian presence here is of great national pride.

In the section of the Church of the Holy Nativity administered by the Armenian Apostolic Church, Sarkissian conversed with the clergy and said in particular, "Your mission, which started hundreds of years ago, at the beginning of the 21st century has the



President Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nouneh, with Armenian Church leaders in Bethlehem

part of history and Christianity, but also a part of Armenia, the Armenian culture and heritage, and most importantly the Armenian Church.

"We are grateful for your support for the preservation of the Armenian spiritual-historic legacy and Christian values," Sarkissian said.

Sarkissian and his wife, Nouneh, visited the Church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem. They were greeted by the Grand Sacristan of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Archbishop Sevan Gharibian.

The President and Mrs. Sarkissian toured the Church, lit candles and listened to the Armenian spiritual songs performed by the Armenian clergymen and prayed together with them.

same value and the same meaning as it had on the day when Jesus Christ was born here. Thus, departure from that historic day doesn't mean that its significance for the world and our people diminishes. On the contrary, it increases because the world needs more than ever to appreciate faith in God and in human values. That's exactly what you do - devotion to God and preservation of human values, and I highly appreciate that. Historical, spiritual Armenian traces are here and one who enters this cathedral can really feel Armenian presence.

Sarkissian added, "It is very important to deepen the relations between the Holy See of Echmiadzin and Jerusalem, to make it more vital, and at the same time deepen your ties to the Fatherland."

Istanbul Patriarchate Objects to Public Tender for Iconic Building

SANASARYAN, from page 1

complaint in an administrative court in Ankara, requesting the directorate to return all revenues generated from the building to the Patriarchate to be used in accordance with the title deed of the Sanasaryan Foundation.

In 2018, the Turkish court ruled to recognize the right of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople to own the building.



Sanasaryan Han in Istanbul



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Community News

Western Diocese Ladies Auxiliary to Host 46th Annual Debutante Ball

LOS ANGELES – Excitement reins high as members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese finalize plans for their 46th Annual Debutante Ball. The gala event will be held on June 28, in the Grand Ballroom of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, beginning with a reception at 5 p.m.; presentation of the debutantes at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and dancing at 7 p.m.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, states that the 46th anniversary represents a milestone in the history of the activities of the Diocese. “The finest young women and men of our community are introduced at this event and we are allowed an opportunity for families and friends to acknowledge their achievements and dedication of our youth in the Armenian church and community” stated His Eminence.

Cindy Norian, Chair of the Ladies Auxiliary, reports that as in previous years, a capacity crowd is anticipated. Many of the debutantes and escorts who have participated through the years have kept in contact with one another, cherishing the memories they have shared. “Many of the young adults have formed lasting bonds because of the Ball,” stated Norian, “and as the years have gone by, many of the debs and escorts are now the daughters and sons of past debutantes and escorts.”

Diane Barsam, committee member in charge of the debutantes, reports that young ladies of Armenian descent, between the ages of 16 and 19, are still welcome to contact her for information: dianejbk6@hotmail.com. For information and reservations regarding the Debutante Ball contact Cindy Norian at cnorian@aol.com.

Arpie Bakhshian One of Four Long Island Students Nominated for Highest High School Honors

NEW YORK (*Newsday*) – Four Long Island teens are among 25 statewide nominated for one of the nation’s highest honors for high school seniors.

The students – Arpie Bakhshian of Lynbrook High School, Karyme Hurtado of East Hampton High School, Thomas Gomez Morrobel of Freeport High School, and Aditya Sehgal of Half Hollow Hills High School West in Dix Hills – have been nominated for the US Presidential Scholars Program by the New York State Education Department.

“Each of these students has worked incredibly hard during high school, and their accomplishments are testimonials to their tremendous effort,” said the state’s interim education commissioner, Shannon Tahoe. “I thank our legislators for recommending these stellar students.”

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars will select scholars based on factors such as academic success, artistic excellence and community service. Semifinalists will be notified in April, and scholars will be announced in May.

Winners will receive a trip this summer to Washington, D.C., as well as a medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

“[Thomas] is a role model in and out of the classroom and is a shining example of a well-rounded young person pursuing his dreams,” said Assemb. Judy Griffin (D-Rockville Centre), who nominated Morrobel.

Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach), who nominated Bakhshian, said: “Her wealth of accomplishments is proof that hard work and passion for one’s community can make a difference at any age.”



Cindy Norian, left, and Saini Kannan

‘Indulge Yourself’ at Ladies Auxiliary of Western Diocese Luncheon

LOS ANGELES – The Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese are hosting a luncheon with the premise “Indulge Yourself,” at the Lakeside Golf Club, 4500 Lakeside Drive, Burbank, on Saturday, February 8, at noon. Guests will enjoy an afternoon of luxury featuring speakers on Judith Lieber Handbags, Maison Francis Kurkdjian perfumes, and informal modeling of original fashions from the Royals Paris.

Cindy Norian, chair of the Ladies Auxiliary, reports that the presentations by the guest speakers will be based on the theme of Valentine’s Day and the love it inspires. She stated “What better time to ‘Indulge Yourself’ in the things you love than Valentine’s Day. Guests will be inspired by the personal commitment each of the speakers have made towards the appreciation and understanding of their art.”

Saini Kannan, a friend of the Liebers and one of the world’s most prominent collectors of Judith Lieber handbags, views collecting beyond the fashion, form and function relationship. Like most connoisseurs, Kannan’s Judith Lieber collection includes the rare, special, documented and important works of Judith Lieber’s 3,500 unique designs created in her 35 years. But the highlight of Kannan’s collection lies in the works that she patiently acquired based upon Judith’s creative intent, and the accessory they provide a woman to express herself in – a rare collection that provides insights into the designer’s creative genius.

Kannan states “Collecting and wearing Judith Lieber’s creations is a good example of shringara. Judith has created a piece of art for every woman for every occasion. In India, shringara is a philosophical concept that refers to the small, simple ways we enhance beauty; a touch here, a flower there or an indefinable quality that makes something distinctive or attractive. A Lieber in a woman’s palm does just that.”

Kannan’s collections have been exhibited widely in such places as at the Museum of Art and Design (MAD), New York City, the Judith Lieber Museum, East Hampton, the Long Island Museum, Sotheby’s Asia Week 2018, and Heritage Auctions. The Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) is grateful for her support; a mentor and visionary business leader with close ties to the technology and biotech communities. As an Advisory Board member to Orange County based technology companies and as a Foundation Board Member, her contributions have influenced and touched many. She strongly believes in working directly with students in pursuing and achieving their life ambitions and dreams.

In addition, Joan Tanis will be speaking about Maison Francis Kurkdjian, a company based in France and sold in the US exclusively at Neiman Marcus, and will demonstrate how these fabulous fragrances for men as well as women are created.

The final presentation by the Royals Paris will be an informal fashion show with modeling of original fashions from Fay Riviere and Hisham Benslimane’s Beverly Hills Boutique.

Guests will also enjoy a silent auction with fabulous prizes.

For information regarding sponsorships and reservations, contact Cindy Norian: cnorian@aol.com.

Baghdasaryans Start Scholarship Fund at AUA with Gift of \$50,000

LOS ANGELES – Dr. Karen Baghdasaryan (MBA ‘98), an alumnus of the American University of Armenia (AUA), with his wife Dr. Gohar Hovsepian, has established the Karen Baghdasaryan and Gohar Hovsepian Scholarship Endowment Fund with a gift of \$50,000 that will provide financial assistance to qualifying students studying at AUA annually, in perpetuity. Thanks to AUA’s partnership with the University of California (UC), AUA’s endowments are managed by UC and the university benefits from the economies of scale of UC’s large endowment pool, world-class investment expertise, balanced investment strategies, and stable annual returns.

As an alumnus, Dr. Baghdasaryan understands the impact that an AUA education holds by providing young Armenian students with new perspectives and critical thinking skills which help shape the future of the country, the region, and the world. “We both knew that we needed a new perspective in life and were not content with the knowledge acquired before AUA,” Dr. Baghdasaryan reflects. “The one place that could give us that new perspective was AUA. That was the secret ingredient that would give me the power to overcome any obstacle or challenge in life and conquer any summit I could put my mind up to.”

Dr. Baghdasaryan was born and raised in the city of Vayk, in the Vayots Dzor region of Armenia. He earned his MBA at AUA after studying dentistry at Yerevan State Medical University where he met his future wife. Now, using the skills earned at AUA, Drs. Baghdasaryan and Hovsepian run two successful private dental practices in Los Angeles, Cyber Dentistry and Viva Smile.

Scholarship gifts help the University to maintain its need-blind admission policy and empower Armenian students to have access to Western-style education in their homeland. “It would have been nearly impossible for me to study at AUA without the scholarship I received,” reflects Ter-Mkrtchyan. “Now I am confident that I can focus on my studies and not worry about the financial burden of pursuing an education. The quality of education was the most important factor for me when selecting an institution of higher education to apply to. I was looking for a place that offered advanced methods of teaching, highly qualified faculty, and everyone around me recommended to apply to AUA. It was the right choice.” Today the couple is raising three children and is teaching them the value of education and giving back to support their homeland. These values are strong in the Baghdasaryan household, and recently their son, Hayk Saryan, set out to raise scholarship funding to support young students like himself, in Armenia. Saryan, a senior student at UC Irvine, was inspired to raise money to establish a scholarship for the 2019-2020 academic year after his father’s classmates came together to establish the Southern California Alumni Scholarship Fund. Saryan organized a charity concert in Glendale in May 2019 where, together with his friends, he performed in front of the community to raise funds in support of AUA’s scholarship program. Saryan’s efforts empowered two AUA computer science students from the rural regions of Armenia to study at AUA – Emin Ter-Mkrtchyan (Masis, Ararat marz), and Alen Adamyanyan (Berd, Tavush marz).

The impact of the Baghdasaryan family will help transform lives, create possibilities, and facilitate real, positive change in Armenia. “The best contribution for Armenia to develop and prosper is the gift of knowledge and education,” Dr. Baghdasaryan says. “It is important for the diaspora to share this concept, because I believe that every member of our diaspora



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Flag Hung in Colgate Dining Hall

By Elizabeth Shaw

HAMILTON, N.Y. (*Colgate News*) — An Armenian flag was installed in Frank Dining Hall over Thanksgiving break after a year-long effort by the Armenian Students' Association (ASA). More than 40 flags hang from the ceiling of Frank, which represent every international student and their country on campus.

According to ASA President sophomore Ani Arzoumanian, she emailed President of Colgate University Brian Casey in early November, saying that she was upset with the bureaucratic process in attempt to get the flag hung in Frank.

"I felt that it was clear the [Student Government Association (SGA)] wasn't doing anything, so the ASA executive board met and decided to go straight to the top and email President Casey. In all honesty, we didn't think he would do much but believed he could point us in the right direction. He ended up being super helpful and handled everything quickly," Arzoumanian said.

According to International Student SGA representative, senior Chihoon In, there are other discrepancies between the international student population and the flags hanging at Frank.

"Currently the SGA has recognized that not all of the students at Colgate have their national flags represented at Frank and is working to install their flags.

Administrators including admissions and campus safety have been contacted and we are currently in progress to putting the final plan into progress and contacting all necessary offices on campus to install the flags."

After meeting junior Mariam Grigoryan, an international student from Armenia, Arzoumanian said she was surprised that there was no Armenian flag in Frank. Arzoumanian is not an international student, but she is a descendant of survivors of the Armenian Genocide and is very active in the Armenian community. Arzoumanian and Grigoryan met with sophomore Alique Fisher and Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor in Humanities,



Inside Frank Dining Hall

Professor of English Peter Balakian, who are also of Armenian descent. They decided to speak with the Executive Chef at Frank, Damian Price. Price referred them to several administrators in an October 18, 2018 email.

Slow Progress

"I am not sure where we are in the process with [SGA] etc. and told [Arzoumanian] that I would continue to drive this forward so that all students are represented. Especially as it is a

highlighted point of campus tours it should be accurate and updated on at least a yearly basis," Price said.

According to Arzoumanian, the request was referred to SGA, and then-president Jenny Lundt '19. In an email sent on December 12, 2018, Lundt cited "a bunch of administrative factors that you might not be aware of in terms of being fair to students, keeping a protocol, having to fireproof the flags, getting funding, getting the funding approved, putting in a work order," which are

all causes for slowing down the process.

According to Arzoumanian, Lundt continued to work on getting approval for the rest of her time in SGA and eventually passed it on to the newly elected officials in spring 2018. During this time, Arzoumanian, Fisher and Grigoryan officially formed the ASA, which is currently a petitioning club with seven members.

After no concrete progress, Arzoumanian wrote to Casey with the ASA's concerns.

"I am writing to you because we, as Armenians and as Colgate students, are alarmed that Colgate University would choose to represent some ethnicities and nations, and completely ignore others," Arzoumanian said in the email.

President Casey responded to the ASA's concerns.

"I simply asked our Buildings and Grounds folks to get one up, which they did," Casey said.

Casey said that he does not know of any flag policy or process in place to ensure that the flags at Frank accurately represent the international student population.

ASA Vice President first-year Ava Horn said seeing the flag hung in Frank made her proud to represent her country on campus.

"I was so happy to see the Armenian flag when I walked into Frank after break. It made me feel so welcomed by the Colgate community and made me even more proud to be an Armenian at Colgate. Ani and I decided to sing the Armenian National Anthem to celebrate the flag's raising, as we do in the Armenian community," Horn said.

The Armenian Flag has red, blue and orange stripes and can now be found near the coffee station, in the center of a row of flags.

Kobe Bryant Pilot Special Permission to Fly Being Analyzed by NTSB

PILOT, from page 1

Visibility was so low Sunday morning that the Los Angeles Police Department had decided to ground its helicopters that morning.

But it's still not certain what caused the helicopter to crash, killing parents, children, and one of the greatest athletes of all time.

Bryant, 41, and his daughter Gianna, 13, were heading to a basketball game in Thousand Oaks, where he was expected to coach and she was expected to play.

All eight passengers killed in the crash were children or parents. They included two of Gianna's teammates with their parents and an assistant girls basketball coach. The pilot, Zobayan, was also killed.

Moments before the crash, the pilot received SVFR clearance — or special visual flight rules clearance, according to audio recordings between the pilot and air traffic control.

SVFR clearance allows a pilot to fly in weather conditions worse than those allowed for regular visual flight rules.

Pilots sometimes request SVFR clearance mid-flight if weather conditions suddenly change, CNN transportation analyst Peter Goetz said. Those granted permission typically keep closer contact with air traffic control.

While SVFR clearance is "pretty normal," Goetz said, "it's not something that's often recommended."

After the pilot requested special permission to fly through the area, the helicopter circled for 12 minutes until air traffic control approved SVFR clearance, Homendy said.

When the pilot flew into the Burbank and Van Nuys airspace at 1,400 feet, he requested radar assistance to avoid traffic, Homendy said. But air traffic control said the helicopter was too low to be able to get that assistance.

Zobayan said he was going to climb higher, and air traffic controllers responded. But they never heard back. Radar data indicated the helicopter climbed 2,300 feet and began a left descending turn, Homendy said.

The last radar contact was around 9:45 a.m. Sunday. The helicopter crashed two minutes later.

Homendy said investigators will look into whether Zobayan should have been granted SVFR clearance.

Zobayan was experienced and had 8,200 hours of flight time as of July 2019, Homendy said.

He had been working with Island Express Helicopters, which owned and operated the Sikorsky S-76B.

"We are working closely with the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate the cause of the accident and we are grateful to the first responders and local authorities," Island Express said in a written statement.

NTSB investigators are looking at pilot records, weather information, ATC communications and the wreckage as part of the investigation.

The chopper is reliable, safe and capable, aviation analyst Miles O'Brien told CNN.

"It's a workhorse," O'Brien said. "It's the fly-

to get to the location.

Complicating their access, mourners flooded the area to get a glimpse of the scene.

An emergency ordinance was issued, making it a misdemeanor to unlawfully access the site, Villanueva said Monday. Deputies are patrolling the rugged terrain on horseback, he said.

Alyssa Altobelli, who was Gianna's teammate, was on the helicopter with her father, Orange Coast College (OCC) baseball coach John Altobelli and her mother, Keri Altobelli.

Her father would routinely travel with her to attend her games, OCC assistant coach Ron La Ruffa said.

Payton Chester and her mother Sarah



Kobe Bryant and his daughter, Gianna (NBC News)

ing Lincoln Town Car for executives. This is what corporate helicopter aviation is built on — on this Sikorsky."

The impact of the crash broke the helicopter into pieces, creating a debris field of about 500 to 600 feet, Homendy said. The crash created a crater at about 1,085 feet above sea level, she said.

"There is (an) impact area on one of the hills and a piece of the tail is down the hill, on the left side of the hill," she said. "The fuselage is over on the other side of that hill, and then the main rotor is about 100 yards beyond that."

Investigators initially struggled to access the site of the wreckage due to the difficult terrain, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said. Eventually, authorities bulldozed the road

Chester were also killed in the crash, Payton's grandmother Cathy Chester wrote on Facebook.

"While the world mourns the loss of a dynamic athlete and humanitarian, I mourn the loss of two people just as important ... their impact was just as meaningful, their loss will be just as keenly felt, and our hearts are just as broken," Todd Schmidt, a former principal at the elementary school Payton once attended, wrote in a Facebook post.

Christina Mauser, an assistant girls basketball coach for a private school in Corona del Mar, California, was also killed in the crash.

"My kids and I are devastated," her husband, Matt Mauser, wrote on Facebook. "We lost our beautiful wife and mom."

'Prayers for Healing' to Resume at St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK — New York's St. Vartan Cathedral will continue an Armenian custom this year, when it resumes its monthly "Prayers for Healing" services.

The short evening services aim to heal body, mind, and soul through prayer, music, Scripture-reading, and a blessing with holy water. Cathedral vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan will lead the gatherings.

The monthly healing services were inaugurated last year at Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan's instigation. "Look around our world, and you can see it needs healing — it needs a Healer," he said. "Healing is at the heart of the Gospel, and at the heart of Christ's ministry."

Last year, the services were notable for attracting people from the surrounding area in Midtown Manhattan. For many it was their first introduction to Armenian Christian spirituality.

The year's first Prayers for Healing Service met on Wednesday, January 29 at 6.30 p.m.

Subsequent services will occur at the same time, on the last Wednesday of each month. The dates scheduled through spring are February 26, March 25, April 22, and May 27.

All are welcome to attend the Prayers for Healing services. St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral is located at 630 Second Avenue (corner of 34th Street and Second Avenue) in New York City. Contact cathedral vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan at vicar@stvartan.org for information.



New Tekeyan West Coast Executive Secretary Installed at TCA Beshgeturian Center

KUREDJIAN, from page 1

Kuredjian graduated Haigazian University in Beirut in 1982 with dual degrees in business administration and political science. With her command of English, Armenian and Arabic (and some additional knowledge of French and Turkish), she became involved in the activities of many Armenian organizations and served as editor of the Women's Page of the *Zartonk* newspaper in Beirut in the 1980s.

She moved to Boston in 1988, where she strengthened her association with TCA and worked as executive secretary for the entire organization from its headquarters in Watertown for over a year. She then worked as executive secretary for the AGBU's New England District, again for more than a year, until August 1990.

Kuredjian worked as a travel agent in Boston for five years, establishing and running her own agency from 1991 to 1995. Although by then a US citizen, she moved

back to Beirut to form a family and raise her children. She established an event-planning organization, Mayda Events, which she founded in 1998. Reestablishing her ties with Haigazian University, she served as the latter's 60th anniversary event coordinator in 2014-15 and then as its job placement officer from 2015 until she returned to the US at the end of last year.

While in Lebanon, she continued to volunteer for TCA, and held positions such as secretary of the District Committee of Lebanon, Youth Director, Women's Committee member, and Vahan Tekeyan School Educational Committee member. She also volunteered as a board member and activities director for the American Women's Club of Lebanon, secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of Haigazian University, chair of the AGBU Veteran Scouts Movement, chair of the AGBU Lebanon Schools Alumni, chair of the AGBU/AYA Mothers' Committee, co-chair of the AGBU/AYA Antelias Executive Committee,

and treasurer of the Armenian Catholicosate Naregatsi Children's Choir.

The two TCA Central Board officials spoke of their confidence that Kuredjian would reinvigorate and expand TCA's cultural activities in the greater Los Angeles area as well as in the TCA Beshgeturian Center itself. They called upon those present to join in this work, which is intended to benefit the entire Armenian community and not to compete with existing organizations. On the contrary, they said, TCA is ready to extend its cooperation further in suitable enterprises.

They noted that Kuredjian will be the direct representative of the TCA Central Board on the West Coast, reporting directly back to the board. This will strengthen coordination of Central Board activities throughout North America.

Azadian pointed out that TCA was able, miraculously, to found and run the TCA Arshag Dickranian School for more than 34 years. Unfortunately, at a certain point the operation of the school was not only financially untenable but would have led to the depletion of the limited resources of the parent organization. This situation is unlike that which faced other larger organizations with much deeper pockets. Instead, TCA is planning to support new activities in the Los Angeles region.

Kuredjian thanked the TCA for its confidence in her abilities and promised in an

emotional speech to work with all who were ready to cooperate to promote Armenian culture and education in the West Coast.

After dinner, a number of the guests present rose and made heartfelt speeches wish-



Edmond Azadian

OBITUARY

Garbis Zakaryan

Turkey's Boxing Champion for Two Decades

ISTANBUL – Garbis Zakaryan, the first boxer to represent Turkey on the professional level, passed away at the age of 90 in Istanbul on Sunday, January 26. Zakaryan, a welterweight of Armenian descent, represented Turkey around the world for 22 years from 1944 to 1966.

Zakaryan, who is fondly remembered by his fans as "Iron Fist," became a professional boxer after having won many local and amateur titles. Making his professional boxing debut in 1950, Zakaryan had 42 professional bouts. He finished his career in 1966 with 28 wins, nine losses and five draws. While boxing primarily in Turkey, Zakaryan also fought in Lebanon, France, Germany, Argentina and Brazil.

For a time he also trained another of Turkey's most prominent boxers, Cemal Kamacı.

Zakaryan was buried in Istanbul's Sisli Armenian Cemetery on January 29 after a funeral ceremony at the Armenian Church.



Garbis Zakaryan during his boxing career

Alice Mavian

Dedicated Mother

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – Alice Mavian passed away peacefully at the age of 96 on January 23.

She was the wife of the late Zorek "Peter" Mavian, to whom she was married for 58 years and the mother of Diana (Hagop) Alexanian and Cheryl (Harry) Joboulian.

She was the grandmother of Alex (Jessica), Peter (Mellie Mae), Michelle (Stuart) and Lisa (Mark) and great-grandmother of Anika, Alex, Arthur, Maverick, Maven, Zoe, Nola and Joseph. She was the sister of the late Harry (the late Florence) Karagosian.

The funeral took place on January 27 at St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit.

In lieu of flower memorial donations are to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (to go towards the renovation of the Vahan Tekeyan School, in Berdzor, Artsakh) or St. John Armenian Church.



Baghdasaryans Start Scholarship Fund at AUA

SCHOLARSHIP, from page 6

cares about Armenia and wants to see it prosper. I chose AUA not only because it is my alma mater, but also because it provides the most contemporary and prospective education, instills freedom and independence, and is the most organized educational establishment in Armenia." Adamyian, also supported by the Hayk Saryan Scholarship, shares the same sen-

timent about studying at AUA. "When I was in the ninth grade, I was one of four participants representing Armenia in the National Olympiads for mathematics and informatics in Tokyo, Japan in 2018," Adamyian says. "Pursuing a degree in computer science was a very natural path for me, and I am confident that AUA will prepare me to become a competitive professional in the field of technology."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Jerair Nishanian Foundation Continues to Help Students, Communities in US, Armenia

WASHINGTON – After more than 25 years of humanitarian activities, the Jerair Nishanian Foundation (JNF), continues to receive many accolades and expressions of appreciation and gratitude.

Several years ago, Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian, pastor emeritus of St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, DC, wrote an article titled “Another Point of Light.” The light that he was referring to was the Other Point of Light that had been shining over the darkest horizons of Armenia. Kalayjian wrote, “Simply put, there



Jerair Nishanian

are those among us, who are very few, who have been undeterred in their commitment to continue to light a candle instead of cursing the darkness. I’m referring to the quietly and steadily functioning JNF, the foundation named after its primary and sole benefactor, Jerair Nishanian of Vienna, Va.”

Recently, Dr. Takvor Nishanian, vice president and treasurer of JNF, reported to a packed audience gathered to honor Dr. Taner Akçam

about the origins of the foundation.

He said, “My father established this Foundation because of a strong sense of duty to his homeland, instilled in him by his parents’ past. Both were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. His father died when he was a child, so his mother raised him and four older siblings by herself. Her love of the Armenian culture – her Armenian identity – was passed down to all of her children; and it is through her, that my father ultimately decided to establish his foundation.

“The overall mission of JNF is very simple: to facilitate an opportunity for underprivileged, talented Armenian students to attain higher education in various disciplines, and achieve their inherent potentials and, in turn, contribute to the welfare of their motherland and future generations. By doing so, they preserve their Armenian heritage and build a strong generation of Armenians, armed with higher education.

“Through a collaboration with FAR [Fund for Armenian Relief], our foundation provides college scholarships for approximately 60 students annually. We have focused on one of the needier regions of Armenia, Gavar, providing scholarships for students attending Gavar State University. More recently, we have expanded our program to include graduate students at the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia in Yerevan.

“In addition, the foundation has renovated portions of Gavar State University. Finally, our foundation is committed to supporting the translation and publication of literary projects towards the advancement of Armenian education and cultural issues, including those written about the Armenian Genocide. Many of these written documents about the Armenian Genocide originated with Dr. Taner Akçam.”

Previously we have reported success stories of graduates. FAR’s Executive Director Garnik Nanagoulian proclaims, “Scholarships Can Change Lives.” The following is FAR’s report about one very accomplished JNF Scholarship recipient whose life has truly been changed:

Silva Karapetyan, 24, earned her bachelor’s degree in design from the Armenian National University of Architecture and Construction in 2018. Her studies were made possible through FAR’s Jerair Nishanian Scholarship Program. She said “Jerair Nishanian is a unique person in my heart and in my memory. I won’t ever forget him,” said Silva. “My university life began thanks to Jerair Nishanian’s generous support. It was filled with many happy moments.”

Silva is pleased with her achievements, as well as with the knowledge and skills she acquired over the course of four years at college. During her senior year, she decided to design the interior of an apartment for physi-

cally disabled people consisting of nonstandard elements like convertible tables, beds and sofas. “I passed all my exams in May, then defended my thesis and got an excellent score. With high



Silva Karapetyan

aspirations, I entered the next phase,” she recollected.

In 2017, Silva landed her first job as interior architect and designer at Unicus NTS. ‘The company provides clients with an opportunity to experience their future apartments in 3D; they can ‘walk in’ and enjoy future comfort. They can even open and close the doors of their rooms,’ Silva said.

A few months later, Silva, who was searching for a higher salary, decided to also plunge herself into graphic design and marketing. Since March 2018, she has been working as a constructor-designer at GAT cutting which is specialized in internal graphic design, construction and installation, large format printing, laser and fraser cuts, and 3D engraving. Silva has engrossed herself in this business and does her best to enrich her skills and develop new projects.

Like many of our scholars, Silva is full of dreams and motivation, which will undoubtedly lead her to future success.”

(<http://farusa.org/2019/03/28/far-scholarships-silva-karapetyan-nishanian-scholarship-student-and-emerging-designer/>)

Jerair Nishanian and his wife Anahid have committed to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children and their families. Indeed, they have touched hundreds of families over the years: giving them power to grow; giving them hope and inspiration; and creating a lifeline for their future.

Here is a letter from Lucine, a scholarship recipient who studies at the National University of Architecture and Construction, Yerevan, in appreciation for the aid she received from JNF’s Scholarship Program:

“Dear Mr. Nishanian, It was in a great awe that I read your biography! At the end each and every paragraph, I made important discoveries about the paths of your life, and gleaned life-lessons for myself. I realized what it means to have willpower and overcome challenges. I also realized the importance of hard work in achieving great goals. You teach many of us lessons of kindness and care, and thereby prove that education is the most important priority for the Armenian nation. By means of your care, you provide us with keys that will enable us to open many doors and fulfill our dreams.

“I promise to be one of the best students by my tireless learning and thus justify your hopes. Your support is quite decisive for my family and myself. Not everyone gets to receive such a material aid and, therefore, I express my gratefulness for your trust, and confidently say that, in my studies, I will be purpose-driven and make the efforts to learn all it takes to be professional and contribute to the development of the Armenian architecture.”

Jerair Nishanian has extended his generosity to many other worthy causes. He was one of six people who, in 2015, donated \$100,000 to organize the commemoration in Washington, DC of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. He also helped renovate the central altar of St. Mary’s Armenian Church in Washington. JNF supports and sponsors churches, various organizations, and Armenian cultural and historical events. One proposed project that JNF’s Board of Trustees is considering, following the strong recommendation of Mr. Nishanian, is to institute seminars, lectures/course in Gavar University on Ethics.

Diramayr Anahid,
JNF Board Member
Washington, DC



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COMMUNITY NEWS

All-ASA Finances Purchase of Micro-Bus for Students in Remote Village

By Ripsime Biyazyan

LOS ANGELES – The All-Armenian Student Association (All-ASA) has raised over \$5,000 in sales of graduation cords bearing the Armenian tricolor. The project began in 2016 as part of an initiative with OneArmenia, a non-profit organization fostering the production of honey in Armenian villages. The cord project has grown since then, made in Dilijan by local Armenian artists and are sold across the United States and Canada. Proceeds are used to support the Medovka school near Stepanavan.

The initiative has financed the purchase of a micro-van for the village school in Medovka, in the Lori Province.

Five young students from Kruglaya Shishka, a village 5 kilometers away, and future students can now be driven to and from school for the entirety of their education.

Much of the project's evolution is owed to Khachig Joukhajian, who is the only Teach for Armenia fellow from the United States, a member of the Shant Student Association, and a

FUNDS ALSO SUPPORTED AN INDOOR GYM, COMPLETE WITH RENOVATED FLOORS AND WALLS, AND ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE WINTER.

member of the All-ASA. Beginning in 2016, Joukhajian spent two years teaching history at the Medovka school for his fellowship, where he met Susanna Avdalyan, the school's dedicated principle and her husband, Gagik Avdalyan, the school's caretaker. With Khachig's guidance and funds raised by the cord project a fence was built around a local park where a girl's soccer team now practices regularly. The funds also supported an indoor gym, complete with renovated floors and walls, and all of the equipment needed for students to engage in physical education through the winter.

This past summer, former All-ASA president and current senior advisor, Ripsime Biyazyan, went back to Medovka and met with the current Teach for Armenia fellow Misak Martirosyan. In meetings with faculty and staff they learned about more ways to support the



ASA Bus

Medovka school and its community and planned for future projects.

Earlier this year, staff and faculty received notification from the new administration of the Armenian government that a new school will be built in Medovka in the coming years. This changed All-ASA funding priorities towards more adaptable academic tools and extracurricular equipment such as laptops, an auditorium microphone, and a ping-pong table. However, when the school learned that Kruglaya Shishka students would be joining them they realized that parents had no consistent means of getting their children to school, especially during the heavy winters. All-ASA took action to gather more support for the school and raise funding for a micro-van to help the Kruglaya Shishka students commute and to enable the school to offer academic excursions around the region.

After the annual All-ASA Halloween party, those who collectively attended were able to fundraise the remaining necessary funds. The All-ASA was then able to help Misak Martirosyan obtain a visa to travel to Los Angeles to present about the work in Medovka to the new All-ASA representatives and collect the needed funds from the organization for the



Students from the neighboring Kruglaya Shisha village that would have to walk 5 kilometers one way to get to school in Medovka.



Former President and current Senior Advisor, Ripsime Biyazyan with Suzanna Avdalyan and other staff from Medovka school, July 2019

purchase of the micro-van. Martirosyan also brought back more of the cords made in Dilijan by a small factory for the continuation of sales for graduating Armenian students in North America.

The sale of the cords will begin immediately and will carry on through the end of June.

They are a great gift for someone graduating as they allow for Armenian students across North America to be unified by our culture and connected to products from our country. Cords can be purchased at all-asa.org for \$20, including shipping. If a student would like to purchase a cord without the cost of shipping they can contact the respective All-ASA representative at their school.

The All-Armenian Student Association works to unite various Armenian-American college student organizations and serve the greater Armenian-American community through cultural, social, educational, and activist programming. As the largest confederation of ASAs in the nation, All-ASA is dedicated to collaboration among its constituent organizations, the leadership development of its members, and the virtues of community service.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Feds Warn Sci-Hub Science Website Poses Cybersecurity Threat To Universities

By Lindsay McKenzie

WASHINGTON (*Inside Higher Education*) – Alexandra Elbakyan, founder of the scholarly piracy website Sci-Hub, is suspected of working with Russian intelligence officials to steal confidential research and military secrets from American universities.

According to the *Washington Post*, Elbakyan, nicknamed the Robin Hood of science, is currently under investigation by the US Department of Justice for suspected criminal acts and espionage.

Elbakyan denies any wrongdoing, but scholarly publishers such as Elsevier have used news of her investigation to call on academic institutions to block access to Sci-Hub – not because the site is illegal, but because it poses a security threat. Several large publishers, including Elsevier, have successfully sued Sci-Hub for mass copyright infringement in recent years. The Sci-Hub repository contains more than 80 million research articles, including a large proportion of Elsevier's catalog.

Attempts to block the site completely through legal measures have not been successful. New links to the site (some listed on Wikipedia) keep being created. Now it seems that publishers such as Elsevier are taking a new approach – asking users to boycott the site because of security concerns.

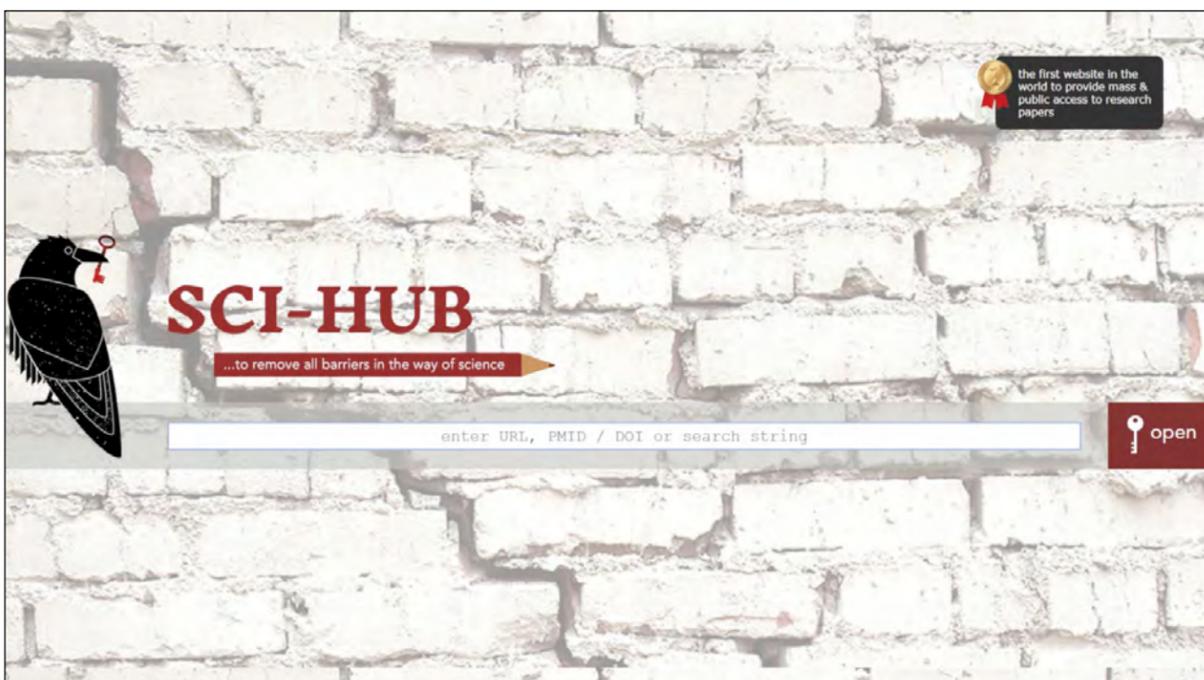
"The *Washington Post* story confirms that Sci-Hub is a malicious site being used for nefarious purposes," said an Elsevier blog post published in late December. The publisher advised universities to block all websites associated with Sci-Hub.

PSI, a company based in Britain that offers tools and services to protect scholarly copyright, maintains a list of web addresses associated with Sci-Hub, which institutions can download and use to block access to the site on campus.

Andrew Pitts, CEO and co-founder of PSI, said that so far, few US institutions have downloaded the block list. Pitts, who has been writing about Sci-Hub's links to Russian military intelligence for several years, said he struggled to understand why universities are not taking more immediate steps to protect their networks. "This is a matter of urgency," he said.

PSI's research suggests that Sci-Hub has stolen log-in credentials from 373 universities in 39 countries, including more than 150 institutions in the US, said Pitts. The credentials were likely stolen through phishing attacks, he said. Sci-Hub browser extensions could also be used to track user activity and steal personal information, he said.

Brandon Butler, director of information policy at the University of Virginia Library, said, "Clearly Sci-Hub is not a legitimate organization. Their activity is sketchy, and we know they are based in Russia." But he added that the "investigation is still



an investigation; nothing has been proven yet."

If the investigation found concrete evidence that Sci-Hub is linked to the theft of US military secrets, Butler said, he would "give the matter more serious attention."

Right now, the University of Virginia is not specifically discouraging academics from using Sci-Hub, said Butler. "We have two-factor authentication on everything. If someone attempted to log in using my credentials, my phone would ping," he said.

"Philosophically, I feel Sci-Hub is a foreseeable side effect of

the publisher business model. There's always going to be a black market for paywalled content," said Butler. He added that the opportunity for Sci-Hub to steal university credentials wouldn't exist if academics didn't have to provide credentials to access paywalled content. "That's a risk that wouldn't exist in a full open-access world," he said.

Jim O'Donnell, university librarian at the Arizona State University Library, said that news of the investigation of Elbakyan had not changed his views on Sci-Hub.

"We are very aware of Sci-Hub. They make assertions about their business practices that cannot be verified – they're very untransparent," he said. But the ASU Library does not tell academics and students to specifically avoid Sci-Hub, nor has it blocked the site. "Our advice to users is that they should abide by the law and follow our university policies," he said.

The investigation into Elbakyan has "created more smoke, metaphorically speaking. But all we're doing is a little more coughing," said O'Donnell. He added, "We observe, we watch, we wait."

Joe Esposito, a scholarly publishing consultant, said some librarians have been "dismissive" of PSI's claims because the company is looking to promote its services. "I have no reason to think that they're lying. But the amount of chatter seems to be way out ahead of the facts," he said. "I think it's true that an investigation is taking place, but we don't yet know the outcome."

Elbakyan has previously stated that the university credentials Sci-Hub uses to access paywalled content and download millions of research papers were volunteered by academics – a statement that is disputed by PSI and some publishers.

Even if Sci-Hub is not obtaining credentials illegally, Esposito noted that one organization "hoarding credentials" has "dangerous implications."

"Sci-Hub could easily be a target for hackers," said Esposito. "People talk about Sci-Hub hacking universities, but what happens if Sci-Hub gets attacked?"



Alexandra Elbakyan

Winter Conference Spiritually Renews Young Adults

ARMONK, N.Y. – For the first time in many years, the Winter Conference returned to St. Nersess over the Armenian Christmas long weekend, January 2-6. Geared towards young adults who are of college age, 18-25 years old, the conference theme was "The Armenian Church: Ancient Spirituality for Today."

Over the course of five days, the participants had an opportunity to partake in discussions, daily worship services, reflections, and prayerful meditations revolving around authentic Christianity as the Armenian people have understood and experienced through the centuries.

Leading the discussions were Deacon Eric Vozzy, director; Deacon Timothy Aznavourian, seminarian; Deacon Michael Sabounjian, a 2018 seminary graduate; and Deacon Alex Calikyan, a 2019 seminary graduate. Emily Movsesian served as assistant director, while Sara Kardjian and Lucine Sabounjian were staff members.

"I hope each participant left the conference, not only with a connection to each other, but also with a lasting encounter with God. It was a privilege to help revive this most important event and I am looking forward to directing next year's Winter Conference," commented Vozzy.

On the morning of January 4, the participants gathered in the St. Hagop Chapel to witness the ordination of fellow participant Shant Danadian to the sub-diaconate during the Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese. Shant is an altar server and parishioner of St. Paul Armenian Church in Syracuse, NY. He has been an active participant in the Deacons' Training Program and High School Summer Conferences for the past several years. A celebratory luncheon followed in the dining hall. The evening prior, Bishop Daniel led a discussion with the young adults on "Christianity: The Most Excellent Calling."

"After all these years, we were happy to gather young adults together again during the Christmas break," remarked Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean, who recalls the filled-to-capacity winter conferences in the 1980s and 1990s. This year not only did the participants come away with a renewed spirit, but also made new friends. This was evident during their outing to a local bowling alley where the camaraderie was strong.

The conference ended at St. Vartan Cathedral, in New York City, where the participants attended the Theophany Badarak,

celebrated by Bishop Daniel, and luncheon on January 6.

"Many of our veteran high school conference participants returned as young adults for our Winter Conference, where they found a space with a little more freedom, a little more accountability, and a lot more in-depth spirituality. What does it mean to be a young

Christian in 2020? I saw the participants begin to answer this question personally through our discussions and reflections," reflected Emily Movsesian, assistant director.

Plans are underway to offer another Young Adult Winter Conference next year, January 2-6, 2021. Registration will open in August. For more information, go to www.stnersess.edu.



Winter Conference participants, staff and clergy

Arts & Living

Cellist Hakhnazaryan to Perform at Concert Dedicated to Centennial Of US-Armenian Relations

WASHINGTON – On Friday, March 6, world-famous cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan will perform at a concert dedicated to the centennial of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the US and the Armenian Republic, the only South Caucasian state recognized and supported by the United States at the time. The concert is sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in the US.

On April 23, 1920, the Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby delivered a note to Armenia's representative in Washington, Armen Garo, that stated: "I am pleased to inform you, and through you, your Government, that, by direction of the President [Woodrow Wilson], the Government of the United States recognizes, as of this date, the de facto Government of the Armenian Republic."

The recognition (by the executive branch) was confirmed by the US Senate on May 13, 1920, upon the unanimous recommendation of its Committee on Foreign Relations.

Held in a renowned Washington institution, this concert will be dedicated to this momentous occasion in the shared history between American and Armenian people.

The concert by Hakhnazaryan will take place at the National Press Club, 529 14th St NW, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45.

Since winning the Cello First Prize and Gold Medal at the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 at the age of 22, Narek Hakhnazaryan has inspired audiences around the world with his artistry. His prior awards included the 1st Prize in the



Narek Hakhnazaryan

2006 Khachaturian International Competition in Armenia, the 1st Place in the 2006 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players in Washington, and the 1st Prize in the 2008 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York. A distinguished international orchestral soloist, he has appeared with the Baltimore, St. Louis, Seattle, Toronto, London, WDR, Frankfurt Radio, Sydney, New Zealand, and NHK Symphony Orchestras; the Royal Stockholm, Czech, Seoul, Netherlands, and Rotterdam Philharmonics; the Utah Symphony; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; Orchestre de Paris; and the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome.

The program that will include works of Armenian, American and European composers, Hakhnazaryan will be joined by an American pianist Noreen Cassidy-Polera, who is among the most highly regarded and diverse chamber artists performing today.



The exterior of the restaurant

Tatos An Armenian Restaurant In Harbin

HARBIN, China – The Armenian community in Harbin was the biggest among the Armenian communities in China in the first half of the 20th century. They have their church and school, various organizations, leading active community life. The Armenians began to leave Harbin in the mid-1940s after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, and soon the community ceased to exist.

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Nowadays there are no traces in China of a prominent one-time Armenian presence. The only exception is Tatos Restaurant (in English - Tadao Si Western Restaurant), the very first Caucasian restaurant in China.

This restaurant is located in the basement at 127 Central Avenue (or Zhongyand Dajie). It was founded in 1901, by an Armenian migrant Tatos (also known as Tadevos, Tevatros) Grigorievich Ter Hakobyan (Terakopov), originally from Georgia. The establishment quickly gained immense popularity among the local public. For many decades this restaurant was suggesting Armenian, Caucasian, and European dishes, mostly unknown to the local population. The Armenian cuisine has become the hallmark of this institution, but now it is considered as a Russian, rather, pseudo-Russian restaurant, as it serves also general European dishes. Even then, Harbin was a multinational city, the most cosmopolite city of Far East, where lots of immigrants from Russia were called Russians. It is the Russian spirit that has been preserved in Tatos to our time.

Among the regulars of the restaurant was the cream of Harbin society – foreign diplomats, representatives of artistic circles, prominent public figures, etc. While in Harbin, the famous Russian singer Feodor Chaliapin used to dine in this restaurant.

Tatos Ter Hakobyan also founded the first winery in the Far East in the 1920s, also named Tatos. It produced wine from Harbin's black grape and Shandong's white grape.

An unusual story is connected with one of the Armenian employees of Tatos Restaurant. In 1916, young Harutyun Mirzakhanyan escaped from his native village (nowadays Verin Karmiraghbyur in Armenia's Tavush province) to avoid marriage and reached Harbin, where he worked at Tatos Restaurant. After several years, his godfather Daniel Babayan traveled to China, found him and took him back to marry. This information was provided me by my colleague at the Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Mirzakhanyan's relative Dr. Artashes Shahnazaryan.

Tatos Ter Hakobyan has run the business with his wife, Valentina Jarzeva; they have a son, Grigor Ter Hakobyan, who was a violinist. After graduating from the Russian Gymnasium of Harbin, he was sent to the United States for a higher education, and then was invited to Italy to perfect his technique for free in one of conservatories.

During World War II, Tatos Restaurant changed its title and owners several times during the Japanese occupation. Tatos Ter Hakobyan later resided in Shanghai,

see TATOS, page 13

A New Look At Alan Hovhaness

By Ara Arakelian

BOSTON – Pianist Sahan Arzruni has produced a new album dedicated to the piano music of Alan Hovhaness. The prolific American-Armenian composer who hailed from Massachusetts is often known for his mystical and ephemeral style of writing, exploring the transcendental nature of music. His approach, as eloquently elaborated in the informative liner notes accompanying by Arzruni, who is also an ethnomusicologist, strives to use music as a "link between the physical and metaphysical worlds."

Throughout his creative life, Hovhaness immersed himself in various cultures and religions, particularly those of the Far East, absorbing all kinds of folk and sacred music. His compositional textures and the medium of his expression reflected these inspirations. The American composer and critic Virgil Thomson commented in a 1947 *Herald Tribune* article that "...each piece is like a hand-made wallpaper. Its motionless quality is a little hypnotic. Its expressive function is predominantly religious, ceremonial, incantatory, its spiritual content of the purest."

On this album, Arzruni calls our attention to the rarely-heard or performed solo piano music of Hovhaness. Most of these masterpieces exist only in the manuscript form and have never been published. They shed light on the composer's eclectic taste – yearnings rooted in Armenia's mythology, folklore, landscape and Christian faith, as well as explorations of the Indian, Persian and Greek folk and mystical material.

The first composition of the album is titled *Invocations to Vahagn*. This five-movement cycle for piano and percussion (here performed by Adam Rosenblatt on various percussion instruments), though not programmatic in nature, projects the majestic power of Vahagn, the mythical legend and the god of bravery.

In another major work of the CD – *Yenovk* – Hovhaness pays tribute to one Yenovk Der Hagopian, a painter, sculptor and folk singer from Van who had introduced Hovhaness to Armenian folk music in the 1940s. Yenovk's artful singing style left an indelible impression on the young composer. The six sections of this homage range from the flowing Fantasy with its evocations of the sound of the oud, to the tightly structured Fugue, a baroque music

see HOVHANESS, page 14



Sahan Arzruni, left, with Alan Hovhaness



ARTS & LIVING

Documentary on Robert Fisk Highlights How the Foreign Correspondent Manages Complex, Grim

By Simon Houpt

TORONTO (*Globe and Mail*) – For more than 40 years, the British-born foreign correspondent Robert Fisk has brought the grim, complex reality of the Middle East to Western readers, first for the *Times* of London and, since 1989, for *The Independent*. The new National Film Board of Canada documentary “This Is Not a Movie,” directed by Yung Chang (“Up the Yangtze”), plays like something of a “Fisk’s Greatest Hits,” following him from the front lines of Syria to the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in West Beirut, Israel and the Palestinian territories, and Serbia and Bosnia. The *Globe and Mail* spoke with him this week from his home in Beirut.

What was it like to have a film crew traipsing after you?

I should tell you, when I was at school, I wanted to be a film critic. I tried to join the start of a local weekly in Kent, in England, so that I could review films, and I used to go up as a schoolboy to watch New Wave films. I’m fascinated by film, because it seems to have an unstoppable power to convince.

What do you think of the result?

I’ve only seen it once, and only very recently, so I haven’t had much time to think about it. This is awful, my first reaction was, “God, what an irritating guy Bob Fisk is, he just waffles on and on and on.” I didn’t yawn at any point, but I felt the need to, occasionally. That’s just me being me.

There’s some nice archival footage of you in Northern Ireland, which you covered in the early 1970s.

When I was sent there as a reporter and I became the Middle East – sorry, Freudian slip, I became the Northern Ireland correspondent, living in Beirut – sorry, in Belfast, there you go

again – I was astonished to see that I was reporting a war. I always refer to Northern Ireland as a war and not the Troubles.

How did covering Northern Ireland influence your subsequent reporting?

At one point, I ran a story and I got a telex from the British Army saying I would no longer be tolerated at British Army headquarters. So I said, “Fine, that’s good.” And an amazing thing happened – and this taught me a lot about the

in good stead.

At one point in the film, you say dismissively: “I’m not reporting what somebody said on YouTube. If you don’t go to the scene, you cannot get to the truth.” What do you make of the growth of “reporting what someone said on YouTube”?

The problem I think that has come up with technology is that a lot of people who would like to be a journalist think it sufficient to read

The film doesn’t touch on your current personal life, except to mention that you’re married to a journalist. Was that the director’s choice or did you put that off limits?

It was my decision from the start, as I’ve done with all journalism and all films, is that I will never talk about my private life. Because it’s private.

It strikes me that it might have been good to get a sense of the personal cost of the work that you do, the life that you’ve chosen.

I’m not being nasty to you, by saying no. I’m just saying I never talk about my private life. It’s a rule I kept from when I was in Northern Ireland and before.

In the film, when you go to the front in the Syrian War, you’re chaperoned by the Syrian Army –

My car, by the way. Not theirs.

Fair enough. Still, do you feel compromised? Especially given that you can’t safely cover the other side of the conflict?

I’ve always said I think this is the worst-reported war in the Middle East, ever, by anybody. Because we can’t get a reporter on the other side. But – compromised? No. My view is every army in the Middle East – and I mean every army – commits war crimes and is brutal. But we’ve got to talk to them, that’s our job. We mustn’t compromise ourselves in doing so, but we must talk to them.

I met Osama bin Laden three times. I didn’t see him after 9/11. I tried to, but I didn’t manage it, but obviously his supporters were attacking Western targets. Should I have gone to talk to him? Yes, of course I should.

(During the making of the documentary, “This Is Not a Movie,” Fisk was a speaker at a panel on journalism at Wellesley College in 2017 sponsored by the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in honor of its 85th anniversary. He was also the recipient of an award at the gala marking the same anniversary.)



Robert Fisk and director Yung Chang

Middle East. I would be walking down a street in Belfast, and a British Army Jeep would pull up next to me, and a young officer would jump out and hand me an envelope and say, “You might be interested in this.” And these were obviously young guys who did not believe the British Army was doing what it was meant to be doing in Northern Ireland, and they would be, of course, official government documents. I realized then that my refusal to go back to the system of press conferences actually stood me

up on the internet. Sometimes, I get rung up by journalists in the States, who clearly haven’t ever been to the Middle East, and it’s very difficult to explain to them what I think is happening, because what they think is happening bears no relation to the place I live in. They’ve read so much material – from the State Department, from various experts in various places, what I call the Institute of Preposterous Affairs, usually with an address in Washington.

Tatos: An Armenian Restaurant in Harbin

TATOS, from page 12

from where he moved to the USSR at the end of the 1960s along with his wife. Ter Hakobyan died at the age of about 100 in Tbilisi in the late 1970s. This information was provided by Susanna Majkalova (Shushanik Majkalyan), a Chinese-born resident of Yerevan, who knew Ter Hakobyan and his family from China.

Nowadays, Tatos is back to operating under the same name (the signboard is in Russian and Chinese), and the building itself is protected by the state. It is being remembered among the Russian and Caucasian restaurants of Harbin – Kavkaz, Iveria, Katusha, Allahverdi, Rogozinsky. The signboard of Tatos Restaurant is seen in the fifth part of the “Russians without Russia” documentary film series, presenting the history of Russian emigration – called “A Far East Result.” The atmosphere of old times is composed by gramophone, manual coffee grinder, typewriter machine, Russian dressers, books of the last century (Russian fairy tales, collections of verses by Tyutchev, Lermontov, pre-Soviet publications of Russian music, newspapers published at the beginning of the twentieth century), as well as the traditional collection of Armenian and Georgian wines.

As Russian journalist Larisa Jebokritskaya wrote in her article titled “The Russian Spirit in Harbin,” “In general, going here, as if you fall into another temporal and spatial dimension. The restaurant hall is spacious and cozy, the design is original, smiling pretty waitresses are dressed in accordance with European tradition. The menu is also designed in a European style: pizza, roast beef and other European

meat dishes, soups, fries, potatoes, coffee, ice cream.... Both Russian Harbin residents and tourists, who know about it, are happy to go to this quiet and peaceful place. By the way, a Chinese translator, who is always at your service, also helps to ensure a comfortable stay here...”

Restaurant’s current owner, Ms. Zhang, successfully maintains also the Armenian atmosphere of Tatos. As Ararat Kostanian (junior researcher of Oriental Studies Institute, National Academy of Science of Armenia) testifies, “I have visited the



Ararat Kostanian with the owner’s son

restaurant several times, due my family business in Harbin. My amusement and astonishment was indescribable after I entered the



Clips about the restaurant on one wall

restaurant. It has full of historical artifacts on the walls about Tatos himself and about Harbin Armenian community. A huge painting of Mount Ararat would make every Armenian proud. On my last visit, I informed the waiter that I am Armenian, and I would like to see the owner if there was any possibility. To my surprise, less than 10 minutes, an elegant Chinese woman approached my table and pre-

sented herself as the owner of the Tatos restaurant. While we were enjoying the delicious Armenian food, she was so eager to know about Armenia and Armenians. Her questions were non-stop. Our close relations continues to this day, because I am the first Armenian she met, and to me, she is the first Chinese I met with such great interest about Armenia and Armenians. She promised me to be my guest in Armenia soon...”



ARTS & LIVING

Helene Pilibosian's New Poetry Collection, *Legacy of an Author*, Is Released

WATERTOWN – A new collection of previously unpublished poems by Helene Pilibosian (1933-2015), titled *Legacy of an Author: Events and Wanderings Sprinkled in Six Books*, was published in 2019 by Ohan Press in Watertown. Pilibosian's husband, Hagop Sarkissian, did the research and coordination of the publication of this handsomely-bound hardcover volume.

Sarkissian, examining his late wife's computer, expected to find three books of poetry ready for publication but was surprised that there were actually six volumes, all written between the years of 2007 and 2013. He decided to combine them into the present volume, and has provided some explanatory notes at its start. Among other things, he has been able to discern some hidden references because of his knowledge of the author's life and personality.

Born Hasmig Vartouhi Pilibosian, the author adopted the professional name Helene Rose Pilibosian, and graduated from Harvard University in 1960. She married Sarkissian the same year and began a life of travel, writing, publishing and editing. She was employed by Harvard University's Widener Library, served as the first female editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, and worked as a proofreader for the Harvard University Printing Office.

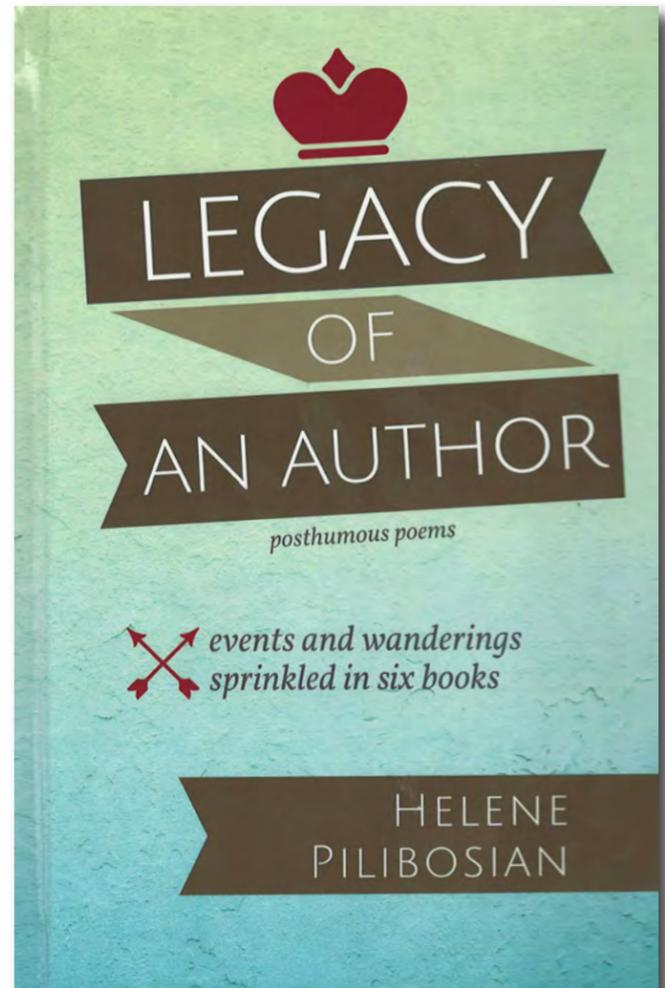
Her poems were published in many literary journals, such as the *North American Review* and *Weber: The Contemporary West*, and won prizes from *Writer's Digest* and other magazines. They also reached finalist status in many literary competitions. Pilibosian founded Ohan Press in their home and published her own books, along with those by other family members, which ended up totaling 15.

A number of the poems in this volume have been published separately in various literary journals in the past. Pilibosian's papers are now accessible as an archive at the Schlesinger Library of the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study at Harvard University. The finding aid is identified as MC972 at Harvard Library's HOLLIS for Archival Discovery website.

The 360-page volume may be obtained from Ohan Press, 171 Maplewood Street, Watertown, MA 02472-1324 for \$26.



Helene Pilibosian, December 25, 2013



'Little Women, the Musical' in Boston

BOSTON – “Little Women, the Musical,” is coming to Boston. Based on Louisa May Alcott's life, the book *Little Women* (on which the musical is based) follows the adventures of sisters Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy March. Jo is trying to sell her stories for publication, but the publishers are not interested. On the advice of her friend, Professor Bhaer, Jo weaves the story of herself, her sisters, and their experience growing up in Civil War America. The original production starred Sutton Foster, who received Tony, Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk nominations for her performance.

“Little Women” will be performed at the Wheelock, 180 The Riverway on the Fenway Campus of Boston University, January 31 - February 23.

The Friday evening performances will be at 7:30; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2

p.m.; ASL and AD Performances, Sunday, February 9 and 16 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20-\$40.



Sirena Abalian

The cast will feature Sirena Abalian as Jo. This is Abalian's 10th appearance at the Wheelock. She has performed in numerous shows in the Boston area since the age of 6, some including; Esther Smith in “Meet Me in St. Louis” (Stoneham Theatre), the title role in “Pinocchio” (Wheelock), Sara Crewe in “A Little Princess” (Fiddlehead Theatre); Clara, in “Nutcracker the Musical” (Stoneham) and Jojo in “Seussical” (Wheelock). She has been awarded two IRNE awards and two nominations for “Best Performance by a Young Actor.”

The performances will be directed by Nick Vargas, with the music directed by Jon Goldberg. The play is recommended for ages 7 and up.

A New Look at Alan Hovhaness

HOVHANESS, from page 14 cal form. Arzruni performs them flawlessly with utmost sensitivity.

Other performances on this album – *Lake Van Sonata*, *Haghpate*, *Journey into Dawn*, *Suite on Greek Tune*, *Lalezar* and the *Mystic Flute* – are equally revealing in their sweeping range from the haunting to the celebratory. Arzruni has masterfully presented and rewarded us, the listeners, with the multifaceted composer's unique and tell-tale voice.

In his liner notes, Arzruni sums up his own conviction: “Hovhaness's art is simple, but

never simplistic; it is unique, yet universal; appealing, as well as enduring.” This album is Arzruni's labor of love and presents music lovers of all background, as well as academics and ethnomusicologist, with an invaluable reference and resource. All public libraries, especially those in the Greater Boston area, should retain a copy for their collection.

The performances were recorded in the United States but the album was produced in Turkey by Kalan Music. It is available at Amazon.com and other reputable music stores online.

THE TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NEW YORK PRESENTS:

Charles

by Taleen Babayan

A bio-musical on the life and art of the legendary singer Charles Aznavour

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020

LEONARD NIMOY THALIA
AT PETER NORTON SYMPHONY SPACE
NEW YORK CITY

featuring:
Maurice Soudjian
Bernard C. Bayer

with:
Marlette Soudjian

music:
Harout Soghomonian

5:30 p.m.
2537 Broadway, New York, NY 10025
tickets: \$45
<https://www.symphonyspace.org/events>
212.864.5400
Text or call Sheela
201.218.6726

*PLEASE NOTE THIS PERFORMANCE IS IN ENGLISH



Andy Madadian, The Prince of Persian Pop, Receives Hollywood Walk of Fame Star

LOS ANGELES (NPR) — On Friday, a new name was added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame: Andranik Madadian, who performs as Andy and has been nicknamed the Prince of Persian Pop, is the first Iranian artist to have a star on the Walk, according to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. Andy has toured the world and amassed a huge fan base among Persian and Armenian Americans; Last week, those fans turned out in huge numbers in Los Angeles for his star's unveiling, chanting his name throughout the ceremony.

"They told me to speak from the heart, and the problem is I can't catch up with my heart, cause it's running too fast," he joked during his speech.

Andy, who was born in Tehran, Iran, has been living in Los Angeles for some 40 years.

"All my life, I dreamed of playing rock music and I knew this was the place," he said. "Los Angeles was the destination and everything else was the journey,"

Andy was in love with music growing up in Iran, where he said his family didn't have running water until he was in grade seven and his father had to take out a loan to pay for his first guitar. By his early 20s, he was just about to release a debut single, but the Iranian Revolution canceled those plans.

"There was a revolution, everybody fled. And of course, I was lucky — the beginning of it, I came to America," he remembered.

Though he has been in the United States for decades, Andy is still hugely popular in Iran, where you're not really supposed to listen to his music: It's actually banned there.

"Especially because our music is from LA, it's kind of sexy, Americanized," he said. "That



Singer Andy Madadian

music is definitely banned."

Nevertheless, people found ways to listen. His music videos were dubbed onto VHS tapes and smuggled into Iran, where his fans watched images of Andy dancing through the streets of LA in secret.

"It was a crime and it was illegal. So, [a] lot of people got jailed for it because they had our cassettes and VHS tapes," Andy said. "But people were persistent, it shows that you cannot stop music. And regardless of how tough the government gets, people will find ways to listen to it."

Andy Madadian has never returned to Iran, and his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame comes in the midst of a crisis unfolding thousands of miles away. There have been protests, bloody crackdowns, and of course escalating tensions with the US, which Andy nodded to at the ceremony in Hollywood.

"I'm just hoping and wishing for a day when America and Iran will be friends," he told the crowd, "so we are able as Iranian Americans to take our American friends back to Iran and show them how beautiful Iran is, and how beautiful Iranian people are and how much they love Americans."

(NPR's Danny Hajek and Arezou Rezvani produced and edited the audio of this interview. Editorial intern Jon Lewis adapted it for the Web.)

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Dalian

Kadayif Two Ways: Cream Kadayif, Kadayif with Cheese

Kadayif is finely shredded phyllo dough which is used in many popular Middle Eastern desserts. In this case, it is also the name of the dessert itself. Kadayif dough is commonly available in one-pound packages in either the refrigerator or freezer section in Middle Eastern shops and international markets. This classic recipe for the favorite Cream Kadayif is courtesy of the late Madelyn Markarian, and is reprinted from *A Harvest of Recipes Cookbook* published by the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church in Fresno, California.

Cream Kadayif

INGREDIENTS

Simple Syrup

3 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups water
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice

Dough

1/2 lb. unsalted butter (2 sticks)
1 lb. package kadayif dough (shredded phyllo dough), defrosted and at room temperature

Cream Filling (Yields about 5 cups of cream filling)

1 cup milk
1/2 cup cornstarch
1 pint (2 cups) half and half
1 pint (2 cups) whipping cream
2/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

PREPARATION

Simple Syrup: Mix sugar and water together in a saucepan. Bring to a boil; simmer for 10 minutes, stirring to dissolve sugar. Take off heat, add lemon juice and stir. Allow syrup to cool completely.

Cream Filling: In a large bowl, add cold milk and cornstarch, stir constantly to completely dissolve the cornstarch. Transfer the milk mixture to a large saucepan. Add the half and half, whipping cream, sugar and vanilla. Bring to a boil on medium heat, stirring constantly until it thickens. Set aside.

Dough: It is important to defrost kadayif dough overnight in the refrigerator and not at room temperature in order to prevent it from getting soggy. If kadayif dough gets soggy, it will be difficult to work with and less crispy when baked.

Preheat oven to 350°. Melt butter. Shred/cut dough into small 1-1/2 to 2" pieces. Stir in melted butter and mix well. Spread 1/2 of dough in bottom of 9" x 13" pan. Pour 3 1/2 to 4 cups of cream mixture over dough. (Note: Save any remaining filling to serve as pudding.) Top with remaining dough.

Bake for 20 minutes on the lowest oven rack. If not golden, move pan to top rack and bake 5 to 10 minutes longer. Lower heat to 300° degrees and bake until golden brown. Pour cooled syrup over hot kadayif. Allow to cool, then refrigerate. When ready to serve, cut into squares and garnish with ground pistachios or walnuts, if desired. (Note: You can bake this dish a day ahead, then reheat immediately before serving and pour the syrup on.)

Serves 24.

Kadayif with Cheese*

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. package kadayif dough (shredded phyllo dough), defrosted and at room temperature
1 1/2 cubes unsalted butter
1 1/2 - 2 cups grated Jack Cheese

PREPARATION

Melt butter and mix with kadayif dough. Put 1 layer of dough in a 3-quart baking dish. Layer with the cheese. Cover with remaining dough. Bake about 40 minutes at 350°. Pour cooled syrup over hot kadayif and serve.

Simple Syrup

2 cups sugar
2 cups water
1 lemon peel and juice of 1 lemon

Bring sugar, water and lemon peel to a boil. Keep stirring till the sugar has dissolved and water is clear. Add the lemon juice and leave to simmer for 7-10 minutes. Leave to cool slightly. Remove lemon peel.

*The is one of the many treasured recipes published in the *Armenian and Selected Favorite Recipes Cookbook* by the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church Trinity Guild (now Ladies' Guild) in 1970. The cost for each cookbook is \$20.00, including \$5.00 for shipping. Make check payable to: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. To order, contact: nazik@holytrinityfresno.org.

Other useful references:

<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2011/12/cream-filling-for-kadaif.html>
<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/2011/11/nut-filled-kadaif-kinaffeh.html>
<https://people.rit.edu/~cxm4176/140/homework/recipe2.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/armenianinternationalcuisinesandmore/photos/1699890403374536>
<http://marynerssession.ca/my-grandmas-armenian-tell-kadayif/>
<https://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/search/label/Hye-Thyme%20Cafe>
<https://www.amazon.com/Shredded-Fillo-Dough-Kataifi-1lb/dp/B000LQMXIO>
<https://www.walmart.com/ip/Shredded-Fillo-Phyllo-Dough-Kataifi-1lb/165101300>





ARTS & LIVING

Interview:

Author Arpi Sarafian Discusses New Book with Aris Janigian

LOS ANGELES — In November 2019, authors Arpi Sarafian and Aris Janigian partook in an interview about Sarafian's recent book of essays titled *Endless Crossings: Reflections on Armenian Art and Culture in Los Angeles*.

Janigian: These essays span 30 years, and cover everything from dance to literature to music to painting. You are one of the best and perhaps most important observers and chroniclers of our culture and its evolution in America, at least in recent years. Can you tell me over the course of three decades, how our accounting of ourselves through the arts has changed, if it has changed at all?

Sarafian: When displacement is a global phenomenon, our unique position of having been at the crossroads of histories and geographies for centuries becomes a great asset. Indeed, our ability to negotiate the diversity of traditions, lifestyles, and languages we find ourselves immersed in in the Diaspora is evidence of our evolution. To survive a culture has to evolve. The ultimate concern of maintaining an Armenian identity away from the homeland may remain unchanged but second and third generation artists seem to confront the challenges of displacement with a new openness. Some fiction writers take us into the midst of the horrors of our recent history of deportation and massacre unflinchingly. Others weave beautiful love stories into a dark chapter. Still others write about the challenges of settling in a new country, thereby making their creations relevant to an even larger community of immigrants.

An interesting recent development is the proliferation of more research-oriented publications. The hidden Armenians of Turkey, revolutionary parties in the Ottoman Empire, even cookbooks that preserve our traditional recipes, are attempts to keep our history and our culture alive, but only time will show their relevance. Further evidence of our efforts to prevail is the ongoing debate over the Eastern and Western dialects of the Armenian language.

We have obviously moved beyond victimhood. We do, however, still ask the same questions and provide the same answers. The Genocide is still our key point of reference. Memoirs and personal accounts of the massacres and the deportations abound. Playwrights also draw on our recent past for inspiration. Richard Kalinoski's 1992 "Beast on the Moon," a play about two young immigrants who escape the Genocide and start a new life in America in the 1920's, or Aram Kouyoumjian's more recent "Constantinople," which focuses on the Armenian community in post-Genocide Constantinople, are good examples. It is perhaps true that one does not repeat the essential enough.

However, while the artistic output is impressive, I see little attempt to challenge ourselves by thinking more critically and transcending our (almost obsessive?) focus on the fear of extinction. An Armenian identity is certainly crucial but we could perhaps try to embrace more of what "others" have to offer so that, while still retaining our distinct identity as Armenians, we cease to exist as an entity apart. Existing within the framework of a multiplicity of cultures greatly enhances our efforts to survive, our ultimate goal.

Janigian: What themes, concerns, motifs, if any, do you find running through these works? Is there an "essence" to Armenian American art that distinguishes it from, say Korean American or Jewish American art?

Sarafian: I would think that the challenge to survive in a new country—the need to be included yet fearing assimilation—is a common concern for all hyphenated Americans. However, because the community life of each ethnic group is intertwined with the specific history of its people, the struggle is different for each.

I find preserving our Armenianness, even as we redefine that Armenianness, to be the "essence" of our struggle as Armenian Americans. It is perhaps because of the fear of extinction following the deportations and the massacres of



Aris Janigian

the years 1915-1922, that keeping our identity as Armenians transcends every other concern. In some paradoxical way, even in our efforts to be included in a new culture, we revert to our Armenianness. The recent exhibits of Armenian religious and Medieval art at New York City's Metropolitan Museum, the "discovery" of Arthur Pinajian, the many talented musicians who perform in the most prestigious concert halls around the country bring us recognition and help us find our way into the mainstream. Our art has become a tool of survival.

I would like to add that a specific history does not contradict the artist's more refined sensibilities that, by definition, transcend the narrow focus on nationalism. In other words, having distinctly Armenian identities does not detract from the universal appeal of writers like Surmelian, Najarian, Aharonian Marcom or Janigian.

Janigian: The opening essay is a kind of eulogy to Leon Surmelian, who taught at California State University Los

treated as "separate and other," deemed worthy of study only in ethnic literature classes. Besides their cultural role, the works could be used to enhance the critical thinking skills of our students, a much-stated aim of our education. I hope it is clear that my suggestion is not to include every second-rate text in our courses because it has been excluded. The works we offer our students, whether ethnic or not, should meet the highest aesthetic standards.

Exclusionary politics is nothing new. It is no secret that the literary canon has been dominated by white male writers. For example, it took a while for Virginia Woolf, regarded as one of the great writers of the 20th century, to be included in courses on literary modernism. Similarly, it was not until the 1970s and the 1980s that women writers began to be included in anthologies and core classes.

The case of William Saroyan is a little more complex. Why would we stop teaching a writer whose works enjoyed enormous popularity when they were first published? Saroyan's obvious celebration of our diversity may be a factor in excluding him from a literary canon that privileges Anglo-Saxon writers. I also think that the autobiographical strand in much of Saroyan's writing places him outside the academic mainstream which for decades following the 30's, when Saroyan's works were being published, was dominated by New Criticism, a critical approach that privileges literary texts that separate the work from its context and that lend themselves more readily to close textual study. One would think though that the shift to context, as opposed to text, in more recent literary theory would bring Saroyan back. But only time will tell.

There are also the obvious time constraints on teachers totally exhausted with an insane workload and thus with literally no time to do the research necessary to discover new works to introduce into their courses. Most teachers I have talked to at AP Reading sessions have not even heard of Saroyan, just as many of us have not heard of good non-Armenian ethnic writers. I understand that Saroyan is still taught in some ESL classes in Community Colleges. But those are colleges with a large Armenian student body, once again supporting the relegation of ethnic writers to ethnic literature classes only. Saroyan clearly belongs outside.

To revise the canon is not easy and the "problem" may never be rectified. Nonetheless, introducing non-canonical texts into our course offerings would be a move in the right direction.

Janigian: One of the great benefit of this book is its thoroughness, how it covers cultural events, particularly in Southern California, that many of us were not aware of, reflecting a stunning and varied output over the last twenty years alone. What explains the exuberance of Armenian artistic production at this time?

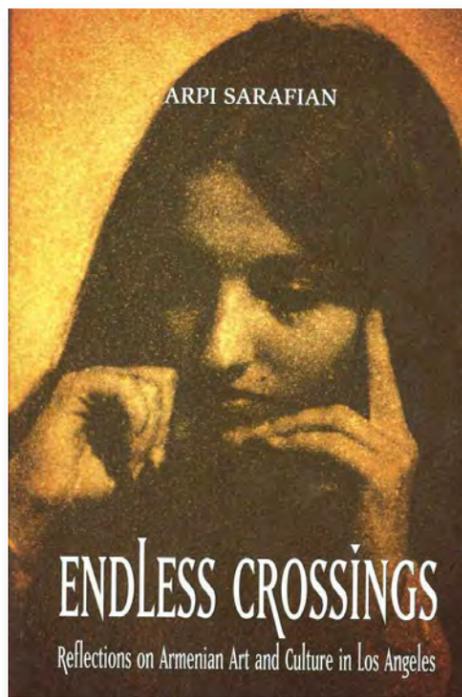
Sarafian: The Genocide continues to be a key player in our efforts to preserve our identity as Armenians in the Diaspora. Indeed, the decades around the year 2015, the year that marked the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, saw an upsurge of artistic activity in the Armenian communities around the world and in Southern California, all attempts to confront Turkey's ongoing denial through art. An impressive output of publications, theatrical productions, fine art exhibits, and much more, showcased our centuries-old cultural and artistic heritage, testifying that our creativity goes on. Artists, especially young artists, seemed to be emboldened by their determination to "remember and demand," and by a new consciousness that with our pain we can bring attention to the ongoing atrocities in the world and help advance the cause of

justice and of human rights globally.

The influx of Armenians from Soviet Armenia, Iran and Lebanon due to political unrest in their respective countries also brought many talented artists to Southern California. These opened galleries, started dance studios, put together traditional and experimental music ensembles. Young Armenians flock to Abril Bookstore in Glendale, almost every night of the week for yet another book launch, another art exhibit, another screening and discussion of films by Armenian filmmakers. Self-publishing also accounts for numerous publications that would otherwise not see the light.

It must be noted, however, that because of a significant decline in the number of Genocide survivors and of their immediate offspring who wrote in Armenian, the number of Armenian periodicals and of writers who created in Armenian is continually dwindling.

(Aris Janigian is the author of several books, including *Waiting for Lipchitz at Chateau Marmont* and *Riverbig*.)



Endless Crossings: Reflections on Armenian Art and Culture in Los Angeles

Publisher: Tekeyan
Cultural Association

Pub. Date: November,
2019

Pages: 234

Angeles, and the book ends with an essay on Peter Najarian's *Voyages*. Neither of these extremely talented writers are known beyond a handful of people outside the Armenian community, and, indeed, I think it's fair to say that Armenian American literature is not even on the radar of literature departments that are ostensibly committed to "Diversity." Nobody today, that I can think of, even here in Fresno, where I live, teaches Saroyan. Can you speak to why this is the case?

Exclusion is the name of the game here. The majority/minority mentality in the United States has led to minority groups being repressed by the so-called "dominant" culture. Even at a time — roughly in the early 1970s to the 1990s — when celebrating our diversity and multiculturalism was the politically correct thing to do, the works of minority (i.e. ethnic) writers were pretty much excluded from the list of "accepted" texts on English Department booklists.

Even though many of these texts deal with issues that are relevant to our (immigrant) students' experiences, they are



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2 — Banquet Celebration welcoming newly consecrated Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan for his first pastoral visit, in conjunction with the 32nd Anniversary of consecration of St. David Armenian Apostolic Church on Sunday following the Holy Badarak at the Mardigian Hall – 12:30pm. For further information, please call St. David Church office – Christine 561-994-2335 Or Sonig Kradjian 607-727-8786”

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 9 — A cappella concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 pm at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester, MA. 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

FEBRUARY 13 — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues presents a public forum on “The Armenian-American Press in Perspective: Its Purposes, Challenges, and Future Prospects.” Lively discussion on issues of immigration, history, and the 125-year-old history of the Armenian-American press. Panel featuring Leeza Arakelian, assistant editor of the *Armenian Weekly*, Alin K. Gregorian, editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and Stephen Kurkjian, Pulitzer Prize winner reporter retired from the *Boston Globe*, and NAASR Board

Member. Moderated by NAASR Board Member and Armenian Weekly columnist Stepan Piligian. Thursday, 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Batmasian Hall, NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. A reception will follow in the Shahinian Solarium. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or hq@naasr.org.

FEBRUARY 22 – Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance - Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Featuring the Fabulous Ani Ensemble: Art Chingris - Dumbeg, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, Dave Anisbigian – Vocals/Guitar, and Brian Anisbigian – Oud. Surprise DJ for modern Armenian and non-Armenian music. Complimentary Armenian Dance Class - 5:00 pm. Dinner and Dancing at 6:00 pm. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 15: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, please contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment. Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

FEBRUARY 27: “The Ruins of Ani: From Sacred Landscape to Political Soil”: Presented by Peter Balakian and Aram Arkun, translators of *The Ruins of Ani* by Krikor Balakian. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues at the Batmasian Auditorium at NAASR, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, 7:30 p.m. Free admission. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or marc@naasr.org.

MAY 28 — Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) presents the 69th annual Armenian Night at the Pops, featuring the young and talented violinist Diana

Adamyan as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 p.m. For tickets and information, please visit FACSBoston.org

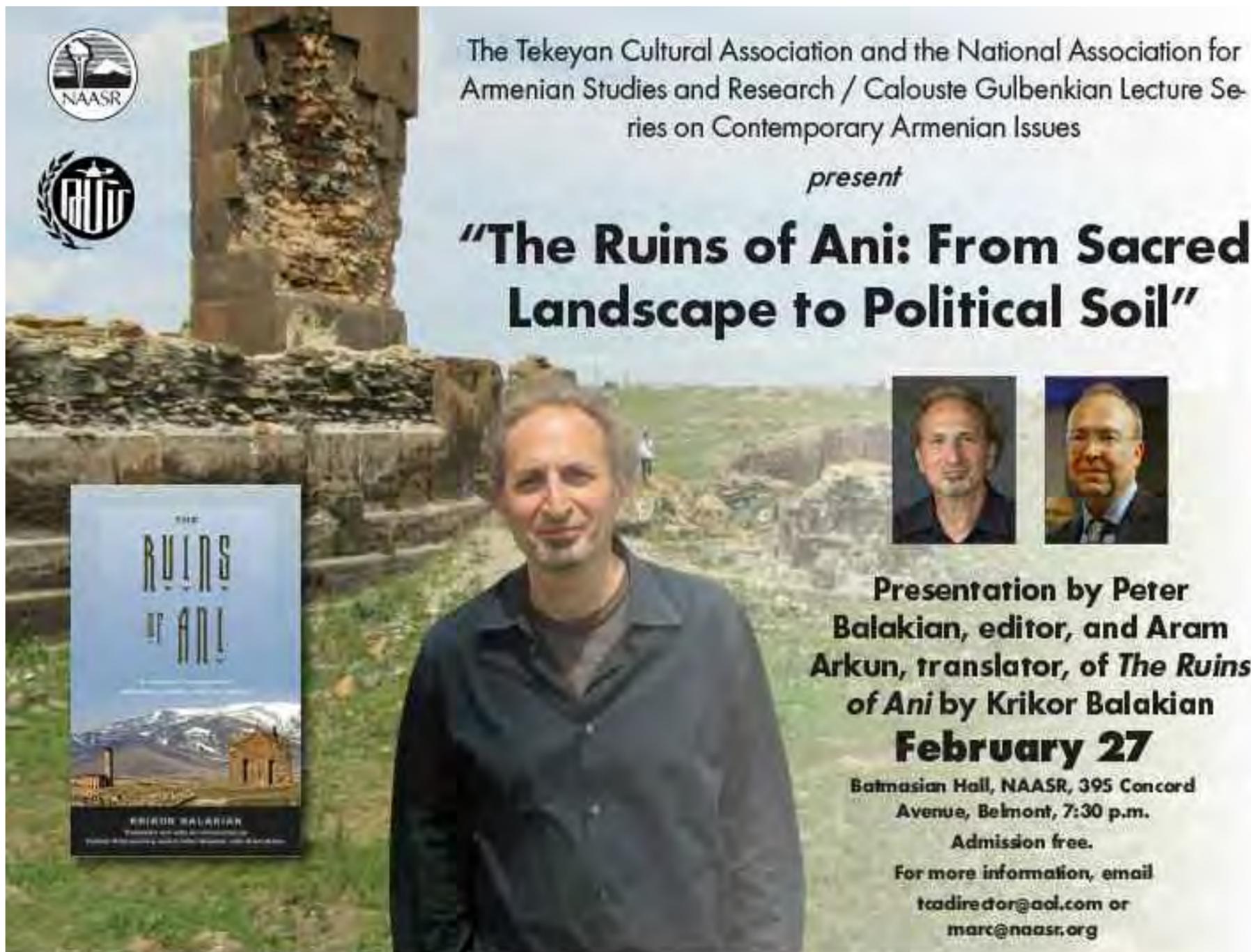
NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 8 — Valentine’s Dinner Dance. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association – Greater New York Chapter and the Hovnanian School PTO. 7 pm. Magic show for children to begin at 7.30 pm. Mezze and dinner included. Cash bar. \$60 adults, \$30 kids under 13. RSVP to Nanor at mrsnanor@gmail.com. Payment required upon reservation. \$75 at the door. Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford.

NEW YORK

MARCH 1 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York presents “Charles,” a bio-musical on the life and art of the legendary Charles Aznavour, by playwright Taleen Babayan. Featuring Maurice Soudjian, Bernard C. Bayer and Mariette Soudjian. Music: Harout Soghomonian. Sunday, 5.30 p.m. at 2537 Broadway, New York, NY. Tickets \$45. www.symphonyspace.org/events. Text or call Sheela at 201-218-6726. Program in English.

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.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research / Calouste Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues

present

“The Ruins of Ani: From Sacred Landscape to Political Soil”

Presentation by Peter Balakian, editor, and Aram Arkun, translator, of *The Ruins of Ani* by Krikor Balakian

February 27

Batmasian Hall, NAASR, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, 7:30 p.m.

Admission free.

For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or marc@naasr.org



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Remembering Silva Kaputikyan: A Consummate Poet, A Valiant Activist

By Edmond Y. Azadian

In the early 2000s, I was in Armenia when I called Silva Kaputikyan (or Gaboudigian in Western Armenian) on the last day of my trip. I apologetically informed her that my visit to her would not last more than one hour, because of time constraints. Her answer was: "If you will bargain your hours and minutes with me, you may as well cancel your entire visit."

She was blunt and brutally honest with friend and foe alike.

The centennial of her birth was in 2019, but the anniversary was marked in a rather muted way. This year, her 101st anniversary was celebrated in a more official way; her apartment was dedicated as a museum.

Kaputikyan was bigger than life. She carried an aura of regal dignity on top of her charismatic personality. She was born in Armenia during the Soviet period, but she never dissociated herself from the heritage of her family, who hailed from Van, from the oldest cradle of Armenian civilization.

During her lifetime, she produced a profusion of literary output which was translated into Russian and through Russian into many foreign languages. She was more than an Armenian poet; she was celebrated throughout the Soviet Union. She surely paid her dues to the Soviet officialdom to build her literary and political pedestal, from the height of which she delivered her poetic and nationalistic messages to Armenia and beyond.

Even her poem dedicated to the Chelyabinsk Tractor Factory was not devoid of poetic color and candor.

As a female poet, her lyricism and the melodic line of her emotions helped her to stand out among her contemporaries.

Her thinking and sentimental journeys were bathed in feminine vulnerability and genuine artistry.

From the mists and perfumes of her lyricism also emanated an iron will which dominated not only her poetry and her entire literary output but also her social activism.

During the Soviet era, any deviation from the state-sponsored Marxist dogma could cost a writer his or her career or even his or her life. Kaputikyan somehow stood above the Glavlit (Soviet censorship office) because of her talent and immense popularity.

She seemed to be untouchable. And she was smart enough to turn that status to her advantage to promote her political agenda.

Early on, when no one could utter a word about Karabakh's Armenian identity and the plight of its population, Kaputikyan embarked on a crusade to demand Karabakh for Armenia, joined by journalist Zori Balayan and novelist Sero Khanzadyan. She took her mission all the way to Moscow to politicize the issue. Through her leadership, even under the iron rule of the Soviet regime, Armenians were able to collect 75,000 signatures in support of Karabakh's plight. Kaputikyan carried her message all the way to Kremlin and argued in front of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. At that time, political fortunes of the Soviet Union were undergoing a fundamental shift but no one was certain of the future. People still guarded their opinions as in previous times.

Kaputikyan launched her social activism when male chauvinism was rampant in Armenia. And referring to her courage, the poetess boasted: "There is only one manly man in Armenia and she is a woman."

During the Soviet period, Silva Kaputikyan was credited for her continued contacts with the diaspora. She connected the diaspora with Armenia's intellectual life, enriching both in the process. The Tekeyan Cultural Association invited the poetess to her first diasporan tour. Her visits to Lebanon and Syria were of historic proportions. Her superb rhetoric, blended with her poetry and patriotism carried the day. She

was treated as a living saint. Huge crowds packed concert halls to hear her inspirational and poetic message. She reflected in her message Armenia's cultural evolution which was at its height then.

As much as she reflected Armenia's life in the diaspora, she also helped the reverse process. As she continued touring the Middle East, Europe and America, she began publishing her memoirs. She published two monumental volumes, *The Caravans Still Marching* and *The Mosaic Composed of the Colors of Soul and the Map*.

She used her literary talents to make those volumes extremely readable; humorous anecdotes, historic encounters and philosophical musings were used to put diasporan life in a readable and informative context.

Of course, some incidental events were interpreted through the lens of Soviet-trained intellectual perspectives, but overall, she laid out a colorful tapestry of Armenian life around the world.

Silva Kaputikyan's adulation extended beyond her reputation as a poet; she became a national icon. Visiting her apartment in Yerevan inspired diasporan Armenians with the awe of entering a sacred shrine. And she savored that veneration with obvious delight.

When independence came to Armenia, many believed that Kaputikyan's free spirit would welcome that historic event with open arms. But surprisingly, the opposite happened. Her idealism clashed with the opportunism of the newcomers. It was unbelievable to find the first president of independent Armenia, Levon Ter Petrosian, with solid academic credentials, treat the writers, intellectuals and artists of the country as a philistine. The intellectual elite, who had enjoyed a reverential position during the Soviet period, became the underdogs. That infuriated Kaputikyan, who took Ter Petrosian to task.

At that period, the Tekeyan Cultural Association once again had invited the poetess to tour, this time around in the US and Canada, to celebrate her 75th birthday. A collection of her new poems was published, with this writer's introduction, to mark the occasion. But Kaputikyan turned that literary tour into a political campaign. She used every forum in every city to criticize Ter Petrosian himself, his government and his policies. And she asked dismissively the rhetorical question: "Who the hell is this scholar of Assyrian studies who has enrolled himself as a member of the Writers' Union, among creative writers?"

She embarrassed her hosts to no end, because they were trying to maintain friendly relations with the first president.

But the worst was yet to come with the regime of the second president, Robert Kocharyan, who she believed impoverished Armenia and encouraged its depopulation.

But her antagonism came to a boil with the massacre at the parliament on October 27, 1999.

"Any president with dignity and integrity would have resigned after this carnage," she proclaimed and then added, "A huge abyss has been created between Armenia's population and its ruler."

To give a higher pitch to her anger, she returned the Mesrob Mashtots Medal, which President Kocharyan had bestowed upon her, accompanied with an abrasive poem composed for the occasion, titled, "Revolt," in which she wrote, "I am not living any more, yet I am not dying either. My not dying will last very long, until I see the day of your judgment." And that irony became a reality.

Now that Kocharyan is behind bars, waiting for his day in court, Kaputikyan's poem has found new popularity and resonance.

Kaputikyan's poetry enriched the Armenian literary canon in many ways. She was already a classic during her lifetime. Future generations will come to be inspired by her legacy of impeccable poetry. But above all, she will stand tall in Armenian history as an icon of liberty and patriotism.

Kaputikyan died in 2006 and after a state funeral, was buried in the Komitas pantheon.

From Van to Yerevan, she continues to remain as important as ever 101 years after her birth.



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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Men Who Rape and Marry Girls Under 18 Could be Pardoned in Turkey

The British *Independent* newspaper published an unbelievable article last week, titled: “‘Marry-your-rapist’ bill to be introduced by lawmakers in Turkey.”

This sounds like a subject from the Middle Ages. If the Turkish Parliament approves it, the pending law “would allow men accused of having sex with girls who are under 18 to avoid punishment if they marry their victims,” *The Independent* reported.

Turkish Women’s rights campaigners are furious that such a shameful bill could become law in “modern” Turkey. Critics contend that the envisaged law “not only legitimizes child marriage and statutory rape but also paves the way for child abuse and sexual exploitation,” *the Independent* wrote.

The pro-Kurdish opposition People’s Democratic Party (HDP) opposes this bill.

“United Nations agencies warned the bill would generate a landscape of impunity for child abuse and leave victims vulnerable to experiencing additional mistreatment and distress from their assailants,” according to the *Independent*.

A similar bill, introduced in 2016, was defeated in the

Turkish Parliament, after receiving criticisms from women’s rights activists from around the world. That legislation would have only pardoned men for having sex with young girls “without force or threat.”

A small number of countries have passed such legislation for the purpose of protecting and safeguarding “family honor.” However, several other countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Palestine that had such objectionable laws, have repealed them in recent years.

The Independent quoted Suad Abu-Dayyah, a women’s rights campaigner, saying it was “shocking” politicians are trying to pass a bill that “provides impunity for perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.” She told the *Independent*: “I applaud the brave work of women’s rights campaigners in Turkey who are taking a stand against this discriminatory bill and pushing back against regressive forces that are seeking to remove current legal protections for girls. Similar ‘marry-your-rapist’ legal provisions have been on the statute books of countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Thanks to years of campaigning by women’s rights activists and lawmakers in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Palestine have all removed these loopholes in recent years. Rather than attempting to introduce legislation that harms women’s rights and protections, Turkish lawmakers should take heed of these advances in repealing gender discriminatory laws.”

Even though the legal age of consent in Turkey is 18, the *Turkish Daily News* quoted Tekin Bingöl, a member of the Turkish Republican People’s Party (CHP) in Parliament, stating: “a total of 482,908 underage women were married in the last 10 years. In Turkey, 26 percent of females were married before the age of 18. Ten percent of them gave birth before the age of 18. Some 142,298 underage mothers were recorded in the last six years. Most of these children were married

with religious ceremonies. A total of 440,000 underage girls have given birth since 2002. The number of women under 15 who gave birth after being exposed to sexual abuse was recorded as 15,937.”

The Independent reported that “Violence against women and girls is prevalent in Turkey – with 38 percent of Turkish women having suffered physical or sexual violence from a partner according to the United Nations. A campaign group called We Will Stop Femicide estimates some 409 women were murdered by a partner or a family member in the country in 2017 – a stark rise from the total of 237 four years beforehand.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, instead of defending women’s rights, has made public statements denigrating the value of women. During a meeting in 2014, Erdogan told the audience: “You cannot put women and men on an equal footing. It is against nature.” Erdogan also urged women in 2016 to have at least three children and argued that a woman’s life was ‘incomplete’ if she did not reproduce. “A woman who says ‘because I am working I will not be a mother’ is actually denying her femininity,” Erdogan said. “A woman who rejects motherhood, who refrains from being around the house, however successful her working life is, is deficient, is incomplete.”

I hope that the legislation pardoning men who marry underage girls after raping them will be rejected. Since the majority of the Turkish Parliament members are affiliated with Pres. Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP), the President can easily stop this legislation from being introduced in Parliament. However, it is not known what he will do, as he has taken many domestic and international positions which are contrary to Turkey’s and Turkish people’s interests. As we have seen on many occasions, Erdogan prefers to appeal to his radical followers rather than doing the right thing.

Yazidi Survivors Are Key to Bringing Islamic State Members to Justice

By Bojan Pancevski

BERLIN (*Wall Street Journal*) – Ivana says she was eight years old when she was sold as a sex slave to an American member of Islamic State after the group murdered her parents.

Five years after the terror militia sought to exterminate her fellow Yazidi, a religious minority in Iraq and Syria, Ivana’s testimony and those of hundreds of other victims offer evidence that might help bring Islamic State members to justice in the West.

European and U.S. authorities have struggled to successfully prosecute returning Islamic State members, largely because of the difficulties in collecting evidence of crimes that happened in Iraq and Syria.

But the Yazidi who survived carry detailed accounts of one of the militia’s worst crimes: The attempt to wipe out the religious minority and the mass enslavement of its women and female children. Islamic State interprets Islamic scriptures literally, using them to justify the murder and enslavement of Yazidis, who are adherents of an ancient religion that is neither Muslim, Christian nor Jewish and therefore perceived as subhuman by ideologues of the terror group. Now lawyers, activists and the United Nations are compiling these accounts to build cases against captured militants from the self-styled caliphate.

“He was horribly brutal. He and his wife owned me and another two Yazidi girls,” Ivana, now aged 13, says in a documentary about Yazidi survivors. The film, by a German-Yazidi lawyer, premiered at the United Nations’ New York headquarters and is part of the documentation effort.

Like thousands of Yazidi girls and women, Ivana was sold multiple times on slave markets in Islamic State-controlled territories. More than 5,000 mostly male members of the Yazidi community were murdered in what the U.N. labels a genocide. Around half a million – nearly half of the entire Yazidi population – were displaced, either in Syria and Iraq, like Ivana, who now lives in a refugee camp. Around 3,000 Yazidi women kept as slaves by Islamic State fighters and their wives are still missing. Hundreds of girls around Ivana’s age were forced to have children with their captors. Lamya, now 16, whose testimony is also featured in the documentary, gave birth to three children from two different Islamic State fighters.

In Syria alone, more than 2,000 foreign Islamic State fighters are imprisoned by Kurdish militias. Many of the fighters have wives who Yazidi victims say played a role in terrorizing enslaved women and children. After Turkey started a military

campaign against the Kurds in the region in October, some of these captives of European origin fled and made their way back to their home countries.

With more former Islamic State fighters expected to return to Europe and some 500 convicted jihadists due to be freed from European jails in the next two years, several organizations collecting evidence of crimes against the Yazidi are racing to build watertight cases, said Olivier Guitta, director of GlobalStrat, a security consulting firm.

Lack of hard evidence means sentences against Islamic State members and affiliates have so far been light, Mr. Guitta said. Female Islamic State affiliates have tended to receive especially short sentences because most didn’t engage in combat.

Critics of this approach, including the Dutch government in a recent report, argue that jihadi women played a central role in recruiting members, producing and disseminating propaganda, raising funds and indoctrinating children.

Düzen Tekkal, the German-Yazidi filmmaker who directed “Jiyan: A Cry For Life,” is collecting the survivors’ testimonies for future court proceedings. Germany, where Tekkal is based, now hosts the world’s largest Yazidi diaspora, some 200,000 strong. Members include Nadia Murad, an activist who won the Nobel Peace Prize and met President Trump at the Oval Office earlier this year.

“This is a global and not a national issue: a genocide that happened across borders, the victims and perpetrators of which are now strewn world-wide,” said Tekkal, who also runs Hawar.Help, a charity helping Yazidi women who survived Islamic State slavery. “Our women are the best weapon against terrorism.”

The world’s first trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Yazidi is taking place in Munich, Germany, where a woman identified only as Jennifer W., due to legal protections granted to crime suspects, was charged with crimes against humanity for allowing the death of a five-year-old slave girl.

According to prosecutors, the defendant and her husband, an Islamic State fighter identified as Taha A.-J., had bought the girl and her mother and at one point chained the child in the sun outside of their house in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, letting her die slowly in the scorching heat.

Taha A.-J. fled Iraq after the demise of Islamic State and lived as a refugee in Greece. He was deported to Germany in October and will become the first person to be charged with participating in the genocide against the Yazidi, according to prosecutors.

Tekkal and several other Yazidi activists in the West have pushed for an international tribunal to try the crimes of

Islamic State because of what they say is the weaknesses of the justice systems in countries such as Iraq and the fact that Western prosecutors are unable to conduct investigations in conflict zones. The U.S. opposes the idea, arguing that international courts are costly and slow and that Islamic State members should be tried in their countries of origin.

Ms. Tekkal’s position is backed by a cross-party group of German politicians, including Markus Grübel, the German government commissioner for international religious freedom, who has called for replicating the international tribunal that tried crimes committed in the Balkans during the Yugoslav civil war in the 1990s.

Nathan A. Sales, the State Department’s coordinator for terrorism, said such a tribunal would cost billions of dollars and take decades to process all of the fighters and pursue their appeals. The tribunal for Yugoslavia opened in 1993 but closed its last case in 2017.

“It’s simply not a viable option to take on that kind of financial burden that would drag out over so many years,” Mr. Sales said in a telephone interview. He added the U.S. would provide evidence gathered by its troops, intelligence agencies and allies in the Middle East.

It is unclear, however, whether national judiciaries will be able to successfully prosecute Islamic State members with that evidence and the Yazidi testimonies. Western courts tend to be protective of the rights of the accused, while courts in the region where the crimes took place have struggled to prosecute Islamic State members.

Natia Navrouzov, a French-Yazidi lawyer working in Iraq, where the worst atrocities took place, said Iraq’s rule of law was in disarray after years of conflict, and the legal system didn’t have the capacity for prosecuting genocide.

Her organization, Yazda, has interviewed hundreds of victims and provided their testimonies to prosecutors in Iraq, Germany, France and elsewhere, but she says national judiciaries in the Middle East won’t be able to proceed without international assistance. Yazda and other organizations are working together with a United Nations investigative team that was set up this year to help investigate the alleged genocide and other crimes by Islamic State, also known as ISIS.

Amal Clooney, a London-based human rights lawyer, represents Yazidi victims, including the mother of the child who died in the Munich case against Jennifer W. and her partner. She said the lack of international coordination had already allowed too many Islamic State fighters to walk free.

“Survivors have long argued that a global response to ISIS must include a global commitment to bringing them to justice. What we have seen so far is too little, and soon it may be too late,” Clooney said.



Raffi, the Children's Troubadour

TORONTO (CBS News) – He may not look like a rock star, but for a certain shorter fanbase, Raffi is just that. “I’m the lucky guy whose songs apparently delight children,” he said.

He’s been playing children’s music for more than 40 years, has been nominated for three Grammy Awards; sold more than 15 million records, and has the generations of fans to prove it.

“I mean, this has just been amazing,” said one woman. “We raised our kids on Raffi. And now we’re raising our grandkids on Raffi. So we just love it.”

Raffi told correspondent Serena Altschul, “The children are having all kinds of fun, but so are the adults now, ‘cause they’re remembering their own childhoods.”

Raffi’s childhood began in Egypt, where he was born Raffi Cavoukian in 1948. In the hope of a better life, his father decided to move his minority Armenian-Christian family out of the country when Raffi was just 10 years old.

“He felt that that bright future wasn’t possible staying behind in Egypt,” Raffi said. “He



Raffi Cavoukian

loved his kids, and he came to Canada for us to live in a free country.”

He took to his adopted country immediately: “Oh my God, I took to ice hockey. I didn’t play it, ‘cause I was a pudgy little Armenian kid! But I loved the National Hockey League games on television.”

But it was the music he discovered on the



Raffi Cavoukian

radio that truly changed his life: “It was not only Motown, but it was Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul, and Mary, and Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell. Oh, my God!”

A teenager in the 1960s, he was caught up in the burgeoning Toronto folk scene, soon picking up a guitar himself. “I wanted to become somebody like a James Taylor,” he said.

But he struggled to make ends meet playing music. Then by chance, he was invited to play for children at a local nursery school.

“Yeah, I was on the floor and I was singing songs that my then-wife had taught me. So apparently, I did well with the kids and I was asked to return and

sing again for them.

“And the \$10 I got helped in those days!” His first album, “Singable Songs for the Very Young,” was released in 1976. It was a smash hit.

It led to 20 more albums of toddler classics, from *The More We Get Together* to

Bananaphone: ... and especially his most famous song, *Baby Beluga*:

Baby beluga in the deep blue sea
Swim so wild and you swim so free
Heaven above and the sea below
And a little white whale on the go

“The song was inspired by a whale in captivity in an aquarium,” he said. “And yet, the song set the whale free. And there’s something about, ‘Is the water warm? Is your momma home with you?’ Now, I don’t know what a little child hears when they hear that, but there must be something, you precognitive connecting with them.”

And he’s still connecting with kids today, by releasing new music and touring around North America.

Raffi spends his downtime at his home in the beauty and seclusion of Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. He first came in

2008. And you can find him every Saturday at the farmer’s market, manning a table for his non-profit, the Raffi Foundation for Child Honouring, which advocates for putting children’s needs first when tackling environmental and social problems.

But as much as children love Raffi, and vice versa, he decided not to have children of his own. “People are always surprised by this,” said Altschul.

“Well, back then, when my wife and I talked about it, long time ago, we were always around kids (she was a kindergarten teacher and I was entertaining children), we just felt that we didn’t need children of our own. And we decided to honor that feeling. It was just that simple.”

“And you have children – they’re just not biologically your children.”

“Precisely.”

And he can count Altschul’s own daughter Vivian as one of them!

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