

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Armenia Is Taking Precautions As Coronavirus Arrives

*US Biotech Run by Afeyan Working on Vaccine*

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Armenia, as of March 3, has one confirmed case of coronavirus and nine suspected ones.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, at a press conference on that day said, “At this moment we are waiting for the results to 9 tests, and will inform the public once the results come in,” Pashinyan said. “We hope they will not be confirmed. But if, God forbid, they are confirmed, we will inform about it. [But] if confirmed, it should not cause any panic. This is a surmountable disease, and for the time being our only [positive] diagnosis is even in a process that, in fact, he is not being treated because he has no symptoms.”

Armenia’s only detected case was a 29-year-old man who recently returned with his wife from Iran.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on March 1 in a Facebook posting that “about



A young woman covers her face as she walks. (RFE/RL Photo)

two hours ago we confirmed a case of coronavirus, unfortunately.”

Pashinyan said the man, an Armenian cit-

izen, had arrived by plane from Tehran on February 28 and later went to the hospital for treatment. He is in good condition, the prime minister said.

Pashinyan said people the victim has had close contact with will be quarantined.

He added that all of the passengers on the flight with him from Tehran had been wearing face masks and were escorted from the airport under previously set precautions for people traveling from Iran.

The Armenian government decided on February 24 to partly close Armenia’s border with Iran and cancel regular flights between the two for at least two weeks due to the rapid spread of the virus in the Islamic Republic. The border remains open for commercial cargo shipments mostly carried out by Iranian trucks.

According to Torosyan, Iranian truck drivers’ physical contact with people in Armenia has been “minimized.” A spokeswoman for the Armenian Ministry of Health said on Saturday that the drivers are under the “24-hour surveillance” of Armenian medics and are not allowed to leave their vehicles without police escort.

Pashinyan announced that classes in Armenian kindergartens, schools and universities have been suspended for one week. “We need some time to understand what’s going on,” he said in a live video

see CORONAVIRUS, page 2

## Stepanyan’s ‘Village of Women’ Depicts Beauty And Melancholy of Life in an Armenian Village

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. – When Armenians from outside Armenia come to visit, they seldom have occasion to see anything outside of the capital city of Yerevan, and if they do go elsewhere it is usually to the other cities and noteworthy touristic destinations. They drive straight through the villages, without much time to do more than glance at their worn-out state. Tamara Stepanyan’s documentary film, “Village of Women [Kanants Gyughe],” rectifies this a little.

A new film, it is just starting to garner attention. “Village of Women” was one of 11 films chosen out of 3,000 to be presented at DOK Leipzig, the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film – one of the oldest film festivals in the world – in 2019, and is now



Tamara Stepanyan

traveling throughout the film world. It will be shown in Belmont’s Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston on Sunday, March 22 at see STEPANYAN, page 15

## Nora Armani Wants to Elevate Socially Relevant Films

NEW YORK – In the past decade, actress, writer, director and producer Nora Armani has added another couple of titles to her resume: founder and artistic director of the non-profit Socially Relevant Film Festival (SRFF).

**By Alin K. Gregorian**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

She founded the festival in January 2013 “as a reaction to the proliferation of violence on screens and in life. Especially in the United States, films and

TV are very violent, both in content and in form. Loud intrusive music, special sound and visual effects that aggressively assault our sense in an attempt to grab attention, especially to cover up the fact that there is clear paucity of content, exasperated me, and I wanted to offer an alternative form of entertainment that offered human interest stories and focused on social issues rather than special effects. This is on the general level, on a more personal level, I wanted to commemorate, in a meaningful way, my dear cousin Vanya see ARMANI, page 14



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Armenia: Turkey Can’t Play Role in Karabakh Settlement

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Turkey cannot play any role in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Armenian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Anna Naghdalyan said on Tuesday, March 3.

Her comments came after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs, who are tasked to mediate negotiations on the Karabakh conflict.

“Given the unfriendly policy towards Armenia and the Armenian people, which is also reflected in the unilateral military and political support to Azerbaijan, Turkey cannot play any role in the peaceful settlement of the issue,” Naghdalyan said.

### Iraqi Yazidi Child Recovers after Surgery In Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A 3-year-old Iraqi Yazidi girl, Arzinda, is recovering after surgery in Yerevan’s Nork-Marash medical center. She has already been transported to the hospital ward, the medical center told Armenpress on February 27.

Arzinda was suffering from a congenital heart defect. She underwent surgery on February 24. Arzinda was transported to Yerevan through the 2019 Aurora Prize laureate Mirza Dinnayi and his Luftbrücke Irak (Air Bridge Iraq).

MP Rustam Bakoyan, Healthcare Minister Arsen Torosyan, Armenia’s Ambassador to Iraq Hrachyan Poladyan and Nork-Marash Medical Center assisted Arzinda’s mother in transporting the child to Armenia and providing the necessary treatment.

The medical center noted they are waiting for a second child from Iraq who is also suffering a congenital heart defect. The child will be transported to Yerevan within the frames of the same initiative.

### Chief Designer of Sukhoi-34 Dies

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – The chief designer of Russia’s multifunctional fighter-bomber Sukhoi-34, Rollan Martirosov, died at 84, on February 28, a source in the aircraft building industry told TASS.

Martirosov was born in Moscow on October 6, 1935. He joined the Sukhoi design bureau in 1959 after graduation from the Ordzhonikidze Moscow Aviation Institute. He rose up the career ladder from engineer to chief designer.

Martirosov was integral in designing many Sukhoi planes, including Sukhoi-24 and Sukhoi-24M.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

PM's Wife Goes on Tour Of Americas

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's wife Anna Hakobyan, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the My Step and City of Smile charity foundations, departed on March 3 for the United States on a visit, where at the invitation of the State Department she was scheduled to participate at the annual International Women of Courage awarding ceremony on March 4.

US First Lady Melania Trump was scheduled to deliver remarks at the event.

During the visit the Armenian Hakobyan is scheduled to meet with Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia Brock Bierman, Hakobyan's Office said.

On the same day, Anna Hakobyan was to attend a concert at the Washington National Cathedral dedicated to the 100th anniversary of establishment of Armenian-American diplomatic relations.

On March 6, Hakobyan was scheduled to travel to Brazil to meet with First Lady Michelle Bolsonaro in Brasilia. Later on the same day, Anna Hakobyan will meet Armenia's Honorary Consul Hilda Burmaian in Sao Paulo.

On March 7, Anna Hakobyan will travel to Argentina and meet with First Lady Fabiola Yáñez in Buenos Aires. Hakobyan will return to Yerevan on the same day.

Medieval Historian Samvel Karapetyan Dies

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Historian, researcher and author Samvel Karapetyan, 58, passed away on February 27.

Born in 1961, Samvel Karapetyan was an expert in medieval architecture, specializing in the study of the historical monuments of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and neighboring countries.

He surveyed and catalogued thousands of artifacts of Armenian history and architecture during the course of more than two decades.

Karapetyan headed the Yerevan branch of the Research on Armenian Architecture NGO.

He was also known as an outspoken critic of the treatment of Armenian monuments in Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan

He presented his findings to US Congress in 2007 and to the European Court of Human Rights in 2008

In 2007, Karapetyan won the Armenian Presidential Humanitarian Sciences Prize for his work in literature.

Kuwait Emir's Daughter Meets with Hakobyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Chairperson of the boards of trustees of My Step and City of Smile charitable foundations Anna Hakobyan, hosted on March 2 the daughter of the 14th Emir of Kuwait, Sheikha Hessa Saad al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Al-Sabah talked about her activities, particularly the Arab Council of Businesswomen, and Hakobyan presented the activities of My Step and City of Smile charitable foundations, as well as the Women for Peace campaign. Presenting the goal of the campaign, Hakobyan emphasized that peace is an absolute value and it's time for women to consolidate for the sake of peace.

During the conversation, Al-Sabah shared her impressions of Armenia and stressed that she visits the country with special warmth every time. She spoke about her Armenian grandmother, Elizabeth, who lived in Zeytun during the Armenian Genocide, and escaped the genocide, finding herself in Deir ez-Zor desert where she met her future husband.

Al-Sabah told that her Armenian grandmother played a major role in her life and constantly pushed her to get an education and struggle for achieving her goals.

Al-Sabah is president of the Council of Arab Businesswomen (CABW). Al-Sabah serves on several committees: Kuwait Volunteers Women Society, the Kuwait Businesswomen Committee, Arab African Woman Council, and the Women's Affairs Committee.

Armenia Is Taking Precautions As Coronavirus Arrives

CORONAVIRUS, from page 1 addressed aired on Facebook.

Despite the prime minister's calls to "maintain calm," the news of the first coronavirus case detected in Armenia triggered panic buying of foodstuffs in some supermarkets in Yerevan. There were also reports that holidaymakers began cancelling hotel bookings in Tsaghkadzor for fear of being infected by the people quarantined at the secluded local hotel.

Iran has become the hot spot for the disease in the Middle East. An Iranian Health Ministry spokesman on February 29 said nine people had died from the virus over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of reported deaths to 43 amid 593 confirmed infections.

Iran has been linked to most of the more than 200 confirmed cases of the virus now spread across the region, and many countries in and outside the Caucasus, Middle East and Central Asia have imposed restrictions on travel to and from Iran in an effort to curtail the disease's spread.

Neighboring Georgia and Azerbaijan reported infections this week, with three in each country.

One day after Armenian authorities reported the first such case, Pashinyan also urged Armenians to avoid nonessential travel to Italy and Turkey.

Armenia has nearly 1,000 laboratory test kits for detecting novel coronavirus and will get 2,000 more on March 6 Torosyan said in an interview with journalist Karlen Aslanyan.

"In addition, we negotiate with the UK and Russia. There are some offers also from China, Japan and the US. We are still considering if we should get new test kits, since up till now we received the test kits from our partners as assistance. It's possible that there will be no need for new ones, because my prediction is that we are on the way of declining outbreaks with the exception of one-two countries. Many other specialist also share my prediction," Torosyan said.

Moderna Therapeutics Working On Virus

Moderna Therapeutics, a Cambridge, Mass.-based biotech company co-found-

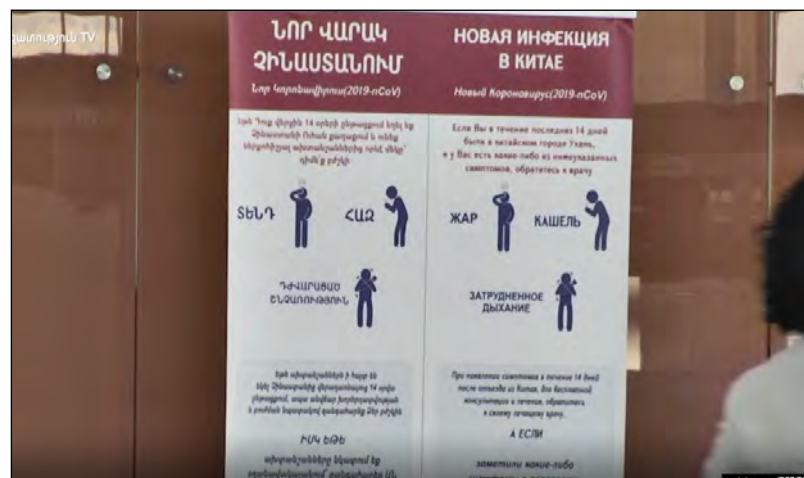
ed by Noubar Afeyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, has shipped the first batches of its COVID-19 vaccine, Time reports.

The vaccine was created just 42 days after the genetic sequence of the COVID-19 virus, called SARS-CoV-2, was released by Chinese researchers in mid-January.

The first vials were sent to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in

responding to this global health emergency with record speed. The collaboration across Moderna, with NIAID, and with CEPI has allowed us to deliver a clinical batch in 42 days from sequence identification," said Juan Andres, chief technical operations and quality officer at Moderna.

"This would not have been possible without our Norwood manufacturing site, which uses leading-edge technology to enable flexible operations and ensure high quality standards are met



A poster urging caution (RFE/RL Photo)

Bethesda, MD, which will ready the vaccine for human testing as early as April.

Moderna's vaccine against COVID-19 was developed in record time because it's based on a relatively new genetic method that does not require growing huge amounts of virus.

Instead, the vaccine is packed with mRNA, the genetic material that comes from DNA and makes proteins.

Moderna wins bragging rights as it kick-starts first experimental coronavirus clinical trial.

Moderna's hope lays in its messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine, mRNA-1273, which has been shipped out to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) for a phase 1 test set to start as early as April.

This will be tested on several dozen healthy patients to assess safety and immune response.

"I want to thank the entire Moderna team for their extraordinary effort in

for clinical-grade material."

On the news (which was first published by The Wall Street Journal), the unicorn biotech, which is predominately an early-stage company with much to prove, saw its shares shoot up more than 18% after-hours to around \$19 a share, down from its heights of more than \$24 at the start of the month (which then led to a public offering of its common shares).

Worldwide, the COVID-19 outbreak, which began in China, has infected more than 86,000 people and killed some 3,000.

Most of the deaths and infections have occurred in China, but the epidemic has spread elsewhere, with Iran becoming the hardest hit outside of mainland China.

(Reports from RFE/RL, Armenpress, Reuters, news.am and Fierce Biotech were used to compile

Armenian AIDS Clinic Staff Quit in Protest

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The work of Armenia's sole medical center specializing in the treatment of HIV and AIDS was disrupted on Friday, February 28, as 80 percent of its employees resigned in protest against the government's decision to merge it with another clinic.

The Armenian Ministry of Health, which initiated the decision earlier this year, says that the Republican Center for the Prevention of AIDS must be incorporated into a Yerevan hospital which treats other infectious diseases, including the flu and similar viruses.

Health Minister Arsen Torosyan insisted earlier in February that Armenia no longer needs a specialized HIV/AIDS clinic and that it now makes more sense to have all infectious diseases treated by a single medical institution. "The fight against AIDS must be integrated into the overall healthcare system," he said.

The affected HIV/AIDS medics strongly disagree, saying the dissolution of their center, which has detected up to 450 cases of HIV annually in Armenia, would break up what they describe as a well-functioning system of preventing, tracking and treating

the immunodeficiency disease.

"In three, four or five years from now we will have ... an uncontrolled epidemic," Arshak Papoyan, who heads one of the center's divisions, claimed on Friday.

The government's decision also sparked protests by many of the HIV-positive Armenians who receive free antiretroviral drugs and counseling at the center. Earlier this week, about 150 of them signed a joint letter to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, urging him to reverse it.

The HIV/AIDS patients are particularly worried about Torosyan's intention to "decentralize" services provided by the Republican Center. That includes transferring the distribution of antiretroviral drugs from the center to regular polyclinics across the country. According to Torosyan, this will destigmatize HIV and AIDS and get people suffering from it out of social "isolation."

HIV carriers counter that any breach of the confidentiality guaranteed by the center would only worsen discrimination encountered by them and the stigma associated with their disease. "None of us

will go to a polyclinic or the Nork hospital [in Yerevan,] one of them told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

On Wednesday, Torosyan fired the center's longtime director, Samvel Grigoryan, for his refusal to help implement the controversial merger. Just hours later, Grigoryan's deputy, Aram Hakobyan, was briefly detained by police for allegedly refusing to hand the clinic's official seal to Artur Berberyan, its acting director appointed by the minister.

It emerged on Friday at least 86 of the 108 people working at the center have tendered their resignations in response to the government's failure to meet their demand.

"The conditions that have been created by various Ministry of Health officials make our continued work impossible," Hakobyan said.

"It's not about an individual, it's about preserving a system," said another senior HIV/AIDS medic, Janetta Petrosyan.

Berberyan deplored the mass resignations of the center's staff. He warned that their "inactivity" could be deemed a criminal offense.



## ARMENIA

# Tigran Mansurian Visits AMAA's Avedisian School in Yerevan

YEREVAN – In the years to come the students at the Avedisian School will not forget where they were on February 21, 2020, when they got a visit from the greatest living Armenian composer, Tigran Mansurian, at their school auditorium.

Hosting Mansurian at the Avedisian School was a memorable event, as the beloved composer, taught a small but invaluable lesson to the students.

He advised the students to see only the good and be forgiving; stay on the path of real victo-



Avedisian School Principal Melanya Geghamyan presents a gift to Tigran Mansurian.

ry to know also to be conquered. He also talked about the freedom of the creative soul; about the character of an intellectual or artist, and many other subjects that touched the soul of the students.

Mansurian was engaging. There were more



Tigran Mansurian with Avedisian School Students and Staff

students who wished to ask questions than those who did. Then he approached the piano, sat down slowly and his fingers touched the keyboard. And the sounds of his famous music from the film "A Little Sky" first spread then began to soar to great heights.

At the conclusion of this event, School Principal Melanya Geghamyan presented Mansurian with a book about Komitas, The Magnificent Song of All Armenians, and a book about the Avedisian School. And the students promised to continue their newly formed friendship with the composer by sending letters.

Established in 1988, the Armenian Missionary Association of America's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School is an educational institution that provides K-12 holistic, tuition-free education in a modern, environmentally friendly building, using state-of-the-art facilities in the low-income Southwest District of Malatia-Sebastia in Yerevan, Armenia.



Avedisian School Students ask questions from Tigran Mansurian.



Avedisian School Students listen attentively to Tigran Mansurian's message.



## Kurdish Community of Armenia Rallyes and Demands Turkey Allow Lawyers Visit Öcalan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Kurdish community of Armenia rallied outside the UN office in Yerevan on February 29, calling on international bodies to demand Turkish authorities to allow the lawyers of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to visit him in prison

"On February 27 the Turkish authorities said that a fire erupted on the island of Imrali, where the leader of the Kurdish people Abdullah Öcalan is imprisoned for 21 years. They [Turkish authorities] did not give other details and did not convey information about the health and condition of our leader. The entire Kurdish people around the world have stood up. We are questioning the Turkish authorities' false, wicked and brute policy because in the past they also made statements claiming Öcalan was sick, or there was an earthquake on the island, and when we rose up it turned out these statements were false. Now we doubt whether or not something has happened to our leader," said Knyaz Hasanov, the head of the Kurdish community of Armenia and Member of Parliament from the ruling My Step faction.

Hasanov emphasized that they want to tell the world that they are demanding from the Turkish authorities to allow Öcalan's lawyers and family to visit him and see his condition.

Kurds living in Turkey itself, in Syria, Iran, Iraq and across Europe are also making the same demands.

The demonstrators said they won't halt the rallies, and chanted "Long live Öcalan", "Long live our leader," "Long live our leader Apo" – Apo is short for both Abdullah and "uncle" in Kurdish.

## Abovian Mayor Indicted

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Law-enforcement authorities have brought criminal charges against a town mayor linked to the opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) nine months after he defeated a government-backed challenger in a tense local election.

The Office of the Prosecutor-General said on March 1 that Mayor Vahagn Gevorgyan of Abovian, a town 15 kilometers north of Yerevan, has been charged with criminal negligence and faces up to five years in prison if convicted.

In a statement, it claimed that he that he deliberately failed to stop a private company from "seizing" communal land in Abovian and illegally constructing an apartment block there. It was not immediately clear whether Gevorgyan, who was apparently not arrested, will deny the accusation.

The statement said that the Investigative Committee decided to indict Gevorgyan even though a regional department of the Armenian police investigated the redevelopment project and cleared the mayor of any wrongdoing last year. It said Prosecutor-General Artur Davtyan personally ordered a new investigation in October because the police inquiry was "flawed."

The police inquiry was ordered by regional

prosecutors in July 2019, one month after Gevorgyan narrowly won reelection in a tightly contested mayoral race. His main challenger, Grigor Gulyan, was a candidate of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract party.

Pashinyan travelled to Abovian and held a rally there in support of Gulyan during the election campaign. Romanos Melikyan, the Civil Contract-affiliated governor of the surrounding Kotayk province, also personally campaigned for Gulyan after taking a leave of absence for that purpose.

The provincial administration had for months been at loggerheads with the Abovian municipality, accusing it of corruption and mismanagement. The mayor strongly denied the allegations. Armenia's National Security Service launched a separate corruption inquiry into the municipality just days before the mayoral election.

Abovian has long been a political and economic stronghold of BHK leader Gagik Tsarukyan. Tensions between his party and Civil Contract ran high in the run-up to the vote.

The BHK, which has the second largest group in the Armenian parliament, did not react to the charges brought against the Abovian mayor as of Monday evening.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## 32nd Sumgait Massacres Anniversary Marked

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan made a statement on Twitter on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Armenian massacres in Sumgait, Azerbaijan, on February 28.

“We are commemorating the innocent victims of Sumgait massacres. 32 years ago Azerbaijan responded to peaceful appeal of Nagorno Karabakh people to self-determination with mass violence and pogroms against Armenians. We pay our duty to memory with strong commitment to prevent such crimes,” he said.

Pashinyan and a high-level delegation visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial to pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the tragedy.

In Artsakh, President Bako Sahakyan visited the Stepanakert Memorial and laid flowers to the monument to the innocent victims.

The President was accompanied by Primate of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Pargev Martirosyan and top officials of the republic.

## ECHR Supports Azeri Journalist's Case Against Government

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on February 28 issued a judgement in the case of journalist Khadija Ismayilova against Azerbaijan.

The court concluded that “the arrest and detention of the applicant, a journalist who had published articles critical of members of the Government and their families for alleged corruption and illegal business activities, had been driven by the improper reasons of silencing her and punishing her for her journalistic activity,” ECHR documents show.

The ECHR ruled that Azerbaijan must pay Ismayilova 20,000 euros in compensation.

## India Wins \$40M Defense Deal to Supply Armenia Radar Systems

NEW DELHI (Times Now) — In a significant victory for the country's defense sector, India beat Russia and Poland to bag a \$40 million defense deal to supply locally-built weapon locating radars to Armenia, it was announced on March 1.

The radar system is developed by the state-owned Defense Research and Development Organization's (DRDO's) Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) Bengaluru-based laboratory and manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

“The deal is for supplying four Swathi Weapon Locating Radars developed by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and manufactured by the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to Armenia in Europe,” government sources said.

## Iconic Istanbul Catholic Church for Sale

ISTANBUL (*Ahval*) — A legal battle has been launched over the fate of Istanbul's iconic Catholic Church of St. Anthony of Padua after a man claiming to represent its owners made moves to put the church up for sale, Turkey's *Yeniçag* newspaper reported on February 28.

The church's high priest, Iulian Pista, has filed an injunction to stop the sale with support from the Vatican's lawyers, the newspaper said.

The Church of St. Anthony, which occupies a prime position in central Beyoglu district, serves the largest Catholic congregation in the city.

But the 1912 building's future has been placed in doubt after a Turkish man, Sebahattin Gök, travelled to Italy, the United States and France to obtain power of attorney from the owners of the land the church is built on and put it up for sale, *Yeniçag* said.

The court will decide on whether to uphold Pista's injunction in the coming days, *Yeniçag* said.

## Turkey Downs Syrian Fighter Jet in Northwest Idlib

By Suzan Fraser and Albert Aji

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey shot down a Syrian fighter jet in Syria's Idlib province Tuesday, March 3, marking the third such incident in as many days, as steady clashes between the two national armies continued over a Russia-backed Syrian government offensive near the Turkish border.

State-run Syrian media said troops shot down a Turkish drone, keeping up a clash in the skies over the northwestern province that has gone on for days and signaled a new stage in the 9-year-old war.

Ahead of a much-anticipated summit later this week between the presidents of Turkey and Russia, the two main power brokers in Syria, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov again laid the blame for the escalation squarely on Turkey.

Russian officials have said they hold Turkey responsible for the collapse of a cease-fire agreement reached in Sochi, Russia in 2018, saying Ankara had not held up its end to rein in militants who continued attacking Syrian and Russian targets.

“The solution to the problem lies in implementing the (Sochi) agreements. They are not being implemented,” Lavrov said after meeting with his Finnish counterpart Pekka Haavisto in Helsinki on Tuesday. He expressed hope that the scheduled Thursday meeting between Russian and Turkish presidents in Moscow will change the situation.

Keeping up the pressure on the battlefield, Turkey's military downed a warplane belonging to Syrian government

forces — for the third time since Sunday. The Syrian military said Turkish forces targeted a warplane with a missile as it was carrying out operations against “terrorist groups” in the rebel-held Idlib region, causing it to crash northwest of the town of Maaret al-Numan. The fate of the crew was not clear.

Turkey has sent thousands of troops into Idlib to support the opposition fighters holed up there, but hasn't been able to roll back the government's advance.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said he hopes to broker a cease-fire in Syria later this week when he meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

But the Russian-backed offensive into the country's last rebel-held area has led to increasingly frequent clashes between the Syrian and Turkish armies that have killed dozens on both sides. It has also threatened a collapse in Turkish cooperation with Moscow, a key backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Turkey's Defense Ministry said one Turkish soldier was killed and nine others were wounded in an attack Tuesday, prompting Turkey's military to strike at 82 Syrian government targets in retaliation. Another soldier was killed on Monday, the ministry said. That raised to 56 the Turkish losses this month in clashes with Russian-backed Syrian forces. The death toll includes 33 Turkish soldiers killed Thursday in a single airstrike.

The government's offensive has also sparked one of the Syrian war's worst humanitarian crises. Almost a million Syrian civilians have fled north toward the sealed Turkish border, overwhelming camps already crowded above capacity.

Tensions in Idlib rose following the Syrian strike that killed the 33 Turkish soldiers. Turkey responded with drone attacks and shelling that killed more than 90 Syrian troops and allied gunmen.

Outraged by the assault against its forces in Syria, Turkey has opened its western borders for thousands of migrants and refugees wanting to cross into Europe, triggering a rush on the land and sea frontiers with Greece. It is Ankara's latest bid to pressure the European Union to help handle the fallout from the disastrous Syrian war. Turkey, which hosts over 3.5 million Syrian war refugees, was an early supporter of the rebels who sought to topple Assad after an uprising against his rule erupted in March 2011.

Lavrov said Moscow fully understands the severity of the migrant issue and what it means for the European Union.

“We're engaged in a dialogue with the EU on this issue but we cannot stop fighting terrorism to solve the refugee problem, even though we are constantly being called upon to do so,” he said.

Idlib, home to more than 3 million civilians, is dominated by al-Qaida-linked factions, but Russia and the Syrian government label all opposition to Assad as “terrorist.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, announced the U.S. would provide an additional \$108 million in humanitarian assistance for Syrians in response to the crisis. Craft, who traveled to Turkey's border with Syria, said the funds would provide food, shelter, clothing and other material for people in Syria and the region.

“While money will help address urgent needs, it's not the answer,” Craft said.

## Letter from Africa: Ethiopia's lost Armenian Community

By Ismail Einashe

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BBC) — My search for the last Armenians of Ethiopia began in Piassa, the bustling commercial center of the old part of the capital, Addis Ababa.

On previous visits to the city, I had always been intrigued by the snippets I had heard about the community and its history.

There had long been a connection between Ethiopia and Armenia through the Orthodox Church. But this developed beyond priests, to bring in diplomats and traders.

In the 19th Century, a handful of Armenians played a vital role in the court of Emperor Menelik II.

And later, in the early 20th century, a community settled that went on to have an economic and cultural impact in the country.

On a sticky afternoon, I stood outside the gates of the exquisite St George Armenian Apostolic Holy Church that was built in the 1930s.

It looked closed but I called out “selam” — “hello” in Amharic.

A confused-looking elderly security guard came out and after I explained that I wanted to look around, he went to fetch Simon, the Armenian-Ethiopian caretaker.

The quiet, dignified man came out and told me that they do not get many visitors.

### Haile Selassie's influence

The church is rarely open, as there is no priest these days, and the community, of no more than 100, is mostly elderly.

Inside the church, the altar is ornately decorated and red Persian rugs cover the floor.



Two women at church (BBC photo courtesy of Getty Images)

This was the heart of the community that began to grow in numbers during the rule of Haile Selassie who, as Ras Tafari, became prince regent of Ethiopia in 1916 and Emperor from 1930 to 1974.

Under his leadership, Ethiopia began to rapidly modernize and Armenian courtiers, businessmen and traders played an important role in this transition.

In 1924, Ras Tafari visited the Armenian monastery in Jerusalem, where he met a group of 40 children who had been orphaned by the mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during World War I.

Moved by their plight, he asked the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem if he could take them to Ethiopia and look after them there.

The 40 orphans, or arba lijoch in Amharic, were all trained in music and went on to form the imperial brass band of Ethiopia.

They were led by an Armenian, Kevork

Nalbandian, who composed the imperial anthem.

The community reached its zenith in the 1960s when it numbered 1,200.

Despite their small numbers they had a crucial role in ushering Ethiopia into the modern world - from helping to develop the distinctive Ethiopian jazz style to working as tailors, doctors, business people and serving in the imperial court.

But as the Armenian community was tied to the imperial history of the country, once the emperor fell the community declined.

Haile Selassie was overthrown in 1974 by the Marxist Derg junta, which went on to seize businesses and property, including that of the Armenians.

Their numbers tumbled as many fled to North America and Europe.

But a few stayed and some married within the local community, creating a unique blend of Armenian and Ethiopian cultures.

They can still be seen in the church for special religious celebrations.

But there is also the Armenian social club, which has a restaurant that reminds people of the taste of home.

Simon, the church caretaker, told me that I should go.

It was a Tuesday night and, apart from my friend and myself, there was a group of three Armenian-Ethiopian women who were delighted to see strangers in the restaurant.

They admitted that the community was not what it used to be. But the social club remained as a way to keep it alive.

That night, as I tucked into delicious and sumptuous börek and lula kebabs, I felt I was tasting the history of the Armenians in Ethiopia.

(This story first appeared on the BBC website on March 1.)



## INTERNATIONAL

# Prime Minister Pashinyan Pays High-Level Visit to Georgia

TBILISI – The official reception of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on March 3 visited Tbilisi, where he was welcomed by his Georgian counterpart, Giorgi Gakharia.

Then the Prime Ministers had a private talk. In his speech, Giorgi Gakharia said: “Dear Prime Minister, Nikol, I am pleased to have the opportunity to host you in Georgia. We work at the government level on a daily basis to deepen our neighborly relations. I am confident that our meeting today will also serve as a good basis for the deepening of relations between the two peoples.”

Gakharia added that Armenia and Georgia live in a complex region and both countries understand that regional stability is the basis for the development of states. “We must first take care of the peace of our countries and then political, economic, cultural issues,” the Georgian Prime Minister said.

Pashinyan also thanked for the invitation and warm reception. “Dear Prime Minister, Dear Giorgi, The importance of our countries’ relations is hard to overestimate. Our countries have deep cultural, political, historical ties. We have lived side by side for millennia, and it is time to think about our joint development in this region, if not millennia, then centuries. What I am saying is not simply a beautiful formulation, but our perceptions of our relations with Georgia are of a strategic nature. Our countries have broader cooperation in both common and differentiated, but we view our regional relations on a completely different plane. Another factor strengthening Armenian-Georgian relations is the commitment to democratic values. This is another important corner stone. “Nikol Pashinyan said. The Prime Minister emphasized that during the last one and a half years the cooperation with Georgia has been able to give a new quality and expressed conviction that this visit will further strengthen the level of bilateral cooperation. Nikol Pashinyan added that the governments of the two countries succeed in pushing forward all agreements with clear steps.

Afterwards Nikol Pashinyan and Giorgi Gakharia continued the negotiations in an extended format.

Pashinyan noted that there is a great deal of unused potential in the Armenian-Georgian relations and its full implementation is an important part of the bilateral agenda. According to the head of the Armenian government, the executive bodies of the two countries here have many opportunities to bring economic cooperation to a whole new level. “Democracy is also important in this respect, because in my view, if people perceive Armenia and Georgia as democratic territories, the investment attractiveness of our countries will increase. We respectfully aspire to Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration. It turns out that our countries



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, right, and Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia

have different perceptions of security systems, but in my opinion we have a general idea of our security. Armenia cannot be a security threat to Georgia, and Georgia cannot be a threat to Armenia,” Pashinyan emphasized, adding that half a month after assuming the post of Prime Minister of Armenia, he proposed this formula during his visit to Georgia as a basis for bilateral relations.

“We welcome Georgia’s position that all conflicts should be resolved peacefully. In general, the conflicts in the world and in our region are completely different from each other, in their content, origin, history and depth. The fact that we are members of the EAEU [Eurasian Economic Union] and that Georgia has signed a free trade agreement with the EU [European Union] creates new opportunities for our cooperation, and discussing them will be at the heart of our discussions,” Pashinyan said.

Afterwards, the interlocutors discussed a number of issues on the Armenian-Georgian agenda. The parties attached importance to the steps aimed at expanding trade and economic cooperation and in this context considered necessary to undertake measures



Georgian Parliament Speaker Archil Talakvadze, left, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

aimed at deepening business ties. Nikol Pashinyan and Giorgi Gakharia touched upon prospective projects in transport, energy and other fields, highlighting the development of transit potential of the two countries in the field of land, electricity and telecommunications.

The parties also exchanged views on cooperation in the fields of high technology, education and science.

Issues of regional importance were also touched upon. Both leaders stressed the importance of exclusively peaceful means to resolve conflicts.

Pashinyan was later hosted by Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili.

Welcoming Pashinyan, Zurbishvili praised the friendly relations between the two countries and noted

that the issues and initiatives discussed at today’s meetings would give a new impetus to the further development and strengthening of relations.

“It is a pleasure to meet you again. I can state that the Armenian-Georgian relations have been developing since our first meeting,” Pashinyan said, expressing confidence that during the visit new opportunities for development of interstate cooperation would be outlined.

Pashinyan and Zurbishvili discussed a number of issues on the agenda of Armenian-Georgian relations. Afterwards the discussions continued during the official dinner.

Pashinyan later met with Georgian Parliament Speaker Archil Talakvadze.

Talakvadze stressed the importance of the active cooperation between the governments and parliaments of the two countries and emphasized that this visit would contribute to the further strengthening and expansion of the ties between the Armenian and Georgian peoples. He praised the cooperation formed between the parliamentarians both in bilateral relations and on international platforms.

Pashinyan stressed the importance of close cooperation between the parliament deputies, noting that the close relations of the Armenian and Georgian parliamentarians have an important contribution to the development of good neighborly relations between the two countries.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili

# Community News

## Archbishop Scholarship Fund Rises to New Heights to Help Children's Education

BURBANK – The education of Armenian children was celebrated on Valentine's Day, not just "in words, but in deeds." (1 John 3:18) last week. A jovial donor appreciation dinner marking the eighth straight year of the goals of the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund of the Western Diocese was held at Casitas Hollywood among supporters who recognized the necessity of scholarship and financial aid to assist Armenian schools in retaining student enrollment. Since the inception of the Scholarship Fund in 2012, it has grown to new heights, providing over \$285,000 in assistance to a multitude of need-based students in 11 Armenian schools.

"Education plays a continuous role in all spheres in the lives of our children. Your presence tonight, and your support over the years is truly an act of love demonstrated by your faith in our children as the leaders of tomorrow," said Derderian, whose vision was the motivating strength behind this philanthropic mission. "I am immensely grateful for your trust in this most important mission for our children because now more than ever, there is a need to fulfill unmet financial obligations of students



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate, (Alice Chakrian in background.)

who wish to pursue an education in our Armenian schools.

The evening began with an outdoor champagne reception where board members and the Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, greeted guests before proceeding indoors for dinner and a program. Guests were then welcomed by the senior advisor to the board, Roy Boulghourjian, who highlighted the importance of the Scholarship Fund mission. "We value each of you for your unwavering support which has proved instrumental in retaining student enrollment in the Armenian schools," he said. He invited Rev. Khajag Shahbazian, pastor of St. Leon Cathedral to give the invocation and blessing of the tables.

During the course of the evening, Diran Avagyan, project manager at the Western Diocese and an advisor, said it was "an honor" to serve on the board with "talented and

see SCHOLARSHIPS, page 5



Diran Avagyan, Project Manager and Advisor



A worshipper at the Vartan Day service

## Courage and Sacrifice of St. Vartan Remembered At Cathedral That Bears His Name

NEW YORK – A Vartanantz Day service and dinner program, commemorating Armenian military leader and martyr St. Vartan Mamigonian, was held at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on February 20. The event was organized under the auspices of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, with the participation of

By Steve Nigohosian

the Mid-Atlantic Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese, presided over the service and program.

The feast day began with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy officiated by the Rev. Voski Galstyan, the newest priest of the Diocese, who was ordained by the Primate's hand this past summer.

A dinner followed in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, featuring remarks by Bishop Daniel Findikyan, keynote speaker Deacon Timothy Aznavourian, and Mid-Atlantic District Representatives for the Knights and Daughters of Vartan (respectively) Dr. Edward Sanossian and Seta Izmirliyan.

In his speech, Aznavourian reflected on how the Armenian peoples' unwavering commitment to Christianity throughout the centuries continues to be relevant in modern times.

"Armenian Christians today are able to refresh our souls and spirit in the bravery embodied by St. Vartan and his soldiers on the battlefield," he said.

see VARTAN, page 11



Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan

## Knights and Daughters of Vartan to Hold Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square

NEW YORK – The 105th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide will take place in Times Square, on Sunday, April 26, from 2 to 4 p.m. Join thousands in solidarity alongside noted politicians, academics and artists to honor the victims of the Armenian Genocide while advancing the fight towards global recognition. Special accolades will be given to the US House and Senate for standing on the right side of history and approving measures formally recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Cultural aspects of the program will be presented by members of the Armenian homeland as well as the Diaspora. Students from the Sipan Armenian School of Paramus, NJ, will sing the Armenian and American anthems. The commemoration will be led by the masters of ceremonies Armen McOmber, Esq. and Nvair Beylerian.

In conjunction with the Times Square Commemoration, the Knights and Daughters of Vartan sponsor an annual global essay contest and Young Professionals event, 100 Years & Beyond, for the New York metro area.

The annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square is sponsored by the Knights of Vartan and Daughters of Vartan, a national fraternal organization, and co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Bar Association and the Armenian Council of America; participating organizations include the Diocese of the Armenian Church, Prelacy of the Armenian Church, Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Armenian Missionary Association, Armenian Evangelical Union, Armenian Catholic Eparchy, and several national Armenian youth organizations.

The event was founded in 1985 by the late Sam Azadian, a former Brooklyn, New York resident, who lost four siblings during the Armenian Genocide

### Essay Contest

The essay should be no more than 500 words, double-spaced, in 12-point font.

A digitally created image, digital photograph or photograph of an original art piece can also be sent. Accepted file formats: .jpeg, .bmp

Films should have a running time no longer than 5 minutes and the accepted file formats are: .mp4, .mpeg, .mov

This is not a research paper but should have original words and thoughts. The essay will be judged on its originality, clarity, historical accuracy and understanding of the essay contest theme. All submissions should include the primary source link and/or name.

The contest is open to high school and college students. The deadline is April 5. Email submissions to [apri24nyc@gmail.com](mailto:apri24nyc@gmail.com).

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners chosen by the judges will be awarded \$300, \$200 and \$100 respectively and announced at Times Square and in the media.

The essay contest is sponsored by Knights & Daughters of Vartan ([www.kofv.org](http://www.kofv.org)) an international Armenian fraternal organization headquartered in the U.S.



COMMUNITY NEWS

# Archbishop Scholarship Fund Rises to New Heights to Help Children's Education

SCHOLARSHIPS, from page 6  
dedicated individuals whose philanthropic impact on our community has enabled young people to achieve their dreams by keeping them enrolled in Armenian schools."

Avagyan explained that donations to the fund could also be made through the newly established website ([www.abpderderianscholarship-fund.com](http://www.abpderderianscholarship-fund.com)), which was created with the help of member Michael Zakian.

Alice Chakrian, founding chair of the fund, communicated her passion for the "Send Your Love to a Child in Need" theme of the program.

"From inception, this has been a mission of Love to keep our children engaged in Armenian schools, strengthening their love of language and faith in church and homeland." Chakrian expressed wholehearted gratitude for the suc-

cess of the program through the vision of Abp. Derderian, and thanked donors and Board members alike for their support of her leadership of eight years as Chairlady of the Scholarship Fund.

Chakrian will be relinquishing her position to Eileen Keusseyan, Esq. "This mission is a labor of love, and under the auspices of Primate Hovnan Derderian, the Board and I entrust its leadership to dear friend and colleague Eileen Keusseyan."

Attendees gave a standing ovation to Chakrian for her years of drive that became the motivating force affecting the progress and prosperity of the Scholarship Fund. On behalf of the Board, Keusseyan presented her with a diamond heart, a symbol of Chakrian's unwavering love for the mission. "You have raised



ABP Scholarship Board L-R: Diran Avagyan, Silva Katchiguian, Silvana Vartanian, Anahid Andreassian, Alice Chakrian, Vicki Grigorian, Peggy Kankababian, Liz Zorian, Eileen Keusseyan, Roy Boulghourjian, Silva Sepetjian, Armine Bedrossian and Angela Parsegian.



Alice Chakrian, outgoing Chair and Eileen Keusseyan, Incoming Chair



Roy Boulghourjian, Senior Advisor

the bar with your enthusiasm and devotion," said Keusseyan. "It is our moral duty to continue to make the vision a growing truth."

The festive evening continued into the night with musical entertainment by Artist Nari Harutuyunyan and DJ Toro & Associates.

The Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund was established on the conviction that each and every Armenian student is entitled to an Armenian education within an Armenian school. Through scholarship and financial assistance program, The Fund is dedicated to helping Armenian students in financial need who are intent on pursuing their studies in an Armenian school, which has the added benefit of improving our community at large and developing leaders who are committed to serving their Church and their people.

Current main recipients of the Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund include: AGBU Manogian-Demirdjian School (Canoga Park, CA); the Armenian Sisters Academy (La Crescenta, CA); the C&E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School (Sherman Oaks, CA); St.

Gregory A. & M. Hovsepien School (Pasadena, CA); Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School, (Pasadena CA) (2007); the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America Saturday Schools (Burbank, CA); American University of Armenia (pillar), FLAG Dual Immersion Programs (GUSD), Moshatagh School, Kashatagh Region (Artsakh)

Under the auspices of the Primate Abp. Hovnan Derderian, members of the Scholarship Fund Board are: Rev. Fr. Khajag Shahbazian, Chairlady, Alice Chakrian; Vice Chairlady, Eileen Keusseyan, Esq.; Diran Avagyan, Diocesan Advisor; Ann Anahid Andreassian, Endowment Funds Manager; Armine Bedrossian, Scholarship Funds Manager; Roy Boulghourjian, Senior Advisor; Peggy Kankababian, Media Relations; Angela Parsegian, Secretary; Silvana Vartanian, Treasurer; Advisors, Vicki Grigorian, Silva Katchiguian, Dr. Kris Mirzayan, Silva Sepetjian and Liz Zorian. Leadership Council: Abp. Hovnan Derderian, Alice Chakrian, Dr. Elie Andreassian and Hagop Hagopian.



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## Luxury Scarves, Women's Online Support Network Raise Funds for Shelter in Yerevan

WATERTOWN – Anet's Collection, a luxury accessories company Based in Los Angeles, and New Paths-Bridging Armenian Women, an inclusive on-line networking group, are launching a collaboration during March, celebrating International Women's Day with a portion of

the lives of women and families. There will be 10 percent off all purchases from [www.anetscollection.com](http://www.anetscollection.com) during the month of March and Abnous will donate 20 percent of sale prices to the Women Support Center in Armenia. Use Promo code WSC10 at



the proceeds to benefit Women's Support Center of Armenia.

Anet Abnous, founder and designer of Anet's Collection, along with co-founders, Armine Hovhannissian and Rosalyn Minassian of New Paths-Bridging Armenian Women, a volunteer-based group on Facebook, are committed to connecting, empowering and supporting women of Armenian heritage world-wide; are combing their creative talent and communication skills. The main purpose for the collaboration is to create greater awareness for the Women's Support Center of Armenia and with your participation, bring forth real change in

checkout to receive the discount. Women's Support Center, [www.womensupportcenter.org](http://www.womensupportcenter.org) maintains two shelters with professional staff dedicated to serving victims and children of domestic abuse. According to WSC's Executive Director, Maro Matosian, "Violence against women-especially domestic violence is an alarming public health and societal problem in Armenia, one in four women experience domestic abuse in the country." Your gift will make a significant difference in the lives of women by providing hygiene essentials, school supplies and clothes for survivors who quickly leave their homes for a safe shelter.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Former US Attorney to Speak at St. James' Men's Club Meeting

WATERTOWN – On Monday, December 2, there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men's Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mesian Cultural and Youth Center in Watertown. Guest speaker will be Christopher F. Bator, US attorney from Cambridge. Bator's topic will be "Violent Crime in the Greater Boston Area." A question-and-answer session will follow.

A retired US attorney from Cambridge, Bator now serves on the faculty of the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School. He also currently serves as a Board Member and Treasurer of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Alma del Mar Charter School in New Bedford.



Bator prosecuted violent drug and organized crime cases as an assistant US attorney in Boston for more than 27 years. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1976, and his JD from Boston University Law School in 1985. He was an associate at Hale and Dorr (now Wilmer Hale) in Boston from 1986-1990.

Other elements of Bator's career in law include: 1974-75, Assistant to Deputy Mayor, Boston; 1977- 1980, Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Hospitals/Director of Boston City Hospital, Boston; 1980-1982 Assistant to Mayor Kevin H. White, Boston; 1986-1990, Associate, Hale and Dorr (now Wilmer Hale) Boston

and 1990-2017, Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Boston.

This St. James Men's Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$17/person. Ladies are invited.

## Rep. Clark Issues Statement on 30th Anniversary Of Anti-Armenian Pogroms in Baku, Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON – On February 28, the Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus Representative Katherine Clark (MA-5) issued the following statement which was entered into the Congressional Record:

"Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 30th anniversary of the anti-Armenian pogroms in then-Soviet Azerbaijan's capital of Baku.

In January 1990, a violent seven-day long riot in Baku broke out against the city's ethnic Armenian civilian population. Approximately 90 Armenians were killed, and hundreds more were brutally beaten and forced to abandon their homes. The Baku Pogrom was just one of several anti-Armenian attacks that took place across Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1990 that were enabled by the Azerbaijani government. From Sumgait to Kirovabad and Baku, Armenian Christians living in the country were murdered, raped, and robbed. These vicious attacks led to the displacement of thousands of Armenian families fleeing the targeted violence as refugees.

These were crimes against humanity that have still gone unrecognized by Azerbaijan. I call upon their government to acknowledge and condemn these acts of violence, actively prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes, and take all appropriate action so that these atrocities never happen again.

Throughout history, the Armenian people have been targets of violence, murder and genocide. We must emphatically condemn these



Rep. Katherine Clark

actions and any efforts to erase these atrocities from our collective memory. Failure to do so will only serve to embolden purveyors of violence against religious and ethnic minorities around the globe. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Armenian Caucus to continue pushing policies promoting peace and human rights for Armenians and for all.

If we do not stand up to hate, we cannot end of the cycle of intolerance."

## OBITUARY

### Richard Martin 'Dick' Kazanjian Veteran, Active in Church, Community

BURLINGTON, Mass. – Richard Martin "Dick" Kazanjian died peacefully at his home surrounded by his family and friends on February 29.

Born on September 8, 1935, in Stoneham, to John and Victoria (Derderian) Kazanjian, he spent his youth in Watertown and Medford.

After graduation from Tufts University in 1958, he proudly served as an artillery officer in the United States Marine Corps, with service aboard ship and on land in several countries.

He and his family lived in Winchester for 52 years.

He leaves his wife of 57 years, Cynthia (Hintlian); son Rick of Chandler, AZ, daughter Andrea Krikorian and her husband Neil Krikorian, and his grandsons Vaughan and Cole Krikorian of Tyngsboro, Mass. He is also survived by brother-in-law Aram Hintlian and his wife Becky, sister-in-law Nancy Hintlian (Florida), and many nieces, nephews and great-nieces.

As the eldest of five children, he was predeceased by his brother John Kazanjian, and survived by remaining siblings, Barbara Purks, (California), and Robert and Edward Kazanjian (Florida).

Devotion is a word which described Dick's life, whether to his Church, his family, or the Community. He was a devoted member of the First Armenian Church of Belmont, serving as a past chairman of the Board of Trustees and Church Moderator for many years. After the 1988 Armenian Earthquake, he worked to raise money for the Armenian Children's Milk Fund (Armenian Missionary Association).

He was active in the Winchester Community as a Capital Planning Board and Town Meeting member.

Dick was a dutiful Scottish Rite Mason after earlier reaching Master Councilor in the Medford DeMolay, and an Aleppo Shriner.

He was a past president of Medford Rotary and was recognized as a "Paul Harris Fellow"

by Rotary International. He served as a Board Member of the Medford Co-operative Bank.

He will be remembered as a true friend, for his kind and generous nature as well as his superb BBQ skills on display at numerous First Armenian Church and Holy Trinity Armenian Church Bazaars, Men's Clubs, and Sunday Family Dinners. He loved golf and played in many benefit golf outings. He adored his grandsons and was a ubiquitous presence at their sporting events and other activities, enjoying every minute of them.



Guests are kindly invited to visiting hours at The First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Avenue Belmont, MA from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 5. Funeral Services are taking place at the First Armenian Church at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 6, with interment at Wildwood Cemetery, 34 Palmer Street, Winchester, MA, immediately following funeral services.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

## Dr. David Gutman to Speak on ‘Sojourners, Smugglers, and Dubious Citizens’ at Fresno State

FRESNO – Dr. David Gutman will speak on “Sojourners, Smugglers, and Dubious Citizens: The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America, 1885-1915” on Tuesday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

The presentation is part of the Spring 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.



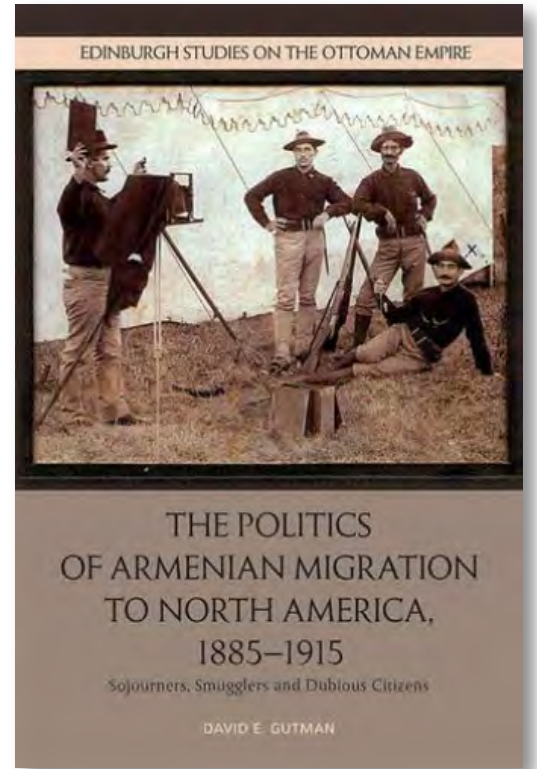
Dr. David Gutman

Between 1885 and 1915, roughly 8,000 Armenians migrated between the Ottoman Empire and North America. For much of this period, Ottoman state authorities viewed Armenian migrants, particularly those who returned to the empire after sojourns abroad, as a political threat to the empire’s security. In response, Istanbul worked vigorously to prevent Armenians both from migrating to and returning from North America.

In response, dense smuggling networks emerged to assist migrants in bypassing this migration ban. The dynamics that shaped the evolution of these networks resemble those that drive the phenomenon of migrant smuggling in the present day. Furthermore, as this talk will discuss, migrants who returned home found themselves stuck in an uneasy legal limbo as both Ottoman and United States governments disavowed them as citizens, leaving them vulnerable to deportation from their own ancestral lands. As this talk contends, the Armenian migratory experience in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both parallels and sheds light on themes such as smuggling, deportation, and the criminalization of migration, that are central to the issue of global migration in the 21st century.

Gutman is associate professor of history at Manhattanville College, New York. He received his PhD in history from Binghamton University. He is the author of *The Politics of Armenian Migration in the Late Ottoman Empire: Sojourners, Smugglers, and Dubious Citizens* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

The lecture is free and open to the public.



# SPONSOR A TEACHER IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



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## District Court Judge Krista Hartounian Runs for Reelection in Michigan

REDFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. – Judge Krista Haroutunian has served as a Redford Township District Court Judge since October of 2018, when she was appointed by then Governor of Michigan, Rick Snyder.

Haroutunian had been in private law practice with her father and mother for 20 years; and had also served as a special assistant attorney general representing Adult Protective Services.

She served actively on the two legislative bodies of the State Bar of Michigan, including 8 years on the Representative Assembly, chairing various sub-committees and special committees; as well as 3 years on the Board of Commissioners, serving on the Budget committee for 2 years. Haroutunian continues to be a member of various bar associations in Wayne and Oakland Counties, including the Armenian American Bar Association in Michigan.

Since 1998 Haroutunian has been a member of Maro chapter of the Armenian Relief Society. In addition, she has been a member of the Michigan Women’s Commission since 2011 (a Michigan Constitutionally mandated commission comprised of 15 women from across the State addressing a number of issues regarding women).

Haroutunian earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan in 1993, and juris doctor degree from Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University in 1998.

Haroutunian is running to retain her seat this year. The campaign committee is holding a reception on Tuesday, March 10, at Hagopian World of Rugs in Birmingham, 6-8 p.m. Donations are \$75 per person with sponsorship opportunities available.

No corporate checks are allowed. Cash donations are prohibited. Checks can be made payable to Committee to Retain Judge Krista Haroutunian, P.O. Box 39937, Redford, MI 48239 or RSVP by email to [info@JudgeKristaforRedfordCourt.com](mailto:info@JudgeKristaforRedfordCourt.com).



Judge Krista Hartounian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Members of Congress, Armenian Assembly Outline Priorities for Armenia, Artsakh

WASHINGTON — On February 27, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a hearing for Members of Congress to testify and submit requests for the Fiscal Year 2021. Among those who testified in person were Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA) and Jim Costa (D-CA), who requested robust funding to Artsakh (also known as Nagorno-Karabakh) including de-mining, reported the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly).

In her testimony, Chu requested \$10 million to continue America's successful and life-saving de-mining program in Nagorno-Karabakh. She also underlined the troubling disparity of US military aid between Armenia and Azerbaijan by noting, "This request of \$10 million pales in comparison to the \$100 million in security assistance given to Azerbaijan, so we can be sure that financial constraints are not the obstacle here." Last year, working in tandem with The HALO Trust, the Assembly helped spearhead a letter on the importance of funding for de-mining in Artsakh.

Costa also highlighted the importance of demining stating: "I think it is our moral duty as a nation to continue to lead this humanitarian effort, and I strongly urge this committee to robustly fund non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, de-mining, and related programs," said Congressman Costa during his testimony. He too urged that operations to clear mines continue by The HALO Trust. "These programs are critical across the globe as we try to strive for peace and democracy as we

try to stabilize troubled areas," he added.

Earlier this week, Armenian Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan outlined key priorities in congressional testimony submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

The Assembly's testimony calls for: \$25 million in assistance to Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh); \$10 million in military assistance to Armenia; \$100 million in democracy and economic development assistance to Armenia; and to reverse and rectify the severe military imbalance between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Assembly also urges robust assistance to Christian and other minority communities at risk in the Middle East, as well as to more than 20,000 refugees in Armenia, and \$20 million to support Armenia's efforts to serve as a regional safe haven for refugees.

The Assembly's testimony drew specific attention to the disparity in US military aid between Azerbaijan and Armenia widely reported last year. At the 2019 National Advocacy Conference, the Assembly raised serious concerns and urged Congress to remedy this issue and uphold the letter and spirit of Section 907 by ensuring military aid parity. Further, given Azerbaijan's war rhetoric and cease-fire violations, the Assembly also recommended that Congress cease any and all military assistance to Azerbaijan.

On another priority, the subject of Armenia's progress in democratic development, Khaloyan added, "Given these



Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA), Congressman Jim Costa (D-CA)

remarkable advances to Armenia, we welcomed Congresswoman Jackie Speier's amendment last year to provide \$40 million in additional democratic assistance and urge not less than \$100 million in FY 2021 for Armenia's continued institutional reforms and economic development. By doing so, Congress will loudly signal that America strongly supports and invests in democracy, which will have a profound effect across the globe."

## US Representatives Rally for Artsakh Aid at Capitol Hill Commemoration of 30th Anniversary of Baku Pogroms

WASHINGTON — Congressional Armenian Caucus leaders joined with human rights advocates and Armenian American community leaders in a solemn remembrance of the 30th anniversary of the anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku, featuring bipartisan calls for continued US humanitarian aid to Artsakh, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

"I stand with you and the people of Artsakh and their rejection of the repeated attempts by the Azerbaijani government to bring them back under oppressive rule," said Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Gus Bilirakis (R-FL). "They fought for their freedom, their right for self-determination, and the opportunity to be greater than second-class citizens. I'm glad to be here today as we recognize the 30th Anniversary of the Baku pogroms, and

Azerbaijan continues to oppose them.

Congressional Armenian Caucus founding Co-Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ), who is the most traveled Congressional leader to Artsakh, noted that he first met survivors of the Baku attacks in the early 1990's during a visit to Armenia. He noted that pogroms such as these have roots in times even before the Armenian Genocide and the importance of vigilance to ensure they never happen again. Pallone then cited ongoing efforts to support Artsakh, including the appropriation of US funds for de-mining efforts and maintaining military aid parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"This fight is not just for Armenian people, but for all oppressed people all over the world, regardless of who you are because if we don't speak up here, who will," said Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), who called for perseverance in the fight to secure a durable and democratic resolution to the Artsakh conflict. Earlier in the day, in a Congressional statement commemorating the Baku pogroms, Krishnamoorthi called on the Azerbaijani government to "acknowledge that these atrocities occurred and that it seeks justice for the victims by prosecuting those who committed these horrific acts of violence."

"The Armenian people continue to make sacrifices for the right to self-determination," stated Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) who noted that, in the case of Artsakh, "we must never let up so that human rights be recognized." Costa pledged to visit Artsakh later in the year, coinciding with the 7th annual Fresno-Armenia medical mission.

"You are doing a service to human rights in this world by calling attention to the pogroms in Baku," said Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI), who, as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, pledged ongoing support for Artsakh de-mining and other activities.

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), who traveled to Armenia and Artsakh with Chu last fall, noted that "we have to do our level best to continue funding for de-mining in Artsakh," expressing disappointment that the US Ambassador to Armenia expressed reluctance to fund the project. In remarks on the US House floor earlier in the week, Speier noted that "even though Armenia and

Artsakh have embraced the Royce-Engel peace proposal, while Azerbaijan has rejected it, Artsakh could lose the mining assistance. And today, even though Armenia has transformed itself into a growing democracy, it is autocratic Azerbaijan that has received a massive, disproportion increase in military aid from the United States. If the administration won't help those who stand for peace and democracy, Congress must. The legacy of Baku, Sumgait, and Kirovabad reminds me why."

Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA), who led an amendment to secure continued US aid to Artsakh in 2019, noted that "Armenians in Baku were killed, tortured, robbed, and tens of thousands were forced to flee their homes to escape persecution, causing families to be uprooted and torn apart. [...] The Aliyev government continues holding a militant policy against Armenians, especially within Artsakh. That's why now, more than ever, it is critical for us to strengthen our ties to Artsakh and hold Azerbaijan accountable for its actions," concluded Cox.

"We must ensure that the victims of the Sumgait and Baku pogroms are never forgotten and that such hateful acts of violence never happen again. We must remain committed to achieving a lasting peace in the Caucasus, and ensure that the people of Artsakh are able to live free from Azerbaijani abuse and aggression," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), referencing her statement submitted to the Congressional record earlier in the week.

Members of Congress in attendance received copies of "The Chronicles of Karabakh", a magnificent picture book detailing the history of the Artsakh, generously donated by Ashot and Ayida Petrosyan, survivors of the Baku pogroms who had traveled to Washington, DC to participate in the solemn commemoration.

Astvsaturian Turcotte: "Just as with anti-Semitism, rooting out the hatred toward Armenians cannot be done by brushing aside this history."

The event featured moving keynote remarks by Anna Astvsaturian Turcotte, who, along with her family, fled the anti-Armenian attacks in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, in the fall of 1989, finding safe haven in the US in 1992. An accomplished lawyer, author, and human rights advocate, Astvsaturian Turcotte, explained, "the same anti-Armenianism that made my grandfather an orphan and that made me a refugee is alive and well today. Just as with anti-Semitism, rooting out the hatred toward Armenians cannot be done by brushing aside this history. The avoidance of calling things as they are contributes to the anti-Armenianism at the highest level of Azerbaijan's government. These crimes continue with shooting across the Artsakh and Armenian borders at civilians."

Astvsaturian Turcotte stressed, "This is the same autocratic Azerbaijan that pardoned and made a hero of a convicted ax-murderer of a sleep-

ing Armenian soldier during a NATO Partnership for Peace Program in Hungary. [...] This is the same Azerbaijan that commits war crimes on civilians living in Armenia during the April, 2016 war [...] And the story continues. And that's because back then in the 1980s there was no justice for the ones that died, no justice for the property we lost."

ANCA Government Affairs Director Tereza Yerimyan, who introduced Astvsaturian Turcotte at the event and served as one of two emcees for the evening, shared the poignant story of Baku survivor Rosa Akopova, who was forced to watch as her daughter was raped and killed during the attacks 30 years ago. "While working for the ANCA in Los Angeles, she [Ms. Akopova] called me to her home to tell her story - not for pity, though she surely deserved our sympathy," explained Yerimyan. "No - she shared her story so that others would not share her fate. 'Artsakh,' she said, 'must be safe, and to be safe, it must be free - free from foreign rule, free from aggression, free of land mines, free to live in peace.'"

The ANCA has launched a nationwide grassroots campaign calling for a \$10 million allocation for US aid to Artsakh in the Fiscal Year 2021 Foreign Aid Bill, to support ongoing de-mining efforts by The HALO Trust and rehabilitation services like those offered by the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center, in Stepanakert.

Earlier in the day, Yerimyan and Astvsaturian Turcotte advocated for broader US support for Artsakh safety and security, as well as continued US assistance in meetings with House Foreign Affairs Committee members Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Steve Chabot (R-OH), and House Appropriations Committee member Chellie Pingree (D-ME).

Armenian Ambassador, Republic of Artsakh Representative Highlight Commitment to Peace; Praise US Support for Artsakh

During the course of the commemorative evening, Artsakh Representative to the US, Robert Avetisyan, who pledged that Artsakh would continue to grow strong enough to ensure that peace. "We are grateful the United States for its support in the effort to establish peace in the region through efforts like the Royce-Engel initiatives and humanitarian de-mining," said Avetisyan.

Armenian Ambassador to the US Varuzhan Nersisyan noted that the Baku Pogrom were the latest in a series of anti-Armenian attacks dating back to 1905 and 1918, and that it took place in the broader context of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict - a brutal and violent Azerbaijani response to the peaceful and democratic Artsakh movement.

The Capitol Hill program was organized by the ANCA, Armenian Assembly of America, Embassy of Armenia, and the Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in cooperation with the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues.



Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), ANCA Government Affairs Director Tereza Yerimyan, with Baku pogroms survivors Anna Astvsaturian Turcotte, Ayida and Ashot Petrosyan at the Congressional Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Baku Pogroms.

stand in solidarity with the people of the Republic of Artsakh."

"The US stands on the side of democracy and peace - and that means standing with the Armenian people," said Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), who characterized the anti-Armenian attacks in Baku, Sumgait, and Kirovabad "a direct assault on the right to self-determination of Artsakh - and it is an assault that is continuing to this day." Chu, who traveled to Artsakh in 2019, successfully led an amendment to the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act urging the implementation of common-sense Royce-Engel proposals, calling for the removal of snipers, deployment of additional OSCE monitors, and placement of gun-fire locators to facilitate Artsakh peace negotiations. Armenia and Artsakh support the proposals, while



COMMUNITY NEWS

# Courage and Sacrifice of St. Vartan Remembered at Cathedral That Bears His Name

VARTAN, from page 6

Aznavourian noted how the ancient Armenian historian Yeghishe recounted the struggle of the Armenians to retain Christianity, despite the Persians' attempt to force a reintroduction of Zoroastrianism.

**Life Beyond Death**

In his own remarks, Findikyan added: "That chapter of our history breathes life into who we are today. St. Vartan knew he would die, but did not look at this tremendous challenge with worldly, human eyes. Instead, he saw it through the eyes of God, with life beyond death, making it possible for us to celebrate the victory of the Christian faith to this very day."

St. Vartan Mamigonian is revered for having

freely practice Christianity.

**An Ongoing Connection**

The Battle of Avarayr is marked each year by Armenians worldwide on the Thursday preceding the Great Lent, in recognition of the ultimate sacrifice made by St. Vartan and his army. The Knights and Daughters of Vartan have been instrumental in ensuring that St. Vartan and the Battle of Avarayr are remembered and observed.

A strong connection to the centuries-old battle was also expressed by the Vartanantz event's attendees, who affirmed that St. Vartan's defense of Christianity is something which they feel appreciative of in their hearts and souls. Many of them nodded in approval as

the evening's speakers emphasized the importance of remembering the many sacrifices that Armenian martyrs have made in defending their Christian faith.

In a moving musical tribute that summed up the spirit of the event, vocalist and St. Vartan Cathedral Choir member Solange Merdinian provided a cultural presentation of Armenian music.

Included in her repertoire of songs were inspirational and emotional versions of the Armenian patriotic anthems Sardarabad and Artyok Ovker En.

The audience immediately began singing along, adding to the palpable feeling of pride and appreciation for Armenia's staunch defense of Christianity throughout the ages, embodied in the words of Yeghishe Vartabed, chronicler of the Vartanantz War: "Death, unanticipated, is death; death, anticipated, is immortality."



Solange Merdinian



Rev. Voski Galstya



Seta Izmirliyan

led the Armenian army at the Battle of Avarayr in A.D. 451, where Christian Armenians took arms against the pagan Persian empire. Although Vartan and his Christian fighters were grossly outnumbered and suffered a military defeat, the battle is significant in that it ultimately changed the course of Armenia's history. After witnessing how unyielding the Armenians were in defending their Christian faith with their very lives, the Persians eventually relented in their bloody campaign of conversion.

The Armenians thereby secured their right to

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Contact: Allen Berber, PE, president@aesane.org, AESA Northeastern Section  
Garbis Baydar, MD, garbisb@aol.com, AAHPO  
Host: Harold Takooshian, PhD, takoosh@aol.com, Fordham University

# Arts & Living

## Western Diocese's Zoraryan Museum To Host Exhibit of Works by Artist Nikol Aghababyan

BURBANK, Calif. – The members of the Zorayan Museum Committee of the Western will present an exhibit of the paintings of Armenian artist Nikol Aghababyan with an official opening and reception on Tuesday, March 17, at 7 p.m.. The works will remain on display on March 18 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, states that this exhibition of the paintings of Nikol Aghababyan are in keeping with the mission of the Zorayan Museum to promote understanding and appreciation of Armenian ethnic, religious and cultural diversity by exposing the beauty of our Heritage and preserving and sharing the experiences with the people of the world.

Aghababyan's works are inspired by the beautiful seasons of Armenia and the rich landscapes, flowers, meadows, streams, lakes, trees, waterfalls, village life and Mt. Ararat.

Aghababyan was born in Koghb, a village of the Tavoush region of Armenia; graduating from the Yerevan Pedagogical Institute, Faculty of Art Painting, in 1986. He is a member of the Armenian Painters Union



Nikol Aghababyan

since 1992. He has had many exhibitions in Koghb, Noyemberyan, Ijevan, Yerevan, Nogorno-Karabakh, Syria, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Germany, Italy, France and the United States (Los Angeles, Fresno, New York). He has stated, "A painting should bring out the best in people. Yes, there is evil in the world, but it has no place in my world of painting."

The exhibition is open to the public and admission is free.

The Zorayan Museum is located in the Western Diocesan Complex of the Armenian Church of North America, 3325 North Glenoaks Boulevard in Burbank.



A painting by Nikol Aghababyan



Iván Gaztañaga

## Gomidas and Other Armenian Materials in Spanish Archives

### Interview with Iván Gaztañaga

MADRID/YEREVAN – Iván Gaztañaga is young Spanish political scientist and PhD in international law and international relations (University of Granada) and expert in Middle East Studies (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). The subject of his research is "The Genocide Against the Armenian People in Diplomatic and Consular Letters (1914-1925)." His article on the Armenian Genocide was published in the April 24 issue of the major Spanish newspaper *El País*.

By **Artsvi Bakhchinyan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

We met in 2017, during his first visit to Armenia, during which he conducted research at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute as a Lemkin scholarship winner.

**Dear Iván, as far as I know you are the first Spanish scholar the studying Armenian Genocide.**

To be honest, I don't really know if I am the first Spanish scholar researching this topic, but I think I was the first researcher discovering and analyzing the Genocide against the Armenians from this perspective: diplomatic letters in our national Historical Archives. Here we have documental resources dating back to at least 1915 which are witnesses of the massacres from Young Turks.

The Armenian Genocide in Spain has been treated very vaguely, possibly like the aftermath of the Great War or even like regional conflict inside Ottoman and Russia Empires. This is one of the reasons why the Armenian Genocide is not taught in university and is not yet relevant for International Relations or International Law disciplines here: does not exist. We have excellent literature and research in the Spanish language from Latin America because of the large Armenian Diaspora.

The awareness of Spanish society on the Armenian issues is connected to two books by Gonzalo Guarch and José Antonio Gurriarán.

Gonzalo Guarch's book *El Testamento Armeni* is a historical novel, not scientific research. He writes it as fiction and it helps the reader a lot to learn and understand the atrocities against the Armenians by the Turks.

José Antonio Gurriarán passed away the last year and it was very sad because despite he was a direct victim of the terrorist attack in Madrid done by ASALA in 1979, he wrote an essay about the Armenian Genocide. He paid attention to "why an Armenian terrorist group exploded a bomb in Madrid? What are they objectives and why?" Despite his trauma he went to Armenia and Lebanon to understand why 1.5 million Armenians vanished from the Ottoman Empire in 1915.

There's another journalist-ethnographer, Virginia Mendoza Benavente, who published a book, *Heridas del Viento*, about her travels and experiences in Armenia. She writes from the Armenian perspective; she has, for example, a conversation with Armenian Genocide survivors who are not alive anymore.

**You study diplomatic and consular letters. Are there many such documents in Spanish archives, if yes, so what kind? In his study "The King of Spain and the Armenian Intellectuals Victims of the Genocide," Vartan Matiossian has mentioned petitions that some Armenians addressed to Spanish king Alfonso XII, asking for his intervention to save deported Armenian intellectuals.**

see GAZTAÑAGA, page 13

## ACF Releases Special Publication In Honor of Diana Der Hovanessian

ARLINGTON, Mass. – The Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) announces the release of the special issue of *Foundation Papers No. 9: Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanessian*. It includes the texts of the presentations, statements and poetry recited during the event, held at the Cultural Foundation on November 4, 2018 in memory of the poet as well as a Festschrift in tribute to Diana Der Hovanessian (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/11/15/paying-tribute-to-diana-der-hovanessian/>). The latter, is a collection of 43 writings by Der Hovanessian's friends, poets, family members and enthusiasts of her literary legacy.

Born in Worcester, Der-Hovanessian, was twice a Fulbright professor of American poetry and was the author of more than 25 books of poetry and translations.

She received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Society of America, PEN/Columbia Translation Center, National Writers Union, Armenian Writers Union, Paterson Poetry Center, Prairie Schooner, American Scholar, and the Armenian Ministry of Culture.

Her poems have appeared in *Agni*, *American Poetry Review*, *Ararat*, *CSM*, *Poetry*, *Partisan*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Nation*, etc., and in anthologies such as *Against Forgetting*, *Women on War*, *On Prejudice*, *Finding Home*, *Leading Contemporary Poets*, *Orpheus and Company*, *Identity Lessons*, *Voices of Conscience*, *Two Worlds Walking*, etc.

She worked as a visiting poet and guest lecturer on American poetry, Armenian poetry in translation, and the literature of human rights at various universities here and abroad.

She served as president of the New England Poetry Club for 30 years.

The Foundation Papers, a periodic publication, was launched in 1992 in response to various requests of audiences and patrons, about the availability of the texts of events held at the ACF. The Papers serves two purposes: to provide a forum for broader exposure of the views of these scholars and intellectuals, and to contribute to cultural life in general, and the field of the Armenian Studies in particular.

Copies of the *Foundation Papers 9: Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanessian* are available for sale (\$12 including shipping and handling) at the Armenian Cultural Foundation office. For more details on the previous issues contact the ACF.



Vivian Shipley at the ACF tribute event in 2018



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Gomidas and Other Armenian Materials in Spanish Archives

GAZTAÑAGA, from page 12

There are at least 20 documents which describe the gestation, growth and the impact of the Genocide. Already in the beginning of 1915, the Spanish Consul at Jerusalem, Jose A. de la Cierva y Lewita, advised Alfonso XII about the fears inside the Christian and Jewish populations because of the Muslim demonstrations and violence against them. In September, Julian Arroyo, Consul in Constantinople, informed regarding the *Tehcir* or Temporary Law: the looting and robbery of Armenian properties and the death marches into the desert. Between September 1915 and February 1916 the consul introduced in his letters and "secret" telegrams terms and definitions of crimes

that will be then used as defining elements of Genocide: xenophobia, hatred, persecution and elimination of minorities, slaughter and extermination of people. He wrote about the massacre of Adana and also how later two million people succumbed. In the summer, Spain was informed about the new Turkish regulation against the few Armenian and Greek survivors in Anatolia and the hard life they will expect.

**You told me there are some Spanish documents that mention the name of Gomidas Vartabed.**

There's a special folder with the name "Procedures in favor of Father Gomidas, 1915." It contains 8 letters requesting Spanish protec-

tion in Constantinople for the musician and folklorist Gomidas Vartabed. Julian Arroyo wrote that he personally had an interview with Gomidas and asked him what Julian could do for him. Julian clearly said that Gomidas was expelled from Constantinople during the first massacres and slaughters against the Armenians. Later, he came back because of United States diplomatic protection. Gomidas said that he needed to go to Vienna with his books and writings. Julian met the United States Ambassador and he said that there was nothing more he could do, so, Julian must request the protection of Gomidas under the Spanish Embassy in Vienna. Julian met Halil Bey and begged for Gomidas' life. He could not

wait any longer and directly asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he said to Julian that Taalat Bey (while smiling) denied Gomidas's freedom because "they" want to preserve his music inside Constantinople. The end is very sad. Julian wrote his opinion telling the truth: "Turks want intellectual Armenian hostages because if they leave Turkey they can talk about the horrors and massacres against the Armenians, and at the end Turks can satiate the hatred against them."

**You live in a country with a strong Turkish lobby. The Spanish government has not recognized the fact of the Armenian Genocide. Do you think after the recognition of Genocide by Germany and the US, recognition by other countries is still important?**

Four autonomous regions in Spain (Catalonia, Navarra, Basque Country and the Balearic) have recognized the Armenian Genocide in their regional parliaments. The Spanish government, president, the crown or the parliament has never pronounced any word regarding the Armenian Genocide. Sometimes this question was on the agenda, proposed by some political parties, or by singular deputies. But, always the proposition was rejected. I consider no one from the Parliament could show in a map where Armenia is and what happened with Armenians 100 years ago. Simply, it is not interesting.

Germany and the US are powerful allies of Turkey in international panorama; they recognized the Armenian Genocide and no single American-Turkish or German-Turkish citizen protested. The same happened in France. The proofs are irrefutable. Spain must be next among the states which have recognized the Genocide. Otherwise, it is understood as a denial. The problem is not the Turkish lobby, but the lack of an Armenian lobby. During February 3-6, we hosted an international seminar in Camilo José Cela University in Madrid, titled "Europe Against Genocide: 1915-2015," bringing together international experts on six of the world's major genocides, particularly the Armenian, Jewish and Gypsy genocides. We invited some politicians to speak.

**Are you in touch with Turkish scholars who study Genocide?**

Before beginning to research the Armenian Genocide, I was advised by Taner Akçam, the Turkish Scholar based in the US and one of the most prominent scholars of the Armenian Genocide. He motivated me and gave me many indications regarding how to treat and analyze historical documentation. He is the only one.

**Was your stay in Yerevan as a Lemkin scholar productive for your research?**

Of course, I was in Armenia in September 2017 because I obtained this scholarship and also a grant from the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR, in Belmont, US). I worked along with Dr. Robert Tatoyan who gave me a lot of bibliography, explained Armenian history and drew a "map" for my research. I was also in touch with other researchers at the Genocide Museum. In Yerevan, I enjoyed visiting everywhere. I traveled a lot in Armenia and I learnt another way to measure the time. I still have friends who helped me a lot in my research, such as you, Artsvi Bakhchinyan, or showed me Yerevan's attractions as Ashot Parsyan. I even saw again my best Armenian friend who came from Jerusalem, the writer Anoush Nakashian.

**While in Yerevan, you told me about a personal connection to Armenia.**

Certainly! My connection with Armenia or with Armenians is special. I was born in Moscow in 1990 and one year later I went to Spain and I became the first Soviet child adopted by Spanish parents. In 2014 after more than 10 years of research by myself I found some relatives in Moscow. Once there, I was told my biological maternal line was Greek, Jewish and Russian and my paternal line was Armenian. I was looking for this man some years ago with only a name and surname without success. I could not find him in Armenia at all. Thanks' God the last night of 2017 I found a sister, other relatives, and finally father who I did not meet in person. My research is a gift for letting me live in 1915 and in 1990.

## Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Grilled Chicken and Bulgur Salad

Here's an updated version of Christine Vartanian Datian's award-winning recipe that was Sunset Magazine Editor's Selection in June 2014. The salad, similar to a Middle Eastern fattoush salad, is especially crisp if you use crushed thin pita chips rather than the thick ones. Fattoush is basically a "bread salad," said to have originated in Northern Lebanon. Lebanese farmers would fry leftover pita scraps in a bit of olive oil for extra flavor. To build their fattoush, they'd simply throw the leftover pita in with whatever in-season vegetables and herbs they had on hand. If you leave out the chicken, this salad works well as a side dish for grilled lamb or kebabs. A simple dressing and a generous dash of sumac spice give this salad its distinctly complex flavor. Grilled vegetables like eggplant, tomatoes, onions, zucchini, mushrooms, and bell peppers may be added to this salad.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup medium bulgur
- 1 boned, skinned chicken breast half (about 1 lb.), pounded until 1/2 in. thick
- 1 large head of Romaine lettuce, chopped
- 2-3 Persian cucumbers, quartered or 1 English cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 large vine-ripe tomato, diced
- 2 cups chopped fresh parsley leaves, stems removed
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup Kalamata or black olives, sliced
- 5 radishes, stems removed, thinly sliced
- 5 scallions, sliced
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
- Salt and black pepper
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 teaspoon pomegranate molasses (substitute balsamic glaze)
- 1 teaspoon powdered sumac, plus more for sprinkling on individual salads if desired)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice (optional)
- Crumbled feta cheese
- Crushed thin pita chips
- Fresh lemon wedges and mint sprigs

#### PREPARATION:

Combine bulgur and 1 cup of boiling water in a large bowl. Cover and let stand 30 minutes or until tender and all liquid has been absorbed. Set aside.

Heat grill to high. Brush chicken with 1 tablespoon of oil and sprinkle both sides with salt and pepper. Grill chicken, turning once, until cooked through, about 5-8 minutes; set aside.

Remove outer leaves from the Romaine lettuce, wash and dry, and then chop Romaine by cutting it into fourths lengthwise and slicing crosswise for fairly smallish pieces. Add the lettuce, cucumber, tomato, parsley, mint, red onion, olives, radishes, scallions, the remaining olive oil, salt, pepper, lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, sumac, and allspice (if using) to the bowl of bulgur, and toss to combine.

Slice grilled chicken and divide tossed salad among 4 plates. Top each salad with sliced chicken and garnish with feta cheese, pita chips, lemon wedges, and mint sprigs. Sprinkle salads with more sumac, if desired.

Serves 4.

For the original recipe, see: <https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/grilled-chicken-bulgur-salad>.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Nora Armani Wants to Elevate Socially Relevant Films

ARMANI, from page 1

Exerjian and her father, my dear uncle Jack Exerjian, who lost their lives in a violent hate crime on March 16, 2004 in Cairo, Egypt. The festival has an award in my cousin's name that is given to a film across all categories, that deals with empowering women and girls."

The 2020 edition of the festival will open on March 16 at the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Centre at the Lincoln Centre with Sophie Deraspe's "Antigone," Canada's entry for Best International Film at the Academy Awards 2020. Screenings continue all week through March 22 at venues including Cinema Village, Hunter College, The Baha'i Centre, The Lebanese American University and The Centre for Remembering and Sharing.

For a list of the films, times and locations, see sidebar or visit [www.ratedsrfilms.org](http://www.ratedsrfilms.org).

## Out with the Old (Way of Thinking)

This year six films 10 documentaries and 26 shorts will be shown.

Armani and her fellow organizers focus on films made by up-and-coming, and some established filmmakers, who submit their through platforms such as FilmFreeway.com and that otherwise would not get seen.

"Unlike most smaller festivals, we do not go around Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Rotterdam, and such important film festivals, chasing after the films that have already been noticed and are attracting media and audience attention. Instead our mission is to shine the spotlight on these filmmakers who have important stories to

der rights, centenarians and age, women and mass incarceration, mental health, plastic pollution, drugs and legalization come up this year," Armani explained.

In keeping with the attitude of inclusion, Armani said that they have at least half the films made by women, all without intending to keep parity. "We have not done so on purpose, meaning specifically looking for woman-made films and programming them at the expense of their male counterparts. Rather, it has always been the quality of the work that has dictated the presence of women. And since our films are films that hitherto remained under the radar for major distributors, it is safe to say that women filmmakers enjoy a limelight at our festival that can translate into major recognition. The MeToo movement has been with us even before it started. We only need look back a few years, to see Gretchen Carlson, one of the first, if not the first woman, to sound the MeToo whistle, gracing our red carpet as one of our guests as she was featured in one of the films we screened dealing with human trafficking and sex slavery."

Other activist who are veterans of the SRFF are directors Deborah Kempmeier and Cady McClain.

Because of Armani's heritage, the festival, which has shown films from dozens of countries, has a film from Armenia every year.

"This year's slate has three films from Armenia, two shorts and a feature film. They all screen in the same session on Sunday, March 22 at 5 p.m. These are 'The Seashell Song,' a poetic short by Anna Bayatyan, 'Old and New Kond,' a documentary about the neighborhood of Kond in Yerevan by Emma Karapetyan, and 'Lorik,' a narrative feature film starring Michael Poghosyan and directed by Alexey Zlobin. We hope the Armenian audience will come and support these films from Armenia in their New York premieres," she said.

Film submissions have tripled since the festival was founded, Armani said. "The SR brand is now recognizable, and more often than not, people have already heard about us," she noted.

In addition, next year, the festival will become an Academy Award Qualifying film festival for the short films. "You need to pass the seven-year threshold for this qualification," she added.

The representation of women and minorities fares poorly not only in the US, but in Europe, she said.

"It is very rare to see films that really do justice to female characters, and more precisely female characters of a certain age. There just are not enough good scripts treating middle aged or older women, and the younger women are mostly portrayed as victims, sex-objects, and secondary characters at best, if not love and lust interests," she lamented. But there might be some good news, too, she added, because of the growing list of accomplished female filmmakers. "This, however, is fast changing fortunately not least because of the MeToo movement and with the advent of such directors as Greta Gerwig, Ava Duvernay, Sophia Coppola, Mira Nair, Lisa Cholodenko, Jody Foster and more. These are some of the female directors that are developing new and strong female characters. The irony is that the cinema-going public is predominantly composed of women, and it is mostly women who are the decision makers when picking which film to see. Yet, Hollywood continues to be oblivious of this fact and does not offer a big enough spot on the platform to female filmmakers, and daftly excludes them from the academy awards too, completely side tracking their wonderful works."

## World Citizen

Armani is a continent-crossing world citizen. She was born in Cairo to Armenian parents.



produced a feature film, 'Haifa,' by Rashid Masharawi, that premiered at the Cannes Film Festival Official Selection," she said. Then she moved to London, where she worked in several theater productions and television shows.

She moved to New York in 2004, working as an actor, coach, and interpreter. She is also finishing a second master's degree.

She has appeared in a variety of roles, including Zarouhi, in the stage production of "Mercedes," in Armenia, about the 1948 repatriations. The production was directed by Hakob Ghazanchyan. Another favorite role is The Mother in Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author," in New York, Isabella in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," Volumnia/Helen Weigel in

"Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising" by Gunther Grasse in London, Beatrice in Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing in Los Angeles, and Raina in Shaw's "Arms and the Man" performed at the Young Vic Theatre in London.

Armani does not only want to recite the words of other writers.

She had created the one-woman show, "On the Couch," in which she reminisces about her colorful life in a humorous and reflective manner, as well as "Sojourn at Ararat," written and starring her and her then-husband, Papiasian in the 1980s presenting Armenian history through the two characters.

"I feel the need for another self-penned one woman piece. Now that I am finishing my second Master's Degree (hopefully in May), I will have some more time to develop that new piece," she said.

She is currently appearing in a production of "Terrorism," by the Presnyakov Brothers at Columbia University's new LenFest Centre for the Arts through March 14.

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## Socially Relevant™ Film Festival NY Unveils Seventh Edition Official Selection

NEW YORK – The following is the list of films which will be shown at the 2020 Socially Relevant Film Festival, March 16-22, with a parallel conference on Friday, March 13, at the United Nations with a selection of short films on Climate: Violence and the Environment: Women Paying the Price..

- "Antigone," by Sophie Deraspe (Canada) Official Submission to the Academy Awards.
- "Butter" by Paul A. Kaufman (US)
- "Foster Boy" by Youssef Delara (USA)
- "Good Morning" by Bahij Hojeij (Lebanon)
- "Lorik" by Alexei Zlobin (Armenia)
- "Transference" by Raffaello Degruittola (UK)

The selected documentary features (<https://www.ratedsrfilms.org/documentary-features-2020>) are:

- "A Call for Peace" by Juan C Borrero - Melodie Carli (US- Columbia, Ireland, UK)
- "Birth Wars" by Janet Jarman (Mexico)
- "Can't Stop the Sun from Shining" by Teresa Mular (US)
- "Inside/Outside" by Nandini Sikand (US)
- "Microplastic Madness" by Atsuko Quirk, Debby Lee Cohen (US)
- "Mother of Tibetans" by Niklas Goslar (Germany - India, Poland)
- "Potluck: The Altered State of Colorado" by Jane Wells (US)
- "Stonewall with a T" by Samy Nemir Olivares (US)
- "Tell My Story" by David Freid (US)
- "Undermined: Tales from the Kimberley" by Nicholas Wrathall (Australia)

tell that concern us all human being on this planet, and who steer away from the commercial currents of Hollywood, resisting them and offering us an opportunity to see real people in real life situations, be in through the documentaries, or narratives that they submit to our attention."

Asked what qualifies a film to be defined as socially relevant, Armani explained: "In my definition a socially relevant film is one that connects to our reality in an intellectual and visceral way, telling us stories about the human condition, certain social problems, raising awareness, improving our intellectual and cognitive level, all the while entertaining us in a meaningful way."

She stressed that the film should still have entertainment value and high production quality.

Many of the festival's films every year tackle difficult topics, such as climate change, immigration, refugees, the status of women, violence against women and girls, social justice and discrimination, age, indigenous people's rights, LGBTQ rights, mass incarceration and capital punishment, human trafficking, gun violence, mental and physical health issues, genocide and the effects of war, etc.

"In the feature length film department the themes of teenage suicide, philanthropy, the foster care system, immigration, the Australian Aborigines, the Peruvian jungles, development at the cost of human life and culture, transgen-



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Stepanyan's 'Village of Women' Depicts the Beauty And the Melancholy of Life in an Armenian Village

STEPANYAN, from page 1

6 p.m. at Studio Cinema (376 Trapelo Road, Belmont, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/global-cinema-film-festival-of-boston-tickets-91132524835>).

The beautifully filmed documentary is set in Lichk, a village 130 kilometers distant from Yerevan. Lichk is located in Gegharkunik Province, south of Lake Sevan, and has a population officially of 5,430. The majority of the adult men leave the village to go work in Russia for eight or nine months out of the year, primarily to do manual labor in fields like construction. Boys there turn 18, go into the army for two years, and then immediately begin this cycle of seasonal work, without pursuing any further education. Life in Lichk seems like life in a third-world country, with no factories or work. Houses are worn-out and women always seem tired. They do heavy physical agricultural labor, keep the cattle, and maintain their families while men send back money occasionally and call over the phone until their annual winter break. However, the women also find occasional consolation from their difficult lives through song, dance and conversation.

Stepanyan, born in Soviet Armenia, moved to Lebanon as a child and then to France, where she lives now and has become an accomplished cinematographer (see "Exile and Waiting Transformed into Film through the Work of Tamara Stepanyan," <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/02/19/exile-waiting-transformed-film-work-tamara-stepanyan/>). Several years ago, she said that she noticed while reading newspapers that the villages in Gegharkunik were emptied of men. It happens that she goes every year to see her parents in Armenia on vacation. While in Armenia with her husband in the summer, she decided to take a taxi to investigate.

The driver knew the region and suggested several places. They came to Lichk through its narrow streets and stopped at the post office, which seemed like a central place. Local children immediately came and surrounded her, asking what she wanted and asking her to come with them. She said yes, Stepanyan related, and went with one, ending up at the home of Anush Oseyan. Anush invited her to drink coffee, and thus it all began by chance. It could have been a neighboring village, Stepanyan said.

They spent the whole day there, and returned to Yerevan in the evening. Stepanyan kept ties via telephone. And every time she went to Yerevan she would also go to Lichk to visit Anush. Stepanyan said, "First it was necessary to establish all the relationships slowly, from the very beginning, so that there is a state of confidence. If there is no confidence, especially in documentary films, you cannot work." This particular situation, Stepanyan noted, was a very sensitive one. She said, "You reach a place where an Armenian woman is very proud. She does not want you to see her family in pain or weakness. She always wants you to see her family in good form. Even when the men were not present, the women in a very beautiful way preserved the family."

She remarked that what the women were doing was very difficult. She said, "All those women, alone, they have to be both men and women, and brothers and sisters, and it is very hard. We cannot in our lives today picture this. We each have our roles. You have your role, your wife has her role, the children have their role, your brother has his role, but there, everything is all-in-all. This, I think, is very important to understand and appreciate. How are they able to do this? Where do they get this strength? But at the same time, it is very difficult for them – the stress and the anxiety they live through!"

## Filming in Lichk

At a certain point, after about a year, Stepanyan felt ready to film, and contacted Anush to ask if it were possible to rent a house and stay two weeks in the village. Anush replied, "Are you crazy? You can stay with me." So Stepanyan said she went and stayed in a room with Anush's 6-year-old son Sahak, while her daughter Hasmik went to stay with her

mother.

Every day they would awake at 6 a.m. and go to bed late at night. They spoke a lot in the evening, drinking tea. Stepanyan said that she did not want to abruptly start filming, so she ini-



tially asked whether she could record conversations on an audio device, and Anush agreed. Stepanyan said it was important that the villagers understood that she did not want to make a sensationalist documentary about women living alone. She said, "I wanted truly to understand their lives, their pains, and their happiness. The camera would stop when I felt they did not want it. There had to be agreement when I filmed. If they did not open their hearts to me, I could not do it. It is a reciprocal relationship."

She would initially ask herself why did the men always leave, but, she said, "after I would for about one year come and go, without filming, I understood that it was not the why that interested me, but the process of waiting, how they endured, how they lived in the state of waiting. My prior film ["Those from the Shore"] also was about waiting, about asylum seekers. This is a different type of waiting."

Stepanyan spent a year filming and so was able to present life throughout the four seasons. She filmed completely alone in the summer, fall and winter. Why? "First of all, I understood that it is a fragile situation, and you cannot come with camera and so forth and say, here I am, let's go. It would not work. I felt that I had to become a part of their life, their daily routine, their meals, everything. And I as a woman I could become part of it. Even if I brought a camerawoman it would not work. They trusted in me. Therefore, I did it alone."

She said that while she had done camera work alone before, it was more difficult here in a village house, with no bath and sleeping in the children's room. But this also opened the way to establishing intimacy and becoming a part of the family. She did not want to film them only as subjects. Stepanyan said, "I wanted to become a part of them and do it in that way. I think I was able to convey that intimate feeling."

She came and went over the year, each time usually staying two weeks in Lichk. She captured the various aspects of village life in each season. In addition to the changes in nature and work that it necessitates, the human landscape also went through cycles of change: the men would come back from Russia in the winter for several months.

Stepanyan said, "At once, the women

changed, and they became more female. And the atmosphere between the couples, there was embarrassment. They were married for 10 years, but they were not used to each other. They needed time before becoming comfortable, but by then the men would leave again."

## Finances

At first there was no financing for her documentary, but eventually she obtained it in France and Armenia. So, in the spring, she told her producer she wanted to take a team with her, a cameraman and sound man. By this time, the villagers knew her well. She had already filmed three seasons and warned them that the next time she came it might be with two more people.

They were both men, and Stepanyan said she was afraid the villagers would be uncomfortable, but it was not true. The two specialists were able to do technical things that Stepanyan alone could not accomplish. At the same time, she did see that their presence made the villagers more constrained and she did not use as much material from the spring as from other seasons.

The film ended up coproduced by two French companies, the medium-sized La Huit Production and TV78, a television channel company (<https://www.tv78.com/>), along with Hayk Documentary Studio (<https://haykdfs.com/en/>), which is the oldest documentary studio in Armenia (it used to make all the television documentary films in the Soviet period). La Huit was the main producer and began to provide Stepanyan's travel expenses and a per diem before full funding was obtained. "Village of Women" is considered a small budget film.

Music was also recorded in Armenia for the film. Stepanyan worked with Cynthia Zaven, an

money and other obstacles.

Stepanyan exclaimed, "I am very lucky to be able to live through my art. This is of course in part due to my husband. My husband does all so that I can work in my art." This year Stepanyan had maternity leave, but the two years prior to this she gave workshops in schools, for the 5th, 10th and 12th grade, to teach youth how to make films. She said she likes this very much because children do not have the filters adults have, and so have greater freedom and creativity.

With two children now and three projects she wants to work on (at least two of which are connected with Armenia), she said she does not want to spend much time on festivals promoting her already completed works, as it takes much energy. She said, "I prefer to work more on new creations." Consequently, she picks and chooses in which festivals she will participate.

Fortunately, she said, she now has a good producer and is not alone in this venue. La Huit is going to prepare DVDs of her three documentary films and her short fiction.

## Change through Film

Stepanyan wants to show "Village of Women" in Armenia. It has not yet been seen in Lichk. She hopes the film will be accepted by the Golden Apricot Film Festival and afterwards can be taken to the villages to raise understanding and perhaps even create change.

"The pain in me!" she exclaimed, "Why would the men go? There was nothing in Russia. They are slaves there to Russian people. What do they do there? Make sidewalks, asphalt...so perhaps indirectly I wanted to bring them awareness so that they would not go. The awareness that each time they left, they would not see how their children grow. Yet each year they return, the children have grown another year, and their youth passes by. What do they understand of life?"

After the film was completed, at least three men returned to live in the village. She does not know if this happened as a result of the film, but she wonders if the women did it. She said, "Perhaps all the questions we raised moved something, and the men understood that they were destroying their lives."

She concluded, "I changed something at least in this village." At the same time, she accepted that major economic change was necessary in the villages to provide suitable employment for the men. Apparently there is talk that the Chinese have bought an old factory in the area which they are going to start up, but it is not certain.



Armenian-Lebanese composer who composed music for Stepanyan's prior films too. The editing and other work however were completed in France.

Stepanyan said that she began each of her three documentaries in the same way, alone in the beginning, until funding was found. She said that, "Of course there must be some money, but that is not the most important thing. If you want to say something with your film, your cinema, your art, you must say it. You cannot wait...It is a passion inside you. Either it is a fire inside you or you must do something else. Cinema is a very difficult profession." She said that she has tried to explain this to youth in Armenia, who are discouraged by lack of

In any case, Stepanyan has succeeded through her work in becoming part of the life of Lichk's women and perhaps part of the price she paid is to accept some of the burden of their lives on her shoulders. She said, "It is difficult. At times I felt I was a psychologist." She did inspire Anush's children with love for cinema. They normally would not have seen real cinema, with YouTube being the main source of videos for them, unless they could come to distant Yerevan.

Under the current circumstances, she said, "Those women [of Lichk] for me are not simply women, they are heroines. That strength, that beauty in them is very difficult to preserve. I feel that this film has great spirit in it, great pain."



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CALIFORNIA

**MARCH 27 — Dr. Mehmet Polatel will give a talk titled "Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Properties,"** at USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, Friday, 8 p.m. Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, 3325 N. Glenoaks Blvd, Burbank. Polatel, a Postdoctoral Fellow in Armenian Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has been awarded the 2019-2020 Center Junior Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research. The program, initiated by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, is supported by AGBU Western District Committee, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian Council of America, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Armenian Rights Council of America, Armenian Society of Los Angeles, Nor Serount Armenian Cultural Association and the Organization of Istanbul Armenians, under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate, Western Diocese of the Armenian Church.

**APRIL 4 — Boston Court Pasadena presents a concert reading of Joyce Van Dyke's play Daybreak,** inspired by the true stories of her Armenian ancestors, and featuring the original Off-Broadway cast. Saturday, April 4, at 4:00 p.m. Tickets \$10 (free to subscribers), with Armenian refreshments included in the price of the ticket. Boston Court Pasadena, 70 N. Mentor Ave., Pasadena. For tickets, visit <https://bostoncourtpasadena.org/events/daybreak/>, or call the box office at 626-683-6801, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m, Tues. - Fri.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**FEBRUARY 29 – 30th Commemoration of the Baku Pogrom. Dinner and Program featuring** a biographical Presentation on Zabel Yesayan, Armenian novelist, translator, and professor of literature by Judith Saryan. St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover. 6 p.m. Adults - \$20. Students - \$10. For reservations, please contact Armen at 978-256-2538, [armenjeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:armenjeknavorian@gmail.com); or Ara, 978-251-4845, [ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com). Merrimack Valley Armenian National Committee of the Merrimack Valley.

**MARCH 2 — St. James Men's Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.,** St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Guest speaker will be Stewart R. Goff, RN, MS, the new C.E.O of the Armenian Women's Welfare Association and the Armenian Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) in Jamaica Plain. The presentation is titled "The ANRC, Is it Armenian Enough?" Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyima Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St. James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598.

**MARCH 18 — Panel: "Green Revolution: Armenia's Vision to Fight Global Climate Change,"** at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA. Panelists to be announced. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Co-sponsored by the Armenia Tree Project and NAASR/Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

**MARCH 22 — "Village of Women" Film Screening, 6:00—7:30 p.m. at Studio Cinema, 376 Trapelo Road, Belmont.** The Armenian Museum of America is proud to cosponsor the film Village of Women by Tamara Stepanyan featured in the Global Cinema Film Festival at Studio Cinema. This engaging and moving documentary tells the story of the small village of Lichk where for 9 months of the year, only women, children, and the elderly reside. The men go to Russia to work and return to their homes only during the winter. The village is held together by these strong and resourceful women. Director Tamara Stepanyan befriends these women, filming them at their strongest and most vulnerable periods, and gathers insight into the life of this village of women. Tickets can be purchased for \$12 at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/global-cinema-film-festival-of-boston-tickets-91132524835>

**MARCH 25 — Christina Maranci, "New Discoveries at Ani Cathedral,"** at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Co-sponsored by NAASR and the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture, Tufts University.

**MARCH 27 — Panel: "Adventures With/In the Armenian**

Language," including Nancy Kricorian, Dr. Kristi Rendahl, Dahlia Elsaid, and moderated by Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Presented by Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society Eastern Region and NAASR through the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

**MARCH 28 — Sayat Nova Dance Company invites you to an evening of laughter.** Back by popular demand, world-renowned comedian and pianist Kev Orkian returns. Get ready for a fun-filled night of laughs as KEV entertains the audience with his brand new show "SUPARMENIAN"! To be held at Newton North High School Auditorium, 457 Walnut Street, Newton, at 7:30 pm. Tickets: \$60 (\$60 tickets include a pre-show meet & greet reception with KEV from 6-7pm). \$45 (General Admission). Tickets may be reserved: Online at [itsmyseat.com/KevInBoston](http://itsmyseat.com/KevInBoston) (online fees apply) Or by calling: Alina (617) 852-1816 or Shant (781) 879-8102 Flyer and seating chart available at <http://www.sayatnova.com/kevorkian.htm> All tickets are final sale.

**MARCH 28 — "Songs of the Other," In Tribute to Maestro Arsen Sayan. Daniela Tosic, voice • Sylvie Zakarian, marimba • Nikola Radan, flute. Works by Komitas, A. Hovhanness, N. Grover, N. Radan, V. Srvandzants.** Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington, Saturday, at 7 p.m. Open to the public. Admission free.

**MARCH 29 — Sunday, Music of Violinist Levon Chilingirian and Pianist Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian.** 2 p.m. The Sanctuary at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Everyone is welcome to attend; this concert is a gift to the community. The duo will offer a rich and colorful program of works. Levon Chilingirian is Professor of Violin and Chamber Music Artist in Residence at the Royal Academy of Music (London) as well as Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London). Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian has performed extensively in her native Armenia and the former Soviet Union, as well as internationally. Her solo appearances and collaborations with various ensembles have won acclaim from renowned authorities in the musical world. Contact Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632 or [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org) for more information.

**APRIL 2 — Film Screening: "Vahé Oshagan: Between Acts," followed by discussion with filmmaker Hrayr Eulmessekian, Taline Voskeritchian, and Dr. Karen Jallatyan.** Thursday, 7:30 p.m. At the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Co-sponsored by Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

**APRIL 4 — "The Power of Love" Fundraiser and Art Show, featuring photographer Zaven Khachikyan, mezzo-soprano Victoria Avetisyan and pianist Anna Avetisyan** at the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries on the third Floor of the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown, 7-10 p.m. Hosted by the Diaspora for Frontline Family Fund (DFFF) and the Knights and Daughters of Vartan (Ararat Lodge and Arpi Otyag). All proceeds go to children who lost fathers during April 2016 War. For more information, email [info@kovcasp.org](mailto:info@kovcasp.org).

**APRIL 6 — St. James Men's Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.,** St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Guest speaker Christopher F. Bator, US attorney from Cambridge. Topic will be "Violent Crime in the Greater Boston Area." A retired US attorney, Bator now serves on the faculty of the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyima Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St. James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598.

**APRIL 7 — Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at Tufts University, with lecture by Rouben Shougarian.** At Tufts University, Goddard Chapel. Co-sponsored by the Darakjian Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, the History Department at Tufts University, Tufts University, the Armenian Club at Tufts University, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

**APRIL 19 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the Erevan Chorale Society,** founded by the Very Rev. Fr. Oshagan Minassian (1930-2008) and now under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, will present a

Spring Concert on Sunday. 2 p.m. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office at 617.354.0632 or e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**APRIL 19 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture at the Armenian Heritage Park** on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday beginning at 7:00 am. Coffee, hosted by Starbucks & Conversation from 8:30am -9:30am. The annual reconfiguration is supported by the Park's Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund. A crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of the split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of stainless steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The annual reconfiguration is under the direction of A&A Industries, Inc., Peabody, who fabricated the Abstract Sculpture, the generous gift-in-kind of owners Aurelian and Anahid Mardiros and their family. Rain date: April 26 RSVP appreciated at [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**APRIL 22 — Sato Moughalian: "Armenian Ceramics: How the Art of an Armenian Genocide Survivor Changed the Face of Jerusalem,"** at Brandeis University, Rapaport Treasure Hall, Goldfarb Library. 415 South St, Waltham. Co-sponsored by the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research NAASR.

**MAY 2 — Celebrate Public Art two-part program during ARTWEEK BOSTON. Armenian Heritage Park** on The Greenway, Boston. Saturday at 1:00pm. WORLD LABYRINTH DAY: WALK AS ONE, join people in cities and towns in 35 countries world-wide walking in peace and harmony including Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and USA followed by RECEPTION TO VIEW THE 2020 RECONFIGURATION OF THE ABSTRACT SCULPTURE, hosted by Eastern Lamejun Bakers and MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**May 9 — Spring Dinner/Dance featuring Barteve Garyan of Istanbul,** Saturday 7:30 p.m., St. James Armenian Church, Watertown. Sponsored by the Society of Istanbul Armenians of Boston, Inc. to aid all Armenian schools in Istanbul. For info or donations, call Krikor Shaboian at 617 489-0346 or email [prsoiab@gmail.com](mailto:prsoiab@gmail.com)

**MAY 28 — Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) presents the 69th annual Armenian Night at the Pops,** featuring the young and talented violinist Diana Adamyany as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 p.m. For tickets and information, please visit [FACSBoston.org](http://FACSBoston.org)

**JUNE 17 — Tea & Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30 pm - 6 p.m. Late afternoon to meet and greet, walk the labyrinth, enjoy refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports, and desserts. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**JUNE 25 — Under A Strawberry Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Thursday at 8:30pm. Evening to meet & greet, tie a ribbon on the Wishing Tree. Enjoy a moonlit labyrinth walk, luscious chocolate dipped strawberries, hosted by vicki lee's and refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**OCTOBER 17 — HYE KEF 5 ANNUAL DANCE. Presented by the Armenian Friends of America, Inc.** Featuring: Steve Vosbikian Jr., Mal Barsamian, John Berberian, Ara Dinkjian, & Jason Naroian. At the DoubleTree Hotel in Andover. For Complete Details, Visit [ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.Org](http://ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.Org) or Call Sharke' @ 978-808-0598.

## NEW JERSEY

**APRIL 18 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents** a Spectacular Extravaganza Celebrating Historic Armenia (1590-1915). Featuring a runway show of traditional Armenian costumes from 40 historic cities by Julia Mutlu from Istanbul. Special presentation by the Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group. Saturday, Clinton Inn, 145 Dean Drive, Tenafly. 6.30 p.m. cocktail, 7.30 p.m., dinner. \$100 in advance, \$125 after March 15. Reservations, Marie Zokian (2010 745-8850 or Talar Sesetyan Sarafian (2010 240-8541.

*continued on next page*



# Armenian Cultural Encounters in Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – Neukölln is a district in Berlin whose very name is synonymous with internationalization, immigration and cultural diversity. The district is home to first, second and third generations of Germans whose forefathers came from many different countries. A large percentage of the population has Russian or Turkish roots, others Arab, as well as Kurds, Roma people and still more.

In addition to the post-World War II immigration, over recent years more newcomers have arrived from Iraq and Syria. In this milieu, one might not have expected to come across posters announcing an initiative called “Neukölln Armenisch.”

A series of events, lectures, readings, concerts, have been taking place under this rubric since January 24 and will continue until April 2. “Living, Praising and Suffering between Orient and Occident” is the title of a photo exhibition

(PHOTO COURTESY OF MASISARAKELIAN.COM)



Masis Arakelian

on the culture, religion and history of the Armenian people that is running at the Genezareth Intercultural Center, sponsor of the activities.

Dr. Reinhard Jakob Kees, who is the priest at the Center and in the Neukölln church circle for interreligious and intercultural encounters, explains that the initiative “should contribute to understanding Armenian culture and to becoming acquainted with Armenian neighbors, their lifestyle and their thinking.” In a flyer for the series, Kees writes, “The history of the Armenians reaches back into prehistoric times. All four rivers mentioned in the biblical story of Paradise arise in the Armenian highlands. Was that the site of the historic Paradise?” Kees cites the biblical account locating Noah’s Ark “in the mountains of Ararat,” and points to the Kingdom of Urartu (9-6th century B.C.) on Lake Van, “which contemporary Armenians look back on with pride.”

In the Diocletian period of the Roman Empire, “when Christians were still being cruelly persecuted,” Kees writes that Armenian King Trdat III converted, giving birth to the first Christian kingdom, where an Armenian alphabet was developed, and mandatory education was available for boys and girls. This early literary culture helps explain the immense value placed by Armenians on education, as symbolized by books.

Despite the political upheavals they lived through, caught in the crossfire of great power struggles, Armenians have survived by preserving their language, education and faith. The country today represents a tenth of what Historic Armenia was, and only a third of the 9 million Armenians live in the Republic of Armenia, the rest scattered throughout the world; “and so it is that we find so many people with Armenian roots also in Berlin,” he concludes.

The exhibition, co-sponsored by the Armenian Embassy and the Berlin Armenian communities and societies, opened on January



Duduk player Arayik Bartikyan

23, with greetings by Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan, Dr. Christian Nottmeier, Superintendent of the Neukölln Evangelical Church Parish, Dr. Andreas Goetze, regional church priest for Intercultural Dialog, “Armenian Today,” Lusine Sargsyan, Cultural Attaché and third secretary of the Armenian Embassy. Under the rubric of “Armenian Life in Berlin,” members of the Armenian communities in Berlin prepared typical Armenian music and food.

On Sunday January 26, Archimandrite Yeghishe Avetisyan celebrated mass, with chorus and members of the community.

Among the 10 public events were a number of concerts; *duduk* player Arayik Bartikyan from Paris performed on January 25, and on March 26, Masis Arakelian will sing Armenian art songs from the last 300 years, including works by Komitas, Khatchaturian, Sayat Nova, as well as original compositions and works by Charles Aznavour. Arakelian appeared on February 13, for an evening of Armenian fairy tales (read by Renate Raber) and music, commemorating the 150th birthday of Hovhannes

Tumanian and Komitas. On May 28, to celebrate Independence Day, a concert will feature singers Yeva Egasyan and Hayk Yesayan.

Dr. Tessa Hofmann, author, human rights activist and genocide scholar, was joined by community members to host an evening to introduce Armenia on January 30, and on February 27 delivered a lecture on “The Genocide of Christians in the Ottoman Empire.” The film “Ageth: A Genocide” will be shown on March 12. For people who have not yet visited Armenia, there are experts to illustrate the natural beauty and the architectural landmarks of



Dr. Tessa Hofmann

the country on March 5; Eduard Saroyan, director of an Armenian travel agency, speaks on “Armenia – Close to Paradise,” Dr. Andreas Goetze’s theme is sacred architecture, and art historian Ani Serobyian focuses on the *khachkars*.

At the concluding event children from the Giteliq Sunday school in Berlin-Charlottenburg will sing and dance under the direction of Lilit Hakobyan and Masis Arakelian, scenes from Paul Imhof’s film, “A Journey through Earthly Paradise,” will be shown, and guests will enjoy songs by Arakelian as well as Armenian specialties in food and drink.

## CALENDAR

from previous page

**APRIL 23-** Armenian Genocide Commemoration featuring the acclaimed documentary “The Stateless Diplomat: Diana Apar’s Heroic Life.” Thursday 7 p.m. Presented by producer Mimi Malayan. Sponsored by CHHANGE at Brookdale Community College, Student Life Center, Navesink Rooms (Parking Lot 7), 765 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ. Free Admission. 732-224-1889 or contact@chhange.org

**SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2021 – Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA)** 75th Alumni Anniversary Weekend in Northern NJ. More details to follow. Questions? Email: ACYOA75@gmail.com

### NEW YORK

**MARCH 6 – 10TH Annual Mentoring Forum, Friday, 6:30 p.m. at Fordham University School of Business,** 140 62nd Street, Room 333, New York City. Free Admission: snacks and beverages will be served. A great opportunity for College and high school students to network with professionals from a wide array of industry disciplines. To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/10th-annual-mentoring-forum-tickets-91547389707?aff=ebdssbeac>

**MARCH 27 – Atom Egoyan, films and direction Mary Kouyoumdjian, composition Laurie Olinger,** projection artist JACK Quartet Silvana Quartet Unreleased scenes and highly personal short films by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Atom Egoyan (“The Sweet Hereafter”) are given original new scores by Armenian American composer Mary Kouyoumdjian in this MetLiveArts commission. Egoyan’s highly personal films and excerpts on the life of abstract painter Arshile Gorky are infused with themes of family and immigration. Kouyoumdjian’s string quartets Bombs of Beirut and Silent Cranes explore her family’s history with the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian Genocide through survivor testimonies and documentary. Metropolitan Museum

of Art, 1000 5th Avenue, New York. 7 p.m.

**APRIL 26 – The Knights and Daughters of Vartan will host the Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square, New York. Sunday, 1.30 p.m.** Free bus transportation for all students and scouts to and from Times Square. Sponsor Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Co-Sponsors: Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL Ramgavars, Armenian National Council of America, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. Participants: Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Church, Armenian Catholic Eparchy of US and Canada, AGBU-YPGNY, ACYOA, ASA, Armenian Network of Great New York, AYF Chapters of NY and NJ, Homenetmen Scouts, Armenian Schools, Youth and Professional organizations and the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization.

### PENNSYLVANIA

**MARCH 25 – The Armenian Student Organization of Villanova University Hosts Book** Presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian of her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Villanova University, 800 E Lancaster Ave Villanova, Falvey Library - Building # 18 - Room 205 ( parking on West Campus in the S4 / S5 lots) . Contact information: Kallie Stahl (610) 519-4458 / kallie.stahl@villanova.edu. Book sale/signing during reception ( cash only). All proceeds donated to the Armenian Student Organization

**MARCH 28 – The Women’s Guild of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church in Wynnewood,** presents its Sainly Women’s Day Program with a special performance by Naomi Abajian of her one woman play “Because of my Son.” Naomi, a professional actress

from Chicago, plays the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in this highly renowned play. After the play, Naomi will discuss how she was inspired by her faith to write this play, and have a brief Q&A. The day begins with a short church service and readings of Sainly Women, followed by the play, and a delicious Lenten lunch. To be held at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob, 630 Clothier Road, Wynnewood, starting at 10:30 a.m. Reserve your tickets today! Tickets: \$25 Adults, \$10 Children (After 3/22/20, Adult tickets are \$30). Email Rosine Gouveia at rosinegouveia@gmail.com or call 610-724-8314. This program is open to everyone.

### RHODE ISLAND

**MARCH 14 – The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Presents** Its “Music Appreciation Series” Featuring Talented Performers Knarik Nerkararian, Soprano, Dalita Getzoyan, Flute, Nune Hakobyan, Piano, Gregory Ayriyan, Violin. Andrei Sobchenko, Saxophone. Book Presentation “Haykakan taraz - Armenian Costumes” By Artist Gourgen Manoukian. Saturday, at 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Donation \$15 Refreshments.

**MARCH 22 – The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church Presents** “Meet The Doctors 2020 – Questions & Answers.” We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and “Meet with our Armenian Doctors” Dr. Beverly Serabian, PhD, clinical psychologist Topic: Healthy Lifestyle Practices and Psychological Well Being Sunday, at 12:30 p.m. Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence.

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

## COMMENTARY

# When Does Karabakh's Destiny Fit in The Russo-Turkish Standoff?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

A few years ago, if any Armenian was asked what relevance the Syrian province of Idlib would have with regard to any Armenian issues, a few minor ones would come to mind: its proximity to Der Zor, the Armenian Auschwitz, and scattered Armenian communities there that have been surviving since the Genocide in those rural areas. No one could possibly relate it to Karabakh.

But today, as Idlib has become the focus of global tensions, the political pairing between Idlib and Karabakh demonstrates their existential relevance to each other.

The recent short-lived Russo-Turkish honeymoon was too good to last. It was destined to come to an end and it ended earlier than anyone had anticipated. Today, the talk in political circles is about the 17th Russo-Turkish war. All the latent tensions between these two parties have come to the surface and their armies are now facing each other on the Syrian battleground. Already, 33 Turkish soldiers have been killed and another 30 have been wounded. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey has thus far hesitating in directly blaming Russia for this blood-letting, instead is directing his ire against the forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which have come under Turkish fire, incurring hundreds of casualties. But military planners in Ankara know full well that the Assad forces could not have achieved that victory without Russian air cover.

Karabakh on the front burner. He stated that the Karabakh issue was Turkey's issue as much as it was Azerbaijan's. "It is our greatest desire to resolve the problem of Nagorno Karabakh on the basis of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said.

In a joint press conference, Azeri President Ilham Aliyev thanked Erdogan for "supporting the righteous cause" of Azerbaijan and announced that Azerbaijan "will continue to purchase modern weapons from Turkey."

The impact of this entire political show extends far beyond the Caucasus to warn Moscow that Erdogan is ready to target Russia's pressure points, with one being in the Caucasus and the other being in Libya; in the latter, Russia supports General Haftar against the government in Tripoli, which in turn enjoys Turkey's political and military support.

The other move naturally would have been to draw NATO into this conflict. Erdogan has asked for a special session of NATO to discuss the situation in Syria. Article 5 of the NATO alliance treaty calls for collective action if one of the members is attacked; the attack on Turkish forces in Syria would not be considered an attack on all members. But since Erdogan could not invoke action through Article 5, he has invoked Article 4, which calls for consultation between the members in time of crisis. However, since the legality of Turkey's presence on Syrian soil is questionable, Erdogan has not received more than condolences for the lost soldiers.

Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector (1991-1998) writing in an op-ed on Global Research, has stated, "The best

Turkey could get from its Article 4 consultation, however, was a lukewarm statement by Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO secretary general, condemning Syria and Russia while encouraging a diplomatic resolution to the fighting in Syria that focused on alleviating the unfolding humanitarian crisis regarding refugees. This is a far cry from the kind of concrete military support, such as the provision of Patriot air defense systems or NATO enforcement of a no-fly zone over Idlib, Turkey was hoping for."

Turkey aggravates the West and Europe to no end and expects to draw the US and Europe its own misadventures.

A disgruntled Erdogan has opened the floodgates of immigrants to let them invade Europe, breaking a 2016 deal with the European Union, after milking it of billions of dollars in order to prevent exactly such a scenario. At the time of this writing, tens of thousands of migrants have been at Greece's

borders, trying to enter Europe.

Moscow has engaged its own political machine to counter Turkey's initiatives. It has sent 10 warships into the Black Sea. On the other hand, the Secretary of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Defense General Stanislav Zas, who, coincidentally, was visiting Yerevan, has announced that should Armenia be attacked by Azerbaijan, the alliance will support the former. This kind of open statement has been rare by Moscow and even by the alliance, of which Armenia is a member.

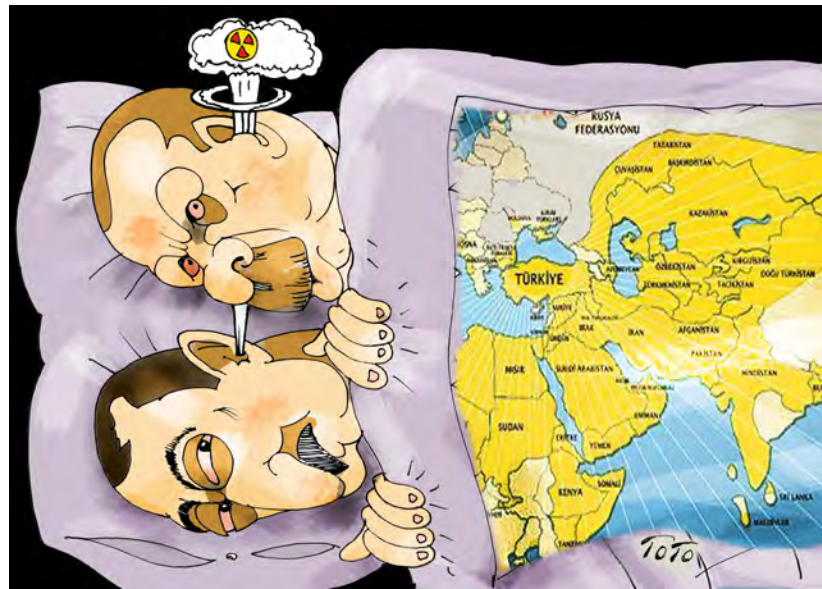
Should the confrontation escalate on the Syrian battlefield, not only the destiny of Karabakh is at stake, but the 102nd Russian military base in Armenia may also engage since it is closest to the battlefield.

Many observers believe that the escalation may not lead to open hostilities. Even the fears that Turkey may provoke Aliyev to start a regional war is a remote possibility, because the country is undergoing a transformation. However, Azerbaijan has begun military exercises to inject fear in an already-tense situation.

Amid all the threats of war and diplomatic maneuvers, several ideas are being offered. One initiative, which may end up to be very dangerous for Armenia, was proposed by Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, who has stated that Turkey can solve the issue of Karabakh, if President Putin extends a helping hand. This proposal is within the context of a political swap; Turkey does not enjoy regional support for its actions in Syria. Europe and the US also have demonstrated that they are not interested in Turkey's gamble in Syria. Therefore, Erdogan is looking for a face-saving device for an honorable retreat from Syria. Therefore, Cavusoglu's deal offers a Turkish retreat from Syria in return for a solution in favor of Azerbaijan in Karabakh, with Russian leadership.

This reminds us of the deal during the Treaty of Kars in 1921, when Turkey ceded Batumi to Moscow, instead receiving Mount Ararat.

Is this a remote possibility? It's anyone's guess.



Initially, President Erdogan called on President Vladimir Putin to stop the carnage, but his call has gone nowhere. Then, the two agreed for a summit meeting in Istanbul on March 5, only for the Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov to announce that President Putin has other appointments on March 5.

The latest word is that Erdogan would be heading to Moscow for the coveted meeting. For an arrogant Erdogan, that is humiliating.

In the meantime, the news media and political apparatus in Ankara have been in action, seeking support for Turkish adventurism in Syria.

Turkey's diplomatic moves have been accompanied by threats towards different directions but particularly aimed at Russian interests.

For example, Erdogan's advisor on political issues, Mesut Hakki Çasin, has announced that Turkey's response to Russia will be very harsh; there are 25 million Muslims in Russia and they can blow up that country from within.

This is not the first time that Turkey has been weaponizing religion and ethnicity. It is worth remembering that when Germany stopped Erdogan from carrying out his electoral campaign in Germany in 2017, he appealed to ethnic Turks in Europe to have bigger families to increase their numbers and therefore power in Europe, gradually.

On the diplomatic front, he took a trip to Azerbaijan for an extended meeting with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev's government last week. He was joined by a large delegation which signed 14 different agreements and he vowed to raise the current level of trade between the two nations from the current \$2 billion to \$15 billion annually.

What was more significant was the participation of Turkey's Minister of Defense Hulusi Akar, who signed military agreements with Azerbaijan to supply that country with more modern weapons, and to plan the joint production of military hardware.

More alarming for Armenia was Erdogan placing the issue of

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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Remnants of an Old Armenian Village Near Ankara

Last summer, Argun Konuk, a 24-year-old Turkish travel and history enthusiast, published an article about the Armenian village of Stanoz located near Ankara.

Konuk reported that Stanoz was “once a prosperous Armenian village in the Ottoman era, now, nothing but ruins and tombstones.... Old Armenian manuscripts reveal that the first inhabitants of the village of Stanoz came from Cilicia in the 15th century. As records show, the population of Stanoz before World War I was 3142 people (668 families) and consisted of Armenians only. Up until its abandonment, Stanoz remained an Armenian-speaking settlement.”

The residents of the village of Stanoz were skilled in carpet weaving, embroidery and leather processing. Furthermore, they produced fabric from goat hair which was in high demand in Europe. The villagers were also knowledgeable about agriculture, cattle-breeding and construction.

Konuk also reported that unfortunately the only things that remain in Stanoz now are the graveyard, a stone bridge, and ruins of an Armenian Church. The damage was mostly caused by Turkish gravediggers or treasure hunters. The size of the graveyard keeps shrinking as the Turkish neighbors have been encroaching on the property.

Stanoz was mentioned in the journals of many travelers for centuries. An 18th-century British military officer, Frederick Burnaby, reported that during his visit to Stanoz, one of the Armenian priests told him that Armenians of Stanoz live in

peace with people who practice Islam and Judaism.

Konuk also reported that “the well-known Turkish traveler Evliya Celebi shared remarkable anecdotes in his journal about this village after his visit in 1643. He spoke of Stanoz as a wealthy town with impressive productivity. Furthermore, he shared that Stanoz had a thousand dwellings, a big bazaar, a fully functioning Turkish bath and even a laundromat.”

There were three religious buildings in Stanoz: Sourp Prgich Church, Karasoun Manoug Church and a Protestant church. There were two Armenian schools: Sourp Ghevontyan School with 140 male and 40 female students and Lusignan School with 50 male and 35 female students.

Due to the Genocide and deportation of Armenians by Ottoman Turkey, many Stanoz residents were either killed or fled the area leaving the village as a ghost town.

The writer found that currently only three Armenians live in Stanoz. Kevork Balabian, who was born in Stanoz, told Konuk: “Stanoz had 1200 households and a population of 7-8 thousand. Ottomans valued Stanoz a lot. At the time, the Armenian population of Stanoz migrated to modern cities such as Istanbul, Marseille and Beirut. Only my wife and I, who came from Hatay, and our daughter live in the region. I go there often as I have a farm and a vineyard. Some treasure hunters come there in hopes of pillaging and finding some valuable artifacts but they are afraid of me so they mostly leave. We have graves there and I still look after them.”

An old Turk told Konuk: “We all grew up with Armenians, went to the same schools. Back then if you were hungry, you could easily knock on an Armenian’s door and ask for food and it was the same for them. We did many things together. There was an Armenian doctor whose name was Mihran Kiremitchi. Every single child who was born in this region owes him so much as he cared for everyone and cured everyone’s child regardless of ethnicity and social class. We never saw him asking for money from anyone. And again, weddings, funerals, everything else, we did together with the Armenians. We even celebrated religious holidays together. They used to paint eggs and we used to sacrifice animals. We miss them.”

An Armenian by the name of M. Suryan wrote in *Aravod* newspaper on April 28, 1919: “Some of the houses of Armenian residents who were exiled during World War I were looted and robbed. A considerable part of Albanians and Bosnians resettled in these abandoned homes. The new residents demolished many of the structures and provided firewood by removing wooden pillars, floor-ceiling boards of many homes. Moreover, instead of acquiring wood from the forest, they cut the fruit trees in the gardens to warm up. The aftermath was appalling as this notable village became dilapidated ruins. Gradz Kar, a small Armenian village, which consisted of twenty houses, located an hour away from Stanoz, also suffered the same fate.”

Konuk is highly offended that Turkish gravediggers have violated the sanctity of the Armenian graves: “The graveyard is particularly in such an abject condition that human bones are scattered around the graves that are pillaged by the treasure hunters and many of the tombstones are damaged. The tombstones are priceless. Each of them represent historical importance, however, their current state is heartbreaking. Even now after devastating centuries, there are still many artifacts and historical objects lying around. For me the most appalling thing was to see some human bones scattered around the graves. In hopes of finding gold or other valuable goods, treasure hunters dig the graves illegally and throw around the bones of the Armenians who are resting there eternally. Undeniably, this is an extreme case of disrespect.”

Konuk concluded his report with the following heart-warming words: “We Turks lived with Armenians in peace for centuries and I believe this place should carry the same importance as other Turkish cemeteries. Regardless of ethnicity and religion, the Turkish state should have taken measures to protect the memory of this village. Unfortunately, the future of Stanoz seems bleak. It is quite sad to see that this old and notable settlement completely vanished.... After five months of my first visit, I decided to go there again and it shocked me to see that many tombstones were missing! The Armenians of Stanoz were our kin. Who knows what stories and secrets this settlement has to tell us. Unfortunately we will never learn them.”

## Defeat of Azerbaijan Began in Khojaly, Nagorno-Karabakh

By David Davidian

**A**ZERBAJANIS and their PR supporters will begin their yearly media blitz about events that took place in the town of Khojaly in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh in February 1992. It was in Nagorno-Karabakh where the indigenous Armenians fought the Azerbaijani Army. We will read that events in Khojaly were genocide with victims lacking justice as handed out at Nuremberg. These two claims are an insult to the term genocide and the judgments at Nuremberg. Justice does not begin with falsifying events, selectively deleting massive amounts of information, and using the calamity at Khojaly to convince the world and an otherwise defeated Azerbaijani state that Armenians are barbarians. Let’s look at the record.

First, nobody would have died on either side if Azerbaijan didn’t base its emerging national ethos on the expulsion of Armenians from within the borders granted them jurisdiction by Joseph Stalin.

Second, 90% of Stepanakert, the regional capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, was destroyed mainly from indiscriminate shelling from Khojaly. Azerbaijan had to assume Khojaly was a lead target needing neutralizing.

Third, by February 1992, shelling from Khojaly had killed over 30 members of the Russian 366 Mountain Rifle group stationed in Stepanakert. The Azerbaijanis must have known this military detachment would eventually retaliate.

Fourth, when Armenians finally reached Khojaly and ended the shelling, for a week, Armenians publicly announced on megaphones, radio, and TV, to the civilian population to get out as a final battle was clearly in the works. However, the Azerbaijani military did what it could to prevent civilians from leaving Khojaly. During a last-minute exit of Azerbaijani civilians, using a corridor created by Armenian fighters, shooting began between Azerbaijani soldiers and Armenians, after which many, on the order of a hundred or so Azerbaijani civilians, were killed. Their names registered in human rights reports. Within weeks, that number began to rise until it was assumed 600+ was good enough. Azerbaijanis never make mention of Armenian losses.

The defeat of Khojaly forced from office then Azerbaijani

President Mutalibov. Mutalibov describes the Azerbaijani political engineering of events at Khojaly in an interview with Czech reporter Dana Mazalova in the April 2 issue of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* newspaper. Of course, several years after this interview and reiterated earlier this month, Mutalibov claimed he never made such statements, even though the papers exist.

Within hours of the deaths in Khojaly, the famous Azerbaijani video journalist Chingiz Mustafayev recorded the destruction. Four days later, Mustafayev returned and found many of these bodies moved from Khojaly to many km inside the Azerbaijani side of the contact line. Mustafayev videoed these same bodies postmortem mutilated, surrounded by Azerbaijani soldiers. Some reporters recognized the earlier Khojaly bodies subsequently mutilated. Azerbaijan claims Armenians hacked up the victims, yet all show wounds that hadn’t bled. Dead bodies don’t bleed. Two months later, Mustafayev lost his life under mysterious circumstances. Mustafayev’s second film was kept under strict censorship by Azerbaijan until 2017 when Chingiz Mustafayev’s brother Vahid, released the film after Azerbaijani authorities closed down his TV station in Baku.

Azerbaijanis provide “photos of Khojaly,” which included photos of mothers grieving over dead children, but they were photos from a 1980s-era earthquake in Erzerum, Turkey. Periodically, Azerbaijan would present what they claim as photographic evidence of events in Khojaly. As an example, Azerbaijan took previously color photos from the mid-1990s carnage in Yugoslavia, made them into black and white, and claimed they were bodies from the events in Khojaly in 1992. Last year’s Azerbaijani “Khojaly commemoration” in Iran had a photograph from the 1915 Turkish genocide of the Armenians, claiming it was from in Khojaly in 1992. That photo is in the US National Archives. If events in Khojaly were so evident, Azerbaijan would not have to plagiarize evidence.

Less than two months after the Khojaly event, early morning on April 10, 1992, Azerbaijani soldiers captured the peaceful Armenian village of Maragha. The soldiers murdered, hacked up, and burnt alive nearly 100 Armenian civilians. Azerbaijanis have forgotten this act of premeditated barbarism.

Azerbaijan failed to thoroughly cleanse Armenians that were placed under their jurisdiction by Joseph Stalin, demonstrated by sovereignty exercised by the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh today. Azerbaijanis continue to use the term genocide to describe events in Khojaly to a world audience that has been fed a story with most of the facts deleted and others manufactured.

For more facts associated with this event, see March 6, 2017, Times of Israel article “Genocides that Never Were: Jenin, West Bank, and Khojaly, Nagorno-Karabakh.”

(This commentary originally appeared in *Modern Diplomacy* on February 26.)

## Turkey’s Actions in Syria Butting up Against NATO

Turkey’s President Tayyip Erdogan asked NATO to invoke its mutual defense pact when 36 Turkish troops were recently killed by Russian and Syrian forces in Idlib, Syria. His request is cynical and self-serving. Erdogan betrayed the Alliance, siding with Russia in a war he helped foment.

By David L. Phillips

After the 2011 popular uprising in Dara’a, which marked the beginning of Syria’s civil war, Erdogan embraced the Muslim Brotherhood and supported Islamist rebels fighting the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Erdogan envisioned himself the Caliph of Mesopotamia, leading a worldwide community of Sunni brothers.

Erdogan made Turkey the major conduit for weapons and money conveyed to jihadists in Syria. At the time, he thought the victory of jihadists was inevitable. However, Assad’s forces were tenacious.

President Barack Obama promised regime change and drew a red line on the use of chemical weapons (CW). More than 1,300 people, including hundreds of children, were killed in the Damascus suburbs of Ghouta, Muadhmiya, Ein Tarma, and Zamalka on August 21, 2013. Obama had no appetite for military intervention. He claimed the red line was a warning, rather than an actual threat to intervene.

Left to his own devices, Erdogan expanded support for the rebels. Turkey’s National Intelligence Agency established the jihadi highway from Sanliurfa in Turkey to Raqqa, the ISIS capital in Syria. It assisted 40,000 foreign jihadists from more than 100 countries who transited through Turkey to the front line in Syria.

The presence of Chechens and other Islamists from the Southern Caucasus was deeply unsettling to Russia. Rebel advances presented a risk to Russian bases in Latakia and Tartus, threatening Russia’s warm-water port on the Mediterranean. Rebels also threatened Iran’s corridor through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon that was supplying Hezbollah with sophisticated missiles to attack Israel.

General Qassem Soleimani, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) Quds Force, visited Moscow to meet Russian defense officials in July 2015. Soleimani unfurled a map of rebel advances on Damascus. He assured the worried audience, “All is not lost.”

Russian and Iranian officials agreed on a plan to rescue Assad. The IRGC, Hezbollah, and other Shiite militias would join the Syrian Arab Armed Forces on the battlefield. Russia would provide air support. Putin announced Russia’s military intervention at the UN General Assembly on 28 September 2015.

Turkey and Russia were on opposite sides. Turkey supported regime change and gave weapons to the rebels, while Russia backed the regime.

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## Turkey's Actions In Syria Butting Up Against NATO

SYRIA, from page 19

Differences became disaster when a Turkish F-16 shot down a Russian Sukhoi-24 along the Syrian border on November 24, 2015.

Turkey was also alienated from the United States. The US and Turkey had a major falling out after Erdogan alleged America's complicity in the so-called coup that summer. Pragmatic and transactional, Erdogan forged an alliance with Putin in Syria.

Marginalizing the UN and excluding the US, Turkey joined Russia in the Astana process.

Putin agreed to look the other way, while Turkish-backed jihadis and Turkish armed forces targeted the Syrian Kurds, who Erdogan called the "real terrorists."

Turkey invaded Afrin in January 2018. The offensive, called "Operation Olive Branch", killed hundreds of Kurds and displaced nearly a quarter million. Russia controlled the air space west of the Euphrates and was complicit.

Turkey invaded Kurdish lands east of the Euphrates in October 2019. Hundreds were killed and many displaced, including Kurds, Armenians and Syriac Christians. Turkey's jihadist proxies committed atrocities, mutilating the bodies of female fighters.

Erdogan thought he could dissuade Putin from attacking Idlib, the last rebel stronghold in Syria's Northwest. Despite assurances, Syrian ground forces backed by Russian air power intensified attacks, pushing 900,000 people from their homes. Turkey sealed its border leaving displaced Syrians with no place to go.

Turkey presents itself as the victim of actions by Russia and Syria. In fact, it is the aggressor. The violent conflict between Turkey and Russia in Idlib is a direct result of Erdogan's ill-conceived bravado.

Now Erdogan wants NATO to intervene on Turkey's behalf. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Charter stipulates that an attack on one member of the Alliance is an attack on all.

However, Erdogan's appeal has fallen on deaf ears. Erdogan's duplicity has riled the West. His anti-American, anti-European and anti-NATO positions have burned bridges.

For sure, any loss of life is regrettable. It is, however, hard to side with Turkey in its dispute with Russia when Erdogan's actions led to Turkey's woes.

Turkey intensified the civil war by supplying jihadis. Erdogan extorted money from the European Union to manage the refugee crisis, which he helped create. Just yesterday, Turkey was weaponizing refugees by dumping displaced people on the border with Greece. Turkey scorned UN diplomacy by joining the Astana process. It repudiated the US, spending \$3 billion on Russian surface-to-air missiles.

Both Obama and Trump have assiduously avoided a slippery slope in Syria. Years ago, Obama missed an opportunity to intervene when intervention could have saved many lives.

Despite the heart-wrenching suffering of people in Idlib, the Trump administration is unlikely to get involved militarily. US officials should not ignore Erdogan's hubris or excuse his bad judgement.

(Phillips is Director of the Program on Peace-building and Human Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. He served as a Senior Adviser at the State Department during the Clinton, Bush and Obama administration. His forthcoming book is *Front Line Syria: From Revolution to Proxy War* (Bloomsbury). This column originally appeared on the website Institute for the Study of Human Rights on March 1.)

### REVIEW

## A Look Back at Ani At Its Height, and at Its Nadir

By Mardean Isaac

In June 1909, Krikor Balakian, a young Armenian priest, undertook a pilgrimage to the ancient city of Ani. The Ruins of Ani, his record of

this trip, has now been translated into English by his great-nephew, the Armenian-American poet Peter Balakian, who also contributes an incisive introduction.

Peter also co-translated (with Aris Sevag) Armenian Golgotha (reviewed in the TLS, August 7, 2009), his great-uncle's sprawling eyewitness account of the Armenian genocide – at the outset of which, in 1915, Krikor was arrested, enduring four years of turmoil before escaping to Germany.

At its peak in the tenth century, Ani was a "rich and mercantile" capital with a landscape featuring "fortified walls, marvelous royal palaces and princely mansions." The city exemplified the excellence of

Armenian architecture, the influence of which extended to European gothic styles.

After a complex history of conflicts and usurpations, Tamerlane's invasion in the 1380s made Ani "an uninhabited place" by the end of the century.

In the late 1800s Ani was revived as a nexus of scholarly interest. The renewed vision of Ani also deepened a patriotic sense that, in Peter Balakian's words, "the Armenian past is still touchable," and that "past glory and present suffering are part of a conjoined history." The city came to represent not only the aesthetic achievements of the Armenian nation, but also the power that once undergirded them.

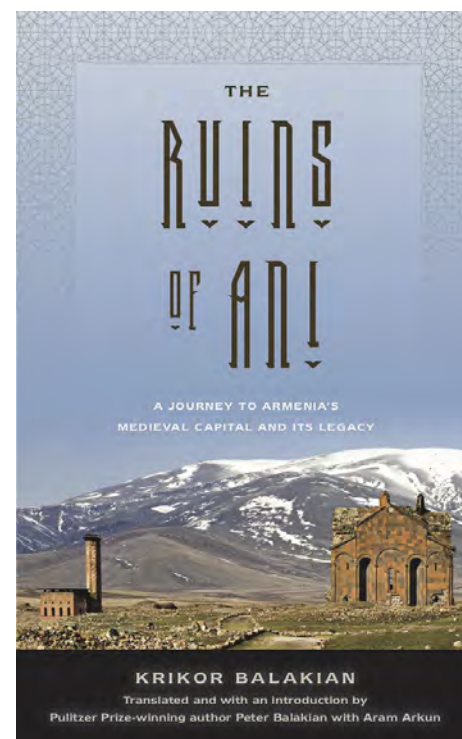
Krikor Balakian's account of his visit mixes the ecstatic and the solemn. The revelry of a group of pilgrims – in the company of the Catholicos of All Armenians, whose predecessors had not been to Ani on an official visit for "nine long centuries" – keeps him up at night in the monastery after a day of touring the "half-

destroyed ruins" he depicts carefully in this book. But he is also haunted by the memory of his encounter with Ani, which had stored the memory of Armenian decline; Turkey conquered the city during the genocide and continues to suppress all references to its Armenian heritage.

This new edition of *The Ruins of Ani* is not merely an informative description of a dazzling city that became a "great museum of the arts and crafts of

### *The Ruins of Ani: A journey to Armenia's Medieval Capital and its Legacy*

By Krikor Balakian, Translated and edited by Peter Balakian with Aram Arkun



Armenian antiquity." It is also an intriguing document of trans-historical and cross-generational imagination. The "richness and opulence" that "always [aroused] the greed of conquering rulers" when Ani was in its prime have long vanished, but eyes are converging on the city once more.

(This review by originally appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* in February.)

