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Govt. Moves to Arrest Opposition Leader Tsarukyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian parliament voted on June 16 to allow lawenforcement authorities to prosecute the leader of its largest group, Gagik Tsarukyan, on charges rejected by him as unfounded and politically motivated.

The parliament, controlled by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's My Step bloc was due to vote separately later in the day on Tsarukyan's pre-trial arrest sought by the National Security Service (NSS).

Addressing lawmakers, Prosecutor-General Artur Davtyan again backed NSS allegations that Tsarukyan "created and led



Police detain a supporter of Prosperous Armenia Party leader Gagik Tsarukian near the parliament building in Yerevan, June 16, 2020.

an organized group" that bought more than 17,000 votes for his Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) during parliamentary elections held in April 2017. Davtyan said the NSS has collected documents and testimony showing that the vote bribes were handed out to residents of the Gegharkunik province.

Tsarukyan and other BHK lawmakers vehemently denied the accusations when they spoke on the parliament floor before the first vote. They said that law-enforce-



Protests in Beirut

Pro-Turkish Forces March Against Lebanese-Armenians in Beirut

BEIRUT (news.am) – Starting on June 11, Turkey-led groups have been literally firing at Lebanese-Armenians. This is what Lebanese-Armenian public figure Sako Arian wrote in his Facebook post under the title "Troubling News from the Armenian Community of Beirut." (See related editorial on page 14.)

"The problem arose when a person who presented himself as a Lebanese posed threats to host of Al Javid TV station, Armenian journalist Nshan Ter-Harutyunyan during an interactive show on WhatsApp, referring to him as a migrant and foreigner. Nshan then countered the caller and stressed that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey and the Ottomans are insidious.

After the show, dozens of people, most of whom live abroad, made provocative statements against the Armenians, justified the genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks and said 'you Armenians are insidious and deserve those murders'. They also praised the fact that they were so-called Ottoman Turks and the followers and supporters of Erdogan.

see BEIRUT, page 4

\$2.00

ment authorities have not produced any evidence of his involvement in the alleged vote buying.

They again claimed that Pashinyan ordered the criminal proceedings in response to Tsarukyan's demands for the entire Armenian government's resignation

voiced on June 5.

Tsarukyan stood by his claims that the government has failed to contain the rapid spread of the coronavirus in the country and tackle severe socioeconomic consequences of the deadly epidemic.

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"I COMPLETELY SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE PEACEFUL-LY PROTEST-ING AND SUP-PORT AND UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Mirror-Spectator will close for two weeks for its annual summer break at the end of June. The last issue before the break will be that of June 27. The first issue back will be that of July 18.

Our offices have been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; our staff has been working from their homes and will continue to do so.

Emails and messages will be checked regularly.

Court in Ankara Rules In Favor of Armenian Church Foundation

ISTANBUL (*Agos*) – The 15th Administrative Court of Ankara has revoked the decision by the Directorate General of Foundations recognizing the Maryakop Armenian Church Foundation as "confiscated" property.

The measure will enable the Armenian Church Foundation to participate in trials to demand the return of over 100 pieces of confiscated property. Meantime, the Directorate will be authorized to appeal the administrative court's ruling.

Founded in the Ottoman period, the Maryakop Armenian Church Foundation was in charge of the property owned by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The Directorate gave it a "confiscated" status in 1973, suspending its activity as legal entity. Most of the foundation's property was sold to third parties.

Foreign Minister Participates in UN Forum on Multilaterism

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan participated in the virtual forum titled "The UN Charter at 75: Multilateralism in a Fragmented World" on June 10.

"Within these 75 years the United Nations has formed unique circles of multilateral cooperation in all spheres, including security, development, human rights which require multilateral partnership and a collective action. During these 75 years it became more than obvious that we all are mutually connected. The global pandemic caused suffering to many at the international platform. But the pandemic also expressed our vulnerability, the trust restrictions towards humanitarian space, global solidarity and multilateral institutions. In some sense this is also a call for action," he said.

Mnatsakanyan concluded that for more than two decades Armenia has assumed a commitment, as well as a moral commitment to unite the international efforts with its partners aimed at preventing genocides, mass atrocities and future crimes.

Sheriff Koutoujian Supports Racial Justice Protests As He Continues Pioneering Programs for Inmates

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

MEDFORD, Mass. – The constant discussion of COVID-19 in America has been changed in the last few weeks to an ongoing discussion of race. People in law

es as a result of the widespread protests spurred on by the death of George Floyd. Among them is Peter Koutoujian, the sheriff of Middlesex County, the most populous county in Massachusetts. His office primarily is involved in corrections, not patrols, with custody of pre-trial and sentenced



enforcement throughout the United States detainees. are reassessing their policies and approach-

see KOUTOUJIIAN, page 9



ARE DOING Completely,"

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UPDATE US Armenian Cemetery Operations Impacted by COVID-19

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

FRESNO – While Armenians sometimes are buried in Armenian sections of American cemeteries or in general cemetery sections, there are also four Armenian-owned cemeteries scattered in different parts of the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected their operations just like that of other cemeteries, though none are located in the worst hotspots of the country. The largest Armenian cemetery is also the one that has been the most impacted. see CEMETERIES, page 8

> Holy Resurrection Armenian Cemetery of South Milwaukee (photos by Armen Hadjinian)



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

US Approves More Coronavirus Aid to Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The United States has allocated \$5.4 million in fresh assistance to Armenia designed to combat the coronavirus epidemic, US Ambassador Lynne Tracy said on Thursday, June 11.

Tracy also voiced concern over the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country while praising the Armenian government's intensifying efforts to get people to practice social distancing, wear face masks and wash hands.

"I'm also happy to say that the United States has been doing its best to contribute and assist the government," Tracy went on. "We have obtained \$5.4 million of new assistance money that's going in a number of directions to help the government. We are also redirecting some of our existing money to help small and medium businesses.

"So I have still some optimism that we can recover and be in a better place. But it's going to take a lot of work, I think, from everybody."

In the envoy's words, much of the fresh US assistance will be channeled into Armenian laboratories and healthcare services dealing with "the most severe cases" of COVID-19. "We are continuing to talk to the [Armenian] government about the needs that they have, and we are looking at what we have within the US capacity to help," she said.

Washington announced its first coronavirus-related aid package for Armenia, worth \$1.1 million, in late March shortly after the Armenian government imposed a nationwide lockdown to contain the first major outbreaks of the disease.

Serbia Sends Aid to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – As a result of conversations between President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian and President of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic, Serbia will soon send a humanitarian aid to Armenia to help fighting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Armenian President's Office told Armenpress on June 15.

Recently the Armenian President had a phone talk with his Serbian counterpart during which they discussed the current coronavirus-related situation. The Serbian president stated that his country is ready to assist Armenia. The Armenian President gave the list of the necessary medical items provided by the healthcare ministry to the Serbian side.

Few days ago at the meeting with the healthcare specialists the Armenian President informed that he again had a talk to his Serbian counterpart and the latter informed what kind of assistance and in what amount he is going to send to his Armenian counterpart and in the person of him the good people of Armenia.

In coming days two aircrafts carrying large amount of medical items and equipment will arrive from Serbia to Armenia via a special flight. In particular, 10 ventilators, 10 monitors, 500,000 surgical and 100,000 breathing masks, 25,000 protective glasses, 25,000 medical protective clothing and other necessary items will be delivered to Armenia

Armenian Government Moves to Arrest Opposition Leader Tsarukyan

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"The end of your revolution has come," Tsarukyan declared, referring to the 2018 protest movement that brought Pashinyan to power.

"Eighty or ninety percent of the people believed in you and the revolution," he said. "But today even 5 percent do not believe."

The BHK leader also said that he is undaunted by the prospect of his imprisonment and will "go to the end" in challenging the authorities. He claimed that with their "fabricated" criminal case they are only "making a hero" out of him.

"This is temporary, [it will last for] only one or two months, not longer," he added in his angry speech. "You must understand this before it's too late. You are standing on the brink of an abyss."

"Tsarukyan and our party represent a considerable part of the people," said Arman Abovian, a senior BHK deputy. "You are at war with the people."

Immediately after finishing his speech and leaving the parliament building, Tsarukyan was surrounded by NSS officers and taken to the NSS headquarters for further questioning. BHK representatives said that the security service illegally detained him before securing the parliament's consent. Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan insisted, however, that Tsarukyan was not detained.

The Bright Armenia Party (LHK), the other opposition force represented in the parliament, also said that the accusations of vote buying are politically motivated. Its leader, Edmon Marukyan, dismissed as hypocritical Pashinyan allies' harsh criticism of Tsarukyan voiced since June 5.

Marukyan argued that Pashinyan repeatedly cut political deals with Tsarukyan following the 2018 "Velvet Revolution." "You are not honest and sincere," he said, referring to the ruling bloc.

In his concluding remarks, Davtyan insisted that the criminal case against the opposition leader and wealthy businessman is a "purely legal process." The chief prosecutor said the NSS opened the case in February, more than three months before Tsarukyan lambasted the government in unusually strong terms.

Leaders of the parliament's pro-government majority also denied any political motives behind the crackdown. Mirzoyan said the opposition must not "politicize the legal parliament seats. Only one of its deputies was absent from Tuesday's session, suggesting that Tsarukyan's prosecution was unanimously backed by the other pro-government lawmakers.

The BHK holds 26 seats, having finished second in the last general elections held in December 2018.

As the parliament began debating the matter in the morning the NSS announced that it launched on Monday a separate investigation into other instances of alleged vote buying by the BHK.



Prosperous Armena Party leader Gagik Tsarukian speaks to journalists in parliament, Yerevan, June 16, 2020

process."

"Everyone is equal before the law regardless of whether or not they lead a political party," said the speaker close to Pashinyan.

Both parliamentary opposition forces decided to boycott the ensuing vote on lifting Tsarukyan's immunity from prosecution. "We will not participate in this farce," said Marukyan.

As a result, only 87 of the 132 deputies of the National Assembly voted in the secret ballot. They all backed the prosecutor's demands. Pashinyan's My Step controls 88 In a statement, the security service said that a senior BHK figure, Naira Zohrabyan, has repeatedly admitted in her private conversations that Tsarukyan's party had paid Armenians to vote for it in various elections. The statement contained a relevant quote attributed to Zohrabyan. It did not specify whether the NSS eavesdropped on the opposition politician's conversations.

Zohrabyan angrily denied these allegations. She suggested that her phones were illegally tapped by the NSS.

Pashinyan Calls for New Constitution

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia should adopt a new constitution that could abolish the country's Constitutional Court, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Monday, June 15.

Pashinyan insisted that he wants to establish an "organic connection between the state order and the will of the Over the past year, Pashinyan has been at loggerheads with seven of the nine members of the Constitutional Court, accusing them of being linked to the former regime and impeding judicial reforms. The Constitutional Court chairman, Hrayr Tovmasyan, has rejected those accusations, saying that the prime minister is simply seeking to

other necessary items will be delivered to Armenia. The total cost of the Serbian assistance will comprise nearly \$1 million.

Former Artsakh Parliamentarian Becomes Armenia Parliament Advisor

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Former Speaker of the National Assembly of Artsakh Ashot Ghulyan has assumed the position of advisor to the Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan, Vahan Kostanyan, assistant of Ararat Mirzoyan, wrote on his Facebook page.

"Ashot Ghulyan has assumed a position at the office of the Speaker of the National Assembly and will continue contributing to the process of forming a joint agenda of the legislative bodies of the two Armenian states in the position of advisor to the parliament Speaker." people," rather than cement his hold on power.

Most Armenians, he said, do not feel such a connection because they played no part in the enactment of their country's post-Soviet constitution and numerous amendments to it made by their former governments.

"I'm not one of those people who think that the country's constitutions should frequently undergo changes," he told a government commission on constitutional reform formed early this year. "But I must also say that especially at this juncture I am of the opinion that we need to not just enact constitutional changes but to adopt a de jure new constitution."

Pashinyan stressed that the commission should not try to reverse Armenia's transition to the parliamentary system of government which was controversially engineered by former President Serzh Sargsyan. It should work on other changes mostly relating to the judicial system, he said.

In particular, Pashinyan suggested that the ad hoc panel "very seriously" consider drafting constitutional provisions that would merge the Constitutional Court with the Court of Cassation, Armenia's highest body of criminal and administrative justice. He said that the two courts have offered different interpretations of Armenian laws on a number of occasions. gain control over the court.

In February, Pashinyan's government decided to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments that would replace Tovmasyan and the six other judges. The referendum scheduled for April 5 was subsequently postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

With no end in sight to the pandemic, the government is expected to cancel the vote altogether. Last month it asked the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe to help it end the standoff with the high court.

The government commission on constitutional reform was formed in January before Pashinyan's political team decided to hold the controversial referendum. It consists of 15 members, including Armenia's justice minister, human rights ombudsman, a representative of the country's judges, members of the three political forces represented in the parliament and legal scholars chosen by the Justice Ministry.

The commission chairman, Yeghishe Kirakosyan, said in February that the panel will come up with a package of amendments and initiate "public discussions" on it by September 2020.

Kirakosyan indicated on Monday that the process will take more time. He told Pashinyan that the commission expects to draft "constitutional reforms" by June 2021.

French Coronavirus Doctors Arrive in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) - A team of French medics arrived in Armenia on June 14 to help Armenian colleagues increasingly struggling to cope with the coronavirus crisis.

The seven doctors were greeted by Armenia's Diaspora High Commissioner Zareh Sinanyan, Deputy Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan and the French and US ambassadors in Yerevan when they arrived at Zvartnots airport late on Sunday.

Sinanyan's office said it has organized the emergency mission "in close collaboration" with the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The doctors who had already undertaken the COVID-19 fight in France are in Armenia for the first time and will invest all their experience and knowledge in this crucial mission to save human lives," it said in a statement.

According to French Ambassador Jonathan Lacote, they will stay in Armenia for 10 days.

"I want to thank all our partners for organizing their mission," Health Minister Arsen Torosyan said on Monday. "It will be really useful for us."

In a Facebook post, Torosyan also said that the French medics have already "gotten down to work" at the intensive care units of three Yerevanbased hospitals treating COVID-19 patients.

Speaking to reporters on Friday. June 12. Torosyan confirmed that a similar medical team from Lithuania will arrive in Armenia in the coming days. The decision to send it was made by the Lithuanian government.

Torosyan revealed that about 50 Russian doctors have also expressed a desire to work at the Armenian hospitals on the front lines of the coronavirus epidemic. He gave no dates for their arrival.

The minister made no mention of similar assis-



French doctors pose for a photograph on their arrival at Zvartnots airport, Yerevan, June 14, 2020. (Photo by the French Embassy in Armenia)

tance that was offered by neighboring Georgia. Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia said on Thursday that his government is discussing details of the proposed aid with the Armenian side.

Torosyan warned on June 4 that Armenia's healthcare system is now so overstretched that hospitals may soon be unable to admit all infected citizens in need of urgent treatment. He said afterwards that the health authorities will set up 350 new hospital beds to treat the increasing number of people infected with the virus.

The minister insisted on June 11 that Armenian hospitals are still able to give life-saving treatment to all patients that are in a serious condition.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases registered in the country of about 3 million continued to grow rapidly over the weekend. The Armenian Ministry of Health said on Monday that they rose by 397 to 17,064 in the past day.

The ministry also reported the deaths of 19 more people infected with the disease. It said 16 of those deaths were primarily caused by the coronavirus. They were added to the official COVID-19 death toll which rose to 285.

According to the health authorities, 94 other infected people have died as a result of other, pre-existing diseases. Three of these fatalities were recorded on Sunday.

The number of new COVID-19 infections hit a new daily high of 723 on Friday.

"With regard to the coronavirus we are not doing well," Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

admitted on Saturday morning. He again complained that many Armenians are not practicing social distancing, wearing face masks in public and taking other precautions recommended by the authorities.

The Armenian government cited the high infection rates last week when it extended a coronavirus-related state of emergency in the country by another month, until July 13.

The state of emergency was declared on March 16. A few days later, the government issued stayat-home orders and banned most types of business activity. It began relaxing those restrictions already in mid-April and lifted virtually all of them by May 10 despite the growing numbers of coronavirus cases and deaths.

Critics say that the government never properly enforced the lockdown and lifted it too soon. Some of them have called for a renewed lockdown. Pashinyan and other senior government officials have opposed such a measure so far.

Catholicos Calls for Solidarity in Combatting COVID-19 in Armenia

ECHMIADZIN - "Today, we have no more important task than to prevent the spread of the pandemic in order to return to our normal lives," Karekin II told an assemblage of clergy on June 11. "Preventing a disaster is possible only through a united effort, in an atmosphere of solidarity."

The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians made those remarks at a special meeting of the brotherhood of Holy Echmiadzin, convened to discuss and review the church's ongoing response to Armenia's pandemic crisis.

The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, at Catholicos Karekin II's direction, has already expended the equivalent of \$600,000 in support of Armenia's medical system during the health crisis.

Echmiadzin has been critically active in the social realm, too, deploying its resources and the ranks of the clergy to help bring food and necessities to our people (click hereto watch a video), especially in areas outside the republic's metropolitan centers.

"The Mother Church and its clergy have an important role to play," His Holiness said in his message. "We hold the responsibility to guide our faithful children in concert with the efforts of the government, urging them to strictly follow the advice of the authorities when visiting churches, places of pilgrimage, and wherever they go."

He offered the same fatherly advice to the church dioceses of the diaspora, which should exhort their people to adhere to local and national health measures.

With the stress of a months-long lockdown, expressions of discouragement and even animosity have become visible at all levels of Armenian society, as elsewhere in the world. But His Holiness struck a note of caution. "The current situation and the challenges facing our country should not become an excuse to retreat from virtue, respect, and tolerance towards others," he said. "It should not tempt us to violate rights and dignity, or weaken love and devotion towards our patrimony." The catholicos has asked the world's Armenian Church dioceses to help in Armenia's time of need. The Eastern Diocese's Fund for Armenian Relief has been doing outreach work. Bishop Daniel Findikyan has assured the Catholicos of the Diocese's additional support, and has planned a fundraising initiative for the week of June 14 through 21 - between the Feast of Holy Echmiadzin and the Feast of St. Nersess the Great (Armenia's "saint of compassion" who sponsored hospitals and charitable concerns throughout the land). "We have been given the opportunity and the privilege to open our hearts wide to our brothers and sisters in Armenia," said Findikyan, "to families that have become impoverished due to the COVID-19 virus that continues to ravage the county; and to hospitals that lack the equipment and medicines to combat the virus."

Government Extends State of Emergency

COVID-19 Cases Soar

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) - The Armenian authorities will double the number of special teams enforcing safety rules meant to contain the spread of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on June 16.

Pashinyan said police officers will be joined by representatives of other state bodies in ensuring that Armenians wear face masks, practice social distancing and take other precautions against COVID-19.

"This will allow us to double the number of enforcement groups," he said at a daily COVID-19 news briefing.

Early this month, the Armenian government made it mandatory for everyone to wear a mask, not only in all enclosed spaces but also in the streets and all other public areas. Police say that thousands of citizens have since been fined 10,000 drams (\$21) for failing to comply with this requirement which the government says is essential for tackling the epidemic.

Pashinvan announced that Wednesday, June 17, Armenians will also have to carry passports or other IDs when leaving their homes. Failure to do so will be punishable by separate 10,000-dram fines, he said, adding that the measure will facilitate the enforcement of the mask requirement.

urgent treatment are now waiting to be hospitalized.

The government pledged last week to set up 350 new hospital beds to cope with the growing number of patients. Torosyan cautioned that increasing hospital capacity alone will not

restrictions already in mid-April and lifted virtually all of them by May 10 despite the growing numbers of coronavirus cases and deaths reported by the Armenian health authorities on a daily basis.

Critics say that the government never prop-



The Armenian Ministry of Health reported on June 16 morning 425 new infections, bringing to 17,489 the total number of coronavirus cases in the country of about 3 million.

The ministry also said that 8 more people had died from the disease in the past 24 hours. raising the official death toll to 295. The figure does not include the deaths of 96 other infected people. These fatalities were primarily caused by other, pre-existing diseases, according to the health authorities.

ministry spokeswoman. Alina The Nikoghosyan, put the number of active cases at over 10,500. Nikoghosyan said only around 2,500 of these patients are now receiving treatment in hospitals. The others remain confined at home and monitored by primary healthcare workers, she said.

Health Minister Arsen Torosyan said on Monday that 231 infected persons in need of A woman wearing a mask walks in Yerevan. (RFE/RL photo)

address the problem. He stressed the importance of lowering infection rates.

The minister was also concerned about the fact that 470 patients were in a serious and 116 others in a critical condition as of Monday afternoon.

"The number is quite large," he said. "Unfortunately the majority of the citizens in a critical condition ... are at serious risk of dving. But doctors are doing everything to prevent that happening."

Citing the continuing spread of the coronavirus in Armenia, the government on Friday extended by another month a state of emergency which it declared in March to combat the epidemic.

A few days after declaring the state of emergency on March 16, the government issued stay-at-home orders and banned most types of business activity. It began relaxing those

erly enforced the lockdown and lifted it too soon. Some of them have called for a renewed and tougher lockdown.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan indicated his continuing opposition to such a measure when he spoke at a cabinet meeting that approved extending the state of emergency until July 13. He said the authorities will instead continue to encourage Armenians to practice social distancing, wear face masks and follow other safetv rules.

Earlier this month the government made it mandatory for everyone to wear a mask in all public areas.

Speaking in the Armenian parliament later in the day, Pashinyan made clear that emergency rule will remain in place until the authorities achieve a significant drop in infection rates. He said the daily number of new COVID-19 cases should fall below 150.

INTERNATIONAL

International News

Turkey Has Plan for Invasion of Armenia and Greece

ISTANBUL (news.am) – The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Turkey has a plan to invade Greece and Armenia. The confidential document was found in the materials of the case regarding the 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt, and the document was mistakenly incorporated in the case by the investigator, as reports Nordic Monitor, which is under the supervision of Nordic Research Monitoring Network. (See related editorial on Page 14.)

According to a Power Point presentation prepared by the General Staff for an internal planning review, Turkey drew up a plan for a secret military operation named "TSK Çakabey Harekât Planlama Direktifi" (TSK [Turkish Armed Forces] Çakabey Operation Planning Directive). The document has a date of June 13, 2014, suggesting that it was most likely updated and finalized on that date after a review of an earlier version and is presumably still active.

Another slide from the same secret document lists Turkey's military offensive plans against Greece and Armenia with corresponding dates indicating when they were drawn up, including the plan against Armenia (drawn up on August 15, 2000) and the plan against Greece (drawn up on June 13, 2014).

The documents were discovered in a court case file in the Turkish capital where investigating prosecutor Serdar Co kun, a loyalist of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, appears to have forgotten to remove the classified documents before submitting them to the court. They were collected from the General Staff headquarters during an investigation into a failed coup on July 15, 2016.

Yerevan in Touch with Red Cross to Deal with Azeri Border Crosser

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Yerevan Office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is in touch with the relevant bodies over the Azerbaijani trespasser.

In an interview the head of the press service of the Yerevan Office of the ICRC Zara Amatuni said, "We keep in touch with the relevant bodies over this issue. As you may know it's in the powers of the ICRC, which is a neutral mediator, to visit individuals arrested as a result of the conflict for overseeing their treatment, the detention conditions and for giving them opportunity to contact with their family members."

The National Security Service of Armenia announced on June 11 that an Azerbaijani citizen, who violated the Armenia-Azerbaijan border in the north-eastern direction, was arrested. The trespasser is 26-year-old Elshan Rasul Oghli Aliyev.

Armenian Patriarch Calls for Hagia Sophia To Become Place of Worship for All

The Start of a Successful (Medical) Relationship

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LEUTENBERG, Germany – Five years ago, the German-Armenian Forum came into being upon the initiative of Albert Weiler, a member of the Bundestag (Parliament) from the Christian Democratic Party (CDU). The aim of the new association was to intensify relations and promote mutual understanding between Armenia and Germany at all levels, from government to parliament, among professionals, students and youth. And it has been a success story.

Ani Avagyan is a good example. After having completed her medical studies with excellent grades in Yerevan, she wanted to further her education in Germany, and applied for a position at Hospital of the Specialized Dermatology at Castel Friedensburg, Leutenberg, in Thuringia. "I simply wanted to develop knowledge in my special field further and gain some international experience. In the field of medicine that is nothing unusual," she said. Language was no barrier, since she had studied German at the university and mastered it rapidly.

Bureaucracy, however, did present a problem. To qualify for a permit to stay in Germany, she had to go through lengthy procedures, which were complicated and thorough. Weiler stepped in to provide help. "After discussions with the ambassadors of both countries and filling out a lot of forms, we were finally able to make it possible for Ms. Avagyan to come to Leutenberg," he said. "One advantage was that the hospital was also a member of our Forum," he added. With her temporary sojourn permit,

Avagyan reached her aim and started



Ani Avagyan, Albert Weiler and Silke Herold (left to right)

activities at the hospital, which is housed in a magnificent 16th-century castle. Within a short time, she was fluent in German; to continue her career, she also had to master the use of specialized medical terminology, and passed the exams with honors. The Specialized Hospital of Dermatology is the right place for her to be; since its opening in 1993 it has become the center for treatment of skin and chronic degenerative diseases, not only for patients in Germany but internationally.

In early June, Weiler went to visit Avagyan, who has just completed her first year at the hospital and received her work permit. The young Armenian doctor raved about the hospital and its surroundings. "When I send photos to friends and family members," she told the parliamentarian, "they are envious, because it is so beautiful here. The natural setting and the historic castle are simply fantastic." The manager and head doctor of the hospital, Silke Herold, had nothing but praise for Avagyan. In the course of the past year, she said, "we were able to get a sense of her personality and achievements. And I am not exaggerating," she went on, "when I say that Ms. Avagyan has enriched our hospital, with her pleasant and friendly manner, as well as her diligence and specialized knowledge."

The project has clearly been a success for all involved. The combination of natural beauty and historical significance of the site have enhanced the clinic and helped attract young medical associates to join the staff. The German-Armenian Forum has played a crucial role as mediator. Plans are already afoot for expanding this cooperation, also in other fields of medicine, like care of the elderly.

HDP Starts 'March for Democracy' from Both Ends of the Country to Capital

ISTANBUL (Bianet) – The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) started a "March for Democracy" on June 15 in the northwestern Edirne and the southeastern Hakkari provinces. It was in reaction to the dismissal of its members of parliament and mayors.

Ahead of the march, the police surrounded the party's provincial building in Edirne, the Mezopotamya Agency reported.

As for the other part of the march, a group of party members, along with cochair Mithat Sancar, arrived in Hakkari from Van the night before.

According to reports, the city was surrounded by police. Special operation forces and snipers have been deployed around state buildings.

The police also surrounded the HDP's provincial building, where MP Garo Paylan started a live broadcast.

After Sancar made a statement for the press, the march started.

"We won't abandon democratic politics," he said.

Delivering a speech ahead of the march, Sancar briefly said the following: "They don't even let us come together. But we are together at heart. No one can break our unity. We will be together in hearts and streets. Our hearts are one, nobody can build a wall between us and our people. Our march is the march for democracy against the coup. Putschism is to usurp the will of the people. It is to persecute the people. A coup is not only done with tanks, guns. A coup can also be done with using the judiciary, the resources of the ruling power. The first thing that all putschists do is to usurp the will of the people. "This government also uses the same methods. It uses the judiciary, the resources of the ruling power. This is called a political coup. What putschists fear the most is freedom. First, they usurp the will of the people, they immediately destroy freedoms. Our right to march is based on the Constitution." "We are here to solve the country's freedom, Kurdish problems through politics and democracy. This is why we are in politics but the government wants to suffocate the politics as well. All mentalities that want to suffocate politics are pro-coup."

HDP Co-Chair Pervin Buldan made a statement also.

"They will never be able to make us take a step back from our resolute march. We are not just this many. We are thousands, millions. You have made undemocratic decisions in violation of the Constitution by banning entries and exits to many cities. The measures you have taken to prevent HDP from meeting with the people will not prevent us from coming together with our people.

"Today, this democratic march

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Armenian Patriarch of Turkey, Sahak II, has joined the discussion over the potential re-transformation of the Hagia Sofia into a mosque, voicing his support for the proposal in a chain of tweets on June 13.

"The Hagia Sophia should be opened to worship," he said, stating that it is big enough for that purpose while suggesting a space for Christians. "Let the world applaud our religious peace and maturity. May Hagia Sophia become a symbol of the peace of humanity in our era."

Sahak further stated that humanity was praying for such unity and so suggested sharing the dome of Hagia Sophia.

Having been a place of worship for Christians for 1,000 years and another 500 for Muslims, he claims that Hagia Sophia won't be minding it.

"Hagia Sophia was built with the labor of ten thousand at an astronomical cost," he said pointing out that for over 1,500 years numerous repairs have been done on the iconic building by the Fatih Sultan Foundation. serve it as a place of worship.

Pro-Turkish Forces March Against Lebanese-Armenians In Beirut

BEIRUT, from page 1

Arian doesn't think these provocations are unexpected since those following the developments in Lebanon from afar have noticed Ankara's ambitions to become established in Lebanon to establish a so-called "Turkish lobby" in northern Lebanon.

"Syria, Libya and now Lebanon...this is Ankara's new plan, and unfortunately, the Sunni Arab world has become a silent and helpless observer. In closing, I would like to address my Lebanese-Armenian friends with the certainty that they will confront this trial with pride and courage as well. May God be with our people." against the coup, is a march for all our friends in prisons, especially for Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yüksekdag.

"This march is not only for Demirtas and Yüksekdag. It is about living together with freedom, democracy and in peace," she said.

The police used rubber bullets and tear gas against the HDP members, including MPs Tuma Çelik and Musa Piroglu, after they attempted to march to the shopping mall again.

She concluded, "The biggest problem of Turkey is the AKP's oppression, violence and denial towards the Kurds, Alevis, women, Armenians and all dissenters in Turkey. Today, those who govern the country are trying to take revenge from the Kurds by damaging their gravestones. Those who govern the country attack Alevis' cemeteries, burning down their places of worship. Those who govern the country are trying to take revenge from the Armenian people by damaging their churches."

Community News

11 11 M

AAF Airlifted \$181,000 Of COVID-19 Medicines And Supplies to Armenia

GLENDALE – Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF) delivered an air shipment of COVID-19 medicines and medical supplies valued at \$181,000 to Yerevan, Armenia on June 12. This shipment will cover treatment of 1,500 patients in the country.

During the first five months of 2020, AAF also delivered \$6 million of humanitarian assistance to Armenia and Artsakh. Of this amount, the AAF collected \$5.8 million of medicines and other supplies donated by Americares (\$5 million) and Direct Relief (\$741,000).

Other organizations which contributed valuable goods during this period were: The Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corp. (\$76,000); Project Agape (\$40,000); Armenian Educational Benevolent Union (\$36,000).

The medicines and medical supplies donated during this period were sent to the AGBU Claudia Nazarian Medical Center for Syrian Armenian Refugees in Yerevan, Arabkir United Children's Foundation, Avak Medical Center, Fund for Armenian Relief, Metsn Nerses Charitable Organization, Muratsan Children's Endocrinology Center, St. Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center, and the health ministries of Armenia and Artsakh.

In the past 31 years, including the shipments under its predecessor, the United Armenian Fund, the AAF has delivered to Armenia and Artsakh a grand total of \$897 million worth of relief supplies on board 158 airlifts and 2,470 sea containers.

Senator Menendez Letter to GAO Regarding Assessment of Assistance to Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) welcomes Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Senator Bob Menendez's letter to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) regarding an assessment of assistance to Azerbaijan.

In his June 3 letter, Menendez stated that the government of Azerbaijan is "clearly not taking" the steps required by Section 907 of the FREE-DOM Support Act. Section 907 of the states in part that no US assistance may be provided to Azerbaijan "until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."

During the Assembly's National Advocacy Conference last Fall, Assembly activists raised concerns about compliance with Section 907 and the disproportionate amount of assistance to Azerbaijan (over \$100 million), as well as US assistance being used by Azerbaijan to attack Armenians. The troubling disparity between US military aid to Azerbaijan and Armenia undermines the nature and spirit of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Menendez's letter also noted that assistance to Azerbaijan has "skyrocketed" and that the "lack of Congressional notifications makes it difficult to understand the full scope and nature of assistance provided pursuant to the waiver" for Section 907. He also raised concerns that "Congress does not have a comprehensive understanding of the scope, nature, and impact of assistance" provided to Azerbaijan. Menendez specifically requested that the GAO, at a minimum, consider the nature and quantity of all US foreign assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan, in accordance with the Section 907 waiver, broken down by year, funding account, and implementing agency. "Given Azerbaijan's continued attacks against Armenia and Artsakh, including the targeting of kindergartens in the Tavush region of Armenia, we fully support Senator Menendez's efforts and believe that no US funding should be provided to Azerbaijan while it continues to blatantly and repeatedly violate the cease-fire agreement," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.



Dr. Sharon Chekijian shakes the hand of President Armen Sarkissian

Dr. Chekijian Receives Fulbright Award to Work in Armenian Hospital Emergency Systems

NEW HAVEN, Conn. – The Yale Department of Emergency Medicine (DEM) announced this week announce that Sharon Anoush Chekijian, MD, MPH, has received a J. William Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award for her work in emergency systems and curricular development in the Republic of Armenia.

Chekijian will base her work, conduct research and lecture at the School of Public Health at the American University of Armenia (AUA), as part of a project to establish a post-graduate program in emergency medicine, to expand and develop emergency services, and to perform research capacity building in emergency services provision and evaluation.

Along with the School of Public Health at the AUA, the National Institutes of Health of Armenia and the Yerevan Municipal Ambulance Service, she intends to develop a comprehensive plan to improve emergency care for citizens of and visitors to Armenia.

Chekijian has previously worked in Armenia in the areas of organ transplantation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, traffic safety, and stroke program development as part of the Stroke Initiative Advisory Task-Force for Armenia (SIATA). Internationally, Chekijian has also served as a consultant for the World Bank, the U.S. Department of State and USAID.

One of a select group of US citizens who will teach, conduct research, and/or provide expertise abroad for the 2020-2022 academic years through the Fulbright US Scholar Program, Chekijian is excited about the opportunity to transfer knowledge and strategies gained from implementing successful projects in the US to Armenia.

"We know that emergency medical systems development is key to addressing and reducing mortality in a variety of acute conditions such as heart attacks, strokes and trauma. The current pandemic has reinforced the importance of a robust emergency response system. Armenia has become a center for the tech industry as well as tourism. The improvement of emergency medicine will be a major contributor to ongoing development in these areas. Having a dedicated group of emergency medicine trained doctors in Armenia will mean we can expect a multiplier effect on the healthcare of the country. I am excited to work as part of a team dedicated to making this happen in Armenia and at the Yale Department of Emergency Medicine," Chekijian said.

A "renaissance" clinical scientist, Chekijian has multiple roles in the DEM, at Yale and with national and international organizations. Clinically, she works as a supervising physician, caring for patients in three extremely high-volume emergency departments. Administratively, she is the medical director for the Emergency Medicine Physician Associate and Nurse Practitioner (PA/NP) group, the inaugural medical director for the Yale New Haven Hospital PA/NP Residency Program, which she developed, she is a faculty Member in the Division of Global Health and International Emergency Medicine, medical director of Patient Experience and Chair of the Patient Experience Forum. She is involved nationally as the Chair of the Society of Academic Medicine's (SAEM) Academy of Women in Academic Medicine's awards committee as well as the Chair of SAEM's APP Medical Director's interest group and SAEM Board of Directors' Advance Practice Provider's Task Force. She has also been nominated as lead ambassador to Armenia from the American College of Emergency Physicians. An excellent administrator, educator and global researcher, Chekijian is uniquely poised to enhance emergency medicine development in Armenia. "Dr. Chekijian demonstrates an outstanding spectrum of experience, professionalism, sensitivity and dedication for her work" says DEM Chair, Dr. Gail D'Onofrio. "As the founder of our highly successful PA/NP residency program, now graduating its fifth class, I am confident that her expertise, compassion, dedication and determination will achieve similar results in Armenia, advocating for physicians who would like to practice emergency medicine and improving healthcare practices. Using internationally recognized guidelines and standards for emergency systems development, her project promises to have an enormous impact on emergency care in Armenia. Our department is proud to support Dr. Chekijian's work."

COVID-19 Vaccine Clears Key Safety Hurdle in Mouse Study

CHICAGO (Reuters) – A study of Moderna Inc's COVID-19 vaccine in mice lends some assurance that it will not increase the risk of more severe disease, and that one dose may provide protection against the novel coronavirus, according to preliminary data released on Friday, June 12.

Prior studies on a vaccine for SARS – a close cousin to the new virus that causes COVID-19 – suggests vaccines against this type of virus might have the unintended effect of causing more severe disease when the vaccinated person is later exposed to the pathogen, especially in individuals who do not produce an adequately strong immune response.

Scientists have seen this risk as a key hurdle that must be cleared before vaccines can be safely tested in thousands of healthy people.

While the data released by the US National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) and Moderna was encouraging, mouse data is no guarantee of what will happen in humans.

The vaccine is currently in midstage testing in healthy volunteers. Moderna said on June 11 it plans to begin final-stage trials enrolling 30,000 people in July.

In the new study, six-week-old mice received one or two shots of a variety of doses of Moderna's vaccine, including doses considered not strong enough to elicit a protective immune response. Researchers then exposed the mice to the virus.

Subsequent analyzes looking for signs of disease enhancement suggests that "sub-protective" immune responses do not cause what is



Moderna labs

known as vaccine-associated enhanced respiratory disease, a susceptibility to more severe disease in the lungs. "Subprotective doses did not prime mice for enhanced immunopathology following (exposure)," Dr. Barney Graham of the Vaccine Research Center at NIAID and colleagues wrote in the not yet peer reviewed manuscript, posted on the bioRxiv website. Further testing also suggested that the vaccine induces potent neutralizing antibody responses – the type of response needed to block the virus from infecting cells.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international see AWARD, page 7

The vaccine also appeared to protect against infection by the coronavirus in the lungs and noses without evidence of toxic effects, the team wrote.

They noted that the mice that received just one dose of the vaccine before exposure to the virus seven weeks later were "completely protected against lung viral replication," suggesting that a single vaccination prevented the virus from making copies of itself in the lungs.

"At first glance, it looks promising in inducing neutralizing antibody protection in mice," Dr. Peter Hotez, a vaccine researcher at Baylor College of Medicine said in an email. He had not yet reviewed the paper in detail. (Reporting by Julie Steenhuysen Editing by Bill Berkrot)

COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARIES

Dr. George P. Gopoian Doctor in Practice for 40 Years

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. – Dr. George P. Gopoian, peacefully passed away June 7, 2020, in his home, surrounded by his family.

He is survived by his wife, Carol; children, Nicole Gopoian (Adam) Wirick, and George Edward (Emily) Gopoian, and many other relatives and friends.

George was born on September 17, 1947 in Detroit. He was the son of the late Edward Vardkas and Rose Sona (nee Sarkisian) Gopoian. He married the love of his life, Carol Marie, in 1978 after they met at work in Chicago. George was a medical resident and Carol was a registered nurse.

George was an outstanding clinician and surgeon, practicing podiatric medicine for 40 years in the Metropolitan Detroit Area. He was widely respected as an expert in his field.

Family meant everything to him. George was an active participant in raising his children and took pride in watching them earn advanced degrees, get married and establish their own businesses.

Always supporting his church and community, in 1981, George became an active charter member of the 100 Hyes, a philanthropic organization of men, dedicated to helping needy Armenians in the community. George was a noted avid hunter and fisherman, who enjoyed his time with his son, George, on a big game hunt to Africa. Their wives also attended to tour the countryside.

He loved his late four-legged companion, Duke, a chocolate lab who added joy to

summers spent at his pool. Duke impressed their many visitors with his ability to jump off the diving board and swim laps with George.

Like any true Armenian, he loved food; but more importantly he cherished weekly family dinners on Sunday evening.

In the care of Simon Javizian Funeral Directors, visitation, Dan Gark and funeral services took place in St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church, Dearborn, with Fr. Hrant Kevorkian officiating. Entombment followed in Woodmere Cemetery, Detroit.

Elizabeth 'Betty' Cholakian Kapeghian Editor, Dedicated to Church, Family

PHILADELPHIA – Elizabeth "Betty" Cholakian Kapeghian passed away on Thursday, June 4, 2020 at the age of 85.



She was predeceased by her husband George Kapeghian. She is survived by her daughter Ankine Carlin (nee Kapeghian), her son-inlaw Rich Carlin, her son Krikor Kapeghian and her two grandchildren

Luke and Taline Kapeghian and step grand-children Morgan Flexon (nee Carlin) and Michelle Nielubowicz (nee Carlin).

Betty was the second and last remaining child of Hagop and Maritza Cholakian (nee Attarian). Her older sister Naomi Kapeghian (nee Cholakian) and younger brother Martin Cholakian predeceased her. She graduated from Temple University in 1955 with degrees in English and French. She leveraged her education to become a wellrespected proofreader/editor in the pharmaceutical advertising industry.

Betty donated her time to various church organizations throughout her life, including being the President of the Women's Guild at Saint Sahag & Mesrob. She was an avid reader, cryptogram solver, crossword puzzle master and loved to cook. She loved classical music and equally enjoyed the opera and theater. In her later years, Betty took great joy in helping to raise her beloved grandchildren.

Graveside Services will be Saturday, June 20, 2020 in Arlington Cemetery, 2900 State Road, Drexel Hill, Penn. Family and friends will meet in the drive facing the office building off of State Road at 10:15 A.M. Social distancing will be adhered to. A luncheon will follow the services.

Barbara (Haroian) Solakian Longtime Member of First Armenian Church

WESTON, Mass. – Solakian, Barbara (Haroian), 81, of Weston, passed away peacefully at her home on June 13, 2020.

She was the wife of John Solakian, daughter of the late Elizabeth (Demerjian) Haroian and the late Nishan Haroian; mother of Mark Solakian and his wife Christine, and Stephanie Solakian Goldstein and her husband Randall; grandmother of Catherine, Caroline, Andrew, and William; sister of Susan Dupont and her husband Jacques, and Marcia Smith and her partner Peter Simon; aunt of Matthew Dupont, Jonathan Smith, and Heather Smith and adored relative and friend to many Barbara was born on November 22, 1938 in Medford. She grew up in Lexington and was a graduate of Lexington High School. In 1960, she graduated with Phi Beta Kappa honors from Tufts University, where she majored in French, with a minor in Italian. Following her college graduation, she worked for many years as the assistant to the House Master of Leverett House, Harvard University. In 1962, Barbara married John Solakian of Watertown. Barbara made her family and home her number one priority, as those were her greatest pride in life. As her children were growing up, Barbara became intimately involved with their schools, and gave generously of her time as a volunteer, serving through the years on various parents' committees and boards of trustees. Barbara was a member of the Board of Directors for Concord Family Services and also cherished her time as a member of the Ladies Committee at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

she and her family have been members for decades. She led the church's Fellowship Hour for a number of years and had a leading role on the church's sanctuary restoration

her First Armenian

Church family, where



Alfred Yegumians Born in Iran, Longtime Realtor

BOSTON – Alfred Yegumians passed away at the age of 80 unexpectedly from a cardiac event in Boston on June 5, 2020.

"Alfi," as he was lovingly called by family and friends, lived a life full of humor, kindness and humility. On any given occasion, he would be the first to put you at ease with a charming joke or gesture that touched one's heart and left even the hardest among us, young or old, with a soft spot for his company. Those who were dear to him – be they family, friends, or co-workers – were his compass and his joy. To them, he was the embodiment of goodness, and they would share that sentiment every time they would encounter members of Alfi's immediate family.

He took great care to cultivate and keep his lifelong friendships, near or far, until his final days. Whether sharing a memory or a verse of poetry that struck a chord, he kept the thread of his friendships tightly woven, letting them know they were never remote in his mind regardless of the miles that separated them. He kept a "dossier" on each friend and family member, with all of their letters, pictures, and life events carefully documented. To him, these were his most valued possessions.

Born on September 18, 1939 in Tehran, Iran, to Simon (Simik) and Alma (Almick) Yegumians, Alfi attended Kooshesh Armenian primary and secondary school. He then attended the University of Tehran, studying mathematics.



At the age of 21, he married his beloved, Janet. They were each other's anchor and had two daughters.

Alfi worked from a young age in the airline and freight industry - LIA Airlines and Unipack, S.A. In 1978, he immigrated his family to the United States and worked for 30+ years as a Broker at Lawndale Realty, (which was his favorite spot in Belmont). During his years in Boston, he was an active member of the Armenian community, proudly supporting many Armenian organizations and serving as the chair of the Iranian-Armenian Society of Boston for several years.

To those he leaves behind, including his wife, Janet Yegumians, daughters Arlette Yegumians and Yvette Yegumians Der-Sirakian, his son-in-law Edward (Teddy) Der-Sirakian, grandson Alec Der-Sirakian, brother Victor Yegumians and his wife Violet V. Yegumians, his sister Anahid Khatchatourian and her family, first cousins Ara Bagdasarian, Flora Stouffs, Katia Yaghoumians-Hurts, Armen Petrossian and their families, as well as countless other relatives and friends around the world, he would want to share one of his favorite verses:

"If you come upon me in the autumn of my life, and you find me hunched and frail.

Don't foresee my winter.

Remember, I have lived a wonderful spring!"

Considering the current social distancing restrictions, a private funeral service led by Fr. Antranik Baljian was held on Tuesday, June 16, at Saint Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, followed by interment at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Watertown, MA. A memorial celebration of Alfi's life will be held at a later time. Arrangements are being made by Aram Bedrosian Funeral Services in Watertown, MA (www.bedrosianfuneralhome.com).



In addition, Barbara was dedicated to serving late

committee. Barbara

was a humble yet impactful leader. She was tireless and accomplished everything she set out to do with grace and elegance.

She lived her life by setting positive examples for her family and friends every single day. She loved to entertain and bring family and friends together.

Even as Barbara faced a surprise illness, she would describe the disease as a blessing, because without the diagnosis, she would not have had the opportunity to welcome so many new and special people, caregivers and friends alike, into her life. Barbara's positive mindset and willingness to explore new ways to manage the disease equipped her with profound strength to co-exist with the illness. Cancer was never a battle or fight, because such words were never part of her vocabulary when it came to how Barbara lived her life. Barbara will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

For the health and safety of Barbara's family and friends, funeral services and interment at Linwood Cemetery in Weston are private. A celebration of Barbara's life will be planned for a later date.



Telephone (617) 924-7400 Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

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COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARIES

Anna Lee Ohanesian Child of Genocide Survivors, Active in Church

DAVENPORT, Iowa - Anna Lee Ohanesian passed peacefully in her home on June 3, 2020. She was surrounded by her family and members of the Genesis Hospice team who helped to care for her these last six months.

It was easy to know how long someone knew her by how they addressed her. Throughout her life she went by many names; Anna Lee, Annie, Anne, Ani, Anahit, Anna and "Anna the Banana." A life-long learner, she thought it was important for people to grow, change and evolve in their thinking and behavior, but . . . that only four things remain steadfast; love of family, a strong Christian faith, patriotism to country, and service to community.

Anna's parents were orphaned in the Armenian Genocide. Her parents came to the United States as small children, along with other Armenians of that time and circumstance.

She was born in June of 1930 in Indiana Harbor. The second child of the late Sarah Simonian and Kniaz Tarazoff, sister to the late Lamont Kachaturian, the late Arthur Tarazoff and the late Irene Merijohn. The last of her line, Anna is survived by her sister-inlaw, Mary Tarazoff. She was also preceded in death by all but two of her beloved cousins and closest friends.

The Armenian community in Chicago became her very large and extended family. She loved her Armenian culture and heritage. She loved life. Anna was a dancer. She loved music of all kinds, and the visual arts. She was young at heart, always ready for an adventure, and always ready to try something new. She was known and will be remembered for her positive attitude and quickness in flashing a bright and infectious smile.

Anyone who ever spoke with her knew immediately her character, strong principles and incredible will. She was honest (brutally at times). Her standards were high.

She served as a member and officer of dozens of organizations. Among her favorites were; serving as superintendent of the Sunday School for Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church, serving for two terms as the president of the American Business Women's Association and serving more than two decades as the financial secretary for Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, retiring at the age of 78.

Nothing brought her more pride and joy than the successes and accomplishments of



her children; Deann (Lee) Kokott, Renaye Ohanesian and Raelene (Scott) Pullen. She is also survived by grandchildren Kristen (Mike) Burke, Kimberly (Pete) Lanzel and one greatgrandchild, Caitlin Burke.

A traditional Armenian graveside service was held at Elmwood Cemetery in Hammond, Indiana. A memorial service and party celebrating her life will be scheduled in Davenport, IA in the future, as announced.



Jack and Zarig Youredjian Stand by AUA Students

LOS ANGELES/YEREVAN - Philanthropists and American University of Armenian (AUA) Pillars, Jack and Zarig Youredjian, are community leaders who recognize needs and take action. They believe in AUA's mission and are partners with the University in its continued efforts of shaping the next generation of leaders in the homeland.

When COVID-19 spread around the world and directly impacted students at AUA, the University reached out to its community of supporters to help address many challenges. The Yourediian Family Charitable Foundation responded with compassion, supporting AUA students generously so that they can continue with their education in the face of crisis.

Jack Youredjian was born in Jerusalem. He attended the American University of Beirut and knows first hand the impact a western-style education has on advancing regions of the world. Jack received his doctorate of pharmacy from the University of Southern California. After working a few years in a hospital, he opened his first pharmacy followed by multiple pharmacies over time. In 1980 he started Western Drug/Lifeair, which now has eight divisions across California.

Jack. like many students at AUA, received assistance from Armenian philanthropists and foundations to attend university. "My higher education would not have been possible without the support of AGBU and The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation," Jack says. "I hope I can make a difference in the lives of the coming generations. I strongly believe that education is the future of our motherland." "As Armenians, we are very proud of AUA and the wonderful work that the University does in educating the future leaders of Armenia," the couple stated. "We remember Dr. Mihran Agbabian fondly and applaud his efforts and hard work that he put in to move his vision forward by establishing a remarkable institution like AUA in Armenia."

Mirror-Spectator/ASA **Offers Paid Internship**

WATERTOWN - For all of you, or your friends and relatives, seeking summer jobs and internships, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator offers an exciting opportunity: it is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August). The intern will receive a \$150 weekly stipend provided through the Armenian Students' Association of America's Internship Program. The Mirror also is looking for interns during the regular year.

The intern should be in college or graduate school and does not necessarily have to be studying journalism. Internet skills are a plus. Most likely, the internship will be done long distance, via electronic communications, so location is not an issue (but native speaker knowledge of English remains important).

Aside from writing for the paper and working on the Mirror website, the Mirror is looking for help in sparking new marketing campaigns and obtain more digital advertising.

To apply, please email tcadirector@aol.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com with a resume.

Dr. Chekijian Receives Fulbright Award

AWARD, from page 5

educational exchange program and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Recipients are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, as well as record of service and demonstrated leadership in their respective fields. The Fulbright Program is funded through an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the US Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations, and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the Program, which operates in over 160 countries worldwide and has given more than 390,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, and professionals of all backgrounds and fields the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns. Cat Urbain

COMMUNITY NEWS

US Armenian Cemetery Operations Impacted by COVID-19

CEMETERIES, from page 1



View of Ararat Armenian Cemetery, Fresno

Fresno's Ararat Armenian Cemetery Association

Fresno has the oldest and largest Armenian cemetery in the United States. While it is run by one organization, the Ararat Armenian Cemetery Association, it has two parts with different names stretching over an expanse of approximately 16 acres. The Ararat Armenian Cemetery was started in 1885. Over the years more land was purchased, and in 1969 a nearby 10-acre plot was turned into the Masis Ararat Armenian cemetery.

Among its most famous tombs are that of writer William Saroyan (containing half his ashes) and of Armenian avenger Soghomon Tehlirian, who assassinated Young Turk leader Talat Pasha, an organizer of the Armenian Genocide. General Antranig Ozanian was buried there in 1927, though his remains later were transferred first to Paris and then to Yerevan. There is also an Armenian Genocide monument erected in 1968 with remains of an unknown martyr brought from the deserts of Der Zor in 1930 by Rev. Manasseh G. Papazian.

Executive Director and Administrator Sheri Manning-Cartwright stated that there are around 16,000 burials between the two cemeteries, and approximately 4,000 vacant spaces yet to be used. Annually there are between 80 and 100 burials conducted, of which a third take place in the old original part of the cemetery, and the rest in the newer Masis section.

She explained that to be buried in the two cemeteries, you must either be of Armenian descent or married to someone who is. The older section has been sold out since the 1950s so burials there are from families who have owned graves there for several generations but have not used them all yet.

There is a mausoleum acquired as part of land acquired in the 1950s which Ararat maintains, but it is not Armenian.

She said that the cemetery association was not aware of any deaths due to coronavirus that led to burials in its land. The rate of burials remains constant, ranging from none to three a week, Manning-Cartwright added.

Nonetheless, COVID-19 has had its impact on the cemetery due to the rules on social distancing. Upon the direction of the Fresno County Department of Public Health (https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health), the gates were closed for a little over a month, from April 6 to May 15 of this year. Manning-Cartwright said that this was particularly hard on people, as it included holidays like Easter and Mother's Day when people often would come to visit.

However, as a comparatively small cemetery, she said, people could have visited if they called ahead of time or even just showed up at the gates, as someone would run out and open them. The problem was to get the word to people that this was indeed possible, so a lot of people remained unaware of this option During the period of time the gates were closed, there was no order to wear face masks, though this became required once the gates were reopened. Manning-Cartwright said she herself would wear a mask, and would maintain her distance. People did not need to get out of their car, and if they did not know the location of a grave, she would walk them to it. She asked that people come in smaller groups and in fact, there were no attempts of larger groups to come. Typically, she said, it would be one person wanting to leave flowers on the grave of parents, or maybe a couple coming to visit their child's grave.

ing the rule but still letting the family witness the lowering."

However, the cemetery had to do away with the practice of family members filling in the grave with dirt. She said, "That has been very hard on the families, and especially in some funerals the young men, the sons, grandsons and nephews, were devastated. They felt very strongly they wanted to do it."

With the newer regulations, beginning at the very end of May, the number of people permitted at funerals was increased to 25, and the time limit extended to 30 minutes. With the larger number of people allowed, the canopy is now backed up further from the casket to allow the priest to take off his mask while speaking. However, this will be very hot in the sun for the priest, so in early June Manning-Cartwright said that the cemtery was going to come up with something to ameliorate the situation.

Families now did not have to go into their cars to watch the casket lowered, but still could not fill in the grave themselves. Chairs would be set up according to the social distancing rules, though people try to move them.

Manning-Cartwright repeated several times how difficult this period has been for the Armenian community, and consequently for her as well. She said, "I am told I get to be an honorary Armenian and I wear that with pride. The Armenian community here has welcomed me and I feel very connected to it. When you handle arrangements for people's loved ones, you grow close to people. You care for them. There are a lot of families here I just adore."



View of Holy Resurrection Armenian Cemetery of South Milwaukee (photo Armen Hadjinian)

Holy Resurrection Armenian Cemetery of South Milwaukee

Armenians settled in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as early as 1910, and they established a church, Holy Resurrection Armenian Apostolic Church, in 1924. Their cemetery was opened in 1948. It is less than a mile from the church and next to St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the latter's own cemetery, where Armenians used to be buried prior to its establishment.

The cemetery was started by the church but became an independent entity, pastor Fr. Sahak Kaishian said, possibly for administrative or tax purposes. The church community still takes care of the cemetery, and the chairman of the local parish council, Armen Hadjinian, is also chairman of the cemetery board. It contains about 400 graves at present (for some tombstone pictures, see http://www.usgwarchives.net/wi/cemetery/southmilwaukee-armenianstharoutum.html), and has its own caretakers.

Kaishian said that normally there were 5 burials a year, and there was no increase in burials this year due to the novel coronavirus. He said that no one from South Milwaukee's Armenian community contracted the virus, as far as he was aware. There were only two or three burials in the last few months. The state restrictions, such as no church service, no wake and no more than 10 people at the gravesite were complied with, and when the Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down the governor's stayat-home order on May 13, this made it possible to also hold a wake for the last burial. Hadjinian added that social distancing had to be practiced as part of the adherence to state laws during the COVID-19 crisis. Unlike other general cemeteries where there are Armenian sections, in Holy Resurrection, Hadjinian said, there are no other activities so it was easier to regulate the situation. Hadjinian said that the local Armenians were all able to shelter in place and family members were looked after by relatives if need be. In general, South Milwaukee did not get hit as hard as many parts of the US, he said.



Baton Rouge Armenian khachkar in cemetery of Saint Garabed Armenian Church, with Fr. Tateos Abdalian of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

cil of this church, there are roughly 80 Armenian families in the two cities. After the community constructed a church, which was anointed in 2006, and an assembly hall next to it, they decided to purchase cemetery land, which lies behind the parking lot of the church. According to the church website, Serop Kaltakdjian, Vasken Kaltakdjian and Boghos Moutafian were the main financial donors toward the purchase of the cemetery land.

Catholicos Karekin II came from Echmiadzin in 2007 to bless the cemetery. In 2010 a large khachkar (cross stone) was placed there in memory of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide.

Moutafian said that at present the cemetery has somewhere around 10-12 graves and the lot is large enough to accommodate many more. No one was buried during the coronavirus period so the restrictions created by COVID-19 did not have to be dealt with. As far as visitation to the cemetery goes, there is a gate in front of it, and Moutafian said that all those with loved ones buried there have keys and can visit anytime they wish.



This photograph of an entrance to the Ocala, Florida Armenian cemetery dates from August 22, 2009 (credit "No Guts No Glory" on FindaGrave.com), and the photographer attests that the view has not changed.

Ocala, Florida

There is a fourth Armenian cemetery in the United States located in Ocala. It is also of recent origin and is taken care of by the Armenian American Cultural Society of that town. Some of the founding members of that organization are buried in this cemetery.

The cemetery apparently is connected to the sad tale of the

She said, "It was very sad though. It was hard. We have families who come and visit weekly. We have families who come and visit on every holiday."

During that roughly one-month period, there was a general limit of 10 people gathering, including in funerals, and that would include clergy. If both deacon and priest came, that only left room for 8 family members. Furthermore, Manning-Cartwright said, the group could only stay 15 minutes at the grave site. She exclaimed, "That is not enough time, especially if families wanted to see the casket lowered. We had to tell them, you'll have to watch from your car. We felt that is follow-

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The newest Armenian cemetery in the United States is not in an area traditionally known for its Armenian population. Located in Baton Rouge, the cemetery belongs to St. Garabed Armenian Church of Louisiana (http://www.armenianchurchlouisiana.org/), and serves the Armenian population of New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Although there were earlier Armenian immigrants to these cities, the majority came from Syria and Lebanon starting in the 1970s.

According to Sarkis Moutafian, treasurer of the parish coun-

two rival Armenian churches built in this town, St. Sarkis Armenian Church, which belonged to the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (consecrated in 1997), and Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church, which was a chapel connected with the Eastern Prelacy for a period of time, located at the end of a hall.

Both churches no longer are operational but the cemetery lies in a plot of land between the two. The hall and the chapel which used to be the Holy Cross church belong to the independent cultural society. St. Sarkis Church is being rented out to non-Armenians at present.

The website Find A Grave presents photos of 11 graves located in the cemetery, which according to the photographer is the unchanged current number. The earliest grave pictured is from 2000 and the last one listed dates from 2015. According to Charles Takesian, one of the Armenian American Cultural Society members, three of the graves contain caskets and the others are cremation remains.

The Find A Grave website gives two names to the cemetery

 Holy Cross Armenian Cemetery and Saint Sarkis Armenian Cemetery, while the gate bears the former name. It is not clear whether both names are still used.

The coronavirus pandemic does not seem to have affected the cemetery directly. There have not been any burials there during the period of its spread so far.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Panel Discussion Takes on Racial Injustice and Responsibility

BOSTON – On Tuesday, June 23, an online panel titled "Racial Injustice and Responsibility" will take place.

The panel will feature Dr. Henry C. Theriault (moderator), and discussants Kohar Avakian, Dr. Jermaine McCalpin and Dr. Michael Rothberg.

Theriault is the president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and associate vice president of Academic Affairs at Worcester State University.

McCalpin is the chair of African and African American Studies at New Jersey City University.

Rothberg is professor of English and comparative literature and the 1939 Society Samuel Goetz Chair in Holocaust Studies at UCLA.

Avakian is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Yale.

The program is jointly sponsored by the AGBU, Ararat, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian Network of America, Greater NY, Daughters of Vartan Sahaganoush Otyag, Justice Armenia, Knights of Vartan Bakradouny Lodge, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research Calouste Gulebenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Topics, St. Leon Armenian Church, St. Leon ACYOA Seniors and Zohrab Information Center.

The program will take place on June 23 at 7.30 p.m. Register on Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3qB60dkyQ6SH7J93pPm6Mg or watch on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu4RC9Ahags

W_bIy2XU_a-Q



Dr. Michael Rothberg



Kohar Avakian



Dr. Jermaine McCalpin



Dr. Henry Theriault

Sheriff Koutoujian Supports Racial Justice Protests as He Continues Pioneering Programs for Inmates

KOUTOUJIAN, from page 1

Koutoujian exclaimed in an interview on Monday, June 15, "I was stunned and I was absolutely appalled when I saw the video of George Floyd, and many of the other videos that have been brought to light on incidents that occurred both before and after George Floyd. Probably even more importantly, to me it was just an incredible sense of sadness to watch someone pleading for his life and dying in a manner that was so preventable. There is no conceivable way for me, a person in law enforcement, to understand or condone what happened. There is no excuse for what happened."

He said the whole incident still affects him greatly now and pointed out that that a similar situation occurred in 2014 when Eric Garner was also pleading with police that he could not breathe and died. Koutoujian said, "This is a set of issues that are not just suddenly here. They have been around for many years, decades, and generations, quite honestly, so when I see the concern and outrage by communities, I can understand why they can be so upset." the consideration of issues regarding race, and Koutoujian emphasized, "I think it is an important discussion to have." He issued a public statement on June 4 as sheriff expressing his condolences to Floyd's family, acknowledging the failures and shortcomings in law enforcement leading to injustice for people of color, and calling for the creation of "a more fair and accountable justice system – not just within policing but throughout the whole structure."

His own office, he said to the Mirror, was ahead of the curve on these issues, but is also taking new steps internally. He said, "We have already begun to step up our training. We work very hard on de-escalation techniques and communications skills to avoid the use of force. So we have been working on this very hard. We are in the process of incorporating additional diversity and civil rights training for all employees. We are incorporating duty-to-intervene policies." He also pointed out that mental health providers were integrated into all that they did, which also can alleviate unnecessary problems. Strikingly, his office is the largest mental health provider in Middlesex County, just as the three largest mental health providers in the entire United States are the Los Angeles, Rikers Island and Cook County jails. Koutoujian said, "I have people that are in jail only because they have mental health issues - only because they have mental health issues. They commit crimes when they are in crisis but if their mental health issues could be resolved, they would not be in jail." The Middlesex Sheriff's Office is involved in two programs which, Koutoujian said, "set Middlesex apart not just from much of the rest of Massachusetts but the rest of the country" and have turned it into a national model.

In 2016, through a grant from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, it became one of three pilot sites for the Data-Driven Urban Justice Initiative. It consequently collects and analyzes public safety and emergency services data about people who are frequently caught in the justice system, often people with mental health issues or drug addiction problems, in order to help provide them with appropriate resources. Furthermore, this is the second year it has a Restoration Center Commission, which is planning the creation of a restoration center. This center would provide behavioral health services to help prevent people from having issues with the criminal justice system or unnecessary hospitalization.

Aside from his local efforts, Koutoujian is involved on a state and national level in the urgent discussion of race in policing. He is currently president of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association, president of the Major County Sheriffs of America (https://mcsheriffs.com/) and a founding member of Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration (lawenforcementleaders.org), based at the Brennan Center for Justice in New York University School of Law. The Major County Sheriffs of America is one of the two major national sheriffs' associations and includes sheriffs from the most populous counties of the US. It issued a statement on May 29 condemning George Floyd's death and calling for rebuilding trust between law enforcement and the communities it serves that was damaged by this tragedy.

30 to 50 bills, or variations of bills. The organization is dealing with the House, Senate and White House.

When asked his position on proposals to defund the police, Koutoujian pointed out that the definition of defunding has changed numerous times so that sometimes it can means refunding or reallocating.

In any case, he said, "The answer is not as easy as taking money from here and putting it there. This is a longer-term issue that we have and I totally support putting money into support services, but just taking it away from police, that is just not going to [be the] answer."

Instead, he said, "You can take a look at their budgets and their programming and make a determination as to what is necessary and what is good for a community...a simple slogan like defunding I don't find to be effective in a long-term way at all." He noted, "I have said from the very beginning when I took office as sheriff that we cannot arrest or incarcerate our way out of these problems - they can be mental health, homelessness, or many other things. Yet who deals with all these problems that are replete throughout society? It is law enforcement that has to do it." This is because communities do not provide funding for necessities like early childhood care and education or mental health support. Koutoujian said, "I think that is a failure of society to support individuals in need. And then they become justice involved, and that does not help anyone. I see a need for putting more money in some of these support services." He said that he is proud of the services his sheriff's office provides, "but you shouldn't have to come to jail to get good programming. You should be able to get it so that you don't have to come to jail."

He said that there were dozens of protests throughout Middlesex County over the last few weeks and to his knowledge, none led to any incidents of violence or property damage.

"I completely support those who are peacefully protesting and support and understand what they are doing completely," he said, but added the caveat that "using violence, looting or vandalizing is not acceptable."

He noted that there are also those trying to take advantage of these situations to bring about violence but they are not there for the message, while the true protesters are trying to focus on the message and urge people not to commit violence.

There has been a major shift in the US in m

It is very engaged in the numerous proposals being discussed in Congress right now on this issue, Koutoujian said. Daily calls are taking places to discuss what positions the sheriffs should take on the individual policies that are being considered. There are at least

Arts & Living

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BOOKS

Book on US, British Response to Armenian **Genocide Wins Prize**

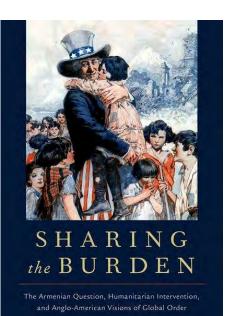
LONDON - The latest book by Dr. Charlie Laderman, a historian at King's College, in London, titled Sharing the Burden: The Question, Humanitarian Armenian Intervention, and Anglo-American Visions of Global Order, has won the Arthur Miller Institute First Book Prize.

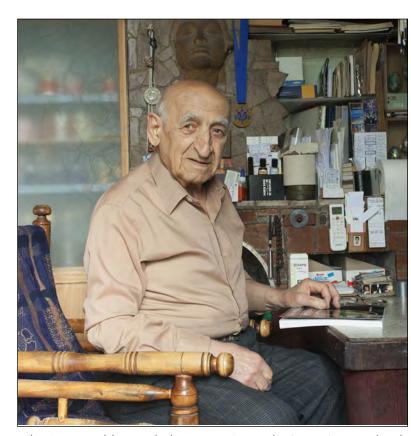
Upon receiving the award, he said: "I am honored to receive this prize. My book grapples with issues, the mass killing of an entire community and strategies for preventing it, which sadly remain as pressing as ever.

"I am grateful to the Arthur Miller Institute for this award, and for recognizing that history can illuminate contemporary challenges, a principle that is central to the mission of the War Studies Department."

Examining how the US and Britain responded to the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide, Laderman's book explores the possibilities, limitations and continued dilemmas of humanitarian intervention. It also provides a new perspective on the United States' rise as a global power and deepens our understanding of the Anglo-American special relationship and its role in reforming the global order.

Laderman is a lecturer in international history in the War Studies Department, School of Security Studies. His research focuses on the United States and its relations with the wider world, exploring the





Yakov Zargaryan (Photographed in Yerevan, Armenia by Georgs Avetisjans (Riga), 2018.)

IN MEMORY OF Yakov Zargaryan 'We Were Lucky, Too'

YEREVAN - Musician, pedagogue, writer, art collector Yakov Zargaryan began his memoir, My Minas, with the following words: "I was lucky..." - referring his

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

close friendship with eminent artist Minas Avetisyan... Writing this article in his memory, I

repeat his words in the plural: "We were lucky..." My family was lucky, moving in 1975 to the apartment at Estonakan 7

in Yerevan, where Yakov Zargaryan was our upstairs neighbor for 45 years. Had he lived, he would have turned 95 in December. Who knows, in our troublesome times, the constrained immobility might have played a role in causing him

to die. He used to say half-jokingly, half-seriously that he is going to live 120 years. He was one of the most interesting personalities of Yerevan; people loved him and always sought after him. He was known in the world of music and painting, the media, the early inhabitants of our Ajapnyak district, and a number of Diaspora Armenian musicians who were educated in Yerevan, as Zargaryan had been the dean of the foreign students' department of the conservatory for 16

years. Many knew him also in Russia: it is no accident that two years ago, Russian TV presenter Maxim Galkin hosted Zargaryan in his 'The Oldest One" program. His tiny two-room apartment was one of the showplaces of Yerevan. It was more than a gallery or a museum. I have entered it so many times and yet each time I found something new. (The same thing, by the way, happens every time when I enter the "house" of another multi-talented creative Armenian, Sergey Paradjanov). There, the ingenious and creative homeowner cleverly used every inch to open the door to surprises in almost every corner of the apartment. Before entering the apartment, the owner's creativity can already be felt from the wooden sign on the door. The colorful "curtain" hanging in front of the door was made by the host from used ordinary and felt-tip pens. The exhibition of works of art starts from the walls of the corridor. The piano in the living room has lived its century as a musical instrument and now serves as a desk and secretaire. The collection, perched on every corner of the house, amazes with its variety, from the pottery of ancient times and the statue of Buddha to the works of the best representatives of modern painting and sculpture. But Yakov Zargaryan is best known for his collection of painted wooden, clay, glass and metal eggs (placed on shelves with special glass shutters, on wheels), which was "launched" by the patriarch of



Powerful Photos Capture Passionate George Floyd Protests in Minneapolis

By Jessica Stewart

MINNEAPOLIS (mymodernmet.com) - For Dr. Artyom Tonoyan, the need to be politically active started at a young age. Growing up in Soviet Armenia, he saw firsthand how protests could bring a wave of change. So as an avid photographer, it only made sense for him to hit the streets as protests against the police brutality that resulted in the murder of George Floyd took hold across Minneapolis and St. Paul.

His photography is an incredible documentation of this critical moment in American history. Tonoyan spent time at the site of Floyd's murder where a mural has been transformed into a memorial and then ventured to St. Paul, where grief boiled into frustration. His images of protestors (young and old) holding their signs, while simultaneously mourning Floyd and all that his death represents, share the somber yet peaceful side as well as the rage and responding violence.

Buildings were burned, police officers



At the George Floyd protest (Dr. Artyom Tonoyan photo)

arrived on the scene, and teargas was released on the protestors - Tonoyan included. For Tonoyan, who is a research associate at the of Minnesota's Center University Holocaust and Genocide Studies, being present was important in order to make sure that the public could have a true visual of what was happening. We had the opportunity to speak with Tonoyan, who has previously documented the fallout from Philando Castile's killing in nearby St. Anthony, about his motivation for photographing these events and what he saw while in the middle of the protests. Read on for My Modern Met's exclusive interview.

intersection between US and international history, and the interconnection between US foreign policy and domestic politics.

In addition, his research encompasses the foreign relations of Great Britain, the First World War and its international impact, and the development of ideas on human rights, grand strategy and global order.

The Arthur Miller Institute awards its annual First Book Prize, along with the British Association for American Studies, for the best first book on any American Studies topic. Based at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, the Arthur Miller Institute for American Studies aims to further interest in the study of the United States, through promoting major new research projects and facilitating the movement of people between Britain and America.

Sharing the Burden: The Armenian Question, Humanitarian Intervention, and Anglo-American Visions of Global Order is available online at Oxford University Press.

see ZARGARYAN, page 15

First off, how are you feeling? I know the atmosphere must be tense.

Thank you for asking. At the moment I am feeling fine, which is not to say I am not occasionally worried. Although things have calmed down significantly in Minneapolis and the Twin Cities, it does not mean it is completely under control. Things like this are rarely under control so fast. The inertia may yet pick up pace.

I know this isn't the first time you've documented reaction to the murder of a black American by the police. What compels you to action?

see PHOTOJOURNALIST, page 14

ARTS & LIVING

Powerful Photos Capture Passionate George Floyd Protests in Minneapolis

PHOTOJOURNALIST, from page 13

A couple of things. And we may need a brief historical excursus to explain what makes me go out and photograph protests.

I grew up in Soviet Armenia at a time when it was undergoing tremendous ideological and structural changes. After Gorbachev came to power, the two buzzwords that were on everyone's lips were perestroika and glasnost, (meaning restructuring and freedom of speech, respectfully), which basically were attempts at reforming the country by allowing certain liberalizations, both political and economic.

For Soviet Armenians, and for other so-called "captive nations" of the Soviet Union, liberalization meant voicing old political grievances that were hitherto taboo. For Armenians, there were a number of these issues, but none as urgent as the issue of the political and cultural rights of the Armenian minority in neighboring Soviet Azerbaijan, the deteriorating ecology due to industrial waste, which would then grow into a full-blown independence movement from the Soviet Union. And so, in 1988, Armenians in the hundreds of thousands started pouring onto the streets demanding redress of these issues.

I was 12 or 13 years old when you can say I became politicized, to the chagrin of my parents. I had started experimenting with writing poetry and it coincided with the emergence of these stirrings. So I started going to these mass meetings - peaceful gatherings - in the town square in my hometown of Gyumri, composing sometimes really corny poems denouncing the Soviet rule, Gorbachev, the Communist Party and the like. Later, my aunt, who lived in the capital city of Yerevan, would take me with her to the even larger gatherings where the rhetoric was sharper and the atmosphere tenser. But the theatricality of the speakers and the carnivalesque atmosphere were all so seductive and powerful for a young kid.

So this sort of attraction has remained with me – seeing, witnessing, and being inspired by the spontaneous and passionate gathering of people for a greater cause than your own. It has always fascinated me how a collective effort can bring about a new social and political reality.

As for the "documentary" aspects, this may sound weird – and I hadn't thought about it – it is probably in part due to the fact that I lost my diaries and the poetry from that time when an earthquake destroyed our house and my hometown in the winter of 1988. Also being a

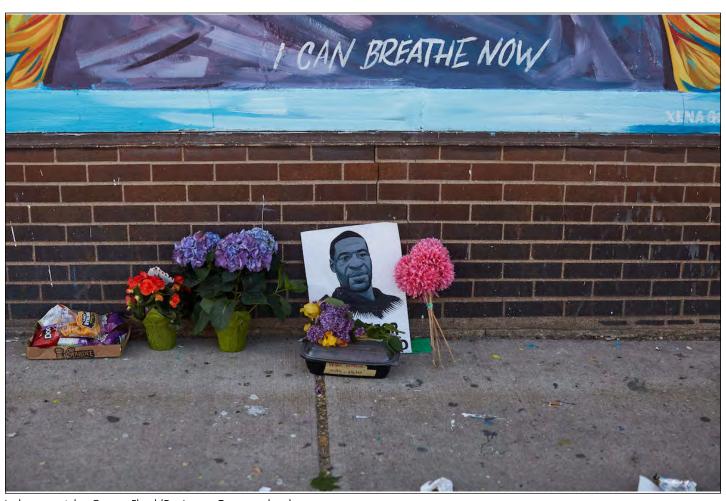


sociologist and a student of history, for me, the importance of documentary evidence cannot be overstated. I am just obsessed with gathering documents, probably one of the reasons I am vet to finish a book I have been working for sevthere were bewildered people – mostly children whose parents were trying to explain what had happened and the children could not register what had happened or what was happening. They could not understand the crying, and the

fied success. Certainly, this was the general feeling among the protestors.

Is there any particular moment from the protests that stood out to you?

I think the presence of so many children at the



At the memorial to George Floyd (Dr. Artyom Tonoyan photo)

eral years is because I keep coming across new information that I feel compelled to include in it. Documenting is a way of life for me. That is sort of my mindset in general terms.

So having sort of this background, I have felt compelled to document the aftermath of Philando Castile's and now George Floyd's senseless killings; and if the images that I try to capture can move even one person, I will feel vindicated. I try to capture the entire range of emotions in these demonstrations and gatherings and share them with friends and whoever

is interested.

I try to convey a story that many people in my social circle (and outside of it) may not have necessarily found interesting or compelling, hoping meanwhile that my images may yet make them feel compelled and interested. Through these images, I try to bring to my friends, colleagues, and anyone interested a visual representation of the social situations that they may not have the ability, or the inclination, or the wish to confront. If they do not come to these situations, I try to bring these situations to them. So in a sense, I try to make them feel less comfortable. I try to prick their taken-for-granted realities. What was the atmosphere when you were in the midst of the protests? I went to three sites. The first was the site of George Floyd's killing and it was really one of the saddest situations I had found myself in in a very long time. The atmosphere was mixed, but the general tone was somber. There were angry people, there were grieving people,

occasional loud wails, and the angry outbursts of the adults around them. It was painful to see them trying to process the burden that they will soon be inheritors of.

The second site was the Third Precinct of the Minneapolis police department, which I found too dangerous to stick around for long as you could sense that something major was going to go down and after snapping some photos there I headed to University Ave. in St. Paul where I witnessed complete mayhem. And at one point I was teargassed. Twice. But I was able to move to safe ground to catch a breather and regain vision before I head

vision before I headed back home.

Why do you feel that these types of protests are important?

The importance of collective social action cannot be overstated. There are countless examples of real political changes taking place due to protests - often peaceful, sometimes not so much. Of course, there's the counter-argument that changes are best implemented

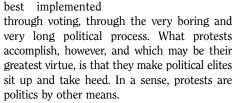
site of George Floyd's death was really what stood out for me. It was painful to see them there. This should not be anyone's Introduction to Life 101, let alone for children. But, unfortunately, for many children in the African American community, this is an all-too-painful reality.

What do you hope will come out of this experience?

Historian Lynn Hunt has a great little book called Inventing Human Rights where she discusses the historical origins of human rights, both as a concept as well as a movement. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is



Police rest at the protest (Dr. Artyom Tonoyan photo)



To add to this, I think it was Kurt Vonnegut that said that, during the Vietnam War, people were irked that the Vietnamese did not fight like ladies and gentlemen, in uniform, that is nice, prim, and proper. And so extending the metaphor, we can say that people feel like protesting like ladies and gentlemen has not worked, or it has had a very limited and quali-

t Police rest at the protest (Dr. Artyom Tonoyan photo)

how the rise of modern literature in places like France allowed the reader to imagine himself or herself in other people's shoes so to speak, inspiring fellow-feeling. Stories that writers like Rousseau, Voltaire, and others were telling their readers often portrayed disordered and inharmonic social relations allowing their readers to imagine a more equitable world, a more just society. Although not fictional, I try to tell stories with my photos as well, stories driven mostly by empathy.

Artyom Tonoyan: Twitter My Modern Met granted permission to feature photos by Artyom Tonoyan.

ARTS & LIVING

In Memory Of Yakov Zargaryan

ZARGARYAN, from page 13

Armenian painting, Martiros Saryan, and the geography of artists from year to year covered the whole world.

The friendship between the Zargaryans and our family began one evening in the cold winter of 1992 without electricity, when Yakov Sergeyevich, or as I have called him all my life, dyadya (uncle in Russian) Yasha, came to our flat, saying that he wants to read his newly written article for us. We knew that our fourth floor neighbor was a pianist by profession, a professor at Yerevan State Conservatory, a distinguished pedagogue in Armenia, but we did not know that he was also writing. In the past, we slightly knew each other, but from that moment, when we invited him to sit by the oil stove, our relationship, friendship and cooperation began. Our long evenings in the darkness began to be marked by the long conversations of our artist and teacher neighbor, who had a remarkable way of life. And he had an inexhaustible energy to talk, a brilliant memory, a skill to present everything in detail. He spoke about everything. Being born in Yerevan, he vividly represented the city during his school years, the 1930s, when he was studying at the Spendiaryan Music School. He recounted his life in Russia, the years of World War II, and especially fondly remembered his student life (he graduated from prestigious Gorky Conservatory). He spoke proudly of his students at the Tchaikovsky Music School in Yerevan (one of them, Marine Abrahamyan, a laureate of international competitions, later told us how strict a teacher Yakov Sergevich had been). He recalled his performances as pianist (he performed as a soloist in various cities of the Soviet Union and Italy). His expression and voice changed as he began to speak about his grandchildren (two at that time).

However, his greatest passion was reserved for Armenian painting, especially the constellation of the 1960s, with many of whom he was close friends: Saryan, Kochar, Galents, Bazhbeuk-Melikyan, Jotto, Karalov, Podpomogov, Elibekyans, Rudolf Khachatryan and especially Minas.

Yakov Zargaryan played a key role in popularizing of Minas Avetisyan's work: Minas affectionately called him Hakob (Yakov is the Russian version of that name). In 1969 Minas wrote in the catalog of his exhibition to his friend: "For Hakob, to my dear, dear friend, who has done so much for my success." Minas even created some portraits of him, also painted the door glass of Zargaryan's apartment and the organic glass on the walls of the bathroom. Unfortunately, the difficult times pushed Zargaryan to sell these and other expensive samples of his collection.



Yakov Zargaryan (Photographed in Yerevan, Armenia by Georgs Avetisjans (Riga), 2018.)

The years of the Artsakh liberation war, full of trials and tribulations, made Yakov Zargaryan write down what he had in mind, both his professional interests and personal memoirs. In the mid-1990s, he published On the Pianist's Way of Sitting, a methodological booklet and a volume of memoirs about Minas Avetistyan (both are in Armenian and Russian). These were followed by several volumes of essays, publicist articles and memoirs, which will always be useful for those interested in Armenian music and fine arts.

We were friends although our age difference was almost 50

years. He encouraged my writing, and from the Russian-language press he always clipped all the articles I might need one day. Many times I took to his house friends and acquaintances from various countries, for whom our country was also embodied in the image of that small, bald, steady collector with a big Armenian nose. During my travels abroad, he often gave me a wooden egg, and I always met an artist who gladly agreed to decorate it. When in 2013 Yakov Zargaryan's photo book was printed presenting his collection of painted eggs, at that time the collection included 665 works by 585 artists from 43 countries. He continued to collect until one day he decided to stop because there was simply no room in his apartment. "The collector is the most insatiable person," Yakov Sergeyich once said. "He has a hundred items, he wants to have hundred and one, he has 20,000, he wants to have 20,001. It is a disease. I am very happy that I am 'suffering' from that disease"...





He was an archivist, preserving every more or less valuable artifact. He was constantly coming up with new ideas. For example, he turned a notebook into a collection of autographs from famous acquaintances, asking them to write their wishes in the name of his eldest grandson. He felt sorry for those who did not read books, listening to rabiz music, watching TV soap operas. He followed the events in Armenia in detail and was always optimistic about its future. A true inhabitant of Yerevan, always positive and lively, dynamic and creative, tireless collector, brilliant writer, great lover of beauty, full of cheerfulness, witty, warm and talkative Yakov Zargaryan dreamed that one day a new museum of personal collections would open in his beloved Yerevan, where his collection and first of all, his painted eggs, would find its final destination... Let it be! .When Yakov Zargaryan had just moved to his apartment in the Ajapnyak district, he had planted a few poplar trees in the yard with his neighbor, near his garage. All the seedlings have taken root, have become trees. However, the life of the poplar is short, so over the years they have fallen one by one.

Photo from Aram Zargaryan's Facebook page

There was one left, which fell to the ground on May 22, 2020, the day Yakov Zargaryan passed away.

ARTS & LIVING

The Legacy of Charles Aznavour

Born Shahhnur Vaghinag Aznavourian to Armenian immigrants in Paris, France, Aznavour was a singer-songwriter, actor, selfless activist, charismatic diplomat and an early supporter of LGBTQ individuals. His passion for music was nurtured at a young age. His parents introduced him to singing and performing when he was just a boy, and made the unconventional decision to have him dropout of school at 9 to pursue a career in entertainment. This was the beginning of a long and fruitful métier.

Over the course of eight decades, Aznavour

recorded more than 1,200 songs in nine languages; wrote and co-wrote over 1,000 songs for himself and other recording artists; sold 180 million records and appeared in over 80 films. Among his most famous songs are She (Tous Les Visages De L'amour), You've Let Yourself Go (Tu T'Laisses Aller), La Boheme and What Makes a Man (Comme ils Disent). He collaborated with prominent musicians of his time, like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Michel Legrand and Sir Elton John. In 1998, Aznavour was named Entertainer of the Century by CNN and TIME magazine.

Fame and success didn't distract him from his activism; Aznavour consistently demonstrated his ardor for human rights throughout his life, often through music. In response to the devastating Spitak earthquake in 1988, Aznavour supported rescue and rebuilding efforts in Armenia with his charity, Aznavour for Armenia. To increase humanitarian aid to Armenia, Aznavour co-wrote the song Pour toi Arménie (For You Armenia), which was a collaboration of 75 mainly French artists, including Rosy Armen and Serge Avedikian.

In 2017, Aznavour and his sister were hon-



Aznavour in Armenia after the earthqauak

ored with the Raoul Wallenberg Award for the role of the Aznavour family in sheltering Jews during the Nazi occupation of Paris in World War II.

And even before his humanitarian work in Armenia, Aznavour was one of the few outspoken allies of the LGBTQ individuals. It is little known in the Armenian community, but in 1972, risking censorship and backlash, Aznavour wrote and performed What Makes a Man - as he called it - "the first song about homosexuality." Aznavour penned the song based on experiences of his friends who were gay. He wrote it to tell the stories of good people who were "marginalized" in society. In an interview with The Telegraph, he stated "I wanted to write what nobody else was writing. I'm very open, very risky, not afraid of breaking my career because of one song. I don't let the public force me to do what they want me to do. I force them to listen to what I have done. That's the only way to progress..." In his song, Aznavour wrote:

So many times we have to pay for having fun and being gay. It's not amusing.

There's always those who spoil our games by finding fault and calling names. Always accusing. Yet they make fun of how I talk, and imitate the way I walk ... Tell me if you can. What makes a man a man.

I know my life is not a crime. I'm just a victim of my time. I stand defenseless. Nobody has the right to be the judge of what is right for me... Tell me if you can. What makes a man a man.

The song serves as a bold testament to Aznavour's commitment to LGBTQ rights. In 2014, the giant artist, Le Petit Charles, told Canada's The Star, "It is still forbidden in certain unenlightened countries." He wanted to see changes in Armenia. In 2017, at the Taglyan Complex luncheon following the Hollywood Walk of Fame Star reception ceremony, Aznavour pledged to record public service announcements advocating for LGBTQ equality in Armenia. Unfortunately, his health and schedule did not allow for the completion of the project. Like many greats, Aznavour was simply ahead of the times, and he had certainly seen the future.

Aznavour's dedication to philanthropy and human rights earned him the title of National Hero of Armenia in 2004.

In 2008, President Serzh Sargsyan granted Aznavour Armenian citizenship, and appointed him as Ambassador to Switzerland in 2009.

In 2011, Charles Aznavour Interactive Museum opened in Yerevan. The building includes the legend's residence where he stayed while in Armenia.



by Christine Vartanian Bitlis Tutoo (from Breaking Bread with William Saroyan)



Bitlis Tutoo (Sour Cabbage Stew)*

Tutoo is an old recipe from the Bitlis and Mush (Mus) regions in Turkey. It is thought by historians to have been brought by the French Crusaders, who later married Armenian women and stayed in the Bitlis region. Tutoo means sour in Armenian, and the stew

can live up to its name. It includes both fermented cabbage and the brine used to pickle the cabbage. Most Armenian cookbooks and online recipes call for at least a 10-day fermentation period.



TO FERMENT CABBAGE INGREDIENTS:

3 large heads cabbage, chopped in 1-inch squares Pickling salt, not iodized 1/4 cup dzedzads 4 quarts water

PREPARATION:

For the fermenting: Have ready a large crock or 1-gallon glass jar for fermenting cabbage. Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil, adding salt to taste. Let it cool to tepid temperature. Rinse and add 1/4 cup dzedzads to the bottom of the crock or glass jar. Add cut cabbage to the container, and cover with water to cover top. Stir and cover container partially, leaving an opening for stirring. Loosely cap the jar. Retain 1 cup of brine to add to the jar during fermentation

to keep the cabbage covered with liquid. Place jar on a plate (in case your fermentation bubbles over) and store out of direct sunlight in your kitchen. Stir thoroughly to help release gases caused by fermentation for once or twice a day for 10 to 21 days (or longer). After cabbage has fermented, refrigerate tutoo by transferring it to large glass jars or other covered containers.

BITLIS TUTOO (SOUR CABBAGE STEW)

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound lamb necks or stew meat (or a little more) 1-2 large onions, halved and sliced



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8 cups fermented cabbage, with its own juice 3/4 cup dzedzads (whole wheat gorghod, peeled wheat), found in Middle Eastern stores 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce 2-3 cups of water Juice of 1 or 2 large lemons (add more for tart flavor) Crushed dried basil and paprika or cayenne pepper, optional

PREPARATION:

In a large kettle or a heavy enameled 7-quart pot, cover lamb meat with some cabbage water and cook for one hour. Skim off any impurities. After one hour, remove the bones. Rinse and add 3/4 cup dzedzads to the pot. Add onions, cabbage, tomato sauce, water, lemon juice, basil, paprika or cayenne pepper (if using), and bring back to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for about two hours or until lamb is very tender.

*This updated recipe is courtesy of Queenie Dardarian, A Hundred Years and Still Cooking, the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno (FAPC) Fidelis Women's Society Centennial recipe collection. Serves 6.

By Janice Stevens and Pat Hunter, published by Heliograph Publishing. Order Breaking Bread with William Saroyan, call or contact: Janice Stevens Gallery II, 1490 W. Shaw Ste G., Fresno, CA 93711, (559) 222-4443, janicemstevens@cs.comhttps://www.gallery2fresno.com/ References:

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On one of his last visits to Armenia, in 2016, Aznavour participated in the Aurora Prize award ceremonies along with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, and laid flowers at the Armenian Genocide Memorial with George Clooney. Aznavour also received a number of state honors from Belgium, Canada, Japan, and of course France, including the Commander of the Legion of Honor. He was the first artist to be honored with a state funeral at Les Invalides military complex in Paris, that was attended by French president Emmanuel Macron, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other foreign dignitaries.

In late 2019, his son, Nicolas Aznavour, moved to Armenia with his wife Kristina Sarkisyan and their young son to continue his father's work through the Charles Aznavour Foundation. Currently, there's an effort underway for Yerevan's Zvartnots Airport to be re-named after Aznavour. His son Nicolas has relayed this request to the Armenian government.

Aznavour's legacy lives on. May he rest in peace.

COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Turkey's Ottomanist Ambitions Target Armenians in Lebanon

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While the population in Armenia is experiencing a crisis within a crisis, meaning political instability during the coronavirus pandemic, Armenians in Lebanon are facing a triple crisis: an economic meltdown during the pandemic in addition to a conflict with Turkish surrogates.

On June 11, a demonstration was staged in Beirut's Muslim quarter, with slogans directed against Armenians, accompanied by the waving of the Turkish and Lebanese flags. This was a surprise outburst against the Armenians, although it had long been anticipated within the perspective of geostrategic developments in the region.

At the turn of the previous century, Armenians were welcomed in Lebanon after the Genocide as the indigenous people of the country, both Muslim and Christian, had themselves experienced 400 years of harsh Ottoman rule.

While Armenian political and intellectual figures lost their

lives on the gallows in Istanbul, the intellectual elite in Damascus and Beirut suffered the same fate. To this day, the main square in Beirut is called Martyrs Square, where the intellectuals of what was then called Greater Syria were hanged in 1915. (On a side note, the last Ottoman governor of Lebanon was an ethnic Armenian called Hoyhannes Kuyumijan.)

Therefore, there was a sense of empathy between the Lebanese people and the Armenians when the latter commemorated their martyrs. The entire country even shut down in solidarity with the Armenian community during April 24 commemorations. That was until last year, when the annual commemoration was met with hostile counterdemonstrations led by Sunni

extremist clerics, instigated by the Turkish embassy in Beirut.

Armenians, upon arrival, first settled in shantytowns in Lebanon, gradually to become one of the most affluent communities in the country. Armenians gave back to Lebanon as much as they had received, as they proved to be one of the most industrious communities there, through professions, art, education, entrepreneurship, etc. Thus, they occupied their rightful position in Lebanese society.

Incidentally, Lebanese Armenians, thanks to a rigorous educational system, exported generations of educators, clergy, editors, writers and political leaders to Armenian communities around the world.

Last but not least, the Armenians were involved in the political processes in Lebanon, unlike many other countries, because the Lebanese system is based on the confessional distribution of political power. There are 18 religious factions represented in the parliament. Today, there are six Armenian members of parliament, plus one cabinet minister. During the last three decades, political turmoil led many Armenians to immigrate to Europe, the US and Australia, forcing the school systems to shrink and social life to deteriorate. That is how the community became more vulnerable. Lebanon was once considered the jewel of the Middle East, with its beauty and lively café society, banking system, freewheeling business atmosphere, etc. But two civil wars and political upheavals upset the entire country, which became an economic and social basket case. For a long time, Lebanon has served as the clearinghouse for all Middle Eastern political conflicts. Most regional and world powers try to solve their political problems there. All these transformations took place as the major powers tried to force certain policies on Lebanon. For centuries, although demographic demarcations were visible, not because of religious issues necessarily, Western powers exploited religious fault lines to antagonize one power bloc against the other and that had its reflection in Lebanon. A Sunni religious revival was encouraged to counter Shiite Iran, the parent entity of the powerful Hezbollah faction in Lebanon. An artificial Sunni bloc was created by the US, which tried to convince the Arabs that the enemy was Iran, when actually the Palestinian Arabs were suffering under an Israeli occupation.

Egypt and the United Arab Emirates were in a bloc together under the unwilling leadership of Saudi Arabia to contain Iran. The US tried to impose on Saudi Arabia a mutually exclusive policy, which was doomed to failure because on the one hand, Riyadh was assigned to lead the Sunni bloc, and on the other hand, it was aligned with Israel. Its diminishing economic and political support to the Palestinians disqualified it as a Sunni leader for the Arab street, however. That is where and when Turkey stepped in.

Turkey's Ottomanist ambitions are not the creation of Armenian paranoia; they present a real plan and a threat to its neighbors. Turkey has always played the role of a necessary evil for NATO. Whenever a mischievous plan was hatched, it was assigned to Ankara to execute it. In return, the West lavishly rewarded Turkey with economic incentives and military hardware. That is how Turkey became the second largest standing army in the NATO structure, all the while pretending to carry out NATO missions. Turkey, in reality, has tended only to its own political agenda.

Today, it has reached a point where it can challenge its allies,



the US included. Turkey has military bases in Somalia, Qatar and Libya and is an unwelcome guest in Cyprus, Iraq and Syria.

As Saudi Arabia has failed to assume leadership of the Sunni world, Turkey is vying for that position. It is championing the abandoned Palestinian cause, sometimes exchanging a war of words with Israel, all the while continuing its military and economic cooperation quietly. Turkey's anti-Israeli rhetoric will prove to be the real deal only when Israel decides to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Turkey has penetrated Lebanon through its TV programs, news outlets and social services. It has imitated Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which had developed grassroots networking through its providing funds, medicine, education and other social services for the needy. By using the same methods, Turkey has developed a powerbase in north Lebanon, particularly in Tripoli, whence it extends its tentacles throughout the country. Turkey has a common cause with Israel and the Sunni world to fight Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah is both a militia and a political juggernaut dominating Lebanese politics. It is an irritant for Israel in the north, as it has forced the residual Israeli forces out of Lebanese soil. In addition, during the Syrian war, it proved to be an effective fighting force.

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Baikar Association, Inc. 755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509 Today, the US is disposed toward destroying Lebanon to get rid of Hezbollah. As the saying goes in Armenian, they are trying to burn the rug to get rid of the bug.

The Turkish presence was long felt in Lebanon and it took only a spark to manifest itself fully.

The incident took place on June 11, when anchorman Nshan Ter-Harutyunyan was interviewing a former minister, Duyam Rahan, on Al-Jadeed TV. When a reference was made about Erdogan and Turkey's nefarious policy in Lebanon, an insulting message arrived on Ter-Harutyunyan What's App. He responded furiously and lo and behold, in a very short time, a caravan of cars surrounded the TV station and they began chanting anti-Armenian slogans.

The pro-Turkish group is called Mardinli and it has been transplanted from the city of Mardin in Turkey (former the stronghold of the Assyrians). Their leader, Mounir Hassoun, posted a message on his Facebook page, justifying the Armenian Genocide.

continued on next page

COMMENTARY



Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenian Patriarch Suggests Opening Greek Church for Christian and Muslim Worship

The recently elected Patriarch of Turkey, Sahak Mashalian, continues his controversial public statements thus antagonizing the Armenian community of Istanbul and Armenians worldwide. A few months ago he made critical remarks regarding the resolution adopted by the US Congress recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

It is clear from the Patriarch's statements that he wants to ingratiate himself to Turkish authorities and particularly Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Our repeated advice to him not to stick his nose in subjects that are not his responsibility has fallen on deaf ears. He does not seem to understand that he needs to remain quiet.

The whole world is aware of the controversy revolving around Pres. Erdogan's repeated statements to reconvert the Hagia Sophia historic church to a mosque. In 1935, Ataturk had changed the status of the mosque to a museum.

Erdogan's statements had raised a worldwide controversy particularly in Greece and among Greeks worldwide. Hagia Sophia was designated as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. Changing its status to a mosque will certainly anger people around the world.

This is the controversy that the Armenian Patriarch has foolishly dived into, just to please Erdogan. In recent days, there has been a lot of criticism about the Armenian Patriarch's controversial suggestion.

Had the Armenian Patriarch any wisdom he would have first consulted with the prominent members of the Armenian community in Istanbul asking for their opinion. More importantly, he should have asked for the advice of the Ecumenical Greek Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. Furthermore, has the Armenian Patriarch thought about asking for the advice of Islamic leaders in Istanbul whether it would be acceptable for them to practice their Islamic religion in the same structure as the Christians? To our knowledge, there is no such site in the world and the reason is that this is an unacceptable practice for Muslims.

The Armenian Patriarch's heretical suggestion would also antagonize the Muslims in Turkey and President Erdogan. So much for the Patriarch trying to ingratiate himself to the Turkish authorities!

Patriarch Mashalian is inadvertently supporting the change of the status of Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque with a private area set aside for Christian worshippers. The only thing the Turkish authorities will conclude from the Patriarch's statement is that he is in favor converting the church to a mosque, ignoring his suggestion that a corner of the mosque be allocated for Christian worship. How would the Armenian Patriarch react if someday the Turkish government decides to convert the Armenian Akhtamar church near Lake Van (now officially classified as a tourist site) to a mosque, allowing a small room for Christian worship?

To make matters worse, Patriarch Mashalian made his statement through a series of tweets. I wonder what prompted him to use the twitter to make such an announcement with serious consequences. "The Hagia Sophia should be opened to worship," he said, stating that it is big enough for that purpose while suggesting a space for Christians. "Let the world applaud our religious peace and maturity. May Hagia Sophia become a symbol of the peace of humanity in our era."

The Patriarch further stated that humanity was praying

for such unity and suggested sharing the dome of Hagia Sophia: "Even though our faiths are different, don't we believe in the same God?" Having been a place of worship for Christians for 1,000 years and another 500 years for Muslims, he stated that Hagia Sophia won't mind it. "Hagia Sophia was built with the labor of ten thousand workers at an astronomical cost," he said pointing out that for over 500 years numerous repairs have been made on the iconic building by the Fatih Sultan Foundation. He stressed that their aim was to preserve it as a place of worship, "not just a museum." He said it would be more fitting as a place of worship where believers could kneel down in prayer in awe of the structure, rather than a touristic site full of visitors rushing around." The Patriarch's statement was immediately publicized by the Turkish media.

The first harsh reaction to the Patriarch's naïve suggestion came from MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) leader Devlet Bahceli who ridiculed the idea that "Hagia Sophia is a mosque on Friday and a church on Sunday."

The Hagia Sophia Cathedral is one of the most significant religious sites particularly for Greeks. It was built in 537 AD by the Byzantine Empire. It was the world's largest building and an engineering marvel of its time. Hagia Sophia was converted into an imperial mosque in 1453, following the Ottoman occupation of Constantinople, nowadays Istanbul. The mosque was then converted to a museum in 1935 by Ataturk's decree.

There is an interesting historical Armenian connection to Hagia Sophia. According to Wikipedia, "after the great earthquake of 25 October 989, which collapsed the Western dome arch, Emperor Basil II asked for the Armenian architect Trdat, creator of the cathedrals of Ani and Argina, to direct the repairs.... The extent of the damage required six years of repair and reconstruction; the church was re-opened on 13 May 994."

We want to conclude by reassuring our Greek friends that the Armenian Patriarch's undesirable statement does not represent the wishes of the Armenian people.

Turkey's Ottomanist Ambitions

from previous page

The incident shook the Armenian community. One of the Armenian members of parliament, Hagop Pakraduni, reached out to the interior minister. The three Armenian political parties - the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and the Hunchaks - issued a statement deploring the incident.

The president of the group, Hassoun, at different times, has claimed to be a Turk, a Kurd and a Christian. One thing is certain though, that he hails from the ranks of mercenaries that Turkey has been dispatching to Syria, Libya and Lebanon to do its dirty work.

The last time Armenians faced such an existential threat was in 1982, during the civil war in Lebanon. The Armenian community had adopted a policy of positive neutrality in the war, to the chagrin of Christian forces. At that time, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon marched the Israeli army through the streets of Lebanon, allowing the Christian Phalanagist forces to slaughter Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila camps. The leader of the Maronite Phalangist forces, Bachir Gemayel, was elected president under the Israeli guns and assassinated in a few weeks. At one point, he threatened to invade Bourj Hammoud, the Armenian town, to massacre the residents. It took the combined efforts of the Pope, the US State Department and Armenian advocacy groups who met at the UN to stop the carnage.

Today, Armenians in Lebanon are more vulnerable than

A Time for Pan-National Solidarity

A COMMUNIQUE OF THE ARMENIAN DEMOCRATIC LIBERAL PARTY SUPREME COUNCIL

Our homeland is facing a crisis within a crisis. The pandemic has reached an unexpected stage with very destructive prospective results for health and the economy. A political crisis has advanced in parallel with that crisis which turns the domestic situation in Armenia all the more fateful.

The only prudent choice under these circumstances is to rally round the state and defeat the crises with pan-Armenian forces. Calls for prudence have been sounded, to which we wish to add our voice. No word, movement or act is permissible which might contribute to the instability of the country. It is time to recall the bitter lessons of our national history. Our Cilician kingdom met its end in the 14th century as a result of weakness created by internal quarrels and divisions of which the Mamluks took advantage. The fall of the first republic was also realized as much from the breach of national unity as from external political developments. We have a serious responsibility in front of history not to repeat the same mistakes.

The Velvet Revolution triumphed in our homeland with new promises of social justice, prosperity and renewal.



Especially in these days of crisis, it is necessary to allow the new regime to carry out its agenda.

On the other hand, it is expected that the new authorities will demonstrate statesmanship. The state belongs to all factions of the homeland, including the opposition elements. For the state to ensure the loyalty of the entire nation, an impartial attitude toward all citizens is required.

All our patriotic speeches rightfully call for the unity of Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora. Today the moment has come to take that idea of unity out of the realm solely of rhetoric and form a body of consensus, uniting the three factions of our nation and propounding an immediate and practical path to solve the growing crisis. It must keep our homeland safe from unwarranted, dangerous and destructive acts.

Pan-Armenian solidarity can no longer be delayed.

Vartkes Kourouyan	Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian
Secretary	Chairman

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ever, as Turkey's role has grown in the Middle East and in particular, in Lebanon.

Some Kurdish groups have offered their support to the Armenians. However, an alliance with the Kurds can only aggravate the situation further. At this moment, Turkish forces are massacring the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey; it is not wise to invite that murderous momentum to Lebanon.

Currently, the Armenians are in a precarious situation, at the mercy of an invisible political force. President Erdogan has a master plan and no one seems to be able to stop him from achieving it. He has repeated several times that Armenia is a hindrance to reaching Central Asia to unite Turkish-speaking peoples.

This was a dream that Enver Pasha failed to achieve at the end of World War I. Erdogan will purse that same dream, even if it takes a second genocide by overrunning Armenia. The publication Nordic Monitor discovered a Turkish document featuring plans for the invasion of Greece and Armenia in 2014. The plan to invade Armenia is called Altay. It is not a surprise, considering that in the not-so-distance past, Turkish President Turgut Ozal verbalized his country's plans by threatening to bomb Yerevan.

Turkish mercenaries destroyed Kessab and surrounding Armenian-majority villages during the Syrian war. Similarly, they bombed the Martyrs Memorial in Der Zor. Today, they are threatening Armenians in Lebanon. Perhaps next in their sights would be Armenia.

The Question of Numbers for Armenian Genocide

To the Editor:

I read with great interest the article by Mr. Edmond Y. Azadian, in the April 25, 2020, issue of the MS, p.13, "Justice for Armenian Genocide Still Elusive."

Mr. Azadian states that the Armenians lost two thirds of their population as well as their historical lands. I would submit that this figure would mean that 3 million to 3.5 million people were destroyed. Why?

First, it is generally believed that in 1915 there were 4-5 million ethnic Turks in the Ottoman Empire. There is no reason to think that there were fewer Armenians; Armenians ate the same foods, lived in the same areas; did not serve in the army (until 1910-1911) ; had many children; very few Armenians were assimilated with Turks or others.

In 1844, the Ottoman Government recorded that, in 1844, 2.4 million Armenians resided in the Ottoman Empire. In

1867, the Council of States took charge of drawing population tables. In 1867, the number remained the same. According to these figures, the number of Armenians remained the same as in 1844. Not likely. See Ottoman Armenian Population, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 6/26/08. pp. 1-8.

See also: The Armenian Calendar for 1913 (in Armenian) published by B. Balentz, publishers, Constantinople, 1913, p.67 in which it is stated that 3.25 million Armenians live in Asia Minor, and 2 million in the Caucasus. The Armenian Calendar quotes the reporter and scholar, Emile Joseph Dillon, reporter for the Daily Telegraph (London), who was in Armenia in 1894-95, and reported on the massacres at that time. Dillon was also professor of classical Armenian.

Krikor Zohrab, an Armenian member of the Ottoman parliament in 1915, calculated that, in 1913, 3.5 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire. He used the pen name of Marcel Leart.

> Walter C. Bandazian Virginia

LETTERS

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

The Time to Stand as One

By Ara Darzi

When the coronavirus pandemic struck the UK and Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the nationwide lockdown in March, I knew I had to do something to help my patients and my colleagues. This was a national and international health emergency and there was a lot of fear. I wanted to set an example by working in intensive care myself, though

I am a surgeon by training. My colleagues at London's St Mary's Hospital pointed me to some online training and, with a certain amount of trepidation, I donned protective gown, mask, visor, and gloves, and began working alongside them.

It was a case of all hands on deck as we worked to care for our patients and support each other. The whole experience was a great leveller in the hospital. The nurses were heroes.

This pandemic has wreaked terrible suffering across the world. But, as with all crises, it has brought us together and reminded us of our common humanity.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is doing just that – reminding us of our common humanity, bringing people together and transforming the way we deliver humanitarian aid to those in need across the globe. Today, its efforts are needed more than ever in response to the global spread of COVID-19 and I am proud to be a part of it.

The initiative was named in memory of Aurora Mardiganian, a teenage survivor of the 1915 massacre who escaped to tell her story, in print, on stage and in film, helping to alert the world to the Genocide. Her determination to bear witness, and similar accounts of courage and transformation from her fellow refugees, inspired Noubar Afeyan, Vartan Gregorian and Ruben Vardanyan to launch 100 LIVES – the first project of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative – in 2015.

The initial vision – to tell the stories of the survivors and the courageous people who stepped forward to help them in their hour of need – has since brought to light hundreds of accounts, which have been translated into six languages and inspired readers across the world. It also led to the movement Gratitude in Action, which seeks to empower people to

help those in need of urgent humanitarian aid. Saying "thank you" was not enough; a bigger commitment was sought.

From the beginning, the Aurora Co-Founders wanted to make the initiative universal. They were joined by a group of Nobel laureates, former heads of state and globally renowned humanitarians, including the late activist and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel to form the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, with the aim of empowering modern day heroes to help ensure the past tragedies are never repeated.

In 2019, I was humbled to be appointed Chair of the Committee, the expertise of whose members is undisputed. Our task of choosing the Aurora Humanitarians and Laureate among so many worthy candidates is an honour and a privilege, but also a huge responsibility. Every year, hundreds of extraordinary candidates are nominated, and we learn stories of awe-inspiring courage, commitment, and impact.

For example, Marguerite Barankitse, the 2016 Aurora Prize Laureate, cared for thousands of orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. Dr Tom Catena, the 2017 Laureate, saved thousands of lives as the sole doctor permanently based in Sudan's war-ravaged Nuba Mountains.

These heroes do not seek recognition, but they deserve it. Aurora honours their life and

work by organizing special events in Armenia. In 2018, the Aurora Prize Ceremony took place at dawn in Khor Virap. Entitled "Aurora: Awakening Humanity", the timing and location of the event were symbolic. As the sun rose over Mount Ararat, the guests joined in a circle

to dance Kochari, the folk dance that has marked celebrations in Armenia for over a thousand years.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Aurora Initiative. To date, it has supported 28 projects in 16 countries, benefitting 950,000 vulnerable people while the #AraratChallenge movement has given a second chance to those who desperately need it. Less tangibly, but equally important, it has helped bring about a subtle shift in the Armenian mentality. Instead of habitually seeing ourselves as victims, which we have done for too long, today we see ourselves helping those less fortunate than ourselves in honour of our ancestors' saviours.

At the launch of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, the co-founders pledged to maintain it for eight years from 2015-2023, in commemoration of the eight years of the Armenian Genocide. But we have the power to extend their legacy. To stand still is to fall back, and as we mark this fifth anniversary, I urge all Armenians across the world to join this movement and support its efforts. If there was ever a time to unite our people to help realise our vision, now is the time.

(Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham, OM, is a surgeon, a member of the UK House of Lords, and Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London. H was a health minister in the UK Labour Government from 2007-9.)

Armenia Reassures Iran Over Embassy in Israel

COMMENTARY

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Following a rare anti-Armenian protest in Tehran, Armenia has again tried to dispel neighboring Iran's apparent concerns over its decision to open an embassy in Israel. The Armenian ambassador to Iran, Artashes Tumanyan, assured a senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official on Wednesday, June 10, that his country remains committed to its "friendly" rela-

First Genocide of the 20th Century

By Prof. Alan Whitehorn

In these troubled times when our streets are filled with human rights protests about discriminatory violence against minority ethnic and racial groups, it is not enough to march. We also need to rethink our conceptualizations and our knowledge of history. Armenians often claim to be the victims of the first genocide of the 20th century, but increasingly in recent decades academic scholarship has suggested another earlier important example.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, European imperial states carved up Africa. A German colony was created in southwest Africa (in what is now Namibia). With the discovery of diamonds, Germany began to build a railroad and gave German settlers ownership and water rights to the land on either side of the strategic railroad line. As a result, the Herero – the local indigenous people – lost their land and access to water in this arid region. They rebelled against such harsh and unjust foreign imperial rule. General von Trotha and the German military, utilizing vast superiority in weapons, drove the Herero further into the desert and prevented the Herero people's escape. Vast numbers of Herero died from lack of access to water, food and shelter. By 1911, most of the Herero people had perished.

tionship with the Islamic Republic despite its desire to improve Armenian-Israeli ties.

The Armenian government announced the decision last September, saying that it will not only "give new impetus" to its relations with the Jewish state but also help to secure the Armenian Apostolic Church's continued strong presence in the Holy Land.

Israel hailed the move, with then Foreign Minister Israel Katz calling it a "significant step in the development of bilateral relations." His Armenian counterpart, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, indicated that he would welcome the opening of an Israeli embassy in Yerevan.

The opening of the Armenian Embassy in Tel Aviv, initially slated for the beginning of this year, appears to have been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Iranian leadership waited until March 15 to publicly signal its disapproval of Yerevan's decision. A senior adviser to parliament speaker Ali Larijani said the move will have a "negative impact on stability and security in the region." The official, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, urged the Armenian side to "think twice" before opening the mission in Tel Aviv. Ambassador Tumanyan met with Alireza Haqiqian, the head of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Eurasia department, on the same day. According to the Armenian Embassy in Tehran, he explained his government's Israel-related motives to Haqiqian "in great detail." In a sign of Iran's lingering discontent, two dozen Iranian university students rallied outside the Armenian Embassy in Tehran on Tuesday to condemn Yerevan's plans and to urge it avoid any diplomatic presence in "the occupied Palestinian territories." News reports from the Iranian capital said the protesters chanted "Death to Israel" and burned an Israeli flag. Tumanyan discussed the demonstration with another senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official, Mohsen Faghani, at a meeting held the following day. According to an Armenian Embassy statement, the envoy assured Faghani that Armenia will continue to avoid involvement in "any anti-Iranian political project."

"some circles" in the Islamic Republic are worried about Israeli influence on Armenia. At the same time, it said, the Iranian official praised the current state of Armenian-Iranian relations and expressed confidence that they will not be undermined by any "discontent" with the Armenian diplomatic presence in Israel.

Mnatsakanyan echoed Tumanyan's assurances when he spoke to journalists in Yerevan on Thursday. "Armenia has never implemented and does not intend to implement policies towards one partner at the expense of another," said the foreign minister.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani most recently spoke by phone on April 28. An official Armenian readout of the phone call said they discussed ways of minimizing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on bilateral commercial ties.

Pashinyan stated on May 7 that Armenian-Iranian relations remain "very good" and are "developing dynamically."

Two weeks later, Pashinyan sent a congratulatory message to Israel's reelected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "I am hopeful that through joint efforts we will be able to replenish and overhaul the agenda of Armenian-Israeli cooperation and build strong ties of mutually beneficial partnership," he wrote. Armenian-Israeli relations have long been frosty, reflecting differing geopolitical priorities of the two states. Armenia has maintained a warm rapport with Iran, one of the landlocked South Caucasus country's two conduits to the outside world, while Israel has pursued strategic cooperation with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Armenian leaders have long expressed concern over Israel's large-scale arms deals with Azerbaijan which have reportedly totaled at least \$2 billion since 2012. The Azerbaijani army used some of its Israeli-made weapons, notably sophisticated anti-tank rockets, during April 2016 hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. And as recently as on April 21, Karabakh's Armenian-backed army claimed to have shot down yet another Israeli-made Azerbaijani military drone. Armenia and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992 but have had no embassies in each other's capitals until now. Armenian ambassadors to Israel have been based in Paris, Cairo and even Yerevan.

The European attitude was that of a sense of superiority over the supposedly inferior African people who were portrayed as living in a more primitive culture and less advanced economy. Does one actually have to fire weapons to be charged with genocide? Why do so few persons know of this African example?

In a time when we speak of "Blacks Lives Matter," my advice remains to all Armenians not to claim to be the victims of the first genocide of the 20th century, but the targets of one of the first. In 2015, in our centennial of the Armenian Genocide, I upset some fellow Armenians by pointing this out during such a symbolic anniversary. However, I think we have a global responsibility to be honest and frank, even when some might want to be first on such a horrific list. It is time for more Armenians to include the genocide of the black Africans as part of their in-depth discussions. We need to speak up for all victims of genocide, if we are ever to achieve a more just and peaceful world.

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"The ambassador emphasized that Armenian-Iranian friendly relations have been and remain one of Armenia's foreign policy priorities," read the statement.

The statement cited Faghani as saying that