Govt. Moves to Arrest Opposition Leader Tsarukyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian parliament voted on June 16 to allow law-enforcement 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 Artyom Davtyan again backed NSS allegations that Tsarukyan “created and led 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 lawenforcement 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.

Sheriff Koutoujian Supports Racial Justice Protests

As He Continues Pioneering Programs for Inmates

MEDFORD, Mass. — The constant discussion of COVID-19 in America has been changing in the last few weeks to an ongoing discussion of race. People in law enforcement throughout the United States are reassessing their policies and approach 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 pretrial and sentenced detainees.

“I completely support those who are peaceful- ly protesting and understand what they are doing completely,” Koutoujian 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 Jawal TV station, Armenian journalist Nahid Ter-Harutyunyan, during an interactive show on WhatsApp, referring to him as a migrant and foreigner. Nahid 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.

Protests in Beirut

BEIRUT (news.am) — Starting on June 11, Turleyeked 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.)

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In Beirut, the fast-thinking Armenians who are living in the city of Beirut actively tried to defuse the tension caused by the harsh words of the fremd groups. The Armenians in Beirut prepared a special request to the Lebanon Police and the Ministry of Interior to arrest the alleged person who provoked the conflict.

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 1952, suspending its activity as legal entity. Most of the foundation’s property was sold to third parties.

Foreign Minister Participates in UN Forum on Multilateralism

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.

US Armenian Cemetery Operations Impacted by COVID-19

By Aram Arakun

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.

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US Approves More Coronavirus Aid to Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The United States has allotted $5.4 million in fresh assistance to Armenia designed to combat the coronavirus pandemic. In particular, Ambassador Lynne Tracy said on Thursday, June 11, “I am 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.

Yerevan 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 wave of the disease.

Serbia Sends Aid to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – As a result of conversations between President of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan 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. 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 with 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 plan. In particular, 10 ventilators, 10 monitors, 500,000 surgical, 100,000 breathing masks, 25,000 protective glasses, 25,000 medical protective clothing and other necessary items will be delivered to Armenia. The total cost of the Serbian assistance will comprise nearly $1 million.

US Approves More Coronavirus Aid to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Former Speaker of the National Assembly of Artsakh Ashot Ghulanyan 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 Ghulanyan 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-agency bodies of the Armenian states in the position of advisor to the parliament Speaker.”

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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 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 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 decriminalize the Cassation Court with the status of a Higher Court of Cassation, Armenia’s highest body of criminal and administrative justice. He said that the two courts have differed different interpretations of Armenian laws on a number of occasions.

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, Hrachia Tovmasyan, has rejected those accusations, saying that the prime minister is simply seeking to 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 was held 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 Kirkorian, said in February that the panel will come up with a package of constitutional changes and invite Pashinyan to vote on it by September 2020.

Kirkorian 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 (REUTERS) - A team of French medics arrived in Armenia on June 14 to help Armenian colleagues tackle the country's struggling to cope with the coronavirus crisis.

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

Simonian’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.

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

“[The] mission will include working with the number of specialists 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” to reinforce the intensive care units of four Yerevan-based 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, he said.

Torosyan revealed that about 50 Russian doctors have also expressed a desire to work at the Armenian hospitals but that their application is still in the process of being finalized.

The minister made no mention of similar assistance offered by neighboring Georgia.

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The mininstry also said that 8 more people have been treated in intensive care in the past week.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan indicated his 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 stay-at-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 locked down, lifted and lifted it too soon.

Some of them have called for a renewed lockdown, Pashinyan and other senior government officials have opposed such a move so far.

Catholicos Calls for Solidarity in Combating COVID-19 in Armenia

ECHMIADzin -- "Today, we have no more important task than to prevent the spread of the pandemic in our own communities," 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 exceeded 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 here to 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 establish a dialogue between local clergy and national health measures.

With the stress of a monthlong lockdown, expressions of discouragement and even animosity have become visible at all levels of Armenian society, as everywhere 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 dignities, or seek only personal and material gain."
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’etat 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 Harekatı 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, 2009) 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 ku, a loyalist of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, appears to have forgotten to remove the classified documents before submitting them to the court. Although the General Staff headquarters during an investigation into a failed coup on July 15, 2016.

Verevan in Touch with Red Cross to Deal with Azerbaijani 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 with 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 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 giv- ing them opportunity to contact with their family members.”

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

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

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

“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 Hagia Sophia be opened as a place of worship for all, keeping a space for Christians. ‘Let the Hagia Sophia into a mosque, voicing his support for the proposal in a chain of tweets on June 13, 2023.”

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

The Start of a Successful (Medical) Relationship

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach Special to the Mirror-Spectator

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

Arts Avagyan is a good example. After having completed her medical studies with excellent grades in Yerevan, she furthered her education in Germany, and applied for a position at the Specialized Hospital of Dermatology at Castel Friedensburg, Leutenberg, in Thuringia. “I simply wanted to develop my professional skills further and gain interna- tional experience. In the field of medi- cine 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 compli- cated and thorough. Weber stepped in to provide help. After discussing the issue 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 sojourner permit, Avagyan reached her aim and started activities at the hospital, which is housed in a magnificent 18th-century castle. Within a short time, she was flau- gant in German: to continue her career, she also had to master the use of spe- cialized 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 1905 it has become the cen- ter for treatment of skin and chronic degenerative diseases, not only for patients from Germany, but also internationally.

In early June, Weber 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 received the hospital’s University head, whom HP Caro Flapian started a live broadcast.

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

“We won’t abandon democratic poli- tics,” 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 togeth- er in hearts and streets. Our hearts are one. We will build a wall, not just for us and our people. Our march is the march for democracy against the coup. Putchism is useless, but the will of the people is to persevere. 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 putchists 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. The people want to bring down the people’s government.”

“We are here to solve the country’s freedom, Kurdish problems through pol- itics and democracy. This is why we are in politics but the government wants to suf- focate the politics as well. All men- talities that want to suffocate politics are perceived.”

HDP CoChair Perin Buldan made a strong statement.

“They will never be able to make us take a step back from our resolve march. We are not just many. We are thousands, millions. You have made us understand democracy in violation of the Constitution by bringing entries and exits to many cities. The measures you have taken to prevent HDP from meet- ing with the people will not prevent us from coming together with our people.”

Today, this democratic march against the coup, is a march for all our friends in prisons, especially for Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yüksekdag. It is about living togeth- er for treatment of skin and chronic degenerative diseases, not only for patients from Germany, but also internationally.”

“This march is not only for Demirtas and Yükselkoch. It is about living togeth- er for treatment of skin and chronic degenerative diseases, not only for patients from Germany, but also internationally.”

She said.

They police used rubber bullets and tear gas against the HDP members, including MPs Pınar Çelik and Muaş Pinoglu, after they attempted to march ahead of the march.

She continued. “The biggest problem of Turkey is the PKK’s oppression, vio- lence, and has undermined the Kurds, Alevi, women, Armenians and all dis- senters in Turkey. Today, those who gov- ern the country attack Alevi’s, Kurds, and all people. Under the name of hatred they want to take revenge from the Kurds by damaging their gravestones. Those who govern the country attack Alevi’s, Kurds, and all people. Under the name of hatred they want to take revenge from the Kurds by damaging their gravestones.”

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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 at 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 Americans (5 million dollars) and $25,000 in donations from Armenia.

Other organizations which contributed valuable goods during this period were: The Howard Karasian Children’s Nursing Research Merit Project, Project Arape ($40,000), Armenian Educational Benevolent Union ($36,000).

The medicines and medical supplies donated during this period were sent to the AGBU Claudia Nazerian Medical Center for Syrian Armenian Refugees in Yerevan, ARS Children’s Foundation, ACAA Medical Center, Fund for Armenian Relief, Metsiets Nurses Charitable Foundation, Muratsan Children’s Endocrinology Center, St. Gevorg Luysian Medical Center, and the health ministries of Armenia and Artsakh.

In the past 31 years, including the shipments under its predecessor, the Armenian Fund for Science and Technology, AAF 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 (AAA) welcomes Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member 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 to comply with Section 907 of the FREEDOM 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 “clearly not taking” the steps required to comply with Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Menendez also noted that assistance to Azerbaijan has “skirted around” and that “the lack of Congressional notifications makes it difficult to understand the full scope and impact 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, 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 “clearly not taking” the steps required to comply with Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Menendez also noted that assistance to Azerbaijan has “skirted around” and that “the lack of Congressional notifications makes it difficult to understand the full scope and impact 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, 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 “clearly not taking” the steps required to comply with Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. Menendez also noted that assistance to Azerbaijan has “skirted around” and that “the lack of Congressional notifications makes it difficult to understand the full scope and impact 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.

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

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The Yale Department of Emergency Medicine (YDEM) announced this week that Sharon Anouchi Chekijian, MD, MPH, has received a 1. 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 postgraduate 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 and visitors to Armenia.

Chekijian has previously worked in Armenia in the areas of organ transplantation, cardiosurgical revascularisation, 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 U.S. Scholar Program, Chekijian is excited about the opportunity to transfer knowledge and strategies gained from implementing successful projects in the US to Armenia.

“We look forward to supporting 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 care 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 care physicians trained doctors to 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 (SAM) Academy of Women in Academic Medicine’s awards committee as well as the Chair of SAM’s APP Medical Director’s interest group and SAM 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,” said 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.”

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

COVID-19 Vaccine Clears Key Safety Hurdle in Mouse Study

(Chicago) – 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 of the new virus that causes COVID-19 — suggests vaccines against this type of viruses 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 adequate antibody response.

Scientists have seen this risk as a key hurdle that must be cleared before vaccines can be safely distributed to the general population. While the data released by the US National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) on Friday provides some assurance that it will not 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 globally by 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 analyses looking for signs of disease enhancement suggests that “suppressive” immune responses do not cause what is known as vaccine-associated enhanced respiratory disease, a susceptibility to more severe disease in the lungs.

"Suppressive doses did not prime mice for enhanced immunopathology following (exposure)," Dr. Barrett Gream of the Vaccine Research Center at NIAID and colleagues wrote in the not yet peer reviewed manuscript, posted on the NIAID's 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 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 Steenhuyzen Editing by Bill Berkrot)
Dr. George P. Gopoian
Doctor in Practice for 40 Years

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. – Dr. George P. Gopoian, peacefully passed away on June 20, 2020, in his home, surrounded by his family. He is survived by his wife, Carol; children, Nicole Gopoian (Adam) Winkel; and George Edward (Emely) Gopoian; and many other relatives and friends. George was born on September 17, 1947 in Detroit. He was the son of the late Edward Varkas and Rose Sima (nee Sarkisian) Gopoian. George loved the life of his life, Carol Marzoe, 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 pediatric 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 noted as a hunter and fisherman, who enjoyed his time with his son, George, on a big game hunt to Alaska that summer. George also attended to tour the countryside.

He loved his late four-legged companion, Duke, a chocolate-colored purebred. When Duke spent summers at his pool, Duke impressed many of his visitors with his 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 Javarian Funeral Directors, devotion, 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.

Barbara (Haroian) Solakian
Longtime Member of First Armenian Church

PHILADELPHIA – Elizabeth “Betty” Cholakian passed away on Thursday, June 4, 2020, at the age of 85. She was predeceased by her husband George Cholakian. She is survived by her daughter Arline Carlin (nee Cholakian), her son-in-law Robert Carlin, her two grandchildren, Luke and Tahle Cholakian, and her great-granddaughter Morgan Pleon (nee Carlin) and Michelle Melabouzn (nee Carlin).

Barbara was the second to last remaining child of Hagop and Maritza Cholakian (nee Attarian). Her older sister Naomi Cholakian (nee Attarian) 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 well-known and respected 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 St. Sahag & Mesrob. She was an avid reader, crossword publisher and lover of music. She loved to cook. She loved classical music and equally enjoyed the opera and theater in her later years and George 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 A.M. Social distancing will be adhered to. A luncheon will follow the services.

Elizabeth ‘Betty’ Cholakian
Editor, Dedicated to Church, Family

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 (Demirdjian) and Bedros Solakian and her husband Randall, great-granddaughter of Catherine of Teravan, Caroline, Andrew, and William; sister of Susan Dupont and her husband Peter Petrossian, Simon of Matthew Dupont, Jonathan Smith, and Heather Smith and adored relative and friend to many.

Barbara was born on November 22, 1939 in Medford. She grew up in Lynnfield and was a graduate of Lynnfield 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 Manager 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. She was endlessly generous in time and spirit, volunteering 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.

In addition, Barbara was dedicated to serving her First Armenian Church family, who saw her and her family have been members for decades. She was a member of the church’s Fellowship Hour for a number of years and had a leading role on the church’s sanctuary restoration 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 alike, into 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 coexist 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 will be limited to extended family and friends.

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. “Alf,” 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 joy. To them, he was the embodiment of goodness, and they would share that sentiment every time they would encounter members of Alf’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. To these, he was their most valued possessions.

Born on September 18, 1939 in Tehran, Iran, to Simon (Simik) and Alma (Almik) Yegumians, Alf attended Keeshesh 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.

Alf worked from a young age in the airline and freight industry - LIA Airlines and Unisack, B.A. In 1979, he immigrated 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 Arlette Yegumians-Derr, his son Edward (Edward) Derr, his grandson Alex Derr, his sister Yvonne Yegumians and her family, first cousins Ara Bagdasaian, Pizz Stouffs, Katiya Yaghoumians-Hurt, Armenian Petrocian 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 open me in the autumn of your 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 Ridgevale Cemetery in Watertown, MA. A memorial celebration of Alf’s life will be held at a later time. Arrangements are being made by Aram Bedrosian Funeral Services in Watertown, MA (www.bedrosianfuneralhome.com).

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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 lifelong learner, she thought it 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 circumstances. Anna 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. Joaachim 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, Deanna (Lee) Kokott, Renaye Ohanesian and Raelene (Scott) Puller. She is also survived by grandchildren Kristen (Mike) Burke, Kimberly (Pete) Lanzer and one great-grandchild, 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 Armenia (AUA) Pals, 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 Youredjian Family Charitable Foundation responded, with continued support, helping 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 can have on Armenian 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/LateNight, which now has eight divisions across California.

Jack, like many students at AUA, received support from Armenian philanthropists and foundations to attend university. “My higher education would not have been possible without the support of NAHRU 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 is doing in educating the future leaders of Armenia,” the couple stated. “We remember Dr. Mihair Aghababian 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 a great opportunity: it is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August). The intern will receive a $500 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 an issue but native speaker knowledge of English remains important.

Aside from writing for the paper and working on the Mirror’s 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
US Armenian Cemeteries Impacted by COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic does not seem to have affected the cemeteries directly. There have not been any burials there during the period of its spread so far.
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), panelists Kohar Avakian, Dr. Jermaine McCalpin and Dr. Michael Rothberg.

Theriault is the president of the International Association for Genocide Scholars and associate professor at 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 American Museum, Greater NY, Daughters of Vartan, Sahagian Oyanj, Justice Armenia, Knights of Vartan Bakdrouny Lodge, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Topics, St. Leon Armenian Church, St. Leon ACYOA Senate 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

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

KOUTOUIJAN, from page 1

Koutoujian exclaimed in an interview on Monday, June 22, that he was absolutely appalled when I saw the video of George Floyd, and many of the other videos that have been brought to light since those incidents 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 world of outrage by communities, I can understand why they can be so upset.

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 the consideration of issues regarding race, and Koutoujian emphasized, “I think it is an overdue 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 Murrow, 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 due-to-serve 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://mcssheriffs.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.

It is very engaged in the numerous proposals being discussed in Congress right now on this issue. Koutoujian and 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 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 mean 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 can not 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 into 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.”

CONTINUES PIONEERING PROGRAMS FOR INMATES
Book on US, British Response to Armenian Genocide Wins 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 intersection between US and international history, and the interconnectedness 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.

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 art 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 document 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 arrived on the scene, and teargas was released on the protestors – Tonoyan included. For Tonoyan, who is a research associate at the University of Minnesota’s Center for 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 photography these events and what he saw while in the middle of the protests. Read on for My Modern Met’s exclusive interview.

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
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, respectively, 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 fullblown 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. It has been a visual representation of collective social change taking place due to protests — often peaceful, sometimes not so much. Of course, there’s the counter-argument that changes are best implemented through voting, through the very boring and very long political process. What protests accomplish, however, and which may be their greatest virtue, is that they make political elites sit up and take heed. In a sense, protests are politics by other means.

To add to this, I think it was Kurt Vonnegut who said that, during the Vietnam War, people were shocked 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 qualified 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 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 Lytia 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 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 inharmonious 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 drawn most by empathy.

Artyom Tonoyan: Twitter
"My Modern Met granted permission to feature photos by Artyom Tonoyan."
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 Sergeevich, 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, vividly represented the city during his school years, the 1930s, when he was studying at the Spendiarian 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 Yzhakavsky Music School in Yerevan (one of them, Marine Abrahamyan, a laureate of international competitions, later told us how strict a teacher Yakov Sergeevich 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, Kocharyan, Gevorkyan, Smbatyan, Zargaryan, Melkumyan, Jotto, Karalov, Padopomog, Elbekyan, Rudolf Khachatryan and especially Minas.

Yakov Zargaryan played a key role in popularizing of Minas Avetistyan’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, for whom our country was also embodied in the image of that small, bald, steady collector with 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 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 his house friends and acquaintances from various countries.

Unfortunately, the difficult times pushed Zargaryan to sell these and other expensive samples of his collection.

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 his house friends and acquaintances from various countries. 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 Asopyan 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. There was one left, which fell to the ground on May 22, 2020, the day Yakov Zargaryan passed away.

Zargaryan passed away. On the ground on May 22, 2020, the day Yakov Zargaryan passed away.
**The Legacy of Charles Aznavour**

Born Shahmurad Vaghinag Amanova 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 Lamour), You're Letting Me Go (Tu T'Laisses Aller), Le Boheme and What Makes a Man (Comme il 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 through-out 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 (Pour Vous Arménie), which was a collaboration of 75 mainly French artists, including Rosy Arman and Serge Abukian. In 2017, Aznavour and his sister were honored 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 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 at all. 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 vic-tim 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 cer-tain unenlightened countries.” He wanted to see changes in Armenia. In 2017, at the Taglyan Complex luncheon following the Hollywood Walk of Fame Star reception cere-monies, Aznavour pledged to record public ser-vices and document events advocating for LGBTQ equality in Armenia. Unfortunately, his health and schedule did not allow for the completion of this project. Like many greats, Aznavour was simply ahead of the times, and he had cer-tainly seen the future.


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, which was attended by French presi-dent 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 Sarkisian 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.

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**Recipe Corner 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 (Mai) 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 ferment cabbage covered with liquid. Place jar on a plate (in case your fermentation bubbles over) and store out of direct sunlight in your kitchen. Stirr thoroughly to help release gases caused by fermentation: 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 1/2 large onions, halved and diced
- 8 cups fermented cabbage, with its own juice
- 3/4 cup dzedzads (whole wheat groghod, peeled wheat), found in Middle Eastern stores
- 1 1/4 cups tomato sauce
- 2 1/2 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 Tquat 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 1/4 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 Darbanyan, A Hundred Years and Still Cooking: The First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno (APPC) Ladies Women’s Society Centennial recipe collection.**

Serves 6.

Turkey’s Ottomanist Ambitions Target Armenians in Lebanon

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While the population in Armenia is experiencing a crisis with the IMF, the international community is playing a role in the political turmoil. The US has imposed economic sanctions on Turkey, and in response, Turkey has imposed economic sanctions on the US. The tension between the two countries has escalated, with Turkey threatening to retaliate. The crisis has raised concerns about the future of the Armenian population in Lebanon.

Turkey has a long history of targeting the Armenian community in Lebanon. In the past, the Ottoman Empire forced Armenians to leave their homeland and settle in Lebanon. Today, Turkey continues to exert pressure on the Armenian community in Lebanon, exploiting their economic and political vulnerabilities. The Armenian community in Lebanon is facing a challenging time, and their future remains uncertain.

The crisis in Lebanon has also had a significant impact on the Armenian community. With the political instability and economic hardship in Lebanon, the Armenian community is facing difficulties in their daily lives. The crisis has also had a psychological impact on the Armenian community, with many feeling anxious and stressed.

The Armenian community in Lebanon has a long history of resilience and perseverance. Despite facing numerous challenges, the community continues to thrive. The Armenian community in Lebanon is an integral part of the Lebanese society, and its contributions to the country are significant. The Armenian community in Lebanon has made important contributions to the cultural, social, and economic life of Lebanon.

The US and the European Union have expressed concern about the crisis in Lebanon and the targeting of the Armenian community. The international community has called for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and for the protection of the Armenian community in Lebanon.

The Armenian community in Lebanon continues to face challenges, but they remain committed to their community and their heritage. The community is determined to overcome the current crisis and to continue to thrive, despite the challenges they face.
By Harut Sassoussian

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. In particular, he has been criticized regarding the resolution adopted by the US Congress recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

It is clear from the official 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 President Erdogan’s statements to recover the Hagia Sophia historic church to a mosque. If in 1935, Atatürk 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.

The president of the group, Hassoun, at different times, has claimed to be a Turkish Kurd and a Christian. One thing is certain, 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 a majority in Lebanon and was targeted by the chagrin of Christian forces. At that time, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon marched the Israeli army through the streets of Beirut, attacking the Phalangist forces to slaughter Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila camps. The leader of the Maronite Phalangist forces, Bachir Gemayel, was assassinated in September of the same year 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 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 be achieved in parallel with that crisis which turns the domestic situation in Armenia all the more fateful.

The problem is complex under these circumstances to rally the state and defeat the crises with pan-Armenian forces. Calls for pride have been sought. In order to increase our voice. No wonder that no movement or act is permissible which might contribute to the instability of the country. It is time to recall the bitter lessons of the past. Our Christian kingdom met its end in the 14th century as a result of weakness created by internal quarrels and divisions of which the Muslim community benefited. 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.

Turkey’s Ottomanist Ambitions

from previous page

The incident shook the Armenian community. One of the Armenian members of parliament, Hapik Patsukian, reached out to the interior minister. The three Armenian political parties – the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), Armenian Revolutionary Federalist (AMF) and the Hunchaks – issued a statement deploring the incident.

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

The recent incident in Kessab is not an isolated event. The Turkish mercenaries destroyed Kesab and surrounding Armenian-majority villages during the Syrian war. Similarly, they bombed the Martyrs Memorial in Deir Zor. Today, they are threatening Armenians in Lebanon. Perhaps next in their sights would be Armenia.

Armenian Genocide

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’s article states that the Armenians lost two thirds of their population as well as their historic lands. I would submit that this figure would mean that 3 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 among 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, 24 million Armenians resided in the Ottoman Empire.

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 Armenians, Armenians and the diaspora. The leadership has come to take that idea of unity out of the realm solely of rhetoric and form a body of consensus, uniting the three branches of the church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Armenian Catholic Church and the Nestorian Church.

Running a communal affairs office, the church is now working to create an administrative structure that can achieve the goals.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, the major commuting area, has decided to open a new office in the northwestern city of Kocaeli, which is home to a significant number of Armenians. The office will be headed by Fr. Sargis Krikor, who has been serving as the chairman of the Armenian Diocese in Turkey for the past 12 years.

The new office is expected to provide services to Armenian communities in the region, including legal aid, social services, and cultural events.

The opening of the new office is seen as an important step in the Patriarchate’s efforts to strengthen its presence in the region and to better serve the needs of the Armenian community.

Conclusion

The opening of the new office is seen as an important step in the Patriarchate’s efforts to strengthen its presence in the region and to better serve the needs of the Armenian community.

It is hoped that the office will serve as a model for the opening of similar offices in other major cities in Turkey.
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 not a doctor. As London’s St Mary’s Hospital’s chief medical officer I was initially pointed to some online training and, with a certain amount of trepidation, I donned protective gowns, 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, with all as 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 human 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 Armenian Genocide whom I got to know during my research. She came to the initiative with a special mission to launch the #AraratChallenge in all 16 countries, benefitting 950,000 vulnerable people while the #AraratChallenge aims to educate people about the Armenian Genocide, including The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference.

First Genocide of the 20th Century
By Prof. Alan Whitehorn

In these troubled times when our streets are filled with human rights protests about discrimination versus identity 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 (what is now Namibia). With the discovery of diamonds, Germany began to build a railroad and gave German settlers ownership of the land 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 imperial rule. General von Trotha and the German military, using 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 1915, most of the Herero people had perished.

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 capable of defending themselves.

The Armenian ambassador to Iran, Arshakum Tumanyan, assured a senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official on Wednesday, June 10, that his country remains committed to its “friendly” relationship with the Islamic Republic despite its desire to improve Armenian-Iranian ties.

The Armenian government announced the decision last September, saying that it will not “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.

President Donald Trump, with then Foreign Minister Israel Katz saying it was “a significant step in the development of bilateral relations.” His Armenian counterpart, Tumanyan, indicated that he would welcome the opening of an Israeli embassy in Yerevan.

The timing of the opening of the 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 the supreme leader, Ali Larijani said the move would have a “negative impact on stability and security in the region.” The official, Hossein Abbasi Abdi, urged the Armenian side to “think twice” before opening the mission in Tel Aviv.

Ambassador Tumanyan met with Alireza Haqipour, 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 Haqipour “in great detail.”

In a phone call from Iran’s outgoing discount, two dozen Iranian university students rallied outside the Armenian Embassy in Tehran on Tuesday to condemn Yerevan’s plans and urge it avoid any diplomatic stance 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 an assistant foreign minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Molsen Faghi, at a meeting held the following day. According to an Armenian Embassy statement, Faghi assured Tumanyan that Armenia will continue to avoid involvement in “any anti-Islamic political project.”

The ambassador emphasized that Armenian-Iranian friendly relations have been and remain equally important, it has helped bring about a subtle shift in the Armenian mentality. Instead of looking to dance Kochari, the folk dance that has marked celebrations in Armenia for over a thousand years.

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