Israel Urged Not to Sell Weapons to Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (PFE/BL) — Armenia has called on Israel to put an end to large-scale supplies of Israel-made weapons to Azerbaijan used by the latter in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"Arms trade with Azerbaijan is fatal because Armenia never hesitates to use those weapons against civilian infrastructure and the civilian population," Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan told the Jerusalem Post newspaper in an interview published on Wednesday, July 29.

"We will consistently pursue this issue and it will always be an integral part of our agenda both on bilateral and multilateral platforms," said Mnatsakanyan. "Israel should stop this deadly business with Azerbaijan."

Over the past decade, Israeli defense companies have sold, with the Israeli government's blessing, billions of dollars worth of advanced military hardware to Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani army used some of these weapons, notably sophisticated anti-tank rockets and attack drones, during April 2016 hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. It also deployed Israeli-manufactured drones against Armenian military and civilian targets during the recent deadly fighting on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border.

The Armenian military claims to have shot down or intercepted 13 such unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). It demonstrated some of their purported fragments last week.

The Defense Ministry in Yerevan went on to publicize a photograph of two Armenian officers standing next to a SkyStriker "suicide" drone manufactured by the Israeli company Elbit Systems. A ministry spokesperson claimed that it was brought down by an electronic warfare system.

"Our military has neutralized Azerbaijani weapons regardless of their perceived origins," Mnatsakanyan said when asked about the Israeli drones.

Armenia has long expressed concerns over Israel's arms deals with Azerbaijan. The Jewish state appears to be a major buyer of advanced weapons, regardless of its official stance on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Arms trade with Azerbaijan is fatal because Armenia never hesitates to use those weapons against civilian infrastructure and the civilian population," said Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, foreign minister of Armenia.

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The Defense Ministry in Yerev
Armenia Seeks to Offset ‘Turkish Threat’

YEREVAN (REUTERS) — Armenia counts on Russia's support in its ongoing efforts to counter a serious threat to its national security emanating from neighboring Turkey, a senior Armenian official said during a conference this weekend.

Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of the Armenian government's Security Council, reaffirmed Yerevan's serious concerns over Turkey's vehement support for Azerbaijan's short-term and after recent deadly clashes on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

"Seeing that Azerbaijan is unable to maintain the situation under control on its own, Turkey is trying to intervene," Grigoryan told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "It's clear that this poses a serious threat to our region. It is also a challenge to the regional security architecture. The regional security architecture has long been unchanged. Turkey is now trying to change it through its intervention through its military contingent in the region."

Asked about Moscow's reaction to the Armenian concerns, Grigoryan said "The July incidents [on the border] coincided with the coronavirus pandemic, and we have not yet been able to discuss the issue at a higher level. But these issues are on the agenda because they are about challenges facing the region and we need a common response to these challenges."

Ankara has blamed Yerevan for the fighting that broke out across a western section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border on July 12 and vowed to boost Turkish military support for Baku. In what appears to be a related development, Turkish and Azerbaijani troops began on July 29 joint military exercises in various parts of Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry expressed concern at the exercises before the Armenian military put some of its forces on high alert. Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said on July 28 that Armenian army units as well as a Russian-Armenian military contingent are "continuing to constantly monitor and analyze" Turkish-Azerbaijani military activities "with all reconnaissance means" at their disposal.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the Armenian-Azerbaijani flare-up during a phone conversation on July 27. According to the Kremlin, Putin "stressed the importance of preventing any steps that could cause an escalation in tensions." Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov similarly urged the Turks to exercise restraint.

Russia is allied to Armenia and has thousands of troops stationed in the South Caucasus state.

Another Fugitive Armenian ‘Given Safe Haven in Russia’

MOSCOW (REUTERS) — A lawyer for Ruben Hayrapetyan said on July 30, that Russian law-enforcement authorities have effectively linked the wealthy businessman linked to Armenia's former leadership and prosecuted on a string of corruption charges.

Hayrapetyan left for Russia in March, more than a month before being first indicted by Armenia's Investigative Committee.

The law-enforcement body claims he, his son Rafik, and near other persons kidnapped and systematically beat up in 2016 the chief of a Hayrapetyan-owned resort who allegedly missed more than 52 million drams ($108,000) borrowed from a commercial bank controlled by the Hayrapetyan empire.

In a separate criminal investigation, Hayrapetyan was also charged with abusing his former status as chairman of the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA) in 2015 to privatize municipal land in Yerevan at a knockdown price.

Hayrapetyan denied the accusations through his lawyers. He told investigators he is unable to return to Armenia because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Investigative Committee dismissed the claim, saying that it believes he simply fled the prosecution.

In late May, a Yerevan court agreed to issue an arrest warrant against Hayrapetyan and four other suspects. The investigators launched an international hunt for Hayrapetyan shortly afterwards.

One of his lawyers, Amram Makinyan, said his client has told him that Russian law-enforcement bodies have formally decided to stop searching for him.

Makinyan said he is not yet aware of the official reason for that decision. He claimed that he also does not know whether the fugitive tycoon holds Russian citizenship and therefore cannot be extradited to Armenia.

A spokesman for Armenia's Office of the Prosecutor-General said it is now trying to verify the lawyer's claims. The official, Oghambaryan, said Armenian prosecutors had contacted their Russian colleagues.

Hayrapetyan, 56, has long supported Armenia's former leadership and remains affiliated with the wealthy businessman linked to Armenia's former leadership and prosecuted on a string of corruption charges.

Russians who support Armenia are considered to be "friendly" to Russia.
**Armenia Bans Turkish Weapons Inspectors**

YEREVAN (REUTERS) — Citing "unpredictable security threats emanating from neighboring Turkey, Armenia on Wednesday, July 29, banned officers from inspecting Armenian military bases and verifying Yerevan's compliance with an international arms control treaty.

It announced the decision as Turkey and Azerbaijan began joint military exercises in the wake of the deadly attack by Azerbaijan on Armenia starting July 12. Signed in 1996 and revised in 1999, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) places specific limits on the deployment of troops and heavy weapons from the Atlantic coast to Russia's Ural mountains. Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan signed it after gaining independence.

Signatories to the treaty are allowed to inspect each other's compli-

ance with the arms ceilings through random visits to practically any military zone. Military inspectors from Turkey and other NATO member states have regularly visited Armenia since it joined the pact in 1999. The Armenian Defense Ministry had first sent a group of CFE inspectors to eastern Turkey in March 2010.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said it informed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on Wednesday that Yerevan has decided to "suspend" Turkish inspections of its armed forces.

In a statement, the ministry attributed the move to Turkey's "unilateral support to Azerbaijan" and "unprece-
dented threats against Armenia," voiced following the border clashes that broke out on July 12. It also pointed to the Turkish-Azerbaijani war games, saying that they "further aggravate the situation" in the Karabakh conflict zone.

"Any [further] military inspection conducted on the territory of Armenia by Turkey would adversely impact Armenia's security interests and may jeopardize the security of its population," read the statement. It indicated that weapons inspectors from the other OSCE member states will be allowed to continue to visit Armenia.

Turkey has blamed Armenia for the border clashes and vowed to boost its military and diplomatic support for Azerbaijan for nearly two weeks. Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said Armenian army units as well as Russian troops stationed in Armenia will use "all reconnaissances means" at their disposal for this purpose.

Armenia and Turkey have carried out mutual onsite arms inspections despite not having diplomatic rela-
tions and an open-ended territorial dispute. The two countries have accused each other of vio-

lating the CFE. By contrast, the Armenian and Azerbaijani militaries have never inspected each other in line with a gentlemen's agreement dating back to the 1990s. Yerevan and Baku have long traded accusations of exceeding arms quotas set by the Cold War-era treaty.

**Dink Foundation to Hold Conference on Hate**

ISTANBUL — The Heart Dink Foundation will hold an online conference titled "International Hate Speech and Discrimination Conference," on December 11-12, 2020 in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

This conference aims to create a space where the problems caused by hate speech and discriminatory discourse can be revealed and ana-

lyzed; moreover, country-specific experiences, strategies, and academ-
ic approaches to these problems could be exchanged, and potential collaborations developed.

In Turkey, as all over the globe, discrimination against women, chil-
dren, LGBTI+ people, refugees and asylum-seekers are either systematically searched or socially stigmatized.

The Covid-19 pandemic started in the winter of 2019 and reached its peak in April 2020. In the months of April and May 2020, hate speech and discriminatory discourse have been increased.

Civil society representatives, aca-
demics, legal experts, occupational organizations, media workers and journalists will be brought together to create a common platform for discussion and inspire new acade-
mic approaches and other methods to counter racism in the field.

This conference aims to raise awareness both
domestically and internationally.

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**Germany's Armenians Respond to Aggression**

GÖRMDYN, from page 1

On July 23, an official car of the Armenian embassy was set afire in front of the diplomatic mission. In the days fol-

lowing, a tax agency and an Armenian school bus were attacked, according to eyewitness accounts, 30 men wearing black balaclavas assaulted the site, throwing chairs and breaking through the glass windows before fleeing. All signs indicated that Azerbaijan was behind the acts of vio-

lence, which came in parallel to Turkish-Azerbaijani military maneuvers on the Armenian border and escalated aggres-
sion by Azerbaijan.

**US State Department Condemns Azeri Arrest Of Opposition**

Baku (Armenpress) — The US State Department this week urged the government of Azerbaijan not to arrest members of the opposition.

The State Department urged Azerbaijan to refrain from violence and respect fundamental freedoms. It called on Baku to properly investigate the reports on violence and protect the police and the hold guilty ones accountable.

Back on July 20, the US State Department com-

mented on the human rights violations in Azerbaijan. In a report the State Department also touched upon this issue, stating that the Azerbaijani authorities are using "all threatening opposition figures. The Department urged Azerbaijan to avoid using the COVID-19 pandemic to silence civil society advocacy, opposition voices, or public discussion.

**Femicide Still Rising in Turkey as 36 Women Killed in July**

ISTANBUL (Panorama.com). — At least 26 women were killed by men in Turkey in July. The number of femicides rose by more than 50 percent in the past year-on-year. In June, 27 women were confirmed killed by men in Turkey. In July 2019, 21 women were confirmed murdered by men in Turkey.

The report found that 11 of the women murdered in July 2020 were killed by their husbands, five – by male partners, five – by men they knew, four – by ex-

husbands, two – by former partners, two – by their fathers, two – by their sons and two – by other rela-
tives.

Five of the women were killed because of financial reasons, while thirteen others were murdered because they wanted to divorce or separate, rejected men or because they wanted to decide about their own lives, ANF said.

**Azerbaijanis Plan Rally in Front of Armenian Church in Tel Aviv**

TEL AVIV, Israel (Public Radio of Israel) — Azerbaijanis who live in Israel are planning an anti-Armenian protest in front of the Armenian Church in Tel Aviv on August 9, blogger Alexander Lapshin warned this week.

The blogger had earlier called for the cancellation of a rally for being distributed among the Azerbaijanis community in Israel.

"Apparently there has been an order from Baku to try to spread riots and attacks on Armenian churches, shops and simply ethnic Armenians like it happened in Moscow," Lapshin wrote in a Facebook post titled "Aliyev, hands off the church."

"I believe that in a democratic country any com-

munity has the right to its opinion in a peaceful demonstration, to declaring its demands. But the fact that the Armenian church, not the city center or some square, has been chosen as a venue for the demonstration is a direct path to provocation," he says.

Lapshin stresses that "you cannot touch religion, you cannot make churches, mosques or synagogues a place for sorting things out and provocations."

In the place of the Armenian community in Israel, I would appeal to the Israeli police with a request to ban the rally in front of the Armenian church in order to prevent it from being motivated by religious intolerance. Christians and Muslims should not come face to face to sort things out, this is no longer democracy, but a direct path to chaos," he adds.

The blogger believes religious leaders in Israel should denounce the choice of the place for the rally, especially considering that Tel Aviv has always been a symbol of peaceful co-existence of Jews, Muslims and Christians.
Sixth Anniversary of Yazidi Genocide Marked

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Combined Sources) – Iraq’s Yazidi community remains overlooked by the international community and Erbil and Baghdad authorities six years on from the genocide. Yazidi survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said in a conference with UN officials on Monday, August 3. “We have repeatedly pleaded to the governments in Erbil and Baghdad, as well as the international community to rebuild our hometown [Sinjar],” Murad said. “But after so many years, we feel that the international community and governments in Erbil and Baghdad abandoned us.”

In the summer of 2014, Islamic State (ISIS) extremists swept across swathes of Syria and Iraq. In August that year, they attacked the Yazidi town of Sinjar in Nineveh province, committing genocide against the ethno-religious minority. Hundreds of thousands of Yazidis fled from the militancy, but not everyone escaped. More than 1,000 were killed and 6,417 were captured by the militants, with many deemed too unsafe to return home.

And Murad criticized the international community for ignoring the Yazidis, reminding them that international community is helping ISIS to reach its “goal” in failing to help survivors. “We know Iraq is facing economic challenges,” Murad said. “But there are tangible defeat of ISIS in Iraq in December 2017, remnants of the group have returned to their earlier insurgency tactics, ambushing security forces, kidnapping and executing suspected informants, and extorting money from vulnerable rural populations, particularly in the disputed territories.

Hearings on Yazidi Case

Advocacy organization Yaara kicked off a two-day conference on August 2 to commemorate the anniversary by hearing from a range of senior officials, humanitarian workers, researchers, and survivors of the attack by ISIS militants.

With security tenuous and swaths of the district’s infrastructure and housing still in ruins under the control of local groups; many Yazidis are reluctant to return despite encouragement from Baghdad, Erbil, UN agencies, and local groups. While most of the keynote presenters spoke in platitudes, other panels pointed to the harder edge of the situation, expressing frustration about the lack of progress after so many years and sustained international attention.

The theme of the commemoration, which was jointly organized by Yaara and the Zovighian Partnership, was “Bridging the Gap Between Terror and Humanity.”

Committed by Daesh in Iraq (UNITAD), said that no counties “can be spectators” in seeking accountability for those who perpetrated the genocide and that minority communities in Iraq “must have a right to protection and to justice.”

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Joey Hood said that he was shocked to see Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) flags in Sinjar during a visit last year and was similarly saddened to hear about Turkish warplanes targeting alleged Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) units in the district. He called for locally-recruited police to be in charge of security, “not armed groups from some other location.”

In that vein, Director of the Assyrian Policy Institute Reine Hanna called for a local force to be created along the model of the Nineweh Plain Protection Units (NPU) and criticized the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) for meddling in the district’s affairs.

Nevertheless, Khadir warned that even well-meaning solutions from outside could in fact undermine the very Yazidi governance that most of the panels argued is necessary for establishing stability in Sinjar.

Armenian Leaders Offer Condolences

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan addressed the Yazidi community of Armenia on the occasion of the Sinjar Genocide anniversary on Sunday. He issued the following message: “Dear sisters and brothers of the Yazidi community of Armenia, today we commemorate the anniversary of the genocide against the Yazidi people in Sinjar perpetrated by some terrorist organizations. Indeed, the tragedy that happened to the Yazidi people is a heinous crime against humanity and the civilized world. We share your grief and sincerely express solidarity with you.

I wish the Yazidi community of Armenia, all the Yazidi families steadfastness and spiritual strength. As a consolation, always realize that in the homeland, in the Republic of Armenia, you have a safe and protected future and a wide field of progress.

Speaker of Parliament of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan also issued a statement on the anniversary of the Sinjar massacre.

“As a nation that survived genocide, we cannot stay indifferent upon witnessing the same crime being committed against any other people,” he said.

“Today we join the Yazidi community of Armenia to commemorate the memory of their brothers and sisters who died in Sinjar six years ago,” Pashinyan added. Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Ararat Mirzoyan said in a statement: “As an Armenian, I extend my condolences to the families of the victims of the Sinjar massacre and the Armenian community in Iraq. I congratulate the Yazidi community on the commemoration of the anniversary of the genocide against the Yazidi people in Sinjar. We must not forget or pardon these crimes. We must remember and learn from this tragedy in order to prevent similar atrocities in the future.”

And the Armenian National Assembly passed a resolution recognizing the Sinjar Genocide on August 2 in commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the genocide.

The bluntest remarks of the day were made by Saib Khidir, a Yazidi member of the Council of Representatives, who called out all sides for shirking their obligations.

“Every stakeholder is throwing responsibility onto another stakeholder. Erbil says the problem is with Baghdad. Baghdad says the problem is with Erbil,” he said.

“This is not serving the Yazidi community. This is not showing love to the Yazidi community. If I love the Yazidi community, I should provide them with services,” he added.

Facebook post. In January 2018, the Armenian Parliament unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the genocide.

The National Assembly also called on the international community to track down and prosecute those directly responsible for the killings and “take measures to ensure the security of the Yazidi population.”

(Stories from Radaw, NRT and Armenpress were used to compile this report.)
Three Grants From Society for Armenian Studies Are Underway

FRESNO — Despite the impact of the ongoing pandemic, the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) has worked hard to expand its efforts to foster Armenian Studies through different initiatives. Three existing and new competitive grants have been announced with deadlines scheduled for September. The first two are open to students who are current members of the SAS.

The Fall 2020 edition of the SAS Graduate Research and Conference Grants for M.A. and Ph.D. students has been recently launched. The amount of grants will be up to $1,000 per applicant and the deadline is September 15, 2020. Applications can be made at https://society-forarmenianstudies.com/resources/

Due to the current restrictions on travel, applicants should also specify an alternative plan if they request funding for travel. Funding will also be available for research-related expenses (tapes and library materials, etc.).

These grants have been made possible through the institutional support of some private Armenian Studies chairs, programs, centers, and libraries in the United States and abroad.

The Nina G. Garsoian Graduate Research Grant for Ancient and Early Medieval Armenian History for M.A. and Ph.D. students has been recently launched. This grant of up to $1,000 will be awarded on an annual basis to a graduate student in the field. The deadline for this grant is also September 15.

Garsoian is a world renowned Byzantinist and Armenologist who was the dean of the Princeton University Graduate School and the first holder of the Gevork M. Aivazian Chair in Armenian History and Civilization at Columbia University. The grant is funded by Dr. Levon Avdoyan, who recently retired as the Area Specialist for Armenia and Georgia at the African and Middle Eastern Division of the Library of Congress. Avdoyan received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in New York in ancient and Armenian history under the supervision of Garsoian.

The third grant addresses graduate students and postgraduate scholars, both SAS and non-SAS members. It is designed to support scholarship in the field of Armenian Studies that focuses on issues related to Armenia on July 12, in violation of the ceasefire agreement. Over the next two days, Azerbaijan launched artillery attacks on various targets of the Armenian military on Armenia on July 12, in violation of the ceasefire agreement. Over the next two days, Azerbaijan launched artillery attacks on various targets of the Armenian military. The Armenian Armed Forces not only successfully defended these areas, but captured a very important military post and has destroyed tens of millions of dollars worth of Azerbaijani and Russian weapons.

These military victories, however, have come with a huge price tag. Five valiant soldiers were killed and others along with a dozen villagers have been injured. In addition, families in these villages have experienced material losses on their homes and property. Several days ago, The Paros Foundation team joined Tavush Governor Hayk Hambardzumyan, Berd Consolidated Communities head Harutyun Manucharyan, representatives of the Prime Minister’s office, and local village representatives to visit the Nekirn Karmir Aghbyur, Aygepar and Chinari communities to assess the damage and to strategize and coordinate the next steps forward.

Due to the extent of the damage and needs of the border villages, Paros is increasing its fund goal to $200,000. Contributions and pledges to date are in excess of $120,000. The Paros Foundation’s Emergency Reconstruction Fund will work to not only make repairs to these damaged homes, but will make substantial improvements on them. In addition, funds will be used to make other substantial infrastructure improvements in the communities.

Through the support received from donors around the world, the Paros team has already begun planning the reconstruction of damaged areas, while our local construction crew looks forward to beginning the job of rebuilding their communities. Work on rebuilding the Aygepar Kindergarten has already begun. Rebuilding of the houses will begin early next week in order to complete work prior to winter. Let’s work together to meet our new goal to rebuild the border region.

To contribute, please visit http://parosfoundation.org/project/emergency-reconstruction/

Community News

San Francisco: Chinahin Armenia – Azerbaijan launched a vicious attack on Armenia on July 12, in violation of the ceasefire agreement. The next two days, Azerbaijan launched artillery attacks on various targets of the Armenian military. The Armenian Armed Forces not only successfully defended these areas, but captured a very important military post and has destroyed tens of millions of dollars worth of Azerbaijani and Russian weapons.

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Zabelle Chapter #12 Daughters of Vartan 2020 Announces Merit Scholarship Recipients

Detroit – The Daughters of Vartan Zabelle Chapter’s Merit Scholarship Program in its 19th year has again disbursed 30 Merit Scholarships totaling $56,700 and has been successful due to the generosity of the Detroit members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and friends.

The Merit Scholarship Program is open to the children, grand-children and great-grand-children of Detroit, Michigan’s Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Nareg & Shiawassee Lodge #6 and Zabelle Chapter #12 members.

The Daughters of Vartan value the importance of recognizing the academic accomplishments of Armenian American students. This year they awarded the Merit Scholarship for an undergraduate student to Tigran Terterian and for a graduate student to Emily Rose Torossian.

The Daughters of Vartan were unable to honor recipients at their traditional June diner, as it was cancelled due to Covid-19. They will honor them at a special dinner and introduce them to the membership when they can once again assemble.

Tigran Terterian is the son of Commander Kaaran and Marina Terterian and the grandson of the late Knight Rekork Terterian. He is a student at the University of Michigan pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in molecular, cellular and developmental biology. His goal is to further his education with a medical degree.

In addition to maintaining high academic standards, Tigran has an extensive work experience and has a part-time job. He is a full-time student in a community college and is part of the engineering program. He has a propensity to be a leader and to feel comfortable outside the Armenian community. He is a leader at school and in a mature manner. Tigran simply educated his friends about Armenian life and they embraced him.

Emily Rose Torossian is the daughter of Elaine Torossian and is the grandson of the late King Terri and Emily. She is a student at the University of Michigan and has received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Michigan State University. Putting her passion into action is evident in her work experiences. These include volunteering in assisting building huts in a remote village in Thailand, facilitating English classes in Vietnam, legal and client advocate intern at a domestic abuse shelter BVR (End Violent Encounters), clinical research assistant (New Oakland Family Centers) and medical social work intern (Michigan Medicine Hospital).

The Paros Foundation Increases Funding

DAVID A. TERTERIAN, Executive Director of the Paros Foundation, announced that Paros Foundation has increased its funding to $200,000 to help individuals in the Aygepar and Chinari communities as they continue to strategize and coordinate the next steps forward. Due to the extent of the damage and needs of the border villages, Paros is increasing its fund goal to $200,000. Contributions and pledges to date are in excess of $120,000.

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To contribute, please visit http://parosfoundation.org/project/emergency-reconstruction/
Gregory Areshian
The Legacy of a True Scholar

By Armen Der Kiureghian

YEREVAN — On August 2, 2020, Armenia lost one of its most distinguished scholars, Dr. Gregory Areshian, Professor of History and Archaeology at the American University of Armenia (AUA), succumbed to the COVID-19 virus in spite of all efforts by his doctors to save him. I had the privilege of knowing him and being a faculty member when I served as the President of AUA. I feel a deep sense of loss and sorrow upon his passing.

He was 71.

My first encounter with Dr. Areshian was in the summer of 1991, when Dr. Mihraph Agbaian and I were in Yerevan working to start the AUA. The Government of Armenia had offered us rent-free use of a massive building, which previously served as the Congress Hall of the Communist Party. To formalize the transfer, we had to get the approval of the Deputy Prime Minister, who happened to be Dr. Gregory Areshian. I remember being extremely impressed by his impeccable English and by his enthusiasm for our project. He quickly signed all the necessary documents, but we stayed in his office longer and talked about the importance of bringing Western-style education to Armenia.

I met Dr. Areshian for the second time around 2004, when Prof. David Storach of the University of California, Berkeley, invited him for a seminar. At the time, Dr. Areshian was a visiting professor and researcher at the Center for the Study of Ancient Iran and Iraq. Storach had extremely high opinion of Areshian’s scholarship. Areshian visited Berkeley again around 2011 for another seminar, this time upon the invitation of Prof. Stephen Astoruan and as the guest of the University’s Studies Program. The presence of archaeology scholars from Berkeley at the seminar again was a testament of the high regard he enjoyed in that field.

Areshian received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Yerevan State University and his doctorate from the Saint Petersburg State University under Boris Piotrovsky, the renowned scholar of Urartian civilization and longtime director of the Hermitage Museum. Professor Areshian was proficient in nine languages, including Urartian cuneiform.

A few years after our visit to his office in 1991, Dr. Areshian had a conflict with Vano Siradeghian, who served as the minister of internal affairs in Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s government and was later charged with criminal conduct. Dr. Areshian was forced to resign and leave the country. He settled in the United States and soon started teaching, first at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 2015, he decided to return to Armenia. I was elated to hire him as a Professor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, a major gain for AUA. He completely devoted his attention and time to teaching, research and service to the University. One very important and highly appreciated service he rendered the University was organizing and leading tours to archaeological sites for major donors to AUA.

He taught some of the most popular and largest classes at AUA on topics related to history and archaeology. Students loved his approach to teaching and how he engaged them in discussions. Every year he assigned several of his students as “guides” during the archaeological tours. The excitement of these students — many of whom majored in fields other than humanities or social sciences — and their dedication to Areshian were palpable. I remember several students telling me that it was through Areshian’s courses that they truly learned and appreciated Armenian history.

Areshian was concerned about the way history was taught in schools and universities in Armenia. He believed that Armenian history should be taught as a part of world history and in the broader context of the history of other nations. He criticized the current approach as “teaching Armenian history for Armenians alone.” His students, some of whom had come to AUA from other universities and had experienced history courses elsewhere, attributed to his innovative approach to the teaching of Armenian history both in style and content.

I had the privilege of many conversations with Dr. Areshian about history, archaeology, and AUA programs, particularly the need for strengthening Armenian studies courses. My colleagues and I also had the good fortune of going on several tours of archaeological and historical sites with him. The first one was to Armenia I care in 2016, where the famous 600-year-old shoe and winery were discovered by a team led by Professor Areshian and Prof. Boris Garapian of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. The second one was to Carahunge or Zorats Karer (Armenia’s Stone Henge) near Sevan, where his students were mapping the tombstones and he intended to conduct excavations to better understand the origins of the multiple graves. The last one was to the northwest of Armenia, where we visited several sites, including Isahakadam Fortress in Aragatsotn, Saint Gregor church in the village of Garnahovit, and the Marmashen monastery complex near Gyumri. His knowledge of these monuments and archaeological sites, and his enthusiasm in explaining their backgrounds to us were so profound that it is difficult to imagine that he will not be leading tours anymore.

He taught in 14 US universities and colleges including the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, Platteville and Amherst College. He is the author of more than 150 scholarly works published in five languages in 12 countries.

Armenia has lost one of its most important scholars. His legacy will go on to a rich body of scholarly books and articles he leaves behind and in the accomplishments of numerous students and research associates he inspired. May his light shine forever.

(Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian is the Taisei Professor of Civil Engineering [Emeritus] Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, University of California, and former president of the American University of Armenia.)

Donation
The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada gratefully acknowledges the donation of $100 by Jerry and Anneke Bolkanian in memory of Victor Vanjanian for the renovation of a classroom in the Berdzer Tekeyan School.

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Armenian Bar Member Lucy Boyadjian Solimon Rises High in New Mexico with Judicial Appointment

By Armen K. Hovannisian, Esq.

LOS ANGELES — It is rare enough for Armenian-Americans to become judges in states with sizable and long-established Armenian communities stretching from California to Illinois to New York. It is another to welcome the judicial appointment of a deserving Armenian-American in places where our tracks are more fresh and our communities less dense. That is one way to describe New Mexico.

On July 2, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed Lucy Boyadjian Solimon as Judge of the Second Judicial District Court, serving Bernalillo County. Judge Boyadjian Solimon, a recent member of the Armenian Bar Association, was born and spent her early years in Lebanon, was raised and educated through college in California, and graduated from law school and entered the legal profession in New Mexico nearly thirteen years ago. For the past five years, she has held the posts of Enforcement Bureau Chief for the New Mexico Workers Compensation Administration, and as an assistant public defender in the Public Defender’s Office, and a private practitioner in defense law firms, including her own firm. She is married to Justin Solimon who practices Federal Indian Law in Albuquerque.

In June 2020, the Armenian Bar’s Judicial Evaluation Committee (JEC), which is comprised of the organization’s most experienced lawyers across the profession’s broad spectrum, met and conferred with Boyadjian Solimon in a rigorous vetting process. The JEC concluded that she embodied the unique, sought-after qualities that make her highly qualified to serve as a judge with honor and distinction. Following the Armenian Bar’s in-depth interview protocol, the JEC Co-Chairs, Lucy Varpetian and Garo Ghazarian, addressed a letter of unqualified support for Boyadjian Solimon’s appointment to Grisham.

Varpetian and Ghazarian encapsulated the evaluations of the committee, writing, “We believe that Ms. Boyadjian Solimon will maintain an excellent judicial temperament as we have found her to be an active listener, measured in her responses, and even-keeled in her demeanor. We also took note of and appreciate her engagement in community and civic affairs, ranging from her provision of pro bono legal services to participation in New Mexico bar associations to her involvement with Native American and Armenian organizations, as well as her support of various nonprofit organizations. These activities reflect Ms. Boyadjian Solimon’s deep roots in her community and commitment to its well-being.”

Summing up its support for Boyadjian Solimon’s appointment, the Armenian Bar impressed upon the Governor that, “Based on the totality of our evaluation process, we believe Ms. Boyadjian Solimon will continue, as she has demonstrated during her career, to be a devoted public servant to the people of New Mexico. We are confident that given the honor of serving as a member of the New Mexico judiciary, Ms. Boyadjian Solimon’s courtroom will be a bastion where fair play, due process, and the rule of law will prevail over all else. She will exhibit compassion, empathy, and understanding to the litigants that appear before her, qualities which are so critical today for our judiciary.”

In explaining her own reasons to Grisham for wanting to be a judge, Boyadjian Solimon explained, “For several generations, my family has constantly been forced to flee and relocate due to threats of war, violence, and instability in the rule of law. My grandfather lost most of his family in the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and was forced to start a new family in Syria and Lebanon. When I was a six-year-old child, my family emigrated from Beirut, Lebanon to Los Angeles, California to escape the war. This dire family history has instilled in me a deep respect for the judicial system, both as a means to prevent and deter crime and to promote fairness and protections offered under the Constitution.”

The long and storied tradition of Armenian judges in America has opened a fresh new chapter in a state whose nickname is The Land of Enchantment. Lucy Boyadjian Solimon’s appointment to the Second Judicial District Court makes clear that New Mexico is, indeed, worthy of that description.

Living Become, LLC IS Teaching Leadership Skills To Young People

WESTON, Mass. – Living Become, LLC is addressing the lack social emotional based learning and fulfilling the need with its BECOME Summer Leadership Program. BECOME, which stands for bold, energized, compassionate, open-hearted, mindful, empowered education is led by co-creators Kristin Asadourian and Lindsay Quezada, a social worker and a leadership coach, and Lindsey Querada, a fifth-grade teacher. It helps students gain a greater understanding of what is important to them and what they value. This heightened level of self-awareness results in an increase in self-confidence. BECOME was initially taught as an afterschool workshop at the Field School in Weston. The afterschool version focused on helping students identify what they value in order to go out into their communities and create an impact based on what is important to them. In the spring the pro- gram moved to an online format and the self discovery piece of the curriculum became even more relevant.

“Bringing the workshop online and focusing on the students and their ability to know themselves and what they value made sense. We are coaching them on how to make decisions, effectively communicate and self-advocate. Participants learn how to be advocates and change makers,” said Querada.

BECOME provides students with the tools to self-manage and self-regulate within two-week sessions conducted over zoom daily.

“Education is changing, there is a great need for social emotional learning. Teaching students how to manage their emotions, time and task manage, and self-regulate is just as important as teaching them math and English Right now, helping young people find their voices, use them and step out healthy, aware and confident is necessary,” said Asadourian.

The workshop uses journaling, mindfulness practices, exercises and online group activities to help increase self-awareness in the participants. Along with BECOME Living Become, LLC has year around workshops and offers personal development and leadership coaching in young people and adults. The organization is committed to addressing the social emotional needs of students to optimize overall mental health. It continues to develop curriculum to address the increase in stress, anxiety and depression in young people and believes BECOME is one way to ensure young people are receiving the social emotional support they need.

“Teaching young people to connect with their thoughts, actions and emotions and providing them with the tools to effectively communicate how they feel and what they think will increase their self-confidence and help to alleviate symptoms of stress and anxiety as they pop up,” said Asadourian.

More information on the BECOME Summer Leadership Program is on the Living Become, LLC website. Visit www.livingbecome.com for more information.
History of Gregory
The Illuminator's Sons and Grandsons

NEW YORK — The calendar of the Armenian Church commemorates the birth of St. Gregory the Illuminator, the spiritual father of the entire Armenian nation. The day of commemoration falls on the Saturday before the Third Sunday of Transfiguration. Excluded from this group of saints are the rest of the members of the Gregorid family, namely Sts. Nerses the Great, Sahag the Parthian, Vartan and his daughter Shushanig. The latter are commemorated on different days during the year.

St. Arsidagés
While still a layman in Caesarea (Kaysier), Gregory and his wife Mariam had with two sons. Vrtanés and Arisdagés, and Mariam parted. Arsidagés was still very young and in need of motherly care. Mariam took him with her to the convent she joined. Influenced by his early upbringing in the convent, Arsidagés entered the service of God at an early age and became a hermit in the mountains. He became renowned for his austere way of life, attracting young disciples who sought his company for pious instruction. He was particularly venerated in Greek letters and philosophy.

Years passed, and when King Drtad (by now a Christian convert) learned that St. Gregory had sired two sons in his younger days and had kept certain nobles to Caesarea to bring the sons to Armenia (St. Gregory himself had withdrawn to the wilderness to lead a solitary way of life, attracting young disciples). He sent certain nobles to Caesarea or Armenia. He and his wife's desire to have children, and their prayers to God for their request were answered only in an advanced age. They had twins, Vrtanés and Husig, who were reared in the Armenian court and given a solid education. He was particularly versed in Greek letters and philosophy. Vrtanés was sent when King Drtad (by now a Christian convert) learned that St. Gregory had sired two sons in his younger days and had kept certain nobles to Caesarea to bring the sons to Armenia (St. Gregory himself had withdrawn to the wilderness to lead a solitary way of life, attracting young disciples). He sent certain nobles to Caesarea or Armenia. He and his wife's desire to have children, and their prayers to God for their request were answered only in an advanced age. They had twins, Vrtanés and Husig, who were reared in the Armenian court and given a solid education. He was particularly versed in Greek letters and philosophy.

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Upon the death of Arsidagés and Vrtanés, King Drtad took them with him to look for St. Gregory. Finding the saint in the wilderness, he invited Gregory to ordain a bishop and take him as his assistant. After his ordination, Arsidagés diligently pursued high ideals and distinguished himself by his austere way of life, attracting young disciples who sought his company for pious instruction. He was particularly venerated in Greek letters and philosophy. St. Gregory represented the Armenian Church at the Holy Council of Nicaea, which met in A.D. 325 at the order of the Roman Emperor Constantin. His name appears among the list alongside those of the 318 bishops who participated in that council. He returned to Armenia, bringing with him the canons of the renowned council. These canons are still venerated in the Armenian Church and form the foundation of discipline and order in our tradition.

After St. Gregory's complete withdrawal from pastoral life and his death, St. Arsidagés succeeded him as the chief bishop of Greater Armenia. As a pastor he surpassed the accomplishments of his father, as attested by the historian of the conversion of Armenia. Arsidagés himself died as a martyr, and that is one of the reasons why he is considered a saint of the Armenian Church. The veneration of St. Arsidagés is one of the reasons why he is considered a saint of the Armenian Church. The veneration of St. Arsidagés is one of the reasons why he is considered a saint of the Armenian Church.

St. Vrtanés
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After his father's demise, Husig was in line to become the chief bishop of Armenia. He and his wife's desire to have children, and their prayers to God for their request were answered only in an advanced age. They had twins, Vrtanés and Husig, who were reared in the Armenian court and given a solid education. He was particularly versed in Greek letters and philosophy. Vrtanés was sent when King Drtad (by now a Christian convert) learned that St. Gregory had sired two sons in his younger days and had kept certain nobles to Caesarea to bring the sons to Armenia (St. Gregory himself had withdrawn to the wilderness to lead a solitary way of life, attracting young disciples). He sent certain nobles to Caesarea or Armenia. He and his wife's desire to have children, and their prayers to God for their request were answered only in an advanced age. They had twins, Vrtanés and Husig, who were reared in the Armenian court and given a solid education. He was particularly versed in Greek letters and philosophy.

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of “supreme justice” and looked after the flock in the countryside, as opposed to a missionary who traveled from place to place. He is said to have preached in Persia and had no inclination to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors. St. Daniel was martyred in A.D. 344; his titles — “overseer, law-giver, supervisor of church affairs, and grandfather. His tomb was shown inside the church of Tortan. The martyrdom of St. Daniel the Syrian, though he is not an early ascetic tending to church affairs in the village of Til, to assume the spiritual leadership of the Armenian people. He met the king in southwestern Armenia and rebuked him and his magnates for their crimes. Enraged at Daniel’s outspokenness, the king ordered his servants to strangle him, despite the contrary advice of his nobles. His body was taken to the valley of Haysats Trakhd and buried in the cell where he had lived as a solitary. St. Daniel was martyred in A.D. 344; the Monastery of Gopa Sourp Taniel stood at that site until 1915. These five saints have been venerated as a group at least since the end of the twelfth century. For it was at that time that Archishop Nersés of Lampron wrote a hymn dedicated to them (“The Canon of the Sons and Grandsons of St. Gregory the Illuminator”), in the hymn he mentions the saints by name, and devotes five stanzas to briefly describing the merits of each one. This hymn is still chanted on the day of commemoration of these saints.

St. Nersés the Great

St. Nersés, the grandson of St. Gregory, is not commemorated with the Sons and Grandsons of St. Gregory. As a major saint of the Armenian Church he has a special day dedicated to his memory. On this day the church honors his memory and marks the anniversary of his consecration as Archbishop of Caesarea. St. Nersés was born in about 347 and was buried in Til, near the tomb of St. Daniel. St. Nersés, the son of Athenogenes and Pamuggius, was the daughter of King Arshag (who was a vassal of King Arshag) and was a princess named Satcht and the couple had a son, who later became the renowned Catholicoi Sahag the Parthian. St. Sahag in turn was the grandson of St. Vartan Mamigian. Despite his secular background, St. Nersés was a pious Christian. As a young noblemen, he had spent some time in Caesarea and had been “taught by spiritual teachers.” His connection with St. Gregory the Illuminator is evident; he attended the synods of the magnates of Armenia, who held council with King Arshag and advised him to purify and return to the spiritual basis of the country. Sahag, who was standing among the magnates in the royal assembly hall, fully approved and solemnly enjoined the king to accept the proposal, not deeming himself worthy of such a high dignity. The assembly laughed at his arguments and the king literally stripped him of his royal ornaments. He was immediately ordained a deacon and sent to Caesarea to receive episcopal ordination.

After being ordained a bishop by Archishop Eusebius of Caesarea, Nersés returned to Armenia and the unification got underway, as it is said to have taken place in 353. Upon his return, Nersés immediately took upon the pastoral duties of his new status; renovating old churches, founding new ones and tending to the spiritual needs of his flock. Christianity was still a new religion in Armenia and many were still feeble in their faith. The newly ordained bishop worked towards making the clergyman practicing among Christians. To that end he held a church council of bishops in Ashdiah; introducing a number of reforms and regulations were set for the believers, and attention was paid to make the beliefs of the church uniform. Most decisions were formulated so that the church would not lose the loyalty of the people who were later to become the priests. In short, he may be described as the founder of Christian charity in Armenia and as a churchman who reigned over the whole the role of the Armenian Church as the guardian of the Armenian people, not only because of his spiritual authority but also because of his moral and charitable activities.

St. Nersés also became known for his other charitable works and his concern for moral purity as well as family life. He forbade excessive mourning over the dead, upheld the sanctity of marriage, and gave relief to widows, orphans, captives and the poor. He sheltered in his own residence the blind and the crippled, and always shared his meals with them. He also tended to the needs of the churches, an institution of religious and liturgical services and the rites, establishing monasteries and schools, and educating the “people who were to later become the clergy.” He was a true churchman who was dedicated to the role of a shepherd to the Armenian people. He was a guardian of the Armenian people, not only because of his spiritual authority but also because of his moral and charitable activities.

St. Nersés also participated in the political life of the country. In 373 until 377 he was among King Arshag’s chief advisors. It has been shown that in A.D. 358 St. Nersés headed a diplomatic mission to Byzantium, which brought about the establishment of a Roman sphere of influence and secured a period of peace and prosperity in the country. This act, however, cost St. Nersés his throne. It is now quite certain that the saint’s exile was actually due to King Arshag’s adherence to the religious policy constant in imperial Rome. We know from the Western historical sources that in 377 the Empire was banished in 359, and Nersés was obviously one of those bishops. King Arshag, who was a pagan, was fast murdering a Christian throne an orthodox chief bishop, when the Roman emperor himself was an adherent to the imperial cult. However, in 377 the Anastasius order St. Nersés to exile the orthodox bishops within his realm. The Armenian historians of the fifth century speak of St. Nersés as the Bishop of the city of Til, and as a result of his objection to King Arshag’s moral depravity, the saint was expelled from the city of Til and the King ordered all of his churchments outside of Armenia. His years in exile seem to concur with the duration of the banishment of the orthodox bishops in the Roman Empire, and his return and reinstallation in office coincided with that of the same bishops.

St. Nersés’ relations with King Bab were cordial at first, but gradually deteriorated. Nersés was a man of peace and morality, almost to St. Nersés’ criticism of the king’s lifestyle as the cause of his downfall, and he also did much for the Armenian Church, in particular the monarch. Ghair and the Roman Empire, and his return and reinstatement in office coincided with that of the same bishops.

St. Nersés’ exile lasted for about nine years. His return to the throne of his ancestors during the reign of King Bab, Arshag’s son, and remained in office for four years. His returning to the throne seems to be something very coincidental and a small testament of respect for his spiritual authority.

St. Nersés lived for about thirty years, and was assassinated in the year 377 at the age of thirty-six. He was buried in Til, where his tomb is still shown.

These five saints have been venerated as a group at least since the end of the twelfth century. For it was at that time that Archishop Nersés of Lampron wrote a hymn dedicated to them (“The Canon of the Sons and Grandsons of St. Gregory the Illuminator”), in the hymn he mentions the saints by name, and devotes five stanzas to briefly describing the merits of each one. This hymn is still chanted on the day of commemoration of these saints.
Overcoming Handicaps

The Story of Aimée Rapin and Sophia Elmas

By Artsvi Bakhchichyan
Special to Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES (Armenpress) — In a virtual ceremony Sunday, July 26, the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) awarded David McKenzie the Emmy for Outstanding Directing Special Class for the critically acclaimed documentary film “Hate Among Us.”

“We are very thankful that the Academy has given attention to this important subject that affects all of us,” said McKenzie. “I am honored that they recognized this work so that hopefully it will bring more attention to this subject matter and shine a light on the terrible situation that hate generates among people.”

Distributed by Associated Television International (ATI) and premiering on Popular TV, “Hate Among Us” from executive producers David McKenzie, Dean Cain, Montel Williams and Sergey Sarkisov, tracks the origins of hate crimes against members of the Jewish faith as well as many others and the ultimate murder of an estimated 6 million European Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators that are still being exhibited by hate groups to this very day from Europe to the United States and throughout the world.

The film follows the family members of Mireille Knoll, an 85-year-old Holocaust survivor who was murdered in her Paris apartment in 2018 in an anti-Semitic hate crime. The film also depicts unique perspectives on anti-Semitism from all cultures and all faiths, from within historic Jewish neighborhoods in Europe, to the streets of Charlottesville and Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life Synagogue massacre.

McKenzie’s direction told real stories of current survivors of violent anti-Semitism to those of the Holocaust. Hate Among Us illustrates how renewed intolerance is taking root in our communities, institutions and universities, with far reaching consequences around the world.

“It helps us to achieve our goal,” said Dean Cain, “which is to shine a light on hate and help educate people about the history and the current growth of hate and anti-Semitism. We are very excited about this recognition and hope this brings more awareness to this serious humanitarian crisis.”

Montel Williams agreed.

“When we set out to make Hate Among Us, we knew it was an urgent project. In these divided times, we have to remember that hate and bigotry are never the answer,”

“The response of the community from this inhumanity proves that this topic is very important to many people as well as being very relevant,” states Sergey Sarkisov. “I believe that Hate Among Us contributes to the proper understanding and empathy that any kind of national, racial or religious hate continues to be an existing danger and every human, including humanity itself, can be a target.”

“Hate Among Us” is the second film from the producing quartet of McKenzie, Cain, Williams and Sarkisov with their first being the critically lauded documentary Architects of Denial which shed light on the Armenian Genocide that is still not fully recognized as of this day. That film was also produced and directed by McKenzie.

Armenian Producer
Sergey Sarkisov's Film Wins Emmy

Los Angeles AIWA Affiliate Announces
Recipient of Scholarship Awards

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Association announced the six winners of the Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarship Awards. Each year awards of $5,000 each are presented to full-time Armenian descent, both under graduates and graduates, enrolled in accredited colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. It is to encourage and heartwarming each year to receive their applications and to learn of their scholastic achievements and the bright future.

The Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarship Awards was established in 2011 thanks to the continued generosity of Dr. Hasmik Mgrdichian, one of the founders of the Los Angeles Affiliate. The Los Angeles Affiliate of AIWA take great pride in contributing to the education of Armenian women.

The 2020 Hasmik Mgrdichian Scholarships were awarded to the following:

Ari Hakebyan, although born in Russia, she has not lived there ever since and grew up in the United States. She received her BA from UC Berkeley and will be entering her first year at the University of Southern California to pursue a master’s degree in communications/public relations. Maran Khouzam was born in Yerevan, and received her undergraduate degree from the American University of Armenia. She attended a vocational school at the Yerevan Technical School in Thilis, Georgia. She will be attending New York University, pursuing a master’s degree in Communications.

Tamar Nachian is a third-year student at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her current goal is to pursue a degree in statistics and data science with an emphasis in biophysics. Lily Organessian will be attending the University of California, Davis. She is a first-year student in a PhD program in veterinary medicine. Her goal is to eventually work as a veterinarian general practitioner on issues associated with human relationship to animals.

Shaneh Tehrakarian, born in Yerevan, received a baccalaureate from LI Po Chuen United World College of Hong Kong and a bachelor’s degree in art history from the Art Institute of Chicago. She will be continuing her education at the Center of Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Oxford.

Nico Neshanian, President of AIWA-LA stated, “Hate Among Us” is the second film from the producing quartet of McKenzie, Cain, Williams and Sarkisov with their first being the critically lauded documentary Architects of Denial which shed light on the Armenian Genocide that is still not fully recognized as of this day. That film was also produced and directed by McKenzie.

For further information contact AIWA-LA at aiwalosangeles@gmail.com.

Lily Organessian

[Image 252x204 to 412x451]

Los Angeles AIWA Affiliate
Satur Day, August 8, 2020

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Saturday, August 8, 2020
The Story of Aimée Rapin and Stepan Elmas

Aimée Rapin painting

Her attractive face, good nature and great talent made many men fall in love with her, but Aimée preferred not to start a family. There was a man, however, that was present in her life with love and affection. In the year 1911 she met Armenian composer and pianist Stephan Elmas (Stepan Elmasian), her great love. Aimée was 43 at that time, and Elmas was 49.

A native of Smyrna, Stephan Elmas was born into a wealthy family and had traveled to Europe at 15 to take lessons with Franz Liszt. From 1888 to 1908, Elmas performed solo piano recitals in nearly all the big cities of Europe. He composed concertos, sonatas, romances, bal- lades, mazurkas and waltzes which were published in Paris, London and Berlin, Munich, Montreal and New York City. He traveled in a train bound for Lucerne from Geneva and paying for her ticket, Aimée said the ticket seller that he can leave the ticket with him, as she cannot take it. On another occasion, a fire started in the building where Aimée used to live, and the firefighters started taking people out of the windows with the help of a ladder. “Hold on to my neck,” the fireman said. “I cannot,” Aimée said. “Don’t be silly!” the fireman was got upset. “But I do not have arms,” Aimée said. And then the strong fireman put the woman on his shoulders and carried her down on his back.

Rapin’s works were exhibited in Paris, London, Berlin, Munich, Montreal and New York City. She continued to work till the end of her life and passed away on May 8, 1956 in Geneva at the age of 88. She was buried in Geneva’s Plainpalais cemetery, next to Stephan Elmas’s grave.

Aimée Rapin worked diligently throughout her entire life and left for generations more than 3,000 unique pieces of art, kept nowadays at the Pauwense Museum. In 1996, the museum published an illustrated book of her works, entitled

Aimée Rapin, Painting Without Hands. The text is written by the artist’s niece, Simone Rapin, a poet and playwright. The Yerevan public is gradually getting familiar with Stephan Elmas; Yerevan Conservatory has been hosting pianists’ contest in Elmas’s memory, and through the efforts of the French-Armenian conductor Alexander Siranossian, who is also the artistic director of the Stephan Elmas Foundation, the composer’s piano was transported to Armenia and donated to the Museum of Literature and Art in Yerevan. Elmas’ companion in life, Aimée Rapin deserves to be known among the Armenians too – a brave artist, whose life and art is truly a unique exemplar of strong will and exceptional bravery.

Together in Gustave-Adolphe littoral area in Geneva. Stephan Elmas greatly contributed to promoting Aimée Rapin's works, and the artist created several portraits of Armenian musicians. In 1922, deeply impressed by the tragedy befallen on her beau's people, Aimée Rapin produced her “Armenia the Martyr” canvas, as well as two portraits of Elmas' mother, Yevnag Elmas.

Stephan Elmas died in Geneva in 1937. On September 13 of the same year, Rapin wrote in her letter to Elmas’ biographer and friend, philologist Hagop-Nashor Derdervan: “A pair of eyes was closed forever for this world, and the world has been changed for me. Yet, wasn’t it the God’s blessing for me to have such a wonderful friend by my side for more than 26 years?”

Stephan Elmas was always a surprisingly strong, optimistic, cheerful and generous person with an incredible sense of humor. She was once at a party at the home of her brother Ernst, who had seven children. She looked around with an adoring and delighted smile and uttered joyfully: “The more arms and hands in this family, the better!” The fact of her unusual state induced many
Young Artists Explore Identity to Understand History

ARTISTS: from page 1
For young diasporan Armenians living in the United States, the mental and emotional weight of this recent conflict is only exacerbated by current public health and social tensions nationwide. Despite recent “reopenings” across the country, the U.S. has exponentially more COVID-19 cases and deaths than any other nation and concurrently, the Black Lives Matter movement continues to demand change at a systemic level.

Armenia’s diaspora has an expansive history of coping with trauma and tragedy through art. Take Genocide survivor and visual artist Berj Kaftan for example — she was exposed to the atrocities of war as a small child, and spent the rest of her life creating breathtaking works of art that not only provided her with a coping mechanism, but also her art became an abstract portal into Armenian history for the younger generations.

With the social and political upheaval both in Armenia and the States, let us take a look at what three young female Armenian artists — who are distinct in their identities as well as their crafts — are doing to explore their identity and cope with the times.

Joanna Nanajian
Meet Joanna Nanajian, the Armenian artist from Beirut (now based in Boston) who was recently accepted to the Fountainhead College of Art and resident artist at the Dorchester Art Project (DAP). Nanajian creates massive abstract charcoal pieces that are simultaneously anthropomorphic and abstract. While in the presence of one of her works, the viewer feels small and eminently insignificant.

“Recently, I’ve noticed a link between my work and heritage, not through an aesthetic influence but through my experiences as an Armenian immigrant from Lebanon and how I have moved through this world. My most recent work undergoes a repetitive draw-and-erase process. These continuous gestures are a mirror for all the moments that I have gained and then lost control of my life.”

In addition to her charcoal pieces, Nanajian also makes masks — the demand for which has naturally increased over the last five months. I was selling masks prior to COVID-19 as a hobby. I really enjoyed the aesthetics of masks and was selling them as fashion pieces with chains and designs attached. Once the pandemic set in, the orders began coming in at large quantities and became my main focus within my art practice for the past four months. This really pushed me to come out with more designs; I began to incorporate more pearls, lace, and jewels. My masks are very influenced by traditional Armenian bead pieces. We’re in this for a while — might as well look cute and feel good when we wear our masks!”

As a resident of the community-based DAP, Nanajian takes social justice seriously. The recent social unrest due to the murders of unarmed Black individuals — such as Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many more — has Nanajian using her platform as an Armenian artist to draw attention to the systemic racism in the States for her diaspora community.

“Your words have value to the people around you, so use them. Demand justice for these victims and actively dismantle any racist behaviors starting with your loved ones. Armenians have had the Genocide and should understand what it’s like to have your innocent people murdered and then be neglected.”

Talin Avakian
Take Avakian, a Worcester-born filmmaker, now based in New York, exploring her multifaceted identity through mainly fictionalized renditions for the screen. Each character she creates is itself a work of art, her films provide a space to deconstruct minor social interactions and complex relationships with a magnifying glass, amplifying character effects that are typically overlooked. Her work is nuanced, meditative and understated.

“I came to realize my deep desire to intimately follow characters through their journeys and challenges of life. Following them (or creating them) would bring me comfort as they were people I could identify with and be inspired by,” said Avakian. “My work has always been very personal, so naturally my identity seeps into my work. While not every character may be of Armenian heritage, the characters I write may experience similar struggles to that of an Armenian diaspora, because that is the story I know.”

Avakian is Armenian on her father’s side and is well-known in the Armenian filmmaking and arts communities. Besides hosting the Worcester Armenian Film Festival since 2013, Avakian also filmed and produced a series of short documentary films about historic Armenia.

“I consider myself mostly a fictional narrative filmmaker, but in 2014 I was asked to help with the Armenian diaspora a group of researchers to document the journey, our ancient churches and the individuals we met (some of them, had Armenian) along the way. I created a few short films as a result, some of which continue to have a screening life as they are screened in classrooms and venues, used to start conversations surrounding themes of genocide and dispersion, erasure and urban development.”

On her mother’s side, Avakian is Black and Indigenous. When asked how the recent events surrounding The Movement for Black Lives has impacted her identity-heavy work, Avakian stated: “Honestly, I’ve felt hindered, as the recent events of the world have left me feeling quite disparate. I’m good for my health, safety and job security, I’ve felt a sense of pressure to respond and be present for everything... It’s been a challenge to process my emotions, prioritize my mental health and dedicate the diligence and attention needed for my work - and when I have a handle asked to be the everyday the other thing pulls me. So all in all I’ve found that it’s been very challenging to prioritize my film work and films as I wish to pause everything to work on it.”

Lilit Danielyan
The black-and-white photography of Lilit Danielyan — an Armenian expat from Kazakhstan who now resides in Portland, Maine — is telling a story that demands to be heard.

“I was born during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in a town called Artsvanos. Two days after my birth, Artsvanos was occupied by the Azerbaijan military, forcing my family to flee... My father told me that I was the last child of Artsvanos — of his hometown that he still dreams to see someday. Growing up, I often dreamed of the details that surrounded the day I was born. I wondered, what my mother felt, giving birth to her first child in the basement of the house we lived in while hearing the shooting in the afar. I also wanted to imagine Artsvanos, because I have actually never seen it in photos. My father’s and my grandmother’s stories led my imagination.”

Danielyan is entirely self-taught, she learned how to capture images and narratives through a desire to uphold her family, their villages, and the world around her.

“My first camera was a Zenit, made in the Soviet Union. It took me a while to learn how to use it properly, but as soon as I saw the first well-exposed images, I couldn’t stop. I traveled to Armenia to take interviews and to photograph my grandmother’s house.”

When Danielyan’s grandmother passed, she realized how truly priceless her photographs were.

“I was left with a few video-interviews and photographs I took of her, of and the surrounding villages. Eventually, I put the videos together and created a short photo essay about my grandmother. When I showed the work to my family, I witnessed the power that storytelling could have on people. I will never forget the silence after the video was over. I decided to continue my photographic journey. At just 19, Danielyan immigrated alone from Kazakhstan to the East Coast. Inspired by her previous work documenting Armenian villages, she hoped to pursue her dreams of becoming a documentary photographer. While Danielyan holds a degree in international relations from Karajagian State University (Karagand City, Kazakhstan), she wanted to bolster her artistic credentials. Her first few years in the U.S. were devoted to saving money so that she could study photography at Smith College and develop her unique style, which she attributes in part to her inspirations: Agnes Varda, Parajanov, Fellini, Bergman and David Lynch, to name a few. Danielyan’s translucent black-and-white images harken back to another era. For Danielyan, her work is personal and nostalgic but as the viewer, we feel that too, as if the viewers are conduits through which we view her work as much a part of the art as the art itself. It feels as if we are transported back to the collective Armenian consciousness; we feel affection for her family members that are not ours but could be. We cherish her scenes and the collective Armenians had but as Armenian diaspora, we always wish we did.

“I grew up in Portland, Danielyan is involved in a number of documentary projects, including documenting the faces and stories of Portland’s refugee community, which is largely from Somalia.

“Recently, I began interviewing and photographing the immigrant and refugee community in Maine, and creating photo-essays. I was continued on next page
Recipe Corner

by Christine Varinian

Mouhamara

Walnut and Red Pepper Paste Spread (Mouhamara)*

This Walnut and Red Pepper Paste Spread (Mouhamara) is featured in Dikranouhi Kirazian’s essential Armenian Vegan cookbook published in 2013. This definitive cookbook offers a world of new and rich vegan flavors, recipes and meals that will satisfy discriminating tastes and motivate readers to add their own culinary touches. Discover over 200 vegan recipes for breakfast, soups, salads, main entrees, breads, desserts, and more—offered from the great tradition of meatless Armenian meals. Included are favorites like Stuffed Grape Leaves, Rice and Bulgur Pilaf, Vegetable Medley, Pakhlava, and Heart Breads that come with carefully chosen ingredients and easy-to-follow instructions.

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Kirazian arrived in the United States in 1959, where she taught at Holy Cross Armenian Church in Union City, New Jersey. Married in 1962, she and her husband George settled in San Diego, where they raised their three daughters “My cookbook is a labor of love for my children, grandchildren, rices and nephews, and for future generations, so they will always remember one of the most unique and traditional cuisines in the world. It is rich in flavor and unique cooking skills and techniques dating back thousands of years. Armenian food is basically healthy, and many recipes are already vegan — these are simple, delicious recipes everyone can make and enjoy.”

INGREDIENTS:
2 cups walnuts, chopped
1/2 cup red pepper paste (found in Middle Eastern markets)
1/2 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup olive oil
4 tablespoons fresh minced onions
2 1/2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
2 1/2 tablespoons cumin
1/2 teaspoon ground dried basil
1 1/2 tablespoons pine nuts (for garnish)
1/4 cup water
Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION:
Chop walnuts in a blender or food processor. Add the bread crumbs, olive oil, minced onions, pomegranate molasses, red pepper paste, all spices, and the water, and blend to combine all ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Place in a serving dish and garnish with pinenuts. Serve as an appetizer with fresh vegetables, toasted pita bread, flat bread, or lavosh. Use as a spread in a sandwich or on lavosh with grilled vegetables, roasted peppers, and cheese. Or as a condiment (or topping) for kebabs, grilled meats, and fish. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container.

Makes about 2 to 2 1/2 cups.

For this recipe, go to:
https://armenianvegan.com/recipes
https://www.facebook.com/pg/ArmenianVeganCookbook/posts/
https://www.amazon.com/dp/1494361585/ref=cm_sw_r_dp_x_6BnXbhZXSQ3Q4

*Muhammara (‘reddened’), mouhamara or mhamara is a hot pepper dip originally from Aleppo, Syria, found in Levantine and Turkish cuisines. In western Turkey, muhamara is referred to as acuka. The principal ingredients are usually fresh or dried peppers, usually Aleppo pepper, ground walnuts, breadcrumbs, and olive oil. It may contain garlic, salt, lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, and spices, and garnished with mint leaves.

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https://www.facebook.com/ArmenianVeganCookbook/
https://georgekirazian.com/cookbook/ (under construction)

from previous page

surprised how much this project helped me to understand my own feelings as someone who immigrated to the United States alone...In Portland, when [Black Lives Matter] protests began, I was amongst the protesters. To me, there is nothing more beautiful than the feeling of connection with one another. It’s crucial to stand up for each other and embrace things that unite us.

Danielyan’s community work in Portland has proven cathartic for her, especially in recent weeks. The village in which Danielyan was born is located in the Gagarkunik region of the Syunik Province, which borders Tavush – the region that has been under attack by Azerbaijani forces since the 1994 ceasefire was broken on July 12, 2020.

“When I learned about the recent political events between Armenia and Azerbaijan, I was devastated. I also realized how much I would have wanted to be in Armenia right now, doing documentary photography work. We don’t need more useless wars that always result in enormous suffering. Instead, we need to concentrate on building peaceful relationships. I will be focusing on this in my next art project.”

Danielyan takes comfort in looking forward to a time when her documentary footage will be a mechanism for telling the story of this moment. She hopes the images she has produced — and continues to produce — will illustrate this time in American and Armenian history for generations to come. For Danielyan, who knows firsthand the powerful role that capturing images plays in preserving history, it is only natural.

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Turkey are participating in war games on Armenia’s borders, as well as in Baku, Ganja, Erlakh and Nakhichevan, in a very demonstrative way, using live ammunition. People claim to have spotted Turkish warplanes within striking distance of Yerevan. Although the news was refuted by government sources, the intent of the Turkish side to scare Armenia is plain to see.

Political analyst Hapog Badaljan very stoically advises people in Armenia to learn to live with the Turkish threat of war but not to be intimidated.

President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan is back to his bellicose mood, after his defeat in Tavush. He has refused out of hand the seven points proposed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and has called on Yerevan to withdraw its armed forces from Karabakh immediately, “before it’s too late.”

Answering that threat, Armenia’s Defense Minister David Tonoyan has called on Yerevan to withdraw its armed forces from seven points proposed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and not to be intimidated.

The threat of war continues to loom on Armenia’s border. The battle in the Tavush region of Armenia was only one episode which may very well be followed by others. The Armenian side is cognizant of the fact that it should not yet rest on its laurels. Armenia proved the battle-readiness of its armed forces. But to what extent? President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has characterized Armenia’s victory against Azerbaijan as a “punch well beyond its capacity,” which in strategic terms may be interpreted as the victory by Armenia being the result of tactical assistance from its strategic ally, Russia.

In today’s wars, drones have expanded the surveillance scope of armies. In this particular battle, the Azerbaijani army, which had boasted of its state-of-the-art military hardware, failed to deploy them properly and thus the Armenian side downed 13 of their drones, in addition to inflicting other critical losses.

Wars now rely more and more on advanced technology both for weapons and surveillance systems, including satellite imaging, which border Armenia’s reach. This is where an ally’s assistance can make the ultimate difference, and most probably this is what Erdogan was talking about.

From July 29 to August 10, the joint forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia’s armed forces have been put on high alert and that the heads as a direct warning to Turkey’s moves.

On July 28, Defense Minister Tonoyan announced that Turkish armed forces are in mainland Azerbaijan and Turkish Base Casts Long Shadow

On Armenia, Turkey

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Turkey has not been discouraged by the fact that the Russian base in Armenia is intended to contain Turkey. “If a war breaks out between Armenia and Azerbaijan, I am not sure what position Russia may take,” the analyst stated. “But if the war takes place in Karabakh, I know for sure that Russia will not intervene. I repeat, the base is there to contain Turkey. The base is part of Russia’s geopolitical posture. Therefore, it is meant to stop Turkey, the foreign intruder in the region.”

Mr. Khramchikhin also believes that Turkey has introduced its forces into Azerbaijan to pressure Armenia psychologically. But he believes that Turkey at this time “cannot invade Armenia, because it will be stretching its influence in the Caucasus region. In the meantime, it is a no free lunch. Turkey’s involvement in many conflicts defines its behavior pattern. Either it foments a crisis to intervene, like it did in Syria, or it takes advantage of destabilized regions, like Iraq and Libya to expand its empire.

Following that logic, we cannot rule out the possibility that Ankara precipitated the current crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan to begin implementing one of its long held dreams. Strategically, Armenia is at the mercy of enemy forces; Turkish armed forces are in mainland Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan, which does not have a common border with the mainland, but has a narrow border with Turkey, acquired after a land swap with Iran in 1937.

Armenian forces are no match for Turkey. Armenia must avoid any direct confrontation with the Turkish army. But Yerevan has other sources that it can use in its diplomatic forums.

Recently, Armenia’s representative Armen Babajanyan raised the issue in Energy Intelligence, a publication of the International Atomic Agency, of Azerbaijan’s threat to bomb its nuclear power plant, Metsamor. On July 27, the issue was discussed at a Vienna conference, which characterized the threat as an act of state terrorism against Armenia.

Armenia has not weaponized its strongest argument, the fact of genocide. Only after some timid references by Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan did Armenia’s Ambassador to Latvia Tigran Muradyan issue a strongly-worded statement that Armenians will not tolerate a second genocide.

Jews and fascist shock troops shout about the holocaust they have suffered. We can emulate them and try to score some political points. What makes everything even worse is that during this current situation, there is polarization in Armenia. Any responsible and rational leadership would seek internal stability, to withstand the external threats.

The opposition and the government are equally responsible for the ongoing divide in Armenia: the first for its irresponsible behavior pattern, the second for its irresponsible political points.

President Vladimir Putin. During their conversation Putin “has stressed the importance of preventing any steps that could cause an escalation in tensions.”

Once again, the issue of the Russian military base in Gyumri has become a topic of public discussion. Many anti-Russian politicians underestimate the significance of that base. Analysts like Levon Shirinyan and Armenian Parliament members like Aram Hulitanian and political activist Arman Tavser and Tigran Zmulaian (European Party) are adamantly against the base. They try to suggest that Russia has set that base on Armenian territory “to enslave us.”

However, they do not offer any alternative in case Armenia faces an existential threat.

Granted, the base may be self-serving for Russia to maintain its influence in the region. In the meantime, it is a deterrent against any Turkish threat. To defend its military base Moscow has to defend Armenia’s territory.

In politics, there has to be a confluence of interest so that a major power is motivated to defend the weaker power. There is no free lunch.

In a recent interview, the director of a political and military analytical center in Russia, Alexander Khramchikhin, confirmed the fact that the Russian base in Armenia is intended to contain Turkey.

“Turkey’s involvement in many conflicts defines its behavior pattern. Either it foments a crisis to intervene, like it did in Syria, or it takes advantage of destabilized regions, like Iraq and Libya to expand its empire.

We wished that it were true. Turkey’s involvement in many conflicts defines its behavior pattern. Either it foments a crisis to intervene, like it did in Syria, or it takes advantage of destabilized regions, like Iraq and Libya to expand its empire.
Political Victory over Azerbaijan Is As Important as the Military Victory

While Armenians around the world have been justifiably focusing on the successes of the Armenian military over Azerbaijan during the three-day attack last month, the political victory is just as important. If you win the war, but lose the peace, then you have not accomplished much. The best solution is to win the war and then draw a long-term benefit from that military victory.

Fortunately, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has provided the best opportunity for Armenians to benefit from the recent skirmishes on the border between the two countries. Aliyev recently fired his long-term Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov for engaging in “meaningless” negotiations with Armenia. This is the best thing that Aliyev could have said from the Armenian point of view. If Aliyev is unhappy with the negotiations, Armenians welcome his statement.

We should remember that the ongoing negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, under the guidance of the Minuk Group of mediators, are solely for the benefit of Azerbaijan, which expects to extract concessions from Armenia on the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) conflict. Armenians should not expect to gain anything from these negotiations. They have already accomplished what they want from the conflict with Azerbaijan by successfully liberating the occupied territories of Artsakh. It is unrealistic to expect that Azerbaijan would somehow acknowledge that Artsakh is an independent territory or a part of the Republic of Armenia. Therefore, these negotiations are useless for the Armenian side. They are only carried out for the sake of giving the appearance to the international public opinion that Armenians are not opposed to a peaceful, negotiated solution to the conflict. These negotiations are carried out more for propaganda purposes than for achieving concrete results.

However, Armenia continues to carry out these negotiations while Azerbaijan pursues on using sharpshooters or periodic attacks on Artsakh and Armenia proper to kill and injure Armenian soldiers and civilians or damage Armenian properties.

I have tried to bring this problem to the attention of Armenia’s leaders in the past. I discussed this issue several years ago with Armenia’s Defense Minister, Seryan Ohanyan. I explained to him that Armenia should temporarily suspend the negotiations with Azerbaijan while the Azeri side was shooting on Armenian soldiers. Armenia should announce to the world that it believes in peaceful negotiations; however, Azerbaijan continues to fire across the border. One cannot sit at the negotiation table while the other side is shooting at you. You either negotiate or fight. You cannot do both at the same time. The Defense Minister told me that this is a political decision which should be taken up with President Serzh Sargsyan. Ohanyan said that he was only involved in military matters.

I then met with President Sargsyan and gave him the same explanation that I had given to his Defense Minister. I emphasized that I was not calling for the cancellation of the negotiations with Azerbaijan which would have left the wrong impression on the international community. I urged President Sargsyan to present to the world that it believes in peaceful negotiations, and that negotiations cannot be carried out under such circumstances. One can either negotiate or fight, but not both. Therefore, the President of Armenia should announce that if Azerbaijan, henceforth, shoots on the Armenian side, Armenia would suspend the negotiations for three months. If the Azeri shootings persist, Armenia would prolong the suspension of negotiations. Without any negotiations taking place, Azerbaijan would be the loser. As negotiations are Azerbaijan’s only chance of getting some concessions from Armenia. Eventually, as the negotiations become frozen for a lengthy period, the Minuk Group of negotiators would induce Azerbaijan to agree to observe a total ceasefire if it wanted to continue the negotiations.

Regrettably, I could not convince President Sargsyan to agree to this peaceful approach. As a result the Azeri shootings continued during the negotiations while dozens of young Armenian and Azeri soldiers were killed.

Nevertheless, I was happy to read sometime after my meeting with President Sargsyan that he had announced on October 24, 2017, during his lecture at the Armenian National Defense Research University, according to Mediamax Armenian news agency, that “You either negotiate or shoot, and we are ready for both cases.” He was also quoted as saying that the negotiations should be held only in case of mutual trust, built by adhering to ceasefire regime, while there are no shootings.

Unfortunately, President Sargsyan had announced only partially what I had suggested. He had left out the warning that no negotiations would be suspended the next time they shoot across the border.

Nevertheless, I believe that this is the right time for Armenia’s new leaders to consider my suggestion, especially since President Aliyev had stated that he does not believe in “meaningless” negotiations. I was dismayed that Armenia’s Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, in his public address, has accused the President to engage in “meaningless” negotiations, which he said that “You either negotiate or shoot, and we are ready for both cases.” He was also quoted as saying that the negotiations should be held only in case of mutual trust, built by adhering to ceasefire regime, while there are no shootings.

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Houston Armenian Protest Against Azerbaijani Aggression

DEMONSTRATIONS, from page 1

Out fliers, and dancing. Numerous cars joined the simultaneous car-rally, honking, waving flags, and encouraging the protestors. Many of the car rally attendees were eventually inspired to attend the demonstration. The event was peaceful and powerful, as Armenian music reverberated in the busy intersection of Post Oak Blvd and Westheimer, in the Galleria.

The Houston Police Department was present to ensure our safety, though no counter-protestors attended as in previous protests. No social media outlets were used, to minimize the possibility of additional aggression from Azerbaijani and Turkish groups. Masks were enforced throughout the entire duration of the protest as well for further safety precautions from COVID-19.

Several of the organizers were interviewed by journalists, who will now be covering the conflict between Armenia, Artsakh and Azerbaijan, as well as the role that we have, both individually and as a community, for this cause. Though we may not see the immediate results from protesting for peace with a small community like ours, when we as Armenians join small movements like on August 1, we add a link to the chain that has grown throughout the years which has become stronger, more resilient, and unbreakable.

See the Mirror-Spectator's website for clips of the Houston demonstration.