Turkey Declares Itself Party to Karabakh Conflict

ISTANBUL (RFE/RL) – Turkey’s strong support for Azerbaijan makes it a party to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said on Thursday, August 27.

“Turkey is also a party to the conflict, standing with a brotherly state and defending its rights,” Akar told the Turkish Anatolia news agency.

Successive Turkish governments have unconditionally backed Azerbaijan in the conflict, reflecting close cultural and ethnic ties between the two Turkic nations. They have refused to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia and kept the Turkish-Armenian border closed. They have also provided military assistance to Azerbaijan.

As Armenians fallen for France,” the statement says.

The inscription on the monument reads: “An homage to composer, musician, folklorist Komitas and the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire in 1915.”

The Komitas statue with the graffiti

The team will wear the patch for a total of 12 Serie A games. The club is auctioning off matchworn shirts, featuring the Black Lives Matter / ASSIEEME patch, to raise money for a number of prominent anti-racism organisations.

Turkey Denies Airspace Use to Yerevan-Bound German Military Flight

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia is holding talks with Russia to buy more Sukhoi Su-30SM fighters for its armed forces, Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said over the weekend.

“The acquisition of a new batch [of Su-30SM jets] is planned,” he said. “Negotiations are underway at the moment.”

Tonoyan, who most recently visited Moscow last week, gave no details of the negotiations.

In a significant boost to its small Air Force, Armenia has already purchased four such multirole fighters at an undisclosed price. They were delivered to an airbase in Comrat in December.

The deal was signed in Moscow in Tonoyan’s presence. In the Russian capital, the latter also attended the opening ceremony of the International Army Games and met with Russia’s Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

The Armenian Air Force largely consisted of 15 or so Su-25 aircraft designed for close air support and ground attack missions. The Armenian Defense Ministry contracted on August 21 to modernize some of these aging jets. The Armenian Defense Ministry is cooperating with Armenia on a military level, and soldiers from both countries are participating in joint drills.

Su-30SM is a modernized version of a heavy fighter jet developed by Russia's Sukhoi company in the late 1990s. The Russian military first commissioned it in 2012.

Before receiving the first four Su-30SMs the Armenian Air Force had largely consisted of 15 or so Su-25 aircraft designed for close air support and ground attack missions. The Armenian Defense Ministry contracted on August 21 to modernize these aging jets.

Tonoyan revealed on Saturday that UAC will procure and upgrade four of them in Russia. He stressed the importance of that deal, saying that the Armenian military had sought it “for years.”

The deal was signed in Moscow in Tonoyan’s presence. While in the Russian capital, the latter also attended the opening ceremony of the International Army Games and met with Russia’s Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

Tonoyan praised the current state of Russian-Armenian military cooperation and, in particular, defense contracts signed by Moscow and Yerevan in the last several years.
Armenak Urfanyan Posthumously Awarded Artsakh Hero Title

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Captain Armenak Urfanyan who died in the Four-Day War in April 2016 this week was posthumously awarded the title of the Hero of Artsakh, the highest title in Nagorno Karabakh.

Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military offensive across the entire line of contact with Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). Clashes that began in the wee hours of April 2 in 2016 lasted four days and were later dubbed the Four-Day War or the April War. Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan hosted a special ceremony in Stepanakert, Karabakh’s capital.

The Hero of Artsakh title “is awarded for exclusive services in the defense of the state, strengthening its economic might, and for creating significant national values.”

Junior sergeant Robert Abakhyan and sergeant Adam Sahakyan, who also fell in the April War, were awarded the title earlier.

In August, Armenian Experts Demined 33,143 Square Meters in Syria

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian explosives experts in Syria have cleared an area of 33,143 square meters from mines in August.

According to a Facebook post from the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining & Expertise, a total of 238,220 square meters have been demined since the beginning of the mission in 2019.

In particular, the group of specialists from Armenia have uncovered anti-personnel mines, hand grenades, and other ammunition.

The first group of Armenian sappers and doctors left for Aleppo in February 2019. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said back then that sending a humanitarian mission to Syria means responding in kind to the people who helped Armenians fleeing the Genocide in 1915.

Armenia Plans to Update Nuclear Power Plant

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia plans to upgrade the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant through its own resources, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an interview to Interfax news agency, commenting on the statement of the Russian Ambassador to Armenia according to which Moscow and Yerevan continue discussing the issue of upgrading the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant through Stepanakert, Karabakh’s capital.

“We plan to upgrade the plant based on our budget resources. And in this respect the possibility of new loans is viewed from the very prism that we do the above-mentioned activity with our own resources,” he said.

Iran-Based Fraudsters Bilk Europe Travelers in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Several members of an organized crime syndicate consisting of Armenians and Iranians are under arrest for racketeering and defrauding around 50 citizens of Iran in a travel fraud, Armenian police said in a news release on September 5.

Two Iranian citizens recruited 50 countrymen and transported them to Armenia under the pretense of organizing a trip to travel to other European countries.

The acquaintances of the Iranian duo, who are citizens of Armenia, met the victims of the fraud in Armenia and charged them a total of nearly $300,000 for their services.

The cons of the project presented themselves to be representatives of law enforcement or diplomatic services in the defense of the state and offered their services. The con artists presented themselves as specialists of law enforcement or diplomatic sector in order to obtain the victims’ trust.

Some of the 50 people were taken to Turkey and Georgia and promised to be sent to their preferred destinations. However, they were again taken back to Armenia and had their passports seized by the perpetrators.

Unseen Armenia

Discovering Griboyedov

By Hovsep Daghdigian and Vladimir Tchagharyan

YEREVAN — A number of locations and institutions in Armenia bear Russian names, including some of which we may have heard of. Sakharov Square in Yerevan, the Pushkin School, etc. On Yerevan’s Tigran Mets street, near the amusement park, stands the statue of Russian author Alexander Griboyedov and in Armaniv province lies the village of Griboyedov. In the back of the Noy Yerevan Vine Factory is an inscription indicating Griboyedov play “Woe from Wit” was first performed here. So, who was Griboyedov?

Alexander Griboyedov was born on 4 January 1795 in Russia’s Vladimir Province to a family of minor Russian nobility. Though poor, his mother insisted he get an education. In Moscow, as a member of the nobility, he was entitled to attend the “Noble Pension” school.

Subsequently at age 11 he entered the Imperial University’s faculty of literature. Though good at languages and with good grades, he demonstrated no special aptitude for literature. In 1812, when Napoleon’s army invaded Russia, Griboyedov briefly served in the army but saw no action.

After leaving the military in 1814, prior to the death of his father, he moved to St. Petersburg. There he became involved in literary circles and befriended members of the Decembrist Russian revolutionaries who planned to overthrow Czar Nicholas I and free the serfs indentured servants with few rights. While sympathetic to their cause, though not a member of the Decembrists, he may have known of their plans but did not participate in their activities. After their failed revolt, he came under the suspicion of the Czar and his police but was subsequently acquitted. Many of his close friends, though, were hanged, imprisoned or exiled to Siberia. During this time, among his other literary works, he started his masterpiece, a play variously interpreted as “Woe from Wit” which satirized the life of Russian high society and nobility. The play, under revision for many years, dealt with the negative consequences of being a bit too clever for one’s own good. Czarist censors, considering the play offensive, continuously denied permission for its performance though underground copies were widely circulated.

Persian Shah Abbas and the Armenians: Due to Armenia’s strategic location, between 1513 and 1727 portions of eastern Armenia including Yerevan were fought over by Ottoman Turkey and Persia (Iran), with the area around Yerevan changing hands fourteen times. During the Ottoman-Persian war of 1603-1618 Persian Shah Abbas I implemented a scorched earth policy, devastating the Ararat valley and deporting 250,000 to 310,000 Armenians from areas as far away as Bayazid and Van to various regions of Persia. This action was intended to prohibit an invading Turkish army from living off the land. The wealthy Armenians and craftsmen from Jaffa, Nakhichevan, were settled in the newly constructed town of Nor (now Jaffa) near the Persian capital of Isfahan. Here, given special religious, cultural, and commercial privileges, they thrived greatly enhancing international trade and commerce in Persia. But Armenians who were settled in other areas of Persia did not fare as well. Some estimates indicate that as many as 50% of the deportees died during the deportations. Consequently, much of eastern Armenia was depopulated with Armenians constituting a minority in much of their eastern Armenian homeland.

Russo-Persian War (1804-1813) and Treaty of Gulistan: Starting with the rule of Peter the Great (ruled 1682-1725), Russia started advancing into the Caucasus resulting in a number of Persian-Russian conflicts. In the war of 1804-1813 Persia was soundly defeated with much of Armenia, including Karabagh and Ganja, coming under Russian control.

Yerevan and Nakhichevan, however, remained under Persian
recent events left Russia weak, he attacked and devastated Karabagh. Shushu, however, succeeded in defending itself for 6 weeks thus preventing further Persian advances. The Czar replaced Russian General Yermolov with General Paskevich who soundly defeated the Persians, taking Yerevan and its fortress after a 6-day siege, taking Nahichivansk, and occupying eastern Armenia up to the Arax River. In response for taking the Yerevan Fortress, including the Soviet-era in the 1930s, the fortress was completely demolished. During a brief absence of Paskevich two of his officers, commanding officers, were taken by the important Persian regional capital of Tabriz.

Treaty of Turkmanchay (1828): Griboyedov, as Paskevich’s chief diplomatic advisor, maintained a firm line in the peace negotiations with Persian crown prince Abbas Mirza. While the Czar desired to use the war as a means to gain additional territory for Russia, the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the British believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persians believed they were owed. Since the British did not want Russia in stronger in Persia, they paid the Persians at least part of what they owed them. The Persians paid the indemnity and the Russians withdrew. In February 1829 an irate mob representing the British, who had a significant presence in Persia, were holding back payments that the Persian regional capital of Tabriz.

Due to an editing error, a mistake was introduced in a story on the front page last week, “Armenian Jet through the Gaze of Western Institutions,” by Karen Haroutunian, the summer intern for the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. In the story, she quotes the author of The Missing Pages: the Medieval Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Recognition, at a lecture at a university in the U.S., that Professor of History and a fellow professor at the university, Prof. Keith Watenpaugh, said: “People in Russia know you as a remarkable stateman who has done a great deal for the development of modern Armenia,” read the telegram published by the Kremlin. “We highly value your personal contribution to strengthening the friendship and alliance between our countries.” Putin has made a pointing of congratulating the president since the latter was first arrested in July 2018 on charges stemming from the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan. He was also subsequently charged with bribery. The Russian Foreign Ministry criticized the arrest as politically motivated. Kocharyan, who strongly deniers all charges leveled against him, was released from custody in July 2018, only to be arrested again three months later. The ex-president, who ruled Armenia from 1998-2008, was again set free days after going on trial in May 2019. He was arrested for a third time nearly two months later. The Russian ambassador to Armenia, Sergei Kopyrkin, was criticized by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s political allies and summoned to the Armenian Foreign Ministry after meeting with Kocharyan shortly before his third arrest. Putin continued to signal support for Kocharyan even after that. He met with Kocharyan’s wife Bella during an October 2019 visit to Yerevan.

Putin Again Congratulates Kocharyan

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Russian President Vladimir Putin telephoned Robert Kocharyan on Monday, August 31, to congratulate his former Armenian counterpart on his 66th birthday anniversary.

Putin also sent Kocharyan a separate congratulatory message on the occasion. “People in Russia know you as a remarkable stateman who has done a great deal for the development of modern Armenia,” read the telegram published by the Kremlin. “We highly value your personal contribution to strengthening the friendship and alliance between our countries.”

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Kocharyan, who strongly denies all charges leveled against him, was released from custody in August 2018, only to be arrested again three months later.

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Armenian officials maintain that Moscow’s gestures of support for Kocharyan have not damaged Armenia’s close political, economic and military ties with Russia. The president’s loyalists claim the opposite.
Turkey Declares Itself Party to Karabakh Conflict

Turkey has opened a military base in Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to Ankara's state-run TRT television channel.

The move comes amid an escalation of tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the disputed region, which has been controlled by ethnic Armenian separatists since a 1994 cease-fire.

Azerbaijan’s Protest in Riga against Armenia

Baku’s embassy in Riga organized a protest in front of the Latvian Parliament against Armenia’s violation of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity.

Azerbaijani diplomatic officials criticized the EU Council President’s statement on the Karabakh conflict, arguing that the solution to the conflict lies in the implementation of the Paris Declaration of 1994.

HRW Condemns Azerbaijan’s Latest Crackdown

Human Rights Watch has condemned Azerbaijan’s latest crackdown on opposition leaders and activists, following a July 14 unsanctioned rally in the capital.

The rights group said that authorities should immediately halt the dispersal of the rally, calling it a violation of free speech and assembly rights.

Survey of 3000 Armenians Provides Snapshot of Opinions in The Diaspora

The survey, conducted by the Institute for Armenian Diaspora Studies, found that most Armenians in the diaspora support the Karabakh independence movement.

Armenia in Talks With Russia Over Another Fighter Jet Deal

Armenia and Russia have reached an agreement on the purchase of fighter jets, according to sources familiar with the negotiations.

Many were not even at the rally. The arrests followed a speech by the country’s long-time president, Ilham Aliyev, who accused the APUFF of instigating the violence.

The arrests sparked criticism from international organizations and rights groups, who called for the release of all those detained.

Turkey’s military base in Nagorno-Karabakh is seen as a further escalation of tensions in the region, which has been at the center of a decades-long conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

HRW said that Azerbaijan’s international partners should not be intimidated by the regional powers and should work towards a peaceful resolution.

Azerbaijan is a key ally of Turkey, which has provided military and financial support to Baku.

Azerbaijan’s embassy in Riga organized a protest against Armenia’s violation of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity.

The protest was held in front of the Latvian Parliament and was attended by a few dozen people.

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Crime Boss of Post-Soviet Underworld Shot Dead in Turkey

By Ron Synovitz

ISTANBUL (RFE/RL) – The killing of a notorious crime boss from the Caucasian region is echoing across the criminal underworld of the former Soviet Union, with reverberations reaching an alleged Uzbek crime boss in Turkey who is the nephew of the former international mafia boss, Bacha Makhmudovich.

Nadir “Lotto Gul” Salifov, a reputed member of the “thieves-in-law” criminal syndicate, had been known as a top crime boss in Russia and Azerbaijan.

He was shot dead at a restaurant in Turkey’s southern coastal city of Antalya on the evening of August 19. Multiple underworld sources said the killer was Nadir Salifov’s bodyguards.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, those sources told RFE/RL, the bodyguard stood behind Salifov and shot him four times—including at least one shot to the back of his head—while he was seated at a card game.

These sources also said the killer had made a short cellphone video of Salifov earlier in the evening and sent it to several people before carrying out the killing.

They said the bodyguard fled the restaurant after the shooting.

According to Turkish media reports, a suspect was detained by Turkish police on August 19 as he tried to flee north along the Antalya-Demre highway. Turkish authorities have not named the suspect.

But RFE/RL’s sources say Turkish police confiscated the suspect’s mobile phone and found that he’d sent the video of Salifov to at least four people.

All four of the individuals said to have been sent the video were detained by Turkish authorities for questioning.

They include Ratchav “Zolotoi” Mulchidinov, a reputed criminal boss from Uzbekistan and the nephew of Gaufrid Rakhimov, the disgraced former head of the International Boxing Association (AIBA) who is wanted in the United States as an alleged kingpin of international drug trafficking.

Muhiiddinov was detained at his home in Istanbul at 3 a.m. local time on August 20 and questioned by Turkish police for seven hours before he was released without charge.

Meanwhile, Russian media reports say agents from Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) detained one of Salifov’s associates in Siberia and released him without charge after questioning.

The 47-year-old Salifov was an ethnic Azeri who had been born in Georgia but moved to Azerbaijan with his family shortly after his birth.

Rising to the top of an Azerbaijani criminal syndicate, he had been repeatedly convicted in Baku on charges that included theft, banditry, and kidnapping.

After a conviction in the 1990s, Salifov spent 22 years in a Baku prison, where he is said to have continued issuing orders to subordinates, including members of his Azerbaijan crime syndicate in Russia.

By 2014, Salifov managed to gain control over three large markets in the country.

Nadir Salifov was known as “Lotto Gul.”

French President Emmanuel Macron Urges Political Reform After New Lebanon PM Named

BEIRUT (DW) – French President Emmanuel Macron called for political reforms in Lebanon on Tuesday, September 1, as the former French mandate marked its centenary amid a political and economic crisis.

Macron is also due to meet President Michel Aoun for a centenary reception and meetings with Lebanon’s various factions.

Macron kicked off his visit to Lebanon – his second since the deadly Beirut blast – on Monday by spending more than an hour with popular singer Fairuz, a unifying figure in Lebanon. He also planted a cedar tree, Lebanon’s national symbol, to express “confidence in the future of the country,” his office said in a statement.

Macron was greeted outside Fairuz’s home by protesters who held placards reading “No corruption” and “The only solution is Lebanon’s economy will collapse” and “the only victim will be the Lebanese people, who cannot go into exile,” he warned on Friday, ahead of the visit.

Macron decided Lebanon’s chronic systemic corruption and the country desperately needs to reform its energy and banking sectors as well as its justice system. The French president said Lebanon’s future, “Everything is there, but change will require political will.”

In the hours before Macron’s arrival, Lebanon designated a new prime minister, Mustapha Adib, reaching a consensus among major parties that senior Lebanese politicians said was decided under pressure from Macron. The president also described the new prime minister as “unemployed.”

Rusesabagina Arrested

KIGALI, Rwanda (CNN) — Paul Rusesabagina, who saved hundreds of Rwandans during the genocide by sheltering them in the hotel he managed, and who has said his story made into the Hollywood film “Hotel Rwanda,” was arrested on Monday, September 21, on terror-related offences, Rwandan authorities announced, according to CNN.

The country’s bureau of Investigation said in a Twitter statement that Rusesabagina was now in their custody after being arrested “through international cooperation.” It did not indicate which country helped them with the arrest.

An international warrant had been issued for his arrest and he is currently in police custody in Rwanda, the Rwandan capital, said the Rwanda Investigation Bureau.

Rusesabagina, 66, is accused of being the “founder, leader and sponsor of violent, armed, extremist terror outfits,” the agency said.

His supporters, and Rusesabagina himself, have long maintained that he became a target of Paul Kagame’s government after sustained criticism of Kagame’s government and the conduct of the Rwandan Patriotic Front in ending the genocide in 1994.

Rusesabagina gained prominence during the 1994 Rwandan genocide for saving the lives of hundreds of people.

Around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the genocide. The genocide was led by Hutu extremists.

At the time, he was a manager at the Milles Collines hotel where he hid and sheltered thousands.

Rusesabagina has not lived in Rwanda since 1996 when he survived an assassination attempt.
Abp. Hovnan Derderian of Western Diocese Calls for Deacons’ Council

LOS ANGELES – As Holy Scripture spells out (Acts 6), the first deacons of the Church were ordained to assist the Apostles in the Christian ministry. This is a quick, expanding period after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. For centuries, and now for two millennia, the Church has found a strong frontline ambassador and soldier in the deacon. Today, the Armenian Church in the Western Diocese is expanding quickly and is seeking qualified men to be deacons to meet the needs of the Church and her people.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Diocese, has appointed a group of young deacons to serve as the Deacons’ Council, to organize activities and continuing education programs for the deacons serving throughout the Western Diocese. He has appointed Fr. Vazken Movsesian, to guide and direct the Council.

In the Christian Church there are three main ranks of clergy: deacons, priests and bishops, each of which are scripturally designated with duties and responsibilities within the Church. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, the clergy receive the authority to minister within the Church. Primary among the deacon’s responsibilities is to serve at the Holy Altar during the sacred Divine Liturgy. But there are other responsibilities, and the Deacons’ Council is here to assist those who wish to explore more closely the gifts of ordination. The focus will be on service to the holy altar as well as to work closely with parish priests in the ministry of the Church – to reach out to the sick, the bereaved and those suffering injustices.

Continuing Education Program

To achieve its goals, the Deacon Council is presenting continuing education programs for the deacons in the following areas:

1) Liturgical – Knowledge of the Holy Badarak, the Seven Hours of the Church, the Seven Sacraments, Holy Week and in the Armenian language.
2) Theology of the Armenian Church: 20 sessions
3) Biblical Study – knowledge and methods of teaching
4) Social Outreach via pastoral assistance

Continuing education will take place using virtual format and include a system of accreditation and certification. Instructors are priests and scholars in the subject area. The entire program is scheduled to be unveiled in October 2020.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages – visiting holy shrines and places are set up to build camaraderie among the deacons as well as to present opportunities to renew the deacons’ vows. Two have been scheduled for this year:

October 18 – at the St. Mary Armenian Church in Yettem, California
December 26 – St. Stephen the First Deacon’s Feast Day to be celebrated at the St. Leon Ghervondzants Armenian Cathedral.

Conferences

Organized annually, the first one is scheduled for Lent 2021. Here deacons can come to learn from instructors and one-another.

Family Ministry

Considering the various ministries of the Western Diocese and the growing spiritual needs within the communities served by its churches, the Deacon will play a crucial role in assisting local parish priests in ministering to the congregation on various levels. True to his calling, the Deacon will be engaging in Christian ministry through outreach programs.

Commending Fr. Vazken Movsesian’s vital role in the success of the expansion of the Deacon’s ministry, the Diocesan Primate said, “Fr. Vazken is a visionary priest of the Armenian Apostolic Church who continues to fulfill his pastoral ministry with a compassionate heart. Undoubtedly, under his leadership, the Deacon’s Council will expand our Diocesan mission to new heights. Thus we urge all of our pastors to guide their deacons and encourage them to participate in this Godpleasing undertaking.”

Pilgrimage to Bless Grapes at Garden of Eden

YETTEM, Calif. — The celebration of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God, Asdvadzadzin, carries with it the tradition of blessing grapes. The first fruits of the land are brought to the church in an offering and gesture of thanksgiving.

By Fr. Vazken Movsesian

This year a group from the Western Diocese made a pilgrimage to the St. Mary Armenian Church in Yettem, to witness this centuries-old tradition in the “garden where it all began.”

The town of Yettem is about 35 miles southwest of Fresno. As the story is told, when the first Armenian settlers escaping the massacres of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s arrived in California, they looked out over the lush green San Joaquin Valley and saw a vision of paradise. They named this area “Yettem” (Armenian for Eden), in reference to the Garden of Eden. At one corner of this town of less than 300 people stands the St. Mary Armenian Church, the center for Armenian Christian life in the area for over a century.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, has long since insisted that pilgrimages are a necessary component in the spiritual welfare of the individual. Each church within the diocese has been consecrated with the Holy Muron and therefore is designated as a sacred shrine. As such, each church is a destination for individuals and groups organizing pilgrimages.

The St. Mary Armenian Church in Yettem, with its unique history and location, has been designated the point for several pilgrimages this year, beginning with this one on its name day.

Fr. Vazken Movsesian has been appointed by the Primate to lead these pilgrimages. On the feast of Assumption, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and officiated at grape blessing service in Yettem. A group from the Deacon Council had planned to bless grapes this year, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, services were held outdoors, under tents and the large,专题 Prayer with the Fr. Vazken Movsesian

Parishioners gather around Fr. Vazken Movsesian

Consul General of Armenia in LA Meets With Glendale Council Member Brotman

GLENDALE: Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles Ambassador Armen Bahourian met with the newly elected member of the Glendale City Council Dan Brotman. During the meeting held at the Consulate General, Bahourian congratulated the latter.

Brotman presented the priorities of the City and his approach in various fields. Issues related to clean energy and environmental spheres also became a subject of discussion.

Bahourian presented the forthcoming plans of the Consulate General, including the Armenian Festival in Glendale which had been originally scheduled for May 2. The festival will instead be held in 2021 with the joint organization of the Consulate General of Armenia and the City of Glendale.

The two also talked about the tech companies from Armenia which extended their operation to Glendale. Bahourian also stressed the importance of promoting tourism to Armenia, the situation allows.

Bahourian emphasized the importance of developing and implementing projects in the framework of the Glendale-Gyumri and Glendale-Kapan sister city relationships.

ASA Awards Silver And Gold Medals

The Armenian Students’ Association (ASA) Silver Medal Award Committee selected four (4) seniors to receive the Silver Medal Award.

The following students were selected to receive this award:

Mark Arsanian Arakel, Lynnfield High School, Lynnfield, MA; he will be attending McGill University.
MacKenzie Douglas Campbell, Smithfield High School, Smithfield, RI; he will be attending Bryant University.
Aliko Osvanian Kozian, Arlington High School, Arlington, MA; she will be attending the University of Toronto.
Zachary Ronald Semejian, Smithfield High School, Smithfield, RI; he will be attending Suffolk University.

The Silver Medal Awards are given annually to high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding scholastic ability.

Applications for Silver Medal Awards can be obtained at: www.asa101.org. Deadline for submitting applications and documentation is May 1, 2021.
Kenosha, Wis. (CBS) — After a week of protests stemming from the police shooting of Jacob Blake, and the shootings of two people by Antioch, Illinois resident Kyle Rittenhouse, Kenosha officials on Monday, August 31, were preparing for President Donald Trump's visit, but not everyone is rolling out the welcome mat.

Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian said the timing is wrong for Trump's visit on Tuesday (after Mirror-Spectator press time).

"I think that you have a community that's in the process of trying to heal," Antaramian said. "It just seemed to me, and I think others, that it would be better for us to get them to actually heal up the process of what's going on and start dealing with the concerns that we have that need to be addressed."

He added that he could not comment on the details of President Trump's visit because it was under the workings of law enforcement and not his office, but he said that this is not the time.

"I think that Kenosha at this present time needs peace, and needs to heal, and needs people to allow us to do that," the Mayor of Kenosha said that as far as President Trump's visit on Tuesday, he said that a meeting with him "has not yet been established."

He's not the only official wary of Trump's visit.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers on Sunday asked President Trump to "reconsider" his upcoming visit to Kenosha as the city continues to be roiled by protests after Blake, a Black man, was shot several times in the back by police last weekend. Mr. Trump's visit will be one week to be roiled by protests after Blake, a Black man, was shot seven times in the back by police last weekend.

The shooting touched off protests; led to civil unrest; lasted for a week; and a third was injured in a shooting in the streets early the following Tuesday morning. Kyle Rittenhouse, 17, of Antioch, has been charged in that incident.

It was a week that changed the way many police to civil unrest, looting, and fires; and sparked even more violence when two people were killed and a third was injured in a shooting in the streets early the following Tuesday morning. Kyle Rittenhouse, 17, of Antioch, has been charged in that incident.

"It's a fantastic job," President Trump replied. "As a community was left infuriated. Sheriff Beth said he had not further information on the Rittenhouse investigation.

"The major reason for that is DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation) did the inventory. For me to give the details that I may not department is not investigating, that's be completely inappropriate. So DCI, I know that they are trying to get this done as expediently as possible. But I don't have comments on the investigation. I just can't do that."

Mayor Antaramian said while not completely unexpected, he said he wants Kenosha to heal first before involving in political matters.

"You know, everyone is going to be always going to be doing this with the politics of what's happening to get a presidential election," Antaramian said. "At this point in time, you know what, I care about my community. I care about the people in my community. That's what my focus is and what's I'm going to focus on."

Char Bobrick told CBS 2's Chris Tye she was in the camp that is happy President Trump is coming. But she and her grandson, Login Maruincu -- who is a big fan of police and disfracted the "police lives matter" collapse - hope the president's visit is about healing and not politics.

"I hope it's not just because he's running for office, you know, for president," Bobrick said. "I hope it's beyond that. I hope it's about what's going on here, and not about everything else."

Among President Trump's plans for the visit is a visit to the widespread damage that happened amid the unrest in Kenosha last week, and to meet with police to thank them.

"Seems a little political to me, but I guess that's what presidents do," Tooney said. "But Tooney is hopeful that the president's trip will allow Kenosha's healing to continue.

"I think it is good for him to come and show support for the town," Tooney said. "He's been here once before, so he's not a stranger."

The president will not take any time to meet with Blake. He said he did not want to be talking to the family with a lawyer on the phone.

President Trump's controversial visit on Tuesday was also underscored by his tweet about Kenosha and his role in getting troops to the city, saying "there would be no Kenosha" without his orders.

At the White House on Monday, President Trump also took credit for saving Kenosha.

"At least the governor asked me if I could. I said, 'You've got to get the National Guard,' and he finally agreed to even a small number. And they were to take care of thugs, and that's what was about five days ago, six days ago, and ever since, it's been very good," the president said.

"That's not correct, according to National Guard Major General Paul Knapp, who said it was inappropriate to comment on the presi- dent's controversial visit on Tuesday was also underscored by his tweet about Kenosha and his role in getting troops to the city, saying "there would be no Kenosha" without his orders.

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OBITUARY

Gladys Aranosian Hayes
Dedicated to Family, Business Owner

Pembroke, N.H. — Gladys Aranosian Hayes of Pembroke, NH passed away on August 7, 2020 at her home. She was 94.

Born on June 5, 1926 in Concord, NH, she was the daughter of Oscar and Mary Aranosian, staunch supporters of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL). She was a loving mom, grandmother and wife.

For years she was a member of St. Paul’s Parish. She was the church office administrator, a committed teacher, a devoted parishioner. Her friendship and culture.

While family was always first, she was also a very successful business owner. Working together with her siblings, she had a 50-plus-year career managing and operating Aranosian Oil Co., Inc. She was very fond of many of her employees.

For years she was a member of St. Paul’s Church in Concord, NH.

She also loved to travel, read and spend as much time with her family as possible. Gladys was also very proud of her Armenian heritage and culture.

The family would like to thank “Seniors Helping Seniors” (Vicki, Linda, Denise and Vera) for the compassionate care given to Gladys.

A private burial service will take place at Blossom Hill Cemetery. The Water’s Funeral Home is assisting with all of the arrangements. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the “Children of Armenia Fund”, 149 Fifth Ave., Suite 500, New York, NY 10010 or log onto www.coafkids.org/donate, with memo section Gladys Aranosian Hayes.

Gladys Aranosian Hayes

Annie (Yetimian) Kalaydjian
Dedicated to St. James Armenian Church

WOBURN, Mass. — Annie Kalaydjian (Yetimian) of Woburn passed away on August 26, 2020 after a brief but courageous battle with cancer. She was 75 years old.

She was born on June 16, 1945 in Beirut, Lebanon to the late Setrak and Ovsanna (Panosian) Yetimian. She was devoted mother, wife, and sister. She was a member of the St. James Armenian Church staff, a committed teacher, a devoted parishioner, and a dear friend to many.

She devoted much of her life to the St. James parish. She was the church office administrative assistant for more than 20 years, and was a vital part of the day-to-day parish life. She had a strong work ethic and took great pride in serving the church and our parishioners. Her friendly voice and heartwarming smile were a true light to the many people she interacted with on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis.

In addition to her work in the church office, she also devoted much of her time and efforts to teaching Armenian language at our parish St. Sahag & Mesrop Armenian School, having taught for more than 30 years. Over the years, she taught and mentored hundreds of children, teaching them Armenian language, history, and culture.

She had also previously worked at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and was actively involved in the AGBU Greater Boston Chapter, having served as secretary and past chair.

She is survived by her husband of 32 years, Alex Kalaydjian; son Narek Kalaydjian and sister Mayda Yetimian. In addition, she is survived by her brothers-in-law: Arak Kalaydjian and his wife Lisa of North Andover, Dr. Antranig Kalaydjian and his wife Rosie of Germany and her two nieces (Mary Aranosian and Cathy Aranosian) and numerous cousins.

Annie Kalaydjian was also very proud of her Armenian heritage and culture.

The family would like to thank “Seniors Helping Seniors” (Vicki, Linda, Denise and Vera) for the compassionate care given to Annie.

A private burial service will take place at Blossom Hill Cemetery. The Water’s Funeral Home is assisting with all of the arrangements. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the “Children of Armenia Fund”, 149 Fifth Ave., Suite 500, New York, NY 10010 or log onto www.coafkids.org/donate, with memo section Annie Kalaydjian.

Annie Yetimian Kalaydjian

Beloved Wyckoff Resident Remembered Through Grants

WYCKOFF, N.J. — A local non-profit remembered long-time Wyckoff resident Andrea Tilbian Halejian through two grants to her namesake memorial fund.

The Northern New Jersey Community Foundation’s (NNJCF) Andrea Tilbian Halejian Memorial Fund awarded two grants to nonprofit organizations in her memory, according to a news release.

The NNJCF donor advised fund donated $5,000 to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey and $10,000 to Yale University.

Based in Hackensack, the NNJCF is a non-profit organization which concentrates on the focus areas of education, public health, civic engagement, the arts, philanthropy, and the environment.

The NNJCF Andrea Tilbian Halejian Memorial Fund contributes to qualified charitable organizations Halejian supported, a news release said.

Subscribe.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity increased tremendously. The contribution to the Community FoodBank of New Jersey was intended to remember Tilbian Halejian’s volunteerism at area food banks.

“Food insecurity, now stretched even further amidst a global pandemic, was always something our mother sought to aid. If she were still walking this earth, she would have immediately jumped in to see how she could support our food banks close to home,” said Alexis Halejian, who is a member of the Fund’s Advisory committee, and daughter of Tilbian.

Sarah Halejian, daughter of the Fund’s namesake, served as captain of the Yale women’s varsity basketball team.

The awarded to Yale honors her support of the college’s academics, and provides a scholarship for an undergraduate student attending the post secondary institution.

“Our mother was our biggest cheerleader both on and off the court. She always loved watching our games and was a constant pillar of support throughout all three of our athletic careers,” said Alexis Halejian.

“She especially enjoyed countless trips to New Haven to watch Sarah and the rest of the Yale Bulldogs play. She always instilled in us a balance between academics and athletics and would be thrilled that this year a scholarship is being awarded to a Yale student.”
Donations Towards Renovations of Vahan Tekeyan School of Beirut

In response to the appeal of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board of Directors, the following donations were received as of August 29, 2020 for the renovation of the Vahan Tekeyan School (nursery through middle day school) of Beirut, Lebanon, which was heavily damaged during the August 4 tragedy. Donations continue to be received.

Please mail your tax-deductible donation to Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472 or donate by credit card at https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm

Nazar Nazarian $20,000.00
In Memory of Artemis Nazarian
TCA NJ Chapter 10,000.00
TCA Detroit Chapter $1,000.00
Raffi Bilemjian $500.00
Harry and Mary Hintlian $500.00
Karen Nargizian $500.00
Arsen Sanjian $300.00
Elizabeth Abrahamian $250.00
Sonia Iskandarian $250.00
Serge Panossian $250.00
Meline Toufayan $250.00
In Honor of Steve Nargizian’s Birthday
Dr. Herach O. Dournanian $200.00
Avedis and Armanouhie Markarian $200.00
Emma Sogoian $200.00
Donald and Barbara Tellalian $200.00
Suzanne K. and Harry Toufayan $200.00
Kristine Toufayan Casali $200.00
Sarkis Vartouguian $150.00
Minas Bekerejian $110.00
Anoush Balian $100.00
Zabel Benenyan $100.00
Chakarian Family Trust $100.00
Ayda Gezdir $100.00
Berc and Narcisse Gokberk $100.00
Onnig and Sossy Hamalian $100.00
Kevork Keushkerian $100.00
Alice Mazmanian $100.00
Karekin and Maria Movsesian $100.00
Masis Parunyan $100.00
Ruth Swisher $100.00
Dr. Gary and Mariann Zamanigian $100.00
Theresa Nargizian $100
Arda Derian $100.00
Vergine Jarakian $100.00
Dr. Charles, Manoushag Garabedian $100.00
George Mikhjian $100.00
Antranig T. Garoyan $55.00
Tania Festeckdjian $50.00
Yervant and Mary Jambgotchian $50
Harry Keyishian $50.00
Sylvana Mikaelian $50.00
David Ojakian $50.00
Lily Ordoubeigian $50.00
In memory of my brother Albert
Dorothy Piranian $40.00
Norman, Rosemary Kondy $25.00
Futi and Ara Ishanian $25.00

Mayor Says Timing Is Wrong For President Trump’s Visit

KENOSHA, from page 7

action. When I believe it to be false, because I know things too, I just have to tell you what I believe the answer is, and that’s false.”

He added that he has heard what people from the community have said in the recent days. He said body cameras will be part of the force beginning next year.

“On August 4, the Kenosha County Board approved a resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis. And I’m committed to this work. We’re going to build up, build upon our already strong partnerships. The pastor and many other organizations have been doing great work here in Kenosha County,” Kreuser said. “I’ve also heard the call for transparency. And I can tell you that body camera for the Kenosha County Sheriff’s Department will be in the budget that will present October 6 for implementation in 2021.”

Sheriff Beth said hundreds have been arrested in the last week.

“There’s been over 200 arrests, since the start. Over half of those have come out of side of Kenosha. And I’ve learned that, and this is really for the people of Kenosha. There are a lot of outside agitators that tried to scare people, they will make phone calls to businesses to churches to residents. Trying to scare and intimidate,” Beth said.

Meanwhile, President Trump on Monday also was asked if he would condemn the actions of vigilantes such as Rittenhouse.

“We’re looking at all of it. That was an interesting situation. You saw the same tape as I saw, and he was trying to get away from them, I guess, it looks like, and he fell, and then they very violently attacked him. And it was something that we’re looking at right now, and it’s under investigation,” President Trump said.

“But I guess he was in very big trouble. He probably would have been killed,” Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot also comment- ed on President Trump’s impending visit to a city still reeling from recent and sometimes vio- lent protests.

“If I believed that he would come with a mes- sage of healing and unity, that would be one thing, but what we see from him over and over again – and particularly as part of his reelection bid – is to exploit tensions and division, and that’s the last thing that Kenosha needs, it’s the last thing that Wisconsin needs, and it’s the last thing that our country and our country need,” Lightfoot said.

“I understand with and agree with the call from the governor of Wisconsin and other local elected officials in Wisconsin asking the presi- dent not to go to Kenosha in this time. We need to figure out how we can build bridges to each other. We need to get rid of the divisive rhetoric. I have not seen this president, in almost four years, as somebody who understands the need to unify the country. What he seems to be focusing on is divisions, and driving a wedge between dif- ferent races, genders, Democrats and so forth.”

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A number of protests are planned in Kenosha for the time when President Trump is there.

CBS 2’s Chris Tye and Charles De Mar contrib- uted to this report.

ASA Awards Silver And Gold Medals

AWARDS, from page 6

The ASA Gold Medal Award

The ASA Gold Medal Award is recognized as the highest scholarly award within the ASA. Any member of the ASA who is an undergrad-uate student and is at least a sophomore in an accredited college or university within the United States is eligible for consideration for this award.

Selected to receive the award this year is Danielle Karen Mikaelian, Thousand Oaks, CA, majoring in English at Columbia University.

Applications for the Gold Medal Awards can be obtained at: www.asainc.org. Deadline for submitting applications and documentation is March 15, 2021.
BOSTON – Keeping people connected, coming together virtually during these unusual times is the focus of the Friends of Armenian Heritage Park Planning Team, an extraordinary team of committed individuals providing key leadership in developing and implementing public programs.

These programs are inspired by Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston and its key design features “…public art that feels alive… gem of the Greenway…public art that is both permanent and alive...” states Joanna Weiss, The Boston Globe.

Armenian Heritage Park reflects the values and importance of Public Art to “engage public interaction, prompt awareness and reflect how our lives are interconnected”. Key points highlighted in a report of the Americans for the Arts, a national non-profit comprised of a network of organizations and individuals who support the arts in America. “Public art is a reflection of how we see the world…the artists’ response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are,” the report continues. “Activities need to be planned and the space needs to be well-cared for and maintained”. Both goals are being achieved at the Park.

“Public Art is the way we express ourselves as a community - it’s the way we tell our story,” comments Karin Goodfellow, Director of Public Art, City of Boston.

Jane Whitehead writes in “Forget Me Not” in ArchitectureBoston, the publication of the Boston Society of Architects, “Luckily, the project had a designer, Don Tellalian, AIA…who was sensitive to the imperatives of civic space…the design uses abstract, geometric forms…it evokes the broader historic struggles of all immigrants…offers multivalent possibilities for interpretation shaped by visitors’ own histories...”.

“Public Art employs a unique position within the art world...adds meaning to our cities, reflects who we are, the Abstract Sculpture and all its surrounding elements are a perfect example...” shares Lucas Cowan, Public Art Curator, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy on the occasion of Celebrate Public Art! during ArtWeek at the Park.

For many, walking the Park’s Labyrinth, symbolic of life’s journey, has become a respite, especially during these unusual times. Many are enjoying a quiet moment on one of the Park’s benches that surround the Labyrinth and the Abstract Sculpture. Some visit the Park each day, a place of comfort. Passersby, they share, often pause to read the Inscription on the Reflecting Pool, upon which the Abstract Sculpture sits, that states that the Abstract Sculpture is dedicated to “lives lost in the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides that followed”.

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Many pause to read the words – Art, Service, Science, Commerce. – etched around the Labyrinth’s Circle in tribute to contributions made to American life and culture.

Now, all programs are cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic including the Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron. The annual reconfiguration is symbolic of all who pulled away, or were forced to pull away, from their country of origin and came to these Massachusetts shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways. In early Spring, a crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of the split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of stainless steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The annual reconfiguration takes place, under the direction of A&A Industries and founders Anahid and Aurelian Mardiros, who fabricated the Abstract Sculpture, their very generous gift in lead. They are joined by William Martin who oversees the Park’s ongoing care and maintenance, and Don Tellalian, AIA. The annual reconfiguration is funded by the Park’s Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund.

On April 24 this year, the Genocide Remembrance was held virtually, a fitting tribute planned by the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Committee.

Several programs are being adapted to be offered virtually to keep people connected, coming together while expanding reach and building collaborations.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra is the newest collaborator to join the festive Welcome Reception for New Citizens at the Park following their Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall annually held in September. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Welcome Reception will not take place. Next year, the BSO will be joining the Armenian Museum of America, the Bostonian Society, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, the Greenway.
Conservancy and Museum of Fine Arts at the Welcome Reception offering gifts to our newest citizens. The Welcome Reception is funded by the Park's Anna and Noubar Afeyan Endowed Fund for Public Programs.

Geometry as Public Art: Telling A Story, the innovative curriculum inspired by the Park's design and geometric features has been developed in partnership with and piloted at the Eliot K-8 Innovation School, Boston Public School in the North End.

Now, adapted for remote learning, the curriculum sparks awareness of geometric shapes in our everyday lives and their creative expression of ideas and thoughts, and engages students in sharing their own, their families' or ancestors' immigrant experience and in doing so, celebrating what unites and connects us.

“This curriculum is an exciting and engaging way for students to learn more about their family heritage and reflect on the American immigration experience...and a wonderful way for teachers to learn about and better understand their students and for the students to learn about one another,” comments Brianna Greene, 4th Grade Educator at The Eliot K-8

Celebrating What Unites Us! series has also been adapted virtually. The two-part program was launched three years ago to build community and cross-cultural understanding while promoting healthy and active living. Each month highlighted the ethnic heritage of many living in the City of Boston and beyond. For two years, all first met at the Park where a community leader shared his/her immigrant experience. Many walked the labyrinth. Then all walked to The KITCHEN (now permanently closed) at the Boston Public Market where a guest chef shared a signature dish for all to enjoy for lunch and conversation. The series was offered in collaboration with City of Boston Age-Friendly and The KITCHEN and funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. Planning is underway to continue the series once all are once again out and about. Now, Celebrating What Unites Us! is a virtual cooking series with each program featuring a guest chef demonstrating signature ethnic dishes. The series is offered in collaboration with City of Boston Age-Friendly and OLDWAYS, a “food and nutrition nonprofit helping people live healthier, happier lives”.

Labyrinth Walking Wellness series was initially planned to be held at the Park to introduce the benefits of walking the labyrinth, as a part of the 2020 Greenway Fitness program. Now, the three-part introductory virtual series is offered in collaboration with City of Boston Age-Friendly, Boston Public Health Commission, the Greenway Conservancy and YMCA of Greater Boston.

Friends of Armenian Heritage Park Programs Planning Team, the team of volunteers providing the key leadership and professional expertise to develop and implement these programs include Kristin Asadourian, Jason Behrens, Andrea Buras, Susan Derarian, Tom Dow, Manneh Ghazarians, Martha Mensoian, Catherine Minassian, Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian, Katrina Piehler, Tsoloeen Sarian, Barbara Tellidian, Arlette Yegumians, Chiera Meghijian Zenati and Zareh Zorabyan.

Friends of Armenian Heritage Park is an initiative of Armenian Heritage Foundation. The Foundation Board, comprising representatives from parishes and organizations within the Armenian-American community of Massachusetts, is responsible for proper governance and fiduciary oversight, as well as for the Park’s ongoing care and maintenance.

To receive the Park’s E-News and announcements, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

The Vahon Tekeyan School was damaged by the August 4 explosion in Beirut. It serves a low-income segment of the Armenian community and already was struggling due to Lebanon’s economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. Now the school is trying to reopen for the fall semester. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada is sending aid and asks your assistance.

Send your donations by credit card at https://gofundme.com/Silw6Ux or send checks to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), or its headquarters (715 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472). All administrative costs for this campaign will be borne by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada. For more information, email ts defStyle@outlook.com or call 617 921-4455.
Sunny with a Chance of Funny

Sona Movsesian Wants to Be Your Friend

LOS ANGELES — Speaking to Sona Movsesian one would be hard-pressed to remember that this young woman regularly appears on the popular “Conan” talk show on TBS, and is co-host, along with Conan O’Brien and producer Matt Gourley, of the very popular “Conan O’Brien Needs a Friend Podcast,” as well as the “Summer S’mores with Conan and the Chill Chums.”

Movsesian, who sounds exactly like the friendly person one hears on the podcast, said it is no accident. “If I have a camera pointed at me or not, I am the same person. It’s me.”

Movsesian sounds enviably relaxed. “I have always been someone who is not stressed or anxious. I’m definitely not creating a persona.”

For about 10 years, Movsesian has been a bad assistant for the bulk of those years, the running joke, both on television and now on the podcast, is what an awful assistant she is, and in turn, what a mean boss O’Brien is.

Of course, had Movsesian been a bad assistant in real life, she would have long been replaced. The older-brother-bratty-younger-sister dynamic is one that both relish and which has resulted in ratings gold. According to Variety, each “Conan O’Brien Needs a Friend” podcast is downloaded more than one million times, making it one of the most popular podcasts now.

Movsesian frequently says her name and nails it every time.

Movsesian said she never wanted to change her name in order to make it more pronounceable. In turn, “He really wanted to make sure he got the name right,” she added. “He’s really gotten the name down. It sort of makes me feel that any era pointed at me or not, I am the same person. It’s me.”

Movsesian wants to be your friend. She can even buy Sona swag, including “Team Sona” t-shirts and “World’s Worst Assistant” mugs.

Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Sona on TV Skits

Search for Sona on YouTube and you will see some of the funniest O’Brien TV skits. In one, from 2018, O’Brien starts talking to Sona when she says she wants a new car as her Jetta has more than 100,000 miles on it. The host sits in the driver’s seat and starts breaking bits of the interior, from the light to the dangling sunglass holder. In the end, he suggests he buy her a car. The suggestions range from a used Bugatti ($2 million) to a used Honda ($1,000). The Honda wins, with the sellers bringing down the price to $500 — without haggling.

The story is true, said Sona Movsesian in an interview this week, with a hearty laugh. (She ended up getting herself a new Kia.)

In another, O’Brien hants for Sona’s “stolen” mug, with the logo and name of see MOVSESIAN, page 16

World Premiere Of Ballet ‘Two Suns’ on Mezzo Television

YEREVAN – The ballet “Two Suns” is the first ever performing arts work to present Armenian art and cultural heritage to the worldwide community of 60 million subscribers.

The premiere broadcast of Roudolf Kharatian’s “Two Suns” on the Mezzo TV channel took place on August 23, at 20:10 (CET). Following the premiere of “Two Suns” on August 23, broadcasts are already scheduled on August 28, September 9 and 15.

Broadcasting in more than 80 countries, Mezzo TV has become a leader in presenting the best of the performing arts to a discerning global audience since 1996. Ballet 2021 Development Foundation has signed a 5-year contract with Mezzo TV granting the channel broadcasting rights.

Fusing the past and the present, “Two Suns” presents Armenia’s impressive creative legacy through the prism of the 21st century becoming an innovative, timeless, Armenian and universal work of art that affirms Armenia’s relevance as an ongoing contributor to the humankind.

The broadcast of the ballet “Two Suns” to the millions of Mezzo TV international viewers is the first step to establishing Armenia on a worldwide stage. This was part of Roudolf Kharatian’s mission when he took the position of the Artistic Director of the National Ballet of Armenia back in 2009 at the invitation of the Government of Armenia.

The ballet “Two Suns” is based on Grigor Narekatsi’s Book of Lamentations. With libretto and choreography by Roudolf Kharatian, the musical score features 4th to 21st century compositions by Mesrop Mashtots, Grigor Narekatsi, Aram Khachaturian, Alun Hovhaness, Arno Babajanyan, Jost Tertian and Ashot Arian.

The sets and costumes were designed by Aybiogh Stephanian.

For this project, Ballet 2021 has created an international ballet troupe with artists from Japan, France, Greece, Israel, and the United States, and guest principal dancers from Germany and the United States.

The “Two Suns” international ballet project was realized in 2015 by Ballet 2021 Foundation with the funding from the State Commission on the Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation. The ballet premiered on May 27, 2015 at the National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Armenia.
Art Is More Powerful Than War

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – When Azerbaijan attacked the Tavush region in July, Armenians everywhere responded with protest demonstrations. In Berlin, as reported in this newspaper, several cultural associations came together to organize an artistic response, with an exhibition that opened on August 9 and ended on August 30. Hosted by the Wolf & Galentz Gallery in Berlin, it was entitled, “Armenia: Grace and Violence. Images of Landscapes and Traces of War.”

Artist and curator Archi Galentz told guests at the vernissage that the exhibition had come as a contrasting reaction to the renewed outbreak of violence. The initiative is a cooperative effort between his gallery, the Association of the European and Armenian Experts e.V. (AEAE) and the Tavush Spiritual Revival Foundation.

Mikayel Minasyan, chairman of the Board of the AEAE, greeted the visitors, and introduced them to the contrasting themes presented in the works on display. On the one hand, magnificent Armenian landscapes adorned with historic architectural monuments; on the other, ravages of war. Here it is not only the scenes of the recent conflict that are evoked, but also war zones in 2016. In the violent four-day war, Minasyan said, both sides suffered massive casualties. “What we want to do with this exhibition,” he said, “is to show what war destroys and what peace offers.”

On one wall Minasyan pointed to the breathtaking Armenian landscapes, on another, the photographs of monuments of Armenian architectural treasures, churches, monasteries and Khachkars. Both expressions of beauty stand in stark contrast to the devastation and suffering in the war zone, depicted also in images of internalized horror.

Not long after the conflict was rekindled in July, Minasyan recalled, a massive explosion obliterated large parts of Beirut. The Armenian quarter was also hit, leading to 13 deaths, more than 100 wounded and 200 missing.

“And then came peace,” he noted, “there came one crisis after the other.”

The landscape paintings and drawings, that come from private collections in Berlin, include the works of Mher Abeghyan, Mariam Azizian, Seda Hakuryan, Hakob Hakobyan, Khachatour Jessayan, Harutyun and Armine Abeghyan, Mariam Aslamazyan, Seda Bekaryan, Hakob Karpatyan, Albert Tzovyan and Hovhannes Zardaryan.

Among the artists featured are Silvina Der Meguerditchian, Mikayel Minasyan, chairman of the Board of the AEAE, Karmen Aslanian, Video Artist Archi Galentz’s grandmother, Armine Kalentz. Curator Archi Galentz’s grandmother, Armine Kalentz. Curator Archi Galentz’s grandmother.

Following Minasyan’s greetings, violinist Davit Khachaturyan played two solo pieces by Komitas, and Father Yeghishe Archimandrite Avetisyan concluded the event with the Hye Men, and a blessing. Among the honored guests were the third Secretary of the Armenian Embassy Lusine Khachatryan and the Counselor Sedrak Durtyan.

The month-long exhibition was a success, not only in terms of numbers of visitors, the message it sent was a powerful moral statement. In the face of aggression and violence, war and destruction, one must not respond in kind, but rather take the high road. News of the exhibition appeared in the Armenian press.

And it must have reached Azerbaijan as well. But the message seems to have fallen on deaf ears there. On August 19, Wolf & Galentz received a letter by email from Baku that denounced the exhibition as “a provocation” by the Armenian community in Germany because of the use of “Artsakh Republic.” It argued that designating Karabakh as Armenian constituted a violation of international law. “We, people of Azerbaijan,” it read, “want you to react and to stop exhibiting aggression and violation of human rights.” Curiously, the person speaking in the name of the people, identified himself as an engineering student at the Process Automation Engineering Department of the Baku Higher Oil School. The organizers of the exhibition are looking into the matter.

Whatever the background, whoever the person or agency behind the letter, the nature of the reaction invites reflection on the enduring conflict, not so much on its territorial, political and geopolitical dimensions, but on the moral, intellectual and cultural aspects. It brought to my mind the story of the Djulfa cemetery in Nakhichevan, where Azerbaijanis forces have systematically destroyed thousands of ancient Khachkars over the decades, and, in answer to international outcries, denied that Armenians had ever inhabited the region.

The exhibition at Wolf & Galentz continued, undisturbed, and received considerable public attention. Among the guests attending the closing ceremony, held as scheduled on August 30, was Hans-Jochen Schmidt, a former German ambassador to Armenia.
The idea has probably shocked some, but there were some communities, perhaps as they had gotten used to believe. Few read-
ners have made it all the way to the end of my book, to write reviews for Armenian culture and of its development. We 

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the institutional development of the Religious Chair on Eurasia.

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George Kirazian’s Novella, A Time for Fathers, is Released

SAN DIEGO — Author and composer George Kirazian’s novella, A Time for Fathers, has been released by Laurel Publications and is available on Amazon.com.

In the short novel, Doug Foster, 14, is fed-up staying with his moody aunt and uncle, wants to avoid permanently living with them and decides to search for his father. His journey takes him from one end of San Diego to the other, meeting strange, quirky, and beautiful people who knew his father. Some of them couldn’t care less and don’t help him at all. Others, in their own kind way, offer memories that help Doug to forget his bitterness and see his father in a way he never has before.

Kirazian, who is a dancer and composer, has worked on A Time for Fathers for years and has been working on other projects. He has also written and published several other books, including The Sleeping Peacock and Beyond the Koala Peacock and Across the Kingdom, also available in paperback. Kirazian is a composer and has worked on several other projects, including the pop-up book, The Sleeping Peacock and Beyond the Koala Kingdom, which was recently published by Laurel Publications.

Kirazian’s work as a composer includes several art songs, hymns, the Armenian Apostolic Church liturgy (kirazianbadarak.com), and a ballet, “The Book of Ruth.” Several of his works have been performed by several orchestras in the San Diego area.

Kirazian is a well-known composer and musician, and his work is widely respected in the music world. His novella, A Time for Fathers, is a heartfelt story about the journey of a teenager who is searching for his father and the lessons he learns along the way. Kirazian’s music has been featured in several films and television shows, and his compositions are often used in religious services and concerts.

Kirazian is currently working on several other projects, including a new ballet, a new opera, and a new album of his music. He is also working on a new book, which will be released in 2021. Kirazian is a prolific composer and musician, and his work continues to inspire and delight audiences around the world.
Sunny with a Chance of Funny: Sona Movsesian Wants to Be Your Friend

MOVSESIAN, from page 12

The real you should not be affected by real life gong shows. Manifestly

ment, prohibited him from appearing on television for six

ratings kept deteriorating and he got the network to give him

work, this time on an hour-long talk show in prime time, there-

floodgates,” she said. “It quickly deteriorated into a brother-sis-

I was talking to my grandmother and he says, ‘It sounds like you

tionship was when she was talking on the phone to her grand-

said. “It’s because he is from a big Irish Catholic

Over time, she said, the relationship organically evolved from

The Harvard grad (with honors), and two-time president of the

asked how she prepares, she notes honestly, “I don’t really pre-

Movsesian comes through as someone who is comfortable in

Harvard Lampoon, “constantly feels the need to educate himself.

He is always reading a giant biography of a president or a book

about the business operates.

The situation, she noted, was a real eye opener for her in terms

“I was one year into my job and it still felt like a new job for

Movsesian was a tremendous support to O’Brien at the time

O’Brien experienced a lot of pain and received a groundswell

of support, including to the launch of his show, “Conan,” on

This is not a myth. He is a very decent person,” she recalled.

Of course, some people fluster the cool-as-ice Sona. “I am a big

Lakers’ fan and I met [the late] Kobe Bryant right after they

had won the championship. He was so happy and loose. How not
to normally was, which was very focused.

Other standouts, she said were Magic Johnson and guitarist

Slash of the band Guns and Roses.

She added, however, that if she and her friends go to

Disneyland, they do so while ingesting the good stuff.

Movsesian also has her own Instagram show, “Sona Pixels Your

Life,” where viewers submit questions or dilemmas they are

Facing. “I am completely useless,” she said. “The name should be ‘Sona makes your life even more complicated!”

Sona and Conan Visit Armenia

O’Brien started recording travel shows as part of “Conan” in

2015, with a trip to Cuba. The show was well received and so

enjoyable to do that he decided to do another one.

Many Armenian-Americans have seen the absolutely ridiculous

episode of O’Brien’s visit to Armenia.

Movsesian recalled that the writers were sitting around a table

when O’Brien said, “Why don’t we take Sona to Armenia.”

“As we were planning it, Armenia books were coming in and

the writers were researching all the names and I heard Versace,”

she added, noting that she was incredibly touched.

“All those things I had grown up listening to and learning about... I can’t tell you how amazing that experience was,” she said.

The trip, which was her first to Armenia, made for hilarious

viewing. Before the trip, she said, she was very nervous. “If you

put something out there, it could very easily have been a disas-

ter.” Instead, the result was a funny and touching episode cap-

turing a lot of sweet moments. “I was very proud to be part of

that episode,” she added.

In addition, she got a bonus present, a tape of her grand-

mother. In the early portion of the episode, O’Brien visits the

Movsesians’ home in Los Angeles and speaks with her grand-

daughter, Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Jimmy Carter and President

Bill Clinton.

The format allows O’Brien and his guest to delve deeply into

subjects — sometimes seriously — without commercial interrup-
tions and censorship. His razor-sharp intelligence shines

through. (Since March all the hosts and guests have participat-
ed remotely.)

Of course, he and his crew — including Movsesian — also do

hilarious ads for various services and products, from State Farm

Insurance to the Tosty Bidet.

The latter, Movsesian said, is a favorite. “He brought me in to

say it,” she recalled, chuckling.

If O’Brien comes across as intelligent, it is because he is,

Movsesian said. “He is probably one of — if not the — smartest people I have ever met. He chooses the right combination of words that is always the fairest,” she said.

The Harvard grad (with honors), and two-time president of the

William and Grace” who chatted hap-

pily to everyone during the pre-taping process.

And who can forget the super chill, super jazzy and laid back Jeff Goldsmith. “He is really cool. After we recorded the interviews, he called the office. He said ‘I just wanted to call and follow up and have a conversation’ with the staff,” Movsesian said.

And of course, famously nice guy Tom Hanks, she recalled, called everyone out by name. “He is a genuinely nice person. It is not a myth. He is a very decent person,” she recalled.

On the show, another running joke O’Brien makes is

Movsesian’s use of cannabis. When asked about it, Movsesian chuckled and said, “It has been legal here for a very long time.”

“Told them, ‘I tried it, but I do it for time to time. I am not a pothead. I just unwind sometimes. I never wake up and do it. I am not Tommy Chong.’”

She added, however, that if she and her friends go to

Disneyland, they do so while ingesting the good stuff.

Movsesian also has her own Instagram show, “Sona Pixels Your

Life,” where viewers submit questions or dilemmas they are

Facing. “I am completely useless,” she said. “The name should be ‘Sona makes your life even more complicated!’
Recipe
Corner
by Christine Vartanian

Simit

All Simonian, the creator of TheFabMom® blog, is a popular TV/media host/contributor and author with over 200,000 parenting lifestyle segments to her credit. Born in Fresno, Jill attended UCLA and now lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two daughters.

This is her late mother Bonnie Simonian’s simit recipe she makes for her family at Easter and the holidays. “Simit is a traditional, not-too-sweet Armenian cookie that goes great with coffee, tea, or hot chocolate that I can serve any time of day. My mother’s version is simple, and I remember her each time I make it with my daughters.”

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 3 cups better (1 1/2 cups), softened
- 2 eggs (plus one egg for brushing on top of cookies)
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 5 cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- Sesame seeds for sprinkling on top, optional

**PREPARATION:**
Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl, beat 2 eggs with the butter for a few minutes. Add the sugar and orange juice, and mix well. Add the flour, powder, and baking soda, and mix well.

Roll quarter-sized pieces of dough into skinny round strips of 1/2-inch thickness (6 inches long). Fold each strip in half, and make “bostyk shape” cookies and cross-criss on ends. Pinch so they stick together on one end.

Place cookie twists on an ungreased cookie sheet (parchment paper, if desired). Brush lightly with beaten egg. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden brown (they may turn golden brown after 10 minutes, depending on your oven). Do not burn.

Makes about 5 dozen.

**REFERENCES:**
http://thefabmom.com/
https://www.facebook.com/jillsimonian.thefabmom/
https://www.instagram.com/jillsimonian/

is as well as the countryside,” she recalled. One day, after a particularly harrowing car ride to the mountains to herd some sheep, she said O’Brien told her, “This is one of the prettiest places I’ve ever seen.”

He was also touched to see her teary reaction, looking at the wedding, on YouTube.)

Now Movsesian’s problem is that if she has a tough day at home. “Tak was a fan of Conan before we met. It is really hard to complain about your work. He will say it’s ‘CONAN!’ There is a real bromance brewing.”

You can visit their wedding as well as O’Brien dancing at the wedding, on YouTube.)

As for the future, Movsesian said, “I don’t try to plan too far in advance.” She said she is pretty happy where she is. “Why rock the boat?”

Watch “Conan” on TBS and listen to “Conan O’Brien Needs a Friend” on all podcast platforms.

**MEDITERRANEAN**

September 9 – Wednesday, at 10am. Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. ARMENIAN CUISINE. Lena Tashjian, Cookbook author, recipe developer, writer, The Vegan Armenian Kitchen Cookbook: Recipes and Stories from Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora (2020); founder, Vegan Armenian Kitchen.com. To register via Zoom, please email hello@ArmenianHeritage.org

September 13 – Trinity’s On-The-Go Picnic, Sunday, Noon – 3 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Pre-Orders Only! Place your orders online or download the mail-in order form to place your order by Wednesday, September 9.

September 20 – St. James Fall Kick-Off To-Fer at the St. James Men’s Club and Hye Cafe groups, in lieu of in-person September events. 12:30 – 2:30pm. Meal will be available for pre-order outside pickup only. Online ordering will be available starting on September 1st at http://stjameswatertown.square.site. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Please contact www.stjameswatertown.com for any questions.

September 22 – Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston 2020 Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament. Tuesday, Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough. Please submit completed registration information directly to the church office via mail or e-mail. Questions? 617 544-6532

September 23 – Wednesday, at 10 am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE. Chef Sean Sherman member of the Ogilala Lakota tribe Cookbook author, The Sioux Chef Indigenous Kitchen. 2018 James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook; co-founder, The Sioux Chef.com - 2019 James Beard Leadership Award. To register via Zoom, email hello@ArmenianHeritage.org

**RHODE ISLAND**

September 4 – The Cultural Committee of the St. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Presents Armenian Cultural Hour Friday, at 7:30 pm Yuval Yaron & Choral Orchestra Of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, Selected Songs. • September 11 – Friday, 7:30 pm, Komitas Vardapet. Berliner Barcks, Premier Presentation in the US • September 18 – Friday, 7:30 pm, Dedicated to of Armenia’s Independence. A Special Program, “Salute to Armenia” • September 25 – Friday, 7:30 pm “Meet with our Doctors” via the Zoom Conference Platform. Questions & Answers. Dr. Ara Sadanianz, Cardiologist, Jason Martinez, Moderator. You can find the LIVESTREAM of the event through the parish’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/parish.amERICANarchurccoli providence/videos/ 17
Turkey’s foreign policy has all the trappings of a superpow-
er. That robust posture is based on the military might, which is
developed arrogantly in regions away from Turkey’s imme-
diate sphere of influence.

On the one hand, Turkey is engaged in a standoff with Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, while on the other hand, it is challenging China for the misattribution of its Muslim Uyghur minority.

In the West, only France has been vocal about its concerns over Turkish aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean, while Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany has been self-peddling between the two antagonists’ camps.

This reaction has been creating some tensions among the members of the European Union.

In response to Turkey’s increasingly aggressive stance in the Mediterranean, President Emmanuel Macron of France has stated that the time has come to draw a red line in front of Turkey’s unlawful activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, adding that Turkey adopted a behavior unconforming to a NATO member.

This comment triggered a furious reaction in Ankara, where Hami Aksoy, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry, replied: “Those who think they have drawn red lines against the just cause of Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean will only face the firm stance of our country. If there is a red line in the region, it can only be that of the rights of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, which stem from international law. It is time for those who have delusions of grandeur to face reality. The era of defining imperialist conceptions by drawing lines on maps is long gone.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s statement was even more blunt: “In addition to our fight against terrorism, we are facing challenges against our interests in the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas. We are fighting against all enemies and we are throwing the gauntlet before our enemies.”

Macron just made his second visit to Lebanon in the wake of the devastating explosion at the Beirut harbor on August 4 to assess the situation. It is not just a gesture of good will on his part; the French are keeping an eye on the activities of various Turkish ministries prestiging on the miscrecy of the citizens of that beleaguered nation.

Turkey’s foreign policy and militant posturing have a sym-
éctical counterpart in the Caucasus. But before dwelling on that region, it is important to find the source of Turkey’s extraordinary arrogance in dealing with the international community.

Watching Turkey’s role in the configuration of global forces, we can find a diminished role for the US military in the world. That does not mean the US is reducing communally its interest in world affairs but there is a shift; once the US was outsourcing manufacturing and was fighting foreign wars. Today manufacturing is returning home, particularly from China, and Washington is outsourcing foreign wars. Remember that one of the highlights of Mr. Trump’s acceptance speech at the Republican National Committee’s convention was bringing back the troops.

Turkey has found its niche in this shift of power. During the Cold War, Turkey served as the bulwark against the expansion of communism. In this new role, Ankara is becoming the policeman of the Middle East and the Caucasus.

Another force is emerging in the Asia Pacific region: Japan. At the end of World War II, when Japan signed an unconditional surrender to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers Gen. Douglas MacArthur, a new constitution, drafted by the gen-
eral himself, limited Japan’s military to self-defense only. But in recent years, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe changed that constitu-
tion with the acquiescence of the US, paving the way towards a new brand of militarism, particularly in view of China’s growing military presence in the region.

Hulusi Akar, who has been commanding Turkey’s murderous raids in Syria and Libya, has also appeared on the Karabakh front during these military drills. Assuming the same arrogance as his boss, Akar threatened Armenia, stating that “Turkey is also a party to the conflict, standing with the brotherly state [of Azerbaijan] and defending its rights.” He added: Armenia does not act reasonably by relying on forces standing behind it, pushing above its weight.

This statement was a direct reference to Moscow, revealing the real threat of the internationalization of the Turkish military presence in Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan.

Mr. Akar’s reference was a direct challenge to Russia, ignoring Armenia.

Thus far, Moscow has been playing it cool. It is reported that President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov have urged Ankara to exercise restraint, speaking to their coun-
terparts on the phone.

Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has added more fuel to the Turkish rhetoric, saying at a joint press conference: “Armenia has proven it is not a trustworthy country. Azerbaijan is not alone. We work under the notion of ‘one nation, two states,’ and we conducted our meeting today with the same understanding.”

The truth of the matter is that to reflect the truth it is more correct to say “two nations, one state.”

For all intents and purpose, Armenia is facing Turkey as the main challenge to its security in the region. This fact was acknowledged by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan during an awards ceremony in Karabakh recently, where he said: “From continued on next page

Turkey Casting Its Threatening Shadow Over Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Before his recent resignation for health reasons, Shimon Abbe visited the Vankanki Shrine, where many executed Japanese war criminals are buried, and paid tribute to them while the Emperor Naruhito made an equivocal statement grieveing all the victims of war.

If President Trump is reelected, we may see more evidence of this policy and other policemen may pop up in different regions doing the bidding of the US.

For example, President Jar Bolnaron of Brazil may fill the bill for South America.

While Turkey is assuming this role of policeman, supposedly serving the interests of Western powers, it will take care also of its own business, consolidating the foundations of its Ottomanist designs.

During the July war on the Tarush border, Azerbaijani forces lost face; the $5 billion shiny military hardware proved to be ineffec-
tive against the licensee-armed Armenian forces. As a result of that setback, President Aliyev lost his credibility. This develop-
mnt has helped Turkey to fill in the power vacuum there. First, Turkish-Azerbaijan joint forces held impressive war games to intimidate Armenia and then Turkey moved its military forces into Nakhichevan, turning it into a virtual military base, mirroring the Russian base in Chuikovka.

These moves were more significant than Turkey supporting its brother nation of Azerbaijan. Turkey was exercising its new status as the policeman of the region, with one eye to Washington, showing it was performing its role of containing Russia. The Karabakh war has been in reality only an excuse to serve a broader geopolitical plan.

Mr. Erdogan’s war here, the ubiquitous Minister of Defense

Editorial
Turkey's Leaders: Tensions with Armenia, Geopolitical Shifts

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey's leaders are facing pressure to scale down tensions with Armenia, as the country's geopolitical positioning continues to evolve.

Recent developments highlight the complexity of Turkey's relations with its neighbors, particularly in the context of regional geopolitical shifts.

The Turkish government has been criticized for its aggressive stance towards Armenia, with recent border incidents and military drills raising concerns about regional stability.

The European Union, NATO, and the United States have urged both countries to de-escalate tensions and pursue a diplomatic resolution.

Regional powers like Russia and Iran have also been closely monitoring the situation, with potential influences on their own diplomatic and strategic interests.

The Armenian government has called for an international investigation into the incidents, with human rights organizations expressing concern about the use of force.

The situation remains volatile, with both sides continuing to demonstrate a determination to protect their national interests, while regional and international actors are working to address the crisis and prevent further escalation.

The future of Turkey's relations with Armenia will depend on a range of factors, including diplomatic efforts, domestic politics, and the role of external actors in mediating the conflict.

By focusing on dialogue and diplomacy, both countries can move towards a resolution, avoiding a potentially destructive arms race and ensuring the stability of the region.
2.2 Million More Syrians at Risk of Hunger: WFP

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Rudaw) — Another 2.2 million Syrians are at risk of poverty and hunger as food prices soar after nearly a decade of conflict, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned on Monday, August 31.

“A record 9.3 million people in Syria are food insecure, & without urgent help 2.2 million more could slide further into hunger & poverty,” the United Nations agency tweeted.

Food prices skyrocketed this summer when the Syrian pound dropped to its lowest ever recorded rate in June as new United States sanctions came into force. The cost of food is now more than double the high prices reached during intense conflict in 2016 and still rising, according to the United Nations humanitarian affairs office.

While need is great, it is now more difficult to deliver humanitarian aid. In July, the UN Security Council narrowly passed a resolution allowing scaled down aid. Weeks of wrangling ended when Russia and China abstained from a veto, allowing a border crossing between Turkey and Syria’s rebellious Idlib province to remain open to aid for another year. Authorization from the Security Council allows UN agencies to deliver humanitarian aid without approval from Damascus. Border crossings with Jordan and Iraq have been closed to aid.

The UN estimates 400,000 people have died in Syria’s conflict since 2011, more than 5.6 million people have fled the country, and over 6 million are internally displaced.

New Game of Thrones in the Mediterranean

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It also seems bizarre for Mediterranean and European countries to be plunged into extraneous tensions when there are so many serious crises to keep them busy, including the economy, the pandemic, the political suspense in the United States, the street clashes in Belarus and Russia’s threat to intervene in Belarus.

In an earlier era, the United States would have stepped in to separate feuding NATO partners, as it did when Greece and Turkey almost went to war in 1996. President Trump did make a call to Mr. Erdogan urging him to negotiate, but that had no effect — the United States under the Trump administration is not regarded as a viable go-between, especially with Mr. Trump in campaign mode. Britain, too, has retreated from European affairs now that it is out of the European Union. The union also lacks leverage over Turkey, since it has become evident that Turkey under Mr. Erdogan, despite its status as a candidate for membership, has no chance of joining the union.

So Germany, which currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the European Council, the policy-setting assembly of E.U. heads of government, has taken the lead in trying to get Turkey and Greece to the negotiating table, with Heiko Maas, the German foreign minister, shuttling between Ankara and Athens. The mediation is not entirely altruistic — a cornered Turkey could unleash another flood of Syrian refugees into Europe, most of them seeking to reach Germany. But with nearly three million Turks living in Germany, Mr. Erdogan has at least some assurance that his side of the argument will be heard.

That is important. Though international law is largely on the side of Greece in the maritime dispute, there is room for negotiation, and Turkey’s explorations in disputed waters have not yet crossed a legal red line. On Friday, E.U. foreign ministers met in Berlin and effectively endorsed Germany’s role, putting off any discussion of sanctions against Turkey until E.U. heads of state meet in late September.

War is in nobody’s interest, and a conflict between NATO members ought to be unthinkable. But when tensions reach the level they have in the eastern Mediterranean, as Mr. Maas has said, “Even the smallest spark can lead to a catastrophe.” Germany has called on all sides to immediately halt provocative military exercises, a step that should be followed by a moratorium on exploration in disputed waters. Then let diplomacy take over.

(This New York Times editorial appeared in the August 31 edition of the newspaper)