

Massachusetts Jewish Leaders Stand with Armenian Neighbors, Call for US Humanitarian Intervention

BOSTON — Over 30 Jewish communal leaders in Massachusetts have signed a letter expressing support for the Armenian community during the current crisis in Armenia, based on shared humanitarian values. The full list of signatories, including Jewish public officials, executive directors, CEOs and Board Chairs of Jewish organizations, and rabbis, can be viewed below.

According to the October 14, 2020 press release of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), “The Jewish community stands in solidarity with our friends and neighbors in the Armenian-American community and to urge intervention to save the innocent people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) amidst a current and growing crisis. The Armenian people have suffered through the genocide once at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. We cannot sit idly by as they face the risk of another extraordinary humanitarian disaster and urge leadership at this critical moment.”

“We in Boston have a longstanding relationship with the local Armenian community and have been in touch with them in recent weeks about ways in which we can show our support,” said Jeremy Burton, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council. “It is important for us to express solidarity with our Armenian neighbors.”

The letter remains open for additional signatures from community leaders.

JCRC defines and advances the values, interests, and priorities of the organized Jewish community of Greater Boston in the public square.

The Sign On Letter in Support of the Armenian-American Community

Dear President Trump,

The undersigned leaders of the American Jewish community are writing to you in solidarity with our friends and neighbors in the Armenian-American community and to urge you to intervene to save the innocent people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) amidst a current and growing crisis.

Since their adoption of Christianity in 301 CE, Armenians have nurtured their faith through many trials, including and significantly the Turkish Genocide of 1915. This first genocide of the modern

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Death Toll Rises as War Continues

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) — As the war is stretching into its third week, the casualties are mounting and the entire Republic of Artsakh is under attack, as is Armenia.

Reflecting that sense of urgency, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev expressed readiness on October 19 to meet in Moscow for urgent talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The two men were interviewed by the official Russian news agency TASS as heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces continued in and around Karabakh.

“The Karabakh conflict must be resolved by exclusively peaceful means ... And I’m



A destroyed school in Stepanakert



Pashinyan Announces Heavy Casualties, Thanks Armenia’s Allies

By Mateos Hayes

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Speaking in a 2 p.m. televised address on October 14 broadcast live across Armenia, Pashinyan gave citizens of Armenia and Artsakh his latest in a series of regular updates on developments relating to renewed fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Yerevan residents were able to view the Armenian head of state’s speech as they went about their day thanks to large flatscreen televisions which have been installed in major public spaces such as the Yerevan State Opera, and Republic Square.

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ready to make every effort to achieve such a result, including to travel [to Moscow,] meet and talk,” said Pashinyan.

He said that Armenia remains committed to a “compromise” peace deal. “If there is no such readiness on the opposite side we are ready to fight till the end for our people, our compatriots in Nagorno-Karabakh,” he said.

Aliyev said, for his part, that Baku is “prepared for any contacts” with Yerevan. “We are always ready to meet in Moscow or any other place to end the conflict and reach a settlement,” he told TASS.

Aliyev noted at the same time that he has received “no such invitation” from Russia yet.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov hosted on October 9-10 talks between his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts that resulted in an agreement to stop hostilities in the conflict zone. However, the fighting has continued since then, with each side accusing the other of violating the agreement.

Lavrov said earlier on Monday that Moscow

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Aronian Says He Is Ready to Join Army

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian grandmaster Levon Aronian has revealed he is ready to join the army.

In an interview with chess24, Aronian said he already has already lost friends in the fighting.

“My country is under assault by Turkey and Azerbaijan. We are trying to protect ourselves and our right to live in peace. For every Armenian in the world this is now the main concern. I am going back tomorrow and will do everything I can to help my country overcome this trouble,” he said in Norway where he was competing at the Altibox Norway Chess tournament.

“I will do everything to help my country with everything I can. If it is necessary for my country for me to be in the army I will do that,” he said.

French City of Vienne Recognizes Artsakh

VIENNE, France (Panorama.am) — The municipal council of the French city of Vienne unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the Republic of Artsakh on Monday, October 19, Deputy Mayor of Vienne Levon Sakounts said on Facebook.

Earlier on October 15, the French town of Limonest recognized the independence of Artsakh.

Meanwhile, the Council of the French Hauts-de-Seine Department issued a statement calling on the French president and the government to reconsider their diplomatic strategy and to render diplomatic assistance to the Republic of Artsakh in the face of the continuing aggression by Azerbaijan.

Int. Bodies’ Avoiding Visits to Artsakh Led to War

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Human Rights Defender of Armenia Arman Tatoyan says the violence, atrocities, mass destructions committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) are consequences of the international structures’ continuous denial to visit Artsakh.

“The atrocities and mass destructions carried out by the Azerbaijani armed forces in Artsakh are also consequences of the fact that the international organizations have constantly refused to visit Artsakh, despite our numerous calls, invitations and warnings,” he said on October 20 .

He considered very important to show now that the principle “no one should be left behind, no one should be ignored and isolated,” which is announced in the UN, other structures at a high level, is a really operating principle in life, is a principle protecting person in life, and is not just an illusion.

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Manoogian Leads Way for Michigan State House Resolution Condemning Azeri and Turkish Aggression

By Harry Kezelian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LANSING, Mich.

— At approximately 3:30 a.m. on

Wednesday, October 14, after a “marathon” Tuesday session that extended through the night, the House of Representatives of Michigan passed a resolution (Resolution 319) condemning Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s aggression against the Armenians of Artsakh.

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Michigan State Rep. Mari Manoogian



ARMENIA

Death Toll Rises as War Continues

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keeps pressing the sides to stop the war and resume “substantive” peace talks that will center on a framework peace accord proposed by the Russian, French and U.S. co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Pashinyan put the emphasis on Azerbaijan’s recognition of the Karabakh Armenians’ right to self-determination. This issue is of “strategic importance” to the Armenian side, he said.

In addition, the United Nations Security Council again discussed the continuing war over Nagorno-Karabakh late on Monday at a meeting initiated by France, Russia and the United States and, the three world powers trying to end the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Vasily Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador to the UN who chaired the closed-door meeting, said it discussed ways of ensuring the conflicting parties’ compliance with ceasefire agreements.

“It is now necessary to ensure the implementation, this is the most pressing issue because a relevant agreement was reached but not respected,” the TASS news agency quoted Nebenzya as saying. “The main question remains how to ensure a verification of its implementation.”

“This issue was certainly discussed during the consultations, and the council was quite unanimous in its approach,” he told reporters in New York.

Nebenzya did not exclude that foreign observers would be deployed by and operate under the aegis of the OSCE.

“The questions of who will be there and in what capacity remain open and under discussion,” said the Russian diplomat.

Rising Death Toll

The fighting in and around Karabakh reportedly continued on Monday night and on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Defense of Artsakh said the total death toll of the Artsakh military reached 772.

According to the Armenian Unified Infocenter, 6309 Azeri troops have been killed in action since the attacks on Artsakh began on September 27.

They added that the Azerbaijani military has lost 200 UAVs, 16 helicopters, 23 warplanes, 576 armored equipment and 4 TOS multiple rocket launchers.

Amid the Azerbaijani ongoing attacks on Artsakh, on October 16, a serviceman of the Azerbaijani armed forces called an Armenian serviceman’s brother and said that they have beheaded him. The Azeri soldier apparently used the mobile phone of the victim. The Azeri soldier told the Armenian serviceman’s brother that they will post the photo of the severed head online. Hours after the call, the man found the photo of his brother’s severed head uploaded on his social media account.



The Bayraktar drone



Unexploded cluster bombs

The Human Rights Defender of Armenia Arman Tatoyan received a call certifying the report.

Armenia’s Representative to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Yeghishe Kirakosyan said on October 19 that they will apply to the ECHR over the brutal case.

Iran has decried the “Takfiri” style beheadings after what they described as “worrying” images were released from Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said, “Iran will not accept beheading people like Takfiris or targeting cities and innocent people,” referring to the “worrying images released from Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” IRNA reported.

Khatibzadeh called on both sides of the conflict to ‘be committed to international regulations.’

In addition to the death toll, the infrastructure of the country is in shambles.

According to Artak Beglaryan, the human rights ombudsman of Artsakh, all 217 schools and 60 kindergartens in Artsakh are closed.

Use of Cluster Bombs, Drones

A missile with an internationally prohibited cluster warhead fired by the Azerbaijani armed forces on civilian settlements of Artsakh was discovered near Stepanakert on October 20. More than 260 exploded and unexploded shrapnel bomblets were found.

“The area where the missile was found is of economic significance,” the State Service of Emergency Situations of Artsakh said. “Residents here make their living by farming, gardening and bee-keeping. There is not a single military facility anywhere nearby,” the service said, adding that the bomb squads will dispose the ordnance.

Azerbaijan has intensified its use of drones against Artsakh and Armenia. However, Iran has also been targeted. A drone crashed in Khoda Afarin, East Azerbaijan Province, north-western Iran on October 20, IRNA quoted Khoda Afarin governor Ali Amiri as saying.

Amiri told IRNA that the drone crashed in Gara Goch village, Minjavan District. It didn’t cause casualties.

According to IRNA, Iranian military experts are now investigating to which side of the conflict the drone belongs.

Over 60 stray rockets have hit Khoda Afarin since the Azeri attacks on Artsakh began on September 27, according to IRNA.

Earlier in October, an Israeli made Harop loitering munition operated by the Azeri military had similarly crashed into Iranian territory.

On October 20, the Artsakh Defense Army shot down around a dozen of the Turkish Bayraktar drones that have been used in the Azeri attacks since September 27, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan said.

“However not one of the downed drones had crashed into territories under Defense Army control. But finally we have remnants of the Bayraktar, which clearly shows that the device was manufactured in September, while the modern optics were produced in Canada in June. Why this is important: Turkey’s direct involvement in the terrorist war and its preparations is being proved with concrete facts. And the countries which supply Turkey with required components for Bayraktars should follow Canada’s lead with this fact and freeze further supplies,” Pashinyan said.

Canada has already suspended exports of the military drone technology to Turkey amid its use against Artsakh.

Foreign Minister Talks

Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan has been participating in a whirlwind of meetings with his counterparts.

On October 17 he spoke with his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian.

Mnatsakanyan praised the personal contribution of French President Emmanuel Macron for the achievement of the agreement on the humanitarian ceasefire which was supposed to have taken place on October 18 and noted that the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan once again refused to fulfill it and continues the large-scale aggression against Artsakh.

Regarding that failed ceasefire, the European Union on October 18 deplored continuing hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and urged the conflicting parties to respect a fresh ceasefire agreement without any preconditions.

“I have just called the ministers of foreign affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan to impress upon them that the ceasefire should be unconditional and strictly respected by the two sides,” Josep Borrell, the EU’s foreign and security policy chief, said in a statement.

“I have also underlined that attacks on civilians should stop immediately,” he said. “They cannot be justified. I have reiterated that the EU remains ready to support the parties and the OSCE in a long-term solution to the conflict.”

Borrell’s appeal came as deadly fighting continued in the conflict zone despite the supposed entry into force on Saturday night of

another Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire agreement. The warring sides blamed each other for the truce violations.

Borrell revealed that the agreement was brokered by French President Emmanuel Macron “in coordination with the other OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” namely Russia and the United States.

“The EU deplores that, unfortunately, violations continue, with reported fighting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh,” he said. “This leads to more civilian suffering. It aggravates the conflict between States and respective societies, rendering the healing of wounds even more difficult. The population in Nagorno-Karabakh has already experienced excessive suffering.”

The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers had also reached a truce agreement on October 10 during talks in Moscow mediated by Russia. Fighting along the Karabakh “line of contact” did not stop as a result, however,

Mnatsakanyan on October 19 spoke with UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for European Neighborhood and the Americas Wendy Morton.

The focus of the conversation was on the situation created as a result of the large-scale aggression launched by Azerbaijan’s military-political leadership against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). Minister Mnatsakanyan called his interlocutor’s attention to several facts about the atrocities of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces against peaceful civilians, the tortures and murders of prisoners of war under their control, constant targeting of civilian settlements and lifeline infrastructures, as well as the shelling of religious and cultural institutions.

Morton expressed her deep condolences on the occasion of the victims among civilians as a result of the hostilities.

Mnatsakanyan also reaffirmed Armenia’s commitment to an exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict and the establishment of a sustainable ceasefire that will be maintained through verification mechanisms.

Mnatsakanyan is headed to Washington, where he is scheduled to meet with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as is his Azerbaijani counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov. The latter is going to meet first with Pompeo on Friday morning. Mnatsakanyan, will meet shortly afterward with the U.S. secretary of State.

Armenia’s ambassador in Washington, Varuzhan Nersesyan, praised Pompeo for recently chiding Turkey over its support for Azerbaijan during the conflict.

“We see no alternative to the peaceful resolution of this conflict based on mutual compromises,” Nersesyan said in an interview.

(Armenpress, news.am, RFE/RL and The Hill contributed to this report.)



ARMENIA

Pashinyan Announces Heavy Casualties, Thanks Armenia’s Allies

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In his speech, Pashinyan summarized the sequence of events which have led to the current conflict, pointing to Turkey’s interference in the war as one of the central factors in exacerbating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: “Unprecedented Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercises were launched shortly after the July battles; a large number of Turkish troops and military equipment were transferred to Azerbaijan. [...] Turkey decided that it is up to them to deal with the Karabakh issue.”

Pashinyan held Azerbaijan responsible for the collapse of the humanitarian ceasefire announced last Friday following talks between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow: “... Azerbaijan did not adhere to the ceasefire for a second and carried on with the attacks, simultaneously hindering the establishment of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism.”

Pashinyan became somber in his tone when his speech turned to military casualties sustained by Armenia. As of this report, Artsakh Defense Force officials have reported around 532 dead since fighting resumed on September 27. Pashinyan stated: “We have suffered numerous casualties. [...] I bow to all our victims, martyrs, their families, their parents, and especially their mothers. I consider their loss my personal loss, the loss of my family.” Pashinyan then adopted a moment of silence as he bowed his head in respect for the war dead.

Pashinyan Gives Thanks

In recognizing the efforts of Armenia’s allies, Pashinyan gave special attention to Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom Pashinyan’s administration “have been in close contact during all this time.” The Armenian Prime Minister recognized the Russian Federation’s crucial role as “Armenia’s strategic ally at a high level.” Pashinyan thanked French President Emmanuel



Pashinyan bows in respect to the Armenian casualties of the war.

Macron “for his determination to name things from the very first days of the and his willingness to make further efforts.”

Pashinyan declared that Armenians today “are more united than ever,” noting the efforts of the diaspora to support Armenia: “Hundreds of thousands of Armenians [who] are providing financial, economic, media-borne and political support to Armenia and Artsakh. In hundreds of diaspora-based communities, our compatriots are holding peaceful rallies of solidarity, protest and support, with two specific issues on the agenda: international recognition of

Artsakh’s independence and condemnation of the Turkish-Azerbaijani terrorist aggression.”

Pashinyan called for a “new heroic battle” such as that of Sardarabad, where Armenian forces routed the forces of the invading Ottoman Army in 1918.

Harkening to the heroes of Armenian national identity, such as Tigran the Great, Hovhannes Baghramyan, and Monte Melkonyan, Pashinyan declared in a fiery tone, “we must win!”

[The full video of Pashinyan’s speech is available with this article on the Mirror website.]

President Hosts Children from Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A group of children from Artsakh, who have temporarily settled in Armenia due to the ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh, have been hosted at the Armenian Presidential Palace, the Presidential Office announced this week.

The Presidential administration organized an event for the children in collaboration with the Hakob Paronyan State Musical Chamber Theater.

Chief director of the Theater Hakob Ghazanchyan stated that such an initiative was important for the children for psychological support. He added that such events will be continuous and informed that the doors of all theaters in Armenia will be open to the Artsakh children.

He reminded that back in summer during the meeting with President, Armen Sarkissian proposed to organize performances in the presidential palace

due to the restrictions in operations of theaters and other cultural facilities due to the COVID-19. “When the President made that offer, there was no war yet, the situation was peaceful. But during these war days we decided to hold a performance at the presidential place for our children of Artsakh,” he said.

After the performance the Presidential administration also handed gifts to the children.



Children from Artsakh outside the Presidential Palace

News From Armenia

COVID Infections Grew By 1,234

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The number of confirmed coronavirus infections in Armenia grew by 1,234 to reach 66,694 on Tuesday, October 20 morning, according to information provided by the Health Ministry.

Fresh figures also revealed that 526 more people have recovered, 10 patients have died from Covid-19, while two others carrying the virus died from other reasons in the past 24 hours.

So far, 1101 have died from the coronavirus in the country.

Rep. Gabbard Asks NATO To Expel Turkey

WASHINGTON – In a strongly worded resolution introduced this week condemning Turkey’s attacks on Armenian forces and citing Ankara’s ongoing support for terrorists, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) called for the U.S. to work with allies in removing Turkey from NATO.

She cited Turkey escalating its involvement in the war over Karabakh and its hostile actions towards a US ally, Armenia, by closing its border and repeatedly threatening the country as well as Armenian communities around the world.

She also cited statements issued by Turkey directly contradicting those of NATO with regard to seeking peace in Karabakh.

Gov. Bans Import of Turkish Goods

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian government on October 17 announced plans to ban the import of all Turkish goods in response to Turkey’s military support for Azerbaijan in the ongoing war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

A relevant draft decision publicized by the government on Friday cites Ankara’s “inflammatory calls,” arms supplies to Baku and “deployment of terrorist mercenaries to the conflict zone.” It says the measure is meant to not only hurt Turkey financially but also neutralize “various kinds of dangers” relating to imports of goods from the “hostile country.”

The ban, if formally approved by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s cabinet, will come into effect on December 31 and remain in force for six months. Government officials do not exclude that it will be extended.

According to data cited by Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, Armenia imported \$268 million worth of Turkish-manufactured products last year. That includes about \$70 million worth of clothing and machinery and other equipment worth \$35 million.

Mnatsakanyan Discusses Situation with CSTO Secretary General

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on October 15 held a telephone conversation with Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Stanislav Zas,.

The main topic was the current situation in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone caused by the aggression of Azerbaijan.

Mnatsakanyan reaffirmed Armenia’s commitment to the implementation of the joint statement made by the foreign ministers of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan on October 10 on cessation of hostilities and strengthening of the ceasefire, at the same time expressing concern over the fact that the Azerbaijani side is not fulfilling its commitments and continues targeting the civilian settlements of Artsakh. The minister said Azerbaijani aggressive actions are accompanied by violations of international humanitarian norms, and highlighted the priority of ensuring the existential security of the people of Artsakh through the complete exercise and recognition of their right to live freely and safely in their historic homeland.



Armenian President Wants NATO to Explain Turkish Involvement in Karabakh

YEREVAN (Politico) – Armenia’s president is demanding answers from NATO over the involvement of Turkey in the Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Armen Sarkissian says he’s ready to travel to Brussels to confront the transatlantic alliance over Ankara’s actions in the Caucasus and warn the European Union of the threat they pose to the bloc’s security.

“If I go to Brussels,” he said in an interview with POLITICO, “I would like to speak to the NATO leadership as to why this very strange situation is taking place where Turkey, a full NATO member, is involved in a war that has nothing to do with NATO. How on earth is it that a NATO member is acting as freely as a cowboy and NATO does nothing? Does this mean they have a green light from NATO?”

Turkey threw its weight behind traditional ally Azerbaijan when the frozen conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh – an Armenian-controlled enclave internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan – reignited last month. The fighting has cost hundreds of lives, with both sides accusing each other of killing civilians.

Armenia is accusing Turkey of sending fighter jets and Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan. Ankara has denied this, though several media reports have documented the presence of Syrian fighters and F-16s. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has acknowledged Turkish F-16s are present in the country but claimed they were not used in the fighting.

Sarkissian said he wanted to visit NATO’s Brussels headquarters to “get explanations” as to why “Turkish weapons, drones and F-16 are involved in the process of bombing Armenia and Armenian civilians in huge numbers. These are NATO-made weapons: the engines from Austria, the avionics are from Canada and the parts of the rockets are from Britain and so on.”

NATO members are not treaty-bound to support each other’s external wars or seek permission for them and have frequently been involved in conflicts with third parties without the alliance’s support – including multiple U.S., British and French interventions across Africa, Asia and the Middle East since the bloc’s formation. (NATO did not respond to a request for comment by the time of publication.)

Sarkissian said he was also ready to travel to Paris, London and Berlin to make Armenia’s case to European leaders.

“I am ready to tell [Angela] Merkel,” he said, “that I understand that Europe is busy with other things and everyone is busy with COVID-19, but dear Madam Chancellor what you are probably not seeing clearly is that there is another disaster coming from the Caucasus to you that is not a biological virus but the virus

A New Reality in Stepanakert

By Alina Aslanian

STEPANAKERT – The strangest thing about Stepanakert right now is the silence. Armenians are naturally gregarious and social, so seeing the streets empty of playing children is unsettlingly eerie. It’s also an incredibly clean city, so seeing garbage, broken glass and upturned cars is also deeply odd. And then there are the craters, the bombed-out buildings and scattered remnants of

bombs, munitions, and other remnants of fighting.

I entered Stepanakert to join my colleagues at the HALO Trust, a British-American mine clearance charity, on Sunday, October 11. I was on vacation in Yerevan when the war broke out a fortnight earlier. As a humanitarian charity dedicated to clearing up the debris of war, we knew we had to get to work as soon as the security conditions allowed.

HALO has been clearing landmines and ordnance from the 1992-1994 conflict in Nagorno Karabakh for 20 years. Fortunately, our compound hasn’t been badly hit by the shelling and we’re able to base ourselves there during daylight hours. During the first few days, our priority was accounting for our staff that remained in Stepanakert and working out logistics for further evacuations at the border. Then we had to contact our donors to let them know our status and our plans for our emergency response.

In a situation like this, where the security is still very fragile, you have to make the civilian population as safe as possible before every piece of explosive debris can be cleared and safely destroyed. So my colleagues and I walked the streets, handing out leaflets to help people identify cluster munitions and other deadly weapons to prevent accidents. The people are understandably traumatized. Most elderly people understand the dangers of landmines, but they’re not used to seeing these new types of cluster munitions in their backyard. Children are particularly vulnerable. Cluster munitions bear a cruel resemblance to toys, which prompts their innate curiosity. Last week we walked for over four hours, talking to everybody we came across in the street or in a shelter. But this is just an interim measure – only the removal and disposal of explosives can guarantee the safety of civilians and allow the future reconstruction of the city.

Before the war, part of my job was to interview local residents about the impact of landmine clearance on their lives. It made me proud to work for HALO and see how people had built houses and grown food on former minefields. But now they have to start all over again. I feel very frustrated for them.

It wasn’t my intention to end up in Nagorno Karabakh. I was working in South East Asia when I applied to HALO. But getting the job in Stepanakert felt like a homecoming. My family is part of the Armenian diaspora and retained many Armenian traditions after we moved to the United States when I was ten years old. Until last month, I felt safer here in Karabakh than I did in California. That’s all changed now, but I feel proud and privileged to be working here during Karabakh’s hour of need.

To donate to the HALO Trust Karabakh Relief Fund to clear explosives, visit halotrust.org. All donations will be matched.

(Alina Aslanian is Programme Officer for the HALO Trust in Nagorno Karabakh. She graduated with a Master’s in Public Administration from Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.)



Alina Aslanian in Stepanakert

of instability and war.”

Sarkissian said he wanted the German chancellor to understand that “the war of Turkey and Azerbaijan risks creating another Syria. Or making Turkey the creator and the ruler of an energy crisis to Europe.” (Pipelines crucial to the EU’s energy supply pass close to Nagorno-Karabakh.)

In contrast, he does not feel the need to remind French President Emmanuel Macron about the conflict’s potential geopolitical ramifications.

“I think that Macron understands that instability in the Caucasus is going to hit the larger region and then it will affect Western Europe,” Sarkissian said. “He understands that the Turkish presence in Azerbaijan will make Southern Europe and Central Asia all dependent on Turkey and Turkey will emerge as a regional superpower and that is what [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan wants to achieve.”

Armenia is seeking to present the war to Brussels as part and parcel of Turkey’s growing assertiveness, which has brought Ankara into conflict with EU member countries across the region. In Libya, Turkey has intervened on behalf of the U.N.-backed government against France-backed militia leader Khalifa Haftar and in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkish ships are searching for energy resources in waters claimed by Greece and Cyprus.

“You get the impression,” said Sarkissian, “that Erdogan is creating instability and breaking the status quo all around. In this sea of instability, Turkey feels quite calm and is swimming as it gives them a chance to play with everyone.”

Sarkissian said that Europe’s and NATO’s seeming inability to influence Ankara risked their credibility.

“I am calling on everybody in Brussels to put pressure on Turkey. But first, they have to decide what is acceptable as these Turkish actions are going to hurt NATO, its prestige and

the very idea [that] it is an alliance that is there to defend against an enemy.”

He stressed that he believed Turkish intervention would permanently reshape the geopolitics of the South Caucasus by turning Azerbaijan into a springboard for Turkish influence across the wider region and its crucial pipeline network.

He also warned that Syrian mercenaries could prove a long-term destabilizing factor in the region: “They will create another zone of instability there menacing Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia and Iran.”

Russia – a treaty ally of Armenia that has in the past also delivered weapons to Azerbaijan – has so far opted not to back Yerevan militarily. The Kremlin has, however, been the lead diplomatic force in the conflict in recent weeks, negotiating a failed cease-fire.

“I appreciate what President [Vladimir] Putin and Foreign Minister [Sergey] Lavrov are doing,” said Sarkissian.

Greek Foreign Minister Visits Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian on October 16 received Foreign Minister of Greece Nikos Dendias and his delegation who were in Armenia on a working visit.

Greeting the guests, President Sarkissian particularly said, “We highly appreciate your visit at any time, but particularly today. At a time when we really live a difficult period, friendship and trust are of great importance”.

President Sarkissian said that Greece is also facing hard times, but fortunately without the scale of violence that exists in the case of Artsakh and Armenia. “But the source of instability and violence is the same,” Sarkissian said.

Dendias said that the friendship of the two peoples has been reinforced throughout centuries. “That has been reflected not only by our relations or mutual understanding, but also by our shared grief,” the Greek foreign minister said. “You have lived through a genocide, and we too, the Greeks of Pontus have also lived through a genocide. We always remember it and cannot allow it to be forgotten. Today you are resisting very hard periods and that’s obvious. My visit to Yerevan can be viewed as a symbol of our friendship and support for Armenia and Armenian people.”

During the meeting the sides referred to the aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh and its encroachments to the territory of the Republic of Armenia.



President Armen Sarkissian and Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, to the right, with the Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias and his delegation to the left.



INTERNATIONAL

20,000 Armenians in France Demand Recognition of Artsakh

By Jean Eckian

Paris — Around 20,000 Armenians gathered near the Invalides institution on Sunday, October 18, to listen to several speakers and activists for the Armenian cause, including Ara Toranian and Mourad Papazian, the co-presidents of the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations in France (CCAF). Other speakers included lawyer Arno Klarsfeld, MP François Pupponi,



Russia Starts Naval Drills Near Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Russia began naval exercises in the Caspian Sea on Friday, October 16, for the second time in less than a month.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the exercises are taking place “in the central part of the Caspian Sea north of the Absheron peninsula,” which is home to Azerbaijan’s capital Baku.

“A total of six warships, seven aircraft and over 400 personnel will be involved in naval maneuvers,” the ministry said in a statement cited by news agencies.

The statement said they will practice protecting “facilities of maritime economic activity” and destroying “illegal armed formations” threatening them.

It said the drills are being held as part of a yearend “check” of the combat readiness of Russia’s Caspian Flotilla. They “do not pose any threat and do not impose restrictions on economic activities of Caspian states,” added the statement.

Elements of the Caspian Flotilla already participated in wide-ranging military exercises that were held in southern Russia late last month. Those war games ended on September 26, one day before the outbreak of large-scale hostilities around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Russia has repeatedly called for an immediate end to the worst fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces since the early 1990s. The fighting continued even after Moscow brokered an Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire agreement on October 10.



Patrick Karam (vice-president of the Ile de France Regional Council), Pascal Torre (Communist Party), Berivan Firat (spokesperson for the Kurdish Democratic Council), world champion of boxing Arsen Goulamirian, Evagoras Mavrommatis (president of the Cypriot community), and various local political figures. (See related story on Page 7.)

While President Emmanuel Macron clearly pointed the finger at the intervention of Turkey which sent jihadists

to fight against the Armenians of Artsakh, the participants did not accept the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs Yves Le Drian, who invoked the neutrality of France in this conflict. This led to Armenians of France to demand the resignation of the minister.

For everyone, the recognition of Artsakh is essential. France must explain to its allies that we must stop supporting Azerbaijan and Turkey, two dictatorships.

The procession then moved directly in front of the Azerbaijani Embassy, escorted by a large detachment of the police and gendarmerie. A minute of silence was observed in memory of the Armenian soldiers who died for the homeland and also in memory of the teacher of history, Simon Paty, beheaded in Conflans-Sainte Honorine by a Chechen.



Kasparov: Start of Karabakh Tragedy Was Sumgait

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The 13th world chess champion and head of Human Rights Foundation Garry Kasparov — Baku-born Russian-Armenian chess grandmaster — said on October 13 that the starting point of the tragedy in Karabakh was the Sumgait pogrom, which targeted the Armenian population of the Azerbaijani town in 1988.

Kasparov believes the Sumgait pogroms took history to a new dimension, followed by pogroms in Kirovabad (today’s Ganja), and those in Baku.

“For me the issue definitely resonates on an emotional level. That is why many will see my point of view as biased. I try to be as objective as possible, though, obviously, what we’ve gone through in Baku and experienced living in Azerbaijan sets a mood of its own,”

Kasparov has said in a conversation with Echo of Moscow (via Sport24).

“First: why the Turkish factor matters, because this problem was not purely an intra-Soviet one, but has in fact the Armenian Genocide perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire at its roots. This is an important factor at the genetic level and is ingrained in the subconscious of every Armenian living in lands controlled by Turkic-speaking peoples.

“Next. In no way shall we re-examine the historical documents from thousands of years ago. This will certainly distract us. The only unbiased statistical evidence is from the census of the late 19th-century Russian Empire, which records that the territory — which then had a different name — was mostly populated by Armenians.”

Kasparov then discusses the history

of the region, how Lenin, who sought a major alliance with Turkey, handed two territories — Nakhijevan and Karabakh — to Azerbaijan which he says created “a minefield” in the Union: “In fact, Stalin would then do this regularly, creating minefields, redrawing the map in such a way that would ensure mine explosions.

“Now lastly. There is actually one detail that fundamentally separates the Karabakh problem from that of Crimea and others. According to a Soviet law approved in 1990, quite a clear exit rule existed for the republics, which said that autonomous republics and densely populated regions of national minorities must vote separately, with an equal right for self-determination. This is why the issue of Azerbaijan’s sovereignty remains questionable.”

International News

Russian Navy Holds Exercises in Caspian Sea

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — The Russian navy launched military exercises involving 6 warships, 7 aircraft and more than 400 troops in central Caspian Sea on October 16, north from the Azerbaijani Absheron Peninsula, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

The defense ministry stressed in a press release that the maritime drills “do not pose any danger and don’t create any restrictions for the economic activities of Caspian littoral states.”

Azerbaijanis Attack Armenian Protestors in Israel

JERUSALEM (Armenpress) — Nearly 20 Azerbaijanis attacked Armenian peaceful protesters with sticks and stones in Israel who were holding a motor march with the flags of Armenia and Artsakh on October 17 against the military cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan, representative of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem Father Tiran Hakobyan said.

“During the rally nearly 20 Azerbaijanis with 3-4 cars blocked the way of our protesters, started to attack the cars with stones and sticks, as well as hit the Armenians in the cars. Clashes started between our protesters and them, during which 4-5 young Armenians received minor injuries, while an elderly Armenian lost consciousness, who has been hospitalized. At the moment all feel well,” Father Tiran said.

He noted that during the incident the Azerbaijanis caused fairly extensive property damage.

Israeli Police arrived at the scene and arrested some of the Azerbaijanis, who had provoked the incident.

Erdogan Slams Karabakh Mediators

ISTANBUL (RFE/RL) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on October 18 hit out at the United States, Russia and France on Sunday, alleging that the three countries co-heading the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group are supplying weapons to Armenia.

Erdogan also reiterated his strong criticism of their long-running efforts to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and reaffirmed Turkey’s strong support for Azerbaijan’s military operations in the conflict zone.

“What are they saying about our support for our Azerbaijani brothers? What is the Minsk [Group] troika, the U.S., Russia and France, are saying? They are supporting Armenia. They are giving Armenia all kinds of assistance in the form of weapons,” Erdogan claimed during a rally organized by his AK Party.

He did not elaborate on his allegations.

A senior Russian lawmaker, Leonid Slutsky, rejected the allegations.

“Erdogan’s claims do not contribute to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” the TASS news agency quoted Slutsky as saying. “Russia and the other Minsk Group co-chair countries do not support any party and are doing everything to stop the bloodshed.”

“One must now continue to look for politico-diplomatic ways of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and renounce aggressive rhetoric and mutual accusations,” added the chairman of the Russian State Duma’s committee on foreign relations.

Turkey itself has been accused by Armenia of being directly involved in the ongoing war by providing weapons and Turkish military personnel to Azerbaijan.

Yerevan has also accused Ankara of recruiting Islamist fighters in Syria and sending them to fight in Karabakh on the Azerbaijani side. These claims have been echoed by France and, implicitly, by Russia. The Turkish and Azerbaijani governments deny them.

The U.S., Russia and France have repeatedly called for an immediate end to the hostilities in and around Karabakh that broke out on September 27. Ankara rebuffed such calls earlier this month.



INTERNATIONAL

Thousands Protest In Madrid

MADRID (News.am) – Thousands of Armenians gathered in Madrid on October 19 to protest the war launched by Azerbaijan and Turkey against Armenia and Artsakh.

Participants were from Madrid as well as other Spanish cities.



Support for Artsakh and Armenia Requested At Highest Governmental Levels In Canada

OTTAWA – The Armenian community in Canada has been particularly active since full-blown hostilities against Artsakh and Armenia began on September 27. Besides demonstrations by several thousands of Armenians, held mostly in Montreal and Toronto, a well-orchestrated lobbying effort has already been made and continues to be pursued up to the level of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and key ministers of today's Liberal government of Canada.

On October 4, some 40 prominent Canadians, including both non-Armenians and Armenians, among the latter including some recipients of the Order of Canada, the highest civilian recognition in Canada, signed a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemning the Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh supported by Turkey. They asked him to recognize the Armenians' rights of self-determination, condemn attacks on civilians, call on Turkey to end its involvement in the conflict, and insist on a reinstatement of a ceasefire and negotiations.

This letter may have helped contribute to the Canadian government's decision to sanction Turkey and cancel the license of some Canadian companies which have been selling Turkey military laser targeting equipment (see "Canada Suspends Drone Technology Sales to Turkey," *Mirror-Spectator*.)

A copy of the letter and the list of its signatories is given at the end of this article.

A second petition signed this time by all Armenian organizations of Canada is being sent to the Prime Minister with demands spelled out in support of Artsakh.

As a result, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Canada François Philippe Champagne will meet with a sizable group of the Armenian Community representatives on Thursday, October 22, where the community intends to press the Canadian government to take strong and immediate initiatives to condemn the actions of Azerbaijan and Turkey, facilitate humanitarian help to Artsakh and recognize the independence of the historically Armenian region of Nagorno Karabakh.

October 4, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P. Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington St., Ottawa ON, Canada, K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

On September 27, 2020, the Republic of Azerbaijan – with declarations of support from Turkey – launched a large-scale military offensive along the entire Line of Contact between the Republic of Artsakh and Azerbaijan, targeting civilian settlements, including the capital of Artsakh, Stepanakert. It has been reported that Turkey now has direct military involvement in this conflict and has since deployed Syrian and Libyan mercenaries.

Turkey's military involvement in the conflict between the Republic of Artsakh and Azerbaijan, and explicit support of Azerbaijan's cause exacerbates the situation and could be dangerous for the security of the entire region. Despite repeated calls from the international community, Turkey – an ally of Azerbaijan – has dismissed demands for a ceasefire. President Macron's accusation that Turkey is sending Syrian jihadists to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh is cause for great concern, once again with broader implications for the region. Media spokespeople have recognized that the flare-up of this historic rivalry may elevate the region in terms

of Turkey's hegemonic territorial aims, thus heightening instability in the area. This represents a threat to global security that should not be minimized, considering Turkey's ongoing territorial disputes in the Aegean Sea and clashes with Cyprus over oil and gas in Mediterranean waters, which present existing vulnerabilities in the region.

The consequences of this war extend beyond the conflict itself as ethnic cleansing and genocide are a real threat to Armenians of this region. Fears of genocide and ethnic cleansing in the region are augmented due to Turkey's impunity for past crimes. As one scholar, Christoph H. Benedikter, has suggested, "... if war is allowed by the great powers in the region, it will result in mass atrocities and possible genocide against the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh." The reports of civilian casualties are a cause of concern for the international community. With a globally recognized commitment to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, Canada is uniquely positioned to condemn attacks on civilians and civilian objects, which represent clear violations of international humanitarian law.

As engaged Canadians, we believe Canada's unique position affords the ability to call upon its NATO ally, Turkey, to immediately end its involvement in the conflict and to insist that the parties reinstate the ceasefire and return to peaceful efforts for a negotiated solution. We call on Canada to recognize the enshrined rights of self-determination codified in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and to leverage Canada's reputation as a peacebuilder to maintain regional stability by calling on Turkey to immediately end its involvement in the fighting and encourage a return to peaceful negotiation through the Minsk Process.

Yours truly,

Margaret Atwood, C.C.
Salah Bachir, C.M.
Atom Egoyan, C.C.
Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, C.M.
Robert Lantos, C.M.
Deepa Mehta, O.C.
Sarah Polley, O.C.
Greg Sarkissian, C.M.
Raymond C. Setlakwe, C.M.
Dr. William Schabas, O.C.
Prof. Varouj Aivazian, University of Toronto
Dr. Nubar Afeyan, Founder & CEO Flagship Pioneering, Co-Founder of The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative
Marius Alexe, President & CEO of ST Global Asset Management Inc.
Sarkis Assadourian, Former MP
Aris Babikian, Scarborough-Agincourt MPP
Dr. Ann Cavoukian, Founder and CEO, Global Privacy & Security by Design
Ingrid Connidis, (retired), Western University
Justin Connidis, lawyer (retired)
Kristine Connidis, lawyer and psychoanalyst
Dr. Nicolas Corradi, University of

Ottawa Andrew Coyne, Journalist
Mychael Danna, Academy Award®-winning Composer
Prof. Frédéric-Georges Fontaine, Université Laval
David Hamilton, Film Producer
Prof. Garry Hanan, Université de Montréal
Prof. Stephen Hanessian, Université de Montréal
Alan Heisy, Q.C. Former Chair of Toronto Police Service Board
Arsinée Khanjian, Actress and Producer
Prof. Nikolay Kornienko, Université de Montréal
Prof. Georgii Nikonov, Brock University
Prof. Roger Smith, The College of William and Mary
Prof. Harvey Sheer, University of Toronto
Prof. Farhang Rajaei, Carleton University
Prof. Christian Reber, Université de Montréal
Prof. Andrew Woolford, University of Manitoba
Jacob Yerex, Artist

Injured French Reporter Thanks Those Who Helped Him

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – *Le Monde* reporter Allan Kaval, who was critically injured by Azerbaijani bombing of Martuni, presented details of the incident and thanked everyone who had a contribution to saving his life.

Kaval wrote on his Facebook page that on October 1 he and his colleague Hermine Virabyan, photo journalist Rafael Yaghobzadeh were doing their professional job in Martuni, a town in Artsakh not far away from the contact line, when Azerbaijan started the bombardment of the town.

"It was midday and walking in a street we suddenly heard the voice of 'Grad' missiles fired from Azerbaijani positions in our direction. They were bombing the city and fire and pieces of metal were dropping on us like rain. Grisha Narinyan, an employee at Martuni city hall, who was showing us the places of previous attacks, died. He was 28 years old. I am thinking about him and his family every day. Grisha died, since he wanted the world to hear about the sufferings of his people. May he rest in peace with the three other civilians killed in that bombing," he wrote.

"My colleague Hermine, whom I greatly appreciate, fortunately was able to avoid injuries. If I understand properly, dozens of fragments had appeared inside my body," he wrote, adding that he is in the stage of recovery.

"But I would be unable to write all this if there were not the people who save me in Martuni, Stepanakert, Yerevan and Paris. Some of them are famous, some are my friends, some were people whom I never knew. Among them there were residents of Martuni, who played a decisive



Allan Kaval

role in the first minutes trying to take us to a safe place. I want to also thank my colleague reporters, who took me from there to the hospital of the town. I want to thank also my other colleagues who were there and informed Paris about the situation. I am particularly thankful to Hermine and Régis Gente. I want to thank the entire medical staff of Martuni hospital who allocated their time to save the lives of two foreigners at a time when their town was being bombed. I want to thank the people who took me from Martuni to Stepanakert hospital with an old-fashioned ambulance by a difficult-to-pass road. I know how much efforts the doctors of Stepanakert made for saving my life. I haven't had time to learn their names yet, but I am deeply grateful to each of them. I am also deeply grateful to the authorities of Nagorno Karabakh, Armenia and France, who ensured our transportation by a helicopter to Yerevan. Of course, all this would be impossible without the role of the French President Macron, who publicly spoke about our case and did impossible to take us out, also without Foreign Minister of France Jean-Yves Le Drian," Kaval wrote.



INTERNATIONAL

Huge Armenian Rally In Paris Seen through The Eyes of an American-Armenian Participant

By **Aram Arkun**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

PARIS — Armenians rallied in large numbers on October 18 in Paris in the third rally in recent days concerning Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh and Armenia (see the accompanying article by Jean Eckian on page 5). Actor and filmmaker Nora Armani was one of the as many as 20,000 participants in this rally and provided her personal perspective the day after the protest.

She related, “It started at 3 p.m. right outside the exit of the metro at Invalides, one of the major stations. They had set up a stage there were speakers and microphones and people were taking turns. Mourad Papazian, copresident of the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations in France (CCAF) opened.”

He spoke about why people had gathered, to draw attention to the fact that so many countries, including France, were sit-

of Foreign Affairs Yves Le Drian. Armani said that he called for Le Drian to resign, and rallied the crowd to yell slogans in French such as “Artsakh is Armenian” and “Aliyev and Erdogan are terrorists.” Also speaking was Ara Toranian, the other

this demonstration was a crucial manner in which to call for French intervention. Otherwise, she said the entire French nation is on the verge of committing a crime, as it sees an entire people or nation in danger without acting.



Nora Armani in sunglasses in the crowd

ting on the fence and stating they need to be neutral. Armani said that the attack was not directed to President Emmanuel Macron of France, who has voiced his concern, but to Minister

copresident of the CCAF.

There were various local French government officials who spoke of motions which soon would be voted on to recognize Artsakh's independence.

Pascal Torre of the French Communist Party declared that there could be no such thing as neutrality when people are being massacred. During genocide, he said, neutrality is complicity.

Berivan Firat, from the Kurdish Democratic Council, spoke loudly and forcefully, Armani said. Firat declared that the Kurds had already asked for forgiveness from the Armenians for what they had done to them in 1915. She said that now they should work hand-in-hand because they had one common enemy.

Arno Klarsfeld, a lawyer who fights for human rights and genocide recognition, spoke about how his family has always worked for the Armenian cause.

Evagoras Mavrommatis, president of the Cypriot community, spoke of the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, said Armani, and the irreparable economic damage this has caused. He said that nobody seems to pay attention, and called for all the people who have suffered at the hands of the Turks, including Armenians, Cypriots, and Greeks, to come together to confront the former, Armani observed.

When all the speakers finished, the organizers invited everyone to walk toward the Azerbaijani embassy, Armani said, which was in the 16th district of Paris by the Avenue d'Iena.

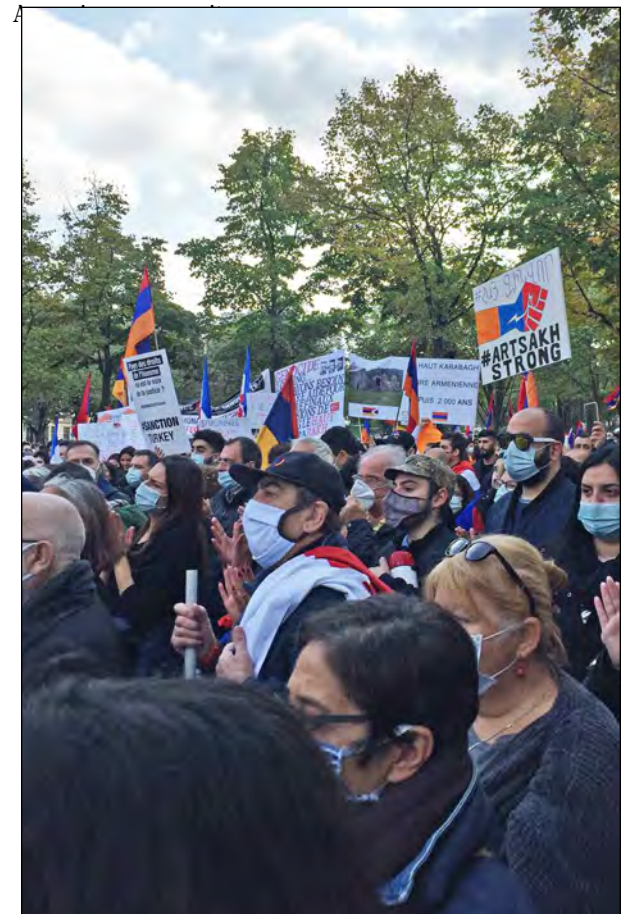
They walked a long distance, and armed French police were present in numbers to assure the safe progression of the rally, Armani saw. The police blocked off an intersection so that the crowd could pass towards the embassy. As a result, many cars appeared stuck there for a long time, she said.

Armani said that she was extremely impressed about the scale and nature of the demonstration. In France, she said, not helping a person in danger is legally considered a crime. Consequently,

The marchers went by the bank of the Seine River and reached a bridge, the Pont d'Alma. “It was very impressive, because the bridge was full of people and I could see people down below at the actual bank of the river, at the walkway. They were looking up to see what was going on. The entire bridge was full of people and Armenian flags and placards,” she exclaimed.

The crowd had stopped and gathered at the bridge's end where a stage was set up. Papazian and other people from the Invalides site had gathered, and new people were speaking. Flares in the colors of the Armenian flag were making the air bright.

Afterwards, they continued walking. At the front of the group was a priest with a flag on top of which was the Armenian cross. Next to him, Armani said, was a man with the flag of Artsakh, and then other representatives of the



Speakers on the stage at Invalides square with French and Armenian flags



The crowd walks towards the bridge

Armenian community behind him, but the majority was formed by a group of various mayors with their distinctive French sashes.

Armani concluded with her personal opinion: “France is a country which stands for liberty, equality and fraternity. The Artsakh people want to be independent. That is their liberty and France has to back this up. Equality is an important principal here because a big guy with a huge amount of armaments, is attacking a helpless people, mostly civilians, while Turkey, Israel and other countries continue to provide the attacker arms and support. Equality is being violated. Fraternity is the last principle. France has always had fraternal relations with Armenia and it must now continue to respect that fraternity. When your brother is in trouble you must help. France is violating its three sacred principles by not helping the Armenians.”

Community News

A Call for Lasting Peace in Nagorno-Karabakh

NEW YORK — A group of internationally prominent scholars on October 16 released a petition seeking peace in Artsakh.

This letter echoes a similar statement made by Jacques Derrida, Isaiah Berlin, Alain Finkielkraut, Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor, and other leading intellectuals in the *New York Review of Books* on September 27, 1990.

The letter is reproduced in full below:

Dear Friends:

We are writing this letter with the hope that you will join the international call for a ceasefire to end the bloodshed and human and cultural carnage taking place since September 27, 2020 in what has been described as the “de facto Armenian republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)” within the Soviet-era boundaries of Azerbaijan.

Ever since the fierce border disputes at the time of the establishment of Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan, ethnic discomfort smoldered in the region and broke into open conflict at the disintegration of the USSR. Since then, it has been a history of conflict, small ceasefires in the thousands made to be broken. Serious military confrontation began in 2016; again with broken ceasefires. Now the violence seems to have increased exponentially and the last Russian brokered ceasefire was breached on October 10. The Azeris bombed not only the city of Hadrut in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), but also a region in Armenia proper. There are civilian deaths and many wounded ... and we do not know what to expect in the coming days.

This wholesale destruction is part of the expansive and violent territorial policy of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to re-establish a version of Ottoman power in the region. We would be closer to a compromise if Azerbaijan had a more open governance structure than Turkey with internal checks and balances. As it stands, we understand that Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey, is cleansing Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), a historically Armenian enclave placed within its Soviet-era boundaries, of its ethnic Armenian population. The frontline of the soldiers is reportedly composed not only of mercenaries and rebel fighters from Syria and Libya but also minorities living in Azerbaijan such as Lezgins, the Talysh, Avars, Tats, Udis, the Tsakhur, Ingiloyes, Rutuls, and Kurds. We call on these minorities to support rather than oppose the minority struggle of the Armenians. Azerbaijan’s 1997–2006 erasure in Nakhchivan of its Armenian culture gives us a sense of the seriousness of the continuing violence and relentless destruction of civilian lives and property, precisely of longstanding minorities, that we have been witnessing over the last decades. We remind you that the site of the bombing includes archaeological sites such as the ancient Armenian city of Tigranakert.

Before the ravages brought in by World War I and the 20th century, Azeris and Armenians in the area lived in the kind of conflictual coexistence with which we are acquainted in the multiethnic parts of the world. We are asking now not only for an agreement to a ceasefire but an insistence on the preservation of that ceasefire and protection for the Armenian minority in its efforts toward self-determination. We hope, in the long run, with the participation of all international institutions of justice, that the democratic will of the ethnic Armenians of the area can be acknowledged.

In solidarity,
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Columbia University
Tariq Ali, Writer
Viken Berberian, Writer
Noam Chomsky, University of Arizona
Judith Herman, Harvard Medical School
Cornel West, Harvard University
Seyla Benhabib, Yale University



Protesting in front of the Georgia State Capitol

Atlanta Armenian Community Demonstrates at CNN, Georgia State Capitol

ATLANTA — The growing Armenian community here joined for a “Rally for Peace in Artsakh and Armenia” on October 15 at the CNN headquarters in downtown Atlanta. Approximately 250 Armenians participated in a demonstration at CNN, which also included members of the Armenian communities of Charlotte, North Carolina and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Armenian community gathered with flags of the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh chanting and demanding for CNN to “report the truth” about the Azerbaijani aggression supported by Turkey.

Prior to arriving at CNN, an “Artsakh Strong ATL-wide (car) cruise” began in Duluth and slowed down traffic to almost a halt on Interstate 85.

After an hour in front of the CNN headquarters, the demonstration continued at the historic Georgia State Capitol building, which was reported on by Fox 5 News of Atlanta. In front of the capitol, Mary Trachian, Esq., gave the keynote speech. She called upon state representatives and the governor of Georgia to recognize the aggression of Azerbaijan and the involvement of Turkey in their war on Artsakh and Armenia. Very Rev. Norayr Kazazian, pastor of the Armenian Church of Atlanta, also



Very Rev. Fr. Norayr Kazazian, pastor of the Armenian Church of Atlanta, leading the procession to the Georgia State Capitol from CNN headquarters



In front of the CNN headquarters

spoke. He stressed the importance of the diaspora helping Artsakh and Armenia, especially at this critical time. The rally concluded with a closing prayer.

Four Action Items For Every Armenian: Bishop Daniel’s Counsel to Our Community

NEW YORK — In a video conference call with leaders of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan laid out four action items that every Armenian should undertake in response to the war on our homeland.

About 150 viewers — including clergy, Diocesan delegates, parish council members, and leaders of church organizations — listened to his urgent call to all Armenian faithful, which proceeded under the title “Artsakh and Armenia: Our Struggle, Our Role.”

In Findikyan’s four action items, he urged his listeners to (1) offer prayers, (2) advocate for truth, (3) contribute financially, and (4) work in unity. In his remarks he elaborated on each in turn, presenting the actions as ways Armenian Americans could lend their own aid to the struggle in Armenia and Artsakh — aid that would be practical, effective, and respond to the most pressing needs of our homeland in the current crisis.

Regarding the four action items, he referenced his discussions with His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and figures in the Armenian government like Armenia’s Ambassador to the U.S. Varuzhan Nersesyan, who had been scheduled to speak during the video conference before other matters interceded.

The Diocesan Primate’s address was preceded by introductory remarks from Oscar Tatosian, a longtime church leader and Diocesan Council member, who also serves as the Republic of Armenia’s Honorary Consul in Chicago. Mr. Tatosian, who was instrumental in organizing the online meeting, greeted fellow Diocesan leaders and affirmed that Armenian Americans are highly respected figures at every level of American society, whose voices must be heard on the urgent matter of the survival of Armenia and Artsakh.

Also offering his perspective at the meeting was Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director, who detailed his efforts over the past weeks to summon support for the Armenian cause from sister churches, faith-based organizations, and the international ecumenical community. He referenced statements of support from most of the major U.S. Christian denominations, from church hierarchs around the world, and from the World Council of Churches. He made special note of the very strong statement issued by the U.S.-based National Council of Churches, which Aykazian led as president for many years.

Aykazian also urged listeners to contact their Congressional representatives and others in administrative roles to denounce and end Azeri aggression, Turkish complicity, and the financial and military support these powers receive from the U.S., Israel, and other nations.

Prayer, Truth, Money, Unity

In the opening minutes of his address, the Primate laid out the architecture of his presentation. “There are four things that we have to do in our Diocese,” he explained, and proceeded to enumerate and develop each responsibility in turn.

(1) PRAYER: “The most powerful weapon we have is prayer,” Findikyan began, repeating a theme he has articulated since the beginning of the Artsakh war.

“Each one of us here must be praying,” he said. “We must call on the name of the Lord and tell him what we want, which is peace in our homeland, peace in the world.” He counseled listeners to offer short, direct prayers “many times a day”; prayers on the model of, “Lord Jesus Christ, bring peace to our country—now. Protect our soldiers—now. Bring aid to their families—now.”

see FINDIKYAN, page 12

COMMUNITY NEWS



MARTIN HAROUTUNIAN PHOTOS

Azerbaijanis Hold Small Demo at State House

BOSTON – A handful of Azerbaijanis demonstrated in front of the Massachusetts State House the afternoon of October 19. The police made them remove their flag from the wall, according to an eyewitness. Their signs called attention to the destruction in Ganja, and included slogans such as, “Don’t believe Armenia,” “Karabakh is Azerbaijan,” and “Stop Armenian terrorism.” They veered into the more vulgar realm with other slogans, like “Kardashian Make Porn Not War.”



Manoogian Leads Way for Michigan State House Resolution Condemning Azeri and Turkish Aggression

MICHIGAN, from page 1

The resolution, the first of its kind on state level, was introduced by State Rep. Mari Manoogian (D-Birmingham). It is important to add, that Michigan’s legislature is one of a handful of State legislatures in the country to recognize the independence of the Republic of Artsakh, and as seen in the resolution, Artsakh is referenced as an independent country.

The resolution, after outlining the history of the conflict, states:

“...now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we condemn Azerbaijan’s coordinated offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh and denounce Turkish interference in the conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge the United States Department of State to work with the co-chairs of the Minsk Group and the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Republic of Artsakh to achieve a long-lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be

transmitted to the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of State, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and members of the Michigan congressional delegation.”

Manoogian answered some follow-up questions in regard to this resolution.

“I introduced this legislation, after having worked with partners and stakeholders in the community to ensure we got the language and tone right. After working across the aisle, we were able to advance this resolution to the floor, and it passed on a voice vote, so there were no votes recorded to individual members. The body as a whole voted to support it.

“Resolutions from the statehouse convey to our state, to our congressional delegation, and to the federal government what the priorities are for our legislature. Since this was the first resolution to pass a state-level body here in the U.S. regarding what’s happening in Artsakh, legislators from other states have reached out to follow suit,” she said.

While a bill in Congress has been introduced by Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Ca), and the

Los Angeles City Council has passed a measure deploring the Azerbaijani attack, no state legislation had proposed or passed such a bill.

Manoogian added, “The Michigan House of Representatives was the first legislative body at the state level to pass a resolution condemning Azerbaijan’s aggression against Artsakh, and for Turkey’s involvement. Our office is always happy to share ideas for legislation, whether it is regarding Armenian issues or otherwise, and we’re working with our counterparts in the Illinois legislature, as well as in Pennsylvania, to help them pass similar legislation.”

The resolution is not legally binding. However, Manoogian noted, the resolution “was transmitted to our congressional delegation and to Secretary [of State Mike] Pompeo. We hope that our action as a state encourages other states to also pass similar legislation, and that we were able to raise awareness through press coverage and within this legislative body about what is happening in Artsakh.”

And finally, she noted in a written statement, “I am grateful that my colleagues in the

Michigan House of Representatives saw fit to condemn Azerbaijan and Turkey for their ongoing promotion of violence against the Armenian people of Artsakh. As the world quietly watches the actions of Azerbaijan and its allies from afar, the passage of HR 319 has shown that Michiganders stand united with Armenians and the Republic of Artsakh against this senseless violence and support the right of self-determination to which every sovereign people is entitled. I hope this resolution might be a catalyst for our federal government to take a more active role in pursuit of a long-term peaceful resolution to this conflict and to quit abdicating the United States’ role as co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group.

“As the descendent of Armenian Genocide survivors, I know how important it is to uplift the struggle of everyday Artsakhstis who are simply trying to build lives for themselves in their own country. Knowing there is more to be done beyond the passage of this resolution, I will continue to use my platform to raise awareness about the violence perpetrated once again by Azerbaijan and Turkey against the indigenous ethnic Armenians of the region.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Worcester Armenians Protest Azerbaijani Aggression at City Hall

WORCESTER — Worcester, the “Mother City” in America for Armenian immigrants seeking sanctuary since the late 19th century from political oppression and Genocide, and a hub for those

moving on to other parts of the United States, was the scene on October 16 of one of the many continuing international protests against Turkey and

By Ken Martin
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Azerbaijan for launching a war on the Armenian-populated Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and parts of the Republic of Armenia proper on September 27, which continues presently. A daylong autumn rainstorm and dark clouds did not dim the enthusiasm of the approximately 250 participants as they made a great deal of noise in the city known as the Heart of the Commonwealth.

It was a compact yet dynamic group of concerned Armenian-Americans and friends which converged on City Hall plaza to let the people of Worcester know about events taking place in their ancestral – and for many, current – homeland. Organized by the Armenian Youth Federation of America (AYF) the plaza was the covered by the Stars and Stripes, the red, blue, and orange tri-color of Armenia and the equally colorful flag of Artsakh.

Everyone carried personal signs expressing disgust at the leaders of Azerbaijan and its powerful supporter Turkey, for attacking during the Covid-19 pandemic, while the attention of the United States, Europe and Russia were turned away. Many said that Turkey was trying to continue the Genocide of 1915 when 1.5 million Armenian were either killed outright or staved to death during deportation marches through the Syrian Desert, echoing the words recently of current Turkish president Erdogan that they hadn’t finished the job in 1915.



KEN MARTIN PHOTO

Mary Aroian of Worcester braved the rain and cold to attend the City Hall rally and protest with her walker and a sign. When offered an umbrella from another protester she said “No, it’s just rain, not bullets!”



SONA DULGARIAN-GEVORKIAN PHOTO



KEN MARTIN PHOTO

Mayor of Worcester Joseph M. Petty and Congressman James P. McGovern

After the singing of three national anthems respectively and a blessing by the Armenian clergy a series of speakers took the stage, including AYF leaders, Mayor of Worcester Joseph M. Petty and Congressman James P. McGovern. The latter two both expressed support for Armenian and Artsakh and condemnation of Turkey and Azerbaijan for the ruthless attack and blitzkrieg style bombardment of Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh and the surrounding villages with artillery and missiles and Turkish and Israeli-made UAV explosive drones and cluster bombs. McGovern also declared that the US should recognize Artsakh as an independent state.



KEN MARTIN PHOTO



KEN MARTIN PHOTO

COMMUNITY NEWS

SONA DULGARIAN-GEVORKIAN PHOTO



KEN MARTIN PHOTO



KEN MARTIN PHOTO

Jewish Leaders Stand with Armenians, Call For US Intervention

LETTER, from page 1

era established a precedent of international silence that in no small part helped set the stage for further horrors over the past century.

Though the Armenian people have been peacefully living in Armenia and Artsakh for thousands of years, they have also been the victims of persecution and suffering by the hands of many nations and regimes. The current crisis, and the aggression toward Armenia, is already creating undue levels of suffering for the civilian population in Artsakh. If the international community fails to intervene to restore calm and return matters to a peaceful place, we fear a far greater tragedy – including grave harm and loss of lives, as well as the destruction of significant religious sites of importance to the Armenian Christian community.

The Armenian people have suffered through the genocide once at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. We cannot sit idly by as they face the risk of another extraordinary humanitarian disaster.

Mr. President, we urge you to use your leadership at this critical moment. The United States of America must intervene to restore calm rather than face living with the remorse of ignoring the plea of Armenians who are calling for peace. We urge you to use the pow-

ers of your office to deescalate this conflict and to use your influence with America's ally Turkey, which is an active participant in the conflict, to bring an immediate end to the killing of civilians before thousands of lives are lost.

Topics: American Jewish position on Artsakh, Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, Jewish-Armenian relations

We will continue to pray for you and your family. The United States of America has been a beacon of hope around the world. You have the opportunity to demonstrate our leadership in hopes of preventing a global crisis. The Armenian people are at grave risk in a fight against terror and persecution. We need you to stand with the people of the Land of Noah.

Signed,

Massachusetts Public Officials
State Treasurer Deb Goldberg
State Senator Michael Moore
State Senator Becca Rausch
State Senator Eric Lesser
State Representative Ruth Balser
State Representative Lori Ehrlich

Massachusetts Jewish Institutional Leaders
Jeremy Burton, Executive Director, JCRC of Greater Boston*
Lino Covarrubias, CEO, Jewish Family Service of Metrowest*

Rabbi Neal Gold, President, Massachusetts Board of Rabbis*
Samuel Mendales, Executive Director, Hillel Council of New England*
Jerry Rubin, President & CEO, Jewish Vocational Service*
Jeffrey Savit, President & CEO, Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters*
Steven Schimmel, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Central MA*
Craig Schneider, Co-President, Synagogue Council of MA*
Mark Sokoll, President & CEO, JCC of Greater Boston*
Andrew Tarsy, Principal, Emblem Strategic & Conscious Customers*

Massachusetts Rabbis
Rabbi Thomas Alpert, Temple Etz Chaim, Franklin*
Rabbi Jordana Battis, Temple Shir Tikva, Wayland*
Rabbi Allison Berry, Temple Shalom, Newton*
Rabbi Danny Burkeman, Temple Shir Tikva, Wayland*
Rabbi Shahrar Colt, Congregation Dorshei Tzedek, Newton*
Rabbi Carol Glass, Hebrew College*
Rabbi Eric Gurvis, Sha'arei Shalom, Ashland*

Rabbi Jeff Foust, Spiritual Life Center, Bentley University*
Rabbi Neil Hirsch, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, Great Barrington*
Rabbi David Jaffe, Inside Out Wisdom and Action*
Rabbi Howard Jaffe, Temple Isaiah, Lexington*
Rabbi Jonathan Kraus, Beth El Temple Center, Belmont*
Rabbi David Lerner, Temple Emunah, Lexington*
Rabbi David Meyer, Temple Emanu-El, Marblehead*
Rabbi Barbara Penzner, Temple Hillel B'nai Torah, West Roxbury*
Rabbi Carl Perkins, Temple Aliyah, Needham*
Rabbi Victor Reinstein, Nehar Shalom, Jamaica Plain*
Rabbi Becky Silverstein, Beyn Kodesh l'Chol, Jamaica Plain*
Rabbi Toba Spitzer, Congregation Dorshei Tzedek, Newton*
Rabbi Henry Zoob, Temple Beth David, Westwood*

(*Organization listed to aid in identification only)



COMMUNITY NEWS

Four Action Items For Every Armenian: Bishop Daniel’s Counsel to Our Community

FINDIKYAN, from page 8

“Please, let us be praying together,” he said. (2) TRUTH: “We must be the agents and voices of Truth in this information war,” he said. “You and I cannot fight the military battle on the ground. But in the Third Millennium, as important—and arguably more important—is the information war.”

He spoke of the need to combat disinformation propagated on social media platforms, as well as biased press reporting in which Armenia is held up as the aggressor in the conflict, or in which both Armenia and Azerbaijan are treated as equally to blame.

Against such falsehoods, he said, Armenian Christians must openly and actively speak the truth: “We have a moral obligation to seek the truth. Jesus said he is the Truth — and it is his Truth that we aspire to.”

“Our voices must be heard, and it must be taken seriously,” Bishop Daniel said.

(3) MONEY: “It is absolutely essential that we give sacrificially,” the Primate stressed: “that we give until we feel it. We don’t give from the few pennies in our pocket; we give from funds that have not been budgeted for this cause.”

“To give, we might sacrifice a meal a week. We might sacrifice a vacation next year. We make the sacrifices that we need to make as individuals, as parishes, and as a church.”

The Primate explained that in consulting with authorities in Armenia itself, they all agree that “This is not the time for collecting shoes, blankets, clothing, and material goods.” He said that while an occasion for such collections might arise in the future, at this time considerations involving transport, inspection, and the pandemic crisis make donations of material goods inadvisable.

“For the ten dollars that would go to buying a blanket, it would be much more effective to donate that ten dollars to the Armenia Fund, or to the Artsakh fund listed on our Diocesan website,” he said. “It will be much more effective because the money will be used as needed, according to local needs.”

(4) UNITY: “We must be united,” the Primate advised, within the Diocese and beyond the Diocese. “This is a time for our people to be one.”

He spoke about former appeals to unity — with the church and community — as a goal to

be achieved in the future, but not in the present. By way of contrast, he affirmed unity as an urgent, immediate goal.

“That day is today,” he said, referring to when unity should materialize. “That day was last week. We must be united,” as individuals, across political parties, and within a church that remains formally divided.

By way of example, Findikyan cited his appearance at a protest before the United Nations a week earlier, when he stood beside Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian in an expression of “unity for the sake of strength in supporting our people, our church, our homeland, Artsakh and Armenia.”

With emotion he continued: “In light of the endangerment of our country — and all that could possibly hold for us — we must be one, in the name of Jesus Christ and in the name of no other.”

“When we can unite ourselves around a common Christian mission, God’s power will be even stronger through us,” he said.

An Ongoing Need

To conclude his message, Bishop Daniel

called on Diocesan leaders to take up his four action items. “Prayer, Truth, Money, Unity—this is our job right now,” he said. “And I am counting on each of you to spread that message—not just in words, but in action.”

In light of the uncertainty of the future in the war, and the need for rebuilding that will certainly follow even a peaceful resolution, he affirmed: “There is a need, and will continue to be a need, for Prayer, Truth, Money and Unity.”

“And even beyond supporting Armenia and Artsakh, these four actions will make us stronger as a Diocese,” the Primate concluded.

Menendez, Colleagues Call on Library of Congress to Recognize Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on October 15 was joined by Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) in calling for the Library of Congress’ records on the Armenian Genocide to reflect both scholarly and Congressional consensus. In a letter to Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla D. Hayden, the Senators declared their support for both UCLA’s and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)’s proposals to

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian



Stuffed Grape Leaves Casserole
from *Vegetarian Times*

This recipe was featured in *Vegetarian Times* on January 2, 2012.

Armenian stuffed grape leaves (derevi sarma or yalanchi) are a Middle Eastern favorite – and widely popular as appetizers, snacks, or even as an addition on the perfect mezze platter. When it comes to preparing stuffed grape leaves, most Armenian families, chefs and restaurants have their own unique recipes. Grape leaves are a beloved dish, made flavorful with onions, rice, parsley, tomatoes, currants, pine nuts, and seasonings, including mint, dill, paprika, allspice, and lemon juice. If you like stuffed grape leaves, you’ll appreciate this simple casserole from *Vegetarian Times*, which has all the flavor and taste of the popular appetizers without the labor-intensive rolling. Jarred grape leaves are available in any Middle Eastern market or specialty store. (You do not need to parboil jarred grape leaves, but a quick dip in boiling water tenderizes them and removes some of their saltiness.)

INGREDIENTS:

- 30 jarred or fresh grape leaves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for brushing top of casserole
- 1 large onion, finely diced (about 2 cups)
- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 cups low-sodium tomato juice or vegetable juice
- 1 cup chopped unsalted, hulled pistachios
- 1 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 cup raisins or dried currants
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 lemon, sliced, for garnish

Serves 8.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VEGETARIAN TIMES

PREPARATION:

Dip grape leaves in large pot of boiling water for 2 minutes or a little longer. Drain, and set aside.

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, and sauté 7 to 10 minutes, or until beginning to brown. Add the rice and 2 1/2 cups water, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook for 30 to 40 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat, and stir in tomato juice, pistachios, parsley, mint, raisins, and lemon juice.

Season with salt and pepper, if desired. (Mixture will be very wet.) Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush a 2-quart baking dish with olive oil. Pat grape leaves dry. Line bottom and sides of baking dish with grape leaves, allowing leaves to hang over sides. Spread half of rice mixture over grape leaves. Top rice with more grape leaves, then top with remaining rice mixture. Cover casserole with remaining grape leaves, and seal by folding over grape leaves around edges. Brush top with olive oil. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until grape leaves on top darken and casserole looks firm and dry. Remove from oven.

Dip knife in cold water. Cut straight down with tip of knife to make 8 servings, then remove servings with a spatula. Garnish with lemon slices and drizzle with pomegranate molasses (if using).

<<https://www.vegetariantimes.com/>> <https://www.vegetariantimes.com/>



U.S. Senator Bob Menendez


formally change the Library of Congress Subject Heading from “Armenian massacres, 1915-1923” to “Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923.”

Last year, Menendez led a successful effort in Congress to defeat the Trump administration’s objections to affirming the historical facts of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, and honoring the memories of its 1,500,000 victims. This marked the first time in U.S. history that both houses of Congress have formally declared a genocide but the Executive Branch has not. The Library of Congress has yet to update its records due to the Trump administration’s genocide denialism.

“Leading academic authorities, including experts on genocide issues, all agree that the Armenian Genocide was a genocide,” the Senators wrote, referencing recognition from the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Encyclopedia Britannica, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Holocaust Encyclopedia, and Yale University’s Genocide Studies Program. “Neither the Constitution nor any legislation provides that the President, or even the Secretary of State, is the primary authority on making historical genocide determinations...We therefore urge you to follow the scholarly consensus, rather than wrongly deferring to the executive branch, and accept the proposals submitted by UCLA and ANCA to designate ‘Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923’ as a Subject Heading and make ‘Armenian massacres, 1915-1923’ a see reference.”



COMMUNITY NEWS




Solidarity With Artsakh

Organized By
Tekeyan Cultural Association
West Coast Chapters

Joining us from Armenia Political Expert
Professor Levon Shirinian

Friday, 23 October, 2020 at 7:30 pm
at the Armenian Society Center
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Please send your tax deductible donations
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OBITUARY

Sona Hamalian

Philanthropist, Promoter of Arts and Culture

YEREVAN – Sona Hamalian, an activist and an observer with a background in public relations, who had worked internationally, died on October 15.

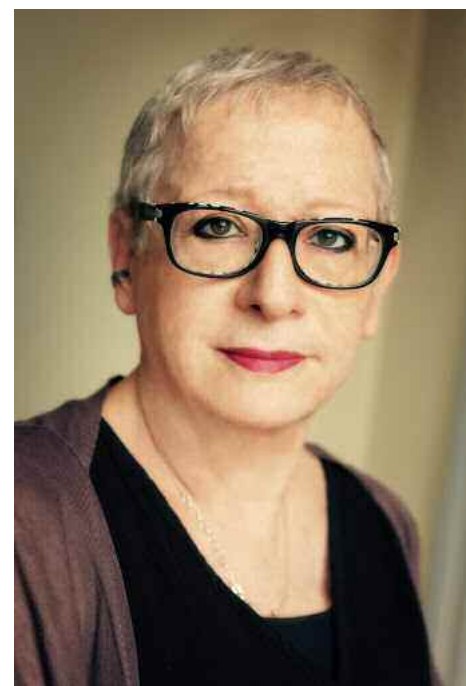
She was born in Aleppo and moved to Lebanon before emigrating to the US, where she spent time on both coasts. In 1991, she moved to Armenia to work first for the American University of Armenia as Director of AUA's Extension Program, then as deputy director of the Eurasia Foundation, then as country director of Catholic Relief Services in Caucasus/Armenia.

In Afghanistan in 2010, she trained 22 NGOs in public relations and fundraising before going to Saudi Arabia to work as an Ethics and Compliance Officer for SAS Systems Engineering.

Eventually she returned to Armenia to work in public relations and fundraising for various organizations.

Later she worked as philanthropic consultant based in Yerevan. She also headed Creative Networks, an international public-relations firm promoting nonprofit organizations, cultural and educational institutions, and artists.

She was a beloved sister, aunt and great-aunt, and cherished by her entire family. She is survived by: Arpi Hamalian, Mr. and Mrs. Artoun and Narine Hamalian, Mr. and Mrs. Arek and Eileen Hamalian and children Areni and Aiki, Mr. and Mrs. Ari and Olya Hamalian and children Aleksei and Natalya, Ms. Nare Hamalian, Mr. and Mrs. Vicken and Sossy Aharonian and their sons Haig and Shant Aharonian, Mr. and



Mrs. Raffi and LeAnn Aharonian and children Anthony, Nicholas, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel and Claire Hamalian, Mr. and Mrs. Mher and Gareen Hartounian and children Enza and Ayk and Mr. and Mrs. Hrag and Natalie Hamalian.

The funeral was held in Yerevan, as was the interment.

A memorial service was held at St. Thomas Armenian Church, on Sunday, October 18.

Araxie Varjabedian (1924-2020)

Active in Armenian Community

MUNSTER, Ind. — Mrs. Araxie (Deyirmenjian) Varjabedian passed away on October 6, 2020. She was the eldest daughter of Arshag and Zabel Deyirmenjian, and was born in Jerusalem in 1924. Her parents had survived the Armenian Genocide and returned to their native city of Marash after the deportations, but ended up taking refuge in Palestine. Her ancestors were of the Mamigonian clan and left Ardashad to settle in Cilicia. They ran a factory powered by a water-mill and so their last name was changed to Deyirmenjian, which contains the word miller in Turkish as its root.

Araxie grew up in Jerusalem and studied at the local Tarkmanchats Armenian National School, where she received an Armenian spiritual education. Then she went to the local LGS English school to further her studies.

Settling in Beirut, she married Sisag Varjabedian, a well known educator and activist, and historian and translator. During the period of crisis in the Armenian Church, she dedicated herself fully to the glory of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, and participated in the Union of Pious Ladies of Echmiadzin, which had been established in Beirut. In recognition of years of service to this organization, she received the St. Nerses the Gracious medal and an accompanying encyclical from Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I.

Together with her husband Sisag, Araxie served the Armenian General Benevolent Association of Lebanon and the Armenian Youth Association for decades. Sisag had been among the founders of the youth association and for many years served as the chairman of its central board. It must be noted that this association during that period carried out fruitful cultural, athletic and scouting activities. He also wrote the words of the anthem for the association.

On May 8, 2006, Archbishop Oshagan Chiloyan, Prelate of the Cilician Prelacy in the Eastern United States, honored Mrs.

Varjabedian as the Mother of the Year.

The Varjabedians were blessed with three children, Khajag, Shoghag and Shahnour. As a result of the Lebanese Civil war, the couple moved to the United States and enjoyed the love and care of their son-in-law, Dr. Raffy Hovannessian, and daughter Shoghag. The Varjabedians continued their service to Armenia literature, the church and educational life in the United States. Araxie for many years was a member of the choir of the Saints Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church of Palos Heights, Illinois. Sisag Varjabedian passed away in 1982.

Araxie Varjabedian's burial will take place in



California's Rose Hills Memorial Park (Whittier), in the family plot.

Donations in lieu of flowers should be sent to the AGBU Sissag Varjabedian Saturday Armenian School, 55 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022 or to Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church, 12600 South Ridgeland Ave, Palos Heights, IL 60463.



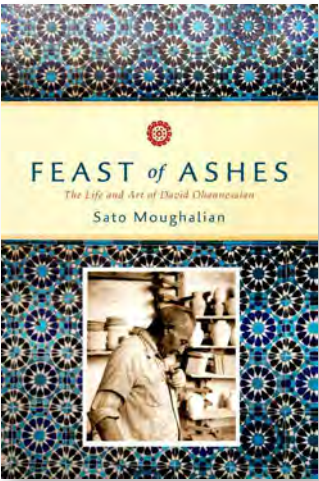
Arts & Living

BOOK REVIEW

Moughalian’s *Feast of Ashes* Threads a Family’s Story Into History

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Born in 1884 in the village of Mouradchai outside of Eskishehir in Western Anatolia David Ohannessian led an idyllic childhood playing in the fields and enjoying age-old traditions and familial love. He would later move to Constantinople and Kütahya, marry and become a master ceramicist commissioned to renovate the tiles some of the Muslim world’s most celebrated mosques and monuments. Ohannessian completed commissions that stretched half way across the world to England and the United States. He would also get be caught up in the conflagration of World War I and the mad plan of the Young Turks to exterminate the Armenian people. Marched into the desert in 1916 with his family, Ohannessian managed to not only survive but later, to thrive. In Palestine and later the State of Israel, he rebuilt his Kütahya studio,



Feast of Ashes, by Sato Moughalian Redwood/Stanford University Press, 2019

which had been known by the Gallic name Société Ottomane de Faïence. The new workshop on the road to the Dome of the Rock would become a New Kütahya, where the ancient Ottoman ceramics tradition still thrives, displaying beautifully colored glazed tiles and pottery painted in every possible hue of the color palette. Along with a few other famed potters, Ohannessian took in surviving Armenian orphans and founded an entirely new school: in Jerusalem today the name Armenian is synonymous with an entire artistic tradition. His granddaughter, Sato Moughalian, the author of *Feast of Ashes*, grew up in the leafy New Jersey suburb of Highland Park surrounded by other immigrant families, many of them Jewish. Her parents had barely escaped Nasser’s nationalization of Egypt in the 1950’s and they now led productive lives, her mother an English teacher, her father an engineer. A lone beautiful vase made by her Grandfather David decorated a mantelpiece their suburban living room.

see FEAST, page 15



Artur Saroyan in his uniform

Artur Saroyan The Dancing Policeman Of the Urals

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/YEKATERINBURG, Russia — In Yekaterinburg, 35-year-old Artur Saroyan is known by some as an athlete, others as a policeman, and to yet others as a dancer. He studied at the Ural Law Institute of the Russian Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the faculty of training specialists for criminal police and public security police. Arthur serves in the Yekaterinburg police, but since the age of 18 he has been an avid dancer at nightclubs. This is more than a hobby for an athletic young man with a southern temperament and features. **Arthur, I think that for women “dancing policeman” sounds tempting, while for most men it is something unacceptable.** Yes, it not only sounds tempting, but also looks tempting, because I had the image of a policeman, that is, black glasses, a black suit, weapons, batons... Girls, of course, like a beautiful body, a powerful, charismatic person who knows how to move their arms and legs, dance in various genres, plus a hot Southerner, plus a real policeman. This is a special moment; there is no such thing, and thus in demand. As for men, people are more jealous, they want more to be the same, but they cannot afford it; perhaps they have some aggression initially, but after recognizing me and knowing that I am originally a sportsman, and not some kind of dancer who just fascinates girls, of course, they respect me. First of all, my task is to win the respect of men, so that they look at me and take an example from me. Years ago, I also danced actively once a week with friends at a Yerevan night-club that no longer exists, and I was not bothered at all by reproaches that it was “not for a serious person”... However, I am sure that dancing is not just moving one’s body, but it is also release, therapy, training, socialization. Reproaches never bothered me, because I love what I do. I am proud that I can dance. For eighteen years this is like a weekly cardio workout for me, but only in stage dance you can allow yourself to develop, come up with various new creative movements. Therefore, for me, it was, is and will be, as it were, a favorite engagement. This is a hobby that has nothing to do with anything, financial or other situation. This is dance, development and inner psychological liberation. Indeed, when you dance, everything leaves your head and you begin to engage in development. Any new movement of your body is the work of the brain. **What sports did you do and how does sport help dance?** I am a master of sports and champion of Russia in karate, hand-to-hand combat and kick boxing. I have been involved with sports since the age of 6, and I won all the competitions. In this regard, I am a professional, and this, of course, helps me in dancing. In dance, you move, act and show the different things your

see SAROYAN, page 15

Aurora’s Main Event in New York City Held Despite Cyber Attacks

NEW YORK – On October 19, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative’s event of the year, honoring the Aurora Humanitarians and the Initiative’s 5th anniversary, took place in New York City. The organizers noted that when they had begun planning the event, nobody could have imagined that a war would be unleashed against Nagorno-Karabakh, but they had decided not to cancel or postpone the plans as it is in times of adversity that the voice of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity should be heard the loudest. The event, focused on the philosophy of Gratitude in Action, was broadcast live from the New York Public Library and featured Aurora Humanitarian Initiative co-founder, member of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee and president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Vartan Gregorian, as well as the evening’s hosts, well-known American journalists Judy Woodruff (PBS) and David Ignatius (the Washington Post). At the same time the rest of the participants, including Aurora Co-Founders Noubar Afeyan and Ruben Vardanyan, chair and members of the esteemed Aurora Prize Selection Committee, Aurora Laureates and famous representatives of cultural establishment like George Clooney, Yo-Yo Ma and Wynton Marsalis, as well as more than 500 invitees, joined the event remotely. However, from the very first minutes of the event and throughout its course (for 1h 40m) the risk of disruption remained high due to series of cyber attacks and an influx of thousands of bots trying to block the broadcast and spreading fake URLs of the broadcast and ultranationalist anti-Armenian slurs in the social media. Several substantial grants, presented by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative in 2020, were announced during the “Gratitude in Action” event, including \$1 million to 2020 Aurora Prize Laureates Fartuun Adan and Ilwad Elman who help women and children in Somalia; \$1 million from the Co-Founders personally to Hayastan All Armenian Fund to cover urgent humanitarian needs in Nagorno-Karabakh; \$1 million to support the children affected by war; \$100,000 to the Elmhurst Hospital in Queens help in its struggle against the virus, and \$20,000 the Committee to Protect Journalists. It should be noted as well that this year, the global Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has also transferred \$200,000 to support those affected by the blast in Beirut, \$140,000 to the Mother of Mercy Hospital in Nuba Mountains, Sudan, and \$120,000 to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia to help it fight against the pandemic of COVID-19. The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative was founded on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors. The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity is awarded annually to modern-day heroes who put themselves at risk to save others. You can watch the full-length version of the event on Aurora’s Facebook page.



From left, Dr. Vartan Gregorian, Judy Woodruff and David Ignatius



Artur Saroyan: The Dancing Policeman of the Urals

see FEAST, from page 14
body can do, how you can present yourself on stage. You are not just a dancer with a beautiful figure, but a powerful warrior, a fighter who can still dance. Therefore, exercise is an indispensable part of me. I want in the future to include music and dance in martial arts, in order to teach a person to be both combat ready and a dancer.

Well, there is a description on some Armenian male dances, that “they are dancing like they are fighting, they are fighting like they are dancing.” Competition is natural in sports: how do you feel about dance competition?

I have never seen any point in dance competitions. I do not compete with anyone; on the contrary, working on stage, when the partners were around, I tried to be on a level, and it was unpleasant for me when a person on the stage did not try as much and ruined the overall esthetic. I never liked these contests, competitions. I can show myself, but to be better than someone ... I am not better than someone else, I am just special.

Were there instances when in your policing when people recognized you as a dancer?

Yes. They saw me somewhere at work, and then they saw me in the club and were delighted, that is, the reaction was extremely positive, although maybe there was some kind of negativity on the part of people who envied me and tried to report to the management. A policeman, such a serious position, an athlete, who can be so relaxed. And when people look at me, being in the night spheres, they are delighted. Seeing me they start to move.

Seeing some of your performances videos, they can be categorized as “For 16+ only.” How would you describe your dance style?

Yes, in some even - 18+, because the genre of my dances originated in nightclubs, I never went to the halls, never rehearsed or studied, it was not interesting to me. Although this hobby was secondary for me, I understood that I was special, exceptional, and that what I want to do, I do, and my body helps me, it brings it in thanks again to sports. Therefore, I will dance in any genre. Let's just say: I am a dancer from God, but not trained. Such things are not taught, such things can be done in improvisation mode, on stage, with people, in fact to learn, and not to steal in front of the mirror and rehearse something.

You were born in Armenia and have been living in Russia since the age of 2. How much Armenian do you remain in life?

I come from Armenia, my spirit is Armenian, but I owe Russia for all the opportunities and knowledge in my life. Living in Armenia, I would not be able to develop myself so much, to be lib-

erated in the night club sphere. My dance genre may be a little wild for the Armenian audience, although I am sure they will like it. Armenia is always with me, and in the future I would like to develop my own projects and ideas there.

According to official data, 5,271 Armenians now live in Yekaterinburg. Do you participate in community life?

I was not particularly involved in community life, my role is not particularly needed there, but in the future, developing a martial arts school or dance directions, I will naturally involve the Armenian community so that all this knowledge and skills that I have is to pass our compatriots. The Armenians are kind, strong-willed, disciplined, and well-mannered; one can list and enu-

merate those characteristics. Therefore, this new understanding, which I received as an Armenian, I received right here.

Has the pandemic affected the lives of clubbers?

Of course it did. The clubs are closed, we do not dance anymore. I go out to run to music, and in the process of running I can dance, I am not shy. And I also want to convey this to the children: yes, you need to temper yourself, not necessarily through music or nightclub: you can use horizontal bars, a gym. You can just dance in the process of your activity, if you want. After a run, I come to the horizontal bars and between sets I dance without caring about what the others think. Whoever likes it, he emulates. And if sadly offended people dislike it, everything has its time, and they will come to this too...



Artur Saroyan when he dances

Calendar

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 18 — 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Afghan Cuisine Chef Sharifa Zareen, Sanctuary Kitchen Catering

DECEMBER 2 — 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Indian Cuisine Madhu Gadia, Cookbook author, The Indian Vegan Kitchen, and New Indian Home Cooking; founder, Cuisine of India

DECEMBER 5-6 — SAVE THE DATE. Trinity's 2020 Christmas Bazaar. Saturday, December 5 & Sunday December 6, 2020. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138. Questions? 617 354-0632

DECEMBER 16 — 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Desserts! Chef Nathan Kibarian Pastry Chef, Island Creek Oyster Bar Chef/Owner, Desserts by Nathan

RHODE ISLAND

The Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence hosts the following Armenian Cultural Hour programs virtually every Friday at 7:30 pm. For information on how to watch or participate in the programs, contact the church office or check the church's Facebook Watch page.

October 30 — Garo Nicheanian, Bass-Baritone, Canada "A bouquet of Armenian songs".

November 6 — “Musical greetings from Lisbon” Levon Muradian, Cello (Portugal)

November 13 — Emma Tovmasian & Vazgen Avetian (CA) in concert“Sere chi tseranoom”, Armenian popular songs

November 20 — “Meet with Armenian Doctors” — Dr. Aznif Calikyan, Anesthesiologist

November 27 — “Nor Serund” Youth Talents from Armenia Armenian folk music and songs

December 4 — Renown Armenian Bass & Songwriter Ruben Telunts in Concert “Karotee Kanch”

December 11 — World Renown “Cadance” Ensemble from Armenia

December 18 — Christmas Concert, featuring “Yerevan” Chorale &Orchestra, Boston, MA

December 27 (Sunday) — Memorial Concert “David Ayriyan”, Virtuozo Kamancha player

Feast of Ashes Threads a Family's Story into History

FEAST, from page 14

As a child Moughalian learned about World War Two and the Holocaust, but knew little of her own history. She studied hard, attended Barnard and became a renowned flautist and founded the Perspectives Ensemble, that contextualizes the work of musicians and visual artists. When her mother died, she left a Memory Book of sorts behind for Sato and her cousins. Sato took down the beautiful blue glazed vase from its perch once more, and thus began a multi-year quest to learn about her family's history and in particular that of David Ohannessian, master ceramicist:

“But my grandparents had survived. And my parents had survived. They had made a giant leap of faith and traveled to yet another foreign country in the hopes that they could root themselves in a different kind of society—one that was free of constant threats, upheavals and loss. I came to see my grandparents' fundamental task had been to keep their family alive. Not only had they done that, heroically, but they were also able, somehow, to take a centuries-old art form and give it a new life in Jerusalem...They went on to create a family of seven children, each of whom would add his or her gifts to the world.” (p7)

The journey took Moughalian around the world to Turkey, England, France, Israel, Palestine, Armenia and even back home to Brooklyn. Family history but also a desire for

setting the record straight drove her forward as she explained to me: “Although Ohannessian's story had been told, cursorily, in various art histories, those texts generally contained significant errors about him and portrayed him as a voiceless, powerless artisan, dependent on the



Sato Moughalian

benevolence of British Mandate patrons. This was a grossly incomplete description. I wanted to draw a clearer line from the first half of his career in Kütahya to the second in Jerusalem.”

Few books become instant classics, but *Feast of Ashes* comes close. Part family biography, part art historical narrative, part historical rendering of the Great Catastrophe, the book has received critical acclaim and was longlisted in the 2020 PEN American Literary Awards/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography. Moughalian's prose is not literary per se, but it possesses an immediacy and sense of storytelling that draws the reader in from the very beginning. An example of Moughalian's powers of description gives

an idea of the complexity of her grandfather's work on a fountain niche: “For the drum, Ohannessian inlaid molded tiles — crosses in shades of aqua and turquoise and stars in darker hues and white and circled the base of the cupola with another row of blue rumis. He arrayed the dome with mosaic tiles in the forms of eight-pointed rosettes, stars and crosses. On this curved ceiling, however, he altered the color scheme, glazing the crosses in white and stars in shades of blue.” (p222)

Moughalian's effort deserves particular support for another reason: published in 2019, *Feast of Ashes* was just picking up steam when the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed her book tour. Among other cancelled dates, the author was never able to deliver the 2020 Dr. Berj H. Haidostian Annual Lecture at the University of Michigan. In private conversation, Moughalian draws a direct link between the events of 1915 that her family underwent and the current attempt by an Azerbaijan and Turkey seemingly determined to repeat history: “I'm keeping a very close watch on the events in Artsakh. It's crucial to speak up. It's impossible not to think of the Genocide, the mass violence, deportations, and other expropriations of 1915-17, especially as Erdogan seems to have made explicit references to it.” Indeed with this terrible war currently unfolding in Armenia, the story of David Ohannessian's survival is doubly important, and ultimately perhaps, doubly reassuring.



COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Karabakh at Mercy of Battling Giants

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Some 700 body bags returning from the battlefield in Nagorno Karabakh have not dampened the resolve of the Armenian side, which continues to defend its ancestral land and the last frontier of Armenian history.

President Ilham Aliyev has exclaimed in amazement how Armenians have amassed the quantity of weapons which they are using now. The store of weapons may seem unlimited, but the young lives using them are in short supply.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has appealed to those who have completed their compulsory military service to volunteer again and head to the front.

Already, the deaths of those 700 mostly young men and women means that their families have been dealt a devastating blow, while the families they could have formed will never be.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijanis refuse to abide by humanitarian ceasefires to collect their own dead.

After the October 10 ceasefire agreement, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu called Moscow to let Russia know that Turkey was in command of the war and thus would have to be consulted. Again, after the October 18 ceasefire, Turkey placed a follow-up call, this time to President Aliyev, ordering him to break the ceasefire agreement, which the Azerbaijani leadership did.

For all intents and purposes, Turkey has colonized Azerbaijan and has set its goals beyond the tiny sliver of land that is Karabakh.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's pan-Turanic plan is neither fiction, nor a figment of his imagination; in fact, it jibes well with the goals of major powers, in the atmosphere of intensifying new cold war.

In reality, Armenia and Azerbaijan are both the pawns of a larger geostrategic war that is developing concurrently.

It is reported that Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has placed a phone call to his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, complaining about Turkey's involvement in the Caucasus and he has received a harsh rebuke.

The Turks are famed for their refined diplomatic skills. Therefore, wherefrom this arrogance?

Following that exchange, President Erdogan announced that Turkey would never recognize the annexation of Crimea to Russia.

Then, he added that Turkey would support the Turkic Crimean Tatars. Between the 17th and 19th centuries, Russia and Ottoman Turkey waged almost 10 wars, during which Crimea changed hands. The present-day Tatars are left over from those wars and they still constitute a hardline group, even harder than the Ukrainians, opposing a takeover of the region by Moscow.

The two alarming threats by Turkish officials were followed by terrorist acts in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan, Russia's Islamic backyard.

In this context, we have to remember that a few months ago, one of Erdogan's advisors had threatened that the Turks could cause Russia to implode from within the borders of the Russian federation.

In response to these threats, Russia began holding war games in the Caspian Sea.

To complete the parameters of the developing configuration of major powers, we need to mention the case of Azerbaijani rockets falling into Iran's territory, in addition to its agitation of Iranian Azerbaijanis.

All these developments have to be viewed within the context of the US administration's decision to withdraw forces from Germany, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

This may seem a sign of disengagement but in reality, it is not. President Trump made it clear that he was sick and tired of being involved in an unending war. Incidentally, he confessed that was the reason that he fired John Bolton ("If I listened to him, we would be waging World War V.")

But refusing to send American youth in uniform into harm's way did not mean that the US was scrapping its global political ambitions. Instead, those goals were relegated to proxy powers, like Turkey, in this case.

One of the goals of the US strategic planners is to contain Russia. In addition to integrating former Warsaw Pact countries within the NATO structure, it is in Washington's interest to see Turkey challenge Russia in its backyard, in this case, the Caucasus.

Although Turkey's bullying has angered France and Greece, Washington will not allow that anger to reach a breaking point within the NATO family.

It is apparent from Washington's treatment of Russia that it does not view the latter as a world power anymore. Instead, it regards China's rising power as a real threat to its world hegemony.

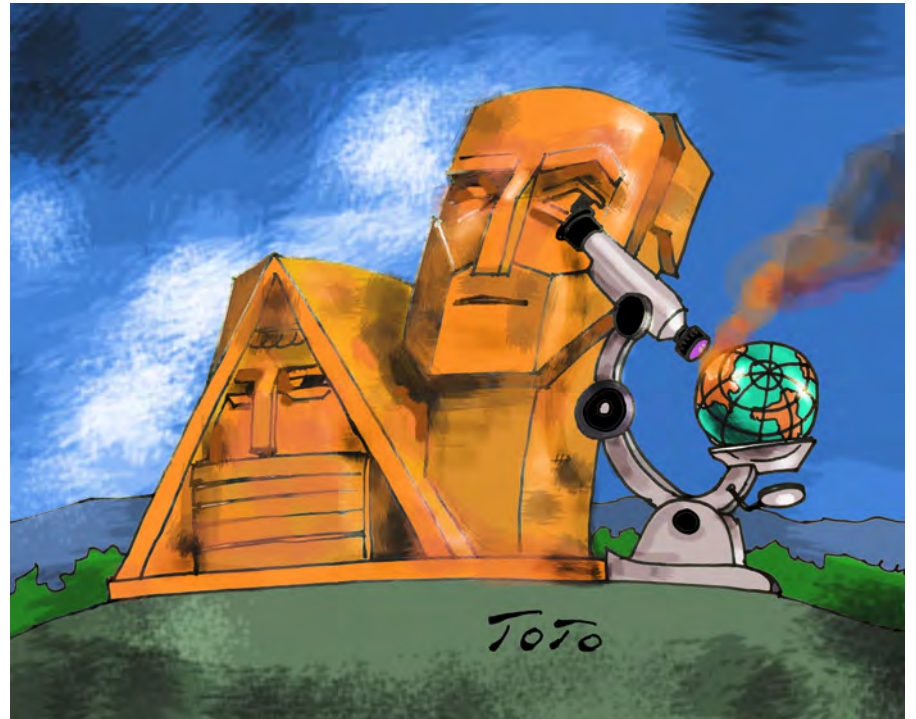
In this light, Turkey's plans to crush Armenia, cut Meghri from its territory and extend all the way to Central Asia, can be considered positive for the US. It will diminish Russia further and threaten China's backyard, particularly its vulnerable Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China, as another way to advance into Central Asia.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo may wish that Armenia could defend itself to make Armenian-Americans feel good in this uncertain period, but that will not deter him from pursuing the global plans of the US.

This week Armenia's Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan is arriving in Washington to meet Mr. Pompeo, who certainly will not share with him American intentions in the Caucasus.

But hopefully, the Armenian diplomat will have on his agenda Turkey's use of F-16 combat aircraft from NATO's arsenal against Armenia and Israel's access to US satellite systems to guide drones to kill civilians in Karabakh.

Israel's participation in this war has been most deadly. Drones



supplied by Israel to Azerbaijan have been very effective in hitting civilian targets and devastating cities.

The expert opinion is that those drones cannot hit their targets precisely without satellite guidance, which could only be provided by the Pentagon.

Many statesmen and scholars in Israel have been questioning the morality of the descendants of the Holocaust survivors helping genocide perpetrators to commit a second genocide.

In this new power play, Turkey will tempt Russian into a major confrontation. But Turkey is not Georgia, where the Russian army can march in and annex a chunk of territory. Ankara is covered by the NATO shield. It may engage in any adventure for its selfish goals, but it has the assurance that any attack on Turkey will be considered an attack on all members of NATO.

This paradigm has already created a pattern; thus Turkey challenged Russia in Syria and Libya. Although Russia could fight and defeat Turkey, it did not for the above reason. Instead, it reached an accommodation with Ankara. In view of these two precedents, it is not difficult to extrapolate Turkey's intentions in the Caucasus as well. Turkey will not allow Russia to have control of the Caucasus singlehandedly.

During the two ceasefire negotiations, Turkey tried to interject itself, once as a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and another as Azerbaijan's partner; it was rebuffed both times.

Consequently, it will continue instigating the war, particularly when Aliyev lose his willpower. In all the countries where Turkey has its occupation forces, no power has been able to challenge Ankara. It is clear that now, Turkey's new phase of aggression is in the Caucasus.

continued on next page

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan Doesn't Retrieve Its War Dead; Continues Shelling Civilians in Artsakh

Azerbaijan and Turkey kept insisting that they will not accept a ceasefire until the Armenian armed forces vacate Artsakh. In other words, they want to reoccupy Artsakh and eliminate the Armenian presence there.

Turkey, an outsider, kept pouring fuel on the fire by stressing that the war on Artsakh should not stop until Armenians return the land back to Azerbaijan. However, as the Azeri and Jihadist terrorists' losses mounted, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan started softening his stance by announcing last Friday that the "principles to settle the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which had been put forward by the United States, Russia and France, should form the basis for a settlement."

That same day, at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin of Russia, the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia met for over 10 hours in Moscow and agreed to a humanitarian ceasefire starting on Oct. 11, at 12 noon (local time), for the purposes of exchanging prisoners of war and retrieving the bodies of dead soldiers. Under Islamic law, a burial ceremony should be held within 24 hours of someone's death.

However, not surprisingly, Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had no intention of abiding by the ceasefire. Azerbaijan continued the shelling of civilian and military targets within few minutes of the start of the ceasefire. Aliyev showed no respect for the dead and their grieving families by refusing to make arrangements to pick up the bodies of killed Azeri soldiers. He also showed no respect for the strict Islamic burial timetable as he is not a devout Muslim.

The real reason Aliyev pretended to accept the ceasefire was to use it as a cover to regroup its shattered armed forces and rush in new military hardware from Israel. Meanwhile, Turkey continued to recruit more terrorist mercenaries from Syria as they kept getting killed in the field of battle.

The blatant Azeri and Turkish violations of the ceasefire should finally wake up President Putin from his slumber. The transfer of these mercenaries to Azerbaijan is not only against the interests of Armenia and Artsakh, but more importantly, against the national interests of Russia. If

Putin does not care about the killings of Armenians, he should care about future acts of terrorism by the mercenaries who had been fighting in Syria against the Russian forces. Armenia and Artsakh are doing a big favor to Russia by eliminating hundreds of Islamist Jihadists that were a menace in Syria and potentially in Russia. These mercenaries could not fight well against Artsakh since they are not trained soldiers, but are capable of committing suicide bombings and blow up civilian targets in Russian cities.

Furthermore, President Putin should feel embarrassed that a ceasefire he had arranged between Armenia and Azerbaijan is being disrespected by Aliyev and Erdogan. This may finally force Putin to take more decisive measures against both Azerbaijan and Turkey. Otherwise, Russia's own prestige will go down the drain.

Russia also has to respect its commitment to the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) with Armenia. It has to defend Armenia's borders since Azerbaijan has repeatedly shelled civilians inside Armenia.

Even more concerned with these Islamist terrorists is Iran which has been fighting them in Syria. To have thousands of terrorists on Iran's border is a serious security risk. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has repeatedly warned Azerbaijan and Turkey about the transfer of these mercenaries to areas next to the Iranian border. Rouhani even spoke with Putin about this threat. If the danger persists, Iran may be forced to take military action against these foreign terrorists to defend its own borders.

One thing that remains puzzling is the polite and civilized reaction of the Armenian forces in the battle. Azerbaijan has kept shelling the civilian population of Stepanakert, Artsakh's Capital, on a daily basis, causing dozens of deaths and injuries both before and after the ceasefire. However, it is not understandable why the Armenian forces refrain from shelling Azeri cities and villages in return. The only exception was the Armenian shelling of the airport of Ganja (Gantsak) in Azerbaijan where Azeri and Turkish air force jets are stationed.

Armenians have every right to respond to Azeri targets. This is war. When the enemy does not respect international law and commits war crimes repeatedly, Aliyev should understand that Armenians will hit back until he stops targeting Armenian civilians. Even the historic Cathedral of Ghazanchetsots in Shushi came under Azeri missile attack causing major damage to this house of worship. Unless such barbaric Azeri attacks cease, Armenia should hit back all Azeri targets, particularly Azerbaijan's oil pipeline.

I was very pleased that on October 11, a massive protest was organized by the Armenian community of Los Angeles in front of the Turkish Consulate.

Erdogan, the delirious leader of Turkey, should be pressured to stop its continuation of the genocide against the

Armenian people. Armenian communities around the world should organize similar demonstrations against Turkish Consulates and Embassies and demand that all governments pressure Turkey to stop its involvement in the war and the recruitment of terrorist mercenaries. The war has unified 10 million Armenians worldwide who are ready to support their homeland against the pan-Turkic onslaught which is far more sinister than the coronavirus pandemic. Everything must be done to foil Erdogan's attempt to stick his nose in the Artsakh conflict. Contrary to the Turkish Foreign Ministry's announcement, Turkey should have no involvement either at the war zone or at the negotiating table.

Just as importantly, protests must be held in front of Israeli Consulates and Embassies in various countries as Israel has sold and continuous to sell billions of dollars of lethal sophisticated drones and missiles to Azerbaijan, killing and maiming hundreds of innocent Armenian men, women and children. A statement circulated on Facebook appropriately describes this insane situation: "The grandchildren of genocide perpetrators are killing the grandchildren of genocide survivors with weapons provided by the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors!"

Last week, a group of prominent Israeli intellectuals issued a joint statement calling on Israel "to cease immediately the sales of arms to Azerbaijan... aimed mainly against a people that like the Jewish people suffered genocidal attacks in the twentieth century. We call upon other Israelis to raise their voice on this important issue." I am pleased that among the signatories are Professors Yair Auran, Israel Charny and Michael Stone, who have always defended the truth of the Armenian Genocide and called for its recognition by the Israeli government.

Since the Russian government has failed to take decisive action against Azerbaijan and Turkey, I suggest that protests be organized in front of Russian Consulates and Embassies in various countries, particularly in Yerevan and Moscow to let President Putin know that his inaction in this war is causing Armenians everywhere to lose their sympathy for Russia and its government.

Finally, the governments of Artsakh and Armenia have urged everyone in the world to recognize the independence of the Republic of Artsakh. This is a very sensitive subject with far reaching consequences. However, given these tragic circumstances, Armenians have no choice but to resort to such a measure, as a reaction to the Azeri and Turkish attempts to annihilate the Armenians of Artsakh. The recognition of Artsakh's independence would be an adequate response to Azerbaijan's and Turkey's war crimes. However, the first step should be the recognition of the Artsakh Republic by the Armenian government. Otherwise, when Armenians approach foreign leaders, they will be told why should they be the first to recognize Artsakh, since Armenia itself has not!

Karabakh at Mercy of Battling Giants

from previous page

Tehran is worried about Turkey's aggressive posture as much as Armenia. Iran is also a target on the US hit list, at the behest of Israel. Israel would love to see Iran, Turkey and Russia embroiled in a Caucasian quagmire.

The conduct of the war also reflects Turkey's and Israel's interests.

Recent bombings are concentrated in two specific areas; targets in the vicinity of Meghri, the piece of land Turkey plans to occupy, and the area closest to the Iranian border, which may become handy if Israel needs a launching pad in Azerbaijan.

Iran has a demographic fault line with 20 million restive ethnic Azerbaijanis in its north. One of the strategic targets of the US war planners has been to implode Iran along those fault lines.

Thus far, the combined forces of Turkey and Azerbaijan, together with Israeli armaments, could not make a major breakthrough. That speaks highly of the ability of the Armenian army to fight a modern-day technological war. Turkey is counting on the exhaustion of the human resources in Armenia. It believes a war of attrition will yield results.

Along with fighting an existential war, Armenians are guarding Russia's southern gate in the Caucasus yet it is apparent that Russia will avoid confronting Turkey. It will avoid triggering Article 5 of the NATO Alliance; nor will the Azerbaijan-Turkish tandem push Armenia to the point of involving the Collective Security Treaty obligations.

Instead, they all will allow Armenia and Azerbaijan to pay the price of this war in blood.

After the first ceasefire agreement, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov proposed an old plan which calls for complete surrender on the Armenian side. That plan was discussed many times within the framework of the OSCE and proved to be a non-starter.

If the US will watch Turkey tempt Russia into a major confrontation, and Russia will avoid the temptation, the retribution will come from the Armenians in terms of territorial concessions.

As we can see, the Karabakh war is not just a regional conflict between historic enemies. It is a war with global implications.

Realistically it is apparent that Armenians will not occupy additional territories as they are fighting defensively. Victory means holding on to the present territories which they are defending.

If there is a silver lining in this somber story, it is the solidarity of the Armenians around the world. Armenians rally when there is an existential danger, like they did during the earthquake in 1988. That solidarity, support, political actions are paramount.

Let us see what remains of that solidarity when peace is restored in Armenia and Karabakh.

LETTERS

Rise Up, Stand and Fight

To the Editor:

In the comfort of diaspora, we stand witness to the attempted destruction of our homeland and beloved people. We must give as much as we can, stand up and cry out, and above all, fight with all our might.

The first Christian nation is pummeled by enemies while complacency and prosperity has slowly killed the true call of God in many of our Christian churches.

As our Hye young men and women are fighting the battle of their lives, we must come alongside them and hold up their hands, even as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses in the heat of the battle, strengthening him to victory (Exodus 17:8-13).

We are far outnumbered and outgunned. The world's sympathy is adding up to nothing. Now is the time to rise up and cry out in faith. Religious formality and pious ritual are powerless in this battle. Let God search our hearts, lest we be found unfaithful, solely nominal and powerless Christians.

We need to get ahold of God.

"The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds." Armenian Church, fellow believers, now is the time to rise up and stand. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Nothing short of demonic influence charges the spirit of murder in this revived 'Ottoman' conquest. Fling open wide church doors and call for all night prayer meetings. Post them without delay on bulletins and in the Mirror Spectator. Preach and expound upon the scriptures, they are "living and active, sharper than any double edged sword". If only one sheep sits before you, that is enough. Call for prayer and fasting and never give up!

May we rise up, stand and fight. Open God's word and find out what He says about this world and our battles. Take up the armor of faith while the fight still rages. May God confound our enemies and reroute them ten ways. We pray not for their bloodshed but God almighty, strike them with fear, panic and confusion. Expose and showcase Erdogan's devilish ways and bring them to shame. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses (and Drones) but we trust in the name of the LORD our God."

"Rise up, O God, and scatter your enemies. Let those who hate God run for their lives."

Lisa Stepanian
New York City, NY

Armenia’s Voice Absent in International Media: A Call for An Armenian News Agency

Considering that we had been hearing persistent war rumblings from Baku and Ankara for some time, Artsakh and Armenia, as well as the diaspora, ought to have expected the current aggression to be imminent. Still, when the actual war calamity struck the Armenian homeland

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

on September 27, evidently it shook up all of us very deeply. War losses are always extremely costly. In our case it can be said bluntly that they are actually unbearable for any substantial length of time. This is not to underestimate the outstanding moral and physical strength and resolve of Armenians in Artsakh and Armenia, and their heroic actions on the battleground, as much in the past several years as in the past few weeks. Meanwhile, Armenians in the diaspora are showing their complete solidarity and readiness to help their brothers and sisters in the homeland in any way possible.

However, a war is not conducted only on the ground or in the air using military equipment, where the cost is very high. The burden of the loss of the priceless lives of valiant fallen soldiers, as well as the cost of destroyed military equipment and civil installations which can within few days easily amount to billions of dollars are quite heavy for a small country like Armenia.

All wars are also conducted on two other fronts, which can end up being equally decisive, even more so in the case of Armenia, in determining the chances for a victorious outcome. The reference here is on the one hand, to the less visible and often invisible but intense diplomatic maneuvers that are necessary to secure favourable alliances leading to the consequential interventions of friendly nations, and on the other hand the war of words carried through powerful and informative media coverage in the international media.

It is vital that the daily warfront realities, as well as the historical and legal background of the situation, be exposed and defended in the media from our own viewpoint, in order to rally public opinion in favor of the Armenian cause. The success of the media battle is obviously essential not only to maintain the high morale of the entire Armenian nation but also and more importantly it has a direct influence on the success of the diplomatic war. To win the latter is absolutely essential, particularly in the case of Armenia, in order to rapidly stop the devastation of the military operations.

As we follow with focused attention the evolution of the current war in our motherland, we note with justified pride the heroic struggle of our nation on the battleground. As for the conduct of diplomatic operations, we are quite naturally not privy to enough reliable information to be able to judge fairly Armenia’s handling of that very difficult and critical battle. However, whereas the latter is certainly a complex subject that needs a serious and deep analysis based on concrete facts, on the other hand, it is unfortunately a sadly evident fact that Armenia’s point of view is nearly totally absent in the international media coverage and analysis of the ongoing war. As a result, to this

date we painfully witness a media coverage that is heavily biased towards our enemies as it is evidently influenced by the well-established joint Turkish-Azerbaijani propaganda sources.

The undeniable reality is that Armenians are heroically defending their right to live and flourish on their own lands, lands which they have owned and inhabited for several thousands of years. Important media outlets, on the other hand, be it in English or French, keep referring to Armenians of Artsakh as “separatists living on the disputed enclave recognized internationally as the Azerbaijani lands of Nagorno Karabakh.”

To read and hear such discourse is unbearably frustrating for any self-respecting Armenian. It also creates in different forums such as in the UN or the NATO circles a totally unjust and unfavourable disposition towards Artsakh and Armenia.

As a matter of fact, this exposes the reality that to this date, Armenia has been sadly negligent in not creating a multilingual – at the very least, English, Russian and Armenian language – active news-producing system of high standing having an international reach, and capable of constantly flooding the international news outlets with timely and well documented information and analysis in its favor. Unfortunately, this is a catastrophic failure from the point of view of the short-term and long-term interests of the nation.

The realization of this serious deficiency or gap within our nation’s toolbox of vital self-defense equipment, leads one to underline the urgent necessity that, as the currently overwhelmed authorities of Armenia and Artsakh cannot be expected to undertake steps to correct this issue now or any time soon, at the very least, those in the diaspora who are presently in the best position to undertake this challenge be seriously supported and encouraged to do so.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, with its current dynamic and unquestionably very respectable status within the diasporan English-language media, is small yet the best prepared to take the initiative as a nucleus, to which all other qualified forces from other circles must be invited to join, in order to come up as soon and as efficiently as possible, with an authoritative and prestigious, nonpartisan Armenian International News Agency network.

As soon as it becomes possible, this network must inclusively extend and integrate all currently existing similar and compatible entities that exist in Armenia. Without being specific, there are indeed also some attempts made in Armenia; however, they have not been able to make any dent in the international media.

In view of the urgency and importance of this need, finances ought not be a problem. Indeed, this must be seriously considered as a war effort in itself. Actually, the war of words is permanent in our modern world which is dominated constantly by the flood of messages through different media.

In the last weeks of the current Artsakh war, Armenians across the world mobilized and joined their efforts. They came up with a total of aid which is over 120 million dollars and still rising. We must realize that as commendable as this is, that entire amount can hardly cover the cost of the loss of several pieces of serious, modern military equipment. It may not even cover the total dollar value cost of a single day’s losses in the ongoing war where sophisticated arms and equipment are used and large civilian installations are destroyed.

A similar infusion of support would easily fund entirely the creation and maintenance of a vitaly needed news generating war chest that is proposed here.

I sincerely hope that this will be a sufficiently provocative article in order to stir thoughts and generate initiatives leading to practical steps to confront this difficult yet most important challenge. Most importantly, when a serious initiative is taken towards its realization, let us hope that the response in making human and financial resources available will be constructive and generous.

The Case for Affirming the Independence of the Armenian Republic of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh

By David Boyajian

In recent years, many territories’ declarations of independence have been justifiably affirmed through international agreements. The Republic of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh’s declaration of independence from Azerbaijan three decades ago is as legitimate as any of those. Artsakh is the republic’s ancient Armenian name.

Artsakh and Christian Armenia have been under attack by Azerbaijan, Turkey, jihadist terrorists, and ISIS since September 27. Turkey is using its army, American-built F-16 jets, drones, and other weapons against Armenians. Azerbaijan’s arsenal comes mostly from Israel, including illegal cluster bombs being targeted against civilians. Israel is currently resupplying Azerbaijan.

Artsakh, like Armenia, is thousands of years old. In contrast, no country named Azerbaijan existed before 1918. It was cobbled together out of a diverse population of what were called Muslims or Tartars, as well as Armenians, Persians, Russians, and others. No such identity as ‘Azeri’ had ever existed.

We’ll show that Artsakh justifiably and legitimately voted for self-determination as it separated from Azerbaijan, its previous temporary but brutish overlord.

The Stalinist Giveaway

Turkey and Azerbaijan speak Turkic dialects. Therefore, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin fantasized (incorrectly, as it turned out) that Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) and his incipient Turkish Republic could be lured into the USSR’s web. So in the early 1920s, Stalin transferred Artsakh – then 96% Armenian – and the Armenian territory of Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan. Stalin’s blunder is the root cause of the present impasse over Artsakh.

Shortly before the transfer, Azerbaijan massacred Armenians in Artsakh, Baku (Azerbaijan), and elsewhere. These crimes were part of the Armenian Genocide that Turkey was already committing from 1915 on.

Stalin also transferred Armenian land to Azerbaijan such that Artsakh became geographically cut off from Armenia. Many majority Armenian areas were also excluded from Artsakh. The latter became a nominally “autonomous” region within Soviet Azerbaijan but, in reality, under the latter’s heavy jackboot.

Artsakh voted for self-determination in accordance with Soviet law in 1988 and international law in 1991. Self-determination and territorial integrity have equal standing under international law. In response, Azerbaijan massacred Armenians in its own cities of Baku, Kirovabad/Ganja, and Sumgait. A war ensued which the outnumbered and outgunned Armenians won in 1994.

Artsakh’s long nightmare through seven decades of Azerbaijani rule was due not to Communism but rather to raw Azeri ethno-racial fanaticism.

Artsakh’s Long Nightmare

Under Azeri rule, Artsakh’s Armenians dropped from 95% to 76% of the population – the product of deportations, exile, murder, theft, oppression, and Azerbaijan’s calculatingly importing Azeris to replace the Armenian majority.

The KGB’s Heydar Aliyev – father of current Azeri dictator Ilham Aliyev – admitted to exiling Artsakh’s Armenians and bringing in Azeris. Reported Russia’s REGNUM news agency: “I tried to increase the number of Azeris and to reduce the number of Armenians.”

Armenian historical figures’ titles were crudely Islamized to “Pasha” or “Bey.” Fifth century Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi became Muhammed al-Khojaji.

References to Armenian history in textbooks were excised. Even the written word Artsakh was banned.

Baku stole from Armenian schools. The material was sent to Azerbaijan. Many schools, orphanages, and libraries were shuttered.

Food processing factories were closed and the equipment transferred to Azerbaijan.

Hundreds of thousands of tons of meat, dairy products, and wool were sent to Azerbaijan instead of being provided to local Armenians.

Armenian leaders who protested were often imprisoned or sent to Siberia on orders from Baku.

Farms and cattle were confiscated. Armenians were frequently banished. Their apartments were given to Azeri immigrants.

Museums were looted of precious artifacts, particularly those that proved Artsakh to be ancient Armenian land.

Murderous Azeri gangs were protected by Baku. Inscriptions in the Armenian alphabet on ancient monuments were depicted as Azeri.

Armenian cemeteries were destroyed. Petitions by Armenians were sent to Soviet Premiers Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev in 1965 and 1977, to no avail.

Fast forward to the late 1980s and early 1990s as Artsakh broke Baku’s chokehold and voted for self-determination.

Massacres, Jihadis, and More

Azerbaijan’s response was, as noted above, massacres. Azerbaijan then invaded Artsakh. But Armenians defended their honor and native land and were victorious.

During the war, Azerbaijan deployed thousands of foreign jihadist and terrorists such as Afghan Mujahedin, Chechen militants, and Turkey’s Grey Wolves fascists to fight Armenians.

Azerbaijan and Turkey are doing exactly the same thing these past weeks.

These things tell us everything we need to know about Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s malign political culture and intentions. Azerbaijan is now executing captured Armenian POWs and filming it.

Azerbaijan is a dictatorship. Artsakh and Armenia are reformist democracies.

The current U.S. State Department report on Azerbaijan lists these problems and more: “unlawful or arbitrary killing; torture; arbitrary detention; life-threatening prison conditions; political prisoners; heavy restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, including violence against journalists; interference with the rights of peaceful assembly; severe restrictions on political participation; systemic government corruption; police detention and torture of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals.”

The official U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom cites Azerbaijan for “engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom.”

Europe’s Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) gave its first “Organized Crime and Corruption Person of the Year” award to President Aliyev.

At a NATO English language course in Hungary in 2004, Azeri Lieutenant Ramil Safarov axed Armenian Lieutenant Gurban Margaryan to death. Safarov was convicted and imprisoned. But later, Hungary illegally transferred him to Azerbaijan, where was greeted as a national hero, awarded a medal, promoted, and given an apartment.

Imagine you lived in Artsakh. Would you ever submit to even nominal Azeri rule? Of course not.

Had Artsakh’s Armenians not voted and fought for self-determination, they would eventually have suffered the same fate as Nakhichevan’s Armenians: By 1989, Azerbaijan had forced every Armenian to leave.

Using pickaxes and dump trucks, Azeri soldiers even obliterated a 9th Century Armenian Christian cemetery in Nakhichevan along with thousands of intricately carved headstones. View the live video on Youtube’s “New Tears of the Araxes.”

International Recognition

The unjust decision and grave error made by Stalin must be corrected.

As Azerbaijan, Turkey, and jihadist terrorists continue their attempts to depopulate and occupy Artsakh, international recognition of the latter would help immeasurably.

The French parliament is now discussing doing so. Artsakh deserves to be formally recognized right now as the independent and democratic republic it is. Artsakh awaits the awakening of the world’s conscience before it’s too late.



COMMENTARY

How Turkey's Military Adventures Decrease Freedom at Home

By Garo Paylan

A procession of cars filled with men waving the flag of Azerbaijan, honking and whistling drove through the Kumkapi area in Istanbul, which is home to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul and many Armenian families. The car rally, on Sept. 28, was a provocation, a threat that filled my community, the tiny Armenian community – 60,000 out of 83 million – in Turkey with fear.

After a decades-long fitful truce, the conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh – a breakaway Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan – between Azerbaijan and Armenia resumed last month, leading to a large military deployment, destruction of civilian centers and thousands of casualties.

In this war, Turkey strongly supports Azerbaijan, with which it shares ethnic bonds, and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dismissed global calls for a cease-fire. He has supported Azerbaijan with defense technology, drones and propaganda machinery.

This strategy is in line with Mr. Erdogan's government's decision to increase our country's military footprint abroad – Syria, Libya and the eastern Mediterranean – to enhance Turkey's position as a regional power.

But there is also a direct correlation between the Turkish government's desire to delve into conflicts abroad and the closing down of the democratic space at home.

I have witnessed and experienced this myself, as an Armenian from Turkey and as a member of the Turkish Parliament, representing the predominantly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir from the People's Democratic Party, or the H.D.P., which brought together the country's Kurds, leftists, environmentalists, feminists and minorities in opposition to Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, or the A.K.P., and its rule.

Turkey's involvement in regional conflicts has whipped up nationalist fervor, obliterated space for advocates of peace and democracy and deepened a sense of fear and precarity among the minority populations.

In the past few weeks, Turkish television networks controlled by the government and pro-government daily newspapers have adopted a hyper nationalist

tone, describing Armenia as the enemy, and giddily broadcasting and printing images of Armenian targets destroyed by Turkish drones. A month or so earlier, the Turkish government clashed with Greece and Cyprus over energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean. For a few weeks, Greece was the enemy.

On Sept. 27 I criticized Turkey's warmongering in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on Twitter, arguing that Ankara should stop throwing gasoline on that fire, as there will be no winners in a war and both Armenian and Azeri people will lose. I urged my countrymen, "We must do what we can for a cease-fire."

Because of my country's authoritarian turn, my background and political leanings are enough to turn me into a target. On Oct. 5, the Eurasia Institute of Strategic Affairs, a nationalist outlet, published a full-page advertisement in support of Azerbaijan in Sabah, a newspaper with links to the Erdogan family. It was signed by former and current members of the Turkish Parliament from the A.K.P.

The advertisement in Sabah accused me of being pro-Armenian and of committing treason, calling on the Turkish judiciary and the Parliament to "fulfill its duty." In the current Turkish political climate, it sounded like a call to remove my immunity – parliamentarians in Turkey have immunity from prosecution – so that I can be put on trial for my peacenik stance. Yet I have filed a legal complaint about the advertisers and continued to call for peace in the Caucasus.

As an Armenian from Turkey and a descendant of genocide survivors, I know very well the meaning of this message. In 2007, Hrant Dink, a celebrated and outspoken Armenian journalist from Istanbul, who edited the Agos newspaper, was assassinated by a Turkish nationalist in a similar period of heightened nationalism. Mr. Dink once described Turkey's Armenian minority as "living with the trepidations of a dove."

The darkness that engulfed Turkey seems to widen every day. In the past few weeks, dozens of my friends from the H.D.P., including

Ayhan Bilgen, the elected mayor of Kars, on the border with Armenia, have been arrested on trumped-up terrorism charges, ostensibly for organizing street protests in 2014 across the country. The protests were a response to the government's nonchalance in the face of the siege of the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani by the Islamic State.

Seven H.D.P. parliamentarians, including me, are being accused of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order" in an indictment, and a prosecutor is preparing to ask the Parliament to remove our immunity, which will then allow the police to arrest us. This was already done to Selahattin Demirtas, a former co-chairman of the H.D.P., and thousands of other officials who are in jail. It's not hard to see that the political intention here is to paralyze our party – the third largest in Turkey – and weaken the opposition.

Despite the recent threats, I was encouraged by thousands of people calling, writing and gathering signatures expressing their support for me. The other day, someone cleaning the streets shouted at me, "My deputy, if they take you away one day and you cannot see us, know that we are here." And I do.

You may wonder why we continue to struggle for democracy in this country. Things were not always so dark in Turkey. A decade ago, Turkey was a relatively promising democracy, on path for European Union membership and calling for regional peace. It coined the "zero problems with neighbors" policy, and at one point, we were even close to normalization of relations with Armenia.

We founded the H.D.P. in that hopeful period in 2012. Our mission was to support the peace process with the Kurds and to introduce a pluralist voice in our country's stifling political scene. I entered the Parliament in 2015, exactly a century after my great-grandfather was killed in the Armenian genocide. My goal was to help build a democracy strong enough, and vast enough, so that Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Alevis, minorities and women would live without any fear, as equal citizens.

I yearned and worked for Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. When I met Armenians during my travels abroad, I argued that this struggle for the heart and soul of Turkey was important because only a democratic Turkey could face its past – and only then would our collective healing start.

But Turkey took a path toward authoritarianism after 2015, and our basic civil rights are on hold today. President Erdogan, once an advocate of European Union-led reforms and a peace process with the Kurds, over the past decade has established a one-man regime, moved away from democracy and entered a coalition with hard-right Turkish nationalists. Greater militarism has followed.

Militant nationalism and authoritarianism can neither solve our domestic problems nor help the region. A better choice for my country will always be to seek regional peace and cultivate better ties with our neighbors. Turkey must encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to return to peace talks and facilitate a lasting settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

On Saturday, Russia, which has a defense agreement with Armenia and good relations with Azerbaijan, brokered a cease-fire between the two countries. This highlighted Russia's role in the region and has left Turkey out of the diplomatic game. If President Erdogan wants to be relevant, he should stop inflaming tensions in the Caucasus and support the cease-fire between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

But I am not naïve, and I know that only a democratic Turkey can help stabilize its region and act as a responsible member of the international community. That is why I will not remain silent in the face of threats and will keep on fighting for democracy here and peace abroad.

(Garo Paylan is a member of the Turkish Parliament from the People's Democratic Party. This commentary was published in the *New York Times* on October 15.)

Let's Not Allow Another Aleppo in the Caucasus

By Chris Bohjalian

WE DON'T TALK MUCH ABOUT ALEPPO THESE DAYS. But it was only a few years ago, beginning in 2011, that the northern Syrian city was front-page news because of the civil war in Syria. The once-thriving metropolis was reduced to rubble and had become ground zero for the refugee crisis that impacted most of Europe – and would be a driving force in Donald Trump's xenophobic election campaign. (Remember the "Muslim Ban"?) The humanitarian crisis and the refugee camps in Greece, Jordan, and Lebanon are still awash in human suffering.

2016: UN human rights chief calls Aleppo a 'slaughterhouse'

Now another humanitarian crisis looms in the Caucasus, in the fledgling Armenian Republic of Artsakh – known also as Nagorno-Karabakh. The 150,000 Armenians there have been under heavy fire from Azerbaijan since Sept. 27, with the Azeri army aided by mercenaries and weaponry that Turkey is shuttling to the front lines. The capital, Stepanakert, has been bombarded for days, despite the cease-fire that was supposed to have gone into effect on Oct. 10. Hospitals, schools, and churches are being shelled.

Most of the world can't find Artsakh on a map. Of course, most of the world can't find Armenia or Azerbaijan, either. But I'm a grandson of two survivors of the Armenian Genocide, so I've been there. I've been to the front lines opposite Azerbaijan during peacetime and stood in the trenches with the soldiers. One year I was there for the country's national first day of school, an annual holiday, and watched the ritual where parents and grandparents would join their children in morning assemblies.

David L. Phillips: Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is spiraling out of control

Why is Artsakh a flashpoint? Azerbaijan claims ownership over Artsakh, citing laws of territorial integrity. The Armenians, meanwhile, insist it is theirs because of a people's right to self-determination. History is on the Armenians' side.

In 1923, Joseph Stalin gave the land to Azerbaijan, despite the fact it was populated by Armenians, to undermine ethnic solidarities that might, in turn, undermine the Soviet Union. But the land had a long Armenian heritage, such as the medieval Dadivank Monastery, with its hauntingly beautiful frescoes.

In 1988, the Armenian majority, in what was then called Nagorno-Karabakh, voted to become part of the Soviet Union's Armenian Republic. But the USSR was about to collapse and couldn't pacify the anti-Armenian violence that erupted across Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, where Armenians were targeted with the violence of pogroms and all had to emigrate to Artsakh, Armenia and, in some cases, America. In 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed its independence and, for the next three years, the Armenians there and in Azerbaijan fought a war that, in the end, the Armenians won. About 30,000 people died, and perhaps as many as 1 million were displaced.

Azerbaijan has never gotten over the loss of that territory, a region that is mostly pomegranates, scrub, and now vineyards. It is Azerbaijan that has the oil and natural gas. Moreover, it has always been a David-and-Goliath sort of struggle: The 150,000 Armenians of Artsakh are squaring off against 10 million Azeris. And this month the odds have grown even longer because of Turkey's involvement.

"There is enormous enthusiasm, but also growing unease among the populace because of Turkey's intervention," said Antranig Kasbarian, an American citizen who is in Stepanakert. Kasbarian is a trustee of the non-profit Tufenkian Foundation, a group that tries to combat poverty and promote education in Armenia and Artsakh. "The people here believe they can win a fair fight anytime, but this is something wholly different," he explained, "such as the drones and aerial bombardment, which are a result of Turkey's presence."

Turkey has also resurrected the ghosts of 1915 and the Armenian Genocide, the Ottoman Empire's systematic annihilation of 1.5 million of its Armenian citizens. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey has been clear that he views Ilham Aliyev, the Azeri president, as an ally in his anti-Armenian agenda, going so far in May as to condemn what he called "terrorist leftovers of the sword," a pejorative term for the Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek minorities the Young Turks almost obliterated a century ago. The coronavirus pandemic, the US exit from the world stage, and our focus on the presidential election have offered Erdogan and Aliyev the perfect cover for the premeditated attack on Artsakh.

Today, Stepanakert, a city of 50,000, "resembles a pockmarked ghost town," said Kasbarian. "It's desolation. The streets are empty, and half the population has been evacuated."

If Stepanakert falls and Artsakh is returned to Azerbaijan, the world may face another Aleppo: a humanitarian crisis with 150,000 refugees and the sort of anti-Armenian bloodshed we saw in that northern Syrian city nine years ago; in Baku, in 1990; and across the Ottoman Empire, in 1915.

The United States must help to stop this. It can:

Demand that Turkey, a NATO ally, stop providing weapons and transporting mercenaries to the front.

Insist that Azerbaijan and Turkey agree immediately to the cease-fire.

Recognize Artsakh, giving it more clout in any peace negotiations with Azerbaijan. (So far, seven US states, including Massachusetts, have.)

Put economic sanctions on Azerbaijan and Turkey.

I do not mean to denigrate the concept of territorial integrity. But as a descendant of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, I think it is clear that a people's right to self-determination counts far more, especially when the alternative is annihilation.

(Novelist Chris Bohjalian is the author of 21 books. This commentary originally appeared in the *Boston Globe* on October 16.)



COMMENTARY

ARCA Appeals to BBC to Correct Skewed Coverage



Armenian Rights Council of America

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October 17, 2020

BBC Studios Americas Inc
1120 Avenue of the Americas
5th Floor
New York
NY 10036-6700
USA

Dear sirs,

When the war erupted in and around Nagorno Karabakh on September 27, 2020, we turned to the BBC as one of the traditionally most reliable and objective news sources in the world. However, to our dismay, your reporting from the war zone up to this point does not live up to your reputation of objectivity.

We do not want to speculate as to why this has happened, but can only comment on the results.

To our knowledge, your reporter filed only once from the Armenian side in Stepanakert while he was taking refuge in a building, huddled with civilians running away from indiscriminate Azerbaijani bombing. Most of the remainder of your reporting emanated from Azerbaijan or Tbilisi, Georgia, with a distinct pro-Azerbaijani bent. It was particularly heartrending to watch Orla Guerrin's coverage with a somber tone describing Azerbaijani women lamenting the loss of loved ones and blaming the Armenian side for the bombing.

Your impartiality is compromised when you fail to give equal time to the other side of the story, let alone your avoidance of presenting the geopolitical perspective. This was an attack on a democratically run society initiated by a dictatorial Azerbaijani state supported and perhaps even instigated by expansionist Turkey. Overwhelming numbers of Azerbaijani forces, fortified with Turkish advisors and advanced military hardware and backed by Syrian mercenaries, are attempting to wipe out a small number of descendants of genocide survivors, to bring to a gruesome culmination the genocidal crime which Turkey had initiated 105 years ago.

It is simplistic to insist on the definition of Karabakh as an Azerbaijani territory, when this is at the least a debatable issue. History and demographics support the Armenian claims for self-determination, and Armenians acted legally according to the constitution of the Soviet Union in their declaration of independence of Mountainous Karabakh. It is the responsibility of serious news media to present the full context of the current situation, if only in summary form, instead of rehashing partisan clichés.

For Azerbaijan, this war is about a small territory, which has a symbolic value for Azerbaijanis, who have never been more than a minority immigrating only in recent centuries to its mountains. It had an Armenian majority population, as witnessed by censuses from the end of the 19th century, and never has been formally part of the country of Azerbaijan.

For the Armenian side, this war is a life-or-death struggle to fend off a "final solution" which the Turks and Azerbaijanis have vowed to execute. A true peace settlement acknowledging the right of the Armenians of Karabakh to control their own lives and society would also lead to the return of historically non-Armenian populated buffer zones to Azerbaijan and an end to the use of this conflict for extrinsic motivations.

What we need to see is the fair and balance reporting which would be most fitting for your reputation and tradition of excellence.

Your viewers throughout the world deserve a more honest presentation.

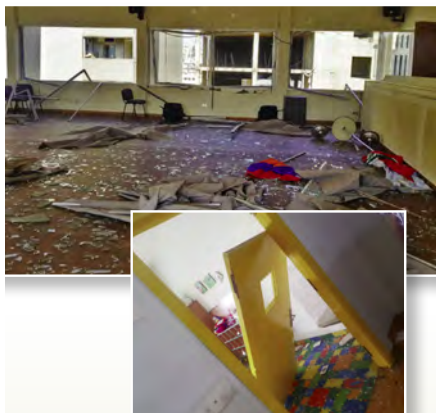
Sincerely,
Kevork Marashlian
President



HELP Us Rebuild

The Tekeyan School of Beirut

The Vahan Tekeyan School, founded in 1951, was damaged by the August 4 explosion in Beirut. It primarily 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 it is trying to reopen for the fall semester.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada is sending aid and asks your assistance too. Make your donations by credit card at <https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm> or as checks mailed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), at its headquarters (755 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 tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455.