

## APPEAL FROM THE ADL SUPREME COUNCIL

### Armenia under Attack

Recent bellicose rhetoric by Azerbaijani and Turkish public figures turned into acts of aggression on the morning of September 27, as Azerbaijani armed forces, violating the terms of the ceasefire, launched a massive attack along the line of contact, primarily the Artsakh-Azerbaijani border. Despite Armenia's powerful retaliation, there are Armenian military and civilian casualties. Hundreds are reported wounded and 16 killed. The populations of Armenia and Artsakh (Karabakh) have been mobilized and martial law has been imposed. Volunteer battalions



are heading towards the border, as the homeland is in danger.

Therefore, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Supreme Council condemns, in no uncertain terms, the Azerbaijani aggression, and expresses its solidarity with the people of Armenia and Artsakh.

The mobilization in Armenia must take place also in the diaspora, and encourage the volunteer movement, heal the wounded, and support the Armenian people in Artsakh and Armenia. Mobilization in the diaspora must lead to massive protests in front of Azerbaijani and Turkish official institutions and diplomatic offices, massive news coverage to sensitize see STATEMENT, page 6

# Turkey, Azerbaijan Launch Attack on Artsakh, Armenia

## Casualties Mounting on Both Sides

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Armenia said on September 29 that a Turkish F-16 fighter jet entered its airspace from Azerbaijan and shot down an Armenian warplane during continuing hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian Defense Ministry said the incident occurred during Azerbaijan air and artillery strikes on military and civilian targets in the Gegharkunik province. (See related editorial on page 18.)

According to Ministry Spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan, Azerbaijan's Su-25 warplanes and Turkish Bayraktar attack drones were engaged by Armenia air-defense units while carrying out the strikes in the morning.

Stepanyan said that a Su-25 plane from the Armenian Air Force flew to the area to support those units only to be shot down by a Turkish F-16 jet. The plane's pilot was killed as a result, she said in a statement, adding that the incident occurred in Armenia's airspace, 60 kilometers from the Azerbaijani border.

"Turkey is carrying out a direct aggression against Armenia," another Armenian



A female Armenian soldier

military official, Artsrun Hovannisyan, wrote on Facebook.

Ankara denied downing the Armenian jet. Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry also dismissed the Armenian report.

Turkey deployed several F-16s in

Azerbaijan ahead of joint Azerbaijani-Turkish military exercises held in August. Subsequent news reports said they remained in Azerbaijan after the end of the drills.

see ATTACK, page 3

## Attack on Artsakh: First-Person Account

By Mateos Hayes

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

This cacophony marked the start of a full-fledged attack, as Azeri howitzers opened fire along the entire line of contact, shelling multiple settlements including Stepanakert, Artsakh's capital. In the wake of the renewed attacks, the Artsakh Ministry of Defense branded the Azeris aggressors and murderers at a press conference at 11 a.m. The Ministry of Defense reported that Azeri artillery fire had struck arms caches and other military targets. They reported 10 civilian casualties, including one child, and called on every able-bodied man to fight.

For people in Artsakh, the escalation in hostilities was marked by confusion, fear and uncertainty. By quarter past seven, the cool morning air in Stepanakert



A man comforts an injured child.

see ARTSAKH, page 3

## Ambassador Nersesyan Comments on Current Azerbaijani Attacks on Artsakh

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON – Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, the representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United States, discussed on September 28 the ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh which began on Sunday, September 27. He noted that its scale is much larger than the April 2016 clashes and that given the reckless nature of the dictatorships in Baku and Ankara, it is not possible to predict whether the violence might spread to the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

When asked what was the cause of this crisis, Nersesyan responded, "I would say it see AMBASSADOR, page 2



## Biden Calls on Trump Administration to Demand Turkey Stay Out of Conflict

WASHINGTON (Public Radio of Armenia) – US presidential candidate Joe Biden has called on the Trump Administration to demand from Turkey to stay out of the Karabakh conflict.

"With casualties rapidly mounting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, the Trump Administration needs to call the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan immediately to de-escalate the situation. It must also demand others – like Turkey – stay out of this conflict," Joe Biden said in a Twitter post.

The eruption of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh runs the risk of escalating into a larger regional conflict, Joe Biden said on September 27.

"I am deeply concerned by the outbreak of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh and call for urgent de-escalation, restoring the ceasefire, and a resumption of negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan," Biden said.

"The United States should be pushing for more observers along the ceasefire line and calling for Russia to stop cynically providing arms to both sides, while reviewing our own security assistance programs to ensure no military capabilities are being repurposed for offensive means," he added.

He called on the Trump administration to step up its diplomatic efforts, together with fellow OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs France and Russia, to seek a peaceful resolution and to support confidence-building measures.

## Armenian GM Levon Aronian Calls for Donations amid Azerbaijani assault

YEREVAN – Chess Grandmaster Levon Aronian has called on friends to make donations for amid ongoing Azerbaijani offensive against the Artsakh Republic and Armenia.

"Dear friends, as you probably know Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are under assault by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Many of my friends are going to defend our borders and support our troops in order to protect our people and our motherland. Any help can be essential for my country now. I ask you to join our campaign and support our nation by donating to the funds mentioned below. Thank you from the bottom of my heart," Aronian said in a Facebook post.

For transfers in USD

JPM Chase Bank N.A., New York

SWIFT code: CHASUS33

Beneficiary's Bank: Acc. No: 001-1-010782

Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia

SWIFT (BIC) code: CBRAAM22

Beneficiary: Acc. 103003241157

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## Smile for The Camera

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Artsakh President Awards 26 Servicemen Posthumously

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) — Artsakh Republic President Arayik Harutyunyan on September 29 signed decrees on awarding. According to the decree, 21 servicemen and two reservists were posthumously awarded with the “For Service in Battle” medal for bravery shown during the defense of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic state border.

As the Information department at the President’s Office reported, by another decree by the president, three servicemen were awarded with the “For Courage” medal for personal bravery and courage shown in the course of the military and combat actions.

## Robert Kocharyan Heads To Artsakh

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia’s second President Robert Kocharyan is leaving for Artsakh, head of the former president’s office Viktor Soghomonyan told Aysor.am.

“Today, the enemy has again unleashed a war against Artsakh. With the explicit military and political support of Turkey, Azerbaijan tries to resolve the Karabakh conflict through military means,” Kocharyan said in a statement on Monday.

“It is not time yet to speak of the reasons for such a cynical behavior by Azerbaijan. Our sacred duty is now to protect the motherland. All of us should consider ourselves as a soldier of the Defense Army, stay ready, united and once again, as it happened in 1992-94, destroy the enemy by a combined force. I am confident, the Armenian forces, unanimously backed by the world-spread Armenians are capable to protect the Republic of Artsakh and secure a victory” the former president added.

## Armenian Students Triumph at International Olympiad In Informatics

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A team of Armenian schoolchildren won a total of 4 medals at the 32nd International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI).

• 11th-grader Emil Kostanyan from the Artashes Shahinyan Physics and Mathematics Specialized School and 12th-grade student Samvel Andreasyan from Quantum College won silver medals.

• 10th-grader Arayi Khalatyan and 11th-grader Alexander Abelyan, both from Quantum College, took bronze medals, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport reported.

The 32nd IOI, involving 343 contestants from 87 countries from all over the world, was held online from September 13 to 23 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Protest Outside UN Office in Yerevan Calls For Justice

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Dozens of citizens protested outside the UN in Office in Yerevan on September 29, calling for the international community to stop putting the parties of the Karabakh conflict on equal footing.

The participants noted that the Armenian people once again showed their unity and spiritual strength in the face of the aggression of the enemy.

“The new war unleashed by Azerbaijan and Turkey came once again to prove that the Armenian people is the only guarantor of its security. We should rely on our strength as the international community keeps silence. The international organizations have their work and responsibilities they have numerously voiced from different tribunes. However, they have not provided the unbiased assessment of the developments, while the statements and appeals of false parity between the parties embolden Azerbaijan to undertake more cynical actions.

# Ambassador Nersesyan Comments on Recent Crisis on the Armenian-Azerbaijani Border

AMBASSADOR, from page 1  
as a very calculated attempt on the part of Azerbaijan and Turkey.” He emphasized the premeditated nature of the attack, citing several supporting factors. He said, “This is a very well-prepared act of aggression against Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan has recently accumulated enormous amounts of military supplies and weapons and conducted largescale war drills just weeks ago with Turkey.” (See related editorial on page 18.)

He pointed to a false flag operation with an historical parallel, declaring, “In preparation for this war, Azerbaijan carried out the same maneuver conducted by Adolf Hitler in 1939 prior to invading Poland. Germany staged a false attack by Poland against Germany. Right now, Azerbaijan’s president, Ilham Aliyev, according to this same logic, before its own attack accused Armenia of concentrating forces along the Azerbaijani border. This is a completely false narrative.”

In further support of this, as Nersesyan reported during the July 2020 clashes, he noted that Azerbaijan has openly disregarded and refused the proposal of the cochair of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group to establish a mechanism to monitor ceasefire violations and discover which party is responsible each time. Nersesyan said, “The fact that Azerbaijan has refused this vociferously and continuously, and Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have agreed to it, is a key piece of evidence that shows that Azerbaijan is attempting to avoid its responsibility for this ceasefire violation and the concomitant crimes of attacks on civilian infrastructures and the people of Nagorno Karabakh.”

Not only has Azerbaijan declined to accept such monitoring but, Nersesyan said, in preparation for this attack, its president and leadership in general have been publicly denouncing the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group in general, calling them meaningless and useless, and proclaiming that Azerbaijan may resort to force at any time to carry out its will.

Connecting the dots, Nersesyan concluded, “The current attacks are nothing but the implementation of a decades-long policy of aggression on the part of Azerbaijan. It is on the record and the responsibility cannot be avoided.”

Another secondary factor is the seemingly deliberate timing of the attacks. They were begun during the relative inactivity of the weekend. Furthermore, Nersesyan said, the international community is very busy right now with many issues. Here in the US there is also a presidential election forthcoming which may distract attention from international affairs.

Some international organizations and media have followed the usual practice of condemning the fighting while avoiding pointing out which party initiated it. Nersesyan said that while it is diplomatic practice to maintain balance, sometimes artificially so, “the international community knows very well which party launched this attack.” There are also some international statements directly condemning the Azerbaijani aggression, such as that of the Organization of American States issued on September 27, along with various members of the US Congress.

Nersesyan said that the Armenian diplomatic services have gotten feedback in private communications confirming that in general the international community is aware of the responsi-

bility of Azerbaijan in this situation.

### Turkey’s Role

Nersesyan said, “Turkey plays an extremely dangerous role in this situation. It is Turkey which is instigating this conflict. This time the people of Nagorno Karabakh are not just fighting against Azerbaijan. They are fighting against Turkey, and Turkish-sponsored ISIS mercenaries. The latter have been brought into Azerbaijan with Turkish help and right now are fighting against the people of Karabakh.”

Turkey has deployed military personnel and advisors in Azerbaijan who are now fighting against Karabakh, he said. It promised to open a military base in Azerbaijan, which at present is basically operational, with Turkish F-16 fighter aircraft, said Nersesyan. Meanwhile, Turkish-made drones are flying over Karabakh’s airspace, and some have already been shot down.

Armenia has been warning the international community about Turkey’s arming of Azerbaijan and encouraging the latter to attack for some time now

needs to undertake much more forceful action.”

Along with the aggression against the border, the Azerbaijan government has unleashed cyberattacks against Armenian government and nongovernmental websites as well as some Armenian media sites and emails. Nersesyan said that this is not disrupting fundamental activities, whether diplomatic or public relations. It may create minor delays and issues but damaged websites are quickly restored.

### The US and US Armenians

There was a statement last week by the US State Department warning Americans to stay away from Armenia’s border regions. Nersesyan said, “The fact that the US issued a warning obviously speaks for itself, indicating that there was certain information about the looming crisis.”

Nersesyan said, “We are always very much appreciative of the US role as one of the cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group from the beginning and throughout the course of the conflict, alongside



Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan

through diplomatic and other channels, Nersesyan said. He explained Turkey’s motivation: “It is not a secret that modern-day Turkey, following some illusions of Neo Ottomanism, has been conducting a reckless policy in the entire region, not only in the South Caucasus but in the Mediterranean, in Syria, in North Africa and specifically in Libya. Turkey right now is pursuing a goal of promoting its interests in the South Caucasus, of projecting power both through Azerbaijan and directly. Most likely this is a calculated attempt to destabilize the South Caucasus and implement certain policies in the region.”

### The International Community

Nersesyan said, “Of course, we are looking for the international community, including the United States, to condemn first of all the perpetrators of the violence and to force Turkey to stay out of this conflict, and of course these are things on which we are working within our dialogue with the United States government.”

He stressed the importance of the international mediation of the Minsk Group, and said, “We need to work within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group cochair to work out a mutually acceptable solution such as what the Prime Minister of Armenia has proposed, a solution acceptable for the peoples of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan.” More immediately, he said, “We hope the international community steps in, condemns the Turkish and Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno Karabakh, and forces these two countries to stop the violence against Karabakh. The cochair is working on this but this is an extraordinary situation and the international community

the Russian Federation and France. Yesterday, the State Department made its position clear when it issued a statement, which is positive. It calls upon any third-party external forces not to intervene, and I think that it is clear to whom that message is directed.”

US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Edward Biegun has called the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nersesyan said that the conversation with Armenia’s foreign minister was very constructive. He said, “We know that the US government is taking a lot of steps and we appreciate it a lot.”

As far as what US Armenians are doing, Nersesyan said, “I think American Armenians are already doing a lot, and I don’t have to tell them anything. The community here has always been at the forefront of political and humanitarian support to Armenia and Artsakh. We have been receiving so many calls from American Armenians, and we are inspired by this. Worldwide, the Armenian diaspora stands behind Armenia and Artsakh and we are proud of it.”

Ultimately, Nersesyan concluded, “Armenia is a guarantor of Nagorno Karabakh’s security and the safety of the people of Karabakh is paramount. Armenia and Karabakh reserve the right to take all necessary measures to defend themselves and enforce their right to live peacefully on their ancestral lands. All possible measures have been attempted through diplomacy. Armenia and Karabakh are committed to the peace process. However, if we are attacked and left with no other way, we will undertake all necessary measures militarily, first, to defend the lives of the people of Karabakh, and, if the attacks do not end, to force the violence to stop.”





ARMENIA

# Attack on Artsakh: First-Person Account

ARTSAKH, from page 1  
became filled with the haunting drone of Azeri unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), and the shattering thunder of Artsakh's artillery and anti-aircraft guns.

Holiday goers such as Lucy Vartevanian reported that her hotel room windows shook with each instance of artillery fire, as air raid warnings blared, and civilian vehicles sped through the city flashing their hazards and honking their horns. She assumed it was a training exercise. "I initially thought the shooting was part of a training exercise," she explained, "but as the booms got louder, and warning sirens went off, I soon understood this wasn't just practice."

Lucy and her husband ultimately opted to make their way back to Yerevan despite a lack of information: "We were concerned as we didn't know if the roads would be blocked or the border closed."

Nevertheless, the decision to leave proved to be well-timed, as the situation continued to deteriorate.

"I am convinced this was a malicious and well-planned attack by Azerbaijan," she added. Less than an hour following the attack, the city became a hive of frenetic activity as columns of military vehicles left Stepanakert for the border and ambulances zoomed across the city.

## Leaving Togh

Perched in the picturesque valleys of Hadrut province, Togh is a village with a rich history, sporting remnants of architecture from the time of the Karabakh melikdoms. Located around 60 kilometers from the Azeri border, it is today one of the centers of wine making in Artsakh, with Kataro wineries being based there. Founded and run by the Avetissyan family, Kataro has experienced significant success and expansion.

Kataro has begun to host students from EVN Wine Academy, who hope to gain insight from the internships into the winemaking business. Two such interns are Arpi Soukiassian and Loucine Sahakian, who were forced to flee when hostilities began: "We had been working all night harvesting and processing grapes, and



An elderly woman in a basement in Artsakh serving as a bunker

ing people in Togh, they found that the situation was far from resolved. Manvelyan reported that most of the men working at the winery had gone to fight, leaving around half of the grapes unharvested. To make matters worse, the shooting and shelling has only continued: "Our landlady said they are still being bombarded, and that it is awful," Sahakian noted.

To help cope with the influx of refugees, Loucine and Arpi volunteered for a food and clothing drive in Goris. "We saw it as crucial to do whatever we can to help," explained Sahakian.



An Artsakh soldier in the trenches

only got to bed by 4 a.m. The night had been so peaceful, but I woke up around 7:15 because my bed was shaking from the shooting, and I smelt gunpowder. We also heard drones that were bombing," Sahakian stated.

In the days leading up to the attack, villagers in Togh had come to believe that an assault was imminent: "We heard that the army had gone to danger readiness level 1 (the highest level of readiness), because masses of Azeri tanks and artillery guns had been spotted moving to the border. It seemed that something was going to start," Soukiassian explained.

Once the shooting began, the intern's landlady implored them to leave Togh. "We packed what we could in 15 minutes and jumped in the car. Our wine maker, Andrenik Manvelyan, also told us to leave. We didn't even have time to pay our landlady," added Sahakian.

After arriving in Stepanakert, the two interns resolved to head for Goris and decide whether to return to Artsakh from there. But upon call-

## Martial Law, National Mobilization

As martial law and national mobilization are declared in both Armenia and Artsakh, it is clear the situation is far from de-escalation. Azeri howitzers continue to bombard communities throughout Artsakh, including Stepanakert. As of this writing, 13 civilian casualties and 16 military casualties have been reported on the Armenian side.

As part of national mobilization, scores of ambulance brigades from all over the country have been dispatched to Artsakh, and many patients are being transported to Yerevan to help Artsakh cope with an influx of wounded soldiers, reported to be 200 as of September 28. The national mobilization has thus placed an immense burden on highways leading into Artsakh, which have also had to cope with an influx of military traffic, and an exodus of refugees trying to get out of harm's way. The crowding was especially evident at Armenia-



Armenia's Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan, left, meets with his Artsakh counterpart Jalal Harutyunyan

Artsakh border crossings, where lines of cars stretched back hundreds of meters.

In Yerevan, the atmosphere was one of fervent patriotism. Scores of motorists put large Armenian flags on their vehicles inscribed with messages of solidarity for troops in Artsakh.

Near Yerevan's Circus, a large digital screen proudly proclaimed "GOD PROTECT OUR TROOPS" in national colors, and as columns of army transports left the city for Artsakh, they were greeted by motorists honking their horns and pedestrians cheering.



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's wife Anna Hakobyan, right, visits with a family in a bunker.





## ARMENIA

# Turkey, Azerbaijan Launch

ATTACK, from page 1

Stepanyan said that multiple Turkish jets took off from an airfield in Gyanja, Azerbaijan's second largest city located several dozen kilometers from northern Karabakh, to protect the Azerbaijani warplanes and drones during their raids on Armenia.

Armenia until now has refrained from formally requesting military aid from Russia or the Russian-led Collective Treaty Organization (CSTO), of which Armenia is a member.

The CSTO is a military alliance between Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, its charter stipulates that member states are bound to protect one another if anyone of them gets attacked.

Asked by ARMENPRESS whether or not the organization has discussed the Azeri shelling of civilian settlements in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, CSTO spokesperson Vladimir Zaynetdinov said discussing the matter requires an official request from Armenia.

"In order for this issue to be discussed in the CSTO, it is necessary for Armenia to apply to the CSTO with a relevant request. The CSTO Secretariat hasn't yet received such request," he said.

## War Launched on September 27

In the early hours of September 27, the Azerbaijani military launched a massive cross-border artillery attack on Artsakh, including on civilian settlements. Civilian settlements are still under bombardment, including the capital city of Stepanakert.

A total of 84 servicemen were killed and nearly 120 were wounded in Artsakh from the Azerbaijani attack (as of press time).

Armenia and Artsakh have both declared a martial law and mobilization.

According to the latest data, Azerbaijan lost 790.

The Artsakh side has destroyed a total of 6 Azerbaijani attacking helicopters, 50 UAVs, 85 armored equipment including tanks, 82 vehicles and 1 aircraft.

The situation has even brought together opposing forces in Armenia.

Former Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan, who served as Chief



An Armenian soldier

Human Rights Defender of Armenia Arman Tatoyan issued a statement over the Azerbaijani shelling on the villages in Armenia's Vardenis town, Gegharkunik province.

"From early morning the villages of Vardenis of Armenia's Gegharkunik province are being shelled by the Azerbaijani side. The data of this moment show that the civilian population is under obvious targeted shelling.

A civilian has been killed, which has been confirmed by the official sources, urgent inquiries of the Human Rights Defender.

The Azerbaijani military bombarded military and civilian infrastructures, including the targeted strikes on civilian population in the Armenian town of Vardenis which resulted in one civilian being killed, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

## Preplanned Attack

Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan sent a letter on September 28 to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, presenting the large-scale aggression unleashed by Azerbaijani against Artsakh, as well as the current situation caused by it, the Armenian foreign ministry told Armenpress.

In his letter the Armenian FM provided information about the cases of deliberate targeting of Artsakh's civilian population and infrastructures by the Azerbaijani armed forces, their provocative actions with the use of various caliber weapons.

Touching upon the disinformation flows spread by the Azerbaijani side, the Armenian FM noted in particular: "The aggression has been pre-planned, and the statements of the Azerbaijani side about the alleged counterattack are absolute lie. Azerbaijan has never hidden its strategic goal of solving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict with the use of force, by constantly keeping the tension along the line of contact and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border".

The Armenian FM expressed his deep concern over Turkey's unconditional unilateral support to Azerbaijan and its aggression. Strongly condemning the Azerbaijani aggression, minister Mnatsakanyan stated that the provocative actions aimed at violating the ceasefire are not only gross violations of the international humanitarian law, but are also fraught with the danger of turning into a large-scale regional war.

Mnatsakanyan criticized Azerbaijan's provocative behavior on not following the UN Secretary-General's call for global ceasefire. He stated that the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan bears the full responsibility of the consequences of aggression.

The FM said as guarantor of the security of the Artsakh people Armenia will take all necessary measures to protect the inalienable rights of the Artsakh people and will provide an adequate response to the Azerbaijani aggression.

Nagorno Karabakh people's right to self-determination is an inseparable part of the conflict settlement, and with the power of this right the people of Artsakh should have an opportunity to determine their status without any restrictions.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Armenia's commitment to the exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The letter will be circulated as a document of the UN General

Assembly's 75th session and as a document of the Security Council.

Prime Minister Pashinyan has called on volunteers to fight.

The Armenian Defense Ministry said that thousands of people across Armenia have already volunteered to fight in Karabakh. It said Karabakh Armenian forces do not need such assistance yet.

"The dictatorial regime of Ilham Aliyev has once again resorted to hostilities," Pashinyan said in a televised address to the nation later in the day. "It's a war against the Armenian people. It's a war against our independence, freedom and dignity."

"The Armenian people are ready for that war because they have always been conscious of the fact that the Armenophobia and hatred with which the Azerbaijani dictatorship has for decades been feeding its people could not lead to any outcome other than war," he said.

Pashinyan also blamed Turkey and its "aggressive behavior for the outbreak of hostilities. "I call on the international community to use all its levers to keep Turkey from any possible intervention which would further destabilize the situation in the region," he added.

Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan issued, meanwhile, a written appeal to the nation accusing Azerbaijan of launching a large-scale offensive along the "line of contact" around Karabakh and saying that Baku will be "strictly punished" for that.

"As a guarantor of the security of Artsakh (Karabakh), the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia are prepared to provide any assistance to ensure the security of Artsakh's population," said Tonoyan.

"This adventure will have severe consequences for the enemy," he added. "Our response will be tougher than ever before."



Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan

of the General Staff of the Armed Forces in 2008, has headed to Artsakh to lend his support.

Gunners of the Artsakh Defense Army have destroyed attacking Azerbaijani tanks with mortars, Armenian Defense Ministry spokesperson Artsrun Hovhannisyan said on social media.

"Our gunners are virtuosos," he said. "Destroying tanks with mortars, check."

The Azeri shelling of civilian settlements resulted in the deaths of four civilians so far in Artsakh.

The Human Rights Defender of Artsakh Artak Beglaryan said the citizens were killed by Azerbaijani artillery and loitering munitions strikes.

Two women aged 59 and 79, one man aged 24, and one child aged 9 were killed in the attack, he said. The civilians were killed in Martuni, Hadrut and Martakert.

More than 30 other civilians, including women and children, are wounded.

Defense Ministry spokesperson Shushan Stepanyan said Azerbaijan is firing the TOS-1A heavy artillery system in some directions.

"The deployment of TOS, Smerch and other large caliber systems changes the scale and logic of the military operations, elevating it to a new level," she said, warning that the Armenian military is forced to deploy heavy weapons systems that inflict greater destruction.

"At this moment the Defense Army units are decisively repelling all enemy offensive attempts, inflicting heavy losses to manpower and equipment," Stepanyan said.

Vardenis Attack



Artsakh forces destroy an Azerbaijani tank.

The Azerbaijani military claimed to have launched a "counteroffensive operation" in Karabakh in response to what it called Armenian shelling of Azerbaijani villages. The Armenian side dismissed the claim.

## Pashinyan Speech

In a heartfelt speech, Pashinyan said, "I want to express my pride in the situation we have today. I would like to touch upon only one nuance when it comes to living for the sake of the homeland, dying for the sake of the homeland. We do not die, we are not ready to die for death, we are ready to die for life, for living, because there is no need to die for death. There is no need to take any initiative there. Our enemies can do it themselves. Here is what we have to do, this is what we have to say. This is very important.





ARMENIA

# Attack on Artsakh, Armenia

“We must understand that we are dealing with a very deeply prepared attack. It’s not a one-off attack, it’s very powerful. We all need to understand. We need to know that we do have casualties, and the adversary has many more casualties. We have equipment losses, the opponent has equipment losses, much more. And this is an evolving situation, we must stand firm.

He added, “I salute all the organizations and individuals of the Diaspora who work with the same intensity as us to solve this problem. Many issues need to be addressed here. And I am glad that the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia is unanimous in this mood, this will, this process.”

“It is impossible to defeat us. It is impossible to defeat us,

OSCE Minsk Group, adding that the Co-Chair countries should take a responsible position for solving the situation in Nagorno Karabakh.

The United States on Sunday called for an immediate halt to deadly hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh and warned “external parties” against participating in them.

“The United States condemns in the strongest terms this escalation of violence,” Morgan Ortagus, the spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, said in a statement.

She said U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun phoned Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s foreign ministers “to urge both sides to cease hostilities immediately, to use the existing direct communication links between them to avoid further escalation, and to avoid unhelpful rhetoric and actions that further raise tensions on the ground.”

“The United States believes participation in the escalating violence by external parties would be deeply unhelpful and only exacerbate regional tensions,” added Ortagus.

It was not clear if she referred to Turkey, which has stepped up diplomatic and military support for Azerbaijan in recent months.

Ortagus also urged Baku and Yerevan to “return to substantive negotiations as soon as possible.” “As a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States remains committed to helping the sides achieve a peaceful and sustainable settlement to the conflict,” she said.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to cease

hostilities, Reuters reports.

Pompeo said during a visit to Crete that he had discussed the clashes in talks earlier with Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias.

“The foreign minister and I addressed the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh where both sides need to stop the violence and work with the Minsk Group co-chairs and return to substantive negoti-

ations as quickly as possible,” he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump said later on Sunday that Washington is closely monitoring the developments in the Karabakh conflict zone.

“We have a lot of good relationships in that area,” Trump told reporters. “We’ll see if we can stop [the hostilities.]”

The two other Minsk Group co-chairs, Russia and France, also voiced concern at the most large-scale fighting in the Karabakh conflict zone in years. Similar statements were issued by the European Union.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts by phone earlier on

(COURTESY OF ARMENPRESS)



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in consultations



Tank belonging to the Artsakh Defense Forces

because the victory, the victory of the Artsakh war, which went through defeats, which went through losses, but which in the end was crowned as a victory, that victory flows in our veins, that victory is in our consciousness. That victory is our backbone, that victory is our identity. That is why it is impossible to defeat us.”

And he conclude, “Long live the Armenian Army, Long live Artsakh, Long live Armenia! Long live the victory that we will build together, every minute, every second, shoulder to shoulder, mind to mind.”

## World Alarmed

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan phoned Russian President Vladimir Putin shortly after the report.

The Kremlin said Putin expressed “serious concern at the continuing hostilities” in the conflict zone and stressed the “urgent need” to halt them and take “measures to de-escalate the crisis.”

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov noted that Russia is in constant touch with Yerevan, Baku and Ankara and urged Turkey to do everything to convince the conflicting sides to cease the fire.

“We call on all countries, especially our partners, such as Turkey, to do everything so that the conflicting sides will cease the fire and return to the peaceful settlement process of the conflict”, Peskov said.

He added that they are also in touch with their partners of the



A bus was bombed in Vartenis, Armenia



A Martuni resident looks at the destruction to his house.

Sunday.

Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with French President Emanuel Macron.

He expressed deep concern over the current situation and its further aggravation. In particular, it was stressed that Azerbaijan is resorting to provocations to launch military operations in the direction of the state border with the Republic of Armenia. He stressed the need for a strong biased-aggressive stance of Turkey to stop the possible intervention of that country.

President Macron expressed deep concern over the current situation and said that further escalation of tensions was unacceptable. He considered it necessary to take all measures to stop the hostilities and defuse the tension. He stressed the need to intensify the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to restore peace in the region.

France said it would call for talks among the ‘Minsk Group’ - which is led by Russia, France and the United States and mediates between Armenia and Azerbaijan - to try to resolve an escalating conflict between the two South Caucasus countries, Reuters reports.

“We will trigger in the coming days a co-ordination of the Minsk Group to clear up what happened, who is responsible and find a way out,” an official at Macron’s office told Reuters.

Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

Prime Minister Pashinyan spoke in detail about the situation on the line of contact between the Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces. Nikol Pashinyan expressed deep concern over the hostilities unleashed by Azerbaijan, which are aggression against Nagorno Karabakh. He considered inadmissible the further development of escalation, the involvement of extra-regional forces in it.

Vladimir Putin has expressed deep concern over large-scale hostilities. The Russian President stressed the need to make the necessary efforts to prevent further escalation of the conflict and the cessation of hostilities.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet urges to immediately end the fighting in the Artsakh-Azerbaijan line of contact.

“I am concerned about the resumption of hostilities along the line of contact in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone and urge an immediate end to the fighting. I am deeply disturbed by the reported loss of civilian lives and injuries, as well as damage to civilian property and infrastructure.

I call on all sides to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular by ensuring the protection of the civilian population and people placed hors de combat, and by preventing damage to essential civilian infrastructure”, the statement said.

Pope Francis has prayed for peace in the Caucasus region as fighting erupted anew Sunday between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia said a woman and a child were killed in the area by shelling from Azerbaijani forces and Azerbaijan’s president said his military has suffered losses.

Francis said during his Sunday Angelus address that he was praying for peace between the two countries, urging them to them to “accomplish concrete deeds of goodwill and fraternity” to reach a peaceful solution through dialogue.

(Azatutyn, Armenpress and the official governments of Armenia and Artsakh contributed to this report.)





ARMENIA

The Artsakh Dead

The Artsakh Defense Ministry has been releasing the names of the men and women of the Artsakh Armed Forces who lost their lives during Azerbaijan's attack.

Below is the list of 84 servicemen and women who died on Sunday.

- Arzumanyan Hasmik Smbatovna, born in 1985
- Vardanyan Lernik Aregovich, born in 1978
- Minasyan Georgy Levaevich, born in 1979
- Khachatryan Hovik Levaevich, born in 1990
- Mnatsakanyan Ashot Kolyaevich, born in 1979
- Harutyunyan Agsen Andranikovich, born in 1997
- Mardiyani Arsen Garikovich, born in 1999
- Galstyan Ruben Mnatsakanovich, born in 2000
- Torosyan David Mkhitrovich, born in 2001
- Filiposyan Taron Hrayrovich, born in 2000
- Mayis Makarovich Grigoryan, born in 2001
- Khlgatyan Garnik Edgarovich, born in 2001
- Sahakyan Eric Smbatovich, born in 2001
- Margaryan Karen Vahramovich, born in 2000
- Ohanyan David Edwardovich, born in 2000
- Sasun Grenik Nersisyan, born in 2002
- Khoren Yura Khachatryan, born in 1983
- Armen Nikolay Grigoryan, born in 1984
- Yuri Hayk Aghasaryan, born in 2001
- Garik Aram Achemyan, born in 2002
- Gevorg Marzpet Galoyan, born in 2001
- Gurgen Vardan Abrahamyan, born in 2001
- Gor Hrant Yaravyan, born in 2002
- Hovhannes Onik Apozyan, born in 2000
- Aren Karen Hovhannisyan, born in 2002
- Haykaz Ashot Beglaryan, born in 2000
- Eric Roma Gabrielyan, born in 1979
- Gurgen Eduard Hayrapetyan, born in 1988
- Arthur Slavik Movsisyan, born in 1981
- Vazgen Loni Mikhaelyan, born in 1998
- Tigran Suren Aghbalyan, born in 2001
- Karen Azat Gorgyan, born in 2000
- Vahe Sasha Gasparyan, born in 2000
- Sargis Armeni Sargsyan, born in 2002
- Harutyun Artashes Ghazaryan, born in 2000
- Aram Artashes Simonyan, born in 2001
- Narek Volodya Harutyunyan, born in 2001
- Aghasi Hakob Gorgyan, born in 2000
- David Karen Badalyan, born in 2001
- Hayk Avetik Grigoryan, born in 2001
- Alex Grima Martirosyan, born in 2001
- Georgi Kamo Babayan, born in 2001
- Shant Sargis Tovmasyan, born in 2000
- Henrik Gurgen Hakobyan, born in 2002
- Arman Arthur Khachatryan, born in 2001
- Narek Arayik Sargsyan, born in 2001
- Artashes Rubik Gharibyan, born in 1999
- Mher Ashot Hovakimyan, born in 2000
- Nikolay Mikael Haykian, born in 1972
- Arman Lernik Poghosyan, born in 1992
- Aghasi Vrezh Mikhaelyan, born in 1992
- Smbat Hmayak Mazmasyan, born in 1998
- Harutyun Karapet Keshishyan, born in 1986
- Samvel Gagik Marukyan, born in 1998
- Vahe Haykaz Mirzoyan, born in 2000
- Hovhannes Oleg Eliseev, born in 2001
- Aram Samvel Grigoryan, born in 2000
- Ashot Armen Ghaltakhchyan, born in 2001
- Yuri Karen Hovsepyan, born in 2000
- Ashot Meyva Avanesyan, born in 2000
- Samvel Sargis Amiryan, born in 1996
- Vanush Vahram Harutyunyan, born 2000
- Eric Tigran Hovsepyan, born 2002
- Narek Samvel Sargsyan, born in 2001
- Zhora Karen Gorgyan, born in 2001
- Arsen Sargsis Sargsyan, born in 2001
- Khachatryan Arman Armeni, born 2001
- Samvel Norayr Harutyunyan, born in 2000
- Vahagn Vardan Takhmazyan, born in 2001
- Hovhannes Zohrab Chobanyan, born in 2002
- Tigran Meruzhan Hakobyan, born in 2000
- Grigor Rashid Manucharyan, born in 2002
- Tigran Manvel Zoroyan, born in 2002
- Eric Arthur Khachatryan, born in 2002
- Hakob Benik Zargaryan, born in 2002
- Sosik Garik Ghazaryan, born in 2002
- Ashot Avetik Karamyan, born in 2002
- Irina Lavrent Musayelyan, born in 1979
- Avag Grisha Melikyan, born in 1978
- Andranik Gevorg Movsisyan, born 1987
- Vahagn Ashot Sargsyan, born 1975
- Dmitry Sergey Ispiryan, born 1987
- Volunteer Robert Armen Petrosyan, born in 1992



Gagik Tsarukyan with his supporters

Court Sanctions Tsarukyan’s Arrest

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A Yerevan court allowed investigators late on Friday, September 25 to arrest Gagik Tsarukyan, a wealthy businessman leading the opposition Prosperous Armenia (BHK), on vote buying charges rejected by him as politically motivated.

His lawyers described the ruling as “illegal” and “unfounded,” saying that it was ordered by the government.

Tsarukyan also condemned it as he headed to a prison in downtown Yerevan later in the evening. He was greeted by several dozen supporters outside the prison building.

Tsarukyan, whose party has the second largest group in the Armenian parliament, again claimed to be persecuted by the authorities when he spoke to journalists in the morning. “If Tsarukyan’s arrest improves the plight of the people, then I have no problem,” he said sarcastically before attending a court hearing on the arrest warrant sought by the National Security Service (NSS).

The tycoon was taken into custody just over three months after the parliament dominated by Prime Minister Nikol

Pashinyan’s allies lifted his legal immunity from prosecution and arrest. The NSS claimed that he “created and led an organized group” that bought more than 17,000 votes for the BHK during parliamentary elections held in 2017.

Tsarukyan strongly denies the accusations. He and his party maintain that Pashinyan ordered the criminal proceedings in response to the BHK leader’s calls for the government’s resignation. Pashinyan and law-enforcement authorities deny that the case is politically motivated.

A Yerevan judge refused to allow Tsarukyan’s pre-trial arrest on June 21. Armenia’s Court of Appeals overturned that decision on July 8, ordering a lower court to hold new hearings on the matter.

Defense lawyers said the investigators kept pushing for Tsarukyan’s arrest despite producing no proof that their client has pressured witnesses or obstructed the NSS investigation otherwise over the past three months. “This is simply absurd,” one of them, Yerem Sargsian, told journalists.

Sargsian and the other lawyers linked

the arrest warrant to an anti-government rally which will be held by the BHK and two other opposition parties in Yerevan on October 8.

Representatives of the BHK, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) and Hayrenik party said on Thursday that the rally will go ahead even if Tsarukyan is taken into custody. They said they will demand the holding of snap parliamentary elections.

The NSS said that it has also indicted a total of 14 individuals, among them two former BHK parliamentarians, and questioned 162 others as part of the probe.

The BHK was part of Pashinyan’s first cabinet formed following the “Velvet Revolution” of April-May 2018. The prime minister fired his BHK-affiliated ministers in October 2018, accusing Tsarukyan of secretly collaborating with the country’s former leadership toppled in the revolution.

Addressing senior BHK members on June 5, Tsarukyan accused the government of mishandling Armenia’s coronavirus crisis and failing to mitigate its socioeconomic consequences.

Armenia under Attack

STATEMENT, from page 1

world public opinion, and a call to action for statesmen and legislators around the world friendly to the Armenians.

Fellow Armenians! The Armenian homeland is in danger and our appeal has to alert every Armenian, even in the remotest corners of the world.

Armenians around the world must be mobilized in support of the armed forces of Artsakh and Armenia. It is incumbent upon the representatives of the Armenian government, diplomatic corps and news media to alert the world that the unrepentant country of Turkey, in collusion with its “brotherly nation” of Azerbaijan, is about to complete the unfinished genocide against the Armenian people that began in 1915.

After surviving the horrors of history, the Armenian people finally managed recently to attain an independent homeland, along with a free Karabakh.

Enough is enough! Armenians will not allow themselves this time around to become victims of atrocities nor to let their homeland be overrun by Turkish and Azerbaijani bands.

**ADL Supreme Council**

Vartkes Kourouyan Secretary	Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian Chairman
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Boston  
September 27, 2020





## INTERNATIONAL



FOGG Commemoration Laying a Greek wreath

# Berlin Commemorates Victims Of Iznik Massacres 1920

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — At the Luisenkirchhof cemetery in Berlin-Charlottenburg, large, imposing structures stand in solemn commemoration of genocide victims. These are the Altars of Remembrance, dedicated to the memory of the more than 3 million Christian genocide victims in the Ottoman Empire. They are the Armenians, Pontic Greeks and Syrian Orthodox who were massacred. The altars are the work of the Promotional Society for the Ecumenical Monuments for Genocide Victims of the Ottoman Empire (FÖGG), which plans commemorative events several times a year.

September 12 and 13 marked the Day of the Open Monument, organized by the German Foundation for Protection of Historical Monuments and the Senate Administration for City Development and Ecology. On the first day, Prof. Tessa Hofmann, President of the FÖGG, led a tour through the ecumenical monuments, and on the second day a ceremony was held in honor of the victims of the Iznik massacres of 1920. Dr. Stefan L. Toma, a priest from the Christi Himmelfahrt Greek Orthodox community in Berlin, laid a wreath and offered prayers. At the end, the names of the families were read.

In her presentation, Hofmann reviewed the tragic history of the massacres in August and September 1920.

“We know the city of Iznik in the ancient region of Bithynia by its Greek name Nicea,” she said. “According to historical accounts, here, not far from the capital Byzantium, or Constantinople, two ecumenical councils were held, in the 4th and 8th centuries. The cathedral of Hagia Sophia, where the second Nicene Council took place, was converted to a mosque on Erdogan’s orders in 2011. In 1920 it was the scene of crimes perpetrated by Kemalist nationalists.

“One hundred years ago, in 1920, the Bithynian districts Bursa (in Greek Prussa), Iznik, as well as the Yalova peninsula and the city of Izmit were terrorized by a group of Kemalist irregulars under the command of a certain officer, Cemal Bey. Cemal was also responsible for the massacre on August 27, 1920.”

Hofmann cited contemporary documentation from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople that summarized the situation in the Nicene diocese as follows: “This district had for a long time been terrorized by Turkish and especially Laz bands. Robberies in the very streets, raids into Christian communities and abductions of Christian notables were none but too frequent.”

The violence escalated and on August 27, hundreds of Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Iznik were massacred by Turkish irregular bands. Their bodies were thrust down wells, others burned and piled up outside the town. Women were raped on the altar of the town’s church, which was then destroyed. Another massacre took place at the end of September. The Greek High Commissioner estimated there

were 600 victims.

Hofmann quoted from an interview with one survivor, Thomas Anastasiadis. “For 75 days the chettes [Tr. çeteler] had blocked off the Greek neighborhood of Nicea. Nobody could leave. They had placed objects barring the four exit gates of Nicea. The entire town was closed in. On the 14th of August, on the eve of the feast of the Virgin Mary, the day on which our church celebrated, the chettes gathered all the Greeks of Nicea, 87 families, and led them out of Lefke Kapusu [Gate to Levke], eastwards, to the pastures. There they were all slaughtered with German bayonets. They threw the bodies inside a cave and burnt them. They didn’t spare the church either; they destroyed it. They raped women on the altar. Twenty days after the slaughter, the Hellenic Army entered the town and stayed for 3 days and left. They did not retaliate on the local Turks who were not to blame for what happened.”

A further eyewitness report came from Stathis Lolosidis, who had taken refuge behind a bush. He was able to see how girls and women were raped before being killed with knives. “From my family,” he reported, “they killed my wife Olga, my mother Sofia, my brother Kostas and my child Sofia. I had no one else.”

The testimony of a member of the Greek army, Haralampos Pliziotis, depicted the dimensions of the massacre. He and his company walked around the city in search of victims, and found body parts strewn about everywhere. “Anyone who had witnessed the massacre had fallen into a state of delirium,” he wrote. Wells were filled with bodies, as were caves. Dizzied and sickened by the sight, the men went into the Greek quarter, “that was incredibly quiet, and then went to the church of Saint Sophia, an old Byzantine church, but we could not tell whether it was a church or a barn.”

The last report cited by Hofmann was that of a British officer who visited the ruins of the city in October. He confirmed that “the entire Greek population of Iznik had been massacred” in late August and the end of September, before the Greeks captured the city. He estimated the number of victims at “130 families, or 400-500 men, women and children. Djemal Bey is considered responsible for this massacre.” He added that the church in Iznik, built in 332 A.D., “was smashed to smithereens, only the walls remained standing.” Reportedly people had been massacred inside the church.

When one reads accounts of such massacres, with the estimated numbers of persons killed, one must not lose sight of the fact that behind each number is a discrete, unique, irreplaceable human being. In closing her remarks, Hofmann made reference to information that one survivor, Thomas Anastasiadis, provided on the victims. She read from his report, “the Greek war correspondent Konstantinos Faltaits assembled a list of the victimized families from Iznik, whose names and numbers we will now read out, as a reminder and commemoration.”

There followed the names of the deceased, family by family: The Nikolaos Anastasiadis family, 7 people, Savvas Anastasiadis; 2; Savvas Psomas; 6; Efthimios Psomas; 6; Pavlos Raptis; 13; Phillip Raptis 6....

## International News

### Monte Melkonian Cyber Army Leaks Azeri Government Emails

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Armenian hackers’ group calling itself the Monte Melkonian Cyber Army has hacked data from several Azerbaijani governmental emails, the group said in a message on social media.

“The obtained documents directly prove that some Azerbaijani websites and web pages are funded and managed by the Government of Azerbaijan. All the mentioned websites and pages focus exclusively on spreading anti-Armenian information, as Armenophobic calls distinguish them,” said the message, adding the leaked data come as another proof of the Azerbaijani aggression.

It also reminds that all social networks in Azerbaijan continue to be blocked to keep the public’s attention focused on these websites and pages.

### Facebook Removes Russian-Backed Accounts Working against Armenia

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Facebook said on Thursday, September 24 that it had removed several hundred fake accounts linked to Russian military intelligence and other Kremlin-backed actors involved in previous efforts to interfere in the politics of several countries, including Armenia.

The largest network in the latest removal, which spanned 301 groups, pages and accounts, was linked to Russian military intelligence services, Facebook said. US prosecutors have accused military intelligence of being behind Russia’s alleged 2016 election interference.

“We removed 214 Facebook users, 35 Pages, 18 Groups and 34 Instagram accounts for violating our policy against foreign or government interference which is coordinated inauthentic behavior on behalf of a foreign or government entity,” the company said.

This activity originated in Russia and focused primarily on Syria and Ukraine, and to a lesser extent on Turkey, Japan, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, and Moldova. A small portion of this activity focused on the UK and the US.

The people behind this campaign posted in many languages including English, Ukrainian, Russian and Arabic as they tailored their activity to each audience. They frequently posted about news and current events, including the Syrian civil war, Turkish domestic politics, geopolitical issues in the Asia-Pacific region, NATO, the war in Ukraine, and politics in the Baltics, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and the US.

### World Premiere of Avetisyan’s ‘Gate to Heaven’ to Take Place in Moscow

MOSCOW (Panorama.am) — The world premiere of the film “Gate to Heaven” by Jivan Avetisyan will take place at the Moscow International Film Festival on October 1-8, the National Cinema Center of Armenia reports.

The film will be screened as a part of its official non-competition program, the source said.

The center shared an in-depth conversation with director Avetisyan, whose films have won many international awards and are favored not only in Armenia but also abroad.

“Gate to Heaven” centers on Robert Stenvall, a European journalist, who returns to Artsakh in 2016 to cover the April Four-Day War. During his time in Artsakh, Stenvall meets Sophia Martirosyan, a young opera singer and daughter of missing photojournalist Edgar Martirosyan, whom Robert left behind in captivity in the village during the fall of Talish in 1992. The film features Tatiana Spivakova, Sos Janibekyan, and Naira Zakaryan in lead roles and its Armenian and Artsakh premiere took place in 2019.

“Gate to Heaven” is a co-production of Armenia, Lithuania, Finland, and France.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Garro Nanikian

## Preserving Armenian Roots in the Congo

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with a population of 12 million inhabitants, a handful of Armenians live.

During the period when the country was colonized by Belgium (1908-1960), very few Armenians lived and worked there. Veterinarian Hovhannes Mahdessian served in the Congo's colonial government for ten years before being repatriated in 1947. Several buildings were built in Congo by the design of French-Armenian architect Kevork Arsenian (1898-1980). Mateo (Megerdich) Margosian was called the "cigar baron" of Congo. Among the Congolese were followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church - in the 1960s, a group of converts came to Holy Echiadzin for ordaining and after they organized the Armenian Church of Zaire. In 1984 according to a statistics there were 100 Armenians in Congo. Today their number is less, but the Armenians living in Congo are always in touch with each other. In addition to those from the Middle East, there are also those born from the marriages of French-Armenian and Belgian-Armenian businessmen and local women...

My conversation is with one of them – young businessman Garro Nanikian. The son of an Armenian father and Bantu mother, Garro studied at the Protestant University of Congo, manages the SCS Company, which is engaged in the development of professional sports. This handsome young man is known in Kinshasa as the organizer of boxing and other martial arts competitions, and for some time he presided over the Armenian community of Congo...

**Dear Garro, what is the sports arena like in Congo and what is your role in it?**

We live in a country that promotes sports. The sports arena in Congo was really satisfactory until COVID slowed down activities. In fact, since the advent of social media and the fall in the price of sports channels, the Congolese have become more involved in sports than ever before. In fact, since the spreading of social network and downward of price sport channel contents Congolese people are more involved in sport than past years. Currently I am a fight sport promoter and I play a role as boxing matchmaker for Police of DRC.

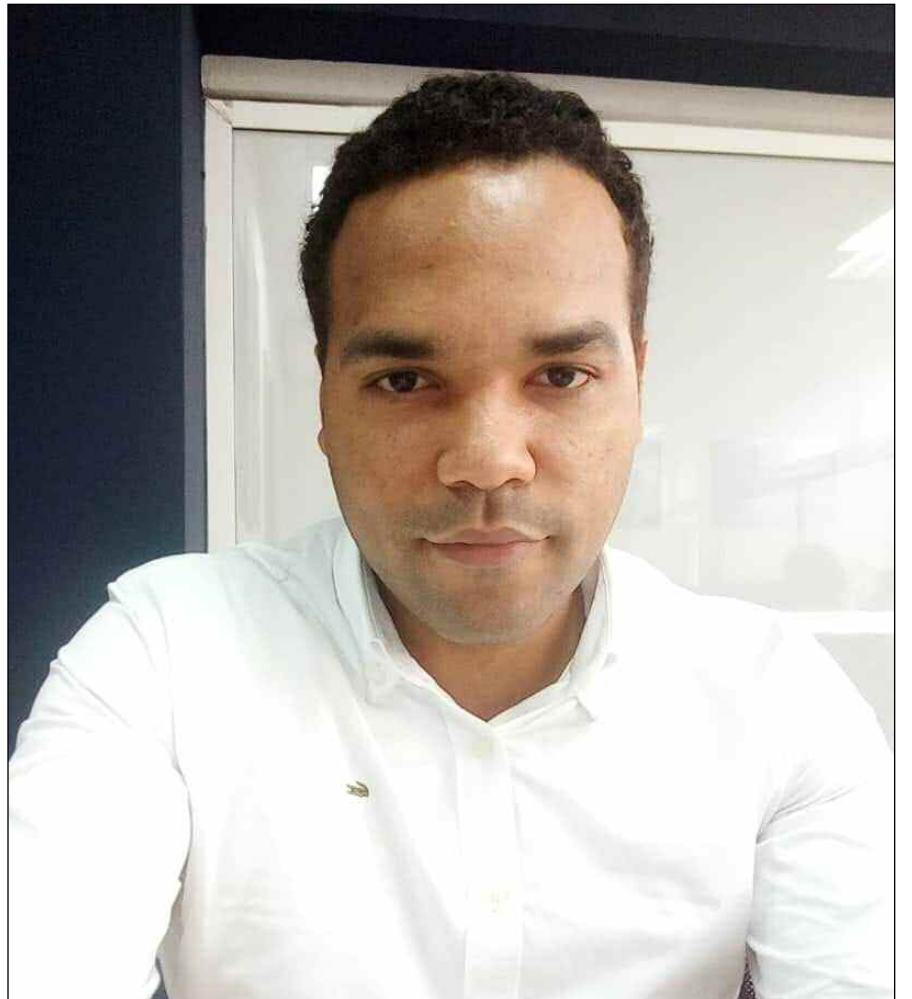
**For about 15 years I have been interested in the history of Armenian presence in Africa, particularly, in Eastern and Western, Central and South Africa. As far as I can see, the first generation is consisted hardworking businessmen and entrepreneurs from Middle East. What was the case of your family?**

My father, Berge Nanikian, is from Lebanon, who was established here within the framework of the UN stabilization program known as Monusco's first mission in Congo. He then ran a business in Congo for many years, managing the firm UPHARCO. Now he is retired. He has many children: Jessica, Jo, Krikor, Antioche, Didier, Legite, Karin, Laetitia, Anthony, Catherine, Andrea, Olga, Jumelle... all of them are Nanikians and they all work in different fields of Congo life.

**A half-Armenian, half-Nigerian young lady living in Yerevan once said that she is being considered too dark-skinned in Armenia and too light-skinned in Africa. Do you share her opinion?**

This is a problem that is facing *metis* people everywhere. It is something that some people make you feel with their attitude. If people do not make you feel that you will not feel that.

**Usually the new generation do not know from what part of Armenia their ancestors hailed. What about you?**



I have an idea but not in detail. I am more connected with my family from my mother's origin. I keep contact with my father's family as well.

**Do you have you any idea how many Armenians reside in Congo and what their main occupations are?**

We were able to find out that six Armenian families live in Congo. Some Armenians come to work temporarily. Armenians work in the Congo in various fields: construction, insurance, administration, mining and trade. They are united on the "Armenian Community of Congo" Facebook group. They are mainly from Lebanon and Syria.

**What kind of Armenian events have you organized in Kinshasa?**

When I was the president of the Armenian community in Congo, I organized a community meeting. Kinshasa Armenians celebrate birthdays and weddings together; they make greeting and farewell parties for compatriots that work in Congo for a while. Thanks to my efforts as well as those of Valéry Safarian, president of the Armenian-Belgian Chamber of Commerce in Congo, Armenian-Belgian professional boxer Alex Miskirtchian, the former EBU Featherweight Champion, competed in Kinshasa twice: he defeated Congolese boxing champion Bilindo Eseko.

**You speak several languages, including Lingala. What about Armenian?**

I am learning Armenian, I know some words. I learn some things from Lebanese-Armenians living in Congo, but I study more by myself, through online courses, as well as from Armenian songs.

**You have visited Armenia once – how would you describe your experience?**

Very fine, I loved it very much. I made new friends. I admired Yerevan and Garni. It was in May 2017. I was invited to participate in a meeting initiated by the "Belgium-Armenia" Chamber of Commerce in Yerevan with the participation of businessmen from Armenia, Belgium and Congo. Armenia is a colorful country that succeeds to marry the traditional to the modernity. It was a wonderful experience.

**I congratulate you again with the birth of your daughter, Hayastan Maria. While in Armenia many people give their children non-Armenian names, and you call your daughter Hayastan.**

## Turkey Deploying Syrian Fighters to Help Azerbaijan, Two Fighters Say

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkey is sending Syrian rebel fighters to support Azerbaijan in its escalating conflict with neighboring Armenia, two Syrian rebels have said, as Ankara pledges to step up backing for its ally.

The clashes over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh are the heaviest since 2016, with reports of dozens of deaths and hundreds wounded.

Armenia's ambassador to Moscow said on Monday that Turkey had sent around 4,000 fighters from northern Syria to Azerbaijan and that they were fighting there, an assertion denied by an aide to Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev.

Armenia also said Turkish military experts were fighting alongside Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan denied the reports. Turkey did not immediately comment, although senior officials including President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has increasingly been flexing Turkey's military muscle abroad, have promised support for Baku.

The two fighters, from Turkish-backed rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under

Turkish control, said they were deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with Ankara.

They declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue. Reuters could not independently verify their accounts.

"I didn't want to go, but I don't have any money. Life is very hard and poor," said a fighter who had fought in Syria for Ahrar al-Sham, a group that Turkey has supported.

Both men said they had been told by their Syrian brigade commanders they would earn around \$1,500 a month – a large wage for Syria, where the economy and currency have collapsed.

The fighter said he had arranged his assignment with an official from the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) in Afrin, a region of northwest Syria seized by Turkey and its Syrian rebel allies two years ago.

A spokesman for the SNA, an umbrella group of Syrian rebel groups backed by Turkey, did not respond to a request for comment.

The other fighter, from the SNA-affiliated Jaish al-Nukhba militia, said he had been told nearly 1,000 Syrians were set to be deployed to Azerbaijan. Other rebels, who also declined to

be named, gave figures of between 700 and 1,000.

The two men, who spoke to Reuters last week, said they expected to be despatched on Sept. 25, to guard facilities but not to fight. Reuters was not able to contact them on Monday to confirm their location.

Hikmat Hajiye, a foreign policy aide to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev said it was "complete nonsense" to say Syrian fighters were coming to help his country: "Our armed forces have more than enough personnel and reserve forces."

In recent years, Turkey has projected growing power abroad with incursions into neighbouring Syria and Iraq, and military support for the internationally recognised government in Libya.

Turkey has repeatedly said it is also ready to provide support to Azerbaijan, with which it has strong historical and cultural ties and runs joint energy projects.

Defense Minister Hulusi Akar attended joint military drills in Azerbaijan in August, and Erdogan used his speech to the United Nations General Assembly last week to accuse Armenia of attacking its neighbor.

Concern that Turkey could get more involved in the conflict helped drag its currency to a record low against the dollar on September 28.

Mustafa Sejari, a senior Syrian rebel, did not confirm the deployment of fighters to Azerbaijan but said Turkey was the "only hope" left for opponents of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has retaken most rebel-held land in Syria with Russian and Iranian support.

"Our alliance with (Turkey) takes different forms and is truly a common fate," he said. "I don't rule out at all Turkey becoming a strategic choice for Syrian youths."

Turkey has already used Syrian fighters to help block an assault on the Libyan capital Tripoli earlier this year by General Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based Libyan National Army, backed by Russia among others.

Their use in Syria would create a third theatre for Turkey's regional rivalry with Moscow, which has a military base in Armenia, considers it a strategic partner in the South Caucasus, and supplies it with weapons. It has not commented on the reports of Syrian fighters being sent to Azerbaijan.



# Community News

## Fall Semester Begins With a Student from The Western Diocese

ARMONK, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary began its fall semester on August 24. “We are happy to welcome back our seminarians and two new students who will study for service in the Armenian Church,” remarked the Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean.

This year, the seminary has welcomed a new student from the Western Diocese. Deacon Garen Hamamjian grew up in Los Angeles and attended St. Leon Armenian Cathedral in Burbank. He graduated from UCLA with an undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern Studies, focusing on the Abrahamic Religions and Armenian Studies.

“Even though I had visited St. Nersess in the summer of 2015 and 2016, I did not know what to expect of the academic and spiritual life. This past month I already feel that St. Nersess has transformed me as I have become inspired by the students and faculty every day. They know exactly what I need both mentally and spiritually and make sure that I am given the right tools to continue my journey to the priesthood,” commented Hamamjian. “Though I am far away from home, they have made me a part of their family, and now St. Nersess feels very much like home. I have been challenged in ways that I did not expect. I know that St. Nersess will be guiding me to become a humble and devoted servant of God, his people, and the Armenian Apostolic Church,” he continued.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, had this to say about Dn. Garen: “Garen is a fine young deacon of the Western Diocese, whose dedication has been exceptional. He has responded to God’s call to enter the journey to priesthood with compassionate love, and I trust that he will be an outstanding American-born Armenian priest in the life of our Church. Surely, St. Nersess is the sacred ground to train young students to become devout servants of Christ our Lord.”

The seminary also has welcomed Arman Shirikyan who will be following the St. Nersess the Great for Late Vocations program. This program prepares men who seek ordination to the holy priesthood of the Armenian Church as a second or late vocation. Arman resides with his family in Massachusetts and is under the guidance of Fr. Khachatur Kesablian at the Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford. He will take his classes remotely and travel to the seminary monthly.

There are five students who are studying at St. Nersess, including Julia Hintlian, a doctoral student at Harvard University who has returned to St. Nersess for a full academic year of study and research. In addition, there are four part-time students studying both remotely and on campus.

While all the students are engaged in coursework during the academic year, seminarians are also required to spend their summers in educational programs, including: participating in a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, working at a Diocesan or AGBU summer camp, and studying at Holy Echmiadzin or the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Following their graduation, they spend a full year at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin to complete their studies. Go to [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu) for more information.



Dn. Garen Hamamjian



Judy Woodruff



David Ignatius

## Gratitude in Action

### Aurora to Kick off Global Events on October 19 in New York City

NEW YORK — The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is happy to announce the launch of “Gratitude in Action,” a series of celebrations planned to mark its fifth anniversary. The series will kick off on October 19 with a live event broadcast at 7:00 pm local time from the New York Public Library in New York City, where the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative was launched in 2015 by Noubar Afeyan, founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and Ruben Vardanyan, impact investor and social entrepreneur.

Hosted by well-known American journalists and anchorpersons David Ignatius and Judy Woodruff, the October 19 event will feature special interviews with Vartan Gregorian, member of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, Aurora Humanitarian Initiative co-founder and president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, as well as virtual performances by cellist Yo-Yo Ma and jazz musician and trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. During the event, the Aurora Prize Laureates and Humanitarians will be honored, with special awards and grants to be announced.

This virtual event invites supporters and partners from around the globe to tune in online and be part of this important gathering of thought leaders and humanitarians as they set the course for future Aurora impact. With respect to the global reach of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, within the next few days after the New York City event, audiences across the world will be able to watch repeat airings of the event in Spanish, French, Russian and German. The Armenian version is to be broadcast on Armenia TV on October 20, at 6 p.m. Yerevan time (GMT+4).

Additional events within the “Gratitude in Action” anniversary celebrations are set to take place in London, Moscow, Yerevan and other world capitals and will be announced in the coming months. On March 10, 2021, the series will culminate with an ecumenical liturgy in one of the cathedral churches in New York City, held to commemorate those who fell victim to the COVID-19 pandemic and to recognize everyone who made an important contribution to support the vulnerable.

The “Gratitude in Action” event series is set to raise funds from international contributors in order to increase the impact and reach of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and help continue the efforts of the Aurora Prize Laureates and the community of unsung heroes putting themselves at risk to save others.

For more details about the event on October 19, visit [auroraprize.com](http://auroraprize.com).

## USC Thornton Friends of Armenian Music Announce Scholarship Awards

LOS ANGELES — The University of Southern California (USC) Thornton Friends of Armenian Music announced the recipients for the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 scholarships. Each year scholarship awards are presented to students of Armenian descent enrolled in the USC Thornton School of Music.

Irene Sassounian, president of the USC Thornton Friends of Armenian Music, reported that in 1984 the organization established the USC Friends of Armenian Music Scholarship Fund, thanks to the generous donation of the late Mrs. Arshag Dickranian. Additionally, the scholarship endowments have been augmented with the Daughters of Vartan, Helen Mardigian, Audrey Babakhanian Gregor, Anne Mills, Seda Marootian and Rose Ketchoyan Scholarship Award Endowments.

The Board of Directors are proud to recognize the following recipients of the scholarship awards. The amounts of the scholarships vary.



Saro Babikian, Classical Guitar, received the USC Friends of Armenian Music Scholarship; the USC Friends of Armenian Music Rose Ketchoyan Endowed Scholarship, and the USC Friends of Armenian Music Seda Marootian Endowed Scholarship.



Bardy Minassian, Classical Guitar, received the USC Friends of Armenian Music Audrey Babakhanian Gregor Endowed Music Scholarship; and the USC Friends of Armenian Music Daughters of Vartan Endowed Scholarship.



Liza Monasebian, Vocal Arts, received the USC Friends of Armenian Music Helen Mardigian Endowed Scholarship.

In past years, these talented Armenian musicians and singers would be showcased and presented at major concerts, music lectures, seminars, symposiums, and other ongoing projects. During these difficult and uncertain times due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board of Directors have postponed events featuring these talented artists until there are operational changes and less restrictions.





## OBITUARY

# Varujan Boghosian, Noted Artist, Dartmouth Professor, 94

By Alex Hanson

HANOVER, N.H. (*Valley News*) — Varujan Boghosian, the puckish artist who mined the castoffs of material culture to assemble works both powerful and whimsical, died Monday, September 21, at his home in Hanover. He was 94.

He had suffered a broken hip last week and died of complications from his injury, his daughter, Heidi Boghosian, said on September 22.

Critical and scholarly responses to Boghosian's work often described him as a magician, able to combine seemingly disparate elements into compositions both beautiful and possessed of historical weight. He was also part magpie, gathering materials from junk shops, flea markets, magazines and literature, as well as and from friends who spotted items and sent them to him.

"When I walk into the studio, the material dictates where I go," Boghosian told the *Valley News* in 2015, when he had exhibitions at the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester and at BigTown Gallery in Rochester, Vt.

His work included assembled sculpture and two-dimensional collages and is part of the collections of major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which exhibited "Varujan Boghosian: Master Manipulator," one of his last major shows, in 2018.

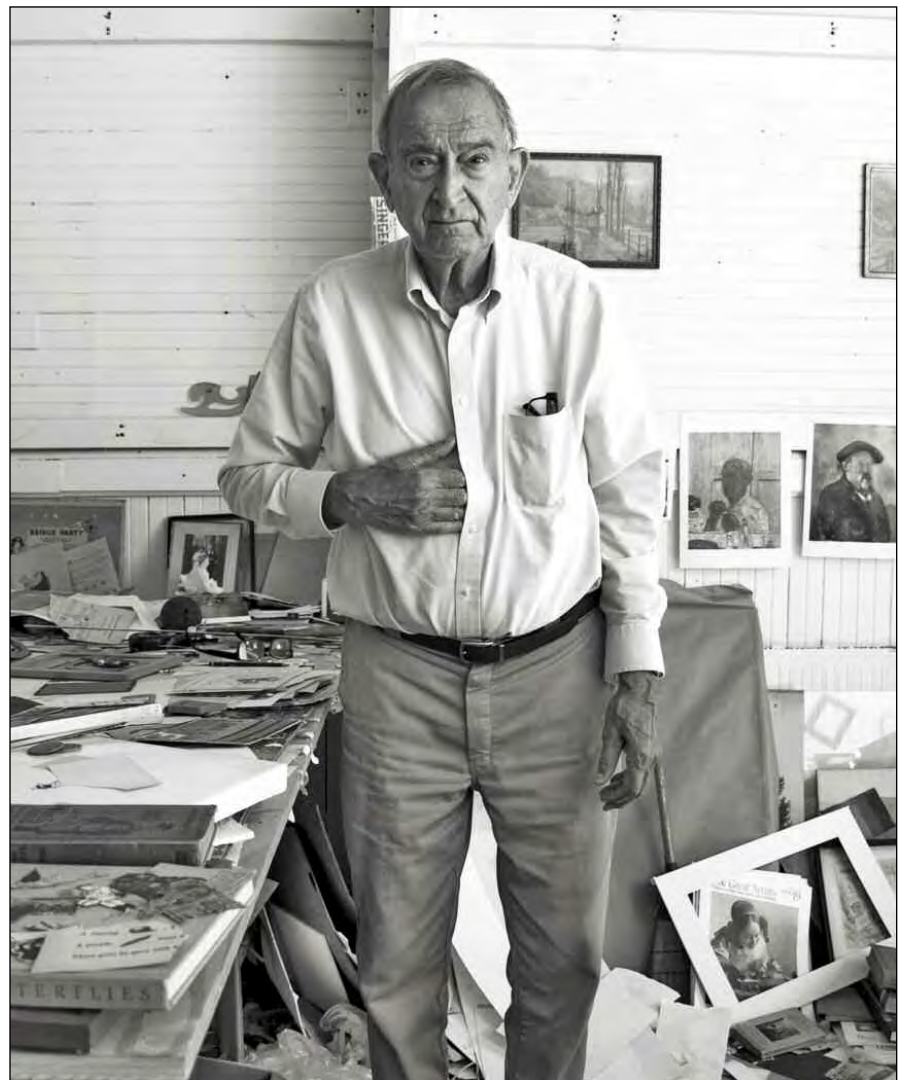
Born in 1926 to Armenian immigrant parents in New Britain, Conn., Boghosian served in the Navy in World War II and went to college on the GI Bill, earning bachelor's and master of fine arts degrees from Yale University's School of Art and Architecture. He was married to Marilyn Cummins in 1953. She accompanied him on a stay in Rome, on a Fulbright Grant, not long after they were married. She died in 2007.

He held several teaching positions since 1958, and first taught at Dartmouth in 1968. From 1982, until his retirement in 1995, he was the George Frederick Jewett Professor of Art at Dartmouth.

Although his work bore the influences of a wide range of artists and writers, Boghosian was a movement of one. His income from teaching allowed him to remain independent of the art world, and he followed his own interests. His influence on art in the Upper Valley was substantial, however, as assemblage became a kind of house style, worked over by a number of skilled practitioners.

When he spoke with the *Valley News* in 2015, Boghosian had made 200 collages over the previous two years. He kept working thereafter, but had slowed down in recent months, his daughter said. His younger sister and only sibling, Hasmig Boghosian Sillano, died a few months ago, and he was depressed.

He was in pain after his injury, Heidi Boghosian said, but he held on to his impish sense of humor. "On his deathbed, in his half-consciousness, he was still winking and cracking jokes" with visiting friends. "The whimsical humor was with him to the end."



## Armen Hampar Beacon of Faith for Western Diocese

LOS ANGELES — Armen Hampar, a pillar of the Western Diocese, a devout Christian, a loving and compassionate husband, father and grandfather died on September 24, surrounded by members of his family. He was 88.

Referring to Armen Hampar's rich legacy, the Diocesan Primate stated, "Today, the Western Diocese lost one of its outstanding pillars who has carried in his heart and soul

the vision of the founders of this Diocese. In the words of Maya Angelou, his loss is compared to "a great tree, whose fall makes rocks on distant hills shudder." We lost an extraordinary man with an exceptional love and dedication for the Armenian Church, whose departure from this world orphaned this 93 year-old institution."

As a young man, Hampar followed in the

footsteps of his parents by being immersed in the life of Holy Martyrs Armenian Church of the Eastern Diocese where he served with the utmost love as member of the Parish Council. The parish flourished through his invaluable contributions and he set a standard through his selfless service. His passion to serve carried over to the Western Diocese and his God-pleasing endeavors benefited St. Peter Armenian Church in Van Nuys.

For decades, he dedicated his time and supported the mission of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church. At the Western Diocese, he was a Diocesan Grand Benefactor. Beginning in 1987, Hampar served at the highest level of the Diocese, as a member of the Diocesan Council. He served as the Chairman of the Diocesan Council from 1989-1991 and from 2010-2013. Mr. Hampar was the Chair of the Cathedral Building Committee, overseeing the successful construction of the decades-long awaited Cathedral of the Western Diocese. He was an esteemed member of the Endowment Fund helping to expand religious, cultural, national, and youth activities of the Diocese within the Armenian commu-

nity.

His involvement in the Armenian-American community was truly commendable. For years, he was a Board Member of Ararat Home.

On March 30, 2003, Hampar received the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal, the highest honor conferred upon a member of the laity by Pontiff of the Armenian Church Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians in recognition of his generosity and support of the mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church. His loyalty to the church was vividly expressed through his ardent support of the Stewardship Program.

His compassionate spirit and his desire to strengthen the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church, earned him the love and respect of the Diocesan clergy, his fellow parishioners and the entire faithful community. With his humble service and compassionate personality, he set an example for the young generation and his children who continue their involvement in the life of the Armenian Apostolic Church.



Armen Hampar, with his wife Nora and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# ‘Vemkar Live Session’ Sheds New Light on a Familiar Parable

NEW YORK — In a riveting online discussion, Dr. Roberta Ervine of St. Nersess Seminary offered viewers a fresh look at one of the most famous parables in Scripture, under the provocative title, “And You Shall Love: Being a Samaritan on the Road Less Taken.”

Ervine’s talk was part of the “Live Sessions” series of online broadcasts, presented by the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America as a feature of its new educational initiative, Vemkar. Some 50 viewers from local parishes throughout the Diocese took part in the event broadcast on Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

In an insightful “close reading” of Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan, and its dramatic setting of a dialogue between Jesus and an unnamed questioner, Dr. Ervine explained that many gospel stories are so familiar that people underestimate how deep and complex they are. Thoughtful reappraisals of such stories, however, can reveal new depths and areas to explore — which may even overturn long-held notions.

Her analysis of the Good Samaritan placed spe-

cial emphasis on the way key terms had been translated and understood in classical Armenian. One consequence of this approach, she said, would be to render the term typically translated as “neighbor”(in English editions) as “companion” (based on the Armenian term used, unger).

She led listeners on a consideration of each of the characters involved in the passage, which is found only in Luke’s gospel. These included not only the figures in the story—the man left beaten on the road, the priest and Levite who pass him by, the Samaritan who rescues him, and the innkeeper who tends to the man’s recovery—but also the figures of Jesus as the teller of the story, and the “student of law” whose question about inheriting eternal life prompts the dialogue.

Like all of the recent Live Sessions, this talk went forward under the theme of Vemkar’s inaugural education module, “Christ as Healer” — a theme well-suited to a discussion of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Ervine’s conclusions drew on the Armenian patristic traditions surrounding the parable. “The Armenian fathers said that Jesus entrusts the

NOT

“Whom was the Samaritan willing to see as his companion?”

BUT

“Who was a companion to the wounded man?”

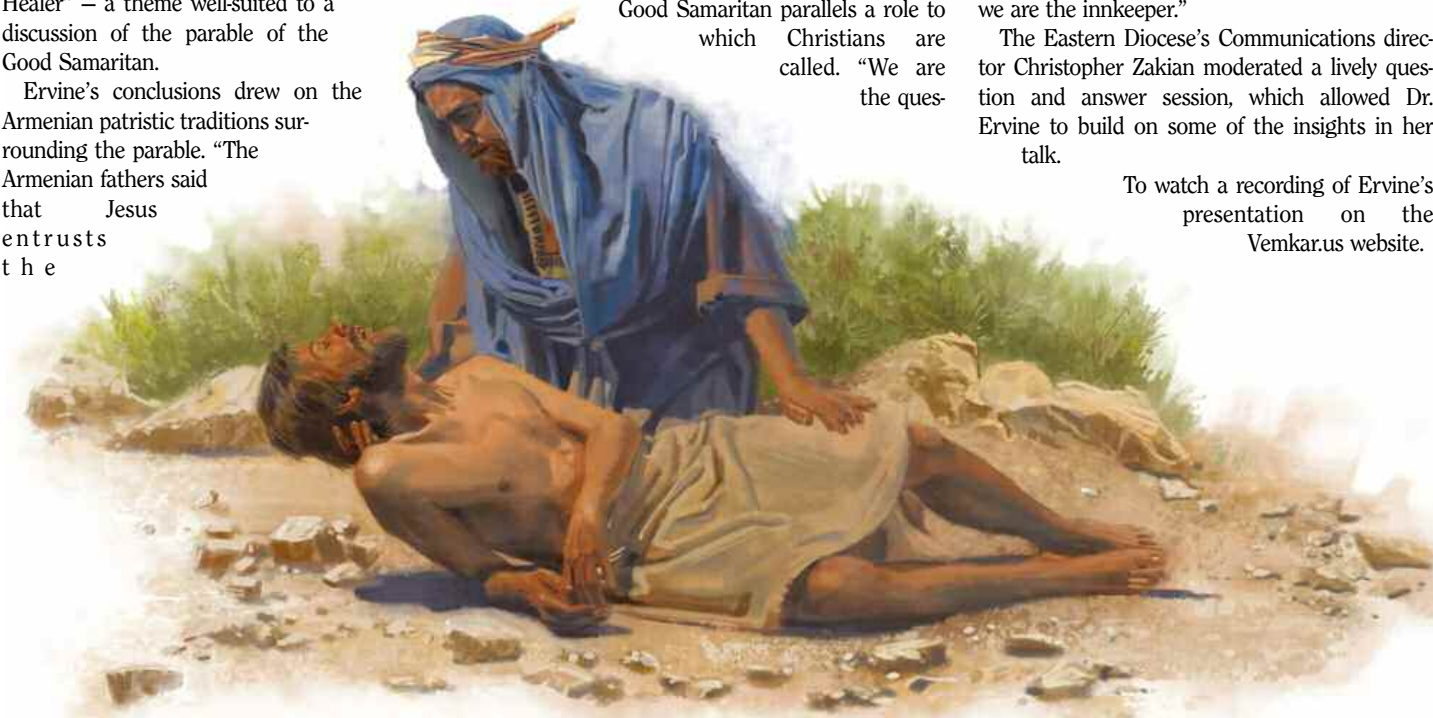
wounded and bleeding to our care,” she said, explaining that each facet of the story of the Good Samaritan parallels a role to which Christians are called. “We are the questioner. We are the audience. We are the wounded man; we are the Samaritan. We are the inn, and we are the innkeeper.”

The Eastern Diocese’s Communications director Christopher Zakian moderated a lively question and answer session, which allowed Dr. Ervine to build on some of the insights in her talk.

To watch a recording of Ervine’s presentation on the Vemkar.us website.



Dr. Roberta Ervine (St. Nersess Seminary) offered online viewers a fresh look at one of the most famous parables in the Bible during a September 23 “Live Sessions” broadcast over the Zoom platform. The Live Sessions series is presented by the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America as part of its new educational initiative, Vemkar.



Left to right: Avo Markarian, Ara Babayan, Sevan Deirbadrossian, Consul General Dr. Armen Baibourtian, Mayda Kuredjian, Kevork Keushkerian and Khatchig Nahabedian

## Tekeyan California Delegation Congratulates Armenia on Independence Day

GLENDAL — On Friday, September 25, a delegation from the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) paid a visit to the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, located in Glendale. The delegation, composed of representatives from the TCA Pasadena-Glendale, Los Angeles and Metro Los Angeles chapters, the TCA Beshgeturian Board, and TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian, congratulated the Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles, Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, on the 29th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia. The delegation conveyed its support and best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the homeland. The Tekeyan Cultural Association delegation mentioned some recent programs that were held, which aim to fulfill the organization’s mission to preserve the Armenian culture and heritage in the diaspora, while also promoting cultural, spiritual and educational ties with Armenia. The delegation expressed its readiness to cooperate in future endeavors with the Consul General.

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# Arts & Living

## The O’Leary Theory:

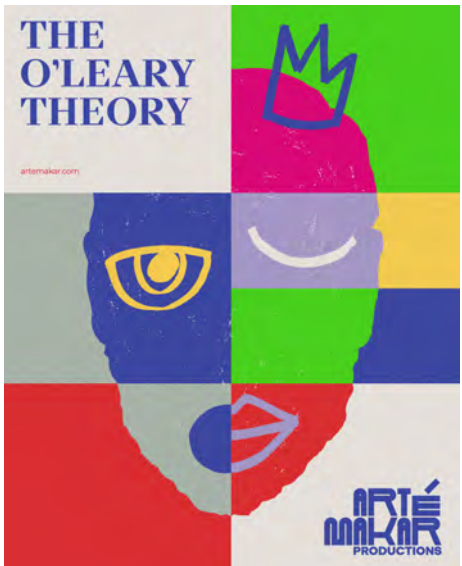
Arthur Makaryan Brings Interactive Theater to the Masses

By Christopher Atamian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – Theater and opera director, producer and artistic director, young créateur extraordinaire, Arthur Makaryan is part of a small and hopefully growing coterie of Armenian-born artists who are taking their talents to the world stage.

Makaryan holds directing degrees from no less than Columbia University, La Sorbonne and the Yerevan State Institute of Theater, and followed up on his studies with a 2017-18 Opera Directing Fellowship at the Juilliard School. His most recent credits include directing the pilot of “Oedipus” at the Armenian National Opera, “Broken April” at LenFest Center for the Arts at Columbia, and the Simulacrum multimedia opera at 3LD Art and Technology Center, also in New York City. His “Hamlet Machine” has toured in Armenia, Russia, Lithuania, Moldova, France and the US (off-Broadway) and “Black Garden” had its performances in Paris at Théâtre de l’Opprimé and at The Tank NYC.

At his production company, ArtéMakar



Poster of The O’Leary Theory (Design by Vilyam Karapetyan)

Productions, Arthur strives to push technological barriers forward, taking theater one step farther than “traditional” immersive theater. Working with Associate Artistic Director Tamara Sevunts, techno whiz Hayk Mikayelyan and branding guru Derek Kopen, ArtéMakar Productions was founded in order to “activate the imagination by reinventing storytelling through emerging mediums of art.”

The company explores complex topics and embraces all forms of technology.

Makaryan and Sevunts have been collaborating since they first met in 2016: “We like to experiment and transcend the traditional limitations of performing arts,” Makaryan explains: “We combine the virtual and the physical, creating experiences where people can travel between their devices and their physical surroundings. We want to push our audience further in directions they never thought they would go.” This of course begs the question of where theater ends and where film and interactive gaming begins. Some might argue that theater was meant to be seen the way the Greeks originally did – in the round – and the way we have more or less, though in a more

see MAKARYAN, page 13



Liana Grigoryan

## Vogue’s Armenian Touch

Photographer Liana Grigoryan Creates Her Own Pages in the Famous Magazine

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES – Imagine the color blue on blue and on another blue. Does it sound tricky? Not for Liana Grigoryan. By using a palette of bold colors and unexpected backdrops she is able to create a simple art piece or, as she likes to call it, a fine art photograph, to land straight in the pages of *Vogue* or *Cosmopolitan* magazines. But the path she chose was never easy. And there she is in my virtual interview room, simple and down to earth, looking just like an old friend from my neighborhood, wearing a T-shirt with Minnie Mouse and a big smile on her face. She is from Yerevan, a fellow alumna of the Caucasus Institute and the last class of Documental Photography Studies led by famous photographer Ruben Mangasaryan.



Even though she arrived in the US on her birthday in 2013, she wasn’t greeted with celebrations. Instead many challenges awaited her before she could see the fireworks years later. Being an experienced video editor helped her find a job at a local Armenian TV station. Then she started to work as a photographer in weddings.

“I was all alone, new in a big city. Everyone tried to convince me that a photographer can only earn money by shooting special events like weddings,” says

see PHOTOGRAPHY, page 16

## A Legend of Kef Music Passes On

By Harry Kezelian III  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON – By now, most readers of the *Mirror-Spectator*, particularly those who live in the Boston area have heard that oudist and singer Harry Minassian passed away this June. Amongst all the other bad news of the year 2020, the Armenian community lost a great artist. His obituary was duly noted in our paper



and tributes have appeared in social media and other Armenian publications.

This writer never had the chance to speak with Minassian in person, and only saw him perform once – briefly. Therefore, to try to do justice to Harry Minassian’s memory, this writer contacted multiple musicians, friends, and family members to gain perspective on the life of a truly remarkable artist in the history of the Armenian-American community.

The Consummate Live Kef Performer

The first thing to say about Harry Minassian is that he was a consummate entertainer. More than one fan attested to the fact that more than almost any other Armenian kef musician, he had a seemingly innate ability to get a crowd going. Harry Minassian was an extremely talented and sensitive oud player. In fact, he took lessons from the legendary Udi Hrant Kenkulian himself, and was one of the five American-born Armenians to receive the title of “Udi” (oud master) from Udi Hrant in 1969. He was also a singer who played oud as he sang. His vocals seemed to hang in the air like a kind of mist which intoxicated his audiences. Somehow intense and gentle at the same time, his knowledge of Turkish as well as Armenian meant that he was able to put feeling into the lyrics that he was singing and make the audience feel them too, whether they understood the language or not. Although many artists sing and play the oud at the same time, Harry’s ability to do so was fluid and natural. Minassian was the Fred Astaire or Bing Crosby of kef music – he performed at the highest level of artistry, and made it look easy.

I spoke with one fellow musician who asked him to play at his wedding due to his renowned ability to work a crowd. The groom had to ask Harry in advance about how extensive his “Armenian set list” was because Harry was one of the last holdouts of the Armenian musicians who still performed predominantly in the Turkish language. Harry, always the gentleman, graciously handled the request to sing only in Armenian, but this was rather atypical for him. His agility with the Turkish language and his adherence to that repertoire is of course not unusual for Armenian-American kef musicians

see LEGEND, page 14





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Arthur Makaryan Brings Interactive Theater to the Masses

MAKARYAN, from page 12

rigid form, watched it ever since the Victorian era. Makaryan is unfazed by such notions: “We don’t make technology the central point of what we do, but rather use it in service of the story.” September 2020 was meant to mark the company’s official launch: then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Zoom became a way of life. But this didn’t faze the young creators: “True to our nature,” explains Sevunts, “we embraced the change and simply pivoted our launch online.”

Which brings us to Makaryan’s current project, the highly interactive “The O’Leary Theory,” which combines technological change with a classic topic in theater – the family drama. The audience watches from home and as the improvised action unfolds, helps to make decisions for the actors: “How are families experiencing difficult times dealing with current circumstances? What are the steps that they take to come together and be a support system for one another? That was the initial idea that started this story,” explains Makaryan: “A family that once epitomized the American dream and then fell from grace...Trying to reconcile past decisions. The aftershock of suppressed trauma. The ability,

or not, to face reality. We created a space where storytelling becomes a democratic tool where the audience has control.”

As Makaryan notes elsewhere, working with actors in such circumstances requires a new form of commitment, as they are literally inviting the audience into their homes: “We must treat these new realities with care and ensure everyone feels comfortable and supported in order to make sure we are respecting their privacy...Theatre is not just a building; it’s also the people who come together. But how do you bring people together when you’re not allowed to do so in person? That was the challenge that was put in front of us.”

“The O’Leary Theory” then, is an attempt to unite people and create a virtual building where everyone together can experience a sense of unity. The production fuses unique approaches to acting, directing and design, and lets the audience decide on the show’s outcome! The show is being billed as “cutting-edge, interactive, improvisational and on-line: quite a mouthful for the average viewer, and exciting as well. And thanks to Hayk Mikayelyan, who creates “thinking machines” in order to give people an idea of what may



Arthur Makaryan (Design by Vilyam Karapetyan)

lie beyond our current technological capabilities, the experience should be a fun one for all involved.

The story is simple enough. Led by family patriarch Jerry, the ill-fated O’Leary family once

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PRODUCTIONS

had a hit reality TV show, “The O’Leary Theory.” After the show is cancelled, Jerry becomes estranged from his three children, Gary, Rhea and Condon, and from a wife who has mysteriously disappeared. Jerry’s career is over and his life is in shambles. Until now that is, several years later, when a producer appears in order to revive the show. Now Jerry must convince his children to return and shoot a test episode. To add spice to the theatrical sauce, his wife suddenly reappears out of nowhere with a startling revelation. Can Jerry and his family pull off a successful test episode without falling apart emotionally? Will the producer deliver on his promise? And who exactly is responsible for a newly revealed crime from the past? Makaryan cleverly casts the audience as producer, to judge whether or not “The O’Leary Theory” deserves a second chance. Sitting in their living room or bedroom seats, the audience’s job then is to prompt family members, stir the pot, and deliver a dramatic family reunion. And as the audience decides the content of the show, the question becomes: do they fully realize the consequences of the choices they make?

“The O’Leary Project” stars James Beaman as Jerry O’Leary and world-renowned Nicole Ansari as his wife Eva. The three children are played by the equally talented Alex Marz, Tamara Sevunts and Oliver Prose.

Not your usual night out at the theater? Certainly not! And that’s precisely the point. So whether you are an immersive theater neophyte, a devotee of traditional theater in the round or a lover of all things technological, join ArtéMakar Productions for its October 2nd premiere and help create your own play. It may be the first time that you, along with the actors, create your own play, but if Arthur Makaryan has anything to do with it, it certainly won’t be the last.

For more information about ArtéMakar productions, visit <https://artemakar.com/>

(Christopher Atamian will regularly take a look at an Armenian writer, filmmaker, fine artist or performer and bring their unique take on the world to Armenian Mirror-Spectator readers. You can reach Christopher Atamian at the following addresses: Email: [catamian@gmail.com](mailto:catamian@gmail.com); Facebook: [facebook.com/Christopher.atamian](https://facebook.com/Christopher.atamian); Instagram: [atamianchristopher](https://instagram.com/atamianchristopher); Twitter: [@CatamianChris](https://twitter.com/CatamianChris))





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# A Legend of Kef Music Passes On

LEGEND, from page 12

of his generation, but it was Harry Minassian's specialty, and this fact makes a lot of sense if one knows something about his background.

## Immigrant Beginnings

Harry Minassian was born on February 6, 1937 in Brighton, Mass. and grew up in Watertown. His parents, Hagop Minassian and Vehanoush (Karamanian) Minassian, were both from the region of Kayseri (Gesaria) in Central Turkey. The Kayseri area is known to history as Cappadocia, and though lying outside the boundaries of Historic Armenia, is full of ancient, medieval and modern Armenian history. It was a region inhabited by Armenians, Greeks, and Turks until the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

His mother, Vehanoush, was born in the city of Kayseri itself, where the Armenian community was Turkish-speaking, and his father, Hagop, was from the outlying village of Nirze, where the people spoke both Turkish and Armenian. When Harry Minassian was a child, along with his brothers Nazareth and Louis, Turkish was spoken in the home, as this was the language the family was most comfortable with, while

Maranian also reminisced about house parties with his grandfather Hagop Avakian playing oud, others playing mandolin and other instruments, where in an atmosphere of family members and friends that hailed from Turkish-speaking Armenian communities such as Kayseri, Marash and Aintab, Turkish was the language of conversation and especially of song.

Harry Minassian was a part of this scene and transmitted that atmosphere to the stage in his performances.

## From Armenian Youth Dances to Nightclub Gigs

Around 1950, teenage brothers Carl (oud and vocals) and Nick (dumbeg) Zeytoonian started the Orientales Band in Watertown. Aaron (dumbeg) and Ara (clarinet) Der Marderosian joined them, as did Berj Krikorian (percussion and vocals). They decided they needed a second oud player and invited young Harry Minassian into the band.

Like the Vosbikians, Barsamians, and so many other American-born Armenian bands of that era, the Orientales filled the need for ethnic dance music at Armenian-American youth events. With two oudists who were both vocalists



Left to right: Harry Minassian, Freddie Elias, George Righellis; bottom: Gary Alexanian El Morocco Nightclub, Boston 1958

playing with Gary Alexanian on dumbeg and George Righellis on guitar. The trio was then better known as 'Harry, Gary, and George.' Their sound was unique and unlike what I was used to in New York. For one thing, it was the first time I heard a guitar played in the ensemble, which greatly added to the rhythm and chords. That sound led me to introduce the guitar into my band in New York. Harry played with many fine musicians and could be heard almost every night of the week at a different venue in New England. In fact, when I dated my wife who was from Massachusetts, it was not unusual for me to take her to listen to Harry three times in one week. It seemed like an explosive time for our music everywhere."

This oud and guitar trend which was started primarily by Harry Minassian, spread to Armenian groups throughout the country; guitarists that were usually of Greek descent were brought into Armenian-led bands; such as Manny Petro of the Kef Time Band (Richard Hagopian's cross-country group) or Nick Kenis of the Hye-Fyes (from Providence). Unlike the Armenians, the Greeks had been using guitar in their folk music for possibly a hundred years and had developed their own style of rhythmic-harmonic accompaniment to Mediterranean/Middle Eastern melodies. And with a Greek guitar player, the Armenian groups could incorporate more Greek repertoire and vocals, which added to their appeal for the clientele of the era's ethnic nightclubs.

## Vinyl Standouts and Mamma

Minassian's first album, released in 1966, was "Near East Enchantments." The album, featuring Minassian, Alexanian, Righellis, Lebanese-American violinist Freddie Elias, and clarinetist Carnig Mikitarian, exemplified the New England Nightclub sound heard on other albums of the era, with almost all Turkish songs. But Minassian was not just an artist focused on the repertoire of the past. As the Armenian *estradayin* genre developed in Lebanon with Adiss Harmandian's hit song *Dzaghnig* in 1968, Harry kept up with the music coming out of the Middle Eastern communities. His second album, "Exciting Moods of the Middle East," released in 1973, featured the first ever Armenian-American recording of Harmandian's worldwide hit *Karoun Karoun*, which had been released earlier that year and has since become a modern Armenian classic. The album, which featured the late dumbeg artist Roger Krikorian as well as clarinetist Steve Vosbikian, Sr., was a tour de force for Minassian and one of the best examples of his style and repertoire. Kicking off with the Armenian patriotic tune *Herosneri Genatz* and including the

latest songs being popularized by Harmandian in Beirut (*Karoun Karoun*, *Noune*, and *Akh Im Yar*), the album also included the recent song out of Turkey, folk-rocker Baris Manco's *Daglar Daglar* (Mountains, Mountains), which became a signature song for Minassian.

Harry wasn't the only Armenian who took notice of the song – Lebanese-Armenian singer Maxim Panossian released his Armenian language version of the tune in 1977 as *Achkes Jampout Ge Sbaseyi*.

A prominent place in the album was given to the nostalgic-romantic Turkish folk song *Her Sabah Her Seher*, originally popularized by Udi Hrant and to this day closely associated with Harry Minassian. The irresistible danceability of this song captured on a record Minassian's live



left to right: Gary Alexanian, Harry Minassian, Carnig Mikitarian, George Righellis at the Jumbo Lounge in Somerville, 1958

Armenian was spoken outside the home.

One of Minassian's earliest musical mentors was also a native of Kayseri – Hagop Avakian, a local oud player and singer in Watertown who gave Harry some of his first lessons on the instrument. Avakian, along with Arto Boghosian of Constantinople on the violin, had formed a band called the Boston Ardziv Orchestra that performed locally. Like many of the early Armenian immigrant bands in the US, much of their repertoire was sung in Avakian's native Turkish. (As an aside, Arto Boghosian's brother was the well-known comedic actor Edward Boghosian of New York, writer/singer of the original *Sood Eh*, *Sood Eh* in the 1940s.)

Hagop Avakian's grandson, Ken Maranian of Texas, shared that although Harry did take lessons from Avakian, he soon surpassed his teacher.

Later, Harry also studied with the famed blind artist Udi Hrant Kenkulian of Istanbul – the acknowledged all-time Armenian master of the oud – who travelled to the US on an almost yearly basis from 1950 to 1963 and mentored many young musicians in this country.

In 1969, Harry Minassian was one of the five young oud players whom Hrant chose to bestow with a diploma (marked with Hrant's thumb print in red ink) and the right to be referred to as "Udi." The others were Charles "Chick" Ganimian of New York, George Mgrdichian of Philadelphia, Richard Hagopian of Fresno, and John Berberian of New York. With Harry Minassian's passing, only Hagopian and Berberian remain with us.

(Carl usually sang in Armenian, and Harry usually sang in Turkish), two dumbegs, a clarinet and the other vocalist, Berj, who usually played the tambourine, they gained popularity in the New England area.

Richard Samoorian, who later was ordained an Armenian Apostolic priest as the Very Rev. Ghevont Samoorian, hung around the band, acted as a consultant and music arranger, and occasionally played piano.

Around 1954 the Orientales produced 6 recordings on 78-rpm discs, including a *chifte telli* oud solo by the 17-year-old Minassian in the style of Udi Hrant, and in 1956 they played the massive Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Convention and General Assembly in Washington, D.C.

Joe Zeytoonian (younger brother of Carl and Nick), himself an accomplished oudist, confirmed that Turkish songs were still acceptable at these type of community events in the 1950s, but certainly "toned down" compared to their prevalence in the ethnic nightclub environment of the time.

## Expanding Musical Palate

At around the same time, Harry drifted from the band and began playing gigs in Boston's ethnic nightclub scene.

In many ways he was a traditionalist (and was considered as such later in life) but he was also an innovator, especially for the time. Master oudist John Berberian shared his memories of this period, both personal and historical: "It was about 1961 when I first heard Harry play. He was



Harry's first solo record circa 1954

performance style which had generations dancing *tek bar* (Armenian solo dancing). Finally, the unforgettable ballad *Mamma* closed out the first half of the album.

It is with the song *Mamma* that we fully understand the relationship to the Turkish language and Turkish songs that Harry Minassian and many of his generation had. This song, which was a Turkish translation of Charles Aznavour's hit *La Mamma*, was often sung by Minassian in live performances, especially when his own mother was in the audience. Minassian was devoted to his mother Vehanoush, a Genocide survivor from the Armenian community of Kayseri, and he sang this song to his mother in her native language, which like most Armenians from Kayseri, happened to be Turkish. This was so emotional for her that she would rush the stage at the end of the song and start kissing her son. It was emotional for the audience as well, to the point where *Mamma* ("Annem" in Turkish) became known as one of Minassian's signature songs long after his

*continued on next page*





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Discussion with Filmmaker Stephanie Ayanian on 'What Will Become of Us'

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program, CineCulture and the Center for Creativity and the Arts present a discussion with filmmaker/producer Stephanie Ayanian, on her film “What Will Become of Us.” The Zoom webinar will take place on Friday, October 9, at 5:30 p.m.

The long shadow of the Genocide creates a burden for young Armenian Americans that discourages them from taking up their culture. “What Will Become of Us” follows six Armenian Americans – famous and otherwise – as they navigate the 100th anniversary of the Genocide, forging identities for the next 100 years. How can Armenian Americans honor their past, while unshackling themselves from its trauma?

Those who would like to view the film online before the presentation, between October 2-9, can contact Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, [barlowd@csufresno.edu](mailto:barlowd@csufresno.edu), to receive a screening code.

Ayanian holds an MFA in Film and



Stephanie Ayanian



Stephanie Ayanian filming in Armenia

Media Arts from Temple University. She co-owns storyshop, an independent production house for creative media. Her film, “Kinderwald,” screened on the closing night of the Slamdance Film Festival in 2014 and was an Official Selection of the Munich International, Seattle International, and Napa Valley film festi-

vals. Previously, Ayanian worked as a senior producer/director for Penn State Public Broadcasting.

The discussion with Stephanie Ayanian will be held as a Zoom Webinar, and registration is required. Use this link to register: [bit.ly/whatwillbecomeofus](https://bit.ly/whatwillbecomeofus). The lecture will also be streamed on the Armenian Studies

Program YouTube channel at [bit.ly/armenianstudiesyoutube](https://bit.ly/armenianstudiesyoutube).

For more information about the lecture please contact the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669, visit our website at [www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies](http://www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies), or visit our Facebook page at @ArmenianStudiesFresnoState.

from previous page  
mother had passed on.

Minassian's third album, released around 1981, was self-titled and became known as “The White Album.” In this recording, accompanied by Hachig Kazarian on the clarinet and Roger Krikorian on dumbeg, Minassian showed his mature, developed style, performing with impeccable ease several works by Udi Hrant such as *Siroon Aghchig* and *Srdis Vra Kar Me Ga* and Turkish favorites like *Kadife* and *Gelin Gelin*. The album also included the moving *Bir Ihtimal Daha Var*, another of Minassian's signature songs. John Berberian, joined by a group of other musicians, played it in a posthumous tribute to Minassian on the “Echoes of Kef Time”

Armenian segment of the Boston radio show “Grecian Echoes” with Meleti Poulioupoulos, one of many Harry Minassian tributes that effervescently began to flow across social media and elsewhere after his death.

### A Legacy of Music, Family and Friends

Despite Minassian's three great albums, Armenians, particularly those in New England, really knew him from his live performances, and not from his LPs. Ask any kef music fan who has seen Harry Minassian live and you will hear nothing but praise and “rave reviews.” Many of his fans recorded his performances on cassette or video, and many of these videos have now been made available on the internet.



Harry Minassian with close friend and fellow oud player John Berberian on violin, Shiraz Restaurant, Watertown, 2015



Harry Minassian playing at the Watertown AMVETS Hall in the 1970s with John Madanian, Bobby Sohigian, and singer Onnik Dinkjian playing tambourine

Incidentally, the Armenian song most associated with him was performed live countless times but was never on any of his albums: *Akh Anoush*. This beautiful 10/8 melody combines the aspects of an Armenian line dance and a love ballad, sung in Western Armenian. “Akh Anoush, Anoush, Anoush / a bit of sugar, a bit of almonds / you are named after sugar, I guess / but you are sweeter than sugar.”

Minassian's legacy as a musician and a human being was described to me by his son, Gary Minassian: “My dad would practice the oud always. He was a perfectionist. He had a great gift; when he started playing people would jump up and start dancing...as far as him being my dad...he was simply the best. Always there when you needed him; a caring

and loving husband to my mom [Gail Minassian]. My dad never had a bad word to say about anyone. He was always kind and approachable. My dad also passed on his teaching from Udi Hrant to Joseph Kouyoumjian and Zaven Donabedian.”

Fellow oudist John Berberian gave as good a summary as anybody: “Harry was not only a colleague but one of my best friends. I will always remember Harry for the gentleman he was, the music he shared and the friendship we had together. I will miss him greatly!”

Minassian will be missed by not only his loving family and friends but his many fans. *Hoghe tetev ulla*, Udi Harry. May you rest easy, as easy and relaxed as your music made us feel – and just as memorable.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Photographer Liana Grigoryan Creates Her Own Pages in Vogue Magazine

PHOTOGRAPHY, from page 12

Liana, remembering the beginning of her career with a smile. The photos turned out great with very specific details that only a professional documentary photographer could add.

But that wasn't what Liana wanted. "I didn't touch the camera for three years. It was hard. I needed to work, improve my English and find an apartment to live in," she says, sharing her memories for a sure plan for success. Liana started to attend Glendale Community College and, not unexpectedly, a photography class was on her schedule.

"I had the camera again in my hands. I needed a marketing plan: to be able to make money and invest it later in my dream." She started to work like a regular photographer by doing photo sessions for children and family, including maternity photos.

Liana's next move was in fine art photography, through which she met with different professional models for her projects. "My first model was

sion for submission before starting it. There are set standards for each publication. You shoot the idea in the way that is acceptable to the magazine. For example, Vogue likes things to be as natural as possible; I might not even have a makeup artist on the set. For this magazine, the most important part is the idea," shares Liana.

Despite the challenges, she loves working for the fashion magazines, "It's team work. It doesn't matter how talented you are. You can never achieve big things when you work alone."

COVID-19 had its impact on the world of photography as on everything else. Liana's next big project, "Armenian Women in the US," is not complete yet. It became one of the most important projects for her. It all started in the college classroom where the Pulitzer-Prize-winning photographer of the *LA Times*, Clarence Williams, assigned Liana to take photos of Armenian women for a special project.

"I presented two different ideas to him, but he rejected both of them. All the other students



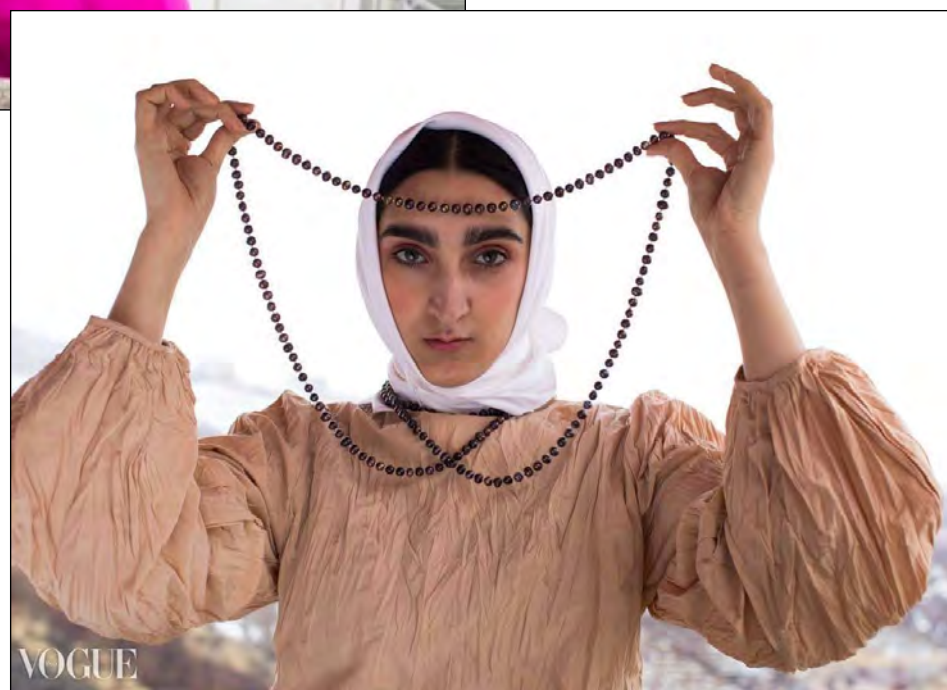
Emily. She is such a sweetheart. I am still working with her," relates Liana with significant gratitude in her tone. Emily's mother was a big support. She was the one who introduced Liana to different professional models.

Work within that setting gave her the opportunity to apply to special projects with the big players in the fashion world. Liana's seven photos were immediately accepted to Vogue's "Inner Peace" project. In her photos, pink flowers represented the hope for the inner peace that everyone should achieve one day.

Liana was in the right place: she started to work with the agencies like Elite LA, one of the huge player in the fashion world with locations in Paris, New York and Milan. Liana started to build her portfolio. With make-up artists, hair dressers and stylists, she had a whole team working with her. From *Vogue* to *Cosmopolitan*, her work ranged from special projects to commercials.

"It's a very difficult and long process. You can apply 100 times but your work can only be accepted once. It's important to make the deci-

started to work on their projects but me. Mr. Williams wanted me to work on something special. He didn't even know what he was dragging me into," Liana laughs. And she went to



Armenian kitchens, businesses, judge's offices and so many other places for this unprecedented photography project to present Armenian women in every domain. "It's not going to be

only in California, but in many states. That's why it's called Armenian women in the US," explains Liana about her post-pandemic plans.

Via the computer screen I can't see her apartment but by exploring her character, a question is tugging at my mind: "Is everything in your apartment set like a picture?"

She thinks for a second without glancing back at the room, like she knows exactly where everything is. "Yes, that is so true! My coffee table is my favorite spot in my apartment. My coffee could get cold but I need to arrange the table the way I want it to be. Or for example, if I work for several hours on the computer, I might just move a flower next to it so I can have the right setting." She even spotted the movement of the sunlight in her room. Around four o'clock in the afternoon, the shadows are very much visible and she can see a picture slowly forming in the room. "I will just bring a vase and put it in the shade of the curtain, and that will make my picture complete."

Liana is a huge self-critic. She never stops learning and evolving. "That's what makes me going," she laughs wholeheartedly.

And then she is a Libra. The balance comes after an inner fight for self-fulfillment, followed by self-confidence concerning a dream that still needs to be attained.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Book Dedicated to Martyred Poets Launched in Germany

POTSDAM, Germany – On September 18 the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam hosted a book launch of the volume, *Todesvision. Eine Hommage an die ermordeten Dichter Armeniens (1915-1945)* (Vision of Death. Homage to Armenia's Murdered Poets (1915-1945)).

The poems were translated from Armenian by Dr. Gerayer Koutcharian and rendered poetically into German by Prof. Tessa Hofmann (pictured below and at right). Dr. Roy Knocke of the Lepsiushaus, introduced the new publication, and Hofmann read selections to an appreciative audience. Photos by Ulrich Rosenau.

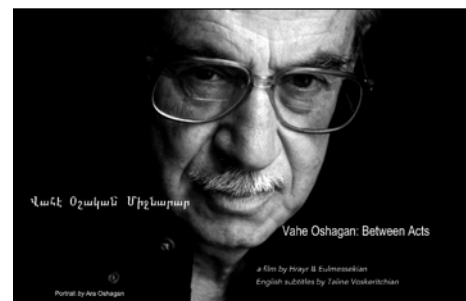
– By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach



## Online Discussion Of Documentary on Vahe Oshagan to Be Held October 7

BOSTON – Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society-Boston Chapter and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present an online discussion of “Vahe Oshagan: Between Acts,” a documentary film by Hrayr Eulmesekian, on Wednesday, October 7, at 3 p.m. (ET). The discussion will feature Hrayr Eulmesekian, Taline Voskeritchian and Karen Jallatyan.

The film infuses the traditional documentary with visual, sound-text, and scholarly interpre-



Vahe Oshagan

tations of Oshagan's poetry and prose. It features readings and commentary by Oshagan of his own poetry, as well as analyses by well-known literary critics Krikor Beledian, Krikor Chahinian, Marc Nishanian; and electronic compositions by Ohannes Salibian.

“Vahe Oshagan: Between Acts” is available for viewing online: <https://youtu.be/Gp9sHY1hzoo>. It will not be shown during the October 7 program and should be viewed in advance.

The discussion will be livestreamed on YouTube or via Zoom.

To view live on YouTube, no registration is required. Go to NAASR's channel at the start of the program or watch afterwards if you missed it: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies>.

To attend on Zoom registration is required. Zoom attendees can submit written questions via Zoom which will be asked as time permits. Zoom Registration link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_\\_4keUN5LSOGJFNxXMh-dog](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__4keUN5LSOGJFNxXMh-dog).

For more information contact NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

## Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

### Cheese Beureg Cake

This original and savory recipe is courtesy of “Kevani cooking with minor adjustments” by Salpy's International Kitchen. Discover signature recipes created by the amazing Salpy Rozario herself, and “an incredible selection of international recipes adapted, tried, and tested with minor or major adjustments.”

#### INGREDIENTS:

4 large eggs  
1/2 cup oil  
1/2 cup plain white yogurt  
2 cups flour  
200 gm (7 ounces) akkawi or halloumi cheese (found in most Middle Eastern markets)  
3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon sugar  
1/4 cup milk  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt (if cheese is salty, do not add salt)  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley  
20 pitted olives (green or black), sliced  
Sesame and nigella seeds, optional  
Serves 8-10.

#### PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
In a large bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, sugar and baking soda. Set aside.  
In a stand mixer bowl, using the whisk attachment, beat the eggs, add to the oil and yogurt, and beat until well incorporated. Gradually add the flour and mix until it becomes a smooth batter. Add the remaining ingredients, and stir until well combined.  
Pour batter into a greased and floured Bundt cake pan. Top with sesame or nigella seeds, if desired. Bake for about 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

For this recipe, go to:

<<https://www.facebook.com/SalpysInternationalKitchen/>> <https://www.facebook.com/SalpysInternationalKitchen/>



## Calendar

### MASSACHUSETTS

**OCTOBER 7 — 10am Celebrating What Unites Us!** A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE Chef Sean Sherman member of the Oglala Lakota tribe Cookbook author, The Sioux Chef Indigenous Kitchen - 2018 James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook; co-founder, The Sioux Chef.com - 2019 James Beard Leadership Award. To register via Zoom, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**OCTOBER 17 — St. James 73rd Annual Take-Out Bazaar** - Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. \$100 Raffle. Online Silent Auction. Pre-order curbside pickup only. To order meals and pastries, visit [www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar) starting on October 1st, or call the Church office. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or [info@stthagog.com](mailto:info@stthagog.com).

**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





## COMMENTARY

## EDITORIAL

# The Face of the New War in Karabakh

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It has been very obvious to even the untrained observer what Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ilham Aliyev were planning in the Caucasus by holding their extensive military exercises in July and August in mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan exclave by moving state-of-the-art military hardware to the theater. The action was certainly better documented by military observers and planners in the region.

In addition, Aliyev's vitriolic attacks on Armenia and Erdogan's criticism from the United Nations' stage that Armenia was a destabilizing factor in the Caucasus were the veneer of war preparations that were in the offing. (See related stories on page 1.)

As war broke out on September 27, Turkey and Azerbaijan accused Armenia of starting the conflict. However, in these days of technological warfare, the major powers, through their satellites, have been constantly monitoring the hot spots around the globe. Thus, the truth is not hard to find.

Writing in Al-Monitor, Amberin Zaman stated: "The emerging consensus is that Azerbaijan most likely instigated the attack after receiving assurances of military support from Turkey."

Laurence Broers, Caucasus program director at the London-based think tank Chatham House, added that "an intentional but limited aims operation on the part of Azerbaijan aimed at recovering territories [and] consolidating [a] more advantageous new ceasefire, packaged as a military win."

For his part, President Erdogan confided that since the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group of mediators, led by Russia, France and the US, had failed to resolve the conflict for more than 30 years, Azerbaijan "had to take matters into its own hands, whether it likes it or not."

The hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan had been simmering for a long time and observers have been questioning why the flare-up took place at this particular time.

There are many analyses and speculations about the timing; one factor certainly was the erosion of President Aliyev's autocratic rule. Junior had inherited his petro-empire from his father, Heydar, in 2003, and was preparing to cede power to his increasingly powerful wife and vice president, Mehriban, at a time of social and political unrest in all the countries created from the ashes of the former Soviet Union, from Kazakhstan to Armenia, from Ukraine to Belarus. That development would certainly impact Azerbaijan socially, where journalists, leaders of the Lezki and Talish ethnic groups, have been rotting in jails, while a silent divide was brewing as a result of the Pashayev and Aliyev clans. (His wife hails from the Pashayev clan.)

All these developments have weakened Aliyev's rule and brought him to the conclusion that any gain in a war with Armenia would restore some vigor to his rule, while whipping up nationalistic fervor amongst his constituents.

The timing of the war may also have depended on President Erdogan rather than Aliyev, who no longer seems to be in the driver's seat in Azerbaijan. Erdogan himself has been locked in stalemates with Russia in Syria and Libya. Therefore, Erdogan needed a new bargaining chip to negotiate with President Vladimir Putin to alter the overall configuration of Russian-Turkish relations, particularly after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rebuked Erdogan.

President Erdogan has deployed his warships in Cypriot and Greek territorial waters this summer and challenged all the countries angered by his arrogant posturing. He was even at loggerheads with the leader of fellow NATO member, France, whose president, Emmanuel Macron, issued a harsh condemnation of his actions.

President Donald Trump was busy with his reelection campaign and could not help Erdogan, his favorite friend in the region. Therefore, Pompeo, worried at the prospect of a split in the NATO structure, visited Cyprus earlier in September. Very little came out of his contacts with the leadership of Eastern Mediterranean countries. But it sufficed for him to utter a few words publicly, that the US remains "deeply concerned" about Turkish activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, to have Erdogan to pick up and move and play the peacemaker, wooing the parties he was bullying to sit at a negotiating table.

Therefore, failing in the Eastern Mediterranean, Erdogan

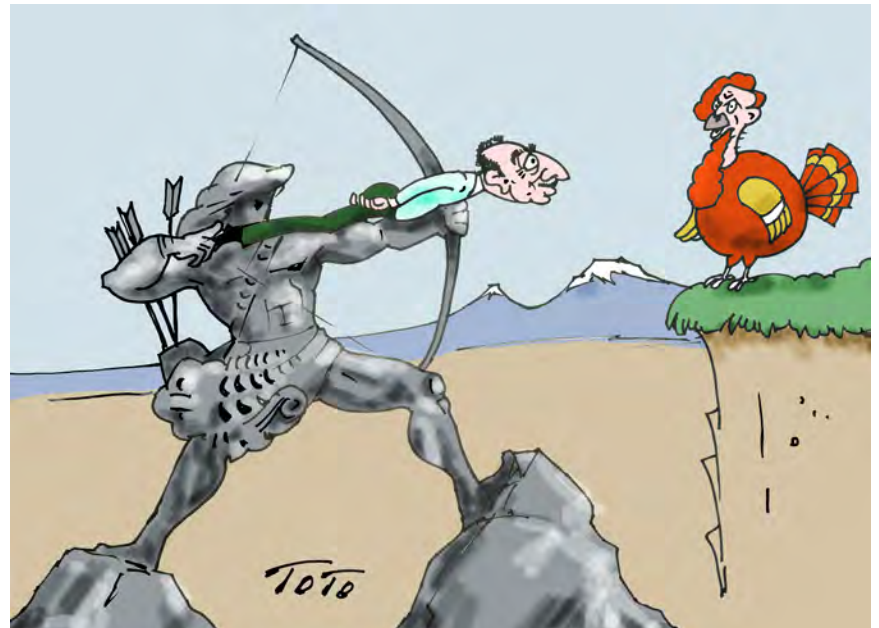
moved back to his backyard in the Caucasus for some mischief.

Although Mr. Pompeo reacted angrily when Mr. Erdogan tried to cause a split within the NATO family, his behavior may be completely different when Turkey decides to foment problems in Russia's soft underbelly, particularly at a time when the Kremlin is looking over its shoulder at the fate of Belarus, wondering whether it is going to go the way of Ukraine, to become a western bastion at its front door.

Turkey is in Azerbaijan to counterbalance the Russian military base in Armenia and next-door Iran. Both countries are America's adversaries. Any damage that Ankara can incur there will be considered a favor by the West. Therefore, by threatening Armenia, Ankara will be sending a message to Moscow. Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, has blamed Armenia for the war. AK Party Spokesman Omer Celik has added that "Armenia is playing with fire and endangering regional peace."

Many countries have issued generic statements by calling for restraints by the parties. In spite of the similarity of the statements, each country has its own policy and particular interests. For example, President Macron of France has expressed "deep concern." President Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, has advised avoiding "further undesirable escalation of the situation." The US has called for "immediate halt to the deadly hostilities." US State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus specifically warned against "external parties' participation." The reference may be about Turkey, but most probably refers to Russia.

Russia's current neutral stance regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan will by necessity come to an end and it will not particularly favor Armenia, but aim to guard its strategic assets in the region. Turkey has held on to a century-old malice against Armenia, first towards its own citizens and now its neighbor. But that is beside the point, since Ankara is planning



to send a message to Moscow by weakening Armenia, where a Russian military base is located. Therefore, the counter message would be helping Armenia in this war to crush Azerbaijan significantly, thereby shaking the soil under Erdogan's feet in Azerbaijan.

There is no doubt that Armenia and Azerbaijan, although they have their specific grievances, are pawns in the hands of greater powers. As far as Armenia is concerned, the 30-year standoff with Azerbaijan has proven one thing: a half-won victory is a recipe for renewed warfare down the road.

Only a definitive victory will convince Azerbaijan that it does not need Karabakh as a perpetual casus belli with Armenia.

Despite Azerbaijan's huge arsenal of modern weaponry, bought from Israel, Ukraine, Belarus and other countries, Armenia has the technological edge to score a decisive victory. But the equation may change when Turkey decides to become a major participant in the war.

On Tuesday, September 29, reports indicated that a Turkish military F-16 jet had shot down an Armenian air force SU-25 jet over the territory of the Republic of Armenia. This demonstrates Turkey's active participation in the war and puts into play the obligation for action of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Arayik Harutyunyan, president of Artsakh, stated that "our forces are fighting against Turkey." Mr. Erdogan and his supporters have all confirmed that they are supporting Azerbaijan 100 percent.

In view of this flagrant participation, the Armenian side has missed a superb opportunity to use the Genocide card. Armenia's leadership had the full coverage globally in mainstream news outlets.

*continued on next page*

# Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

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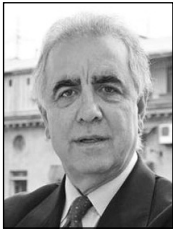
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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Armenians Should Unite Against Turkey's And Azerbaijan's Joint Attack on Artsakh

A massive attack was launched against Artsakh by Azerbaijan with the direct participation of Turkey and Islamic Jihadist mercenaries in the early hours of Sept. 27, 2020.

The Azeri/Turkish side not only attacked Armenian military forces, but also peaceful civilians in various villages and Stepanakert, the capital of the Republic of Artsakh. Ominously, Turkish F-16 Air Force jets operated in the war zone after several threatening remarks against Armenia by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

As we write this article on Monday (Sept. 28), the battles continue. We hope that France, Russia, and the United States will intervene and stop the bloodshed. So far 370 Azeri soldiers, including Lieutenant-Colonel Mehman Miraziz, have been killed. Mais Barkhudarov, an Azeri Major General was wounded and captured by the Armenian forces. In addition, 81 foreign Islamist Jihadist mercenaries have been killed. Eighty four Armenian soldiers were killed and more than 100, mostly civilians, wounded. Turkey, which transported a large number of these Islamist terrorists to Azerbaijan, has promised to pay them thousands of dollars a month. It is embarrassing that Azerbaijan and Turkey with their own huge militaries are too cowardly to use their own soldiers and are importing mercenaries from Northern Syria. Hopefully, these hired terrorists will suffer the same fate as the Afghan Mujahideen and Chechen mercenaries who were brought to Azerbaijan in the 1990's to fight against the Armenian forces. Many of them were killed in battle and the rest left Azerbaijan seeing the cowardly behavior of Azeri soldiers. In addition, Armenian forces have destroyed Azerbaijan's four helicopters,

36 tanks and armored vehicles and 27 drones, including those purchased from Israel and Turkey.

Russia and the United States issued statements calling for a ceasefire and return to the negotiating table. Significantly, the U.S. State Department announced that "participation in the escalating violence by external parties would be deeply unhelpful and only exacerbate regional tensions." This was an indirect call to Turkey not to meddle in the Artsakh conflict. However, the United States government should go beyond mere words and sanction both Turkey and Azerbaijan by not providing any weapons or foreign aid to either of them. In addition, we are seeing the same meaningless statement urging both sides to cease fire without condemning the party that started the attacks, which is always Azerbaijan. I am certain that the United States and Russia know full well who started the attacks.

I am sure most Armenians realize that at this critical time when the lives of the populations of Armenia and Artsakh are at risk, they should refrain from continuing their personal or partisan disputes. This is no time to engage in internal disagreements. The priority is to deter the common enemy. We should all rally around the government of Armenia. Similarly, Diaspora Armenians should set aside their petty disputes and join ranks. I know many Armenian-Americans have been engaged in supporting the different candidates in the upcoming U.S. presidential elections and Facebook is full of their heated comments. I urge everyone to take a break from these political disputes and rally around Armenia and Artsakh. We are facing much larger and more powerful enemies, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Only our united effort and smart tactics can protect us to avoid the reoccurrence of the Genocide.

Even though I am not a military expert, I have some common sense suggestions to Armenia's leaders. This is not a partisan issue. I had made the same suggestion to Armenia's previous and current governments, regrettably to no avail. I would like to remind our political leaders in Armenia that they should immediately declare that they will postpone all negotiations until such time that Azerbaijan and Turkey stop firing on Armenia and Artsakh. How can one carry out peaceful negotiations when the other side is holding a gun to your head? Armenia should declare to the world that we are for peaceful negotiations; however, it is not acceptable that Azerbaijan keeps firing while supposedly negotiating. What

kind of negotiation is that? One can either fight or talk, but not do both at the same time. If the negotiations are interrupted, Azerbaijan is the one that will be the loser because that is the only way that it hopes to arrive at mutual concessions. It is in Azerbaijan's interest to stop firing and start negotiating. The international community will only blame Azerbaijan for the interruption of the peaceful negotiations. By not placing such a reasonable condition on negotiations, Armenia is in fact is encouraging Azerbaijan to continue firing on Armenia and Artsakh, costing the lives of many young Armenian. No more negotiations unless Azerbaijan stops these continuous attacks.

The other suggestion I have is that we should never tell the enemy where we would or would not attack. After the spokesman of the Azeri Defense Forces threatened in July that Azerbaijan could attack the Armenian Nuclear power plant, I was dismayed to hear an Armenian official state publicly that Armenia would never attack civilian targets in Azerbaijan. There was no need to announce such an announcement. Let the enemy guess what you would or would not do in case of war. If Armenia thought that by making such an announcement it will gain praise from the international community, it is sadly mistaken. War is not the time to play Mr. Nice Guy. The world respects only strength. Rights and good behavior do not count. Let Azerbaijanis worry that Armenia could attack their dams, pipelines, oil fields and civilian populations. We do not need to announce whether we could attack such targets or not. Azerbaijan had no hesitation attacking Stepanakert this week, why should we announce that we have no interest in retaliating on similar Azeri targets?

Finally, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan just announced that the possibility of Armenia recognizing Artsakh's independence is "on the table and needs to be reviewed." This is a welcome announcement. Pashinyan already had announced in Stepanakert last year that "Artsakh is Armenia, period." The previous Armenian government had also declared that if Azerbaijan attacks Artsakh, Armenia would then recognize Artsakh's independence. It is high time that Armenia take such a decision which would be an appropriate response to the Azeri/Turkish attack on Artsakh.

I urge all Armenians around the world to united and defend the homeland in whatever way they can against its enemies, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

## The Face of the New War in Karabakh

from previous page

This column has referred a few times earlier to this issue. Hitler's statement, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians," could have been proven true had it not been for the Nuremberg Trials and the Jewish effort to render the issue into a universal pain which could be – and has been – used politically. Thanks to a concerted effort globally by the Jews, the world community has been sensitized to the issue.

Mr. Erdogan knows the impact of the issue much better than our current leadership in Armenia. He realizes full well that modern-day Turkey is very vulnerable when the Genocide issue is politicized. Therefore, he has taken the pre-emptive strike by personally setting up a special committee to deny the Genocide. One can only wonder when the enemy resorts to defense against this most potent political weapon and Armenia's leadership does not take the initiative to warn the world community that the unrepentant perpetrator of the Genocide is threatening to complete a crime it began in 1915.

When Turkey considers Armenia a hindrance for its plans to achieve a pan-Turanic empire, it means that the Armenian people have to be dislodged from their current habitat to allow the realization of that grand dream.

Currently, Armenians are fighting not only Azerbaijani soldiers and Turkish military forces, but also jihadists imported from Syria by Turkey. Ankara hired and used Islamic jihadists first to empower former ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, and after his assassination, it used them in Iraq against the Kurds and in Syria and Libya against the Russians and the local peoples. It was reported that 4,000 mercenaries have been sent to Azerbaijan to fight against Armenians.

The Azerbaijani leadership dismissed the news as "nonsense." But the *Guardian* and Reuters published their interviews with those hired guns.

It has become a method of modern warfare for Turkey to hire mercenaries and send them to different battlefields as cannon fodder, earning them a place in heaven and good money for their survivors. The practice has enjoyed such acceptance that even the US was tempted to use them by hiring the Kurds in Syria, pit them against ISIS and then abandon them.

Armenians live in a most dangerous neighborhood where major political empires cross or crash. They have survived all adversities; this is not their last battle. Armenia and Artsakh are mobilized and Armenians around the world are raising the alarm. The enemies are watching to measure the volume of support that the diaspora can supply and the political clout that it can generate to design their own strategic planning.

It does not only take courage and technology to win the war but also worldwide solidarity that Armenians must generate and manifest.

# Turkey Backs Azerbaijan Against Armenia as War Looms over Caucasus

By Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL (Al-Monitor) — As renewed fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh enters its second day, the question of why now is looming ever larger, amid fears of a full blown conflict in the Caucasus that could draw in Russia and Turkey.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on September 28 that Turkey already had a "direct presence on the ground" and that Turkish military experts were "fighting side by side" with Azerbaijani forces that were using Turkish weapons and aircraft.

Armenian officials have also accused Turkey of transporting thousands of Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan, as it has done to Libya. An aide to Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, rebutted the assertions as nonsense today.

But two Syrian rebel fighters quoted by Reuters said they were "deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with Ankara" and had been told by their brigade commanders that they would earn \$1,500 per month. Similar descriptions of the alleged recruitment effort circulated on Twitter and were reported by The Guardian as well.

Turkey has riposted with its own claims that Armenia is deploying Kurdish militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party and Syrian mercenaries of its own. Azerbaijan has, in turn, accused Russia of sending large numbers of weapons to Armenia, where it maintains a base near the Turkish border in Gyumri. While none of these allegations can be verified, the emerging consensus is that Azerbaijan most likely instigated the attacks after receiving assurances of military support from Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan renewed his support for Azerbaijan today, saying that Armenia must immediately end its occupation of Azerbaijani territories. He called Armenia, a country of 2.9 million versus Turkey's estimated 84 million, "the biggest threat to peace in the region."

The current conflagration, he said, offered an opportunity for Azerbaijan to seize back Nagorno-Karabakh. "Recent developments have provided an opportunity for all influential countries in the region to introduce realistic and fair solutions," he said. "We hope that this opportunity will be

utilized." More ominously, Erdogan noted that since the Minsk group of mediators led by Russia, France and the United States had failed to resolve the conflict for almost 30 years, Azerbaijan "had to take matters into its own hands whether it likes it or not."

Armenia has begun a general military mobilization and both countries have declared martial law. Azerbaijan has sealed its airspace to all flights except from Turkey. Dozens of people including civilians have been reported killed and hundreds wounded on both sides. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said, "We are on the brink of a full scale war in the South Caucasus." He blamed Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Russia, the United States and NATO have all called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as has Iran.

Turkey and Azerbaijan are bound by strong ethnic and historical ties, which saw Turkey send weapons and military advisers to Azerbaijan in the early 1990s when the war over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian-majority enclave inside Azerbaijan, was in full swing. Reflecting the public mood, the main political parties in the parliament, with the exception of the pro-Kurdish bloc, signed a joint declaration in defense of Azerbaijan today.

Turkey is the main export route for Azeri oil and natural gas. Azerbaijan's state oil company, SOCAR, is the biggest foreign investor in Turkey. Yet despite all the talk about being "one nation, two states," the reality is more complex. Azerbaijan, though ethnically Turkic, is mostly Shiite. "Turkey uses ethnicity and language while Iran uses religion to promote their agendas in Azerbaijan and then you have the Azerbaijani intelligentsia, who are all Russian speakers," said Cavid Aga, an Ankara-based analyst who monitors the conflict. "The truth is that most Turks know very little about Azerbaijan," he told Al-Monitor.

Culturally speaking, Anatolian Turks arguably have more in common with Christian Armenians who fled to Armenia from Turkey than they do with the Azeris in Azerbaijan. But such nuances get lost in the warmongering rhetoric spewing from Baku, Ankara and Yerevan alike.

The intensity and scale of the current round of fighting does suggest advance planning by Azerbaijan to upend the status quo, cemented since 1994, when it lost Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding territories, and that favors Armenia.





# Turkey Backs Azerbaijan Against Armenia as War Looms over Caucasus

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Laurence Broers, Caucasus program director at the London-based think tank Chatham House, noted via Twitter that the clashes could be “an intentional but limited aims operation [on the part of Azerbaijan] aimed at recovering territories [and] consolidating [a] more advantageous new ceasefire, packaged as a military win.”

Firdevs Robinson, a London-based specialist on Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia, concurred.

“In Azerbaijan, the loss of significant part of the country’s territory has been a festering wound for decades but the pressure from the public has been growing in recent years,” she told Al-Monitor. “With the Minsk group largely ineffective in recent years, and the United States distracted with its presidential race, and the Europeans battling the pandemic, the timing of this latest escalation makes perfect opportunistic sense,” she added. It remains to be seen just how far Azerbaijan will go and how far Turkey will back it.

Pressure on Aliyev intensified when clashes erupted along Azerbaijan’s international border with Armenia in July, killing at least 16 people. Thousands of people took to the streets of Baku demanding the government declare war and wrest back Nagorno-Karabakh along with other lost territory.

“The prevailing sentiment in Azerbaijan now is that ‘Turkey is behind us and told the [Azerbaijani] government: Do as you must,’ and that is the reason the government decided to act,” Aga, the Ankara-based analyst, contended. “Nagorno-Karabakh is an existential issue for Azerbaijanis across the political spectrum. They believe Turkey can help win it back and Erdogan is extremely popular in Azerbaijan.”

For Armenians and their brethren in the diaspora, Nagorno-Karabakh is every bit as existential if not more, as it’s closely bound up with the trauma of the genocidal slaughter of more than a million of the Ottoman Empire’s Armenian

subjects in 1915. Many wound up in Syria and now around 25,000 have sought refuge in Armenia since the start of the civil conflict there in 2011. Should the allegations of Turkish backed Sunni Syrian mercenaries being carried to Azerbaijan to fight the Armenians prove true, this would be a further cruel twist.

Against this background most Armenians see themselves as not just fighting Azerbaijan but

brief period of rapprochement saw emergence of Armenian Genocide discussion, which was long criminalized, and a flurry of bicultural activity promoted by Turkish philanthropist Osman Kavala.

But hopes of a lasting thaw faded when Erdogan scrapped Swiss-brokered protocols to normalize relations with Armenia soon after they were signed in 2009.

He reportedly succumbed to pressure from

ing in Libya, Syria and the eastern Mediterranean, where it’s been forced to back down in the face of Russian countermoves and threats of sanctions from the European Union. “Facing major economic challenges domestically, and forced to recoil from adventures in the Mediterranean, Erdogan is pinning hopes on some Azeri success for which he can take credit,” he told Al-Monitor.

Erdogan’s trashing of the Minsk process may well point to an even riskier gamble. A Western diplomat speaking not for attribution to Al-Monitor said that by fomenting instability in Russia’s hinterland, Turkey aims to create “greater symmetry in its relations with Moscow” to “create an Astana-like process for Karabakh” that will bolster its hand in its dealings with the Russians elsewhere. The diplomat was referring to the mechanism through which Turkey, Iran and Russia pursue their often clashing interests in Syria through mutual if begrudging accommodation. The prospect of freeing out France and the United States from mediation efforts should prove attractive to Moscow, or that anyway may be Ankara’s calculation.

Turkey may also be hoping to benefit economically by selling more military hardware to Azerbaijan and win better terms for its gas and oil imports. Nothing is that straightforward, however, warned Robinson, and Turkey could walk away empty handed. “Yet another short-sighted, half-baked military adventure, especially when it involves coming face-to-face with Russia, in its historical backyard, will be nothing like playing power games in Syria or Libya,” she said. “It might be useful to remember that President Aliyev is a pragmatic leader. His country has close ties with Russia and Azerbaijan buys arms from Israel. When forced to choose between the real regional power – Russia and the one with ambitions to become one – we can guess which direction he will take.”

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Turkey as well. “President Erdogan’s discourse, such as his tweets that Turkey and Azerbaijan are ‘one nation, two states’ and that ‘the Turkish nation with all its capabilities, today as always, stands with its Azerbaijani brothers’ only serve to reinforce that dominant perception,” said Khatchig Mouradian, a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University.

Turkey has no diplomatic ties with Armenia and its borders with its eastern neighbor remain sealed in solidarity with Azerbaijan. A

Azerbaijan. In doing so, he forfeited Turkey’s chance to broker peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan by removing landlocked Armenia’s incentive to make concessions in exchange for open borders with Turkey. Kavala has been in jail since November 2017 on trumped-up terrorism charges. Hate crimes against Turkey’s 60,000-strong Armenian minority are on the rise.

Like many experts, however, Mouradian believes that Erdogan’s hawkish rhetoric on Armenia is tied to Turkey’s aggressive postur-



## 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.

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