

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

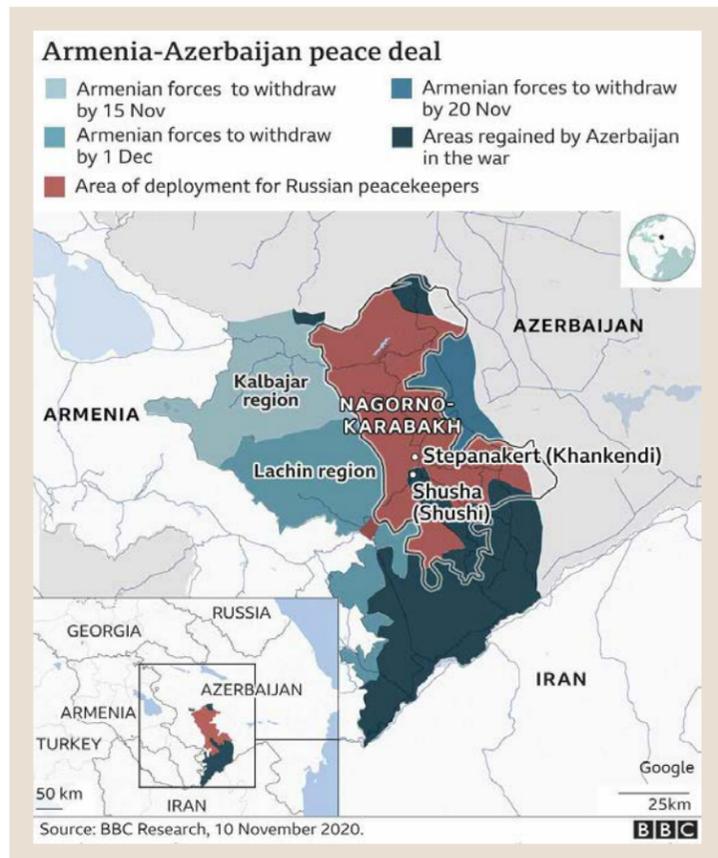
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## Armenia Surrenders to Azerbaijan After Devastating Fall of Shushi



YEREVAN (ARKA) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Vladimir Putin released a joint statement on the peace treaty the three leaders announced on November 9, which is available on the Armenian premier's official website.

Artsakh will lose Shushi, a devastating blow.

The three countries' leaders state the following: 1. We hereby declare that a complete ceasefire shall be established and all hostilities shall be stopped in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone as of 00:00 Moscow time on November 10, 2020.

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, shall remain at their current positions.

2. Aghdam region shall be returned to the Republic of Azerbaijan until November 20, 2020.

3. Peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation shall be deployed along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor, including 1,960 servicemen with firearms, 90 armored personnel carriers, 380 units of motor vehicles and special equipment.

4. The peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation are being deployed in parallel with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces. The peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation shall stay there for a period of 5 years, with automatic extension for the next 5-year periods, if none of the Parties declares of its intention to terminate the application

see CEASEFIRE, page 3

## Armenian Opposition Parties Plan to Hold a Rally After Demanding Pashinyan's Resignation

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – About two dozen opposition political parties are planning to hold a rally in Yerevan on November 11, one day after demanding that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan resign (After *Mirror-Spectator* press time).

The move comes after protests triggered by Pashinyan's announcement earlier on Tuesday that he had signed a Russian-brokered agreement with Azerbaijan to end the war over Nagorno-Karabakh to avoid even greater defeats and losses in the battlefield.

Unhappy with the situation, several thousand angry protesters gathered in the Armenian capital in the early hours of the morning, with mobs storming the government headquarters and parliament, ransacking offices and smashing windows in an outburst of anger.

Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan was injured in a mob attack and hospitalized; the incident drew a sharp rebuke from the government. He was taken to a hospital and underwent surgery. He is expected to make a full recovery. Two persons have been arrested in connection with the attack.

Still on November 9, 17 opposition parties issued a joint statement calling for Pashinyan's resignation amid a



Armenian police officers detain a man near the government building in Yerevan protesting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's signing an agreement to end fighting with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, November 10, 2020.

series of military defeats suffered by Armenia-backed ethnic Armenian forces fighting against Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Among the parties that signed the statement were also the largest parliamentary opposition party, Prosperous Armenia (BHK), led by tycoon Gagik Tsarukian, the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia of ex-President Serzh Sarkisian, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutjun), and the Hayrenik (Homeland) party led by former director of the National Security Service Artur Vanetsian, who was relieved of his duties in 2019 over differences with Pashinyan.

see OPPOSITION, page 2



## Pashinyan Admits His Mistakes On Karabakh issue

YEREVAN (ARKA) – In a video address to the citizens of the country, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Tuesday, November 10, admitted his mistakes on the Karabakh issue.

"If there were failures, it means that I was wrong somewhere, but it is necessary to understand when and in what circumstances, especially in the current situation," Pashinyan said. He said after assuming the post of prime minister and looking deeper into the status of negotiations on the Karabakh settlement, he had to tell the people that the Armenian side was to return five districts without specifying the status of Karabakh or there would be a war.

'Why didn't I say it then? Because I wanted to try to see PASHINYAN, page 3

## Armenia President Learned of Peace Deal through Media

YEREVAN – On Monday, November 9, after the release of the news by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of the ceasefire deal, President Armen Sarkissian released a statement in which he said that he had not known about the peace deal. He also urged the country to stay calm.

The statement appears in its entirety below:

I learned from the press that a statement on ending the Karabakh war was signed with the Presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan. I learned about the conditions for ending the war from the press as well.

Unfortunately, there had not been any consultation or discussion on this document with me as the President of the Republic. I had not taken part in any negotiations. see SARKISSIAN, page 3





## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Catholicos Urges Calm

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, addressed the nation on November 10.

In his address the Catholicos said “our behavior should never endanger the life of soldiers who continue their service courageously in the frontline.”

“There is a prayer in our hearts for our national wisdom and unity. With the understanding of the lessons of our centuries-old history and the necessity of protecting the national unity we are calling on to keep calmness and not to give in to unnecessary demonstrations of emotions which haunt us, to refrain from violence and disorders. The current crisis should get its solution by the joint efforts of the military-political forces of Armenia and Artsakh”, he said, adding that there should be solidarity and stability in order to be able to jointly find solutions.

“We are calling on the leaderships of Armenia and Artsakh to immediately present well-grounded and sufficient explanations to our people on the decisions made and their impact on our country’s future. We bow before the victorious spirit of our Homeland defenders,” Karekin II said in his address.

## Ter-Petrosyan Warns Against Civil Unrest

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – It is imperative to overcome the current crisis without incurring new losses and avoid the danger of civil war and overcome internal political contradictions exclusively through constitutional means, the first President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan stated.

“Apart from being a great gift to the Turkish-Azerbaijani alliance, the civil war will be destructive for Artsakh, Armenia and all Armenians. I hope that the parties concerned with the fate of the nation, social and political groups, power structures, authoritative representatives of the intelligentsia and the sense of responsibility of all parties to exert all their influence to avoid such a catastrophic prospect,” he said, according to Ilur.am .

## EU Disburses 35 Million Euros for COVID-19 Pandemic in Armenia

YEREVAN – On November 9, the European Union (EU) informed the Government of Armenia about the disbursement of 35.6 million euros in grants to support Armenia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU’s decision follows a positive assessment on progress in selected sector reform areas, macro-economic stability, public financial management and state budget transparency.

It is part of the 92 million euro EU assistance package for Armenia announced last April, which included restructured and new funds to support Armenia in its fight against the COVID-19 crisis, in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the Armenian people.

This direct financial contribution recognizes and supports the Government commendable efforts to preserve jobs and support SMEs, as well as to ensure basic health and social services for those most affected by COVID-19. This assistance announced today is complementary to other instruments of support with CSOs and European financial institutions to assist vulnerable households and businesses.

Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister, said: “As the world faces a multi-layered crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic, we highly appreciate the EU’s support to tackle the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic in Armenia. This timely allocation is the manifestation of our productive cooperation with the European Union and I’m sure that our joint efforts will result in increased COVID-19 crisis resilience of Armenia.”

Andrea Wiktorin, EU Head of Delegation, said: “This direct budget support disbursement is once again a very tangible demonstration of the EU and its citizens’ strong commitment to fight the COVID-19 pandemic in Armenia. The European Union and its Member States are contributing to strengthen the health systems and meet the urgent human and economic implications of COVID-19 in Armenia. We share the challenge and we can only succeed together.”



People gather in the Parliament chamber.

## Armenian Opposition Parties Plan to Hold Rally After Demanding Pashinyan’s Resignation

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Unrest in Yerevan started early on November 10 after the news that the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia signed an agreement putting an end to 44-day-long fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh as rioters perceived the deal as surrender.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has called on people not involved in riots to go home after angry protesters stormed government and parliament buildings in Yerevan early on November 10 following the news of a Russia-brokered deal with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh viewed by them as surrender.

“All those citizens who have nothing to do with the disturbances, please go home. All those citizens who believe me, believe us, please prepare for struggle,” Pashinyan wrote on Facebook, addressing his words to citizens who gathered near the buildings of the government and the National Assembly in Yerevan.

“Do not doubt for a second that we have done anything dishonest. We did not agree to any bargain. I have acted in a way so as to have answers to all questions and be justified in front of my homeland and the people,” Pashinyan said.

“At this difficult time, we must stand side by side against mice stealing seeds. You, who fish in muddy waters, we will still talk,” the premier added in an apparent reference to his political opponents.

The council of these parties issued another statement today, saying that it is inviting a rally in Yerevan on November 11.

“Unfortunately, the most shameful page in our history was written yesterday. An agreement was signed behind the backs of the soldiers defending their land and statehood with their own blood in the battlefield and behind the backs of all of us in the rear. It is crucial at this moment to preserve our collective unity and exclude internal riots and provocations,” the body said.

The parties said that at the rally expected to be held in Yerevan’s Liberty Square on Wednesday afternoon they will present to the public “a way out of the situation.”

The current martial law in Armenia declared at the start of the hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 27 bans public rallies and outlaws demands for the resignation of government officials.

It is not clear at this moment what the government’s reaction to the announcement of a rally will be.

Earlier today two parliamentary opposition parties – the BHK and Bright Armenia – also sought to convene a special session of parliament as protesters gathered outside the National Assembly demanding the annulment of the agreement with Azerbaijan.



BHK lawmaker Naira Zohrabyan said that she did not know what a solution should be, but she added: “First of all, naturally, the current martial law must be ended so that we can bring forth our political agendas.”



Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan was attacked by the mob.



## ARMENIA

# Armenia Surrenders to Azerbaijan

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of this provision 6 months before the expiration of the preceding period.

5. A peacekeeping center shall be deployed to monitor the ceasefire with a view to increasing the effectiveness of control over the implementation of the agreements reached by the Parties to the conflict.

6. The Republic of Armenia shall return the Kelbajar region to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020, and the Lachin region by December 1, 2020. The Lachin corridor (5 km wide), which will provide for communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia and at the same time will not affect the city of Shushi, shall remain under the control of the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation.

The Parties have agreed that a plan for the construction of a new route along the Lachin corridor shall be determined within the next three years, providing communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, with the subsequent redeployment of Russian peacekeeping troops to protect this route.

The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee traffic safety for citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions along the Lachin corridor.

7. Internally displaced persons and refugees shall return to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the control of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

8. An exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons and bodies of the dead is to be carried out.

9. All economic and transport links in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia guarantees the safety of transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic with a view to organizing the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions. Control over transport communication is exercised by the Border Guard Service bodies of the FSS of Russia.

The Parties agree that the construction of new transport communications linking the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic with the western regions of Azerbaijan shall be provided.

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told the television broadcaster RTVI in an interview, "This document has the status of a statement. We proceed from the assumption it must be complied with by all signatories. Their signatures are a hard fact," she said.

She warned against speculations about various scenarios of how this agreement may fail to be implemented.

"Let's talk about what is to be done to make it a reality. And a great deal is being done with an eye to that," Zakharova said, adding that the agreement was a result of consensus and all signatories agreed it was crucial to implement it.

The statement on Karabakh does not specify the status of this region, added the press secretary of the Russian president Dmitry Peskov.

"Yes, this document does not speak about the status of Karabakh, at the moment we continue to proceed from all the relevant basic acts of international law, first of all, the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and other documents," Peskov told reporters.



## Pashinyan Admits His Mistakes on Karabakh

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change the logic of the negotiations, which I failed to do. The reason is that the surrender of districts was the only specific topic in the negotiations that was not in doubt. [It was] the only topic that did not have discrepancies and, in fact, was an established reality," he said.

"Even if I said that the situation was like this, no one would say that it was good and that everyone was waiting for it. No one would say, let's quickly return the districts. Everyone would disagree and I would also say 'no' and the result would be the same.

"If the war had happened earlier, the results would have been worse for various objective and subjective reasons. It was possible to prevent the war, but then it was necessary to say that at least five districts should be surrendered without specifying the status of Karabakh. I didn't say it because I didn't want us to surrender that way. I believed that we could fight for our rights and the rights of the people of Artsakh and now I believe too. If I had said on September 1-2 that it was necessary to act this way or there would be a war, the people would not agree.

"When I made a statement about painful mutual concessions, it caused a harsh reaction. Armenian society would say that they would fight and defend the rights of people. The result would be a war. Why didn't I make a decision earlier? At the beginning, the war went on quite successfully for the Armenian side and, in fact, the condition for preventing the war did not change - the return of five districts without specifying the status of Karabakh.

"Why didn't I say it earlier? Because I believed that we could fight. I tried to do my best. If I had said it, the Armenian society would not agree to peace in exchange for five districts, and after the start of the war, it would have been not five, but already seven districts. Why was no decision made at one of the stages? We wanted to turn the tide. A painful decision was made when it was already obvious that we did not have the opportunity to turn the tide of the war. We were tasked with avoiding the worst.

"In retrospect, we can say that if a year ago we had agreed to return five districts, the situation would have been better than now, and this is true. But who would have believed in Armenia that this is the right path? There are very few people and I would not have believed it either. As a result, it would have turned out that we gave up without a fight and did not try to fight. My analysis shows that I was wrong, but can this be considered a mistake and does this lead to responsibility? I am fully responsible, personally, regardless of all the circumstances, but for me and everyone, these decisions were impossible. The fact is that our army in this war fought to the end and selflessly, our soldiers, officers, generals and many others.

"There are myths that this is due to foreign policy nuances. This problem also existed in 2016. In this context, it is not connected with foreign policy, but with the international perception of the situation around Karabakh. And the international perception is as follows: seven regions must be returned to Azerbaijan and, unfortunately, we could not resist such a perception when they perceive the Karabakh conflict as a territorial dispute.

"For the development of the army over the past 2.5 years, we have implemented numerous measures; perhaps in the context of this war, not all steps were effective. But in the past 2.5 years, the army has always been the focus of the authorities' attention. We couldn't invest as much as we wanted. I have repeatedly spoken about tax liability in this context. Yes, we were unable to generate enough funds from corruption cases, at least 1-1.5 billion drams, and direct them for military purposes, but the plan was and remains," according to Pashinyan.

"What is left to us in this situation? Concentrate on strengthening Armenia and Artsakh - economically, intellectually, in the field of education, fixing that we fell, but did not kneel, we stood to the end, to the last line and made a decision on it so as not to fall into the abyss. It was a painful decision, but it was necessary and inevitable, otherwise the situation would have been much worse. I am personally responsible for all this and continue to be responsible. I believe that this is a great tragedy for us, but I believe that Armenia and Artsakh must live. We must become stronger and perhaps, having slightly revised our perception on some issues, try to learn lessons. They must be constructive and serve our Motherland, people and future."

## Armenia President Learned of Peace Deal through Media

SARKISSIAN, from page 1

The settlement of the Karabakh conflict is a matter of national significance. Any step and action, any decision related to the vital security interests and rights of Armenia, Artsakh and the entire Armenian people, especially the signing of a document, should be the subject of comprehensive consultations and discussions.

I emphasize that the fate of Artsakh, and consequently, of the Armenian people, can be resolved only taking into account our national interests and only on the basis of a national consensus.

Taking into account the deep concerns of the large masses of the people conditioned by the current situation, I immediately initiate political consultations in order to coordinate the solutions, arising from the protection agenda of our national interests, as soon as possible.

As the President of the Republic, I consider the formation of national unity at this crucial moment of national preservation to be my current mission. I hope that within ten days we will all be able to form such a unity, in which case I will consider that I have used the opportunities to serve my homeland.

### Sarkissian Meets with Political Leaders

Sarkissian met with members of the executive body of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Vahram Baghdasaryan, Eduard Sharmazanov and head of the youth organization of the party Hayk Mamijanyan in the side-

lines of the consultations with political forces of Armenia.

The president's office reported that during the meeting, he discussed the declaration signed between the Presidents of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan on full cessation of fire and military operations in Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone and its provisions.

Sarkissian said that that national consensus is necessary for the solution of any issue of national importance, such as the settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The representatives of the RPA presented their views in the mentioned declaration, the future steps, existing risks, as well as expressed concerns over the situation in the country, presenting some proposals.

Sarkissian also met with ARF Bureau member Armen Rustamyan and member of ARF Supreme Council Artsvik Minasyan in the sidelines of the consultations with political forces of Armenia.

Considering the current leadership as the main responsible for the situation, the ARF representatives expressed their concerns over the existing risks and presented their vision on overcoming the situation.

It was emphasized that a national consensus is necessary for the settlement of Karabakh conflict, as an issue of national importance.

President Sarkissian emphasized the importance of stability, public solidarity and unity in the country.



## ARMENIA

## Artsakh President Calls Truce Necessary Step to Save Republic

YEREVAN (ARKA) — Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan on Tuesday, November 10 addressed the nation with a video message, in which he called the truce a necessary step to save the republic.

“It was probably the most difficult night in my life. The decision that was made the day before, I don’t know what assessment history will give to this decision, was forced,” Harutyunyan said.

Among the reasons, he pointed out that during 43 days of hostilities Artsakh lost several regions - Fizuli, Jabrayil, Kubatlu, Zangelan, Hadrut (mainly), part of Martuni, Askeran and, most importantly, Shushi.

“The fighting continued on the outskirts of Stepanakert at a distance of 2-3 km. If the fighting continued at a similar pace, then within days we would have lost all of Artsakh and would have had more casualties, since the fighting, having moved to the rear, would have irreversible consequences for the frontline, where our forces are heroically fighting for 43 days, especially our conscripts. If we lost Stepanakert, what would become of the soldiers on the front line in the Askeran and Martuni area? There would be a possibility of their encirclement,” Harutyunyan said.

He noted that Artsakh managed to defend itself against UAVs for several days, but the last two days, the enemy, due to new technologies or new devices, was again able to inflict serious damage on the Armenian troops, as a result, just the day before, the troops suffered heavy losses from the UAV in the Martuni region.

Harutyunyan noted that everyone who did not succeed in Artsakh would be responsible for the failure, because they knew that the Defense Army had a similar problem, everyone who held positions in recent decades.

“In general, the state of the army in the future must be assessed and I am sure that it will be. In addition, the moral and psychological state of the troops was not very good and, in a sense, it could be said extremely difficult. It was not possible to replace them on the front line, to give rest, to cure, every day they participated in hostilities, every day they were wounded and killed as shelling continued,” Harutyunyan said.

But at the same time, according to him, they were able to resist the Armed Forces of, one might say, eight states.

“Since we [fought - ed.] not only with Azerbaijan, the officers and equipment of Turkey, but also with mercenaries, terrorists from various countries. We were forced to save the lives of these conscripts,” Harutyunyan said.

Answering the question of why everyone was not informed about the situation in due time, he recalled that he had said from Aghdam that he needed the support of his compatriots, and on October 29 - from Shushi. On that day, he said that Shushi was under threat and the enemy was already 5 km away.

“We argued whether we had Shushi or not, but we lost the main control from November 5, and from November 7 completely. We didn’t want to believe that we were losing our Motherland completely, didn’t want to believe that it was already impossible to fight with the available human and technical resources. For a long time there were attempts tried to discuss and stop at the negotiating table, but it was impossible (although I did not participate in the negotiations), but the problems were big,” Harutyunyan said.

At the same time, he noted that everything is ahead, Artsakh, the Armenian people and Armenia have gone through very difficult days in history, but due to wise decisions in the future, they have managed to take the right path for achieving success in the future.

# Displaced But Never Broken

## The Continuing Fight for Peace of the Women of Artsakh

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

[Editor’s Note: This article was written several days before the fall of Shushi and the November 10, 2020 ceasefire.]

YEREVAN — Siranush Sargsian is from Sos village in Martuni, Artsakh. She has no news about the state of her home. She heard a lot about Azerbaijanis entering her friend’s homes, burning and destroying them. The village was shelled several times already. “The only thought, that they could enter my house, disgrace my father’s portrait, doesn’t abandon me,” Siranush is crying. She is crying during almost the entire interview. But through the tears, the signs of resilience never leave her eyes.

She remembers how her mother was rushing her and her siblings to safety during the first war in Artsakh, when her father was fighting in the frontline, and how her mother was looking at her home thinking that it would be the last time she would see it. It wasn’t.

Siranush and her family were back when the war was over. Her hopes are the same this time again.

Siranush is the Chief Specialist (adviser) of the Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports of the National Assembly of Republic of Artsakh. With her mother, two sisters and their children she moved to Armenia when it wasn’t safe anymore to stay in Artsakh. Her two



Siranush Sargsian

brothers-in-law are on the frontline defending their motherland. With many women from Artsakh. Siranush created the “Artsakh’s Voice Matters” movement. It organizes demonstrations, writes letters and meets with different international organizations and consuls and ambassadors to raise the voice of the people, the mothers and wives of Artsakh, to recognize their right to live in their motherland and to condemn the atrocities committed by Azerbaijani soldiers and Syrian mercenaries.

“We are not asking them to fight instead of us: we can take care of our enemy. We are asking them to understand that these terrorists that are now fighting with our fathers, brothers and sons,

tomorrow will go to stand at their doorsteps. We need to work together to end this. We want international society to understand that our movement is not political. We are women of Artsakh. We are mothers and sisters and daughters and telling what we witnessed,” explains Siranush.

Siranush’s father was wounded during the first war in Artsakh. He died after an illness caused by the war. She lost her uncle in the same war. Now her cousin fights his own fight, continuing his father’s legacy.

“I keep seeing the parallels; we’re constantly coming to the same circle. For me the war has one face and it’s horrible,” Siranush says. The apartment she was renting in Stepanakert was next to a military station. On September 27, when the war started, she left the apartment without anything. When two days later she went back to get her clothes, she saw cluster bombs only 100 meters distant.

“We never saw anything like that. It was a new type of a munition. They were evacuating the military hospital, where a lot of wounded soldiers were being treated. Now part of it is destroyed,” Siranush said, remembering her first impressions of the war.

Siranush’s generation witnessed three wars. They grew up in Artsakh under the threat of an unfinished battle that could resume every moment. That threat was taken into consideration every time when someone wanted to start a project, develop a business, or build a future. But there was no



fear. They were never afraid.

“We knew that the war will start one day, but subconsciously we were always hoping for peace. Even when the war started this time, we didn’t believe that it was for real,” says Siranush.

Artsakh is not recognized internationally as an independent republic. Even though this never affected directly the lives of its citizens, it played a major role when it came to collaborating with international societies and building relations with them. Siranush often had issues participating in educational programs abroad, often being rejected just because she was from Artsakh.

“However, we were just living our lives. We were looking at it only as obstacles. We created our reality and were trying to live in peace.” In that same reality, always remembering the horror of the last war, Siranush and others were trying not to make it the inheritance of the new generation.

“As a child I was always having a dream about war,” she declared. “In that dream, I was taking the wrong plane and instead of Artsakh, I ended up in Azerbaijan. I never wanted our children to be raised with that horror. In every family in Artsakh, there is at least one serviceman who fights for his fatherland. The child sees this already and there is no need for him to get more information. We don’t raise our children with hate speech. They see the patriotism every day.”

In Armenia, many displaced children from Artsakh participated in regular classes at the schools. But the rapidly raising numbers of the coronavirus pandemic forced schools to be closed. The Republic of Artsakh is now developing a system to create small classrooms for 24,000 students to continue their education in Armenia. Currently, according to the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Artsakh, there are 100,000 displaced citizens from Artsakh in Armenia. Many were sheltered in homes with other families in different cities. Some of them were placed in hotels. Siranush notices a lot of support coming from individuals through quick mobilization on social media. But this is not a short-term problem.

These families will need help even when the war is over. Siranush is hoping to get support from different organizations working in Armenia and abroad for everyday items, but mostly for education. “I was a student doing my homework under the shelling when I was a child. It’s very important that this new generation, who unfortunately witnesses war too, will have the possibility to have a proper education,” Siranush said, expressing her hopes.

Like almost everyone from Artsakh, Siranush wants to return to her homeland. Of course, there will be families who will stay in Armenia, but the majority will go back. Siranush herself goes back to Artsakh every three or four days. She wants to see, to feel every second of life there, even under the shelling. She is dreaming of buying an apartment in Stepanakert, to go to Shushi, be in the midst of nature with her friends, to have her coffee in the balcony at her workplace, to walk free in the streets of the city...

Eight hours after our interview, Siranush informed me that her brother-in-law fell in the battlefield.

## Defense Minister Says Time Had Come to Stop Bloodshed

YEREVAN (ARKA) — The Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia issued a joint address to the nation. In their statement available on Novosto-Armenia agency’s website, they say that on September 27, a war was unleashed against Artsakh, unprecedented in strength, means, number and type of weapons involved. It was also unprecedented in terms of the fact that our army actually fought not only against the 10-million armed forces of Azerbaijan, but also against Turkey’s direct military participation as well as its full and unconditional political, military and diplomatic support for Azerbaijan and against several thousand hired terrorists.

The Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia also said in their address that the army under these conditions did whatever they could and the impossible to confront the enemy. Each soldier, officer and general of the Armenian army did his

best to defend the Motherland, without hesitating even a second to devote himself to this struggle and creating many heroic stories. This war took away our best sons from us, the memory of which will forever remain in the hearts of all of us — about the real heroes of our time.

“Each of you should be sure that no one should have the slightest doubt that our army has done everything possible and impossible. We have once again proved that we have soldiers, officers and generals, indestructible in spirit, who are ready, without a moment’s hesitation, to sacrifice their lives for the protection of our holy Motherland,” the statement says.

“But the time has come to stop the bloodshed. The political leaders of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan have come to an agreement, the content of which you are already familiar with. The war is not completely over, the fighting in Artsakh is still going on. Nevertheless, we support and are obliged to implement the decisions

of the military-political leadership of our country, which were adopted on the basis of a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the situation. We must stop the bloodshed. We must find the bodies of all our heroes and bury them with military honors. We must try to ease the pain of our heroic mothers and heal the wounds of the victims. We must restore the potential of our army and further strengthen it, turning it into a modern and super-powerful fist. We have a lot to do. The war ends. The army has done its job and will continue without a trace.

“We urge you to refrain from actions that can undermine the foundations of statehood and, having learned from all possible mistakes, build an incomparably strong and efficient army, which our heroic people deserve,” the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia said in their joint national address.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Russian Peacekeepers Arrive in Artsakh

MOSCOW (*Moscow Times*) – Hundreds of Russian peacekeepers were heading to Nagorno-Karabakh on Tuesday, November 10, after Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a peace deal to end weeks of fierce fighting over the disputed region.

The Moscow-brokered agreement, which saw a ceasefire take effect at 21:00 GMT, came after a string of Azerbaijani victories in its fight to retake the ethnic Armenian enclave.

It sparked celebrations in Azerbaijan but fury in Armenia, where protesters took to the streets to denounce the country's leadership for losses in the territory, which broke from Azerbaijan's control during a war in the early 1990s.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the deal in the early hours of Tuesday.

Pashinyan described the agreement as “unspeakably painful for me and for our people,” while Aliyev said it amounted to a “capitulation” by



Russian soldiers leaving for Artsakh (Tass photo)

Armenia.

A Russian force of 1,960 military personnel and 90 armored personnel carriers will deploy to the region as peacekeepers, for a renewable five-year mission.

Aliyev said key ally Turkey would also be involved in peacekeeping efforts but there was no mention of it in the agree-

ment.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Ankara and Moscow would jointly supervise the ceasefire at a “joint center to be designated by Azerbaijan in its lands saved from Armenia's occupation.”

He hailed the truce as a “right step in the direction of a lasting solution.”

## International Reactions to Peace Treaty

MOSCOW (Combined Sources) – On Monday and Tuesday, leaders around the world reacted to the shock ceasefire agreement arrived at by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia.

The office of French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday it was studying the parameters of a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, but said any lasting agreement needed to take into consideration the interests of Armenia.

In a statement, the office also said Turkey should end its provocations in the region and refrain from doing anything that could compromise a future accord.

Macron on Tuesday called for a “lasting political solution” to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh after Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed a deal to end weeks of fierce fighting, AFP reports.

Macron also urged that Turkey, which backs Azerbaijan, to “end its provocations” in the conflict.

“France firmly calls on Turkey to put

an end to its provocations about Nagorno-Karabakh, to show restraint and to do nothing that compromises the possibility of a lasting agreement being negotiated between the parties and within the framework of the Minsk Group,” the French president said.

He added that a long-term deal should also “preserve Armenia's interests.”

Macron's office quoted him as saying that efforts should be made “without delay” to try to come up with a “lasting political solution to the conflict that allows for the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to remain in good conditions and the return of tens of thousands of people who have fled their homes.”

The French president said he will actively pursue his consultations with Russia and will meet “very soon” with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.

Macron said that France, which is home to a strong Armenian community, “stands by Armenia at this difficult

time.”

Along with Russia and the United States, France is a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group that has for nearly three decades spearheaded international efforts to broker a negotiated peace for Nagorno-Karabakh.

The European Union released a statement saying that it welcomes the cessation of hostilities in Nagorno Karabakh, European External Action Service spokesperson Peter Stano said in Brussels, TASS reports.

“We've been calling for this since the beginning of military actions. We are now analyzing the consequences of the war and the situation in the region, after which we will make a separate statement,” he said.

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili said “A new era starts in the Caucasus. I congratulate our friends Armenia and Azerbaijan for ending a tragic war and thank all the facilitators. My sympathy to the families of the victims. Peace and stability have no alternative! We launch together a new chapter of cooperation,” she said.

Georgian PM Giorgi Gakharia spoke with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Gakharia praised the establishment of ceasefire in Nagorno Karabakh.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani expressed satisfaction with the result.

“Being the neighbor of both the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic and considering our numerous historical similarities with the regional peoples, the Islamic Republic of Iran expresses satisfaction over the decision made by the leaders of the two countries mediated by Russia to end the military operations and start the process of diplomatic settlement,” the president of Iran said.

Rouhani added that he hoped that the two countries will be able to solve their disputes peacefully and in the sidelines of the international law.

“For that goal Iran presents a peaceful plan of establishing ceasefire and peace, as well as holds intensive talks with the conflicting sides and other interested countries and we will spare no efforts for de-escalating the tensions and establishing stable and fair security in that region for the sake of stability and peace,” Rouhani said.

(Tass, Armenpress, RFE/RL contributed to this report.)

## International News

### TRT Employee Fired After Outcry Over TV Caption

ISTANBUL (*Nor Marmara*) – On November 6, the TRT state-run TV station during the evening daily news program, gave rise to an outcry when during a live broadcast, the latest updates on the war in Artsakh were presented.

During the news broadcast, a highlighted sentence appeared on the screen reading in Turkish: “Azerbaijan Attacks Civilians.”

This headline, which remained on the screen after the news announcement, raised a huge outcry in the media and on social media. Due to the controversial sentence, the TRT leadership tried to fix the mistake, firing the person who wrote it. Turks and Azerbaijanis with social media accounts expressed their anger, describing the incident as a disgrace. It was also noted, on that topic, that TRT has made mistakes in the past as well.

### Swiss Intelligence: Turkey Key Transit Area, Safe Haven for Islamic State

BERN (*PanARMENIAN.Net*) – Turkey plays a key role as a transit area and safe haven for the Islamic State group, according to the 2020 edition of Switzerland's Security report from the country's Federal Intelligence Service.

Published in late October, the survey says the core organization of the Islamic State has considerable resources in terms of personnel and finances.

“It has been preparing for the prospect of defeat for a long time: cadres and financial resources have been moved to safe places. In Syria and Iraq it is now an underground organization which, though fragmented, has intact structures at the regional level. It has carried out thousands of attacks in Syria and Iraq since the fall of the caliphate,” the report reads.

“Despite the limitations referred to above, the core organization entertains extensive transnational networks. Turkey plays a key role in this context as a transit area and safe haven. This assessment is corroborated by the fact that adherents of the Islamic State have been captured or killed in areas close to the Turkish border on numerous occasions.”

In 2019, the Turkish Minister of the Interior publicly confirmed the increasing presence and heightened activity of jihadists in Turkey. In the same year, the Islamic State declared Turkey one of its provinces.

### International Committee Of Red Cross Ready to Facilitate POW Exchange

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), as a mediator, is ready to start the process of exchanging prisoners of war, hostages, other detained persons and bodies of the dead, the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides are aware of the readiness of the Committee, but when the process will start, depends on the agreements, Communications Program Manager at ICRC Armenia Office Zara Amatuni said on November 10.

“There is the readiness, the sides are aware of, but everything depends on the agreements to be reached on this matter. The sides also need to apply to us on this issue,” she said.

Amatuni assured that during this whole period the ICRC has been in touch with and held discussions with a two-sided status. Since September 27 the Committee has expressed its readiness every day.

“As we are a mediator, we are not involved in the political decisions. Of course, most of our decisions are in the hands of the sides. We, as a neutral humanitarian organization, are here to help the process to be carried out with humanitarian standards, to remind that it is a duty. Of course, the timetables of political decisions and others are agreed at the initiative of the sides, but with our participation as a mediator,” she said, assuring that they are in constant touch with the sides on different matters.

### Adidas Confirms It Has Severed Ties with Azerbaijan Soccer Club over Hate Speech

BERLIN (*CivilNet*) – Adidas confirmed on November 6 that it has put an end to its relationship with Azerbaijan's Qarabag FK football club following comments by communications officer Nurlan Ibrahimov calling for the extermination of Armenians.

“It is important to stress that these individual views are in no way shared by Adidas and that we've taken swift decision to end our relationship with the club,” said Tommaso Saranni, an Adidas spokesman.

The decision by the German sportswear maker were prompted by a social network post by Ibrahimov in which he justified the 1915 Armenian Genocide and urged Azerbaijanis to kill “all Armenians”: “We must kill all Armenians – children, women and the elderly. We need to kill them without making a distinction. No regrets. No compassion.”

The response by Adidas was triggered by a petition started on Change.com by Liza Yessaian, of New York.

“He echoed the same words as Talaat one-hundred years ago and, as a mother reading about killing children, I couldn't just post it on Facebook and comment and be upset,” said Yessaian. “I just didn't think he should get away with it.”

On November 4, UEFA also imposed a provisional ban on Ibrahimov, preventing him from serving in any capacity in football.

In a statement issued this morning, UEFA said: “Nurlan Ibrahimov, is provisionally banned from exercising any football-related activity with immediate effect until the UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body decides on the merits of the case.”

The Union of European Football Associations charged Ibrahimov with discriminatory conduct (Art. 14(1) of UEFA Disciplinary Regulations), and violating the basic rules of decent conduct – Art. 11(2)(b).

FIFA has not responded to requests for comments.



## INTERNATIONAL



Peace for Artsakh

# Orchestra For Peace Performs In Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – Walking up towards the Brandenburg Gate, you see on the ground a myriad of small red votive candles, lined up in rows to form a huge cross. Behind it, on a stage, an orchestra plays a piece by Komitas. It is November 6 in Berlin, and people have been gathering throughout the afternoon, to take part in an event dedicated to peace in Berg Karabakh. They have been visiting information stands to find out about the conflict, have seen works on exhibit by Berlin artist Mischa Badasyan and have listened to speakers from the political and cultural world address the issue.

Following the speeches, each person received a votive candle, proceeded to place it on the ground. First the bare outline of the cross came into being, then candle after candle was added, until the enormous cross-filled and dominated the broad space in front of the majestic Brandenburg Gate.

It was not an event by Armenians for Armenians, as Shushan Ghazaryan chairwoman of the German-Armenian Student Club HAIK explained, but an informative gathering, where people could learn about the conflict. The students were not organizing a demonstration or a protest action, but a cultural event dedicated to peace.

Serim Dagdelen, a member of the Bundestag (Parliament) from the Left Party, said they had gathered at the Brandenburg Gate “out of concern for the people in Berg Karabakh, out of concern for peace in the South Caucasus. We want an end to the bombings, an end to the expulsions, we want peace in Berg Karabakh.” Dagdelen said reports were arriving almost by the hour, of severe bombings by the Azerbaijan army; “again civilians are being killed and wounded, again homes are being burned; a human catastrophe is looming in the region,” she warned.

Referring back to the resolution passed in the Bundestag on June 2, 2016, which recognized the Armenian genocide, she said it had not been easy to organize the votes. But “now, four years later, when people in Berg Karabakh are being attacked by Azerbaijan, and by Islamist killers,” when Turkish drones and Erdogan’s advisors are involved, “the Bundestag must not remain silent. We have a responsibility and we must live up to it.”

Martin Kranz, a leading figure in cultural activities in Weimar, spoke of genocide happening now – “a genocide towards one nation.” This is something that can be neither accepted nor ignored: “we as part of German society, must raise our voices, and reject this.” He said he had come to “tell Armenians that we are definitely on your side.”

For Leo Ensel, a conflict researcher specialized in the post-Soviet space; it is above all a moral issue. “People who are alone and rely only on themselves, a country which receives almost no outside support and which has been traumatized by the genocide 105 years ago, must never be left on its own, isolated.” In addition to this moral obligation, one must consider the fact that Europe may be suffering under the illusion that this conflict is far away, and has nothing to do with it – far from the truth.

The event closed with concert performed by the “Orchestra for Peace,” directed by Alexandr Iradyan. Pianist, composer and conductor, Iradyan graduated from Yerevan State Conservatory, then continued his studies at Brussels Royal Conservatory, before coming to Berlin, where he received his Masters at the University of Arts. The concert featured classical works by Komitas, Marzoyan and Altunyan.

Featured performer was soprano Hrachuhi Bassénz, ensemble member of the Dresden Semperoper. Bassenz also delivered a moving address. “We don’t want anything from others,”



The cross of votive candles

she said, “and have never taken anything away from others. But a lot has been taken from us.” She pointed to the losses sustained by Armenians in history. “From a very extensive territory of Armenia, a very small piece is left,” she said, “What else do they want? As an old and very creative nation, we have always created something new and passed it along. Is humanity going to ignore this? We are the soldiers of peace,” she said, “We have the right to defend ourselves and we are doing it.”

# Community News

## Armenian Assembly, Congress Push for Artsakh Demining With HALO Trust

WASHINGTON – On November 3, 101 members of Congress sent a bipartisan letter to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in support of humanitarian demining efforts by the HALO Trust in Nagorno Karabakh. The Armenian Assembly of America, the largest, non-partisan Armenian American advocacy organization in the United States, along with partners at HALO Trust and supporting member offices, worked to increase awareness and generate support for this critical humanitarian effort.

“The Armenian Assembly is proud to support the work of The HALO Trust as it seeks to protect the people of Nagorno-Karabakh by removing these dangerous munitions,” said Mariam Khaloyan, Congressional Relations Director of the Armenian Assembly of America. “We greatly appreciate the bipartisan commitment from Members of Congress in supporting this humanitarian effort. The current crisis underscores the importance of The HALO Trust’s life-saving work.”

“It’s clear that more needs to be done to protect the people of Artsakh and bring lasting peace to the region,” said Congressman Jim Costa (D-CA). “Demining efforts save lives and this conflict has put thousands at stake. The peace process must resume. I’m hopeful Administrator Barsa will act quickly to fund demining and unexploded ordnance removal in Nagorno Karabakh to prevent avoidable casualties during and after the conflict.”

“As an international aid organization dedicated to removing the types of lethal explosive hazards now strewn throughout Nagorno-Karabakh, we at HALO hope to see strong US funding to respond to this humanitarian crisis unfolding in the south Caucasus. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Representatives Jim Costa, Devin Nunes, T.J. Cox, Gus Bilirakis, Brad Sherman, Bill Johnson, Judy Chu, John Katko, and the many other Members of Congress that signed onto this letter to urge US support,” said Chris Whately, HALO USA Executive Director.

A chilling side effect of the ongoing military assault by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh is the increasing quantity of unexploded ordnance, including cluster munitions, present throughout civilian areas. The HALO Trust is a long-time partner of USAID, and Members of Congress are seeking immediate funding to increase its capabilities and conduct emergency activities to protect civilians in the region.

“The ongoing conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is a humanitarian crisis that needs immediate international attention. In the same breath, it is crucial the US maintain funding for humanitarian demining in the region. We should not have to fight tooth and nail for peace and basic human rights. I am proud to join my bipartisan colleagues in highlighting this need to USAID,” stated Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA).

“Azerbaijan’s indiscriminate bombing of Nagorno-Karabakh has left cities, including Stepanakert, with high levels of explosive contamination, such as rockets, missiles, and cluster munitions. We need a trained and capable team on the ground working to remove the explosive ordnance which pose a danger to the families who remain, and those looking to return. It is important that the U.S. Government moves to support the emergency removal of explosive ordnance in Nagorno-Karabakh as soon as possible. Thank you to Representatives Jim Costa, Devin Nunes, TJ Cox, Gus Bilirakis, Bill Johnson, Judy Chu, and John Katko for joining in this important effort to provide stability to Nagorno-Karabakh,” said Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA).

“I’ve been to Nagorno-Karabakh and I’ve seen the amazing work HALO has done to remove mines and UXO to make this land safe to live on again. This work is only more important now as Azerbaijan continues to attack civilian areas in Nagorno Karabakh. The US must continue our support for this life-saving work to clear the lethal debris of Azerbaijan’s hostility,” said Rep. Judy Chu.



International Master and Woman Grandmaster Lilit Mkrтчian

## High School Student Organizes Fundraiser Chess Tournaments for Artsakh Aid

WASHINGTON – The existential war against Artsakh is galvanizing Armenians of all ages to come together and provide help in all kinds of ways. High school junior Arshak Avetisyan has come up with a unique approach. He

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

has put together a series of four online fundraiser chess tournaments under the auspices of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, DC. The first took place on October 31, and the remainder are planned for November 14, November 28 and December 14. The proceeds are going to be sent to Armenia Fund to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of aggression.

Arshak turned to chess as his tool to help, he said, because “chess has always been a big part of my life. I know that chess is a universal language. It unifies people. And this is a time when everybody should unify and contribute to help Artsakh.”

Arshak was born in the United States, but both his parents were born in Yerevan and came to America in the early 2000s. All his relatives still live in Armenia, including his grandfather. Arshak said that though his parents are not chess players, his grandfather is a very good one.

On one of the family visits to Armenia, Arshak said, “One summer my grandfather brought the chess board and said let’s play a game. We started from there. That whole summer we did that together. Afterwards, when I went to America, we would Skype and play. Playing chess over Skype were some of the favorite moments of my childhood.”

Arshak started when he was only five-years old, and then, he said, “I just started to find the beauty in it. At around 9 or 10 years old, I started asking for more chess lessons. My grandfather played a huge role in my playing chess.”

The first tournament, which took place on October 31, raised over \$3,000 through its entry fees. The majority of the 46 participants were from various parts of the United States, including Texas, Florida, New York and the Washington region, but there were also people from Germany, Catalonia, Spain, Russia and Armenia. Language was no barrier, for as Arshak said, “Even if you and I don’t speak the same language, we can communicate well about chess.”

He explained how it works: “It is simple. When people donate through Donate Box online, we send them a code for the tournament, which takes place on lichess.org. They then enter the code to the tournament, when the time comes and the tournament begins.” Lichess itself is a completely free website and the tournament will last 100 minutes. Each player will have 10 minutes on their clock per game.

There is no limit on the number of participants, Arshak continued, and lichess.org is convenient and well organized. He said, “It is organized as an arena. You don’t necessarily play against people who have the same score. After one game, win or lose, you play against another player.”

In other words, children might end up playing against other children, or against strong adult players. Arshak said, “It is a great way as a child to both experience a very strong opponent and one who has the same experience as the child. The identities are not shown, though some Armenians may recognize the user names of opponents.”

see CHESS, page 8

## Dr. Ohannes Kılıçdağı to Speak on Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul After the Last Patriarchal Election Crisis

FRESNO – Dr. Ohannes Kılıçdağı, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Fresno State, will give a Zoom presentation on “The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul Under the Light of the Last Crisis of the Patriarchal Election” Monday, November 16, at 7 p.m. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The Armenian Patriarchate and Patriarch of Istanbul have had an ambivalent status in the Turkish Republic. De jure, there are no such existing institution and office, as there is no legal codification that describes the rights and responsibilities of the Patriarchate as well as regulates the election method of the Patriarch; de facto, on the other hand, the Patriarch is still recognized as the representative of the whole Armenian community as he is invited to official meetings with state officials. This legal vacuum, deliberately created by the Turkish state, was used as a tool to control, and manipulate the Patriarchate and the whole Armenian community. This talk, after explaining this historical-legal background, examines the last crisis of the Patriarchal election between 2009 and 2020. It describes the emergence and development of the crisis step-by-step and situates it in the general framework of the official Turkish policy on minorities.

Kılıçdağı was the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Middle Eastern South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS) at the Columbia University for Spring 2020. He was accepted between 2017 and 2019 as a post-doctoral fellow by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University and completed a pre-doctoral fellowship (2011-2012) at the Armenians Studies Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Zoom Registration Link: [bit.ly/armenianstudieskildagis](https://bit.ly/armenianstudieskildagis)

## Jason Sohigian Joins Armenian Museum of America as Executive Director

WATERTOWN – After a lengthy search period, the Armenian Museum of America has recently hired Jason Sohigian as the organization’s executive director.

Jason has degrees from Clark University and Harvard University Extension School, and he is well-known locally, nationally, and internationally for his volunteerism and professional work. He has appeared on numerous panels and was featured as speaker at one of the prestigious TEDx events in Yerevan.

Jason served as the editor of the Armenian Weekly, and most recently as Deputy Director of the Armenia Tree Project. His work at ATP over the past 15 years focused on development, marketing, and environmental sustainability.

“As a leader in the non-profit sector, Jason has led many efforts here in the US as well as in Armenia to help organizations expand and promote their mission,” says Michele Kolligian, President of the Board of Directors. “Jason is a very passionate and proud Armenian with a strong interest in our heritage and rich history. Among other things, his knowledge will play a vital part in our efforts to present the Museum’s

see SOHIGIAN, page 10



Jason Sohigian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## High School Student Organizes Fundraiser Chess Tournaments for Artsakh Aid

CHESS, from page 7

The top five players in each tournament will receive certificates and souvenir prizes. In addition, Arshak was able to arrange for an extra special prize for tournament winners. The winner of the October 31 tournament will be able to play a couple of rapid chess games against Grandmaster Hrant Melkumyan, whereas the winner of the November 14 tournament will play against International Master and Woman Grandmaster Lilit Mkrtchian.

Arshak said that he messaged both of them with no expectations, but each really supported him and shared the news of the tournaments.

In addition to this, Arshak has been working hard to promote the tournament. He said that he contacted the chess federation in Armenia, and another chess community or forum of Armenian chess players. He went on Facebook and other social media to spread the news. He said that he has been getting everyone he knows to advertise on social

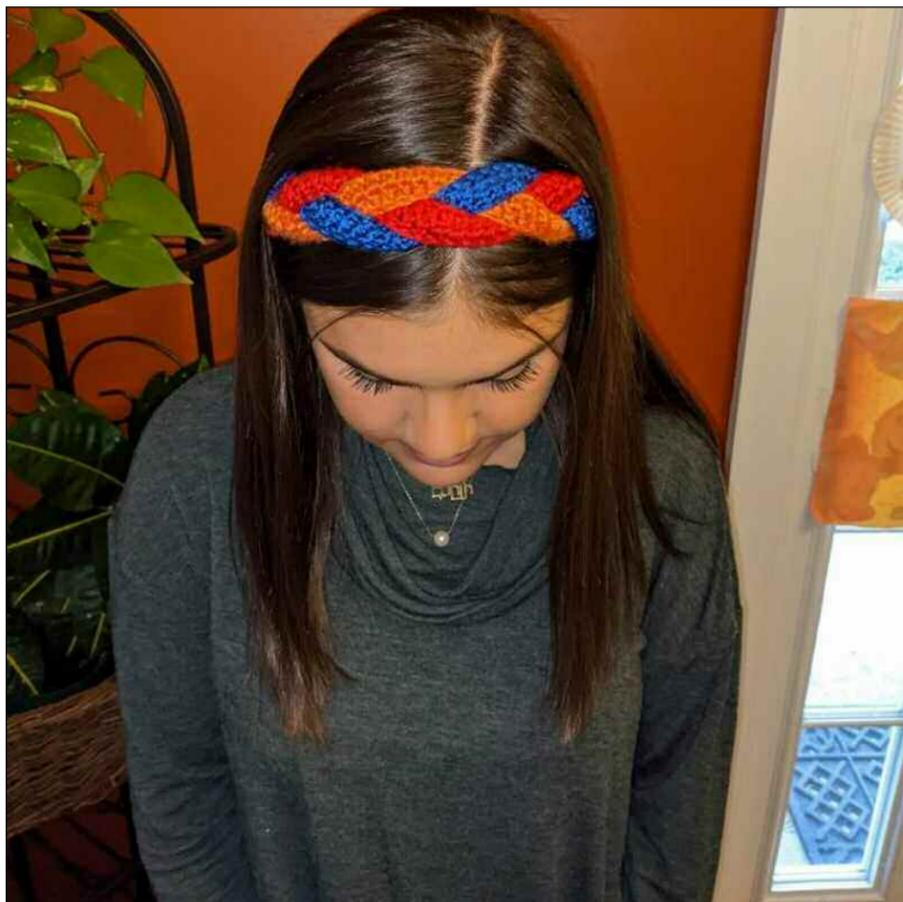
media, including his parents. He also has been contacting school chess communities and Armenian groups.

Arshak declared, "Special thanks to everybody who has supported me! I went into this with no expectations and got a lot of support from many people, and am very thankful for that." In particular, he mentioned Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, who gave him a platform and helped him in making the donor bucket, along with other organizational things. Zareh Asatryan, an economist based in Mannheim, Germany, helped in advertising the tournament and generally supported Arshak, as did active Armenian community leader Mihran Aroian of Austin, Texas.

The link for the November 14 tournament is <https://donorbox.org/chessforartsakh-2>. The deadline for registration is 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on that date, while the tournament itself begins at 11 a.m. For any questions, email the administrator at [chessforarmenia@gmail.com](mailto:chessforarmenia@gmail.com).



Arshak Avetisyan



Show your Armenian pride with tricolor headbands and ear warmers on Etsy; 100% of proceeds from these items are going to the Armenia Fund. A total of \$260 has been donated so far (with a match!) and another \$175 will be donated next week. Visit <https://www.etsy.com/shop/HyeKnots4>

## Belichick Shows Support for Armenians Fighting for Freedom

BOSTON (*Boston Globe*) – New England Patriots Coach Bill Belichick made it clear he stands with Armenians in the Nagorno-Karabakh war.

His longtime girlfriend, Linda Holliday, shared a video Sunday with a variety of clips in which Belichick expresses his opinions on the matter.

The message, originally posted by Patriots director of football/head coach administration Berj Najarian, displays Belichick speaking in a quick montage. Belichick – who proudly displayed a small Armenian flag pin at the White House in April 2015 – introduces himself and makes his stance clear right away.

"To Armenians around the world, I just want to give a quick message and let you know that I stand with you during these difficult times," Belichick said. "I have learned that throughout Armenian history, regardless

of any adversity or tragedy, the Armenian people have continued to thrive and persevere."

Then a graphic appeared on the bottom of the post: "For the past month, Armenian civilians in the Republic of Artsakh have been attacked brutally and relentlessly by missile and drone strikes by Azerbaijan."

"I hope and pray for peace, justice, and the safety of the brave soldiers that are fighting for their nation's recognition and freedom," Belichick said as the website [marchtojustice.org](http://marchtojustice.org) flashed across the screen.

Belichick asked those watching to aid his small effort to create justice and equality throughout the world.

"Please help the Republic of Artsakh gain recognition and prevent another Armenian genocide," Belichick said, imploring people to go to [armenianfund.org](http://armenianfund.org) to do their part.



Bill Belichick

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Lobbies in Washington Congratulate President-Elect Biden

WASHINGTON – The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly of America in separate statements last week congratulated Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their victory, welcoming the election of two leaders with records of support for Armenian American policy priorities, and clearly setting forth expectations for the next four years of Biden-Harris leadership:

The ANCA wrote:

– With regard to the current crisis, we expect President Joe Biden to honor his statements against Azerbaijan's attack on Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), including "to stop the advance of Azerbaijani troops into Nagorno-Karabakh," to "fully implement and not waive requirements under section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, to stop the flow of military equipment to Azerbaijan, and call on Turkey and Russia to stop fueling the conflict with the supply of weapons and, in the case of Turkey, mercenaries."

– In terms of broader Artsakh policy, we encourage his Administration to promptly recognize the independence of the Artsakh Republic, end all U.S. military aid to Baku, fully enforce Section 907, and implement the Royce-Engel peace proposals (deploy gun-fire locators, add observers, and withdraw snipers). We ask him to support the Artsakh Republic's full return to the OSCE peace process, remove obsolete restrictions on contacts between officials of the U.S. and Artsakh governments, and provide hundreds of millions of dollars in emergency humanitarian and development assistance to Artsakh.

– With regard to the Armenian Genocide, which Joe Biden long fought to recognize as a U.S. Senator, we look to him as President to officially condemn and annually commemorate the Armenian Genocide – ending all forms of U.S. complicity in Turkey's denials, pressing Turkey to openly acknowledge its guilt and reckon with its responsibilities, and working toward a just and truthful international resolution of this crime.

– We look forward to supporting the leadership of President Joe Biden in expanding the U.S.-Armenia Strategic Partnership, prioritizing trade and investment promotion initiatives, trade missions, and other programs to expand mutually-beneficial commercial relations – including through a U.S.-Armenia Double Tax Treaty, Social Security Totalization Agreement, and Free Trade Agreement.

– We are hopeful that President Joe Biden will be the first sitting President to visit Armenia and that his Administration will invite Armenia's Prime Minister and President to the White House on official state visits.

Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian, Armenian Assembly Co-Chairs, released the following statement on behalf of the Armenian Assembly of America:

"We congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their election victory and extend our best wishes to



President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

"The Armenian Assembly recognizes that this election was hard-fought and filled with deeply held convictions on both sides of the aisle. We join those calling for the United States to come together after the election in a positive spirit for the good of all Americans and the world. While the eyes of the world have been glued to this election, Armenian-Americans and our friends have been consumed by the attempted Genocide being waged by the Aliyev and Erdogan regimes with jihadist support against Armenia and Artsakh. We pray for peace."

"We hope this change in Administration will produce investigations of the surreptitious influence Turkey and Azerbaijan have exercised over the United States in recent years."

"As we stated in 2016 during the last presidential election, given 'Turkey's ties to ISIS' and its increasingly authoritarian regime as well as 'Azerbaijan's links with ISIS,' both countries posed a 'threat to stability in the region.' At the time, we also stated that 'in view of the insecurity in the region, it is vitally important that Christians and minority communities at risk be protected' and we urged 'the new Administration and new Congress to take steps to safeguard these vulnerable communities.'"

"We need only look at the unprecedented war launched on September 27th by Azerbaijan, with Turkey's backing, and the use of imported ISIS and related terrorists to know that the issues the Armenian Assembly raised then are all the more pressing and critical today."

"We are encouraged not only by the records of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, but also by the statements which they issued during their careers and reiterated in the campaign to effect Administration reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide, enforce Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, not turn a blind eye to Turkey and

Azerbaijan's destructive behavior, and build on the enduring partnership between the American and Armenian peoples."

"During the Trump Administration in 2019, both chambers of Congress passed Armenian Genocide resolutions which were historic. The

Administration also enabled the Erdogan regime in Turkey to harm U.S. security interests and human rights around the world, while giving the equally corrupt Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan more than \$100 million since 2018 in military assistance used against Christian Armenians, failing to enforce Section 907 banning aid to Azerbaijan, and allowing Aliyev and Erdogan to import jihadist mercenaries and help America's enemies without consequences."

"The United States must take decisive steps now before more innocent lives are lost. We urge the United States to exert full economic and diplomatic pressure on Azerbaijan and Turkey. We fully agree with President-elect Biden regarding Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. Section 907 must be fully enforced to stop military and security assistance from being handed to a corrupt dynastic dictator like Aliyev, who continues to use American taxpayer dollars to commit human rights atrocities. There is no excuse for the shelling of schools, churches, and hospitals, or for the use of white phosphorus in sensitive environmental ecosystems. Turkey also must be sanctioned for its active role in supporting the Azerbaijani military, including the recruitment, transport and deployment of jihadist mercenaries. U.S. policy towards Turkey requires a thorough re-evaluation."

## Armenian Caucus Members Re-Elected

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) welcomes the re-election of Members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues.

"The Armenian Assembly congratulates members of the Armenian Caucus on their election day victories," said Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "The leadership of Representatives Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Adam Schiff (D-CA), as well as the support of the Caucus membership, have been especially important given Azerbaijan's military offensive against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, with the active backing of Turkey, and confirmed reports of jihadist mercenaries being recruited and deployed to fight against Christian Armenians. The activism of the Caucus has been critical as manifested by its numerous congressional initiatives."

Founded in 1995 by Congressman Frank Pallone and then Congressman John Porter (R-IL), the Armenian Caucus is a bipartisan group of legislators dedicated to strengthening U.S.-Armenia relations and raising awareness about key issues.

"We welcome all newly-elected Representatives to learn more about the issues facing Armenian Americans and invite them to join the Armenian Caucus when the 117th Congress convenes in 2021," continued Ardouny.

"We also express our gratitude to those Members who will be leaving Congress, in particular House Appropriations Chair Nita Lowey (D-NY), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Eliot Engel (D-NY), Armenian Caucus Vice-Chair Peter King (R-NY), and longtime friends and Caucus Members Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Peter Visclosky (D-IN) and Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)."

"There is much work ahead, and the U.S. must take decisive action, including the enforcement of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and sanctions against Turkey. The Assembly looks forward to working with Congress and the Caucus to address these critical issues," Ardouny concluded.

The Assembly notes with pride that Armenian Americans Representatives Jackie Speier and Anna Eshoo (D-CA) won re-election, and also applauds the election victories of Armenian Americans who ran for office at the state level, including: State Senator Dick Harpootlian (D-SC-20) (Harpootlian serves as the Assembly's volunteer State Chair in South Carolina), State Rep. Katherine Kazarian (D-RI-63), State Rep. Mari Manoogian (D-MI-40), State Rep. Mary Lou Marzian (D-KY-34), State Rep. David Muradian, Jr. (R-MA-9), and State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (D-CA-46).

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

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Having Completed One Year of College by June, 2021

Applications and other information may be obtained from

**ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
Scholarship Committee**

**333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888  
Tel. 401 461-6114 • Fax 401 461-6112**

e-mail: [headasa@aol.com](mailto:headasa@aol.com)

**Deadline for returning completed Applications:  
March 15, 2021**

## Garmin Takes Action against Use of Its Products in Bayraktar Drones

OLATHE, Kansas – Armenian protests at the headquarters of Garmin International at Olathe, Kansas, on November 6 against the use of Garmin GPS technology in Bayraktar drones used in the Karabakh war by Azerbaijan and Turkey against Armenians appears to have been a factor leading to the company instructing its dealers to cease selling Garmin products to Baykar and other related companies.

The protestors included individuals flying in from Los Angeles as well as members of the Kansas Armenian community. The Armenian demands were sent in a letter to the company prior to the protest, which took place as the letter did not alone lead to a resolution of the issue. On November 4, Garmin promised to investigate how its technology found its way into the Turkish drones and declared it would take appropriate action afterwards.

Garmin issued the following statement on November 9 on its corporate website. "It has been brought to Garmin's attention that one of our

products has been incorporated into Bayraktar UAVs deployed in the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The Garmin product used in these drones is a commercial, non-military product that is widely and legally available for purchase on the open market. It is not designed or intended for military use, and it is not even designed or intended for use in drones. We have investigated how our products ended up in these drones, and we can confirm that we do not sell any products directly to Baykar. Further, we are contacting our independent dealers to instruct them to cease selling Garmin products to Baykar and to any other persons or companies they have reason to suspect are engaged in nefarious activities. We want to thank all those who brought this to our attention."

Both the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America had urged action to stop this form of technological military assistance to Azerbaijan, as had many individual Armenians.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Law Firm Greenberg Traurig Drops Turkey

By Theodoric Meyer

MIAMI (Politico) – The law and lobbying firm Greenberg Traurig has cut ties with the Turkish government under pressure from Armenian-American activists furious over Turkey's support for Azerbaijan in its ongoing hostilities with Armenia. The firm sent an internal email this week announcing that it had terminated its relationship with Turkey on October 29, according to a person who saw the email. The firm declined to comment. The Turkish embassy in Washington didn't respond to a request for comment.

Greenberg Traurig's decision to drop Turkey comes after Mercury Public Affairs scrapped its \$1 million contract with the Turkish government following a pressure campaign waged by the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America. Armenian-American activists want to deprive

Turkey and Azerbaijan of support in Washington as Armenia and Azerbaijan battle over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Greenberg Traurig has lobbied for the Turkish government in Washington for years and renewed its contract – worth more than \$1.5 million a year – in January, according to a copy filed with the Justice Department. Former Representatives Randy Forbes (R-Va.) and Al Wynn (D-Md.) were among the Greenberg Traurig lobbyists who represented the country, according to disclosure filings.

Aram Hamparian, the Armenian National Committee's executive director, told POLITICO after Mercury dropped Turkey that he planned to pressure another lobbying firm, BGR Group, to stop representing Azerbaijan. But BGR said in a statement at the time that it "intends to continue its representation of Azerbaijan." Instead, Azerbaijan has gotten more help in Washington. A limited-liability company based in Baku, Azerbaijan, Investment Corporation, hired two more firms, Portland PR and the S-3

## Jason Sohigian Joins Armenian Museum

SOHIGIAN, from page 7

incredible coin collection donated to us by the late Paul and Vickie Bedoukian, and their son, Dr. Robert and his wife Gail."

In 2015, Jason co-founded the Armenian Numismatic and Antiquities Society, which has held several "antiques roadshow" type events, published a journal/newsletter, and developed a website and social media presence for collectors, historians, and enthusiasts.

"To say these are unprecedented times has become a real understatement these days, especially for our community. On top of a global pandemic, we are following an ongoing war in Artsakh every day," notes Sohigian. "Nevertheless, the Museum has been updating its exhibitions and expanding its virtual offerings. As a living museum, we are more

than just a collection of artifacts. Our goal is to increase our membership and continue to curate exhibitions and programs as we celebrate our 50th anniversary in the coming year. We will offer something for everyone."

Jason lives in Watertown with his wife Vicki and their two children.

"We are thrilled to welcome Jason to the Armenian Museum and wish him all the best in his position as Executive Director," adds Kolligian. "Our goal is to raise the profile of the Museum through exhibitions, public programming, and expanding partnerships. We hope to see more visitors to the Museum in the near future when the pandemic subsides and it safe to resume normal operations. In the meantime, we wish everyone good health and well-being, and wish the same for our Armenian brothers and sisters in Artsakh."

## Together for Artsakh

*This is a message for those who wonder how they could contribute today to counter the genocidal threat against the people of Artsakh.*

The ongoing aggression against Artsakh is a continuation of the 1915 Armenian Genocide by Turkey. The tripartite alliance of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Islamist terrorism continues attacking peaceful communities across Artsakh. The aggressors use their entire military might, including internationally banned cluster munition and chemical weapons.

The international recognition of independence of the Republic of Artsakh is the most practical way to end war crimes against Artsakh and to solve the Karabakh conflict. Artsakh's independence stands on a strong legal and historical platform; not only is it underwritten by the last 30 years of Artsakh's factual sovereignty, it also rests on the historical record of fifteen centuries of Artsakh's uninterrupted institutional self-governance, starting in the fifth century AD.

**The Americans for Artsakh, Inc. (AFA)** is a US-registered non-profit organization, working to bring together American supporters of Artsakh's recognition, and channeling the energy and expertise of Armenian American professionals into concrete ways to support the people of Artsakh in their democratic aspirations.

In consultations with the Government of the Republic of Artsakh, AFA is currently building a team of professionals willing to join hands in this battle. Please contact us if you would like to contribute your expertise and make a firm time commitment to this effort. Outnumbered and outgunned, Artsakh continues to defend its freedom on the battlefield. With the goal of leveraging Artsakh, we need professional supporters who have skills and contacts in the following areas:

- Human rights, especially in remedial self-determination and secession
- Democratic governance
- Former Soviet Union regional experts
- Journalism

We also need the following technical experts:

- Copywriter
- Editor
- WordPress Content Manager
- Video & Audio Producer and Editor
- Infographics Illustrator
- Graphic Designer
- Programmer: PHP, WordPress, Security
- Search Engine Optimization specialist
- Social media specialist
- Office Manager

At this point, we have to rely only on the help of accomplished professionals or companies who can quickly deliver high-quality products.

**We look forward to receiving your offers. Let's stay strong for Artsakh!**

For more information, please contact us at: [Americans4Artsakh@gmail.com](mailto:Americans4Artsakh@gmail.com)

Subject: Stay Strong with Artsakh!

In your message, please indicate the time you can dedicate to this project, and kindly include a link to your portfolio, CV, or website.

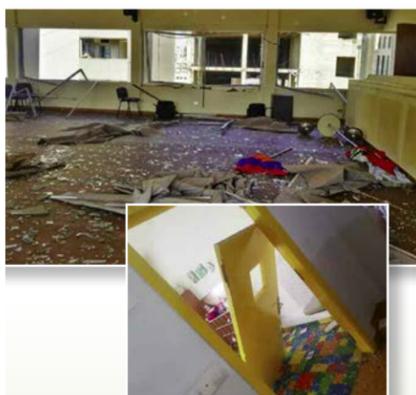


LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



# HELP US Rebuild

## The Tekeyan School of Beirut



The Vahan Tekeyan School, founded in 1951, was damaged by the August 4 explosion in Beirut. It primarily serves a low-income segment of the Armenian community and already was struggling due to Lebanon's economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. Now it is trying to reopen for the fall semester.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada is sending aid and asks your assistance too. Make your donations by credit card at <https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm> or as checks mailed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), at its headquarters (755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472). All administrative costs for this campaign will be borne by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada.

For more information, email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com) or call 617 924-4455.

# Arts & Living

## Artsakh: The Cry From the Mountains On November 19

NEEDHAM, Mass. – Arlekin Players Theatre, co-producer Sara Stackhouse of BroadBand Collaborative, and presenting partner Cherry Orchard Festival in NY, will present an evening dedicated to Armenia, featuring Hayk Demoyan, director of the Aurora Prize and former director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute. The evening will include additional performances and remarks from Arthur Ghukasyan of High Fest International Performing Arts Festival, Vahan Badalyan of the National Centre of Aesthetics and Art Director of Small Theatre in Yerevan, cellist Karen Ouzounian, artist Kevork Mourad and members of the Arlekin Players Theater Company. The event will take place on Thursday, November 19, at 7:30 p.m. on ZOOM.

Tickets are free with reservations. Donations encouraged to benefit Hayastan All Armenian Fund. For more information or to reserve a Zoom spot, visit [arlekinplayers.com](http://arlekinplayers.com) or call (617) 942-0022.

"We are humbled to host this incredible group of Armenian artists and thinkers to share their stories and perspectives with us. We are coming together to raise awareness and raise critical funds to support efforts for peace in Armenia," says Golyak. "The world needs to step in. This cannot and should not happen in the modern times. Let's please stop the war."

Arlekin Players Theatre was created in Boston in 2009 and has since toured to New York, Chicago, and Hartford, as well as to international festivals in Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Monaco. Its current international virtual tour of State vs Natasha Banina continues to receive World-wide acclaim, including the New

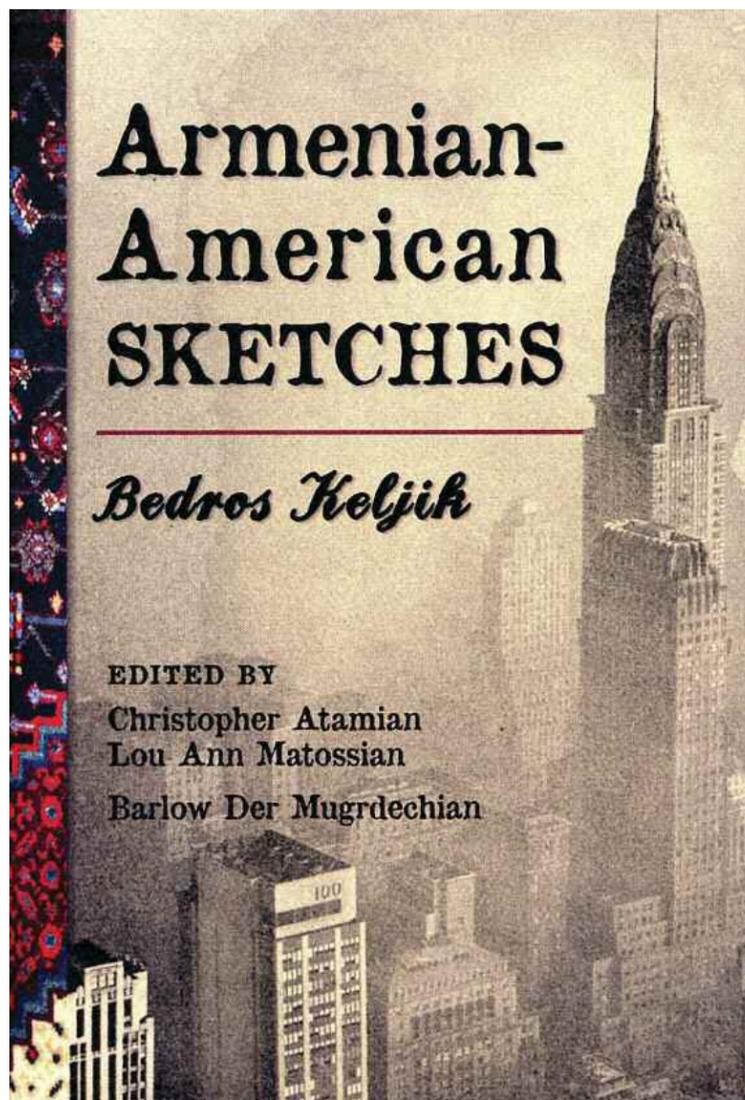


Arthur Ghukasyan

York Times Critics' Pick, and has performed for audiences in 40 US States and in 16 countries. Arlekin has received multiple awards for its work including four 2020 Elliot Norton Awards from the Boston Theater Critics Association for its recent productions of *The Stone* and *The Seagull*. Arlekin takes strong pride in their emphasis on self-identity; they are a company of immigrants performing works that play on the ideas of cross-culture, home, and traditions, challenging the idea of nationality, and finding common themes that unite us all. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. For more information, visit [www.arlekinplayers.com](http://www.arlekinplayers.com).

Igor Golyak (Arlekin Founding Artistic Director) received the 2020 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director for Arlekin's "The Stone" and was also nominated in the same year for his direction of Arlekin's "The Seagull." He is an associate professor at the Boston Conservatory, and has spent over a decade teaching the art of theatre. He is the founder of the Igor Golyak Acting Studio and Artistic Director of Arlekin Players Theatre which has won numerous awards in the United States and internationally. Arlekin Players Theatre is a multicultural, multi-national collaborative that is growing year to year in the number of audience members, company actors, and

see ARTSAKH, page 15



## Bedros Keljik's *Armenian-American Sketches*

### REVIEW

The publication of this English translation of *Armenian-American Sketches* by Bedros Keljik is a landmark in the literary life of our community. When the Armenian-American community transitioned to being predominantly English-speaking in the 1950s and thereafter, our literary life also went through a transition. We have been fortunate in developing an English-language Armenian-American literature, starting with the works of William Saroyan – such as *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1934) and *My Name Is Aram* (1940) – as well as Leon Surmelian's brilliant memoir (recently back in print), *I Ask You, Ladies and Gentlemen* (1945). These were followed by the

establishment of the sadly now-defunct literary quarterly *Ararat*, published by the AGBU for some 50 years, and the appearance of well-known names like Diana Der-Hovanessian and Peter Balakian.

Unfortunately, the Armenian-language literary scene which existed in the US in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, in periodicals such as *Baïkar's* special annual issues, *Hayrenik Monthly*, and *Nor Kir* (an independent quarterly), did not survive the transition. And while many people have worked hard for many years so that we would have at our disposal English translations of famous Armenian authors like Naregatsi, Raffi, Siamanto, and Krikor Zohrab, very few translations have been made of the early Armenian-American immigrant authors who wrote in Armenian. This has created a rather strange situation. The second and third generation Armenian-Americans, most of whom only speak English, have access to the Armenian poets of old Constantinople but not to the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of the immigrant writers who were the contemporaries of their own grandparents. On the other hand, some of these writers did gain enough renown in the Armenian community to be taught in Diaspora Armenian schools. The outcome is that someone who grew up attending Armenian schools in 1960s Beirut is more likely to be familiar with the works of Hamasdegh, who immigrated to Boston in 1913 and published stories about his childhood in Kharpert, than are the very grandchildren of the Kharperts who immigrated to America at the time that Hamasdegh did – regardless of how involved they are in the community and how many translations of authors like Toumanian, Isahakian, or Tekeyan they have on their shelves.

### Keljik the Man

The present volume is a wonderful first step in remedying this lack. Author Bedros Keljik led a remarkable life. Born in Kharpert in 1874, he attended the famous Getronagan School of Kharpert, founded by its principal and teacher of Armenian language and literature, Hovhannes Haroutunian, who, under the pen-name Tlgadintsi, became the founder of the Western Armenian school of provincial literature.

see SKETCHES, page 14

### A Critical Exclusive

## Raffi Joe Wartanian's *Letters for Peace*.

Young Azeris and Armenians Bridge the Hate Gap

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this series of letters that journalist and human rights advocate Raffi Joe Wartanian has recently put out in Yerevan on Zangak Publishing House. Some 60 letters in all or 30 pairs of letters between young Azerbaijanis and Armenians, they restore one's hope that when this terrible war now being waged is over – and it will eventually be over – young people will have the resolve, the intelligence and most of all the love to live together as neighbors and friends. The letters here are touching, some erudite, others simple, always from the heart. More importantly they show how similar young Armenians and Azerbaijanis truly are. They argue convincingly for the fact that the war which Azerbaijan has started in the middle of a COVID-19 pandemic is the result of the political machinations of a dictator and that if it were up to the young people in Azerbaijan, we would all be living in more peaceful times – and here I do not speak of the demonstrators whipped up into a nationalist frenzy by Aliyev and his minions. The project was co-sponsored by a group of foundations, including in Armenia: "Peacebuilding through Capacity Enhancement and Civic Engagement" and "Eurasia Partnership Foundation," and the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Azerbaijani supporters must be kept hidden for now, out of concern for their safety. Here is a sampling of an exchange between a young Armenian girl in Lori and her counterpart in Baku:

"Hi Dear Friend:

You know someday we may both drown in unspoken roads, restrained tears and misunderstood hatred. But no, I don't hate you because we share the same fate...it is only the weak who hate...those who don't find the strength to love others. I live in Lori...in Agarak village, Stepanavan. You know people in Lori are considered naïve because of their extreme sincerity and kindness. In our dialect it's called "Shash"...I'm tired of crying, let us both think out of the box and borders for solutions. You know the saying: "He who seeks shall find." Let's be Baba and Haj.

-With Love, Your Lilit."

"Hi Lilit:

Thank you for your amazing letter. I am also 20 years old and moved to the capital for studying. It seems I got a letter from someone with a similar lifestyle. I am a tour guide. Baku is amazing! The Old City, Shirvandakh Palace, Maiden Tower etc...I checked your motherland in Google. It is great that you feel proud of your homeland! I moved from a small city called Goychay... famous for its pomegranates...Trust me nobody wants war. Nobody wants to see dead bodies...I think everybody knows that we are just tools in war. There was a war in Donbass and we had a war in April too...Maybe you have heard of Aland Islands in Finland. They had a similar problem (as ours) in 1917...they could solve it and today Aland

see LETTERS, page 13



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Armenian-Egyptian Archeologist and Architect

## Nairy Hampikian Has Stories to Tell

By **Maydaa Nadar**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

CAIRO – Without a doubt, the Armenians who came to Egypt enriched Egyptian heritage and culture. Parallel to their achievements and appreciated works, many of them, their sons, and their grandsons, are still present in the minds of Egyptians.

Let us recall that the first prime minister of Egypt was the Armenian-Egyptian Nubar Pasha. Regarding arts, not only the Egyptian but the Arab public as well have been enjoying the works of Armenian-Egyptian actresses and singers Ninochka Manoug Kupelian (known in Egypt by her stage name Lebleba), Nelly Artin Kalfayan (known by her mononym Nelly), Perouz Artin Kalfayan (known by Feyrouz), and Wartanoush Garbis Selim (known as Anoushka).

In addition to politics and arts, other fields of achievement for the Armenians in Egypt include archeology and architecture. A vivid example is the Armenian-Egyptian archeologist and architect Nairy Hampikian.

In 1895, after the first wave of the Hamidian massacres, Nairy's grandparents arrived in Egypt from Constantinople. When the formation of an Armenian community started in the country, her grandparents worked as teachers at the Armenian schools. She grew up in a suburb in Heliopolis (a neighborhood today in the Egyptian capital of Cairo). Egyptians describe this area as a multiethnic district. In order to preserve her Armenian identity, including the language, her parents raised her in an isolated bubble. We interviewed Nairy to delve into her interesting life path.

**What was your childhood like?**

I was raised surrounded by Egypt-born Armenians, and studied at the Nubarian



Primary Armenian School, which set the base of my identity and educational formation. Moreover, the quarter in which I grew up, Heliopolis, was a cosmopolite area where Greeks, Italians, and other ethnicities

enjoyed the freedom of preserving their languages and cultures, an ethnic freedom that Egypt granted to Egyptians of different origins. Being a part of the Armenian community, this ethnic freedom not only strengthened my Armenian identity, but it also allowed me to learn from the other cultures.

Could you tell our readers more about the Nubarian Armenian School?

The Nubarian Primary Armenian School was a place of serious education, with multiple extra-curricular activities of which I have still kept sweet memories. In particular, I recall our director, Professor Dikran Babigian, who used to give us six books to stimulate our love for reading during the summer vacation. The first student to return the books was given a prize.

When it comes to promoting the arts, and encouraging students' artistic talents, competitions were organized in art classes and the best were chosen and received prizes. Furthermore, the latter were sent to international competitions such as the Shanghai Exhibition for Children, I even once won a prize from this institution.

In the domain of sports, seasonal sport competitions were planned in the Cairo Stadium and at the end of each year, cups and medals were given to the winners during the annual sport festival, with the participation of Firkat Hasaballa—an Egyptian band.

Was growing up in such a bubble a positive or a negative fact?

On one hand, it was positive as it helped me maintain my Armenian identity, for which I am very grateful. On the other hand, it was negative

because it was an isolation from my Egyptian identity. Egypt is a rich nation with different cultures worthy of being proud of and discovering. So, at one point in my childhood, I decided to pop the bubble and start explore my Egyptian side, which I did. I consider this dual identity my privilege today, as this made me part of two mother cultures and two mother languages.

**When did you decide to pop the bubble?**

A transitional point in my life was moving to Ramses College for Girls. Although my performance was excellent in classical Arabic, I had difficulty in understanding my colleagues' conversations in colloquial Arabic. That was the right time to discover my Egyptian identity. I

used to take me every Friday on a visit to different places in Cairo. After watching Tom & Jerry in Cinema Metro, we explored Islamic and Ancient Egyptian sites and museums. I still remember our visit to Ibn Tulun Mosque and our multiple stopovers at the Egyptian Museum. In Ibn Tulun Mosque, besides his presentations which introduced me to the architecture and serenity of the space of this mosque, he was the one who explained to me how Muslims pray, a detail that was not commonly known amongst other religious communities before TV was accessible. In the Egyptian Museum, he used a guidebook of the museum written in the Armenian language by an

Shams University, Faculty of Engineering, I received two master's degrees: one from the American University in Cairo and the other in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, from the Polytechnic Institute of Yerevan. In Yerevan, I studied the history of architecture of the world and conservation of monuments. I specialized in Armenian architecture, with a thesis that focused on the architectural activities of Armenians in Egypt. In the American University, I specialized in Islamic art and architecture, with a thesis on al-Bimaristan al-Muayyadi, founded by the Mamluk Sultan al-Muayyad Shaykh. This is when I started to trot around the old city and fell in love with historic



The Islamic monument Bab Zuwayla (Photo Credit: the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' official website)

started by reading "The Donkey Market," a story borrowed from medieval Egyptian folklore, Goha's adventures, and one of the works of the renowned Egyptian writer Tawfiq Al-Hakim. This was a first step towards the wonderful world of Arabic literature and Egyptian history and culture.

**How did your family respond?**

My parents responded positively as they were open-minded adults. My father was an energetic lover of knowledge with a passionate thirst for novelty. He showed great enthusiasm in my new line of development. When I was a child, he

Armenian Egyptologist – he was "catching a bird with a single stone," as the Arabic proverb says: learning about the history of ancient Egypt by the use of the Armenian language.

To wrap up, my father, the Armenian school, and the surrounding Egyptian-Armenian community shaped my strong Armenian base, my multi-ethnic life in Heliopolis added my love of knowing "the other," which was crowned by my drowning in, appreciation of, and creation of my "Egyptianness" – my twin identities.

**What about your postgraduate studies?**

After my graduation as an architect from Ayn

Cairo's monuments, urban fabric, and the people living there. This is how my dual architectural interests were formed, armed by education to become my passion in life.

Could you tell us more about your stay in Yerevan?

After graduating, I wanted to stay in Armenia to discover more about my country of origin. Studying for a master's degree was an opportunity for me to dig deep into my country and its treasures. I stayed there for approximately two years and a half and seized the opportunity of studying the Armenian monuments by traveling all around Armenia.

During my stay in Yerevan's student hostel, my entourage were all Armenians, but from different parts of the world, including Ethiopia, Canada, Argentina, France, England, Syria and Lebanon. It was another type of experience for me as I became exposed to Armenians with a single Armenian identity, the native Armenians and the other Armenians, with their "other" dual identities, like me. Life inside the hostel was like a big Armenian-based multi-dual identity individuals. Exchanging different aspects of culture was the inseparable part of our daily life; from traditional cuisines and how feasts are celebrated, to architecture, movies, music, dance, and literature. The experience in Yerevan gave me an understanding of the broad ethnic diversity of the diaspora Armenians. On the personal level, I am so proud to have friends in countless countries who have dual identities like myself, with whom we have rediscovered our common Armenian identity.

Has your professional career ever stopped you from studying more?



Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo (Photo Credit: the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' official website)

*continued on next page*



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Armenian-Egyptian Archeologist and Architect: Nairy Hampikian Has Stories to Tell

from previous page

On the contrary, as the more you are in a practical field; the more you are aware of your constant ignorance and consequently feel the urge to learn more widely and deeply. The buildings that I work on during my practice of conservation of old structures are like people; the more the number, the more you feel the need of further investigating, which means my career is reading and learning more. This is why I studied architectural restoration in Rome, at ICCROM (International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). I was also fortunate to work in the German Archaeological Institute where the director then and his wife, encouraged me to continue studying more and more and motivated me to obtain my Ph.D. from UCLA, in the United States of America.

#### What was the topic of your Ph.D.?

At the University of California, Los Angeles, I got my Ph.D. in archaeology with a dissertation entitled "The Al-Salihiyya Complex Through Time," which examines a group of buildings founded by the Ayyubid Sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din and his wife Shagar al-Durr, the Sultana of Armenian origin during the thirteenth century AD.

#### Concerning your professional career, what kind of buildings did you work on?

I worked on conservation projects of Islamic, ancient Egyptian, and Armenian buildings in Egypt. Among a number of Islamic monuments that I worked on, I would like to single out the "Conservation Project of Bab Zuwayla," which was

done under my direction, funded by a USAID-EAP project under the umbrella of the American Research Center in Egypt and the Ministry of Egyptian Antiquities. In the pharaonic domain, I worked as the site architect for more than fifteen years (three months per year) on the "The Colossi of Memnon and the Mortuary Temple of Amenhotep III Conservation Project" in Luxor directed by Armenian Egyptologist Hourig Sourouzian. I also had the privilege to direct the conservation works on the Armenian Church Sourp Krikor Lousavorich in Ramses Street, Cairo.

#### Why is it the restoration of Armenian monuments in Egypt important?

Armenian style monuments in the diaspora represent the bridge between the Armenian culture and the host country in which Armenians live and receive their dual identities. For example, the Armenian Church Sourp Krikor Lousavorich in Ramses Street, Cairo, with its Armenian mediaeval church style including form and characteristics, acts as the inseparable part of the architectural heritage of the history of Armenian architecture, irrelevant of the fact that it is located in Egypt. On the other hand, being built in Ramses Street, in the heart of Cairo, this church is also an inseparable artifact of the Cairene historic urban fabric. Therefore, working on the conservation of this church can be considered as an act of reinforcement between the two heritages, the Egyptian and the Armenian, with a common cultural object that is to be shared forever between the two countries.

#### Do you think being multidisciplinary is a benefit?

Specializing in more than one field is definitely and unquestionably beneficial to one's career, especially when the fields of specialization are related. In my case, they are built on each other and they complement each other and make my understanding of the object under conservation more comprehensible. A degree in architecture and urban planning, with two degrees in history of architecture (Islamic and Armenian), added to them a degree in architectural conservation, and finally a degree in archaeology helped me widen my scopes of comparison between the fields and better understand the different urges of the building or archaeological site under examination. It was also a privilege in my formation to work on buildings belonging to different cultures and erected during different eras: Pharaonic, 11th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 19th, and 20th centuries AD.

#### What is the story behind the name Karkar?

On my first day in Ramses College for Girls, they missed my name when we were called to get our buses. Armenian names are normally mispronounced by non-Armenians. When I approached the teacher, I asked: "I did not hear my name. So, which bus am I getting on?" I told her I lived in Heliopolis.

She answered "Yes there is a missing student in the bus to Heliopolis. Are you Nayyera Harraz Karkar?" This is when I realized that Nairy Heratch Krikour Hampikian, which is my full Armenian name, had its Egyptian version. Years later, when I worked in Bab Zuwayla, I noticed a store named Karkar. To satisfy my curiosity, I asked about the matter and was informed that Karkar is the surname of a very well-known family from Upper Egypt.

## Young Azeris and Armenians Bridge the Hate Gap

LETTERS, from page 11

Iceland's local dwellers are the wealthiest people in Finland!...We can change everything (here as well) ...We are stronger together!

-With love, Zulfiyya."

Wartanian was inspired to take on this daunting project after he co-taught a creative writing workshop at Rikers Island Jail from 2017 to 2018: "The incarcerated individuals there taught me about the ways writing can unlock a spirit of freedom and possibility, regardless of the challenging circumstances...As the grandson and great-grandson of Armenian Genocide survivors, and having spent time living in Armenia as a volunteer and researcher, I was always dismayed by the conflict with Azerbaijan." Wartanian sought something productive that he could do to help move the situation forward: Letters for Peace is his timely answer.

He and his team organized two-week workshops at the intersection of creative writing and conflict transformation. The workshops featured guest lectures, writing exercises, site visits, and culminated in each student writing a letter in which he/she articulated the desire and/or possibilities for a peaceful future. Wartanian's goal was/is simply to create a constructive discourse and open up avenues of discussion between two sides that have at various periods of history and in different parts of the Caucasus, lived side-by-side in peace.

Of course the ironic and sad twist is that the current war had not yet broken out when Wartanian published this volume, though he notes that some of the writers included in the volume were soldiers during the April 2016 clashes and that others live in border regions under regular threat from snipers and bombardments. It is perhaps worth listening to Wartanian here: "Let me state in no uncertain terms that Aliyev, with the help of Erdogan, is committing crimes against humanity... (but) I'm starting to believe that this conflict is not between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. This is a conflict between love and hate, between justice and corruption, between equanimity and greed, between harmony and dissonance, between cooperation and distrust, between common sense and the fog of war. We cannot fight forever...we must have the capacity as people around the world, as citizens in the region, to relate to one another with understanding, respect, and friendship. To build power with, not over, each other."

Amen. A first step towards peace for both sides may well be to pick up Letters for Peace and think about the wise words that young people on both sides of the border are proffering.

Learn more about the project at: [www.lettersforpeace.org](http://www.lettersforpeace.org)

Order future copies of the book at: [www.lettersforpeace.org/contactcontributesupport](http://www.lettersforpeace.org/contactcontributesupport)

Tekeyan Cultural Association

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# 20<sup>th</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY

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# Review: Bedros Keljik's *Armenian-American Sketches*

SKETCHES, from page 11

A part of the first graduating class of the school in 1890 along with legendary writer Roupén Zartarian, Keljik promptly left for America after completing his studies. After living in Worcester, Boston, New York and Chicago, Keljik settled in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1899 where he started an oriental rug business still run by his grandson, Mark Keljik.

Bedros Keljik was part of the large Kharperci clan originally named Geoljukian which originated in the Kharperci district's village of Dzovk on the shores of the lake of the same name, which was called in Turkish "Geoljuk." Many members of this family came to America, including successful businessmen and professionals, writers and musicians, and active leaders in the Armenian church and community. To just mention immediate relatives of Bedros Keljik, his brother Krikor was a writer who used the pen-name Devrish and worked with Bedros in the rug business, and his nephew, Vahan Totovents, who had already been published as a teenager in Turkey, came to America and worked in the rug store when he wasn't attending classes at the University of Wisconsin. Totovents left the Midwest for the Caucasus to fight as a volunteer when the Genocide began, and became the personal secretary of General Antranig. Settling in Soviet Armenia after the Genocide, his stories of his Kharperci childhood, written in Eastern Armenian, made him one of the foremost prose writers of the Soviet period until he was killed in the Stalinist purges.

All of this is to say that Bedros Keljik, though he settled in Minnesota, was deeply immersed in Armenian life in Anatolia as a young man and in America as an adult, on the educational, literary, political and other fronts. The volume *Amerigahye Badgerner* (Armenian-American Sketches) was published in New York in 1944 by Charles Garabed Aramian's Yezprad Press. It was the first in a series of volumes by different authors whose topic was the experience of the Armenian immigrants in America.

Although the interest in publishing entire books about the Armenian-American experience in Armenian seems to have been spurred by the success of William Saroyan's *My Name Is Aram* in 1940 (which was, of course, in English) and a subsequent meeting and resulting manifesto by the Nor Kir literary group, of whom author Vahe Haig of Fresno published *Hayreni Dzkhán*, Volume 2 in 1941 largely devoted to short stories set in America, Keljik stated that his stories had been written over the previous twenty years. In addition to the translation of the original contents of *Amerigahye Badgerner* (21 stories), the current translation includes eight stories by Bedros Keljik originally published in Baikar's special annual literary magazine throughout the 1940s, as well as an English translation made by Keljik of a Roupén Zartarian story and thorough documentation of Bedros Keljik's life, put together by his grandsons, Tom and Mark Keljik. The fact that the Keljik brothers didn't know that their grandfather wrote this book until they found out from a computer search at the Library of Congress (as they willingly admit) is not a mark against them, but only further testament to the almost total lack of awareness on the part of the community, and the lack of translations, up until now, of this early literature.

## The Translation

The worthy translators of the stories are Aris Sevag, who translated all but one of the stories from the original "Armenian-American Sketches" before his untimely passing, Lou Ann Matossian, who translated the remaining story, and Vartan Matossian, who translated the eight "Baikar Stories." All of them are known scholars and are to be applauded for translating a very difficult piece of literature, though their names, perplexingly, do not appear on the front cover, aside from Matossian's in her capacity as co-editor of the volume. Matossian, a resident of Minnesota and the original expert on and promoter of Keljik's work, along with Christopher Atamian (formerly of *Ararat* magazine and currently of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*), and Barlow Der Mugrdchian of Fresno State University are the editors of the volume and are to be highly commended for bringing this book to press.

Keljik's original writing, already verging on classicism due to the fact that he left Anatolia as early as 1890, is purposely spiced up with dialect words, Turkish, English, and comical combinations of all of the above, such as when Magar Agha in the original explains that he is an "elevator-jee" because he is the elevator operator in the wire mill. While the elevator example would be funny and understandable to many Armenian-Americans today, many of the expressions are difficult and in fact Keljik included a small dictionary in the back of his original book, mostly to explain Turkish and English words that perhaps some Armenian readers were not familiar with. With the difficulty of translating such a text there were inevitably mistakes, at least in this writer's opinion; the name rendered "Keo" seems like it should have been "Kevo"; the blind musician Gabriel's "harmonica" was probably an accordion, which many Anatolian Armenians called harmonika. But this is nitpicking when we consider how difficult it must have been to translate these stories. For that, all three translators must be applauded.

I do want to make one substantive criticism: the difference between bantoukht and kaghtagan. Sevag translates the first as "émigré" and the second as "refugee." It is true that bantoukht is used in Armenian to mean émigré and that kaghtagan is used colloquially in the Armenian-American community to mean a refugee or a "DP," and of course Keljik does use a lot of colloquial Armenian-American slang. But in the story "Worcester and Magar Agha" he is, I believe, using these two words to mean something like "migrant worker" and "immigrant." The bantoukht is one

who comes just to work, and not really to settle down; it is equivalent to the Turkish-Arabic gharib. The kaghtagan is an immigrant who comes as part of a *kaghout* (colony), a community formed from mass immigration. In a later story, our astute translator Sevag seems to capture the gist of this difference more clearly, and had he lived and been able to edit his own work, maybe he would have made this more clear. I only bring this up to help those who might read the beginning of the Worcester story with confusion as to the line, "the Armenians weren't refugees but émigrés."

## Chronicler of Early Armenian Immigrant Life

Keljik's stories offer us a sharp, incisive wit; satire worthy of Hagop Baronian (as noted by Matossian's introduction and in a thinly veiled self-portrait of Keljik himself); plenty of good humor; and a true-to-life picture of Armenian immigrant life in the very early years (more than half of the stories take place in the 1890s). The stories show us the joys, sorrows, vices, and virtues of the early Armenian immigrants. They also show us their patriotism to an Armenia that they could still hope would be liberated from Turkish oppression, even after the Genocide, as they dream of returning to their native Kharperci until these dreams are dashed by the international treaties that followed the end of the First World War. We sometimes forget that the earliest group of immigrants came to America in a time when returning to Western Armenia was still an option and an aspiration for many.

Keljik lived in Worcester, Boston, Manhattan, Chicago, Waukegan (briefly), and St. Paul, and all of these cities are depicted in his stories – mostly in the 1890s. While Keljik is in Minnesota, he even encounters a small group of Armenians working on a remote railroad line, undoubtedly the same group of Armenians who were depicted in the Genocide film, "The Cut," as, somewhat unbelievably to most viewers, working on the railroad and living in Ruso, North Dakota. But the men that Keljik depicts in most of his stories (and as we know, the earliest immigrants were almost all men) live in the well-known early Armenian settlements, like Worcester. They work in factories and live in boarding houses in a manner known as *khoumana* or communal living. One person rents the house and collects money from the others to pay rent and buy groceries to provide a daily meal. The men eat from a common table. Many of these men work for years saving their money to return to the old country – like Magar Agha, who sadly dies two days after setting foot back in his home in Kharperci.

Keljik stays away (mostly) from criticizing particular political factions, religious denominations, or social classes as such, but his biting satire (admittedly much funnier and more biting in the original Armenian) is unleashed on unscrupulous political agitators, preachers, moneylenders, rug merchants (of which Keljik was himself one) and other businessmen who make it their job to fleece the Armenian people in the name of God, homeland, or just through plain trickery. Though most of these charlatans are Armenians, the figure of the phony American preacher does not escape Keljik's pen either.

Perhaps the harshest criticism is reserved for the native born Anglo-Americans, and even more so, the Irish immigrants, depicted as xenophobes who "persecuted the weak and cringed before the powerful" and who think themselves to be more American than the rest of the immigrants since they already speak English. One normally gentle-natured Armenian immigrant lobs an iron bar at the head of an Irish factory foreman upon being called a "damned Armenian" because he could take insults if directed at himself, but not at his people. As for Anglo-American culture, in the same story Keljik states with deadpan sarcasm that "Helping one's family was a sacred and somewhat religious obligation for the Armenians, who were still ignorant of Western Civilization." But the Irish are victims too, not only of an "unjust ruler" in their homeland (the British, of course) but of the slick Armenian pick-pocket Danny (Dono) of New York's Bowery, who boasts of not having to work as long as the Irish ("long live the Bowery residents, the Irish!") have money in their pockets.

Some Armenian characters aren't particularly unscrupulous, but merely eccentric – like Chicago's Garo the Mule, who is fond of telling tall tales about his life in the old country, like his ability to lift a horse or the "fact" that he was with the famous Archbishop Narbey of Constantinople at his death and is the only one who knows where the Bishop's invaluable unpublished manuscripts are buried. "Know-it-all-Keo" (it should probably be "Kevo") is another eccentric character, who was born and raised in Kharperci with Keljik but had the stubborn personality of a Guruntsi, which comprises the primary punch line of the story. Little details like this shed light on an Anatolian Armenian world that is long gone, and almost forgotten.

While individual Armenians are criticized for their behavior, the Armenian community in general is depicted as good-hearted. Keljik describes the founding of the Worcester church, the first in America, in 1890-91: "There was so much enthusiasm and religious fervor in those days...It took them less than a year for the church to be completed, with its primate's office, auditorium, and library. This was a project accomplished by Armenian immigrants with monies earned through their hard work...I used to observe the zealous religious devotion of those hard-working laborers with amazement and great joy."

In the political arena, too, the people are selfless, as they support the Hunchag Party, the only Armenian political organization in existence in the US in that time. We read in regard to the Armenians of Boston in the 1890s: "The patriotism of the Diasporan Armenians was pure and unmitigated. Having newly

left their fatherland in turmoil, the youths made unparalleled sacrifices for its liberation. At every meeting, six to seven hundred dollars – all in cold cash – were collected from these poor working-class Armenians, who were few in number." Keljik notes that the money was converted into checks that were made payable to Hunchag leader Avetis Nazarbekian in Europe, and makes an oblique reference to the famous meeting in London where the Reformed Hunchags (who eventually merged/transformed into the ADL) split from the Old Hunchags, stating that "later on, when the delegates went to London to receive an accounting, we found out why those checks were sent, made payable to an individual." Finally, the Party loses the respect of the Armenians of Boston and even its most ardent American-Armenian activist, the main character of the story, when a party leader from abroad (the same one who sent the money directly to Nazarbekian) refuses to attend a meeting in honor of the election of Khirmian Hayrig to the Catholicate, because he is only "an ignorant clergyman." The people turn on their political leader and Keljik has to help him escape from an angry mob after a meeting in Providence. The loyalty of the immigrants to their nation, homeland, and church, with all the nuances and possible conflicts involved, is realistically depicted in this story.

In addition to their political and religious donations, the Armenian workers are also helpful to their fellow compatriots, not just by forming the *khoumana* boarding-houses, but by paying off the moneylenders in the old country from whom the newly arrived had gotten the money for the steamship fare (this was before the days when there were enough Armenians in America that one would be "sponsored" by a relative already in the country). Considering the setting of these stories among the single, all-male, boarding-house-dwelling immigrant factory workers of the early days, this writer was surprised by the almost complete lack of references to the *surjarans* or Armenian coffeehouses that were so prevalent in that generation. One would surmise that the setting is too early for that, as if there aren't enough Armenians around yet to have opened *surjarans*. More than one story involves frequenting American bars, but more particularly, a certain Italian restaurant on Hanover Street in Boston, where the local Armenians hang out due to the "similarity of their menu."

## Memories of Kharperci

Though the Armenian-American Sketches properly speaking are all set in the US, the eight "Baikar Stories" are more varied. Among these, Keljik's memoirs of Kharperci and the Getronagan School stands out as an invaluable historical record of life in Kharperci and the personality of famed writer Tlgadintsi, who was Keljik's teacher. His somewhat unconventional and unkept appearance (Keljik says he dressed and lived "like a dervish"), his flexible and innate ability as a teacher, and his personality that was tied to the native soil and atmosphere stands out. Keljik's story "Our Garden and My Grandmother" is a poignant portrait of simple village life in the "city" of Kharperci and a window to the past for many Armenians with roots in Anatolia. Keljik's grandmother spends her life tending her garden and doesn't even go to church, yet faces the sun every morning (just as an Armenian church must face East), saying her prayers. Reading this story in the current atmosphere of war in Artsakh, in 2020, one cannot help but reflect on what the loss of Kharperci meant to Keljik and his generation, and what the loss of Artsakh would mean to the native Armenians living there now.

In fact, Keljik does touch on this loss in his story "The Blind Musician" (from the original "Sketches") where a travelling blind musician, a fellow Kharperci, visits St. Paul with his "harmonica" [probably meaning accordion] upon which he plays everything from patriotic songs to *Harpüt Havasi* [Turkish: Melody of Kharperci]. Just after the Armistice of World War I, the men are "drunk over the imminent prospects of a free fatherland. There wasn't anyone who didn't believe in our liberation in those heady days, since the great, civilized and Christian states of Europe had promised and signed declarations to that effect...Clemenceau had grabbed the Turkish delegates by the neck and tossed them out...after those bloodthirsty acts of barbarism committed by them." When the men discuss how they will return to a free Kharperci and rebuild, they question the blind musician, Gabriel, how he will know that he has returned, considering his inability to see. Gabriel exclaims "Hey [in the original, "dzo"], you just take me to Kharperci. I'll know from the sweet fragrance of its almond and licorice trees that I've reached my homeland; I'll enjoy my city's air, the vivifying winds blowing from Masdar; I'd give anything for its air...I shall play for the last time by the waters of Yotnag and sing, before dying." [Masdar is the large mountain that separates Kharperci from Palu; Yotnag, the famous spring of water that served the population of Kharperci's village of Hussenig.] But Gabriel dies before he can return to Kharperci, and "all our hopes of those heady days became transformed into one night's evaporating dream."

This writer heartily encourages all Armenian-Americans to secure a copy of this book. For those whose roots are in the early generations of immigration, it is a window onto the lives of one's grandparents or great-grandparents. It is an honest depiction of the origins of this community and shines a light onto why things developed as they did as well as a reflection of life in Western Armenia. I cannot more heartily recommend this hilarious, witty, insightful, sometimes sad, and culturally invaluable book, and I commend those who translated it and those who brought it to press.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Cry from the Mountains

ARTSAKH, from page 11

see volunteers. His theatre has been invited to perform on famous stages and at world-renowned festivals all over the world, including Moscow Art Theatre, and festivals in Yerevan, Armenia, New York City, Chicago, Lviv, Ukraine, Monaco, and many others.

The sphere of research interests of Hayk Demoyan includes such topics as the Armenian Genocide, Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Dr. Demoyan is author of 15 books (among them "Armenian Genocide: Front page coverage in the world media", Yerevan, 2014, (in Armenian, in English, in Russian and in French), "Foreign Policy of

Turkey and Karabakh Conflict", Yerevan, 2013 (in Russian), "Armenian Sports and Gymnastics in the Ottoman Empire", Yerevan, 2015, 2015, "Western Media Coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in 1988-1990" (in English), Yerevan, 2008) and of about 40 academic articles.

From 2006 to 2017 he was the Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute (AGMI) in Yerevan, Armenia. From 2011 to 2015 Demoyan was the Secretary of the State Commission on Coordination of the events dedicated to the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. From 2017 to 2018 Dr. Hayk Demoyan was a US Fulbright visiting

scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies of Harvard University to research the identity transformation processes in the South Caucasus. In 2018 he published his new book "Armenian Legacy in America: 400-year heritage" dedicated to the arrival of the first Armenian in Virginia back in 1618. In 2019 a new book "Armenian churches and monasteries in the international postcards" was released. Currently he is chairman of "Gyumri 20/25" foundation which aims at establishment of the Museum of the Armenian photographic art, Museum of Armenian women and Armenian sports museum in Gyumri within 5 years.

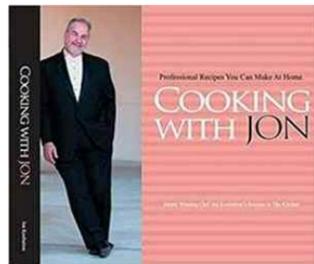
## Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

### Almas Koobation's Tukalic (Drop Cakes)

Whenever award-winning chef Jon Koobation's beloved grandmother, Almas Koobation came to babysit them as children in Dinuba, California in the 1950s, he and his sister Marilyn would beg her to make her mouthwatering tukalic or "drop cakes." Also known as zeppole or bishi, Jon says, "this recipe is lighter than doughnuts, and more like a cruller sprinkled with sugar. I remember standing by our stove with my sister, watching my grandmother drop the batter into the hot oil and the cakes quickly rising up. We could hardly wait for them to finish cooking, so we could enjoy them right away."



This recipe is featured in *Cooking With JON*, the engaging cookbook Jon published in 2017. Jon for decades owned the celebrated Jon's Bear Club. Under his professional direction, Jon's Bear Club became a beloved part of the local community,

and home to countless family meals and celebrations that welcomed generations of Central Valley residents.

*Cooking With JON* is a legacy to Jon's diverse culinary background, and includes many of his popular signature recipes along with family photos and warm memories and anecdotes. The wealth of delicious choices and beautiful full-color photography will provide daily inspiration for meals throughout the year. Recipes include: Grandma Bazarian's Shish Kebab, Chicken George, Lebanese Lentils and Rice, Baja Cobb Salad, JBC Crab Cakes, Braised Lamb Shanks with Bulgur Pilaf, Cabbage Dolma with Beef and Lamb, Meyer Lemon Homemade Ice Cream, and Cracked Wheat and Kale Salad. "My grandmother Almas was a very good cook, and this recipe is just one of many fond memories of my childhood. Her "drop cakes" are a perfect breakfast treat or served as a dessert with fresh berries, honey, powdered sugar and whipped cream."

#### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup flour  
1 large egg  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt  
2/3 cup water  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla  
Canola oil for frying  
Serves 6. Makes 12-13 pieces.

#### PREPARATION:

In a bowl, mix the ingredients well with a whisk to make a nice batter. Let this rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Heat a large skillet with canola oil to the depth of 1/2 inch and 350 degrees. Using a tablespoon, drop the batter into the oil, being careful not to splash. Fry until golden and turn to finish the other side. Drain on a paper toweled plate. Dust or roll in cinnamon, sugar or powdered sugar, and serve with butter, honey, or maple syrup.

\*The batter can be mixed the night before and placed in refrigerator overnight. Take out and leave at room temperature for 30 minutes before frying.

Jon is the recipient of the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award in the California Restaurant Association's "Best of the Valley" awards. Contact Jon at <mailto:chefjonkoobation@gmail.com> chefjonkoobation@gmail.com to order his book and for a personally signed copy. His book is also available for sale at The Market Grocery Store on West and Herndon and at Sam's Deli & Cucina in Fresno, California. To order directly at Amazon Books, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Cooking-JON-Jon-Koobation/dp/0692769315>

See: <https://www.food.com/recipe/armenian-zeppole-bishi-179060>

<https://www.thedailymeal.com/recipes/bishi-armenian-zeppoli-recipe>

<http://www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/Adventures\_in\_Armenian\_Cooking\_-\_Desserts#Fried\_dough\_28MAFISH.29>



## Calendar

### MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 18 — Wednesday at 10 am, Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series**, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) Afghan Cuisine Chef Sharifa Zareen, Sanctuary Kitchen Catering

**DECEMBER 2 — Wednesday at 10 am, Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series**, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) Indian Cuisine Madhu Gadia, Cookbook author, The Indian Vegan Kitchen, and New Indian Home Cooking; founder, Cuisine of India

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

**DECEMBER 16 - Wednesday at 10 am, Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series**, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) Desserts! Chef Nathan Kibarian Pastry Chef, Island Creek Oyster Bar Chef/Owner, Desserts by Nathan

### RHODE ISLAND

**DECEMBER 3 — Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island (AHARI) presents "The Missing Pages"** - Lecture with Dr. A Lecture by Dr. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, Professor of Art History, University of California, Davis on Thursday, at 7 pm EST. The Missing Pages is the story of the Zeytun Gospels, a manuscript illuminated by the greatest medieval Armenian artist, Toros Roslin, and which is at once art, sacred object, and cultural heritage. Follow the manuscript's footsteps through seven centuries, from medieval Armenia to the killing fields of 1915, the refugee camps of Aleppo, Ellis Island, Soviet Armenia, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and ultimately to a Los Angeles courtroom. A story of genocide and survival, of unimaginable loss and of inspiring resilience. Virtual-Zoom and Facebook Live streamed here on our Facebook page, For Zoom link, contact AHARI at [info@armenianhistorical-ri.org](mailto:info@armenianhistorical-ri.org)

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

**November 20 — "Meet with Armenian Doctors"** — Dr. Aznif Calikyan, Anesthesiologist

**November 27 — "Nor Serund"** Youth Talents from Armenia Armenian folk music and songs

**December 4 — Renown Armenian Bass & Songwriter Ruben Telunts in Concert** "Karotee Kanch"

**December 11 — World Renown "Cadance"** Ensemble from Armenia

**December 18 — Christmas Concert**, featuring "Yerevan" Chorale & Orchestra, Boston, MA

**December 27 (Sunday) — Memorial Concert "David Ayriyan"**, Virtuozo Kamancha player

## EDITORIAL

# Karabakh War Ends with Collapse of Dreams

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenians woke up Tuesday with heavy hearts to see in the glare of the new day the nightmarish scenario in Nagorno Karabakh.

Had the outcome had been positive, the spilled blood and the young lives lost in 44 days of heroic battles would have been justified and not hurt as much. Instead, the tripartite peace deal signed on November 10, 2020 will become a disgraceful epitaph on the tombstones of those fallen heroes.

This calamity was long in coming. When the Velvet Revolution took place in 2018, it had an attractive single-subject goal of getting rid of corruption. That caught the imagination of the masses, particularly when the revolution's leader, Nikol Pashinyan, assured the public that he did not have a foreign policy agenda; and that relations with friendly nations would be kept intact. But when the members of My Step party packed the ministerial positions and parliament, events took on a different direction. People in parliament such as Daniel Ioannisyan, Arman Babajanyan and ALEN Simonyan, just to mention a few, began engaging in anti-Russian rhetoric. They demanded that Moscow talk to Yerevan on an equal footing, as if Yerevan's political clout matched that of Moscow.

This shift in policy certainly upset the Kremlin, which grudgingly watched insults being hurled at its friends in Armenia, like former President Robert Kocharyan and Gen. Yuri Khachaturov. The sacking and incarceration of the latter, in particular, was shocking as he held the prestigious position of secretary general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. That move was disastrous politically, and cost Armenia dearly.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey immediately saw the increasing alienation between Armenian and Russia. Armenians underestimate Erdogan's political and diplomatic acumen at their own peril.

It was easy for Turkey to conclude that because of the deepening rift between the two formerly close allies, Moscow would not go the extra mile to protect Armenia.

Moscow telegraphed many signs of its displeasure, but if the Armenian government read them correctly, they turned a blind eye.

The developments encouraged Turkey to lay out its war plans. Armenians ignored the warning signs. They matched Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev's maximalist demands, wanting everything and conceding nothing, with their own maximalist stance.

Today it is Monday morning quarterbacking to state that the seven regions outside Karabakh, in Azerbaijan proper, occupied by the Armenian forces as an insurance policy, could have been surrendered with dignity rather than waiting for today to sign an unconditional, undignified surrender.

At an earlier time, concessions could have been made against the guarantees that the territories ceded would be kept demilitarized. Today, Armenia and Artsakh have no room to make such demands.

This column had detected early on a consistent pattern in the political interaction and power play of Russo-Turkish relations and had predicated that the pattern may also extend to the Caucasus; in that pattern, Turkey, in its aggressive posture, creates facts on the ground and Russia eventually acquiesces. That happened in Syria, Libya and today it is happening in Artsakh. Russia has been testing Turkey on all these fronts but it will always avoid getting entangled in a full-scale war, because that will mean standing up to the entire NATO alliance.

Erdogan can jail as many journalists as he wishes, murder as many opponents as he desires and bully his neighbors. He will only get a slap on the wrist from the Western allies, as long as he complies with the global agenda of the West to contain Russia. All rhetoric on human rights, democracy and justice will evaporate and Erdogan is well aware of the fact and he designs his policies accordingly.

This time around, Turkey's foray in the Caucasus proved to be partially successful. First, Ankara sought to have a voice alongside the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, in the settlement of the Karabakh issue, but it was rebuked. Then, it appealed to Moscow to bypass the OSCE format and cut a deal between the two capitals. That proposal also failed.

Armenia confronted a situation similar to that of today during 1992-1993, when Prime Minister Levon Ter-Petrosyan adopted the policy of the "third-party option," which meant that Armenia could opt to ally itself with Turkey, abandoning Russia. At that time, Moscow had helped Azerbaijan to conquer two-thirds of Karabakh. Armenia changed course, after suffering 6,000 casualties. Following course correction, Russia helped Armenia to conquer back Karabakh proper and seven additional regions for security. That is how the favorable agreement of the ceasefire of May 1994 was achieved and held until the present war. This time around,

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was indifferent to Moscow's calls. That is why Armenia was forced to accept this debacle.

Moscow realized that Azerbaijan was slipping through its fingers and tilting towards Turkey. It therefore decided to cut a deal with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, at the expense of the Armenians, especially since the latter had also rendered themselves politically dispensable for Moscow.

In the document signed on November 10, there is no mention of Turkish peacekeeping forces in Karabakh alongside Russian ones. Aliyev has claimed that Turkey is also party to the peacekeeping regime but has shown no evidence for it.

The Russians have appeased the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem at

the expense of Armenia, very much like they did in signing the Treaty of Kars in October 1921, finalizing Armenia's border with Turkey. At that time, Moscow ceded Armenia's territory to Turkey as a result of friendship with Ataturk.

It pains every Armenian to read the entire text of the agreement because that document signifies a surrender of historic proportions. It can be compared with the fall of the Ani, the capital of medieval Armenia, to the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, the surrender of the Fortress of Kars in February 1918 and the gifting of Cilicia by France to Ataturk in 1921. On all three occasions, Armenians could only swallow the bitter pill.

The document signed on November 10 gives away to Azerbaijan all that it had wanted and more, including a strategic corridor through Meghri to connect Azerbaijan with the enclave of Nakhichevan. What is left of Karabakh is 2,500 square kilometers of territory, almost half the size of the original. What is more agonizing is that there is no mention even of the status of the enclave.

Silence on the issue of the status means that it will come under bloody Azerbaijani rule and Baku will bestow on it what it calls the "highest level of autonomy."

After 30 years of proud independence, which Armenian will be naïve enough to live under Azerbaijani rule? The ghosts of Sumgait and Baku are still alive and well for Armenians who have lived under Azerbaijani rule.

Today, the major question is who will be in charge of damage control in Armenia, with the spillover problem from

*continued on next page*



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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## President Trump Loses Reelection; Our Four-Year Nightmare is Over

After months of acrimonious debate and nasty disputes, the election is finally over. Trump supporters were 100% sure that he will be reelected. I advised everyone not to be so cocky about their predictions so that they would not be embarrassed if they turn out to be wrong.

Now comes the second chapter of the false prediction. Trump supporters, following the lead of the President, are refusing to acknowledge the results of the election. In the last few days, we have come across all kinds of crazy conspiracy theories questioning the outcome of the election. How can anyone be so gullible to believe such fraudulent claims? As expected, Trump is refusing to concede and leave his office gracefully. Trump is a sore loser. While it is true that the courts will determine the validity of these false claims, not a shred of credible evidence has been presented to question the results of the election. Just about every sensible person has acknowledged the victory of Joe Biden and the defeat of President Donald Trump. Even former President George W. Bush, a Republican, congratulated President-elect Biden. Many leaders around the world have also congratulated Joe Biden.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was among the first to congratulate Biden. Here is Pashinyan's important message:

"I am convinced that the wealth of experience and wisdom that you gained through your distinguished career in politics and legislature will guide you well, as you lead the United States and its people on the path toward continued progress and prosperity. Throughout your service, you have made great contributions to the strengthening of the U.S.-Armenia friendship and mutually beneficial relationship. The Armenian people appreciate your principled stance on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and your support for the pursuit of their fundamental rights. Bilateral relations between Armenia and the United States are built on shared democratic values. I am convinced that our cooperation will continue to flourish during your presidency, consistent with the level of the strategic

dialogue that underlies the relationship between our two nations. That process, of course, benefits from the invaluable role that the Armenian American community plays, acting as a bridge between our countries. Armenia deeply values the role the United States plays in the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. As you are aware, for over a month now, Azerbaijan and Turkey with the use of foreign terrorists have been fighting a war of aggression against Armenia and Artsakh in defiance of all efforts of the Co-Chairs to establish ceasefire. As a candidate you have laid out a vision for the resolution of the conflict exclusively through peaceful means. I salute that vision. I am hopeful that your Administration will take active steps to stop the war and bring about a comprehensive settlement of the conflict based on safeguards providing for the security of the people of Artsakh through the exercise of its right to self-determination...."

Without raising any hopes of what President Biden might or might not do for Armenians after taking office in January, one thing is clear: Trump had to go. He has been a nightmare for most Americans and the rest of the world. He has violated scores of laws promising his advisors to pardon them should they get charged. He has lied close to 25,000 times in four years - a record for anyone, let alone a President. He has said the most ignorant and childish things undermining the dignity of the Presidency and the reputation of the United States in the world. The reason he is fighting so hard to stay in office is because he knows he will be charged when he is no longer President.

In the 2016 elections, Trump got three million less votes than Hillary Clinton. The Electoral College saved him from defeat. In 2020, Trump received 4.5 million less votes than Biden. This time around Trump also lost the Electoral College.

In January, President Biden's first order of business on day one will be to reverse the dozens of Trump's Executive Orders. Some were ruled illegal by the courts others will be reversed by President Biden who will reinstate the Paris Climate Accords, rejoin the World Health Organization, and restore the international treaties that President Trump undermined and violated.

On Armenian issues, President Biden has pledged to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide in several campaign statements. That remains to be seen. One thing is clear, Biden has been highly outspoken against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who has been a close friend of President Trump. All one has to do is follow the Turkish press where there are multiple alarming articles about the Presidency of Biden which would end the love affair between Trump and Erdogan. Trump has acknowledged that he has a conflict of interest with Turkey because there are two buildings in Istanbul that bear his name and for which he receives millions of dollars of royalties every year.

In recent months a video surfaced of Biden's interview with The New York Times in which he used very strong language against Erdogan, angering the Turkish leadership. Here is what Biden said:

"I've spent a lot of time with him [President Erdogan of Turkey]. He is an autocrat. He's the President of Turkey and a lot more. What I think we should be doing is taking a very different approach to him now, making it clear that we support opposition leadership. Making it clear that we are in a position where we have a way which was working for a while to integrate the Kurdish population who wanted to participate in the process in their parliament, etc. Because we have to speak out about what we in fact think is wrong. He has to pay a price for whether or not we're going to continue to sell certain weapons to him. In fact, if he has the [Russian] air defense system that they're flying F-15s through to see how they can try to figure out how to do it."

Biden went on: "So I'm very concerned about it. But I'm still of the view that if we were to engage more directly like I was doing with them, that we can support those elements of the Turkish leadership that still exist and get more from them and embolden them to be able to take on and defeat Erdogan. Not by a coup, not by a coup, but by the electoral process. He got blown out. He got blown out in Istanbul [during the mayoral elections]. He got blown out in his party. So what do we do now? We just sit there, and yielded. And the last thing I would've done is yielded to him with regard to the Kurds. The absolute last thing!"

Biden concluded: "I had a couple of those meetings with him about the Kurds, and they did not clamp down at the time. We have to make it clear that if they're looking to, because, at the end of the day, Turkey doesn't want to have to rely on Russia. They've had a bite out of that apple a long time ago. But they got to understand that we're not going to continue to play with them the way we have. So I am very concerned. I'm very concerned about our airfields [in Turkey] and access to them as well. And I think it takes an awful lot of work for us to be able to get together with our allies in the region and deal with how we isolate his actions in the region, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean in relating to oil and a whole range of other things which take too long to go into. But the answer is yes, I'm worried."

Biden has made several similar statements against Erdogan and Turkey. We now need to ensure that he keeps his words.

It is important now to unify the people of the United States. Biden has pledged to be the President of all Americans including those who did not vote for him.

After this divisive election, the Armenian American community has to come together and help defend Armenia and Artsakh against Azerbaijan, Turkey and their mercenary terrorists in Artsakh!

## Karabakh War Ends with Collapse of Dreams

from previous page

Karabakh into Armenia proper.

Pashinyan has stated that before signing the conditional capitulation, he had consulted the relevant parties, while President Armen Sarkissian issued a statement to indicate that he was informed of the peace treaty through the media. Even Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan confessed that he was unaware of the deal.

Now, acrimonious barbs are being traded in Armenia. An unruly crowd invaded the prime minister's office and ransacked it. Another mob moved to the parliament, causing damage. One could hear incoherent slogans, with some blaming Pashinyan, and others blaming the old regime for creating an uncontrollable and volatile situation. The fact that the Speaker of Parliament Ararat Mirzoyan, who is one of the architects of the Velvet Revolution, was sent to the hospital, speaks to how much velvet is left of the 2018 revolution.

There are calls for Pashinyan's resignation and forming a transitional coalition government, but members of the parliament cannot enter the building to hold a session.

Five members of Pashinyan's My Step party have resigned from their seats, fearing to meet Mirzoyan's fate.

A dangerous situation has been created; not only Karabakh has been lost, but it looks like Armenia's fate is also damaged beyond repair.

As the Karabakh defense army is being evacuated from Shushi to be replaced by peacekeeping forces, groups of soldiers have refused to obey orders and have vowed to remain in their positions. This is reminiscent of a historic precedent, when the Bolsheviks were taking over Armenia in 1920 and intended to cede Syunik to Azerbaijan. Garegin Nzhdeh refused to abandon his post and that is how the region remained an integral part of Armenia.

When Pashinyan came to power, he promised to the people that any agreement he would sign would be subject to the will of the people. He stated that he would invite them to the main square in Yerevan and seek their consent.

The crowds have been inundating the square, but Pashinyan is nowhere in sight.

## In Support Of Armenia

By Rabbi Kenneth I. Segel

How much sadness the Armenian people has had to endure. History's pages are stained with their tears, their blood. They have learned well that there are no limits to evil.

The Armenians are the bearers of a sacred and priceless birthright. They were the first nation to adopt Christianity in 301 AD.

Jews and Armenians are brethren in pain. We have been made kin by our suffering, by a torment so heinous and devastating that it leaves us speechless.

Theirs is an ancient civilization with a centuries old claim to a homeland in the Caucasus mountains. Armenians saw their country overrun by a series of imperial invaders. Under the Ottoman Empire, during and after World War I, the Armenians were victims of what scholars consider the first genocide of the twentieth century. Between 1915 and 1923, 1.5 million ethnic Armenians were viciously and systematically murdered by the Ottoman government which modern day Turkey denies to this day.

Nagorno-Karabakh is an Armenian populated region of approximately 150,000 Armenians within the country of Azerbaijan. Karabakh has operated independently within Azerbaijan - with Armenia's support - since a 1994 ceasefire ended a war between the parties. The Armenian de facto autonomy has largely been accepted until now.

That inchoate peace broke down recently at the end of September. The Armenians say Azerbaijan led an onslaught with help from Turkey and Syrian mercenaries. What distinguishes this from past conflicts is that Turkey, which has long supported Azerbaijan politically, is now backing them militarily.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, strengthened by Turkey, must be condemned. The response by the Armenians is one of defense of population and territory. It should earn the support of those who cherish the principle of self-determination and

justice for all peoples.

Unfortunately, much of the world is choosing to see this crisis as an isolated regional conflict. Although the renewed hostilities have the potential to draw in Russia and Iran and lead to a large scale war, Karabakh seems faraway and strategically unimportant for greater geopolitical interests. The world doesn't especially seem to care. But civilized nations have a reason to care.

The Azeris outnumber the Armenians 3 to 1. They have been modernizing their military with a huge assist from the Turks. Armenia can resist only with the backing of Russia. There are Russian military bases on Armenian territory close to the borders with Turkey and Iran. Orthodox Russia feels a bond with Christian Armenia.

While the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, Pope Francis and others have called for a ceasefire, Turkey's President Erdogan continues to fan the growing fire and offer Azerbaijan unwavering support.

It should be sadly noted that Israel, a global leader in military technology, has sold arms to the Azerbaijanis. We must question Israel's role and motivation in an armament effort aimed against the Armenians. Israel, in the past, has prided itself in taking the moral high ground in international conflicts.

There must be options other than violence. There is diplomacy and negotiation. Disputes must be addressed without killing, without risking new ethnic cleansing or genocide.

The risk that descendants of genocide will tragically experience it again is precisely why Jews need to stand up and speak out for the rights of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Security and self-determination are essential for those whose forebears had those rights removed. Now is the moment for people of character and concern to respond.

Adolph Hitler once asked, "Who remembers the Armenians?" We should ask, "How could the world forget?"

Jews must join people of conscience in proclaiming that every human being is worthy of freedom, dignity, and respect. We must reject violence and fanaticism.

We must be responsive and sensitive to the anguish and pain of all human beings. To remain indifferent to persecution and suffering anywhere is to become an accomplice of the tormentor.

In support of the Armenians, may we refuse to accept that hatred must ever be the signature of humanity. May we refuse to give hatred the last word.



## COMMENTARY

# Remembering Robert Fisk

By Peter Balakian

**I** FIRST MET ROBERT FISK at a bar at the Hilton in midtown Manhattan on an early spring day in 1997. He had gotten interested in the national petition drive I had started with Robert Jay Lifton. My friend Robert Lifton – the historian and psychiatrist who has written prolifically about mass violence and trauma – and I had gone public with a petition about the scandal involving a professor named Health Lowry who was a hired hand for the Turkish government. A big part of Lowry's job was to discredit all scholarship and representations of the Armenian Genocide in American institutions and that included Lifton's recent book *The Nazi Doctors*,

which mentioned the role of Turkish physicians in the Armenian Genocide. Somehow, Lowry, who had dramatically inadequate credentials, had been hired by Princeton University with an endowed chair funded by Turkish forces. Our petition had been signed by 150 prominent public intellectuals, scholars, and writers and had been covered by the major press and was making waves. Fisk called me from Beirut and wanted to discuss the issue.

We arranged to meet for drinks when he was in New York City next. My firebrand friend, the writer Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, joined me as we spent a couple hours over scotch that Saturday afternoon talking about the Turkish government's propaganda mill and the endless tactics that Ankara would go to suppress, rewrite, deny the history of the Armenian Genocide.

In a tweed sport coat and a light blue shirt, Fisk leaned into the table, Scotch in hand, his cheeks ruddy, his denim blue eyes a little glassy through his metal rim glasses. He speaks in quick bursts of phrases, passionately, and non-stop. I hadn't known how obsessed he was with the history of the Armenians, the details of the massacres and the deportations of 1915. His knowledge was scholarly, granular, and personal, because he had spent years interviewing Armenian Genocide survivors, and he told those survivor stories with a sense of intimacy and pride.

That Saturday at the Hilton bar, Fisk was on fire talking about Turkish government denialism. He had a passion for uncovering criminality, wrongdoing and injustice, and it was uplifting to me and Marjorie. These were days of venal reporting on the Armenian Genocide in the mainstream press, and so Bob's voice was ever more important. I came to learn that this was vintage Fisk: revved up, intense, full of historical knowledge, personal encounters with political conflict, and a love of telling the story. He had a compendious knowledge of history and not, of course, just Armenian and Ottoman history, but the history of Ireland,

Great Britain, Europe and much of the Middle East. He had interviewed Osama Bin Laden three times; he knew Muammar Qaddafi, Saddam Hussein, Rafic Hariri, and dozens of other dominant figures in the politics of the middle east. He had interviewed so many of them.

When I went to Beirut and Aleppo in 2005 on a lecture tour, I had my official hosts and guides, but Bob was my unofficial guide. I arrived at his apartment on a late May afternoon to find him sitting at his writing desk at the cusp of his terrace that looked out at the Mediterranean and the cornice; there were piles of pages of his new book spread out, and he handed a chapter to me, declaring: "Please read this and let me know if you find any errors."

I said, "Bob, I'm jet lagged and have to give two lectures tomorrow." "Peter, it's my chapter on the Armenian Genocide. Let me know if you find any errors." He was drinking a gin and tonic and poured



Peter Balakian

me one. We sat on his balcony and I felt sun, gazed at blue sky, teal water, palm trees, people milling in the streets, sitting at cafes. What a relief from the late cold spring of central New York. That evening Bob took me on a tour of his downtown Beirut, to a mosque, to an elegant restaurant, and to the city center where a huge community-made memorial to the recently assassinated President Rafic Hariri was assembled. A massive installation that marked the nation's grief for the unclaimed assassination of the

Lebanese president, it was shaped by banks and piles of flowers, a coffin, photographs, sacred artifacts, and candles that lit the site as people milled around into the early morning hours of night.

When Fisk dropped me off at the Geffinor Rotana Hotel sometime past midnight, he reminded me that he would pick me up in a cab at 9 to take me to the Palestinian refugee settlements of Sabra and Shatila. He was angry that the State Department was prohibiting me from going anywhere deemed dangerous including to the Bekka Valley where I was supposed to spend a day. "What the hell do they think, a poet and professor is going strapped with bombs?"

By mid-morning we were walking through the dusty shanty towns of Sabra and Shatila where the massacre of Palestinians and Lebanese Shiites took place at the hands of the Lebanese right-wing Christian militia with Israeli army collusion in September of 1982. Bob swore me to secrecy about our excursion because, "if the State Department learns you've been there, they'll send you home." It was a powerful and profound walk through the impoverished settlement villages of these marooned people. Fisk took me to a couple of his friends' homes where we were invited in for tea and I listened to stories of grief and loss. Bob told me he had interviewed many of the survivors here and was writing about their tragedy.

The next day I handed Bob back the draft of his Armenian Genocide chapter with as many edits and suggestion as I was able to make. It would appear as Chapter 10



Robert Fisk and Peter Balakian, Hariri Memorial, Beirut, May 2005

"The First Holocaust" in his eleven-hundred-page opus *The Great War for Civilization*. The chapter, somewhat like the book, is a unique blend of journalism, history, non-fictional prose, muckraking, and interviews with genocide survivors. Fisk's passion for the histories of the victims of crimes of mass violence defined a large part of his career during which he wrote about the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the Lebanese civil war, both Gulf Wars, the wars in Afghanistan and the plight of the Palestinians. He brought an ethical edge to his work without betraying depth and intellect. He understood that crimes of mass violence emanated from the wanton abuses of power by states and ethnic groups.

In "The First Holocaust," he takes on the history of the Turkish government denial of the Armenian Genocide as no journalist ever has. He wrote relentlessly about the lengths to which the Turkish state would go to rewrite history and to exert political pressure and stop other democratic nations from exercising their own freedom of speech regarding the narrative and representation of the Armenian Genocide. He shined a moral flashlight on those who colluded with or caved in to Turkish denial: Tony Blair, George W. Bush, the Israeli government. He told me how appalled he was by the cowardly, unethical reporting of Stephen Kinzer at the *New York Times*; he wrote about the Lowry case at Princeton, Turkey's suppression of Armenian Genocide representation at the British Imperial War Museum and the cancelling of an academic conference in Israel, among other Turkey scandals. In the 1990s when some historians were still wary of using survivor testimony to write history (that seems no longer the case), Fisk was demonstrating how important survivor testimony was to history and historiography. In "The First Holocaust," voices of Armenian survivors – Boghos Dakessian, Zakar Berberian, Nevart Sourian, Mayreni Kaloustian, Serpouhi Papazian and Astrid Aghajanian – take the reader into the granular realities of deportation and massacre.

Robert Fisk was born in 1945 in Maidstone, Kent, England to William and Peggy Fisk. He was educated at Lancaster University and received a Ph.D. in Political Science from Trinity College, Dublin. Later in life he took Irish citizenship. A harsh critic of war, he credited his father, who was a World War I veteran, with a deep understanding of the fact that war was a cruel waste of human life and the destruction of civilization. His view of current events was always connected to historical context and his understanding of the destructive impact of both western imperialism and Ottoman imperialism on the Middle East.

From the early 1990s on, Fisk wrote dozens of pieces in the pages of *The Independent* on the history and aftermath of the Armenian Genocide and the totality of these pieces constitute a unique body of journalism and scholarship. They embody the best of a journalist's relentless efforts to bring to popular awareness one of the most important human rights histories of the modern era, one to which he bore witness and augmented with his own conceptual analysis. It was Fisk who noted that the Turkish killing squads invented the prototype for the modern gas chamber by jamming thousands of Armenians into the caves in northern Syria at Shadadeh and other places, lighting brush fires at the mouths of the caves in order to suffocate thousands of Armenians trapped there. His articles on the Armenian Genocide should be collected and published as a book. Millions of readers will miss Fisk's voice, his prose, and his commitment to truth.



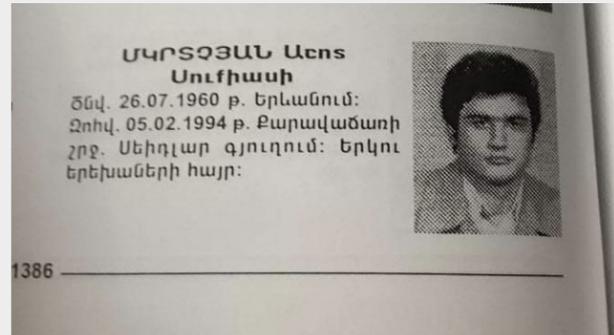
COMMENTARY

# The Heirs of the Artsakh War: The Generation Which Learned How to Share

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian

When we won the war in Artsakh in 1994, it felt like we conquered the entire world! But very soon that world was wrapped with a black ribbon engraved with the golden names of boys, uncles, fathers and grandfathers, who became the most mystical heroes for us. And we became the heirs of that war. I received my inheritance from my uncle, Ashot.

He left to fight one autumn day as quietly as he lived his life. He came to visit us for the last time. He sat down with my father, to have his last meal and have a last drink as a civilian. Maybe my father was trying to convince him not to leave. At least I was praying for him to do so. I never saw a real uniform.



The author's father

Gradually intensifying whispers reaching my bedroom and the slightly moving shoulder in camouflage were telling scary

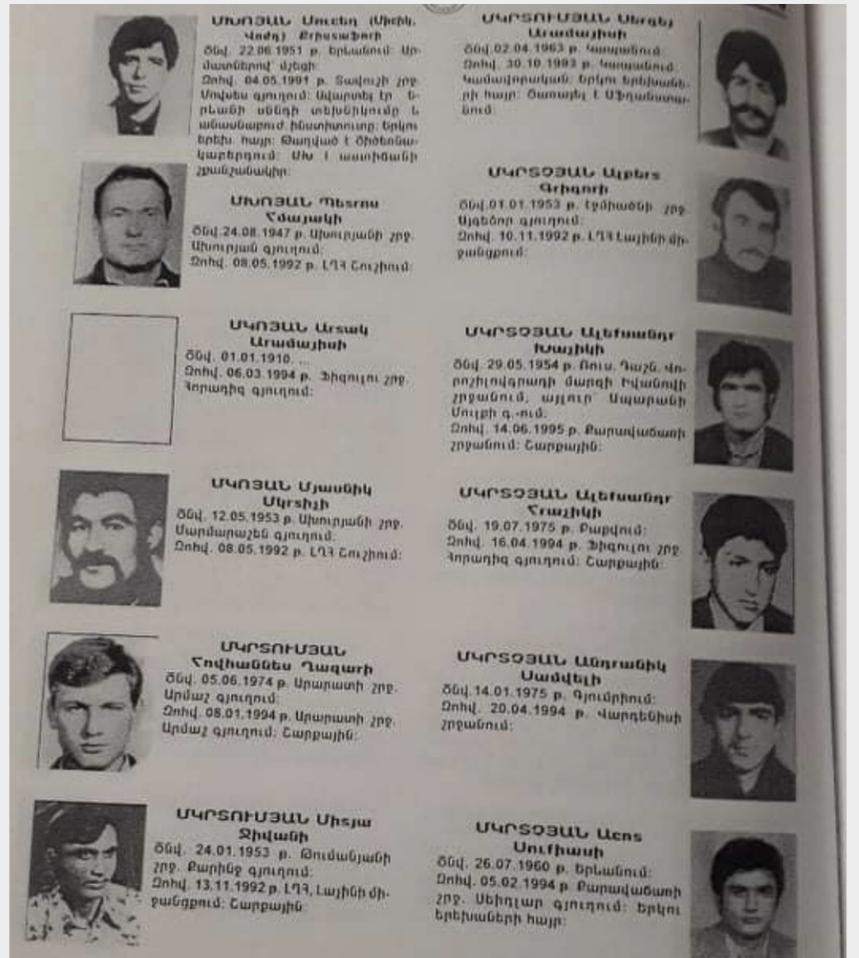
tales of the war that would soon become an inseparable part of our young lives.

Ashot was an ordinary guy, with a wife and two children. Ordinary in life and in the war. Never saw a firearm, never fired one. No heroic tales were published in books about him. But he was our hero; the hero of my childhood.

We didn't understand what the loss of a young man was. But I never called my own father mine again in front of my cousins. The war in Artsakh devoured the best of every single family in Armenia, leaving behind a generation of orphans and widows, the constant visitors of Yerablour, a 110-acre cemetery of fallen heroes on a mountain, celebrating their children's birthdays and graduations, weddings and christenings with the tall picture of a once-young man chiseled on a gravestone. Later, writer Sasoun Grigoryan wrote a whole book, an encyclopedia of heroes fallen during the war in Artsakh. Ashot was one of them, placed modestly on the corner of a page.

Thirty years later, the heirs of the first Artsakh war accepted their inheritance to fight again. On September 27, Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, using mercenaries from Syria, decided that there weren't enough gravestones in Yerablour.

But they didn't even know that these new soldiers never forgot the celebrations that their fathers missed. For more than a month now heroes are falling, heroes are fighting, and heroes are winning again. Once again, new heirs are coming to inherit their own destiny as



soldiers. Once again, the mountain is expanding in the silence of a desperate cry. Everyone is fighting his own fight, faithful to the victorious memory of that last winter.

I can still smell the smoke coming out of the wood oven which couldn't warm my tiny heart of a child, who learned the passing of her hero. I didn't know that my childhood will be forever wrapped in all the ribbons of no color, since the war took away my right to have a father of my own, instead leaving me one to share with my cousins for thirty years.

## President Biden Must Shut Down Azerbaijan's Sanctions Waiver on Day One

By Michael Rubin

The September 11, 2001, terror attacks brought a brief moment of unity to Americans but also ushered in a period of partisan foreign policy. During the Bush administration, Democrats drew partisan lines on the 2003 Iraq war, at least after they found little evidence that weapons of mass destruction existed. Republicans repaid the favor first on the Libya intervention, at least after the Benghazi debacle, and then on the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. Israel and Saudi Arabia remain firmly within progressive crosshairs.

Joe Biden has made healing partisan discord a pillar of his campaign. Should the former vice president wish to carry that promise over to foreign policy, then he would find no better place to start than leading a bipartisan effort to stop the Azerbaijani assault on Nagorno-Karabakh, or Artsakh as locals call it. Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous region historically populated by Armenians. Soviet premier Joseph Stalin, however, transferred the region to Azerbaijani control as he sought to undercut nationalism in the Caucasus. Decades of communism imposed from afar were not enough to undo millennia of culture and history, however. As the Soviet Union crumbled, violence erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan while Armenians in the mountainous region fought ethnic cleansing and sought to rejoin Armenia. In the fighting that followed, Armenians largely re-asserted control over Nagorno-Karabakh, and the region has acted as a de facto independent republic ever since.

Against the backdrop of the initial fighting and credible reports of ethnic cleansing,

Congress passed the Freedom Support Act, Section 907 of which determined U.S. aid "may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh." Azerbaijan has long argued this sanction was unfair given that the U.S. State Department recognizes and affirms the Stalin-era border changes, but initially found little support in Congress or the White House.

This changed after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Azerbaijani president Heydar Aliyev, father of current leader Ilham Aliyev and mastermind of the initial attempt to encircle Nagorno-Karabakh and drive out Armenians, allied himself with the United States in the wake of the Al Qaeda strikes and declared itself an ally in President George W. Bush's "Global War on Terror." Aliyev allowed Azerbaijan to be used for a number of counterterrorism operations, and the country also served as an important listening post as tensions mounted between the United States and Iran. The United Kingdom, perhaps motivated by British Petroleum's interests in Azerbaijan, encouraged the rapprochement as did Israel, which Azerbaijan cultivated both directly and through Jewish organizations in the United States.

As a reward for Azerbaijan's positioning itself as a U.S. ally in a time of need, Congress amended Section 907 to allow a presidential waiver of restrictions on aid to Azerbaijan if such a waiver "is necessary to support United States efforts to counter international terrorism; is necessary to support the operational readiness of United States Armed Forces or

coalition partners to counter international terrorism; is important to Azerbaijan's border security; and will not undermine or hamper ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia."

The current Azerbaijani offensive, however, violates each condition of the Section 907 waiver, most recently extended in March 2020 by Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun. Whereas first Heydar and then Ilham Aliyev once stood against Al Qaeda, Azerbaijan now works in conjunction with Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries, many of whom previously served Al Qaeda-linked groups or the Islamic State. In essence, Azerbaijan is following the lead of both Turkey and Pakistan, both of which often depict themselves as counterterrorism partners while covertly supporting anti-Western terrorists. As the aggressor, Azeri forces further make a mockery of their own border security concerns and also act to undermine any pretense to a peaceful settlement.

Azerbaijan publicly denies its aggression, but it hemorrhaged its credibility when its defense ministry posted a statement on Twitter that accused Armenia of ceasefire violations on Oct. 26, a move reminiscent of the 2013 incident when Baku accidentally released election results before the polls opened. Baku has also denied the presence of Syrian mercenaries transported into the theater by Turkey even as Azerbaijan-friendly journalists have interviewed the Syrians.

Since 2018, the year popular revolution restored democracy in Armenia, the U.S. government has provided over \$100 million in security assistance to Azerbaijan, even as that country continues its descent into authoritari-

anism. Rather than bring peace, this money now funds ethnic cleansing. On Oct. 28, Biden issued a statement calling on "the [Trump] administration [to] fully implement and not waive requirements under section 907 of the Freedom Support Act to stop the flow of military equipment to Azerbaijan, and call on Turkey and Russia to stop fueling the conflict with the supply of weapons and, in the case of Turkey, mercenaries."

During presidential campaigns, it is easy to play the role of backseat driver and question every decision the incumbent makes but let us hope that Biden and his aides are not merely posturing for political advantage. The current waiver of Section 907 violates the law upon which it is based and should be revoked immediately. That the State Department has turned a blind eye to Azeri violations and maintains the waiver is an affront to all Congressmen, whether Democrat or Republican.

Azerbaijan has shown the insincerity of both its counterterror commitments and its pledge to pursue a peaceful resolution of its dispute with Armenia. If Biden is victorious, then he can prove his rhetoric about working across the aisle to be sincere by establishing a broad, bipartisan coalition to end Azerbaijan's free pass and descent into terror complicity. As he rebuilds confidence across the aisle, he might then leverage that domestic coalition to restore consensus on other issues, from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Middle East to Asia. There is no stronger foreign policy than one rooted in bipartisan consensus and cooperation.

(Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. This commentary originally ran in the *National Interest*.)



## COMMENTARY

# Russian Ceasefire Deal in Nagorno-Karabakh Marks Slow, Painful End of Empire in the South Caucasus

By Mark Galeotti

Does the Russian-brokered ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan represent a victory for Moscow? The tragic coincidence with the shooting down of a Russian helicopter suggests that this is really about the Kremlin's efforts to manage its decline.

The trilateral deal essentially fixes Baku's recent territorial gains. Armenian forces have to withdraw from regions such as the politically-significant eastern district of Agdam and the strategically-crucial Lachin region, through which runs the main road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

That road, the so-called Lachin corridor, will remain open, a lifeline guaranteed by 1,960 Russian peacekeepers, who will also monitor the new line of contact. These troops, from the combat-experienced 31st Independent Guards Air Assault Brigade, have already arrived in-theatre.

While there is massive popular dissatisfaction in Armenia about Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's acceptance of the deal – he himself admitted it was “incredibly painful both for me and for our people” – this is essentially a fait accompli. It was also made all but inevitable by the fall of the strategic town of Shushi to Azerbaijan's forces, the gateway to Karabakh's main city, Stepanakert.

For Armenia, this at least staves off a more comprehensive defeat in Nagorno-Karabakh. For Azerbaijan, whose forces had taken heavy losses to get this far, President Ilham Aliyev has been able to crow that this represented Yerevan's “capitulation.”

But what does it mean for Moscow? The Kremlin has long regarded the South Caucasus as part of its “Near Abroad” sphere of influence. Not an empire as such, but a region in which it

has to be acknowledged as regional hegemon.

Its inability and seeming unwillingness to control this six-week war had become increasingly problematic, especially as Armenia – unlike Azerbaijan, still a member of the CSTO, Russia's increasingly-threadbare answer to NATO – was suffering attacks even on its own territory.

This was all the more serious given Turkey's extensive and evident support for Azerbaijan. It is not just that the Azerbaijanis were deploying Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones to deadly effect, but Ankara has deployed F-16 fighters to Ganja airport, presumably to deter Armenian attacks, and according to admittedly contested reports have also sent Syrian mercenaries and command personnel.

This represented a clear challenge to Russian regional hegemony. In that context, it is noticeable that the ceasefire deal was a trilateral one, concluded between Moscow, Baku and Erevan (although Aliyev also claims that Turkey will play a role in monitoring the deal).

So is this Moscow finally asserting its role as regional hegemon? Not so much.

Armenia, which put its faith in Russia's protection against larger, richer and far better armed Azerbaijan, has in effect been forced to accept defeat. While some might see it pleased also to undermine Pashinyan, as a liberal elevated by one of the infamous ‘color revolutions’ that so exercise the Kremlin, it is hard to see that any alternative government would be any more friendly, now. Armenians do not appear to be considering the Russians as their saviors.

Azerbaijan is triumphant – but its triumph, while recognized by Russia, was really delivered by Turkey. Aliyev makes no bones about this, and in his speech about the ceasefire referred to Putin in neutral terms while thanking “my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan.”

#### Managing decline

Russia may have the role of peacekeeper, but

it is worth noting that this is an additional burden on its military and treasury. It does bake a role for itself into the geopolitics of the region, to be sure, but this was a part of the world in which it was already meant to be dominant? When you have to escalate your commitment to retain your position, that does not seem a sign of progress so much as laboring to hold back decline.

Whether or not Turkish officers do end up working in the new peacekeeping center for ceasefire control is in many ways irrelevant. In a pattern reminiscent of the changing orientation in Central Asia – where Moscow retains the overt trappings of hegemony, while behind the scenes Beijing's economic power is increasingly dominant – so too in the South Caucasus, Russia is having to accept new players in what was once its unquestioned backyard.

The irony is that it is not that Russia did not have the political and military muscle to act more quickly and decisively, had it wanted to.

The response to the shooting down of its aircraft in many ways demonstrates a decay in Moscow's will, its capacity to maintain its imperial pretensions that has been evident for some time.

On the same day as the ceasefire agreement, an Azerbaijani surface-to-air missile shot down a Russian Mi-24 helicopter gunship well in Armenian airspace as it was escorting a Russian military convoy to its 102nd Military Base in Gyumri. Two crewmen were killed.

Baku has extended its apologies, after a fashion. Although the action was well away from the conflict zone, the Azeris highlighted that it was flying at night and at low altitude – hardly surprising for a convoy escort – and “in the context of these factors and in light of the tense situation in the region and increased combat readiness in connection with possible provocations of the Armenian side, the duty combat crew decided to open fire to kill.”

An immediate parallel has been drawn with the shooting down in November 2015 of a Russian Su-24 bomber that was involved in combat operations in northern Syria when it cut across Turkish airspace. Then, a clearly furious Putin denounced the act as a “stab in the back by terrorist accomplices.” Sanctions were then imposed on everything from package holidays to Turkish tomatoes.

Moscow's bluster ended up masking weakness. Eventually, Erdogan delivered his condolences, carefully framed not to be an apology. Nonetheless, the Kremlin chose to pretend that this is exactly what had been offered, and the sanctions were lifted.

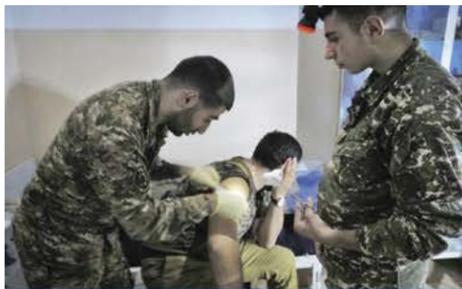
Moscow pretended that honor had been satisfied. In fact, Erdogan had outstared Putin.

Likewise, this time the Russian Foreign Ministry expressed its satisfaction that “Baku immediately admitted its guilt.. We also note the assurances given by the Azerbaijani side that an operative investigation of this incident will be carried out.”

In other words, the matter is over, and the two dead pilots will not be avenged or likely even remembered.

This is neither mature statecraft nor self-confident hegemony. This is managing decline, a Russia that in regional terms is strong in capacities, weak in will, trying to make the best of a situation, and in the process disappointing its allies and doing nothing to deter its challengers. All one can say is that at least the guns are silent now – but for how long?

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