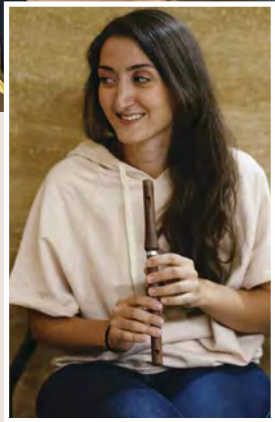




Tekeyan Cultural Association Allocates \$100,000 To Armenia Fund to Support Artsakh

WATERTOWN — At an urgently convened Central Board meeting, the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) voted to allocate \$100,000 to the Armenia Fund in support of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). This decision was taken in light of Karabakh's existential struggle which has mobilized the entire Armenian people around the world.

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Sevana Tchakerian Is Fighting Back With Her Only Weapon: Music

Story on page 13

War Shows No Sign of Abating

Increased Turkish, Mercenary Involvement

STEPANAKERT (Combined Sources) — The war in Artsakh (Karabakh) has shown no signs of slowing down, despite the declaration of a third cease fire earlier in the week, following the meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Geneva.

The Azerbaijani use of cluster bombs has destroyed huge chunks of Shushi and Stepanakert, including the latter's central market.

Throughout the evening of November 3 the Azeri air force bombed Martuni, Shushi was bombarded, and the Shahumyan region's residential areas with PC30 missiles.

The shelling again has extended into Armenia.

One civilian was killed and several others were injured in Azerbaijan's shelling of the village of Davit Bek, Syunik Province in Armenia, Defense Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said Monday, November 2.

"Today, at around 6:10 pm, the Azerbaijani side opened artillery fire in the direction of the positions of the Armed Forces of Armenia and the settlement of Davit Bek, as a result of which one civilian was killed and two others were wounded," Stepanyan said on Facebook.

On November 3, Azerbaijani troops attempted to launch an assault against the Nagorno-Karabakh army three times within one hour but were successfully repelled.

According to information provided by the Defense Army, at 1:30 pm, Azerbaijani soldiers fired smoke bombs to try to retrieve the bodies of their peers from a gorge in the direction of Karvachar. However, the Armenian side's artillery fire made the group turn back, leaving two more bodies.

see FISK, page 9

see KARABAKH, page 2

Robert Fisk: Middle East Correspondent of *The Independent* dies aged 74

DUBLIN, Ireland (Combined Sources) — Robert Fisk, a veteran Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* and the most celebrated journalist of his era, died on October 30 after an illness. He was 74.



Fisk was renowned for his courage in questioning official narratives from governments and publishing what he uncovered in frequently brilliant prose.

He joined *The Independent* in 1989 from *The Times* and rapidly became its most recognizable writer and searched-for byline. He continued to write for *The Independent* until his death in Dublin.

France to Ban Turkish 'Grey Wolves' after Defacement of Armenian Memorial

LYON, France (Combined Sources) — France is to ban a Turkish ultra-nationalist group known as the Grey Wolves, the interior minister said Monday, November 2, after a memorial to victims of the Armenian Genocide was defaced over the weekend.

The dissolution of the Grey Wolves will be put to the French cabinet on Wednesday, Gérald Darmanin told a parliamentary committee.

"To put it mildly, we are talking about a particularly aggressive group," he said.

His announcement came after a memorial center outside Lyon dedicated to the Armenian Genocide was defaced with pro-Turkish slogans including "Grey Wolves" and "RTE" in reference to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

see GREY WOLVES, page 4



The National Armenian Memorial Centre was daubed with the giant letters 'RTE', in reference to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and with the words 'Grey Wolves'. © Jeff Pachoud, AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kocharyan Contracts COVID

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Despite no obstacles from the government Armenia's former President Robert Kocharyan has not been able to leave for Moscow for "discussions with Russian elites" over ways to end the Nagorno-Karabakh war due to testing positive for the novel coronavirus, his office said on Friday, October 30.

Earlier, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's spokesperson Mane Gevorgyan revealed that still on October 20 the current Armenian leader effectively gave the green light to Kocharyan and another former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian to use their ties and political clout in Russia to get concrete proposals for ending hostilities with Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Stressing that he could not raise objections to any possible step for the benefit of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Prime Minister Pashinyan agreed to that proposal," said Gevorgyan, adding that according to her information neither Kocharyan nor Ter-Petrosian have made the trip yet.

Kocharyan's office issued a statement on Friday, clarifying that the proposal to travel to Moscow had come from former Karabakh leaders Arkady Ghukasyan and Bako Sahakyan. But it said that despite supporting the idea, Kocharyan could not leave for Moscow immediately due to being confined to country limits as a defendant in a trial who had been released from detention on bail.

"It was only after Ghukasyan and Sahakyan had a conversation with the prime minister, the court allowed Kocharyan to leave the country with an exit deadline of November 7, and his passport was returned to him," the statement said.

Paris Deputy Mayor Toranian Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian received on November 3 Deputy Mayor of Paris Anouch Toranian, the Presidential Office announced.

The meeting sides mainly discussed the ongoing Azerbaijani-Turkish aggression against Artsakh, the current situation caused by it and the support to the Artsakh-Armenians who are under the target of hostilities.

The sides expressed concern over the non-observance of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan, its targeting of civilian infrastructure and civilians in Artsakh which result in casualties and injuries.

Sarkissian and Toranian also discussed the activities carried out by the Diaspora, in particular the Armenian structures in France, as well as the deepening of partnership between administrative-territorial bodies of Armenia and France.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Azeri Troops Continue Posting Evidence of War Crimes

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijani troops continue publishing videos of the war crimes they commit against Armenian soldiers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

In a video spread by social media users, an Azerbaijani soldier is seen stabbing the face of a fallen Armenian serviceman with a knife multiple times. Both ears of the Armenian soldier are cut off.

The Azerbaijanis earlier filmed their torture and brutal murder of two Armenian prisoners of war, one of them a civilian. In another video published by Twitter users, an Azerbaijani soldier is seen using a handgun to shoot a wounded Armenian serviceman in the head at close range.

Prisoners of war from Nagorno-Karabakh are regularly made fun of by Azeri troops who also mutilate bodies of fallen Armenian servicemen.

Azerbaijan, with help from Turkey and Syrian and Libyan mercenaries deployed by Ankara, started a war against Karabakh (Artsakh) in the morning of September 27. The Armenian side has reported deaths and injuries both among the civilian population and the military. Foreign and local journalists too have been injured in Azeri shelling of towns and villages.

Russia Urges External Players to Leave Karabakh

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — Russia calls on external players to use their capacities to prevent the deployment of mercenaries from the Middle East to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone, as their number is already approaching 2000, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview to Kommersant on November 3.

“We, of course, are concerned over the internationalization of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the involvement of militants from the Middle East. We have repeatedly called on the external players to use their capacities to prevent the transfer of mercenaries whose number in the conflict zone is already reaching 2000 according to the existing data. This topic was discussed in particular during the October 27 telephone conversation of Russian President Vladimir Putin with President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, as well as during the regular contacts with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. We continue persistently pushing forward our position through various channels,” Lavrov said.

Yerevan Condemns Attacks in Vienna

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The terrorist attack in Vienna on November 2, once again attest to the fact that in no way could the world community afford selective approaches in the fight against international terrorism, as it is the greatest menace to mankind on our times, President of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan wrote on his Facebook page.

“No state is immune to terrorism, and I believe terrorism must not be associated with any particular civilization, religion, nationality or ethnic group.

“We express our deep sympathies and condolences to the families of victims of the terrorist attacks and wish the wounded speedy recovery.

“It has been more than a month that in full view of the international community Artsakh became a target of terrorism, combating aspirations and attempts of Azerbaijan and Turkey to turn the South Caucasus into a new hotbed of international terrorism.

“The Republic of Artsakh faces terrorism and crimes against humanity, suffering human and tangible material loss.

“We strongly condemn any attempt whereby communities are subjected to terrorism, and the civilian population is targeted deliberately on the grounds of ethnic or religious belonging.

“Any attempt to justify those encouraging, sponsoring or perpetrating terrorism and extremism, as well as those inciting hate crime and violence, should be unequivocally condemned,” he wrote.



Shushi damage

War Shows No Sign of Abating

KARABAKH, from page 1

At 1:40 pm, the Azerbaijani forces tried to break through with a group of 30 men in the same direction, but their advance was stopped with high-precision grenade fire from the Artsakh Defense Army units, as a result of which the adversary, suffering losses, retreated to their original positions.

At 2:30pm, the Artsakh servicemen spotted the accumulation of Azeri troops and destroyed four enemy soldiers who were trying to hide.

“The operative situation in Karvachar and other areas is under the control of units of the Artsakh Defense Army,” Karabakh authorities said.

Russia, Turkey Consultations

Russia will continue cooperating with Turkey and use its entire influence in the region to prevent a military solution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview to Kommersant newspaper.

Lavrov said that Moscow and Ankara are close partners and are able to display a flexible and pragmatic approach and cooperate with each other in a strategic vision.

He pointed out Syria and Libya to be the obvious examples of practical and substantive cooperation between the Russian and Turkish diplomats, militaries and intelligence agencies.

“The situation in case of Nagorno Karabakh principally differs, and I’ve partially spoken about this in my answers to the previous questions. I repeat, we have never hidden and we aren’t hiding that we are not in favor of a solution to the crisis by force, we seek a speedy halt in combat operations,” Lavrov said.

Lavrov emphasized that both the parties to the conflict, as well as their foreign partners should steadily adhere to the agreements on ceasefire, the creation of verification mechanisms and the re-launch of substantive negotiations by a concrete timetable.

“And although it wasn’t possible to achieve a stable ceasefire at once, we will continue using our entire influence in the region, we will work with our Turkish colleagues, in order to stop the further development of a military scenario, so that dialogue gets established between the sides, and so that we convince Baku and Yerevan to come to the negotiations table,” Lavrov said.

Aliyev on November 1 repeated Baku’s demand that Armenia withdraw from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas and warned that Azerbaijani troops would “go to the end” if negotiations cannot achieve that goal.

He was speaking during a meeting with the delegation led by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Baku.

Armenia has a security guarantee from Russia through a bilateral treaty and via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on October 31 formally asked Moscow to start consultations on the “type and amount” of assistance that Moscow can provide to Armenia.

According to Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter sent to Putin Pashinyan presented in detail the current situation and challenges created by the “Azerbaijani-Turkish military aggression” against Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian leader particularly emphasized the deployment in the conflict zone of “foreign terrorist fighters” from the Middle East and their involvement in military operations against Nagorno-Karabakh, the Ministry said.

“Taking into account the fact that hostilities are approaching the borders of Armenia as well as the encroachments on the territory of the Republic of Armenia that have already taken place, the prime minister of the Republic of Armenia has turned to the president of the Russian Federation for an immediate holding of consultations in order to define the type and amount of assistance that the Russian Federation can provide to the Republic of Armenia to ensure its security based on the allied relations between Armenia and Russia and Article 2 of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of August 29, 1997,” the statement released by Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Russia has reaffirmed its commitment to Armenia under the treaty invoked by Pashinyan.

In a statement issued later on Saturday Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that “under the treaty Russia will render all necessary assistance to Yerevan if military operations take place directly on the territory of Armenia.”

At the same time, Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs again called on the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to halt military operations immediately, deescalate the situation and return to “substantive negotiations” to achieve a peaceful settlement.

War Crimes by Azerbaijan

The U.N. human rights chief said on Monday, November 2, that artillery strikes in Nagorno-Karabakh could amount to war crimes and she urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to halt attacks on civilian areas, schools and hospitals.

Despite a deal reached in Geneva last Friday by Armenia and Azerbaijan to refrain from deliberately targeting civilians, artillery salvos against populated areas were reported over the weekend, Michelle Bachelet said, citing strikes on the central market in Stepanakert and the city of Tartar.

“While many faked images have been circulating on social media, in-depth investigations by media organizations into videos that appeared to show Azerbaijani troops summarily executing two captured Armenians in military uniforms uncovered compelling and deeply disturbing information,” Bachelet said in a statement said, noting it could also be a war crime under the Geneva Conventions.

Senior Commander Dies

The Artsakh military’s press service on November 2 released the names of 11 more servicemen killed in action since the start of hostilities on September 27, which raises the total death toll among their forces to 1,174.

Among those 11 is also deputy commander of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Defense Army, Colonel Artur Sarkisyan. Nagorno-Karabakh’s Defense Minister, Lieutenant-General Jalal Harutyunyan was replaced last week after being wounded.

The Azerbaijani military death toll is estimated to be 7095.

continued on next page



ARMENIA

Armenian PM to *Post*: Israel Joins Forces with the Devil

YEREVAN (*Jerusalem Post*) – Israel has lined up with Turkey, terrorists and Syrian mercenaries in backing Azerbaijan in the current conflict with Armenia, and will eventually suffer the consequence of that unholy alliance, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told the *Jerusalem Post* in an exclusive interview on Monday, November 2.

By Herb Keinon

Pashinyan, speaking from Yerevan through an interpreter via Zoom, blasted Jerusalem for arming Azerbaijan, which he said is intent on “carrying out genocide against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.”

While Israel has not commented formally on the fighting and the Foreign Ministry is trying to keep Israel out of the conflict, Pashinyan said Israel is now very actively engaged in the conflict, “because Israeli UAVs [drones] are actively used in the war against Nagorno-Karabakh.”

Armenia recalled its ambassador to Israel for consultations in early October – just two weeks after it opened an embassy in Tel Aviv – to protest arms sales to its enemy.

“I think that Israel should think about the following,” the prime minister said. “Mercenaries, Islamic terrorists and Israel are now on the same side basically. So Israel should think, is this really a convenient position for it to be?”

Israel should also ponder, he made clear, whether it really wants to be on the same side in the conflict as Turkey, which he claims has moved thousands of Syrian mercenaries into Azerbaijan to fight against Nagorno-Karabakh.

President Reuven Rivlin, soon after Armenia recalled its ambassador, called his Armenian counterpart and offered humanitarian aid. Asked whether his country would be interested in Israeli humanitarian aid, Pashinyan replied bitterly: “Humanitarian aid by a country that is selling weapons to mercenaries, which they are using to strike a civilian peaceful population? I propose that Israel send that aid to the mercenaries and to the terrorists as the logical continuation of its activities.”

Israel has emerged over the last decade as Azerbaijan’s largest arms supplier, followed by Russia and Belarus. Israel views Azerbaijan, because of its strategic location on Iran’s border and the fact that it provides Israel with a large percentage of its oil needs, as one of its most important strategic allies.

Israel’s ties with Armenia, which has strong relations with neighboring Iran, as well as with Russia, have warmed up in recent years, and before the recall of the ambassador could have been characterized as “cordial.”

Pashinyan said the involvement of Turkey and Syrian mercenaries in the conflict has badly complicated the situation: “Their presence in the region poses a threat not only to Nagorno-Karabakh, but also Iran has stated that it views it as a threat, and Russia has stated that it views it as a threat.”

The Armenian prime minister said that while in the past there was only indirect evidence that Turkey was mobilizing Syrian mercenaries to fight in Azerbaijan, now there is concrete evidence since two mercenaries were recently captured by Nagorno-Karabakh forces.

“One of them has testified comprehensively, and said that he was living in a Turkish-controlled Syrian refugee camp. He described how he was recruited, described where they became engaged, and how they crossed the border into Turkey at an official check point, but without anyone asking them any questions or checking them.”

Pashinyan said the mercenaries were being promised \$2,000 a month.

The prime minister said that what was so dangerous about this situation, and why the international community should take note and action against it, is because it represents a new Turkish modus operandi – what he called a “mechanism” – in its aim to “reinstate the Ottoman Empire, as strange as that may sound.”

This “mechanism” – recruiting mercenaries from among the Syrian population under Turkish control to advance Ankara’s foreign policy goals – has already been used in Libya, is now evident in Nagorno-Karabakh, “and who knows where it will

be tried next,” he said.

“This is a totally new mechanism that has been put into place, and this mechanism may be manifested in different places and in different ways” as long as the international community does not respond.

“I am very glad that many countries in the Middle East, including many Arab countries, are making the proper assessment and calling this by its name, understanding what a threat this poses to international peace and stability,” he said.

Pashinyan said that certain “shifts are taking place in the international security system, and that those shifts also contain elements of hybrid warfare. Mercenaries are engaging in that warfare. And that hybrid warfare can be manifested in different ways –it can be manifested in ways which we see in Nagorno-Karabakh, or in ways in which we are seeing in Vienna, or in Nice, in France,” all recent sites of terror, or attempted terror acts, by Islamists.

The world needs to look at this new activity by Turkey and draw the necessary conclusions, because it will use this new way of implementing its foreign policy elsewhere as well, he predicted.

“Israel should ask itself the question – is it not fighting de facto alongside mercenaries against Nagorno-Karabakh? Is this a convenient position for it? If it is, God be with it. But I think that there will be specific consequences, and you will have to face those consequences.”

Pashinyan said it was only a matter of time before Turkey’s “imperialistic ambition” will be aimed toward Israel.

Asked if he was warning that at some point Turkey would mobilize Syrian mercenaries to march on Jerusalem, the prime minister said he was not warning about anything specific, but rather about the creation of a “political environment and political atmosphere, and the gaps which have emerged in the international security system. And if there are gaps, corridors and loopholes, somebody will try to pass through them. And this won’t necessarily be in one area, or in two areas, there will be traffic in all possible directions.”

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Mercenaries

Meanwhile, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has called for an international inquiry into the alleged participation of mercenaries from Syria and Libya on Azerbaijan’s side in the conflict.

“This issue should be the subject of an international inquiry,” Pashinyan said on Facebook after the Armenian side had shown videos of interrogations of two Syrian fighters that Armenians say were taken prisoner on the battlefield.

Both Azerbaijan and its ally, Turkey, have denied the involvement of mercenaries in the hostilities.

Armenia has accused Turkey and Azerbaijan of seeking to give the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh an inter-religious character by bringing in jihadists from the Middle East to fight there.

In a statement released on November 1 Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that at least two mercenaries from Syria had been captured by Nagorno-Karabakh’s ethnic Armenian defense army during the fighting with Azerbaijan in the region.

Nagorno-Karabakh’s de facto ethnic Armenian authorities showed videos of two men whom said they had been recruited in Syria by Turkey to fight for Azerbaijan for a monthly pay of \$2,000. One of them said they were also promised an extra payment for each “beheaded infidel.”

“The transfer of jihadists to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone reveals the intentions of the Turkish-Azerbaijani leadership to give the conflict an inter-religious character,” Armenia’s ministry said.

“This is a completely new manifestation of the expansion of terrorism, when foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists from the Middle East have been deployed to the conflict zone in the OSCE area; it is a serious threat to international and regional security and stability,” the statement added, stressing that “Armenia will continue to undertake consistent steps in the fight against international terrorism, in that regard cooperating with all interested partners.”

Russia, France, the United States, Iran and other countries and international organizations have also voiced their concern about



Azerbaijan’s Use of Phosphorous Munitions Causes Huge Fires in Karabakh

YEREVAN (ARKA) – More than 150 hectares of forests owned by the rural community of Nngi in Nagorno-Karabakh have been on fire for the third day because of the use of weapons containing white phosphorus by Azerbaijani troops, the Artsakh Information Headquarters reported citing the head of the Nngi community of the Martuni region.

It is also noted that the enemy is constantly keeping at gunpoint Nngi and adjacent territories.

“Fortunately, as a result of today’s shelling, human losses were avoided,” said the head of the community.

credible reports of Syrian mercenaries being involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh fighting.

Yerevan’s arguments on the presence of mercenaries on the Azerbaijani side have also been supported by multiple investigative reports by Western journalists, some of which alleged that Turkey began recruiting

jihadist fighters to be later deployed in Azerbaijan as early as July.

In an interview with RFE/RL’s Armenian Service (Azatutyun) last month one such journalist, Lindsey Snell, estimated that the number of Syrian mercenaries fighting for Azerbaijan at one point was around 2,000.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based human rights organization, at least 217 Turkish-backed Syrian mercenaries have been killed in the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh.

(RFE/RL, Reuters, Armenpress and Panarmenian.net contributed to this report.)



Police Vow Tougher Approach as COVID Cases Spike Amid Karabakh War

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's police have warned citizens to abide by the mandatory rule of wearing face masks in all public spaces or face fines as the numbers of new coronavirus cases and resulting deaths have soared

2,000 new cases and several dozen deaths a day during the last week or so.

Since the start of the epidemic in March, more than 93,000 people have tested positive for the novel coron-

deaths per million).

According to the Health Ministry, hospitals in Armenia are overwhelmed with coronavirus patients, with as many as 576 people needing hospitalization currently on the waiting list due to the shortage of hospital beds.

The healthcare situation in Armenia is complicated by an ongoing armed conflict with Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh from where hundreds of wounded ethnic Armenian servicemen and scores of civilians have been brought to Armenia for treatment since the hostilities began on September 27.

Government officials and healthcare specialists in Armenia believe that the war situation has largely affected the epidemiological state of affairs as people — servicemen, volunteers, others involved in wartime activities — began to care less about social-distancing and mask-wearing rules, which have been mandatory in Armenia for months and at one point in September admittedly led to a dramatic decrease in the infection rate.

Deputy Chief of Armenia's Police Ara Fidanyan warned citizens on Monday, November 2, that from now on police officers will pay greater attention to enforcing the anti-epidemic rules by fining those who break them. He acknowledged that in recent weeks Armenian law-enforcement bodies have been more preoccupied with duties emanating from the current martial law regime, issuing much fewer fines for breaking anti-epidemic rules.

"Although we have mainly focused our efforts on ensuring the legal regime of martial law, we are now engaging additional forces, including female police officers, in the fight against the novel coronavirus," Fidanyan said, adding that control will also cover public transport.

Failing to wear a facemask in public spaces in Armenia, including in public transport, may result in a fine of 10,000 drams (about \$20) imposed on the offender. Citizens caught breaking the rule may be fined an additional 10,000 drams if they have no passport or other ID around them.



in recent days amid continuing Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In what appears to be a second and much stronger wave of the pandemic Armenia has been recording more than

avirus in a country with a population of about 3 million. According to Armenian health officials, 1,391 of these people have so far died from COVID-19, making it one of the highest COVID-19 death rates in the world (469

France to Ban Turkish 'Grey Wolves' after Defacement of Armenian Memorial

GREY WOLVES, from page 1

The incident in the town of Décines-Charpieu came against a background of intense communal tensions in France between its Armenian minority and the Turkish community over the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Four people were wounded outside Lyon last Wednesday in clashes between suspected Turkish nationalists and Armenians protesting against Azerbaijan's military offensive.

Hate speech against Armenians has surged amid the ongoing hostilities in Karabakh, with Turks and Azerbaijanis declaring what they call "a hunt of Armenians" and threatening them. For example, a group of Turks in France attacked Armenians rallying to protest Azerbaijan's aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh, and hit two of the rally-goers with hammers on October 28.

Hundreds of Turkish ultranationalists marched through the streets of two French towns on October 29, chanting threats against Armenians, as tensions over the war in Nagorno-Karabakh boiled over.

A French anti-racism group and an organization representing France's Armenian community said what they called the "hunt for Armenians" was orchestrated by the Grey Wolves, a militant Turkish ultranationalist group which is active in Western Europe and banned in a number of countries, including Austria. Footage of the marches, which took place on Wednesday night, was circulated on Twitter accounts featuring wolf emojis and references to the Turkish name of the ultranationalist organization, Bozkurtlar.

The International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) and CCAF, the Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations in France, both called Thursday for the Grey Wolves to be banned.

"French people of Armenian origin must be able to live in France in safety, without being targeted by acts of violence and racial hatred," the CCAF said in a statement.

A spokesperson for the CCAF, who did not want to be named for security reasons, said no Armenians were injured during the intimidating marches, as most people were at home due to coronavirus restrictions.

The move by Darmanin risks further stoking tensions with Ankara.

In Turkey, the Grey Wolves are closely linked to the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) of Devlet Bahçeli that had a political alliance with Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP).



The National Armenian Memorial Centre was daubed with the giant letters 'RTE', in reference to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and with the words 'Grey Wolves'. © Jeff Pachoud, AFP

The Grey Wolves caused havoc on the streets in Turkey during the 1970s and 1980s when its members frequently clashed with leftist activists.

There have been weeks of tensions between France and Turkey, which reached a peak last month when Erdogan questioned President Emmanuel Macron's mental health.

France responded by taking the highly unusual step of recalling its ambassador to Ankara for consultations.

Macron in an interview with Al-Jazeera on Saturday accused Turkey of adopting a "bellicose" stance towards its NATO allies, saying tensions could ease if Erdogan showed respect and did not tell lies.

There have also been weeks of tensions between France and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean, Syria, and Libya.

Tensions have risen further after the beheading of a French schoolteacher who showed his pupils cartoons mocking Islam's Prophet Mohammed.

In the wake of the killing, Macron has defended free speech, including the right to mock religion, triggering sharp rhetoric from Erdogan and a call to boycott French goods in Turkey.

France has also been taking steps to ban radical Islamist groups.

(With reporting by AFP, dpa, France 24 and RFE/RL)



INTERNATIONAL

Alain Navarra-Navassartian:

'For Me Armenia Is the Place of Active Belonging'

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GENEVA/YEREVAN — Alain-Barkev Navarra-Navassartian was born in Paris and resides in Geneva. He has studied at University of Sorbonne and Columbia University, New York City. He is a doctor in art history, PhD in sociology in Italy and the United States, vice-president of the association "Invitation to knowledge" and president of the NGO "Hystart." He is actively in touch with his colleagues in Armenia, initiating various social and cultural projects, teaching tourist guides to discover and study subjects of the history of art...

Alain, your name and surname hint your belonging of two peoples and cultures, Western and Armenian. How this combination influences on you as specialist and person?

Indeed, I come from a mixed family: an Italian-American father with Hispanic and Maltese origins and an Armenian mother. I was raised by my maternal grandparents, who were Armenians, so Armenian culture is at the heart of my learning as a child and teenager and even my adult life. However, I had to develop identity strategies in order not to give up my mother's culture (speaking the language, attending Armenian school, etc.) There was an objective identity but also a subjective one. And this is the great gift that my grandparents gave me: the freedom of the sense of identity, the adherence to my Armenian identity is my choice.

There is a voluntary dimension in this choice; it is not only logic of collective belonging, but also logic of private trajectory. I am therefore comfortable with all my "legacies." This freedom offered by my family has had a significant impact on my life and professional choices. First of all, I was led to rethink the definition of "culture" as the grandson of stateless people, and belonging to a group that has always appeared as the paragon of integration in the host country. Beyond beliefs and practices, a culture is characterized by ways of thinking about the world, the individuals, the family, etc. My education has allowed me to understand that I am not the mirror of a single cultural belonging without betraying family loyalties. The Narek echoed Saint Francis of Assisi as Vahé Oshagan echoed French existentialism.

My taste for art history and the arts, in general, is more a matter of family heritage. My grandfather had started studying architecture in Turkey, he painted and knew many Armenian artists in Paris. My grandmother was a musician. On the other hand, growing up in a diasporic family, marked by exile and the difficulties of integration in the host country certainly had an impact: the dialectic of absence and presence, of the said and the unspoken, etc., was not always easy to understand. I have always refused the place assigned to the Armenian group: a group with a ritualized memory in a social and spatial inter-self. Through the experience of my grandparents and my mother, the history of minorities imposed itself on me. And this is the subject of my sociology studies

Unlike many diaspora-born people, even being half Armenian, you are very connected to Armenia.

I am indeed very close to Armenia, first of all by my family history; my aunt came to Armenia in 1948. She studied there and started a family. So we came to Armenia during the Soviet period and I have family there. But I also created my own network of dear friends. I carried out various activities with my association and other associations: teaching, participating in social-economic projects, organizing cultural trips, etc.

My link with Armenia is essential for me; I come there three to four times a year. Armenia is the place where I can avoid the diasporic standardization of identity. It is a country with all that it entails: social and cultural differences, meetings with a multitude of personalities, diversity. But I never come to find the "promised land," a kind of imagined country, the center of amenity. First of all, because I refuse this idea of center and periphery. There are only centers that must work together. I never seek homogeneity when I am in Armenia, but on the contrary all the variations of a living population. My position is therefore quite clear: I am a subject of the diaspora but an active participant in a collective history, that of the Armenians. Armenia is for me the place of active belonging. I am among my people, confronted with various realities (pleasant or not) but also with creative and cultural bubbling. But the most obvious link is the love I have for the country and for my people who know how to show the greatest dignity in all difficulties.

In 2007 you published a study in English with an unusual title, "Armenian landscapes in contemporary art and architecture landscape of symbols, landscape of the built environment, landscape of dreams." As an art specialist what do you consider special in Armenian landscape for modern art and architecture?



In order to understand the culture of a people, its history, the signs of its existence, the study of the natural environment is essential. The distinctive characteristics of the place (climate, vegetation, altitude, natural resources, etc.) incite man to make precise choices and this is a particularly determining fact in geographical territories with a very pronounced character such as Armenia. For example, the presence of Mount Ararat on the territory is a milestone like all sacred mountains (Fuji-Yama, or Olympus) with a strong symbolic meaning, such as its verticality and the notion of elevation that it signifies. It is a "sacred" sign. It is an unchanged part of the Armenian landscape. But that will suppose a way of reading and analyzing the space, of representing it if necessary outside of the sensory grasp, of schematizing it in order to offer it for aesthetic appreciation, of loading it with meanings and emotions.

Thus multiple logics determine the way of understanding space. Beliefs, expectations, cultural references, the drawing of imaginary places. There is no virgin perception. Other landscapes appeared with the social-economic upheavals of the post-independence period: industrial wastelands or the construction of new districts, or the destruction of certain historic areas of Yerevan such as the rehabilitation of Firdus. These landscapes and their modifications are obviously important for each individual and for artists as well. The landscape and how it is read, or how it is put into art, varies from individual to individual, but also from group to group, and is constantly changing over time. There is a historicity of the landscape. The landscape I was talking about in this text is the post-independence landscape, the one built during the entry into a poorly managed market economy (shopping malls, poorly planned urbanization, etc.) and this has generated an infinity of experiences for artists. The landscape is the personal and common history made visible and what has been interesting is to see how the awareness of these changes has been rendered by the artists, through the awareness of place. "All things are somewhere and in one place" (Aristotle).

The question of landscape reflects social, economic and cultural issues. The specificity of a neighborhood has an influence on collective identity by having a symbolic resonance. The overall destruction of this type in the center of Yerevan raises the question of these urban landscapes emptied of collective experience and social interaction.

The simplest or most banal of landscapes is at once social and natural, subjective and objective, natural and cultural production, real and symbolic. I would take as an example the remarkable work of a group of Armenian students that we carried out on Yerrord Mas (Third) district in Yerevan, documented by photos. The anthropological, sociological and artistic work that reveals how a landscape, thought of as ordinary, takes on an emblematic dimension. This work has become a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between territory and collective identity.

This year the book by contemporary Armenian writer Aram Pachyan has been translated. (See review on Page 13).

It is important, for me, to defend contemporary creation, including Armenian, with a certain desire to think about the links between art, knowledge and action, so to look for creators who use, in a certain way, the force of opposition of art, those which endeavor to create, voluntarily or not, an "intervening thought" according to the expression of Berthold Brecht. It is not a question of opposing forms of artistic

see BELONGING, page 6

International News

UEFA Investigates Azeri Soccer Team over Hate Speech

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Union of European Football Association (UEFA) has launched an investigation after an official from the Azerbaijani club Qarabag posted a hate message targeting Armenians, the European football's governing body said Monday, November 2.

"An Ethics and Disciplinary Inspector has been appointed today to conduct a disciplinary investigation regarding the statements made on social media by a Qarabag FK official," a message on the UEFA website said. "Information in regards to this investigation will be made available in due course."

The Qarabag FK official is Nurlan Ibrahimov, a PR and media manager of the club who called for killing "all the Armenians, including women, children and elderly, without distinction."

Hate speech and calls for violence against Armenians have surged to an unprecedented level in Azerbaijan, especially amid Baku's aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh. Turks and Azeris living abroad, meanwhile, have been threatening Armenians and attacking them during peaceful gatherings and rallies.

Erdogan More Dangerous Than Pandemic, Says ex-Turkey PM

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is a greater threat to the world than the coronavirus pandemic, former ally of the leader and head of opposition Turkish Future party Ahmet Davutoglu has said on November 3, according to *The National*.

Davutoglu told party officials that the greatest danger to Europe and the world was the culture of despotism, which had been spread by populist leaders such as Erdogan. "The criterion for the tribal-state is lack of choice, and choice is the measure of democracy," he said.

"As long our people are suffering, and there is deep corruption, and the dignity of our country is insulted abroad, we will keep calling for early elections," the former head of Erdogan's ruling AK party said.

The Turkish opposition leader also criticized the presidential system of government implemented in 2016 by Erdogan to consolidate more power.

Davutoglu said the country needed to return to a parliamentary system because the current system only produced crises. He reiterated his demand for early elections, which the opposition began pushing at the beginning of October.

Davutoglu served as prime minister to Erdogan between 2014 and 2016 before breaking away from the AK party and forming a rival political movement to challenge the longtime Turkish leader. He also served as foreign minister from 2009 to 2014.

Ukraine to Suspend Azeri Military Delivery

KYIV, Ukraine (Public Radio of Armenia) — Ukraine is facing a major scandal with Azerbaijan due to the "tacit decision" of President Volodymyr Zelensky to suspend the implementation of the contract between Ukrspesexport (arms trading company and part of the state conglomerate Ukrainian Defense Industry) and Azerbaijan on the supply of components for P-18 radar stations, ZN.UA reported on November 3.

The website quotes its sources as saying that Zelensky ordered to suspend the execution of the contract with Azerbaijan "orally" about a month ago, after Baku launched a military campaign against Nagorno Karabakh.

Minister for Strategic Industries Oleg Urusky and Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba were orally informed about the president's decision.

In turn, Urusky, who is in charge of the defense industry, had to give the appropriate instructions to the heads of Ukroboronprom (Defense Industry of Ukraine) and Ukrspetsexport, Igor Fomenko and Vadim Nozdra.



INTERNATIONAL

Petitions, Calls for Political Mediation Continue

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – As the war in the South Caucasus enters its second month, Armenian organizations in Germany are redoubling their efforts to urge government authorities in Berlin and in Europe to finally take effective action.

The Central Council of Armenians in Germany (ZAD), the Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany, the German-Armenian Society (DAG) and the German-Armenian Lawyers Association (DEARJV) issued an appeal on October 21, addressed to all members of the German Bundestag (Parliament). In three main points the groups demanded immediate humanitarian aid for the people in Karabakh, to lessen their suffering; clear denunciation of Azerbaijan’s responsibility for the current developments, instead of “balanced” declarations; and, abandoning silence to address the role of Turkey, as other countries have already done (France, the US, Russia and Canada). Finally, the German Federal Government should see to it that Turkey no longer be co-chairman of the Minsk Group.

A week later a debate in the Bundestag took place, on the “Peaceful Solution for Karabakh” during which these points were discussed. The initiative generated interest on the DAG’s website, with 65,000 persons reached, and was echoed in the press.

The German-Armenian Lawyers Association, at the same time, took the bold step of reporting the events officially. On October 20, it filed a criminal complaint to the Federal Prosecutor General at the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe, for war crimes by Azerbaijani soldiers. Making reference to photographic documentation, the complaint listed torture, the use of cluster

bombs, shelling of civilians and civilian sites like hospitals, kindergartens, schools, cultural centers, theatres and churches, as well as civilian infrastructure. The document noted, “Under universal jurisdiction, criminal prosecution in the Federal Republic of Germany is also possible if the offence was committed abroad and the perpetrator is located in Germany after the crime.” It cited a precedent for the case.

Prominent intellectuals also came together to add their voices to the demands for political intervention. They addressed their petition to the leading political representatives of the German Federal Republic, beginning with President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and including government ministers, relevant parliamentary committees, members of the European Parliament and the Bundestag. The call came on the 30th anniversary of an appeal issued by 126 leading scientists, writers, artists and politicians, among them, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida and Isaiah Berlin; at that time, on July 27, 1990, members of the international academic elite had urged immediate measures to guarantee the security of Armenians in the South Caucasus. The earlier initiative had recalled that 70 years after the genocide, a half century after the Holocaust and 40 years after the declaration of human rights, one must not allow human rights violations to be covered in silence or a second genocide against the Armenians to occur.

Now, 30 years later, the group of colleagues from the academic world in the fields of Near East, Caucasus and Armenian Studies, express their deep concern and shock. In the shadows of the Corona pandemic, they write, a modern war is raging, with deployment of Islamist mercenaries, who are threatening the lives of innocent people, as well as a thousand-year-old Armenian cultural landscape.

Alarmed that the Minsk Group’s call for a ceasefire and return to negotiations has yielded nothing, the academics warn of an

impending humanitarian disaster, with mass refugee flows. Colleagues and students in the universities in the region are endangered, as heavy bombs have targeted Stepanakert. Cultural treasures and valuable medieval manuscripts, preserved in the monastery libraries of Artsakh are not safe. Not only Artsakh, but also the territory of the Republic of Armenia is threatened, they write, where archaeological and geological excavations have been taking place, as a collaborative effort among the countries they represent.

Finally, the group expresses concern that the conflict will spill over into Germany, where Armenian properties have already been attacked.

Offering their expertise to help find solutions to the complex conflict, the academics demand “effective mediation between the two sides to end this armed conflict.” The preconditions listed are: immediate cessation of hostilities; an end to weapons deliveries to both sides; protection for civilians on both sides; protection of historical monuments; respect for the right to self-determination of the various ethnic groups; and, a peaceful political solution that takes this into account.

The text closes with reference to the independence declaration of the Autonomous Republic of Berg Karabakh following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the words of nuclear physicist and Nobel Prize winner Andrei Sakharov, who endorsed the self-determination of the Armenian people. The signatories demand mediation in the conflict and recognition of the right of the Armenian people in the Republic of Artsakh to self-determination “as the only guarantee for its existence.”

The initiators of the call are Prof. Dr. Armenuhi Drost-Aberjan, Mesrop Center, and Prof. Dr. Carola Horn, Seminar on the Christian Orient and Byzantium, both of the Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg. Co-signers include a long list of academics and prominent personalities.

Alain Navarra-Navassartian: ‘For Me Armenia Is the Place of Active Belonging’

BELONGING, from page 5

creation, but that also depends, quite simply, on my freedom as a spectator who chooses. But it is obvious that my training (art historian and sociologist) leads me to take an interest in the relationship between arts and society. What social function of art in a society which has undergone profound changes, such as Armenian society?

Art has not only a social nature but also social effects. Art is not a miraculous activity, the work is a production carried out under specific conditions by a socially and historically situated individual. The structure of the work is a product of the structure of collective representations. The art producer is situated in a dynamic vision of the social, but what characterizes him is not so much to be registered in a social reality as to derive from it something that is only in the state of potentiality. The choice of a work to defend starts, obviously from a subjective point of view, as far as I am concerned. As a spectator or reader, I claim the status of partner and not of simple receiver who would just have to diffuse the works of the artists. It is in this that the book of Aram, challenged us. It offers a space for social questioning and transgression and is situated outside the normativity of the Armenian literary field.

On the other hand, the translation of a language which is not dominant in the field of international literature is essential. HYESTART did the translation, to make an imprint in Armenian contemporary literature, because it is a potentially powerful tool of cultural mediation, it constitutes the type of cultural transfer, par excellence.

The activities of Hyestart NGO are diverse – from the program of the Armenian stall at the Geneva book fair to the election of the observation mission.

The bottom line is we need a truly democratic Turkey, a Turkey that accepts to confront its bloody past and decides to make amends in order to have peace in the region. That’s why we decided to create Hyestart with Alexis Krikorian. The situation we are observing today, that of a country which is hell bent on finishing the job of 1915 – the International Association of Genocide Scholars issued a statement two days ago warning of the risk of genocide against Armenians – proves us right unfortunately.

Our achievements this far: an Armenian stand on the Geneva book fair which is often voted as the public’s favorite stand on the book fair; a conference on Freedom of Expression in Turkey featuring as speaker, among many others, the famous Turkish writer Asli Erdogan; an honorary board which brings together Armenians and Turks: Ragip Zarakolu (human rights activist and publisher), Pinar Selek (sociologist), Serge Avédikian (actor, director), and Eugene Schoulgin (VP of PEN International and expert on freedom of expression in Turkey); our electoral observation missions to Armenia which accompanied the strengthening and the deepening of the Armenian democracy; as you mentioned, a first translation into French of an Armenian novel, Au-revoir, Piaf by Aram Pachyan (Editions Parenthèses, Marseille, September 2020); Supporting in the revival of the Armenian PEN centre of PEN International; a

partnership with the FIFDH, the world’s largest human rights film festival in 2020 to present the documentary “I am not Alone” on the velvet revolution in Armenia (the civil disobedience process which led to Nikol Pashinyan to being Armenia’s Prime Minister). A model for us has been Ragip Zarakolu who was the first publisher to publish a book on the Armenian genocide in Turkey in 1993 – a year later his publishing house, Belge, was fire-bombed and he now lives in exile in Sweden, like so many other Turkish human rights activists. His publishing house Belge has been a major cultural and democratic agent in Turkey.

That is great, but why also Turkey?

I think I have partly answered regarding Turkey. But I can add that both Alexis Krikorian and I have tremendous experience in the fields of culture and human rights in Turkey. We have worked extensively with artists, writers, publishers, intellectuals, freedom of expression NGOs to defend the right of freedom of expression in Turkey as a way to have a more democratic Turkey. When Hrant Dink was killed by an ultra-nationalist in 2007 we went to his public funerals which were attended by 100,000 persons. We have gone there dozens of times, at least until 2016 when the situation became really dangerous in Turkey, including for foreigners. If you look at Turkey specifically, the country is ranked 154th in the press freedom index of RSF, while Armenia is ranked 61st. In the latter, there are some taboo subjects, but generally speaking, there is freedom of expression. In Turkey, on the contrary, freedom of expression is now controlled, truncated, oriented. Journalists and human rights activists are being arrested. Fake news are mass produced. A new law was just passed in Parliament further restricting freedom of expression on the internet which had been until recently the last stronghold of freedom of expression in the country. Not anymore! In the current context, Turkish media say that the Armenian side started the war, which is completely false: Turkish reporters were on the spot in Azerbaijan to do live coverage of the Turkish-Azeri offensive on September 27th. Turkey and Azerbaijan have a lot of aggressive trolls who sow terror on social networks. Even if Facebook finally deleted 8000 pages of Azeri trolls a few days ago, the phenomenon remains massive.

We have strong bonds with this country. This is where we are coming from. It is a country that matters to us and a country we need to see become a true democracy if we are to ever live in peace in this region. I must insist on the word “truly.” It cannot only be cosmetic; it has to be some kind of Copernican revolution where we see a real and definite change of mentality in Turkey. To reach this point, it may have to go through an end to the impunity it has been enjoying since World War I.

What are the current projects of Hyestart?

We have a fund for contemporary Armenian Literary Creation & the Freedom to Publish in Turkey. Our second book is being translated. We are or were planning to set up a creative writing program in Armenia in the field of fiction (which has a social and/or political resonance) and to publish

or support the publication of the best texts selected at the end of the teaching by a jury of specialists. We are or were also planning to develop – through the fund – our support for freedom to publish in Turkey. Finally we were also planning a big conference against racism in Geneva next year (we see that anti-armenianism is at the heart of the current Azeri-Turkish war in Armenia and Artsakh). That said the current war – whereas said the very survival of Armenians is at stake – is obviously upsetting our plans to a large extent. We are also leading all around advocacy and communication efforts to end this war and to have the human right to self-determination of the people of Artsakh recognized.

This war is making all Armenians look in one direction.

I am ready, like many, to come and spend several months to help rebuild the country after this war. I would like to underline only one thing: THE ILLUSION OF SOLIDARITY AND THE UNUSUALITY OF COMPASSION.

The journalistic “law” of the “dead mile” seems to apply to the discourse of solidarity or compassion of certain Western leaders, intellectuals or even certain NGOs. The rule is simple: two deaths in a serious accident in Paris or London weigh more than 100 victims “at the end of the world.” In the exchange of emotions, not all victims have the same value, but the Armenian population of Artsakh does not need compassion, which is a heavy tendency in democracies, because through this process, all the political, economic and social dimensions of the conflict are erased. The “I suffer with you” is not of great use, even if the place of feelings is not to be neglected if they are put back into the political field. We are indeed the inhabitants of the same world, but the reality of the Armenians of Artsakh does not seem to be that of many others, they seem to be out of our field of consciousness. And yet...

Neutrality in this conflict is aporetic because the decisions taken by the Turkish and Azerbaijani governments do not spring from a cultural or historical void. When we speak of a new possible ethnic cleansing in the region, we refer to specific events: the pogroms of Sumgait and Baku. We, individuals of Armenian origin, should be well aware that compassion and solidarity are eminently political: relativizing certain crimes is immoral but, on the other hand, other imperatives seem to allow us to relativize the aggression of Aliiev, Erdogan and sometimes even the negationism of the genocide of the Armenians. This population and its claims to break free from the Azeri yoke do not have the same “assets” as other sufferings, all of which are absolutely legitimate, moreover. A general consensus continues to speak of ethnic conflict and here we have a notion full of innuendoes, since a false trial in archaism is taking shape. I am always surprised in all the interventions of experts to read so little reference to the reality of the life of these minority groups during the “pax soviética.” The ignorance and silence of violence in social relations is also one of the many factors that pushed a population to rise up.

All Armenians demand one essential thing: that our history be written in a proper way.

Yes, I will come to help my people to rebuild...

Community News

National Security Advisor, US Senator Lee Join Supervisor Barger and Local Armenian Leaders to Discuss US Efforts to Broker Artsakh Ceasefire

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger convened a round-table discussion with National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, US Senator Mike Lee and leaders from the Armenian community on October 30 to discuss the current crisis in Artsakh and US efforts to broker a ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"We are deeply troubled by Azerbaijan's refusal to honor three separate ceasefire agreements in recent weeks and the continued campaign to spread misinformation to deflect their egregious actions," said Barger, Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. "I am grateful to National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien and United States Senator Mike Lee for engaging with our grassroots organizations and faith leaders who have done a tremendous job raising awareness on this pressing issue for the Armenian community."

"The United States is deeply concerned about the escalation of violence between Azerbaijan and Artsakh, especially in light of reports of strikes in areas of significant civilian populations," said National Security Advisor Robert

"THE PRESIDENT HAS CALLED ON BOTH SIDES TO FULLY OBSERVE THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAWS"

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR ROBERT O'BRIEN.



O'Brien. "The President has called on both sides to fully observe their obligations under international humanitarian laws including the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Both sides must agree to a ceasefire and they must come to the negotiating table without preconditions. This is particularly true of the Azerbaijanis who have been the most hesitant about an unconditional ceasefire to date."

Armenian community leaders at the round-table discussion included: Nora Hovsepian and Levon Kirakosian, Armenian National Committee of America; Michelle Kezirian, Armenian Assembly of America; Talin Yacoubian, Armenian General Benevolent Union; and Maria Mehranian, Armenia Fund USA. Faith representatives included: Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Western Diocese; Bishop Torkom Donoyan, Western Prelacy; Most Reverend Mikael Mouradian, Armenian Catholic Eparchy; and Reverend Berdj Djambazian, Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

The focus of the dialogue centered on the unprovoked military operations by Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh region against Armenians in the area. This ongoing military offense has included attacks on civilian and residential structures, which killed approximately 40 innocent civilians including children and older adults and wounded more than 125 people, according to the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh.

Los Angeles County is home to the largest population of Armenians outside of Armenia. For years, the County has supported the Armenian community through continued advocacy for their rights and increased awareness of their history.

O'Brien most notably declared in his remarks that any Turkish mediation or peacekeeping role was not acceptable to the United States, and in general armed peacekeepers should not be from the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs or neighboring countries. Instead, he said the US was working with Scandinavian countries to put together a peacekeeping force that could maintain a ceasefire.



GE portable X-ray machine medical imaging equipment before being crated for shipment to Artsakh.

Armenian American Medical Association Sends Equipment to Artsakh

BOSTON – The Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA) of Boston in collaboration with its network of health care professionals including Armenian Biotech, Pharmacists', and Nursing groups along with partners in the region has been providing medical assistance towards the Azeri/Turkish led aggression against our compatriots in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

In a matter of hours from the start of the hostilities on September 27, 2020, the AAMA and its partners started fundraising campaigns and medical supply donations in coordination with the Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC) and the Armenian Ministry of Health.

see SUPPLIES, page 11



Handheld portable ultrasound machines sent to Artsakh are already being used to care for patients.

Tekeyan in California Fundraises For Artsakh

GLENDALÉ – The California chapters of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) organized a fundraising gathering for solidarity with Artsakh on Friday, October 23, at the Armenian Society Center in Glendale. The evening was highlighted by a talk by Yerevan political analyst Levon Shirinyan on the current conflict in Artsakh.

In her welcoming message, Executive Secretary of TCA West Coast Mayda Kuredjian greeted members and friends and thanked them for their generous donations, which resulted in a total of more than \$40,000. This sum is to be sent to Armenia Fund with other donations from US and Canadian TCA chapters and supporters. Along with the contribution from the TCA Central Board, a total of \$100,000 has been assembled which is being transferred to the Armenia Fund.

She noted that TCA has this year also tried to support the Beirut Vahan Tekeyan School, with financial aid to prevent it from closing due,



TCA West Coast Executive Secretary Mayda Kuredjian

and then after the August bombing, to help it rebuild and continue its mission.

Kuredjian invited Kevork Haleblan to give a general historical and present-day evaluation of the situation in Artsakh. Haleblan said that 102 years ago the Ottoman army entered the Caucasus with the clear plan of occupying the whole region and realizing the dream of Pan-Turanism. In 1918, the Ottomans succeeded in establishing an Azerbaijani Republic for the first time in history. In 1920, Bolshevik Russia took over Azerbaijan, which became part of the Soviet Union. Later the Russians gave Azerbaijan the historically Armenian regions of Nakhichevan and Karabakh.

We can see the same Pan-Turanism at work today in this political situation, Haleblan said, with Turkish historians and politicians stating that Armenia is clearly in the way, geographically blocking the realization of this plan. It would envisage joining Nakhichevan and Zangezur to reach the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

Politically there are three main players in the region, Haleblan said: Turkey, Russia and Iran. The latter is not very active and Russia has not strongly intervened. Russia tried to broker several ceasefire attempts which were not respected by the Azerbaijanis. On the other hand,

see TCA, page 8



Kevork Haleblan



COMMUNITY NEWS

Michigan Armenian Business Roundtable with Senate Candidate James and Gov. Christie

WEST BLOOMFIELD, Mich. — On Friday, October 30, an Armenian Business Roundtable was held with Republican US Senate Candidate John James and guest Governor Chris Christie at the Shenandoah Country Club.

The event was organized by Corinne Kachadourian Khederian, a former Republican elected official and Volunteer State of Michigan Vice Chair of the Armenian Assembly of America. She was assisted by Edward Haroutunian, an Armenian activist and founding chair of the Wayne County Republican Committee, and John Jamian, the first Armenian elected to the Michigan State legislature and currently Volunteer State of Michigan Director of the Armenian Assembly of America.

John James was in the last few days of campaigning for the Michigan US Senate seat in a hotly contested race and is currently 2 points ahead in the polls of the Democrat currently holding the seat. (The *Mirror-Spectator* goes to press before the election results have been tallied.)

He is the son of parents, as he states, from the “Jim Crow South” and grew up in Detroit. James is a West Point graduate, served his country with distinction in Operation Iraqi Freedom and currently serves as president of his family business that was started by his father.

In the meeting, James proved himself to be a

friend of the Armenian community. The main topic that was at the top of everyone’s mind was the aggression occurring in Artsakh by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

According to Khederian, “Father Aren Jebejian, Pastor of St. John Armenian Church (representing the four Michigan Armenian churches), John Jamian, Judges Lisa Asadoorian and Krista Haroutunian and other attendees explained to Mr. James and Governor Christie the mass devastation and casualties that are occurring to Armenian civilians, soldiers, churches and infrastructure since September 27.”

Khederian explained to James that everyone attending had lost family members in the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and now another genocide is impacting Armenians today which must end. “John James was appalled at the kind of devastation taking place against a civilian population in Karabakh, and was very moved to determine for himself why the killing could not stop now,” said Edward Haroutunian.

Christie, who is very familiar with the Armenian community from his service as governor of the State of New Jersey, also stated his concern for what was happening to the Armenians overseas. He reviewed a map of the region with attendee Sandy Mouradian to gain a better understanding of the area impacted.

The Michigan Armenians who attended



From left, US Senate Candidate John James, Governor Chris Christie, Corinne Khederian, Edmond Azadian and Edward Haroutunian

signed a letter addressed to Governor Christie asking him to convey their support for President Trump and their immediate concerns about the devastating war in Nagorno-Karabakh impacting Armenia and the actions they believed were needed to be taken to have a sustainable binding humanitarian ceasefire in Karabakh after three unsuccessful ones have been brokered and agreed to by President

Trump for the United States, France and Russia. Governor Christie accepted the letter presented to him by Khederian and agreed to personally deliver it to President Trump for his review, as well, when he will see him next on election day.

Other topics discussed included James’ desire to keep and promote charter schools in the United States. He explained that education is a “civil right” and children should have the ability to attend a school of choice. “The failing education system,” according to James, “is our country’s number one civil rights threat.” Fr. Jebejian and Edmond Azadian, a director at the Manoogian School on the St. John campus, explained to James that one of the first charter schools approved by the state of Michigan was the Manoogian School.

Covid protocol was wisely strictly enforced with everyone wearing masks during the entire event. James spoke of the obligation to help fellow community members at a time when others are in need. Both James and Christie praised the “Seerov Josh” program that Fr. Jebejian described as an initiative consisting of church members preparing and serving meals for those in need.

Tekeyan in California Fundraises for Artsakh

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Turkey is a very active participant in the conflict, providing Azerbaijan with military support.

The main speaker of the evening was political analyst Professor Levon Shirinyan who joined from Yerevan and was interviewed by Lilit



Dr. Levon Shirinyan

Kehyeyan, Kevork Haleblan and Harout Der Tavitian.

Professor Shirinyan gave an overall update about the military and political situation in Artsakh and the region. He presented global and at the same time very detailed information about what really was going on and was very positive about the Armenian solidarity and defense that was realized in the area. He asked the diaspora to continue giving generously to the homeland, supporting financially humanitarian, medical and military aid for soldiers and families.

After the interview Professor Osheen Keshishian was invited to give his political and analytical viewpoint. He urged everyone to contact their senators and congressmen to ask them for sanctions against Turkey or Azerbaijan. Keshishian said that it was very important to work on political connections and have Armenians’ voices heard, as well as to putting pressure on Armenia’s opponents. He said that there are politicians who even don’t know where Armenia is, so a lot has to be done to educate them about the Armenian cause and explain and demand their help.

The spirit of the evening was that Armenian solidarity will continue and Artsakh will be free again.

Professor Levon Shirinyan’s interview is available on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/-MHsSmA0z0>).



Osheen Keshishian

Tekeyan Cultural Association

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COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARY

Robert Fisk: Middle East Correspondent of *The Independent* Dies Aged 74

FISK, from page 1

Christian Broughton, editor of *The Independent* until last week and now managing director, said: "Fearless, uncompromising, determined and utterly committed to uncovering the truth and reality at all costs, Robert Fisk was the greatest journalist of his generation. The fire he lit at *The Independent* will burn on."

Much of what Fisk wrote was controversial, something he appeared to savor. In 2003, as the US and UK prepared for the invasion of Iraq, Fisk went to the United Nations in New York, where he watched then Secretary of State Colin Powell make an unimpressive case for war.

"There was an almost macabre opening to the play when General Powell arrived at the Security Council, cheek-kissing the delegates and winding his great arms around them," he wrote. "Jack Straw fairly bounded up for his big American hug."

Fisk, who was born in Kent, and studied at Lancaster University, began his career on Fleet Street at the *Sunday Express*. He went on to work for *The Times*, where he was based in Northern Ireland, Portugal and the Middle East.

For decades he was based in the Lebanese city of Beirut, and occupied an apartment located on its famed corniche. He lived and worked there as the nation was torn apart in a civil war, and a number of journalists fell victim to kidnappers.

Fisk, who was the recipient of numerous awards, including from Amnesty International and the British Press Awards, wrote several books, most notably *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* and *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*. He completed a PhD at Trinity college and had a home in Dalkey in County Dublin.

He interviewed Osama bin Laden three times.



Robert Fisk at the Armenian Mirror-Spectator anniversary panel, to the left, with Amberin Zaman, Philip Terzian, Aram Arkun and David Barsamian at the podium. Insert: Robert Fisk, left, with Aram Arkun

After the attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent US and UK invasion of Iraq, he travelled to the Pakistan-Afghan border, where he was attacked by a group of Afghan refugees, furious about the killing of their countrymen by western forces.

He famously turned the incident into a front-page report, complete with an image of his battered face.

He wrote: "I realized —there were all the Afghan men and boys who had attacked me who should never have done so but whose brutality was entirely the product of others, of us — of we who had armed their struggle against the Russians and ignored their pain and laughed at their civil war and then armed and paid them again for the War for Civilisation just a few miles away and then bombed their homes and ripped

up their families and called them 'collateral damage.'"

Fisk, who took Irish citizenship, was praised by the Irish president, Michael D. Higgins.

"I have learned with great sadness of the death of Robert Fisk," he wrote in a statement.

"With his passing, the world of journalism and informed commentary on the Middle East has lost one of its finest commentators.

"Generations, not only of Irish people but all over the world, relied on him for a critical and informed view of what was taking place in the conflict zones of the world and, even more important, the influences that were perhaps the source of the conflict."

Armenian Issues, Armenian Mirror-Spectator Honoree

Fisk long covered the Armenian Genocide. As written in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in 2017,

"As a self-proclaimed 'Ottoman Correspondent,' Fisk has written often and forcefully about the Turkish government's denial of the Armenian Genocide. In October 2016, Fisk published a moving article titled 'A Beautiful Mosque and the Dark Period of the Armenian Genocide,' bringing to light the construction of a mosque in Gaziantep or Antep on the former site of the 19th-century Armenian Holy Mother of God

Cathedral.

"Fisk prefers to call the events that befell the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire and later the Republic of Turkey as 'The Armenian Holocaust.' In addition to renaming the Genocide, Fisk suggests that Armenians fight denialism following the Jewish tradition and honor the noble Turks who put their own lives and those of their families by saving countless Armenian neighbors and friends. One of his favorite quotes when speaking about this subject is 'Honour the good Turks. Alas, everyone claps. And does nothing.'"

"He has not escaped unscathed during his many years of being in political hotspots. In December 2001, Fisk was in Pakistan to cover the Afghan border situation. During a long car ride between the Pakistani city of Quetta and the border town of Chaman, Fisk faced a crowd of several hundred Afghani refugees. During this face-off, Fisk was attacked with rocks and brutally kicked. Through the kindness of a local, Fisk escaped more serious harm and was brought to a Red Cross convoy where he was treated.

In Fisk's own words, "I couldn't see for the blood pouring down my forehead and swamping my eyes. And even then, I understood. I couldn't blame them for what they were doing. In fact, if I were the Afghan refugees of Kila Abdullah, close to the Afghan-Pakistan border, I would have done just the same to Robert Fisk. Or any other Westerner I could find."

Fisk received a slew of awards during his life, including the David Watt Prize for an investigation of the 1915 Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman Empire in 2001, a University of St. Andrew's honorary degree.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* awarded him a lifetime achievement award at its 85th anniversary banquet.

He and an esteemed panel, including journalists Amberin Zaman, Philip Terzian and David Barsamian, spoke at a standing-room-only event held on the campus of Wellesley College titled "Journalism and Fake News: The Armenian Genocide and Karabakh."

Canadian journalist Yung Chang followed Fisk during the event, as he was making a documentary on him, which was later shown at the Toronto International Film Festival.

(The obituary from *The Independent* was used in this report.)

Garabed Babahekian

ADL and Tekeyan Leader

BEIRUT — Garabed Babahekian, former chairman of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Founders Body in Beirut, and leader of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, passed away in Beirut on October 31 at the age of 94.

A Lebanese-Armenian philanthropist, Babahekian was an industrialist who had made economic investments in Armenia.

He leaves behind his widow, Hasmig Ouzounian Babahekian, his children, relatives and a wide circle of friends.

Funeral services were held on November 2 at the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, after which the burial was conducted in the Bourdj Hammoud Armenian Orthodox Cemetery.



Yevgine Gharibian

Longtime Leader of Armenian Radio Hour

WATERTOWN — On Thursday October 29, 2020, Yevgine Gharibian, daughter of Alec and Iskouhi Zarifian, loving wife of the late Jirair Gharibian, passed away at the age of 84 after a short illness. Yevgine was born in Rasht, Iran where she attended elementary and high school, then went on to college in London, England. There, she met and married Jirair Gharibian, and they eventually moved to the US and settled in Watertown, MA. Yevgine was preceded in death by her parents, her husband

Jirair, and her three brothers: Alfred, Shahan, and Rouben. She is survived by 14 nieces and nephews, most of whom are living with their respective families in California, but also in England, Wales, Canada, and Watertown.

Yevgine's husband, Jirair, founded the Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston in 1980, and after his untimely death in 1991, Yevgine took over and became the director right up until her recent death and thankfully was able to see the 40th anniversary celebration come to fruition. Through the years, she has received numerous medals and accolades for her hard work and dedication. Yevgine was also an active member of the Armenian Relief Society (ARS).

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, private funeral services were held at St. Stephen's Church in Watertown, MA. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Armenia Fund via the Armenian radio by sending checks payable to The Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston, PO BOX #46, Watertown, MA. 02172 or to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, 76 Nichols Ave, Watertown, MA. 02472.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

‘Demonstrate to Educate’ at Harvard Square on Artsakh

By Ken Martin

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Shifting locations marked yet another event Sunday afternoon, October 31, by the greater Boston Armenian community in its support of the Republic of Artsakh and its month-long defense against an invasion by Azerbaijan supported by Turkey. This time the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals of Boston hosted “Demonstrate to Educate” at Harvard Square, where its message was delivered directly to people in the streets. Demonstrators lined John F. Kennedy Street at the corner with Mount Auburn Street at Winthrop Square Park waving flags and informational posters while others showed posters with QR Codes to vehicle occupants and answered questions, and many handed out information cards with bullet point information and links to human rights websites.

Cambridge residents and visitors were friendly and open to their Armenian friends and neighbors and often stopped to talk and take pictures and learn about the human rights violations by Azerbaijan in the Artsakh Republic. There was a solid presence by the Cambridge Police Department protecting the demonstrators in case Azerbaijani or other thugs who earlier in the summer threatened members of the Armenian Youth Federation holding folk dances for Artsakh nearby, would show up again.

While the actions were mostly visual, there was a period of chanting slogans of accusation against Azerbaijan and Turkey, resistance to the attacks on Armenians, and calls for the recognition and independence of the Republic of Artsakh by the world. There were a minimum of 125 demonstrators present, whose numbers may have increased slightly during the two-hour event.



JUSTIN KALADJIAN PHOTO

NYC Demonstration Against New York Times Coverage of Artsakh

NEW YORK — A demonstration against biased *New York Times* coverage of the Artsakh conflict began on the afternoon of November 1 at the New York Armenian Prelacy, with protesters marching to the *New York Times* headquarters on 41st Street in Manhattan. The



PROTEST AT

The New York Times

NOVEMBER 1, 2020
12 PM
THE ARMENIAN PRELACY
138 E 39TH STREET

MARCHING AS ONE TO
THE NY TIMES BUILDING
242 W 41ST STREET

FACE COVERING REQUIRED

NEW YORK TIMES, REPORT THE TRUTH!

protest was organized by the Armenian Youth Federation and approximately 500 people participated, according to one participant. The reporting of Istanbul bureau chief Carlotta Gall in particular has upset many readers. A letter was handed over by the demonstrators to a representative of the *Times*. It called for the investigation and retraction of Gall’s recent articles.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Youth Federation Organizes Hunger Strike and March to Raise Awareness of Ongoing War in Artsakh

By Michelle Mkhlian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES – On Monday, October 26, ten members of the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) of the Western United States began a six-day hunger strike at the Federal Building on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles to stand in solidarity with Armenian soldiers on the frontlines in Artsakh. The demonstrators demanded the following from the US government: 1) the recognition of Artsakh, 2) the sanctioning of

Turkey, and 3) the sanctioning of Azerbaijan. On October 27, Tro Megrdichian, one of the members participating in the hunger strike delivered a letter containing AYF's detailed demands to the Federal Building. However, no further letters were accepted after that instance.

AYF Western Region Chairperson Aram Manoukian is one of the ten individuals who participated in the hunger strike. Manoukian declared: "Since Azerbaijan launched its war and terror against Armenia and Artsakh with the sponsorship of Turkey, our community has been doing awe-inspiring work especially here in Los Angeles. We've had numerous peaceful and lawful protests, but we realized those types of things are not getting the media attention or coverage they deserve, and most importantly, they aren't getting the response from the United States government that they deserve. Thus, this was the next logical step for us to take."

The hunger strike garnered attention and received extended coverage by local stations such as Fox 11 Los Angeles, KTLA5, and ABC7, and Armenian media outlets and stations such as Panarmenian TV, ARTN TV, Horizon Armenian TV, and Zartonk Media.

During the day, the demonstrators walked the surrounding neighborhood passing out flyers, hanging up posters, and speaking with passersby to inform them about the ongoing conflict. In addition to the hunger strike, AYF members protested in front of the UNICEF Los Angeles Regional Office on October 29 to condemn the organization's lack of action and response to Azerbaijan's violence against the people of Artsakh.

Each evening, members of the local community gathered from 8-10 p.m. both in person and via livestream to support the group's efforts. At its peak, there were 500 people in attendance physically and 40,000 people tun-



AYF member and hunger striker Tro Megrdichian delivering letter to Federal Building

ing in via Facebook and Instagram livestream. The scheduled programming varied from distinguished speakers delivering addresses to AYF members performing traditional Armenian revolutionary songs.

Aram stated: "We use the nightly program to call on our community to do three things, to donate to Armenia Fund, to make their political voice heard through anca.org/alert, and lastly to do visual advocacy through social media. Every Armenian needs to do what they can do so we can be successful."

The demonstrators slept in tents in front of the Federal Building and remained on site for the entire duration of the strike. The organization took necessary precautions to protect the health and well-being of the demonstrators. They were examined by a doctor twice daily and monitored by various

healthcare professionals who remained on site 24 hours a day.

Aram explained: "Since the onslaught of the war, our AYF members have all been thinking, 'we gotta do whatever is needed.' The ten of us who are doing this felt mentally and physically prepared so it was an easy decision for us. It's been very fulfilling to know that we're doing our part to bring awareness and attention to what's happening in Artsakh and Armenia right now. However, what we're doing is absolutely nothing compared to the sacrifices our soldiers and community members are making in Artsakh and Armenia every day."

The hunger strike concluded with a "March for Recognition" on Sunday, November 1, which began at the Federal Building and culminated at the Azerbaijani Consulate.

Armenian American Medical Association Sends Equipment to Artsakh

SUPPLIES, from page 7

Our organization has established relationships with several medical equipment companies to source key medical devices and equipment needed in Armenia that are in excellent and certified working condition. It has also established relationships with device manufacturers for necessary high-tech equipment to assist



Oxygen helmets are being sent to help prevent the spread of coronavirus given the sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 cases among soldiers, civilians, patients, physicians and other medical staff due to the war.

On the basis of these efforts, equipment and supplies worth over \$750,000 have been procured and are being transported to Armenia. A direct transport system has been established in Armenia, where all supplies are sent directly to Artsakh or to the hospitals most in need in Yerevan or other regions. Transportation partnerships have been established for shipment of large items, in addition to the shipment of key medical supplies by travelers to Armenia. This effort has been particularly successful, where a large quantity of high value items has been transported and put in use within a matter of 1-2 days upon arrival in Armenia.

AAMA is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with the mission to engage medical professionals of Armenian heritage and to provide assistance to colleagues in Armenia and Artsakh in support of their health-related activities.

All tax-exempt donations can be sent to the Armenian American Medical Association, PO Box 812641, Wellesley, MA 02482. For those interested in dropping off supplies needed in



Daily procurement of medical supplies by Boston AAMA members and generous community members, including FemoStat medication used in the treatment of bleeding and chest tubes to help heal injuries involving the lung cavity.



Microsurgeons Dr. Arthur Harutunyan and Dr. Artak Badeyan (pictured) in the Military Hospital in Yerevan have received microsurgery sets sent by AAMA Boston for performing all military hospital cases. Dr. Armen Hovhaneesyan, Chief Consultant in Plastic Reconstructive Surgery and Microsurgery in Erebuni Hospital (not pictured), and Dr. Artavazd Sahakyan, Chairmen of Plastic Surgery and Chief of University Hospital N1 (not pictured), have also received microsurgery sets. Two additional microsurgery sets are presently en route to Stepanakert Republican Hospital. Physicians across Armenia and Artsakh are sending their sincere thanks to all AAMA Boston members and partners for helping them do their work. Together united, these ongoing efforts are meaningful and impactful for meeting the healthcare needs of our Motherland and we are encouraged to continue our important medical and humanitarian mission for Artsakh and Armenia.

with the emergency diagnostic efforts underway in Artsakh and Armenia. Through partnerships with a number of not-for-profit organizations, Armenian professional groups, and generous community support, the AAMA has established in-kind donation supply lines for specific items in urgent need.

Armenia, or volunteering to travel to Armenia to deliver supplies (expenses paid by the AAMA), email the organization at aama-boston1@gmail.com to arrange for drop off.

For more information, visit <https://www.aamaboston.org/>, contact us by email at aamaboston1@gmail.com, or follow us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/bostonaama/> or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BostonAAMA/>.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Eastern Diocese's Khrimian Lyceum Holds Virtual Ceremony for 2020 Graduates

NEW YORK – The Eastern Diocese’s Khrimian Lyceum graduated four of its students during a special virtual celebration on October 22, 2020.

Graduating students Lara Altiparmak, Victoria Devian, Lori Hashasian, and Lara Muratyan were the focus of the online program—a long awaited milestone for them since the original live event, scheduled for last spring, had been postponed due to the pandemic.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, addressed the Khrimian Lyceum participants just prior to presiding over St. Vartan Cathedral's ecumenical service for peace and justice in Artsakh. He underscored the critical importance of faith and the power of prayer. In addressing the precarious situation of our countrymen in the homeland, the Primate affirmed: “Prayer is our most powerful weapon.” He congratulated all involved in the Khrimian Lyceum for their efforts in one of the Diocese’s most successful, long-running programs.

Gilda Kupelian of the Diocesan Armenian Studies department acknowledged the concerted efforts of Armenians across the diaspora in support of their compatriots, and underscored that it was more urgent than ever before for Armenians to learn about their faith, language, and cultural values, through programs like the Khrimian Lyceum and local parish Armenian schools. She expressed her appreciation and congratulated staff members, parents, and students for their commitment to the Armenian language and cultural heritage.

Each of the graduates read their Khrimian Lyceum Pledge to remain faithful to our church, participate in the advancement of our nation and culture, and become faithful citizens of the land we live in. They then read their graduation speeches with references to the four-year course of study that enhanced their appreciation of the Armenian heritage, and promised to continue their journey in that vein, much to the delight of the attendees.

For 33 years now, the Eastern Diocese has offered the Khrimian Lyceum as a prestigious “immersion program” in the Armenian heritage and culture, open to graduates of local parish Armenian schools. The flagship Lyceum traditionally meets monthly on Saturdays at the Diocesan Center in New York; similar programs have been held in other regions of the Diocese.



The Eastern Diocese's prestigious "immersion program" in Armenian heritage and culture, the Khrimian Lyceum, held its 2020 graduation as a virtual ceremony over the Zoom platform. Primate Bishop Daniel (pictured in this screenshot at row 1, column 1) presided, with Gilda Kupelian (row 1, column 3) of the Diocesan Armenian Studies department leading the gathering of students, staff, and parents. The four graduates were Lara Altiparmak, Victoria Devian, Lori Hashasian, and Lara Muratyan.

Armenian Assembly Surpasses \$2 Million Goal for Armenia Fund Donation

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America announced on October 29 that it surpassed its \$2 million Humanitarian Campaign fundraising goal to support the Armenia Fund, an aid effort that directly benefits the people of Artsakh and Armenia.

“The Armenian Assembly expresses its heartfelt appreciation to all those who contributed to this important humanitarian effort,” said Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

The campaign kicked off with the generous offer by an anonymous Assembly member to match all contributions up to \$1 million. After a period of just 17 days, the Assembly raised \$1,095,938.12, which combined with the \$1 million match brings the total to \$2,095,938.12.

“The groundswell of community support in such a short time has been truly inspiring. Together, we continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Artsakh and Armenia, and these funds will provide them much needed aid in these difficult times. Together we are Artsakh strong,” Ardouny continued.

“Although this matching opportunity is completed, the Assembly strongly encourages everyone to donate directly to the Armenian Fund,” Ardouny added.

Course on ‘Artsakh: History, Culture, and Conflict,’ Donations to Benefit Armenia Fund

NEW YORK – Prof. Khatchig Mouradian will offer an online seminar on “Artsakh: History, Culture, and Conflict” starting Wednesday, November 11.

Organized by St. Leon Armenian Church, this 4-week multimedia seminar will explore the history and culture of Artsakh—as its people confront an existential threat—and discover a legacy of creativity and resistance.

College students, adults and high school students are invited to join Professor Khatchig Mouradian and his featured guests — scholars, artists, and journalists.

The seminar will employ photography, poetry, and art to delve into the past and shed light on the present of Artsakh and its people.

This is the third in a series of courses offered by Mouradian at St. Leon. In July, more than 50 people from across the U.S. and a few from Europe attended the online course titled “Monuments, Names, and Racism.” A course titled “Apologies, Non-Apologies, and Reparations: A Global Perspective,” in August and September drew an even larger group of participants. Participants in the courses included artists, authors, journalists, professors, members of the clergy, PhD, undergraduate and high school students, and professionals from all walks of life.

Classes will be held via Zoom on Wednesdays starting November 11 at 7 p.m. Eastern Time (US and Canada).

Tuition for four sessions (75-minute classes) is a \$50 donation per household to St. Leon Armenian Church. All donations will benefit Armenia Fund.

To register, go to: <https://bit.ly/3jz5kr3> . For questions, call Ara N. Araz at 917-837-1297 or email ara@edcorp.net.

Khatchig Mouradian is a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University, where he also heads the Armenian studies program. His book, *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918* is forthcoming in 2020.

Tekeyan Cultural Association Allocates \$100,000 to Armenia Fund to Support Artsakh

SUPPORT, from page 1

While this emergency allocation was allocated, the TCA Central Board continues to finance its traditional, as well as extraordinary, educational and cultural projects, particularly in Armenia and Lebanon.

The Central Board was able to make this special contribution in these trying times by tapping into its own resources, combined with the generous participation of its regional chapters, dedicated members, friends and benefactors.

In this fateful period, Armenians face tremendous challenges to heal the wounds of soldiers, to support the families of martyred heroes and to defend the borders of the ancestral homeland. We recognize that the end of the war will not signify the end of challenges. On the contrary, Armenians will be facing even harder challenges.

Therefore, while expressing our profound appreciation to our contributing members and generous benefactors, we will be continuing our fundraising drive, at even a faster pace, until all the destroyed churches in Karabakh are rebuilt, all the homes are restored, all the wounds of the soldiers and injured civilians are healed, and the families of the fallen heroes are protected.

A full century after the Genocide, once again Armenians are engaged in the task of restoration and nation building.

Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada

Arts & Living

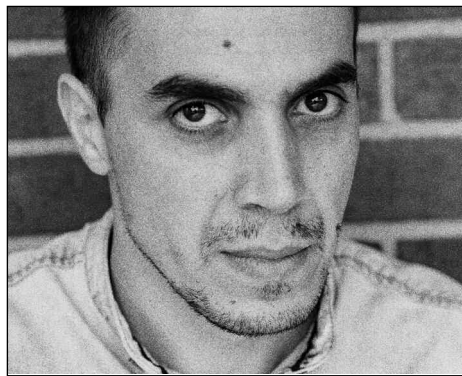
A CRITICAL EXCLUSIVE

Aram Pachyan: From Armenia, With Love and Despair

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

For a lover of the written word, nothing is more rewarding than discovering a new talent. Aram Pachyan is 37 years old, from Vanadzor, and studied law at Yerevan State. He is a columnist at *Hraparak* and writes the *Lratvakan* radio show. His first novel, the 2012 Armenian best seller *Goodbye, Bird* was turned into an opera with music by Arsen Babajanyan. Pachyan is raffish, sometimes sports a bandana over his chiseled face and has furrowed thunderbolts for eyebrows. He also writes extraordinary things. What does Pachyan write about exactly? Everything and nothing. Life and death. War and peace. Things at once large and small. In his latest book of short stories, *Robinson*, this includes mean boys who plot horrid ways to dismember a retarded playmate; an alcoholic surgeon spiritually broken by war; and a young lad who takes a neighbor out on a date only to



Aram Pachyan by Umar Timol

watch her get piss drunk and spend all of his money. He escapes out the bathroom window and rushes home to borrow money from his aunt in order to pay the bill. Many of us have been in similar situations. His are at once painful and comic sketches. One assumes many of the episodes to be autobiographical for their veracity and drama.

Born in 1983 in Soviet Armenia, Pachyan is the enfant terrible of post-Soviet Armenian literature. Is he a great stylist? Yes and no, but not in the traditional sense. His sentences are short and declarative and so are the stories in *Robinson*, stuck somewhere between literary sketches and short stories. The pieces aren't experimental or sensationalistic. Instead they derive their originality from a mix of stream-of-consciousness stylistics, a noir sensibility and larger-than-life characters. Pachyan writes about everyday topics, but doesn't shy away from the tawdriness of things. In "Transparent Bottles," a piece about alcoholism, the author describes what it feels like for a son to partake in a dubious chemical intervention with his mother: "My mother crushes a pill into the soup, the movement of her wrists are swift and agile. He quickly finishes his soup...(he) drinks a glass of water and goes to his room. I think, maybe he is gong to die, the pill will affect his blood circulation and his heart will explode. I feel sorry for him. Minutes pass. My father is uneasy. He rises from his bed and hurries to an open window; he's short of breath. He's gasping for air. He doesn't know why he feels like this. There is fear in his eyes, the same kind of fear I have seen in the eyes of a street dog gnawing at a bone. My mother and I sit in the room with

see PACHYAN, page 15



Sevana Tchakerian, holding her woodwind instrument with her young charges

Sevana Tchakerian Is Fighting Back With Her Only Weapon: Music

YEREVAN — For repatriate Armenian folk singer and musician Sevana Tchakerian, as soon as the war broke out in Artsakh, she knew all of her plans would change. The Paris-born musical artist and leading member of the avant-garde folk group Collectif Medz Bazar has been living in Armenia since 2015. She was visiting her family in Paris when Covid-19 broke out, and made the best of her time there this past spring and summer by creating an entertaining cooking-and-music video series on social media with her mother Alenoush, titled "Agh oo Hats – Doone Gats" (Salt and Bread – Stay at Home). When restrictions were lifted, Sevana was overjoyed to return to Armenia. But scarcely after her return, the war broke out.

Four years ago, Tchakerian helped a group of friends, including executive director Anna Mikaelian, to open a music and arts center in Yerevan called Nexus Center for the Arts. (<https://www.nexuscenterarts.com/>)

She worked there for a year and a half creating curriculum for preschool and elementary school kids. When her performance and touring schedule increased, she had less time to teach and she stepped out of her role at the Nexus Center. But upon her recent return to Armenia, she began setting up shop again at the Center and planning for new programs. Then Azerbaijan attacked Artsakh, and thousands of refugees from the region – mainly women and children – began pouring into Yerevan.

"I told Anna, the director, we have to do something," Tchakerian says. "What can we do? Should we record music, should we write music? Ok, maybe we should open up the doors of the school and have music and arts workshops."

Workshops, that is, for the thousands of Artsakh kids now in taking refuge in Yerevan, deprived of education and certainly of any kind of arts and music education. Sevana went Live on Facebook as she herself says, "in a very spontaneous way" to announce the initiative. In her message, which was posted in both Armenian and English, and directed at her worldwide following in addition to friends in Yerevan, she stated that "we are not able to go and fight, but our weapon that we have here with us is music and art." She further issued a call to musicians living in Yerevan willing to volunteer for this special effort, and asked for donations from the Diaspora to help run the instantly-expanded program.

The result was the rapidly organized "Nexus for Artsakh" program, which has Tchakerian as co-director along with Mikaelian, who still runs the Nexus Center on a daily basis. The idea of the program, as Tchakerian says, is that "there is a war on the front lines, there are attacks on the civilian population, there is a war

see MUSIC, page 14

Artist Ahmet Öğüt Has Withdrawn His Work From an Azerbaijani Museum After It Used His Name in a Propaganda Campaign

By Taylor Dafoe

BAKU (*Artnet*) – Turkish artist Ahmet Öğüt has withdrawn a solo exhibition of his work from the Yarat Contemporary Art Space in Baku, Azerbaijan, after the museum tied it in social media posts to the ongoing war in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Earlier this month, Yarat published a photo of its façade on Instagram and Facebook in which the sign advertising the artist's exhibition, "No Poem Loves Its Poet," was paired with a matching banner that read: "Everything for the homeland! Karabakh is Azerbaijan."

"I have become aware that the banner of my exhibition is being used as a propaganda tool in social media along with politically motivated statements that have nothing to do with my independent vision or the content of my exhibition," Öğüt wrote in a public letter shared Wednesday, October 28.

"As the institution has regrettably rejected my requests to take down the exhibition banner with my name appearing next to the Azerbaijani national flag on the facade of its building, and the photo thereof on its social media sites, I have no other option but to demand the immediate closure of my exhibition," said the artist, who was born in Turkey and works between Amsterdam and Berlin. "I refuse to allow my work to fall prey to political instrumentalization."

Soon after the Öğüt sent out his statement on October 28, Yarat changed the exhibition



The facade of the Yarat Contemporary Art Space in Baku, Azerbaijan, with a banner promoting Ahmet Öğüt's exhibition.

details on its website to say that the show was over. His works were removed from view that same day, but they remain on the premises.

Yarat did not respond to Artnet News's request for comment, but the institution confirmed to Art Asia Pacific that, as of October 29, the exhibition has been removed from view.

Öğüt's exhibition included two site-specific video and sculptural installations commissioned for the occasion. The titular work, *Hiçbir siir, sairini sevmez* (No poem loves its poet), which was named for a piece of graffiti Öğüt came across in a historic neighborhood in Baku, features footage shot across the capital city and is a reflection on gentrification.

Responding to the political conditions of a host city is characteristic of Öğüt's work.

"During my career as an artist, I have worked many times in conflicted areas and have responded to the local situation with nuanced and challenging artworks," he added in his statement.

On view since March, the show was supposed to run through November 20. Öğüt did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



ARTS & LIVING

Sevana Tchakerian Is Fighting Back With Her Only Weapon: Music

MUSIC, from page 13

in the media, online. But we have to take care of the people who are now in Armenia who are temporarily displaced, and what we can do best, personally, is music education, art education, and kind of bring a sense of normality to these kids' lives. Because they grew up in war – they live in a war zone, you know? So what can we do to take their minds off a little bit?"

She continues, "at the same time we want to bring musical and artistic relief to everyone, but we also know that there are lot of musician kids, who are musically gifted, who had a musical education, who were playing instruments – we keep on meeting them, and they are ... everything stopped for them. They don't have anything. They don't have, of course, their instruments. So we're thinking of, how can we keep on giving them an education and make them evolve and use also their voices to transmit certain messages."

Her initial idea of hosting workshops at the Nexus Center building in Yerevan was almost immediately modified. Most of the displaced Karabakh refugees are living in hotels and church-run shelters that have opened their doors. "We realized ... a lot of hotels told us, it's difficult for us to bring them to your center, can you come and meet them in our hotels, shelters?"



Young musicians performing

want to play music, their [Nexus'] doors are opened and we want to do daily education." She adds, "You have to know that a lot of these kids also don't go to school – I don't know, I've read some crazy statistics, like 30,000 kids have lost

it to our fundraiser."

So, what does Nexus for Artsakh programming look like? "For the musical parts, we've done a couple of things. We go to meet with a group of kids. We sing, we bring musical instruments, we teach them songs, it's very interactive. We do musical games, we do preschool music education, like ear training. Percussion ensemble, we do trash can ensemble with the bigger ones, teenagers. And kind of arranging Armenian folk songs."

This experience has also revealed a ton of native talent.

"For instance, there is a kid, there is a 17-year-old girl from Stepanakert, Dina, who wrote a song about it, and she sang it for us, and we said 'You know what, let's record it, we will arrange it, we will produce it for you at the center, and we will also do a music video.' Because it comes from her heart, she's speaking about her reality, and it's a very beautiful song, and we want to help, and we want to raise her voice. So, this is what we're currently working on. We finished the audio recording, and I think today they're going to shoot the music video," she said.

Young Dina was not the only young person they met with blooming talent: "There are some kids we met who are very good musicians so we are getting instruments and sending them to them," Sevana said, and continued, "There are some teenagers from Artsakh who are musically very talented, and they've been helping us, like as assistants. And so we're pro-

viding them guitar lessons, so they can also then lead workshops and have an instrument to accompany themselves."

Recently, a group of new arrivals at the center have filled Tchakerian with hope. They are 15 music students from Artsakh who had met up 2 days prior, and practiced a new song only 20 minutes before Sevana captured their moving, talented performance on film, accompanied by guitar played by a teenage girl from among the group.

"We want to train these teens," she says, "so they also go and play for the kids. They are all students from the Music College of Stepanakert, though some of them enrolled this year and didn't get to study yet," she said.

When asked if music helps children deal with



Sevana Tchakerian, in the background, and other musicians and students cheer on a young performer.

The needs were immediate and the work started right away.

"So starting from the day that we announced this initiative, the next day we started meeting kids, I think we met like 30 kids, and then another 30, and then another 50, we went to different places – church organizations were sheltering kids; hotels were completely booked with families from Artsakh. So for a week we did that, and then I got called by the region of Tavush," Tchakerian said.

She was informed by representatives of the Tavush regional government that her music programming was needed not only in Yerevan but also in the provinces. She took her music program on the road: "So with a team of musicians, psychologists and artists, we went to Dilijan and then I kept on going to other places, went to Vanadzor, went to Goris, and in Goris there are thousands of kids. So far I think we've worked with 1,500 kids."

The need is great and varied. With thousands of kids displaced, they aren't even able to go to school and get a basic education, let alone stay involved in the arts. Yet it is often art and music that is most needed in times like this. Everything is done according to the kids' needs, and the programming is extremely flexible.

Said Tchakerian, "There are kids that we see a couple of times, some we just visited one time, it really depends on what they want. There are some kids that we [originally] met in a big group of kids, and then they started coming [to the Nexus Center]. Because just recently [toward the end of October], we got funding to have daily classes at Nexus. So now we're trying to understand and get organized and pay for transportation for individual kids who really

their right to education. I mean, it's just too complicated right now to readjust." As for funding? "Everything is free for the kids. Very quickly we had people who started donating, thankfully. We have a group of individuals in the diaspora, even non-Armenians who are donating, thankfully. And we have a little fundraiser. Obviously for us, the priority for every Armenian is to donate to the Armenia Fund, but if there are people who have donated to the Armenia Fund and they have a little more money, they want to give more for kids, and arts and music, they can give it to us, they can give



Children engrossed by activities.



Sevana Tchakerian and a young student

trauma, she replied, "For sure. You see, you feel, a difference. These kids, like I told you, their daily life is the war. Very often they have their fathers, their brothers, their sons, husbands, boyfriends, in the front lines. Friends, of course. And so, we act as psychologists, we are very careful, we cannot just show up and play. Sometimes they are not in the mood to play. They want to do like, origami. The kids want to draw. So we always have other stuff with us. Even though we're professional musicians we also have other options. But very often, even if their parents, moms, are like 'We don't feel like it's the mood now to play music,' what happens is that we will start playing and there are some kids and then, gamats gamats (slowly slowly), they gather and they join and at the end they say thank you so much, this was great. You know, it's just a change and you know how music is soothing for everyone...And I think it's just a little breath of fresh air during their days because they have literally nothing to do in these hotels. Except checking the news and be worried."

Tchakerian sighs, and our interview draws to a close. She is clearly worried, but the talented kids give her hope, as they should to all Armenians. "They are our next generation," I say. Tchakerian concurs.



ARTS & LIVING

Aram Pachyan: From Armenia, with Love and Despair

PACHYAN, from page 13

the silent patience of murderers. Father starts howling. We run to his side, lay him down to bed. The sheets stink of alcohol, his heart is throbbing in his chest." (P. 35)

Like the poet Violet Krikoryan, Pachyan lays bare parts of Armenian society often hidden from public view, as they often are in societies with conservative mores. Pachyan's stories the are also very Armenian, obsessed as they are with death, persecution, and tragedy but also presenting characters in love with life, always fighting, never giving up. The narrator quotes Narekatsi and one of his characters reads Khanjyan. Pachyan's prose is steeped in the history of the land: "Goodbye, Bird," the story of

a 28-year-old returning from war, is of course especially topical today given the current Turco-Azeri war being waged against Armenia.

"Whenever my father upset my mother, I would go to Toronto..." So begins the short tale "Toronto" in which a young boy finds escape in the Canadian city of his mind, one that he has never visited in real life. The title story "Robinson" begins with an epistolary exchange between a fictional Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday before leaping into several gruesome tableaux, including one of school children slowly torturing and crucifying their teacher. In the three-page meditation on fear "The Suitcase," a young boy goes on a mad search for dwarves that his father tells him lurk in a

suitcase underneath his bed. The tale ends with one of the most stirring lines that I have read anywhere of late.

"Father Vilik" is ultimately the most satisfying of the stories in Robinson, if for no other reason than it has a happy ending. A young man visits a church to escape his father's wrath after losing his job and thus ensues an unlikely friendship: "Father Vilik kissed my forehead. I took out an old lilac from the flower pot and gave it to Suzy. She was very happy. She said goodbye to me with her delicate fingers. The taxi left. Suzy had leaned her head on Father Vilik's shoulder. Some loud laughter had been heard in the Vegetable District that day. The next morning, my father and I did not wake

up." (p.99)

The reader closes the book and thanks God for his own good fortune. Somewhere in Armenia a little Aram, now grown up, writes wonderfully sorrowful books and one hopes, no longer suffers quite so much.

Purchase Robinson at

<https://glagoslav.com/shop/robinson-by-aram-pachyan/>

Buy Goodbye, Bird at <https://www.amazon.com/Goodbye-Bird-Aram-Pachyan/dp/1911414321>

Learn more about the Opera Goodbye Bird at <https://m.facebook.com/GoodbyeBirdPachyan/>

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

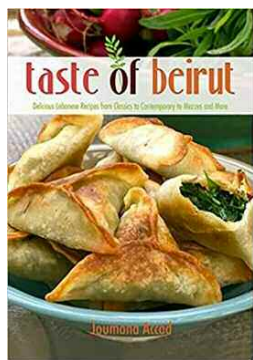




Mallow Salad

Mallow Salad (Khobbeizeh bel-zeyt)
from *Taste of Beirut*

Recipe and photos are courtesy of Joumana Accad, the talented creator of TasteofBeirut.com, the successful Lebanese food blog. A native of Lebanon, Joumana is a trained pastry chef and professional caterer. In her celebrated cookbook, *Taste of Beirut*, she shares her heritage through exquisite food and family anecdotes, teaching anyone how to master traditional Lebanese cuisine. Published in 2014 by Health Communications, Inc. (US), her cookbook has enjoyed to date the largest number of independent five-star reviews from their roster of cookbooks, and is available online through Amazon and other sites as well as in major bookstores in Lebanon.



With over 150 recipes inspired by her beloved grandmother, Accad captures the famous and healthy flavors of the Middle East and makes them completely accessible to home cooks everywhere, like this traditional Mallow Salad (Khobbeizeh bel-zeyt). What is khobbeizeh? It is a wild plant from the same family as hibiscus and mallows (mauve in French). "It was consumed for medicinal purposes in the olden days as it was believed to help digestion and to fight sore throats. It is like the dandelion in taste," Joumana says.

"Eaten in salads in Lebanon with fried onions and a squeeze of lemon, it is from the same family as mallows from which the original marshmallow used to be made, before it was turned into a corn syrup, sucrose and artificial coloring candy. We are finding that making candy from mucilaginous plants dates back centuries since the Abbassid used to do it in the tenth-century in Baghdad."

TasteofBeirut.com started as a food and culinary blog in 2009, and its main purpose was to share Joumana's beloved Lebanese heritage with the world through recipes, anecdotes, and cultural history.



INGREDIENTS:

3 bunches of khobbeizeh (or Swiss chard, kale, spinach, beet greens, dandelion or other any greens)
4 medium onions, chopped or sliced in rings
Olive oil, as needed
2 large lemons
1/2 cup golden raisins (not traditional, but it adds a nice touch of sweetness)
2 cloves garlic
Salt to taste

PREPARATION:

Pluck the stems off (Joumana uses kitchen scissors); place the leaves in a bowl, fill with water and rinse several times to clean well. Chop the leaves in ribbons, and place with the water clinging to them in a large pot; bring to a boil.

Add the raisins and let simmer a couple of minutes until the leaves wilt and set aside. If a lot of water remains in the pot, boil it until it evaporates, watching to make sure the leaves do not burn. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet, and add the onions; fry the onions until a golden-brown color. Mash garlic cloves and add to the skillet alongside the greens and raisins. Season with extra salt, if needed, and about 1/4 cup of fresh lemon juice; toss gently to combine. Serve at room temperature with lemon quarters.

For this recipe, go to:

<http://www.tasteofbeirut.com/mallow-salad-khobbeizeh-bel-zeyt/>

<https://www.instagram.com/taste.of.beirut/>

<https://www.instagram.com/taste.of.beirut/>

<https://www.facebook.com/joumanaaccadtob/videos/spinach-turnovers-taste-of-beirut/10153181235608056/>

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Calendar

MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

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

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

RHODE ISLAND

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

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

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

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

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

December 11 — World Renown "Cadance" Ensemble from Armenia

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

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



COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Ceasefire or Misfire?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

After the collapse of first three ceasefires, brokered by the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), very few people had any confidence that the fourth one, agreed on in Geneva, would hold.

All the ceasefires have proved to be misfires, because Azerbaijan broke the agreements the very same day they were signed.

Bombings continued and even intensified, using internationally banned incendiary phosphate bombs over forests and civilian populations.

In retrospect, when we review the terms and conditions of earlier ceasefires, mostly in 1994 and 2016, we find that they proved to be effective, because of Russia's influence over the two warring parties.

This time around, President Ilham Aliyev does not give a damn about Russian influence, because Russia has lost Azerbaijan to Turkey. Even Aliyev himself has lost his country to Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan who calls the shots.

People are dying in Karabakh and jihadist terrorists have been wreaking havoc with their mission and commission of

front for the lower price of \$800 a month.

Erdogan's friends and foes can plainly see that he is engaged in a global business of creating and exporting terrorists as part of his global war machine, and yet, they look the other way.

Erdogan is a more sophisticated version of Osama Bin Laden. Indeed, the US policy planners used to admire cheerfully Bin Laden when the latter was an ally, shooting down Soviet MiG fighter planes over Afghanistan with shoulder-held Stinger rockets, until they had a rude awakening when he blew up the World Trade Center.

Erdogan is on that very same path. He has been financing the construction of 100 mosques around the world, both in Islamic countries and in the West. In addition, thousands of *madrasas* (religious schools) are being built around the world to promote the fundamentalist version of Islam. One may consider propagating one's religious faith an innocent endeavor, but Erdogan himself and his AK party have been weaponizing religion and using it for their political ends.

Two years ago, Erdogan threatened Germany with political turmoil through manipulating the three million Turkish immigrants there. The same threat has been directed at Russia, whose 25 million Muslim citizens are considered a timebomb by Erdogan. His recent altercations with French President Emmanuel Macron and Austria's Prime Minister



beheading Armenians (\$100 per head) yet we hear only lip service from the world community, which was up in arms when Al-Baghdadi proclaimed his caliphate using the same Islamic terrorists.

Those Islamic terrorists have become permanent features in all of Erdogan's wars, trained in the occupied territories of Syria, and exported to a battleground of Turkey's choosing; they were used in Syria and then moved to Libya and currently they are in Azerbaijan confronting the Karabakh army, which has captured two after slaughtering hundreds of them in the battle.

During the interrogations, the captured jihadists have revealed incriminating facts about their recruitment, training by the Turkish army, their numbers and their plans. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan had been vehemently denying the existence of those jihadists fighting alongside their troops.

The Syrian jihadists have joined the Azerbaijani army for a compensation of around \$2,000 a month, plus as indicated above, a \$100 bonus for each "infidel" head.

Lately, news outlets have reported that Pakistan, a hotbed of terrorism, has found jihadists from Afghanistan whose life seems to be cheaper than the Syrian jihadists. Indeed, it is believed that Pakistan has been recruiting those terrorists from Afghanistan, who have agreed to fight in the Karabakh

Sebastian Kurz are well known.

Already, a taste of what may come is being demonstrated by the beheading of a French teacher in Paris, the killing of a Greek priest in Lyon, the knifing and killing of three at a Catholic church in Nice, and terrorist acts in Germany and Austria.

And yet, Turkey's NATO allies stand in cheerful admiration of Erdogan, who has moved to the Caucasus to foment trouble for Russia.

The day of reckoning won't be far; Erdogan has had fall-outs with every country in the Eastern Mediterranean. If the Western countries do not wake up today for Armenians who are fighting an existential war, they will wake up tomorrow to feel the blows falling on their own skins.

Ahmet Davutoglu, Erdogan's erstwhile soulmate, who had served as his prime minister, was the architect of Turkey's foreign policy of "zero problems with neighbors." He parted ways with Erdogan and founded his own party, Gelecek (Future). Speaking at his party forum, Davutoglu made a scathing attack on his former boss, accusing him of flirting with disaster. He has accused Erdogan of plundering the country's economy by building his war machine. In addition, he stated that the Sultan has antagonized so many countries

continued on next page

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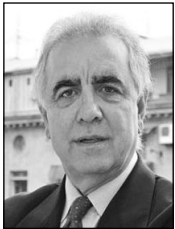
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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Putin Finally Reveals His Solution to the Artsakh Conflict

After Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted and failed to establish a ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenians around the world have been wondering why is he so reluctant to intervene more forcefully in the Artsakh War and stop the bloodshed.

There have been many speculations about Putin's unexpected hands off approach to the Artsakh conflict, including several conspiracy theories which are not worth mentioning.

During an interview with a Western journalist last week, Putin finally revealed his plans to resolve the Artsakh conflict.

This is what Putin stated: "You said that Russia has always had special ties with Armenia. But we have always had special relations with Azerbaijan too. More than two million Armenians and about two million Azerbaijanis live in Russia. These are not only those people who came for temporary work, but also those who live here almost permanently. Working in Russia, they send billions of dollars to support their families. All these people have very stable, close ties in Russia at the humanitarian level, interpersonal, business, family. Therefore, for us, both Armenia and Azerbaijan are equal partners. And it is a great tragedy for us when people die there. We want to build full-fledged relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan. In each case of building relations with each of these countries there is something that distinguishes our relationship with another partner. Well, with Armenia this is Christianity. But we have very close ties with Azerbaijan in other areas as well. As for the religious component, I want to draw your attention to the fact that almost 15 percent of the population of the Russian Federation is Muslim. And even in this sense, Azerbaijan is not a foreign country for us. But what we definitely cannot forget is what happened in the fate of the Armenian people, the Armenian nation, during the First World War; a huge tragedy for the Armenian people. This is the second part. The third is that this conflict began just as an interstate conflict and a struggle for territories. It began as an ethnic confrontation.

It is also unfortunately, a fact when in Sumgait [Azerbaijan], and then in Nagorno Karabakh, cruel crimes were committed against the Armenian people. We must take all this into account in a complex. At the same time, we understand that a situation in which a significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan has been lost by the country cannot last forever. Over the course of many, many years, we have proposed a variety of options for resolving this crisis in order to stabilize the situation for a long historical perspective. I will not go into details now, but believe me, it was hard work to bring the positions closer together. At some moments, it seemed that a little more, a little more, one more step, and we would find a solution. Unfortunately, this did not happen and today we have a conflict in its worst form. And the tragedy is that people are dying. You know, there are many losses on both sides. According to our information, there are more than two thousand dead on each side. The total death toll is already approaching five thousand. I draw your attention to the fact that 13,000 Soviet soldiers died in the 10 years of the war in Afghanistan. And in Karabakh, in such a short period of time, almost five thousand people have already died. How many were injured! How many people are suffering, how many children! Therefore, this is a special situation for us. Yes, the Minsk Group was created in 1992. Russia, France, and the United States as co-chairs, we are responsible for organizing this negotiating process. It is clear, I am 100 percent sure here that all participants in this process sincerely strive for the situation to be resolved. However, no one is as interested in this as Russia. This is happening in a broad sense with our people with our friends, with our relatives. Therefore, we take a position that would allow us to enjoy the trust of both sides and play an essential role as mediators in the settlement of this conflict to bring their positions closer. I would very much like this compromise to be found. As you know, I am in very close contact with both President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan. I talk to them on the phone several times a day. Our foreign ministers, defense ministers, heads of special services are in constant contact. You know the foreign ministers of both countries came to visit us. They met in Washington on October 23rd. I very much hope that our American partners will act in unison with us and help the settlement. Let us hope for the best."

I transcribed this lengthy translation of Putin's remarks without any omission in order to provide the full context of his statement.

Obviously, Armenians are not happy with President Putin equating with Armenia Russia's relationship with Azerbaijan. Armenia is a strategic ally of Russia with a mutual defense treaty and with a Russian military base located on its territory. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, is a puppet of Turkey and has taken many steps to undermine Russia's geopolitical interests, such as the Azeri gas and oil pipelines that reduce the need for Russian oil in Europe.

Furthermore, the involvement of the Turkish military on

Azerbaijan's territory, a part of the Russian sphere of influence, undermines Russia's interests. Even more alarming is Turkey's recruitment of Syrian terrorists and their transfer to Azerbaijan to fight against Artsakh. This is an obvious danger to the national security of Russia. Putin did not mention the nefarious role of these terrorists.

The Russian government has made it clear, however, that the mutual defense treaty with Armenia only applies in case of a foreign attack on the Republic of Armenia, which excludes the territory of Artsakh, even though there have been several missile attacks on Armenia's mainland.

Russia, on the other hand, has other interests with Turkey that it takes into consideration. These are:

- Russia's attempts in recent years to win over and separate Turkey from NATO.

- Multi-billion trade between Russia and Turkey with Turkey's purchase of the Russian S-400 missiles and the planned construction of a Russian nuclear power plant in Turkey.

- Russia's unwillingness to go to war against Azerbaijan and Turkey to protect Artsakh.

- Russia and Turkey have conflicting interests in Syria and Libya where they have an uneasy understanding. The Artsakh conflict would place further pressure on the Russian-Turkish relationship should Russia become actively involved in the Artsakh war against Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Most significantly, as Putin said in his above quoted statement: "a situation in which a significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan has been lost by the country cannot last forever." In other words, Putin implies that he is willing to accept that Azerbaijan militarily reoccupies the seven regions surrounding Artsakh and then negotiate the settlement of the final status of Artsakh. This is totally unacceptable for Armenia and Artsakh. It is imperative to counter the military moves of Azerbaijan and Turkey in order not to allow them to create new facts on the ground which would weaken Armenia's bargaining position. Furthermore, the loss of the territories surrounding Artsakh – the buffer zone – would further threaten the existence of Artsakh.

Even more alarming, Putin announced that "many countries, including Turkey and a host of European states" should work together to find a consensus. Armenia and Artsakh would categorically reject Turkey's involvement. How could Turkey, the instigator of the war, be considered a neutral mediator?

Armenians are somewhat reassured that in recent days, various Russian officials have confirmed Russia's treaty obligation to defend the territory of the Republic of Armenia from any attacks by Azerbaijan or Turkey.

Armenia and Artsakh have difficult days ahead, left all alone to their fate. Only a resolute defense will safeguard the Armenian population of Artsakh.

Ceasefire or Misfire?

from previous page

that sooner or later they will gang up against Turkey and tear it apart.

At this time, Erdogan is in the Caucasus to tempt Russia into an entanglement, which may be temporarily in line with NATO plans, but not for long. And at the same time, Armenia is suffering as Turkey conducts war in Karabakh using Azerbaijan's army and the jihadists who have been appearing in other countries in the Caucasus and in Russia.

Had it been left to Aliyev, he would have settled for peace soon after the start of the war after suffering tremendous losses. Indeed, it is believed that a good portion of Azerbaijan's military hardware, amassed over the years, at the cost of billions of petrodollars, have been destroyed in the war. But Aliyev's persistence in continuing despite the damage carries the hallmark of Erdogan's arrogance.

Erdogan has been brutally open in declaring that Armenia is a hindrance for its path towards achieving its imperial plans. Therefore, he has set his sights beyond Karabakh. Most of the ferocious battles are being waged on Karabakh's territory, trying to move closer to the southern tip of Armenia, the Meghri region, which separates mainland Azerbaijan from the Nakhichevan exclave.

The conduct of the war, threatening Armenia's territory, has triggered the stipulations of the Treaty of Friendship Cooperation and Mutual Defense of 1997, signed between Armenia and Russia.

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has alerted Russia's President Vladimir Putin of the impending danger of war on the very territory of Armenia.

Despite his reluctance and neutral position on the conflict, Putin has responded that Russia will honor the terms of the

treaty. Also, consultations have ensued as to the nature and volume of assistance.

After forcing Russia into a stalemate in Syria and Libya, Turkey has been challenging that country into a confrontation closer to home, in the Caucasus. Erdogan's government has suggested repeatedly that Turkey is in charge of the war operation. Russia has been trying to provide peacekeeping forces, which Turkey would like to match in numbers. Recently, White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, speaking at a community outreach forum in Los Angeles, indicated that discussions are underway to bring peacekeepers from Scandinavian countries. He has also bluntly ruled out Turkey's participation in peacekeeping. So far, so good.

But the US is capable of doing more. President Trump had mentioned the Kosovo model, which thus far has been considered a unique precedent that cannot be repeated.

Hugo Dante, writing in the *National Interest*, under the title "US Sanctions Could Deescalate Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan," says: "The United States has the tools to deescalate but Azerbaijan and Turkey are testing the effectiveness of influence campaigns and strategic entanglement in coaxing the United States to overlook mass civilian displacement and potential massacres."

He adds, "The United States is uniquely positioned to deescalate tensions and enforce peace. Given that Turkish weapons and influence are driving violence, Washington has the ability to cut aid, weapons sales, and impose sanctions as a check to Ankara's war drum."

But the US administration is in a campaign for its life and the massacres of Karabakh Armenians are not a priority at this time.

Ilham Aliyev, who has three times ignored initiatives of the OSCE co-chairs, should be held accountable for breaking the ceasefires.

Erdogan, who is chasing his Turanic dreams, has to be stopped in his tracks. The creation of an Ottoman Empire requires the subjugation of other nations in this era of globalization. When 25 million Kurdish people are engaged in a war of liberation to break away from Turkey's embrace, which nation, in its right mind, would tolerate the rule of a blood-thirsty Sultan?

Today, Turkey is on Armenia's borders to finish its genocide launched 105 years ago. Since the beginning of the war, this column has been underlining the importance of using the genocide issue as a moral wall against Turkish aggression.

Turkey and Erdogan are vulnerable on that score and that is why they have allocated tremendous resources to the denial of the Armenian Genocide globally.

At last, Armenia's president and prime minister have begun to effectively capitalize on the issue in their public pronouncements. Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan continues that theme in his diplomatic jargon.

Israel and the Jews have long capitalized on the issue. Zev Chafetz, writing in Bloomberg.net, articulated the issue best: "The greater similarity, is, of course, the fact that Jews and Armenians were both victims of 20th-century genocide. But instead of bringing them together, the mutual experience has become a point of contention. ... Israel knows the power of victimization and has made the Holocaust centerpiece of its diplomacy since 1948. The benefits are obvious. It has won Israel financial reparations from Germany and other European perpetrators, given Israel freedom of action denied to other small countries and has been a moral trump card against Holocaust deniers like Iran and the Palestinians."

As the war has been proving these days, Armenians do not have many friends. They may as well put to good use the rightful moral capital they possess.



COMMENTARY

PROPOSAL TO LAUNCH ARMENIA-ARTSAKH RECONSTRUCTION BONDS: AN OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER PASHINYAN

The R. H. Nikol Pashinyan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia
Yerevan, Armenia

Dear Mr. Pashinyan,

In 1951 Israel had barely emerged from an existential struggle to create Jewish state in the middle of an ocean of enemies. Yet in the midst of truly life-threatening circumstances, Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion called for the vast Jewish diaspora to participate in the building of this state surrounded by mortal enemies.

I would not establish necessarily a one-to-one parallel between the case of Jews seventy years back in Israel and that of Armenians today in Artsakh and Armenia. We Armenians are currently much better off!

After one month of devastating war which began on September 27, Artsakh and Armenia are still not out of the woods. However, the war must end eventually and then a huge reconstruction effort will be needed in the motherland. It must erase the enormous damage suffered so far and, even more importantly, help Armenia and Artsakh much further to solidify and strengthen their infrastructure, industry, defense and all other means to secure their existence for many years to come. All of this requires various resources, among which financial backing is unquestionably fundamental.

Ben Gurion in 1951 came up with the concept and the efficient process of issuing Israel Bonds which has allowed the Jewish diaspora to contribute substantially to the nation-building process. Israel Bonds continue to this date to play that role. Furthermore, as successful as Israel has become internationally thanks to the well-known intellectual and business abilities of the Jewish people, many non-Jews have become Israel Bond espousers, and hence contributors to Israel's well-being.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister Pashinyan, Armenia and Armenians must emulate today Israel's successful experience of 1951. Please take the initiative, with the help of the expertise available as much in Armenia as in the diaspora, to issue "2021 Armenia Reconstruction Bonds."

With the unprecedented pan-Armenian solidarity created as a fortunate by-product of the otherwise unfortunate current catastrophic crisis, there is no doubt that every breadwinning Armenian will want to participate in this effort. In a diaspora of well over 10 million Armenians spread across the world, from Russia to Australia, the Middle East, Europe and



that the diaspora will respond most positively to such an initiative.

Please accept my wholehearted sincere wishes for our nation to overcome the current existential crisis. We shall overcome!

Sincerely,
Dr. Arshavir Gundjian C.M.
Montreal, Canada



cc: Honorable Anahit Haroutyunian
Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, in Ottawa, Canada

An Armenian Pilgrim in Jerusalem

By John Aroutiounian



FOR all of us there are memories, once seared into our beings, which never depart. For me, one such memory begins on a hot summer day in Jerusalem's Old City, on a winding road opposite King David's Tower – a sweltering sea of hijabs, yarmulkes, burqas, and Franciscan habits. Of ultra-orthodox yeshiva students ducking into

the Jewish Quarter, a pair of nuns rushing to make Mass, an imam taking a pause to wipe the sweat off his brow, an Israeli soldier gazing out from Jaffa Gate, machine gun in hand. And then, in this concentrated cesspool of devotion, of hate, of love, of distrust, of power, of sin and holiness, coming down the winding road is an Armenian Apostolic vardabet, in black robes, instantly noticeable by virtue of the distinctive head covering and the Armenian cross hanging around his neck. He is walking up through the crowd, and many heads turn to follow his gait. He is rushing from the Armenian Quarter, the ancient home of Armenian religious and pilgrims in the Holy Land, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, our Lord Jesus Christ's tomb, which Armenians co-administer along with, principally, the Catholic and Greek Orthodox Church. It is time for the weekly Armenian procession at the Holy Sepulchre, as it was the week before and every Sunday before that since time

immemorial. I see all this and I think, as I frequently do now each time the memory returns: How did the Armenians survive here?

The answer, of course, is precisely how they survived everywhere else. But in this place – the most hotly contested stretch of land in the world, and the site of the ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of the son of God – this question takes on a metaphysical significance.

Why has God, through their unspeakable tragedies and loss, continued to favor the Armenian people and Church, particularly at the sites of his only-begotten Son's life journey? A people so small, so scattered, so alone compared with the other mighty forces wrestling for control of this land.

It is a question as mysterious, it often seems, as others surrounding God's various choices – of the weak man Peter to be his disciple, or of the relatively unimportant Jewish tribe to be the bearers of His covenant in the Old Testament. Perhaps it has something to do with Armenia's unique history as a Christian people, an identity formed by the holy and sacred Armenian language, whose script was created by the fathers of the Church, by Armenian architecture and literature – indeed, all the highest forms of Armenian intellectual expression, which found their manifestations through service to God. And, of course, by the Armenian Genocide, the crucifixion and resurrection of an entire people and culture.

An excerpt from Isaiah 53 reads,

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain
When you make his life an offering for sin
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper
Out of his anguish he shall see light
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

In the Jewish tradition, this image of the Suffering Servant is understood as the nation of Israel. In the Christian, as the fig-

ure of Jesus. Both are correct. But it is hard to read Isaiah 53 and to not also see a reflection of the Armenian nation, a Christian people spread around the world to be a "light to the nations," and to intercede for the world: "to be my salvation to the ends of the Earth." My pilgrimage to 2014, with a devoted group of student from the Armenian Church in America under Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, opened my eyes to the reality that the trials of the world's oldest Christian people give us a special responsibility to stand up for the dignity of man and proclaim God's name to all we encounter. Perhaps this universal mission is why Armenians survive, and why they've survived in this of all places – Jerusalem.

My two weeks living in the Armenian Quarter, attending daily prayer and visiting places like Bethlehem, the garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and so many others convinced me that this is a trip every Armenian should feel obliged to take at least once in life. For Jerusalem is our Holy City in a way no other Christian people can claim – because through suffering and martyrdom of a brutality perhaps no other Christian peoples have ever seen, the Armenians are still there in the one and only Jerusalem, described so beautifully in one of the most haunting of hymns, from the Requiem Service of the Armenian Church:

Ee vereenun Yerusaghem, ee pnagaranes hreshdagats, oor Yenovk yev Yegheas gan dzeratsyal aghavnagerb eetrakhdeen.
In the supernal Jerusalem, in the dwellings of the angels, where the prophets Enoch and Elijah live old in age like doves.

And one last thing – if you're blessed to have the privilege to make this pilgrimage, may I suggest that you choose to stay in the Armenian Quarter. The rooms are small and cramped, and there is no full-service hotel breakfast. But your path will more closely resemble the one taken by our ancestors over the centuries, who trekked from Cilicia, Van, and Ani just to see Jerusalem before they died. And you will be helping to ensure the Armenian footprint and bond with supernal Jerusalem – a bond virtually as old as the Christian story of Christ emerging from the tomb we are here to help restore tonight, endures forever.

(John Aroutiounian gave this talk at the Gala Dinner, and is a student at the University of Oxford) Armenian Church News, Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Volume 2, Issue 32, 18 November 2016)



COMMENTARY

Why Negotiations Failed



By Jirair Libaridian

[A shortened version of this talk was presented on October 31, 2020 during the one-day international conference/webinar titled “Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and the Palimpsests of Conflict, Violence, and Memory,” organized by the Armenian Studies Center of the Promise Armenian Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles.]

The issue I have been asked to address, “Why Negotiations Failed,” is one of the easiest and, at the same time, one of the most difficult to discuss. Easy because there are so many reasons for the failure of negotiations to choose from. Difficult, because the choices bring with it a measure of responsibility for the actors in question, a responsibility all the more difficult to accept considering where that failure has led us, the disastrous historical events we are witnessing.

Therefore, in addition to the limitation of the time available, my presentation will be constrained by two factors: (1) the restraint appropriate for a time of war, and (2) my strong sense that the parties to the conflict, that includes the Armenian side, are not yet ready, if they will ever be, to accept their share of responsibility in this failure.

First, who are the parties to the conflict: Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh, and Armenia. And now Turkey.

What other actors have a direct interest in the outcome? Russia, Turkey, Iran, the US, China, Georgia and other countries with secessionist movements; the OSCE and EU, the UN, NATO, the Organization of Islamic States; British Petroleum and other major oil and gas companies that have invested in the exploration, exportation, transportation, and use of Azerbaijan’s hydrocarbon resources. And the Diaspora.

Who has attempted or otherwise been involved in negotiations at various times? Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkey, Italy, Sweden, Finland, France, Germany, the US, the UN, even, at one point, the International Olympic Committee, as odd as it may sound.

Who has attempted or actually mediated? Russia, Russia and Kazakhstan, Iran, the US, Turkey as direct intermediaries; Russia, the US, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia in secret negotiations in Geneva; advisors of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in confidential consultation. The winner has been the OSCE through its Minsk Conference, reduced to the 3-way co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group, the current Group of actors: Russia, France and the US.

What have been the elements of the conflict under negotiations?

Cease-fires during periods of active warfare

The future status of Nagorno Karabakh or Artsakh

Seven districts around the Soviet era NK Autonomous region not populated by Armenians within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan, districts that came under Armenian. Control by the summer of 1993. This is one dimension of this conflict that is different from similar other Soviet era conflicts.

Security guarantees for any agreed upon status and for civilian populations impacted by any agreement

And to a lesser degree, refugees and internally displaced persons largely from Nagorno Karabakh and the seven districts in general

It should already be obvious that we are dealing with a complex issue, with parties to the conflict unwilling to make the necessary concessions or with ineffective mediations. The answer is probably all three.

It is possible to separate the time span from 1991 to 2020 into two distinct periods as far as negotiations on the Karabakh conflict are concerned.

The first is from 1991-1997, during the administration of the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian. During that period Armenia thought that the war had not ended with the cease-fire of 1994, that the balance of power was likely to change in favor of Azerbaijan, that all things considered time was not on our side, that if concessions had to be made they are better made when the Armenian side was in the stronger position. The Ter-Petrosian administration considered (a) the problem to be primarily its own and supported the work of the mediators with its own initiatives and ideas, (b) the conflict to be primarily an issue between neighbors without ascribing to it any symbolic global significance, (c) the problem one that must be

resolved above all else, otherwise all other issues—democratization, economic reforms, strengthening of state institutions, normal relations with all neighbors as the best guarantee for Armenia’s long term security—to be threatened if not impossible to achieve, and (d) that it was impossible to reach agreement on the status of Karabakh but peace could be achieved in two phased negotiations, and peace would be secured in the first phase.

The Ter-Petrosian administration labored toward this goal intensely, at times facing the disagreement, even the active opposition, of the Karabakh leadership. On two or three occasions it brought Azerbaijan close to an agreement that would establish peace through mutual concessions. To do that this administration avoided many of the pitfalls that would become problems in the second period, discussed below. On these occasions Azerbaijan balked at the end, hoping that it could get a better deal. The last such occasion when an agreement seemed very possible, was the September 1997 proposal offered by the Minsk Group. That document was likely to be accepted by Azerbaijan and Armenia as a basis for constructive negotiations. But this time it was a group within the Ter-Petrosian administration that vehemently opposed the proposal, and left no choice to the president but to resign. The group opposed the document because it did not think the Armenian side needed to make any concession, regardless of what it received in return.

The second period extends from 1998 to the present. In general terms, the following problems stand out as factors that have made negotiations for the most part unproductive during this period:

The parties to the conflict see this conflict as the continuation of previous episodes of armed hostilities going back to 1905-1907 and as integral to their state and national identity formation, especially in the case of Azeris

Thus, they have invested their identities, historical perspectives, and cultural sensibilities in the conflict and not just their interests making concessions equivalent to a loss of identity.

The conflict, the fortunes of war on the ground, and possibilities of resolutions have been instrumental in the domestic politics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, legitimizing or delegitimizing leaders of governments, a process that has pushed populations toward more nationalistic and maximalist positions, making concession more difficult and providing leaders excuses for not making any concessions.

Also, as a consequence, societies have become alien to each other, unwilling to understand each other, each seeing the other as completely untrustworthy, to say the least. In the case of Azerbaijan, the loser of the first major round of battles, this alienation has become outright hatred with racist overtones. Although the Armenian side has increasingly equated Azeris with Turks, hence genocidal by nature, the Armenian side has not imitated the Azerbaijani campaign.

Furthermore, when considering ideas, proposals, possible solutions, each side imagined the worst possible scenarios that would follow, not having grounds, each believed, to trust the other. And ascribing the worst possible intentions to the other. Thus, the whole process of negotiations was undermined by the fallback position of taking chances with war rather than with peace.

For the most part, the parties to the conflict defined their maximum demands but not their minimum ones, making negotiations slippery. Thus, they went after what they wanted and not what they needed. When one party was ready to be flexible the other was not. Thus, they both missed opportunities to benefit from each other’s flexibility. In doing so each party to the conflict relied on their version of history, on their sense of victimhood, but above all on principles of international law, each highlighting the ones that support their demands. Each wanted to believe, mistakenly, that international principles were adopted to protect the interests of small nations, when in fact they are formulated by the big ones, they serve the interests of the big ones, and they can be used or discarded at will by them.

The parties ignored the fact modern communications technologies do not allow for distinctions between words and rhetoric intended for domestic consumption and those uttered for an international audience. More often than not, each side found comfort in the populist and extremist public utterances of the other’s leader to justify their lack of readiness to make concessions and to invest the necessary energy, imagination, patience and political capital on negotiations.

Each party to the conflict imagined that time was on its side. Each side convinced itself of the validity of its argument.

Azerbaijan was confident time would deliver the benefits of its oil diplomacy and oil income to secure continued international support for its position and to prepare for the next war.

The Armenian side thought of the Diaspora as the equivalent resource that countered the Azerbaijan’s assets. The Armenian Diaspora did nothing to disabuse Armenia and Artsakh of their illusions.

Evidently, some arguments were obviously more valid than others. Meanwhile opportunities were lost.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the two peoples tended to replace the so-called socialist ideology with nationalism, and Politburo Moscow with Republican Moscow, Brussels, and Washington. That left no room for the development of a sense of regionalism and common regional interests beyond their differences on the conflict.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union did put an end to the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War but not to the geopolitical rivalries. The dissolution of the Soviet Union had opened

new areas for contention and control. The South Caucasus was one of them.

We are faced with an interesting paradox: The Minsk Group mediators, Russia, the US and France, had conflicting interests and pursued opposing goals with regard to a variety of global and regional issues; yet they achieved a rare unanimity on the basics regarding the two most important issues of the Karabakh conflict: withdrawal of Armenian forces from the seven districts accompanied by measures to provide for the security of the population of Artsakh, with the understanding that negotiations on the future status of the region would follow.

Yet the US and Russia often checked each other when it came to the details and other aspects of the plan. Each wanted to make sure that any plan would maximize their interests and influence in the region and minimize those of the other. In other words, the mediators tried to resolve issues of their own, beyond the Karabakh conflict itself.

The result was an ineffective mediation. It became impossible for them to bring about the equivalent of the Dayton Accords, that settled the conflict of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this case the mediator, the US used all of its influence and resources to force the parties to make concessions in order to reach an agreement. In this case the three mediators, that is three of the five members of the UN Security Council, one superpower and two major powers, did not perform any better than any set of three other states might have. Each mediator was concerned that exerting pressure on one of the parties might drive that party to the other.

What we are witnessing today is a repetition of that pattern. The three Minsk group Co-Chairmen are trying hard to bring about an effective cease-fire. All three think that the first order of business should be a cessation of military operations on the ground. On this, they agree with Armenia, while Azerbaijan and Turkey disagree. Russia is trying to station its own peacekeepers in a region that has considerable geopolitical significance for them, and the US is opposing the idea proposing, instead that Scandinavian peacekeepers be deployed when. And if there is agreement on such forces. The result may be total inaction.

Some brief observations:

Cease-fires during periods of active warfare

There have been two periods of significant warfare: 1991-1994 and the current one that was started a month ago. The first period lasted as long as it did because Azerbaijan refused to agree to a cease-fire because it started to lose territory and it continued to fight in order to recoup what it had lost; and, in the process, lost more. The Armenian side offered cease-fires at every step. Azerbaijan resisted thinking that a cease-fire would freeze the situation and that frost might last too long. That is until 1994 May when it was no longer capable of fighting.

At this time too Azerbaijan is refusing to abide by any cease-fire, but this time because it is gaining ground and sees no reason to stop. Azerbaijan thinks they can improve their advantage on the ground and leave as little as possible for the negotiating table.

The future status of Nagorno Karabakh or Artsakh, the central issue

Azerbaijan has insisted on the principle of territorial integrity, that is, the status of Karabakh, whatever is negotiated, had to be as part of Azerbaijan. It is important note that at times it has retreated from that categorical insistence and to leave the final determination to second stage negotiations.

The Armenian side has on occasion indicated willingness to leave the final status to a second phase of negotiations but otherwise has insisted on independence for Karabakh or agreement by Azerbaijan to the right of self-determination for the people of Artsakh through a future referendum, which amounts to the same thing.

It is obvious that under the circumstances an agreement on the status is impossible. Insisting on it at this time means certain failure of negotiations. The only solution would be to leave it to the future.

The international community, including the mediators, have unanimously sided with Azerbaijan on this issue. When compelled to articulate their position in a proposal to the parties, they have consistently insisted on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, that means some kind of autonomous status for Karabakh within Azerbaijan. However, realizing that agreement between the sides on this issue is impossible at this time, they prefer to postpone status negotiations for later.

The seven districts around Artsakh under Armenian control.

If status negotiations should be left to a second phase, what would a first phase entail? Primarily and mainly the return of those districts to Azerbaijani or possibly, for one of them, Lachin, international control.

Azerbaijan has made it clear that regardless of when the status of Karabakh would be determined or what that would be, it would never acquiesce to those seven districts remaining under Armenian control. That it would go to war for those districts faster than for Karabakh. It has also made clear over the past 25 years that when it did go to war for them, it would have no obligation to stop at retaking those seven districts; that since it considered Karabakh part of Azerbaijan, it would also take Karabakh militarily, and then see what is left to negotiate.

The Armenian side has justified the taking of these districts as necessary for the immediate security of the population of Karabakh when during the first big war Azerbaijani forces were



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using these heights to bomb that population. Subsequently control of these districts were justified as bargaining chips, although for some it was a bargaining chip to secure permanent peace, while for others these should be ceded only in return for the recognition by Azerbaijan of Artsakh's independence, once more an impossible quest. But at the end these districts came to be described as liberated territories, including by government officials in more than one administration, as territories that could never be returned, thus transforming the Karabakh issue from a matter of self-determination and security of a people to one of territorial aggrandizement with all the consequences that shift entailed. Those who thought otherwise were characterized as defeatists and traitors.

On this issue too, the international community, including Russia, the US, and France, made it clear that under no circumstances would they agree for these districts to be left under Armenian control. They have said so consistently for over two decades. Thus, the international community has sided with Azerbaijan on the two core issues of the conflict; there are no "friends" of Armenia to be found here.

Equally important, it is important to note that Armenian control of these districts initially taken for the security of our people became a powerful irritant produced more insecurity than security.

In summary, there is a simple, stark and crucial difference between the two periods, 1991-

1998 and 1998-2020, as far as negotiation strategies are concerned: During the first period, that is the Ter-Petrosian administration, the policy with regard to the conflict was to actively seek a resolution of the conflict. During the second period, that is the Kocharyan, Sargsyan and Pashinyan administrations, the policy was essentially to preserve the status quo.

Conclusions

The contemporary phase of this conflict started in 1988 with a political campaign in Stepanakert and then in Yerevan. Azerbaijan bears the responsibility for the brutalization and then militarization of the conflict.

If we are to get to the essence of the conflict, we could find it in the following difference: The Azerbaijani side sees the Karabakh problem as one of territory that must bring under its control, with or without its Armenian population. The Armenian side sees it as a problem of the right of the Armenian people of Artsakh to live free and secure on their lands. This difference also dictates the militaristic policies of Azerbaijan. It does not make them legitimate but also does not make them less real.

The reader will have realized, nonetheless, my observations recognize a few realities. I will present three of them here:

That the Armenian side is an active participant in the development of the conflict and in negotiating process, which means that what it said and did mattered; that no outcome was predetermined. The position and policies of the parties evolve and they do so partly on the basis of what the other side is doing and saying. These premises run counter to the narrative that says that Azerbaijan and now Turkey were going to do what they are doing regardless of what we said or did. Had that been so, we should not have said or done anything; we should have just waited for our destiny to come to us.

That what is fair and just, what we deserve and should be given to us, what is cruel or uncivil, what can be characterized as pure indif-

ference by the international community do not matter in these negotiations.

That we ignored what the international community, including the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, especially Russia have been telling us clearly and for so long regarding what they think the solution to the problem should be and we should be doing. We acted that they do not matter. And yet now we are appealing to them to save us, and to so on our own terms. This observation has nothing to do with my personal preferences, with my idea of an ideal solution, what I wish would happen, or my dreams. None of these actors, beginning with Azerbaijan all the way to countries that like us or hate us, have any responsibility toward me or to making my dreams real. We ignore these facts at our own peril.

It is obvious that it is not a single event, word or attitude that will explain the vicissitudes of negotiations and, at the end, their failure. All the more important for small nations like ours to try and get all the elements right. That includes the position or positions in the Diaspora which have played some role in the perceptions of Armenia and Artsakh as a resource that could balance the resources Azerbaijan has. I do not think I will be mistaken in asserting that the Diasporan positions have been maximalist and to say the least, have not contributed to a more realistic assessment of the situation in the homeland. I am not aware of any political organization or any institution in the Diaspora that has advocated a more circumspect policy than the one advocated by the political groups that claim to speak on behalf of the Diaspora.

More importantly, it has been impossible to find any scholar – historian, political scientist, or other – who has articulated a critical view of such extremist policies in any article, book or public presentation during the 20 or more years. The state of war cannot be an excuse here, since between May 1994 and September 27 2020 there were less than 10 days when we had active war. What we have from scholars are at best descriptions of policies on Karabakh.

And our historians and political scientists should know our history better than there exists in popular imagination. Examples abound in our history of disasters that follow serious miscalculations. It is possible to argue that we are scholars and we just watch and describe. Then we would have to explain why so many scholars engage in harsh criticisms of those who present a view other than the maximalist.

In substance one can find the basic points made above in my writings and presentations during the past 20 or more years, and I stand behind every position I have taken in those pieces, even more so today than at the time of their writing. Still, I found it important to make these points here, because we are at a critical juncture and the Prime Minister of Armenia will have to make some hard decisions that will reflect the situation on the ground rather than any other consideration. It is not clear how much leeway he will have at any given moment, that is, to what extent, if any, the future will depend on him or Armenia and Artsakh. I certainly hope it will not be too late to have say-so in the solutions. And he will need our understanding and may even need our help.

Scholars and community and the wider Diaspora will have to rethink their positions, they will have to find a new voice to be able to contribute to the solution of the problem rather than being part of it by actively pushing for maximalist positions that assured a path to war or by their silence. Scholars and intellectuals should not participate in the art of escaping realities and facts, an art that is more characteristic, but no less disastrous, to politicians.

Repeating the mistakes of the past expecting a different result is not the mark of a nation that knows its history.

(Gerard Jirair Libaridian is a historian and politician. From 1991 to 1997, he served as adviser, and then senior adviser to the former President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian, and was closely involved in the Karabakh negotiations.)



HELP Us Rebuild

The Tekeyan School of Beirut

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



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

For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455.