

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXI, NO. 23, Issue 4665 \$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

## US Sanctions NATO Ally Turkey over Purchase of Russian Missile Defense System

By Karen DeYoung and Kareem Fahim

WASHINGTON (*Washington Post*) – The Trump administration imposed sanctions on Monday, December 14, on NATO-ally Turkey's main military weapons procurement agency as punishment for its purchase of a Russian-made missile defense system.

The sanctions were mandated under a 2017 law requiring them against any entity that engages in “significant transactions” with Russian defense or intelligence sectors.

The announcement came after Congress last week overwhelmingly passed the annual defense funding bill, which includes a provision ordering that the sanctions be imposed within 30 days. President Trump has threatened to veto the bill.

Lawmakers of both parties had criticized the administration for delaying the sanctions following Turkey's \$2.5 billion purchase of the S-400 system in 2019, inaction that some attributed to Trump's disinclination to offend Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Senior State Department officials who briefed reporters denied that the administration's hand was forced by passage of the defense measure. “Any decision to impose sanctions ... requires a thorough, deliberative process” and had taken a long time to properly consider, said Matthew Palmer, deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. “That's particularly the case when we're talking about a NATO ally, one that is deeply integrated into NATO supply chains.”

In a harshly worded statement, Turkey's Foreign Ministry condemned the measures, which it called “completely senseless” and “unfair.” Turkey, it said, “will take the necessary steps against this decision, which will negatively affect our relationship,” and pledged to “retaliate in a manner and timing it deems appropriate.”

It called on the United States to reconsider and to “address this issue through dialogue and diplomacy.”

The sanctions, although lighter than what the law allows, include a ban on US export licenses and authorizations to Turkey's Presidency of Defense Industries, and asset freezes and visa restrictions against the organization's president and three other senior officials.

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Ethnic Armenian militants stand at a checkpoint near village of Charektar at a new border with Kalbajar district turned over to Azerbaijan, November

## Azerbaijani Army Attacks Villages in Hadrut

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – The situation near the two villages in the Hadrut region of Karabakh, where the ceasefire had been violated on December 11, is back to normal, said the commander of the Russian military contingent of peacekeeping forces in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Lieutenant General Rustam Muradov.

According to him, the attack was stopped by the actions of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, RIA Novosti reported.

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## Aliyev Calls Yerevan, Zangezur, Sevan Historical Azerbaijani Lands

### Erdogan Praises Enver Pasha At Baku Victory Parade

BAKU (AP, Reuters, France24, Trend, Daily Sabah, en.president.az, Facebook) – On December 10, Azerbaijan celebrated its military victory over Artsakh and Armenia with a parade in Baku presided over by Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Almost 3,000 troops participated, including Turkish detachments, with Turkish drones on display which only recently had been striking Armenian forces, while flags of the allied countries were borne by helicopters over the Caspian Sea.



Presidents Erdogan and Aliyev

Azerbaijani tanks and soldiers marched in long lines past the two presidents.

Aliyev in a speech at the start of the parade made a provocative claim to the

see ALIYEV, page 6

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Azerbaijan Received Israeli Intelligence During War with Armenia, Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Intelligence Online has published an article about the recent war in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), stating that Azerbaijan has won the intelligence war thanks to the Israeli contracts.

The article says that while the world's focus was on the support of Turkey and Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan, as well as the Israeli-made UAVs, Israel was also providing intelligence data to Baku.

Intelligence Online reports that Israeli companies have provided Azerbaijan with concrete data about the geographical terrain of Nagorno Karabakh which made it easier for the UAVs of the Azerbaijani army to move in the aforementioned areas. It says it is thanks to these data that the UAVs managed to accurately hit the targets and cause huge losses to the Armenian side.

The article also states that Israel managed to test its equipment in areas near Iran.

### 3 Days of Mourning in Armenia, Artsakh

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia and Artsakh will hold three days of national mourning starting from December 19, Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan informed.

“The 40th day of the end of the Karabakh war, that lasted for 44 days, ends on December 19. An agreement was reached with Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to declare three days of national mourning in Armenia and Artsakh in memory of those who fell while defending the homeland,” Arayik Harutyunyan wrote on Facebook.

“Their names will stay forever in our hearts and on pages of history books, compel us to continue their patriotic work in our future march. Thus, it will be a mourning of pain, pride, and commitment for the Armenian people,” added Harutyunyan.

### Mirror-Spectator Closing One Week for Christmas

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Mirror-Spectator will close for its traditional winter break after next week.

The issue of December 26 will be our last of 2020. We will start back with the January 9, 2021 issue.

The online portal of the paper, [www.mirror-spectator.com](http://www.mirror-spectator.com), will continue updating if there are major events.

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### Help City of Smile

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Sam and Sylva Simonian

### Tekeyan Cultural Association Thanks Simonians for \$100,000 Donation to Beirut's Tekeyan School

WATERTOWN – The recent catastrophic war in Nagorno Karabakh and the resulting humanitarian disaster seems to have moved the problems of other Armenian communities to the back-burner. But many of our communities also face survival challenges. We are particularly concerned with the plight of the Armenian community in Lebanon, which is struggling to recover from the ravages of the explosion in Beirut last August.

The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) took immediate action to help the Vahan Tekeyan School in Bourdj Hammoud. The school and

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Holy Echmiadzin Launches Artsakh Support Program

**ECHMIADZIN (Panorama.am)** – By an order of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the "Let's Support Artsakh" program of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin has been approved.

The program, announced on December 12, intends to provide support for the distressed people of Artsakh and the families who were evacuated from the villages of Artsakh after the war and took refuge in Armenia, the church press service announced.

The program will be coordinated by a commission headed by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Pontifical Delegate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe, through the Social Services Office of the Mother See.

On this occasion, Catholicos Karekin II recently participated in a video conference with the members of the commission.

The catholicos extended his paternal blessings and appreciation to the members, who in these difficult days, have assumed to bring their support to the Armenians of Artsakh within the framework of the program initiated by the Mother See.

The Armenian religious leader reflected on the serious challenges facing Armenia and Artsakh in various spheres today, emphasizing that in the current conditions, the Armenian Church must do everything necessary to provide maximum support to our homeland and people.

In this regard, he stressed the importance of the mission, expressing hope that the planned activity will gain nationwide coverage.

## Returning POWs Debriefed

**YEREVAN (Armenpress)** – The Committee of Investigations noted on December 15 its detectives have carried out 'necessary investigative and other procedural actions' with the participation of the 44 prisoners of war and captive civilians who were repatriated from Azerbaijan.

The Committee of Investigations said the actions were namely "questioning" and that a number of examinations will take place. It added that its criminal investigation into the Azeri war of aggression, international terrorism, gross violation of international law norms and involvement of foreign mercenaries against Artsakh is still ongoing.

The prisoner swap between Armenia and Azerbaijan was carried out as part of the terms of the armistice which ended the war.

## IMF Approves \$37 Million Disbursement For Armenia

**YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net)** – The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the third review of Armenia's performance under the program supported by the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). The completion of the review will allow the authorities to draw about US\$37 million, bringing total disbursements to about US\$ 332 million).

Armenia's three-year SBA of about US\$ 443 million, equivalent to 239.75 percent of Armenia's quota in the IMF, was approved by the IMF's Board on May 17, 2019 and augmented on May 28, 2020.

"Armenia has been hit hard by twin—pandemic and security—shocks. These shocks have negatively impacted its economy and population and brought to an end a period of strong growth seen in recent years. The authorities have responded proactively to mitigate the socio-economic and health effects of these shocks. Notwithstanding the sizable challenges Armenia has faced this year, its performance under the Stand-By arrangement has remained satisfactory, said Tao Zhang, Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair.

"The authorities' 2021 budget is appropriate given weak growth and is embedded in a clear medium-term fiscal strategy. The authorities remain committed to taking measures to safeguard debt sustainabil-



## March of Dignity Against Pashinyan

**YEREVAN (Armenpress)** – Citizens demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan marched in the streets of Yerevan on December 15 in a procession called "March of Dignity". The march is organized by the Homeland Salvation Movement – originally created by 16 political parties (1 parliamentary and 15 non-parliamentary). The procession began near the Sasuntsi David station.

The movement officially declared ex-PM Vazgen Manukyan as their candidate for Prime Minister who they say will organize early general elections.

But Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan ruled out his resignation for now, saying on December 14: "I have clearly stated that I can abandon the status given to me by the people only based on the credible results of the people's expression of will. As long as such an expression of will hasn't taken place, I will continue fulfilling my functions of prime minister and I have obliged to do so honestly."

## Azerbaijani Army Attacks Villages in Hadrut

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Russian peacekeepers are constantly monitoring the situation and maintain interaction with representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides, he added.

As a result of the fighting, which lasted several hours, the enemy managed to enter the village of Hin Tagher, and also come close to the village of Khtsaberd.

According to Armenia's Defense Ministry, the Azerbaijani army used heavy artillery to capture one of those villages and approach the other on Saturday. A ministry statement said six Karabakh Armenian soldiers were wounded as a result.

It said that Russian peacekeepers rushed to the area late on Saturday to try to stop the hostilities. Their negotiations with local Armenian and Azerbaijani commanders are still going on, added the statement issued at around noon.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said early in the afternoon that Azerbaijani troops also took "provocative actions" around two other Hadrut villages remaining under Karabakh Armenian control. It alleged a "blatant violation" of the ceasefire agreement that stopped the six-week war on November 10.

Azerbaijani denied violating the ceasefire, in a joint statement issued by its Defense Ministry and State Security Service. It said that the Azerbaijani army stationed in the Hadrut district launched a "counterterrorist operation" after one of their soldiers was killed on Tuesday.

The statement claimed that the

Russian peacekeepers arrived in the area to try to "evacuate" Armenian troops remaining there. It said that the latter refused to pull out and attacked Azerbaijani forces.

The Armenian Defense Ministry asserted, however, the peacekeepers' talks with the warring sides are aimed at getting them to "return to their previous positions." It also said Defense Minister Vagharshak Harutiunyan discussed the situation on the ground with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu during a visit to Moscow that began on Saturday.

"armed provocation" in Hadrut that left one Azerbaijani soldier wounded.

A senior Karabakh official, Davit Babayan, likewise claimed that Azerbaijani forces tried to advance at a southern section of the Karabakh "line of contact" but were repelled.

These actions of Azerbaijan, which are evidently a continuation of the aggressive policy of Baku and an attempt to expand the occupation zone in Artsakh, as well as the seizure of a significant part of Artsakh and ethnic cleansing in general, should receive the strongest con-



A general view shows Hadrut town, which recently came under the control of Azerbaijani troops, November 25, 2020

The Russian Defense Ministry confirmed truce violations in the Hadrut area but did not blame either side for the escalation or say what the Russian peacekeepers are trying to do there. The peacekeepers have had no observation posts in that area until now.

The Karabakh Defense Army said earlier in the day that three of its soldiers were wounded while thwarting an Azerbaijani attempt to attack one of its frontline positions late on Friday. It denied Azerbaijani media reports saying that Armenian forces resorted to an

demnation by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the international community as a whole.

The Republic of Artsakh, for its part, will continue to make consistent efforts aimed at the international recognition of Artsakh in order to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict, to ensure the de-occupation of the republic's territory and the return of the population to the places of their former residence."

(RFE/RL and Reuters contributed to this report.)





## ARMENIA

# An LA Doctor Describes Serving in Goris Hospital during the Artsakh War

**By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES / YEREVAN — In mid-October, when the war in Artsakh was intensifying, Dr. Armen Aboulian, a general and colorectal surgery specialist in Los Angeles, was one of the doctors who rushed to Armenia to save lives. This wasn't his first visit to homeland though. For five years in a row, Dr. Aboulian taught innovative practices of laparoscopic colon cancer surgery to his colleagues at the Astghik Medical Center in Yerevan.

This time, when he arrived to Yerevan, the Armenian Ministry of Health gave him the option of volunteering in one of two hospitals in the capital city: Erebuni Medical Center or Astghik, where many soldiers from Artsakh were already admitted. Aboulian chose Astghik Medical Center, where he stayed for two and a half days. However, after a few days, he realized that most of the patients who were receiving treatments there had already undergone surgeries in hospitals in Stepanakert or other regions. Dr. Aboulian soon realized that he could contribute more if he was closer to the frontline.

Moving to Goris Medical Center in Goris, Armenia, Aboulian joined a group of doctors and other medical professionals from diaspora and local medical facilities. The days were full of events, sometimes filled with the horrors of war and sometimes with the pure joy of a saved life.

"Unfortunately, we would see all types of injuries. The majority of them were from explosions; a lot were penetrated shrapnel injuries. In fact, when we would see a gunshot wound, we would be relieved in a sense in that at least some of the soldiers were in a gunfight. They would have been able to see where the attacks were coming from. Unfortunately, with the explosions, drones and aircraft bombs launched against Artsakh, most soldiers didn't have a chance to defend themselves," explains Aboulian.

"At one point, we even encountered a few soldiers with issues that we had a very hard time to figure out. The soldiers had evidence of a severe lung injury, almost a burn-type injury to the lungs, but there was no sign of a burn on the outside of the body. I'm assuming there was a chemical or barotrurumatic injury that had been caused to the lungs that manifested itself similar to a burn injury. That was the first time that I encountered something like this in my career." In retrospect, having had a chance to have researched the topic, Dr. Aboulian thinks this was a thermobaric weapon which uses oxygen from surrounding air to generate a high temperature explosion.

Goris Medical Center was admitting patients directly from the frontline and others who were being transferred from the different regional hospitals. They were using Goris Medical Center as a stopping point in order to be transferred again to Yerevan. Doctors in the hospital could check the intensity of military actions with the frequency of arriving ambulance vehicles. "There would be times that three or four hours would go by, and we wouldn't have a single patient. And there would be times when three ambulances would come with three or four patients in each ambulance," remembers Aboulian.

Goris Medical Center, like many other hospitals in Armenia, was not prepared to treat soldiers as patients during active war time. They weren't trauma centers and quite naturally could have been lacking some medical supplies needed in the situations like war. But Dr. Aboulian asserted that he did not experience a major lack of immediate medical supplies. He is certain that they received a lot of medical supplies from the diaspora that was directed to the medical center. However, he is very practical when it comes to the collaboration and support of the diaspora.

"When the diaspora is sending some help to various hospitals in Armenia, it has to make sure to send what is needed and not what is available to send. And if the Ministry of Health [of Armenia] decides that there is a higher need and better utility of the donated material at another hospital, then that item needs to go there," he said. During his time in Armenia, Dr. Aboulian encountered some serious issues related to the use of donated medical supplies, such as items arriving without the appropriate parts, or without anyone knowing how to safely use a product. "Here, in the United States, we would never expect health care professionals to use a new equipment without proper education and training. We have to use a similar approach when we ship equipment to Armenia," he observed.

Aboulian finds the solution in systemic changes that can be implemented during the war and peace as well. "For example, when someone has a massive injury on his abdomen and can't use his intestine, and can't eat, he can be fed by intravenous nutrition [Total Parenteral Nutrition- TPN]. In Armenia, that is not a well-established option and it's quite expensive. As a result of the war and possible collaboration with the diaspora, I would love to see a few pharmacies become experts in providing TPN to patients and hospitals. This



Dr. Armen Aboulian performing surgery at the Goris Medical Center

would be an example of a useful systemic change for Armenia. Sending bandages and gauze pads may look good in pictures for social media, but real change is needed, which comes with systemic improvements to add to the capabilities of the local Armenian people," he declared.

One thing that the hospital seemed to have was a healthy supply of dedicated manpower. All the volunteers from Armenia and diaspora collaborated at full capacity to help the soldiers. Dr. Aboulian is certain that lives were not lost due to lack of a specific medical supply in the immediate time period after arrival to the medical center. However, the picture was different in the front line, where there were often challenges in transporting the injured from the front lines to safer zones. "The diaspora can continue to be helpful, and this is the time to further increase all efforts. Once such example is in the assistance with wound care, rehabilitation and eventual prosthesis fitting and retraining of the soldiers who suffered limb amputations. This is where the diaspora can come together and help our soldiers to go back to a functional life, get back to work and be a part of a society. Just because the war is over, we can't let our soldiers feel abandoned," Aboulian remarked.

During his two weeks in Armenia, he was moved by the maturity of the young soldiers — boys who didn't break even when severely injured. "Our soldiers, even though they were only 18-years old, were able to appropriately recognize the gravity of the situation and willingly put their lives on the line for their country. This is unique to the Armenian nation. A lot of soldiers that were injured, were saying 'Doc, when am I going to get better, so I can go back. My friends are over there, the guys are still there. Or my friend passed away next to me, I have to go visit his family and then I can go back to help other ones.. When I think back and compare myself at that age their level of maturity, I

see a world of difference. They are impressive," Aboulian says proudly.

Dr. Aboulian was part of an "international" group of medical professionals, who had arrived to collaborate despite their different backgrounds. Overall, the goal was clear: help the soldiers as fast and effective as possible and send them to Yerevan. "Whatever difficulties we faced, I would expect to face anywhere a war has broken out and a new collaboration is created. In my group, there was a thoracic surgeon from Saratov, Russia, the orthopedic surgeon was from Yerevan, neurosurgeon from Goris, and another general surgeon besides me came from the US. The head of our team was a surgeon with military surgery experience from Russia. Obviously, we had different styles, medication and orders, and the medical language was different, but overall, we had no major issues for collaboration," he concluded. Aboulian can't let his colleagues from Armenia stay unrecognized: "I was very impressed by the willingness of the physicians from several Yerevan hospitals that had come to Goris to assist without any reservations, without any effort spared, and often without an end date."

Unfortunately, Covid-19 didn't spare Armenia and Artsakh during the 44 days of war. According to Aboulian, it was present at the frontline and in the hospitals too. In fact, he states that a large number of medical professionals in the Goris Medical Center were infected. "With the surge of helping soldiers, the hospitals now have a bigger burden to deal with Covid too. Fortunately, most of the soldiers were young and healthy otherwise, and most of them recovered quickly from Covid," he said.

Dr. Aboulian is planning to return to Armenia to be able to help soldiers in post-war surgeries, where his skills will be needed mostly as a colorectal surgeon. "My efforts, everyone's effort in the diaspora need to be doubled down to help Armenia get back where it was before the war and even beyond," he stressed.



Dr. Armen Aboulian, furthest left in third row from front (with cap), and his colleagues at the Goris Medical Center





ARMENIA

# Pediatric Cancer Treatment in Armenia Continues to Need Support

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN – The Center of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology of Armenia, the sole facility for treatment of cancer for children in Armenia and Artsakh, continues its work under difficult conditions after the Artsakh war and the ravages of Covid-19. The City of Smile Foundation provides funding and other types of support for its operation despite the new set of difficulties, according to foundation director Ester Demirtshyan.

Demirtshyan said that from October 2018, the center and its predecessor institute began to provide free treatment for all children and young people up to the age of 25 years old suffering from cancer or blood disorders. Around 350 individuals benefited. On a monthly basis somewhere between 80 to 100 are treated and fully funded by the foundation. There is no selection based on socioeconomic status, she stressed, but anyone in this category who comes to the foundation will get the financial support for treatment.

Even before the recent war, 20-30 percent of the children were from Artsakh, since there is no similar center there, and there are even Armenians from Javakhk in neighboring Georgia. Demirtshyan said that she fears that in 3-4 months there will be greater numbers of patients from Artsakh since stress is a contributory factor to leukemia.

The financial support provided by the City of Smile Foundation is indispensable for 95 percent of patients. “We don’t want families to collapse financially and emotionally. We understand that cancer treatment is not affordable even for middle class families in Armenia,” Demirtshyan said. She related that recently the foundation bought medication for child that cost \$2,500. The child’s mother asked whether they would really pay for this, as it cost more than her housing. Demirtshyan replied that they would certainly pay for it, as well as all the following treatments that the child would need.

The average expense per course of treatment for a child in Armenia is \$20,00-25,000, while in the US it is \$500,000. In the US the greater resources permit some 90 percent of the patients to be cured. Armenia, at 70-75 percent now, still cannot reach this rate, but it has improved a lot from only a few years ago, when it was as low as 5 percent.

The hospital where the center is located is government supported. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the costs of the facility and rooms, and the salaries of the doctors. The hospital may receive one or two types of medication through the Armenian Ministry of Health, but the rest has to be purchased through the foundation.

The foundation expends approximately \$60,000-75,000 a month, which covers the costs of chemotherapy, radiation therapy, surgery, all kinds of lab tests, and constant social support to the children and their families. The meals of the children in the hospital are paid for so they can have the strength to withstand chemotherapy. This is important also because 70 percent of the children in the hospital come from the provinces and this makes it difficult for parents to provide freshly cooked food.

Everything was going well in 2019. Demirtshyan said that fundraising through visits to the communities in the US and elsewhere allowed new initiatives to be realized. One important step, which is taken for granted during treatment in the US, is the use of anesthesia for all procedures. In the past, many procedures were done without it because it requires payment, but the foundation was able to provide regular funding for its use.

Concurrently, the use of mediports was instituted, which in the US are commonly used. Instead of poking veins each time chemotherapy is needed, a port is inserted into the body. Their use saves veins from damage and alleviates pain. An honorary board member and adviser, Dr. Shant Shekherdian of the Geffen School of Medicine and the University of California Los Angeles Health trained one of the Armenian doctors and the foundation funded the devices.

Cynthia Kazanjian, a dedicated volunteer who has played a



Cynthia Kazanjian (David Medzorian photo)



The Dr. R. H. Yolyan Hematology Center building where the Center of Pediatric Oncology and Hematology of Armenia is located

key role in fundraising in the US, noted, “In 2016 and 2017, when I first went there, I would walk up and down the halls and hear kids screaming. They had no medication before the mediports were brought in. They just used lidocaine. Today, they would not dare put in a mediport without anesthesia.”

It was possible to provide some additional support to the children being treated in 2019. Demirtshyan said that over 100 events, large and small, were organized at the center to take their minds off their situation. At one end of the spectrum, writers came to read books to children, while on the other, huge troupes of ballet dancers gave performances.

This year, 2020, was very different. First of all, Covid-19 restrictions limited the types of entertainment feasible. For example, performers in the summer came to the backyard of the hospital and children would watch from their windows, Demirtshyan said.

Financially, fundraising has become difficult. Demirtshyan said that doing a few online concerts or events does not produce the same result as in-person events, while costs remain the same. The majority of people in Armenia would not be able to afford these costs but children cannot be allowed not to get treatment, she said, due to funding problems.

Housing for visiting parents is on hold because it was not possible to do the fundraising planned for 2020. Instead, funding available is being used for treatment costs. It will become the first priority of the foundation when the latter are fully assured.

However, one bit of good news is that a palliative care center, the first ever in Armenia, is 90 percent finished. It will have five rooms and be completed in 2-3 months so that it will become operational in the beginning of 2021. This is for children who cannot be saved through treatment, and fortunately donations had already been received for it, though there are still a few rooms with naming opportunities left.

Special training of doctors and nurses occurred to a certain



Ester Demirtshyan

degree in 2019 but were put on hold in 2020. The doctors and residents are encouraged to present at conferences. Demirtshyan said that it is important to motivate the younger ones so they feel appreciated and stay in their own country despite incomparably low salaries. They need to do research and learn about new developments around the world. They work with platforms like the Union for International Cancer Control, headquartered in Switzerland.

Demirtshyan pointed out that providing funding for research

*continued on next page*





## ARMENIA

# Armenia, Azerbaijan Begin Prisoner Swap

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia and Azerbaijan exchanged on Monday, December 13, the first groups of prisoners under a Russian-brokered deal that stopped the war in Nagorno-Karabakh last month.

Armenian officials said a Russian plane carrying 44 Armenian prisoners landed at Yerevan's Zvartnots airport late in the evening. It was not immediately clear if the group included only soldiers or also Karabakh Armenian civilians that were held in Azerbaijani captivity.

"Additional information about the returned prisoners will be provided later on," Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan said in a Facebook post that announced the start of the prisoner swap.

"The process of finding and repatriating our other compatriots who went missing or were possibly taken prisoner is continuing intensively," he said.

An Azerbaijani government agency announced the start of the exchange earlier in the day. It did not say how many Azerbaijanis have been returned home.

According to news reports, the Armenian side freed two Azerbaijani men who were detained in 2014 after crossing into the Kelbajar district which was handed back to Azerbaijan late last month. The men subsequently received long prison sentences after being convicted by a Karabakh court of murdering an Armenian teenager.

The November 10 truce agreement calls for the exchange of all prisoners of war (POWs) and civilians held by the conflicting sides.

Armenia's and Karabakh's closely integrated armed forces have not yet given the official number of Armenian POWs. According to officials in Yerevan and Stepanakert, Azerbaijan has admitted holding fewer Armenian soldiers than were captured by it during the six-week war.

Karabakh's human rights ombudsman said earlier this month that his office has identified about 60 Armenian POWs shown in videos widely circulated on Azerbaijani social media accounts.



Russian soldiers in Artsakh

from previous page

by Armenian doctors, aside from serving as motivation to do new work, also is important as a way to increase their monthly income a bit. Dedication and passion is important, but people also need the means to support themselves and their families, she said.

The Center for Pediatric Oncology and Hematology is part of the Dr. R. H. Yolyan Hematology Center. All the hematology work in Armenia is conducted here, and some adult oncology is treated too. The Armenian government's Ministry of Health supports these centers so that the hospital in which they are located is maintained through government funding, and certain medication is provided for the children being treated, but the resources provided are limited. The City of Smile Foundation is physically located at the hospital center although it is not connected with the ministry or government.

## Organizational Structure

The City of Smile Foundation was established in 2014 by Drs. Gevorg Tamamyan and Lilit Sargsyan. It only has three fulltime staff members, including Demirtshyan, so everyone multitasks, according to the latter. It has managed to keep overhead less than 10 percent, including the cost of marketing, salaries and taxes.

While in 2019, Anna Hakobyan, wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, was honorary chair of the board of trustees of the

City of Smile Foundation, she resigned in mid-September this year due to personal reasons, while remaining a board member. As a private foundation, the City of Smile is independent of the Armenian government and all political parties.

In addition to the City of Smile board in Armenia, a City of Smile nonprofit board was created in 2020 for the United States. Kazanjian, who spearheaded this process, said that the main purpose was to enable American donors to enjoy tax deductions in exchange for their philanthropy. It took a year and two months to finalize the process, but in the spring of 2020 501(c)3 status was achieved. In the meantime, the Armenian Missionary Association of America supported the City of Smile Foundation with office and clerical help, and tax receipts.

The successful fundraising events in various parts of the US in 2019 led to enrolling nine board members from Boston, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, New York/New Jersey, and Texas. There will be two more spots filled, to make a total of 11. Current members include Kazanjian, Acting President (MA), Yelena Bisharyan, Fund Raising (MA), Fr. Martiros Hakobyan, Fund Raising (Houston, TX), Mariya Nagapetyan, Treasurer (CA), Shant Shekherdian, Board Member and Medical Advisor (CA), Ester Demirtshyan, Secretary / Executive Director of City of Smile (Yerevan), and board members Leon Ariyan (NJ), Naz Atikian (CA), Avo Avetisyan (CA), Jim Kalustian (MA) and Ramella Markarian (CA).

## Tracking Donations and Expenditures

When the City of Smile Foundation gives money for a particular purchase or treatment, it asks for a report from the doctor involved, and a separate report from the nurse who would give the item to the patient. Then the two report lists are reconciled. Demirtshyan said that parents nowadays are knowledgeable so it would not be easy for staff to be attempting to get bribes from them. The parents feel entitled to the aid so they would complain if something was demanded illegally, she explained.

On the macro level, Demirtshyan said that the City of Smile Foundation hires a company, usually an experienced 15-20-year-old one, for its annual audits of donations and spending. Those who donate to the foundation directly receive a report of how the money given was spent. Furthermore, quarterly reports are posted on the foundation's website with every single child or youth's name and the amount given for treatment for those three months.

Armenia's tax authorities audit the foundation annually. It submits a report to the government which the tax authorities can check. The City of Smile Foundation does not have to pay taxes on donations it receives but it must pay taxes on purchases, like all charities in Armenia. Incidentally, donations are not tax-deductible in Armenia for donors. Companies can receive a very small percentage of tax-deductions.

When money was raised from the US and elsewhere in 2019, the foundation wanted to create an endowment fund which would provide a stable annual income. However, as donations had fallen so greatly in 2020, it was necessary to use some of the money intended for the endowment to cover expenses. Only a small fund could be established, but, Demirtshyan said, if there is no other way to cover the expenses of treatments, it will have to be spent too.

Meanwhile Kazanjian, acting president of the US board, said that the latter will carefully monitor how the money donated from the US is being spent.

## Call for New Donations

Demirtshyan said that usually funding from the diaspora is based on events, though a small number of people have agreed to make direct monthly payments online. In normal times, more money comes from abroad than from Armenia. Though the absolute number of donors from Armenia is greater, Demirtshyan said that the sums given are larger by donors abroad.

Though it is not possible to have the large banquets and events that were so successful in 2019, and Armenians throughout the world are fixated on the aftermath of the Artsakh war, Demirtshyan said that new support is critical. "Given the situation, with Armenia exhausted financially, but cancer continuing to spread, we cannot wait till better times. We are reaching out to people saying that literally every single donation matters. Even ten dollars can buy something. It is very hard to see things that can be treated in kids that we have to leave untreated. We can save lives," Demirtshyan exclaimed.

If you wish to support the work of the City of Smile Foundation, please use this link to donate through GoFundMe: <https://gf.me/u/zaa5qi>. For tax-free donations in the US, you can go to <https://us-donate.cityofsmile.org/>.



Part of the palliative care center being constructed





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Biden Reportedly Considers Samantha Power for USAID

WASHINGTON (Panorama.am) — Joe Biden is considering Samantha Power to head the United States Agency for International Development, which would place a high-profile figure atop foreign aid and coronavirus relief efforts, people familiar with the matter tell Axios.

Installing Power — a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and author of a Pulitzer Prize-winning book about genocide — would signal the Biden administration plans to revitalize foreign assistance and use it as an instrument of soft power and to achieve humanitarian goals.

Power was a prominent member of President Obama's cabinet and recently wrote a Foreign Affairs article about the president-elect headlined: "The Can-Do Power: America's Advantage and Biden's Chance."

Biden hasn't made a final decision on the position, and there could be other candidates — including those who were passed over for Cabinet positions — in the mix.

Power served as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 2013-2017.

## New Rep. for Minorities In Turkey

ISTANBUL (Nor Marmara) — A new representative of the religious minorities officially recognized by the Republic of Turkey to the Directorate General of Foundations [Vakifs] of Turkey will be elected on December 29. The current representative, member of the Jewish community Morris Levi, sent a special communique to these minorities, including the Armenians, on December 7, indicating that this year the election would take place online.

The first representative of minority communities in the Directorate General was the Greek Orthodox Laki Vingas.

## Modular Homes for Russian Peacekeepers

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Russian military department will equip the quarters of the Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Ministry said Monday, December 14.

Army General Dmitry Bulgakov said that they are planning to install 31 modular towns at observation posts to accommodate the peacekeepers, Mk.ru reports.

For the transfer of the peacekeeping contingent to Nagorno-Karabakh, 250 flights of heavy military transport aircraft were carried out. Over 530 vehicles delivered.

## Memorial Dedicated to Russian Helicopter Crew Erected in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A memorial plaque in memory of the victims of the Russian helicopter shot down by Azerbaijan in the airspace of Armenia was inaugurated in the village of Yeraskh in the Ararat province on December 11.

The memorial plaque was installed by the Peace Foundation.

"Thousands of Armenian soldiers were joined also by Russian officers who were in the airspace of Armenia with their mission on November 9. I want to condemn this terrorist act of Azerbaijan during which the helicopter of the Russian peacekeepers was shot down in the territory of Armenia", head of the opposition Bright Armenia faction of the Armenian Parliament Edmon Marukyan said during the inauguration of the memorial plaque.

Later a monument will be erected in the place where the helicopter was shot down.

A Russian Mi-24 military helicopter was shot down over Armenia near the border with Azerbaijan on November 9. Two crewmembers died and the third pilot was wounded.

# Aliyev Calls Yerevan, Zangezur, Sevan Historical Azerbaijani Lands

ALIYEV, from page 1

capital and provinces of Armenia, declaring "Zangazur, Goycha [Sevan] and Iravan [Yerevan] districts are our historical lands. Our people have lived in these lands for centuries, but the Armenian leadership expelled 100,000 Azerbaijanis from their native lands at the time [late 1980s]." He has made such claims to the heart of the Armenian republic repeatedly, starting in 2010, including at the Sixth Congress of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party in February 2018, where he said Azerbaijanis must return to those lands.

Aliyev used severe language about the Armenians, whom he called the "despised enemy," declaring, "During the war, I said that our iron fist embodies both our unity and strength. That iron fist broke the enemy's spine and crushed the enemy's head. After that, if Armenian fascism ever raises its head again, the result will be the same. Again, Azerbaijan's iron fist will break their back."

In his own speech, Erdogan declared, "Today, may the souls of Nuri Pasha, Enver Pasha, and the brave soldiers of the Caucasus Islam Army, be happy," in reference to the Ottoman armies that invaded the Caucasus during World War I. Enver was the Young Turk leader who was Ottoman Minister of War during World War I and the Armenian Genocide. Nuri Pasha, Enver's brother, led forces which occupied Baku in 1918 and massacred many Armenians.

The two presidents held a press conference after the parade. Erdogan called for the removal of Nikol Pashinyan as prime minister, declaring, "We wish for the Armenian people to rid itself of the burden of leaders who console them with the lies of the past and trap them into poverty. Erdogan also warned that although the Karabakh war ended, "The struggle carried out in the political and military areas will continue from now on many other fronts."

However, Erdogan did state that Turkey might open its borders to Armenia. "If Armenia leaves behind its irrational ambitions, it can also be part of our regional alliances one day. We destroyed their [Armenian] army. Yet, then we called on Armenia to cooperate with us," he said.

He pointed to Aliyev's proposal to create a six-state grouping for peace in the South Caucasus and said Armenia

Armenian people, Armenia's civilian population, an explicit terrorism, which are under absolute prohibition stipulat-



Azerbaijani soldiers march in the parade.

could join it alongside Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran and Georgia, but only "should Yerevan fulfill its responsibilities related to such a platform." This could lead to opening the Turkish borders. Turkey and Azerbaijan have blockaded Armenia and Artsakh since the 1990s.

Strangely, Erdogan tried to claim that Armenia burnt down its own churches in Karabakh, perhaps in an effort to try to camouflage destruction by Azerbaijani forces. He said, "Armenia burned everything down in Nagorno-Karabakh while leaving the region. They burned down not only the mosques but also the churches. It is hard to understand why."

### Reaction

Mane Gevorgyan, spokesperson to the prime minister of Armenia, responded: "We strongly condemn the provocative announcements made by the Azerbaijani leader in Baku. Speaking about territorial ambitions against Armenia seriously questions Azerbaijan's readiness for establishing peace and deliberately puts regional peace and security under risk." She also condemned the glorification of the ideology of the Young Turks.

Armenian Ombudsman Arman Tatoyan on his Facebook page declared: "These speeches are direct threats aimed at the life and health of the whole

ed by the international law. The aforementioned speeches also affirm the Azerbaijani genocidal policy applied through methods of ethnic cleansing and terrorism during this war. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia calls upon the worldwide international community to react and take substantive preventive measures with regards to those issues, which are in breach of fundamental principles of international law and undermine the whole international system human rights and humanitarian protection."

The official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova merely said in a weekly briefing on December 10, referring to the Erdogan and Aliyev speeches noted above, that political statements should not disrupt the cessation of military operations in Nagorno Karabakh.

Azerbaijani and Turkish expansionism did not only cast eyes on Armenia but on Iran as well, leading to a strong reaction from the latter. On December 11, the Iranian government summoned Turkey's ambassador to Tehran to discuss "meddlesome and unacceptable" portions of Erdogan's speech. Erdogan reportedly read parts of a poem about how a border tore apart ancient Azerbaijani lands "by force," referring to the separation of current Azerbaijani lands from bordering territories in Iran.

## Tekeyan Cultural Association Thanks Simonians for \$100,000 Donation to Beirut's Tekeyan School

SUPPORT, from page 1

the Tekeyan Cultural Center in downtown Beirut had both sustained considerable damage, like other Armenian community centers and schools. The Central Board allocated \$110,000 to the school for renovation and for educational programming in 2020.

The Central Board further committed itself to future assistance to guarantee the survival of the school, because many dangers lie ahead. As the school was reorganizing itself with TCA assistance and local help to continue operations under covid-19 restraints, salutary news arrived of a major complement to TCA efforts.

Indeed, benefactor Sam Simonian and his wife Silva allocated a grant of \$100,000 to the school. Mr. Simonian has close ties to it since he received his early education there.

This is not the only instance of Mr. Simonian's generosity toward the school, which has always been on his list of charities. He is a member of the Central Board of Directors of the AGBU and member of the boards of the American University of Armenia and Teach for Armenia. He is a successful telecommunications entrepreneur, but he and his wife are perhaps best known among Armenians for their creation of the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, a free digi-

tal media learning center for teens. The first TUMO center opened in Yerevan in 2011, and then centers in Gyumri, Dilijan and Stepanakert. The model was so successful that centers were established in Beirut, Berlin, Moscow, Paris and Tirana, while many more are being planned.

The Simonians have provided Armenians an inspiring example of creative philanthropy with TUMO. They also have shown how to honor one's past and help struggling portions of our community. The TCA Central Board is as grateful as the Vahan Tekeyan School's students for their generosity





## INTERNATIONAL

# Evidence of Widespread Atrocities Emerges Following Karabakh War

BAKU (Eurasianet.org) — A steady stream of videos depicting shocking atrocities by Azerbaijani soldiers against Armenian civilians and prisoners of war has emerged on social media.

The videos, shot by soldiers and distributed on various Telegram news channels, depict a wide variety of torture, humiliations and mutilations of corpses. There have been several executions of captives shown, and at least two live beheadings.

The authenticity of most of the videos has yet to be confirmed, and the Azerbaijani government has promised to prosecute all such crimes. In a November 21 statement, the state prosecutor's office announced it was opening a criminal case to investigate reports of "insulting the bodies of Armenian servicemen killed during the fighting for the liberation of our lands, as well as inhumane treatment of captured Armenian servicemen."

"The perpetrators of such illegal acts will be identified and brought to justice," it continued. It added, however, that according to initial investigations "many videos were found to be fake."

A spokesperson for the prosecutor's office, Kanan Zeynalov, told Eurasianet on December 8 that the investigations were continuing. "It is too early to say anything today," Zeynalov said.

International human rights groups also are investigating. Human Rights Watch issued a report on December 2 on humiliations of captured Armenian soldiers, but it has not yet addressed the more serious atrocities. "Extrajudicial executions and despoiling dead are separate war crimes and we are still looking into it. It's complicated, as it's hard to verify the videos," the organization's associate director for Europe and Central Asia, Giorgi Gogia, told Eurasianet.

A smaller number of videos have emerged showing apparent Armenian atrocities against Azerbaijanis, including at least one execution. The Armenian authorities have not yet announced any criminal investigations into the reports. Gogia said Human Rights Watch also is investigating reports of Armenian atrocities against Azerbaijanis.

The steady drip of the videos has traumatized Armenians already reeling from their crushing loss in the 44-day war, in which Azerbaijan managed to take back a large part of the territories that it had lost in the last major war between the two sides in the 1990s.

"The videos of atrocities committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against Armenian servicemen, as well as the mutilation of the bodies and photos circulating on social media, deepen the anxiety of family members

[of current prisoners], the anxiety over the return of their relatives," a group of Armenian civil society groups wrote in a December 3 letter to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The issue is being hotly discussed in Azerbaijan, especially following the release of the second live beheading video on December 7.

A large number of Azerbaijanis refuse to believe the videos are real and believe they are part of a negative PR campaign.

One prominent political analyst, Arastun Orujlu, wrote on Facebook that "personally, I am convinced that these videos are fake," part of a Russian-orchestrated campaign to discredit Azerbaijan. "It is an attempt to portray the victorious army of Azerbaijan to the world like a criminal gang. We must do our best to prevent this," he wrote.

Many other Azerbaijanis have been skeptical of the government's sincerity in its promise to appropriately prosecute the crimes and have demanded accountability in the process.

A group of civil society activists issued a statement calling on Azerbaijani prosecutors "treat the images on social media as a violation of international humanitarian law" while also asking the international community to pressure Armenia to do the same.

"I have never said that the Interior Ministry or the State Security Service should arrest anyone. But this is already a red line," wrote activist Ilkin Rustamzade on Facebook. "Anyone who films an Armenian being beheaded, or beheads him, should be severely punished. Anyone who puts an ISIS brand on the nation's war has to be punished."

One local NGO, the Baku Human Rights Club, is collecting videos of atrocities from both sides and is working with international partners to help authenticate them. "If [a video] isn't authentic then we need to know that it's not authentic," the group's chairman, Rasul Jafarov, told Eurasianet. "But if it is real, the prosecutor's office opened a criminal case, the videos need to be analyzed as part of that criminal case and those found guilty should be brought to justice."

Given the large number of videos that have emerged, and the fact that soldiers apparently felt comfortable enough to show off the atrocities, some analysts have said that the behavior was at least implicitly condoned by the authorities.

"These are widespread, consistent and systematic war crimes, tolerated or even encouraged by commanders," wrote Ryan O'Farrell, an independent military analyst who has closely followed open sources on this conflict, on Twitter.

"[B]etween the number of videos, their frequency and the number of participants, it's impossible to not assume that the Azerbaijani state has given its tacit approval to these war crimes. These aren't 'bad apples.' This is systematic," O'Farrell added. "I'll believe otherwise when the Azerbaijani government arrests the hundreds of soldiers who proudly filmed their participation in executions, torture, beheadings and mutilations of civilians and POWs."

Some Azerbaijani analysts disagree.

"In order to protect the positive image of the country, the perpetrators need to be found and punished," Fuad Shahbaz, a political and military analyst, told Eurasianet. "Some foreign experts are skeptical, but I think that servicemen who took part in these videos will be punished. It may not be in two

days, ten days, 20 days, but I think it will happen."

Still other Azerbaijanis have cheered the abuse of Armenians. Elvin Basqalli, a news presenter at the Azerbaijani network Space TV, wrote on Facebook that Armenians deserved revenge after crimes against Azerbaijanis, citing the Khojaly massacre of the first Karabakh war and the bombing of civilian targets in Ganja and Barda in this war.

"I appreciate such treatment of Armenians," Basqalli wrote. "If the Armenians had known at the time that they would be beheaded, they would not have committed such tragedies." Other Azerbaijanis objected and called for him to be fired from his post, but as of the time this piece was posted he remained in his job.

## Allan Kaval Wins France's Top Journalism Prize for Syria Coverage

PARIS (rfi.fr) — The 2020 Albert Londres Prize has been awarded to *Le Monde* reporter Allan Kaval for his coverage of the war in Syria.

The Albert Londres jury hailed Kaval's reports from the "Syrian hell," published in October 2019, featuring a series of portraits "imbued with humanity."

His coverage and analysis of the "slow death of jihadist prisoners" held in inhumane conditions in Kurdish centres in northeastern Syria also won him the prestigious Bayeux award for war correspondents and the Ouest-France Jean Marin Prize.

Kaval remains in hospital after he was seriously wounded in October while reporting on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"I'm incredibly honoured," Kaval told AFP news agency. "But behind each report there are around 10 people who are not given credit for their absolutely essential contributions."

"This really is teamwork," he said, naming one photographer, Laurence Geai, who accompanied him in Syria.

The 82nd Albert Londres prize is the third consecutive year that *Le Monde* has won the "French Pulitzer," after Benoît Vitkine (Moscow correspondent) et Elise Vincent (jihadist terror specialist).



# US Sanctions NATO Ally Turkey over Purchase of Russian Missile System

SANCTIONS, from page 1

"I would in no way underestimate the importance of cutting off the main military procurement entity of a military ally from items coming from the US defense industrial base," said Christopher Ford, assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation. "I think this is a very significant, significant step."

Both Palmer and Ford emphasized that, in addition to what Ford said was the desire to "send a strong signal" to Turkey and make its defense organization "clearly feel the consequences of its choice to be involved in this transaction," the goal was also to punish Moscow and warn other countries not to deal with Russia.

Similar sanctions were applied to China when it purchased the same Russian system along with fighter aircraft in 2017 and 2018. A number of other countries, including India and Saudi Arabia, have also progressed toward purchases.

The long saga of Turkey and the Russian S-400s began with the civil war in neighboring Syria, as Russia and Iran became the leading backers of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his struggle to remain in power. With war

on its lengthy southern border, Turkey argued that it needed a surface-to-air system that would allow it to shoot down approaching offensive aircraft and missiles.

Although NATO temporarily repositioned Patriot missile batteries along the Turkish border with Syria, they were eventually withdrawn, and Turkish negotiations with the United States to purchase its own Patriot systems stalled over disagreements on timing of delivery, cost and Turkish demands for technology transfer and co-production agreements.

Ironically, as Russian aircraft in Syria appeared to pose the main immediate threat to Turkey, Ankara decided to purchase the Russian defense system. The decision brought immediate protests from the United States and NATO, which charged its deployment would compromise the security of the F-35, the newest US joint strike fighter aircraft being deployed by the allies. Turkey was suspended from co-production agreements for the aircraft, and its own purchase of 100 planes was canceled.

"The United States made clear to Turkey at the highest levels and on numerous occasions that its purchase of the S-400 system would endanger the security of US military technol-

ogy and personnel and provide substantial funds to Russia's defense sector," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement announcing the sanctions Monday.

After taking delivery of the missile system, Turkey deployed it for test firing in October.

In his statement, Pompeo urged Turkey "to resolve the S-400 problem immediately in coordination with the United States."

Turkey, he said, remains "a valued ally and an important regional security partner for the United States."

Although the measures announced stopped short of some of the harshest allowed under the legislation — known as CAATSA, for the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act — the sanctions are likely to affect Turkey's already faltering economy.

Turkey has suffered in the past from the "perception that US-Turkey ties are not in good shape," said Soner Cagaptay, author of *Erdogan's Empire: Turkey and the Politics of the Middle East*. For that reason, he said, "I think [Erdogan] wants a narrative that he is getting along with the US"

It would be hard for the relationship between the NATO allies to get any worse. A long list of US grievances includes Turkey's military inva-

sion of northern Syria, its resort to "hostage diplomacy" with US citizens and employees of US missions in Turkey, and its aggressive naval maneuvers over competing natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Pompeo visited Istanbul in November, but failed to meet with any Turkish officials in what Ankara viewed as a public snub. The rapidly deteriorating state of the bilateral relationship was a "phenomenon I have not witnessed in more than two decades," Cagaptay said.

Erdogan has remained publicly defiant — last week calling the then-pending sanctions "disrespectful" of a NATO ally — even as he called for greater cooperation with the United States. In what was seen as part of an effort to reset relations with the new Biden administration, Ankara also recently appointed a new ambassador to Washington and announced new legal and economic reforms that appeared aimed at improving investor confidence as well as relations with Western allies.

"Erdogan is like a shape-shifter: He becomes whatever an American president wants to see," Cagaptay said. But it would take more than cosmetic changes to improve the relationship, he added, because "major differences remain."



# Community News

## Taleen Babayan Named Armenian Assembly Communications Director

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America announced this week that the hiring of community activist and journalist Taleen Babayan as its new communications director.

“I’m honored to join the Armenian Assembly’s professional team, particularly during this critical time for the Armenian people in the aftermath of the six-week war launched against Artsakh and Armenia,” said Babayan. “Through the Assembly’s impactful and tireless work, we will continue our efforts to press ahead on the key issues that are so important for the Armenian American community.”

Babayan will spearhead the Assembly’s communications strategy and oversee all aspects of traditional print media, as well as digital and social, to further strengthen the Assembly’s mission and initiatives. Her chief responsibilities will also include leading con-



Taleen Babayan

tent creation, mainstream media outreach, and donor communications.

“With Taleen’s superb experience, dedication, and community activism, I am confident that she will further elevate the effectiveness of the Assembly,” stated Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “We are fortunate to have the benefit of such a talented individual.”

Babayan has over a decade of professional experience in the non-profit sector. Prior to joining the Assembly, Taleen worked with the American University of Armenia and the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

She has also been a longtime correspondent for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

She has interned with NBC News, the United Nations, the New York City Mayor’s office, and with a long-time champion of Armenian issues, the late Senator Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy.

Babayan earned her Master of Science from Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, and her Bachelor of Arts in international relations, history and mass media studies from Tufts University.



Some of the stars that appeared at the COAF fundraiser, including Andrea Martin, Tina Fey, Eugene Levy, Dan Levy and Martin Short

## COAF Raises \$4.5 Million in ‘Moving Mountains’ Benefit

NEW YORK — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) on December 5 held a fundraiser, titled “Moving Mountains,” with a star-studded list of presenters, which raised \$4.5 million.

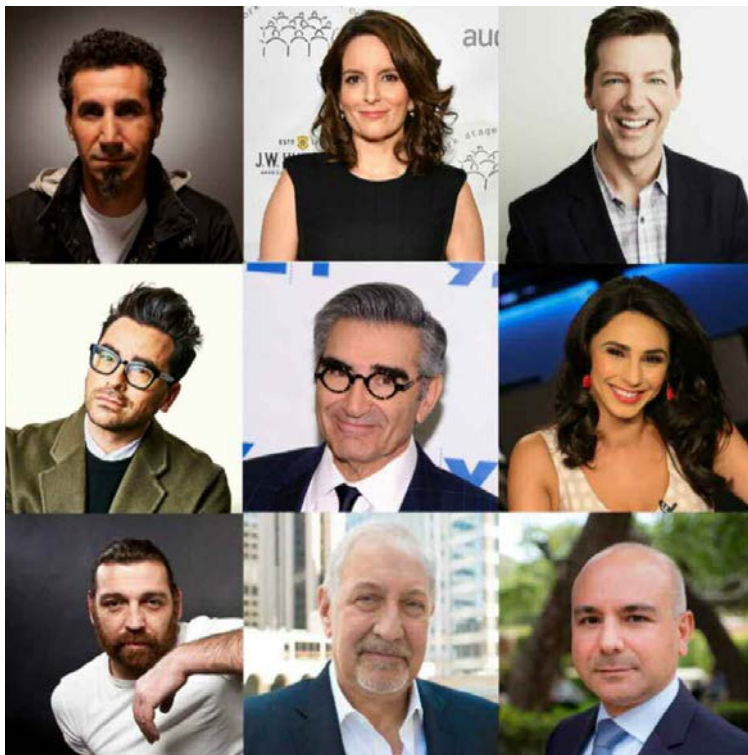
More than 3,600 tuned in to watch the fundraiser, hosted by Araksya Karapetyan of “Good Day L.A.” on FOX 11 Los Angeles, COAF Senior Director of Development Haig Boyadjian, and world-renowned auctioneer Gabriel Butu.

The funds will be used toward ongoing holistic and cutting-edge education, health, child and family, and economic programs in 64 villages and at the SMART Center in the Lori region, and for modular homes for displaced families from Artsakh who have found refuge in COAF beneficiary villages in Armenia.

But after the damage and devastation of this year, there is still more work to be done. We plan on securing temporary housing and integrating 2,000 displaced people from Artsakh into our programs and services by the end of 2020. We will then provide permanent housing to those who will not return to Artsakh and ensure they have continued access to our programs. Our goal is to raise an additional \$500,000 by yearend to reach \$5 million for this initiative, and to reach a total of \$20 million by mid-year 2021.

The program featured Andrea Martin, Serj Tankian, Sean Hayes, Eugene Levy, Daniel Levy, Tina Fey, Mark Geragos, David Alpay, Martin Short, Victor Garber, Iveta Mukuchyan, Ara Malikian, Serouj Kradjian, Mary Basmadjian, Hovik Keuchkerian, Dr. Eric Esrailian, California State Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian, Lory Tatouljian, Ken Davitian, and Kev Orkian.

The organization is also selling tops and totes designed by COAF students in rural communities. All proceeds go to our programs in Armenia. Visit <https://www.bonfire.com/store/coaf/>



## Moderna Vaccine Is Highly Protective and Prevents Severe Covid-19, Data Show

By Noah Weiland, Denise Grady and Carl Zimmer

WASHINGTON (*New York Times*) — The coronavirus vaccine made by Moderna is highly protective for adults and prevents severe cases of Covid-19, according to data released on Tuesday by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Based on the encouraging findings, the agency intends to grant emergency authorization for use of the vaccine on Friday, people familiar with the F.D.A.’s plans said. The decision would give millions of Americans access to a second coronavirus vaccine beginning as early as next week.

The review by the F.D.A. confirms Moderna’s earlier assessment that its vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.1 percent in a trial of 30,000 people. Side effects, including fever, headache and fatigue, were unpleasant but not dangerous, the agency found.

The success of Moderna’s vaccine has become all the more crucial to fighting the pandemic as other vaccine efforts have faltered. The hopeful news arrives at a time of record-breaking numbers of coronavirus cases that are overwhelming hospitals and of an ever-increasing death toll, which reached a bleak milestone of 300,000 on Monday.

The data release is the first step of a public review process that will include a daylong meeting on Thursday by an independent advisory panel of experts. They will hear from Moderna, F.D.A. scientists and the public before voting on whether to recommend authorization. The panel is expected to vote yes, and the F.D.A. generally follows the experts’ recommendations.

Distribution of about six million doses could then begin next week, significantly adding to the millions of doses already being shipped by Pfizer and BioNTech, the companies that developed the first coronavirus vaccine given emergency clearance just last Friday. Health care workers received the first shots on Monday of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which has an efficacy rate of 95 percent.

The vaccine rollout has been highly anticipated, and is one of the most ambitious immunization campaigns ever conducted in the United States.

The federal government signed deals last summer with Moderna and Pfizer to deliver a total of 200 million doses in the first quarter of 2021. Because both vaccines require two doses, those contracts guaranteed enough doses for 100 million people.

Last week the government announced that it had purchased another 100 million doses from Moderna for the second quarter, increasing the number of Americans who can be vaccinated to 150 million. But that still leaves the question of how and when the roughly 180 million other Americans will be covered.

Moderna’s vaccine has become a symbol of the triumphs of government scientists during the pandemic. After China released the genetic sequence of the new virus in early January, scientists at Moderna and the National Institutes of Health were able to zero in on the design for a vaccine in just two days. Unlike Pfizer, Moderna has maintained a close relationship with Operation Warp Speed, the federal program intended to quickly bring a vaccine to see MODERNA, page 9





COMMUNITY NEWS

Moderna Vaccine Is Highly Protective and Prevents Severe Covid-19

MODERNA, from page 8  
market. Nearly \$2.5 billion in federal funds helped Moderna buy raw materials, expand its factory and enlarge its work force by 50 percent.

Moderna’s success stands in contrast to two other high-profile projects that the United States had hoped would augment its supply of vaccines: one from the pharmaceutical companies Sanofi of France and GlaxoSmithKline of Britain, and another from the British-Swedish drug maker AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford.

AstraZeneca and Oxford ended up using two different doses in clinical trials in Britain and Brazil. At one level, the efficacy was 62 percent, and at the other it was 90 percent. These muddled results have left it unclear when AstraZeneca will have enough data to secure an emergency use authorization.

Meanwhile, Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline received disappointing results from their vaccine in early clinical trials. While it produced a promising immune response in volunteers under 50, it failed to do so in older ones. The companies are now planning a new set of trials with a different version of the vaccine. The delay means they would be unlikely to provide vaccines before the end of 2021.

Moderna’s vaccine worked equally well in white volunteers and in communities of color. There was also no significant difference between its protection for men and women, or between healthy volunteers and those at risk of severe Covid-19 who had conditions like obesity and diabetes. For people 65 and older, the trial provided an estimated efficacy of 86.4 percent, lower than the overall estimate of 94.1 percent. But the apparent difference was not statistically significant.

So far, two potential differences between the vaccines have emerged from the F.D.A.’s reviews, but the findings may reflect a shortage of data rather than genuine differences. The Pfizer-BioNTech trial showed that their vaccine started to protect against the coronavirus within about 10 days of the first dose. The trial of Moderna’s vaccine, by contrast, did not reveal such a striking effect after the first dose.

But fewer cases of Covid-19 occurred among trial participants in the early days of the Moderna trial, making it harder to measure differences between the vaccinated group and the placebo group. In any case, health officials have said that for both vaccines, two doses are essential for full protection.

A second difference involves the ability to prevent severe disease. Moderna produced more evidence that its vaccine can do so, according to the review. In its trial, 30 volunteers developed severe cases of Covid. All of them were in the placebo group,

with no cases among the people who were vaccinated.  
In the Pfizer-BioNTech trial, the findings were less compelling. There were 10 severe cases in the placebo group and one in the vaccinated group. Those numbers are too small to gauge the vaccine’s ability to prevent serious illness.  
“The available data for these outcomes did not allow for firm conclusions,” the F.D.A. said.  
The documents published Tuesday made clear that side



Moderna headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

effects were particularly common after the second dose, but typically lasted only a day. Experts say people may need to take a day off work after getting the shot.

During the Moderna trial, researchers also kept an eye out for volunteers who developed new disorders. In a trial lasting several months with 30,000 volunteers, it is normal for some to come down with conditions that have nothing to do with the vaccine, health experts say. Comparing the rates between the people who get the vaccine and the placebo – as well as general background rates – can help pinpoint serious concerns and rule out coincidences.

During the Moderna trial, three vaccinated participants developed a form of temporary facial paralysis called Bell’s palsy, while one participant with the placebo also experienced it. Bell’s

palsy, which can last weeks or longer, can be triggered by viral infections and other causes. Some 40,000 people develop the condition each year in the United States. Years of intense research has failed to find evidence that any vaccine routinely recommended in the United States causes Bell’s palsy.

In the review released on Tuesday, the F.D.A. said: “Currently available information is insufficient to determine a causal relationship with the vaccine.”

In the Pfizer-BioNTech trial, four cases were detected in the vaccine group, including one in a person with a history of the disorder, and none in the placebo group.

Dr. Peter Marks, the F.D.A.’s top vaccine regulator, said Monday in an interview with JAMA that the cases of Bell’s palsy in the trial were most likely not caused by the vaccine, and that the seeming difference between the two groups of volunteers was just a matter of chance.

“Our working hypothesis is just that this is an imbalance in background rates, like we’ve seen in other trials,” he said.

In its analysis of the Moderna vaccine published Tuesday, the F.D.A. said it planned to recommend tracking Bell’s palsy cases as the vaccines roll out.

“We’re going to query for that, just to bring that question to close,” Dr. Marks said on Monday.

The F.D.A.’s analysis did not find serious allergic reactions to the Moderna vaccine. The same was true in the Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial, but when vaccinations began in Britain outside that trial, two people with a history of serious allergies had a severe and potentially life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis.

British health officials have said that people with a history of anaphylaxis should avoid the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

But in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that people with serious allergies can be safely vaccinated, with close monitoring for 30 minutes after receiving the shot.

The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are similar in their ingredients, but not identical, so it is not clear whether an allergic reaction to one would occur with the other. Both consist of genetic material called mRNA encased in a bubble made from a mixture of fats. The two companies use different fats.

Moderna has requested authorization to vaccinate people 18 and older, like those in its study. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for people as young as 16, because the trial had some younger volunteers. Both companies are running trials on children as young as 12 and have plans to start studying even younger children.

Merry Christmas!

To Our Readers

This year has been an unusual one for all who are concerned about Armenian affairs, and it has put extra demands on many Armenian institutions, including the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. As you know, the Mirror is the first English-language Armenian weekly published in the US, and for some 88 years, it has served the community. Readers can learn of the most important developments in Armenia, as well as international politics, art and culture throughout the world in a convenient and concise format.

The crises for Armenian communities in Lebanon and now in Artsakh have led us to increase the frequency of our online coverage, while we have secured new young correspondents in Armenia and the US. We continue our agreement with Artsakh Public TV to periodically subtitle in English and condense some of its video broadcasts, while our video correspondent in Washington, DC posts reports. Send us your email if you wish to regularly receive links to articles and videos.

Demands for humanitarian assistance abroad from our sponsoring organizations and friends, and a decrease in events and advertising due to COVID19 have led to decreased revenues for the Mirror, while its expenses have increased.

While some things in the Armenian world have changed, we continue with our annual tradition of publishing your Christmas and New Year’s wishes, and greetings to relatives and friends in the final issue of the year. In case you wish to give gift subscriptions of the Mirror-Spectator for Christmas, for your convenience, we are placing a gift subscription form in the newspaper as well as one below.

Sincerely,

Alin K. Gregorian  
Editor

Aram Arkun  
Assistant Editor

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# San Francisco's Mt. Davidson Cross Is Rebranding

SAN FRANCISCO – The Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council, also known as the Council of Armenian American Organizations of Northern California (CAAONC), is closing out 2020 with positive momentum. Along with the addition of six new members from various Bay

Area organizations, the Council has a new name and logo. The new logo showcases the Cross' majesty and surrounding landscape while also representing San Francisco. A newly created video has been released to highlight the Council's mission and recent accomplishments. The video was created by community member and professional videographer, Anthony Catchadoorian of San Francisco. To view the video, click <https://bit.ly/2W1wNbj>.

In November of this year, Chairperson Sevag Kevranian announced a donation to support Armenia Fund on behalf of the Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council. This donation was publicized during the annual Thanksgiving Day Armenia Fund Telethon.

About Mt. Davidson Cross

Over 30 local Armenian churches and organizations came together in 1997 to purchase and preserve the Cross atop Mt. Davidson from demolition. They dedicated the Cross to the memory of the 1.5 million martyrs of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The 103-foot tall Cross sits high above the city skyline at 928 feet, representing the highest point in San Francisco.

The Council remains proudly committed to the stewardship of Mt. Davidson Cross but the challenges of owning a historical landmark open to the public continue. Please consider making a financial contribution to support the preservation and maintenance of the Cross at [www.mountdavidsoncross.org](http://www.mountdavidsoncross.org).



## NBA's Enes Kanter Congratulates Erdogan on 'Becoming the Terrorist Of the Year'

BOSTON – Boston Celtics player Enes Kanter, an outspoken critic of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, shared on Twitter the cover of Time news magazine, depicting Turkey's President Erdogan with caption 'The Terrorist of the Year.' "Congratulations, Erdogan," Kanter wrote, tagging the president's official Twitter account. The image came as imitation to the Time's Person of the Year annual issue, which features people and profiles who have done the most to influence the events of the year for better or for worse.

### OBITUARY

## Arthur Sarkis Satian

Entrepreneur, Former Knights of Vartan Washington, DC. Lodge Chair

RESTON, Va. – On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, Arthur Sarkis Satian, loving son, devoted husband and supportive father of three girls passed away at age 55, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

He was born on October 26, 1965 in Fairfax, to Sarkis and Margie Satian.

He was a successful entrepreneur, builder and developer.

He had a passion for his family, sports cars, all kinds of music and many other pursuits. One of his greatest gifts was his ability to build and create and draw beauty out of everything he touched. He was known for his quick wit, his infectious smile, and his kind and compassionate spirit. With his awesome sense of humor and talent for accents, he kept his friends and family smiling.



He was proud of his Armenian heritage and served his community throughout his entire life.

He was a member of the Knights of Vartan, ANI Lodge, which he loved, cherished, and served as its president from 1997 to 1999.

He is survived by his wife Suleima Satian; former wife, Sylva Satian; his three daughters, Taleen, Nicole, and Allison; his mother, Margie Satian, father, Sarkis Satian; his step-mother Mary Satian; his sister, Rosemary, and his best friend who is like brother

er Varoujan Varoujanian; step-siblings Heather, Holly and Heath, along with many loving cousins, nephews and nieces.

Due to the current Covid Pandemic, a private funeral service was held on Saturday, December 12, at St. Mary Armenian Church, Washington DC. Knights of Vartan members initiated a very short funeral service to their departed brother and his sister, Rosemary, delivered an emotional eulogy.

Rev. Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of St. Mary Church presided over the funeral services and interment.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to: The Arto Satian Charitable Fund, c/o Varoujan Varoujanian 46412 Esterbrook Circle, Sterling, VA 20165.



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### Donations

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* thanks the following individuals for their support of its mission to provide Armenian-related news via both its print edition and its website ([mirrorspectator.com](http://mirrorspectator.com)).

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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## Professional Transitions at Project SAVE Archives

WATERTOWN – Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives is grateful for Suzanne Adams's 14 years of service to the organization as archivist. Adams ushered in the digital age at Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives by implementing and overseeing digitization of photographs, as well as introducing a database for cataloging photograph information which was kept on paper for decades. She provided photographs and information to people from around the world who sought images from our archive for their fascinating and diverse projects.

She also served as a mentor to numerous volunteers and interns interested in archival work.

An award-winning storyteller, Adams competes in "The Moth's" various StorySlam events.

In this transition, Marta Fodor joins Project SAVE's staff as archivist. She brings with her years of experience in digitization projects most recently with Brandeis University and the Museum of Fine Arts, as well as formal training

BEILA HALACSY PHOTO



Marta Fodor

in photography, archives, and library science. Fodor holds a BFA in photography from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and a Master in Library Science from Queens College, CUNY. She is also currently enrolled in the Digital Archives Specialist Certificate program through the Society of American Archivists.

Her work with Project SAVE Archives will create more public access to the photographs and their stories, to make our archive more outward facing.

Fodor is a photographer, then an archivist, creating personal photographic projects about immigrants, folk dance and cultural identity. She is also her family's archivist, digitizing photographs of her grandfather taken during his military career in Eastern Europe after WWI.

Project SAVE Archives professional staff are a major strength and asset to the organization. The work of collecting, preserving, protecting and making the photographs available for use is carried out with care and with knowledge.

For more information on Project SAVE, visit [projectsave.org](http://projectsave.org).

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# Arts & Living

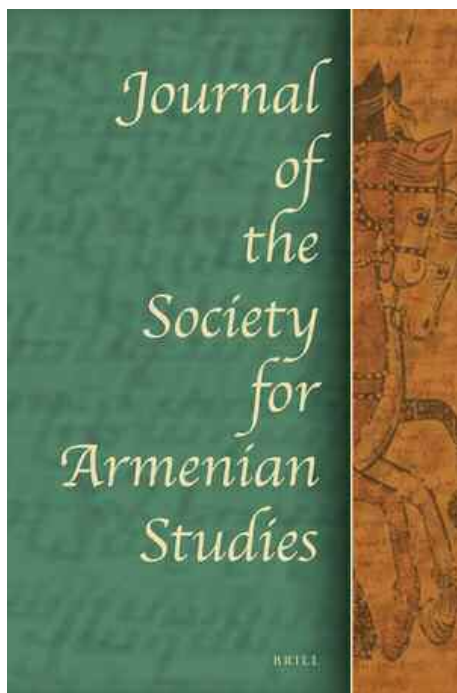
## Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies Releases First Volume through Brill With New Editor-in-Chief

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies announces the release of Volume 27, Issue 1 (Spring 2020) of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS), edited by Dr. Tamar M. Boyadjian at Michigan State University. This volume of the JSAS includes four articles, and five book reviews.

The articles in this issue address topics in Armenian religious practice, philology, the Armenian Genocide, contemporary literature, and the transmission of traumatic memory.

The volume begins with a study by Anna Ohanjanyan examining the reshaping of the orthodoxy of the Armenian Apostolic Church along the lines of European confession-building and Ottoman sunnization, in the face of Tridentine Catholicism. Ohanjanyan contextualizes these polemic writings and the ways of detecting “bad innovations” versus those enforcing “pure faith” in the doctrine and practice of Armenian communities in the Ottoman realms in the late seventeenth century.

Ohanjanyan’s article is followed by Jesse S. Arlen’s micro-historical study of an episode in Joseph Emin’s *Life and Adventures*, where Emin encounters Armenian villagers in the town of Jinis. Arlen reads this episode within



the greater context of 18th-century “port Armenians” and Armenian merchant culture in the early modern world, while also reflecting on the growing divergences between viewpoints of developments in this period, and that of rural dwellers like the local villagers and priests of Jinis.

Maria Armoudian and Vukan Jokic provide an in-depth study of the portrayals of Armenia and Armenians in the New Zealand media from 1842 up to the beginning of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Their sample includes more than 35,000 archived national and local newspaper articles, as well as other types of news reports in the period. In addition to categorizing the various representations of Armenians in these papers — including a special discussion of women, the article further serves as a reminder of the Armenian community of New Zealand, which is not often considered in historical studies of Armenians, especially during this period.

The final full-length article in this volume is the work by Maral Aktomakyan devoted to Madteos Mamurian’s *English Letters or the Destiny of an Armenian*. Aktomakyan argues for the role of the strange, stranger, and uncanny in Mamurian’s text, and its engagement with modernity as a framework which hopes to reawaken the Armenian nation and its political voice in a late nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

see JOURNAL, page 13



“Girlhood Interrupted”

## Digital Exhibitions at U Michigan Include Focus On Women, Borderlands

DEARBORN, Mich. — Two digital exhibitions will go on display at the University of Michigan- Dearborn, Dearborn, on Monday, December 14, on the gallery website and will be permanently displayed there.

The locations of the exhibitions are the official gallery website for the Stamelos Gallery Center, Mardigian Library-1st Floor, University of Michigan- Dearborn.

Kristin Anahit Cass is a Chicago-based artist working in photography, video, writing, sculpture and other media. Her art explores the intensely personal spaces where our lives intersect, considering underlying questions of social justice and human rights. As an artist of mixed ethnicity and a descendent of genocide survivors, Cass’s work reflects her passion for amplifying diverse voices telling stories that inspire change. In addition to her arts education, her career as a lawyer gives her a unique perspective on the injustices that so many people and communities face every day. Cass is a graduate of the University of Chicago.

“The New Freedom Fighters: Women and Nonviolent Resistance” project explores the often unrecognized role that women play in the survival and evolution of cultures and communities. The women profiled in this project live every day under military threat and use different types of nonviolent resistance to defend their human rights and mitigate the consequences of war in their communities. The lives of the women you meet here have been irrevocably shaped by war. Despite feeling the effects of the violence on their homes, families, career prospects, and communities, these women understand the need for creative non-violence to break the cycle of war and intolerance.

“Borderlands Under Fire” exposes the world of a frozen conflict and documents the effects of state-sponsored violence on daily life in the frontier villages of Armenia, a tiny country in the South Caucasus. Caught at the geopolitical crossroads of East and West, Armenian villagers find themselves used as pawns in a political power game, and ignored by international organizations like the OSCE and the UN. But they refuse to give up their agency, and they continue working to make change from within their communities. Even as the people of these border villages suffer violence and privation daily as a result of war, they hold fast to their homeland, preserving their language and culture as part of the world’s heritage. The project explores the villagers’ use of creative nonviolent resistance to defend their human rights and develop their communities.

For more information, visit [www.umdearborn.edu/stamelos](http://www.umdearborn.edu/stamelos)



“Ine and Mariam”

## ECM Releases Tigran Mansurian’s ‘Con Anima’

LOS ANGELES — ECM in November released the latest record from composer Tigran Mansurian, “Con Anima.”

Conceived jointly by violinist Movses Pogossian and violist Kim Kashkashian on the occasion of Mansurian’s 80th birthday, the “Con Anima” project brings together a dedicated cast of players to perform the chamber music of Armenia’s great contemporary composer. The emphasis is on newer pieces — only the *Third String Quartet* dates from the 20th century — but there is a timeless quality to Mansurian’s work, all of which resounds with the spirit of his homeland.

“Mansurian’s works are full of signifiers that come from Armenian ornaments, paintings or stones,” writes Elena Dubinets in the CD notes. “His music itself feels as if it was carved out of stone.” It can seem both ancient and modern at once, as it carefully explores and reveals relationships between contemporary Western composition and Armenia’s sacred and secular music traditions. These characteristics are immediately evident in *Agnus Dei*, dedicated to the memory of Russian violinist Oleg Kagan. Here, violin, clarinet and cello sing against a sparse piano backdrop, in a piece whose form



Tigran Mansurian

conveys the melos of Armenian spiritual music.

Mansurian, however, is a multifaceted composer, as Mark Swed has observed in the *Los Angeles Times*: “For all of his spiritual intensity, Tigran Mansurian achieved his mature voice the hard way, and he has always been of many sides. That late voice, the one Mansurian is known for, strives for a purity of sound and expression based on elements of traditional Armenian melody and the country’s traditional and liturgical music, its language and poetry, to say nothing of its landscape. But under it all is a highly cosmopolitan composer.” His compositions, effectively letters from Yerevan, also address the complexity of his country’s history.

*Sonata da Chiesa* is dedicated to priest-composer-folklorist Komitas Vardapet, an enduring inspiration for Mansurian. Komitas (1869-1935), a crucially important voice in the history of his country’s music, was silenced and broken by the Armenian Genocide. His artistic achievement and his tragedy resonated powerfully with Mansurian, as Kim Kashkashian and Tatevik Mokatsian make evident in the moving performance here.

The *String Quartet no 3* was written in 1993, a message from a blockaded Yerevan in the wake of the Armenian struggle for independence, in which Armenian melody is dissonantly deconstructed. The piece concludes, as Elena Dubinets observes, “with a tense and mournful adagio seemingly drawn from a haunted world of constant suffering.” Through good times and

see MANSURIAN, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

# ECM Releases Mansurian's 'Con Anima'

MANSURIAN, from page 12  
the most difficult times, Tigran Mansurian has been faithful to Armenia.

The title piece Con anima draws inspiration from Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 13. In Mansurian's string sextet the first viola attains a dominant role, "repeatedly reciting a confessional melody inflected with Eastern motifs and rhythmic figures."

Movses Pogossian and Kim Kashkashian, dedicatees of the *String Trio* of 2008 play the work here joined by cellist Karen Ouzounian. Its three movements are of strikingly different character. In the first, a melody is shared among the three instruments. In the second, a folk-like theme arises. For its concentrated musical thought, the slowly-moving third movement has drawn critical comparison to late Beethoven.

The album ends with *Die Tänzerin*, based upon an Armenian folk dance. "My dancers are mountain dwellers," says Tigran Mansurian. "When they dance they turn their backs on the mountain tops, having vast spaces in front of their eyes. Their dance embodies the joy of treading and circling these spaces..."

The "Con Anima" project was recorded at the UCLA School of Music, Los Angeles, between January and April 2019.

Tigran Mansurian was born on January 27, 1939 in Beirut, where he attended the French Catholic School. In 1947 he and his family returned to their homeland. After having attended a special music school, Mansurian studied composition at the Yerevan Conservatory, where he subsequently taught music analysis with special emphasis on contemporary composition.

Mansurian's compositional oeuvre includes orchestral works, concertos for string instruments and orchestra, string quartets, choral music, chamber music, and works for solo instruments. He cites Komitas and Claude



Movses Pogossian

Debussy among the composers who have most profoundly influenced his work.

Documentation of his music on ECM New Series began with Hayren (recorded in 2000) where Mansurian's music was juxtaposed with



Komitas's; it featured Kim Kashkashian, Robyn Schulkowsky and Mansurian himself as interpreters. It was soon followed by the far-reaching composer portrait Monodia (recorded 2001 and 2002), with Kashkashian, Jan Garbarek, the Hilliard Ensemble and the Münchener Kammerorchester. Ars Poetica (recorded 2003)

featured Mansurian's choral music sung by the Armenian Chamber Choir. The Rosamunde Quartet recorded Mansurian's String Quartets in 2004. Quasi Parlando (2012) featured the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, with Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Anja Lechner as soloists. Mansurian's Requiem, dedicated to the memory of victims of the Armenian Genocide was recorded by the RIAS Kammerchor and the Münchener Kammerorchester in 2016.

## Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies Releases First Volume through Brill with New Editor-in-Chief

JOURNAL, from page 12

In addition to these articles, Volume 27, Issue 1 also contains the following book reviews: Gohar Grigoryan Savary's review of Heggner Watenpaugh's *The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice*; Michael Pifer's review of Christina Maranci's *The Art of Armenia: An Introduction*; Alison M. Vacca's review of the edited volume by Hourii Berberian and Touraj Daryaei entitled, *Reflections of Armenian Identity in History and Historiography*; Alyssa Mathias's review of Sylvia A. Alajaji's *Music and the Armenian Diaspora: Searching for Home in Exile*; and Zaruhi Hakobyan's review of Yana Tchekhanovets's *The Caucasian Archaeology of the Holy Land: Armenian, Georgian and Albanian Communities*.

The JSAS has partnered with Brill. As the Society for Armenian Studies President, Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) commented in his message: "We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with Brill with the aim of transforming the Journal into a global hub of disseminating knowledge about Armenian Studies... JSAS will open new horizons for developing as a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary field...I have no doubt that JSAS will soon become a prestigious journal attracting scholars from all around the globe." The JSAS also thanks its former Editor-in-Chief Sergio La Porta for his decade of dedicated service.

Boyadjian continues as the editor. The Book Review Editor for this volume was Michael Pifer, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The journal now has moved from having only a book review section to a now including a section entitled "Reviews and Reconsiderations" with the editorial team of Rachel Goshgarian, Lafayette College; Nora Lessersohn, University College London, and Erin Piñon, Princeton University. The Advisory Board consists of: Bedross Der Matossian, University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Barlow Der Mugrdchian, California State University, Fresno; Sharon Kinoshita, University of California, Santa Cruz; Alison Vacca, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Jyotsna Singh, Michigan State University; and

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Dr. Tamar M. Boyadjian

of California, Irvine; Myrna Douzjian, University of California, Berkeley; Shushan Karapetian, University of Southern California; David Kazanjian, University of Pennsylvania; Lilit Keshishyan, University of Southern California; Tsolin Nalbantian, University of Leiden; Christina Maranci, Tufts University; Hratch Tchilingirian, University of Oxford; and Heggner Watenpaugh, University of California, Davis.

The *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* is a peer-reviewed journal and is published bi-annually by Brill.

Copies of the latest volume, and back issues, are also available by contacting the SAS Secretariat, or can be ordered online at [societyforarmenianstudies.com](http://societyforarmenianstudies.com).

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Christos Galileas

## ‘I Feel 100% Greek and 100% Armenian’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/ATLANTA – Hailed by many music critics as “A genuine old school virtuoso,” “an incredible mixture of dazzling virtuosity and immaculate musicianship,” “an artist of rare originality and utmost integrity,” Greek-Armenian violinist Christos Galileas has enjoyed an active international career as a concert violinist, chamber musician and teacher.

Born in 1975, in Thessaloniki, Greece, he had his first violin lessons at the age of 4 from his father, Kosmas Galileas, the distinguished Greek violinist and conductor, and continued studying with Prof. Stelios Kafantaris. He was awarded first prize and the gold medal for his outstanding musical abilities upon graduating from the Conservatory of Athens in 1994.

His first public appearance at age sixteen was with the Symphony Orchestra of Thessaloniki with an impressive performance of the Paganini Violin Concerto No 1. From 1994 to 1995, he studied with Zachar Bron in Lubeck, Germany, then at Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, where he was accepted to the studio of renowned Professors Roland and Almita Vamos and received the “Dean’s Talent Award” and from where he received a bachelor’s degree in music.

In 1995 he won the first prize at the “National Competition for Scholarships” of Greece, and two years later he was awarded the Alexandra Triandi scholarship of the Megaron of Athens. Since then, he has appeared as soloist with many orchestras and at the international festivals worldwide.

In 1999 he continued his studies at the Juilliard School with the legendary violin pedagogue Dorothy Delay and received his master’s degree.

In 2002, he founded the Hellenic Camerata, a chamber orchestra with 22 members, and conducted an extensive tour in North, Central and South America in many countries.

In 2005 he received his doctorate in Violin Performance (Doctor of Musical Arts) from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Dr. Galileas has been invited to teach violin and chamber music extensively in many renowned institutions. He has held important administrative positions which include: Director of the North City Conservatory in Thessaloniki Greece, Artistic Director of the “Dimitria” International Festival of Thessaloniki, member of the Board of Directors of the State Conservatory of Greece, and State Orchestra of Thessaloniki, Artistic Director of the Summer Music Academy in Afytos Greece. In 2007 Christos Galileas joined the faculty at Georgia State University where he currently serves as associate professor of Violin and Coordinator of Chamber Music. He served as coordinator of the String Area from 2007-2014. His latest research is focused on commissioning and recording the music of women composers from Greece and Armenia. In 2015 Galileas founded the Anatolia Summer Music Program in Thessaloniki, where he also serves as executive and artistic director.

Dr. Galileas’ recordings can be found on the Albany Records label. He plays on a 1705 Joseph Guarneri violin.



Dear Christos, let’s start our conversation by sharing my memory from 1994, when you performed with the Yerevan Philharmonic Orchestra. It was an unforgettable concert –



during that hard period a very young musician, even being half Armenian, came to the country of his maternal ancestors with a brilliant performance. I even remember how your mother was crying because of her excitement and pride!

Yes, it was a very special and unforgettable experience. I was 19 years old and visiting Armenia for the first time made me feel very emotional. On top of that was the excitement of performing with such a great orchestra and renowned conductor Loris Tjeknavorian. A very, very special moment indeed. I am looking forward to visiting Armenia again. I miss it dearly.

**Please tell us about your career.**

I can’t complain! I am very fortunate to have enjoyed a vibrant career as a soloist and chamber musician in more than 30 countries around the world. I have performed in some of the world’s most prestigious concert venues such as Vienna’s Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Munich’s Gasteig, Prague’s Rudolfinum and Smetana Hall, Kennedy Center, Bucharest Athenaeum, just to name a few. I have collaborated with distinguished artists such as cellist Mischa Maisky, pianists Dimitri Sgouros and Jura Margulis, and the Borodin and Komitas string quartets among others. In 2007 I joined the faculty at Georgia State University where I currently serve as associate professor of violin and coordinator of chamber music. I am also the co-founder, executive and co-artistic director of the Anatolia Summer Music program in my hometown of Thessaloniki Greece.

**The classical music scenes I am sure are very different in Greece and the US...**

Not so much. Actually I find that music is an international language that mostly unites people and cultures and brings us closer. The music scene might be a little different in regards to the support in the arts. In Greece the arts are still heavily supported and subsidized by the state (which is a good thing). In the US it is mostly the private sector (also a good thing). I really think that a combination of the two would be ideal.

**Your sister Nevart-Veron Galileas is a musician too, who participated in the Renaissance Musical Festival in Gyumri twice.**

My sister Nevart-Veron is a brilliant flutist with a wonderful career of her own. We have collaborated on numerous occasions. Together we started the Music Anatolia Summer Music Festival. Yes, she also visited Armenia. At some point in the near future we would like to perform together in Armenia.

**After your concert a Yerevan newspaper published an article entitled “Galileas-Kalfayan Family of Fools.” Why so? Please tell about your family.**

The article is referring to the very famous Sardarabad song which at some point mentions the “crazy love for your country.” Although having been born and raised in Greece and to a Greek father, my mother Diroui Kalfayan-Galileas made sure that my sister and I were raised “very Armenian.” She spoke to us only in Armenian to make sure we learn the language and taught us the history of our proud nation. My Armenian side of the family had been very active in the community in Thessaloniki. My great-grandfather Garabed Gazarian was one of the people that bought the land for the Armenian church in Thessaloniki and also funded the con-

struction. My grandfather Roupen Kalfayan was the president of the Armenian Community of Thessaloniki for 30 years. My uncle Garabed Kalfayan was the first representative of the Republic of Armenia in Greece after Armenia became an independent state following the collapse of the Soviet Union. He was also responsible for organizing the humanitarian aid that was sent from Greece to Armenia in the early 1990s. My mother has been president of the Hamazkayin Cultural Association in Thessaloniki Greece for over 30 years. As one can see, there is a very long and strong history of the Armenianess in me! When asked if I feel more Greek or Armenian, my response is that I feel 100-percent Greek and 100-percent Armenian.

**By the way, in 2011 in Thessaloniki I visited Kalfayan Museum and was hosted by Garabed and Anahid Kalfayan, now both deceased. How will you describe their influence in the museums in Greece?**

You must have visited the Kalfayan Private Collection exhibit at the Museum of Byzantine culture in Thessaloniki. The Kalfayan family have had a long tradition as art collectors and antique dealers – three generations to be exact. Their private collection of Armenian art is monumental and has established a long lasting legacy for years to come. Their commitment in promoting our Armenian Cultural Heritage is noteworthy and most admirable.

**To what extent is Armenian music present in your work?**

I make it a point to include the music of Armenian composers in my concert programs on a regular basis. I also collaborate frequently with Armenian artists. I have given lectures regarding Armenian music, Komitas and the “School of Five.” As a child, I was very fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to meet legendary figures of Armenian music such as composers Ghazaros Saryan, Edvard Mirzoyan, conductors Hovhannes Tchekidjian and Loris Tjeknavorian, the famous Komitas quartets and others. These great artists visited our home in Thessaloniki at the invitation of my father, the distinguished violinist and conductor Kosmas Galileas. My mother Diroui Kalfayan-Galileas had talked to my father and suggested that he invite all these great artists and ensembles from Armenia to perform in Greece. The ensembles that my parents had invited from Armenia include the Armenian Philharmonic, the Armenian Chamber Orchestra under Aram Gharabekian’s conduction, Serenade Chamber Orchestra, the State Choir of Armenia, the Little Singers of Armenia, the Komitas and Khachaturian quartets and many others. So yes, Armenian Music has always been a very big part of my life and I am grateful for that.

**Are you in touch with Armenians in the US and in the world?**

Yes, I am constantly in contact with Armenians all over the world. I am also very active as a member of the Armenian National Committee of Greece and America. I am currently involved in a project to gather and send humanitarian aid to Armenia from Greece to offer some much-needed relief following the Artsakh war. As an Armenian I am devastated by the outcome of this conflict and the casualties that we suffered. We must continue fighting for our cause to ensure that the sacrifice of our brave heroes was not in vain. *Park ou badiv mer herosneroun!* Eternal Glory and Honor to them!





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Yerevan PERF'

## Choreographer Vahram Zaryan Twins Paris and Yerevan in Bold New Festival

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Performance: most people in Armenia equate the word solely with theater and ballet, end stop. For mime, choreographer and movement guru Vahram Zaryan, this status quo some thirty years after the collapse of the USSR was unacceptable. Sure, the Armenian public has been exposed to contemporary dance through touring companies like the UK's Akram Khan Dance Company, but this has made little difference in its overall artistic consciousness. Zaryan's solution? To create a city-specific movement festival – a global first – and choose Paris and Yerevan as the first two twinned cities.

Born in Armenia and now a French resident, perhaps like Charles Aznavour and other French Armenians before him, Zaryan is both completely French and completely Armenian. Hence the choice of first cities was obvious: thus Paris-Yerevan PERF' was born. Each year, Zaryan will pick a new city to highlight. The idea is always to share and exchange new dance and movement pieces, as well as ideas and texts about performance. Another unique aspect of the festivals: all texts will be translated, so as to assure complete intellectual transparency and to also foreground the art of translation itself. Not one to be easily daunted, when COVID-19 hit, Zaryan took the festival on line. Then the war happened. More about that later.

For the first edition of the festival Zaryan has put together an eclectic program that includes French comedian and director Astrid Bayiha's "Mamiwata," interpretations by pianist Maroussia Gentet of composers Philippe Schoeller and Hector Parra and a new work by mime Cécile Ghrenassia. Armenian contributions include director Arturo Sayan's homage to Sergei Parajanov and Arthur Makaryan's immersive online improvisational show "The O'Leary Theory." Zaryan will himself perform "Oblique Cycle 2," a collaboration with the composer Vincent Trollet based on poems by Frédéric Parcheminier which casts a look at things disorienting and skewed – hence the title. Apart from spotlighting Yerevan itself, the festival hopes to contribute to Armenian culture by creating a space where people from around the world will exchange ideas, research and work while encouraging multimedia and multidisciplinary work that doesn't limit creative workers to one specific genre or medium.

As for Zaryan's Armenian roots, they run deep. His Armenity as he calls it, lies in the Lori region of Armenia where he grew up in the village of Shirakamut. Zaryan studied in Vanadzor at the Abelyan Theater and then at the National Theater Conservatory in Yerevan. He then decided to take a proverbial path less trodden in order to study mime at the Armenian State Mime Theater with Zhirayr Dadasyan.



Vahram Zaryan and Sara Paone, Non-Mime performance, "Oblique Cycle 2" (Photo © Jana Jasenkova)

fused elements of French culture, itself a heterogeneous construct, with his own native Armenian one and created something original in the process.

As for the festival itself, Zaryan credits the Armenian diaspora's spirit of openness and creativity with bringing something truly unique to the endeavor. Paris-Yerevan PERF' will also give him a much-anticipated opportunity to renew his creative links with his homeland: "I have always felt tied to Armenia. My artistic sensibilities themselves were born in my native village, along with me! Armenia is a constant and inexhaustible source of inspiration: its culture is vibrant and important, essential even," says the choreographer.

In works such as "Mater Replik," a palpable sense of exile can be felt, or perhaps more accurately an examination of the notion of exile. Explains Zaryan: "The body in exile is not only a notion for those who feel exiled or living outside their own culture – the body itself is a locus of exile – the idea that we are all in the end exiled." Or fallen perhaps, as in the Book of Genesis? For Zaryan travel, departure, exile are all part of the human experience or Odyssey: "Every human being feels this sentiment at some point in his life, I think...And the idea of return is often key to one's survival and to enduring both the existential and physical that pain one experiences on a daily basis."

Zaryan is quick to note that traditional Armenian dance is one of the most ancient known to man: "One finds representations of dance in the Armenian highlands painted as far back as the 5th to 3rd century B.C. Movses Khorenatsi himself heard of the way in which the children of Aram – that is to say Armenians – evoked these dances and accompanying songs in ballads that were accompanied by the lyre. We continue to be proud of and preserve traditional Armenian dance throughout the world, to this very day!"

As for classical dance or ballet, this arrived in Armenia from Russia. "What is missing is contemporary dance, which is a shame. Hence one of the festival's goals is to hold master classes and put Armenian choreographers in contact with well-known choreographers abroad. We also need to establish scholarships so that young Armenian dancers can study abroad.

"In the meantime, the arts are now converging, especially with the presence of big screen projections and the like: the point is to create new work that is vibrant, and not limit yourself to one type or genre...A work that I created this year called "Géotide," for example, is multi/pluri-disciplinary, built around a pianist (Maroussia Gentet) and a mime-performer (myself) that also brings together circus arts, dancers and other types of performers. And the music comes from contemporary composers such as Hector Parrà, Philippe Schoeller and Maël Bailly. It is also not site-specific; we travel the work."

And through all this whirlwind of creativity, Zaryan's heart remains inevitably tied to Armenia itself: "We've experienced the terrible shock of war once again," he says with a sigh. Let's hope that Yerevan PERF' will spur others in Armenia and the surrounding region to channel their forces into constructive and creative endeavors, and that it helps to build bridges in the Caucasus.



Vahram Zaryan, Non-Mime performance, "Oblique Cycle 1" (Photo © Rémy Grandroque)

Perhaps seeking a larger stage to practice his art form, Zaryan then moved to Paris where he has now spent the greater part of his adult life. There he studied with several leaders of the art form including the legendary Marcel Marceau and has since then moved on to be a leader in the field as the inventor of a new subgenre called "Non-Mime." In his work, he has





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

## Mediterranean Shepherd's Pie

Contributed by Mrs. Alice Vartanian

Persimmons are perhaps the most beautiful fruit of the fall and winter season. Persimmons can be eaten fresh, dried or cooked, and are commonly used around the world in jellies, drinks, pies, cookies, curries and puddings. These persimmon cookies are filled with walnuts, raisins, chocolate chips, and a variety of warm spices that smell wonderful when they are baking.

This recipe from Mrs. Alice Vartanian of Fresno, was originally published in December 2018, but is reprinted again this month. These persimmon cookies are an all-time favorite with Mrs. Vartanian's family, and she has lovingly baked at the holidays for many years. "Persimmons are so prevalent here in Fresno, and many of my late friends and relatives always made these cookies (or a variation of them) for their families, church bazaars, luncheons, and special celebrations. These were very creative and talented women who loved to cook, and who enjoyed making a variety of traditional Armenian cookies, breads, and desserts at Christmas and for the New Year. It was very common to walk into any Armenian kitchen and see persimmons ripening in a large fruit bowl, waiting to be made into cookies, cakes, puddings, marmalade, or muffins," remembers Mrs. Vartanian.

Mrs. Vartanian was born in Lowell, MA, and is a graduate of Lowell High School. With her talented brother, Stanley Sarkisian, Alice played classical piano and performed in many musical recitals and concerts during high school. Her parents were the late Levon and Pepay Sarkisian, immigrants from Adana. She was married to the late Arthur Vartanian, and is the mother of Christine Vartanian Datian, a contributor to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, and Steven and Philip Vartanian. She is a member of the Ladies Guild at the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno.

Alice is known for her culinary skills and creative abilities.

There is a variety of persimmon indigenous to the southern United States, but the two most common are Asian varieties - Fuyu and Hachiya. Fuyu are sweet, squat and yellow-orange, and ready



### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup persimmon pulp (from 2-3 medium persimmons), skins removed, pureed  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup shortening or unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1 large egg, beaten  
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt, to taste  
1/2 teaspoon orange or lemon zest  
1/2 teaspoon each ground cloves, nutmeg and ginger  
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts  
1 cup raisins or chopped dates  
1 cup dark chocolate chips

### PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease two baking sheets and set aside.

In large bowl, cream the sugar and the shortening until fluffy. Add the egg and mix to combine. Add the flour, baking soda, vanilla, cinnamon, salt, zest, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger, and mix to combine.

Add the persimmon puree, nuts, raisins, and the chocolate chips, if desired. Drop by the rounded spoonful on baking sheet and bake until cookie top springs back when touched, for 12 to 14 minutes.

Remove cookies from oven and cool on baking sheet for 5-8 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Note: This recipe can easily be doubled. Also, once cooled, dip half the cookie in melted dark or white chocolate and sprinkle with finely chopped nuts. Dried cranberries and cherries, chopped pecans or almonds may be added to this recipe. Or use 2 teaspoons of pumpkin pie spice to replace the cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and ginger for this recipe. Cookies may be glazed with orange or lemon glaze, if desired. If you want the persimmon flavor to shine through, serve cookies plain or lightly dust with confectioners' sugar.

Yield: About 3 dozen cookies.

For more persimmon recipes, go to:

<http://www.californiagrown.org/blog/perfect-uses-for-persimmons/>

<https://www.marthastewart.com/275469/persimmon-recipes>

<https://www.cookingchanneltv.com/devour/2013/11/what-to-do-with-persimmons>

See:

<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/12/20/recipe-corner-persimmon-walnut-raisin-cookies-contributed-by-mrs-alice-vartanian/>



Mrs. Alice Vartanian with her late husband, Arthur Vartanian, and their children Philip, Christine and Steven Vartanian at their Fresno home in the 1980s.

to eat when still slightly firm. Hachiya, which are larger than the Fuyu and have a tip at the bottom, need to be super ripe and almost too "squishy" to pick up before you try to eat them.

Persimmon has been popularly grown in Japan for the past 1,300 years and is also produced in China as well as other parts of the world. Look for persimmons with smooth skin and no bruising.

Persimmons are sweet and sour, and their texture is slightly reminiscent of apricots or peaches, so they're often pureed or baked into goods, but they're also delicious raw. Many home cooks and chefs are finally discovering the great versatility of using persimmons in many savory preparations as well as sweet ones during this season.

## Calendar

### MASSACHUSETTS

**JANUARY 27 - Wednesday at 10am**

**Celebrating What Unites Us!** A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) Haley House Bakery Café Signature Dishes Chefs Brie Garner and Alima Mbabzi

**FEBRUARY 10 - Wednesday at 10am**

**Celebrating What Unites Us!** A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) French Cuisine Chef Tyler Stout Executive Chef, Troquet on South

**MARCH 24 - Wednesday at 10am**

**Celebrating What Unites Us!** A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) Seafood! Executive Chef Kathy Sidell Owner, Sidell Hospitality, Saltie Girl, Met Back Bay, Stephanie's on Newbury

### 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.

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

## Armenian Word Search Book Released

LOS ANGELES - *Armenian Word Search*, a new book by Southern California Armenian women Stella Kientz and Lisa Kradjian, is now available on Amazon.com.

*Armenian Word Search* is for people of all ages interested in the Armenian language. The searches are predominantly in Western Armenian, on a variety of topics including Food, Culture, Geography and more. The book is appropriate for beginners and experts alike.

The authors, Kientz and Kradjian, have been friends for 25 years from Armenian church youth group days. They got the idea from talking about Stella's mother who enjoys doing word searches daily. They decided it would be a great idea to create an Armenian word search that their Armenian relatives and friends could enjoy, young and old. They focused on words that are pure Armenian, but there are some words with other related origins from surrounding regions.

"We thought it would be a wonderful way to keep our Armenian language alive. This book helps all ages of people keep up with their Armenian language - or learn it for the first time," the authors said. "We hope it is an educational and entertaining book for the Armenian community - and beyond."

Kientz is a registered nurse who works in regulatory, accreditation and licensing at Kaiser Permanente in Southern California. She grew up in Armenian church, attended Armenian school until junior high, and she is fluent in Western Armenian. Kradjian is an author and playwright who resides in San Diego and has been involved in the Armenian community and church since childhood and in various leadership roles.

*Armenian Word Search* is available on Amazon.com here, or for more information visit <https://kirazia9.wixsite.com/armenianwordsearch>.





## COMMENTARY

## EDITORIAL

# Aliyev's Military Parade Reveals Future Ambitions

By Edmond Y. Azadian

One month after the conclusion of the Karabakh war, President Ilham Aliyev organized a bombastic military parade in Baku on December 10, with the participation of his big brother, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey.

The speakers at the parade did not confine themselves to the military achievements of the combined forces of Azerbaijan and Turkey, but also made clear the extent of the looming dark clouds over the region.

Aliyev's speech was full of bravura, exhorting the "glorious victory of Azerbaijan's army." The exaggerated praise of that army's performance was meant to convince Aliyev himself and presumably his audience that the Azerbaijani war machine achieved those results all by itself, "smashing the myth of the Armenian army's invincibility."

Even with Turkey's full involvement in the war – in addition to their thousands of hired guns from Syria – 44 days of resistance speaks for itself about the true grit of the Armenian army.

Politicians and generals on the Armenian side recently have spoken about what transpired during the war.

Along with the blame game, some hard facts are coming to the surface. For example, Gen. Samuel Babayan, the war hero of the first Karabakh war in the 1990s, and the chairman of the Defense Committee of Karabakh, revealed in a recent interview that on September 27, the first day of the war, within the first 15 minutes, 50 percent of the air defense assets and 40 percent of the artillery on the Armenian side were knocked out. Still, the Armenian army continued to fight in the ensuing confusion, inflicting considerable damage to the enemy.

In another news item, it was reported that Israel not only had sold the deadly drones to the Azerbaijani army, but had also provided intelligence and surveillance of the terrain and the location of the Armenian military assets.

The war has changed the entire geopolitical landscape of the region, one where Armenia has to fight to survive.

The *Wall Street Journal* presents a realistic view of the turn of events in an article by David Gauthier-Villars, the newspaper's Turkey bureau chief, on December 11, under the heading "An Assertive Turkey Muscles into Russia's Backyard."

In that article, President Vladimir Putin is reported to have said, "What can I tell you? It's the geopolitical fallout from the downfall of the Soviet Union."

Although the author of the article believes that Moscow's accommodation of Turkey in the Caucasus is a ploy to drive a wedge among the members of the NATO alliance, the broader picture reveals a different message, particularly when viewed in the context of the Russo-Turkish confrontations elsewhere, such as Syria, Libya and Crimea: All evidence points to the diminution of Russian power.

During the parade, Mr. Erdogan made some historical references, which upset the Armenian side. Above all, however, the remarks irked the Iranian regime with the talk of reuniting Azerbaijan with the Iranian province of Azerbaijan. The Iranian government was so incensed that it summoned the Turkish ambassador to Iran.

Erdogan stated during the parade that the soul of Enver Pasha was illuminated. The reference was clear – and the audience he hoped would hear that sentence – as Enver Pasha was a member of the Ittihadist triumvirate, which had planned and executed the Armenian Genocide.

The reference to Enver was also a challenge to Russia, because after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Enver had gone to Moscow to dupe the young Bolshevik regime, as did Atatürk later, receiving arms, supplies and gold from Lenin to fight the Greeks and Armenians.

Enver Pasha at first was successful in convincing Moscow that he would go to Central Asia to fight the rebellious Islamic Basmaji movement. However, once he arrived in Turkmenistan, he joined the Basmajis against the Soviet forces and declared himself the Emir of Turan.

The Soviets did not forgive Enver and chased him throughout Central Asia. He was trapped by the Red Army headed by Hagop Melkumyan, who murdered Enver on August 4, 1922. It was perhaps history's revenge that on the day Shushi was handed to Enver's descendants in Azerbaijan, the heroic Enver, as he was being recalled, was killed by a Shushi-born Karabaktsi Armenian.

Turkey had received from the Nazi regime Talaat's remains to

be buried in his native land. Similarly, Enver's remains were handed over to Turkey, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Erdogan at the parade also mentioned Nuri Pasha, Enver's half-brother, who led the massacres of Armenians in Baku.

During and after the military parade, Aliyev's pronouncements were equally provocative.

In his speech, he reiterated the historic lie that Zangezur, Sevan and Yerevan had belonged to Azerbaijan, when no such state existed during the millennia that these regions had been part of Armenia.

He wielded his power later during a meeting with the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group in Baku. He told them that he had not invited them and that he had agreed to meet with them only since they were already in Baku.

Only the French co-chair, Ambassador Stéphane Visconti, politely reminded him that the French government had indeed received an invitation.

Other insults remained unchallenged. For example, Aliyev chided the OSCE for advocating non-violence in solving the issue. He bragged instead that Azerbaijan had reached its goal through precisely the opposite. He further demonstrated "magnanimity" by stating that he refrained from occupying Armenia itself. It was surprising that the Russian representative did not remind Aliyev that the former's government had guaranteed the territorial integrity of its strategic partner, Armenia. Any further attempt would have challenged that guarantee.

The silence of the OSCE delegates baffles one in the face of Aliyev's abuses; is that diplomacy or idiocy?

Back in Armenia, the delegation faced the flip side of the coin. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan raised the issue of Karabakh's status, which has been on the OSCE agenda throughout the negotiations over the years. The delegates were mute on the issue and promised to make a statement later about their deliberations in Baku and Yerevan.

Interestingly, the Russian Co-Chair, Ambassador Igor Popov, was not present at the Baku and Yerevan meetings. Russia was represented by the ambassadors to the two countries.

As far as Aliyev is concerned, the conflict has been settled between Turkey and Russia and no question remains about the status. The co-chairs maintain that the document signed on November 9 was only a declaration and not a peace treaty. The negotiations have to resume under the auspices of the Minsk Group to work out the details of the agreements and to come up with a final document.

As the Russian peacekeeping forces settle in and around Karabakh, Azerbaijani provocations in the villages on the periphery of Hadrut continue.

Armenian civilians are still captured and three members of the Armenian defense forces were wounded.

Azerbaijan's authoritarian government has allowed – or rather instigated – a protest against the Russian military presence on their soil.

Turkey is certainly behind this mischief since it failed to gain a firm foothold in the peacekeeping force.

Ironically, a similar rally took place in Yerevan in front of the Foreign Ministry building, headed by the Sasna Tserer group, and the European Party headed by Tigran Khzmalyan. Both are anti-Russian groups demanding the replacement of Russian forces by those of a neutral country.

This last movement has two vectors: it defies Russia and divides the opposition, giving respite to Pashinyan, whose resignation has become a hot political issue.

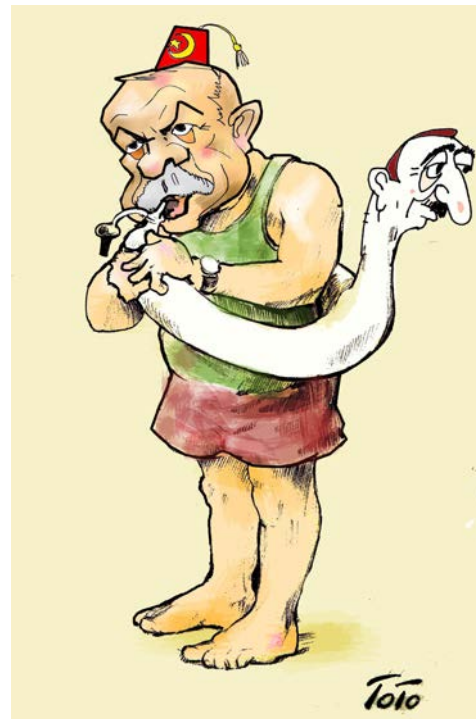
Pashinyan's response is that the citizens of Armenia brought him to power and only they are entitled to remove him in a snap election. He questions his opponents about why they don't request snap elections rather than demand his outright resignation.

He realizes that in case of snap elections, he has the state apparatus at his disposal and can use it as did the leaders of the previous regime.

The other opposition movement, comprising 16 groups, headed by Vazgen Manoukyan, the former prime minister, continues its demonstrations, demanding Pashinyan's resignation.

Pashinyan and his team proved their incompetence during peacetime and after this disastrous war, the stakes are even higher than one that this incompetent and ill-equipped team can handle.

Any leader, statesman and concerned Armenian can draw the right conclusion.



# Mirror Spectator

Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

EDITOR  
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR  
Marc Mgrditchian

**SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:**  
Edmond Y. Azadian

**CONTRIBUTORS:**  
Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

**CORRESPONDENTS:**  
**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian  
**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian  
**Los Angeles** - Taleen Babayan  
**Berlin** - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

**Contributing Photographers:**  
Jirair Hovsepiyan

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

**www.mirrorspectator.com**

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator  
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA  
and additional mailing offices.

**ISSN 0004-234X**

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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**Baikar Association, Inc.**

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA  
02472-1509





COMMENTARY

# The Turkish Border Has Gotten Closer to Me

By Marine Petrossian

THE TURKISH BORDER has come closer to my home. Or better to say, now I realize more clearly how close it is to my home. I write these words sitting at my desk, in my apartment at Arabkir district of Yerevan. Ararat mountain is in my rear on the left. Stepanakert is in my rear on the right. Baku is much far away but on the same line—Yerevan-Stepanakert-Baku. Ankara is on my left, to the north, far away. My ancestors’ town Sebastia is much closer. They form a line: Yerevan-Sebastia-Ankara. This is the same line that ends with Baku in the East. The line was always there but up to yesterday it was kind of in the mist of history. Now the mist is gone. And the history came back to shoot us with newest weapons.

Above were my thoughts written some 2 months ago, at the beginning of October. The war had just started, we were absolutely sure we were going to win. And then we lost the war. We lost it badly. I remember the day when we got the news that Azeris had taken Shushi. It was November 9, and it was the spokesman for Artsakh’s president who wrote about this on his Facebook page. Impossible to believe! Most of my friends were asking on Facebook – Maybe the spokesman’s page has been hacked? Maybe it is a fake page? But the spokesman soon confirmed it was his posting. And then, late at night, came the terrible news about the joint statement signed by Prime Minister Pashinyan together with the Russian and Azeri presidents: we were ceding to Azerbaijan not only all seven districts around Nagorno Karabakh proper, taken during the war of the 1990s as the belt of its security; not only the city of Shushi, a gate to Stepanakert; but also Hadrut that had never been mentioned in any resolution plan before, being part of Nagorno Karabakh proper.

Were we in a nightmare dream? No, it was a reality, not dream. Pashinyan posted a Facebook live message, telling us he had to sign the statement otherwise after losing Shushi we would lose also Stepanakert and the rest of Artsakh, and all of our troops could be surrounded and destroyed by Azeris.

Today, when I write this, more than three weeks have passed since the signing of capitulation statement, and there have been some shocking revelations. It turns out that our Prime Minister, long ago before the war started, was well aware that Azerbaijan with Turkey were planning an attack; he was also well aware that Armenian military resources were not enough to withstand that attack. And knowing all this, instead of being active in Minsk Group negotiations to find a solution through compromise, he did exactly the opposite: he created a deadlock, announcing that negotiations had to start “from zero point”.

Why, Nikol, why did you do that?

The Armenian people would not agree to compromise, Pashinyan says.

Had you tried to explain to them the situation?

No, he had not. He was afraid to lose his popularity. And we lost the war. And we lost all the achievements of our previous victory in 1990’s.

I write these words sitting at my desk, in Yerevan. Ararat mountain is in my rear on the left. Stepanakert is in my rear on the right. Baku is much far away but on the same line—Yerevan-Stepanakert-Baku. Ankara is on my left, to the north, far away. My ancestors’ town Sebastia is much closer. They form a line: Yerevan-Sebastia-Ankara. My great-grandfather Kosmas Messiaian was a famous doctor in Sebastia. This summer, after having found his unique photos and then some exciting papers about him and his family, after having read Karapet Gabikyan's Yeghernapatum and then Arakel Patrick's Hushamatian about the history of Sebastia and destiny of its Armenian population in 1915, I started a series of poems: letters to my grandpa, to Varujan, to Metsarents – all of them were from Sebastia region. While writing these letters, I had the feeling that I was speaking to people who had lived in an epoch utterly different than mine, in an epoch that was closed forever. Now I realize maybe I was wrong.

When I was born, Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. Then, in 1988, the Karabakh movement began. Soon the Soviet Union collapsed and Armenia became an independent state. Then the Karabakh war started and we won the war. We had broken the chain of defeats that had lasted for centuries. We were a nation of winners. It was a wonderful feeling. And it lasted only for three decades. Having lost this war, we lost not just territories but security both for Artsakh and Armenia. Now we are on the brink of an abyss, having against us not only Azerbaijan but also Turkey with his huge army and big appetite.

How did we come to this?

Prime Minister Pashinyan is not going to resign. What is his main argument? He says: If I resign, nakhginner will come back. Nakhginner are “former ones”: President Robert Kocharyan, Serzh Sargsyan and their supporters. Pashinyan believes this argument will work and keep him in power, because it is similar to the one that assured his victory during the Velvet revolution of 2018: Merjir Serzhin / Reject Serzh. Pashinyan won the revolution and became Armenia’s prime minister solely with that slogan, without presenting any political program to his voters. The negativism was so strong that people were not looking for any political program. Serzh and his team are robbers, looters, plunderers; they have robbed you this is why you are poor; we will make Serzh go, we will put all the plunderers into jail and you will not be poor any more—this was the main message of Nikol and his team during the revolution.

It was a successful one – Serzh Sargsian resigned and soon Nikol Pashinyan was elected as Armenia’s prime minister.

Very soon, numerous lawsuits were filed against people who were part of former government or ruling political team, also against people who had familial ties with former president. Up to now, almost none of these lawsuits have ended with any final court decision. The process is at a standstill.

After the victory of the Velvet Revolution, in Armenian society there were great expectations for reforms, particularly in the judiciary, national security and police. Nikol Pashinyan and his team were unable to fulfil them. They did not manage to revamp these systems; instead, they made them largely non-functional. Then came the Covid 19. Then came the war. And we lost it.

Nikol Pashinyan’s populism turned to be a disaster for Armenia. But it was not just an accident, it was the culmination of unhealthy developments in Armenia’s political life where there are no serious discussions, no serious programs, instead, there is this image of talanchiner/robbers/plunderers right in the center of political discourse. All this had started long ago, it went on for decades and culminated with present disaster. When such a big disaster happens, there are two roads a nation can go by: either it will degrade and go to final collapse; or it will rethink its priorities, analyze its mistakes and find new ways of going forward. I hope we will be strong enough to take the second road.

(Marine Petrossian is a Yerevan-based poet and columnist.)

# Usurping Sayat-Nova

Recently, I received the new edition of the fifth volume of the *Great Russian Encyclopedia* (Moscow, 2015). Having spent many years studying the works of Sayat-Nova and medieval literature, I naturally read the article “Sayat-Nova” and discovered the following glaring errors and, worse, intentional distortions about the man and the artist.

The author of the article, A. Bagirov, Doctor in Philology, presents Sayat-Nova to the modern reader as a folk ashugh (minstrel) and poet of Transcaucasia. This is new, a collective Transcaucasian poet!

Sayat-Nova was so talented that he wrote poetry not only in his native Armenian, but also in Georgian and Turkish; in addition, he knew Persian and Baluchi. At the same time, in all previous Russian, Soviet and foreign encyclopedias (including musical), vocabularies and histories of literature without exception it is written that Sayat-Nova is an Armenian poet. It is difficult to suspect the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (as well as Britannica or Brockhaus and Efron) of tendentiousness.

Even more shocking is Bagirov’s next “discovery.” It turns out, Sayat-Nova’s father, Mahtesi Karapet (Mahtesi is a believer who has made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem), was a Syrian Turk from Aleppo with the Armenian name Karapet (!!!), and to tie loose ends, Bagirov ascribes to him the Armenian-Gregorian faith.

It is difficult to imagine a greater misunderstanding than of a Syrian Christian Turkish follower of the Armenian Apostolic Church, originally from the city of Adana (under the conditions of the Ottoman Empire, which included the city since 14th century, it was impossible, as up to the 14th century the territory of historical Armenia and the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia were inhabited predominantly by Armenians until the end of the

19th century). To write something like that, you have to possess evidence, new data. If there are any, we will gladly read them and introduce them into the academic sphere.

All the information in Armenia we have about Sayat-Nova’s father we draw from manuscripts (Matenadaran, manuscript no 4270, page 100b, 10838a) and from his *Davtar* (Collection of songs), which is stored in the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Art of Armenia (Sayat-Nova’s files, no 1). In the latter, in one of the Turkish songs the poet mentioned his father being from Adana. Later his father moved to Aleppo and then to Tiflis. And in his other song in Turkish, by the poet’s own hands it is written, as if in advance giving the answer to future Turkish-Azerbaijani “academicians,” that “Sayat-Nova dini Sakhi inkar etmaz – ermanidur” – “Sayat-Nova does not betray the true faith – He is Armenian!” (*Davtar*, p. 62).

Bagirov’s article states that “Sayat-Nova is a pseudonym, and his real name and surname is Harutiun Sayadyan. He was born, lived and died in Tbilisi. Writing in Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian languages ... he played a great role in the development of Turkic, Armenian and Georgian verse.”

It is clear that this author is intentionally or unintentionally fooling himself. We can say (in addition to the poet’s own statements) the following: for some reason, the “Turk” Mahtesi Karapet migrated from Adana to Aleppo (where there was a historically large Armenian community, then one of the cultural centers of Armenians in the East), then to Tiflis, settled in Armenian-populated quarter Havlabar and there he married an Armenian woman, Sara. His son, Harutiun (which in Armenian means resurrection, possibly born on Easter week), grew up in the Armenian-speaking environment of Havlabar, learned to read and write in an Armenian parish school, was a poet and musician in the same Armenian environment and mastered various musical instruments. Then he served at the court of Georgian King Heraclius II.

He composed in Georgian, and it was with his arrival that the Persian language used for performances at the royal court was replaced by Georgian. At the same time, he actively participated in ashugh competitions and composed in Turkish, since it was a common language in the ashugh environment; some quatrains in Persian have also survived. Much later, he recorded his works with his own Armenian lettering (some songs in Georgian letters). Sixty-eight of his works have been preserved



in Armenian, 35 in Georgian and 121 in Turkish (all of them were published in Armenian letters in the collection Sayat-Nova’s Poetic Heritage, Yerevan, 2016, compiled by Henrik Bakhchinyan).

It should be noted that the Turkish language that the poet and ashugh Sayat-Nova used and recorded in his *Davtar* in Armenian lettering, was the dialect of the Airumlu tribe and in the 18th century it was not called Azerbaijani.

Let us also emphasize that it is the themes and motives of Armenian poems, reflecting the drama of life, that elevate Sayat-Nova’s works above the flowery, decorative poetry in the Georgian and Turkish languages, with the influence of Persian (Oriental) poetry. As he said: “Not everyone can drink my source: my water is special! Not everyone should honor my writings: my words have a special meaning!”

Judging by the next paragraph of Bagirov’s article, he is undoubtedly not familiar with either the original of *Davtar* or the two subsequent facsimile editions, otherwise he would not have written that “the songs recorded in *Davtar* were published by Sayat-Nova’s son Ogan Seidov in 1842 in St. Petersburg.”

*continued on next page*





COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Previously, Aliyev Had Called Turkey’s Leaders ‘Liar, Cheat and Betrayer’

Last week, when Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev held a victory parade in Baku, he expressed his appreciation to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who attended the ceremonies. Tens of thousands of Azeris turned up in the streets singing the praises of Turkey and waving Turkish and Azeri flags. The two presidents uttered lavish words for one another and repeated their catchphrase, “one people, two states.”

Even though the Turkish military and its advanced drones played a decisive role in the recent Artsakh war, both Aliyev and Erdogan repeatedly lied about Turkey’s involvement in the war, just as they lied about the transfer of Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan to fight against the Armenian troops. The successful Azeri/Turkish/mercenary war cemented the influence of Turkey over Azerbaijan and its policies. Many commentators have described this situation as the occupation of Azerbaijan by Turkey. Since the Ottoman army seized Baku one hundred years ago, this is the first time that the Turkish military has reached the shores of the Caspian Sea. This reality is reinforced by the November 9, 2020 agreement signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, which provides for a route across Armenia linking Azerbaijan proper with Nakhichevan, thereby allowing Turkey access to Azerbaijan and the chance of going beyond to connect with other Turkic republics, thus realizing the age-old dream of Pan-Turanism.

But the Azeri-Turkish relations have not always been this warm and jovial. In 2009, when Armenia and Turkey were negotiating the protocols to open their mutual border, Azerbaijan was furious that Turkey would consider making such a move with Armenia, while ignoring the interests of Azerbaijan.

Wikileaks revealed a “Secret” cable dispatched by the U.S. Embassy in Baku to the Department of State reporting on the over one-hour long meeting held on April 3, 2009, between President Aliyev, Foreign Minister Elmar

Mammadyarov, Matthew Bryza, the U.S. co-chair of the Minsk Group of negotiators on the Artsakh conflict and Anne Derse, the U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan. The cable was titled, “Pres. Aliyev Reasonable on Nagorno-Karabagh Options, Still Furious with Turkey.”

In the summary paragraph, the cable stated that “Aliyev hid none of his outrage at Turkey’s apparent disregard for Azerbaijan’s interests, and the intensity of his display seemed calculated to underscore the seriousness of the repercussions for Turkey if Azerbaijan’s interests in NK [Nagorno Karabagh] are sacrificed for the sake of the Armenian accord.”

Under the subtitle, “Resentment at Ankara’s Betrayal,” the cable stated that “Aliyev responded with a lengthy and bitter indictment of Turkey as a ‘liar, cheat and betrayer’ of Azerbaijan. Noting that the consequences of the current volatile situation in the region are unpredictable, he complained that Azerbaijan had quietly supported the recent improvement in Turkish-Armenian relations, including President Sargsian’s ‘football diplomacy,’ never dreaming that Turkey ‘would cheat us’ by delinking progress on NK from that process. [Turkish] President Gul had promised that there would be no doors or borders opened for Armenia without progress on NK, Aliyev asserted. ‘He lied, I no longer trust him.’”

The cable then stated: “Aliyev noted that when he met Prime Minister Erdogan in Davos this January [2009], Erdogan had said nothing about the steps Turkey was contemplating with Armenia.... After Davos, Erdogan had sent Foreign Minister Babacan to Baku to explain what was occurring with Armenia with respect to re-establishing relations. ‘Babacan asked for my support, saying we should try to make progress ‘in parallel’ on NK,’ but without linkage, Aliyev said incredulously. Aliyev told Babacan Azerbaijan would not support Turkey’s steps with Armenia without progress on NK and outlined ‘all the possible consequences for Turkey and this region’ if Turkey pursued this course. The Turks asked that Aliyev keep the conversation confidential. Aliyev agreed, he said, but shortly thereafter, RFE/RL’s [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty] Armenian Service reported that NK was ‘no longer an obstacle’ to improvement in Turkish-Armenian relations. This had sparked a press campaign in Azerbaijan which continues to this day, Aliyev added.”

According to the cable: “Aliyev said he had twice sent Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov to Turkey to outline for the Turks what they would win and what they would lose from normalization without resolution or progress on NK, and to propose a joint Turkish-Azerbaijani statement on the matter. Azimov returned without results, and Azerbaijan now confronts ‘the reality’ that Turkey will initial, sign and ratify

an agreement with Armenia to open the border and establish diplomatic relations.”

The cable continued: “Azerbaijan also can no longer maintain its posture of ‘patient silence’ about the Turkish-Armenia process, Aliyev said. He noted that given Erdogan’s political weakness going into the recent Turkish elections, Azerbaijan had refrained from public statements to avoid impact on the vote. But ‘silence was a sign of friendship the Turks do not deserve.’ Turkey is manipulating public opinion, portraying Azerbaijan as acquiescent in its process with Armenia, so Azerbaijan must now clarify, publicly, its position.”

Furthermore, “Turkey is about to commit ‘a serious historical mistake that will never be forgotten,’ Aliyev asserted. ‘Our relations will never be the same. We are not one nation and we never will be. Our relations will be damaged, it will be a disaster on all issues, security, economy, energy,’ Aliyev continued. ‘Turkey has to decide what it will gain and what it will lose. It will lose Azerbaijan, certainly; Central Asia as well, and end Turkic solidarity,’ he continued. There will be consequences for Georgia if Turkey and Azerbaijan split. Energy negotiations will end. ‘They did everything to ruin energy cooperation,’ Aliyev said heatedly. He added later that Turkey underestimates the degree to which Azerbaijan can influence its domestic politics. Azerbaijan has never interfered in Turkish internal politics before, ‘but this is a matter of national concern,’ he warned.” Aliyev added that he felt “personally betrayed” by Gul and Erdogan.

Aliyev concluded his remarks to the U.S. officials with a warning to Turkey, “noting that when the Azerbaijanis had asked the Turks point blank whether they had agreed to normalize with Armenia and open the border without progress on NK, the Turks ‘had not responded,’ Aliyev exploded. ‘Silence means yes...they did it! They will be on the black list always.’”

Following this meeting, Aliyev continued pressuring and threatening Erdogan and Turkey so it would not ratify the Armenia-Turkey protocols. Erdogan was forced to add a new condition to the protocols, seeking the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Artsakh which was unacceptable to Armenia. Eventually, the protocols fell apart as neither Armenia nor Turkey proceeded to ratify them by their respective parliaments.

Aliyev was successful in preventing a rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey. Now that Aliyev and Turkey have solved most of the Artsakh issue militarily, they have resumed their love fest creating an existential threat to both Artsakh and Armenia.

One hopes that new unexpected developments could revive the old feud between Aliyev and Erdogan, undermining their current close relations.

from previous page

In fact, in 1823, in St. Petersburg, upon the instructions of the Georgian prince Teimuraz, Ohan Sayadyan (being a subject of the Russian Empire, he wrote his name as Seidov) compiled a manuscript collection (in Georgian letters), including 80 Armenian, Georgian and Turkish songs (stored at the Institute of Oriental Studies of St. Petersburg, collection of Georgian manuscripts, number 21). But in 1842 not a single collection of Sayat-Nova was published! Only in 1852, through the efforts of Gevorg Akhverdyan, was the first collection of Armenian songs by Sayat-Nova published in Moscow.

In the article, the biography and work of Sayat-Nova are given in fragments and erroneously, and it remains to be wondered why such an authoritative publication as the Great Russian Encyclopedia, assigned the article to such an incompetent author and why a review was not ordered and the data was not verified.

As far as I know, the *Great Russian Encyclopedia* has a bibliographic department that verifies all its data from available past dictionaries and encyclopedias, or at least one could use the very valuable publication *History of World Literature* (volume 5, Moscow, 1988), where there is a detailed chapter on Sayat-Nova’s life and work. All these sources rightly and reliably indicate his Armenian origin, the national character of his work as a continuer of the traditions of centuries-old Armenian poetry and musical art (the modal system of Armenian folk music is original, has no analogues, the inclusion of individual rhythmic and poetical oriental elements does not violate its foundations), as well as his role as poet and ashugh for Georgian and Turkic poetry. One should not neglect the highest professional assessment of Sayat-Nova’s creativity, which was given by eminent Russian poet and translator Valery Bryusov in his preface to the anthology *Poetry of Armenia* (1916, in Russian).

However, this is not the first attempt to Turkicize (Azerbaijanize) the Armenian poet, but in the *Great Russian Encyclopedia*, where only verified and already recognized facts are given, this seems unacceptable. As we can see, Bagirov’s article is by no means the last and already indisputable word of science.

Bearing in mind all of the above, I would very much like to hope that the Great Russian Encyclopedia will not lower the academic level of past encyclopedic publications and correct the mistake, replace the article (at least in the electronic edition) and give a refutation, not allowing the seeds of falsification to spoil the open field of Russian science and culture.

(Translated from Russian by Artsvi Bakhchinyan)

LETTERS

Azadian Editorial Makes Clear Danger to Armenia

To the Editor:

The editorial by Edmond Azadian (“A Race Against the Challenges of Destiny and History,” published on November 26), made a lot of good points.

The below paragraph is exactly on the mark.

“With Turkey’s Ottoman ambitions and Russia’s control of its “near abroad,” the turbulence in the region will not calm down soon. Armenia cannot survive and will not survive, unless it attains a super weapon or its nuclear deterrence. It is believed that Israel clandestinely conducted its nuclear tests in South Africa. Pakistan bought plans for its nuclear arsenal from North Korea. Armenia cannot act as the most honest citizen of the world community when its very existence is on the line.”

Unfortunately, the unpatriotic selfish swaggering idiots who preceded Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and ignored the necessity of:

- (1) Super Weapons.
- (2) Defenses to Israeli & Turkish Drones, which could have been accomplished on a cost effective basis.
- (3) Offensive & Reconnaissance Drone capabilities, which also could have been accomplished on a cost effective basis.

By the way:

- (a) Pakistan sold, not purchased, nuclear technology to North Korea, - in exchange for rocket engines to power missiles. In the 1980's I was aware of A.Q. Khan's nuclear pursuits.
- (b) The Azeri Israeli Drones were open news. My friends in the Drone business were aware, as I was. Certainly the idiots in Yerevan were aware. This disaster, & the blood of thousands, is not the result of honest leadership doing their best. It is the result of Dishonest leadership who put themselves first and left their troops unprepared, lacking necessary equipment.

Richard Vartanian  
Los Angeles

Libaridian Gets It Right

To the Editor:

Thank you very much for publishing Jirair Libaridian’s article on November 24. Mr. Libaridian is not any other pundit expressing his personal thoughts. He was the principal advisor to the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter Petrossian, when the initial war in Karabakh took place in the nineties. He knows the full history of what took place then and who the forces are today who protest loudly about the losses in Artsakh we now face. The same people and parties who participated in governing for over 20 years are now blaming the current prime minister for losing the war.

The main point Libaridian is making is that we have people who live in a dream world where tiny Armenia can hold onto lands that were gained in the past while Azerbaijan, with its oil money and strategic friends, will accept the status quo forever. That of course was not going to happen.

So when President Ter Petrossian, who understood the real strategic picture and who believed that time was not on Armenia’s side, proposed a series of land for peace compromises, he was driven out of office by the same parties that are clamoring today for Pashinyan’s head. Had we listened to Ter Petrossian then, when we were in a position to drive a stronger bargain, we would not have lost lands and thousands of young soldiers to a war that could have been avoided.

What we have now is the hope that realism and not phony patriotism and emotion will be the policy going forward. I am not that optimistic knowing how these super patriots think and operate. We would be wise to not listen to them.

Michael Haratunian  
New Jersey





# Robert Haddejian’s Novels *Arasdagh* And *Arasdaghin Mius Goghme* Republished in One Volume

ISTANBUL (*Nor Marmara*) – *Nor Marmara* newspaper announced this week that two novels by its editor-in-chief, Robert Haddejian, titled *Arasdagh* [Ceiling] and *Arasdaghin Mius Goghme* [The Other Side of the Ceiling], have been republished in a single volume.



Robert Haddejian at his 90th birthday party

These two novels have been sold out for a long time and were awaiting republication. Giragos Kouyoumjian of Kuwait, who is a fan of Haddejian’s work, made the reissue possible and wrote a concise introduction.

The new 400-page volume was published by *Nor Marmara*’s own Murad Offset Press. *Arasdagh* appeared in serialized form in the

newspaper in 1982. It won the Alex Manoogian Cultural Fund Literary Prize at that time and was published in book form in 1983 thanks to the financial support of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Haddejian soon wrote and published the second volume. He began to write a third, which would complete a trilogy, but never completed it.

*Arasdagh* is the only work out of Haddejian’s voluminous literary output that has been translated into Turkish. It was published in 1997 under the title *Tovan*. Anahid Hazarian did the Turkish translation and it was printed by the Turkish publisher Telos. The Turkish translation had a second printing in 2018 by Aras Publishing.

The *Arasdagh* series depicts the great tragedy of the Armenian people, as a result of which Armenians were forced to leave the provinces of their birth, come to the big city, and from there go overseas, toward alienation and loss of Armenian identity.

Kouyoumjian observes in his introduction that “*Arasdagh*, being a[n Armenian] national novel, is also a universal human story, in the pages of which every Armenian can find something of himself.” The current publication sports a cover designed by Ari Haddejian. Garo Hamamjian made preparations for printing. It is available from the editorial offices of *Nor Marmara* or its distributors.

# Iran Protests to Turkey over ‘Meddling’ Poem Recited by Erdogan

TEHRAN (Al Jazeera) – Iran’s Foreign Ministry on December 11 summoned Turkey’s ambassador over what it said was “meddlesome” remarks by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a visit to Azerbaijan on Thursday.

Erdogan was in the Azeri capital Baku to review a military parade marking Azerbaijan’s victory over Armenia in a war over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave that ended last month.

The Turkish president recited an Azeri-Iranian poem about the division of Azerbaijan’s territory between Russia and Iran in the 19th century. Tehran appeared concerned his remarks could fan separatism among Iran’s Azeri minority.

“The Turkish ambassador was informed that the era of territorial claims and expansionist empires is over,” Iran’s Foreign Ministry said on its website on Friday.

“Iran does not allow anyone to meddle in its territorial integrity.”

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted earlier: “President Erdogan was not informed that what he ill-recited in Baku refers to the forcible separation of areas ... from [the] Iranian motherland.”

“NO ONE can talk about OUR beloved Azerbaijan,” Zarif said, referring to the northwest region of Iran where many of its ethnic Azeris live.

According to Iran’s ISNA news agency, the poem recited is “one of the separatist

symbols of pan-Turkism.”

It said the verses point to Aras and “complains of the distance between Azeri-speaking people on the two sides of the river.”

The poem includes the lines: “They separated the Aras River and filled it with rocks and rods. I will not be separated from you. They have separated us forcibly.”

Iran’s Foreign Ministry said it had summoned Turkey’s ambassador in Tehran over Erdogan’s “interventionist and unacceptable remarks,” and demanded an “immediate explanation.”

The envoy was told that “the era of territorial claims and warmongering and expansionist empires has passed,” according to an official statement.

It added that Iran “does not allow anyone to interfere in its territorial integrity.”

Turkey to play ‘important role’

During the visit, Erdogan said Turkey would play “an important role” in the reconstruction of areas taken by Azerbaijan in the conflict, saying he and Azeri President Ilham Aliyev had agreed to move on this within a year, according to NTV.

He reiterated Turkey’s continued support to Azerbaijan: “As long as Turkey and Azerbaijan work hand in glove, they will continue to overcome all difficulties and run from one success to the next.”



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# Insurance Foundation for Servicemen in Armenia

The Insurance Foundation for Servicemen in Armenia was created in January 2017 to insure the social wellbeing of soldiers injured while on active duty as well as that of the families of soldiers who died while performing their duties. The insurance Foundation for Servicemen will provide monetary compensation to the families of soldiers as well as to soldiers injured or fallen

in combat on or after January 1st, 2017. Every employed person in Armenia, gives 1000 drams (\$2) monthly from their salary to the Foundation, which will be raised to 3000 (\$6) drams in July 2021 Please encourage everyone to stand alongside the brave servicemen of Armenia by making a small donation for their insurance.

The Foundation operates on the principle of complete transparency. In enactment of this principle this website provides the possibility to see both your donations from overseas and every employed person’s contribution month to month in Armenia. At any given time it is possible to see the total funds of the Foundation as well as the total amount of compensations.

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