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Armenian Ombudsman Arman Tatoyan inspecting the area around Sev Lake

Azerbaijani Forces Leaving Armenian Territory after International Pressure

By Raffi Elliott

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GORIS, Armenia — Azerbaijani troops are slowly pulling out of the area around the remote mountain lake of Sev Lidj after they entered the area on the border between Syunik and the adjacent province of Karvajar which had recently fallen into

Azerbaijani control.

Azerbaijani soldiers had reportedly crossed into the internationally recognized territory of Armenia on the morning of May 12 in the vicinity of that lake under the guise of conducting “border adjustments.” Local Armenian forces halted the Azerbaijani intrusion which reached some 3.5 KM (2.1 miles) into Armenian territo-

ry, and prevented them from digging entrenchments. Armenian Defense Minister Vagharshak Harutyunyan later announced “The Azerbaijani forces near the Sev Lake have been surrounded by the Armenian military. All approaches to the area are under our control.”

However, the Azerbaijanis refused to see TERRITORY, page 3

Three Arrested in Attack on Armenian Priest in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (Panorama.am) — Three young Jewish men were arrested in Jerusalem following a mob attack on an Armenian priest.

Fr. Arbak Sarukhanyan was attacked on his way to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

“Fr. Arbak was injured. He was rushed to hospital and was discharged after receiving the necessary aid,” Fr. Koryoun (Hovnan) Baghdasaryan, Chancellor of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, wrote on Facebook on Tuesday, May 18.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem lodged a complaint with the police, after which three of the attackers were arrested, he said.

“We demand that the police conduct a fair investigation and bring all the perpetrators to account in accordance with the law in order to avoid such incidents in the future,” Fr. Koryoun said.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem severely condemns the assault by Jewish youth upon one of the Members of the Brotherhood, Father Arpag Apegha Saroukhanian, on the road leading to the Holy Sepulcher.

Father Arpag has received multiple injuries. He was immediately transferred to the hospital, and after receiving emergency medical procedures, was released.

The Patriarchate has officially presented a protest to the police department, after which three of the assailants were arrested.



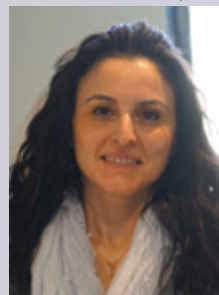
Illumination: Gospel Book fragment, 1477 Gift of Adele and Haig Der Manuelian (photo courtesy Armenian Museum of America)

Armenian Museum of America Uses Ancient Treasures to Excite New Interest

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America has been closed to visitors since the start of the novel coronavirus pandemic last year, but inside its landmark building in Watertown, the staff have been busier than ever, researching its collections, preparing new exhibits and finding ways to connect through the media and Internet with the public.

For a museum to be able to operate effectively, it is not enough to possess an extensive and interesting collection. Well-funded research is necessary for identification of items and their proper presentation in exhibits. Fortunately, the museum was able to bring scholar Dr. Alisa Dumikyan from Armenia to help in this work. She was working in France with a post-doctoral grant, related Berj Chekijian, the museum’s director see TREASURES, page 8



Dr. Alisa Dumikyan

Acting PM Pashinyan Holds Security Council Meeting on Azerbaijan’s Syunik Encroachment

YEREVAN — Armenia’s Security Council held an extraordinary sitting, chaired by Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on May 12. The Council discussed the situation at the border section of Sev Lich in Syunik Marz of Armenia and the steps to take in this connection.

Addressing the meeting, Nikol Pashinyan stated, in part: “Today’s Security Council sitting is dedicated to the events taking place at the border section close to Sev Lich in Syunik Marz and the surrounding area. Earlier today Azerbaijan’s armed forces crossed the state border of the Republic of Armenia and advanced as far as 3.5 kilometers in that section. In fact, they are trying to surround and besiege the lake.

“Of course, this is unacceptable to the see ENCROACHMENT, page 2

ARMENIA

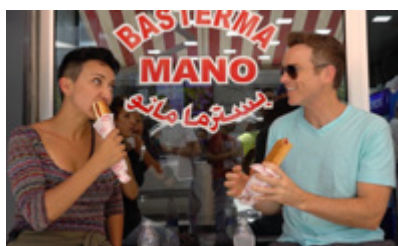
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For All the Flavors of the World



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French Armenians Demonstrate to Free Prisoners in Azerbaijan



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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Ex-Minister Gagik Beglaryan Arrested Upon Arrival in Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Armenia's former Minister of Transport and Communication Gagik Beglaryan was arrested upon his arrival at Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan, Armenia's Police Press Service reports. Beglaryan, 57, was handed over to the National Security Service after arriving from Moscow on May 17. The former minister had been wanted since March 23, 2020 on charges of misappropriation or waste and abuse of official authority. Detention was chosen as a precautionary measure. Gagik Beglaryan was the head of Yerevan's Kentron community in 2002-2008 and served as mayor of Yerevan between 2009 and 2010. He was the Minister of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Armenia in 2012-2016.

Armenia Submits Application against Turkey with ECHR

STRASBOURG — On May 9, the government of Armenia submitted an inter-state application against Turkey with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) claiming a number of Convention violations by Turkey by means of recruiting and transporting Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan and providing military support to Azerbaijan during the 44-day war, the Representative of Armenia before the ECHR said in a Facebook post on May 18. In particular, the Armenian government claims that during the 44-day war Turkey violated the right to life, prohibition of torture and inhuman treatment, the right to liberty, the right to property, the right to personal and family life, as well as a number of other Convention rights of the population of Artsakh and Armenia. The government has submitted extensive evidence with regard to the recruitment and transfer of Syrian mercenaries by Turkey to Azerbaijan, the supply of military equipment, weapons and ammunition to the Azerbaijani army, as well as other evidence on its involvement in the war.

PACE Representative to Visit Armenia to Assess War Consequences

STRASBOURG (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Paul Gavan (Ireland, UEL) will visit Armenia on behalf of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) from May 19 to 22 to gather information for his report on "The humanitarian consequences of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan," PACE reported. He will hold meetings with parliamentarians, including the President of the National Assembly, and with representatives of different ministries dealing with the humanitarian consequences of the conflict.

Planting Hope for Rural Armenians

YEREVAN — With many villagers unable to travel abroad for work due to the pandemic and socio-economic issues brought on by the recent war, the temporary work opportunities created by ATP are critical in creating economic opportunity in rural Armenia. Most recently, the Aznavdzor community in the Lori region became the focal point of ATP's job stimulation.

Situated in the northern Lori region, Aznavdzor Village was an Azerbaijani

settlement up until the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1989. The village is located on the southern slopes of Bazum ridge, four kilometers from the city of Vanadzor. It occupies an area of 14.56 sq. kilometers and has a population of about 300.



Workers in Aznavdzor

ni settlement up until the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1989. The village is located on the southern slopes of Bazum ridge, four kilometers from the city of Vanadzor. It occupies an area of 14.56 sq. kilometers and has a population of about 300.

Spring planting in Aznavdzor began on Monday, April 19, and lasted for two weeks. More than 85,000 trees were planted across 42 hectares, including pine, wild apple, oak, and beech. A fence was also installed to help protect the newly planted trees. The long-term impact is that the planted forest will contribute to biodiversi-

ty, soil and water conservation, and carbon sequestration. Most significantly, 60 villagers were hired to assist in the plantings. Many of the newcomers to Aznavdzor first settled in the 1990s, and were Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, mainly from Baku, Ganja, Sumgait, etc. The main occupation of the villagers is animal farming and horticulture. However, some have left traditional agricultural occupations to work in Armenia's booming tourism industry. Still, the majority of the villagers

engage in farming or leave for Russia for seasonal jobs.

"After we left Talish we stayed in Alashan, the real name of which is Qmqadzor. From there we went to Berdzor and to Bertadzor after that. In the end, our fate brought us to Aznavdzor, Lori, which we had never heard of. How many dzor's (gorges) do we have to enter and exit before we can have a stable future?" said ATP seasonal worker, Ashot Bayunts.

The lack of employment in the village forces the male population to migrate abroad for work, mainly to Russia and other post-Soviet countries. When provided

with seasonal jobs, many of the villagers prefer to stay with their families and work in the village. The amount earned and saved abroad is not significant when all the expenses are taken into account - accommodation, obtaining visas, travel fees, etc. Therefore, the seasonal opportunities created by ATP are critical in ensuring that the population remains in Aznavdzor, with their family and near their homes.

The selection of the new forestry planting site in Aznavdzor village was carefully planned by ATP specialists, taking into consideration several important factors including providing job opportunities to these villagers, as well as the optimal climate conditions. The main purpose of forest rehabilitation here is to restore the capacity of degraded forest land due to illegal and uncontrolled logging that was done during the 1990s.

The planting site, which encompasses a territory of about 42 hectares (103 acres), is situated on a slope of a hill about a kilometer away from Aznavdzor. Prior to the first plantings, the entire territory was fenced. The first tree planting was implemented in fall 2020 during which around 100,000 trees were planted, including fruit trees, decorative trees and shrubs. 85,000 trees were planted during the second tree planting, which was just completed.

Through our planting in Aznavdzor was completed, our work is not finished. Just last week, ATP planted 35,000 trees in Koghves village in Lori, and hired 33 locals. ATP will continue to create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth in rural Armenia through future planting projects, including the upcoming willow-tree planting project, through which another 300 workers will be hired.

Through an anonymous donor, a match opportunity was created for \$10,000 to assist in hiring the seasonal workers for our planting in Aznavdzor. Though the match has been reached for that project, our upcoming projects still need financial support to help us continue hiring seasonal workers.

Pashinyan Holds Security Council Meeting on Azerbaijan's Syunik Encroachment

ENCROACHMENT, from page 1
Armenian side, because it represents an encroachment on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia. It still remains to be seen why such an action was possible, but it should be noted that this is an act of subversive infiltration. It should also be stated that our armed forces responded early this morning with appropriate tactical maneuvers and other necessary measures. "However, it should be noted that these actions of Azerbaijan's armed forces were not combined with the use of firearms or any other weapon. They are trying to justify their move with some fake maps. We still have in our possession a map approved by the central government in Soviet era, which clearly shows where the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan runs.

"However, the current situation is unacceptable to us; the Republic of Armenia cannot simply accept it, but given what we have now, our primary task is to settle the matter through negotiations, through diplomatic means. This is one of the options.

"I want us to make it clear that we cannot in any way tolerate and come to terms with the situation at hand. Today, the Security Council will address the situation, our counteraction, possible scenarios, and the connectivity between such scenarios.

"In the meantime, I should note that this

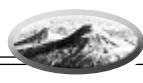


PM Nikol Pashinyan at the May 12, 2021 Security Council meeting (courtesy president.am)

situation has unfortunately given rise to political speculations. I would like to reiterate that no attempt should be made to use external security threats for internal political purposes, as this is a matter of national security; we need to focus on the problem and its solution.

"I wish to reiterate that any piece of information about shootings, hostilities, injuries and casualties has nothing to do with

reality. On the other hand, it should be noted that the situation is at least near-critical, if not critical. Were it not for that, we would not have to convene a Security Council meeting. Anyway, we need to keep calm in this situation. On the other hand, we need to be consistent in terms of defending our state and national interests, and we must make decisions about the steps to take and the tools to use."



ARMENIA

Azerbaijani Forces Leaving Armenian Territory

TERRITORY, from page 1
return to their starting line, citing a Soviet-era demarcation purportedly showing the entire area of the lake as falling within their side of the border. Armenian authorities countered that claim with a 1975 topographic map of the area clearly showing the border between the two then-soviet republics as crossing the northern third of the lake, with the other two thirds firmly inside Armenian territory.

Some claims in Armenian media of Azerbaijani forces entering the adjacent villages of Ishkhanasar and Verishen, a suburb of the provincial capital of Goris, were denied by the Ministry of Defense, and the villagers themselves later said they heard these rumors from the internet.

One clause of the November 9 ceasefire agreement which ended last autumn's bloody war in Artsakh was the "return" of 7 buffer territories around Artsakh. At least three of these territories border the Armenian provinces of Syunik and Gegharkunik. While the Soviet-era borders, which had never been designed as international boundaries, had never been properly demarcated. Since the war ended, a delicate process of border demarcation has been taking place under Russian supervision, using Soviet-era maps and GPS coordinators. However, a variety of differing maps has frustrated these efforts.

With the Karvajar province handover taking place in December, heavy snowfall prevented both Armenian and Azerbaijani border guards from setting up border markers in some of the more remote and mountainous sections of the border. With the spring thaw melting most of the snow in the area in early May, Azerbaijani military engineers rushed to set up at least one position well-within the territory of Armenia.

This unprecedented incident — the most serious breach of the tense ceasefire in place since last November — has sparked fear in Armenia that Baku is planning to make good on multiple threats to seize parts of the southern Syunik province by force. Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev has publicly spoken of potentially launching an invasion in the Meghri area before walking back those comments following international outcry.

Azerbaijani military engineers conducted entrenching works within the territory of the neighboring Gegharkunik province as well, according to its governor. "Yesterday [the Azerbaijanis] encroached on our border towards the village of Kut under the guise of setting up border demarcations using erroneous maps" Gov. Gnel Sanosyan told reporters. "We blocked them from moving any further and are waiting for negotiations to conclude so they may return to their side."

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who called the situation "explosive" during an emergency meeting of the Security Council on the evening of May 12, declared that Azerbaijan's incursion would not be tolerated. "I hope that this situation would be resolved with the Azerbaijani soldiers peacefully returning from whence they came" Pashinyan said, adding that diplomacy was but one of the options at his government's disposal to resolve the conflict. Referring to the seemingly-falsified maps carried by Azerbaijani military engineers, Pashinyan characterized the incident as a "pre-planned provocation" designed to test Armenia's response as a precursor to further incursions.

With Azerbaijan refusing to back down by May 13, Pashinyan announced that the crisis would escalate as his government formally invoked Article 2 of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) — a

Moscow-led mutual defense agreement that Armenia is a part of. Under the treaty, any intrusion against one member state is considered to be an aggression against all member-states.

By invoking Article 2 — the first time in the organization's history — Pashinyan is testing both the CSTO's resolve in fulfilling its treaty obligations, while simultaneously drawing a redline in the face of

Yerevan as an attempt by the prime minister to quell domestic critics who accuse him of being soft on defense. Former President Robert Kocharyan, Pashinyan's chief rival in the upcoming snap elections, has specifically attacked Pashinyan for neglecting to strengthen the security of the vulnerable Syunik province, a charge which some of his supporters feel is vindicated by the recent crisis.

time the incident first escalated. Incidentally, Aliyev was also attending a music festival in the occupied city of Shushi several dozen miles away, while at the same time, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili was in Armenia on an official visit.

However, international pressure has continued to mount on Baku to pull back its troops across the official border. The CSTO has convened an emergency session and declared that it was "mon-

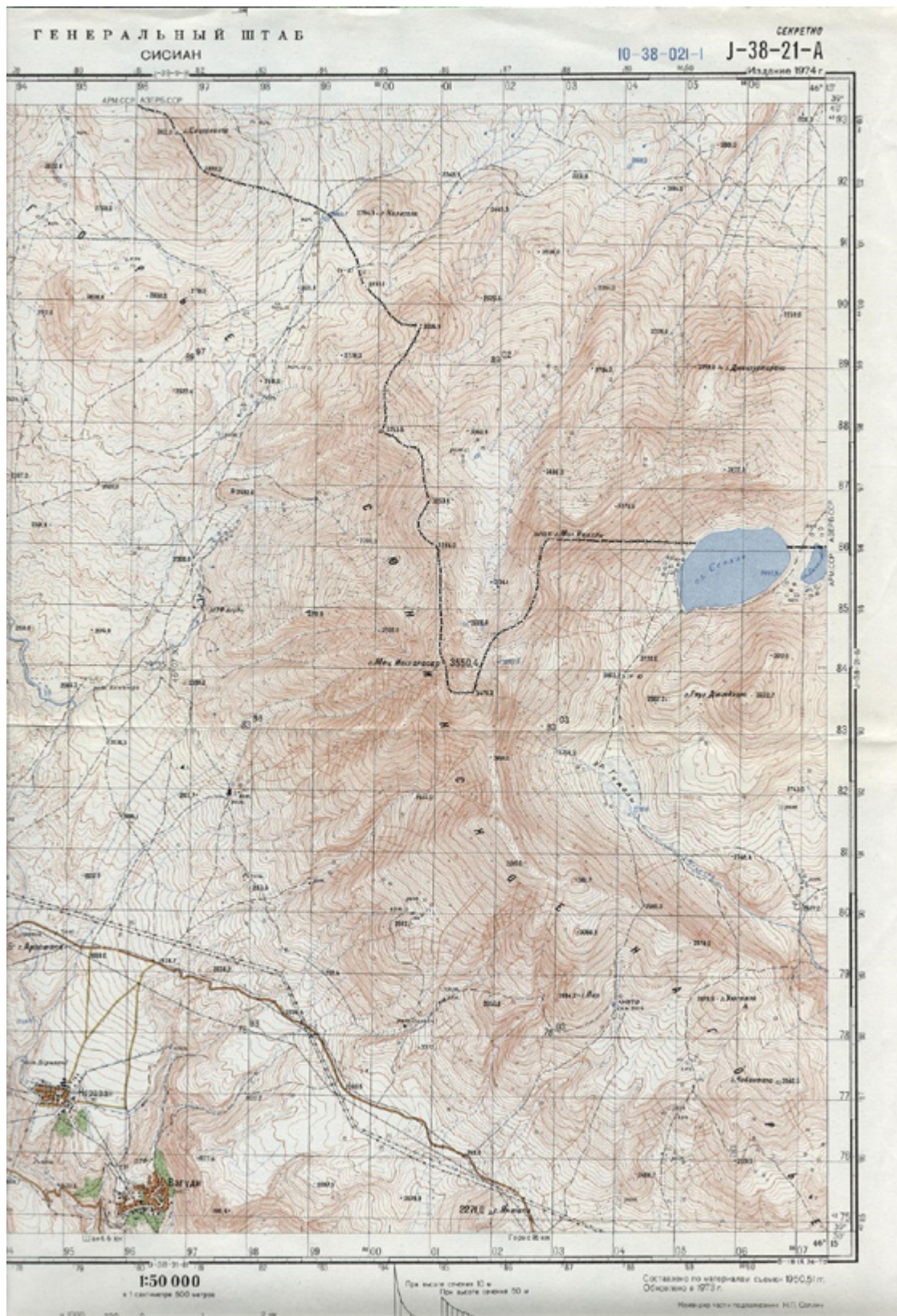
itoring the situation. If necessary action will be taken in accordance with provisions of the Collective Security Treaty charter." Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the need to strictly comply with all provisions of the November 9 ceasefire agreement. "The Russian side reaffirmed its disposition to continue active mediation efforts and maintain close contacts with Yerevan and Baku in the interests of ensuring stability in the region" read a statement posted to their website. General Alexandr Dvornikov, Commander of the Southern Military District of the Russian Armed Forces was also dispatched to Yerevan where he met with Armenian Defense Minister Vagharshak Harutyunyan.

In the United States, Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee called on President Biden to support Armenia. "The violation of Armenia's sovereign territory by Azerbaijani troops is a dangerous and illegal act of aggression that underscores the sustained threat that the Armenian people continue to face," the senator said.

Still the strongest condemnation of the incident came from French President Emmanuel Macron. Following a phone call with his Armenian counterpart, Macron posted on

Facebook in Armenian that "France always stands in solidarity with Armenia," calling on Azerbaijan to immediately remove its troops, and promised to bring up the matter to the UN Security Council, of which France is a permanent member.

On May 14, the Armenian Ministry of Defense announced that, following a night of negotiations, the Azerbaijani forces were "waiting only for an official order from their superiors to retreat to their original positions." Over the weekend, however, the prime minister announced, during a Security Council briefing, that Azerbaijani troops had already begun to retreat to their side of the border, and more were expected to do so in the coming days. "This crisis will not be considered resolved until all the Azerbaijanis exit Armenian territory," Pashinyan announced, adding that negotiations would resume under Russian mediation on Wednesday, May 19.



Soviet-era topographic map from 1974 clearly showing the border between the two republics splitting the top third of Lake Sev.

further potential violations of Armenian sovereignty by Baku.

Speaking to the *Mirror-Spectator*, Richard Giragosian, director of the Yerevan-based think tank Regional Studies Center, called the situation "a test of Armenian resolve and Russian response." He further cautioned that as Azerbaijan probes for weakness, "we should only expect more such incursions and escalations."

Dr. Anna Ohanyan, a nonresident senior scholar at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace agreed. "This is a straightforward case of a breach of sovereignty, a norm which enjoys the most support within international law. Russia has a chance to come out stronger as the global player it so craves to be by supporting its obligations. It has a lot to lose if it does not play this right."

The move has also been interpreted in

Responding to chiding from the opposition, Secretary of the Security Council Armen Grigoryan responded that the Army "did not have time to man the entire length of the new border before snowfall," adding that continuous work was being undertaken to redeploy along the new border. Still, the government's move has been supported by parliamentary opposition leader Edmon Marukyan.

For its part, Baku denied that its military personnel had even crossed into Armenian territory. "Our border guards are stationed along positions belonging to our country," the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "Azerbaijan is committed to easing tensions in the region and calls for appropriate measures to this end." The statement also revealed that the commander of the Azerbaijani Border Guards was apparently away on a business trip at the

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Turkey Worried Iceland Could Recognize The Armenian Genocide

ANKARA (Public Radio of Armenia) – Speaker of the Turkish Parliament Mustafa Sentop on May 17 asked his counterpart in Iceland Steingrimur Sigfusson not to back the draft resolution on Armenian Genocide, Anadolu Agency reports. In a letter to Sigfusson, Mustafa Sentop said the draft resolution submitted in Iceland parliament was “built on groundless allegations.”

“I learned that a draft resolution, which built on groundless allegations and aimed at recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide, has been submitted to your parliament. It is obvious that such unfounded attempts, which we know that they emerged with the provocation of some circles, will result in nothing but shadowing the good relations that exist between our countries,” Sentop said in the letter. He said the resolution would cast a shadow on Turkey-Iceland relations.

Russia Discusses Armenia-Azerbaijan Unrest with Iran, France

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko met with French Ambassador to Russia Pierre Lévy on May 18 to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as the situation in the South Caucasus, the press service of the Russian Foreign Ministry reported. Also on May 18, Rudenko also met Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, exchanging views on regional matters, including on the Karabakh issue and the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

On the morning of May 12, the armed forces of Azerbaijan violated the border of Armenia in the southern province of Syunik, advancing 3.5 kilometers and surrounding Sev Lake, which is situated on the border between the two countries but is predominantly a part of Armenia. On May 13, the Azerbaijani military committed more border violations against Armenia, advancing near Vardenis (Gegharkunik province) and Sisian (Syunik province).

Armenian Cemeteries Destroyed in Iran

ABADAN, Iran (International Christian Concern) – Looters destroyed Armenian cemeteries in Iran, seeking to find antiques and other valuables, with no government intervention. An Armenian cemetery in Abadan was registered in 2002 with the National Monuments List of Iran. Yet rumors of wealth hidden among the tombs have brought looters and destruction of property. Up until a few years ago, the cemetery was protected by guards. However, repeated clashes and raids of the cemetery caused the police to refuse to intervene so it now lies in ruins.

French Armenians Demonstrate before National Assembly for Release of Prisoners in Azerbaijan

By Jean Eckian

PARIS – On May 18, French Armenians demonstrated in front of the National Assembly to demand the release of the Armenian soldiers held in captivity in Azerbaijan and against the violation of the territory of Armenia by Baku.

Several representatives of the French community spoke, as well as parliamentarians and French government spokesperson Gabriel Attal. The latter stressed that the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, “was the first to go on the offensive and say things clearly, which led to him being attacked by Turkish political leaders. We will continue to be on the offensive with major priorities: to uphold the integrity of Armenian territory which has suffered a new incursion in defiance of international law; to find a solution for the Armenian prisoners who are now detained in Azerbaijan in unbearable conditions,” he said. Gabriel Attal added that the use of social networks to put pressure on families “is abominable.” He concluded, “Today we want to move forward within the framework of the United Nations Security Council.”

The representatives of the Armenian community of France, Ara Toranian and Mourad Papazian, spoke out vehemently against the inclinations of the Ankara-Baku axis of Pan-Turkism, which wishes the destruction of the Armenian people. “Armenia is in danger of death,” emphasized Ara Toranian. For him, in the current situation of violation of the integrity of Armenian territory, “this is a trap set in Armenia.” “Baku and Ankara are waiting for a response from Armenia to justify an attack and put the country to fire and blood,” said the CCAF (Coordination Council of Ar-



Activists (photo Jean Eckian)

menian Organizations of France) co-president.

The French parliamentarians, Pierre Ouzoulias, Valérie Boyer, Danièle Cazarian, François Pupponi and Guy Tessier, president of the Cercle d'Amitié France-Artsakh, denounced the atrocities committed on young Armenian soldiers, as well as the “museum of shame prohibited by international conventions,” as Guy Tessier said. He called on the UN Security Council, the Minsk Group, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairmanship and the Council of Europe to demand the immediate application by Azerbaijan of international laws of war.

Among the sentences uttered were “Azerbaijan organized trafficking in organs of Armenian corpses,” “Today we need more than words,” and “Armenia is the last democratic bulwark of Europe in the region.”



Gabriel Attal (photo Jean Eckian)

Centuries-Old Armenian Cemetery North of Shushi Partially Destroyed

SHUSHI – Caucasus Heritage Watch (CHW) has made a high-confidence assessment that a centuries-old Armenian cemetery north of Shusha/Shushi has been partially destroyed. A portion of the grounds on the west side of a road leading into the city was leveled in the construction of a building complex.

The expansive cemetery, which spans both sides of the road, contained 96 tombstones dating 1834-1920 and two 12-13th c. cross stones (*khachkars*), including the tombs of noble Armenian families (*meliks*).

Although the construction occurred in an area shaded by tree cover, imagery from February 2021 (middle image) reveals a dense array of tombstones, and documentation provided by Monument Watch, in Yerevan, details specific plots in the location.

Neither the number of damaged tombs nor the affected plots can be determined with available data. CHW calls on the president of Azerbaijan and UNESCO to directly assess the extent of the damage and preserve this historic site.

CHW is a team of researchers at Cornell and Purdue Universities. Their mission is to monitor and document endangered and damaged cultural heritage using satellite imagery.





INTERNATIONAL

Armenia UN Rep Suggests Azerbaijan Violates International Law

NEW YORK — On Monday, May 17, Armenia's representative to the UN, Ambassador Mher Margaryan, spoke at the United Nations General Assembly plenary meeting on the Responsibility to Protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

In his remarks, he reiterated Armenia's support for Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

In addition, he spoke against the attack by Azerbaijan on the country in September 27, 2020, which resulted in the deaths of thousands and the capture and illegal detention of many Armenian POWs.

His remarks in full are published below.

I would like to express profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report, which provides an important reflection on the root causes of the persistent challenges for advancing atrocity prevention. Once again, we are reminded in the report that flawed capacities to protect human rights for all create particular risks for identity-based violations of human rights, the ultimate manifestation of which are genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We are equally reminded that prevention is an ongoing process that requires sustained efforts towards promoting respect for the rule of law and human rights without discrimination.

Addressing and countering hate speech remain crucial priorities in delivering on the genocide prevention agenda. Incitement to hatred and hate crimes, denial, justification or glorification of past crimes, along with instances of racial and ethnic profiling constitute the detectable early warning signs, which, if unaddressed, can lead to further violence and atrocities. Armenia has welcomed the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which, as the Secretary-General has succinctly put it in his foreword, represents "a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace".

Today, there is a growing, urgent need to step up collective efforts to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia, which so often represent the root causes of atrocity crimes. Armenia has consistently raised its voice against the immense sufferings and mass atrocities perpetrated against ethnic and religious minorities. The continuous, systematic human rights violations, crimes on ethnic and religious grounds in the context

of situations of humanitarian crisis require stronger engagement of the international community, including the human rights and preventive machinery of the UN system.

Fostering international cooperation for prevention of mass atrocities and the further development of national and international early warning mechanisms are important



Ambassador Mher Margaryan

priorities of Armenia's engagement within the United Nations.

Armenia, whose people have undergone through the horrors of Genocide in the early 20th century, will continue to support strong focus on the early action to prevent situations, which can result in crises and atrocity crimes.

As the main sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution instituting the International Day of the 9th December as the Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, Armenia is fully committed to strengthening this important platform, most notably, through thematic events aimed at fostering cooperation for prevention of atrocity crimes and the further development of national and international early warning mechanisms.

The first intersessional meeting of the Human Rights Council on genocide prevention, held in February this year, is yet another reflection of our strong commitment to the mutually reinforcing agendas of human rights and genocide prevention which builds on our extensive national record in this field.

The Secretary-General's report makes a salient observation that the national prevention efforts require addressing the legacy of the past, in particular, in countries and regions that have experienced atrocities before. More often than not, at the heart of the crimes against humanity is a history of continued violations of fundamental human

rights and identity-based violence, when policies of identity-based hatred and intolerance are led and cultivated at the highest political level.

In our part of the world, the brutal, large-scale violence unleashed amidst the global pandemic in an attempt to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by force led to the most intense and destructive escalation in the region since 1990s, putting the lives of thousands of civilians and the ancient Armenian Christian heritage under existential threat.

Time and again, Armenia alerted the international community about the dangerously mounting level of hate speech and racist rhetoric dominating the political discourse in Azerbaijan, which constitutes all elements of incitement to violence against ethnic Armenians and represents a significant indicator of risk of atrocity crimes.

Azerbaijan's continued failure to release the numerous prisoners of war and civilian hostages who are still being held in captivity, contrary to the international humanitarian law, the ongoing provocations by way of incursions into the territory of Armenia, as

well as the wide-spread state-led campaign of dehumanization of Armenians, such as, for example, the recently opened "military trophy park", which has already been named as "national hatred theme park" by the international media, come to manifest that the genocidal ideology does not merely belong to history. This is a source of grave concern that needs to be properly identified and acknowledged to prevent further atrocities.

Armenia rejects all allegations and fabricated accusations voiced earlier by the representative of Azerbaijan, which was nothing short of a futile attempt to conceal the massive atrocities conducted by Azerbaijan in course of aggression unleashed on September 27, 2020.

Armenia condemns such actions in the strongest terms and views them as an affront to the values, ideals and principles of the United Nations, including the collective commitment to prevent and punish crimes that "deeply shock the conscience of humanity".

Armenia remains strongly committed to advancing prevention agenda and shares the view that accountability for atrocity crimes prevention can be strengthened by open reflection and inclusive dialogue, with civil society, free media and academia playing a key role in this regard.

As ever, we recognize the central role of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and expect it to deliver adequate response, at all times, and to act in situations where atrocity risks exist, in any part of the world.

Arms Dealer Davit Galstyan to be Released From Pre-trial Detention

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Arms dealer Davit Galstyan will be released from jail as Judge Sergey Marabyan of the Court of Criminal Appeals approved his complaint against the extension of his pre-trial detention, his lawyer Armen Harutyunyan said on May 17.

Davit Galstyan, frequently referred to as



Davit Galstyan

Patron Davo (meaning Bullet Davo) by the media, is an arms dealer who previously served as advisor to the former Minister of Defense Davit Tonoyan. He was jailed in February 2021.

Galstyan is accused in supplying the Armenian military with poor-quality artillery shells unfit for combat. The deal in question was made between Galstyan's Moss-ton Engineering and the Armenian Defense Ministry in 2018.

Back in February, Galstyan denied wrongdoing and claimed that the supplies were actually done as required by the contract.

Redrawing of Armenia's Borders 'Unacceptable' to Iran

TEHRAN (RFE/RL) — A senior Iranian official reportedly voiced strong support for Armenia's territorial integrity when he commented on the continuing military standoff on its border with Azerbaijan.

"The position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is very clear, unequivocal and resolute: the territorial integrity of the regional states must be preserved," Mojtaba Zolnour, the chairman of the Iranian parliament's committee on national security and foreign policy, told the Russian Sputnik news agency on May 17.

"It would be unacceptable for us if they took away a part of Armenian territory and changed our borders. That is, if we had a new neighbor. The existing borders must be fully protected and Iran's border with Armenia must be preserved," said the conservative politician who previously served as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's representative to Iran's

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Armenia's southeastern Syunik province bordering Iran and Azerbaijan is the epicenter of the standoff that began after Azerbaijani troops reportedly advanced several kilometers into Armenian territory on May 12. (See related story on page 1.)

Armenia has condemned the Azerbaijani troop movements as a violation of its territorial integrity and asked Russia and the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization to for military support.

Azerbaijan denies such a violation, saying that its forces simply took up new positions on the Azerbaijani side of the frontier.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has suggested that Baku may be intent on "provoking an armed clash" with Armenia six months after a Russian-brokered agreement stopped the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. He has pointed to

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's recent threats to forcibly open a "corridor" connecting Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave via Syunik.

Meeting with Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami on Monday, the Armenian ambassador in Tehran, Artashes Tumanyan, said Yerevan also counts on the Islamic Republic's support in the border standoff.

According to the Armenian Embassy in Iran, Eslami reaffirmed his country's support for Armenia's territorial integrity. In that context, he assured Tumanian that Tehran remains committed to the idea of creating a "transport corridor" that would connect Iran's Persian Gulf ports to the Black Sea through Armenia and Georgia.

During a March visit to Yerevan, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described Armenia's territorial integrity as a "red line" for Iran.



Community News

Upcoming Armenia Election Topic of Panel Sponsored by NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues will present an online panel entitled “Back to the Ballot Box: The June Elections in Armenia and the Stakes for Statehood,” with Nerses Kopalyan, Harout Manougian, and Anna Ohanyan, on Saturday, May 22, 2021, at 1:00 pm (Eastern). The program will be accessible live on Zoom ([registration required](#)) and on [NAASR's YouTube Channel](#).

On April 25, 2021, Nikol Pashinyan formally tendered his resignation as Prime Minister and announced that he would seek re-election through an early parliamentary election. It was almost 3 years to the day after the dramatic resignation of Serge Sargsyan which catapulted Pashinyan to power in the culmination of the Velvet Revolution. In the wake of the catastrophic 44-day war of fall 2020 and mounting political tensions, much is at stake in the June 20 elections. This special panel discussion with three distinguished experts will analyze how we got here, what may lie ahead, and what it means for Armenian statehood.

The featured panelists will be Dr. Nerses Kopalyan, assistant professor-in-residence of political science, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Harout Manougian, elections expert currently based in Yerevan and a contributing writer for EVN Report; and Dr. Anna Ohanyan, Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College. Marc A. Mamigonian, director of academic affairs, NAASR, will serve as moderator.

For more information contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

NAASR Awarded Mass Cultural Council/ MassDevelopment Grants

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) is thrilled to announce that the Mass Cultural Council, in partnership with MassDevelopment, has awarded NAASR a \$100,000 capital grant and a \$7,000 Systems Replacement Plan grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund. This funding will go toward final construction costs and measures for protections against covid-19 in NAASR's new Vartan Gregorian Building, which preserves NAASR's 31,000-volume, rare book Armenian Studies library and serves as a research center and community gathering place. We are deeply grateful to the Mass Cultural Council Cultural Facilities Fund, MassDevelopment and Governor Charlie Baker for supporting cultural institutions so generously to benefit the entire state.



Adrienne Alexanian with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

Adrienne Alexanian Receives St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal And Gontag

NEW YORK — On May 11, 2021 during an intimate dinner attended by 30 prominent members of the Armenian Community hosted by Vera and Berge Setrakian in honor of Catholicos Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch of all Armenians, His Holiness surprised Adrienne Alexanian by bestowing upon her the Saint Nersess Shnorhali Medal. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, former Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and currently the Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe and representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See read the Gontag on behalf of the catholicos.

Also in attendance were Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) as well as Archbishop Yezras Nersisyan, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan.

Alexanian, who is well known to the Armenian community because of her activism, received the Ellis Island Medal in 2010 for her prolific and broad based volunteer work and philanthropy for the Armenian Diocese, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Assembly of America and for Armenia. To highlight just a few examples: Adrienne coordinated the Diocesan earthquake relief effort and procured 20 tons of medical supplies and equipment as well as tons of food, clothing and toys for the children. All of these donations were sent to Armenia on three planes the services of which Adrienne was also able to acquire as donations. Adrienne chaired all of public events for the late Catholicos Vasken I. She was the NGO representative of both the Armenian Diocese and the AGBU to the United Nations for eight years during which time she advocated for every aspect of Armenia's agenda, including a major forum on the Armenian Genocide whose panel included Vahakn Dadrian, the foremost expert on the Armenian Genocide, and Juan Mendez, special advisor to the Secretary General on the prevention of genocide.

Andrea Kannapell, *New York Times* Foreign Affairs editor, was the moderator. The 333 attendees included numerous ambassadors, UN department heads, NGO representatives, scholars, historians and prominent representatives of both the Armenian and Turkish communities. Among other panels and forums Adrienne organized were panels on the Blockade of Armenia, the Nagorno Karabakh War, Land Mine Eradication, the Armenia Tree Project, Women's Wellness in Armenia, etc. with prominent members on the panels including Congressman Frank Pallone and Baroness Caroline Cox. Adrienne began her advocacy of the Armenian agenda by inviting numerous

continued on next page

California Armenian Legislative Caucus Announces New Caucus Member: Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Kevin Mullin

SACRAMENTO — The California Armenian Legislative Caucus added new member: Assembly Speaker pro Tempore Kevin Mullen to the Caucus which already includes: Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins, Senate Majority Leader Bob Herzberg, Senate Minority Leader Scott Wilk, Senator Bob Archuleta, Senator Andreas Borgeas, Senator Brian Dahle, Senator *Maria Elena* Durazo, Senator Anthony Portantino, Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes, Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, Assemblymember Laura Friedman, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Assemblymember Mike Gipson, Assemblymember Chris Holden, Assemblymember Tom Lackey, Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, Assemblymember Luz Rivas, Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, and Assemblymember Suzette Valladares.

Said Mullin, “The Armenian genocide that killed 1.5 million Armenians over 100 years ago resulted in immeasurable pain and suffering. As a new member of the California Armenian Legislative Caucus, I am one more voice for the global Ar-



“AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA ARMENIAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS, I AM ONE MORE VOICE FOR THE GLOBAL ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AS THEY CONTINUE TO HEAL FROM THIS BRUTAL ATROCITY.”

CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY MEMBER
KEVIN MULLIN

menian community as they continue to heal from this brutal atrocity. We must make every effort to make sure that history does not repeat itself and stand up against violence and hatred of any kind.”

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus serves as a forum for members from the California Senate and Assembly to identify key issues affecting Armenian Americans and develop and empower the Armenian American community throughout California. The Caucus encourages advocacy and participation in cultural, educational, governmental, and community efforts in California. Through advocacy, the Caucus strives to ensure that California Armenian American's voices are heard and given a platform.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Deacon Michael Sabounjian To Be Ordained as Priest

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — On June 5, Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) will ordain and anoint Reverend Deacon Michael Sabounjian to the Holy Order of the Priesthood.

The Service of Calling to the Priesthood will take place on Friday, June 4, at 6 p.m. at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection at 1910 Stanley Street, New Britain, followed by a reception in the John and Mary Abrahamian Hall at the Church.

The Celebration of the Divine Liturgy and Ordination will take place on Saturday, June 5 at 10:00 am, also at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection. An Ordination Banquet will take place immediately following the Service at the Tunxis Country Club in Farmington CT.

The sponsoring priest will be Rev. Krikor A. Sabounjian, Deacon Michael's father, and the Godfather will be Stepan Piligian.

Deacon Michael has been the Deacon-in-Charge at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection since February 1. He is a graduate of Boston College and St. Nersess Seminary and is married to Lucine Sabounjian. His parents are Fr. Krikor A. Sabounjian and Yeretsgin LuAnn Sabounjian.

COVID -19 restrictions require that attendance be by RSVP only, masks be worn at all times and there will be limited seating in the Church sanctuary. There will be additional seating in the Church hall with a live stream. Those unable to join in person are invited to join in the live stream for the Service of Calling and Ordination, which can be found at <http://bit.ly/ACHRLiveStream>

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Fr. Krikor Sabounjian and Michael Sabounjian

Adrienne Alexanian Receives St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal and Gontag

from previous page

ambassadors and NGO representatives to a program to commemorate the 1700th anniversary of Christianity which included a lecture by Abraham Terian on Armenia's religious history followed by vocal selections of Armenian liturgical hymns.

Alexanian was chairperson of the One World Festival which was co-sponsored by the City of New York and attracted over 100,000 people over the weekend. Adrienne brought together 26 ethnic groups to display their culture and was the first chairperson to incorporate numerous parishes belonging to the Eastern Diocese. Adrienne fundraised and decorated the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations. She also initiated and chaired several fundraising antiques shows and rug sales for the Armenian Diocese. Adrienne was an active member of the committee that brought children's art work from Armenia for display at the Brooklyn Children's Art Museum. As a member of the Diocesan Heritage committee Adrienne was able to get a commitment from Elia Kazan personally to show his film *America, America* as part of a weeklong commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Alexanian was chairperson of the St. Vartan Cathedral Anniversary and chairperson of several Easter Sunday luncheons and several of the Primate's children's Christmas parties as well as chairperson of several Cultural Happenings on the Plaza.

She was the first person to introduce Eric Bogosian, Leslie Ayvazian and Ron Darian to the Armenian community during a cabaret evening in Kavookjian Auditorium and was a member of the committees honoring Charles Aznavour, Governor George Deukmejian and Lily Chookazian.

She was also a member of the Nagorno Karabakh committee and fundraised for the war effort in the 1980s.

Adrienne was on both the AGBU Cultural Committee and the AGBU Convention Committee and as part of the AGBU effort fundraised tens of thousands of dollars for Andrew Goldberg's documentary on the Armenian Genocide which appeared on PBS. As a fellow trustee of the Armenian Assembly, Adrienne was a member of the

Eastern District of the Armenian Assembly of America and she along with her mother Grace organized and funded a documentary on the Nagorno Karabakh War which was sent to the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Library of Congress, Senators and Congressmen on behalf of the Armenian Assembly which also appeared on PBS. The aforementioned are just some highlights but the list of Adrienne's volunteer work goes on.

More recently, she spent three years preparing her father Edward Alexanian's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, for publication in 2017 by Transaction Publishers / Rutledge Publishers which was distributed world-wide. The memoir is on several websites including the SHOAH Foundation, Genocide Watch, and Houshamadyan and has been translated into foreign languages.

Since its publication, Alexanian has offered 29 book presentations all over the country at colleges and universities, Holocaust Museums, libraries and Armenian venues donating the proceeds from the sale of the books to the host venue. Her goal is to use her father's memoir to educate the non-Armenian community about the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Community about an aspect of the Armenian Genocide about which there are no other books in literature.

Adrienne and her parents have endowments funds at the Armenian Diocese, The AGBU, and the Armenian Assembly of America which support various needs in the Armenian community.

Beside the Saint Nersess Shnorhali Medal and the Ellis Island Medal for her volunteer work and philanthropy for her people, Adrienne received an award from Lyudmila Ter-Petrosyan on behalf of her husband, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the first President of Armenia, for her work for the Armenian Mission, a medal and a citation for her volunteer work on Armenian American Night at Eisenhower Park and a citation from the government of Armenia, presented to her by Ambassador Garen Nazarian for her advocacy of the Armenian agenda at the U.N. and her work for the Permanent Mission of



Adrienne Alexanian with, from left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Bishop Daniel Findikyan

Armenian to the United Nations.

After thanking Karekin II for honoring her with the Saint Nersess Shnorhali Medal and *Gontag* and highlighting that it was all the more special because the catholicos bestowed it himself, Adrienne expressed her profound and heartfelt appreciation to the AGBU and in particular to its president Berge Setrakian. She continued to say the following:

"Someone once said that the two most important days of one's life are the day that you are born and the day you realize why you were born. I consider myself to be lucky because I came to that realization early in life and despite having free will

never change course. I believe strongly in God's will and that we're on earth for a purpose which is predetermined. You know that purpose when you look for the signs. The signs were obvious to me because I watched both of my parents dedicate their lives to advocacy for our people. I learned by watching them that it was my responsibility and my privilege to do the same. So when you honor me this evening you are in reality honoring my parents' legacy for which I am profoundly grateful."

Alexanian reiterated her appreciation to the catholicos, which concluded a special evening.

— Karen Bedrosian Richardson

Armenian Museum of America Uses Ancient Treasures to Excite New Interest

TREASURES, from page 1

of finance and building operations, when Michele Kolligian, president of the board of trustees, made the connection with her.

Dumikyan was born in the village of Metsavan in the northern Armenian province of Lori. She went to school in the nearby town of Tashir before going to Yerevan for her higher education. She studied at the Valery Bryusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences from 1995 to 2000 and after graduating, was invited to teach there for about a decade. She also taught at the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and the French University while continuing her education.

After a master's degree from the National Academy of Sciences in 2008, Dumikyan worked as a senior researcher in the Academy's Institute of History while completing her doctorate, which concerns 19th century issues in French Armenology, and afterwards led to the Armenian-language book *Issues in the History of Ancient and Early Medieval Armenia in French Armenology of the 19th Century*" (Yerevan, 2014).

At the museum, Dumikyan explained that it was necessary to first reexamine the collections to see what they encompass. Initial categorizations by donors were not always correct. She presented a number of items that she had been researching and observed, "Most manuscripts here are damaged and don't have colophons. So if nothing exists on the work, you have to study the period, the writer and the illustrator. This takes much time."

There was a manuscript listed as from



Triptych, 1743 Gift of Paul and Vicki Bedoukian. This at one time may have held a relic of the cross, Dumikyan surmises, and was from Charek Monastery in Utik Province. (photo courtesy Armenian Museum of America)

non-Armenian languages. Dumikyan did a partial interpretation and sent copies to various experts in Armenia and the US for their help, which she is awaiting at present.

The museum had a small 15th-century Gospel manuscript section of six pages with illuminations, about which it was only known that the illustrator's name was Bishop Stepannos. It was a gift from Adele and Haig Der Manuelian to the museum. Lusine Sargsyan at the Mesrop Mashtots

companying information to the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan, which determined that it was much older, dating from the 14th to 12th centuries. This is another major discovery which is a coup for the Armenian Museum. Now there are other pots in the collection which must be similarly reevaluated.

Of course, she pointed out that the museum also has many items which are truly from Van's kingdom of Urartu. Many are gifts from Paul and Vicki Bedoukian, which have been exhibited in the past.

Dumikyan's work extends to a great variety of items and artifacts. She had found a rare lunar calendar/map, the origin of which was unknown. One copy exists with the Mkhitarians in Venice, who assumed it might be a part of the Haigazian dictionary. As it is not actually from this work, the search continues as to its origins. Dumikyan even contacted the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory in Armenia in case they might have any knowledge of it.

Dumikyan highly commended the preservation efforts of the Armenian Museum, exclaiming that manuscripts are kept very well with climate control and great care. However, she hoped that the museum would be able to have the means one day to renovate or repair manuscripts that have suffered damages or the ravages of time. She pointed out, "How we maintain museum items shows our attitude towards our cultural heritage."

She called for increasing cooperation with Armenia and hoped that in the future more researchers will come to work at the museum. Collaboration between Armenia and diaspora would be fruitful, she felt, on many scholarly and cultural topics, including the very timely one of Artsakh's cultural heritage, especially when efforts are being made to distort Armenian history. Dumikyan in particular stressed that dialogue and vision are important in strengthening the state of current Armenology and helping new generations of scholars advance.

Virtual Activities

Manager of Collections and Museum Operations Zoë Quinn and Executive Director Jason Sohigian listed the four primary types of virtual or online activities of the museum. There are virtual concerts on

a bimonthly basis, a monthly virtual exhibition, a live webinar which is also on the museum website concerning the digitized 78 rpm Armenian record collection, and a show-and-tell of various objects conducted by Collections Curator Gary Lind-Sinanian.

The first virtual exhibition was on Artsakh rugs, followed by ones on ancient coins curated by collector Levon Saryan, the Norton Dodge collection of Armenian dissident art, the Azgapietian family and Near East Relief, and the forthcoming exhibition of numismatic and philatelic materials on the first Republic of Armenia. These are often topical, with the Near East Relief exhibit in April coinciding with the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide or the first Republic of Armenia exhibit this month coinciding with the May 28 anniversary of Armenian independence. The Artsakh rug exhibition, Dumikyan's idea, was inspired by the Artsakh war.

The concerts are curated by composer and conductor Konstantin Petrossian and supported by a grant from the Dadourian Foundation. Their virtual nature of the concerts allowed musicians from Armenia such as the members of the Nairyan Vocal Ensemble or the Yerevan State Choir to participate.

Quinn said that during this period of Covid restrictions, the museum increased its online presence on Facebook and Instagram, and did more emails, while for the first time it started a YouTube account.

When asked how he chose the wide range of artifacts he presented, Lind-Sinanian responded: "Basically it is a random choice. I don't want to do too many objects out of one category. I do a little of this and a little of that so that people will get brief introductions to a lot of areas about which they would not necessarily be aware."

Sohigian said: "The exciting thing about this was that we have so many things in the collection in storage that don't get to be displayed. Gary brings them out, shows them to people and tells the story behind them. People seem to be enjoying it. We distribute it across all our social media platforms, via email, website, and YouTube."

The videos were initially an idea by Kolligian, who made a donation at the end of last year to sponsor the series.

Looking towards Physically Reopening, Increasing Membership

Dumikyan is updating the galleries of the museum through her research and new labels are being prepared based on her discoveries. Sohigian said, "There are some new objects and there will be reconfigurations. Alissa is finding out information that we did not have before, which is amazing. Our collection is significant and we are one of the few museums of this caliber in the diaspora." Beyond that, he confirmed that the first-floor galleries will have a more chronological approach and that there will be an attempt to have more interactive experiences, perhaps with cellphone apps that can provide audio accompaniment while visitors move through the museum.

Sohigian pointed out that many visitors to the museum are not Armenian and are interested in learning more about modern Armenian, culture and customs, according to visitor surveys. Consequently, more current materials will be added to displays gradually as the second and third floors are

continued on next page



Polished black pot, 14th-12th Century B.C., Gift of Hakop Alimian (photo courtesy Armenian Museum of America)

the 16th century, for example, which she realized might not be from that period. It was not a hymnal as described, but actually a "manr usumn" liturgical musical codice, with melodies indicated by the *khaz* type of Armenian musical notation. Dumikyan began contacting experts in the Republic of Armenia to confirm her suspicions.

This type of work was important in the Cilician Armenian kingdom, and indeed, it was confirmed by Arusyak Tamrazyan in Yerevan that it dated from the 14th century, making this a particularly valuable item of the museum.

Dumikyan showed a set of four letters from the 17th century from Armenian merchants of Julfa, who had a great trading network. The letters are difficult to read because of the handwriting and the dialect, which borrows words from various

Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, or Matenadaran for short, in Yerevan, confirmed that the illustrator appeared to be the 15th century Stepannos of Arinch.

Dumikyan said that it is a beautiful work and amazingly, she found the remaining sections, which were in Haroutiun Kurdian's collection, which he in turn had donated to the Mkhitarians of Venice. She is awaiting a confirmation letter from the latter, which will allow bringing back together these manuscript pieces, at least in a virtual fashion.

She then pointed out a pot or jug which was ascribed to Van's kingdom of Urartu, and initially was thought to have been used to hold food. She suspected this was not correct, as its ornamentation or design was not characteristic of the works from the kingdom. She sent its image and ac-



COMMUNITY NEWS

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reconfigured over time. The third floor is reserved for contemporary art and rotating exhibits, and Sohigian said that new artists will be brought in to make the third-floor gallery more vibrant.

One major new project is the updating of the second floor Armenian Genocide exhibit with the aid of an outside scholar. The Cummings Foundation, a non-Armenian company from the Boston area provided the museum a grant a few years ago for this purpose as part of a multi-year project. Sohigian said, "We are going to expand the range of objects displayed and have a focus on regions and family stories of the survivors. We want to have it end on a more uplifting note, since the Genocide has turned into the diaspora and the story of survival and experience." The survivor oral histories held by the museum will be integrated into new interactive multimedia displays.

Sohigian said that the museum was working towards a soft reopening this summer, possibly even as early as next month. With many visitors and museum members not being local, he continued, the virtual programs will also be retained to at least some



Belt Fragment, circa 8th - 7th century B.C., Gift of Paul and Vicki Bedoukian (photo courtesy Armenian Museum of America)

extent in order to allow people around the world to enjoy the collections and feel part of the museum. This is something new and positive, evidently, that came out of the Covid restrictions.

In the meanwhile, Sohigian, who only came to work at the museum last November, is trying to expand the museum's membership through its various online programs. While many people have visited and donated in the past, they did not necessarily

become members. He declared, "When we came up against the situation in Artsakh last year, we realized a lot of our heritage and history is endangered, especially with the kind of cultural erasure we are seeing there. We thought this makes our mission even more important now." Consequently, he is instituting a membership drive this summer to help support the care and maintenance of the museum's collections.

The museum appears to be in a strong

position to do so, as it has been getting a lot of attention in the media. Sohigian said, "I have been here six months as director, and have already had several interviews with non-Armenian media. I was working in the environmental area before and thought that was a popular cause in this country, but now I realize the support for the arts is even greater." A major grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council led to a connection with WBZ radio in Boston, which advertised the museum for free. In turn, this led to an interview on the Nairyan Ensemble, which is unique for using sign language to accompany their programs.

Even the statement on the Armenian Genocide by President Joe Biden last month led to media inquiries, this time from various countries abroad. Many organizations approached the museum for collaboration in April this year on exhibits or programs, and Sohigian said the museum was able to contribute photos of its objects to help raise awareness of the Armenian Genocide and history.

He concluded, "Even though we might be physically closed, it has been an extremely busy year." It will be even busier as the museum reopens this summer or fall.

OBITUARY

Harry Haytayan

Founded Manufacturing Company

NASHUA, N.H. — Harry Haytayan of Nashua, NH passed away peacefully at home on May 13, 2021 at the age of 91.

Harry was born on July 19, 1929 in Aleppo, Syria to the late Manoog and Nellie (Cholakian) Haytayan. He was the husband of the late Katherine J. (Balian) Haytayan who passed away in 2013.

Harry is survived by his children: Karen Tuthill and her husband Scott of Amherst, NH, Harry Haytayan, Jr. and his wife Alison of Hollis, NH, Linda Haytayan of Hollis, NH and Alita Guillen and her husband Enrique of California. He is the grandfather of Harry Haytayan III, Geoffrey Tuthill, Natalie Haytayan, Jacquelyn Haytayan, Sofia Guillen, Nicolas Guillen, Robert Haytayan, Izabella Haytayan and Julia Guillen. He was the dear brother of the late Anoush Manoukian and Yeghia Haytayan. He is also survived by many loving nieces, nephews and lifelong employees and aides who loved him.

Harry came to the United States in 1952 after working for Syria Petroleum saving enough money for a plane ticket. He enrolled at Northeastern University School of Mechanical Engineering where he earned a bachelor's degree and later became a Professional Engineer. He was also a proficient

welder.

Once he graduated, Harry worked at Lewis and Shepard as a welder. He worked at Itek Corporation in the aerospace program.

In 1970 he was laid off and decided he did not want to work for anyone. He came up with an idea to fasten steel to concrete, replace welding for commercial construction with a pneumatic fastening system. He tested the tools with a compressor in his basement in Lincoln. Then, in 1974, Pneutek, Inc. was born. A manufacturing company, Harry believed in making everything in the United States. His work was his passion. He was a problem solver. He then came up with a method of attaching flooring for the truck and trailer industry with an electro-pneumatic system which kept operators off their knees, cut labor and worker's comp claims costs.

He had over 45 patents worldwide and employed many people over the past 43 years. Harry had a big heart and helped many of his employees when they were in need.

Harry had many accomplishments, too many to mention. The pride he carried was immeasurable. He famously advocated "make your plan and execute your plan." His legacy shall carry on.

Harry was a long-time member of Council of Armenian Executives (CAE).

Funeral Services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, Mass., on Tuesday, May 18. Interment was held at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.



John Kolligian

Army Veteran

ARLINGTON, Mass. — John Kolligian, 88, of Arlington and North Falmouth, passed away on May 3, 2021.

He was the beloved husband of Ida M. (Gechjian) Kolligian for 63 years; father of Dr. John Kolligian, Jr. of Princeton, NJ; grandfather of Max Tyler and Zoey Marie Kolligian; brother of Rosalie Demarjian and the late Marjorie Ayzavian and Sarah Goolkasian. He also leaves many loving nieces and nephews.

Kolligian attended Arlington High School, New Preparatory School and Tufts College.

He proudly served in the Army during the Korean conflict.

He was past president of Kolligian Rambler and an active member of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Cambridge. Private funeral services have been held.

For more information, guestbook and to light a candle in his memory, visit giragosianfuneralhome.com.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Davidian Speaks on Ottoman-Era Painter 'Monsieur Pierre' Srabian

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — Noted writer, editor and political activist Arpiar Arpiarian wrote in his 1898 obituary of the artist Bedros Srabian, whose works had already begun to be lost, that "...what survives only is the memory in the hearts of friends who loved him, a memory inscribed in a newspaper article, until the day when these friends and these old newspapers too shall go and vanish into

really only known the man as "Monsieur Pierre," as he was called when he was the teacher of fine arts and drawing at Constantinople's Berberian School during Teotig's student days in the 1880s. A chance encounter of the name "Bedros Srabian" in an old student magazine from the Uskudar Jemaran leads Teotig to realize that this was "Monsieur Pierre's" real name. Teotig's quest leads him to the basic biography of Srabian, culled from Arpiarian's obituary and some information received from Srabian's surviving family. The quest also, of course leads toward Srabian's artwork, of which precious little has survived that either Teotig or current scholars know of.

Arpiarian described Srabian as an artist who brought Western technique and style (he studied in Rome) to the Armenian community in Constantinople as well as eventually depicting the realities of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire through his works. Davidian notes that just as Arpiarian was attempting to portray Ottoman Armenian life through realist literature, a movement of which he was the founder in the Western Armenian world, Srabian was doing the same thing through art.

Srabian, who painted in a Realist style of academic art typical for the 19th century, has perhaps been ignored by later artists and art historians as not having contributed anything new or different to the realm of painting. However, as Davidian explained in the talk, his contribution in historical and socio-political terms was extremely important. His paintings of "Armenian Girl



"Armenian Beggar From Van" by Bedros Srabian, 1882

From Paghesh" and "Manoug Aghpar" were singled out by Arpiarian as earning him the title of "painter of the Armenian heart," showing for the perhaps the first time in Western fine arts a depiction of everyday Armenians by an Armenian artist. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether either of these works exist today, or their whereabouts; Davidian's image of the "Armenian Girl From Paghesh" painting is taken from Teotig's article, and no image was shown of "Manoug Aghpar" which is apparently lost. Due to the Armenian Genocide, lack of interest in Srabian, and various other factors, less than two dozen of Srabian's paintings are known today.

One of the best which has survived is Srabian's "Armenian Beggar from Van" which is held by the National Gallery of Armenia. This painting which dates to 1882, shows a man in traditional garb whose eyes move the viewer to pity. The painting was executed a year after a massive famine in the Van region. Davidian contended that this and similar paintings, highly appreciated by Arpiarian and other activist contemporaries, served as a way to highlight the suffering of Armenians in the provinces while evading the censorship of the Abdul Hamid era by virtue of the fact that such images were apolitical ethnographic-realist subjects typical in the art of the time. In a time



Dr. Vazken Khatchig Davidian

the abyss of the great oblivion."

Dr. Vazken Khatchig Davidian has rendered valuable service to the Armenian community and to the art world by rescuing the story of this once-prominent painter from that "oblivion."

Davidian's lecture on Bedros Srabian, known by his students as "Monsieur Pierre," was not only valuable for understanding Srabian but also as a reminder of the invaluable work of Teotig, from whom most of our information on "Monsieur Pierre" comes. The tireless early-20th-century writer and researcher Teotig (Teotoros Labjinjian) was the compiler, along with his wife Arshagouhi Teotig, of the Armenian almanac series known as *Amenoun Daretsoutse* (Everybody's Almanac). The series was published in Constantinople and later Europe from 1907 to 1929 with a gap of several years due to the Armenian Genocide.

Davidian, who is a post-doctoral fellow at Oxford and has his PhD in art history, was joined by art history Professor Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh of UC-Davis as discussant in a lecture sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and introduced by Marc Mamigonian. The lecture focused on the figure of Bedros Srabian (Monsieur Pierre) as seen through a single 1928 article written by Teotig and published in *Amenoun Daretsoutse*.

Who Was Monsieur Pierre?

Davidian introduced the topic by taking us along with him on the journey Teotig describes in his article "Monsieur Pierre." When Teotig started his quest for information about the artist in 1922, Bedros Srabian was a forgotten man. In fact, Teotig had

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COMMUNITY NEWS

when candid documentary photography barely existed, let alone in Eastern Anatolia, it is easy to see why Srabian's art struck such a chord with Armenian intellectuals.

A Forgotten Man

As Davidian related, Srabian's legacy suffers today from a double dose of neglect: Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora does not seem to know or care about him; and historians of Ottoman art, almost all Turks, have erased all memory of Armenian contributions to the Empire's artistic life.

Yet Srabian was once highly respected in both communities. In the Ottoman world, he enjoyed the patronage of Sultan Abdulaziz and painted the interiors of palaces, as well as being chosen to represent the Ottoman Empire with his paintings at the Paris World's Fair of 1867. In the Armenian community, he was not only a teacher at various Armenian schools in Istanbul but was called to Echmiadzin by none other than Catholicos Mgrdich I (Khrimian Hayrig) to decorate the interior of the catholical residence. He also painted a masterful portrait of Khrimian as well as apparently restoring some of the historic paintings in Echmiadzin.

Davidian expressed frustration that the nationalist narrative of Turkish historiography and art history is still being promulgated by Ankara, excluding Armenian artists who were clearly influential in the Ottoman Empire (for example, sculptor Yervant Oskan, the vice-director of the Ottoman Academy of Fine Arts according to Armenian sources, and merely an assistant to the director Hamdi Bey according to Turkish sources). However, he also



Bedros Srabian

strongly expressed optimism that the new generation of Turkish scholars are turning to acknowledge the Armenian presence and contribution. On the other hand, Davidian showed his disappointment with the lack of interest in Armenia about Srabian or any Armenian artists outside the sphere of the Russian Empire/modern Armenia, as well as the lack of support or knowledge of Srabian and similar figures in the Diaspora.

The lecture was followed by a discussion

between the speaker and Dr. Heghnar Watenpaugh. A lively question-and-answer period was moderated by Mamigonian.

It is hoped that this lecture and others like it will increase awareness of Srabian's historical importance. The loss of Srabian's work and the loss even of memory about him was already predicted by Arpiarian at the time of the artist's death; by the time Teotig researched the artist for his almanac nearly 100 years ago, he had already been forgotten. Arpiarian's comments about Srabian as well as his own work being lost to "the abyss of the great oblivion" were frighteningly prophetic. He could not have possibly known

just how much of an oblivion all Armenian life in Anatolia would fall into after 1915.

Teotig, himself almost forgotten by today's Armenians, preserved vastly important documentation on Armenian life before 1915. This was his legacy as a Genocide survivor and that of so many others that wrote countless books documenting that life, now mostly out of print. As we have seen an increased interest in that era over the last ten years or so, the work of Teotig

and his contemporaries has given us the ability to understand life for the Armenians before the Genocide. Bedros Srabian, an important figure of the era's fine arts, has finally come full circle and is being appreciated by scholars. The progress of the Armenian community can only happen by understanding the past, and the past consists not only of suffering and political demands, or of ancient history, but also of



Teotig, publisher of Everybody's Almanac

accomplishments and the record of life as it was in recent centuries. This alone makes the study of Srabian and others like him not only worthwhile, but indispensable.

Students from Armenia, US Participate in 20th AESA Science Olympiad

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA) Science Olympiad Committee congratulates all the students, teachers, parents, judges, mentors, sponsors, donors, volunteers, committee members, and all other supporters who made the 20th AESA Science Olympiad a successful and memorable event.

Established in 2002, the AESA Science Olympiad Committee (SOC) has been organizing an annual Science Olympiad, which promotes interest in engineering and sciences among middle and high school Armenian students. The 20th AESA Science Olympiad was held on Sunday, March 7, 2021 virtually via Zoom. About 60 Armenian young bright minds presented their research in Life and Physical Sciences projects.

The following schools had student representation this year:

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (Canoga Park, CA), A.H. Yeritsyan Gymnasium at MSU Branch (Yerevan, Armenia), Armenian Sisters Academy (Monterose, CA), Clark Magnet High School (La Crescenta, CA), Children of Armenia Fund SMART Center (Lori, Armenia), Eleanor J. Toll Middle School (Glendale, CA), High school N1 after Kh. Abovyan, Hrazdan (Republic of Armenia), Hoover High School (Glendale, CA), La Canada High School (La Canada, CA), Poqrik Ishkhan Educational Complex (Yerevan, Armenia), Ribet Academy (Los Angeles, CA), Rose and Alex Pilibos Armenian School (Los Angeles, CA), Vahan and Anoush Chamlian Armenian School (Los Angeles, CA), V. Abrahamyan High School (Jrahovit, Armenia) and YSMU "Heraci" High School (Yerevan, Armenia).

Sona Juharyan, AESA SOC Chair, welcomed all those in attendance and started the event with the judges' orientation. SOC members Aida Bareghamian and Araksiya Najarian facilitated the virtual setting and

managed the scheduling of project team interviews with multiple judging panels in separate Zoom breakout rooms. A team of over 30 volunteer professional scientist and engineer judges from the USA, Republic of Armenia, and Canada interviewed students to evaluate their presentation skills, creativity, scientific thinking, data analysis, and comprehension.

As students were in Zoom's main room waiting for their turn to be interviewed, SO Committee PR Lead Svetlana Arutyunova warmly communicated with the students and teachers, and offered the audience a few videos, featuring NASA's Perseverance Mars Rover landing.

In the afternoon, Special Award sponsors interviewed preselected students. CogniCoder, a startup that provides online programming courses for kids, sponsored a Special Award this year. Two winners were awarded a choice of any free class (Scratch, Python, Web Development or Java, more information is available at <https://cognicoder.com>); This year the award is offered to students in Los Angeles only, one for Junior and one for Senior level.

Criteria for CogniCoder Special Award were: Most innovative use of technology; Logical approach to the problem; Real life application/utility and Out of the box thinking.

Gugo Martikyan and Mr. Vahag Karayan, founders of CogniCoder, were so impressed by all students' projects during interviews that they decided to offer \$50 coupon towards any class for all students selected and interviewed for the CogniCoder Special Award, as well as \$25 coupon towards any class for every participant of AESA Science Olympiad to recognize their efforts and to promote further learning.

There is a lot of action going on during the event as judges, teachers, parents, sponsors and students can see during the event itself, but there is also a massive effort per-

formed behind the scenes in preparation of the event. Last year it was almost time for the 19th Annual SO, when the pandemic was announced, forcing the team to postpone and eventually cancel the event after all the effort put into it by the organizing committee and participants.

This year, the Science Olympiad differed from previous years in that the whole event was conducted remotely due to the pandemic restrictions. Coordinating a whole day of virtual activities presented some technical challenges, yet students patiently followed the program and made a great impression on the judges. It was especially demanding of students in Armenia, as the time was getting late at night for them and their supportive teachers.

There were many words of appreciation for SOC members and here is a quote from AESA President, Richard Ohanian: "Thank you Science Olympiad Committee for making Science Olympiad happen during these challenging times. With every activity, AESA is pushing above and beyond its boundaries and we all should be very proud of the organization, its achievements and the future we are creating together."

In 2021, the prize for 1st place is \$250, 2nd place is \$150, 3rd place is \$100, and honorable mention is \$50. Special awards were presented by CogniCoder.

In addition to the monetary awards for the students, SOC traditionally presents three other appreciation awards: The School of the Year Award, Aram Sarafian Teacher Appreciation Award, and Judge's Award. The criteria for the school and the teacher appreciation awards are based on the number of winning students, total number of participating projects in each category and level, and the point value of each award. The judge's award is based on the most number of schools' science fairs and Science Olympiads judged.

This year, the School Award went to Vah-

an and Anoush Chamlian Armenian School (Glendale, CA). The School Award consists of \$300 to go towards the purchase of equipment for their school's science laboratory.

The Aram Sarafian Teacher Award is to be presented with a plaque and a \$300 check to Ms. Rubina Harutyunyan of YSMU "Heratsi" High School (Yerevan, Armenia).

The Helen Dabaghian Judge Award trophy is to be given to Dr. Louisa Manasyan, who has been a member of SOC for many years and a continuous judge at numerous science fairs.

SOC is grateful to the AESA Science Olympiad Endowment Fund sponsors for financially supporting promotion of science and engineering education! We thank CogniCoder for sponsoring the Special Awards and offering additional rewards to all student participants this year. We also express gratitude to ConnectTo Communications for offering their studio and services for recording AESA Science Olympiad announcements in English, Armenian, and Russian for the AESA Tube channel. In addition, ConnectTo created a brief commercial to raise awareness about the AESA Science Olympiad in the local Armenian community and increase STEM interest in Armenian youth.

AESA Science Olympiad Committee, which is now part of AESA STEM Academy encourages all Armenian students from 6th through 12th grades in public and private schools to consider participating in many of the programs offered in Robotics, Electronics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Annual Science Olympiad. We also invite more STEM professionals to join our team and help make a positive difference for the Armenian youth and community by serving as a volunteer, judge, sponsor or SOC member. We look forward to seeing you next year!



Arts & Culture

Books

Haratunyan's *Ravens before Noah: Towards An Armenian Baroque*

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

“She had promised to kill the child as soon as it was born.” These chilling words begin Susannah Haratunyan’s *Ravens Before Noah*, which was awarded the 2016 Presidential Prize for Literature. Born in 1963, Haratunyan has published eight previous novels including *Map Without Land and Waters* as well as a few short story anthologies. A popular writer in Armenia, she also edits the literary magazine *Karayan*. The underlying premise behind much of the action in this accomplished author’s present tale should intrigue anyone with an anthropological or sociological bent. Set in a small village in the Armenian Caucasus sometime around mid-century, novel describes the lives of a set of refugees from the Hamidian mas-

(photo by Dirk Skiba)



sacres of 1894. The residents of said village lead mostly sad and superstitious lives but seem happy enough. This in spite of the fact that they live under the protective watch of Harout who is a combination Godfather-enforcer. They sell their vegetables and fruit to surrounding villages and live constant fear: fear of being discovered, fear of the Turks coming back, fear of each other.

The main plot of *Ravens Before Noah* revolves around a child saved from certain death. Harout meanwhile grows up and falls in love with a beautiful young girl, Nakhshun, who suddenly arrives in the village one day, and who has been tortured and raped by Turkish soldiers. To complicate matters further, she is pregnant and so the village women plot to kill the twin girls whom she gives birth to. The *amot* factor plays a big role in this, given the humiliation that the Armenians have recently faced. But when she gives birth to twins, Sato the midwife — who will routinely kill

continued on next page



Aladjadjian at a live cooking demonstration of elevated Latin cuisine for the food media company, We Are Cocina

For All the Flavors Of the World!

Chef Crista Is Offering a Full Experience of Mezze

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Marie Ani Aladjadjian traveled 31 countries, discovered world cuisines and created Mezze, a platform that introduces food and culinary cultures from “the rest of the world.” We agreed that I could call her Crista for short, while discussing the future of the food industry on Zoom. She was in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico, while I spoke from her hometown of Los Angeles. Crista has been in Mexico since January, promoting remotely Middle Eastern cuisine through her new platform and telling stories about ethnic food that excite all the possible taste buds of those millions of viewers and followers. And the name comes out just right for the platform, Mezze, meaning in the original Persian, to taste, which became a way of living for these last years of Crista’s life constantly on the road, living like a “nomad.”

“A mezze spread has different flavors and colors, textures and foods. Your life is a white canvas and you paint it with food. You can paint with experiences and travel the same way you enjoy a mezze spread. And I also love the idea of sharing: on the mezze table everyone is sharing, talking and the energy at that table perfectly embodies our mission,” she explains.

After 13 years of building a career as a chef, in 2017 Crista was offered the role of the Culinary Director at a new food media company, Cocina, which intended to elevate Latin cuisine. She was the perfect candidate, having Latin roots on her mother’s side. Crista’s maternal

grandparents are from Mexico and Spain, where her mother grew up. However, work at Cocina created the perfect opportunity to think about her paternal Armenian side as well.

see FLAVORS, page 14



Visiting the famous Basterma Mano restaurant in Bourj Hammoud in Beirut, Lebanon for their delicious Soujouk Shawarma and Basterma (of course), with Crista’s boyfriend and business partner, Law Casey (this is part of the new Mezze travel series that was inspired by Anthony Bourdain’s “No Reservations” and “Parts Unknown”)

Hamazkayin Eastern Regional Executive Announces the 2021 Tölölyan Prize In Contemporary Literature

BOSTON — The Regional Executive of Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of the Eastern United States is pleased to solicit submissions for the *Minas and Kohar Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature*. As in previous years, two prizes will be awarded to the winners of the *Prize*: one for a submission in Armenian and one for a submission in the English language.

Named after one of the major Armenian literary critics of the second half of the Twentieth century and his wife, a devoted and acclaimed teacher of literature, the annually awarded prize will recognize the work produced by talented writers working in North America. The prize is intended to encourage new work in all the major genres of literary production, as they are currently understood in North America. In this expanded understanding, poetry, short stories, novels and drama are all included, but so are works of creative non-fiction, a genre that includes memoirs, as well as personal, descriptive, literary and critical essays. Writers in all these genres may be considered as candidates for the prize, as long as the authors are of Armenian ancestry, or the work has an Armenian theme or revolves around an Armenian topic.

The primary purpose of the Prizes is to encourage and offer recognition through the award and through the ensuing publicity for those who wish to write about Armenian subjects and topics. There will also be a modest financial award of \$1,500 for each of the two winners.

Members of the jury are: Dr. Sima Arahamian-Hovhannessian (Canada), Anouche Agnerian (Canada), Dr. Vartan Matiosian (New York/New Jersey), Karen [Kâren] Jallatyan, PhD Candidate (California) and Dr. Myrna Douzjian (California).

Hamazkayin Regional Executive Committee of Eastern USA is grateful to all members of the jury and Dr. Kh. Tölölyan for his stewardship of the prize over the past several years. Dr. Sima Arahamian-Hovhannessian gracefully agreed to assume the operational responsibilities of the committee, to which she has been a key contributor for the past several years.

The Prize winners will be announced in October 2021 as a part of the events dedicated to the Armenian Cultural month. All submissions must be sent electronically to tololyan_award@hamazkayin-usa.org as a PDF file by July 15, 2021. Submissions must be accompanied by the Tölölyan Prize Application form, found online at <http://bit.ly/167vSsM>. The Armenian and English versions of the Guidelines of the Prize can also be found at the above link.

Submissions may consist of works published in 2019 or 2020, as well as recent, yet unpublished works.

This award has been made possible by Edward and Vergine Misserlian of San Francisco.



ARTS & CULTURE

Haratunyan's *Ravens before Noah*: Towards an Armenian Baroque

from previous page

a child in return for a sack of flour — cannot get herself to kill *two* children. It's a strange code of ethics, but what the heck. Similarly when Harout dislikes a newcomer or someone in the village crosses him, he has no qualms about taking an axe to their head or having them dragged by a horse, eviscerating and tearing them to pieces on the pavement beneath.

Here is Haratunyan at her best, describing Sato on horseback, sent on an unlikely errand by Harout: to dig up some human



Susannah Haratunyan

bone, grind it up and bake it into rolls of bread that they then feed to some scared newcomers in order to make them overcome their fear:

“The fear was there—the fear of the darkness, the cold, the fear of predators, but their fear of God did not bring them to their knees, for they were doing good deeds...She climbed on the Wild Horse and sped through the peace of the night. And the peace of that night was frightening—it consisted of groans, the screeches of hawks, the sighing of the wind drowning

in the valleys, the crackling of the rocks pouring from the mountaintops...And Sato sped as she clung to the neck of the horse, unable to decide which side she should take. She had never been so afraid. She would have refused if it had been up to her. But the throbbing veins of the sweating animal vibrated beneath her calves, and vapor rose along the side of the horse from the heat they were generating and she was afraid that if she did not fulfill the command, the horse with the trembling flanks would drag her from a rope made of its tail hairs and shatter her bones against the rocks and nobody would bother to check when it was dusk whether it was her blood blackening on the stone or the sweat of the sun.”

While Haratunyan is technically a realist writer, there is something mythical about her characters, so extreme are they. They have been deformed, stretched out, bent if you will, by history and by the veritably strange lives that their isolation and village ways have imposed on them.

In my head while reading *Ravens before Noah*, images of a naïve or even baroque sensibility kept re-appearing. Naïve I suppose because this movement in the arts often depicts village life in simplified, picturesque scenery. In particular the paintings of the Tbilisi painter Gayané Khatchaturian kept recurring. Khatchaturian, who represented Armenia at the 2009 Venice Biennale was of course considered by many to be a naïve painter. But unlike say the Haitian (Ernst Louizor and *Saincilus Ismaël*) or Croatian (Emerik Feješ, *Dragan Gaži*, *Ivan Generalić*) schools of naïve painting, Khatchaturian's work has something grandiose and overdone to it. The shapes are too large and almost super-human in their dimensions; and they seem expressionistic, even baroque in tone. In his recent book on

the collaborationist dancer and choreographer Serge Lifar, writer Mark Franko in his book *The Fascist Turn in the Dance of Serge Lifar* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2020) opposes the Baroque to the Neoclassical. The Neoclassical or Classical represents traditional ballet while the “baroque” embodies the counter-movements that it spawned: less rigid, more expressive of individual styles, if grandiose in presentation. This can of course be differentiated from the properly Baroque—a movement in the arts and music represented by practitioners such as Rembrandt, Bernini or Caravaggio. The dictionary definition of the movement is rather direct: “relating to or denoting a style of European architecture, music, and art of the 17th and 18th centuries that followed mannerism and is characterized by ornate detail.” Although Khatchaturian's work does not technically resemble the aforementioned painters, they do possess the aforementioned qualities in spades. And similarly Haratunyan's writing possesses something grandiose, chiaroscuro and epic on a scale that recalls the most Baroque of masters. If you consider schools of painting and literature to exist on a spherical, non-linear spectrum then Haratunyan's realism—like Khatchaturian's art—takes shape somewhere in between the wide swath that separates the two schools, naïve and baroque, if one can hold the two in one's mind simultaneously.

Back at the ranch so to speak, the villagers in *Ravens before Noah* begin to get antsy. Suddenly one day a group of German prisoners appear, forced by the Russians to do hard labor outside the Armenian village in a nearby valley. Trouble is surely ahead, though not in the exact form that the reader at first imagines. Will their hidden existence come to an end or will they continue

to live apart from the rest of the world? Only time will tell. Haratunyan includes some fascinating historically based details such as the rape of the virgin singer from Moush and the different manner of crucifixion that the Armenians were subjected to in 1894-95. These help the reader to understand that the persecution of Armenians by Turks was long-standing and not in fact simply the result of Fifth Columnist fears by the Turks or the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire—as some Turkish historians and politicians continue to contend. As this exciting novel pitches forward to its inevitable ending the scene that I imagined in my head remains a bit naïve, a bit baroque.

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 Nevart Torian, Novi, MI, \$25

Thankful Appreciation

Edmond Azadian would like hereby to extend his sincere appreciation to all the individuals who have expressed their condolences on the loss of his spouse Nora Azadian. She was passionate over the years in raising funds for the TCA Sponsor a Teacher Program. This program was devised to assist underpaid teachers at five Tekeyan schools in different cities of Armenia and Karabakh (unfortunately, the Karabakh school became a casualty of the recent war).

At this time, the Azadian family would like to thank all those who shared their sorrow through different ways of communication. Unfortunately, it may not be possible to respond individually to each person.



For All the Flavors of the World!

Chef Crista Is Offering a Full Experience of Mezze

FLAVORS, from page 12

“Seeing the success of the brand of my Latin roots, I thought ‘hey, what about my Armenian heritage and culture!’ So that’s what inspired the whole idea of Mezze.”

Christa’s grandfather Krikor Aladjadjan was born in Syria and grew up in Jordan. He immigrated to Detroit,

Michigan, when he was 18. He got an education, served in the army and was very much involved in the Armenian community. Young Krikor sung in the local Armenian church choir where he met Crista’s grandmother, whose parents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. One day in 1964, Krikor received a phone call from Gabriel Inejikian inviting him to move to Los Angeles and become one of the first teachers in Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School. In fact, Crista’s father also became one of the first graduates of the school. The family tradition continued, as Crista, her brother and sister received their education from the same school.

Through that same establishment Crista found her other passion, dance. She

joined the Hamazkayin Niari Dance Ensemble. “Even though we weren’t able to stay in Ferrahian and finish school, through the dance I was able to stay connected to my culture. My director Catherine Hairabedian was the one who really helped me preserve that connection to my Armenian heritage. She is a very big part of what inspired me to build a business around culture,” Crista acknowledges with gratitude.

Middle Eastern culture always was a significant part of her family. Being able to expertly distinguish what kind of grape leaves is used to make *sarma* or what cheese is being used in *beoreg*, Crista can fully see how these ethnic cuisines on the “other side of the world” play a significant role in the global food market. She said: “If you look at the trend of the Mediterranean diet being the number one diet in the world for so many years now – It’s healthy, it’s fresh – the only thing that was holding us back for all these years was accessibility for non-ethnic people. They have to go to a specific store to buy certain ingredients to make a specific dish. They need to educate themselves about how this food is made. We are putting a



Crista Marie Ani Aladjadjan, while traveling through the southern Albanian countryside in 2020, visited the town of Berat



Traveling down the Dubai Creek on an abra in the United Arab Emirates (this is part of the new Mezze travel series that was inspired by Anthony Bourdain’s “No Reservations” and “Parts Unknown”)



Performing, center, at the CSUN Performing Arts Theater with Hamazkayin Baruyr Sevag Chapter’s Niari Dance Ensemble in “Shalakhov,” directed by Catherine Hairabedian and Ari Libaridian



ARTS & CULTURE

lot of responsibility on them. We can make a little more of an effort to make all these types of cuisines more accessible for everyone. That would bridge the gap between cultures and that will start a very important conversation. Food can be a catalyst for a very important change that we could see in the world.”

Crista’s excitement made me think that during the last 15 years I gradually saw a growing number of non-Armenians shopping at my neighborhood Armenian store and many others reserving tables at the local Armenian restaurant. Then there was that Canadian friend drinking only Armenian wine after discovering it at my place. Crista goes on with contagious optimism: “In the US we are developing a real culture by adopting all these ethnic cuisines and food experiences. Famous chefs want to do something new. It can be a new dish or even a new ingredient; Aleppo pepper is suddenly everywhere, sumac is suddenly everywhere! You go to the nicest, award-winning restaurants in LA, like Republique, and you see



Dinner Party Meze Spread: Hummus, Baba Ghanouj, Labneh, Homemade Pita Bread, Muhammara, Grape Leaves; Original Meze Recipe



Labneh 3 Ways: Za’atar and Olive Oil, Peaches with Mint and Nigella Seeds, Pomegranate Molasses and Pistachios; Original Meze Recipe

Armenian cucumber on the menu (they call it Armenian Cuc), or *labneh*! It’s amazing!”

The same optimism appears when she talks about Armenian-owned food businesses in the US, observing how

with the utmost intensity, Crista is working on her very first product, a spice kit organized by a specific country’s food palette. For example, if you want to explore North African cuisine today, here are the six base spices that

the new generation is making huge efforts to better market their fathers and grandfathers’ eateries and restaurants according to the new standards and “extending the reach, trying to get to the ‘odar’ communities and increase the popularity of our cuisine.”

Intending to present the experience of world cuisine

you need to make pretty much any Moroccan recipe, and the recipes come with a cookbook.

Two years ago, Crista traveled to seven Middle Eastern countries with a film crew and worked on a movie series to somehow continue the efforts of her major inspiration, Anthony Bourdain, to share all these stories from different parts of the world. “In Western culture we tend to brush a lot of cultures that maybe we don’t understand, or that have politically complicated pasts, under the rug and we don’t explore them. We don’t necessarily have the same level of appreciation for not just food, but artistry in general for specific parts of the world. Our mission became to put these ethnic cuisines in the spotlight not just as a trend, but because these people have become a big part of Western culture and brought so many things to the western part of the world.”

Crista is dreaming of having her own hotel somewhere in France, or even any other country, where she can offer a full culinary vacation to her guests. But until then she keeps on exploring the flavors of the world.

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 26-AUGUST 15 — The Armenian Heritage Park will hold a series of events during the spring and summer:

•Wednesday, May 20 **PARK’S GIVING DAY!** Support the Park’s Care and Maintenance at ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support

•Wednesday, May 26 at 10am **CELEBRATING WHAT UNITES US!** virtual series Mediterranean Cuisine

Oldways Instructor Register: bit.ly/32Ffcjp

•Wednesday, June 9 at 4pm **TEA & TRANQUILITY ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet at the Park. Walk the Labyrinth. View the Abstract Sculpture. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

•Sunday, June 13 at 2pm **LABYRINTH WALKING WELLNESS** program **ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet at the Park. Introduction to the many benefits. Walk the labyrinth. A part of The Greenway Fitness program. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

•Sunday, July 11 at 2pm **LABYRINTH WALKING WELLNESS** program **ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet at the Park. Introduction to the many benefits. Walk the labyrinth. A part of The Greenway Fitness program. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

•Wednesday, July 14 at 4pm **TEA & TRANQUILITY ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet the Boston Mayoral candidates at the Park. Walk the Labyrinth. View the Abstract Sculpture. Tie Ribbon on the Wishing Tree. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

•Wednesday, August 11 at 4pm **TEA & TRANQUILITY ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet at the Park. Walk the Labyrinth. View the Abstract Sculpture. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree.

RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

•Sunday, August 15 at 2pm **LABYRINTH WALKING WELLNESS** program. **ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY**, Boston Meet & Greet at the Park. Introduction to the many benefits. Walk the labyrinth. A part of The Greenway Fitness program. RSVP hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JUNE 16 — SAVE THE DATE: BUILDING FOR ETERNITY~ NAASR’s Virtual Gala. Join us as we honor Edward Avedisian, NAASR Board member and philanthropist, during NAASR’s Building for Eternity Virtual Gala, on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at 7:00m Eastern / 4:00pm Pacific. Edward Avedisian is the principal benefactor of NAASR’s Vartan Gregorian Building and will be recognized for his outstanding dedication and distinguished service in advancing education in the United States and Armenia. He is an extraordinary philanthropist and serves as a Director of NAASR, a Trustee of the American University of Armenia, and a Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Special guest, New York Times bestselling author Chris Bohjalian will also join us in a unique conversation with Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, Armenian and Georgian Specialist at the Library of Congress.

JUNE 21 — Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. Monday. Hospitality/Registration is from 9-10:30 am. 10:30 AM “Shotgun” start. Lunch at the 9th hole. Dinner (casual dress) is at 4:30 pm. Location: Marlborough Country Club 200 Concord Rd, Marlborough, MA 01752. Register Online: The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament 2021 - Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston (htaac.org) or call the church office 617.354.0632

RHODE ISLAND

MAY 28 — Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence continues programming the Armenian Cultural Hour programs, every Friday at 7:30 p.m. The program can be livestreamed on the church’s Facebook page by everyone at <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence> Celebration concert, dedicated to 100th Anniversary of the First Republic of Armenia



ARTS & CULTURE

Folk Healers Create Modern Techniques from Their Ancestors' Lost Lore

By **Isaiah Murtaugh**

GLENDALE (RNS) — Growing up, Ani Kalafian had heard stories of how her great-grandmother, an Armenian healer living in Iran, had the power to heal by touch. But after her mother's family migrated to the United States, and with the passing of time, her great-grandmother's art was lost.

Kalafian, who lives in Glendale, California, has inherited her ancestor's healing spirit and is seeking to piece together her techniques. The closest thing she has found

is reiki, a Japanese energy healing practice that, like her great-grandmother's art, involves channeling healing energy through the hands of the practitioner.

Today, along with guided meditation sessions and traditional [coffee cup readings](#), Kalafian offers her own version of reiki, intuitively substituting Armenian words and symbols for the Japanese ones in an attempt to rebuild a practice lost in the tumult of family history.

The work isn't about perfect replication. Kalafian's practice relies as much on intuition as on inherited knowledge. "Culture



Levon Kafafian. Portrait in collaboration with Jiyan Zandi, courtesy of Levon Kafafian

isn't always preservation," she said. "It's where you're at now and what you're doing to evolve."

Efforts like Kalafian's have a history in the US. Beginning in the 1960s and '70s, then picking up speed in the 1990s, neopagans began formulating faiths such as Wicca and Nordic Asatru, based on mostly pre-Christian deities and nature worship.

Though they occasionally stray into ideas about white supremacy — the California-based Asatru Folk Assembly, for instance, has been designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center — these movements are often considered a pointed rejection of European Christian culture, and their adherents often champion political or social justice causes such as queer identity.

Kalafian's quest is in some ways more personal, and tied to the idea of global diaspora. She belongs to a loose network of young healers, mystics and practitioners who have coalesced around a group called the Southwest Asian and North African Ancestral Hub, or SWANA Ancestral Hub for short. Rather than any single culture or faith, its members are bonded by their shared separation from their disparate homelands. They support each other as they research, reconstruct and catalog their cultures' healing and spiritual practices.

"It's about the joy and the healing that comes through being in connection with each other and our cultures," said Layla Feghali, the group's founder, in a phone interview from her home near Los Angeles. "It's about sharing our stories."

Sarah Pike, a professor at California State University-Chico who studies new religious movements, said that in focusing on a community of color, the work of the SWANA Ancestral Hub is akin to the work of Black Americans revitalizing West African Yoruba faith practices, or Chicanos embracing Mexican Indigenous practices.

"There's an idea of religion being in the blood or the bones, or the genes, that you carry it with you. It doesn't depend on where you are, but it's connected to a specific place that might be far away from you," said Pike.

The source of Feghali's work is her family's ancestral village in Lebanon, where, she said, the people knew the land and her fruits intimately. "All of my seeking has led me to an understanding that our earth-based practices seem to be a place where all the answers are," said Feghali. "Our

ancestors have so many of those answers."

Her garden in California is a laboratory where Feghali tries to divine those answers, while necessarily developing the clues she has gleaned from Lebanon to invent something new. She grows the roses, orange trees and poppies — her "plantcestors," as she calls them fondly — and turns them into the traditional oils, teas and tinctures that she sells on her personal online [soul](#), or marketplace. As part of a course she offers, Feghali will mail out a tincture or an oil and ask students to self-administer for two weeks before reconvening over Zoom to discuss.

Like the neopagans, some of those exploring traditional cultural practices are looking to free themselves from established faiths that they find oppressive.

Six years ago, Levon Kafafian, an Armenian-American weaver in Detroit, began creating [rites](#) for the autumnal and spring equinoxes and other seasonal turns based on Armenian practices and incorporating his hand-woven textiles.

Kafafian, who is queer, partly hoped to provide a cultural alternative to "a deep and heavy judgment" in the Armenian Orthodox Church.

Practitioners like Kafafian "want to move away from the liturgical aspects of religion, but you can't move away from those aspects of ethnic identity," said Sabina Magliocco, an anthropologist at the University of British Columbia, so they turn to traditional practices.

The Armenian Church "has been a unifier for a group that has such a diverse range of idea, lifestyles, dialects and cuisines," said Kafafian. "I think we're at a time where we can be so much more deeply connected beyond that."

Feghali, the child of a Maronite Catholic and a Malachite Catholic, pointed out that ancestor-honoring and earth-based practices are peppered through those ancient churches' worship. Her work is less about escaping church traditions than delving into the ancestral knowledge they are rooted in.

It is a search she acknowledges may not have drawn her had her family not moved 7,000 miles from their Lebanese village.

"Our need to connect is more intense because our sense of what's lost is more intense," said Feghali. "Diaspora has the potential to be a place where we create from a new place, where we connect to where our ancestors come from and honor that."

Recipe Corner



Mashed Potato Pancakes

From *Salpy's International Kitchen*

Salpy's traditional Mashed Potato Pancakes are versatile and easy to assemble and make. Crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, they can be a delicious side dish for just about any meal -- or the main course for a lighter meal. Serve as a side dish or with roast chicken, lamb, pork, or turkey for a hearty meal with a side of applesauce, yogurt, or sour cream.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups cold mashed potatoes
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, mashed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon Aleppo pepper or cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon onion granules (or dried onion flakes)
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese (or your favorite cheese)
- 6-8 medium eggs, beaten
- Oil for cooking
- Finely chopped green onions and parsley as garnish, optional

PREPARATION:

In a large bowl, mix together all the above ingredients, except the oil, until thoroughly incorporated.

Heat a few tablespoons of oil in the skillet, drop a dollop of mixture a few inches apart in and cook until golden on one side, flip and cook for additional few minutes until golden on both sides. Garnish or top with chopped green onions and parsley, if desired.

(Original recipe and photos are courtesy of Salpy's International Kitchen.)

For this recipe, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/SalpyInternationalKitchen/photos/a.193156930836425/1613216378830466/?type=3&theater>



COMMENTARY

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Editorial

Armenia's Territorial Integrity Is In Jeopardy



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

Make no mistake: Armenia is facing a real existential threat. The 44-day war has not ended yet. At best, a tenuous ceasefire is in place, as defined by the November 8 tripartite declaration.

Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan have never minced words. The first one invoked Enver Pasha's unfinished plan for the Caucasus during the victory parade in Baku on December 10, 2020, and the latter expressed his intention to force Armenia to build a land corridor through the "historic Azerbaijani land of Zangezur."

All current military operations and the ensuing crisis are the prelude to achieve those objectives.

Historically, when we explore the background of such military adventures, we discover that they take place in conjunction with other global crises, either in the same region or somewhere around the globe. And indeed, when political attention is focused on the flare-up between Hamas and the Israeli forces in Gaza and the forthcoming tumultuous presidential elections in neighboring Iran, the time seems most opportune for the Turkey-Azerbaijan tandem to make a mischievous move, under Moscow's benevolent watch.

President Aliyev, who inherited Azerbaijan from his late father, Heydar Aliyev, was a novice in foreign policy and state affairs at the start of his reign, but gradually, the Azerbaijani government wised up and began to make the most cunning diplomatic moves in the region as well as on the global scene. That development was the direct consequence of the takeover by Turkey of Azerbaijan's state affairs.

The current tension created on Armenia's borders by the incursion of 250 Azerbaijan soldiers 3.5 kilometers into the sovereign territory of Armenia is a calculated risk, most probably designed by Erdogan's administration and implemented by the Aliyev government. By exploiting the configuration of military and political force in the region, the Ankara-Baku tandem has found out that Armenia's strategic ally, Russia, is in a stalemate with the Turkish forces in the Caucasus and not in a position to meet its treaty obligations to Armenia. Therefore Russia has allowed the opportunity to Baku to make its historic move to occupy part of the Syunik region in Armenia.

Syunik is not only important for Armenia as a mineral-rich province, but above all, it is a strategic piece of land which has created a bottleneck for Turkey on its way to achieve its pan-Turanic plans. That territory is also important for Iran for multiple reasons. That is why the Iranian MP Mojtaba Zonnour, head of the Iranian Parliament's Commission of National Security and Foreign policy, said, "The borders of the past must be completely protected and the common border of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Armenia must be preserved. We do not accept any changes in the borders in the region."

The Iranian government is wary that any occupation of Armenia's territory may trigger a domino effect which may also compromise Iranian territorial integrity, a potential threat which is in Azerbaijan's future plans, encouraged by Turkey, Israel and the West.

And interest in the region goes even further. China is interested from a remote distance in the Syunik region, which stands as a barrier to a Turkey desiring to extend its power into Central

Asia.

Azerbaijan has introduced its forces in the area of Sev Lich, which is located at the narrowest point from the Nakhichevan exclave, and where President Aliyev is planning to cut through his coveted corridor to finally integrate Nakhichevan with Azerbaijan's mainland.

Negotiations are taking place between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces, with the participation of Gen. Aslan Muradov, commander of the Russian peacekeeping forces in Karabakh.

Azerbaijan has been basing its territorial claims on fictitious maps it has drawn and is pretending that it is conducting innocent border demarcations, while Armenia and Russia have been using Soviet-era authorized maps which feature Sev Lich within Armenia's borders.

Since May 12, the Azerbaijani side has agreed to withdraw its forces to their original positions. However, it has not yet delivered on that agreement.

Ilham Aliyev has been using President Teddy Roosevelt's fabled adage of speaking softly and carrying a big stick. Indeed, its foreign minister, Jeyhun Bayramov, has been blaming Armenia for internationalizing a local issue and has added that Baku



has been trying to calm the situation while at the same time, Azerbaijan has begun war games on Armenia's borders with the participation of 15,000 soldiers and with heavy weaponry.

These are the fifth war games since January of the current year. Is there any question as to which party may be Azerbaijan's target for intimidation?

It is surprising that while most major world powers have condemned or expressed their concern about the Azerbaijani provocative actions, Russia has remained silent. Adding insult to injury, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has been
see INTEGRITY, page 19



COMMENTARY

Why Repatriation Has Failed, or Apo Sahagian's Useless Diaspora

By Christopher Atamian

By Way of an Introduction

It has taken me several months now to ponder and properly digest Apo Sahagian's contentious and ultimately self-defeating February 3 column in *The Armenian Weekly*. Titled "*Our Useless Diaspora, Our Future Armenia*," it somehow purports to explain that what makes the Diaspora supposedly ineffective is simply that "we" don't care enough. "We" (a monolith that actually doesn't exist) aren't somehow Armenian enough to have packed ourselves and our children up and repopulated Artsakh and Gyumri — in which case the disaster of the 44-Day War could somehow have been averted. Sahagian is a bright young man, a dedicated Jerusalem-born singer/artist who now lives in Armenia — and thus his particularly nationalistic point of view makes some sense. And yet it doesn't.

Sahagian is correct in diagnosing some of the critical underlying problems that "we" in the Armenian world have faced these past thirty years and which ultimately led to "our" recent defeat. A series of corrupt governments (followed by the presently inexperienced and potentially treasonous one), combined with a concurrent inability to repopulate Artsakh and make a go of it as an independent or incorporated state: these are indeed some of the main reasons that we lost the war. But as I will attempt to forcefully argue below, it is not the Diaspora's job to run Armenia from abroad—nor has the Armenian government itself laid the proper conditions for any type of serious repatriation. It is also beyond the Diaspora's scope and power to force Armenia to recognize Artsakh's independence—something the Third Republic has remarkably and inexplicably yet to do.

The Diasporan Reality

Sahagian seems somehow surprised — almost offended even — by the fact that the average diasporan Armenian would prefer to live in Los Angeles rather than Shushi; Paris rather than Gyumri; New York City rather than Yerevan. In making this observation, the author has taken the donkey by the tail and/or placed the cart before the horse, to extend the equine metaphors. Simply put is not up to the three or four million diasporans spread around the world, some of whom have not lived near historic Armenia for generations now and no longer even speak Armenian, to rebuild Armenia proper. These Armenians negotiate their diasporan existence just fine on average—some are fully Armenian, others less so. Some have assimilated while others belong to what was termed by AIM Magazine some years back as "Armenian by choice," while still others are new Armenians by marriage. Rather it is up to the Republic of Armenia to build a livable, viable state—and that includes breaking the endemic corruption that is the real reason behind Armenia's current failure. Then I think Sahagian will see diasporan Armenians begin to move back/repatriate in significant numbers.

Let me once again repeat that the role of the Diaspora is not to make Armenia run like a Swiss Clock, not is it even to support Armenia unconditionally. There are a multiplicity of diasporan communities in the Armenian transnation, each one unique in its own way, with its own culture and its own unique historical memory that influence how its individual members negotiate their own relationships with the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh. Within those communities there are people who grow up in fully Armenian households: they speak Armenian at home, attend Armenian schools and churches, and contribute to Armenian causes as second nature. There are also Armenians such as myself who are *guess hai*, *guess odar* and who may have learnt Armenian later in life in college or in special immersion programs but who strongly identify with their Armenian half. And then there are Armenians who exist along a spectrum that ranges from moderately Armenian to completely assimilated. Exactly where they fall on this spectrum, as well as a whole host of other personal, educational and professional factors, influence whether diasporan Armenians—young and old—would ever consider repatriation. Queer Armenians for example—who have their own organizations ([GALAS](#), [AGLA](#)) and publications ([The Hye-Phen Magazine](#), [The Queer Armenian Library](#)) can hardly be expected to move back to a country where they are routinely attacked with impunity and have no legal recourse when such violence occurs. Single mothers can hardly be expected to hop on the next *Aeroflot* to Yerevan in order to embrace a new homeland known for being intensely patriarchal and often disdainful of women's rights.

Corruption, Corruption, Corruption

In the wake of the 44-Day War, Armenians sent \$180 million to Hayastan through the Armenia Fund alone, of which \$100 million was summarily seized by the government for its own purposes—"seized" here is a kind way of saying appropriated or stolen. President Armen Sarkissian, one of the few politicians in Armenia who displayed any sense of integrity during this difficult period, called the Pashinyan government to account for how this money was being spent, but you might as well have wished for the moon. No such courtesy was extended to the many diasporans who might have done all sorts of other things with their hard-earned money.

I am sometimes amazed at how much of a blind eye some donors are willing to turn to the endemic corruption in Armenia: this has ultimately been a bad strategy as it let previous governments pilfer state wealth and, among other things, fail to rebuild the Armenian military. Several Armenian friends have told me that during their mandated military service, for example, they had no warm coats and ate cabbage four times a week while enduring sometimes painful physical abuse at the hands of their superior officers. Meanwhile, leading diasporan figures who had in fact repatriated such as the renowned musician and orchestra director Constantine Orbelian have been bullied and mistreated in the most ignominious ways by the supposed "Ministry of Culture" and its minions—one step short of the old KGB.

Is this the government that Apo Sahagian and others think diasporans should entrust their lives to upon repatriation? The same one that more or less gave Shushi away to the enemy and whose current Prime Minister then announced that "Shushi was never ma-

jority Armenian, how can we call it Armenian?" The same leader who first exasperated Vladimir Putin and then begged him for help, and then pretended that Russian Iskander missile somehow simply malfunctioned during the 44-Day War? The same leader who some insiders say was aware of the incipient war over a year ago but because of his hatred for Robert Kocharyan was apparently perfectly happy to see Artsakh overrun by Azerbaijan and an entire generation of young Armenian men murdered, while the enemy suffered few losses as it watched hired mercenaries fight a proxy war for them? The words *monumental chutzpah* come to mind here, but it is not emphatic enough. And last but not least what is to be said about all the schools, churches and cultural centers in the Diaspora itself that have suffered immeasurably (or simply not been built) of late, precisely because so many funds have been diverted to the Republic of Armenia and Artsakh?

Who's (Not) Looking Presidential?

There has also been little these past thirty years in the way of good governance in Armenia, a must for any country trying to repatriate and attract people to their lands. Of the four Prime Ministers that have ruled Armenia to date, perhaps only Levon Ter-Petrosyan was truly "presidential," in the sense that he had the brains and the stature to mix it up with the best of them, people of say Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev and Bill Clinton's ilk. The next two presidents were pure oligarchs, though their military experience meant that they at least knew how to keep the country safe from invaders and inspired some sort of caution on the part of Turkey and Azerbaijan. The current Prime Minister would elicit a "no comment" were it not for the fact that his ineffectiveness daily risks the Third Republic's very future as Azerbaijan continues to encroach on Armenian territory. Of all the politicians in Armenia, Armen Sarkissian appears the only one with a top-rate mind and diplomatic ability — it remains unclear to some why he does not run for Prime Minister. A highly-placed contact confirmed recently that these corrupt leaders—and the weak economy that they have engendered—have accelerated the already-existing brain drain: "Djana," she added: "All the young men have been sent abroad and there's almost no one left with any experience inside Armenia."

Conclusions

I suspect that Apo Sahagian knows better because among other things he is Israeli by nationality. Israel provides its citizens with excellent free education and health care, and some of the best universities in the world. And any comparison of the statesmanship in Israel dating back from Abba Eban and Ben Gurion down through Golda Meir to Ariel Sharon, Itzhak Rabin and now Benjamin Netanyahu puts the four "statesmen" who have run Armenia in cold perspective. Putting politics aside one moment, I have quite a few American and French acquaintances who have moved to Israel over the past twenty years. Several are wealthy and bought their own condos, but others became settlers. In this last case, the Israeli government had modern, functional housing and a job ready for them when they arrived. Where is the equivalent in Armenia? It simply doesn't exist. Either through lack of vision or coordination with organizations such as the Armenia Fund, to my knowledge no such housing has been built in Hayastan or Artsakh. In fact there are still people living in containers and makeshift housing in Gyumri 30 years after the devastating 1988 earthquake.

The last point that I will make refers us back to the *Nergakhts* or repatriation of the 1940s. Many of those Armenians ended up in Siberia, denounced by their fellow Hayastans. Most reconciled themselves to being called *aghpars* and to never fully being accepted as Armenians. The bitter memory of this experience has faded, but it leaves traces nonetheless. I also imagine that life in Armenia is quite different if one is a privileged diasporan who congregates at Artbridge Café and the Yerevan Hotel (I include myself in this group) or simply someone of average means wanting to return to Armenia. Something like a third of the Syrian Armenians who fled that country's terrifying Civil War have already left Armenia and emigrated elsewhere. How on earth is this possible? The answer sounds eerily familiar: lack of jobs and lack of a coordinated policy on the part of the ROA government to welcome and house them. To expect people to move their families to a country unready to host them is sheer folly.

Finally my parting words: you cannot run a country from a diaspora, especially one whose members cannot even vote from abroad in elections. Diasporans can advise and donate money to Armenia and they can influence foreign policy in their own countries by lobbying and demonstrating: all things that the Armenian diaspora has done in spades. But ultimately a country must learn to govern itself honestly if it is to move forward. We as Armenians have precious little time left. The barbarians are at the gate: nay, they have crashed it already. Like Israel, Armenia is surrounded by enemies and does not have the luxury to fool around anymore.

The wonder is that through it all, the Diaspora is still so supportive of Armenia and Artsakh. In its essence, I don't think that this will change: it has not in my case or in those of Armenia's true friends. But for Sahagian's well-meaning hopes to become a reality — i.e. for a mass repatriation to occur — then the governments of Armenia and Artsakh must finally get their act together. Instead of a base kleptocracy, we need leaders who are invested in growing a modern, successful Republic. And we need leaders who are willing to engage the diaspora and its talents honestly and with vision. Until that time comes, much to Apo Sahagian and others' chagrin, the Armenian Diaspora may unfortunately appear to be powerless if not useless.

(Christopher Atamian is a New York-based writer, filmmaker, translator and editor. He has written for leading publications such as *The New York Press*, *The Huffington Post*, *The New Criterion* and *The New York Times Book Review* and concentrated exclusively on Armenian culture and history in a previous column at [www.yevrobatsi.com](#). His first book of verse, *A Poet in Washington Heights* was nominated for a National Book Award and received the 2017-18 Tololyan Literary Prize. He has translated five books from French and Armenian and most recently co-edited a volume on Bedros Keljik, *Armenian-American Sketches*.)



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Turkish Group Hacked Biden's Website To Undermine His Presidential Election

While it was widely publicized that Russia attempted to interfere in the 2020 US presidential election, very little was reported about similar meddling by Turkey.

The US National Intelligence Council (NIC) released on March 15, 2021 a declassified report which confirmed Turkish hackers' cyber-attack in the 2020 election on Joe Biden's campaign website, to support Pres. Donald Trump.

This should not come as a surprise to anyone, given the warm personal relationship between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pres. Trump. Erdogan made weekly phone calls to the White House securing Pres. Trump's agreement on many pro-Turkish issues. Erdogan was certain that Biden would not be as accommodating as Trump.

Abdullah Bozkurt, a dissident Turkish investigative journalist living in Stockholm, Sweden, confirmed the Turkish hacking scheme by publishing the details in the Nordic Monitor on March 25, 2021.

The NIC disclosed that the Turkish group RootAyyıldız hacked the Biden-Harris presidential campaign website in October and November 2020. "Hackers promoting Turkish nationalist themes breached and defaced a website previously established for a candidate in the US presidential campaign, according to US cybersecurity press," the NIC reported.

"The Turkish hackers posted a nationalist and Islamist message that by and large repeated the narrative often promoted by ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) officials in Turkey, led by President Erdogan," Bozkurt wrote.

The Hackers placed on the Biden-Harris website the photos of Pres. Erdogan and Sultan Abdulhamid II, named Red Sultan because of the massacres of 300,000 Armenians from 1894 to 1896.

"The hackers identified themselves as 'Turkish Muslim Defacer' and emphasized that they follow the Turkish president, described as 'Reis' (Chief) in the posted message, and are on the path of a Turkish Islamist jihadist campaign to dominate the world. The opposition political parties were alleged to have been supported by the US, and the hackers warned of further consequences if the US did not leave Turkey alone," reported Bozkurt.

Here is the translation of the Turkish hackers' message left on the Biden-Harris website:

"We made the ablution [used here as a means to clean oneself to get ready to be a martyr in jihad] before and set out on a journey, we said our own funeral prayer, we sharpened our blade for our brother. We made our pledge to the Great Sultan [late Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, an authoritarian ruler revered by Islamist circles in Turkey]. We will kill for Reis [Chief -- President Erdogan] anybody who sets their eyes on our [Turkish-Islamic] cause.

"Damn those who live for money and fame, greetings to those who live for the Islamic cause. From here, I warn the US-backed, so-called [opposition] political parties like the CHP [main opposition Republican People's Party], HDP [pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party] and the Iyi [conservative/nationalist Good] Party.

"We'll be your nightmare if you don't take your hands off my [Turkish] state, my nation. We will make you afraid of walking in the street [in shame] by revealing your most private conversations.

"RootAyyıldız is not a group or organization but a patriot who fights alone. We hail anybody who fights for Turk and Islam. May Allah be our help. We do not use social media. Don't be fooled by fake accounts."

The hackers wrote under the photo of Erdogan and Abdulhamid II: "We are the ones who stopped the tanks with our bare hands on the night of July 15 [2016 failed coup]. We are those who killed death that night. We have been waiting for Archers' Hill for 15 centuries [a reference to a scene in the Battle of Uhud fought by the Muslim Prophet Muhammad]! We are the keepers of that red [Turkish] flag that will never abandon its shadow on us." Archers' Hill is frequently mentioned by Erdogan in his campaign rallies.

Bozkurt added: "RootAyyıldız is believed to have connections to elements of the Turkish government, specifically with intelligence agency MIT and the police department. Its attacks on foreign governments, entities and individuals have coincided with the growing noise among Turkish officials who leveled harsh criticism and threats against such foreign governments, entities and individuals."

Bozkurt ended his article revealing that the Turkish hackers group RootAyyıldız "also targeted the Greek government and institutions during the heightened tension between the two countries in August 2020. The official website of the Bihar Education Department in India was hacked in August 2019 by RootAyyıldız, which posted messages in praise of Pakistan and Islam. In October 2020, the group hacked the Armenian Football Federation's website during the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and posted messages in support of Azerbaijan."

In a separate article by the Reuters news agency, titled: "Hackers acting in Turkey's interests believed to be behind recent cyberattacks," Turkish hackers attacked at least 30 organizations, including Albanian, Cypriot and Greek government email services, the website of the national security advisor of Iraq, embassies and security services as well as companies and other groups.

"The attacks involve intercepting internet traffic to victim websites, potentially enabling hackers to obtain illicit access to the networks of government bodies and other organizations," Reuters wrote.

"According to two British officials and one US official, the activity bears the hallmarks of a state-backed cyber espionage operation conducted to advance Turkish interests," Reuters wrote.

These hacking efforts by the Turkish government-linked group are yet another example of the violation of international laws and conventions by Turkey.

Armenia's Territorial Integrity Is in Jeopardy

INTEGRITY, from page 17

parroting Bayramov that Yerevan is kicking up too much of a fuss about a border issue which we are trying to resolve with our regional partners.

France has been the most straight forward country in condemning Azerbaijan and has asked Baku to withdraw its forces. President Emmanuel Macron himself called Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to express his solidarity with Armenia. Furthermore, he offered to raise the issue at the United Nations Security Council and proposed military assistance to Armenia, under UN mandate.

Similarly Canada has condemned the Azerbaijani incursion.

The US State Department Spokesperson Jalina Porter has published the following statement on the department's website: "Military movements in disputed territories are irresponsible and they are also unnecessarily provocative. And of course, we've seen the reports of some withdrawal and would welcome that, if confirmed, but we expect that Azerbaijan pulls back all its forces immediately and cease further provocation."

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security advisor, talking to Pashinyan on the phone, has expressed his concern.

President Aliyev claims that he has solved the Karabakh issue by force and that there is no longer a problem of status. By threatening Armenia's own territory, he is further ensuring that Armenians should worry about their own existence before being concerned about Karabakh.

He is also testing Russia's resolve to meet its obligations to its strategic ally. In the meantime, he is testing the effectiveness of the Russia-centered Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is supposed to be Armenia's defense umbrella. That treaty was already turned into a mockery when Azerbaijan, a non-member, defeated Armenia, a member of that defense treaty, and several of its members ironically rushed to congratulate Azerbaijan on

its victory against Armenia.

Russia is rightfully worried about the internationalization of the current conflict. We have to remember General Sergei Shoigu, Russia's defense minister, boasting about the Russia-Turkey joint operation in the Caucasus. He said that Russia and Turkey had been able to successfully create a political and military plan in the region, similar to the one in Syria. The fait accompli achieved in the region is in the interest of both parties. Armenia's interest, even as far as its existence, is the least of their worries. Any intervention or projection of the major power in the Caucasus is a potential threat to that successful plan. That is why Russia has been dragging its feet in bringing the Karabakh issue to the forum of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) whose two other co-chairs, the US and France, are against the current status.

President Vladimir Putin has been stating emphatically that the Karabakh status issue has to be determined at an indefinite point in the future. However, both France and the US consider the status issue a residual agenda to be resolved after the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The situation does not bode well for Armenia. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is beholden to the Kremlin; he is allowed only to take baby steps, always looking for a nod of approval from Putin.

The Armenian army has encircled the intruding Azerbaijani contingent. Anyone's impulsive reaction would be to use force to expel the intruders. But Armenia is deliberately engaged in unending negotiations, waiting for a favorable outcome.

Many citizens and analysts have been questioning what the purpose of the 102nd Russian base in Gyumri is if it will not defend Armenian territory against aggressors. It has dawned on them that the base is there not to defend Armenia but rather to serve Russia's broader interest in watching

Georgia and projecting power into Syria.

Thus far, Pashinyan was allowed only to apply to the CSTO on the basis of the treaty's Article 2, Section 2, which calls only for consultations between members and not necessarily action.

Article 4 would have triggered military assistance, which, in this case, would be futile any way, after observing the conduct of its members.

The Kremlin did not shy away from embarrassing Pashinyan publicly. The latter had applied for military aid from Russia during a phone call with President Putin at the start of the Azerbaijani incursion, yet Putin's spokesman, Dimitri Peskov, publicly countered that Pashinyan had not asked for military assistance - but Russia did not intend to provide it anyway.

Obediently following Mr. Putin's expectation, Pashinyan has even postponed his appeal to the UN, to keep the major powers away from the region.

Should Armenia dare to appeal to France or to the UN for aid, Russia has the chokehold around its neck and it is in position to complicate the situation even further.

Nor is Armenia's defeated army ready to expel the intruders by force. Armenia's Secretary of the Security Council Armen Grigoryan has been grudgingly using words indicating that negotiations have been yielding cumulative results and the issue will be resolved peacefully.

Pashinyan, in all his speeches, seems to be an exasperated and embattled leader who is trying to put on a brave face before the Azerbaijani aggression, against irredentist movements in Syunik and the opposition parties who are planning to extract maximum punishment in the forthcoming elections.

Pashinyan and his inexperienced team could hardly manage the government affairs in peacetime.

It is more questionable how they can fare in such perilous times.



Diocese's Midwest Parishes Welcome Bishop Daniel For Extended Visit

NEW YORK – For 10 days in April, on the heels of this year's Easter celebration, Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan traveled throughout the Midwest for an extended stay among the clergy and faithful of the region. He was warmly welcomed by parishioners throughout the Wisconsin and Illinois communities of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America — with whom he met in sacred, celebratory, as well as informal settings.

The excursion from April 9 through 19, 2021, was an opportunity for the Primate to hold meetings with leaders of the Diocese and its sister churches. But just as importantly it was a chance to spend time with the local people, hear their ideas and concerns — especially in the midst of the ongoing pandemic — and inform them about the outreach efforts of the Eastern Diocese.

The trip began with a momentous event in the life of St. John the Baptist Church of Milwaukee, WI, in which the Primate ordained Dn. Albert Hambartsumyan as a priest, and naming him “Fr. Guregh.” The Service of Calling on April 9, and the ordination on April 10, brought together local parishioners and faithful from throughout the region to witness the rare and impressive sacrament, resulting in a new pastor



The ordaining of Fr. Guregh Hambartsumyan at St. John the Baptist Church, Milwaukee, WI

for the Milwaukee church.

The Sunday following the ordination took Bishop Daniel to St. James of Nisibis Church in Evanston, IL, where he presided over the badarak with the assistance of pastor Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan. During the service, the Primate performed several ordinations to the minor orders, ordaining

Aram Kirakosyan, Brandon Simon, and Alexander Khoja-Eynatyan as acolytes, and Melkon Melkonian, Vartkes Minatiskan, Haig Hagopian, and Alexander Khoja-Eynatyan as subdeacons.

Continuing on to St. Mesrob Church in Racine, WI, Bishop Daniel led a weeknight vespers service and blessed two new chal-

ices: one dedicated in memory of the late Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian, donated by parish pastor Fr. Avedis Kalayjian and his extended family, and the other dedicated in memory of the late Charles Dadian, donated by the Dadian family.

Parishioners of St. George Church in Waukegan, IL, gathered with the bishop for a vespers service, and later welcomed the Primate to a special parish gathering. During his time in the community, Bishop Daniel also presided at the funeral of Susan Dayenian, a beloved parishioner of the Waukegan church. Waukegan was also the locale for the Primate's first in-person meeting with clergy of the Midwest region since the outbreak of the pandemic. Fr. Sahak Kaishian, Fr. Andreas Garabedian, Fr. Avedis Kalayjian, Fr. Tavit Boyajian, Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, and Fr. Yeprem Kelegian gathered with Bishop Daniel for prayer and discussion.

At Sts. Joachim and Anne Church of Palos Heights, IL, the bishop led an evening service assisted by pastor Fr. Tavit Boyajian. Later he met with parish leaders for an informal gathering in the church hall. Friday, April 16 brought Bishop Daniel to Chicago, where he attended a formal meeting with that city's Roman Catholic Archbishop, Cardinal Blase Cupich, at the Archdiocesan Center. Accompanying the Primate on that visit was Fr. Andreas Garabedian, who later in the week welcomed Bishop Daniel to St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Chicago, IL, for the Bishop's long-awaited return to the parish where he



The Tekeyan Cultural Association Is Rolling Up Its Sleeves Again

Before the 44-day war, we supported the development of the strategic Berdzor corridor and made large investments in the region. Berdzor and its neighboring regions (Kashatagh) have now fallen into enemy hands. All of a sudden, its residents, students and teachers were forced to become refugees and are now helplessly scattered all around Artsakh and Armenia. They have lost everything and their living conditions are less than desirable.

The good news is that once more Tekeyan is engaged to make their lives better, so that they remain in Armenia and become part of the nation-building process.

This time though the help will be achieved through investments and not through donations. The creation of a **sustainable economy** is the aim of this appeal.

Through small contributions / mass funding we will create income-generating opportunities for the displaced families. Tekeyan of Armenia in association with a local reputable NGO (Shen or Syunik or Kashatagh) will make investments in agriculture and/or housing to create income or comforts for their beneficiaries. The recipients get these funds conditional that they give back on an annual basis the equivalent in produced goods of 5% of the amount of assistance they have received.

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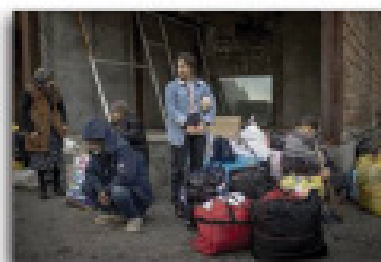
- Alleviate the hardship of these forcefully displaced families
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At St. James of Nisibis Church, Evanston, Illinois

ordained Fr. Andreas to the priesthood in 2019. The faithful gathered for the Divine Liturgy and a celebratory event afterwards, which was also attended by local Catholic clergyman Fr. Thomas Baima and Armenia's Honorary Consul to the Midwest (and also a Diocesan Council member) Oscar Tatosian.

The Primate's trip culminated in his presiding over the spring Sacred Music Festival. He welcomed the attendees to the online festival from Evanston, alongside Sacred Music Council chair Fr. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, and delivered the keynote address on “The Badarak: Our Musical Sacrament.”

Bishop Daniel's visits to the Midwest parishes invariably included a meal or other gathering with local faithful (always observing the regulations imposed by the pandemic). In his messages, the Bishop conveyed his joy at reuniting with parishioners of the region face-to-face, after a year of separation. He also spoke enthusiastically about the activities and ministries of the Diocese, and about promising developments on the horizon. He engaged parishioners in discussions of their own efforts and challenges during the past year, and applauded their ongoing work to “Build Up the Body of Christ” throughout their respective communities, even under difficult circumstances of a worldwide pandemic.