



Congratulations to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Today, we come to declare our sincere congratulations concerning the success achieved by you and your political party, Civil Contract, during the June 20 snap parliamentary elections. Your victory is valued even more because of your noble initiative, extending your hand to all those who want it.

In the aftermath of the disastrous war, your new government



will be confronted with many serious challenges, and we in turn reach out to you, leading our homeland with wisdom, to work together to overcome them. We especially hope that the entire nation will rally together around you.

With wishes for success,
Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) Supreme Council
Boston, June 25, 2021

Nora Ipekian Azadian Classroom Inaugurated at Yerevan’s Vahan Tekeyan School

YEREVAN — The official opening of the Nora Ipekian Azadian Armenian Language Classroom took place on June 24 at the Vahan Tekeyan School of Yerevan. Her husband, Edmond Y. Azadian, son, Gerald Papasian, and family friend Marina Arakchyan were present along with the school’s principal Tsovinar Mardanyan and the teachers of the school.

It was Edmond Azadian’s idea to name a classroom after his wife Nora in one of the schools bearing the Vahan Tekeyan name in Armenia because Nora placed such great importance on

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From left, Edmond Azadian, Tsovinar Mardanyan and Gerald Papasian cut the ribbon to the newly renovated classroom



From left, Louise Elder, David Elder, Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, Dr. Rouben Adalian

One Century Later YMCA Volunteers Honored For Saving Lives in Armenia during World War I

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDAL — The picture of an orphan refugee that became a horrifying testimony of the Armenian Genocide is from the collection of John Elder, a Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) missionary who

served in Armenia during World War I. The Armenian Assembly of America and the YMCA of Glendale honored John Elder and James O. Arroll, another missionary with a reception and an exhibition at the YMCA on June 24. It showcased their work and life in Armenia during the horrors of

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Prominent Armenian Doctor Arrested For ‘Electoral Offense’

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A prominent surgeon running a hospital in Yerevan and supporting an Armenian opposition group was arrested again on Wednesday, June 23, on charges of pressuring his subordinates to participate in the June 20 parliamentary elections.

Professor Armen Charchyan, the director of the Izmirlian Medical Center, was first detained last Friday after a non-governmental organization publicized a leaked audio recording of his meeting with hospital personnel.

Charchyan, who ran for the parliament on the opposition Hayastan bloc’s ticket, can be heard telling them that they must vote in the snap elections. “After the elections I will take voter lists and see who went to the polls and who didn’t,” he warns.

A Yerevan court freed Charchyan from custody on Saturday, June 26, before he was formally charged under a Criminal Code article carrying between four and seven years in prison. The court allowed the Special Investigative Service (SIS) on Wednesday to arrest and hold him in



Dr. Armen Charchyan, director of the Izmirlian Medical Center

detention pending investigation.

A lawyer for Charchyan, Erik Andreasyan, said he will appeal against the decision. “Mr. Charchyan is subjected to political persecution,” he told reporters.

Hayastan, which is led by former President Robert Kocharyan, has also condemned the criminal proceedings as politically motivated.

Speaking after a court hearing on Tuesday, Charchyan insisted that he did not coerce the medics to participate in the elections and vote for Hayastan. He also denied threatening to fire them.

Charchyan claimed that he only warned his staffers that they should no longer count on their and their relatives’

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KARABAKH

Hye Hopes Completes Programs for Forcibly Displaced Youth



MASSACHUSETTS

Boston Globe’s Anush Elbakyan Wins Two More Emmy Awards



Mirror-Spectator Annual Vacation

This is the last issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* before our annual two-week vacation. Our next issue back will be that of July 25.

New content will be posted online, at www.mirror-spectator.com during the vacation.

Have a safe and healthy summer!



ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

EU Could Lift Travel Restrictions for Armenians

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The European Union could lift travel restrictions for Armenian citizens, the Armenian Service of RFE/RL reports citing a diplomatic source at the Council of Europe.

The EU chairmanship has reportedly suggested listing Armenia among the countries whose citizens can travel to the Schengen zone, as well as to Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The question could be discussed as early as June 30, although each country is free to decide whether to follow the EU guidelines.

In July 2020, for example, the EU member states approved a list of 15 countries, including Georgia, considered as safe due to their epidemiological situation related to the coronavirus. However, the Czech Republic restricted the entry of Georgians at its own discretion.

Fifteen countries and territories are currently included in the EU's "green zone," such as the United States, Israel, South Korea and Singapore. The list is being updated every two weeks. If the new motion is approved, Armenians will get to travel to Europe with a negative Covid-19 test result or a vaccine certificate.

Baku Says It Will Return POWs if Artsakh Recognized as Part of Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Baku wants Armenia to recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan with most of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in exchange for the release of the prisoners of war, lawmaker Naira Zohrabyan said at a press conference on June 29. Zohrabyan revealed that after a Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) meeting, she spoke to the head of the Azerbaijani delegation, Samed Seyidov, who claimed that the Azerbaijani side holds no prisoners of war, and that Armenian soldiers who are now in Baku have allegedly committed terrorist attacks, Sputnik Armenia reports.

Seyidov further charged that 50 percent of the minefield maps transferred to Baku in exchange for 15 POWs were "fake." At the same time, according to the Azerbaijani lawmaker, Baku is ready to consider the release of prisoners of war only if Armenia agrees to sign a peace treaty, Zohrabyan said. Signing such a document would mean "to recognize in writing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, including that it owns 75% of Artsakh. Then, 'as a gesture of goodwill', they are ready to consider" the return of the Armenian POWs, the Armenian lawmaker added.

Zohrabyan noted that if Baku ignores calls for the release of the POWs coming from the European Union, then concrete sanctions should be applied against Azerbaijan. She suggested European structures to arrest the bank accounts belonging to President Ilham Aliyev and his family members.

Hungary's Deputy PM Makes Surprise Visit to Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Hungary's Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen joined a group of Hungarian academics in visiting Armenia on Friday, June 24, despite the virtual absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Armenia froze those relations in 2012 after the Hungarian government controversially extradited to Azerbaijan an Azerbaijani army officer who hacked to death a sleeping Armenian colleague in Budapest in 2004. The officer, Ramil Safarov, whom a Hungarian court sentenced to life imprisonment in 2006, was pardoned, rewarded and promoted by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on his return to Azerbaijan.

The Hungarian government claimed to have received prior assurances by Baku that Safarov would serve the rest of his life sentence in an Azerbaijani prison.

Yerevan dismissed that explanation.

Then Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian alleged at the time that corruption was at the root of the "Azerbaijani-Hungarian deal."

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban travelled to Baku and met with Aliyev two months before Safarov's release.

Semjen is the first senior Hungarian official known to have visited Armenia since then. He arrived with a delegation of officials from Hungary's Pazmany Peter Catholic University received by Catholicos Karekin II, the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

In a statement on the meeting, Karekin's office referred to Semjen and the other visitors as "pilgrims." It said Karekin discussed with them "inter-church relations," the Hungarian university's cooperation with Armenia's Khachatur Abovian State Pedagogical University and issues relating

to Hungary's small Armenian community.

Semjen, who holds a doctoral degree from Pazmany Peter Catholic University, also held a separate meeting with Karekin. It was not clear if the Hungarian vice-premier will meet any Armenian government officials during the trip.

Unlike other European Union member states, Hungary has openly supported Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry reaffirmed that support three days after the outbreak of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war last September.

Visiting Baku in March this year, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto discussed with Azerbaijani officials Hungarian companies' participation in the planned reconstruction of areas around Karabakh retaken by Azerbaijan during and after the six-week war.



Catholicos Karekin II meets with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen in Echmiadzin, June 25, 2021.

Prominent Armenian Doctor Arrested for 'Electoral Offence'

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preferential medical treatment at the Izmirlian Medical Center if they do not heed his appeal.

Prosecutors maintain, however, that his remarks amounted to election-related pressure and coercion prohibited by Armenian law.

In the leaked audio, Charchyan also stresses the fact that the Armenian Apostolic Church, which owns the hospital, does not want Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to stay in power.

"I'm not telling you to vote for this or that candidate. The position of the Mother See [of the church] is that one must not vote for the current authorities," he says.

The office of Catholicos Karekin II, the supreme head of the church, deplored Charchyan's first detention and demanded his release. It did not immediately react to the last court decision.

According Armenia's Office of the Prosecutor-General, law-enforcement authorities have so far brought election-related criminal charges against 16 individuals, among them 7 election candidates.

Virtually all of them are opposition members and supporters accused of trying to buy votes. They are mostly affiliated with the I Have Honor (Pativ Unem) alliance co-headed by former President Serzh Sarkisian and former National Security Service Director Artur Vanetsyan.

"If their guilt is proven during the investigations in a credible manner I will accept those results," Vanetsyan said on Wednesday.

day. "If the opposite is proven I will say this is another case of the authorities persecuting us."

No government officials and loyalists are known to have been arrested or indicted so far.

The Pativ Unem and Hayastan blocs

claim that public sector employees openly supporting them have been harassed and even fired by government officials in the run-up to the elections. They have also accused central and provincial government bodies of forcing their employees to attend the ruling Civil Contract party's rallies.

Armenian students Win 3 Medals at International Olympiad in Informatics

YEREVAN (Panorama) — The Armenian team of school students won three medals at the 33rd International Olympiad in Informatics, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport reports.

The Olympiad was held online at the Yerevan State University on June 19-25. The competition, which brought together 355 schoolchildren from 88 countries, was organized by Singapore.

Alexander Abelyan, a 12th grade student from Quantum College in Yerevan, won silver, while Emil Kostanyan, a 12th grade student from the Physics and Mathematics Specialized School named after Artashes Shahinyan, and Arayi Khalatyan, an 11th grade student from Quantum College, received bronze medals.

The team was led by Armen Andreasyan, a lecturer at the Yerevan State University Faculty of Informatics and Applied Mathematics, and Levon Muradyan, a master's student at the same faculty.

The Armenian team earlier had won two medals at the European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics, which was held for the first time. The competition, organized by Switzerland, took place online on June 13-19.

Ani Khachatryan, a 12th grade student from the Physics and Mathematics Specialized School, won silver and Amaras Nazaryan, an 11th grade student from Quantum College, won a bronze medal.



ARMENIA

Pashinyan Aide ‘Regrets’ Lack of Support From Yerevan Mayor

YEREVAN (RFE/RL — A senior member of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s administration has effectively confirmed differences between the current ruling party and Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan that opposition media have speculated on for months.

In an interview with RFE/RL’s Armenian Service (Azatutyun) on Sunday, June 27, Arayik Harutyunyan, chief advisor to the prime minister, denied, however, any ongoing discussions about the future of the mayor.

“It is very much regretful that Mr. Marutyan showed such an attitude before the elections, since the mayor, who was nominated by the Civil Contract party and My Step Alliance [of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan], did not express his public support for Civil Contract during the election campaign. I regret this, because the votes due to which Mr. Marutyan became the mayor of Yerevan, was largely for the political party that will now form the government for the second time,” Harutyunyan said.

The senior official said that no discussions were currently underway regarding the mayor, but added that members of the ruling party had the same attitude in this matter.

“We should understand how to act in such a situation in order to make decisions on this issue within our party, but so that the city and city authorities do not suffer from it,” Harutyunyan added.

Harutyunyan’s remarks sparked fresh speculations about Marutyan’s possible resignation.

Marutyan, a popular actor and producer who supported Pashinyan during the 2018

Velvet Revolution and was elected mayor of Yerevan later that year in an election where the pro-Pashinyan alliance scored a landslide victory, would not comment publicly on various media speculations in recent months and weeks about his disillusionment with politics and plans to quit.

After the June 20 snap parliamentary elections in which the Pashinyan party retained its majority in the National Assembly a number of media reports suggested that the government planned a change of the mayor of Yerevan – Armenia’s capital and largest city with a population of about a million people.

In a Facebook post in the wake of the elections addressed rather to the opposition chief of the prime minister’s staff Arsen Torosyan called on elected community leaders that had supported other political parties and alliances to take note of the Pashinyan party’s landslide victory and decide on whether they wanted to continue in office or resign.

The post has sparked criticism from the opposition that also claims that pressure has been put on some local elected officials, including mayors, to resign.

Several weeks before the early elections Marutyan, a member of the Civil Contract party, publicly hinted that he would remain politically neutral during the elections. “I am not interested in elections, I am busy doing my work,” he said in May.

But during the June 22 session of the Yerevan Council of Elders, which is a municipal assembly of elected representatives, Marutyan congratulated the citizens on “holding free and transparent elections.”

Hakob Karapetyan, a spokesperson for



Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan

the Yerevan Mayor’s Office, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service (Azatutyun) on Monday that Marutyan has no intentions to resign.

“The mayor of Yerevan, together with his team, actively continues to work, continues to implement the mandate given to him by the people of Yerevan in September 2018. The mandate was given by the people of Yerevan for a period of five years,” Karapetyan stressed.

Izabella Abgaryan, a member of Yerevan’s Council of Elders who quit the ruling My Step faction last November, said she did not like what Harutyunyan said about Marutyan in an interview with RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

“Because it is not an internal party issue, they simply ought to respect the vote of the

people,” she said.

“The mayor was elected by the people of Yerevan. Let’s not forget about the independence of local government bodies. Our list of candidates was headed by Hayk Marutyan, not Nikol Pashinyan, and people in Yerevan voted for Hayk Marutyan and his program, which he is implementing. And I think it will be unfair to the people of Yerevan if the party makes a party decision,” she added.

Emin Yeritsyan, the head of the Union of Communities of Armenia, meanwhile, stressed that the issue of the mayor of Yerevan should in any case be decided by the Council of Elders. “No one from the outside can make changes unless it is decided by the Council of Elders,” he said.

Nora Ipekian Azadian Classroom Inaugurated at Yerevan’s Vahan Tekeyan School

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Armenian schools. She would always say speak and use the Armenian language. By speaking you will advance and enrich it, she would say.

She also was a passionate proponent for many years of the Sponsor a Teacher Program of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA), which supports the schools bearing the Tekeyan name. The generous donations of many of her family members and friends to TCA made the renovation of this classroom possible after her recent passing on April 29.

Mrs. Azadian was a creative and sensitive person who found inspiration in the Armenian homeland. This room dedicated to the Armenian language and education is additionally imbued with a special and moving atmosphere now thanks to works of art hanging on the classroom walls which she created with her own hand.



Newly renovated Nora Ipekian Azadian Classroom with her paintings on the wall



From left, Edmond Azadian, Tsovinar Mardanyan, Gerald Papasian, Marina Arakchyan



Photograph of Nora Azadian with one of her paintings at the Nora Ipekian Azadian classroom

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

OSCE Chief Says Body Is Looking Forward to Working with Armenian Government

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde on June 29 congratulated Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on his victory in the parliamentary elections in Armenia. Linde, who is also the Foreign Minister of Sweden, added, “Looking forward to working with Armenian government and wish you success in continued democratic reforms.” She stressed that Sweden stands ready to support Armenia.

Razminfo: Azerbaijan Has Deployed Bayraktars in Nakhichevan

BAKU (News.am) — On June 23, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan showed photos of the tactical exercises that the Azerbaijani army of Nakhichevan and the Armed Forces of Turkey conducted from June 21 to 23. The photos show that Azerbaijan has deployed Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles at the aerodrome that was officially opened in Nakhichevan recently, Razminfo reported.

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan reports that during the exercises, President of the Supreme Majlis of Nakhichevan Vasif Talibov met with the officers and subalterns who have taken courses for use of Bayraktar TB2 UAVs in Turkey. Razminfo had already reported that, judging from the analysis of open sources and satellite photos, the aerodrome deployed near Nakhichevan International Airport was operating and was ready for use before the war [in Nagorno-Karabakh] in 2020.

Overall, 8 hangars, parking spaces, auxiliary constructions have been built for maintenance of helicopters and planes, one runway has been rebuilt, and the opening ceremony of the aerodrome on May 10, 2021 was conditioned by the visit of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. Although it's not safe to claim that the four Bayraktar UAVs seen during the exercises will remain in Nakhichevan, let us state that, taking into consideration the enhanced network of air bases and springboards in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani army may use these UAVs from different parts of the country, upon necessity.

Belarus Suspends Participation in Eastern Partnership Initiative

MINSK (Public Radio of Armenia) — Belarus has suspended its participation in the Eastern Partnership initiative of the European Union, the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement posted on its website on June 28, *BelTA* reports. The initiative involved the countries of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.



St. Toros Armenian Church vandalized in Kayseri

Garo Paylan Raises Alarm about Church Destruction

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — Treasure hunters in historical Armenian settlements in Turkey have damaged the 18th-century St. Toros Armenian Church in Kayseri, ethnic Armenian lawmaker of the Turkish Parliament Garo Paylan said on social media this week.

Paylan sent an inquiry to the parliament addressing the Turkish minister of culture and tourism over the two-meter hall that appeared inside the Church.

He stated that the old Armenian Church, which is one of the key historical and cultural structures of that region, has become a target of vandals.

In this respect he asked the minister why the Church is not protected, why the persons who damaged it are not being investigated. He also asked the government why it stays silent over such actions against the cultural heritage belonging to Christians. In the letter Paylan was also interested whether the ministry is going to renovate the Church or not.

Turkish Businessman Arrested, Faces US Extradition

VIENNA (OCCRP) — A Turkish businessman at the center of an Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) investigation into Trump-era backchannel diplomacy has been arrested in Austria and now faces extradition to the United States, the Department of Justice announced on June 21.

Baran Korkmaz was arrested at the request of the US for his alleged role in a scheme — along with Armenian-American



Levon Termendzhyan

organized criminal Levon Termendzhyan and members of a secretive Mormon sect — that defrauded the US government of roughly US\$500 million in fraudulent bio-fuel tax credits. Korkmaz is alleged to have laundered over \$133 million of the money through accounts in Turkey and Luxembourg. The US government will seek Korkmaz's extradition to Utah to face trial, the DOJ said. His alleged co-conspirators, Termendzhyan and brothers Jacob and Isaiah Kingston, have already been convicted in separate proceedings.

A joint investigation by OCCRP and



Baran Korkmaz

Law&Crime in March revealed that Korkmaz played a key role in facilitating a 2018 backchannel trip to Turkey by two figures associated with then-U.S. President Trump, former CIA director James Woolsey and current Republican National Committee co-chair Tommy Hicks Jr. The trip was aimed at securing the freedom of Andrew Brunson, an evangelical pastor then imprisoned in Turkey.

Korkmaz was also part of a broader Turkish effort, revealed by OCCRP last year, to quietly influence the Trump administration through a series of middlemen and business associates, many of whom have since faced criminal investigation and trial.

Korkmaz's case has also proved to be

a headache for Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Korkmaz is alleged to have cultivated ties with senior Turkish officials, and has been pictured alongside Erdogan. The Turkish President has sought to have all pictures of him and Korkmaz together scrubbed from the internet. Turkey has sought Korkmaz's arrest and extradition on separate charges.

Korkmaz's attorney in Turkey, Volkan Murat Dülger, told local media that the businessman wants to stand trial in Turkey, and not in the US, as he is likely to face a much shorter prison sentence if convicted. Turkish newspaper *Sözcü* reported that Korkmaz stayed silent while appearing before a Vienna judge on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL

Turkish Officials Defend Journalist's Violent Arrest at Istanbul Pride March

By Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) — Senior Turkish officials are seeking to justify the violent weekend attack on Agence France Presse photographer Bulent Kilic as he was covering a Pride march in Istanbul, part of a broader pattern of state-incited violence against journalists seeking to document government abuse, rights groups say.

All four deputy interior ministers took to Twitter to push back against the main opposition's denunciations of the attack, which also saw dozens of LGBTI protestors subjected to police assault. Pride marches have been banned for the past seven years amid an escalating campaign to criminalize Turkey's remarkably resilient gay community.

"Detaining those who resist the police during illegal demonstrations is not barbarity," wrote Mehmet Ersoy, shifting blame on the victim much as his fellow deputy ministers did.

The attack on Kilic has sparked indignation among fellow journalists with 14 media organizations planning separate rallies in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara tomorrow to protest violence against the press. The conflict has escalated ever since the government issued a circular just before May 1, when government protests typically occur, banning audio visual recordings of citizens and police at public rallies.

"There was an attempt on my life," Kilic declared in a series of tweets illustrated by photographs showing police officers pinning him to the ground and stepping on his back and his neck. He has vowed to seek justice "for as long as I live."

Kilic was briefly detained on grounds of "resisting police," a catchall justification for detaining thousands of protestors and journalists in recent years.

Eyewitnesses say Kilic was shoved to the ground, his hands cuffed behind his back as police placed their feet on his spine. "Bulent said, 'I am a journalist' and one of them responded 'I don't care.' Another of

them put his foot on Bulent's neck and he shouted 'I can't breathe.' At that point we all rushed to help," recalled Haci Biskin, a photojournalist for the online independent news outlet Duvar. "Police demanded he show them his press card even as his hands were cuffed, it was farcical," he told AI-Monitor. Police then approached Biskin and told him to delete the photos.

"I refused," he said. When they contin-

pendent news portal Bianet, said violence against journalists has been on the rise ever since Suleyman Soylu, the scandal-spattered interior minister, took power in the wake of the failed coup to overthrow Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in July 2016. The hawkish Soylu has been at the forefront of spiraling repression, notably against the Kurdish movement.

Onderoglu noted Bianet had document-

flag of Erdogan's informal coalition ally Devlet Bahceli, leader of the far-right Nationalist Movement Party. The distinction allows Erdogan to distance himself from some of the thuggery. However, Soylu has been under growing pressure ever since fugitive mobster Sedat Peker unleashed a series of incriminating videos detailing alleged corruption by him and his various associates on a massive scale. The pressure appears to have propelled the minister to act even more boldly to assert his continued grip as the AKP continues to bleed in opinion polls.

LGBTI people are among the favorite targets of Turkish police, who operate under Soylu's authority. Emma Sinclair-Webb, Turkey director for Human Rights Watch, said the government was being "opportunistically homophobic." She told AI-Monitor, "They are trying to mop up conservative elements outside the party by appealing to them on culture wars."

The past month has seen the climate of impunity grow even darker, notably with the murder of Deniz Poyraz at the Izmir headquarters of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) on June 17. The gunman, identified as Onur Gencer, later confessed he had entered the building "with the intention to kill everyone who might have been in the office at the time." It was no random act of violence. It emerged that Gencer had spent time in Syria, trained at a weapons range and had spent time snooping within the HDP building, which is closely surveilled by police. "It's inconceivable that they were unable to spot this guy who was casing the joint and taking a language class in the same building," Sinclair-Webb said.

The manner of Gencer's eventual arrest stood in stark contrast with that of Kilic. "He was extremely politely marched to the police car. He was treated like royalty. I haven't seen anyone who has committed such an atrocity treated with such kid gloves," Sinclair-Webb added.



Photographer Bulent Kilic being arrested by police.

ued to harass Biskin he told them, "Just arrest me" and walked away.

"They eventually gave up," Biskin said.

The Istanbul Security Directorate claimed in a statement on June 29 that it had "realized" that Kilic — who was carrying a camera at the time of the incident — was a reporter only after he was taken to the police station for questioning along with 45 protestors.

Erol Onderoglu, a Turkey representative for the Paris-based advocacy group Reporters Without Borders who also leads the media monitoring team at the online inde-

ed over 150 physical attacks against journalists since Soylu took over the ministry in August 2016. "There's been a growing sense of impunity among the police whereby they feel, sense that if they attack a journalist who is critical of power they won't be punished for it," Onderoglu told AI-Monitor. The phenomenon has intensified since the March 2019 municipal elections, which saw Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lose Istanbul and Ankara to the opposition.

Though formally a member of the AKP, ideologically speaking Soylu carries the

Gunman Kills Woman Volunteering for Turkey's Pro-Kurdish Party

By Nazlan Ertan

IZMIR, Turkey (AI-Monitor) — A gunman attacked the headquarters of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in Izmir, the third-largest city of Turkey, June 17, killing a 38-year-old volunteer.

The gunman's initial statement said that he acted alone, but several opposition politicians demanded further inquiry into his ties, particularly after his Instagram account showed him toting guns in Manbij, Syria. HDP members also accused the government of making the party a target with repetitive accusations that HDP was a threat to national security.

"This was an attack that was coming," HDP co-chair Mithat Sancar said at a press conference in Ankara. "This government feeds on chaos and tries to stifle the opposition, particularly the HDP, through all means. Those who have not dealt with us through legal and political means have now mobilized their killers. The government has put its chaos plans into action."

He added that the attack could have become a massacre if the HDP had not decided at the last minute to postpone a meeting of 40 local chairs scheduled for the morning.

The HDP, Turkey's third-largest party with 55 seats in the 583-strong parliament, is under threat of closure after a top prosecutor refiled an indictment earlier

this month to ban nearly 500 of its members from political office on terror-related charges. The legal move is coupled with growing political pressure from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its ally the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which repeatedly link the HDP to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party. MHP chair Devlet Bahceli said June 8 that the Constitutional Court had a moral duty to ensure that the HDP would be wiped from the political landscape of Turkey, never to return under another name.

"The government as a whole is responsible for this attack. [It] uses hate speech, enmity and methods of polarization to provoke conflict. ... It is responsible for this murder ... and massacres that will be committed in the future," Sancar said.

The party's Izmir deputy Serpil Kemalbay told AI-Monitor that they had warned the local police that they needed better protection, particularly after anti-Kurdish demonstrations in front of the building earlier this month.

She said that the gunman entered the party offices at 10:30, when Deniz Poyraz was there alone. "She was there to tell us that her mother, who is our regular office worker, would not come on that day," Kemalbay told AI-Monitor. "I was on my way to the office."

The gunman shot Poyraz, then fired shots at the doors of the locked offices and

tried to start a fire before he was stopped by the police, she said.

Poyraz' mother, Fehime, sat in front of the building under a makeshift poster of her daughter with a large crowd offering condolences. "I was not allowed to see her as they took her away," she told AI-Monitor. "But I am proud, proud that my Deniz is a martyr."

She had named her daughter after Deniz Gezmiş, a Marxist-Leninist student leader in the 1960s who was executed, she said.

According to a statement from the Izmir governor's office, the attacker was 27-year-old O.G. — later revealed as Onur Gencer — a health care worker who had recently resigned from his job.

"I am not with any organization. I staged the attack because I hate the Kurdistan Workers Party and have been plotting an attack on them since I was a kid," Gencer said in his statement to the police. He said that he had been to Manbij as a health care worker in 2020.

But opposition politicians, both from the HDP and the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), said it was impossible to believe that this man who arrived in the office heavily armed had no connections.

"The Instagram photos — a man carrying an M-16 at a camp claimed to be in Syria and making the [Gray Wolves] sign — indicate that this man was trained at an

incubation center," Garo Paylan, the HDP deputy of Diyarbakir, told HalkTV.

"This is a fascist attack," CHP Izmir deputy Murat Bakan said on HalkTV. "It indicates the presence of an illicit, paramilitary formation. ... There are many rumors and all of them should be very carefully investigated. Remember the murder of Hrant Dink [the Armenian-Turkish journalist killed in 2007], which was initially presented as a lone wolf crime by a 19-year-old but later revealed a dark web that touched the depths of the state."

Bahceli denied that the gunman had any links to the MHP. "No one has the right to accuse the MHP or try to tie a criminal to us because of a hand gesture," he tweeted, claiming that the photos looked staged.

While the CHP, the Iyi Parti and the AKP offered condolences to the HDP, there has not been any statement from the government so far. Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu was conspicuously silent at a meeting with governors.

But Soylu's nemesis Sedat Peker, a fugitive mobster who has been implicating AKP members and cronies in myriad crimes, would not keep quiet. "My dear friends, unfortunately, in the coming days, we will experience much bigger attacks than this provocative attack on the HDP's Izmir offices," he said, calling on supporters of the party "not to go on the streets under any circumstances."



Community News

No Concessions To Erdogan, Says US Senator Bob Menendez

By Alexis Papachelas

WASHINGTON (Ekathimerini.com) — No concessions should be made to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan “without a significant behavior change,” US Senator Bob Menendez, a Democrat and chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee said in an interview. Menendez notes that Turkey continues to display provocative behavior with regard to “destabilizing actions” in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as over the purchase of the Russian S-400 missile defense system, its “support for autocrats in Azerbaijan and its undemocratic treatment of the Turkish people.”



Sen. Robert Menendez

“The US-Greece bilateral relationship has never been stronger, and defense cooperation is a key pillar,” notes the senator, who has repeatedly expressed his support of Greece’s rights against Turkish challenges in the Aegean and also played a pivotal role in Washington’s recognition of the Armenian genocide. Menendez, moreover, expects US President Joe Biden to continue maintaining a firm stance toward his Turkish counterpart, and believes that the 3+1 partnership between Cyprus, Greece, Israel and the United States can bring significant benefits to the region.

Senator, there is still a lot of excitement in Greece and the region over your landmark Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act and the policy changes that followed from it. What developments since the East Med Act led you to come up with the US-Greece Defense and Inter-parliamentary Act?

The goal of this new legislation is to build on the important momentum in our security relationship due to the work of Ambassador Geoffrey R. Pyatt and successive Greek governments. The US-Greece bilateral relationship has never been stronger, and defense cooperation is a key pillar. We thought that it was important to have a congressional component to all the good work done so far and set a vision for the future.

When Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis visited Washington, you, Senator Marco Rubio and Senator James Risch presented him with a signed and framed copy of the East Med Act. And in this new act, the overwhelming focus is on Greece again. We know that the US has invested heavily in the bilateral relationship with Israel. Do you believe that increased investment by Washington in the relationship with Athens is key to a new Eastern Mediterranean strategy for the US?

See MENENDEZ, page 7



Students with their laptops

Hye Hopes Completes First and Second Programs for Forcibly Displaced Youth Of Artsakh in Syunik Region

KAPAN, ARMENIA — Hye Hopes, Inc. is a nonprofit based in Burbank, Calif., established in November 2020, with the mission of providing critical and essential educational resources along with teacher professional development and social emotional services for the forcibly displaced youth of Artsakh living in the Syunik region.

Hye Hopes, Inc. announces the successful completion of its first and second sessions in Kapan, the capital of the Syunik region, on March 12, and May 28, respectively. The two 8-week educational programs included more than 200 students in two schools from 2nd through 11th grades.

Displaced students from Hadrut, Jabrayil and Shushi arrived in Kapan throughout the implementation of the Hye Hopes’ program and Hye Hopes was able to provide educational assistance to the displaced children. The Hye Hopes initiative provided over 60 laptops for both students and teacher stations for schools N1 & N3 in Kapan and School N1 in Meghri. In addition to providing computers, Hye Hopes donated projectors, printers and robotic kits to support the students with remote synchronized instruction by teachers from California and throughout the United States of America.

The online classes included art, mathematics, python, coding, English, science, physics and electronics/robotics. The students were presented with certificates of completion upon the culmination of the second session. “The students showed advanced skills in subject matter and were quick to learn how to use the technology they were given,” stated Hye Hopes Vice President of Educational and Program Affairs, Seran Krikorian. Fifth grade volunteer teacher, Ani Yeghiyan stated, “I could sense how eager they [the students] were to learn and were so excited about answering questions in class. It is an incredible experience getting to interact with and getting to know the students in Kapan and I am grateful to Hye Hopes for the opportunities I’ve had as a teacher.”

On his most recent trip to the Syunik region, Hye Hopes founder Greg Krikorian, visited over 25 schools in the cities of Kapan, Meghri, Goris and Sisian in order to see HOPE, page 7



Students in Kapan receiving their certificates

Turkish National Charged with Wire Fraud and Illegally Exporting Defense Articles to Turkey

BOSTON — A Turkish national was arrested on June 22 and charged in federal court in Boston in connection with fraudulently having various parts and machine components for the United States military made by a Turkish manufacturer in violation of arms regulations.

Arif Ugur, 52, formerly of Cambridge, Mass., was charged by criminal complaint with one count of wire fraud, one count of violating the Arms Export Control Act and one count of conspiring to violate the Arms Export Control Act. Ugur was arrested today in Virginia and will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

The criminal complaint alleges that in approximately May 2015, Ugur founded and was the sole managing partner of the Anatolia Group Limited Partnership (Anatolia), a domestic limited partnership registered in Massachusetts. Beginning in approximately July 2015, Ugur bid on and acquired numerous contracts to supply the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) with a variety of machine parts and hardware items intended for use by the United States military. Many of these contracts required that the parts be manufactured in the United States. In his initial bids and in subsequent email communications with DOD representatives, it is alleged that Ugur falsely claimed that Anatolia was manufacturing the parts in the United States. In fact, Anatolia and Ugur had no manufacturing facilities in the United States or elsewhere. Instead, Ugur allegedly contracted with a Turkish manufacturer to make the parts and then passed them off to DOD as if they had been manufactured by Anatolia in the United States.

It is further alleged that Ugur shared technical specifications and drawings of various DOD parts and components with employees of the Turkish manufacturer so that they could produce the parts for Anatolia. Ugur also allegedly provided employees of the Turkish manufacturer and other Turkish nationals with access to DOD’s online library of technical specifications and drawings. Many of the parts that Ugur contracted to provide, and did provide to DOD, were designated as defense articles under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and the United States Munitions List (USML). Thus, an export license was required to export the parts and related technical data (drawings, specifications, etc.) from the United States to Turkey. The complaint alleges that Ugur knew of these restrictions, but nonetheless exported technical data controlled under the ITAR and USML to employees of the Turkish manufacturer without an export license.

The charge of violating the Arms Export Control Act provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in see FRAUD, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

Boston Globe's Anush Elbakyan Wins Two More Emmy Awards

BOSTON (Public Radio of Armenia) — The *Boston Globe's* award-winning producer and multimedia journalist Anush Elbakyan won two Emmy Awards at the 44th Boston/New England Emmy Awards Virtual Ceremony on June 26.

"Several hours ago Anush Elbakyan received two more Emmy Awards, making the seventh award for her," her father Arthur Elbakyan wrote on Facebook.

He recalled that just a few days ago the journalist won 2021 Pulitzer Prize, one of the most prestigious awards.

Anush Elbakyan won three Emmy Awards in 2019 for a story called "Losing Laura" and two awards in 2020.

Additionally, she has won numerous other prestigious awards. In 2014 Elbakyan and her team were awarded with a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings.

Elbakyan is the senior video editor and the video director for the *Boston Globe*. Elbakyan oversees the production and distribution of the *Globe's* original video content, while also managing video business operations and leading the digital video strategy.

Elbakyan manages a team of video producers and coordinates the daily video news operation. She launched and served as executive producer for the political digital video series "Ground Game," "Live Political Happy Hour" and the food series "Smart Cooks."



Hye Hopes Completes Programs for Forcibly Displaced Youth

HOPE, from page 6

provide a needs assessment and help develop strategic areas for Hye Hopes to best continue supporting the Armenian youth. "Our teachers, staff, parents and students are grateful for Hye Hopes during challenging times for Armenia. Our students were eager and excited to work on the new laptops, which for many of them is their first time working on Lenovo & HP Laptops," stated Lusine Zarkaryan, Principal of N1 School in Kapan.

The Hye Hopes program provides training for volunteer teachers as well as teachers in Armenia in areas of remote learning such as setting up Zoom and Google Classrooms and also provides training for Mental Health and Social Emotional assistance. "The first two sessions were a great success for distance learning, social-emotional support for students, as well as staff training in Kapan. Our volunteers and teachers provided social-emotional support for students through different activities designed to foster self-awareness, resilience and other qualities necessary for healthy development and high achievement," stated Executive Board member Dr. Alina Vehuni. To further professional and educational development in the Syunik region, Greg Krikorian is excited to report the collaboration with Teach for Armenia, TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, Armenian American School Psychologist Association (AASPA), CODE-3 Angels and Davidian/Mariamian Educational Foundation. Hye Hopes Inc. is looking forward to the future with great anticipation as these and future collaborations will ensure innovative opportunities and additional educational resources to the Syunik region.

To volunteer or to collaborate with Hye Hopes, email info@hyehopes.org.

Turkish National Charged With Wire Fraud and Illegally Exporting Defense Articles to Turkey

FRAUD, from page 6

prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million, or twice the gross gain or loss of the offense. The charge of conspiring to violate the Arms Export Control Act provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss of the offense. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Patrick J. Hegarty, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Northeast Field Office; William S. Walker, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigation in Boston; and William Higgins, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Boston Field Office made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jason A. Casey and Timothy H. Kistner of Mendell's National Security Unit are prosecuting the case.

Details contained in the criminal complaint are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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OBITUARY

Avak Avakian
WWII Decorated Veteran, Intellectual

CONCORD, Mass. — Avak Avakian, a notable World War II hero and intellectual, died on June 19. He was 97.

Born in Worcester in 1924, he was the son of Armenian immigrants who survived the Armenian Genocide. In spite of growing up during the depression era, he lived a rich life. In his youth, he was an altar boy at the Armenian church, held a paper route, frequented the Worcester boys club and excelled in his studies at school. He was the eldest of three and very close to his sister, Elizabeth, and brother Sarkis. These were the years that influenced him.

In 1943 he was drafted into the army and fought in the battle of the bulge. He was awarded three Battle Stars, a Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. Just a few years ago, he modestly accepted Frances’ highest military honor, the French Legion Medal of Honor in a distinguished ceremony at the French Consulate. It has only been awarded to select few veterans.

Through the GI bill he fulfilled his childhood dream of going to college and attended McGill University in Montreal graduating with top Honors in Chemistry. During this time he met his sweetheart, Rose Ansourlian, on an Armenian Moonlight cruise. They were married in 1951

and raised their children Marilyn, Paul and Jeffrey in Concord.

He was Vice President of GTE Government Systems. His career led him to travel the world from Moscow to China to Sri Lanka and beyond. He also served as an advisor to the National Academy of Science.

He was a voracious reader. Every morning with the *Boston Globe*, and always had 2 or 3 books going. Anybody who met him admired his knowledge and insight no matter the subject. He rooted for the underdog and always looked out for his fellow man. He had many interests including photography, the arts, jazz music, the Boston Symphony/Pops, golf, and old movies.

He was the son of the late Mariam and Boghos Avakian, brother of the late Sarkis and Elizabeth Avakian, husband of the late Rose Ansourlian, and father to Marilyn, Paul and Jeffrey Avakian. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Funeral Services were at St. Stephen’s Armenian Church on Thursday, July 1. Interment was at the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord.

Arrangements were by the Giragosian Funeral Home.



Anne (Berberian) Ohanian
Daughter of Genocide Survivors

WOBURN, Mass. — Anne (Berberian) Ohanian passed away peacefully on June 21, 2021, in Woburn at age 98.

Born January 24, 1923, Anne was the daughter of Khachadur and Sahaganush Berberian, survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

She was raised in Arlington and graduated from Arlington High School. In 1942, Anne married the late Arthur A. Ohanian and they shared 67 years of love, happiness and mutual respect, raising a family in Belmont.

A doting mother, Anne was a home-maker “par excellence”. She was famous among family and friends as a skillful baker of Armenian pastries, notably her *khadayif* and *beoregs*. Along with Arthur, she was the host to memorable holiday celebrations, summer *shish kebab* barbecues, and mid-winter skating parties (the “Frog Pond” at the Belmont Country Club was practically in the Belmont home back-

yard!).

Anne was a long and active member of St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown and a volunteer at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC).

She enjoyed travel, and Armenian music and dancing. She was talented at floral arranging, ceramics, jewelry beading and, more recently, painting. She liked to entertain all with her joke-telling and enjoyed competitive card games. And as a resident of 12 years at Brightview Senior Living in Woburn, Anne was the enthusiastic instructor of a weekly exercise class called “Stretch and Tone with Anne,” which she was able to continue into her 97th year until the onset of the Pandemic curtailed all social activities.

Anne’s family would like to thank the BrightView Community for the warm and welcoming home environment they offered to Anne, as well as the hospice team and



home health aides for their loving and gentle care in the last few weeks of her life.

Anne is survived by her brother Vahan Berberian and his wife Beverly. Beloved mother to her children Barbara Gumuchian of Woburn MA and her late husband Stephan Gumuchian, Joan Ohanian and her husband Mossik Hacobian of East Boston MA, and Peter Ohanian and his wife Suzan Messina of Windham NH. Loving grandmother to eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, “Auntie” to numerous nieces and nephews, and “Annie” to her many cousins. She was the sister of the late Nishan Berberian and his late wife Geraldine.

Funeral service was at Saint Stephen’s Armenian Church, 38 Elton Avenue, Watertown on Tuesday, June 29 and interment followed at Cambridge Cemetery, Cambridge.

Martin Kalustian
World War II Veteran

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Martin Kalustian of Arlington passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on June 20. He was 98 years old.

He was the beloved husband of the late Mary “Mimi” (Tomajian) Kalustian; the father of Dr. Albert A. Kalustian and his wife Dr. Anita Lurantos of Manchester and James M. Kalustian of Arlington; and brother of Paul Abrahamian and his wife Natalie of California. He is also survived by his nephews David and Gary Abrahamian.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Marie and Yvette Azor who lovingly cared for him.

Kalustian was a WW II veteran of the Army Air Corps.

He was a life Member for over 71 years of Golden Rule Lodge, AF & AM, Wakefield.

Funeral Services were held at Holy Trin-



ity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge on Friday, June 25. Interment followed at Newton Cemetery.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

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Donation

Dr. Jacques Gulekjian donated \$250 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and \$250 to *Baikar* in memory of his sister Sira Gulekjian.



COMMUNITY NEWS

No Concessions to Erdogan Says US Sen. Bob Menendez

MENENDEZ, from page 6

I do believe that Athens is key, due to a confluence of factors. The US has strong partners across the political spectrum in Greece. Likewise, Greece continues to have strong partners across the political spectrum in the United States. We need to solidify these gains so that the relationship can continue to grow in the future. With the 3+1 interaction among Cyprus, Greece, Israel and the United States at its core, there is no limit to the potential of these relationships and our cooperation in the region. For example, Greece is leading the way in Europe on climate and advancing the conversation on renewable energy. I am proud of the role that the Biden administration has played in advancing these initiatives and expect that we will see this aspect of the partnership expand further.

When you passed the East Med Act, you seemed to be dragging along a somewhat reluctant president.

Today, you have an administration that is certainly more clear-eyed about Turkey – as demonstrated in your latest public exchange with Secretary of State Antony Blinken – and one that has restated a commitment to the 3+1 over and over. How do you expect the Biden administration to receive your legislation and to capitalize on it if it passes?

I expect the administration will see this as the logical extension of President Biden's efforts since coming into office on the defense relationship. To be clear, I don't see this bill as an anti-Turkey piece of legislation – this is about our positive and constructive relationship with Greece and how we can build on positive momentum. A key element of this legislation is the establishment of an inter-parliamentary group to include elected officials from the Cypriot, Greek, Israeli and American legislatures. It is critical for us to play an enhanced role in ad-

vancing the 3+1 and representing the important views of our constituencies

Speaking of President Biden, do you think this legislation gave him extra leverage in his meeting last Wednesday with Turkish President Erdogan?

President Biden did not need any additional leverage when meeting with Erdogan last week. We already have plenty if we are willing to use it. I have every expectation that President Biden will continue to be firm with Erdogan and advance US national security interests when it comes to Turkey's purchases of the S-400, its destabilizing actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, its support for autocrats in Azerbaijan and its undemocratic treatment of the Turkish people. This should be the agenda of all of our meetings with Turkey and I strongly urge no concessions to Mr Erdogan without a significant behavior change in each of these areas.

Armenian Museum Commences Permanent Exhibition Schematic Design

GLENDAL — The Armenian American Museum has commenced the Schematic Design of the Permanent Exhibition — the core experience of the museum that will be dedicated to the history, culture, and heritage of the Armenian people and the Armenian-American experience.

The permanent exhibition will showcase the thousands of years of rich and vibrant Armenian history, educate the public on one of the darkest chapters in history in the Armenian Genocide, and celebrate the inspiring strength, resilience, and perseverance of the Armenian people and their vast contributions to society throughout the world. The Permanent Exhibition will combine signature spaces, interactive presentations, and rare artifacts to provide a unique, immersive, and impactful experience for every visitor to the museum.

The Schematic Design phase of the Permanent Exhibition is led by the museum's world-renowned exhibition design firm Gallagher & Associates, an internationally recognized interdisciplinary design studio with more than 20 years of experience in museum planning and design. G&A's notable projects include the National Center for Civil Rights and Human Rights, International Spy Museum, National Archives Museum, National Museum of American Jewish History, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, Grammy Museum, and more.

During the Schematic Design phase, the exhibition's key experiences are designed, key storylines are established, and key interactive and artifact opportunities are identified for the three-dimensional gallery space. The current phase follows the initial Master Plan phase completed in December 2019. The Schematic Design is anticipated to be completed in Fall 2021.

"We are pleased to share the exciting progress on the Permanent Exhibition of the Armenian American Museum," stated Executive Chairman Berdj Karapetian. "The Permanent Exhibition is going to be the signature experience of the museum and we look forward to the design and content bringing the exhibition experience to life through the Schematic Design."

The museum will be convening a Permanent Exhibition Committee comprised of scholars, artists, and thought leaders



Armenian American Museum Permanent Exhibition Master Plan Conceptual Design 2

in Summer 2021 to provide expertise and guidance on the content of the exhibition as Gallagher & Associates advances through the Schematic Design phase.

The Armenian American Museum has announced the historic Groundbreaking Ceremony of the landmark center on Sunday, July 11, at the future site of the museum in Central Park in Glendale.

The museum will rise to a two-level

50,820 square foot cultural and educational center in the heart of Southern California. The first level will feature the grand lobby, auditorium, learning center, demonstration kitchen, gift shop, and administrative offices. The second level will be dedicated to the permanent and temporary exhibition galleries as well as the collections archives.

For more information, visit <https://www.ArmenianAmericanMuseum.org>.

Donations for Nora Azadian



The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada would like to thank the followings for their donations to its Sponsor a Teacher Program in memory of Nora Azadian, along with the individuals mentioned in the prior issues of May 22, May 29, June 5, June 12 and June 19 of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator:

Vartkes and Rita Balian Family Foundation, Crystal City, VA \$500

Dr. Armen and Martha Demerjian, Watertown, MA \$200

Dr. Silva S. Karayan, Porter Ranch, CA \$200

Ara and Sonya Babayan, Glendale, CA \$200

Mr. and Mrs. Nerses Babayan, Saddle River, NJ \$200

Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul, Southfield, MI \$100

Harry and Patricia Kezelian, Bloomfield Hills, MI \$50



Armenian American Museum Armenia An Open Wound Temporary Exhibition

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator would like to thank the following readers for their kind and generous donations in support of our newspaper.

Margaret Mgrublian, Pasadena, CA \$500

Adour Adrouny, Crescent City, CA \$30

COMMUNITY NEWS

One Century Later YMCA Volunteers Honored For Saving Lives in Armenia during World War I

ELDER, from page 1
war and famine, the formation of the first Armenian Republic in 1918 and their humanitarian efforts that saved thousands of lives.
The exhibit organized by the Armenian National Institute (ANI) first was released digitally in Washington in 2018. Rouben Adalian, the director of ANI, tells me that years ago the institute received a precious donation, the

and contacted us. I was looking for the information, and little by little we were able to find out what the pictures were telling about. It was not only a discovery but also a reminder to them [David and Louise Elder] about what their father had done,” relates Dr. Adalian.
David and Louise Elder were the ones who received the honor and recognition for their late father at the reception at YMCA Glendale, traveling all the way from Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Mihran Toumanjan, the Western Region Director of the Armenian Assembly of America, in his speech emphasized the significance of the “American unsung heroes” who played an important role in saving Armenian people during the most difficult time of their history.



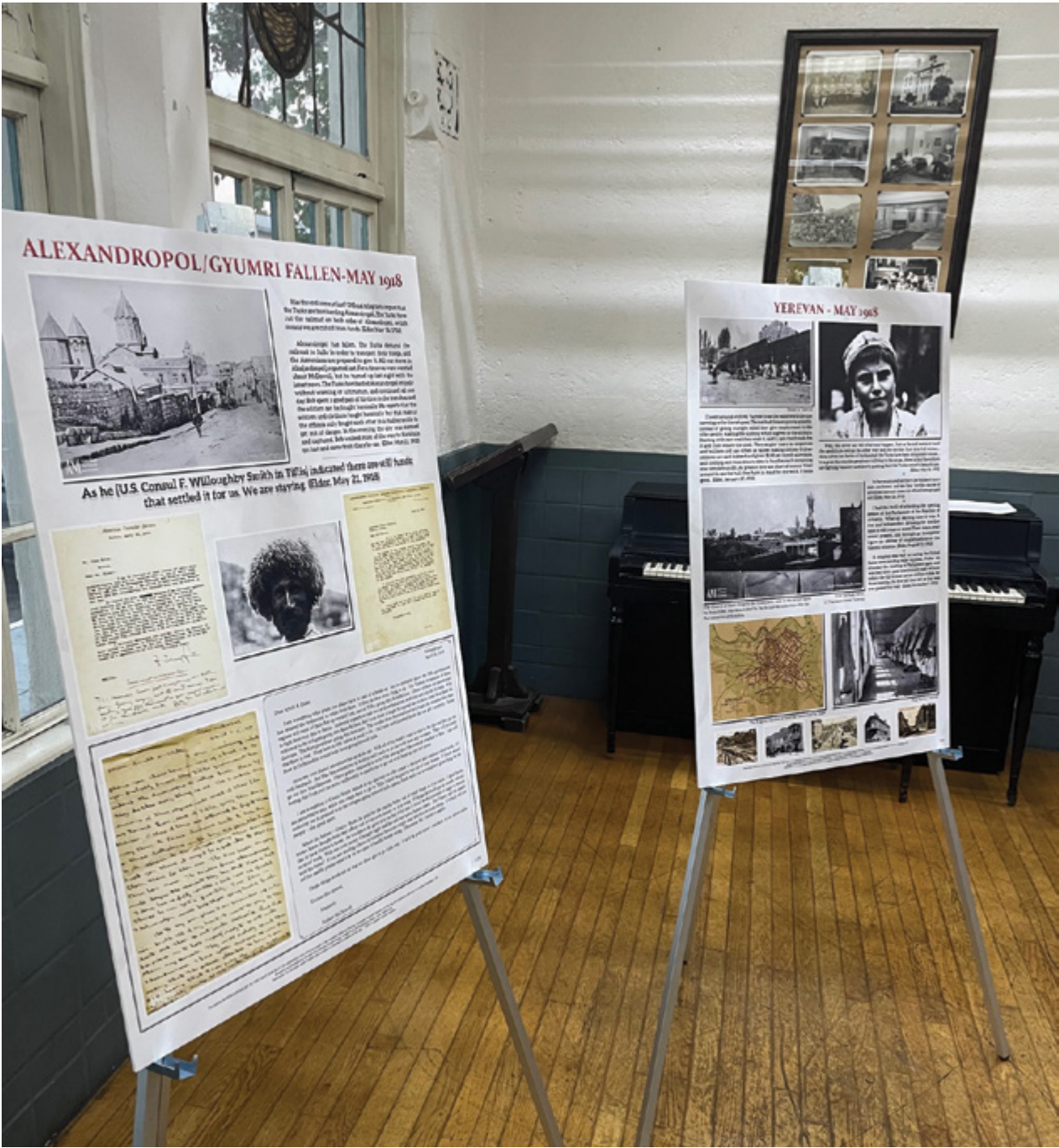
The photo of an orphan refugee from the exhibition tiny negatives of the photographs from John Elder’s wife Ruth, and only later, after immense research, continuous examination and communication with the latter’s children David and Louise Elder, was he able to assemble the whole picture by combining the stories from his diary and their memories. “Before creating the exhibition, ANI posted the pictures on its website. The Elders saw them

into Turkish hands. Capt. Gracey considers this very serious and disappointing... Consul Smith advises all Americans to leave at once, on a special train which may be the last. With considerable difficulty secured permission to stay for the present. Arrol staying also, and there are three members of the Gracey Mission. The next day the others all left, 24 in all” (Elder, March 14, 1918). This is an ex-



Siblings David Elder and Louise Elder, children of John Elder

cerpt from John Elder’s diary that is a part of the exhibit.
John’s son David Elder remembers how his father came up with different ideas to pay people for food and services
continued on next page



Mihran Toumanjan, Western Region Director of the Armenian Assembly of America



Dr. Rouben Adalian, director of the Armenian National Institute



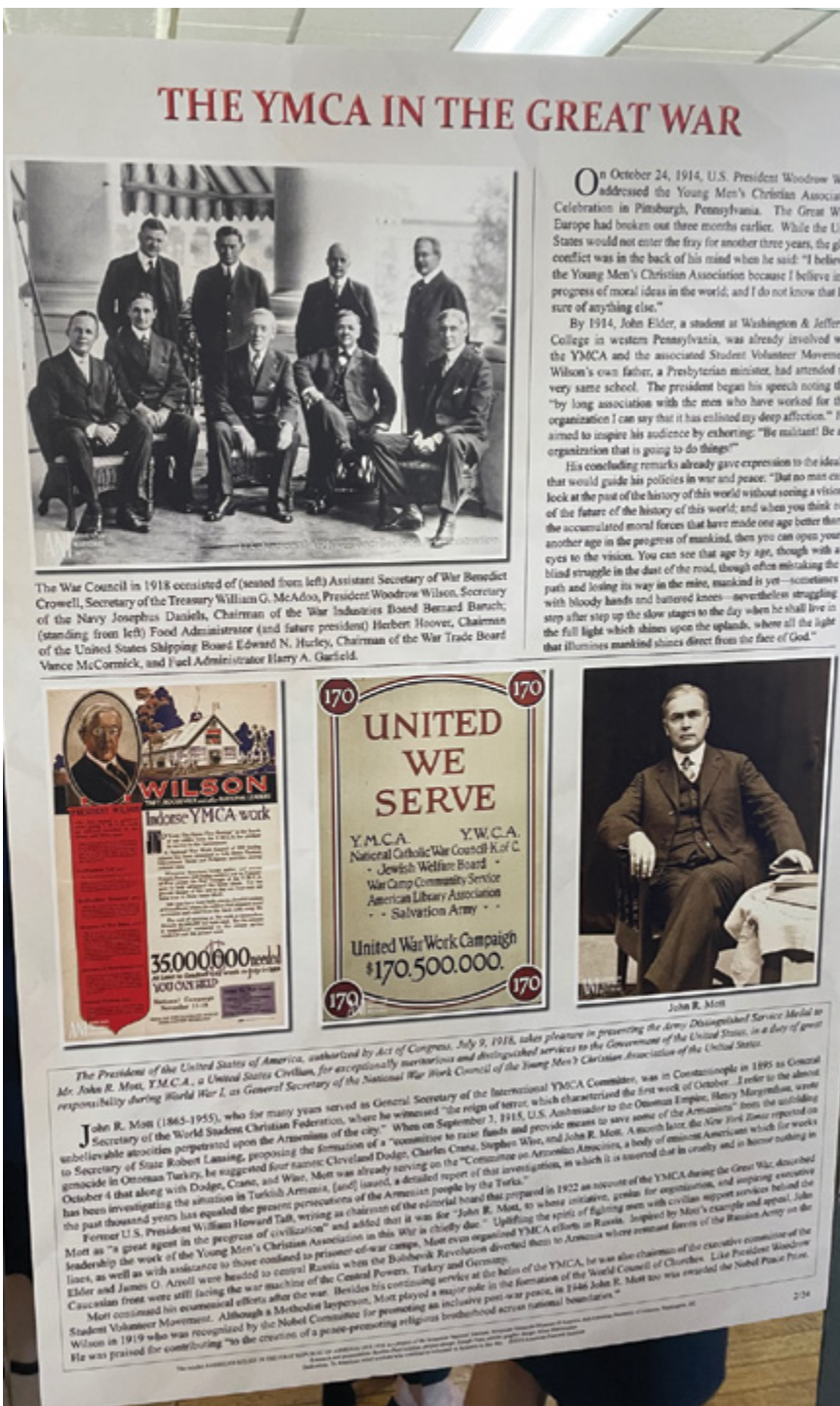
COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page
even when the funding from the US government stopped. People trusted him because of his dedication. In addition to all the stories presented in the exhibit, David remembers those that are cherished within his family circle with a smile. “He was telling a story that once, he went with other people to get grain, and they needed to pass a water tower. A man, an Azeri, was working at that tower and blocking their way to get the grain. At that time all the foreigners were given a gun to protect themselves. He never really used it,” David tells me. “Imagine the scene: my dad, not very tall, blond hair, blue eyes, very different from people in that region at that time.” Louise Elder joins our conversation with excitement. “Anyway,” David Elder continues, “the Azeri man didn’t want them go further to get the grain [for Armenian]. He was pretending that there was a problem with the water. My dad, very furious, came to the tower and said to the man ‘if it is not fixed in two min-

utes, there will be only one person at it’. The man got scared and let them go.”
David also remembers how his father was telling them that he always felt an attachment to the children he helped and the managers who worked in Armenia with him. He cherished the connections that he kept during the years. And only by sharing stories from time to time was he able to cope with the trauma he endured as a volunteer.
Besides the memories, the Elders now have another family heirloom to cherish: a silver bowl with a lid which was found only by an accident while arranging some items in the attic. The bowl has an engraving which says that it was given to Captain Elder by the government of Armenia as a farewell gift.
David and Louise Elder received honors and speeches full of appreciation for their father’s work from many elected California state and city officials, the consul general of Armenia in Los Angeles Armen Baibourtian, and various organizations.



The bowl that was given to John Elder by the government of Armenia in 1919





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Arts & Culture

Karabakh Churches Featured at Washington’s Museum of The Bible

WASHINGTON — On June 24 a presentation titled “Ancient Faith: The Churches of Nagorno Karabakh” was held at the Museum of the Bible celebrating the launch of a new on-line exhibition documenting the sacred sites of the remarkable sites of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh).

Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the USA Varuzhan Nersesyan in his remarks highlighted this initiative and expressed his gratitude to all the organizers of the event. The ambassador presented the situation in Nagorno Karabakh and its religious and cultural heritage after the 44-day war launched by Azerbaijan, including the bombardment of Sourb Ghazanchechots Cathedral in Shushi and the demolition of Kanach Jam (located in Shushi) and Zoravor Holy Mother of God (located in Mekhaka-



Amb. Varuzhan Nersesyan

van) churches shortly after the war. Nersesyan highlighted this initiative as another platform to introduce the vast Armenian cultural and religious heritage of Artsakh to the international community.

During the virtual panel discussion Very Rev. Proto-Archimandrite Shahan Ananyan and Professor Christina Maranci presented the history of Armenian religious sites in Nagorno Karabakh, the risks they currently face and the need to preserve these irreplaceable churches and material culture.



Flyer for first Armenian Creatives meeting, July, 2018 (image courtesy of Arevm-edyan Hayastan)

Armenian Creatives *Where Innocence Is Bliss*

By Arpi Sarafian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — In July 2018, a group of Armenian artists residing in Brooklyn, New York, formed Armenian Creatives to fulfill “an urgent need for togetherness . . . to hold a space that we couldn’t find prior.” Ever since the group’s inception, these emerging artists have been getting together for monthly free-form get-togethers to exchange artistic ideas, discuss projects, and “to cultivate a community of integral support and infectious creativity.” These workshops, usually potluck events at the members’ homes, are models of collaboration. One member describes the group as “a composition of people inherently based on negotiation through its very acts of gathering.”

Armenian Creatives 01: Transcription__the Space Before Translation (Winter 2021) is the group’s inaugural publication in a projected series of bi-annual publications. The book enacts a whole process of initiating a workshop, of inviting, meeting and conversing, with the focus always on the activity at hand, never on the end product. One would hesitate to even describe the publication as a “book,” a word replete with connotations of authorship and of a finished product. Indeed, *Transcription__the Space Before Translation* attempts to deconstruct the traditional perception of a book, focusing instead on the archival documentation of the group’s activities, “not only to tell stories of the past or to exist for future eyes, but to balance the presence shared in a moment.” The book’s 114 pages validate the process by which it came into being, ultimately making the process the product.

Assembled in *Armenian Creatives 01* are the invitations to the monthly get-togethers, thoughtfully and tastefully designed meeting flyers, instructions to prepare for the workshops, transcriptions of entire conversations at the meetings, and much more. Every featured item evidences the support the members have for one another. There are no hierarchies here, no author’s name on the book cover. The contributors are listed, but not matched with their specific contributions in the table of contents. Even members who attended the meetings, but who are not featured in the publication, are humbly acknowledged in the credits. These creatives certainly practice what they preach. The respect they have for one another is palpable on the pages of their compilation.

Most appealing is the enthusiasm, and also the seriousness, with which the members approach their various tasks. For example, these young adults make no attempt to mask their thrill at discovering an old Armenian proverb like *chem oozar, krbans teer, Arevn ampi dak chi mnah*, or *tershoo yeghank*. For the most part, the meetings revolve around simple topics like a favorite recipe, a family photograph, or a word or utterance used as a catalyst for discussion. These discussions may not involve complex proposals, yet they engage the reader with their relevance to her own experiences and their sophistication. An interesting segment is the conversation around the word *odar*, where each member was asked to share her relationship to the word and of how she has lived with it. Another interesting exercise involves the discussion of disappearance in memory and architecture. The many photographs and the illustrations, on the other hand, the

see CREATIVES, page 15

The Armenian Photographer Who Captured Life in Gaza on Camera

By Razmig Bedirian

PARIS (TheNationalNews.com) — When Kegham Djeghalian stumbled upon three red boxes tucked away and forgotten in his father’s wardrobe in Cairo three years ago, he couldn’t believe his luck.

The boxes contained the negatives of more than 1,000 photographs taken between the 1940s and the 1970s by Djeghalian’s grandfather, also named Kegham, who founded Gaza’s first photography studio.

“I grew up with the knowledge that my grandfather was the first photographer of Gaza and one of the most important,” Djeghalian, an artist and academic, tells *The National*. “It was a given. Something I grew up hearing. But I never saw his professional photos until I discovered the negatives.”

They were not categorized in any discernible order. There were no accompanying materials dating them or listing the names of those photographed. But the clutter of film rolls was the closest Djeghalian had come to his grandfather’s work and adopted hometown, and were the most vital evidence of his legacy.

Djeghalian took them to Paris, where he lives, and began developing them. The photographs he chanced upon were shown to the public for the first time in March, as part of an exhibition curated by Djeghalian for Cairo Photo Week.

The images are as stirring as they are informative of Gaza. Some are portraits and show subjects of various ethnicities, smiling and looking dreamily off-frame. Others show military personnel and gatherings, such as picnics and even costume parties. Varied and uplifting, the images provide a precious historical insight into the scarcely documented daily life of Gaza in the mid-20th century, before the Israeli blockade and heavy bombardment of the Strip.

Some are even an indication of how the city would look if it weren’t suffering from shortages of food, water and medical aid.

The images were exhibited similarly to how they were found: without names or dates. “I embraced this ambiguity in order to articulate the affective and the nostalgic, but also to acknowledge the disrupted narratives and contexts of Kegham’s story and his photos,” Djeghalian writes in the exhibition statement.

Originally from Armenia, Djeghalian’s grandfather, Kegham, travelled to Jerusalem as a toddler with other survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

He grew up in Jerusalem and Jaffa, working in a photo studio where he learnt the foundations of the craft. Then, in the early 1940s, he moved to Gaza with his wife, establishing his studio, Photo Kegham, in 1944.

see PHOTOGRAPHER, page 13



ARTS & CULTURE

The Armenian Photographer Who Captured Life in Gaza on Camera

PHOTOGRAPHER, from page 12

“He saw a business opportunity, I think,” Djeghalian says. “He was advised to go precisely because there were no photographers and no photo studio in Gaza. Unlike in Jaffa and Jerusalem, there were also hardly any Armenian families there.”

Business acumen may have inspired Kegham to move to Gaza and open a photo studio, but it was his sharp documentarian’s eye that drove him to photograph everything he saw and made him an influential figure in the community.

“He was not a photojournalist,” Djeghalian says. “He did not work for any publications. He just had this urge to document everything.”

Kegham photographed the social and political developments in Gaza for almost four decades.

During its turbulent transition periods, he was there, documenting daily life under the British mandate, which ended in 1948, as well as the Egyptian rule between 1949 and 1956, and again from 1957 to 1967.

He also photographed the refugee camps that sprouted around the suburbs of Gaza after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and documented the Israeli occupation of Gaza in 1956 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict.

Djeghalian says sometimes Kegham played a more active role with the Palestinian resistance than simply documenting the struggle under Israeli occupation.

“I found out that my grandfather was working with Egyptian intelligence in 1967, when Israel occupied Gaza,” he says. “He would send them negatives not only from Gaza, but from a network of Armenian pho-



Artist and academic Kegham Djeghalian found negatives that belonged to his late grandfather in Cairo. Courtesy Kegham Djeghalian

audio installation at the exhibition.

“Through word of mouth I met someone in London who is from Gaza and he happened to be the 12-year-old boy who was charged with actually transporting these negatives to Egypt. He told me my grandfather was extremely patriotic and a supporter of the Palestinian cause. He had even earned the nickname Al Musawer Al Fedai [The Guerrilla Photographer].”

While his family left Palestine for Egypt shortly before the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, Kegham refused to leave until his death in 1981. “He loved Palestine,” Djeghalian says. “He loved Gaza. It was his home.”

After his death, Kegham passed his photo studio on to his assistant, Maurice. When Maurice died, he left the studio and its archive to his brother, Marwan.

After finishing art school in 2007, Dje-

ghalian developed an interest in recovering his grandfather’s archive.

A few years later, Djeghalian got his hands on a few postcards that showed pictures of the Gazan landscape. To his surprise, some of the postcards credited Photo Kegham. Djeghalian says he then came across Facebook posts showing photographs of Gaza that were also taken by his grandfather. So, in 2017, he decided to reach out to Marwan.

While the negatives Djeghalian found in his father’s wardrobe are valuable in their own right, Djeghalian says they are merely a sliver of the trove that exists in Gaza, which he hopes to access in the future. For now, though, he says he is looking forward to compiling the photographs he found for a book and exhibiting them again around the world.

Djeghalian says he is most of all glad that he was finally able to get an understanding



Photo by Kegham Djaghelain

tographers working in the West Bank.”

How did Djeghalian come to know this? While researching for his Cairo exhibition, he conducted and recorded a series of interviews with people who had known Kegham. Some were played as part of an



A picnic in Gaza (Courtesy Kegham Djeghalian)

Even though Marwan did not grant access to the archives directly, he offered to show Djeghalian a few photographs through Zoom calls.

The pictures show some of the most important moments of Gaza’s political and cultural history. There are images of Ahmed Al Shukeiri, founder and first president of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as of Che Guevara during his visit to Gaza in 1959.

of his grandfather’s work and talk to people who knew him, something he says he would not have set out to do if he had easy access to the archives in Gaza.

“It didn’t feel like he was just a photographer,” Djeghalian says. “People had a personal connection with him. It explained why people had this sense of nostalgia when they met me and learnt I was Kegham’s grandson and that we shared a name. I got to know he was quite a figure.”

MIRROR SEEKS SUMMER INTERN

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer

(mid-July through August). The intern will receive a weekly \$150 stipend provided through the Armenian Students’ Association of America’s Internship Program.

The intern should be in college or graduate school. If interested, please contact Aram Arkun at tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4420



ARTS & CULTURE

In the Kitchen: Artist Nina Katchadourian on How to Make the Hilariously Complicated Armenian Soup Recipe She Learned From Her Late Aunt

By Sarah Cascone

NEW YORK (ArtNet) — While many of us continue to work from home, we’re checking in with artists about the creativity they’ve been cooking up in their kitchens.

When [Nina Katchadourian](#) asked her Auntie Nora — Nora Tour-Sarkissian, technically her father’s cousin — to teach her to make *kufteli yaghene*, a beloved Armenian soup, the family matriarch was not encouraging.

“She kind of metaphorically raised her eyebrow and said, ‘That is a very hard recipe. Why don’t we start with something simpler?’” Katchadourian told ArtNet News.

It was 2010, and Katchadourian, who grew up in California, was interested in learning some of the recipes that her father’s Armenian family had brought over from Turkey, where an ethnic-cleansing campaign carried out by the Ottoman Empire killed up to 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1917. Her own great-grandfather was murdered during earlier riots in the late 1800s.

The violence inflicted on the Armenian people is something that Katchadourian’s family still carries with it. The [Armenian Genocide](#) was finally formally recognized by US President Joe Biden in April, just days after Auntie Nora, who was in her 90s, died of cancer.

“I wish Auntie Nora had lived to see it happen,” Katchadourian said. “She lived an amazing life, with a lot of displacement and hardship.”

That diasporic family history is also reflected in the artist’s work. “Cumulus,” Katchadourian’s current exhibition at Pace Gallery, includes a print, *Lucy’s Sampler*, that traces the designs of a needlepoint em-

her life, but also acknowledging that her lifelong labor was taking care of other people,” Katchadourian said.

The show also highlights a different kind of family. “The Genealogy of the Supermarket” (2005–) offers a playful family tree teasing out resemblances between different mascots drawn from supermarket shelves, such as the Sun-Maid Girl, the Gerber Baby, and Chef Boyardee.

For this go around of the ongoing work, Katchadourian has added 23 new family members to the tree, which takes up an entire wall.

“It’s a lot of fantasy and matchmaking,” she said. “It’s a funny kind of puzzle to solve.”

But those widely distributed processed foods, many of which promote convenience in the kitchen, bear almost no relation to complex Armenian cooking traditions.

“For my Armenian family, food was a big deal. It was very social and tied into a desire to preserve our heritage,” she said.

Despite Auntie Nora’s concerns, she agreed to host Katchadourian and some friends for what they dubbed “Kufte University.” Typically a term for meatballs, the dish’s delicate, meatless kufte have a bulgur wheat shell and a butter and walnut filling, served in a yogurt-mint both with chicken or lamb.

“When the kufte are floating around in the soup and you cut into them, they release the butter and you get this delicious burst of buttery flavor,” Katchadourian said.

Preparing them proved to be a tall order. “To make them requires a tremendous kind of dexterity,” she explained. “You put a lump of bulgur wheat paste in the palm of your hand. And then, with this very particular gesture, you stick your thumb into

complexity as a reflection of an earlier time, when such time-consuming labor it the kitchen was expected of women.

A couple of years after the lesson with Auntie Nora, Katchadourian attempted to recreate the soup with friends in Brooklyn.

“It was definitely not Auntie Nora-level soup,” she said. “But I reported back and she was very encouraging and sweet about it.”

The artist never did get a written recipe. “You don’t measure anything. It’s just done through this deep experience,” Katchadourian recalled.

Instead, Katchadourian suggested ArtNet News share with readers a pair of videos she tracked down on [YouTube](#) giving instructions on how to prep the dish—an appropriate homage to the oral tradition of passing down such recipes from generation to generation.

“Note that this soup is so complicated that it requires a second video to make the soup base part,” she warned.



Nina Katchadourian. Photo courtesy Pace Gallery.



Auntie Nora’s kufteli yaghene soup. Photo courtesy Nina Katchadourian.

broidery made by another family member, an Armenian Genocide survivor adopted from an orphanage by Katchadourian’s grandparents.

“She became one-part older sister, one-part second mother, one-part nanny to my dad,” Katchadourian said. “And to me, she was like a grandmother.”

Lucy made the original sampler while she lived at the orphanage. It hung on Katchadourian’s walls for years before she was inspired to use it in an artwork.

“The piece is a way of paying respect to her skill, calling attention to the trauma in

that lump and turn it so that gradually you create a hollow space inside the little ball for the walnut and the butter.”

“If you’re an expert like Auntie Nora, you have a perfectly shaped ball. And if you’re like me or my friends, you create this thing that just falls apart in your hand,” the artist said. “She kept just shaking her head, going ‘wrong, wrong, wrong.’”

But after hours of labor, they were able to enjoy a treasured family recipe.

“It was really a gift to sit there, eat the soup, and know how much had gone into it,” Katchadourian said. She sees the dish’s

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

JULY 14–AUGUST 15 — The Armenian Heritage Park will hold a series of events during the spring and summer:

- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)
- AUGUST 21-22 — SAVE THE DATE!** The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe will hold its annual picnic on Saturday and Sunday, 12 to 5 p.m. 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill.

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 13 — Save the Date: Saturday. 12 Vocations, Fulfilling the Promise of St. Nersess Seminary. Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and the vocations of the first 12 priests who graduated from St. Nersess and St. Vladimir’s Seminaries and were ordained. This is the first in a series of events to recognize the alumni of St. Nersess, both ordained and lay, who are in service to the Armenian Church, in any capacity. The celebratory dinner will be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, N.J. For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.

RHODE ISLAND

JULY 9 – JULY 25 — The Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence hosts the Armenian Cultural Hour every Friday at 7:30 p.m. online. Whether or not you have a Facebook account, you can find the livestream of the event through the parish’s Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>

- JULY 9 - Hekimyan Band from Yerevan**
- JULY 16 - “Flutes & Sopranos”, featuring Soloists and Symphony Orchestra of the Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Harutyun Arzumanyan, Music Director & Conductor**
- JULY 23 - Favorite Armenian Songs, featuring Armen Hovhanessyan & Salbi Mailyan**



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Armenian Vegan's Lasagna with Eggplant, Mushrooms and Tofu

From *Armenian Vegan*.

This mouthwatering vegan lasagna recipe was created by Dikranouhi “Dee” Kirazian, author of the essential *Armenian Vegan* cookbook published in 2013. “It’s made with eggplant, mushrooms, garlic, and tofu that is so good your guests may ask for it again and again,” says Dee. “This savory recipe from my cookbook is the ideal meal for every potluck, dinner, and family feast. It can be especially handy around holiday meals when you’re deciding what to serve to family members or relatives who will not eat turkey, steak, or whatever meat dish on your menu. It is meatless, dairy-free, and packed with spices and flavors that are sure to please even serious meat-lovers. After this lasagna, your guests will want to make it, too,” she adds.

Armenian Vegan was a six-year long research project for Dee and her husband, George Kirazian, who is also an accomplished author and editor. She tested and prepared more than 200 vegan recipes in her own home, taking photos, and documenting each step and ingredient along the way. “I’ve included many old and new Armenian vegan recipes, family memories and anecdotes,” she says. “My cookbook is a labor of love and a legacy for my children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and for future generations, so they will remember their heritage and their diverse Armenian culinary history.”

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Dee came to the United States in 1959, where she initially taught Armenian language classes at Holy Cross Armenian Church in Union City, New Jersey. She and her husband George now live in San Diego, California where they raised their three daughters. (Dee and Arshagouhi Tavitian are sisters of Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, former Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Western Diocese.)

“Another time-saving tip is to make the sauce the night before, allowing the spices and flavors to marinate the mushrooms, eggplant and tofu,” adds Dee. “You can keep this lasagna in the refrigerator for at least 5 days. Warm up slices in the microwave or reheat the entire lasagna (covered with foil) until bubbly.”

INGREDIENTS:

1 28-oz can diced tomatoes
1 16-oz. package vegetarian lasagna pasta*
1 1/2 - 2 large eggplants
1 large onion, chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
4-5 cloves garlic
2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce
3 cups fresh chopped mushrooms
2 cups firm or super firm tofu, crumbled
1 cup olive oil
4 tablespoons soy sauce
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon basil
1 teaspoon oregano
Salt, pepper or crushed red pepper to taste

PREPARATION:

Cook pasta according to package directions.

Prepare stuffing/sauce: Wash and chop all vegetables. Sauté onions in olive oil until soft; then add the garlic and eggplant, stirring frequently. Add the mushrooms, and toss for a few minutes.

When everything is cooked, crumble the tofu with a fork and add it to the pot with the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, soy sauce, and spices. Cook for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. When the sauce is cooked, remove from heat. Discard bay leaves.

Assemble: Take a 13 x 10 x 3-inch baking dish (Pyrex or other) and spread some sauce on the bottom of the dish. Take cooked lasagna pasta and layer it. Use 4-5 strips to cover the bottom of the dish. Add some sauce, spreading evenly. Add another layer, and cover with stuffing/sauce.

Continue to layer with sauce in this way until the pasta is finished. Leave some sauce to use now to cover the top layer. Preheat oven to 350° and bake for 30-35 minutes. When cooked, remove from oven, cut into medium sized squares, and serve with a tossed green salad and crusty French or Italian bread.

Serves 4-6.

For this recipe, go to: <https://armenianvegan.com/recipes>

TO MAKE IN ADVANCE: Assemble lasagna per the recipe. Instead of baking, wrap tightly with foil and refrigerate until ready to bake. If possible, remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking to allow lasagna to return to room temperature.

*Most packaged pasta-including spaghetti, rotini, and any other type-is 100 percent vegan. Sometimes, you might see “egg” listed as an ingredient in “fresh” pastas, so avoid those-but generally, pasta contains no animal-derived ingredients. Popular brands like Barilla, Mueller’s, and Ronzoni as well as store brands offer many varieties of vegan pasta.

Author Dikranouhi Kirazian’s sister, Arshagouhi Tavitian, hosted a “Hye Geen” Luncheon in Glendale featuring the Armenian Vegan cookbook as a gift.

Guests received a complimentary copy of Armenian Vegan signed by the author’s sister. An excellent vegetarian meal was served including homemade borag, ful (cooked fava beans), chorag, fresh vegetables, pastries, and fresh fruit.

ORDER TODAY: *Armenian Vegan: A Pure Vegan Cookbook With 200+ Recipes Using No Animal Products* Paperback - December 3, 2013 by Dikranouhi Kirazian (Author). Go to https://www.amazon.com/dp/1494365189/ref=cm_sw_su_dp

Armenian Vegan is also available at Abril Books at: <http://www.abrilbooks.com/armenian-vegan.html>

References: <https://armenianvegan.com/>

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

<https://twitter.com/armenianvegan?lang=en>

<https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/09/03/george-kirazians-novella-a-time-for-fathers-is-released/>

Armenian Creatives: Where Innocence Is Bliss

CREATIVES, from page 12

images of postcards and other items the participants bring to the meeting entertain with their variety and originality.

The Armenian Creatives make no claim to Armenianness as a unified cultural, geographical or linguistic concept, yet their passion for everything Armenian and their awareness of the need to make that special effort to stay connected, given a history of displacement, is central to their vision. “We print this as Armenians presently face continued displacement in Artsakh,” they write. Even when hardly fluent in or unable to read and write Armenian, their commitment to their Armenian identity is unmistakable. In her essay on translating Zahrad’s poems, done in collaboration with Mher Tarakjian, Caroline Partamian writes: “Translating one of Zahrad’s poems may not be of direct benefit to preserving the Armenian language, but it can be one

way of introducing people to Armenian history and culture, and therefore one avenue of preserving our Armenian identity.”

Armenian Creatives 01 is self-published, “printed and bound in USA, on Indigenous land,” a most unobtrusive way of expressing the group’s strong political stance of solidarity with liberation movements, which must surely include “investing in efforts to recognize Artsakh and Armenians’ right to peace and self-determination.” In fact, the reader is never allowed to forget that “we are gathered as Armenians.”

This first publication is promise that these creatives will develop their unique skills in their different artistic mediums and grow. While, as they utter at every meeting, whether gathered around the same table or around a screen (during the Covid-19 pandemic), that the group was “initiated to hold a space that we couldn’t find prior,” each artist has her own distinct voice. Empowering and

liberating that “inventiveness, imagination, and individuality” is part of the mission statement of Armenian Creatives.

The contributors refer to this first publication as a love letter. “The book exists because of the people who are part of Armenian Creatives. And we exist together because of how we hold each other,” they write in their acknowledgments. It is indeed hard to think of a better word to describe an accomplishment that makes tangible the love these artists have for one another. What ultimately jumps out at the reader is their joy at gathering and of assembling the book together.

Armenian Creatives has now spread to various corners of the world, but for these technologically savvy men and women the challenge of touching base through “satellite choreography” is nothing new.

The book is available for purchase at <https://armeniancreatives.com/PRINT>.



Flyer for virtual Armenian Creatives meeting, summer 2020

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COMMENTARY

Editorial

New Challenges for Armenia after Snap Parliamentary Elections



By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenia's snap parliamentary elections not only surprised the losers, but also the winners.

After the final rally by former president Robert Kocharyan's supporters, observers believed that finally the Kocharyan campaign had gained traction by outnumbering Pashinyan's final rally. But the polls had their own logic and gave a landslide victory to the incumbent prime minister by 54 percent.

Kocharyan came a distant second with 21 percent of the votes and Serzh Sargsyan's I Have Honor bloc did not even manage the 5-percent threshold for political parties, let alone the 7-percent one for alliances. However, Sargsyan's alliance will have seven representatives in parliament because Armenia's electoral laws require three opposition groups in the latter body.

Although Pashinyan's Civil Contract Party can pass any law in parliament with 71 representatives, Kocharyan is preparing to play hard ball, even without consulting the Sargsyan camp, which has not yet revealed its intentions as to whether it will join Kocharyan in his bid for the opposition.

The elections took place under peaceful conditions and the irregularities reported by the monitors did not impact the overall process.

Even before the final results were reported, congratulatory messages arrived from the European Union, Russia, France and other countries.

President Emmanuel Macron's message was the most meaningful, as it went beyond the limit of strict congratulations and pledged economic support and cooperation with Armenia to resolve the unfinished business of Karabakh.

One cautionary note needs to be made about the coverage of these elections in Western media outlets, where Pashinyan's victory has been characterized as the victory of anti-Russian forces against pro-Russian ones. If the Pashinyan camp is tempted to subscribe to that point of view, it will be perceived as an irritant to the Kremlin.

Armenia's elections have had a transformational impact domestically and internationally.

Beneath the veneer of the calm talks between Yerevan and Moscow, there is justifiable resentment in Armenia because of the cavalier attitude of its strategic partner when it was under attack.

Armenia cannot veer too far from the Russian orbit, but for Moscow, a limited level of dissent may be tolerable, like Kazakhstan, which is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as is Armenia, but has a military treaty with Turkey.

On the other hand, Belarus, which is Armenia's partner in the CSTO, rushed to congratulate Armenia's adversary, Azerbaijan, on its victory over Armenia and to this day is supplying lethal armaments to Baku.

Armenia definitely and urgently needs to rehaul its foreign policy establishment, which is in shambles.

Despite the country steadily sending students to study diplomacy around the world, the ranks of its diplomatic corps seem empty in the 30 years since independence. It will be foolhardy for the Pashinyan administration to refuse to tap into the expertise of former foreign ministers on the ground that they were part of the old regime. The Caucasus is in constant flux and every day new opportunities may arise but with an amateurish approach in foreign policy, Armenia may lose valuable diplomatic opportunities.

Iran, for one, has been making waves in the region, after being released from the punishing US sanctions, and it has been flexing its muscles. Tehran was a partner of Russia in Syria

supporting the Bashar al-Assad regime, but currently has been seeking an independent role in opposing the Russian-Turkish juggernaut in the Caucasus.

It is also offering economic opportunities for Armenia and Georgia, which, in the long run, may release them from the economic spheres of Russia and Turkey.

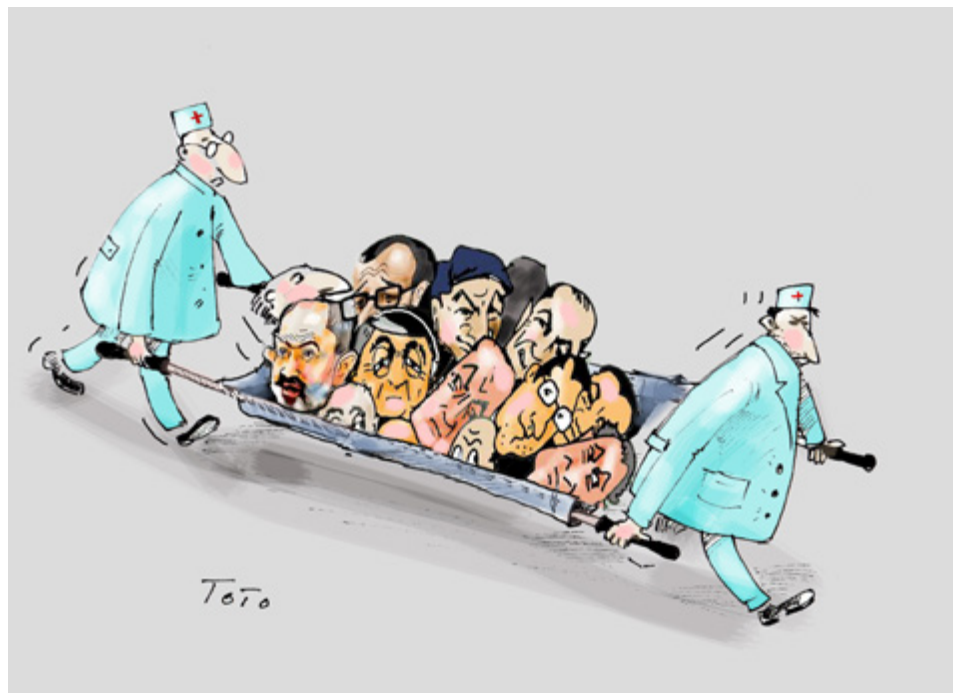
Another interesting and frightening development is the one happening between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent trip to Shushi, where he signed a treaty with Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev, technically absorbed Azerbaijan and lay the first building block of the pan-Turanist Empire which he has been aspiring to build.

Incidentally, Turkey and Azerbaijan have been holding their seventh military exercises on Armenia's border. That is why Pashinyan has dispatched a military commission to Moscow to negotiate a new deal to reinforce the Syunik region, which is targeted by Armenia's enemies.

The Pashinyan administration will also face many domestic challenges as the country is still reeling from the devastating effects of the twin catastrophes of war and the pandemic. Like all winners in the election, Pashinyan has made many generous promises to his electorate to build roads, to improve the economy, to develop science, etc. People are used to these pledges, which may or may not materialize, while governments also have excuses for the failure to make good on their pledges.

Any statesman who wins the election and fails to demonstrate magnanimity towards his opponents does not deserve his victory.

Along with his positive pledges, Pashinyan promised to put



a stop to some of his negative habits which had come to characterize his behavior in the past. Either Pashinyan himself has realized this or his advisors have warned him to refrain from certain actions.

During his victory rally on June 21, Pashinyan came out as a reformed leader. Many people were expecting him to use the hammer (really), which he had literally wielded throughout his campaign, against his opponents, but instead he came out as uncharacteristically conciliatory in his speech. He extended his hand to the opposition to cooperate in the parliament. He also promised to look for qualified citizens outside his camp to invite them to serve in the government.

Pashinyan asked his audience to refrain from using foul language in the news media as well as social media. He confided that sometimes he himself had used such language "willingly or unwillingly" but in fact, he has been the promoter of that language when he served as the editor of the newspaper Haykakan Zhamanak, and later as opposition leader.

Unfortunately, the language used on social media is mind-boggling and hopefully Pashinyan's appeal may temper it. Reading that kind of language, one is depressed to find out how low any Armenian can degenerate morally.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

‘What if Someone Buried My Son?’ Anguish Of Search for Armenia’s War Dead

By Astrig Agopian

Eight months after the end of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh that left more than 5,000 people dead, many soldiers are still missing. In Armenia, families are desperately looking for news about their loved ones. There is a growing lack of trust around DNA tests and a lack of information, leading to mounting pressure on the government.

Larissa Dureyan has been looking for her 20-year-old son Mxitar since October. He began his mandatory military service in July 2019 and was serving in Fizuli when war broke out in September last year.

On October 12 he called his mother to say he was being transferred somewhere else, without saying where. It was the last time she heard from him. “They brought a body of a boy wearing my son’s jacket. They also found his credit card in the pocket,” she said. “The face was not recognizable. My son’s hands were full of scars because he had been through surgery when he was a teenager. So first I looked at the hands of the body. They were perfect, completely scarless.

“I had given my DNA already, and I asked if they had checked. They said they had not but that it was certainly my son since his jacket and his credit card were on the body. I insisted that they check the DNA.” When the test was checked, officials realized it was not her son.

“Imagine if I had buried someone else’s child, they would not have been able to find him. And what if someone else has buried my son, thinking it’s theirs?” said Dureyan. Since the mistake was uncovered, she has continued searching for her son in morgues, hospitals and online, posting pictures of him on social media. But she has not found him.

The numbers still missing or being held as prisoners of war in Azerbaijan remain unclear. Armenia’s prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, said in mid-April that 3,621 people were confirmed dead, there were 321 missing people, and 200 bodies yet to be identified. Human rights defenders have appealed to the European court of human rights about the fate of more than 200 PoWs.

While Dureyan still has no news, some families have ended up finding their sons. In January, Narine Gasparyan was told that forensics experts had identified the body of her son from a DNA sample. She was given three bones to bury, the only parts of him remaining, she was told.

Then a few weeks later Gasparyan received the news from the lab that it was not him. The family excavated the buried bones and continued looking for their son. “Two weeks later we found the full, still recognizable corpse of our son in a morgue. I saw him and it was him,” said Gasparyan.

Gasparyan does not want her son’s case to be used to criticize those working to identify the bodies. “I just think that scientists are people too, and maybe they were just tired because they work so much now. We talked with the lab and accepted the idea that it was a genuine mistake. Still, it was very painful,” she said. “But we feel lucky that at least we now found the body of our son and were at least able to properly bury him. Many people have nothing.”

A Scientific Challenge

Diana Harutyunyan is a forensic genetic expert at the Scientific Practical Centre of Forensic Medicine working under the authority of the health ministry. “We feel terrible about it. But you must know that it was a human mistake when transcribing figures, it has nothing to do with the machines,” she said.

The center used to have only a few cases a year of DNA identification from bones, related to criminal cases or archaeological research. After the war in Nagorno-Karabakh it was deluged with several hundred bones and body parts to identify. The lab employees admit they were overwhelmed.

It was not only the number of victims that made it difficult to do the DNA testing. “There were mechanical and chemical hardships for those corpses,” Harutyunyan said. “We do have a few cases of fragments that are so deeply burned, so damaged, that we do not know if we will be able to identify them at all.” Armenia has accused Azerbaijan of using white phosphorus, which could explain the burns found on soldiers and corpses.

“Groups of people were hit and burned. They all died. A pit was dug; all the bodies were put in it. So all the bones have to be identified and the parts that have exactly the same profile, that’s when you understand they belonged to the same body and the same person.”

The lab has been giving out bones before reconstituting full corpses. “The Red Cross advised us to wait to identify several bones and parts of the body of one person and reconstitute a corpse before giving it back to the family,” Harutyunyan said. “Can you imagine us telling families we have your son but wait we are not giving him back yet? It is just impossible. Families are not that patient, they cannot wait, they put pressure on us.”

Lack of Trust

Some families do not trust the results of the official lab and decide to verify them by sending DNA samples outside Armenia or by consulting private companies.

Anna Hovhannisyan is the CEO of Genetic Forensic Centre LLC, a private company doing DNA testing. Before the war, she didn’t work on DNA-testing bones, but she started after receiving financial help from a group of French doctors, Santé Arménie.

“People come here with a DNA test from the official lab, and with DNA extracts. They give me the sample and I do the same internationally recognized research with markers like they did at the official lab,” Hovhannisyan said. So far she has only double-checked a few samples, without charging the families. All the samples matched the results of the official lab, meaning there was no mistake, except one.

“I have to refuse some people because I do not have the time or means to do so many tests. So people who have the financial means are contacting labs in Europe or the US,” she said.

“Parents do not trust us, so they test us. They bring the DNA samples of someone else not from the family, saying it is someone from the family, to see if we are going to realize it’s not someone from the family or not. Of course, we test for real, so we do realize it is not someone from the family, but we lose very precious time.”

Biden Calls Turkish Exit From Women’s Treaty A ‘Disheartening Step Backward’

WASHINGTON (AI-Monitor) — US President Joe Biden on Sunday, June 27, forcefully condemned Turkey’s “deeply disappointing” decision to pull out from a landmark European convention aimed at protecting women.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a presidential decree on Saturday announcing the withdrawal from the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. Turkey, which was the first country to ratify the treaty, is now the first of 35 signatories to abandon it.

“Countries should be working to strengthen and renew their commitments to ending violence against women, not rejecting international treaties designed to protect women and hold abusers accountable,” Biden said of the convention named for Turkey’s biggest city. “This is a disheartening step backward for the international movement to end violence against women globally.”

Biden also noted reports in Turkey of rising femicide, which is defined as killing women and girls because of their gender. At least 474 women in the country were murdered in 2019, many for wanting a divorce, according to We Will Stop Femicide. The Istanbul-based group says most of the murders were committed by current or former partners, relatives or men whose advances the women rejected.

The Turkish exit from the women’s convention also drew condemnation from the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe, the continent’s main human rights body.

“This move is a huge setback ... and all the more deplorable because it compromises the protection of women in Turkey, across Europe and beyond,” Marija Pejcinovic Buric, the council’s secretary-general, said in a statement.

Religious and conservative groups in Turkey say the European accord undermines traditional family norms, and in a statement, the Turkish government said the Istanbul Convention has been used to “normalize homosexuality.”

The US criticism comes ahead of Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s expected meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Brussels this week. As AI-Monitor first reported, Blinken will hold separate talks with both Cavusoglu and Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias on the sidelines of a NATO foreign ministers summit on March 23-24.

Ties between Washington and Ankara are strained over a number of issues, including Turkey’s deteriorating human rights record. Last week, the Biden administration slammed a Turkish plan to disband a pro-Kurdish opposition party, warning that doing so would “further undermine democracy in Turkey.”

In February, the State Department issued a formal statement saying it was concerned by the treatment of student protesters in Turkey as well as the anti-LGBT rhetoric sparked by the demonstrations. A separate statement called on Turkey to immediately release prominent businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala from prison and expressed concern over charges against US-based academic Henri Barkey.

More than two months into office, Biden has yet to speak with Erdogan despite placing phone calls to a number of regional leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud.

New Challenges for Armenia

from previous page

During his victory rally, Pashinyan touched upon a very sticky issue: church-state relations, which have hit a new low. It was a very constructive approach by the winning candidate to mend relations with the church. His Holiness Karekin II responded in kind, by congratulating Pashinyan on his victory.

These public moves may help release some tensions but actions are needed beyond the rhetoric. During the war, the Catholicos had asked for Pashinyan’s resignation, which had created a sore point. It was not the Catholicos’ place to wade into the political waters. At best, he had to appeal for calm and conciliation. That angered the Pashinyan camp which reacted in an unstatesmanlike fashion by denying a police escort to the Catholicos, levying customs duty on paraffin oil Echmiadzin imports to make candles

and by allowing the spoilage of tons of perishable food items at customs destined to Karabakh under the auspices of Holy Echmiadzin.

To top it all, the Pashinyan administration has arrested the director of the Izmirlian Hospital, Prof. Armen Charchyan, for having made some equivocal remarks to his staff, before the elections. Incidentally, the hospital is run by the Holy See of Echmiadzin.

This writer had the opportunity to hold long discussions with Pashinyan’s chief advisor, Arayik Harutyunyan, who is believed to be one of the major policy planners, as well as His Holiness. Unfortunately, they are entrenched in their positions. Hopefully the disaster that befell Armenia will have a sobering effect on both parties, reminding them that there are more pressing issues to attend to in the country at this time.

The domestic and the international media characterized the snap alliance as “against” and not “for,” because the

electorate was faced with the prospect of the comeback of the old regime. They have suffered so much under that regime that their vote was against it, rather than in favor of Pashinyan.

Kocharyan, who had joined forces with the ARF, which has the best organized election machine in Armenia, certainly lost votes because of that association, since the party does not enjoy popularity in Armenia, unlike its counterpart in the diaspora.

Armenia is not out of the woods yet and Pashinyan’s administration will face many challenges that will require the resources of the entire nation, in Armenia and in the diaspora.

The new administration’s failure will only make the Turks and Azerbaijanis happy. When the stakes are so high, only vigilance, national unity and prudent policies can help Armenia survive.



COMMENTARY

Recognition of the Armenian Genocide Is a Major Moral Crisis for Jews and Israel

By Prof. Israel Charny

Do you know that there are many publications in Hebrew which refer to the Armenian genocide as “Hashoa HaArmenit” or the Armenian shoah? This is because “shoah” intrinsically means extensive or cataclysmic destruction. The word became so identified with the terrifying destruction of the Jewish people and the Nazi intention to destroy all Jews everywhere that many of us retain a capital letter for the English translation of “shoah” when we are referring to this immense event of the Holocaust (capital H). But it is a mistake to think that either word — in Hebrew or English — is limited or “owned” by the Jewish people. In Hebrew, the word first appears in the Bible where it refers to total consumption by fire, and in English, there are many references through the ages long before the Holocaust to other holocausts, including of the Armenian people in the genocide by the Ottoman Turks 1915 to 1922.

Should Israel have recognized the Armenian genocide many years ago? Of course. The logic, fairness, and historical accuracy of this definition are obvious to a child. Israel’s choice to play such a serious version of *realpolitik* of lying blatantly about

erty, dignity, and decency in this world against enemies who are pictured as destructive to humanity.

Israel’s bizarre denials of the holocaust or genocide of another people brings enormous shame on Israel and works away inside of us Israelis to reduce and complicate our pride and faith in our country. In my opinion, before long, it actually weakens our spirit and resolve and becomes an insidious source of weakening our basic ability to fight for our safety and survival.

The United States has now overcome decisively its denials of the Armenian genocide — President Biden has issued full recognition, after the Senate voted amazingly unanimously for recognition, after the House of Representatives had voted overwhelmingly for recognition.

In Israel, over the years, we have had several indications of the Knesset’s readiness to recognize the Armenian genocide — in one case, just a few years ago, a major committee of the Knesset voted decisively for recognition. Key leaders such as presidents of Israel and Knesset speakers have championed the move. Our current alternate prime minister and future prime minister has taken a firm public position for recognition: “I will continue to fight for

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a solid piece of evidence in human history because it believed it would gain favor and benefits of such favor from the Turks was, in the eyes of many of us, disgraceful beyond words.

Moreover, it was pointed out frequently that this kind of “practical thinking” would be bitterly condemned were it applied by other countries to denial of the Holocaust — we Jews have been very fortunate that from the outset the German government has taken full remorseful responsibility for the horror it imposed on the Jewish people. Even so, there are thousands of cases of denials of the Holocaust in our world, and, quite properly, we react to them with angry scorn and whatever possible retaliation. Should not the same justice be our due when we assault another people’s minds and sensibilities by denying a known holocaust of their people?

Somehow, people get used to whatever is the prevailing norm in their lives, and stop fighting back, as even their own instincts incline them to do. Thus, prejudices and discriminatory and worse destructive behaviors by the huge authorities in our lives remain fashionable, practiced and accepted. In US history, for example, slavery for many years, or McCarthyism, or elimination of basic medical insurance for millions of people, or laws restricting the right to vote.

However, what is too little realized is that abject unfairness cannot help but be registered in the conscious and unconscious minds of people in the country responsible for hurting human lives severely. And they have consequences for the lives of people.

Both America and Israel take great pride in being democracies. Their pride in being free and caring societies streams enormous strength to the spirits of their citizens, and not at all surprisingly show up regularly in the rhetoric of their military security when one is called on to fight for freedom and democracy and not only for one’s specific country. Fighters are frequently encouraged that they are fighting for lib-

Israeli recognition of the Armenian genocide; it is our moral responsibility as the Jewish state.”

If Not Now, When? The price we pay for grossly immoral behavior is huge and far from a smart-alecky triumph of power and cleverness. We need to be powerful, but mixed and integrated with the emphases of historic Judaism — and universal common sense — to be good to human life.

It is high time for Israel to recognize the Armenian genocide, and it will only add if such recognition is accompanied by a sensitive apology for doing so much too late. It is no crime for us to note in such an apology that Israel is always deeply aware of the terrifying destruction of Jews through the ages and in our Holocaust, and as a result understandably emphasizes policies designed to maximize its protection against future attacks against the Jewish people and sometimes can err because it is so busy protecting itself. The apology of course should then be accompanied by warm wishes for the security of the Armenian people.

In general, if Israel is to fulfill the intrinsic and historic seeking of justice to which Judaism is committed, and if it is to be an honored leader among nations, it is time for a full policy of standing with any and all people, including Muslims such as in China and Myanmar today, and including Christians such as in many countries today who are being subject to genocide.

(Prof. Israel W. Charny, who lives in Moshav Shoshon outside of Jerusalem, is the director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide and author of the just published Israel’s *Failed Response to the Armenian Genocide: Denial, State Deception, Truth versus Politicization of History*, available from the publisher, Academic Studies Press (Boston) or Eurospan Bookstore in London. This commentary originally appeared in the *Times of Israel*.)

The Election in Armenia, and the Pathway Forward

By Bishop Daniel Findikyan

The parliamentary elections in Armenia were seen from the start as an important juncture in the modern history of our homeland. Inevitably, after the terrible events of last year, the political contest was going to be filled with tension. And indeed, in the weeks preceding the election, the spirit of anger and vituperation displayed on all sides was often unsettling. But for good or ill, heightened emotion has become the new tone of the democratic process, all too familiar in our own political culture.

What is more troubling, however, is that even now, with Armenia’s election concluded, the negative spirit has continued, and shows no sign of abating. We see it from afar in the news coming from our homeland. We feel it close at hand in our communities here in America.

From our perspective as Americans, we have witnessed in recent years the damage that relentless division and mistrust can do, even in a society as large as our own. In a society as small as Armenia’s, those negative attitudes could only prove disastrous. So it is imperative that Armenians find a productive pathway forward. And that includes all Armenians across the world: for though we in the diaspora do not vote in Armenia’s political process, the behavior we model does have an impact beyond our shores, on the social and spiritual developments in our homeland.

That is why I am directing these words to our faithful throughout the Eastern Diocese. I believe this moment in history summons us to act with a united purpose, and above all to re-commit ourselves to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this critical moment when we are tempted towards fragmentation and disintegration, our Lord calls us to embrace a higher ethic fueled by patience, honesty, a willingness to listen, and self-sacrifice.

Certainly, the stakes for our homeland today are very high. But they would remain high regardless of the government or party in power. The great issues facing Armenia and Artsakh are not matters that can be resolved by one political faction or another. They can only be addressed by a unified society, with the good of the entire Armenian nation in mind.

More importantly, they are issues that cannot be resolved at all without the saving power of Jesus Christ. That great truth, articulated throughout history by our ancestral Armenian Church, has guided our nation through every moment of decision.

All of us together — leaders and citizens, natives of the homeland and the diaspora — must lift our eyes from our limited, momentary disputes, and focus our attention on the vastly greater objective: the preservation and long-term rebuilding of Armenia and Artsakh. In time, God willing, this project will include many transitions of power, many governing administrations, and above all many voices from among our people.

It is for the sake of those people that we must resist fragmentation, apathy, and demoralization: the excuses people of every type fall back on when they wish to retreat from responsibility.

It is for the sake of those people — our people — that we must unite with a positive outlook for Armenia’s future, and re-commit ourselves in word and deed to the long-term prosperity, peace, and dignity of our homeland.

Finally, it is for the sake of the people — namely, all of us — that we must look to our Lord Jesus Christ, with hope and prayer. We must awaken to the humbling reality that, as frail, imperfect human beings, we exist in the hands of a loving God who stands with us through every trial of life. Armenians can never forget that He has led us through times of great difficulty: literally “through the valley of the shadow of death.” He is with us still, and we must pray to Him with one voice, in a united spirit of hope.

The most enduring identity of the Armenian people is — and always will be — our role as members of the Body of Christ in the world. It is in that role as a united body that we will find the power to heal our many historical wounds, the strength to overcome present-day adversity, and the sense of purpose to inspire us to a secure and dignified future for all.



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

United States Arrests Turkish National For Exporting Defense Data to Turkey

The snap parliamentary elections have been tumultuous. Michael Balestra, Special Agent of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, submitted a 16-page sworn affidavit on June 21, 2021 to Judge Jennifer Boal against Arif Ugur, a Turkish national, requesting that an arrest warrant be issued.

Ugur was accused of:

- 1) Conspiring to export defense technical data from the United States to Turkey without an export license;
- 2) Exporting technical data from the United States to Turkey without an export license;
- 3) Committing wire fraud by devising a scheme of fraudulently obtaining contracts from the Department of Defense (DOD).

Ugur is a 52-year-old Turkish national who lived in Massachusetts intermittently since 2002. He became a Permanent Resident of the United States in 2005.

According to the affidavit, Ugur founded in 2015 the Anatolia Group Limited Partnership in Massachusetts, described as a domestic manufacturer and supplier of specialty machinery and parts to DOD. He was the sole partner.

The Affidavit claimed that “between July 2015 and September 2017, Ugur acquired dozens of contracts to supply DOD entities with various parts and hardware items used by the U.S. military. Many of these contracts required that the parts be ‘domestic end product,’ manufactured in the United States. In order to obtain these contracts, Ugur falsely represented to DOD that Anatolia would manufacture the parts at facilities in the United States. In fact, Anatolia had no manufacturing capabilities whatsoever and many of the parts that Anatolia supplied to DOD and its affiliates were manufactured overseas, including at least one manufacturer in Turkey. Some of these parts were substandard and, therefore, could not be used for their intended military purpose.”

Ugur provided the manufacturer in Turkey “with technical specifications and drawings of the parts, which he obtained from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).” Several of the drawings and specifications required an export license which Ugur failed to obtain, prior to exporting them to Turkey. He registered his company with the DLA which granted him access to DOD bids after he agreed in writing to comply with the strict legal requirements – not disclosing, sharing or providing foreign entities access to defense technical data, according to the affidavit.

On August 13, 2015, DLA provided Ugur access to technical specifications, drawings and other information concerning active DLA solicitations. That same day via email, Ugur notified three Turkish nationals on how to access the DLA “Collaboration Folders” through the internet, including its library of “military critical technical data,” the affidavit alleged.

Special Agent Balestra wrote in the affidavit: “In an email dated on or about July 27, 2016, a DLA purchasing agent asked Ugur to verify the ‘address of the actual manufacturing’ of Bracket Assemblies for the purpose of arranging an origin inspection.... In an email dated on or about July 28, 2016, Ugur told the contracting agent that the Bracket Assemblies were being manufactured by Anatolia at 90 Woodmont Road in Milford, Connecticut. I believe this statement was false, as Ugur knew that the Bracket Assemblies were being manufactured by the Turkish Manufacturer in Turkey. Ugur subsequently caused the Bracket Assemblies to be delivered to DOD in late August 2016 without allowing DLA to first inspect the parts at the place of manufacture. I believe that Ugur intentionally avoided the origin inspection in order to conceal from DLA the true place of manufacture: Turkey. Upon receiving the Bracket Assemblies, DOD determined that they failed to meet contractual specifications. DOD declined to pay Ugur and Anatolia for the Brackets, and they attempted (unsuccessfully) to return the parts to Ugur.”

A similar violation allegedly took place when DLA awarded Anatolia a contract to manufacture Groove Pulleys. On August 23, 2016, Ugur emailed the technical data related to the Groove Pulleys to Individual D, an employee of AYPIK located in Turkey, according to Balestra’s sworn affidavit. DOD determined that the Groove Pulleys failed to meet the contractual specifications.

Arif Ugur was arrested on June 22, 2021 and charged in federal court in Boston with one count of wire fraud, one count of violating the Arms Export Control Act and one count of conspiracy to violate the Arms Export Control Act, stated in a press release the United States Attorney’s Office, District of Massachusetts.

“The charge of violating the Arms Export Control Act provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million, or twice the gross gain or loss of the offense. The charge of conspiring to violate the Arms Export Control Act provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss of the offense,” according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office pointed out that “the details contained in the criminal complaint are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.”

The War Of Terror

By Karolina Pawłowska

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The news about a theme park opened in Azerbaijan in April, a place which includes not only the display of original helmets, but also wax models of injured or dead Armenian soldiers, has caused outrage among Armenians around the world. It has been interpreted as an act of sheer ruthlessness of Ilham Aliyev, which though somehow true, flattens the analysis that can be provided if anthropological, sociological, and political factors are considered. In fact, such move shows a variety of strategies both symbolically and practically.

Firstly, the park does indeed celebrate; however, this is obviously not its sole function. Combining the educative aspect of a museum and entertaining features of an interactive display creates a monument both to Azerbaijani victory and Armenian failure. Subsequently, it establishes the space where joy and hate merge in a rather gruesome and worrisome manner and such management of public emotions, especially contradictory ones, is common in autocracies. Arzu Geybullayeva notices rightfully, that the park offends not only the memory of fallen Armenian soldiers, but also Azerbaijani servicemen. However, commemorating the death of one’s own people in a respectful manner does not fit with the narrative designed to shape common perception of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in Azerbaijan. In the context of Aliyev’s statements since November 10, it may seem that the events of the 44-day war can be framed only in extremely positive terms with no space left for public displays of grief and loss. The end of the conflict is presented as an undoubted victory, despite the fact that multiple lives have been lost.

Secondly, the open and public dimension of the venue visited by entire families aims at showing that the support for the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in Azerbaijan is by no means unanimous, despite external views that some segments of Azerbaijani society are simply too intimidated to vocalize remorse. Moreover, it is a shared feature of autocratic governments to familiarize citizens with violence from an early age. For such a regime to survive, it is necessary to eradicate empathy and compassion and subsequently shape new generations to be capable of cruelty, not only against others but also against each other.

Thirdly, it is arrogance directed in all possible direc-

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND NAGORNO-KARABAKH WAR, ALIYEV’S REGIME HAS BEEN FEEDING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WITH A NARRATIVE WHICH DESCRIBED THE AGGRESSION AS MERELY THE ATTEMPT TO WIN BACK ITS RIGHTFUL TERRITORY

tions. Internally in Azerbaijan, it is the projection of strength. Internationally, both Azerbaijan and Turkey have been testing for months how much so-called humanism is worth in Western and Eastern politics and successfully have proven that it is worth little or nothing. No clear condemnation has been voiced by the international community, which is not surprising considering that the more prompt and tragic issue of over 200 Armenian prisoners of war kept captive has not been approached with the expected firmness. Even though the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) EURO Championships could have been a perfect opportunity to address the issue, only the Dutch parliament decided on a boycott, thanks to the efforts of Armenians

in the Netherlands.

Since the beginning of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, Aliyev’s regime has been feeding the international community with a narrative which described the aggression as merely the attempt to win back its rightful territory and the execution of 4 UN Resolutions adopted in 1993. The Soviet mandate of Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh territory seemed to justify the violation of the United Nations Mercenary Convention, targeting civilian population and cultural heritage, the use of phosphorus weapons and other war crimes. The dogmatic belief in the principle of inviolability of borders has created the impression that if Nagorno-Karabakh legally belongs to Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan has the full right to do with it whatever it pleases.

Recent actions such as the refusal to return the remaining POWs and captured civilians, their inhumane treatment reported by Human Rights Watch, and violating the Armenian border in the Syunik region cannot any longer fit that narrative. They seem, however, to be somehow acceptable worldwide. To Armenians, they send a message of terror, causing, obviously, fear and insecurity. Combined with the meek response of the international community and the inefficiency of the Armenian government in dealing with these developments, the sheer ruthlessness and arrogance of Ilham Aliyev continues to prove that, indeed, he can do whatever he pleases and will stop at nothing. He knows very well what he is doing and most probably, the war of terror is just beginning.

Karolina Pawłowska is a cultural anthropologist finalizing her Ph.D. thesis on the repatriation of the Armenian diaspora, affiliated with the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań (Poland). She used to work at the American University of Central Asia and the American University in Armenia, teaching mainly academic writing, anthropology, and culture studies. Living in Armenia for more than six years within the span of the last decade, she has witnessed various social and political processes and developed a deep interest in multiple aspects of Armenian culture and society. During the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, she was engaged in initiatives aimed at fighting disinformation and raising awareness of Karabakh issues.

Indictment Read Out at Trial of 14 Armenian POWs in Azerbaijan

BAKU (Panorama) — The Baku Court on Grave Crimes on Tuesday, June 29, resumed the illegal trial of 14 Armenian prisoners of war (POWs) accused of terrorism, with the prosecutor reading out the indictment.

According to the indictment, “having illegally acquired firearms, ammunition, explosives and devices”, they allegedly created “armed groups” and from November 27 to December 13, took up combat positions in the forest areas of Artsakh’s Hadrut region and committed “terrorist acts” in this territory, Azerbaijani media reported.

The POWs were charged under four articles of Azerbaijan’s Criminal Code. The criminal case together with the indictment approved by the deputy prosecutor general of Azerbaijan was sent for consideration to the court.

Many experts, US and European lawmakers have urged Azerbaijan to end the sham trial of Armenian prisoners of war, pointing to a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

According to a report by Public Radio of Armenia, the Armenia has drawn the attention of the UN Human Rights Council to a series of spurious lawsuits against Armenian Prisoners of War in Azerbaijan.

Addressing the 46th session of the

Council, Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the UN Mission in Geneva Andranik Hovhannisyan said on June 28, “The European Court of Human Rights adopted 201 interim measures with regard to the combatants and civilians of Armenian origin detained by Azerbaijan, but the latter refused to acknowledge the detention of most of them, failed to meaningfully cooperate with the said Court and launched proceedings against 58 detainees, even though the international humanitarian law (IHL) specifically requires to set POWs free after hostilities.”

“Should any charges be filed, IHL prescribes fair trails based on presumption of innocence and right to be tried by an inde-



Some of the Armenian POWs in Baku

pendent and impartial court,” the ambassador noted.

“Azerbaijan violates all these norms. It failed to provide prior notification about judicial proceedings, to specify the charges, as well as to extend appropriate legal assistance to the detainees. None of them is

represented by a lawyer of their choice in a country where independence of courts is basically non-existent. The judge, who presides over the trials, is notorious for the politically-motivated sentences imposed upon several Azerbaijani HRDs,” the Ambassador noted.

Armenian Boxer Hovhannes Bachkov Will Compete in Tokyo Olympics

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian boxer Hovhannes Bachkov (63kg) will participate in the Tokyo Olympics this summer, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport confirmed on Tuesday, June 29.

The two-time European champion was unable to qualify for the Olympics at a tournament in Paris but was granted the chance to participate in the Games thanks to his standing in world rankings.


Boxers Koryun Soghomonyan and Arman Darchinyan, also representing Armenia, will compete at the Olympics too.

Armenia has a total of 15 athletes participating in Tokyo 2020. Weightlifters



Hovhannes Bachkov

Simon Martirosyan and Izabella Yaylyan, judoka Ferdinand Karapetyan, gymnast Artur Davtyan, Greco-Roman wrestlers Artur Aleksanyan, Karapet Chalyan, Armen Melikyan and Karen Aslanyan, freestyle wrestlers Arsen Harutyunyan and Vazgen Tevanyan, athlete Levon Aghasyan and shooter Elmira Karapetyan had qualified for the Olympics earlier.






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 Syunik NGO will make investments in agriculture to create income for their beneficiaries. The recipient gets assistance conditional that within 2 years they give back on an annual basis the equivalent of 10% of their produced goods to other needy families.



THIS IS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE ASSISTANCE, YEAR AFTER YEAR

Participations are tax deductible. Checks to be made to

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