

# Karabakh Officials Angrily React to Pashinyan Speech Asking for ‘Lower Bar’ in Status

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) — Nagorno-Karabakh’s leadership on Thursday, April 14, criticized Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and warned him against helping Azerbaijan regain control over the Armenian-populated territory.

“Any attempt to incorporate Artsakh into Azerbaijan would lead to bloodshed and the destruction of Artsakh,” said Davit Babayan, the Karabakh foreign minister. “And after the destruction of Artsakh there would be no Republic of Armenia.”

Pashinyan said on a speech to parliament on the previous day that the international community is pressing Armenia to “Lower your bar a bit on the question of Nagorno-Karabakh’s status and we will ensure a great international consolidation around Armenia and Artsakh.” Or else, says the international community, please do not



“ANY ATTEMPT TO INCORPORATE ARTSAKH INTO AZERBAIJAN WOULD LEAD TO BLOODSHED AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ARTSAKH”

-DAVIT BABAYAN  
KARABAKH FOREIGN MINISTER

pin your hopes on us. Not because we do not want to help you but because we cannot help you,” he said in an hour-long speech. (Read excerpts of speech inside.)

“Today the international community is clearly telling us that being the only country in the world that does not bilaterally recognize the territorial integrity to Turkey ally Azerbaijan is very dangerous for not only Artsakh (Karabakh) but also Armenia,” Pashinyan said.

He signaled Yerevan’s intention to make such concessions to Baku, fueling more opposition objections that he has agreed to Azerbaijani control over Karabakh.

Pashinyan said he is therefore keen to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan “as soon as possible.” He reiterated that Baku’s proposals regarding such an accord, including a mutual recognition of each other’s see SPEECH, page 2



Artur Vanetsyan, center with two Karabakh veterans

## Opposition Leader Vanetsyan Begins Sit-in, Calls on Pashinyan to Resign

**By Mark Dovich** YEREVAN (Civilnet) — Artur Vanetsyan, an opposition leader in Armenia’s parliament, announced on Sunday that he and several other party leaders would hold an indefinite sit-in in central Yerevan to protest the Armenian government’s apparent openness to ceding control of Karabakh to Azerbaijan in ongoing peace talks. In a statement, Vanetsyan and his allies demanded that Prime Minister Nikol see OPPOSITION, page 2



Ruben Vardanyan, left, and Noubar Afeyan, flank a photo of Vartan Gregorian

## Aurora Co-Founder Vartan Gregorian’s Legacy Honored In New York City

NEW YORK — The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative joined the memorial service organized by the Carnegie Corporation of New York on April 13, 2022 at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Dr. Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation in New York, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, and Aurora Prize Selection Committee Member, died in April 2021. During the memorial, members of the Gregorian family, lifelong friends, and distinguished colleagues shared memories and teachings and paid tribute to Gregorian’s exceptional achievements in philanthropy, libraries, educational institutions, and arts and cultural organizations. Videos and photos of Gregorian at every stage of his life were interspersed with personal memories shared in heartfelt video messages. see MEMORIAL, page 20

## Zabelle Panosian

WWI Era Armenian Singing Star,  
Remembered in New Book and CD Reissue

BALTIMORE — One hundred years ago, as the members of the fledgling Armenian-American community witnessed the holocaust of their compatriots and families back in Ottoman Turkey, a young woman, born in Turkey, brought as a bride to Boston, and trying to break into a singing career, found herself as the voice of a bereaved nation.

IMAGE COURTESY OF MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

Madame Zabelle Panosian, soprano, became the first Armenian-American female singing star, whose concerts raised money for the survivors of the Genocide and whose very image was used by fundraisers to personify a “Mother Armenia” who would protect her “children,” the orphaned survivors. For some 6 to 10 years, from 1915 into the mid-1920s, the see ZABELLE, page 14



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Easter Services Held in Echmiadzin  
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**LOS ANGELES**  
FAST Raises \$1.4 Million for Science and Tech  
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**BELGIUM**  
International Musicians, Master and Students, Perform Jazz in Antwerp  
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## ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Artsakh Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church Organizes pilgrimage to Dadivank

STEPANAKERT — The Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church organized a pilgrimage to the Dadivank monastery on Easter Sunday.

Primate of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Bishop Vrtanes Abrahamyan told reporters earlier that pilgrimages to the medieval Armenian monastery Dadivank (Hutavank), which is located in the Azerbaijani-held Shahumyan region of Artsakh, had been suspended since May 2021.

### Yerevan to Spend 22.3 Million Drams to House Displaced Civilians

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Yerevan City Council has decided to allocate more than 22.3 million drams (\$46,000) for the resettlement of people temporarily residing in Armenia as a result of the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

First Deputy Mayor Levon Hovhannisyan said this week, however, that the budget of Yerevan for 2022 does not provide funds for tackling the housing problems of civilians displaced from Azerbaijan during the First Karabakh War in the 1990s.

### Iran Willing to Participate in Armenia Road Construction Projects

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — At a meeting with the Ambassador of Armenia, the Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development Khairullah Khademi announced the readiness of Iran to cooperate with Armenia in exporting technical and engineering services in order to complete a new corridor between the two countries, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development informs.

According to the Ministry, Ambassador Arsen Avagyan met with Khademi to discuss transportation cooperation between the two countries and facilitate road communication between Iran and Armenia.

Khademi said: “Iran seeks to enhance its transit advantages by building new international routes.”

New road, rail, and sea routes have been built or are being built for this purpose, making it easier for Iran to access the North-South corridor and European countries, reducing transportation times.

He continued: “Iran is currently providing the conditions for the completion of this corridor of communication with Armenia by constructing a road from Tabriz to the border of Norduz.”

Khademi announced Iran’s readiness to cooperate in the construction of this axis by issuing technical and engineering services by Iranian consulting engineers and contractors and noted that “with the construction of this axis, the north-south transit route from Iran to Armenia will be reduced by half.”

# Karabakh Officials Angrily React to Pashinyan Speech Asking for ‘Lower Bar’

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territorial integrity, are acceptable to Yerevan. He again stated that a “clarification of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh” must also be on the agenda of upcoming Armenian-Azerbaijani talks on the treaty.

Pashinyan did not explicitly say whether his administration is also ready to formally recognize Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh. He noted only that Yerevan will put the emphasis on “security guarantees for the Armenians of Karabakh and their rights and freedoms.”

Babayan said Pashinyan’s remarks caused a “wave of discontent” in Karabakh. He said he believes that they are also unacceptable to most residents of Armenia as well as the worldwide Armenian Diaspora.

“We have no bars anymore, we have only red lines drawn by blood,” added the Karabakh official. “Our red line is that we will not be part of Azerbaijan. This is out of the question.”

Pashinyan, he went on, is wrong to claim that “the whole international community is against us.” “Even if the whole international community is against us... we will still fight till the end,” Babayan said.

The Karabakh parliament debated the implications of Pashinyan’s statement at an emergency session held later on Thursday. In a resolution adopted by it unanimously, it demanded that the Armenian authorities “abandon their current disastrous position.”

“No government has a right to lower the negotiating bar for a status acceptable to Artsakh and the internationally recognized right to self-determination under the pretext of peace,” reads the resolution.

Arayik Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, discussed the issue with local politicians and civil society members during separate meetings held in Stepanakert on

Wednesday. He stressed that the Karabakh Armenians will not give up their right to self-determination.

Meanwhile, Pashinyan defended and reaffirmed his stance when he again addressed the Armenian parliament on Thursday.

“What I’ve been saying is all about not surrendering Karabakh... If we follow a difference path we will surrender Karabakh,” the Armenian prime minister told lawmakers.

“I have the impression that there are people who dream about seeing the population

“I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DREAM ABOUT SEEING THE POPULATION LEAVE KARABAKH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.... NO, WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF KARABAKH MUST NOT LEAVE KARABAKH, THE PEOPLE OF KARABAKH MUST LIVE IN KARABAKH, THE PEOPLE OF KARABAKH MUST HAVE RIGHTS, FREEDOMS AND A STATUS.”

—NIKOL PASHINYAN

leave Karabakh as soon as possible,” he said. “No, what we are saying is that the people of Karabakh must not leave Karabakh, the people of Karabakh must live in Karabakh, the people of Karabakh must have rights, freedoms and a status.”

Pashinyan again declined to specify what that status should be.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly ruled out granting Karabakh any status of autonomy, let alone recognizing

ing its de facto secession from Azerbaijan. Aliyev maintains that Baku put an end to the Karabakh conflict with its victory in the 2020 war.

Pashinyan and Aliyev met in Brussels on April 6 for talks on an Armenian-Azerbaijani “peace treaty” hosted by Charles Michel, the European Union’s top official. Aliyev said after the talks that “Armenia is renouncing territorial claims” to his country.

Armenian opposition leaders were quick to strongly condemn the remarks. Ishkhan Saghatelian, a senior member of the main opposition Hayastan alliance, said Pashinyan openly expressed his intention to place Karabakh back under Azerbaijani control.

“This means that we would finally lose Artsakh because Artsakh will be left without Armenians if we go down that path,” he told RFE / RL’s Armenian Service. “This is absolutely unacceptable to us.”

Saghatelian said that regime change in Armenia is the only way to prevent such a scenario.

Hayastan and the other parliamentary opposition bloc, Pativ Unem, jointly rallied thousands of supporters in Yerevan on April 5 to warn the Armenian government against making far-reaching concessions to Baku. They signaled plans to stage more such protests in the coming weeks.

Russia, the United States and France have for decades co-headed the OSCE Minsk Group tasked with brokering a Karabakh settlement. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week that Washington and Paris have stopped cooperating with Moscow on the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute because of the war in Ukraine. US and French officials have not denied that.

Pashinyan is scheduled to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on April 19 during an official visit to Moscow.

## Opposition Leader Vanetsyan Begins Sit-in, Calls on Pashinyan to Resign

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Pashinyan resign and called on all “compatriots” to join the demonstration on Freedom Square in downtown Yerevan.

“The so-called ‘authorities’ have entered the last stage of the destruction of our state and statehood. We have no time to delay,” the statement said. “There is a way to stop this destructive cycle: Armenians must wake up and become one fist again.”

“For the sake of our homeland, our state, and the future of our children, today we must wake up, sober up, fight, and stop this government and its patrons,” the statement continued. “We will not go home until we reach our goal.”

“Dear compatriots, come to Freedom Square. Come with family, friends, relatives, come at any time convenient for you.”

The sit-in comes in response to a major speech Pashinyan gave to parliament last week, in which he said that Armenia should “lower the bar a little on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and ensure greater international consolidation around Armenia and Artsakh (Karabakh).”

Pashinyan’s speech fueled mounting concern, in both Armenia and Karabakh, that Yerevan could be preparing to cede control of the territory to Baku during

peace negotiations — and prompted a quick and furious backlash from leaders across Armenia’s fractured political spectrum.

Among other responses, the Karabakh parliament last week issued an extraordinary, unanimous rebuke of Pashinyan’s administration, “demanding that the Armenian authorities abandon their current catastrophic position” in peace talks with Azerbaijan.

On Monday morning, two veterans of the 2020 war in and around Karabakh announced that they would be joining Vanetsyan’s sit-in and launching an indefinite hunger strike.

“The purpose of the hunger strike is to draw the attention of the representatives of our generation to the situation around Artsakh,” wrote one of the men on Facebook.

Reports have emerged that the police have prevented the demonstrators from setting up tents or heaters on the square, culminating Sunday night in a scuffle between protesters and police that led to several arrests. In response, Vanetsyan said the police were acting “out of fear.”

“They are just afraid that the movement will gain momentum faster,” Vanetsyan told reporters.

Before joining the opposition, Vanet-

syman was a close ally of Pashinyan and played a key role in his administration, leading the National Security Service from 2018 to 2019. In September 2019, Vanetsyan resigned from his post in circumstances that remain murky.

In the immediate aftermath of the signing of a ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020, Vanetsyan was arrested on two separate occasions, the first on charges of “illegal conduct of rallies,” the second on allegations of “usurping power.” In each case, the court ruled that Vanetsyan’s arrest was unlawful and freed him from detention.

In June 2021, the I Have Honor alliance, led by Vanetsyan, entered parliament with about 5 percent of the vote, netting seven seats in the 107-seat body.

Several lawmakers from the other opposition party represented in parliament, the Armenia Alliance, have come out publicly in support of Vanetsyan’s protest.

“We have a plan from start to finish. We will make a statement shortly and move on to action,” said Ishkhan Saghatelian, an Armenia Alliance leader and the National Assembly’s vice president.

“The Armenian people must come out to fight in the name of Armenia and Artsakh, and I assure you that this government has no future.”





## ARMENIA

# Excerpts of Pashinyan's Speeches on April 13, 14

YEREVAN — On April 13, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered a general address to parliament, but his comments on Karabakh were so explosive that the next day, he delivered a second message to clarify the previous one.

Below are some excerpts from the two:

I initially accepted my guilt and responsibility for both the war and the defeat. But I have not accepted and I do not accept the accusations addressed to me by the opposition after November 9, 2020, accusing me of surrendering lands, and thus, also of treason. At first glance, this may seem absurd, that you admit guilt, but do not accept the accusation, and perhaps the time has come for this dilemma to be resolved.

In a recent interview, I hinted that if I was to be accused objectively, I should not be accused of surrendering lands, but of not surrendering lands. And now, yes, I want to admit that I'm probably guilty of that.

In order to talk about it with the people at the time, I first had to convince myself that it was the right way. And I confess, I could not convince myself. And why could not I? For the same reason as a number of our opposition partners are unable to come to terms with reality to date.

I could not convince myself also because for 25 years we have been telling the Armenian society that all the deprivations we have suffered and are suffering have a great goal and that goal is the freedom of Artsakh. All the hardships we face is for the sake of having powerful army, and it is difficult to believe that an army built on so much hardships will not be able to defend our dream.

I could not convince myself, because the geopolitical centers generally thought in the same direction, in the sense that everyone unequivocally recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, but they were not united in the logic of the events that would take place after the potential surrender and the contradictions that had already intensified in Syria, Libya, Georgia, Ukraine, and finally in Nagorno-Karabakh, would definitely lead to an explosion.

I could not convince myself, because when I was getting acquainted with the negotiation documents, I realized that Serzh Sargsyan did not exaggerate anything when saying that Armenia was ready to abandon the 7 regions, but each time Azerbaijan made new demands and that Azerbaijan's expectations were unrealistic and unacceptable to us.

I could not convince myself because I realized that Robert Kocharyan was not exaggerating at all when he stated that Armenia also has a problem of territorial integrity.

Today the international community tells us again "Lower your benchmark on the status of Nagorno Karabakh a little and ensure greater international consolidation around Armenia and Artsakh".

Otherwise, says the international community, please do not rely on us, not because we do not want to help you, but because we cannot help you.

First of all, about the agreements based on the results of the trilateral meeting held on April 6 this year in Brussels. Yes, I have agreed that the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan should begin preparations for a peace treaty. What this means in practice, what schedule, what format, still needs to be discussed and decided. But signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan as soon as possible is part of our plans.

But I must say that we do not have illusions here either, because we do not rule out that Azerbaijan will try to bring the peace

talks to a deadlock as soon as possible, making it an opportunity for new aggression and aggressive actions against Armenia and Artsakh. We have the same concern, by the way, in relation to delimitation works, because we do not rule out that Azerbaijan will use this process to formulate territorial claims against Armenia, de jure declaring that it has no territorial claims.

Understanding and calculating all the risks and challenges, we have come to the conclusion that standing at the same point and not making any progress in the process not only does not reduce but also exacerbates the risks. That is the reason why we reached an agreement on delimitation in Brussels - to set up an Armenia-Azerbaijan bilateral commission on delimitation and border security by the end of April and start working.

Our concern that Azerbaijan wants to maintain military tensions along the border parallel with the delimitation process in order to justify territorial aspirations and formulate new aspirations towards Armenia has finally been perceived by the international community, but we have already reached a dangerous point where the offer of a simultaneous withdrawal of troops could be perceived as a policy of bringing the situation to a standstill. That is why, as I said at the March 31 Cabinet meeting, we are ready to show flexibility, and we have shown that flexibility in Brussels, hoping that the international community will pay more attention to the security environment along the border.

I would like to emphasize that the delimitation agreement was not reached from scratch in Brussels, but the agreements reached in Sochi on November 26, 2021 were finalized, but all this also created a basis for the Russian Federation, the Western and the other partners, if necessary, to provide the necessary support to the delimitation of borders with their information and experience.

It should be noted that the bilateral commission on delimitation and border security, as the name implies, will have a double mandate. The first is the delimitation work, the second is the provision of security and stability along the border. This means that the commission will have some authority to monitor the border situation, as well as the opportunity to come up with a concrete proposal to increase the level of security and stability at the border. If necessary, it will be possible to involve international expert potential in this process.

I would also like to inform you that we are currently working on the format and staff of the commission and we must try to clarify the staff by April 30 at the latest. In the meantime, our relevant officials must work with the Azerbaijani side and reach a common ground on this organizational issue.

Returning to the topic of the peace treaty, I must remind you that we have repeatedly stated our readiness to start this process. On March 10, one of the OSCE MG Co-Chair countries conveyed to us Azerbaijan's views on the basic principles of the peace treaty.

These principles are as follows:

- Recognition and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders, political independence,
- Recording the absence of territorial claims against each other and de jure recording the obligation not to make such claims against each other in the future,
- a mutual commitment not to pose a threat to each other's security, territorial integrity or political independence in inter-



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II leads the Easter services with the throngs of faithful.

## Easter Services Held in Echmiadzin

ECHMADZIN — On April 17, the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church celebrated the Feast of the Miraculous Resurrection of our Lord, Savior Jesus Christ.

On the occasion of the holiday, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, celebrated Divine Liturgy at St. Gregory the Illuminator Mother Church in Yerevan.

The Pontifical Divine Liturgy was attended by members of the Supreme Spiritual Council, benefactors of the Mother See, President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Berge Setrakian, heads and representatives of diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia, international organizations, politicians and public figures, and many pilgrims.

After worshiping in front of the relics of St. Gregory the Illuminator in the vestibule of the Mother Church, the Catholicos of All Armenians, offered his blessing to the faithful and led a procession to the Holy Tabernacle. The Catholicos was accompanied by Bishop Mushegh Babayan, Dean of the Yerevan State University Faculty of Theology and Superintendent of St. Gregory the Illuminator Mother Church in Yerevan, Bishop Anushavan Zhamkochyan.

During the Holy Liturgy, the Catholicos of All Armenians addressed his patriarchal message to all Armenians, conveying the angelic message "Christ is risen from the dead."

state relations, including by the use of force, and not to take any action incompatible with the goals of the United Nations,

- delimitation and demarcation of borders and establishment of diplomatic relations,
- Unblocking transport and other communications, creating new communications, and cooperating in other areas of mutual interest.

### Pashinyan Speech from April 14

They say we should have stopped the war, or prevented it - did we not think about stopping or preventing the war? It was not possible to stop or prevent the war without Shushi, it was simply not possible. I have said this several times, and our soldiers who fell, Glory to them, they fought for this right. They fought for the opportunity not to surrender Karabakh, what I am talking about is about not surrendering Karabakh, dear colleagues. Note, it's about not surrendering, because if we go the other way, we will surrender Karabakh. The incidents of Parukh are a good example, piece by piece. It is enough to deceive each other.

There are a lot of discussions since yesterday, people are asking what I said, what my speech meant. I also thought about my yesterday's speech, what it meant and, I am sorry for I have to evaluate my speech myself, but, yes, I have a clear assessment of my yesterday's speech. With that speech we opened a space for the Republic of Armenia, for Artsakh, because during the whole negotiation process of the previous period, Armenia and Artsakh were deprived of political and diplomatic space. We are opening a path for Armenia and Artsakh. We are opening a path for Armenia and Artsakh to preserve statehood. Because exotic thoughts are voiced, those thoughts are voiced as a threat that if something does not happen in this or that way, we will take out the people of Karabakh from Karabakh or the people

of Karabakh will leave. There is an impression that there are people who dream that the people leave Karabakh as soon as possible. No, we say that the people of Karabakh should not leave Karabakh, the people of Karabakh should live in Karabakh, the people of Karabakh should have rights, freedoms, status in Karabakh. That's what we are talking about, and yes, we have opened that space. Our martyrs fell in order to open a perspective for Karabakh and Armenia, because since 1998, with that step-by-step-package versions, the Armenians had been deprived of that space.

We are paving the way to get our people, thousand apologies, out of the status of a sacrificial lamb, and finally, ok, let's understand why that war happened, and why the war of 2016 did not take place earlier. It was not us to decide whether the war should be or not, we did not decide anything. I am standing at this rostrum today and I say no, Armenia is a sovereign state, we must return the right to making decisions over things, because we are a country, not a cowshed. We are country, we are citizens, we are not sacrificial lamb for others to decide how much and how to slaughter us and how much to forgive us. We are a state, we are a nation, we are sovereign, yes we are self-respecting, and yes, we are bleeding, but we have dignity and we will not allow someone else to decide or take away our rights by manipulating us, introducing models of patriotism, telling us that we have to be patriotic in the way that is in our interests. We must be patriotic in the way that is in the interests of these children. I don't know what they are told, I even don't know what their teachers tell them, but today I tell them that I will not allow our generations to be kept in the status of a sacrificial lamb. We speak so much that we were massacred, subjected to genocide, well, will not we finally understand the deep-rooted reasons behind that?



## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Karabakh's Independence Not a Bargaining Chip, Says Aram I

BEIRUT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The independence of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) cannot be a bargaining chip, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I said during an Easter mass on Sunday, April 17.

"We as a nation cannot remain indifferent and silent, we will tell the people of Artsakh that we are with you," the Catholicos said.

"Peace, independence and justice are God-given values and rights. The peace of a nation can't be a bargaining chip, the people of Artsakh have collectively established and strengthened their independence on the land where they have been living and working for centuries."

Aram I said Armenia is facing severe challenges today. "We expect the authorities of Armenia, the people of Armenia, as well as the people of Artsakh to firmly establish their collective will, saying that a nation's will to live freely, the right to live in peace can't be undermined in the light of so-called geopolitical conditions," he said.

## Turkey Opposition Leader Visits Dink Foundation

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — The leader of the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, visited the Hrant Dink Foundation together with a group of supporters and the representatives of the party's Istanbul branch, on April 18.

Kılıçdaroğlu met with Dink's widow, Rakel Dink, and the leaders of the foundation.

During a press conference following the meeting, Kılıçdaroğlu said their main fight is going to be against the dark forces there. "Yes, the murderer of Hrant Dink is known, is arrested, but we must fight and find the real murderers," he said.

## Parliament to hold hearings On Armenian-Turkish Relations

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The National Assembly was scheduled to hold hearings on Armenian-Turkish relations, it was announced on April 19. The hearings have been initiated by the opposition Armenia bloc.

The special sitting was scheduled to be held on April 21.

Turkey and Armenia last December named special envoys to discuss the normalization of ties. Two rounds of talks followed on Jan. 14 and then Feb. 24. The next meeting is slated to be held in Vienna although no date is available for now.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Vahan Hunanyan said earlier that Armenia has suggested that Turkey open the border for holders of diplomatic passports as a first step, but that Ankara is hesitating.

Hunanyan's comments came after Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavuşoğlu urged Yerevan to take more "bold steps."

## Putin, Pashinyan Reaffirm Russia Role in Armenian-Azeri Talks

MOSCOW (Azatutyun) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reaffirmed Russia's key role in efforts to end the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict when they met outside Moscow on Tuesday, April 19.

They called for a "consistent implementation" of Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by Moscow during and after the 2020 war in Karabakh. They also agreed to speed up the planned creation of a commission on demarcating Armenia's border with Azerbaijan with Russian assistance.

"The parties agreed to intensify trilateral cooperation between Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan in order to foster the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and in the region as a whole," Putin and Pashinyan added in a joint declaration issued after their talks.

Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev agreed to start drafting an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty and to set up the commission on the border demarcation during their April 6 talks in Brussels hosted by European Council President Charles Michel. The latter reaffirmed the European Union's readiness to facilitate the opening of transport links between the two South Caucasus states.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov noted on April 8 that Putin had already laid the groundwork for these agreements during his frequent contacts with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders. Lavrov accused the EU of seeking to sideline Moscow and use the Karabakh conflict in the



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in his Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, April 19, 2022.

standoff over Ukraine.

A senior EU diplomat insisted shortly before Lavrov's comments that the EU and Russian efforts are "not mutually incompatible."

In their joint statement, Putin and Pashinyan stressed the importance of "revitalizing" the work of a Russian-Armenian-Azerbaijani intergovernmental body dealing with practical modalities of reopening regional transport links. The working group has not met since December.

The statement made no explicit mention of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty. Lavrov said that Moscow is ready to help Yerevan and Baku "create conditions" for concluding such an accord.

In his opening remarks at the talks held in his Novo-Ogaryovo residence near Moscow, Putin noted that "many problems remain" in the Karabakh conflict zone. He did not go into details.

The two leaders did not address the press in person after the talks.

## U.S. Supreme Court Seeks Biden Administration's View On Turkish Immunity for Attack on Peaceful Protestors

WASHINGTON (Law.com) — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday, April 18, asked for the views of the Biden administration on whether the justices should review Turkey's claims of immunity from a lawsuit over a violent altercation in 2017 between Turkish security forces and protestors in the nation's capital.

The justices called for the views of the U.S. solicitor general in the case, *Republic of Turkey v. Usoyan*. In its petition, Turkey claims its presidential security detail is immune from tort liability for its use of physical force during an official state visit

because of the "discretionary function" exception to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

David Saltzman of Washington, D.C.'s Saltzman & Evinch represents Turkey. With him on the petition are Cathy Hinger of D.C.'s Womble Bond Dickinson and Mark Schamel of Lowenstein Sandler.

A brief opposing review by the high court has been filed by longtime victims' advocate Steven Perles of the Perles Law Firm in D.C. He is assisted by a team of lawyers from Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll; Public Citizen Litigation Group;

teams of attorneys from Bregman, Berbert, Schwartz & Gilday and Dorsey & Whitney; and Michael Tigar of Duke University Law School.

The May 2017 incident occurred outside the Turkish ambassador's residence. President Recep Erdogan had met that day with then-President Donald Trump. Protestors had gathered across the street from the ambassador's residence following clashes with pro-Erdogan supporters. After Erdogan arrived by car, Turkish security forces and Erdogan supporters broke through a U.S. law enforcement line separating the groups and attacked the protestors, according to Perles' brief.

The protestors were left bloodied and disoriented, with concussions, lost teeth, and other serious injuries, according to Perles.

Ruling in two separate lawsuits filed by the injured protestors, a federal district court held that "Turkey cannot rely on the discretionary function rule to maintain its immunity because defendant Turkey's exercise of discretion relating to the violent physical attack on the protestors was not grounded in social, economic, or political policy and was not of a nature and quality that Congress intended to shield from liability."

On appeal by Turkey, the United States supported the injured protestors, writing in its brief that the security forces' conduct "cannot reasonably be regarded as an exercise of the agents' protective function." The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit affirmed the district court judgment.



The attack by Erdogan's bodyguards on protestors in Washington in 2017.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Remembering Legacy of Eiichi Shibusawa

## *Helped Armenian Refugees During Genocide*

By Anna Vardanyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Nowadays, interest in Eiichi Shibusawa, as a unique, exemplary entrepreneur does not stop in Japan. He founded more than 500 enterprises operating in Japan, carried out diplomatic and charitable activities, and made a major contribution to the development of the Japanese economy at the time. However, until about a de-cade ago nobody knew about the ties between Eiichi Shibusawa (1840-1931) and the Armenian nation.

In fact, he was the head of “Arumenia-Nippon” Armenian-Japanese Scientific and Cultural Union. More has been discovered about him thanks to the efforts of historian and independent researcher at the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Vicken Babkenian.

During the Armenian Genocide, Japan sent aid to the refugees.

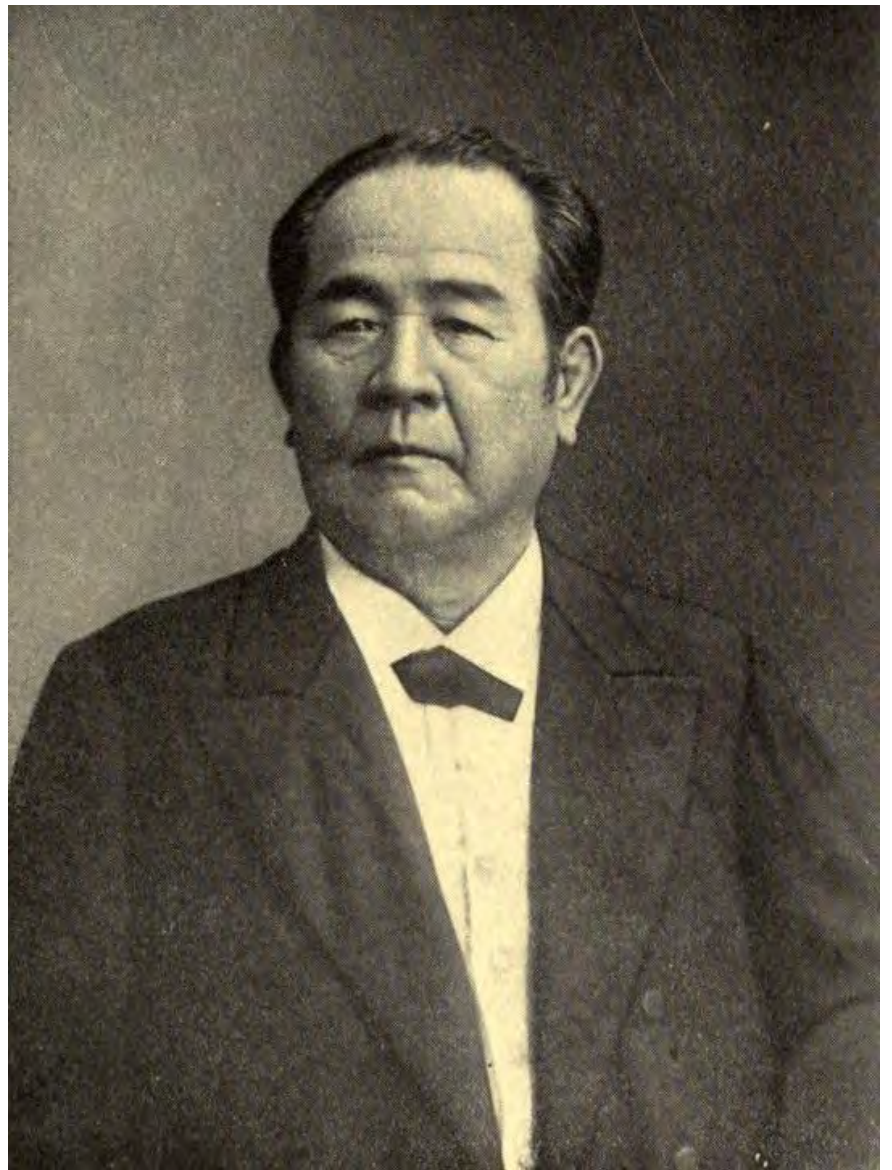
In an effort to internationalize the efforts of the US-based Near East Relief, which was a fund helping Armenian refugees after the Genocide, Rev. Dr. Lincoln L. Wirt, an American Congregational minister and a Red Cross commissioner during World War I, was given the mission to establish branches of the Near East Relief among the Pacific nations, one of which was Japan. He succeeded in establishing

a general committee in Japan and the Armenian relief movement began to gain momentum. Wirt was invited to the Imperial Bank. As Babkenian notes, Shibusawa was also present at this meeting.

Sitting at the head of a long table, Shibusawa asked Wirt “who the Armenians were and why they needed help.” After a little geography and history, Wirt described the details of the atrocities committed against the Armenians and their current plight. Shibusawa interrupted and asked, “Why did you not come to us with your appeal?” He added, “Was it because we are Buddhists and you thought we would not help Christians in distress? We have read your speeches as reported in the *Japan Advertiser* [an English-language daily] and we thought we would like to help, even if we have not been invited to do so. Unbeknown to you, one of our Japanese papers published your appeal, and here is your result.”



Statue of industrialist Eiichi Shibusawa near the Bank of Japan in Tokyo



Shibusawa then handed over to Wirt a check for \$11,000 (about \$140,000 in today's terms).

Not only did he give money for charity, Shibusawa also accepted the chairmanship of the Armenian Relief Committee of Japan, headquartered in Kajimachi, Tokyo. He immediately wrote a letter to 100 Japanese leaders, inviting them to attend a lecture by Rev. Wirt in the hope of inspiring interest to help the Armenians.

It's a fact that the Armenian Relief Committee of Japan implemented a series of donations, activities, and lectures together with Eiichi Shibusawa and a group of people of different social and political status, who spared no effort to raise funds for Armenians in need. The issue of the Armenian refugees became a key question for the Committee.

For example, 10,000 yens were sent to the Armenian Refugee Fund. Another amount was transferred to the Armenian Musicians' Fund. In addition, it was decided to transfer 120 yen per child per year. The Armenian Relief Committee headed by Eiichi Shibusawa raised about 20,000 yen, by organizing such activities as lectures, concerts, film screenings and theatre performances. It is also significant, that the money raised by Armenian Relief Committee headed by Shibusawa reached the biggest Armenian orphanage at the time, which was located in Aleksandrapol, today's Gyumri, Armenia.

From the distance of a century, the impression is created that the mercy of the Japanese people towards the Armenian people has been forgotten, lost from the pages of the joint history of the two friendly peoples. This article hopes to counteract this view, valuing the historical relations between the Armenian and Japanese peoples. Despite the geographical distance, the peoples of the two friendly countries have always treated each other with mutual warmth. In general, there is an opinion that states make history.

## Moscow Rejects Armenian Criticism of Russian Peacekeepers

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — Responding to criticism by Armenia, Russia said on April 15 that its peacekeeping forces did not breach any agreements when they refused to allow Armenian opposition parliamentarians to visit Nagorno-Karabakh earlier this week.

The deputies representing Armenia two main opposition groups had headed to Karabakh on April 12 as part of their campaign against far-reaching Armenian concessions to Azerbaijan. Russian peacekeepers manning a checkpoint in the Lachin corridor connecting Armenia and Karabakh did not allow them to proceed to Stepanakert.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry ex-

pressed concern over the peacekeepers' actions, saying that they run counter to the terms of the Russian-brokered ceasefire that stopped the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in November 2020. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan echoed the criticism on April 13.

The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, said the Russian soldiers acted “in strict conformity” with the truce accord. Claims to the contrary “do not correspond to reality,” she said.

“We expect that given the incidents that have taken place both in the zone of responsibility of the [Russian Peacekeeping Contingent] and at certain sections of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, both sides will

refrain from steps that could further aggravate the situation in the region,” Zakharova added in written comments. She did not clarify the reason for the travel ban.

Armenian opposition leaders claim that they were barred from entering Karabakh at the behest of Armenia government. They argue that lawmakers representing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party condemned the trip when it was announced by their opposition colleagues beforehand.

The government has denied any responsibility for the unprecedented ban.

Pashinyan and the Foreign Ministry in Yerevan have also criticized the peacekeepers for not preventing Azerbaijani troops from

seizing a village in Karabakh and nearby hills late last month. They have repeatedly called on Moscow to investigate the peacekeepers' “inactivity.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov appeared to dismiss the criticism after holding talks with his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan in Moscow on April 8.

“Calls for bringing this contingent to account and conducting an internal inquiry, which are sometimes voiced, do not reflect the real attitude of the Armenian people and leadership towards the huge role that the Russian peacekeeping contingent plays in maintaining stability in this region,” he said. Lavrov.



# Community News

## Primate Issues Call For Funds to Aid Ukraine Armenian Refugees

NEW YORK — At the directive of Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel, all churches of the Eastern Diocese will take up a special collection on Easter Sunday, to aid Armenians who are suffering in Ukraine.

All funds collected will go to the Armenian Church Diocese of Ukraine, for distribution to Armenian families and individuals in need. Bishop Marcos Hovhannisyan, Primate of the Ukrainian diocese, will personally oversee the distribution of aid.

In an April 8 directive to Diocesan clergy, the Bishop Daniel wrote:

“This morning I was able to speak with Bishop Marcos, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Ukraine. With great valiance and humility, Marcos *Srpazan* is in Kyiv doing his very best to care for his community under the current nightmarish circumstances. Of the approximately 350,000 Armenians in Ukraine he knows of 37 confirmed deaths from the war thus far, including seven Armenian servicemen of the Ukrainian military, who died defending the land which is their home.

“The situation in Kyiv has improved somewhat in recent days with the retreat of Russian forces. Food and supplies are available, but most people cannot pay for them because they have not been working and have no income. Their situation remains dire.

“As a concrete gesture of gratitude to God for the blessings we enjoy as American-Armenians, I hereby direct that a special collection be taken in all churches of our Diocese on Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022 to assist our brothers and sisters who are suffering in Ukraine. All donations should be forwarded immediately to the Diocese in New York, where they will be securely wired directly to the Armenian Diocese of Ukraine. I am in regular contact with Bishop Margos, who will personally oversee the use of the funds to assist families and individuals in his communities that are in need. He will report to us accordingly.

“In the spirit of the Easter season, when we celebrate God’s total self-sacrifice for the salvation of his people, I urge our clergy and faithful to give generously.”

Make an online donation to help in this effort, via the Eastern Diocese’s secure server, at <https://armenian-church.us/donate/>.



Bishop Marcos Hovhannisyan, Primate of the Ukrainian diocese



Dr. Noubar Afeyan and Dr. Armen Orujyan

## Global Community Joins FAST in Raising \$1.4M for Science and Tech

LOS ANGELES — The Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) held its inaugural fundraiser, titled “Advance Armenia Gala,” on March 31, at The Landmark with hundreds of thought leaders, visionaries, and entrepreneurs in attendance. The organization hit a milestone in raising \$1.4 million that will benefit its Advance STEM programs in building intellectual capacity, cultivating scientists in Armenia, and connecting them with international researchers. This joint effort aims to harness globally competitive educational and research projects in the upcoming year.

Dr. Noubar Afeyan served as the evening’s keynote speaker and underscored the



Dr. Noubar Afeyan

importance of igniting the Diaspora’s responsibility and continued engagement to address the dynamic needs of Armenia. Afeyan is recognized for co-founding Moderna, Inc., which changed the world of medicine by introducing the COVID-19 vaccine. He joined others in co-founding FAST in 2017 and has been working with international experts to heighten the foundation’s presence in the scientific community. In his speech, Dr. Afeyan asserted that the most notable contribution to the betterment of Armenia would be through increasing investments in science and technology, as well as capacity building in education. “Just like oil has been a natural resource that has propelled many countries over the past century, for a country like Armenia, one of the best ways forward is to grow the natural resources of human minds through education and apply them to make breakthrough innovations that create extraordinary value. Science and technology can yield many new oil-like natural resources and this time without the associated environmental burden.”

A powerful address was delivered by the founding CEO of FAST and renowned innovator, Dr. Armen Orujyan, further substantiating the need for innovation in Armenia. Orujyan expressed his sincere gratitude to attendees for their generous donations and support of the organization’s goals. In his presentation, Orujyan emphasized that

see FAST, page 7

## COVID-19: Variants, Vaccines, and Emerging Science

YEREVAN, Armenia — On March 3, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health and the American University of Armenia (AUA) Turpanjian College of Health Sciences launched their first Community of Practice event titled “The Global Picture of COVID-19: Variants, Vaccines, and Emerging Science.” The webinar brought together more than 120 specialists from the public health community across Armenia, including public health professionals, physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, and policy makers.

The Community of Practice program is a new virtual platform providing a space for participants to receive ongoing continuing education and support, practice their skills, and engage in open and up-to-the-minute discussions. This webinar created the first coming together open space for providers to discuss the global epidemiology of COVID-19, variants & vaccine coverage, lessons learned to date from both Armenia and the globe, and emerging science in terms of boosters, therapeutics, and other key preventive measures.

The event was organized by the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and the AUA Turpanjian College of Health Sciences in the scope of the National Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Program for the Republic of Armenia, which is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) of the Republic of Armenia.

The webinar was co-led by Dr. Alina Dorian, associate dean of Public



Dr. Alina Dorian

Health Practice, associate professor at the Fielding School of Public Health, and the lead of the UCLA team, and Lusine Musheghyan, research associate and lecturer at the Turpanjian College of Health Sciences, and the co-lead of the AUA team.

The program featured professor of Medicine from the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Dr. Michael Reid. Reid is a board-certified infectious disease physician, whose

see UCLA, page 7





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# FAST Raises \$1.4M for Science and Tech

FAST, from page 6

this is a pivotal time for Armenia to magnify its efforts. “By launching our inaugural fundraiser, we aimed to raise the necessary funds to build stronger intellectual capacity in Armenia, scale our ADVANCE grant program, and expand the network necessary to help enhance Armenia’s science and technology ecosystem. This event proved that the Diaspora wants to take active participation in building innovative Armenia by supporting far-reaching and cutting-edge education and research. We are thrilled to see this energy and the unity of Armenians, which I believe, is a crucial asset in transforming the future of Armenia and making a lasting impact.”

FAST is ranked highly in the pantheon of science and technological advancement in Armenia and its aspirations are no small feat - transforming the country’s landscape into an innovative hub and changing the world’s perception of what Armenia represents in the global context. In its nearly five years, the organization has made a significant impact in the lives of young intellectuals and researchers in Armenia by developing fellowships, granting schemes, startups and international relationships.

Attendees of the gala were fully engaged and solidified their cooperation for FAST’s mission. The organization’s comprehensive long-term institutional and financial sustenance supports advancing STEM in Armenia and aims to play a critical role in the country’s leapfrog into a top global innovator by 2041.



Dr. Armen Orujyan

## COVID-19: Variants, Vaccines, and Emerging Science

UCLA, from page 6

work and research in infectious diseases has had global impact. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, his role has expanded to support COVID-19 related training and education activities across the state of California, and he now oversees a large pandemic-focused training initiative at UCSF.

During the webinar, Reid provided a general overview of global epidemiology of COVID-19, including infection trends and vaccination coverage updates, discussed the Omicron variant and the insights gained by the global public health community, and presented on the emerging science including vaccines and therapeutics.

He went on to discuss lessons learned



Lusine Musheghyan



Dr. Michael Reid

from the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years. He emphasized that though the pandemic did not come as a surprise, even better-prepared countries experienced a large learning curve and encountered unexpected challenges and losses while trying to overcome its effects. He underscored four main recommendations to improve preparedness for the next pandemic including strengthening surveillance systems, focusing on a “one health” framework, acting on climate change, and re-thinking global governance.

The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer session.

In the early days of the pandemic, the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and the AUA Turpanjian College of Health Sciences combined their efforts to establish a collaborative initiative – the National Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Program for the Republic of Armenia. This initiative aimed to enhance the surge capacity of Armenia’s existing public health system and to help limit the spread and adverse effects of COVID-19 in Armenia. The program grew to also offer professional development training opportunities and continuous education, as well as provide additional support for Armenia’s public health sector in collaboration with partner agencies and other associated sectors. The program also helps raise public awareness on COVID-19 and preventive measures and ultimately addresses the overall current and future public health needs of the country.

“The Community of Practice program is yet another addition to this initiative which will be held on an ongoing basis to bring together public health professionals and encourage a new, innovative, and interactive platform for collaborating, learning, and dialoguing”, said Daniela Abrahamian, program manager from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. She added, “this is a great way for individuals across the globe to engage and share knowledge and resources, as well as build strong relationships and partnerships to effectively prepare for and combat current and forthcoming disasters, threats, and emergencies, while ensuring and promoting the health and well-being of all.”

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Holy Week at St. John Armenian Church of Milwaukee

By David Lührssen

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — For the first time in 25 years, St. John the Baptist Armenian Church in Greenfield held the full order of services for Holy Week. With last year’s ordination of Rev. Guregh Hambardzumyan to the priesthood, 2022 became the first year since 1994 that the parish had a resident pastor serving the community at Eastertime.

Holy Week began when the curtains covering the Altar opened on the morning of Palm Sunday, April 10. The Opening of the Doors (Turun-Patzek) was followed by Badarak, the distribution of palm branches and St. John’s traditional Palm Sunday Brunch in the church’s Cultural Hall. Proceeds from the brunch, sponsored by the parish’s Sunday School, were donated to support charities in Armenia.

On Thursday evening, April 14, Hambardzumyan washed the feet of 12 of the parish’s members, aged 2-62, following the tradition established by Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17). In

his homily, Der Guregh stressed that the love Jesus showed for his disciples through that act of humility is the core value of Christianity. Afterward, Der Guregh conducted the Vigil of Darkness, Tenebrae (Khavaroum), the solemn remembrance of the betrayal of Christ.

On Holy Friday, April 15, the Kerezman representing the tomb of Christ was placed in the center of the chancel and the Order of the Entombment was performed. On Saturday evening members of the community gathered for the Reading from the Prophecies (Jrakalooys) followed by Badarak.

Nearly 110 people crowded into the church’s sanctuary on Easter Sunday, and many stayed for the unscheduled luncheon that followed. “Christ Has Risen from the Dead!” (Krisdos haryav ee merelotz!) was the theme of Hambardzumyan’s sermon, which compared Christianity with religions based on the words and memories of dead prophets. By contrast, Christianity assumes that its founder is the living Son of God, whose conquest of death on the first Easter enables those who follow His exam-



Fr. Guregh Hambardzumyan



Fr. Guregh Hambardzumyan following the Washing of Feet service

## HMADS Dinner Dance Is Back

By Jennifer Chelebi


MANHASSET, N.Y. — Friends of HMADS announce the return of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) Dinner Dance, which this year will take place on June 4, 2022. Hosted once again at the North Hills Country Club, it will be an elegant evening of mingling, dancing, and fine dining in celebration of the 55th anniversary our beloved HMADS. In the true spirit of the Armenian people, our school thrived through the most challenging of years.

The annual gala supports the Friends of HMADS Committee’s efforts to raise funds for the Armenian Day School, including HMADS Principal Seta Megherian, incredibly hard-working teachers and staff, dedicated Board of Directors and devoted parents and families who ensured the school promoted a safe, strong Armenian community during the difficult pandemic years.

This year’s booklet Chairperson is Karnig Alajajian, an active member of the Armenian community and a supporter of Armenian education and schools.

Gala attendees will dance to the musical stylings of Harout Bedrossian, a very talented songwriter, singer, and producer. Harout is a gifted performer from Canada, who began his singing career as a soloist in the choir of the Armenian Church. He released his first album in 2004 titled “Shepatsour Ints.” He has since then collaborated with numerous successful artists and musicians. Harout loves to travel overseas and entertain the Armenian community, he will ensure an evening of joy and excitement on the dance floor.

For further information about this highly anticipated event, or to find out how to become a part of the Friends of HMADS, please contact the school office.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Western Diocese Ladies Auxiliary Debutante Ball to Be Held June 12

LOS ANGELES — The Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church held a Family Luncheon on Sunday, April 3 in honor of the Debutantes of 2022, their escorts and parents.

Cindy Norian, chair of the Ladies Society, welcomed everyone and expressed her joy that after a years-long delay due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the event can go on. She stated “We were delighted with the festive mood at our luncheon for the debutantes, escorts and their families. St. James Gogian Hall provided a joyful backdrop for all our guests to mingle and visit with each other. We look forward to the rehearsals where the participants will have even more time to get to know each other.”

Norian reported that this year 18 young women will be presented as debutantes and this family luncheon afforded the debutantes and escorts the opportunity to be briefed by the committee members on the Presentation, rehearsals, and all the re-

quirements necessary for a successful ball.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, states “The youth, a vibrant and beloved segment of our community, is a large family of the faithful of Christ whose life is defined by God’s divine love. Such gatherings and fellowship as the Debutante Ball, create the milieu for the cultivation of the Armenian identity in the hearts of the youth. Such events serve as a calling for our youth to devote themselves to the faith of our forefathers, to rekindle in their hearts the love for their ancestral homeland and to lead lives as noble citizens of the United States.”

The 46th Annual Debutante Ball will be held on June 12, at the elegant Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90212. The evening will begin with a Cocktail Reception at 5 p.m., presentation of the debutantes at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner and dancing at 7 p.m. As in past years, the music will be provided

by Park Avenue West, conducted by Murray Middleman.

A keepsake booklet will also be prepared containing the pictures and resumes of the

debutantes and escorts. Families and friends will have the privilege of sending congratulatory messages and acknowledge their love and pride in their accomplishments.



Members of the organizing committee

## OBITUARY

### Romen Kozmoyan

#### Diaspora Relations Official During Soviet Period

YEREVAN — After a short illness, on the morning of April 12, Armenian state official and public figure Romen Kozmoyan, passed away.

Kozmoyan was a retired National Security Service colonel. He was one of those exceptional people who knew how to use his knowledge, position and connections to help people, especially intellectuals, to



facilitate the work of those who want to invest in the motherland and to encourage all Armenian national initiatives.

Due to this, Kozmoyan worked effectively in the Committee for Cultural Relations with the Diaspora during the presidencies of both Vardges Hamazaspyan and Karlen Dallakyan, and at the Soviet Embassy in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War, where he was head of the Eastern Countries Department. In the 1980s, he served as cultural attaché of the USSR Embassy in Lebanon, and in the independent Republic of Armenia, he remained the best-informed expert concerning its diaspora.

He had the ability to make sense of the various moments of his life, full of different experiences, and to present the character and actions of the people he encountered with a subtle and kindhearted humor. Kozmoyan used his wisdom, experience, connections and ingenuity throughout his life to solve small and big problems in the diaspora and to fulfill the strategic necessities of Armenia-diaspora relations.

He will be remembered in the minds and souls of those who know him as a knowledgeable, compassionate person, always ready to help – a steadfast and loyal friend.

### Joseph M. Hovsepian

#### Active Community Member

PARAMUS, N.J. — Joseph M. Hovsepian, 81, of Paramus, NJ passed away at home surrounded by his family on April 13, 2022.

Joseph was born on March 1, 1941 in Jerusalem, Palestine. He was the youngest of four children born to Armenian Genocide survivors Minas and Mari Hovsepian. Joseph grew up in the Armenian Quarter with families of Armenians that formed an unimaginable bond that is akin to a fraternity. The “Yeroosaghemtzis” were true brothers and sisters, who shared everything and lived a “rich” life together, not in monetary means, but a life full of stories, laughter, and memories that defined an entire generation. Joe, who was known to his friends as Joudig, attended Sts. Tarkmanchatz School in his elementary years and then attended the French College Des Freres in Jerusalem to further his education.

In 1964, Joseph left Jerusalem for the United States and settled in New Jersey where he attended Fairleigh Dickinson University to study accounting. “Joe from Jordan,” as he was called by his classmates, was a talented soccer player for the university team. He graduated college in 1968 and settled in Rutherford, NJ. Soon after, Joseph was joined in New Jersey by his future wife, Rosine Deoshoghlanian, who also grew up with him in the Armenian Convent. They were married on December 31, 1970 at St. Thomas Armenian Church in Tenafly, NJ. Joseph and Rosine had two daughters, Talin and Arda, and raised their family in Paramus, NJ.

After working for several different companies, Joseph started a very successful accounting, tax preparation and payroll business called HART Financial Services, named after the first initials of his family members - Hovsep, Arda, Rosine and Talin.



Joseph was extremely active in the Armenian community through service on the parish council at St. Thomas Armenian Church. He served on committees at the Armenian General Benevolent Union, as a board member of the Armenian Home in Emerson, was involved in Armenian basketball and tennis leagues and is a brother in the Knights of Vartan.

Joseph is survived by his wife, Rosine; sisters, Shoushan Kalaydjian and Angele Vosgerichian; daughters, Talin Hovsepian and Arda Mesropian and her husband Ara; grandchildren: Arman, Alique, Alexander, Nadine and Garen. He is predeceased by his parents, Minas and Mari and older brother, John.

The funeral was on Tuesday, April 19, at St. Thomas Armenian Church, Tenafly.

Arrangements were by the William G. Basralian Funeral Home.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Celebrating Easter with TCA Greater NY and Joëlle

By Nanor Hartounian

MILFORD, N.J. — On Saturday, April 2, the Tekeyan Cultural Association Greater New York (TCA-GNY) chapter hosted a program by Joëlle, an Armenian children’s music singer from Montreal, Canada, for an Easter Party celebration at Hovnanian School.

This was the second time the chapter has organized a children’s event featuring Joëlle, who was joined onstage by 7 young Armenian dancers and the Easter Bunny. After singing and dancing with Joëlle and the Easter Bunny, the children took memorable pictures with the performers and won over 30 exciting raffle prizes. The event drew up to 200 guests and was a beautiful way to celebrate the upcoming Easter festivities.

Joëlle has been keeping Armenian youth connected to their cultural roots through her songs for years. Born in Lebanon, she has a strong passion for kids and music. Joëlle has written the lyrics and composed the melodies of many of her songs. She



Joëlle performing on stage



Joëlle with members of the committee

has also released a miniseries on YouTube entitled “Sorvink Hayeren,” an Armenian educational program where children learn about different interesting topics.

This event would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of its dancers and event committee members. The TCA-GNY chapter thanks talented dancers Andreas, Grace, Hagop, Mila, Perla, Reya, and Sophia for helping Joëlle put on an incredible show. The chapter also wishes to thank the Joëlle event committee members for their unwavering support in making this event a success. Many thanks to Anita Atamian, Talia Bouldukian, Katia Buchakjian, Nanor Hartounian, Arev Karajelian, Tsoler Panossian, and Serli Tasci, in addition to TCA-GNY chapter board members Taleen Babayan, Sylvia Buzantian, Hilda Hartounian, Vartan Ilanjan, Barkev Kalayjian, Shoghig Medzadurian, and Serge Panossian.

Easter Party with Joëlle represents the first event of the year dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Beirut, Lebanon. To honor this incredible milestone, the TCA-GNY chapter is organizing a Diamond Anniversary Gala to take place on Saturday, October 15, in New Jersey. More details will be announced shortly.

Follow the Greater New York chapter on Instagram and Facebook at @teketangreaterny for updates on all future events.

## Knights and Daughters of Vartan

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**New Jersey:** Bergen County Courthouse Green  
10 Main Street Hackensack, NJ  
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Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter

## ARMS FOR ARMENIA: THE MATTER OF AIRPLANES

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Keynote speaker

### DR. RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN

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# Arts & Culture

## Alexey Lyubimov

*‘Armenia Is My Spiritual Homeland!’*

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/YABLONOVSKY, Russia — Few people in Armenia know Russian linguist and translator Alexey Lyubimov, despite his close ties with Armenia and the Armenian language. Recently, Vadim Arutyunov’s interview with him was posted on the Internet, which aroused great interest among our compatriots. Thank you to Vadim Arutyunov for revealing this friend of ours to the Armenian people and the Armenian language!

Alexey was born in 1983 in Novoshakhtinsk, in the Rostov region. He studied languages at the Rostov-on-Don Institute of Foreign Languages. He worked as an editor of Armenian articles in *Nakhichevan of Don* newspaper of the Armenian community of Rostov, and also taught Armenian at the Armenian Sunday school in Rostov. He lives in Yablonovsk, Republic of Adygea, with his Armenian wife and sons, Hayk and Daniel, and works as a freelance translator, translating from Armenian to English into Russian and from Russian to English.

Correspondence and telephone conversations started between me and Alexei. I admire his fluency in speaking and writing Armenian.



**Dear Alexey, the website of Russian translators mentions that your native language is not only Armenian, but also Russian. And that is in the case when you do not have Armenian origin and did not grow up in Armenia. How is that possible?**

As a child I had many Armenian friends and I already spoke Armenian, mainly in the Artsakh dialect. When I moved to Rostov-on-Don, I started attending the Armenian community in Rostov and learning literary Armenian. After some time, I decided to learn the Old Armenian, Western Armenian and many dialects of Armenian. The Armenian language has long been as dear to me as Russian, and Armenian culture, song, dance, cuisine have really become an integral part of my life.

**How do you explain that despite the 200-year-old relations between Armenians and Russians, there**

see TRANSLATOR, page 13



Milan Verbist, Lionel Loueke, Cedric de Lat, Jef Manderveld (hidden), Simon Van Brandt, Alexander Baboian

## International Musicians – Master and Students – Perform Jazz in Antwerp

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ANTWERP, Belgium — “It was a really cool experience to work with him and perform, especially after a hard isolating winter!” That is how Alexander Baboian described a musical event he participated in, together with colleagues in Belgium and a special guest from Africa. The event was a concert on March 22 at a jazz club called De Singer, in Rijkvorsel, not far from Antwerp. And the special guest was a “unique and outstanding jazz guitarist from West Africa,” Lionel Loueke.

Alexander Baboian is an Armenian-American jazz guitarist and composer from Belmont, Mass., currently studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. As part of its “Breathing Project,” a program launched 10 years ago, the Conservatory has provided artistic and logistical support for jazz students, and in this context, invites international artists to come and coach students.

The renowned guitarist Lionel Loueke was born in 1973 in Benin and studied in France as well as in the US at the Berklee College of Music in Boston (where Baboian’s father, John Baboian has long taught guitar) and the Thelonious Monk Institute. He has worked with major jazz artists such as Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Terence Blanchard and is known for a unique blend of African and Jazz elements in his music. His mentor, Herbie Hancock, called him “a musical painter.” A group of students in Antwerp were invited to prepare a set of his original compositions under his direction, in a series of master classes. After studying and rehearsing intensively for a week with him, they went on stage together and performed in concert.

The featured composer, vocalist and guitarist Lionel Loueke was joined by Milan Verbist on the piano; Jef Manderveld, double bass; drummer Simon Van Brandt; trumpeter Cedric de Lat and guitarist Alexander Baboian.

### From Boston to Berlin ... and Yerevan

Alexander Baboian was born in Boston, into a 3rd/4th generation family. His father and grandfather introduced him to the world of music at an early age, and he completed his undergraduate studies at Berklee College of Music in Boston. He majored in performance as a guitarist there, focusing mainly on Jazz and developing as an instrumentalist. He graduated Magna Cum Laude, and received the Guitar Department Achievement Award twice.

His contact at Berklee with classmates from abroad, combined with opportunities to perform internationally during his time as a student inspired him to make a big move to Berlin after graduating in 2015. In the German capital he worked freelance teaching and performing in a variety of artistic projects. It was there that he met members of the German-Armenian community,

see JAZZ, page 15



Lionel Loueke and Alexander Baboian

## Mosesian Arts Exhibit ‘Across Cultures’ Focuses on Displacement, Migration, Immigration, And Cultural Identity

WATERTOWN — “Across Cultures: Invisible Ties and Journeys of Hope,” the upcoming exhibition at the Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts, reflects on ideas of displacement, migration, immigration, and the complexity of navigating different cultures. In this group exhibition, artists address issues from how moving geographically shapes one’s cultural identity, to the discourse around immigration in the last few years, to bringing awareness to diverse points of view. Mosesian Arts aims to provide a space where diversity is celebrated and acknowledged.

The broad range of artworks was selected by Boston-based, Lebanese-born photographer Rania Matar. Matar moved to the U.S. in 1984. As a Lebanese-born American woman and mother, her cross-cultural experience and personal narrative inform her photography. Matar’s work has been widely exhibited in museums worldwide, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Carnegie Museum of Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Rollins Museum of Art, and more. It is part of the permanent collections of several museums, institutions, and private collections. A mid-career retrospective of her work was recently on view at Cleveland Museum of Art, Amon Carter Museum of Art, American University of Beirut Museum.

Matar received a 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship, 2017 Mellon Foundation artist-in-residency grant, 2011 Griffin Museum of Photography Legacy Award, and Massachusetts Cultural Council Artist Fellowships in 2021, 2011, and 2007. In 2008, she was a finalist for the Foster Award at the ICA/Boston, with an accompanying solo exhibition. She has published four books: *She*, 2021; *L’Enfant-Femme*, 2016; *A Girl and Her Room*, 2012; and *Ordinary Lives*, 2009. An exhibition of select photographs from *She* will run at Mosesian Arts concurrently with “Across Cultures.”

At this exhibition, works on paper, paintings, fiber pieces, and small sculptures tell stories and address issues of displacement, immigration, and cultural identity. *Tante Rachel’s Thread*, an accordion style book by artist Etta Rosen, depicts the journey of a great-aunt who as a child escaped the Cossacks and later as an adult fled Nazi Germany. The book unfolds very much like the journeys made by the protagonist. The maps, copies of old documents, and thread illustrate her life. The thread is particularly important as she used her skills as a seamstress to make a living when she eventually reached the United States. In a large painting titled “Blossoms and Bones,” artist Marsha Nouritza Odabashian uses onionskin dye, a tradition borrowed from her Armenian ancestors. After boiling the skins, the artist drops the sienna-tinted dye on the canvas then uses acrylic paint to develop a varied cast of characters – human, animal, and hybrid that exist

see EXHIBIT, page 13



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

## ‘Across Cultures’ Exhibit Focuses on Displacement, Migration, Immigration, and Cultural Identity



SHE by Rania Matar\_Alae-Beirut-Lebanon-2020-1170x936

EXHIBIT, from page 12

in various states of movement and migration. She writes that her interest in migration reflects the experience of her four Armenian grandparents who were forced to flee to Lebanon, Syria, and the United States because of genocide in their native country. Artist Sandra Mayo's *What Goes Around Comes Around* is a world art-map printed on Tyvek. The map depicts routes that migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers take to new countries in search of safety and new homes. The artist chose Tyvek be-

cause it is a material used in construction to wrap and protect houses from the elements. In a way, Tyvek becomes a symbol of protection and evokes the idea of home. This piece also raises issues of displacement, colonialism, and political abuse.

“Across Cultures” is on display at the Mosesian Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St, Watertown, from May 5 to June 30. The opening reception will be held on May 26, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [www.mosesianarts.org](http://www.mosesianarts.org).

## Erevan Choral Society to Perform at Holy Trinity Armenian Church on April 24, Commemorating Armenian Genocide

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — After two years of inactivity due to Coronavirus pandemic, the Erevan Choral Society of Greater Boston resumes its musical activities. The first most anticipated concert will be held on Sunday, April 24 at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church.

The complimentary concert will be dedicated to the Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923. The chorus will be accompanied by soloists and students of the Armenian School of Holy Trinity Church.

“The excitement and the enthusiasm of the choral members were visible during the first rehearsal”, says Konstantin Petrossian, the musical director of the choral society. Most members of the chorus were present, and it was a pleasant surprise to see the presence of new members. At the present time, the choral members are actively rehearsing and preparing a beautiful repertoire of Armenian patriotic songs.

All members of the Armenian community in the Greater Boston Area and beyond are invited to attend this concert.

## Alexey Lyubimov: ‘Armenia Is My Spiritual Homeland!’

TRANSLATOR, from page 12

**are almost no Russian scholars possessing Armenian?**

To be honest, it is very surprising for me. Maybe the Armenian language seemed difficult and intricate to the Russians, and the Armenian alphabet is very unusual. However, it seems to me that due to the Internet and modern technologies, more and more people are interested in Armenia and Armenians in general and the Armenian language in particular. I hope the ranks of Armenian scholars will be replenished in the near future.

**You say you know both Eastern and Western Armenian, as well as *grabar* and some dialects. What does this knowledge give you?**

I am happy that I understand not only literary Armenian, but also all Armenian dialects, the living language of the Armenian people, I can feel the richness and depth of the Armenian language. Thanks to all this, I can also enjoy Armenian art and literature, which are a real treasure and an inexhaustible source of wisdom. In addition, my knowledge of Armenian dialects allows me to communicate and get closer to ordinary people who do not know the literary language.

**What will it give to non-Armenians to learn Armenian?**

Knowing Armenian will give non-Armenians an opportunity to communicate with the rich heritage of the Armenian people, the ancient, beautiful and unique Armenian culture, the history of the Armenian people. Knowledge of Armenian will allow them to easily communicate with Armenians living in different countries. People who speak Armenian will be able to read the works of Armenian authors in the original. For me personally, this is very important, because in my opinion, no translation is able to fully convey all the features of the original text,

**You have translated two books from Armenian to Russian and a number of films.**

In 2011 I translated the book *Ak-Dagh: the Four-Year Struggle for Survival* by Nazar Gabigian and Gulbenk Kalusdian, natives of Yozgat, one of the Ottoman Turkish provinces. During the Armenian Genocide, they hid in the mountains for four years, waging an unequal life-and-death struggle against the Ottoman army and numerous Turkish and Kurdish bandits. Among the works I have translated, there are also a number of scientific articles edited by Haykazun Alvrtsyan about the

hidden Armenians in nowadays' Turkey and their problems. Among the films I have translated are “Tigran the Great,” “Return to Ararat,” “Liberation of Shushi,” “Tevan Legend and Reality,” “Who is Monte?,” etc. The books were published with the support of the “People's Memory” NGO and *Yerkramas* newspaper, after which they were distributed in the Russian-speaking environment of the Armenian communities. The Russian versions of the films were made with the support of Vadim Arutyunov, Arthur Gevorgyan, Vadim Badalyan and the editor-in-chief of *Yerkramas* newspaper Tigran Tavadyan and are distributed through YouTube and various websites.

**You also speak Azerbaijani. Do any Azerbaijani speakers bother you?**

Strange as it is, such cases have never happened in my life. I meet mostly good people, regardless of their nationality. Maybe I am lucky, I do not know. I have some acquaintances from Azerbaijan, who do not live in Azerbaijan, are far from politics, are not under the influence of Baku's propaganda and treat Armenians and Armenia well. Some of them even have Armenian friends.

**What does Armenia mean to you?**

Armenia is my spiritual homeland. Armenia is the place where I feel free. Everything is dear to me there. I miss the kind, open-hearted, warm and hospitable people of Armenia, the wonderful nature, the high mountains, the fresh air and the water, I would like to visit Armenia often. I hope I will have such an opportunity soon.

**You translate from Armenian on your own initiative, without material reimbursement. I wish that from now on our compatriots, in Russia or Armenia, use your translation skills, paying for your work, to support your family and visit Armenia often.**

I have always wanted representatives of different nations to get acquainted with the Armenian culture, to study the history of the Armenian people, to know the truth about Armenia, to form an opinion based on facts, as opposed to the lies that are spreading everywhere today. It is a great honor for me to be useful to the Armenian people and Armenia. That's why I translate from Armenian for free, but at the same time I understand that money plays an important role in our lives, because it allows us not only to keep our family, but also to achieve different goals, to do what we like. I am ready to cooperate with anyone to whom my knowledge can be useful.

## EAST COAST LAV ELI ACOUSTIC DUO TOUR

GOR MKHITARIAN  
MHER MANUKYAN

Info and Tickets



April 27 - Richmond, VA

April 28 - Washington, DC

April 29 - New York, NY

April 30 - Boston, MA (SECOND SHOW ADDED!)

May 1 - Portland, ME

FEATURING SPECIAL GUEST:  
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THE ARMENIAN WEEKLY











ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

**JUNE 5** — Save the date. The Armenian Assembly of America will mark its 50th anniversary with a program on Sunday, at 5.30 p.m., at the Jonathan Club. This special event will highlight five decades of the Assembly's influential achievements in advocacy, education, and awareness on Armenian issues. For more information visit <https://www.aimhye.com/>

CONNECTICUT

**APRIL 23** — The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut will hold its annual program, on the 107th anniversary of the Genocide, on Saturday, at 10:30 am. Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, 1910 Stanley Street, New Britain as an in person event but will also be livestreamed Reception to follow. Livestream link: [bit.ly/34VhGbH](https://bit.ly/34VhGbH). The program will begin with the Martyrs' Service. Clergy from Armenian Churches in Connecticut will participate in the service. The keynote speaker will be Lillian Avedian, journalist and poet who works as a staff writer for the Armenian Weekly. She will speak on "Narrating Genocide: Journalism without facts, Art without truth."

MASSACHUSETTS

**APRIL 24** — Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge and the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra will present an in-person Spring Concert on Sunday, at 1:30 p.m. in the church sanctuary (145 Brattle St., Cambridge). Under the baton of composer Konstantin Petrossian, the concert dedicated to the Armenian Genocide martyrs will feature vocal and instrumental soloists, and recitations by Armenian School students. Open to the public, admission is free. For information, contact the church office at (617) 354.0632, e-mail [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**MAY 2** — St. James Men's Club Dinner and Fellowship. Monday, Speaker Dan Shaughnessy, Boston Globe journalist, author and sports commentator will discuss his latest book, *Wish It Lasted Forever: Life with the Larry Bird Celtics*. Social Hour at 6.15 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. Losh kebab and Kheyima dinner, \$20 per person. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. All are welcome.

**MAY 7** — "We Wait for Your Return — A Love Letter to Armenia," evening of photography, storytelling, and music is a theatrical experience will take you on a unique journey from Watertown to Armenia through the intimate stories and evocative imagery of American photographer Winslow Martin. It also includes many photos and memories of Der Dajad Davidian, who set Winslow on his road to Armenia. Northeastern's Blackman Auditorium, Ell Hall, 342 Huntington Ave, Boston, on Saturday, at 8 p.m. A visual and musical celebration of the beauty and soul of the Armenian people, with music by award-winning composer Astghik Martirosyan. Sponsored by the Northeastern University Department of Music, tickets are available on-line at: <http://www.wewaitforyourreturn.com>

**MAY 7** — In Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Celebrate Public Art! Saturday, 1 p.m., World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One in Peace and Harmony. Joining people in cities and towns in countries worldwide followed by reception to celebrate the abstract sculpture and all its configurations. Welcome: Ted Touloukian, AIA, Principal, Touloukian Touloukian Inc. Trustee, Boston Society of Architects Foundation. Greetings: Karin Goodfellow, Director of Public Art, City of Boston. Reception is hosted by Starbucks. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org) **MAY 19** — The Armenian Assembly of America Honor Gail Talanian O'Reilly with Distinguished Humanitarian Award at a program at 6 p.m. at Hyatt Regency/Cambridge, 575 Memorial Dr, Cambridge. For tickets, donations or more information, visit <https://www.armenian-assembly.org/> **JUNE 8** — Armenian Night at the Pops will feature violinist Diana

Adamyany as the featured soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart conducting. Wednesday, 8 p.m. Symphony Hall, Boston. Presented by the Friends of Armenian Culture Society. Details to follow.

**MAY 7** — Hye Pointe Church's Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) is sponsoring a Mother's Day Armenian Concert. Doors open 6.30 p.m., Concert at 7 p.m. Featuring singer Margar Yeghiazaryan, duduk and clarinet player Mher Mnatsakanyan, dhol and percussion player Markos Shahbazyan and keyboardist Gegham Margaryan. Tickets adults \$60, 18 and under \$40. For tickets go to [www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org) or contact Sarah Tavitian at 978-652-8448, [sarahtavitian@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahtavitian@yahoo.com).

**SEPTEMBER 21** — Gala Benefit Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation's Immigrants. InterContinental Hotel, Boston.6pm Honoring Stephen Kurkjian, Distinguished Citizen, Leader, Pulitzer Prize Journalist and Author, and Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants and Refugees. Funds raised support the Legacy Fund, endowed fund to care for and maintain the Park year-round. Advance Reservations only. To receive the invitation, please send name and address to [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**MAY 18** — Chris Bohjalian and Stephen Kurkjian in Conversation at the Armenian Museum of America. Chris Bohjalian will be in conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Stephen Kurkjian (author of *Master Thieves*) at the Armenian Museum of America discussing *The Lioness* and what words and reading and books can mean to the soul. This is a free event and registration is not required. Wednesday, 7 p.m. Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown.

**MAY 20-21** — Armenian Memorial Church Fair, Friday 5-8 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Delicious Armenian chicken, losh and beef kebab dinners served under the tent or take-out, Armenian baked delicacies. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Avenue, Watertown. For information call 617-923-0498. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

NEW JERSET

**JUNE 17** — Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group in association with Huyser Music Ensemble presents "Huyser and Friends Project: Harmony," an open-air concert dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of Tekeyan Cultural Association. Featuring Gohar Hovhannisyan & Band from Armenia. Friday, 7:30 p.m. at St. Thomas Armenian Church, 174 Essex Dr. Tenafly, NJ. Donation \$60, includes Aran Wines from Artsakh. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. For tickets call Marie: 201-745-8850 or Talar: 201-240-8541 or visit: [www.itsmyseat.com/harmony](http://www.itsmyseat.com/harmony)

NEW YORK

**OCTOBER 15** — Save the date! The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Chapter is celebrating the diamond anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association with a gala. Details to follow.

PENNSYLVANIA

**APRIL 24** — The Philadelphia Armenian Intercommunal Committee presents a commemorative program. Dr. Vartan Matiossian shall discuss, "The Politics of Naming the Armenian Genocide." Students from the Armenian Sisters Academy will also participate in the program. The event will be held at St. Gregory's Armenian Church, 8701 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, on Sunday, 3 p.m. A reception shall take place after the program. All are welcome.

RHODE ISLAND

**APRIL 24** — 107th Commemoration of the 1915 Armenian Genocide on Sunday, at the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial site at North Burial Ground, Providence at 12:30 p.m. with the participation of the three Armenian churches and organizations. Stepan Piligian is the guest speaker. All are welcome.

International Musicians – Master and Students – Perform Jazz in Antwerp

JAZZ, from page 12  
like artist Archi Galentz, musician Nersin Howhannesijan and actor/songwriter/singer Stepan Gantralyan. (It was in Galentz's atelier, during an exhibition, that he first became acquainted with the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, through me.)

Three years later, Baboian decided to move again, this time to Armenia. His experience living and working in a foreign country had led him to explore questions about his own identity, while his sensibili-

ties as an artist were maturing and developing in new directions. As a result, in 2018 he decided to pursue further studies in Armenia, beginning his graduate studies at Yerevan State Conservatory as a Composition student with Artur Avanesov. He felt honored to be invited to teach a course on Jazz improvisation and enjoyed having the opportunity to share his knowledge of Jazz with Bachelors students at the Conservatory in 2020. That year proved to be tumultuous, with the outbreak of the Covid-19

pandemic and the war in Nagorno Karabakh. These developments, combined with his deepening aspirations in the area of music technology, motivated him to continue graduate studies in Europe.

Offered the opportunity to study in Switzerland and Belgium, he chose the latter and is now studying electronic music at the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp, with Andrew Claes and Bert Cools. He plans to graduate in the summer of 2023 and hopes to continue in Europe as a teacher, com-

poser and performer.

The experience with artist Loueke and his Conservatory colleagues shows he has gotten off to a good start. In concluding his report on the concert, he added that in April, "We have another special guest coming from the US, saxophonist Chris Potter." In preparation, Baboian is working on writing a big band arrangement which should be performed at the famous jazz club Bimhuis in Amsterdam. "That will be exciting!"







## COMMENTARY

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



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THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

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

Baika Association, Inc.

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02472-1509

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.S.A.	\$80 one year
Canada	\$125 one year
Other Countries	\$200 one year

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

**Other than the Editorial, views  
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## EDITORIAL

# Fallout from Pashinyan's Anticipated Bombshell



By Edmond Y. Azadian

For several months now, representatives of Armenia's ruling Civil Contract Party have been making only indirect references and avoided direct questions about the position and the intention of the government regarding the future of Nagorno Karabakh. Finally, April 13 became the day of reckoning when Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan took the podium at parliament, and revealed the entire inconvenient truth about Karabakh in a long and self-flagellating speech.

In fact, he only detonated the bombshell that had been anticipated for a long time.

These revelations came on the heels of a flurry of diplomatic activity, which included a face-to-face meeting between Pashinyan and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels on April 6, mediated by the President of the European Council Charles Michel. At the conclusion of that summit, the three participants issued separate but identical statements, from which any reference to Karabakh was conspicuously absent.

Exacerbating worries in Armenia was President Aliyev's statement that Armenia had given in on its position on the issue of Karabakh's status. He specifically added that Armenia was ready to recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, including Karabakh as a part of that territory. He actually said that Armenia is renouncing territorial claims "in Azerbaijan."

Therefore, when Pashinyan spoke at the parliament and revealed the entire truth, the bombshell, while anticipated, triggered a wave of anger and confusion in Armenia and in Karabakh. Vitaly important is that the speech brought into public view the divide that had been simmering for months between Armenia and Karabakh, at a moment when unity is most needed. It also intensified divisions between the government and the opposition, to the delight of the leadership in Baku. Armenia's civil society fragmented rather than consolidated around a unified national agenda.

In his long and impassioned speech, Pashinyan developed three crucial themes: a) his share of responsibility in the defeat; b) the conditions set by the international community on Armenia and c) his plan to open the path towards an era of peace in the region.

With regard to the first theme, he said, "I have initially accepted my guilt and responsibility for both the war and the defeat. But I have not accepted and I do not accept the accusations addressed to me by the opposition after November 9, 2020, accusing me of surrendering lands, and thus, also of treason. At first glance, this may seem absurd, that you admit guilt, but do not accept the accusation, and perhaps the time has come for this dilemma to be resolved. In a recent interview, I hinted that if I was to be accused objectively, I should not be accused of surrendering lands, but of not surrendering lands. And now, yes, I want to admit that I'm probably guilty of that."

As we can notice, Pashinyan, as a former journalist and a fiery one at that, is a master of verbal gymnastics to be able to hypnotize his audience to not see the bitter truths they face.

In that speech, he also admitted that he could have avoided the war, or stopped it in its tracks, saving 3,825 lives, by confronting the country and admitting the truth about the dire situation.

"I could not bring myself to do it," he admitted.

The thrust of Pashinyan's speech was the fact of Armenia is facing the international community in an untenable position. Addressing that issue, he stated, "Today the international com-

munity clearly tells us that being the only country in the world that does not recognize the territorial integrity of Turkey's ally Azerbaijan is a great danger not only for Artsakh but also for Armenia. Today the international community tells us again 'lower your benchmark on the status of Nagorno Karabakh a little and ensure greater international consolidation around Armenia and Artsakh.' Otherwise, says the international community, please do not rely on us, not because we do not want to help you, but because we cannot help you."

Then, Pashinyan laid the ground for immediate negotiations to complete the border delineation and demarcation and sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan.

There were many questions left unanswered by those comments: which country is included in the term "international community"? What actually is expected from Armenia? What in return will Armenia get? Is this a road to relative peace for a certain period of time or a recipe for a new war?

The reasons for Armenia in facing such a grim reality today are the recent developments on the international political scene,



where Turkey and Azerbaijan have become major players.

President Aliyev, under the Turkish leadership's tutelage, took certain initiatives to placate both opposing camps in the Ukraine war. Just one day before Russia launched its attack, Aliyev signed a strategic alliance treaty with Russia, equivalent to the one Armenia had signed long ago. That raised the question as to which side Moscow would support in case of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as Moscow has identical agreements with both adversaries. That move virtually neutralized Armenia's sole pillar of strength.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan became the favorite supplier of energy to Europe when the latter has been trying to wean itself from Russian energy sources due to embargos resulting from that war.

Therefore, under these conditions, the West has all the reasons it needs not to antagonize Azerbaijan and support its adversaries in the Caucasus. What does Armenia have to offer the West to counter Azerbaijan's new clout in the West, except a field in its policy, to facilitate the West's efforts to undermine Russia's military footprint in the Caucasus?

While Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov laments that Russia's Western partners, the co-chairs in the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), see BOMBSHELL, page 19





## COMMENTARY

# The Armenian Genocide Holds a Bitter Lesson for Those Who Weep for Ukraine

By Jon Schwarz

If there is one thing we can say for sure about the governments of the US and Europe, it's that they sound upset about Russia's brutalization of Ukraine. President Joe Biden recently called it "genocide." A spokesperson for his National Security Council said that it's working to "identify any Russians responsible for the atrocities and war crimes that have been committed." German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared that the civilian killings in the city of Bucha "are war crimes we will not accept ... those who did this must be held accountable." British Prime Minister Boris Johnson proclaimed, "We will not rest until justice is done."

However, history suggests that this is the emptiest of rhetoric. It's difficult to find any examples of governments sacrificing their goals for the well-being of people in other countries. Instead, governments see the very real suffering of foreigners as useful for propaganda purposes — to motivate their own citizens and make their enemies look bad — but otherwise as totally irrelevant.

A chilling story from 100 years ago illustrates this truth in the starkest possible terms. And precisely because it's so unflattering to the powerful, it is now almost completely unknown.

When World War I broke out in July 1914, the antagonists were the Allies on one side (most importantly the French, British, and Russian empires) and the Central Powers (the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires) on the other.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire — which once stretched across south-eastern Europe and northern Africa — had contracted to present-day Turkey plus most of what is today Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine. And thanks to the discovery of oil in the Middle East, other empires, the French and British in particular, were keenly interested in carving off more Ottoman territory for themselves.

A triumvirate called the Three Pashas took control of the Ottoman Empire following a coup in 1913, just before World War I. In 1915, when the war was raging, they launched one of history's greatest crimes: the Armenian genocide.

The Ottoman Armenians were a minority of about 2 million Christians in what was officially a Muslim sultanate. More significantly, the Three Pashas feared that the Armenians might attempt to break off and form their own independent country. In the words of one of the triumvirate, Talaat Pasha, the Ottoman Empire was "taking advantage of the war in order to thoroughly liquidate its internal foes." Armenians were massacred en masse with bullets or driven into the Syrian desert to perish. By the time it was over, approximately 1 million people were dead. A US diplomat in Turkey who witnessed the genocide firsthand wrote that he was "confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this." Adolf Hitler would later cite it as precedent for his own exploits.

None of this was secret as it was happening. On the contrary, as soon as the genocide commenced, the British, French, and Russian governments stated jointly: "In view of those new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied governments announce ... that they will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman government." A prominent member of the British House of Lords conducted an investigation and in 1915 wrote that "there is no case in history, certainly not since the time of Tamerlane, in which any crime so hideous and upon so large a scale has been recorded." British and French newspapers were filled with denunciations of the vicious Turks and celebrations of the valiant Armenian people.

But here's what was going on behind the scenes:

In December 1915, another of the Three Pashas, Djemal Pasha, sent an emissary to the Allied side of the war with an extraordinary offer. He told them that he hoped to stage a coup to push

the other two out and seize all power for himself. If France, the U.K., and Russia would support his scheme and provide financial support for the Ottoman Empire, he would withdraw from the war and halt the Armenian genocide.

His only other condition was that France and the U.K. give up any claims to the Ottoman Empire's territories in the Middle East.

This was his key mistake. As historian David Fromkin writes in his celebrated book *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*: "Djemal appears to have acted on the mistaken assumption that saving the Armenians — as distinct from merely exploiting their plight for propaganda purposes — was an important Allied objective."

While Russia was initially interested, France said no and reiterated its claims to Syria. The British foreign minister also turned down the offer.

In other words, as the British and French governments rent their garments and beat their breasts in public about the massacre of Armenians, in secret they happily allowed the genocide to continue. And yet somehow they outdid even that grotesque cynicism. As Fromkin points out, the offer from Djemal Pasha arrived right at the moment of the famed Allied evacuation from the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey and the abandonment of their campaign there. Yet British and French lust for imperial boodle after the war was so great that they ignored an opportunity to take the Ottoman Empire out of the conflict, thereby prolonging the war — and condemning an unknowable number of their own soldiers to death.

The US role in these incredibly sordid proceedings was less significant but still ugly. The American press and politicians had also cried out in lamentation about the Armenian genocide during the war, which the US joined in 1917. "The whole heart of America has been engaged for Armenia," said President Woodrow Wilson. Americans, he believed, "know more about Armenia and its sufferings than they know about any other European area."

But the US then jumped into the post-war maneuvering for a slice of the region and its oil. The Three Pashas had fallen from power, but their replacement, Kemal Atatürk, vehemently opposed any accountability for the perpetrators of the genocide. Suddenly everything looked different. Meanwhile, pogroms against Armenians resumed.

Allen Dulles, who would eventually head the CIA, was then a young State Department official. He wrote at the time that "the Secretary of State wants to avoid giving the impression that while the United States is willing to intervene actively to protect its commercial interests, it is not willing to move on behalf of the Christian minorities." But in fact, as Dulles continued, that was exactly the case: "I've been kept busy trying to ward off congressional resolutions of sympathy."

It soon became time to look forward, not backward. And after all, had what happened to the Armenians been so bad after all? One retired US admiral wrote a prominent article claiming that the missing Armenians had been deported not into the desert, but to "the most delightful and fertile part of Syria ... at great expense of money and effort." He did not mention that the Turkish government had given him a lucrative oil concession in Iraq.

The lesson here regarding Ukraine is grim, but it should be faced honestly. All of the heartfelt declarations from politicians should be ignored, here as in every case. It is possible that the US will act in ways that benefit Ukrainians. But if so, that will be mere happenstance. Certainly no Ukrainians should be counting on it, and no Americans should believe that's the goal that's motivating our government. Powerful countries have far-reaching strategies that they are determined to carry through, and human suffering is not part of the equation.

(This commentary originally appeared in The Intercept on April 18.)

# The EU's Dining Diplomacy and the Armenia-Azerbaijan Reconciliation Process

By Anna Barseghyan

On April 6, 2022, on the initiative of European Council President Charles Michel, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev held a meeting in the format of a working dinner in Brussels.

At the onset of the meeting, 43 Members of European Parliament (MEPs) from all the major political groups, led by François-Xavier Bellamy (France-EPP) and Loucas Furlas (Cyprus-EPP), addressed a letter to Charles Michel and Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The main concerns of the MEPs related to Azerbaijan's policy of ethnic cleansing in the territory of Artsakh. They call on the EU leaders to use their leverage to urge Azerbaijan to stop its aggressive policy, immediately withdraw its military forces back to their initial positions, and stop any action that could endanger the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the negotiations seem to have gone down a different path.

After more than 4.5 hours of negotiations, the announcement from the heads of the Armenian and Azerbaijani press secretary offices is very restrained. Pashinyan's office released a statement that reads, "Based on the results of the meeting, an agreement was reached to set up a bilateral commission on border delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan until the end of April, envisaged in the agreement reached in Sochi on November 26, 2021, which will be authorized to deal with security and stability issues along the border." Moreover, The Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan instructed their foreign ministers to start preparations for bilateral peace talks between the two countries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Azerbaijan emphasized some nuances, which shed light on the context of the negotiations. They noted that: "Following the meeting, an agreement was reached to instruct the heads of the foreign affairs agencies of Azerbaijan and Armenia to begin work on a future peace treaty, based on the initiative put forward by Azerbaijan a year ago and the basic principles presented by Baku some time ago." One of the basic principles of Baku's 5-point proposal is the recognition of each other's territorial integrity, implying that Armenia abandon Artsakh's attempts to gain a recognized status independent of Azerbaijan.

The MFA of Armenia had answered this proposal by applying "to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship to organize negotiations for the signing of the peace agreement between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan based on the UN Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act." The Helsinki Final Act includes the principle of the self-determination of peoples. Following the statement, the EU took the initiative to organize a meeting, instead of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, which includes France, Russia and the United States. The implication is that the OSCE Minsk Group format is no longer operating, with the EU taking on its responsibility.

Charles Michel released his own statement following the meeting, which noted "both President Aliyev's and Prime Minister Pashinyan's stated desire to move rapidly towards a peace agreement between their countries."

The main outcomes of the meeting are the following:

To form a joint border commission by the end of April 2022 to start the process of delimitation. According to international law, delimitation is the legal process by which two sovereign nations establish and describe in writing the location of their common boundary, mainly as the result of negotiations. For delimitation, it is mandatory to recognize the exact boundaries of the states. The commission's mandate will also include security and stability issues along the border.

The status of Nagorno-Karabakh was not discussed. There is not a single word in any of the statements by the three parties in the negotiation about the status of Artsakh. While Baku is proposing recognizing territorial integrity as a condition for starting negotiations, the Armenian side is not raising the topic. Of course, it's hard to predict what is taking place behind the scenes, but the fact remains that there is no mention of the ongoing tense situation in Artsakh because of Azerbaijani provocations and military operations.

As Michel stated, each side has expressed willingness to sign the agreement rapidly, despite a host of unresolved issues. Is it beneficial for Armenia to try and expedite the process? The international community is preoccupied with Ukraine, and not

see DIPLOMACY, page 20





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Pashinyan's Trail of Destruction: First Artsakh; Then Armenia

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered a very lengthy, rambling speech on April 13, 2022 to the Armenian Parliament on his government's failures and achievements in 2021.

Ever since the catastrophic 2020 Artsakh war, I have been repeatedly saying that the Prime Minister is too incompetent to govern Armenia. He caused the loss of most of Artsakh and thousands of young Armenian soldiers. As a defeated and psychologically crushed leader, he is incapable of repairing the damage he caused to the country. With each passing day, the situation is getting worse. Artsakh is mostly gone; Armenia is next.

However, Pashinyan refuses to resign, clinging to his seat and establishing a one-man rule. Ironically, when he took over the government four years ago, he proclaimed that the power belonged to the people.

In his April 13, 2022 speech, Pashinyan stated: "we have had the most serious failures as well as the most serious achievements. I must first talk about the achievements, then focus on the failures, but not so much or not only to record them, but also to use the opportunity of being on the high rostrum of the National Assembly, to confess to the public about the cause and effect of the war and defeat, and talk about possible solutions."

Various high-ranking government officials have recently announced that Artsakh is no longer a territorial issue, but one of human rights, meaning that Armenia is giving up on its long-standing demand for the independence or self-determination of Artsakh, opting instead on seeking to preserve the cultural and religious rights of ethnic Armenians in Artsakh under Azeri rule.

Since Pashinyan's plan is to turn over the remainder of Artsakh to Azerbaijan, why is he then boasting that "from November 2020 to the end of 2021, the [Armenian] government has implemented in Artsakh 136 billion drams [about \$272 million] of programs?" Armenia is actually subsidizing Azerbaijan's infrastructure in Artsakh, since the government of Azerbaijan, in three and a half years or less, will take over that territory.

Pashinyan admitted that the negatives in 2021 outweighed the positives. He stated that "from the beginning I have accepted my guilt and responsibility for both the war and defeat." But then, he contradicted himself by saying: "I have not accepted and I do not accept the accusations addressed to me by the opposition after November 9, 2020, accusing me of handing over lands and thus also of treason." He acknowledged that what he just said is "absurd -- admitting your guilt, but not accepting the accusation."

Making his confession more confusing, Pashinyan added: "In a recent interview, I hinted that if I were to be accused objectively, I should be accused not of handing over land, but of not handing over land. And now, yes, I'm going to admit that I'm probably guilty of it. It is my fault that in 2018, 2019, I did not stand in front of our public and did not speak out that all, I repeat, all distant and close [foreign] friends expect us that we hand over the seven well-known

regions to Azerbaijan, one way or another and lower our bar for the status of Artsakh. It is my fault that I did not tell our people that the international community unequivocally recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, expects us that we too recognize it, also expects that the Azerbaijanis who left Karabakh be fully integrated in the decision-making and governance of Nagorno-Karabakh."

In the above paragraph, Pashinyan admitted his guilt in losing Artsakh, but strangely, avoided accepting the consequences for his actions. He also repeatedly laid the blame on pressure from the international community. It is not true that the international community demanded that Armenians give up Artsakh, but even if they did, Pashinyan should have been more concerned about Armenia's national interests than the outsiders' suggestion. Only a weak leader would buckle under the pressure of third parties and not defend his people's rights.

Pashinyan confessed: "And not doing this is my real fault, and such a formulation is not an attempt to alleviate the situation at all. On the contrary, I aggravate it, because by handing over [Artsakh's lands], I might have saved thousands of lives, but by not handing over I actually became the author of decisions that resulted in thousands of victims." As the Prime Minister of Armenia, he had no right to hand over Artsakh territories that he had no jurisdiction over.

Pashinyan is getting ready to surrender Artsakh completely by announcing that he wants to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan and recognize its territorial integrity. He used the excuse that "the international community clearly tells us that Armenia is the only country in the world that does not recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity." This "is a great danger not only for Artsakh but also for Armenia. Today the international community tells us again, 'lower your bar on the status of Nagorno Karabakh a little and you will secure greater international consolidation around Armenia and Artsakh.' Otherwise, says the international community, 'please do not rely on us, not because we do not want to help you, but because we cannot help you.'"

After saying that Armenia has not recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, Pashinyan contradicted himself by falsely claiming that in 1992, Armenia had recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. His contention, that the international community warned him that they cannot help Armenia, unless it made concessions on Artsakh, is also a baseless statement. When has the international community lifted a finger to help Armenia? Pashinyan is simply using this excuse to make further concessions to Azerbaijan. He is incapable of protecting Armenia's borders as we have seen with Azerbaijan's May 12, 2021 encroachment on Armenia's border. Furthermore, Pashinyan falsely blamed his political opponents for that Azeri incursion. He also faulted the Russia-led CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) for not coming to Armenia's defense, even though he is the current CSTO Chairman.

Pashinyan's defeatist remarks at the Parliament were soundly condemned not only by the political opposition, but also by the usually compliant leaders of Artsakh.

Everything must be done to get rid of Pashinyan as soon as possible since he refuses to resign, favoring his own seat over Armenia's interests. Otherwise, after Artsakh, Armenia is next to go.

## Fallout from Pashinyan's Anticipated Bombshell

BOMBSHELL, from page 17

have been refusing to cooperate with Moscow in hammering out peace in Karabakh within the context of that group and therefore the Minsk format is dead for all practical purposes, the French and US co-chairs, Brice Roquefeuil and Andrew Schofer, respectively, have recently visited Yerevan to revive the process and inspire hope in Armenia.

For a long time, Armenia has pinned its hopes on the Minsk Group, which was continuing to maintain that the status of Karabakh still needs to be addressed under the principals of the Helsinki Final Act.

These visits have been accompanied by a call from Michel on the eve of Pashinyan's planned visit on April 19 and 20 to Moscow, to meet President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and the head of Russia's Duma.

All these activities may also serve as a warning to Pashinyan to avoid making any commitments to the Kremlin, which may damage the West's interest in the Caucasus.

In that context, even the destiny of \$3-billion aid package to Armenia from Europe may be up in the air.

There are many challenges for the Pashinyan government to deal with, particularly in light of Armenia's fragile foreign policy

ranks.

Russia's Ukrainian war gives a free hand to Baku to engage in further adventures in the Caucasus and press Armenia for more concessions.

Azerbaijan's leadership realizes that this window of opportunity cannot last very long and that is why it is pressuring Armenia to sign a peace treaty now, under duress.

Former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian just released a commentary in Armenian media advising the leadership to refrain from signing at this time a peace treaty whose impact may endanger Armenia's security and territorial integrity in the future.

For a while, President Aliyev had refrained from mentioning the Zangezur Corridor, leaving the impression that his idea had reached an impasse. But with recent developments, he has again revived that demand, even accompanied it by a threat.

With all these external threats, the Pashinyan administration has to deal with opposition from the Karabakh leadership as well as internal dissent.

The Karabakh government and inhabitants have justifiable fears about their future. As if Pashinyan's troubling statement was not enough, a member of Pashinyan's party in the parliament, the chameleon of Armenia's political landscape, Vigen

## LETTERS

### Armenia Doomed with Pashinyan

To the Editor:

As long as Nikol Pashinyan is allowed to continue as Armenia's Prime Minister, Armenia is doomed.

With the total support of Turkey, Azerbaijan will continually take land from Karabakh until all of it will be under the realm of Azerbaijan's President Aliyev.

Russia, under Vladimir Putin, is no help to protect Armenia since it is concentrating on taking over Eastern Ukraine.

Dorothy Piranian  
Boston

Khachatryan, added fuel to the fire and stated in the parliament that "the notion that Karabakh has no future as part of Azerbaijan is a fallacious statement."

Arayik Harutyunyan, the president of Karabakh, held an emergency meeting with the leaders of local political groups to discuss concerns in the wake of Pashinyan's statement. His office said that the meeting "expressed outrage" at Pashinyan's remarks and stressed that Stepanakert would continue to assert Karabakh Armenians' right to self-determination.

His foreign minister, Davit Babayan, went further, stating that Karabakh Armenians will never agree to live under Azerbaijani rule. He added that there are no "bars for us to scale down; there are only red lines drawn in blood."

Another challenge in Armenia is the

action of opposition Hairenik Party's Artur Vanetsyan, who has begun a sit-in in Freedom Square. Although he claims that the opposition has a clear plan, he does not offer one.

All along, the opposition has been calling for Pashinyan's resignation, without coming up with a better alternative.

The opposition and the ruling party, at this time, are engaged in an intense campaign of mutual recriminations. Most of the political talk shows have crossed all lines of decency and descended into a blame game.

Armenia's enemies are on its borders. The internal dissent is no less a danger. Unless the citizens and the government come together, no solution can be found to face the external dangers.

Pashinyan's bombshell should not destroy what remains of hope.





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# The EU’s Dining Diplomacy And the Armenia-Azerbaijan Reconciliation Process

DIPLOMACY, from page 18  
paying attention to the humanitarian crisis and the aggressive policy of Azerbaijan towards the people of Artsakh. Such urgent steps will most definitely not guarantee fair and comprehensive solutions for Armenia.

The OSCE Minsk Group has been sidelined since the 2020 Artsakh War. The Minsk Group format was the most balanced and preferable one for Armenia and it is one of the rare platforms where Russia and the West cooperate. After Azerbaijan launched the war in 2020, however, Russia took the initiative and became the main mediator. After this “shock”, the EU has started to make

be the conflict manager between Georgia and Russia. If the Armenian-Azerbaijani reconciliation process will take place under the auspices of the EU, it will be another bold “plus” on the EU’s record.

A day after the meeting in Brussels, Prime Minister Pashinyan summed up the main points during the governmental session mentioning Russia’s role in the mediation process several times. “The Russian Federation has expressed readiness to support the delimitation and demarcation work. The European Union is also ready to support [this], we must move in this direction,” he added. Moreover, Pashinyan said that the Armenian side has emphasized that there is “noth-

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gradual attempts to have its place on the negotiation table. One of the attempts was in December 2021 in the scope of the Eastern Partnership’s 6th Summit when Pashinyan and Aliyev had a meeting again coordinated by Charles Michel.

### Why now?

Why is the EU taking the initiative now while being an observer during the course of the Artsakh war and even afterward? The EU’s immediate neighborhood is on fire, security issues at its borders are critical, there is a looming migrant crisis knocking at its door and suddenly Armenia and Azerbaijan appear on the EU agenda. In the meantime, with Russia invading Ukraine, the European Parliament condemned the destruction of the Armenian heritage of Artsakh. It could be assumed that the EU needs a success story in the Eastern Partnership region. Considering the fact that Russia is busy with the war in Ukraine and the U.S. is practically absent in the mediation process, the EU aspires to take the lead and use the geopolitical deadlock over Ukraine to find a rapid solution for the South Caucasus. The EU’s geopolitical entry to the South Caucasus was in 2008, during the Russo-Georgian war. It was indeed a success story for the EU to

ing unacceptable” but that Azerbaijan’s proposals do not include security guarantees of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh or the protection of their rights and freedoms. “The clarification of the final status of Nagorno Karabakh is of fundamental importance for us,” he noted. “These issues are included in our response to the peace agenda and they should become subject of negotiations. Of course, as before, we consider the involvement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs essential in this process, and we must continue to work in that direction.”

Although Pashinyan attempted to stress the importance of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, actions speak for themselves. It now seems that the Armenia-Azerbaijan reconciliation process will be led by spontaneous initiatives.

Pashinyan also stressed the need to investigate the competence of the Russian peacekeeping force, the adequacy of their actions, and possible inaction during the course of developments in Artsakh. The Armenian Prime Minister concluded his address to the government by speaking about the “era of peace” in the region stressing that “we must do our utmost to make this agenda a reality.” Unfortunately the era of peace thus far has only brought losses for Armenia and Artsakh.

# Aurora Co-Founder Vartan Gregorian’s Legacy Honored in New York City

MEMORIAL, from page 1  
“For the many years I knew Vartan, I always felt he was looking over my shoulder. Looking out for me, challenging me, guiding me. And I feel his spirit here today, watching over all of us. Vartan was a guiding light. Shining for those who knew him and for those he did not,” said Noubar Afeyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, Founder & CEO of Flagship Pioneering, and founder and chair of Moderna.

Born in Tabriz, Iran, Vartan Gregorian overcame countless challenges he faced as a young immigrant to the United States and went on to build a remarkable career that spanned several decades and crossed the lines of academia, philanthropy, and culture within and beyond his adopted

country. He has made a crucial contribution to countless projects and foundations and was one of the Co-Founders of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative that seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with a focus on helping the most destitute.

Uniquely dedicated to discovering and supporting the world’s unsung humanitarian heroes to enable and raise awareness of their courageous work, Aurora has made a significant impact on the lives of those in greatest need. Representatives of Aurora’s community, including Co-Founders of the Initiative, several members and Chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, and Aurora Laureates, attended the memorial service.