



Devastating Fireworks Explosion At Yerevan’s Surmalu Market

16 Dead, 60 Injured

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) — A devastating explosion at a fireworks storage area at the Surmalu shopping center in Yerevan on Sunday, August 14, at around 1.20 p.m., has resulted in at least 16 deaths so far and 60 injuries. About four people are still missing.

Rescue workers sifted through twisted metal and rubble in a search for survivors throughout the night as firefighters continued to fight the blaze amid clouds of dust and smoke in the air just two kilometers outside of the city center.

The Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations said initial investigation showed two large explosions brought down part of a building housing fireworks.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fireworks to detonate. Criminal proceedings have been launched.

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Firefighters on August 15 continued to fight a blaze at the Surmalu market in Yerevan triggered by a powerful explosion that caused multiple detonations inside a fireworks warehouse on the location the previous day.

Aliyev Again Rules Out Status for Karabakh Armenians

BAKU (RFE/RL) — Speaking on national television on Friday, August 12, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev again ruled out any status for ethnic Armenians living in Karabakh, saying that they will enjoy the same rights as other citizens of Azerbaijan.

Aliyev also reaffirmed Baku’s right to conduct military operations in Karabakh similar to the one its armed forces conducted in early August along the Lachin corridor with the use of drones, mortars and grenade launchers.

Armenian authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh said two Armenian soldiers were killed and 19 others were wounded in the August 3 attack by Azerbaijani forces that prompted calls from the international community for de-escalation in the volatile region.

Azerbaijan claimed it had taken retributive action for the killing of an Azerbaijani servicemen by “Armenian terrorists.”

“Armenians living in Karabakh should take the right steps. They must understand that their future depends on their integration into Azerbaijani society. We live in reality. From the geographical, economic and

historical points of view, Karabakh is an inseparable part of Azerbaijan,” Aliyev told AzTV, as reported by Azerbaijani news website Haqqin.az.

The Azerbaijani leader claimed that those who talk



about some status or independence for Armenians in Karabakh are “the main enemies of the Armenian people.”

“Because the Armenians living in Karabakh will not have any status, independence or advantages. They will live like all citizens of Azerbaijan. Their rights will be protected the way the rights of Azerbaijani citizens and people living [in Azerbaijan] are protected,” Aliyev said.

In March, Azerbaijan presented Armenia with five elements which it wants to be at the heart

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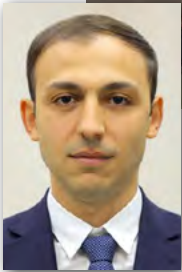
Artsakh Ombudsman Brings Attention To Increasing Azerbaijani Threats

Calls on Diasporans to Help Break International Isolation

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The mandate of Gegham Stepanyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh, and his staff, should primarily be to defend human rights in Artsakh against the unlawful actions of Artsakh’s state institutions and individual office holders. However, living through a period of conflict, Stepanyan explained during an August 8 inter-

view that around half of their time is used to deal with Azerbaijan’s violations of the rights of Artsakh’s inhabitants. Stepanyan prepares reports, participates in conferences and works to assure awareness of these violations. His staff, like Stepanyan’s time, is divided basically into two parts, each focusing on one of these two major areas.



The 31-year-old Stepanyan, a native of Stepanakert who went to Armenia for his higher education, has a lot of relevant experience for his current job. He worked as assistant to the president of the Artsakh parliament from 2016 to 2020, and

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ICG: Baku Pursues Three Goals It Hopes Will Pressure Armenia To Capitulate in Negotiations

By Heghine Buniatian

BRUSSELS (RFE/RL) — By escalating the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh Azerbaijan pursues three goals that it wants to achieve either by force or the threat of force, which it hopes will pressure Armenia to capitulate in negotiations, an international think tank says in its latest report on the region.

In its report titled “Warding Off Renewed War in Nagorno-Karabakh” that was published this week the Brussels-based think tank International Crisis Group (ICG) goes on to list what it views as these three goals that have to do with the overland connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia known as the Lachin corridor, the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the region as well as a treaty with Armenia to end the conflict that would be to Azerbaijan’s advantage.

The report quotes an unnamed Azerbaijani official as saying that “the Armenian side is trying to delay the commissioning of the new road this year, thereby purposely delaying the handover of the city of Lachin and a number of villages to Azerbaijan.”

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NEW YORK
Eminent Armenologist Nina Garsoïan Passes Away

The eminent Armenologist and Byzantinist Prof. Nina G. Garsoïan passed away on August 14 at 99 years old. She broke a number of glass ceilings in academia, both as a woman and as a specialist in Armenian Studies.

(see obituary on page 10)

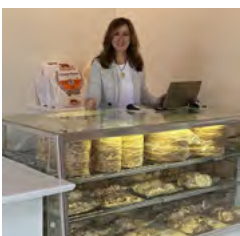
DETROIT
Houshamadyan and Bozigian Travel to Detroit for Armenian Folk Dance Revival

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FRESNO
Valley Lahvosh Baking Company Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

ANIF Chairman Advocates For Ban on Fireworks

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) Tigran Avinyan is calling for a ban on the use of fireworks and restriction on the sale of pyrotechnics after the deadly Yerevan explosion.

“Back in 2020 we were discussing the issue of heightened regulations for fireworks,” Avinyan, a former deputy prime minister, said in a statement on social media on August 16. “In 2021 the initiative gained the government’s consent and was submitted to parliament. Realizing the economic interests of businesses, nevertheless I believe that the free trade of pyrotechnic products must be banned as envisaged in the regulations we had proposed.

He concluded, “I extend condolences to the families of those who died and I wish swift and speedy recovery to those injured.”

Armenian, Russian Defense Chiefs Discuss Karabakh Peacekeeping Mission

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian and Russian Defense Ministers Suren Papikyan and Sergei Shoigu on Tuesday, August 16, discussed the activity of Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The two met on the sidelines of the X Moscow Conference on International Security.

“We have things to discuss, there are traditional issues related to our military cooperation. And, of course, issues related to the activities of our peacekeeping contingent, which performs tasks in Nagorno-Karabakh. We remain as confident as you that the main stabilizing factor is the ceasefire along the entire line of contact,” Shoigu said.

Ex-Top Judge: Karabakh Residents Can Turn to ECHR

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Residents of Berdzor, Aghavno and Sus in Karabakh, who are forced to leave their homes by the end of August 25, can turn to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and claim compensation from their government, former judge of the Constitutional Court Alvina Gyulumyan said on Friday, August 12.

According to her, it is necessary to wait until August 25 and see how the situation develops, after which it will be possible to consider the issue in the context of expatriation.

Authorities in Karabakh have ordered the residents of the villages of Berdzor, Aghavno and Nerkin Sus — all three within the Lachin corridor connecting Karabakh to Armenia — to leave their homes by the end of August. The ceasefire statement of 2020 calls for the construction of a new highway within three years. Azerbaijan, however, has demanded the closure of the existing corridor and suggested that the Armenian side use a bypass road which has yet to be constructed.



Citizens help rescue workers remove the rubble at the site of a major explosion and fire in the Surmalu shopping center in Yerevan. August 14, 2022.

Devastating Fireworks Explosion At Yerevan’s Surmalu Market

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“A little while ago, the rescuers took out another body from the rubble. As of now, we have six victims. The search and rescue operations are continuing,” says Hayk Kostanyan, press secretary of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

“At the moment, firefighting and rescue-and-search operations are ongoing, the fire has not yet been contained, search efforts continue,” the official said.

Videos appeared on Monday showing Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visiting the scene of the search and rescue operations.

Earlier, a criminal case was instituted over a possible breach of fire-safety regulations that caused human death or other serious consequences. Investigators said they would start looking into possible causes of the explosions and fire once conditions permit.

Meanwhile, Minister of Emergency Situations Armen Pambukhchyan told reporters on Monday that the version that a bomb had been planted in the shopping center was “almost excluded.”

He noted that some of the firework mate-

rials are still in the area, as a result of which fires break out on a regular basis.

“Also, there was a lot of plastic material in the warehouse [where the explosion occurred]; it is constantly burning. It is normal that it may take several days; we are ready for it,” he added.

The minister noted that about 70 rescuers are working at the scene. Seven rescuers had received various injuries, two of them were hospitalized, the others received medical assistance at the scene,” he said.

A major fire at Surmalu in April 2021 destroyed several pavilions and warehouses with toys and household goods.

Condolences Offered

Russian President Vladimir Putin and officials representing other countries have offered condolences to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan over a powerful explosion and fire at a Yerevan market that killed at least six people and injured dozens on Sunday.

In a message to Pashinyan over the Surmalu market explosion and fire, Putin, according to the Kremlin, asked the Armenian leader to accept his “deepest condolences”

over the loss of life.

“Please convey my sincere words of sympathy and support to the families of the victims and my wishes for a speedy recovery to all those injured,” Putin wrote.

Georgia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs also offered condolences in a Twitter post addressed to its Armenian counterparts.

“News about a massive explosion in Yerevan, Armenia, is shocking. Our condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy. We wish swift and speedy recovery to all those injured and stand in solidarity with our Armenian friends in this difficult time!” it said.

Foreign embassies in Yerevan, including the embassies of the United States and China, also reportedly expressed condolences regarding the deadly explosion and fire at the Surmalu market.

Earlier, on Sunday, Serdar Kiliç, a Turkish envoy leading the normalization talks with Armenia, also offered condolences to his Armenian counterpart on the market explosion.

(Stories from Civilnet.am, Azatutyun, News.am and Public Radio of Armenia contributed to this report.)



The devastation at Surmalu market



ARMENIA

Dr. Taner Akçam Alarmed by Neglected Grave of Genocide Studies Pioneer Dadrian

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish-German historian and genocide scholar Dr. Taner Akçam has published images from the grave of the celebrated Armenian-American sociologist and historian Dr. Vahakn N. Dadrian, which has been left unattended and is now overgrown with weeds and bushes.

“I share some images from my dear Professor Vahakn N. Dadrian with great shock and sadness,” Akçam wrote on Facebook on Monday, August 15.

“After persistent and patient research, the director of the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Maggie Goschin, found out that Dadrian’s grave, at a cemetery in Yerevan, where he was interred in 2019, had been left unattended and was overgrown with weeds and bushes. Worse still, there was no marker on the grave. Only after consultation with the cemetery administration, the grave site could be located,” he wrote.



The grave of Vahakn Dadrian



The grave of Vahakn Dadrian

Akçam believes Dadrian deserves better.

“While many foreign dignitaries are honored on the road to Yerevan’s Tsitsernakaberd Memorial, it is unacceptable and an immense shame that the grave of the founder of modern Armenian Genocide research lies in an unkempt and forgotten in a cemetery without even a grave marker,” the scholar said.

He noted that he was not sure who was in charge of erecting a grave stone for him. “Whatever the reasons might be, I’m sure everybody will agree with me that this is a great shame and unacceptable. I hope those responsible will take immediate action and give Dadrian the grave he deserves. Instead of blaming each other, we should get together and do whatever is necessary.”

Dadrian was a professor of sociology, historian, and an expert on the Armenian Genocide. He was one of the early scholars of the academic study of genocide and recognized as one of the key thinkers on the Holocaust and genocide.

False Bomb Threats Continue to Come in As Suspect Arrested

YEREVAN (Armenpress/Azatutyun) — Police on Tuesday, August 16, identified and arrested the person who made the fake bomb threats targeting various buildings in Yerevan and in Gyumri in the recent days.

Police said a 63-year-old citizen of Gyumri told the local police department that he made the hoax bomb threats while intoxicated.

An investigation is underway.

On August 14, at 4:around 5 p.m., the National Center for Crisis Management received information about explosive devices installed in all metro stations, important military and civilian facilities, in all shopping malls, in the zoo, at Baghramyan 19, in St. Grigor Lusavorich Church.

On August 16, Yerevan’s metro service was again suspended as security workers searched for possible explosive devices there after another bomb threat that later proved false.

The Yerevan municipality said engineering teams with bomb-sniffer dogs had been deployed to conduct searches at several metro stations.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations later said no explosive devices were found. The metro resumed its work in the afternoon.

This is the second false alert in the last three days about a bomb or bombs having been planted in the metro.

On Sunday, hours after a deadly explosion and fire at the Surmalu shopping center in Yerevan, Armenia’s Ministry of Emergency Situations also received bomb threats concerning multiple other facilities in the capital, including the metro.

Passengers were evacuated and the work of the metro was then suspended for several hours.

Eventually, the bomb threats reportedly received via email proved false. The National Security Service launched an investigation into the false alerts apparently made from outside Armenia.

An official at the Ministry of Emergency Situations told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on Monday that since the beginning of this year they have received over 30 false bomb alerts - a four-time increase over last year.

Harutyun Chebeyan, who manages a shift at the ministry’s National Crisis Management Center, said bomb threats received by e-mail mostly concern important transport hubs, such as the Yerevan metro and the Zvartnots international airport near the Armenian capital.

Evacuation of people in response to bomb threats have caused discontent about inconveniences among commuters and visitors of shopping centers in Yerevan in recent months.

But the official said that even though all previous bomb threats eventually proved to be false, security and emergency services have to respond to them and take action every single time.

Amid the spike in the number of false bomb alerts in recent months, Armenia’s National Security Service on Monday called on the media and citizens “to refrain from publishing unverified information and comments on the Internet about the threat of terrorist attacks in Armenia and to use only official reports in order to avoid unnecessary panic among the population.”

Cybersecurity expert Samvel Martirosyan said that email alerts about explosive devices are often sent during crisis situations similar to the shopping center explosion in Armenia.

Urvakan Festival To Be Held in Dilijan This Year

DILIJAN — The Urvakan Festival will take place September 23–25 to Dilijan. Spanning three days, the program welcomes new perspectives on regionalism and decoloniality, synthesis, programming and sonic activism, all explored through the prism of live shows, labs and discussions. The offering is vast yet focused on core concepts — reconceiving and transcending genres from contemporary, electronic and electroacoustic music to folk, noise, militant dub, underground rap and everything in-between. The slate of artists will be presented soon.

“The first edition of Urvakan took place in Yerevan. Today, while its creative infrastructure is becoming stronger every day, the other regions of Armenia are still developing and are in need of greater attention and economic support. Choosing the city of Dilijan as the host for Urvakan 2022, the festival not only honors one of the country’s most historical, picturesque and pleasant regions, but also aims to decentralize our work,” the organizers noted.

Urvakan 2022 aims to address the most current and vital issues. Since the last festival, the coronavirus pandemic, migration crises, climate disasters and bloody wars have continued around the world, which have infiltrated our daily lives and inevitably affected our perspectives.

The war in Artsakh, the war in Ukraine and the other wars that still continue in different parts of the world vary in their contexts and backstories. Yet, common patterns can be discerned in most of them—these are the relics of centuries of imperialism and colonial histories.

Aren Deyirmenjian Appointed New AMAA Rep. in Armenia

PARAMUS, N.J. — Zaven Khanjian, the Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), recently announced the appointment of Aren Deyirmenjian as the new representative of the organization in Armenia, effective September 1, 2022.

Deyirmenjian moved from his hometown of Beirut to join Yerevan’s management team as AMAA’s Deputy Representative in Armenia three years ago. His journey in faith took him through what he calls an “awakening process” which made him realize that he had to leave the comfort of his home and venture into the unknown to find true meaning and purpose.

Deyirmenjian had been part of his family’s manufacturing business in Lebanon, after graduating from the American University of Beirut in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in Landscape Architecture. He was also deeply involved with the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh as Youth Group General Director and a Christian Endeavor Committee Member. In 2016, he pursued an MBA in Montreux, Switzerland, graduating in 2018. When the position with the AMAA presented itself a year later, he thought it was a good time to step out of his role in the family business and bring his management experience and spiritual discourse into different uses in humanitarian missions and kingdom causes.

As AMAA’s deputy representative in Armenia, part of Aren’s daily responsibilities included overlooking construction projects, liaison with the finance team, budget preparation, and writing grant pro-



Aren Deyirmejian

posals. He also regularly visited various AMAA offices in Armenia and Artsakh to learn more about the needs of the communities in each region. He worked closely with Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, to outline strategies, as well as evaluate current and past programs with concerned parties.

Deyirmenjian is a musician, with degrees in classical and jazz piano studies, and plays in Nor Yerk’s worship band.

“I am delighted with the appointment of Aren Deyirmenjian as AMAA’s Representative in Armenia. Aren has demonstrated devotion and worked diligently for the advancement of AMAA’s mission in Armenia” said Khanjian. “We know that his management experience and spiritual maturity will help advance the work of the AMAA in the Homeland and Artsakh.”



ARMENIA

Artsakh Ombudsman Brings Attention to Azerbaijani Threats

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from September 2020 through March 2021 served as the chief of staff of the Ombudsman's office in Artsakh before being elected as ombudsman himself by the National Assembly of Artsakh on March 25, 2021.

He witnessed the 2020 Artsakh war and its aftermath firsthand.

Stepanyan stated that the primary way he and his staff deal with Azerbaijani violations is by recording objective facts. He noted that as the ombudsman, he is not a member of the government of Artsakh carrying out its policies. He is an independent official obliged to present the truth. "Therefore," he explained, "we first of all record facts, prepare reports, and work on the preparation of announcements, and send all of our reports and announcements immediately to various bodies and representatives of different organizations. Our main work is providing information and warnings...I think we have been able to do this, at least during the current period. Of course, the responses we have received are not that satisfactory and I think we must work a lot more to attain results. However, we are accumulating experience and we are continually advancing that experience."

Cooperation with Stepanyan's counterpart, the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, is crucial. Since Artsakh is not internationally recognized as a state, it cannot become a member of various world organizations for the defense of human rights. Sometimes there are problems for the ombudsman to even work with international organizations. Therefore, Stepanyan said that the channels of the ombudsman of Armenia are very important in speaking with the outside world.

"Often, on various issues when it is necessary that Armenia's ombudsman communicates directly with ambassadors or international human rights organizations, I enter into contact with him and ask him to immediately report what is happening in Artsakh and obtain their help, or at least deliver information in general on the objective reality of the situation," he said. "In other words, it is by means of Armenia's Defender of Human Rights that the voice of the people of Artsakh becomes audible."

This close relationship has existed during the consecutive periods in office of all the ombudsmen of Artsakh (Stepanyan is the fourth). It was particularly important, Stepanyan related, during the April 2016 war and in the fall of 2020. Roughly 20 reports have been prepared by his office concerning the crimes committed by Azerbaijan during the recent war and the violations of various human rights.

Ceasefire Agreement and Violations

Representatives of the Republic of Artsakh did not sign the trilateral November 9, 2020 ceasefire agreement. It was only signed by representatives of the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. Stepanyan observed that while Artsakh (then called the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh), signed the 1994 ceasefire ending the first Karabakh war, after around 1997 or 1998, it only was indirectly represented by the representatives of the Republic of Armenia, who presented Artsakh's points of view during negotiations and then informed the Artsakh people.

Though Artsakh's government did not sign the November 9 agreement, Stepanyan said that it is forced to accept it. "As much as it has very bad consequences for us, it does assure that at least the majority of the 90,000 Armenians who left Artsakh during the course of the [recent] war can return and at present they do live in Art-

sakh. Unfortunately, our voice is not being heard. In many matters we are directly ignored and we are carrying out what is decided in the course of the trilateral negotiations. It would be much more desirable if in that matter changes are made and Artsakh also has a direct participation in the deciding of its fate."

Whatever the interpretation of the value of the ceasefire, anybody following the news from the region is aware that it is being regularly violated. When asked why, Stepanyan stated, "Azerbaijan is carrying out a policy which has as its goal the depopulation of Artsakh of its Armenians — in other words, the realization of ethnic cleansing....As a result of the [2020] war, Azerbaijan occupied a large part of the territory of Artsakh. A small part of Artsakh was left, and Azerbaijan could not be reconciled to the fact that the Artsakh Republic and its Armenian population is preserved. It desires to take over all of Artsakh completely. Azerbaijan is aggressively disposed towards this situation."

Stepanyan remarked that in all territories under Azerbaijani occupation, such as Shushi, and the areas of Hadrut and Askeran, Azerbaijan attempts to impose psychological and physical oppression to force Armenians to leave. If fully successful, "afterwards, the demand by Armenians for the right of self-determination will also disappear," he concluded.

Artsakh Army for Defense, Russian Peacekeepers and Monitoring

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of the Republic of Armenia recently declared that Armenian troops today are not serving on the territory of the Republic of Artsakh. Stepanyan said that this situation reduces the role of Armenia as guarantor of Artsakh's existence, and the armed forces of Artsakh now are formed exclusively of the people of Artsakh.

"We must note that the Defense Army of Artsakh still exists and must remain, developing its capacities as much as possible, because we see that the Azerbaijani threat does not decrease. Although Russian peacekeeping forces are found in Artsakh, Azerbaijan periodically still carries out acts of military aggression, the most recent of which was on August 1, when 19 soldiers of Artsakh were wounded and 2 killed. The people of Artsakh must continue to take advantage of the right of self-defense provided for in international law, and this right is realized today by means of the Defense Army of Artsakh," he said.

However, the Defense Army alone, Stepanyan admitted, cannot assure the safety of the Artsakh populace, and if it could, there would be no need for Russian peacekeepers as per the November 9 agreement, or peacekeepers in general.

"No matter whether the peacekeepers perhaps do not use force or have certain failings, the placement of Russian peacekeepers restrains Azerbaijan from carrying out largescale attacks. The departure of Russian peacekeepers from Artsakh would be equivalent to the depopulation of Artsakh of Armenians. I would like to note that this important truth must be perceptible for Europe and America too — that today the Russian peacekeeping troops deployed in Artsakh are preventing another genocide of the Armenian people. America or Europe may have issues with Russia in other parts of the world, but here it must be understood that the Russian presence has a positive influence, purely from the point of view of saving human lives and defending human rights," he explained.

There have been some questions about

the effects of the Russian war operations in Ukraine on the operations of the Russian peacekeepers in Artsakh. Stepanyan said he thought Azerbaijan was indeed attempting more provocative operations because it thought Russian attention would be focused on Ukraine. However, he did not agree that in practice this war led the peacekeeping force in Artsakh to be less effective. He pointed out also that Azerbaijani ceasefire violations took place before the Ukrainian war too, even if not in such large numbers. According to the Russians, he said, the numbers of their troops in Artsakh have not changed and they maintain the same quality of experience and leadership.

Without delving further into broader issues of international politics, Stepanyan said he thought that the Russian peacekeeping forces are not intervening more forcefully because their mandate has not been clarified. He said, "Very often, when we raise the objective question of why appropriate actions are not carried out, we are given the answer that they do not have the order to fire or use force. This is what must be fixed and clarified. Appropriate mechanisms must be established through a written manner about what kinds of actions the peacekeepers can carry out under which circumstances, including, in case of necessity, the punishment of those who violate the ceasefire regime."

Stepanyan pointed out that it has been said that Azerbaijan declined to sign the mandate for the Russian peacekeepers, and commented: "I believe that if Azerbaijan declines to do this, then international mechanisms without asking Azerbaijan's will or opinion, must directly establish this mandate. This issue must become a topic of examination, and after the establishment of the mandate, certainly the violations of the ceasefire regime will either disappear or at least not be of such magnitude any longer."

In addition to a role for the Russian peacekeepers and the Artsakh Defense Army, Stepanyan declared that there is a need for additional security mechanisms. Among them, he suggested, would be the establishment of the offices or representatives of various international organizations in Artsakh. He elaborated: "Let us suppose that if the United Nations has an office in Stepanakert, then it can obtain additional information. Azerbaijan cannot engage in provocations when it knows that the UN is conducting monitoring locally, or if the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is conducting monitoring locally. However, there is no representation of any such organization here. Nobody refuses their entry into Artsakh except for Azerbaijan."

Status of Artsakh

When asked whether Armenia under pressure might agree to the integration of Artsakh into Azerbaijan without any special status except general human rights guarantees, Stepanyan declared, "Armenia has its foreign policy and may resort to different strategies and tactics but this does not change the reality. The Artsakh question first of all is connected with the right of self-determination of the Artsakh people. If we understand it as a matter of human rights, we must also understand that the right to self-determination is included as part of human rights...The Artsakh issue should not be presented merely as Armenia's demands of land from Azerbaijan, but as the defense of the rights of the Armenian people living on these territories, including the defense of their right to self-determination."

Stepanyan added that Artsakh has never been part of the body of an independent,

sovereign Azerbaijan and its inhabitants already exercised their right to self-determination just as the population of Azerbaijan did to emerge from the Soviet Union.

In summary, Stepanyan said, "The negotiations conducted by the Republic of Armenia cannot ignore the right of self-determination of the people of Artsakh...If it is decided in the end through negotiations that Artsakh must be part of Azerbaijan, this will never be accepted by the Artsakh population. I can say with full confidence that the people living in Artsakh will never live under Azerbaijan's control."

If such a decision were to be taken, he said "We would fight against that decision to the degree that our possibilities permit. We will continue the struggle in Artsakh to not be in any fashion part of Azerbaijan, and except the assistance of our compatriots in the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia so that the Artsakh issue will not have such a denouement. I can say that in such a worst-case scenario, if we do come to it, Artsakh within the body of Azerbaijan is equivalent to the emptying of Artsakh of Armenians and the loss of Artsakh...the sending of 120,000 people directly to genocide. As the Defender of Human Rights, I hope that commonsense will triumph and such a decision will not be taken."

Lachin Corridor and Its Remaining Armenians

According to Stepanyan, the two major places where Armenians are still living in the Lachin corridor, a territory connecting the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh which is at present patrolled by Russian peacekeepers, are the town of Berdzor and the village of Aghavno. Prior to onset of war in September 2020, he estimated that around 2,000 or more lived in Berdzor, of whom 170 people remained after the war, while nearly the entire population of Aghavno returned, with around 200 Armenians living there now.

The November 9 trilateral agreement stipulates that in three years' time a new connecting route be established in the Lachin corridor. Azerbaijan has already constructed such a route on the section of territory it controls which bypasses Berdzor and Aghavno and demands that the switch to the new route take place soon. As a result, the Artsakh authorities have asked the Armenian population of these two places to evacuate their homes by this August 25.

In addition to the Armenian section of this new route not being ready, infrastructure lines that ran through the original route will all have to be changed. This includes gas, electricity, telephone and internet lines running from Armenia to Artsakh. The electricity and communication lines are comparatively easy to construct, and Artsakh's government has already promised to work on them as quickly as possible, but the gas pipelines will take longer and require greater resources, Stepanyan said. Consequently, he said, "For this matter, the intervention of the Russian peacekeepers is necessary so that Azerbaijan will not interrupt the gas supply to Artsakh until the building of the new lines...It is a fact that due to the change of the route, at least in the near future, infrastructure will be more vulnerable. International aid, especially from the United States and France, may be necessary."

He noted that in March of this year, when Azerbaijan obstructed the gas supply, the European Union, France, America and others condemned this act, and put direct pressure on Azerbaijan to restore the supply, while the Russian peacekeepers intervened

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ARMENIA

Iran Appoints Consul in Kapan in Syunik Province

By Naira Nalbandian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Iran has appointed a consul general to the town of Kapan in southern Armenia, the Islamic Republic’s embassy in Yerevan told the Armenian state-run Armenpress news agency. Armenian news website News.am, quoting Robert Beglaryan, an ethnic Armenian lawmaker in Iran’s parliament, reported on August 11 that the appointed consul general, Abedin Varamin, had already taken

statements from Baku that Armenia must provide Azerbaijan with an extraterritorial land corridor via Syunik to its western Nakhichevan exclave under the terms of the Russia-brokered ceasefire that put an end to a deadly six-week Armenian-Azerbaijani war over Nagorno-Karabakh in November 2020.

Armenia publicly supports the idea of unblocking transport links in the region, but insists that it should maintain sovereignty over all transit roads in its territory, including in Syunik.

“In Iran’s case it is also a matter of national security,” Torosian told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on Friday.

“Opening a consulate general in Kapan means that they consider Syunik to be an important region for Iran in terms of protecting the interests of Iranian citizens and protecting the interests of the Iranian state in general,” he added.

The Armenian lawmaker said that Iran’s consulate general in Kapan also means that Tehran’s repeated statements against geopolitical changes in the region “now become visible.”

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned against attempts to block Armenia’s border with his country when he held separate meetings with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Tehran last month.

Under the 2020 ceasefire agreement in Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, which protects Armenia’s borders with Iran and Turkey, is to oversee the security of the transport links between Azerbaijan and its western exclave passing through Armenian territory.

Images of Russian checkpoints set up



A view of Kapan

office and held meetings with officials in Yerevan.

Tehran made the decision to open a consulate general in Kapan, a strategic town in Armenia’s Syunik province bordering Iran, last December. Officially, the consulate is likely to open later this year.

Shirak Torosian, a pro-government lawmaker who is a member of the Armenia-Iran friendship group in the Armenian parliament, described the decision as “another clear message about Tehran’s red lines in the region.”

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi reassured Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in an August 11 phone call about his country’s opposition to any attempt to alter borders in the region.

The reassurance came amid continued

Proposal of Alternative Road through Iran Is Attempt to Pressure Armenia To Create Zangezur Corridor

By Gevorg Gyulumyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan stated at a press conference to Turkish media on August 9 that Baku could be connected to Nakhichevan through the territory of Iran. Iranologist Vardan Voskanyan, who is the head of the Department of Iranian Studies at Yerevan State University, commented: “If Azerbaijan has an alternative, then I think it is meaningless to talk about the ‘Zangezur Corridor’ they dreamed of. They just would have to use that [other] road, but I want to point out that the reality here is different. Azerbaijan has no alternative, and the foreign policy of dictatorial Azerbaijan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov is just trying to pull off a propaganda and political trick. With this [statement], he is simply trying to exert pressure on the Republic of Armenia” to create a corridor through Zangezur.

The Iranologist explained further: “I have noted many times that the aforementioned road through the territory of Iran already existed after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Armenian liberation of the area near the Araks River of Artsakh in the 1990s. At that time, it ran directly parallel to the Iranian border with Artsakh and Armenia, along the southern banks of the Araks. Now the situation has changed a little. As a result of the 44-day war, with the Azerbaijani occupation of the area near the Araks, the part of that road passing through Iranian territory will be reduced by about 100 kilometers, at the expense of the occupied Artsakh part, entering Iran not beyond Horadis, but right near

the border of Armenia. They want to shorten this road by several bridges.”

Voskanyan also commented on Bayramov’s statement that if Armenia does not provide a land connection between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan, it will be cut off from regional projects and only suffer, declaring: “Bayramov’s statement is false. How is it possible to believe that barbaric Azerbaijan wants to act to make us benefit. This cannot be the case. Therefore, we should do the exact opposite of what our enemy said.

“As for Iran’s part, I would like to note that having that road in their territory, they have an additional lever to control Azerbaijan, because they carefully check all the cargo transported from Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, and it is very clear that Iran will prohibit the transfer of weapons, which is not advantageous at all for Azerbaijan.”

“In this way, Tehran is trying to weaken the Turkish-Azerbaijani pressure on Armenia regarding the so-called Zangezur Corridor. It is clear that Bayramov cannot talk about the corridor through the territory of Iran,” said Voskanyan.

Voskanyan also believes that there cannot be any route crossing through Armenian territory not under the control of Armenia, because this would be fraught with many dangers for the latter. He said: “It is necessary to clearly proclaim that Turkey and Azerbaijan will not get any corridor through the territory of Armenia, because it will have disastrous consequences for Armenia. Basically, it is proposed to open what was originally called the Turan Corridor by the Turks, but renamed due to the sensitivity to this term in Armenia, Iran and Russia.”

along several roads in Syunik that appeared on the Internet earlier this week fueled speculations among Armenians about an imminent deal on the transport corridor. But Russia’s Federal Security Service,

which is in charge of the protection of Armenia’s state border, said that the stepped-up security measures were due to increased drug trafficking and other illegal cross-border activities in the area.

from previous page

to facilitate negotiations which led to the restoration of the gas service.

Stepanyan reported that according to the authorities of the Republic of Armenia, there has not been any agreement on a deadline for the switch to the new route. He said, “There are two fundamental issues at play here: Azerbaijan itself is aware that the Armenian section is not ready but it ignores this and ignores that people have the right of free travel, and imposes its will. In order to achieve its demands it is resorting to escalating its aggressive activity, to make us accept these demands.”

As to why the inhabitants are being evacuated, he said, after citing the precedents during the 2020 war, it is “because there is a direct threat to their lives. If Aghavno or Berdzor comes under Azerbaijan’s control, the people living there will either be killed or placed into captivity. Karabakh’s government is carrying out the evacuation of their populations so that this will not happen.”

Stepanyan said that in his opinion, Azerbaijan intended to take Berdzor under its control because it is following a policy of restoring cities and towns. He said, “I have some hope that it will be possible to post-

pone at least until the spring of 2023 the deadlines. I have certain information that negotiations are taking place.”

Meanwhile, the Armenian media has reported that there has been a threat by Artsakh government representatives that if the evacuating villagers burn their homes before leaving, they will not receive compensation or new housing. Stepanyan said that he has requested clarification on this matter from the government of Artsakh. He has been assured that such a declaration has not been made. He stated, “Irrespective of whether such a statement has been made, as the Defender of Human Rights, I wish to declare that the allocation of housing to displaced people cannot be connected in any way with the burning of their houses. Displaced people must receive residences in accordance with their status of being displaced. If they need residences, they must receive them in an obligatory manner. The declaration of a minister or this or that action cannot have any effect on the realization of the rights of such individuals, and I can guarantee that independent of whether there has or hasn’t been such a declaration, I will defend the rights of all those displaced people concerning the obtaining of residences.”

What Can Be Done?

Stepanyan reiterated that Azerbaijan’s goal is to get Artsakh’s territory without its Armenian population. He said, “These are not isolated words. What does [Azerbaijani President] Ilham Aliyev proclaim? After the war, he proclaimed once that there are only some 30,000 Armenians living there [in Artsakh]. Then he said only 20,000 Armenians live there. He periodically tries to show that only a few thousand Armenians live there and their numbers are continually decreasing. But we see that this is not the truth, and also the Russians see that this is not the truth. Aliyev cannot continue presenting this lie to the international public... but he continues to try in every way — by sending various letters of threat to the inhabitants of Artsakh, calling on people living in various villages to leave their homes or, if they do not, force would be used. This is their goal, to do everything to get the native people of Artsakh, the Armenians, to get tired and leave their country.”

Stepanyan said he always notes in interviews that the more Armenians live in Artsakh the greater the chance it has of remaining Armenian. He said, “Today, when our population asks what we can do to get out of this situation, my immediate answer

is, it depends on you. It [the solution] is to live here, to endure all the deprivations and difficulties that we have in the situation that has been created and live here. Because in the end, I have the hope that our will shall not be ignored.”

As far as the Armenians in the diaspora are concerned, Stepanyan said that Artsakh more than ever needs their help. He said, “Many when they think of the diaspora think of financial help, but that is not what I am speaking about. The diaspora today is necessary for Artsakh first of all as a tool to break the international isolation in which we are living. Each and every Armenian living in the diaspora must understand that he/she has the obligation to speak about Artsakh every day and keep our issue alive. Our possibilities are extremely limited, but in this connection, having a diaspora is a great advantage for us. No matter how much the diaspora may be disappointed with the results of the war, no matter how much during the discussions on various issues it is disappointed with governments or this or that official, it should not leave the people of Artsakh alone. It should understand that what it does is not for the governments of Armenia or Artsakh but for the people living in Artsakh, its compatriots.”

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Turkish Provocations over Aegean on Greece's Holy Days

ATHENS (*Greek City Times*) — On one of Greece's most important religious holidays, the [Assumption of the Virgin Mary](#), on August 16, Turkey carried out 39 airspace violations over the Aegean Sea, rescinding an agreement between the two nations to avoid provocations on religious celebrations.

Turkish aircraft carried out provocative overflights over Greek islands, particularly in the northeastern, central, and southern Aegean regions.

More specifically, there were 39 violations and 11 infringements of Greek airspace by 18 Turkish F-16s, which flew in nine formations. Of the 18, ten were armed, while three engaged in dog fights with Greek fighters. It should be noted that out of the 39 violations, three were overflights.

In particular, a pair of Turkish F-16 aircraft performed an overflight at 11:05 over Kinaro and at 11:08 over Mavra Lerou, at 27,000 feet. At 11:09, a second pair of Turkish F-16s made another overflight over Kandeliosa at 23,000 feet.

According to the Hellenic National Defense General Staff sources, the Turkish aircraft were identified and intercepted following international rules according to standard practice.

Based on the Memorandum signed between Greece and Turkey, the two countries had agreed to refrain from provocations during national and religious holidays.

ICRC Reps Visit Armenian PoWs in Azerbaijan

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) Representatives of the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Baku have visited the Armenian prisoners of war still being held in Azerbaijan, Zara Amatuni of the ICRC delegation in Armenia [told](#) Sputnik Armenia on August 10.

"The latest visit to the Armenian prisoners took place at the end of July. They were given the opportunity to contact their relatives in all possible ways: through letters, phone calls and video messages," Amatuni said.

According to her, the ICRC representatives visited those captives whose existence has been officially recognized by the Azerbaijani authorities.

She noted that the purpose of such visits is to assess the state of health of prisoners, the conditions of their detention (including through private conversations).

Amatuni expressed hope that the regularity of visits will continue in the future. Representatives of the ICRC also keep in touch with the families of the captives.

Baku confirms the presence of 38 Armenian prisoners of war and civilians, but according to human rights activists, another 80 people are in Azerbaijani captivity.

In total, 303 persons from Armenia are still missing in relation to the 2020 war unleashed by Azerbaijan, the International Committee of the Red Cross said in a report on August 12.

Russia, Turkey Sign Contract for Delivery Of Second Batch of S-400 Missiles

MOSCOW (Ahval) — Moscow and Ankara have signed a contract for the delivery of a second batch of S-400 missile defense systems to Turkey, Russian state-owned news agency TASS reported on August 16, citing the head of Russia's military cooperation service.



Russian military hardware being delivered in Turkey

The deal with Ankara will also "allow for the production of some components of the [S-400 Triumf] system to be localized," it cited the head of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS),

Dmitry Shugayev, as saying on the sidelines of a military forum.

NATO ally Turkey acquired the first batch of Russia's S-400 in 2019, sparking backlash from Washington and the alliance. The purchase resulted in the country's removal from the F-35 program and

the sanctioning of its defense officials.

Washington and NATO strongly object to the use of Russian systems within the alliance and the United States says it poses a threat to the F-35 fighter jets. Ankara main-

tains the S-400s can be used independently without being integrated into NATO systems and therefore pose no risk.

It is unlikely that any country will design a system that could rival the S-400 Triumf missile systems, Shugayev said, adding that the contract with Turkey was currently being put into practice.

Russia and Turkey last week agreed to enhance economic cooperation at a meeting between Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held in the city of Sochi. Some alarm by European countries have been alarmed by the meeting, which arrives as the West is looking to reduce its economic relations with Moscow over its war with Ukraine.

The original contract between Ankara and Moscow for the purchase of S-400 systems included two regiments, Reuters cited a Turkish official as saying on Tuesday, adding that there were no new agreements, dismissing reports of a deal for the sale of a second batch.

Meanwhile, a Turkish military delegation is currently in the United States for talks on the sale of F-16 jets to the country, state-run Anadolu news agency reported on Monday.

Armenia to Set up Ferry Service between Georgia and Russia

By Nini Gabritchidze and Ani Mejlumyan

Amid a sharp rise in exports to Russia, Armenia is working to establish a new Black Sea ferry service from Georgia to Russia, officials have said.

While the inspiration for the new service seems to have been long-standing problems with bottlenecks at the Georgia-Russia border, it has taken on new significance and scrutiny in light of the war in Ukraine and the resulting international sanctions against Russia.

Armenia's Economy Ministry said the service, from Georgia's port of Poti to Kavkaz in Russia, was supposed to start on June 15 but now should start operating in August. "The launch of the ferry service is postponed mainly because of the sanctions against Russia," Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan told Sputnik Armenia. He did not elaborate on the connection with the sanctions.

The Economy Ministry first mooted plans for a ferry service last year. An Armenian government decree of March 24, 2022, said that the Armenian logistics company C&M International would operate the ferry between Poti and Kavkaz twice a week. Kerobyan said the Armenian government will subsidize costs for fruit and vegetable exporters to use the ferry for the first six months of its operation.

Armenia is heavily reliant on Russia for trade, especially as a buyer of its agricultural products. The two countries don't share a border, however, and overland traffic must go through Georgia. The road to the single border crossing between Georgia and Russia, Upper Lars, traverses a high pass in the Caucasus mountains and is vulnerable to weather-related closures.

"The average time for cargo transportation from Armenia to Russia [via Lars] is seven days, and it can be trimmed up to three days by the ferry," the ministry told Sputnik Armenia on August 9.

Problems at the land border have been particularly acute this year.

Heavy rain in late June caused part of the highway on the Georgian side to wash away, forcing the road's closure for several

days. As a result, trucks exporting Armenian fruits and vegetables were stuck for days, just as the peak season was beginning, and much of the cargo spoiled.

"The biggest problems that the two countries [Armenia and Russia] face are connected with logistics," Kerobyan said in a July interview with Russian news agency Tass. "There are huge lines at the Russia-Georgia border, more than a thousand Armenian trucks are standing there and it takes them 10 days to travel a distance that should take no more than five hours."

Even before the road was closed, Georgian authorities and transport agencies were reporting significant increases in freight traffic along the road.

Meanwhile, Armenian trade with Russia has been sharply increasing. Armenian exports to Russia grew 49 percent in the first half of 2022 compared with the same period last year. Imports grew 42 percent.

The big increase is likely due to an increase in re-exports to Russia via Armenia, economist Suren Parsyan told Eurasianet. Georgian exporters also have complained that Russian customs officials have been

operating slowly, increasing wait times.

To deal with the delays, Georgian authorities came up with a solution in May to allow trucks loaded with perishable goods to skip ahead of other trucks, Businesspressnews reported.

Early in July, the Russian side reported opening 12 additional lanes on its side of the Lars border crossing.

In Georgia, where the government has faced repeated questions from opposition politicians and media of possibly turning a blind eye to smuggling sanctioned goods to or from Russia, the long lines of foreign trucks at Lars have also led to political speculations.

The ferry will likely remain only a back-up route given the increased cost, Parsyan said. "The ferry is just an alternative trade route," he said. "Land will remain the most cost-effective route. The ferry could be only profitable or preferable if the land border is closed and the government subsidizes half of the cost in the long term."

(This story originally appeared on Eurasianet.org on August 16.)

Aliyev Rules Out Status For Karabakh Armenians

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of a peace treaty to be signed by the two South Caucasus nations that fought a bloody six-week war over Nagorno-Karabakh in the fall of 2020.

The elements include a mutual recognition of each other's territorial integrity. The Armenian government, in principle, agreed to the elements, but said they should be complemented by other issues relating to the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the security of its population.

In the interview to national television, Aliyev also claimed that hundreds of Armenian soldiers were withdrawn from Karabakh after Azerbaijan's military operation on August 3. He stressed that Azerbaijan wants a full withdrawal of Armenian armed units from Karabakh. "It is Armenia's commitment. It is reflected in the act of surren-

der signed by Armenia on November 10, 2020," Aliyev claimed.

Speaking at a weekly cabinet meeting in Yerevan on August 4, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stressed that there was no serviceman of the Republic of Armenia in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian side, however, does not share the view that the Moscow-brokered ceasefire that provided for the deployment of about 2,000 Russian peacekeepers in the region also stipulates that local Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh should disarm.

In his interview Aliyev also confirmed that the few remaining Armenian residents of the town of Lachin and the villages of Sus and Aghavno situated along the Lachin corridor will leave by the end of the month as a new route for the corridor linking Karabakh with Armenia is due to be put into use.



INTERNATIONAL

Virtual Genocide Memorial Launched

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

On August 10, after three years of hard work, Dr. Tessa Hofmann announced the launch of a new website, the Virtual Genocide Memorial (<https://virtual-genocide-memorial.de>). Hofmann is a pioneer of genocide research in Germany, one of the first scholars here to publish scientific research on the Armenian genocide. A professor for many years at the Free University of Berlin, she has produced scores of books and articles on the fate of the Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire, not only the Armenians, but also the Greeks and Syrian Orthodox (Arameans). An early campaigner for Germany to officially recognize the genocide, as chairwoman of the human rights organization, “Working Group Recognition – Against Genocide, for International Understanding” (AGA), she also co-founded the Association for the Promotion of an Ecumenical Memorial to Genocide Victims in The Ottoman Empire (FÖGG).

The FÖGG is dedicated to commemorating genocides, educating, learning from the past and preventing their repetition in the future. It established a unique memorial in Berlin between 2012 and 2018. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/03/01/ecumenical-altars-remembrance-berlin/>) The memorial, as the name indicates, is ecumenical, representing Armenians, Greeks and Syrians of various denominations. It honors the memory of those more than 3 million Christians who were deported, sent into forced labor and massacred, and preserves the tradition of their cultural heritage.

As explained on its home page, the new website, “complements this analogue genocide memorial in Berlin-Charlottenburg. It reconstructs the life of Christian communities before their annihilation, paying particular tribute to their contribution to the culture and economy of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time we want to document the annihilation of these communities, both in textual, photo or video documents. This focus on genocide studies, as well as our in-



Dr. Tessa Hofmann

clusive ecumenical approach, distinguishes us from similar projects of textual and photographic reconstruction on national or regional levels.”

Sixteen Ottoman Provinces

The documents on the website are arranged according to the administrative organization of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century. As established through the “Provincial Law (Vilâyet Nizamnâmesi) of 1864, each province (vilayet) was divided into judicial districts (sancak), these in turn into counties (kaza), the counties into boroughs (nahiye) and these into local communities (kariye). The local communities were headed by a mukhtar, the municipalities by a mayor (müdir), the cantons by a kaymakam, the judicial districts by a mutassarrıf and the provinces by a governor (vali).” Visitors to the website who open the menu will be able to choose from among 16 Ottoman provinces. If one looks under Regions, The Six Provinces (Vilâyet-i Sitte), for example, and clicks there, one will arrive at a list including Bitlis, Diyabekir, Mamuret ül-Aziz, Sivas and Erzurum. By choosing Diyabekir, one comes to a page showing a photo of a commemorative plate placed in the ground at the Ecumenical Memorial in Berlin. There follow maps, and texts ex-

plaining the name, summarizing the history and administrative divisions, characterizing the population as whole and the Armenian population. Here one reads about the trades and professions of the Armenians, before moving on to the Greek and Syriac populations. The destruction of the cities and their inhabitants, the monuments etc. are detailed and richly illustrated.

The site visitor learns about the locations and the fate of their people, through selected texts from historical studies, contemporary accounts, memoirs, and many, many photographs.

Appeal for Support

Hofmann, the research editor who organized the website virtually by herself,

calls for support and collaboration: “Such a project cannot be carried out by a few individuals,” she writes, “but depends on the support of colleagues and the related Armenian, Greek and Syriac communities concerned. We therefore ask for your support: Please provide suitable texts (preferably in English or with English translation) or photo documents for the Virtual Memorial, from private property or from your work and research context. Videos of the present state of the former Armenian. Syriac or Greek buildings and settlements are also welcome, as are videos and photos that give an impression of the landscape in which Armenians, Aramaeans and Greeks lived a hundred years ago.”

Kazakhstan to Start Oil Sales Via Azeri Pipeline

NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan (Reuters) — Kazakhstan is expected to sell some of its crude oil through Azerbaijan’s biggest oil pipeline from September, as the nation seeks alternatives to a route Russia threatened to shut, three sources familiar with the matter said.

Kazakh oil exports account for more than 1 percent of world supplies, or roughly 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd). For 20 years, they have been shipped through the CPC pipeline to Russia’s Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, which provides access to the global market.

In July a Russian court threatened to shut the CPC, prompting the Kazakh government and major foreign producers to set up contracts for other outlets as a precaution. None of the alternatives are as practical as the CPC pipeline, raising the risk of further volatility on energy markets.

Shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine in February, international crude prices hit 14-year-highs and prices have stayed high, sustaining an average above \$100 a barrel in July.

A source with direct knowledge of the matter said Kazakhstan’s state oil firm Kazmunaigaz (KMG) was in advanced discussions with the trading arm of Azerbaijan’s

state firm SOCAR to allow 1.5 million tons per year of Kazakh crude to be sold through the Azeri pipeline that delivers oil to Turkey’s Mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

At just over 30,000 bpd, the volume is a trickle compared to the usual 1.3-1.4 million bpd that flows through the CPC pipeline.

The final contract is due to be signed at the end of August with flows through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline starting up a month later, the source said.

Another 3.5 million tons per year of Kazakh crude could start flowing in 2023 through another Azeri pipeline to Georgia’s Black Sea port of Supsa, two sources said.

Combined with BTC flows, the volume would equate to just over 100,000 bpd, or 8 percent of the CPC flows. KMG declined to comment and SOCAR declined to comment on the specific deal.

Relying on Azerbaijan would allow Kazakhstan to side-step Russian territory. Last month, BP Azerbaijan said it would redirect flows away from the Baku-Supsa pipeline to the larger BTC pipe.

However, the new BTC route means Kazakhstan will have to rely on a fleet of small tankers to take its oil across the Caspian Sea to Baku from its port at Aktau that has limited capacity, the sources said.

Baku Pursues Three Goals It Hopes Will Pressure Armenia To Capitulate In Negotiations

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Azerbaijan’s second grievance, according to ICG experts, relates to what Baku says is Armenia’s failure to withdraw forces from Nagorno-Karabakh, as the ceasefire says it must do. “Yerevan says it has done so. The issue, it says, is Azerbaijan’s concern that Nagorno-Karabakh’s de facto authorities retain an armed force. Baku argues that this force is illegal, demanding that Russian peacekeepers disarm it, while Armenia and the de facto authorities say its disarmament was never part of the ceasefire deal,” the report says.

“Baku seized upon comments Armen Grigoryan, Armenia’s Security Council secretary, made in an interview in mid-July that Armenia would withdraw forces by September as evidence of its claims. Yerevan has since furiously tried to walk back words it says were taken out of context,” writes the ICG, noting that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reiterated on August 4 that all Armenian armed forces have left Nagorno-Karabakh.

An Azerbaijani military official told the ICG that Baku will press ahead with operations until the area is fully demilitarized.

The report says that, thirdly, Baku ap-

pears keen to proceed to talks on a treaty that it hopes will end the conflict to its advantage. Although in April the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders in Brussels declared their readiness to start talks on such an agreement, Azerbaijan has voiced frustration that subsequent diplomacy has moved too slowly, the authors of the report note.

An Azerbaijani official alleged that Armenian officials are purposely delaying talks. “They think that, by prolonging the negotiations, they can wait for the geopolitical situation to change in their favor,” the official quoted by the ICG said.

For their part, officials in Yerevan blame Baku, saying it is Azerbaijani officials that are “dragging their feet in EU-mediated talks and hoping to take advantage of the world’s focus on Russia’s war in Ukraine,” the authors of the report say.

“From a military standpoint, Armenia and de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh view Baku’s seizure of Farukh (Parukh) in March, as well as positions held by the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh forces near the Lachin corridor and along the front lines in the entity’s north and northwest, as an attempt to gain high ground and, thus, strategic advantage,” the ICG notes.

The authors of the report wonder whether Russian peacekeepers can deter Azerbaijan and enforce the ceasefire, noting that since early May, they have been conducting daily patrols on Sarybaba heights close to the Lachin corridor. “The patrols stopped a couple of days before the Azerbaijani advances, however, for reasons that are unclear,” the report says.

A senior de facto official in Stepanakert quoted by the ICG said the peacekeepers often feel powerless. “Everyone understands that Russia is weaker than ever before in the international arena,” the de facto representative said, according to the report.

“The clashes have once again highlighted the challenges faced by the Russian peacekeeping mission without a clear mandate for how it can engage beyond its monitoring role — a problem made worse by Russia’s loss of standing following its invasion of Ukraine,” the ICG writes.

In a 2021 report, the ICG called on the sides to hold talks on clarifying the peacekeepers’ role. “They appear increasingly unlikely to do so, particularly amid increasing criticism of the mission by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Such frustration risks undermining the peacekeepers’ abil-

ity to carry out their existing mandate of observing the ceasefire in the conflict zone. If and when the time becomes ripe, international mediators must urge the sides to revisit this issue, which will likely come to a head in any case in 2025 when Baku and Yerevan must give their assent to the mission’s continuation,” the report says.

According to ICG experts, “most importantly, Western capitals and Moscow should try to ensure that their standoff over Ukraine does not bleed into mediation efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh.”

“Even distracted, Moscow pays more attention to Armenia and Azerbaijan than does Brussels or Washington. It remains the only country that has been willing to dispatch forces to the region and it remains a key trade partner of both countries. Working with Moscow, distasteful as it may be in European capitals, improves the odds of bringing peace to the South Caucasus,” the ICG says.

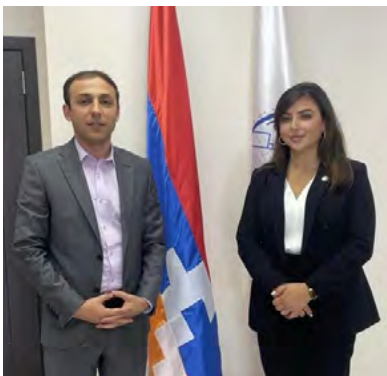
The group’s experts conclude that “concerted diplomacy by all outside actors might yet avert a return to war and keep nascent talks about an eventual peace settlement and new trade routes on track.”

Community News

Armenian Assembly's Working Trip to Artsakh Highlights Needs

WASHINGTON — Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) Congressional Relations Director, Mariam Khaloyan, traveled to Artsakh last month on a working trip, where she assessed the region's needs and conditions in the aftermath of the 2020 war launched on Artsakh that resulted in devastating consequences for the Armenian people. Khaloyan held meetings directly with several governmental and humanitarian organizations addressing these challenges.

Khaloyan met in Stepanakert with International Christian Concern (ICC), a human rights organization that is helping families amidst the current humanitarian crisis. During the meeting, Khaloyan and ICC representatives discussed the importance of therapy for those who are trying to adjust after the brutal war that claimed the lives of soldiers and civilians, destroyed infrastructure, and displaced thousands of residents. The Assembly had also connected with ICC in person in December 2020, when Khaloyan traveled to Artsakh during her fact-finding trip following the signing of the November 9, 2020 trilateral ceasefire statement. Since then, ICC has conducted ex-



Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan with Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman Gegham Stepanyan

tensive research, participated in the Assembly's online Advocacy Panels, and published several articles raising awareness and expressing concerns regarding Azerbaijan's continued existential threats and violence against the Armenian people in Artsakh.

During Khaloyan's meeting with The HALO Trust, she was briefed on current conditions of post-cease-fire challenges relative to unexploded ordnance and demining clearance operations in the remaining areas of Artsakh. Khaloyan also participated in a field visit by The HALO Trust in Martuni province's Nengi village, where she saw demining efforts first-hand alongside HALO team members. The HALO Trust is focused on clearing cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance from densely populated areas such as Stepanakert, Martakert and Martuni, which will ensure the safety of the remaining population and returning displaced families in the coming weeks and months.

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The bakery opened in Fresno's "Old Armenian Town" in 1922

Fresno's Valley Lahvosh Baking Company Celebrates 100th Anniversary

FRESNO — In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Fresno had a thriving Armenian community in the southern part of the city known as Old Armenian Town. Old Armenian Town is a large area of Downtown Fresno where most Armenian immigrants first settled in Fresno. This was the center of Armenian life in which the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, playwright, and short story writer William Saroyan, born in 1908, grew up and where he gleaned many of his early stories.* Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® began as the California Baking Company, and was founded in 1922 by Armenian immigrant and master baker, Gazair Saghatelian. It remains one of the oldest, most recognized, and respected Armenian landmarks in Fresno.

Gazair was an original member of the community of hard-working, industrious Armenian immigrants who first settled in Fresno with his young family, and who worked many long hours establishing his own bakery business over a century ago.

"In the 1920s and 1930s, this was a vibrant Armenian neighborhood," says current president and Gazair's granddaughter, Agnes Saghatelian. "Our family had the bakery and lived right next door. Everyone knew each other in the area, there were many Armenian immigrant families, shops, the Armenian church, the historic Emerson Elementary School, and thriving businesses. My mom and her siblings lived and grew up here." (The Emerson School once stood on Santa Clara and L Street. This school was the site of Fresno's first high school and the institution at which William Saroyan and many Armenian children were educated. [Santa Clara and L St]).

see ANNIVERSARY, page 9



Gazair Saghatelian



Bakery delivery trucks in the 1930s

Former Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian Ending 50 Year Career

By Andre Coleman

PASADENA, Calif. (Pasadena Now) — After half a century in public service former Pasadena Police Chief Bernard Melekian, who currently serves as the interim chief in Santa Barbara, retired in July.

According to the Santa Barbara news website Edhat.com, Melekian stepped down as the Santa Barbara Police Department Interim Police Chief on Friday, July 15.

Melekian pulled off an amazing hat trick in Pasadena, serving 13 years as the Police Chief, six months as acting Fire Chief and 10 months as the acting City Manager.

Melekian came to Pasadena in 1994.

After the Halloween murders of three children by gang members rocked Pasadena, Melekian responded with "No More Dead Children."

The program worked and for three years there were no youth homicides.



Chief Bernard Melekian [Image courtesy of Santa Barbara Police dept.]

Melekian also pushed for civility among his officers as they dealt with the public.

Melekian has a reputation of transparency during fatal officer-involved incidents.

After police shot and killed Leroy Barnes, Melekian held a community meeting at the Pasadena Public Library and presented a powerpoint to the community showing how that incident unfolded and answered every question from community members.

After then City Manager Cynthia Kurtz left the city, Melekian was tapped as the Interim City Manager and left the police station to run City Hall.

Melekian, known nationwide for his community policing policies, joined the Obama Administration when he was tapped by Attorney General Eric Holder to head the federal community policing program.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Fresno's Valley Lahvosh Baking Company Celebrates 100th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 8

Originally, the bakery started when Gazair began baking his authentic Armenian bread for the local Fresno community. He became famous for creating the Original Peda Bread and the other Armenian breads that he expertly baked each day; in the 1930s, he showcased his fleet of trucks that delivered his fresh bread locally, adds Agnes.

The bakery continues to be operated by the Saghatelian family, and still occupies its original location across the street from the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. The church is the oldest Armenian Apostolic church in the Western United States, located at the center of Old Armenian Town, a ten to twelve-block area in downtown Fresno. This area remained predominantly Armenian until the mid-1950s. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The exterior of the church remains virtually unaltered since its completion in 1914.

After Gazair died in the mid-1940s, his son, Sam Saghatelian, continued baking and the company became named Valley Bakery. The name remained the same until becoming Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® in 1994.

Janet Saghatelian was the youngest child of Gazair and Hayganous Saghatelian. She began working at the bakery at a young age and became the president in 1982. For many years, she carried on her father's tradition and dedication to the Fresno community. She was devoted to her family's bakery, and was proud of the business her father and family had built. Janet also created the bakery's heart-shaped Lahvosh crackers. The cutter arrived in 1983, and these popular crackers have been produced ever since. (They are called "Janet Saghatelian's Hearts" on the package, too.)

"My mother Janet received great pleasure sharing Lahvosh and Peda Bread products



The bakery's Original Peda Bread and Lahvosh cracker bread

with others...no one ever left the bakery empty-handed," adds Agnes. As Janet continued running the company, she was also raising her daughter, Agnes. In 1993, after graduating from Fresno State, Agnes began working full-time at the bakery and would eventually take over her mother's position in 2010 as president of Valley Lahvosh Baking Company®.

Today, Agnes continues her family's commitment to outstanding quality products and customer service. Along with an incredible staff, she manages and operates the bakery, and like her beloved mother before her, she is raising her daughter, Danielle – balancing motherhood, work sched-

ules, and the family business.

"We currently sell our lahvosh products throughout the United States. For exporting, our products are sold in gift baskets at Costco Mexico. Along with our products being sold to grocery store chains throughout the country, our 15" Rounds are featured at The Capital Grille, Houlihan's, and Yard House," says Agnes.

The bakery still bakes their famous Valley Lahvosh® to crisp perfection. What better way to celebrate the upcoming holidays and special celebrations than by creating a festive charcuterie board or appetizer (mezze) tray featuring Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® crackers available

in signature Hearts, Rounds, Stars, and Christmas Trees shapes.

Agnes says, "Catering companies, party planners, and restaurants use Valley Lahvosh Cracker Bread® to create delicious charcuterie boards and appetizer trays."

"Our Valley Lahvosh crackers are widely popular at wine tastings, weddings, and as personal and professional gifts," says Agnes. "Valley Lahvosh crackers are oven-baked, non-GMO, low in fat, and contain no cholesterol. Try making your own charcuterie board or appetizer tray that can include: sliced cured meats and cheeses, fresh or dried fruits and nuts, olives, marinated peppers, jams, pickles, sprigs of mint or rosemary, and crackers baked from Valley Lahvosh Baking Company."

"My personal goal has always been to reach 100 years in business. This year is a noteworthy achievement for my family and my immigrant grandparents who worked so hard and with such dedication through the years. We are still here because of their strength, fortitude and commitment. We are proud to have a successful family business in Downtown Fresno that has served so many customers for decades. I'm extremely grateful to all our family members and employees, past and present, who worked to make this milestone possible," says Agnes.

Guided Tours Available

Valley Lahvosh Baking Company is listed on Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources and celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2022. In honor of this milestone, guided tours will be given and are scheduled for: August 25, September 22, October 20, November 17 and December 15.

Visit <https://m.facebook.com/valleylahvoshbakingco/>, <https://www.instagram.com/valleylahvosh/?hl=en> or <https://twitter.com/ValleyLahvosh>

For recipes, go to: <https://www.valleylahvosh.com/recipes>

Armenian Assembly's Working Trip to Artsakh Highlights Needs

NEEDS, from page 8

Most of the current contamination is due to the 2020 war on Artsakh, where cluster munitions continue to be found in civilian areas, including in fields, schools, and homes. HALO's team surveyed areas for threats to the civilian population and found three types of cluster bombs: a Russian-manufactured bomb delivered by Smerch carrier rockets which carries over 70 submunitions; a 9N235 bomb with a self-destruct mechanism that often fails to function; and an Israeli-manufactured M095 cluster bomb, delivered by long artillery ranged rockets (LAR-160). HALO's diligent team works in the field in groups of eight. They are accompanied by trained medics, who are on hand for the clearance team.

"As one can imagine, the work is very dangerous. These teams put themselves in harm's way everyday to ensure the safety and well-being of civilian lives," said Khaloyan. "This critically important work saves lives and we very much appreciate continued U.S. assistance in this regard," Khaloyan added. Since 2000, HALO has cleared almost 500 minefields in Artsakh, making the land safe and transforming the lives of more than 130,000 people. They visit schools and communities to teach individuals, especially children, on how to stay safe until all landmines are cleared.

In her meeting with Artsakh's Human Rights Ombudsman Gegham Stepanyan, a variety of ongoing issues that are priorities for the well-being of Armenians living in

Artsakh were discussed. They included the humanitarian crisis on hand, including the lack of proper housing for approximately 40,000 internally displaced persons. Currently, funding for housing and help with the displaced is coming from the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund and other diasporan organizations. Additionally, challenges facing school-aged children were also emphasized. "There is not enough space for students or educators, as students are crammed in one classroom," said Khaloyan. "There is also a concern of language preservation as there are many dialects throughout Artsakh. To ensure the preservation of these dialects, children are taking second shifts in school. To help solve this issue, additional schools are needed to protect the language and help preserve the culture of the different areas of Artsakh now under occupation," added Khaloyan.

The November 2020 statement required that Armenia and Azerbaijan "exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons." Despite this, and along with strong calls from Congress, the Administration, and a number of humanitarian organizations, Azerbaijan still has not released all prisoners of war and captured civilians. Just last month, the U.S. House of Representatives reiterated the importance of the immediate release and repatriation of Armenian POWs - still unjustly held captive and subjected to torture and abuse by Azerbaijan - via passage of an amendment strongly supported by the Assembly to the FY2023 National Defense Authoriza-



Workers of HALO Trust

tion Act (NDAA). The Assembly remains deeply troubled by Azerbaijan's ongoing ceasefire violations, including last week's unprovoked attack against the Armenian people in Yeghtsahogh — a region along the Lachin/Berdzor Corridor monitored by Russian peacekeepers — with the use of mortars, launching grenades, and strike drones aimed at defense posts, resulting in 2 killed, 19 wounded, and 4 seriously wounded. The Assembly urges Congress to hold the Aliyev regime accountable for its ongoing ceasefire violations and renewed

hostilities against the Armenian people. The importance of enforcing Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act is clear. "It is imperative for Armenian Americans to make their voices heard and press Congress to stop Turkey and Azerbaijan from succeeding in their plans to remove the surviving Armenians from Artsakh and infringe further on Armenia's border," stated Khaloyan. "Armenia and Artsakh stand as leading democracies in the region and efforts to maintain its security are tantamount."



OBITUARY

Eminent Armenologist Nina Garsoïan Passes Away

NEW YORK — Nina Garsoïan was born in Paris in 1923, and ten years later as a child moved with her parents to New York City. She initially intended to be a concert pianist, but after obtaining her bachelor's degree in Classical Archaeology in 1943 from Bryn Mawr College, she earned a master's degree in archaeology and then her doctorate in Armenian, Byzantine and Medieval History (1958) at Columbia University. She began teaching at Smith College.

Garsoïan came to Columbia University in 1962 and became the first female professor to receive tenure at its Department of History. She was invited to Princeton University in 1977 to become the first female dean of its graduate school, but only stayed till 1979, when she returned to Columbia as the inaugural holder of the Gevork M. Avedissian Chair in Armenian History and Civilization. She continued to teach there until she retired in 1993.

She was one of the leading scholars in Armenian and Byzantine Studies, and



part of the generation of scholars who integrated Armenology into American academia at the highest levels. As such, she became the first president of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) in 1975.

Her translations of various works such

as *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade* by H. A. Manandian (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1956), *Armenia in the Age of Justinian* by Nicholas Adontz (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1970), *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia* by Aram Ter-Ghevondyan (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976) and *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand* (Harvard University Press, 1989) provided useful annotations, notes and bibliography in addition to commentary.

Some of her other academic works in English include *The Paulician Heresy* (Mouton & Co., 1967), *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (Variorum Publishing, 1985), *Church and Culture in Early Medieval Armenia* (Ashgate, 1999), and *Interregnum: Introduction to a Study on the Formation of Armenian Identity (ca 600-750)* (Peeters, 2012), but there are many more. She published her memoirs, titled *De Vita Sua*, in 2011 (Mazda Publishers). In her early work in partic-

ular, she was known for bringing to light the Iranian influence in Armenian history.

She was particularly dedicated to her graduate students and trained a whole cadre of specialists who have themselves become leaders in the field of Armenian studies.

Garsoïan served as editor for many years of the Paris-based *Revue des Études Arméniennes*. She was a Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. She participated in the Byzantine Studies Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, twice serving as a co-director.

In 2019, the Society for Armenian Studies awarded Garsoïan the SAS Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition and appreciation of her outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies. Furthermore, the SAS established the Nina G. Garsoïan Graduate Research Grant funded by her student Dr. Levon Avdoyan (retired recently from the Library of Congress).

Dr. Razmik Sirakian

Tehran-Born, UK-Trained Surgeon, Devoted to Family

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Dr. Razmik Sirakian passed away on August 7, 2022, after being hospitalized for injuries he had sustained in a motor vehicle accident. He was a brilliant and accomplished surgeon as well as a warm and loving father, husband, brother, and friend.

Dr. Sirakian was born on November 15, 1930, in Tehran, Iran, to Mariam and Arshavir Der Sirakian, one of seven children. His mother died at childbirth. He was raised by his father, but due to family circumstances, he spent two years in an orphanage in Isfahan.

He excelled academically and was spon-

sored by a loving Armenian couple, Hrand and Miranaz Shetdikian, who supported his aspiration to become a physician. He moved back to Tehran, attended Alborz High School, and graduated from Tehran University Medical School with distinction. He continued his education and training in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he specialized in general surgery and became a member of The Royal College of Surgeons.

While in the United Kingdom, he met Meda Abrahamian. They married and had two sons. After a few years in London, they returned to Iran, where Dr. Sirakian became the chief of surgery at Arad Hospital,



maintained a private practice, and cared for thousands of patients during a career spanning five decades.

He was a highly regarded member of the medical community in Tehran, a talented clinician and beloved physician who was devoted to the health and wellness of his patients.

His many accomplishments included

collaborating with Japanese colleagues to introduce endoscopy in Iran. He also volunteered his services during several regional military conflicts, spearheading the establishment of multiple Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals at the frontlines and serving as an onsite surgeon to save the lives of wounded soldiers. He was a dedicated member of the Armenian community, supporting the work of many Armenian humanitarian organizations.

After his retirement, he relocated to Lexington, Mass., to spend more time with his family. He enjoyed books, long walks, nature, wine, good food, family, and friends.

He was always extremely generous, kind, and committed to helping those in need.

He is survived by his wife Meda; sons Aram and Edward; daughters-in-law Asi and Yvette; grandchildren Eric and Alec; brother Vrej Sahakian; sister Rosa Soukiasian, and many nieces and nephews.

Visiting hours were on Monday, August 15 at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home in Watertown. Funeral services were private.

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Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.



Dr. Nubar Berberian 2022 Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2022**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2022** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2022**.
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 20, 2022



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Heritage Park Celebrates Decade with Events in September

BOSTON — Festive events are being held in September to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.

On Sunday, September 18, at 3 p.m., all are invited to come together to meet/greet and enjoy the Leon Janikian Ensemble and so much more at an event titled “Let’s Celebrate 10! Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends.”

On Wednesday, September 21, the gala benefit, “Celebrating Contributions of Our Nations Immigrants!” will be held at the InterContinental Hotel, Boston. Stephen Kurkjian, Pulitzer Prize journalist, author and leader will be honored with the Distinguished Citizen Award. Funds raised support the Legacy Fund to endow the Park’s care and maintenance year-round for many years to come.

“The Park has been a brilliant addition to the new Boston with its giant modern sculpture that gets reshaped every spring into a new form,” as the Boston Globe stated. It celebrates “how public art becomes a part of



The Armenian Heritage Park from above (Steve Dunwell photo)

the city, both permanent and alive... measuring up to the promise each of us makes in living or working in Boston – you are part of this city’s great history and expected to honor and contribute to it... And this is the kind of pledge that I see that the Armenian Heritage Park made to itself and to those who supported its drive from the outset,” commented Stephen Kurkjian during a gathering with the park’s benefactors.

A gift from the Armenian-American community to the City of Boston and the Commonwealth, Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway is a source of pride to all Armenians. The park celebrates the strength and resiliency of generations of Armenians who have immigrated to the U.S. and of immigrants and refugees from throughout the world who have come here and contributed to American life and culture.

Armenian Heritage Park is the initiative of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, comprised of representatives from Armenian-American parishes and organizations in Massachusetts.

The park is among the select few gathering sites on public land in the United States that commemorates the Armenian Genocide and celebrates the immigrant journey. Visitors travel from all over the world to visit this space where all come together on common ground, to remember, celebrate, and honor.

In its commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Haypost, Armenia’s Postal Service, issued a commemorative stamp with a photo of the 2012 Configuration of the Park’s Abstract Sculpture.

Programs at the Park engage all ages, cultures, and ethnicities, building community while broadening reach and impact. Annual programs include the Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture as well as Tea & Tranquility, Celebrating What Unites Us! and New Citizens Welcome Reception following their Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall. The Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall always a highlight. The curriculum, Geometry As Public Art: Telling A Story, inspired by the Park’s design and geometric features that tell the story of the immigrant experience, was developed and is being implemented in the Boston Public Schools. The curriculum fosters understanding and respect while improving math and literacy skills and engaging students creatively all while building common ground.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, everyone is encouraged to consider a gift to support The Legacy Fund to ensure the Park’s impeccable care for years to come. Gifts may be made online at ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support or by check, made payable to Armenian Heritage Foundation, mailed to Armenian Heritage Foundation, PO Box 77, Watertown, MA 02471. All contributions received by September 28 will be acknowledged in the 10th Anniversary Thank You in a special e-News.

Advance Reservations for the September 21 Gala Banquet are required. To receive the e-invite, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org. Contributions received by September 8 will be acknowledged in the Gala Benefit Program Booklet.

RSVP for the Let’s Celebrate 10! Sunday Afternoon at the Park is appreciated. Email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.

You're Invited

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MOTHERLAND

Documentary Feature Film By Vic Gerami

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TIME 6:00 PM DOORS OPEN
7:00 PM SCREENING
9:00 PM Q&A

RSVP Please RSVP By August 30
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The current configuration of the abstract sculpture

COMMUNITY NEWS

Metro Detroit's AGBU Special Projects Group Holds 50th Anniversary Golf Outing

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WEST BLOOMFIELD, Mich. — Monday, August 8, 2022 was a special day for the Armenian community of Metro Detroit.

Pine Lake Country Club in West Bloomfield was host to the annual Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Special Projects Golf Day, to raise funds for the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School in Southfield, MI. The committee, headed for the fifth year in a row by Brian Thomas and Matthew Najarian, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the annual event, which is

of the Special Projects Group. Edward Mardigian, Jr. read a letter from Richard Manoogian, chairman emeritus of Masco Corporation and son of the school's founder Alex Manoogian. Richard Manoogian is the only surviving member of the original Special Projects Group from the inception of the golf outing.

The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian school was the brainchild of industrialist and philanthropist Alex Manoogian, who emigrated from Smyrna, Turkey and made his career in Detroit as the founder of Masco Corporation. It was one of the first Armenian day schools in the US. Beginning



At the reception

one of the longest-running charitable golf outings in the State of Michigan, and has raised over 6 million dollars for the school during the last half-century.

The Golf Day included breakfast, lunch, mezza, and a banquet dinner for the attendees, at which Richard Dickran Kurjian spoke on behalf of the AGBU School Board and Brian Thomas spoke on behalf

as a kindergarten in the St. John's Armenian Church complex in Southfield in 1969, the school was moved to its own full-service building in the early 1970s at which point the golf outing was initiated in 1972 to raise money to support the school. It remains the only Armenian day school in the Midwest and the only Armenian day school in the US, outside of California, which runs



Golfers putting at the 2022 AGBU Golf Day in Metro Detroit

through 12th grade. Since the school was chartered by Central Michigan University in 1995 and became a charter school under the auspices of the State of Michigan, the Special Projects Group acts as an auxiliary fundraiser for improvements to the school.

The Special Projects group is composed of 45 Armenian professionals and businessmen from the Metro Detroit area, who enlist family, friends, business associates and fellow Armenians to buy tickets for the golf outing. Approximately 150 golfers participated in the Golf Day, and the number of attendees expanded to approximately 175 for the banquet.



Some of the younger golfers



Members of Metro Detroit AGBU Special Projects Group, 2022

St. Mark's Annual Armenian Fest Returns Sunday, September 4; Features Authentic Armenian Cuisine, Music



SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — St. Mark Armenian Church's Annual Armenian Festival will return to the church grounds on Sunday, September 4, from 12 noon to 6 p.m., 2427 Wilbraham Road. The Fest, which has become a favorite in the Greater Springfield area, is the parish's biggest event for more than 25 years and will feature delicious hot meals, a live Armenian band, dancing, authentic Armenian and International pastries, Armenian coffee, and more.

The St. Mark Armenian Festival draws hundreds of patrons from Springfield and surrounding suburbs that enjoy great food, entertainment and a wonderful social atmosphere. Everyone is welcome to be a part of the culture and enjoy all that is offered.

The Fest involves dozens of parishioners lending their time and talents to put on this annual one-day event, which is the parish's largest annual fundraiser. Baking workshops have taken place over the summer in preparation.

The Festival's Armenian menu is filled with a variety of traditional Armenian foods and pastries.

St. Mark's parish priest, Father Nigoghos

(Nicholas) Aznavourian, will be giving tours of the church throughout the event, and will explain the Armenian Apostolic faith and its history for those interested in learning more.

A new treat that has become a festival favorite, Soorj, or Armenian coffee, will be available at this year's Fest. The International booth will feature a variety of savory and sweet treats. There will also be a cultural booth, and a raffle. St. Mark's very own instructional cooking DVD, featuring parishioners demonstrating how to make traditional Armenian delicacies, will also be available for purchase.

All proceeds benefit the ministries of St. Mark Armenian Church. Sponsorship opportunities are also available, and donations can be made through the donate button on the church website, stmarkarmenianchurch.org. More information about the Fest can be found on the Facebook event page, on the church website, stmarkarmenianchurch.org.

Admission to the festival and parking are free. The event will be held rain or shine (there will be plenty of seating under the tents).



Arts & Culture

Hüseyin Ovayolu

'For Me Armenia Is Like Noah's Ark!'

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Photographer and documentary filmmaker Hüseyin Ovayolu was born in Gaziantep (Antep), Turkey, in 1986. He studied at photography and video department of Istanbul Bilgi University. Hüseyin also graduated from the Documentary Photography School organized by the Photography Foundation in Istanbul. He is an artist who tries to tell his personal stories and social memory with the language of photography.

We met in Yerevan in the beginning of last July. What was interesting, that in his English conversation Hüseyin never used the word "Armenia," but "Hayastan."

Hüseyin, once a Turkish intellectual said that everybody is minority in Turkey. Do you agree and what nationality were your ancestors?

I was born in a Kurdish-Alewi family, but both of my father's grandmothers were Armenians from Marash, survivors of the Genocide. Our family village had some 11-12 Armenian villages around. When their inhabitants were exiled to Der Zor or Aleppo during the Genocide, many Armenians gave their children to Kurdish families. That was the case of my two great-grandmothers. They were very little, did not even know their real, Armenian names. One of them, re-named Khatije, died early, but my father and aunt told me that sometimes she was using words that were neither Kurdish, nor Turkish, for instance, the word *agh-jik* (girl in Armenian). They tell that Khatije was well aware of the government and public rules, which was not typical for a peasant woman.

You see, I don't know the language and traditions, but when I meet an Armenian, I have very different feeling. I want to hug him or her. And this feeling I have not only in here in Armenia, but also in historical homeland, be it in Sasun, Van or Cîbîn. It is not about the lands, but the people; the same happened in Paris.

You know, Turkey's history is full of massacres and bloodshed. If you are not Turk, you are politically on the outside; they consider you against everything. Actually I am against fascism. I stand up for all oppressed and marginalized people, whether Armenians, Kurds or Assyrians. I understand the minorities' mentality very well.

You are from Aintab or Antep, a city with a rich Armenian past, but perhaps with no Armenian traces anymore.

Yes, but I will tell you something interesting. Once in Antep, in a shopping mall, a girl, seeing my bag with see OVAYOLU, page 14



Tom Bozigian leading a line of dancers

Houshamadyan and Tom Bozigian Travel to Detroit for Armenian Folk Dance Revival

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

DETROIT — The weekend of August 11-14 marked the second meeting of the group of folk dance experts led by Tom Bozigian of California to document authentic Armenian folk dances that were brought to the US from Western Armenia and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire by the original Armenian immigrant generation.

The group, who meet frequently over Zoom, had their first in-person meeting in Boston last August. The purpose of the meetings is to film instructional videos of the dancers performing these traditional folk dances accompanied by live music. Bozigian, 84, grew up learning the dances from the original immigrants in the Fresno area. While his mother's family hailed from Kharpert in Western Armenia, having a father who was an immigrant from the Gyumri region of current-day Armenia meant he was exposed to both Eastern and Western Armenian culture his entire life. He pursued a career as an expert in folk dance and also studied in Soviet Armenia with experts there.

Bozigian is considered the preeminent scholar of Armenian folk dances that reached the US from Historic Armenia. The American-Armenian community, for various historical reasons, has been the home of the strongest folk-dance tradition outside of present-day Armenia; not only that, but a multitude of dances from Historic Armenia survived here which did not get passed down in present-day Armenia. With the generations that brought these dances over now gone and the community in its 4th and 5th generation, many of these dances are being lost to time. The preservation of this heritage is the purpose of the dance project. The dance teachers found a sponsor in Houshamadyan, the Berlin-based organization led by historian Prof. Vahe Tachdjian, whose purpose it is to document the heritage of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

see DANCE, page 15



Dance Class in St John's new cultural hall

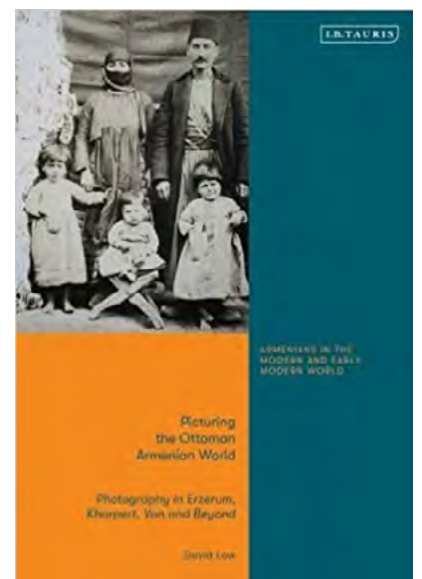
Books

Picturing the Ottoman Armenian World: Photography In Erzerum, Harput, Van and Beyond

David Low's New Book, Just Published by I.B. Tauris

LONDON/NY — I. B.Tauris, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, has announced the publication of Dr. David Low's book *Picturing the Ottoman Armenian World: Photography in Erzerum, Harput, Van and Beyond* as part of the series *Armenians in the Modern and Early Modern World*.

The Armenian contribution to Ottoman photography in the last decades of the empire has been well-documented. Studios founded and run by Armenian Ottomans in Istanbul contributed to the exciting cultural flourishing of Ottoman 'modernity', before its dissolution after World War I. Less known however are the pioneering studios from the east in the empire's Armenian heartlands, whose photographic output reflected and be-



came a major form of documenting the momentous events and changes of the period, from war and revolution to persecution, migration and ultimately, genocide.

This book examines photographic activity in three Armenian cities on the Armenian plateau: Erzurum, Kharpert and Van. It explores how indigenous photography was rooted in the seismic social, political, and cultural shifts that shaped Armenian lives during the Ottoman Empire's last four decades. Arguing that photographic practice was marked by the era's central movements, it shows how photography was bound-up in Armenian educational endeavors, mass migration and revolutionary activity. Photography responded to and became the instrument of these phenomena, so much so that it can be shown that they were responsible for the very spread of the medium through the Armenian communities of the Ottoman East and the rapid increase in photographic studios.

see PHOTOGRAPHY, page 15

Hüseyin Ovayolu: ‘For Me Armenia Is Like Noah’s Ark!’

OVAYOLU, from page 13

Armenian letters, approached and asked me where I bought it. It turned out she is an Armenian from Syria. After the Syrian war, 25 Syrian-Armenian families came to Antep. My friend Hagop’s wife, Haiganush, had a baby in Antep. Imagine, after 100 years, in 2015, an Armenian, named Sahag was born in Antep! The Turkish government gave Syrians refugee cards, without mentioning their ethnicity, but cards given to Syrian-Armenians were different, mentioning in red color their Armenian ethnicity. By the way, after 2018, no more Syrian-Armenians remained in Antep.

What brought you to Armenia this time?

My photography book project, called *Uprooted*. It started in Antep, aiming to explore who am I, what it means being born in Turkey. With this project I want to learn and discover myself with the colors and languages of our bordering countries. I went to the borders made by governments and people, both legal and illegal. This is a



different way for me to understand myself and my geography. This is not just a black-and-white photo documentary project; this is about me, my view, my observations and the ways how can I understand our neighbors — Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia, as well as sea-bordering Ukraine, Russia, Cyprus, also Israel. I have visited almost all those countries and I just want to present them like a visual novel.

Before this current project, have you ever made other Armenia-related efforts?

Ten year ago I came to Yerevan for my metro stations photography project. I photographed lots of portraits and metro stations as a part of my project which was photographing metro stations in ex-Soviet cities: Moscow, Petersburg, Kyiv, Yerevan, Tbilisi and Baku. Next time I will visit Kyiv again, as well as Central Asia.

What about documentaries?

I plan to make a short documentary film in a very strategic area on Turkish-Syrian border Akçakoyunlu, inside the train station there. My big dream is to have in this film my favorite dancer from Yerevan, the brilliant Rima Pipoyan, whom I had a chance to meet in person thanks to you.

This is your third visit to Armenia, but the first one after the war. What do you feel?

This time I understood I should be beware of having a Turkish passport. Four years or 10 years ago, I was taking lots of photos in Hayastan, and if people asked me to show my Turkish passport, it was really no problem. But this time when I went to Armavir to shoot the train station, I saw a police car and was worried if they would ask me to show my passport. Before it was safe to say I am from Turkey, but now I understand the situation: we had horrible days, 5,000 young people were killed. By the way, after the war I went to Azerbaijan, where people were quite skeptic about me, but my Turkish passport helped me, as they collaborated and killed together.

This time I saw many intellectual and dynamic Russian expats in Yerevan. Of course, countries also determine their guests according to the education quality of



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ARMENIA IS LIKE NOAH’S ARK. THERE ARE ARMENIANS, BUT MANY OF THEM HAVE DIFFERENT CULTURES, LANGUAGES AND KNOWLEDGE.

their own society. Russians in Armenia are just the opposite of Russians visiting Turkey. Once I met a Russian in Antalya and told him I love Dostoyevsky very much. He asked me: “Who is Dostoyevsky?” This time thanks to you I visited the town of Nor Ayntap, which was a nice experience from an Antep-born person like me. I am impressed by school no 2 of Nor Ayntap, the warm welcome of its director and one of the teachers. It was great to see the map and photos of Antep’s self-defense, as well as the monument with busts of commander Asadour Levonyan, priest Nerses Tavoukjian and gunsmith Avedis Kalemkarian — names I know from the history of Antep.

It is really exciting: every time I meet different interesting people in Hayastan. And I love that in Hayastan people live with art. You see monuments everywhere, I love walking in the morning in the calm and relaxed parks, often hearing piano playing or vocal practicing. For me Armenia is like Noah’s ark. There are Armenians, but many of them have different cultures, languages and knowledge. This richness in people of Hayastan I love very much!



ARTS & CULTURE

Houshamadyan, Bozigian Travel to Detroit for Folk Dance Revival

DANCE, from page 13

In addition to Bozigian and his wife, Sheree King, the other experts of this style of dance have assembled, including Gary and Susan Lind-Sinanian of the Armenian Museum of America (Watertown, MA), Robert Haroutiunian, leader of the Aradzani Dance Group in New York, and Carolyn Rapkiewicz (Bar Harbor, ME) who spent many years with the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, and is the coordinator of the group.

Bozigian, King, Haroutiunian, and Rapkiewicz met in Michigan where they spent two days filming at ballroom of the old “Hye Getron,” (Findlater Building) in Southwest Detroit. The building, which started life as a Masonic Lodge before being purchased by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) in the early 1940s, was known as the “Hye Getron” for two decades, housing the ARF’s “agoump” (clubhouse),



The dance instructors and the musicians

ballroom, and the St. Sarkis Church. In the 1960s, the hall was sold and the ARF-affiliated community bought new property in Dearborn. Currently an event space and banquet hall (El Bosque Salon) serving the large Hispanic population of what is now known as Mexicantown, the hall was chosen for its historic value as a venue of many Armenian events where the early immigrants performed the same dances which were being filmed. Music was provided by Hachig Kazarian, noted clarinet virtuoso and leading expert of Western Armenian folk music in the US, along with George Nigosian (oud), Ara Topouzian (kanun), Gerry Gerjekian (davoul), and Mike Mossoian (dumbeg).

Kazarian’s leading of the band had extra meaning and weight, as many of the dances filmed were native to the Van-Vaspouragan region and were taught to the Detroit Armenian community by his father, Yenovk Kazarian, and passed down from his grandfather, Khachig. The dances therefore, were performed with their original melodies which were passed down from the immigrants with little or minimal change.

On Saturday, August 20, the dance team members arrived at the newly remodeled

St. John’s Armenian Church cultural hall where a four-hour workshop was led by Bozigian for the members of the Armenian community at large. More than 60 workshop attendees participated in the class, including members of all churches and groups in the Michigan Armenian community as well as non-Armenian relatives, friends, and folk-dance enthusiasts. The class learned six dances, most of which are now quite rare, and almost all of which were originally learned by Bozigian from the same community in the Detroit area. The dances included “Khm-Khma” (Van/Kurdish influence), “Yerzingatsi Tamzara” (Yerzinga – Erzincan), “Vana Mayroke” (Van), “Daldala” (Erzurum), “Chandrozhee” (Van), and “Suleimani” (Van), and Bozigian also briefly taught or demonstrated alternate steps or versions of the same dance which came from different regions. He also spent some time specifically with members of the Hamazkayin Arax Dance Group working on the version of “Daldala” from Artvin, which is more acrobatic and perhaps more suited to stage performance. Many of the community members who participated showed great interest and aptitude in learning the dances; they picked them up quickly as many of them had learned these dances previous and even performed them at community events, weddings, and so on. Although many were familiar with the dances on some level, since the senior community members who would typically lead these rare regional dances are either aging or have passed on, a refresher course was sorely needed.

On Sunday, August 14, the members of the dance team attended the St. Sarkis Church’s annual Blessing of the Grapes picnic where Hachig Kazarian and his group again performed the music to the dances learned on Saturday and many other folk melodies, with the participation of the dance leaders, class attendees, and community members of all stripes.



From left, Tom Bozigian, Sheree King, and Robert Haroutiunian perform to the music of the Hachig Kazarian Ensemble

Picturing the Ottoman Armenian World: Photography in Erzerum, Harput, Van and Beyond

PHOTOGRAPHY, from page 13

Contributing to growing interest in Ottoman and Middle Eastern photographic history, the book also offers a valuable perspective on the history of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

“Like many works with an Armenian focus, this is a book written in response to absence. Armenians are widely acknowledged as being central to photography in the Ottoman Empire, and yet the stories of Armenian photographers, their lives and their images, remain largely unwritten,” Dr. Low said. “However, rather than produce a history of photography in the conventional art historical mode, my aim has been to write what might be termed a photographic history, a history that uses the lives of photographers and, moreover, their subjects and images as a means of entering and exploring a wider history of Armenians in the Ottoman East,” he continued. “While written in response to absence, the book endeavors to avoid the prevalent notion of photographs as the vestiges of a lost world. It approaches them instead as the creations of a vibrant world and the products of lives being lived. Its central preoccupation is how we might write productively about photographs and what sort of histories might be produced when we closely study, scrutinize and converse with them.”

Reviews of the book:

“Picturing the Ottoman Armenian World powerfully fills the most glaring lacunae in



David Low

photography studies of the Middle East: a critical and rigorous deep dive into the central role of the Armenians in the history of Armenians in the history of Ottoman photography. Low gifts us a scrupulous and erudite social and art history of Armenian photography that promises not only to change how we think of Ottoman visual culture but also shakes how we understand the history of photography writ large.” Stephen Sheehi, Wellesley College, USA

“Low provides a groundbreaking study of photography from a neglected region of the Ottoman Empire. He tells the compelling

story of multi-generational Armenian families of photographers, whose work was long believed lost in the 1915 genocide. An important contribution to both the history of photography and the social history of Ottoman Armenians.” Armen T. Marsoobian, Southern Connecticut State University, USA

Professor Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska, Lincoln), series editor of the *Armenians in the Modern and Early Modern World* noted: “We are extremely happy to publish David Low’s book. It is well known that Armenians have played a dominant role in introducing photography to the Middle East in the 19th and the 20th centuries. Low’s book is a sophisticated analysis that incorporates the history of Armenian photography in central cities of historic Armenian with the major political and socio-economic transformations that took place in the Ottoman Empire. The book will have a lasting impact on the ways in which scholars will view Armenian contribution to photography.”

Dr. David Low is a photographic historian focusing on the Ottoman Armenian world and the place of photography in Armenian lives, as well the wider intersections of photography, migration and exile. He was awarded his PhD by the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.

Forthcoming Books in the Series:

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For more information about the series visit: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/armenians-in-the-modern-and-early-modern-world/> For more information about the series and submission please contact Bedross Der Matossian @ bdermatossian2@unl.edu.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Sonia Uvezian's Coffee Frozen Yogurt

"A name can be an immediately recognizable sign of excellence...And so it can be with cookbooks. Such [is] the one I have in hand, titled *The Book of Yogurt*, and bearing an author's name that's a certification of merit – Sonia Uvezian," Stan Reed, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

The internationally acclaimed *The Book of Yogurt* features over 300 flavor-packed recipes ranging from hearty peasant fare to elegant creations. Sonia Uvezian, an Armenian born and raised in Lebanon, expands yogurt beyond the narrow limitations of desserts and snack food and incorporates it into an impressive array of international dishes, such as South American Pumpkin Soup, Balkan Moussaka, Russian Beef Stroganov, and Caribbean Papaya Frappé. Also included is a section on making yogurt, along with outstanding recipes for frozen yogurt.

A genuine contribution to culinary literature, this indispensable guide will take its readers on a voyage of discovery that will inspire yogurt lovers to new gastronomic heights as well as create a whole new following for this guardian of good health.

A leading authority on Middle Eastern and Caucasian cooking, the winner of a James Beard Award, and a recipient of the R. T. French Tastemaker Award, Uvezian has contributed articles and recipes to various publications, including *Gourmet*, *Bon Appétit*, and *Vogue*. She and her husband divide their time between the United States and Europe. She is the author of six highly acclaimed cookbooks, including *Recipes and Remembrances from an Eastern Mediterranean Kitchen*, *Cooking from the Caucasus*, and *The Cuisine of Armenia* (published in 1974).

"The Cuisine of Armenia, an acknowledged classic, is the first book in any language to offer a comprehensive view of Armenian cookery. A brilliant exploration of one of the world's most exciting culinary traditions, this landmark volume contains hundreds of splendid recipes, many of them for dishes previously unknown in the West. You will find all the classics in *The Cuisine of Armenia*: dolma, sarma, keuftch, shish kebab, boereg, lahmajoon, lavash, pideh, choereg, gatah, baklava, bourma, tel kadayif, kurabia, and many more."

Several of her books have been selections of Book-of-the-Month Club and published internationally. She has contributed articles and recipes to *Gourmet*, *Bon Appétit*, *Vogue*, and other publications.

From *The Snack and Drink Encyclopedia*:

"Yogurt was introduced to the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century, influenced by Élie Metchnikoff's *The Prolongation of Life; Optimistic Studies* (1908); it was available in tablet form for those with digestive intolerance and for home culturing. It was popularized by John Harvey Kellogg at the Bat-

tle Creek Sanitarium, where it was used both orally and in enemas, and later by Armenian immigrants Sarkis and Rose Colombosian, who started Colombo and Sons Creamery in Andover, Mass. in 1929. Colombo Yogurt was originally delivered around New England in a horse-drawn wagon inscribed with the Armenian word 'madzoon' which was later changed to 'yogurt.' Yogurt's popularity in the United States was enhanced in the 1950s and 1960s, when it was presented as a health food by scientists like Hungarian-born bacteriologist Stephen A. Gaymont. Plain yogurt still proved too sour for the American palate and in 1966 Colombo Yogurt sweetened the yogurt and added fruit preserves, creating 'fruit on the bottom' style yogurt. This was successful and company sales soon exceeded \$1 million per year. By the late 20th century, yogurt had become a common American food item and Colombo Yogurt was sold in 1993 to General Mills, which discontinued the brand in 2010."*

Frozen yogurt, the flavorful treat that was practically unheard of only a few years ago is now a staple in many American kitchens. Here is Uvezian's classic recipe for Coffee Frozen Yogurt:

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups raw sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup cold, very strong black coffee
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups plain, whole milk yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons Grand Marnier or coffee-flavored liqueur, such as Kahlua

PREPARATION:

In an enameled or stainless steel saucepan, cook the milk over low heat, but don't allow it to boil. Then remove the pan from the burner and add the sugar, stirring until it dissolves. Now, gradually pour the milk mixture over the beaten eggs, stirring constantly until the ingredients are well blended.

Next, transfer the mixture to the top of a double boiler and cook it, stirring all the while, until it's thick and smooth. Cool the concoction to room temperature, then add the remaining ingredients and mix them thoroughly. Chill the dessert-to-be for 2 hours, and then churn it in a two-quart freezer.

Makes 1 1/2 quarts.

For this recipe and more frozen yogurt recipes, see:

<https://www.myfermentation.com/dairy-and-eggs/frozen-yogurt-recipes-zmpz-84jazbut/>

Author Sonia Uvezian

From Nancy Newman at the *Chicago Sun-Times*:

"Sonia Uvezian has never disappointed me with any of her cookbooks. [She] is an expert on yogurt. The recipes are splendid, from the subtle flavors of Middle Eastern dishes to the spiciness of Indian and Caribbean cooking to the suaveness of French and other European foods....In the appetizers there are so many delicious dishes it would be hard to begin to list them, ranging from dips to yogurt cheese (there is a recipe to make this simple, yet utterly divine, cream cheese which I am using more and more instead of commercial cream cheeses). There are a dozen fragrant soups, 24 wonderful salads, and 11 interesting egg dishes. There are recipes for fish, poultry, meat, pasta, and vegetables. There are sauces, from salad dressings to a yogurt creme Chantilly (a light, refreshing alternative to sweetened whipped cream with about half the calories) and a chocolate yogurt sauce that makes a marvelous frosting. There is a section on bread. She also has recipes for waffles, pancakes and fritters. However, it was the dessert section that started me cooking up a storm. Such wonderful cakes - chocolate, lemon, jam, orange with coconut topping, fruit and banana. A souffled cheesecake with strawberries, a molded yogurt cream, a marvelous coffee mousse, and all kinds of yummy frozen yogurts. I tried the chocolate cake with chocolate yogurt sauce and got raves. It was one of the best chocolate cakes I've ever made. If you love yogurt, this is a book for you. If you hate yogurt, this book will convert you, if anything can."

Note: This Coffee Frozen Yogurt recipe is reprinted from *The Book of Yogurt* by Sonia Uvezian (published by 101 Productions). To purchase, go to:

To purchase Sonia Uvezian's books, go to:

https://www.amazon.com/Sonia-Uvezian/e/B001H9MFGA/ref=dp_byline_cont_pop_book_1

References:

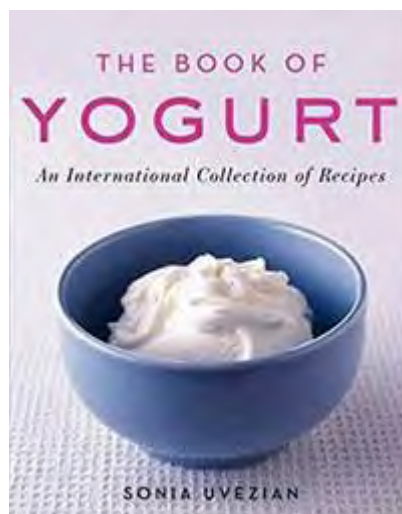
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ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 25-DECEMBER 15 — 100th Anniversary at Fresno’s Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® - Guided Tours Available. Valley Lahvosh Baking Company® is listed on Fresno’s Local Register of Historic Resources and celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2022. In honor of this milestone, guided tours of the factory will be given and are scheduled for: August 25, September 22, October 20, November 17 and December 15. Call today to reserve your place: (559) 485-2700 ext. 200. Sign up for a guided tour of this historic bakery and see where Valley Lahvosh® and the Original Peda Bread are made. <https://m.facebook.com/valleylahvoshbakingco/> <https://www.instagram.com/valleylahvosh/?hl=en>

SEPTEMBER 17 — The Orange County Trex Fraternity – Presents KEF TIME So Cal! Bagramian Hall• 900 W. Lincoln Ave, Montebello (within the church grounds of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Cathedral). 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Semi Formal or Business Casual attire. Delicious Mezza Style / Armenian Specialties. Beautiful large outside lounge. Cigars by Dr. Garo. Music by Kef Time Legacy Band featuring: Andrew Hagopian, Phillip Hagopian, George Nigosian, Jim Karagozian, and Mal Barsamian. Ticket Prices: \$85 Adults, College-age students and under \$65.00. Table Sponsor. 10 Tickets for \$800.00. Tickets at www.ticketleap.com. Donations are tax deductible. The Orange County Chapter Charitable Trust is a 501 C3 entity: E.I.N. 56-668-3467. A portion of our proceeds from this event will go to the Armenian EyeCare Project and to the Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc. Contacts: Ralph Dergazarian 714.681.3013 • Brian Melkesian 626.827.8434 • Chuck Simonian 559.799.3949 • Ari Gulugian 949.701.8006. <https://octriplex.org/kef-time/> Local hotel rooms at the Doubletree by Hilton.

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 28 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic, 12 – 5 p.m., 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill. Live music with the fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh & Chicken Kebab, Kheyma, Pastries and Beverages, including Beer and Wine. Cash raffles. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. For more info please visit www.hypointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227.

SEPTEMBER 11 — Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley Annual Picnic, 158 Main St. North Andover. 12 Noon to 5pm Call

Sharké @ 978-808-0598 or Visit www.saintgregory.org SEPTEMBER 18 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. LET’S CELEBRATE THE PARK’S 10th Anniversary Sunday Afternoon at the Park! at 3pm. Featuring the Leon Janikian Ensemble.

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

NEW JERSEY

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.

RHODE ISLAND

AUGUST 5 to SEPTEMBER 9 — The Cultural committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence continues programming the “Armenian Cultural Hour” programs, Fridays at 7:30 p.m. The program can be livestreamed on the church’s Facebook page by everyone at <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>

August 19 - Ruben Matevosyan, Concert in Yerevan

September 9 – Dance Ensemble of Vanush Khanamiryan Academy

September 23 — Armenian Cultural Hour - Friday, 7:30 pm, “Daniel Yerazhisht”

PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 21 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian on her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Wednesday 7- 9 p.m., Armenian Martyrs’ Congregational Church, 100 N. Edmonds Avenue, Havertown. (610) 446-3330 office@amccpa.org. There are no other books in literature on this aspect of the Armenian Genocide. The book contains rare documents and pictures which will be shown during the presentation. Book signing during the reception. All proceeds will be donated to the AMCC.

Kef Time
LA Set for
Sept. 9

GLENDALE — “Kef Time LA,” an evening of “Armenian folk music and line dancing, will take place on September 9, starting at 7 p.m., hosted at Miaseen Studios, 1651 S Central Avenue. Timeless folk favorites such as the *Tamzara*, *Pompouri*, *Haleh*, *Sepo Bar* and various other favorites will be performed live by a master cast of musicians featuring oud, violin, bass and dumbeg percussion. Dancers and enthusiasts can enjoy these cherished folk songs and dance the night away in a welcoming space for what will surely be a magical night.

“We have been looking to host this event for quite some time,” stated oud player Antranig Kzirian. “With the last couple years of difficulties and what everyone experienced, we are quite excited to bring the community together for a night of fraternalism, dancing and appreciation of our beloved folk music tradition,” he added.

Kzirian will perform on the oud and vocals. A co-founder of the acclaimed kef music group the Aravod Ensemble, Kzirian is no stranger to the kef tradition and has

performed on the oud and guitar for over 25 years at countless community social events for various organizations, festivals, private functions and folk and classical concerts, in addition to studying the Armenian American oud tradition academically at Columbia University. As the symbolic plucked fretless string instrument of Armenian folk music, the oud holds a special place in the Armenian culture. Given this role of the oud, Kzirian has studied or performed with oud masters such as John Berberian, Ara Dinkjian, Richard Hagopian, the late John Bilezikjian and various other respected interpreters of this sacred craft, in addition to recently accompanying the famed Armenian vocalist star Onnik Dinkjian here in Los Angeles. Kzirian has also been an innovator on the oud, co-founding the art folk ensemble String Harmonies, and introducing the oud to rock with his band Viza.

Vik Momjian is a master of the 4, 5 and 6-string fretted and fretless electric basses, and is the leading bass player in his field. As a Lebanese born Armenian American that has backed up the top Persian, Armenian, Arabic, Assyrian, Greek and Kurdish artists, Momjian has encyclopedic knowledge of various cultures’ music. Recent projects include working with the living legend Enrico Macias, String Harmonies and various other projects. Momjian’s work has been featured in Bass Player Magazine, Bass Musician Magazine, and No Treble, and Momjian is endorsed by La Bella, MTD Bass, Moollon, Ibanez, Asterope, Gallien-Krueger, Bartolini, Forder, Peterson Tuners and Bergantino. Momjian

has studied with prominent instructors Jim Lacefield, Steve Bailey, and John Pena, and is without a doubt the first-call musician for



Antranig Kzirian, Yervand Kalajian



Vik Momjian, Aram Malkhassian

many top Middle Eastern and ethno-European artists.

Yervand Kalajian is a world class violinist known for his creative soloing and enchanting playing style. Kalajian performed

with the Los Angeles youth philharmonic from 1986 to 2009, reaching the prestigious positions of assistant concert master and concert master. Kalajian is a first call violinist in Southern California in a wide variety of styles, including Armenian folk, classical, pop in addition to film and television soundtrack work with famed composer John Debney for the movies Beirut and the Stoning of Soraya M. Kalajian also lended his mastery working with composer Aaron Zigman for “Sex and the City 2” and “The Company Men,” and also recorded his violin on Viza’s “Aria” record with the art folk ensemble String Harmonies. Kalajian has accompanied numerous Armenian and Middle Eastern singers and artists, including Harout Pamboukjian, Paul Baghdadian, Yeghia Sanosian, Harout Khachoyan, the Black Cats, Ibrahim Tatlisles and Muazzez Ersoy.

Aram Malkhassian rounds out the group on percussion. The 26-year-old Lebanese/Armenian drummer studied music and drums at Hamazkayin’s Parsegh Ganatchian Music School in Beirut, and has worked as a professional freelance touring and session drummer since 2014 with notable singers, performers and producers in the Middle East such as Melhem Zein, Ramy Ayach, Maya Diab, Carole Samaha, Adam, Jose Fernandez, Guy Manoukian, Sarina Cross and many others. Malkhassian also served as the main Drummer for “Heik men ghanni” Season 6-TV show on MTV Lebanon, and also plays the piano.

Tickets available now at <https://keftime-la.eventbrite.com/>

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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Armenia's Destiny Is Up for Grabs Without Its Input



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

The main topic of international politics is the development of the new world order, which is more intensely felt and fought in the Caucasus.

Recently, two major summits were held, the first in Tehran, with the participation of Presidents Ebrahim Raisi, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin, and the second in the resort city of Sochi, in Russia, with only Russia and Turkey. Syria, Armenia and

Ukraine were not among the participants, yet their destinies were on the table. The major powers did not deem their participation necessary. Most of the negotiations and decisions regarded the war in Ukraine and its fallout in the region, where Armenia is located.

During the Tehran summit, Armenia received Iran's strong support on the issue of the Zangezur Corridor, which threatens the former's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Indeed, the Supreme Spiritual leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ali Khamenei warned Putin and Erdogan against any change of borders between Armenia and Iran, as these "borders have a history of millennia."

In a recent phone call between President Nikol Pashinyan and Raisi, the latter referred to the warning of Mr. Khamenei about Iran's red lines.

During an interview with Armenpress, a scholar of Iranian studies, Emma Bigijanyan, stated, "This is how I understand the words of the Iranian president, that a change in borders, meaning the so-called 'corridor,' is a red line for them and that they will counter it at any cost. In the general picture, this means that Iran will not even rule out a military intervention."

Furthermore, Begijanyan argued that now it is Turkish President Erdogan who needs the so-called "corridor" the most.

Yes, indeed, that is the nature of politics in the region: Ankara negotiates on behalf of Azerbaijan, Russia negotiates on behalf of Armenia, and most of the time, they don't need the opinion of their partners, whose destinies are auctioned.

Thus far, Iran has come out most forcefully against the issue of the corridor, but it remains to be seen if indeed Tehran will use military force to support its position. In the case of Syria, Tehran had gone far enough to spell out its opposition to Ankara's efforts to wrench 30 additional kilometers from that country's lands and add it to its territory.

Tehran warned Mr. Erdogan that his new adventure in Syria, under the pretext of eliminating "threats by Kurdish forces," may encounter Iranian forces. After receiving a warning from Washington and Moscow, in addition to Tehran, Mr. Erdogan has put his plans on hold, although Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu reiterated that "Turkey does not need anyone's permission to act."

There is more than one reason that Iran was excluded from the Sochi summit. In the first place, the positions of Moscow and Ankara are dovetailing on the issue of the Zangezur Corridor, contrary to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's firm statements that there should not be any "equivocation" that Armenia will maintain its sovereignty over the eventual corridor. The second reason is that once relieved of the yoke of Western sanctions, Iran will become a serious competitor to Russia on the world energy market.

Following Iran's firm stand on the issue of the corridor, Moscow has concocted a false-flag operation, saying terrorist bands had been infiltrating Armenia from Iran and thus Russia

has posted five military stations in Syunik, near Armenia's border with Iran. Further expanding its military bases in Syunik province, Russia has placed checkpoints for Armenian citizens moving from one town to another in their own country. And it is anyone's guess if Russia has coordinated those moves with Armenian authorities in Yerevan.

Following Russia's action, Tehran opened a consulate in Kapan, in the south, to better monitor the situation.

These actions would have been more reassuring had Russia carried out its peacekeeping mission in Karabakh with the same vigor it does in Syunik. Indeed, recent weeks have witnessed border clashes between Azerbaijani and Karabakh forces, leaving four dead and more than 20 wounded. When the Armenian side complained about the inaction of the Russian peacekeeping force, the latter revealed that they have no mandate to restrain Azerbaijan through military force. They can use force only in self-defense.

Although the aggression came from the Azerbaijani side, Mr. Cavusoglu has warned Armenians to stop the provocations! The besieged Armenian forces have certainly no motivation to create a provocation, given the fact that they are vastly outnumbered. Predictably and infuriatingly, Washington and the European Union have called on both parties to use restraint.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov has called



for the removal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory. Helpfully, Armen Grigoryan, the chief of Armenia's Security Council, has since announced that Armenian units have left Karabakh. The only forces remaining are members of the Karabakh defense forces, which Azerbaijan refuses to recognize. The mere fact of Azerbaijani provocations and murderous raids justify the retention of Karabakh defense forces to prevent a pogrom, similar to the ones carried out by the Azerbaijani army in Baku and Sumgait in 1990.

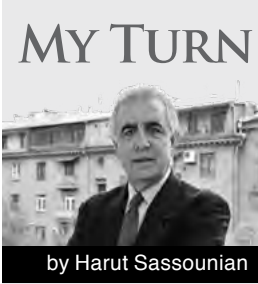
Azerbaijan refuses to abide by the November 9, 2020 cease-fire declaration which asks for the release of Armenian prisoners of war (POWs) but it blames the Armenian side for delinquency. On the other hand, Baku has already built an alternative route to Karabakh, to gain control over the Armenians reaching Karabakh, though that new road should have been planned within three years of the signing of the declaration and built only after the approval of all three signatories. The use of that corridor leaves gas and power lines outside the control of the peacekeepers and thus the lives of the Karabakh people can be easily manipulated by the Azerbaijani overlords. This is not an abstract danger; Azerbaijan indeed cut off gas supplies to Karabakh twice in March, after particularly bad snowstorms.

While the military provocations against Armenia and Karabakh continue by the leadership in Baku, the latter's rhetoric is no less threatening. Karabakh's Foreign Minister David Babayan, responding to President Aliyev's recent comments, said, "Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said in his

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COMMENTARY



Armenia’s Leaders Continue Capitulating to Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan’s order to evacuate around 150 families from three Armenian villages in the Lachin Corridor, which connects Armenia to Artsakh, has alarmed Armenians worldwide.

As a result of Azerbaijan’s ultimatum, Armenians in the villages of Berdzor, Aghavno and Sus, are obliged to move elsewhere in Artsakh or Armenia. After losing a devastating war in 2020, Armenia and Artsakh, both suffering from poor leadership, are demanding that the villagers comply with Azerbaijan’s demand to leave their homes and churches by the deadline of August 25.

The source of the problem is the joint “statement” of November 10, 2020 signed at the end of the war by the Prime Minister of Armenia, President of Azerbaijan, and President of Russia. Even though the first line of that “statement” declared “a complete ceasefire,” this is the most unusual kind of ceasefire in the history of all wars. Instead of stopping where the opposing armies had reached, the Armenian side agreed to turn over to Azerbaijan large areas of land not conquered by Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Armenia, without any authority, signed a document relinquishing lands, including most of Artsakh and its surrounding territories, over which he had no legal authority. Therefore, the Nov. 10, 2020 trilateral agreement should be considered null and void.

Paragraph 6 of that agreement stated that “The Lachin corridor (5 km. wide), which will provide for communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia and at the same time will not affect the city of Shushi, shall remain under the control of peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation. The Parties have agreed that a plan for the construction of a new route along the Lachin corridor shall be determined within the next three years, providing communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, with the subsequent redeployment of Russian peacekeeping troops to protect the route. The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee traffic safety for citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions along the Lachin Corridor.”

This paragraph, like many others, has created problems due to its unclear wording. Almost two years after signing this agreement, during which the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan had several face to face meetings, the Armenian government did not bother to clarify the language of Paragraph 6. Armenian officials, after approving Azerbaijan’s plans, kept repeating that the alternate route to bypass the Lachin Corridor was to be built only after three years and that Azerbaijan hastily built its segment of the alternate route. In fact, the 2020 agreement stated that the alternate road will be built within, not after, three

years. Armenia is planning to complete its section of the alternate road to Lachin after 250 days from this month.

Armenian officials falsely reassured the families of the three Armenian villages within the Lachin Corridor that they have plenty of time to resolve their problems, assuring them that they may remain in their homes. When Azerbaijan insisted on the immediate removal of these villagers, the Armenian families were given less than three weeks to move without having anywhere to go.

To make matters worse, Artsakh’s Minister of Territorial Management and Infrastructure, Hayk Khanumyan, warned the residents of the three Armenian villages that should they burn their houses before leaving, they will not receive the promised 10 million dram (\$24,000) compensation, which is insufficient to purchase a new house. The Minister was referring to the practice of many Artsakh Armenians who burned their homes before leaving their houses after the 2020 war. Burning one’s home is a heartbreaking decision, but it is equally upsetting to leave your own house to your sworn enemy. I watched this week the disturbing video of a father burning his family home before leaving. What did the Minister expect these villagers to do? To clean their houses, leave a cooked meal on the dining table with a bottle of champagne, and a welcome sign on the door for their Azeri enemies?

In addition to turning over to Azerbaijan large parts of territories in and around Artsakh which Azerbaijan had not occupied at the time of the ceasefire, Azerbaijan conquered additional lands in both Artsakh and inside Armenia’s borders since the end of the 2020 war. Furthermore, Azerbaijan, contrary to the 2020 agreement, is still holding Armenian prisoners of war, whereas Armenia foolishly turned over all the Azeri prisoners of war shortly after the ceasefire. Armenian authorities not only do not make any efforts for the return of the Armenian prisoners and the liberation of Armenia’s occupied territories, they do not even talk or complain about them. Before complying with any of Pres. Ilham Aliyev’s orders, Armenia should first demand that Azerbaijan keep its own obligations under the 2020 agreement. It is understandable that after losing the war Armenia is in a weakened and subservient position. However, mismanaging the situation due to Armenian leaders’ incompetence and capitulating to the enemy’s every whim and desire is unacceptable. Such spineless behavior encourages Azerbaijan to demand and obtain more concessions.

With the shutting down of the Lachin corridor which connects Armenia to Artsakh, the remaining Armenians of Artsakh will be isolated, surrounded by Azerbaijan. They will lose their access to Armenia, will be cut off from electricity, heat and internet, and will be sooner or later taken over by Azerbaijan. Sadly, Artsakh and Armenia, after losing the 2020 war, are on a downward spiral. Competent new leaders may not be capable of reversing Armenia’s calamitous situation, but at least they won’t let it get any worse.

Armenia’s Destiny Is Up for Grabs Without Its Input

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interview in Azerbaijan the Armenians living in Karabakh would have neither status nor independence, nor any special privileges. First of all I want to thank Mr. Aliyev for his sincerity. Indeed, neither Azerbaijan or its leadership have ever misled or deceived anyone on their plans for Artsakh. Secondly, indeed, Karabakh will not have anything as part of Azerbaijan because there will be no Karabakh at all. Moreover, for Artsakh itself, any status within Azerbaijan is unacceptable. How could Jews have any kind of administrative territorial status within Nazi Germany?”

Mr. Aliyev’s statement not only threatens Armenians in Karabakh, but it defies the international community. Indeed, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group still maintains that the Karabakh status has not yet determined through peaceful negotiations — the only way to arrive at a solution. Russia, as a co-chair of the Minsk Group, refuses to cooperate with the other co-chairs, France and the US, thereby playing into Azerbaijani (and thereby Turkish) hands.

Time is running out for Turkey and Azerbaijan. Both want to seal historic deals with Armenia. Turkey wants to legitimize the Treaty of Kars of 1921, which is on shaky legal grounds, while Azerbaijan is after a slice of Armenian territory to link with Nakhichevan and compromise Armenia’s sovereignty in perpetuity.

Armenia is going through hard times. Its enemies are many and friends are rare while lip service is in abundance.

Armenia-Turkish Relations Drifting In the Dark

By Karolina Pawłowska
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

As we witness the controversy regarding a potential step towards the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, we see Armenians divided over contrasting visions of which strategy is in Armenia’s best interest. As they excite extreme emotions — from hopefulness to fear and anger, the real status of things seems to be obscured by rather dogmatic, binary narratives.

By following a “no preconditions” policy, the Armenian government proposes the separation of the symbolic from the practical, focusing on economy and politics and putting aside whatever appears as “old harms and recriminations.”

I have noticed that many individuals and institutions engaged in the Armenia-Turkey reconciliation process respond to recent developments with enthusiasm, assuming that normalization is the beginning of the reconciliation process. While technically justifiable, this assumption is based more on hopes and wishes than a realistic assessment. What we witness today, is, in fact, an attempt at superficial normalization, with the hope for further reconciliation in an undefined future. The expectation that both forgiveness and repentance will occur naturally, simply by people-to-people contact, is highly idealistic and extremely unrealistic.

What is not mentioned is that such reconciliation cannot happen without a complete change of narrative and the character of the Turkish government, which cannot occur without some sort of subsequent complete conceptual revolution and the reinvention of modern Turkey. Even the most profound people-to-people contact will not bring a mass change in consciousness without proper, long-term policy measures taken at the governmental level. There will be no reconciliation without the reestablishment of an elementary sense of justice.

On the other hand, the genocide issue is being brought up frequently by those who oppose the governmental plan. By following the “no-preconditions” agenda, the Armenian government indirectly promotes the idea that genocide can be considered as secondary, while to many Armenians it is central to the problem. This is not because of its scale and horror, and not even due to the obligation to the victims and survivors. It is critical simply because it embodies the attitude of the Turkish state towards Armenia, which is continuously hostile.

Considering Armenian-Turkish relations strictly in the limited framework of the aftermath of the 1915 events is convenient to Western politicians, as it takes away the pressure to confront multiple problems regarding contemporary Turkish foreign policy. The indirect acceptance of the Turkish policy of genocide denial by the Armenian government, is painful mainly because it occurs in the context of extreme imbalance between the capacities of Turkey and Armenia to shape the narrative and subsequently, to set the conditions for normalization. The “no-preconditions” policy is problematic not because it takes place, but because it is obviously not a choice, but simply the only way to reach the discussed normalization.

As Armenia attempts to show good will, Turkey continues implementing its agenda. However, a good start for showing good intentions would be to stop persecuting Armenian minority in Turkey (a still pending issue reported on recently by journalist Aris Nalci) and bullying foreign states to stay silent on the genocide issue.

As long as foreign diplomats will be forced to pretend they did not visit Tsitsernakaberd, any normalization will only remain a façade covering extremely unbalanced and toxic relations. The “no-preconditions” policy lures Armenian citizens with the promise of security. We seem to follow the logic that showing compliance or giving Turkey something she needs or wants (a permeable sales market, a foreign policy success, a potential improvement in connectivity with the rest of Turkish world) may assure peace and stability in the region.

Politically, we seem to follow the approach that any relations are always better than none and economically, putting it simply, that more trade is always better than less trade. These statements are technically true in the most simplified way, but the issue is not simple. It is in fact complicated beyond measure.

Armenia-Turkish Relations Drifting in the Dark

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What we are missing from the bigger picture is that the reluctance of many Armenians to support this agenda stems not from the idea itself, but rather from the justifiable doubts regarding the Armenian government’s ability to maneuver through an extremely unequal and imbalanced set of circumstances. Whoever doubts this capacity is quickly labelled as nationalist and accused of an anti-reconciliation stand, two labels which do not go well in the contemporary world with its neo-liberal narrative constituting the mainstream.

A “no preconditions” policy may seem visionary to some, but at the same time it raises questions regarding how far the Armenian political elite is willing to go and what it is ready to sacrifice to make it all happen. A dogmatic approach on both sides takes away the need to engage in a constructive debate on how to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations in a way that

will secure Armenian economic and political interest. The available analysis on the subject is predominantly shallow and focus entirely on the estimated annual trade volume raising from the potential open exchange, which is an insufficient factor for foreseeing the entire range of potential consequences. In fact, the total range of economic benefits for Turkey seems to outweigh the ones from Armenia. Without a competent government showing enough professionalism to look deeply into every detail of this exchange, this step will cause an economic downside for many Armenians equal to its potential benefits.

The frequent answer that these concerns are irrelevant, as Armenia will soon become an innovation and technology hub, is not sufficient, and in fact misleading. As recently pointed out by Ani Avetisyan, despite rapid growth, the IT sector still constitutes only 4 percent of Armenian GDP, and we must not forget that IT companies

have a rather limited potential in terms of creating jobs. Additionally, the Russian IT businesses recently transferred to Armenia enjoy tax-free privileges. What is more important, according to Veronika Movchan of the German Economic Team, is that the estimated value of imports from Turkey will be at least 3.5 times higher than exports. I see no valid governmental strategy to protect most vulnerable businesses and to support Armenian industry and agriculture in general, while one in five Armenians relies on farming as a source of income.

In a way, it is all about the genocide, but not in the way it seems. It is not because it did happen and is being continuously denied. In fact, this is not about the past, but strictly about the present and the future. The genocide and its denial are the symbol of many problems we face – the weakness and insignificance of Armenia in global geopolitics, the hypocrisy and indolence of Western politics, and the politization and

marketization of the international press (I always notice that Al Jazeera, for example, tends not to use the term genocide). It reflects the attempts to reach a global political balance by possibly lowering Russia’s influence in Caucasus, at the cost of regional imbalance. It exposes the lack of integrity of those from whom we expect it the most, such as Ursula von der Leyen or Abdulla Shahid.

The past two weeks were telling. The president of the European Commission was very enthusiastic about the deepened cooperation with Azerbaijan, the president of the United Nations General Assembly deleted his tweet on his visit to the Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan, and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken urged both sides to show restraint after the recent violation of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan. These actions expose the inability of the Western world to deal with Turkey and Azerbaijan and the dearth of any significant attempts to do so. While normalization is being discussed, a deep concern has been created about the possibility of a subsequent “Palestinization” of the Armenian case internationally and the deepening of its entanglement in a structural and symbolic set of unequal circumstances.



AGBU

92nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Central Board of Directors of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (the “Union”) hereby gives notice to all the members of the Union qualified to attend, that the **92nd General Assembly** will be held on **Saturday, October 8, 2022**, at 11:30 AM at the Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Manuscript Library (Matenadaran) at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Vagharshapat, Armenia.

This is the only notice which will be given for the meeting of the 92nd General Assembly. We therefore request the qualified members of the Union to attend the Assembly in person or to submit, on or before September 7, 2022, their respective proxies duly executed and certified according to the provisions of the By-Laws, to the Secretary of the Central Board of Directors by emailing it to the official email address of the AGBU Central Board at agbucb@agbu.org

or mailing it to the following address:

Armenian General Benevolent Union
Central Board of Directors
55 East 59th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10022, U.S.A.

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

1. Consideration and approval of the Report on the Activities of the Union for the years 2020 and 2021.

2. Consideration and approval of the Union's Financial Reports for the years 2020 and 2021.

3. Election of Directors.

4. Election of a member of the Auditing Committee.

5. Consideration and action upon any matters incidental to the foregoing and any matters which may properly come before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

6. Consideration of any recommendation and resolution of the General Assembly.

ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION

CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarkis Jebejian

Secretary

Berge Setrakian

President

August 2, 2022

Learn about related events and accommodations at agbu.org/general-assembly

AGBU and EU to Boost Armenia’s Economy With Katapult

YEREVAN — AGBU has joined forces with the European Union to help reimagine Armenia’s creative economy and transform it into a key strategic sector for advancing national and economic development.

In July, AGBU organized a public event in Yerevan to introduce the Katapult Creative Accelerator Program — a three-year EU-funded initiative to be co-implemented by AGBU Armenia and Creative Armenia. Its core activities are designed to harness the collective intelligence of the creative and cultural communities of the country which include members of the performing arts, sound recording, dance, theater, opera, ballet, live music, cinema, and filmmaking disciplines. Visual arts encompasses museums, photography, fine arts, graphic design, and other two-and-three dimensional art forms. Also included is publishing — digital and traditional—as well as video game developing, retailing, advertising, architecture, and all media delivery platforms: radio broadcasting; TV programing/production; and social media.

Highlighting the importance of the Cultural and Creative industries, Frank Hess, the head of cooperation, EU Delegation to Armenia, stressed Armenia’s potential economic gains from the sector, citing the impressive turnovers the EU realizes from its investments. “In the EU, the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) generate around €09 billion per year, representing 5.3 percent of the EU’s total GDP and employs 12 million full-time jobs, which constitutes 7.5% of the EU’s employment and the third largest employer sector in the EU.”

By 2025, Katapult aims to incubate 135 creative businesses and projects and support ten cultural institutions across the country. Through Katapult Pavilion, Armenian designers, artists and musicians will exhibit their products to international markets at world renowned expos.

More information on Katapult can be obtained at agbu.org. Details about the Artbox incubator for culture can be found at [CreativeArmenia](https://CreativeArmenia.org), a global arts foundation.