

France Demands That Azerbaijani Forces Retreat as Pashinyan, Macron Meet in Paris

PARIS (Public Radio of Armenia) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and French President Emmanuel Macron met on September 26 at the Élysée Palace. After the welcoming ceremony, before starting the meeting, the leaders of the two countries made statements for media representatives.

In his comments, Macron said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to receive today the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Nikol Pashinyan. In recent days, we have talked many times on the phone, because Armenia is



President Macron and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Paris on September 26, 2022

again suffering from the armed clashes of September 13 and 14, and the situation is really critical. Large-scale military operations took place on the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan, causing many casualties. The territory of Armenia was targeted, civil infrastructures were destroyed. In the face of this unacceptable situation, France has assumed its commitments.

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Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in New York

Pashinyan Speaks at UN

NEW YORK — As part of his working visit to New York, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered a speech at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly at the UN headquarters on September 22. In the speech, he laid out the attacks of this month by Azerbaijan on Armenia, it’s land grab there and expressed concerns that that nation was intensifying plans for further, more devastating attacks.

Below is the full speech, shortened slightly due to space considerations:

It is an honor to return to the General Assembly, though I wish I was here with a more positive message, given all the challenges and tribulations the world has been through in the past few years. But my statement will focus on the latest Azerbaijani unprovoked aggression against the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and its overall impact on the stability in the South Caucasus.

On September 13, Azerbaijan launched an unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Armenia. Using heavy artillery, Multiple Rocket Launchers and combat UAVs, the Azerbaijani armed forces shelled 36 residential areas and communities, including towns of Goris, Jermuk, Vardenis, Kapan, Geghamasar deep within the sovereign territory of Armenia. This was not a border clash. It was a direct, undeniable attack against the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Armenia, which was condemned and addressed during the latest UN Security Council meetings and beyond.

The Azerbaijani attack deliberately targeted civilian population and vital civilian infrastructures: Jermuk is one of the main health tourism and resort places of Armenia and now as a result of Azerbaijani aggression all the hotels, see UN, page 2



Menendez, in Letter to Blinken, Urges Stop to Azerbaijan Aid

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) welcomed a letter by Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to Secretary Antony Blinken, urging the Administration to cut U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan as a result of its invasion into sovereign Armenia last week.

Menendez stated that the “unpro-



voked and illegal attacks,” which killed over 100 Armenians, highlight the “brutality of the Aliyev regime” and urged that all security assistance to Azerbaijan be halted.

“This heinous assault on Armenian territory is only the latest example in a pattern of Azerbaijani brutality,” continued Senator Menendez, citing the 2020 War on Artsakh launched by Azerbaijan, with the full and open support of Turkey, against the Armenian people of Artsakh, see MENENDEZ, page 20



Rep. Speier Introduces Azerbaijan War Crimes Resolution

WASHINGTON — Just a week after her participation in a historic Congressional delegation visit to Armenia led by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congressional Armenian Caucus co-chair Jackie Speier (D-CA) has introduced legislation condemning Azerbaijan’s war crimes against Armenia and Artsakh, calling on the US to explore sanctions and pe-



tion international tribunals to carry out appropriate investigations, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

Speier shared her intention to introduce the legislation during Washington, DC meetings last week with Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan and Deputy Minister of Culture, Education, Sports and Science Lernik Hovanesian, following the ANCA’s Federal Policy Seminar. In addition to pursuing see SPEIER, page 20

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ARMENIA

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Missing Soldiers' Parents Protest In Yerevan

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Parents of Armenian soldiers missing after recent border clashes with Azerbaijani forces rallied outside the Defense Ministry in Yerevan on September 26 to demand information about their whereabouts.

The Armenian military has said that at least 207 of its soldiers were killed or went missing during two days of heavy fighting on Armenia's border with Azerbaijan which broke out late on September 12. It has still not identified them, raising more questions about the official figure, certified by the country's government.

Nor have the authorities given the precise number of soldiers taken prisoner during the hostilities. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke last week of "at least two dozen" such prisoners of war.

The several dozen parents of Armenian army conscripts demonstrating outside the Defense Ministry compound complained about a lack of information about the fate of their sons officially or unofficially listed as missing in action. They were received by a senior military official but came away from the meeting dissatisfied.

Armenian Banks Block Russian Cards After New US Sanctions

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Some of Armenia's commercial banks have stopped processing payments via Russia's Mir cards following additional US sanctions imposed on Russia earlier this month.

The Mir cards issued by the Russian central bank's National Card Payment System (NSPK) became an alternative for Russian travelers in March after Visa and MasterCard shut off their Russian networks over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The US Treasury Department announced sanctions against NSPK Chief Executive Vladimir Komlev on September 15. The Financial Times reported that Washington is pressuring Turkey as well as the countries of the South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf to block the Russian payment system on their territory.

Two Turkish banks suspended the use of Mir a few days later. Uzbekistan's national UZCARD system followed suit on Friday.

It emerged that at least several of the two dozen banks operating in Armenia have also stopped using the Russian cards. None of them agreed to comment on their decision.

The development will first and foremost affect Russian tourists visiting Armenia as well as many of the thousands of Russians who have relocated to the country since the start of the war in Ukraine on February 24.

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) insisted, meanwhile, that it has not issued any orders or guidance to local banks regarding Mir.

"Armenia's commercial banks manage their risks, including those related to sanctions, on their own," the CBA said in a statement to RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

Pashinyan Speaks at UN

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resort and health centers of Jermuk are closed. All the residents of this town are displaced. Overall number of those temporarily displaced from Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik regions of Armenia is more than 7600 persons, mostly women and elderly people, among them 1437 children and 99 persons with disabilities.

Around 192 houses, 3 hotels, 2 schools, 1 medical facility, 1 medical facility, partially or completely destroyed. 7 electrical infrastructures, 5 water infrastructures, 3 gas pipelines, 1 bridge were damaged. 2 ambulances, 4 private cars were shelled. The Kechut water reservoir was targeted and shelled. Journalists and ambulance vehicles were targeted and shelled as well. As a result of the aggression, the number of victims and missing persons at the moment exceeded 207, among them 3 civilians were killed and 2 civilians are missing. 293 servicemen and 8 civilians were wounded, at least 20 servicemen were captured. There are evidences of cases of torture, mutilation of captured or already dead servicemen, numerous instances of extra-judicial killings, and ill-treatment of Armenian prisoners of war, as well as humiliating treatment of the bodies. The dead bodies of Armenian female military personnel were mutilated and then "proudly" video-recorded with particular cruelty by the Azerbaijani servicemen. The videos featuring such gruesome war crimes and crimes against humanity are being shared and praised on Azerbaijani social media by individual users.

No doubt, committing such unspeakable atrocities is a direct result of decades long policy of implanting anti-Armenian hatred and animosity in the Azerbaijani society by the political leadership.

In the wake of this offensive, the official narrative and other sources of information suggest that Azerbaijan intends to occupy more territories of Armenia, which needs to be prevented. I want to stress that the risk of new aggression by Azerbaijan remains very high, especially taking into account that every day Azerbaijan violates the ceasefire, and the number of casualties and those injured could change any moment. Another factor for further escalation can be inappropriate reaction to this situation by the regional security organizations, which raised very hard questions among Armenian society.

Despite the above-mentioned facts Azerbaijan is trying to pose itself as a country seeking peace in our region, peace with Armenia. Hearing from aside what Azerbaijan is saying, you can even be impressed by its devotion to peace efforts. And for staging this impression Azerbaijan is using the subjects of Peace treaty with Armenia, border delimitation, and regional communication opening agenda.

Why don't we have tangible progress in these directions? The reason is very simple. Azerbaijan is using all those topics for territorial claims against Armenia. For example, one of the most important subjects of peace treaty is bilateral recognition of territorial integrity between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We have already declared that we are ready to do so, but Azerbaijan hasn't done it so far. On the contrary, Azerbaijan has been publicly voicing that the entire South and East of Armenia and even the capital city of Yerevan, is an Azerbaijani land. On the other hand, Azerbaijan is keeping under occupation tangible territories of Armenia, and as I said the risk of new aggression by Azerbaijan remains very high.

In this regard I'm posing an official and public question to the Azerbaijani president. Could you show the map of Armenia, that

you recognize or are ready to recognize as the Republic of Armenia? Only then it can come out that from the point of view of official Azerbaijan, only half of Armenia is the Republic of Armenia. If Azerbaijan would recognize territorial integrity of Armenia, not theoretically, but concretely, I mean the integrity of our internationally recognized territory of 29.800 square kilometers, it would mean that we can sign peace treaty by mutually recognizing each other's territorial integrity. Otherwise, we would have a phantom peace treaty and after that Azerbaijan will use border delimitation process for new territorial claims and occupation.

As you may know bilateral commission of border delimitation and border security was formed in May and two meetings of the commission have taken place. Before the formation of the commission, last year Azerbaijan occupied more than 40 square kilometer territories of Armenia. And then, one of the excuses of Azerbaijan about the reasons they have done this - was that Armenia, according to them, refuses to form border delimitation commission. Of course we didn't refuse to do that but only insisted that simultaneously a mechanism of border security should be established.

In the end, according to our international partners' request, who argued that the border commission work itself will be a reliable factor for border security, we agreed to start the work. And now that border delimitation and security commission has been formed and is working, Azerbaijan initiated a new phase of aggression. And some of those international partners are silent. But what is now the explanation for aggression of Azerbaijan. You know, if someone has excess of aggressiveness the reason always will be there. As it is said in a movie it is always possible to find a reason. For example, why they killed prince Hamlet. Who killed, how, when and why - it doesn't matter. The reality is that Azerbaijan is trying and will continue to use delimitation process for territorial claims against Armenia.

Another such a topic is the opening of regional transport communication links. Azerbaijan is trying to represent Armenia as a destructive side in this discussion. The reality is, that Armenia is ready to open its roads for Azerbaijan in the framework of our national legislation. Moreover, recently the draft decision of government was published, that supposes to open three check points in the border with Azerbaijan for implementation of the article 9 of the trilateral statement from November 9, 2020. According to that draft, citizens and goods of Azerbaijan would be eligible to use the existing roads of Armenia to commute from main Azerbaijan to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The Armenian government had political will to unilaterally accept that decision. But Azerbaijani officials tell us, that they don't want to have those routes. What do they want? They want a new route to be constructed. It is also acceptable for Armenia, but according to the 9th article of the trilateral statement from November 9, 2020, a new route can be constructed with the consent of the sides. Armenia is ready to construct such a route which would operate according to the legislation and within sovereign control of the Republic of Armenia.

So what is the point of Azerbaijani claims? Azerbaijan is hinting that Armenia has to provide an extraterritorial corridor and according to them the 9th article of the trilateral statement from November 9, 2020 is supposed to do that. The trilateral statement is a public document and in the 9th article there is nothing about corridor, extraterritoriality etc. So what is the purpose of

Azerbaijan? To create a new crisis as a pretext for a new aggression against Armenia and for a new territorial claim.

We have shared packages of proposals with Azerbaijan on the topic of opening communications, and if Azerbaijan accepts that those routes must operate according to national legislations, we can decide on this very quickly.

By the way, the trilateral statements from November 9, 2020 and January 11, 2021 imply that not only Armenia should provide roads to Azerbaijan, but Azerbaijan should provide roads to Armenia too. And we haven't received anything so far either.

As for the corridor wording, it is very important to note that in the trilateral statement from November 9, only one corridor is mentioned, and it is the Lachin corridor for Nagorno-Karabakh.

One of the crucial factors of regional stability is the comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict where the rights and the security of the Armenians living in NK will be addressed and guaranteed.

Latest aggression is happening while the humanitarian consequences of the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh have not been addressed yet. The post-war rehabilitation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the psycho-social issues of the displaced population, the repatriation of Armenian POW's and the preservation of cultural and religious heritage remain on the agenda of our Government.

Nevertheless, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh are in need of the support of the international community. We call to support the secure and unhindered access of UN humanitarian agencies to Nagorno-Karabakh in order to assess the humanitarian, human rights situation and ensure protection of cultural heritage on the ground. We think that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the independent fact-finding mission of UNESCO should have access to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan has been blocking both missions by making artificial, political preconditions, essentially blocking the access of an independent fact-finding mission in Nagorno-Karabakh.

It is also reprehensible that Azerbaijan stalls the repatriation of Armenian Prisoners of War, inter alia subjecting them to artificial trials in gross violation of international humanitarian law, its own commitments, and contrary to the calls of the international community.

It is very important to state that the target of Azerbaijani attacks isn't only the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, but democracy of Armenia too. Despite the expectation of some forces Armenia stayed democratic after devastating war of 2020, using the tool of free fair and democratic elections as a way out from internal political crisis. International community unanimously recognized and praised this fact.

The Armenian democracy is struggling in an atmosphere, when Azerbaijan is using force every day, to impose its plans unilaterally, to bring to the end the Armenian statehood, independence and democracy.

But I'm here to announce that we are determined to defend our democracy, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity by all means. I want to underscore that diplomatic solutions are an absolute priority for us and the full engagement and support of international community is crucial. In this regard I would like to mention, that the international observation mission to the Armenia-Azerbaijan bordering areas would be an important factor for regional stability.

Self-Defense Groups Get to Work

By Arto Manoukian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator/Abaka

YEREVAN — Some people gather and organize rallies. Others respond to the call for the defense of their endangered homeland, where the enemy is standing armed and ready at the borders to advance further. One army, one nation is the motto for many of these groups of volunteers preparing for civil defense. They are training young people, and sometimes adults.

Among these groups are Vova Vartanov’s Voghch Mnalou Arvest [The Art of Survival], Haykakan Legeon [Armenian Legion], and POGA (Betakanutyune Vorpes Geragoyn Arzhek, or Statehood as the Supreme Value). This correspondent attended one of POGA’s training sessions in the Davitashen district. There were 8 people participating that day over a period of three hours, di-

vided into sections devoted to first aid, war strategy and theoretical strategy. This particular group was enrolled in a 10-day-long program, but there are others that follow a more intensive three-month course.

The first aid training in this POGA session covered methods of intervention to stabilize bodily injuries, primarily broken bones. The well-versed instructor demonstrated how to use any available means for this purpose on a volunteer.

The second hour consisted of physically demanding and difficult field training in an adjacent school yard. The participants, equipped with knee and elbow guards as well as mock combat machine guns, went through field strategies, defense and attack positioning, protective positions against grenades, and advancing formations.

The third part of the evening concerned reading maps, geopositioning and territori-



First aid training at a course offered by POGA



A training session conducted by POGA



Some of the POGA training session participants with the author in front of a sign reading “Tomorrow we will harvest as a nation what we sow today”

al strategies.

After completion of either the 10-day or three-month course, volunteers will have acquired knowledge of self-defense, first aid, survival and combat techniques, mathematics, map reading, geopositioning, war strategies and much more. Young veterans were teaching the sessions as volunteers.

While there is an economic boom visible everywhere, people are getting ready for what appears to be the undesirable eventuality of war. At POGA’s headquarters, there was a long list of needed materials,

ranging from protective wear to warm gar-



One of the POGA participants

ments and medical supplies. POGA operates through fundraising and donations. The state is encouraging such groups but not financing them, as the army remains its priority.

Any assistance from the diaspora is welcome. For example, \$15 would buy a set of knee and elbow protectors. For more information on POGA or to support it financially see <http://poga.am/>.



The POGA sign



ARMENIA

Pro-US, Anti-Russian National Democratic Axis Party Holds Demonstration in Yerevan

By Arto Manoukian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator/Abaka

YEREVAN — The National Democratic Axis (Bever) opposition party held a demonstration in front of Yerevan's Opera House on September 21. There were many speakers addressing a crowd which appeared to be composed of 2,000 to 2,500 party followers and curious passersby.

The speakers primarily delivered an anti-Russian message. President Vladimir Putin and his attitude towards Armenia were harshly criticized. Among the speakers was a Russian citizen who criticized Russia and its leader.

Meanwhile, numerous American flags were visible onstage and in the crowd. The US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to Armenia and her remarks of "Armenian democracy vs. Azerbaijani autocracy"



cy" were loudly presented and applauded. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's intervention against the September 14 Azerbaijani military aggression was claimed to be the main reason for the halt in the Azerbaijani attacks. In sum, the attitude was that the US is Armenia's savior and Armenia

must liberate itself from Putin's oppressive attitude.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's pre-2020 war statement that Karabakh is Armenia and that's it was reiterated.

Such public events are frequent in today's Armenia, and in the near future there

might be another one defending the Russian presence and criticizing the Western powers.

Police presence and intervention forces were discretely situated but at the ready, evidently in case the crowd's sentiments got out of hand.

Armenian Leaders Cancel Key Ceremony on Karabakh War Anniversary

By Robert Zargarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Avoiding another confrontation with angry parents of fallen soldiers, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other senior officials did not visit Armenia's main military cemetery on Tuesday to mark the second anniversary of the devastating war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The war broke out early on September 27, 2020 when Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military offensive along the Armenian-Azerbaijani "line of contact" around Karabakh. The Azerbaijani army captured four districts south of Karabakh's southern Hadrut district and the town of Shushi (Shusha) before a Russian-brokered ceasefire stopped the hostilities on November 10.

Baku also regained control in the following weeks over the three other districts occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces in the early 1990s. The truce accord negotiated by Russian President Vladimir Putin also led to the deployment of 2,000 Russian peacekeeping forces in Karabakh.

According to the Armenian authorities, 3,825 Armenian soldiers and 80 civilians were killed during the six-week war. At least 203 other servicemen remain unaccounted for.

Early in the morning, the parents of several dozen soldiers killed in action gathered at the Yerablur Military Pantheon in Yerevan to try to prevent Pashinyan from laying flowers there as part of planned official ceremonies to mark the war anniversary. They hold him

responsible for the deaths of their sons.

The same protesters tried unsuccessfully to disrupt a wreath-laying ceremony led by Pashinyan there on Armenia's Independence Day on September 21. Riot police broke up the protest and detained dozens of its participants, causing uproar from opposition and civic groups.

Pashinyan, members of his government and political team as well as President Vahagn Khachaturian decided not to visit Yerablur this time around. According to pro-government media, they did not want to cause further tension at the cemetery where hundreds of Armenian victims of the 2020 war were laid to rest.

"Today, we once again bow our heads and commemorate the fallen warriors of the 44-

day war, who fought to stop the existential threat facing our compatriots," the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement released on the occasion.

The ministry said the six-week war demonstrated "Azerbaijan's state policy of ethnic cleansing of Armenians of Artsakh."

"Even today, through the use of force and the threat of use of force, Azerbaijan attempts to realize its maximalist aspirations, rejecting the very fact of Nagorno-Karabakh's existence as a territorial unit and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," it said.

The war anniversary was also marked in Azerbaijan whose government has acknowledged over 2,900 combat and civilian deaths. The country observed a minute of silence in memory of its war dead.

Leading NGOs Call for Police Chief's Dismissal after Military Cemetery Arrests

By Mark Dovich

YEREVAN (Civilnet.am) — Thirty five leading Armenian non-governmental organizations called for Vahe Ghazaryan, Armenia's police chief, to be dismissed in a joint statement Thursday, September 22, after officers detained relatives of soldiers killed in the 2020 Karabakh (Artsakh) war the day prior for attempting to prevent senior officials from holding a ceremony to mark Armenia's independence at a major military cemetery.

"It is unacceptable for the Armenian police leadership to issue and execute orders to carry out illegal actions using force

against citizens," the NGOs said, noting that "there are credible reports that some of the parents of the fallen servicemen were physically injured during the operation."

"Issuing orders to commit violence against the family members of servicemen who died for the defense of the country and to illegally deprive them of their freedom also crosses all moral boundaries," the statement continued.

The NGOs said they would consider "full responsibility for the illegal use of force against the relatives of the fallen servicemen...to fall on Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan himself" if he does not dismiss Ghazaryan, adding that "prosecuting those

who issued the orders...will be a serious indicator of the independence of Armenia's judicial system."

Videos showing officers detaining about three dozen people at Yerablur, Armenia's main military cemetery, before Pashinyan and other officials arrived for an independence day ceremony on September 21 quickly went viral online. Many Armenian social media users decried both the decision to make the detentions and the excessive force some officers showed.

All those who had been detained were released after Pashinyan and other officials held a wreath-laying ceremony at the cemetery.

The police defended its actions in a statement Wednesday, adding that Ghazaryan would launch an internal inquiry into the matter.

Kristinne Grigoryan, Armenia's Human Rights Defender, said Wednesday her office would conduct its own investigation, noting her staff would "demand detailed clarifications from the police, including regarding the actions of individual officers."

"In any case, and especially in such sensitive and emotionally charged situations, police officers must act strictly proportionally and refrain from such physical force. The opposite is unacceptable," Grigoryan said.



INTERNATIONAL

France Demands That Azerbaijani Forces Retreat as Pashinyan, Macron Meet in Paris

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“France, holding the presidency of the UN Security Council, convened a meeting of the Security Council, where the situation was discussed twice, on September 14 and 15. The Council members demanded a speedy cessation of hostilities and respect for the ceasefire. Taking into account that there are occupied positions, France demanded that the Azerbaijani forces return to their initial positions. I told President [Ilham] Aliyev on September 14 that the fact that the border is not demarcated cannot justify any advance into the territory of the other country.

“In addition, I have clearly stated since September 13 that France is convinced that the use of force cannot be a solution for either Armenia or Azerbaijan and it is necessary to resume the dialogue immediately. All unresolved issues, which are numerous, should be resolved exclusively through negotiations. The negotiations are held in different formats, particularly under the auspices of the EU, and they should be resumed.

I do not forget that exactly two years ago, on September 27, 2020, a terrible war began, which became deadly for the region. It led to a de facto new situation with an expanded Russian military presence in the

region. And I strongly condemn what happened in recent days and call for peace and resumption of negotiations. I would like to salute the courage of Prime Minister Pashinyan, who proposed a new approach for the future of the region.

President Aliyev, with whom I will talk in the next few hours, says that he also wants to end instability in the region and find solutions. But it is impossible to build peace under the threat of force. To that end, France will do everything, will pursue its goal, which is a stable, safe and prosperous South Caucasus.”

For his part, Pashinyan thanked Macron for his warm welcome. “France holds the presidency of the UN Security Council, and also with the support of France and personally President Macron, the issue of Azerbaijan’s another aggression against Armenia was included in its agenda. An earnest discussion took place, and the issue remains on the agenda of the Security Council.

“As a result of the aggressions of May 12, 2021 and September 13, 2022, Azerbaijan has occupied the sovereign territories of the Republic of Armenia. I would like to emphasize that our position is unequivocal: the Azerbaijani armed forces must withdraw from the sovereign territory of Armenia, and

I want to thank France, personally President Macron, for recording this position.”

He continued, “The administrative borders between Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan became state borders in the first months of independence of the two countries, since both Armenia and Azerbaijan signed and ratified the December 8, 1991 Agreement on Establishing Commonwealth of Independent States. Moreover, both countries are members of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) until now. I want to emphasize that it is an integral part of this agreement that the administrative borders, the existing borders basically become state borders and the countries that joined the agreement recognize these borders.

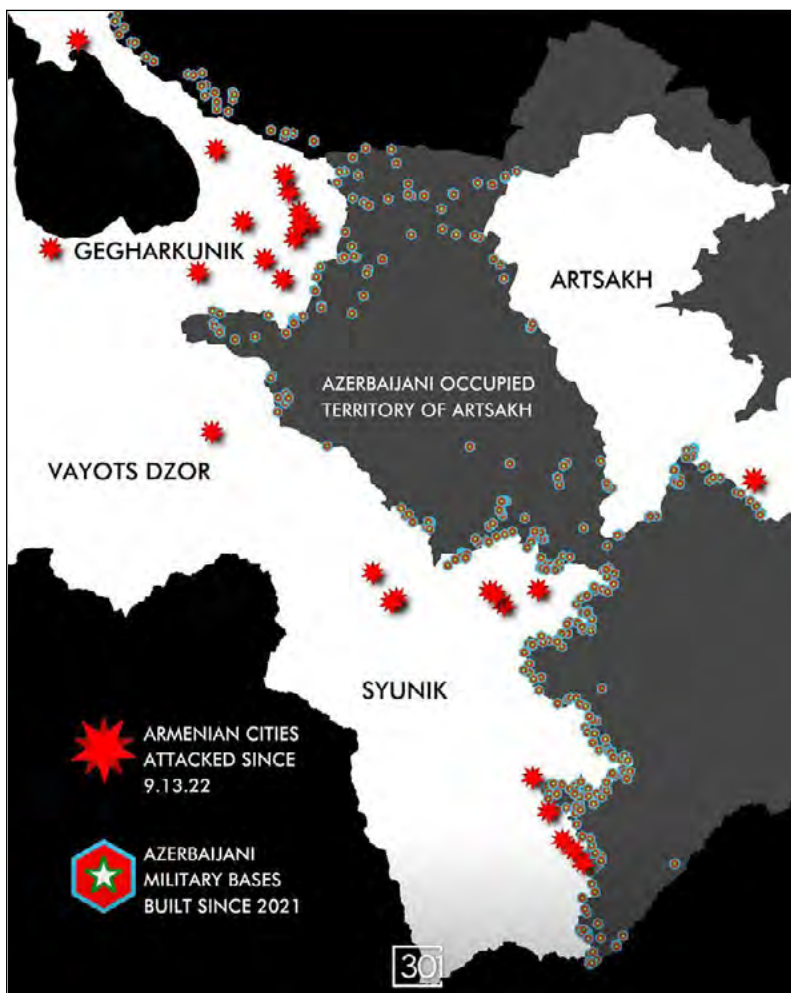
“This means that the actions of Azerbaijan cannot be assessed in any way other than deliberate aggression. As a result of the Azerbaijani occupation, the situation in our region remains tense. I think that sending an international observation mission to the regions affected by the Azerbaijani occupation and the border zone will help the international community to receive direct and not mediated information, and will also become an important factor in stabilizing the situation,” he said.

Franco-Armenian Association Issues Call For Documents Regarding Azerbaijan Attacks

PARIS — Faced with the proliferation of false information disseminated every day by Azerbaijan and its networks around the world, the Franco-Armenian Association (Union Franco-Arménienne), a non-profit cultural non-governmental organization, calls upon all persons, organizations and media outlets possessing documents (videos, photos, recordings, etc.) related to the territories of Zangezur, Gegharkunik and Artsakh to send it copies in order to assemble material to be presented to the world community on the true history and evidence related to these regions of Armenia. The association has the contacts of the world media networks.

For this purpose, please send your documents urgently to unionfarm@gmail.com and also through WhatsApp/Zangi applications - No. +33695147767.

PHOTO: Map of sites where the Azerbaijani armed forces struck from September 12 to 14, and military bases identified at the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan (including the occupied territories around present-day Artsakh, determined via satellite images (dated June 4, 2020 so not including newer bases) (image 301.am)



Armenia Skips CSTO Drills in Kazakhstan

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Citing lingering tensions along its border with Azerbaijan, Armenia has decided not to participate in military exercises which the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) began in Kazakhstan on Monday, September 26.

The Kazakh Defense Ministry reported that the two-week exercises will bring together “rapid reaction forces” of Russia, Kazakhstan and other ex-Soviet members of the military alliance. According to the CSTO Joint Staff in Moscow, they will simulate a coordinated response to an imaginary military conflict in Central Asia.

In a statement cited by Infocom.am, the

Defense Ministry in Yerevan said the decision to send Armenian troops to the drills was made in view of “the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border that arose as a result of Azerbaijan’s military aggression.” The ministry took into account “tasks set for the Armenian Armed Forces” in the current circumstances, added the statement.

Armenia appealed to the CSTO for military aid just hours after large-scale fighting erupted at several sections of the border on the night of September 12-13. Azerbaijani forces reportedly attacked Armenian army positions with the help of heavy artillery and combat drones.

Russia and other CSTO member states effectively declined the request, deciding instead to send to Armenia fact-finding missions tasked with studying the situation on the ground and submitting policy recommendations. Armenian officials criticized the bloc’s reluctance to openly side with Yerevan.

Meeting with the CSTO’s visiting Secretary-General Stanislav Zas last week, Deputy Foreign Minister Vahe Gevorgyan said the Armenian government continues to expect from the CSTO “concrete actions towards restoring CSTO member Armenia’s territorial integrity and preventing new escalations.”

INTERNATIONAL

NATO Secretary General ‘Extremely Concerned’ About Incursions

NEW YORK (Public Radio of Armenia) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on September 22.

Pashinyan referred to the large-scale aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan on the sovereign territory of Armenia on September 13, emphasizing that 36 settlements were targeted by the Azerbaijani armed forces, as a result of which the Armenian side also suffered casualties, many were wounded.

Pashinyan emphasized the importance of the international community’s condemnation of Azerbaijan’s actions and adequate response to the need for the immediate withdrawal of the Azerbaijani units from the territory of Armenia.

Stoltenberg said he is extremely concerned by developments on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. He emphasized the need for the settlement of regional problems through negotiations and to making consistent efforts in that direction.

US Calls on Azerbaijan to Return Troops to Initial Positions

WASHINGTON (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The US is calling on Azerbaijan to return troops to their initial positions, Department of State spokesperson Ned Price told a press briefing on September 26.

Price reiterated that Secretary of State Antony Blinken hosted the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers for a face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC.

“The Secretary noted to both leaders the importance of maintaining the ceasefire, of maintaining the calm, said – noted that we’re dedicated to a sustainable ceasefire and to a peaceful resolution. We made clear to both foreign ministers that the United States stands ready to support – to support this bilaterally, multilaterally, together with partners. This includes our support for efforts by EU Council President Charles Michel bring the leaders together,” Price said.

“They during the course of that meeting discussed the best path forward, and the Secretary suggested the sides share ideas for how to meaningfully advance the peace process before the end of the month.

“Our message has been consistent for some time. We call on Azerbaijan to return troops to their initial positions. We urge disengagement of military forces and work to resolve all outstanding issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan through peaceful negotiations. The use of force is not an acceptable path. We’ve made that clear privately. We’ve also made that clear publicly, and we’re glad that our continued engagement, including at high levels, including last week in New York, with both countries has helped to halt the hostilities, and we’ll continue to engage and encourage the work needed to reach a lasting peace because there can be and there is no military solution to this conflict.”



INTERNATIONAL

Berlin Program Marks Centennial of Burning Of Smyrna

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — “The Smyrna horror is beyond the conception of the imagination and the power of words.” This is how an American physician, Dr. Esther Clayson Pohl Lovejoy (1869-1967), characterized the events she witnessed in the city of Smyrna in September 1922.

In the German capital, one hundred years later — almost to the day — diplomats, political figures, representatives of the Greek and Armenian communities, civil society and clergy, as well as citizens from Berlin and beyond gathered to commemorate the victims of The Great Fire of Smyrna.

On September 10, Prof. Tessa Hofmann, Spokeswoman of the Board of the Promotional Society for the Ecumenical Monuments for Genocide Victims of the Ottoman Empire (FÖGG), gave a guided tour of the altars of remembrance honoring the Greek, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian victims of the Ottoman genocide, located in the Luisenkirchhof cemetery in Berlin-Charlottenburg. The following day, in the chapel of the cemetery, she opened the program with a review of the historical events.

Capture, Plunder, Massacre and Arson

At the time of its capture on September 8, 1922, Smyrna was a city without defenses. “Hours prior to the entry of Kemalist armed forces, the Greek armed forces, who, tasked in May 1919 by the Allies to take over the defense of the Christian population in the Smyrna district, had left by sea,” Hofmann said.

A Christian majority of the city of a half million inhabitants, included 150,000 Greek Orthodox Ottoman citizens, 25,000 Armenians, several thousand Italians, French, British and about 100 Americans, according to contemporary diplomatic sources.

Days following the September 9 capture of the city, Kemalist commander Nureddin Pasha (known as the “butcher of Smyrna”) took advantage of shifting winds to order the Armenian quarter Hajnoz be set afire and the flames soon engulfed the neighboring Greek neighborhood. “At least 150,000 Greeks and Armenians perished in the capture of the city,” burned or crushed by collapsing homes; massacred or drowned in the vain attempt to “swim to the 27 foreign warships and merchant ships anchored in the Gulf of Smyrna.” This meant, Hofmann said, that the “tragedy unfolded before the eyes of a huge international public: missionaries and teachers, diplomats and tradesmen, as well as the crews of the ships in the Gulf.” One of them, an Anglican pastor from New Zealand, Charles Dobson, would choose the Biblical Greek term “Holocaust” — meaning “whole burnt-offering or wholesale sacrifice” — to depict the catastrophe. The term, Hofmann explained, had been in use in American and European media since 1895 in reference to Ottoman Christians burned alive, and in 1958 Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel adopted it for the Shoah, Nazi Germany’s elimination of European Jews.

In addition to the devastation wrought by the Great Fire, about 300,000 Greek men became forced laborers, under Nureddin Pasha’s orders, while remaining Christians were given two weeks to leave the country. Hofmann drew a striking comparison to the situation surrounding the Ukraine war: “The former allies of Greece wanted to save the Christian people of the Ottoman Empire, without becoming involved themselves in the conflict or damaging their economic interests,” for example, France’s trade relations with Kemalist Turkey. Another aspect recalled by the Ukraine war relates to the evacuation; unlike today, in 1922 the quarter million people, mainly women and children, who were forced to flee had no logistical backup, transportation, personnel or experience. Rather, Hofmann suggested, what the Smyrna evacuation anticipated in recent experience is the withdrawal from Afghanistan; there too, it was local personnel, teachers, translators and domestic staff, who were left behind, “not-naturalized Greeks and Armenians sent back to the ports.”

The Great Fire of Smyrna, Hofmann concluded, marked

not only an unprecedented humanitarian disaster, but also the “bloody conclusion” of the decade-long genocide, initiated by the Young Turks and carried forward by Kemal Ataturk after 1919. From the deportations and massacres of Greeks in Aydın or Smyrna province in 1914, to the Great Fire and massacre of 40,000 Christians in Manissa in 1922, where many survivors of the previous attacks died, to the forced laborers in 1923 — it was one process. A process of elimination of Ottoman Christians, Hofmann concluded, that Taner Akçam “rightly depicted as the founding crimes of the Republic of Turkey. Out of the multireligious Ottoman Empire Turkey for the Turks was born.”

Lessons of Smyrna

Diplomats from the embassies of Greece and the Republic of Armenia, along with representatives of the Armenian community and Evangelical Church delivered brief messages of greetings. Consul Andreas Spyropoulos, 2nd Secretary of the Greek Embassy, was followed by Viktor Yengibaryan, Armenian ambassador, who presented that country’s efforts to advance the international agenda on preventing genocide.

Jonathan Spangenberg, chairman of the Central Council of Armenians in Germany (ZAD), sketched the events from August 30, when the Kemalists broke through Greek front lines, forcing their retreat, and the flow of 150,000 refugees to Smyrna, to capture of the city and the massacres, plundering and deportations that preceded the Great Fire. In light of Europe’s experience with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, and the consensus in remembrance culture, Spangenberg stated, it is a central concern of the ZAD to commemorate the genocide against Armenians, Greeks and Aramaeans, not only to keep the memory alive, but to prevent the reemergence of discrimination and persecution. In this regard, he underlined the need for countering denialism, especially in school curricula. In closing he referenced Greek-Turkish tensions in the Aegean as well as the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, where Azerbaijan’s racially motivated policy has forced Armenians to flee.

Pastor Marion Gardei, Representative for Memory Culture, Evangelical Church Berlin-Bandenburger-Silesian Upper Lusatia (EKBO), spoke next. In her remarks, she highlighted the “cosmopolitan flair” of the prosperous trading and port city Smyrna since the 17th century, a flair that earned it the name “Little Paris of the Orient.” The peaceful cohabitation of Christians, Jews and Muslims there rivalled that of many European cities. Following the capture and destruction of Smyrna, the new borders sealed in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty between Greece and Turkey led to the mass population transfer, and the victory of the nationalist ideology, and further wars. With critical words for Turkey’s denialist policy, Gardei stressed the importance of memory culture as grounded in the biblical depiction of God’s care for His people.

Father Theofilos Sofitsis, from the Greek Orthodox Parish Christi Himmelfahrt, Berlin, delivered a substantial address of “The Path to Holiness: The Work of Saint Chrysostomos as Metropolitan of Smyrna through his Correspondence.”

The Survivors’ Testimony

Nothing can communicate the drama of such historical watershed events better than the words uttered by those who lived through them and found the emotional strength and means to bear testimony. Actress Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, from Berlin, read selections from Dr. Garabed Hacharian, Pastor Charles Dobson and Esther Clayson Pohlson Lovejoy. Their accounts detail various aspects of the atrocities: the cold-blooded approach of the perpetrators, the brutality of their assaults, the massive destruction of the city, the plight of the civilian population, the suffering.

Hacharian was a doctor who had attended Armenian and American schools, studied medicine in the capital and served in the Ottoman armed forces during the war. In his diary, published by his daughter, Dora Sakayan, he recorded his direct knowledge of Turkish soldiers’ setting the fire. On September 13, he encountered a Turk, who said to him: “‘We have done what we had to do; go back!’ The Turk,

who must have played an active role in setting the fire and takes me for a compatriot and accomplice, advised me not to go further and to turn back.... Little by little the flames approached our house. The clatter of burning buildings and the transformation of fuel into clouds of fire confront me with a hellish image that was unknown to me. In Constantinople and other cities I have experienced huge fires, and on the battlefields of the Dardanelles and in Rumania I was witness to the pillaging of entire cities and villages, yet none of the conflagrations had moved me so much up to now. The fire of Smyrna is indescribable and incredible. Our situation is hopeless.”

Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian introduced Dobson, an Anglican pastor who was in Smyrna at the time of the fire, and later testified in a trial which concluded that the fire had been deliberately set. Born in New Zealand, he had served as a military chaplain on the Western front and in Gallipoli, before going to Smyrna in 1922. There he comforted terrified Christians and buried their dead. Evacuated on September 14, and transferred to Malta, he learned that some refused to believe the Turks had deliberately burned the city. His report, published in 1923 as *The Smyrna Holocaust*, described the atrocities in gruesome detail, bloodied infants, ravaged women, robberies and more.

Ehlers-Kerbekian concluded her readings with selections from the account provided by Esther Clayson Pohl Lovejoy. She was Director of the American Women’s Hospitals Service (AWHS), which she helped establish to bring humanitarian relief to displaced and injured victims of war. In Geneva attending a conference when the Smyrna fire broke out, she was dispatched immediately to the site. She read, in part:

“I was the first American Red Cross woman in France,” she said, “but what I saw there during the Great War seems a love feast beside the horrors of Smyrna. When I arrived at Smyrna there was massed on the quays 250,000 people — wretched, suffering and screaming — with women beaten and with their clothes torn off them, families separated and everybody robbed.

“Knowing their lives depended on escape before Sept. 30, the crowds remained packed along the water front — so massed that there was no room to lie down. The sanitary conditions were unspeakable.

“Three-quarters of the crowd were women and children, and never have I seen so many women carry children. It seemed that every other woman was an expectant mother. The flight and the conditions brought on many premature births, and on the quay with scarcely room to lie down and without aid most of the children were born. In the five days I was there more than 200 such confinements occurred.

“Even more heartrending were the cries of children who had lost their mothers or mothers who had lost their children. They were herded along through the great guarded enclosure, and there was no turning back for lost ones. Mothers in the strength of madness climbed the steel fences fifteen-feet high and in the face of blows from the butts of guns sought the children, who ran about screaming like animals.

“Under the order to remain neutral I saw the launch of an American warship pick up two male refugees who were trying to swim to a merchant ship under the Turkish rifle fire and return them to the hands of the waiting Turk soldiers on the beach for what must have been certain death. And under orders to remain neutral I saw soldiers and officers of all nationalities stand by while Turk soldiers beat with their rifles women trying to reach children who were crying just beyond the fence.”

Esther Lovejoy succeeded in wielding “the power of words” to convey the “horror of Smyrna” and its lessons: “It is a crime for which the whole world is responsible in not having through the civilized ages built up some means to prevent such orders as that of the evacuation of a city and the means with which it was carried out. It is a crime for the world to stand by through a sense of neutrality and permit this outrage against 200,000 women.”

The program was accompanied by musical selections of Greek songs from Asia Minor performed by singer Maritina Asoniti, violinist Penelope Gkika and Shingo Ali Masuda on the Kanoon and Guitar. Father Theofilos Sofitsis offered requiem prayers and wreaths were laid at the Ecumenical Monuments.

(The selections read by Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian were in German, the first in Sakayan, Dora (Hg.): *Smyrna 1922: Das Tagebuch des Garabed Hacharian*. Klagenfurt, Wien: Kitab, 2006, S. 79f. I have translated this, Dobson and the song lyrics into English. Dr. Lovejoy’s text in English comes from a press account: “Woman pictures Smyrna horrors: Dr. Esther Lovejoy, an eyewitness, tells of terrible scenes on the Quay; she assails neutrality; declares it a crime for the world to lack the means to prevent such outrages.” *The New York Times*, October 9, 1922, page 3.)



Community News

New Armenian Community Projects Funded by Mass. Humanities Grants

NORTHAMPTON, MA — Mass. Humanities announced this week it had awarded \$713,876 in Expand Massachusetts Stories (EMS) grants to 42 cultural nonprofit organizations across the Commonwealth, including to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Armenians of Whitinsville. The funded projects will surface new narratives about the people and ideas that shape Massachusetts.

NAASR was awarded \$9,570 for their project, “Exploring Hybrid Identities of Armenian-Americans in Mass.” The project will support a series of public programs on Armenian-American identities and how they interact with the diverse community of Massachusetts.

The project will Expand Mass Stories by encouraging and inviting members of the Armenian-American community in Massachusetts to share their voices and perspectives on the multiple facets of their identities and how they have been shaped through interactions with the broader, diverse Massachusetts community. “Exploring Hybrid Identities of Armenian-Americans in Mass.” will encourage fruitful conversations and reflections on the importance of the diversity within the Armenian-American community and the overall Massachusetts population.

Armenians of Whitinsville was awarded \$7,500 for their project “Whitinsville Armenians, Stories Past to Present.” The project will produce 10 to 15 oral history recordings from Armenians with ties to Whitinsville. The recordings will sit on the Armenians of Whitinsville project website alongside recently translated and subtitled recordings of Armenian Genocide survivors done in the 1970’s. They will also reside with the University of Southern California Center for Armenian Studies for research purposes.

The project will Expand Mass Stories through oral histories that will explore issues around the diaspora, the transformation of the Armenian community of Whitinsville, and how their identity has changed over the last 130 years. The oral history project will dovetail into a web-based project organized over the last 12 months and recently launched, www.armeniansofwhitinsville.org. They will sit inside both the Recordings section and inside their family collection, providing additional narrative and context. If interested in contributing your story, please contact the project through info@armeniansofwhitinsville.org.

Rooted in Mass Humanities’ mission to create opportunities for the people of Massachusetts to transform their lives and build a more equitable Commonwealth, the new EMS initiative kicked off last year with support to projects across the state that included audio tours, documentary films, oral histories, and public

see GRANTS, page 9



Assembly Board Members Herman Purutyan and Annie Totah, Artsakh’s Foreign Minister David Babayan, Assembly Congressional Director Mariam Khalyoyan and Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny

‘Salute to Artsakh’ Program Takes Place On Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — The “Salute to Artsakh” event marking Artsakh’s independence took place on Capitol Hill on Monday, September 19, co-hosted by the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee of America, in collaboration with the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. Key remarks were delivered by Artsakh Foreign Minister, David Babayan, and Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Members, including Representatives Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Judy Chu (D-CA), Jim Costa (D-CA), and David Cicilline (D-RI). Opening and closing prayers were led by Rev. Sarkis Aktavoukian, pastor of the Soorp Khatch Church in Bethesda, MD, and Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of the St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, D.C., with additional remarks from former Congressional staffer Tadeh Issakhanian.



Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan urges the Armenian diaspora to remain strong and united

move she holds as a “badge of honor,” emphasized that she will continue to speak up for the “peaceful people of Artsakh and Armenia, which is even more important now after yet another brutal assault of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia’s undisputed borders.”

“We need strong U.S. support for Armenia and Artsakh and to draw a clear line,” said Rep. Chu, who is a cosponsor of H.Res.1351, which condemns Azerbaijan’s unprovoked attack on Armenia last week. “No more U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan, and further violence must result in sanctions.”

“Today’s celebration shows that there is strong bipartisan support in Congress and with that we hope we can do justice for the Armenians in Armenia and Artsakh, along with so many hard-working Armenians in the U.S.,” concluded Rep. Chu.

Fresh from his trip to Armenia alongside U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Representatives Jackie Speier (D-CA), and Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Pallone described the warm welcome from Armenians and the “outpouring of love and support for the U.S.”

He stated that Azerbaijan “directly attacked” Armenia in a show of aggression, and that both Azerbaijan and Turkey have been “very effective in convincing the media that they’re not responsible and that it is a lie.”

“The Speaker made it clear that this was aggression from Azerbaijan and they have to pull back and remove themselves from Armenian soil,” said Rep. Pallone. “It is not acceptable for them to stay [on Armenian territory].”

see SALUTE, page 12

Good Time Had by All At St. John’s Khunjook

By Nyree Giragosian and Karen Kalajian

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — The early morning sunshine gleamed against the iconic golden dome as St. John Armenian Church opened its newly renovated doors to welcome our families and church school children back to Sunday School. After a long summer recess, the church grounds were brimming with laughter, hugs, and excitement for a new school year. The children were all smiles, happy to reunite with their old companions and looking forward to making new friendships with fellow parishioners who will undoubtedly mature into lifelong friends.

Under the direction of Paulette Apakarian, the Women’s Guild launched a festive *Khunjook* on Sunday, September 11. More than 200 guests enjoyed an inflatable bouncy obstacle course equipped with a slide, a basketball shootout range, craft tents, a flashy photo booth with colorful props, a raffle with various themed baskets, and the popular Crispelli’s food truck serving freshly baked pizza and Bosco sticks. The aroma of freshly popped popcorn filled the air underneath the food tent laden with fresh fruits, vegetable plates, cookies, pretzels, and candy. The Nigolian

see KHUNJOOK, page 9



Folks enjoying their food, music games and snacks at the St. John Khunjook



OBITUARY

Archie Dadian, Wisconsin Golf Legend

By Gary D'Amato

SOUTH MILWAUKEE, Wis. (Wisconsin Golf) — Archie Dadian had to fight for everything he ever got in golf: birdies with a homemade, whiplash swing; access to tournaments and private clubs as the son of an Armenian immigrant and tavern owner in blue-collar South Milwaukee; and respect at a time when public links golfers were looked down upon by many country clubbers.

Fight he did, with a steely determination and chip-on-the-shoulder mentality that was seemingly at odds with his outgoing, friendly nature.

Dadian, a devoted family man who competed as hard as anyone who ever picked up a golf club and blazed a trail for public links players in Wisconsin, died on September 23 after a protracted battle with cancer. He was 89.

"He is such a public links legend and icon," said Randy Warobick, president of the Wisconsin State Golf Association. "It's hard to think of how he could ever be surpassed for what he has done for the public links golfer in the state of Wisconsin."

Dadian combined extraordinary strength, superior hand-eye coordination and an underdog's fighting spirit to win, by his own count, more than 100 tournaments. He was the first municipal player to win the Wisconsin State Amateur and the Milwaukee District Match Play Championship and was named the national public links player of the decade in the 1970s.

"He's kind of a larger-than-life character," said Bob Gregorski, like Dadian a member of the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame. "For a long time, he was probably one of the best-known amateur golfers in Wisconsin and one of the best-known public links amateurs in the country."

Dadian won the Wisconsin Public Links Association's Ray Fischer 72-Hole Championship, the WPLA 36-Hole Championship, the Milwaukee District and the old Milwaukee Sentinel and Milwaukee Journal tournaments five times each.

"Five seems to be my number," Dadian said in an interview with Wisconsin.Golf in 2019.

Unless it was 10. That's how many times he won the WPLA Billy Sixty Best-ball (with three different partners). He also was a 10-time WSGA Senior Player of the Year, taking the honor every year from 1989 through 1998 (sharing it with Dick Sucher in 1992).

"(He was) among the most remarkable and lionized champions in Wisconsin golf history," John Haines, a top-level amateur, wrote in a text message to Wisconsin.Golf. "Incredible eye-hand coordination. A golf swing that looked more like a gut punch. Tough."

Like some of the men he competed against, Dadian worked in insurance. But they were salesmen, many with their own successful businesses. He was an examiner with a 9-to-5 job, raising four children in South Milwaukee with his wife, Shirley.

As a Saturday morning dew-sweeper, he plunked down his green fees at Milwaukee County courses with the rest of the working stiff and couldn't enter the locker room at some private clubs, even during tournaments he would win. Often, he changed into his golf spikes in the parking lot.

"He was a blue-collar guy who worked hard," Gregorski said. "He had grit. He was the type of guy that us Wisconsin players really respect. He brought himself up from the dirt."

For many years, the Wisconsin State Golf Association, established by private

clubs, allowed only 10 "deserving" public links players to enter the State Amateur. Dadian won the State Am in 1963 at match play and again in 1974, after the format was switched to stroke play. His victories paved the way for greater acceptance of public links players.

Once, in a Milwaukee District match, Dadian was standing over a bunker shot when he heard a woman in the gallery say, "I hope the public links player loses." He backed off, instructed his caddie to pull the



Archie Dadian shows off some of the trophies he won in a career that spanned more than six decades.

flagstick and defiantly holed the shot. Take that, he thought.

When he briefly played on the PGA Tour in 1964-'65, he was paired with the great Jack Nicklaus and two-time major champion Doug Ford at a tournament in Indianapolis.

"Jack hits his tee shot on the first hole and Ford hits his tee shot and now I'm getting ready to hit," Dadian said. "All of a sudden I hear a voice in the gallery: 'Who the hell is that guy?' I back off and I say, 'I'll show you who I am.' I belted it and it had to be close to 70 yards past Ford's ball and maybe 20 yards past Nicklaus' ball."

Dadian said his grandfather was the Turkish heavyweight wrestling champion who went by the nickname "No Neck." Dadian inherited that strength. He could lift 100 pounds with one hand, no problem, and in his late 70s could still do one-arm pushups.

"He was unbelievably strong," Haas said. "This was a time when we were hitting wound golf balls with persimmon heads. If you hit the ball 260-some yards, you were a long hitter. Archie could hit it 270-plus. There were very, very few people who could hit it that far."

Warobick will never forget the first time he saw Dadian play golf. He was 9 years old and caddying for his father, the late Lou Warobick, in the Capital Times Invitational at Odana Hills in Madison.

"The foursome was my father, Manuel (de la Torre), Tommy Veech and Archie Dadian," Warobick said. "Manuel and Tommy were my dad's best friends, so I'd seen them play. This was the first time I saw Archie Dadian. I was absolutely in awe. My dad was a sweet swinger and Archie is out there like Arnold Palmer, lashing at it. I remember to this day Archie walking around the green and stalking a putt from every angle. He gets up and he knocks in this 15-footer and I said, 'That's how I want to play the game, dad.'"

Years later, Warobick, who attended the University of Texas and played on the same golf team with Tom Kite and Ben Crenshaw, would compete against Dadian.

"Next to Tommy Veech, he had the best hands I've ever seen in the game of golf," Warobick said. "He hit a shot at the state best-ball at West Bend, back in the '70s, I'll never forget it. On the eighth hole, the par-3, he had a huge slope and a bunker between him and the pin, which was cut close to the edge of the green. It was straight downhill. He's lucky to get this shot on the green. And I'm in there with 4 feet for birdie."

"He gets up and hits this screaming bullet into the bank and his ball shoots straight up

licated.

"He was the nicest guy while he was ripping out your heart," Warobick said with a laugh.

"Generous with advice," Haines added. "On the gregarious side, as far as golfing savants go."

Gary Menzel, a member of the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame, competed against Dadian many times through the years and teamed with him to win the WSGA Senior Best-ball title three times (Dadian won best-ball tournaments with at least seven different partners).

"Arch was a beaut," Menzel said. "He always battled. That's something that younger kids don't understand. You're going to hit bad shots. It's the next shot that's important. When you played against him he aggravated you because he never gave up on a shot."

Dadian's other gift was incredible hand-eye coordination. He was a multiple-time South Milwaukee city marbles champion, back when every kid shot marbles. He is a charter member of the Wisconsin Dartball Hall of Fame. His brothers excelled at racket sports and his niece was a U.S. table tennis champion. And he once ran 121 consecutive balls in straight pool.

Dadian learned to play golf at Grant Park and still holds the course record, a 59 that he shot in 1964.

But the time he devoted to golf paled in comparison with the time he devoted to his family. He and his wife, Shirley, raised four children: Laurie, Lisa, Lyle and Larry. He was the rare weekend golfer who excelled in tournaments.

"He was a family man. That's his legacy, more than golf," Menzel said. "Arch was resigned to what was happening (as he battled cancer) and he talked about his kids helping him so much. I said, 'Arch, that's the way you and Shirley brought them up.' The kids are what he was. That's all you can ask."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Good Time Had by All at St. John's *Khunjook*

KHUNJOOK, from page 7

Band enhanced the event by playing Armenian dance music all afternoon. It was heartwarming to see the children and adults socializing, playing, and dancing, genuinely enjoying their afternoon together.

The committee has worked together since the beginning of the year to ensure families would enjoy this day. Thank you to our committee members: Alexandra Apkarian, Paulette Apkarian, Renee Apkarian, Christine Atesian, Sara Sarkisian, Bell Marilyn Dadian, Michelle Samarian Ducato, Lauren Reizian -Gershonowicz, Nyree Giragosian, Kathy Hasse, Karen Kalajian, Dawn Karagosian, Lynne Kojamian, Donna Lafian, Diana Mardigian, Jenni Morris, Nicole O'Donovan, Christine Sarafian, Maral Thomas and Kathy Torigian.

The *Khunjook* could not have been possible without the dozens of people who were so generous with their donations to the Women's Guild and St. John Armenian Church.



New Armenian Community Projects Funded by Mass Humanities Grants

GRANTS, from page 7

events. The new grant program will strive to promote an equitable and inclusive society that recognizes all people's perspectives, especially those that have been marginalized and underrepresented.

This latest round of funding will continue to focus on projects that surface and share the histories and experiences of traditionally overlooked communities. "At this critical juncture in the history of our state, we see these projects as the sparks for a needed re-

imagining of our past and a new vision for our future," said Brian Boyles, Executive Director of Mass Humanities. "We believe Massachusetts can only truly thrive when all residents participate in creating, learning and sharing the stories of Massachusetts."

A non-profit based in Northampton, Humanities provides grants to more than two-hundred organizations across the state each year. The EMS initiative provides up to \$20,000 to nonprofit organizations. The grants are made possible through Mass Hu-

manities' partnership with Mass Cultural Council, the state's cultural agency, as well as a two-year, \$700,000 partnership with the Barr Foundation that was announced in August.

Support from the Barr Foundation will contribute to Mass Humanities' efforts to share the stories of the impacted communities with decision makers and audiences across Massachusetts.

"I extend my congratulations the recipients of the Expand Massachusetts Stories

initiative," said SueEllen Kroll, Senior Program Officer for Arts & Creativity at the Barr Foundation. "We at Barr are proud to support the creation, collection, and sharing of community stories that contribute to a more inclusive narrative and understanding of the Commonwealth's history, culture, and people."

Organizations interested in learning about future grants should follow Mass Humanities on social media @masshumanities and visit their website.



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Send resumes to: tbacon@h-hovnanian.com

COMMUNITY NEWS

A Celebration of Life Held for Dr. Raffy Hovannessian

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — He was larger than life - a man truly dedicated to his family, to his church, to his profession, to all whom he could help, and to his countrymen in Armenia, Artsakh and America. And he generously gave to all with complete love, devotion, humility and always with a smiling face, even when he himself was suffering.

He was Dr. Raffy A. Hovannessian, (1938- 2020).

On Saturday, September 10, more than 400 family, friends and admirers who had come from across this country and throughout the world, packed St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral for a solemn yet celebratory service extolling Hovannessian's exemplary life.

When the members of the clergy, including Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe, Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate of the Eastern Armenian Church, and Bishop Daniel Findikyan entered the cathedral, the crowd stood in reverence.

During the sacred Armenian Requiem Service, legendary Armenian singer Onnik Dinkjian came before, faced the altar, and sang the soulful *Der Voghormia* (Lord Have Mercy) by Komitas with heartfelt emotion. He was accompanied on the organ by his son, Ara Dinkjian, who also accompanied the combined choir, from St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral and St. Armenian Illuminator Cathedral, conducted by choir director Khoren Mekanejian. Soloists were Anoush Barclay, Hasmik Mekanejian and Anahit Zakaryan.

'A Man of Action'

Keynote speaker Archbishop Khajag Barsamian who had traveled from Rome to honor his long-time close friend, in an impassioned and inspiring eulogy in both Armenian and English, recounted how Dr. Raffy, "a loved and admired man had fought the good fight, finished his race and



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian with Dr. Raffy Hovannessian

every one of us."

And it was evident in his "love for his parents and heritage, for his wife Shoghag — his precious partner in everything he did, his children and grandchildren, and his universe of friends from every walk of life. He was "a dear friend, a trusted advisor who always spoke from the heart on any matter with confidence, openness and total honesty. He was one of the most profoundly spiritual men I have ever known."

He recounted Hovannessian's great friendship with the late Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I — "a bond of deep brotherhood. "He devoted the last decades

church were seen wiping away tears.

Messages from Church Leaders, Family

The message of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, read by Diocesan Vicar, Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, paid tribute to Dr. Hovannessian as "a renowned physician who devoted his medical expertise and humanitarian compassion to the benefit of countless fellow Armenians —most notably in his fatherland of Armenia where his contributions greatly advanced the fields of medicine and medical education." The Ca-

tholikos concluded with "prayers for, and consolation to his beloved wife Shoghag, children, grandchildren and countless relatives and friends."

The letter from Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I, read by Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, remembered Dr. Raffy Hovannessian as a gentle and highly devoted man "for whom the Armenian Church, nation, and homeland remained of supreme value. He respected his circle and was respected by everybody without restrictions. This memorial event is eloquent testimony



Hovannessian Family with Vicki Hovannessian in the middle to her right Dr. and Mrs. Paul Paik

always kept his profound faith throughout his life. He was always a man of action with an active mind, an outgoing personality that took him all over the world with incredible energy, and drove him in every endeavor — in medicine, community service, philanthropy, the arts."

He also lived a "life of consequence, grounded in a foundation that is stable, secure unshakeable in service to God, Christ and his church. This is what gave his life balance and conviction," stated Barsamian. "It was his source of balance, conviction, strength, and energy. And it was the inspiration for the great power of love that flowed from Raffy's heart and touched ev-

of his life advancing Vehapar's vision and spirit in our community. Raffy Hovannessian embodied the best in Armenian history and in the Armenian soul. It was Raffy's conviction that the Armenian Church, with its ancient history, had something profound to teach the world of today, and he was one of those teachers."

Archbishop Barsamian concluded his moving sermon with "prayers and love to dear Shoghag, and to the Hovannessian family's children, grandchildren, brother and countless friends and companions," and asked Dr. Raffy "to pray for us, Armenia and Artsakh. May my dear and close friend rest in heavenly lights." Many in the

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COMMUNITY NEWS

that he will keep on being the unforgettable and beloved Raffy for his family, friends and the multitudes who were fortunate to know him.”

Several family members and friends then presented loving remembrances of Dr. Raffy in loving tributes. Cousin Alex Yemendjian, former chairman and CEO of MGM Studios, who warmly welcomed the huge crowd, performed the role of master of ceremonies with dignity. He called Dr. Raffy a “role model and great teacher” for him, and for so many people.

Brother of Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, Dr. Reuben Siraganian, an Emeritus Scientist at the National Institute of Health, remembered playing with 8-year old Raffy in Biskanta, a small village in Lebanon. He said, “Growing up, Raffy was very athletic, and participated in many sports, excelling in soccer and basketball, while at the American University of Beirut (AUB).”

Deeply involved in church activities, “Raffy did not distinguish between the two sides of the Armenian Apostolic Church, or the evangelical churches. The church fulfilled not only his spiritual needs, but also provided him with the person he would cherish for the rest of his life, his beloved wife Shoghag. They would spend 55 years together. She gave him strength and friend-

ship, and stood by him especially in those last, hardest days of his illness. What is clear and endures is Raffy’s love of family. His spirit lives on in his children and



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Dr. Armen Kelikian with Vicki Hovanessian

grandchildren.”

Close family friend Zaven Khanjian, executive director and CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, (AMAA), recounted how his and

Dr. Raffy’s fathers “were two young, orphaned, handsome, bald Arapgertsies who grew up to be artisans and family heads of large families” and whose members regularly visited each other’s homes. “Raffy was an exceptionally brilliant student who skipped three grades and graduated from Aleppo College at age 16.”

In Beirut, Dr. Raffy with Bishop Karekin Sarkissian of the Great House of Cilicia who later became Catholicos of All Armenians, established the Armenian Church University Students’ Association (HEHOM) in 1963, fighting for the rights of Armenian students

and students of all denominations to become members.

“For me, he has been a brother, friend, advisor, counselor and a man of God,” said Khanjian.

Another close family friend, Professor of Medical Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s College of Medicine, Dr. Ara Tekian, spoke about his special caring for his family and his patients, and also for the many multitudes for whom he served with utmost patience, and respect.

Cousin, Dr. John Deirmenjian, at UCLA’s Psychiatry Department at the David Geffen School of Medicine, spoke of Dr. Raffy’s role in Indiana to establish and lead the Asian American Medical Society and aid both Armenian and non-Armenian doctors in finding job opportunities. In both Indiana and Chicago, Dr. Raffy helped establish the AGBU Center.

“Philanthropy was in Raffy’s blood,” he said. “He was a team player, always consulting with Shoghag, and working together on many charitable events. After the Armenian earthquake, they worked nonstop to raise funds and mobilized the entire Chicago community. Raffy also organized fund-raising events for U.S. politicians from both parties who supported Armenian causes.”

Dr. Deirmenjian related that as the private physician to Catholicos Karekin I, Dr. Raffy had a close and trusted friendship. And in his private life, he deeply loved his family, having yearly celebrations with his grandchildren called the “Medzbaba Camp.”

The children and grandchildren of Dr. Raffi and Shoghag - Chief of Radiology at Desert Springs Hospital Dr. Armen Hovanessian, Partner at Wilkie, Farr and Gallagher, LLP Ani Hovanessian, Esq., and Agopian Inc./Art Advisor Aileen Agopian presented remembrances.

“He gave and helped to all unstintingly, and always with his typically humble manner,” conveyed Armen Hovanessian. “Obsessively punctual, he was a man of his word, and taught us the value of being trustworthy.”

In His Words

A powerful video of Dr. Raffy’s life, with his heartfelt words enumerated the highlights of his life in his own words - his birth in Jerusalem, his life with his hardworking and religious parents in Aleppo, his education at AUB and other universities where he excelled, his life in the church, and his unbounding love for his family, patients, and all who sought his help and advice.

Dr. Raffy’s face especially lit up when he paid tribute to his wife. “I had gone to church during Vartanantz and a girl came and stood in front of me. I knew this is the girl. Of course, she was beautiful, tall and elegant. For the first and only time in my life, I waited after church to have a nice and good look at her and see if someone knows her. Her name is one that has always been romantic to me — Shoghag.”

As shown in the video, since Armenia’s independence, Dr. Raffy A. Hovanessian “has been one of the staunch advocates of Continuing Medical Education (CME) of healthcare professionals in Armenia. Recently under the banner of the AAHPPO, he initiated a new project - the CME for doctors and nurses in Artsakh, and he designated the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) to implement it.”

The Dr. Raffy Hovanessian Education Fund was established at FAR by the Hovanessian Family.

Following the inspiring church service, the Diocesan Kavookjian Hall came alive as all in attendance continued their remembrances of Dr. Raffy during a lavish dinner.

The evening’s tribute was eloquently written by his 15 year-old youngest grandchild, Alessandra Victoria Agopian: “My Medzbaba is a legacy within himself Shining and bright like God’s crafted stars The gift of his love and his care for those who were both blood or not, lives on forever. This is my Medzbaba.”



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Arts & Culture

‘Where Is Your Groom’ to Be Performed in Vancouver

VANCOUVER — The Armenian-American comedic play “Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh)” will be performed for the Vancouver Armenian community on Saturday, October 15, at the Michael J. Fox Theatre, in an event hosted by the Armenian Cultural Association of British Columbia (ACA).

“Where Is Your Groom?,” written by Taleen Babayan and directed by Jirayir Arslanyan, is a play that crosses ethnic boundaries and delivers shared laughs as it follows the story of an Armenian-Canadian family’s quest to find their daughter a suitable spouse. The themes of assimilation, cultural identity and generational divides take center stage in this warm-hearted comedy that shows the lengths one family will go to in order to maintain their ethnic ties while living in North America. The play is in both English and Armenian, and suitable for Armenian and non-Armenian speaking audiences.

The play debuted under Babayan’s tutelage in New York City in 2013. The original and its sequel have gone



A scene from “Where Is Your Groom?”

on to perform over 15 times around the U.S., including in Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Fresno, featuring close to 50 different cast and crew members. This current iteration will spotlight a local cast from the greater Vancouver region.

For members of the Armenian Canadian Armenian community, it was a chance to widen their horizons, participate in their culture, and enjoy their time on stage.

“It’s been fulfilling getting to know others in the community and really forming a bond as a group,” said Natalie Arslanyan, who plays the character of bride-to-be Lara. “This has been a unique experience that I’ll cherish forever.”

Ben Migirditch, who plays the groom-to-be Ari, hopes that the performance will encourage the community to connect and learn about one another.

“Art has a way of bridging gaps in time and language to bring us together in a shared culture,” said Migirditch. “To me, this play does exactly that while reminding us of the joy of inclusion, the importance of family,

see GROOM, page 15



Nemra at the Baikar Building in Watertown: from left, Vaspur Yeghiazaryan, Van Yeghiazaryan, Marianna Karakeyan, Marek Zaborski (photo Aram Arkun)

Nemra Recreates Musical World for Boston, Supports Erebuni School

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The four musicians of the band Nemra came to the Boston area from Armenia to play for the first time in the United States. They perform original alternative rock songs in English and new renditions of traditional Armenian folksongs in Armenian.

The band is composed of two pairs of siblings, lead singer and guitarist Van Yeghiazaryan and bass guitarist and backup singer Vaspur Yeghiazaryan, and keyboard player and singer Marianna Karakeyan and her brother Marek Zaborski on drums. They have issued two albums, “Mubla” (2016) and “Hmm” (2019), along with a number of singles.

The band’s September 24 performance at the Robbins Memorial Town Hall in Arlington, Mass. in support of the Erebuni School was well attended.

Creating World through Music

Van explained that both the band’s name Nemra, and the name of their first album “Mubla” are reversed versions of the words Armen (the root of what the world calls the Armenians) and album. The reasoning behind this, he said, is “we in general like to look from different points of view at any matter. For example, if something is said to be white, we want to examine it in various ways to confirm that it is white. We don’t participate in brainwashing. We want to form our own opinions by thinking and looking from different points of view.”

However, he said, they don’t espouse any particular philosophy or ideology and do not try to give advice or educate through their music. Instead, he said, “What is important is that we attempt to be sincere to the greatest degree.”

“In addition,” Marianna said, there is the idea that in this reality, we created the planet Nemra. Often there are certain things that we don’t like in this reality, so we go to our reality, to our world, and transport people with us.” Visitors to the band’s website (<https://nemraband.com/>) immediately are drawn into this world, with the greeting “Welcome to Planet Nemra, where music is life.”

Van said that life in Armenia in particular can be very difficult sometimes and escape is necessary. The band’s music does not deal with political issues. “When we give our concerts, together with our audiences, we walk in a totally different world,” he said.

The custom in Armenia has been that people enjoy concerts sitting down, but do not participate more viscerally. Marianna said that Nemra serves as an example to show people that they can be more free with their emotions and energy. She said, “When people come to our concerts, even those who are shy, slowly while seeing others dancing and happy, begin to feel more free. In today’s reality, it is very important that a person can express his energy. We are establishing the platform [for this].” Van added that Nemra also is an example to concert goers to not be *anshnork* (indecent).

see NEMRA, page 14

Exhibition Of Aram Isabekyan’s Paintings Takes Place in Yerevan

By Arto Manoukian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator/Abaka

YEREVAN — The 28th annual Tekeyan Awards ceremony took place on September 23 and concurrently an exhibition of the works of the painter Aram Isabekyan was held at the Ara Sargsyan Exhibition Hall in the Artists Union of Armenia building in Yerevan from September 22 which ends on September 29.

Numerous works from his career of many decades were displayed. The exhibition was curated by Osya Karamyan.

Isabekyan was born in Yerevan in 1952 and graduated from the De-



Aram Isabekyan, at left, with author Arto Manoukian

partment of Painting of the Institute of Fine Arts and Theater in Yerevan in 1976. From 1979 to the present he teaches at the same institute, where in 1990 he became an associate professor and in 1992 full professor. From 1994, he has served as rector of the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts.



Copy of the painting “Sumgait” which was displayed in the Shushi art museum and now has been destroyed

In 2001 he was awarded the Movses Khorenatsi medal while in 2002, he received the title of People’s Artist of the Republic of Armenia. He has participated in more than 200 exhibitions in Armenia and the Soviet Union since 1976, and has had solo exhibitions in Yerevan, Paris, Aleppo, Cairo and London.

For more on his work, see <http://aramisabekyan.com>.



ARTS & CULTURE

Nemra Recreates Musical World, Supports Erebuni School

NEMRA, from page 13

Turning into a Band, Attaining Success

The idea of Nemra was established in 2012. Van and his brother Vaspur studied classical music as children but in their late teens began to love rock. They soon knew that they wanted to form a band, Van related, and there was a boy in the courtyard of their apartment who also loved music, so they decided to become a group. They needed a drummer, and found out about Marianna through an acquaintance. Marianna had learned a little drumming from her brother Marek, but they learned that she was actually a professional pianist, so they told her to stick to that.

However, she left the country, disrupting the group for a while. She proposed that Marek join the band, and after coming to a few concerts he did so in 2015 and from around 2015-16 the group began to work seriously and perform more live.

“In Armenia,” Van said, “you have to be crazy to found a rock group. It was not accepted and even now it is not fully accepted by all of society. It is largely underground.” Underground means performing in pubs and small venues with 70-100 seats, where you do not generally make money, Van observed.

He said that soon Nemra became one of the fortunate bands that were liked and could turn mainstream. Usually in Armenia there is a stereotype that rock must be metal or hard rock, and Satanic in nature. People are not aware of pop rock, alternative rock and other similar styles, Van said. Hearing their music, people understood that there can be melody and the words can convey emotions for all. He said that perhaps their music videos contributed to their popularity.

Their audiences are very varied, especially after they issued versions of Armenian songs. People of all ages, ranging from children to grandparents, come. Van said that their audiences were distinguished by being very good singers. In fact, sometimes they sing half of the songs themselves, he said laughing, making things very easy for the band.

Vaspur said that their audiences help change the stereotypes in Armenia that rock audiences always break things. On the contrary, he said, Nemra’s listeners are educated and mature and serve as examples for others who just want to enjoy the music.

In 2018, Nemra sent in a song for the Armenian national level of competition for Eurovision. Van said that their approach was not suitable for the Eurovision format, with a big show, as Nemra wanted to focus on the music. Nevertheless, of the 20 participants chosen, Nemra won second place, and only very narrowly lost first place. The same year, Nemra was recognized as the best rock group in Armenia. Since that competition closed afterwards, they remain as such, Van said with a laugh.

While Nemra would not participate again in the initial selection competition, if it were to be invited directly to participate in Eurovision with its songs and its own ideas, it would gladly represent Armenia, Van said.

Recently they have been able to perform in large halls. Van said their latest concerts usually are in a hall holding 1,000 people, while in Moscow, they played for 2,000 people. They also are called upon to perform on Armenian television.

At the Starmus Festival this September in Yerevan, Nemra performed as an opening act for Queen guitarist Brian May in a hall that holds around 10,000. Brian May even gifted his pick, a sixpence coin, to them and wished them good luck, Van said. The band also met there for the first time in person

Serj Tankian, lead vocalist and primary lyricist of the Armenian-American heavy metal group System of a Down, who had shared two of their songs previously on social media.

Marek added that Nemra was one of the few rock groups able to earn money in Armenia. It plays in different venues, not only in Yerevan but in the provinces, and can fill public squares up with thousands of people, and they sing Nemra’s songs by heart.

In fact, Van said, their success has led to a few incidents but they have become accustomed to the adulation. He said, “We are a hotblooded people, and when people crowd in to take pictures, they push one another. Sometimes they surround me and squeeze from all sides, but our security has worked well.” He said that at first having such fol-



Nemra at the Starmus Festival (photo courtesy Nemra Facebook page)

lowers was very pleasant. He said they encouraged that energy, casting wood onto that fire so that it would burn more, but now they are more calm and try to prevent incidents from happening.

Working Hard

Despite this growing success, only Van at present works fulltime for Nemra. Van studied music as a child but graduated from the Armenian State University of Economics in marketing and business management. He never worked in that field, but has done various jobs in the past, he said. Today, however, he deals with publicity, social media and managerial issues for Nemra fulltime along with writing songs.

Vaspur, a year younger than Van, graduated in radiophysics from Yerevan State University and today works as a web developer. Marianna graduated Yerevan State Conservatory as a classical pianist and then went to Poznan, Poland to study culture management for a year. She said, “Since a musician must have other work, I worked at various places and at present have been working for two years at the Polish embassy in Armenia.”

Marek said he is a self-taught drummer starting in 2000, who had the famous big band drummer Robert Yolchyan as his mentor. He was the first drummer of the Armenian State Jazz Orchestra in the Soviet period. Marek played for 12 years with Armenia’s Reincarnation Orchestra, before leaving it. He works as a sound engineer and auto mechanic.

English vs. Armenian

Van explained that they did not make a conscious decision to only write their original songs in English but it just naturally happened that way. They were inspired by English-language songs, and their style or genre, more than by the English language itself. They first became familiar with rock through System of a Down, and then went on to like various classic rock groups. Their favorite is the Beatles, followed by Led Zeppelin.

Furthermore, he said, “we always thought that we should speak in the language of the world, to present our ideas so that any nation or people can understand them and feel their emotions. For us, a person remains a person irrespective of their nationality.”

On the other hand, Vaspur said that they

Whatever language the band members use, they attempt to maintain a unique style. Van said, “We have struggled a lot to avoid becoming too similar to the music that we love. There have been periods when I have deliberately not listened to my favorite bands for as long as two years, for example, so their influence dissipates and we create our own. I think over time the mix of Armenian spirit and music from abroad that has inspired us has succeeded in becoming our style.”

Performing Overseas

So far, the group has performed outside of Armenia in Russia, Poland, Georgia, Ukraine and the Republic of Buryatia (Eastern Siberia, in Russia). Often such concerts happen because of personal contacts. In Buryatia’s capital of Ulan-Ude, they performed at the Voice of Nomads festival in 2015, and it marked their first taste of fame.

Van said that the festival was so well organized that large loudspeakers were placed in their public square to play the songs of the participants for one month. As a result, when Nemra gave its concert the locals had learned the words and sang along with the band. Vaspur said that this was the first time that when Nemra came on stage, they were photographed. Van said it wasn’t like that then in Armenia, exclaiming, “We felt it for the first time there. The girls all ran towards me.”

As Armenia is a small country, sooner or later Nemra ends up performing in the same places there. Van remarked that in such circumstances, their popularity will decline sooner or later, so opportunities to seek new audiences abroad are wonderful.

It is at this propitious point that Arminé Manukyan, principal of the Erebuni Armenian School in Belmont, Mass., entered the picture. She came across the video of Nemra’s popular song *Nare*, which by now has been viewed over 7 million times. She said she had always heard it sung in the same style by ethnographers, but Nemra’s interpretation showed great talent. That led her to write to Marianna, whom she did not know personally, to invite the group to perform in Boston in a benefit for the school. The Covid pandemic interrupted the process, which required a lot of paperwork, but afterwards, as things got better in the US, it was possible to arrange the concert.

Van thanked Arminé for her work. He declared that they had come to Boston with great excitement and were very happy to support the activities of the Armenian school, which performs the important function of keeping Armenians outside of their homeland Armenian in identity.

Arminé remarked that Covid had a deleterious effect on the school and community at large. Before the pandemic began, there were 180 students, but now the number has practically halved, since parents prefer online classes. She pointed out that the health motivations were understandable but this leads to a loss of the sense of community.

Arminé stated, “Keeping a school in the diaspora is part of patriotism and love of Armenia. Believe me, it is very important for Armenians from Armenia to have a school here amidst foreignness.” She pointed out that Armenians are very divided here among themselves, with various cliques and factions, but schools can provide an occasion for the community to come together.

Vaspur said that they were happy to be doing a good thing and helping the school. At the same time, the trip also provides fresh air and new energy for the band. Their one wish? In one voice, they all exclaimed, “Peace for our country, peace for the world. May people come to their senses.”



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



(Photos courtesy of Bee Sweet Citrus)

Cranberry Orange Breakfast Muffins

Bee Sweet Citrus is a grower, packer and shipper of premium California citrus. Located in the heart of California's Central Valley, the Fowler-based company is family owned and operated, and harvests approximately 10 different citrus varieties throughout the year.

Bee Sweet Citrus sits adjacent to California Highway 99 and features state-of-the-art technology that allow its team to wash, sort and grade citrus with precision. In addition to providing families with fresh citrus year-round, the citrus company also demonstrates leadership in the areas of environmental stewardship, so-



Jim Marderosian, Founder and Owner of Fowler, California-based Bee Sweet Citrus

cial sustainability and philanthropy. Committed to shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders, the company has donated an innovative packing line to the students of California State University, Fresno, and works closely with California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, Reedley College and other campuses to provide internship opportunities for students.

Over the last 35 years, Bee Sweet Citrus continues to set itself apart as a leader in produce. From installing an automatic palletizing system in its packing house to minimize manual labor, to starting construction on a brand new, state-of-the-art mandarin packing facility, the California citrus company continues to look for ways to improve its efficiency.

Bee Sweet's diverse citrus line caters to consumers around the world. You can expect to see their product in retailers located throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and several Pacific Rim countries, including Japan.

Please try Bee Sweet's delicious Cranberry Orange Breakfast Muffin recipe for your next breakfast, luncheon, or as a light snack, and visit their website at www.beesweetcitrus.com to learn more.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed orange juice from Bee Sweet Citrus Navel Oranges
- Zest from 1 medium Bee Sweet Citrus Navel Orange
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cups oatmeal
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (melted)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/4 cups fresh cranberries

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 23–25 minutes

Servings: 12

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with cupcake liners.

In a large bowl, mix the dry ingredients together. In a second bowl, whisk together the wet ingredients. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients bowl and mix until everything is combined. It is okay if the batter is slightly lumpy.

Gently fold in the cranberries. Evenly distribute the batter into the cupcake liners. Bake for 23–25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the middle of the muffins comes out clean. Let muffins cool before you serve.

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Bee Sweet Citrus Incorporated © 2022.

'Where Is Your Groom' to Be Performed in Vancouver

GROOM, from page 13

and the rich spiritual reward of working to keep a culture alive."

After focusing on music for the last few years, Ivan Vladikovic returned to his acting roots for the role of "Matt," a non-Armenian vying for Lara's affection. Reflecting on his grandfather's Armenian heritage, Vladikovic felt a connection to the character, who is a musician.

"This character and play hits home with me as it draws many parallels to my personal life," said Vladikovic. "I'm truly excited for gaining better insight into my heritage and the Armenian community

through theatre and art."

As chairperson of ACA of BC, Anita Desjardins was looking to organize a cultural event for the community that would "lift the spirits and bring people together" after two years of experiencing the COVID pandemic.

"Where is your Groom" is the perfect vehicle for not only the Armenian community but the larger Canadian community as well," said Desjardins. "It's hard work and a labor of love, but it has brought a wide variety of members together, including first, second, and third generation Canadian-Armenians, in a real spirit of friendship

and cooperation."

"I'm delighted that 'Where Is Your Groom' continues to come alive on stage almost a decade after its debut, which is a testament to the significance of the play and themes that hit home in our daily lives and communities," said Babayan. "I'm so pleased that the Armenian Cultural Association of British Columbia took the initiative to stage the play for the Vancouver Armenian community and to connect more Armenians on and off the stage."

The cast includes Harout Apigian, Natalie Arslanyan, Sako Arzoumanian, Elo Attarmigirian, Hagop Attarmigirian, Re-

becca Desjardins, Liza Deyrmenjian, Ani Khoudian, Alice Lazarian, Rita Manoukian, Viken Majarian, Ben Migirditch, Shahin Soheili, Ivan Vladikovic and Simon Yaghjian.

The ACA is a non-profit organization that strives to preserve and promote the heritage and culture of the Armenian people and focuses on efforts to foster a wider appreciation of Armenian history, traditions and values. The Michael J. Fox Theatre is located at 7373 MacPherson Avenue, Burnaby, BC V5J 2B7.

For tickets visit <https://www.whereisyourgroom.ca/>.

Books

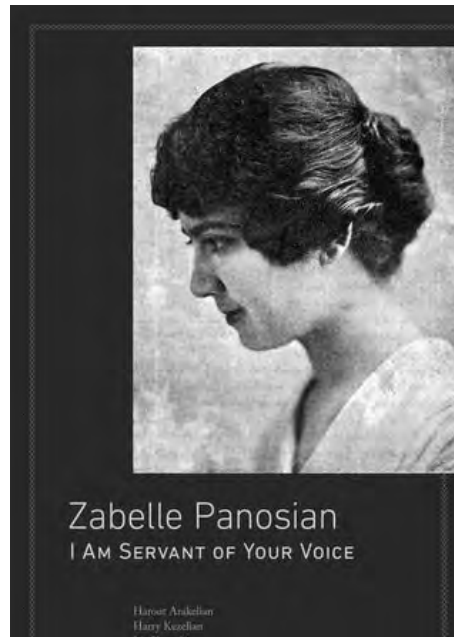
Authors Ian Nagoski and Harout Arakelian to Discuss New Book On Soprano Zabelle Panoisian

FRESNO — Music researcher and producer Ian Nagoski and music collector and researcher Harout Arakelian will present an in-person lecture titled “I am Servant of Your Voice: Armenian-American Soprano Zabelle Panoisian, 1891-1986” on Thursday, October 13, at 7 p.m., in the Industrial Technology Building, Room 101 (corner of Barstow and Campus Dr.) in the Fresno State campus.

The soprano Zabelle Panoisian (b. Bardizag 1891; d. New York City 1986) was among the most significant voices of the genocide generation of Armenian-Americans. She recorded 11 songs from March 1917 to June 1918 for Columbia Records in New York City and personally raised millions of dollars for the relief of Arme-

nians through benefit concerts in the late '10s, regularly collaborating with the tenor Armenag Shah-Mouradian. Her recordings resonated with audiences for decades. She toured Europe successfully and sought out Komitas Vardapet in Paris, publishing a first-hand account of her meeting with him as a devotee of his work.

Panoisian's music and story underwent a period of forgetting during her lifetime and especially since then. But through recent listening to her breathtakingly beautiful, century-old recordings a revival of her legacy is taking place. Non-Armenians all over the world are learning her name and her music and, through them, a story of the Armenian-American audience who cared for her during the wake of the genocide,



awakening a previously neglected story of a great American singer.

A newly published biography of Panoisian, *Zabelle Panoisian: I am a Servant of your Voice*, undertaken by three independent researchers, presents her story along with new, careful restorations of her complete recordings providing an opportunity to look deeply into the life and music of a unique and serious artist who left an amazing body of work.

Ian Nagoski who published Panoisian's biography will talk about her life and mu-

sic along with comments by his co-author Harout Arakelian who will speak directly to her relationship to the Fresno area.

Nagoski is a music researcher and record producer in Baltimore, Md. For more than a decade, he has produced scores of reissues of early 20th-century recordings in languages other than English for labels including “Dust-to-Digital,” “Tompkins Square,” his own “Canary Records,” and others. His enthusiastic talks have been hosted at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens Greece, the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, and New York University.

Arakelian is a video editor, music collector and researcher based in Los Angeles, California. His focus is the Armenian contribution to the landscape of art and culture, with a specific lens on the American experience. He is actively working on collecting every known commercial recording from the 78 rpm era. He contributes articles for the Armenian Museum of America's “Sound Archive.” He began a series of live presentations at Abril Bookstore, which only ended due to the Covid pandemic. He has been a guest lecturer at UCLA and has delivered presentations for the Armenian Institute in London.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

For more information about the lecture visit <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenian-studies/news-events/index.html>.

Woman in Trial And in Revelation: Vehanoush Tekian's Loyalty to Life

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Vehanoush Tekian's *Woman in Trial And in Revelation* (Zankag Publishing House, Yerevan, Armenia, 2022), reaffirms Virginia Woolf's assertion that “the principle which controls the essay is simply that it should give pleasure. . . . The essayist must know how to write. . . . The triumph is the triumph of style.” Indeed, it is Tekian's masterful manipulation of Western Armenian that foregrounds the woman of the title and gives the short stories and the poems assembled in this latest collection a unique intensity.

The foregrounding starts with the title itself, which validates the author as a woman. The dedication that follows, “To my grandmother/Takou neneyin/And my

daughter/Nayiriin,” brings together three generations of women. Casually woven into the pieces are the rituals of the everyday lives of these women. Fermenting the madzoon in the warm clay pot, or lighting the *odjakh* with the dried peels of oranges hanging from the kitchen window frame, provide solidity through their continuity. “A spoonful to you, and a spoonful to you . . . /Madzoon is good for the bones,” says the grandmother as she coaxes her grandchildren to eat. The mother/grandmother is, in fact, always present, always ready to balance the “craziness” of the world with “compassion” and “selflessness,” so life can go on. In Tekian's world, injustices are brought to trial in an inner tribunal built on the trusted powerful inner voice of a woman's instincts, and not through the externally imposed justice of the courts of law, “full of deceit and bribery.”

The celebration of women is not done at the expense of the men, however. Tekian's is not a vision based on the exclusionary politics of oppositions. Indeed, there is empathy for “the father, the brother, the son, the husband and the lover who went to war and never returned,” a theme that surfaces in several of the stories. Deceitful and abusive husbands are surely present, but it is life itself, not men, that is brought to justice.

Tekian's is not the pitting of the old against the new either. The poet celebrates the so-called traditional virtues of piety, loyalty and selflessness, but she also glorifies passion. “Life is to be grabbed, not begged for,” she writes in the short story, “A Triangle with One Angle.” “Don't keep love pure. . . . Without passion your days are cold and the world is flat.” Even divorce, a devastating personal experience, is seen as “a saving vessel,” rather than “destruction,” testifying, once again, to a woman's instinct to cohere, to create.

A good example of this inclusive vision is the prose piece, “Dawn,” that opens the collection. In this story, the “Diasporan poet par excellence,” shares her experience of being asked, when on a visit to Armenia, to submit her manuscripts to the Yeghishe



Vehanoush Tekian

Charentz Museum of Literature and Art in Yerevan, so they can be placed next to the archives of Varoujan, Siamanto, Baronian and other greats. The request is evidence of the homeland's support of diasporan authors, and challenges the widely held belief that Soviet Armenia ignored Armenian writers beyond its borders.

The scene depicted in the selections is not an exaggeratedly desolate scene. The daughter well knows that after the mother's death, “It is a different world now. . . . My life is full of cares and fear.” Gone is “the sanctity of marriage,” gone “the Good that used to inundate my house with light.” In “Mama, Wherever You Are,” “When you were here . . . /the thorns of the roses were not thorns,” writes Tekian. Yet,

the mother's values of compassion and of self-giving never fail to provide relief. Life ultimately prevails. In “A Triangle with One Angle,” the heroine, “like everybody else, had not been able to figure out the meaning of life, but she had believed in life.” (Italics mine)

Notwithstanding, it is easy to perceive statements like, “Life offers evil pretending it is good,” “Justice is a mere word from another planet,” “They say life has a purpose/We have purpose but where is life?” and many similar others, as bitterness. But there is no lamentation here. Even when, as in her long meditative poem, “Divorce,” the speaker prays to God to help her “not to be good,” so she can force the poison

continued on next page

NAASR to Present Storytelling Program For Children

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will host an in-person children's event on Saturday, October 1, at 10:30 am Eastern at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave.

Meghri Dervartanian and Mary Galstian will tell the story of “Anahid” in both Western and Eastern Armenian, followed by a fun activity. An adult must accompany the children. Masks are recommended to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

“Anahid” is an Armenian fable told by Ghazaros Aghayan as Tork Angegh. David Kherdian used the same tale as the basis for his book *The Golden Bracelet*.

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 14 — Opening Reception: Thursday, September 15, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Members Exhibition 2022, the upcoming exhibition at Mosesian Arts, Watertown, gives current members of the arts center an opportunity to showcase their work. What is surprising in this year's exhibition is how many of the artists turned to nature for inspiration, for comfort, and reflection. <https://www.mosesianarts.org/>

OCTOBER 2 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will host its International Food Festival which from 12 noon to 3 p.m. For more information, see <https://htaac.org/>.

OCTOBER 3 — St. James Men's Club Monthly Dinner Meeting, with speaker Stepan Piligian. Monday. Topic will be "The Struggle for Security in Armenia." Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner, 6:15 p.m. Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. \$20 per person. New members welcome. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street. Watertown. For more information see church website

OCTOBER 8 – SAYAT NOVA DANCE COMPANY'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCE. A must see show! Honoring our heritage and celebrating 35 years of preserving and promoting the Armenian culture. To be held at Regis College (Eleanor Welch Casey Theatre), Weston, MA. Show begins promptly at 7 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm). To purchase tickets and to see the seating chart and pricing, please click on buytickets.at/sayatnovadancecompany/753694. All tickets are final sale. No videography.

OCTOBER 9 — Sayat Nova Dance Company's 35TH ANNIVERSARY GALA, celebrating 35 years of preserving and promoting Armenian culture. To be held at The Castle at Sheraton, 1657 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA. 6 pm – Reception; 7 pm – Dinner and Program. Entertainment by popular singer GOHAR HOVHANNISYAN & BAND. Donation: \$150 for adults; \$100 for 18 and under. RSVP by September 30. Tables of 10 guests highly encouraged. www.sayatnova.com/35th-anniversary

OCTOBER 14-15 — St. James Armenian Church 75th Annual Bazaar – Our traditional two-day Bazaar is back! Fri 12-8 pm, Sat 11 am-7 pm. Delicious Armenian Food, Mezze, Pastries, and Baked Goods. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children's Activities, Booths and Vendors. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar.

OCTOBER 15 —Armenian Friends of America (AFA) will celebrate their 10th Anniversary of Hye Kef 5 with a dance. Performing will be Mal Barsamian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Leon Janikian, Ken Kalajian and Jason Naroian. 6:30 – Midnight, Doubletree by Hilton, 123 Olde River Road Andover. For AFA Room rates, Call the hotel front desk. Tickets are now available online: www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.Org. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

OCTOBER 22 — The Women's Guild of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, will host a traditional Hey Jan Ghapama Dinner Dance to re-create the old tradition of serving Ghapama (a sumptuous stuffed pumpkin delicacy) on New Year's Eve and Weddings in Armenia. Losh Kebab Dinner and dancing to DJ Gabriel. Kazanjian Ballroom, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. 6:30 p.m. Adults advanced reservation - \$40, \$50 at the door; Children, 6 – 16, \$25. Children under 6 – free. For reservations, please call or email Yn. Ann at 617-797-9015, annakesabyan10@gmail.com; or Isabelle, 978-459-7315, ihame@aol.com.

OCTOBER 29 — A conversation with artists from "On the Edge: Los Angeles Art 1970s-1990s from the Joan and Jack Quinn Family Collection" currently on display at the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Featuring artists Laddie John Dill, Gregory Wiley Edwards, and Joe Fay. Artist panel 2 - 3:30 p.m. Reception 3:30 – 5 p.m. Suggested donation \$15, free for museum members and students. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/conversation-w-artists-from-on-the-edge-los-angeles-art-1970s-1990s-tickets-412385374757>

NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 2 — The Ararat Armenian Congregational Church at 2 Salem St. Salem, NH will hold a Shish Kebab Picnic Sunday, Oct. 2, open to the public. Please join an inspiring church service starting at 10:30 a.m. The service will be followed by the picnic from noon to 4 p.m. on the church grounds. The first 100 guests attending the church service will receive a free Shish Kebab Dinner. Wildlife Encounters for kids is at 2 p.m. Children will be able to see small wildlife animals "live" in a safe environment and learn about the "wild" life. Face Painting will be available for free for kids, plus an amazing Bounce House and free kid's giveaways. The event includes a full shish kebob dinner, dessert, live music, Wildlife Encounters, face painting, a bounce house and more. Meal tickets are \$20 at the door and include your choice of lamb or chicken, rice pilaf, vegetables, salad, hummus, tabouleh, pita bread and dessert. Free Kids meals for children 12 and under. Free meal for the first 100 who attend the church service at 10:30 a.m. All Tickets sold at door. Follow us on Instagram @Ararat.Church or visit www.araratchurchNH.org For more information call or text Mary Ann Janigian @ 603-770-3375.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 15 —The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Chapter is celebrating the diamond anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association with a gala. Honoree will be Sen. Robert Menendez (R-N.J.) artist Tigran Asatryan and his band from Los Angeles will perform for the first time for the New York/New Jersey community. The gala dinner, taking place at the Terrace in Paramus, N.J. (293 Paramus Road), will include a sophisticated silent auction pieces as well as a variety of raffle items. For sponsorships or tickets, please contact Talia Bouldoukian (rsvptaliab@gmail.com or 917 238-3970) or Tamar Degirmenci (tiiaa20@aol.com, or 201 315-6486).

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 1 — AHARI, the Armenian Historical Association of RI, is sponsoring an Open House, "Under the Tent", at the museum on Saturday, Oct 1, 2022 from 1PM - 4 PM. celebrating its 5th Anniversary since its opening on 245 Waterman Street, Providence. It will be an interactive, informative and fun day. Bring old photos with Armenian script for translations. Live performances, dance instructions, refreshments and more. Chronicles' oral histories. Free and open to the public. info@armenianhistorical-ri.org or 401-454-5111.

OCTOBER 14-DECEMBER 9 — Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents:

- October 14 - " Mer Anoush Ayrenik" Grigor Haroutyunyan Conductor, Chorale of Ghazaraos Saryan Art School, Yerevan, Armenia, 7.30 p.m.
- October 23 -Spiritual Music Festival featuring the Choirs & Soloists of: St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church (Newport, RI), St. Mary and Mena Coptic Orthodox Church of RI (Cranston, RI), The Holy Family Coptic Orthodox Church (Attleboro, MA), Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (Providence, RI) Sunday, October 23 at 5 p.m. at Church sanctuary. Donation gratefully received. Refreshments
- November 4 - Biblical music from the Louvre, Paris by Edouard Barseghian, Dr. of Philosophy (Musicology), 7:30 p.m.
- December 9 - Christmas concert at Church sanctuary, Friday at 7.30 p.m.

Armenian Cultural Hour: Whether or not you have a Facebook account, you can find the LIVESTREAM of the event through the parish's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/armenianchurchprovidence/videos/>

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down the throat of whoever gave it to her to drink, the verdict is in favor of Life. Abandoning it is not an option. "What to do?" is the question.

"Change the doctrines when you can no longer believe in them/so you can believe in new beginnings . . . Say No to servitude and to deceit," writes Tekian in "Divorce." In "After Divorce," another poem that encapsulates her spirit of defiance, she writes: "I shall teach my children to swim away from the ruins/ . . . and not live in the shadows." Loyalty to life persists: "Bidi dogma

— I shall prevail."

A striking feature of Tekian's style are her images. The sun is a constant presence, hastening to enter through the open window on the very first page of the book, and appearing on almost every page thereafter, to the very last. The sun comforts, soothes and provides warmth. Much of the "meaning" of Tekian's work is in the power of her words. The poet seduces the reader with her colors, with the green eyes of, the alternately "pink," "white," and "blue," Mama. Tekian's writing is also full of memorably insightful lines: "To talk about pain is not

difficult. What is difficult is not to talk about it," or, "They say forget. Every day there are things to forget/There is no time to forget."

Western Armenian is on UNESCO's list of endangered languages. While many have forecast its doom, a few visionary souls are doing the impossible to keep it alive through programs with prominent scholars. A heartwarming example is the Padus-Araxes Cultural Association founded thirty-six years ago in Venice, Italy, that gathers together students from the Armenian diaspora for a three-week intensive

summer course of Armenian. According to its founder and director, Archbishop Levon Zekian, "The Western Armenian language is in real danger of disappearance . . . and this program is not ready to stop." With her passion for words, Tekian herself does no less to keep Armenian, according to her "the most beautiful language," thriving.

A final note: Providing the dates of composition and/or publication for the individual pieces in the collection would have created some context and enhanced the experience of reading them. "Dawn," discussed earlier, would be a good example.



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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

The Battlefield Moves to the UN Forum



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

After the September 13 Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia, fresh graves are being dug at Yerablur Memorial Military Cemetery and more families are grieving the losses of 207 soldiers and civilians. Now, the battlefield has shifted to the United Nations, while a tenuous ceasefire holds on the ground.

There is still apprehension in Armenia's political circles and amongst the general populace as the news reports about military flights to Azerbaijan, from Israel and other directions, and concentration of Turkish armed forces on Armenia's borders.

During the 44-Day War, whose second anniversary — September 27 — is upon us, the international community kept almost a complete silence. However, this time around, there is more interest and alarms are being raised against future escalation. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict was on the agenda of two sessions of the United Nations Security Council this past week. As the 77th session of the UN General Assembly began, the battleground moved to New York, first through the speeches delivered by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, and then by other parties concerned, primarily Iran and Russia.

Pashinyan, in his speech, presented a full picture of the recent aggression, with its grim results, and called for Azerbaijan to sign a comprehensive peace treaty. To this day, Azerbaijan has not responded to Armenia's call. Instead, Bayramov highlighted the UN resolutions about the conflict, sounding as if the world body had supported unilateral resolutions against Armenia.

Since the debate was taking place at the UN, Pashinyan did not play up the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, which was created by the UN. That could have scared the hell out of Bayramov, because Baku refuses to recognize the role of the OSCE in the conflict, thereby issuing a direct challenge to the UN.

Bayramov's speech was crafted in such a way as to cast Armenia as the aggressor, while his nation is cast in the role of the "good guy." He stated: "After the provocation of the Armenian armed forces on September 12-14, 2022, Azerbaijan is engaged in eliminating the humanitarian consequences and in this context, declared its readiness to unilaterally return the remains of fallen soldiers to Armenia."

This means that killing those soldiers was no crime, and that in addition, for returning their bodies, Azerbaijan should be rewarded.

Any rational leader in the audience could draw his or her conclusions that Armenia, as a defeated party from two years ago, would not have any motivation for further provocations.

However, the practice at the UN is that the politicians believe what their political interests dictate and not the simple truth. For example, Bayramov touted the meager level of energy supplied to Europe to gain sympathy as he said, "At the same time, Azerbaijan remains a reliable supplier of energy sources to the international markets."

Of course, the parties who are the beneficiaries of that energy supply, such as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, will need to believe Bayramov's narrative.

Bayramov also issued a veiled threat as he stated, "Every time Armenia resorts to serious provocations, avoiding responsibility for making the necessary decisions in order to make a breakthrough at a crucial stage, Azerbaijan is determined to overcome any threats to its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the security of its citizens" and ask "Armenia to refrain from further escalation of the situation. Armenia should

constructively participate in the normalization process in order to create a stable situation in the region by establishing friendly, neighborly relations."

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu endorsed his colleague's appeal to Armenia, urging that Armenia sign a comprehensive peace treaty with Azerbaijan. For Ankara and Baku, that peace treaty has to be signed at the expense of Armenia's sovereign territory, which would be gifted to Azerbaijan as war booty.

Most representatives at the Security Council tried to observe strict neutrality. The Chinese representative went so far as to blame both sides for violating the ceasefire, although he added there can be no solution to the conflict without the settlement of the Karabakh problem. Only the representatives of Norway and particularly France indicated plainly that Azerbaijan was the aggressor. The Russian representative, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, prided himself that it was Moscow which helped to bring about the ceasefire, whereas Russia, as Armenia's strategic ally in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), should not have allowed Azerbaijan to initiate the war in the first place.

Azerbaijani foreign policy establishment and pro-government think tanks are particularly displeased that the US, through its Secretary of State Antony Blinken, US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy, as well as Speaker of the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi, have been pointing fingers at Azerbaijan as the aggressor and have been asking them to retreat from Armenia's sovereign territory and return all POWs.

Meeting along the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi talked to Prime Minister Pashinyan and Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian to his Armenian counterpart, Ararat Mirzoyan, and both Iranian officials restated that any changes to the borders are red lines for Iran.

Iran has troop concentrations on Armenia's borders to stave off any incursion from Azerbaijan or Turkey. But the Iranian leadership is well aware that while world public opinion is focused on Ukraine, its own territory may become the victim of a surprise attack. Therefore, if Armenia is

threatened, we should not expect Iran to get involved, because that will be a trap set up by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Israel and the US. This scenario may look more realistic when we remember how wars in Iraq, Syria, and Libya began: internal dissent was triggered first, as is happening these days in Iran, then the foreign aggression follows.

With all these developments, the atmosphere is extremely tense in Armenia. The political elite is confused and Pashinyan's party is very cautious with regard to soliciting anyone's help outside Civil Contract. Three former presidents — Levon Ter-Petrosian, Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan — met this week with the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II to unify the country, but they face all kinds of negative pushback, suggesting they are about to conspire and stage a coup.

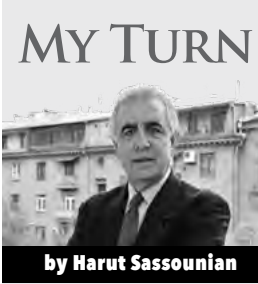
Ter-Petrosian was on Petros Ghazaryan's talk show to shed some light as to why all the former leaders, who are sworn enemies, had come together. He stated that what all the outside parties are asking from Armenia is only known to Pashinyan and that not even his close associates are privy to that knowledge. Whatever document Pashinyan will sign, he said, will be detrimental to Armenia and Pashinyan will be blamed as a traitor. The least he can do, Ter-Petrosian suggested, is to share the information with the former leadership, under strict confidentiality, so that they can offer some wise counsel and possibly find the least awful path, and in that way, the responsibility will be shared by the government and the opposition through a pan national consensus.

Indeed Pashinyan alone cannot hold Armenia's destiny in his hands and face history.





COMMENTARY



The Short-Lived Fake Republic of ‘West Azerbaijan Goycha-Zangezur’

Last week, two Azerbaijanis arrogantly declared themselves to be the leaders of the fake “West Azerbaijan Goycha-Zangezur Republic,” which claimed to include Lake Sevan and the Syunik province of the Republic of Armenia. This announcement was made a few days after the barbaric attack on the eastern border of Armenia by Azerbaijan.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has frequently referred to large areas of the Republic of Armenia as part of Azerbaijan, giving them fake Azeri names. Here is what he said in September 2013: “Azerbaijan’s state flag should be waved in Shusha [Shushi], Khankendi [Stepanakert], and Azerbaijanis should live in their historical lands in the future. Our historical lands are Yerevan [Yerevan] khanate, Goyce [Lake Sevan] and Zangezur regions. There will be times; we will live in these lands. I believe it, I am sure. Everyone should put their efforts in order to achieve it.” Furthermore, Aliyev stated in March 2015: “Azerbaijan will restore historical justice and reclaim not only the breakaway Nagorno Karabakh region and areas around it, which are currently held by Armenians, but also parts of present-day Armenia.” He boastfully envisaged that after “liberating Karabakh, we, Azerbaijanis, will return to our ancient lands -- Yerevan, Goyca [Lake Sevan], Zangezur [Armenia’s Syunik region], etc. The younger generation must know that our lands are not limited to the current territories of independent Azerbaijan. We must go back to those lands as well and we will.”

If the president of Azerbaijan makes such outrageous statements, it is not surprising that other Azeris parrot his baseless claims. Last week, two Azerbaijanis, Rizvan Talibov and Mehmet Ali Arslan, proclaimed themselves to be the “President and Vice President” of “West Azerbaijan Goycha-Zangezur Republic” and declared its independence, with its capital in Ghapan or Vardenis, Armenia.

These Azerbaijanis attended the inauguration of the first representative office of this fake Republic in Ankara, claiming that Turkey was the first country to recognize it. “President” Talibov declared that Turkey and “West Azerbaijan Goycha-Zangezur” are “one nation, two states.” He must have forgotten about the Republic of Azerbaijan which uses the same slogan.

Regrettably for the Azerbaijanis, their euphoria was short-lived. Eurasianet.org published an article on Sept. 22, titled, “The rise and fall of Azerbaijan’s ‘Goycha-Zangezur Republic.’” This “Republic” lasted for three days, even though Azerbaijan’s pro-government initially publicized this fake news. Tural Ganjali, a member of Azerbaijan’s parliament had immediately endorsed the non-existent “Republic.” However, Ganjali deleted his Facebook post within hours and most Azeri websites removed all references to this “Republic.” The pro-government media discredited not only the “Republic” but also its equally fake “President” Talibov who had been appointing ministers and adopting decisions.

Azerbaijan’s news agency, APA, condemned Talibov, stating that he “actually has no scientific knowledge about or research on “Western Azerbaijan. He knows neither the history nor the geography of Western Azerbaijan. It is impossible to find a single serious person around him, and most of the people he named, appointed, and included in the structures do not even know about it. Talibov ‘appoints’ and gives ‘authority’ of the highest positions to anyone, regardless of their identity or political views in return for flattery or a meal or 5-10 manats [a few dollars].”

A member of Azerbaijan’s parliament Hikmat Babaoglu wrote on Sept. 21: “The so-called ‘Goycha-Zangezur Republic’ is a political-ideological terror against Azerbaijan.” Babaoglu continued: “Such a political hypocrite [Talibov] has no moral right neither to create the ‘Goycha-Zangezur Republic’ nor even to pronounce these holy names. Because this idea, while Azerbaijan is insisting on the issue of the Zangezur corridor, creates the impression that Azerbaijan does not intend to open a corridor in Zangezur, but to create a state there. This is a real provocation against the opening of the corridor.”

This is not the first time that such a lame-brained idea has been floated by someone in Azerbaijan, according to Eurasianet.org. “In 2020, an Azerbaijani academic in Turkey, Gafar Chahmagli, formed what he called the Republic of Western Azerbaijan (Irevan), which would have had an even larger territorial reach. That project (which also was called the Irevan Turkish Republic) was connected to another group with apparent government links, the West Azerbaijan Community (WAC), but it did not get the (brief) level of state endorsement as the Goycha-Zangezur Republic.”

Greatly disillusioned, “President” Talibov wrote on his Facebook page: “While we were expecting attacks from Armenians, some of ‘ourselves’ attacked us with an unseen aggression, full of slander!” All those Azeris who condemned Talibov and Arslan must not have realized that they were indirectly also condemning President Aliyev who has made similar baseless statements about territories of the sovereign Republic of Armenia.

LETTERS

Why Don’t People Care about Our Plight?

To The Editor:

I think that it’s a given that America is the most charitable country on earth. Our charitable efforts go beyond our borders by focusing on the suffering of those in foreign countries. In the past year Americans have been flying blue and yellow flags on lawns, and wearing blue and yellow lapel pins in support of Ukraine, and frankly I marvel at how people with no ethnic attachment to Ukraine are so supportive because they believe that the country and people have been victimized by an aggressor. Perhaps we can attribute this outreach to the fact that the majority of Americans have assimilated to the point that their own ethnicity is a faded memory or perhaps self-righteous, sanctimony is the impetus. Or maybe Americans just need a cause to support. The media is also dedicating an enormous amount of air time to the invasion and overtly supporting Ukraine. So, my question is: Why don’t they care about us?

In 1988, worldwide media focused on the devastating earthquake in Armenia. We had the attention of the world and therefore the opportunity to prolong that focus in a positive way by educating the world about our rich history, culture and religion...a missed opportunity and a failure on our part.

Today our focus seems to be relegated to our annual April 24 lament. Our demonstrations attempting to educate America and the world about the Armenian Genocide to garner support for our plight don’t get much attention or media coverage...an exercise in futility at this point. We highlight the President’s use of the word Genocide, which was second to Reagan’s use of the word, but to put it bluntly...So What! It doesn’t mean much if American presidents don’t put pressure on Turkey to own up to its past, make amends and prevent Azerbaijan’s aggression

towards Artsakh and Armenia.

Artsakh was attacked and conquered by the use of sophisticated and some say illegal weapons supplied by foreign countries which also caused tremendous collateral damage. Not only were thousands killed and land conquered, but religious and historical sites were and are being destroyed. Where was the outrage from Americans and the rest of the world? Who beside Armenians were flying the Armenian flag and wearing the tri-color lapel pins? The geopolitical differences between the US support of Ukraine versus Russia and the lack of support for Armenia/NK versus Azerbaijan isn’t lost on me but I’m also cognizant of how influential the court of public opinion is. Plainly put, people just feel good about defending and supporting victims. Politics aside both situations have

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ethical, moral and humanitarian components so again my question is: Why don’t they care about us? Could it be that it’s our fault? Perhaps it’s because we put the cart before the horse.

Why should people who aren’t Armenian care about us when they really don’t know who and what we are. Before expecting Americans and the world to champion our causes we have to apprise them of our rich history, culture and religion. Even our cuisine is being hijacked by our nemesis without pushback. We are a small but import-

ant people. As the first Christian nation we are the second chosen people. Our religious importance is compounded by the fact that the first three queens of parochial Jerusalem were Armenian and two of them are buried in the same tomb as the Virgin Mary. Despite having numerous high profile Armenians in various fields only a handful have stepped up to the plate to promote their ethnicity.

One suggestion to rectify this is for Armenian organizations to be supportive of our collective agenda as opposed to being competitive, pool resources and hire a public relations firm to formulate a long term master plan to promote Armenia, our history and culture as well as our plight. Armenians worldwide who have distinguished themselves need to be highlighted and we need to garner their support. Another suggestion is to establish a think tank comprising the brightest minds both inside and outside of our community to also formulate long term master plans as I had suggested years ago. Our clergy need to lecture about our religion at college and university divinity schools and our scholars and diplomats need to do the same about our history and the positives about Armenia at educational institutions and influential venues such as The Foreign Policy Association. However, doing nothing, or just focusing on the negative yearly isn’t an option if we are to prevail with our enemies at our border.

We need to get to a point where the word Armenian invokes familiarity and not just because of the Kardashians. Then and only then will the non-Armenian world feel our plight and support our agenda. Then, and only then, will the world care that one and a half million people descended from the first Christian nation were brutally massacred in the first genocide of the twentieth century. Then and only then will people care that innocent Armenian men, women and children were victims of pogroms in 1988 and that thousands of Armenians were killed in the recent war in Artsakh and historic Armenian land confiscated and historic sites destroyed. Einstein defined insanity by saying that it’s ‘doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result’. Simply put, business as usual doesn’t cut it.

Adrienne G. Alexanian
New York, NY



Armenian Designers at Milan Fashion Week Raise Awareness about Atrocities

MILAN, Italy (Public Radio of Armenia) — New collections by eight Armenian designers were presented on September 26 at Visconti Palace within the framework of Milan Fashion Week and the Textile Alliance Armenia-Italy forum, the Armenian Ministry of Economy reported.

Ariga Torosian, Faina, Kivera Naynomis, Loom Weaving, Nelly Serobyanyan, Ruzane, Soncess and Vahan Khachatryan were selected to show their fall and winter collections.

Before the show, the Armenian designers present-

ed a video message, in which they talked about the recent Azerbaijani attacks and the torture of several Armenian female soldiers.

The Armenian designers then walked on the podium wearing T-shirts carrying the message “Stand with Armenia.” Artsakh-based artist Liana was the designer of the pictures on the T-shirts.

Textile Alliance Armenia-Italy business forum and fashion show were held for the first time this year with the support of the Armenian Ministry of Economy.



Rep. Speier Introduces Azerbaijan War Crimes Resolution

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sanctions for war crimes, the resolution calls for an investigation into Azerbaijan’s ongoing illegal imprisonment of Armenian POWs, condemns the destruction of Armenian churches and historic sites, and reaffirms the territorial integrity of Armenia and Artsakh. Rep. Speier is joined by Congressional Armenian Caucus co-chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ), vice-chair Adam Schiff (D-CA) and fellow Armenian American Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA) in spearheading the measure.

“We welcome today’s introduction of

Congresswoman Speier’s war-crimes resolution – alongside Congressman Schiff’s measure condemning Azerbaijan’s attacks,” said ANCA executive director Aram Hamparian. “Both are powerful, bipartisan expressions of Congressional support for the statutory measures required to enforce Section 907 and cut-off all US military aid to an oil-rich Azerbaijani government that is attacking Armenia and ethnically-cleansing Artsakh.”

“Congresswoman Speier is ending her service in the US Congress in the same spirit she entered this great house of de-

mocracy – as a courageous and caring voice for the Armenian people – in her House district, across America, living in our homeland and throughout the world,” said ANCA San Francisco Bay Area chair Matt Senekeremian, who resides in Rep. Speier’s district. “We stand shoulder to shoulder with her in seeking to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its war crimes.”

Rep. Speier’s measure follows the introduction earlier this month of H.Res.1351, spearheaded by Rep. Schiff and Congressional Armenian Caucus leaders, calling for an immediate end to US aid to Azer-

baijan, and condemning President Aliyev’s unprovoked attack against Armenia and Artsakh. The measure currently has 44 co-sponsors.

Speier singles out Azerbaijan for violating the Geneva Conventions, which establish international legal standards on the treatment of civilians, prisoners of war (POWs), and soldiers who are otherwise rendered incapable of fighting, as well as mutilating and torturing civilians and soldiers.

She also included a reference to Azerbaijani rocket artillery striking the Martakert Military Hospital on October 14, 2020, in an “apparently deliberate” attack, according to Human Rights Watch, in which the nearest military target was over 1.5 kilometers away, and the rocket’s satellite guidance capability ensures accuracy within 10 meters. She similarly specifies an attack on October 28, 2020, when an Azerbaijani artillery rocket struck the maternity ward of the Republican Medical Center, causing extensive damage.

In the bill she makes reference to more than 100 POWs and civilians in violation of the November 9, 2020, tripartite agreement, in which Azerbaijan committed to repatriating all POWs and captured civilians.

Menendez, in Letter to Blinken, Urges Stop to Azerbaijan Aid

MENENDEZ, from page 1

which resulted in thousands of deaths, scores displaced and injured, and close to 200 Armenian prisoners of war still unlawfully held in captivity by Azerbaijan, including “unlawful killings and torture by Azerbaijani forces...[the use of] cluster munitions and phosphorous bombs, and posted videos of beheadings online.”

Menendez emphasized the Government Accounting Office’s (GAO) report publicly released earlier this year that proved that the Department of State and Department of Defense failed to comply with reporting requirements for reviewing U.S. assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan in terms of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act.

“The United States must play no part in supporting authoritarian brutality,” said Senator Menendez. “The United States has an important opportunity to stand with the Armenian people as they attempt to repel an authoritarian assault.”

“The Assembly commends Senator Menendez and fully supports his letter to Secretary of State Blinken,” said Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “The U.S. must step in to cut off assistance to Azerbaijan, because the more Aliyev’s belligerent actions go unchecked, the further he will destabilize the region and the emerging democracy in Armenia will be at grave risk.”



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