

Four Arrested Over Yerevan Market Blast

By Anush Mkrtchian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Armenian law-enforcement authorities on Friday, August 27, made their first arrests in a criminal investigation into the August 14 explosion at a market in Yerevan that left at least 16 people dead and dozens of others injured.

The Investigative Committee said the suspects include the deputy director of the Surmalu market and three other individuals who used one of its warehouses. The committee did not name any of them.

A spokesman for the law-enforcement agency, Vartan Tadevosyan, said the deputy director and another suspect, who rented the warehouse loaded with fireworks, were charged with a serious violation of fire-safety rules. The two other suspects are facing accusations of negligence and involuntary manslaughter, he told RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

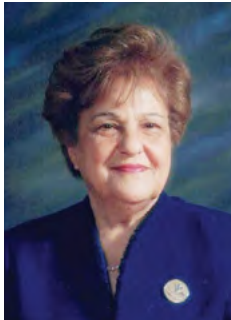
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Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations of Armenia, Artyush Grigoryan, speaking with reporters

Montreal Educator, ADL And TCA Pillar Vartouhie Balian Passes Away

MONTREAL — Educator and Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) and Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) pillar Vartouhie Balian passed away on August 19.



She was born in Alexandrette (under Syrian rule then but now part of Turkey) to Arsene Balian and Loussaper Shakelian, both originally from Chork-Marzban (Dört-Yol), on December 13, 1932. She moved with her family at a young age to Beirut. After graduating there from the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)'s Tarouhi Hagopian Girls' Secondary School in 1950, she studied psychology at the American University of Beirut and specialized in pedagogy.

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Non-American and non-French diplomats visit Shushl. (photo: Twitter, Hikmet Hajiyev)

US, France Shun Shushi Conference, Angering Azerbaijan Government

By Sargis Harutyunyan

YEREVAN (Azatutyun/News.am) — Azerbaijan has condemned the US and French ambassadors in Baku for declining to join other foreign diplomats in visiting the Karabakh town of Shushi (Shusha) captured by the Azerbaijani army during the 2020 war.

The senior diplomats representing several dozen nations traveled to Shushi over the weekend to attend a conference organized there by the Azerbaijani government. The US and French ambassadors were conspicuously absent from the event.

“We regard this as a disrespectful attitude towards territorial integrity,” Hikmet Hajiyev, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s chief foreign policy aide, said during the conference.

Hajiyev charged that the United States and France have done little to help resolve the Karabakh conflict in their capacity as co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

“It’s not clear whether they cannot accept Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity or the reconstruction work taking place in Shusha,” he said.

The US Embassy in Baku responded to the criticism on Monday, August 29, in a statement provided to the Azerbaijani Service of the Voice of America. It said that embassy officials regularly visit “all regions” of Azerbaijan, including the Aghdam, Fizuli and Zangelan districts won back by Baku as a result of the 2020 war.

The statement made no mention of Shushi or Hadrut, another town in Karabakh proper occupied by Azerbaijani forces during the six-week hostilities stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire.

Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan praised the decision by the US and France.

“Azerbaijan has once again attacked the OSCE Minsk Group, using its appropriate diplomatic lexicon. One of the reasons was the refusal of the French and US ambassadors to travel to the [Azerbaijani-] occupied Shushi [city of Artsakh]. We welcome this waiver and consider it an important political and humanitarian step,” Babayan wrote on his Facebook page.

“However, the reasons for Azerbaijan’s actions to break up the Minsk Group lie elsewhere. The main reason for Baku’s interest in the collapse of the OSCE Minsk Group, and, in particular, the institution of this group’s co-chairmanship, is that through this, Azerbaijan is trying to destroy the de-facto and de-jure international diplomatic status of Artsakh, which is a recognized party to the Azerbaijani-Karabagh conflict and negotiation process. And most

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A New US Co-Chair of OSCE Minsk Group Has Been Appointed. What Does It Mean?

YEREVAN (JAM News) — Philip Reeker has been appointed US Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE Minsk Group). Peace talks on the Karabakh conflict were held in this format prior to the 2020 war. At the time, the president of Azerbaijan announced that the conflict no longer exists, that it had been resolved by military means, and the Minsk Group itself had “died, and the resuscitation of the OSCE Minsk Group is impossible.” At the same time, the Armenian authorities consistently emphasize the “importance of using the institution and experience of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing”, and express readiness to continue the dialogue with Azerbaijan in this fashion.

Moreover, the Armenian authorities emphasize the role and necessity of



Ambassador Philip T. Reeker

involving the Minsk Group in negotiations not only regarding the Karabakh conflict, but also on the issue of signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan.

The OSCE Minsk Group was established in 1992. It was entrusted with a mediating role in the negotiations about the Karabakh conflict. The group includes Germany, Italy, Finland, Sweden, see MINSK, page 2

SARAJEVO

Young Armenian Judoka Gor Karapetyan Crowned World Champion



OTTAWA

Churchill Portrait Disappears in Art Heist in Canada



RECIPE

Charcuterie Board With Dried Fig Relish





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Chief Adviser to Artsakh President Detained

STEPANAKERT (News.am) — According to NEWS.am, Mikael Arzumanyan, former commander of the Artsakh Autonomous Republic and chief presidential advisor, has been detained on August 30. No other details were available.

Earlier Politik.am reported that Arzumanyan was subjected to detention on his way from Artsakh to Yerevan. This was done by the order of the military investigators of the Investigative Committee of Armenia.

Parents of Fallen Servicemen Block Street

YEREVAN (News.am) — The parents of servicemen killed during the 44-day war blocked Vazgen Sargsyan Street on August 30. They demanded the detention of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Police officers called for the street to be opened.

“We, the parents, collected money, bought a car to come up, and we were going to present our demands with a loudspeaker. But they wouldn’t let us, they said we were disrupting the normal rhythm of the General Prosecutor’s Office. And what should we do, if normal rhythm of work is more important for them than the right of our children? “Naturally, we have to block the street,” Anahit Manasyan, the mother of one of the deceased servicemen, told a reporter.

Since late April, parents of soldiers who died in the 44-day war have been protesting.

Hatis Fortress Nearly Destroyed by Construction

YEREVAN (News.am) — The Gagik Tsarukyan Charitable Foundation presented the final version of the Monumental Statue-Complex of Jesus Christ project this week. Despite the objections of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and the Archaeological and Geological Institutes, the government approved the project and work is already underway.

On Mount Hatis, 2,528 meters high, which is considered a historical and cultural monument and where exhaustive archeological excavations have not been conducted, there are plans to build 1,700 steps and a cable car that will take the citizens to the 77.7-meter high statue.

In 2019, excavations near this mountain uncovered a 3,000-year-old fortress. Archaeologist Artur Petrosyan, co-leader of the Armenian side of the Armenian-Italian Archaeological Expedition, also participated in documenting the ancient monument. He told NEWS.am that although the construction work has been temporarily suspended, much of the castle has been destroyed as a result of the work carried out so far.

Petrosyan noted that they have been conducting systematic excavations atop Mt. Hatis since 2019. “During our next explorations we visited, we saw that it is in the field of our research, it has a very interesting strategic position, it is a well-preserved fortress, and we recorded that too,” he noted.

A New US Co-Chair of OSCE Minsk Group Has Been Appointed. What Does It Mean?

MINSK, from page 1

Belarus, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia, the US and France are co-chairs.

The State Department also made a statement regarding the new appointment:

“The United States is committed to helping Armenia and Azerbaijan negotiate a long-term political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ambassador Reeker will also work with like-minded partners such as the European Union and, as Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, will promote direct dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The appointment of Ambassador Reeker during this period also confirms the importance of the role of the United States in the Geneva discussions on Georgia.”

Philip Reeker is reported to be a diplomat with extensive experience. He was Chargé d’Affaires in the UK until recently, and from March 2019 to August 2021 he served as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, also working in Milan as US Consul General and US Ambassador to North Macedonia. He has experience not only in the Balkans but in Iraq.

The current situation raises questions, since Russia, a co-chair, has declared that work in the format of the OSCE Minsk Group is impossible.

Doubts about the possibility of the United States, France and Russia working together arose immediately after the start of the war in Ukraine and the open confrontation between Russia and the West.

They were confirmed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who spoke openly about the impossibility of continuing work with France and the United States in the Minsk Group. This also surprised the Prime Minister of Armenia. Nikol Pashinyan stated that he had other agreements with the President of Russia.

The unfeasibility of the group was also stated by the press secretary of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova. According to her, the United States and France had severed ties with Russia over this after the start of the war in Ukraine.

However, the United States has repeatedly stated at various levels that it is ready to continue working with Russia in the OSCE Minsk Group “for the sake of a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Karabakh problem.”

In April, Minsk Group Co-Chair from France Brice Roquefeuy visited Armenia and confirmed his country’s readiness to participate in the process.

A few days after this visit, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair from Russia, Igor Khovaev, was appointed special representative of the Russian Foreign Minister to promote the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Moscow reported that Khovaev’s new status is a consequence of the refusal of Washington and Paris to work with Russia about this.

In June last year, Reeker visited Yerevan as part of a regional visit. He then served as the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. In an interview with Radio Azatutyun (Freedom), he spoke about the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

The diplomat emphasized the need to resolve humanitarian issues – particular the return of Armenian prisoners still held in Azerbaijan:

“The US government has repeatedly stressed that all prisoners and detainees must be released and returned home. We must remember that this conflict has affected people deeply. It is important to remember that we are talking about people who are on both sides of the conflict, about people’s children, their spouses, their parents. We want all detainees to be released,

we want an end to mine deaths, we want to see an end to the conflict and a comprehensive solution. This is something that the United States has supported for years as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group.”

A year before this appointment, Reeker said that Washington was in favor of continuing negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group:

“We are confident that the mandate of the group is still very viable, it is necessary to return to this process, to revive this process, to resolve all these issues in practice as soon as possible. [...] We are ready to work with the rest of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs [France and Russia] or, if necessary, with others. Our message is that we want to see a solution to this conflict so that all countries in the region can move forward, look ahead, focusing on building secure, stable democracies that can provide prosperity, which is the desire of all people.”

Reeker will not only be the co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, but also the US representative in the Geneva International Discussions, analyst Suren Sargsyan said.

“This means that he will coordinate all US diplomatic work in all conflicts in the South Caucasus. In general, American interests in the South Caucasus are predominantly of a broader regional nature than the context of deepening bilateral relations with the three states. That is, the United States is interested in the region as a whole and competes with regional players. The South Caucasus is geographically located next to longtime US adversary Iran, strategic ally and key NATO member Turkey, and historical rival and main adversary Russia. It explains everything. And the last appointment directly confirms what was said above,” he wrote on his Facebook page.



Young Armenian Judoka Gor Karapetyan Crowned World Champion

SARAJEVO — Armenian judoka Gor Karapetyan has won gold at the Cadet World Championships held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from August 24 to 28.

The young athlete took a strong win over his rival Alisher Samanov of Uzbekistan in the U81kg category to capture the world title, the Armenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports reports.

The Armenian team, led by Hovhannes Davtyan, also included Gor Safaryan (50 kg), Vahe Aghasyan (55 kg), Erik Saghatlyan (55 kg) and Arsen Hayrapetyan (90 kg), who could not win any medals.



ARMENIA

Fresh Armenian-Azeri Summit Scheduled for August 31

By Gayane Saribekian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were scheduled to meet again in Brussels on August 31 (after *M-S* press time) for talks to be hosted by the European Union's top official, it was announced on Thursday, August 25.

Azerbaijani media were the first to reveal the date of the next meeting of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The Armenian government confirmed the information later in the day.

"The agenda of Nikol Pashinyan and Ilham Aliyev includes the issues which they have discussed before," a government spokesman told RFE/RL's Armenian Service. He did not elaborate.

Senior Armenian and Azerbaijani officials met in Brussels late last week in apparent preparation for the summit.

Aliyev and Pashinyan already held trilateral talks with European Council President Charles Michel in April and

May. Michel spoke with the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders by phone on August 5 following deadly fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh. He said afterwards that their next meeting is imminent.

Earlier this month, Russia indicated that it is also trying to organize an Armenian-Azerbaijani summit. Incidentally, Pashinyan held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

Moscow has repeatedly denounced the EU's mediation efforts, saying that they are part of the West's attempts to hijack the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks and use the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the standoff over Ukraine. A senior EU diplomat insisted in June that the 27-nation bloc is not competing with Russia in its efforts to facilitate a "comprehensive settlement" of the Karabakh conflict.

It also emerged on Thursday that an Armenian-Azerbaijani commission on demarcating the border between the two South Caucasus states will meet in



The previous meeting of the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders with Charles Michel; from left, Nikol Pashinyan, Michel and Ilham Aliyev

Moscow on August 30. The commission held its first session on May 24 two days after the most recent Aliyev-Pashinyan talks.

Conference Addresses Threat of Destruction Of Armenian Heritage in Karabakh

YEREVAN — From July 15 to 19, a conference on "The Cultural Heritage of Artsakh" was held at the Yerevan State University and the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Vayots Dzor/Armenia. More than 30 international scholars and experts discussed the origin, historical development and current threats to cultural heritage in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh). These are part of the Armenian culture and, thus, amongst the oldest heritage of Christianity.

The motive for the meeting was an appeal by numerous scholars for the "Protection of cultural heritage in Karabakh" of 04.03.2021. The appeal pointed out the acute endangerment of the Armenian population and its cultural heritage.

Numerous organizations such as the World Council of Churches, the Central Committee of German Catholics and the solidarity initiative with the people in Central and Eastern Europe, and Renovabis, a Catholic organization based in Germany, have already published statements on the suffering of the people and the endangerment of the cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in its Resolution of 27.09.2021 and the US State Department in its Report on Religious Freedom in Azerbaijan of 02.06.2022 have also taken a stand.

Meanwhile, the United Nations International Court of Justice, in an order dated 7.12.2021, called on Azerbaijan to take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration of Armenian cultural heritage objects. Most recently, on 10.03.2022, the European Parliament strongly condemned Azerbaijan's continued policy of erasing and denying the Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

The background to this is that during his visit to the 12th-century Armenian Church of the Holy Mother of God in Tsakuri Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced that he would remove the Armenian in-

scriptions from there. In addition, the Azerbaijani Minister of Culture, Anar Karimov, announced on 03.02.2022 the establishment of a working group which is apparently intended to legitimise the systematic destruction of all Armenian cultural heritage in the region.

During the 2020 war unleashed by Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani forces attacked and severely damaged the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of the Holy Savior in Shushi twice with precision weapons. Furthermore, St. John the Baptist Church (Kanach Zham) was partially destroyed after Azerbaijani forces gained control of the city. Other churches, inscriptions and cross-stones were damaged, desecrated or destroyed. Satellite images also show that several (historic) cemeteries were destroyed.

In the recent past, Azerbaijan already erased the cultural heritage of the Armenian population in the Nakhichevan exclave, including the complete destruction of the medieval Armenian cemetery of Djulfa and its thousands of cross-stones and other monuments.

The conference participants consider the Armenian tangible and intangible cultural assets in and around Nagorno-Karabakh to be highly endangered.

They asked for:

- all political and social actors, as well as international organizations, to commit themselves to the protection of cultural heritage and the endangered population in and around Nagorno-Karabakh;

- decision-makers to make the protection of cultural property and human rights a condition of any cooperation with Azerbaijan;

- the delegations to negotiations currently being conducted at various levels on a conflict settlement with the goal to reach a peace agreement to take also into account the legitimate interests of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Only a just peace can guarantee the sustainable safeguarding of cultural heritage and human rights, to which Azerbaijan has committed itself under international law;

- the European Union and its Member

States to ensure that also the issues of historical revisionism, human rights and the threat of destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh will be raised in light of current negotiations and agreements with Azerbaijan on energy supplies;

- Azerbaijan to allow scientists, UNESCO and other international organizations unrestricted access to cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and to not deny believers access to places of worship.

The organizers:

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Martin Tamcke, Göttingen
Prof. Dr. Andreas Müller, Kiel
Dr. Dagmar Heller, Bensheim
Dr. Harutyun G. Harutyunyan, Yerevan

The participants:

Archbishop Abraham Mkrtchyan, PhD cand.,

Yeghegnadzor Bishop Prof. Dr. Anushavan Zhamkochyan,

Yerevan Archimandrite Sahak Shakaryan, Gandzasar

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Alexander Trunk, Kiel

Dr. Roy Knocke, Potsdam

Dr. Wolfram Langpape, Hannover

Dr. Vahan Ter-Ghevondian, Yerevan

P. Dr. Abel H. Manoukian, Geneva

Lernik Hovhannisyan, PhD cand., Step-

anakert

Prof. Dr. Ashot Hayruni, Yerevan

Prof. Dr. Hamlet Petrosyan, Yerevan

Prof. Dr. Klaus Koschorke, Munich/

Thun

Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Sternberg, Münster

Dr. Tessa Hofmann, Berlin

Markus Meckel, Berlin

Dustin Hoffmann, Brussels

Harutyun Grigoryan, Berlin

Prof. Dr. Armenuhi Drost-Abgaryan,

Halle Dr. Anahit, Yerevan/Eichstätt

Dr. Raffi Kantian, Hannover

Dr. Armen Kazaryan, Yerevan/Moscow

Dr. Ani Ghazaryan, Geneva

Tamara Minasyan, PhD, Yerevan

Armine Melkonyan, PhD, Yerevan/Flor-

ence Lusine Tumanyan, PhD, Yerevan

Dr. Hayk Martirosyan, Potsdam

Arpine Springborn, Göttingen

Anahit Asatryan, Yerevan

Four Arrested over Yerevan Market Blast

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Prosecutors have already asked a Yerevan court to allow the investigators to hold them in pre-trial detention, added Tadevosyan.

It remained unclear whether the investigators will also bring criminal charges against the market's owner, Razmik Zakharyan. The latter has not yet been interrogated by them.

The first arrests in the probe came two days after the Armenian Ministry of Emergencies ended search and rescue operations at the sprawling market located south of the city center. Rescue teams managed to extract 10 survivors and 16 dead during the ten-day operations. But they failed to find the last person still listed as missing following the powerful explosion.

The investigators believe that the blast occurred in a market area where large quantities of fireworks and other pyrotechnics were stored.

Right after the accident, the Investigative Committee urged businesses and individuals who bought fireworks at Surmalu recently to provide their samples to the Armenian police. Many of the buyers heeded the appeal, Tadevosyan said, adding that the samples are now being examined by forensic experts.

In a statement released on Thursday, the Office of the Prosecutor-General pointed out that last year fire inspectors had identified two dozen violations of safety rules at Surmalu. It said they did not carry out a follow-up inspection to see whether the violations were eliminated.

Tadevosyan would not say whether the inspectors could also be charged with negligence. "Employees of the inspectorate have been questioned but they currently have the status of a witness [in the case]," explained the Investigative Committee spokesperson.



ARMENIA

Azerbaijani Aggression Makes Life Difficult in Border Village of Kut

By Gevorg Gyulumyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

KUT, Armenia — Kut village of the Vardenis enlarged community region in Gegharkunik Province is one of a number of border settlements of the Republic of Armenia today subject to aggressive Azerbaijani actions, which began after 2020. Consequently, living conditions for the villagers of Kut have become very difficult. Approximately 50-60 people live here at present but there were around 100 until 2020. The village in the Soviet period was primarily composed of ethnic Azeris, who fled in the era of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the Republic of Azerbaijan. In their stead, Armenians forcibly displaced from northern Artsakh from 1988 to 1991 were settled. The main occupations of the Kut villagers are farming and animal husbandry, which became very difficult after the 2020 44-day war. In certain places these also became dangerous, because Azerbaijan in 2021 invaded the administrative area of the village and deployed military positions there, from which shooting took place regularly. The village only requires one shepherd to take care of all their cattle. In June 2021, Azerbaijani soldiers stole eighty head of cattle from the shepherd of the villagers at gunpoint. Those cattle belonged to five families of the village. One cow is worth approximately 400,000 dram (roughly \$1,000). The former head of the village, Kima Chitchyan says that people have not received substantial compensation until now. They only received a small amount of aid from the provincial governor of Gegharkunik. The amount varies from person to person based on the animals they owned, but so far no one is willing to reveal the details. Chitchyan states: “The governor said that compensation should be given through the decision of the prime minister [Nikol Pashinyan]. The prime minister is well aware of the incident, but until now there has been no compensation. Until the 2021 Azerbaijani invasion, Kut was



Kima Chitchyan

the village with the most pastures in the Vardenis sub-region [and] people lived safely, but now those pastures are gone. Everything has turned upside down. When the lands came under the control of the enemy, many sold their livestock and began to endure [the situation], keeping very few animals. Imagine that these cattle often graze in pastures close to houses today. At one time, they used to buy fodder from our village. Now our villagers buy it from somewhere else.” Chitchyan relates that under these circumstances, even finding a shepherd for the village is difficult now. No one agrees to put himself in danger and graze cattle in front of the view of the Azerbaijanis, since every minute he could become a victim of their aggression. “At present, a herdsman has come to the village, but he grazes the cattle in the vicinity of the village. He does not take them out of the village for the reasons I mentioned. Now one bale of hay has tripled in price

and the yield of milk of the cows has decreased four-fold. After all this, who will be engaged in animal husbandry? People are very upset – hopeless, indignant and discouraged,” Chitchyan exclaims.



At the entrance of Kut Village



Animals grazing in Kut Village



INTERNATIONAL

Azerbaijan Retakes Control of Three Karabakh Settlements

By Ulkar Natiqzizi and Lilit Shahverdyan

Azerbaijani forces have taken control of three additional territories in Karabakh, even as the opening of the new road that was the reason for the handover — the new “Lachin corridor” — has been delayed.

The three territories lay along the current route of the Lachin corridor, the road that connects Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh. The ceasefire agreement that ended the 2020 Second Karabakh War stipulated that a new Lachin corridor would be built and in early August, as Azerbaijan said that the new road was “near completion,” the de facto Karabakh authorities gave residents of the villages along the road [an August 25 deadline to leave](#).

But on the day of the deadline, both sides reported that the new road had been delayed: Karabakh’s de facto Interior Ministry [announced](#) that the current road would function until August 31 and would be protected by the Russian peacekeepers.

Both sides said the issue was a segment of less than five kilometers that should be ready in the coming days.

The head of Azerbaijan’s highway administration said that the 10-kilometer section of the road that lay on Armenian territory had not been completed. “At the request of Karabakh Armenians, Azerbaijan built a connecting section of 4.8 kilometers,” said the official, Saleh Mammadov, chair of the Azerbaijan State Agency of Automobile Roads. He said the new road would be ready “in the coming week.”

Despite the road construction delay, Azerbaijan’s defense ministry released a video of troops entering the district capital of Lachin on August 26.

“Azerbaijanis have returned to the city of Lachin,” President Ilham Aliyev said in a [tweet](#). “I congratulate all the people of Lachin and the people of Azerbaijan on this occasion. Long live Lachin! Long live Azerbaijan!”

One eyewitness who traveled from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh on August 26 told Eurasianet that Russian peacekeepers were still in the process of dismantling their checkpoints along that road, while Azerbaijani troops were visible in Lachin, though they did not appear to be attempting to control the traffic.

Also on August 26, Azerbaijan’s state energy company [announced](#) that its workers had entered the three communities — La-

chin [Berdzor], and the villages of Zabukh [Aghavno] and Sus — to start restoring power infrastructure there.

The lead-up to the handover of the three communities was chaotic and emotional, as the more than 400 Armenian residents were given mixed messages and then a tight deadline to leave their homes. The territory had been settled by Armenians after they took control of it in the first war between the two sides in the 1990s, with most coming from Armenia and some from Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon.

One of the provisions of the 2020 ceasefire statement was that a new Lachin corridor would be planned “within the next three years” and that when it was, the Russian peacekeepers that had protected the old route would shift to that one, allowing for Azerbaijani forces to take control.

But in early summer, Azerbaijan reported that it was already close to finishing construction of its portion of the road, and began exerting pressure on Armenia to finish its side.

One village in particular — Zabukh, which Armenians call Aghavno — became a cause célèbre among Armenians for its efforts to rebuild after the 2020 war.

Some defiant Aghavno residents [vowed to resist orders to evacuate](#). But as the deadline approached and the Azerbaijani takeover became inevitable, all the residents left. While Aliyev has promised to treat the long-term Armenian residents of Karabakh as its citizens, he [branded](#) the remaining Lachin residents illegal settlers and demanded that they leave.

The de facto Karabakh government promised to give residents money to buy a new home elsewhere, and in the final days ahead of the deadline began cutting off utilities like power and water.

Days ahead of the deadline, one Aghavno resident [noted](#) that even the church in Lachin was being dismantled: “If they are taking even the crosses, it means that there is no way back.”

(This report was originally published by Eurasianet.org.)

Armenian Police Break Up Russian Anti-War Protest

By Robert Zargarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — At least 22 people were detained in Yerevan on the evening of August 24, as riot police broke up a demonstration against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine organized by a group of Russian expatriates living in Armenia.

News reports said the police made the arrests shortly after several dozen people, most of them Russian nationals, gathered in the city’s Liberty Square on the six-month anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine. A police statement released afterwards said the protesters were detained because of defying unspecified police orders.

All of them were released from police custody later in the evening. They included Yury Alexeev, the main organizer of the protest.

“We came [to the square,] unfurled our placards, and all of a sudden police officers turned up, saying they have information that our action has an offensive character

and demanding that we stop the demonstration,” Alexeev told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on August 25. “I said that’s not true, that’s nonsense, they have no grounds [to impede the gathering.] They then detained us.”

Alexeev, who relocated to Yerevan this spring along with thousands of other Russians critical of President Vladimir Putin, described the police actions as illegal, arguing that the protest was sanctioned by municipal authorities.

Armenian civic activists also condemned the arrests. “That was completely illegal because the gathering was sanctioned and peaceful,” one of them, Artur Sakunts, said.

The Armenian police did not thwart similar small-scale protests that were staged in Yerevan earlier this year.

Russia has long been Armenia’s main ally, with the two nations maintaining close political, economic and military ties. The Armenian government has refrained from publicly criticizing the Russian invasion.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran Launches New Power Transmission Line to Armenia

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The East Azerbaijan Province of Iran inaugurated a power transmission line to Armenia on August 30, among over 2,000 electricity-related projects, [IRNA reports](#).

The 90-kilometer Heris-Meghri power transmission line can export 400 kilowatts of Iran’s electricity to Armenia.

Tabriz Electricity Power Distribution Company and East Azerbaijan Power Distribution Company inaugurated over 2,000 projects, as Iran is celebrating the Government Week.

Azerbaijan Continues to Hold POWs, Civilians

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijan continues to hold Armenian prisoners of war, including civilians, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearance on August 25.

“Enforced or involuntary disappearance of persons is a violation of fundamental human rights by its nature, since it infringes on an entire range of human rights, established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as set out in International Covenants on Human Rights and other major international human rights instruments, the statement reads.

“The international humanitarian and human rights law seeks to refrain people from going missing as a result of arbitrary arrests and other violations occurring during detention and captivity. After the ceasefire signed on November 9, 2020, Azerbaijan continues to hold Armenian prisoners of war, including civilians, while the fate of hundreds of missing persons and dozen cases of enforced disappearances resulting from the First Nagorno-Karabakh War and the 44-Day War remain unclarified.”

The Foreign Ministry said the lack of cooperation by Azerbaijani authorities makes it impossible to accurately estimate the number of missing persons.

“Azerbaijan continues to disregard the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights on the implementation of interim measures to provide information on Armenian hostages in Azerbaijan, as well as provisional measures put forward by the International Court of Justice on December 7, 2021, which instruct Azerbaijan to cease racist and discriminatory policies against Armenians,” the statement continues.

“The issue of disappearances is a humanitarian priority that must be depoliticized, and it must be addressed with strong political will and cooperation. In the absence of such an approach, justice, and social healing, and therefore long-term peace will remain elusive. We call on the international community to assume responsibility for ensuring unconditional access to the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which could alleviate the existing humanitarian crisis.”

US, France Shun Shushi Conference

CONFERENCE, from page 1

of the relevant documents, statements and other political and legal acts are in the sphere of activity of the Minsk Group and the Minsk process. The disbandment of the Minsk Group and the co-chairing of this group, according to the logic of #Baku, should actually level the de-facto and de-jure international diplomatic status of Artsakh,” he noted.

Babayan added, “Here Baku and Ankara act together, making every possible use of the contradictions between Russia and the collective West, which also affects the activity of the co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group. But this emotional flirting, through which the Azerbaijani-Turkish alliance is

trying to deceive Russia, is naturally tactical and temporary in its nature. It is quite obvious that both Turkey and Azerbaijan are doing everything possible to undermine the Russian peacekeeping mission in Artsakh, knowing full well that with Russia’s withdrawal, Artsakh will also be destroyed, the destruction of Artsakh in its turn will lead to tectonic geopolitical shifts in the Transcaucasus and in adjacent vast geopolitical spaces, which will create existential threats for a number of countries, primarily for Russia. This poses a threat, by the way, to the West as well, just in the longer term.”

Azerbaijan maintains that its victory in the war with Armenia put an end to the Karabakh conflict. The US and France,

which have for decades led the Minsk Group together with Russia, say, however, that the conflict remains unresolved because there is still no agreement on Karabakh’s status.

Washington underlined this stance last week when it appointed a senior US diplomat, Philip Reeker, as the Minsk Group’s new co-chair. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Reeker will strive for a “long-term political settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.” (See related story on this page.)

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry responded by denouncing what it called US attempts to “revive” the group.

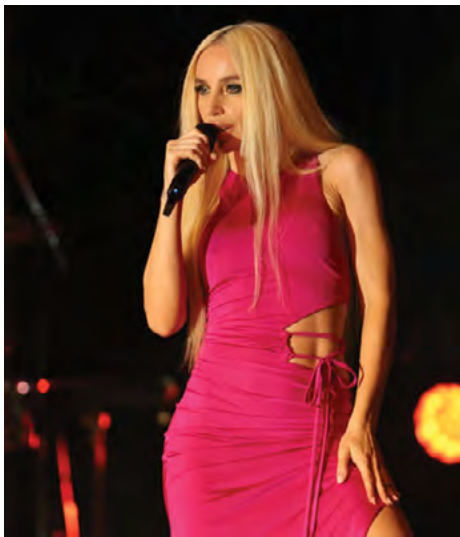
INTERNATIONAL

Turkish Pop Star Jailed over Joke Now Placed under House Arrest

By Nazlan Ertan

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) — Amid international concerns and national protests, a Turkish court released pop singer Gulsen from jail Monday, August 29, but placed her under house arrest as she awaits trial on charges of “inciting hatred and enmity.”

The 46-year-old Gulsen Bayraktar Colakoglu, known on stage by her first name, was put behind bars August 26, after an Istanbul prosecutor opened an investigation into a quip she made on stage four months ago. “He has studied in an Imam Hatip. ... That is the root of his perversity,” Gulsen said, referring to religious second-



Singer Gulsen Bayraktar Colakoglu

ary schools in an apparent jest to a member of her band, as both the band member and members of the audience clapped and laughed.

The 15-second-clip, shared by pro-government daily Sabah and ATV on Aug. 24, went viral immediately as Turkey’s minister of justice and several others lashed out at her in unison. Conservative pundits leveled insults at her for disrespecting Imam Hatip alumni, a vocal and politically powerful group that includes President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

“Inciting one part of society toward another using begrudging, hateful and discriminating language under the guise of being an artist is the biggest disrespect to art,” Turkey’s Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog tweeted, saying that the artist’s remarks were “primitive” and “archaic.”

Though Gulsen issued a public apology for her remarks, a public prosecutor ordered her pre-trial detention two days later. Her lawyer, Emek Emre, said his legal team challenged the arrest, calling her detention both irregular and illegal.

But until the court ruled for her release Monday, the singer spent the weekend in Bakirkoy Prison, in a cell adjacent to that of award-winning producer Cigdem Mater, who is serving an 18-year-sentence in connection with the 2013 Gezi Park anti-government protests.

Gulsen’s arrest, which made international headlines, was met with concern by Washington. A US State Department spokesperson expressed concern about the “widespread efforts in Turkey to restrict expression” via censorship and judicial harassment following Gulsen’s detention. In addition, various women’s organizations criticized the sharp contrast between judicial inaction toward femicides and violence against women and the artist’s speedy arrest.

The We Will Stop Femicides Platform, an award-winning rights group engaged in a legal battle against its closure, held a

demonstration in support of the singer in front of the courthouse in Istanbul.

Monday’s ruling placing the artist on house arrest also spurred outrage from opposition politicians, artists and jurists. It means that Gulsen cannot perform at several scheduled concerts, including a large open-air show planned for Sept. 7 in Istanbul, tickets for which are almost sold out.

Emre said that while he welcomed the fact that Gulsen would “spend the night at her own home with her child,” the legal team would apply for her release from house arrest as the court had already acknowledged that she did not pose a flight risk.

“This house arrest aims to ban her from giving concerts, from appearing on stage, from wearing the dresses she wears and from waving a certain flag,” tweeted Gokce Gokcen, the deputy chair responsible for youth policies of the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP).

Gokcen’s tweet refers to repeated attacks on Gulsen by the conservative media for wearing transparent minidresses and waving an LGBTI+ flag on stage. Some pundits believe that the case against her is really about her support of LGBTI+ causes, while others said that in today’s Turkey, any criticism of Imam Hatip schools is an attack on sacred cows. Last year, Erol Mutercimler, a journalist who said in a television program that many crimes of child molestation and corruption were carried out by graduates of Imam Hatip schools, was sentenced to 10 months in prison.

Gulsen’s arrest highlights three critical trends in the Turkish political landscape. First of all, it adds to the claims that the judiciary has become a tool in the hands of the government and is used to shut down the opposition and punish those who do not subscribe to a conservative lifestyle.

Social democrat pundit Baris Pehlivan pointed out that the prosecutor in the Gulsen case was the same one who ordered the arrest of journalist Sedef Kabas, who was charged with insulting the president earlier this year.

The singer’s arrest also came amid corruption allegations against senior members and officials of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, including Erdogan’s advisers Serkan Taranoglu and Korkmaz Karaca. Last week, mobster-turned-whistleblower Sedat Peker claimed in a series of 50 tweets that former Capital Markets Board head Ali Fuat Taskesenlioglu, his sister and AKP lawmaker Zehra Taskesenlioglu and Erdogan’s former adviser Sekan Taranoglu had formed a network to extract bribes from companies.

“All that is rotten, all that is illegal and immoral leads to the presidential palace,” CHP deputy chair Veli Agbaba said Monday. “Where are the judges and prosecutors to investigate these claims? Shouldn’t they be looking into the allegations instead of arresting Gulsen?”

Faced with attacks, the Council of Judges and Prosecutors made a statement defending the independence of judges, whose decisions were based on the existing legal system including the constitution and according to their conscience. “No authority or person can give orders and instructions, send memos or make recommendations and suggestions to courts and judges,” it said. In a thinly veiled warning, it urged press organs to refrain from “intervention” in judicial decisions, particularly if their words went beyond criticism and bordered on insult.



London’s St. Sarkis Church

Centenary of London’s St. Sarkis Church to Be Marked in 2023

LONDON — The Primate of the Armenian Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Bishop Hovakim Manukian announced this week that the centenary of the consecration of St. Sarkis Church in London will be celebrated with a series of events in early 2023.

The centenary committee has been meeting to appropriately mark this milestone in the life of the Armenian community in Great Britain. St. Sarkis Church was built in 1922 and consecrated in January 1923 in the heart of London’s Kensington neighborhood. Built by philanthropist Calouste Gulbenkian, St. Sarkis is a significant community center for Armenians and has played an important role in the religious, cultural and social life of British-Armenians.

The centenary celebrations will be kicked off by a solemn Divine Liturgy on the feast of St Sarkis in 2023, with the participation of community members, as well as ecumenical and civic leaders. A unique concert by the renowned Chilingirian Quartet, led by Levon Chilingirian, will be held in the church. A book dedicated to the centenary is being prepared by Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian. A series of youth events and Armenian food fairs are in the planning.

The centenary committee members are Rev. Shnorq Baghdasarian (Pastor of St. Sarkis), Martin Essayan (St. Sakis Charity Trust), Mr. Christopher Kurkjian (St. Sarkis Church Trust), Bedros Asslanian (St. Sarkis Parish Council, Chair), Annie Kanikianian (St. Sarkis Parish Council, Secretary), and Teni Matian (Arev Project).

The second point in the Gulsen saga is the growing conflict between the government and the entertainment world. Artists have become a vocal critics of the government, which has banned at least 14 youth and music festivals over the summer, attacked singers such as Sezen Aksu and imposed unofficial bans on certain content.

Many artists rallied to support Gulsen, particularly after she made her apology. One of the most outspoken was Kaan Tagoze, the lead singer of the rock band Duman. “There is nothing to say; all is clear,” he said in a concert in the coastal city of Bodum yesterday. “The elections are approaching; you know what to do. The government is shooting itself in the foot.”

The third is the cracks within the conservative bloc. Like Aksu, the pop diva attacked by Islamist nationalist groups for a song she wrote five years ago that allegedly insults the biblical Adam and Eve, some even among the AKP thought that taking the issue to court was going too far. Sev-

eral pro-government columnists, such as Mehmet Barlas and Sebnem Bursali, said that while Gulsen’s words on Imam Hatips were offensive, putting her behind bars was too much.

“I’m also a graduate of a religious high school,” conservative opposition journalist Nihal Bengisu Karaca said. “I was also hurt by Gulsen’s insult. I showed my reaction by writing an article. But why is Gulsen being arrested?”

On the other hand, the opposition CHP pointed out that the judges were adept at ignoring insults to religion when it came from people close to the AKP. “A figure who mocked the Quran’s Baqarat verse has not only faced no charge but is currently Turkey’s ambassador to the Czech Republic,” said CHP chair Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

(This article originally appeared in AI-Monitor on August 29. [<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/08/turkish-pop-star-jailed-over-joke-placed-under-house-arrest#ixzz7dTMABi5HJ>])



Community News

Armenian Assembly Cites *Christian Post* Article in Calls for Releases of Armenian POWs, Aid to Artsakh

WASHINGTON — As the two-year mark approaches of the signing of the November 2020 ceasefire statement that required Armenia and Azerbaijan to “exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons,” Azerbaijan has taken no action to adhere to the requirements of the agreement and continues to unlawfully hold Armenian prisoners as hostages. The Armenian Assembly of America urges the Biden Administration and Congress to aid in releasing Armenian POWs, which total over 100 people, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In addition, the Assembly calls for the U.S. to provide significant aid to help post-war Artsakh rebuild, including humanitarian aid to help displaced Armenians, all of which builds upon the recommended \$2 million in demining assistance in the Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations Bill.

The recent *Christian Post* article, titled “When Will Christians Stand Up for the Armenians?”, journalist Uzay Bulut warns of yet “another genocide at the hands of Muslim Turks and Azeris” against the Armenians. She highlights the recent “Red Flag Alert” issued by the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention regarding the governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey, and their plans of a possible new genocide.

Bulut highlights the underreporting of atrocities against the Armenian people, including the torture and abuse of POWs, particularly a recent video that triggered the Lemkin Institute alert. In the video, an Azerbaijani soldier ties an Armenian skull, dug up from a nearby Armenian cemetery, to the back of military truck as soldiers cheer the revolting action.

While Congress and the U.S. State Department have called for Azerbaijan to release all prisoners of war, including in a statement released on May 27, 2021, wherein Spokesperson Ned Price stated that the “United States is concerned by recent developments along the international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the detention of several Armenian soldiers by Azerbaijani forces...” and that “Azerbaijan of its obligations under international humanitarian law to treat all detainees humanely,” these calls have fallen on deaf ears.

“Although almost two years have passed since the mandated release of Armenian POWs and captured civilians. ... Armenian Americans must continue to advocate and fight for their release,” said Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan. “Enforcing Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act is critical, as is pressing Congress to pressure Azerbaijan to adhere to the trilateral ceasefire agreement, instead of allowing the Aliyev regime to double down on human rights violations.”



Participants learning rituals of the Badarak

New Altar Servers Attend Deacons’ Training Program

ARMONK, N.Y. — From July 24 to 31, the Deacons’ Training Program welcomed 19 young men from the Eastern and Western Dioceses, including Arin Parsanian and Zareh Mirzayan, who are returning to St. Nersess to commence their fall semester studies in preparation for ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

This year, many of the participants were first-time attendees of St. Nersess Summer Conferences. The program was led by co-directors, Dn. Alex Calikyan, a 2019 seminary graduate, and Dn. Ari Terjanian, and was guided by Fr. Mardiros Chebian, dean. Daily classes were led by Fr. Tateos Abdalian and the Fr. Nigoghos Aznavourian, a 2020 seminary graduate, as well as Dn. Alex and Dn. Ari. Dn. Anthony Maldonado and Dn. Garen Megrđichian assisted as counselors during the week.

Armenian language classes focused on learning to read the Armenian alphabet, fluency in chanting in Armenian, and basics of grammar in *Krapar* (classical Armenian) for the advanced students. In the Deacons’ Training classes, students reviewed the chants, hymns, and liturgics of the *Badarak*.

Evening lectures were also offered, including guest speaker Bishop Daniel Findikyan, previewing his soon-to-be-released translation of *The Book of Hours* (Zhamakirk); Dn. Arthur Sabounjian presenting on repentance; and Dn. Alex giving a moving presentation on St. Stephen and the diaconate.

A service was held to bless two new icons in the St. Hagop Chapel, St. Nersess the Graceful and St. Nersess the Great. Officiating at the ceremony was Bishop Daniel, assisted by the participants. The icons were donated in commemoration of Fr. Karekin Kasparian, former dean of St. Nersess and Fr. Mardiros Chebian, current dean of the seminary.

On Sunday morning, *Badarak* was celebrated in the chapel, with Fr. Tateos serving as the guest celebrant.

The participants enjoyed wonderful meals throughout the week, prepared by Wilma Petrossian, Manager of Food Services.



Deacons’ Training Program participants

Moderna Sues Pfizer and BioNTech Over Covid Vaccine Technology

By Rebecca Robbins and Jenny Gross

BOSTON (*New York Times*) — The vaccine manufacturer Moderna sued Pfizer and BioNTech on Friday, August 26, claiming that its rivals’ Covid-19 shot copied groundbreaking technology that Moderna had developed years before the pandemic.

The allegation of patent infringement sets up what could become a protracted and expensive legal battle between the companies behind coronavirus vaccines that have saved millions of lives worldwide and raised hopes for future medical products using similar messenger RNA, or mRNA, technology.

Experts said Moderna’s litigation, regardless of its outcome, was unlikely to impede access to Covid vaccines or chill the development of mRNA products. But the outcome could dictate whether Pfizer or Moderna controls and profits more from a powerful and lucrative medical technology.

“The battle really is who is going to be, in the future, the go-to source that other companies may have to license from,” said Ameet Sarpatwari, an expert on pharmaceutical policy and law at Harvard Medical School. For Moderna, he said, “establishing their ownership and their dominance in this space is going to set the stage for future royalties that they’re going to get.”

In two lawsuits on Friday, Moderna claimed that Pfizer and its development partner, BioNTech, had in-



Moderna Chairman Noubar Afeyan

fringed on three patents that Moderna filed between 2011 and 2016 related to its mRNA technology. One lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, where Moderna is based, and the other in Germany, home to BioNTech.

Jerica Pitts, a spokeswoman for Pfizer, said Pfizer and BioNTech were “surprised by the litigation” and “remain confident” in their intellectual property supporting the vaccine. BioNTech said in a statement that its “work is original, and we will vigorously defend against all allegations of patent infringement.”

Moderna is seeking damages, which could include royalties and lost profits, incurred since March, when the company said it would begin enforcing its Covid-related patents in wealthier countries after see MODERNA, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS/OBITUARY

Moderna Sues Pfizer and BioNTech Over Covid Vaccine Technology

MODERNA, from page 7

previously pledging not to do so during the pandemic emergency. Moderna's lawsuits said the company would not seek damages from Pfizer's sales of its shot to the world's poorest countries. They also said the company would not pursue any damages that would be the responsibility of the U.S. government, which has bought hundreds of millions of doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Christopher Ridley, a spokesman for Moderna, said that the company would leave the amount of the damages for the courts to decide and that it would not give an estimate. But Jacob S. Sherkow, an expert on biotechnology patent law at the University of Illinois College of Law, estimated that if Moderna's litigation succeeded, Pfizer might be forced to pay tens of millions of dollars in damages — a small fraction of the overall sales for its Covid vaccine, which reached a record \$36.8 billion in 2021.

Christopher Morten, an expert on pharmaceutical patent law at Columbia Law School, said, "It seems to me that Moderna is really just looking for a cut of Pfizer's profits and hoping to share with its shareholders a fraction of the billions that Pfizer is earning on top of the billions that Moderna itself is earning."

Messenger RNA is the genetic molecule that helps cells make proteins. The vac-

cines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna both use the technology to command cells to make tiny pieces of viruses that strengthen the immune system to protect against the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

Moderna had been working on the technology for other infectious diseases for years before Covid emerged. The company invested billions of dollars it raised from investors in developing the technology while also receiving significant government support. The United States has given the company more than \$10 billion to develop and test the Covid vaccine and to buy doses.

Moderna's suits claim that Pfizer and BioNTech copied crucial features of its patented technology, including making the same chemical modification to their mRNA and targeting the same type of protein, known as a spike protein, that Moderna scientists had pioneered years earlier.

Moderna has been aggressive in staking out its intellectual property claims on mRNA technology.

The company spent months locked in a bitter dispute with the National Institutes of Health, its collaborator on a project that led to the development of its Covid vaccine, over who deserves credit for a crucial component of that shot. (None of the patents at issue in Friday's litigation relate to intellectual property generated during that

collaboration.) Moderna has since backed down in the dispute with the N.I.H., though the two sides remain in discussions about a resolution.

Moderna said it was not seeking to remove Pfizer and BioNTech's vaccine from the market, and was not asking for an injunction to prevent its future sale, given the need for access to coronavirus vaccines.

"There is no way that any court in the land would ever issue an injunction blocking Pfizer from making or selling its vaccine as long as the virus continues to circulate and kill hundreds of Americans a day," Mr. Morten said. "That's a clear-eyed assessment by Moderna's lawyers that they just wouldn't get an injunction anyway."

Moderna is being represented by WilmerHale, a major and well-connected law firm. Its lead lawyer is William Lee, one of the most experienced patent litigators in the country.

Analysts at the investment bank SVB Securities wrote in a note to investors on Friday that the history of disputes over intellectual property between similar companies "suggests the most likely outcome would be modest royalties paid by both companies, with little net favorable financial impact for anyone but the law firms involved."

"These two companies are going to be locked up in litigation for years to come,"

said Mr. Sarpatwari of Harvard.

The Covid vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna were both authorized and rolled out within a week of each other in December 2020. They account for the vast majority of the coronavirus shots administered in the United States. Now the Biden administration is preparing to roll out, soon after Labor Day, the next generation of coronavirus shots developed by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

Both developers this week completed their submissions to the Food and Drug Administration seeking emergency authorization of retooled shots aimed at Omicron subvariants that are causing most new coronavirus cases in the United States. The federal government has ordered 105 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's revamped shot and 66 million of Moderna's, with options to buy hundreds of millions more.

Officials have said the fall booster campaign could be the last government-subsidized Covid vaccination campaign for many Americans. Ashish Jha, the White House's Covid-19 coordinator, said this month that the government was likely to stop buying vaccines as soon as this fall, meaning that future Covid booster shots would be paid for and distributed largely through the private health care system, as is done with annual flu vaccines.

Noah Weiland contributed reporting.

OBITUARY

Montreal Educator, ADL And TCA Pillar Vartouhie Balian Passes Away

BALIAN, from page 1

Before her marriage, she taught Armenian language and Armenian history at Beirut's Giligian [Cilician] National School (later renamed Apkarian Giligian School) and was appointed by the local Diocese as vice-principal. Along with this work, she taught for five years at a local Armenian Sunday School.

educational institution which also perpetuates the Armenian identity.

Balian, as principal, was given a golden medal upon the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the school. She also received the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II in 2002. This medal was awarded in Canada to nominees who

made exemplary contributions to public life.

She was a member of the administrative body of the Saturday School of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church of Montreal, where she both taught and served as principal. She received the St. Sahag – St. Mesrob Medal and an accompanying encyclical from Catholics

children Ara Balian and Maral (Kevork) Partamian, as well as her granddaughter Chloe Balian. Other surviving relatives include Anahid Santourian and family (Cyprus), Ohannes and Lena Minoyan and family, Sirvart Soukiasian and family, Sirvart Balian and family (Sweden),

and the entire Kojayan, Akkelian, Chakelian, Balian and Yeguenian families.

Visitation and funeral services took place at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Cathedral of Montreal on August 24, followed by burial at Saint-Laurent Cemetery.



Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and accompanying certificate

In November 1956, she married Onnig Balian and moved to Aleppo. In 1968, the couple and their children Ara and Maral moved to Montreal. In her new country of Canada, Vartouhie Balian became busy with community, educational, and political party activities.

In 1970, she began her collaboration with Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, one of the founders of the AGBU Alex Manoogian School. She served as principal of this school until 2002, where she also taught Armenian history and language. Her motherly care of the Armenian students became the reason for many parents to register their children at this school, which by now has produced over 1,000 graduates. It is an important ed-

ucational institution which also perpetuates the Armenian identity.

Balian played a major role in the organization of Montreal's Tekeyan Cultural Association. She was one of the pillars of Montreal's Armenian Democratic Liberal Party's Eugene Papazian Chapter and one of the founders of the trilingual newspaper *Abaka*.

She was a frequent public speaker and writer and an organizer of community life who did not shy away from defending the institutions, organizations and ideology that she believed in and served.

Vartouhie Balian leaves behind her

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COMMUNITY NEWS



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.



Dr. Nubar Berberian 2022 Annual Awards

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

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

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

Watertown, MA, July 20, 2022

SAS and NAASR to Hold Conference on Armenian Narrative Practices Through the Centuries

BELMONT, Mass. — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will hold a major international in-person conference on September 17-18, at NAASR’s headquarters. Titled “Technologies of Communication and Armenian Narrative Practices Through the Centuries,” the conference aims to foster an interdisciplinary conversation with researchers working across historical periods and different themes pertaining to communication and narratives.

From Cilician-era Armenian manuscripts to 19-century newspapers, to exciting new forms of digital storytelling today, Armenians have always taken advantage of the most contemporary technologies for conveying information and producing knowledge. In adopting these information technologies, Armenians have made them their own: Armenian iconographic and book arts are in conversation with imperial neighbors but develop their own styles; Armenian newspapers became a vehicle for the development of the modern Armenian vernacular and an opportunity to plumb the depths of Armenian history; and TUMO, the Center for Creative Technologies in the

Republic of Armenia pushes boundaries of digital storytelling. Focusing on technologies of communication (i.e., manuscripts, print, visual, and digital media) this conference aims to foster an interdisciplinary conversation with researchers working across historical periods around the question of how technologies of communication have impacted Armenian narrative style and practices (such as modes of storytelling, narrative structure, and exegetical principles), and reversely how Armenian narrative practices have shaped each new technology.

Scholars from Armenia, the U.S., Hungary, and Australia, will deliver exciting papers on the topic. The conference will feature four panels: Narrative Practices and Power; Adapting to change: Mobility, Changing Socio-Economic Patterns, and Technologies of Communication; Technologies of Communication and Identity Making; Can the Provinces Speak? Mainstreaming Peripheral Narratives and Perspectives on Ottoman-Armenians. “Most of the papers delivered at this conference are by young and uprising scholars. The interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives and the depth of the topics of the papers are just breathtaking,” noted Prof. Bedross Der Matossian, President of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS). He continued, “It is indeed an honor to cooper-



Dzovinar Derderian and Christopher Sheklian

ate with NAASR on hosting its first in-person conference in the newly renovated Vartan Gregorian Building. I would like to thank Drs. Dzovinar Derderian and Christopher Sheklian for spearheading this project and extend my gratitude to the different Armenians Studies Programs and Chairs for co-sponsoring the conference.”

Marc Mamigonian, director of the Academic Affairs at NAASR, commented, “NAASR is excited to cosponsor and host this important conference. It is the first chance to have a major academic event at our new building and a welcome opportunity to continue our collaboration with SAS and the other co-sponsors.”

Organizers Derderian and Sheklian, are thrilled by the depth of the papers that will be offered at the conference. “We believe that the variety of the papers, spanning disciplines and historical eras, will foster a unique and productive conversation. Our hope is that the arrangement of panels will create intellectual connections that will push Armenian Studies in new and exciting directions,” they added.

The conference was made possible with the support of University of Southern California, Institute for Armenian Studies; Mashtots Chair in Armenian studies, Harvard University; Armenian Studies Program, California State University, Fresno; Armenian Studies Program; University of California, Irvine; and Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, NYC; and the Center for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

To view the full program, visit the SAS website.

The conference is open to the public.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Eric Adams After Dark: A Private Table and Tarnished Friends

By Sarah Maslin Nir and Jazmine Hughes

NEW YORK (*New York Times*) — Before he took office, Eric Adams vowed to boost New York City's nightlife as both the mayor and a very active participant, visiting venues from Staten Island to Queens, showing up personally to restore the vibrancy of an industry crushed by Covid.

Mr. Adams has indeed become a fixture out after dark, visiting destinations around the city. But a curious and unmistakable pattern has also emerged: Again and again he returns to the same upscale Manhattan restaurant. There, he slips behind a frosted glass partition to a private table where he holds court, while the restaurant stays open until he leaves — sometimes well after its official closing time.

The restaurant, Osteria La Baia, is run by Mr. Adams's close friends, Robert and Zhan Petrosyants — twin brothers whose businesses Mr. Adams has supported despite the brothers' past felony convictions, outstanding tax debts and a trail of legal troubles.

In June alone, Mr. Adams visited La Baia on at least 14 evenings, according to *New York Times* reporters who observed his nighttime outings — of which there were at least 22 that month.

At La Baia, where entrees range in price from about \$30 to over \$60, *Times* reporters never observed him paying for his meals. In response to questions from *The Times*, a spokesman said the mayor personally pays the bill to the restaurant monthly. But the spokesman declined to provide receipts, and the restaurant's operators did not respond to emails seeking any documents that would support the mayor's claim.

If the mayor has failed to pay for his meals, he could have violated the city's ethics rules, watchdogs said. Public servants are explicitly barred from accepting gifts worth \$50 or more from city vendors — a rule that would not apply to La Baia and the Petrosyants brothers. But the city's Conflicts of Interest Board advises public officials not to accept any valuable gifts that are given to them because of their positions.

The mayor's pattern also raises questions about who gets access to him.

La Baia opened late last year along a subdued stretch of West 52nd Street. The restaurant's website describes the venue as coastal Italian; it offers a seafood-heavy menu in an elegant white-tablecloth dining room.

The mayor sometimes stays for three or more hours, and often he is the only remaining guest as the staff waits well after the restaurant's posted 10 p.m. closing time. His security detail, including his brother Bernard, eats at a separate table on some evenings.

In addition to socializing with the Petrosyants brothers at the restaurant, Mr. Adams receives a stream of guests at La Baia. In mid-June the former mayor, Bill de Blasio, met him there; earlier in the year, Mr. Adams dined at La Baia with former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and posed with the mixed martial arts fighter Dillon Danis, according to social media posts. The outings do not appear on the mayor's public schedule.

Although he sometimes describes himself as a vegan, Mr. Adams has been greeted by a waiter asking if he will have his usual, the branzino, which is listed on the menu for \$55.

Maxwell Young, a spokesman for the

mayor, said Mr. Adams conducts both business and personal meetings at La Baia. "Of course, there is nothing wrong with talking city business at a restaurant," Mr. Young added.

Lots of political figures have their favorite haunts. Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani enjoyed cigar bars, and Mr. de Blasio spent leisurely mornings at the Park Slope Y.M.C.A. But Mr. Adams's allegiance to La Baia stands out, as does his history of supporting the businesses run by the brothers, who pleaded guilty to felony charges in 2014 after being accused in a money-laundering scheme and have a long record of unpaid tax bills and lawsuits.

The 40-year-old twin brothers, who had previously operated businesses in Brooklyn, launched their Manhattan restaurant just weeks after the mayor was elected. Mr. Adams's frequent appearances at and promotion of the restaurant have boosted its reputation in nightlife columns and social media.

After dining at La Baia's grand opening in November, Mr. Adams, 61, gushed over the phone to a *New York Post* reporter about the mushrooms. "It's a great restaurant," he told *The Post*.

The behavior raises ethical questions, said Richard Briffault, the former chair of the Conflicts of Interest Board.

"It doesn't matter what his intentions are, whether he is giving them free advertising because he's getting free meals, the fact that he is boosting them is a benefit to them, and it arguably hurts their competitors," he said. "It could undermine the public's confidence and the public's belief that the person in power is using his or her office fairly and impartially to help everybody."

Ethical Issues Surrounding Mayor Adams

The New York City mayor, Eric Adams, has faced recurring ethical and accountability issues over his hiring practices, finances, residency, and even his eating habits as a self-proclaimed vegan. (He eats fish, too.) Here are some of the behaviors that have drawn recent criticism:

He keeps his allies close. Mr. Adams hired his brother to run his security team and appointed a former police official who was an unindicted co-conspirator in a public corruption case to become deputy mayor. Mr. Adams also gave a former police colleague a position as senior adviser and allowed him to keep his six-figure job at a casino company, though he later left that post.

His personal financial history is murky. Earlier this year, he declined to commit to releasing his tax returns, as is customary for New York City mayors. He has since relented, and plans to release them in October. He has also faced questions about his residency. In one instance, he said that he no longer owns a Brooklyn co-op, despite public records to the contrary. Then, in recent public filings, he acknowledged ownership.

His loyalists are rewarded. As a state senator, Mr. Adams was faulted for using "exceedingly poor judgment" in awarding a video-lottery contract at Aqueduct Race-track. For years before becoming mayor he also praised a police tool, BolaWrap, made by a company whose investors included his current chief of staff, Frank Carone.

In his short time as mayor, Mr. Adams has occasionally waded into murky ethical waters. After pledging to pay his own way



Zhan "Johnny" Petrosyants (right) and his twin brother, Robert Petrosyants (left).

on a trip to Puerto Rico, he acknowledged flying on an entrepreneur's private jet. He later said he paid for his seat but did not provide documentation.

The Conflicts of Interest Board ruled that Mr. Adams could not give his brother Bernard a \$210,000 job as head of the mayor's security detail. Bernard Adams was then redirected to an adviser role with a \$1 salary. And late this spring, Mr. Adams put his longtime friend, Timothy Pearson, on the payroll of a nonprofit controlled by the mayor for an undisclosed salary, while allowing Mr. Pearson to retain his job as a vice president at the city's only casino — a move experts said was ethically questionable. Mr. Pearson left the casino job after *The Times* disclosed his dual roles.

In a statement, Mr. Young called Mr. Adams "an unabashed champion of New York's nightlife industry" at a time when the sector is struggling to recover from the pandemic.

"He visits venues in every borough and gets energy from being around New Yorkers — and is at work bright and early every morning as everyone can see," he wrote in an email responding to questions from *The Times*.

Typically, the mayor's motorcade — two black SUVs — pulls up after 9 p.m. outside La Baia, where the upscale dining room is decorated in muted taupes and blond wood.

Waiters refer to Robert and Zhan Petrosyants as the owners, though they are both prohibited from holding the restaurant's liquor license because of felony convictions. Instead, Marianna Shahmuradyan — with whom Robert has several children — is on the license, according to New York State Liquor Authority records.

The twin brothers were accused of conspiring with several other men to launder the proceeds of phony insurance claims through shell companies. Zhan was charged in the scheme in 2012, Robert the year after.

According to an indictment filed by federal prosecutors in Brooklyn, Robert Petrosyants owned and managed medical billing companies that received money through false insurance claims, then wrote checks to shell companies that falsely purported to supply medical goods and services. Zhan Petrosyants, known as Johnny, cashed checks written to the shell companies at a check-cashing business in Queens in order to conceal the source and ownership of the money and avoid detection by federal authorities, the indictment said.

Both pleaded guilty to lesser charges. Robert Petrosyants was sentenced to six

months in federal prison, and Johnny Petrosyants received five years of probation. Each was required to forfeit about \$667,000.

Mr. Young, the mayor's spokesman, described the friendship between Johnny Petrosyants and Mr. Adams as born out of the mayor's efforts to help people through difficult times.

"Mayor Adams does not believe in judging people based on the worst mistake they've ever made," Mr. Young said.

Being mayor of New York is intensely stressful, and Mr. de Blasio said he believed La Baia had become a place where Mr. Adams could relax. (Mr. de Blasio once hosted a fund-raiser at a restaurant run by the brothers.)

"I think when you are mayor, you need an outlet," Mr. de Blasio said. "I think this is one part to unwind, it's one part thinking stuff through with people he trusts."

For Mr. Adams, the Petrosyants brothers appear to be those people.

"That continues to be the nature of their relationship — one of friendship and mentorship and support," Mr. Young said. "It's a personal relationship, and there is no business relationship, and has never been a business relationship."

But those lines have blurred at times.

At the time of their arrests, the brothers ran a restaurant in Brooklyn, Woodland, at which Mr. Adams was also something of a regular.

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Mr. Adams, then Brooklyn borough president, had held fund-raisers and parties for staff at the restaurant on Flatbush Avenue in the bustling mix of commercial and residential properties near Barclays Center. But complaints about excessive noise at Woodland mounted and eventually led Mr. Adams to convene a neighborhood meeting in the fall of 2016.

There, he urged those assembled to give Woodland a fair chance, according to Regina Cahill, the president of the North Flatbush Avenue Business Improvement District, who attended the meeting.

Mr. Adams never noted his relationship with the Petrosyants brothers. The restaurant was permitted to keep operating.

"He never disclosed that he had more than a casual patron relationship with them," said Ms. Cahill, who learned of it some years later, she added. "We were surprised." A few years later, Woodland lost its liquor license and closed after further



COMMUNITY NEWS

complaints from neighbors. Its owner, a business partner of the Petrosyants brothers, said at the time that the complaints were grounded in racism directed at the restaurant’s largely Black clientele.

The Petrosyants brothers have worked together on several other restaurants, leaving a trail of lawsuits and unpaid bills in their wake. The landlords of Forno Rosso, an Italian restaurant in Downtown Brooklyn at which Robert was a manager and guarantor on the lease, last year sued him and an associate in an effort to recover what they say is more than \$500,000 in rent and other costs that went unpaid since April 2020 while the restaurant continued operating.

Johnny Petrosyants said by email that the landlord rejected good-faith efforts to settle the unpaid bills; Scott Loffredo, a lawyer for the landlord, said no such efforts were made.

The brothers and entities connected to them have been sued by landlords, investors and others for hundreds of thousands of dollars. In some of the cases, they have denied the charges while citing the hardships of Covid. The brothers and some

corporations connected to them have at times failed to pay state and federal taxes, records show.

The Petrosyants brothers have been occasional campaign donors to Mr. Adams: Robert gave his Brooklyn campaign \$1,000 in 2013, and Johnny gave his mayoral campaign \$1,000 in 2020. Ms. Shahmuradyan gave \$5,000 in April 2018, of which the campaign refunded \$3,000 to meet public matching eligibility requirements, according to campaign finance records.

In an email, the Petrosyantses said they had taken a plea deal in the criminal case on the advice of their lawyers. They said their federal taxes had been fully paid, and overdue personal and corporate state taxes were largely paid, though records suggest Johnny Petrosyants has outstanding I.R.S. liens in New Jersey. They did not respond to questions about their relationship with Mr. Adams.

Behind the Velvet Rope

The Petrosyantses’ restaurant is not the only nightspot the mayor is drawn to. He sometimes starts his evenings at La Baia and then heads downtown to a more exclusive locale: Zero Bond, a private members’

club in NoHo.

Late one night in May, Mr. Adams arrived at Zero Bond to meet with the mayor of Atlanta, Andre Dickens. The two public officials headed for an even more private location: a V.I.P. room unlocked with a fingerprint scanner.

For people over age 45, membership at Zero Bond, which opened in 2020, requires a \$5,000 initiation fee and a \$4,000 annual payment; food and drink are purchased separately. Nonmembers must be accompanied by a member, and the mayor visits as a guest, Mr. Young said, though he did not respond to a question about who hosts Mr. Adams at the club.

Being granted access to private clubs without paying membership dues risks violating ethics rules, said Mr. Briffault, the former Conflicts of Interest Board chairman.

Arthur L. Aidala, an attorney and longtime friend of Mr. Adams, defended the mayor. “I don’t think he feels likes going home at 9 o’clock at night and watching whatever is on the television.”

Plus, Mr. Aidala said, he doubted that the mayor’s dining companions would affect policy. “This is someone he is going to

have a flatbread pizza with olives and goat cheese on; I don’t think they are the ones who are making any decisions about the City of New York.”

Through his relationship with the mayor, the owner of Zero Bond, Scott Sartiano, has risen: In February, Mr. Adams appointed him to the board of the Metropolitan Museum — one of the most coveted posts on the New York social circuit.

Mr. Young, the spokesman for the mayor, said that Mr. Adams pays for his meals at Zero Bond, but did not provide details or supporting records. Through a spokesman, Mr. Sartiano declined to be interviewed for this article or provide any records, except to say that the club itself did not pay the mayor’s bills at Zero Bond.

Mr. Young provided the names of a handful of restaurants outside Manhattan that he said Mr. Adams visits regularly, including Zona de Cuba, a Latin rooftop restaurant in the Bronx. Alexander Chan, the general manager, said Mr. Adams comes in about once a week, alone or with a guest. He orders from a vegetarian menu and pays the bill himself, Mr. Chan said.

“It’s really nice to have the mayor come and help out and come by the restaurant,” Mr. Chan said.

But on other occasions, the mayor’s outings beyond La Baia or Zero Bond appear to be steered by the same small group with whom he often spends his evenings.

In June, the mayor attended a private dinner sponsored by the Florida-based luxury magazine *Haute Living* at a Madison Avenue restaurant.

“The city’s going to come back, you feel the excitement, you feel the energy,” Mayor Adams said to guests who nibbled morsels of tuna belly and raised glasses of a 25-year-old Scotch that retails at \$2,900 a bottle.

Beside him, once again, was Johnny Petrosyants — a longtime friend of one of the magazine’s principals, Kamal Hotchandani.

In an interview, Mr. Hotchandani said he met the mayor at a dinner at Zero Bond, and that despite a flurry of social media pictures linking them, they didn’t know each other well. He said the mayor’s commitment to the city’s nightlife is welcome, and suggestions that he’s spending too much time at nightclubs are overblown.

“He’s really restoring the city that never sleeps back to that,” Hotchandani said. But he added that he was surprised to hear that the mayor spends so much time at a single restaurant.

“At the end of the day if you’re the mayor of the most powerful city in the U.S. and the world,” Mr. Hotchandani said, “would you recommend spending 50 percent of your time with one person or spreading the love? I’d recommend spreading the love.”

To many people steeped in New York City’s nightlife, Mr. Adams’s enthusiasm and attention are welcome. And the mayor himself seems unconcerned that commercial interests might capitalize on his presence.

“It ain’t an album release party until the mayor gets here,” the rapper French Montana said in an Instagram video on June 19 at a party where the musician racked up a tab of more than \$26,000, according to his posts.

Mr. Adams appears over his shoulder: “And you know this is going to be a hot album!”

William Benson, the founder of the luxury brand Billionaires Row and a friend of Mr. Adams, praised the mayor’s efforts to connect with a powerful constituency.

“The players come out at night, the money guys, the bankers, the athletes, it makes sense for the mayor to go and rub shoulders and build relationships,” he said. “Those conversations don’t start from 9 to 5.”

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Arts & Culture

‘And My Mother Gave Me Away’

*Armenian Women
Genocide Survivors’
Stories of ‘Absorption’ and Reinte-
gration During and After Genocide’
by
Dr. Rebecca Jinks*

FRESNO — Dr. Rebecca Jinks will present an in-person lecture entitled “‘And My Mother Gave Me Away’: Armenian Women Survivors’ Stories of ‘Absorption’ and Reintegration During and After Genocide” on Thursday, September 15, at 7 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus. The presentation is part of the Fall Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Gladys Z. Ashjian Memorial Fund.

This lecture will discuss the experiences of Armenian women who were “absorbed” into Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab households during the



Dr. Rebecca Jinks

Genocide of 1915, and who then escaped or were rescued after the Armistice and returned to the Armenian community. In the last ten years, scholars have begun to focus on this topic, and we now know much more about the forced conversion process, Armenian and international humanitarian relief efforts, and Armenian community responses.

But in order to truly understand the genocidal impact of “absorption,” religious conversion, and erasure of identity, the difficult decisions Armenian women made, and the lingering impacts on individuals and community during the process of reintegration, we need survivors’ stories. While fragmented, full of silences, and mediated by the passage of time, these stories allow us to reorient, and to consider not just what was done to these women, but how they experienced, fought, and accommodated the uncertainties, dislocations, violence, and losses. Historians have traditionally been wary of including Armenian survivors’ stories in their work, partly because of Turkish denial, but this project seeks to place them front and center, and to listen to their silences as well as their words.

In this lecture Jinks will explore see MOTHER, page 16



Estrellita Karsh wife of legendary photographer Yousuf Karsh stands in front of the iconic 1941 photograph of Winston Churchill taken by her husband in the Speaker of the House of Commons’ chambers on Tuesday July 14, 2009. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Fred Chartrand

Churchill Portrait Disappears In Art Heist in Canada

By Livia Albeck-Ripka and McKenna Oxenden

OTTAWA, Canada (New York Times) — It is among the most famous photographic images of a statesman. Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, glowers, hand on hip. For decades, an original signed print of the image has hung on a wall in a landmark hotel in Ottawa.

But on Friday, August 19, an employee noticed that something was off with the photograph, shot by the renowned portraitist Yousuf Karsh.

The frame was askew. It did not match the others on the wall.

When the hotel, the Fairmont Château Laurier, called Jerry Fielder, the director of Mr. Karsh’s estate, he thought there was “no chance” that the picture could have been replaced by a copy.

Then they sent him a close-up picture of what was supposed to be Mr. Karsh’s signature. “I was stunned,” Mr. Fielder said, noting that it had been forged. “This was a heist.”

The photograph, taken in 1941 after Churchill addressed the Canadian Parliament during World War II, is known as the “Roaring Lion” for the fierce gaze of the British leader, and the defiance that many said it captured as the Allied forces forged ahead in a difficult and bloody war.

It catapulted Mr. Karsh, an Armenian Canadian then 33, to international fame. He went on to photograph Ernest Hemingway, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Georgia O’Keeffe and Nikita S. Khrushchev.

Mr. Karsh had a special relationship with the Fairmont hotel: In 1936, he held his first exhibition there. In 1972, he opened his photography studio in the building. Later, he and his wife, Estrellita Karsh, moved in.

“We traveled so much it was difficult to keep up a big home,” Mrs. Karsh, 92, said by phone. “I loved it,” she added, “because a hotel is like a little city.”

She and her husband, who died in 2002, gave the original print of Churchill, along with several others, to the hotel, after living there for nearly two decades. Mrs. Karsh said that when she learned that the picture was missing, she was incredulous.

“Churchill was important in his life; he was important in everybody’s life,” Mrs. Karsh said. “When he photographed him, Britain was on the verge of giving up.” Her husband, she added, had practiced making the image on a man who “looked like Churchill from the neck down.”

In a news release, the Fairmont hotel said that it had informed the local authorities of the picture’s disappearance, and, as a precautionary measure, had removed other photographs that were hanging in the reading lounge of the building.

“We are deeply saddened by this brazen act,” said Geneviève Dumas, the hotel’s general manager, adding that the hotel was incredibly proud to house the Karsh collection. In an interview with CTV News, she said that the public had sent in photographs see HEIST, page 13

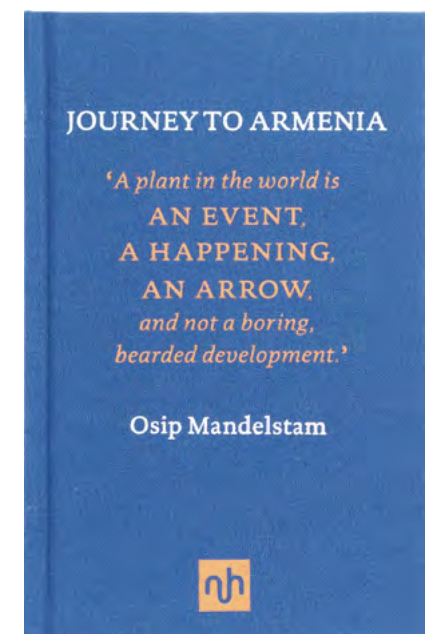


The late Yousuf Karsh

Balakian Publishes New Essay on Poet Mandelstam and Armenia

HAMILTON, N.Y. — Peter Balakian’s new essay “Ending the Dry Spell: Mandelstam’s Journey to Armenia” has just been published in *Literary Imagination* (Volume 24, issue 2, July 2022). Osip Mandelstam (1891-1937) remains one of the most important poets of the 20th century. He was a major figure in Russian literary modernism whose steadfast commitment to his literary and aesthetic principles made him an enemy of Stalin’s new Soviet cultural repression. He was arrested and sent into exile to labor camps several times and died at the age of 47 in a Siberian transit camp. But, before he did, he made his now famous journey to Armenia in 1930, during which time the poet lived in lenient exile in order to escape the surveillance he was living under in Moscow.

Balakian writes, with uncanny insight, about the depth of Mandel-



stam’s passion for Armenia as nation and as a seminal part of a larger geographic Mandelstam called “the holy land” of “Christian, Hellenic, and Judaic civilization.” He explores Mandelstam’s great essay “Journey to Armenia,” and the impact of Armenia on the poet’s imagination in the essay that ended the writer’s block that had plagued Mandelstam during the dark years of the late 1920s in Moscow.

Balakian’s groundbreaking analysis of Mandelstam’s overlooked poem cycle, “Armenia,” written immediately after the poet left Armenia in October 1930, also sheds light on an important poem cycle that opened up Mandelstam to a new poetics that would define his final phase of writing. Balakian argues that understanding the poem cycle “Armenia” is essential to understanding one of the most important poets of the 20th century.

“Ending the Dry Spell: Mandelstam’s Journey to Armenia” is essential for understanding Mandelstam and his love affair with the Armenian culture and history.

See <https://doi.org/10.1093/litmag/imac022>.



ARTS & CULTURE

Mosesian Center for the Arts to Host Exhibit of Members' Art

WATERTOWN — “Members Exhibition 2022,” the upcoming exhibition at Mosesian Arts, 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. Living in a world that is undergoing devastating climate changes, artists are looking for ways to keep nature and its fragile beauty in the forefront.

In C.J. Lori’s painting “Ladies View, Killarney,” the viewer is transported to the magnificent, green landscape of Ireland. Devoid of any human presence, the rolling hills and blue sky take us to a more peaceful and idyllic time. Rebecca’s Skinner’s “Within,” a photograph mounted on aluminum panel, depicts nature in a totally different way. An abandoned house is overtaken by creeping, verdant vines. The vegetation is reclaiming its rightful space. The deserted, crumbling house evokes feelings of loss and emptiness and its strange beauty draws us in.

“Meeting in the Forest,” a mixed media piece by Marija Draskic Brancazio, portrays a real forest from upstate New York. Marine species, realistic representations of sea life, float thought the dark forest, bathed in soft moonlight. The woods and the ocean meet in a surreal, fairy tale world where a ghost-like figure illuminates their path. The artist tells us that “the human character is a woman in white clothing, carrying a delicate necklace (guia, a spritual guiding necklace or rosary) in her left hand, and a lantern in her right, symbolizing the search



Marija Draskic Brancazio “Meeting in the Forest” mixed media painting

of other worlds on a spiritual path.”

Sandy Gregg’s “Celebrating Autumn Glory” is an explosion of beautiful, fall colors. Even though the colors are inspired by autumn, the wall quilt is an abstract piece

created by geometric shapes linked together. Lines, like branches, extend upward and create an illusion of a forest, moving with the fall wind.

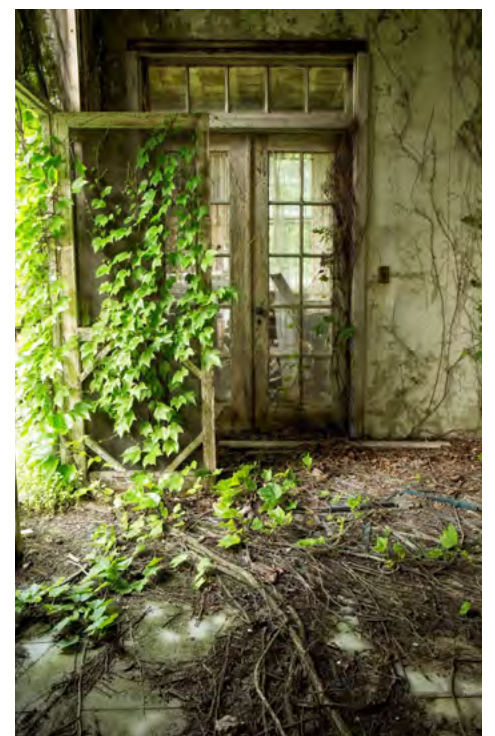
Finally, Dee Kricker’s “Urban Garden” combines acrylic painting and collage to create a tapestry of lines and shapes that gives a feeling of being in the city and encountering a patch of vegetation, like an oasis amongst the city streets. Collaged pieces of paper, some of them pieces of handwritten pages, remind us of things lost or discarded in the city. Painted from memory, this abstract work draws inspiration from the community gardens that dot the urban landscape. The variety, the thoughtful and masterful execution of the work ranging from paintings, fiber pieces, prints, sculptures, and drawings makes this year’s Members Exhibit a true jam.

“Members Exhibition 2022” will be on display September 14 to October 14, with the opening reception taking place on Thursday, September 15, 5.30 to 7.30 p.m.

The mission of the Mosesian Center for the Arts is to enrich the lives of diverse audiences and participants by providing exceptional experiences in theater, visual, and literary art.



C.J. Lori “Ladies View, Killarney” oil on panel



Rebecca Skinner “Within” photograph on aluminum

For more information, visit www.mosesianarts.org.

Churchill Portrait Disappears in Art Heist in Canada

HEIST, from page 12

of themselves in front of the famous image, which revealed that it had been taken sometime between December 25 and January 6.

The hotel is asking anyone who saw or noticed anything unusual at the hotel during that time to contact them, Ms. Dumas added.

Mr. Fielder, the director of Mr. Karsh’s estate, said the print was an original made from the original negative by Mr. Karsh in his Château Laurier studio. He said it was 20 by 24 inches, printed on photographic paper and mounted on archival board.

When Mr. Karsh closed his studio in 1992, his negatives were given to Library and Archives Canada, he said. No copies were allowed, Mr. Fielder said; the only prints in existence were those made by Mr.

Karsh himself before 1992.

The Ottawa Police are investigating the disappearance, according to the CBC. The authorities did not respond to a request for further comment on Tuesday.

Another signed copy of an original print of Mr. Karsh’s “Roaring Lion” photograph was sold for \$62,500 at a Sotheby’s auction in 2020.

The famous picture that Mr. Karsh took of Churchill came after the photographer was invited by Mackenzie King, the Canadian prime minister, to hear Churchill’s “electrifying” speech to Parliament on Dec. 30, 1941. Mr. Karsh, eager to photograph Churchill, had set up his lights and camera the night before, according to Mr. Karsh’s website.

Churchill was apparently taken aback.

“What’s this, what’s this?” he barked as Mr. Karsh flipped on the floodlights.

Though irritated that he hadn’t been told about the photo session, Churchill lit a cigar and told Mr. Karsh that he had one shot.

Mr. Karsh held out an ashtray but Churchill kept puffing. “Forgive me, sir,” Mr. Karsh recalled saying as he snagged the cigar.

“By the time I got back to my camera, he looked so belligerent he could have devoured me,” Mr. Karsh said. “It was at that instant that I took the photograph.”

While Mr. Karsh said he knew that he had taken an important picture, he could “hardly have dreamed that it would become one of the most widely reproduced images in the history of photography.” In 2016, the image went on to be featured on the British five pound note, according to

the International Churchill Society.

Mrs. Karsh said it was “a sad and stupid thing” to steal the photograph. “I hope they apprehend the person.”

She said that it was amazing that these many years later, the Churchill portrait still resonated.

The power of her husband’s images, she added, was that they captured the person behind the mask, including Churchill.

“The relationship and the bond that he shared with many of his sitters made them lose their numbness in front of the camera,” Mrs. Karsh said.

“They allowed him to see, if only for a moment, which he caught, something real in them, something authentic,” she added. “The main element in his relationship to his sitter was trust.”



ARTS & CULTURE

Trashland: An Armenian Dystopia

By Christopher Atamian

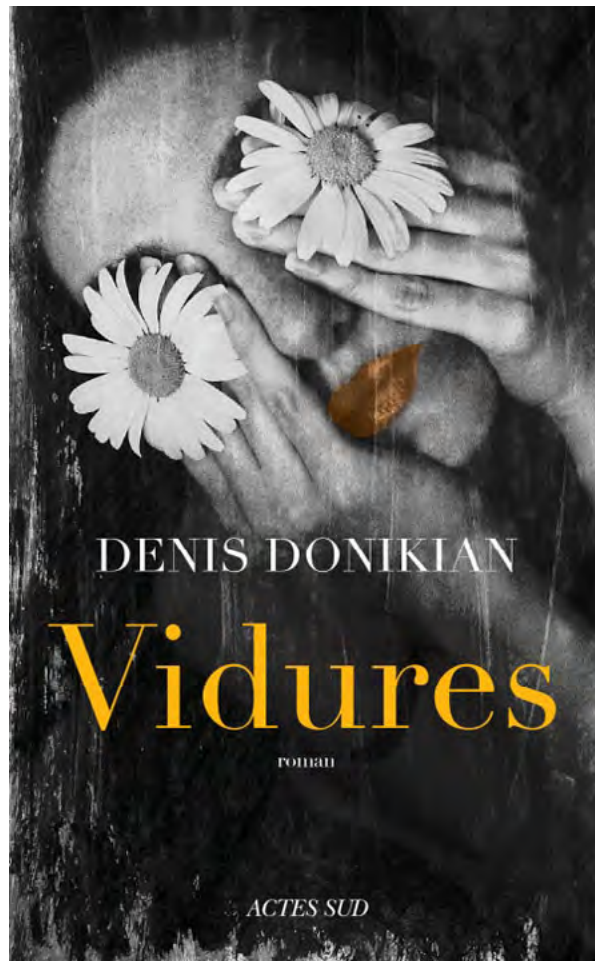
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In a sometimes forgotten corner of Asia Minor, amid the ruins of a former Soviet republic turned capitalist hell hole, in a land where a brutish individualism has taken hold and where a handful of oligarchs live in unimagined luxury while the rest of the country starves, atop a hideously smoldering trash dump where the denizens of the once model community of Nubarashen are reduced daily to foraging with rats and dogs for food, Denis Donikian sets his remarkable novel *Trashland*.

Trashland begins with its hero Gam standing atop a hill, relieving himself on the Armenian capital of Yerevan below. (Gam, which in Armenian means both “I exist” and “or” — a clever play on words.) Gam then joins some trash pickers and mourners as they follow the burial procession of a woman named Anna, who turns out to be his mother. Once a muckraking journalist nicknamed *The Hedgehog*, Gam fled a life-shattering earthquake in his home city of Gyumri and the henchmen of the Armenian government into a small hut near the garbage dump. Here he has escaped society. Hook and shoulder bag in tow, he joins Roubo and Louso and their motley group of friends to daily pick for food among the trash. One day the government henchmen arrive: the Japanese have been hired to install an efficient incinerator system and everything — and everyone — must go. The rest of this tale involves many twists, turns and ironies. Interestingly enough, the great Armenian writer Vahan Totovents wrote about trash pickers (or *kulkhan beyi* in Turkish) in his 1930 novel *Life On the Old Roman Road*. It’s a sad but telling comment on how precious little social equity had been gained in that part of the world over the past 100 years.

Few novels deliver quite so biting, acerbic and at times joyful societal criticism as *Trashland*. The novel serves as both a dirge (and underneath it all, a paean) to a country abandoned to its worst tendencies where, in real life as in fiction, women who are forced to prostitute themselves with their historic enemies in Turkey or journalists who dig a bit too deeply at the country’s corruption, or anyone who simply openly disagrees with the government are “disappeared” or “suicided” off the frightening Kiev bridge with alarming regularity. *Trashland* owes a debt to both William Golding and George Orwell. Instead of an island as in *Lord of the Flies*, Donikian presents to the reader an Armenian trash dump. Instead of an allegorical animal farm as in the eponymous novel, the author gives us a whole country turned into a zoo, its people no better than farm animals to be exploited, metaphorically consumed, and then discarded.

Trashland was received with dismay by many of Armenia’s so-called intelligentsia. Everything from the title to the brutal honesty of its narrative took many by surprise.



The French edition of *Trashland*

Just as Junot Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* takes a candid look at the Dominican community in New York City and the DR, *Trashland* offers an insider’s view at a sometimes closed-in society. As a diasporan Armenian, Donikian writes from the viewpoint of both insider and outsider. In going farther than most diasporans and openly criticizing a rotting society, he has crossed the line assigned to most diasporans — mere cash cows to be bilked at will for imaginary projects, or retirees who come to spend their hard-earned money in their golden years. To cross this line, one must love one’s people and community. To lay bare its deepest wounds and expose its most deep-seated corruption — those are the signs of a true patriot and humanist.

Writer and philosopher Marc Nichanian has noted that Armenian writers of the diaspora have labored within a self-contained world with an imaginary and yet very real curtain separating them from Soviet and now independent Armenia on the one hand, and the rest of the world on the other. Let’s hope that *Trashland*, published first in French by a leading publisher — Actes Sud — and now picked up in its English translation by the fine independent publishing house Nauset Press, will help to pull this curtain back and perhaps, Oz-like, reveal this fascinating and complicated culture to the world-at-large and the reality that lays underneath.

Trashland is a liminal novel, written from the perspective of an insider/outsider. Denis Donikian was born 1942 in Vienne, a small city just south of Lyon, France, and grew up in Le Kemp, a former armaments factory housing workers who were all Armenian Genocide survivors. He studied first in France and then in Soviet Armenia while still a young man. He has spent the better part of his adult

life writing about and critiquing life in the Armenian diaspora and the Republic of Armenia both. Donikian has published some forty books, including tomes of poetry, a long extended poetic essay on Paradjanov’s horses that to this day remains singular in its beauty and passion, as well as exhibited his wonderfully quixotic sculptures influenced by First Nation totem poles. His recent *Small Encyclopedia of the Armenian Genocide*, a monumental six-hundred page thematically arranged history of the *Great Catastrophe* or *Medz Yeghern*, is in part a *devoir de mémoire* and a nod to his parents who survived the event and managed to transmit Armenian culture and language to their son. The greater part of Donikian’s oeuvre then, including his journalistic work at www.yevrobatsi.org where he was my very brilliant editor, has been a long, extended critique of the Armenian world and a quest for justice for the Armenian people. His work is living proof that the two are not mutually exclusive.

Trashland brings together a hodgepodge of styles: poetry, prose, direct address, third-person narration, inner monologue. The result is dizzying at times, but always coherent. In the past decade since the novel was originally published in French a new generation, dubbed *Generation Independence*, has emerged in Armenia that is equally critical of its own society. Writers such as Aram Pachyan, Anna Davtyan and Armen Ohanyan have taken to exposing everything from corruption in the army and society, to warped gender relations and persecuted sexual minorities, with eagle eye and acid pen. But before they came along, Donikian and a few others were lone wolves in an otherwise empty forest of pallid acquiescence. They helped to pave the way and we are grateful to them.

In his 1844 book, *Armenia*, the English writer Lord Robert Curzon, who had spent a year stationed in Erzerum, writes that as recently as the 17th and 18th centuries Armenians dominated the world’s most coveted trade routes from Asia to Venice and Western Europe along with Sephardic Jews, only to lose out to these rivals for one basic, simple reason: the Jews formed alliances and came together while the Armenians, more ruggedly individualistic, refused to do so with the same effectiveness and alacrity.

If Donikian’s novel is to be trusted, precious little seems to have changed in the Armenian world.

One of his characters in *Trashland* describes his fellow Armenians thus: “Savages, that’s what. Too busy waging war against each other. Whether we like it or not, we’re unable to communicate without ending up at each other’s throats. The political murders should be enough to prove my point, no?” Donikian’s novel is greater than a simple parable of Armenian life. It serves as a metaphor for the human condition, for the ruthless way in which the strong and the powerful — regardless of the country or community — will abuse the weak and less fortunate.

The one true ray of hope that Donikian gives his reader lies in the way the trash pickers — the most dispossessed of the dispossessed — come together despite desperate circumstances. And the open-ended final chapter which leaves the reader to wonder if and how Gam will prosper despite all the adversity that life has thrown his way. Let’s hope that Donikian’s message rings far and clear — beyond Armenia and its diaspora and to the greater world-at-large. *Trashland* is a wake up all long in coming, a bracing reminder of the writer’s true role in society.

The English translation by Christopher Atamian is going to be published by Nauset Press this fall.

Atamian Hovsepian Curatorial Practice presents Art to Learn, Art to Live: Contemporary Art from Lebanon at LAU NY

NEW YORK — “Art to Learn, Art to Live,” is a group exhibition of works by Lebanon’s leading contemporary painters, photographers, sculptors, and multimedia artists creating in Lebanon and internationally. The exhibition will take place at Lebanese American University’s New York City campus and cultural center in Midtown Manhattan, September 6-19, with a Press Conference on September 7 at noon and an evening reception 6-8 p.m.

Lebanon has been dealt a heavy blow by a series of events including the 2020 port explosion and the worsening financial crisis. Despite this, Lebanon’s long tradition of excellence in the fine arts continues today in its vibrant contemporary art scene.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an online auction on artscoops.com, September

7-12. Proceeds from the auction will go directly to support student financial aid and cancer care at LAU in Lebanon.

The Lebanese American University’s New York Academic Center (LAU NY) is an off-campus hub for global educational outreach and cross-cultural dialogue. In keeping with the vision and global aspirations of Lebanese American University, the Center focuses on initiatives anchored in the values of a liberal arts education. It fosters academic partnerships, expands the experiences of LAU students and faculty abroad, and increases the global visibility of the University and Lebanon.

LAU New York is located at 211 East 46th Street New York, NY 10017. Contact chris@atamianhovsepian.art with any questions or press inquiries.

Artists of note in the exhibition include:

Award-winning photographer and filmmaker Fadia Ahmad’s photographs are conceived as paintings. Her most recent project, *Beyrouth/Beirut* (2019), is a homage to Lebanon’s capital. To complete this photo series, Ahmad walked a daily itinerary of 10,452 steps across the city. The project is a quest for identity and belonging, in which Ahmad seeks the roots of the Self.

Abstract painter and Chair Head of LAU’s Fine Arts Department, Hanibal Srouji is known for using a blowtorch to create small holes and lines on his canvases. One of the leading artists in the Middle East, he has been awarded numerous prizes including the Ahmed Asseleh Prize, Algiers, 1999 and the 49th Saint-Cloud exhibition Grand Prize. Chucrallah Fattouh: one of Lebanon’s

most famous living artists sells his work at leading galleries and his abstract paintings have been auctioned by Bonhams. An accomplished representational and abstract painter, he received a special medal from Queen Elizabeth at the 2006 London GCC Polo Cup of London. Fadi Balhawan: Injured during the Lebanese Civil War in 1976, Balhawan took up drawing and fine arts. The rest is history: he shows his delicate, nature and calligraphy-inspired works at M.A.D.S. Gallery and internationally.

“Art to Learn, Art to Live” has taken flight thanks to the generous donations from artists eager to help their home country. Given the incredible range and nature of the works, the curators arranged the exposition according to aesthetic and thematic lines



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



The elements on the charcuterie plate—sliced cured meats, wedges of cheese, some pickles or olives, mustard, toasted nuts, fresh and dried fruit—pair well with something a bit tart and sweet, like this simple dried fig relish made with Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Dried Figs. Photo: Sally Pasley Vargas

Charcuterie Board with Dried Fig Relish

From Valley Fig Growers

What do you know about dried fig nutrition? Dried fig nutritional value and benefits include being a good source of fiber, and providing calcium, potassium, and micro-nutrients. One (40-gram) serving of dried figs has 100 calories in it. For perspective, this serving size and calories in figs is less than in dates, dried apricots, or raisins.

“The best dried figs come from California. Located in the fertile San Joaquin Valley, our fig-grower-owned cooperative is one of the largest handlers of figs in North America. Whether you’re using our dried figs or fig products in a commercial kitchen or enjoying our dried figs at home, the benefits of dried figs are many. You can find them in your favorite store or online, under the brands: Sun-Maid, Orchard Choice, and Blue Ribbon. You can count on California Figs.”

“Our figs are always GMO-Free, vegan friendly, and packed with nutrition. Whether you enjoy our figs for their nutritional powerhouse reputation, their wonderful taste, or their reputed aphrodisiac qualities, we know you’ll be back for more.”

The “recipe” for the charcuterie platter here is just a guideline. You can concentrate on a particular region and choose meats and cheeses from France, Italy, or



Sorting figs

Spain for example, or you can be guided by what appeals to you that is available in the market. For the meats, allow 2 ounces per person for an appetizer platter, up to 5 ounces if the platter is for a meal. Choices range from pre-sliced meats such as prosciutto or Spanish ham (Serrano or Iberico), Italian dry-cured beef (bresaola), German speck, and mortadella. Hard salamis such as soppressata, smoked kielbasa, and capicola are also good candidates.

Offer three types of cheeses—something soft and pungent like a soft blue Castello, a triple crème Tur or Brillat-Savarin, or Brie; something firm like an aged Parmigiano; and something in between, like a Gouda or Spanish manchego. Once again, be guided by your own taste and what is available, or focus on a particular region or country.

Wash all of it down with a chilled rose or sparkling Lambrusco. It’s officially summer; *the living should be easy*.

Pass on the cheese plate and plan on an antipasto platter. Adding dried fig relish to a charcuterie board with pickles, nuts, and cheese is so much better.

Recipe and photo are by Sally Pasley Vargas.



For the relish (makes about 1 1/2 cups)

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid California Figs, stemmed + coarsely chopped
1/3 cup green olives, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely diced
2 tablespoons mint leaves, snipped
1 1/2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

For the platter:

Fig Relish

12 ounces cured meats sliced
3 wedges cheese
1/2 cup toasted whole almonds
A small pot of mustard
1/2 lb. red grapes or purple
1 cup blackberries
1/2 cup olives
1/2 cup cornichons
Toasted baguette slices
Crackers
Serves 6.

PREPARATION:

In a bowl, stir together the figs, olives, almonds, celery, and mint leaves.

Stir in the vinegar and oil and taste. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper. Transfer to a small serving bowl.

Arrange the fig relish, meat, cheese, almonds, mustard, grapes, berries, olives, and cornichons on a platter. Serve with baguette and crackers.

For this story and recipe, go to: <https://valleyfig.com/dried-fig-recipes/charcuterie-board-fig-relish/>

Valley Fig Growers produces a variety of fig products for Industrial/Foodservice use including bulk figs, fig paste, fig concentrate, diced and sliced figs, fig nuggets, and fillings. If you make this recipe, snap a photo and tag @valleyfig — they’d love to see what you’re cooking on Instagram and Facebook.

Don’t miss Valley Fig Growers Hummus with Lamb + Spiced Figs recipe at: <https://valleyfig.com/dried-fig-recipes/hummus-with-lamb-spiced-figs/>

For this year’s most popular Fig Pizzas, go to: <https://valleyfig.com/fig-pizza/>
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ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

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

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

OCTOBER 8 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter presents “An Evening of Comedy III featuring Harout Soghomonian” on Saturday, 8 p.m. at Phoenicia Restaurant, Glendale . Special guest appearance by Antic and guest appearance by Tsoghig Samuelian. Admission \$100. For reservations call or text 818.730.1100.

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 11 — Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley Annual Picnic, 158 Main St. North Andover. 12 Noon to 5pm Call Sharké @ 978-808-0598 or Visit www.saintgregory.org SEPTEMBER 18 — Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. LET’S CELEBRATE THE PARK’S 10th Anniversary Sunday Afternoon at the Park! at 3pm. Featuring the Leon Janikian Ensemble.

SEPTEMBER 12 — St. James Men’s Club Monthly Dinner Meeting with speaker Mark DerMugrditchian discussing his book 4 Strokes West: An Amazing American Adventure. Monday. Losh Kebab and Kheyima Dinner. 6:15 p.m. Social Hour, 7 p.m. Dinner. \$20 per person. Ladies welcome. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information e-mail mensclub@stthagop.com.

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/>

SEPTEMBER 18 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will be hosting its annual picnic on September 18th from 12 noon to 5pm. For more information, see <https://htaac.org/>.

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

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 8 — Save the Date for Sayat Nova Dance Company’s 35TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCE. To be held at Regis College, Weston, MA. More details to follow soon.

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 – Save the date for the return of our traditional two-day Bazaar! Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children’s Activities, Booths and Vendors. Details to follow. 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.

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.

NEW JERSEY

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

RHODE ISLAND

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

September 9 – Dance Ensemble of Vanush Khanamiryan Academy

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

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.

OHIO

SEPTEMBER 22 — Lessons of the Armenian Genocide: a lecture & Q&A from Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Peter Balakian organized by the Armenian Cultural Garden of Ohio and John Carroll University Peace, Justice & Human Rights Program. 7 p.m. at the John Carroll University Donahue Auditorium (in the Dolan Science Center), 20700 N. Park Blvd. University Heights, OH 44118. Free and open to the public.

PENNSYLVANIA

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

Armenian Women Genocide Survivors’ Stories of ‘Absorption’ by Dr. Rebecca Jinks

MOTHER, from page 12
some such stories, and she would be particularly interested to hear in the Q&A and after from any audience members who are able to share family histories or passed-down stories of “absorption” and reintegration.

Jinks is a historian of comparative genocide and humanitarianism at Royal Hol-

loway, University of London. During her PhD, she won the first Raphael Lemkin Scholarship to the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (Yerevan), and began researching international humanitarian responses to “absorbed” Armenian women, especially those who had been tattooed on their faces and bodies according to Bedouin custom. This research was published

as “Marks Hard to Erase” in the American Historical Review (2018). Her current AHRC-funded research project, “Genocidal Captivity,” reorients and broadens this work to explore the experiences of Armenian and Yezidi women survivors of “absorption” and sexual slavery, and community and humanitarian responses in the aftermath. The project will result in a book

and through interviews, collaboration with NGOs and a photojournalist, and an exhibition, the project also seeks to develop new, ethical ways of representing these experiences.

The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information about the lecture, visit www.fresnostate.edu/armenian-studies.



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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL

Azerbaijan Defies International Community's Agenda



By Edmond Y. Azadian

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly announced that the Karabakh conflict is over because Baku has solved it through brute force. Azerbaijani officials, in their turn, never miss the opportunity to reiterate what their president has said since the disastrous 44-Day War in 2020.

But the actions of the international community demonstrate that Azerbaijan has not quite issued the final verdict on the situation

and that for some parties involved, the conflict remains unresolved.

Recent events have brought to light more saliently that the international community, particularly the West, has been taking the issue into its own hands, to the intense displeasure of Azerbaijan.

Two specific events demonstrated the differences shown by the two sides: one was a recent gathering in Shushi, where Azerbaijan invited representatives of 60 countries, to show off the reconstruction of the city which they had bombed during the war, and the other was the appointment of a seasoned US diplomat, Philip T. Reeker, as the new US co-chair to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

In the first instance, the representatives of two countries, the US and France, who serve as co-chairs of the Minsk Group, along with Russia, were demonstrably absent from Shushi, drawing the ire of Azerbaijani officials, because that absence sent a clear message that the reality was not the way Baku leaders represent it to the diplomatic community.

The second initiative had scared Azerbaijani leaders stiff, because that appointment meant the resurrection of the

Minsk Group and its mandate to take up the unfinished task in the South Caucasus.

The stalemate in the Ukraine war has indicated that Russia's failure in that war may result in a political vacuum in the Caucasus, which cannot be left unattended. That is why the West—and particularly the US—has taken a more active and assertive role in the past six months in the region.

Azerbaijan has been emboldened by its recent victory and is particularly reveling in Ankara's unwavering support for its actions. Azerbaijan's Aliyev did not hesitate to defy Moscow by closing down the Russian news outlet Sputnik in Baku, because Sputnik's Armenian service had broadcast an interview with Karabakh's Minister of State Artak Beglaryan.

Today, Baku comes out equally forcefully against the US and France, with the assurance that its recent gas deal with Brussels will absolve all its sins.

In the case of the Shushi gathering and the abstention of the US and French ambassadors, Hikmet Hajiyev, the top foreign policy advisor to the Azerbaijani president, said, "Attempts by some to revive the OSCE Minsk Group are hypocritical and shameful. ... There are two countries that are not participating in this event. They are the US and France. We cannot understand the reason for their absence here. ... Their absence, their statements on the restoration and resuscitation of the Minsk Group once again show what mission they carried out within the framework of the 30-year negotiation process."

The reason that the two countries have boycotted the Shushi event, obviously, is that they do not consider the occupation of that city by Azerbaijani forces as legal, because that city always has been within the borders of the autonomous region

of Karabakh.

That omission appears more explicitly in an answer that the US issued indirectly. Asked about Hajiyev's comments, the US embassy in Baku released a statement to the Voice of America's Azerbaijani service, expressing its support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty and independence, adding, "The personnel of the United States embassy have made and continue to make visits in all the regions of Azerbaijan, including Aghdam, Zangilan and Fuzuli."

As we can see, Shushi is not mentioned, implicitly drawing a distinction between those regions. But the reference is clear enough to extend the message.

As far as the reactivation of the Minsk Group is concerned, the US position is clear in a statement by the State Department: "The United States is committed to helping Armenia and Azerbaijan negotiate a long-term political settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Ambassador Reeker will also work with like-minded partners, such as the European Union and, as co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, will promote dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The appointment of Ambassador Reeker during this period also confirms the importance of the role the United States in the Geneva discussions on Georgia."

Azerbaijan's reaction was equally strong in view of Mr. Reeker's appointment, which demonstrates the United States' resolve to bring an equitable settlement of the Karabakh conflict; the OSCE is the only international forum mandated by the UN to handle the issue.

Here is Azerbaijan's reaction to the State Department's news of the appointment: "Attempts to resuscitate the de-facto non-functioning Minsk Group may result in the USA to be estranged from the process of nor-

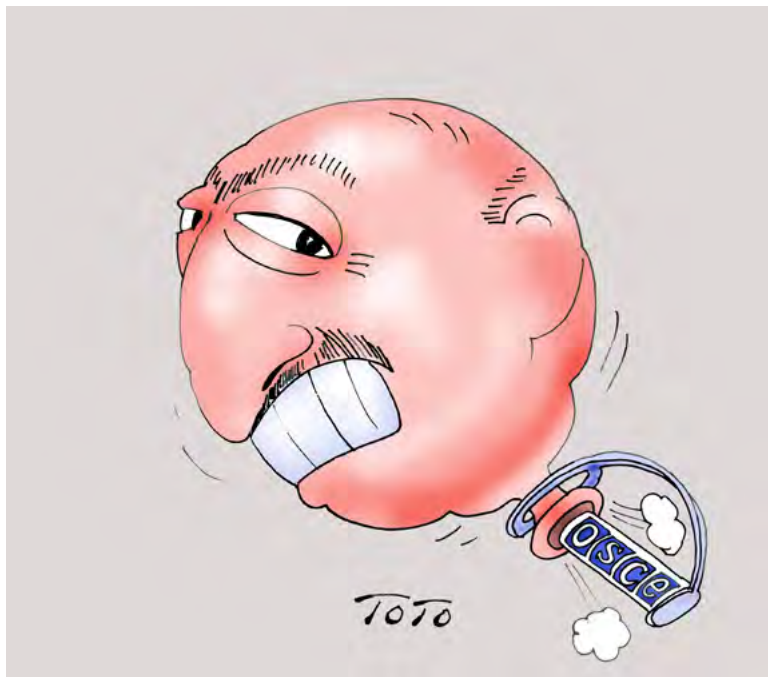
malization of the Azerbaijani-Armenian relations. The Karabakh conflict has been resolved and Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan. The international community, including our partners, should understand that connecting negotiations on the normalization of the Azerbaijani-Armenian relations with Karabakh issue does not serve normalization at all," said Layla Abdullayeva, the spokesperson of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry.

Contrary to Ms. Abdullayeva's wishes, it means that the international community does not "understand" the Azerbaijani logic.

This is the general atmosphere and the context within which Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's Aliyev are heading to Brussels on August 31 to work out a peace treaty, through the mediation of Charles Michel, president of the European Union (after *Mirror-Spectator* press time).

The August 31 meeting was originally planned to take place in Moscow. This sudden shift demonstrates that the negotiating parties were dissatisfied with Moscow's services and that is why they opted for Brussels. To explain this shift, Pashinyan placed a call to Russian President Vladimir Putin to explain the situation, because Moscow had expressed its anger over rising anti-Russian sentiments and actions in Armenia, using the pretext of the Surmalu market explosion.

Russia is not inclined to solve the conflict, because that will mean the removal of its peacekeeping forces from Azerbaijan's territory. On the contrary, the West is interested in the resolution of the conflict, not because of its consideration and care for the parties involved, but because it wants to remove Moscow's excuses for deploying its occupation forces in Azerbaijan.





COMMENTARY

Where Is Yerevan as Armenian Villages Handed Over?

By Maria Titizian and Nerses Kopalyan

On August 25, 2022, the Armenian villages of Aghavno, Berdzor and Sus on the Lachin Corridor were handed over to Azerbaijan. While Berdzor and Sus were mostly depopulated of their Armenian residents following the end of the 2020 Artsakh War, approximately 150 people had remained in the village of Aghavno. These residents have now been forced to relocate to Armenia and Artsakh.

The Lachin Corridor was subject to alterations according to the Russian-brokered November 9, 2020, trilateral statement that ended the 2020 Artsakh War. According to point 6 of that document, Armenia had to return the Kelbajar/Karvajar region to Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020 (this was later extended to November 25), while the Lachin region (which includes the three villages in question) by December 1, 2020, with the exception of the 5-km wide Lachin Corridor that would be patrolled by Russian peacekeepers, allowing Armenians to travel between Armenia and Artsakh. The parties—Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia—had to agree on a plan for building a new road linking Armenia to Artsakh (replacing the existing Lachin Corridor) within three years with subsequent redeployment of Russian peacekeepers to protect the new route.

Azerbaijan began constructing its side of the road in 2021 without properly consulting with Yerevan. Azerbaijan was operating under the logic that construction responsibilities specific to its side remained within its purview, and in this context, it did not interpret its unilateral actions as violations of point 6 of the ceasefire document. Russia’s acquiescence to such developments suggests that Russia also did not consider this process as contradictory to the letter of the agreement. Thus, in July 2022, Baku announced the completion of the construction of its side of the road earlier than the deadline foreseen in the ceasefire statement.

Back in May 2022, Artsakh’s Human Rights Defender Gegham Stepanyan said that the new road bypassing the Lachin Corridor is under construction and noted that “according to my information, it will bypass Berdzor and Aghavno” and that there was no clarity regarding the fate of the population of those settlements.

A month later, on June 30, head of Armenia’s Security Council Armen Grigoryan said that there was still time “to find solutions both for the road and the residents,” and that the Armenian side had “approximately 1.5 years” to “work with the Artsakh government and find solutions.”

Azerbaijan’s tactical approach to this situation entailed three specific objectives. First, to curtail the Armenian side from renegotiating or finding alternative solutions, Azerbaijan changed the “facts on the ground” by completing the road on its end and demanding the implementation of point 6 prior to the three year deadline. Second, to reify this objective, it manufactured a crisis in the Lachin Corridor

by initiating a localized incursion that resulted in the death of two Armenian soldiers. And third, it negotiated with the Russians, and indirectly with Stepanakert, and thus excluded Yerevan from this process of speeding up the implementation of point 6 of the ceasefire document. By initiating a militarized operation, Azerbaijan destabilized the corridor, while at the same time arguing that the only way to re-stabilize the corridor was to implement point 6 of the ceasefire agreement before the three year deadline.

In a telephone conversation with President Charles Michel of the European Council on August 5, Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev said that the new route to replace the old corridor had been determined according to an agreement reached with Russia’s Defense Ministry and that Azerbaijan had all but finished constructing the new road. Contextually, this confirms the underlying assumption that Yerevan was left out of the process and that Azerbaijan had been fulfilling point 6 of the ceasefire agreement primarily through negotiations with the Russians. Namely, the ceasefire document states that “a plan for the construction of a new route along the Lachin Corridor shall be determined within the next three years,” and Aliyev confirmed that the process of “determination” was undertaken with the Russian Defense Ministry. Yerevan’s exclusion from the process, or more specifically, Russia’s unilateral assumption of authority in negotiating developments without Yerevan, remains the most important explanatory factor as to why the Armenian side was seemingly caught off guard by the August 25 deadline.

This was further reaffirmed by official Stepanakert, for the Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh authorities undertook the responsibility of informing the villagers and organizing the evacuation of the villages prior to the handover deadline. Stepanakert’s active involvement was confirmed on August 5, when Artsakh’s Minister of Territorial Administration Hayk Khanumyan visited the village of Aghavno and told residents they had 20 days to leave their village and warned them not to set their houses ablaze when they left as they could be left without compensation (the Government of Artsakh announced it would offer a voucher of \$25,000 to each family forced out of their villages). His justification was that in the future it might be possible for people to return to Aghavno as it is very close to the new corridor. He added that several villages of the Aghanus community, which had fallen under Azerbaijani control after the war, will be included in the new corridor and Artsakh residents may be able to move back to the villages of Aghanus.

A few days later, Khanumyan in an interview on August 9, presented the position of the Artsakh government and provided information on developments. Specifically, he noted that the Russian peacekeeping mission had informed Stepanakert about Azerbaijan’s intention to start the construction of the alternative road and that the sides had agreed that the new road would be south of the existing corridor through the villages of Mets Shen and Hin Shen. According to Khanumyan, the alternative road was built based on what Artsakh suggested with only a few alterations. More importantly, Khanumyan confirmed that a separate process of negotiations was taking place between Stepanakert and Azerbaijan, with Russia as the intermediary. Just as importantly, he hinted that official Yerevan

was sidelined from the negotiation process regarding the construction of the new corridor, and that the agreement was reached primarily between Azerbaijan, the Russians and Stepanakert. In this context, on behalf of Azerbaijan, the Russians “presented” to Stepanakert two sets of options for the construction of the new corridor, and the option that Stepanakert “chose”, according to Khanumyan, became the one that is being implemented.

The seeming exclusion of official Yerevan from this process appears to have been confirmed by Prime Minister Pashinyan’s debriefing of developments during the August 4 Government cabinet meeting: “I have to record that at the moment there is no plan approved by the Russian Federation, Armenia and Azerbaijan in a trilateral format, and we have proposed several times and are still proposing to do that. Note that the statement is not just about the construction of a new road, but about the construction plan and the redeployment of peacekeeping troops, which is a very complex and trilateral process. As of now, we have not agreed to any plan, because no draft of such a plan has been proposed to us.” Thus, as of August 4, according to official Yerevan, there was neither an agreement on the construction routes for a new corridor, nor was the Republic of Armenia privy to the developments revealed by Khanumyan. Whereas official Stepanakert confirmed the ongoing negotiations between itself, Russia and Azerbaijan over the construction of the new corridor, Yerevan, one day before Stepanakert’s declaration on handing over the three villages, allegedly remained in the dark. Whereas official Yerevan was saying one thing on August 4, official Stepanakert was doing another on August 5. This discrepancy, in no uncertain terms, reaffirms Khanumyan’s explanation: the three-way negotiations were between Russia, Azerbaijan, and Artsakh. Yerevan’s exclusion from the process, it appears, is Moscow taking agency away from Yerevan and endowing it upon Stepanakert. To paraphrase Khanumyan: the options were presented to Stepanakert and Stepanakert made the decision. That such options were neither presented nor addressed to Yerevan, as confirmed in the August 4 Government meeting, reaffirms the exclusion of Yerevan from the process.

The broader integration of Artsakh’s political leadership into the process, and thus the further enhancement of Artsakh’s political agency, was also confirmed when leaders of the five political groups represented in the Artsakh parliament met with the commanders of the Russian peacekeeping contingent to discuss the new corridor. According to a statement released by the parliament’s press service, they received assurances that “the new route will have” the “legal status” of a “corridor” and it will be administered in the same comparable fashion as the Lachin Corridor. The Russian commanders further assured the heads of the political parties that Russian peacekeepers will control and provide security to the new corridor. The fact that the Russian peacekeeping commanders gave the Artsakh parliamentary parties an audience, and the fact that the Russian peacekeeping commanders formally engaged with a state institution of Artsakh, is highly indicative of a developing reconfiguration.

(This piece originally appeared in the EVN Report online magazine on August 26.)

DNA Analyses Illuminate Origins of Farming, Ancestral Languages

By Andy Carstens

New genetic evidence provides more clues to the origins of farming in Anatolia and suggests an alternate hypothesis to a long-held theory regarding where Indo-European languages began. A trio of studies published August 25 and 26 in *Science* suggests that farmers didn’t solely descend from hunter-gatherer ancestors from Anatolia, an area that connects West Asia with Europe and overlaps with modern-day Turkey, but that they also came from people who entered the region in two distinct migrations, reports Science. Furthermore, the studies find that Indo-European languages may have begun in the Caucasus mountains, near modern-day Armenia, rather than emerging from the steppes north of the Black Sea as previously assumed, the outlet reports.

The three studies are all coauthored by David Reich, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard. One focuses on Mesopotamia, another on Anatolia, and a third on Southern Europe and West Asia.

The combined genetic analysis represents a four-year effort and includes DNA from more than 700 individuals spanning 10,000 years of history and across a geographical range that stretches from Croatia to Iran, according to Science. “The sample size is phenomenal, and fascinating,” Wolfgang Haak, a geneticist at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology who was not part of the research, tells the outlet. “The beauty of this is it’s bringing it all together in a bigger narrative.”

Researchers sequenced dozens of genomes of people from ancient Anatolia and found that between 10,000 and 6,500 years ago, two separate migrations into the region occurred: one from today’s Iraq and Syria and the other from the Eastern Mediterranean coast, reports Science. Comparing the genomes to those of earlier hunter-gatherer pop-

ulations indicated the first people in the region to farm wheat and domesticate goats and sheep descended from the hunter-gatherers and those who later migrated to the region. In addition, the researchers found that hunter-gatherers from the Caucasus mountains entered the area about 6,500 years ago followed by the Yamnaya — nomads from the steppes north of the Black Sea — about 5,000 years ago, according to the outlet.

“This fits really well with archaeological data,” Barbara Horejs, a director at the Austrian Archaeological Institute who was not part of the team, tells Science.

For more than a century, linguists have linked the origins of the Indo-European language family, from which most European and all Indian languages emerged, to the Bronze Age Yamnaya, reports Haaretz. But research from 2018 cast doubt on that hypothesis by revealing that people from ancient Anatolian cultures who spoke languages derived from the Indo-European family lacked Yamnaya DNA. According to Haaretz, the new research seems to confirm that the Yamnaya arrived in the area after people in the area began speaking Indo-European languages.

Because ancient Anatolians and Yamnaya share common hunter-gatherer ancestors in the Caucasus Mountains, the researchers go on to posit that the most likely origin of the Indo-European languages is that region, possibly near modern-day Armenia, reports Science.

Not everyone agrees with that assessment, however. Guus Kroonen, a linguist at Leiden University, tells Science that people from the Caucasus were familiar with farming and likely had a rich farming vocabulary, while in contrast, the early roots of Indo-European languages have very few words related to farming. “The linguistic evidence and the genetic evidence don’t seem to match.”

(This story originally appeared in *The Scientist* on August 25.)



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Before Reconciling with Turks, Armenians Need to Reconcile with Each Other

Can't the Armenian government do anything right? Not a day passes without additional bad news from Armenia and Artsakh!

Rather than blaming our enemies, we need to look at our own shortcomings and stop inflicting more wounds on ourselves.

In the midst of the severe crisis in Armenia after the devastating defeat in the 2020 Artsakh War, one would think that Armenian leaders would have the wisdom to unite the nation and strengthen the military to prevent further attacks on the country.

Surprisingly, Armenia has embarked on a course of action that is further dividing and weakening the nation. Armenian leaders are too incompetent to run a country with so many critical issues. Rather than trying to minimize Armenia's losses, they are determined to add to the damage inflicted by its enemies.

For four years, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has been dividing Armenians into "blacks" and "whites," Artsakhtsis and Hayastantsis, former leaders vs. the current one, and Armenia vs. Diaspora, at a time when Armenians desperately need to be unified. He has threatened to slam into the wall or the asphalt his domestic political opponents. He even went on the campaign trail last year holding a hammer in his hand, promising to smash the heads of those who oppose him.

Not only is Pashinyan too incompetent to lead Armenia, so are his cabinet ministers and advisors. An incompetent leader cannot make competent appointments.

Take for example, Pashinyan's appointment of Zareh Sinanyan to the post of "High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs." Sinanyan's only qualification is that he is a blind supporter of the Prime Minister. Consequently, Sinanyan has hardly accomplished anything worthwhile during his three years on the job, except for wasting the government's meager budget on his and staff's frequent travels around the world.

Sinanyan just announced that his office will hold a "Global Armenian Summit," at the end of this October. One would have expected that he would have the common sense to invite to the "Global Summit" the representatives of all Armenian organizations and prominent individuals in Armenia and the Diaspora, regardless of their political affiliation.

However, Sinanyan's and the Prime Minister's only goal is to give the impression that they are busy doing something rather than actually accomplishing anything useful for the nation. Sinanyan shortsightedly decided, with the blessing of his boss, to invite to the "Global Armenian Summit" Armenians who are the regime's supporters, leaving out those who have dared to oppose the current leaders. The government of Armenia is actually engaged in divid-

ing, rather than unifying the Diaspora.

In any other normal country, an employee like Sinanyan would have been fired long ago for being incompetent and wasting the government's precious resources. However, this Prime Minister will not fire an underling who is more incompetent than he is! Regrettably, Sinanyan does not even know his job description. He has foolishly advocated inviting Arab immigrants to Armenia, not realizing that his responsibility is dealing only with Diaspora Armenians, not Arabs or other nationalities. In his frequent TV interviews, Sinanyan constantly engages in partisan politics, criticizing major Armenian organizations, and creating further divisions in the nation. He does not understand that his job is not to act as a propagandist for Pashinyan's regime, but be a government employee who is getting paid a salary to be a bridge between Armenia and the Diaspora.

If the excuse of Pashinyan and Sinanyan is that their political opponents would have refused to attend the "Global Armenian Summit," that would have been a good reason to invite them. Those who reject the invitation would have looked bad and the government would have looked magnanimous rather than petty. The Armenian government cannot behave like a thug who wants to settle scores. Regrettably, it does not possess the maturity to rise above the fray. Armenia is the home of all Armenians, not only those who agree with the regime. A small and weak nation surrounded by powerful enemies cannot afford to splinter itself into smaller fragments.

Rather than embracing all Armenians worldwide, the government has rejected in recent weeks the entry of several prominent Diaspora Armenians whose sole guilt is that they are opponents of the supposedly "democratic" regime! Meanwhile, Turkish members of the Grey Wolves terrorist group are allowed to enter Armenia and insult the memory of the Armenian martyrs on the grounds of the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan!

In the past 20 years, Armenia has organized several Diaspora-Armenia conferences. None of them accomplished anything useful. Sinanyan's planned "Summit" will have the same result. Pashinyan has repeatedly talked about allowing Diaspora Armenians to assume high-level positions in the Armenian government. Regrettably, beyond paying lip service, he has not taken any step in that direction. Similarly, Sinanyan announced with much fanfare around a year ago that his office will appoint Diaspora commissioners in Armenian communities around the world. Until now, he has not appointed a single such commissioner.

When Pashinyan came to power in 2018, he pledged to increase Armenia's population from less than 3 million to 5 million by the year 2050. Regrettably, Armenia's population in his four years in office has declined, not increased. Beyond just talking about encouraging repatriation to Armenia, nothing has been done.

It is high time that all Armenians unite to defend the homeland against the powerful enemies on both sides of the border. Before reconciling with Turks, Armenians first need to get along with each other.

Swedish, Finnish NATO Bids Face Test as Officials Meet Turkey's Representatives

Andrew Wilks

ISTANBUL — Officials from Turkey, Sweden and Finland meet on Aug. 26 to review the June deal on the Nordic countries' NATO membership bids amid Turkish doubts they are living up to their promises.

Stockholm and Helsinki dropped their long-standing policies of military non-alignment in the wake of Russia's February invasion of Ukraine, announcing their intent to join the Atlantic defense pact.

The move was widely welcomed by the alliance's 30 members, but Turkey insisted it would not approve the move, which must be accepted by every member state, unless the two countries tightened their approach to terrorism.

Ankara was particularly concerned about the activities of supporters of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is considered a terror group by the United States and the European Union, as well as those associated with a 2016 coup attempt in Turkey.

The latter, dubbed the Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization (FETO) by the Turkish government after the group's leader, US-based Fethullah Gulen, is not internationally recognized as a terrorist threat beyond Turkey and a few allies.

Turkey further demanded action against the PKK's Syrian branch, the People's Protection Units (YPG). The YPG is not regarded as a terrorist entity by Western powers, a situation that has proved to be a thorn in Turkey's relations with the West, particularly given the Kurdish fighters' role in the US-led campaign against the Islamic State in Syria.

An agreement reached at the Madrid NATO summit on June 28 seemed to smooth Ankara's concerns, with the Nordic governments promising stricter action against those considered by Turkey to be terrorists. They also agreed to address Turkey's pending extradition requests

"expeditiously and thoroughly."

Speaking on Wednesday, Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde outlined the purpose of Friday's meeting in Finland. "The issue is how we should follow up on the agreement that Turkey, Sweden and Finland reached during the NATO summit in Madrid, which was a precondition for Turkey to agree to Sweden's and Finland's requests," she said.

On closer reading, the June memorandum appears to give Sweden and Finland significant wiggle room. The clause on extradition, for example, states cases will be judged in accordance with the European Convention on Extradition.

Within days of the agreement being signed, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that Turkey would continue to block the Nordic expansion of NATO if his expectations were not met.

The accession of Sweden and Finland must be approved by the legislatures of each member state, including Turkey, where Erdogan controls parliament through his ruling party and its allies.

Over the weekend, Turkish Justice Minister Bezir Bozdog indicated Friday's meeting of the accord's monitoring committee could be a bumpy one.

"Currently, none of the persons accused of terrorist crimes from Sweden and Finland, whose extradition has been requested by Turkey, have been extradited to Turkey," he told journalists in Istanbul.

He said Turkey had resubmitted earlier extradition requests for terror suspects and filed papers in new cases following the June deal. Erdogan has said that Sweden had promised to return 73 terror suspects under the agreement.

"After this communication, there has been no positive or negative response from either country to Turkey up to today," Bozdog said, adding that the extradition of a Turkish national wanted for fraud recently announced by Sweden

did not come under the remit of the agreement.

"As long as Turkey's expectations on this matter are not met, Sweden and Finland will not be deemed to have fulfilled their promise to Turkey in the tripartite agreement," the minister added. "The NATO membership process will therefore not go one step further."

Turkish officials have not commented on the reported extradition case in Sweden against a Turkish national accused of supporting the PKK.

"The membership of the states in which PKK members run wild in the streets will harm the values that NATO stands for," Erdogan said on Aug. 8. "We maintain our clear and determined position regarding Finland and Sweden."

He added, "No NATO country should be a safe haven for FETO's cowards and PKK terrorists fleeing Turkish justice."

Ankara's patience has also been tested by shows of support for the PKK and YPG since June. Sweden's Left Party lawmakers, who oppose joining NATO, posed with PKK and YPG flags during a political rally, and other demonstrations of support for the groups have been held across the country.

Linde called the promotion of the actions of Left Party legislators "completely unacceptable." Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson added, "The PKK is a designated terror organization, not just in Sweden but in the EU, and posing with such flags is extremely inappropriate."

(This piece originally appeared in Al-Monitor on August 25. [https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/08/swedish-finnish-nato-bids-face-test-officials-meet-turkeys-representatives#ixzz7dTMJUqLD])



Sven-Erik Rise: Creating His Own Armenia in Norway

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / OSLO — Sven-Erik Rise is Norwegian expert of Armenia, an author of articles and op-eds about the country and the Armenian genocide in Norway's national and local newspapers. He also has published two books — *Hayastan – Why I Love Armenia* (in Norwegian and English) and *44 days in Artsakh* (in Norwegian). Rise has led numerous public lectures about Armenia for varied audiences. He has also been a tour leader for numerous tour groups from Norway to Armenia. Sven-Erik Rise proudly calls himself an “Armenian-by-choice” and dreams of having an Armenian passport.

So, how shall I call you during our interview – Sven-Erik or Tigran Van?

(*Laughing*). I am always happy when Armenians call me Tigran, it makes me feel Armenian — or gives me a feeling of Armenians respecting that I can be an Armenian by choice

Perhaps you also have special feelings for Van as I do?

I sure do. I read a lot about the Armenians of Van and the surrounding area. I was fascinated by the resistance of the people of Van when the genocidal Turks



attacked Van. Many heroes did everything in their power to fight off the Turks. I am also very interested in the saltwater lake, Akhtamar and, of course, the Armenian Vana katu (Van cat). I know many Armenians, who have their roots in Van, and so I want to contribute that we never forget that this town and this lake were stolen from Armenia – but everybody knows that this area actually belongs to Armenians.

The relations between our countries started already in the 14th century, when in 1313/1314, Cilician Armenian king Oshin sent envoys to Norway with treasures to King Håkon to ask for military

assistance. Yet for Armenians Norway is associated with Fridtof Nansen's name, whose assistance to Armenian Genocide survivors was tremendous. And now we have Sven-Erik Rise. Why did this pro-Armenian movement started by Nansen not continued in Norway, as Armenia remains unknown for most of Norwegians?

One of the great heroes of the Armenians is Fridtjof Nansen who saved a lot of Armenians during and after the genocide by offering then Nansen passports and making sure they had a safe place to go. Another one is Bodil Biørn, who saved tens of thousands of orphans. Armenia does not

ask much of Norway, maybe only to officially recognize the genocide — which the Norwegian politicians are very hesitant to do — whereas the Norwegian people, if they have learned about, would do. I have never met a single person who does not support the Armenian Cause. Norway does not support Armenia very much, and I am ashamed of my country. There is no embassy in Yerevan, there is very little trade with Armenia, and we do not support Armenia with any funds. During the war in Artsakh, Norway was shamefully neutral and did not condemn the Azeri and Turkish atrocities. Norway has big investments in oil and gas in Azerbaijan, so is very careful to criticize this regime which is seen as one of the worst by Human Rights organizations. My opinion is clear. As a country responsible for handing out the Nobel Peace Prize, Norway should be first in line to recognize the Genocide and strongly condemn Azerbaijan and Turkey for their atrocities against the Armenia and Artsakh. Armenia is a country sandwiched between enemies, and therefore must seek partners further away. I do not find it strange that Armenia has trade and good relations with Iran and Russia and other regimes, since the West does not really support Armenia when this support is really needed.

Tigran, once you called Armenia one of the best-hidden, yet most intriguing countries on earth. What radical steps should be done that it does not remain well-hidden anymore?

Yes, and I meant it. Every person I bring to Armenia loves the people, the sights, the language and culture, as well as the food and wine. They all end up as real friends of Armenia. Since then Armenia has become better known, and more tourists are actually coming to experience Armenia. I think Armenia should continue promoting tourism, offer more packages also in winter months, create ski-resorts, sports-trips, homestays and so on. The wine and the brandy are really quality products and should be promoted more, maybe with the aid of spyurk (Diaspora) communities around the world. I know that many Japanese come to Armenia for plastic surgery. This could easily be promoted in more countries. And I dream of the days when investments can be made in areas like Vanadzor and Alaverdi to make these towns beautiful and attractive to tourists and investors. With Armenian salaries, Armenia should be a heaven for people who want to start businesses. If creative Armenian people could manage to make a TV-series about the history of Armenia and today's Armenia with intriguing stories — sell it to Netflix — that's one way of creating more knowledge and interest in Armenia.

You do your best to raise this awareness, having created your own Little Armenia in your yard with Ararat and khachkar, small Artsakh with its flag, plants from Armenia, mini winery, memorial with the flags of the countries that recognized the Armenian Genocide, as well as posters with information about Armenia and Artsakh. Can this place one day become an Armenian cultural center in Oslo?

This place is actually my *dacha* (summer house), but I am planning on moving here permanently. Many people come to see the garden, and to buy my books; even a school class from Yerevan came here this summer. The tourists I take to Armenia always visit after the trip, and the garden is situated on a very popular walking track, so many people learn about Armenia and the history. A cultural center would probably need to be bigger with conference rooms and so on, so I think my *Pokr Hayastan* (Little Armenia) will remain as *Pokr Hayastan*.

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