

# COAF Raises \$6M In Support of Rural Armenia at 19th Annual Gala in NYC

NEW YORK — More than 450 persons from around the world gathered here on December 17 for the 19th Annual Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) Holiday Gala, this year with the theme “Building a Nation.” After two years of virtual galas, due to the pandemic, this year’s event was met with enormous generosity once again, raising an astounding \$6 million to support COAF’s rural development projects in Armenia.

The evening, hosted by KTTV FOX11’s “Good Day L.A.” Anchor Araksya Karapetyan and COAF Senior Director of Development Haig Boyadjian at Cipriani - 25 Broadway, featured tantalizing musical performances by world renowned musicians — violinist Ara Malikian (Spain) and cellist Sevak Avanesyan (Armenia). Musical guests included 12-year-old cellist Lyanna Ulikhanyan and 13-year-old violinist Davit Babayan from Armenia who delivered heart-warming performances.

One of the highlights of the evening was when high school students Anna Rafayelyan from the village of Lanjik (Shirak region) and Artur Simonyan from the village of Arteni (Aragatsotn region) took the stage to share with everyone the impact COAF has made in their lives. They touched upon the various COAF programs that have empowered them to try their best and study hard to become successful so that they strengthen their country.

This year’s Humanitarian Award was presented to benefactors Peter and Marilyn Sarkesian of Michigan in recognition of their generous contributions to COAF’s various education and healthcare programs, including the establish-



2022 Humanitarian Award Honorees Peter and Marilyn Sarkesian

ment of several cafeterias in rural schools, and the establishment of the Regional Health Center in Dsegh village, Lori province.

All funds will go towards enhancing the quality of life of village youth and their families through COAF’s education, health, psychosocial support, and economic development initiatives. For nearly two decades, COAF’s classic village-based and SMART programs have demonstrated their expendability, sustainability and scalability. Each rural population of 100,000 requires a capital budget of \$15 million and an annual budget of \$2 million. The \$15 million see COAF, page 11



A group of citizens of NKR go towards Shusha with a demand to open a corridor for the transfer of Russian peacekeepers. See related story by NKR Presidential Advisocr Nelly Baghdasaryan on Page 4.

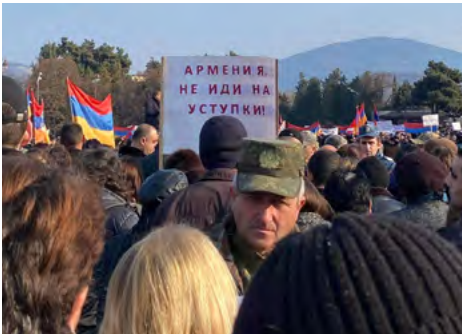
## Awaiting New Year Under Blockade

By Lida Asilyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

“Last year we didn’t have water for two or three weeks during the summer. Then we didn’t have gas...We are now being blockaded and this is slowly but steadily making everybody really exhausted,” shares Nina, an English teacher at a small village school in the Artsakh Republic (also known as Nagorno Karabakh).

The Armenian enclave has been under blockade since December 12, when a group of Azerbaijani gathered near the Berdzor (Lachin) corridor connecting Artsakh to Armenia, claiming to be environmental activists – a claim still under scrutiny.

Nina has been hoping to put up a Christmas tree together with her sisters, as they



Armenian protests in Stepanakert

usually do, but the latter are stuck in Yerevan and can’t make it home for the New Year celebration. It’s the first time for them to be separated on such a special occasion. see BLOCKADE, page 3

## Bay Area Armenians Hold Virtual Town Hall on Artsakh Blockade Crisis

By Harry Kezelian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

SAN FRANCISCO — On Thursday, December 29, a virtual town hall, hosted by the San Francisco Bay Area Artsakh Task Force, attempted to bring together the community on the blockade crisis in Artsakh. The topic of the panel was the recent blockade by Azerbaijani “protestors” of the Lachin Corridor which is the only connection from Armenia to Art-

sakh (the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic). The protestors were sent by the Azerbaijani government under the false premise of complaining about environmental concerns at copper, molybdenum, and gold mines that are operated in Artsakh. The blockade of the road as well as intermittent shut-downs of the gas and electric lines leading into Artsakh have created a humanitarian crisis for the people of the region.

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## Karabakh Leaders Defend Russia as Russia Says No Progress Made in Ending Blockade

MOSCOW/YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Nagorno-Karabakh’s political leaders defended Russian peacekeeping forces on December 30 after Yerevan accused them of doing little to reopen Karabakh’s sole land link with Armenia blocked by Azerbaijan.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan charged on Thursday that the peacekeepers have become a “silent witness” to Baku’s efforts to “depopulate” Karabakh through the blockade. He said Moscow should come up with a plan to unblock the corridor or seek a larger and multinational peacekeeping mission in Karabakh. Russian officials rejected the criticism.

Davit Babayan, Karabakh’s acting foreign minister, argued that the peacekeepers lack an international mandate to forcibly disperse Azerbaijani protesters who halted traffic through the see RUSSIA, page 3

TURKEY  
Hrant Dink School of Istanbul Reports on Use of Tekeyan Aid



CALIFORNIA  
Armenian Trade Delegation visits Glendale



ARMENIA / RUSSIA  
Street Artists Create Graffiti to Call Attention to Artsakh Blockade







ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Armenian Envoy Calls For Clear Int’l Stance on Azerbaijan’s Actions

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Ambassador-at-Large of Armenia Edmon Marukyan has called on the international community to take a clear stance on Azerbaijan’s 23-day blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

“It’s been 22 days since Azerbaijan keeps the 120K NK population under siege by blocking the Lachin Corridor,” Marukyan said on January 2.

“Obviously, [Azerbaijan] chose a policy of starving peaceful people. The international community should take a clear stance and tell what consequences [Azerbaijan] should face for such behavior.”

Armenia to Provide \$10 Million in Aid to Karabakh

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia will provide 4 billion drams (around \$10 million) in additional support to Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) Prime Minister said on December 29.

Pashinyan said at a cabinet meeting that a working group headed by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan will be formed to support efforts of managing the humanitarian crisis in Karabakh. The working group will monitor humanitarian issues together with the authorities of Nagorno Karabakh and provide the necessary urgent support, including with the help of international organizations.

The Ministers of Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, as well as representatives of other departments will also be involved in the work.

International Red Cross Helps Transfer 3 Patients, Delivers Humanitarian Cargo

YEREVAN (Panorama/Panarmenian.net) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has facilitated the transfer of three severely ill patients from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to Armenia amid the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan, the Artsakh health authorities reported on December 30.

The three patients suffering from serious illnesses, including cancer and heart failure, had been undergoing treatment in the Republican Medical Center, the Artsakh Ministry of Health said in a statement.

“With the mediation and accompaniment of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the patients were today transferred to various specialized medical centers in Armenia,” the statement said.

In addition, the ICRC delivered the first batch of humanitarian aid was delivered to Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) on the 14th day of the blockade by Azerbaijan, the head of communication programs of the ICRC delegation in Armenia Zara Amatuni said.

According to her, the ICRC ensured the safe delivery of 10 tons of humanitarian cargo through the Lachin Corridor.

Karabakh Suspends Mining Operations Amid Azerbaijani Blockade

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Nagorno-Karabakh’s leadership announced on Wednesday, December 28, that mining operations at a local copper and molybdenum deposit will be suspended due to Azerbaijan’s blockade of the sole road connecting Karabakh to Armenia.

A section of the vital road was blocked on December 12 by a large group of Azerbaijanis protesting against “illegal” mining in Karabakh. They are demanding that Baku be allowed to inspect ore mines in the Armenian-populated territory and assess their environmental impact. The Azerbaijani government has backed their demands.

The authorities in Yerevan and Stepanakert have condemned the blockade as a gross violation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement that placed the Lachin corridor under the control of Russian peacekeepers.

In a statement, the Karabakh government insisted that the territory’s sole functioning ore mine run by a private company, Base Metals, has operated in accordance with “the highest international standards.” Nevertheless, it said, it has decided to request an “international ecological examination” of the Kashen deposit to disprove Azerbaijani claims to the contrary.

“Together with the management of the company, a decision was made to temporarily stop the operation of the company’s



The Kashen Mine in Artsakh

mine until the examination is completed,” added the statement.

The announcement followed reports that Major-General Andrei Volkov, the commander of Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in Karabakh, held fresh talks with Karabakh Armenian leaders.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reportedly discussed the blockade in Saint-Petersburg on Monday when they spoke during an informal summit of the leaders of ex-Soviet states. They reported no concrete understanding afterwards.

The Kashen mine is Karabakh’s largest corporate taxpayer and private employer. It had more than 1,400 workers when Base Metals inaugurated its ore processing facilities in December 2015.

Lemkin Institute: EU, NATO Continue to Offer Explicit Support for Azerbaijan and Turkey, While They Openly Threaten Armenia

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention published its annual report on genocide-related events in 2022, which reflects also the situation in Armenia, Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) as well as in Azerbaijan.

The report says that in 2022 the Republic of Armenia faced increasing threats to its territorial integrity from neighboring Azerbaijan and its ally, Turkey. On September 13, in violation of the 2020 Tripartite Ceasefire Agreement that ended the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijani military launched an attack against several eastern Armenian towns, committing horrific atrocities against Armenian soldiers that were filmed and shared widely on Azeri social media.

These atrocities, and their dissemination, followed patterns from the 2020 war, when Azerbaijan sought to take over the ethnic Armenian enclave of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Although the external world acted quickly to end Azerbaijani aggression in September, Azerbaijan still occupies 140km of sovereign Armenian territory as well as important parts of Artsakh, including the city of Shushi.

Since December 12 it has also blockaded the only road linking Artsakh to the outside world, causing a humanitarian crisis that may quickly become a catastrophe. The regime of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev openly promotes violent anti-Armenianism at home, celebrating war crimes while representing itself as a bastion of tolerance to the outside world. Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine has emboldened Turkey and Azerbaijan to aggressively push for a land corridor (the ‘Zangezur’ corridor) linking the two countries through the Armenian province of Syunik.

They openly threaten the Armenian

state with war, occupation, and genocide. While several organizations, including the Lemkin Institute, have called attention to the threat of genocide from Azerbaijan and Turkey, powerful states as well as the European Union, NATO and other bodies, continue to offer explicit support for these regimes.

Azerbaijan

Since the signing of the Tripartite Ceasefire Agreement of November 2020 that put an end to the 44 days war, Azerbaijan has systematically breached its ceasefire obligations. In violation of international law and of the ceasefire agreement, it has refused to return Armenian prisoners of war (POWs). As of July 2022 the regime in Baku still held in captivity 3 civilians and 35 POWs and subjected them to expedited and illegal criminal trials.

On almost a daily basis Azerbaijan has opened fire against Armenian positions both in Armenia and Artsakh, creating a situation of constant terror and uncertainty due to the imminent threat that the conflict will escalate, which finally occurred on September 13, 2022.

The humanitarian crisis in the region reached another level of concern when Azeris claiming to be environmentalists blocked the Lachin Corridor, the only road communicating the 120,000 Armenians of Artsakh to Armenia proper. The first blockade took place on December 3rd and lasted for a few hours. The second blockade started on December 12 and has increased the humanitarian crisis in Artsakh by isolating the entire Armenian population of the region and completely blocking its land access to food, medicine, and basic human needs.

Although Azerbaijan restored the gas supply to Artsakh a few days after the December 12th blockade, the road from Step-

anakert to Goris still remains closed at the time of publication of this report. Azerbaijan is ranked as one of the least free countries in the world by Freedom House. In the past years, it has stepped up its persecution of journalists, human rights workers, ethnic minorities, and civil society, using domestic as well as transnational repression to quash dissent.

Artsakh Video News Reports

By Haykaram Nahapetyan  
Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

STEPANAKERT — Artsakh Public TV’s news reports provide valuable insights into life in the besieged Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, in accordance with its partnership agreement with Artsakh TV, continues to provide edited and subtitled periodic updates based on those reports.

The current video reports tell about the food and medicine shortage, a massive public rally in Stepanakert’s central square, and a development program carried out in one of Artsakh’s rural settlements. Meanwhile, the children of Artsakh still expect Santa Claus to come, although they understand that with the road to Artsakh blocked by Azerbaijanis, Santa, or Ghagand Baba, may not be able to arrive.

Please follow the video at [mirror-spectator.com](https://mirror-spectator.com).





## ARMENIA

# Awaiting New Year Under Blockade

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The Azerbaijani siege has left more than 120,000 people – including 30,000 children – completely cut off from the outside world and left with scarce food and medical resources. The fur-coated eco-activists, who display ethno-nationalistic slogans and symbols and appear to be part of Azerbaijani state institutions, “are pushing yet another agenda of President Aliyev, of depopulating Artsakh and taking it over,” stated former Armenian Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Development Lilia Shushanyan, in her online article at *Hetq*.

As the winter gets colder, it gets harder to rely on the natural produce the residents used to get from their own gardens.

“If this happened during summer or spring, it would not be a problem because we also grow a lot of things but during the winter we rely on greenhouse vegetables and fruits from Armenia — and now we don’t have them,” shares Nina.

Basic products like flour, sugar, eggs, and cooking oil have already been emptied from store shelves. The list goes on with cheese, sausages, and nearly everything else. Although Artsakh has its own produce, it is limited and cannot sustain the whole population.

Nina teaches at a smaller village, where people at least have some home-grown products and livestock compared to the capital of Stepanakert. Nevertheless, the scarcity makes people be more cautious of consumption. “You have to take account of every single piece of bread that you have, of everything that you have,” says the young teacher.

It’s her first year teaching in that school, but she has already managed to build strong ties with her students, who gather with her for tea parties, go on hikes and walk. They recently were working on a theater performance, practicing at least three times a week.

“We had ‘A Christmas Carol’ for the first one and we’re planning on doing another performance for the new academic year. We want to go on big stages, go to Stepanakert, to Chartar, and perform on real theater stages,” says Nina.

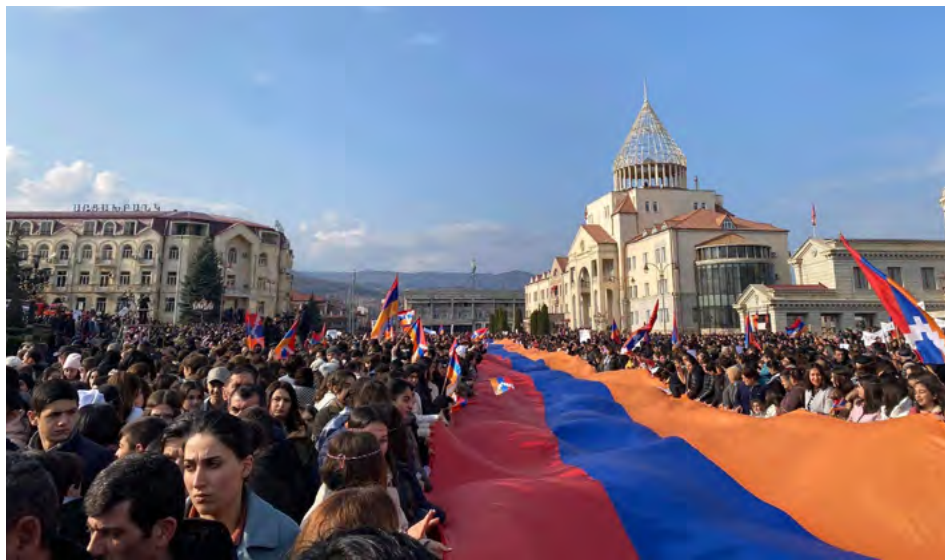
They started practicing before the blockade, but performed after it started. Some of the invited guests couldn’t make it to Artsakh.

The children clearly know what’s happening and they express their desire for the road to be open. They know it because they hear about it on TV and from their parents, who try not to discuss everything with them. “They already do not have the best childhood. It is not the easiest childhood. So we just keep them away from this problem.”

After the 2020 Artsakh war, Stepanakert

and unconditional reopening of the corridor was explicitly called for.

In an interview given to News.Am, Stepanakert Mayor Davit Sargsyan said the city has almost completely run out of basic necessities. “The stores are virtually empty. Groceries, [vegetable] oil, and sugar are left in few stores — and that only in small quantities. There are no fruits and vegetables left.



Armenian protests in Stepanakert

city lit a Christmas tree for the first time to make it more festive and bring joy to the children. This will be the first New Year for many families to celebrate without enjoying the unity of their families.

Nina says most of the families are planning to celebrate the New Year anyways and celebrate the best way possible even with the food shortage. On the search for a carrot and a potato to make *Olivie* salad, as Nina says, people of Artsakh want to make sure Azerbaijan doesn’t achieve its goal of making them feel hopeless.

“You can’t make us suffer because New Year is a sacred thing here. We will do it even if you put us in a blockade,” Nina says. The vacant cream cheese shelves give her hope that everybody will at least have their cakes for Christmas and will make sure to celebrate it.

## Shortage Amid Long Winter

The situation in the Lachin Corridor was also on the agenda of the emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on December 20. During the session, the immediate

There are cases when these products are not provided to people. We don’t have a flour and wheat problem as the bread factories are working as normal,” shared Sargsyan. He also stated that the cars now rely on natural gas as only five percent of the gasoline stock is left in Stepanakert.

Due to the blockade, three severely ill patients were under medical supervision at the Medical Center of Artsakh and were just transported to Armenia only on Friday, December 30 with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Red Cross also transported 10 tons of various drugs shipped from Armenia but “mostly got first-aid medication ... The quantity is too low,” according to an Artsakh medical official’s interview to Azatutyun.am.

## On the Other Side of the Road: Christmas without Family

Nina’s sisters and others stuck on the other side of the road wish they could be in Artsakh. Nina says there’s a clear understanding that it’s a lot better to be in the blockade than outside of it because it’s extra worri-

some to imagine the situation from outside.

Out of more than a thousand who can’t cross the blockade are students who wanted to go back home after passing their exams or those traveling to Yerevan and abroad for other educational and work purposes. Sofi Abrahamyan is a senior at Artsakh State University, majoring in Translation Studies. She went to Yerevan days before the blockade to travel to Spain in the scope of the Erasmus + cultural youth exchange program.

While she was in Spain, she hoped the roads would open. They workshop was about “Digital Storytelling” and the participants from different countries worked on their short films. Sofi’s 3-minute film was about Armenia, the 2020 war, and unfortunately, the blockade was also added to the list.

“I urged my international friends not to stay silent because basic human rights are violated and they need to speak up,” Sofi shares.

Sofi’s studies and work are mired in uncertainty as the blockade enters the third week. Her capstone and exams, as well as her work in WikiMedia Armenia seem to be hanging in the air. She is in touch with her professors and colleagues, but it is not effective to work from distance when she needs to be there physically.

Her father is in Yerevan with her, while her mother, brother, and grandmother are in Stepanakert. “It’s an unbearable feeling to see my family divided and it is more unbearable that I can’t do anything about it. We’re in touch all the time but it’s not the same. We won’t be able to be together for this family holiday.”

While financial resources are running low, Sofi’s grandma is among those whose medicine is no longer available in the pharmacies and she’s using the last package of it.

Sofi’s friends from Italy were also present at the peaceful protests organized in Yerevan. By organizing and taking part in these demonstrations, Sofi and her friends try to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis people of Artsakh are facing.

When asked about hope, Sofi says the word ‘hope’ itself already makes her sad. She says dejectedly, “We are hoping the road will open, but we have not reached the end of the countdown. Instead we remain mired in uncertainty.”

## Karabakh Leaders Defend Russia as Russia Says No Progress Made in Ending Blockade

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vital highway on December 12. They need to secure “appropriate authorization from the United Nations,” he said.

“The problem is not the Russians,” Babayan told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service in Yerevan. “We need to realize this. The problem is Azerbaijan and Turkey.”

“Hitting the Russian peacekeepers at this point means strangling Artsakh (Karabakh),” he said. “Who is to blame for all this? The Russians? Why are you following this line?”

Representatives of major Karabakh parties were even more critical of Pashinyan’s stance.

“Let him not shift his responsibility onto others,” said Artur Mosiyan, a leader of the local branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun). “He is primarily to blame for this whole thing. Pashinyan simply doesn’t miss an opportunity to make an anti-Russian statement without thinking whether it is good or bad for Karabakh.”

Davit Galstyan of the opposition Justice party said Pashinyan’s government itself should do more to help the Karabakh Armenians. He dismissed the Armenian government’s decision on Thursday to allocate 4 billion drams (\$10 million) in emergency aid to Karabakh.

“Even if you bring today 4 billion drams to Artsakh, the shops here will still have no basic foodstuffs,” said Galstyan.

Some members of Armenia’s parliament representing Pashinyan’s party claimed earlier this month that Moscow is using the Azerbaijani blockade to try to clinch geopolitical concessions from Yerevan. Arayik Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, afterwards defended the peacekeepers and praised their “conscious steps to alleviate the humanitarian problems of our people.”

## No Progress

Russia said on Friday, December 30, that despite its “consistent efforts” no progress has been made so far towards ending the nearly three-week Azerbaijani blockade of the sole road connecting Nagorno-Kara-

bakh to Armenia.

The Russian Foreign Ministry renewed its calls for the conflicting sides to “strictly comply” with the 2020 ceasefire agreement that placed the Lachin corridor under the control of Russian peacekeepers and committed Azerbaijan to guaranteeing safe passage through it. But it again stopped short of explicitly urging Baku to unblock the highway.

“We express concern about the absence of progress in restoring the full functioning of the Lachin corridor for the movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions in accordance with the Statement of the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia dated November 9, 2020,” the ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, said in a statement.

The Russian Defense Ministry has regularly reported in recent weeks that its peacekeeping contingent is negotiating with the sides to try to end the blockade which is causing growing shortages of food, medicine and other basic goods in Karabakh.

No details of those negotiations have been made public.

“We hope that the parties will come to agreements regarding the development of ore deposits in the region,” said Zakharova.

Azerbaijani protesters who blocked a section of the corridor on December 12 are demanding that Baku be allowed to inspect “illegal” ore mines in Karabakh and assess their environmental impact. The authorities in Yerevan and Stepanakert have condemned their actions as a gross violation of the 2020 agreement that stopped a six-week Armenian-Azerbaijani war in Karabakh.

The Karabakh government announced earlier last week that production operations at Karabakh’s sole functioning copper and molybdenum mine will be suspended pending an “international ecological examination” requested by it. Baku has not yet publicly reacted to the move.

Ruben Vardanyan, the Karabakh premier, said on Friday that the blockade is not only causing local residents severe hardship but also taking a heavy toll on Karabakh’s econ-





## ARMENIA

# Nagorno Karabakh Republic Presidential Adviser Analyzes Blockade

By Nelly Baghdasaryan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

If the Lachin corridor is a way of life for the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), the only way of communication with the outside world, then for Azerbaijan it is a political playing card.

After the trilateral agreement of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan of November 9, 2020, Azerbaijan is pursuing a policy of “creeping occupation” with respect to the remaining 3,000 square kilometers of the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (before the 2020 war, the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was 12,000 square kilometers), which was expressed in periodic violations of the truce, local military escalation, minor territorial occupations, information terrorism, acts of killing civilians. During and after the escalation of August 1-3, 2022, provoked by Azerbaijan, it was clear that Azerbaijan would work against the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, using the Lachin corridor as a playing card.

The phases and directions of the Azerbaijani information policy that prepared the blocking of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan were as follows: Starting from March 2022, and then from October-November, the Azerbaijani side has periodically spread deception that the Armenian side allegedly imports weapons through the Lachin corridor; At the same time, after November 20th, the Azerbaijani Defense Army periodically spread deception that the self-defense forces of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic were allegedly shooting in the direction of the Azerbaijani positions of Shushi; In late November and early December, the Azerbaijani side also applied another false thesis, according to which the commander of the Russian peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh, A. Volkov, and the newly appointed State Minister of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Ruben Vardanyan, allegedly “illegally” exploited the Kashen gold deposit of the Martakert region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

There was no doubt that Azerbaijan was preparing a major provocation in the direction of the Lachin corridor on the basis of this false information. On December 3, a group of Azerbaijani so-called “eco-activists” closed the Lachin corridor. The so-called “eco-activists,” and in fact, under their name, former and current representatives of the security services or the armed forces of Azerbaijan, and members of state-funded public organizations, obeying a clear state decree, demanded to stop the so-called “illegal” exploitation of minerals on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which allegedly led to environmental and other disasters. Clarifications of the further events are presented in the statement of the President of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Araik Harutyunyan, dated December 23: “As for the Azerbaijani side’s demand to visit the Kashen field, the reality is that on December 3 this year, having blocked the only road connecting Artsakh with Armenia for the first time, Azerbaijan, through Russian peacekeepers, handed over written proposals to the Artsakh authorities that had little to do with environmental problems and were absolutely unacceptable for Artsakh.”

Araik Harutyunyan also stressed the constructiveness of the NKR authorities, noting that “the Artsakh side has shown a constructive approach by transmitting through the peacekeepers to the Azerbaijani side those proposals for which they will be ready to allow the visit of environmentalists to the field. Azerbaijan did not implement the agreement, and consequently did not enter

the field. After that, it began a long-term road closure, not only creating serious humanitarian problems for 120,000 residents of Artsakh, but also grossly violating numerous norms of international law and the provisions of the trilateral statement of No-

ative practice; the international instruments of punishing Azerbaijan should be used immediately.

The blockade of the Lachin corridor and the problem of the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh have reached an interna-

the Turan news agency Mehman Aliyev noted that control over the corridor means control over the whole of Nagorno-Karabakh. It is noteworthy that, according to the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, the corridor is in the area of responsibility of



A group of citizens of the self-proclaimed NKR go towards Shusha with a demand to open a corridor for the transfer of Russian peacekeepers

vember 9, 2020.” It is also important that the authorities of the self-proclaimed NKR appealed to the UN within the framework of the Environment Program (UNEP) with a request to send an international monitoring group to the territory of the NKR and adjacent territories.

## Azerbaijan’s Blockade Cause of Humanitarian Catastrophe

The 120,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, including 30,000 children, found themselves under a prolonged blockade due to the closure of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan. More than 1,100 people, including 270 children, remained on the other side of the corridor in Armenia, as they are unable to return and reunite with their families in Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result of the blockade, the communities of Lisagor, Metz Shen, Hin Shen, Yeghtsahogh of Shushi district were completely isolated and cut off from the rest of the NKR and Armenia.

Since the gas pipelines running from Armenia to Artsakh stretched along the former Lachin corridor, which has remained under the control of Azerbaijan since August 2022, Azerbaijan, in parallel with the blockade, prevented gas supply to the NKR for 3 days. The corridor, being the only communication route connecting the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic with the outside world, served the daily transportation of 400 tons of food and other essential goods from Armenia to Artsakh. After the blockade of the corridor, at the time of writing /December 28/, 6800 tons of cargo were not actually transported. On December 25, the ICRC transported 10 tons of humanitarian cargo from Armenia to Artsakh. With the mediation of the ICRC, a number of extremely serious patients, including a 4-month-old child, were transferred to specialized clinics in Armenia. Medical supplies are running out. Planned operations have been temporarily suspended in hospitals. After the blockade, there are not enough supplies to care for children born in Artsakh. Along with the shortage of food and basic necessities, there is also the problem of diesel fuel.

## What Is the Responsibility of the International Community?

The fact that in the 21st century a state can be blockaded by a neighboring state and remain unpunished defies any logic and has no justification. According to international law, the fact of non-recognition of the state does not matter either. In this case, the international community should not have declar-

tional level. The international progressive community and international human rights organizations committed to democratic values and considering human rights a priority have issued statements on the immediate unblocking of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan. The issue was discussed in the context of international and regional security. The discourse used allows us to say that a new level of internationalization of the problem of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict has been recorded; this was also expressed at the meeting of the UN Security Council on December 20, 2022, when the situation created in the Lachin corridor on the basis of the statement of the Republic of Armenia was discussed. In fact, in all the speeches of the UN Security Council, Azerbaijan’s unblocking of Nagorno-Karabakh was emphasized as an urgent measure. In the speeches of the UN Security Council, there was a reference to the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, as a source document for overcoming the current situation. Particularly important was the statement of the continuing obstacles in the Lachin/Berdzor corridor and their severe humanitarian consequences. The role of the Russian Federation and, accordingly, responsibility in overcoming the crisis was emphasized.

My comments on the UN Security Council discussion are available at the following link: <https://www.aravot-en.am/2022/12/22/316532/?fbclid=IwAR026XEFIIIB3OSGG-gLVTY-qWdw2ckbTgtGooWnwJooNb6338MFp-Ww7Jcbe>

In the conditions of the ongoing blockade of the NKR, it is very important that the discussions of the UN Security Council continue and practical measures to punish Azerbaijan are applied on the basis of a single statement.

## The Real Goals of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan speaks the language of ultimatums, in order to achieve greater concessions under the influence of the threat of war. The Azerbaijani-Turkish tandem is trying to achieve an extraterritorial solution in Zangezur through pressure, and the Azerbaijani narrative “corridor in exchange for corridor” is used regarding the Lachin corridor.

Azerbaijan is trying to achieve full control over the Lachin corridor, which means full economic and political control over Nagorno-Karabakh, with an invented agenda of “environmental protection” and “conflict over mines.” For example, the director of

the peacekeepers of the Russian Federation.

Azerbaijan openly accuses the Russian peacekeeping forces of contributing to the militarization of Nagorno-Karabakh in order to oust peacekeeping.

The Azerbaijani authorities at the highest level, including the highest rostrum of the UN, are voicing threats and demands for resignation against the elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. In particular, President of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Araik Harutyunyan and newly appointed State Minister Ruben Vardanyan are being targeted. This should be considered as Azerbaijan’s first attempt to deinstitutionalize the NKR.

For the past two years, Azerbaijan has been waging a transit war by means of a transit blockade through roads, tunnels and international airports. Now Azerbaijan has moved to the second stage of the transit war, the purpose of which is to penetrate into 3,000 square kilometers of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. It is a fact that no international structure can guarantee that the international airports built in the vicinity of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic will not be used by Azerbaijan and Turkey for military purposes.

## What Standing and Agenda Does Nagorno-Karabakh Have?

Any proposal that could lead to the integration of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic within the framework of the Constitution of Azerbaijan is unacceptable to the people of the self-proclaimed NKR. Such a development of events in the issue of status predetermines an ontological catastrophe for the people of Artsakh. From 2020 until today, Azerbaijan has applied a policy of ethnic cleansing and mass forced eviction of the population of Artsakh against the self-proclaimed NKR by creating life-threatening conditions. Azerbaijan’s actions can be included in the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention of Genocide.

The population of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, which is under total blockade, appealed to the international community with a message of respect for self-determination through peaceful and civilized actions. The concept of “recognition for the sake of salvation” was the basis for the nationwide rallies in Stepanakert on October 30, 2022 and December 25, 2022 with the participation of 60-70 000 people.

(Nelly Baghdasaryan is Adviser to the Artsakh Republic President on International Relations.)





## INTERNATIONAL

# Hrant Dink School of Istanbul Reports on Use of Tekeyan Aid

ISTANBUL — The Hrant Dink School of Istanbul educates the children of families from the Republic of Armenia who emigrated to Istanbul to make a living. Many of the students are from needy families but still are able to get an Armenian education in this unique school. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada raised aid for the school in 2021 and thanks to a generous anonymous donor matched every contribution. The cochair of the school's board of volunteers, Talar Hisarlı Horozoğlu, has released a report on how the school has used the \$30,000 it was sent.

Due to the pandemic in 2021, the



During renovations



Smart board

school's classes were sometimes in person and sometimes online. She said the school administration was not able to make school renovations last year because of the recurrence of the pandemic, but said, "we have started to buy slowly the needs of the school with your kind donation."

First of all, measures were taken to ensure a safe kitchen environment. The oven and stovetop, which had been used for about 17 years, were replaced with new ones, and kitchen equipment needs were provided.

Apart from this, a laptop was purchased

for the school principal and her assistant and a smart board for the school.

As the school was closed for over one year due to the pandemic, and it's located in the basement of a church, the physical condition of the school deteriorated because of the lack of air and humidity. Therefore at the beginning of the 2022 academic year,



Renovated classrooms in use

the entire school was repainted. The cause for the humidity was investigated, the necessary insulation was added and the electrical system was improved. All this was done to allow children to receive education in a healthier environment.

The remaining deficiencies (like camera, screen, camera foot, doorbell, speaker, etc.) were also fixed in the autumn of 2022.

She added, "We still have \$13,410 remaining [from the donation] which we reserved to make a computer room with 10 computers. Before preparing a computer room, it is necessary to provide a good ventilation system."

Since the room was humid, something that can damage electronic equipment, it was suggested that before the purchase of computers, the room be renovated.

Fortunately, one a local philanthropist paid for the school's ventilation system. The work will be completed in 4-6 weeks, as the school's electrical system also needs to be improved to take on this additional load. The computer room is planned to be ready for use at the latest at the end of this February.

She conclude, "The Hrant Dink School's students, educational staff, parents and the school's volunteer administrators, are grateful to the Tekeyan Cultural Association for supporting our project, for helping us to make up for the deficiencies of our school and improve its physical conditions."

## INTERNATIONAL

## Armenia, Azerbaijan Working on Peace Treaty Contents, Lavrov Says

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia and Azerbaijan are now in the process of finalizing the contents of a possible peace treaty, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with RIA Novosti this week.

Lavrov said that the prospect of signing a peace treaty depends on the two countries. He noted that Moscow has a close strategic partnership and alliance with both Yerevan and Baku, and therefore it is important for the Russian Federation to achieve peace between the two.

On December 26, on the sidelines of the informal Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit in St. Petersburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin had a trilateral conversation with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

Pashinyan noted that the most urgent issue to be discussed was the crisis in the Lachin corridor. He also recalled that the corridor is within the area of responsibility and control of Russian peacekeepers, while Azerbaijan has guaranteed the unimpeded passage of goods and citizens along this route.

## Rep. Chu Says Sanctions on Azerbaijan Are necessary

WASHINGTON (News.am) — Voice of America this week discussed the current situation around the Lachin corridor, which links Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to Armenia, with US Congresswoman Judy Chui.

Chu said the Congressional Armenian Caucus had addressed a letter to US President Joe Biden in this regard in the first days of the Azerbaijani blockade of the Lachin corridor. The letter, signed by nearly 30 Congress members, calls on the US administration to use all tools at its disposal — including ending financial support to and imposing sanctions on Azerbaijan — to ensure the safety of the people of Artsakh, both now and in the future.

The statement also notes that Azerbaijan is again using people as weapons, further worsening the living conditions of Armenians in Artsakh. And if this situation continues, a humanitarian crisis with potentially catastrophic consequences will become inevitable.

She noted, "This is a direct violation of the ceasefire agreement. Sanctions on Azerbaijan are necessary. Considering the fact that they have openly attacked Artsakh, Section 907, by which Azerbaijan receives aid from the United States, should not be canceled."

Chu underscored the need for the US administration's response to the situation, emphasizing the need for stronger measures against Azerbaijan, among which Chu pointed to the imposing of sanctions against Azerbaijani officials and the suspension of US military aid to Baku.

However, the priority is to supply food, medicine, and important supplies to the people of Artsakh, she noted.



(Photo by Jean Eckian)

## French Armenians Demonstrate In Support of Artsakh

By Jean Eckian

PARIS — On Tuesday, December 27, a demonstration organized by a cultural and apolitical association (Union Franco-Arménienne), led by Arthur Arzoyan, was held on the "Parvis des Droits de l'Homme" of the Place du Trocadero in Paris, in front of the Eiffel Tower, in support of the Artsakh population. The aim of this demonstration was to draw attention to the human damage caused by the iniquitous blockade of Azerbaijan prohibiting any land connection with Armenia and to denounce a possible future humanitarian disaster in Artsakh.

Various slogans were chanted, questioning the destructive Ilham Aliyev-Recep Tayyip Erdogan association, the pro-Azerbaijani posture of President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and the danger for the sick people of Artsakh and the children, some of whom have been kept in Armenia since the broadcasting of the Junior Eurovision. This is due to the fact that the Azerbaijanis have obstructed passage through the Lachin corridor, as well as to food and fuel.





# Community News

## Armenian Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan Leaves For Government Affairs Post

WASHINGTON — Armenian Assembly of America Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan will leave his current position after seven years of service to Armenian-American advocacy and community priorities. At the onset of 2023, Toumajan will start a new job in the field of government affairs.

Working with the Assembly’s congressional relations team in Washington, Toumajan was instrumental in mobilizing grassroots support for Armenian Genocide resolutions (H.Res.296 and S.Res.150), which were adopted overwhelmingly in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate in 2019.

During the 2020 War on Artsakh, he tirelessly advanced key Assembly initiatives and raised awareness on the horrors unfolding and the fundamental right of the people of Artsakh to live freely and securely in their ancestral homeland.

Toumajan also represented the Assembly within various Armenian American coalitions in southern California, including Armenia Fund, Inc. and its Board of Directors, the Armenian Genocide Committee (AGC), the Pan-Armenian Council of the Western USA (PAC-WUSA), and the United Armenian Council of Los Angeles (UACLA), as well as at bicameral hearings of the California State Legislature in Sacramento. Additionally, Mihran testified regularly on the merits of key legislation ranging from AB 1320 (the Divestment from Turkish Bonds Act) to AB 1801 (State holidays: Genocide Remembrance Day) to ACR 105 (a resolution on California’s sister state relationship with Armenia’s Syunik Province), among other initiatives.

In addition, Toumajan helped to encourage sizable contingents of Armenian Americans based in the Western United States to participate in the Assembly’s National Advocacy Conferences in our nation’s capital in 2018 and 2019, and during the Assembly’s virtual Advocacy Conference in the Spring of 2021. Toumajan helped to re-energize the Assembly’s Southern and Northern California Regional Councils, in addition to assisting in the establishment of regional committees in Los Angeles and Orange counties and in California’s Inland Empire. During Toumajan’s tenure, key activists from Arizona, Utah, and the State of Washington joined the Assembly as State Chairs, further enhancing the Assembly’s outreach and advocacy efforts.

A Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program alumnus, Toumajan promoted the Assembly’s Washington, D.C. and Yerevan flagship, 8-week, Summer internship programs with passion and purpose. In that vein, he visited several college campuses throughout the State of California and motivated

see TOUMAJAN, page 7



Armenian cheese and milk products on display in Glendale (photo Aram Arkun)

## Armenian Trade Delegation Visits Glendale

By Aram Arkun  
*Mirror-Spectator Staff*

GLENDALÉ, Calif. — An Armenian business delegation visited the Los Angeles area from December 1 to 7 as part of the 2022 Armenian American Business Bridge and the Armenian Trade Show programs, organized by the Armenian American Business Council (AABC) with the Liva Elite Business Group LLC. The International Business Relations Support Council (IBRS) in Armenia also provided its assistance. The public highlight of the visit was a trade show held in Glendale on December 3-4 under the auspices of the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles. Some fifty producers from Armenia and Artsakh participated, with small booths arrayed outside at the Glendale Civic Center Plaza displayed their wares or services under tents, forming a mini “vernissage.”

Visitors to the trade show could sample many types of Armenian dried fruits and sweets from several different companies and sample different wine and other spirits produced in Armenia. Armenian-made carpets, clothing and leather goods vied for the attention of visitors. One company even had a collection of clothing embossed with Urartian cuneiform writing. The representative of a new luxury hotel in Yerevan, the Golden Palace, provided information and offered gift cards encouraging visits, while photographer Hayk Manukyan displayed photographs of Armenia’s picturesque sites, thereby promoting tourism, and noted that proceeds from sales would go to help needy families in Armenia.

In addition to the usual products that one would expect to see at a vernissage, there were high tech companies such as Volta, providing solar energy and heating solutions, and traditional manufacturers of items such as plastic cups and containers. Other booths highlighted specialized importers of medical devices to Armenia and Artsakh (AM Medical Group); a company providing laboratory analysis of food, drugs, tobacco and microbiological substances (FDA Laboratory); producers

see TRADE, page 10



The FDA Lab booth (photo Aram Arkun)

## International Ecumenical Groups Stand In Support of Artsakh

WASHINGTON — As the blockade of Artsakh continues, two major ecumenical groups have issued statements strongly supporting Artsakh and Armenia in this time of crisis.

Thanks to the efforts of Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, two major ecumenical organizations have decried the cruelties inflicted against Artsakh and Armenia.

“By its actions in obstructing the humanitarian Lachin corridor, and by temporarily cutting gas supplies to the region just at the onset of winter, Azerbaijan is deliberately creating a humanitarian emergency for the 120,000 ethnic Armenian residents of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, seeking to force Armenia into accepting a settlement on Azerbaijan’s terms, and trying to terrorize ethnic Armenians into abandoning their ancient homeland,” wrote the World Council of Churches in a letter to the European Union. “In these circumstances, Armenian fears of renewed genocide against them cannot be discounted.”

A communiqué from the U.S.-based National Council of Churches said: “We stand with the Armenian Church, and add our voices to those of the World Council of Churches, Pope Francis, and the Conference of European Churches. We call on the United States and its international allies to immediately pressure Azerbaijan to lift its unjust blockade and to allow food, medical supplies, and other essential resources to flow unimpeded.”

Below, read the full texts of the letters from the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. (Readers are encouraged to share these statements with others in the surrounding community.)

### The World Council of Churches Letter

December 19, 2022

The World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches denounces the blockade by Azerbaijan of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, as a violation of the tripartite agreement that ended the six-week war of 2020, of international humanitarian and human rights law, and of the most fundamental moral principles. By its actions in obstructing the humanitarian Lachin corridor, and by temporarily cutting gas supplies to the region just at the onset of winter, Azerbaijan is deliberately creating a humanitarian emergency for the 120,000 ethnic Armenian residents of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, seeking to force

see SUPPORT, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan Leaves For Government Affairs Post

TOUMAJAN, from page 6

Armenian students to apply for either of the Assembly’s internship opportunities using his own example as one of over 1,200 alumni.

“Mihran has played a significant role in expanding the Assembly’s activities and programming across the Western United States, and in encouraging our Members and grassroots activists to effectively advocate for the betterment of the Armenian people in Artsakh, Armenia, and across the diaspora in furtherance of the Assembly’s mission,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “Over the years, I have enjoyed collaborating with Mihran on working visits to Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah, and more. On behalf of the Armenian Assembly of America, we appreciate Mihran’s longtime involvement in the Assembly, which dates back to his days as an intern, and we are sure he will remain a part of the Assembly family.”



Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan with La Canada High School students and members of the school’s Armenian Club

Ara Safarian to Speak on Story Behind Soghomon Tehlirian and Assassination of Talaat Pasha

FRESNO — “The Story Behind Soghomon Tehlirian and the Assassination of Talaat Pasha” will be the topic of a presentation by Ara Sarafian on Monday, January 23, at 7 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, on the Fresno State campus. The event is organized by the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

This presentation-talk will be the United States launch of the English translation of Tehlirian’s memoir, *Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2022). This is the first English translation of Tehlirian’s memoir, which was originally published by Housaper (Cairo) in 1953. It is a fascinating account of his experiences during World War I, including his witnessing the Armenian Genocide and his visceral need to avenge the mass-murder of over a million Armenians, including 84 members of his own family.

*Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha* also relates Tehlirian’s induction into the ARF’s assassination campaign, “Operation Nemesis,” to liquidate Turkish leaders who had been responsible for the Armenian Genocide of 1915. This is a complex yet well-written account which lends itself to serious examination and analysis. Tehlirian was buried with full honors at Masis Ararat Cemetery, Fresno in 1960.

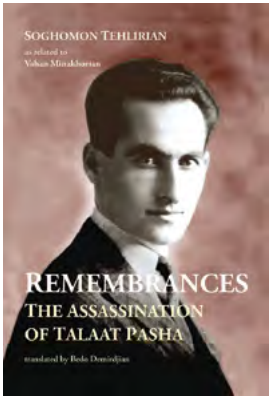
Sarafian is an archival historian and the executive director of the Gomidas Institute (London). He specializes in late Ottoman and modern Armenia history, including the Armenian Genocide. Over the past 18 years, he has been at the vanguard of Turkish-Armenian truth and reconciliation projects, including engaging Turkish state intellectuals, civil society organizations, press and other outlets. He was the first diaspora Armenian to commemorate the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul (2008), Diyarbakir (2013) and Bitlis (2015). On his latest survey trip to Turkey, in September 2022, he visited Yeznga (Erzincan) and Gamakh (Kemah), including Tehlirian’s village, Vari Pakarij.

Sarafian is currently heading “Project Kharpert 2022,” the Gomidas Institute’s civil-campaign to oppose the Turkish authorities’ erasure of what remains of Armenian material culture in Kharpert today.

Copies of *Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha* will be on sale at the event.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

The presentation will also be live-streamed on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/armenianstudiesyoutube>.





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COMMUNITY NEWS

International Ecumenical Groups  
Stand in Support of Artsakh

SUPPORT, from page 6  
Armenia into accepting a settlement on Azerbaijan’s terms, and trying to terrorize ethnic Armenians into abandoning their ancient homeland.

This follows a clear pattern of behaviour by Azerbaijan that contradicts any claims of goodwill and humanitarian responsibility on its part. Increasing Azerbaijani attacks on sovereign Armenian territory prompted the UN Security Council to call an emergency meeting on 15 September 2022. Growing evidence of gross violations of human rights against Armenians by Azerbaijan’s military and security forces compelled Human Rights Watch to accuse Baku of war crimes. Accountability for such crimes and violations has not been pursued. Moreover, Armenian religious and cultural heritage in the region remain largely unmonitored, unprotected and at risk.

In these circumstances, Armenian fears of renewed genocide against them cannot be discounted, and the already week-long blockade of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh is a context in which those fears are greatly and understandably exacerbated.

We therefore write to urge you to pursue all possible diplomatic initiatives to ensure that Azerbaijan re-opens the Lachin corridor and provides appropriate guarantees that it will remain open. Further, we appeal to you to do all in your power to secure extension of the mandate of the existing EU monitoring mission at the Armenia-Azerbaijan border to include the Lachin corridor, in order to provide independent civilian monitoring of the situation along the corridor.

We look forward to your response, and to your swift action to address these urgent humanitarian and human rights concerns.

Yours sincerely,  
**Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca**  
Acting General Secretary  
World Council of Churches

**Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen**  
General Secretary  
Conference of European Churches

**Communiqué of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA**  
December 21, 2022

Deuteronomy 10:17-18: For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA strongly condemns the actions by Azerbaijan that have cut off civilians in need in Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh. In a season where we celebrate the birth of Jesus in a cold stable, it is particularly horrific that civilians are being cut off in the middle of winter.

We stand with the Armenian Church and add our voices to those of the World Council of Churches, Pope Francis, and the Conference of European Churches. We call on the United States and its international allies to immediately pressure Azerbaijan to lift its unjust blockade and to allow food, medical supplies, and other essential resources to flow unimpeded.

OBITUARY

Helen (Altoonian) Hajian

WALTHAM, Mass. — Helen (Altoonian) Hajian of Waltham died on December 21, 2022, at age 87.

She was the wife of the late Michael Hajian. She leaves her children Carol S. Hajian, Diana A. Aliberti and her husband Mark and Gloria L. DiStefano and her husband Joseph and grandchildren Gabriella, John, Michael and Dante. She was the sister of Danny Markarian and the late Mark Markarian.

Funeral services were held at First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont on Thursday, December 29. Interment was private.

Arrangements were by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.



THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR  
SPECTATOR**

Notice to Our Subscribers Regarding Print Version

Dear subscribers, it has come to our attention that for the past year, and specifically the past month, the delivery of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* has been erratic.

Please note that our paper goes to our printer at the same time every week and is mailed out the same time every week. Nothing has changed.

The delivery problems all lie with the postal service, which is understaffed, and though we have contacted them repeatedly, we have not been able to resolve the problem.



*Christmas Donations*

(The following donations arrived after the publication of the Christmas issue.)

Yervant Chekijian, Watertown, MA \$500

Dr. Aram Adourian Concord, MA \$300

Robert Proodian, Lynn, MA \$200

Elsa Parsegian , Rootstown, OH \$200

Armenian Missionary Association of America, Paramus, NJ \$200

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Bay Area Armenians Hold Virtual Town Hall on Artsakh Blockade

FORUM, from page 1

Four speakers were at the forum: Dr. Davit Akopyan, Dr. Benyamin Poghosyan, Mariam Khaloyan and Aram Hamparian.

Akopyan is a senior advisor to the director of the Arab States Regional Hub (Amman, Jordan) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and also an advisor to the President of Armenia, as well as serving on the board of the think tank Applied Policy Research Institute of Armenia (APRI Armenia). Poghosyan is a political scientist and is the chairman of the Center for Political & Economic Strategic Studies of Armenia. He is also a regular commentary contributor to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. Khaloyan is the director of Congressional Relations for the Armenian Assembly of America while Hamparian is the executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America. International human rights lawyer Sheila Paylan of Montreal, Canada, was scheduled to be a part of the panel but was unable to make it.

The panel was moderated by community leader Yervant Zorian, who is a member of the Artsakh Task Force board as well as a leading computer engineer and chief architect at Synopsys, Inc., which produces microchips.

Each panel member offered a different perspective. Poghosyan's perspective, being on the ground in Armenia, was arguably the most pragmatic. He argued for the continued importance of Russian presence in Armenia and Artsakh. According to him, the Azerbaijani blockade is going to continue much longer, and it is clear that the goal of Azerbaijan is to starve the people of Artsakh into submission. The ability of the Azerbaijanis to cut the gas and electric lines whenever they want will be used as leverage to force the people of Artsakh and Armenia to accede to their demands, he said.

One of the Azerbaijani demands is that a checkpoint be established on the Lachin corridor to check every car and truck that passes from Armenia to Azerbaijan; this would essentially give Azerbaijan control of the corridor and de facto of Artsakh as a whole. Azerbaijan is also demanding that Ruben Vardanyan, the State Minister of Artsakh, leave the region as soon as possible. Vardanyan, a Yerevan-born billionaire businessman and philanthropist known as the "Father of the Russian Stock Market" recently renounced his Russian citizenship and moved to Artsakh where he was appointed State Minister. Vardanyan has stated that the people of Artsakh have three choices, join Azerbaijan, leave, or fight; he has chosen to fight, he said.

Poghosyan also discussed the possibility of bringing minimum supplies by airlift until the corridor is open. Since Azerbaijan is



Dr. Benyamin Poghosyan

claiming Artsakh as their territory, they argue that all air travel into the Stepanakert airport (in Artsakh's capital) should use the international air traffic code for Azerbaijan. That will again give Azerbaijan control as to who comes in and out of Artsakh. It was stated that if Armenia tried to send supplies by military helicopter, these would immediately be shot down by the Azeri forces. On the other hand, despite all of this, the Russian military continues to use the Stepanakert airport without interference from Azerbaijan. Poghosyan and others suggested that the best way to get supplies to Karabakh would be on Russian military helicopters. Therefore, the pro-Russian stance

should continue. Poghosyan suggested that Armenia speak to the Russians asking for the minimal amount of help, namely aid and supplies to keep the people of Artsakh alive as a humanitarian measure, without asking even for the Russian military to disperse the protestors blockading the road. The reasoning for this is that Russia is not currently dispersing the protestors so it is clear that Russia feels such action would be considered aggression by Azerbaijan and lead to more conflict.

Akopyan spoke to the international community's involvement in ending the blockade. He stated that the most immediate opportunity for the UN to help was during the Security Council discussion of December 20, however despite an attempt from France for the fourth time to suggest a statement from the Security Council, no statement was made. All parties agreed that there is a "blockade" but rotating current Security Council members Albania and the United Arab Emirates did not want to use the nomenclature "Nagorno-Karabakh." Meanwhile Russia wished to have its role stressed and the US wanted the Russian role downplayed.

Akopyan mentioned that when there was a blockade of parts of Syria during the civil war in that country, it took almost two years for the UN to decide what to say, thus, he



Dr. David Akopyan

said, the Security Council is not really the best option for solving the current crisis. However, he noted, in the new year, there will be new temporary Security Council members such as Japan, Malta, Ecuador and Switzerland; Akopyan said he hopes that some of these can be allies to Armenia.

The outgoing UN Security Council member, Norway, had meanwhile suggested increased international presence in Artsakh. The problem is that right now the UN can only enter Artsakh with the permission of Azerbaijan, but that does not preclude various countries like Norway from sending their own representatives or international NGOs; the Red Cross, Halo Trust, and Doctors Without Borders are already present there. Talks between the Norwegian ambassador in the US have already emerged discussing this possibility.

Akopyan stressed the importance of the presence of international personnel in Artsakh especially by organizations bringing in humanitarian assistance. He opined that this would help to break the blockade, stating that Armenians should proceed "step by step, with their eyes on the facts on the ground." In fact, the African nation of Gabon suggested that a UN fact-finding mission be sent to Artsakh, but the implementation of this is still unclear.

Akopyan further discussed the positive influence of more attention being paid to Artsakh in the international media, mentioning journalist Lara Setrakian's article in the outlet Foreign Policy. He mentioned that international observers following Armenia and Artsakh are "between a rock and a hard place," needing to rely on Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CTSO), which is not really doing much to help, while Russia has become the primary villain in international media due to its invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, some writers have been trying to project the idea that next to Ukraine, Armenia is on the front lines of the struggle between democracy and autocracy.

In contrast to Poghosyan, Akopyan was much more skeptical of the Russian role in

the conflict. "I am not sure of the value of the Russian promises," regarding their promises to stay in Artsakh, he said, adding that the situation changed with the war in Ukraine. He concluded that the solution is to make Armenia and Artsakh strong using more alliances and increased military capacity.

During the question-and-answer section, he also voiced that making the argument to the UN and the international community would involve making comparisons to the Berlin Airlift of 1948, the US military support for the unrecognized nation of Somaliland, and other similar situations in recent or past history where an unrecognized or blockaded area was given humanitarian aid despite political issues.

Hamparian took another pragmatic approach, one that was more cynical of the true role of the international community and the sway held by concepts of democracy and human rights. "In any crisis, you have to mitigate any harm, survive the crisis, and look for opportunities," he stated. Some of the opportunities that exist are the "internationalization" of the Artsakh crisis, the spotlight on Azerbaijani intentions, and the humanitarian issue. While these can be used, Hamparian was much more critical of the motives of state actors and took an approach that takes realpolitik into account.

Hamparian referred to different streams of thought in Armenian politics over the years. One school of thought is that a "land for peace" deal can create a stable equilibrium and bring much-desired peace to the Armenian people. In other words, by making territorial concessions to Azerbaijan or Turkey, some Armenians have tried to use that as a way to gain peace for Armenia as a whole. Hamparian argued that there is no such "transactional path to peace" that such an argument envisions, but that Artsakh and Armenia are in an "existential" environment, not a "transactional" one. The Turks and Azerbaijanis desire to either eliminate the Armenians — or at least to marginalize them — until they are insignificant.

Hamparian noted that in the US, while there are those who are concerned with the humanitarian crisis, "nobody in DC is losing any sleep over this," he stated. The basic approach that most US government officials are taking is that the conflict is the fault of "both sides." US officials know who the aggressor is but refuse to say it, he added. They would rather the issue resolve itself without US involvement, and if at the end of the day, the Armenian people have to leave Karabakh, so be it, he added. Hamparian proved his point by noting that there has been no end to the military aid to Azerbaijan and no effort to deliver humanitarian aid to Artsakh; there has been no investigation into Azerbaijan's war crimes, use of mercenaries, or illegal munitions and land mines. The tools of US power such as sanctions, travel bans, freezing of bank accounts, and so on, are only picked up by the administration when doing so is useful to the US government. The administration has not done so in this case, so clearly, saving Artsakh is not useful to the US government.

Hamparian continued that the Armenian-American community is "swimming upstream," but there are some options. Armenian-Americans who are US citizens should be rising up and complaining to the elected officials that are beholden to them that something needs to be done. The US government should be asked to send a signal to Azerbaijan that this is not acceptable; we have such a law on the books, which is Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act banning military aid to Azerbaijan. The executive branch continues to waive this law and send aid anyway. Hamparian stated that we don't need to convince Congress to cre-

ate new sanctions, we just need them to enforce the already existing Section 907.

Hamparian also mentioned foreign aid, stating that Secretary of State Antony Blinken has presided over giving out \$11 billion in aid to all kinds of countries around the world, even US adversary Venezuela, yet nothing has gone to Artsakh. It seems that either Turkey or Azerbaijan is vetoing such aid or the diplomats are holding it back of their own accord, he said.

Hamparian stated that although we should be making the geopolitical argument in behalf of Armenia, the civilizational argument that Armenia is part of Western Civilization, promotes democracy, western values, freedom, tolerance, and has a Christian basis, along with a Diaspora that is highly tied into the Western world, he concluded that geopolitical arguments or moral suasion will ultimately not determine the outcome, but rather the status of Armenian-Americans as voters and stakeholders in the American democracy.

Khaloyan echoed Hamparian's remarks, issuing an impassioned call to the Armenian-American community to act in accordance with Hamparian's suggestions and reach out to elected officials as well as local news media.

Citing heartbreaking stories such as of a man who almost dropped an egg on the street in Artsakh and stated that he would rather have cracked the screen of his phone than lose the egg, she highlighted the danger of starvation faced by the natives of Artsakh.

Stating that the Armenian Assembly as well as the ANCA serve as a sounding board from the Armenian community to the US Congress, she called on all community members to raise their voices and raise awareness. She suggested writing letters to the editor or articles to local newspapers; calling one's Senators or Member of Congress, and especially stressing to elected officials to enforce Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which bans direct aid to the Azerbaijani government.

Khaloyan added that participation of the community is needed right away. Community members should be making calls and sending letters, and becoming more and more active in the fight, as well as reaching out to family and friends in other states to do the same.

In response to the discussion on community involvement, Hamparian added that the Armenian advocacy community has allies in faith-based groups, including Christian groups as well as Jewish ones, though some pro-Israel groups are not as fond of speaking out against Azerbaijan. He also mentioned that the ethnic advocacy groups of the Greek, Kurdish and increasingly the Hindu (ethnic/religious) communities have been allies to the cause. On the flipside, Hamparian expressed extreme disappointment with the behavior of traditional human rights advocacy groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which have not stood up for the Armenians.

In the end, Hamparian echoed his earlier remark that the US government's policy is apparently not to provide aid, and that nobody at the higher levels of power in Washington DC takes "human rights" seriously. For this reason, the Armenian people must learn to speak out and realize that they have more power than they think they do as citizens of the US and just as much right to ask the US government to help Artsakh as almost any other group of citizens in the US have to advocate for their issues. His suggestion was to be bold and to leave behind the "keep your head down" attitude that Armenians have become used to throughout their history of living under authoritarian empires.





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Trade Delegation Visits Glendale

TRADE, from page 6  
of vitamins and other medical products (Tonus-Les), and a company producing products based on microbiological techniques (JV Smart Technologies Systems, the Armenian branch of a company based in Riga, Latvia). The Legara transportation company offered its services in Armenia, Artsakh and Georgia for moving cargo and leasing minivans and buses, as well as freight transportation to neighboring countries.

Several of the participants explained on December 3 that in addition to familiarizing people with Armenian products, the participants in the business delegation hoped to establish business-to-business connections in separate meetings as well as through a business conference that the city of Glendale was hosting on December 5. For example, the dried fruit producers hoped that their products could be sold in various American supermarkets or grocery stores through the connections this trip would make. The participants also said that there was great competition in Armenia to get accepted into the business delegation, so that only a small number of applicants succeeded in joining the trip.

According to the Facebook site of the Armenian Consulate General in Los Angeles, the business delegation visited their offices on December 1 to meet with Counselor Nazeli Hambardzumyan, and on the next day was hosted by the Glendale City Council and Mayor Ardashes Kassakhian. The counselor, mayor, and members of IBRS and AABC delivered welcoming speeches at the official opening of the trade show on December 3.

The city of Glendale provided the space for the trade show and some of the other events. It also helped in making some introductions of the vendors to people who could help them with marketing in the US. Mayor Ardashes Kassakhian later declared, “We wanted to provide whatever assistance we could because we believe that given our large Armenian population, good trade relations with Armenia are critical...And the timing could not be more perfect because it also coincides with the holidays, so a lot of folks from our community came out to do their holiday shopping.” He noted that in a sense all this is a continuation of the mercantile spirit of the Armenian people, which has been evident for at least several thousand years.

Behind the Scenes

Former Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles Valery Mkrtumyan, who holds the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, provided some background to the Armenian Trade Show. Earlier efforts to encourage trade relations between Armenia and California included the 2015 creation of the Armenian American Business Council, promoting business relations between the US and Armenia, of which Mkrtumyan is a founding member. Mkrtumyan declared, “Our main aim was to attract Armenian companies to the United States to actively participate. We first started with travel shows, and then we tried to organize some kind of exhibition, but we didn’t



Tarazard booth (photo Aram Arkun)

manage to do it due to Covid-19 restrictions and consequent developments.” The AABC is a nonprofit organization based in California and its current, third president is Artak Ghazaryan.

Mkrtumyan declared, “California offers some unique opportunities, from the point of view of its vast marketing opportunities and for foreign entrepreneurs to be represented here.” In 2021, imports from Armenia to California totaled \$41 million dollars, he said. Therefore, he continued “we thought about creating a platform called Armenian Trade Show to facilitate the presentation of Armenian goods, producers and services, especially for companies that didn’t have any chance to get to the United States market.”

There was a first version of the show in Burbank, California, in May, 2022, at which 20 companies participated. They signed over a dozen agreements or contracts, Mkrtumyan said, which was a good beginning. The second version in December had many more participating companies as well as visitors, and the public show was expanded to two days from one.

Mkrtumyan emphasized the unique character of the trade show. The US through the US Agency for International Development, which closely cooperates with the US embassy in Armenia, has been involved in this initiative from its very start, while back in Armenia, the IBRS, a governmental organization under the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, supported the show as well. IBRS was created to help Armenian entrepreneurs and businessmen participate in various trade shows and fairs, Mkrtumyan added. Finally, the platform was com-

pleted with the participation of several companies based in California as well as with the help of the AABC.

Liana Vardanyan, cofounder and CEO of Liva Elite Business Group LLC, stated that her company’s main purpose is to support the entry of Armenian manufacturers into the US market. The Liva Group helped organize the Armenian American Business Bridge project and with its business partners the Armenian Trade Show platform.

She noted that after the first trade show in May, her company signed contracts with several Armenian manufactur-



Dancers at the opening of the Armenian trade show (photo courtesy Facebook page of the Consulate General)

ing companies, and after the second trade show, it now is in the course of negotiating terms with several more companies. If an Armenian company engages Liva’s services, it will help with all necessary registration for the US market, such as with the Food and Drug Administration, the US Department of Agriculture. This includes ingredients review, nutrition facts review and labelling design. Liva, she said, collaborates with many Armenian-American partner companies in order to help with product shipping, and after the importation, marketing, advertising and actual sales in the US. Liva Group, she said, works with companies in the fields of food, alcohol, textile, souvenirs, jewelry, leather goods, and many others.

The first step will be online sales through a website, and after all the necessary approvals have been obtained, the products will be imported and distributed to Armenian stores. The final stage will be to have Armenian products sold in big chains like Trader Joe’s or Ralphs, when, Vardanyan said, the necessary quality and quantity can be assured.

Vardanyan remarked that in the future, the Armenian Trade Show intends to present specialized shows and events in different fields such as industry, agriculture, tourism, hotels and the medical sector. The Armenian Trade Show is a non-profit enterprise, but of course when companies enter into contracts with Liva, then this becomes a for-profit business arrangement.

Vardanyan and Mkrtumyan both said that after the success of the second trade show, the organizers plan to make this an annual event.



The Armenian business delegation at the Armenian Consulate General of Los Angeles with Counselor Nazeli Hambardzumyan and others (photo courtesy Facebook page of the Consulate General)



COMMUNITY NEWS

# COAF Raises \$6M in Support of Rural Armenia

COAF, from page 1

capital budget is allocated towards the construction of COAF’s SMART complexes in each rural region, while the organization’s \$2 million annual budget covers operational expenditures.

COAF’s goal is to expand its reach to all of rural Armenia’s population of over one million. To date, the organization has served over 100,000 people in 5 regions of the country. To serve the entire population of Armenia will require an expenditure of \$150 million for capital expenses and an annual budget of approximately

In his address, COAF Founder and Chairman Garo Armen spoke about the dire situation in Armenia and in Artsakh,

urgent need to support the people of Armenia by continuing to carry out the important work of nation building and uplifting youth to become the catalysts for change. “We need to show them our commitment; we need to show them that they will not be abandoned in their quest to be important contributors to advancing their country,” stated Garo Armen. He also announced the EU’s commitment of 20M euros to build 2 more COAF SMART CENTERS in the southern region of Syunik in Armenia.

Major Gala sponsors included Jack and Zarig Youredjian of Los Angeles who made a \$1-million donation to open three COAF Child and Family Centers in Goris, Gyumri and Vanand, in addition to the family’s



COAF student Artur Simonyan, cellist Lyanna Ulikhanyan, violinist Davit Babayan, and COAF student Anna Rafayelyan



L to R - COAF Founder and Chairman Garo Armen, KTTV FOX11’s Good Day L.A. Anchor Araksya Karapetyan, COAF Senior Director of Development Haig Boyadjian

where a humanitarian crisis is currently in the making, due to Azerbaijan blocking the only road connecting Artsakh to Armenia and the rest of the world. He stressed the

scholarship fund which has so far provided over 350 students with access to higher education in Armenia. Another anonymous donation for \$1 million was made by long-

time COAF supporters. Garo Armen also once again made an annual \$1-million donation which covers most of the organization’s administrative costs.

JHM Charitable Foundation also made a \$250,000 donation in support of the COAF SMART Center being built in the Armavir region. The evening’s honorees Peter and Marilyn Sarkesian’s \$200,000 gift will go toward the Regional Health Center COAF is building in Dsegh (Lori) where a wing will be named in honor of them.

Platinum sponsors and donors include 4 anonymous donors at \$100,000 each, as well as Aleksandr Yesayan, Victor and Judy Zarougian, Michael Panosian, and Paul and Aline Griffin whose gift will go toward the Auditorium of the future COAF

SMART Center in Armavir. There were 8 Gold sponsors at \$50,000 and 6 Silver sponsors at \$25,000.

For more information visit [coaf.org](http://coaf.org).



Cellist Sevak Avanesyan

75TH ANNIVERSARY

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# Arts & Culture

## Erevan Choral Society Annual Christmas Concert

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The lights of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston in Cambridge were illuminating through the snowy Sunday evening on December 11, 2022, as the Erevan Choral Society presented their annual Christmas Holiday Concert, their first since the start of the pandemic.

The concert this year was dedicated to the 90th birthday anniversary of the founder of Erevan Choral Society,



The late Very Rev. Father Oshagan Minassian

the Very Rev. Father Oshagan Minassian. The last concert of the Choral Society had taken place in 2019.

The group presented a beautiful combination of traditional Armenian and Western Christmas Hymns and Carols, was also accompanied by a 25-piece orchestra and soloists, lyric soprano Rosy Anoush Svazlian and tenor Giovanni Formisano, who enchanted the audience with their superb vocal performances.

The concert also marked the 15th year of composer and director Konstantin Petrossian taking up the helm at the Choral Society. Recently Petrossian received the Honorary Title of Meritorious Artist of the Republic of Armenia for his many years of service in art and music.



The Erevan Choral Society concert on December 11

The students of Holy Trinity Armenian School also participated in the program with recitations of traditional Armenian Christmas poetry. Pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, noted in his opening remarks the importance of this event, and thanked the local community and the sponsors for their continuous support for this tradition in the cultural life of the Armenian Community in the Greater Boston area.



Mariam Karapetyan as Cleopatra.

## Mariam Karapetyan

### Prima Ballerina of Egyptian Ballet

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

CAIRO — During my trip to Egypt last November, I had a pleasant meeting with ballet dancer Mariam Karapetyan, who is the Prima Ballerina of the Cairo Opera Ballet Company. Born in Gyumri, Mariam graduated from the Yerevan State College of Dance in 2009. Since 2011, she has been performing leading roles in the Egyptian ballet (“Don Quixote,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Swan Lake,” “Carmina Burana,” “Spartacus,” “Zorba,” “Bolero,” “Walpurgis Night,” “Fountain of Bakhchisarai,” “Coppelia,” “Prince Igor,” etc.).

Mariam has worked with eminent ballet masters Abdel Moneim Kamel, Jose Perez, René de Cárdenas, Valentin Bartes and others, and performed in ballets of internationally known ballet masters Renato Greco, Thierry Malandain, Lorka Massine. Since 2004, she has taught character dance at the Cairo Contemporary Dance Center for a while. Mariam performed with the Cairo Opera Ballet Company in different countries; in 2017 she participated in the gala of the South African International Ballet with duets.

#### From Gyumri to Cairo. How did this come about?

In 1991, the year of my birth, our family moved from Gyumri to Russia, then we returned to Armenia, as my mother did not want my sister and me attend school in Russia. In Yerevan, my father, Arshaluys (Ashik) Karapetyan, went to work at a choreographic school as a designer and maker of dance shoes. We are extremely grateful to the late director of the school, the legendary Tereza Grigoryan, because thanks to her, our family got out of the crisis of the '90s, and it was she who accepted me to the ballet department. Everyone at school knew about my dad’s “Ashik’s workshop,” and they called me “Ashik’s boy” because I used to get into a lot of fights (laughs). I always fondly remember my late teacher, Lola Gyurjyan, with whom I studied until the seventh grade. Then I finished the class of Elvira Mnatsakanyan, one of our ballet stars. I fell in love with dance; after graduating from school I entered our opera theater, where I stayed for a while. Then I taught for two years at Maluntsyan Art School. During that time, I was depressed because I could not dance, so I started practicing with ballet teacher Hayk Avagyan. At the end of November 2010, I was going to apply for a job in the Tel Aviv ballet company for next January. I was with my sister in the Yerevan Grishko shop for dance cloths and shoes, when a large group of foreigners entered. It turned out they were dancers from Egypt. We did not know there is ballet in Egypt. My sister, being very sociable, asked one of the guys if they dance the Tanoura [the Sufi whirling dance]. The guy said, offended: “No, I am a ballet artist!” My sister proudly said that her sister is a ballerina. The Egyptian said they need girls and offered to apply for a job in their group. Three days later, one of the dancers, who is now my life partner and who had noticed me in the shop, accompanied me to my studio and filmed my dance. Then he showed the clip to their director, Erminia Kamel, who wanted to meet me. I danced for her in the gym of Ani Hotel, and she immediately offered me a contract for next January. But when we were leaving the hall, Erminia Kamel turned and asked: “Are you free now?”

see BALLET, page 13

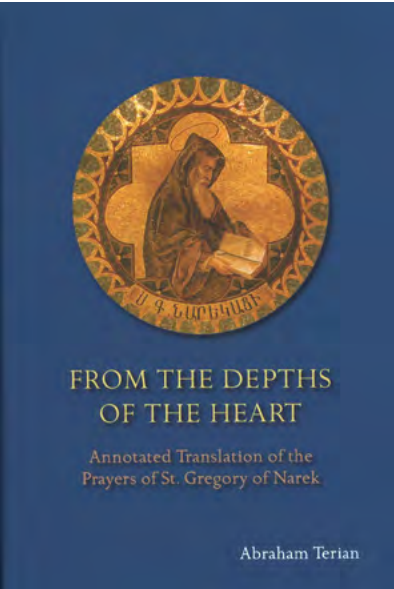
## NAASR Announces Winners of 2022 Dr. Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prizes

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in December announced the winners of the 2022 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes for Excellence in Armenian Studies: Dr. Ümit Kurt for *The Armenians of Aintab: The Economics of Genocide in an Ottoman Province* (Harvard University Press, 2021) and Dr. Khatchig Mouradian for *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915–1918* (Michigan State University Press, 2021); and Dr. Abraham Terian for his annotated translation of St. Gregory of Narek’s *Matean* Պղերգութեան (Մատենան Պղերգութեան) or *Book of Lamentation, From the Depths of the Heart* (Liturgical Press, 2021). The 2022 awards are for books with a 2021 publication date.

NAASR’s Aronian Book Prizes were established in 2014 by the late Dr. Aronian and Dr. Geoffrey Gibbs, to be awarded annually to outstanding scholarly works in the English language in the field of Armenian Studies and translations from Armenian into English.

NAASR’s Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian commented that “each year it is difficult to make choices for the Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes — there are many superb works coming out from across the wide range of what constitutes Armenian Studies. This is a good problem to have.”

Abraham Terian is the first repeat winner of the Aronian Prize, having received the 2017 award for translation for *The Festal Works of St. Gregory of Narek: Annotated Translation of the Odes, Litanies, and Encomia*. Terian is professor emeritus



From the Depths of the Heart by Dr. Abraham Terian

of Armenian theology and patristics at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, Armonk, New York. Both *The Festal Works of St. Gregory of Narek* and *From the Depths of the Heart: Annotated Translation of the Prayers of St. Gregory of Narek*, as well as other recent publications such as *Moralia et Ascetica Armeniaca: The Oft-Repeated Discourses* (Catholic University Press, 2022) *The Life of Mashtots’* see PRIZE, page 15





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Mariam Karapetyan: Prima Ballerina of Egyptian Ballet

BALLET, from page 12

Having received a positive answer, she asked: “Can you join us now?” I agreed, but I had no idea that this “now” was to happen in six days. It was most difficult for my parents. They sent the contract in two days, and my ticket on the third day. That’s how I ended up in Egypt.

## And are you happy?

Yes! There are no ideal places. But there is something that always keeps me going here. I am grateful to this country, to this theater for many things, especially for the repertoire: my experience here also had taught me many things as a person.

## What is special about today’s Egyptian ballet?

It is a difficult question. In Egypt, the school teaches by the Vaganova method, so the basis is Russian. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many ballet artists and choreographers came to work here. They elevated the ballet company, making it one of the leading ones for a period. Thanks to that era, many Egyptian dancers became stars and artistic directors in various European theaters. Our ballet method is a mixture of all ballet schools, which makes it interesting. When I first arrived, we practiced the Russian method on the first day, the Cuban method on the second day, and the French method on the third day. Personally, I am a fan of the French school. Many choreographers come from Europe, which provides opportunity to learn new things, develop and open your worldview. Our theater preserves the classic repertoire in its “pure” form, which, as we know, is gradually disappearing in the world as innovative interventions are being made everywhere. Of course, it should be developed, but the classical heritage should also be kept in its native form.

## Which version of “The Nutcracker” do you present, the one by Petipa-Ivanov?

Basically, yes, but some scenes are from [Rudolf] Nureyev’s production. The third and fourth acts of “Swan Lake” are unchanged, as always. “La Bayadere” was staged with a modern approach, but the shadow scene has not been touched. So, the classical remains the basis on which we rely and being developed. We have a lack of modern, new classical contemporary performances, which I am not so fond of, being mostly into classical dance, but it is definitely necessary to have too.

## Have you counted how many plays you have participated in?

I was a soloist dancer, now I am the official prima ballerina. My first big performance as a principal soloist was in the ballet “Osiris,” where I acted as Isis from ancient Egyptian mythology, directed by Abdel Moneim Kamel. The music, in the impressionist style, was very hard for the ears, people usually left in the middle because they got a headache. It was also hard for the dancers and orchestra, but the work itself was interesting. I danced Giselle, Gamzatti in “La Bayadere,” Gulnara in “Corsair,” Masha/Clara in “The Nutcracker,” Juliet in “Romeo and Juliet,” Manuela in “Carmen Suites.”

## Well, why not “Carmen?”

“Carmen” was staged when I was not prima. It is not in my nature to ask - I am a proud native of Gyumri - that is why I was satisfied with the role of gypsy Manuela. At the end of the first season, Jose Perez, the choreographer of “Carmen Suites,” staged

“Cleopatra.” When I was offered the role of Cleopatra, I was very happy. Well, who wouldn’t want to dance the role of a legendary queen? Later Erminia Kamel added some scenes, making the production even more luxurious, like Cleopatra’s entry into Rome on a huge sphinx statue, in gilded dresses, as well as the scene of death, when she falls into the arms of the girls, they lift

gan to learn and speak Russian. The main language of communication is English, although I also know a little Arabic.

## Have other Armenians worked at the ballet company of Cairo Opera Theater?

My teacher Hayk Avagyan, a very talented person, was invited to work as a tutor for a year. In the 1970s, Vilen Galstyan staged

tor of the “Sardarabad” dance group of the Houssaper Armenian Cultural Association in Cairo. When I was offered that position, I said that I am not a folk dancer, I cannot teach children Armenian dances, but they hired me anyway. Naturally, the dances I stage are different. Being a classical music fan, I use the works of great Armenian composers. Despite the difficulties, I like



Mariam Karapetyan as Julietta.

her up and place her on a golden throne, after which the golden color cloth descends on the stage. It was very beautiful and impressive.

## Is your Egyptian partner also your stage partner?

No. Dancing together with your life partner is difficult, there are many conflicts. It seems that you should feel each other, especially in acting scenes, and cooperate better, but couples, working in the theater, refuse dancing together. If someone who is not so close to you does something wrong, you say it more nicely: you know, it is not convenient like this, but with your life partner you want everything to be perfect, you are more demanding towards him or her. With my boyfriend I danced only once, in “Dances qu’on croises,” where I had two roles, and I messed up the order during the rehearsal. My friend started yelling at me, and the poor tutor stood and watched our quarreling. When we calmed down, she said: “Is it over, can we continue now?” (laughs).

## In what language do you communicate in the theater?

My first ballet tutor, Alla Georgievna Shevelyova, a legendary person, now deceased, whom I will always be grateful for her contribution in my artistic development, was Ukrainian. By the way, Alla Georgievna was Victor Smirnov-Golovanov’s assistant in the “Masquerade” ballet staged in Yerevan. Since most of the dancers and tutors were Ukrainians and Russians, a significant part of the Egyptian dancers be-

Aram Khachaturyan’s “Gayane” here, with famous Egyptian-Armenian ballerina Sonia Sarkees in the main role. And in 2004, excerpts from “Gayane” were staged here. Famous Belarusian ballet master Elizarov also staged Khachaturyan’s “Spartak” in Cairo, which we still have in our repertoire; I acted there first as a courtesan and then as Phrygia. Many years ago, Mark Mnatsakanyan staged “Lorciana” in Cairo, which is still performed every two years. It is a popular performance, always with full halls.

## Do you have any connection with the cultural community of Cairo Armenian community?

Since 2014 I have been the artistic direc-

working in our Armenian club, that way I feel close to Armenian culture and Armenia. And if at least one Armenian child returns to his roots thanks to dancing, it will make me very proud.

## We have not seen you on stage in Yerevan yet.

I would very much like it myself. And since I am the prima ballerina of the Egyptian State Theater, I would like my performance in Armenia to be organized at the high level of our countries. I think what I said does not sound arrogant. It will be a great honor for me somehow to bring the cultures of the two countries closer together. To be a leading dancer in a foreign country makes me proud as an Armenian.

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## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Books

## Book to Celebrate Charlie Hachadourian's '(H)earth'

By **Marineh Khachadour**

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

Born in 1954 in the Bronx New York, Charlie G. Hachadourian lived and created art in the United States and in Armenia for most of his adult life.

"His every visit to Armenia, as to any other place in the world, was a creative and highly personal 'pilgrimage,' stemming from the urge to seek and find the truth in life and in art." (L. Sargsian, 2021.)

"I dig holes and move earth," Hachadourian said half-jokingly whenever asked about his art.

A humble, approachable, unpretentious human being with an unparalleled sharpness of mind Charlie lived and breathed art in his lifelong quest for truth and knowing.

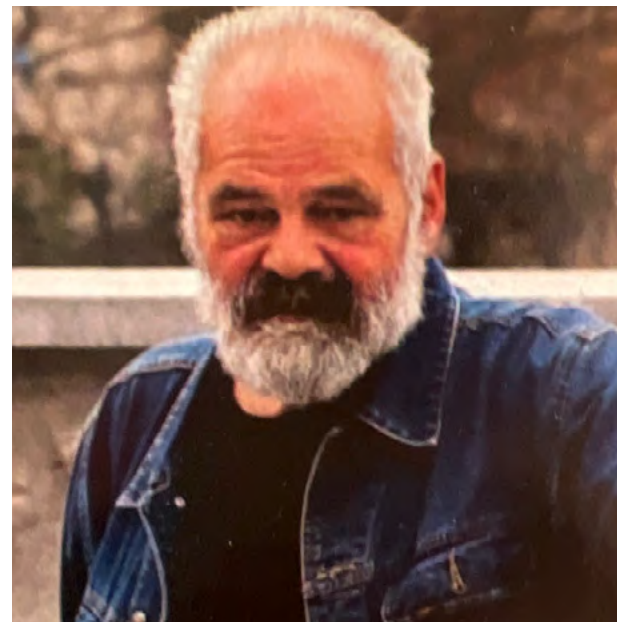
His most recent work, "Topographies," constitutes a series of inverted vessels, reliquaries that transport sacred

in Armenia in 1990, unrelated adults and children became participants engrossed in conversations related or not related to art, faces aglow in the warmth of a fire or the sun, spirits anointed with the aroma of burning wood, earthy flavors of herbs, a misty breeze on a balmy evening. In places far away from their origins, strangers gathered around a "hearth" that transgresses culture, language, ethnicity, age, and rekindles hearts and spirits with the grace of humanity.

Hachadourian's art, whether creative or re-creative, humbly centers "displaced" human souls, reminds us of the eternal coexistence of the good and the evil, dark and light, of our connection to the earth and the divine.

It is the "hearth" of humanity.

An old soul who carried within him centuries-old wisdom, Charlie had his finger on the pulse of the young and the contemporary. He took pride in showing his sculp-



Charlie Hachadourian

Charlie devoted a significant part of his professional life to the cultivation and propagation of modern Armenian art in the years immediately following the collapse of the USSR.

As a curator of modern art, Hachadourian had an unparalleled eye for recognizing, identifying, and defining an artist's work even to the artist. "With a single glance he could explain the intent, the essence, and the importance of the artwork in ways very few professionals can," said artist Sahak Poghosyan in a radio interview in 2022.

As the Soviet Union collapsed, artists in the newly freed and independent Armenia strove to find their way to the wide-open free world. Hachadourian, in collaboration with the Armenian avant-garde artists, organized and presented to the local and expat community of Yerevan the very first modern art exhibit at the American University of Armenia in 1993. The 11 artists who took part in the "Beyond Idiom" exhibit spoke the language of modern art in their own lexicon.

As Hachadourian explained in 1993: "It was not until many studios were visited and even more works were seen that I began to notice and appreciate the pattern of ethno-centricity, the common thread of a personal alphabet, the individual artist engaged in molding, and restructuring what has now become for him a point of departure, an opportunity to influence and to be influenced, to take active part in an ongoing, ever growing arts exchange... creating their own cultural amalgam, not a borrowed world but a timely foray completely indigenous to Armenia."

He shared his skills, knowledge, beliefs, and wisdom generously with everyone in his professional and personal circles through the exhibitions he curated, catalogues he published, and conversations and interviews he facilitated. The Charlie Khachadourian Gallery, symbolically located adjacent to the Natural History Museum of Armenia, became the first commercial art establishment for local avantgarde artists in Yerevan in the early 1990s. The gallery operated successfully until 1996. With individual and group exhibits and shows the Charlie Khachadourian Gallery became a destination for Yerevan's local arts community and for tourists.

Progressive in his outlook both in life and in art, Hachadourian curated the first ever in the history of Armenian art an all-female group show. The exhibit showcased not only visual artists but composers, writers, and textile artists as well.

His life on the earthly realm expired on November 4, 2022. His long-term deteriorating health eventually got the best of Charlie Hachadourian leaving many projects and dreams unrealized. Charlie will embark on one last pilgrimage this summer to his final resting place in Lake Sevan, Armenia.

His family, friends, and colleagues will honor Hachadourian's memory through a publication of a photobook. A GoFundMe has been created to raise the necessary \$10,000 toward the publication (<https://gofund.me/20b04310>). The family will donate copies of the book to arts libraries at teaching institutions in the US and Armenia. This monograph is critical in bringing attention to Charlie's ground-breaking artwork and socially conscious work in building a global Armenian arts community.

Currently titled "Charlie Hachadourian: (H)earth" the book will be in four-colors, 60-80 pages with dozens of photos. It will include interviews with Charlie, curatorial statements, essays about his work, his biography and photos and descriptions of his projects and artwork spanning his lifetime.



Charlie's "Earth Soul" as part of the Shushi Art Project,

soil. Soil, to him, was more than dead matter; it was a living, breathing entity that holds memories and carries epigenetic code.

"Charlie dug small and large holes in the ground in places of personal as well as historical significance. He poured various types of adhesives into the holes, like gypsum, wax and other materials, which would then adhere to the dirt and form a solid mass. This mass would then be excavated out of the ground and transported elsewhere to be displayed," said photographer and artist Ara Oshagan about him in 2022.

Hachadourian invented not only a novel technique in using earth as material for making art. He developed a truly unique approach which explored the depths of an artist's relationship to site, location, space, and time.

"His later works in particular involved the extraction of earthen linguistic space--literally, earth rendered in animistic, architectonic representation: site specifics maintained, but taken out of context and moved elsewhere which made visible what was usually invisible to most, revealing a base and fundamental human indigeness—a deeper codex and coding." (A. Mgrdichian, 2022)

In many of his performative projects, Charlie focused on creating community through a shared experience such as the breaking of bread around a table in a gallery setting, building a *tonir* (an underground clay oven) in which a traditional lavash bread was baked.

During every one of his performances, including his own wedding ceremony on the peninsula of Lake Sevan



A sculpture by Charlie Hachadourian

tures in college and university campus galleries and enjoyed the discourse his work created among his young colleagues.

Never expecting praise or recognition for his own work,





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Street Artists in Armenia and Russia Create Graffiti to Call Attention to Artsakh Blockade

By Lilit Ovsepyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Street artists from Armenia and Russia have created graffiti and stickers with the symbol of Artsakh, the monument We Are Our Mountains, accompanied by the slogan Free Artsakh. The purpose of the action is to draw public attention to the blockade of Artsakh by Azerbaijan and the need to open a humanitarian air corridor. Cities such as Yerevan, Dilijan, Vanadzor, Krasnodar joined the initiative, which began the week of December 19. The designs are by the street art artist GaReggin (see his Instagram page, [https://www.instagram.com/gareggin\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/gareggin_/)).

Since December 12, the Stepanakert-Goris highway, which is the only route linking Artsakh with Armenia, has been completely closed by a group of several hundred Azerbaijani citizens who call themselves environmental activists. As a result, 120,000 residents of Artsakh, including 30,000 children, found themselves under a blockade. 1,100 citizens, including 270 minors, are deprived of the opportunity to return to their homes. Elective surgeries were suspended in medical institutions. The entire population of Artsakh is in a state of a humanitarian crisis, having lost the supply of food, medicine and fuel.

The artists call on the world art community not to be silent and share the #FreeArtsakh slogan in order to draw attention to the situation and stop the blockade of Artsakh.



In Dilijan



In Yerevan



In Yerevan



In Krasnodar, Russia



In Yerevan



In Vanadzor, Armenia

## NAASR Announces Winners of 2022 Dr. Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prizes

PRIZE, from page 12

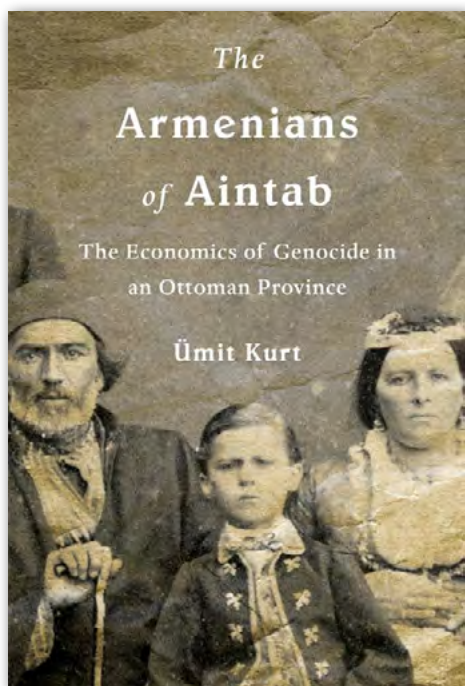
by his *Disciple Koriwn* (Oxford University Press, 2022) are part of Terian's extraordinary continued scholarly productivity in his "retirement."

Reached by email, Terian modestly replied, "Thank you for the unexpected award, especially to a previous recipient of Dr. Sona Aronian book prize for translation from Armenian into English. Were it not for the inspiring text by St. Gregory of Narek my translation would have been insignificant."

Ümit Kurt is assistant professor in the School of Humanities, University of Newcastle, New South Wales. Kurt, born and raised in Aintab (today Gaziantep, Turkey), was astonished to learn that his hometown once had a large and active Armenian community. In *The Armenians of Aintab*, Kurt explores the Armenian dispossession that produced the homogeneously Turkish city in which he grew up. In particular, he examines the population that gained from ethnic cleansing. Those who benefited most — provincial elites, wealthy landowners, state officials, and merchants who accumulated Armenian capital — in turn financed the nationalist movement that brought the modern Turkish republic into being. The economic elite of Aintab was thus reconstituted along both ethnic and political lines.

Via email, Kurt reflected that "as a historian and perhaps even a narrator, it is very difficult to separate my research topic from my personal history, especially when I am working on the dark annals of my own

country's history. I am sometimes a passive agent and sometimes active. It starts with my upbringing and continues in my education and, in fact, is with me, my whole life. At some point, 'your' people's history became part and parcel of 'my own history.'" He continued, "I did not own your people's

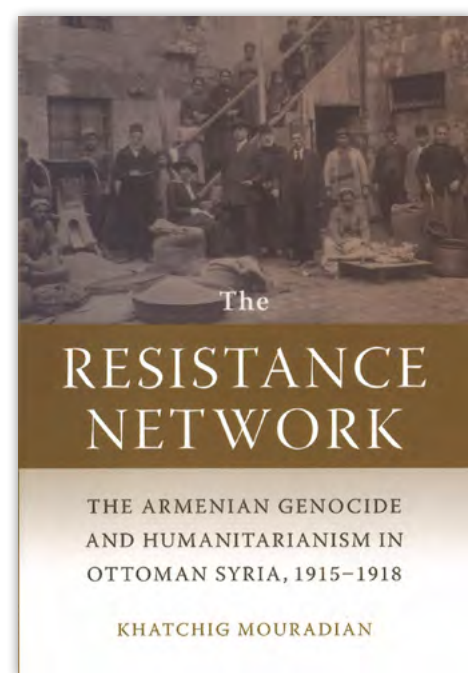


history; on the contrary, it came to own me. *The Armenians of Aintab* is an outcome of such a long journey. This award is so meaningful and extremely important to me in terms of showcasing the truth and honesty of my work. And I am so happy that it has been confirmed and crowned by such

a special prize. My only wish and hope is that my work will open new avenues and paths for further research and researchers."

Khatchig Mouradian is the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist at the Library of Congress and a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University. *The Resistance Network* is the history of an underground network of humanitarians, missionaries, and diplomats in Ottoman Syria who helped save the lives of thousands during the Armenian Genocide. Mouradian's work challenges depictions of Armenians as passive victims of violence and subjects of humanitarianism, demonstrating the key role they played in organizing a humanitarian resistance against the destruction of their people. He ultimately argues that, despite the violent and systematic mechanisms of control and destruction in the cities, concentration camps, and massacre sites in this region, the genocide of the Armenians did not progress unhindered — unarmed resistance proved an important factor in saving countless lives.

Responding to the news of the prize, Mouradian connected the history he explored in the book with the current moment. "In these challenging times for the Armenian nation, I derive strength and hope from the resistance network. These men, women and, yes, children, demonstrated that resistance is possible even in the darkest moments of a nation's history." He added, "all I did was reconstruct their stories and amplify their voices. It is they



who deserve the recognition. Their gift to me — and, hopefully, us — is the realization that if they could do it then, we can do it now. It's an honor to share this prize with my colleague, the indefatigable Ümit Kurt. This prize is also testament to Taner Akçam's ongoing impact on a number of fields not just through his own work, but that of his PhD students. Thank you, NAASR, for this award."

Authors or publishers wishing to submit books for consideration for future Aronian Prizes may contact NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian at [marc@naasr.org](mailto:marc@naasr.org).





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



## Chocolate Walnut-Raisin Baklava with California Raisins

FRESNO – California Raisins are made for healthy eating, cooking, and snacking. Dried in the warm California sunshine, they come by their sweetness naturally. This esteemed fruit offers benefits that may help to maintain a healthy lifestyle. On approximately 200,000 acres, the 2,000 California raisin growers produce 100 percent of the U.S. raisins, totaling approximately 300,000 tons annually in an area within a 60 mile radius of Fresno – known as the central San Joaquin Valley. Two-thirds of the U.S. raisin production is consumed in the U.S. and Canada, while one-third is exported to nearly 50 countries with Japan and the United Kingdom being the top two export markets.

According to the Friends of the Fresno Fair Armenian Exhibit, “Armenians were among the first settlers in Fresno County to enter the agriculture industry in significant numbers. When they first began arriving in the early 1880s, Fresno County was a relatively small, rural community, having a population of around 9,400. Grapevines were among the first crops planted, as raisins were becoming the predominant crop of that time. Raisin production increased significantly from the late 1880s to the 1920s, creating a series of rather a dramatic boom and bust cycles. Armenians also farmed melons, figs, peaches, and various nuts, quickly becoming some of the

earliest pioneers in the agriculture industry. By 1894, Armenians owned approximately 200 acres of farmland; by 1904 they were farming over 10,000 acres.”

Natural (sun-dried) seedless raisins include the Thompson seedless and other newer cultivars such as Selma Pete, Fiesta and DOVine. California Golden Seedless and California Dipped Seedless raisins are mechanically dried and processed. Other raisin varietal types include Zante Currant, Muscat, Monnuka, Sultana, and other Seedless. Raisins may be further processed into Raisin Paste and Raisin Juice Concentrate. Once dried, the raisins are brought from the vineyards, stored in wooden bins, and processed as needed by having their stems and capstems removed, then sorted by size, cleaned and washed in water to ensure a wholesome, safe final product.

Dried fruits have been grown and dried from fresh fruits for thousands of years. Originally used in place of fresh fruits when fresh was out-of-season, dried fruits were actively traded to those countries where growing and drying conditions made these products a rare and desired commodity, especially in northern Europe. Grapes have always been at the top of these fruits most suitable for drying, and raisins continue as the number one dried fruit today. All natural, no sugar-added dried fruits, such as California Raisins, have been proven to have the same nutrient value as fresh fruits as only the water is taken out in the drying process. California Raisins are gluten free and can be consumed by people who do not tolerate gluten. Gluten is a protein substance found in abundance in wheat flour and less abundantly in barley and oat flours. It is not found in raisins. In fact, raisins contain very few proteins of any kind.

Baklava is a layered phyllo pastry filled with chopped nuts, and sweetened with syrup or honey. Baklava of some form is made in many countries today. The origins of baklava are hazy, to say the least – a good handful of nations lay claim to the dessert we know today as far out as central Asia. It is generally accepted that the first form of baklava came from the Assyrian empire, around 800 BC, where layers of bread dough were stretched thinly and baked with chopped nuts and <<https://www.greatbritishchefs.com/ingredients/honey-recipes>> honey for special occasions.

In Armenian cuisine, pakhlava (Armenian: Փախլավա) is often spiced with cinnamon and cloves, and uses 40 sheets of dough to align with the 40 days of Lent. Many Armenians insist that the word itself reveals its Armenian origins as the word appears to be related to the Armenian word for bahk (Lent) and halvah (sweet). Greek-style baklava is supposed to be made with 33 dough layers, referring to the years of Christ’s life. While the Greek version uses honey syrup, Armenians use a spice-infused sugar syrup to sweeten their recipes.

In Lebanon, baklava is made of phyllo dough sheets filled with nuts (pistachios, walnut, cashews, pine nuts, almonds) and steeped in ‘Atir’ (ka-tr) syrup made of orange blossom water and rose water, sugar and water. It is cut into a variety of triangular rectangular, diamond or square shapes. The city of Tripoli in Lebanon is famous for its baklava products. In the Balkans, it is one of the most popular desserts; though, it is also a dessert made on special occasions (by Muslims, mostly during the holy month of Ramadan and Eid El-Fitr) and by Christians during Easter and Christmas.

Baklava is the perfect make-ahead dessert because it’s even better served the next day. This recipe for Chocolate Walnut-Raisin Baklava from California Raisins demonstrates a new way to add extra flavor and flair to this most iconic Middle Eastern dessert.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

### INGREDIENTS:

#### Simple Syrup:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2/8 teaspoon ground cloves

#### Filling:

- 2 cups halved walnuts
- 1 cup (6 ounces) bittersweet or semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 cup California raisins
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 lightly beaten egg
- 11 sheets (16 x 24-inch) frozen phyllo dough (about 1/2 pound), thawed according to package directions
- 3/4 cup melted, unsalted butter
- Lightly whipped cream, for garnish, optional
- Makes 24 pieces.

### PREPARATION:

#### Syrup:

In a small, heavy saucepan, bring all ingredients to a boil, stirring until the sugars dissolve. Continue boiling the mixture for 1 minute, brushing the sides of the pan frequently with a wet pastry brush to keep the sugar from crystallizing. Remove the pan from the heat and cool the syrup completely. Cover and store at room temperature until ready to use.

#### Filling:

In a food processor, pulse the walnuts, chocolate pieces, raisins, sugar and cinnamon until coarsely chopped. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl; mix in the egg. Set aside.

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°F. Lightly butter a 13 x 9 x 2-inch metal baking pan.

Place 1 phyllo sheet on work surface. Keep remainder covered with plastic and a damp towel to prevent drying. Brush the top of the phyllo sheet with butter. Top with a second phyllo sheet; brush with butter. Place sheets, buttered side up and lengthwise, in prepared pan, covering bottom, ends and sides of the pan. Brush another phyllo sheet with butter. Fold phyllo sheet in half, forming an 8 x 12-inch rectangle; brush the top with butter.

Repeat the buttering and folding with 2 more phyllo sheets. Stack the 3 folded phyllo sheets in bottom of pan, buttered side up. Sprinkle half of the filling over the phyllo. Butter another phyllo sheet, fold in half, butter the top and place on top of the filling. Sprinkle remaining filling over the phyllo. Repeat the buttering and folding with 3 more phyllo sheets. Stack on top of filling. Butter the last 2 phyllo sheets. Stack lengthwise in pan, tucking the sides and ends of the top and bottom sheets to enclose the filling completely. Carefully cut through the top layers of phyllo (do not cut through filling) 4 x 6 to mark 24 2-inch squares. Pour any remaining butter over top.

Place the baklava dish on the middle rack of your preheated oven. Bake until top is golden brown, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and immediately spoon simple syrup over baklava. It will sizzle and crisp up the layers even more.

Cool baklava completely; cover and let it stand at room temperature overnight. When ready to serve, cut and drizzle lightly with whipped cream over the top, if desired.

Enjoy this recipe at: <https://californiaraisins.ca/recipes/chocolate-walnut-raisin-baklava/>

Raisin Administrative Committee  
2445 Capitol Street, Suite 200  
Fresno, CA 93721-2236  
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Fax: (559) 225-0652  
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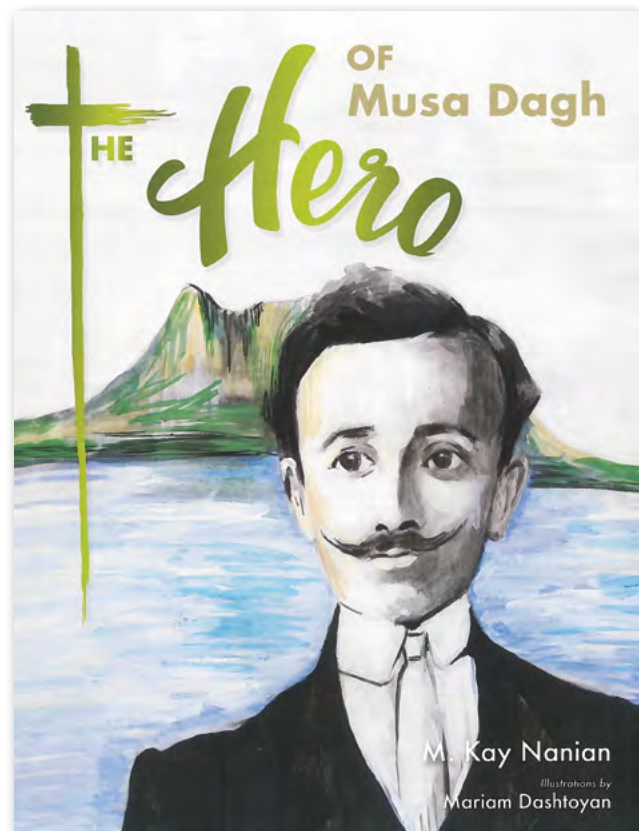
## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Children's Book Tells the Story Of Musa Dagh Resistance

PARAMUS, N.J. — Most Armenians are familiar with Franz Werfel's book, *The 40 Days of Musa Dagh*, detailing the true story of six villages that resisted the Turkish army on the Mountain of Moses (Musa

*The Hero of Musa Dagh* highlights the efforts of Badveli (Reverend) Dikran Antreassian, who organized the villagers to fight the Turks with limited supplies and weapons. After 53 days, the villagers were rescued by a French warship and taken to Port Said, Egypt. The story is told by former Judge, M. Kay Nanian, and illustrated by Mariam Dashtoyan, an art and theater student in Yerevan, Armenia.

Werfel's book, published in 1933 in Austria, served as the inspiration for the Warsaw Ghetto revolt in 1943 by the Jews against their Nazi captors. The book was initially written in German and was banned by Adolf Hitler. The following year, it was published in Hebrew and had a profound impact on the Jews in European ghettos. The book was later made into a movie in 1982 and was incorporated into the second half of the movie, *The*



Dagh). Now, an illustrated children's book has been published by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), to reach a younger audience of Armenians.

Promise in 2016.

The children's book is available for \$10 plus S & H at the AMAA website: <https://amaa.org/featuredbooks/>

## New Tekeyan Armenian Cultural Website Unveiled in Yerevan

By Christine Melkonyan

YEREVAN — The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Armenia unveiled its new website, [www.armtmm.com](http://www.armtmm.com), in Yerevan at the Tekeyan Cultural Center on December 16, 2022. The new platform aims at popularizing artists of Armenian origin both in the homeland and abroad. It presents Armenian culture and famous Armenian authors and their creations.

The website has a section called Cultural Exhibition Hall, which includes the works

portunity of becoming familiar with family histories, providing explanations, stories, excerpts, documents and sources. It is even possible to apply for a copy of your family crest, in different formats.

News will also be given an important place on the website, with daily updates covering events and developments of interest to the public both from Armenia and beyond its borders.

At the presentation of the platform were present members of the TCA of Armenia, guests, and collaborators – 31 authors and creators of culture.

Dr. Rouben Mirzakhanyan, the president of the TCA of Armenia, thanked the artists for their cooperation, and assured the audience that the TCA has set itself the task of multiplying its number of partners within one year and presenting Armenian culture to the world with the new interpretations of contemporary artists. Mirzakhanyan also emphasized the journalistic role of the website,

which presents not only local news, but also information from a number of Armenian-language and foreign language newspapers of the Armenian diaspora.

"In the near future, other services will be available on the website, including a genetic passport, in which the results of genetic research are presented in various manners.



Dr. Rouben Mirzakhanyan with an image from the new website in the background

of contemporary folk artists of the Republic of Armenia whose creations adorn world famous exhibition halls and museums. Visitors from any part of the world can view paintings, jewelry, sculptress, musical instruments, and Armenian national costumes. In addition, there is a genealogy service available which provides the op-

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### MASSACHUSETTS

**JANUARY 9 — St. James Monthly dinner meeting . Monday 6:15 Mezza , 7p.m. Dinner, Losh Kebab and Kheyma. Dinner \$20 per person. No speaker this night, just social time. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St. Watertown. New members welcome. For more information contact chairman Robert Berberian 339-293-2514**

**JANUARY 19 — Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter invites those interested in cultural activities to a post-holiday open house to discuss future plans. Thurs., 7:30 p.m. Baika Building, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Light refreshments offered.**

**JANUARY 28 — Armenian Genocide Remembrance interviews. High school students throughout the greater Boston area will conduct interviews to collect oral histories concerning the Armenian Genocide and the way in which history is passed on from generation to generation. Anyone with a connection to this important history is welcome to join us to be interviewed. Organized by Jenny Staysniak, a history teacher at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School and a member of the Teacher Advisory Board for Facing History and Ourselves. Interviews to take place 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. With questions, write to [jennifer\\_staysniak@lsrhs.net](mailto:jennifer_staysniak@lsrhs.net).**

**JANUARY 28 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter presents "An Evening of Comedy III featuring Harout Soghomonian" on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Phoenixia Restaurant in Glendale. Special guest appearance by Antic and guest appearance by Tsoghig Samuelian. Admission \$100. For reservations call or text 818.730.1100. No tickets will be sold at the door.**

**FEBRUARY 25 — The 128th Anniversary of the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the ARF. The Armenian Church at High Pointe, 1280 Boston Rd, Haverhill. Dinner-program. Narrated slide presentation by Joe Dagdigian: "Unseen Armenia: A brief glimpse of People, Places, and Projects." Keynote Speaker: Reverend Father Vart Gyozyan - "Current Life and Conditions in Armenia." Donation: Adults- \$35 and Students: \$20. Reservations Required. For Tickets: Call or email Armen at 978-265-9479, [armenjeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:armenjeknavorian@gmail.com) or Ara 617-803-2612, [ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com). Tables of 8 to 10 may be reserved in advance.**

### NEW JERSEY

**MAY 13 — Save the Date! The Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group will mark its 25th anniversary with a gala. Details to follow.**



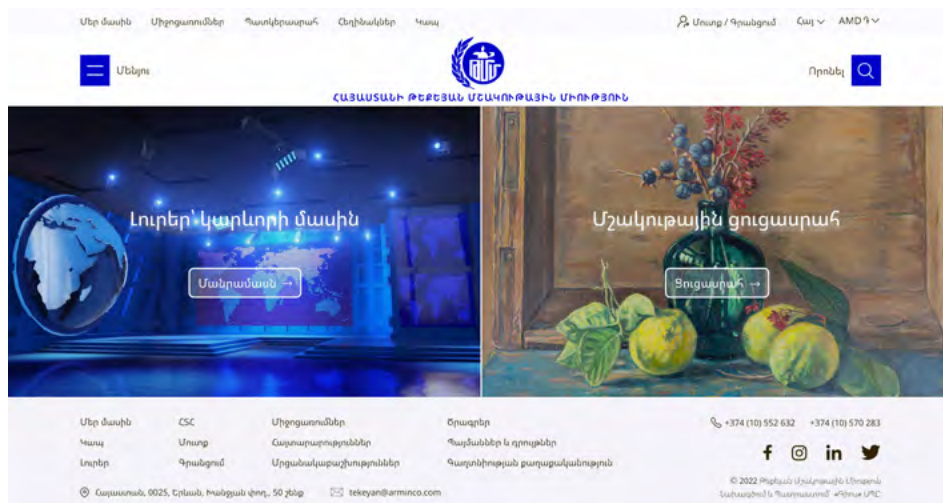
Paravon Mirzoyan

It is exceptional when a number of services such as those mentioned above and others to be implemented in the near future are

presented jointly. I assure you that this will be a pan-Armenian cultural platform," added Mirzakhanyan.

People's Artist of Armenia Paravon Mirzoyan expressed gratitude for such an initiative on behalf of the artists represented on the platform. "We should be grateful to the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Armenia, which continues its cultural preservation activities to show the world who we are. The Association is one of those structures that brings honor to our people," added Mirzoyan.

To see more details about the website via an English-language video at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju-GlOxgnMFk>



An image from the new website



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SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

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ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
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## COMMENTARY

# EDITORIAL

## Artsakh Is Falling While the World Shrugs



By Edmond Y.  
Azadian

It has been almost a month since Artsakh's blockade by Azerbaijan in full view of the Russian peacekeeping forces. Yet, there is a general apathy in the world and even in the world Armenian community — shocking, as the destiny of 120,000 Armenians is on the line.

On December 31, the *Guardian* newspaper published a summary of worldwide problems by its correspondents around the world mentioning hotspots to be watched during the new year. They listed more than 100 conflicts to be concerned about; Artsakh's blockade was not among them. That demonstrates the priority of Artsakh on the global scale of crises and makes it understandable that the political world has much more pressing crises to tend to. Therefore it becomes exclusively our burden to watch and seek solutions for it, before Baku forces its own solution by depopulating Artsakh.

Armenians have seldom behaved with such nonchalance in view of a crisis. Have we collectively given up after witnessing so many continued tragedies which may have numbed our sense of responsibility?

The new state minister of Artsakh, Ruben Vardanyan, has stated that the people of Artsakh have three choices: join Azerbaijan, leave or fight. He concluded, "We have chosen to fight." This is easier said than done, since the imprisoned population of the enclave can hardly assume the burden of fighting alone as people in Armenia and the diaspora watch that struggle powerlessly.

As the political puzzle of the situation in and around Artsakh does not leave any political avenue to resolve the crisis, that leaves the option of unconventional venues.

To begin with, the source and the cause of this apathy is the chaotic political situation in Armenia and the disintegration of leadership and authority in the diaspora. Many pundits and analysts in Armenia ask what coherent policy does the government have to tackle the situation, but there have not been no convincing answers to this yet.

In such instances of national emergency, it behooves all forces to rally around the government to mitigate the situation, yet no such move is visible on Armenia's political scene. A fractious opposition behaves erratically, still claiming to have as its main agenda unseating Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan rather than pivoting its goals towards dealing with the impending disaster of Artsakh. On the other hand, the ruling party is firing off one wrong move after another, miscalculations which are shrinking its power-base rather than broadening it. Among those are the continued harassment of members of the previous administrations, through imprisonment or hauling them into courts, and undermining of the Armenian Church through tacit or overt means, while Russia and Georgia have been using their churches as political assets to bolster their unpopular regimes.

In short, the government of Armenia is not trying its best to pull out its sister enclave from its death spiral; instead it is still trying to pick off political enemies domestically.

Azerbaijan will continue to pressure the Armenians until it achieves one of its immediate goals, while not renouncing its future ones. At the press conference following the foreign ministers' meeting in Moscow on December 23, which Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan missed, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov reportedly declared that Lachin's corridor is open one way — if Artsakh's Armenians choose to leave for good.

By blockading Artsakh, Baku has openly placed its intentions on display: to wrest away the "Zangezur Corridor," meaning a whole swathe of southern Armenia. That is why one of the calls during the recent rally in Stepanakert was a reminder to Armenia not to give in, in order to bring relief to their pain. Short of achieving that goal, Azerbaijan will force its will on Armenia, by establishing a checkpoint on the Lachin Corridor, in collusion with Russia. Pashinyan was right when he stated recently that the peacekeepers no longer control the Lachin Corridor as they have surrendered that authority to the powers in Baku.

Despite Armenia's weak position, it was able to muster enough political will to threaten Moscow with the prospect of abandoning the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which, rather than being a defense structure, has become a sham and a liability for Armenia. It is not known yet how many points Yerevan can score with the West through that posture.

Armenia cannot pin its hopes on the standoff between Baku and Tehran, because that disagreement may prove to be temporary. Nor can Armenia rely on the appalling prospect of entertaining an Iranian military base in Syunik, which was rumored to be installed. That may prove to be disastrous in the end, as Turkey, Israel and Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia are openly plotting to bring down the regime in Iran.

The potential of regime change in Iran may further be fueled by the Biden administration which has given up on the nuclear deal, and particularly with the rise of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel, with his penchant for lobbying preemptive strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Early in December, we witnessed a debate at the United Nations Security Council. Politicians and analysts placed too much value on those debates, despite the fact that most of the speeches were generic, run-of-the-mill statements, advising Armenia and Azerbaijan to resolve their differences peacefully, completely disregarding the fact that the people of Artsakh were on the point of starvation because of the actions of Azerbaijan and have no time to wait until the dubious outcome of these negotiations.



On the other hand, it was a perilous but necessary warning to Russia that Yerevan may divorce itself from the CSTO. To continue along those lines, Armenia may halt hosting the Russian military base in Gyumri. For example, a "popular movement" similar to Azerbaijani environmentalists can blockade that base until the Russian peacekeepers make good on their commitments.

Similar actions can take place around the world, particularly where large Armenian communities reside. Human chains can block Azerbaijan's embassies to sensitize public opinion and activate the news media.

Already, some advocacy groups are encouraging their followers to call or write to their senators and representatives in the US. That move can be expanded to involve many more organizations until it makes an impact on the media and legislators.

There are many other ethnic or faith-based groups which have grievances against Turkey and Azerbaijan, such as the Greeks and the Kurds. Only a few weeks ago, the Turkish defense minister bragged openly that his country can hit Athens with missiles anytime it wants. We may enter into coalitions and organize rallies in major capitals of the world.

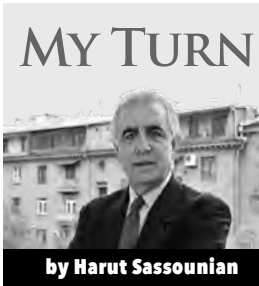
Azerbaijan and Turkey are way ahead of the Armenians in their lobbying activities and media connections. Our funding sources, benefactors and advocacy groups must be able to create the necessary resources and begin to make waves.

Before going too far and engaging others in our plight and fight, we need to break this chain of apathy which has paralyzed our forces.





COMMENTARY



MY TURN  
United Nations Security Council Internationalizes the Artsakh Issue

Once again Armenians heard supportive words from the international community; this time from the United Nations Security Council.

The discussion in the UN Security Council served to influence world public opinion and internationalize the Artsakh issue, thus pressuring Azerbaijan to allow 120,000 Artsakh Armenians to have access to food, medical aid, and travel to Armenia through the Lachin Corridor.

Here are excerpts from the 2-hour long speeches by all 15 UN Security Council members on December 20, 2022:

The first speaker was Miroslav Jenča, UN’s Assistant Secretary-General. He stated that “Armenia and Azerbaijan have provided widely differing accounts of the situation and accused each other of violating the November 9, 2020 tri-lateral statement.”

The Deputy Representative of France, Nathalie Estival-Broadhurst, made a powerful statement saying that “restrictions on the free movement through the Corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are unacceptable. The direct consequence of blocking the Lachin Corridor is the isolation of the NK population. It has humanitarian consequences that are getting worse every day. France calls for the unconditional restoration of traffic along the Corridor and of supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh, while respecting the rights of the populations residing there.... France also notes that, as the Republic of Azerbaijan has undertaken, the safety of the movement of people, vehicles and goods along the Lachin Corridor in both directions be guaranteed.”

Mohamed Issa Abushahab, the Representative of the United Arab Emirates, urged both sides “to resolve their differences through peaceful and diplomatic means.”

Ferit Hoxha, the Representative of Albania, noted “the importance of ensuring freedom and security of movement along the Corridor.”

Geng Shuang, the Representative of China, stated that “the disputes surrounding the Lachin Corridor should be resolved through dialog and consultation.”

Robert A. Wood, the Alternate Representative of the United States, strongly urged “the government of Azerbaijan and others responsible for the Corridor’s security to restore free movement, including for humanitarian and commercial use, as soon as possible.... Any attempt to cut off services essential to the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh is unacceptable.”

Anna M. Evstigneeva, the Deputy Representative of the Russian Federation, stated that “the Corridor ensures a link between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.” She admitted that “it is under the control of a Russian peacekeeping contingent, which remains a guarantor of stability in the region and is carrying out its objectives effectively.” She promised that a full transport Corridor will be restored “in the very near future.”

James Kariuki, the Deputy Representative of the United Kingdom, strongly urged “the immediate reopening of the Corridor. The Lachin Corridor is

the only means by which daily necessities can be delivered to the region. The closure of the Corridor for over a week raises the potential for severe humanitarian consequences, especially in the winter. We also note with concern the civilians who have been stranded by the closure and urge that their unimpeded return is urgently prioritized.”

Ronaldo Costa Filho, the Representative of Brazil, expressed his serious concern that “any obstruction jeopardizes the well-being of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

Jayne Jepkorir Toroitich, the Representative of Kenya, voiced concern about “the ongoing blockade along the Lachin Corridor.” She called on both sides “to de-escalate current tensions and cooperate in ensuring freedom and security of movement along the Corridor.”

Juan Gomez Robledo Verduzco, the Representative of Mexico, stated that his country “is following with concern the tensions surrounding the situation in the Lachin Corridor and the potential humanitarian implications of traffic blockages.”

Mona Juul, the Representative of Norway, stated that “the blockage of the Corridor has already had severe humanitarian implications. Medical supplies and medical evacuations have been interrupted. As any disruptions to the supply of essential goods and services harm the most vulnerable groups first. This can and must be avoided.”

Khalilah Hackman, the Representative of Ghana, emphasized “the need to prioritize the humanitarian interests of civilian populations. Any real or perceived blockage of the Lachin Corridor must be addressed as a matter of urgency to ensure the interrupted and safe movement of all persons.”

Martin Gallagher, the Deputy Representative of Ireland, warned that “without the free movement of people, goods, food and medical supplies through this vital Corridor, the people of Nagorno Karabakh will surely face a humanitarian crisis this winter. As a Council we must do everything we can to avoid this and prevent another man-made catastrophe emerging on our watch. Ireland therefore calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally restore freedom and security of movement along the Lachin Corridor.... Ireland supports a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the conflict, including on the long-term status of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

Edwige Koumby Missambo, the Representative of Gabon, expressed concern regarding “the closure of the Lachin Corridor, which could result in a humanitarian crisis. The right to move through the Corridor must be guaranteed.”

Ravindra Raguttahalli, the Deputy Representative of India, stated: “the reports regarding blockade of the Lachin Corridor indicate adverse implications on the supply of essential items such as food and medicine to Nagorno Karabakh. This is a matter of deep concern and has the potential to precipitate a humanitarian crisis.”

Mher Margaryan, the Representative of Armenia, warned that the blockade is “another demonstration of systematic violence used by the Azerbaijani authorities to subject the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to ethnic cleansing.” He urged the UN to apply “sanctions” against Azerbaijan.

The final speaker was Yashar T. Aliyev, the Representative of Azerbaijan. He repeated the usual lies of the government of Azerbaijan, denying that the Lachin Corridor is blocked.

Political Implications of Turkey’s ‘Gas Hub’

By Carlos Antaramian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

On October 14 of this year in Astana, Kazakhstan, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan surprisingly approved Russian President Vladimir Putin’s project to create a Turkish-Russian gas hub in his country. The proposed site is Thrace, in Turkey’s European region, where infrastructure for both gas storage and pipelines already exists. Although details on the costs, deadlines, scope,

and conditions for implementing the proposal have not been released, the project has already generated criticism and is widely perceived, especially by the United States, to constitute a threat to several countries. French president Macron, for example, said that the project “made no sense” (“L’Elysée estime que le ‘hub gazier’ proposé par la Russie en Turquie n’a ‘aucun sens’,” <https://francais.rt.com/international/101737-elysee-estime-que-hub-gazier-propose-russie-turquie-aucun-sens>).

On October 19, Vedant Patel, spokesperson for the US State Department, made a highly critical announcement, stating that “Turkey and other U.S. allies will not become a safe haven for illicit Russian assets or transactions,” adding that Washington is willing “to assist (Turkey) in its efforts to enhance its long-term energy security.”

Supplying energy is a critical and controversial issue in global politics, one that creates problems between producing and exporting countries, as we have seen recently in the case of Russian supplies of gas and oil to Europe, a commerce impacted by sanctions due to the war in the Ukraine, including measures to cut planned supplies, restrict gas sales, and place limits on sales of oil (as proposed recently by the G7 at US \$60/barrel), and destabilized by “shadowy” attacks on pipelines. It is clear that producers are fighting fiercely for market share and will exploit any opportunity to “gain” ground from their rivals. It is important to note that in June of this year the US, for the first time in its history, supplied more liquid natural gas (LNG) to Europe than its main competitor, Russia

through its pipelines, a feat that would have been unimaginable just two or three years ago (Dustin Meyer, “U.S. LNG Outpaces Russia for First Time Ever as EU Opens Another Door for Natural Gas,” American Petroleum Institute, at: <https://www.api.org/news-policy-and-issues/blog/2022/07/08/us-lng-outpaces-russia-for-first-time-ever>). However, that supply chain is still very costly since middlemen push up the price of the gas that leaves the US fourfold before it arrives in Europe, with an impact that has provoked complaints by European leaders, voiced, for example, by French president Emmanuel Macron (América Hernández, “Why cheap US gas costs a fortune in Europe,” at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/cheap-us-gas-cost-fortune-europe-russia-ukraine-energy/>). Gas supplies, moreover, cause problems between producers and exporters when pipelines pass through third countries, like Turkey.

Energy is Turkey’s Achilles’ heel, states William Hale. Its principal problem “is that it has limited domestic supplies of fossil fuels, and that other sources have not been fully developed, so it is heavily dependent on imports, which account for about 70 per cent of energy consumption” (William Hale, “Turkey’s energy dilemmas: changes and challenges,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 58, N° 3, 2022:453). There is very little oil there (barely enough to satisfy 5.75 percent of the nation’s needs) and only small reserves of hard coal. Turkey has lignite, but that fuel is highly contaminating. Virtually all natural gas is imported, see HUB, page 20

LETTERS

A Lovely Note of Thanks To the Editor

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We appreciate all that you do for the AMAA and the community at large!

Sincerely,

Zaven Khanjian  
Executive Director/CEO



# Political Implications of Turkey’s ‘Gas Hub’

HUB, from page 19  
though a field (Sakarya) discovered in the Black Sea could begin production in 2023. Today, Turkey has no nuclear energy, but two construction projects are underway to supply hydroelectric plants (Hale: 457). One result of this situation is that a large portion of the country’s commercial deficit is due to fuel imports (mainly coal, oil, and natural gas), so reducing their volume would go a long way toward mitigating one of its most persistent, serious economic problems.  
Over the past two decades, natural gas has become one of the most reliable source-

A LARGE PORTION OF [TURKEY’S] COMMERCIAL DEFICIT IS DUE TO FUEL IMPORTS (MAINLY COAL, OIL, AND NATURAL GAS), SO REDUCING THEIR VOLUME WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD MITIGATING ONE OF ITS MOST PERSISTENT, SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

es of imported fuel in Turkey. Ankara enjoys the enormous advantage of being a neighbor to three key gas-producing countries: Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan. Before 2001, Turkey’s only supplier was Russia, through the pipeline that entered Europe from the east (through Ukraine), but since then a pipeline was constructed that connects Tabriz with Ankara, allowing Turkey to access gas from Iran and Turkmenistan. Later, two pipelines were built from Russia, the “Blue Stream” (2003) that crosses the Black Sea from the east (read Ukraine) to avoid traversing Europe, and the “Turkstream” (2020) that crosses the Black Sea and extends to Kiyikoy, in the Turkish region of Thrace, and from there to Greece. Azerbaijan, meanwhile, has the Southern Gas Corridor that begins in the fields of Shah Deniz and reaches Italy through three sections: first, the South Caucasus Pipe-

line from Baku, passing through Georgia, to Erzurum, inaugurated in 2006; second, TANAP (Trans-Anatolia Pipeline) that stretches from Erzurum to Ankara and then to the Turkey-Greece border; and, third, TAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline), from the Turkey-Greece border across the Adriatic to southern Italy, where it connects to the Italian supply network. That project, conceived to reduce European dependence on Russian gas, was completed in 2020 with U.S. support.  
One consequence of the new pipelines is that Turkish imports of Russian gas, which accounted for 46 percent of the total in 2010, decreased to 34 percent in 2020, while imports from Azerbaijan and Iran increased by 24 and 11 percent, respectively. The remaining 31 percent is liquid natural gas introduced from Nigeria and Algeria that, due to recent technological developments and improved conditions in world markets, has dropped considerably in price to a point where it is competitive with the gas that arrives by pipeline. Existing pipelines do not use 100 percent of their capacity, but if Turkey becomes a “gas hub,” they could approach that figure. Moreover, Putin mentioned in the “Russian Energy Week” that Russia could build other pipeline systems that would convert Turkey into the hub that supplies gas to countries in Europe that require it (“Turkish hub should unite gas flows from Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan — expert” at: <https://tass.com/economy/1523797>).  
Today, Turkey operates as a transit state between producers and consumers. In reality, it is a budding “gas hub” that only requires enhanced infrastructure that would allow it to store and distribute enormous amounts of gas which it could sell to the highest bidder. Alternatively, it could provide Turkish companies, like BOTAS, with gas previously delivered to its internal market for re-sale or re-export. Turkey already receives gas from Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan and, through the last, from Turkmenistan. In the near future, this could allow it to accumulate enormous reserves that it could offer for sale to European nations.  
Many predictions hold that European gas

imports will increase exponentially in the coming years. In a related development, the European Parliament voted in favor, under certain circumstances, of considering natural gas a “sustainable” energy source, a move that could free up millions of Euros for investment. Even though the price of liquid natural gas has fallen to levels that sometimes make it competitive with pipeline gas, additional pipelines would improve efficiency, reduce sales costs, and allow Turkey to take on a crucial role as a transit country for flows of gas from Russia, Iran, the Caucasus and Central Asia. That, in turn, could allow it to play the “energy card” to obtain concessions from the European Union, similar to how it utilized the “migration card” to support its applica-

tion for admittance to the EU.  
But the US has no desire for Turkey to play such a role, much less for Russia to reap additional income through triangulated sales of its gas, for this would impact its economic interests and sales of its own gas. Recently, multimillion dollar investments have been made in Louisiana and Texas to construct plants for processing liquid gas for export to gas-thirsty markets in Europe and other parts of the world. Washington is worried over the potential transformation of Turkey into a “gas hub,” as that would undermine its vested interests in the energy sector. And, maybe, it might strengthen its ties with Azerbaijan to avoid Turkey’s influence and access to its immense reserves of hydrocarbons.



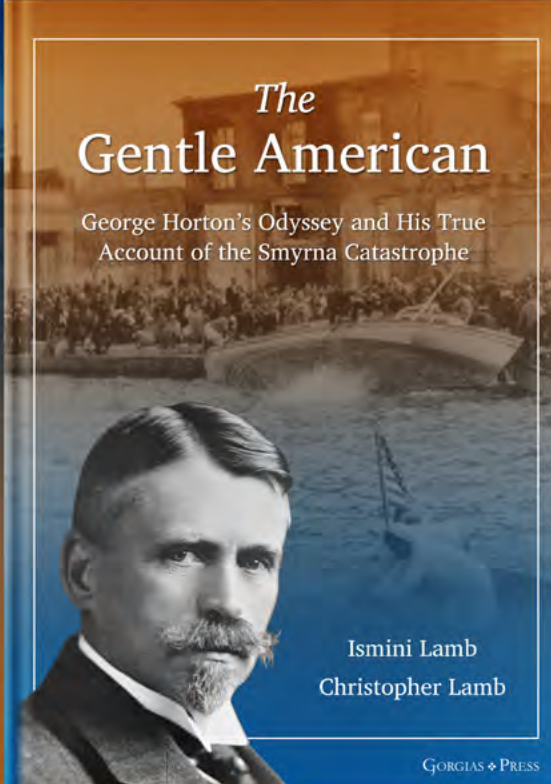
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Resolve to learn more in 2023 about the American role in the Asia Minor genocides before, during & after WWI.



*The Gentle American*  
George Horton's Odyssey and His True Account of the Smyrna Catastrophe  
Ismini Lamb  
Christopher Lamb  
GORGAS PRESS

How many lives can be saved? Never enough, Horton realized. As his ship backed away from Smyrna’s wharf, he could see the helpless crowd on the waterfront trapped between the sea and a raging inferno. He was not consoled by his shipload of escaping refugees or the many other Christian, Jewish, and Muslim lives he saved while American consul. His focus was on the people before him threatened with fire, rape, and massacre. He was determined to help them. It would not be easy. His superiors were blocking humanitarian aid and covering up atrocities with disinformation to win Turkish approval for American access to oil. They conspired to discredit Horton when he decried their duplicity. Undaunted, he pursued his cause until it went to the President and Congress for resolution. At stake was the outcome of WWI, the stability and liberality of the Middle East, and the likelihood of more genocide.

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Reveals how Horton saved Smyrna’s Armenians and knew the 1915 genocide “surpasses in deliberate and long-protracted horror and in extent anything that has hitherto happened in the history of the world.”