

# Karabakh Leader Warns of More ‘Azeri Provocations’ after Assassination of Three Police Officers

STEPANAKERT (Combined Sources) — Nagorno-Karabakh’s leadership on Monday, March 6, warned local residents to brace themselves for more Azerbaijani “provocations” following Sunday’s armed incident near Stepanakert that left five people dead.

“The vast majority of our people agree that we will not deviate from our right to self-determination and independence, and that means we are going to deal with various developments and situations soon,” Arayik



The three murdered Karabakh police officers

Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, told an emergency meeting with other officials in Stepanakert.

Three of the victims were Karabakh police officers. According to the authorities in Stepanakert, a car carrying them was ambushed by an Azerbaijani sabotage group that was then repelled by Karabakh soldiers deployed nearby.



The vehicle in which the police officers were riding, riddled with bullets

The Armenian side released a video of the shooting and its aftermath.

The Russian Defense Ministry confirmed on Monday that the Azerbaijani forces were the first to open fire at the Karabakh police vehicle and that two of them were killed in the ensuing firefight which it said was stopped by Russian peacekeepers stationed in Karabakh.

The Russian Foreign Ministry expressed “serious concern” at the incident but did not blame either party for it.

“We strongly urge the sides to show restraint and take steps to de-escalate

the situation,” said Maria Zakharova, the ministry spokeswoman.

Echoing a weekend statement by the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan condemned the shootings as an act of “terrorism” which is part of Baku’s efforts to drive the Karabakh Armenians out of their homeland.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov accused Armenia of continuing to resort to “provocations” in the conflict zone despite Azerbaijan’s “peace efforts.”

Speaking during the Stepanakert see ASSASSINATIONS, page 2

## German Leader Backs Karabakh’s Right To Self-Determination

By Astghik Bedevian

BERLIN (Azatutyun) — German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Thursday, March 2, advocated a peaceful resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict that would respect Nagorno-Karabakh residents’ right to self-determination.

“We are concerned about instability on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the worsening humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh,” Scholz said after talks with Armenia’s visiting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. “The status quo cannot continue and there needs to be a long-term solution to the benefit of people.”

“There needs to be a peaceful settlement in terms of



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz meets with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Berlin, March 2, 2023.

the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh citizens’ right to self-determination. These principles are equally applicable,” he told a joint news conference.

Peace plans jointly drafted by the United States, Russia and France prior to the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war upheld the Karabakh Armenians’ right to self-determination, which would be exercised through a referendum. Successive Armenian governments for decades championed that principle.

see SELF-DETERMINATION, page 4

## 92 Flights From Israeli Base Reveal Arms Exports to Azerbaijan

By Avi Scharaf and Oded Yaron

TEL AVIV (Haaretz) — An Azerbaijani cargo plane landed last Thursday at the Ovda Israeli air force base north of Eilat. After two



Azeri President Aliyev with Israeli Spike missiles and Hanit artillery (Credit: president.az)

hours on the ground, as usual, the old Ilyushin-76 airlifter took off, flew over central Israel, continued north over Turkey and then to the

east — returning to its home field in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

An investigation by Haaretz, based on publicly available aviation data, reveals that over the past seven years, 92 cargo flights flown by Azerbaijani Silk Way Airlines have landed at the Ovda airbase, the only airfield in Israel through which explosives may be flown into and out of the country.

Israel has had a strategic alliance with Azerbaijan for the past two decades, and Israel sells the large Shi’ite-majority country weapons worth billions of dollars

— and in return, Azerbaijan, per sources, supplies Israel with oil and access to Iran.

According to foreign media reports, Azerbaijan has allowed the Mossad to set up a forward branch to monitor what is happening in Iran, Azerbaijan’s neighbor to the south, and has even prepared an airfield intended to aid Israel in case it decides to attack Iranian nuclear sites. Reports from two years ago stated that the Mossad agents who stole the Iranian nuclear archive smuggled it to Israel via Azerbaijan. According to official reports from Azerbaijan, over the years Israel has sold it the most advanced weapons systems, including ballistic missiles, air defense and electronic warfare systems, kamikaze drones and more.

see ARMS, page 6

## Russia ‘Seriously Concerned’ about Escalation of Tensions in Karabakh

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) — Russia is seriously concerned about the escalation of tension in Nagorno-Karabakh and calls on the parties to show restraint, Spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova said in a statement on March 6.

“We express our serious concern about the escalation of tension in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Over the past few days, there have been repeated violations of the ceasefire regime. On March 5, an armed resulted in human casualties from both the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides,” Zakharova said, urging the parties to exercise restraint and take steps to de-escalate the situation.



Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova

see TENSIONS, page 5

### ARMENIA

Tricolor Waves over Anipemza Border Village near Ani



### MICHIGAN

Detroit Tekeyan Chapter Reaches Out to Local Youth



### GERMANY

Giving Nagorno-Karabakh a Voice Through Poetry







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Former Karabakh Official Calls out EU Rep for Incompetence

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Advisor to Nagorno-Karabakh State Minister, former State Minister Artak Beglaryan has slammed remarks from European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar, after three police officers were killed by the Azerbaijani military.

Klaar said the deadly incident “underscores the urgency of pushing forward with negotiations to achieve stability and fair peace.”

Beglaryan took to Twitter to express a growing mistrust and doubts about Klaar over the latter’s reactions to Azerbaijan’s crimes.

“He is either: Amateur diplomat, Under [Azerbaijan’s] brainwashing, Corrupt official, With deviated perceptions of European values, interests & human rights. All four options require changes,” Beglaryan said.

### US Senior Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations Travels to Armenia

YEREVAN (news.am) — US Senior Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations (SACN) Louis Bono is traveling to Yerevan on Tuesday, March 7, the US Embassy in Armenia announced.

“During his visit on March 7, SACN Bono will meet with Armenian government officials and others to discuss US support for negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan to reach a comprehensive peace agreement, including a long-term political settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

“In his capacity as Senior Advisor for Caucasus Negotiations, Mr. Bono works with regional leaders to advance the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan and to address Russia’s ongoing occupation of sovereign Georgian territory,” the embassy noted added

### Former POW Charged with Treason

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A former POW is suspected of spying for Azerbaijan after his release and subsequent service in the military, the prosecution announced on March 7.

The suspect, a major in the Armed Forces of Armenia, is one of the Armenian troops who were taken captive by Azerbaijani forces in July 2021 in Ishkhanasar, Syunik Province. The Armenian POW was then taken to Baku. In custody, he gave written consent to spy for Azerbaijan after his release, according to investigators.

He was released on September 7 of the same year. Months later he was assigned to a new post at a military base, where he served as the communal service chief.

The general prosecution said that during his service the suspect “being recruited by a foreign intelligence agency, conveyed classified information [state secrets] to the foreign intelligence agency, thus committing high treason...”

# Karabakh Leader Warns of More ‘Azeri Provocations’ after Assassinations

ASSASSINATIONS, from page 1

meeting, Harutyunyan warned that Baku could provoke more such violence in a bid to force the Karabakh Armenians into submission.

“We must keep fighting for a long time and there will be such situations during that struggle,” he said. “We need to be aware of that and take preventive steps.”

The Karabakh leader linked Sunday’s bloodshed to the March 1 meeting between Azerbaijani and Karabakh officials which was mediated by the commander of the Russian peacekeepers. He said during that meeting his representatives refused to discuss Karabakh’s “integration” into Azerbaijan.

In his words, the Azerbaijani side warned afterwards that if Stepanakert persists in opposing the restoration of Azerbaijani rule, Baku will not only continue to block Karabakh’s land link with Armenia but also take “tougher and more drastic steps.”

It was not clear whether the Russian peacekeepers are planning more talks between the two sides.

### Artsakh MFA Appeals to International Community

Artsakh’s Foreign Ministry called on the international community to take measures under international law to stop the terrorist and genocidal policy of Azerbaijan.

A preliminary analysis of the circumstances of the killing of police officers allows one to conclude the actions qualify as a war crime, the MFA said.

“The infiltration of the Azerbaijani sabotage group into the territory of Artsakh and the attack on Artsakh police officers is another flagrant violation of the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, which indicates that the Azerbaijani side is seeking to initiate an escalation of tension. Earlier, on 2 and on the night of 2 to 3 March, units of the Azerbaijani armed forces stationed in the occupied territories of the Askeran, Martakert and Martuni regions of the Republic of Artsakh also violated the ceasefire established by the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020,” the Ministry said.

It noted that these attacks were carried out immediately after the talks on unblocking the Lachin Corridor held between representatives of Artsakh and Azerbaijan on 1 March.

“Through its actions, Baku openly demonstrates its rejection of negotiations as a means of finding solutions to any issues,” the Ministry said.

“Against the background of the more than 80-day blockade of Artsakh, aimed at deliberately creating unbearable living conditions for its people, a serious escalation of the situation, resulting in casualties, once again demonstrates the true objectives of Azerbaijan and its intention to complete the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh. Apparent-

ly, the lack of adequate measures on the part of the international community aimed at stopping the internationally wrongful acts of Azerbaijan was perceived by the authorities of this country as a carte blanche to commit new atrocities,” the Foreign Ministry said.

“We once again call on the international community as a whole and the parties involved in the settlement of the Azerbai-

bakh. Moreover, the videos prove that there was nothing in the microbus except official documents and a service pistol.

The actions of the Azerbaijani forces cannot be described as anything other than terrorism. In parallel to blocking the Lachin corridor and creating a humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh for almost three months, Azerbaijan continues to terrorize the Armenians of Artsakh by creat-



Emergency session of the Karabakh leadership

jan-Karabakh conflict in particular to reconsider their approaches and take effective measures under international law to stop the terrorist and genocidal policy of Azerbaijan,” it said.

### Foreign Ministry of Armenia Asks for Fact-Finding Mission

Sending an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh becomes a vital necessity, Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The statement reads, in part:

The facts prove that this provocation was pre-planned and instructed by the highest leadership of Azerbaijan. After the ambush, Azerbaijan’s official bodies spread disinformation alleging that they received reports that weapons, ammunition and personnel are being transferred from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh and acted on these.

The official version of events put forward by Azerbaijan is absurd: they have not presented and cannot present any fact and justification supporting that version. This happens less than two weeks after the decision of the International Court of Justice that wholly rejected Azerbaijan’s absurd claims on the alleged laying of landmines by Armenia.

The video that Nagorno-Karabakh Police has proved that the Azerbaijani military attacked the “UAZ” microbus that carried four employees of the Nagorno-Karabakh Ministry of Internal Affairs, who were on their way from Stepanakert to Hin Shen and Mets Shen villages of Nagorno-Kara-

ing inhumane conditions for living in their homeland with the ultimate goal of ethnic cleansing.

It is noteworthy that after the International Court of Justice on February 22 granted Armenia’s request to apply a provisional measure against Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani side not only did not take steps towards the implementation of the legally binding decision of the Court but committed new crimes against Armenians of Artsakh, including civilians. On February 28, the Azerbaijani armed forces opened fire on a resident of the village of Myurishen, Martuni region of Artsakh, who was carrying out agricultural work. The ceasefire was also violated by the Azerbaijani armed forces on March 2 and on the night of March 2-3, from the territories of Askeran, Martakert and Martuni regions under Azerbaijani control.

This once again shows the need for guarantees for ensuring the rights and security of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the international involvement in them.

The Republic of Armenia calls on the international community, countries and international organizations interested in the establishment of real peace in our region to strongly condemn the use of force and the threat of force by Azerbaijan, as well as another manifestation of provoking large-scale hostilities and take active steps to prevent further violations of Azerbaijan’s own international obligations.

A video of the incident can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPC-gIwPyrVY>

## Azerbaijan’s Actions Nothing but Terrorism, Pashinyan Tells French OSCE Co-Chair

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the French Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Brice Roquefeuil on March 6.

Pashinyan drew the attention of the French co-chair to the attack carried out by the Azerbaijani armed forces in Nagorno Karabakh on March 5, as a result of which three officers of the passport and visa department of the Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Nagorno Karabakh were killed and one was injured.

Pashinyan emphasized that the actions of Azerbaijan cannot be described as anything other than terrorism and added that parallel to the blocking the Lachin Corridor and the actions aimed at provoking a humanitarian disaster in Nagorno-Karabakh for almost three months, Azerbaijan continues the actions of terrorizing the Armenian population of Artsakh with the ultimate goal of accomplishing ethnic cleansing.

Both sides emphasized the need for Azerbaijan to immediately implement the decision of the International Court of Justice on unblocking the Lachin Corridor.

At the same time, Pashinyan added that, under the existing conditions, sending an international fact-finding team to the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno Karabakh becomes a vital necessity.

Issues related to the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Nagorno Karabakh issue were also discussed.

The two also discussed the importance of the activity of the European Union civilian mission in Armenia, which will contribute to regional stability and peace.





Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia Shushan Petrosyan, holding the microphone

## Tricolor Waves over Anipemza Border Village near Ani

YEREVAN — On March 5, in the village of Anipemza, in Shirak Province, the ceremony of raising the flag of the Republic of Armenia took place within the framework of the For the Homeland [*Vasn Hayrenyats*] national unity movement’s initiative, which can loosely be translated as “The Borders of the Brave Are Determined by the Flags They Plant.”

The flag was placed there under the patronage of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party leaders Susana and Sergio Nahabetian of Argentina.

The choice of Anipemza has a symbolic purpose. The village sits on one side of Akhuryan River, across the border with Turkey and the historic city of Ani, known as the city of one thousand and one churches. Anipemza itself is home to the church of Ereroyk, which was built in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Before the raising of the flag, with the blessing of the Primate of the Shirak Diocese, Archbishop Mikayel Achabahian, Father Tatev Marukyan of the Shirak Diocese offered a mass and then blessed the flag and welcomed this national initiative.

The tricolor was raised right in front of the Yereruyk Church, accompanied by the Armenian anthem.

Sevag Hagopian and Vahagn Chakhalyan, the co-founders of the For the Home-



Carrying the tricolor with Ereroyk in the background

land national unification movement, Martiros Miroyan, the administrative head of Aniavan, residents of the community, and others spoke at the event.

Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia Shushan Petrosyan spoke and sang at

the event.

The goal of the initiative is to place the tricolor flag of Armenia on any visible hill in the border communities of the 9 provinces of the republic. The purpose is to symbolically delineate the inviolable borders of Armenia with its state flag, to further strengthen the preservation of the flag and the respect for it among Armenians, to further familiarize the general public with Armenian border villages through public events and resulting media reports, to contribute to the development of the given village, and to turn the residents of the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh, as well as those of the Armenian diaspora, into participants in this activity, with the intent of uniting them.

To watch on YouTube, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=388uQLd4e-BY&t=248s>.

## Russian Group to Build Two Power Plants in Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A Russian business conglomerate owned by Armenian-born billionaire Samvel Karapetyan announced on Friday, March 3, plans to invest at least \$150 million in the construction of two thermal power plants in Armenia.

In a statement, Karapetyan’s Tashir Group said one of those gas-fired plants will be built near Noyemberian, a small town close to the Armenian-Georgian border.

The 126-megawatt facility will generate electricity not only for Armenia but also Georgia, it said, adding that Tashir will upgrade dozens of kilometers of high-voltage transmission lines in both countries for that purpose.

“Work on the thermal power plant will start this year and last for about two years,” said the statement.

It said the other, much smaller plant will be built in the central Armenian town of Hrazdan by the end of 2024.

Both facilities will be equipped with

German turbines that will “reduce emissions into the atmosphere and minimize the impact on the environment,” according to Tashir.

Karapetyan’s group, headquartered in Moscow, already owns Armenia’s largest thermal power plant also located in Hrazdan. The obsolete plant has been reportedly decommissioned in recent years.

Armenia’s electricity distribution network and second most important hydro-electric complex are also owned by Tashir. Speaking at a Russian-Armenian business held in Yerevan in 2021, Karapetyan pledged to invest up to \$600 million in the Armenian energy sector in the coming years.

Karapetyan, 57, was born and raised in Armenia. He moved to Russia in the early 1990s, making a huge fortune there in the next two decades.

His Russian conglomerate includes over a hundred firms engaged in construction,



Samvel Karapetyan

manufacturing, retail trade and other services. With total assets estimated by the Forbes magazine at \$3.8 billion, Karapetyan is apparently the richest ethnic Armenian in the world.

## New Investigation For Pashinyan Motorcade Deadly Crash

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Armenia’s Court of Appeals has ordered a fresh investigation into the death of a pregnant woman who was hit last April by a police car escorting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s motorcade.

The police SUV struck the 28-year-old Sona Mnatsakanyan as she crossed a street in the center of Yerevan. It did not stop after the collision.

The vehicle’s driver, police Major Aram Navasardyan, was arrested twice and released before going on trial in November. He pleaded not guilty to the charges of reckless driving and negligence leveled against him.

Mnatsakanyan’s close relatives have been very critical of the pre-trial criminal investigation into her death, alleging a cover-up. They pointed to the investigators’ failure to prosecute any members of Pashinyan’s security detail and accused them of withholding key evidence relevant to the high-profile case.

That includes audio of radio conversations among security personnel that escorted Pashinyan on that day. The Armenian police reportedly told the investigators that they were not recorded due to a technical malfunction. The latter did not bother to check the veracity of the police claim, according to Raffi Aslanyan, a lawyer representing the victim’s family.

In a ruling announced this week, the Court of Appeals ordered the Investigative Committee to properly examine the reasons for the absence of the recordings. It said the law-enforcement agency must do more to determine whether senior security officials in charge of Pashinyan’s motorcade were also responsible for the deadly accident that shocked many in Armenia.

The investigators and prosecutors overseeing them cleared those officials of any wrongdoing during last year’s inquiry. Only Navasardian was indicted.

Forensic tests conducted during that probe found that the police car driven by Navasardyan raced through Yerevan at almost 109 kilometers/hour (68 miles/hour), breaching a 100-kilometer/hour speed limit set for government motorcades. It remains unclear whether the policeman was ordered by his superiors to ignore the speed limit.

Under Armenian law, the prosecutors have 15 days to appeal against the court’s decision or launch a new investigation.

Pashinyan’s limousine and six other cars in his motorcade drove past the dying woman moments after the accident. The prime minister never publicly commented on her death.

The deputy chief of Pashinyan’s staff claimed later in April that the motorcade would have caused a traffic jam and made it harder for an ambulance to reach the victim had it stopped right after the crash. Opposition figures and other government critics brushed aside that explanation, blaming Pashinyan for Mnatsakanyan’s death.



## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

### Karabakh Minister Nersisyan Says Its People Are 'Hostages in Azerbaijan's Hands'

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) — State Minister Guren Nersisyan has said that the people of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) are hostages in the hands of the Azerbaijan.

"Baku's goal is to try to treat captives and hostages as it wants and to get what it can get from the captive, in this case, from the people of Artsakh," Nersisyan said on March 6.

His comments came one day after the Azerbaijani military ambushed and killed three Karabakh police officers and wounded another one.

"This is a terrorist act, with this the Azerbaijanis want to show that Artsakh cannot have contact with the outside world," Nersisyan said.

He said that the international community and Azerbaijan should understand that the people of Artsakh will fight on their land until the end.

### Qatar Expels Armenia's Gymnastics Coach without Explanation after He Arrives

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The coach of Armenia's gymnastics team was expelled from Qatar shortly after arriving there for the world cup series, sports officials revealed Tuesday, March 7.

"As soon as we arrived in Doha to participate in the world cup series, coach Hayk Nazaryan was deported for five years during passport control," the head coach of the Armenian team Hakob Serobyan said at a press conference. "We don't know why. He stayed in the airport for hours before being sent back to Armenia."

Serobyan said that Nazaryan had visited the country before without any problems.

### Foreign Ministers of Syria, Russia, Turkey and Iran to Meet

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov stated that a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Syria, Turkey and Iran is being planned, the Iranian IRNA agency reported.

"We are working in that direction. The quadrilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Iran, Turkey and Syria is currently being prepared. I can say that we have agreed not to disclose details so far, not everything is so easy," Mikhail Bogdanov said.

In December, the first talks in 11 years took place between the Turkish and Syrian Defense Ministers, in Russia.

In 2011, a civil war in Syria began. Turkey, which before this conflict, maintained close relations with Damascus, has positioned itself against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

# Mexican Armenians Express Gratitude for Senate Recognition of Armenian Genocide

By Carlos Antaramián

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

MEXICO CITY — On Saturday, February 18, some members of the Armenian community in Mexico gathered at the "Armenian Clock" in Mexico City to pay tribute to the martyrs of 1915, and also to give thanks for the recognition by the Senate of Mexico of this genocide.

With Armenians from France, Venezuela, Cyprus, Armenia and also with the participation of Peter Balakian, Pulitzer Prize winning poet and professor at Colgate University in the United States, the assembled remembered their ancestors massacred by the government of the young Turks in the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1918. In Mexico, although the Armenians can trace their origins in this country back to the 18th century, the vast majority arrived as refugees as a result of the genocide and settled between 1923 and 1928 in Mexico City or Tijuana and rebuilt their lives, establishing a small but thriving community.

Mexican Armenians have sought for many years for the Mexican government to recognize the Armenian Genocide, as Uruguay did in 1965 and recently the president of the United States (in 2021). The architect of this new initiative was Armen Yeritsian and the senator for the northern state of Baja California Alejandra León Gastelum (currently of the "Citizen Movement" Party), who since April 2022 together with the "Plural Group" presented a Point of Agreement in the Senate of Mexico to recognize



At the Armenian Water Clock, from left, Zareh Narinian, Berjuid Bernal Narinian and Nachís Valenzuela Narinian, Nubar Hanessian, Sylvie ¿?, Rodrigo Gómez García, Fr. Khristofor Nersisyan, Fr. Arseniy Vázquez, Veronica Sahaguian, Herika Prochorian, Margrit Gazarian, Peter Balakian, Carlos Antaramian, Martín Chatoyan, Patricia and Claudia Chatoyan, Tamara Samarjian Karkourian, Mary Behrens, José Luis de la Riva

the Genocide. This proposal was passed to the plenary session of the Senate for its vote on February 8, 2023 and that same day

it was voted on unanimously.

After the offering deposited in the fountain of the Armenian Clock, the group participated in a toast at the Sahaguian family's house, where the community thanked Yeritsian for his work in pursuit of the recognition. There, Peter Balakian emphasized the role that educating US legislators has had on the issue of genocide and how, little by little, this worked. Meanwhile, congressmen have lost their fear of confronting the powerful Turkish lobby that denies the Armenian genocide. The same process, without a doubt, has also happened in Mexico. Mexican society itself has changed, with, for example, the Mexican president apologizing in 2021 for a massacre of Chinese and Japanese conducted in 1911 in the northern Mexican city of Torreón. Legislators are no longer afraid to raise their voices in pursuit of the truth and against the evil denialist campaign of the Turkish state. This is what these commemorations and recognitions are for – to prevent these atrocities from happening again.

At the conclusion of the gathering, Balakian moved the group with the reading of his poem "After the Survivors Are Gone," which closes with the words: "we shall not forget the earth/ the artifact, the particular song, /the dirt of an idiom, / things that stick in the ear."



At Veronica Sahaguian's house, from left, Nubar Hanessian, Berjuid Bernal Narinian, Carlos Antaramián, Martín Chatoyán, Patricia and Claudia Chatoyán, Begoña Acasuso Hamparzumian, Cécile Khachadurian, Veronica Sahaguian, Peter Balakian, Armen Yeritsian, Mary Behrens, (Berjuid boyfriend) José Luis de la Riva, Herika Prochorian, Nachís Valenzuela Narinian, Magrit Gazarian, Zareh Narinian.

## German Leader Backs Karabakh's Right to Self-Determination

SELF-DETERMINATION, from page 1

Over the past year, Pashinyan and other senior Armenian officials have made no references to it in their public statements. They have spoken instead of the need to ensure "the rights and security of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh."

Pashinyan stated in January that the international community has always regarded Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan. The claim was denounced by the Armenian opposition and Karabakh's leadership. The latter urged Yerevan to continue to champion "the Artsakh people's right to self-determination"

in the international arena.

Scholz also voiced support for European Union chief Charles Michel's ongoing efforts to facilitate an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal. He noted in that regard that German observers account for a large part of a monitoring mission launched by the EU along Armenia's border with Azerbaijan last month.

Russia has denounced the mission requested by Armenia, saying that it is part of the West's efforts to squeeze Moscow out of the South Caucasus. Yerevan has dismissed the strong criticism voiced by its

traditional ally.

Speaking at the press conference in Berlin, Pashinyan revealed that Armenia and the EU are planning to sign a "document regulating the monitoring mission." He did not go into details.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan visited the German capital last month. During that trip, his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock added her voice to calls for an immediate end to Azerbaijan's blockade of Karabakh's land link with Armenia. Baerbock pointed to "disastrous" humanitarian consequences of the blockade.



INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey Summons US Ambassador over Top General’s Syria Visit

By Ezgi Akin and Jared Szuba

ANKARA (AI-Monitor) — Turkey’s government summoned US Ambassador Jeff Flake on March 6 over top US general Mark Milley’s visit to northeast Syria over the weekend, the country’s state-run Anadolu News Agency reported.

Turkish officials reportedly sought an explanation for Milley’s surprise visit on Saturday to an undisclosed US base in the Kurdish-controlled region of Syria.

“We can confirm that Amb. Flake did go to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for meetings,” State Department press secretary Ned Price told reporters Monday afternoon.

“It’s our understanding that Gen. Milley met only with US troops while in Syria,” Price said.

Milley, who serves as the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, inspected security measures and met with the top commander of US forces in Iraq and Syria, Army Maj. Gen. Matthew McFarlane. He did not meet with representatives of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Pentagon spokesperson Col. Dave Butler told AI-Monitor.

The top general’s trip came as Biden administration officials signal their intention to keep the roughly 900 US troops in Syria in support of the SDF in order to keep pressure on the remnants of the Islamic State group, which no longer controls significant territory, but maintains a low-level insurgency that aims to reconstitute, defense officials say.

It also came as Pentagon officials led by defense chief Lloyd Austin are touring the Middle East to meet with troops and assure allies of Washington’s commitment to security in the region.

But word of Milley’s visit threatened to rekindle accusations by Turkey’s government over US support for the SDF, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces perhaps his toughest re-election bid yet in May.

Ankara considers the Syrian People’s Protection Unit (YPG) — a largely Kurdish militia that leads the SDF — to be inextricable from the Kurdistan Workers’ Party,

or PKK — a designated terrorist organization by Turkey and Western allies.

The US does not consider the YPG to be a terrorist group and has funded, armed and trained the militia to fight against the Islamic State on the ground in Syria since 2015.

The campaign was largely a success, but issue remains one of the thorniest between the two NATO allies.

The SDF insists it poses no threat to Turkey, and has said it is open to negotiations with the Turkish government. Ankara has repeatedly called on Washington to end its support for Syrian Kurdish groups and to withdraw its troops from the country as Ankara explores rapprochement with the Bashar al-Assad regime in Damascus.

Washington, for its part, has sought to

avert another potential Turkish military operation against the YPG in northern Syria, saying the move would undermine efforts to contain IS. Some 10,000 IS fighters remain imprisoned in makeshift facilities guarded by the SDF in northeast Syria.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has toned down his repeated threats to launch a fresh incursion in recent months amid opposition from the US and Russia, which also maintains troops in Syria and limited ties with the YPG.

At least two Turkish air and drone strikes amid a blitz against Syrian Kurdish forces last November came dangerously close to US troops, leading CIA director Bill Burns to warn his counterpart in Ankara.

Syrian Kurdish officials have worried the Turkish army may launch its long-antici-

pated assault this spring as Erdogan’s AKP party seeks to consolidate its nationalist voter base ahead of the pivotal elections.

Turkey-US relations have been fraught by a handful of high-profile disagreements in recent years, including Ankara’s purchase of Russia’s S-400 air defense systems, new military basing access for the US military in Greece and Turkey delaying Sweden and Finland’s accession to NATO amid the war in Ukraine.

Ties between the two allies have been buoyed somewhat by Turkey’s role mediating an agreement with Russia restore Ukraine’s grain exports as well as by rapid US support for Ankara’s emergency rescue efforts following last month’s earthquake, which was the deadliest to hit Turkey in decades.

## Three Dead in Israel Strike on Syria’s Aleppo Airport

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israeli warplanes killed three people in a raid on Syria’s Aleppo airport on March 7, a war monitor said after the strike which, according to a Syrian official, halted earthquake aid flights.

The airport has been a major conduit for relief flights since a February 6 earthquake devastated swathes of southeastern Turkey and neighboring Syria.

A transport ministry official in Syria said the aid flights were among those brought to a stop from Aleppo, Syria’s second city.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has a network of sources in war-torn Syria, said “a Syrian officer” and two people of unknown nationality were killed in the air strike.

Syria’s defense ministry said the strike occurred at 2:07 am (2307 GMT Monday).

“The Israeli enemy carried out an air attack from the Mediterranean west of Latakia targeting Aleppo international airport,” a ministry statement said.

It added that the damage forced authorities to close the airport to all flights.

More than 80 aid flights have landed in Aleppo over the past month with relief sup-

plies for quake-hit areas, transport ministry official Suleiman Khalil told AFP.

“It is no longer possible to receive aid flights until the damage has been repaired,” he said, adding the strike had put the runway out of service.

Aid deliveries have been diverted to Damascus and Latakia airports, a ministry statement said.

State news agency SANA said Syrian air defenses had gone into action against “enemy missiles.”

An Israeli military spokesperson declined to comment on the reported strike.

The Observatory said the airport was expected to reopen in a few days after repair work.

Syria’s foreign ministry decried a “double crime”, saying the strike targeted “a civilian airport... and one of the key channels for the arrival of humanitarian aid” to victims of the quake which killed around 6,000 people in Syria.

It marked the second Israeli attack on government-held areas since the 7.8-magnitude quake that killed more than 50,000 people in the two countries.

On February 19, an Israeli air strike

killed 15 people in a Damascus district housing state security agencies, the Observatory said.

Damascus ally Iran condemned the latest strike as “a ‘crime against humanity.’”

“While the Syrian earthquake victims in Aleppo are experiencing difficult conditions, the Zionist regime (Israel) is attacking Aleppo airport,” foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said in a statement.

Israel has attacked Aleppo and Damascus airports several times in recent years.

A strike on the Aleppo facility last September put it out of service for a few days. That attack targeted a warehouse used by Iran-backed militias, the Observatory said at the time.

Since civil war erupted in Syria in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of air raids against its neighbor, primarily targeting positions of the Syrian army and its Iranian and Hezbollah allies.

The Israeli military rarely comments on individual strikes against Syria, but has vowed repeatedly to keep up its air campaign to stop arch foe Iran consolidating its presence.

## Armenian, Indian Militaries Mull Closer Ties

NEW DELHI, India (Azatutyun) — India’s and Armenia’s top generals discussed growing military ties between their countries during talks held in New Delhi over the weekend.

Major-General Eduard Asryan, the chief of the Armenian army’s General Staff, met with General Anil Chauhan, the chief of the Indian Defense Staff, as he and other senior Armenian officials visited India to attend an annual conference on global security.

In a Twitter post, the Indian military headquarters said Asryan and Chauhan discussed “identifying areas to augment defense cooperation, including opportunities to leverage indigenous defense manufacturing industry.”

The Armenian Defense Ministry said, for its part, that they looked at the “possibilities of expanding defense cooperation between India and Armenia.”

The two nations have stepped up that cooperation since the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war in Nagorno-Karabakh during which India’s arch-foe Pakistan strongly supported Azerbai-

jan. Last September, the Armenian military reportedly signed contracts for the purchase of \$245 million worth of Indian multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank rockets and ammunition.

Anil Chauhan (left), chief of India’s Defense Staff, meets his Armenian counterpart, Eduard Asryan, New Delhi, March 4, 2023.

Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan explored more such deals during a subsequent visit to India. Indian media reported during Papikyan’s trip that Yerevan is interested in acquiring air-de-



fense systems and combat drones manufactured by Indian companies.

The Armenian Defense Ministry said Asryan presented “security challenges” facing Armenia during a roundtable discussion on Indian-Armenian relations organized by India’s National Security Council.

New Delhi has effectively sided with Armenia in its ongoing border disputes with Azerbaijan. It has also expressed serious concern over the Azerbaijani blockade of the Lachin corridor.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar also met on Saturday on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue conference. Mirzoyan briefed Jaishankar on the humanitarian crisis in Karabakh caused by the blockade as well as recent Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, the two ministers also reviewed growing Indian-Armenian trade and bilateral cooperation on education, culture and tourism.

## Russia ‘Seriously Concerned’ About Escalation of Tensions In Karabakh

TENSIONS, from page 1

Zakharova stressed that the Russian side “confirms the need to strictly comply with the provisions of the statement of the leaders of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan dated November 9, 2020 on a complete ceasefire and all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.” The official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry also drew attention to the fact that “any issues related to ensuring security and vital activity in the zone of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent must be resolved peacefully through contacts between the parties under the auspices of the peacekeeping contingent.”

“The incident once again confirms the imperative of the speedy return of Baku and Yerevan to negotiations within the framework of the implementation of the provisions of the tripartite statements of the leaders of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan dated November 9, 2020, January 11 and November 26, 2021, as well as October 31, 2022, including those concerning unblocking regional communications, delimiting the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and preparing a peace treaty,” she concluded.





## INTERNATIONAL

# 92 Flights From Israeli Base Reveal Arms Exports to Azerbaijan

ARMS, from page 1

Silk Way is one of the largest cargo airlines in Asia, and according to official documents it serves as a subcontractor for various defense ministries around the world. The company operates three weekly flights between Baku and Ben-Gurion International Airport with Boeing 747 cargo freighters, and last year it was the third-largest foreign cargo carrier in terms of volume at Ben-Gurion.

But the figures revealed here for the first time show that since 2016, the company's IL-76 planes have landed at least 92 times at the Ovda airport, an unusual destination for civilian cargo planes. Silk Way is one of the very few airlines that lands at Ovda; over the years only a handful of Eastern European airlines that have carried explosives have landed and taken off from there. Silk Way was even at the center of an investigative report in the Czech media in 2018, which stated that weapons banned for sale to Azerbaijan were flown there in spite of the arms embargo - in a circular deal through Israel.

Israeli aviation law forbids the routine transport of explosives from Ben-Gurion Airport, because it is located in the heart of a densely populated area, said sources in the aviation industry. The only airport from which it is permitted to import and export explosives is the Israel Air Force base in Ovda, the sources said. In October 2013, the head of the Israel Civil Aviation Authority, Giora Romm, signed an exemption permitting Silk Way planes to fly shipments of explosives — “classified as dangerous materials banned to fly” — from Ovda to a military airfield on the outskirts of Baku. This exemption, which was posted at the time on the Civil Aviation Authority's website, requires strict safety conditions, and includes a list of the Azerbaijani aircraft allowed to transport explosives from Ovda to Azerbaijan.

These Silk Way aircraft (and others) have landed at Ovda almost 100 times since the permit was issued. The data expose an increasing pace of flights to Baku especially in the middle of 2016, in late 2020 and at the end of 2021 — which coincide with periods of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan and Armenia have waged war over this disputed region between them many times since the beginning of the 20th century — and all the more so since both countries gained independence after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Some of these flights landed at Ovda with the official call sign of Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry. In 2016, Silk Way was granted another exemption and allowed to continue to land here — even though its planes did not meet the Israeli aviation noise standards — just so they could continue flying to Ovda.

## A Shared Enemy, a Strategic Alliance

Nagorno-Karabakh is the most famous of a number of enclaves that has led to the troubled relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia throughout their history. The Soviet regime was relatively successful in reducing the tensions between the Christian Armenian population and the Shi'ite Azeris, but in 1988 the parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh region called a referendum on leaving Azerbaijan and uniting with Armenia. This step led to violence and what became, in practice, massacres of Armenians in Baku and other Azerbaijani cities — and similar acts against the Azeri population.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the conflict turned into an open and bloody war, which ended in 1994 in a clear victory for Armenia, which took control of large areas surrounding the enclave. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from both sides were expelled or forced to flee for their lives.

The harsh conflict left both sides under sanctions and severe export restrictions in Europe and the United States. President Ilham Aliyev, after inheriting the position from his father Heydar Aliyev, has ruled Azerbaijan with a firm hand — and his regime has a long history of repressing civil rights and arrests of opposition activists. In 2017, the U.S. State Department released a report condemning the state of the LGBT community in the country, which suffers from persecution, discrimination, disappearances and arrests, torture and murder.

The sanctions provided a business and strategic opportunity for an unexpected partner: Israel. The fact that the two countries both see Iran as a direct threat only strengthened the ties. Azerbaijan declared its independence in October 1991, and Israel — which was one of the first countries to recognize the new nation — opened an embassy in Baku in 1993.

“Azerbaijan's relations with Israel are discreet but close,” wrote Rob Garverick, the head of the political and economic department in the U.S. Embassy in Baku, in a 2009 telegram that was published as part of the Wikileaks documents. “Each country finds it easy to identify with the other's geopolitical difficulties and both rank Iran as an existential security threat. Israel's world-class defense industry with its relaxed attitude about its customer base is a perfect match for Azerbaijan's substantial defense needs that are largely left unmet by the United States, Europe and Russia for various reasons tied to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Aptly described by Azerbaijani President Aliyev as being like an iceberg, nine-tenths of it is below the surface, this relationship is also marked by a pragmatic recognition by Israel of Azerbaijan's political need to hew publicly and in international forums to the [Organization of Islamic Cooperation's] general line.”

Azerbaijan's economy is based primarily on oil and gas, and as part of its strategic alliance it has become Israel's largest supplier of oil. According to estimates, about half of the oil imported by Israel comes from Azerbaijan.

During their first years of independence, both Armenia and Azerbaijan relied on the Soviet arsenal of weapons, but according to the Stockholm International Peace Institute, since 2016 the situation has changed and Israel is now responsible for almost 70 percent of Azerbaijan's weapons.

Numerous official reports, statements and videos from Azerbaijan show Israel has exported a very wide range of weapons to the country — starting with Tavor assault rifles all the way to the most sophisticated systems such as radar, air defense, antitank missiles, ballistic missiles, ships and a wide range of drones, both for intelligence and attack purposes. Israeli companies have also supplied advanced spy tech, such as communications monitoring systems from Verint and the Pegasus spyware from the NSO Group — tools that were used against journalists, the LGBT community and human rights activists in Azerbaijan, too.

Israeli weapons played an important role when the fighting against Armenia restarted in the Four-Day War between the two countries in April 2016, and especially during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, as well as in the battles during 2022. “The skillful use by the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan of high technology and high-precision weapons, including those produced in Israel, in particular drones, played an important role in achieving military victory. I am confident that our bilateral ties will be further strengthened and deepened in various fields after the Patriotic War,” Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov told the Israel Hayom newspaper in an interview in April 2021.

The Stockholm International Peace Institute says Israel's defense exports to Azerbaijan began in 2005 with the sale of the Lynx multiple launch rocket systems by Israel Military Industries (IMI Systems), which has a range of 150 kilometers (92 miles). IMI, which was acquired by Elbit Systems in 2018, also supplied LAR-160 light artillery rockets with a range of 45 kilometers, which, according to a report from Human Rights Watch, were used by Azerbaijan to fire banned cluster munitions at residential areas in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia also fired cluster munitions manufactured by Russia, and a great deal of unexploded ordnance remained in civilian areas. Israel, the United States, Russia and China are among the opponents of the 2008 international Convention on Cluster Munitions banning the development and use of cluster munitions, which has been signed by 123 countries.

In 2007, Azerbaijan signed a contract to buy four intelligence-gathering drones from Aeronautics Defense Systems. It was the first deal of many. In 2008 it purchased 10 Hermes 450 drones from Elbit Systems and 100 Spike antitank missiles produced by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and in 2010 it bought another 10 intelligence-gathering drones.

Soltam Systems, owned by Elbit, sold it ATMOS self-propelled guns and 120-millimeter Cardom mortars, and in 2017 Azerbaijan's arsenal was supplemented with the more advanced Hanit mortars. According to the telegram leaked in Wikileaks, a sale of advanced communications equipment from Tadiran was also signed in 2008.

Israel and Azerbaijan took their relationship up a level in 2011 with a huge \$1.6 billion deal that included a battery of Barak missiles for intercepting aircraft and missiles, as well as Searcher and Heron drones from Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). It was reported that near

the end of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, a Barak battery shot down an Iskander ballistic missile launched by Armenia.

Aeronautics Defense Systems also began cooperating with the local arms industry in Azerbaijan, where some of the 100 Orbiter kamikaze (loitering munitions) drones were produced — drones that Azerbaijan's defense minister called “a nightmare for the Armenian army.” In 2021, an indictment was filed against Aeronautics Defense Systems for violating the law regulating defense exports in its dealing with one of its most prominent clients. A court-imposed gag order prevents the publication of further details.

A project to modernize the Azerbaijani army's tanks began in the early 2010s. Elbit Systems upgraded and equipped the old Soviet T-72 models with new protective gear to enhance the tanks' and their crews' survivability, as well as fast and precise target acquisition and fire control systems. The upgraded tanks, known as Aslan (Lion), starred in the 2013 military parade.

Azerbaijan's navy was reinforced in 2013 with six patrol ships based on the Israel Navy's Sa'ar 4.5-class missile boats, produced by Israel Shipyards and carrying the naval version of the Spike missiles, along with six Shaldag MK V patrol boats with Rafael's Typhoon gun mounts and Spike missile systems. Azerbaijan's navy also bought 100 Lahat antitank guided missiles.

In 2014, Azerbaijan ordered the first 100 Harop kamikaze drones from IAI, which were a critical tool in later rounds of fighting. Azerbaijan also purchased two advanced radar systems for aerial warning and defense from IAI subsidiary Elta that same year.

“We have purchased the most modern air defense installations. Our army has the most powerful artillery ... The weaponry and ammunition we have acquired in recent years suggest we can accomplish any task ... Just as we have beaten the Armenians on the political and economic fronts, we are able to defeat them on the battlefield,” declared Aliyev during a visit to the battlefield — and also on his Twitter account.

Two years later, Azerbaijan bought another 250 Sky-Striker kamikaze drones from Elbit Systems. Many videos from the areas of fighting showed Israeli drones attacking Armenian forces.

In 2016, during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Baku, Aliyev revealed that contracts had already been signed between the two countries for the purchase of some \$5 billion in “defensive equipment.”

In 2017, Azerbaijan purchased advanced Hermes 900 drones from Elbit Systems and LORA ballistic missiles from IAI, with a range 430 kilometers. In 2018, Aliyev inaugurated the base where the LORA missiles are deployed, at a distance of about 430 kilometers from Yerevan, Armenia's capital. During the war in 2020, at least one LORA missile was launched, and according to reports it hit a bridge that Armenia used to supply arms and equipment to its forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

More advanced Spike missiles were sent in 2019 and 2020. Along with the Israeli weapons systems, Turkey — Azerbaijan's ally and Armenia's enemy — supplied its Bayraktar TB2 drones, which played a major role in destroying Armenian targets.

## An Official Visit — and An Embassy

In October 2022, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz visited Azerbaijan and met with Aliyev. In an official statement, Gantz said his visit concerned security and policy issues and deepening the cooperation between the two countries. What was not made public at the time was that a month before Gantz's visit, Yair Kulas, the head of Israel's defense exports directorate (SIBAT), made his own visit to Azerbaijan and met with the minister in charge of Azerbaijan's defense industries.

The Azeri ministry said the two discussed expanding business with Israeli defense industries. A short time later Azerbaijan officially announced that it would soon open an embassy in Israel for the first time, calling it a “historic step” and adding that the “sky is the limit for the relations between the two countries and peoples.”

Since the visit, tensions have flared between Azerbaijan and its neighbor Iran. And based on testimony from Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan's relations with Armenia have reached the boiling point again, and another violent conflict may be looming.

In the meantime, seven more Azeri flights have landed at the Ovda airbase. After two hours on the ground, with their cargo loaded, they departed — back to Baku.





# Community News

## Honorary Consulate Of the Republic of Armenia in Chicago Hosts the Armenia Tree Project

CHICAGO — The Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Armenia in Chicago Oscar Tatosian in February hosted Armenia Tree Project (ATP) representatives for a weekend of events and meetings to introduce the group's longstanding activities throughout Armenia. Founded in 1994, the Armenia Tree Project has created important environmental projects throughout Armenia which have sustained ongoing long-term environmental and economic advancement throughout the country and particularly in its more rural areas.

Tatosian invited Jeanmarie Papelian, Anahit Gharibyan and Christine Jerian to present the work of the ATP and to introduce the organization to community leaders and to the larger diaspora in Chicago. A welcoming reception, organized by Tatosian, was attended by civic leaders and students from The University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

As Tatosian explained, "The Armenian Tree Project has had great impact throughout Armenia — particularly in rural areas where social and economic stability, as well as security, are urgently needed. Since 1994, over 7.6 million trees have been planted and restored. This kind of direction and awareness have generated incredible progress in Armenia."

"We are so grateful for the warm welcome that ATP received in Chicago," said Papelian, executive director of the ATP. "It was inspiring to know that the Armenians of Chicago share our vision for a more sustainable Armenia."

During their three-day visit, ATP's team members, joined by Tatosian, were the guests of the Chicago Botanic Garden, where Fred Spicer, executive vice president and director of the garden, provided a tour featuring many species of trees and plants native to Armenia. They also discussed the possibility of future collaboration on relevant scientific topics.

The ATP team presented to a number of youth groups and churches including the St. James Armenian Church, the Siragan Armenian Dance Company of Chicago, the AGBU of Chicago Armenian School Students, and the Ararat Chapter of the Armenian Youth Federation. In addition to a visit to Yerevan Park in downtown Chicago, the ATP visitors were welcomed into the home of community members Sevak and Tamar Alaverdyan which allowed a greater number of members to hear about the impact of the Armenia Tree Project in Armenia and Artsakh.

The presentations by ATP highlighted the Artsakh Backyard Greenhouse Initiative, launched in 2021 in response to the 44-Day War started Azerbaijan and the loss of agricultural lands and territory. Currently this initiative allows Armenians to grow food in greenhouses and stave off humanitarian crises and potential starvation due to the Lachin Corridor Blockade led by Azerbaijan.



Backgammon lovers at the TCA Detroit program

## Detroit Tekeyan Chapter Reaches Out to Local Youth

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On Thursday, March 2, the leaders of Detroit's Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) chapter, Mr. and Mrs. Hagop and Diana Alexanian, were invited by a group of local Armenian young adults as special guests at their monthly social gathering.

The young adult initiative, loosely affiliated with St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield, was organized by local Armenians in their late 20s and 30s, who saw the need for a forum in which to socialize and have fellowship with Armenians their own age in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Upon the invitation of assistant pastor Fr. Armash Baghdasarian, St. John's agreed to take the group under its wing, while allowing the group members to set the entire agenda for their activities. Using the theme of Baghdasarian's exhortation that "the Church is your home," the group decided to organize a monthly casual gathering which was named "Hye Doon" (Armenian Home).



Abby Panabaker, AGBU Manoogian School English teacher, recites "You Boys and Girls" by Vahan Tekeyan

coincidence that one of the first special guests was a veteran of the ADL *agoumps* of Lebanon, Hagop Alexanian and his wife, Diana Alexanian, chairwoman of the local Tekeyan Chapter.

At Thursday's event, which was the 4th monthly Hye Doon gathering, the Alexanians introduced and spoke about the activities of Tekeyan on a global and local level to the young people with the hope that some of them would be interested in joining the TCA and helping in the goal of perpetuating Armenian culture. Several people expressed interest in different TCA initiatives as well as for Tekeyan to be

see YOUTH, page 11

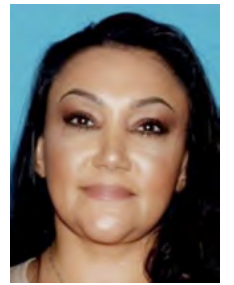
## Co-Leader of COVID-19 Loan Fraud Ring to Begin Serving Prison Sentence

LOS ANGELES — A California woman who fled to Montenegro to avoid serving a lengthy prison sentence has been returned to the United States after spending approximately one year as a fugitive.

Tamara Dadyan, 43, of Encino, was extradited by Montenegro and arrived in Los Angeles on February 27.

According to court documents, Dadyan was a member of a Los Angeles-based fraud ring who engaged in a scheme to fraudulently obtain more than \$20 million in Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) COVID-19 relief funds.

Dadyan and her co-conspirators used dozens of fake, stolen, or synthetic identities — including names belonging to elderly or deceased people and foreign exchange students who briefly visited the United States years ago and never returned — to submit fraudulent applications for approximately 150 PPP and EIDL loans.



Tamara Dadyan

In support of the fraudulent loan applications, Dadyan and her co-conspirators also submitted false and fictitious documents to lenders and the Small Business Administration (SBA), including fake identity documents, tax documents, and payroll records. Dadyan and her co-conspirators then used the fraudulently obtained funds as down payments on three luxury homes in California. They also used the funds to buy gold coins, diamonds, jewelry, luxury watches, designer handbags, cryptocurrency, securities, and a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

In June 2021, Dadyan pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and bank fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, and one count of aggravated identity theft. She was sentenced in December 2021 to 10 years and 10 months in prison.

In January 2022, Dadyan fled the United States. U.S. authorities determined Dadyan had fled to Montenegro where she joined Richard Ayvazyan and Marietta Terabelian, two other participants in the scheme and conspiracy who also fled after their convictions. Ayvazyan and Terabelian, who were respectively sentenced to 17 years and six years in prison, were extradited to the United States from Montenegro in November 2022.

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; see FRAUD, page 8





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Paros Accepting Applications for 10<sup>th</sup> Year of SERVICE Armenia

Since 2013, The Paros Foundation’s SERVICE Armenia program has taken young people ages 17 to 22 to Armenia for a service and tour program. This marks our 10th official year.

The Paros Foundation’s SERVICE Armenia program provides a space for youth from around the world to experience Ar-

menia in extraordinary ways. With a focus on service, this trip provides participants with a deeper connection to Armenia. This summer the trip will take place from June 24th-July 15th with similar programming as past years. Participant fees are \$2,250 per person including a \$400 charitable contribution, not including airfare.

“I had such an amazing time I absolutely cannot wait to come back to Armenia, it was a life changing experience! I really

well-located accommodations and transportation combined with interesting cultural and educational activities that will



SERVICE Armenia 2022 group at Sevanavank

## Co-Leader of COVID-19 Loan Fraud Ring to Begin Serving Prison Sentence

FRAUD, from page 7

U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada for the Central District of California; Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division; Special Agent in Charge Tyler Hatcher of the IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) Los Angeles Field Office; Special Agent in Charge Weston King of the SBA Office of Inspector General (SBA-OIG), Western Region; and Special Agent in Charge Jay N. Johnson of the Federal Housing Finance Agency Office of Inspector General (FHFA-OIG), Western Region, made the announcement.

The Government of Montenegro, including the Ministry of Justice, provided significant assistance in the extradition of Dadyan to the United States. The Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs also provided sub-

stantial assistance in securing the arrest and extradition of Dadyan.

The FBI Los Angeles Field Office, IRS-CI, SBA-OIG, and FHFA-OIG investigated the case. The U.S. Marshals Service transported Dadyan from Montenegro to the United States.

Trial Attorney Christopher Fenton of the Criminal Division’s Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian Faerstein and Scott Paetty for the Central District of California are prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Boyle for the Central District of California is handling forfeiture. Trial Attorney Goran Krnaich and International Affairs Specialist Marina Shimarova of the Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs handled the extraditions with assistance from Assistant U.S. Attorney John Lulejian for the Central District of California.

loved the projects we did and the work days we had,” said Sanah Syed, SERVICE Armenia 2021 participant.

Applications are now available on The Paros Foundation’s website for SERVICE Armenia 2023 at [www.parosfoundation.org](http://www.parosfoundation.org). The program includes tours to historic, religious and cultural sites in Armenia, English speaking staff and guides, safe and

ensure all will have an engaging and memorable experience. Participants need not be of Armenian descent; the program is open to everyone. Knowledge of the Armenian language is not required. Join us and create a lifetime of great memories and friends. The deadline to submit the completed application is March 24. Applicants are encouraged to apply early.



Tekeyan Cultural Association

# SPONSOR A TEACHER

# 2023

*in Armenia and five villages in Artsakh*

Since its inception in 2001, the TCA Sponsor a Teacher program has raised \$828,060 and reached out to 7,253 teachers and school staff in Armenian and Artsakh.

Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Artsakh to continue helping them educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher’s name and address.

☐ \$200   ☐ \$400   ☐ \$600   ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association  
Memo: Sponsor a Teacher  
Mail your check to:  
TCA Sponsor a Teacher  
5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056

YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE







## OBITUARY

## Vartkes 'Vic' Kourken Karaian

### Dedicated to Public Health

WINCHESTER — Vartkes "Vic" Kourken Karaian, 94, of Winchester, passed away peacefully at Mt. Auburn Hospital on February 23.

He was the husband of Elissa J. (Avagian) Karaian for 64 years.

Born in Watertown, the son of Armenian immigrants, the late Kourken and Ziazan Karaian, Vartkes was predeceased by his brother George Karaian and sister-in-law Vivian Karaian.

He was uncle to George and his wife Bernadette Karaian of NH and Kenny and his wife Cheryl Karaian of NH. He was also a great-and great-great-uncle, and was also known as honorary "Uncle" Vartkes to Ed, Jim and Linda Karaian, Diane Nitzschke, Jeffrey Avagian, Jennifer Heist, as well as so many others too long to list, who loved, respected and looked up to him. Vartkes also leaves behind many good friends.

Vartkes graduated Watertown High School Class of 1947 and then continued his education at Tufts University and graduating with his BS in Chemistry-Biology, in 1951. He then received his MS in Sanitary Science and Public Health from the

University of Massachusetts in 1953. Prior to attending and graduating from Tufts University with his second master's degree in civil engineering, he served two years in the Army as a preventative medicine technician during the Korean War.

A humble, kind man, Vartkes was employed by the state of Massachusetts as a Registered Sanitarian Engineer. He served the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, followed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality Engineering and completing his employment with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in 1992. He then remained active as an environmental-public health consultant. He was particularly interested in all matters relative to solid waste management in the Commonwealth, and in particular the region.

He was one of the pioneers in developing safe food handling process and procedures for the state.

The recipient of many awards, including the Health, the Dr. Joseph S. Goldfarb Award (1979) as and outstanding member of the Massachusetts Environmental Health



Association (MEHA), in recognition of exemplary service and achievement in the professional practice in the field of Environmental and Public Health in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. the Curtis M Hillard Award (1992) for outstanding achievement in Public Health, the Robert C. Perriello Memorial Award (1993) in the field of environmental health as well as his membership in the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association, for which they created an award in his name in 1997 named the Vartkes K., "Vic" Karaian award for outstanding leadership and contribution

towards the improvement of the environmental health of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This prestigious award continues annually. He also served as President of M.E.H.A 1963-1964.

Vartkes received the Governor's Citation in recognition to the 37 years of his career he dedicated to the Board of Sanitarians in 2008.

Vartkes along with his wife were founding members of the St. James Armenian Church Couples Club. He was also actively involved in the C.A.E. (Council of Armenian Executives). He was a former member and chairman of Winchester Board of Health for 8 years. Also a former member of the following, Winchester Aberjona Watershed Committee, "Concern" (Committee on New Concepts of Educational and Therapeutic Needs) for which he was particularly involved with drug and youth orientated problems, former chairman of Winchester Waste Disposal Problems Study Committee and former member of Winchester Permanent Building Committee, just to name a few.

Funeral services were conducted at St. James Armenian Church on March 4. Interment followed at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home, 576 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

## 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.

We apologize and ask for your continued understanding.

Telephone (617) 924-7400

## Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET  
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN  
PAUL BEDROSIAN  
LARRY BEDROSIAN

## DENNIS M. DEVENY & SONS

### Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in  
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543  
(781) 891-9876 [www.NEMonuments.com](http://www.NEMonuments.com)



ԹԵՔԵԱՆ Մշակութային Միութիւն  
ՊԵՂԵՐԵՐԵԱՆ ԿԵՂՐՈՆ  
ԸՆԿԵՐԱՅԻՆ ՅԱՆՃՆԱԽՈՒՄ

Tekeyan Cultural Association  
Beshgeturian Center Social Committee

## FAMILY NIGHT

Ընտանեկան Երեկոյ

Musical Entertainment By  
Renowned Vilonist

Merouzhn Margaryan

Friday, March 17, 2023 at 7:30 pm at the TCA Beshgeturian Center  
1901 N Allen Avenue, Altadena

Ուրբաթ, Մարտ 17, 2023-ի երեկոյեան ժամը 7:30-ին,  
ԹՄՄԻ ՊԵՂԵՐԵՐԵԱՆ Սրահին մէջ, Ալթադենա:

For reservations call 626-296-1806

Տեղեր ապահովելու համար հեռաձայնել 626-296-1806 թիւին

## Giragosian

F UNERAL H OME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC  
Mark J. Giragosian

Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606  
[www.giragosianfuneralhome.com](http://www.giragosianfuneralhome.com)

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Abp. Derderian's Pastoral Visit to St. Gregory Church of Fowler

FWLER, Calif. — On Sunday, February 19, St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church joyfully celebrated Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian's 20th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood and the bestowing of the St. Nersess Shnorhali medals to long-time parishioners. This event was presided over by Abp. Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. During Badarak, Srpazan called forth: Dn. Edward Nikssarian, Richard Hagopian, and Jane Kazarian.

Abp. Derderian made remarks upon distributing the medal to each recipient. About Nikssarian he said: "Dn. Ed Nikssarian, for decades you have rendered your selfless service to St. Gregory Church through the ACYO [Armenian Church Youth Organization of America], Men's Forum, Altar, Parish Council, Parish Assembly, and many more committees. Besides serving on committees, your presence is always noticed, whether it be grilling at church picnics, washing the dishes, preparing meals for the church and local community, and making sure the altar is ready every Sunday. We are delighted in knowing that through your affectionate service as a dea-

con and loyal church member. You have brought love and respect to the Christ-loving faithful community."

Primate Derderian said about Hagopian: "Richard Avedis Hagopian, you have dedicated your life to the Armenian Church and heritage, mainly our traditional folk music. From a young age, you joined the choir and served in many capacities, such as the ACYO, Parish Council, and as a delegate to the National-Ecclesiastical Assembly. In 1969, you earned the title of 'Oudi' for your mastery in the oud. You have performed in many cities as well as recorded numerous albums with your band. In 1989, you were honored by the National Endowment of the Arts as a National Heritage Fellow, America's highest honor in folk and traditional arts. You have been recognized for your artistic excellence, lifetime achievement, and contributions to Armenian traditional music for three generations."

He summarized Kazarian's service as follows: "Jane Kazarian, for more than four decades you have rendered your selfless service to St. Gregory Church, ensuring the perpetuity of the parish. You served many positions as Sunday School superintendent for 14 years, Ladies Society chairlady, Parish Council chairperson, Diocesan delegate, and many more committees. In doing so, you have ensured to protect and safeguard the values which we commonly hold in reverence, contributing to the strengthening and livelihood of the Armenian Church community. We especially wish to

highlight your meticulousness and zealous spirit with which you render your unwavering services."



Front row seated, from the left, Fr. Sarkis Petoyan, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian; back row, from left, Connie and Edward Nikssarian, Jane and Ron Kazarian, and Richard and Gerry Hagopian.



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian to his right, in back, with Sunday School students

## NAASR to Celebrate Marc Mamigonian's Quarter Century with Organization

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will host an in-person and online program celebrating its Academic Director Marc A. Mamigonian's 25 years with the organization, on Thursday, March 16, at 7 p. m. Mamigonian will engage in a conversation with Khatchig Mouradian on developments at NAASR and in Armenian Studies generally, and a multitude of other topics, followed by an open discussion with the audience.

This will be an in-person event and also presented online live via Zoom and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies](http://www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies)). For those attending in person, NAASR recommends the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. A reception will follow the program.

Mamigonian is the co-author of the volume *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* (Oxford University Press, 2022; with John N. Turner and Sam Slote) and is the co-author of annotated editions of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Alma Classics, 2014; with John N. Turner) and *Ulysses* (Alma Classics, 2015, with John N. Turner and Sam Slote). He has served as the editor of the *Journal of Armenian Studies* and the volume *The Armenians of New England* (Armenian Heritage Press, 2004), and has published articles in *Genocide Studies International*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Armenian Review*, *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, and elsewhere.

Mouradian is the Armenian and Georgian Specialist at the Library of Congress, lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University, and member of the NAASR Board of Directors.

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).



Marc Mamigonian

## NAASR to Host Talk on New Translation of Tehlirian's Memoir

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will host an online program marking the publication of the first English translation of Soghomon Tehlirian's memoir, *Remembrances: The Assassination of Talaat Pasha* (Gomidas Institute, 2022), on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 1 pm Eastern / 10 am Pacific. This program is co-sponsored by NAASR, the Armenian Film Foundation, and the Ararat-Eskijian Museum.

The webinar will be accessible live on Zoom (registration required) and on NAASR's YouTube Channel.

Dr. Carla Garapedian, who wrote the preface to this new edition, will provide a general introduction and Bedo Demirdjian, translator of the memoir, will talk about the challenges of working with this manuscript.

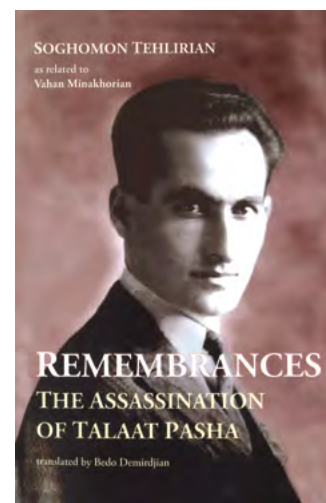
Marking the 102nd anniversary of the shooting of Talaat Pasha in Berlin, this program will focus on the process and the complexities of translating Tehlirian's

memoir, originally published in Armenian in Cairo in 1953 as *Soghomon Tehlirian: Verhishunner*, and its repercussions. The assassination and Tehlirian's trial had far-reaching consequences, including a direct impact on Raphael Lemkin, who coined the word "genocide" and worked for the adoption of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948.

Demirdjian was born in Beirut. He is a graduate of Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus, and studied Economics and European Union Integration at the University of Peiraeus in Greece. He has worked as a journalist, as Communications and Public Relations Director at the ANC Europe, and as the office

coordinator of the Artsakh Republic permanent representative to the Middle East. In 2020, he settled in Armenia, in the province of Lori, where he headed the COAF SMART Center.

For more information contact NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Detroit Tekeyan Chapter Reaches Out to Local Youth

YOUTH, from page 7

a medium for them to realize their own vision and ideas for Armenian cultural activities.

The Alexanians also gifted to the group a copy of the recent translation of Vahan Tekeyan's poetry (translated by Gerald Papasian and John Papasian, and edited by



Hye Doon Co-Chairs Christine Santourian and Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator senior editorial columnist Edmond Azadian and Gerald Papasian), and asked for a volunteer to recite one of the poems. Ms. Abby Panabaker, who is an English teacher at the AGBU Alex and

Marie Manoogian School, volunteered and beautifully recited "You Boys and Girls" by Vahan Tekeyan, in English translation. The poem, which has Tekeyan gently exhorting the orphans of the Genocide not to forget each other or where they came from, was moving and appropriate to the occasion. Ms. Panabaker received the copy of the book as a gift.

After a traditional Armenian lenten dinner was served courtesy of Basmajian Bakery, Hye Doon co-chairs Christine Santourian and Harry Kezelian (of the Mirror-Spectator) offered a brief thank you to the Alexanians and announcements of the upcoming Tekeyan-sponsored VEM Ensemble Concert and lecture by Prof. Melissa Bilal of UCLA on the legacy of musicologist and Gomidas disciple Mihran Toumajan, which are being held in honor of the late Armenian teacher at AGBU Manoogian, "Baron" Dickran Toumajan (who was the nephew of the famous musician). They also announced other upcoming local events, such as the Naghash Ensemble's March 9-10 concerts at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and at St. John's in Southfield, after which Fr. Aren Jebejian, pastor of St. John's, stopped by to briefly welcome the



Some participants at the Game Night

attendees and thank them for their efforts in keeping the Armenian community vibrant. The attitude of the local clergy, upon seeing the positive developments brought about by the group, has been to allow them the space and freedom to organize their own events without interference.

The main activity of the day then commenced, which was an Armenian Game

Night, featuring tavloo (backgammon) and the traditional Armenian card game karsoon. "Captain Jack" as a master tavloo player (varbed as we say in Armenian), was specifically invited not only to present the activities of the TCA, but to teach some of the young people who did not know the game how to play tavloo, with his inimitable charm and fun-loving personality contributing to the social bonds of the young Armenian-Americans. To the background of Armenian and Greek music, and the rolling of the backgammon dice, the Armenian-American Veterans' Building where the event was held (which doubles as a "Rec Center" for the St. John's community), began to take on the atmosphere of an Armenian coffeehouse or *agoump* of old. One could even hear a lively conversation in Western Armenian as one young man from the Middle East who



Hagop Alexanian, Harry Kezelian, and Diana Alexanian facing off against first timers in backgammon

knew the game taught it to another young man his own age who had recently arrived in the area from Beirut.

Perhaps an even more rare and special occurrence was the teaching of the Armenian card game "karsoon" (i.e. "40") which originates in the village of Tomarza, region of Kayseri, and has been passed down in the Racine, Wis., Armenian community. (A similar or identical game known as khoz is also played in Metro Detroit by some older descendants of survivors from the nearby village of Evereg-Fenesse, but is practically unknown by the younger generation). Leah Mamassian, whose maternal grandmother was born in Racine to parents from Tomarza (and was interviewed by this writer in his recent article on Racine), was the expert teacher of karsoon, which she plays with her family on a regular basis. The four-person game, which can be likened to a much simpler version of Bridge or Pinochle, was well received and perhaps to the surprise of some, also taught players some basic Armenian words which are used in the game, such as karsoon (40), ksan (20), kasheh (pull, i.e. to draw a card), and barab (referring to cards that have no point value).

— Harry Kezelian



# Arts & Culture

## Neil McPherson

*Bringing Armenian Genocide to the British Stage*

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LONDON — Neil McPherson (born in London, 1969) is British artistic director and playwright. Between 1991 and 1994 he trained as an actor at the Central School of Speech and Drama and was a member of the National Youth Theatre for eight years. McPherson was artistic director of the New End Theatre, Hampstead, from 1996 to 1997, and has been the artistic director of the Finborough Theatre, London, since January 1999. He has commissioned many productions for the Finborough Theatre including most of the theatre's acclaimed series of rediscoveries (including "Accolade," "Mixed Marriage" and "Cornelius").

His award-winning first play, "I Wish to Die Singing – Voices From The Armenian Genocide," was presented at the Finborough Theatre in 2015, and an excerpt was also performed concurrently in Los Angeles. His second play, "It Is Easy To Be Dead," sold out at the Finborough Theatre, and subsequently transferred to the West End where it was nominated for an Olivier Award, and toured Scotland. The scripts of both plays are published by Oberon Books.



McPherson received Best Artistic Director – Fringe Report Awards (2009), The Writers Guild Award for The Encouragement of New Writing (2010), Best Artistic Director – Off West End Awards (2011), Off West End Awards (2012), the Critics' Circle Special Award for Services to Theatre (2019).

**Neil, we became friends on Facebook after your award-winning first play, "I Wish to Die Singing – Voices From The Armenian Genocide," was presented at the Finborough Theatre in 2015. We, Armenians, are sensitive to those non-Armenians, who share our pain and concerns. And many people would have a logical question: why did you pick this topic?**

As far as I remember, the first time I ever heard about the Genocide was when I was 18 and read Tim Cross' *The Lost Voices of World War One*, which included the work of three

see MCPHERSON, page 14



OSCANYAN, THE TURKISH LECTURER.  
FROM AN AMBROTYPE BY BRADY.

## The Complex Life of the Pioneer of Armenian-American Immigration, Christopher Oscanyan

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — Scholar Nora Lessersohn, in a recent lecture online at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), shed light

on perhaps one of the earliest known Armenian Americans, Christopher Oscanyan.

Whether under the name of Khachadour Vosganian, Khachik Oskanian, or Christopher Oscanyan, this unique figure's name has remained simply a name, with the majority of publications or articles merely noting his existence as the first of a string of Armenians who came to the US for their education, which later in the 1880s led to mass economic, political, and refugee immigration to the US, increased exponentially by the Hamidian Massacres of the 1890s and the Armenian Genocide of World War I.

Lessersohn's research and her lecture aim to fill this void in the public's knowledge of this highly interesting figure in Armenian-American community history.

### Story of Ottoman Armenian In Changing Times

Lessersohn, a doctoral candidate in history at the University College, London, described her research as filling in the story of a man named Christopher Oscanyan and his work to connect the US and Turkey, and his creation and reshaping of an identity in order to do so. She stated that Oscanyan's story answers the main questions which started her on her academic path, especially, the question of why Armenian-American identity looks the way it does.

Oscanyan was an Armenian born in 1818 in Constantinople. As Lessersohn, noted, the Ottoman Empire, which was multi-ethnic and multi-religious at the time, was referred to in the US simply as "Turkey" and its people were often referred to as "Turks" regardless of their actual ethnic or religious background.

With the help of American missionaries, Oscanyan came to the US for the first time in 1834 (at age 16) in order to attend the University of the City of New-York (now NYU). Lessersohn shared a photograph of a page from the university's registrar with "Khachadour Osganyan, Gostantnoubolsetsi" (Khachadour Osganian of Constantinople) written in Armenian. Lessersohn noted that although Oscanyan already knew English, he chose to write his name in Armenian in the registrar's book.

Oscanyan returned to Constantinople between 1840 and 1854, then returned permanently to New York. For most of his career, Oscanyan used popular media to correct erroneous impressions and Orientalist stereotypes about "the Turks," in order to cultivate friendlier relations between the US and the Ottoman Empire. But in the 1870s, his politics radically changed as Christians began undergoing persecution, at which point he focused solely on building relations between the American and Armenian peoples until his death in 1895, by which point he was pleading for the US to obliterate the Ottoman Empire.

continued on next page

## Giving Nagorno-Karabakh a Voice Through Poetry

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WIESBADEN, Germany — The tug-of-war continues over Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin Corridor, in the wake of demands by the International Court of Justice that it be lifted and the deployment of a European Union mission to the area. Azerbaijan, to date, has not budged. In addition to mobilizing political protests and organizing humanitarian support, what can Armenians in the diaspora do?

The answer offered by Agapi Mkrtchian is, "give the Nagorno Karabakh Armenians a voice." The Armenian author and translator has done so by publishing a volume of poems composed by men and women from Artsakh, in a bilingual Armenian-German edition. Entitled *Das Blau streichelt meiner Gedanken Flügel: Armenische Lyrik aus Berg-Karabach/Arzach* (Blue Caresses the Wings of my Thoughts: Armenian Poetry from Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, Glaré 2022), the volume contains 30 short pieces by 16 poets. She presented the new volume on March 5 at a well-attended gathering in Café Bliss in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Mkrtchian moved to Germany in 1987 following completion of her studies at Yerevan State University, where she also taught, and Jena University. She continued studies at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, then began her teaching career in German literature in Wiesbaden from 1993 to 2022. Though settled in Germany, she has maintained contact with Armenia and its literary community. As Dr. Lutz Kuntzsch from the Society for the German Language noted in introducing her, Mkrtchian has received awards for her own poetry and prose, as well as translations, from the Armenian Writers Association (2015 and 2022) and the Ministry for the Diaspora (2017).



Agapi Mkrtchian

Mkrtchian provided a brief overview of the history of the conflict from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, drawing on the Afterword to the new volume, which was written by Dr. Tessa Hofmann. see POETRY, page 16





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

from previous page

Lessersohn explained that one of Oscanyan frequently gave public lectures, a very popular form of entertainment in 19<sup>th</sup>-century America.

Starting in 1835, he gave his first public lectures on Armenia and education among the Armenians. He appealed to the audience to financially support the efforts of American missionaries to build schools for Armenians in Turkey. He leveraged the ancient past of the Armenians by speaking of Armenia as his “nation” and “country,” identifying as an Armenian Christian to solicit an American Christian audience’s funds, and even quoting Shakespeare to show that he, and by extension the Armenian people, were civilized from a Western perspective. Lessersohn highlighted the quote from this lecture which appealed to the educational movement, “how wonderful, how interesting that the youngest nation of the earth should become the instructor of the oldest.” In these early lectures, Oscanyan also lamented the fall of Armenia as an independent state at the hands of the despotic tyrants, but declined to name who those tyrants were.

#### Reformist Ottomanism

In 1838, Oscanyan began to give lectures on life in Constantinople and the “Domestic Manners, Customs, and Costumes of the Turks.” Rather than being anti-Ottoman, these lectures tried to counter some of the most common negative stereotypes such as Turks being barbarous, lazy, lustful, violent, etc. He also identified himself with the culture and civilization of the Ottoman Empire, at the end of one lecture even identifying himself as a “typical Ottoman man.”

In the late 1830s Oscanyan became a naturalized US citizen and married an American woman named Maria Louisa Skinner. He took her with him back to Constantinople in 1840 at the time that the Tanzimat reforms were beginning under Sultan Abdulmejid, which were supposed bring more equality between the different ethnic and religious groups of the Empire.

While in Constantinople, four children were born to the Oscanyans, and Oscanyan started one of the first newspapers in the Ottoman Empire, which was published in Armenian.

During the Crimean War (1854), Oscanyan went to Great Britain, which had allied itself with Turkey in the war against Russia. In London, he installed an “Oriental and Turkish Museum” to acquaint the British Public with their new Ottoman Ally. He featured the Armenians prominently in this museum, and wrote in the catalog that the “Armenians were the real life and soul of Turkey, and without them the Osmanlis [Ottoman Muslim Turks] could not survive a single day.”

According to Lessersohn, Oscanyan often combined pro-Turkey and anti-Turkey viewpoints, such as calling Islam “barbarous” and promoting the Armenians and their Christian faith, while at the same time calling for closer relations between Turkey and the West and supporting the Ottoman Empire politically.

“At times he expressed both sentiments, making statements that were all at once expressions of Armenian superiority and influence, critiques of the ruling power of the Ottomans, and affiliations with Turkey and the Ottomans,” Lessersohn said. She argued that “this pride and emphasis on influence shows that criticism and collaboration were not mutually exclusive,” and that Armenians at the time felt “both special, and subjugated.”

#### US Return and Showmanship

After returning to the US in 1855, Oscanyan resumed lecturing on Turkey and its people, and his affiliations with Turkey were even stronger than they had been be-

fore. At the time, many referred to him as an “Armenian Turk” or “Turkish Armenian.”

Oscanyan began a series of failed ventures to try to bring “Turkish” culture to America or to create ties between Americans and Ottomans. In 1855 he established a Turkish Coffeehouse on Broadway, while in the 1860s he tried more than once to start a Turkish Bathhouse in New York City. He also started writing for the local newspapers.

In 1857, Oscanyan wrote the book *The Sultan and His People*, which was an overview for the American audience of the geography, society, and culture of Turkey, including the Armenians and other minorities. According to Lessersohn, the book was



Mr. OSCANYAN, the Oriental Lecturer. Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by C. D. Fredricks & Co., in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of

Oscanyan’s portrait from his 1857 book, “The Sultan and His People” with his signature in English and Armenian below

most likely produced as a kind of argument for Oscanyan’s goal of gaining a diplomatic post in the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the US. He positioned himself as an author particularly equipped to chart a path to Ottoman reform, Lessersohn stated.

While opposing Turkey’s age-old enemy, Russia, Oscanyan gave suggestions on how Turkey, then known as the “Sick Man of Europe,” could be “preserved and resuscitated,” including decentralization, European oversight, separation of church and state, and equality of the religious sects, suggesting that if Ottoman Muslims and Christians were given equal rights, they could rule together under European hegemony.

While the US government seemed favorable to Oscanyan’s application for a job, he never received one, possibly because his relationship with the American missionaries, who were highly influential with the US diplomatic corps in Constantinople, had soured.

By 1860, Oscanyan, now writing articles about the Armenians, whom he characterized as the “Yankees of the East,” no longer trusted that Europe had the best interests of Turkey and its Christians at heart. He proposed a new plan to divide up Turkey into small but independent states. Within this plan, he suggested that “the two Armenian provinces could be combined under the rule of one of their old princes” claiming that there were many families still in existence descended from Armenian nobility.

During the American Civil War, Oscanyan resorted to ever more bombastic measures to get his message across, and in the mold of Wild Bill Hickok and P.T. Barnum, he became the impresario of the “Grand Turk and his Harem of Circassian Beauties,” a spectacular show designed to draw bigger audiences to his lectures on the culture and accompanied by female models

dressed in “authentic” garments, as well as a black man, who evidently played the role of the harem’s overseer. An album of collectible postcard-like pictures from the show was published in 1863. In 1865, he even opened his own building in New York, dubbed the “Turkish Hall” to showcase his presentations.

#### Armenian Advocacy

In 1868, he finally got a diplomatic post – but not the one that he wanted. Instead, the Ottoman government made him Consul General of Turkey in New York. He served until 1874 when he either resigned or was forced out. According to Lessersohn, this was due to “his ineptitude at being corrupt” doing a poor job at facilitating kickbacks for himself.

Soon after, as Abdul Hamid II ascended to the Ottoman throne in 1876 and the Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1877, Oscanyan showed a markedly different opinion on Turkey. During the Russo-Turkish war, he sided openly with Russia in his public lectures, stating that “Russia’s religion is one of improvement, and Russia is amendable to the laws of change. Russia can be made better, Turkey cannot.”

This turn in his opinions might have been because he was upset about losing his position, said Lessersohn, but was likely fortified by the “internationalization of the Armenian Question.” From the 1860s onwards, Christian agitation and anti-Christian sentiment in the Ottoman Empire were on the rise, and in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria all gained autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. While Armenians also campaigned for reform, civil rights and partial autonomy, they were “given only a tepid promise that the Ottoman government would carry out the necessary reforms,” said Lessersohn.

After this diplomatic disappointment, Armenian nationalist organizations (i.e. Hunchag Party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation) were formalized, starting in the 1880s, while the Ottoman Government moved more toward Pan-Islamic and later Pan-Turkish ideology, rather than their tem-

porary reformist tendency of the 1850s.

In response, Oscanyan began to advocate for Armenian immigration into the United States. He argued that Armenians fleeing Ottoman Turkey would be model citizens. “The Americans were a kind hearted people and loved all who are industrious and sober. Therefore, the Armenians were just the people to suit their peculiarities, and would on that account gain their affection and sympathy, and soon prosper,” he stated in one of his public lectures.

In 1889, with thousands of Armenians recently arrived in America, Oscanyan started an Armenian newspaper in New York, called the *Azadoutiun (Freedom) National Newspaper*. Its tagline, echoing the rhetoric of contemporary Armenian revolutionaries, was “The price of liberty is blood alone.” In his paper, he wrote, “We express enmity to the Turks to the point of hatred, but our enmity is neither personal or social, but merely political.” He stated that because the Turks have persistently persecuted and exterminated Christians, Armenians will certainly oppose such conduct, and rhetorically asked “Will we be accused of not giving the pleasure of being slaughtered or sacrificed for fanaticism?”

In the summer of 1894 during the massacre that followed the Sassoun Resistance, a dying Oscanyan dictated a message from his sickbed to be delivered to a gathering of Armenian-American compatriots in New York City. The newspapers, which reprinted Oscanyan’s address, referred to him as “the Patriarch of the Armenian colony in America.” According to the newspapers, Armenia’s only hope was the United States, and they quoted Oscanyan as saying “The utter extinction of a power so barbarous, inhuman, and relentless as Turkey all through history has shown itself to be, would be a blessing to the world,” calling on America to avenge the Turkish outrages.

Oscanyan died on August 1, 1895 (prior to the main outbreak of the Hamidian massacres later that year) and was buried in Staten Island with his tomb marked only as “Oscanyan” in Armenian letters.



Institute for the Study  
of Eastern Christianity

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Grace and Paul Shahinian

Armenian Christian Art and Culture Lecture Series

## ARMENIA AND THE WORLD *in art and culture*

CHRISTINA MARANCI, PH.D.  
MASHTOTS PROFESSOR OF ARMENIAN STUDIES  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Date: March 23, 2023

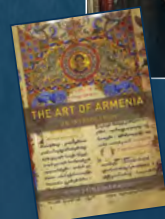
Time: 5 p.m.

Location: Heritage Hall

Reception to follow in Heritage Hall

The Catholic University of America  
Father O'Connell Hall  
620 Michigan Ave., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20064

To request accommodations for individuals with disabilities, please call 202-319-5683.







## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Neil McPherson: Bringing Armenian Genocide to British Stage

MCPHERSON, from page 12

leading Armenian poets, all deported from Constantinople on April 24, 1915.

Seventeen years later, as artistic director at the Finborough Theatre in London, I was programming the theatre for the 2005 season. As usual, I researched the anniversaries that fell in that year as they can sometimes be a useful marketing hook for a production. When I learned that 2005 was the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, I decided to search for a play that we could produce to commemorate it. All of the plays I could find were by Armenian-Americans. Most were very short, and focused on the experience of the Armenian diaspora in the United States. They all assumed that their audiences already possessed a good working knowledge of the Genocide.

But I quickly learnt that the Armenian Genocide was very far from common knowledge. Most people I spoke to had never heard of it. A very few had, but only vaguely, and then solely in relation to the Holocaust, rather than as an event in its own right.

In the end, if I wasn't able to find a play that would do that, then I vowed to try and create one myself.

**The genocide is continuing – for example the war between Armenia and Turkey-supported Azerbaijan in 2020 and current blockade of Artsakh. Of course, we are thankful to professionals like you, but do you believe that artists are still able to make some positive changes with just their art?**

Of course, theatre can't change the world, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't try. As an example, in December, the Finborough Theatre became the very first foreign theatre to visit Kyiv since the Russian invasion in February with performances of a one-woman show by a Ukrainian playwright. The play itself was hugely acclaimed, but perhaps more than the play itself, was the fact that the actress had travelled all the way from the safety of the UK into an active war zone to share with people her work and her art. The ges-



Tamar Karabekian in "I Wish to Die Singing"

ture of support and solidarity — coupled with the art — became something deeply meaningful.

**I assume you get acquainted with Armenian literature a little, as the title of your play, "I Wish to Die Singing," is taken from poet Siamanto, who died during the Genocide. Generally, what sources did you use while writing the play?**

Obviously as a non-Armenian, I researched exhaustively for the play. The bibliography in the published text fills three plays. I used the work of Peter Balakian extensively, both his own writings (*June-Tree: New and Selected Poems*; *Black Dog of Fate*; *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*) and translations (*Bloody News*

*from My Friend by Siamanto*; *Armenian Golgotha by Grigoris Balakian*). I used also the usual primary sources like Henry Morgenthau and contemporary reports; the memoir by Fethiye Çetin, a Turkish author who discovered that her grandmother was — unbeknownst to her — a survivor of the Armenian Genocide who had been forcibly converted to Islam; and, of course, as much Armenian poetry as I could fit into the play.

**How did the audience and critics respond?**

We had a very successful run with many great reviews and sell-out performances. Some of the press quotes we received included:

"A searing account of the Armenian genocide... it movingly achieves what it

sets out to do" (Michael Billington, *The Guardian*).

"Simple, moving and very powerful.... You leave the theatre with a soul full of anger" (Aleks Sierz, *The Stage*).

"90 minutes of continuously compelling theatre" (Howard Loxton, *British Theatre Guide*).

The reaction of the Armenian community was overwhelming, including parents bringing their children, and even people who travelled especially to the theatre from as far afield as Beirut and Yerevan to see it.

**There were cases that during such performances some spectators threw scissors or other sharp objects on the stage. I hope your performances happened without such incidents.**

We did receive some death threats when we did the 2005 production. When the full production opened in 2015, on the exact anniversary of the start of the Genocide — 24th of April — we were very fortunate as the denialist lobby seemed to be careful to keep their heads down around the time of the centenary. We had a few minor incidents including a woman who tried to distribute leaflets to the audience denying the Genocide, and serious abuse on Twitter, but nothing too bad. Interestingly, the angriest letter of complaint we received was not from Turkish sources, but from a British couple outraged that Israel was criticised for not formally recognising the Genocide.

**Some years ago, I have translated one of best pieces of documentary theatre, "Seven." Do you think that in the future documentary dramas will have more place in theater?**

Yes indeed, I think there will always be a place for documentary theatre. There are some subjects where the themes are so vast that the truth speaks better than fiction.

**Have you ever visited Armenia?**

Sadly, I have not yet done so. Running a theatre and occasionally writing plays means that I rarely have any time to visit anywhere. But one day definitely!

**ADDITIONAL SHOW**  
SUNDAY, MARCH 19  
GRAB A DRINK @ 5 PM  
START LAUGHING @ 6 PM

**A SHARP, FUNNY NEW SHOW**  
IN ARMENIAN

PRESENTED BY  
TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
GREATER NEW YORK

MARCH 18, 2023

TICKETS: \$75

PLEASE CONTACT TALIA AT  
(917) 238-3970  
RSVPTALIA@GMAIL.COM

NUMBERED SEATING  
MEZZA & CASH BAR

GRAB A DRINK: 6:30 PM  
START LAUGHING: 7:30 PM

ST. LEON CHURCH, ABAJIAN HALL,  
12-01 SADDLE RIVER RD, FAIR LAWN, NJ 07410

**VAHE BER BERIAN**

TCA  
MHER MEGERDCHIAN  
THEATRICAL GROUP

**25 YEARS OF THEATER**

*Celebration Gala*

**MAY 13, 2023**  
SAVE THE DATE





ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Sylvia Hagopian: Armenian Greek Finikia Cookies

Readers will love Sylvia Hagopians grandmother’s melt-in-your-mouth Armenian Greek Finikia cookies with the delicious and simple flavors of cinnamon and walnuts. Soaking the cookies in sugar syrup gives them a decadent, sweet taste. Finikia (or melomakarono) is an egg-shaped Greek dessert made mainly from flour, olive oil, and honey. Along with the kourabiedes, it is a traditional dessert often prepared during the Christmas season. When it comes to Greeks and Christmas, you can absolutely bet these decadent cookies will make an appearance. Some people use the two terms interchangeably depending where they are from, although there are differences. Finikia often contain semolina, or may be fried or stuffed as opposed to melomakarona.

“This recipe comes from my grandmother on my father’s side-Anahid Hagopian (née Kevorkian). My grandmother was born in 1915 in Shabin-Karahisar, which is historical western Armenia. She was orphaned due to the Armenian Genocide orchestrated by Ottoman Turks at the beginning of the 20th century,” says Sylvia, a resident of Toronto, and the founder and recipe creator at ArmenianDish.com.

“ArmenianDish.com is my journey to recreate my grandmother’s splendid dishes to share with my family and readers. Tangy yogurt soup with mint and mante dumplings, deliciously seasoned kebab skewers, generously meaty lahmajoun with squeezed lemon, crispy cheese boereg with tabulé and zesty eetch, kofte....just to name a few. I’m obsessed with food and food photography, and I know some of these dishes can be time consuming to make, but I try to break down recipe steps in a way that helps my readers learn from my trials and errors,” she adds.



Sylvias grandmother Anahid Hagopian (née Kevorkian) was an Armenian Genocide survivor (Photo courtesy of Armenian Dish)

“The highlands where my grandmother was born were one of the few locations where Armenians actively resisted the Armenian Genocide in an epic battle. This was also the birthplace of Andranik Ozanian, a legendary Armenian military commander, statesman and key figure of the Armenian national liberation movement,” she says. (Note: General Andranik was an Armenian military commander and statesman, the best known fedayi, and a key figure of the Armenian national liberation movement. He was born on February 25, 1865,

in the town of Shabin-Karahisar (Şebinkarahisar), Sivas Vilayet, Ottoman Empire. From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, he was one of the main Armenian leaders of military efforts for the independence of Armenia. Armenian fedayis’ main goal was to defend Armenian villagers from persecution and at the same time, disrupt the Ottoman Empire’s activities in Armenian populated regions. Armenian volunteers fought during Hamidian Massacres, Sasun Resistance (1894), Zeitun Rebellion (1895-1896), Defense of Van, and Khanasor Expedition. They were the leaders and members of the Armenian national movement.)

“To save her life from the advancing Turkish forces, my grandmother was surrendered to an orphanage and then transferred along with thousands of other Armenian babies to orphanages in Greece where she grew up. The Near East Foundation supported my grandmother’s move to Cairo, Egypt when she was just 13, where she was welcomed into Haig and Marie Hovsepian’s family. She married

my grandfather, Vartares Hagopian, also orphaned by the Armenian Genocide, in 1937 in Cairo.”

“I take great comfort in sharing this recipe with my readers since it is a reminder of my grandmother’s and our ancestors’ fight to live, and the Armenian blazing legacy of strength and survival. This is a very difficult time for Armenians around the world as we relive the trauma of our people’s genocide as Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey, invades our motherland-threatening our people’s existence through dehumanizing and barbaric acts of violence against our soldiers and the innocent villagers living near the border.”

“My father fondly remembers these cookies from his childhood, and I am grateful my aunt preserved the recipe exactly how my grandmother used to make it. We loved these melt-in-your-mouth cookies with the simple flavors of cinnamon and walnuts. Soaking the cookies in sugar syrup gives them a decadent, sweet taste. This is a Greek recipe possibly taught to my Armenian grandmother when she lived in an orphanage in Greece. She was famous for bringing a platter of these cookies, her specialty, to every family event and celebration.”

INGREDIENTS:

Cookie batter:

- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 cups Crisco
- 1/2 cup butter (room temperature)
- 1/8 cup sugar (Sylvia’s aunt explained that just a palm full is needed, since they will be dipped in sugar syrup)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon corn starch (mix with 1 cup of water)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup crushed walnuts for topping

Sugar syrup:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare baking sheets with parchment paper.

Blend together oil, Crisco and butter until smooth. Combine the dry ingredients (except the walnuts which will be used for topping the cookies after soaking.) Mix water with cornstarch. Alternate adding water/cornstarch mixture and flour in batches to the oil and butter. Combine well until smooth. Flour your surface and rolling pin. Roll your dough about 1 cm thick and cut out circles using a cookie cutter. With a gentle touch, roll the circles into “tubes.” Then, each of these cookie tubes are gently rolled down the rough side of a cheese grater. (The prickly side you would use for grinding spices.) This helps to give it a design and later will help the cookie absorb the syrup after being baked.

Line the cookies in your tray and bake for 25 minutes until the bottom is lightly browned.



The process of making Sylvia Hagopian’s Armenian Greek Finikia Cookies (Photo courtesy of Armenian Dish)

While the cookies are baking, combine the syrup ingredients in a saucepan and find a slotted spoon. Bring to a boil and allow to simmer on low.

After the cookies have cooled, dip each cookie with the slotted spoon into the sugar syrup. Allow it to absorb in the sauce pan for about 10-15 seconds per cookie. Place them on a cookie wrack that allows the syrup to drip down. While the cookie is still wet from the syrup, sprinkle crushed walnuts on top. (Sylvia suggests covering the counter with paper towels so that you aren’t cleaning up a sticky mess.)

These cookies taste even better the next day after they have absorbed all the sweet syrup.

Watch Sylvia’s video to see how to make these cookies at: <https://armeniandish.com/2022/09/make-armenian-greek-finikia-cookies/>

Also see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmMg5VokaCg&t=6s>





ARTS & CULTURE

# Giving Nagorno-Karabakh A Voice Through Poetry

POETRY, from page 12

Having maintained correspondence over time with all 16 poets, Mkrtchian travelled to Karabakh last December, and left just two days before the Lachin Corridor was blockaded. She had already considered what her contribution to the struggle might be. Had she been born a man, she said, she would have volunteered for military service. Instead, she decided to use her literary talents to make the voices of those in the beleaguered land heard. Thus, the idea for the anthology.

Men and Women, Young and Old

The poets who have contributed to the collection are all from Karabakh. They span generations; Vova Arzumanyan, the youngest, was born in 2003 and Sokrat Khanyan was born in 1930. Almost all the

as in 2020.

**Sounds and Images of the Homeland**

The themes developed in this poetry reflect the personal experiences of the writers: we are dealing with love for the homeland and the pain of its loss, recollections of childhood, love, and war. For example, Vardan Hakobyan’s writes in “Artsakh”:

To define the borders  
of my homeland Artsakh  
I choose  
as a unit of measure  
love. There is  
no greater land than Artsakh,  
no mightier homeland than Artsakh.

And, the 92-year-old Khanyan recalls the image of his childhood home, where he hears the voices neither of his mother nor his father, the doors no longer swing open, neither children’s shouts nor songs



Christina Narinyan and Agapi Mkrtchian

poets are members of the Writers Union of Armenia and/or Karabakh; several are, or have been, active in journalism, like Aris Arseni, Hermine Avagyan, Asnive Grigoryan, Nemrut, Vitali Petrosyan and Sarine Sarajyan; Professor Vardan Hakobyan, poet and dramatist, is the author of the national hymn of the Republic of Artsakh. Norek Gasparyan was Minister for Youth and Culture in 2007. And some have been active in the military: Aris Arseni was in the underground movement for the liberation of Nagorno-Karabakh. He, along with Gagik Beglaryan, took part in the 1988-1994 war. Komitas Hakobyan died in 1994 in that conflict, at the age of 22. Vitali Petrosyan took part in the war in April 2016 as well

of birds can be heard to share his longing. It ends with a vision the courtyard of his childhood, where he planted roses; in the homeless courtyard, he feels orphaned.

War is the theme of Sona Hambardzumyan’s poem. War is something that terrorizes all, mercilessly amputates our lives, pervades everyday life; war is not invisible, she concludes, the “morning sunbeam is the lamentation of our interrupted dreams.” Gagik Beglaryan writes of “my Fallen friends,” Norek Gasparyan also treats the theme in a poem entitled “Suicide.”

The poetic voices do lament a tragic destiny, and strains of sadness, yearning, nostalgia, melancholy can be heard throughout. But one hears, as well, a motif of hope

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

**MARCH 12 — Armenian Dance Group of Fresno Presents the Annual Dance Concert, with opening act by the Andrew Hagopian Ensemble. The event will be hosted by special guest Ashot Ghazaryan. 5 p.m. Paul Shaghoian Memorial Concert Hall, 2770 E. International Ave., Fresno. For tickets visit [fresnoarmeniandance.ticketleap.com/concert/](https://fresnoarmeniandance.ticketleap.com/concert/)**

**MARCH 17 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Beshgeturian Center Social Committee present “Family Night,” with music by renowned violinist Merouzhan Margaryan. 7.30 p.m., TCA Beshgeturian Center, 1901 N. Allen Ave., Altadena. For reservations call 626-296-1806.**

MASSACHUSETTS

**MARCH 12 — Concert in memory of Composer Levon Chaushian, with Anahit Chaushian from the UK on piano, soprano Knarik Nerkararyan and pianist Levon Hovsepian. Sunday, 5 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington. Hosted by Amaras Art Alliance. For info call (617) 331-0426.**

**MARCH 18 — Yerkir Nairi and Friends Unite to Present a Concert Celebrating and Preserving Armenian Cultural Treasures, featuring Victoria Avetisyan, Yeghishe Manucharyan, Lilit Karapetian-Shougarian, Sargis Karapetyan, Nuné Hakobyan, Levon Hovsepian, Haig Hovsepian, Ani Hovsepian and others. 6 p.m. First Parish in Bedford, 75 Great Road, Bedford. Tickets \$65, \$125. For tickets visit [www.ticketsource.us/yerkir-nairi](https://www.ticketsource.us/yerkir-nairi). All proceeds to benefit educational publications and digitizing of the Armenian National Music Library.**

**MARCH 26 — Piano Recital: Blossoming Keys, Performers: Anahit Truzyan, Rebecca Lai, Timothy Lai. Works by Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt. Sunday, 5 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation: 441 Mystic Street, Arlington. 781-646-3090.**

**APRIL 16 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. Sunday beginning at 7:30 a.m. Supported by the Park’s Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund. Rain date: April 23. For details, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)**

NEW JERSEY

**MARCH 18 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York presents “Payts,” a new show from comedy great Vahe Berberian. Tickets \$75. Talia (917) 238-3970 or [RSVPtaliab@gmail.com](mailto:RSVPtaliab@gmail.com). Numbered seating and mezza and cash bar. Cocktails at 6.30 p.m., program to start at 7.30. St. Leon Church, Abajian Hall, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn.**

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

NEW YORK

**MARCH 29 — The International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA), the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center will host the second event of their reading series, Literary Lights, featuring Deanna Cachoian-Schanz, translator of A Book, Untitled – written by Shushan Avagyan. Cachoian-Schanz will be joined by Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, Preceptor on Armenian Language and Culture at Harvard University. 7:00 p.m. Eastern, at the Guild Hall of the Diocesan Center in New York City (No registration required). A Book, Untitled unfolds an imagined encounter between two early twentieth-century feminist writers, Zabel Yesayan and Shushanik Kurghinian, juxtaposed with a conversation between the author and a friend.**

RHODE ISLAND

**MARCH 11 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church and Composers Union of Armenia Presents Armenian Music Concert in memory of composer Levon Chaushyan, Featuring Anahit Chaushyan, piano (UK), Knarik Nerkararyan, soprano, Levon Hovsepian, piano. Saturday, 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Donation \$20. Refreshments after performance.**

**Send Calendar Items to the Mirror-Spectator: To send calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator, email [alin@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:alin@mirrorspectator.com) or [alin.gregorian@gmail.com](mailto:alin.gregorian@gmail.com). You can also visit our website, [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com), and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More.” You can also mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.**

and confidence, nurtured by faith, as in a poem by Aris Arseni, who calls on the “bells to ring out,” and in Sarine Sarajyan’s poem, “Prayer,” with an appeal for peace to reign in her land.

The afternoon poetry reading was framed in live music. At the piano sat Christina

Narinyan, from Steinbach, and she intermittently played variations from Paganini, wonderfully. The nine-year-old girl was a prize-winner in a music competition this year (“Jugend musiziert”). Her presence and performance enhanced a mood of optimism and hope.





## COMMENTARY

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

## MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

## ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

## SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST

Edmond Y. Azadian

## STAFF WRITER

Harry Kezelian III

## CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Atamian, Artsvi Bakhchinyan,  
Florence Avakian, Christine Vartanian  
Datian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Philippe  
Raffi Kalfayan, Ken Martin, Gerald  
Papasian, Benjamin Poghosyan, Suren  
Sargsyan, Harut Sassounian, Hagop  
Vartivarian

## REGIONAL

## CORRESPONDENTS

LOS ANGELES: Ani Duzdabanyan-  
Manoukian, Kevork Keushkerian,  
Michelle Mkhlian  
YEREVAN: Raffi Elliott  
BERLIN: Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
PARIS: Jean Eckian  
SAN FRANCISCO: Kim Bardakian  
CAIRO: Maydaa Nadar

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

## VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA  
02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

Other than the Editorial, views  
and opinions expressed in this  
newspaper do not necessarily  
reflect the policies of the  
publisher.

## EDITORIAL

## Appeasement of Azerbaijan Will Only Trigger More Violence



By Edmond Y.  
Azadian

(as well as Syria) had temporarily put a limit to Turkey's aggressive stance towards its neighbors.

Despite all these developments, Azerbaijan has refused to unblock the Lachin Corridor, which it has blocked since December 12. In addition it has escalated its war rhetoric and engaged in violent clashes with the Armenian side. This means that those developments have in no way have impacted Azerbaijan's behavior and its methods of assessing the political atmosphere in the region.

There are some inherent causes motivating President Ilham Aliyev's aggression and shaping his policies.

For one, Aliyev considers Armenia the defeated party and he has decided to extract maximum concessions from Yerevan. Another reason is Russia's resentment towards Armenia because of the latter's recent deals with the West, to which Moscow is responding through a third party, meaning Azerbaijan. They are not admitting that Armenia has had little choice but to seek help from the West, since the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which Russia leads and in which Armenia is a member, has resolutely refused to help the latter at any point. Adding insult to injury, several member nations' leaders have congratulated Azerbaijan on its decisive victory in the 44-Day War which it had launched.

The third reason, which is not always obvious when discussion turns to politics in the Caucasus, is the Israeli political and military support for Azerbaijan. Despite Turkey's quandary temporarily limiting its capacity for foreign adventures, Baku is depending heavily on Israel to gain leniency from the West and in particular, from the US, for its arrogance and bloody misadventures.

On the sidelines of the last Munich Security Conference in February, when Aliyev shared a panel with the prime ministers of Armenia and Georgia, addressing Nikol Pashinyan, he bluntly stated that Armenia has signed a treaty of capitulation and the people in Armenia have recognized the results of the war by reelecting Pashinyan. Therefore, he added, Armenia has to pay the price. Once we understand Aliyev's frame of mind, then nothing seems out of the ordinary; his ministers have considered the "Zangezur Corridor" as war booty since Aliyev finds it very reasonable to claim publicly that Armenia's territory is up for grabs to be recategorized as Western Azerbaijan.

Russia's nefarious role only boosts Aliyev's ego and encourages him in his brinkmanship with Armenia. Armenia invited EU monitors to its borders and Russia was displeased. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned Yerevan that stationing them without Azerbaijan's consent would create problems. This column, at the time, predicted that it will be Mr. Lavrov, not a psychic, who will foment that problem and that is why he would know it will happen. And lo and behold, Mr. Lavrov just visited Baku a few days ago to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Russia-Azerbaijan strategic partnership alliance, and on the heels of that visit, Azerbaijani terrorists killed three police officers and severely injured another, on March 6, inside Karabakh. (See story on Page 1.)

Several analysts in Armenia commented that every time Mr. Lavrov visits Baku, Azerbaijan is encouraged to commit a violent act, and this time around was no exception.

This was a repeated performance of Azerbaijani aggression in last May and the serious escalation on September 13-14, 2022.

Turkey and Pakistan were active participants in the 44-Day War against Armenia while Israel was the invisible partner, by providing deadly drones.

Armenia does not seem to be the target of Israeli military plans in its standoff with Iran, but is only an unintended victim. We also have to factor in the Israeli influence when we complain every year over the presidential waiving of Article 907 of the Freedom Support Act banning the sending of US military support to Azerbaijan.

Israel is Azerbaijan's staunch ally, to the chagrin of the Islamic world. Baku has provided its own territory for Israeli surveillance of Iran and even use of its territory as a launching pad for an eventual attack on Iran, as it was recently revealed by the Israeli daily *Haaretz*. As tensions rise between Iran and Israel, Azerbaijan becomes more indispensable. Israel's presence was further enhanced after Azerbaijan captured the territories that were under Armenian control.

After some tense days, when Israel launched a few rockets into Iran, there were hopeful signs that the Iran Nuclear Deal would be back on track after Iran permitted the visit of Rafael Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But it seems that Mr. Grossi's remarks touched a raw nerve in Israel.

Indeed, he stated that an Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear facilities is against the law. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Netanyahu responded angrily, saying, "Rafael Grossi is a worthy gentleman who has said something unworthy. Against which law? Is Iran, which is openly calling for our destruction, permitted to defend destructive weapons that would slaughter us? Are we permitted to defend ourselves? ... Nothing will deter us from defending our country and preventing our enemies from eliminating the State of Jews."

Azerbaijan's value rises in conjunction with the temperature of this incendiary rhetoric from the controversial and much-hated Israeli head of state. As is the case with Azerbaijan, domestically Israel is in disarray under the thumb of a dictator. In oil-rich Azerbaijan the standard of living is lower than Armenia, while political opponents are hauled into jail. In Israel, Netanyahu's megalomaniacal thirst for power seeks to strangle the country's high courts and as a result, hundreds of thousands of citizens are protesting every day. At the same time, Israeli-Palestinian tensions are ratcheting up, now at the level of the next Intifada, with his encouragement of illegal Israeli settlers on Palestinian lands. Thus, it looks to be the most opportune time for Netanyahu to seek an external adventure to whip up domestic support.

It is not unusual to have another conflagration while one is still raging, in this case in Ukraine, particularly restraining one of Iran's close allies, Russia, in the region.

Even if Turkey is temporarily out of commission, Russia and Israel are there to lend their support to Baku.

see APPEASEMENT, page ?





COMMENTARY

STATEMENT BY THE ORGANIZERS OF THE CONFERENCE ‘REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH: THE IMPERATIVE OF INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION’

*Editorial Note: A conference called Republic of Artsakh: The Imperative of International Recognition took place on February 24-25 at Yerevan’s Mesrop Mash-tots Matenadaran [Repository of Manuscripts], with the participation of many scholars, diplomats, political figures and historians. Such events often are labeled as pro- or anti-government in today’s polarized atmo-sphere in Armenia, but it is important that all sectors of the Armenian people, in Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora, unite forces to escape the current impasse. For this reason, it is important to continue such public discussions and analyses, even if sometimes they may be used by some forces for political purposes. Below, we are reproducing without comment the statement of the organizing body of the conference as its conclusion to the nearly twenty varied speeches, panel discussions, and exchanges conducted.*

We, the co-organizers of the conference Republic of Artsakh: The Imperative of International Recognition held in Yerevan on February 24 and 25, 2023, with the blessing of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, based on the ideas, arguments and scientific justifications stemming from the academic speeches and remarks presented at the conference, underscore the following:

• Artsakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan; moreover, the Republic of Artsakh is an established state itself. Historically, Nagorno-Karabakh has been an Armenian territory for thousands of years, and in 1918-1920, when Azerbaijan first put forward its claims on the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh, in all international reports Nagorno-Karabakh was explicitly recognized as a territory inhabited by Armenians. Only after the establishment of the Soviet regime and with-in its internal administrative territorial division, was it annexed to Soviet Azerbaijan while still continuing to enjoy the status of an autonomous region. The Soviet legislation underlying the renewed autonomy of Art-sakh also corresponded to the norms of international law, providing an equal right of self-determination to people living in Soviet Union. The factual basis for the independence of Artsakh was not only the ethnic, territorial, socio-cultural, economic, historical auton-omy of Artsakh, but first and foremost, the existential necessity of its people to avoid genocide and ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan. The international commu-nity has never expressed any explicit legal or political position that Artsakh should be incorporated back to Azerbaijan, and in 2007 the co-chairs of the Organi-zation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group came up with a proposal, which in 2009 was adopted by Armenia and Azerbaijan as the Madrid principles and as a basis for negotiations, whereupon alongside with the principle of territorial integrity, the people’s right for self-determination was established as the basis for negotiated final solution. The international legal foundations of the establishment of the Republic of Artsakh are thus indisputable, and any retreat from them is impermissible.

• Considering the issue of Artsakh outside the pack-

age of existential concerns of Armenia is not permis-sible. Recognizing Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan, en-forcing it with any legal document, and disowning the struggle for the realization of Artsakh people’s right to self-determination will not only fail to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the physical safety of its population, but on the contrary, it will become another tragic milestone turning irre-versible the demolition of Armenian statehood and the genocide of the Armenian people, as Azerbaijan never hid its genocidal aspirations not only towards Art-sakh people, but also towards the Republic of Armenia, by means of hateful actions and likewise rhetoric peri-odically rejecting the right of the Armenian people to live in their own historical homeland.

• The political and diplomatic mechanisms and op-portunities for the international recognition of the Re-public of Artsakh are by no means exhausted. From a legal and political point of view, the claims spread by the government’s propaganda machine that allegedly back to December 21, 1991, Armenia recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan through the Alma-Ata Declaration, including Artsakh as part of the latter, are totally misguided. Likewise, false and groundless are the claims that the international community sees Art-sakh as part of Azerbaijan. The international commu-nity is not prompting us to sign such a “peace treaty” with Azerbaijan, which will be followed by Azerbai-jan’s new aggression, groundless territorial claims, and large-scale reparations, the price of which will be paid by the people of Armenia, and which will result in the loss of sovereignty and the eventual destruction of the Republic of Armenia. Although the Co-chair states of the Minsk Group have serious geopolitical disagree-ments, they still maintain a balanced position based on the general principles of international law regard-ing the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, and all three Co-chair states expressed a clear position af-ter the 44-day war in 2020 that the issue concerning the status of Artsakh is not closed. The statements of many states and international organizations regarding the blockade of the Lachin Corridor also prove that it is conceivable for the international community that the self-determination of Artsakh is not a matter of sepa-ratism at all. Besides, it differs from other initiatives of self-determination arising from time to time in var-ious civilized countries, as it provides the only realistic way of physical survival and the prevention of another genocide in the Republic of Artsakh. All the negotiation preconditions forwarded by the Republic of Armenia (de-occupation of Shushi and Hadrut, other territories of the Artsakh Republic, return of refugees, restoration of the existing mediation format or creation of a new one, fulfillment of obligations assumed by Azerbaijan in the statement of November 9, 2020, etc.) will be ac-ceptable for the major international actors, which in its turn, will neutralize Azerbaijan’s ambitions to conclude the negotiation process with a new act of capitulation.

In addition, the Republic of Armenia can take Azer-

baijan to international courts for military, genocidal and other hate crimes against humanity, thereby strength-ening its negotiating position. The Armenian diaspora still has significant unrealized lobbying opportunities, whereas the direction of the current Armenian author-ities contradicts the continuous logic of the of the Ar-menian diaspora’s activities, and deprives them of the necessary effectiveness, as well as creates a confusion in foreign diplomatic decision-making centers in un-derstanding the unified Armenian position.

• It is the constitutional duty of the Armenian author-ities to support the international recognition of the Art-sakh Republic, with a perspective of eventual reunifica-tion with the Republic of Armenia. It derives from the Republic of Armenia’s Declaration of Independence and its Constitution. The renouncement of this consti-tutional duty is not only illegal, but also a betrayal of the vital interests of the Armenian people and will inev-itably lead to legal and political responsibility.

• The struggle for the international recognition of the Republic of Artsakh is the key mission of the Armenian people. A new life must be breathed into this struggle. That struggle must be removed from the logic of inter-nal political contradictions and geopolitical preferenc-es. The indifference shown today by a significant part of the young generation towards the fate of Artsakh must be overturned as well and must be directly linked with the imperative of civic responsibility and that of having a viable homeland. Both the co-organizers and all the organizations sharing their ideas have a direct responsibility to restore the willpower of our youth to bring the national liberation struggle to its logical con-clusion thus undertaking to do their utmost to involve our youth in that struggle.

Based on the above:

• We are determined to use all available means to de-ter the current authorities of the Republic of Armenia from the illegal and destructive policy pursued in the Artsakh issue,

• We request the current authorities of the Republic of Armenia to refrain explicitly from signing any doc-ument which would recognize Artsakh as part of Azer-baijan.

• In this respect, we expect the support of all our compatriots and organizations concerned with the fate of our homeland, and we call on all public and political forces of Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian diaspora to form a unified front around the agenda of interna-tional recognition of the Republic of Artsakh.

Consolidation Movement  
5165 Movement  
ARAR Foundation  
Genesis Armenia Foundation  
Alternative Projects Group  
Armenian Association of Political Scientists  
Conceptual Platform  
National Value Club of Gyumri

Appeasement Will Only Trigger More Violence

APPEASEMENT, from page 17

Iran is the only power in the region whose interests have some confluence with those of Armenia. But Tehran’s embrace may prove to be toxic for Armenia, because it may fall on the wrong side of the Israeli and US policies. Thus, it has to move very cautiously in dealing with Tehran.

The players in the region are Turkey, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan. Except for Iran, Armenia is surrounded by hostile na-tions and that is why Azerbaijan is using force with impunity. The West and Europe cannot generate much more than some sup-portive declarations. Besides, Azerbaijan is much more valuable now for the EU as a result of the ill-conceived Russian war

launched last year against Ukraine.

Last week, Karabakh representatives met with Azerbaijani officials at a meeting me-diated by the Russian peacekeeping forces at the office of General Andrei Volkov. The purpose of the meeting was to resolve some practical problems and the agenda did not include any political issues. It addressed only the unblocking of the Lachin Corri-dor, restoring power and gas to Karabakh and allowing a one-time inspection of the Kashen and Drmbon mines by Azerbaijani representatives. Although nothing was re-solved, the Azerbaijani side issued a com-munique stating that the two sides met to discuss the integration of Karabakh Arme-nians into Azerbaijani society. The killing of three Armenian policemen was the price of refusing to negotiate on the integration process.

On March 6, the Karabakh government

met after hearing Ilham Aliyev’s ultima-tum: Refusal to integrate will result in worse treatment. The Karabakh govern-ment has decided to stay the course and seek self-determination.

The Azerbaijani government blames the incident on March 6 on Karabakh Arme-nians transporting weapons from Armenia to Karabakh. Fortunately, the Karabakh government had videos clearly showing the Azerbaijan attack on the police car. Incidentally, the November 9 declaration does not contain any restriction for goods moving through the Lachin Corridor.

Russian peacekeeping forces could not corroborate the Azerbaijani government statement and in their official release, ad-mitted that it was the Azerbaijani side which opened fire first. The Azerbaijan-is lost two soldiers, with several others wounded. The Armenian government

characterized the incident as a terrorist act, while Russian Foreign Ministry Spokes-person Maria Zakharova called for restraint from both sides, demonstrating the Russian bias toward Azerbaijan.

Russian peacekeeping forces were duty bound to prevent such incidents. With Azerbaijan’s determination to raise the ante and Russian reluctance to abide by their November 9 commitment calls for interna-tional mediation. Russia cannot act as an honest broker.

Armenia is planning to invite EU or UN monitors to complement Russian peace-keepers. Also negotiations and their out-come may have productive results only if they are conducted by international medi-ators.

Azerbaijani actions and threats of further escalation of violence underscore the fact that remedial cessation is urgently justified.





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Israel's Massive Supply of Sophisticated Weapons to Azerbaijan

The Israeli Haaretz newspaper published on March 5, an astounding article titled: “92 Flights from Israeli Base Reveal Arms Exports to Azerbaijan.”

The article reported that on March 2, Azerbaijan's Silk Way Airlines' cargo plane landed in Israel's Ovda military airport, and two hours later returned to Baku via Turkey and the Georgian Republic. In the last seven years, this is the 92nd cargo flight from Baku to Ovda, the only airfield in Israel that is allowed to export explosives. These military shipments increased substantially during Azerbaijan's attacks on Armenia/Artsakh in 2016, 2020, 2021 and 2022. Pres. Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has described Israel's covert relations with Azerbaijan as being like an iceberg, nine-tenths of it is below the surface.

Israel supplies almost 70% of Azerbaijan's weapons and in return receives about half of its imported oil. Haaretz quoted foreign media sources disclosing that: “Azerbaijan has allowed the Mossad [Israel's intelligence agency] to set up a forward branch [in Azerbaijan] to monitor what is happening in Iran, Azerbaijan's neighbor to the south, and has even prepared an airfield intended to aid Israel in case it decides to attack Iranian nuclear sites. Reports from two years ago stated that the Mossad agents who stole the Iranian nuclear archive smuggled it to Israel via Azerbaijan. According to official reports from Azerbaijan, over the years Israel has sold it the most advanced weapons systems, including ballistic missiles, air defense and electronic warfare systems, kamikaze drones and more.”

Haaretz revealed that Azerbaijan's Silk Way Airlines “operates three weekly flights between Baku and [Israel's] Ben-Gurion International Airport with Boeing 747 cargo freighters.” In addition, some Eastern European countries circumvent the ban on the sale of weapons to Azerbaijan by shipping them via Israel.

The restriction of the sale of weapons by Europe and the United States to Armenia and Azerbaijan created an opportunity for Israel to earn billions of dollars in weapons' sales to Azerbaijan.

Haaretz reported that “Israel has exported a very wide range of weapons to the country [Azerbaijan] -- starting with Tavor assault rifles all the way to the most sophisticated systems such as radar, air defense, antitank missiles, ballistic missiles, ships and a wide range of drones, both for intelligence and attack purposes. Israeli companies have also supplied advanced spy tech, such as communications monitoring systems from Verint and the Pegasus spyware from the NSO Group -- tools that were used against journalists, the LGBT community and human rights activists in Azerbaijan, too.”

The Stockholm International Peace Institute wrote: “Israel's defense exports to Azerbaijan began in 2005 with the sale of the Lynx multiple launch rocket systems by Israel Military Industries (IMI Systems), which has a range of 150 kilometers (92 miles). IMI, which was acquired by Elbit Systems in 2018, also supplied LAR-160 light artillery rockets with a range of 45 kilometers, which, according to a report from Human Rights Watch, were used by Azerbaijan to fire banned cluster munitions at residential areas in Nagorno-Karabakh,” even though Israel and 123 other countries have banned the use of cluster bombs.

Haaretz reported that “In 2007, Azerbaijan signed a contract to buy four intelligence-gathering drones from Aeronautics Defense Systems. It was the first deal of many. In 2008 it purchased 10 Hermes 450 drones from Elbit Systems and 100 Spike antitank missiles produced by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and in 2010 it bought another 10 intelligence-gathering drones. Soltam Systems, owned by Elbit, sold it ATMOS self-propelled guns and 120-millimeter Cardom mortars, and in 2017 Azerbaijan's arsenal was supplemented with the more advanced Hanit mortars. According to the telegram leaked in Wikileaks, a sale of advanced communications equipment from Tadiran was also signed in 2008.”

According to Haaretz, “Israel and Azerbaijan took their relationship up a level in 2011 with a huge \$1.6 billion deal that included a battery of Barak missiles for intercepting aircraft and missiles, as well as Searcher and Heron drones from Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). It was reported that near the end of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, a Barak battery shot down an Iskander ballistic missile launched by Armenia. Aeronautics Defense Systems also began cooperating with the local arms industry in Azerbaijan, where some of the 100 Orbiter kamikaze (loitering munitions) drones were produced — drones that Azerbaijan's defense minister called ‘a nightmare for the Armenian army.’”

In 2021, “an indictment was filed against [Israel's] Aeronautics Defense Systems for violating the law regulating defense exports in its dealing with one of its most prominent clients. A court-imposed gag order prevents the publication of further details. A project to modernize the Azerbaijani army's tanks began in the early 2010s. Elbit Systems upgraded and equipped the old Soviet T-72 models with new protective gear to enhance the tanks' and their crews' survivability, as well as fast and precise target acquisition and fire control systems. The upgraded tanks, known as Aslan (Lion), starred in the 2013 military parade. Azerbaijan's navy was reinforced in 2013 with six patrol ships based on the Israel Navy's Sa'ar 4.5-class missile boats, produced by Israel Shipyards and carrying the naval version of the Spike missiles, along with six Shaldag MK V patrol boats with Rafael's Typhoon gun mounts and Spike missile systems. Azerbaijan's navy also bought 100 Lahat antitank guided missiles.”

In 2014, “Azerbaijan ordered the first 100 Harop kamikaze drones from IAI, which were a critical tool in later rounds of fighting. Azerbaijan also purchased two advanced radar systems for aerial warning and defense from IAI subsidiary Elta that same year.... Two years later, Azerbaijan bought another 250 SkyStriker kamikaze drones from Elbit Systems. Many videos from the areas of fighting showed Israeli drones attacking Armenian forces.... In 2016, during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Baku, Aliyev revealed that contracts had already been signed between the two countries for the purchase of some \$5 billion in ‘defensive equipment.’ In 2017, Azerbaijan purchased advanced Hermes 900 drones from Elbit Systems and LORA ballistic missiles from IAI, with a range 430 kilometers. In 2018, Aliyev inaugurated the base where the LORA missiles are deployed, at a distance of about 430 kilometers from Yerevan, Armenia's capital. During the war in 2020, at least one LORA missile was launched, and according to reports it hit a bridge that Armenia used to supply arms and equipment to its forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. More advanced Spike missiles were sent in 2019 and 2020.”

It is appalling that the descendants of the Holocaust are supplying such massive lethal weapons to Azerbaijan to kill the descendants of the Armenian Genocide.

# Acceleration of Armenian-Turkish And Armenian-Azerbaijani Negotiations

By Davit Safaryan

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations have seen a new tempo. Both normalization processes take place with the background of increasingly intense geopolitical rivalry, which makes us follow the situation in the South Caucasus with growing anxiety. In this analytical essay, we present our observations concerning the two directions of negotiations, which, as we understand it, are by and large intertwined and have an objective of creating a new reality in the South Caucasus.

Logic of Current Process of Armenian-Turkish Normalization

Armenian rescuers known for their technical skills and good physical training had taken part in the efforts to ease the aftermath of the recent disastrous earthquake in Turkey. This step gave rise to controversial responses both in Armenia and Turkey. Critics of the Armenian authorities

said that there was no need to send such demonstrative and numerous condolences and such a long life-saving mission to Turkey. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities assisted in creating some positive atmosphere on that issue, which was certainly psychologically favorable in the sense of bringing some warmth into the atmosphere of Armenian-Turkish negotiations.

It seems that the conversation of the two negotiators aimed at the establishment of diplomatic relations has continued from the point where it was terminated in 1920-1921 – the Alexandropol Treaty of December 1920 and the Moscow Treaty of March, 1921, which shaped the realia ruling now in South Caucasus. Seventy years of existence of the former Soviet Union plus thirty post-Soviet years make a century of almost no relations between Armenia and Turkey on the state level. Following the Soviet tradition, the Armenian-Turkish frontier is still guarded by Russian border patrol with the participation of Armenian colleagues. In our previous articles we wrote that with the escalation of the First Artsakh War in the spring of 1993 the Turkish government had unilaterally closed the Armenian-Turkish border and prohibited any imports from Armenia. Since that period to the present day Armenian-Turkish trade relations were limited to the unilateral import of Turkish goods to Armenia, the real volume of which is still unknown. In view of this special envoys of Armenia and Turkey agreed to partially open border communications with the reservation that presently the border may be crossed only by third country citizens and persons with Armenian and Turkish diplomatic passports. Thus, the border shut since 1993 has been partially opened.

The other noteworthy agreement referred to the reconstruction of the presently ruined medieval bridge of Ani across the bordering Akhurian River, through which Ar-

menian and foreign tourists may enter the site of Ani. It is worth mentioning that while signing the Kars Treaty of 1921 the Armenian delegation asked the Turkish negotiators to consider their request of leaving Ani and Mount Ararat to Armenia, but as we know the Great National Assembly of Turkey had sharply rejected that plea. Presently, when Armenian alpinists desire to climb Mount Ararat, they enter Turkey from Georgia and ascend the mount by tested routes. Opening Ani for foreign tourists visiting Armenia is a new step presented to public opinion as boosting tourism.

In general, the atmosphere of these negotiations seems to show that each following step may be accompanied by more delays and difficulties because we are sure that the Turkish authorities would rather wait for the time when Armenia and Azerbaijan sign an agreement. We have already drawn the attention of our readers to the fact that the Armenian-Turkish negotiations held in 2008-2010 during the “Football Diplomacy” failed for the simple reason that Azerbaijan was resolutely against any normalization until there was a positive result in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations. Currently while Armenia and Azerbaijan are still negotiating, Turkey is waiting for some tangible result and does not wish to cause anxiety to its “brother” and comrade-in-arms. Thus, it may be stated with certainty that the meetings and discussions of the Armenian and Turkish envoys would be long-lasting unless negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan achieve some progress.

Process of Armenian-Azerbaijani Negotiations and Factors of Influence

The secretary of Armenia's National Security Council recently informed that the preparation of the peace treaty draft between the two countries is in progress. Armenia see ACCELERATION, page 20



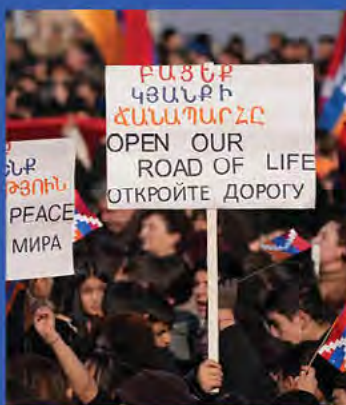


## COMMENTARY



## Tekeyan Cultural Association Launches **ARTSAKH CRISIS AID CAMPAIGN**

The Armenians of Artsakh have been suffering direly due to the Azerbaijani blockade since December 12 despite international condemnation and sympathy.



**How Much  
Longer Must  
the People  
of Artsakh  
Suffer?**

The people of Artsakh have appealed for aid but diasporan Armenians hesitate, not knowing what can be done.

Due to the blockade, sending supplies is physically impossible, but there still is a way to help. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of USA and Canada has reached an agreement with the Artsakh government to send money directly into the bank accounts of large families with many children whose fathers were killed during the 2020 Artsakh war. With our help these families can purchase much needed life-sustaining supplies.

TCA has already sent an initial \$10,000. All money raised will be immediately transferred, with TCA paying all administrative fees.

**LIVES, AND THE VERY FUTURE OF  
ARTSAKH AND ARMENIA ARE AT STAKE.**  
**The Time to Act is NOW!**

Please donate as much as you can by making your donation online by clicking **HERE** or mail checks made out to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, memo: Artsakh Aid, to Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, or in Canada, 825 Manoojian, St.-Laurent QC, H4L 1Z5.

For more information, see <https://mirrorspectator.com/2023/01/05/tekeyan-cultural-association-launches-artsakh-crisis-aid-campaign/> or email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com).

## Acceleration of Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani Negotiations

ACCELERATION, from page 19  
has received the latest text of the Azerbaijani proposals and is working on it in order to send it back to the Azerbaijani side in due time. Generally, the situation during the weeks after the September armed confrontation when Armenia lost over two hundred servicemen at its frontiers is still very tense. Many Armenian experts consider that new armed conflicts are highly plausible. Most probably the keen interest and recommenced efforts of the international community to revive the negotiation processes are aimed at preventing the resumption of new conflicts.

It was considered in Armenia that it might rely on the support of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) as the Azerbaijanis intruded onto sovereign Armenian territory. It turned out that at least three of the six members of that organization were much closer to Azerbaijan than to Armenia, a member of this organization, while Russia, being the strategic ally of both states, could not or would not aggravate its relations with either of them. Under these conditions, with no support expected from the CSTO, Armenia turned to the West. France promised to send a civilian observation mission consisting of 300 gendarmes, and other EU members promised to send 100 civil observers to Armenia.

In his turn, the prime minister of Armenia declared that Armenia would not provide its territory to CSTO for regular drills planned for 2023, so the CSTO resolved to conduct its military drills in Kirgizstan. In this situation, the CSTO tried to correct its mistakes by declaring its readiness to send observers to the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. The presence of the Western observers on Armenia's borders has caused great anxiety in Azerbaijan, whose politics and strategy was based on representing Armenia in Russia as a pro-Western state, and as an incorrigibly pro-Russian state in the West. The question that now became the most troubling for Yerevan analysts was what final decision the Armenian authorities might make between the Russian and European observers to be placed along the Armenian borderline. The further development of allied relations with Russia or the newly warming and deepening ties with the EU and US would depend on it. As making

various assumptions and discussing different scenarios of development seems quite untimely, we'd rather wait and see in order to receive exact answers to these questions.

**Possible Role of the US and European Union in the Process of Settlement**

We should understand that the international community has no essential controversies on the further settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. It is extremely important that the US secretary of state seated the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the negotiating table in Munich. It means that the United States has not washed its hands of the responsibility of settling this conflict and is ready to continue its mediation efforts between the two countries. This news is also important because the US representatives still considered the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a platform where the process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement is being discussed. Russia insists that it has the best ability to successfully mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia and assist, based on its military maps, in border delimitation and demarcation works. We know that the leaders of the European Union also declared about their readiness to help during delimitation and demarcation works. Even at a time when international relations are so intricate and complicated, with the inaction of the OSCE Minsk Group, the US, EU and Russia may continue their efforts for compelling Armenia and Azerbaijan to sign a peace treaty. Inviting these major mediators to Armenia and relying on their multilateral assistance, Armenia will try to compensate for its vulnerable position existing since its defeat in the 44-Day War of 2020.

Another important issue is removing the Azerbaijani blockade of the Lachin Corridor connecting Armenia and Artsakh, which requires huge efforts from and creates tension for Armenia. Despite the numerous assurances of different parties and diplomatic circles that the blockade will be soon lifted, no real steps have been taken yet and it is unclear whether they ever will be. Artsakh is surviving under conditions of blockade without any panic, as ensured by their political leaders. But this reality comes to prove that the future political status of Artsakh is not as topical now as the protection of human rights and prevention

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR-SPECTATOR

*Celebrating*

**90**  
*Years*

CONNECTING. REFLECTING. INSPIRING

**OCTOBER 27 – EVENING PANEL WITH JOURNALISTS**

**OCTOBER 28 – RECEPTION AND DINNER BENEFIT**

**DETAILS TO FOLLOW**