

## Aliyev Again Threatens Armenia, Karabakh

By Ruzanna Stepanian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Azerbaijan may be walking away from recent understandings reached with Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan suggested on Monday, May 29, reacting to Azerbaijani

number of other conditions set by Azerbaijan. That includes delimiting the Armenian-Azerbaijani border on Baku's terms and opening a corridor to the Nakhichevan exclave, he said.

"They must not forget that Armenian villages are visible from here," he added

"I think that both Azerbaijan and our international partners should at least clarify whether that means a renunciation of the understandings reached in Brussels," he told Armenian lawmakers. Armenian diplomats should "get an answer to this question from our partners," he said.

Pashinyan provoked a storm of criticism in Armenia and Karabakh when he confirmed after the Brussels summit his readiness to recognize Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan through a peace treaty currently discussed by Baku and Yerevan. He said the treaty should call for an international framework of addressing "the rights and security" of Karabakh's Armenian population.

Aliyev appeared to again rule out any such mechanism on Sunday, saying that the Karabakh Armenians must dissolve their government bodies and unconditionally accept Azerbaijani rule.

"Everyone knows that we can carry out any [military] operation in that territory," he warned. "That is why the [Karabakh] parliament must be dissolved, the element who calls himself the president [of Karabakh] must surrender and all ministers, deputies and other officials must resign. Only then can there be talk of amnesty."

see THREATS, page 4



President Ilham Aliyev visits Lachin, May 28, 2023.

President Ilham Aliyev's latest threats of fresh military action against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Aliyev said on May 28 that apart from recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh, Yerevan must also meet a

during a visit to the border town of Lachin.

Pashinyan said the threat runs counter to the mutual recognition by the two South Caucasus states of each other's territorial integrity which he and Aliyev reaffirmed at their May 14 meeting in Brussels.

## Catholicos Karekin II Issues Statement Rejecting Azerbaijani Rule over Artsakh

ECHMIADZIN — On May 23, Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, presided over a meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council at the Mother See in Holy Echmiadzin, augmented by the participation of bishops of the Mother See. Participants in the meeting discussed the challenges facing Armenia and Artsakh, as well as statements made this week regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiation process.

Afterwards, the Supreme Spiritual Council issued the following statement:

"The vision of a free and independent existence for Armenia and Artsakh has become a reality in the last three and a half decades, thanks to the heroic struggle, sacrifice, and commitment of our people around the world. The shining example of courage shown by our children martyred in defense of the motherland has fortified the spirit of our people, and their determination to face every adversity in order to continue our historical presence on our native land.

see STATEMENT, page 7

## Investigation: 'Assassination Attempt' On Pan-Turkist Media Mogul Was Actually 'Family Violence Matter,' Say Prosecutors

By Colin Cortbus

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Last week, a well-known US-based Iranian-Azeri businessman was viciously beaten at an airport hotel in San Jose, California, leaving him with life-threatening spinal injuries. Ahmad Obali founded Günaz TV, a well-known Chicago-based satellite TV channel that pushes pro-Aliyev, pan-Turkist messaging to the Iranian-Azeri community. Pro-Aliyev media in Baku suggested "Armenian armed groups" in California might have been implicated in the crime and used the incident to shore up Armenophobic narratives. Now, an investigation by the Mirror-Spectator can reveal the District Attorney's office has indicted Obali's own son, Deniz Obali for "Attempted Murder" and is treating the crime as a "family violence incident."

Last weekend, the Baku-based newspaper *Yeni Musavat* published disturbing photos, showing a seriously injured, bruised Ahmad Obali in a hospital bed in California. The newspaper published claims that both Obali and his

see ASSASSINATION, page 6



Ahmad Obali

## Caucasus Expert Says Pashinyan's Tilt to The West Won't Save Armenia in Wake of 2020 Disaster

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The May 22 declaration by Armenian Premier Nikol Pashinyan that Armenia acknowledges Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, including what remains of Karabakh, has the Armenian world reeling. The 30-some-year quest for independence and perhaps eventual joining up with Armenia, as far as the latter's leadership is concerned, is done for good.

But can Armenia make that decision for Artsakh, that the republic's time is done?



ARMENIA HAS THE RIGHT TO RECOGNIZE THE MOON AS PART OF UZBEKISTAN, BUT THERE IS A LEGAL PROVISION THAT ARMENIA CANNOT UNILATERALLY RECOGNIZE ARTSAKH AS PART OF AZERBAIJAN."

—DR. ARTYOM TONOYAN

One scholar who has studied the Caucasus and is the editor of a recent volume, *Black Garden Aflame: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Soviet and Russian Press*, Dr. Artyom Tonoyan, Visiting Professor of Global Studies at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN, is not so sure.

He said, "Armenia has the right to recognize the moon as part of Uzbekistan, but there is a legal provision that Armenia cannot unilaterally recognize Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan."

Instead, he said, Armenia, he said, "has the obligation to succor the aspirations of Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh."

The enclave had been given to the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic by Stalin in 1923.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leadership of the Armenian-majority Karabakh organized a referendum in 1991, so see TONOYAN, page 4

### ARMENIA

#### Gyumri Dry Port Planned



Page 3

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Joseph's Bakery Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Page 13

### ARMENIA

#### Armenia Celebrates 105th Anniversary of First Republic



Page 20



ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Armenia Issues Arrest Warrant for Ex-Official Over Drug Trafficking

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— The National Security Service (NSS) of Armenia has issued an arrest warrant for Mihran Poghosyan, the fugitive former chief compulsory enforcement officer of Armenia.

Poghosyan, owner of Mrgeni LLC, its director and warehouse keeper have been charged with large-scale drug smuggling and illegal drug trade. They latter have been arrested.

The NSS officers seized about one ton of cocaine bound for Armenia on May 24 in fruit boxes imported by an Armenian company from Ecuador via Panama, Italy and Georgia.

### Deputy PM Rules out Extraterritorial Corridor For Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— Armenia has repeatedly ruled out an extraterritorial land corridor for Azerbaijan, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said on Tuesday, May 30.

Speaking to reporters, he stressed Armenia had always been committed to the unblocking of regional communications, but the corridor “is a red line” for the country.

All infrastructures must be under Armenia’s jurisdiction, Grigoryan said.

“We have always been ready to continue discussions in line with these principles and eventually unblock the regional communications, which is important for the Republic of Armenia as well,” he said.

Commenting on Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s latest statements on the so-called “Zangezur Corridor,” the deputy PM said talks on any corridor with a special regime are ruled out.

“We have repeatedly announced that it is a red line for us. No such issue will be discussed,” he stated.

### Criminal Case against Fallen Soldier’s Mother Goes to Court

YEREVAN (Panorama)

— The criminal case against Gayane Hakobyan, the mother of fallen soldier Zhora Martirosyan, has been sent to a Yerevan court, her lawyers said on May 29.

The Shengavit District Court of General Jurisdiction approved her pre-trial detention for one month on May 20 after she was charged with attempting to “kidnap” Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s son, Ashot Pashinyan. The decision sparked anti-government protests in the Armenian capital.

“According to our knowledge, the case has today been sent to the Yerevan Criminal Court of General Jurisdiction,” lawyer Hovsep Sargsyan told reporters, adding the presiding judge has not yet been named.

He noted that the preliminary probe into the case lasted only a few days, completing on May 25.

“The case materials have been provided to the defense. The court has now taken over the case,” her lawyer said.

# Six Months into Blockade, Nagorno-Karabakh Faces Energy Crisis as Key Reservoir Dries up

By Lilit Shahverdyan

The Sarsang Reservoir in Armenian-administered Nagorno-Karabakh is reaching critically low levels. If it gets much lower, the region will face crisis-level electricity shortages and environmental catastrophe.

Karabakh has been largely dependent on the reservoir for electricity generation since early January, when cables from Armenia were damaged and could not be repaired amid Azerbaijan’s blockade.

The severe water shortage - sure to worsen as temperatures rise and precipitation reduces in summer - will likely make it impossible for Karabakh authorities to deliver on a deal to provide Sarsang water to nearby Azerbaijani-controlled areas for agricultural purposes. This raises the risk of “military provocation” from Baku, local officials fear.

### Critical Levels Reached

Nagorno-Karabakh’s de facto state minister, Guren Nersisyan, reported on May 6 that in the first five months of 2023 almost three times as much water had been released from the Sarsang Reservoir compared to the same period last year. This while water inflow was half as much due to lower precipitation.

“Currently, Sarsang’s water resources have reached a critical limit of about 88 million cubic meters (about 15 percent of the total capacity), approaching the dead (unusable) volume of about 70 million cubic meters,” he wrote on Facebook.

His post included a striking pair of satellite images showing how much the water level in Sarsang has fallen between January 1 and April 28.

A few weeks later, on May 25, Karabakh’s energy distribution company announced that “unprecedented water scarcity” compelled it to further limit electricity production and introduce a new rolling blackout schedule of three 2-hour outages per day.

The Sarsang hydroelectric power plant is one of six remaining in the region and accounts for 70 percent of its generation capacity.

Prior to the Armenian defeat in the Second Karabakh War of 2020, there were an additional 30 hydropower plants under the local authorities’ control and their loss resulted in a 59 percent decrease in generation capacity.

After the war, cables from Armenia through the Lachin corridor provided the

region with about 70 percent of its electricity needs but this line was damaged in January, a few weeks after Azerbaijan began its blockade.

On January 9, the Nagorno-Karabakh government began implementing rolling blackouts since the region was now entirely dependent on its own generation capacity.

(During the blockade, which began on December 12 when Azerbaijani government-backed activists staged a sit-in on the Lachin corridor, Karabakh Armenians also dealt with periodic disruptions to internet access and natural gas supply. There has been no gas supply to Karabakh since March 22.)

Artak Beglaryan, an advisor to Karabakh’s de facto state minister, says that Sarsang and the region’s five other hydropower plants are operating at maximum capacity but will likely not meet the population’s needs in the coming weeks and months.

“If precipitation decreases again, which will undoubtedly happen, soon in June, we will gradually extend the rolling blackouts. We will confront serious energy issues in summer, which will bring about dire humanitarian conditions. If the volume drops to the dead level, an environmental disaster will also fully manifest itself,” Beglaryan told Eurasianet.

### Irrigation Demands Unlikely to Be Met

Davit Babayan, an advisor to the Karabakh president and founder of the water security committee after the First Karabakh War (1991-1994), says that when the Soviet authorities built the reservoir in 1976, it was meant both to generate electricity and to provide irrigation for surrounding farmland through a management system based in Terter, Azerbaijan.

Between the two wars, the reservoir was used to generate electricity for the local Armenian population in winter. Water was simultaneously released into Azerbaijani-controlled territory, but it was of little use to local farmers because of the season.

That changed after the second war, and in June 2022, Karabakh officials told Eurasianet that they had informally agreed to allow some of the water from Sarsang to flow into Azerbaijan for irrigation purposes in the summertime.

But Babayan says since then Azerbaijan has declined numerous proposals for more detailed discussions on the joint use of the reservoir’s water.

“They decided that any deal with Nagorno-Karabakh authorities would mean indirect recognition of the de-facto republic, and they preferred to leave their agricultural issues unresolved over signing agreements with Karabakh,” he said.

Aside from a brief experiment with dialogue in March 2023, Baku has been refusing to engage the Karabakh Armenian authorities. The main sticking point in the talks on a comprehensive peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan is Yerevan’s insistence on guarantees for the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians backed by some kind of international mechanism. Azerbaijan has not obliged despite Armenia’s now-explicit readiness to recognize its sovereignty over Karabakh.

Artak Beglaryan, the advisor to Karabakh’s state minister, believes Azerbaijan’s goal is the “complete de-electrification” of the region as part of its campaign of “psychological terror” aimed at pushing the Armenian population out of Karabakh.

“They are also trying to create a military pretext around this matter. If we do not release enough water in summer, because we will not have water there, they will use this for military provocations,” Beglaryan added, noting signs pointing to this in Azerbaijani media.

Indeed, there have been at least some calls in Baku to take action over Sarsang. Adalat Verdiyev, a military expert, said that the drying of the reservoir could lead to cracks in the dam, which in turn could cause flooding in nearby Azerbaijani-populated areas once precipitation picks up again. “Six districts of Azerbaijan will wind up underwater. We must prevent this catastrophe,” he said, as quoted by Nedelia.az on May 22.

Beglaryan sees two solutions to the electricity issues: the restoration of electricity supplies from Armenia or unusually high precipitation – both of which he considers highly unlikely.

“As an emergency response, we will reduce consumption to minimal levels and extend the power blackouts. We also make attempts to create alternative energy sources, but this is not a quick solution to the issue, and time is of the essence,” he added.

(Lilit Shahverdyan is a journalist based in Stepanakert. This article first appeared on the website eurasianet.org on May 26.)



The images of the Sarsang Reservoir on January 1 and April 28



## ARMENIA

# Gyumri Dry Port Planned

By Paul Vartan Sookiasian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GYUMRI, Armenia — Change is in the air for Gyumri, with a project for a “dry port” which could bring numerous international companies and the potential to double the city’s population in the next five years. However, what exactly is the oxymoronic-sounding “dry port” being planned in famously landlocked Armenia, and what makes Gyumri an ideal location for it?

The plan was first announced by the Ministry of Economy in 2021, and last year Minister Vahan Kerobyan said of it “we see an opportunity to return to Gyumri the status of an industrial city.”

The concept was originally designed and proposed in 2011 by specialist in dry-port design, management, and operations Charle Malas, who is based in the United Kingdom and is an Iraq-born half-Armenian. Such a specific project has never been attempted in Armenia, and the closest such dry port facility is as far away as Tehran, so Malas was called upon to lead the project, which will require substantial international expertise.

A dry port is an inland terminal with surface transportation connecting it to a seaport which serves as a logistics center for getting cargo to inland destinations. The process of sorting and processing containers at seaports is time-consuming, and they can become overburdened, as you might recall the scenes of hundreds of container ships sitting outside major ports such as Los Angeles during COVID. The concept of dry ports was created about thirty years ago to take off some of this pressure through inland terminals where the cargo can be processed instead. As Malas described: “Dry ports are operated the same way as a regular one; they utilize the exact same documentation and infrastructure, just the cargo comes off trucks and rail



An early-stage conceptual image of the dry-port part of the terminal (there’s also an industrial park planned at the site)

wagons instead of ships.”

Gyumri is in a special position to do this, as the 630-hectare site borders the Gyumri International Airport, Armenia’s north-south highway, and a railway mainline, creating an ideal transportation cluster. “This uniquely collocates three forms of transport at the site which makes it very attractive to the international market’s transportation companies,” explained Malas. Besides being close to the Georgian border and the Black Sea beyond, Gyumri is also extremely close to the Turkish border, about which there’s been much talk of a possible opening to cargo. There are many issues surrounding how the Armenian market would fare with such an opening, but there’s no doubt an open border would make the dry port’s position even more prime.

The design for Gyumri’s dry port is focused on exports, where the goods will clear customs in Armenia instead of at the seaports in Georgia. Yet Malas notes a dry port alone is too big for Armenia’s needs. For this reason the complex will also host an industrial park that will generate trade to make it more effective and attractive to international companies from fields such as pharmaceuticals and high tech, amongst many others. According to Minister Kerob-

yan, “the industrial park is created to provide industrial companies with necessary infrastructures. They also serve as logistic centers, terminals for containers, which are used to transfer cargo from one mode of transport to another with minimum costs.”

The Gyumri airport will also have the added boost of being designated a tax-free special economic zone (SEZ). The transportation cluster around Gyumri will give manufacturers the ability to reduce their shipping and operating costs while producing goods which will further the facility’s export-centric nature. Malas noted the industrial park has a critical role for diasporan-owned companies to play: “They will be invited to ‘copy and paste’ their factories into the industrial park, which is also being eyed by a number of other international businesses to potentially produce goods there. Diasporan companies would be in good company, alongside interest already coming from China, Europe, the Middle East, Russia, Georgia, and Iran.”

The Armenian government envisions a public-private partnership to operate such a facility and will require many highly-experienced professionals from abroad, as that specific expertise doesn’t exist in Armenia. Malas detailed how “the great deal of interest the project has already attracted

creates confidence needed for potential international backers to join. Government involvement is also needed, and while there is improvement needed in some regards such as tax issues and ease of setting up companies, collaboration with the Ministry of Economy is ongoing and amendments can be made to existing rules. Feasibility studies in the coming months will be considering these issues and indicate future steps, but we are already in early discussions with experienced blue-chip international port operators.”

With a price tag estimated at well over \$100 million, the project requires a huge amount of investment, but it also could bring major rewards to Armenia’s second-largest city, including a contribution of 0.7-1.2 percent to the nation’s GDP. “The implementation of the project would help Armenia to be less insular, while making it a place international companies would increasingly look to develop their businesses. It is also critically important for Gyumri’s development, and could act as a draw for those who went to seek their fortunes elsewhere but want to return.” said Malas. “The world order is a fluid one that’s dynamically shifting, and it requires us to adapt to those changes with innovative steps forward.”

## US Envoy Again Visits Armenia, Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A US special envoy for Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations again visited Armenia and Azerbaijan for further discussions on a planned peace agreement between the two nations.

The diplomat, Louis Bono, met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of Armenia’s Security Council, on Friday, May 26.

Pashinyan’s office said he presented “the Armenian side’s approaches to resolving the key outstanding issues.” It did not elaborate.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry reported, for its part, that Mirzoyan and Bono reviewed the Armenia-Azerbaijan “normalization process” and the remaining differences between the parties. It cited Mirzoyan as stressing the importance of non-use of force, “border security” and an “internationally guaranteed mechanism for dialogue” between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh’s leadership.

Bono had met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov in Baku



US envoy Louis Bono (left) at a meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Yerevan, March 7, 2023.

on May 24. According to an Azerbaijani readout of the meeting, they discussed the draft peace deal and the results of recent Armenian-Azerbaijani talks organized by the United States and the European Union.

“As we’ve said, we believe that an agreement is in reach, and we continue to press the two parties to work together to reach an agreement on the issues that remain outstanding,” the US State Department

spokesman, Matthew Miller, told reporters on Thursday.

Dereck Hogan, a US deputy assistant secretary of state, revealed earlier this week that Washington “put forward a number of ideas” designed to help the two sides overcome those sticking points. He said they relate to the delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, “the distancing of Armenian and Azerbaijani forces” deployed along the frontier, and “the rights and security of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.”

During the recent talks, the sides made major progress towards the bilateral treaty that would commit them to recognizing each other’s territorial integrity. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan confirmed on Monday that Yerevan would thus recognize Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh. Another senior US official hailed Pashinyan’s statement condemned by the Armenian opposition and Karabakh’s leadership.

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted fresh talks between Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Moscow

on Thursday. The two leaders were scheduled to meet again in Moldova’s capital Chisinau on June 1 (after *Mirror-Spectator* press time). They will be joined by EU chief Charles Michel, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

The Reuters news agency on Friday quoted Azerbaijan’s ambassador to France as saying that the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty could be signed during the Chisinau summit. The Foreign Ministry in Yerevan essentially denied this, however, saying that the signing of the landmark document is “not included on the agenda” of the summit.

“As we have noted many times, the Armenian side will be ready to sign the agreement when the key issues are addressed,” the ministry said in written comments to RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “We believe that discussions on them will continue during and after the meeting scheduled within the framework of the European Political Community [summit] in Chisinau on June 1.”



## ARMENIA

# Caucasus Expert Says Pashinyan's Tilt to the West Won't Save Armenia in Wake of 2020 Disaster

TONOYAN, from page 1

that the residents could vote about their fate. They overwhelmingly voted for independence from Azerbaijan.

Karabakh residents and leaders used the same methodology that the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan had used to secede from the Soviet Union. Thus, the interpretation is that if the latter were legal, so is (was) that of the former.

Of course, this declaration and Armenia's support for it resulted in a bloody war from 1991 to 1994, with the Armenian side winning handily. In the ensuing 30 years, constant negotiations had been going on through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Minsk Group), to determine once and for all Karabakh's status internationally.

However, Karabakh never tried to legally join the republic to Armenia.

"They tried to play the international game. Armenia never wanted it to be a territorial issue. The approach was that this was a human rights issue, that the lives of Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh are threatened, thereby the people of Nagorno Karabakh, which had legal grounding being a subject of Soviet Azerbaijan, and the Soviet Union, they had the right to secede. It was looked at not as a territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan — which was a smart thing to do. Initially they wanted Nagorno Karabakh to join the motherland, but the way they started playing the game was that Karabakh had agency and were separate, with the goal of joining Armenia at a later date," if they wanted, Tonoyan explained.

While the recent statement by Pashinyan set off a storm in the Armenian world, in essence, he has made similar statements before.

Said Tonoyan, "This is not new. He has been signaling this and the people around him have been signaling this for quite a while. It's been a year since [the] Prague [meeting with Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev] that this has been said, but with never [citing] such precise numbers regarding the territorial size of Azerbaijan. The most important impetus on this was this the recent meeting in Washington, that the Armenian foreign minister and the Azeri foreign minister, under the auspices of [US Secretary of State Antony] Blinken met in Washington DC. I guess they had reached some agreement on this," he said. The "welcoming Pashinyan's statements," "you cannot but draw a straight line from those negotiations to Pashinyan's statements and to the support that the State Department's officials are throwing Pashinyan."

"Pashinyan has given his commitment to making pronouncements at this juncture," he said. "And this was said right before his trip to Russia. This was another way of Pashinyan putting pressure on [Russian President Vladimir] Putin to sort out what's happening with the Lachin Corridor and allow Armenian goods and services and Karabakh goods and services free travel between those countries."

Shortly after the announcement, representatives from the UK, US and NATO, visited Armenia. The timing of those visits certainly were striking.

These actions, Tonoyan said, did arise from the pronouncements by Pashinyan, who was sending signals to the West. "I think it's Pashinyan's wish to see Armenia be decentered from Russia. I think this is part of the game that is played. I don't know how wise it is, but that is what is happening," he said.

The ultimate purpose seems to be reducing Russia's sphere of influence in the Caucasus; Armenia is one country in the region dependent on Russia and Russian help.

"Pashinyan has always had this *idée fixe* that much of Armenia's problems are because of its close ties and entanglements with Russia. Some may say he has Russophobic tendencies. He wants Armenia out of Russia's orbit and this is the price he is willing to pay but I am not sure this is the price that the Armenian people must pay," Tonoyan stated.

## Lachin Corridor

The Lachin Corridor, linking Armenia and Karabakh, was closed by Azerbaijan in December. More recently, the Azerbaijani side has constructed a checkpoint there, indicating that they are not going anywhere.

At first, when Azerbaijan blocked Lachin corridor, the only link the enclave has with Armenia, and therefore the world, the US and even the UK, which he said "has been all too cozy with Azerbaijan for decades," as well as

France, made statements against it.

"The Azeris are quite good playing this game. They know there is bigger fish that is being fried, in Ukraine, and so they can wait out any pressure from the west," he said.

"Everyone is ok with the results of the conflict. Everyone wants this conflict to go away and insofar as it serves to weaken Russia's positions in the south caucas, the Azeris are pretty good at conveying this, that whatever they are doing, they are meant to reduce Russia's role in the South Caucasus."

If they are not needed in Armenia, then they can leave the South Caucasus.

"For them, Armenia doesn't nearly have the geopolitical significance or the weight to them that the Azeris do," he said. "The western powers are just fine with it."

And what would happen once the corridor opens, if it does?

"It's a very complex question. I am sure some of the population would be willing to leave and who am I to blame them," he said, adding wistfully, "For heaven's sake I left Armenia."

He added that in the absence of "a strange statehood and statist traction, leaving our countries has become a part of our DNA, as unfortunate as it is."

Not all would settle in Armenia, he noted, saying "given how disgusting Armenia's government's position has been"

Tonoyan said that Aliyev is hinting that the Lachin Corridor is not closed, because "the people of Nagorno Karabakh can actually freely move to Armenia," but, of course, he never said Armenians are able to go to Karabakh.

Aliyev was basically saying, Tonoyan explained, that "Armenians of Karabakh are free not to go back and forth but there is free movement to go out," he added.

"I am sure you will have very small numbers who are tired of it and will get Azeri passports and stay," he said; the "nightmarish" scenario regards those who want neither, meaning "they will put up some fight. I don't even want to contemplate that because we know no one will come to their rescue."

In hushed tones, he added, "We will have a fait accompli where this population has been massacred and they [the Azerbaijani government] have achieved their strategic goals that they have always contemplated," he said. "The Armenian army, having been defenestrated, I just don't see any willingness to do anything about it."

The same goes for the Armenian churches and monuments that Azerbaijan is destroying. They do it "because they can."

Azerbaijan, he noted, has "created a reality on the ground" and those who can do something about it, choose not to do so. "The only entity that could do something about it is Armenia. It's our territory. It has historically meant something quite significant for our history, and culture and we're not doing anything because sometimes we're incapable, sometimes we're unwilling," adding that the Russians, Americans and Iranians are not willing to do it. "They are getting away with murder," he added.

One reason for this international *laissez faire* attitude is the Iran factor. "Azerbaijan has positioned itself as a regional player that can parry both against Russia and against Iran. It represents the objectives of the West to separate these two from each other and not allow them to connect in any meaningful fashion. At the same time, we have to keep in mind that Azerbaijan facilitates this communications network between Russia and Iran through the railway that they are trying to construct," he said. "They are good at playing this game."

While the West seems to be delighted with having Azerbaijan as a proxy in the South Caucasus, that country is also cozying up to Russia.

In fact, the day before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Russia and Azerbaijan signed a much ballyhooed strategic pact in Moscow, pledging fealty to one another.

## 2020 War

The fortunes of Karabakh reversed after the disastrous war of 2020 launched by Azerbaijan, which saw the abject defeat of Karabakh and Armenia. The Armenian army, which until then had boasted a stellar reputation, was left in tatters.

Noted Tonoyan, "I think the war was completely mismanaged," he said. "Your army is as good as your leader-

ship. If your leadership is mercurial and can't make up its mind, can't delegate properly, what can the people fighting on the ground do?"

He also referred to the much circulated recent comments by Anna Hakobyan, the premier's wife, who claimed that the Armenian army lost the war partly because there were 11,000 army defectors. She has not provided any proof regarding the numbers.

"It was very insensitive, very offensive. My nephew wasn't a defector and he paid the price," Tonoyan said.

Pashinyan's "future depends on the will of the Armenian people," Tonoyan said.

In Armenia, he said, the "cannon fodder" love "the cannoners who lob bombs at them," he said. "His political future depends on whether the people of Armenia will say enough is enough. We're tired of this," he said. He said a recent poll by the International Republican Institute suggested the majority is unhappy with his management of the Karabakh war.

This wasn't there even last year, he said.

"This is the consequence of that *idée fixe*. The most tragic part of this is that he had two clearcut examples from which he did not draw any conclusions. ... He never thought it would become an example himself: Georgia and Ukraine," he said.

In the war with Russia, Georgia lost South Ossetia and Abkhazian, and as for Russia's current war, "look what Putin did with Ukraine," he said. "Putin unleashed the dogs of war on that country."

Tonoyan said that Pashinyan is wrong if he thinks by handing over Karabakh to Azerbaijan, Armenia's territorial security will be respected by either Azerbaijan or Turkey. If Turkey decides to take a chunk of Armenia, they could possibly get away with it, he lamented, adding, "Look what Turkey did with Syria and Iraq and who did anything? Who is to tell they won't do the same to Armenia under some pretext?"

He added, "Aliyev is not a good faith actor and the government of Armenia, half-witted as they are, they assume that they are dealing with a good-faith actor, which is not the case," he said. "I know he [Pashinyan] is trying to message the international community that we are peace-niks, that we don't want war."

He further explained, "Aliyev doesn't look at Armenians as adversaries. He looks at them as foes to be vanquished, to be destroyed. ... Aliyev looks at Armenians as an existential threat rather than equals," he said.

Armenia's government and population, Tonoyan said, have historically been wrong to belittle this adversary.

"The Armenians have always looked on at Azeris as these unsophisticated villagers who are not up to the task of challenging Armenians," he said. "There has always been this cultural supremacy."

That sort of attitude, he said, led to a skewed interpretation of reality. "You end up underestimating your enemy and that's the worst thing you can ever do. That led to Armenia letting its guard down."

## Aliyev Again Threatens Armenia, Karabakh

THREATS, from page 1

Arayik Harutyunyan, the Karabakh president, rejected the threats on Monday. A spokeswoman for Harutyunyan said Aliyev's demands also mean he "recognizes the legitimacy and importance of our institutions."

Aliyev already made it clear in April that Baku will not hold any internationally mediated talks with Stepanakert. The Karabakh Armenians "will either live under Azerbaijani rule or leave" their homeland, he said.

Two Karabakh lawmakers said Aliyev has doubled down on such threats because of the far-reaching concession to Baku made by Pashinyan.

Aliyev and Pashinyan are scheduled to meet again on June 4 in Moldova's capital Chisinau on the sidelines of a European summit. The Armenian premier insisted that the controversial peace treaty will not be signed during that meeting.



## INTERNATIONAL

# How Erdogan's Reelection Will Shift Turkey's Foreign Policy Goals

By Fehim Tastekin

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) — Having won May 28's runoff vote, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will extend his rule into a third decade with piles of foreign policy issues on his plate. The strategy that won him reelection and his desire to build a legacy will both require Erdogan to sustain and nurture the notion of a "strong Turkey" in foreign policy.

Normalization with Syria is the thorniest dossier, calling for drastic decisions. The return of the Syrian refugees — either forcibly or voluntarily — was a top issue on the campaign trails. Any progress there depends on not only reconciliation with Damascus but also the provision of living spaces to the returnees. A Turkish-Syrian deal alone cannot smooth the way for reconstruction. US and European objections will have to be overcome as well.

Earlier this month, Turkey and Syria agreed to continue dialogue toward normalization at a four-way meeting in Moscow involving Russia and Iran. Nevertheless, Damascus maintains that the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syria is a precondition for any meeting between the two countries' leaders.

## No Immediate Withdrawal from Syria

Erdogan is unlikely to go for a withdrawal without crushing the de facto autonomous administration in the north led by Kurdish groups that Ankara sees as terrorists. He built his election coalition around the pledge of resolutely fighting terrorism and remains reliant on his nationalist partners to command the majority in parliament.

Also, Erdogan is unlikely to acquiesce to dissolving the Syrian National Army, an umbrella group of Turkish-backed rebel groups, or changing the status quo in Idlib, where the jihadi group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham holds sway, until he gets what he wants at the negotiating table.

While US support for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remains an irritant in ties with Washington, Ankara now has to reckon with another important factor: The Arab world has begun to rebuild ties with Damascus and is seeking to end Turkey's military presence and curb Iran's influence in Syria. Having readmitted Syria earlier this month, the Arab League tacitly denounced Turkey and Iran in its May 19 joint statement, rejecting "foreign interferences" and "support for ... armed groups and militias" in Arab countries.

The Arab reengagement with Damascus could strengthen the latter's hand in normalization talks with Ankara. Kurdish sources told AI-Monitor that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been encouraging Damascus — with tacit US approval — to integrate the SDF into the Syrian army as part of efforts to push back Iranian influence. Such moves clash with Ankara's interests as well.

Erdogan, some observers believe, will seek to cast himself as an above-party national leader akin to Turkey's founding father Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in what is expected to be the final stage of his political career. Such aspirations would require him to embrace diversity at home, but he could also pursue ventures nurturing the notion of a "strong Turkey" to build that image.

The strategies that Erdogan pursued to consolidate his electoral alliance rested on the narrative of a "strong Turkey" that has fought terrorism far and wide, devel-

oped its military industry including armed drones, manufactured its first electric car, discovered energy resources in its Black Sea waters, increased its power in the eastern Mediterranean, become a playmaker in the Caucasus by helping Azerbaijan reclaim territories from Armenia, led the creation of the Organization of Turkic States, stood up to NATO and the European Union to defend its interests, put Greece in its place and mediated between Russia and the West in the Ukraine war to prove its strategic autonomy. By flattering national pride, fanning national security fears and villainizing his opponents, Erdogan was able to avoid paying a price for Turkey's economic turmoil, his government's shoddy response to the February earthquakes and rampant allegations of corruption. This playbook dictates that the nationalism and triumphalism permeating his foreign policy should continue.



Erdogan's quest to institutionalize his authoritarian shift was met with a popular objection that sent the presidential vote into a runoff but is unlikely to push him back to the democratic path. Any decision to heed rulings by the European Court of Human Rights and release scores of political prisoners would come as a huge surprise.

## EU Membership a Distant Prospect

Reviving Turkey's membership talks with the European Union appears a distant prospect, too, for it would require the miracle of Erdogan reinstating checks and balances, the rule of law and democratic norms. Still, Turkey's worsening economic outlook, marked by an alarming foreign-currency crunch, requires continued partnership with the European Union. The flow of foreign portfolio investments to Turkey has all but stalled amid Erdogan's controversial economic policies, with the central bank's international reserves deep in negative territory.

Erdogan's pragmatism dictates that Turkey makes the best of its position within NATO and partnership with the European Union. Having gained in spades from his double game between Russia and the West, Erdogan is unlikely to part with that policy. Moreover, he would not like to upset Russian President Vladimir Putin given the latter's economic gestures ahead of the elections, including the postponement of

Turkish gas payments. Putin gave Erdogan further political credit on May 17 when he agreed to extend the Ukraine grain deal that the Turkish leader had mediated. Economic interests — chief among them Turkey's Russian-built nuclear power plant and the gas and grain trade — will continue to drive bilateral ties in addition to continuing dialogue on Syria and Ukraine.

Tensions with NATO ally Greece and the Greek Cypriots are unlikely to go away, given the importance that Erdogan places on the energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean.

But despite Ankara's frequent rows with Western partners, those anticipating a rupture between Turkey and NATO have yet to prove justified. Having approved Finland's accession to NATO in March, Ankara could well unblock the way for Sweden as well at the NATO summit in July. Yet, getting rid of the Russian S-400 air defense

systems appears impossible for Ankara as long as its relationship with Moscow remains strategic.

## Closer Ties with China?

During his third term as president, Erdogan could dedicate a stronger effort to realizing the so-called Zangezur Corridor plan — a transport route that would connect Azerbaijani territories via Armenia and provide Turkey with a direct link to Azerbaijan proper — in a bid to solidify Turkey's role in the Caucasus, gain access to the Caspian Sea and strengthen ties with the Turkic states in Central Asia. It would require normalization with Armenia, managing tensions with Iran and keeping up the dialogue with Russia.

As for China, Erdogan has largely stepped back from criticizing Beijing's treatment of the Uyghur community and raised the prospect of Turkey joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization led by Russia and China. Despite Beijing's wariness, he could press on for closer ties with the East.

As former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza put it recently to *The New Arab*, Turkey's bridging role between West and East would continue but Ankara's focus could now shift to "being anchored in the East and willing to hold the West, meaning Europe and the US, more at arm's length."

## INTERNATIONAL

## Artsakh Ombudsman Asks For UNESCO Help

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Artsakh's Human Rights Defender on May 30 called on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to take immediate action as Azerbaijan continues its policy of distortion of Armenian heritage of Artsakh.

"Azerbaijan continues its criminal policy of Albanisation of the Armenian religious and cultural heritage of Artsakh by falsifying its history, distorting and desecrating its sites," Ombudsman Gegham Stepanyan said in a [Twitter post](#).

"This vandalistic behavior is unacceptable. We are once again calling upon UNESCO to immediately take action," he added.

## Artsakh Official Calls out EU President for Referring To 'Former NKAO'

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — It is upsetting that the European Union's public face, Charles Michel, refers to Artsakh people as "Armenians living in former NKAO", disregarding the fact of the decades-long existence of their statehood built on the exercise of their fundamental and inalienable right to self-determination, Artsakh's Human Rights Defender Gegham Stepanyan said in a [Twitter post](#) on May 30.

"Such formulations, made intentionally by a union that champions human rights values worldwide, not only hurt the feelings of Artsakh people, but also bring a destructive effect to the peace process over the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as they ignore its main beneficiary's rights and security," he added.

"By neglecting Artsakh people's will and interests, the EU does not foster peace talks but contribute to the subjugation of a democracy — Artsakh — into a genocidal Armenophobic authoritarian state — Azerbaijan. After all, Artsakh people's lives and destinies are at stake," he said.

The comments come after EU Council President [Charles Michel](#) said "dialogue between Baku and Armenians living in former NKAO on their rights and security is now crucial."

## OSCE Faces 'Collapse' In Row over Estonia's Chairmanship

STOCKHOLM (Panorama.am) — Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto fears that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) could potentially collapse because Russia and Belarus are unwilling to approve Estonia's chairmanship in 2024, [TASS](#) reported.

Each year, one of the OSCE's member states holds the chairmanship of the organization on a rotating basis. The candidate must be approved by all OSCE members. According to [Yle](#) news outlet, Russia and Belarus have not approved Estonia's candidacy, while Tallinn will not relinquish the prospect of chairing the organization. Thus, according to the news portal, the OSCE will face a fundamental crisis within the next six months.

# St. Gregory Church Preserves Armenian Heritage in Singapore

By Vahe Artinian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SINGAPORE — When traveling as an Armenian, you tend to look for symbols and places where our small but ancient nation has a place. One such place is Singapore, a wonderful island of order and harmony, where Armenians who traded internationally established a community in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today Singapore is a modern city with a democratic parliamentary system and currently, a female prime minister.

As elsewhere, one of the first acts of Singapore Armenians was to build a church in 1835. Today, the Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator remains preserved thanks to the efforts of its trustees. I and my family visited, lit candles, and prayed for our Artsakh living under siege. I hope one day many others will come and visit this historic place and be inspired by what a nation can achieve with hard work and discipline.

When we arrived, only the caretaker was there. A museum is being completed next to the church. The Armenian Heritage Gallery was opened in 2018. There are only a few Armenians at present who reside in Singapore. Occasionally the Armenian archbishop and priests travel from Sydney, Australia, to conduct a church service.



The exterior of the Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator, with some of the relocated tombstones of the early Armenians of Singapore visible in the foreground



The interior of the Armenian Apostolic Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator



An Armenian khachkar erected in 2015 in honor of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide in the Armenian Church Memorial Gardens

## 'Assassination Attempt' on Pan-Turkist Media Mogul Was Actually 'Family Violence Matter'

ASSASSINATION, from page 1  
son, Deniz Obali, were brutally beaten, allegedly by up to six people, in an attack that the newspaper suggested may have been the work of Iranian intelligence services," Obali's channel Günaz TV (Günaz being short for Güney Azerbaijan, South Azerbaijan) quoted a relative as saying.

Chicago-resident Ahmad Obali is one of the most outspoken pan-Turanist activists in the West. In the economically-deprived, predominantly Azeri-Turkish speaking areas of North-Western Iran, which have long been neglected and repressed by the mullah regime in Tehran, the radical-populist rhetoric of Mr Obali and his channel GUNAZ TV have won him a large following. In an interview with the Jewish Press newspaper in Brooklyn, Obali summoned up his agenda as follows "Our activists want an independent South Azerbaijan because we will do much better once we are independent. We can move toward a union with North Azerbaijan, join the Council of Europe (a human rights group established in 1946 that includes most European nations), and embrace Western values." Obali has travelled to Baku on multiple occasions. During one symbolic and provocative journey, he was photographed by pro-government media standing at the Khudafrin bridge, formerly a scene of fighting during the 2020 Karabakh war, at the Aras river, looking out at Iran. That visit was also promoted to American audiences by Mike Doran, the former Bush-administration official turned Hudson Institute think-tanker who has frequently been criticised for pushing pro-Baku messaging to US audiences. GUNAZ TV, the station Mr Obali owns, has repeatedly aligned itself with the Baku-authority's Stalinist-style personality cult of deceased ex-dictator and human-rights violator Heydar Aliyev, using the reverential terminology "Ümum-milli Liderin" (national leader) to describe him on its website. GUNAZ TV has pub-

lished op-eds claiming an "40-million people" strong independent South Azeri state would be "suicide for Armenia" while lamenting the fact that many other Iranian-Azeris do not share this separatist and pan-Turkist viewpoint.

After the attack on Obali in California last week, media commentators in Baku rushed to suggest Armenians might have been guilty of the crime against Ahmad Obali, among other suspects like the Iranian Mullah regime or the exiled, non-separatist Iranian opposition. "We can say that this incident is a terrorist act. ...As an initial hypothesis we can mention the cooperation of Iran and Armenian terrorist groups. We hope that the perpetrators of the crime will be revealed soon," an one activist was quoted by Modern.az as saying. "In general, it can be said that either elements of the Mullah regime or members of Armenian armed groups who are in collusion with them, are behind treacherous plans prepared against Ahmad Obali and other national activists," claimed an "investigative journalist" quoted by AZNews, although the journalist also thought exiled Iranian monarchists were the likely culprit. "The third possibility, I can say, is that the Armenian diaspora in California may have committed the incident," an analyst told BayMedia Az. "His enemy can be only two forces: first-up, Iran and pro-Iran forces, and secondly, Armenia and pro-Armenian forces including the Armenian lobby, given that the Armenian terrorist organizations have been conducting such kinds of attacks against Azerbaijani and Turkish political and public figures," an commentator told Azernews, though this person vehemently dismissed the possibility that Armenian groups could have done it without coordinating with Iran.

California police and prosecutors did not see it the same way. Sean Webby, an employee at the Santa Clara District Attorney's Office told the Mirror-Spectator "The incident is being charged as a fami-

ly violence matter. The victim's son is the sole defendant."

A criminal complaint filed in the Superior Court of California, Santa Clara County, this week alleges that "on or about May 18, 2023, in the County of Santa Clara, State of California, the crime of Attempted Murder... was committed by Deniz Obali who did attempt to unlawfully and with malice aforethought, kill Ahmad Obali... ." Deniz Obali, is the adult son of Ahmad Obali and is believed to be a post-grad student at a private California university. The presumption of innocence applies.

The *Mirror-Spectator* requested and received, from the Santa Clara District Attorney's office, a "statement of facts," signed by Detective Bill Nyguen of San Jose Police Department, that summarises the results of the police investigation so far. While the statement misspells Deniz's name as Beniz, it does clearly refer to him as Ahmad Obali's son. The statement says that on the morning of Friday, May 19, housekeeping staff at the Wyndam Garden Hotel near San Jose Airport, found Obali "lying face down on the floor of the room with visible signs of trauma." With blood coming from his head, Ahmad Obali told an attending hotel manager that "my son attacked me, he tried to kill me," the statement claims. Firefighters who were summoned to attend to Obali also told the police that he repeated the allegations, saying his son had attacked him on the previous evening with "his fists and an unspecified object," the statement says. A medical professional at the Intensive Care Unit where Obali was transported told the police that Obali had informed them that at the hotel, on the previous evening, they "got into a disagreement and that is when his son assaulted him, choked him, and tried to break his neck, and kill him." Detective Nyguen's statement claims that another hotel guest saw a person matching Deniz Obali's description exit his hotel room, shortly

after fight-like noises emanated from the room. A trauma surgeon told the police that Obali suffered devastating spinal injuries that "may leave him paralysed." The detective's statement said that on May 23, at the Intensive Care Unit, police spoke with Obali, who was "conscious" and "able to speak very few words at a time." The statement claims while the injured Ahmad Obali advised that he would only be able to provide a formal statement "in a few days," Ahmad Obali did not deny his son was responsible when asked, and "expressed sadness over his parenting of the suspect and said he did everything he could to raise" his son. The "statement of facts" seen by the Mirror-Spectator concludes with a sworn declaration, under the penalty of perjury, by Detective Nyguen, of the correctness of the statement.

Relatives of Ahmad Obali have allegedly claimed to media that Deniz Obali is an unlikely suspect and is actually in hospital recovering after surgery. In a statement, San Jose Police Department rejected this "From the time SJPD Officers took Deniz Obali into custody, to the time he was booked into Santa Clara Main Jail, he did not have any injuries that required medical treatment." An inmate record obtained by the Mirror-Spectator proves that Deniz Obali is indeed currently being held at that prison in California, and was brought there on Friday May 19th. A defence lawyer was not listed in the jail statement, and the record notes "No Bail Allowed."

Attempts by the *Mirror-Spectator* to contact GUNAZ TV, Ahmad Obali and one of his relatives in Baku were unsuccessful. *Yeni Musavat* newspaper did not respond to an emailed request for comment on the sourcing of its story about Obali. The FBI referred questions about the matter to San Jose Police Department.

(Colin Cortbus is a British-German freelance journalist who often investigates extremism, neo-Nazism, pan-Turkism etc.)



## INTERNATIONAL

# Russia's Transport Ambitions Create New Headaches in Georgia

By Nini Gabritchidze

After the recent controversial resumption of air travel with Russia, anxiety is growing in Georgia that Moscow is poised to push for closer transport and economic ties in a bid to reassert its dominance over Tbilisi.

The re-establishment of direct flights between Russia and Georgia was followed by remarks in Moscow about the prospective revival of the long-dead railway link through the breakaway Abkhazia region. At the same time, Tbilisi has to deal with local scrutiny of its facilitation of Armenia's maritime trade with Russia.

This has led to questions in Georgia about whether the government will have to give in to more pressure from Moscow to take part in schemes connecting Russia with its partners to the south and east.

"Railway transit should also be organized within the framework of the Silk Road route: China, the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, Astara in Iran, Astara in Azerbaijan, Gabala in Azerbaijan, and Marneuli in Georgia, through the territory of Abkhazia to Russia," Sergei Katyrin, president of Russia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry told *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* on May 12 in the context of transport projects under discussion to develop the so-called North-South corridor connecting Russia with Iran.

The 200-km railway section crossing through Georgia's Russia-backed separatist region Abkhazia is the only railroad link to connect Georgia and Russia but has not been used for that purpose since the armed conflict in the early 1990s. There has been periodic talk of reviving the railway, but it has never borne fruit, partly because of the obstacles that would follow Georgian trains going through the region, which Moscow has recognized as an independent state since 2008.

Katyrin's remarks came shortly after Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a decree lifting the four-year unilateral ban on direct flights with Georgia and reintroducing visa-free travel for Georgian citizens after more than two decades.

The Georgian government embraced the decision, quickly authorizing several airlines for regular Russia flights. The first planes flying from Moscow have already touched the ground at Tbilisi airport despite local protests and Western criticism.

Katyrin, discussing the prospects of Rus-

sian business in Georgia in his interview, said new transport links would help facilitate more lucrative long-term oil and gas deals, and also ease the burden on Upper Lars, the only overland border crossing between Russia and Georgian-controlled territory, where trucks regularly have to queue for days.

"Given the current situation with the transit of Russian goods through Turkey, organizing such a scheme is vital," Katyrin told the newspaper.

Georgia's pro-opposition TV Pirveli also cited Russian MP Leonid Kalashnikov as floating the idea of restoring the Abkhaz railway, and various pro-Russian voices in Georgia have recently also raised the issue. Others, like U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan, expressed fears the project could be next in a series of gestures of cooperation from Moscow ultimately aimed at increasing Georgian dependence on Russia.

"What is the price that Georgia is going to have to pay for direct flights, for lifting the visa regime, potentially for restoring this railway that would connect Georgia to Russia through Abkhazia?" the diplomat asked in remarks to journalists on May 18.

Georgian leaders have rejected such a prospect for now. Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the ruling Georgian Dream party, said on May 14 that the issue of railway revival is "not on the agenda," adding that decisions on such matters would be taken in accordance with Georgia's "national interests."

Similarly, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili called the speculations about the railway's imminent revival "lies", saying that "many things can be discussed" after the country is reunified.

(The ruling party has advertised the recent detente with Moscow as a pragmatic policy that could eventually lead to the country regaining its Russia-backed breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

The potential revival of railway links would particularly benefit Armenia and Turkey, which rely on the Georgian road corridors in their overland trade with Russia. Adverse climate conditions and growing traffic jams on Georgian roads as a result of rising transit demand in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year have particularly troubled Armenia, which has few alternatives and no direct sea ac-



## ADL Leader in Greece Receives Medal

ATHENS — Sarkis Khachadourian, center, surrounded by his family members on May 19, with his wife Yeghis to his right and to his left the locum tenens of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Greece Fr. Khoren Arakelian, after receiving the pontifical St. Nerses Shnorhali medal for his six decades of community dedication. Khachadourian, a leader of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), is the publisher of the Greek-Armenian newspaper *Nor Ashkharh*.

cess. But that would beget more controversies in Georgia, due partly to fears that it would mean de facto recognition of Abkhazia, and partly to mounting opposition to growing dependency on Russia amid the Ukraine war.

And this comes as the issue of granting Armenia sea access to trade with Russia has led to separate controversies in Georgia.

Since last year, Armenia has been working to set up a ferry route to Russia through Georgia amid significantly rising trade with Moscow. The country's officials cited problems with perishable goods amid protracted transportation.

Back then, the Georgian authorities defended the initiative, citing sympathy for the concerns of its southern neighbor and Tbilisi's commitment to international conventions obliging the provision of sea access to landlocked countries such as Armenia.

Tbilisi recently had to respond to the alarm following Armenian media reports about the launch of regular container ship

traffic between Georgia's Batumi and Russia's Novorossiysk ports since April as a more convenient alternative to the jammed Upper Lars route.

Tbilisi's Maritime Transport Agency called the reports a misinterpretation, denying the existence of a "regular" route while confirming that two commercial transit trips have been indeed completed by a vessel operating under the flag of Palau, and that more are to follow.

The agency said that the vessel was not subject to sanctions and that sanctioned ships or those with sanctioned owners are not allowed into Georgian ports.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Moscow's subsequent political and economic isolation, it has been Tbilisi's declared policy not to impose its own sanctions on Russia, but to ensure that Moscow cannot use the country's territory to evade Western sanctions.

(Nini Gabritchidze is a Tbilisi-based journalist. This piece originally appeared on eurasianet.org on May 25.)

## Catholicos Karekin II Issues Statement Rejecting Azerbaijani Rule over Artsakh

STATEMENT, from page 1

"The tragic results of the 44-day Artsakh war placed new security challenges—indeed, an existential threat—before our homeland; but even under these difficult circumstances, the zeal of our people and our national institutions to persist in protecting the just rights of Armenia and Artsakh did not diminish.

"A peace agenda is currently being presented to the public; however, statements made by the Republic of Armenia's Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, during a May 22 press conference, have revealed its true

intentions, and have made evident the unacceptably dangerous positions that have been adopted by the authorities leading Armenia's negotiation process, regarding the future disposition of Artsakh and certain areas bordering Armenia.

"The Supreme Spiritual Council rejects and condemns these unilateral concessions that are being 'justified' under the pretext of peace. By shortsightedly recognizing the Republic of Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan, the Armenian authorities would inevitably confront our brothers and sisters in Artsakh with a new geno-

cide and de-patriation. The independence of Artsakh and Armenian territories, affirmed at the cost of our children's blood, is not subject to bargaining. The homeland belongs to everyone, and decisions related to the homeland should be made in accordance with the fundamental provisions of the Republic of Armenia's Constitution and legislation—and not at the discretion of individual political parties and groups.

"We urge the authorities to move away from the mentality of defeatism, and from the destructive steps resulting

from it, to find reasonable and dignified solutions that will overcome our national challenges. We appeal to all our people and national institutions to soberly assess the complex situation that exists at this fateful moment, and to remain steadfast and united in the pursuit of our national interests: the realized right of self-determination for Artsakh. In this matter, we see the decisive expression of our people as necessary.

"Peace for our homeland; safe and secure life for all our people, in Armenia, Artsakh, and the Diaspora."

# Community News

## Political Scientist Suren Sargsyan Gives Interactive Talk on Armenian Foreign Policy Challenges

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — Yerevan political scientist Suren Sargsyan kept a group of Armenian community organizational leaders and interested members engaged in a lecture on Friday, May 19, which turned into an open dialogue on the current foreign policy issues facing Armenia. The event, sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, for which he is a regular columnist, seemed to prove that there is a thirst for reliable information on what is taking place today in Armenia and Artsakh.

Sargsyan is a political scientist, author, and Ph.D. candidate in American studies, concentrating



Suren Sargsyan (photo Aram Arkun)

on US foreign policy towards Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and the Soviet Union/Russia. At the same time, he is a Donald Rumsfeld Fellow and the President of the Armenian Center for American Studies, a research center based in Yerevan, Armenia. He holds a BA degree in law from Yerevan State University, LLM from the American University of Armenia, and an LLM degree in international law from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is a lecturer at the Brusov State University in Armenia and was a teaching assistant and later co-teacher at the Fletcher School from 2014 to 2016.

Sargsyan has held different positions in the government of Armenia. Suren Sargsyan worked at the office of the President of Armenia as a legal adviser under two former presidents of Armenia from 2004-2011. He served as legal and foreign affairs adviser to the prime minister of Armenia, the speaker of the Parliament of Armenia, and the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court of Armenia.



Andrew Levon Krekorian with the museum exhibit

## Armenian-American Military Veterans Honored Through Teenager's Eagle Scout Service Project

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — In honor of all Armenian-Americans who have served in the US military, a local Boy Scout has dedicated a veterans tribute garden at the Ararat Home in Mission Hills.

Andrew Levon Krekorian of BSA Troop 36 in Valley Village had the idea for the veterans garden as a service project for the Eagle Scout rank, Scouting's highest achievement. He was inspired by the memory of his late grandfather Rick Krekorian, who was a World War II combat veteran of the US Marines Corps. He brought his idea to the Ararat Home, who embraced it and partnered with Andrew in designing and completing the garden.

"Armenian-Americans have courageously served our country in the military since the Civil War," said Andrew, 18. "The men and women who gave us the freedoms we enjoy deserve all of our gratitude, and this project is one step to honor them appropriately."

The garden includes a circular seating area of concrete benches around a shade tree, which will be enjoyed by the elderly residents of the Ararat Home and their families. A bronze plaque that Andrew designed reads "Throughout our nation's history Armenian-Americans have served nobly and selflessly in the United States Military. This garden is dedicated to the sacrifices they made and their undying patriotism and devotion. As you enjoy this quiet place, take a moment to remember them with gratitude for their service."

In addition to the garden, Andrew created a brochure highlighting some of the history of Armenian-American military service for the adjacent Ararat-Eskijian Museum. The brochure includes information about inspirational role models like Brigadier General Haig Shekerjian, the first Armenian to graduate from West Point; Anna Der-Vartanian, the first woman ever to serve as the Navy's Master Chief Petty Officer; World War II Marine Corps heroes Victor Maghakian and Harry Kizirian; and Civil War veteran of the Union Navy Khachadour Paul Garabedian, who is believed to be the first Armenian to become a US citizen.

"I'm extremely grateful to everyone who helped make this project a reality, especially the management of Ararat Home and the Ararat-Eskijian Museum," said Andrew. "None of this would have been possible without their generous partnership, cooperation and encouragement."

The Armenian American Veterans Garden is located at Ararat Home of Los Angeles, 15105 Mission Hills Road.

## Generous Gift from Dean V. Shahinian To Fund Summer Internship for Students

NEW YORK — The Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center's 2023 summer internship and community service program for high school and college students will be named "The Lily E. Jelalian Internship and Community Service Program," thanks to a generous donation from Dean Vahan Shahinian, Esq., which will provide modest stipends to the interns and lunches for interns and volunteers. The program will last for approximately six weeks, from June 19 to July 28.

Lily Elizabeth Jelalian, Shahinian's aunt, was a lifelong member of the Armenian Church, belonging to St. Leon Armenian Church in New Jersey, where her father, Rev. Fr. Vahan Jelalian, served as the parish's priest from 1941-1947. She was a faithful and avid supporter of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and other Armenian cultural and Christian causes. She read widely in Armenian art, history, and other subjects and worked through various avenues and means to promote effective ministry in the Church.

Ms. Jelalian was a school psychologist, who helped countless children with their various psychological and emotional needs. She pursued doctoral studies in educational psychology at New York University after receiving a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Arts from Douglas College. Her yearbook described her as "warm, sincere, ardent...about things big and little."

In addition to being a loving and caring aunt involved in the life of her nephew, Jelalian played a mentoring role to the young Dean Shahinian, acquainting him with the activities and leaders of Armenian Christian and cultural organizations, many of whom she knew personally. She was a constant source of encouragement, offering advice and guidance to her nephew as he pursued his education, career, and concurrent involvement in Armenian Church affairs.

Shahinian recalls how his beloved aunt "sparked my interest in various Armenian subjects through our many discussions, buying me Armenian books to read and sending me subscriptions to Armenian publications. She made me feel comfortable and well informed about the Armenian Church, leading me to assume positions of responsibility on the Diocesan Council, as a representative on the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, and in other ways."

It is Shahinian's intention that through the internship and community service program sponsored in his aunt's name, young Armenian Americans will see how their efforts and contributions are valued by the Church and community. He hopes that the program will provide them with experience and mentorship like that he received from his aunt, helping Armenian youth to feel at home and find their place in the Armenian Church and culture.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# 8 Women Join Suit over Texas' Abortion Bans, Claim Their Lives Were Put in Danger

By Nadine EL-Bawab

HOUSTON (ABC News) — The Center for Reproductive Rights is expected to add eight more women to a lawsuit it filed against Texas over its abortion ban, claiming their lives were put at risk due to the law. This brings the total number of plaintiffs to 15. (Among those is Anna Zargarian, the details of whose case is further down.)

The suit alleged that Texas' abortion bans have denied the plaintiffs and countless other pregnant people necessary and potentially life-saving medical care because physicians in the state fear liability, according to a draft of the complaint shared with ABC News.

Texas has several abortion laws in place, prohibiting all abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, except in medical emergencies, which the laws do not define. One of the bans — called SB 8 — prohibits abortions after cardiac activity is detected, which kept several plaintiffs from accessing care despite their pregnancies being nonviable, according to a draft of the suit.

Under Texas' bans, it is a second-degree felony to perform or attempt an abortion, punishable by up to life in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000. The law also allows private citizens to sue anyone who "aids or abets" an abortion.

The lawsuit is asking a judge to temporarily and permanently suspend the Texas law due to the uncertainty surrounding the meaning of the exception in the state's abortion bans. The suit also alleged that the abortion bans have caused and threaten to cause irreparable injury to the patient plaintiffs and the patients of physician plaintiffs filing the suit.

The suit is the first to be filed by women impacted by the abortion bans since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year, ending federal protections for abortion

rights.

The lawsuit is filed against the state of Texas, Attorney General Ken Paxton and the Texas Medical Board. A date has not yet been set for a hearing, according to Molly Duane, a lead attorney at the Center for Reproductive Rights.

"This is the Texas that politicians have created, and Texas officials do nothing while people suffer. But, Texans will have their voices heard," Duane said at a press conference Monday.

"This is a public health crisis -- one that is pervasive, ongoing and government-inflicted. More stories of similar pregnant people both in Texas and around the country pile up every day," Duane said.

"THIS IS THE TEXAS THAT POLITICIANS HAVE CREATED,  
AND TEXAS OFFICIALS DO NOTHING WHILE PEOPLE  
SUFFER. BUT, TEXANS WILL HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD,"

Along with the women who filed the suit after they were unable to access abortion care in the state, two Texas OB-GYNs — Dr. Damla Karsan and Dr. Judy Levison — are also plaintiffs who alleged the bans have had a devastating impact on their practice and that of their colleagues, who fear prosecutors and politicians will target them personally and threaten state funding of hospitals if they provide abortion care to pregnant people with emergency medical conditions, according to a draft of the suit.

Levison said she partially retired from her practice of medicine in July 2022 in part because *Roe* was overturned and she felt she could no longer practice in the way she was trained and as is consistent with her ethical obligations as a physician, according to a draft of the suit.

The lawsuit alleged that despite their being an exception in the bans to save the life of a pregnant woman, inconsistencies in the language of these provisions, the use of non-medical terminology and sloppy legislative drafting have resulted in understandable confusion throughout the medical profession regarding the scope of the exception.

Two plaintiffs, Kiersten Hogan and Elizabeth Weller, had their water break prematurely, but were both told to wait until they were sick enough to receive abortion care, according to a draft of the suit.

Hogan was allegedly told that if she tried to leave the hospital to seek care elsewhere she could be arrested for trying to kill her

of state for abortion care, so she had to continue her pregnancy, according to a draft of the suit. She went into labor early and after delivering, her daughter only lived for four hours, according to a draft of the suit. She could only afford a gravestone after a story was written about her and members of the public contributed to her fundraising website, according to a draft of the suit.

Dr. Austin Dennard, an OB who treats Lauren Miller, is one of the other plaintiffs who had to travel out of state to receive abortion care for a nonviable pregnancy. She is now pregnant again and fears for her safety as a pregnant woman in Texas, according to a draft of the suit.

Dennard, Jessica Bernardo, Taylor Edwards and Lauren Van Vleet's fetuses received fatal diagnoses and they had to travel out of state for abortion care, even while risks to their own health increased, according to a draft of the suit.

Bernardo and her husband had decided to continue her pregnancy after finding out their baby may have Down syndrome, deciding they would love her either way. But, they later found out the baby also had a fatal condition called hydrops that could also pose a threat to Bernardo's life if she develops mirror syndrome. She could experience severe fluid retention that could be fatal to her and the fetus, according to a draft of the suit.

"Under these laws, [doctors] couldn't speak openly, or even tell us my options. I remember saying to my doctor, 'we have a place in Colorado. Should I go there?' And as if the secret code she said 'yes, I think you should go to Colorado'," Bernardo said at a press conference Monday.

"Speaking up now, and joining this case, because I never want another human being to go through what I another Texans have been through. This has to be stopped. My trusted OB-GYN and general practitioner felt so helpless, that all they could offer me was a hug as I sobbed into their shoulders. The State of Texas owes them and us so much more," Bernardo said.

She sought care at a clinic in Seattle, booking expensive flights and a hotel room. At the clinic she was told she was their third patient from Texas that week alone, according to a draft of the suit.

Five of the plaintiffs were a part of the original lawsuit that was filed in early March.

Amanda Zurawski's water broke and she said she was forced to wait until she was septic to receive abortion care, causing one of her fallopian tubes to be permanently closed.

Lauren Miller said she had to travel out of state to save her life and the life of one of her unborn twins after she learned that the other twin was not viable.

Lauren Hall's fetus was diagnosed with a fatal condition and she had to travel to Seattle for abortion care. Hall is now pregnant again and fears that the state is not safe for her and her family, according to a draft of the suit.

Anna Zargarian had to travel across multiple states to receive abortion care after her water broke, risking that she could go into labor or septic shock on the journey, according to a draft of the suit.

Ashley Brandt had to travel out of state for an abortion to save the life of one of her twins. Her Texas physician feared documenting the abortion and listed her condition as vanishing twin syndrome, according to a draft of the suit.

baby, according to a draft of the suit. She was kept in the hospital until she went into labor four days later in the hospital bathroom and delivered her son stillborn.

"I was told that if I tried to discharge myself or seek care elsewhere, that I could be arrested for trying to kill my child. I wanted this baby, so of course I stayed," Hogan said at a press conference.

"When I needed to use the bathroom, I was accompanied and watched and made sure that I didn't push," Hogan said.

Hogan called the experience the most traumatic and heartbreaking experience of her life.

"At every turn, staff reminded me how alone I was and how unmarried I was. I was made to feel less than human," Hogan said.

Weller had to wait until she developed an infection before a hospital approved her abortion despite her losing almost all her amniotic fluid, which a pregnancy is not viable without, according to a draft of the suit.

"My doctor told me that due to a new Texas law, my request for an abortion had been denied. Now, I was left with one of two options, each cruel and inhumane. I could either stay in a hospital to wait for my baby to die, at which point I could get the abortion I needed to protect my health, or I could go home and wait for either my daughter's death or for an infection to develop that might cause my own demise," Weller said at a press conference Monday.

"My baby would not survive and my life didn't matter. And there was nothing I could do about it," Weller said.

Kylie Beaton and Samantha Casiano said they were both forced to carry nonviable pregnancies to term.

Beaton had an emergency c-section to deliver and after a few days in the hospital took her son home, she told ABC News. He died hours later, her husband told ABC News. She will have to wait between 16 to 18 months before she could try to get pregnant again, her physicians have told her.

According to the draft of the suit, Beaton and her husband watched their son grow cold in their arms until he died. He could not sit upright or it would put too much pressure on his head, which was abnormally large. When she delivered, the circumference of her baby's head was measuring at 49 cm, the average head circumference for a newborn is 35 cm, according to a draft of the suit.

Casiano was unable to afford to travel out

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

## Giragosian

F UNERAL H OME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC  
Mark J. Giragosian  
Funeral Counselors

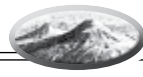
576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606  
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

## DENNIS M. DEVENY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in  
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543  
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com



# 3 People Sue Cardinal, Bishops, over Alleged Sex Abuse By Arlington Catholic High Ex-Principal

By Simon Rios and Lisa Creamer

BOSTON (NPR) — Three people who claim they were sexually assaulted by a former vice principal at Arlington Catholic High School have filed a civil lawsuit against Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley, leader of the Archdiocese of Boston.

The lawsuit alleges that Stephen Biagioni abused the plaintiffs, known as John Doe I, II and III, between 2011 and 2016. The former students were between the ages of 15 and 17 at the time, attorney Mitchell Garabedian told reporters on May 22.

The civil suit names O'Malley and two of his top lieutenants — Bishop Robert Deeley, currently head of the Diocese of Portland, Maine, as well as Bishop Peter Uglietto, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Boston. The three allegedly “knew, or were negligent in not knowing” that Biagioni, who is not a priest or church leader, posed a danger to children at the high school, the suit claims.

“Once again, we have to look at the secret files to see what Cardinal O'Malley has for information concerning Stephen Biagioni and concerning what his supervisors knew,” Garabedian said.

“It's time for Bishop O'Malley to reveal what he has substantively in those secret files concerning the sexual abuse ... of three innocent children.”

The archdiocese said it does not comment on pending litigation. But its spokesman, Terry Donilon, in a statement said church

officials understand certain allegations in the suit were brought to the attention of Arlington Catholic High School in 2016, and were reported to law enforcement and child welfare authorities.

Biagioni, who was later promoted to principal, “was subsequently removed from his position,” Donilon said, and staff from the high school and the archdiocese “cooperated fully with the investigating authorities.”

According to news reports, Biagioni was placed on administrative leave in 2016, pending the outcome of the investigation after a complaint from a Medford resident “related to events that may have happened during a Sunday detention at the school.”

Defendants Deeley and Uglietto each hold the title of vicar general, second in command to the cardinal.

Last August, another person represented by Garabedian filed suit accusing Biagioni of repeatedly sexually abusing him as a teen during detentions at Arlington Catholic High School between around 1999 until 2001.

Biagioni is not a named defendant in either lawsuit. Garabedian said Biagioni's alleged acts are being investigated by the Middlesex district attorney's office. Biagioni could not immediately be reached for comment.

The alleged victims in the new lawsuit are not named in the suit, and Garabedian said they did not wish to comment. The suit calls for a jury to determine whether and



Attorney Mitchell Garabedian in the WBUR studios in Boston in 2016. (Jesse Costa/WBUR)

what damages may be owed to the plaintiffs, in addition to covering their legal fees.

Garabedian noted that O'Malley is the president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. “Cardinal O'Malley has failed woefully in protecting

children within the Archdiocese of Boston, never mind worldwide,” he said.

Over roughly 20 years, Garabedian has represented dozens of victims in sexual abuse lawsuits against priests within the Archdiocese of Boston.

Tekeyan Cultural Association

# SPONSOR A TEACHER

in Armenia and five villages in Artsakh

2023





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



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Fr. Mampre Kouzouian Celebrates 65th Anniversary of Ordination

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On May 21, Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge honored its former pastor Fr. Mampre Kouzouian on the 65th anniversary of his ordination. In addition to his 65 years of service to the Armenian church, the parish also celebrated his 90th birthday. The program following Divine Liturgy included generational tributes, musical selections, and videos. Fr. Mampre felt the appreciation and love of those he served over the decades, with the Holy Trinity community in attendance along with parishioners from many of the other parishes he has served.

A letter of pontifical blessing and appreciation was sent to Fr. Mampre by Catholics of All Armenians Karekin II on the occasion of his 65th anniversary. The letter was brought to Holy Trinity by the Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), who was in attendance for the special celebration and presented the letter during the reception in his honor. The letter read, “Dear Der Mampre: During your long years of pastoral service, you have zealously placed your talents in the service of the spiritual care of our faithful people, thereby earning the love and esteem of both the hierarchy as well as your flock... With particular gratitude, we acknowledge your inexhaustible love for Echmiadzin, which you have demonstrated during your entire pastoral service...”

“Fr. Mampre met some truly inspirational people over the years, each of whom strengthened the foundation of his life. These were all honorable, principled, and faithful people... and he cherishes them in his prayers every day, and during every *Badarak*. These are the people who helped prepare him and nurture him to serve the Armenian Church and people. He spent his life on something far greater than himself that would outlast him and forever define him,” shared Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, Holy Trinity’s pastor and son of Fr. Mampre.

During the program a beautiful painting



Fr. Mampre Kouzouian with his family and the Very Rev. Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), as his grandchildren presented him with a painting of him serving at Holy Trinity’s altar.

was presented to Fr. Mampre by his grandchildren, Oscar Derderian III, and Alina Kouzouian, painted by local artist Sona Manoukian. The painting captured Fr. Mampre standing at the altar of the church he served for 25 years. Musical selections performed by tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan, and mezzo-soprano Victoria Avetisyan extended the joyous mood as Fr. Mampre was welcomed to the podium with a standing ovation in the Charles and Nevart Talian Cultural Hall.

The event also raised funds for causes near the honoree’s heart.

Kouzouian spoke about the vision he saw that started his journey from the island-nation of Cyprus to now standing in Cambridge, looking back on his many years of service. “I ask nothing for myself... I ask for the children of Armenia who are battling cancer, and for the fatherless fam-

ilies of Artsakh soldiers...let us together serve their needs...” ended Fr. Mampre. All funds raised in his honor will benefit children with cancer at the Prof. Yeolian Hematology Center in Armenia and the families of the fallen soldiers of Artsakh.

The celebration came to a close with closing remarks and a blessing from the Primate, Fr. Parsamyan, who eloquently stated, “My

friends, if you listened to *Der Mampre’s* remarks, he never once spoke about himself... after 65 years of service, he stood before us today asking that we serve the children and families of Armenia and Artsakh...that’s what it means to be a priest and servant of God...May *Der Mampre* be forever blessed for his devotion and service to God’s children...”



Fr. Mampre Kouzouian, Very Rev. Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and Fr. Vasken Kouzouian with Holy Trinity’s altar servers.

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH

# ARMENIAN FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2023  
NOON-5PM —RAIN OR SHINE!

**DELICIOUS ARMENIAN FOOD!**  
Shish, Losh and Chicken Kebab! Delicious vegetarian options!

**LIVE ARMENIAN MUSIC!**  
Bob Raphaelian \* Jay Baronian \* Leon Janikian \* Kenny Kalajian

**CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES!**  
Moor Bounce \* Face Painting \* Treats \* and More!

**FUN FOR ALL AGES!**  
Armenian Music & Dancing! Rattle! Armenian Verdcr!

[www.stjameswatertown.org/festival](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/festival)

St. James Armenian Church | 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA  
info@sthagop.com | 617.923.8860

## THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

### Seeking Summer Intern

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August). The intern will receive a \$150 weekly stipend provided through the Armenian Students’ Association of America’s Internship Program. The *Mirror* also is looking for interns during the regular year.

The intern should be in college or graduate school and does not necessarily have to be studying journalism. Most likely, the internship will be done long distance, via electronic communications, so location is not an issue (but native speaker knowledge of English remains important).

Aside from writing for the paper and working on the *Mirror* website, the *Mirror* is looking for help in sparking new marketing campaigns and obtain more digital advertising.

If interested, please email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com) or [alin.gregorian@gmail.com](mailto:alin.gregorian@gmail.com) with your resume and tell us of your interests and relevant skills.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

- Associate's or bachelor's degree preferred.
- Minimum of 3 years relevant experience.
- Able to fluently work with administration, faculty, and parents to build a tightly integrated and smooth running school.

**Knowledge of:**

- Modern office practices, procedures, and equipment.
- Record-keeping techniques.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Interpersonal skills using tact, patience, and courtesy.
- First Aid and CPR (or willingness to obtain certification after hire).
- Knowledge of Armenian language is preferred.

**Ability to:**

- Compose routine correspondence independently and timely.
- Work independently with minimal direction.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships.
- Learn, interpret, apply and explain rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Compile and maintain accurate records and prepare reports.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**\* Perform other tasks as needed.****Benefits**

- Competitive salary
- Health and Dental Insurance Coverage
- 403(B) plan with match
- Professional development opportunities

*Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, résumé and three letters of recommendation to [careers@ssaes.org](mailto:careers@ssaes.org)*

**Minimum Qualifications**

- Associate's or bachelor's degree preferred.
- Minimum of 3 years relevant experience.
- Able to fluently work with administration, faculty, and parents to build a tightly integrated and smooth running school.

**Knowledge of:**

- Modern office practices, procedures, and equipment.
- Record-keeping techniques.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Interpersonal skills using tact, patience, and courtesy.
- First Aid and CPR (or willingness to obtain certification after hire).
- Knowledge of Armenian language is preferred.

**Ability to:**

- Compose routine correspondence independently and timely.
- Work independently with minimal direction.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships.
- Learn, interpret, apply and explain rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Compile and maintain accurate records and prepare reports.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**\* Perform other tasks as needed.****Benefits**

- Competitive salary
- Health and Dental Insurance Coverage
- 403(B) plan with match
- Professional development opportunities

*Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, résumé and three letters of recommendation to [careers@ssaes.org](mailto:careers@ssaes.org)*

## Arizona Legislature Affirms Artsakh Right To Self-Determination

PHOENIX, Ariz. — The Arizona State Legislature has affirmed the Republic of Artsakh's (Nagorno Karabakh) right to self-determination in a proclamation issued by Arizona State House Speaker Ben Toma, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

"We welcome the proclamation from the Speaker of Arizona's State Assembly recognizing Artsakh's right to self-determination – an important step towards justice for the Armenians of Artsakh," remarked ANCA National Board Member Zanku Armenian. "Amid Azerbaijan's blockade of Artsakh, this demonstration of solidarity is a crucial part of our community's ongoing efforts to raise awareness of this unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and ensure Azerbaijan is held accountable for its unabated aggression against the Armenian people."

Arizona Armenian community leaders Artur Artyan and Vartan Arabyan, working in conjunction with the ANCA, spearheaded the legislative effort. The proclamation cites Artsakh as "the indigenous homeland of the Armenian people, and has been a center of Armenian cultural, political and religious life for several millennia."

It goes on to document Soviet Azerbaijan's decades of Artsakh oppression and post-independence aggression, "culminating in an assault on Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 that saw Azerbaijan perpetrate war crimes against the region's Armenian population, and resulted in Azerbaijan seizing control of 70% of Karabakh's territory."

The proclamation salutes the Artsakh Armenians "efforts to exercise the right to self-determination and live free from violence and repression."

Arizona House Speaker Toma then affirms support for the "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination, and its continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation, in order to guarantee its citizens those rights inherent in a free and independent society; and be it further, I encourage the United States government to strengthen and solidify our country's economic and cultural relationship with the Artsakh Republic and its citizens and continue to promote the humanitarian and economic rehabilitation of the region."

The full text of the Arizona legislative proclamation is provided below:

Whereas, The Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) is the indigenous homeland of the Armenian people, and has been a center of Armenian cultural, political, and religious life for several millennia; and

Whereas, despite its historical and cultural ties to Armenia, in 1921, Joseph Stalin arbitrarily severed Artsakh from Armenia, and placed it under the administration of Soviet Azerbaijan in violation of the national, territorial and human rights of the Armenian people; and

Whereas, following decades of oppression under Soviet Azerbaijani rule, the Armenians of Artsakh in a popular referendum voted overwhelmingly in support of exerting their right to self-determination and declared independence from the Soviet Union; and

Whereas, Azerbaijan responded to these calls for independence by force, plunging the region into a bloody conflict that ended with a ceasefire agreement that secured Nagorno-Karabakh's self-governance; and

Whereas, in defiance of the ceasefire agreement and conflict resolution efforts, Azerbaijan continued to threaten the security and sovereignty of Artsakh in the decades following the war, culminating in an assault on Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 that saw Azerbaijan perpetrate war crimes against the region's Armenian population, and resulted in Azerbaijan seizing control of 70% of Karabakh's territory; and

Whereas, The Armenians of Artsakh remain resolute in their efforts to exercise the right to self-determination and live free from violence and repression, and by recognizing the government of Artsakh, the international community can help put to rest this century-old conflict.

Therefore, I, Representative Ben Toma, Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, do hereby recognize and support the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination, and its continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation, in order to guarantee its citizens those rights inherent in a free and independent society; and be it further, I encourage the United States government to strengthen and solidify our country's economic and cultural relationship with the Artsakh Republic and its citizens and continue to promote the humanitarian and economic rehabilitation of the region.



# Arts & Culture

## Wiebke Zollmann Finds Her Joy Living, Working And Creating in Yerevan

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Wiebke Zollmann is German poet, translator, photographer, and arts manager. Born in Stendal, Germany, from 2011 to 2014, she studied at the Swiss Literature Institute in Bienne. In 2014-2015, she has taught at the Brusov State University for Languages and Social Sciences in Yerevan and worked at the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Information Center. Since 2015, she has been the manager of the [Naghsh Ensemble of Armenia](#). Wiebke has published poems and short stories in literary magazines and anthologies, and translated Armenian authors (Kostandin Yerznkatsi, Mkrtich Naghash, Kostan Zarian, Yeghishe Charents, Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan, Shushan Avagyan, Aram Pachyan, Tatev Chakhian, Grig).

**Dear Wiebke, in your blog and elsewhere you often write about Armenia. How you would describe shortly your experience in living Armenia?**

I love living in Yerevan. The city has changed a lot over the past years, but it remains a fantastic place to be. People are hospitable and helpful, there's easy access to the cultural scene, and the town is super walkable. (Though we all must admit: Traffic has become unbearable. We'd need a better public transport system to ease the situation. Let's bring back trams!) After you've been in Armenia for a while, the city center feels like a village. You go for a walk and always run into people you know, stop for a moment to chat, or spontaneously spend the rest of the day together. Things don't have to be planned weeks beforehand. (And even if you try, it probably won't work.) They just happen, and that's mostly in a good sense.

**Was it a coincidence that you arrived in this country?**

When I first came to Armenia in 2009, I was only 19 years old. It was my German philosophy teacher who "sent" me there. She asked what I wanted to do after high school and in response to my lame, lukewarm answer, she simply said: "I think you should go to Armenia and work in environmental protection." My first response was: "Wait, where?" I must admit: before she mentioned it, I had never even heard of Armenia. But I trusted her advice — and the rest is my Armenian history. I volunteered for SunChild/FPWC for three months and later for another year. I adored the team and everybody's dedication to preserving Armenia's stunning but highly threatened nature. From that point on, I always kept coming back to Armenia...

see ZOLLMANN, page 16



## Famed MA Bakery Celebrates 50th Anniversary with Nationwide Expansion of Original Pita

By Christine Vartanian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LAWRENCE, MA. -- Joseph's Bakery, the leading selling brand of pita and lavash flatbreads in the U.S., is celebrating its 50th year of business with a nationwide expansion highlighted by new partnerships with Kroger, including more than 1,200 locations, and new item additions in 3,000 Walmart stores and multiple Albertsons Safeway divisions. The Original Pita, a white traditional pita bread and Joseph's initial product offering that was first delivered fresh to Demoulas Market Basket stores in New England, has expanded in recent years to include all Ahold Delhaize USA banners, eight Albertson Safeway divisions, Meijer, Publix, Southeastern Grocers, and WinCo stores. Joseph's top-selling Flax, Oat Bran and Whole Wheat line of pita, wraps and lavash are available for purchase throughout the U.S.

Joseph's is selling the Original Pita that started it all in 1972 at over 15,000 stores globally. "For the past 50 years, Joseph's has been relying on our centuries-old family recipes to craft the freshest, healthiest products for our customers, and the demand continues to grow," said Joseph Boghos, Chief Baker, and third generation owner. "To see our traditional pita bread, the first product my grandfather Joseph made from my grandmother's recipe, continuing to build momentum globally is a testament to our quality and timeless recipes. We could not have achieved this success without our family, dedicated employees, and our loyal customer base."

"With our family recipes, updated modern ingredients, and technical innovation, we've been making authentic Middle Eastern breads for half a century. We bake in our Massachusetts headquarters and deliver around New England and the country 7 days a week, so you know your favorite Joseph's products will be fresh, soft, and tasty, straight out of the package-and they'll stay that way throughout their shelf life," says Stephen Boghos, third generation owner, and Vice President of Business Development

### Syria to America

In 1952, Joseph Boghos immigrated with his family from Damascus, Syria, to the greater Boston area. Missing the flavors of home, he recreated some of his favorite dishes in his kitchen. One of these was an authentic pita bread made from a recipe handed down through his family. In 1972, his neighbors, fascinated with the portable sandwich pocket, started asking for pita of their own. To meet the demand, he founded Joseph's Bakery in 1972. It wasn't long before grocery stores around New England could barely keep the bread on their shelves. After three years in a small attic apartment in Lowell, MA, the operation moved to Riverside Drive in Methuen, MA, until 1984. Joseph's products expanded to include lavash, tortillas, wraps, pancakes, pizza dough and flatbread in a variety of grain styles from Whole Wheat to Flax, Oat Bran and Whole Wheat.

To commemorate the milestone, Joseph's is committing to donating 50,000 packages of flatbread, pita and wraps over the next year to Lazarus House Ministries in Lawrence, MA, which provides food, shelter, clothing and advocacy services to families and individuals throughout the Merrimack Valley. The donations will support the

see JOSEPH'S, page 15

## Gathering Celebrates Appointment of New Smithsonian Archives Director

BEVERLY HILLS — On May 21, trustee Amanda Quinn Olivar hosted the Smithsonian Archives of American Art to celebrate the appointment of its new director Anne Helmreich.

The event was held at the home of Amanda's twin sister, Jennifer Quinn Gowey, and brother-in-law Eric Gowey. The Beverly Hill home was featured in David Hockney's 1968 painting *American Collectors* (Fred and Marcia Weisman) that is part of the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

The event was attended by Amanda and Jennifer's mother Joan Agajanian Quinn, as well as many Los Angeles-based artists such as Chaz Bojórquez, Woods Davy, Laddie John Dill, Shepard Fairey, Jim Ganzer, Yolanda Gonzales, Alex Hedison, George Herms, Charles Hill, Pamela Smith Hudson, Andy Moses, Claudia Parducci, Astrid Preston,



From left, Jennifer Quinn Gowey, Joan Agajanian Quinn, Alexandra Hedison and Amanda Quinn Oliva (Photo credit Alan Shaffer)

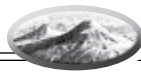
Joey Terrill, and Elyn Zimmerman. Approximately 100 people were in attendance.

Said Anne Helmreich: "The Archives of American Art has answers to vital questions about why art and artists matter. Our collections contain profound stories that will help future generations understand who we are and how we got here. As we look to the future, the Archives will continue to collect to reflect the breadth of the American experience and to develop innovative programming that connects with new audiences, powering future creativity."

Added Amanda Quinn Olivar: "It was a privilege to welcome friends and family into my sister's home to introduce our new director Anne Helmreich and to celebrate all the great work the Archives of American Art does in preserving artist's stories in their own voices! I've been involved with the Archives for a few years. It means so much to me and has always been essential for my own research. The Archives is an outstanding resource, and I can't wait for everyone to tap into what we have to offer!"

Helmreich is a widely published art historian, administrator, and educator. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, she served as associate director of grants programming at the Getty Foundation, supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of visual arts in Los Angeles.

see APPOINTMENT, page 14



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# ACF Concert Paying Tribute to Arsen Sayan Features Nairi Babayan, Christina Gullans

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Treasures of Armenian Classical Music will be featured at a concert sponsored by the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF), co-sponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance, on Sunday, June 11, at 4 p.m.

Pianist Naira Babayan and cellist Christina Gullans will perform works by Koharik Ghazarossian, Sayat-Nova, Gagik Hovvunts, Avet Terteryan, Komitas Vartapet, Edvard Baghdasaryan, and Alexander Harutyunyan.

The concert is part of ACF's Mirak Chamber Music Series, established in 2017 in memory of John P. Mirak (1907-2000), entrepreneur, philanthropist, community leader, benefactor for decades and late president of the Armenian Cultural Foundation.

The Mirak Chamber Music Series aims to place the world's finest classical music at the center of the cultural life of the Boston Armenian community in general and Arlington in particular. In line with the Foundation's mission, to focus "on the history of Armenian music in the diaspora and on the role of Armenian women in the nation's history," the Series showcases works by international and Armenian composers, with an emphasis on introducing works by Armenian women composers in Armenia and the Diaspora. On occasion, the Series will also feature and promote young and promising performers and groups as well as premieres of newly written works.

This concert is presented as a tribute to Arsen Sayan (1928-2018), founder and conductor of the KNAR-ANI Choral Groups of Philadelphia and Washington.



**Pianist Naira Babayan**

Recognized for her exceptional talent and artistic approach to musical interpretation, Dr. Babayan received her early education in music from Tchaikovsky Music School. She holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Piano Performance from the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, as well as a Master of Arts from the Gnnessin Academy of Music in Moscow, where she studied under the tutelage of Professor Maria Gambaryan. She also holds a Doctorate from the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

With over 25 years of experience, Babayan has performed in solo and chamber recitals worldwide: the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall, Komitas State Conservatory Concert Hall, and the Ministry of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Diaspora Concert Hall in Yerevan, the Royal Concert Hall of the American University in Dubai and Sharjah, UAE, and the San Lazzaro-Hall of Mirrors in Venice, Italy. She was

a guest performer and won first prize at the 2005 Moscow Music Festival in, performing a program of works by Rachmaninoff and Scriabin.

Babayan is widely recognized as a foremost interpreter of Armenian folkloric and classical repertoires. According to Oleg Mitrofanov, the General Manager of the AMADEI Moscow Music Theatre, "Naira's exceptional talent and artistic approach to musical interpretation make her a clear stand out among many others, particularly her expressiveness, unique style and technical virtuosity. She is an Armenian Treasure!"



**Cellist Christina Gullans**

A former member of the Boston String Quartet, Christina Gullans helped establish the quartet's longstanding commitment to music education through the establishment of mentoring relationships with dozens of secondary schools and colleges throughout the country.

As an orchestral musician, Gullans has performed as a member of Lorin Maazel's Castleton Festival Orchestra and as the principal cellist for Joseph Vincent's World Orchestra, where she was honored as Ambassador of Peace from the Fundación Cultura de Paz in Madrid, Spain. She recently began collaborating with visual artists and living composers creating rich and immersive art experiences dedicated to environmental awareness.

Gullans' playing has been heard in top concert halls around the world, ranging from Carnegie Hall, the National Auditorium in Madrid, Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, Jordan Hall, and National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing. She has also been heard on National Public Radio and telecasts throughout the United States, Europe, and China.

In 2020, Gullans was featured on "Across the Ages," an album of works written by the Armenian-American composer Alan Hovhanness, released by Albany Records. Inspired by ancient Armenian, Japanese, and Indian musical elements, the collection displays Hovhanness' ability to synthesize different musical traditions. Utilizing the cello's rich and expressive nature, this music reflects timeless connections the current generation has to past civilizations, to nature, and to each other. The CD has been praised as a much-needed and overdue addition to American cello discography.

Praised for her "incredible depth" [*Broadway World Review*], "exemplary musicianship" [Guy Rickards, *Musical Opinion*] and "thoughtful nature" [David Moore, *American Record Guide*], Gullans is based in Washington.



**Conductor Arsen Sayan**

Acknowledged for his purposeful direction and stubborn perseverance, passionate direction, careful preparation of concert programs, and meticulous attention to selection of music combined to reflect in all elements the Armenian spirit and character, Sayan was a purist in the art of directing and in the authentic interpretation of Armenian music.

Born in Aleppo, Syria (1928) of Daron parentage, Sayan received his early education in the local Mkhitarist School. He continued his education at the Armenian Theological Seminary in Antelias (Beirut), Lebanon. In 1948, upon completing his studies at the Seminary, Sayan returned to Syria, where he taught Armenian language, history and music in various institutions. During the tenure of the late Catholicos Zareh I, he undertook the direction of the 50-voice male choir of the Mother Cathedral of Aleppo. In 1950, he expanded his activities and organized the 90-voice Shoghakan Chorus, which he conducted for seven years.

Moving to the United States in 1957, Saryan served for a number of years as choirmaster at St. Gregory Illuminator Armenian Church in Philadelphia. In 1960 he founded the 70-plus member KNAR intercommunal Armenian Choral Group in Philadelphia, aimed at promoting pan-Armenian activities. Over the years KNAR became the spiritual anchor for the first and future cooperative efforts.

Hailed as the "Indefatigable Apostle of the Armenian Song" for the close to five decades that followed, a purist with unequal devotion and uncompromising dedication and attention to details, Sayan disseminated the treasures of Armenian musical culture through meticulously designed concerts (85) and radio and television broadcasts to Armenian and American audiences in New York, New Jersey, Washington, Richmond, Virginia, and in particular, Philadelphia, and as the musical-cultural director and chief producer of the VOA Armenian Service for 25 years (1970-1995).

In 1963, Sayan was accepted at the Komitas State Conservatory of Music in Yerevan to pursue his studies, majoring in choral direction. He graduated in 1966 with first-class honors and a dissertation titled "Armenian Religious Music of the Middle Ages." Years later, Sayan headed the Conservatory's final examination committee for graduating conductors (1998, 2000, 2002, 2003), period. In 1997 He also established a scholarship fund for the students of the Komitas Conservatory.

As part of his humanitarian initiatives,

Sayan sponsored the complete renovation of Argavand Music School in Ararat Province, Armenia, named after him. Today, the school continues to thrive thanks to the generous funding of philanthropist, Armenian musicologist, educator and social worker Maestro [Sayan](#). His widow Catherine continues to fund a scholarship through the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) for students who wish to study at the school. Three new scholarships dedicated to Arsen Sayan will be awarded to students with the highest grades.

## Arsen Sayan Collection

The ACF houses the Arsen Sayan Collection (No.12), a treasury of major musical Diaspora Armenian music. Meticulously compiled and organized, the Collection is comprised of an extensive library of books, music scores, recordings of the KNAR-ANI choirs' performances, several binders chronicling decades of activities, newspaper clippings, program notes, and correspondence with composers, musicians, educators, public and cultural figures, writers, poets, scholars and national leaders. Lastly, included is a collection of memorabilia, commendations, certificates of appreciation as well as photographs.

Proceeds from concert will be donated to the Romanos Melikian Music School in Yerevan on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of its founding (1923-2023).

Tickets (\$20 adults, children under 12 free) can be obtained by contacting the ACF office or by visiting [amarasonline.com](#). Seating limited. The concert will be followed by a reception.

## Gathering Celebrates Appointment of New Smithsonian Archives Director

APPOINTMENT, from page 13  
Angles and throughout the world, and previously as associate director of digital initiatives at the Getty Research Institute, both part of the J. Paul Getty Trust. Anne also brings her experience as a former dean, director of an interdisciplinary humanities center, and art history professor to further the mission of the Archives of American Art.

The Smithsonian Archives of American Art collects, preserves, and makes available primary sources documenting the history of the visual arts in the United States. The Archives holds the papers of American art luminaries such as the Leo Castelli Gallery, Roy DeForest, Stanley and Elyse Grinstein, Frederick Hammersley, Nancy Holt, Rockwell Kent, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Roy Lichtenstein, Chiura Obata, Jackson Pollock, Leon Polk Smith, Robert Smithson, Alma Thomas, and Gloria Vanderbilt Whitney. The Archives of American Art is based in Washington, D.C. and has an office in New York, N.Y. Matthew Simms serves as the Gerald Bente Buck West Coast Collector for the Archives and is based in Long Beach, California. The Archives holds its annual gala in New York, N.Y. where it presents the Archives of American Art Medal to an artist and a philanthropist and the Lawrence A. Fleischman Award for Scholarly Excellence to an art historian. Both awards recognize individuals who have made transformative contributions in the field of American art.

# Famed Joseph's Bakery Celebrates 50th Anniversary

JOSEPH'S, from page 13

organization's food pantry program, which helps provide up to 1,500 families with nourishing food each week. Joseph's has donated more than 100,000 packages of food to the organization since August 2020.

"The industry has changed dramatically over the years, but Joseph's commitment to providing high-quality, healthy products to customers and supporting our community has always remained the same," said Stephen Boghos. "We are thrilled to be offering Joseph's in thousands of new locations, making our products even more accessible nationwide."

Perfect for pizza night, grab your BBQ leftovers and make this easy recipe for a family dinner any day of the week.

## INGREDIENTS:

1 package Joseph's Flax Lavash  
 1/3 cup low-fat ricotta cheese  
 1/2 clove minced garlic  
 Olive oil  
 Sea salt, to taste  
 1/2 cup chopped yellow onion  
 1/4 cup thinly sliced pears  
 1/2 cup shredded cooked chicken (or turkey), more to taste  
 BBQ sauce  
 Arugula (or watercress, baby spinach, baby kale or mixed greens)  
 Ranch dressing

## PREPARATION:

Pre-heat the oven to 450°F.

Combine the ricotta and minced garlic together in a small bowl. Caramelize the onions in a pan, then set aside. Thinly slice the pear to make about 1/4 cup. Prepare the shredded chicken and set aside.



Add toppings: Lay lavash on a nonstick pan, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Dollop the ricotta mixture on the lavash and spread with a spatula, leaving a little bit of room around the edges. Layer on the caramelized onions and shredded chicken.

Bake for 4-6 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool for 1-2 minutes. Drizzle on the BBQ sauce, add the arugula, and drizzle on ranch dressing as desired. Cut into slices and serve.

For this recipe, see: <https://www.josephsbakery.com/recipe/bbq-chicken-and-pear-pizza/>

## About Joseph's Bakery

Joseph's Bakery, which employs over 300 employees, can be found in all 50 states in more than 15,000 stores and is growing internationally, as well as in e-commerce, including [josephsbakery.com](http://josephsbakery.com), Amazon, and Walmart.com. For more information, visit <https://www.josephsbakery.com/>. Joseph's Bakery is celebrating its 50th anniversary



Joseph's Lavash BBQ Chicken & Pear Flatbread Pizza

with the nationwide expansion of its original pita bread, bringing its availability to over 15,000 stores globally, as well as a new webpage launch

## Arthur Kayzakian's Debut Poetry Collection *The Book of Redacted Paintings* Published

Poet Arthur Kayzakian's debut collection, *The Book of Redacted Paintings*, has been published by Black Lawrence. The book, which is a winner of the 2021 Black Lawrence Immigrant Writing Series award and a finalist for the 2021 Philip Levine Prize for Poetry, intertwines poetry, prose, and visual art, takes place in the present day yet alludes to the Iranian Revolution.

In *The Book of Redacted Paintings*, the narrative arc follows a boy in search of his father's painting, but it is unclear whether the painting exists or not. The book, a poetry collection, is also populated by a series of paintings. Some are real, incomplete, and/or missing, while most are redacted from reality. The withdrawn paintings concept is the emotional arc of the book, a combination of wishing one could paint the pieces he/she/they envision and the feeling of something torn out of a person due to a traumatic upbringing. A sort of erasure ekphrasis, to foresee artwork that was never painted.



Arthur Kayzakian

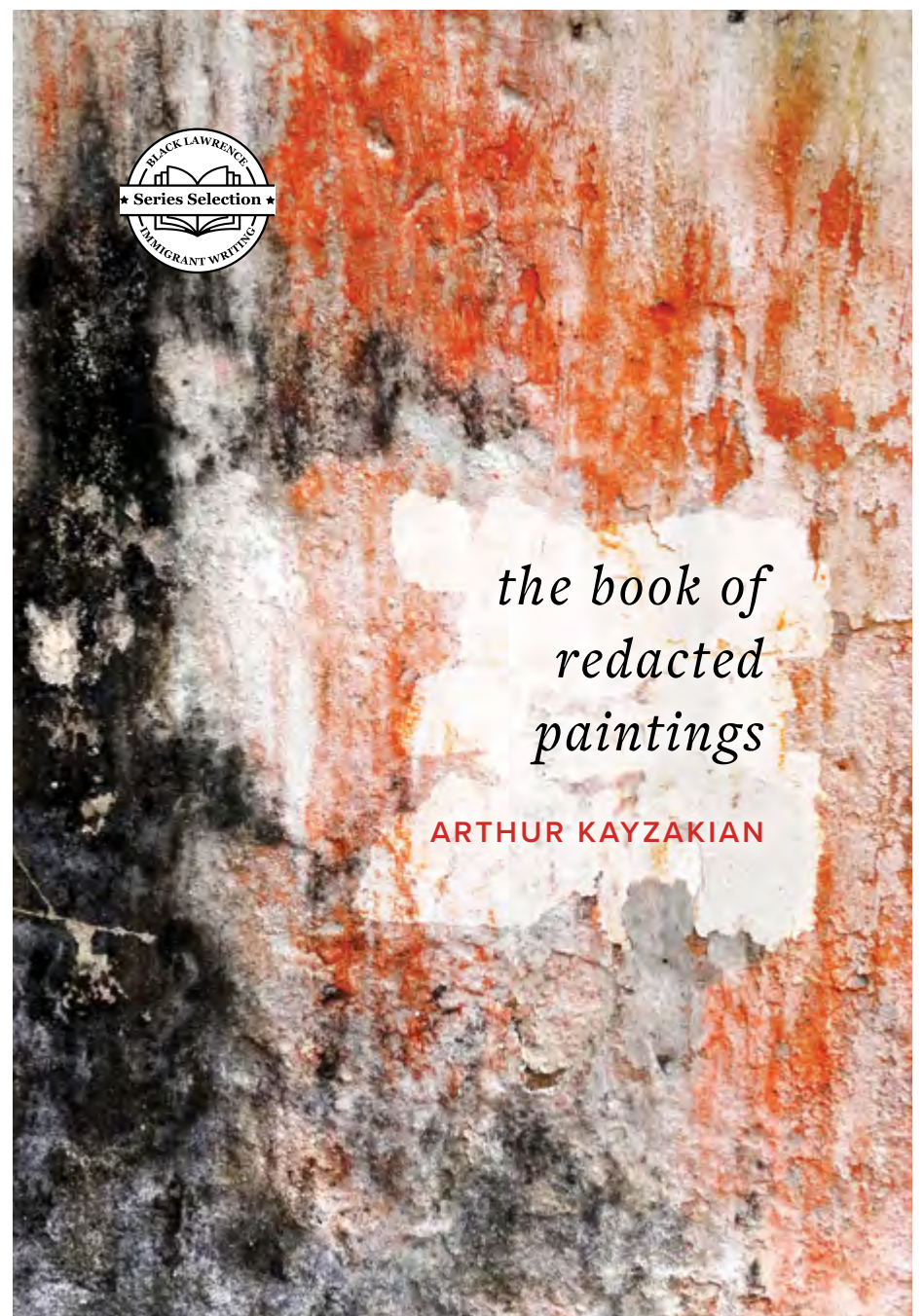
Formally various, narratively propulsive, and relentlessly earnest in its psychospiritual excavations, Arthur Kayzakian's *The Book of Redacted Paintings* is a sincere achievement. That it represents the au-

thor's first full-length collection makes it even more remarkable. In one poem, the sound of gunfire "splits the wind in half." In another, "It rains, as if heaven crashes, it rains." Kayzakian's are poems of real stakes and scale, of the minute and the hour and the lifetime. His subjects — art, family, masculinity, empire — remain as timely as ever, but it's the uncanny juxtapositions of lyric and visual art that make *The Book of Redacted Paintings* an unforgettable text. — Kaveh Akbar, author of *Calling a Wolf a Wolf* and *Pilgrim Bell*

Arthur Kayzakian is the recipient of the 2022 Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He is also the winner of the Finishing Line Press Open Chapbook Competition for *My Burning City*. He serves as the Poetry Chair for the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA). His work has appeared in or is forthcoming from several publications including *Taos Journal of International Poetry & Art*, *Portland Review*, *Chicago Review*, *Nat. Brut*, *The Southern Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Witness Magazine*, and *Prairie Schooner*.

On June 17, Kayzakian will be participating in Literary Lights, a monthly reading series run by the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA), the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center.

To purchase *The Book of Redacted Paintings*, visit Black Lawrence's website: <https://blacklawrencepress.com/books/the-book-of-redacted-paintings/>



# ‘Armenia: A Love Story’

## World Premiere of Award-Winning Documentary

YEREVAN — Live Fire Media and Beauty MTN Films announce the world premiere of “Armenia: A Love Story,” a remarkable documentary directed by acclaimed American war reporter Chuck Holton. The premiere will take place at 6 p.m. on June 28, at Yerevan’s Moscow Theater.

“Armenia: A Love Story” portrays the resilience and spirit of the Armenian people. In October 2020, Holton traveled to Armenia to cover the attacks by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Deeply moved by the courage and determination of the Armenian people, Holton returned with his family in January 2021, further exploring the country. This journey inspired him to create a message of hope and recognition for Armenia’s future.

The documentary captures the beauty, rich history, and vibrant culture of Armenia, showcasing the profound love and potential within the country. Through breathtaking cinematography and heartfelt interviews, “Armenia: A Love Story” encapsulates the inspiring stories of the Armenian people and their unwavering devotion to their homeland.

The film has received critical acclaim, winning more than five laurels at the Christian Film Festival, including Best Docu-

mentary, Best Director, and Best Music. The accolades reflect the exceptional experience of director Holton with more than 60 documentaries to his credit.

The world premiere event promises an unforgettable evening. It will begin with a special live performance by renowned musician and composer Daniel Decker, whose evocative melodies will set the emotional tone for the film. The screening will commence at 6:00 p.m., offering attendees an opportunity to immerse themselves in the heartfelt narratives and stunning visuals presented throughout the documentary.

Tickets are available at <https://Armeniamovie.eventbrite.com>. Attendees are encouraged to support the film’s mission by purchasing tickets if possible, as proceeds will contribute to additional showings. Furthermore, donations can be made at <https://www.givesendgo.com/artsakh> to help spread awareness and support the film’s outreach endeavors.

Screenings are also being arranged across the United States in the month of July. If you are interested in hosting a screening, please contact Chuck Holton at [chuckholton@gmail.com](mailto:chuckholton@gmail.com).

The movie’s trailer is available at <https://vimeo.com/livefiremedia/armeniatrailer>



## Wiebke Zollmann Finds Her Joy Living, Working And Creating in Yerevan

ZOLLMANN, from page 13

**It is always interesting to know about how a non-Armenian learned Armenian and what were the main challenges.**

Armenian is very tricky! There are some letters where I know the difference when I read or write them. But hear me try and pronounce them — you’ll see I’m struggling. To me, they sound utterly similar. Normally, people in Armenia are very forgiving when a foreigner tries to speak Armenian. But I remember traveling to Urtsadzor, a village where SunChild does many projects. I was walking around and met a group of schoolchildren. They were asking me what I was doing there, and when I answered in Armenian, they all just stared at me but didn’t understand a word. It took one girl to repeat every sentence I said properly for the others to understand me. So yeah, the grammar is fine. The vocabulary is hard to memorize, but pronunciation is the main challenge.

**Have you ever written any poem on Armenia?**

When I first got to Armenia and worked in environmental protection, I wrote many “environmental poems,” often inspired by the news we discussed at work.

**Usually you translate from Armenian with Anahit Avagyan, complementing each other – from medieval poets to contemporary authors. Those are commissioned, but are there some authors whose works you simply like to translate just for fun or for bringing to the attention of German readers?**

When I read for pleasure, I usually read literature in German, so I can’t claim to have an extensive overview of Armenian literature. The following are random yet heartfelt discoveries. All the Charents and Shushan Avagyan texts we translated were on my initiative. I’m a poet by training, and last year, we worked on a collection of

Tatev Chakhian’s fantastic poems. It was a commissioned translation but very dear to me.

Also, a few years ago, I stumbled on the French version of “Glissement de terrain” by Vahram Martirosyan, and I’d love for this book to exist in German! Part of it my students at Bryusov University and I already translated together from Armenian to German. This text brilliantly captures certain *very Armenian* elements of life.

**Some people ensure that music is one of positive sides of living in Armenia. You are a great music lover.**

When I worked for the DAAD and taught at Brusov University, I made it a habit to attend a concert every evening. It could be anything: A Komitas recital, a classical concert, a rock show at The Venue, a singer-songwriter at Calumet, I was just curious and exploring it all. And somehow, Armenian music very much resonated with me. I’ll hear a Mansurian piece in a mix of many things on Spotify and will feel: That’s it, that’s cool! Then I’ll look up who wrote it — et voilà, an Armenian. Same with the Komitas songs, they’re just very close to my heart. I had been a fan of composer John Hodian’s work for a long time — since 2009 when I first came to Armenia. In fact, I remember in 2012, after attending a concert of his in Germany, I told my father: One day, I’d like to work with him. Well, that certainly became a reality!

**The Naghash Ensemble, founded by John Hodian, became one of vivid mu-**

**sical collectives of Armenia, presenting very special music. Your contribution in making it known in the world is much appreciable.**



Wiebke Zollmann

It’s the most fulfilling thing in my life. I adore this music; I love this group of musicians. I’ve probably heard over 100 concerts since 2015, and I still can’t wait for the next concert to begin. This music deeply touches your soul. It doesn’t fit into any category — is it world music? New classical? Sacred music? Should it be performed in front of a seated audience in a concert hall? Or ancient ruins somewhere in Europe? Or in an airport hangar? Is it Armenian? (Yes!) American? (Probably.) Does it make you proud to be Armenian (or ABC, Armenian by choice)? YES!

Give it a listen: <https://www.naghashensemble.com/music-video>

When the ensemble performs in Europe,

for many audience members, this music is their first encounter with Armenian culture. I’m always proud if they later decide to learn more, listen to more, read more, watch more, and eventually visit. In this sense, the ensemble is a very powerful cultural ambassador. I love it!

**There are German and German-speaking expats in Armenia and even a small NGO “Teutonia” unifying the few Armenian citizens of German origin. Have you ever got in touch with them?**

I haven’t. I believe there’s also a regulars’ table for Germans, but there’s only one German I regularly meet with. Plus a few Armenians who speak German. But with the internet and access to online newspapers and ebooks, I don’t miss German culture. The only thing I miss is the ease of speaking my mother tongue — the precision you have in your native language.

**Wiebke, after the tragic war of 2020 you stayed in Armenia. Some Armenians living abroad are skeptical about returning to their homeland, although today we see many non-Armenians living, working and creating in our country. What would you say them given your experience?**

Armenia strongly benefits from the contribution of its old and new diaspora as well as of non-Armenians. I meet many Armenians abroad who’d like to make Armenia their home (again) or even just their temporary home. Of course, in 2018-2020, there was a different, very optimistic repatriation movement. Armenia’s future seemed bright, hopeful, and almost naively careless. I understand everybody who hesitates post-2020. The situation is dire. At the same time, Armenia never needed you more. And we must continue to exist, create, and thrive, let it be in Armenia or abroad. Just like Saroyan says in his famous quote.





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### MASSACHUSETTS

**JUNE 4 — MEGHRI DERTAVANIAN, CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston at 2pm shares the story of her recently published, «Դէպի Արարատ Լեռ» "Toward Mt. Ararat" (2022) Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Interactive Program. Book Signing. Refreshments hosted by Eastern Lamejun Bakers. Announcement. For all ages. RSVP appreciated

**JUNE 5 — St. James Men's Club monthly dinner and fellowship; 6:15 pm Meza, 7 pm Losh Kebab and Kheyma dinner, \$20 per person, all are welcome.** There will be no speaker this night but participants will discuss the upcoming Golf Tournament. This is the last meeting for the season. 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown.

**JUNE 8 — Armenian Mirror-Spectator editor Alin K. Gregorian will speak at a program sponsored by the Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island (AHARI), titled "The Armenian Mirror-Spectator: Covering Vital Issues for the Community." Thursday, 7 p.m. EST. Virtual. Zoom and Facebook live streamed. For Zoom link contact AHARI at [infor@armenianhistorical-ri.org](mailto:infor@armenianhistorical-ri.org). For more information, visit [AHARI.clubexpress.com](http://AHARI.clubexpress.com).**

**JUNE 8 — UNDER THE STRAWBERRY MOON.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston at 8:15pm. Meet & Greet. Chocolate Dipped Strawberries hosted by Ovenbird Cafe. Featuring the Leon Janikian Ensemble. RSVP appreciated, [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JUNE 9 — 70th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops, Symphony Hall, Boston.** Featuring violinist Eva Aronian and the Boston Pops Orchestra, in a performance of the Allegro Vivace movement from the violin concerto by Aram Khachaturian, marking the iconic composer's 120th anniversary of birth. The evening will feature A Symphonic Journey, a musical tour of Europe and Armenia, presented by the Boston Pops and Maestro Keith Lockhart, in collaboration with European travel authority and writer Rick Steves. Visit [www.FACSBoston.org](http://www.FACSBoston.org) to select seats and purchase tickets.

**JUNE 11 — St. James Armenian Festival – Annual Picnic!** Delicious Armenian food, Live Armenian music, children's activities with moon bounce, face painting, and more! Rain or shine. Noon-5pm. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown MA. For more info visit [www.stjames-watertown.org/festival](http://www.stjames-watertown.org/festival) or call 617.923.8860.

**JUNE 11 — Mirak Chamber Music Series: Treasures of Armenian Classical Music, Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by**

**Amaras Art Alliance.** Naira Babayan, piano; Christina Gullans, cello. Works by Ghazarosian, Hovounts, Sayat Nova, Komitas, Baghdasarian, Harutyunyan. Sunday, at 4 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington. (781) 646-3090. For tickets contact: [amarasonline.com](http://amarasonline.com)

**JUNE 13 — Let's Party for the Park!** InterContinental Hotel, Boston. Wine Tasting featuring the extraordinary Storica Wines: Wines from Armenia. Benefit for the Park's care during 2023. Advance Reservations required. For details and link to reserve, [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support)

**JUNE 13 — LET'S PARTY FOR THE PARK!** InterContinental Hotel, Boston, 6:30pm. Friends of Armenian Heritage Park's fabulous Wine Tasting Party featuring the extraordinary Storica Wines: Wines from Armenia Advance Reservations required. Benefit for the Park's Care during 2023. 21+ Party. For reservations, [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support).

**JUNE 21 — Tea & Tranquility.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston at 4 pm. Meet & Greet. Together at the Park. Marvel at the Abstract Sculpture. Tie a Ribbon on The Wishing Tree. Enjoy ice tea and luscious cookies. RSVP appreciated, [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JULY 2 — Armenian Church of Cape Cod - Kef Time Fourth of July weekend - Dinner & Dancing.** Sunday, 6 to 11 p.m. at The Cape Club - 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth Chicken Kebab & Losh Kebab dinner; music by Leon Janikian, Harry Bedrosian. ages 21 & over \$85;16 to 20 \$50;8 to 15 \$35; under 8 free Tickets on sale Eventbrite Kef-Time. For more information: Andrea Barber (617)201-9807.

**JULY 22 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Men's Club New England Clambake Church Fundraiser, 1280 Boston Road (Rte 125) Haverhill MA.** Menu: lobster or steak, clam chowder, steamed clams and mussels, corn on the cob, coleslaw, baked potato, tossed salad, strawberry cheesecake or shortcake. Children's menu: hamburger, hotdog, corn, chips, ice cream. 3 p.m. appetizers and cash bar, Dinner served promptly at 4 p.m. Donation \$95.00 per adult, children 12 and under \$20.00 Please RSVP by July 17, 2023, by calling the Church office at (978) 372-9227, or texting Myles Couyoumjian at (978) 852-2859, Ed Kibarian at (781) 838-1056, Mark Kazanjian at (508) 633-7447 or Michael Bebirian at (603) 785-6090.

**OCTOBER 27-28 — SAVE THE DATE.** The Armenian Mirror-Spectator will celebrate its 90th anniversary with two programs, a panel featuring top-notch journalists on October 27 and a banquet on October 28. Details to follow.

**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. There is no fee for calendar entries.

## Canadian Children's Opera Presents Production Based on Armenian Folk Tale

TORONTO — The Canadian Children's Opera Company announces the return of its annual main stage production with its latest commission, "The Nightingale of a Thousand Songs," based on a beloved Armenian folk tale, by Juno award-winning composer Serouj Kradjian and Dora award-winning playwright and librettist Marjorie Chan.

The opera is based on a fairy tale, known in Armenian as "Hazaran Blbul." The story follows the journey of two siblings, Leah, and Ari, as they emerge from a tragedy in their homeland. They embark on an adventure to find the Nightingale of a Thousand Songs to bring back life and joy to their world. Along the way, the children remember their lost friends and family and face many challenges and obstacles.

The story is one of healing and hope and exploring what it means to be able to move on from a terrible event; to honor those who are no longer with us and celebrate what is still to come.

The opera will be performed by 70 young people between the ages of 7 to 18 in English, Armenian and Arabic.

The CCOC is happy to welcome back a CCOC alumna, Armenian-Canadian soprano Lynn Isnar, to the role of The Nightingale. CCOC Music Director Teri Dunn, will lead a professional chamber orchestra, including the duduk, an ancient Armenian double-reed wind instrument that has been compared to the human voice in its expressiveness and ability to convey deep emotion. The duduk will add an extra layer of

depth and meaning to the performance with its hauntingly warm tone, evoking the rich cultural heritage of Armenia and immersing audiences in an unforgettable musical experience that will reflect both Armenian and Western sonorities and musical traditions.

Canadian pianist and composer Serouj Kradjian was inspired to create a work to represent the rich culture and music that unites the Caucasus and the Middle East. As the lead characters travel from the plains of Mount Ararat, through the region to Lebanon, the music changes to reflect a more distinct Arabic style, incorporating traditional instruments and texts, and throughout, the relationship between the two siblings - navigating different needs and wants, but nonetheless rich in connection, love and support - lends universal resonance. While he has composed for children's voices in the past, The Nightingale is Kradjian's first full opera.

Librettist Marjorie Chan, who co-created the CCOC's "The Monkiest King" commission (2018), was excited to work on the new project. She was inspired by the hope and resilience of the children in the story, and how they cope with tragedy. "Serouj presented me with this tremendous fairy tale filled with survival, hope and healing. It was so incredibly rich, filled with prophecy, magic and humanity. I was struck by the resiliency of the child characters. I could not stop thinking of the children who survive war and genocide. What happens to

them? How do they find their way out of darkness and towards light?"

Together, with a production team featuring director Julie McIsaac, designer Jung-Hye Kim, and lighting designer Mikael Kangas, and Armenian-Canadian visual artist Amy Kazandjian as Creative and Cultural Page 2 of 3 Director to create a unique expression and celebration of Armenian and Arabic culture, accessible and intended for young people and families to enjoy. "Opera offers a dynamic medium in which young people can explore their emotions, shared experiences, and how they connect with the world," says Executive Director Katherine Semcesen. "In addition to growing the Canadian operatic canon, commissioning new operatic works allows young people to welcome new stories, experience new musical aesthetics and traditions, and connect with and learn from new artists and communities. 'The Nightingale of a Thousand Songs' is rooted in Armenian culture and history, but its themes of loss, courage, hope, and healing are themes to which we can all relate."

Creative and Cultural Director, Amy Kazandjian, believes that "The Nightingale of a Thousand Songs" speaks to the Armenian experience but one can easily draw parallels to other recent and past atrocities and significant events: "Our aim is to engage in meaningful conversations with the CCOC choristers and audiences about genocide, while making an important connection to our Canadian roots. Canada was "built" on the (stolen) ancestral lands

of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and as non-indigenous Canadians, we hold an important role in the ongoing recognition of Indigenous history and its active reparation. Through this production, we hope to facilitate a deeper understanding of cultural exchange and the complexities of our shared (human) history, and create a compelling experience for audiences of all ages." Board Chair Maria Ringo agrees; "the world is changing constantly, and these new commissions give us fresh perspectives to appreciate through these new stories. We love the dramatic reflections of our world presented to us by these modern commissions, especially when performed by our children."

Performed by more than 80 choristers in the CCOC's Principal, Youth, Intermediate, and Apprentices choruses and a professional chamber orchestra. It is appropriate for ages 7 and up.

School Previews will take place June 9, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Public Performances will take place June 9, 7:30 p.m. Opening Night will be June 10, 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and June 11, 2023 - 3 p.m.

Leah and Ari will be played by: Alice Malakhov and Sophie Mestetchkin - June 9 at 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., June 10 at 3 p.m.; Katie Lair and Joel Glickman Rosen on June 9 at 1 p.m., June 10 at 7:30 p.m. and June 11 at 3 p.m.

For more information regarding student group tickets for the school previews, contact the TO Live Box Office.

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

**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.**

## ADL Press Council Issues Statement on Armenian-Azerbaijani Negotiations and the Right Of Self-determination of the People of Artsakh

The multivector negotiations conducted for many months by the Armenian authorities at the highest level for the purpose of signing the Armenia-Azerbaijan “peace agreement” have gained significant momentum recently.

The travel from Washington to Moscow, between these two politically opposing poles, passing through Brussels, Prague and other European cities, has reached a dizzying political speed, especially when it has become impossible to see in the successive announcements from those meetings even the slightest degree of an Armenian national strategy taking shape.

In this process, attitudes inspiring concern are being revealed. Indeed, in the speeches of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan, who are the official main negotiators of the Republic of Armenia, in recent days, there are expressions that are foreign and unacceptable to the beliefs that are the *raison d’être* of the Armenian people in general and to our organization in particular.

Among the highly worrisome positions of the representatives of Armenia is the continual emphasis on the urgent need for a peace agreement with Azerbaijan while the necessary fundamental basis for a just and lasting peace between the sides, including military, political and international guarantees, is lacking.

Moreover, Nikol Pashinyan’s now clear statement that his regime will accept that not only Artsakh is part of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, but also border villages and territories belonging to the Republic of Armenia and possessing strategic importance for the latter will disquiet the mind and conscience of all Armenians.

Any such idea or tendency expressed by a head of the Republic of Armenia contradicts:

A) the point of view of the creation of the third Republic of Armenia, and many points of the Declaration signed by the Supreme Council of Armenia on August 23, 1990. In other words, it calls into question the foundation of the existence of the third republic.

B) the just result of the referendum of the people of Nagorno Karabakh held on December 10, 1991, based on the fundamental human right of self-determination of peoples and in accordance with internationally accepted norms,

which is to declare Nagorno Karabakh an independent republic with the all rights thereof.

C) the law adopted in 1992 in the National Council of Armenia (Parliament) at the initiative of the parliamentary faction of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), which prohibits any official body or official of Armenia from considering Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) as part of Azerbaijan.

Finally, it leaves the Artsakh Armenians who are surviving bravely under the severe conditions of the siege, and the national cultural monuments subject to an uncertain fate and the whims of a barbaric enemy.

Based on the above, it is unacceptable for the majority of the Armenian people living in the country, as well as for the diasporan Armenians in general, and for our representatives of ADL press in particular, that the prime minister who only a few years ago issued the statement “Artsakh is Armenia and that is that,” and thereby gained the support of the people, has now replaced his principled position with the diametrically opposite statement “Artsakh is part of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan,” which is fundamentally wrong, opportunistic and reprehensible.

The ADL Press Council unreservedly responds to the May 22 call of the National Assembly of the Artsakh Republic, and accordingly appeals to all Armenians living in the homeland or outside it, to all Armenian national structures, and to all countries which are friends of the Armenian people and Armenia. It asks that they make their voice of support heard and conduct a practical intervention in favor of the heroic Republic of Artsakh and its people. Finally, it calls for opposition to any attempt at violating the borders of the Republic of Armenia or any defeatist attitude.

Long live the Armenian people!

Long live the inviolable borders of the third Republic of Armenia!

Long live free and independent Artsakh!

Long live our vision and goal of an integral Armenia!

ADL Press Council  
May 25, 2023

(The above is a translation from the original Armenian.)

## Erdogan’s Win Highlights Political Fault Lines

By Selçuk Aydın

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan easily won Sunday’s run-off election, capturing 52 percent of the vote to rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu’s 48 percent. The outcome gives Erdogan, who has been president for the past decade, another five-year mandate.

Although polls had initially suggested that he risked losing in the first round because of anti-Erdoganism, the unification of opposition groups, economic problems, and Kurdish votes. The result was ultimately determined by Turkey’s political fault lines and Erdogan’s strong leadership.

The early political concepts of Ottomanism, Turkism, and Islamism can help in understanding these dynamics.

Yusuf Akcura’s 1904 treatise Three Kinds of Policy — a classic of Turkish political literature, comparable to The Communist Manifesto for communism in terms of its impact on the development of Turkism — put forward the concept of Turkism as an alternative to Ottomanism and Islamism for the salvation of Ottoman Empire.

The policy of Ottomanism pursued by Mahmud II and the Young Ottomans during the 19th century proved unsuccessful due to the emergence of nationalist and independent movements among non-Muslim groups alongside the growing demographic dominance of the Muslim population within the empire.

As a result, Abdul Hamid II adopted an Islamic policy aimed at strengthening the Ottoman Caliphate’s role in the empire. Akcura maintained that this policy would fail, and the only way forward was through Turkism. Turkish nationalist ideas especially took root after the founding of modern Turkey in 1923.

Akcura’s ideas heavily affected the establishment of modern Turkey and he also played an active role in the country as a politician and intellectual.

His core arguments have transcended their era and remain relevant to contemporary developments, even shaping the outcomes of elections.

### Coalition in Jeopardy

While Kilicdaroglu, leader of the Republican People’s Party (CHP), did not explicitly convey a sense of failure in his election-night speech, there will likely be consequences for his loss.

The support he has received from political groups that would otherwise not align themselves with Kilicdaroglu’s ideology and that was offered simply on the basis of their anti-Erdoganism, may not be sustainable in the long run. This coalition will struggle to maintain cohesion and continuity in its objectives beyond the election.

Under Kilicdaroglu’s leadership, the CHP has transformed from being fiercely secular and nationalistic to more inclusive and liberal — a modern-day equivalent of Ottomanism, advocating the notion of equal citizenship for all groups. This has found widespread acceptance among minority communities, Kurds, and left-wing and liberal political actors.

It will be crucial in the years ahead to explore how Erdogan’s strong leadership will be replaced within the conservative political tradition

Kilicdaroglu sustained the nationalistic roots of the CHP by building a coalition with the right-wing Good Party under the banner of the Nation Alliance. In the 2019 municipal elections, the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) tacitly supported this alliance and helped the CHP to win in two major cities, Istanbul and Ankara, beating the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Kilicdaroglu also managed to enlarge the Nation Alliance with conservative parties in the context of “helallesme” (reconciliation), amid discriminatory and aggressive secularist state practices, such as the headscarf ban.

But some of his policies, along with Kilicdaroglu’s close relations with the HDP, have raised concerns among nationalists.

*continued on next page*

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Pashinyan's Surrender of Artsakh To Azerbaijan Is Null And Void

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has hinted repeatedly since the 2020 Artsakh War that Artsakh is a part of Azerbaijan. This has been his position for years. As a journalist, long before coming to power, he thought that Artsakh is a burden on Armenia.

Pashinyan told the Armenian Parliament in April 2022 that the international community urged Armenia to lower the bar on the status of Artsakh. Earlier this year, a Parliament member of Pashinyan's party made the following defeatist statement: we cannot risk three million Armenians for 120,000 people in Artsakh.

On May 14, 2023, European Council President Charles Michel announced, after meeting with Pashinyan and President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan in Brussels, that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan "confirmed their unequivocal commitment to ... the respective territorial integrity of Armenia (29,800 square kilometers) and Azerbaijan (86,600 square kilometers)."

Finally, during his 4.5-hour-long rambling press conference in Yerevan on May 22, 2023, Pashinyan clearly confirmed that his recognition of the territory of Azerbaijan includes Artsakh. This is the same man who stood in front of the people of Artsakh in Stepanakert, the Capital of Artsakh, on August 5, 2019 and said: "Artsakh is Armenia, period!" He also led the crowd in chants of "miyatsoum" or "unification." To make matters worse, Pashinyan also conceded that the enclaves (previously Azeri-inhabited villages located inside Armenia), are not included in his 29,800 square kilometers of Armenia.

After deciding to give away Artsakh, Pashinyan tried to explain that his recognition of the territory of Azerbaijan, which includes Artsakh, is with the understanding that Azerbaijan in return recognizes Armenia's territory (29,800 square kilometers) and that the "rights and security issues of the people of Artsakh must be discussed by Baku and Stepanakert."

There are several serious problems with Pashinyan's statement:

1) Pashinyan is wrong to recognize Artsakh as a part of the territory of Azerbaijan. Artsakh was not historically a part of Azerbaijan. Whereas Artsakh has been a part of Armenia for thousands of years, Azerbaijan has been in existence for a little over 100 years. Pashinyan could have recognized the territory of Azerbaijan without acknowledging that it includes Artsakh.

2) While Pashinyan is recognizing the territory of Azerbaijan, President Aliyev has never acknowledged Armenia's territorial integrity. On the contrary, Aliyev repeatedly claims that all of Armenia is part of historic Western Azerbaijan!

3) To cover up his misguided recognition of Artsakh as a part of Azerbaijan, Pashinyan is misleading the Armenian public by saying that he wants to defend the 'rights and security' of Artsakh Armenians within Azerbaijan. In reality, Artsakh Armenians will not be able to live a single day under Azerbaijani rule. An example of how Azerbaijan treats Artsakh Armenians is the six-month blockade of the Lachin Corridor, depriving the local Armenian population of food and medicines. Once they fall under Azeri rule, their mistreatment

will get much worse.

4) Pashinyan keeps dangling a carrot in front of Artsakh Armenians by saying that he is seeking 'international guarantees' to safeguard their well-being under Azeri rule. During his press conference, Pashinyan claimed that he is relying "not only on the pressures of the international community, but on constructive negotiations with Azerbaijan, and on Baku-Stepanakert institutional dialogue." No international guarantees can safeguard the well-being of Artsakh Armenians under Azerbaijan's brutal rule. Aliyev will ignore all external pressures, since he frequently states: "no matter what the international community says, I will do what I want."

5) Pashinyan is throwing Artsakh Armenians to the wolf telling them to make their separate arrangements with Azerbaijan. He is washing his hands from the Artsakh Armenians who are citizens of Armenia! Without any backing from Armenia, how can tiny Artsakh battle the Goliath Azerbaijan? If Armenia will not defend the rights of its own citizens in Artsakh, how can Pashinyan expect others to guarantee their security?

6) Pashinyan is not only violating the interests of Armenia and Artsakh, but also the earlier decision of Armenia's Parliament. Legally, Pashinyan has no right to give away Artsakh to Azerbaijan. He does not own Artsakh. He also does not have the approval of the Parliament or the Constitutional Court.

7) While Pashinyan is recklessly risking the lives of Artsakh Armenians by planning to place them under Azerbaijani rule, he is ironically acknowledging that Azerbaijan is pursuing a policy of "ethnic cleansing and genocide" against the people of Artsakh.

8) Despite all the indications that he is playing with fire, Pashinyan is hell-bent on signing a peace treaty with a brutal enemy who intends to chop Armenians to pieces, not make peace.

9) Pashinyan's concessions to Azerbaijan encouraged President Aliyev, a week later, to make further demands and threaten both Armenia and Artsakh.

This is what happens when an inexperienced, incompetent and defeated person like Pashinyan leads a country and refuses to resign.

Pashinyan should know that whatever meaningless piece of paper he signs with Azerbaijan, giving away Artsakh and "making peace" with Azerbaijan, the Armenian people consider his illegal decisions null and void and categorically reject them. As soon as a new nationalist government comes to power in Armenia, it will cancel and reverse on day one all of Pashinyan's defeatist and anti-Armenian decisions.

This is not just my opinion. During the past week, several major Armenian institutions from Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora issued statements condemning Pashinyan's unacceptable surrender of Artsakh. The list includes, the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Armenian General Benevolent Union, all 33 members of Artsakh Parliament's unanimous resolution, and dozens of other Armenian organizations!

Armenia's population should form a common front against Pashinyan, have 100,000 or more Armenians gather in front of his office in Yerevan and demand his immediate resignation. Unless such a joint and massive show of force is organized, Pashinyan will remain in office until he destroys both Artsakh and Armenia!

from previous page

To avoid the same fate as Mahmud II, who was accused of being an "infidel sultan" because of his modernist and Ottomanist practices, Kilicdaroglu pivoted towards a hardline nationalistic discourse in the second round of voting.

This had an interesting result, as both the ultra-nationalist Victory Party and the HDP together supported Kilicdaroglu's candidacy.

However, his support in Kurdish-populated areas decreased in the second round. The Nation Alliance now faces a significant crisis, amid a conflict between secular nationalists and leftists that could have significant implications for the upcoming 2024 municipal elections.

### Different Approach

On Sunday night, Erdogan delivered a victory speech. Yet while observers have often commented in the past on the inclusiveness and conciliatory tone of his speeches, he took a different approach this time, blasting the opposition.

He took particular aim at the HDP's support for Kilicdaroglu.

His intention is to disrupt the harmony of the Nation Alliance — a discourse that will likely continue in the lead-up to next year's municipal elections when the AKP will hope to retake Ankara and Istanbul.

When Erdogan came to power as prime minister in 2003, despite his strong leadership in conservatism, he also initiated liberal processes such as EU integration, enhancing minority rights, and peace talks with Kurdish groups.

But after Erdogan in 2015 failed to secure a parliamentary majority, the move towards a heavily centralized presidential system began, along with an alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and liberal discourse faded.

At the same time, tensions between conservatism and nationalism have remained significant on issues such as abolishing the nationalist oath for students, and the presence of pro-Kurdish Huda-Par candidates on AKP lists. The lack of strong leadership has led to fragmentation within the Turkish nationalist movement, which has struggled to gain equal representation in a parliament that favors unified groups. While the MHP, Good Party, Great Unity Party and Victory Party received more than 23 percent of the vote on Sunday, their representation in parliament has fallen to around 15 percent of seats.

Kilicdaroglu's adoption of nationalist rhetoric in the second round of elections reduced both the participation and support of Kurds.

The fact that the HDP cannot clearly sever its ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is recognized as a terrorist group, puts the Nation Alliance in an even more difficult position. It brings into question the future of the alliance and creates an atmosphere of uncertainty for the upcoming municipal elections.

Meanwhile, Erdogan has maintained his position as the main representative of conservatives in Turkey.

Yet, considering that this will be his last term as president, it will be crucial in the years ahead to explore how his strong leadership will be replaced within the conservative political tradition.

(Selçuk Aydın holds a PhD from King's College in the School of Security Studies. He has conducted projects and published articles, book chapters and opinions on Turkey's history, the Turkish diaspora, Kurdish studies, and Middle East politics. He is currently an assistant professor at Bogazici University. This commentary originally appeared on [www.middeesteye.net](http://www.middeesteye.net) on May 19.)

## LETTERS

### The Conundrum of the Diaspora Today

To the Editor:

We as diaspora Armenian activist, are living as zombies! We struggled for Genocide recognition, saw and expressed our discontent with the Soviet social freedoms of Armenians while we moved from one continent to safer ones. Then came independence and we travelled and enjoyed our nation building; but being shunned from criticizing ruling parties and oligarchs which misused resources & got filthy rich. The consequent governments kept distributing medals and titles. Armenian forces had liberated Artsakh and we were fed continuous negotiation meetings, no results, and reports for 3 decades: how to repopulate or share these ancestral lands?

Then the 44-day war and great loss of a generation of young Armenians, plus loss of large portion of Artsakh and all its resources which we didn't properly populate or protect, as if deep in the ruling psyche it was a given that it's all temporary.

Today we face the total loss of the small part of Artsakh with its 120,000 ethnic residents, yet again diaspora Armenians issue protest communications and protest with zero end results.

The diaspora was never a real voice in future building or decisions taken and has been kept as diaspora.

So as much as we meet, we pray and cry, no meaningful waves felt at the homeland.

It's a true conundrum of human suffering and a psychological low.

We need a unifying hero or agenda! Are Armenians capable of a second Sardarabad? or is it a status quo... and pass the blame.

That's what will determine our future and the generations to come will judge each of us accordingly.

We need humility and union of cause with no prejudice, with only the vision of our great nation within international laws.

Vahe Artinian  
Sydney, Australia



# Celebrity Chef Amanda Freitag Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — American celebrity chef, star of the TV show “Chopped” and cookbook author Amanda Freitag is visiting Armenia June 1-6, for a culinary diplomacy program focused on food sustainability and culinary entrepreneurship, hosted by the U.S. Embassy in collaboration with The Culinary Diplomacy Project.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Freitag has worked in a diverse mix of restaurants in New York City and is well known for being a judge on the popular American TV show “Chopped.” She has also appeared on Iron Chef America, Next Iron Chef, Unique Eats, Beat Bobby Flay, and more. Her mission to make cooking more approachable inspired her cookbook *The Chef Next Door*. Most recently she launched a digital series called “Easy AF” where she shows audiences that delicious food can be fun and easy to make in your own kitchen.

“Sharing a meal together can promote a deep understanding of a culture’s values and traditions,” said Ambassador Kristina Kvien. “We’re delighted to host Chef Freitag for a visit to Armenia to strengthen U.S.-Armenian ties and spark important conversations about food sustainability and entrepreneurship.”

Freitag’s visit to Armenia will also include cooking demonstrations, masterclasses, and workshops with aspiring chefs and food entrepreneurs, with a focus on innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and women’s empowerment. These engagements will be held in partnership with Yerevan Wine Days Festival,



Yeremyan Academy for Culinary Arts, and TUMO Center for Creative Technologies in Dilijan.

Freitag will also visit local food producers supported by USAID/Armenia’s rural economic development initiatives, where she will learn about Armenia’s food traditions and discuss the importance of food sustainability. This will include visits to local companies such as: Yellow Bee, Dream Chocolate,

Borisovka LLC, Mets & More Bakery, and various wine producers.

“USAID partners with Armenia to boost rural development across the country — including support to food producers and agribusinesses,” said USAID/Armenia Mission Director John Allelo. “We’re delighted to shine a light on Armenia’s amazing food entrepreneurs through Chef Freitag’s visit.”

# Armenia Celebrates 105th Anniversary of First Republic

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The 1918 Republic of Armenia barely lasted two years. It was, however, a historic political entity — the first expression of Armenian sovereignty since 1375.

Its efforts led to the establishment of a Soviet Armenian Republic, which, in turn, allowed for an independent Armenia upon the collapse of the USSR seventy years later.

In 1917 after the February Revolution Russian Provisional Government dissolved the Viceroyalty of Caucasus and established the Transcaucasian Special Committee. During that period of time steps were undertaken for the Armenian refugees to return back to Western Armenia. By the end of 1917, the number of refugees was about 390,000. In September 1917, the Armenian National Committee was formed in Tbilisi, where the representatives of the Armenian Revolutionary Party of Dashnaksutiun had the majority.

In December the Yerznka Ceasefire was signed between the newly established Transcaucasian Committee and Ottoman Army. In its turn the Soviet Government announced a Decree on Turkish Armenia, recognizing the right of Armenians from Western Armenia to self-determination, including even the creation of an independent state. However, Turkish troops restarted military actions, disrupting the Reconciliation Regime. Despite heroic resistance, the Armenian irregular troops and volunteer detachments began retreating to the borders of Eastern Armenia.

According to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 3, 1918), under the pressure of Germany the Soviet Russia agreed to return to the borders of the former Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878. As a result of that retrograde not only Western Armenia, but the regions of Kars, Ardahan and Batumi became parts of Ottoman Empire as well.

As a consequence of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk the peace negotiations that had been conducting with Ottoman Empire in Trabizond since March 1918 by the authorities of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic (former Commissariat and then Sejm) were deadlocked and suspended. Invading Eastern Armenia, Turkish troops occupied the Province of Kars, cities of Kars and Alexandropol (Gyumri) and moved towards Yerevan and Gharakilisa (nowadays Vanadzor). On their way Turks were demolishing Armenian towns and villages, slaughtering population. The situation was fatal: Eastern Armenia was under the threat of genocide then.

Day by day growing danger united Armenians and Armenian troops along with militias and led by General Moses Silikyan, Colonels Daniel Bek-Pirumov, Drastamat Kanayan and others made a decisive counterattack to

the Turkish conquerors near Sardarapat, Gharakilisa and Bash-Aparan.

During those days of Heroic Battles of May 1918, the discrepancies within the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic composed of three main nationalities of the South Caucasus, were deepening.

defeated Turkey in the city of Sevres (France). It was Avetis Aharonyan, the head of the Armenian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, who signed the agreement on behalf of the Republic of Armenia. The section “Armenia” in the Treaty of Sevres included Articles 88-93.

By this treaty Sultan Turkish Government recognized



Flags at Sardarabad

On March 26, 1918 the Transcaucasian Sejm (Parliament) was dissolved leading to the dissolution of Transcaucasian Republic. In those conditions, on May 28, 1918 the Armenian National Council declared itself as the only and supreme authority of Armenian provinces. The Republic of Armenia was established. After the defeat of Ottoman Empire in the World War I and according to the Peace Treaty of Mudros (October 30, 1918), Turkish Troops hastily quit the Territory of Eastern Armenia.

In April, 1920 during a regular Congress the people of Nagorno-Karabakh made a decision on unification with the Republic of Armenia.

On August 10, 1920 the victorious states of the World War I, including Armenia, signed a peace agreement with

Armenia as a free and independent state. Armenia and Turkey agreed to provide America with an opportunity to decide the demarcation line between the two states in Erzurum, Van and Bitlis provinces as well as to accept the offers concerning the access of Armenia to the Black Sea and the disarmament of all Ottoman territories, adjacent to above-mentioned boundary.

The nationalist government of Turkey, headed by Mustafa Kemal, who assumed the authority, did not accept the Treaty of Sevres. In 1920 the Soviet Government, seeking to direct the Kemalist movement in Turkey against the Entente, provided Turkey with palpable military and financial aid which was used against Greece in the West