



Protests in Stepanakert on July 14

## Thousands Rally in Stepanakert Against Azerbaijani Blockade

STEPANAKERT (Azatutyun) — Thousands of people rallied in Stepanakert on Friday, July 14, in what local officials described as the start of daily protests against Azerbaijan's seven-month blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh and a worsening humanitarian crisis caused by it.

Karabakh's leadership and major political faction organized the protests one month after Baku further tightened the blockade by banning Russian peacekeepers from shipping limited amounts of food, medicine and fuel to Karabakh. Earlier in the week, the Azerbaijani side also blocked the evacuation of seriously ill

Karabakh patients to hospitals in Armenia carried out by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) through the

Lachin corridor.

The punitive measures aggravated the shortages of essential see RALLY, page 2

### Azerbaijan Rejects Russian Calls To Reopen Lachin Corridor

By Heggine Buniatian and Astghik Bedevian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Azerbaijan has rejected Russia's latest calls for an immediate end to its seven-month blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh's only land link with Armenia, which has led to a serious humanitarian crisis in the Armenian-populated region.

In a weekend statement, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry defended Baku's decisions to set up a checkpoint in the Lachin corridor and block relief supplies carried out through it see LACHIN, page 4

## Exceptional Scholar Prof. Richard Hovannisian Dies

### Founder of Field of Armenian Studies

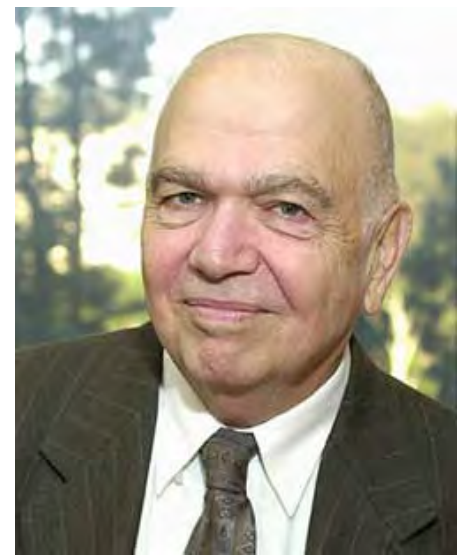
LOS ANGELES — Richard G. Hovannisian was a titan in the field of Armenian Studies — an academic discipline that he shaped with his groundbreaking scholarship and professionalism. He died on July 10 at the age of 90, leaving behind a legacy that is impossible to capture.

He lived the life of a public intellectual. He became a historian with a mission — to promote the study of the Armenian Genocide as a consequential 20th century event. His research and publications cemented the place of the first Republic of Armenia in Armenian history and world history. Yet, he never lost sight of his two other responsibilities, teaching and community building.

He was a professor who shaped multiple generations' ideas and outlook on what it means to be Armenian. He and his life partner,

always included the California Central Valley where his Genocide survivor father settled.

His name has been omnipresent in academia for nearly seven decades, making space for Ar-



menian scholars at institutions once out of reach. Hovannisian's time at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) birthed new scholars through the graduate program he founded in Armenian



Four volumes on the first Armenian Republic

Dr. Vartiter Kotcholosian Hovannisian, were an unrelenting, resolute presence in the developing Armenian-American community of Southern California — which

history. Hovannisian also provided opportunities for students of all disciplines to have hands-on experience collecting, transcribing, see HOVANNISIAN, page 7



Shushanik Hayriyan with braids of dried aveluk (wild sorrel) in Maine

### Young Woman from Artsakh Forges New Ties Thousands of Miles Away from Home

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — For many college students, moving away from home is a rite of passage, albeit one in which they know they can expect visits from family and also return during breaks. For Shushanik Hayriyan, however, this experience is interlaced with an international tragedy — the blockade of Artsakh (Karabakh) by Azerbaijani forces. see SHUSHANIK, page 3

### Tekeyan Cultural Association Pays Tribute to Dr. Richard Hovannisian's Legacy

The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Richard Gable Hovannisian at the age of 90. He was one of the most prominent scholars in the field of modern Armenian studies from the latter half of the 20th century till the present and helped make this field accepted as a worthy part of Western academia.

Not only was he the premiere scholar of the first Republic of Armenia through his four volumes and other works dedicated to this topic, but he also used his position as a chairholder at the University of California, Los Angeles, to hold numerous conferences see TRIBUTE, page 7



#### TOKYO

Armenia Wins 5 Medals at International Physics Olympiad

Page 2



#### NEW YORK

Liturgy Launches Diocese's 125th Anniversary Celebration

Page 6



#### TURKEY

Egyptian-Armenia Group Reaches Top Of Mount Ararat

Page 20







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Artsakh Armenians in Yerevan Protest Outside US Embassy

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Artsakh Armenians staged a protest against the illegal blockade of their homeland outside the US Embassy in Yerevan on Tuesday, July 18.

They urged the US to break Azerbaijan's seven-month blockade of the Lachin Corridor, Artsakh's only land link with Armenia, and stand up for Artsakh's right to self-determination.

Earlier on Tuesday, they protested outside the French Embassy in Yerevan.

The protesters accused the US and the other co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group of playing "political super games" and submitting to the Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem.

Taguhi Tovmasyan, an MP from the opposition Pativ Unem faction who attended the rally, urged the US to stop the aggressor and recognize Artsakh's independence.

### Karabakh Students Can't Access Armenian Universities

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Applicants from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) have been deprived of the opportunity to take entrance exams to Armenian universities due to Azerbaijan's blockade since December 12.

After discussions, the authorities of Artsakh and Armenia have chosen the remote option of submitting exams.

After passing the exams and being accepted, the question of how the students are going to get to Yerevan needs to be addressed.

If Armenia-Artsakh life path is not opened, Artsakh students will have to take classes online.

### Ombudsperson Releases Ad Hoc Report on Azerbaijani Aggression in Yeraskh

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia's Human Rights Defender (Ombudsperson) Anahit Manasyan has published an ad hoc report on ongoing human right violations as a result of Azerbaijani attacks on Yeraskh, a border village in Armenia's Ararat Province.

The document presents human rights violations as a result of Azeri shelling in June and offers a set of recommendations to protect the rights of local residents, the ombudsperson's office said in a statement on July 18.

On July 13-14, the Azerbaijani armed forces opened fire on Yeraskh, specifically targeting the plant under construction with foreign investments. Two Indian citizens, who worked at the construction site, were injured and hospitalized in the wake of the Azeri attack.

"As a result of Azerbaijani servicemen's actions, the civilian population's rights to life, mental and physical integrity, property, education, work, entrepreneurship and a number of other fundamental rights have been violated," the statement said.

# Thousands Rally in Stepanakert Against Azerbaijani Blockade

RALLY, from page 1

items in the Armenian-populated region which had already been rationing food, fuel and electricity since last December's disruption of commercial traffic through the corridor.

The Karabakh premier, Guren Nersisyan, described the situation there as "critical" when he addressed the sizable crowd in Stepanakert's central square. He said that Karabakh is running out of basic foodstuffs, life-saving drugs and even fuel reserved for ambulances. Nersisyan went on to urge Armenia, Russia and the international community to do more to make Azerbaijan lift the blockade.

"What are you waiting for?" he said. "Do you want us to put the bodies of dead people in this square every day before reacting?"

"Tell me, how should I look in the eyes of ... a malnourished pregnant woman

whose child may be born with defects, mothers whose biggest dream is to find a handful of fruit or candy for their children, people who stand in lines for hours to get a handful of sugar or oil," Gegham Stepanian, Karabakh's human rights ombudsman, said for his part.

The protesters then marched to the ICRC office in Stepanakert and the headquarters of the Russian peacekeepers located outside the Karabakh capital. Nersisyan said that the peacekeepers must unblock the corridor to prevent a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Karabakh.

Nersisyan and two other senior Karabakh officials were received by Alexander Lentsov, the commander of the peacekeepers. Nersisyan said afterwards that Lentsov pledged to do more to "resolve the situation" and "send information about the humanitarian crisis to the Russian Federation on a daily, hourly basis."

A group of protesters pitched tents near the Russian headquarters. Many others camped out in Stepanakert's Renaissance Square.

Russia has repeatedly called on Baku to lift the blockade but stopped short of ordering its troops to try to forcefully reopen the Lachin corridor. The United States and the European Union have also called for renewed traffic through the only road connecting Karabakh to Armenia.

Azerbaijan's leaders continue to dismiss such appeals and deny the very fact of the blockade.

Baku appeared to allow the Red Cross to resume the medical evacuations after ICRC officials met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov on Friday. According to the health authorities in Stepanakert, 11 Karabakh patients were transported to Armenia along with family members accompanying them.

## Gyumri Conservatory Hosts Premier Harp Concert

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GYUMRI — On June 18, 2023, a historic concert took place in the Gyumri branch of the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. It was the first time in the Conservatory's 25-year history that it had showcased a harp concert. The solo concert featured Hasmik Mkrtychyan, a second-year student in the string department. The talented harpist, who studies under Professor Gayane Harutyunyan, performed in the small hall of the Conservatory. Her program presented a varied repertoire: Johann Sebastian

Bach's Prelude No. 2, L. Konkon's Prelude No. 19, a 17th-century composition by an unknown author, Mikhail Glinka's Nocturne, George Frideric Handel's Prelude and toccata, and Théodore Dubois's Fantasia.

Hasmik's exceptional performance created a warm and inspiring atmosphere, and captivated the audience. It also brought back fond memories of the moment two years ago when the German "Ars Musica" Choir and the Mirak-Weissbach Foundation presented the harp instrument to the Gyumri Conservatory. The Conservatory had wanted to offer instruction in the harp

and needed a quality instrument. On the initiative of Alexan Ter-Minasyan, Honorary Consul of Germany in the Shirak and Lori regions, contact was made with the two institutions in Germany, who then combined efforts to raise funds for a Venera Grand



### Armenia Wins 5 Medals at International Physics Olympiad

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian school students have earned 5 medals, including 1 silver and 4 bronze, at the 53rd International Physics Olympiad held in Tokyo, Japan, on July 10-17, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports reported on July 17.

The team, who can be seen in the picture above, includes Hovsep Karapetyan, a 12th-grade student from the high school of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, who won a silver medal, while PhysMath School students Areg Barseghyan, Maria Arakelyan, Vyacheslav Petrosyan (all 12th graders) and Arsen Aghayan (11th grader) bagged bronze medals.

The team was led by PhysMath School teachers Bilor Kurghinyan and Hrant Topchyan.

The Armenian school students had won 3 bronze medals and 2 commendation letters at the previous Physics Olympiad.



Soloist Hasmik Mkrtychyan



Concert Harp. (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2021/08/26/ars-musica-brings-grand-concert-harp-to-gyumri/>) This gesture of generosity touched the university community deeply, evoking profound gratitude and appreciation.

(Material for this article and photos courtesy of the Gyumri Conservatory)





## ARMENIA

# Young Artsakh Woman Forges New Ties Thousands of Miles from Home

SHUSHANIK, from page 1

Hayriyan, 23, now a freshman at the College of Idaho, hails from Sghnakh, a village outside the town of Askeran, in Artsakh. Her family is now stuck behind a blockade while she is in the US, unable to visit home.

While her story is frustrating and shot through with sadness, she has also made a deep connection with many people locally who have in effect created a new family around her. And that development came full circle through friendships forged by those supporting a remote corner of Armenia, as well as activists in the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Through quick action, a group of women were able to connect Hayriyan with Judith Saryan, who has opened her home to the young student for the summer, changing both their lives.

Said a grateful Hayriyan during a recent interview, "It feels like my actual family, honestly. They've been very nice to me and the fact that they understand what is happening in Artsakh and the situation with my family is very important to me. For most of my time in Idaho, you never get people who are actually interested in my part of the world," she said. "When it comes to the Armenian community, I find a lot of people are caring about Karabakh and the future of Armenia and it feels good to be around these people. I feel the diasporan Armenians are actually with us."

## From Yerevan to Idaho

When Hayriyan was 8, her family moved from Sghnakh to Stepanakert. She was accepted to the United World College in Dilijan, Armenia, better known as UWC Dilijan College, for two years after concluding 11th grade in Stepanakert. The school is part of the United World Colleges program, in which graduates receive international baccalaureates.

She attended UWC on scholarship and at graduation, she received a full scholarship to the College of Idaho, where she is majoring in journalism and international politics.

"I graduated [from UWC] in 2019," she noted during a recent interview. She then took a gap year, which was then extended by the pandemic.

Hayriyan, the seventh of nine children born to parents Albert and Ruzanna, started attending the College of Idaho in Caldwell, on the outskirts of Boise, in February 2023, during the university's spring term, because her visa issues had delayed her expected start date in the fall semester. She had been living in Yerevan to take care of her visa issues.

She had last visited Artsakh in December 2022, right before the blockade. When she arrived there, on December 3, the Azerbaijani government closed the border for a few hours but quickly reopened it. She said goodbye to her family on December 9, only three days before the Azerbaijani government imposed its ongoing blockade.

After the semester ended in May, it became clear Hayriyan could still not go home.

"For the summer I was thinking what I am going to be doing, because I thought going back to Armenia is not very wise now since I won't be able to see my family, and as a student, I can't spend that much money, get to Armenia and then not see my parents," she said. "I was thinking of staying in the US and staying at the College of Idaho, where they have some student summer jobs. But I thought it's better to connect with the Armenian community in the US, just because it feels like home, with them honestly."

She reached out to a friend, American-Armenian expat in Armenia Serena Hajjar Bakunts, who hails from the area and has since

relocated to Yerevan and married a young man from Artsakh.

Zela Astarjian, vice president of the AIWA Board of Directors and the New England Affiliate President, shed more light on how someone from Artsakh and now based in Idaho was able to find connections so far away from both her original home as well as her US base.

The younger Astarjian connected Hayriyan to her mother, Zela, who got the ball rolling.

"Serena somehow heard about this girl and she was talking to Anais [Astarjian] and she said there is this girl and she could not get back to Artsakh," Astarjian recalled in a recent interview.

"I talked to her a couple of times to figure it out and have her come to the East Coast rather than somewhere else," Astarjian noted.

It was then that AIWA friends "sprang into action," Astarjian said.

"I called Judy [Saryan] and a couple of other people," she said. Among the people who expressed their willingness to open their homes to Hayriyan was Barbara Merguerian, an AIWA founder and former editor of the *Mirror-Spectator*. Eventually, Saryan and Merguerian spoke and decided that since Saryan is in Cambridge, an urban hub, it would be a much easier fit for the young visitor than Merguerian's home, which is in the Metro West area.

Noted Saryan, "We have a deep connection with Artsakh and we are excited to have a young person from Artsakh stay with us." She added, "We were very concerned that she could not go home."

The experience has been great for Saryan. "I found her to be very bright, and a very imaginative, knowledgeable person. She has a lot to say and is thoughtful. She is a strong person. I am very impressed with her. I felt she had this strength of character and independent spirit. She was enthusiastic about spending time with us."

Hayriyan accompanied the family to their home in Maine earlier this summer, where they all unexpectedly had experiences harkening back to Artsakh. When they were walking around, Saryan recalled, Hayriyan spotted *aveluk*, wild sorrel, and "we braided the leaves and dried them. We also picked rose petals and made rose petal jam."

Thus, Saryan said, "a little taste of Artsakh" was revived in Maine.

Saryan said that their young guest would often speak about her father, who had trained as a vet and has his own business. "She has a special bond with her father," she noted.

Saryan summed up the rollercoaster experience of her young friend: "To have these opportunities and yet be so concerned about how her family is doing... She dreams of visiting them."

Astarjian said she enjoyed getting to know Hayriyan, taking her to various places in the city, including the Seaport.

Astarjian noted that this was not the first time that the AIWA network were able to help someone. Last year a stranded *duduk* player from Lebanon was able to stay with her.

"This is happening all the time. We need to have a place" for such stranded visitors, she stressed.

"She is lovely. It really tugs at your heart that she cannot go back. Your heart breaks and you want to help as much as possible," Astarjian noted.

Silva Katchiguiyan, president of the AIWA Board of Directors, added, "For 32 years AIWA has been at the forefront of women's empowerment. And by that we mean paving a way for women to be educated and informed to know their rights and

to give them the "power" to independence. We know this is essential for the growth of any nation, and Armenia is no exception. Our goal at AIWA is to connect and support women so they have a trusted community of leaders navigating similar challenges. Diversity is core to our organization. The tools of the 21st century — connectivity, access to knowledge, access to each other — are tools that AIWA women can and do put to powerful uses. It is what we do at AIWA. It is in our mission to connect and elevate Armenian women globally. Globalization has given women a power they lacked in the past, the benefits of family planning, child care, good health care etc. and hopefully the power to end the system that breeds poverty, exploitation and oppression to some extent. We offer programs, mentoring and networking opportunities to Armenian women all over the world through our on-line platforms."

## Missing Home

For Hayriyan, getting in touch with her family now is not easy. "Most of the time there is a time zone difference and electricity outages. They don't have electricity and the internet connection is not good."

Hayriyan's family seems to be doing okay, so far. "If I talk only about my family, I feel they are doing fine. They've always been very self-sufficient. We've been growing some of our food, potatoes and such, for our own use. But if we are talking about Artsakh's people, more importantly, it's a very uncertain situation in Artsakh. People don't know how to feel about what's happening. They definitely feel it's a bad situation but they also don't know who to call. It's definitely not the Artsakh government and it's definitely not the Armenian government because they don't have any legal responsibility."

She continued, "When it comes to the Russian peacekeepers, [protests and requests have] to be done on a governmental level and the people of Artsakh, even if they protest against the Russian peacekeepers, it's not how it should work. It should be demanded on a governmental level that these peacekeepers have to do what they are responsible for. And when it comes to the blockade, it's only because they are not doing what they are responsible for that we have the blockade," she said.

She noted that while moving to Idaho and living in a dormitory were difficult for a variety of reasons, being a part of a diverse student body was not an issue.

"I studied at UWC and it's known for its diversity. I didn't have a big culture shock," she said. The student body at Dilijan's UWC comprises students from more than 88 countries.

"I would say Idaho is a very safe state, but there's not much happening," she said.

One source of frustration is that understandably, most people don't know where Nagorno Karabakh is. "Some people who are majoring in politics might know about the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan but I would say it is still very hard for expel to understand what people of Nagorno Karabakh are going through," she said. "The concept of a blockade is not very familiar to people. My friends are [however] very interested in this. I share stories on my social media platforms. I am not sure how much it can change but I feel that's one of the things I am supposed to do."

Hayriyan continued, "For me it's very important to talk about the Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh and to put the stress on who is responsible for this situation because Russia is in fact our ally but we can see they are doing nothing," she said.

"Let's be real. The Russians are the ones who actually have responsibility over this

corridor. They are the one we have a peace treaty with in 2020 and they signed the trilateral agreement, where the Russians said this corridor's 'free movement of Armenians' would be guaranteed by the Russian peacekeepers," she said.

## Help for the Homeland

Saryan is no stranger to Artsakh or philanthropy. Through the Tufenkian Foundation, Saryan and her husband, Victor Zarougian, have sponsored several projects in Artsakh as well as Armenia.

Saryan said that a center in Kornidzor, in Syunik, Armenia, near the Azerbaijan border, where the organization All for Armenia had created the KorniTun project to help the beleaguered area, was one of the projects to which they donated, to make the border region safer for the inhabitants. Through her support for KorniTun, she was able to connect with Bakunts and Matthieu Sahakian, both expats, who are helping the effort.

Saryan praised it as a "combined diaspora-Armenia effort," in which the locals do a lot of the work.

"That is how we got to know them," she said.

In addition, Saryan and Zarougian have supported Artsakh and Armenian through the Tufenkian Foundation, Children of Armenia Foundation and Christians in Need Foundation. For COAF, the couple donated to a family center in Stepanakert for children with emotional and speech difficulties.

Through the Italy-based Christians in Need organization, they are renovating a K-12 school in Stepanakert, serving 600 students.

They have also helped with the renovation of Shushi's Yeznik Mozyan Vocational School, which sadly was lost after the war.

The couple believes in the future of Artsakh and has doubled down on helping since the end of the war in 2020. "It is important to create the sense that we are still trying to build an educational effort in Artsakh," Saryan said. "We want to offer hope. We want them to know people are playing attention to them and that we see them."

Another effort is to provide students with biology and chemistry lab kits in Martakert, in Artsakh, one of the efforts the couple supports through the Tufenkian Foundation. According to the foundation, schools in Artsakh have long been under-resourced, with most having no lab equipment for students to learn about the sciences first-hand through experimentation. Designed to integrate with the 7th-grade biology curriculum, the lab kits support specific assignments throughout the school year. The kits include a microscope, specimen slides, Petri dishes, and many other items. The second phase of the campaign, which will provide lab kits to support the chemistry curriculum for the 7th, 8th and 9th grades, is scheduled to kick off in August just prior to the school year.

## Back to Idaho

Hayriyan is set to start her classes on August 23.

When asked what she wants the government of Azerbaijan to hear about Karabakh, she said, "My number one message would be you can't break us. We have been through this a long time and everyone knows how resilient and strong the people of Artsakh are. We are indigenous to this land and you know all the fake history you're creating, no one will believe that," she said.

She said her family is not considering leaving. "They're going to keep on staying in Artsakh," she said. She added, however, that fears for the safety for her family and all others there are very real.

For now, she said, she wants to "hug my parents."

## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

**Turkish Lira Hits Record Low**

ISTANBUL (Reuters) — The Turkish lira weakened more than 2 percent to a fresh record low against the dollar on Tuesday over market concerns that the central bank might raise interest rates this week by less than previously expected.

The lira hit a record low of 26.9 against the U.S. currency, sliding from Monday's close of 26.3505. It has weakened 30 percent so far this year.

According to a Reuters poll, Turkey's central bank is expected to raise its policy rate by 500 basis points to 20 percent this week, making good on its pledge of further tightening to curb inflation, which is set to rise again.

However, prominent *Hurriyet* newspaper columnist Abdulkadir Selvi wrote on July 18 that his impression from "economic circles" was that the rate will be raised to around 16.50-17.0 percent.

"News saying that the central bank's interest rate hike will be below market expectations is triggering the lira depreciation," said one trader.

"Gradual interest rate hikes were already a difficult path, but concern in the market that the increases might not be enough has started to be reflected clearly in prices," he added.

**Iraqi Kurdistan Leader Visits Azerbaijan**

YEREVAN (news.am) — The head of Iraqi Kurdistan, Nechirvan Barzani, on July 17 arrived in Azerbaijan for a visit.

Barzani planned to discuss with Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev Azerbaijan's relations with Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan, as well as the strengthening of their collaboration in various domains.

**Iran Says It Seeks to Connect to Russian Electricity Grid through Armenia**

TEHRAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Iranian Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian said on July 17 that Iran is looking to connect to the Russian electricity grid through Armenia.

"To exchange electricity with Russia, we have followed the two routes of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia-Georgia, and we are in the process of final negotiation and implementation," he said in an interview for the Iranian Students' News Agency (via IRNA).

The Iranian energy minister added that Iran is seeking to exchange electricity with some neighbors without payment.

"Soon we will start exchanging electricity with Russia through Azerbaijan. Connecting to the Russian electricity grid through Armenia and Georgia is also on the agenda," he concluded.

# Azerbaijan Rejects Russian Calls To Reopen Lachin Corridor

LACHIN, from page 1

by Russian peacekeepers. It accused the peacekeepers of not preventing Armenia's alleged shipments of weapons and military personnel to Karabakh and not ensuring the "withdrawal of the remnants of Armenian military units from Azerbaijani territory."

"Armenian army units on the contrary receive assistance under the guidance of the Russian peacekeeping mission," it said without offering proof of the allegations strongly denied by Armenia.

Baku reacted to Saturday's statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry expressing serious concern over the worsening shortages of food, medicine and other essential supplies in Karabakh and warning of even more "dramatic" consequences of the blockade.

The Azerbaijani side dismissed those concerns, saying that Karabakh can be supplied with basic necessities from Azerbaijan proper and the town of Aghdam in particular. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev apparently insisted on this idea during his latest trilateral meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and European Union head Charles Michel held in Brussels on Saturday, July 15.

Michel said after the talks that as well as urging Aliyev to reopen the Lachin corridor he "noted Azerbaijan's willingness to equally provide humanitarian supplies via Aghdam."

"I see both options as important and encourage the humanitarian deliveries from both sides to ensure the needs of the population are met," he said.

Karabakh's leadership rejected the Aghdam option earlier, saying that it is a ploy designed to facilitate the restoration of Azerbaijani control over Karabakh.

Michel's reference to it was constructed by some Armenian analysts and critics of Pashinyan's government as a serious setback for the Armenian side. One of those

analysts, Tigran Grigoryan, on July 17 decried "the inactivity and incompetence of the Armenian diplomacy."

"By including such a point in the statement [by Michel] and putting that point on the same plane with the issue of unblocking the Lachin corridor ... Azerbaijan will be able to nullify the previous decisions of various international structures — and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in particular -- regarding the unblocking of the Lachin corridor," Grigoryan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

The ICJ court ordered Azerbaijan in February to "take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions." The European Court of Human Rights issued a similar order in December.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry pointed to those injunctions on Monday. "Other international actors should follow this line," the ministry spokeswoman, Ani Badalyan, said in a Twitter post that may have been a veiled rebuke of Michel.

**Brussels Meeting**

Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met in Brussels on July 15 for fresh talks hosted by the European Union's top official, Charles Michel.

Speaking after the trilateral meeting, Michel gave no indications that Aliyev and Pashinyan narrowed their differences on an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty discussed by them. He said he urged them to "take further courageous steps to ensure decisive and irreversible progress on the normalization track."

"Even though our meeting took place in the context of a worrying increase in tensions on the ground, I noticed an important momentum in the political discussions and efforts," Michel said in a statement to the press.

"The Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders

once again fully reconfirmed the respect for the other country's territorial integrity and sovereignty based on the understanding that Armenia's territory covers 29,800 square kilometers and Azerbaijan's 86,600 square kilometers."

"Real progress depends on the next steps that will need to be taken in the near future," added the president of the European Council, the EU's top decision-making body.

An Armenian government statement on the talks said the three leaders agreed to "intensify the work towards the settlement of the discussed issues," which included not only the would-be treaty but also Azerbaijan's continuing blockade of the Lachin corridor, "the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians and planned transport links between Armenia and Azerbaijan."

According to Aliyev's office, the agenda of the meeting included Baku's demands for "the withdrawal of Armenian army units from Azerbaijani territory" and the dissolution of Karabakh's "illegal" armed forces. Armenia has repeatedly denied any military presence in Karabakh.

Pashinyan said last week that the peace accord is not "yet ready for signing." The Armenian Foreign Ministry reported earlier that Baku and Yerevan continue to disagree on practical modalities of delimiting the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and organizing a dialogue between Baku and Karabakh's leadership.

Pashinyan charged earlier this month that the seven-month blockade of Karabakh's only land link with Armenia reflects Baku's intention to commit "genocide" in the region. He made it clear at the same time that he will not deviate from his "peace agenda" denounced by the Armenian opposition as well as Karabakh's leadership. Opposition leaders claim that Baku was emboldened by his recent pledge to sign a peace deal upholding Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh.

## Azerbaijan Continues Caviar Diplomacy for Bribing European Officials, Experts Warn

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Azerbaijani government has been bribing European lawmakers in an attempt to conceal its poor human rights record, former member of parliament and former Armenian delegate to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Tatev Hayrapetyan on July 18 warned that Azerbaijan will continue its practices of bribing European officials, but more cautiously.

Azerbaijan's infamous "Caviar Diplomacy" of systematic bribing, which helped conceal its human rights record, has led to investigations and convictions.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on July 13 on recommendations for reform of the European Parliament's rules on transparency, integrity, accountability and anti-corruption.

The resolution mentions violations by various countries and organizations, including the Azerbaijani government's actions.

"...whereas Azerbaijan has conducted large-scale influence operations, in-

volving strong suspicions of corruption, against members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; whereas Azerbaijan has managed to avert probes into its elections and whitewash its human rights record," reads clause T of the [resolution](#).

Hayrapetyan said, "The scandalous reports prove that Azerbaijan's actions in PACE involve a broad network and that the head of the Azerbaijani delegation Samad Seyidov is directly involved in criminal activity. When we were going to Strasbourg the Azerbaijanis were already acting very cautiously. Nonetheless, the facts remain and Seyidov continues to lead the Azerbaijani delegation."

Among those who With the scandalous ousting of Pedro Agramunt as President of PACE in 2017 not stopping the practices of the Aliyev regime, the Caviar Diplomacy continues to this day, the expert on Azerbaijan warned.

Agramunt and many other officials served at PACE for a long time and their partiality contributed to pro-Azeri word-

ings which did not reflect the situation neither on Azeri domestic developments not around the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Eventually all packages are collected and Baku makes a tool out of it. The facts are disclosed, perpetrators are prosecuted, but the huge damage remains, she said.

"Azerbaijan isn't criticized for its numerous political prisoners and human rights violations, whereas European countries get lambasted for the same occurrences. Turns out there are good and bad despots for Europe, with Aliyev being the so-called acceptable despot in this case, which in turn unleashes him even more in our region. Moreover, the Azerbaijanis show that the PACE resolutions mean nothing to them, they disregard the organizations where they themselves have membership. Should these organizations display principled approach, they would have considered ousting or suspending Azerbaijan, forcing Azerbaijan to respect the European resolutions," Hayrapetyan said.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Embassy Protest Highlights Azerbaijani Activists' Frustration

It's common practice around the world for protests to be staged outside foreign embassies. It's exceedingly rare for them to occur inside the walls of a diplomatic compound.

But that's what happened at a reception marking American Independence Day at the U.S. embassy in Baku on June 23.

Three invited guests, local women's rights activists, removed scarves from around their necks to reveal black hands painted on their throats symbolically strangling them.

They had a message for the Azerbaijani government officials and MPs attending the reception with them.

"Rights are violated in Azerbaijan. They [authorities] are grabbing people's throats with their hands," Sanubar Heydarova, one of the three, said as Ulvi Hasanli, director of the local independent news outlet Abzas Media, recorded her on video.

"Today the government and opposition have come here to celebrate the independence of another country, while independence in Azerbaijan has been choked, the voice of media has been choked, and activists are arrested and subjected to torture," said another activist, Gulnara Mehdiyeva.

They expressed solidarity with the people of the village of Soyudlu, which had been (and still is) under tight police control since the violent dispersal of an environmental protest there three days earlier.

As Hasanli's camera continued to roll, the activists were approached by embassy staff who asked them to stop protesting and filming. They responded that they were engaged in a "quiet, civil protest" not aimed at disrupting the event.

A short time later another video, showing Hasanli being apprehended by Azerbaijani police, was posted on social media. Though it can't be seen in the footage, Hasanli had reportedly been handed over to the police by embassy security personnel. The activists, meanwhile, were asked to leave the embassy, and they too were detained by police. All four were released shortly afterward.

After his release, Hasanli vented his frustration on Facebook. "This time, I am concerned about the U.S. embassy," he said in a sarcastic reference to routine diplomatic expressions of "concern" over frequent human rights violations in Azerbaijan.

"The embassy of a country which speaks so much about democracy, human rights, and press freedom shouldn't have acted like that."

He later told Eurasianet that his only grievance was the embassy's cooperation with the Azerbaijani police. "If the embassy had simply removed me from the embassy grounds because of my filming, I would have understood and would not have had any resentment," he said. "But it is disgraceful that the embassy staff took me out of the area forcefully, twisting my arms, and handed me over to the Azerbaijani police. The embassy should apologize for this."

He added that they requested a meeting at the embassy for an explanation and had not received a reply.

In response to an email query from Eurasianet, the embassy provided a statement that did not address the question of embassy staff's cooperation with the police.

"Much of the night was a chance to network, share the diversity of the United States, and celebrate the official event. The U.S. embassy supports fundamental freedoms including the right to protest and freedom of speech," the statement read.

Hasanli's discontent is reflective of wider exasperation among Azerbaijani civil

society activists, who wish the U.S. and other Western democracies would push back harder against the repressive policies of strongman President Ilham Aliyev.

"We can see that the embassies of the Western countries, particularly those that declared issues of democracy and human rights as priorities in their foreign policies - such as the U.S., the UK, France, and Germany - have chosen to remain mere observers of Azerbaijan's domestic political processes," Baku-based political analyst Anar Mammadli told Eurasianet. "They had the same position when the political parties law and the media law were adopted in Azerbaijan, and have the same reaction in light of the Soyudlu events."

But Mammadli did acknowledge the difficult balance that Western countries have to strike in their relations with Azerbaijan - a hydrocarbon-rich ally geographically situated between strategic adversaries Russia and Iran.

"It seems to me that they [Western em-

bassies] prefer to engage in 'silent diplomacy,'" he said, noting diplomats' assurances that they communicate civil society concerns to government officials. "And this is understandable. These countries have geopolitical interests here, not to mention that they try to keep warm relations with the Azerbaijani government given the threat to their energy security in the aftermath of the Ukraine invasion."

Maran Turner, the director of Freedom Now, a U.S. non-profit that has supported local civil society and worked to address human rights violations in Azerbaijan for more than 10 years, said she understood the motivation of the protesters and their choice of venue.

"The US embassy event would have offered a unique opportunity to directly confront many government officials, and to do so in the presence of the Baku international community. Though a U.S.-hosted event on U.S. embassy grounds is not the ideal place for such a demonstration against the Azer-

bajani government, it is hard to begrudge these activists for taking this opportunity," Turner told Eurasianet in an email.

"With regard to the removal of the activists from the event, I do not know whether there was a protocol that was followed by the U.S. embassy in this situation. It is regrettable, however, that the protesters and the journalist with them were not simply escorted off the premises as opposed to detained, however briefly, by local police. Nevertheless, I do not believe that this incident should be taken as indicative of a lack of support by the U.S. embassy for civil society or their right to protest. The U.S. embassy is among the most ardent supporters of local civil society in Azerbaijan, and I have no doubt they will continue to offer support and amplify local concerns and criticisms with Azerbaijani officials."

(This article originally appeared on the website [eurasianet.org](http://eurasianet.org) on July 14.)

## European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee Urges Turkey To Recognize Armenian Genocide, Supports Normalization

By Lilit Gasparyan

BRUSSELS (Armenpress) — The Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament has adopted a report on Turkey which also mentions the latter's normalization process with Armenia.

The report, released on July 17, supports the Armenia-Turkey normalization for reconciliation, regional stability and security. The report welcomes the progress achieved so far and commends the Armenian prime minister's attendance of the Turkish President's inauguration ceremony.

The report once again calls on Turkey to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and preserve the Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey.

The members of European Parliament (MEPs) urge the EU and Turkey to break the current deadlock and find "a parallel and realistic framework" for European Union (EU) and Turkey relations.

Unless there is a drastic change of course by the Turkish government, Turkey's EU accession process cannot resume under the current circumstances, the MEPs on the Foreign Affairs Committee said in the report adopted on Tuesday (by 47 votes in favor, no votes against and 10 abstentions).

Urging the Turkish government, the European Union and its member states to break the current deadlock and move towards a closer partnership, MEPs recommend starting a reflection process to find a parallel and realistic framework for EU-Turkey relations. They call on the Commission to explore possible formats for a mutually appealing framework.

In the report, MEPs confirm that Turkey remains a candidate for EU accession, a NATO ally and a key partner in security, trade and economic relations, and migration, stressing that Turkey is expected to respect democratic values, rule of law, human rights and abide by EU laws, principles and obligations.

The report urged Turkey to ratify Sweden's NATO membership without any further delay, and underlines that the NATO accession process of one country can in no way be linked to the EU accession process of another. Each country's progress on the path towards the EU remains based on its own merits, MEPs stress.

The report welcomes Turkey's vote in favor of condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the UN General Assembly and its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, regretting that Turkey does not support sanctions outside the UN framework. Turkey's alignment rate with the EU's Common foreign and security policy has slipped to an all-time low of 7 percent, making it by far the lowest of all enlargement countries.

MEPs commended Turkey's efforts to continue hosting the largest refugee population in the world of almost four million people. They welcome the continued provision of EU funding for refugees and host communities in Turkey, and express their strong commitment to sustain this in the future.

Expressing their condolences to the families of the victims of the devastating earthquakes of February 6, 2023, the MEPs stated that the EU should continue to sup-

port the people of Turkey in meeting their humanitarian needs and reconstruction efforts. They underline that European solidarity could lead to a tangible improvement in relations between the EU and Turkey.

The rapporteur Nacho Sánchez Amor (S&D, Spain) said: "We have recently seen a renewed interest from the Turkish government in reviving the EU accession process. This will not happen as a result of geopolitical bargaining, but when Turkish authorities show real interest in stopping the continuous backsliding in fundamental freedoms and rule of law. If the Turkish government is sincere in this they should show it with concrete reforms and actions."

Turkey's EU accession talks have been in a deadlock since 2018 due to the deteriorating condition of Turkey's rule of law and democracy. The report will be sent to the European Parliament plenary session for voting.

## Paris: 'They Came, They're All Here' for Artsakh

By Jean Eckian

PARIS — As if in accordance with the above quote from a Charles Aznavour song, *La Mamma*, on June 28, 1,500 people flocked to the prestigious Salle Gaveau in Paris to support Artsakh at the call of Armenia's ambassador to France, Hasmik Tolmajian.

Nagorno-Karabakh's representative in France, Hovannes Guevorkian, opened this special evening, which was a strong message of solidarity from France.

More than twenty intellectuals and artists answered the embassy's urgent call to raise public awareness of the plight of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Leading voices from the worlds of journalism, literature, cinema and the arts were mobilized to speak out on behalf of those who live in anguish today, with moving letters presented from our compatriots under the blockade of Azerbaijan.

High-profile French personalities included writer Sylvain Tesson, *Figaro Magazine* journalist Jean-Christophe Buisson, filmmaker Robert Guédiguian, actress Ariane Ascaride, writer-filmmaker Olivier Weber and actor Pascal Légitimus.

Denouncing the 200-day blockade suffered by the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh, Sylvain Tesson spoke out against the wait-and-see attitude of the French presidency, saying: "Today, Artsakh is the outpost of a dungeon called Armenia, and Armenia is the outpost of another dungeon to be conquered, namely Europe. It's time to take stock of this reality, without hiding behind the pretext of waiting for 'the right moment to intervene.'"

As noted filmmaker Robert Guédiguian said, history is repeating itself. He read the famous speech by the great French writer Anatole France on April 9, 1916 at the Sorbonne: "Armenia expires, but it will be reborn!"



# Community News

## St. Nersess Seminary Prepares to Honor Its Second Group of 12 Graduates

ARMONK, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary is proud to have an active alumni network of clergy and lay ministers who lead and serve the Armenian Church in North America, with love and humility.

To honor that service, the seminary will highlight the vocations of 12 priests and lay ministers who studied at St. Nersess and St. Vladimir's Seminaries, with a gala banquet on Saturday, November 4.

This will be the second in a series of tribute events featuring alumni of St. Nersess who serve the Armenian Church in various capacities. The first celebration took place in November 2021, and established the "12 Vocations" theme. The upcoming event will build on that idea, under the title: "12 Vocations: Broadening the Call."

This year, the event will honor a seminary graduate who became a hierarch of the Armenian Church: Archbishop Avak Asadourian (priestly ordination in 1977, episcopal consecration in 1982), who recently retired after a long tenure as Primate of the Diocese of Iraq.

He will be honored along with seven clergymen and four lay ministers—listed here by ordination or graduation date:

Fr. Krikor Sabounjian (ordained 1998); Fr. Sarkis Petoyan (ordained 1998); Fr. Abraham Ohanessian (ordained 1999); Fr. Mikael Devejian (ordained 2000); Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan (ordained 2004); Fr. Aren Jebejian (ordained 2004); Fr. Bedros Kadehjian (ordained 2005); Mat. Valerie Goekjian Zahirsky (graduated 1974); Yn. Sirapi Feredjian Aivazian (graduated 1978); Nancy Basmajian (graduated 1979); Shaké Ajamian Derderian (graduated 1989).

The celebratory evening will be filled with nostalgic reflections and special awards. Invitations will be mailed in August; information on how to include your warm wishes to the honorees in a commemorative keepsake booklet will be mailed soon. All donations will benefit St. Nersess Seminary and its ongoing mission.

For information on the November 4 banquet, visit [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu).

## Armenians of Whitinsville Projects Receives State Grant

WHITINSVILLE — The Armenians of Whitinsville project is one of 35 humanities and arts organizations in Massachusetts to be awarded a grant from the Mass Humanities Council. The \$1.2 million awarded in total to these 35 organizations represents the single largest grant line in the history of Mass Humanities. Awards ranged from \$16,000 to \$40,000 for organizations with budgets of \$500K or less; the AW see GRANT, page 13



A reception in the Diocesan Center's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium allowed worshippers and other visitors to greet the Primate and receive his blessing. Here is Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan greeting young altar servers from around the Diocese, who were attending the St. Nersess Seminary Summer Conference programs. (Photo: Harout Barsoumian, BarsImages)

## Liturgy at NYC's St. Vartan Cathedral Launches Diocese's 125th Anniversary Celebration

NEW YORK — New York's St. Vartan Cathedral was the site of a special Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 2, celebrating the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

On that same date in 1898, Catholicos Mkrtych Khrimian (known to the ages as "Khrimian Hayrig") issued the encyclical that officially established the very first Armenian Diocese in the New World.

Diocesan Primate Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan celebrated the badarak at the cathedral, joined on the altar by Cathedral Vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan, St. Nersess Seminary Dean Fr. Mardiros Chevia, senior priests Fr. Karekin Kasparian and Fr. Aved Terzian, Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian from the Western Diocese, as well as a large company of deacons.



Diocesan Primate Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan celebrated the badarak at New York's St. Vartan Cathedral on Sunday, July 2, 2023.

"It was in the year 1898 that the Armenian Church's Diocese of America began its history," wrote Catholicos Karekin II in his letter. "This was a time that also saw the massacre of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey; the destruction of age-old monasteries and churches on our native soil; and the depopulation of Armenians from their ancestral lands. So it was an act of remarkable foresight when Catholicos Mkrtych Khrimian — Khrimian Hayrig, of blessed memory — had a vision that a bright, enduring future awaited the Armenian people on the soil of the United States, where so many faithful Armenians had lately taken refuge. And under that vision he established the Armenian Diocese of North America, to advance the ministry of our Holy Church in the New World."

In his sermon, Fr. Parsamyan also reflected on the 125-year history of the Diocese by echoing the words of the Bible: "The Lord has done great things for us — and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3).

"Those ancient words," the Primate said, "ring with Truth for us today. And so we joyfully sing the praises of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose hand has been upon this Diocese from the very beginning. He has never let us down. He has never abandoned us. And He will always be leading us forward."

The Primate made similar observations in a special video message, released to the public on Sunday morning.

A reception in the Diocesan Center's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium allowed worshippers and other visitors to greet the Primate and receive his blessing.

The Diocese's 125th Anniversary is an ongoing series of events, involving special liturgical services, cultural and social gatherings, and charitable outreach activities.

## Knights and Daughters Of Vartan Host Grand Convocation In Boston

By David Medzorian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON — The Knights and Daughters of Vartan held its Grand Convocation in Boston during the first week of July. Members from Lodges and Otyags across the United States were hosted this year by Ararat Lodge No. 1 and Arpie Otyag No. 9.

The slogan for this year's gathering was "Return to Ararat" because Ararat Lodge was the Knights of Vartan's first *Tahlij*, founded on July 4, 1916.

The home for the 105th Avak Tahlij and the 83rd Kerakouyn Zgoghov was the Westin Waltham Boston Hotel. On Wednesday, July 5, a group of Knights and Daughters and some spouses and friends saw some of the city's famous sites up close as they enjoyed a Boston Harbor Cruise. The ninety-minute excursion took them past landmarks such as the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides), the Italian North End and The Old North Church, The Bunker Hill Monument, and Spectacle Island, which Boston's Big Dig Project transformed. The group also visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial at Heritage Park and walked the labyrinth surrounding a small water fountain. Most of the group enjoyed an outdoor dinner at Legal Seafood before returning to the hotel. The first official day of the Grand Convocation began with a workshop led by the leaders of the Call-to-Action Committee. Grand Vice-Commander Levon Thorose joined Former Commanders Jake Bournazian and Garry Javizian in updating the Knights and Daughters of Vartan on efforts to help the 120-thousand Armenians who are living in Artsakh amidst a blockade by Azerbaijan that is now in its seventh month. To help publicize the plight of those in Artsakh and to seek international support, the Call-to-Action Committee commissioned two informational videos, which were shown to the Knights and Daughters on two occasions during the Grand Convocation.

The second workshop of the day, moderated by New England Grand District Representative Bob Avakian, was an interactive discussion focusing on efforts to recruit new members into The Knights of Vartan.

The Grand Convocation's first social event was a reception Thursday evening in the hotel's lounge, hosted by Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian and Grand Chairwoman Gloria Korkoian.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan got to business on Friday morning with official proceedings in their meeting rooms. In separate see CONVOCATION, page 12



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Exceptional Scholar Prof. Richard Hovannisian Dies

HOVANNISIAN, from page 1  
and translating the invaluable oral histories of Armenian Genocide survivors. In recent years, he was also a presence at the University of Southern California, after entrusting his large collection of oral history interviews to the university for preservation and public access. The interviews were among the first to be conducted with genocide survivors.

His father, Kaspar Gavroian, was born in the village of Bazmashen near Kharpert in 1901. Unlike others, he survived the Genocide and arrived in the US. He changed his last name from Gavroian to Hovannisian after his father Hovannes. In 1928, Kaspar married Siroon Nalbandian, the child of Genocide survivors. They had four sons: John, Ralph, Richard and Vernon. Richard was born in Tulare, on November 9, 1932. Being the son of Genocide survivors played an important role in his academic path. In 1957, he married Dr. Vartiter Kotcholosian in Fresno and had four children: Raffi, Armen, Ani, and Garo. Raffi would become the first Minister of Foreign Affairs (1991-1992) of the Modern Republic of Armenia.

Hovannisian began his academic life in 1954 by earning a BA in history, followed by an MA in history from the University of California, Berkeley. In 1966, he earned his PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His dissertation was published in 1967 with the title *Armenia on the Road to Independence* which was the precursor to the four-volume magnum opus *The Republic of Armenia*. Hovannisian played an important role in establishing the teaching of Armenian history at UCLA. In 1987, he became the first holder of the Armenian Education Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, which after his retirement was named in his honor as the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History, with Prof. Sebouh Aslanian as its first incumbent.

Hovannisian was a Guggenheim Fellow and received numerous prestigious national and international awards for his service to the field and civic activities. He served on the Board of Directors of multiple national and international educational institutions and was a member of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences. After finishing his four-volume *The Republic of Armenia*, he dedicated his research and career to battling the denial of Armenian Genocide, resurrecting the history of Armenian towns and villages of the Armenian Provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and writing textbooks on modern Armenian history. Although not a scholar of Armenian Genocide, he has contributed more to the discipline than many others in the field. He edited multiple volumes on different facets of the Armenian Genocide, including historical, literary, and artistic perspectives. Hovannisian also spearheaded a monumental project to preserve the eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide survivors.

Hovannisian in his illustrious career, produced numerous books that are considered foundational, including *The Republic of Armenia, Volumes I-IV*; and *The Armenian Holocaust*. He wrote, edited, or contributed to dozens of other books, scholarly articles, and journals on Armenia and Near Eastern society and culture. He trained many young scholars who have gone on to become experts in the study of Armenia from ancient to modern times. Over the years, he earned many fellowships and honors for his commitment to educating the world about Armenian history and culture through his teaching, writing, research, and public lectures.

Having joined the UCLA faculty in 1962, he was also an associate professor of history at Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, from 1966 to 1969. He served as the associate director of UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies from 1978 to 1995 as well as becoming the first Holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History in 1986, a chair which is now named in his honor.



Prof. Hovannisian at the USC Shoah Foundation

Besides his contribution to the field, Hovannisian also mentored and educated multiple generations of scholars and thousands of students. He was a strict mentor who demanded that his students work to reach their full potential. He wanted to make sure that they would survive and thrive in the tough terrain of the academic job market.

In his lifetime, Hovannisian was especially influenced by two people: his wife Vartiter and Simon Vratsian (the last Prime Minister of the First Republic of Armenia). Vartiter was his life's partner for more than half a century. Her dedication to Richard and the field of Armenian Studies played an important role in shaping who Richard became. Vartiter was an intellectual companion who read and reviewed every piece that he wrote. She was also a constant presence at every conference he planned or attended. In the early 1950s, Vratsian, the author of a major book on the First Republic, became Hovannisian's mentor when he studied Armenian language at the Hamazkayin Nishan Palanjian Jemaran in Beirut, Lebanon.

In 1974, Hovannisian along with Dickran Kouymjian, Nina Garsoïan, Avedis Sanjian, and Robert Thomson spearheaded the project to establish a Society for Armenian Studies (SAS). Considered as the pillars of Armenian Studies, the main objective of this group was the development of Armenian Studies as an academic discipline. With access to very limited resources, this group of scholars was able to establish the foundations of a Society that would play a dominant role in developing Armenian Studies in North America and beyond. From a handful of chairs and programs that supported the initiative at the time, today Armenian Studies as a discipline has flourished in the United States with more than thirteen chairs and programs providing their unconditional support to the Society. Hovannisian was the president of SAS for three terms (1977, 1991-1992, 2006-2009). During his tenure the Society flourished and was able to achieve major accomplishments in the field.

In 2019, the Society for Armenian Studies awarded Hovannisian with the *SAS Life Time Achievement Award* in recognition and appreciation for his outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies.

He lectured frequently at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), dating back to 1963. "We deeply mourn the passing of Prof. Richard Hovannisian," stated NAASR Chairperson Judith Saryan. "He was a true pioneer in Armenian Studies and a great friend of NAASR. His contributions to the field are invaluable."

He last lectured there last year about a

students, and survivor families cannot be overstated. His scholarly contributions will be long-lasting." The Richard G. Hovannisian Armenian Genocide Oral History Collection of over 1,000 testimonies is the largest existing collection of voices of Armenian genocide survivors. In 2018, Professor Hovannisian entrusted the collection to the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive. Several of the Center's research fellows and visiting scholars have productively relied on these testimonies for their work. "Richard was always generous with sharing his expertise," Professor Gruner said. "He was very open minded and kind and exemplified what it means to be a public historian. He organized panels about the Armenian genocide in museums, public libraries and scholarly conferences, including the pioneering event at Lessons & Legacies, the premier international academic conference in Holocaust Studies, in November 2010, where I had the honor to be one of the presenters."

The community wake took place on July 19 at Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church, Montebello. The national funeral service will be held on Saturday, July 22, at 11 a.m. at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, located at 2226 Ventura Ave., Fresno.

Prof. Hovannisian is survived by son, Raffi and Armenouhi Hovannisian, children and grandson; son, Armen and Elizabeth Hovannisian, children and granddaughter; daughter, Ani and Armenio Kevorkian and children; son, Garo and Arsineh Hovannisian and children; sister-in-law, Nazik Kotcholosian Messerlian and family; brothers John, Ralph, and Vernon Hovannisian families (Fresno-Visalia); in-laws, Takouhi Khatchikian family, Zabel Aranosian family, Seda Artounians family and Zohrab Kevorkian family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Orran (Center for Underprivileged Children in Armenia), c/o 2217 Observatory Ave., Los Angeles CA 90027 or the Richard G. Hovannisian Scholarship Fund/Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School, c/o 101 Groverton Place, Los Angeles, CA 90077.

## Tekeyan Cultural Association Pays Tribute To Dr. Richard Hovannisian's Legacy

TRIBUTE, from page 1

on the various provinces and regions of historic Armenia, the results of which he later edited and published as books. In addition to promoting academy study of these regions, this made their history accessible in English to Armenian Americans who could not otherwise learn of their ancestral lands.

He served as a champion of recognition and study of the Armenian Genocide both in academia and in broader society at a time when this appeared an uphill struggle, yet he never wavered. Even when confronted in his own university with opponents who enjoyed the sponsorship of the Turkish state, then considered an indispensable ally to the US, he made the voice of truth and justice heard.

He enabled the recording through his university classes of oral histories of Armenian Genocide survivors, which preserved for future generations many important aspects of the Genocide which otherwise would have remained unknown.

He tirelessly traveled to many Armenian communities in the US and abroad

to give lectures which helped inform both new and old generations of various aspects of Armenian history, and in this way strengthened their attachment to Armenian identity and culture.

Dr. Hovannisian on a personal level served as an example for American Armenians of how to both be very American and very Armenian. The role of his wife Vartiter Kotcholosian Hovannisian, M.D., in supporting his work through many decades should also never be forgotten. His children and grandchildren have in their own ways perpetuated his legacy, with Raffi Hovannisian perhaps the best well known as a politician and the first foreign minister of the current Republic of Armenia.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association joins together with so many other institutions and individuals of the Armenian world to honor Richard Hovannisian's contributions to our understanding of our history and the strengthening of our identity. May his children, grandchildren, family and friends in particular take comfort that though physically he is no longer with us, his memory will endure through his works and words.





## OBITUARY

## Luther Khachigian

### San Joaquin Valley Farmer with Strong Political Ties

By Bryant-Jon Anteola

FRESNO, Calif. (*Fresno Bee*) — Luther Khachigian, a politically influential central San Joaquin Valley farmer who advocated agricultural-friendly policies, died late last month. He was 87 years old when he passed away June 20. With strong political ties dating to President Richard Nixon's



uther Khachigian, a politically influential central San Joaquin Valley farmer who advocated agricultural-friendly policies, died at 87 years old (photo courtesy Khachigian family)

tenure, Khachigian often fought for farmer-friendly policies with a no-hold-back approach. And he solely backed politicians who, too, were advocates of the agriculture industry. To those who weren't farmer friendly in Khachigian's eyes, he had no issue confronting such opposition even if he came off as brash. "I'm mean-spirited," Khachigian admitted to the *Bee* in 1996.

Four years prior, Khachigian organized a protest in Visalia and criticized then-Democratic Senate candidate Dianne Feinstein in person for what he perceived as her "lack of respect" for agriculture.

While Khachigian didn't mind upsetting others, he usually only did so while fighting for farming. It was his passion, which was heavily influenced by being born on his family's 60-acre grape and walnut farm in Visalia. Specifically, Khachigian was a grape grower and farmed in the 330,000-acre Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District. He also excelled as a businessman, which led to a lucrative career that allowed Khachigian to financially support politicians as well as generously donate to various charities and organizations through the years.

In 1999, Khachigian donated a 1979 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow II for auctioning to benefit the Armenian Community School of Fresno. Khachigian also helped start a grape nursery in Armenia with the Armenia Technology Group. In addition, he contributed to ongoing support of the Armenian Eyecare Project and the underwriting of the John Ohannes Khachigian Regional Eye Center in Gyumri, Armenia, that provides quality eye care access in that remote region.

Perhaps Khachigian's most influential time with politics occurred during the 1980s while backing and co-chairing the San Joaquin Valley for California Governor George Deukmejian's winning campaigns in 1982 and 1986.

A decade later, Khachigian continued to publicly support farmer-friendly politicians. He even tried to persuade then-Gov. Pete Wilson not to run for president and instead continue to focus on California. "Governor Wilson has been a farmer-friendly governor," Khachigian said then. "We don't want Gray Davis appointing the state's secretary of agriculture."



Then Cal-Western Nurseries CEO Luther Khachigian, left, with the group's president Jesus Gutierrez (photo Darrell Wong, *Fresno Bee* file)

Though he endorsed primarily conservative views, Khachigian didn't hold back against those he disagreed with. Khachigian once spoke against a then 23-year-old Devin Nunes as the young politician pursued a seat on the College of Sequoias Board of Trustees. Khachigian, who supported Nunes' opponent, harshly criticized Nunes as being too young and inexperienced for the post. But when Nunes resoundingly won the election for the board of trustee seat, Khachigian pivoted to embrace Nunes, who managed his family's dairy business in Pixley at the time and would go on to become a US representative.

"We'll welcome him on board," Khachigian said of Nunes in 1996. "He's one of us. He's a Republican, he's a conservative, he's an agriculturalist."

Khachigian also made sure to speak up whenever he thought government was overreaching, and continued to do even as he approached his 80s. "They deserve to be sued," Khachigian said in 2012 of the US Department of Agriculture and the California Table Grape Commission over grapevine patents. "They don't belong in the

nursery business ... They're interfering in a business they don't know anything about."

Among those Khachigian helped influenced in politics and help implement farm-friendly policies was his youngest brother Ken. A San Clemente lawyer, Ken Khachigian would go on to be named a top adviser to Bob Dole's presidential campaign in 1996. Ken also was a senior adviser, media consultant, strategist and writer for the successful Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle campaigns.

"He's not mean-spirited," Luther Khachigian of his youngest brother then. "I'm mean-spirited ..."

"I have a close relationship with my baby brother. We're sons of an Armenian immigrant who didn't even know where Harvard was."

Luther Khachigian was predeceased by his wife of 52 years, Glenda L. Khachigian. Together the couple raised five children — Grant, Denise, Teresa, Elizabeth and Luther II. Khachigian is survived by his brother Ken and sister-in-law Meredith, his son Luther Khachigian II and daughter-in-law Tracy, and his fiancée Claudette Mekalian.

## DENNIS M. DEVENNEY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in  
Armenian Designs and Lettering

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

## Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

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

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

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

## Rosemary Khachadoorian

Business Educator

WATERTOWN — Rosemary Khachadoorian of Watertown, died on June 27, 2023.

She was the daughter of the late John and Nazan Sarah (DerDavidian) Khachadoorian, sister of Vahan Khachadoorian and his late wife Sheila and the late Rose Guarnieri. She was also the aunt of Thomas John Khachadoorian.

Rosemary was a graduate of Boston University (1966) where she received a BS in business education. In 1974, she continued her education and completed a course in Spanish at Estudio Sempre in Madrid, Spain. Rosemary was also awarded an Educational Needs Grant, Summer of 1980, "Survey of the Medical Secretarial Graduates 1975-1979."

Rosemary taught at many local colleges including as a professor at Massachusetts Bay Community College, Division of Management and Business and in the Division of Continuing Education 1966-1991; instructor, Aquinas Junior College 1978 - 1991; instructor, Hickox Secretarial School 1968-1974; Instructor, State House, Boston, Clerical Training Program for State Employees 1966-1967.

She was a member of Delta Pi Epsilon, Boston University, as corresponding secretary 1974, historian 1975 and 1976, and recording secretary 1977. She was a member of the Massachusetts Business Educators Association, Eastern Business Teachers



Association and National Business Teachers Association.

She was a member of the Board of Trustees, Saint Stephen's Armenian Church 1978 - 1982; Sunday School Teacher, Saint Stephen's Armenian Church 1957-1970; League of Women Voters, Treasurer 1962-1964; Board Member, Armenian Relief Society Cambridge Shushi Chapter; Board of Trustees, Armenian Cultural and Educational Center; Volunteer, Attorney General's Office, Senior Hotline 2002 - 2008.

Funeral services were held at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown on July 7.





## COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARY

## Armenia Fest Brings Food, Music and Dance to Royal Oaks Farmers Market

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — The metro Detroit Armenia Fest Committee in collaboration with the Detroit Knights of Vartan is proud to announce that they will be hosting the Annual Armenia Fest on Saturday, July 22, from 5 to 10 p.m. at the Royal Oak Farmers Market located at 316 E. 11 Mile Road in Royal Oak.

A year in the planning, the festival will begin with the American and Armenian anthems followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony and introduction of special guests at 6:00 p.m. Admission is free and guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and be prepared to travel to Armenia for an evening.

The first ethnic festival ever held in the City of Royal Oak will again feature a rich collage of Armenian culture. The Royal Oak Farmers Market will be transformed into a Middle Eastern bazaar with booths exhibiting Armenian crafts, artwork, souvenirs, music, cookbooks, and jewelry. Silent auction items donated by generous supporters will be on view with winning bidders being announced the evening of the Fest.

Authentic Armenian food including tasty kebabs, stuffed grape leaves, pastries, and breads will be available for purchase. Live traditional and contemporary Armenian music will be performed during the evening by the Armenia Fest All-Stars under the direction of Vaughn Masropian featuring special musical guest Michael Kamalian on the clarinet.

A highlight of the evening will be a special performance by the Hamazkayin Arax Dance Troupe composed of local Armenian youth trained in the art of Armenian folk dance. The enthusiastic Troupe's stunning



costumes and artistically choreographed dance routines have been a crowd favorite since the inception of the Festival.

The Armenian community of metro Detroit numbers well over 70,000 within the tri-county regions of

Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

The Armenia Fest Committee sponsors events and programs which focus on Armenian culture, faith and history. Each year proceeds from the festival are donated by the Committee to humanitarian Armenian causes.

### OBITUARY

## Paul Suren Hokokian

### Air Force Veteran, Attorney

FRESNO — Paul Suren Hokokian passed away on June 27, 2023. He was 72.

Paul was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1980. He was admitted to practice law before all courts in the State of California, the United States Court for the Eastern District of California, the American Bar Association, and the Armenian Bar Association.

Paul was elected by his peers as Vice-President and governor of the State Bar Board of Governors. Paul served as chair of the Bar Regulation, Admission and Discipline Committee. Paul is the only governor to be elected to a second term of office despite the bar's restriction preventing serving consecutive terms.

During his second term of office, Paul

chaired the bar's discipline system. He was a member of the Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers, as well as the American Bar Association's Center for Professional Responsibility. Paul served as chair, on Bar Regulation, Admission, Discipline Committee.

He Co-chaired the Bar Budget Committee, of \$120 million annually. Additionally, Paul served as President of the Fresno County Bar Association and Paul was past President of the Fresno County Prosecutors Association.

He was a Deputy District Attorney, prosecuted welfare fraud. Paul has served as a Judge Pro Tem for the Fresno County Superior Court for over 15 years. Central California Legal Services honored Paul for

pro bono legal services at the annual Veteran's Stand Down providing legal service to homeless or unemployed veterans.

Paul was the founder of CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties, where a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) serves as an officer of the Court that Represents a Child's Best Interest in the court system. A judge appoints a CASA volunteer to speak up for a child. These children are either abused, neglected or abandoned.

He was a retired Lieutenant Colonel, Air National Guard (35 years of service). He served as a Judge Advocate General (JAG). He was also admitted to the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Paul was also a former security commander, of the Air National Guard.

Paul chaired the Fresno Chamber of Commerce Legislation Committee.

He earned his B.A., from California State University, Fresno and his Juris Doctorate Law Degree, from the University of

funny, and resilient legacy will live on through us all.

Funeral services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge on July 12. Cemetery services were private.



the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento.

Paul served four terms of office on the board of directors of the Educational Employees Credit Union (EECU) which is headquartered in Fresno. The credit union is the 14th largest credit union in California with 4.5 billion in assets. EECU has over 351,000 members in central California.

After retirement as a Deputy D.A. Paul served as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) in the state prisons for the California Department of Corrections. He administrated over KEYHEA Hearings, PC 2602 regarding the authorization for involuntary administration of psychotropic medication with inmate consent. Paul retired from this position in 2020.

Paul was proceeded in death by his parents Sam and Mary (Stepanian) Hokokian. Paul leaves behind his wife Margaret (Melkonian) Hokokian. On July 11, 2023, they would have celebrated their 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He also leaves behind his son Alexander and his daughter-in-law Alara. Brother John and sister-in-law Vicki, nephew Christopher and niece Alina and husband Arlen Pilavian.

Graveside service were held on July 15, at Masis Ararat Armenian Cemetery, Fresno.

## Gregory Daniel Goshgarian

### Full of Love for Life

CANTON, Mass. — Gregory Daniel Goshgarian, of Canton, took his last breath on the evening of July 6, 2023. He was 42.

He was the son of Crosby Jr. and Flo (Bournazian) Goshgarian; brother of Kenny Goshgarian and his wife Caroline and Ali Coletta and her husband Nick; uncle of Jack Goshgarian and Cameron Coletta. He is also survived by his boyfriend, Rob Paliotta.

For decades, Greg suffered with countless serious detriments to his physical form, all while having an unwavering spirit to live a life that was full of love and on his own terms - but it was long before this that Greg taught us the importance of staying true to ourselves and proud of who we all are. He redefined one-of-a-kind with a special combination of love and humor that changed us all for the better, no matter how long you knew him.

He was fascinated by history and loved to travel, feeding off the love he saw and felt

in all cultures. He adored time with loved ones, especially his nephews. He took pride in making the ones he loved laugh, whether it be through inside jokes, quoting movies, or thoughtfully obscure and junky gifts. Greg had no idea how much of an impact he had on everyone he met because his spirit was so deeply ingrained in his everyday interactions. He was a naturally nocturnal person due to his desire and need to squeeze every ounce of life from each day.

Greg's time was cut short but he lived a life filled with love, strength, and determination. He adored his family, his boyfriend Rob, his incredible friends, and his exceptional medical team at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Greg radiated love to everyone he met and everyone he met loved him. This was his ability and his nature. Never to be forgotten, our hearts are forever broken by this void left in our world, but his loving,





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Buy Armenian Movement Becomes a Shopping Store and Event Center in Glendale

By Ani Duzdabanyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALE — At the corner of San Fernando Road and Brand Boulevard in Glendale, neighboring the historical Train Station, the crowd was patiently waiting for the red ribbon to be cut and the bread to be broken for the grand opening of the Buy Armenian storefront on June 22. But this wasn't just another store opening: it was an idea, a project and a goal that united Armenians in Armenia and diaspora three years ago during the war in Artsakh, one of the most horrendous times for the entire nation.

Lilit Odabashian along with her husband Nishan came up with a plan of buying only products and goods made in Armenia or by Armenians during that time and shared it on her social media. Soon, thousands of people in diaspora started to follow her lead, supporting local businesses who imported only Armenian products and therefore supporting the producers in Armenia



Lilit and Nishan Odabashian cutting the store ribbon (photo Arka Photography)

when all the sales were almost impossible in the midst of the pandemic and war.

Not much later, Lilit and Nishan decided to create an online platform where all producers, craftsmen and businesses could sell their creations to the customers in the US, and later, to the world. Three years later,

erating from our home and the warehouse where everything was in the boxes, I didn't have the flexibility to show them appropriately to the buyers. Now, in this beautiful store the main purpose is to display everything and market with full force," says Lilit.

after many festivals and pop-up events where the founders of Buy Armenian saw more clearly the demand of their services at the permanent address, the decision to open a store became inevitable.

"Armenian products are in much need of marketing. While not having a storefront and operating from our home and the warehouse where everything was in the boxes, I didn't have the flexibility to show them appropriately to the buyers. Now, in this beautiful store the main purpose is to display everything and market with full force," says Lilit.

Out of a thousand vendors from the website, 25 are introduced in this 1,800-square-foot showroom. Fifteen more are waiting to take their place on the shelves in the upcoming months.

Mane Tiles, which has produced hand-crafted ceramic tiles since 2001, has more than two hundred decorative plates, cheese boards and serving dishes at the store. With the limited market in Armenia, the company has always seen the need to explore other markets, explains Angela Manukyan, the managing director of Mane Tiles. "With the help of Buy Armenian we were able to create new contacts and export small but significant quantities of our products to the US. We are estimating fifteen to twenty percent of overall sales to be in this market especially after the opening of the store, since it's even more effective to physically see the products than buy them online."



Angela Manukyan of Mane Tiles (photo Arka Photography)

One of the first producers to join the movement was Artsakh Carpet. After the second war in Artsakh in 2020, the company had to relocate its operations entirely to Stepanakert and rely on exports in order to provide stable employment for its employees. Buy Armenian became that bridge to create a reliable customer base in the diaspora.

"As a result of the war, all the small producers were suffering, including Artsakh Carpet. Buy Armenian was that helping hand that reached out to each of us and became a solution for overcoming that difficult period of our life and continuing our work," says Sevak Khachatryan, founder and managing director of Artsakh Carpet.

As a result of the blockade which has already lasted over six months, Artsakh Carpet is concentrating on store operations in Yerevan. Because of the war, its overall production was cut by 50 percent and became even less during the last three years. Being part of Buy Armenian helped the company preserve production even with a smaller market presence.

The Buy Armenian store and event center will create opportunities for many small businesses to be featured in its monthly products section. For the food items, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) certification is still in effect along with the standards set by Lilit and Nishan for high quality and taste.

The store will also serve as a window to the huge US marketplace. According to Nishan Odabashian, last year alone twenty-five tons of food items from six Armenian producers were placed in Home Goods stores in California, Arizona, Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut, Georgia and Missouri. A new, even bigger shipment is on its way.



Storica Summer Six-Pack

**SUMMER SIPS TO ARMENIA**

**\$140 + FREE shipping!**

**(Limited Time Only)**



**GENATS! MAY YOU DELIGHT IN OUR WINES.**

For more information, please email us at [hello@storicawines.com](mailto:hello@storicawines.com)

To place an order, visit [storicawines.com](http://storicawines.com)

Follow us @storica\_wines | @drinkshofer





## COMMUNITY NEWS



THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR**  
**SPECTATOR**

*Reflecting ~ Connecting ~ Inspiring*

## MEDIA COVERAGE OF ARMENIA AND KARABAKH TODAY

Journalists' Panel and Q&A

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023**

**7:00 – 8:30 PM** (Free and open to the public)

With the participation of:  
**David Ignatius**  
*(Washington Post)*  
**Ken Dilanian**  
*(NBC News)*  
**Eric Hacopian**  
*(CivilNet)*



Joyce Cummings Center, Room 270

Tufts University, Medford, MA

*Complimentary parking. Light Reception to Follow.*

## 90TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2023**

Boston Burlington Marriott, Burlington, MA



**KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER**

**Robert  
Avetisyan**

*Representative of the  
Nagorno Karabakh  
Republic in the US*



**EMCEE**

**Sona  
Movsesian**

*Author, podcast co-host  
and personal assistant to  
Conan O'Brien*

### MUSICAL PERFORMANCE



*a cappella trio*



From left Teni Apelian, Anais Tekerian, Yeraz Markarian

Cocktail Reception | 6:30 pm  
Dinner and Program | 7:30 pm  
Donations are \$300 per person

To learn more about this two-day celebration, reserve your seat or donate: please visit [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com) or Hasmik at [mirrorads75@gmail.com](mailto:mirrorads75@gmail.com) (617) 924-4420 ext.103  
Sponsorship opportunities are available also at <http://givebutter.com/UMfFeB>







## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights/Daughters of Vartan Host Grand Convocation In Boston

CONVOCAION, from page 6  
gatherings, delegates from each organization discussed and voted on measures and appropriations that would affect the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and the people they serve in the year ahead. It was not all business for members of The Daughters of Vartan, who took mid-day on Friday to hold their annual luncheon, featuring an 80th birthday celebration for Grand Chairwoman Gloria Korkoian. The ladies of Arpie Otyag in Boston and Tzouig Otyag in Merrimack Valley presented Korkoian with a large white birthday cake and an even larger birthday card signed by everyone at the gathering. Among those was Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian, who stopped by briefly to offer birthday greetings and to thank his friend for her hard work and dedication in leading the Daughters of Vartan during the last two years.

The party, however, wasn't over yet. In her thank you remarks to her sisters in the Daughters of Vartan, Korkoian quoted the lyrics to the song *Unwritten* by Natasha Bedingfield. They began with the words, "I am unwritten. Can't read my mind. I am undefined. I'm just beginning. The pen's in my hand. The ending unplanned." Unknown to the Grand Chairwoman, as she was reciting the lyrics, someone found a recording of the song and began playing it when she finished. Within moments, the function room became a dance floor as the Daughters got up from their seats and moved to the beat of the music.

The dancing would continue that night following the afternoon meetings. Vocalist Elie Berberian from Montreal and his band serenaded the gathered. He then picked up the tempo, and within moments, the dance floor, bathed in colored lights, was filled from one end to the other. It would stay that way for the rest of the evening.

The final day of the Grand Convocation was one of ceremony and festivity. Following the morning meetings, The Knights of



A group of Knights and Daughters at the Armenian Genocide Memorial at Heritage Park in Boston - July 5<sup>th</sup> (David Medzorian photo)

Vartan were invited to join the Daughters and attend the Installation of the incoming Grand Chairwoman, Nancy Berberian Thompson, and her council. The afternoon session began with a presentation by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Liaison Gohar Palyan, who had traveled from Yerevan for the occasion. Using visuals, she updated the membership of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan on the progress of some of their ongoing humanitarian projects in Armenia. She also gave the audience a glimpse and answered questions about the new interactive [website](#).

The official activities concluded with installing the new Grand Council. That evening, the 2023 Grand Convocation ended

with a gala banquet in the Eden Vale Ballroom. Once the dignitaries at the head table were seated, Master of Ceremonies David Medzorian introduced vocalist Alla Petrosyan, who sang the American and Armenian national anthems and two ballads later in the program. Following the invocation by Former Commander Rev. Stephan Baljian of Arakadz Lodge, Grand Convocation Committee Chairman Nelson Stepanian introduced those at the head table. He then thanked the members who had helped plan this year's gathering.

The tributes began with Former Grand Chairwoman Gloria Korkoian introducing this year's Daughters of Vartan Woman of the Year, Eva Medzorian, the former Chairwoman of Arpie Otyag No. 9 in Boston. In her acceptance speech, read by her daughter, Ruth Medzorian Falletti of Arpie Otyag, Medzorian described herself as a lifelong activist whose appreciation of her Armenian heritage began very early. She recalled how, during a visit to Armenia shortly after the 1988 earthquake, she was impressed by the women she met and their bravery and desire to contribute more to their communities. These conversations inspired Eva Medzorian to form, with the help of two friends, the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). She also praised her sisters in the Daughters of Vartan. Finally, Medzorian sang one of her favorite ballads, *Hayasdan*, to a standing ovation.

David Medzorian then read an acceptance letter from the Knights of Vartan Man of the Year, Prof. Vartan Abdo, the founder and director of the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey. On Abdo's behalf, Arshakian presented the Man of the Year Award to Former Commander Hrant Gulian of Mamigonian Lodge No. 12 in Brooklyn, New York.

Former Mamigonian Lodge Commander Tigran Sahakyan was honored with the St. Vartan Mamigonian Knight of the Year Award. As he was not present to receive his honor, Sahakyan's award was accepted on his behalf by Mid-Atlantic Grand District Representative and Former Commander



Nakhgin Dirouhie Eva Medzorian of Arpie Otyag, The 2023 Daughters of Vartan Woman of the Year. (David Watts Jr. photo)

Dr. Edward Sanossian.

Gloria Korkoian introduced her successor, Grand Chairwoman Nancy Berberian Thompson, who was installed in a ceremony earlier that day. After acknowledging her Grand Council, the new Grand Chairwoman promised to continue working on behalf of

*continued on next page*



Avak Sbarabed Hunan Arshakian presenting the Knights of Vartan Man of the Year Award to Nakhgin Sbarabed Hrant Gulian of Mamigonian Lodge No. 12, Brooklyn, NY, on behalf of Professor Vartan Abdo, Founder, and Director of the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey, who could not attend. (David Watts Jr. photo)



Avak Dirouhie Nancy Berberian Thompson (David Watts Jr. photo)





COMMUNITY NEWS



The Daughters of Vartan attend the "Daughter's Luncheon on Friday, July 7th, in honor of Avak Dirouhie Gloria Korkoian's 80th Birthday. (David Medzorian photo)

from previous page

the Armenians of Artsakh. She also urged the Daughters of Vartan to support Armenian endeavors in the US, such as the Armenian-American Museum in Glendale, Armenian Studies Programs at various universities, and scholarship programs.

Arshakian also acknowledged his team.

He then described the plight of the Armenians now in Artsakh as a people hanging by a thread with no end date for their suffering. He said, "1915 is happening right now in Artsakh. It is a real ongoing genocide and pure ethnic cleansing." He urged all Knights and Daughters of Vartan to raise awareness of Armenians' plight in

Artsakh and contact their lawmakers and other persons of influence. He also encouraged the audience to support the work of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Call-to-Action Committee. He said that Armenians worldwide need to put aside political and religious differences and work together.

The Grand Convocation Banquet concluded with a prayer by Rev. Vasken Kouzouian of Ararat Lodge in Boston.

(David Medzorian is an asbed and a member of Ararat Lodge No. 1, Boston.)



Knights and Daughters of Vartan Liaison Gohar Palyan, who traveled from Yerevan to be here, gives a presentation on our ongoing projects in Armenia and shows us the new interactive Knights and Daughters of Vartan website - July 8th (David Medzorian photo)



Avak Sbarabed Hunan Arshakian presents the St. Vartan Mamigonian Knight of the Year Award to Mid-Atlantic Grand District Representative and Nakhgin Sbarabed Dr. Edward Sanossian on behalf of recipient Nakhgin Sbarabed Tigran Sahakyan, also of Mamigonian Lodge who could not attend. (David Watts Jr. photo)

## Armenians of Whitinsville Projects Receives State Grant

GRANT, from page 6

project received \$40,000 The grants were funded to Mass Humanities from the Mass Cultural Council and are part of Massachusetts' multi-billion dollar pandemic recovery spending plan.

The Armenians of Whitinsville project was founded during the pandemic and is dedicated to celebrating this early Armenian American community's post-genocidal survival after more than a century. Central to the project's vision is a website — [www.armeniansofwhitinsville.org](http://www.armeniansofwhitinsville.org) — which serves as a modern *houshamadyan* of Armenian-American life over the generations in a diasporan community founded at the end of the 19th century. Collections on the website capture the families, work, church and school memories that shaped the lives of many generations, with photographs, memory objects, recordings, documents, and recipes. Sharing these collections shows how Armenians became an integral part of this Massachusetts community, helping it to grow and learn with a spirit of service to others. Putting the website and its content together has been a grassroots effort run by volunteers. The AW project is looking forward to using the grant's funding to contract the consulting help needed to strengthen the website's infrastructure and expand the project's visibility through social media and events.

Research done by the project team has already surfaced some discoveries of historical significance, including a letter written by a missionary in Marash to a member of the town's founding family detailing her eyewitness testimony of the massacres there in the 1890's. At the time Arthur Fletcher Whitin received this letter from Clara Hamlin Lee in 1896, there were already approximately 100 Armenian men working at his textile machinery factory, and the earliest of the Armenian families were settling in town.

Volunteers for the project are working with families to help them put together their family histories and collections. These have even included translating and subtitling recordings done in the 1970's/1980's to broaden the reach of these genocide survivors' life experiences to viewers unfamiliar with their native Western Armenian dialect. The project's founders believe that other concentrated ethnic communities, especially those who emigrated because of trauma, will learn from this project the importance of preserving their histories for generations to come.

The Armenians of Whitinsville project is also currently completing its work on a 2022 Expanding Massachusetts Stories grant from Mass Humanities to conduct new oral history recordings among Armenians with Whitinsville roots. That work, which complements the historical recordings the project has translated and posted, has been done with guidance from the University of Southern California Institute for Armenian Studies.

Anyone with an interest in the Armenian diaspora or in post-genocidal survival can learn by exploring the collections on the website. The project invites anyone with Armenian ancestors who can trace their American journey to Whitinsville to reach out to the team about building their own collection at [info@armeniansofwhitinsville.org](mailto:info@armeniansofwhitinsville.org).

Tekeyan Cultural Association

# SPONSOR A TEACHER

in Armenia and five villages in Artsakh

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

2023

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



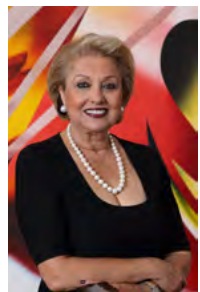
# Arts & Culture

## Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian Appointed Cultural Advisor Of Embassy of Armenia to US

WASHINGTON — The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the USA informs that, by the order of Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the USA Lilit Makunts, Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian has been appointed the Cultural Advisor of the Embassy of Armenia.

Hovanessian is a collector, curator, fundraiser, benefactor, humanitarian and a prominent civic leader. When one thinks of Hovanessian, art and music come to mind.

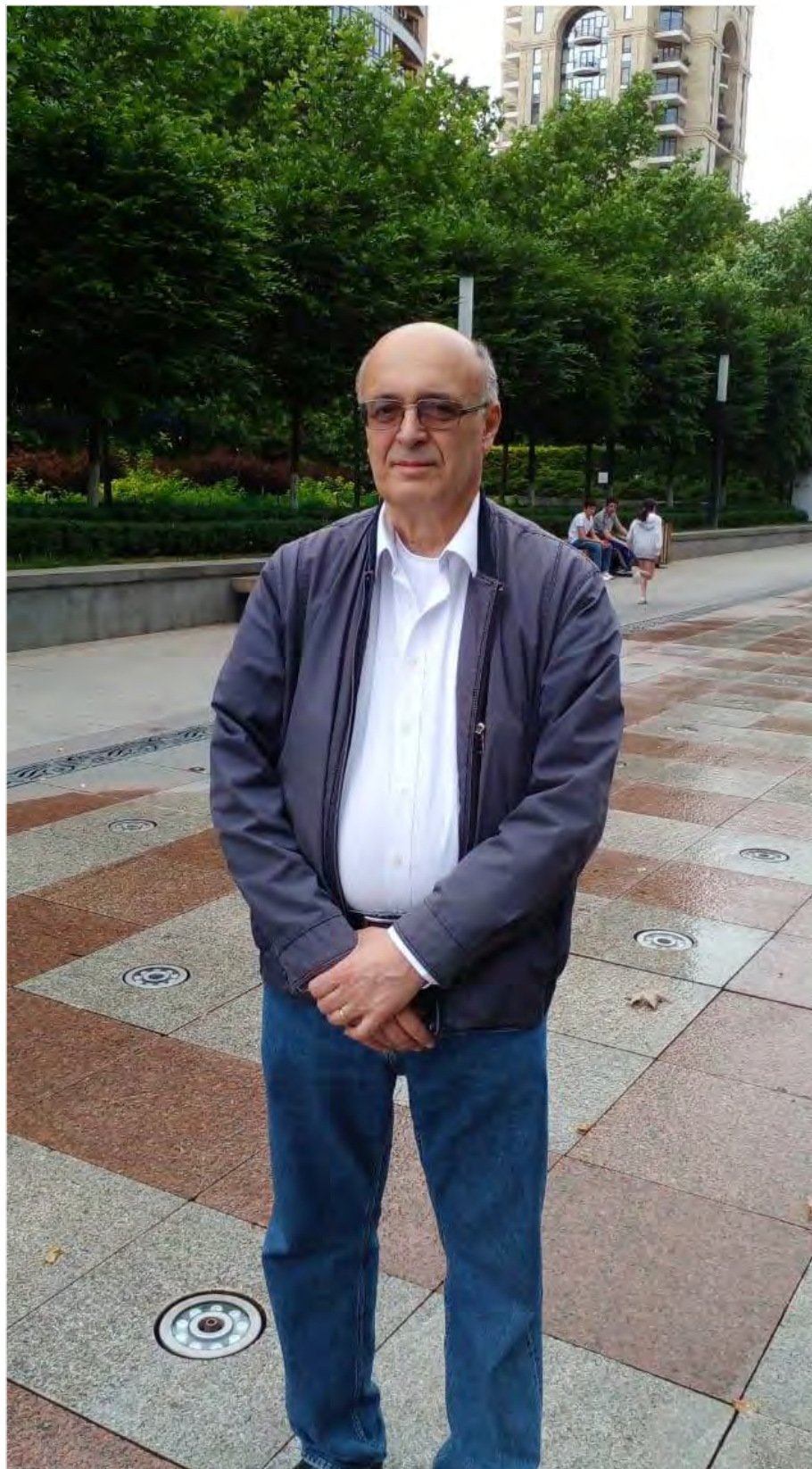
Since 1995, Hovanessian has fostered the careers of Armenian artists through art fairs, private viewings and in galleries on par with the standards of the global markets.



Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian

Hovanessian grew up in Beirut, Lebanon and attended the Armenian Evangelical College (high school) and the Beirut College for Women. In 1965, she received a B.A. degree in Management and Business from Louis University in Chicago. She studied contemporary art at the Art Institute of Chicago and Sotheby's Educational Institute in New York. She is the former director of Vicki Hovanessian Contemporary Art.

Hovanessian has curated award-winning exhibitions and received recognitions in her career, including "Windows to Armenia: Armenian Art," 1998, Chicago, Illinois; "Beyond Icons," 2001, Yerevan State Museum, Armenia; "Beyond Icons: Contemporary Art in Armenia," 2003, Northwest Indiana Art Center; "Art @ the Cathedral: Giving Form to Faith," 2008, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, NY; "Optimizm: Armenian New Art," 2010, Armenia; "Constitution & Art," 2011, Armenia; "Crosses + Icons: Celebrating Spirituality," 2011, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, NY; "Legacy of Ten Armenian Artists," 2012, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, NY; "Fractured History," 2012, Bergen Community College, NJ; "Art as Salute to Excellence," 2012, Southern Connecticut State University, CT; "25 Years, 25 Artists," 2015, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, NY; "Artist Avedis Baghsarian," 2018, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, NY; Illinois State Democratic Ethnic Council Heritage Award, 1989; US Congressional Record by Congressman Adam Visclowsky, 1991, 1997; Collector's Forum of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Chairman 1994 – 1997; Diaspora Cultural Advisor to Armen Amirian, Minister of Culture of Armenia, 2017; "ARMENIA" exhibit curated by Dr. Helen Evans, 2018.



## Gregorio Belaunde French-Peruvian and a Little Bit Armenian

YEREVAN — Gregorio Belaunde, a French and Peruvian national born in 1961 in Paris, is an Independent International Risk Management Consultant. He graduated with a degree in law in France (1979-1982) at Université Paris 2. He holds a master's degree in international and European law from Université Paris 2 (1983), and an additional Post-Graduate degree (DEA) in Private International Law and International Trade and Finance Law, from Université Paris 1 (1984). Then he also graduated in law in Peru. He has had more than 20 years of experience in banking with the Credit Lyonnais Group in Hong Kong. Returning to Peru end 2005 he first was the Head of the Credit Risk Supervision Department in the SBS, the Peruvian financial and insurance regulator. Between 2012 and 2016, he was the director of the Risk Management Directorate in the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Peru. In early 2017, he began a new career as international consultant, moving first to Switzerland, and then in February 2022, he established his base in Yerevan, where he continues the same work.

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

**Gregorio, in this conversation I would like to discuss on your Armenian heritage and your activities in Armenia.**

While I was based in Geneva, I was working for around five institutions including one part of the UN. But I was mainly working for two multilateral development banks, and my contracts rapidly started to concern mainly Armenia on one hand (what is funny: when it began my Armenian background was not even known, I just applied for an opportunity and I was chosen due to my overall professional background), and then the work continued.

Whether in Armenia, where more of my activity takes place (and also more recently in Georgia), or in West Africa, I work mainly providing technical assistance in a

continued on next page

## Creative Resistance: A Literary Reading In Paintings, Poetry, Collage, and Fiction

BOSTON — On Sunday, July 23 at 4 p.m., the Midway Gallery presents poet Arthur Kayzakian and novelist Nancy Agabian as they read from their new books that demonstrate creativity as a form of personal transformation and political resistance. A conversation and book signing will follow with books by both authors available for sale. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

In Kayzakian's *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 is the winner of the 2021 Black Lawrence Immigrant Writing Series award for his collection, *The Book of Redacted Paintings*, which was also selected as a finalist for the 2021 Philip Levine Prize for Poetry. He is also the winner of the Finishing Line Press Open Chapbook Competition for his chapbook, *My Burning City*. He has been a finalist for the Locked Horn Press Chapbook Prize, Two Sylvias Press Chapbook Prize, the C.D. Wright Prize, and the Black River Chapbook Competition. He is a contributing editor at *Poetry International* and a recipient of the Minas Savvas Fellowship. His work has appeared in or is forthcoming from several publications, including *Taos Journal of International Poetry & Art*, *COUNTERCLOCK*, *Chicago Review*, *Nat. Brut*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Witness Magazine*, and *Prairie Schooner*. <https://www.artkay.org/>

In Agabian's *The Fear of Large and Small Nations*, feminist writer and teacher Natalee—aka Na—seeks to reclaim her cultural roots in Armenia only to be confronted with the many contradictions of being a diasporan. When she falls for a charismatic younger man and returns with him to New York City, Na becomes trapped in an abusive web of codependency, bound by intergenerational trauma and political ideals. Written in short stories collaged with intimate journal entries and blog posts, the fragmented narrative reveals what is lost in the tightrope passage between cultures ravaged by violence and colonialism—and what is gained when Na seizes control of her story, pulsating in its many shades and realities, daring to be witnessed.

Nancy Agabian's previous books include *Me as her again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter* (aunt lute books), a memoir honored as a Lambda Literary Award finalist for see CREATIVITY, page 17





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

from previous page

rather little-known field of public financial management, managing risks which can derail the state budgets. I had already done this in Peru. I had a consulting contract under a system first created with the help of the United Nations Development Project and aimed at attracting more talent into the State, which became part of the recruiting system for high level cadres. So, I continued in the same fields when my wife and I had to return to Europe for family reasons, and we just moved to Armenia, when I continue with the same activities for the two same multilateral development banks, including trips to West Africa.

#### What interests do Latin American states have in Armenia?

Two countries in Latin America have a sizeable Armenian community compared to their overall population: Argentina, from where a well-known ethnic Armenian hails (Karas Wines is a brand developed by his group) and Uruguay, the first country in the World to explicitly recognize the Armenian Genocide. Those two countries have a special bond with Armenia, even if the Armenians there, are mainly heirs to the survivors of the Genocide, so they come mainly from regions from the former Western Armenia and from what is now Syria. Brazil also has a sizeable ethnic Armenian minority for the same reasons. The interest Latin American countries have, or can have, more than trade per se, is reciprocal tourism, together with exchanges in the culinary field, Armenia being a fantastic place in terms of cuisine, like several countries in Latin America, notably Peru and Mexico. And you may know that Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil have excellent beef. Latin American countries are essentially Christian and for them to discover the first Christian nation in history can be extremely interesting, apart from visiting Jerusalem and nearby places. Another factor is that other countries of Latin America also have, like Armenia, very old civilizations, and peoples who continue to keep alive those old traditions: it is notably the case of Peru, Bolivia and Mexico. There is this increasing sense that having indigenous peoples who have survived in spite of very disruptive invasions is something we have in common.

For example, I had the opportunity to meet there a famous football coach called Sergio Markarian, quite popular in Peru, and his family who had come from Uruguay to visit him; his son was like me very fond of history. The funny thing is that sometimes I used the case of this coach to explain to Peruvian people, what Armenia is and who Armenians are, because the ignorance in Peru about the subject is almost absolute. I know there are also Armenians in Venezuela, the country of this military adventurer De Nogales, who fought in the Ottoman side, but was shocked by the treatment of the Armenians by the Turks and it is in his memoirs, where he quotes a famous Ottoman official saying that all Armenians had to be annihilated. I noticed that many Venezuelan journalists mention the Genocide as an obvious thing. And in Chile there are also some. And of course, in Mexico, even if not as much as in the US and Canada. In Bolivia and in Paraguay there certainly are some, because those 2 countries have recognized the Genocide.

#### Your second surname is Matossian. For many Diaspora Armenians their ancestors' history is lost. What can you tell us about the Armenian side of your family?

Exactly, in Peru, as in all Spanish-speaking countries we keep by law the maternal surname, so in Peru, there are eight Belaunde Matossians (four boys, four girls), of whom I am the eldest. In our case, our sense of Armenian inheritance was not lost at all. Our Armenian maternal grandfather, Nichan Matossian, came to visit us in Peru with our French grandmother when I was 4 years old, and I began asking lots of questions from my mother about *Papik*, who spoke excellent French with a slight accent. And my mother told me her father's family history. That my grandfather came from a city called Aleppo, that he lived in a country called Turkey with another religion which had kings like France before, but called Sultans, who were also emperors (like the Incas) because they had conquered many lands and their empire was called Ottoman. That long ago there were good Sultans who were friendly to Christians, but after some time they became very bad, and one day they decided to kill all the Armenians. His father, Ohanes, had been killed in front of all the family with other Armenians, and the rest of the family survived because after that, the "bon Gouverneur" (the good Vali) who was furious about those killings told the Armenians of the city, you must escape or go in hiding because those who now rule the Empire want to kill all the

Armenians. Later on, I discovered that the name of that Vali was Mehmet Celal Bey, that he had saved many Armenians in two cities. It was the first time that I also heard the word "million." My *Papik*, born in 1897 came back to Peru again for another long stay when I was a teenager, and he passed away in 1978; he didn't like to speak about the Genocide, so it was always my mother, H el ene, who did the talking on the subject. He used to say that "we Armenians are the smartest people of the world but we are always divided by politics." I also learnt that one of his brothers, Mihran, had died of typhus in a concentration camp where we tried to give food to Armenians, and that another one, Stepan, survived by a miracle after an almost deadly beating, and escaped execution thanks to a legal trick used by that Vali. I have seen photos of his mother Takouhi, and of his brother Levon, and of three of his sisters, one of them was named Arshaluys.

I also learnt a few years ago a well-guarded family secret, that even her daughters (my mother, who died young in 1984, had two younger sisters, Astrig and Anik, whom I continue to see frequently in France) learned from his Armenian friends and an Armenian priest sometime after his passing, that he actually survived by miracle a mass-shooting, because one night he was captured when he was with friends he was trying to help evade certain death in Aleppo concentration camps. He was fully covered by corpses and by their blood and he didn't move an inch. The priest told my aunties that he could not talk about that without tears. I know that people with such experiences often have survivor's guilt.

My *Papik* had an uncle in Diyarbakir, Sarkis (Ohanes' brother), but nobody knew what that happened to him and his family.

In France, as a student, I discovered thanks to one of my aunties other Armenians, more about Armenian culture (my mother had some dishes unknown in Peru, a beautiful icon with the Virgin and the Child, and always wanted incense in her room), the Armenian mass which I found much more beautiful than Western mass. Auntie Anik had even learnt some Western Armenian in University in France. The language was not transmitted in the family because my grandfather who had survived the Genocide, but only went to France around 1930 due to a *fatwa* (he was member of a group defending Christian rights in Syria and he was friendly to the French authorities), had to travel a lot while working in Guadeloupe (French Caribbean), where he married my grandmother (who was never able to learn another language) and he spoke excellent French himself. He actually was also fluent in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and German; and he also spoke English while young, he was preparing to study International Relations in Europe when the War broke out.

I also discovered members of another branch of the family who had migrated to Egypt in the 1880s, and then left because of Nasser. They all fondly remembered my mother. One of them was an old lady married to a Swiss diplomat, who told me a lot about the family history (hailing from Tokat, originally). A daughter of one of her brothers who lived in Spain, who is my age, also ended up marrying a Peruvian, like my mother. Kind of a funny coincidence.

#### The first Armenians were established in Peru already in 1699. Do you know other Peruvians with Armenian roots?

Incredibly enough, I would like to know more about them! In Peru, there are very few people of Armenian extraction. A Peruvian diplomat, when I asked him why Peru did not recognize the Genocide like other countries of the region, told me half-joking, that the Belaunde Matossian brothers and sisters like me were certainly half of the whole community and that Turkey's soap operas were too popular in the country. But actually, in the French-Peruvian school, I had a classmate whose father was Armenian, a very old man (who set up a reputed clothing business in Lima, and had also married a younger French lady), had escaped as an infant with his father, Gomidas, and the family, of being killed in Smyrna, thanks to the help of Greek friends. He had lived in France where he had a similar business, for a number of years and left for Peru, following the advice of a Peruvian diplomat he had as a customer in Paris. My friend has never come to Armenia yet, we remain in close contact, and he remembers some Armenian words from his father. He has an older sister whom I know as well. We were both interviewed by a Peruvian magazine for the 100th anniversary of the Genocide; I managed to get that magazine editor-in-chief interested in the subject, that he did not know at all about. My son also has a Peruvian friend and former classmate, with a French-Armenian mother; but her mother didn't

like to speak about that subject.

I easily say, either in France or in Peru, that I'm fully both, and that I also have my Armenian identity that I am proud of. And this love for Armenia came through my French-Armenian mother. And my three children have come to visit Armenia already and I have transmitted our Armenian family memory to them. They know that my name, Gregorio, comes from my mother wanting to have her first son named after Gregory the Illuminator, so that's why my children have all visited Khor Virap as a priority.

#### Was it your choice to begin to work at your mother's ancestor's country?

Totally. Actually, what happened was that one of the multilateral development entities wanted me to come more often to Armenia (I had come many times since November 2017), and for longer stays, and I jumped on the chance to offer to do better than that: to come to live here, and that I could do my other work from Armenia as well.

I had already been thinking for some time of coming to Armenia when that opportunity appeared, especially after the shock caused by the defeat in the 44-Day War. I felt the country was more in danger than ever, and that it was time to do something and come. You know, even small things like making my small contribution to Armenia's economy through taxes and spending is important to me. I also hope that other people will follow that example. It took some time to materialize, to organize the contract, but also to complete the residence formalities here in Armenia, first for me and then for my wife, who agreed to come with me here (she is French, with no Armenian roots, but she knew mine well, including having known my mother when she was still my fianc ee, and knowing my aunties, as well as my friend in Lima when we lived there) and also the exit formalities in Switzerland, where it is better to settle everything straight before leaving. And well, my wife is used to living in other countries as well. She has enjoyed living in Hong Kong, Peru and Switzerland.

#### How do you describe living in 2020s in Armenia?

When I was coming often here before Covid, the atmosphere was different, as the first large war had been won, there was no sense of danger. Now you feel that sense of danger, but also outrage, every time there is something happening at the border, and it was especially strong during the September 2022 aggression. I was seeing the sadness in the faces of many women and asking myself: how many of them have fathers, boyfriends, brothers, husbands at the dangerous borders? And being an ethnic Armenian while being here, knowing what your own family went through, makes one feel that danger very strongly. While feeling the outrage at the almost universal cynical "both-sideism" even more strongly.

At the same time, at least here in Yerevan, one feels the need to live intensely when it is possible. People go out as much as in Latino countries. And what is amazing is the kindness of the people, I have travelled to many countries, you feel it more than in any other places. The sense of personal safety is also impressive for one used to dangerous cities like Lima or Paris; even Geneva is not that safe, actually; I had not felt that since my times of travelling often to Singapore for work.

The new thing is that since February 2022, one sees much more Russians, but also more Americans. And also, more people from India which reminds me of Hong Kong. I have seen places where you can find plenty of tables with Russians, others with Americans, and all this coexists without problems. That leaves me wondering what a fantastic role Armenia could play in the international arena if only there were not two countries bent on annihilating Armenia and Armenians.

Well of course, since February 2022, rents and many prices have skyrocketed, and we feel the difference. But at least for prices this is happening in most countries. Trouble is that this can increase poverty, as what I have seen sometimes in the countryside. I already know cases of people who could not keep the places they were living in. At least when we arrived it was a flat rented by no one for quite some time; I wouldn't have liked to be the cause of someone Armenian losing his place.

And there are so many small things that remind us of our life in Peru that one could write a full article about that.

The difference is not speaking the language but some weeks ago, we at last found a teacher who can adapt to our rather chaotic timetable, so there are now things that we can say, understand and read (and even write): "hima, sovorum enk Hayeren" (now we are learning Armenian), and we are very happy about that!





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



## Manti Made Easy

Manti or mante is a traditional Armenian dish; the closest Lebanese or Syrian equivalent to manti is shish barak, yet they are definitely not the same. Shish barak are meat-stuffed dumplings cooked in a yogurt-based sauce.

“Manti is a type of dumpling popular in most cuisines of the Central Asia, West Asia, South Caucasus, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. Manti is also popular among Chinese Muslims, and it is consumed throughout post-Soviet countries, where the dish spread from the Central Asian republics. The dumplings typically consist of a spiced meat mixture, usually lamb or ground beef, wrapped in a thin dough sheet which is then boiled or steamed. The size and shape of manti vary significantly depending on geographic location.”\*

“According to an Armenian researcher, manti first reached Cilician Armenia as a result of the cultural interaction between Armenians and Mongols during their alliance in or around the 13th century. Migrating Turkic-speaking peoples brought the dumpling with them to Anatolia, where it evolved into the Turkish manti. However, some researchers do not discount the possibility that manti may have originated in the Middle East and spread eastward to China and Korea through the Silk Road.”

Andrew Janjigian, a freelance journalist, recipe developer, and alum of America’s Test Kitchen and Cook’s Illustrated based in Cambridge, Mass., grew up eating manti with his family every Christmas Eve. He says, “Up until a few years ago, eating manti was a Christmas Eve ritual for my extended Armenian family. For weeks before the holiday, the women in the family would gather together on weekends at my Aunt Esther’s house to make the tiny dumplings, which they’d then freeze. Hours and hours (and hours) of work went into making enough manti to feed a few dozen people a meal they’d been looking forward to eating all year long. And then it would be over, and we’d all have to wait another year.”\*\*

“Manti are common to many Central and West Asian cuisines, small parcels of spiced ground lamb or beef surrounded by thin wheat dough wrappers that are typically steamed or boiled. However, Armenian manti, sometimes called ‘sini manti,’ are a little different. The diminutive, canoe-shaped, and open-faced dumpling are baked until crisp instead, and are served in a tomato-infused meat broth, finished with a dollop of yogurt, minced garlic, and a sprinkling of Aleppo pepper and sumac powder. To me, this the ultimate manti, since the combination of flavors and textures is unparalleled: crunchy-crisp dumplings, their corners softened gently by the hot, aromatic broth, paired with the cool, tart yogurt, all of it brightened by lightly spicy, fruity, and tart garnishes,” he adds.

As writer Maggie Schmitt said in 2009, “So for the moment let us put aside

whether manti came thundering across the Asian steppes with Genghis and Timur, or landed on Ararat with Noah and family. They were once served in neighboring houses, Turkish, Armenian, and Kurdish, in all the cities and towns of Eastern Anatolia. The same sheets of pasta are rolled out now on both sides of that hostile border, as well as in homes in Aleppo, Beirut, Boston, Los Angeles. They are testimony to a long legacy of cultural entanglements, mirror of a diverse population, and work of a millennium of mothers’ attentions to what is good and fine. Manti, then, for the peacemakers: in hopes that they might be as honest, as flexible and as persistent as this dish.”\*\*\*

YepRecipes features a variety of dishes from around the world, and though you may find some classic and traditional dishes, they also like to put a twist on some of those recipes to make them a little healthier. And although not entirely omitted, they do try to limit ingredients such as refined sugars and processed foods. These days you can easily find these traditional dumplings in every Armenian or Middle Eastern market or deli, but here’s a short-cut recipe from YepRecipes that uses wonton wrappers:

### INGREDIENTS:

#### Filling:

- 1 egg yolk
- 6 oz. ground beef
- 1 teaspoon fresh chopped parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion, grated and squeezed dry

#### Dumpling:

- 12 wonton wrappers
- 1 egg white
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1/3 cup beef broth
- Olive oil spray

#### Paprika Sauce:

- 1/8 cup red peppers, diced
- 1/8 cup yellow peppers, diced
- 1/8 cup yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon Hungarian paprika
- 1 teaspoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon flour
- 1/2 cups chicken broth

#### Yogurt Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt
- 1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh chopped parsley

### PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Spray an 8-inch oven proof skillet or baking dish with olive oil spray and set aside.

In a small bowl combine all the filling ingredients and mix well.

Remove the wonton wrappers from the package and cut each into quarters. Keep covered with a dry towel with a damp towel over the dry towel to prevent them from drying out.

Combine the egg white with the water and set to the side. Line your work space with wax paper for easy clean up.

Working with a few pieces at a time brush each with egg wash. Place a tiny dollop (about 1/4 teaspoon) of the meat mixture in the center of each wonton wrapper. Seal each of the sides by pinching them together. The top will gape open revealing a little of the meat filling. Place the dumpling into the baking dish. Repeat until you run out of filling. Space the dumplings close together and fill the dish completely in a circular pattern.

Place the pan in the oven and cook for 12 minutes.

In the meantime start the paprika sauce: Sauté the onions and peppers in a small pan over medium-high heat for 2 minutes, add the garlic and sauté for 2 more minutes. Add the paprika and cook, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Turn down heat if needed. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Add the chicken broth and stir together. Simmer for about 20 minutes. Taste and season if needed.

Once dumplings have cooked for the 12 minutes remove pan from oven and turn it up to 400°F. Carefully add the beef broth to the pan. Spray the tops of the dumplings with olive oil spray and bake for about 15 minutes.

In the meantime mix all the ingredients for the yogurt sauce in a small bowl. When the dumplings come out, the liquid should be absorbed and the tops of the dough should be crisp. If not flash them under the broiler until they are crisp. Top with paprika sauce and yogurt sauce, and serve.

For this recipe, go to: <https://www.yeprecipes.com/img-manti-dumplings-546.htm>

A diverse collection of taste tested recipes using fresh foods.

For recipes, see: <https://www.yeprecipes.com/>

For Middle Eastern recipes, see: [https://www.yeprecipes.com/search2.php?search\\_keywords=middle+eastern&x=0&y=](https://www.yeprecipes.com/search2.php?search_keywords=middle+eastern&x=0&y=)





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## MAINE

**JULY 30** — 3rd Annual Armenian Picnic, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Searsport Shores Ocean Campground, Rt 1, Searsport Maine, featuring Leo Derderian & Friends. Eat Dance Laugh Play all on cool Penobscot Bay. free admission. For more information: [makersguildmaine.org](http://makersguildmaine.org)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**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 Couyoumjan 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.

**JULY 31** — Saint James Armenian Church 23rd Annual Harold Partamian Memorial Golf Tournament, on Monday, Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Hosted by the St. James Men's Club, Rain or Shine/ Scramble Format/ Raffle, Silent Auction. Following the tournament-banquet dinner at Oakley Country Club. \$195.00 per player by July 17th/ \$40.00 dinner only. For full details and online registration ,please visit [www.stjameswatertown.org/golf](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/golf). Various sponsorships are available .Contact Robert Berberian, chairman of Men's Club, 339-293-2514.

**AUGUST 6** — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church will hold its annual picnic, featuring music by Jason Naroian Ensemble. Sunday, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Admission \$1. Shish kebob, losh kabob, chicken kabob, khyema, rice pilaf, salad, pastries, beverages. 50/50 raffle. Children's activities. Please bring your own lawn chair but no alcohol. In the event of rain, picnic will be held in the Kazanjian Memorial Ballroom. Church is located at 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford. [www.stsvartanantz.com](http://www.stsvartanantz.com).

**AUGUST 13** — Sunday, 7:30pm, **UNDER THE AUGUST MOON.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Featuring Black Sea Salsa Ensemble. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Refreshments. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**AUGUST 16** — Wednesday, 4pm , **TEA & TRANQUILITY.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Marvel

at Abstract Sculpture. Write a Wish on a Ribbon for The Wishing Tree. Refreshments. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 9** — Saturday, at 11am, **LET'S MEET AT THE PARK! FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BOSTON & BEYOND.** Meet & Greet. Eat & Enjoy. Welcome at 11am. Walk the Labyrinth. Write a Wish on a ribbon for The Wishing Tree. To receive the e-invite, please email first and last name of the student(s), college each attending, year graduating and email to [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org). We will ask they invite their roommate(s) to join us, too.

**SEPTEMBER 29** — Save the date! City of Smile-USA will host "A Tribute to Coco Chanel Who Loved Pearls." Friday, 11.30 a.m., Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Pearl jewelry raffle fundraiser and shopping the world's largest collection of pearl jewelry designs at incredible direct-from-producer savings. City of Smile-USA is dedicated to treating the children of Armenia who have cancer.

**OCTOBER 14** — The Armenian Friends of America, Inc., presents Hye Kef 5, a five-hour dance featuring Harry Bedrossian, John Berberian, Leon Janikian, Bob Raphaelian and Jason Naroian. Saturday, 6.30 p.m. to midnight, The Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill. AFA rooms available at Double Tree by Hildong, Andover. Ask for AFA room rates. Ticket prices \$50 for the dance and mezza platters. Coffee and dessert to follow. Cash bar. Tables of 8, \$385. Advance tickets only. No tickets will be sold at the door. Ticket sales final. Online at [armenianfriendsofamerica.org](http://armenianfriendsofamerica.org) or call Lu Sirmaian 978-314-1956 or Mary Ann Janjigian 603-770-3375. Proceeds to benefit The Armenian Churches of Merrimack Valley.

**OCTOBER 27-28** — Mark your calendars. Celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator with two spectacular events. First, a panel discussion on Friday, October 27, with renowned journalists including David Ignatius from the Washington Post, Ken Dilanian from NBC News, and Eric Hacoopian from CivilNet, at Tufts University. Second, a spectacular gala benefit on Saturday, October 28. The gala, at the Burlington Marriott, will be MC-ed by the irrepressible Sona Movsesian, who calls herself the Worst Assistant in the World, in her capacity as assistant to the one and only Conan O'Brien, and feature as keynote Speaker Artsakh's Representative to the US Robert Avetisyan.

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 4** — **SAVE THE DATE! 12 Vocations: The Ongoing Promise of St. Nersess Seminary.** Help us celebrate the vocations of the next 12 priests and lay ministers who studied at St. Nersess and St. Vladimir's Seminaries. Details, invitations, and booklet donations can be found on [www.stnerssess.edu](http://www.stnerssess.edu).

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.

## New Children's Book Celebrates *Vardavar*, a Journey of Water, Forgiveness and Love

Author Steve Boyadzhyan invites children and families to take part in an adventure with his latest children's book, *Sienna and Jace Celebrate Vardavar*. The book came out this month.

This heartwarming tale not only captivates young readers with its vibrant sto-

rytelling but also delves into the deeper meaning behind the joyous Armenian holiday.

This book showcases the richness of Armenian culture, immersing readers in its vibrant traditions and captivating folklore. As Sienna and Jace discover the transfor-

mative power of water and the value of family bonds, they inspire readers of all backgrounds to embrace unity and celebrate life's simplest yet most profound moments.

*Sienna and Jace Celebrate Vardavar* takes readers on a magical journey through the bustling streets of Armenia as the siblings embark on an unforgettable experience. Against the backdrop of *Vardavar*'s exuberant water fights and festive celebrations, Sienna and Jace encounter Astghik, the Armenian Goddess of water, love and beauty. Under her gentle guidance, they begin to unravel the significance of *Vardavar* – a time for renewal, connection, and spreading love.

This latest release is the seventh book in the *Growing Up Proud* series by Boyadzhyan. The series combines essential childhood themes with a focus on Armenian culture and traditions. Previous titles, such as *Jace The Armenian Boy Who Loves Healthy Habits* and *Sienna The Armenian Girl's World Adventures*, have resonated with families worldwide, fostering a sense of pride and understanding of Armenian heritage.

To purchase *Sienna and Jace Celebrate Vardavar* by Steve Boyadzhyan and learn more about the author, visit [Amazon.com/author/steveboy](http://Amazon.com/author/steveboy).

Follow Sienna and Jace's adventures on Instagram at [sienna.and.jace.books](https://www.instagram.com/sienna.and.jace.books).



### Creative Resistance: A Literary Reading in Paintings, Poetry, Collage, and Fiction

CREATIVITY, from page 14

LGBT Nonfiction and shortlisted for a William Saroyan International Writing Prize, and *Princess Freak* (Beyond Baroque Books), a collection of poetry and performance art texts. In 2021 she was awarded Lambda Literary Foundation's Jeanne Córdova Prize for Lesbian/Queer Nonfiction. *The Fear of Large and Small Nations*, a finalist for the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, is her first novel. [nancyagabian.com](http://nancyagabian.com).

For more information, visit the Midway Gallery website: <http://www.midway-gallery.org/> The gallery is located within the Midway Artists Studio Building in the Boston Seaport, 15 Channel Center Street, Boston, MA 02210. Street parking is free on Sundays.



## COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR  
SPECTATOR**  
SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

## EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

## MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

## ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

## 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.

# We Are Guilty Collectively:

## If We Do Not Act Now for Artsakh, Then When?

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian C.M.

Special to the Mirror-Spectator/Abaka

I can hardly imagine that there is today a single conscious Armenian, aware of the desperation of the blockaded population of Artsakh, who does not develop a profound feeling of helplessness and guilt.

Let us realize that while facing such a calamity, for all practical purposes, we are sitting idle and are not participants in any meaningful shape or form in any consequential activity of help to some 120,000 of our brothers and sisters, children, adults, sick or elderly, subjected to an open and obvious act of genocide in their ancestral homeland.

The so-called civilized world, from East to West, is playing a game of ineffective and half-hearted meetings, declarations, resolutions, and appeals, all directed to an unrepentant Azerbaijan and its leader Ilham Aliyev who openly and blatantly makes a joke of all such manifestations.

Aliyev is pursuing an obvious and vengefully sadistic strategy, consisting of subjecting an entire population to a slow process of strangulation, until it inevitably gives up and accepts defeat, followed by a historically demonstrated and predictable process of physical ethnic elimination.

Dear fellow Armenians across the world, including our motherland Armenia, facing this tragedy that a precious part of our nation is living through, let us have the courage to first ask ourselves, including the Armenian authorities, all organizations, and individuals of the diaspora across the globe, the following inevitable question, and then equally have the courage to answer honestly: Have we so far pulled together all our means and forces together, to rush to the rescue of our nation?

The resounding answer to this unforgiving question, is an embarrassingly negative and very clear NO.

To emphasize further this embarrassing answer, let me ask further, today, as we have some eight million or more Armenians comfortably living across the world, in a resourceful diaspora, and a fully independent motherland Armenia, which itself is a full-fledged member of the United Nations organization, as we allow ourselves to remain in this sinful insensitive lethargy, how dare we blame the so called "civilized world" back in 1915, for not having lifted a finger to help our ancestors and save them from the genocidal hands of these same Turkish murderous hangmen?

Fellow Armenians, we need urgently and without delay, collectively to stand up and be counted for effective and forceful actions that we must be taking without delay, to come to the rescue of our Artsakhtsi population.

Never mind those endless "top level meetings," involving Nikol Pashinyan, Aliyev, Charles Michel or whoever, which do not provide any medicine or food to the sick and starving Artsakhtsis. We just learned that after the last such inconclu-

sive meeting in Brussels on July 15, there is again a sheepish next one being planned in the fall in Grenada.

This amounts simply to an international shameless abuse of credibility to which Armenians are continuing to be subjected!

Facing this national genocidal calamity, we in the diaspora must come up with an ad hoc pan-Armenian (*hamahaygagan*) action mechanism led by all historically recognized major national organizations, but in which any and all legally structured organizations will be welcome to participate.

This is a challenge where facing a national calamity we can show our national maturity by putting aside all internal political, denominational, or other differences. All our church structures, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, all political and philanthropic organizations, the Armenian Assembly and like organizations must be made to feel part of this action group, which may simply be called "The International Pan-Armenian Save Artsakh Movement."

Of course, we recognize, and I personally am fully aware of, the enormous logistic difficulties that such an action will face. The challenge is to find the way to overcome and circumvent such difficulties in view of the enormity of the calamity.

The main but not sole practical purpose of such a movement ought to be to generate such a strong international informational wave in all major countries where the diaspora has a foothold, that the Azerbaijani genocidal process in Artsakh becomes part of the daily news reports, just at par with the news of the Ukrainian war, and certainly to eradicate the continuing Azerbaijani-generated language of qualifying the Artsakhtsis as the culprit "separatists in Azerbaijan."

With equal strength and emphasis, the International Pan-Armenian Save Artsakh Movement must demand of our own Armenia's authorities to immediately engage in an urgent and intense international states level action in favor of the Artsakhtsis, starting with the insistent and repeated request of the UN Security Council to intervene, if need be with the help of an international military or police force, to open immediately the Lachin (Berdzor) corridor.

Dear fellow Armenians, and especially leaders of our identifiable major Armenian diasporan organizations, let us take shortcuts and start to communicate together without delay in order to start this process immediately

This action will first, invariably give hope to our Artsakhtsi brothers and sisters, and much more importantly, it will effectively bring international justice and especially prevent a humanitarian major criminal plot from taking place.

Dear fellow Armenians, this is a national emergency. Many excuses can readily be raised to prevent the above process from being brought into existence. However, they all fade to total irrelevance in view of the enormity of the crisis that is being faced right at this moment, by our nation.

## Negotiations in Washington

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

There were no particular details or leaks in the media about the meeting in Washington between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the end of June but it is obvious that Washington is trying to regulate Armenian-Azerbaijani relations as long as Moscow is busy with the Ukrainian war and concentrating its resources in that direction.

While the negotiation process in Washington was going, the Azerbaijani side undertook aggressive actions against Armenia, as a result of which many Armenian servicemen were killed or wounded. Considering the fact that the Armenian side did not withdraw from the negotiations right after the incident, it can be assumed that the Armenian side accepted Azerbai-

jan's preconditions and pressure.

Whether the American mediation will reach a final result is hard to predict. Just a month ago the parties were in Moscow as Russian President Vladimir Putin invited them to Russia as a mediator in negotiations on the same issues. Definitely, this is part of the natural geopolitical competition between the West and Russia not only in the South Caucasus but around the world. Of course, this competition also concerns the possible peace agreement. According to some information available from Armenian sources, there were two documents presented to parties recently. According to the Western version, Armenia recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan, and according to the Russian version presented, the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is left for future consideration. Also, let's not forget that months ago there was information circulating in Armenian media that two documents were proposed to the parties: the Brussels document, which is also support-

ed by Washington, and the Moscow one. It is obvious that the interests of Russia will be taken into account in the Russian version, and the interests of the West in the Brussels/Washington version.

Which version Armenian leaders will go for depends on the pressure that will be exerted on them by Russia, the West, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. However, it is clear that Armenia will have to choose between the bad and the worst, and the peace agreement will imply a legal act of capitulation, because the statement signed on November 9 was merely a statement that was not reinforced by national or international legal mechanisms.

(Suren Sargsyan is an expert on US foreign policy, researcher and author. He is a graduate of Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Suren Sargsyan is a founder of the Armenian Center for American Studies, a research center based in Yerevan.)





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Pashinyan Is Incorrect that Armenia had Agreed to Exchange Meghri for Artsakh

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attempted last month to distract attention from Armenia's current tragic situation by blaming former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian. This is a routine ploy used by Armenia's current leader to cover up his defeat in the Artsakh War and failure to protect the country's national interests.

This does not mean that the former leaders were faultless. They made plenty of mistakes and I repeatedly criticized them at the time while sitting in front of them in the Presidential Palace. Those who describe my criticisms of Pashinyan as defending the former leaders are totally mistaken.

Here is what Pashinyan said last month while testifying in a parliamentary committee investigating the circumstances of the 2020 Artsakh War: "On June 2, 2000, Aravot newspaper [in Armenia] published the following article: Vartan Oskanian, the Foreign Minister, on April 25, 2000, during his meeting with the Armenian community of Glendale [California], described by him as 'very private, unofficial remarks,' announced the following: 'Meghri is being given to Azerbaijan, Lachin [Corridor] along with Artsakh is being given to Armenia. Through Meghri, Armenia is being given a sovereign road with which Armenia would be able to have a sovereign contact to enter Iran.'" Pashinyan added: "His [Oskanian's] remarks were published in the California Courier weekly newspaper [in 2000] which also quoted Oskanian's words that the above mentioned proposal has 'some logic and needs serious consideration....'"

Since Prime Minister Pashinyan was referring to an editorial I wrote in The California Courier on May 25, 2000, a few lines of which were reprinted in Aravot, I would like to set the record straight by quoting from what I wrote 23 years ago, titled: "Exchanging Meghri with Karabagh: Good Idea or Political Suicide?"

What Pashinyan is referring to was a 1992 proposal by Paul Goble, Special Adviser to Secretary of State James Baker, to exchange Meghri, the strategically important Southern Region of Armenia, for Artsakh. This idea was rejected by then President Robert Kocharyan and subsequently by Azerbaijan's then President Heydar Aliyev.

Pashinyan is partially distorting what Oskanian said in Glendale. In my editorial of 2000, I quoted Oskanian as saying: "There are many rumors about the resolution of the Karabagh conflict. There are criticisms alleging that the

Armenian authorities want to give Meghri to Azerbaijan. In fact, there is a small degree of truth in those rumors. Such a proposal on the exchange of territories has been made to the Armenian Republic, to the President of Armenia. But, such a proposal was rejected. Armenia did not accept it as a basis of negotiations." Oskanian repeatedly stated that this proposal was rejected by the Armenian government. The proof is that Meghri was not exchanged for Artsakh.

However, Oskanian continued his remarks, raising questions about his assertion that Armenia rejected the Goble Plan. Pashinyan is now capitalizing on Oskanian's supplementary statement.

Here is what Oskanian said in his additional statement which I reported in my 2000 article: "But let me say the following: I don't want you to misunderstand me. It's been rejected, it will be rejected and it's not a plan that can be realized. Nevertheless, this is such a proposal that is worth thinking about. It's not happening. It won't happen, but when people say it's treasonous to even think about it, that's what I would like to respond to: Let's think a little deeply about it. This proposal has certain logic. To simply dismiss such a proposal on a purely emotional basis is wrong. We have done that. We must seriously analyze it. I wonder, maybe we are wrong in saying no. What are we afraid of? Why are we not analyzing it? Is it a taboo? Let's make a checklist. Let's analyze it in newspapers. It has pluses and minuses. What I'm calling for is that it's possible to have a very healthy debate and a dialog on this issue, because this proposal is worth thinking about."

I don't know why Oskanian, after repeatedly rejecting the exchange proposal, went on to say that it is "worth thinking about." In my opinion, there was nothing to think about. It was clearly an unacceptable proposal, suggesting that Armenia exchange one Armenian territory, Artsakh, for another Armenian territory, Meghri. Oskanian's speculative words gave Pashinyan a reason to blame him for even considering such a bad idea.

I concluded my editorial in 2000 with the following words: "Armenia has nothing to gain and much to lose from such an exchange." I am still of the same opinion.

Finally, for those who think that since Armenia lost most of Artsakh in the 2020 War, maybe Oskanian was correct about considering the exchange of Meghri for Artsakh, I must say that Azerbaijan's insatiable appetite is not satisfied by the conquest of Artsakh or even Meghri. Azerbaijan's imperialistic ambitions extend to the takeover of the entirety of Armenia. The more Armenia's leaders make territorial concessions, the more Azerbaijan will be encouraged to demand further Armenian territories. The only solution is to arm Armenia's military with modern lethal weapons and defend its territory from further Azeri incursions.

# The South Caucasus and Iran's SCO Membership

By Benjamin Poghosyan

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

As the Russia–West confrontation continues without any signs of ending, many experts, academicians and politicians seek to grasp the contours of the emerging new world order. Some believe that, in the end, a new bipolar world will emerge dominated by China and the US, while Russia will be forced to choose between these states based on the outcome of the Russia–Ukraine war. If the West can impose a strategic defeat on Russia and bring about a regime change, Russia will be in the West's camp against China. Otherwise, the Kremlin will be a junior partner of China, supplying Beijing with cheap raw materials and in return gain access to Chinese funds and technologies.

Others argue that the future world order will be multipolar, with no fixed alliances, and several key players will pursue temporary cooperation with each other based on short-term needs. One thing is clear: the finalization of the new world order will take years and decades, and till then, instability and strategic ambiguity will be the primary features of the world.

Meanwhile, several non-Western organizations continue to increase their power and potential, in line with the strategic pattern of a shift of power from the West to the East. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(SCO) is among these new groupings. The organization was established in 2001 and was perceived as a tool to manage Russia–China relations in Central Asia. At that time, China was still an emerging regional power, while Russia still was seeking ways to cooperate with the West. However, over the last 10-15 years, the SCO gained additional momentum as one of the emerging poles of the changing world order, adding economic cooperation and anti-terrorist activities to its core functions.

The significant milestone for the organization was the full membership of India and Pakistan, which transformed the SCO into a significant regional actor in Asia, playing the role of another platform for discussions between Russia, China, and India, alongside the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and Russia–China–India trilateral dialogues. India is cautious not to be associated with anything anti-Western, as it is interested in continuing its strategic partnership with the US. However, India also does not want the return to a unipolar world dominated by the US, nor is it interested in finding itself in a new bipolar US–China cold war, where it has to choose between Washington and Beijing.

In this context, the full membership of Iran in the SCO, finalized during the July 2023 summit, will inject additional momentum into the organization, making it a more powerful vehicle for cooperation and dialogue in Asia. Given the tensions between Tehran and Washington, Iran's membership may add more anti-Western patterns to the organization. However, India and Central Asian republics will be careful not to cross the line between fostering regional cooperation and pursuing a blatant anti-Western policy. Meanwhile, as Iran has friendly relations with Russia, China, and India, its membership in the SCO may play a positive role in balancing the interests of these three behemoths.

Iran's membership in SCO will also impact the regional geopolitics of the South Caucasus. This region gradually is emerging as one of the primary areas of US – Russia confrontation in the post-Soviet world, as Washington seeks to decrease Russia's influence and presence there. Russia also faces increased competition from Turkey as Ankara pushes forward its strategic

partnership with Azerbaijan and trilateral Azerbaijan–Georgia–Turkey cooperation.

Meanwhile, Iran has growing concerns about the potential decrease of Russia's role in the region, as for the Iranians a weaker Russia means a more assertive US. Iran and Russia still have contradictory stances based on historical mistrust, diverging interests in Syria, and differences in their approach to Israel. However, as Iran remains the top adversary of Israel, and Iran–US relations are in a low-key mode, both Russia and Iran are interested in decreased US influence and presence in the region, which also relates to Turkish activities in South Caucasus.

In this context, Iran's full membership in the SCO increases the organization's presence in the region, as Russia embraces the South Caucasus from the north, while Iran encircles it from the south. Iran's membership in the SCO may also affect ongoing Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations and the future of Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan pursues power politics, rejecting any possibility of international presence in Nagorno Karabakh and any special rights for Armenians while threatening Armenia with new attacks if Yerevan fails to sign a peace agreement based on Azerbaijani terms.

Meanwhile, the Armenia–Azerbaijan and Armenia–Turkey normalization process will have a regional impact, as it can decrease Russian influence over Yerevan and kickstart a gradual push of Russia out of Armenia. However, the primary problem for Armenia is not the normalization process itself but the fact that, as of now, any agreement is possible only if Armenia accepts Azerbaijani demands while dropping any tangible requirements of securing the rights of Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh. In this sense, the increased presence of the SCO around the South Caucasus may give Armenia additional leverage during the negotiation process to counter Azerbaijani demands and send a message to Western partners that Yerevan has alternative options.

(Benjamin Poghosyan is chairman of the Center for Political and Economic Strategic Studies in Yerevan, and Senior Research Fellow at the Applied Policy Research Institute (APRI) of Armenia.)





# AMAA Artsakh Celebrates Kindergarten Graduations

STEPANAKERT — The Armenian Missionary Association of Armenia (AMAA) kindergartens in Artsakh are where thousands of children begin their education and receive a solid foundation for their lives. The kindergartens equip Artsakh children with an Armenian education, right value system, linguistic thinking, and the ability to appreciate the environment. Despite the continuing humanitarian crisis, epidemic, war and blockade, the AMAA's kindergartens in Martakert, Stepanakert, and Askeran in Artsakh managed to stay fully operational, defying all odds. The blockade, periodic power and gas outages, lack of fuel and food have made the day-to-day performance of the kindergartens difficult, but not impossible.

Despite these challenges, the school year ended in its normal course and 125 students from the three kindergartens, armed with necessary knowledge and skills, said goodbye to their beloved schools. This was manifested by the solemn farewell year-end programs held in the three kindergartens, where the children sang, danced, and recited. And, according to our tradition, and despite the blockade, the AMAA was able to provide the graduating children with gift bags full of school supplies.

The year-end graduation ceremony, with the theme "Farewell Kindergarten," for the



The Askeran Kindergarten graduation

senior group students of AMAA's Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian Kindergarten of Martakert, was held on Saturday, June 17, 2023, in the hall of the Culture and Youth Center of Martakert.

The students presented a program of recitations, songs, and dance dedicated to the Motherland, as well as to their school, teachers, and parents. There were words of thanks to the staff for their motherly love, not sparing effort and energy and for making every day a fairy tale.

At the conclusion of the event, the senior

group students handed over the symbolic key that opens the door to the world of wonders to the next generation. The Kindergarten's Director Gayane Aleksanyan congratulated the children and wished them a good journey to the world of new knowledge.

the children with good wishes and handed them gift packages filled with school supplies provided by the AMAA.

The AMAA's Yeprem & Zabel Basmadjian Kindergarten in Askeran celebrated the 17th Annual Graduation Ceremony on June 29.

Despite the blockade and the prevailing humanitarian crisis, the staff and parents joined forces and by God's grace did the impossible. The children joyously recited, sang, and danced.

Inside the school's hall, it was a different world during the Ceremony. As the guests immersed themselves in the children's world, they momentarily escaped from the horrors, uncertainty, and injustices that engulfed them all. The children declared to the whole world that they deserved a peaceful childhood in their own Homeland.

"Our children are the ones who give us hope and strength to live in our homeland today" said Director Anahit Danielyan in her remarks. "They want to enjoy the beauty of Artsakh's nature, the sacred home-



Four Egyptian Armenians on top of Mount Ararat with the Armenian flag

## Egyptian-Armenia Group Reaches Top of Mount Ararat

CAIRO — A group of Egyptian-Armenian youth succeeded recently in reaching the top of Mount Ararat, where they raised the flags of Armenia and Egypt at an altitude of 5,165 meters. Mount Ararat is located in what is now Eastern Turkey (historic Western Armenia) near the border of the Republic of Armenia.



The group that climbed Mt. Ararat: Saro Erzingatzian, Ari Erzingatzian, Varoujan Kazanjian, Simon Depoyan and Shahan Terzibashian



The Baghdikian Kindergarten graduation

On June 27, the AMAA's Hagop & Lydia Bagdikian KG of Stepanakert held its year-end Graduation Program. The theme of the Program "Let's Live for Artsakh to Live!" presented songs, recitations and acting. It was a golden fairy tale for the children under siege for the past 200 days for peace, kindness, friendship, and the dreams of the children of Artsakh and the world.

At the conclusion of the Program, Kindergarten Director Nune Babayan addressed

land where their grandparents lived and worked."

"May God give strength, patience, courage, and peace to realize the golden fairy tale of our children's lives in Artsakh... May God hear and be pleased with the words and the will of our little ones... and may the days of Artsakh and the world open with good news, peaceful and carefree..." said Viktor Karapetyan, AMAA Representative in Artsakh.



The Janbazian Kindergarten graduation