

Armenia Seeks Urgent UN Security Council Meeting Concerning Artsakh

Worsening Conditions Under 8 Month Blockade

By Avet Demourian

YEREVAN (AP) — Armenia on August 12 called on the U.N. Security Council to hold an emergency meeting on the worsening humanitarian situation in Azerbaijan’s Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is mostly populated by Armenians.



In his letter to the president of the U.N. Security Council, sent Friday and released by Armenia’s Foreign Ministry on Saturday, Armenian U.N. ambassador Mher Margaryan said the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were “on the verge of a full-fledged humanitarian catastrophe.”

Since December, Azerbaijan has blockaded the only road leading from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, severely restricting the delivery of food, medical supplies and other essentials to the region of about 120,000 people.

“The Armenian government asks for the intervention of the U.N. Security Council, as the main body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to prevent mass atrocities, including war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide,” Margaryan wrote.

Armenia’s appeal comes after the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court warned Tuesday that Azerbaijan is preparing genocide against ethnic Armenians in its Nagorno-Karabakh region and called for the U.N. Security Council to bring the matter before the international tribunal.

The report by said Azerbaijan’s blockade of the only road leading from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh seriously impedes food, medical supplies and other essentials to the region of about 120,000 people.

“There is a reasonable basis to believe that a genocide is being committed,” Luis Moreno Ocampo wrote in his report, noting that a U.N. convention defines genocide as including “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.”

“There are no crematories and there are no machete attacks. Starvation is the invisible genocide weapon. Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks,” the report said.

“This hidden genocide, starvation by blockade, has been exposed,” the California-based group said. “It is now the responsibility of state parties, especially the US, to take measures to stop Genocide 2023.”

Maggie Arutyunyan, Esq. a founding member and member of the Board of Directors of CFTJ said the horror of genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh is the failure of the state parties to the Genocide Convention that keep repeating the words “never again” to mass atrocities but have not stepped up to prevent the latest case.

Center for Truth and Justice Welcomes Ocampo Report Citing Genocide in Nagorno Karabakh

“When put on notice by Mr. Ocampo’s thorough report, those who continue to turn a blind eye become complicit in Genocide 2023,” she said, adding that ending the blockade will have the immediate effect of preventing what Ocampo called the “physical destruction” of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. “At this point, it takes political will by the US and state parties to stop Genocide 2023, and stop starvation by blockade.”

Azerbaijan seized control of much of Nagorno-Karabakh, which lies inside Azerbaijan’s official borders but which has operated as a self-governing entity for decades, in a deadly 2020 war. What remains of the enclave – known by Armenians as Artsakh – is connected to the outside world by the Lachin Corridor. On December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan blocked the road, allowing only intermittent passage by the Red Cross and Russian peacekeepers – and since June 15 all passage has been entirely blocked, cutting off food and other supplies.

“Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks,” Ocampo wrote in the 22-page pro bono report entitled “Genocide against Armenians in 2023.”

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Tessa Hofmann: The Situation in Artsakh Corresponds to UN Genocide Convention



Dr. Tessa Hofmann

Tessa Hofmann, a well-known German scholar of Armenian and Genocide studies, PhD, research scholar at the Free University of Berlin, on April 11 gave an interview to the Orbeli Analytical Research Center about the severe humanitarian situation in Artsakh caused by the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the ultimate goal of the genocidal policy of the Azerbaijani authorities, and about the possibilities of settlement of the problem within the framework of international law.

Orberli: Since December 12, 2022, a severe humanitarian crisis has been created in Artsakh as a result of Azerbaijan’s blockade of the Lachin Corridor, see HOFMANN, page 6

Tekeyan School in Beirut Carries on Mission in Difficult Times

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BEIRUT — The once-mighty Armenian diasporan community of Lebanon has suffered greatly as a result of the nonstop onslaught on the country’s economy. While many have left to seek a better life abroad, others have stayed put and are trying to make life better for their fellow citizens there.

And what better way to help the Armenian community than to steward its youngest by offering them a good education for free?



Students take part in arts and crafts



TCA Vahan Tekeyan School students protesting the illegal blockade of Artsakh

That is exactly what the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Vahan Tekeyan School, located in the Bourdj Hammoud neighborhood of Beirut, is trying to do.

The school is one of several around the world that the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) has sponsored. In the past three years alone, the board has raised

and given about \$125,000 to the school,

Two people making decisions for the school are Annie Lachinian-Magarian, chair of the school’s Board of Trustees, and the principal, Sevana Semerdjian Darakjian.

In an interview in July, the two described the struggles they are facing as well as the strides they are making.

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\$20 Million Gift from Edward and Pamela Avedisian to Further Expand AUA

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LOS ANGELES

Gabo’s Paintings To Be Exhibited at Saryan Cultural Center

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Person Dies from Starvation In Artsakh

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — According to the information received by the Human Rights Defender's Office and the research conducted by its Staff, a resident of Stepanakert, K. Hovhannisyan, born in 1983, died this week as a result of chronic malnutrition, protein and energy deficiency.

According to the conclusion of the forensic medical examination and the death certificate of Hovhannisyan, his death resulted from: "severe alimentary dystrophy (general exhaustion due to prolonged and incomplete intake of nutrients, edema, disorder of all forms of metabolism with organ changes and their functional disorders), cachexia, protein-energy deficiency and ... chronic malnutrition."

Armenian Singers Call For Release of Arrested Conductor

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A group of Armenian musicians and TV hosts have signed a petition seeking the release of noted conductor Sergey Smbatyan.

Smbatyan, the artistic director and chief conductor of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, and his father Armen Smbatyan, Armenia's former ambassador to Israel, were arrested on charges of large-scale fraud in late July.

The Prosecutor General's Office alleges that Smbatyan's actions led to a loss of one billion drams for the state, and that the 300-square-meter plot of the Yerevan Tchaikovsky Music School was stolen.

In an open letter to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Prosecutor General Anna Vardapetyan, the artists highlight Sergey Smbatyan's invaluable contribution to the development of the country's cultural life and urge the competent authorities to reconsider his detention.

The signatories of the letter include singers Iveta Mukuchyan, Nune Yesayan, Shushan Petrosyan, Alla Levonyan, Hayk Ghevondyan (better known as Spitaksi Hayko), Aram MP3, duduk player Kamo Seyranyan, TV host and songwriter Avet Barseghyan, TV host and comedian and musician Garik Papoyan.

Government Allocates \$5M For Snoop Dogg Concert

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The Armenian government has allocated more than \$5 million for the organization of a concert of rapper Snoop Dogg at the Hrazdan Stadium on September 23.

Up to 25,000 people are expected to attend the event that is also hoped to bring more tourists to the South Caucasus country.

The first announcement of a possible Snoop Dogg concert was made by the head of the prime minister's office Arayik Harutyunyan in July. A document appeared on the Internet shortly according to which more than \$23 million would be allocated from the state budget for concert programs.



EUMA members monitoring the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border (file photo).

EU Monitors See No 'Military Buildup' On Armenian-Azerbaijani Border

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) on August 15 said it had observed no "unusual military movement or buildup" along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border after Baku accused Yerevan of amassing troops at the border.

The EUMA emphasized on Twitter that it daily monitors the military and security situation from four operating bases, patrolling along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border area.

"Based on the information on the ground, we see no unusual military movement or buildup, especially at the entrance to the Lachin corridor. We keep patrolling the areas," the EUMA said.

Armenia's Foreign Ministry on Monday also issued a statement calling accusations

from Baku false. "The spreading of this false information indicates Azerbaijan's intention to aggravate the situation in the region," it charged, again rejecting Azerbaijan's statements about the presence of Armenia's troops in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"It is also evident that one of the objectives of Azerbaijan's disinformation campaign is to divert the international community's attention from the escalating humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is intensifying day by day, and from its steps to implement ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh through provoking a humanitarian catastrophe," the ministry said, referring to what Yerevan views as Azerbaijan's illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh.

Yerevan and Stepanakert view the Azerbaijani roadblock as a violation of the terms of the ceasefire agreement that they insist places the vital route solely under the control of Russian peacekeepers.

Amid severe shortages of basic foodstuffs, medical and fuel supplies experienced by Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians, Armenia last Friday officially asked the United Nations Security Council to hold an emergency meeting regarding the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The move came after the region's ethnic Armenian leader appealed to the international community for "immediate action" to lift the de facto blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and prevent what he called "the genocide of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh."

Moscow Paper Reveals Russian Offer on Access to Karabakh

By Hrach Melkumian and Ruzanna Stepanian

MOSCOW (Azatutyun) — Citing an unnamed state official, Russia's leading daily, *Kommersant*, wrote on Friday, August 11, that Moscow had proposed ending the current situation with the blocked access to Nagorno-Karabakh by opening both the Agdam and Lachin roads.

The paper said the arrangement that both the Azerbaijani and Karabakh sides had almost agreed to eventually did not go through, however.

According to the official "familiar with the regional situation", Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov proposed opening the Agdam road first, through which Red Cross vehicles would deliver what was necessary to Nagorno-Karabakh, and a day later, according to Moscow's proposal, the Lachin road would be opened.

"Such an option was brought to a high level of preparation," said the unnamed official who spoke to *Kommersant*.

But, according to him, the Karabakh Armenians first set a condition that Lachin should be opened not one day later, but simultaneously and then demanded that Azerbaijani goods should not be delivered through Agdam. The paper writes that then

a scandal related to Azerbaijan's detention of a Karabakh resident at a checkpoint in the Lachin corridor on charges of war crimes allegedly committed during the early 1990s emerged and "the compromise did not happen."

According to the official cited by *Kommersant*, Moscow assesses the situation as serious and believes that Baku is not inclined to make concessions.

"All attempts to somehow calm the situation that are being made by us, Western and international organizations lead to nowhere. Baku is not backing down," the official said, adding that the Karabakh authorities are also persistent, in particular, in rejecting the option of using the Agdam road.

According to the Russian official, however, the Agdam road will be opened in any case.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said at a meeting with the head of the Red Cross office in Baku on July 14 that Azerbaijan does not rule out the possibility of "providing assistance" to meet the needs of Karabakh Armenians by using the Agdam-Stepanakert road.

One day later, on July 15, after a meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels, President of the European

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

"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.

Authorities in Stepanakert strongly rejected that option, insisting that the Agdam road cannot be an alternative to the Lachin corridor, which, they stressed, should remain solely under the control of Russian peacekeepers in accordance with the terms of the 2020 Moscow-brokered ceasefire agreement.

Commenting on the publication in the Russian newspaper, Artur Harutyunyan, a member of Nagorno-Karabakh's parliament, stressed that alternative options could become a subject of discussion only after the Lachin road gets to be operated without interruption.

"We clearly say that we have a corridor under a signed document, the Lachin corridor, which should work without interruption. After it works without interruption, those alternative options are already issues to be discussed," the region's lawmaker told RFE/RL's Armenian Service.



ARMENIA

Schiff Urges Biden to Personally Call Aliyev to End Blockade, Assess Options for U.S. Aid to Artsakh

WASHINGTON — United States Congressman Adam Schiff on August 15 called on U.S. President Joe Biden to personally call Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and urge him to end the blockade of Lachin Corridor.

In a letter, the Congressman called on President Biden to warn Aliyev that there will be consequences, including the implementation of sanctions, visa restrictions, and cutting off U.S. foreign assistance, should the blockade continue.

Below is the Congressman's full letter addressed to President Biden.

"Dear President Biden,

Since I wrote to you on June 8 expressing my deep concern over Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only road connecting Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to the outside world, the crisis has deteriorated significantly and demands your personal and immediate attention.

Since December 2022, the people of Artsakh have been living under Azerbaijan's illegal blockade with devastating effects, with 120,000 individuals denied access to food, water, medical supplies and services, gas and consistent electricity. While previously the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was able to provide limited deliveries of essential food and medicine and facilitate transport in medical emergencies, Azerbaijan weeks ago cut off access to even the ICRC. As ICRC stated, "Tens of thousands of people rely on humanitarian aid reaching them through these routes. With this lifeline cut off, the population is completely isolated and the toll on civilians is escalating rapidly. There is no question that the situation is now a "dire humanitarian crisis," as stated by a group of UN experts on August 7.

The population of Artsakh is in urgent need of assistance, including those most vulnerable - pregnant women, children, and the elderly and disabled. Life-saving medications and baby formula are almost gone. Health authorities in Artsakh have reported a surge in the disease incidence and death rate related to malnutrition, lack of medicines, and lack of emergency medical services/transport. For example, the level of anemia among pregnant women has reached approximately 90 percent and incidents of fainting due to malnutrition have become widely reported. The grave consequence is that innocent civilians are increasingly suffering from malnutrition and facing the imminent threat of starvation in accordance with Aliyev's deliberate

and strategic design. At this very moment, a convoy of trucks carrying 400 tons of humanitarian aid is blocked by Azerbaijan and not allowed to enter Artsakh. These actions are in clear violation of international law and the 2020 trilateral ceasefire statement. The August 7 statement by UN experts called for Azerbaijan "to uphold its international obligations to respect and protect human rights, including the right to food, health, education and life," and I join them in that call.

Though the U.S. government, the European Union, UN experts, and Russia have condemned the blockade and called for the corridor to be opened to regular traffic, Azerbaijan has ignored such statements for months. The U.S. Department of State and USAID have tried to use diplomacy to put an end to Aliyev's blockade of the Lachin Corridor, but the time for statements and such calls has clearly long passed. The United States must take concrete actions and immediately use other tools to press Azerbaijan to return to compliance with international law and order. I therefore urge you to take the following steps:

Convene an emergency session of the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the crisis in Artsakh while the United States holds the presidency. This situation aligns with our country's intention to focus this session on combating food insecurity and defending human rights and is an urgent matter demanding UNSC attention. UN Secretary-General Guterres voiced deep concern over the ongoing blockade and "the deteriorating situation on the ground" via an August 2 statement, and he and UN special rapporteurs have called for action. It is time for the UNSC to engage. I agree, as the Armenian government stated in an August 12 letter, that "the UN Security Council, as a principal body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to prevent mass atrocities including war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide," must convene a meeting on this crisis as soon as possible.

Direct the U.S. Mission to the UN to lead a UN Security Council resolution calling on Azerbaijan to immediately comply with the orders of the International Court of Justice, providing for the deployment of a team of UN experts to Artsakh to gather information and produce an independent report on the human rights and humanitarian situation, and sanction Azerbaijan for its flagrant violations of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Direct USAID and the Department of Defense to assess options for the United States to assist in the delivery of aid to Artsakh by land or airlift to prevent the very real threat of starvation and avoid the preventable deaths of innocent civilians.

Personally call Aliyev and urge him to lift the blockade. Warn him that there will be consequences, including the implementation of sanctions, visa restrictions, and cutting off U.S. foreign assistance, should the blockade continue. Many of us in Congress believe that Azerbaijan should have been cut off from U.S. aid a long time ago.

I stand ready to provide any support to your Administration's efforts to address this crisis, including facilitating a meeting between your administration and national Armenian community stakeholders who can share first-hand accounts of the catastrophic situation in Artsakh.

This inhumane and evil campaign to destroy a people is hauntingly familiar to Armenians, whose ancestors suffered the horror of the Armenian Genocide 108 years ago. In an expert opinion report released August 7, former International Criminal Court prosecutor and international legal expert Luis Moreno Ocampo concluded, "There is a reasonable basis to believe that a Genocide is being committed against Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023." He stated, "The blockade of the Lachin Corridor by the Azerbaijani security forces impeding access to any food, medical supplies, and other essentials should be considered a Genocide under Article II, (c) of the Genocide Convention: "Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction." There are no crematoriums, and there are no machete attacks. Starvation is the invisible genocide weapon. Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks."

We have pledged "never again," Mr. President, but today the people of Artsakh face the real threat of ethnic cleansing and genocide at the hands of an autocratic Azerbaijani regime. On April 24, 2023, when Armenians around the world were commemorating the 108th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, you powerfully stated, "Here and around the world, the Armenian people have met the evil of hate with hope. They rebuilt their communities. They nurtured their families and preserved their culture. They strengthened our nation. They also told their stories - and those of

their ancestors - to remember and to ensure that genocide like the one that happened 108 years ago is never again repeated. Today, let us renew this pledge. Let us recommit to speaking out against hate, standing up for human rights, and preventing atrocities." Mr. President, you have been on the right side of history, have spoken truth to power, and now is the time to uphold this pledge and stand with the people of Artsakh and stop another Armenian Genocide from occurring.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I stand ready to work with your Administration in support of the people of Artsakh."

Center for Truth and Justice Welcomes Ocampo Report Citing Genocide in Nagorno Karabakh

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Ocampo, who was the first chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, noted that Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention determined that "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction" constituted a genocide attempt.

"You will find no crematoria in Artsakh, nor machetes, but genocide by starvation is no less devastating for being silent," Ocampo said. "It was the same deadly method used against Armenians in 1915, against Poles and Jews in 1939, and against the people of Srebrenica in 1993. And unless we intervene right now, we'll have a Genocide on our hands by year's end."

Ocampo, who began his legendary career by helping to liberate his native Argentina from military dictatorship, had written last week to Azerbaijan's authoritarian president, Ilham Aliyev, demanding explanations about his intentions and cautioning that his behavior could be investigated as a genocide. He did not receive a reply. Ocampo said Aliyev should be investigated by the ICC, but the priority now is to prevent the physical elimination of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Ocampo's meticulous analysis of President Aliyev's intention of genocide, and possible avenues for state parties to prevent 'physical destruction' of Armenians, is crucial," Arutyunyan said. "As neutral third parties we will continue to document first-hand evidence, using proper methodology ensuring its reliability and authenticity."

The Center for Truth and Justice collects testimonial evidence of war crimes and provides them to international organizations and actors - especially amplifying the voice of Armenians affected by discrimination, ethnic cleansing, displacement, war crimes, mass atrocities and genocide.

Ocampo's report, released Aug. 8, has been delivered to the President of Nagorno-Karabakh, Arayik Harutyunyan, to Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Mher Margaryan, and to the Armenian Foreign Ministry in Yerevan.

(An abridged version of the report can be seen on pages 4-5, while the full report is on www.mirror-spectator.com)

11 Killed in Minibus-Truck Collision

By **Satenik Kaghvantsian**

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — At least 11 people were killed and nine others injured in an overnight collision of a passenger minibus and a truck in Armenia.

The Rescue Service of Armenia's Interior Ministry said the collision occurred on the 90th kilometer of the Yerevan-Gyumri highway just after midnight on August 14.

It said a Volkswagen van carrying passengers collided with a ZIL truck on the section near the village of Lanjik.

Six people injured in the crash were

hospitalized in Gyumri, a local medical center said, adding that one patient was later transferred to a hospital in Yerevan.

Deputy director of the Gyumri Medical Center Armen Khachatryan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service that the five patients were in a critical condition and their lives were in danger.

The Health Ministry later said that one person hospitalized in Yerevan was also in a serious condition, while three others taken to a medical center in the Armenian capital had sustained only light injuries and were discharged from the clinic shortly after they had been examined and

received treatment.

According to relatives of the victims, they were returning from Turkey where they had visited historical Armenian sites.

Investigators were reportedly working on the scene early on Monday to establish the circumstances of the traffic collision. No other information was reported immediately.

The Investigation Committee said later criminal proceedings had been instituted in connection with the case.

Meanwhile, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expressed condolences to the families of all victims.

INTERNATIONAL

67% of Azerbaijanis Believe Karabakh Armenians Will Be Killed or Displaced

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A survey of Baku residents conducted by FOCUS Free Alliance of Euro-Asian Sociologists recently revealed some startling opinions.

According to the poll, almost 72 percent of the residents of Baku admit that they do not believe in peace with the Armenians. At the same time, almost 62 percent believe that Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) is now under blockade.

Opinions were divided about the fate of Karabakh though. A little more than 18 percent of respondents believe in the voluntary integration of Karabakh Armenians into Azerbaijani society. Fewer than 5 percent believe that Karabakh will remain independent.

Almost 43 percent of the respondents agreed that the Armenians of Karabakh would be killed, another 24 percent said that the Armenians would be driven out of their homes. Only 28 percent of Azerbaijanis agree to coexisting with the Karabakh Armenians and helping them.

The telephone survey of Baku residents was conducted between July 20 and August 3.

Turkey: Armenia Should 'Avoid Provocative Steps'

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Ankara “expects” Armenia to avoid provocative steps, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said on August 15, when referring to the Lachin blockade.

Turkey maintained that by closing the sole route connecting Karabakh to Armenia, Azerbaijan “took measures it deemed appropriate within the framework of its sovereign rights.”

Turkey “is of the opinion that there is no legitimate ground for criticisms against Azerbaijan concerning the Lachin Road,” the Ministry added. “Our expectation from Armenia is to avoid provocative steps, to recognize territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, ... as well as to support Azerbaijan’s efforts to reintegrate the Armenian population,” the Ministry said in a statement.

Turkey Admits Its Soldiers Killed in Artsakh

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who previously headed the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), on August 11 admitted that Turkish soldiers died in the 44-day war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh in 2020.

Before a meeting of the National Security Council (MGK), President Recep Tayyip Erdogan awarded Fidan with a medal for distinguished service for his work as deputy undersecretary and president of MIT.

Upon receiving the award, Fidan stated that “I am receiving this medal on behalf of my friends, who were martyred in Libya, Karabakh, Syria and Iraq to carry out your orders while serving with me,” RT reports.

Fidan’s statement confirmed Turkey had been directly involved in the conflict.

Ocampo Report: Genocide Against Armenians in 2023

NEW YORK — Former International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo earlier this month released a detailed report making the case that what is happening to the Armenians of Artsakh (Karabakh) is tantamount to genocide.

He was the first Prosecutor (June 2003-June 2012) of the International Criminal Court. His office was involved in twenty of the most serious crises of the 21st century including Iraq, Korea, Afghanistan, and Palestine. Previously, Moreno-Ocampo played a crucial role during the transition to democracy in Argentina, as the deputy prosecutor in the “Junta trial” in 1985 and the Prosecutor in the trial against a military rebellion in 1991. He was a Visiting Professor at Stanford University and Harvard University. After the end of his tenure as ICC Prosecutor, Moreno Ocampo was the chairman of the World Bank Expert Panel on the Padma Bridge project. He is now in private practice at a New York law firm.

His lengthy report, which can be seen in its entirety on www.mirrormirror.com, is abridged below.

There is an ongoing Genocide against 120,000 Armenians living in Artsakh.

The blockade of the Lachin Corridor by the Azerbaijani security forces impeding access to any food, medical supplies, and other essentials should be considered a Genocide under Article II, (c) of the Genocide Convention: “Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.”

There are no crematories, and there are no machete attacks. Starvation is the invisible Genocide weapon. Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks.

Starvation as a method to destroy people was neglected by the entire international community when it was used against Armenians in 1915, Jews and Poles in 1939, Russians in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) in 1941, and Cambodians in 1975/1976. Starvation was also neglected when used in Srebrenica in the winter of 1993/1994.

Analyzing the Srebrenica case, the International Court of Justice ruled that “deprivation of food, medical care, shelter or clothing” constitute Genocide within the meaning of Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention.

State parties of the Genocide Convention assumed the duty to prevent and punish Genocide. The International Court of Justice ruled that state parties should “not wait until the perpetration of Genocide commences,” and “The whole point of the obligation is to prevent or attempt to prevent the occurrence of the act.”

Genocide in Karabakh in 2023

There is a reasonable basis to believe that a Genocide is being committed against Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023.

The International Court of Justice, at the request of Armenia, has already analyzed the Lachin corridor’s blockade. The Court focused on State liability for alleged violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination rather than individual criminal responsibility for the commission of Genocide.

Though predicated on a different set of State obligations, the Court confirmed the occurrence of the material elements of Genocide that are set out in Article II, (c) of the Genocide Convention: “Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.”

struction.”

The Court’s preliminary findings considered “plausible” that the Lachin corridor blockade produced “a real and imminent risk” to the “health and life” of an ethnic group, “the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh.”

The intention, a subjective element required by the crime of Genocide, should be deduced from the facts and statements from President Aliyev, who has supreme authority in Azerbaijan.

President Aliyev, in a fair trial, would have the opportunity to provide a different interpretation of the indicia. In the meantime, there is reasonable basis to believe that President Aliyev has Genocidal intentions: he has knowingly, willingly and voluntarily blockaded the Lachin Corridor even after having been placed on notice regarding the consequences of his actions by the ICJ’s provisional orders.

The facts are:

President Aliyev deliberately blocked the provision of life’s essentials to the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

He openly disobeyed the specific orders of the International Court of Justice, “to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.”

The ICJ order put him on notice about the “real and imminent risk” created by the blockade to an Armenian group “health and life.”

President Aliyev’s public statements affirming that the blockade was the consequence of people smuggling minerals and i-phones through the Lachin Corridor is a diversion.

Smuggling activities should be properly investigated but they are not an excuse to disobey a binding order of the International Court of Justice or a justification to commit a Genocide.

Could President Aliyev be investigated by the International Criminal Court?

Article IV of the Genocide Convention establishes that “[p]ersons committing genocide shall be punished,” even if “they are constitutionally responsible rulers.” But there is no independent criminal justice system ready to investigate the crime of Genocide allegedly committed by President Aliyev.

President Aliyev cannot be investigated by any foreign national authorities because he enjoys immunity as a head of state.

The International Criminal Court provides a jurisdiction where such immunity does not apply. There are three ways to start an ICC investigation for the commission of the crimes in Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh:

- 1) Azerbaijan becomes a state party (Article 12(1) of the Rome Statute);
- 2) Azerbaijan accepts the jurisdiction of the Court on its territory (Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute); or
- 3) The UN Security Council refers the situation of the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh after December 2022 to the ICC (Article 13(b) of the Rome Statute).

But Azerbaijan is not a state party of the Rome Statute (Article 12(1)), the treaty creating the ICC and has not accepted the ICC’s jurisdiction (Article 12(3)). As a result, immediate state action is required to adopt a UN Security Council Resolution referring the situation in the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh to the ICC.

There are precedents. In March 2005, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1395, referring the Darfur, Sudan situation to the ICC. Five years later, President Omar Al

Bashir was indicted for Genocide.

In February 2011, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Libya to the Court. In June 2011 the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Muammar Gaddafi for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Obtaining a UN Security Council Resolution to provide ICC jurisdiction should be feasible. Under the Genocide Convention, state parties have an obligation to prevent and punish Genocide, and 14 of the current 15 members of the UN Security Council are also parties of that Convention, providing an overwhelming majority.

France proposed, as early as in 2013, that the five permanent members of the Council voluntarily and collectively suspend the use of the veto in case of Genocide and other mass atrocities.

How to Prevent the Final Destruction of the Armenian Group?

President Aliyev as well as the international community has the rare opportunity to prevent further casualties and the “physical destruction” of a group in this Genocide. Timely prevention requires the adoption of urgent political decisions,

a) to stop the blockade and reestablish the provision of essentials to Nagorno-Karabakh in one or two weeks, and

b) institutional solutions to the disputed territorial claims. It should be adopted before May 2025 because, at that moment, Azerbaijan can request the end of the Russian peacekeeper protection.

By design, there are no central authorities at the international level to adopt such urgent measures. A specific International Court of Justice ruling on Genocide, smart sanctions, and other classic diplomatic tools would not be quick and strong enough.

In the short term, which is crucial to stop the ongoing Genocide by starvation, the duty of prevention would be exclusively defined by the interest of the states involved in the conflict.

In April 1994, most of the UN Security Council members refused to call “Genocide” what was happening in Rwanda. During the debate the Czech Ambassador challenged the intense focus on a negotiation to achieve a new ceasefire, which he likened to asking the Jews to reach a truce with Hitler.

In *A Problem from Hell*, Samantha Power explains the crucial role of the citizen in transforming the national leaders’ interests in a Genocide abroad. The voice of the Armenians in the diaspora could reduce the failure by design created by the international legal architecture. They should be mobilized worldwide to reach national leaders and promote a pragmatic solutions.

Russia, responsible for peacekeeping in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the US, promoting current negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, are state parties of the Genocide Convention, as are all the European Union members. They have a privileged position to prevent this Genocide. Their intense confrontation due to the Ukrainian conflict should not transform the Armenians into collateral victims.

Is it possible to assist European, Russian, and USA leaders to reach a joint position to stop the ongoing Armenian Genocide? If they could agree, the food will reach the Armenians within one day.

The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is an opportunity for the international community to develop an innovative and harmonious solution to prevent Genocide.

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INTERNATIONAL

from previous page

Under Article 16 of the Rome Statute, a criminal investigation could eventually be suspended by the UN Security Council to find a final and fair solution.

President Aliyev asked: "Why Spain does not allow Catalunya to have a referendum? Why should we tolerate separatism?" The simple answer to complex issues of sovereignty involved in the question is that Spain is not committing genocide to control separatist efforts.

Blockade of the Lachin Corridor

On the morning of December 12, 2022, President Aliyev allowed individuals without formal ties with the state apparatus to block the Lachin Corridor near the city of Shushi or Shusha, affecting the provision of food, medicines, oil, and all other essentials to Nagorno-Karabakh. President Aliyev denied the involvement of the State in the creation of the problem but justified the action to stop alleged illegal export of mineral resources.

The European Court of Human Rights and ICJ Provisional Measures

Armenia brought the problem to the attention of both the European Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice. It affirmed that "The 120,000 ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh are now entirely encircled by Azerbaijan, completely cut off from access to the outside world." They are now "effectively under siege."

On December 21, 2022, the European Court of Human Rights evaluated the State's responsibility and instructed Azerbaijan to "take all measures that are within their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage through the 'Lachin Corridor' of seriously ill persons in need of medical treatment in Armenia and others who were stranded on the road without shelter or means of subsistence."

On January 2023, Azerbaijan's agents before the ICJ affirmed that Armenia has not demonstrated that "the protest is actually blocking the road or seriously obstructing the flow of traffic along it"; that "to the extent the traffic is obstructed, the intention or effect was racial discrimination"; and that "the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 'Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Azerbaijan' consequences of the restrictions were such that there is now a real risk of irreparable prejudice." "Armenia tries to suppress the fact that for nearly 30 years, it has been illegally exploiting the resource-rich territories of Azerbaijan that it invaded and occupied in violation of international law."

On February 22, 2023, the International Court of Justice ordered: "The Republic of Azerbaijan shall, pending the final decision in the case and accordance with its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions." ¹⁴ The order was reaffirmed on July 6, 2023.

Is there a reasonable basis to believe that the Lachin corridor blockade constitutes the crime of Genocide?

Some specialized institutions have already claimed a Genocide is underway in Nagorno-Karabakh. As has happened in previous cases, Genocide, in particular, when committed by starvation, is neglected.

An estimated 1 million Armenians were murdered or died of disease and starvation in 1915 and the world did not stop it. Starving children in the Warsaw ghetto produced no reaction. Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) became a "prison of starvation." *The Findings of the International Court of Justice in the Armenia v. Azerbaijan Case.*

The ICJ has already analyzed the Lachin corridor' blockade. The Court focused on State liability for alleged violations of the

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination rather than individual criminal responsibility for the commission of Genocide.

Though predicated on a different set of State obligations, the Court confirmed the occurrence of the material elements of Genocide that are set out in Article II, (c) of the Genocide Convention: "Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction."

The ICJ's preliminary decision indicates the plausible concurrence of the material elements of the crime of Genocide required by Article II of the Genocide Convention: (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part.

The Court issued provisional measures considering "plausible" that the rights of a part of an ethnic group, the "Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh," are affected by the blockade of the Lachin Corridor established in December 2022. Therefore, the International Court of Justice assessed that the "persons affected belonged to a particular ethnic group" as required by the Genocide Convention.

According to the "Elements of the Crimes" adopted by the International Criminal Court, the term "conditions of life" calculated to bring about the physical destruction of that group "may include, but is not necessarily restricted to, deliberate deprivation of resources indispensable for survival, such as food or medical services, or systematic expulsion from homes."

In its February order, the ICJ accepted the request related to food and medicines, affirming "[a] prejudice can be considered as irreparable when the persons concerned are exposed to danger to health and life. The Court has further noted that restrictions on the importation and purchase of goods required for humanitarian needs, such as foodstuffs and medicines, including lifesaving medicines, treatment for chronic disease or preventive care, and medical equipment, may have a serious detrimental impact on the health and lives of individuals."

The International Court of Justice concluded that the blockade "may entail irreparable consequences to those rights and that there is urgency, in the sense that there is a real and imminent risk that irreparable prejudice will be caused before the Court makes a final decision in the case."

Such a conclusion is an indication of the concurrence of the infliction of "certain conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of that group." The requirement of a plan or a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against that group is evident, but it will be further analyzed below.

Aliyev's Statement on August 1, 2023

To safeguard my accuracy and impartiality, before producing this report, I wrote to President Aliyev explaining the consequences of the blockade and offering him an opportunity to clarify his position. My letter put President Aliyev on notice of the commission of Genocide. He could be responsible for Genocide. I received no answer, and the blockade continues.

President Aliyev discussed the matter during a Euronews interview aired two days after my letter. He indirectly recognized that the blockade was his official policy and pretended to justify the starvation of 120,000 Armenians to avoid the alleged smuggling of minerals, cigarettes, iPhones, and gasoline.

He justified the December blockade produced by the "representatives of civil society of Azerbaijan" because of the "illegal excavation of natural resources in Karabakh."

He said that an Azerbaijan checkpoint was established to implement the International Court of Justice decision. "And as soon as we established a border checkpoint on our border

with Armenia, which is our legitimate right... we communicated through my representative here in Shusha with NGOs' representatives for them to stop, and they stopped. They left. So now, freedom of movement is not blocked."

Then he explained that "On June 15, Armenia made another military provocation and wounded one of our border security guards, and temporarily the road was closed for investigation."

"But then it was reopened. Red Cross restarted again to transport medications and evacuate patients who need treatment in Armenia. But unfortunately, Red Cross trucks, when checked, we found smuggling goods like cigarettes, iPhones, and gasoline. Red Cross admitted that. So, that is how, again, it was blocked." The ICRC clarified the incident. This statement confirms that President Aliyev is in command of the situation, providing misleading arguments to divert attention from his commission of Genocide.

He pretends that he is disobeying an ICJ decision and starving 120,000 persons to control the smuggling of some iPhones or minerals. The smuggling cases should be properly investigated but they should not distract from the genocidal impact of his decisions.

In the interview, President Aliyev stated his motive, which is to "put an end to separatism." He said he is "not organizing ethnic cleansing," but he proposes that Armenians in Karabakh could live as a minority in Azerbaijan, ignoring the discrimination and the Genocide, or they have to leave.

Perpetrators of genocide attempt to conceal their genocidal intent. Combating such concealment is the *raison d'être* of the explicit distinction between motive and intent with respect to genocide.

Intent refers to the actual goal the perpetrator strives to achieve, while motive refers to the specific reason of the perpetrator in the commission of criminal acts. Accordingly, the ICTY Appeals Chamber conclusively declared in *Stakić* that "the reason why the accused sought to destroy the victim group has no bearing on guilt."

Thus the existence of a "personal motive," such as the acquisition of territory or integration of a separatist entity, "must be distinguished from intent and does not preclude a finding of genocidal intent."

President Aliyev rightly said that Azerbaijan recovered in the 2020 war a territory occupied by Armenia, but now, he threatens Armenia with a new war to end the special status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

He explained that the last year's geopolitical changes were in his favor and posed the question: "Who will protect Armenia?" This is akin to Hitler's statement that he made in August of 1939, when he said, "who remembers now the extermination of the Armenians?"

President Aliyev ended his interview with a threatening message to the Armenians: "They should understand that the situation where they are today would not change in their favor if they continue to ignore us if they continue to behave that we do not exist."

How to Prevent the Final Destruction of the Armenian Group?

Determining that Genocide against Armenians is being committed in 2023 would transform the understanding of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

One hundred and fifty-three nations, including Azerbaijan, Russia, the United States, and members of the European Union are contracting parties of the Genocide Convention. Under the Convention, the Parties confirm that Genocide is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish. Timely prevention requires the adoption of urgent political decisions.

a) to stop the blockade and reestablish the provision of essential goods to Nagorno-Karabakh in one or two weeks, and

b) institutional solutions to the disputed territorial claims. This should be adopted before May 2025 because at that time, Azerbaijan can request that Russia ends its peacekeeper role.

A failure by design

By design, there are no central authorities at the international level to adopt such urgent measures. A ruling by the International Court of Justice on Genocide, smart sanctions, and other classic diplomatic tools are slow and inadequate measures to respond and prevent the current dire situation.

In the short term, which is crucial to stop the damages caused by the ongoing Genocide by starvation, the duty of prevention is exclusively defined by the interests of the states involved in the conflict.

Samantha Power affirmed that U.S. policymakers did almost nothing to deter genocides, because America's "vital national interests" were not considered imperiled.

She described magnificently in *The Problem from Hell* how politicians avoid efforts to control genocides. They appease, bribe, seduce or manipulate their constituencies that demand action.

The time to prevent is now

As the International Court of Justice established, accepting genocide as a method to procure an agreement is complicity.

In its 2007 Bosnia v. Serbia judgment, the International Court of Justice established the principle that the states' "obligation to prevent, and the corresponding duty to act, arise at the instant that the State learns of, or should normally have learned of, the existence of a serious risk that genocide will be committed."⁵⁶

The Court added: "This obviously does not mean that the obligation to prevent Genocide only comes into being when the perpetration of Genocide commences; that would be absurd since the whole point of the obligation is to prevent or attempt to prevent the occurrence of the act."⁵⁷ From the moment when a State has information that leads it to believe that a Genocide is afoot, it establishes its obligation to take all measures possible to prevent and stop the further "physical destruction" of a group of people.

Secretary of State Blinken explained in the Holocaust Museum that one of his responsibilities "is determining, on behalf of the United States, whether atrocities have been committed. It's an immense responsibility that I take very seriously, particularly given my family's history." He identified intent to destroy a group and hate speech as a path in the Rohingya situation, "mirroring in so many ways the path to the Holocaust and other genocides."

President Biden took a courageous step and became the first U.S. President that labeled the 1915 events as the Armenian Genocide. "The American people honor all those Armenians who perished in the genocide that began 106 years ago today. Let us renew our shared resolve to prevent future atrocities from occurring anywhere in the world."

Now that the path of Genocide against an Armenian group in Nagorno-Karabakh is exposed, it is time for the U.S. to put words into action.

The U.S., Russia, members of the European Union, all state parties of the Genocide Convention, and UN members have a rare historic opportunity to stop Genocide against an Armenian group in 2023.

In many respects, the starvation of the ethnic Armenians represents the archetype of genocide through the imposition of conditions of life designed to bring about a group's destruction.

As an individual with some experience in the field, I was honored to make my contribution providing an impartial report and I am ready to assist any party committed to prevent the destruction of the Armenian group in Nagorno-Karabakh.



INTERNATIONAL



Dr. Asadur Tchekmedyan Named President-Elect of World Endoscopy Organization

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay — Dr. Asadur Tchekmedyan, Chief of Endoscopy at Asociación Española and Past President of the Interamerican Society for Digestive Endoscopy, in June was named president-elect of the World Endoscopy Organization (WEO).

In a letter, Hisao Tajiri, the WEP wrote, “WEO has a long tradition of looking after gastrointestinal endoscopy on an international level and we are certain that this will continue under your leadership and that you will further strengthen WEO’s reputation. We look forward to the close cooperation between WEO and SIED as the next zone to host the presidency of WEO. As you are aware, this position rotates to each of the three world wide areas that constitute WEO, with the European zone hosting Professor Lars Aabakken as the next president, and myself currently representing the Asian-Pacific zone.

“You have been close to WEO and the activities for long time, you have been instrumental in ENDO 2020, you have served on the CRC SC for many years and have given advice and guidance on numerous occasions.”

Tessa Hofmann: The Situation in Artsakh Corresponds to UN Genocide Convention

HOFMANN, from page 1
which is the only road of life connecting Artsakh to Armenia and the whole world. Artsakh President declared the country a “disaster zone”. 120,000 innocent civilians are struggling to survive in the absence of food, medicine and other vital supplies. Human deaths are recorded as a consequence of the blockade. How would you characterize this policy of Azerbaijan?

Hofmann: The blockade of the only land route connecting the Republic of Armenia with the Republic of Artsakh, which has now lasted eight months, is contrary to international law in several respects. First and foremost, it violates the trilateral ceasefire agreement of November 9, 2020, which provides for access to Artsakh / Nagorno-Karabakh controlled by Russian peacekeepers, the so-called Lachin Corridor. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) had already ordered Azerbaijan to immediately lift the blockade on 22 February 2023. However, Azerbaijan did not comply with this order, nor with similar appeals by the European Parliament or individual states. The authoritarian Aliyev regime in Baku can be sure that no sanctions will be imposed because of its importance in the energy sector as a “reliable energy supplier” (Ursula von der Leyen). The lack of consequences of the ICJ decision also illustrates the helplessness of international jurisdiction. The situation is similar with the principle of international responsibility to protect, introduced in 2005, which is limited to purely peaceful means of influence or intervention.

To make matters worse, the blockade is taking place in the shadow of the Ukraine War, and international attention is thus very limited or one-sidedly focused. This is particularly true of Germany. Appeals by local human rights organizations to the foreign minister about the blockade of Artsakh have so far gone unanswered. But Germany in particular is obliged, due to its military alliance with Turkey in the First World War, not to sit idly by and watch Armenians being exterminated once again.

Orbeli: What do you think, can these actions of Baku be observed within the framework of Article 2, Clause C (Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide?

Hofmann: The blockade of the Artsakh region, inhabited almost exclusively

by ethnic Armenians, has had existential-threatening consequences for all of the approximately 120,000 inhabitants, but especially for very young children, pregnant women, the elderly and the chronically ill. The blockade has not only cut off the supply of food, medicine and fuel. It has also driven numerous inhabitants to economic ruin, especially since Azerbaijan has repeatedly interrupted the supply of gas and electricity from Armenia to Artsakh, often for weeks at a time.

Orbeli: Arayik Harutyunyan, the president of the Republic of Artsakh, has drastically but vividly compared the situation of the people there with genocide in a large concentration camp. Why is Harutyunyan’s assessment accurate? The situation in his homeland corresponds to the definition of Art. II, c) of the United Nations Genocide Convention.

Hofmann: Luis Moreno Ocampo, the first chief prosecutor of the International Court of Justice from 2003 to 2012, also confirms in a legal expert opinion published of 7 August 2023, that the blockade constitutes genocide. President Aliyev has genocidal intent: “(...) he knowingly, willingly, and voluntarily blocked the Lachin Corridor, even after he was made aware of the consequences of his actions by the ICJ’s preliminary orders.”

Even before the blockade, since August 2022, associations and institutions of genocide scholars warned of a “significant genocide risk” to the “indigenous Armenians of the South Caucasus,” including the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention in its repeated Red Flag Alerts and the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS). It is the largest professional association of genocide scholars. They consider the danger of genocide to be imminent, among other things, because for decades the media and schools in Azerbaijan have systematically spread hatred against Armenians. As a telling example I quote the following:

Ruslan Novres:

“Armenian

If he is sleeping in his cradle, slaughter him quickly, don’t drag it out,

Find a knife, a sharp one! The Armenian is a scum! What an epic! The Jew is not alone on earth,

The foul Armenian has surpassed the Jew now.

Thank Allah, Jew, there is a second son of Shaitan,

The dirty, loathsome Armenian will go to the stake with you.”

Another example: Dissenters such as the writer Akram Aylisli face political persecution and death threats. A. Aylisli had addressed the persecution of Armenians in the past and present in his novel *Stone Dreams* (2012, written in 2005). The impetus for the publication of this remarkable work, which was initially withheld by Aylisli, was the triumphant reception in Baku of Ramil Safarov, who had beheaded a sleeping Armenian officer at night with an axe in Budapest and is celebrated as a national hero in his homeland.

President Ilham Aliyev then canceled Aylisli’s pension and his honorary title of “Writer of the Nation.” Aylisli’s works were removed from the curriculum, his plays may no longer be performed, and his books were publicly burned. The pro-government Müasir Müsavat Partiyası party announced that it would pay ten thousand manats (about \$12,000) to anyone who cut off the writer’s ears.

Orbeli: The authorities of Artsakh and Armenia claim that Baku’s ultimate goal is to evict Armenians from Artsakh. This will mean that again a part of the Armenians will be uprooted from their ancestral lands, as in 1915. What is the place of the concept of “deprivation of the fatherland” in the crimes of genocide?

Hofmann: Azerbaijan wants Artsakh, but an Artsakh without Armenians. Whether this goal is achieved through starvation or expulsion is ultimately secondary. Loss of homeland is not listed as a criminal offense of genocide, but it is empirically present in every genocide. The survivors can no longer live in their homeland, at least not visibly as members of the genocidally annihilated group. As the example of the Republic of Turkey shows, they can exist there at best as crypto-Armenians, completely dependent on the mercy of their oppressors and deprived of any dignity and human rights.

Orbeli: What do you think, is Baku implementing its policy against Artsakh and Artsakh Armenians alone?

Hofmann: Baku is supported by Turkey; the father of the current president coined the phrase “one nation in two states,” declaring Turkey a brother nation and the protecting power of Azerbaijan. But Azerbaijan certainly also feels emboldened by the disinterest and indolence of the international community. Moscow, Washington, Brussels, and Yerevan all agree that Artsakh is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

As for Armenia’s official Artsakh policy, it is far from the ‘Miatusum, Miatusum’ shouts of 1988. And also far from Nikol Pashinyan’s statement in 2019, “Artsakh is Armenia, and basta!” But Armenia is mistaken if it thinks to save its existence by sacrificing the remnants of Artsakh. Azerbaijan has an omnivorous appetite, even for Syunik, even for Yerevan.

More difficult to assess is the attitude of militarily weakened Russia, which is often mistakenly seen as the supposed protective power of Armenians. In its most recent statements, the Russian Foreign Ministry points out that Nikol Pashinyan has recognized Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan since May 2023, thus rendering the agreements of the 2020 cease-fire obsolete. Russia also has no international mandate for its peacekeeping forces.

Orbeli: How can the international community help resolve this catastrophic crisis? Do you see any political mechanisms that can be implemented to prevent the commission of a new serious crime against Artsakh Armenians?

Hofmann: What we are seeing at the moment is an unfortunately very delayed reaction in some Western countries. In Great Britain, in France and in Canada, parliamentarians are calling for the blockade to be lifted. The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag is also calling for this.

Moreno Ocampo’s expert opinion suggests that the United Nations Security Council refer the Lachin Corridor and the situation in Artsakh to the International Criminal Court (ICC). If this could be achieved, it is certainly helpful. Sanctions would be as well.

The Armenian diaspora and its institutions can play an important role in mobilizing decision-makers. If they want to.

It seems to me of particular importance that we succeed in changing the internationally widespread narrative: The conflict in and around Artsakh does not originate from a territorial conflict between the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan. It arises from the oppression of a region that was arbitrarily annexed to Soviet Azerbaijan against the will of its people at the beginning of Soviet rule. Legally, it is a conflict between the right to national self-determination and the principle of sovereignty, although post-Soviet Azerbaijan’s claim to Artsakh is legally questionable anyway. Moreover, in the conflict between self-determination and sovereignty, the former takes precedence.



Community News

Transformational \$20 Million Gift from Edward and Pamela Avedisian to Further Expand AUA

GLENDALE — The Avedisian legacy of contributing to the constant growth and advancement of the American University of Armenia (AUA) was recently expanded by Pamela Wood Avedisian with a \$20 million new gift in honor of her late husband, Edward Avedisian. The history of AUA is testament to his belief in the mission of the University and his steadfast support for more than twenty years as a trustee, philanthropist, and visionary. This recent \$20 million capital gift will be allotted to the construction of the new Humanities & Social Sciences and the Arts buildings.

“As a longtime board member, Edward Avedisian had a thorough understanding of the university and the vision shared by its leadership. He was truly excited to see it grow and evolve over the past three decades and wanted us to contribute towards that growth. We both understood the need for expansion to further broaden the University’s offerings and fields of excellence,” comments Pamela. His expressed objective was to see AUA grow its campus congruent to the planned new course offerings in the science, technology, and engineering curriculum and, similarly, in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The expanded campus will comprise the AUA Science and Engineering Building, currently in development; the Edward and Pamela Avedisian Building for programs in the humanities and social sciences; the Paruyr Sevak Building that will house the arts programs; and the AUA Founders Building to serve as an atrium that connects all three new facilities.

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the University in 2022, AUA launched the Build a Better Future With AUA capital campaign designated for the construction of the new AUA Science & Engineering Building. While the implementation of that project is in progress, the University has now embraced this second capital project, thanks to the magnanimous recent contribution by the Avedisian family earmarked for this endeavor. These two innovative projects create new ground for strengthened collaboration among the various fields of study offered by the University, duly enhancing AUA’s liberal-arts approach to education.

Edward Avedisian was born in the United States in 1937. A seasoned musician and instructor, through shrewd business decisions, he found success as a private investor. In 1999, he joined the AUA Board of Trustees, lending his efforts to advance education in his homeland.

At AUA, the Avedisians are pre-eminently recognized as major sponsors of the Paul Avedisian Center for Business Research and Development see GIFT, page 9



Students at St. John Armenian Church’s “Arts of Armenia” camp in Southfield, Mich.

Arts of Armenia A Camp to Inspire Young Souls

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — When the Komitas Choir of St. John Church of Southfield took a trip to Armenia in 2007, it led to the creation of a new program to instruct and inspire young souls of the parish. Some 16 years after its conception, St. John’s “Arts of Armenia” program is still flourishing.

Back in 2007, while choir members toured Armenia (and even joined the Echmiadzin Choir one Sunday morning), a visit to a local Arts and Crafts school planted the seed for the parish’s “Arts of Armenia” program. As that seed germinated, choir director Dn. Rubik Mailian had the idea that the choir should sponsor a program to teach parish children the Armenian arts.

Now 16 years later, the “Arts of Armenia” program continues to introduce St. John students to Armenian literature, music, art, dance, food, and important events in Armenian history (such as the Battle of Sardarabad or the history of Artsakh). For three years, a dance instructor and an artist were brought from Armenia to teach the children. After those few years, the classes were taught by professional teachers and artists from St John the parish. Under the leadership of Dn. Rubik and chair Denise Karakashian, the “Arts Armenia” committee has retained its members and instructors for the entire 16-year period.

Each day of classes during the week-long program begins with the Lord’s Prayer and the national anthem of Armenia. The sessions revolve around a different theme every camp season, such as Royalty and Saints, An Armenian Wedding, and Faith and Family. This year’s theme was Historical Figures and Monuments.

Various art classes have involved making *khatchkars*, wedding *narods*, *trchnakir* or bird-letter calligraphy, painting miniatures from Bible stories, and painting historical flags of Armenian dynasties. This year, students made paintings of the Sardarabad Memorial; Artsakh’s famous monument “We Are Our Mountains” (affectionately known as “Tatik-Papik”); and the mystical 7th letter of the Armenian alphabet, “Eh,” which signifies the unutterable Name of God.

Fr. Garabed Kochakian and Zabel Belian have been teaching these classes, and see ARTS, page 8



Students at St. John Armenian Church’s “Arts of Armenia” camp in Southfield, Mich.

AMAA 104th Annual Meeting Banquet to Celebrate Armenian Evangelical Education

Will Honor the Legacy of AMAA Benefactor Edward Avedisian

By Phyllis Dohanian

The Armenian Missionary Association of America this fall will celebrate the legacy of the late Edward Avedisian, who created so much good here in the US as well as in Armenia, with the support of his wife, Pamela.

His dedication will be marked at the AMAA’s Annual Banquet on October 21 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront in San Francisco.

Born in Pawtucket, RI, Edward Avedisian embarked upon a lifetime of helping others. Through many years of helping his own community, Avedisian developed a vision of how best to impact the well-being of Armenians into an action plan which would play a pivotal role for the future of Armenia. By providing the poorest and most deprived of children in Yerevan with the highest quality education from pre-kindergarten through secondary school at no cost, he wished to empower them to lift themselves to a level where they could not only obtain a good job, but also raise their own families within Armenia, assist other neighbors in need, and uplift their community and country.

A drafty and derelict building in Yerevan was the perfect place for Edward Avedisian and his wife, Pamela, to make his dream a reality. In Melanya Geghamyan, principal of the Avedisian School from its inception, he found the perfect partner. Melanya listened as Ed told anyone who was within earshot that a true Armenian patriot should see the future of Armenia in an educated generation and should give the nation educated children. Melanya worked diligently day and night to make this shared mantra a reality.

Beginning in 1999 with kindergarten, adding one grade with each successive year with a middle school and a high school to follow and then, in conjunction with AUA, a university education for those eager children with the drive and skills to work hard to capture the future, the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School came to be.

Providing the highest quality education to these young people was only one part of Ed’s vision. Ed’s dream also included working tirelessly to build the first LEED building in Armenia, introducing a more ecologically sound construction standard by finding and educating Armenia’s construction leaders as they built a facility with significantly reduced operating costs. The Avedisian School continues its growth with a greenhouse, each of which provides a strong future for Armenia.

Ed walked the school grounds, listened to the teachers, met with the students, and observed the needs of the community and Armenia on every visit. Quietly, humbly, but tenaciously, he continued to expand upon his see AMAA, page 10

COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARY

Arts of Armenia: A Camp to Inspire Young Souls

ARTS, from page 7

this year were joined by a new instructor, Alex Koceyan: a fine arts student at the College of Creative Studies in Detroit, who was a student from the very first year of "Arts of Armenia."

Passing On an Ancient Artistic Legacy

Dance instructors Nayiri Karapetian and Dikran Callan teach the Kochari, Lorke, Pampoori, Musa Ler, Tamzara, and Art-sakhian dances—the latter dating back some 5,000 years, according to archeological evidence found in cave drawings.

Music instructor Dn. Rubik Mailian teaches students traditional folk songs that tie into the yearly theme. This year's songs were *Sardarabadi Kacher*, *Aravod Looso*, *Seghan eh Arad* and *Sourp Asdvadz*.

During cooking classes, students learn to make two or three Armenian baked or cooked items, including *manti*, *cheoreg*, *bourma* and *lahmajun*. This year the students made *dolma*, *lavash* and *hummus*. Instructors for these classes are Yerchanig Callan, Marianne Dardarian, Yn. Roberta Kochakian, and Dolly Matoian.

Students also enjoy storytelling sessions on Armenian folk tales, legends, heroic epics like the poem "David of Sassoun," and the story of the beginnings of the Armenian language. Anahit Toumajan teaches this class.



All the participants also tour the magnificent Manoogian Museum, guided by museum director Lucy Ardash. The artifacts on display connect to the classes and bring Armenian history to life. Some highlights from this year include paintings by Sarian, an oriental rug made in 1907 by orphans, a statue and death mask of Gomidas Vartabed, and a 500-year-old *khatchkar*. A walk to the Martyrs' Monument on the St. John Church campus was a chance to learn

about the Genocide and recall the sister monument on the grounds of Holy Echmiadzin in Armenia.

A field trip is also planned for each year. Previous excursions visited the Detroit Institute of Art, the Henry Ford Automotive Museum, Pewabic Pottery, and an artist's studio. This year saw trips to Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church; to St. John's Episcopal Church, where Detroit Armenians worshipped before having a church of their

own; and to the first church built by the Detroit Armenian community on Oakman Boulevard.

Parish pastor Fr. Aren Jebejian, assistant pastor Fr. Ar-mash Bagdasarian, and former pastor Fr. Garabed Kochakian teach religious sessions on the priest's vestments and the vessels of the church. This year, Fr. Aren Jebejian explained the mosaics that adorn the St. John sanctuary.

Guest artist John Merigian gave a presentation on the sculpture of the three figures he constructed, that stands on the church grounds outside the front doors. He explained his inspiration for the piece entitled "Let Us Rejoice," and invited students to explore the sculpture up close.

All the students greatly enjoyed their classes and made new friends as they learned the "Arts of Armenia."

— Dolly Matoian

OBITUARY

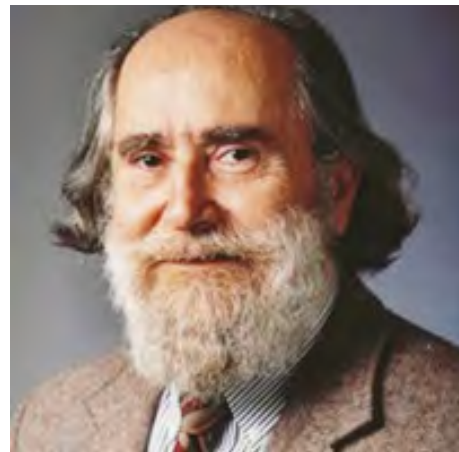
Harutiun (Arutun) Maranci Sepastia-born Research Scientist

NEWTON, Mass. — Harutiun (Arutun) Maranci passed away on August 10, 2023 in Newton.

He was born in 1930 in Istanbul to Ohannēs Zakar and Veronica (Viron) (née Minassian) of Sepastia. He grew up in the district of Psamatya (Samatya), where his family attended the Surp Kevork church. As a child, he and his older brother Levon

helped their father in their leather tanning factory and attended the Getronagan Armenian High School in the district of Karaköy (Galata). Among his classmates were Ara Güler, Vartan Ozinian, Chavarche Mardirossian and Vartges Semerjian.

In the mid 1950s, he emigrated to the United States and enrolled in Northeastern University's work/study program, where



he earned a Bachelor of Science in 1961. In Boston, he met his wife Anahid (née Serge-nian); they married in 1962.

He earned his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in chemical engineering in 1970.

Thereafter, he was employed as a research scientist with a focus on materials at American Cyanamid (now Cytec Industries) in Stamford, Conn., where he con-

ducted award-winning work on fibers and polymers, published his findings in academic journals, and earned five patents.

After finishing his doctorate, he and Anahid moved to Westport, Conn. with their three children, Peter, Daniel and Christina, where they lived until 1993. After retiring from his position at Cyanamid, he and Anahid moved to Brookline, Massachusetts and Boothbay Harbor, Maine. Dr. Maranci was known for his brilliance, generosity, kindness, sense of humor, and an abiding love of classical music and of animals. He loved painting, needlepoint, cooking midia dolma, and was an active volunteer. His departure brings great pain and sadness to his loved ones. He is survived by his wife, Anahid, their three children, Peter, Daniel (m. Jennifer King), Christina (m. Robert Dulgarian), three grandchildren: William, Lily, and Sebastian, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was a joy to all who knew him.

There will be a gathering to celebrate his memory, and details will be shared with family and friends.

Professor Richard G. Hovannisian: *Karasunk* and Message of Gratitude

FRESNO — Professor Richard G. Hovannisian's passing has brought about a swell of heartfelt sympathies and meaningful remembrances. The Hovannisian family expresses its gratitude for all of the messages of solace and comfort received in his memory. In worldly life, he was the quintessential teacher of Armenian history and experience in the 20th and 21st centuries. In eternal life, his spirit and vision will continue to inspire generations to come. The memorial gifts to Orran (orran.org), the Holy Martyrs Ferrahian School Richard G. Hovannisian Scholarship Fund, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and other worthy charities are testaments to the light and lessons that will be shared in his name.

The *Karasunk*/ 40th Day Requiem services will be held on Sunday, August 20, at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno, California and Sourp Sarkis Cathedral in Yerevan, Armenia.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

\$20 Million Gift from Edward and Pamela Avedisian to Further Expand AUA

GIFT, from page 7 (CBRD), as well as the Zvart Avedisian Onanian Center for Health Services Research and Development (CHSR). In addition, they were the primary benefactors for the construction of AUA's Paramaz Avedisian Building (PAB). All three donations were made in honor of Edward's siblings, and a more recent contribution established two endowed professorships in recognition of fellow AUA

trustees, Dr. Judson King and Dr. William Frazer.

His contributions to AUA are among the numerous philanthropic works he has accomplished in both Armenia and the United States. In the recent past, he made the headlines in the U.S. for his generous donation to his alma mater, Boston University, in honor of his long-time friend Aram Chobanian, who would only accept the honor if Avedisian's name were also displayed alongside his.

When asked what moved him to carry out these philanthropic endeavors throughout his lifetime in honor of those whom he loved and cherished, his wife Pamela responds, "Edward recognized that the success he had achieved in life was in large part due to his parents, the great sacrifices they made for their children, and the loving, nurturing environment that was their home. He and his siblings were very close to and supportive of one another in all their endeavors. It was only natural for him to

honor the special bond they shared and herald their achievements. He also wanted to champion the success of his friends. He was immensely proud of their accomplishments and felt it was fitting to name buildings after them to laud their excellence in their respective fields and honor their legacies through naming." She adds, "Edward was very humble; he didn't feel the need to put his name on buildings. Rather, he was content seeing his name listed in the program booklets of the orchestras with which he performed, alongside his fellow musicians." At last, though posthumously, Edward's and his wife's names will be displayed on the walls of the new AUA building duly immortalizing their longstanding legacy at the University.

The arts played a significant role throughout Ed's life, as he was a clarinetist for over 60 years. Thus, these new expansion projects are fittingly earmarked for

these disciplines. His mother loved music and enjoyed singing and reciting poetry. His father would chant the Divine Liturgy in Armenian at home every Sunday. Arts



Edward Avedisian



Paramaz, Edward, and Zvart Avedisian,



From left, Dr. Armen & Nelly Der Kiureghian, Edward & Pamela Avedisian, June 2016

and culture were celebrated in their home. "After he retired from music, we enjoyed attending concerts, ballets, operas, etc.," recalls Pamela. "Our shared love of the arts is what brought us together. I accompanied the chorus that Ed was directing at Endicott College (Massachusetts). Every vacation we took involved attending various artistic performances and visiting museums. We would make an annual trip to New York to see several operas over a long weekend. The arts and humanities have brought great joy to both our lives. I don't think either of us could imagine life without them!"

Construction efforts for the new buildings are currently underway. The AUA Building Committee appointed for these projects is in the process of interviewing the shortlisted architectural firms for making the final selection. Ronald Altoon, FAIA, LEED AP, the president and CEO of Altoon Strategic consulting firm, and former president of the American Institute of Architects, is leading this effort. Ground-breaking is expected in 2024.

The new buildings will include classrooms, offices, science and engineering laboratories, conference rooms, auditoriums, art studios, music rooms, and other functional spaces. In addition, there will be underground parking underneath all three buildings. Entrance to all three buildings will be through the Atrium, which will also be used for various cultural, academic, and other collaborative events.

The Paruyr Sevak building will be the first in Avedisian's philanthropic portfolio to not be dedicated to a friend or family; instead, to be named after one of the greatest Armenian poets of the 20th century. Avedisian greatly admired Sevak's works and felt that the building should bear his name to honor his legacy and serve as inspiration to all those who study within those walls.

Pamela fondly remarks, "Sevak's life and legacy will underscore the expectation of excellence that AUA strives to impart to every student. Edward firmly believed that AUA is creating the next generation of Paruyr Sevaks. There are a couple pertinent lines from Sevak's famous poem entitled 'To My Son' that reflect his vision —

I would not want,
that your life become like that,
a flat gravel way.

Don't pass over the paved road,
you must prefer to build a road!

That's what Edward wanted for the sons and daughters of Armenia — for them to be the next leaders and builders!"



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.



Dr. Nubar Berberian 2023 Annual Awards

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

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 30, 2023**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2023** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winners will receive their awards in **November, 2023**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, August 10, 2023

COMMUNITY NEWS

AMAA Annual Meeting Banquet to Celebrate Armenian Evangelical Education

AMAA, from page 7

original vision, considering what the next project should be to continue addressing vital needs of Armenia and be an inspira-



Pamela Avedisian delivering her message at the 2023 Graduation Ceremony of Avedisian School

tion for young people currently pondering what their own dreams will be for the benefit of all Armenians.

Armenian Evangelicals have a long tradition supporting education. In the Near East, wherever our ancestors settled in Diaspora, we have planted schools near our churches to help our Armenian community

grow ever stronger which has proved to be a blessing to us all.

Speaking at the Avedisian School graduation this June, Pamela Avedisian reminded everyone of the pride she and her late husband shared in celebrating the personal successes of each Avedisian student and graduate. "It is deeply gratifying knowing all Ed and I have contributed has impacted the lives of so many..., and our projects will further impact Armenia for decades to come. I hope that all of you get to the point where you can give back, as enriching the lives of others is what it is all about."

Berj Karazian, a distinguished and Honored Artist of Armenia, a soloist with the Yerevan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, will perform musical selections during the banquet. This celebrated outstanding tenor has performed all over the world. Karazian will be accompanied by Soprano Armine Vardanyan, an artist who recently made her debut in Carnegie Hall, and in the opera "Magic Flute" as the Queen of Night in Opera America of New York.

For more information may visit the AMAA website at amaa.org.



Ribbon cutting ceremony of Avedisian School. L to R: AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and

Dr. Libaridian To Discuss New Book at NAASR Talk

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) is hosting an online talk by Dr. Gerald J. Libaridian, Historian, Educator (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, retired), Diplomat, on Tuesday, September 12, at 7.30 p.m.

Libaridian will discuss his latest book, *A Precarious Armenia: The Third Republic, The Karabakh Conflict, and Genocide Politics* (Gomidas Institute, 2023), in which he explores a number of fundamental issues regarding Armenia's foreign and security policies and scrutinizes the political culture as the framework within which positions have been defined and solutions have been sought.

The previously published and unpublished material analyzes the political thinking that characterized the response to challenges the Third Republic faced and failed to address from the standpoint of statehood versus a vague but powerful nationalism. Libaridian considers themes such as Armenia and Armenians as agents of their own history as opposed to the dominant sense of victimhood, maximalism confused with patriotism, the role of mediators and other states as saviors, and the comfort zone of illusions and legends as opposed to hard realism and pragmatism.



Dr. Gerard J. Libaridian

Libaridian served as senior adviser to the former president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian and was the director of Armenian Studies Program and held the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History at the University of Michigan. He is the author of numerous books including *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking since Independence* (1999) and *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State* (2007).

A Precarious Armenia: The Third Republic, The Karabakh Conflict, and Genocide Politics is available in the NAASR Bookstore: <https://naasr.org/.../a-precarious-republic-the-third...>

Live on Zoom. Registration is required and free. <https://bit.ly/NAASR-Libaridian>

Livestream on the NAASR YouTube channel Armenian Studies. <https://www.youtube.com/c/ArmenianStudies>

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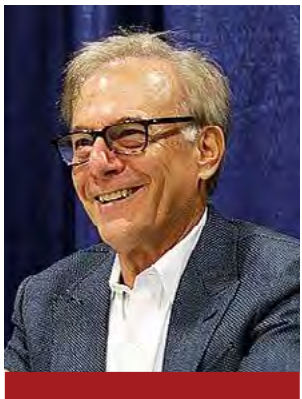
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Complimentary parking. Light Reception to Follow.

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

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



Arts & Culture

'Aurora's Sunrise' Animated Feature, Based on Genocide Survivor's Story, to Be Shown in US, Canada

LOS ANGELES — Bars Media Films, the newly established branch in Los Angeles of Armenia's largest independent documentary production company, is proud to announce its first-ever animated feature, which is also the first-ever animated documentary film made in Armenia, and Armenia's Official Selection for 95th Academy Awards for Best International Feature Film, "Aurora's Sunrise."

Directed by Inna Sahakyan, "Aurora's Sunrise" premiered in competition at Annecy IAFF2022 and then became a festival favorite winning more than 10 awards, including the Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2022 for Best Animated Film, Movies that Matter 2023 Audience Award and Special Mention Winner, Audience Favorites at IDFA 2022, Audience Awards at Animation is Film 2022 and FIFDH Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights 2023 for Grand Prix, among others. The film will soon have its North American theatrical release, opening Aug. 11 in New York City at Village East by Angelika and New Plaza Cinema, Aug. 18 in Los Angeles at Laemmle Glendale, Sept. 1 in Toronto at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, with director Inna Sahakyan in-person for Q&As at all three. The film will also roll out in other cities across the U.S. and Canada throughout August and the Fall.

The film started showing in New York City on August 11 and will play at Village East Cinema and New Plaza Cinema for another week until August 24.

The film opens in Los Angeles at Laemmle Glendale on August 18, in Toronto at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on September 1 with the filmmaker in person for post screening conversation.

Starting August 25, it will expand to cities including, Portland, Oreg., Seattle, Beverly Hills, San Diego, Wilmette, Ill., Columbus, Ohio, Waterville, Maine, Montreal, Rhinebeck, NY, Washington, DC, Ann Arbor, Mich., Bryn Mawr, Penn., and Salem, Ma., and more. For tickets go to this website: <https://documentarystudio.barsmedia.am/new-page-4>

In 1915, as WWI raged on, the Ottoman Empire singled out its entire Armenian population for destruction. Only 14 years old at the time, Aurora Mardiganian's story was tragically relatable. Forced onto a death march towards the Syrian desert, she lost her entire family before being kidnapped and sold into sexual slavery. Four years later, through luck and extraordinary courage, she escaped to New York, where her story became a media sensation. Starring as herself in the silent epic "Auction of Souls," an early Hollywood blockbuster, Aurora became the face of one of the largest and most successful charity campaigns in American history, as one of the first women activists fighting against the injustices of war. With a blend of vivid animation, interviews see SUNRISE, page 16



"Elephants in the room," 140 x 130 cm.: Majestic elephants, accompanied by whimsical friends, transform this room into a magical realm of vibrant enchantment.

Gabo's Paintings to Be Exhibited at Saryan Cultural Center Inauguration

By Tamara Hovhannisyan

In these tumultuous times, when our Armenian national spirit feels fractured, rallying around our culture becomes paramount. Gevorg (George) Dagliyan, a rising star, and accomplished intellect within the Armenian community, epitomizes this with his generous and dedicated support of our culture.

This young man, chairman and chief operating officer of Commonwealth Casualty Company in Phoenix, is more than an educator and successful entrepreneur. He's the embodiment of an invigorating success story that breathes life into our ongoing national saga as immigrants. In the face of national uncertainty and global upheaval, it's crucial that we honor and support each other, standing steadfast in safeguarding our identity. Our history tells stories of adversity and yet of an undeniable resilience that binds us as a nation.

As we traverse this path, painter Gabriel (Gabo) Manoukian brings an innovative and unique creative spark that rekindles the spirit of a new renaissance. Within this unfolding narrative, Dr. Dagliyan's role is pivotal. His achievements and steadfast dedication help reinforce our shared stories and continuously shape our collective, evolving legacy. Gabo's art, supported by Dagliyan, will be a highlight of the inauguration of the Saryan Cultural Center in the Canoga Park neighborhood of Los Angeles on September 23. The Saryan Center is founded and directed by Ashot Gegamian.

see GABO, page 13



Gabriel Manoukian in front of one of his works

Books

The Stain on the Wall: Arthur Kayzakian's *the book of redacted paintings*

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

With his "The best translation of darkness is a victory flag," Arthur Kayzakian divests the victory flag of its connotations of glory and joy and makes *the book of redacted paintings* (Black Lawrence Press, 2023) an indictment of all displacements, all erasures and all wars. The persona in the poems assembled in the slim volume is trying to write his way through to his homeland. With images that reach deep into the consciousness, Kayzakian awakens the reader to the horrors of an "invasion" that took the persona's whole world away from him. The exiled son's yearning "to get back to my world," yet failure to reclaim what he has lost, underscores the enormity of the crime committed against him. His "Dear Reader,/Today I haven't thought about killing myself" conveys his despondency about the reality he now has to exist in.

It is through the search for a missing painting that the poems explore this "upside-down world." All that the search brings to light, however, is that the portrait, "My Father Under the Stars, 1979," "obviously, of my father" standing by a redwood, "cannot be recovered." After numerous letters back and forth with The Art Restoration Center and the FBI, the son is courteously asked to "take your endeavors elsewhere." Indeed, because of the "unusual request for a painting redacted from reality," The Art Center takes "the liberty to include our Trauma, Loss and Therapy Department for further counseling" in their response to his quest. The sarcastic tone of the persona's "This painting does not exist, but in some version of this story, it was stolen in winter, the season my father was late from the war," cannot be missed. In "Stain on the Wall," a poem that can be said to encapsulate his vision, Kayzakian writes:

when potential buyers
arrive touring the house

they stop at the wall
and ask about the stain
I apologize and assure them
it is not blood

that the absence of artwork is a
casualty of migration

I say this with a smile
that bears

the blueprint of my father
hanging on the wall inside me

The father fled Iran during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which the see BOOKS, page 14



ARTS & CULTURE

Gabo's Paintings to Be Exhibited at Saryan Cultural Center

GABO, from page 12

The Man Behind a Mysterious Smile

How does one fill an emotional void when one is far from the country that shaped you? How do you connect with the nostalgia of the past and the emptiness of the present while attempting to make sense of the emotional turmoil? How do you keep the memory of what was or what once existed? How do you reconcile a divided soul when forced to leave your homeland? The only way to process this rawness of emotion is by expressing oneself creatively, as a mere attempt to overcome that void.

Gabo, born in Armenia, is a man with an extraordinary destiny and a larger-than-life spirit. Visiting him in his new and spacious workplace feels like stepping into a childhood kaleidoscope, where the owner of the territory welcomes you with an intriguing smile on his face. It's as if you're entering a wonderland, and Gabo is the doorman, the creator of that wonderland.

Gabo is a deeply sensitive individual who conceals his pain beneath the enigmatic smile of an enchanting storyteller. Despite being fragmented and deeply shredded, his narrative contributes to the puzzle of a broad, panoramic view, shedding light on the abandonment of his past. There remain numerous questions to be asked and answered, but who will take on the task of inquiring? For now, the response is merely silence. However, amidst this quiet, the world is hemorrhaging, posing the question: Could art be the healing balm we need?

Gabo holds a distinctive position within Armenian artistry. Many observers have embarked on the challenging task of cat-

dividual of exceptional depth. Establishing meaningful communication takes time, but it's like unleashing a genie from its bottle, once accomplished. Suddenly, one is afforded a rare opportunity to delve into Gabo's world, explore his psyche, and appreciate his work's philosophical underpinnings. To connect deeply with Gabo requires acute observation and patience. He is a guarded individual, wholly immersed in the world he crafts. He simultaneously embodies the roles of king and servant, creator and muse in this universe of his making.

Gabo's creativity is distinguished by two striking features: his use of color palettes and the populated compositions he crafts. His work presents a sprawling panorama of life, depicting characters in various states of existence: some reveling in dominance, others immersed in a midday meal, some fantasizing about amorous nights, all co-existing harmoniously. His art strives to bridge the gap between the animal and human worlds, the flora and the fauna.

Universality permeates his work; one encounters objects and characters in entirely unexpected settings. The scenarios he captures in his artwork are intended to incite laughter, inviting the viewer to partake in life's vibrant, joyous madness, thus offering an escape from the tribulations of everyday existence. In his unique fashion, Gabo harnesses the flight, dance, and combat of his boundless imagination. His intention is to serve both collectors and art lovers by showcasing the breathtaking beauty that human imagination can produce. Through his work, he aids in making life not just tolerable but truly enjoyable.

Gabo's canvases transform into immense playgrounds, where a fresh charac-



"Noah's Ark," 165 x 157 cm.: An enchanting voyage: unveiling the secret world amidst Noah's Ark

ter distortion techniques of Post-Expressionism. In doing so, he shatters the boundaries of the surrealist movement and its related offshoots. He embarks on the uncharted territory of self-created fantasy and wisdom, inadvertently establishing his own unique creative universe. This universe is instantly recognizable, unfailingly genuine, and perpetually jubilant. When asked about his art style, Gabo humbly maintains that "the style chooses him, and he becomes the servant of the style." His personality and creativity are inextricably intertwined; he lives within his canvases and engages in an internal dialogue with them. To him, everything around possesses an energy. As a variant of the fantasy genre, Magical Realism has influenced literature and music. Clearly, Gabo's art can be securely classified as adhering to this genre, intertwining the essence of melodic lyricism.

Creativity is Gabo's religion; it completes his universe. Nothing in his works provokes confusion. Every element communicates with the viewer in a friendly manner; there is no pain. Everything appears effortless, and nothing seems impossible. The viewer becomes a participant in his fairy tale. He harbors his own perception of reality. He fabricates his own relationships. In his theatre of characters, animals, birds, and humans coexist in biblical harmony. It's as if he's the captain of Noah's Ark, where everyone embarks on a journey of joy, not a journey of obligatory rescue.

Gabo's mind is a relentless factory of dreams, creating and discovering avenues for the most captivating compositional implementation. It is a surreal expedition into a strange yet sweet and humorous world that is mature and teeming with both spoken and unspoken messages. These unspoken messages have a unique way of fostering harmony within your universe as a viewer. Gabo adeptly opens a path for merging the possible with the impossible. He places reality and dreams as inseparable lovers under the same blanket — a magnet that both attracts and repels. He personalizes and humanizes kindness so that everything can coexist harmoniously in this easi-

ly approachable world. Life is an unending fantasy in Gabriel's paintings. The viewer is gifted a free ticket to enter his universe, where the relentless work of his restless mind is on full display.

This self-created metamorphosis of reality has its own rules and regulations, where everything must reflect the image in the artist's exhilarated mind: the fertile pleasures of sunshine, the chatter of colorful birds ready to share the eternal tale of nature's romance with its cycles and familiar seasonal changes. Gabo's unusual affinity with the natural world showcases and generously disseminates our everlasting longing for eternal peace. His paintings are captured visualizations, tributes to human awareness, and the inner connection with the universal sacred that dwells in the deepest corners of our psyches. True artists are phantoms of shapes and colors, elusive presences beyond the known categories of common experiences.

Gabo's canvases are imaginary destinations where laughter and delightfully unreal connections primarily have one mission: to transport you to a world of dreams. In this world, pain is forgotten, obligations dissolve, and love is the hidden flower nestled in every corner of the canvas. His work encourages viewers to abandon the burdens of everyday reality and dwell in his self-crafted dream. Unsurprisingly, as an Armenian, Gabo understands how to grapple with losses and how to begin a new from scratch. For Gabo, all objects in the visual world are imbued with their own soul. His characters are heavy yet weightless. Music permeates everywhere, creating a magical existential symphony. This is Gabo's universe. It's unearthly yet real. No one can intrude to steal or cause harm; life is an unceasing fountain of excitement. Nobody is alone, betrayed, or marginalized.

They say that we all dwell in the twilight zone of existence and non-existence, part of an azure dream. Some of us never cease to glow, guiding humanity through the darkness of starless nights, eventually becoming luminous stars in our own right... Gabriel Manoukian's name is undoubtedly on that list.



"The Sound of Peace," 202 x 300 cm. Magic in melodies: A symphony of playful wonder, where vibrant characters dance and soar in rhythm to the enchanting sounds of a giant musical instrument, unveiling a world where imagination takes flight

egorizing his creative output. Although frequently labeled a surrealist, it's vital to remember that surrealism inherently grapples with profound conflicts, allegorical confrontations with painful realities, and philosophical inquiries, all expressed under the weight of human nature. Gabo's art also delves into philosophical depths, but unlike the gloomy intensity typically associated with surrealism, his work effervesces with lightness. His creativity soars beyond societal woes, offering a remedy by infusing elements of humor, surprise, and whimsy. Unlike classic surrealists who operate under the oppressive shadow of life's horrors, Gabo's creative universe gleams with luminosity.

Engaging with Gabo can initially be an encounter marked by profound silence, making it a deeply intriguing experience. Behind this enigmatic quietude lies an in-

ter awaits discovery behind every towering tree or miniature bush in the convergence of fauna and flora. Each turn reveals a new persona, fostering an experience reminiscent of finding a reflection within a reflection, unraveling the puzzle of self-perception through another's gaze.

Magical Realism melds fantasy with reality, morphing the familiar into the unrecognizable, devoid of logical explanation. Simultaneously, it elucidates the mystique of events and their dynamics. This fascinating interplay is clearly evident in Gabo's art. His boundless imagination is the wellspring of his vast compositional tapestries. His work is unparalleled, a joyous and eccentric celebration of spiritual nomads journeying toward self-constructed paradises. Gabo places his professional and spiritual trust in such innovative visual transformations by employing the figural



ARTS & CULTURE

The Stain on the Wall: Arthur Kayzakian's *the book of redacted paintings*

BOOKS, from page 12

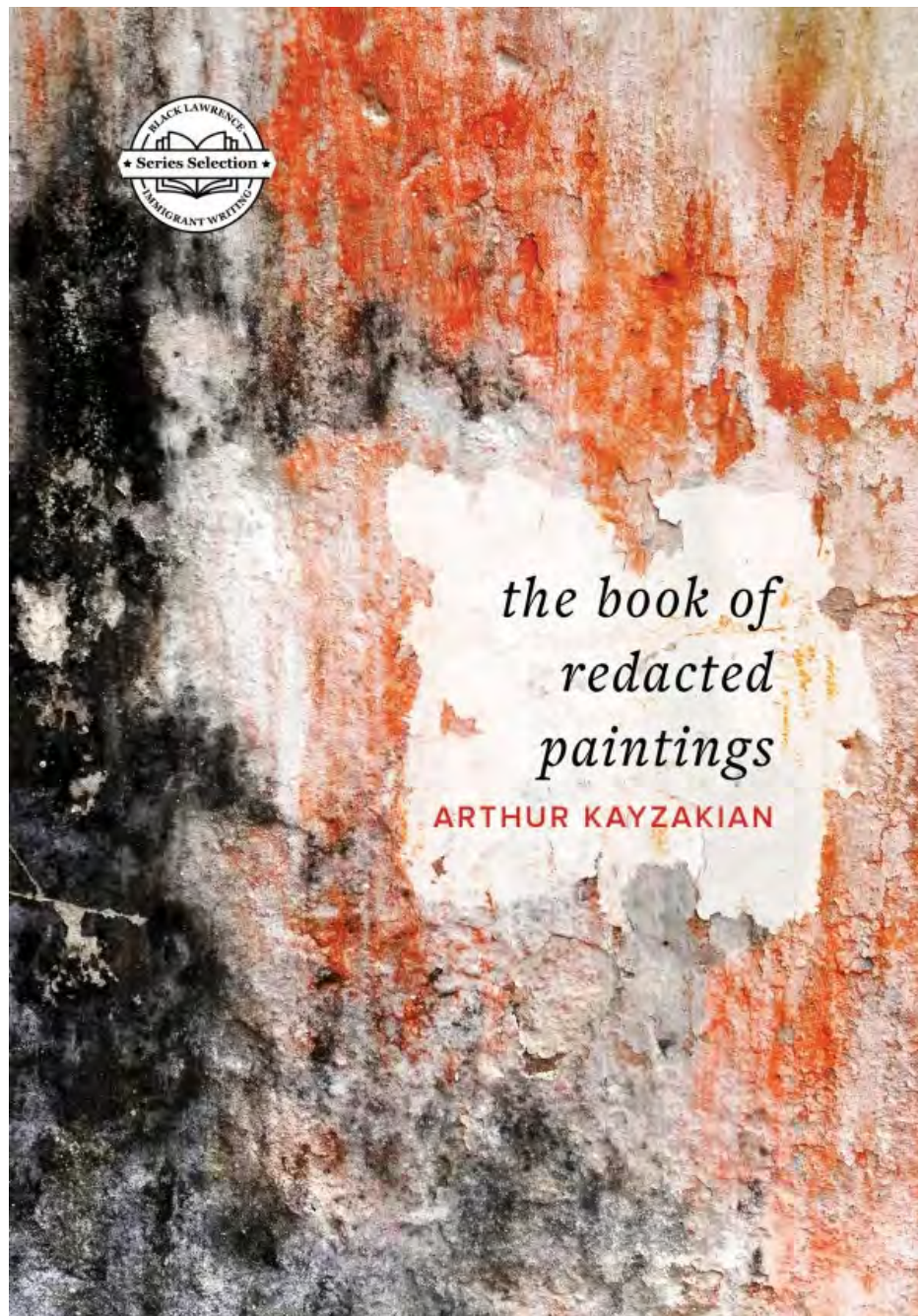
images of “soldiers in green uniforms,” “green oil tanks,” the “caskets and rifles” the father made “for men who unbuttoned their graycoats/sat on barstools ordering drink after drink,” insensitive to the horrors of war, all draw on:

one day the men in graycoats
knocked on my father’s door
and asked him to kneel before the empire

The separation is complete, the verdict irreversible. Nonetheless, the past remains very real for the persona. It is the “Home . . . I carry in my blood,” he sings in “Dispora.” He apologizes to the reader “in advance/since I will ask you to see things that do not exist.” Stubbornly clinging to “a world that could have been,” especially in an age where myths are constantly reformed and identities reinvented, further underscores the persona’s sense of alienation.

Tormented by his loss, plagued with hopelessness, and suicidal, the son seeks therapy. However, no therapy can help with “the ritual of paying bills” — “I’m late on my water and power bill—” and “the buildings collapsing in your chest.” To “end it all./The mortgage, the deadlines, the apologies . . . to escape life to become expunged” feels like the only way out. The persona is destined to die alone, unable to say “i love you,” notwithstanding his acknowledgment of those who helped “me believe in myself . . . showed me a path to healing.” Even “my Higher Power who never led me astray, who saved my life,” invoked in his Dedications, proves inadequate.

One wonders if one who feels betrayed and censored by history can still construct visions. Indeed, throughout the poems the persona apologizes for his anxieties and for “the shame i feel . . . for my failure to locate my country/in my father.” Yet, the courage he has to voice the truth about the madness and the corruption surrounding him, about “the part history leaves out,” to borrow his



words, evidences that his creativity goes on. With his stunningly precise images, “as in the sugar of a dying language, the scent of ash and a bashed-in door, as in smoke-rings blown from the mouth of a glorified general.

as in river then a slice of jail. of wine stain, the torture of praying. as in history. as in we wait with white men for metal doors to slide open. instead of anger, we have flower petal weight on our shoulders. as in psy-

chedelic. it’s okay we smile. it’s not okay we know . . .” Kayzakian gives the reader insights into “the contagion of *the world’s slow stain*,” (italics mine) to borrow a line from *Adonais*, British Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley’s elegy on the death of John Keats.

In “This Halloween,” the persona dresses as a walking painting:

i want to be a stolen painting so the earth
could see
the imprint of a wall in the aftermath of
hands
i want my canvas to be a thousand mouths
that fall silent when the siren sounds
when i step up to your patio for candy
like “trick or treat”
you’ll open the door and manage a smile
you won’t know what else to do
you’ll say *and what are you supposed to
be this year*
i’ll want to say the leftover dust of a pic-
ture frame
which is another way to say *kheyanat*,
betrayal
i’ll want to say the dark shade of a canvas
in its leaving
but instead I’ll say “thank you—I am the
result of history”

With “I am the result of history,” Kayzakian implicates a whole history we have reduced to wars and to genocides. The gentle, non-threatening, almost pleading, voice of the persona, “Please Ask . . ./what happened to the Armenians?” exposes the anger lurking beneath. “Now our laughter happens, though/we know where hell came from,” writes Kayzakian in “Tehran.” The world remains a hostile place.

Kayzakian serves as the Poetry Chair for the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA). *the book of redacted paintings*, his debut collection of poems, won him the 2021 inaugural Black Lawrence Immigrant Writing Series award.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Vanetzi Ashkile (Spinach Soup)

A hearty, healthy, delicious Armenian soup perfect for cooler weather – or any time of year.

This is one of the many treasured recipes in the Armenian and Selected Favorite Recipes Cookbook published by the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church Trinity Guild (now Ladies' Guild) in 1970. The Ladies' Auxiliary was organized in 1914, the year the new church was built. This supporting membership of 68 young ladies was dedicated to the church in all areas - visiting the ill and shut-ins, and was the only major fundraiser for many years. They taught the Armenian language classes on Saturdays to all age students. These pioneer members had a significant role in the church Christian life. In later years, these senior members were responsible for preparation and serving memorial (hokejosh) luncheons.

The Trinity Guild was formed in 1949 with the goal of improving the Sunday School attendance. The Holy Trinity Ladies' Guild was formed in 2011 as a result of combining the Ladies' Auxiliary and Trinity Guild. The purpose and objectives of the Ladies' Guild is to promote and perpetuate the Armenian Apostolic faith and to encourage all members of the church and its community to join and participate in church activities. The Ladies' Guild offers financial support to the church and its affiliated groups and promotes the social, educational, and spiritual wellbeing of church members.

The fundraisers evolved into the Annual Bazaar. Yearly service activities include working for the lunch delivery in the spring, hosting a joint dinner meeting with the Men's Society, participating in the annual April 24th commemoration as well as baking and cooking throughout the year to prepare for the Annual Grape Blessing and Bazaar.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs. stewing beef or lamb (boneless)
- 2 large cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
- 3-4 cups chicken or vegetable broth, or water
- 1/2 cup wheat berries, shelled wheat or whole wheat kernels (Also known as dzedzadz. Shelled wheat is sold in Middle Eastern stores.)
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 1 medium bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 medium bunch parsley, chopped
- 1 small bunch cilantro, chopped (optional)
- Salt, pepper to taste
- 2 medium bunches fresh spinach, washed, chopped
- Juice of 1 large lemon (or 1/2 lb. rhubarb, finely chopped)
- 4 medium eggs, optional
- 4 tablespoons butter (or 1/4 cup olive oil to taste)

PREPARATION:

Brown stew meat in a large pot in butter or olive oil, tossing, until meat is brown on all sides. Add the onions and garlic, and sauté until onions are translucent.

Add just enough of the broth or water to cover the meat; bring to a gentle boil. Cover pot, and braise for about one hour, stirring occasionally.

Add the tomato sauce, the rest of the broth or water, dzedzadz, carrots, green onions, parsley, cilantro - if using, and seasonings, and bring to a full boil. Stir, reduce heat, and simmer for 25-35 minutes or until the meat and dzedzadz are very tender.

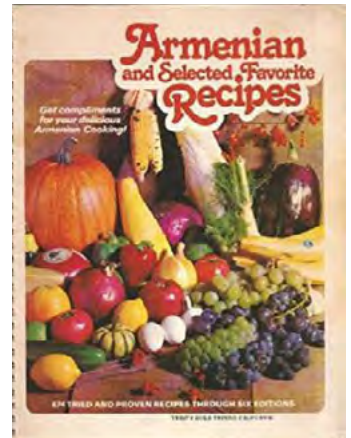
Add the spinach and lemon juice (or rhubarb). Add more broth or water, as needed, to make a stew-like consistency. Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until the spinach (and rhubarb, if using) is/are cooked.

Optional: crack the eggs, one at a time, into a separate bowl. Gently add each egg to the pot and steam for a few minutes until egg whites are set.

How to order your copy of the *Armenian and Selected Favorite Recipes Cookbook*: The cost of the cookbook is \$20.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping. For questions or to place an order, please call or contact:

Ms. Nazik Arisian
Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church
2226 Ventura St.
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 486-1141 (office)
Email: nazik@holymtrinityfresno.org

Make check payable to: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church.



The Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Fresno is the oldest Armenian Apostolic church in the Western United States. The first Holy Mass-Badarak was officiated by Rev. Aharon Melconian in 1895. The church is registered as a National Historic site located in downtown Fresno. Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church is a historic Armenian church located in the heart of downtown Fresno, California. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this beautiful church serves as a foundation for the Fresno Armenian community and is a focal point of historic downtown Fresno. The "Blessing of the Cornerstones" was held on January 14, 1914. At this ceremony, a handful of soil brought from the Monastery of St. Krikor the Illuminator in Garin (Erzerum) was placed in the foundation along with a "Nshkar" from St. James Monastery in Jerusalem. The first Badarak (Liturgy) was held in the completed basement of the Church on April 12, 1914. The architect of the Church was Boghos Condorjian (Lawrence



Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Fresno

Cone). The total cost of the Church was \$22,594.84. The Holy Trinity Church was located at the center of "Armenian Town," a ten to twelve-block area in downtown Fresno. This area remained predominantly Armenian until the mid-1950s, when many Armenians there became financially and socially successful and moved out.

<https://thearmeniankitchen.com/vanetzi-ashkile-spinach-soup-another/>
<https://thearmeniankitchen.com/simit-recipe-from-fresnos-holy-trinity/>
<https://thearmeniankitchen.com/lemon-chicken-spinach-soup-with-mint-by/>

*Raffi Tapanian, a licensed attorney in California, says in Cultural Genocide of the Armenian Heritage of Van, Western Armenia, "Van is a city that is currently in Turkey's Van Province on the eastern side of the Republic of Turkey, located around Lake Van. This city has a long history of being populated by thousands of Armenians in the past 3,000 years under the various Armenian kingdoms and foreign empires, but following the Armenian Genocide of 1915 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian population has vanished. Along with the erasure of the Armenian population of Van, the erasure of thousands of years of Armenian heritage has and continues to take place." For more about Van, see: <https://as-barez.com/cultural-genocide-of-the-armenian-heritage-of-van-western-armenia/>



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 14 — The Orange County Trex Fraternity presents Kef Time So-Cal at Bagramian Hall Mezza 900 W. Lincoln Avenue, Montebello. Featuring Hagopian Kef Time Legacy Band. Saturday, 6 p.m. to 1a.m. ORDER TICKETS ONLINE: orange-county-trex-fraternity.ticketleap.com Adults \$85. Students, College Age & Younger \$65. Table Sponsor \$800. For More Information Contact: Ralph Dergazarian 714.681.3013 • Brian Melkesian 626.827.8434 Chuck Simonian 559.799.3949 • Ari Gulugian 949.701.8006

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 27 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic, 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill, 12 noon to 5 p.m. Live music with the fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh & Chicken Kebab, Kheyima, Vegetarian Plate Available. Beverages including Cash Bar. Cash Raffles. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. Tours of the new church will be given. For more info please visit www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 3729227. Take Rte. 495 N to exit 106, bear right at the end of the ramp and follow the signs.

SEPTEMBER 3 — St. Mark Armenian Church's Annual Armenian Festival will be held on the church grounds on Sunday, from 12pm to 6pm, 2427 Wilbraham Road, Springfield. Hot dinners feature St. Mark's signature Losh Kebab (made of ground beef, lamb and a variety of herbs) and Chicken Kebab, along with Porov Kufteh, which was added to the menu last year and is an Armenian-style meatball made of ground lamb and beef. Attendees can enjoy an array of ethnic baked goods and sweets, and Soorj, Armenian coffee, will also be available. There will also be a cultural booth with handmade Armenian jewelry and other items made in Armenia, and a raffle. All proceeds from the Fest benefit the ministries of St. Mark Armenian Church. stmarkarmenianchurch.org, or call (413) 783-5793. Admission to the festival and parking are free. The event will be held rain or shine (there will be plenty of seating under tents).

Armenian Heritage Park Weekly through October 24 at 12:15pm MIDDAY LABYRINTH WALKS AT THE PARK. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston Tuesdays for all who work and live in the city and beyond, an opportunity for connection and wellbeing. Offered in collaboration with Boston Public Health Commission and The Greenway Conservancy.

Weekly through October 25 at 4pm

TEA & TRANQUILITY. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston Wednesdays to Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Marvel at Abstract Sculpture. Write a Wish on a Ribbon for The Wishing Tree. Refreshments.

SEPTEMBER 9 — Armenian Heritage Park at 11am. LET'S MEET AT THE PARK! COLLEGE STUDENTS IN BOSTON & BEYOND RSVP appreciated, please email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org with name of your college

SEPTEMBER 21 — Thursday WELCOME RECEPTION FOR NEW CITIZENS following their Naturalization Ceremony at Faneuil Hall Supported by the Noubar and Anna Afeyan Endowed Fund for Public Program. For details, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 23 — JEAN APPOLON EXPRESSIONS: DANCE PERFORMANCE AT THE PARK, Momentum Greenway Dance Program, presented by Amazon, 11:00am and 3:00pm. Rain date: September 24 Inspired by the Park's design and key features, ArWsWc Director Jean Appolon selected the Park to create this original piece.

OCTOBER 7 — MOMENTUM GREENWAY DANCE PROGRAM presented by Amazon, Four dance companies perform on The Greenway including at Armenian Heritage Park. 11:00am ConWnuum Dance Project at AunWe Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park. 12:30pm Vimoksha Dance Company at Rows Wharf Plaza, 1:30pm Jean Appolon Expressions at Armenian Heritage Park, 2:30pm Public Displays of MoWon at Carolyn Lynch Garden

NOVEMBER 12 — Sunday at 2pm GIVING THANKS! TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing

Tree. Share the Warmth: ABCD Winter Drive

Sunday, December 10 at 4:30pm

DECEMBER 10 — CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY "Boston's Newest Holiday TradiWon" Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Meet & Greet. Hot Chocolate & Luscious Cookies. Share the Warmth: ABCD Winter Drive

SEPTEMBER 11 — Saint James Men's Club and Holy Trinity Men's Union will have a joint meeting on Monday, at the Holy Trinity Center, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Guest Speaker will be Matt Slater of the New England Patriots. Mezza at 5:45, dinner at 6:45, Kheyima or Iosh dinner \$20.00. Will appreciate R.S.V.P. to the church office 617-354-0632.

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. 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 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 Hacopian 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

SEPTEMBER 24 — St. Gregory the Enlightener Church Picnic Annual Picnic & "Fall Family Fair" at St. Gregory Armenian Church in White Plains, from noon until 5:00 p.m. Featuring Armenian music, Raffles and Fun Activities for the children. Traditional Armenian Food and Wine. Admission and parking are free. "North Street" Exit 25 on Hutchinson River Parkway, 1131 North St, White Plains, N.Y. Phone: 914-428-2595 or saintgregorychurch-wp@gmail.com

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.stnersess.edu.

Send Calendar Items to the Mirror-Spectator: To send calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator, email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, 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.

'Aurora's Sunrise' Animated Feature, Based on Genocide Survivor's Story, to Be Shown in US, Canada

SUNRISE, from page 12

with Aurora herself, and 18 minutes of surviving re-discovered footage from her lost silent epic, "Aurora's Sunrise" revives a forgotten story of survival, hope and the endurance of the human spirit.

"The Armenian Genocide is the enduring pain of my nation," said Sahakyan. "I was afraid of telling stories that only confirmed Armenians as a nation of victims with no historical agency and nothing but tragedy running through our veins. That is, until I stumbled upon an interview with Aurora Mardigianian while going through archival interviews with Armenian Genocide survivors at the Zoryan Institute. Through her words and expressions, an incredible but ordinary heroism shone: this woman survived a genocide but refused to be a victim. This is

the character I wanted to build in 'Aurora's Sunrise,' resilient, powerful and heartwarming all at once."

Sahakyan has directed and produced feature-length documentaries, documentary series and shorts, for over 15 years. Following her feature-length debut co-directing the award-winning "Armenia's Last Tightrope Dancer" in 2010, she directed "Mel" and "Aurora's Sunrise," completing both international co-productions in 2022. Inna also enjoys mentoring her native Armenia's next generation of filmmakers.

Atom Egoyan (Director, "Ararat") & Arsinée Khanjian (Star, "Ararat") released a quote about the film: "A beautifully made film...captures the spirit and extraordinary scale of an unimaginable journey...a very powerful story of horror, survival and a

most moving act of sharing...made with great artistry and attention to detail. Highly recommended!"

Bars Media documentary film studio was formed in 1993 by Vardan Hovhannisyan, a frontline-filmmaker who began his career covering the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union as a stringer for 24 hour news outlets. Created out of the need to tell honest stories in the chaos following Armenia's independence, Bars Media became one of the country's first independent film production companies, and to this day specializes in creating documentaries that tell human stories about conflict, culture, history and pressing social issues. Bars Media's feature-length and short documentaries have been broadcast with BBC (UK), ARTE (France-Germany), WDR (Germany), PBS

(US), NHK (Japan), NPO (Netherlands), YLE (Finland), Al Jazeera English (Qatar) among others. Located in Armenia, the studio is uniquely positioned at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, giving it a unique vantage point for discovering and uncovering a broad range of breathtaking stories from across the region and beyond. In 2023, Bars Media Films opened a new branch in Los Angeles to continue to bring the Armenian filmmaking lineage into the Western hemisphere.

The 2022 film is a joint production of Armenia, Germany and Lithuania. It was made possible with the academic contribution of the Zoryan Institute and is based on its Oral History Archive.

For more information, visit www.auro-rassunrise.com



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
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SINCE 1932



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US Response to Lachin Corridor Blockade

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The population of Artsakh has been under blockade for more than 7 months now. The only road connecting Armenia to Artsakh-Lachin corridor is blocked. The situation is deteriorating as Azerbaijan has cut off all shipments of food, fuel and all other indispensable supplies to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. As a result of this blockade 120,000 Armenians living there face the threat of extermination.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), “Tens of thousands of people rely on humanitarian aid reaching them through these routes. The civilian population is now facing a lack of life-saving medication and essentials like hygiene products and baby formula. Fruits, vegetables, and bread are increasingly scarce and costly, while some other food items such as dairy products, sunflower oil, cereal, fish, and chicken are not available. The last time the ICRC was allowed to bring medical items and essential food items into the area was several weeks ago.”

The ongoing situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is so dire that Luis Moreno Ocampo, a leading specialist in international law, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and lecturer at Harvard and Yale Universities, claims that Azerbaijani blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh in fact constitutes genocide. He defined starvation as an invisible genocide weapon claiming that “without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks. In many respects, the starvation of the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh represents the archetype of genocide through the imposition of conditions of life designed to bring about a group’s destruction. It closes a tragic circle because “[t]he treatment of the Armenians by the Turkish rulers in 1915 provides the paradigm for the Genocide provision dealing with imposition of conditions of life.”

Azerbaijan is providing two choices: either submit to Baku’s rule, or the deprivation and suffering will continue.

In the face of this humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh it is important to analyze the response of the US authorities to this situation. The US authorities have referred to this issue starting from the second day of the blockade. As the blockade persisted for months, more and more responses followed. However, those are only statements and specific steps have not been taken.

The reactions came from the US Department of State through comments by the spokesperson during the press briefings, individual statements as well as phone calls between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Azerbaijani president. Another US body that has been quite vocal about the situation is the US Congress – predominantly members of Congressional Armenian Caucus.

The first reaction to the blockade of the Lachin corridor by US authorities came from the spokesperson of the US Department of State. During the press briefing of December 13, 2022, Ned Price stated that “we call on the Government of Azerbaijan to restore

free movement through the corridor.” A similar statement was made in the spokesperson’s Twitter (now X) account. Since then the issue of the Lachin corridor was raised during the State Department’s press briefings.

Apart from press briefings, phone calls also took place between Blinken and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. The first such phone call happened around a month later after the blockade, on January 23, 2023. During this phone call, Blinken urged “an immediate reopening of the Lachin corridor to commercial traffic.” This was followed by a few phone calls with similar messages, on March 21, April 23 and April 30, 2023, where the US also expressed its deep concern over Azerbaijan’s establishment of a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor, on July 12, and the latest one was on July 30, in which one could notice a slight change of wording. The secretary underlined the urgent need for free transit through the Lachin corridor. This was connected with reports of a worsening situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Another statement on the situation in Nagorno Karabakh was issued by Samantha Power, the Administrator of the USAID. The first statement came one month later, where Power called for restoration of movement through the corridor. The latest statement from Power came just days ago, on August 1, where she joined the statement of Blinken.

The members of the House of Representatives and Senate of the US Congress were quick to react to the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan, among the first were the representatives of the Congressional Armenian Caucus. The Congressmen and Senators made statements condemning the actions of Azerbaijan, and also sent letters to the members of the US administration. The key areas they have been working on include, inter alia, passage of anti-blockade legislation, stopping military assistance to Azerbaijan, sending emergency assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, calling on the Biden administration to act immediately to bring the crisis to a peaceful end, and calling to internationally recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.

So far, despite the active involvement of the United States in the negotiation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the United States has not made any other specific efforts against Azerbaijan in the form of sanctions or even political pressure. Moreover, humanitarian assistance, including by the USAID, has not been provided to the starving people of Artsakh. In other words, the statements coming from US officials have not yet turned into specific and concrete actions. That might leave the impression that the administration wants to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at any cost and doesn’t care about the future of the Armenian population of Artsakh.

(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.)

What Russia Wants in Nagorno Karabakh

By Benjamin Poghosyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

When Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia signed the November 10, 2020, trilateral statement, it seemed that the Kremlin scored another victory in the South Caucasus. It was a thinly veiled secret that Russia wanted to have boots on the grounds in Nagorno Karabakh, and at least since 2014-2015, has pushed for a solution which envisaged the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in the region after the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the security zone around Nagorno Karabakh.

The idea of deploying peacekeepers in the region as a part of the conflict settlement is not new. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) even established a high-level planning group to design the operation. However, while the international community was speaking about multinational peacekeeping forces and many argued that co-chair countries, including Russia, should not take part in the operation, Russia was interested in having only Russian troops in Nagorno Karabakh, viewing it as a tangible tool to

secure its influence in Azerbaijan. Thus, as Russian peacekeepers were entering Nagorno Karabakh just hours after the signature of the November 10, 2020, statement, there was a feeling in Armenia that now the security of Armenians was guaranteed. Experts repeated like a mantra too many times this sentence – Russian troops never leave the territory where they entered. Thus, almost everyone was confident that Russian troops would remain in Nagorno Karabakh forever, and the status of the region would remain in impasse, providing the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh de facto independence from Azerbaijan.

It is challenging to assess how accurate these estimates were back in November 2020 and whether Russia was interested in keeping its troops in Nagorno Karabakh forever, making it an endless point of contention with Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, as the war in Ukraine significantly increased the importance of Azerbaijan for Russia as the shortest transit route to reach Iran and establish a corridor that would connect Russia with India and other Asian countries via the Russia – Azerbaijan – Iran route, the notion that Russia would be ready to sig-

nificantly worsen its relations with Azerbaijan only to have a military presence in Nagorno Karabakh sounded less realistic.

Is a military presence in Azerbaijan the only way for Russia to secure its interests? There was no Russian military presence in Azerbaijan from 2012-2020, but it did not prevent the two countries from developing strategic partnerships, including large-scale arms sales to Baku.

Meanwhile, after the start of the war in Ukraine, the collective West, and especially the US, launched a new “Russia containment policy” with the primary goal of reducing Russia’s presence and influence in the post-Soviet space, including the South Caucasus. In this context, the Russian military presence in Nagorno Karabakh itself could not guarantee anything for Russia. If Azerbaijan becomes too anti-Russian, and if after the Armenia – Azerbaijan and Armenia – Turkey normalization processes, the Russian military presence in Armenia may disappear, then the Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno Karabakh become a liability rather than an asset for Russia.

Meanwhile, as the Armenian government
see RUSSIA, page 18



COMMENTARY

What to Make of This World?

By Esther Heboyan

When I hear Elia Kazan's voiceover in his 1963 movie "America America" (a total flop that rips my heart), "I am a Greek by blood, a Turk by birth and an American because my uncle made a journey," I feel like saying, "I am an Armenian by blood, a Turk by birth and a French woman because my parents made two journeys, not one."

Although I'm unsure of all three things mentioned by Kazan.

First, unsure that blood has any ethnic or geopolitical texture. Blood flows red, whether you come from Asia, Australia, Europe, Africa or America, whether you are an Armenian born in the Caucasus, the Near East, the Middle East or in the Western World. Blood is not Greek, not American, not French, not Turk, not Armenian. Blood is blood, healthy or unhealthy, pumps life into your organs or poisons them. Sometimes, in the name of blood, xenophobic nationalism leads to all sorts of discriminations and assassinations. In the name of blood, some search for purity, end up committing ethnic purification. Having done so, they believe they shall reap the best of times for a thousand and one eternities. In a world homogenized by their aspirations, ambitions, destructions.

"From here to the cemetery," says Bronx-born American author Grace Paley, "it's the same fare for everybody."

Grace Paley of Jewish-Russian descent is one of my favorite authors. I met her twice while she was on lecture tours, the first time in Iowa City, the second time in Paris. I enjoyed her gritty jokes, feminist insights, historical shrewdness. I still do. With her postmodern short stories, poems, and essays, she is right up there with my literary favorites – Albert Camus, Donald Barthelme, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., August Wilson, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, 2022 Nobel Laureate Annie Ernaux and many others.

Unsure also that the place of birth grants you the required or wished for status of citizen. That place of birth, in most if not all cases, amounts to a country whose frontiers will have shifted over time. See history books and textbooks, confront them with other sources, verify if certain facts have not been altered or omitted – such a tempting enterprise for many, many governing bodies throughout the human world. To be born here or there does not necessarily make you part of the mainstream society attached to that here or there. Indeed, you can be dropped on the outskirts of that here or there, because of your name (yes, your name), skin color, hair color, facial features, height, body language, religion (if you have one and even if you don't), minority culture (customs, gendered roles, culinary folklore, musical heritage, language, dialects, sociolects...). Thus you can wade in the margins, for a while or forever, because of the history of the world into which you were born without being aware of it at the time of birth.

I carry mention of my birthplace – Istanbul, Turkey – on my French identity card, my French passport and my French social security card. The three numbers 2-0-8 for "born in Turkey" will be engraved on my social security card till the day I die. I am grateful to the French for not classifying me as "White" or "Caucasian" or "Christian" or "Mediterranean" or whatever. Although, on some medical forms, I've come to notice lately, the French do inquire about your ethnic background. One hospital has called me "white." I must say my "whiteness" triggers unpleasant thoughts. I imagine a white shroud around my corpse. I wonder if any painter has come up with "foreign white." Did Mark Rothko have any say?

With geopolitics and local politics changing all the time, not always for the best, in

"TODAY IN MANY PARTS OF THE GLOBE
MORE AND MORE VOICES ARE NEEDED TO
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France too they want you out of the game if you are not pure blood (here we go again!) French. They want you to be a "Français de souche," as they say, "a person of French stump," "souche" meaning "tree stump." This would be a way to trace back your ancestry to Vercingetorix (chief of the Gallic tribe of the Arverni who was captured and killed by Julius Caesar), or to Napoleon I (who, by the way, was Corsican). There's no law against faking. Therefore you can always fake belonging to some ancient family who felt French to their bones or toes or teeth, ate French food, drank French wine, spoke a French dialect of some sort. You can also purchase a title of nobility. Just to make sure. To cover your ass in case things get nasty. And, oh boy! oh girl! things can get nasty.

So, I am a Turk by birth whose ancestors were not always treated as Turks. And I could have never been French by birth since my ancestors never lived in France nor in Navarre nor in La Gaille. Can't claim Vercingetorix as my godfather nor Joan of Arc (oh, the utmost symbol of Frenchness in xenophobic spheres) as my godmother.

Despite everything, I do like to travel around Europe with a European Union passport and a European Union social security card. They've come a long way to build this European Union.

I do like to sit at a café and sip a cappuccino. In Paris, Berlin, or Rome.

Which takes me back to my variation on Elia Kazan's third assessment of himself, "I am an American..." Therefore, I repeat: "I am a French woman because my parents made two journeys, not one."

So, what about this third qualifier, a French woman? Well, in certain circumstances, I'm almost sure I think and act like a French woman.

I wouldn't put up with some attitudes from the Old Country, no way. Never wanted to serve Turkish coffee in tiny porcelain cups to a would-be fiancé of Armenian extraction posing as my future savior and protector on a Sunday visit to our living-room. Now, don't get me wrong: Past the age of innocence and stupid youth, I wouldn't put up with some attitudes from the New Country either. The New Country part of the famous Western World had, and still has, its own ways of breaking your bones and crushing your spirit.

One day, because I was asking for a salary raise, a male colleague at a French university called me a feminist. He meant it as an insult of course. Another day another

colleague at the same university sneered at my teaching postmodern American literature that was bound to bring chaos to the patriarchal order of the world. According to both men's vision of the universe, I was a brain-washed or brain-damaged feminist. I hope their appraisal of me makes them feel good to this day. I wish them feminist-free me-too-free arthritis-free Alzheimer-free retirement days.

Well, ok, I'm a French/Armenian woman with somehow Americanized feminist expectations. Thank goodness for Simone de Beauvoir's objections to gender formatting

and for Annie Ernaux's reflections on sexual and social conditioning. Thank goodness there was Zabel Yesayan's compassionate perspicacity and there is Violet Grigorian's unrestricted audacity. Thank goodness there was Grace Paley's subversive humor and there is Natacha Tretheway's Southern outcry.

Where do we go from here?

Where are we headed in a post-pandemic world under the threat of climate change, with civil and international wars being waged here and there, with nationalisms on the rise, with the Mediterranean sea engulfing refugee boats, with more and more technological surveillance of individuals, with the widening gap between the poor and the rich ... ?

Today in many parts of the globe more and more voices are needed to affirm men and women's claim for freedom, justice, and plain, yes, plain, human dignity which means to have access to food, shelter, education and health care, and also and above all to live in peace. Who can lend a voice?

While I walk past the movie theaters of Paris billing side by side "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie" (North America's soft power, as they say), and remember Elia Kazan's voice in "America America" (a film about Greeks and Armenians fleeing Ottoman Turkey at the end of the 19th century), I feel like saying, "I am a 68-year-old world-wise woman in this sad, mad world." Fearing a future craze for uncomfortable pink high heels or another political fancy for mass-killing weapons I am unable to say "a woman in this

What Russia Wants in Nagorno Karabakh

RUSSIA, from page 17

recognized Azerbaijani territorial integrity within the administrative borders of 1991 Soviet Azerbaijan, including Nagorno Karabakh, the whole idea of keeping Karabakh's status in limbo to secure the extension of the Russian peacekeepers' mandate indefinitely, became obsolete. If Armenia and Azerbaijan agree on the future of Nagorno Karabakh, no external power can reject that agreement and push for a different solution.

Meanwhile, the growing increase of US and EU involvement in the negotiation process raised alarms bell in Russia that an Armenia – Azerbaijan peace agreement may be signed somewhere

in Europe. It will be a reputational and real-life loss for Russia, as it would establish that Russia is no longer the most influential player in the region. As Russia vies to keep its status as a regional powerhouse in South Caucasus, it needs more or less positive relations with all regional states. Thus, if Armenia agrees that Nagorno Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, drops any demand even for autonomous status for the region, and only demands rights and security for Armenians living there, there is no logic for Russia to speak about Nagorno Karabakh's status, thus adding tensions to its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Russia may try to lead the peace pro-

cess, hoping to bring Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders to Moscow to sign an agreement. Simultaneously, Russia would push forward the idea of the rights and security of Armenians living in Nagorno Karabakh, hoping to secure some positive sentiments among Karabakh Armenians.

Is Russia still interested in keeping its peacekeepers in Nagorno Karabakh after November 2025? The answer to this question can be both yes or no. Yes, because Russia may still view its peacekeepers as a tool to leverage Turkish influence in Azerbaijan and as a stick, which can be used whenever Russia wants to send messages to Azerbaijan, and no, because

Russia values its relations with Azerbaijan and does not want to have a permanent conflict with Azerbaijan.

In any case, the Russian primary goal in the South Caucasus is not preserving its military presence in Nagorno Karabakh but preventing US efforts to push Russia out of the region or decrease Russian influence. In this context, Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno Karabakh can be more of a problem than a solution for the Kremlin.

(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.)



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Righteous Jews Appeal To Israel to Help Open The Lachin Corridor

There are pro- and anti-Armenian individuals in every nationality. Jews are no exception. There are Jews who support us and those who oppose us. We should not generalize and paint everyone with the same brush. Armenians should not treat every Jew as an opponent just because the Israeli government denies the Armenian Genocide and sells billions of dollars of arms to Azerbaijan.

Armenians have the right to criticize the Israeli government and Jews who are anti-Armenian. I severely condemned Israel's denial of the Armenian Genocide in my 2015 lecture at an Israeli University. After the lecture, I met with the President of Israel Reuven Rivlin and told him that the government of Israel, whose own people were victims of genocide, should have been the first country to recognize the Armenian Genocide, not the last. Pres. Rivlin told me that he recognized the Armenian Genocide and blamed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for denying it.

I just received copies of two letters sent by a group of righteous Israelis to their country's top officials, requesting that they intervene with Azerbaijan to unblock the Lachin Corridor.

The first letter was sent to Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen on January 15, 2023, asking for his assistance to prevent "a grave humanitarian crisis and loss of life" due to Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin Corridor. The 17 prominent Jewish signers of the letter, including Rabbis, journalists and scholars, wrote: "We believe that you, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, through your ties with your counterparts in Azerbaijan and Russia, can help to avoid this grave humanitarian crisis. Therefore we ask that you approach them urgently to work for the lifting of the blockade of the Lachin Corridor."

The second letter was sent on August 11, 2023, to Israel's President Isaac Herzog who had recently visited Azerbaijan. The letter-writers requested him "to make a personal appeal to your counterparts in Azerbaijan and demand their immediate removal of the blockade of the Lachin Corridor." The 35 prominent Jewish signers of the letter, including rabbis, scholars, journalists, a former cabinet minister and member of Knesset, architects and scientists, wrote: "The State of Israel enjoys close ties with Azerbaijan, the state which is responsible for this crisis, and has the ability to resolve it. These ties obligate the State of Israel to take a clear stand, and not to stand idly by.... The aid that we [Israel] provided [to Azerbaijan] means that we have a special responsibility not to be a bystander, and also gives us an important opportunity to have a positive impact. We cannot remain silent, especially in light of our historic and multilayered connection with the Armenian people."

Beyond these letters, hundreds of Jews and Armenians in Israel held several protests during and after the 2020 Artsakh War. One of the protests was in front of the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv, criticizing the sale of Israeli arms to Azerbaijan. Some of the protesters held models of drones with blood stains painted on them with the words "Made in Israel."

Avidan Freedman, one of the founders of Yanshoof, an organization dedicated to stopping Israeli arms sales to human rights violators, published an article in *The Times of Israel* on August 13, 2023, titled: "The Artsakh humanitarian crisis is our responsibility. Here's why." He wrote: "Israel provided Azerbaijan with 69% of its arms in the period between 2016 and 2020. During the 2020 Artsakh War, a senior Israeli military source asserted that 'Azerbaijan would not have been able to continue its operation at this level without our support.'" Freedman concluded: "the current humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh was enabled by Israeli support.... The emerging humanitarian crisis, Israel's military support of Azerbaijan, and the Jewish people's historic and moral connection to the Armenian people combine to create a clear moral responsibility. Israel must take a moral stance and call on Azerbaijan to immediately lift its blockade of the Lachin Corridor."

(See Freedman's letter in full below.)

To illustrate the depth of pro-Armenian sympathies among some Jews, I would like to quote Dr. Israel Charny, one of the signers of the above mentioned two letters. He is the executive director of the Jerusalem-based Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide and author of "Israel's Failed Response to the Armenian Genocide." In 2009, Charny and I were invited to speak at the UK Parliament. Since he could not attend due to illness, he submitted his speech in writing. Here is an excerpt: "No less than the arch fighter for peace in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Shimon Peres, now President of Israel, then serving as Israel's Foreign Minister, twice went notably out of his way to insult the history and memory of the Armenian Genocide."

In 2001, Charny sent a scathing letter to Peres: "You have gone beyond a moral boundary that no Jew should allow himself to trespass.... As a Jew and an Israeli, I am ashamed of the extent to which you have now entered into the range of actual denial of the Armenian Genocide, comparable to denials of the Holocaust."

In response to an "especially insulting" denial by Peres in 2002, Dr. Charny sent him one of my editorials in *The California Courier*, with the following note: "I am enclosing with great concern for your attention an editorial in a leading US-Armenian newspaper calling on Armenia to expel the Israeli Ambassador [Rivka Cohen, after she denied the Armenian Genocide]. For your further information, the author of this editorial, who is the head of the United Armenian Fund in the US — comparable to our United Jewish Appeal — was for many years a delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva."

Armenians should support their friends and criticize their opponents regardless of their nationality.

Israel Must Protest Azerbaijan's Immoral and Illegal Actions Against The Armenians

By Rabbi Avidan Freedman

I recently saw an Israeli news broadcast that broke my heart three times, and, for a change, it had nothing to do with judicial reform. The average Israeli who saw the same broadcast would have seen it as entirely benign, and even positive and optimistic. The reporter went so far as to insist that it was heartwarming. But to me, this obtuseness and ignorance was heartbreaking.

The reporter was broadcasting live from the Lachin corridor. This is the last remaining road connecting Armenia to the Republic of Artsakh (formerly Nagorno-Karabakh) still controlled by indigenous ethnic Armenians, after they lost control of most of the area in the latest round of fighting in 2020. For the last seven months, the road has been blockaded, first by government-backed Azerbaijani activists, and then by the Azerbaijani military, in violation of the negotiated ceasefire which stipulated that Russian peacekeeping forces would ensure the flow of vital supplies to the 120,000 residents of the Republic. On July 25, the International Committee of the Red Cross issued a statement that residents face a "lack of life-saving medication and essentials", and expressed concern that the humanitarian situation facing residents will deteriorate. On July 27th, the government of Azerbaijan blocked a convoy of 19 trucks carrying emergen-

cy aid sent by the Armenian government.

But none of this developing humanitarian crisis was mentioned by the Israeli reporter. He was too busy getting emotional at the economic and security benefits of the warming ties between Israel and Azerbaijan, a Muslim country that borders Iran, to be bothered by the families that could not feed their children or care for their infirm. This cruelly narrow perspective, which looks at the whole world only from the lens of "good for the Jews", is heart-breaking on its own. But what broke my heart a second time is the knowledge that this is not only an Israeli sin of omission by one reporter, but a much graver sin of commission of the Israeli government. It is not

AS AN ISRAELI AND A ZIONIST,
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only a willingness to ignore suffering out of the prospect of our own gain, but the willingness to provide active, essential support to Azerbaijan.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) which monitors global arms transfers, Israel provided Azerbaijan with 69% of its arms in the period between 2016 and 2020. During the war in 2020, a senior Israeli military source asserted that "Azerbaijan would not have been able to contin-

ue its operation at this level without our support". The prominence of Israeli drones in the Azeri victory parade confirmed the qualitative edge that Israeli weapons gave Azerbaijan in their quick victory over Armenia. Thus, the current humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh was enabled by Israeli support.

As an Israeli and a Zionist, I burst with pride when Israelis are first on the scene to provide support for humanitarian crises around the world. That is the global impact I yearn to see. When Israel thinks that it serves its interests by providing weapons to countries that create humanitarian crises, countries that indiscriminately target civilians, and commit grave violations of human rights- it is a heart-breaking violation of our mission.

When the victims of these cold calculations of national interest are the Armenian people, there is a third reason for heartbreak. The world's willingness to ignore the Armenian genocide encouraged the Nazis that their Final Solution for the Jewish problem would encounter the same apathy. Ever since, the Armenians maintain an existential anxiety that we can understand well, along with a loathing of international inaction. The fear of another genocide haunts them, as it haunts us. They fear Azerbaijan. We fear Iran, and this motivates our desire for a close relationship with Azerbaijan.

But this desire does not give us license to ignore the suffering of the people of Artsakh. On the contrary. The emerging humanitarian crisis, Israel's military support of Azerbaijan, and the Jewish people's historic and moral connection to the Armenian people combine to create a clear moral responsibility. Israel must take a moral stance and call on Azerbaijan to immediately lift its blockade of the Lachin corridor.

(Rabbi Avidan Freedman is the co-founder and director of Yanshoof (www.yanshoof.org), an organization dedicated to stopping Israeli arms sales to human rights violators, and an educator at the Shalom Hartman Institute's high school and post-high school programs. He lives in Efrat with his wife, Devorah, and their five children.)



Tekeyan School in Beirut Carries on Mission in Difficult Times

MISSION, from page 1

Lachinian-Magarian has been the chair of the school's Board of Trustees for two years, and is currently the secretary of the TCA Founding Board of Trustees.

"The role has transformed because there is more collaboration with the school on a regular school, and my background being in education, has somehow benefited facilitating and coaching and mentoring our new principal," after the previous principal had to travel to Canada for family reasons.

"We were lucky to have Sevana willing to join as a principal. The past two years, the learning curve has been really very steep and she has more than fulfilled expectations," Lachinian-Magarian said. "We are very pleased with the progress she has made and her dedication and commitment are really exemplary."

Darakjian has a long history at the school. Before she became principal two years ago, she had been an English teacher there for nine years. And before all that, she was a student at the school.

Lachinian-Magarian is the university registrar at the Lebanese American University, one of the largest universities in the region, and is also a lecturer in English. Before that, she was principal of the Melkonian Educational Institute in Cyprus. Before that, she had been in the Sultanate of Amman in one of the universities established there by the AUB.

Darakjian has a BA from Lebanese University with a teacher's diploma. She taught at Al Ahliyah School for two years, before coming to teach English at her "second home."

Seven Decades of Education

The school, offering nursery through grade 9, was founded in 1951, through the efforts of Hratchya Setrakian, under the patronage of the Board of Trustees of Tekeyan Cultural Association. According

to the school's website, its mission, aside from instilling a strong Armenian spirit in students, is "to bring out individuals who are full of service spirit and believe in universal human values."

At its peak, 40 years ago, the school had 900 students.

Sadly, the past five decades in Lebanon have been marked with an ever-worsening economic situation and runaway inflation, which has led to a decimation of the population, including the Armenian minority. When it wasn't the civil war or state cor-

ruption on a monumental level, it was the explosion of illegally stored fireworks three years ago which leveled parts of Beirut.

Still, the school persists. In the upcoming academic year, the school is expected to have between 140 and 150 students. The number has risen from 120 the previous ac-



Annie Lachinian-Magarian, left, and Sevana Semerdjian Darakjian

ademic year and 109 the year prior to that.

One of the ways the school is encouraging a higher enrollment is by offering free tuition to the financially strapped parents.

The challenges are many, "especially during this economic problems that Lebanon is facing, it has been challenging, but I was always ready to meet up the unexpected and carry it strongly," Darakjian said. She praised Lachinian-Magarian as "the backbone behind my success."

"There was a turning point in Lebanon when there was that port blast on August 4, and the school and our Tekeyan Center were damaged. With the help of Tekeyan Cultural Associations, the AGBU, individual donors and other associations, we were able to rebuild and renovate as much as possible," Lachinian-Magarian said.

Added Lachinian-Magarian, "That was a very difficult economic year for our parents. Our students mostly come from low-income families. Most Armenian

students suffered from being anti-social, emotional traumas, isolation, especially during this dire economic situation, since many of our students are from low-income families. As we have realized, the past two years they have suffered from emotional distress. As a school and teachers, we always cooperate with the parents. We hired a behavioral and special education therapist through the Howard Karageuzian Foundation," she said. "She [the specialist] was able to take care of those students who were suffering with mental issues. We were

able to contact the parents. The work will be ongoing the next year or two."

Lachinian-Magarian said the small size of the student body makes it possible for the teachers and administration to address the special needs of children.

Darakjian said, as an example of these efforts, "Last year we incorporated a character education program which our teachers presented in different ways in order to each our students and give them the values" they need and "it's helping them a lot. It helps in one way or another their perspective in how they view things."

Darakjian noted that an immediate need for the school is a bus with at least 30 seats.

The TCA in the US regularly holds fundraisers in support of the school. Just this spring the Greater New York chapter of the TCA raised \$5,600 for the school, while the Western TCA raised \$3,000 toward the purchase of the bus.

Another item on the school's wish list is solar panels, because the "generators, especially nowadays are very expensive as they need fuel," Darakjian said.

"Our idea is we don't want donations for scholarship purposes, but we have projects and needs," Lachinian-Magarian said.

Aram Arkun, the executive director of the TCA of US and Canada, said, "The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada has supported Beirut's Tekeyan School over the decades. In fact, its creation in part stemmed from efforts to raise money for the school. We will continue to support the school as much as possible while the school continues to struggle with the difficult overall economic and political situation in Lebanon. The high quality Armenian education it offers students, many of whom are from economically disadvantaged families, is extremely praiseworthy."

TCA Greater New York Chapter Chair Hilda Hartounian added, "Access to a proper education is a universal human right and plays a pivotal role in the preservation of Armenian culture, so supporting institutions like the Vahan Tekeyan School is of the utmost importance to TCA. I feel personally connected to the Vahan Tekeyan School because my father, Krikor Kuredjian, spent years on its Board of Directors. Ever since I was a child, I've been aware of and appreciated the school's value, which I am dedicated to preserving."

"I may say that especially with the new board, our school is on the right track for a brighter future. In all aspects, not only in construction, but building students who can be future leaders. It's all positive and we have many aims. One of them, it's my dream, ... my aim is to have secondary level," Darakjian said.

The school already has the license for the secondary grades but it does not have the finances to make it a reality.

The two repeatedly thanked their donors. "We feel privileged that we have a lifeline of donors from abroad. ... Our lifeline is mostly from the US, from the TCA and major generous donors and we would like the message to go through that first we are very grateful and second that we have the courage, commitment and passion to carry on the torch of education here, in very difficult circumstances," Lachinian-Magarian said, while Darakjian added emotionally, "against all odds."

To make a donation to the school, visit <https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm> or send checks to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), at its headquarters (755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472). For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455.



TCA Vahan Tekeyan School students performing

schools at the time, three years back, decided not to charge tuition. In solidarity everybody did that, including our school. Financially it was very challenging for the TCA, but we managed to do that."

What was worse, many parents could "hardly put food on the table," much less pay for schooling, and therefore the school decided that to encourage parents to enroll kids in the school, rather than in free public schools, they would waive tuitions.

"We wanted them to stay in the Armenian community, get a good education in a

very safe environment," Lachinian-Magarian said. She added that the school will be free next year, also.

At this most difficult time, the school found benefactors Sam and Silva Simonian of Dallas, who with a \$100,000 donation helped it remain not only operational but also able to waive tuition for students. Sam Simonian is an alumnus.

Said Lachinian-Magarian, "We owe to their generosity the fact that we are able to carry on tuition free. We know this will be everlasting, but if the situation improves a little

bit in Lebanon, we would again start asking for some tuition from parents."

Both educators stressed that Armenian education is important.

"We believe that propagating Armenian culture and identity is very important. It is only in the Armenian day schools that you can efficiently inculcate all the values, mores, principles, songs and traditions," Lachinian-Magarian said. "If we really want to encourage people to think, feel, to have the spirit in total Armenians, then the role of the Armenian school is very, very much needed, especially in this part of the world."

Darakjian concurred and added, "In brief, to keep the Armenian identity alive."

In the post pandemic world, the task for the educators has changed, Darakjian noted, adding that the school has to address more than the educational needs of the students.

According to Darakjian, "After corona