

# The End of a State

## 100,000 Flee Artsakh

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) — Since Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) President Samvel Shahramanyan signed a decree on September 28, to dissolve the republic officially by January 1, 2024, in effect, no Armenians remain in Artsakh anymore.

The decision was made after Azerbaijan's unprovoked attack on what had remained of Artsakh, on September 23.

As of October 1, 100,514 forcibly displaced people have arrived in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh, a government spokesperson reported.

The mass evacuation of Nagorno-Karabakh's ethnic Armenian population has



Refugees arriving in Armenia from Karabakh



on Sunday after at least 100,000 local residents fled to Armenia, refusing to live under Azerbaijani rule.

passengers on board," Karabakh's human rights ombudsman, Gegham Stepanyan, wrote on Facebook on October 1.

He said that a "small team of dedicated people" will stay in Karabakh for now to look for "helpless" civilians who may be stuck in their homes and unable to join the exodus on their own.

see EVACUATION, page 2

been practically completed, outgoing authorities in Stepanakert indicated late

"The last bus from Artsakh reached [the Armenian border town of] Goris with 15

## All for Armenia Rushes to Goris, Kornidzor to Aid Fleeing Refugees

By Alin K. Gregorian  
 Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN— The pall over everything in the Armenian world in the wake of the loss of Artsakh (Karabakh) is not

going to go anywhere soon. It is heartening, however, to see some volunteers step up and helping their brothers and sisters who have left their homes and everything they have for the safety of Armenia.

Among the organizations helping is All for Armenia, which since its cofounding by husband and wife Araz Kekejian and Matthieu Sahakian in the wake of the 2020 war, has focused its efforts on the Lachin border village of Kornidzor, the first village in Armenia from Artsakh.

see AID, page 4



All for Armenia volunteer Anais Astarjian with supplies in Goris



All for Armenia and Red Cross tents

## Armenian Ruling Party Members Warn Karabakh Refugees

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Several members of Armenia's ruling Civil Contract party and other loyalists of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan have said that refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh participating in opposition rallies in Yerevan must be denied government aid.

Their veiled threats made on social media in recent days follow a series of anti-government protests sparked by Azerbaijan's September 19-20 military offensive in Karabakh that forced its practically entire population to flee to Armenia. Pashinyan's political team is reportedly worried that many of the 100,000 or so refugees could join protests organized by Armenian opposition forces blaming the prime minister for the mass exodus and demanding his resignation.

"Deport Karabakh people taking part in demonstrations!" Tatul Asilyan, a Civil Contract member, said in a weekend Facebook post.

see WARNING, page 2

## Anxious World Waits Fate of Vardanyan, Other Armenian Leaders Arrested in Karabakh

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) — Authorities in Azerbaijan brought on September 28 a string of criminal charges against Ruben Vardanyan, an Armenian-born businessman and former Nagorno-Karabakh premier, one day after arresting him in the Lachin corridor. A video showing him handcuffed, walking with his captors in Baku, is particularly ominous.

see VARDANYAN, page 5



Azerbaijani government video of Ruben Vardanyan's transfer to a prison in Baku, September 28, 2023.

**FRANKFURT**

Frankfurt Demonstration for Artsakh



Page 5

**YEREVAN**

Knights of Vartan Renovates Building For Students at #106 School in Yerevan



Page 12

**NEW YORK**

Proceeds from Armenian Independence Day Concert to Benefit People of Artsakh



Page 13



ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Azerbaijani Forces Fire on Food Truck in Gegharkunik, Killing One

YEREVAN (news.am) — On October 2, Azerbaijani military fired upon the vehicle of the Armenian Armed Forces transporting provisions for personnel on duty at Armenian combat positions.

Aram Tigran Kocharyan died in the attack. Two others were wounded.

Azerbaijani units tried to target an ambulance responding to the attack, as well.

“The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia shares the pain of loss and expresses condolences to the family members, relatives, and colleagues of the serviceman,” a press release by Armenia’s Ministry of Defense announced.

### ICRC Receives Calls From Karabakh Citizens Searching for Relatives

YEREVAN (News.am) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported on October 2 receiving hundreds of calls daily from people from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) searching for their missing relatives. Zara Amatuni, Communication and Prevention Program Manager of the ICRC Armenia office, made this announcement in response to inquiries from the media outlet Azatutyun.

ICRC representatives continue their efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh and are prepared to facilitate the transportation of vulnerable citizens to Armenia. However, the ICRC did not provide specific figures regarding the number of alerts received or the total number of people considered missing.

In addition to assisting in the search for missing persons, the ICRC is involved in the retrieval of remains from Artsakh. Zara Amatuni reported that the organization transported 33 sets of remains to Armenia on the previous day.

### Marukyan Says UN ‘Legitimizes’ Ethnic Cleansing

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Ambassador-at-Large Edmon Marukyan on October 3 criticized the UN mission in Nagorno-Karabakh for legitimizing all crimes committed by Azerbaijan, such as ethnic cleansing and destruction of civilian infrastructures. He called on the UN to investigate the activities of the mission.

“The so-called UN mission in Nagorno Karabagh did its best to legitimize the ethnic cleansing, arbitrary detentions, destructions of the civilian infrastructure and other crimes committed by Azerbaijan. These guys are discrediting the UN as an institution. I look forward to the UN investigation on the activities of these ‘representatives,’” Marukyan said on X.

A UN mission recently entered Karabakh. However, the mission was sent only after nearly the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh was forcibly displaced.



# 100,000 Flee Artsakh

EVACUATION, from page 1

“If you still have clear information about lonely or helpless people left behind in Artsakh, you should contact the International Committee of the Red Cross or provide us with relevant information to be forwarded to the ICRC,” added Stepanyan.

A separate Karabakh government statement issued around the same time said Shahramanyan and a “group of other officials” will stay in Stepanakert until the ongoing search for people who died or went missing as a result of last week’s hostilities and powerful explosion at a local fuel depot is over. They will also help people remaining in Karabakh “for various reasons” and eager to relocate to Armenia, said the statement.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan predicted on Thursday that “there will be no Armenians left in Nagorno-Karabakh in the coming days.” He accused Azerbaijan of practically finishing “ethnic cleansing” there. Baku rejected the accusations, saying that it still hopes to “reintegrate” the Karabakh Armenians.

Artak Beglaryan, a former Karabakh



premier, said late on Saturday that the region is already “almost fully empty, with at most a few hundred people remaining, who are also leaving.”

Karabakh’s population officially stood

at around 120,000 prior to the exodus. The figure included thousands of people who were unable to return from Armenia to Stepanakert and other Karabakh towns and villages after Baku blocked traffic through the Lachin corridor last December.

Earlier on Sunday, October 1, Azerbaijan’s prosecutor-general said that Baku wants to arrest and prosecute about 300 current or former political and military leaders of Karabakh. They apparently include three former Karabakh presidents. A Karabakh official told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on Friday that Shahramanyan is trying to convince Azerbaijani authorities to let them as well as other prominent Karabakh Armenians leave the region.

Karabakh’s former premier Ruben Vardanyan, former Foreign Minister Davit Babayan, former army commander Levon Mnatsakanyan and his ex-deputy Davit Manukian were arrested in recent days while traveling to Armenia through the Lachin corridor.

(Stories from News.am, PanARMENIAN.Net and Azatutyun were used to compile this report.)

## Armenian Ruling Party Members Warn Karabakh Refugees

WARNING, from page 1

“I’m saying this as a citizen of Armenia. an Artsakh Armenian who takes part in demonstrations must be stripped of all kinds of assistance,” wrote Ani Vartazaryan, a village mayor also affiliated with Pashinyan’s party.

Stella Sarukhanyan, a woman who claims to “represent” Pashinyan’s wife Anna Hakobyan, issued an even more ominous warning to refugees taking part in “demonstrations ruining Armenia.”

“Their names will be registered and their families will be stripped of state support. This, according to rumors circulating in the air,” she wrote.

Sarukhanyan defended her post when she spoke to RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on Monday.

“I read the news and shared it so that my Artsakh Armenian friends saw it,” she said. “If it’s not true, that’s even better... I just

can’t understand all this fuss.”

Protesters gather near the government building in Yerevan to support ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh following Azerbaijani armed forces’ offensive operation executed in the region, September 20, 2023.

Neither the Armenian government nor Civil Contract commented on the threats and an uprising caused by them. Human rights activists said they ran counter to Armenia’s constitution guaranteeing freedom of assembly.

“They [Pashinyan’s entourage] include people who have been educated abroad and speak several languages. They know this [constitutional provision,]” said Vartan Harutiunian, a veteran civic activist.

“This means that there was such talk among them, and a couple of them, who are more outspoken, came out with such public statements,” he said. “If there is no public

backlash, then you may see not two, three or four but 20, 30 or 50 such social media posts. They are still deterred by the public’s rebukes.”

Amram Makinian, a well-known lawyer critical of the government, petitioned prosecutors to launch criminal proceedings against Vartazarian, the village chief. Makinian said that her calls constituted a criminal offense. A spokesman for the Office of the Prosecutor-General told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service that it is looking into his “crime report.”

Another law-enforcement agency, the Investigative Committee, raised eyebrows last week when it repeatedly stated that many of the protesters clashing with riot police in Yerevan and prosecuted as a result are Karabakh Armenians. Critics accused the committee headed by one of Pashinyan’s trusted lieutenants of violating Armenia’s anti-discrimination laws.



## ARMENIA

# AGBU Organizes On-the-Ground Relief for Karabakh Evacuees

YEREVAN — With an influx of over 100,000 displaced people entering in a matter of days, AGBU is ready to provide for people who have suffered through a nine-month blockade of vital supplies, as part of the ethnic cleansing campaign of Armenians by Azerbaijan.

Over the past week, tens of thousands of Armenians finally concluded a long and arduous trip out of Nagorno-Karabakh to begin another journey in Armenia. That road begins in the town of Goris in the southern region of Armenia, where many evacuees will, for the first time in nearly a year, be served a fresh, warm, nutritionally balanced meal—compliments of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), working with international NGO, World Central Kitchen (WCK). To date, over 15,000 meals have been prepared and distributed with the demand increasing exponentially.

As soon as the WCK team arrived on the scene on September 29, they immediately joined forces with friend and kindred spirit Aline Kamakian, a prominent Lebanese-Armenian restaurateur and life-long member of the AGBU global network, the world's largest Armenian non-profit organization with deep experience in humanitarian relief dating even prior to the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Collaborating with WCK, AGBU is ready to tackle this humanitarian crisis of historic proportions.

“With an influx of over 100,000 displaced people entering in a matter of days, AGBU is ready to provide for people who have suffered through a nine-month blockade of vital supplies, as part of the ethnic cleansing campaign of Armenians by Azerbaijan, stated AGBU President Berge Setrakian. “Working with World Central Kitchen and our friend Aline Kamakian once again is a critical partnership of resources, know-how, and reach.”

Kamakian and WCK had collaborated and cooperated before, in the aftermath of the 2020 Beirut Blast. That was when Ka-

makian found herself on the front lines of humanitarian relief, feeding hundreds of disaster victims for weeks and months on end. Working with the WCK team in person gave Kamakian and AGBU the opportunity to learn from this experienced group what is entailed in solving for massive food insecurity in a disaster zone. Now the team is back in action to bring comfort and hope to ever-growing numbers of Armenian evacuees.

Last week, within hours of the first reports of evacuees seeking refuge in Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh, Kamakian was in Armenia working with the local AGBU office and its volunteers in the Syunik region near the Azerbaijani border. In short order, they set up a command post in Goris with nearby hubs in Sisian and Ishkhana-sar. Another location was then established in the historical Vayots Dzor (Vayk) region, where many evacuees are headed in the next leg of their journey to recovery. More hubs in Ararat, Massis, and Yerevan were up and running as of Sunday, as the evacuees spread out to the north, east and western regions of Armenia. Back in Goris, distribution is now focused on local hotels, hospitals, and schools, as well as private residences where evacuees are sheltering.

In all cases, hot meals are prepared in local restaurant spaces, using locally sourced ingredients and recipes. Some local restaurant owners happened to be alumni of the

AGBU EmpowerHer Initiative, which offers support to Armenia's women entrepreneurs.

“Many of these evacuees, including the very sick and ailing, had to pack up in a hurry only to face standstill traffic for hours upon hours to cross the border to safety in Armenia proper. This only added to the

anything else she needs to ensure that her fellow Armenians have a chance to rebuild their shattered lives. With the support and generosity of WCK, she is confident that this vital aspect of humanitarian relief will make an important difference in this very difficult transition period.



AGBU volunteers distribute meals to evacuated children and their families from a food truck dispatched to Goris, Armenia.

trauma of the situation,” explained Kamakian. “The shock to the body, mind, and spirit is something we have seen before, when victims of disaster and catastrophe are in no condition to fend for themselves. That’s where a balanced warm meal made with fresh ingredients—with lots of dignity and compassion added to the mix—may be the first sign of hope for them. It gives them the physical and moral strength to begin a new and uncertain chapter in their lives.”

AGBU has made it possible for WCK and Kamakian to waste no time setting up the logistics of this immense effort, providing them with the resources, volunteers, and

Setrakian went on to say, “We appreciate that WCK immediately recognized the tragic dimensions of this crisis and is able to provide free meals for an extended period to evacuees, including those in hospitals in desperate need of emergency care. We also owe our thanks to Aline Kamakian for her take-charge spirit and professional skill set that enable her to organize such an urgent and multi-faceted undertaking. Her presence here in Armenia during this critical time is both reassuring and inspiring for all.”

Donations to the humanitarian effort for Armenian evacuees can be made to AGBU Global Relief Fund at [agbu.org/global-relief](http://agbu.org/global-relief)

## Not Enough Helping Hands: Doctors from Karabakh Were among the Last to Leave Stepanakert

YEREVAN (news.am) — The last patients and doctors of the Republican Medical Center of Nagorno-Karabakh left for Armenia in a motorcade on September 28 — five bedridden patients, several more patients moving independently and more than 15 medical workers and technical staff. They took with them what they could: some tools and equipment, medicine and after their departure, the hospital stopped working, said Dr. Artashes Saiyan, reanimatologist at the Republican Medical Center in Stepanakert.

In the front and at the end of the motorcade, according to him, were the ambulances of the hospital with patients in bed. And in between them, there were other patients and medical workers with their families in passenger cars.

Saiyan says the Russian peacekeepers were informed that such a motorcade was moving to Armenia. “But they didn’t accompany us. When we were going down to the river after the Old Shen village, the Russian peacekeepers made an agreement with the other [Azerbaijani] side to open a corridor for us and give us the opportunity to cross the road faster than others in a motorcade. We reached Kornidzor in about 14 hours, which is very fast under these conditions. Because we know that our citizens, unfortunately, have been on the road for 2-3 days, in terrible traffic jams,” he said.

On their way to Armenia, they picked up several more displaced people who needed medical help, including a newborn child

with the mother. The motorcade stopped several times to provide aid to those whose health deteriorated along the way. After entering Armenia, the patients were placed in the Goris Medical Center, and there the doctors had to decide whom to leave and whom to transfer to Yerevan.

Saiyan and his family are already in Yerevan, but he still cannot understand why everything happened so quickly. According to his assessment, “artificial political processes” took place.

“When the siege of Artsakh began in December of last year, the hospital switched to a special working regime. Only patients requiring urgent medical care were admitted, all scheduled events were cancelled. There was a shortage of medicines. They began to use them very sparingly. Part of them was kept for the war.

When the large-scale aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh began on September 19 of this year, the doctors of the Republican Medical Center took their patients, including those hospitalized due to prolonged hunger, to the basement or first floor, which are relatively safe places. Those who could move on their own were discharged. Then the flow of the wounded started, very intensively. Wounded civilians and soldiers were brought,” he remembers.

According to Artashes Saiyan, thanks to the competent work of the Ministry of Health and the management of the medical center, the hospital did not have any prob-

lems with medicines and tools when receiving the wounded and later the victims of the explosion. According to him, the problem was not the lack of painkillers, but to provide timely help to everyone, because the flow was very large.

The doctor noted that during the 44-day war, and before that, every time there was a need, doctors from Armenia and the Diaspora came to help doctors in Artsakh, but this time because of the blockade, they were left alone without enough helping hands.

“But it should be said that we did it with honor, both the Children’s Hospital, where our colleague Marat Harutyunyan, together with the chief doctor, very competently organized the help to the wounded and those who suffered burns, and the Republican hospital. Everyone showed up and heroically helped and fought, although during all that it turned out that they too had losses in the ranks of their relatives, or they met their relatives among those burned and wounded. No one was discouraged and everyone was working. The hospital of Russian peacekeepers also helped us a lot, their medical service, doctors,” he said.

After the September 19 attack and the explosion in the fuel terminal, it became clear to the doctors that eventually the medical center would be evacuated. Different dates were mentioned: December 1, or January 1. When the evacuation of the patients began, there was an order that after the final and successful transfer of the patients, the

doctors should also leave Stepanakert.

“The events unfolded very quickly. There are processes in politics that last long. Even the examples of Kosovo, Abkhazia, Ossetia ... But all that happened very quickly: war, disarmament, and then the catastrophic explosion. And, in fact, that order that we should evacuate, the very Republican Hospital, which is the most powerful medical facility in Artsakh, should be evacuated. The sad thing was that you found yourself in a war left without help, in a siege, like 300 Spartans. And in that case, the hope is on one’s own strength,” Saiyan added.

“We walked through this road together with our patients, there was no fear,” he continues. “People were just angry with the enemy.” They said that if there were weapons, we would have fought. It is unjust when the superpowers attack the small, 120,000-strong Artsakh, and they are not even able to finish the job, they stop their random operation, causing many losses. And as a result of some... I don’t know based on what political processes, it is decided that weapons should be laid down, disarmed, surrendered... You can feel the course of these artificial processes.”

He still asks himself why it happened so. “I don’t know, I’m not a political scientist, but we had the strength to fight. It’s sad that this is how it all ended... However, I think it’s not over. We left our hearts in Artsakh to return to Artsakh with victory, and that will happen,” said Saiyan.



ARMENIA

# All for Armenia Rushes to Goris, Kornidzor To Aid Fleeing Refugees

AID, from page 1

Among the volunteers there are two repats formerly from the Boston area, Serena Hajjar Bakunc and Anais Astarjian.

Astarjian, 26, a graduate of Emmanuel College, has been living in Armenia for the past two years, working at the Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs.

She has been at the border, in Kornidzor, as well as the closest city to the border, Goris, helping All for Armenia work with the Red Cross to help feed and care for the 80,000 or so who have poured into the region, in appalling conditions.

Astarjian, speaking from Goris on September 27, said she and other volunteers were in the center of Goris, where they were helping the displaced people get settled.

Many of the arrivals have just what they could carry with them. Those, for example, who arrived by buses, need to navigate a “super chaotic” process to get their stuff and then try to find housing.

Astarjian said there are 15 registration desks inside the theater building where officials from the Ministry of Health and various medical volunteers assess the arrivals, assisted by volunteers from another NGO, Viva Foundation.

In addition, she said, the Red Cross is giving out survival essentials since “it’s very cold here.”

She added, “I’m wearing a fleece jacket and I am still shivering so much.”

Bakunc is currently coordinating the volunteers for All for Armenia. She is mostly in Yerevan but went to Goris over the weekend.

at our tents at some point, tea, coffee, baby formula, diapers and hygiene products. There is a ton of traffic at our tents.”

“We have sandwiches in bags up to the ceiling and sweets and chocolates. The kids are loving the sweets because they haven’t had them since the blockade,” Astarjian said.

“The people arrive super hungry,” Astarjian said. “Some have been on the road for 40 hours, with no food or water.”

Kornidzor is dear to Bakunc, because that is where her husband is from and that is where they met.

“We became close to the people of Kornidzor village, which is the first village on the Lachin Corridor,” Bakunc said, “right at the gates of Artsakh.”

There, the organization has renovated KorniTun, a community center, adding a second floor and putting in a guest house and classrooms for students, Bakunc added.

She further explained that Kornidzor is a village outside Goris, which is the largest city in the area, though not a large city by any means, with a population of 40,000.

“We immediately kicked into action,” she said, with the rooms in KorniTun used to house volunteers helping with the efforts.

Bakunc said she was “blown away” by the response in terms of donations and volunteers. More than 20 volunteers with the organization have participated in the efforts in Goris and Kornidzor.

When asked how she coped with seeing the desperation, she said, “I felt really par-



All for Armenia tents in Goris

menia with whom they can stay until they sort out a long-term plan, she added.

Part of that is because many had family members or friends who were visiting in Armenia in December, right before the blockade.

“There are a lot of cases like that, of people who couldn’t make it back,” Astarjian said.

The distance they were traveling from Artsakh to Armenia is not long, but it was the traffic jam on the bridge, where they were stuck, because of the sheer numbers of people attempting the distance.

Since All for Armenia has been working in the region for three years, it is easier for them to set up now.

Astarjian first came to Armenia with Birthright a couple of years ago and through them, got two internships, one at the NGO Path of Law and the second at her current office. The experience made her want to give back more to her homeland, she said.

And now, when they are seeing the very worst things, she said, she has to motivate herself. “They need us to be strong and for us to stay as positive and as welcoming as we can,” she said. “They need to see that Armenian is happy to have them.”

Of course, the face she shows there must hide the pain she is experiencing. “I’m OK. It is very difficult to see. But in the moment, I think how can I help them. I really try to keep it together.”

Among the horrific things she has seen was a mother who was covered in dust and her baby, with cuts and blood on her face, munching on a chocolate bar. Astarjian said she did what came naturally, which was take a baby wipe and clean her face.

For both Astarjian and Bakunc, the impetus for moving to Armenia was the 2020 war. Seeing the horrors of that war caused her to want to move to Armenia. “Everybody is needed. We need more diasporan Armenians engaged in Armenia,” she said.

Astarjian said what American-Arme-

nians can do to help from afar, aside from donations, is to “contact their elected officials so that their tax dollars don’t go to Azerbaijan.” She stressed that everything that the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America are doing should be supported in terms of advocacy.

“We are very lucky as Armenian-Americans to be able to do this. We have that opportunity as Americans,” she said, about pushing for legislations.

Another person directly involved with the effort is Simon Hassoian, the CFO of All for Armenia, from France. Interviewed on October 2, he said he had arrived in Armenia on October 1 and was about to go to Goris the next day. He noted that the majority of the donations — 70 to 80 percent — is coming from individual donors in the US, more specifically in California. Basically, the organization has no overheads, as it has no offices and all the staff work as volunteers.

Hassoian said that All for Armenia is composed of three legal entities based in the US, France and Armenia.

Since September 23, he explained, All for Armenia has spent about \$9,000 a day in Goris and Kornidzor.

Hassoian said that he did not want to allow himself to be emotional, and rather wanted to concentrate on the work he had to do. However, he said, a story making the rounds on social media in which a woman fleeing Artsakh said she had toyed with the idea of burning her house down, but did not have the heart to do so. Instead, she said she had washed all her dishes and straightened out her house, ready to receive a visitor.

“It really got me. This was the moment everything [emotional] came out,” he said.

Fundraising is ongoing through social media, especially the group’s Instagram page. The group operates independently, without a sponsor.

To learn more about All for Armenia or to donate, visit <https://allforarmenia.org/>.



All their earthly possessions in suitcases in Goris

Like Astarjian, she moved to Armenia in the wake of the 2020 war. When not volunteering with All for Armenia, she is a communication specialist at the American University of Armenia.

Bakunc said, “All for Armenia is practically the only organization, aside from the Red Cross, on the ground there.”

“Now that the refugee flow is coming to an end, World Vision, the World Food Program, UNICEF, and the big ones are there,” Bakunc added.

She added that their tents are located outside the building where the refugees do their registration upon arrival.

Bakunc noted, “Nearly all families stop

analyzed when I was in Yerevan. The finality of it all is truly heartbreaking. It’s done at once. How many people have died in the last 30 year? It is horrifying and devastatingly. All of us have failed.”

By contrast, she said, once she started planning her visit to Goris, and was “extremely overloaded,” she felt better as she was “constructively doing something.”

At this point the people are being sent to different places, Astarjian said, since with the immense numbers, they need to be distributed. “They were putting people on buses to Gyumri, which is very far from here,” she noted. About half the arrivals to date have some relations or family in Ar-



## ARMENIA

# National Assembly Ratifies Rome Statute as Artsakh Refugees Flood into Armenia

By Raffi Elliott

Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

YEREVAN — With 60 votes in favor, 22 against, and no abstentions, Armenia's National Assembly adopted a draft resolution ratifying the Rome Statute, which now only requires the President's signature to become law. Ratification would see Armenia joining the International Criminal Court.

The vote, which fell along party lines — with the opposition factions I Have Honor and Armenia Alliance, affiliated with former presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan, respectively, opposing the motion.

The decision comes against a backdrop of turmoil in the South Caucasus, with Armenia's authoritarian neighbor Azerbaijan conquering the ethnic-Armenian populated self-proclaimed republic of Artsakh during an entirely unprovoked attack between September 19 and 20, which resulted in hundreds of deaths, thousands more wounded, and the expulsion of the entire region's 120,000 indigenous Armenian inhabitants.

Despite global condemnation of this attack and pledges of tens of millions of dollars in assistance to refugees, no country has yet imposed sanctions on Azerbaijan for breaking the terms of the November 9, 2020 ceasefire (as well as virtually every previous ceasefire agreement), all of which stress the importance of renouncing a violent solution to the decades-long Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Russia, in particular, despite being the only foreign power with a military presence in the region (along with 2000 peacekeepers with a mandate to protect the people of Nagorno-Karabakh),

notably failed to condemn Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing and went so far as to shift the blame to Armenia. Russia, which formally signed two mutual defense agreements with Armenia in the 1990s, has in turn been criticized by Yerevan for failing to fulfill its pledge to defend the South Caucasus nations' territorial integrity.

In Kornidzor, the first Armenian village along the Lachin Corridor connecting Artsakh to Armenia proper, a Red Cross triage tent was set up to process the expected flow of refugees fleeing the Azeri advance into their homes and villages. Among the first arrivals, Arsen Hambarzumyan from Nor Shen village, told the *Mirror-Spectator* that the entire village had been evacuated when the Azeris began shelling. "Only the mayor stayed behind," Hambarzumyan said, "we don't know what happened to him."

Another refugee, Nairi Chapanyan, from the Stepanakert suburb of Krkjan—situated just below the Shushi cliff—described Azeri artillery spotters intentionally redirecting fire towards the village's school after parents had rushed to save their children from the barrage. Footage shot by local journalists also shows evidence that Azeri munitions hit schools, municipal buildings, and civilian infrastructure all across Artsakh. Almost 200 Armenian military personnel and civilians were killed during the 2-day attack, with many others still missing. Official Azerbaijani losses amount to 192.

According to Armenian authorities and the Red Cross, almost 101,000 indigenous Armenians fled Artsakh into Armenia between the 24th and 29th of September in one of the most dramatic acts of ethnic cleansing in the 21st century, ending an almost 3-thousand-year continuous Ar-

menian presence in that land. A UN mission that visited Nagorno-Karabakh under Azerbaijani escort published a report estimating the remaining Armenian population at "between 50 and 1000," most of whom include various government officials or medical personnel who are expected to leave within hours or days as well.

Azerbaijani authorities, including presidential advisor Hikmet Hadjiev, have repeatedly told the international press that their government is ready to "reintegrate" the local Armenian population while guaranteeing linguistic and religious rights. They have also claimed that up to seven Artsakh Armenians have taken them up on their offer and accepted Azerbaijani citizenship, though there is no way to verify the validity of these applications. Azerbaijan has yet to unveil any 'reintegration plan,' while Azerbaijani soldiers continue to upload themselves ransacking and even bulldozing Armenian homes across Artsakh, putting into question Baku's sincerity on the matter.

In Yerevan, opposition groups linked to the former ruling parties, along with the Armenian Church, blamed Prime Minister Nicol Pashinyan's diplomacy for the disaster while also accusing him of sitting out the attack. They declared the start of non-stop protests and acts of civil disobedience with the stated aim of toppling the Prime Minister's government and setting up a national unity government to "save the country from the abyss." Official endorsement of these protesters by RT boss Margarita Simonyan and other Kremlin-linked personalities has fueled speculation that Moscow was seeking to facilitate regime change in Armenia. Other groups of protesters target-

ed their anger towards the Russian Embassy over several nights of demonstrations.

However, both protesting groups called off their actions soon after due to a lack of momentum and some public criticism over their potential to disrupt the work of emergency services personnel at the height of an unprecedented refugee crisis.

Ratifying the Rome Statute has remained a contentious issue in Armenia. Despite signing the statute in 1998, a series of constitutional conflicts repeatedly delayed ratification. Ratification was further complicated earlier this year when ICC judges issued an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin over the abduction of Ukrainian children. As a member, Armenia would theoretically be obligated to arrest and extradite Putin to The Hague if he were to ever set foot on Armenian soil. Armenian officials insist that they could be able to provide immunity to Putin, but that did little to tame Russian pressure on Armenia not to sign.

Veteran human rights lawyer Sheila Paylan, who has represented Armenia at The Hague, insists that joining the ICC would allow Armenia to hold Azerbaijani war criminals accountable. "Ratifying the Rome Statute puts you in a group of like-minded states taken more seriously in our commitment to peace, stability, and accountability," Paylan said.

Regardless, on Telegram, Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Yuri Vorobyov condemned the Armenian Parliament for what he calls "an unfriendly act towards Russia." Citing Russia's failure to act in the defense of Nagorno-Karabakh, however, Paylan commented, "what do we have to lose?"

## Anxious World Waits Fate of Vardanyan, Other Armenian Leaders Arrested in Karabakh

VARDANYAN, from page 1

Vardanyan, who held the second-highest post in Karabakh's leadership from November 2022 to February 2023, was arrested at an Azerbaijani checkpoint on the main road connecting Karabakh to Armenia as he fled the region along with tens of thousands of its ordinary residents.

Azerbaijan's State Security Service said the prominent billionaire was charged with "financing terrorism," illegally entering Karabakh last year and supplying its armed forces with military equipment. It said an Azerbaijani court remanded him in pre-trial custody.

Born and raised in Armenia, Vardanyan is a former investment banker who made his fortune in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s. The 55-year-old relocated to Karabakh and was appointed as its state minister last November shortly before Baku blocked traffic through the Lachin corridor. He made defiant statements during and after his short tenure, urging the Karabakh Armenians to resist Azerbaijani efforts to force them into submission.

Vardanyan is the first Karabakh leader arrested after last week's Azerbaijani military offensive that paved the way for the restoration of Azerbaijani control over the Armenian-populated territory. There are growing indications that Baku is seeking to also jail other current and former Karabakh officials.

Davit Babayan, a well-known adviser to Karabakh's current and former presidents, said on Thursday that "the Azerbaijani side has demanded my arrival in Baku." He said he will turn himself in later in the day because he does not want to "cause serious damage" to other Karabakh Armenians who

have not yet left the region.

In Yerevan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expressed serious concern at "arbitrary arrests" made at the Azerbaijani checkpoint. Without mentioning Vardanyan by name, he said the Armenian government will take "necessary steps to protect the rights of arbitrarily arrested individuals, including in international bodies."

The government on Wednesday asked the European Court of Human Rights to order Baku to urgently provide information about Vardanyan's whereabouts and detention conditions. The Armenian Foreign Ministry said it will do its best to try to secure the tycoon's release.

Vardanyan, who renounced his Russian citizenship late last year, has been increasingly critical of Pashinyan in recent months, repeatedly denouncing his recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh.

### Calls for Vardanyan's Release

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) called on Azerbaijan to respect the rights of Vardanyan.

Trossell said that they call on the Azerbaijani authorities to take all measures to ensure that due process and fair trial rights are respected—as required by international human rights law.

Former Foreign Minister of Armenia Vardan Oskanyan on his Facebook page asked for the safe return of Vardanyan and Babayan.

"The return of all Armenian captives, arrested and kidnapped to Armenia should be one of the main issues on the agenda of the Armenian authorities. Azerbaijan's accusations against Ruben Vardanyan are

fabricated. Azerbaijan does not have any legal basis to keep him. The same applies to Davit Babayan and others who may have a similar fate. Ruben Vardanyan is a citizen of the Republic of Armenia. He was there to stand by his people and defend their right to self-determination. Davit Babayan is a citizen of Artsakh by birth, he also fought to protect the land his ancestors left him as a legacy and to live freely there. The Armenian authorities should make every effort, including the interruption of negotiations, to secure their release. In return for the great gift given to Azerbaijan, the authorities of Armenia should at least demand the return of these people. Diaspora should also make this issue an agenda item. And the international community should definitely demand from Azerbaijan to refrain from such persecutions."

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, co-founded by Vardanyan, issued a statement on the arrest, signed by a host of Aurora Prize laureates and members, including fellow co-founder Nubar Afeyan.

"The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, to which Ruben has given so much, has for the past eight years honored and supported the work of those who fight for basic human rights, often at the risk of their own lives, all around the world. The irony is that Ruben now finds himself a victim of the same persecution as those he has sought to help as a human rights defender.

"When Ruben moved to Nagorno-Karabakh over a year ago, prior to the 10-month-long blockade of all food and basic necessities and recent bombings, he did so knowing that there were significant risks, but he was determined to help find a peaceful resolu-

tion to the conflict.

"Detaining Ruben, a man who has spent the last 20 years dedicated to advancing the socio-economic development of the region, is unjust. This action deprives him of his basic rights much like the tens of thousands of Armenians of the region whose fundamental human rights are violated daily.

"Ruben Vardanyan is being held captive because of his support for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and their right to a democratic way of life. The Azerbaijani government must release him and demonstrate their respect for human rights — his and those of all Armenians of the region.

Similarly, the Armenian General Benevolent Union issued a statement asking for Vardanyan's release and for Azerbaijan to face retributions for its blatant violation of human rights.

AGBU President Berge Setrakian, upon hearing about Vardanyan's release said, "This showcase arrest sends a clear message that Azerbaijan is following the same genocidal playbook as its Turkish partner in crime. In effect, nothing has changed since 1915 and we are back to ground zero for the first genocide of the 20th century. International players must take a stand to ensure that all citizens who are forced out of their ancestral homeland leave with dignity."

In its statement, the organization said, "The AGBU calls upon every member of the United Nations Security Council, all heads of state and foreign ministries of the free world to stand up in resounding solidarity to act without delay. The world is watching to see if the levers of the international order are functioning to stop Azerbaijan in its tracks."

## INTERNATIONAL

## Two Israeli Doctors Visit to Help with Burn Victims

YEREVAN (News.am) — At the request of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Health of Israel has dispatched two doctors to Yerevan, to provide assistance to the victims of the recent gasoline warehouse explosion near Stepanakert, on September 26. Israel's Ambassador to Armenia, Joel Lyon, made this announcement on his social media platform.

The two doctors sent by Israel are Yarom Shoham, the head of the burn department at Soroka Medical Center in Israel, and Adi Maisel Lotan, an expert in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Shaare Zedek Medical Center. They will be joining a team of international experts to offer medical support to those affected by the explosion.

## Azerbaijan Detains Former Artsakh Presidents, Leaders

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On October 3, the official Azerbaijani government news outlet reported that former Karabakh President Arayik Harutyunyan was detained.

In addition, former presidents Arkady Ghukasyan (1997-2007) and Bako Sahakyan (2007-2020), and the former speaker of the parliament David Ishkhanyan were detained and taken to Baku.

Former Foreign Minister Davit Babayan was detained by Azerbaijan earlier.

## After Karabakh Emptied Out, UN Team Visits

YEREVAN (Euractiv.com) — A United Nations team visiting Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan said on October 2, they were struck “by the sudden manner in which the local population fled their homes”, but stopped short of accusations of ethnic cleansing.

At the same time, the UN observers said they did not see any damage to civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and housing or to cultural and religious sites.

The team on Sunday visited the Karabakh capital known as Stepanakert weeks after Azerbaijani forces took control of the enclave on its territory populated by ethnic Armenians, triggering an exodus of more than 100,000 Armenians.

“Our colleagues were struck by the sudden manner in which the local population fled their homes and the suffering that the experience must have caused them,” UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said told reporters.

“They did not come across any reports – either from the local population or from others – of violence against civilians following the latest ceasefire,” he said. “No destruction of agricultural infrastructure or dead animals were seen by members of the UN team.”

The UN mission aimed to assess the situation on the ground and identify humanitarian needs of both people remaining and those on the move, Dujarric said.



Protestors in Frankfurt

## Frankfurt Demonstration for Artsakh

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FRANKFURT — Three days after Azerbaijan's military aggression, which led to the expulsion of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, demonstrations took place not only in Berlin and Frankfurt. Organized by the Armenian Cultural Association in Hessen (AKV), it brought together representatives of diaspora groups who addressed several facets of the unfolding drama, political, juridical, cultural, and personal.

Shushan Tumanyan, a leader of the AKV, addressed the ongoing threat to Armenian cultural heritage. Citing the UN Security Council resolution of March 10, 2022 on the destruction of Armenian cultural monuments, she quoted the view that the removal of traces of Armenian culture resulted not only from damage and destruction but also historical falsification, in the attempt to present it as “Caucasian Albanian.” Then Minister of Culture Anar Karimov announced his establishment of a team in February 2022, tasked with “removing fictitious Armenian inscription for Albanian religious temples.” The UNSC denounced this policy of elimination and denial as part of Baku's anti-Armenian policy, historical revisionism, and hatred, as dehumanizing, revanchist, and threatening the Republic of Armenia itself, and thus the stability in the Caucasus. Stressing the role of culture in national identity and history, it called on member states to protect this heritage.

Tumanyan called on the German government to denounce Azerbaijan's aggression, and to seek, together with Artsakh Armenians, a political solution. Referring to the United Nations Security Council meeting held days earlier, she thanked German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's for her denunciation of Azerbaijan, but added, “we hope however that her words will be translated into deeds.” At the same session, no state demanded Azerbaijan troop with-



Student Sevan with his painting of Artsakh symbol

drawals, no state proposed political or economic sanctions, Turkey threatened with talk of the Zangezur corridor, and no one criticized Russian peacekeepers. All which leads to the question: can one expect anything from the international community?

Ani Kanayan and Mariam Taranyan-Buschler from the German-Armenian Jurists' Union (DEARJV) spoke next. While the former addressed the theme of political aspects, the latter focused on international law. For Taranyan-Buschler, not only was Azerbaijan's military attack in violation of international law, but so was the 9-month blockade leading up to it, both showing genocidal intent. She deplored the failure of the international community, the states who signed the genocide convention, to intervene; this “makes them complicit in renewed genocide against the Armenian people,” she said.

She stated that not only was the population threatened, but so is their cultural

heritage, recalling the bombardment of the Cathedral of Ghazanchetsots in Shushi, the religious symbol of Artsakh Armenians, and its transformation into a mosque. The mass exodus constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity, she continued, urging Germany and the European Union to call in the UN Security Council for “remedial secession,” referencing the self-determination process of Kosovo, whose separation was recognized as a solution to save lives.

Offering a glimpse into the personal dimension, Armenian journalist Susanna Margaryan read a brief entry on Facebook by 27-year-old Elina Antonyan from Stepanakert. A medical student in Yerevan, she was sending an SOS to the world, a description of the situation in Artsakh: Armenians bury family members, not knowing whether they will be able to visit the graves; or they cannot bury them, because they have to flee for their lives, and the dead lie in overcrowded morgues. Before abandoning their homeland, they remove photos of their loved ones killed, to protect them from vandalism. Some wait in vain for news from their missing children, children who may be sleeping somewhere on the ground, not knowing where to go. A village elder from Sarnaghbyur managed to evacuate the village children, but lost his own.

Areg Safaryan (AKV) described how meaningless it is to talk about “reintegration” of Artsakh Armenians in Azerbaijan. What kind of reintegration could occur, if Armenians in the Russian language Azerbaijan press are demonized as parasites and beasts, “as dirty, useless gypsies from India”? How can they become co-citizens and co-exist in Azerbaijan, that, regarding the 1915 genocide is more denialist than Turkey? -- whose social media carry messages expressing regret that the “Turkish brothers hadn't finished the job”? If Baku refuses to recognize any village as Armenian, and embraces notion that the Republic of Armenia is “western Azerbaijan”?

## France Donates 5 Tons of Medical Supplies to Armenia For Forcibly Displaced Persons from NK

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The French government has sent 5 tons of humanitarian aid to Armenia for the forcibly displaced persons who've arrived from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The plane carrying the aid (medical items and medications) landed in Yerevan's Zvartnots airport Friday evening.

Armenia's Deputy Minister of Healthcare Lena Nanushyan and French Ambassador to Armenia Olivier Decottignies personally

inspected the transfer.

“We are here today to receive the cargo of medications and medical equipment donated by France to Armenia,” Nanushyan said. “I'd like to thank our partners and friends in France who are helping us overcome these difficult days and ensure the necessary medical items for the patients.”

Decottignies said the aid will allow to meet the needs of 250 gravely wounded persons.

“As you know, nearly 100,000 Armenians

of Nagorno-Karabakh have already left their homes. They were forced to leave. This is a humanitarian tragedy and a very difficult situation. France supports Armenia and the Armenian people. We just received medical items from France, which will allow to meet the needs of 250 gravely wounded persons, as well as 40 medical kits, with medicine and medical equipment. I believe this is a very important step in a situation like this,” the French ambassador said.



# Russia Failed to Keep Peace in Nagorno-Karabakh, Pivoting Away from Armenia

By Robyn Dixon & Francesca Ebel

RIGA, Latvia (*Washington Post*) — With virtually the entire population of Armenians fleeing from Nagorno-Karabakh, refugees are voicing rage over the loss of their homeland and accusing Russia of betrayal after peacekeepers sent by Moscow failed to protect them.

The lightning military operation by Azerbaijan to seize back the disputed mountainous region made a mockery of President Vladimir Putin's 2020 guarantee that Russian peacekeepers would protect the region's population, maintain a cease-fire, and assure access on the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, through the Lachin Corridor.

Russia failed on all three counts.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has warned that the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, roughly 120,000 people, will leave and he accused Azerbaijan of "ethnic cleansing." Azerbaijan has insisted that residents can stay, but those fleeing say they do not trust the Azerbaijani government in Baku after decades of war.

More than 100,000 refugees arrived in Armenia from the Nagorno-Karabakh region after Azerbaijan took back control of the region in late September. (Video: Reuters)

By late Friday, September 29, 93,000 Karabakh Armenians had arrived in Armenia, according to Pashinyan's office, more than 77 percent of the region's estimated population.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has insisted that Russia does not bear blame, and said that there was "no direct reason," for the exodus, merely that "people are willing to leave." His statement ignored repeated cycles of war and ethnic violence in the region.

"It is hardly possible to talk about who is to blame," Peskov insisted on September 28 amid mounting criticism of Russia. He described Baku's swift moves to reimpose control over Nagorno-Karabakh, internationally recognized as Azerbaijan's sovereign territory, as "a new system of coordinates." He said residents should get to know the agreements on living under Azerbaijani rule.

Many analysts ascribe the Russian failure down to the Kremlin being highly distracted by its war in Ukraine. The focus on the war has undermined Russia's authority and influence throughout its geopolitical neighborhood, including the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Moscow's sway was also diminished when Turkey, Azerbaijan's powerful military backer, emerged as the victorious regional power broker in the 2020 war that Baku used to seize back most of Nagorno-Karabakh and other Azerbaijani territory taken by Armenia in the first Karabakh war, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

But other analysts and officials see darker motives: Moscow betrayed Armenia, for which it had long provided security guarantees, in a conscious shift to accommodate Azerbaijan and Turkey. Some believe Putin was seeking to punish Pashinyan over his search for new Western partners, as the Armenian government in Yerevan seeks to reduce its decades-long dependence on Russia.

Pashinyan's supporters fear Moscow may use the largely pro-Kremlin opposition in Armenia to stage protests in a

bid to oust the prime minister and drag Yerevan back into Moscow's fold.

When Armenia won control of Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were forced to flee. Decades of war ensued.

But in 2020, heavily armed with advanced weapons from Israel and Turkey purchased using oil and gas riches, Azerbaijan attacked its smaller neighbor, defeating Armenia.

The truce brokered by Russia allowed it to deploy peacekeepers and border guards and maintain at least the appearance of a role as a regional power broker. But it left uncertain the fate of the breakaway Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; its capital; Stepanakert; and its Armenian residents.

Putin has devoted great energy trying to re-create Russia's lost empire and dominate its ex-Soviet neighbors, so the failure to protect Armenia, a long-time ally, was a striking shift. For other small nations on Russia's borders, the message was clear: Who could trust Russia in the future?

"I think it's a process of managed decline," said Laurence Broers, an expert on the Caucasus at Chatham House, a London-based policy institute.

Broers said that Russia had quietly turned away from Armenia toward the powerful regional nexus of Turkey and Azerbaijan, because of Turkey's importance in Russia's war against Ukraine and in regional energy and transportation routes in the South Caucasus.

"I see it as a pivot to Azerbaijan and becoming a partner in Azerbaijani-Turkish connectivity," he said.

Olesya Vartanyan, an analyst with International Crisis Group, said a study of Russia's peacekeeping mission showed that it grew less effective after the invasion of Ukraine, as Azerbaijan steadily withdrew cooperation.

Russian peacekeepers patrolled tense areas but "no matter how often they traveled, and how often they patrolled the areas, that did not have any impact," Vartanyan said.

"Azerbaijan clearly started testing the Russian peacekeepers and Russia's readiness to stand for its peacekeepers when the Ukraine invasion started," she said. "And the more they were testing, the more it was becoming clear that Russia had no appetite to get involved in any kind of confrontation with Azerbaijan."

With Nagorno-Karabakh emptying out, the Russian peacekeepers will soon have no mission. The broken trust, however, could reverberate for years.

"The Russians are whores! The Turks are whores!" raged 70-year-old Jorik Isakhanyan, using an expletive in Armenian. As he spoke, Isakhanyan was changing a flat tire on his car in Kornidzor, an Armenian border town where he and his wife had fled with no hope of returning to their homeland.

"The Russians lied to us and tricked us," he said. "They told us the peacekeepers would be there and that there would be no more war. Then, at night, they started shelling with artillery and Grads and drones," he said, referring to Azerbaijani forces.

For the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, there is also anger at being ignored by the world. For most of the last 10 months, Azerbaijan blocked the Lachin Corridor, causing food shortages.

Artur Babayan, 26, of Martakert, blamed Russian leaders. "They either failed to give the right orders or they didn't want to do it," Babayan said. But he was also angry at Armenia's government, as well as the global community that "watches and does nothing."

"No governments around the world can provide any safety for us," he said. "There is no country in the world who is willing to take actual steps against Turkey and Azerbaijan."

The West has never engaged deeply in Armenia's intractable problems, with the nation perceived as firmly wedded to Moscow. For Armenia, an isolated, landlocked nation, wedged between two enemies, there appeared to be no realistic partner but Russia.

But when Armenia reached out to others, Moscow threatened repercussions. A decade ago, when Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova planned to sign economic agreements with the European Union, the Kremlin saw it as a threat.

In Yerevan, a Russian diplomat warned that Armenia was on a "road to hell." Another likened the planned accords to pacts with Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Yerevan caved and dropped the deals.

Armenia had long relied on the Russia-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which also includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But as Armenia came under threat in recent months, the organization did nothing.

Increasingly, Pashinyan has slow-walked cooperation with the CSTO. Earlier this month, Armenia skipped CSTO military exercises in Belarus, but welcomed U.S. forces for a 10-day training exercise in Armenia. It also angered Moscow by sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine in early September.

Even worse, from the Kremlin's view, was Armenia's decision to ratify the Rome Statute underpinning the International Criminal Court, which has indicted Putin for alleged war crimes over the deportation of Ukrainian children. Peskov called Armenia's decision "extremely hostile for us."

In an interview with Italy's *la Repubblica* in early September, Pashinyan said that Armenia's history of relying on Russia was a "strategic mistake."

Putin's distaste for Pashinyan is evident in the vehement condemnations by his diplomats and state propagandists.

Pashinyan's attitude toward Putin is also not subtle. At the same CSTO summit, he moved as far from Putin as possible, leaving an obvious gap in the group photo.

Pashinyan, who helped lead Armenia's Velvet Revolution protests in 2018 and was twice democratically elected, is not a natural partner for Putin. More relatable is Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, a tough autocrat who broke promises to Western leaders by launching last week's military operation. Like Putin, Aliyev has a history of brutal rhetoric and inciting hatred of enemies.

"The Armenians believed that Russia would protect their sovereignty," said Paata Zakareishvili, an expert on the Southern Caucasus and former state minister in Georgia. "But now it's complete disappointment. They understand Russia will not protect their interests."

## Athens Wants To Revamp EU-Turkey Migrant Deal

By Jacopo Barigazzi

BRUSSELS (Politico) — Athens wants to expand a migration deal with Turkey, Greek Interior Minister Dimitrios Kairidis said.

The European Union reached the contentious agreement with Turkey at the peak of the migration crisis in March 2016. It foresaw that all undocumented migrants arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands without admissible asylum applications should be returned to Turkey.

But these days, that deal "does not work, Turkey does not take back people," Kairidis told Politico.

After a meeting with EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson and German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser in Brussels on September 28, Kairidis said there's "more cooperation from the Turkish side and better guarding of the border." Germany is concerned because many migrants who cross into the EU from Turkey are destined for Germany.

"We already see some improvement on the ground, especially on the land border," Kairidis said.

Tensions between Athens and Ankara on migration and territorial disputes have often run high. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan cut off relations with Greece after Mitsotakis urged U.S. lawmakers in May 2022 to block arms sales to Turkey. But Greece's prompt reaction to the devastating earthquakes in Turkey in February this year created a new backdrop for bilateral ties. Greek and Turkish leaders this summer agreed on a fresh start to talks.

And after the recent Turkish election, which Erdoğan narrowly won, Ankara expressed renewed interest in negotiations for Turkey's accession to the EU, which leaders in 2018 said had "come to a standstill." In June this year, the European Council asked the European Commission and top EU diplomat Josep Borrell to submit a report on the state of play on relations with Turkey.

Kairidis said that now is the time to "reenergize, rejuvenate and expand" the EU-Turkey migration deal. "There is still a long way to go," he added, including "room for improvement in both guarding the border and combating smuggling networks."

The original agreement did not apply to migrants crossing to Greece through the "land border, only the islands," Kairidis said. "Now, we might want to include" controls of the land border so that migrants crossing there may also be returned.

If cooperation continues to improve, he said, the EU "can explore more ambitious things such as the visa liberalization" for Turkish citizens — a long-standing concern for Turkey. A roadmap of actions details how Ankara could achieve this target.

Then there's the aspect of funding. The EU-Turkey deal has so far been financed with about €10 billion — the EU could add an "additional €3 billion now," Kairidis said.

# Community News

## Boston Rallies For Artsakh

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — Hundreds of people rallied for Artsakh on Saturday, September 30, at Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. The event was organized by the Pan Armenian Council of New England, with the support of Armenian churches of the three major denominations, political parties and charitable organizations of the region, and it received both television and newspaper coverage in the Boston area.

After brief opening prayers in Armenian and English by the assembled clergy, Meghri Der Vartanian, master of ceremonies, recognized dignitaries present and called for all to work for change with strength in unity. She read an Armenian-language poem by Hamo Sahyan, adapted to the Artsakh crisis.

Anthony Barsamian, co-chair of the Armenian Assembly of America, summed up the situation, with over 100,000 refugees already in Armenia at the time as ethnic cleansing.



Anthony Barsamian of the Armenian Assembly of America (photo Ken Martin)

He said, “This is unacceptable. The world failed, the UN failed, the United States failed, Turkey failed, and Azerbaijan is an enemy of the world at this moment. President [Ilham] Aliyev is a war criminal. He is not welcome in the United States. He is not welcome in any free country around the world.”

As a lawyer, he outlined what should be done next: “We are going to charge the president of Azerbaijan with a war crime, because he is a criminal, and we are going to charge those who aided and abetted the war criminal – countries, individuals, lobbyists who have blood on their hands.”

Secondly, the US has offered \$11 million in humanitarian assistance for the Artsakh tragedy, and the world combined \$30 million. This only makes for a downpayment,

see BOSTON, page 11



Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

## Former Navy Sec. Paul Ignatius Honored by Armenian Assembly With Tributes from Pelosi, Peters

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America honored former US Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius at the Willard Hotel on Tuesday, September 26. The tribute was headlined by several dignitaries, including Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), with guests including Congressmen David Valadao (R-CA) and Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, former State Rep. Mari Manoogian (D-MI), and former member of parliament in Turkey Garo Paylan, among others.

Speaker Emerita Pelosi toasted Secretary Ignatius for his “patriotism” and how he has served as an “example of the American Dream.” Turning to the current event, Pelosi also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Assembly on Capitol Hill amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Artsakh.

For the occasion of its 50th anniversary, the Assembly had the distinction of honoring Speaker Emerita Pelosi in November 2022 at The Willard, where she was awarded the Assembly’s Ambassador Henry Morgenthau Award for her strong support of and leadership on US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide.

Echoing Speaker Emerita Pelosi, Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) assured the audience that “we will do everything we can to move the needle with this Administration” in relation to Armenia and Artsakh, while noting Secretary Ignatius’s contributions “in his service to this country” as the “son of the Armenian community.”

Assembly Board Member and grassroots activist Valina Agbabian served as Master of Ceremonies and Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Vicar of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, delivered the opening prayer followed by remarks by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), who recently returned from Armenia. He noted that he was motivated to travel there due to the “vibrant Armenian community in Detroit” who feel “so strongly about what is happening in Nagorno-Karabakh and the suffering the Armenian people are going through.”

Peters, who served more than 10 years in the United States Navy Reserve, stated that he was “going to encourage more of the colleagues in the Senate” to support the Armenian people and for “repercussions” to take place against Azerbaijan’s Aliyev regime.

As a co-sponsor of legislation that requests humanitarian assistance for the Armenian people, Senator Peters called on the Administration to “impose sanctions” on Azerbaijan and repeal the waiver for Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act.

“I’m doing everything I possibly can to make sure the Armenian people are able to have their human rights protected and live with dignity,” said Senator Peters. “We need to send a strong signal to Azerbaijan that what they did is simply unacceptable.”

see IGNATIUS, page 9

## Pelosi, Eshoo Spearhead Letter To Biden Urging Sanctions Against Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON — A letter dated October 2, spearheaded by former Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), was sent to President Biden urging sanctions against Azerbaijan, humanitarian aid, and ensuring the safety of the Armenian people, was supported by 75 Members of Congress, reported the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly).

The letter outlined Azerbaijan’s “unprovoked military offensive on Nagorno-Karabakh” on September 19 “in an attempt to subjugate the region’s ethnically Armenian population by force,” that resulted in a day-long vicious attack, causing the displacement of thousands of civilians and over 200 deaths. This assault followed a nine-month blockade that created a man-made humanitarian crisis and denied 120,000 Armenians access to food and medicine, among other essentials. “We believe the United States must make clear to Azerbaijan that its unprovoked aggression against Artsakh is unacceptable and will be met with an appropriate response,” the letter stated. “Azerbaijan’s assault and subjugation of Artsakh has left the region’s Armenian population with no option but to flee, fearing for their future under Azerbaijan’s brutal authoritarian rule,” the letter continued.

Citing leading scholars on genocide and atrocities, including Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, the letter emphasized that the “U.S. has a moral obligation to do whatever is necessary to bring an end to this needless suffering and ensure Azerbaijan faces consequences for engaging in ethnic cleansing,” and requested from the Biden Administration enforcement of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, “a provision of current law that prohibits U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan, and impose targeted sanctions on Azerbaijani officials under the Global Magnitsky Act to make clear to Azerbaijan that its aggression will not be tolerated.”

Providing “robust humanitarian assistance to support Artsakh’s displaced population” was also outlined, as well as shoring up support from the international community to initiate an international humanitarian relief operation. Finally, the letter underscored the importance of taking proper actions to “ensure the safe evacuation of Artsakh’s population to Armenia, including through the immediate deployment of observers to the Lachin Corridor, as well as direct engagement with Azerbaijani authorities to secure amnesty for Artsakh’s local leaders.”

“The Assembly welcomes the continued efforts by Congress, including this initiative by Speaker

see SANCTIONS, page 9





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Former Navy Sec. Paul Ignatius Honored by Armenian Assembly

IGNATIUS, from page 8

Introducing Paul Ignatius, Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian highlighted his career as Secretary of the Navy from 1967-1969 and his years of service during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, followed by his appointment as president of the *Washington Post* and then as President of the Air Transportation Association.

The son of Armenian parents who emigrated to the United States from the Kharpert region and settled in Glendale, Ignatius earned his B.A. degree from the University of Southern California, and his MBA degree from Harvard Business School. He began his military career in the Navy during World War II, and following his graduation from Harvard Business School, began to work with the Department of Defense.

In a video salute, Ken Khachigian, speechwriter for President Reagan and former Assembly Board Member, said that Secretary Ignatius emphasized his public service and how he has been a “real role model for all of us who followed in your footsteps.”

“We should give you accolades for everything you’ve done from California to Washington,” he said. “You deserve this great honor for all of your trailblazing and setting the standard for all of us in California.”

Speaking on behalf of the Ignatius Family, Sarah Ignatius thanked the Assembly for honoring her father and reflected on her family’s heritage, while sharing her experiences traveling to the historic Armenian city of Kharpert, where her grandfather was born and raised.

“Even though it was completely destroyed, I saw the same view that grandpa must have seen everyday,” she said. “As I felt the breeze from the mountains in the



The Assembly Board with Secretary Paul Ignatius and his family

distance, I felt like I had arrived in the center of the world.”

She emphasized the importance of a shared Armenian heritage that is “so powerful” and that the “sense of resilience goes back thousands of years,” a feeling she holds onto now during the tragedy in Artsakh, expressing that “strength and resilience will prevail.”

The Assembly Board presented Secretary Ignatius with the George Deukmejian Award in recognition of exceptional public

service, alongside his family members, including Adi Ignatius, Editor-in-Chief of the Harvard Business Review, David Ignatius, Associate Editor of The Washington Post, and Sarah Ignatius, Former Executive Director of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research.

In his remarks, Ignatius shared his thoughts on the dire situation in Artsakh and stated his pride in being Armenian, “an ancient people have survived through trying times and triumphant times.”

He reflected on his Armenian heritage and culture while looking ahead at the advancements in Armenia and “hoping and praying that peace will come to that troubled part of the world.”

Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian’s closing words captured the family ties that exist among all Armenians including the pride in the accomplishments of Secretary Ignatius, as well as the pain of watching genocide repeat in Artsakh, thanking all those in attendance again.

## Pelosi, Eshoo Spearhead Letter to Biden Urging Sanctions Against Azerbaijan

SANCTIONS, from page 8

Emerita Pelosi and Congresswoman Eshoo on the critically important need for the U.S. to take decisive action, including sanctioning Azerbaijan for its crimes against humanity,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Last week, at the Assembly’s tribute for former Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius, Speaker Emerita Pelosi and Rep. Eshoo, who headlined the event, highlighted the importance of persevering in their efforts on Capitol Hill “to move the needle” when it comes to aiding the Armenian people of Artsakh and holding Azerbaijan accountable.

The letter was cosigned by Representa-

tives Nanette Barragán (D-CA), Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Julia Brownley (D-CA), Tony Cárdenas (D-CA), Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Judy Chu (D-CA), Jim Costa (D-CA), Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Dwight Evans (D-PA), Robert Garcia (D-CA), Brian Higgins (D-NY), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Seth Magaziner (D-RI), Morgan McGarvey (D-KY), Kevin Mullin (D-CA), Gwen Moore (D-WI), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Donald Norcross (D-NJ), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Frank Pallone, Jr (D-NJ), Chris Pappas (D-NH), Linda Sánchez (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Haley Stevens (D-MI), Paul Tonko (D-NY), David Valadao (R-CA),

Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Lou Correa (D-CA), Daniel Goldman (D-NY), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), Ro Khanna (D-CA), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Susie Lee (D-NV), John Larson (D-CT), Mike Levin (D-CA), Tom McClintock (R-CA), James McGovern (D-MA), Jennifer McClellan (D-VA), Grace Meng (D-NY), Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Katie Porter (D-CA), Deborah Ross (D-NC), Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA), Brad Schneider (D-IL),

Eric Swalwell (D-CA), Dina Titus (D-NV), Lori Trahan (D-MA), David Trone (D-MD), Jake Auchincloss (D-MA), Salud Carbajal (D-CA), Sean Casten (D-IL), Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL), Katherine Clark (D-MA), Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Mark Takano (D-CA), Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Susan Wild (D-PA), Ted Lieu (D-CA) and Nikema Williams (D-GA).

Telephone (617) 924-7400

### Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET  
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN  
PAUL BEDROSIAN  
LARRY BEDROSIAN

### Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island’s Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220  
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

www.nardolillo.com

### Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

James “Jack” Giragosian, CPC  
Mark J. Giragosian

Funeral Counselors

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

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian-Americans Hold More than 300 Meetings on Capitol Hill with US Leaders to Bring Attention to Artsakh

WASHINGTON — With a second Armenian Genocide underway, Armenian Americans mobilized to advocate for Artsakh Armenians as part of the Armenian Assembly of America’s Summit that took place last week in the Nation’s Capital. With participants from across the United States, and with over 300 in-person meetings, Congressional offices heard directly from constituents about the need for U.S. leadership to prevent further loss of life, including applying sanctions against Azerbaijan’s genocidal regime.

Thanks to the collective efforts of the community, a bipartisan, bicameral letter urging sanctions against Azerbaijan and signed by nearly 100 Members of Congress was sent to the Biden Administration, that stated Azerbaijan’s attacks against Armenians “represent a gross violation of human rights and the perpetration of violent conflict, which both pose a direct assault on American values and interests. The perpetrators of these human rights violations must be held to account by the United States.”

“While discussing numerous legislative initiatives, the message was clear that the U.S. needs to assert its leadership, end Azerbaijan’s brutality, and ensure the security and safety of the Armenian people,” stated Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan. “In these dark days for fellow Armenians from Artsakh, we very much appreciate the support of our donors and activists who made the summit



Advocates in the Capitol Rotunda;

search (NAASR), Paros Foundation, Philos Project, Tekeyan Cultural Association of US and Canada (TCA), Armenian Catholic Eparchy, Armenian Evangelical Union, Di-

ocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Western), and Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.



Assembly Western Region Director David Ojakian and Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan



Massachusetts advocates on Capitol Hill



Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), Assembly President Carolyn Mugar, Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian and advocates



Nerses and Kathryn Aposhian with Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Assembly Western Region Director David Ojakian

possible, and were heartened by all those who joined us on Capitol Hill,” Khaloyan continued. “In these dark days for fellow Armenians from Artsakh, we very much appreciate the support of our donors and activists who made the summit possible, and were heartened by all those who joined us on Capitol Hill,” Khaloyan continued.

The co-sponsoring organizations were: The Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO), Armenian Bar Association, Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA), Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), Armenia Tree Project (ATP), Erebuni Armenian School, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), HALO Trust, Knights of Vartan (KoV), March for Martyrs, National Association for Armenian Studies and Re-

**Storica Fine Wines of Armenia Summer Six-Pack**

**Order online today: \$140 + Free Shipping**








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



# Boston Rallies for Artsakh

BOSTON, from page 8

Barsamian said, compared to the scale of assistance to other countries. Georgia, for example, after being attacked in 2008, received some \$3 billion.

Barsamian also declared that as a dictator in need of an external enemy, Aliyev would come for Armenia next, so the Armenian community must be strong and ready to fight back. He concluded that the Armenian Americans are no longer the people of 1915, but a powerful community which must raise its voice and say it will not stand for a second genocide.

Rev. Laura Everett, executive director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, then took the microphone to call for peace. She referred to the first Armenian Genocide and she said that we will not let this happen again. The Armenians are not alone, she said, and she closed with a prayer for justice and peace.

Ara Balikian, chair of the New England District of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), focused on the immediate humanitarian crisis. He like Barsamian pointed out the insignificant sums for aid offered by the US and other major states initially, compared to other regions of the world, while those fleeing Artsakh



Demonstration Participants at the Armenian Heritage Park (photo Ken Martin)

anger and our concern into action. Let me be clear about one thing: There is no doubt that this is the greatest threat to our community since the Genocide. Think about that.”

Koutoujian pointed out three priorities: safeguarding and supporting this new generation of refugees, insuring that Azerbaijan is held accountable for its actions, and helping Armenia strengthen itself for defense. He stressed, “Let us make no mistake: the sovereignty of Armenia itself is at stake right now.” Syunik, or southern Armenia, is a target of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Dr. Ara Nazarian, speaking on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, recalled the words of Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I in 1992, and declared that little has changed, with the rule of force reigning instead of the force of rules. Despite the promising words of US Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Yuri Kim, four days later Artsakh was attacked, and, he said, “an enemy bent on

destroying our state, and any trace of our presence in this world, was left unchecked to ravage the already distraught people of Artsakh last week.” Moreover, “having just whetted their appetite, the enemy is looking to encroach upon the sovereignty of Armenia, as they gleefully refer to it as Western Azerbaijan.”

Nazarian concluded, “So as I see it, we have two options: we continue with business as usual, or rethink our strategic outlook. We define who we are as a nation, embrace our values and what we aspire to be. A tumultuous history will pass, one of real contribution to mankind, even at our most difficult hours, and we will ensure that an enemy horde with a petty dictator at the helm, does not write the last chapter of our nation. Artsakh will always be Armenian, she will rejoin our nation again, and our brothers and sisters will return to their homeland.”

Tufts University student Ani Belorian

spoke optimistically, quoting William Saroyan on the ability of Armenians to come together and create anew. Persevering through systematic violence, they can unite in times of strife or celebration, and so there is hope in Armenian unity, which brings with it a rich history and amazing culture. Armenians must advocate, provide aid and fight for their homeland, she declared.

Dr. Shant Parseghian, head of the board of the Pan Armenian Council of New England, briefly spoke last. Estimating around 600 Armenians present, he asked where the remainder of the Armenians in the Boston area were. He called on those present to contact friends so that next time, they too will come, stressing the urgency of the danger that the Armenian homeland itself may be lost. He concluded with “Long live Artsakh!”



Dr. Shant Parseghian speaking at the Boston demonstration (photo Ken Martin)



Dr. Ara Nazarian of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (photo Ken Martin)

have immediate needs for nutritious meals, clothing, medical supplies, counseling, family therapy and school for the children. The AGBU has a Global Relief Fund for this purpose. Balikian urged all to donate to this or any trustworthy organization or church.

He urged people not to forget the unjust imprisonment of the leaders of Artsakh like Ruben Vardanyan, in prison in Baku now, and exclaimed: “We should not stop speaking until they are all home.”

Sheriff of Middlesex County Peter Koutoujian declared that he could not sleep well, with haunting images from our homeland repeating in his head. These images, he declared, were contemporary versions of what his grandparents and other Armenians went through while fleeing their homelands and being forced into exile.

Calling for Armenian unity, he urged, “But right now, our immediate focus must be on our near future. We should turn our

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH  
*76th Annual*  
**BAZAAR**

**FRI, OCTOBER 13, 2023**  
12 - 8 PM

**SAT, OCTOBER 14, 2023**  
11 AM - 7 PM  
(KITCHEN OPENS AT 12 PM)

**DELICIOUS ARMENIAN FOOD**  
Shish, Chicken and Losh Kebab | Imam Bayeldi | Eetch Kheyma (available 12-2pm & 4-7pm) | Mezze Booth & More

**FABULOUS DELICACIES AND PASTRIES**  
Boereg | Manti | Yalanchi | Porov Kufte | Tourshi Choreg | Khadaif | Baklava | Tahin Hatz | Simit & More

**BOOTHS AND VENDORS**  
Armenian Vendor | St. James Artisan Table | Sunday School Bake Sale Booth | Children's Activities

**ONLINE SILENT AUCTION**  
Visit [AUCTRIA.EVENTS/STJAMES](http://AUCTRIA.EVENTS/STJAMES) to register.  
Multiple Items! Artwork, jewelry, services, experiences, and more.  
Items will be on display at the Bazaar. Bidding will be online-only.  
Online bidding begins at 9 am on Thurs, Oct. 12 and ends at 9 pm on Sun, Oct. 15.

BAZAAR SITE

**\$100 RAFFLE**  
\$5,000, \$1,000, \$750 and three \$500 prizes!  
Drawing will take place Saturday, October 14th.

SILENT AUCTION SITE

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

[WWW.STJAMESWATERTOWN.ORG/BAZAAR](http://WWW.STJAMESWATERTOWN.ORG/BAZAAR)

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH  
465 MOUNT AUBURN ST. WATERTOWN, MA | (617) 923-8860 | INFO@STHAGOP.COM



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights of Vartan Renovates Building for Students at #106 School in Yerevan

YEREVAN — In an inspiring display of dedication to education, the Knights of Vartan's Nareg-Shavarashan Lodge of Greater Detroit successfully concluded the comprehensive renovation of a two-story building at the Knights of Vartan 106th School in Yerevan for students in Grades 1-3. This initiative was made possible through a relationship with the Paros Foundation as the project's partner. Notably, since 2018, the lodge has channeled well over \$100,000 toward a series of renovations within the school.

The Knights of Vartan has a rich tradition of advocating for education, tracing its roots back to its inception in 1916. Over the years, the organization has generously supported multiple Armenian schools across the Middle East and provided scholarships for clergymen, facilitating their educational journeys in the United States.

Since Armenia gained its independence, the Knights of Vartan expanded its com-

mitment to education into the Republic of Armenia. The enduring bond between the Knights of Vartan and the #106 school in Yerevan was initiated in 1993. What began as the Knights of Vartan's "Adopt A School Project" (AASP) soon evolved through partnerships with the World Bank and the Government of Armenia programs (ASIF, ATDF).

This collaborative effort culminated in the renaming of the school to the "Knights of Vartan" on April 5, 1995, in recognition of the organization's unwavering support. Since 2018, the Nareg-Shavarashan Lodge has taken on the responsibility of adopting the

school, and continually implementing vital renovations each year. These enhancements included the gymnasium, auditorium, classrooms, restrooms, hallways, new windows, doors, and electrical wiring throughout the school. The latest achievement involved the extensive renovation of a smaller building on the school's campus

journeys in these newly refurbished classrooms. The institution is firmly committed to delivering high-quality education, a testament to its accomplished faculty and steady increase in student enrollment.

Past Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian, the key initiator of this transformative project shouldered by Nareg-Shavarashan

Lodge, said, "In the future, additional improvements will be made as needed to maintain an exemplary environment for students to learn. Fundraising efforts to benefit the school have been achieved with the generous support of our brothers and sisters from the Avak Tivan, Arakadz Lodge, Bakradouny Lodge, Daron Lodge, Gomidas Lodge, Yeprad Lodge, and Zabelle Otyag". Knights of Vartan Grand Commander, Hunan Arshakian, added, "We are committed to



KV 106 school 1B classroom-before

inclusive of all 13 classrooms across two stories, stairways, and hallways.

This building serves as the nurturing ground for the school's youngest pupils and it is truly heartwarming to witness first graders commence their educational

the education of children in Armenia one school at a time to ensure a bright and more promising future for the country."

For more information about the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, visit <http://kofv.org>.



KV106 School 1B classroom after

## UCLA Panel to Discuss Artsakh Atrocities

LOS ANGELES — The Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA Law, in partnership with the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, presents "Atrocities, Genocide and the Duty to Prevent and to Punish Under International Law: The Situation of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh." This panel discussion will take place on Tuesday, October 10, at 7 p.m. (Pacific Time) at the UCLA Mong Learning Center (Engineering VI Building) and via the Zoom Webinar platform.

On Tuesday, September 19, Azerbaijan launched a military operation against the already-suffering people of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, who had been under a blockade for nearly 300 days, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries. This tragic situation became an overt initiation of wholesale, violent ethnic cleansing, and while a ceasefire agreement may be in place, threats to the safety and security of the ethnic Armenians in this region continue as the population evacuates their ancestral homeland.

Looking at the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh with respect to the Lachin Corridor blockade as well as the recent active military attacks in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and the threats to Armenia generally, this panel will explore the following key questions drawing from action taken thus far by states and international actors (or not):

What conditions trigger the duty to prevent atrocities, including genocide?

Once triggered, what is the scope of that duty, and what tools, both national and international, can help to identify these obligations as well as lawful steps for addressing a genocidal situation?

How can accountability for atrocities be achieved in this situation?

This panel will also assess how con-

current litigation before the ICJ intersects with these questions; and further explore the extent to which lack of labeling or action with respect to the risk of genocide is due, in part, to a lack of clarity regarding the duty to prevent and punish genocide under international law.

The panel will be moderated by Professor Hannah Garry, Executive Director, Promise Institute for Human Rights, expert signatory to the submission to the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on Nagorno-Karabakh, and feature Dr. Taner Akçam, Inaugural Director, Armenian Genocide Research Program of The Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA; Professor Thomas Becker, Legal & Policy Director, The University Network for Human Rights, Columbia Law School & Wesleyan University, author of briefing "The Tip of the Iceberg" on the Lachin Corridor blockade; Professor Juan Méndez, American University Washington College of Law, first UN Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide, author of a "Preliminary Opinion" on the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and the need to prevent atrocity crimes; and Sheila Paylan, International law, human rights and gender expert; Director, Armenian Women's Bar Association Board of Directors.

Registration for this event is required and free. Visit the event registration webpage to sign up for in-person or virtual attendance. The panel will conclude with a small reception in the foyer.

This event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Students' Association at UCLA, Jewish World Watch, UCLA Initiative to Study Hate, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, and University Network for Human Rights.

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

Proudly Presents

*William Shakespeare's*  
**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**  
ԲԱՅՈՒՄ ԱՂՄՈՒԿ ԳԱՍՆ ԻՆԻՆԻ

A MUSICAL COMEDY  
DIRECTED BY *Gerald Papasian* PRODUCED BY *Harout Chatmajian*  
MUSIC BY *Harout Barsoumian*

\* PERFORMED IN ARMENIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES \*

*Saturday, November 04, 2023 - 7:30 p.m.*

SYMPHONY SPACE 2537 BROADWAY 95TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NY 10025

\$80 • \$60 • \$40  
FOR TICKETS: [www.symphonyspace.org/events/vp-tca-mmtg-much-ado-about-nothing](http://www.symphonyspace.org/events/vp-tca-mmtg-much-ado-about-nothing)  
OR (212) 864-5400

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION  
MARIE (201) 745-8850 OR TALAR (201) 240-8541

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP



# Arts & Culture

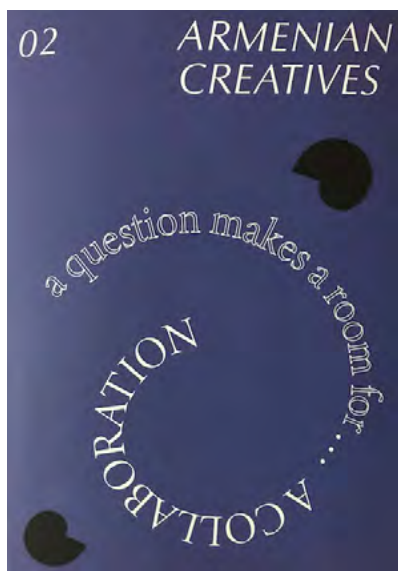
## The Armenian Creatives: Gently Forging Ahead

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

*Armenian Creatives 02: A Question Makes a Room for a Collaboration* is an invitation to calm and to harmony. A seemingly incongruous mixture of materials — conversations, workshops and gatherings that the Creatives hope will ultimately help readers “build rooms of their own”— evidences the young artists’ peaceful and joyful existence, an existence many of us covet.

“A lace workshop practice brought peace to our conversation,” they write. Indeed, true to their mission, these men and women, initially centered in Brooklyn, New York, now spread to the far corners of the world, meet once a month to share what they



have accomplished and what they dream of accomplishing. Theirs is an unwavering will to “further explore” and to “reinscribe our presence continually.”

*The Anthology*, the second in a projected series of publications foregrounding the activities of the group, is the outcome of gatherings the Collective decided to host in an effort to keep connected during the Covid 19 pandemic and lockdown. Questions were emailed to the members inviting them to participate in collaborative projects of mutual interest. Rehan and Deborah follow the visual details of photographs to “reconstruct cultural heritage.” Kamee and Knar “explore the spiritual and temporal qualities of physical belongings, and the sense of belonging they might evoke for both participants and audiences with their shared and respective ancestral lands, histories, and memory.” Reproduced in the book are photos of family heirlooms — pressed flowers from a lost garden, a bone comb, fabric fragment from an Ethiopian priest’s velvet umbrella etc. — that evoke our ancestral land and diaspora history. With a fascinating story behind each belonging, these objects highlight the artists’ awareness of the disruption caused by forced displacement.

Kamee tells of her great-grandmother’s (born in Adana) amniotic sac — dried with salt, folded up, sewn  
see CREATIVE, page 14



Jason Tramm conducting the Mid-Atlantic Philharmonic Orchestra

## Proceeds from Armenian Independence Day Concert to Benefit People of Artsakh

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — It is rare for an event to be dedicated to both joy and grief.

On Wednesday, September 20, at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, a highly professional and sold out classical music concert took place, originally planned and organized to celebrate the 32nd year of the independence of Armenia.

However, just the day before, on September 19, a massive military assault had taken place by Azerbaijan against the 120,000 starving Armenians on their ancestral land of Artsakh.

The Eastern Diocese and the organizing committee decided that the proceeds from the concert will be given to the people of Artsakh through the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Sponsoring the concert was the Eastern Armenian Diocese, and its Primate, the Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan. Clergy also in attendance included Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, former Eastern Diocesan Primate, and current Pontifical Legate of Western Europe and Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See; St. Vartan Cathedral Vicar Rev. Davit Karamyan; and St. Nersess Dean Rev. Mardiros Chevian.

In an eloquent welcoming address for the evening’s uplifting program of remembrance, the Primate first reflected that “tonight we are also carrying a heavy burden of painful news in our hearts. We woke up yesterday learning about yet another surprise attack on our ancestral land of Artsakh that has already resulted in the loss of many innocent lives, including children.”

Continuing in a solemn voice, the Primate stated, “I must be honest with you — the first thought that came to our mind was to cancel tonight’s concert. And yet, after some thoughtful consideration, we realized that it would not be the way of the Armenian people. With a strength of heart and faith in God, we have faced every evil and adversity one can imagine throughout our history — and yet we have endured with patience and resilience as a people of God, as a nation and as a civilization.”

Calling the concert “a testament to our strength, unwavering hope, and the endurance of the Armenian civilization,” he declared, “no matter how many times the enemy tries to eliminate us from the face of this earth and erase our culture, heritage and faith, we will continue to fortify our faith, create goodness, and share with people our rich cultural heritage.”

The Primate then asked the concert attendees to join him in a moment of silence “in  
see CONCERT, page 16



From left, Jason Tramm, Sossy Setrakian, Seta Paskalian Kantardjian, Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Der Davit Karamyan, Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian, Yng. Ala Terzyan Karamyan, Tamar Barsamian Degermenc

## Gary Goshgarian Is Back with a New Thriller

By Alin K. Gregorian

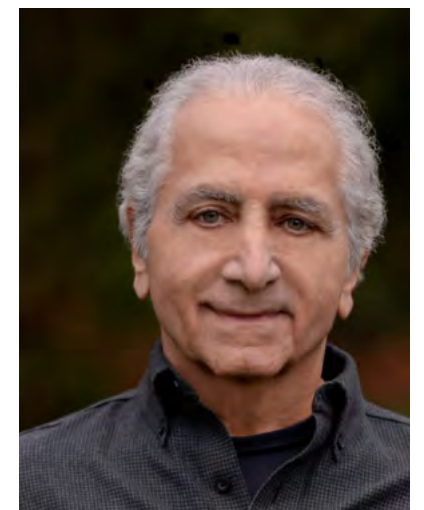
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON — Veteran author Gary Goshgarian, who writes under the pen name Gary Braver, is back with a new thriller set in the greater Boston area.

*Rumor of Evil* is set to be released on October 10 by Oceanview Publishing. (See accompanying review.) The book marks firsts in a couple of ways: one, the book is his first in a series, and second, it is the first time he will have an ongoing Armenian-American detective character.

Set in Cambridge, the book is filled with hyperlocal references in the Metro Boston area. That is done “to create an authenticity. This is my turf. I’ve been here 45 years,” he said in a recent interview. “Most of the novels I’ve written are in the Greater Boston area.”

His previous book was the very popular *Choose Me*, a collaboration with Tess Gerritsen, the author of the



Gary Goshgarian (Gary Braver)

Rizzoli and Isles detective series that has been made into a TV series of the same name.

“On the success of that, it was suggested ‘why don’t you write a series,’” he said.

Goshgarian isn’t just a writer. For several decades, he was a professor of English at Northeastern University, where he taught courses in science fiction, horror, bestsellers and fiction writing. Therefore, he brings a whole arsenal of tools to creating a new character when embarking on a new book.

He retired last year. “I miss the experience of being with young people ... but I don’t miss the politics and driving in. I do miss the high of a good class,” he said.

“In any novel, there are two quests: the outer quest and the inner quest. The professional quest if you are a cop is to solve a crime. The personal quest is personal baggage, that you have issues,” he said.

The book deals with a the murder in Cambridge of a pillar-of-society type, Sylvie, interspersed with diary entries from a teen named Morgan about another death (or is it murder?), that of a Roma girl, Vadima, two decades earlier. Of the 50 chapters, 19  
see GOSHGARIAN, page 14



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

## Gary Goshgarian Is Back with a New Thriller

GOSHGARIAN, from page 13  
are diary entries from Morgan as a 16-year-old.

Of course, nothing is as it seems.

“I knew that if I were to do it as a first person, I could introduce all those red herrings,” he said.

As the book starts, lead detective Kirk Lucian’s marriage has been blown up by the hit-and-run death of his 15-year-old daughter. The shattering grief and trading off of blame has the couple apart. Kirk, however, is still besotted with his wife and wants her back.

To capture the heart-wrenching dialogue between the couple, Goshgarian said he researched the effect of a child dying on a marriage.

“It often ends in divorce. I made that his personal baggage. And I made his personal quest to get back with Olivia,” he explained.

The couple’s story continues in the next book.

*Rumor of Evil* has gotten a good review from *Publishers Weekly* and Goshgarian added that he does not want to solve Kirk’s daughter’s death just yet. “I wanted to leave that open so there will always be a sense of mystery, injustice, an open wound,” he noted.

“Almost always, a murder mystery starts off with a crime scene,” he explained. “I knew that was going to be the narrative flow of solving the crime of who killed Sylvie. . . . but I wanted to make it a layered story and I wanted there to be in the background the haunting of a cold case. I came up with the idea of the back story. I have a file of true crime clippings from newspapers and there was one disturbing story that came out of 2014, when two 12 year old girls were arrested for stabbing their girlfriend 19 times because they were trying to satisfy Slender Man, or Slender Man would kill their families. I wanted to capture the adolescent mind at work and tap into contemporary conspiracy theories.”

The incident took place in Wisconsin and

the victim miraculously survived. Both of the perpetrators were committed to mental health institutions.

His research led him to conclude that “one of the scourges of America is bullying.”

He explained, “The bully victim is someone who is perceived as weak or different,” he noted. “And therefore becomes a victim. Bullies are characteristically aggressive, they want to appear powerful and in control to their peers. They often have very short tempers. They often come from broken homes. They are envious of their victims, who may be prettier, nicer, may come from a stable home.”

“I came up with Morgan, who hosts this girl from Slovakia,” he said, who is beautiful and meek, and yet uncool by American standards. “At a pizza party, she does a palm reading” and immediately after looking at the palm, horrified, she runs out. “Then bad things start happening.”

The girl whose palm Vadima read dies and another person gets ill. And all of a sudden the tide turns and everyone tries to find a reason for why bad things are happening.

“These bad things get the rumors flying, thus the *Rumor of Evil* of the title,” he said. “Slanderous, awful” and clearly superstitious tropes about the Roma then are readily accepted by the girl’s circle of friends, including that the Roma are witches, drink the blood of children and started the bubonic plague. One way to get rid of a witch is to set them on fire,” and thus, the girl dies.

“The characters come out of need,” he said, including those who act as red herrings. “Having raised two sons, I knew something about the teenage minds and believing incredible stories.”

Aside from bullying, the book tackles sexual exploitation as well as the rights of the LGBT communities.

In the book, 16-year-old Vadima ends up in a sexual relationship with her host family’s father. In keeping with the times and the current, more evolved understanding of

consent, the sexual relationship is properly characterized as assault. We have to remember that not that long ago, songs like *Christine Sixteen* by the band Kiss celebrated adult males’ love of nubile girls. Fortunately, opinions have shifted.

Goshgarian said that an article in the *New York Times* about E. Jean Carroll’s case against Donald Trump struck a nerve with him. Someone had asked her why she had not screamed during the attack.

He explained, “This article is about women who had been sexually violated. They freeze. They are so embarrassed and outraged about what has happened that you don’t tell me. . . . So Vadima does not tell anyone what Morgan’s father did.”

In addition, she has an economic disadvantage and would be sent back if the father gets mad.

Goshgarian said that his empathy and respect for women can be attributed to his mother.

“I was brought up by Rose Avedisian Goshgarian, who was a very strong woman. She lived through the Depression. She lived through extreme poverty. Her father was not a very nice man. He farmed her and her brother and sister out to foster families. But she was tough and a remarkably loving person.”

Thus, he added, “I was able to appreciate the strength of this woman. So I’ve been a feminist very early on in my life.”

Teaching at Northeastern also gave him other tools.

“Having been at Northeastern and seeing so many female students go into criminal justice, I wanted a female cop. I wanted to make her have challenges. I made her gay and married to another woman. I wanted her to be in a traditionally male, heterosexual organization, which is the police force. She has prejudices against her but overcomes her,” he noted. “I also wanted her to be compassionate for Kirk, who is pining for his wife to return.”



When writing, Goshgarian said, it is not just the protagonist that deserves to be fully fleshed out. In order for the story to work, it has to have a believable, fleshed-out baddie.

“A villain gives the story plot. Without a villain you won’t have a story,” he added.

“I try to imagine a real life villain . . . does not stand in front of the mirror and say ‘there is the face of evil.’ There is justification for why they do bad things,” in their minds, he said. “I do bad things to make up for the injustices of my mind,” he explained.

So what does this writing professor like to read?

Goshgarian said he has favorite books such from Robert Parker’s Spencer novels, Tess Gerritsen, Michael Connelly and Walter Mosely and Louise Penny.

“I like crime stories where there are characters that are fleshed out,” he added.

In his classes, he taught *Silence of the Lambs* by Thomas Harris and Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House* “which is a crime story and is brilliantly written.”

Goshgarian said he submitted the second in the series of the Kirk Lucian series, *Heat of the Moment*, to the publisher a month ago.

In the second book, Lucian will show even more Armenian characteristics, he said.

“He is more Armenian. He is eating at an Armenian restaurant in Watertown, he eats at Eastern Lahmejun and I’ll have him read the *Mirror*,” he joked.

“If I only knew the language, I would put in Armenian phrases,” he added. “It’s fun having him be Armenian because he is a minority and there are very few of us who write it,” he said, singling out Chris Bohjalian. “My pride of ethnicity is part of his character.”

Goshgarian is the best-selling and award-winning author of ten critically acclaimed mysteries and medical thrillers including *Elixir*, *Gray Matter*, *Choose Me* (cowritten with Tess Gerritsen) and *Flashback*, which is the first thriller to have won a prestigious Massachusetts Book Award. His novels have been translated into 16 languages, and three have been optioned for movies, including *Elixir* by director Ridley Scott.

*Rumor of Evil* is available everywhere, including on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

For more information about him, <https://garybraver.com/>

## The Armenian Creatives: Gently Forging Ahead

CREATIVE, from page 13

into cloth, and used as a good luck charm—that was borrowed and never returned “because war broke out.” Kamee and Knar’s project did, in fact, lead to their participation in Sunrise Stepanakert, a festival that gathered artists from Artsakh, Armenia and Diaspora in Stepanakert, in July 2022. The project has given birth to the Museum of Forgotten Belongings.

A rich collection of materials — flyers inviting the participants to the events, notes to be read “in anticipation of the event,” documents to be read “in memory of the event,” images with captions and descriptions, screenshots from workshops, links to websites and digital resources, and much more — help the reader imagine the gatherings and share in the process of creating intimate archives of “personal materials with easy access,” as an alternative to “gated archives.” Asking questions — the spiral of the Armenian question mark is the inspiration behind the design of the book cover—is a key ingredient of the process of building the archive. The goal is not to come up with absolute answers, but “to ease absences in each other, absences the artists see as “inherently part of our emotional and physical archives as Armenians.” The historical trag-

edy, the loss of 1915, is very much present in their consciousness, yet their gaze is fixed ahead on imagining possible futures, and on celebrating life.

*Armenian Creatives 02* reveals a radical understanding of creativity. Errors are perceived as part of the creative process. It is the artists’ belief that challenges are easier to overcome when imperfections are tolerated and confronted *together*. To this end, the collective organized, in April and May 2022, a series of gatherings of creative writing in Western Armenia asking the participants to respond to specific prompts. Mher writes of his grandmother’s continuous displacements in search of peace and of closeness to the community. Caroline recounts the treasured moment of one day taking a random walk with a friend in New York City, and ending at Washington Square Park where a piano player would drag his piano each night, from a storage space two streets down, to entertain his audience. These contributions are reproduced in the volume with no corrections or editing, the building of language being, for these pioneering spirits, a process in “perpetual translation and transcription.” The concepts explored in the volume may be difficult to grasp for many of us schooled in more traditional schools of thought where

correctness and clear-cut answers are cherished values.

Yet, the artists’ embracing of errors as “freedoms” need not be perceived as a resistance to improving their competence. In fact, by encouraging the use of Western Armenian the sessions help with the efforts of preservation of Western Armenian in the Diaspora. As a token of their commitment to overcoming their “inadequacies” “without shame, fear or guilt,” the Creatives have included a pullout zine of an *Armenian Erotic Glossary* (with content warning), still a work in progress compiled by Levon and Hrayr, as part of the publication. The intent is not to shock or to be irreverent. These men and women have strong connections to their families and their heritage.

With their hands-on workshops and illustrations the Creatives come close to giving expression to the visceral, the inexpressible. Feelings, which they see as part of the material, physical presence of an object, and notions of connectivity, togetherness, warmth, affection and caring, become tangible and palatable. The aim, as stated by Katie, is “to make visible, ceaselessly.”

*The Creatives* have totally internalized their philosophy of working *together* and of caring for one another. There is no trace of

disingenuity here. The needle lace and natural egg dyeing workshops—projects that may be perceived as simple and unsophisticated, and thus held in lower “esteem”—are genuinely enjoyed by this group of artists, architects, educators, all graduates of “esteemed” institutions. Ultimately, collaborating and supporting one another gives the artists the peace of mind and the safe haven, *abahov degh meh*, to borrow Alexia’s words, we all seek. It leads them home.

Ever since the group’s inception in July 2018, the creatives have been forging ahead with confidence boldly resisting “false premises,” in their deliberate yet non-coercive manner. Questions and remarks are “whispered.” “As whispered in prior emails . . .,” reads one “invitation to collaboration.” It is all done gently, tenderly, curiously, patiently. Indeed, along with “Needle!” “Thread!” and “Scissors!” “Patience!” is one of the materials Emma asks the participants to prepare in advance for the needle lace workshop she hosts.

The values the creatives hold dear acquire a unique significance at a time when committing genocides has become the order of the day. The artists’ gestures of “care and affection” might just be the perfect antidote to the madness humanity has immersed itself in. Combatting brutal force with “wisdom and grace” may be delusional. It is, nonetheless, delusion necessary if we are to reclaim the *human* species.



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine  
Vartanian



Caramelized Lamb

## Paddy Fermor's Favorite Caramelized Lamb

Elpida Belogianni, Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor's cook at his home in Mani, in the southern Peloponnese in Greece, shares the recipes of some of the late author's favorite dishes. This was Patrick Leigh Fermor's favorite lamb dish, which Elpida served with different sides like mashed or oven potatoes, carrot and cauliflower puree, or artichokes with peas. "A man of simple tastes, who ate his meals at the same time every day, could hold his drink, and was an avid smoker. That's how Elpida Belogianni, who worked as a cook for the late writer from 2001 until his death in 2011, describes Patrick Leigh Fermor."

"Sir Patrick Leigh Fermor, known affectionately as Paddy Fermor (1915-2011), was a 20th century Renaissance man: a dashing war hero, erudite man of letters and arguably the greatest travel writer of his generation. Fermor's Telegraph obituary described him as 'a modern Philip Sidney or Lord Byron.' He was the British writer whose erudite, high-spirited accounts of his adventures in prewar Europe, southern Greece and the Caribbean are widely regarded as classics of travel literature."

"She approached Paddy, or 'Kir Michalis' as he was known by everyone in Mani, about the job at <https://www.greece-is.com/open-house-patrick-and-joan-leigh-fermors-final-a-ct-of-philoxenia/> his house in Kardamyli when she heard that the previous cook had left her position. Being an old acquaintance of her father, Giannis Belogiannis, Leigh Fermor hired her on the spot."

"For health reasons, Leigh Fermor's wife Joan made sure that he stuck to a strict diet," Elpida recalls. "When she passed away however, he loosened the restrictions and made new rules, personalized to his tastes: he started eating a lot more meat, which he loved (particularly pork chops with butter and onions, and oven-roasted lamb with vegetables), as well as dishes like moussaka, baked gigantes beans, and eggs sunny-side up with bacon. He created his own dietary plan, which he then stuck to happily and religiously."

"In the mornings, he would have one cup of Chinese tea, one orange, and three slices of toast: one with orange- or Seville orange marmalade, a second one with butter and marmite, and a third one with gentleman's relish (a type of anchovy paste). At 11:00, he would have a 'medium-sweet' cup of Greek coffee. For lunch he ate whatever Elpida cooked. His afternoon snack consisted of another cup of tea with two Digestive biscuits. Then dinner. He was never a fan of elaborate delicacies; he preferred simple meals, even when hosting large groups of . He often declared that nothing could beat a plate of lentil stew drizzled with olive oil or a freshly fried fish, dipped briefly in seawater to achieve the perfect saltiness."

Asked if she remembers any moment in particular from cooking for Paddy, she enthusiastically recalls: "One evening - he was widowed by then - I had cooked him his favorite lamb in the oven, and I thought to recite the poem 'The Lamb' by Alexandros Katakouzinis. He listened to it carefully, and it led to a discussion about Greek poetry that lasted all night, as we sat in front of the fire and had large amounts of wine. He was an experienced drinker, but I got really dizzy, and woke up in the morning with the worst headache. As we sat down for lunch that day, I couldn't speak from the pain. He, on the other hand, was completely fine. Eating his meal in silence while reading a book, he looked up every now and again, shook his head with guilt, and muttered: 'Poor Elpida, poor Elpida...'"

"Mr. Leigh Fermor was a restless scholar with a love of adventure. He dis-

covered Greece while crossing Europe on foot at the age of 18. After joining the Irish Guards during World War II, he was judged to be promising officer material for the Special Operations Executive, the unit created by Winston Churchill to wage war by unconventional means. His superiors deemed his fluency in modern Greek useful in leading resistance to German occupation in the Aegean. For 18 months he lived disguised as a shepherd in Crete, emerging from the mountains with a team that in 1944 kidnapped Gen. Heinrich Kreipe, the island's German commander. The operation provoked brutal reprisals toward the local population. It earned Mr. Leigh Fermor the Distinguished Service Order and later became the basis for the 1957 English film 'Ill Met by Moonlight,' directed by Michael Powell and starring Dirk Bogarde."

Patrick Leigh Fermor had worked undercover in Greece for the British military during World War II.

### Caramelized Lamb

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 leg of lamb, with bone, cut into medium-sized pieces
- 3 large onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 carrots, coarsely chopped
- 2-3 fresh bay leaves
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 5-6 garlic cloves, cut in half
- 120ml extra virgin olive oil (or half a cup, to taste)
- Salt, freshly ground pepper

#### PREPARATION:

Season the lamb pieces with salt and pepper.

In a wide and shallow pan, add some olive oil and sauté the onions, carrots and herbs at medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Place the lamb pieces on the pan in a single layer, sauté for 2-3 minutes on each side, turning once. Add the garlic cloves and sauté for 1 minute, or until the garlic is fragrant.

Remove from heat.

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Place the contents of the pan in a medium-size, deep roasting pan, making sure the lamb pieces are still placed in a single layer. Do not add any other liquid to the roasting pan, as the food will slow cook in the small amount of flavorful juices that the ingredients will release, particularly the onions which will sweeten the sauce.

Cover the pan well with aluminum foil and cook for about 2 hours. Uncover the pan, raise the temperature to 356 F and leave in for about 15 minutes, until the meat is nicely browned.

Serves 4.

In 1996 Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor bequeathed their home in Kardamyli to the Benaki Museum with the intention that the house's ownership would be transferred to the Museum after their death.

The operation of the Leigh Fermor House includes residencies and educational activities in collaboration with partner Universities as well as scheduled visits and specially organized events open for the public. According to the expressed desire of the Leigh Fermors and the donation contract, the house can be used to host researchers who are looking for a quiet and hospitable place to work. The Stavros



Elpida Belogianni was Patrick Leigh Fermor's cook from 2001 to his death in 2011. © Alexandros Antoniadis

Niarchos Foundation (SNF) approved the Benaki Museum's request to fully cover the repair works at the House as well as the cost of the necessary equipment, for the operation of the Leigh Fermor House.

The Leigh Fermors also granted the museum the right to rent the property for a period of three months per year. Under the alliance the museum will ensure the preservation of the house and its contents, and enable members of the public to have access to the property, while hospitality services will be provided by Aria Hotels, that specializes in the provision of authentic retreats in restored, historic Greek properties. The Leigh Fermor House is considered one of the most beautiful properties in Greece. Within a Mediterranean garden of cypress trees, olive trees, fragrant shrubs, white oleanders and wild flowers rolling down to the sea, stand three stone buildings: the Main House with three suites, the writer's studio right next to it, which is formed into the Traditional House, as well as the Guest House, adjacent to the Main House. Available to rent from June through August each year, it remains the perfect spot for an idyllic Greek vacation.



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### CALIFORNIA

**OCTOBER 14** — The Orange County Trex Fraternity presents Kef Time Social 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

**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

**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 Rowes 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

**OCTOBER 13** — Arev Short Film Festival, Capitol Theater in Arlington, 6-8 p.m. Sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, the festival will showcase short films by filmmakers from all over the Armenian Diaspora, including "Kef Time" by Avo Kambourian – a documentary about the Armenian band by the same name. Also scheduled to be shown is the third episode of the Amazon Prime series "One Plus One Is Two", written and directed by festival director Sharisse Zeroonian, and various short films made by students at the TUMO Center – including a short called "Your Life As A Film." Tickets are being sold in advance only, and can be purchased at AmarasOnline.com or by calling 617-331-0426. Those who wish to submit short films for consideration should contact Sharisse Zeroonian at szeroonian@gmail.com .

**OCTOBER 13-14** — Friday and Saturday, St. James Armenian Church will hold its 76th Annual Bazaar – Friday 12-8 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Delicious Armenian Food, Mezze, Pastries, and Baked Goods. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children's Activities, Booths and Vendors. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@sthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar.

**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 21** — Saturday from Noon to 7 pm **FAC FallFest 2023.** Join us @ First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Avenue, Belmont. Delicious Kebab Dinners: Lamb, Beef, Chicken and Losh. Combo Platters and Vegetarian Dinners Available. All dinners served with Salad, Pilaf and Pita Bread. Armenian Desserts, Cookies and Choreg. Pre-order and Take-out on-line at <https://www.facbelmont.org/fallfest>. For more information contact (617) 484-4779 or office@facbelmont.org

**OCTOBER 22** — **Competing Cultures in the Education of Ottoman Armenian Daughters: French Mission Schools in the Homeland (1840-1915)**, presentation by Dr. Paulette Houbouyan-Coutant, from Paris. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association. 2:30 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington. The public is cordially invited to attend. (Info: 781-237-6858; 617-926-0171; or info@aiwainternational.org.)

**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.

**NOVEMBER 9** — **Couple's Night Out, "Marriage Stress or Blessing"** organized by the New England Armenian Clergy for Parish Families. Guest Speaker Rev. Dr. Vahan and Yn. Maggie Tekeyan Kouyoumdjian, lecturers on Christian, spiritual and psychological issues. \$100 per couple, including catered buffet. RSVP by October 31. St. Stephen's Armenian Church Hall, 38 Elton Ave., Watertown. Call or text Arpi Boynerian, 617-229-9254 or email [avedisb1@gmail.com](mailto:avedisb1@gmail.com).

**NOVEMBER 21** — **SAVE THE DATE.** Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Symphony Hall, Boston, 8:00 PM. Details to follow

### NEW JERSEY

**NOVEMBER 4** — **12 Vocations: The Ongoing Promise of St. Nersess** seminary. Help us celebrate the vocations of the next 12 alumni clergy and lay ministers at a gala banquet to be held at Macaluso's, Hawthorne, NJ. Starts at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$175 per person. Details, invitations, and booklet donations can be found on [www.stnersess.edu](http://www.stnersess.edu).

Send Calendar Items to the Mirror-Spectator: To send calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator, email [alin@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:alin@mirrorspectator.com) or [alin.gregorian@gmail.com](mailto:alin.gregorian@gmail.com). You can also visit our website, [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com), and find the "calendar" section under the heading "More." You can also mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication. There is no fee for calendar entries.

## Proceeds from Armenian Independence Day Concert to Benefit People of Artsakh

CONCERT, from page 13

solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Artsakh, and in tribute to the losses of these past days, and past years in our beloved homeland."

With the crowd standing in unified silence, Parsamyan prayed for God's "divine mercy for the protection of our fellow brothers and sisters in Armenia as they faced attacks and unprovoked aggression against the peace-loving people of Nagorno-Karabagh. Loving God, listen to the voice of our supplications, and help the innocent civilians of our ancestral land, Artsakh who are under continuous bombardment and assaults by Azerbaijani forces."

The Primate prayed for God's protection, courage, resolve and strength for our homeland, and to increase the "wisdom among those who are at the helm of the state so they can wisely lead our people during these dangerous times for the Armenian nation."

With a closing prayer for the courageous souls who have died "in these brutal and genocidal attacks," he asked all to pray to save those still under attack, and for the end of this aggression. He also prayed for the "spirit of courage, unity, care and love for one another, and understanding so we can stand up for the truth and help each other during times of trial and tribulation, espe-

cially for our brothers and sisters in Armenia."

### Musical Masterpieces

Before the Cathedral altar, the youthful 45-piece Mid-Atlantic Philharmonic Orchestra was in place with Jason Tramm, a much decorated choral, symphonic, and operatic conductor, and an accomplished educator at Seton Hall University.

Karine Poghosyan, an award winning pianist who has had several sold-out recitals at Carnegie Hall and who has a world-wide following with multiple glowing press coverages, then confidently entered in a glittering gold dress, her right wrist adorned with a satin covering displaying the Armenian flag colors.

One of the greatest and most beloved monumental compositions, Sergey Rachmaninoff's soulful and towering *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor*, a piano and orchestral masterpiece with its different themes and thudding climax, filled every crevice of the vast cathedral.

The pianist and conductor reflected the expressiveness and sentimentality of this epic work of genius with their virtuosity and emotional body movements. And they were rewarded with a loud standing ovation lasting several minutes.

Another masterpiece followed. Aram

Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto in D-Flat Major*, employs soulful Armenian folk melodies, unique harmonies and colorful orchestration. Again, the pianist, conductor and orchestra displayed their mastery, to another long standing ovation.

Poghosyan then presented an encore, the much loved Khachaturian's *Toccata* for solo piano, which again reflected the composer's Armenian roots with its folk melodies and rhythms, and several contemporary themes. She provided the necessary skill, sweep and control with her artistry.

Bouquets of flowers were presented to both the pianist and conductor by the organizing committee to the delight of the audience who continued their ovation.

Rev. Karamyan expressed his appreciation to the benefactors of this special event, Harry and Suzanne Toufayan, Vicki Shoghag Hovhannessian, and John Mahdessian in memory of his father Noubar Mahdessian.

"Our music has always reflected the pain and hope of our people and nation," stated Karamyan.

The organizer of the concert and its committee, Vicki Shoghag Hovhannessian, paid tribute to the 32nd anniversary of the independent Armenian nation with the beautiful musical performance, and expressed appreciation to Primate Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan

"for his vision in encouraging this cultural event," and to Karamyan and the hardworking committee for their "invaluable help".

She then reflected on the 10-month blockade, and now the brutal attack on Artsakh and its people. "It is our prayer and resolute conviction that we will face these atrocities and difficulties with the resilient spirit our nation."

The organizing committee included co-chair Seta Pascalian Kantarjian, and Sossy Setrakian, Lily Sarkissian, Yn. Alla Terzyan Karamyan and Tamar Barsamian Dergemenci.

Following the event, a gathering of concert attendees took place on the St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral Plaza, with coffee and cookies. Due to the attack on Artsakh, the original plan to serve champagne in celebration of Armenia's independence was changed.

Arts aficionado John Wolohojian, reflecting the feelings of so many, called the concert "very accomplished. It was so important to show the timeless and heroic spirit of Armenia and Artsakh. And it is crucial to help the people in Artsakh as much as we can," he stated in tribute to the decision to send all the concert's proceeds to the suffering people of Artsakh through the Fund for Armenian Relief.





## COMMENTARY

# Deploy United Nations' International Peacekeeping Forces on Armenia's Borders to Stop Further Catastrophe

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian C.M.

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

As literally hell has broken out in the Armenian homeland, today's government, all opposition parties, as well as any and all organized groups in Armenia, and in the diaspora, must have one major objective that overrides all the many other important humanitarian, economic or political emergencies. That objective is, as the popular wisdom says, "to save the presently remaining furniture," meaning to save, at the very least, what Armenian possessions still remain, at this moment.

The writing has been on the wall for a long while, certainly since the end of 2020's disastrous 44-day war, that not only Artsakh but certainly also the present-day Republic of Armenia are targeted to be taken over by Azerbaijan, acting with the obvious full collaboration of Turkey. Furthermore, whatever the reasons, it had become increasingly evident that the so-called Russian peacekeepers' protection had become quite impotent.

One did not have to be an expert to observe the fact that apart from Artsakh, the belligerent Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has been regularly using the "Western Azerbaijan" qualifier, when referring to the territories of the current Republic of Armenia, including Yerevan, Sevan and Dilijan.

Incredibly, on every such occasion, hardly any voices of indignation, official protest and condemnation, have been heard from the Armenian government or from any other international bodies. Azerbaijani weather reporting agencies are said to refer even to the weather in Armenia, as the "weather in Western Azerbaijan."

Has official Armenia been taking the use of such cynical, shocking and dangerous language as a distasteful joke?

If that is the case, then they are better advised to seriously shake themselves and wake up.

Indeed, Azerbaijanis and Turks have not been joking. They do mean what they say, and more.

Have we not learned from Armenia's history lessons, that to wipe out Armenia from the map has been their centuries-old project, as the core part of the Turkic Pan-Turanic grandiose scheme of expansion from Europe all the way to the heart of Asia, in one uninterrupted vast empire?

So far, they were prevented from achieving that dream, only because of the Soviet-era Russian obstacle which suddenly is now absent!

It is unquestionable that the entire Armenian world needs now to consolidate all its means and forces, by putting aside all internal differences, in order to save whatever territories of Armenia that still remain in our hands.

We probably have only a limited time available to engage feverishly in that effort of consolidation of all our forces. As I already stated in my latest writings, today, any lack of maturity and failure of any Armenian party, be it the current authorities, opposition groups, political parties or diaspora groups, to comply with a spirit of, national emergency-motivated unity, would be considered outright treason towards the supreme interests of the Armenian nation.

We must recognize, and just register for now, that Armenians, both in Armenia and Artsakh, have actually failed to build their national security tools during the entire length of the past three decades, whereas they should have actually consolidated their efforts to secure their own military and diplomatic security devices. This had to be accomplished as a priority, independently and aside from any additional so-called external foreign help from whomever that may have been. Indeed, they were expected to know that the latter is volatile and can be ephemeral, while the former is the only one that a nation can depend on!

Immediately following the collapse of the Soviet structure, Armenia's highest priority should have been not only to carefully maintain its defense industry but also to continue to build on it to secure a world class army, equipped with regularly updated state-of-the-art sophisticated weapons. Armenia had the infrastructure and the intellectual manpower to succeed in that path. Actually, we all, especially in the diaspora, were led to believe that such was indeed the quality and caliber of the Armenian defense system. We were fooled, and even worse, through its irresponsible behavior Armenia had created all the elements of the current Armenian catastrophe.

The other big failure concerns specifically the Artsakh dip-

lomatic front. Artsakh has indeed had two solid legal and internationally recognized tools to support its right to independence, which it neglected to use all the way since way back in 1994, following the Armenian victory against Azerbaijan.

Indeed, just as the Soviet regime was crumbling, it is a well-established fact that Artsakh has lawfully held (according to the laws that prevailed at that time) the successful referendum of December 10, 1991, to establish its right to declare its independence and its right to manage its own destiny.

The repeated Azerbaijani atrocities against its own citizens of Armenian origin, starting from the massacres of Sumgait all the way to the relentless Azerbaijani acts of violence and open rhetoric encouraging its population to perpetrate atrocities towards Armenians that continues to this day in the Azerbaijani media, are the uncontested elements for the Kosovo-like demand of Artsakh for separation from Azerbaijan for survival.

Both Armenia's and Artsakh's Armenian authorities have effectively allowed, sheepishly, the above two internationally accepted solid arguments for independence to fade away in time.

Such failure has reached its lowest point when PM Nikol Pashinyan has instead, recently started to repeat that Armenia recognizes the integrity of Azerbaijan, including Artsakh within its borders.

As incredible as all the above cited Armenian failures may be, and as serious as may be the responsibility and hence the guilt of all those who have caused such failures, it is evident that at the current stage of our national crisis for survival, we cannot allow ourselves the luxury of spending any effort to pursue these issues now. In that respect, however, all is not lost. We simply need to take now very serious note of the above points to make sure that they become fundamental components of an Armenian long-term national strategy which must soon be worked on, once we cross today's state of super-emergency.

Having reminded ourselves of all the above as a background, we now need to put all efforts of our nation together, to achieve the immediate objective which as I said in the beginning of this article, is needed to save what Armenian is still left at this moment, without suffering further losses.

Mr. Pashinyan, fellow leaders of political and other movements in Armenia and Artsakh, as well as heads of our Diaspora major organizations, we need now to bring all our means together to help Armenia request from the United Nations Security Council the only immediate concrete remedy which will prevent the execution of the obvious Azeri-Turkish plan of the complete physical elimination of Armenia from the map:

Armenia must demand the immediate deployment of a credibly strong international peacekeeping force along the borders of Armenia, and what is left of the remaining Armenian populated Artsakh, with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

To partially save sensitivities, those forces may be qualified as "additions or acting in association" with the Russian forces that currently are stationed along those borders.

This demand must be formulated at the UN, immediately, forcefully, formally, and repeatedly by the government of Armenia in Yerevan in association with the government of Artsakh in Stepanakert

Simultaneously, our Armenian Church leadership, led by the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II from Echmiadzin, in association with Catholicos of the Sea of Cilicia Aram I, in Beirut, with the collaboration of Armenia's embassies around the world, all major Armenian organizations' heads must be brought together without lengthy time consuming formalities, in order to inundate heads and legislators of all nations, where Armenian important communities reside, starting of course with those of the USA and France, to request of them, as citizens of such countries, to give their support, and secure their participation to such a UN Peacekeeping Force in the Caucasus.

Dear fellow Armenians, as I am writing the last lines of this article, I presume you are all aware of the very recent unveiled threats that I hear, are being voiced openly just now, by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Aliyev, demanding unheard of farther concessions from Armenia.

Let's not doubt for a moment, that such verbal threats will soon be translated into "military actions."

THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR  
SPECTATOR**

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**EDITOR**

Alin K. Gregorian

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Aram Arkun

**ART DIRECTOR**

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

**STAFF WRITER**

Harry Kezelian III

**CONTRIBUTORS**

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

**REGIONAL**

**CORRESPONDENTS**

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

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

**VIDEO CORRESPONDENT**

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baika Association, Inc.  
755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA  
02472-1509  
Telephone: 617-924-4420  
FAX: 617-924-2887  
www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com  
For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

## LETTERS

## When Darkness Reigns Turn to God

To the Editor:

While Jesus lamented in deep anguish and prayer, religious leaders and an ultimate betrayer led Roman soldiers to arrest Him. Knowing that torture and death awaited Him, Jesus declared to them, "This is your hour, when darkness reigns!" As Christians who follow such a Savior, we, as Armenians, know that even after toiling in prayer and anguish,

an hour of darkness now reigns. We know betrayal, even torture and death. Far more potent than any political power and even military strength are the demonic spiritual powers that endow our enemies. Azeris seek more than the beloved land of Artsakh. Stirred with unnatural hatred, they besiege and ravage our people, desecrating homes and churches, blasting Khachkars. No less than powers of darkness launch out to eradicate the witness of Christ even as they tried in the Garden of Gethsemane.

With tears and heartache we watch the loss of Artsakh and the suffering of our people. For the Azeris, for the Turks, this is their hour, when darkness reigns. But, as Jesus said, it's an hour. The Christian view of life is eternity. As much as we

love our *Haygagan Hogh*, through faith in Christ we are already citizens of heaven, a place secured in His coming Kingdom without end.

Let us in every way possible come alongside our brethren as our legacy of suffering goes on. May we first unite in faith, as believers linked together in prayer, trusting in the infallible word of God. We can only trust the Lord if we know the Lord, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God". The only way to persevere through devastation is to walk through it step by step with our Savior. The legacy of suffering is in Christ's call, "pick up your cross and follow Me." If we pray and open our Bible, words of life can encourage and minister to our hearts. Let the Lord lead us to a church, to prayer meetings, to worship, to encourage one another. It is a God-led life that leads to victory, even in the hour of darkness.

Now is the time, in every way possible, to unite in love. There is power in prayer but it is an undergirding power to enable acts of love. Let us gather and stand as a strong voice for those in anguish and expose the wicked deeds. Even as the Apostle Paul 'appealed to Caesar',

let us rally, protest and proclaim to governments a call for action and justice. While not feasible for most to go to Armenia, let us sacrificially give to those who are serving and providing for our people in this tragic time.

With the challenge to unite in faith and to love sacrificially also comes the call to resist hatred. It is natural, yet deceitfully empowering, to hate our enemies and those who betray us. The venom of hatred aligns us with evil. As Christians, our enemies are God's enemies and truly contemplating His expressed wrath against them would lead us to pity them.

Our people have deep wound upon wound, tremendous loss and grief. In their hour when darkness reigns, we must be, as Christ calls us, "the light of the world". Press in to the Lord and unite together, sacrifice and take action to save our brethren. Our faith is the last bastion for the enemy, forbid them that victory and stand firm in the darkness, trusting God for resurrected new life through Him.

Lisa Stepanian  
New York, NY

## Armenia Paying the Price for Not Following Israeli Lead on Nation Building

To the Editor:

The divergent paths of Israel and Armenia stand as stark testaments to the power of strategic foresight and leadership. From its inception in 1948, Israel astutely recognized the paramount importance of a robust military for its survival in a tumultuous region. By diligently preparing and stockpiling arms, they safeguarded their nation's future against existential threats.

In stark contrast, Armenia's tragic history of corrupt leadership, exem-

plified by presidents Kocharyan and Sargsyan, chronicles a nation that squandered its opportunities. Instead of emulating Israel's model, they shamelessly enriched themselves, depleting Armenia's already meager resources. This reckless negligence left the country vulnerable to aggression, culminating in the 2020 war and the tragic loss of historic Artsakh in September of 2023.

Vladimir Putin's betrayal exposed the Kremlin's opportunism, highlighting Armenia's need to reassess

its alliances. Armenia's rich history and potential remain untapped, marred only by its dependence on Russia. It is time for Armenia to follow a path of self-reliance, aligning with Western nations, fostering economic prosperity, and building a formidable military. The tragic lessons of history must guide Armenia toward a brighter, self-determined future, free from the shadows of corruption and foreign manipulation.

Armen Dedekian  
Arlington, MA

## The Latest Repeat of The Trail of Tears

By Taline Satamian

So, ladies and gentlemen, a repeat of the Trail of Tears (the forced removal in the 1830s of the Cherokee people from their lands in the Southeast of the US to west of the Mississippi River) is still completely acceptable nowadays...as long as it happens off US soil.

Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) is one such place. Its indigenous Armenian population that numbers about 120,000 people has undergone genocide since 2020 and is now (today and for the next few days) experiencing ethnic cleansing and removal.

Since Azerbaijan's 2020 genocidal military operation against Artsakh's indigenous population, the number of casualties have been mounting. At least 4,000 defenders of the land, mostly 18 to 20 year-old men, were annihilated video-game style, using Turkish and Israeli-made drones during the 2020 war on Artsakh.

The petro-dictatorship's military attacks since then have claimed additional young lives—sons, fathers, brothers attempting to defend their families, their 4,000 year-old culture, their land.

Azerbaijan's next to last genocidal act was launched in December 2022; a nine months-long blockade of the region which for millennia had been inhabited by Armenians brought the population to its knees.

It was followed by a final coup de grace in the form of another devastating Azerbaijani military onslaught on September 19, 2023. The meager Artsakh self-defense forces could not withstand the inordinate attack and protect the indigenous population from the killing spree that ensued and from reported cases of rape and beheadings, even of children. The casualties are officially in the hundreds, but may rise to the thousands, as thousands of people are reportedly missing.

The genocide (mostly) completed, ethnic cleansing and removal of the remaining indigenous from Artsakh towards Armenia are now in progress, unless, of course, Azerbaijan...

(Amongst this horror, a huge fuel tank explosion in Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, which killed and maimed hundreds of civilians trying to refuel their vehicles to join the exodus. Some believe it was a terrorist act—in other words, another genocidal act in the midst of ethnic cleansing or at the very least a horrible accident whose victims cannot be treated due to the blockade. The genocide is not over then; genocide and ethnic cleansing seem to be occurring simultaneously.)

...unless, of course, Azerbaijan rushes in and throws into [greater] disarray a "banal" replay of the Trail of Tears, as a disinterested and a substantial layer of the world looks away from the tragedy, while another much smaller, more privileged layer looks on, drooling at the prospects of oil, mining, and weapons deals now that the indigenous population is out of the way. Both layers are comfy and/or enriching themselves with Azerbaijani gas transport route deals that are delivering warmth to Europe. The delivered gas is deceptively and cleverly packaged as Azerbaijani, though it is also augmented by sanctioned Russian gas.

An Azerbaijani invasion of Armenia might happen simultaneously as the exodus, before Armenia has had a chance to recover from the rippling effects of the blow on Artsakh. Azerbaijan's dictator Aliyev has widely publicized his aim to dismember and lay claim to Armenia's southern territories as well.

In short, the leaders and the privileged of the civilized world have in actuality and shamelessly embraced one of Stalin's worst crimes against humanity—the 1921 transfer of Armenian Artsakh to Azerbaijan which at the time was a newly formed Soviet invention built on stolen indigenous lands and cultures. It is this Stalinist move and its Western adherents and beneficiaries who are the main culprits in this human tragedy which is by no means over. Stalinism is alive and well in the "democratic" world.

(Taline Satamian is a public elementary school teacher and the co-founder of the Glendale-based parent-teacher group, Artsakh Humanitarian Council, that has been advocating for the Artsakh Armenians' human and civil rights since 2020. For her advocacy work as a public school teacher, she received the Zarouhy "Sara" Chitjian Armenian Heritage Award from the Armenian National Committee-Western Region. She has also written on violent racial hatred (including ethnic cleansing and genocide) and justice for its victims on Twitter and elsewhere.)

## Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Its Worldwide Press, and Tekeyan Cultural Association Demand Release of Ruben Vardanyan



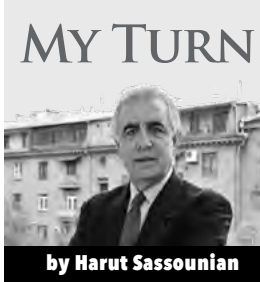
WATERTOWN — The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Supreme Council, the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, and the seven newspapers of the ADL in various countries of the world demand the immediate release of prominent philanthropist and entrepreneur Ruben Vardanyan. Vardanyan repatriated to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and served as its state minister briefly until earlier this year. He was arrested on September 27 while trying to cross the border to Armenia with tens of thousands of other Armenians.

His arrest is a symbol of what can happen to any Armenian in Artsakh, and why Armenians are fleeing en masse now. This ethnic cleansing has not been opposed forcefully by any outside state despite all the warning signs. At the very least, along with humanitarian aid to the refugees, the UN and major world powers like the US and Russia can insure the safe evacuation of the Armenians of Artsakh and prevent Azerbaijan from conducting genocide.

Armenians demand also forcefully that the UN guarantees the safety of any Armenian who decides to remain in Artsakh. Artsakh's destiny must be subject to the internationally established criteria of human rights. We consider the international powers to now be fully responsible for the Azerbaijani atrocities that have been happening for a while in Artsakh. Statements are short of any value, unless Azerbaijanis are forced to comply.



## COMMENTARY



## Biden's Inaction on Artsakh Disappoints Armenian-Americans

There are many justified complaints about Russia's shameful role in the loss of Artsakh and inaction in coming to the defense of Armenia's borders. However, there is also a lot to complain about the indifference by the international community, including the United States, about Azerbaijan's aggression against Artsakh and Armenia.

For 30 years, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, composed of the United States, France and Russia, the mediators in the Artsakh conflict, issued repeated statements about the unacceptability of the use of force, urging the settlement of the dispute through peaceful negotiations.

However, contrary to such well-intentioned words, when Azerbaijan repeatedly attacked Artsakh and Armenia with frequent shootings at the border for three decades, the OSCE Minsk Group simply issued meaningless statements, urging both sides not to engage in violence. The OSCE, however, never bothered to point a finger at the guilty party – Azerbaijan—thus equating the victimizer with the victim.

Such unjust statements encouraged Azerbaijan to brazenly continue its attacks, culminating in the unleashing of a massive war against Artsakh in 2020, followed by incursions into the territory of Armenia. Last month, Azerbaijan violated the agreement it signed in 2020 to allow Russian peacekeepers to protect the remnants of Artsakh's population until 2025. President Ilham Aliyev, knowing full well that no foreign country would intervene to stop his attacks, ethnically cleansed the 120,000 inhabitants of Artsakh and drove them out of their historical homeland.

On Sept. 14, 2023, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State Yuri Kim testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "We will not tolerate any military action. We will not tolerate any attack on the people of Nagorno-Karabakh." Days later, Azerbaijan attacked and occupied Artsakh confident that the U.S. government was bluffing.

Naturally, no one expected the United States or another major power to send troops to defend Artsakh and Armenia, but merely urging Azerbaijan not to block the Lachin Corridor or refrain from the use of force is an exercise in futility. The international community did not even impose sanctions on Azer-

baijan because its gas and oil was more valuable than Armenian blood.

To make matters worse, after ignoring Azerbaijan's repeated attacks on Artsakh and Armenia since the 2020 war, Samantha Power, the Administrator of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), finally arrived in Armenia last week, bringing along a letter from President Joe Biden which contained a lot of sweet words for Armenians, but once again, no action.

Even more shocking, Power offered the pitiful amount of \$11.5 million in humanitarian aid to the 120,000 destitute Artsakh refugees. That's almost \$96 for each refugee, deprived of housing, food, medicines and other basic necessities. This is a shameful amount of money compared to the USAID's annual budget of \$50 billion. Her visit was too late and accomplished too little.

Several other countries and international agencies also pledged assistance to the Artsakh Armenians: France (\$7.4 million), Germany (\$5.3 million), the European Union (\$5.3 million), Sweden (\$1.3 million), Canada (\$1.85 million), Denmark (\$140,000), United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR (amount unspecified), Japan (amount unspecified), Spain (amount unspecified). Armenia committed \$25 million, plus \$125 for rent and utilities per month for six months for each refugee. The government of Cyprus invited the Artsakh refugees to resettle in Cyprus. However, it is not a good idea to take these displaced Armenians out of Armenia.

In addition, dozens of Armenian organizations throughout the Diaspora are raising funds to help the Artsakh refugees. There are also many charitable organizations and businesses in Armenia that are helping the Artsakh Armenians with funds, supplies or services. Armenia's Ministry of Finance opened a bank account to receive donations from the public. There is also an office set up by the Armenian government to coordinate the distribution of the offered assistance.

Just in case someone thinks that the pledged assistance is a lot of money, it is in fact a negligible amount compared to the vast needs of the refugees for the months and years to come. Ukraine, on the other hand, has received so far \$80 billion from the United States for its military, financial and humanitarian needs. In addition, 41 other countries have contributed tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine.

The lack of concrete action by the Biden Administration, aside from pledging \$11.5 million to the Artsakh refugees, has highly disappointed many Armenian-Americans. It is surprising that President Biden, an experienced politician and candidate for reelection next year, who has one of the lowest ratings in the history of the United States for an incumbent president, has not made more of an effort to win over Armenian-American voters. Even if President Biden does not care about Armenia and Artsakh, he should have at least cared about his own self-interest, which is getting votes for his own re-election.

# Assessing the US-Armenian Joint Military Exercise

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

Recent developments around Armenia and Artsakh did not allow a full assessment of the Armenian-American military drills that took place in September. It is clear that the attention of the Armenian public was elsewhere. However, the conduct of these military exercises introduced another tension in Russian-American relations, the epicenter of which was Armenia. The US-Armenian joint military exercises became the main topic of controversy both inside and outside the country.

"EAGLE PARTNER 2023" joint drills between Armenia and the United States were held on September 11-20 in Armenia, particularly at the Zar Training Center of the Peacekeeping Brigade and the Training Center of the Ministry of Defense "in the framework of preparation for participation in international peacekeeping missions." The drills involved approximately 85 US personnel and 175 Armenian participants. This initiative had several objectives, among which are to fortify the US alliance with Armenia, to bolster interoperability, and to prepare the Armenian 12th Peacekeeping Brigade for a NATO Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) evaluation under the NATO Partnership for Peace program later this year.

The conduct of the US-Armenian joint military exercises led to criticism by Russian officials. During this period of a tense US-Russian relationship, cooperation of Armenia with the US has been received as an unfriendly gesture.

One criticism came from the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. In Lavrov's words, "this action of the Armenian leadership is regrettable." In general, Russia is worried about the US trying to play a more active role in the Caucasus. "Of course, we see little good from an aggressive NATO country trying to infiltrate into South Caucasus. I don't think this is good for anyone, including Armenia itself," Lavrov stated. Russian presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov also commented on the joint military exercise, stating that "In this situation, the implementation of such exercise will not contribute to the stabilization of the situation, in any case, it will not contribute to the strengthening of the atmosphere of mutual trust in the region."

Moreover, the Foreign Ministry of Russia summoned the Armenian Ambassador in Russia to protest the joint military exercise among other actions Russia deemed un-

acceptable. In its statement Foreign Ministry stated that Armenia has taken a number of unfriendly steps, among them "the exercises that will begin Monday, Armenia's provision of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and its moves to ratify the Rome Statute that created the International Criminal Court, which this year indicted President Vladimir Putin." In sum, the Russian response to these exercises coupled with other moves has been quite negative.

Conversely, the US side has stressed that this exercise is a "routine exercise that is in no way tied to any other events." According to a US State Department spokesperson, the US regularly trains and operates alongside its partners and continuously improves interoperability between armed forces. According to the spokesperson, Armenia is a partner of the US and has "an enduring relationship since 2003 with the Kansas National Guard as part of the Department of Defense's State Partnership Program." Hence the conduct of exercises now should not be deemed as action directed against some other country or connected to some event.

Asked about Russia's response to the joint military exercise, the US harshly responded that "given Russia has invaded two of its neighbors in recent years, it should refrain from lecturing countries in the region about security arrangements." Hence, this became just another issue on which Russian and US officials attack and criticize one another, leaving Armenia to deal with the repercussions.

Having considered all the criticism and accusations from the Russian side it is important to highlight the fact that such joint military exercises are not something new between the US and post-Soviet countries. Such drills happen annually and have a permanent and regular character. It's not only Armenia that conducts such joint exercises with the US but also the countries of Central Asia.

Such joint exercises took place in Tajikistan between 10-20 August, 2022 within the framework of the US Central Command-sponsored REGIONAL COOPERATION 22. The participating states were the United States, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan and the United States also conducted a five-day bilateral field training component of the exercise at the Fakhraabad Training Center. Another such joint exercise – STEPPE EAGLE 19, took place in Kazakhstan in 2019, where soldiers from such countries as the US, the United Kingdom, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkey took part in. This year, on August 8, Exercise Regional Cooperation 23 took place in the US, at Helena, Montana. It brought together military personnel from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as US personnel from across the country.

Naturally, the Armenian government would like to establish continuous military cooperation with the US after these military exercises, including security cooperation, but there are no signals from the US that these exercises can become more than routine exercises.

(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.)



# A Special Order of Prayer Was Held at Echmiadzin in Support of Artsakh and Artsakh Armenians

ECHMIADZIN — On October 1, the day of nationwide Prayer for Artsakh, under the chairmanship of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, following the Divine Liturgy, a special order of prayer was performed in support of Artsakh and the Armenians of Artsakh in the St. Trdat Open Altar of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

On the occasion of the Nationwide Prayer, the Holy Lance of Geghard was taken out for the worship and blessing of the faithful.

During the Service, the Armenian Patriarch blessed Armenia and Artsakh and the attending faithful people with the Holy Lance of Geghard.

At the conclusion of the prayer, the Catholicos of All Armenians conveyed his Patriarchal message to the entire Armenian people.



Catholicos Karekin II kisses the Holy Lance of Geghard on October 1.

In his message, he expressed his sorrow over the elimination of Artsakh, linking it to the Genocide.

He said, “The souls of all of us are filled with infinite pain and deep concern. My Armenian nation is experiencing difficult and alarming days. Today, united in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and in Armenian churches throughout the Diaspora, we raise a prayer in support of our brothers and sisters in Artsakh, who, having been subjected to terrible suffering and inhuman deprivation, have taken the path of emigration. The world of Artsakh is being depopulated, the sacred land is once again orphaned.

“It is with pain to reflect on this national tragedy that the inadequate response of the world to the aggressive, genocidal actions of Azerbaijan, the policy adopted by the authorities of the Republic of Armenia towards Artsakh and the divisiveness of our people led to the loss of Artsakh.”

He cautioned that Armenia itself was under threat. “Today, the Republic of Armenia is facing the same threat; the dangers of loss of sovereignty and statehood are openly discussed. The security challenges, the territorial losses, the haste shown in the process of establishing peace under obvious coercion, as well as the ways of the government’s communication with the public, have created an atmosphere of mistrust and brought about a just uprising, which in the created complex situation can lead to painful developments.”

He urged a steady course ahead.

“We urge the statesmen not to sow hatred, divide and weaken the people with new dividing lines, unbalanced words and expressions. In order to provide a dignified solution to the existing problems, to get the motherland out of this dangerous situation, it is necessary to act soberly, to correctly assess the geopolitical realities and to use all the expert potential and experience of our nation in the crisis that is deepening day by day, in order not to lead our country to new losses, especially considering the enemy’s ambitions and belligerent rhetoric. The bloody picture of Artsakh is a testimony to the fact that the aggressive aspirations of the enemy are uncontrollable, and there is no discrimination in the choice of means,” the Catholicos said.

Finally, the Catholicos urged unity in the face of such destruction.

“Let this Nationwide Prayer gird us, and unite us as God’s own people, with one and the same vision of strengthening the nation and the countrymen. This moment is also an opportunity for us to reflect on the course of our lives, to remove anti-patriotic phenomena from us, to correct mistakes and shortcomings, in order to strengthen ourselves as a nation, state and Church.

“The priceless symbol of our country, the world of Artsakh, is ours and is in our hearts, and the consciousness of Artsakh being Armenian will never weaken in generations.”

He offered words of sympathy to the people fleeing Artsakh.

“Beloved children of Artsakh, be strong and resilient with your special brave spirit, remain steadfast in your faith and hope, continue to live and create, not succumbing to difficulties, and keep your love for Artsakh and your native heritage alive forever. All our people and the Church are with you and in these painful days with ready commitments to support you,” he said.

*Pan Armenian Council of New England & YerazArt Foundation  
in partnership with Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian Relief Society,  
Friends of Armenian Culture Society & Tekeyan Cultural Association  
invite you to join us for a concert in solidarity and support of the people of Artsakh.*

## ARMENIAN NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

**Eduard Topchjan**, Artistic Director & Principal Conductor  
**Sergei Babayan**, piano

SYMPHONY HALL, BOSTON

.....

**Aram Khachaturian 120th - Sergei Rachmaninoff 150th**  
*A Tribute*

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday

November 21, 2023

8:00 PM

Tickets will soon be available for the Boston Concert.

**North American Tour**  
New York, Toronto, Montreal & Boston