

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

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## New York Public Library Dedicates Center for Research in Humanities to Former President Gregorian

NEW YORK — The New York Public Library (NYPL) on Thursday, November 16, announced it has officially dedicated its Center for Research in the Humanities in honor of former NYPL President Vartan Gregorian, whose extraordinary leadership revitalized the Library and helped solidify its position as an indispensable civic and educational institution. The Library's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the name change during their quarterly meeting on Wednesday, November 15.

The new Vartan Gregorian Center for Research in the Humanities is dedicated to furthering the Library's mission to engage, inspire, support, and connect a growing community of scholars worldwide — all of which were priorities of Gregorian during his tenure as NYPL President from 1981-89.



The late Dr. Vartan Gregorian (Ken Martin photo)

Located in the heart of the Library's flagship Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, the Gregorian Center is both an homage to its namesake's enduring legacy and a physical manifestation of all of the progress and growth in the Research Library over the last decade. That progress includes substantial  
see LIBRARY, page 10



Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh region sit in the back of a truck upon their arrival in the border village of Kornidzor, Armenia, September 27, 2023 (REUTERS/Irakli Gedenidze/File Photo)

## World Court: Azerbaijan Must Let Ethnic Armenians Return To Nagorno-Karabakh

THE HAGUE (Reuters) — Judges at the World Court on Friday, November 17, ordered Azerbaijan to let ethnic Armenians who fled Nagorno-Karabakh in September return, and to keep the Armenians remaining in the enclave safe, as part of a set of emergency measures.

Azerbaijan in September recaptured the region, then controlled by its ethnic Armenian majority despite being internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan.

The lightning offensive, after decades of enmity between Baku and Yerevan and a nine-month blockade of essential supplies by Baku, prompted the mass exodus of most of the region's 120,000 ethnic Armenians to neighboring Armenia.

Yerevan accused Azerbaijan of ethnic cleansing and asked the International Court of Justice, as the World Court is formally known, to issue emergency measures aimed at protecting the rights of ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Azerbaijan must (...) ensure that persons who have left Nagorno-Karabakh after Sept. 19, 2023, and who wish to return to Nagorno-Karabakh are able to do so in a safe, unimpeded and expeditious manner," presiding judge Joan Donoghue said.

see COURT, page 3

## Jerusalem Christians Rally 'round Armenian Church over Land Deal

By Crispian Balmer

JERUSALEM (Reuters/Combined Sources) — The heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem issued a rare joint appeal at the weekend, warning that a contested land deal could erase the centuries-old presence of the Armenian community within the Old City.

The ethnic Armenian community has its own district within the ancient city of Jerusalem under borders drawn by Ottoman rulers - the smallest of the four quarters, which also include highly distinct Muslim, Jewish and Christian neighborhoods.

However Armenians say they risk being uprooted by a deal to lease about 25 percent of their area to developers who want to build a luxury hotel on the site.

The deal was signed by the head of the Armenian Church in Jerusalem in July 2021, but members of his community said the first they heard of it was when surveyors started work in the area this year.

He has told his congregation that he was misled and has started legal action to get the contract annulled. The priest who brokered the accord on his behalf was defrocked by the Church Synod in May and he has left Jerusalem.

Despite the legal challenge, bulldozers arrived last week and started tearing up a carpark, which covers some of the contested land. When protesters blocked the work, armed Israeli Jewish settlers turned up in a failed effort to disperse the demonstration.

"The provocations that are being used by the alleged developers to deploy incendiary tactics threaten to erase the Armenian presence in the area, weakening and endangering the Christian presence in the Holy Land," the Christian leaders wrote, including the heads of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.

see JERUSALEM, page 6

## No More 'Enver Pasha Bridge' in Potsdam After Complaint

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

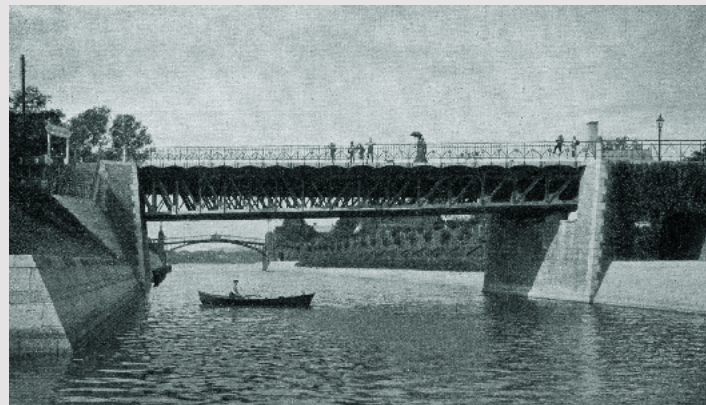
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

POTSDAM — Germany is known for its culture of remembrance, manifest in official acknowledgement of heinous crimes committed by previous governments in history, from the massacre of the Herero and Nama in 1904-1908 in Namibia, to complicity in the Ottoman genocide against the Armenians and other Christian minorities, to the Holocaust.

Recognition of the genocide committed by the Young Turks during World War I came only in 2016. The text of the Resolution passed by

the Bundestag (Parliament) on June 2 that year clearly "deplores the deeds of the then-Young Turk government" which perpetrated the mass murders and "regrets the ignominious role of the German Empire," which, as the Ottomans' wartime ally, failed to intervene. The resolution furthermore stated it was the "task for education in Germany, in schools, universities, and political formation to take up study of the expulsion and extermination of the Armenians, including it in curricula and textbooks, as part of the study of the history of 20th century ethnic conflicts, to transmit this to future generations."

see BRIDGE, page 5



The Enver Pasha Bridge in 1906

BERLIN

Erdogan Greeted by Demos in Berlin

Page 4



BOSTON

Grassroots Activism Yields Roundtable Discussions on Artsakh With US Senators

Page 7



NEW YORK

TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Page 13







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Foreign Ministry Condemns Synagogue Attack

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Armenian Foreign Ministry has condemned the vandalism targeting a synagogue in Yerevan.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ani Badalyan, in response to a media query, said that antisemitism and intolerance on national or religious grounds have no place in Armenia.

“As we have already stressed before, the Republic of Armenia considers any attack on any religious institution and in particular any manifestation of vandalism, any disrespectful action towards the synagogue in Yerevan impermissible. Such cases of intolerance or its incitement are unacceptable, and criminal proceedings have already been initiated by the competent authorities of the Republic of Armenia. We categorically reject any manipulation of the incident, subject, be it for political, propaganda or other intentions. Anti-Semitism and intolerance on national or religious grounds have no place in Armenia,” Badalyan said in a statement.

### USAID Releases \$4 million Extra for Refugees

YEREVAN — The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has announced more than \$4.1 million in additional humanitarian assistance for people affected by the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. This additional funding brings total U.S. humanitarian assistance for the Nagorno-Karabakh response to nearly \$28 million since 2020.

Azerbaijan’s military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh between September 19 and 20 displaced more than 100,000 people into neighboring Armenia and generated significant humanitarian needs.

With this additional assistance, USAID is supporting efforts on the ground to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance for almost 74,000 vulnerable refugees and displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh who are sheltering in Armenia. This funding will increase life-saving food assistance and provide humanitarian protection and emergency shelter.

The U.S. stands with civilians affected by Azerbaijan’s military operation and supports the Armenian government’s efforts to help those in need.

### Stella Chen to play Khachaturian’s works in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — American violinist Stella Chen will share the stage with the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra as part of the 11th Khachaturian International Festival at Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall on November 25.

The program features Khachaturian’s *Violin Concerto in D minor* and *Symphony No. 2 in E minor* “The Bell.”

The conductor is Sergey Smbatyan. The festival Khachaturian’s 120th anniversary.



Paruyr Hovannisyan, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, and Vassilis Maragos, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, sign an agreement on the status of the EU mission in Armenia, Yerevan, November 20, 2023.

## Yerevan, Brussels Sign Agreement on EU Mission Status in Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The European Union and Armenia have signed an agreement on the status of the 27-nation bloc’s mission in the South Caucasus country.

The official signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on Monday.

The agreement was signed by Deputy Foreign Minister Paruyr Hovannisyan and Head of the EU Delegation in Armenia, Ambassador Vassilis Maragos, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

Hovannisyan said in early November that progress had been made in terms of fixing the status of the European Union mission (EUMA) in Armenia, and that an agreement on the immunity and privileges

of EUMA observers would be signed soon.

“The strengthening and expansion of the EU mission is on Yerevan’s agenda,” the official said then.

In January, the European Union approved the establishment of a civilian mission in Armenia. It said that monitors sent by different EU member states would strive to “contribute to stability in the border areas of Armenia, build confidence and human security in conflict-affected areas, and ensure an environment conducive to the normalization efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

About 100 monitors arrived in Armenia in late February. The mission has a mandate for two years and its operational head-

quarters is in Armenia.

Canada recently decided to join the mission. Last week EU foreign ministers gave the green light to a proposal to beef up the border-monitoring mission in Armenia. When the measure is submitted to the European Commission, it will need to come up with a proposal on how the EUMA can be expanded. The decision of the European Commission, in turn, must be ratified by the 27 EU member states.

The EUMA, which operates from six Forward Operating Bases in Armenia’s four provinces bordering on Azerbaijan, said recently that since its deployment it has carried out more than a thousand patrols along the border.

## CSTO ‘Continues To Work’ On Sending Observation Mission to Armenia

By Nane Sahakian and Shoghik Galstian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Despite the fact that Armenia will not participate in the November 23 summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in Minsk, the Russian-led defense bloc “continues to work on sending an observation mission to Armenia.”

The CSTO Secretariat’s statement to this effect made on November 21 follows a statement by the organization’s Secretary-General Imangali Tasmagambetov made the previous day during a meeting with Belarusian leader Aleksandr Lukashenka, the formal host of the upcoming summit, that Yerevan had asked the CSTO to remove the issue of providing military assistance to Armenia from the organization’s agenda.

“Out of the 34 decisions made at the Collective Security Council meeting [in Yerevan] in November last year, only two have not been implemented. One of them was the re-editing of the Council’s decision on assistance to Armenia. Despite the fact that all other allies supported this decision, the Armenian side did not show any interest in that document. Moreover, at the final stage of the work on the document, the Armenian side asked for it to be removed from the agenda altogether,” the Kazakh head of the CSTO said.

Armenia had appealed to the CSTO for military assistance in September 2022 following two-day deadly border clashes with Azerbaijan that Yerevan said stemmed from Baku’s aggression against sovereign Armenian territory.

The Russia-led bloc that also includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan never called out the aggressor, while agreeing to consider sending an observation mission to Armenia.

At the CSTO summit held in Yerevan in November 2022, Armenia declined such a mission unless it gave a clear political assessment of what Yerevan said was Azerbaijan’s aggression and occupation of sovereign Armenian territory.

Explaining his decision to skip the Minsk summit, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told the parliament in Yerevan earlier this month that the “fundamental problem” with the CSTO was that this organization has refused “to de-jure fix its area of responsibility in Armenia.” “

“In these conditions this could mean that by silently participating [in the summit] we could join the logic that would question Armenia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. We cannot allow ourselves to do such a thing, and by making such decisions [not to attend CSTO gatherings] we give the CSTO and ourselves time to think about further actions,” Pashinyan said.

During the November 15 question-and-answer session in parliament, the Armenian leader refused to be drawn into the discussion of whether Armenia planned to formally quit the CSTO, nor would he speak about any security alternatives to membership in this organization.

“We are not planning to announce a change in our policy in strategic terms as long as we haven’t made a decision to quit the CSTO,” Pashinyan said.

While official Yerevan has not yet confirmed that it had asked for the document on assistance to Armenia to be removed from the CSTO agenda, Hakob Arshakyan, a deputy parliament speaker representing Pashinyan’s ruling Civil Contract party, implied that such a move would only be natural given that the CSTO has not changed its attitude.

“That’s the problem that was openly discussed in the works related to the CSTO, that is, these issues arose from there, and the reason is the same,” Arshakyan told reporters.

Last year, the then Secretary-General of the CSTO Stanislav Zas said that the heads of member states had ordered him to finalize the document on sending an observation mission to Armenia and submit it for signing. Official Yerevan has not reported any efforts by the CSTO to amend that document over the past year.





## ARMENIA

# Samaritan's Purse Evangelical Christian Organization Provides Aid To Armenians from Artsakh with Mission Aviation Fellowship

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — Samaritan's Purse, an evangelical Christian organization that both provides physical aid and promotes the Gospel, has recently provided aid to the forcibly displaced Armenians from Artsakh in Armenia. Two flights of its DC-8 cargo plane brought emergency supplies from its base in Greensboro, NC.

The first delivery on October 7 brought more than 30 tons of relief, including food, blankets and solar lights, to Yerevan. Samaritan's Purse set up its own Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) by working with local evangelical church partners to deliver this relief. According to its press release, it promised hot meals, and necessities such as personal hygiene kits, diapers, cleaning supplies, bed linens and blankets.

Moreover, Samaritan's Purse medical teams began working in local hospitals to help burn victims from a gas station explosion near Stepanakert during the exodus from Artsakh. Two burn specialty teams provided surgical care to these victims,



Samaritan's Purse burn specialty teams are among dozens of disaster personnel helping Armenians from Artsakh

including wound care, skin grafts, and post-operative physical therapy, as well as prayer.

"The depth and extent of these [wounds from the explosion] are probably some of the worst I've seen in my 27 years of experience working in burn treatment. The amount of suffering here is beyond human comprehension," said Joany McDougall, a nurse on Samaritan's DART, in an October 11 article.

By October 11, Samaritan's Purse had 28 people on the ground in Armenia, including the burn specialty teams.

A second flight left North Carolina on October 12 with 23 tons of emergency supplies.

Rick Emenaker of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) was on vacation with his Armenian-American wife, Rebecca Hakimian Emenaker, during the Azerbaijani invasion of Artsakh in September 2023. Samaritan's Purse asked whether he could help with its relief efforts and MAF gave Emenaker permission to stay after his vacation in October and early November to assist in these efforts.

He said, "I did do some of the distribution and helped with it, but my main role

was actually to get the two DC-8 airplanes in — to get landing permission for them. I know all of the people in civil aviation, up to the director." He also went out on the ramp on the aviation side, and help with the unloading and getting the items through customs.

Emenaker added, "I was in reality a point of contact for a lot of people because I know a lot of people. That enabled them to do their work a lot easier." Emenaker explained that he understands Armenian fairly well as well as Russian, because he and his wife lived in Russia for eight years. He said he knows a lot of people in Armenia, primarily within the Evangelical community, as well as outside it, because he has been there 8 or 9 times in the last few years for various reasons.

He found that the refugees he spoke with seemed not to want to try to return to Artsakh again. Emenaker related, "The interesting thing for me was that many of them said, [when asked], do you want to go back to Artsakh, no, we are done. We are finished. Let's start life afresh and move forward."

He declared, "Without going into a whole lot, I think there is such an opportu-

nity here, if the diaspora and many others could realize that this is actually an opportunity for Armenia to regroup and become stronger. You have 120,000 people, many of them farmers who work the land, hard workers, and they have big families. Many of them have 6 or 7 kids." They are looking for work, and considering going to Russia, he said, but when talking to some of them, "they said: If we had a piece of land to work and grow we would do it. We don't want to leave, but what choice [do we have]?"

Emenaker stressed, "Artsakh is gone. We don't like it but we have to face reality at the moment. It doesn't mean that in 20-30 years it can't be back. I mean, things do change, but that is all philosophical. I just think there is an opportunity for Armenia now. If you want to keep the land, if you really want to make Armenia prosper, there is an opportunity for that to happen." Here, the diaspora could play an important role, he said.

Samaritan's Purse brought emergency supplies to Armenia after the 2020 war as well, according to its own press releases. It airlifted over 22 tons, including coats, boots, thermals, gloves, socks and beanies, while distributing winter kits, blankets and food to over 8,000 displaced families. Mobile medical teams provided care to more than 500 patients. Emenaker was in Armenia from the start of the war, and afterwards participated in the 2020 relief efforts, through MAF, in the same way as in 2023. He assisted Samaritan's Purse in getting aircraft permissions for landing, helped with customs to get donated items released, and then helped to work with local churches for distribution of goods.

He recalled, "That was hard. That was winter when that happened when a lot of people poured in. The difference is, back then they all thought they were going back, and many of them did, the majority. This time they know they are not."

Emenaker stated that he had heard that Samaritan's Purse would conclude its current program of assistance on November 22. Meanwhile, he has his own plans connected with Armenia. He said, "We'll be back. In fact, my wife and I plan to climb Ararat next year with some friends."



A Samaritan's Purse team member prays with a woman from Artsakh



Rick Emenaker at work in 2018

## Azerbaijan Must Let Ethnic Armenians Return

COURT, from page 1

The court said Azerbaijan must also make sure any ethnic Armenians still living in the enclave were "free from the use of force or intimidation that may cause them to flee" and ordered that Baku report to the court in two months to show what it was doing to comply with the order.

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry said it had already pledged to ensure all residents' safety and security, regardless of national or ethnic origin, and that it had not forced the ethnic Armenians to leave Karabakh.

"Azerbaijan is committed to upholding the human rights of the Armenian residents of Karabakh on an equal basis with other citizens of Azerbaijan," it said in a statement.

The measures are part of two competing legal disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan before the ICJ. Both states accuse each of violating a U.N. anti-discrimination treaty.

No date has been set for the main case and a final ruling is not expected before well into next year.

## Armenia Men's Team Wins European Team Chess Championship Bronze

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Armenian men's national chess team took bronze at the 2023 European Team Chess Championship after beating England on Monday, November 20, in Budva, Montenegro.

Tenth-seed Serbia won the Championship after finishing a single tie-break point ahead of Germany, who took silver despite remaining unbeaten and winning their head-to-head clash, Chess.com reports.

Armenia's men's team lost just one match, to Germany, and their European medals come a year after Armenia pulled off the even more impressive feat of finishing runner-up at the 2022 FIDE World Chess Olympiad in Chennai.





## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

### Erdogan: Armenia Should Accept 'Hand of Peace' Extended by Baku

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that Armenia should work with Turkey and Azerbaijan to build peace instead of looking to the West for weapons and training, Iran Front Page reported on November 21.

Erdogan told a press conference on November 20 after a lengthy cabinet meeting in Ankara that some Western powers have yet to realize that the Karabakh War has changed the Caucasus and the entire region.

"It is better for the Armenian people and rulers to seek security in peace and cooperation with their neighbors, not thousands of kilometers away," he said.

"No weapons and ammunition sent by Western countries can replace the peace that a permanent peace environment will provide," Erdogan continued, urging Armenia to "accept the hand of peace extended by our Azerbaijani brothers."

### Aslikyan Beats Azerbaijani Boxer to Become U-22 European Champion

BUDVA (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian athlete Ruslan Aslikyan won a gold medal at the U-22 European Boxing Championships in Budva, Montenegro on Sunday, November 19.

In his final bout, Aslikyan (57 kg weight category) defeated his opponent from Azerbaijan, Azrak Bagirov.

Another Armenian boxer, Rudolf Garboyan (51 kg), lost in the final round and took the second place.

Earlier, Elida Kocharyan (60 kg) from the women's team snatched gold for the Armenian team, which in total won 2 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze medals at the tournament.

### Azerbaijan Arrests Investigative Journalists

BAKU (AFP) — Azerbaijan on November 21 detained two journalists who investigate corruption among the political elite, their lawyers said, in the latest legal case targeting media in the tightly-controlled Caspian nation.

Signs of dissent are usually met with a tough government response in Azerbaijan.

"Police detained on Tuesday Sevinj Vagifgyzy, editor-in chief of Abzas Media, upon her return to Baku from Europe, and searched her home," lawyer Elchin Sadygov said.

On Monday, the media outlet's director Ulvi Hasanli, was "detained and charged with smuggling foreign currency," said his lawyer Zibeyda Sadygova.

"Hasanli has pleaded not guilty and denounced the charges as unfounded," Sadygova said, adding that her client "risks up to 12 years in prison."

Abzas Media reported that Hasanli was "subjected to inhumane treatment" in custody.

# Turkish and German Leaders Air Deep Differences on Israel-Hamas War

By Geir Moulson

BERLIN (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Friday, November 17, aired deep differences over the war between Israel and Hamas as the Turkish leader made a brief and tensely anticipated visit to Berlin.

Erdogan was invited to visit Germany months ago after his reelection, but recent weeks have been marked by discomfort in Berlin over his increasingly strident stance against Israel.

Turkey has long been viewed as an awkward but essential partner in Germany, home to more than 3 million people with Turkish roots. It's a NATO ally that also is important in efforts to control the flow of refugees and migrants to Europe, an issue on which Scholz faces intense domestic pressure, but there have been frequent tensions in recent years.

Most recently, a chasm has opened between the countries' stances on events following Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel.

Germany is a staunch ally of Israel and has opposed calls for a cease-fire, while pushing for aid to civilians in Gaza, advocating "humanitarian pauses" and seeking to keep open channels of communication with other countries in the region to prevent the conflict spreading.

Erdogan this week called Israel a "terrorist state" intent on destroying Gaza with all of its residents. He described Hamas militants as "resistance fighters" trying to

protect their lands and people. Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and European Union.

Those and similar comments have appalled politicians across the spectrum in Germany. Scholz has described Erdogan's accusations against Israel as "absurd."

"It's no secret that we have, in parts, very different views on the current conflict," Scholz said at a brief news conference alongside Erdogan before their talks. But "particularly at difficult moments, we need to speak directly to each other."

"Hamas' attack means that Israel must protect itself and must be able to defend itself," he said. "It cannot remain the case that a terror organization that rules this region undertakes such activities from there again and again with unbelievable military force. That must end, and that is an aim that one must support — we do, in any case."

At the same time, Scholz said it is important to "do everything to keep the number of civilian victims as small as possible," and stressed that "the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza also depresses us."

Scholz said that Turkey and Germany share fears of a wider "conflagration" in the region and would discuss how to prevent one.

While Scholz again advocated repeated "pauses" in the fighting, Erdogan said: "If we can establish a humanitarian cease-fire together with Germany, we will have the opportunity to save the region from this ring of fire."

"As of now, 13,000 Palestinian children, women and elderly have been killed," he said. "There is almost no place named Gaza anymore, everything has been destroyed."

Erdogan suggested that Germany was unable to criticize Israel because of the Holocaust.

"I speak freely because we do not owe Israel anything. If we were indebted, we could not talk so freely," he said. "Those who are indebted cannot talk freely. We did not go through the Holocaust, and we are not in such a situation."

Israel recalled its diplomats from Turkey last month after Erdogan accused Israel of committing war crimes. Turkey later also recalled its ambassador from Israel.

Another possible source of tension emerged ahead of Friday's visit when Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler said Turkey plans to purchase 40 Eurofighter Typhoon jets, but Germany was impeding the sale of the warplanes produced by Germany, the U.K., Spain and Italy.

Guler told members of the Turkish parliament's defense committee that Spain and the UK favored selling the jets to Turkey and were working to persuade Germany.

"Germany can sell them or not sell them," Erdogan said Friday. "Is Germany the only country that produces warplanes? We can procure these from many other places."

Scholz didn't address the issue, and other German officials had no immediate comment.

# Erdogan Greeted by Demos in Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — Reportedly 2,800 police were deployed on Friday November 25, to protect Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was making a short visit. Members of the Society for Threatened Peoples (GfbV) and the Syrian Kurdish Diaspora Network gathered in front of the residence of German President

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who welcomed the guest. The GfbV's banner read: "No Red Carpet for Islamist Erdogan!" Many organizers complained that, due to the extensive roadblocks throughout the capital and the disturbance to bus and train connections, they had difficulties reaching the site.

There was one demo after the other on the schedule: In Pariser Platz at 3:00, the message was "Solidarity with Kurds and

Jews — No to Erdogan in Germany." At the same time in Tiergarten, it was "Peace in Turkey and the World"; elsewhere throughout the city, at 4:30 slogans were "Erdogan Not Welcome — No to Human Rights Violations by Turkish Military" and beginning at 5:00, "No to Erdogan Visit and Racism against Kurds." On the day following his visit, diaspora Kurds demonstrated against the ban against the PKK, which has been in effect since 1993.



Demonstrators in Berlin





## INTERNATIONAL

# No More 'Enver Pasha Bridge' in Potsdam After Complaint

BRIDGE, from page 1

How, then, could it be possible for a bridge in Potsdam, a city near Berlin, and capital of the state of Brandenburg, to carry the name of Young Turk leader Ismail Enver Pasha, wartime Minister of War and, together with Interior Minister Talaat Pasha, chief perpetrator of the genocide? One day in 2021, a local resident posed this question to a city councilwoman, whose response led ultimately to a successful initiative to remove the name.

## Constituency Politics at Work

Dr. Anja Günther, a member of the Sozial.Die Linke (The Left Party) faction on the Potsdam city council, relates the story. A citizen of Potsdam was going for a walk along the Teltow Canal in late 2021, and at the location of a former bridge recognized the name "Enver Pasha" as that of a war criminal. He went to talk to his city councilor and asked if she were aware of the significance of this name. Günther is a biochemist by education and training. As a local political representative, she has dealt mainly with issues related to finance and urban development and had not been involved in remembrance culture. But, alarmed by what her constituent told her, she investigated the matter and decided to take action.

Her research on the history of the bridge revealed that it was built in 1901, named after Enver Pasha in 1915, and exploded in 1945 by soldiers of the Wehrmacht. In its place is a steel girder construction for supply lines, but the location was still known by the same name.

She contacted the Waterways and Shipping Authority (WSA) for the Spree and Havel rivers, responsible for registering names, and was told to put her issue in writing and they would reply.

On January 26, 2022, Günther presented an official petition to the City Council, 22/SVV/0053, Renaming the Former Enver Pascha Bridge. In it she demanded that the City Council direct the Lord Mayor to file a motion at the WSA whereby the name of the bridge would be removed. This intervention would contribute to "overcoming, in durable fashion, the honoring of war criminals which still exists in Potsdam, for example, in street names." At the same time, the petition calls for deleting the bridge's name from all official documents, maps, etc.

In stating the grounds for her demand, Günther made clear her political focus. After summarizing the events leading to the current situation, she stated: "Murderers and war criminals do not deserve being named or honored in Potsdam. The namesake of the former bridge in the Potsdam district of Babelsberg, Enver Pascha, was

as a politician, general, and War Minister of the Ottoman Empire (modern day Turkey) one of the people most responsible for the Armenian genocide." Given the WSA's declaration that the relevant authorities are open to renaming it, the petitioner proposed it be named after an anti-Nazi resistance fighter from Nowawes (as Babelsberg was previously called).

The City Council voted in favor of the motion and its cultural committee was to receive a report by March 2022.

More than a year and a half passed. Nothing happened. In September 2023 Günther presented what is called a "Small Inquiry" (Kleine Anfrage) asking what steps had been taken pursuant to the City Council's demand. The answer given on September 5 by the Mayor's office was that, although the decision to delete the name had been made, there had been no contact made with the WSA, because "thus far there has been no decision regarding a concrete new name." Thus, the name remained on site and in the records and would remain until a new name were decided. Günther also inquired whether there had been any protest or intervention of the side of Turkish interests, but the answer was negative.

The idea was that a new name depended on a new bridge. Günther objected and was quoted in the press saying, "perhaps one might keep the name of a bridge that no longer exists until a new one is built, but not when the name is that of a war criminal and genocidal murderer." Her party colleague Sascha Krämer accused the Town Hall of "hair-splitting;" if a decision had been made, that meant it should be implemented, and a simple letter to the WSA should be sufficient. Günther contacted the WSA and presented an argument she thought might conform to their line of reasoning: If there can be no new name without a new bridge, then there should be no old name for the old bridge, because it is no longer there. You can delete the old name now and assign a new one when the new construction is completed. The official at the WSA was satisfied.

Finally, in mid-October, an Official Notice signed by the Lord Mayor was released. It stated, the name "Enver Pasha Bridge" will be "officially retracted and deleted from the street directory." The reason given for the decision is not political, and its formulation reflects the Aristotelian logic that Günther had suggested. It reads: "The original bridge was blown up in April 1945 and as a result is no longer there. The construction currently associated with this name is a 1970s-erected electrical supply line on steel girders, which however has no transport function. Since the actual bridge therefore no longer exists and the current supply bridge requires no name, the name

still partially being used is groundless and nonfunctional.... [Therefore] it clearly must be revoked and deleted from all official directories." In a departure from normal procedure, the declaration makes absolutely no mention of the City Council's resolution which was the basis for the administration's decision, nor of its motivation – a fact that Günther finds "scandalous." The official announcement is duly signed by Lord Mayor Mike Schubert (SPD).

Günther pursued the issue further, demanding that the name be removed also from Google maps and all other representations of the location. Discussion then focused on the name to be given a future bridge.

## Enver Pasha in Potsdam

One might wonder what the Ottoman War Minister had to do with Potsdam in the first place. Roy Knocke, director of the Lepsius House in Potsdam, gave some background to the matter in an interview published September 21, 2023 in the *Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung*. Enver had served as military attaché from 1909 to 1912 in the capital of the Brandenburg province of the German Empire. Fluent in German, Enver was, in Knocke's characterization, "a kind of Ottoman superstar in Imperial Germany," or a "poster boy for the German-Ottoman friendship," whose center was in the Babelsberg area where the bridge was located. There was even a big tobacco factory in Berlin named after Enver at the time. That the name should be deleted is "an imperative" for Knocke, in the interests of a true culture of remembrance. In 2000, discussion had begun around a new name, and of course, that of Johannes Lepsius was suggested. Lepsius, Knocke recalled, had fought against repression of the Armenians already during the 1890s Hamidian massacres and, in 1915/16 in Potsdam, compiled his documentation of the genocide committed by the Young Turk regime. He distributed the work widely but failed to shift Imperial Germany's policy, due to the wartime alliance.

Andreas Fritsche, writing in *nd-aktuell* on November 11, noted that right after the armistice in 1918, Enver was among a group of Young Turk perpetrators who escaped aboard a German submarine, thanks to General Hans von Seeckt, one of their close allies. They made it to Berlin, where they lived in comfortable exile under assumed names. Interior Minister Talaat Pasha was shot dead in Berlin by a member of the Nemesis group, Soghomon Tehlirian in 1921, whereas Enver traveled to the Caucasus to lead a military campaign to establish a "pan-Turanian" empire, and was killed in 1922.

A new bridge was supposed to be built

but the East German Communist regime put up the notorious wall dividing Berlin in 1961, and that nullified construction plans. Although the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989, no new bridge has replaced it. There is talk of construction in 2027. And therefore, of a new name. Knocke and Günther have initiated discussion, and proposed, in addition to Lepsius, the name of an anti-Nazi resistance fighter from the area. What is important, Günther stresses, is that the location be identified as a place of remembrance.

## Remembrance or Denial

Removal of this mass murderer's name is a victory (notwithstanding the curious nature of the WSA's linguistic acrobatics), one that its political initiator Anja Günther and those supporting her motion in the Social Democratic (SPD), Green (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), and Left parties can be proud of. But more remains to be done in the interest of remembrance.

Not far from Potsdam, in the federal capital Berlin, is a cemetery where other Young Turk perpetrators lie in honored graves. They are Bahaeddin Sakir, leader of the Special Organization, and Cemal Asmi Bey, known as the "Butcher of Trebizond." Both had been condemned to death by the Constantinople trials, in absentia; they had escaped on board the same ship as Enver, and lived under assumed names in Berlin. Members of Nemesis killed them together on April 17, 1922. Their graves, richly renovated in 2011, are in the Sehitlik (Martyrs') Cemetery (formerly Islamic Cemetery). Interior Minister Talaat Pasha had also been buried there until the Nazi regime returned his remains to Turkey in 1943. Any attempt to alter their location or status would be in vain, given that the cemetery is sovereign Turkish territory, purchased in 1921 and administered by the Turkish Defense Ministry.

Against this background, it is understandable that in her formal inquiry regarding implementation of the decision to remove Enver Pasha's name, Anja Günther asked whether there had been Turkish intervention. As journalist Fritsche recalled in his article, Turkish influence had previously censored references to the Armenian genocide. He writes that in 2005, Matthias Platzeck (SPD), while governor of Brandenburg, had dinner with the then-Turkish Consul General Aydin Durusay, following which "the Armenian genocide disappeared from the syllabus and course plan for history classes in the federal state of Brandenburg." There followed protests by Armenians, historians, and political figures; in the end a pledge was made to include it, along with other examples of genocide.

# Another Karabakh Armenian Charged With War Crimes in Baku

BAKU (Azatutyun) — Authorities in Baku have brought charges of alleged war crimes against a 61-year-old man from Nagorno-Karabakh who, according to the Armenian side, was kidnapped by Azerbaijan weeks before its forces established full control over the region in a one-day military operation in September.

According to Azerbaijani media, Rashid Beglaryan, who, Armenians say, strayed into an Azerbaijani-controlled territory near Nagorno-Karabakh on August 1, has been charged on five counts of the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan, including "torturing Azerbaijani prisoners" and "participating in the activities of illegal armed groups."

Citing the country's State Security Service, Azerbaijan's APA news agency also reported that Beglaryan admitted that "ethnic Armenian forces, including himself, ambushed and gunned down 200 Azeri civilians, most of them women, children and elderly people" during February 1992 events near the Karabakh town of Khojaly (Khojalu) that Azerbaijan claims amounted to genocide.

The Armenian side has denied that Armenian forces targeted civilians during one of their early offensives in the 1992-1994 war, blaming the killings on the Azerbaijani forces allegedly seeking to prevent the evacuation of Khojaly's ethnic Azeri resi-

dents.

Earlier this month, a court in Baku sentenced another Karabakh Armenian man Vagif Khachatryan to 15 years in prison after finding him guilty of "genocide" and "forced deportation of civilians," charges that Khachatryan denied vehemently throughout the trial.

Khachatryan, 68, was detained by Azerbaijan's military in late July as he was trying to leave Nagorno-Karabakh for Armenia. Armenia then also accused Azerbaijan of "kidnapping" a Karabakh resident.

Virtually the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh — more than 100,000 people — fled to Armenia two

months ago after Azerbaijan carried out a 24-hour offensive to take the entire region under its control.

Eight current and former ethnic Armenian leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh, including three former presidents, have been detained by Azerbaijani forces and transferred to Baku where they are imprisoned pending trial on grave criminal charges.

Baku has so far acknowledged only nine Karabakh detainees. Armenia insists that their number is at least 16. The figure does not include 30 Karabakh soldiers and 12 civilians who are said to have gone missing during the Azerbaijani assault and remain unaccounted for.



## INTERNATIONAL

## Baku Offers Direct Peace Talks to Yerevan

BAKU (Azatutyun) — Azerbaijan has offered to conduct direct negotiations with Armenia on a peace treaty at a mutually acceptable venue, including along the state border between the two countries.

“Azerbaijan is ready for direct bilateral negotiations with Armenia for the early conclusion of a peace agreement,” Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry said on November 21.

“We believe that the two countries should decide the future of their relations together. This stagnation in negotiations does not contribute to the stability of the region,” he added.

The Azerbaijani ministry said that “the responsibility for the continuation of the peace process, including the choice of a mutually acceptable venue or the decision to meet at the state border, belongs to the two countries.” It urged the Armenian side to “avoid new unnecessary delays.”

The statement from Baku follows the announcement by Armenia’s Foreign Ministry that Yerevan has submitted its sixth proposal on a peace agreement to Azerbaijan following Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s November 18 call for “intensifying diplomatic efforts to achieve the signing of a peace treaty with Azerbaijan.”

“Armenia remains committed to concluding and signing a document on normalization of relations based on previously announced principles,” the Armenian ministry said.

Official Yerevan did not immediately respond to Azerbaijan’s call for direct negotiations that Baku has made after what appears to be its rejection of Western mediation in the process.

During the past several days, Azerbaijan indicated that it rejected France and the United States as mediators because of their “pro-Armenian” bias.

During the weekend, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said that while Baku remained open to European Union-mediated negotiations with Armenia, above all, it preferred “direct talks” with Yerevan.

In his recent public statements, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan urged the Azerbaijani leadership to publicly commit to the three key principles for achieving peace that he said were agreed upon by the parties during several rounds of Western-mediated negotiations in 2022 and 2023.

Pashinyan outlined those principles as follows: Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other’s territorial integrity, the delimitation of the countries’ borders is based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration by which former Soviet republics recognized each other’s borders after the collapse of the USSR, and that regional trade and transport links are opened while respecting sovereign jurisdictions.

Pashinyan made those statements as Aliyev appeared to be avoiding Western-mediated meetings with the Armenian leader since Baku carried out in September a one-day military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh that caused more than 100,000 people, virtually the entire Armenian population of the region, to flee to Armenia.

Western leaders have urged Azerbaijan to respect the right of Armenians to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh and ensure the safety of those who decide to go back to the region that is now fully controlled by Baku.

## Azerbaijan Accuses France of Stoking ‘New Wars’ in Caucasus

BAKU (AFP) — President Ilham Aliyev on November 21 accused France of inciting conflicts in the Caucasus by arming Azerbaijan’s longtime rival Armenia, with which it has fought two wars.

Baku and Yerevan have been locked in a decades-long territorial conflict over Azerbaijan’s Nagorno-Karabakh region, which Baku reclaimed in September after a lightning offensive against Armenian separatists.

“(France) is pursuing a militaristic policy by arming Armenia, encouraging revanchist forces in Armenia, and laying the groundwork for provoking new wars in our region,” Aliyev said in written comments to an international conference in Baku.

In a statement read out by his foreign policy advisor, Aliyev said Paris was “disrupting stability not only in its former and current colonies, but also in the South Caucasus, where it is supporting separatist trends and separatists.”

Home to a large Armenian diaspora, France has been routinely criticized by Azerbaijan for harboring “pro-Armenian bias” in the Caucasus countries’ territorial conflict.

Aliyev doubled down on the criticism during a press conference with Iraq’s President Abdul Latif Rashid on November 20. He accused France of “playing a very destructive role in the Southern Caucasus.”

“The wrong messages from the French government actually create illusions in the Armenian government... that they can again launch a military aggression against Azerbaijan.”

He accused Armenia’s government of “thinking about revenge” after Azerbaijan

regained control over the Nagorno-Karabakh region this fall.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said last week that Yerevan’s “political will to sign a peace agreement with Azerbaijan in the coming months remains unwavering.”

Aliyev said Azerbaijan recently tabled its proposals for a future peace treaty with Armenia and awaited Yerevan’s response.

And in a statement Tuesday, his foreign ministry said it “stands prepared for direct negotiations with Armenia on a bilateral basis to finalize the peace agreement as soon as possible.”

Azerbaijan has recently refused meetings under the mediation of the EU or the US, accusing them of favoring Armenia.

“The responsibility to continue the peace process -- including the selection of a mutually acceptable venue or a decision to meet at the state border -- lies with two countries,” it said, an apparent refusal of international mediation.

Both leaders have said a comprehensive peace agreement could be signed by the end of the year, but internationally mediated peace talks between the ex-Soviet republics have seen little progress.

Aliyev and Pashinyan have also met on several occasions for talks under the mediation of the European Union.

But last month, Aliyev refused to attend negotiations with Pashinyan in Spain, citing French bias.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz were meant to mediate the talks with EU chief Charles Michel.

There has since then been no visible progress to resume EU-led talks.

## Jerusalem Christians Rally ‘round Armenian Church over Land Deal

JERUSALEM, from page 1

The Armenian community says the investor behind the land lease deal is an Australian-Israeli businessman Danny Rubinstein, who owns a company registered in the United Arab Emirates — Xana Capital Group. A company sign was posted in the parking lot shortly after the surveyors turned up.

Rubinstein did not respond to a request for a comment about the project sent via his Linked-In account.

Parity in Jerusalem

By tradition, Armenia was the first kingdom to convert to Christianity as a state religion in 301, and although its Church is much smaller than the Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches, it has parity of rights at Jerusalem’s Holy Christian sites.

At the heart of their Quarter lies the ornately decorated St. James’s Cathedral, which dates to 420 A.D., strung with precious lamps and often infused with the haunting singing of its black-cowled monks.

The Quarter covers a sixth of walled Jerusalem and houses just 1,000 people, a fraction of the Old City’s 35,000-strong population.

Armenian locals say the land lease project would consume not just their carpark, the largest open space in the Old City, but also their community hall, the patriarch’s garden, the seminary and five family houses.

“The Armenians have been here since the 4th century, but we now risk being uprooted,” said Hagop Djernazian, 23, a student,

who is part of a group guarding the carpark night and day, with barbed wire strung out to try to keep out developers and settlers. “We are having to fight for our existence,” he said.

Daniel Seidemann, an activist Israeli lawyer who closely monitors the spread of Jewish settlers around Jerusalem, said the project was aimed at expanding the footprint of the Jewish Quarter across half the Old City.

Israel captured East Jerusalem, including the Old City, from Jordanian forces in a 1967 war. Israel regards the entire city as its eternal and undivided capital. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

“We are aware of a plan to encircle the outside the Old City with settlement projects. We suspect this Armenia Quarter deal is meant to be a continuation of this plan inside the city walls,” Seidemann told Reuters.

“However, there is so much irregularity surrounding it that there is a good chance the courts will reject it.”

**Police Arrest 3 Armenians**

In a related story, On November 15, at around 4:30 p.m., a motorcade of settlers on 4x4 vehicles and motor bikes, which were by all accounts sent by Xana representative George Warwar, encroached on the Cows’ Garden premises (“Goverou Bardez”).

Members of the Save the ArQ movement immediately alerted the entire Armenian community of Jerusalem to surround the

barricaded perimeter in order to stop the trespassers. The Israeli police and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) arrived on scene and the settlers scattered, with only a few remaining on site, in a malicious attempt to change facts on the ground. The outraged Armenian community attempted to peacefully — with neither any intention nor any directive to resort to any violence from community leaders — demand that the trespassers vacate the property belonging to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The Israeli police, without probable cause, proceeded to arrest 3 Armenian Jerusalemites, including a 17-year-old minor. Two adult arrestees received a 15-day stay-away notice forbidding them to be within 50 meters of the Cows’ Garden.

Instead of removing the trespassers, the Israeli police permitted a few settlers to continue their presence intended to possess the Armenian property. In response to the incursion, Armenian community members — despite being asked to disperse — formed a human shield and peacefully urged the aggressors to vacate the Cows’ Garden.

Meanwhile, according to a November 15 communique from the Chancellery of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, a legal note sent on November 6 ascribed a false, defamatory and libelous quote to Bishop Koryoun Baghdasaryan, who supposedly made such a statement to Danny Rothman on November 5 in the Cows’ Garden.

The next day, November 7, a widely read Israeli media outlet known as Y-net pub-

lished an article referring to this supposed statement. However, Armenian community members contacted the author, pointing out that the bishop had never been contacted to confirm or deny the quote, and the article was edited henceforth to remove this reference.

Rothman submitted the fabricated quote to the police department, which summoned Bishop Baghdasaryan for investigation.

According to the Chancellery, Baghdasaryan never spoke with Rothman, and the bishop is preparing to sue Rothman for defamation.

The Chancellery on November 16 issued a new communique noting that “In recent days, the vast destruction and removal of asphalt on the grounds of the Armenian Quarter has been done without the presentation of permits from the municipality by neither the developer nor the police. Despite this fact, the police have chosen in the last few days that all members of the Armenian community vacate the premises. We plead with the entirety of the Christian communities of Jerusalem to stand with the Armenian Patriarchate in these unprecedented times as this is another clear step taken toward the endangerment of the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.”

These disturbing developments continue to be an existential crisis and a clear attempt orchestrated by Israeli settlers, George Warwar, and Danny Rothman, to intimidate and displace and evict a 1700-year-old community from its ancestral home.



# Community News

## Armenian Protection Act Adopted by Senate

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly welcomed the passage of bipartisan legislation spearheaded by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) and Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL). S. 3000, the Armenian Protection Act of 2023 repeals the waiver authority to Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. Section 907 states that U.S. funds “may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.”

“We commend Senator Peters along with Senator Rubio for this bipartisan legislation,” stated Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan. “Passage of this Bill sends a strong message in the face of Azerbaijan’s genocidal policies against the Armenian people,” Khaloyan continued.

Peters, who traveled to Armenia this September upon his return, at an Assembly event honoring former Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius, 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



Senators Gary Peters, left, and Marco Rubio

against Azerbaijan’s Aliyev regime. Senator Peters called on the Administration to “impose sanctions” on Azerbaijan and to enforce 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.” Last month, the St. John Armenian Church and the Michigan Chapter of the Armenian Assembly hosted a luncheon meeting and briefing with Senator Peters and members of the Armenian Community, wherein Peters made clear that he recognizes how critical the situation is on the ground and emphasized that the “U.S. must help ensure that the Armenians from the region receive humanitarian assistance and that the U.S. must stop all military assistance to Azerbaijan.”

A senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and see SENATE, page 9



## Grassroots Activism in Boston Yields Roundtable Discussions on Artsakh with U.S. Senators

BOSTON — To protest the lack of a US response to Azerbaijan’s ethnic cleansing of Artsakh Armenians, a coalition of local advocacy, community, youth, and student groups assembled by the Zoravik Activist Collective held a silent vigil every Thursday afternoon in October in front of the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston. By making the cause of Artsakh Armenians visible to Federal elected representatives and their staff members, the group caught the attention of Sen. Ed Markey, who spoke with the activists, later inviting them to participate in an online roundtable discussion of Massachusetts Armenian community leaders. Markey said he had signed legislation to grant more humanitarian aid to Artsakh Armenians and he had urged both the State and Treasury Departments “to impose sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act on select individuals in the government of Azerbaijan.”

Inspired by this interaction, the group wrote to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who in turn invited Zoravik to organize a similar online roundtable discussion on Zoom on November 9. At the meeting, Zoravik’s Lisa Gulesserian read the group’s demands:

“We expect our government to prevent genocide and support democracies. We demand 1) condemnation of Azerbaijan’s genocidal actions at the highest level from our President; 2) concrete steps to hold Azerbaijan and its leadership accountable (such as sanctions against individuals, as well as cutting off all military and other aid to Azerbaijan); 3) more humanitarian aid for forcibly displaced Armenians from Artsakh and robust security aid for the effective self-defense of Armenia. 4) demand that Azerbaijan return Armenian political leaders and Prisoners of War

see PROTEST, page 9



Members of Zoravik outside the JFK Federal Building in Boston

## AMAA Hosts Hyeminds Evening In Support of AMAA’s Khoren And Shooshanig Avedisian School

By Ani Nigoghosian

BOSTON — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Boston Child Care Committee successfully presented “Hyeminds” as over 130 guests and supporters gathered at the Wellesley Country Club in Wellesley, to benefit and support the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan.

Special guests included Pamela Avedisian, keynote presenters Garen and Emiliya Bagdasarian of APRIS Wines, and a representation of area clergy. Per its website, the “Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School (AHS) is an educational institution that provides outstanding K-12 holistic, tuition-free education in a modern, environmentally friendly building, using state-of-the-art facilities in the low-income southwest Yerevan district of Malatia-Sebastia. AHS was



AMAA Boston Child Care Committee Co-Chairs Phyllis Dohanian and Susan Covo

established in 1998 by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) thanks to the vision and generosity of its benefactors, Edward and Pamela Avedisian.”

Event Co-Chairs Talin Abidian and Cara Haleblan created an evening of entertainment with a purpose. The event began with a lively cocktail hour, where guests were treated to musical entertainment provided by John Baboian while having the opportunity to view and bid on an extensive variety of silent auction items, including sports memorabilia, a wine-pull including Armenian wines, and a variety of Armenia related items.

The event co-chairs then made introductory statements, to set the tone for the event. “Hope comes in a familiar form — the AMAA. The reason why we’re all here is to make a difference, to give hope to all the children in our Homeland by making the dream of an education a reality.” “To our generous donors, we’ve been blown away by your gestures of support. Thank you for helping to give our young Armenian thinkers a chance to reach for the stars.”

Event MC Ara Balian introduced Rev. Father Arakel Aljalian of the St. James Armenian Apostolic Church see AMAA, page 10





OBITUARY

# Elizabeth Aprahamian

## Daughter of Genocide Survivors

NORTHVILLE, Mich. — Elizabeth (Liz) Aprahamian of Northville passed away peacefully, surrounded by family on November 14.

She was born May 10, 1938 in Detroit.

Liz was the daughter of the late Souren and Arminuhe Aprahamian, both Armenian Genocide survivors.

Elizabeth was a graduate of Mackenzie High School. She graduated from Wayne State University in February 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She received her Master of Arts degree at the University of Michigan in English Literature in 1964. She did post graduate work in Administration at Eastern Michigan University. She taught English in the Detroit Public Schools (Northwestern High School and Mackenzie High School) starting in 1961. Liz was an Administrator and English Department Head at Northern High School, from which she retired in 1996 after 36 years.

During her teaching years, she spent her summers traveling the world visiting many countries including China, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Russia and Armenia.

Liz's early retirement years were dedicated to caring for her parents, Souren and Arminuhe Aprahamian. She honored their lives by writing, along with her father, several books documenting her parents' lives and paying tribute to their strength. The books are available for purchase at St. John Armenian Church bookstore.

The Armenian community was extremely important to Liz. She was a member of the ACYOA Juniors and Seniors. She was a lifelong member of St. John Armenian Church where she served the church in many capacities, including as a member of the Parish Council, the Manoogian School Board, nominating committee and Fine Arts committee. She was a Sunday School teacher, Diocesan delegate, and a docent for the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum.

She followed in her parents' footsteps and was a member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party. She was an active member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Detroit Chapter executive board.

Liz was a regular writer for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* weekly newspaper, covering lectures and Armenian events in Michigan.

Liz was proud of her Armenian heritage and a passionate advocate in supporting Armenian causes. She was a generous donor to many charities both to benefit the church and people in Armenia, as well as numer-

ous philanthropic causes. Liz took her first trip to Armenia with her mother in 1964 followed by many additional trips with family and friends.

In 1989, she took a mission trip with the St. John Parish Council to provide aid and support after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. In 2000, Liz and a group from St. John Armenian Church went to Armenia to celebrate the ordination and consecration of Very Rev. Paren Avedikian to bishop.

Liz and other family members accompanied Souren to Armenia in 2006 to honor and celebrate his 100th birthday.

Her most recent trip was with friends in 2013 with the hopes of returning one more time in the future with nieces Allison and Elizabeth.

Liz had a wide circle of friends whom she met during her teaching career, Bible study and her exercise center. Her most treasured friends were part of the Armenian community, which became an extension of her family.

Although her immediate family was small, Liz's favorite times involved spending time with family in Wisconsin and Florida. She also enjoyed family vacations to Washington D.C., Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In 2017, she fell in love with the magic of Disney World and, at the age of 80, made her first of many visits. Liz was eager to stay in the park till closing, 2 a.m. She outlasted younger members of the family.

Liz loved animals, especially dogs. Her favorites were her niece and nephew's dogs. Her happy place was sitting and cuddling with as many dogs as she could fit on her lap.

Liz was an avid reader. She also enjoyed and supported many cultural venues and activities in the Detroit area such as the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Detroit Institute of Art, and Detroit Zoo.

Liz was an incredibly strong Armenian woman whose faith and love of her family helped her overcome many serious health problems, including a full recovery from open heart surgery in 2022. During the last six months of her life, she was back to enjoying her normal, active lifestyle when God unexpectedly called her home.

While putting together this tribute, the family found an autobiography composed by Liz in 2016. The first line from her brief autobiography is as follows. "Keep my eulogy short. People have things to do and don't need long speeches on any topic. Let alone me."

In discussing her life at St. John Armenian



and David, who kept me busy being Aunt Liz, and two amazing great-nieces, Allison and Elizabeth. Wow, was I lucky! I also had three nieces, Tammie, Heidi, and Mary. Each one, special in her own way.

"Well folks, that's the scoop. No reason to be sad. I had Ma and Hairek for a long time. How fortunate I was and am. Wished Rhaffi could have hung around longer. I enjoyed my teaching years but not so much as an administrator. I guess I had a guardian angel that got me through DPS. I've enjoyed traveling, certainly did go to Armenia a lot - but what an experience meeting with the relatives in Armenia. I enjoyed my mother's extended family in Niagara Falls. I have had good friends.

"How lucky I was! Liz"

Liz was the sister of the late Dr. Ashod Rhaffi Aprahamian and the late Dr. Edward Aprahamian; aunt of nephews Edward (Mary) Aprahamian, Jeff Aprahamian, and Dr. David (Dr. Heidi) Aprahamian; great-aunt of Allison Aprahamian and Elizabeth Aprahamian; and sister-in-law of Cindy Aprahamian and the late Susan Aprahamian Boemer. She is also survived by many cousins in Armenia and the US, as well as many friends.

Her funeral service took place on November 20 at Saint John Armenian Church of Southfield, and internment followed at Woodlawn Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Elizabeth Aprahamian Memorial Fund at Saint John Armenian Church.

Church, Liz wrote... "I was fortunate to have several wonderful priests in my life: Archbishop Paren Avedikian, Rev. Father Diran Papazian, Rev. Father Garabed Kochakian, and Very Rev. Father Aren Jebejian."

In her own words:

"I am the proud daughter of Souren and Arminuhe. Their survival, their history, made them gentle souls. And, like so many survivors, they were devoted to their family and to their Armenian roots. And I was so fortunate to be surrounded by their love and the St. John Armenian community.

"I have been blessed with a wonderful family. I had two loving brothers, Rhaffi and Ed. I had two I had two wonderful sisters-in-law who became my sisters, Sue Aprahamian Boemer and Cindy Slawnik Aprahamian. I have my brother's three sons, Eddie, Jeff,

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 LARRY BEDROSIAN





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Grassroots Activism in Boston Yields Roundtable Discussions on Artsakh with US Senators

PROTEST, from page 7

illegally held in Baku. Senator Warren, we ask you to not only co-sponsor and support current legislation with these demands in the Senate, but also to actively advocate for these demands in Congress by giving public speeches on and off the Senate floor and by actively persuading your colleagues in Congress to join your efforts. It's the right thing to do."

Gulesserian then moderated representatives from the Armenian Assembly, Armenian National Committee of Eastern Massachusetts, Pan Armenian Council, Armenian Youth Federation - Boston, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the editors of *Genocide Studies International*, Harvard Law Armenian Student Association, Armenian Bar Association and other local student associations, along with interested individuals, who informed the Senator of their concerns. Oft-repeated demands included sanctions against Azerbaijan and greater humanitarian aid for Artsakh Armenians, along with concerns that Azerbaijan could attack Armenia and the need for Artsakh's cultural monuments to be protected.

Warren spoke of her dedication to the issues, citing her support for California Sen. Alex Padilla's June resolution that called for sanctions against Azerbaijan. She pledged to elevate the issues with the State Department. She also said, "If people in the US aren't talking about it or don't understand, then the State Department and government feel less urgency to talk about it on their end."

Later that week, Warren sent the following note to Zoravik: "I was glad to join a coalition of advocacy and community leaders to listen to their concerns about Azerbaijan's attacks on Armenians. We must continue to raise awareness, protect and assist Armenians, and hold accountable Azerbaijani officials responsible for the attack and blockade."

To continue pressuring elected leaders while educating the public, Zoravik will hold



The participants with Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), top left

a rally at the JFK Federal Building in Boston on Saturday November 18th from 3:30 to 5 pm, with many of the roundtable representatives sharing their statements alongside musicians and local elected officials.

"Our visibility and pressure are amplifying Artsakh Armenians' needs and fight for justice," said a representative of the organizing team. "So we welcome all members

of the Armenian community to the rally to demonstrate their support for our siblings in Artsakh. Let's show other Armenian communities throughout the US how to similarly pressure their elected representatives."

Founded in 2018, Zoravik ("in solidarity") is an Armenian activist collective that promotes new avenues for grassroots and political organizing for progressives.

Primarily based in Boston, Zoravik has supported human rights, environmental and social justice causes in the US, Armenia, and Artsakh. Through our local organizing members have joined in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, Asylum Seekers, Kurdish inhabitants of Northern Syria and Jewish Americans under attack by the far right, among other causes.

## St. John Armenian Church of Southfield, Michigan Women's Guild 85th Anniversary And Armenian Heritage Collection 50th Anniversary Gala

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — The St. John Armenian Church Women's Guild 85th Anniversary and the Armenian Heritage Collection 50th Anniversary Gala was held on Saturday, October 28 with the participation of 200 guests who enjoyed mouth-watering Armenian appetizers while Armenian music played in the background as they were welcomed into the newly renovated banquet hall.

In honor of the Women's Guild Anniversary, 20 past chairpersons (dating back to 1962) of the church's 85-year-old organization were honored. One by one, each honoree lit candles on the anniversary cake as they were introduced by current Women's Guild Chairman Sara Andonian and Women's Guild Anniversary Chair Jacqueline ElChemmas, followed by a toast to their years of service.

Those honored were: Rose Shahinian, Angela Banerian, Mary Keoleian, Isabelle Vahratian, Alice Terzian, Nina Sarkisian, Rose Mardigian, Mary Demir, Lora Kazanjian, Jane Hovsepian, Jacqueline ElChemmas, Marianne Dardarian, Linda Assarian, Linda Tiffany, Joyce Obenhoff, Dawn Karagosian, Linda Stambouljian, Yerchanig Joy Callan, Barbara Rupas, Lisa Derderian, Denise Karakshian, Denise Boyagian,

Carol Cholmakjian and Sara Andonian.

Following dinner, the second half of the evening began – the Armenian Heritage Costume Collection Program. Since 1977, when the collection was first performed at St. John Armenian Church, it has enriched audiences all over the United States and Canada. Under the guidance of the Armenian Heritage Collection Chairman Paulette Apkarian, this 50-year-old legacy was brought to life. The following 26 models had the honor of participating in the program: Shahan Ashkarian, Armen Arslanian, Michael Baghdasarian, Sona Baldwin, Stella Baldwin, Melanie Boskovich, Vartuhi Dilakian, Nazelie Doghramadjian, Patricia Fantazian, Hiyk Ghazarian, Sevag Ghazarian, Gayane Hovhannisyian, Isabelle Kazarian, Marissa Kazarian, Adam Krikorian, Mona Kurjian, Madisen Lundquist, Areg Mailian, Sevana Mailian, Madeline Mardigian, Nayiri Ourlian, Maria Palaian, Lindsay Sahakian, Christine Santourian, Jennifer Scappaticci and Olivia Thomas.

The Gala committee worked diligently for the past six months under the guidance of Jacqueline ElChemmas. The Armenian Heritage Collection chair was Paulette Apkarian, and her committee for ensuring the theatrical production of the collection per-

formance was flawless.

Women's Guild Committee consisted of Jacqueline ElChemmas – Chair, Sara Andonian, Paulette Apkarian, Sara Sarkisian Bell, Carol Cholmakjian, Marilyn Dadian and Diane Ekizian. The Armenian Heritage

Collection Committee consisted of Paulette Apkarian – Chair, Patricia Kezelian, Terry Palaian, Marilyn Sarkesian, Nyree Giragosian, Denise Karakashian, Yn. Roberta Kochakian, Dolly Matoian, Anna Svirid Sarkisian and Linda Tiffany.

## Armenian Protection Act Adopted by Senate

SENATE, from page 7

a lead sponsor on a resolution condemning Azerbaijan's blockade of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and ongoing human rights violations, Senator Marco Rubio has been a staunch supporter of Armenian issues. Senator Rubio along with Senator Peters also joined a bipartisan bicameral letter addressed to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen calling upon the Administration to impose Global Magnitsky sanctions against Azerbaijan.

The Assembly has repeatedly called for sanctions to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its genocidal policies, and in the Assembly's testimony yesterday before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe stated that "Azerbaijan should not be rewarded for their continued assault against the Armenian people, but rather sanctioned" and highlighted that the "U.S. has many tools at its disposal to do so from the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and economic sanctions to trade restrictions and the enforcement of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act," along with the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act.

The passage of this Bill in the Senate by voice vote is significant with more action needed given Azerbaijan and Turkey's ongoing aggression against the Armenian people. The next step in the legislative process is for the House to take up the measure.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# NY Public Library Dedicates Research Center to Former President Gregorian

LIBRARY, from page 1

investments in collections, programs, and access to public space, highlights of which are outlined below.

Lead support for the Gregorian Center is provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York, where Gregorian served as president from 1997 until his death in 2021. The library is also grateful for the generosity of Gregorian's many friends and colleagues: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Agnes Gund,

a vibrant work environment for up to 400 researchers, including 40 scholars on paid fellowships. Additional highlights of the Gregorian Center include:

\* Dedicated spaces to support researchers and fellows by offering long-term access to collections and staff expertise in quiet workspaces, while simultaneously building meaningful and sustained connections between researchers and the Library. This includes four study rooms (Scholars

exhibitions. Programs are held on Fridays at 2 PM. Research 101 Series: Tailored for both experienced and novice researchers, this series of classes, lectures, and workshops offers comprehensive resources to advance research and fulfill information needs effectively

"It is impossible to overstate the impact of Vartan Gregorian. He is known as the savior of the Library, but I would argue his work to guarantee free access to knowledge

together," said NYPL President Anthony W. Marx.

"The Vartan Gregorian Center for Research in the Humanities has a mission to inspire, engage, and connect a growing community of researchers from all over the world, all while providing access to the Library's remarkable collections," said Brent Reidy, the Andrew W. Mellon Director of the Research Libraries. "It is an amazing resource for all, aptly named after our legendary former president who dedicated his life to providing free access to knowledge. I am excited to see the scholarship this site will support in the years to come."

"The headline over the beautiful New York Times obituary of our father referred to him as the 'Savior of the New York Public Library.' He was so many things to so many people, but those words spoke eloquently to his journey and essence, the spirit of hope and enlightenment that defined his life and the central role that libraries played in it," said Vahe, Raffi, and Dareh Gregorian. "We are deeply grateful that this center will perpetuate his legacy of humanism, with Patience and Fortitude standing watch over our beloved Literary Lion.

"If you knew Vartan, you know that he loved libraries, as Andrew Carnegie did before him. Vartan referred to them as an oasis for renewal of one's imagination and the development of one's mind—a necessity for every community," said Dame Louise Richardson, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York. "We are delighted to honor his legacy as one of the NYPL's great champions by supporting the Vartan Gregorian Center for Research in the Humanities. I cannot think of a more fitting tribute than a space for scholars to allow their imaginations to take flight amidst the extraordinary resources of this great library."

The renaming of the Gregorian Center is just the latest example of the Library's ongoing commitment to scholarship and access to its collections.



The Center for Research in Humanities (New York Public Library Photo)

Mahnaz Ispahani Bartos and Adam Bartos, Annette de la Renta, Fiona and Stanley Druckenmiller, Barbara G. Fleischman, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Harold W. McGraw III Foundation, Abby and Howard Milstein, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The Edward John and Patricia Rosenwald Foundation.

The 8,000-square-foot space, which was part of the Schwarzman building's recent \$200 million renovation project, provides

Reading Room, Shoichi Noma Reading Room, Frederick Lewis Allen Room, and Wertheim Study) which scholars can apply to use. The rooms will also hold books from Gregorian's personal library.

\* Public events, programs and classes for researchers and visitors to learn more about the collections. Programs include: Friday Afternoon Lecture Series: A new public lecture series, offering insights into books written with NYPL support and topics related to the library's collections and

for all at a time of enormous challenges also saved New York City. This naming honors that important legacy and underscores the significance of the Library's mission, especially on behalf of a growing community of scholars worldwide. More and more it feels like we find ourselves in a moment not dissimilar from the one in which Vartan led the Library. At a time when once again people are counting New York City out, we will take inspiration in what he was able to achieve and navigate these choppy waters

## AMAA Hosts Hyeminds Evening in Support of AMAA's Avedisian School

AMAA, from page 7

to open the evening in prayer. Laurie Onanian presented a video discussing not just the life of her uncle Ed Avedisian, but his lifetime of philanthropy and dedication to the school, detailing how the school began, and its vital role in the lives of the underprivileged children it serves.

Featured keynote presenters Garen Bagdasarian, Founder and CEO, and his daughter Emiliya Bagdasarian, Project Manager, of APRIS Wines, then provid-



Event Co-Chairs Cara Haleblan and Talin Abidian

ed an entertaining and informative presentation of their family's winery, which had been located in the heart of Artsakh. Emiliya spoke on Armenia's important historical role in the wine industry, ani-

how the "terroir," that is, conditions most conducive for the production of wine, was extremely favorable in Artsakh. Given that Garen Bagdasarian had deep family roots in the area, it was a natural decision to base their winery there. Emiliya described both the joys of their experience in Artsakh, from bottling their wine and seeing it to market, to the happy occasion of celebrating her own wedding at the winery during this past summer. However, the sorrow of losing Artsakh hit the family hard. As the waging war grew closer, APRIS lost valued workers, friends, and ultimately the winery itself. But hope continues to remain strong in the Bagdasarian family, as Emiliya concluded, "We haven't given up. We will continue."

The ongoing suffering in Artsakh and the need to provide immediate help was a theme that ran throughout the evening. Boston Child Care Committee member Jeanmarie Papelian, Esq. spoke passionately of the school's response to the developing situation. "Enrollment at the Avedisian School is currently at maximum capacity, with 100% of graduates going on to university." Papelian reported that since the evacuation of Artsakh,



Keynote presenters Garen and Emiliya Bagdasarian

the school "has taken on more than 40 students, with plans of taking on even more."

Grand benefactors were Pamela Avedisian, John and Michele Simourian, Boston Child Care Committee co-chairs are Susan Adamian Covo and Phyllis Dohanian.

"I am amazed at the power of love, dedication and care that the Boston Child Care Committee pour towards the chil-

dren of Armenia and Artsakh. Now more than ever, every contribution makes a colossal difference in the lives of these children. Their smiles are our reward, and our love is a reflection from the Almighty" said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.

Ongoing donations are gratefully supported and may be made through the AMAA, or by visiting AMAA website at [www.amaa.org](http://www.amaa.org)





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# NAASR Holds Hybrid 69th Annual Assembly

## Ara Araz To Become New Board Chairperson

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) held its 69th Annual Assembly of Members on Saturday, November 4, at its headquarters, the Vartan Gregorian Building. The event was a hybrid meeting with both in-person attendees and online participation of NAASR members around the U.S. as well as abroad.

Board Chairperson Judith Saryan remarked on the pain of the past year for Armenians in the Republic and in Artsakh, in particular, and observing that “preserving our cultural and historical heritage is even more crucial and we should be proud of having an organization such as NAASR dedicated to this cause which has become stronger and stronger.”

Saryan’s report as chairperson gave an overview of an exceptionally active year for the organization, including sponsoring or co-sponsoring more than 65 scholarly programs, supporting scholars through research grants, hosting events for young people, providing space for a number of Armenian sister organizations to hold their events, as well as the ongoing valuable work of NAASR’s Mardigian Library and Bookstore, and more. She thanked the full- and part-time staff as well as volunteers for their efforts and expressed special gratitude to several individuals who have honored NAASR with generous bequests.

### Recognition of Long-Serving Board Members

Of special significance was Saryan’s recognition of three outstanding and long-serving NAASR Board members who were retiring this year for their leadership, vision and dedicated service: Yervant Chekijian of Watertown, a NAASR member since 1963, Board member since 1998, and Board Chairman from 2016 to 2022, making a profound impact on NAASR’s growth and leading the ambitious and highly successful campaign for our new headquarters; Raffi Yeghiayan of Bedford, a NAASR member since 1960, Board member since 1968, and Board Chairman from 2010 to 2016, devoting his many talents to leading the organization; and Roxanne Etmekjian of West Newton, a NAASR member since 1986 and a Board member since 2006, including many years as Treasurer.

Saryan concluded by stating that she has “felt privileged to serve as NAASR’s Chair this past year and honored to work with all of you,” but had made the decision to step down as Chair while remaining “as committed as ever to NAASR” and continuing to serve on the Board of Directors.

Following Saryan’s report, NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian introduced the featured speaker, Dr. Henry Theriault, associate vice president for Academic Affairs at Worcester State University and past president (2017-2021) of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, whose talk was entitled “The Artsakh Crisis: Scholarly Ethics, Activism, and Genocide.”

Theriault provided a succinct overview of the historical background for the current Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, going back to the post-World War I period and the Sovietization of the South Caucasus, noting that creation of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, as well as the Nakhichevan exclave and other such territories within the new Soviet republics, created a “perpetual tension” between ethnicities and a reliance on Moscow to resolve problems that inevitably

arose.

He discussed the long-term outcomes of the first war over Nagorno-Karabakh that resulted in 1994 in a stalemate that left Armenians in control of the region as well as additional territories around it. He noted that the years since then resulted in the development of a legitimate democracy, albeit within a self-declared state that was unrecognized by other nations, while at the same time within Azerbaijan a strong ultra-nationalist identity centered on anti-Armenian sentiment and avenging the defeat while the government became increasingly oppressive and intolerant of any dissent.

Turning to the question of the relationship between the current conflict and the Armenian Genocide carried out by Ottoman Turkey, Theriault observed that “while there are certainly components specific to Azerbaijan and the immediate context, the anti-Armenian ideology and eliminationist project would not have formed or been pursued absent the history of genocide against Armenians.” Furthermore, “Azerbaijan has imported a ready-made fully genocidal ideology from Turkey.”

Azerbaijan’s stance, Theriault stressed, is harmful not only to Armenians but also “genocidal anti-Armenianism is destructive for Azeris as well,” since “Heydar, then Ilham, Aliyev used this ideology as a tool of manipulation to dupe their subjects into willing subjugation in an authoritarian then totalitarian system of political control.” Connecting the current heads of state of Turkey and Azerbaijan, he stated that “Both Aliyev and Erdogan have stated repeatedly and in no uncertain terms that their goal is the elimination of the Armenian presence in the Caucasus, that is, they show the special intent to destroy Caucasus Armenians because they are Armenian,” and that, therefore, there is a clear case for genocide as defined by the UN Genocide Convention.

Theriault then turned to role of scholars in the contemporary crisis, faced with dilemmas regarding their perceived — albeit mythical — status as “disinterested” authorities who risk overstepping their roles by weighing in on political issues within Armenia. Rather, he argued, “the right kind



Featured speaker, Dr. Henry Theriault

of interest can drive deeply committed and effective scholarly work; it needs a moral component that militates against tainting of results.” That is to say, “is a scholar’s concern about Armenian issues based on an honest appraisal of the facts and generalized concern for all human rights or a narrower ethnocentrism that affects the scholar’s perceptions?” The former is entirely appropriate; the latter is not.

After highlighting that neither a preoccupation with past cultural achievement or nor an exclusive focus on the future without awareness of the past is productive approach for Armenian Studies scholars,

Theriault concluded that “What is necessary is a model of a community of scholars engaging in both kinds of work in a complementary and dynamically interactive ways.” He added that “in every aspect of its mission and actual activity, NAASR provides the space and lines of connection that allow, encourage, and indeed are the very condition for this scholarly community. In the same way that specific territory—think of Artsakh, Ani, the Dakotas, or any other indigenous land where every hill and river,

ed to the NAASR Board of Directors: incumbents Ara Araz of Franklin Lakes, NJ; Michael Bobelian of Cold Spring Harbor, NY (Incumbent); Dr. Gregory Ketabgian of La Canada, CA; Stephen Kurkjian of Manomet, MA; Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian of Wellesley, MA; and Judith Saryan of Cambridge, MA; and new members Dr. Sharon Chekijian of New Haven, CT; Ani Hovannisian of Los Angeles, CA; Dr. Mary Papazian of Livermore, CA; and Dr. Henry C. Theriault of Brookline, MA.



Incoming Board Chair Ara Araz with outgoing Chair Judith Saryan

every constructed edifice and marker, every plant and animal, contributes to a unique medium through which social relations among those attached to this land are bound together—is the essential conduit and binder of interconnection and shared identity, so does NAASR provide that for the community of Armenian scholars.”

### Reports from NAASR Staff and Committees

After Theriault’s presentation and discussion, the business session of the Assembly commenced, which included reports by Treasurer Bruce Roat, Executive Director Silva Sedrakian, and Mamigonian, as well as the presentation of the co-chairs of the Nominating Committee, Nancy R. Kolligian and Ara Araz, prior to the election of members of the Board of Directors.

Sedrakian reflected on positive developments such as the addition of many new members around the United States as well as in other countries and encouraged all “who care about keeping our Armenian heritage, culture, and history alive” to become members and to urge others to do likewise. She cited as highlights of the year two very successful outreach events: in Los Angeles, to mark the hiring of Dr. Taner Akçam as the inaugural director of the Armenian Genocide Research Program of the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, and in Cambridge honoring Prof. Christina Maranci’s appointment to the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard. She also presented a special gift to Judith Saryan to recognize her time as NAASR Chairperson.

Mamigonian emphasized the quality as well as the quantity of NAASR’s academic programming, which in 2023 included the co-sponsorship of several major international conferences and vital partnerships with a wide range of academic colleges and universities as well as community organizations, noting that “there is no possibility of doing all of these programs on our own, nor would it be desirable to try to. ... our strength lies in our ability to work with others towards our goals—namely, advancing Armenian studies and research.”

The following candidates were elect-

Chairperson Saryan recognized with gratitude 25, 50, 60, and 65-year members for their enduring commitment to NAASR: 25 years: Roger K. Hagopian, Paul R. Ignatius, Marc A. Mamigonian., Carissa D. Vanitizian, and Gayle M. Yapchaian; 50 years: Eva A. Medzorian, Robin L. Tashjian, and Dr. Edward H. Yeterian; 60 years: Yervant Chekijian and Michael Kilijian; 65 years: Mary-Louise Essaian and Edward Shooshanian.

Finally, Saryan paid respect to a number of extraordinary leaders in the community and dedicated supporters of NAASR who passed away during the past year: diplomat and author Edward Alexander, who passed away at the age of 103; NAASR Board Member and principal benefactor for NAASR’s Vartan Gregorian Building, musician and philanthropist Edward Avedisian of Lexington, MA; Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian, one of the leading lights of Armenian Studies for more than half a century at UCLA; Dr. Mary Kilbourne Matossian, longtime NAASR member and pioneer scholar of Soviet Armenia and women’s studies; Peter Onanian, former NAASR Board Member and prominent Boston-area community leader; and Dr. Dennis Papazian, NAASR Charter Member and former Board Member, and founder of the Armenian Research Center in Dearborn, MI.

### New Executive Committee Formed

Following the close of the Assembly and the tallying of election results, the newly reconfigured Board of Directors met and approved a new Executive Committee consisting of Ara Araz, Chairperson; Margaret Mgrublian of Pasadena, CA, Vice-Chairperson; Arlene Saryan Alexander of Washington, D.C., Secretary; Bruce W. Roat of Los Angeles, CA, Treasurer; Nancy R. Kolligian of Watertown, MA, Advisor; Mark Momjian of Wayne, PA, Advisor; and Dr. Henry Theriault, Advisor. Araz becomes the first NAASR Chairperson from outside of the Greater Boston area in the organization’s history, and the geographical diversity of the Executive Committee reflects the fact that the work of the organization is truly national, if not international, in its scope.





# Arts & Culture

## AGBU Hosts Private Viewing of Pioneering Art of Genocide Survivor Léon Tutundjian

NEW YORK — When the prestigious Madison Avenue art gallery Rosenberg & Co. announced its new exhibition of the works of French-Armenian artist Léon Tutundjian, who stands among the pioneers of the 20th century abstract expressionist movement in Europe — the team at AGBU Arts saw a connection.

According to AGBU Arts Director Hayk Arsenyan, the opening of a New York art exhibition dedicated to a survivor of the Armenian Genocide just one week after the ethnic cleansing of Armenians from Artsakh would surely have special meaning to the Armenian community. The next step was enlisting the AGBU New York Special Events Committee, otherwise known as NYSEC.

This dynamic group is well connected to both the New York cultural scene and the AGBU community and, for over a decade, has successfully showcased Armenian talent at some of the most prestigious venues in the city, while raising funds for university level arts scholarships in the process. Current members include: Anita Anserian; Nadine Ariyan; Betty



Curator and Art Historian Choghakate Kazarian presents short overview on Léon

Cherkezian; Nila Festekjian (Chair); Linda Gezdir; Maral Hajjar; Hilda Hartounian; Maral Jebejian; Vesna Markarian; Sossy Setrakian and Vera Setrakian.

However, this year, the committee immediately agreed to help raise funds to support AGBU humanitarian relief efforts, given the crisis in Armenia and recognizing it was time to remind the world of the triumph of the Armenian spirit over adversity and catastrophe, as exemplified by Tutundjian's own backstory.

On November 8, over 40 guests assembled at the elegantly appointed two-story space that the Rosenbergs moved into in the 1940s. Often described as resembling an aristocratic Parisian apartment, it was a fitting venue in which to honor the late Paris-based Tutundjian, whose genius parallels iconic artists the likes of Calder, Kandinsky, and Klee. His see AGBU, page 17



## New Documentary 'Cup Of Salvation' Focuses on Armenian Wine Culture

WATERTOWN — A new documentary, titled "SOMM: Cup of Salvation," featuring Armenian wine and the story of Vahe and Aimee Keushguerian's journey to reinvigorate Armenia's wine producing culture, will be shown at the Majestic 7 Theater in Watertown on Sunday, December 3 at 3 p.m. and again on Monday, December 4 at 7:20 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/somm-cup-of-salvation-movie-screening-tickets-754210813847?aff=oddtcreator>).



film has already wowed audiences in Los Angeles, Napa, Chicago, and Seattle, and has qualified for an OSCAR nomination with its extended run at the Laemmle Theater in Glendale, CA.

As the country's leading importer of Armenian wines, Storica is committed to using this as an opportunity to share the story of Armenia's ancient wine culture and heritage with the masses — what better way than to watch a feature-length documentary profiling two of the pioneers of this renaissance, who also happen to be a father-daughter duo who make tasty, award-winning wines!

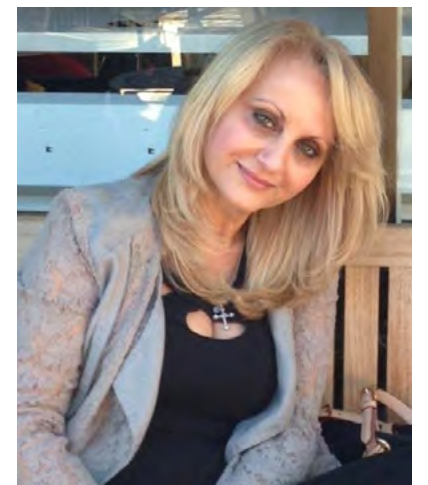


## Meghedi Children's Ensemble to Perform At Holy Cross Catholic Church

BELMONT, Mass. — The Meghedi Children's Vocal Ensemble, together with guest performers, has organized a musical Christmas pageant that will take place on Sunday, December 17, at 4 p.m. at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church. The program will take place under the auspices of Bishop Mikael Mouradian, Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of our Lady of Nareg in the USA and Canada.

This will be a unique event, where the Meghedi choir and guest performers will be performing popular favorite Christmas songs while the nativity scene unfolds before your eyes by the children. The concert is open to the public and will be free of charge. Following the concert there will be a Christmas bake sale at the Nishan & Margrit Atinjian Hall.

The Meghedi Children's Vocal Ensemble was founded in 2014, thanks to the initiative of the late Father Raphael Andonian of Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, under the directorship of Dr. Marina Mar-



Dr. Marina Margarian

garian. Since then, many children between the ages of 5 and 16 who enjoy singing have joined the ensemble to develop their musical abilities. Meghedi is a unique group where children have the opportunity to not only acquire the basic principles of music and singing, but also develop rhythmic education, learn sight singing and many traditional and contemporary Armenian and foreign songs.

Margarian, a highly skilled musician, composer and educator with 30 years of experience, has spared no effort over the years to instill in children the love for music and help them achieve their highest potential. Thanks to her dedication, Meghedi Vocal group has been serving the Boston community diligently over the past ten years, and has been performing continuously at various events throughout the community. Meghedi has performed at several fundraising and benevolent concerts, cultural and musical events, as well as during holidays. Through its rich repertoire and variety of programs, the vocal ensemble strives to preserve our rich heritage, faith and culture.

The Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church is located at 200 Lexington St., Belmont.





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

NEW YORK — The celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), was marked by an extraordinary theatrical presentation for Armenian theater enthusiasts in New York. On November 4, at Symphony Space in New York City, the group delivered a stellar performance of William Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," under the direction of Gerald Papasian, who had been specially invited from Yerevan to helm the production.

Over a span of three months, Papasian diligently rehearsed this Shakespearean classic with a talented ensemble of 25 actors at the TCA center in New Jersey. Notably, alongside seasoned actors, young Armenian Americans took to the stage, captivating the audience with their portrayal of musical segments intertwined within the play. Lebanon native Varoujan Bedigian had skillfully translated the play from English into Armenian. This version had been initially staged by the Vahram Papazian Theater Troupe of the Beirut Armenian Youth Organization, under the direction of Krikor Satamian.

The New York performance featured Harout Chatmajian (Don Pedro), Harout Barsoumian (Benedick), Talar Zokian Tomlinson (Beatrice), Armenak Kurusyan (Claudio), Roy Bahian (Leonato), Talin Bahian (Hero), and Talin Karagolian (Dogberry) in pivotal roles.

The technical crew behind this presen-



On the stage at Symphony Space in New York

Haig Gulian, Sound by Arpi Cankar, Music by Harout Barsoumian, English Translation by Ani Chatmajian, and Subtitles Operation by Elizabeth Akian.

This show marks the 24th production of the Megerdchian Theatrical Group, which over the years has performed under the guidance of various directors, including Tamar Hovannisian, Berge Fazlian, Krikor Satamian, Vartan Garniki, Gerald Papasian, Harout Chatmajian and Gagik Karapetian. The theatrical group has highlighted its talent through numerous performances in various cities, including the widely acclaimed staging

of Berge Zeytounsian's "All Rise, The Court Is in Session," a gripping play recounting the story of Soghomon Tehlirian, presented ten times. The group has received accolades in



A celebratory cake for the cast party

tation was: Stage Manager Hratch Zokian, Wardrobe Supervisors Marie Zokian and Vanig Janian, Stage Construction by Boghos Orangian and Natalie Bargamian, Lighting by



From left, Nora Armani, Harout Chatmajian, Hagop Vartivarian, Gerald Papasian at the cast party

Yerevan and Gyumri, earning praise from local audiences and critics alike.

The production would not have happened

without the support of longtime patrons the Kurdian family, and those of friends such as Edward and Carmen Gulbenkian, Henri Dimidjian and Shoghag Hovannesian.

Despite challenging geopolitical circumstances, including the Artsakh tragedy and the global attention on the Palestinian issue, a substantial audience supported this performance. Their dedication to Armenian theater, showcased in the native language, was heartening. Plans are underway to stage this production in New Jersey and several other cities in the near future.

Following the performance, a cast celebration took place at Cornetta's Restaurant and Marina in Piermont, NY. The gathering included Mr. and Mrs. Gulbenkian and noted actress Nora Armani. Harout Chatmajian, chairman of the MMTG Executive Committee, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to each participant, highlighting their versatile talents. Director Gerald Papasian and Hagop Vartivarian, the founding chairman of the Theatrical Group, also shared sincere sentiments. Amidst a cheerful familial ambiance, attendees pledged their ongoing dedication to Armenian theater.



TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group cast party





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Kalle Käsper

## For Armenia - The Country Of His Love

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/TALLINN — Estonian writer Kalle Käsper (born in 1952 in Tallinn) graduated from the Russian philology department of the University of Tartu and the Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Directors in Moscow. He is the author of seven collections of poetry, about 20 books of prose, and a number of plays and screenplays in Estonian and Russian. In 1996, his first novel, *Ode to Morning Solitude*, won a prize at a novel competition. Between 2002 and 2014 he created the eight-volumes epic, *Buridans*, which was awarded the Tammsaare Prize, given every five years for a work in the novel genre.

Kalle Käsper is connected to Armenia through his marriage to the Armenian Russian-language writer Gohar Markosyan-Käsper (1949-2015), whose works have been translated into all major European languages. His novel *Miracle* (in Russian) is dedicated to Gohar's memory and



was nominated for the Russian Booker Prize in 2017.

Dear Kalle, fate has brought you together with the Armenian people, and I would like to start our conversation with the talented and unforgettable Gohar Markosyan-Käsper, whose works I have read with pleasure for many years, and thanks to whom I have also become acquainted with your work to some extent. I was not lucky enough to meet Gohar, but it is obvious from her literary style that she was an erudite, ironic, kind-hearted person with a subtle sense of humor.

First of all, dear Artsvi, let me express my sympathy with the tragedy of Artsakh. Sharing your pain, I am nevertheless confident that your people, who have gone through such severe trials, will be able to cope with the current one as well. Strength to all of you for that!

Now about Gohar. You are right, she was not only talented but also extremely erudite. I developed the habit of asking Gohar in search of an answer to some question, before going to the bookshelf with encyclopedias, and usually the reference book was not needed after that. Gohar's father, opera singer, bass Carlos Markosyan, was a fanatical bibliophile, he collected a magnificent library on which Gohar and her sister Hasmik [ballet scholar Hasmik Markosyan - A. B.] grew up. Gohar loved thick novels — Balzac, Zola, and also fiction, read everything in this genre, and wrote fantastic epic *The Fourth Beta*. She knew history very well, being especially interested in the Ancient World — this passion, in the end, gave birth to the novel, *Mycenae, Rich in Gold*, about ancient Greece in the era of the Trojan War, about Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Cassandra and Orestes.

When we first traveled to Italy, Gohar served as my guide — she already knew what to see first, based on the books she had read. At the end of her life, she started to write a guidebook to Italy, which remained unfinished: I have completed the work, and I hope this book will reach the reader soon. But apart from such general erudition, Gohar, as a doctor, PhD in medical sciences, possessed specific knowledge that was not available to “mere” mor-

tals. She thoroughly knew anatomy, chemistry and biology, and all this knowledge, plus medical experience, helped her in her literary work. She looked at life the way doctors look at life: soberly.

You are also right about the irony — yes, it is Gohar's main literary tone, and quite rare in Russian literature!

The history of Armenian-Estonian literary relations has a short but interesting history. Khachatur Abovyan studied in Tartu, the so-called “Estonian songs” were composed by Vahan Teryan and Alexander Tsaturyan, the great Armenian writer Kostan Zarian wrote the poem “I Entered Tallinn with Joyful Steps,” and Ain Kaalep, Ira Kaal, Vahur Afanasjev and others dedicated poems to Armenia. Nevertheless, your life and creative union with Gohar Markosyan-Käsper occupies a special place in the history of Armenian-Estonian literary ties. As you said in your story, “The Life of Trdat,” you looked at the world through the eyes of a Russian-speaking Armenian writer, that is, you penetrated so deeply into the essence and psychology of Armenians.

Every nation, as I have long noticed, lives in its own historical time. Armenians are an ancient people, while we, Estonians, have entered the stage of the universe quite recently, a couple of centuries ago. This is the huge difference between you and us. As an old man is wiser than a young man, so an ancient nation is wiser than a young one. I still remember the first Armenian I met. When I was a schoolboy, I was fond of volleyball: I did not make it

as a player, but I became a referee. As a referee, I traveled to all-Soviet competitions, and there I was noticed by my senior colleague, an Armenian. Others did not pay much attention to this strange phenomenon — a boy referee — but he did, talked to me, encouraged me in every possible way. This is typical for Armenians — they are sincerely interested in people. You are a sighted people, we are half-blind. We do not see another person, but you do.

Our literary history is different from yours, too. When Khachatur Abovyan came to study at the University of Tartu, Armenian literature had almost two millennia behind it, while Estonian literature was just being born. Less than two centuries have passed since then — a pittance for history. Therefore, it

is not surprising that the achievements of Armenian literature still exceed ours. At the beginning of our marriage, Gohar and I used to translate Armenian poetry into Estonian, from the classics — Nahapet Kuchak — and from modern poets Hovhannes Grigoryan. Then we ran out of time and had to give up this pleasure. But the interest in Armenian literature in Estonia continues without us; the proof is the fact that a couple of years ago *Book of Lamentations* by Grigor Narekatsi was published in Peeter Volkonsky's translation.

As for *The Life of Trdat*, I have always been interested in the image of the outsider. I once wrote a story about a Russian who married an Estonian woman and moved to Estonia, where he was looked down upon, and then a story about an actor who fell into the KGB net and became a snitch. From here, as you understand, there is only one step to the outcast - an Armenian writer writing in Russian. He does not feel at home anywhere - neither in Yerevan, where everyone believes that an Armenian must write in Armenian, nor in Moscow, where he is a “person of Caucasian nationality.” Such an existential situation causes a strong reaction — a person begins to think more deeply about the universe, comes to thoughts that for many people are “forbidden.” It is such people, even if they are wrong about something, who move life forward.

I know that some Armenians did not like this novel, because, in their opinion, it is not “patriotic” enough. I am ready to argue with the latter judgment, because a true patriot, in my opinion, is the one who tells the truth to his compatriots, although for him, as I wrote in a poem, “it is rarely useful, and sometimes even dangerous.” On the other hand, of course, I understand that it is risky to write about another nation, and I apologize if I have offended anyone with my writing.

And how interesting are your Armenian characters and motifs to Estonian and Russian-speaking readers?

Reading is about recognition. We read and subconsciously compare the novel with our life, with our experience. So, it is clear that a work in which the events

take place in the reader's home country and the characters are compatriots is a priori closer to the reader than a text about a foreign country. This, by the way, explains the paradoxical fate of Gohar's novel “Penelope,” which could be worthy of appreciation by Leningrad blockade survivors, but not by the “new Russians”, for whom taking the shower is a matter of course. *Trdat* was treated with understanding in Estonia and Russia, but the novel did not cause any special excitement either here or there. It is foreign.

But *The Armenian Women* did. Every nation believes that it is they who live the proper way, and the fact that I dared to cite the Armenian way of life as a positive example angered many people. Well, I am satisfied.

I 100% agree with your beautiful *The Armenian Women*, especially when you write: “If I had to define the essence of an Armenian woman in two words, I would choose the expression ‘strong rear.’”

Thank you for the compliment. An Armenian woman is a jewel, polished by centuries. The Armenian women do not become so easily — they are the fruit of upbringing of many generations. Of course, not all men like the fact that Armenian women are so hard to get. You mentioned my *Trdat* — he was in favor of free relations. And it is understandable, because in our youth we, men, crave for amorous victories — the more, the better. It is more difficult for Armenians to realize such dreams than for Estonians or Russians.

Nevertheless, a stable family is the basis of society. And the basis of a stable family is the fidelity of the wife. A man cannot work fruitfully if he has to constantly think about whether his wife is cheating on him.

I would be interested to see what will happen to Armenian women in the new conditions, when the free mores of Western society have challenged them the most. Will the “strong rear” hold out?

In my personal opinion, Western manners may affect them, but only in a positive way. Kalle, I think that after Gohar it will be difficult for you to travel to Armenia, but it would be interesting to know your opinion about today's Yerevan, which you called “the most beautiful city built in the twentieth century.” Today, the architecture of the city, the people and many other things have changed a lot. Young Armenian women in the capital are very willing to communicate with strangers, which, as you rightly noted, was not the case in the Soviet years, and there are no more Yerevan shuttle buses, which Gohar called “prison cells on wheels.”

Armenia is the country of my love. I fell in love with Armenia when I was still young, I am afraid to say more than half a century ago, when as part of a student delegation I came to Yerevan for the Peoples' Friendship Festival at the Polytechnic Institute. Then, as it often happens with youthful loves, this feeling began to fade slowly, and probably would have faded completely, leaving only a light, sad trace of something irrevocably lost, if I had not met Gohar. Then everything flared up again. I still remember with fondness the first years of our marriage, when we sometimes spent several months in Yerevan, in the house of her parents. I remember Komitas Street, down which, near the former furniture store, you see the snowy peak of Masis suddenly appearing on the horizon! I remember walks around the city, meetings with friends, trips to Sevan, Ashtarak. And dark evenings without light, with flickering candles, and dinners, which were kept under a pile of blankets, so that they would not get cold. My best days were spent there.

Of course, Yerevan has changed, it has lost that special intellectual flavor that it had, thanks to the numerous layers of scientists and artists. Many of them have left, some to Russia, some to Europe, some to the States, and new ones have not appeared in such numbers, it takes time and conditions. After Gohar's death, I was in Yerevan twice, and the last time, something happened to me that could not have happened before - I got into a cab whose driver did not understand a word of Russian.

Maybe he was a Syrian-Armenian repatriate?

Maybe. Some time ago, I started to think about moving to Yerevan in my old age. It is not just that I love Armenia - two of my closest friends live here, one of whom I became friend with when I first came here in 1971, and the other with whom we studied together in Moscow at a scriptwriting course - it was he who introduced me to Gohar. Here is Gohar's sister, who is now my sister, other relatives... Alas, the move is difficult to realize, so that, I am afraid, will remain only a dream....

Or maybe it will not remain so at all. You are always welcome to Yerevan, where now you have another friend.

Thank you for your interest in our work, dear Artsvi! Good luck to you!





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine  
Vartanian



Maria Loi's Greek Honey Cheesecake (Melopita)

## Maria Loi: Greek Honey Cheesecake (Melopita)

Chef Maria Loi is an internationally renowned entrepreneur, author, television personality and philanthropist working to change the world – one healthy bite at a time. Loi's mischievous grin, sparkling eyes, and culinary prowess have made her a food superstar; she is a popular television chef in Greece and the author of more than 36 cookbooks, and over 150 magazine editions. She owns an exquisite gourmet restaurant in idyllic Nafpaktos, and has a line of Maria Loi dinnerware and kitchen appliances. She is also the founding partner in a fashion company. She is the founder of Loi Food Products, a specialty brand built on traditional ingredients from Greece; her pastas, beans, botanical herbs, refrigerated dips, honey and olive oil are sold on QVC, at Whole Foods Markets, and in other stores.

"Born in the village of Thermo in southeastern Greece, Loi learned from her grandparents and parents how to cook using golden oil pressed from the plump olives that had ripened under the hot sun, black honey gathered from ancient unspoiled woods, and the oregano that grew wild in the mountains and was caressed by the sun. She raised both vegetables and chickens from a young age and became so passionate about the foods of her country that she is the Ambassador of Greek Gastronomy, having been awarded that honor by the Chef's Club of Greece. It started, she says, when her grandfather fed her two tablespoons of olive oil — Greek olive oil of course — not that stuff from Italy or Spain every morning and a teaspoon of black honey every night — the honey she and her grandfather had harvested together."

"He told us the olive oil would flush out the toxins from our body and the honey would kill the germs from our day," she says. "It's become such a mantra that patrons seeing her at Loi Estiatorio confide they're taking their daily dose of olive oil just like she recommends. Her staff has lost weight following her Greek diet or diet (think Mediterranean but the Greeks really invented it, she says), and she is healthy as a horse."

"Of course you should always talk to your doctor," she says with a broad smile, most likely because she believes that any doctor would back up her claims. "Even the FDA has adopted now that we have to do two tablespoons of olive oil every day."

"According to WebMD, the FDA has approved a new qualified health claim for olive oil-based on studies showing that consuming about two tablespoons of olive oil a day may reduce the risk of heart disease. This, of course, is not news to Loi who has learned from the land and her ancestors about the wonders of eating."

"Not only does she cook and consume olive oil, but she also puts some on her hair at night and shampoos in the morning. Named one of the top Women Makers by Whole Foods Market and one of the best female owned and operated brands/suppliers with whom Whole Foods Market works, Loi was selected as one of the Top Women in Food Service & Hospitality, and is called the 'Julia Child of Greece.'"

Now Loi, chef/owner of two restaurants – the award-winning Loi Estiatorio in Manhattan and Kouzina Loi in the port town of Nafpaktos in Western Greece, takes us further into the culinary treasures of Greek cooking in her 13-part National Public Television series "The Life of Loi: Mediterranean Secrets," which premiered last December on PBS.

"Melopita translates as 'honey pie,' but this dish is my healthy version of a ricotta-style cheesecake," writes Loi in the introduction to this recipe from The Greek Diet Cookbook. "Light and fresh with a hint of lemon, this cake has the perfect tang from the yogurt. Drizzle with some honey to keep it classic."

Serves 16.

### INGREDIENTS:

Olive oil, for the pan  
1 pound anthotyro (ricotta cheese)  
1 cup 2% plain Greek yogurt  
3 eggs, lightly beaten  
1/2 cup Greek honey, plus more for garnish  
Grated zest of 1 lemon  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1/4 cup sugar  
Ground cinnamon, for garnish

### PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 350F. Coat a 9-inch spring form pan with olive oil, line it with a round of parchment paper, and lightly oil the paper.

In a large bowl, combine the ricotta, yogurt, eggs, 1/2 cup honey, lemon zest, flour, and sugar. Beat thoroughly, either with an electric mixer or a whisk. Pour the batter into the pan and gently rap it against a hard surface to release any air bubbles.

Bake the melopita for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the filling sets. Remove the cake from the oven and let cool. Refrigerate the cake for 2 or 3 hours. Run a knife around the inside edge of the pan and release the sides. Invert the cake onto a serving plate. Carefully remove the bottom of the cake pan and the parchment paper. Serve the cake sprinkled with some cinnamon and drizzled with a little honey.

Based on a similar article that appeared in the Herald Palladium.

For this recipe and more, go to:

<https://janeammeson.com/2023/03/01/maria-loi-secrets-of-the-mediterranean/>

Also featured at:

<https://www.thelifeofloi.com/recipes/greek-honey-cheesecake>

The Life of Loi: Mediterranean Secrets is presented by your local public television station. Distributed nationally by American Public Television.

For episodes, go to: <https://www.pbs.org/show/life-loi-mediterranean-secrets/>

For more recipes, see: <https://www.pbs.org/food/recipes/>

Loi is involved in Greek and American causes that care for children in need. She is a founder of Elpida (the Greek word meaning "hope"), a foundation to support children with cancer. She oversees a fund that grants university scholarships to underprivileged students. Loi also works closely with The Center for Discovery and their Department of Nourishment Arts as a DaVinci Master Chef. In June of 2015, Loi received the prestigious Women's Award from the Women Together Foundation at the United Nations, honoring her for the philanthropic accomplishments over the years, focusing on her time since moving to the United States. During her diverse career, Loi spent many years representing clients Texaco, Nokia and ITT Sheraton among others. This rewarding yet fast-paced life, long hours and travel separated her from her roots and the Greek traditions of family, food, balance and nature. From that experience, Loi developed a lifestyle program for all that would nurture a healthy body and soul, influenced by the Greek ancients.

To view recipes featured in the series and more, visit Chef Loi's social media platforms @ChefMariaLoi (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter).

More than just a weight-loss plan, The Greek Diet is a path back to health and a way of eating that is not only sustainable but completely satisfying and enjoyable. Once you learn how good it tastes (and how good you'll feel) eating Greek, you'll never want or need another diet again. So go ahead and indulge; your body and your taste buds will thank you. When Loi chooses ingredients and creates recipes, she considers the ancient grains and flavors that continue to flourish millennia later. This is an area of expertise in her book Ancient Dining on ancient Greek dining that was the only official cookbook of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. The ingredients, as respected as the great Greek minds of Plato, Socrates and Hippocrates, are the pillars of a healthy, tasty Mediterranean diet: olive oil, Greek yogurt, grains, beans and freshly picked greens. Loi's food is about truth in flavor. Hers is a philosophy derived from the warm, scented Greek air and the sounds of loved ones around the table.

To purchase The Greek Diet by Chef Maria Loi, go to: <https://theloilife.com/products/the-greek-diet-cookbook>

To purchase Ancient Dining by Chef Maria Loi, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/Ancient-Dining-Maria-Loi/dp/9606603296>

Connect at:

<https://www.thelifeofloi.com/>

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<https://www.facebook.com/chefmarialoi>

<https://www.instagram.com/chefmarialoi/>

<https://twitter.com/chefmarialoi>

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# Books

## Fresno State Armenian Series Publishes Volume 20 In the Armenian Series at Fresno State

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program announces the publication of *Death Marches Past the Front Door: Clara and Fritz Sigrüst-Hilty, Swiss Eyewitnesses to the Armenian Dante-Inferno in Turkey (1915-1918)*, by Dora Sakayan, Volume 20 in the Armenian Series of The Press at California State University, Fresno. The book was edited by Barlow Der Mugrdechian and Zareh Tjekanvorian.

“*Death Marches Past the Front Door* represents a unique addition to the Armenian Series at Fresno State,” said Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, general editor of the Armenian Series. “Clara and Fritz Sigrüst-Hilty’s account of their stay in Turkey in 1915 provides a never before revealed perspective of the Armenian Genocide. Dora Sakayan has presented in English for the first time a fascinating recounting of an important period in Armenian history.”



Author Dora Sakayan

On the day of their church wedding, the civil engineer Fritz Sigrüst and the nurse Clara Hilty take the train from Werdenberg (Switzerland) and travel through the war zone across the Balkans to southeastern Turkey. After Turkey’s involvement in World War I as Germany’s ally, it was certainly not the ideal place for

a honeymoon, but Fritz had been working on the construction of the Baghdad railway since 1910. After a short stop in Constantinople, the newlywed couple settled down for a few months in Entilli, then for three years in Keller.

Shortly after their arrival in Turkey, the Armenian deportations began, and thousands of Armenians were marched past their front door. For three years the couple witnessed “the lapsing of human lights down there in the steep gorge” while they lived their everyday life in their little house on the remote hillside. A visit to Aleppo and the Katma concentration camps makes them realize that what they were seeing in Keller on a daily basis was nothing less than premeditated death marches, i.e., the Armenian Genocide. Things become worse when the skilled Armenian workers — actively involved in the Baghdad railway construction — are also forced to join those death marches.

Clara records the atrocities, first in her journal, later in a memoir or a special eyewitness account. Fritz in his turn, writes two stories and a letter on the subject.

Dora Sakayan has deciphered the Swiss



archive documents written mostly in Gothic handwriting and has meticulously processed them and embedded them in the historic events of the time. Moreover, based on a 1970 memoir by Haig Aramian, Sakayan recounts the adventurous story of how in June 1916 the Sigrüst-Hilty couple helped their Armenian storehouse manager Aramian escape certain death.

Sakayan’s book consists of three parts, each one dedicated to the life and writings of one of the three individuals: Clara Hilty, Fritz Sigrüst and Haig Aramian. An organic

interplay of primary and secondary texts relates to the reader a coherent real-life story — one of extreme human suffering and pain, but also of Christian charity, compassion, and selflessness.

Sakayan graduated with a Doctorate in German philology at the Moscow Lomonosov State University. She then taught German at Yerevan State University (YSU), where she also headed the Department of Foreign Languages.

Sakayan later moved to Canada and continued her pedagogical career as a Professor of German Studies at McGill University in Montreal. Her training in various areas of applied linguistics allowed her to gradually venture from German Studies to Armenology and to become the first scholar to introduce Armenian Studies in a Canadian University. She has written, edited, and translated more than 30 books in both areas of her expertise, German and Armenian Studies. She has also authored a series of scholarly articles.

Sakayan is a major contributor to the study of the Armenian Genocide. In 1992, she came across the journal of her maternal grandfather, Dr. Garabed Hatcherian, which is an eyewitness account of the 1922 Smyrna disaster. Recognizing the historic significance of this writing, Sakayan undertook its translation, annotation, publication, and worldwide dissemination in nine languages. <https://www.dorasakayan.com/>

Copies of *Death Marches Past the Front Door* are available for purchase from: Abril Bookstore, <http://www.abrilbooks.com/books/death-marches-past-the-front-door.html> or the NAASR bookstore, [https://naasr.org/products/death-marches-past-the-front-door?\\_pos=1&\\_sid=08b61d183&\\_ss=r](https://naasr.org/products/death-marches-past-the-front-door?_pos=1&_sid=08b61d183&_ss=r).

All of the books in the Armenian Series can be found at the following website: <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/armenian-studies/resources/armenianseries/index.html>

## New Volume Edited by Prof. Der Matossian Focuses on Social Democrat Hnchakian Party

LONDON/NY — I. B.Tauris, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, has announced the publication of Prof. Bedross Der Matossian’s edited volume *The Armenian Social Democrat Hnchakian Party: Politics, Ideology and Transnational History as part of the series Armenians in the Modern and Early Modern World* edited by Der Matossian himself.

The book, based on new research, sheds light on the history of the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party, a major Armenian revolutionary party that operated in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Persia and throughout the global Armenian diaspora.

Divided into sections which cover the origins, ideology, and regional history of the SDHP, the book situates the history of the Hnchaks within debates around socialism, populism, and nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries. The SDHP was not only an Armenian party but had a global Marxist outlook, and scholars in this volume bring to bear expertise in a wide range of histories and languages including Russian, Turkish, Persian and Latin American to trace the emergence and role this influential party played from their split with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the events of the Armenian genocide to the formation of the first Armenian Republic and then Soviet Armenia. Putting the Hnchaks in context as one of many nationalist radical groups to emerge in Eurasia in the late 19th century, the book is an important contribution to Armenian historiography as well as that of transnational revolutionary movements in general.

“This is the first edited volume in English language that discusses the multidimensional and rich history of the of the Social Democrat Hnchakian party in the Ottoman, Russian, and the Persian empires and beyond. It is based on archival material in multiple languages including but not limited to the Ottoman, Armenian, British, and French archives,” said Der Matossian. “The volume is unique in that it brings together leading senior and junior scholars to assess the role of the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The volume is divided into three sections: From Inception to the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920); Regional and Local Histories; and Ideology,” stated Der Matossian.

### Reviews

Houri Berberian, Professor, University of California Berkeley, wrote, “This first-ever edited collection on the Hnchakian Party is a very welcome intervention in a historiography that includes few scholarly contributions on the party. Especially noteworthy and compelling is the volume’s reexamination of the party’s history in light of new sources in multiple languages and approaches that—just to name a few examples—consider the party’s local and regional operations in the eastern Ottoman provinces, its relationships with non-Armenian neighbors, and its exclusion from the collective memory of Turkish socialism.”

Ronald Grigor Suny, Professor, The University of Michigan, said, “This unique collection of articles is not only a major contribution to Armenian studies, adding to our knowledge of one of the most dedicated revolutionary parties in the Armenian world, but also a work that fills a lacuna in

late Ottoman history and the history of the international Left. Bringing together Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, and other scholars, the editor Bedross Der Matossian’s volume illuminates the activities, ideologies, achievements, and frustrations of Marxist revolutionaries in the Ottoman world.”

Y. Dogan Çetinkaya, Professor, Istanbul University, Turkey, added, “For quite a while the Ottoman Empire was considered as a preliminary stage in the history of nation-states that followed it. However, the communities consisted of people with different class positions and did not live in isolation from each other. The Hnchakian Party was not only a political party but also a social movement that cannot, therefore, be reduced to just one stage in the history of a nation. Thus, analyzing different aspects of this movement, this outstanding book offers a unique treasure to understand not only the Hnchaks but also the last decades of the Empire as a whole.”

The list of contributors in the order of their contribution are Der Matossian, “Introduction: The Social Democrat Hnchakian Party in the Course of History”; Abel Manoukian, “The History of a Group Picture and the Foundation Date of a ‘Revolutionary Society’ in Geneva”; Garabet K. Moumdjian †, “The Hnchakian ‘Nay’ to Young Turk Overtures, 1895-1908”; Yeghig Jeredjian, “A Newly Discovered Letter of Sabah-Gulian to Paramaz”; Richard G. Hovannisian †, “The Hnchakian Party and the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920)”; Toygun Altıntaş “Armenians, Muslims, Citizens: Hnchak Pamphleteering in Central Anatolia”; Varak Ketsemanian, “Peasants, Pastoralists, and Revolutionaries: Hn-

chakians and Armeno-Kurdish Relations in Late Ottoman Eastern Anatolia”; Ümit Kurt, “The Hnchakian Revolutionary Party in Aintab: Founders, Ideology and Structure”; Vahram Shemmassian, “Absolute Monarchy: The Social Democrat Hnchakian Revolutionary Episode in Armenian Musa Dagh during the 1890s”; Vartan Matiossian, “The Hnchakian Party in the Armenian Communities of South America: An Outline of its Early History”; Gerard J. Libaridian, “Ideology and Reality: Hnchakian Paradoxes at Birth”; Gaïdz Minassian, “The Social Democrat Hnchakian Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Fraternal Twins or Semi-Identical Twins?”; Yaşar Tolga Cora, “The Istanbul Students’ Union of the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party and its Periodical *Kaytız* (1911-1914)”; and Kadir Akin, “In the Footsteps of Hidden History: The Roots of Socialism in the Ottoman Empire.”

Copies of *The Armenian Social Democrat Hnchakian Party: Politics, Ideology and Transnational History*, are available for purchase from the Bloomsbury Press website. Use code: GLR AQ4 to receive a 35-percent discount.

Der Matossian is the vice-chair, professor of Modern Middle East History and Hymen Rosenberg Professor in Judaic Studies at the Department of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). He is the past president of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS). He is the author, co-editor and editor of seven volumes including his latest, *Denial of Genocides in the Twenty-First Century* published by University of Nebraska Press in 2023.





# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### THE ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK PROGRAMS

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 .

DECEMBER 3 — Sunday, 1 p.m., Stephen Jrbashyan Choir & Folk Orchestra (Online Concert) @ Virtual via the Facebook page and website of the Armenian Museum ([www.ArmenianMuseum.org](http://www.ArmenianMuseum.org)), under events. The Stepan Jrbashyan Music School provides an outstanding education for Armenia’s most talented young musicians. Groups from the school have won prizes at competitions like the Gyumri Renaissance and Art-Music festivals. This concert will showcase three ensembles that demonstrate a range of musical ability and stylistic range. The choir will be directed by Mamikon Andreasyan, the chamber orchestra by Arman Grigoryan, and the folk instrument orchestra by Levon Tevanyan. Recorded and produced in Armenia last summer by Daniel Ayriyan. The bi-monthly Hybrid Concert Series is free through a grant from the Dadourian Foundation. The concert will be posted on our Facebook (click “going” to receive a reminder), website, and YouTube channel.

DECEMBER 4 — Monday, Saint James Men’s Club Dinner and Fellowship Gathering. Guest Speakers, Dr. Anna Ohanyan Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College. She is also a Nonresident Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace/Russia and Eurasia Program., also Attorney Anthony Barsamian, Co-Chair of the Armenian Assembly of America’s Board of Trustees. Anthony just returned from a trip to Armenia. The topic will be “The Fall of Artsakh, the forced displacement of Armenians, and its implications in the Soth Caucasus Region.” Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner 6:15 pm Mezza and social / 7:00pm Dinner \$20 per person. All our Welcome. 465 Mt. Auburn Street , Watertown.

DECEMBER 7 — Armenian Museum of America, 5-8 p.m. Members Reception & Christmas Gallery Stroll. Wine, hors d’oeuvres, and sweets will be served. Free parking is available in the lot on the Church Street side of the Museum. This event is complimentary for current members; 100 percent of proceeds from the purchase of the new line of Michael Aram ornaments in our Gift Shop will go towards humanitarian relief for the Ar-

menians of Artsakh. If you are not a member, now is a great time to renew or join! Memberships start at only \$50 for an Individual and \$75 for a Family. Please visit <http://www.armenianmuseum.org/membership>. To register for the event, please visit our Eventbrite page: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/members-reception-and-christmas-gallery-stroll-tickets>. The museum is located at 65 Main St., Watertown.

DECEMBER 10 — Sunday at 7 p.m. Holy Trinity Armenian Church will host Erevan Choral Society for the annual Christmas Concert. This year’s concert—honoring the 850th anniversary of St. Nersess Shnorhali, and supporting humanitarian efforts for families of Artsakh—will feature soloists Rubik Mailian and Astghik Martirosyan, who will join the chorale under Konstantin Petrossian. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert.

DECEMBER 12 — Author Victoria Atamian Waterman will present her new book, *Who She Left Behind*, at a talk with Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist Stephen Kurkjian, co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America and Watertown Free Public Library. 6 p.m. Tuesday, Watertown Free Public Library, Watertown Savings Bank Room, 123 Main St., Watertown. Registration required at <https://reservations.watertownlib.org/evening-victoria-atamian-waterman-who-she-left-behind>

DECEMBER 17 — Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church presents the Meghedi Children’s Vocal Ensemble under the patronage of the Most Reverend Mikael Mouradian, Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of Our Lady of Nareg in the USA and Canada. 4 p.m. 200 Lexington St., Belmont. Join us for an enchanting afternoon, as we celebrate Christmas with songs and ply, unfolding the beautiful message of the nativity. A Christmas bake sale to follow. Free admission. 617-489-2280, email [holycrossbos-tonma@gmail.com](mailto:holycrossbos-tonma@gmail.com).

### RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 8 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church presents “Silent Night, Holy Night” Christmas Concert featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island Soloists The Junior Choir Friday, December 8, 2023, at 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Refreshments following concert Donations greatly appreciated.

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.

## AGBU Hosts Private Viewing of Pioneering Art of Léon Tutundjian

AGBU, from page 12

works remain on display through December 22, 2023.

Arsenyan in his remarks outlined AGBU’s main areas of focus for humanitarian relief, including food security, health services, and job training and placement support. It should be noted that, as of October 31, 304,000 hot meals had been distributed to Artsakh Armenians across seven regions of Armenia through a partnership with AGBU and World Central Kitchen. This month, 56,000 food boxes are being distributed for at-home meal preparation as families find more stable housing arrangements.

There was also commentary by Marianne Rosenberg, the owner of the gallery, which is part of her family legacy going back four generations. It was her great grandfather who established himself in Paris where he represented Picasso, Matisse, and Legèr among other well-known modernists. Her grandfather, a victim of the Nazi regime,



AGBU Central Board Member Haig Ariyan makes concluding remarks.

first brought the family curatorial practice from Europe to America after World War II, making her especially attuned to Tutundjian’s improbable rise to fame from his humble beginnings as an orphan of genocide.

French-Armenian art historian and curator Choghakate Kazarian was also present to give an informal talk about why Tutund-



AGBU Central Board Member Haig Ariyan makes concluding remarks.

jian deserves to be seen as an historically and culturally seminal figure in the birth of abstract modern art and its timeless value today. Kazarian will be back at Rosenberg & Co. on December 6th to make a longer presentation that delves deeper into the artist’s work, influence, life, and times.

Each speaker also pointed out that, while Tutundjian’s name is held in such high esteem throughout European art circles but somehow is less recognized in North America, this exhibition of the creative visionary’s works is long overdue. They also agreed that the multilateral collaboration among Rosenberg & Co., the Tutundjian Foundation in France, AGBU Arts, and NYSEC was such a success because each stakeholder brought a particular expertise to the planning and implementation of the benefit event.

AGBU Central Board member Haig Ariyan closed the remarks with an inspired message. He explained why the AGBU Global Relief Fund is so critical at a time of such great upheaval and uncertainty. He also confirmed that the funds that AGBU has already expended for Artsakh Armenians enabled the organization to greatly expand its scope and capacity to meet the needs of tens of thousands of people within



a very short window. He cited the outpouring of donor support to meet these challenges. “If we step up in times of need and step up with consistency even when there is not a crisis, Armenia will get through this period of time. And most definitely Armenians will get through it,” Ariyan asserted, reprising the evening’s theme of the indomitability of the Armenian spirit.

To learn more about the exhibition of Leon Tutundjian through December 22, go to [rosenbergco.com](http://rosenbergco.com)

To donate to AGBU Global Relief Fund in support of Artsakh Armenians, go to [agbu.org/global-relief](http://agbu.org/global-relief).





## COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR  
SPECTATOR**  
SINCE 1932



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# Response of US Think Tanks to the Exodus Of Nagorno Karabakh Armenians

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In my latest article I analyzed the response of the US media to the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Artsakh. To have the full picture of the situation, I think there is a need to also dwell on the response from the US think tanks that have covered this issue.

The crucial and first point of this study is to identify how US think tanks have defined what happened in Artsakh in September during the exodus of Armenians. The Council on Foreign Relations noted that the ethnic Armenian population “is experiencing ethnic cleansing at warp speed.” Carnegie Endowment also indicated that Azerbaijan’s military operation against ethnic Armenians resulted in “ethnic cleansing.” However, in saying this the think tank referred to Armenian sources and did not risk directly calling a spade a spade. On the other hand, the Council on Foreign Relations warned about the crime of genocide against ethnic Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh by citing the words of the former International Criminal Court Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo and some international aid groups indicating the facts that Azerbaijan was “using starvation as ‘an invisible genocide weapon.’”

The other most common point that was expressed by a number of US think tanks was the idea of increased Western or international involvement in the region in connection with Armenia and Azerbaijan and for the prevention of future aggression. One of the extensive analyses of this issue was provided in the article of the Council on Foreign Relations. First, the think tank stressed that the “United Nations and influential actors such as the United States, Turkey, and the European Union should be pressing Azerbaijan to prevent ethnic cleansing and its incitement against Armenian” in all diplomatic exchanges with Azerbaijan. Second, it proposed the deployment of OSCE or UN monitors under a new mandate to prevent cross-border movements, which would also imply the “withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces from the Armenian territory that they occupied in 2021 and 2022.” Third, the article suggested that the Council of Europe should explore “a truth and reconciliation commission” between the two countries.

The involvement of international actors was also highlighted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States which came up with a vague statement that “it is essential that the international community, including the United Nations, work collectively to uphold the principles of human rights and prevent further suffering” once Azerbaijan takes control of the area. An appeal for more Western involvement was also stressed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. One of its articles focused on geopolitical realities on the ground where external actors have now an opportunity to enhance their presence and influence on the region due to Russia’s preoccupation with war in Ukraine. The article highlighted that the change in power dynamics provides “Western policymakers with an opportunity to step up as potential guarantors of longer-term peace and stability in the Caucasus – a title famously claimed by Russia.”

Another key issue that US think tanks have emphasized is the worsening relations between Armenia and Russia. It is noteworthy that they singled out several reasons for that. According to the Carnegie Endowment, one of the reasons is the “anti-Russian” position of the current Prime Minister of Armenia. In its article, Pashinyan was presented as “a long-standing opponent of Armenia’s integration into the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union.” Moreover, it portrayed him as the proponent of

a “worsening relationship with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).” Another reason for this situation mentioned in the article is Russia’s and specifically CSTO’s inaction when Azerbaijan attacked the internationally recognized borders of Armenia. Pashinyan now says “that Russia has acted in bad faith – taking advantage of Armenia’s weakness and seeking to undermine its statehood.” A third reason for the worsening of the bilateral relations between Russia and Armenia is the noncompliance with the guarantees given by President Putin for the safe return of Karabakh Armenians from Armenia and the ensurance of their continued residence in their homeland by the Russian peacekeepers. According to them, now Russia sees Azerbaijan as a more valuable partner and after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Armenian government began to pivot toward the West. According to the German Marshall Fund, “Yerevan has a chance to shape its own future without Russian meddling.”

Some of the think tanks referred to Turkey’s role in the conflict. Prominently, one article published in the Brookings Institute, written by a Turkish author, advocated for bigger Turkish involvement in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. First the author argues that the United States can’t do much “other than relying on diplomacy to push for a peace deal to prevent a new war” because Russia is all over this map and it won’t tolerate Armenia seeking US support. According to the author, as counterintuitive as it sounds, “Turkey might be helpful” in peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the United States should test that. The Carnegie Endowment, on the other hand, stressed that a new peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan would lead to the decrease of Russian influence, while Turkey’s influence would increase.

It is also worth mentioning the article published in the Caspian Policy Center. The article tried to emphasize the key points the Azerbaijani government is pushing. The article starts with the description of the Azerbaijani attack on September 19, citing the statements of official Baku. Moreover, the article was mostly pro-Azerbaijani, with quotations from Azerbaijani officials and an emphasis on key aspects important for Azerbaijan. Finally, the article referred to a website launched by Azerbaijan as if the latter was trying to help Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians to stay and register as residents in NK. The article called it “a show of more recent efforts to promote peaceful integration.” That’s something the Azerbaijani government would say.

Finally, Carnegie Endowment analyzed the impact of the exodus of all the NK Armenians on the involved parties. If some Armenians stayed in NK that would be politically significant for all the parties involved. As the Carnegie Endowment mentioned, if NK Armenians stayed, Azerbaijan wouldn’t be seen as a “monster” in the eyes of the international community. Moreover, Azerbaijan “wants to avoid being accused of ethnic cleansing.” On the other hand, the Armenian government risks anti-government protests. So, for the Armenian prime minister, refugees are a burden. As for Russia, it needs to justify the presence of its peacekeepers in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is only possible with the presence of some ethnic Armenians there.

(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.)

## Securing a Permanent French Military Presence: Armenia’s Path to Long-term Security

By Rafael Castro

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In the turbulent landscape of geopolitics and regional conflicts, nations must sometimes take bold steps to ensure their sovereignty and security. Armenia, a nation with a history marked by territorial disputes and the threat of military incursions, finds itself at a crossroads. To protect itself from further Azerbaijani attacks and safeguard its future, Armenia should seriously consider securing a permanent French military presence on its territory. This initiative is underpinned by several compelling factors that make it not only necessary but also advantageous.

1. France’s Military Strength and Historical Ties: France stands as a nuclear power with a formidable military. Moreover, it has deep historical and political connections with Armenia, making it an ideal candidate to provide security. The strength of the French military is a deterrent to potential aggressors, ensuring Armenia’s territorial integrity.

2. Influential Armenian Community in France: France is home to a thriving Armenian diaspora of around 600,000 individuals. This community boasts significant influence and political power. By uniting and leveraging their might, they can play a pivotal role in initiating and sustaining a French military presence in Armenia.

3. European Union Solidarity: A French military presence would be emblematic of European Union support for Armenia. In the unfortunate event of an Azerbaijani attack, the entire EU would stand in solidarity with Armenia, sending a strong message of deterrence to any aggressor.

4. American Constraints and Russian Sensitivities: Given America’s involvement in multiple global conflict zones and the heightened sensitivity of Russia to American military presence near its borders, Armenia cannot rely on American military defense. A French presence could serve as a more balanced and feasible alternative.

see SECURITY, page 20





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## NYC Mayor Attended 80 Events In 8 Years Related to Turkey

Three weeks ago, when I first wrote about FBI's investigation of New York City Mayor Eric Adams' campaign links to Turkey, I did not realize that this will be the opening of Pandora's box.

Last week, Adams created a defense fund to raise money to pay the legal expenses for the expanding federal probe into his 2021 election campaign. The law permits Adams to receive donations up to \$5,000. However, he must disclose the names and addresses of all donors.

According to the *New York Post*, "Federal authorities are investigating whether the Turkish government or Turkish citizens illegally funneled donations to Adams' campaign by using 'straw donors' — a scheme where contributors listed in official records aren't the actual source of funding — and whether Adams did quid-pro-quo favors."

Multiple sources told the *New York Post*: "the Adams administration staffer who was found to have allegedly 'acted improperly' amid the federal corruption probe into his campaign fundraising worked in the city's Office for International Affairs before abruptly being placed on leave." The mayor's office confirmed the information.

That person is Rana Abbasova who was the mayor's Director of Protocol. Originally from Azerbaijan, she performed advanced planning and logistics for mayoral events and traveled with him. Her annual salary is \$80,651. The *Post* was told that she lied to federal investigators.

Abbasova previously served as community coordinator and advisor to Adams when he was Brooklyn borough president. Her biography states that: "She was responsible for international relations and maintaining relationships between the Borough President and stakeholders, including the Middle East and Central Asian countries, Muslim and Russian-speaking communities, and Non-profit organizations. She also worked with Embassies and Consulates to build relationships between countries and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President to help overcome language barriers and cultural differences. She also organized Turkic Heritage events and assisted with Sister Cities agreements. Abbasova was also an administrative assistant for Adams' One Brooklyn Fund, Inc. when he was still borough President."

The City news website reported that in April 2017, Abbasova arranged a meeting between borough President Adams and the Turken Foundation, founded by President Erdogan's son, Bilal. Three of Turken's board members contributed a total of \$6,000 to the mayor's campaign. His schedule shows that he attended four Turken events. Turken is registered as a foreign agent with the Department of Justice.

Abbasova arranged for Adams at least three "meetings and events related to Turkey when he was borough president, a review of his schedule shows.

Among them was a 2015 grand opening celebration for a Turkish restaurant in Brooklyn, which she marked as "important."

Politico reported that as Brooklyn borough President, Adams "attended nearly 80 events over eight years celebrating Turkey — including a flag-raising in 2015, a charity ball in 2018 and a Zoom meeting with the Turkish consul in 2020."

After reviewing thousands of Adams' public schedules and many social media posts, Politico revealed his "unusually strong relationship with Turkey, which has drawn scrutiny from federal investigators." In 2019, as Adams "was embarking on a run for New York City mayor, he joined Martha Stewart at a gala celebrating Turkish Airlines -- a company now caught up in an ongoing FBI probe into Adams' campaign finances. At the event, Adams was photographed holding hands with two company officials over a sheet cake; after winning the mayor's race, he appointed one of those officials — Cenk Ocal — to his transition team." The CNN reported that on Nov. 2, the home of a Turkish Airlines executive was among the locations raided by the FBI.

Politico's analysis of Adams' Brooklyn Borough schedules turned up three mentions of the Turkish airlines: Two planned banquets celebrating the carrier in 2019 and 2020, and a cryptic entry on October 2, 2015 that simply read: "Reschedule 4 p.m. Turkish airline. Rana [Abbasova] my gifts."

Daniel Nigro, then New York City Fire Commissioner, was pressured by Adams to permit, despite safety concerns, the opening of a high-rise building that housed the Turkish consulate, just in time for the arrival of President Erdogan. Nigro received a grand jury subpoena and spoke to FBI agents.

After becoming mayor last year, Adams made virtual remarks at a real estate conference in Istanbul, which was attended by two top city officials. However, the Mayor's participation was left out of his daily public schedule and not reported.

In addition to the home of the fundraiser for the Mayor's campaign, the FBI raided or conducted interviews at a dozen locations as part of its investigations of campaign contributions from Turkish sources, CNN reported.

In 2022, "Adams took two trips to Turkey — one in August funded by multiple entities including the Turkish consulate, according to a financial disclosure obtained by Politico. Local news outlet The City recently reported Turkish Airlines also chipped in for that trip, but that was omitted from the required annual disclosure. Four months later, the financial disclosure shows, an organization called the Association of Young Tourism Leaders funded another trip to Turkey for Adams. The junkets were among a half-dozen trips the mayor has said he made to the country, including a 2017 sojourn with his son, Jordan," according to Politico.

While visiting Turkey as Brooklyn Borough President, Adams said that he was interested in buying a house in Istanbul, according to the Turkish *Sabah* newspaper. Adams also said that he is so satisfied with Turkish Airlines that he not only uses that carrier to fly to Turkey, but also to other parts of the world, like India.

## Armenian POWs Await End to Their Illegal Imprisonments in Azerbaijan

By Uzay Bulut

Since Azerbaijan's 2020 genocidal war against the Armenian Republic of Artsakh/ Nagorno-Karabakh, many Armenian prisoners of war continue to be illegally held and tortured in Azeri jails.

Recently, a prominent human rights lawyer traveled to Armenia and met in the city of Gyumri with families whose children were captured in the aftermath of Azerbaijan's 2020 war against Artsakh.

She shared her observations with me: "Mothers, with a strength inherent in feminine nature, sat at the forefront. They courageously expressed their pain and longing to reunite with their sons. They emphasized their anguish and frustration over their sons' illegal and arbitrary detention in Azerbaijan during the past three years. In the case of the fathers, I sensed a feeling of devastation and renunciation. Lost and defeated looks appeared on their faces, edged with an unendurable pain which secretly moved me even more than the mothers' energetic demands."

Azerbaijan had launched an aggressive war against the Armenians of Artsakh between 27 September and 9 November 2020. During these 44 days, Azerbaijan's military forces indiscriminately bombed civilian areas, including homes, hospitals, and schools. Thousands of Armenians were killed; many were tortured and even beheaded.

The war was halted through a Russian-brokered trilateral agreement signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan on November 9, 2020. Many Armenians — civilians and soldiers — were taken hostage by Azeri forces. The ceasefire agreement urged both sides to release prisoners of war. Although Armenia has fulfilled its obligation, Azerbaijan has refused and instead continued kidnapping more Armenians even in the aftermath of the war.

Shortly after the agreement was reached, on December 11, 2020, Azerbaijani Armed Forces again violated the ceasefire agreement and launched an attack on Artsakh's Hin Tagher and Khtsberd towns in the Hadrut region. It is worth noting that these were the only two settlements in

the Hadrut region that remained under Armenian control after the 2020 war. The Armenian military was stationed there according to the ceasefire agreement, surrounded by a much larger Azerbaijani military force.

Based on assurances from Azerbaijani military personnel that they would return to Russian peacekeeping forces, 92 Armenian soldiers surrendered to Azerbaijan.

However, only 30 of the Armenian military personnel were returned. The remaining Armenian military personnel from Khtsberd were taken prisoner and transported to Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

Upon arrival in Baku, they were charged with various crimes under Azerbaijan's Penal code. A common charge involves Article 318, paragraph 2, related to the "illegal crossing of borders or outside a checkpoint by an organized group that might have had used violence as its objective". In some cases, they are charged under Article 228, paragraph 3, related to the "illegal purchase of weapons, transfer, sale, or accumulation by a group of people, based on repeated frequency basis."

It is worth clarifying that these prisoners of war are not citizens of Azerbaijan, were not detained in Azerbaijan, and were transported to Azerbaijan for the purpose of facing these charges. These charges are inadmissible and reprehensible from a legal, ethical, and moral perspective.

They contravene the norms of international humanitarian law, violating provisions of the Geneva Conventions that make it mandatory to promptly return all prisoners, ensuring their physical integrity and guaranteeing that all detained individuals are repatriated to their homeland promptly. For reference, during the Falklands War, the repatriation of prisoners of war was conducted meticulously, adhering to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

The lawyer noted that "These charges are levied against these prisoners of war through sham trials held in Baku's Serious Crimes Court. The judges are Afgan Hajiyev, Eldar Ismayilov, Azad Majidov and Faig Ganiyev. Alternatively, these farcical courts, like a court of jesters, are also composed of Telman Huseynov, Ali Mammadov,

Javid Huseynov, Samir Aliyev, Zeynal Aghayev, Sabukhi Guseynov, Mirza Khankishiyev and Illham Mahmudov.

"The trials conducted by these judges are illegal and arbitrary. The Armenian military personnel face false accusations where the judges deprive them of their rights as prisoners of war and even refuse to provide them with independent defense lawyers. This is to be expected, as these judges have appalling backgrounds. They have tried and condemned Azerbaijani national political prisoners, many of whom have expressed political dissent and speak against President Ilham Aliyev's dictatorship. Clearly, these sentenced Azerbaijani nationals have the status of political prisoners."

Thus it is no surprise that Azerbaijan's dictatorship routinely violates every norm of international humanitarian law whenever it takes Armenian defense forces and civilians as hostages. While in captivity, some are even tortured; others are murdered.

There has been extreme inconsistency and arbitrariness within these trials. Some prisoners were returned before a judicial decision was even made, while others were sentenced to 6 months in prison. Two prisoners have received 4-year prison sentences, and many others have received 6-year sentences.

"All of this causes extreme anguish and mental torture in the families who know that their sons are deprived of any coherent criteria for imprisonment and prosecution and are exposed to severe torture in Azeri jails," the lawyer said.

"Another cause of pain for the families is the lack of assistance and support. For example, despite three years of illegal imprisonment, the lack of visibility of such a sensitive issue in the media has created an absence of political motivation from any state — including the government of Armenia — to advocate for the freedom of these young men."

The names of those held hostage are often absent from public discussions, further hampering efforts for their release. The lawyer shared their names with me.

see POWs, page 20





## Armenian POWs Await End to Their Illegal Imprisonments in Azerbaijan

POWS, from page 19

The following Armenian prisoners of war were sentenced to six months in prison: Gevorg Norairovich Asetryan, Volodiya Vachagani Hakobyan, Mkrtich Simonovich Minosyan, Yuri Tigranovic Karapetyan, Romik Misakini Sedrakyan, Edgar Vachaganovich Matesyan, Albert Kamoyevich Petrosyan, Gor Vagramini Gasparyan, Aram Garnikovich Minasyan, Kamo Karenovich Sefilyan, Armen Yegizari Bagasyan and Sisak Grishai Yengoyan.

All were repatriated after their false sentences were completed. The following Armenians have been sentenced to 4 years in prison: Gegham Samveli Serobyan and Hrach/Grach Arzumani (Arzumanovic) Avagyan/Avakyan. Both remain incarcerated, and I had the opportunity to interview their mothers in Armenia.

The Armenians below have been sentenced to six years in prison: Varazdat Amushavanovich Manukyan, Martin Mushegovich Agramanyan, Jora Vanoevich Manukyan, Ashot Artakovich Gevorkyan, Grigor Gagigovich Kuregyan, Haykaz Koryuni (Koryunovich) Hovhannisyani/Hovanesyan, Davit Stepani (Stepanovich) Stepanyan, Levon Ashoti (Ashotovich) Tosunyan, Artur Eduardi (Eduardovich) Baghdasaryan, Hrayr Hrachyayi (Hrachovich) Herbayan, Varazdat Seryozhayi (Seryojevich) Harutyunyan/Arutyunyan, Serob Sureni (Surenovich) Avagyan/Avakyan, Narek Aghasu (Aqaovich) Kostanyan, Setrak Samvelovich Soghomonyan, Rafik Robertovich Karapetyan, Feliks Arshakovich Grigoryan, Mels Karapetovich Ambar-danyan, Gurgen Hovhannesovich Golayan, Vagarshak Merojanovich Maloyan, Arman Vazgeni (Vazgenovich) Dilanyan, Andranik Vazgeni Mikayelyan, Manuk Hovhannesi (Hovanesovich) Martoyan, Arsen Arayiki (Araikovich) Vardanyan, Hrayr Vardeni (Seryojevichin) Tadevosyan, Vahagn Ediki (Edikovich) Bahrikyan, Sasun Seyrani (Seyranovich) Yeghiazaryan, Ovsep Robertovich Manukyan, Robert Hoviki (Ovikovich) Gevorgyan, Karen Armenaki (Armenovich) Aramyan, Andranik Srapi (Srapovich) Sukisyan, Eduard Armeni (Armenovich) Kirakosyan/Giragusyan, Gevorg Samveli (Samvelovich) Martirosyan, Volodya Vachagani (Gagikovich) Hakobyan/Akopyan, Tigran Manuki (Manukovich) Avagyan/Avakyan, Grigor Seyrani (Seyranovich) Saghatelyan and Vagharshak Ashoti Avetisyan

It should be noted that 12 of those listed above were repatriated, adding yet another layer of illegality to the criteria adopted for their treatment by Azerbaijan.

For the past 3 years, families have eagerly waited for the return of their loved ones. Since there is no justice for these imprisoned Armenians, it is vital to support their families in this painful process by letting them know that their sons are neither forgotten nor abandoned. The plight of these Armenian young men and their families should be constantly brought to light so that policies at the highest levels of international political arenas can put an end to Azerbaijan's criminal and reprehensible actions.

(Uzay Bulut is a Turkish journalist formerly based in Ankara. She is a research fellow of the Philos Project.)



## TCA Artsakh Refugees Aid Program Donations Continue

The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* thank the donors listed below for their support of the TCA Artsakh Refugees Aid Program. These donations were received as part of the commemoration of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Mirror-Spectator*. Updates on the aid program may be found in the pages of the *Mirror-Spectator*.

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 Gevorg Grigoryan \$500  
 Anelga Hajjar \$50  
 Jean-Jacques Hajjar and Nicole Babikian Hajjar \$1,000  
 Joseph Hajjar \$100  
 Roger Hajjar \$1,000  
 Saro and Hilda Hartounian \$2,500

Jirair and Ani Hovsepian \$250  
 Vartkes and Nina Hovsepian \$100  
 David Ignatius \$200  
 Sarah B. Ignatius \$100  
 Ara Ishanyan \$100  
 Carol Ishkanian \$500  
 Sam Kapreilian \$500  
 Raffi Kassardjian \$250  
 Taline Kebabdjian \$250  
 Rouzan Khachatourian \$250  
 Kiladjian Home \$250  
 Arpi Kouzouian \$150  
 Yeraz Markarian \$350  
 Sarkis Martirosian \$250  
 Armen Meguerditchian \$250  
 Katrina Menzigian \$250  
 Catherine Minassian \$100  
 Sona Movsesian \$250  
 Ellen Mugar \$250  
 Anna Musialowski \$50  
 Shant Parseghian \$250  
 Harry and Hripsime Parsekian \$250  
 Paul Proudian \$100  
 John and Elissa Putukian \$100  
 Judith Saryan and Victor Zarougian \$1,000  
 Julie Scallen \$1,000  
 Tigran Shougarian \$250  
 Nelson Stepanian \$250  
 Miganush Stepanians \$250  
 Anaïs Tekerian \$20  
 Tekeyan Greater NY Chapter \$2,500  
 Don and Barbara Tellalian \$250  
 Nirva Tomasian \$500  
 Sally Vanerian \$250  
 Laura Yardumian \$25

## Securing a Permanent French Military Presence: Armenia's Path to Long-term Security

SECURITY, from page 19

5. International Treaty Enforcement: Armenia's sovereignty currently relies on international treaties and conventions that may not always be enforced by the international community. A French military presence would serve as a tangible reinforcement of Armenia's territorial integrity.

6. Deterrence Against Azerbaijani Expansion: Without a foreign military presence, the Azerbaijani government will always be tempted to seize more Armenian territory to divert attention from economic problems and widespread corruption. A French military presence would eliminate this option for the Aliyev regime.

If the Armenian diaspora in France unites and actively lobbies major political parties in the country to support the establishment of this military presence, it could play a role in French foreign policy akin to that of the American-Jewish community in American foreign policy. After the Holocaust, the American-Jewish community united to secure diplomatic, political, and military support for the establishment of a Jewish state in 1948. In a similar vein, the Armenian community in France can help secure the sovereignty and self-determination of the Armenian nation.

In conclusion, the establishment of a permanent French military presence in

Armenia is not only a necessary step for safeguarding the nation's security but also a viable one. By harnessing the influence and political power of the Armenian community in France, Armenia can bolster its defense and strengthen its position on the world stage. The lessons of history demonstrate that determined communities can be powerful advocates for change, and the Armenian diaspora in France has the potential to play a crucial role in securing Armenia's future.

(Rafael Castro graduated from Yale University and Hebrew University and is an independent political analyst based in Berlin.)