

European Parliament Resolution Addresses Azerbaijan and Relations with Armenia

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on October 24 that welcomes the progress made in the border delimitation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The resolution primarily addresses “the situation in Azerbaijan, violations of human rights and international law, as well as relations with Armenia.” It was supported by 453 members of parliament, with 31 voting against and 89 abstaining.

The resolution includes a series of appeals, particularly directed at the European Union. One of these calls for the cessation of all technical and financial support to Azerbaijan that could contribute to strengthening its military capabilities. Another appeal is addressed to EU member states, urging them to “freeze all exports of military equipment to Azerbaijan.”

The resolution also highlights human rights violations in Azerbaijan. Those who voted in favor believe these violations are “incompatible with hosting COP 29” in Baku.



“EU leaders, particularly European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, are strongly encouraged to use COP 29 as an opportunity to remind Azerbaijan of its international obligations and to actively address the human rights situation in the country,” the resolution states.

Since the resolution also addresses Azerbaijan’s relations with Armenia, significant emphasis is placed on conflict resolution and the necessary steps to overcome it.

The European Parliament reaffirms its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. It expresses solidarity with the resolution of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations based on mutual recognition of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders, in line with the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration.

Accordingly, the European Parliament reiterates its demand that the Azerbaijani army withdraw from all sovereign Armenian territory.

On the matter of unblocking regional communication routes, European parliamentarians emphasize that this must be

done “with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia.”

“Any military actions against Armenia are unacceptable and will have serious consequences for the EU-Azerbaijan partnership,” warn European deputies.

According to the resolution, the EU must be prepared to impose sanctions on any individuals or organizations that threaten Armenia’s sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

The resolution also mentions support for Armenia through the European Peace Facility. The deputies believe that EU-Armenia cooperation in the areas of security and defense should continue.

The European Parliament acknowledges the crucial role of the EU civilian mission in monitoring the situation along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. At the same time, parliamentarians expressed “concern over defamatory statements and campaigns originating from Baku against the observation mission.”

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Azerbaijan Razes Entire Historic Center of Stepanakert

YEREVAN (Arka) — In October, the Azerbaijani administration in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, demolished the historic center of the city, former Karabakh Minister of Culture, Youth and Tourism Sergey Shahverdyan wrote in a Facebook post.

“No less than 6.5 hectares of residential buildings, including historic buildings, a Soviet-era apartment building and public buildings, were razed to the ground,” Shahverdyan said.

He attached a map based on a video released yesterday. It was filmed from a modern residential building that houses apartments of employees of the Azerbaijani National Security Ministry.

“This means that the video was released with the aim of demoralizing the people

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COP29 Host Azerbaijan Set for Major Fossil Gas Expansion, Report Says

By Damian Carrington

LONDON (The Guardian) — Azerbaijan, the host of the COP29 global climate summit, will see a large expansion of fossil gas production in the next decade, a new report has revealed. The authors said that the crucial negotiations should not be overseen by “those with a vested interest in keeping the world hooked on fossil fuels.”

Azerbaijan’s state-owned oil and gas company, SOCAR, and its partners are set to raise the country’s annual gas production from 37bn cubic metres (bcm) on October 23 to 49bcm by 2033. SOCAR also recently agreed to increase gas exports to the European Union by 17 percent by 2026.

The COP29 summit, starting on November 11, comes as scientists say that continued record carbon dioxide emissions means “the future of humanity hangs in the balance.” The International Energy Agency said in 2021 that no new fossil fuel exploitation should take place if CO2 emissions were to fall to zero by 2050.

But in 2023 SOCAR pushed 97 percent of its capital expenditure into oil and gas projects, the report found. The company launched a “green energy division” a few weeks after Azerbaijan was appointed as COP29 host, promising investments in wind, solar and carbon capture technologies. But according to the report, SOCAR’s renewable operations remain insignificant.

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Pashinyan, Aliyev Meet in Kazan at BRICS Summit

By Shoghik Galstian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Yerevan is satisfied with the recent negotiations between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev that yielded some “tangible results” and marked progress in the peace process between the two South Caucasus nations, an ally of the Armenian leader has revealed.

After a closed-door meeting in parliament with the Armenian prime minister and Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan late on Friday, October 25, Hovik Aghazaryan, a parliamentarian and senior member of Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service that key topics discussed at the October 24 talks



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, October 24, 2024

held on the sidelines of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit in Kazan, Russia, included the restoration of cargo transportation as well as issues related to border demarcation and the ongoing work towards a peace treaty.

He said that based on the evaluations made by Pashinyan and Mirzoyan, “it can be concluded that it was productive and very useful.”

“There was a certain level of sincere conversation. Importantly, both sides were ready to engage without anyone’s mediation. They talked for 1.5 hours, and a lot of topics can be addressed in that time,” Aghazaryan said.

The Armenian government has issued few details about the prime minister’s meeting with members of his political team. A source said that the Kazan negotiations included discussions on the peace treaty, the continuation of the border demarcation process as well as regional unblocking. It was revealed earlier this year that the sides had mutually agreed to remove the issue of unblocking from the draft peace agreement.

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Armenia Worried about Israeli Strikes on Iran

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Official Yerevan has expressed its deep concern over developments in the region after recent Israeli strikes against Iran.

“Armenia condemns activities aimed at undermining international security expressed also in the actions against the Islamic Republic of Iran last week. We are deeply concerned about developments in the wider region,” Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement published on the platform formerly known as Twitter on Monday, October 28.

“We hope that diplomacy will enable protection of international law and prevention of further undesirable developments,” it added.

Israel carried out airstrikes against Iran on October 26 in response to Iranian attacks earlier this month. Four Iranian officers were reportedly killed as a result of the Israeli strikes. Israel said that it only hit military facilities and that no nuclear or oil production sites were targeted.

Ecuador Ambassador Meets President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia’s Ambassador to Ecuador Armen Yeganyan this week presented his credentials to President Daniel Noboa at the Palacio de Carondelet in Quito, the country’s capital.

Gabriela Sommerfeld, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, as well as other government officials attended the ceremony, the foreign ministry said in a press release.

Yeganyan is Armenia’s first accredited ambassador to Ecuador.

He conveyed President Vahagn Khachaturyan’s greetings to Noboa and the friendly people of Ecuador.

Goddess Anahit Exhibit Boosts History Museum Ticket Sales

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Proceeds from the sale of tickets to the History Museum of Armenia have exceeded 30 million drams in one month thanks to the exhibition of Goddess Anahit on loan from the British Museum, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Zhanna Andreasyan said on Tuesday, October 29.

Andreasyan made the remarks during the discussions of the 2025 draft budget in parliament.

The head and hand of the Hellenistic statue of Anahit is being exhibited in Armenia for the first time.

Known as the Satala Aphrodite, the fragments of the 2nd or 1st century BC statue, were discovered in 1871 in Satala (classical Armenia Minor, present-day Sadak, Gümüşhane Province, Turkey).

The British Museum identifies the statue as the Greek goddess Aphrodite.

The exhibition, titled “Mother Goddess: from Anahit to Mary,” will run through March 21, 2025.

Moonq High-tech School of Artsakh Reopens in Armenia

By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — The last time I met Ashot and the Moonq team was in Artsakh in 2022. A group of young, motivated compatriots of Artsakh, thanks to crowdfunding and the Nagorno-Karabakh government input, set up a modern-looking high-tech school in the village of Haghorti of the Martuni district of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK or Artsakh). In about 15 months of its existence, the school educated 250 local students and even got some international contracts for software programming. Everything ended in September of 2023 when Azerbaijan launched another unprovoked attack against Armenians, which destroyed the millennia-old Armenian presence in Artsakh. The Moonq team left behind everything they had created, and along with nearly 100 thousand Armenians of the Artsakh Republic, found refuge in the Republic of Armenia.

“It took as four days to arrive in Tashir, Armenia,” says Ashot Avanesyan, recalling the painful days of exodus through the only and heavily jammed highway that connected NK to the Republic of Armenia



Tashir’s cultural center where Moonq’s office is located

last fall. “The desire to relocate our tech school in northern Armenia was perhaps the main motivation that helped us survive those hard days. Even before we left, some of our friends were already working on re-creating Moonq here,” recalls Ashot.

The Tashir Foundation helped 1,500 Armenian refugees from NK settle in Armenia’s northern town of Tashir and the neighboring villages. They allocated food rations. “Each of our team members assumed certain responsibilities, and in a matter of a month, we basically reestablished our school here,” noted Ashot.

The Moonq team members were able to grab some laptops and other technologies with them, but the rest

was left behind. However, as Ashot says, first of all, school is the people and second of all, the technology. As the Tashir Foundations charity allowed the young professionals to stay together in their new hometown, the revival perspective became more feasible. Then, the Hovnanian Armenian-American Foundation pitched in. “48 hours after our initial application, the Hovnanian Foundation agreed to cover all our expenses in Tashir for the first several months. This allowed us to reestablish Moonq almost fully and start the expansion in a month,” he said.

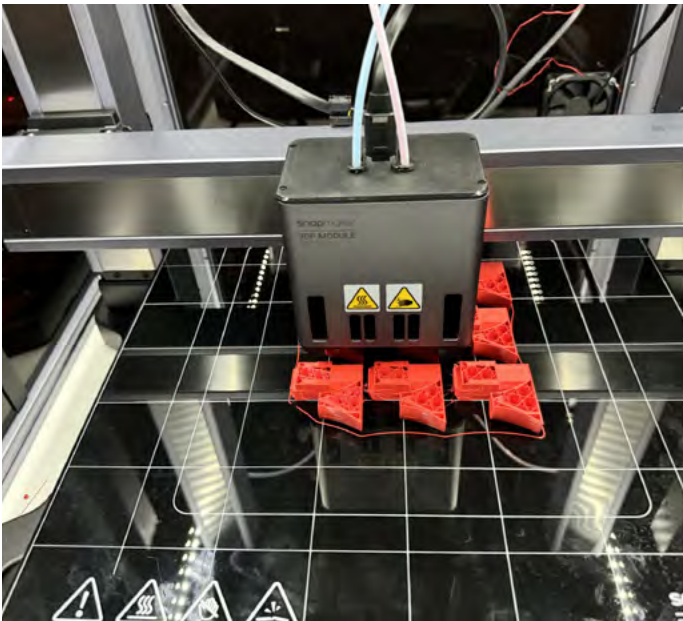
With continuous crowdfunding, the school kept growing, setting up branches in Syunik and elsewhere. By the end of 2023, the school had about 370 students. The Washington-based Americans for Artsakh assisted with getting a US-manufactured 3D printer that was printing three-dimensional figures when I was visiting Moonq.

“Look at the quality of the products,” said Ashot, pointing to the colorful figures of the iconic We are our Mountains monument that the printer was producing in front of our eyes. “This is day and night compared to what we could manufacture with our outdated devices,” he remarked.

Soon after their arrival, they opened a branch in Vanadzor and began expanding to the Syunik area. If the logistics are sorted out, the high tech school is considering opening more facilities in other Armenian towns. “We teach programming, digital design, and engineering. We follow the market requirements and adjust our curriculums accordingly,” noted the director.

The Moonq team members declare that they already see the fruits of their efforts. Some of their students that had been educated in Artsakh found jobs and continue to find employment in techno and IT enterprises in Armenia. Others got together and set up their own private engineering companies. Svetlana Manasyan, one of them, graduated from the school and now works for Moonq. “In Artsakh, I was already teaching programming in the villages. Now, I teach about 60 students in Tashir and the countryside settlements,” she said.

Among other goals are establishing IT manufacturing facilities in the Tashir area and opening up high-tech schools for diaspora students that could function alongside the Sunday or other community schools in the diaspora.



The 3D printer gifted by the Armenians for Artsakh (AFA) Armenian-American organization



The Moonq staff



ARMENIA

Scholar Tessa Hofmann Interviews Artsakh Refugee: After the Expulsion

Prof. Tessa Hofmann, a noted German scholar of Armenian and Genocide studies, is a research scholar at the Free University of Berlin. Her most recent book, *Das geopolitische Schicksal Armeniens: Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Armenian's Geopolitical Fate: Past and Present)*, was just printed. Earlier this month, she interviewed Siranush Sargsyan, a Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) native, who along with all Armenian citizens of that enclave, had to flee. Sargsyan is a freelance journalist and has her stories published in regional and international media, including *Newsweek*, the *Armenian Weekly*, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR). She is currently completing an internship at the *Tageszeitung (taz)* in Berlin.



Prof. Tessa Hofmann



Siranush Sargsyan

10-year-old Gor's heart stopped out of fear. A few hours later, thousands of citizens who had barely escaped from villages through forests reached Stepanakert, but the city was already unable to help them due to lack of food and medicine. Wives and mothers had no information about their loved ones at military positions. Even after the end of military operations, thousands of soldiers were still surrounded and could only reach their relatives a few days later. Their families waited in uncertainty for several days.

Flight, expulsion or both? How did the mass exodus take place?

When it was decided after the capitulation that all Armenian soldiers should disarm, no one felt safe anymore. First the villagers and then the capital's residents, seeing Azerbaijanis already in the city's outskirts, realized they couldn't stay. After months of suffering and deprivation, they decided to leave to at least save their families. The forced displacement was comparable to a real hell. From Stepanakert to the Armenian border, which normally took two hours, we passed for two to three days. It was reminiscent of the Der Zor in some ways. Hungry, emaciated, frightened, some having lost relatives and unable to bury them, they had to endure this unbearable journey. 64 people died on that hellish road, unable to withstand the intolerable conditions. Children were also born on the way. Almost all men had the mindset that Azerbaijanis would capture them at the border, because for months Azerbaijanis had been spreading rumors that they would arrest all men who had participated in any war.

What does Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh mean to you? What do you miss most?

Artsakh is my essence, my identity, my past. Without Artsakh, I feel as if I'm cut off from the ground. Perhaps strangely, I felt safer there even after going through four wars. Now I don't feel safe anywhere. Longing is an inexplicable feeling. Some-

times I miss Artsakh as a whole homeland that we've been deprived of, but sometimes in details — the house where I spent my childhood, our churches, our mountains that seemed endless, sometimes even the smallest things left behind that I now try to find similar ones around the world and compare, endlessly. It's terribly hard to be separated from relatives' graves. Along with longing, there's a feeling of guilt for leaving them alone there.

Is there a realistic chance of the displaced persons to return? And if so, what would be the conditions for this?

Unfortunately, our return to Artsakh is only a dream, at least for now. As much as we realize we have that right, without serious security guarantees it's impossible to imagine, and today I don't see any country or force ready to give us those guarantees.

How do you assess the policy of the current government of the Republic of Armenia regarding Artsakh? Does it advocate for the right of return of the displaced persons? For the restitution of their material losses?

Unfortunately, the Armenian authorities are doing nothing to realize our right of return. We witnessed more talk about our return from representatives of other countries. The Armenian authorities justify this by not wanting to create obstacles for signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan, but it's difficult for me to understand how they envision this peace treaty if there's no mention of Nagorno-Karabakh, what has happened, and our return. As for compensation for our lost property, I have no expectations in this matter either. Although some steps have been taken to file claims in international court, some human rights defenders have already expressed concerns and have no hope that it will become a reality.

What do you think were the main reasons for the failure of the negotiations for

a peace agreement with Azerbaijan in the period 1994-2020?

Neither in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, nor in Azerbaijan were societies prepared for this peace. We Armenians certainly didn't want war in any form and considered the existing fragile peace, which was a status quo, sufficient as long as we remained in our homeland. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, was preparing for war and, having not just the support but the direct participation of Turkey, simply decided to resolve the issue through war.

What is the situation of those displaced from Artsakh after more than a year? What are their most pressing concerns?

One year after forced displacement and ethnic cleansing, forcibly displaced Artsakh Armenians face numerous challenges. The most pressing are providing accessible housing and employment. Most of them left their homes and everything they had created over the years. They brought almost nothing with them, only a few clothes and the most important items. They are forced to start everything from scratch. Armenia itself is a small state and every thirtieth person is a refugee; even the government works hard and accurately which is not the case they cannot meet these needs. And the international response and support with humanitarian aid is very minimal. If these issues are not resolved, unfortunately many will leave for other countries, mostly Russia.

More than social issues, they are concerned about realizing their right of return to their homeland, and another concern is that Armenia is not safe either. Azerbaijan makes daily threats against Armenia, propagating through state and media outlets that Armenia is so-called Western Azerbaijan that must be reclaimed, and constantly leading to the danger of new escalation. In parallel, we don't see an international response. Russia and the West, which are dependent on Azerbaijani gas, pretend not to see all this and take no concrete steps to curb Azerbaijan's aggressive policy.

Nearly Two-Thirds of Armenians Do not Trust any Politician – Poll

By Ani Avetisyan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, seen here addressing Armenia's parliament, is the most trusted political figure, according to the poll, although his trust rating stands at a paltry 16 percent. The ratings of other prominent figures are in the low single digits. (Photo: primeminister.am)

Political apathy is gripping Armenia at a time when the government is making a geopolitical pivot away from Russia and toward the West, a new poll shows.

The survey, conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in mid-September, indicates that the population's trust in Armenian politicians has reached alarming lows. The data, gathered through telephone interviews with 1,503 citizens and displaced residents from Nagorno-Karabakh, reveals growing disillusionment with politics.

The most trusted political figure, according to the poll, is Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, but his trust rating stood at a paltry 16 percent. The trust percentage of

other prominent figures, including Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, pro-government politician Aram Z. Sargsyan, Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan and former president Robert Kocharyan, all were in the low single digits. A whopping 61 percent said they did not trust any politician.

The results reflect a precipitous decline in public faith of politicians since 2018, when mass protests swept Pashinyan to power amid the Velvet Revolution. The Pashinyan government's inability to meet initial expectations for rapid reform, combined with Armenia's decisive defeat in the Second Karabakh War, have acted as the main catalysts for changing attitudes.

Despite the rock-bottom levels of trust in politicians, more Armenians (46 percent) believe the country is headed in the right direction as opposed to the wrong direction (40 percent), the poll found. Meanwhile, 58 percent said they would vote 'yes' if a referendum were held in Armenia on whether the country should join the European Union.

The IRI poll also showed that 29 percent

of respondents said they were disinclined to vote in the next parliamentary vote, while another 16 percent declined to answer. Turnout figures for national and local elections have been declining in recent years. The Yerevan municipal election in 2023 had only a 28.4 percent turnout.

Along with declining trust in politicians, Armenians' attitudes towards Russia have experienced a significant shift over the past six years. Over that time span, Pashinyan's government has accused Moscow of failing to fulfill security guarantees concerning Karabakh and has downgraded relations with Russia while bolstering ties with the United States and EU. An IRI poll conducted in 2018 showed that 87 percent of Armenians were satisfied with Armenian-Russian relations; this year's poll showed 35 percent of respondents described bilateral relations as "good," while roughly 65 percent considered them "bad."

(This article originally appeared on the website www.eurasianet.org on October 24.)

Azerbaijan Razes Entire Historic Center Of Stepanakert

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of Artsakh (Karabakh), depriving us of the will and hope to return. The huge rush may be a sign that something is happening behind the international scenes that is unknown to us," Shahverdyan said.

After the signing of a statement on November 9, 2020 between the leaders of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan on the cessation of hostilities in Artsakh, the Armenian side repeatedly expressed concern about the safety of churches and other cultural and historical monuments in the territories that came under the control of Azerbaijan.

Yerevan hoped for the participation of Russia, as well as UNESCO, in preventing vandalism and the destruction of Christian shrines. However, the UNESCO leadership has still not been able to obtain permission from the Azerbaijani authorities to visit the occupied territories of Artsakh. -

INTERNATIONAL

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Georgian Elections Involved 'Armenian Carousel,' President Says

TBILISI (Panorama.am) — Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili in an interview on October 29 said that Saturday, October 26's parliamentary elections in the country involved an "Armenian carousel."

Zurbishvili referred to voters casting multiple ballots at different polling stations as she gave an interview to the Associated Press.

"We call it here an 'Armenian carousel.' It might be called a 'Georgian carousel' in Armenia," she clarified.

Zurbishvili stated that some time before the elections, socially vulnerable people had their ID cards taken away for various reasons.

"They have been used for the same person to vote up to 17 times with one ID and various electronic equipment," the president added.

Syrian President Bestows Order of Merit On Ambassador

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — President Bashar al-Assad awarded the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Syria, Dikran Kevorkian, the Syrian Order of Merit of excellent degree in appreciation of his efforts in developing the Syrian-Armenian relations, on October 28.

Foreign and Expatriates Minister Bassam Sabbagh awarded Kevorkian with the Order of Merit.

In his speech during the ceremony, Sabagh emphasized the historic friendship that unites the two countries and peoples, praising the efforts made by Ambassador Kevorkian during his tenure to strengthen relations between the two countries, appreciating the stance of the Republic of Armenia in support of Syria, especially the humanitarian support given by the Armenian government after the earthquake that hit Syria in Shabbat of Last year.

Kevorkian expressed his gratitude for the great honor.

Ankara Is 'Closely Following' Peace Efforts

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Ankara is closely following the efforts by Azerbaijan and Armenia to achieve peace, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in an address following a Cabinet meeting on October 28.

He noted that Ankara will continue "coordinated work with our Azerbaijani brothers" to achieve permanent peace.

"Our wish is to receive good news as soon as possible without giving an opportunity to the centers trying to sabotage the process," the Turkish president said, as quoted by Turkey's Anadolu news agency (via RFE/RL's Armenian service). He did not specify which centers or what kind of sabotage he meant.

Erdogan emphasized that this regional cooperation platform, which is known as "3+3," is now "meeting an important need."

Pashinyan, Aliyev Meet in Kazan At BRICS Summit

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Over the past two months, Yerevan has been advocating for the signing of a formal agreement on the key points that have already been agreed upon by the sides, while Baku has insisted on signing only a fully agreed text of the treaty, also linking it to the need for amendments to the Armenian Constitution that Azerbaijan contends contains territorial claims against it.

Armenia denies that the reference in the preamble of its Constitution to the 1990 Declaration of Independence that, in turn, cites a 1989 unification act adopted by the legislative bodies of Soviet Armenia and the then Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast amounts to territorial claims against Azerbaijan.

The only legal way to scrap the preamble is to enact a new constitution. Pashinyan and his political team have indicated that they will try to do that in 2027. They have said at the same time that the preamble has no legal impact on the current Armenian government's recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region over which Armenia and Azerbaijan waged two major wars in the past three decades before Baku established full control of this territory in 2023, causing its entire ethnic Armenian population to flee to Armenia.

Meanwhile, RFE/RL's Armenian Service's source also indicated that Pashinyan and Mirzoyan told their political allies on October 25 that some progress was also made in Kazan on the points of the draft treaty over which the sides continue to have differences.

While no details have been disclosed yet, Aghazaryan confirmed that at the negotiations the sides referred to issues related to unblocking, and more specifically to the restoration of cargo transportation.

"For several years, there have been concerns about the possibility of ensuring the security of trains passing through the territories of the two countries without the presence of a third party, namely Russia. That's why the conclusion was that things should be started with cargo transportation and relations should be gradually developed in that direction. That's very important," the pro-government lawmaker said.

The issue of opening the railway was being actively discussed by the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2021-22 during negotiations mediated by Charles Michel, president of the European Council. An agreement was even announced at that time stating that border and customs control should operate on the principle of reciprocity.

The Armenian government even made preliminary calculations estimating that the construction of the railway would cost \$200 million. However, the Armenian side expected agreements to be documented before construction began, which did not happen.

During this period, Baku continued to promote the so-called Zangezur Corridor agenda, with Yerevan insisting that any extraterritorial logic behind the road through its southern Syunik region would be a red line for it.

Despite reported discussions on restored cargo transportation, Aghazaryan cautioned that it was too early to talk about Azerbaijan abandoning its agenda of securing a corridor through Armenia to its western Nakhichevan exclave, which Armenia would not control.

"Their goal is 'Western Azerbaijan,' and we are fighting to thwart such goals," Aghazaryan emphasized, referring to repeated statements made in Baku at different levels about "historical Azerbaijani lands" in modern-day Armenia.

The source also told RFE/RL's Armenian Service that during their talks in Kazan, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan reached no specific agreement on the possible conclusion of a peace treaty.

The United States and other international partners of Armenia and Azerbaijan have repeatedly expressed their support for a peace treaty between the two South Caucasus nations, encouraging them to finalize it already this year.

Border Deal Framework

The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan have validated a framework agreement on the delimitation of the long border between the two countries.

The agreement which had been signed on August 30 involves "regulations" for joint activities of Armenian and Azerbaijani government commissions dealing with the delimitation process. It does not specify which maps or other legal documents will be used for that purpose.

The regulations say that the process will be based, unless agreed otherwise, on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration in which newly independent ex-Soviet republics recognized each other's Soviet-era borders. Earlier this month, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry downplayed the legal significance of that declaration, saying that it "has nothing to do with the question of where the borders of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member states lie and which territories belong to which country."

The Armenian parliament controlled by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party ratified the regulations on October 23 amid strong opposition criticism. Opposition lawmakers pointed to the lack of specifics in them, saying that it could only help Azerbaijan clinch more territorial concessions from Armenia and hold on to Armenian border areas seized in the early 1990s as well as in 2022-2021.

President Vahagn Khachaturian signed the ratification bill into law late on October 24. The office of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced on October 25 that he too has formally approved the border deal.

The announcement came the day after Aliyev and Pashinyan met on the sidelines of a BRICS summit held in the Russian city of Kazan. The official readouts of the talks said they discussed ongoing efforts to negotiate an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty as well as delimit the border.

The Kazan talks were attended by deputy prime ministers of the two nations who signed the August 30 deal more than four months after Pashinyan controversially agreed to cede four disputed border areas to Azerbaijan. The unilateral land transfer sparked massive anti-government demonstrations in Yerevan in May and June. Pashinyan claimed in March that Azerbaijan will attack Armenia unless it regains control of those areas.

Greta Thunberg Visits Turkey Radio Station Closed over Armenia Genocide Row

By Fulya Ozerkan

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) — Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg on October 25 visited Istanbul's Acik Radyo, whose broadcasts were silenced earlier this month by Turkish authorities after a guest spoke on air about the "Armenian genocide", the station said.

"Greta supports Acik Radyo," it wrote on X, posting a video of the 21-year-old activist expressing support for the broadcaster whose name means "open radio."

"Open Radio should stay open! I support Acik Radyo. It is more important than ever that we have honest media platforms that tell the truth about the climate crisis and human rights," Thunberg said.

Turkey's broadcasting watchdog RTUK suspended Acik Radyo for five days in May on grounds of allegedly inciting hatred, then withdrew its license in July, although it continued broadcasting until mid-October.

The sanctions came after an April broadcast in which a guest called the 1915 killings of Armenians in the final days of the Ottoman Empire-era "genocide."

Many historians agree with the term but it has been fiercely disputed by successive Turkish governments.

Co-founded some 30 years ago by prominent Turkish environmental activist Omer Madra, Acik Radyo's broad-



Greta Thunberg

casts addressed human rights, minority rights and ecological issues.

Its last broadcast was on October 16, but it has vowed to appeal the ban and return to the airwaves.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounced the closure, saying the station "embodied pluralist information, respect for cultural and political minorities, as well as the fight for the climate and ecological awareness."

Armenia says Ottoman forces massacred and deported more than 1.5 million Armenians during World War I between 1915 and 1917, with some 30 countries recognizing the killings as genocide.

Turkey rejects the charge although it acknowledges that up to 500,000 Armenians were killed in ethnic fighting, massacres or starvation during mass deportations from eastern Anatolia.



INTERNATIONAL

COP29 Host Azerbaijan Set for Major Fossil Gas Expansion, Report Says

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Azerbaijan’s climate action plan was rated “critically insufficient” by Climate Action Tracker (CAT) in September. “Azerbaijan is among a tiny group of countries that has weakened its climate target [and] the country is doubling down on fossil fuel extraction,” said the CAT analysts.

Azerbaijan and SOCAR had also been accused of human rights violations, the report said. The authors said defeating the climate crisis required civil society to have freedom of speech and protected human rights.

“Given SOCAR’s pivotal role in Azerbaijan’s economy and its close ties to the country’s political elite, its influence will surely be felt throughout the climate negotiations in Baku,” said Regine Richter

at the German NGO Urgewald, lead author of the report. “As we prepare for COP29, we cannot but ask ourselves: did we put the fox in charge of the henhouse?”

Azerbaijan’s president, Ilham Aliyev, told a climate conference in April: “Having oil and gas deposits is not our fault. It’s a gift from God.” Aliyev appoints SOCAR’s management board and was vice-president of SOCAR until he succeeded his father as the country’s president in 2003. Azerbaijan’s ecology and natural resources minister, Mukhtar Babayev, will run COP29. He previously worked for SOCAR for 26 years until 2018. Rovshan Najaf, the president of SOCAR, is part of the COP29 organizing committee.

A COP29 spokesperson, responding in relation to Azerbaijan’s gas production and

energy transition, said: “Azerbaijan is investing in gas capacity in response to a European request to increase supplies following the disruption of supplies from Russia. This is in line with the [UN’s] global stocktake, which agreed on the need to ensure that the energy transition is just and orderly.” The global stocktake concluded the world was not on track to stop global heating and that “urgent and deep greenhouse gas emissions reductions” were needed.

The COP29 spokesperson added: “Azerbaijan is intensively developing its abundant solar and wind resources as part of its commitment to becoming a leading supplier of green energy.” Neither SOCAR nor Azerbaijan’s foreign affairs ministry responded to the Guardian’s requests for comment.

The new report, produced by Urgewald and CEE Bankwatch, found Azerbaijan was set to increase its gas production by a third in the next decade, with fossil fuel companies forecast to spend \$41.4bn (£31.9bn) on the country’s gas fields. SOCAR alone spent almost \$300m on exploration for new oil and gas between 2022 and 2024, according to the report.

The analysis is based on data from Rystad Energy, the industry’s leading provider. It includes current gas production, new resources approved for development, and other known resources. Burning of the expected gas production would produce about 780m tonnes of CO2, more than double the annual emissions of the UK. Rather than discovering more reserves, scientists concluded in 2021 that most existing gas reserves needed to remain in the ground to limit global heating to 1.5C.

SOCAR works with some of the world’s biggest fossil fuel companies, including BP, TotalEnergies, the Russian oil giant Tatneft and the United Arab Emirates’ state oil company Adnoc. The CEO of Adnoc, Sultan Al Jaber, was president of Cop28 in Dubai, where nations failed to agree to “phase out” fossil fuels, as many wanted,

instead choosing the weaker ambition of “transitioning away from fossil fuels.”

SOCAR also receives substantial financial backing from major international institutions, totalling \$6.8bn in loans and underwriting between 2021 and 2023, according to research by the Banking on Climate Chaos coalition.

Azerbaijan’s economy is heavily dependent on fossil fuel income, which makes up 90% of export revenues and 60% of state revenues, according to the IEA. Azerbaijan’s gas production was similar to that of the UK in 2022. Its oil production has declined since 2010.

leaders, not those with a vested interest in keeping the world hooked on fossil fuels,” the report said.

The report also highlighted accusations of human rights abuses and corruption in Azerbaijan. The European court of human rights found the country had violated the European convention on human rights 263 times since 2001, including three instances of torture and 30 cases of inhuman and degrading treatment.

Freedom House ranks Azerbaijan among the least free countries in the world in relation to political rights, independent media and civil liberties, below Russia and Belarus. Transparency International rated Azerbaijan as the second-worst nation for public sector corruption in eastern Europe and central Asia in 2022.

SOCAR has also been accused of human rights violations by the Azerbaijan-based Organization for the Protection of Oil Workers’ Rights, which has cited health and safety violations and environmental pollution.

Manana Kochladze at CEE Bankwatch said: “Where other governments partner with civil society to tackle the climate crisis, the Aliyev regime systematically threatens environmental and human rights defenders. This does not inspire confidence in the upcoming negotiations in Baku.”

Armenian and Turkish Wrestlers Disqualified after Brawl

ByArshaluys Barseghyan

An Armenian and a Turkish wrestler were disqualified from a championship in Albania after they got into a brawl mid-match on October 28.

The incident took place during a match between the two wrestlers, Lyova Gevorgyan and Hakan Buykcingil, at the U23 World Championship in Albania.

The two athletes began brawling mid-match, leading to both of them being disqualified.

The short video of the match circulating online shows the Turkish wrestler showing Gevorgyan, who is then seen slapping Buykcingil before the referees and coaches interfere and break the two apart.

Tensions between Armenian and Turkish or Azerbaijani athletes have previously been recorded in international sports matches and events.

At the end of September, another incident took place in France during an amateur football match between Turkish and Armenian clubs.

Turkish fans reportedly stormed the field and attacked Armenian footballers, two of whom were critically injured, after the first half of the match. Armenia was in the lead by 2–0.

In April 2023, criminal investigations were launched in both Armenia and Azer-

baijan after an Azerbaijani flag was burnt on stage at the opening ceremony of the European Weightlifting Championship in Yerevan.

The Azerbaijani delegation withdrew



Lyova Gevorgyan (left) and Hakan Buykcingil

from the competition following the incident.

The incidents took place after Armenia and Turkey launched normalization talks at the end of 2021. At the time, the two countries appointed special representatives to hold negotiations.

Previously, in 2019, Arsenal’s Henrikh Mkhitaryan — a prominent Armenian football player — did not take part in the final of the Europa League in Baku, reportedly due to ‘fears over his safety’.

(This article originally appeared on OC-Media on October 28.)

European Parliament Resolution Addresses Azerbaijan and Relations with Armenia

RESOLUTION, from page 1

The resolution calls on the European Union and its member states to expand and extend the mission’s mandate.

Among its other demands, the resolution urges Azerbaijani authorities to release all 23 Armenian prisoners still held in Baku and to comply with the rulings of the International Court of Justice, including those regarding the safe return of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The resolution also calls for a comprehensive and transparent dialogue with the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, providing them with guarantees of protection, in-

cluding safeguarding their property rights.

The document further addresses the preservation of Nagorno-Karabakh’s historical and cultural heritage, recommending that Baku refrain from further destruction or alteration of the region’s cultural, religious, or historical legacy.

Members of the European Parliament demand that Azerbaijan allow a UNESCO mission to visit Nagorno-Karabakh to assess the situation.

(This article originally appeared on the website www.jam-news.net on October 24.)

Nigerian Federal Government Drops All Charges Against Binance Executive Gambaryan

ABUJA, Nigeria (politicsnigeria.com) — The Nigerian federal government has dropped all charges against Tigran Gambaryan, a Binance Holdings executive who has been detained since April and facing trial for money laundering.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) announced the withdrawal of charges at the Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday morning, October 23.

The judge, Emeka Nwite, had previously denied Gambaryan bail twice, citing flight risk concerns.

Gambaryan’s health had reportedly deteriorated during detention, with prison officials describing him as “very sick.”

Gambaryan, a United States citizen and former IRS agent, was arrested in February while visiting Nigeria to address regulatory concerns about Binance. He was accused of money laundering and operating an unlicensed financial institution.

The prosecution’s lawyer stated that Gambaryan was merely an employee of Binance, not involved in the company’s broader financial decisions.

Mark Mordi, Gambaryan’s defense law-



Tigran Gambaryan

yer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria agreed with the prosecution’s assessment.

It is understood that there were intense diplomatic efforts between Nigerian and US government officials to secure Gambaryan’s release.

US lawmakers had campaigned for Gambaryan’s release, writing to relevant authorities to intervene.



INTERNATIONAL

AMAA Holds 105th Annual Meeting in Montreal

By Louisa Janbazian

PARAMUS, N.J. — The Armenian Missionary Association of America's (AMAA) 105th Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, October 19, and hosted by the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, QC, Canada. The theme of this year's Annual Meeting and its related activities was "Celebrating Our Youth."

AMAA President Nazareth Darakjian, MD, welcomed the delegates and invited Rev. Georges Dabbo, pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, to offer a devotional and the opening prayer. "Our simplest actions should reflect our desire to honor God (1 Corinthians 10:31)," said Rev. Dabbo. "Seeking our own glory or gain is contrary to the spirit of service and humility. If each of us, AMAA, and our churches live with this mindset, then Jesus will be even more glorified."

During the meeting, AMAA President Dr. Darakjian and Treasurer Dr. Nurhan Helvacian presented their reports covering the Association's activities during the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year. Reports were also received from the AMAA Officers, Committee Chairs, as well as Representatives of the Armenian Evangelical Unions, the Armenian Evangelical World Council, and affiliated organizations, who praised God for another successful year.

The AMAA's general membership elected the following nine members to the Board of Directors Class of 2027 for a term of three years: Ronald Altoon, LEED AP (CA), Lucienne Aynilian (NJ), John Janigian (NH), Christine Momjian (PA), Thomas Momjian, Esq. (PA), Jack Muncherian (CA), Alan Philiposian, Esq. (NJ), Roseann Saliba, LMFT (CA), and Aram Shemmas-



The annual meeting

sian, M.D. (CA).

The AMAA's 105th Annual Meeting concluded with a closing prayer offered by Rev. Joël Mikaëlian, president of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France.

Prior to the AMAA Annual Meeting, the AMAA Board of Directors met on Friday, October 18, in the evening. AMAA Pres-

ident Dr. Darakjian welcomed the Board members and guests attending the meeting and invited Rev. Calvin Sagherian, pastor of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco, to offer a devotional and the opening prayer.

During the meeting, the AMAA officers presented their reports since the last Board meeting, which were accepted with many thanks. The meeting adjourned with a closing prayer offered by Rev. Joe Garabedian, pastor of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ.

On Sunday, October 20, members and guests joined the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal for a special Worship Service culminating the 105th Annual Meeting and the related activities. Church Pastor Rev. Dabbo warmly welcomed all the delegates and representatives coming from the United States and from many countries worldwide. Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D., Acting President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon, offered the Armenian message. The topic of his sermon was "The Beginning and the Ending of the Wisdom," based on James 3:13-18. "The source of wisdom, like all good, is the Lord," said Rev. Haidostian. "Let the beginning of wisdom be where the fear of God is, taught with love and patience, relying on His word. Our behavior will reveal to people Who lives among us. May the Lord grant that we guide the young generations with this spiritual education."

The English message was delivered by Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian, Field Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America. The topic of Rev. Tovmassian's sermon was "Goliath Must Fall" based on 1 Samuel 17:17-25. "The need to avoid discomfort is a giant, like Goliath, that keeps us from obeying God and living in spiritual victory. Rather than running from discom-



Rev. Paul Haidostian, PhD

fort, we should embrace it. Change, renewal, inspiration, and vision do not come from a place of preserving comfort," said Rev. Tovmassian.

During the Service, a special prayer was offered by Rev. Dabbo in memory of AMAA members and friends who made the transition from this life-to-life Eternal during the past fiscal year. In his prayer he specially remembered the late AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, the immediate past Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA Rev. Harut Khachatryan, one of the former pastors of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA Rev. John Najarian, Jr., and Yeretsgin (Pastor's wife) Rebecca Karjian. At the conclusion of the Worship Service, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, officiated the installation of the members and officers of the AMAA Board of Directors.

"We take this opportunity to thank the members of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal and its Pastor Rev. Georges Dabbo for hosting the Annual Meeting and welcoming us with great warmth and hospitality," said AMAA President Dr. Darakjian. "We pray that God will continue to bless this congregation and their ministry abundantly in Montreal."



The board meeting



The installation



Community News

‘Coalition to Boycott Baku’ Aims to Hold Azerbaijan Accountable

WASHINGTON — This week, a new informal coalition of individuals and organizations opposed to Azerbaijan’s past genocide/ethnic cleansing — and determined to prevent the next one it has promised to mount against Armenia — launched a multimedia campaign to boycott Baku.

The immediate focus is to raise awareness about past, present and prospective Azeri crimes against humanity and to discourage international attendance at and sponsorship of the 29th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP29), scheduled to be held in Azerbaijan’s capital from November 11-22.

The Coalition to Boycott Baku’s campaign is being initiated on myriad social media platforms, television programs and podcasts across America keying off messaging initially presented via mobile billboard in Washington, D.C. The display showed the following messages outside of, among other sites: the Azerbaijani and British embassies, the World Wildlife Fund, the State Department, the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and COP29 sponsors, Meta and Amazon: “Good with Genocide? Get Complicit at COP29;” “Hate Polluters? Azerbaijan has a cell for you;” “Friend of Genocide? Greenlight it at COP29;” “Hate Pollution? Boycott Baku;” “Good with Genocide? Join the Greenwash at COP29” and “Love Jesus? Azerbaijan hates Him.”

The coalition also delivered letters this week to selected governments, international agencies, environmental groups and sponsors of the 29th Conference of Parties, urging them not to attend, underwrite or otherwise enable the legitimization of the Azeri regime, the greenwashing of its past genocide and the greenlighting of its promised one. Among the addressees were: President Joe Biden; British Prime Minister Keir Starmer; UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres; the heads of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; the leaders of the World Wildlife Fund, the Climate Action Network and Greenpeace; and the top executives of Meta, Amazon and United Airlines.

The Coalition to Boycott Baku’s goals are to:

- Expose and raise domestic and international awareness about Azerbaijan’s sordid record of crimes against humanity.
- Shame those turning a blind eye to Baku’s actions as a serial perpetrator of genocide.
- Create reputational risk for corporations and organizations who, by enabling Baku’s events and projects, effectively condone Azerbaijan’s past crimes against humanity and greenlight those it is promising.
- Reverse decisions by conference boards and global institutions that have chosen Baku as a future international meeting venue.
- Prevent Baku from carrying out its plans to invade Armenia.



110-year old ANRC resident and Genocide survivor, Mary Vartanian, and Catholicos Aram I of the Great See of Cilicia

ANRC Residents and Staff Celebrated A Special Pontifical Blessing

JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. — The Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) hosted Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, on October 22. During this most memorable visit, the Catholicos shared a special blessing and toured the facility dedicated to providing both short-term and long-term rehabilitative care for elders in the Armenian community.

Catholicos Aram engaged warmly with residents and staff, bringing joy and laughter throughout his visit.

This marks his first visit to the Boston area since 2015.

One poignant moment was shared with 110-year-old resident, Mary Vartanian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. Vartanian presented the Catholicos with a crocheted keepsake, inscribed in Armenian with the message, “Do not forget April 24th,” commemorating the tragic events of 1915. Vartanian, originally from the village of Antep, moved to Lebanon and later the US with her husband, a talented violinist and composer, and their six children.

In a touching conclusion to the visit, the Catholicos joined the residents for a short mass, during which the group sang the beloved Armenian folk song Cilicia. The lyrics resonate with longing and hope, celebrating the beauty and rich traditions of the Armenian people.

After blessing the meal prepared by the residents and staff, he posed for photographs before departing in a stately caravan of black SUVs.

The ANRC is a not-for-profit nursing and rehabilitation center that has been serving elders locally and internationally for over 100 years, owned by the Armenian Women’s Welfare Association (AWWA) and managed by Legacy Lifecare.

The AWWA is a not-for-profit organization established in 1915 dedicated to serving elders and their families both locally and internationally. In 2004, AWWA expanded its mission to Nagorno Karabakh to become a supporter of Hanganak Elder Program and Clinic which provided medical care, food, and social support to elders in that region and continues to do so for those elders displaced in Armenia today. AWWA believes that honoring elders is at the very foundation of both family and community.

2024 TCA Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund Awards

WATERTOWN — The management of the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s “Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund” this week announced the names of Armenian students who received awards in 2024 for their academic studies.

They are:

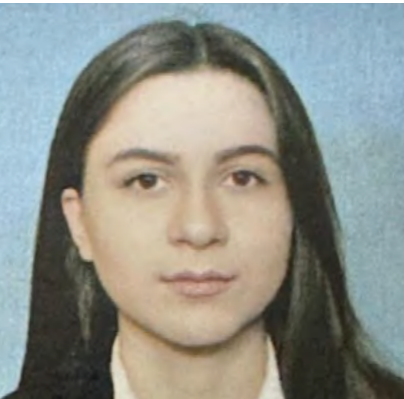
- Daniel Cherry, Boston College, of Boston, a sophomore majoring in political science, with a minor in pre-law.
- Keti Jhangiryan, Russian-Armenian University, Yerevan, in her first year studying international law, originally from Stepanakert, Karabakh, graduating in 2028.
- Lorig Korajian, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, studying international law, from Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, graduating in 2026.



Daniel Cherry



Lorig Korajian



Keti Jhangiryan

Noted journalist and Armenian activist Dr. Nubar Berberian passed away on November 23, 2016. His entire estate has bequeathed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. The Board of Directors of TCA decided to establish the irrevocable “Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund” and accomplish his will and use yearly interests to give awards to college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.

This year is the sixth year the awards have been given out.

To apply for 2025 seventh year awards, email TCADirector@aol.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS



SAS gathering at Harvard

Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) Marks Its 50th Anniversary with a Trailblazing Conference

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) marked its 50th Anniversary with a three-day groundbreaking international conference at Harvard University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). Titled “Armenian Studies: Evolving Connections and Conversations,” the conference took place on September 13-15 and was co-sponsored by the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies (Harvard University); the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (Belmont, MA); the Promise Armenian Institute (University of California, Los Angeles); the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History (University of California, Los Angeles); the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies (University of California, Los Angeles); the Armenian Studies Program (California State University, Fresno); the Institute for Armenian Studies (University of Southern California); the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies (Clark University); the Center for Armenian Studies (University of California, Irvine); the Center for Armenian Studies (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor); the Institute of Armenian Studies (University of Southern California); the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (Belmont, MA); the Armenian Studies Program (University of California, Berkeley); and the Armenian Research Center (University of Michigan, Dearborn).

Over fifty scholars from Armenia, Turkey, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, England, Australia, and the United States participated in the three-day conference. The conference dealt with established and emerging areas of focus within Armenian Studies, making connections and conversations with related areas of research. They included—but were not limited to—the study of diaspora, migration, and forced displacement; collective violence, trauma, memory, and genocide; race and ethnicity; women, gender, and sexuality; environment; transnational and global mobility of people and ideas; art, architecture, and material culture; print and other established and emerging foci.

The first day of the conference opened on Friday afternoon, September 13, at the Sackler Lecture Hall at Harvard Universi-

ty, to a capacity crowd audience. The organizing committee chair, Bedross Der Matossian (University of Nebraska, Lincoln), delivered the welcoming remarks. He noted that the conference marked a significant milestone both in Armenian Studies as a field and the Society of Armenian Studies as an institution. Der Matossian thanked the Organizing Committee, the Academic Committee, and the co-sponsors and highlighted the collective efforts that brought the “momentous international conference” to fruition, adding, “This is a huge milestone in the history of SAS. The breadth, the scope, and the multidisciplinary approaches of the papers delivered at the conference demonstrate how SAS has evolved from a handful of scholars to become the most important academic society in the Western Hemisphere, with cutting-edge approaches to Armenian Studies.”

Christina Maranci, Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies (Harvard University) and the President of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), delivered the opening remarks by providing a brief overview of the history of the Society and its achievements. “This conference offers an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the Society since its founding fifty years ago,” said Maranci. “Since its founding by eminent scholars Richard Hovannisian, Nina Garsoïan, Dickran Kouymjian, Robert Thomson, and Avedis Sanjian, the Society has grown and developed apace in both its membership (now close to 500), and in its profile. When one considers the multitude of webinars and podcasts, sponsored conference panels, lectures, the SAS website and social media, as well as awards for books and dissertations, grants, and the Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies, it is clear that SAS has achieved great things in its 50 years.”

The first day of the conference paid tribute to the contributions of eminent scholars who left an indelible mark on the field. These scholars, including Robert Thomson, Avedis Sanjian, Robert Hewsens, Nina Garsoïan, Sirarpie Der Nersessian, Lucy Der Manuelian, George Bournoutian, Anahide Ter Minassian, Louise Nalbandian, Richard G. Hovannisian, Dennis Papazian, and Vahakn N. Dadrian, significantly shaped the development of Armenian Studies and paved the way for succeeding generations.

After the tribute panels, a reception was

held in honor of the participants at the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East and featured Armenian folklore music by the prominent “Musaner” group. On the same evening, SAS President Maranci gave “The SAS Lifetime Achievement Award” to Stephan Astourian, Anny Bakalian, Levon Chorbajian, Roberta Ervine, Jirair Libaridian, Krikor Maksoudian, Levon Marashlian, Rubina Peroomian, and Abraham Terrian, in recognition of and appreciation for their outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies.

The second day of the conference began in the morning at the Sackler Lecture Hall. The first panel, titled “Gender in Armenian Studies,” was chaired by Elyse Semerdjian (Clark University) and featured three papers: Melissa Bilal (University of California, Los Angeles) on The Other Teotig: Arshaguh Teotig’s (1875-1922) Political Thought; Lerna Ekmekçioğlu (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) on Siran Seza: The Last Grande Dame of the Armenian Middle East and Her Yeridasart Hayuhi; and Shushan Karapetian (University of Southern California) on Performing Ethnolinguistic Masculinities.

The second panel, titled “Genocide Refugees and Survivor Stories,” was chaired by Ümit Kurt (University of Newcastle, Australia) and featured four papers: Asya Darbinyan (Center for Holocaust, Human Rights & Genocide Education, New Jersey) on Refugees in the Caucasus: Novel Approaches to the Armenian Genocide Research; Victoria Abrahamyan (University of Geneva): Armenian Refugees Between Greece, Soviet Armenia and Syria, 1922-1926: The Entangled History of Population Exchanges and Partitions; Ayşe Parla (Boston University) on Hostage Writing and Surviving Genocide in Hagop Mnt’suri’s Istanbul Memoirs (1897); and Manuk Avedikyan (University of Southern California) on Collecting Armenian Genocide Oral Histories Coast to Coast: Initiative and Cooperation.

The final panel of the day, titled “Armenians in Turkey: Ambiguity, Erasure, and Pitfalls,” was chaired by Sossie Kasbarian (University of Stirling) and featured three papers: Profs. Hülya Delihüseyinoğlu (Newberry Library) on Governing Armenian Schools Through Ambiguity; Hakem Al-Rustom (University of Michigan) on Denativization: The Ongoing Erasure of

Armenians in Contemporary Turkey; and Hrag Papazian (University of Southern California) on From “Crypto” to “Islamized” to “Muslim” Armenians of Turkey: Analytical Shortcomings and Ethico-Political Pitfalls of Classificatory Labels.

After the panels, a reception was held for the participants at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown. Museum director Jason Sohigian welcomed the participants and presented the history of AMA and its valuable collections. “There is a long-standing linkage between the Society for Armenian Studies and the Armenian Museum of America,” stated Sohigian. “It is an honor for us to be a part of the 50th anniversary conference agenda and to host the participants for a tour of our galleries and a networking reception after the close of the proceedings at Harvard.”

The conference’s third day was held at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). Hourri Berberian (University of California, Irvine) and Marc Mamigonian (NAASR) gave the introductory remarks. Berberian, who served as the Chair of the Academic Committee, explained the criteria by which the papers were chosen for the conference. She emphasized the high number of abstract submissions from all corners of the world, the competitive process, and the rigorous review, and congratulated and thanked all participants. She concluded by announcing that the Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies plans to publish special 50th-anniversary issues of the Journal featuring many of the papers after review and revision.

Mamigonian, who served on the Organizing Committee, welcomed everyone to NAASR. After briefly introducing the participants to the rich history of NAASR and the efforts that went into constructing the new building, he discussed the various dynamic programs carried out by NAASR. “One of the ways we do our work is to collaborate with other outstanding organizations that share the same values and general purposes,” said Mamigonian. “SAS is one of NAASR’s most important and most frequent partners and collaborators and it is perhaps the organization with whom we share the most DNA.”

After the opening remarks, the first panel, titled “Identity Politics and Memory,”

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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began. Chaired by Richard Antaramian (University of Southern California), the panel featured five papers: Dzovinar Derderian (University of California, Berkeley) on Complicating Relations of Power in the Ottoman Empire Through Armenian Petitions from of Van in the Mid-19th Century; Hasmik Khalapyan (American University of Armenia) on Politics and Social Agendas of Fashion Among Ottoman Armenians in the Late Ottoman Empire; Bedros Torosian (University of California, Irvine) on Sex, Patriotism, and Redefining Ottoman Citizenship in Exile; Flora Ghazaryan (Central European University) on On the Eve of National Awakening: Early 19th Century Sectarian Violence of Armenian Communities in Istanbul; and Diana Yayloyan (Georgetown University) on Land, Power, and Armenian-Kurdish Relations in the Late-Ottoman East: A Testimony of an Armenian Survivor from Van.

The second panel was titled “Translation, Knowledge Production, and Mobility.” Chaired by Helen Makhdounian (Vanderbilt University), the panel featured four papers: Henry Shapiro (Ibn Khaldun University) on Early Modern Armenian Mobility and the Rise of Diary-Writing; Erin Piñon (Princeton University) on Translating Translators: Armenian Vernacular Images in the 18th and 19th Centuries; Hülya Çelik (Ruhr University) on Much the Same in Other Words? On Armeno-Turkish Translations in the Early 19th Century; and Hratch Kestonian (City University of New York) on Between Empires and Epidemics: Armenian Doctors and the Global Circulation of Medical Knowledge in the 19th Century.

A parallel panel took place at the same time titled “Philology, Manuscripts, and Archives.” Chaired by Jirair Libaridian (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), the panel featured three papers: Zohrab Gevorgyan (American University of Armenia): The Voyages of “Knowledge” in the Mediterranean According to Venetian and Genoese Notarial Documents Drawn up in Cilician Armenia (13th-14th century); Ani Yenokyan (Matenadaran) on The Legacy of the Prominent Bibliophile Vardan Balişec’i: Reconstructing the 17th-century Library at Amirdölu Monastic School; and Julia Hintlian (Harvard University) on Searching for Molino: Sibyls and Amazons in a 17th-Century Armenian Manuscript.

Christina Maranci (Harvard University) chaired the third panel titled “Art, Architecture, Artists, and Dealers.” The panel featured four papers: Talinn Grigor (University of California, Davis) on The Description of Persia’s Notable Edifices and the Diasporicity of post-Safavid Armenian Art History; Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan (University of Lincoln) on Life Stories of Armenian-Ottoman Antiquities Dealers: The Curious Case of Dikran Garabed/Khan Kelekian; Vazken Davidian (Oxford University) on Exiles, Émigrés, Refugees: Ottoman Armenian Artists and The Arts of Dispersion; and Sato Moughalian (City University of New York): The Union of Armenian Artists, 1916-1921: A Cultural Expression of “Nation”

A parallel panel took place simultaneously titled “Architecture, Landscape, Memory, and the Senses.” Chaired by Rachel Goshgarian (Lafayette College), the panel featured three papers: Anahit Galstyan (University of California, Santa Barbara) on Illuminating the Dead: Light and Commemoration in Medieval Anatolia; Whitney Kite (Columbia University) on The Virtues of Tillage: Interactions Between Monastery and Landscape and Tat’ev; and Polina Ivanova (Harvard Uni-

versity) on Land Inscribed in Stone and Parchment: Historical Geography, Local Memory, and Archiving Practices in the Story of a Fourteenth-Century Armenian Endowment, Its Ottoman Life, and Modern Afterlife.

The final panel, titled “Future Directions of the Field(s): An Open Discussion,” was chaired by Dr. Matthew Ghazarian (Smith College) and dealt with future directions in Armenian Studies. Lori Khatchadourian (Cornell University) and Simon Maghakyan (California State University, Fresno) spoke about the endangered cultural heritage of Artsakh; Hratch Tchilingirian (Oxford University) and Khachig Tölölyan (Wesleyan University) discussed the prospects of Armenian Diaspora Studies. Nora Lessersohn (Harvard University) assessed the field of Armenian-American Studies, and Aram Ghoogasian (Princeton University) discussed the future of modern Armenian history in the context of Armenian Studies.

The closing remarks were made by Barlow Der Mugrdechian (California State University, Fresno). Der Mugrdechian spoke about the challenges SAS had to overcome since its foundation. He highlighted the strides that SAS has made in the past two decades. “In 1976 SAS had 81 members,” said Der Mugrdechian. “Today, the SAS has nearly 500 members, which is a testament to the growth of the Society. The field of Armenian Studies has grown in the past 50 years, and today the SAS is the leading organization in the field. The SAS has been at the forefront of Armenian Studies, bringing the field into the mainstream of academics.”

The Organizing Committee of the conference consisted of Bedross Der Matossian, chair (University of Nebraska, Lincoln), Christina Maranci (Harvard University), Barlow Der Mugrdechian (California State University, Fresno), Tsolin Nalbantian (Leiden University), Marc Mamigonian (NAASR), Lisa Gulesserian (Harvard University), and Executive Secretary, Flora Ghazaryan (Central European University)

The Academic Committee of the conference consisted of Houri Berberian, chair (University of California, Irvine) and included Jesse Arlen (Zohrab Center, New York), Sebouh Aslanian (University of California, Los Angeles), Sossie Kasbarian (University of Stirling), Ümit Kurt (University of Newcastle), Helen Makhdounian (Vanderbilt University), Hazal Özdemir (Northwestern University), Stephen Badalyan Riegg (Texas A&M University), and Hratch Tchilingirian (Oxford University).

The Executive Council of the Society of Armenian Studies (SAS) consists of President Christina Maranci (Harvard University), Vice-President Rachel Goshgarian (Lafayette College), Secretary Armen T. Marsoobian (Southern Connecticut State University), Treasurer Shushan Karapetian (University of Southern California), advisors Elyse Semerdjian (Clark University), Helen Makhdounian (Vanderbilt University), Asya Darbinyan (Center for Holocaust, Human Rights & Genocide Education, New Jersey), and ex-officio JSAS Editor Tamar Boyadjian (Stanford University).

The SAS is an international body, composed of scholars and students, whose aims are to promote the study of Armenian culture and society, including history, language, literature, and social, political, and economic questions; to facilitate the exchange of scholarly information pertaining to Armenian studies around the world; and to sponsor panels and conferences on Armenian studies.

Dr. Maghakyan to Speak about ‘Pathways for Saving Armenian Vestiges in Turkey’ at Fresno State

FRESNO — Dr. Simon Maghakyan, the 20th Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, will speak on “The Future of the Past: Pathways for Saving Armenian Vestiges in Turkey” on Friday, November 8, at 7 p.m., in the University Business Center, 5245 N. Backer Ave., Alice Peters Auditorium, on the Fresno State campus.

The lecture will identify and assess domestic, interstate, and international opportunities and challenges for preserving Armenian heritage remnants in the Turkish Republic. It will then discuss three scenarios, detailing the agencies of key stakeholders, for the future of Turkey’s Armenian material past, making the case that a total erasure of all traces of Armenian heritage should not be accepted as an inevitable outcome.

Maghakyan is a political scientist who researches heritage and security. He is a Community Scholar at the University of Denver’s Korbel School of International Studies, and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford. His publications include a *Hyperallergic* exposé of Nakhichevan’s cultural erasure, acclaimed as “groundbreaking” by *Forbes* and “rock-solid” by the

Guardian. His analyses have been featured by the BBC, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post* and *Time*. His forthcoming book, *Sovereign Heritage Crime: Security, Autocracy, and the Material Past*, is a critical heritage studies element of Cambridge University Press.

The screening and reception are free



and open to the public. Free parking is available in Fresno State Lot P6, near the University Business Center. Permits are not required on Friday nights.

The presentation will also be live-streamed on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/>

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COMMUNITY NEWS

A Future Worth Belonging to: Anna and Noubar Afeyan's Mission in Armenia

By Mark Gargarian

Noubar and Anna Afeyan first met in 1986 at an American Chemical Society meeting in Anaheim, Calif. Noubar was an MIT graduate student, and Anna was visiting from Sweden on business for Alfa Laval, a multinational corporation. Both were trained biochemical engineers, and a mutual acquaintance introduced them to discuss one of Noubar's projects. Their chemistry would soon catalyze into marriage, but few could have predicted the extraordinary journey ahead.

Today, Noubar is best known for co-founding Moderna, the pharmaceutical powerhouse behind the life-saving mRNA vaccine widely disseminated during the Covid-19 pandemic. Opportunities to impact lives on that scale are rare, but Noubar and Anna are no strangers to pushing the boulder of progress. The couple has been a force for positive change in all their endeavors, from their partnerships across the non-profit sector to their philanthropy platform, the Afeyan Foundation, which has generously supported the Children of Armenia Fund's (COAF) mission to expand opportunities for Armenian youth. For the Afeyans, science entrepreneurship and charitable pursuits inspire equal dedication, drawing from the same well of values that water the roots of everything they do.

While Noubar and Anna are both scientists and immigrants to the United States, these similarities are contrasted by prominent differences in their formative beginnings. Anna, born Anna Gunnarson, was raised in Sweden to first-generation college graduates.

"My dad ended up being a lawyer — his dad was a blacksmith. My mom ended up a high school teacher — her dad was a snowplow driver," Anna explained.

For her, it is a point of pride that, in Sweden, high-quality education is accessible to the general public with relative parity in quality. Reflecting on her family history, Anna contends, "These stories show that education is what takes you places, and how important that is — how you can change your trajectory if you have a good education. That was always very important in our family. I think that's a similarity to Armenians."

Noubar was raised with his two brothers in Lebanon, descended from Armenian Genocide survivors. His mother studied piano at the Paris Conservatory and taught lessons in Beirut. His father's family had initially escaped the Genocide in Anatolia for Bulgaria, but the dire state of life under communism led the family to flee again, this time to Lebanon. In Beirut, Noubar's father found success importing and exporting plastics across the Middle East, before geopolitics intervened again in the form of the Lebanese Civil War. Noubar was 13 when his parents packed their bags yet again for Montreal, Canada.

War brings many reasons for emigration, but for the Afeyans, one stood out. "We left Lebanon fairly early at the start of the Civil War, because my dad thought it would severely impact the education of his three teenage sons. He made a big sacrifice in leaving the relative ease of earning a living he had in Lebanon," he said. "We ended up going to Montreal, where he started all over again."

Starting from zero is, for Noubar, a

characteristic of the Armenian experience. He also considers it a valuable memory that would prepare him for life as an entrepreneur. Noubar made his first investment pitch on the Tuesday directly following Black Monday, the day of the infamous October 1987 stock market crash.

"There was this once-in-a-generation event where the stock market dropped by about 50 percent, and I was a 25-old recent PhD graduate of MIT, and I had no idea why that should matter," Noubar said. He added that, at the time, start-ups were expected from well-established American men deep into middle age, not young immigrant college graduates. Suddenly, he was asking for funding while the alarm bells flashed red. "Investors

on science education, holding strong to the Swedish values at the roots of her upbringing. For more than 20 years, Anna has supported foundations and schools around the world to expand STEM accessibility and equity. Currently, Anna serves on the board of Beacon Academy in Boston, preparing motivated students from communities with limited resources to succeed in competitive high schools, colleges, and careers. She said, "They want to learn, they want to move places. But, as we know, in Boston education is not the same for all."

Anna is not a typical trustee in that she came to the board via the classroom. "I became friends with someone who was working there, and they lost their science

change the world. It's not us."

Noubar echoed Anna's point: "Our guiding light in everything we've done in Armenia is that we consider our clients to be 5-year-olds in Armenia. We do not hold ourselves accountable to any government or any adult."

For Noubar, the adults of Armenia are preoccupied with the present, because they are pressed into managing a very difficult geopolitical situation. "They're making choices, survival choices today. And yet, you really need kids to be thought of, because that's the future of the country. So I'd say, we think we're working on important things, and other people may be working on urgent things," he said.

The "important things" that Noubar has in mind are those that nurture the inner and outer worlds of Armenian children, including their connection to the Diaspora, and the meaning of that connection to broader Armenian identity. "I'd like it to be that a young Armenian kid identifies with a young Armenian in Canada," he remarks. Recalling the writing of William Saroyan, Noubar offers a reflection on the puzzle of Armenian consciousness. "On this topic, Saroyan's view of the world was that it comprised stateless nations. He considered nationhood, not statehood, and that there are people in the world that identify with common values, common history, common traits, and he thought, Armenians just like that could exist anywhere and everywhere."

Anna, though Swedish through and through, has no small stake in the future of Armenia. "It's very natural for me to understand the importance of keeping Armenianness. Sweden is there. It's not going anywhere. It's 10 million people. It's fine. It's safe. There are little things here and there, but nothing like Armenia. Armenia needs to keep its culture, because cultural identity is really important. My kids have one foot in each right? They speak Swedish fluently, but they grew up in the Armenian church with Armenian dance. It's really important for their identity," she said.

For Anna, her relationship with the Armenian experience has changed much since those early years when she introduced Noubar and his two brothers to her clan of strong Swedish women. In those days, Armenian music was as foreign to her as Swedish nature walks were to Noubar. Now, it surrounds her and fills her home. "I was just on the Cape, and my third daughter had her friends there, and I'm going to the pool, and it's all Armenian music — it's like dance music. It's just fun to see, you know, and they feel the attachment to the culture, to each other, and to the country. So that's a great thing. You need to belong. So many people don't belong."

The Children of Armenia Fund is proud to work alongside partners like the Afeyans to safeguard the next chapter in the Armenian story.

(This article was originally published on coaf.org by the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF). COAF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of children in rural Armenia through a holistic approach to education, healthcare, child and family care, and economic development. COAF has helped over 100,000 beneficiaries expand their universe so that they can shape a brighter future.)



Anna and Noubar Afeyan

were completely devastated, and that cast a long shadow. But that ruinous moment was useful, because while it makes things tougher for you, it makes it even tougher for people who are less convinced about what they're working on."

That initial pitch in 1987 would be the first in a long career in which Noubar would help found more than 70 life science companies, including his greatest success, Moderna. He noted, "We had spent 10 years developing a platform and very carefully demonstrating all the new things that mRNA could do. Then, suddenly, Covid presented as an infectious disease of unknown severity." In 2020, Noubar watched the international health organizations activate, one by one, and realized that this virus was different.

"We thought this could be the big one, so our team just basically went into the lab and designed the first construct of the vaccine literally within hours. We could do that because we had spent so much time and money developing a robust platform to do this type of science," he said.

What unfolded was like nothing else in Noubar's career — watching the trials return with effective rates of 94 percent, working with the United States military, and receiving phone calls from world leaders.

He said: "It's remarkable how people get your cell phone, if they need to. I was getting calls from various government heads, from global church heads, from various kings. Quite remarkable."

While Noubar pursued science entrepreneurship, Anna focused her energies on raising their large family and champi-

teacher, and she said, "Can you jump in and do it for a semester or so?" I ended up doing it for 8 years." Anna's robust chemical engineering background and passion for student advocacy equipped her to assume teaching responsibilities. This experience informs Anna's perspective on the challenges, stakes, and rewards of enhancing STEM equity in Armenia.

Together, Noubar and Anna are deeply involved in securing a better future for Armenia. Since 2000, the Afeyans have engaged in an astonishing scope of Armenian development work. Noubar explained, "We co-founded a number of socio-economic development projects, including an eco-tourism cluster near Tatev Monastery in the south of Armenia, an international school in Dilijan, healthcare projects, science/technology projects, and others."

Anna jumped in, reflecting on their foundation's recently announced launch of the Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia (AIFA). "We are doing so many projects in Armenia that we decided to set up an on-the-ground organization," she noted. After the recent capture of Artsakh by Azerbaijan, the Afeyans committed \$2 million to support the displaced Armenian refugees, including grants to Children of Armenia Fund (COAF). Noubar was honored by COAF in 2015 with a Save the Generation Award at its 12th Annual Holiday Gala. Recently, the Afeyans also launched the Armenian Spiritual Revival Foundation to address mental health traumas produced by the war and its consequences. "COAF really fits in well, because it's young people. It's education," Anna explained. "We know that young people are going to



COMMUNITY NEWS

Mushegain Family Pavilion Opens at St. Gregory's in Pasadena

By Kevork Keushkerian

PASADENA — Sunday, October 20, was a historic day for the family of St. Gregory Armenian Church in Pasadena. After the celebration of the Holy *Badarak*, a multitude of faithful gathered for the grand opening of the Mushegain Family Pavilion under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

The generous benefactors of the Pavilion, the Mushegain family consists of two brothers' families, Tommy and Richard. The older brother, Tommy, could not be present for the opening due to his advanced age. However, Richard Mushegain was present with his wife Lauren, their children and grandchildren.

Richard Mushegain is a businessman who trained as an attorney. He received his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley. He has been a member of St. Gregory Armenian Church in Pasadena for many years and has devoutly served the many different organizations of the Church.

On that day, the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy was the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. In his homily the Primate praised Mushegain as a faithful Christian, and a devout member of St. Gregory Armenian Church in Pasadena.

The Primate also mentioned that he first met Mushegain in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin in 1999. They had both trav-



The Mushegain Family Pavilion

eled to attend the enthronement of Catholicos of all Armenians Karekin II. At that time, Derderian was the Primate of Canada while Mushegain was representing the Diocesan Council of the Western Diocese.

Following the Holy Badarak, the Primate, accompanied by Fr. Sarkis Petoyan, Fr. Moushegh Tashjian, and the Mushegain family were led by the choir with a procession out of the church toward the Mushegain Family Pavilion.

Afterward, a beautiful home-blessing service (Dnorhnek) was conducted at the entrance of the pavilion, after which The Primate and the Mushegain family cut the ribbon and entered the pavilion with a multitude from the church following behind them.

Sarkis Nazerian to say a few words. Nazerian commended Moushegain's generous work throughout the years while expressing gratitude on behalf of the Parish Council to his family for their enormous dedication and sacrifice.

The Hovsepien Armenian School students truly left an impression on the faithful with their uplifting voices and beautiful singing. They sang *Pam, Porodan* written by Parsegh Ganachian, as well as *Shogherjan* by Komitas.



Richard Mushegain cuts the ribbon of the pavilion, while Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church looks on



Richard Mushegain and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church as well as other faithful head to the pavilion



Students from the Hovsepien Armenian School performed several songs

There was a brief program led by former chairman of the St. Gregory Parish Council Dr. Kourken Matossian.

Matossian began the program by welcoming all the faithful who were present that day. He later made a point to remember the architect of the pavilion, Sam Yusefian, who had recently passed away. Finally, Matossian introduced Mushegain while noting that he has also served on the Hovsepien School Board as a chairperson for 25 years, as well as chairperson for the Diocesan Council and Parish Council of St. Gregory Armenian Church.

Mushegain has also been a board member of the Armenian Assembly of America, representing the western region.

Finally, Matossian invited St. Gregory Armenian Church's Parish council Chair,

When it came time for the benefactor to offer his words to those present he mentioned in his speech, "I am grateful to St. Gregory Armenian Church for giving me the opportunity to serve my community. Thank you also for honoring me today."

Before the final blessing, the Primate encapsulated everyone's beautiful words in honoring Mushegain by stating that he has rightfully won the respect and love of the Western Diocese through his service.

Finally, the Primate and the Mushegain family members cut the celebratory cake after which all the faithful were invited into the Geragos Hall where the parish had organized a fellowship in celebration of this historic day.

(Translated by Deacon Garen Hamamjian)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Fund for Armenian Relief Honors Garnik Nanagoulian’s 20 Years of Service

NEW YORK — On October 15, board members, executive leadership and families of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) gathered in New York City to recognize the tremendous efforts and commitment Garnik Nanagoulian has made to the organization and the people of Armenia for 20 years as executive director. The event celebrated Nanagoulian’s stellar achievements at FAR and announced FAR’s Bree Carriglio, formerly head of marketing and development, and Margarit Piliposyan, formerly head of Armenia programming, who were promoted to become the new co-executive directors. Nanagoulian will remain on the FAR executive team as an advisor.

Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, 13th Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and President of FAR began the evening with prayer which was followed by a traditional Armenian dinner in the Tahlij room of the Armenian Cathedral. Following dinner, he presented and read an Encyclical and concluded with remarks: “As Executive Director of FAR, Garnik has consistently demonstrated a steady and thoughtful leadership style, always focused on the mission and ensuring that FAR’s work reached those who needed it most. His dedication to the organization and his ability to navigate complex challenges with humility and care are qualities I’ve come to deeply respect. On a personal note, I’ve appreciated Garnik’s friendship and his humility, grace and commitment to service.”

The program continued with a video



Garnik Nanagoulian with Primate Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan

tribute to Nanagoulian from all those that had worked with him over the past 20 years. It was truly a remarkable journey through the many years and many lives he has affected.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe, Representative of the Armenian Church to The Holy See (Vatican), and Vice Chairman OF FAR, who was Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) between 1990 and 2018, offered this tribute: “Garnik Nanagoulian has been a cornerstone of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR),

serving as its executive director with dedication and vision. During his tenure, he successfully guided FAR through numerous challenges, ensuring the organization thrived and became a model for others. His leadership not only strengthened FAR’s operations in both New York and Armenia but also fostered a sense of unity and family among the staff, board members, and supporters. Personally, I have cherished working with Garnik, as his wisdom, friendship, and advice have greatly benefited FAR’s mission and the people of Armenia. His contributions will leave a lasting legacy.”

FAR’S Chairman and President of Equation Equity Randy Sapah-Gulian stated: “I’ve been Chairman of FAR for 20 years and during that time I could have not asked for a better partner than Garnik. His tireless commitment to FAR and the people of Armenia was extraordinary and without him we couldn’t have achieved a fraction of what we have accomplished today.”

Further comments by FAR’s Vice Chairman and CEO of Bazarian International Financial Associates, Carl Bazarian Sr., provided personal recollections on Garnik’s tenure at FAR and announced a plaque in Garnik’s name which was mounted in the FAR Armenia office’s conference room. “Since 1991, Garnik had a relentless mission of building a nation-state while improving the health, well-being, and prosperity for his fellow at-risk Armenian brothers and sisters. Based upon his impeccable integrity, honesty, and hard work, he earned the trust to walk the corridors of the highest levels of the US and Russian Governments as well as the international and Armenia Diaspora donor community. FAR was so fortunate in his leadership and sacrifice in making FAR the premier aid NGO and expanded our mandate to self-sustaining projects, entrepreneurship, and job creation,” Bazarian stated.

Nanagoulian concluded the evening by thanking the board members for their specific individual and collective contributions to FAR and the people of Armenia. He spoke with the humility and grace that typified his tenure at FAR.



Tekeyan Cultural Association

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia

Since its inception in 2001, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Sponsor a Teacher Program has raised 838,700 dollars and reached out to 7,386 teachers and school staff in Armenia and Artsakh. This year the program continues to support school teachers in Tekeyan Schools in Armenia, as well as teachers who had to flee Artsakh but continue teaching in Armenia’s schools, as they educate new generations of children, our future leaders.



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Arts & Culture

Wasafiri Magazine’s Winter 2024 Special Issue to Be Released In December

Editors Tatevik Ayvazyan and Naneh V. Hovhannisyan announced recently the release of the winter 2024 special issue of the *Wasafiri* magazine for contemporary international writing. This landmark edition, *Armenia(n)s: Elevation*, is guest co-edited by the UK-based duo and will be published on December 6.

In some 170 pages, it offers a multi-genre selection of specially commissioned works or their debut translations into English. The Armenian Special features an unprecedented array of established and new writers from Armenia and the Diaspora.

From poetry and fiction to thought-provoking book reviews, art, life writing and in-depth inter-



Tatevik Ayvazyan



Naneh V. Hovhannisyan

views, *Wasafiri* 120 is a rich tapestry of modern Armenian voices. It offers readers a profound and eloquent exploration of the human condition through meditations on the Armenian language, culture, and identity.

Hovhannisyan said, “This is a showcase — by no means exhaustive — of the creative force of our community and of the vital themes to us right now. We’re honoured to be sharing it with anglophone readers and to be contributing in this small way to cross-cultural literary links.”

“This issue is a jukebox of contemporary Armenian writing,” added Ayvazyan. “Alongside heavyweights such as Krikor Beledian, Nancy Kricorian, Aram Pachyan, Khatchig Mouradian and Narine Abgaryan, we introduce emerging talent — Perla Kantarjian, Shogher Sargsyan, see WASAFIRI, page 15



Translator Mariam Gurzadyan reading the Armenian version of Cwiernia’s novel

Black Sea Lit Project Brings Nations Together

By Christopher Atamian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SEVAN, Armenia — The transcultural literature project *Geschichten vom Schwarzen Meer - Black Sea Lit* is meant to open a dialog about the Black Sea region, including Armenia. Together with the curators Nino Haratischwili (2023) and Laura Cwiernia (2024), the Goethe-Institut invited 20 authors from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine to engage in conversation about and beyond the region.

In its second iteration, this year the last leg of the project took place in Armenia in June and was implemented by the Goethe Center Yerevan in partnership with the ARI Literature Foundation in Armenia. ARI was founded by agent Arevik Ashkharoyan as a non-profit organization to implement projects aimed at developing the local book market and supporting Armenian writers. This past June 26, I had the pleasure of attending a reading that took place at Lake Sevan towards the end of the writers’ residency there. The event, titled “Մի բուռ ջուր:” or “A handful of water” took place at the historic Sevan’ Writers House.

The event began with the Goethe Center Director Jan-Tage Kühling presenting the project within the context of the organization’s global cultural outreach initiatives. This was followed by a presentation of a truly unique book — the Armenian edition of Laura Cwiernia’s novel, *Our Names Are Different in the Street* (Դրսով մեր անուններն ուրիշ են) which recounts four generations of an Armenian family, taking the reader from Turkey and the Armenian Genocide all the way to modern-day Germany where the author was born.

Laura is a German writer with Armenian roots, but she grew up in Germany with Turkish friends and only a distant sense of her Armenian self, until she makes a fateful trip to Armenia and finally finds a much-needed sense of belonging.

Ashkharoyan presented the book along with translator Mariam Gurzadyan, who is also a project coordinator at Goethe Center Yerevan. Gurzadyan read an extract from the book in Armenian and I had the honor of reading the English translation. In her book, Cwiernia contrasts her experience in the vibrant metropolis of Istanbul with her current trip to Armenia: “Lake Sevan is still. Not a single wave on the water. Today, a fishing boat lies almost motionless in the small harbour. Two bearded men sit on deck, slowly pulling on cigarettes, as if the hands on their wristwatches are just for show, certainly not to guide their day. The character of the lake is reflected in the souvenirs sold by the roadside. Semi-precious stones, mined from the nearby mountains, glint in a silvery turquoise similar to the lake... The surface is clear, but you can lose yourself in the depths of the moon stones. Few customers pass by the stalls today. Unlike the stallholders in Istanbul, these vendors do not call out to attract them. They just grin at them shyly.”



Christopher Atamian Reading English version of Cwiernia’s novel

Special Screening Of ‘Strangers in a Promised Land’ to Take Place at UCLA

LOS ANGELES — The UCLA Promise Armenian Institute, in collaboration with the Armenian Film Foundation, will present a special film screening of the remastered documentary, “Strangers in a Promised Land,” on Friday, November 15, 2024, at 7:00 PM (Pacific Time) at the UCLA James Bridges Theater.

“Strangers in a Promised Land” is a documentary focusing on the struggles of Armenian immigrants arriving in California in the early 1900s. This screening will also feature a conversation between a prominent member of the Fresno Armenian community, Bryan Bedrosian, and filmmaker Dr. Carla Garapedian of the Armenian Film Foundation, who worked on remastering the 40-year-old film.

Registration for this in-person only event is required and free. To attend the screening please RSVP at bit.ly/PAI11-15-24.

This hour-long documentary, directed by filmmaker J. Michael Hagopian in 1984, was partly funded by federal grants and tells the story of the struggles of the first Armenian settlers in Fresno as they tried to create a new life in the legendary Central



Valley, home to the richest farmland in the world.

Himself an early resident of Fresno, Hagopian believed the Armenian experience in California reflected the universal experience of immigrants arriving in America from all over the world.

Narrated by former California Governor George Deukmejian, “Strangers in a Promised Land” includes, among others, the story of artists such as William Saroyan and Varaz Samuelian; the Seropian family, who were among the first Armenians to arrive in the region; Malcolm Markarian, the “fig king” of America; and the Bedrosians and Pakchoians, who became leaders in the raisin industry.

The success of “Strangers in a Promised Land” helped Hagopian and the Armenian Film Foundation to launch a campaign to interview as many survivors of the Armenian Genocide as possible, leading to an archive of nearly 400 testimonies – now available at the Visual History Archive within the USC Shoah Foundation.

This event is co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum (AEM) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). For registration and event details, please remember to visit the event webpage at bit.ly/PAI11-15-24.

UCLA James Bridges Theater is located at 235 Charles E Young Dr. E, Los Angeles, CA 90095. Visitor parking available at UCLA Parking Structure 3.



ARTS & CULTURE

Books

The Burning Heart of the World by Nancy Kricorian to Be Published in April

NEW YORK — In vivid, poetic prose, Nancy Kricorian's latest book, *The Burning Heart of the World* tells the story of a Beirut Armenian family before, during and after the Lebanese Civil War.

Returning to the fabular tone of *Zabelle*, her popular first novel, Kricorian conjures up the lost worlds and intergenerational traumas that haunt a family in permanent exile. Leavened with humor and imbued with the timelessness of a folktale, *The Burning Heart of the World* is a sweeping saga that takes readers on an epic journey from the mountains of Cilicia to contemporary New York City.

"Like colorful miniatures — from a childhood of elders haunted by the Armenian genocide, to girlhood and adolescence amidst war in Beirut, to marriage and children in New York at the time of 9/11—Nancy Kricorian finds just the right scale to bring her heroine's

passage to vivid, reverberating life." — Aram Saroyan

"An arrestingly beautiful novel of how families draw us together, but also push us apart. Set amidst the backdrop of displacement and war, *The Burning Heart of the World* illuminates how we carry history deep into even the most forgotten corners of ourselves. Once you start reading about Vera and her family you won't be able to put this book down." — Marie Myung-Ok Lee, author of *The Evening Hero*

Kricorian, who was born and raised in the Armenian community of Watertown, is the author of four novels about post-Genocide Armenian diaspora experience, including *Zabelle*, which was translated into seven languages, was adapted as a play and had been continuously in print since 1998. Her essays and poems have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly*, *Guernica*, *Parnassus*, *Minnesota Review*, the *Mississippi Review* and other journals. She has taught at Barnard, Columbia, Yale and New York University, as well as Teacher & Writers Collaborative in the New York City Public Schools and for the Palestine Writing Workshop in Birzeit. She has been the recipient



of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, a Gold Medal from the Writers Union of Armenia, and the Anahid Literary Ward. She lives in New York City.

The novel is set to release on April 1, 2025 by Red Hen Press.

Black Sea Lit Project Brings Nations Together

BLACK SEA, from page 13

This reading was followed by a presentation about the Sevan Writers' House itself by the Institute of Contemporary Art's Ruben Arevshatyan. It was a wonderful experience to be sitting inside the very building whose history he was describing. The structure, which is said to have the shape of a whale as it looks out onto Lake Sevan, is considered an outstanding example of Soviet modernist architecture, and there are hopes that it will soon be renovated and restored to its former glory.

This was followed by a truly fascinating presentation by Tigran Amiryan and Arsen Abrahamyan of the Cultural and Social Narratives Laboratory (CSNlab). Perhaps fittingly, since the group was literally perched over Lake Sevan, the two researchers discussed their research on the "memory of water."

The first case they discussed was that of the Getar river which used to flow in Yerevan, but was then covered and effectively closed, its water diverted. They presented their research book, titled *Getar: Memory of a River*, that describes what happened to the river from a rich variety of personal viewpoints, referencing Aram Pachyan's book *P/F* for example, while also accessing memories about the Getar.

Their second case study was that of Kechut village in Vayots Dzor region, which was drowned in order to create a water reservoir: the village was moved to a different site, destroying the villagers' history and lives in the process. The memory of both these events remains in people's minds generations later. Interestingly enough, both the Soviets and the post-independence Armenian government have engaged in the same type of reckless destruction of existing natural resources, regardless of the effect on the people living near or around them.



Arevik Ashkharpoya Moderating the reading with translator Maryam Gurzadyan

This reading was followed two days later a final panel discussion chaired by Ashkharoyan at the Goethe Institute in Yerevan with the writers from the Black Sea Lit Project, around the topic of "literary and ecological developments." They discussed what meeting their counterparts from neighboring countries meant to them and the importance of such exchanges to creating a climate of peace. They then read from texts that they composed during their residency. The discussion and reading uncovered fascinating insights into

everything from how difficult it is to get one's ideas out into the greater world when writing in Romanian, to a powerful reading from Ukrainian writer Halyna Krug that seemed to affirm that Ukraine, an ancient nation with its own language and culture, would somehow continue to endure. It was remarkable for Armenia to host such an important project this year and a sign that the country's book market and cultural influence in the region are both on the rise.

More about the Black Sea Lit Project:

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/ge/en/kul/gsm/ueber-das-projekt.html>

The Ari Literature Foundation: <https://www.instagram.com/ariliteraturefoundation/?hl=en>

Buy the Armenian edition of *We Have a Different Name on The Street* by Laura Cwiernia: www.buyarmenian.com/product/we-have-different-name-in-the-streets-laura-cwiernia/

www.new-books-in-german.com/recommendations/we-have-a-different-name-on-the-street



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe
Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Baklava Cheesecake (Photos courtesy New Idea Food)

Baklava Cheesecake

The Armenian Kitchen’s Robyn Kalajian writes, “Some years ago, Susan Ounjian, a lecturer and performer, hosted a cooking video, ‘The Art of Traditional Armenian Cooking.’ In the lecture, she explained her version of the origin of the word ‘pakhlava.’ She stated that the word came from an old Lenten tradition: “With ‘pak,’ meaning Lent, and ‘halva’, meaning sweet, the story says that pakhlava was made with 40 layers of dough to represent the 40 days of Lent. After Easter services, pakhlava was often served in celebration.”

Here is a delicious new twist on the traditional Middle Eastern delicacy from Barbara Northwood at New Idea Food that can be enjoyed throughout the year. “This rich, sweet dessert pastry made of layers of phyllo filled with chopped nuts and covered in honey syrup is now a cheesecake.”

INGREDIENTS:

- 12 sheets phyllo dough; thawed according to package instructions*
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup blanched almonds, more to taste
- 1/2 cup unsalted pistachios, more to taste
- 1/2 cup walnut halves, more to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon mixed spice
- 2 8 oz. packages cream cheese, softened, at room temperature
- 1/3 cup caster sugar*
- 1 tablespoon corn flour
- 1 teaspoon finely grated orange rind
- 2 cups Greek yogurt, plus extra to serve
- 3 eggs
- Finely chopped almonds, pistachios and walnuts, to decorate

Syrup:

- 1 cup honey
- 2/3 cup fresh-squeezed orange juice

*Thaw phyllo dough according to package instructions (this is best done overnight in the refrigerator, then place it on the counter for 1 hour before starting your recipe to bring it to room temperature).

PREPARATION:

Invert the base of a 9.5” steel non-stick round springform pan. Grease the base and side. Line the base with parchment paper. Place on an oven tray.

Layer half the phyllo sheets together, brushing in between each sheet with butter. Press into prepared pan to line base and two opposite sides, allowing excess to overhang. Repeat layering with remaining sheets and butter.

Press into pan at the opposite angle. Using kitchen scissors, trim excess to edge of pan. Line with a piece of parchment paper. Fill with dried beans or rice.

Cook in a preheated 350°F oven for about 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove parchment paper and beans or rice. Meanwhile, make the syrup. Stir honey into the juice in a medium saucepan over a low heat. Gently boil for about 5 minutes or until reduced to 1 cup. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Process the nuts and spice in a food processor until finely chopped. Combine with 1/2 cup of the syrup in a bowl. Spread over base of the sheets. Process the cheese, sugar, corn flour and rind in same, clean food processor until smooth. Add yogurt. Process until combined. Add eggs, one at a time, processing until combined. Pour into the pan.

Cook in a moderately slow oven 320°F for about 50-60 minutes, or until just set. Filling should still wobble. Turn off oven. Cool completely in oven with door ajar. Refrigerate until cold. To decorate, top with extra nuts. Serve with extra yogurt. Drizzle over half the remaining syrup, serving the rest separately.

This recipe originally appeared on New Idea Food.

Serves 8

* Caster sugar (sometimes spelled castor sugar) is finely ground granulated sugar. It is not as fine as confectioners’ sugar, as it does have a little grit to it, and is not powdery. So, in terms of texture, it falls somewhere between granulated and confectioners’.

Barbara Northwood

Barbara Northwood, former Food Director, has over 38 years’ experience in the food industry, loves sharing advice, recipes and know-how on everything food. She’s a passionate gardener and being able to grow fresh herbs, lemons and rhubarb and more, gives her great satisfaction.

For this recipe, go to: <https://www.newidea.com.au/baklava-cheesecake>

For recipes, see: <https://www.newidea.com.au/author/barbara-northwood/>

For more recipes, see: <https://muckrack.com/barbara-northwood/articles>

For her Choc-Pecan Baklava Rolls with Orange Honey Syrup, see: <https://www.newidea.com.au/choc-pecan-baklava-rolls-with-orange-honey-syrup>

For her Baklava Custard Slice, go to: <https://www.newidea.com.au/food/baklava-custard-slice-recipe/>

Also:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewIdeaFood/videos/its-masterclass-time-this-week-new-idea-food-director-barbara-northwood-tells-yo/923184397794782/>

<https://m.facebook.com/armenianandmiddleeasterncooking/photos/a.286561815793/10155456333135794/?type=3>

<https://hungryrabbit.com/2011/09/pistachio-baklava-cake/>

See Susan Ounjian’s YouTube video: “The Art of Traditional Armenian Cooking” with Susan Ounjian at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeMwrQFzJ2w>

Also: <https://thearmeniankitchen.com/pakhlava-traditional-style/>

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Barbara Northwood of New Idea Food (Photos courtesy New Idea Food)

Wasafiri Magazine’s Winter 2024 Special Issue to Be Released in December

WASAFIRI, from page 13 Garine Boghossian, and others. It’s a pity we didn’t have another hundred pages for many more exciting works.“

The result of over two years’ meticulous work with some fifty-plus contributors, the volume is part of Wasafiri’s rich back catalogue, comprising works by distinguished and prize-winning authors such as Chinua Achebe, Anita and Kiran Desai, Sam Selvon, Nadine Gordimer, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Michael Ondaatje, and Vikram Seth.

The magazine’s editor and publishing director Sana Goyal says, ‘Wasafiri is delighted and honoured to have worked with

guest editors Tatevik Ayvazyan and Naneh V Hovhannisyan on producing a special issue of the magazine. This powerful and pertinent volume shines a light on modern Armenian identities and experiences through creative and critical work from the region and its diasporas. Speaking simultaneously to the personal and the political, to questions of history and geography, and (un)belonging and borders, it elucidates the ruptures and elevations as represented and expressed by a community of writers and artists.

Queen Mary University of London’s Wasafiri magazine for contemporary inter-

national writing is known for championing diverse global perspectives. Armenia(n)s – Elevation continues this tradition, providing a platform for Armenian writers and artists to share their stories with an international audience.

The volume has been supported by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - Armenian Communities / Հայկական Բաժանմունք

The Winter 2024 issue is open for pre-orders now.

Ayvazyan is a London-based writer and producer with Rebel Republic Films and the former director of the Armenian Insti-

tute. She is the producer of the award-winning poetry film, Taniel, and is currently adapting Iris Murdoch’s The Italian Girl. She’s a board member of the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA), focusing on translation projects, and of Azad Archives.

Hovhannisyan is an Armenian-born writer of creative nonfiction. Her book reviews and life writing have been published by EVN Report, WritersMosaic and The Cambridge Review of Books, among others. She is interested in history, loss, and is currently writing a memoir in essays with the accompanying radio documentaries.



ARTS & CULTURE



Anahit Saribekyan

A Dancer and Dance Enthusiast to Her Core

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/ATHENS — Dancer, choreographer, dance researcher, dance instructor and organizer of international dance events Anahit Saribekyan, 39, who was born in Vanadzor, graduated from the dance department of Vanadzor School of Arts and the Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University (Russia). She obtained her master's degree from Greenwich University (London). Anahit has been selected multiple times as the president, member, or honorary guest of the jury for several world conferences, festivals, and seminars related to dance. She represents International Dance Council CID-UNESCO and is a laureate of several competitions in dance, song, and poetry. She has delivered lectures and performed in Armenia, France, Greece, Georgia, India, Italy, Oman, Poland, Russia and Turkey.

Dear Anahit, you have over 24 years of experience in the psychopedagogical methodology of choreographic art. Could you point out the key aspects a dance instructor should consider when working with children?

First of all, I am very grateful for the interview. It's hard to answer the question in just a few words. Irreplaceable knowledge in the fields of psychology and pedagogy can serve as the foundation for solid and correct work and its results. Every new movement creates a new neural connection in a child's mental system, which must be approached with great responsibility. Everyone can dance and sing; for me, there is no such thing as a talentless person. There are techniques and special approaches that help achieve in a short time what many struggle to reach due to a lack of knowledge and experience.

When working with children, we must consider: 1. their age, 2. their health, particularly if there are issues such as cardiovascular insufficiency, muscle weakness, tension, etc., 3. their temperament and character, 4. their ways of perception, and more. It is essential to collaborate with specialists in the fields of psychology and pedagogy and continuously improve oneself through self-education, mastering methods that make the work even more interesting for both students and teachers. Despite my knowledge, I always discover new approaches from my students

because we are all different, and the approach must also be different.

Around 20 years ago, you founded and still manage the “Anahit” International Academy of Arts. What innovation did you bring with this institution?

The academy is like my child, created from my own flesh and blood, and I am grateful to God for sending me like-minded people and helpers in this endeavor. Initially, it was established as the “Nairi” dance ensemble in Nizhny Novgorod, and in 2007 we started collaborating with the Armenian community, which led us to become a dance group operating under the community. Today, my mother, Karine Kocharyan, a dancer and choreographer of the “Horovel” ensemble and now the artistic director of “Nairi,” continues the work with my students. I join them online whenever they need help. My choreography and dance masterclasses gained global reach when I started offering them online in 2009, and my international students named the academy “Anahit.” This institution brings together and enriches our Armenian diaspora, with the goal of uniting them through art, thereby contributing to the intellectual, spiritual, and physical formation and development of the Armenian individual, while preserving the values created by nature, the Armenian people, and human history.

You create what are called abstract and monumental dances, combining Armenian folk dance movements with the New World Vision style. Could you explain what this unusual fusion is?

The name of this dance style was coined by my father, Ashot Saribekyan. Abstract and monumental choreography is ethnic dance, a delicate blend of history and modernity. Each gesture is a symbol, each movement a picture and every element reflects back on our ancient and rich culture. The ancient rituals, Armenian chronicles, and a profound sense of our roots and ancestors inspire my productions. In my abstract-monumental eclectic performances, I incorporate patterns from sacred Armenian miniatures, embodied through movements and abstract and associative imagery, using a special method. The monumentality comes from a collection of visual frames merged with dance movements, while the abstraction harmonizes geometric shapes and signs in space, set in motion through an unconventional method for the eye, aligned with the music and theme. Every movement carries hidden meaning rooted in ancient pagan symbolism. The combination of my productions with New World Vision style music began with my first production, “Armenian Patterns,” when I was 14 years old. I took patterns from our carpets and miniatures and abstractly translated them into movements. To make it engaging for the audience, I used this style of music, as it is both modern and ethnic. The New World Vision style was founded by the great Peter Gabriel, who combined ethnic instruments and music with electronic instrumentation.



So, you come from a family of artists.

My parents played a crucial role in the cultural development of Vanadzor. They were leading actors in the Puppet Theater, with my father also being a singer in the “Horovel” ensemble, and my mother a dancer. My father was also an actor at the Vanadzor State Drama Theater named after Hovhannes Abelyan and the organizer and, for a time, director of “Horovel.” I've been on stage since the day of my conception (laughs). While others remember their grandmother's fairy tales, I recall the rehearsals of “Horovel.” From a young age, my mother took me to her rehearsals, and sitting at the ballet barre, I absorbed everything I saw and heard.

And how did you end up in Greece?

The office of the president of the International Dance Council CID-UNESCO is in Athens. The official office is in Paris, at the UNESCO building, where I often travel for work. I met the office leaders in St. Petersburg during the World Dance Congress. They asked me to start collaborating with Armenia. Over time, it became clear that my computer skills, organizational drive, and knowledge of languages were needed at the CID office, and I received an invitation to cooperate. I chose the Athens office mainly because of the climate and the beautiful location — it's close to the Acropolis. For 12 years now, I've been working at the CID office as a regional manager, web designer and dance researcher.

Thank you for your interest, professional approach, and interesting interview. It was a pleasure!



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

- NOVEMBER 4** — Saint James Men’s Club, Monday. Guest Speaker Radio Personality Karen Blake, a Boston native who proudly grew up attending St. James. Her voice and energetic personality have been heard on Boston radio for over 35 years! Karen can be heard on Magic 106.7 weekdays from 2-7 p.m. Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner 6:15 p.m. Mezze, 7 p.m. Dinner \$20.00 per person, all are welcome. 465 Mount Auburn street, Watertown, Ma. 617-923-8860
- NOVEMBER 7** — Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Boston Child Care Committee presents a special evening with joy and laughter at the Wellesley Country Club in Wellesley, MA featuring comedian Kev Orkian to benefit Khoren & Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan. For more info and RSVP visit: <https://amaa.org/bostonchildcare2024/>
- NOVEMBER 16** — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School will celebrate with a 40th Anniversary Gala. Saturday, 6.30 p.m., Hyatt Regency Cambridge. Tribute will be paid to retired longtime Principal Houry Boyamian. Program to feature Dr. Mary Papazian as keynote speaker. Vocalist Angelina Nazarian will perform. MC will be Kristina Ayanian. Cocktail reception to start at 6.30 p.m., followed by dinner and program at 7.30 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$250 (\$150 for alumni and students) available at <https://ssaes.square.site/product/tickets/2?cs=true&cst=custom>
- NOVEMBER 16** — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe will host its Annual Church Bazaar, 12 to 5 p.m., Delicious Armenian Food, Lamb, Chicken, Shish, Losh kebab, and Kheyma Dinners and Vegetarian Options. Armenian Cuisine and Pastries. Booths and Tables with Products from Armenia. Gift Baskets and Cash Raffles. Armenian Cookbooks for Sale. Sponsorship Opportunities Available. 1280 Boston Road (Rte 125), Haverhill MA (Exit 106 off Rte 495). For more information visit www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227

- NOVEMBER 17** — GIVING THANKS: TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 2 p.m. Meet & Greet. Sing! Share the Warmth: Bring hat, gloves, scarf for the ABCD Winter Drive. Enjoy light refreshments. RSVP appreciated, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
- NOVEMBER 23** — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church 75th Annual Food Festival. 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Eat-in or Take-out. The Food Festival menu includes lamb, chicken, losh kebab, and kheyma dinners, and a vegetarian platter; a country store with a variety of Armenian specialties and deserts. The festival also features a jewelry table, gift items from Armenia as well as tours of the church’s sanctuary and a Backgammon (Nardi) Tournament. For further information, call the church office at 978-256-7234.
- DECEMBER 8** — CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 4:45pm. Meet & Greet. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Holiday Cookies. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org
- DECEMBER 15** — Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston and Erevan Chorale Society and Orchestra present their Christmas Holiday Concert, Sunday, 7:00 p.m. at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. The Christmas Concert is dedicated to the 155th anniversary of the birth of Gomidas Vartabed. Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director & Conductor; Tatev Baroyan, soprano; Fr. Ghazar Bedrossian, tenor. For more information contact Konstantin Petrossian at Petroskon@aol.com, or Aida Diloyan, Chorale corresponding secretary at adiloyan@verizon.net.

RHODE ISLAND

- DECEMBER 13** — Christmas Concert @ Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI, featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Junior Choir, Soloists. 7 p.m. Details to follow.
- Send Calendar Items to the Mirror-Spectator: To send calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator, email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirrorspectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More.” You can also mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.

Symphonic Tribute to Two Icons of Armenian Musical Culture in Venice

VENICE, Italy — Earlier this fall, the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia offered a memorable evening in the heart of Venice, at the Monastery of the Mekhitarist Congregation, on the island of San Lazzaro, in Venice.

The concert celebrated two important anniversaries: the 275th anniversary of the death of Abbot Mekhitar, founder of the congregation, and the centenary of the birth of Charles Aznavour, the famous Armenian-French singer-songwriter.



Violinist Astghik Vardanyan

In a packed church, Fr. Hamazasp Kechichian opened the evening with a warm welcoming speech, laying the foundations for the harmonization of Armenian sacred music with French chanson.

The first part of the program began with a selection of works by Komitas Vardapet, whose compositions capture the essence of Armenian folk and liturgical music. Pieces such as *Garun a*, *Shushiki*, and the touching *Krunk* were performed with great precision and sensitivity. Violinist Astghik Vardanyan performed a moving solo in *Krunk*. Komitas’ “Patriarchal Blessing” from the Divine Liturgy brought the audience to deep reflection.

After a short intermission, the second part began with a special tribute to Charles Aznavour. An “Aznavour Medley” was performed for the first time in Europe, followed by some of his greatest hits. Soprano Hayarpi Yeghikyan and tenor Sipan Olah gave powerful interpretations of pieces such as *Que c’est triste Venise* and *Pour toi Arménie*, breathing new life into these timeless songs.



National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia at San Lazzaro



Tenor Sipan Olah



THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
SPECTATOR**
— SINCE 1932 —



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COMMENTARY

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Marks 103rd Anniversary Proud of Its Past, Concerned for the Future

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, C.M.

On the broad panorama of the history of our national political life, the birth of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL or “Ramgavar”) on October 1, 1921, occupies a significant place. This month we mark its 103rd anniversary.

Starting with the crisis-filled years before 1921, when the very existence of the Armenian people was threatened by genocide, then the difficult years of the establishment of the Soviet system, major revolutions and world war, and finally the three decades of completely new challenges following the reestablishment of the independence of Armenia, the Armenian people, in their homeland as well as throughout a newly created global diaspora, lived and continues to live through exceptional challenges.

For any self-aware people, and especially for the Armenian people which found itself in such difficult conditions, the formation of political parties was a necessity. Under these circumstances, the ADL was born through the union of four already existing parties. It is noteworthy that one of those four was the Armenagan Party, which was created in 1885 in Van, as the first political party in Armenian history, so that the ADL in turn can be considered today to be the first and oldest continuously operating Armenian political party.

Role and Achievements

With justifiable pride based on demonstrated facts, we can note that from the very first day of its creation, the ADL has considered its highest goal to dedicate all of its organizational and publicity resources exclusively to the difficult work of pursuing and protecting the highest interests of the Armenian people and the Armenian homeland. It placed the pursuit of its own interests as an organization in a secondary position among its priorities.

In its efforts to pursue the supreme interests of Armenians, it has consistently prioritized, to the greatest extent possible, the inculcation of a spirit of cooperation among the forces belong-

challenges.

For completely different but equally serious reasons, the Armenian people must confront a problem of survival both within the borders of the homeland and in the Diaspora.

Once again, Armenians as a collectivity, while possessing various important philanthropic and spiritual structures, also have the need for the active presence of political parties that, as spelled out above, prioritize national supreme interests.

In a fair and realistic overview of the outlook for Armenians worldwide today, it is unfortunately difficult to find reasons for optimism.

In our homeland, which has enjoyed more than thirty years of independent statehood, a political party based on and consistently operating according to seriously defined political and social principles, has unfortunately simply not appeared until today. In a country with barely three million people, how can we view seriously the several dozens of assemblages that call themselves parties, sometimes with hardly a dozen members? To the credit of the ADL, it should be noted that over a century ago, it had the intellectual and political maturity and courage to unite four parties without even having the patronage of a state.

Until today, the people of Armenia have not been able to create a mature political understanding of sacrificing individual interests for the sake of the collective. From the days of independence, until today, the grouping that is in power generally bears some descriptive party name, but after losing power, when the possibility of individual gains disappears, the grouping thins out and practically disappears.

For a variety of altogether different reasons, the picture is not encouraging in the diaspora either. While the generation that survived the Genocide, with great sacrifices managed to maintain political-minded structures in some large regions where the widely dispersed Armenians lived, and transfer that spark to its succeeding generation, the generations that follow the latter understandably are quickly and increasingly absorbed by the

TO THE CREDIT OF THE ADL, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT OVER A CENTURY AGO, IT HAD THE INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL MATURITY AND COURAGE TO UNITE FOUR PARTIES WITHOUT EVEN HAVING THE PATRONAGE OF A STATE.

ing to different political, philanthropic or intellectual forces already operating amidst our people.

Taking into account the extremely sensitive geopolitical position of our homeland at the intersection of major global interests, the ADL considered it a priority to adopt the political position that promises the best guarantee of physical survival for our country.

In addition to all these vital considerations, the ADL has regarded as its primary duty to stand as a guardian of the interests of the Armenian Apostolic Church and, therefore, as a defender of its head, the Holy Mother See of Echmiadzin.

Thanks to the abovementioned guiding principles, and especially thanks to its uncompromising and influential wide-ranging activity from its very creation to essentially the end of the 1990s, the ADL has been rightly regarded as the *voice of conscience* of the patriotic masses of the Armenian people throughout those seven decades.

Until today, the ADL continues to fulfill its mission following the same principles, especially thanks to its press.

It is thus, thanks to the extremely dexterous role played by the ADL, especially in the diaspora, that the diasporan Armenian masses, despite the often politically extremely difficult atmosphere created during the Soviet period, remained spiritually connected to Mother Armenia and thus, enthusiastically welcomed the independence of the latter. It is in large part due to its actions that in the 1940s and 1960s, the great immigration or repatriation movement was successful, as a result of which Armenia was able to maintain the conditions of autonomy as a republic in the Soviet Union. Finally, it is also largely owing to the leading role played by the ADL that the schism created in the Armenian Church through Antelias was curbed and the Mother See maintained its position of historical supremacy.

Concerns for the Future

While for the most part, the last set of issues mentioned have passed into history, the Armenian people now face new alarming

concerns of overcoming the challenges faced in their immediate environments.

The ADL, one of the three traditional Armenian political parties which emerged in the late 19th century and continued its existence until the present, has for some time now lost its legitimate organizational structure. We hope that serious and conscious ADL leaders operating in different regions will make a special effort to come together and facilitate the restoration of a reliable and respectable leadership. Each of the other traditional parties has in its turn its own specific internal problems.

Fortunately, the ADL, with the greatest foresight, in its time gave birth to a sister organization, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, which has the mission of keeping the torch of Armenian culture, art and history high. In Armenia and the diaspora, Tekeyan, especially by means of the press it sponsors, fulfills an important role through efficient and effective activity.

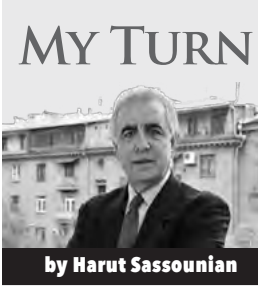
In conclusion, at this stage, pan-Armenian national interests dictate that the diaspora, with the participation in particular of all of its organizations established on the basis of time-tested and durable traditions and principles, should create one or more clearly defined cooperative superstructures. These bodies need to have as their clear primary goals, on the one hand, the ensuring of the preservation of a well-founded Armenian identity in the diaspora, and on the other hand, the search for, and implementation of means to help the homeland be strong economically and diplomatically. We must hope, wish, and most importantly, believe, that such a practice of consolidating our forces will become contagious for the people and the leadership of our homeland as well.

The ADL, faithful to its record of over a century, will undoubtedly support every initiative proposed in this spirit with

(Dr. Arshavir Gundjian served in the past for many years as chairman of the ADL Central Committee.)



COMMENTARY



MY TURN Presidential Candidates Issue pro-Artsakh Statements: You Decide Who To Vote for

In the heated atmosphere of the U.S. presidential campaign, former President Donald Trump and current Vice President Kamala Harris, have issued statements to Armenian-American voters seeking their support.

On his “Truth Social” media platform last week, Trump issued a statement accusing Harris of doing “nothing as 120,000 Armenian Christians were horrifically persecuted and forcibly displaced in Artsakh. Christians around the World will not be safe if Kamala Harris is President of the United States. When I am President, I will protect persecuted Christians, I will work to stop violence and ethnic cleansing, and we will restore PEACE between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

On the other hand, the Harris-Waltz campaign issued the following statement on September 23, 2024: “We must never forget the Armenian Genocide, when an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were deported, massacred, and marched to their deaths. It is a tragedy that continues to shape the identity of the Armenian people.... I remain committed to a lasting peace between Armenia and its neighbors that respects sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. The right for Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to return safely to their homes is vital to restoring dignity to the Armenian people and stability to the region. I will continue to support Armenia in its efforts to strengthen democracy and foster stability in the region....”

Trump’s statement was not issued by the Trump Campaign office and not posted on his official website. It was posted only on his social media which makes it less official. Harris’ statement was issued on her campaign letterhead, but not posted on her official website. Trump used the term Artsakh, while Harris referred to the region as Nagorno-Karabagh.

It is a positive development that both U.S. presidential candidates issued statements making Armenia and Artsakh a part of the national electoral discourse.

It is no secret that many Armenian-Americans have been disappointed with both candidates. Trump did not lift a finger as Azerbaijan was attacking and occupying most of Artsakh in 2020, while he was president. Harris did nothing as vice president in 2023, when 120,000 Artsakh Armenians were forcibly displaced. They are both to be blamed for their inaction.

To pressure Trump and Harris to make statements on Armenian issues, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) had conducted a lengthy public campaign condemning them for their inaction in defense of Artsakh and giving them a failing grade.

Trump as president had dramatically increased military aid to Baku, breaking the established precedent of parity in U.S. military assistance to both Armenia and Azerbaijan. During Azerbaijan’s occupation of most of Artsakh in 2020, he took no action in the face of Azerbaijan’s war crimes, using prohibited cluster munitions against Armenian civilians, recruiting Islamist jihadist terrorists to fight against Artsakh, allowing Turkey to deploy F-16 jets in Azerbaijan during the war, thus violating the U.S. end-user agreement, refusing to recognize the Armenian Genocide and actively blocking its congressional remembrance.

ANCA is now asking Trump to support Artsakh Armenians’ right of return by urging the Republican House Speaker to back pro-Artsakh legislation. Furthermore, ANCA asked Trump’s Vice Presidential candidate, Sen. JD Vance, to cosponsor similar measures in the Senate.

ANCA is also criticizing Harris for not saying one critical word when Azerbaijan completed the occupation of Artsakh and expulsion of the 120,000 Artsakh Armenians in 2023. Since then, she has done nothing to ensure Artsakh Armenians’ right to return, support sanctioning Azerbaijan’s officials for war crimes, and help release Armenian prisoners of war and Artsakh leaders detained in Baku.

Rather than issuing meaningless campaign promises which are quickly forgotten after the election, Armenian-Americans expect credible action from the candidates. There are things they can do and say in the last days of the campaign, even though they should have said and done them long ago.

Since both candidates failed to defend the interests of Armenia and Artsakh when it really counted, Armenians should stop expecting outsiders, no matter who they are, to help resolve their issues. No one has come forward to save Armenia during our several millennia-long history and it is not going to happen now nor in the future. The only reason why Armenian Americans have the right to demand candidates to support their issues is that these candidates are asking them for their votes. Armenians should not give them their votes, unless they get something concrete in return, not just empty promises.

As polls indicate that the two presidential candidates are in an extremely tight race, this provides an opportunity for smaller voting blocs like Armenians to tip the balance in key swing states, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

I leave it up to each reader to make up his or her mind as to who to vote for.

Could US-Armenia Military Cooperation Deepen Further?

By Suren Sargsyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In my previous article, I observed that Armenia and the US have underwhelming bilateral relations. Their economic, political and military cooperation is insufficient to engage the heads of state, as there are no significant issues to discuss at the highest level. The same applies to military cooperation.

Suren Papikyan, Armenia’s minister of defense, is the only minister in independent Armenia’s history to visit the Pentagon without meeting his counterpart, the US secretary of defense, during his 2022 visit, which yielded no significant results. All other Armenian defense ministers, including Vazgen Sargsyan, Serzh Sargsyan and Seyran Ohanyan, held bilateral meetings with their counterparts when visiting Washington.

The US never provided arms or ammunition to Armenia; instead, bilateral cooperation focuses on educational programs and training, with military exercises primarily aimed at peacekeeping. Security assistance is limited to the procurement of defense articles, services, design and construction services, as well as training for Armenian military students both abroad and in the United States, including related training aids and materials.

The chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Armenia was in the US recently. This visit brought to light several key points. The Armenian Ministry of Defense’s press release noted that Lt. Gen. Edward Asryan met with US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Charles Brown. They discussed mutual interests and reinforced the development of Armenia-US defense cooperation. The US reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the transformation and reform of the Armenian Armed Forces. The importance of maintaining joint activities and addressing various regional security issues

was also emphasized.

This readout differed significantly from the US version. Joint Staff Spokesperson Jereal Dorsey stated that Gen. Brown expressed appreciation to Lt. Gen. Asryan for Armenia’s productive military cooperation with the US and emphasized the need to enhance their defense relationship. While discussions in Armenia about leaving the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a Russian-led military alliance, continue, the two officials

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are exploring ways to reform the Armenian army. However, there are currently no talks about restructuring the army to NATO standards, as seen in neighboring Georgia. This is largely due to the absence of US arms and technology necessary for such a transformation. Thus, it is clear that these discussions are not on the agenda, and Armenia is unlikely to exit the Russian sphere of influence.

I have had the chance to express my views on the situation. Armenia is reluctant to leave the CSTO and

does not want to transition its army to non-Russian standards, requiring additional guarantees from the US and NATO that are unlikely to materialize. Consequently, Yerevan will seek to buy time to assess the outcomes of the Ukrainian war and the US presidential elections to better shape its foreign policy.

Coming back to the meeting of the two generals, they indeed discussed Armenia’s military modernization efforts, with Gen. Brown offering support via the State Partnership Program and additional training. Lastly, Brown expressed concerns about Russia’s negative influence in the region and the necessity to address these challenges, mentioning that the US remains dedicated to promoting regional stability and lasting peace in the South Caucasus. The US general’s statement outlines American interests in the South Caucasus, which are well-known and documented in the US National Security Strategy and other public materials. Notably, the Armenian military leadership has avoided addressing the anti-Russian sentiment, has not responded to the general’s remarks, and excluded them from their press release, choosing not to adopt an anti-Russian position.

The question arises whether Yerevan genuinely seeks to strengthen military ties with the US, as it continues to view the US primarily as a provider of aid to Armenia. The second question is what Armenia can offer the US, aside from anti-Russian stance, to stimulate Washington’s interest in military collaboration.

(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.)

Armenia’s Reorientation Not Unique, Yet Critics Refuse to Recognize It

By Michael Rubin
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

That Armenia 2024 is not Armenia 2014 is obvious to all Armenians and most observers of world affairs. Ironically, it is a reality which continues to elude many think tankers in Washington.

Perhaps hatred of Armenia blinds them or, more likely, a desire to ingratiate themselves to Azerbaijan combined with the perquisites of close ties to the embassy, government, or state oil company. Intellectually, though, the idea that countries, regimes, and even leaders change orientation or flip alliances is neither new nor surprising. That is, after all, the goal of diplomacy.

Not every reorientation is good for the United States. A decade before Chinese Communists launched a revolution that led to their control across mainland China, Mao Zedong studied American history, lionized George Washington, and believed that the United States and China could cooperate to defeat Japan. He turned against Washington and joined the Chinese Communists after American realpolitik toward Japan led him to conclude China could not trust the United States. Nevertheless, more than two decades after Mao established the People’s Republic of China, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger capitalized on Washington and Beijing’s suspicion of the Soviet Union to drive a rapprochement that led the United States to recognize Communist China.

Nor was China the only example of diplomacy and world events leading to sudden reorientation. At the APRI Forum in New York, the Atlantic Council’s John Herbst likened Armenia’s pivot to the Ogaden a half century ago. It was an astute example. On September

12, 1974, the Derg, a group of Marxist military officers, overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie, head of a dynasty that ruled Ethiopia for more than 700 years. They unleashed a red terror and replaced U.S. patronage with Soviet support. Soviet leaders, who until then counted Somalia as its chief regional ally, hoped Ethiopia and Somalia might form a communist confederation in the Horn of Africa. It was not to be. In July 1977, Somali dictator Siad Barre invaded Ethiopia’s Somali-populated Ogaden region against Moscow’s wishes. When the Soviets refused to support him, he flipped Somalia’s Cold War orientation. Just years after a state visit to Moscow and preaching communist revolution alongside Cuban leader Fidel Castro and Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, Barre was sitting in the Oval Office with Ronald Reagan. The Berbera airport, built in the mid-1970s by Soviet engineers to support the Soviet Union’s heaviest bombers, almost overnight became the crown jewel of America’s own presence in Africa.

Somalia was never a good ally; genocidal dictatorships never are. Likewise, hindsight suggests throwing Taiwan under the bus was not a wise decision. Kissinger’s efforts in the Middle East were more positive, though. Egypt was the most powerful and populous Arab state and controlled the Suez Canal. When President Richard Nixon entered the White House, Egypt was a solid Soviet ally. After Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sided with Egypt’s Arab nationalist regime against Israel, France, and the United Kingdom for realpolitik reasons: Arabs outnumbered Jews in the Middle East.

Israel licked its wounds and withdrew, but Eisenhower’s gambit almost killed NATO before it even began. Nor did it win Washington Arab friends two years later during the Lebanon crisis. Nasser continued both to send Egyptians to study in the Soviet Union and purchase Soviet weaponry. On May 27, 1971, Nasser’s successor Anwar Sadat and Nikolay Podgorny, chairman of Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, signed a Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. It would not last. Egypt abrogated the treaty in 1976 and expelled Sovi-

et advisors, eventually welcoming Americans in their place. In the course of just a few years, Egypt switched from being Soviet ally to a pillar for American policy.

Armenia’s pivot is likewise not unique, nor did it begin with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s 2018 rise to power. Even prior, Armenia sought balance between Russia and the United States. In 2008, Armenia became the first country in the Caucasus to host NATO exercises, even as it continued to host Russian forces at Gyumri. In January 2014, Armenian peacekeepers exercised with the US Army in Germany to prepare for the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission. In 2011, Armenia tripled its contingent in NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan to 130; on a per capita basis, this meant Armenia’s contribution was four times that of Turkey and ten times that of France.

If Armenians look increasingly to the West, Russian President Vladimir Putin has no one to blame but himself given his repeated betrayals in the lead up to Azerbaijan’s conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh. Washington may relish Armenia’s pivot, especially after Pashinyan upstaged Putin at the November 2022 Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Summit in which he refused to sign its final declaration and subsequently when Pashinyan cancelled CSTO military drills in Armenia.

It is legitimate for Armenians to debate if their pivot has gone too far given lack of US guarantees and the likelihood that Putin will seek revenge against Armenia should he emerge victorious in Ukraine. Analysts are also right that Azerbaijan’s pivot to Russia and Iran occurred simultaneous to Armenia’s pivot to the West. What is counterfactual and dishonest, however, is the mantra repeated in some quarters in Washington that Armenia is in Russia’s pocket. This suggests either profound ignorance of history and world affairs or dishonesty motivated by other causes.

(Michael Rubin is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and director of policy analysis at the Middle East Forum.)

Khndzoresk Kindergarten Undergoes Complete Renovation

KHNDZORESK, Armenia — On October 3, representatives from the local community, lead project sponsor, representatives of the Paros Foundation and officials of the consolidated community of Goris gathered for the re-opening celebration of Khndzoresk Kindergarten. This renovation will now allow the kindergarten to facilitate the early education for up to 100 children from this important border community.

“Today is such an exciting day for everyone here in the village of Khndzoresk, but especially for the children,” said Peter Abajian, executive director of the Paros Foundation. “Having a safe, comfortable and inviting atmosphere in which to begin their early education is absolutely a game

changer. With this newly renovated space, the kindergarten will be able to launch another group, providing services for 100 children beginning at the age of 2.”

Adrienne, Aram and Brian Krikorian of California supported this important project in memory of their mother and father, Lucine and Haig Aram Krikorian. Haig Krikorian’s family roots hail from Khndzoresk, and Adrienne and her parents, visited the village in 2005.

“My father spent the day in the village touring and talking with the children. He was very touched. Completing this renovation in my parent’s memory makes me feel as if we made their wishes complete,” said Adrienne Krikorian.

The kindergarten received a new roof, new staircase, new heating system, new bathrooms and a thorough cosmetic renovation throughout including new flooring, paint and lighting. Focus on Children Now, a long-time partner organization, supplied the new furniture for the kindergarten.

Prior to the renovation, the kindergarten operated with approximately 50 children in two groups. A leaky roof, lack of proper sanitation and water issues throughout the buildings created poor conditions for both the health of the children and their learning. Now, an additional group of younger children will be added in the coming weeks

allowing the population of the kindergarten to increase to 100 children. The renovation also resulted in additional jobs. In addition to the direct benefits to these children, parents will be able to more easily work, knowing their children are being cared for in a safe and inviting environment.

The Paros Foundation was launched in 2006 and has implemented more than \$16 million worth of projects in Armenia through its unique model of philanthropy and community partnership. These projects are located throughout the country with focus on Gyumri and in communities along the border with Azerbaijan.



A warm welcome from the children who will be attending the newly renovated Khndzoresk Kindergarten

Annual Fall Bazaar at the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe

HAVERHILL, Mass. — The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe is excited to announce its Annual Fall Bazaar, taking place on Saturday, November 16, from 12 PM to 5 PM at the church located at 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill.

This cherished community event promises an afternoon filled with delicious Armenian food, unique products, and fun for the whole family.

Booths and tables will feature souvenirs from Armenia, Anoush Honey, a raw wildflower honey, and Nairian, a lux sustainable, natural skincare from Armenia.

In addition, there will be Armenian cookbooks available for sale.

Raffle tickets for \$2 each can win cash prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200. The drawing will be held on the same day. Winners need not be present.

Gift basket tickets are available at 10 for \$5. The drawing will also be held on the same day, and again, winners need not be present.

In addition to the delicious offerings, a portion of the proceeds—\$1 from each dinner sold—will benefit the Armenian Clergy Fund, which supports clergy who serve border town villages in Armenia.

“This bazaar is not just a fundraiser; it’s a celebration of our culture and community,” said Janice Young, Bazaar Chairperson. “We invite everyone to come together for a day of great food and fellowship.”

For more information about the bazaar, visit www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.