

Armenia Finally Establishes Embassy in Divided Capital of Nicosia, Cyprus

By Larry Luxner

NICOSIA — More than 30 years after the establishment of bilateral relations, the Armenian government has at last opened an embassy in Cyprus.

It's an important milestone for both countries, which share a common Christian faith as well as a bitter legacy of repression by Turkey and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire.

"Armenia and Cyprus have had deep, historic ties for centuries," said newly appointed Ambassador Inna Torgomyan, who on May 2, 2025, presented her credentials to Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides in Nicosia. "There's a long-



Inna Torgomyan, Armenia's new ambassador to Cyprus (credit Armenian Foreign Ministry)



UN checkpoint at Ledra Street crossing in Nicosia, one of the world's last divided capital cities (photo Larry Luxner)

standing friendship between our peoples, and these bonds have created a strong sense of solidarity. Even before establishing embassies, we have worked closely in many areas, including defense," she said.

Until now, Cyprus had fallen under the jurisdiction of Tigran Mkrtchyan, Armenia's resident ambassador to Greece; from Athens, he also had responsibility for

neighboring Albania.

In September 2024, Michael Mavros became the first Cypriot resident ambassador in Yerevan. Martiros Minasyan will remain Armenia's honorary consul in Limassol, the island's chief port. The embassy is expected to begin offering consular services in September or October.

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Armenian Archbishop on Trial For Alleged Call For Government Overthrow

By Anush Mkrtchian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan, accused of calling for the seizure of power and the violent overthrow of the constitutional order, has gone on trial on charges his legal team and supporters describe as politically motivated.



Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan, at right, with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II in June

Ajapahyan, the primate of the Shirak Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, surrendered to investigators on June 27, several hours after security forces raided the Mother See of Holy Echinadzin in an attempt to arrest the outspoken archbishop. They failed to do so facing fierce resistance from hundreds of angry priests and laypeople.

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Former Armenian Official Faces Criminal Proceedings And Accusations of War Crimes in Gaza

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

The Armenian Prosecutor General's Office has charged David Papazian, the former head of the now dissolved Armenian State Interests Foundation (ANIF), with forgery, money laundering, and theft. Foreign human rights group has also called for an investigation into Papazian's alleged involvement in war crimes in Gaza.



According to the criminal proceeding launched on Friday, Papazian is being investigated over the alleged forgery of documents, stamps, seals, forms, as well as computer theft, and money laundering.

Papazian served as ANIF's executive director from 2019 until January 2024. The foundation was established in 2019 and was dissolved in 2024, with Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan serving as the head of ANIF's board of directors until 2022. At the time, Avinyan was Armenia's deputy prime minister. A criminal case related to ANIF's activities was initiated in December 2023 regarding alleged unspecified abuses.

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Pashinyan Tells Karabakh Armenians to Forget about Repatriation

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Nagorno-Karabakh's ethnic Armenian population displaced by Azerbaijan's September 2023 offensive should stop hoping to return to its homeland, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Monday, August 18, as he again touted Ar-

menian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by US President Donald Trump.

His August 8 talks with Trump and Azerbaijani President Ilham held at the White House resulted in the initiation of an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty. Pashinyan also pledged to give the

United States exclusive rights to a transit corridor through Armenia demanded by Azerbaijan.

The draft treaty publicized in the following days does not resolve thorny issues such as the delineation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border or the release of at least 23 Armenian prisoners held in Azerbaijan. Nor does it say anything about Karabakh.

"Peace has been established between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan," Pashinyan declared in a 30-minute video address to the nation.

"As for our compatriots displaced from Karabakh, I have publicly stated more than once that I do not consider their ideas about return to be realistic," he said. "And in general, I consider bilateral discussions of the return of people who became refugees after the start of the conflict in Armenia and Azerbaijan to be a dangerous factor that undermines the peace established between Armenia and Azerbaijan."

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A long traffic jam of vehicles along the Lachin corridor as ethnic Armenians flee Nagorno-Karabakh, September 26, 2023

JERUSALEM

Franciscan Official Visits Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem

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NEW YORK

Navy Veteran Robert Milian Saluted at Yankee Stadium

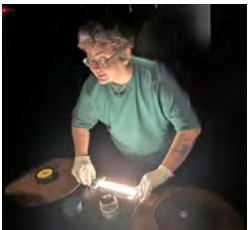
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MONTREAL

Chantal Partamian: Reviving Film Archives

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Vanadzor Stadium to Be Rebuilt to UEFA Standards

VANADZOR (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Vanadzor’s stadium will undergo major reconstruction to comply with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) standards. On August 7, the Armenian government approved fast-tracking the project.

The urgency is tied to Armenia’s bid to host the 2029 FIFA U-20 World Cup, reported Armenpress.

Armenia and Georgia have jointly submitted a bid to host the tournament, which has already gained UEFA’s preliminary support. However, final approval depends on meeting technical infrastructure requirements.

A key condition is to have at least one UEFA Category 4 stadium. Building such facilities is part of the Armenian government’s 2024–2030 physical culture and sports development strategy, adopted on December 7, 2023.

Seven Cattle Killed By Landmine

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A landmine explosion killed seven cattle in Armenia’s Gegharkunik Province on July 18.

Shamshyan.com reported that the animals owned by 53-year-old resident were grazing in the mountainous area near the village of Verin Shorzha in the Vardenis community when the explosion took place.

Local police confirmed that the blast happened in a suspected minefield, causing significant material damage. Documents related to the case have been forwarded to the Vardenis Investigation Department of Armenia’s Investigative Committee for further examination.

EU, Armenia Discuss Border Monitoring Mission

YEREVAN (Caucasus Watch) — The European Union’s monitoring mission in Armenia will continue its operations for the foreseeable future, while potential changes to its mandate will be discussed jointly by Brussels and Yerevan, EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy spokesperson Anitta Hipper told the Azeri Report media outlet on August 18.

“The mission’s mandate is to monitor and report the situation on the Armenian side of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border,” Hipper said, reaffirming the mission’s current role in ensuring transparency and stability along the frontier.

The statement comes amid a major diplomatic development, as Armenia and Azerbaijan have initialed a long-awaited peace agreement. The EU welcomed the move, calling it a decisive step toward resolving decades of conflict. “We encourage both sides to sign and ratify the agreement as soon as possible,” Hipper added.

FAR Sparks Curiosity and Friendship Through Science Camp

NEW YORK/YEREVAN — Noy, 13, Grig and Ashot, both 11, recently became fast friends, united by their shared love of science and technology. They met at the 11th Byurakan Science Camp, generously supported by Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Foundation, where 34 curious schoolchildren from across Armenia, including Syunik, Lori, Tavush, Shirak, Aragatsotn, Kotayk, and Yerevan, came together to learn, explore, and have fun under the stars at the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory.

Noy Khachatryan said that he earned his spot at the camp after winning first

place in chemistry at a FAR-supported STEM Olympiad earlier this spring. “Our school, Sisian #5, was recognized as the smartest school in the entire Sisian region,” exclaims Noy who has loved math, chemistry, and physics from a young age and dreams of a career in high tech.

His new friend Grig, from Dilijan in Tavush region, was fascinated by astronomy for the first time. “I think astronomy involves a lot of guessing and probability, while physics and chemistry are based on clear facts and numbers. That’s what I love most,” he says. Grig was amazed to learn that even though the Sun is enormous,

it’s actually considered an average-sized star, and that the brightest star in the sky is Sirius. He adds, “We found out there are around 10 to the 22nd to 10 to the 24th stars in the universe. It’s mind-blowing!”

Over seven days, Noy, Grig, Ashot, and the other campers explored astronomy and science hands-on. They met renowned scientists, toured Armenia’s largest telescope, explored Viktor Hambardzumyan’s house museum, the Schmidt observatory, and the planetarium, and enjoyed night sky observations through smaller telescopes. Beyond science, they joined games, debates, and cultural visits to places like Saghmossavank, Amberd, and the Armenian alphabet monument, all while building friendships they’ll carry into the school year.

“Science camps like this spark curiosity and help shape future scientists and responsible citizens,” says Eduard Karapetyan, FAR’s Head of Scientific and Educational Programs. “It’s not just about facts, it’s about discovering how each of us can make a difference.”

To learn more about FAR, visit www.farusa.org.



Noy, 13, Grig and Ashot, both 11, share their love of science and technology at the 11th Byurakan Science Camp

Pashinyan ‘Sorry’ for Offensive Remarks

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Two days after being censured by a state ethics body, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan apologized on Sunday, August 17, for using offensive language to attack an opposition leader and a senior clergyman of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Pashinyan resorted to profanity in late May at the start of his controversial campaign aimed at deposing the church’s top clergy and Catholicos Garegin II in particular.

“Monsignor, keep banging your uncle’s wife. What’s your problem with me?” he told an unnamed cleric in a social media post that sparked an uproar from opposition leaders, prominent public figures and many ordinary citizens.

Armenia’s Commission on the Prevention of Corruption likewise deplored the use of a “vulgar, rude and indecent” word. The body monitoring the integrity of state officials said Pashinyan also violated ethics rules by insulting Seyran Ohanian, the parliamentary leader of the main opposition Hayastan alliance, on the parliament floor on May 7.

During the Armenian government’s question-and-answer session in the National Assembly, Pashinyan lost his temper and pledged to “go after” Ohanian and other Hayastan lawmakers in response to their claims that he is turning a blind eye to media reports about corruption among members of his entourage.

“You must be the first to go [to prison]

and you will go,” Pashinyan shouted at the retired general before branding the latter a “moron.”

Hayastan leaders condemned Pashinyan’s threats as illegal and demanded criminal proceedings against him. Prosecutors brought criminal charges against Ohanian instead. The parliament controlled by the ruling Civil Contract lifted his immunity from prosecution last month.

“Although I don’t quite agree with some of the assessments in the decisions [made by the Commission on the Prevention of Corruption,] I apologize to all of you,” Pashinyan wrote on Facebook.

The premier made clear at the same time that while he regrets uttering those two words he remains committed to “the political, spiritual, and moral principles associated with them.”

On July 20, Pashinyan pledged to “free” the Echmiadzin-based Mother See of the Armenian Church from Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and strive to install a new Catholicos. He urged supporters to gear up for a rally in an adjacent square.

Karekin’s office accused Pashinyan on July 21 of planning a violent attack on the Mother See. Armenian opposition groups condemned Pashinyan’s declared plans in even stronger terms. They also urged their supporters to be ready to rush to Echmiadzin and protect the Catholicos.

The gathering promised by Pashinyan has still not taken place.

Pashinyan Tells Karabakh Armenians To Forget about Repatriation

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“Our vision for the future of our compatriots displaced from Karabakh is as follows: with our support and that of the international community, they should settle down in Armenia and live, create and establish themselves here as full citizens of Armenia,” added Pashinyan.

Even before the White House agreements, Karabakh’s exiled leadership in Yerevan tried in vain to get the Armenian government to champion the Karabakh Armenians’ right to safe repatriation in peace talks with Baku. Pashinyan made it clear that the Karabakh issue is closed for his administration.

In an apparent reference to Russia, the Armenian premier again claimed on Monday that the issue was long “used by some forces as a tool to prevent Armenia’s independence and sovereignty.” He himself had famously said in 2019 that “Artsakh is Armenia.” He stopped using the Armenian name of Karabakh after recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over the region in 2022.

More than 100,000 Karabakh Armenians, the region’s virtually entire remaining population, fled to Armenia in the space of a week following the Azerbaijani assault condemned by the US and the European Union.

Azerbaijan denies forcing the Karabakh Armenians to flee their homes and says they can live there under Azerbaijani rule. Karabakh’s leaders and ordinary residents rejected such an option even before the exodus. Some of those leaders have said that only “international guarantees” could convince the refugees to return home. Yerevan has refused to seek such guarantees.



ARMENIA

Agreements Signed for Closer Cooperation during Iranian President Pezeshkian's Visit to Yerevan

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia/PanArmenian.net) — Armenia and Iran have pledged to significantly deepen their economic partnership, setting a target of reaching a \$3 billion trade turnover through expanded investments, infrastructure projects, and closer cooperation in key sectors on August 19.

The agreement was announced following talks between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who was on an official visit to Armenia. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen bilateral trade, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Among the priority projects highlighted was the construction of a second bridge over the Araks River, development of new and modernized border crossings, and the reduction of customs duties to facilitate trade. Both sides also emphasized the importance of the Persian Gulf–Black Sea transport corridor, which is expected to boost regional connectivity and strengthen the transit role of both countries.

Energy cooperation was another key focus. The leaders underscored the urgency of completing the third power transmission line between Armenia and Iran, which would expand electricity exchanges under the existing gas-for-electricity barter agreement.

The statement also underlined the need to develop international transportation routes, roads and railways, linking Armenia more directly with Iran and regional markets. In this context, Pashinyan's "Crossroads of Peace" initiative received backing from Tehran, with both sides stressing that new transportation links must respect territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

Beyond infrastructure, Armenia and Iran agreed to support joint ventures in industry, agriculture, mining and services, with a special emphasis on creating favorable conditions for private sector cooperation.

The economic agreements were further reinforced during a joint trade forum in Yerevan, attended by government officials, business leaders, and representatives of private companies from both countries.

President Pezeshkian praised Armenia's hospitality and invited Prime Minister Pashinyan to pay an official visit to Tehran, signaling continued momentum in strengthening economic and political ties between the two neighbors.

Armenian Borders

During a joint press conference, and referring to the recent agreement signed in Washington, Pashinyan reiterated that all communication routes passing through Armenian territory will remain under the exclusive jurisdiction and security oversight of Armenia. "Their security will be guaranteed by Armenia — not by any third country," he said.

Pashinyan said that his talks with Pezeshkian focused on regional peace and the unblocking of economic and transport infrastructure — issues he described as key priorities for the Armenian government. He emphasized that Armenia's vision is reflected in the "Crossroads of Peace" project, which has received strong support from Iranian partners at the highest level.

The Prime Minister stressed Armenia's deep appreciation for Iran's "clear and consistent stance" on safeguarding Armenia's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and the inviolability of its borders, describing these as matters of vital importance for both coun-



The Iranian and Armenian delegations after signing trade agreements

tries. "For Armenia and Iran, the inviolability of international borders and uninterrupted communication between our states is of crucial significance," Pashinyan said.

He also briefed President Pezeshkian on the joint declaration signed in Washington on August 8 and the initialed agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on peace and interstate relations.

Agreements Signed

A series of bilateral agreements were signed between Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran during the official visit.

The Armenian and Iranian Foreign Ministries signed a memorandum on political consultations for 2025–2027. The document was signed by Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi.

Several additional memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were concluded in a wide range of fields:

Economy and Standards: The Armenian Ministry of Economy and Iran's National Standards Organization signed an MoU on cooperation in standardization, accreditation, conformity assessment, metrology, and technical regulations.

Tourism: The Armenian Ministry of Economy and Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts signed a MoU to promote collaboration in the tourism sector.

Education and Vocational Training: Armenia's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports signed a MoU with Iran's Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare on cooperation in vocational education and training for 2025–2029.

Urban Development and Construction: Armenia's Urban Development Committee and Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development signed a MoU on cooperation in urban planning and construction.

Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals: The Armenian National Center for Medicines and Medical Technologies signed a MoU with Iran's Food and Drug Administration on cooperation in the regulation of medical products.

Cultural and Historical Institutions: Multiple agreements were signed between the

national archives, libraries, and museums of the two countries, including MoUs between Armenia's National Archives and the National Library and Archives of Iran, Armenia's National Library and its Iranian counterpart, as well as between the History Museum of Armenia and the National Museum of Iran.

Cinema and Cultural Exchange: The Armenian National Cinema Center and Iran's Cinema Organization signed an MoU to foster cooperation and film exchange.

Within the framework of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Armenia, Head of the Urban Development Committee of Armenia Yeghiazar Vardanyan and Iran's Minister of Roads

and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeghi signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in urban development and construction, the Urban Development Committee has said.

The document defines several key areas of partnership, including the involvement of Iranian specialists and workers in the construction of 300 schools and 500 kindergartens in Armenia, as well as the exchange of experience in spatial planning, zoning and technical engineering services.

As part of his visit, Pezeshkian prayed at Yerevan's Blue Mosque, according to Iran's Tasnim News Agency.

Following the visit to Armenia, Pezeshkian is scheduled to travel to Belarus.

Armenian Archbishop on Trial for Alleged Call For Government Overthrow

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His arrest followed the detention of another Armenian archbishop, Bagrat Galstanyan, along with 14 of his supporters, on charges of plotting to topple the government through "terrorist acts," which they deny.

Government critics allege the arrests are part of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's broader campaign against the Armenian Apostolic Church in which he has called for the resignation of its head, Catholicos Garegin II, alleging that the supreme patriarch has broken his vow of celibacy by fathering a child.

During the opening session in Ajapahyan's trial on August 15 attended by members of his flock as well as senior Church representatives, the court rejected a defense petition for the archbishop's release pending trial, extending his detention by another 10 days.

Ajapahyan stated that he would not appeal to the prosecutor for release, asserting his belief in his own innocence. The 61-year-old archbishop strongly criticized the authorities, noting that he had not been arrested even during the Soviet times when

priests were openly persecuted. But, he said, "a state that calls itself democratic is now restricting freedom of speech through detention."

The charges against Ajapahyan stem from an interview he gave to a local media outlet back in February 2024. In that interview the archbishop allegedly called for a military coup in Armenia. At the time, however, prosecutors found no criminal wrongdoing in his remarks. The prosecution now argues that Ajapahyan's repetition of the statement in June 2025 warranted the launch of a criminal investigation.

The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin has strongly condemned the decision to take the archbishop into custody, calling it an act of personal revenge. The Armenian Apostolic Church described Ajapahyan's detention as "a direct result of the government's policy of persecution against the Church, led by the prime minister and other high-ranking officials, as well as rhetoric of hostility and hatred toward the clergy."

Pashinyan and members of his political team deny targeting the Church, insisting that their efforts are intended to reform it by removing clergy they see as undeveloped.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Pashinyan and Aliyev Endorse Trump for Nobel Peace Prize

WASHINGTON (Public Radio of Armenia) — The White House published the list of countries that call for President Donald Trump to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, on August 19.

The list includes Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Hun Manet of Cambodia, President Brice Oligui Nguema of Gabon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, The Government of Pakistan, Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe of Rwanda.

Armenia and Azerbaijan jointly nominated Trump.

“Peace has been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The contribution of US President Donald Trump and his administration has been crucial. For this reason, together with the President of Azerbaijan, we have decided to submit a joint application to the Norwegian Nobel Committee,” Pashinyan said in an address to the nation.

CIS Secretary General Welcomes Agreement

MINSK, Belarus (Public Radio of Armenia) — The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member countries welcome the declaration on a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan signed in the US, CIS Secretary General Sergei Lebedev told reporters on August 19.

“Following the signing of the joint declaration between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington, CIS nations exchanged phone calls to share views on this agreement. Just as we welcomed the signing of the interstate border agreement between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan back in the day, we are equally happy to welcome this joint declaration,” Lebedev said.

“We believe this is one of the steps toward the final resolution of disagreements and the achievement of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia,” he added.

Aliyev says ‘Zangezur Corridor’ to Become Key Global Route

WASHINGTON (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stated during an interview with Fox News during his visit to the United States that the agreement reached on the so-called “Zangezur Corridor” is not aimed against any country but is set to become one of the important links in international transportation routes.

“For any country in our region or beyond, it would be difficult to speak negatively about today’s achievement. Essentially, today we’ve made the final step toward establishing peace,” he said, according to lnews.az.

In the interview, Aliyev expressed gratitude to U.S. President Donald Trump and his team for their role in reaching the agreement.

Russia Bars Entry of Armenian Cargo at Georgian Border

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

RFE/RL reported on August 13 that there are over 40 Armenian lorries, carrying fresh fruits, vegetables, and flowers, that have been prevented from entering Russia at Georgia’s Upper Lars border checkpoint “for several days.”

A lorry driver who was carrying 22 tons of plums to Russia, who spoke to RFE/RL on the condition of anonymity, said that his lorry had been parked at the neutral zone of the Russian–Georgian border for three

days as of August 12.

The driver also said that the Russian customs officers did not provide them with any explicit explanation on why their entry was being denied. The driver added that “two weeks ago”, Russian police were issuing widespread fines for “incorrect parking” to Armenian lorry drivers crossing the Russian border while they were in queue. However, it remains unclear whether drivers were entering or leaving Russia.

When the drivers argued that they were just waiting in line and hadn’t broken any

rules, the officer reportedly explained that they had been instructed from higher circles in Russia to fine the Armenian drivers.

The interlocutor claimed that many of the drivers paid the fine on time, but were still prevented from entering Russia — even showing the receipt of the payment of the fine did not change the situation.

“Not receiving any explanation for the ban, the truck driver concluded that the reason was political”, RFE/RL reported.

The driver added that the Russian side regularly creates difficulties for Armenian lorry (truck) drivers.

“They say ‘We have an order from above, our bosses have given an order to come here and fine all of you’. Why should they just come here and fine us?” said the driver.

Drivers have also complained that there is no representative of the Armenian government on site to assist them, as the seat of the customs attaché at the Armenian Embassy in Russia remains vacant.

In comment to RFE/RL, the Armenian Economy Ministry noted that the issue was not within its domain, adding that they would try to understand the issue and its causes.

Armenian lorries have for years faced difficulties crossing into Russia amidst spikes of tensions between Yerevan and Moscow. Most recently, Georgia had for over a month reportedly blocked the access of Armenian lorries packed with brandy in transit to Russia, but the authorities in Armenia say the issue has been resolved.

(This story originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on August 13.)



A border guard at the Upper Lars border crossing (photo TASS)

Judge Drops Two Charges Against Texas Congressman Henry Cuellar, Wife

By Cameron Abrams

LAREDO, Texas (The Texan) — According to the Associated Press, U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal said during a Zoom hearing on August 14 that in addition to the two counts being dismissed, the trial will be moved to next year.

Cuellar and his wife were indicted in May 2024, after they “allegedly accepted approximately \$600,000 in bribes from two foreign entities: an oil and gas company wholly owned and controlled by the Government of Azerbaijan, and a bank headquartered in Mexico City.” His campaign office was raided in 2022 after the allegations of financial misconduct were made public.

Last month, it was reported that Cuellar’s alleged dealings with Azerbaijan and Mexican citizens were expected to be withdrawn. The pair will continue to face 12 charges that include conspiracy, bribery, and money laundering.

Cuellar has maintained his innocence following the Department of Justice (DOJ) charges: “I want to be clear that both my wife and I are innocent of these allegations.”

“Everything I have done in Congress has been to serve the people of South Texas.”

President Donald Trump’s administration and U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi issued a memorandum regarding the Foreign Agents Registrations Act in February, stating that “Recourse to criminal charges under the Foreign Agents Registration Act... shall be limited to instances of alleged conduct similar to more traditional

espionage by foreign government actors.”

After the memorandum was released, Cuellar’s legal representation said that “the new policy largely affirms our position in the case,” adding that “we’re evaluating the new policy and assessing the best manner to address it with the Department of Justice.”

While Cuellar and his wife remain within the crosshairs of the DOJ, his seat is at risk of being redrawn and targeted with the mid-decade redistricting map proposed by Texas Republicans.

The current 28th Congressional District is rated D-51%, according to The Texan’s

Partisan Index, but would shift to D-53% under the proposed new map; Trump won the potential district by 10 points in 2024. With Cuellar’s trial being pushed into an election, it creates an arduous situation for the sitting congressman running for re-election but also puts any resolution to the case past the filing deadline.

Cuellar won re-election in the 2024 general election and former Texas Congresswoman Mayra Flores has already announced she will seek the GOP nomination to challenge him for his seat but could pivot to run in the 34th Congressional District race once the new map passes.



Azerbaijani Ambassador Elin Suleymanov (left) and US Congressperson Henry Cuellar (right)



INTERNATIONAL

Debating Trump's 'Peacemaking' in Germany

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

News of the deal that Donald Trump believes might win him the Nobel Peace Prize did not make front-page headlines in Germany. What sparse coverage appeared was light on content, and less than enthusiastic in tone. The general line was: a deal has been made, but there is a long way to go. The evening news on German national television channel 1 focused on the agreement for a land corridor between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan, calling it a “deal tailored to Trump’s taste,” and noted the damage done to Iran, by blocking its border with Armenia, as well as the demotion Russia would receive as regional power. Nonetheless, the gist was, it may be a big step in cooling tensions but it is not a peace agreement.

The position of the German federal government was expressed on August 8 by Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, who said the agreement meant “hope for many people in Armenia and Azerbaijan who look back on a long past with conflict, expulsions, and suffering.” He seemed to claim a share in the “success,” saying Germany had been “pursuing this aim with its partners through regular high-level exchanges,” and referenced peace negotiations in Berlin last year.

The thinking in government circles could be gleaned from articles appearing in publications of the two coalition parties ruling in Berlin, the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democrats (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU). The gist was: underneath the typically bombastic Trumpian rhetoric of a historic peace, etc., the reality is yes, progress has been made, the decades-long conflict has been suspended, but it is still a long way to peace.

‘Handshake ... for the Moment?’

An expert on the region, Marcel Röthig, who was interviewed on television, issued a detailed analysis in the Journal for International Politics and Society, published by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, a thinktank close to the SPD. Röthig, based in Tbilisi, is the director of the foundation’s South Caucasus regional office and is responsible for Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Whether the “peace” orchestrated by Trump, he writes, holds or not is uncertain, but it has reshuffled the cards in the region. With pungent irony, Röthig says that it seemed as if Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan were “compet-

ing to see who could propose Trump for the Nobel peace prize.” Big talk, quotes from the Bible and Louis Armstrong provided the pomp, but it’s just a beginning, he adds. Pashinyan is under pressure from the opposition for having omitted key demands for freeing the Armenian prisoners as well as the right of return for the Artsakh Armenians expelled. Then the other serious omissions: defined borders and security guarantees in the event of renewed.

The clear winner, he writes, is Azerbaijan, with its long-sought corridor, which will pave the way for oil and gas pipelines and enhanced access through Turkey to Europe. In fact, the EU signaled its support right after the signing ceremony. Another winner is Turkey, which will have “a free trade route to the Caspian Sea — and thence to Central Asia and China.” Moscow stands to lose a lot, its “sanction-free North-South route” through Iran and In-

dia as well as its role as regional power. Its role as security guarantor for Armenia has vanished. Röthig sees this as a “liberation from Russia’s firm grip” for Armenia, also with respect to dependance on Russian oil and gas, as well as nuclear energy. The think-tanker proposes this distancing could lead to closer relations with the EU and NATO. At the same time, Moscow’s relations to Baku are weakened, something Putin may not accept—and that could lead to conflict.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the thinktank of the CDU-CSU, issued a similar reading in its “Country Report,” in an article by Jacob Wöllnstein, “Historical Breakthrough in the South Caucasus?” The stress seems to be on the question mark. If the thinktanks’ analyses reflect the respective parties’ assessments of the Trump peace deal, one would conclude that Berlin would support the thrust of the deal, but is

painfully aware of its inherent dangers.

The Armenians in Germany?

The embassy of Azerbaijan trumpeted its great satisfaction, headlining, “Historic Breakthrough in Washington” on its Facebook page. Although no statement has appeared on the Armenian Embassy’s website, it should reflect the government’s position.

As Pashinyan comes under pressure from the opposition at home, another important question arises: what about the Armenian diaspora in Germany? To date the Central Council of Armenians in Germany (ZAD) has not issued any statement on the deal. The German-Armenian Society (DAG) has not yet presented a declaration either. Instead, it informs readers that the DAG has always stood for a peaceful resolution of conflict and dialogue. Though promoting civil society and dialogue, it does not participate directly in any negotiations.



Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land and his delegation visiting the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Franciscan Official Visits Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (Public Radio of Armenia) — On Monday, August 18, the newly appointed Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Francesco Ielpo, accompanied by members of the Franciscan Brotherhood, made his first official visit to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, where he was received by His Beatitude Patriarch Nourhan Manougian.

During the meeting, Manougian congratulated the newly elected Custos or keeper, and reflected on the longstanding

relationship between the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Franciscan Order. Fr. Ielpo, expressing his gratitude for the warm welcome, assured that the spirit of good neighborly relations would continue throughout his tenure.

Also present at the meeting were Archbishop Sevan Gharibian, Grand Sacristan of the Holy See; Bishop Koryun Baghdasaryan, Director of Properties; and the Reverend Fr. Aghan Goghchyan, the chancellor.

Former Armenian Official Faces Criminal Proceedings and Accusations of War Crimes in Gaza

PAPAZIAN, from page 1

Along with Papazian, Armenian investigative media Hetq reported that prosecution has also been initiated against Bella Manukyan, former director of Armenia’s Entrepreneur + State Anti-Crisis Investment Fund (ESIF), and Karine Andreasyan, director of CFW, who has links to Avinyan’s wife.

Hetq also noted that all three organisations “had come under media scrutiny for financial irregularities and mismanagement of state funds.”

In March, Hetq revealed that on May 4, 2023, the Armenian government invested 1.5 billion (\$3.8 million) in CFW. The company received the funds just eight days after its creation and is owned by companies registered offshore in the US. The money came from the Entrepreneur + State Anti-Crisis Investments Fund, established on 22 May 2020 by ANIF.

Papazian was at the center of another no-

torious case shortly before his charging by the Prosecutor’s Office.

On August 14, the Middle East Eye reported that the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) based in the UK has submitted a complaint to the Armenian authorities calling for an urgent investigation into Papazian, who reportedly chairs the board of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), an American non-profit established to distribute aid in Gaza.

GHF has come under criticism with many rights organizations warning that it could be liable for complicity in war crimes for the mass killings of Palestinian seeking to acquire aid through its sites in Gaza.

The Middle East Eye reported that the AOHR claimed that there was “credible evidence and documentation” that Papazian “may have been involved in, or facilitated, actions that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip.”

The AOHR claims that Papazian is the president of the foundation’s council in Switzerland and is also a founding board member.

On Monday, August 18, the Armenian authorities told local media that they had been investigating the complaint.

The Middle East Eye has also quoted multiple sources criticizing GHF’s actions in Gaza, including Doctors Without Borders (MSF), which accused it of institutionalizing ‘starvation and dehumanization.’ An Associated Press investigation found that “American contractors working under the GHF used live ammunition, stun grenades, and pepper spray on Palestinians seeking food.”

According to Middle East Eye, “at least 1,800 Palestinians have been killed and more than 13,500 wounded while collecting food or queuing for assistance at GHF sites or en route to its centers.”

The GHF has denied the accusations.

The Middle East Eye cited AOHR’s complaint, in which the rights group alleged that in his role in the foundation, Papazian “played a key role in designing, endorsing, and overseeing the implementation of an operational aid delivery model that has led to mass civilian harm.”

The complaint further claimed that Papazian was “fully aware” of reports by UN bodies documenting acts of genocide, including the use of starvation as a weapon, yet proceeded “in pursuit of sordid financial gain.”

“The conduct of Mr. Papazian [...] meets the threshold of legal complicity and renders him criminally liable under both Armenian law and international criminal law,” the complaint reportedly said.

Papazian has declined to comment on the accusations.

(This article originally appeared on www.OC-media.org on August 18.)



INTERNATIONAL

Armenia Finally Establishes Embassy in Divided Capital of Nicosia, Cyprus

CYPRUS, from page 1

Torgomyan, 42, spoke by phone from Armenia's new mission on Akadimou Street in the Engomi district of Nicosia. That's a five-minute drive to the buffer zone that separates the Greek-speaking Republic of Cyprus — a member of the European Union — from the self-proclaimed "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

This Turkish-occupied military fictional state comprises 37 percent of the island's land area and is home to about 385,000 of its 1.3 million inhabitants — 99 percent of them Muslims of Turkish origin. Yet the de facto TRNC is recognized by only one country: Turkey.

Before the ethnic dispute began in 1964 — four years after Great Britain granted Cyprus its independence — the island was inhabited mainly by Greek Cypriots (77.1 percent) and Turkish Cypriots (18.2 percent), with the remaining 4.7 percent consisting of Armenians, Maronites and Lebanese dispersed throughout the entire island. To this day, around 200,000 Greek Cypriots are still deprived of the right to return to their homes and properties.

Prominent Armenian businessman and politician Vartkes Mahdessian called Torgomyan's appointment "long overdue."

Mahdessian, 73, told the Financial Mirror, a Cypriot business news site, that it "comes at a critical juncture of events in Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus, and is a sign of gratitude of Armenia towards the people and government of Cyprus for its steadfast support towards Yerevan at all international fora, from the European Union and the European Parliament, to the United Nations and beyond."

Torgomyan graduated in international relations from Yerevan State University and has led various departments within the Foreign Ministry, including that of director of media and public diplomacy — a job she had held since January 2022 before her current transfer to Nicosia, her first as an ambassador. From 2014 to 2017, Torgomyan was at Armenia's UN mission in New York. Besides her native Armenian, the ambassador speaks English, Russian, Italian and Farsi.

Since her arrival, Torgomyan has met with several high-level local officials including Leonidas Pantelides, representative of the Greek Cypriot community on the Committee of Missing Persons in Cyprus; Vasiliki Kasianidou, deputy minister of culture; and Annita Demetriou, president of the Cypriot House of Representatives.

Cyprus is home to around 3,500 Armenians, said Mahdessian, who officially represents his minority in the island's Parliament as one of three non-voting members (the other two speak for Maronites and Latins).

"We go back to 578 A.D., when the first Armenians settled in Cyprus," he explained in a recent interview.

Between 1915 and 1923, an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were slaughtered by the Ottomans and Young Turks in a murderous wave of ethnic cleansing. During

ous physicians, writers, merchants, entrepreneurs and civil servants.

"The eight million refugees this diaspora created didn't go to all these countries to be tourists. They were forced to leave Turkey and their properties," said Mahdessian. "Compensation for these properties is a huge issue; maybe they don't want to acknowledge the genocide for this reason."

Not surprisingly, Cyprus was the second country in the world, and the first in Europe, to recognize the genocide in 1975. Since then, 32 more countries have followed suit.

In 2015, on the 100th anniversary of that tragedy, the

asked us why. The reason was that these people had nothing, they had to trade to earn bread for their children, and housing there was very cheap — four families to a house," said Mahdessian, who owns an electrical trading company.

"We never saw any animosity from the Cypriot Turks. They were very hospitable to us, and received us with open arms as neighbors," he added. "Our problem is with the Ottoman Turks, the pashas who organized the genocide."

Earlier this year, Armenians and Cypriots together organized a solemn event marking the 110th anniversary of the



St. Lazarus Church in Larnaca, Cyprus, which is among the world's 20 oldest continuously inhabited cities (photo Larry Luxner)

Cypriot parliament unanimously passed a law criminalizing denial of the Armenian genocide. That law was spearheaded largely by Mahdessian, who has lived here all his life.

"Israel should be the first nation to recognize the Armenian genocide because of the Holocaust," he said. "Maybe if the correct recognition was given at the time in 1915, the Holocaust would have been avoided. When Hitler was instructing his generals, he said, 'Who, after all, remembers the Armenians?'"

Mahdessian spoke from the grounds of the once-impressive but now abandoned Melkonian Educational Institute — built on a hill overlooking Nicosia.

The school was established as an orphanage in 1926 by two brothers, tobacco merchants from Egypt, who wanted to offer shelter to hundreds of Armenian children who had survived the massacres. Later on, it became a secondary school for Armenians throughout the diaspora — including children from Albania, Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Russia and Turkey. Adjacent to the property is a small forest planted decades ago by orphans in memory of their loved ones killed in the genocide.

"I'm very proud to say that we've done a lot of work to put these forests, these buildings and the headmaster's house in a protected zone. It's untouchable," he said, gesturing towards its historical statues,

plaques and inscriptions amid the weeds growing through the concrete. The institute's legal owner is the New York-based Armenian General Benevolent Union, which closed it in 2005 on the grounds that the school was no longer economically viable.

"When my family and all these other families came here in 1923 to Cyprus as refugees with nothing in their pockets, they settled in the Turkish Quarter, and the Greeks

1915 Armenian genocide in Larnaca, at a sculpture marking the spot where thousands of Armenian refugees fleeing the atrocities of World War I first landed in Cyprus.

The nearby Church of Sourp Stepanos — considered one of the oldest monuments of its kind in the entire Armenian diaspora — was built to honor the victims of the massacre. It was completed in 1913, even while the killings were still going on.

At the event, Larnaca's district governor, Angelos Hadicharalambous, noted how much the two countries have in common.

"Both our nations have suffered grave injustices," he said. "As Cyprus continues its quest for justice regarding the ongoing occupation of its territory, we stand in unwavering solidarity with Armenia in its rightful demand for global recognition of the genocide. Justice is the bridge that connects our histories and our futures."

Author and screenwriter Angelina Der Arakelian Dennington, 23, was born and raised in Cyprus.

"My dad is Armenian-Cypriot, and his grandfather went through a lot during the genocide, and I consider that to be a miracle," she said. "If it weren't for his story, I wouldn't be here."

She added: "Since Cyprus got independence in 1960, Armenians and Greeks have found common ground through religion. That's allowed them to coexist. But the funny thing is that a lot of Greek Cypriots don't recognize what an Armenian is."

Dennington has never been to Armenia herself, but that should be getting easier in the future. WizzAir now offers daily nonstop service between Larnaca and Yerevan, and FlyOne services Yerevan from Paphos.

Just as Cyprus has long expressed support for recognition of the Armenian genocide, Yerevan would like to see the division of Cyprus soon become a thing of the past, said Torgomyan.

"Armenia always expresses its sincere hope for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Cyprus question, in accordance with UN resolutions and international law," the ambassador said. "We really trust that all parties can engage in constructive dialogue and build mutual understanding. It's the only way for a peaceful settlement."



Entrance to the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," which is recognized by no countries other than Turkey (photo Larry Luxner)

that time, some 9,000 Armenian refugees — mainly from Adana and Seleucia, as well as Istanbul, Smyrna and other cities — found refuge in Cyprus.

Like the later Ashkenazi Jews who arrived here from Poland and elsewhere in Europe, most of them eventually settled in other countries, though 1,300 stayed and made Cyprus their home. The Armenian community grew, and the newcomers quickly established themselves as prosper-



Community News

Departing L.A. Councilmember Paul Krekorian Will be city liaison For Olympics

By David Zahniser, Dakota Smith

LOS ANGELES (Los Angeles Times) — Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian will oversee the city’s handling of the 2026 World Cup, the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and other large events once he leaves office.

Mayor Karen Bass picked Krekorian, who previously served as council president and is stepping down Sunday due to term limits, to be executive director of the city’s Office of Major Events. In that post, he will ensure that the Olympics and other sporting events provide “positive economic impacts for the city,” Bass’ office said.

The veteran city lawmaker will serve as the primary liaison between Bass’ office and LA28, the private group organizing and paying for the



Mayor Karen Bass has tapped Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian to serve as the new executive director of the city’s Office of Major Events, where he will oversee the city’s handling of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. ((Brian van der Brug/Los Angeles Times))© (Brian van der Brug/Los Angeles Times)

Games. He will coordinate city departments, work with the business community and oversee an effort to beef up the city’s transportation networks.

“We need a point person” on the Olympics, Bass said Thursday. “We have to get ready, and I feel like we’re running a little bit behind.”

City leaders are hoping that the Games will boost tourism and the regional economy. During the 2024 Summer Games, Paris saw a surge of visitors but also a dramatic falloff in business for some shops and museums because of security restrictions that closed off parts of the city, according to the Associated Press.

The region’s transit officials have asked the incoming Trump administration to pay for billions of dollars worth of transportation improvements ahead of the Games, though there is no clear indication that it will.

Bass, Krekorian and other city and county officials visited Paris earlier this year to study that city’s staging of the Summer Games.

Paris created a new department with 100 staffers — mostly employees from other city agencies — to see KREKORIAN, page 10



Dr. Garibyan in Armenia with the lasers donated to Arabkir hospital

Dr. Lilit Garibyan Develops Treatment for Chronic Pain

By Raffi V. Arkun
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BEVERLY, Mass. — “I am not going to let fear stop me.” These words became Dr. Lilit Garibyan’s mantra when facing the possibility of failing at various key stages of her life, especially in her youth, and it seems they were helpful. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Harvard and now is working on a US Food and Drug Administration-deemed “breakthrough device” that could eventually become the standard treatment for various chronic conditions like knee osteoarthritis and post-surgical pain. However, her path in life was not always so clearly bright.

Early Life in Yerevan

Born in Yerevan, Garibyan was one of three children in her class granted the honor of wearing a red scarf around her neck, which during the Communist era represented the top of the class. In the first grade, students were taught Armenian,



Dr. Garibyan as a child in Armenia

Russian and Farsi, but not English. Her life dramatically changed when her family immigrated to the United States and settled in California in 1991, forcing Garibyan to learn a new language from scratch while adjusting to a new culture and a new school.

She eventually began to do well in school but when application season for college approached, Garibyan’s high school guidance counselor still advised her to apply to Glendale Community College, believing that other University of California (UC) schools would be too difficult and expensive. To try and raise money for college, a discouraged Lilit got a job dry cleaning which was “mind numbing.”

While a trusted Armenian friend pushed her to apply to 4 UC schools, Garibyan still had low expectations for herself. Nevertheless, she was determined to continue learning somehow and to find joy in her work. She had taken the SAT as if it was a routine test, with no studying or preparation, in contrast to other applicants who may have spent hours with private tutors to prepare, yet she still managed to do well enough to get into excellent schools such as UCLA.

Once at UCLA, contrary to what her guidance counselor thought, Garibyan did extremely well, graduating with triple honors in 2001. After a gap year that consisted of interviews, many applications, and working to earn money, Garibyan was accepted into many post-graduate programs, most prominently Harvard University’s joint MD/Ph.D. program.

see GARIBYAN, page 11

ANCA-WR to Honor Rep. Young Kim as 2025 “Legislator of The Year” at Annual Gala in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region (ANCA-WR) will honor Republican Rep. Young Kim (CA-40) with the organization’s 2025 “Legislator of the Year” Award at its Annual Awards Banquet Gala, on Sunday, October 26, at the Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles.

Kim began her political career in 2014 when she was elected to the California State Assembly, representing parts of Los Angeles and Orange counties. In 2021, she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where she currently represents communities across Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. She is an active member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and serves on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Orange County, home to a vibrant Armenian-American community, has long benefited from her steadfast support and engagement.



Rep. Young Kim

A longtime friend of the Armenian-American community, Kim has been at the forefront of legislative efforts to honor the memory of the Armenian Genocide, condemn Turkish and Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia and defend the rights and security of the Armenian people of Artsakh.

Her support includes co-sponsoring resolutions affirming the Armenian Genocide, condemning Azerbaijan’s aggression and the inhumane blockade of Artsakh, advocating for sanctions and accountability against the Aliyev regime, and championing increased U.S. humanitarian aid to Armenia and Artsakh. Most recently, she has been a vocal advocate for a just, secure, and dignified right of return for the Armenians of Artsakh.

“Congresswoman Young Kim’s principled leadership and unwavering advocacy for justice make her deeply deserving of the ANCA-WR’s Legislator of the Year Award,” stated Oshin Harootyanian, chairman of the ANCA-WR Board of Directors. “In this critical moment for the Armenian people, her bold voice in Congress has been a powerful force for accountability, action, and compassion.”

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and additional event information, visit www.ancawr.org/gala2025.



OBITUARY

Michael Manoog Kaprielian

Global Citizen Dedicated to Mental Health for All

PROVIDENCE — Michael “Manoog” Kaprielian passed away peacefully on August 10, 2025, surrounded by family and friends. He lived his 75 years of life as a global citizen with the conviction that doors should always be opened, all cultures are to be honored, the world is to be explored, and service to others is the foundation of a thriving community.

He carried his life with him in stories told, pamphlets shared, and lapel and hat pins worn reflecting the countries and organizations he championed. When Manoog arrived at a gathering, often fashionably late, he was ready to contribute in any way he could. He had an easy charm and gentle nature that could turn strangers into friends before the conversation was over.

Born and raised in Providence, RI, Manoog was the son of the late Vartkes and Elizabeth (Dolbashian) Kaprielian. He grew up in a vibrant Armenian-American household where the door was always open around the clock, welcoming people from all walks of life. This spirit of hospitality and generosity, along with his family's deep love for the arts, community, and faith were enduring pillars in his life. As a Vietnam War veteran and grandson of four Armenian Genocide survivors, Manoog was wholeheartedly committed to using his experiences to help others — as a humanitarian, advocate for mental health, feminist ally and supporter of veterans.

Manoog served in the U.S. Navy for four years and was in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971, navigating the treacherous Mekong Delta waterways to disrupt enemy supply lines. His harrowing experience, including being captured and then saved by a fellow serviceman, left an indelible mark. He was inspired to bring comfort and aid to other veterans, refugees, and survivors of disas-

ters across the globe.

After Vietnam, Manoog returned to Rhode Island College with a zest for learning and graduated Magna Cum Laude with majors in the social sciences, psychology and women's studies. His diverse education and war experience prepared him for a remarkable career spanning various nonprofit, corporate, and governmental aid organizations.

He was a tireless advocate for mental health services to communities near and far. Notably, he was a consulting psychologist for the UN in 1994, supporting USAID and Save the Children to help train medical staff in an active war zone on the Black Sea to deal with PTSD among the local population. He lectured

nationally and internationally on women's studies and domestic violence and was a featured scholar in Yerevan, invited by Armenia's former First Lady to her inaugural international conference on women. In 1988, he flew to Armenia to provide counseling for earthquake victims and personally delivered donations and supplies on foot to stricken areas. And in 2001, he was at Ground Zero right after 9/11, helping first responders deal with the stress of recovery efforts.

His experience in Vietnam was life changing and made him a fierce proponent for Veterans affairs and refugee support. He was a founding member of the Rhode Island Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 273, serving as the Rhode Island State Council President. Manoog was enormously proud of his work with veterans, Southeast Asian refugees and many students in RI schools. He was a familiar, revered presence marching annually in the Bristol 4th of July and Gaspee Day Parades. In 2015, he led a group of non-Armenian



veterans to Times Square for the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, believing in strength through solidarity. His many articles in VVA publications consistently highlighted the interconnectedness of diverse cultures and the need to support one another. He also bravely shared his war experiences in national and local media, including The Providence Journal, demonstrating how shared stories, even after 50 years of silence, could foster healing and recognition for veterans' service.

Manoog was a community leader and champion of all things Armenian. He was a proud member of the Armenian Relief Society Ani Chapter, an organization which provides humanitarian relief to Armenians worldwide. In addition, he served on the board of directors of the Armenian International Women's Association, and he was a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Armenian Youth Federation, the Armenian Students' Association, Amnesty International, and the Armenian Historical Association of RI (AHARI). He also sang in the Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island. In his younger days, he was a cook at Camp Haiastan in Franklin MA, where thousands of children have learned about and bonded over their Armenian heritage, forming lifelong friendships.

In 1998, he met the Armenia team at the World Para Sailing Championships in Newport, RI, a world class race involving people with physical disabilities. He loved seeing this competitive outlet for those traumatically impacted by accidents and wars, and so he provided free housing, logistics support, transportation and food for the Armenia team whenever they travelled to the US.

Understanding that true charity begins at home, Manoog owned and operated the Ani Luxury Suites building in Wayland Square. There, he opened his doors and heart, providing fully furnished apartments and a welcoming haven to over 100 refugee families impacted by wars in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In 2018, he welcomed the Mulilikwa family from the Congo with open arms, later becoming a Godfather to the eight children who affectionately called him Baba.

Manoog spent much of his free time at his second home, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, following in his father's footsteps as a dedicated choir member and weekly bible study participant. Deeply connected to his ancestral roots, Manoog spent five years living in Yerevan, Armenia immersing himself in the culture and community. He returned to the US glowing with pride, sharing stories of his travels and news of meeting long lost relatives whose grandparents, like his, had fled the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian Genocide. His last visit to Armenia was in the fall of 2024, where he sought to help his long-time para sailing friends open a sports camp for disabled soldiers of the Artsakh-Azeri war.

He was lovingly called Manoog Keri (uncle in Armenian) by his nieces, nephews, and Godchildren alike — and was always in attendance at their sporting events, art shows, concerts, and graduations, deeply proud of their accomplishments.

To get around town, he could be seen walking, biking, taking RIPTA, Ubering, catching a ride with someone — and very occasionally driving his beloved 1959 MGA convertible when he could get it running.

Manoog is survived by his siblings, Karen Pilla of Providence, George “Varky” Kaprielian of Cranston, and Elyse Kaprielian (Gary Comella) of Providence. He also leaves behind his nieces and nephews, Joey (Jill) Pilla, Beth (Marc) Ranaldi, Adam Kelley, Liz Kelley (Bobby Souza), Alek Comella, and Ani Comella, as well as his grandnephews, Luke and Noah Souza, and grandniece, Elise Ranaldi.

His funeral service was held on Monday, August 18, at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, Providence. Burial with military honors followed at North Burial Ground in Providence.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Manoog's memory may be made to the following organizations:

Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church, The Armenian Relief Society (Ani Chapter), RI Vietnam Veterans of America, Local RI Chapter 273 or Armenian Historical Association of RI (AHARI).



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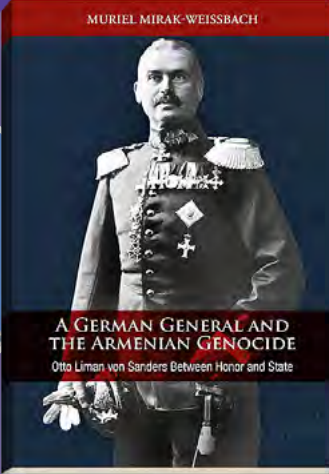
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Muriel Mirak-Weissbach









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OBITUARY

Sheila Laurianna Palandjian
Cherished Matriarch Who Nurtured Family and Friends

PALM BEACH, Fla. — Sheila Lauriana Palandjian of Palm Beach, Fla., formerly of Belmont, Mass., died peacefully at home from Alzheimer's Disease, surrounded by loved ones, on August 9, 2025. She was 84.

Sheila was born on May 25, 1941, in Boston, the daughter of Lawrence and Edith Kelly. She grew up in Watertown with her four siblings and pledged to her father, before his death when Sheila was 12, that she would always look after her mother and siblings. She used the thunderous left hook she had learned from her father (a former Golden Gloves champion) to protect her family and worked odd jobs in high school to provide for them.

With beauty to match her toughness, Sheila made local newspaper headline “Watertown Girl Wins State Disabled Veterans Beauty Contest,” and as title holder visited patients at Veterans hospitals while still a junior at Watertown High School.

Before graduating, she met the “tall, dark, handsome” foreign college student Petros Palandjian on a blind date. She soon found herself swept away by his ballroom dancing prowess, by frequent weekend dates crashing ethnic weddings where he played accordion as a member of the Jay Anthony Band, and by his mathematical brain and his family values which she shared. She said “I do” and married him on

April 24, 1960.

She then moved to Iran to live with Petros' family, who at first lamented that he had married an American and inadvertently selected the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day as their wedding date. Sheila needed very little time to learn Armenian language and cooking, as well as the tradition of fortune telling, which involved reading coffee grounds. Everyone wanted their cup read by Sheila.

Sheila came to call this period her “college education,” and she became the beloved daughter her in-laws never had. And under the guidance of her mother-in-law Artzvik, she mastered the skill of allowing Petros to believe he was the decision maker.

Sheila bore her first child Gregory during the three years the couple lived in Iran before returning to Belmont, where she made a perfect home for Petros and their family, which eventually expanded to four sons. She kept an immaculate house while teaching herself to cook for her boys a broad range of dishes, since embraced by her grandchildren as family classics. Sheila nurtured her boys' pursuit of the advanced opportunities in education and sports that she created for them.

Sheila volunteered at the Belmont Day School and the Fessenden School, while reading the canons of literature alongside



her children and helping them with writing assignments. She drove her sons to tennis tournaments across New England, as well as to locations nationally, while also encouraging their interests in martial arts and team sports.

Sheila travelled the world seeking a cure for Gregory's epilepsy, before losing him tragically and prematurely in 1983.

Sheila built an architecturally distinctive vacation home in Falmouth, Mass., where she created epic childhood experiences for her children and her 9 nephews and nieces. In the 1970s and 1980s, she hosted iconic summer parties at that home, often coupled with a local tennis tournament, and where she served shish-kabob to Boston's leaders in business, medicine, arts, and government. Petros often attributed his success in business to Sheila's gracious warm aura and wise judgment.

After losing Petros to cancer in 1996, Sheila moved to Palm Beach, Fla., while continuing to visit her children in Belmont.

Sheila played joyously with her 12 grandchildren and helped shape their upbringing. Her convenings and cooking were the glue of her multigenerational family. Her flair for interior, landscape, and fashion design always created an idyllic atmosphere and inspired future generations in different ways.

Sheila was generous and empathetic to a fault and found beauty in every person. She maintained profound, life-long friendships, nurturing them on tennis courts and golf courses. The power of her southpaw forehand and strength of her drive delighted the partners she carried to victory in sport and in life.

Sheila was deeply committed to her volunteer work, hosting galas and raising money for the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana Farber Cancer Institute in her communities in Palm Beach and Boston. She had deep, soulful connections to the several dogs she cared for over her lifetime, most recently her Goldendoodle Stan, who could often be found dining on steak with Sheila and her friends at tables of Palm Beach's finest restaurants.

Sheila is survived by her sons Peter Palandjian and his wife Eliza, Paul Palandjian and his wife Dionne, and Leon Palandjian and his wife Tracy; her grandchildren Manon Freese and her husband Nate, Petros Palandjian and his wife Sydney Harrington, Margot Palandjian, Madelon Palandjian, Nicolas Palandjian, Estelle Palandjian and her husband Francesco Falcone, Declan Palandjian, Te Palandjian, Charis Palandjian, Pari Palandjian, Bourne Palandjian, and Bodan Palandjian; her great-granddaughter Mila Freese; her siblings Lawrence Kelly, Sean Kelly, and Carol Khozozian; and her friend of 16 years, Gianfranco DiCicco. Sheila was preceded in death by her husband Petros Palandjian, her son Gregory Palandjian, and her brother Paul Kelly.

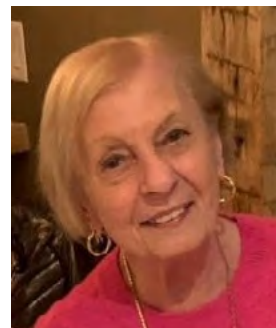
Funeral Services will be held on September 4, at 10 a.m. at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont, with interment to follow at Mount Auburn Cemetery. Hokejash celebration will follow the services at Belmont Country Club, 181 Winter St., Belmont, from 1-3:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Sheila's honor to the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church or the Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

Ann (Jigarjian) Seferian
Matriarch of Large Family

FALMOUTH, Mass. — Ann (Jigarjian) Seferian of Falmouth, formerly of Watertown, passed away at the age of 91, on August 13, 2025.

She was the daughter of the late Nazareth and Anna Jigarian.

She was the wife of 50 years of the late Edward G. Seferian; mother of Corinne Sapah-Gulian and her husband Randy, Lauren Paklaian and her husband Scott and Dr. Edward G. Seferian. She was the grandmother of Simone, Alexa and her husband Alex, Ariana, Olivia and Gabrielle; sister of the late Charlotte Hunter and her late husband Walter, the late George Jigarjian and his late wife Sarah, the late Helen




Perez and her late husband Gene, and the late Edward Jigarjian and his wife Alice. She was the sister-in-law of Julie Ganjian and her late husband George, the late Lucy Aylaian and her late husband Warren, Madeline Mardirosian and her late husband Robert.

She is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

A Funeral Mass celebrating the life of Ann was held at the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Belmont, on August 19. Interment was in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic



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MARION BEDROSIAN
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Departing L.A. Council-Member Krekorian Will Be City Liaison for Olympics

KREKORIAN, from page 7

plan for the Games, Krekorian said in an interview. He said he hopes to create a similar department in L.A. in the run-up to 2028.

Krekorian said he also wants to increase transparency around the financing of the Games, “because the city has a very strong vested interest” in the outcome.

He didn’t reveal his new salary but said it’s a “little more” than his council salary, which is \$244,727, according to the City Controller’s office. He said he hopes to serve in his new role through the 2028 Games.

Last month, Krekorian expressed worries about the election of Trump, who has repeatedly attacked California over its left-leaning policies. At the time, Krekorian said he was anticipating “four difficult years for our city on multiple levels, not least of which is our access to federal funding for different programs, and preparations for the Olympics.”

On Thursday, August 14, Krekorian offered a more upbeat message, saying he’s hopeful the Trump administration will “see the opportunity that the Games present and will continue to be supportive of what we’ll be doing.”

Trump said earlier this week that he is nominating television commentator and former assistant treasury secretary Monica Crowley as the administration’s representative for “major U.S. hosted events,” including the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics.

Navy Veteran Robert Milian Saluted at Yankee Stadium

NEW YORK — On August 13, a packed Yankee Stadium saluted Vietnam Veteran Robert “Bob” Milian.

The New York Yankees instituted the Veteran of the Night Program in 2019.

He served as a 2nd Class Petty Officer in the US Navy.

Milian was touched and delighted by the spotlight. “They even let me hold one of their World Series Championship Ring,” he said.

Milian said of his service history, “I did 2 tours off the coast of North Vietnam primarily (which was very hostile at the time) from 1970-1974. I served on Guided Missile Cruisers. The team shot down 10 MiGs the 1st tour and 13 the 2nd tour before the Paris peace talks took place.

The attendance that night at Yankee Stadium was 44,466 — a packed crowd!

To see the clip, visit <https://youtu.be/-R8W6bX-oyjM?feature=shared>

VETERAN OF THE GAME



ROBERT MILIAN
U.S. NAVY

RANK

PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS

HOMETOWN

QUEENS VILLAGE, NY

SERVED

VIETNAM



Robert Milian holding one of the World Series Championship rings



Robert Milian and family at Yankee Stadium



Tekeyan Cultural Association Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia

Since its inception in 2001, The TCA Sponsor A Teacher program has raised \$838,700 and reached out to 7,386 teachers and school staff in Armenia and Artsakh. Yes, I would like to sponsor TCA school teacher(s) in Armenia, as well as teachers who fled Artsakh and continue teaching in Armenia schools, to continue helping them to work, and educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher(s)’s name(s) and address(es).



Yes, I would like to sponsor TCA school teacher(s) in Armenia, as well as teachers who fled Artsakh and continue teaching in Armenia schools, to continue helping them to work, and educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher(s)’s name(s) and address(es).

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Your donation is tax deductible.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Lilit Garibyan Develops Treatment for Chronic Pain

GARIBYAN, from page 7

With a full ride at Harvard, she was able to complete a Ph.D. in immunology, because, she said, she “really loved the immune system and was fascinated by how it worked.” She did it in only 3 years, as opposed to the typical Harvard standards of 5-6 years, and initially set her next goal as to have her own lab studying immune-mediated skin diseases – but soon she moved in a different direction.

A Career of Innovation

While doing her medical residency, Garibyan met Dr. R. Rox Anderson and became intrigued by a side effect of the “coolsculpting” or cryolipolysis device he had invented to freeze fat and non-surgically contour bodies. Fascinated by how the device caused a loss of sensation, Garibyan started thinking of potential applications. She realized it could treat skin pain and itch, something opioids are currently prescribed for, with fewer side effects. She discussed this with Anderson and found out that nobody was studying this unique way of using cooling to target nerves. In the process of trying to understand the mechanism of this side effect she invented a new way of cooling tissue using ice, not just topically, but injected directly into areas with pain. This led to her and Anderson founding a clinical stage life sciences company called Brixton Biosciences in 2019, with Sameer Sabir as chief executive officer, and developing the use of what became called “Neural Ice.”

Unfortunately, men were considered “somehow higher than women” in Armenia. Garibyan noticed this in the US too, as she climbed the career ladder. The majority in medical leadership are males, and there are inherent difficulties or obstacles to women rising in positions. Garibyan believes, she said, that “as women, we should use this as inspiration to pave the way for the next generation,” and that women are just as capable as men.

She has more than proved this. Garibyan has attained many patents, did all of the pre-clinical work and published 14 papers in high impact journals to show the various applications of the injectable ice she invented. This invention can be used to treat pain, sleep apnea, cardiovascular disease, visceral fat removal, and subcutaneous fat removal. Testing has been done on many animals, and it has been proven that it is safe and effective in targeting nerves to treat pain and to selectively remove fat.

In the beginning, funding was hard to come by. The government does not like to fund risky projects, but interestingly the Department of Defense became her biggest supporter. The DoD funds projects that can help treat soldiers and Neural Ice holds the possibility of being a useful tool for the latter.

Right now, the Neural Ice device is in human pivotal trials to specifically treat knee pain. Garibyan said that it has the potential to “completely revolutionize the pain treatment industry.” One injection provides over three months of pain reduction and helps patients avoid the danger of opioids.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave it the designation of a “Breakthrough Device,” which is given to potentially more effective medical devices to expedite their development, assessment and review. The ice is easy to use, as it is injected through the same syringes that doctors already use for other purposes. If it receives FDA approval, the product must be launched through a salesforce, Garibyan noted, in order to have providers buy and use it.

Garibyan is also a founder of EyeCool Therapeutics, which uses a similar ap-



Dr. Lilit Garibyan standing with her certificate and medal at the National Academy of Inventors in Atlanta in July 2025

proach to target pain in the eye. This company has completed initial human trials with positive results and will soon launch pivotal trials. While doing all of this, Garibyan is still an active physician. Garibyan does one day of clinical dermatological work a week with four days of research and teaching. She is an associate professor of dermatology at Harvard Medical School and a physician-scientist at Wellman Center for Photomedicine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

She believes that it is important to be a physician-scientist because patients pro-

vide the inspiration and insight required to make discoveries. For example, Garibyan had many patients who suffered from itch, which originate from cutaneous nerves, which do not have devices to target them. This was an inspiration to continue searching and learning, allowing her to better help people.

She exclaimed that “this is so cool – you can actually discover something... and see it benefiting patients in your lifetime.” Garibyan’s dream, as for many physician-scientists, was to solve a problem and create something that helps patients in real life. To encourage this type of research and problem-based innovation for clinicians, she and Dr. Anderson founded in 2013 the Magic Wand Initiative.

Back to the Homeland

Garibyan never forgot about her homeland of Armenia. In 2013, she helped create the Face of Angel Project, which had the goal of treating patients with scars, portwine stains, and vascular anomalies. According to the project’s website, it aims to “help people with life-altering skin diseases to have a better chance at life.”

Aside from several trips Garibyan and her colleagues from Harvard made to Armenia, bringing donated lasers, and the establishment of laser clinics in Yerevan, they

virtually train Armenian physicians in laser dermatology. They are actively continuing this project and at some point would like to also improve education in Armenia medical schools, Garibyan said, by integrating laser training and the understanding of lasers into the medical school curriculum.

More support and resources are necessary to achieve this. If anybody wishes to help, she would love to hear from you at LGARIBYAN@mgh.harvard.edu or you can donate directly at the website <https://www.faceofangel.org/>.

Garibyan is particularly invested in this project because she said that “education empowers people.” Throughout her life, education is the one thing that allowed her to succeed and she now uses her education to help others. She said she hopes that everybody else has the same opportunities she had and can “change the future in the way they want to.”

Garibyan’s message to any young reader is: “Do not let fear stop you from doing what you are passionate about.” Over and over again, Garibyan faced obstacles, yet these challenges, through the ups and downs of life, met by hard work are what lead to success. You may encounter haters, she concluded, but never be afraid to “be a trailblazer” and chart your own path.



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian 2025 Annual Awards



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

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 30, 2025**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2025** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winners will receive their awards in **November, 2025**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 14, 2025



Arts & Culture

Violinist Haig Hovsepien Launches Chamber Concert Series

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — At the young age of 25, violinist Haig Hovsepien has a lot of experience under his belt. He has won numerous awards and performed in many hallowed sites, including Symphony Hall and the Massachusetts State House.

This fall he is launching the Massachusetts Chamber Music Artists (MCMA), a curated concert series.

“It’s a flexible collective of professional musicians who come together to perform chamber music on a concert-by-concert basis. Rather than having permanent ‘members’ like an orchestra would, MCMA builds its programs by curating ensembles specifically tailored to the repertoire and artistic goals of each concert. This structure allows us to remain flexible and explore a wide range of works while collaborating with a diverse group of artists who share a passion for meaningful and engaging performance,” Hovsepien explained recently.



MCMA will have its inaugural concert on November 1, at the First Parish in Bedford. The concert will feature Frank Bridge’s Phantasy Piano Quartet, as well as songs from Komitas, and finally Felix Mendelssohn’s Piano Trio No. 1. The artists performing, in addition to Hovsepien, will be Michael Fisher on violin, Yeh-Chun Lin on viola, Edward Aron on cello and Dina Vainshtein on piano.

He explained further, “MCMA is a chamber music initiative that is aimed at serving both Armenian and non-Armenian realms of repertoire and artists. At its core, it’s a platform where exceptional chamber musicians can collaborate and present dynamic programs that span a broad and diverse repertoire. All the while, a key part of our identity is

see HOVSEPIAN, page 15



Chantal Partamian at work

Chantal Partamian *Reviving Film Archives*

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN-MONTREAL — Chantal Partamian was born in Beirut to Armenian father and Lebanese mother. She is an experimental filmmaker and archivist specializing in Super 8mm and found footage. Her films, recognized and awarded at numerous festivals, are distributed by Vidéographe, Groupe Intervention Vidéo (GIV), and the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre. As an archivist, Partamian focuses on the preservation and restoration of film reels from the Eastern Mediterranean through her project Katsakh Mediterranean Archives. She also conducts research on archival practices in conflict zones. Her written work frequently appears in Revue Hors-Champ. Partamian’s practice bridges the artistic and archival spheres, blending experimental cinema with cultural preservation to safeguard the audiovisual heritage of the Mediterranean region. In addition to her filmmaking and archival work, she has directed music videos and served as assistant director, cinematographer, and editor on numerous documentaries and short films. Chantal has also published articles in English and French on cinema, gender issues, and related cultural topics.

For more information about Chantal Partamian, please visit her official website: www.chantalpartamian.com.

Chantal, you gave an unusual name to your project Katsakh (vinegar in Armenian) — perhaps referring to the preserving nature of it. What is the process of obtaining and restoring archival footage like?

Katsakh Mediterranean Archives is an independent film archive and research project which focuses on the collection, preservation, and reactivation of amateur and personal film footage from the Eastern Mediterranean, films shot on small gauge (8mm, 9.5mm or 16mm) between 1900 and 1980. I also chose Katsakh because I wanted to have an Armenian name that informs my research and my posture regarding images.

The name Katsakh is a reference to “vinegar syndrome,” a chemical decay that affects acetate film over time. When film begins to degrade, it emits a strong vinegar-like odor, signaling its potential loss. The metaphor resonated with me on multiple levels, not only as a literal warning sign of archival fragility, but it also speaks to cultural memory, trauma and the urgency of preservation.

The process of restoring archival footage often begins with searching for material, reaching out to families, individuals, or communities. These are mostly amateur films: family vacations, social gatherings, or moments that were meaningful enough to document, yet never intended for public viewing. Once in my hands, the material must be physically examined and repaired. The restoration I do is strictly mechanical, it means removing dust, mending broken splices, relaxing warped reels, and preparing the film for scanning. I avoid heavy-handed digital manipulation because I believe in preserving the integrity of the image as it was shot. My role is not to

continued on next page

Adrineh Mirzayan Amplifies the Armenian Voice Through Film Production

By Mariam Pashayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES — “We each have to write our own narratives and tell our stories,” Adrineh Mirzayan says, her voice steady but filled with conviction. “We have so many incredible stories that need to be shared with the world.” Adrineh’s day job is being the director of employee relations at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles but she has chosen as her vocation to promote the Armenian story through film, and in particular supports the work of film director Jivan Avetisyan.

Adrineh was born in Tehran, the youngest of three siblings, but moved with her family when 8 to Germany. She lived there for three years before relocating to the United States, where she attended Holy Martyrs Ferrahian Armenian School in Encino. She graduated from California State University, Dominguez Hills, in 1993, and obtained a master’s degree in public administration from California State University Northridge in 1998, before beginning her career in the hospitality field.

Complex Family Background

Her family history played an important role in her decision to promote Armenian causes and cinema. Her paternal grandparents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide; her grandfather was born in Erzurum, her grandmother in Kars. To escape the massacres, her grandfather fled to Krasnodar, Russia, and later to Baku — but the oppression of communism soon pushed the family to seek freedom elsewhere. After moving to Iran, to better integrate, he changed their last name from Gobalian to Mirzayan. Adrineh’s father was just 10 when they arrived in their new country.

On her mother’s side, her grandmother was born in Russian Armenia near Gavar, while her grandfather was born in Karadagh in Iran, just across the Araks River from Karabakh — a region that shared the same dialect. “I grew up in a household that spoke the Karabakh dialect,” she recalls with a smile. She laughs, “People say, what type of Armenian are you? I always say, I am an Armenian — a citizen of Armenia — because that’s the reality of it.”

She paused, declaring, “My story is not necessarily an original one — there are many stories like mine,” before relating the story of Hovhannes, her maternal grandfather. He was only 4 when his family moved from Karadagh to Baku in the early 1900s. Aleksander Mantashev, an Armenian oil magnate, had created many jobs through the oil industry, and many Armenians from Karadagh, including Hovhannes’s family, moved there to take advantage of these opportunities (just as Adrineh’s maternal grandmother’s family moved from Gavar (Kavar) to Baku for the same reason).

see FILM, page 16



ARTS & CULTURE

from previous page

“beautify” it but to safeguard its material truth, to allow it to be seen again and recontextualized in the present.

You give new life to amateur film shootings and old footage. I can’t help but recall Armenian filmmakers who created montage films and also used old film materials in their work — Artavazd Peleshian in Armenia, Yervant Gianikian in Italy, and Silvina Der-Meguerditchian in Germany.

You mention some of my favorite directors. I admire entirely the work of Artavazd Peleshian; I wrote about his work in French in Hors Champ (<https://horschamp.qc.ca/article/nous>). I’m equally moved by the work of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, whose meticulous reworking of found footage opens space for mourning, testimony, and resistance. I wrote about their film *Frente a Guernica* for the Cinémathèque québécoise (<https://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/en/news/a-propos-de-frente-a-guernica-ricci-lucchi-gianikian-2023/>). And I recently got acquainted with Silvina’s work, which I find very close to my own obsessions.

In what ways have recent advances in AI and restoration technologies influenced your approach to working with archival footage?

Recent advances in AI and digital restoration tools are changing the archival landscape, but my own approach remains tactile and analog and my project is personal, self-funded, and grounded in a slow, hands-on methodology, a kind of counter-archival posture that insists on presence, patience and proximity to the fragile material. So, I haven’t yet incorporated AI into my practice.

But I am aware that AI has indeed been transformative in institutional contexts for cataloging large databases, generating metadata, converting images into text, and even for facial or geographical recognition. These tools require a technological infrastructure that’s often out of reach for independent projects like mine. In addition, they

also introduce new ethical questions about authorship, erasure, and the ways memory is shaped through machine logic.

Could you elaborate on your ongoing research into Armenian history and how it informs your work with archival footage?

My ongoing research into Armenian history is deeply connected to my work as a film archivist and informs both the methodology and ethics of what I do. Recently, a couple of historians shared several silent film reels with me, likely shot in the early 1900s. These reels are untitled and lack clear contextual information, but based on the landscapes, clothing, and atmosphere, they appear to depict Armenians living in Ottoman Turkey. Without proper documentation, however, the images remain suspended in ambiguity.

This lack of information highlights the essential role of archival labor, not only to preserve and restore these materials, but also to historicize them responsibly. I see it as my duty to carefully examine these fragments, to date and catalog them as precisely as possible, and to situate them within a broader historical and cultural context. It’s a slow and rigorous process that often requires collaboration with historians, anthropologists, and local communities. The goal is not to impose meaning, but to allow the footage to be understood within the complexity of its time to avoid erasure or falsification. Without careful contextualization, such materials risk being misinterpreted or misused.

I approach these images with both responsibility and urgency, not only to make them public, but to do so in a way that honors the people within them and the histories they carry. And I believe that through this kind of research and archival practice, we can continue to expand the already multi-layered, rich, and vast visual vocabulary of Armenian existence, moving beyond images solely associated with trauma and survival, and recovering a broader, more nuanced spectrum of life. These reels can add vital layers to the multiplicity of our pasts and open new ways of seeing ourselves in history

as a complex and enduring presence.

I can recall two remarkable individuals with the surname Partamian — the Armenian literary scholar Vartan Partamian and the American opera singer Maro Partamian. Could you share the story of the Partamian family?

It’s a beautiful question because it touches on the kind of diasporic connections and the possibility of scattered kinship. Although I’m not directly related to either Vartan or Maro Partamian, I did connect with Maro online out of admiration for her voice and legacy. As for my own family, the Partamians I descend from originally came from Aintab, where my great-grandparents were teachers at a local college. They were warned by one of the Pasha’s, whose children they taught, that danger was imminent, and they fled to Aleppo. The rest of the family chose to remain behind and were ultimately lost. My grandfather was born in Aleppo. The family moved several times, to Kessab, back to Aleppo, then to Rayak in Zahle. It was in Rayak, amid the presence of the French military, that my grandfather learned photography. He eventually moved to Beirut and became one of the pioneers of cinema and moving image culture in Lebanon, a legacy that was continued by my father and now by my siblings and me.

So, your grandfather was Antoine Partamian, the cameraman of Lebanese cinema in 1950s... Chantal, in your film “Sandjak,” you explore your Armenian heritage through your grandmother’s memories. How present is your Armenian identity in your artistic work?

Whether I invoke it explicitly or not, my Armenian identity is deeply embedded in everything I create. It’s not always about representing Armenianness in a literal or symbolic way, sometimes it’s about rhythm, memory, absence, or even fragmentation. Growing up in a diasporic environment, surrounded by a language that wasn’t always spoken publicly, a history that was too painful to articulate directly in the family, and a culture that was always negotiating its own

survival, these conditions shaped the way I see and the way I create.

“Sandjak” was a particularly intimate film, rooted in my grandmother’s memories, but also in the silences she carried, the gaps in her stories, the rituals of daily life, the ways trauma echoes through generations. In many ways, my work tries to trace those echoes, to understand what is left unsaid, and to find new forms through which to speak it. Even when the work appears abstract or focused on other themes, the underlying impulse often comes from that same place. I see Armenian identity not as a fixed point, but as a dynamic presence, one that evolves and insists, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Could you tell us about your experiences in Armenia?

I’ve visited Armenia many times, and each trip has left a distinct impression. My earliest visits, in the early 2000s, were difficult. Like many diasporans, I was raised with a strong sense of belonging to a homeland I had never seen, the idea of Armenia was emotionally charged, almost mythical. But when I arrived, I was confronted with the reality that this homeland didn’t always recognize me back. The linguistic, cultural, political differences were jarring. Russian was everywhere, as were the post-Soviet sensibilities that I hadn’t been exposed to. I realized that Armenianness was not a unified experience, but a spectrum shaped by geography and history. But over time, that feeling evolved. With each visit, I sensed more openness from myself and from others. The arrival of more Armenians from Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere has also contributed to a richer understanding within Yerevan and other cities of what the Armenian diaspora looks and sounds like. I feel that there’s more dialogue now between locals and diasporans, more awareness of our different histories, and more curiosity rather than judgment. My last visit, about a year ago, felt affirming. I no longer seek sameness; I’m interested in the multiple ways of being Armenian.



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ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Butter Gargantak (Cheoreg)

Memories from Author Dawn Essegian Lajeunesse

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — “I grew up in the 1950s. I had an Armenian last name, and we attended the Armenian church a block away from our home in Troy, NY. But we were different from our Boston cousins. Our father was a first generation Armenian, but he fell in love with and married a ‘country girl’ from a sleepy village, Valley Falls, about a half hour’s drive from Troy. One look at her and you knew she wasn’t Armenian. She described herself at ‘Heinz 57’, meaning she had a little of a lot of nationalities in her blood, none of which were Armenian.”

“Our Boston cousins, however, were 100% Armenian, with our father’s sister, Aunt Hasmik, (Aunt Has, for short). Their lives revolved around their Armenian heritage and culture. Whenever we visited, Aunt Has turned out entire menus of what became our very favorite Armenian foods. She taught our mom how to make Armenian pilaf and sarma (stuffed cabbage), but many of the foods we loved were only available when we visited the Boston cousins. My first awareness of Armenian cheoreg at their house was the fragrance of these aromatic yeast rolls. Aunt Has shaped her dough into braids and round balls and stacked swirls. As they came out of the oven, they looked like yeast rolls, on which she sprinkled sesame seeds or poppy seeds. But it was their unusual aroma that set them apart from ordinary yeast rolls.”

“Fast forward through my school years and forty years of professional jobs into the 21st century,” says Dawn. “Retirement allowed me more time to revisit my love and appreciation of Armenian food and recipes, with my beloved cheoreg was on top of the list. I volunteered at a local Armenian church to assist in the food preparation for their annual church picnic. Although their cheoreg taste didn’t match my memory, they looked the same. I asked about the recipe, and it was shared with me readily. I waded through my Armenian cookbooks to identify the reason the taste was different from what I remembered.”

“One of the cookbooks was a copy that Aunt Has sent to her daughters and her nieces. There, in the recipe in *The Art of Armenian Cooking* (1971) by Rose Baboian, was the missing ingredient: mahlab. The church recipe was similar but excluded the mahlab. Not sure why. The spice can be hard to find locally, but there are multiple spice sources online that include mahlab. And so, I crossed my fingers and added mahlab to my next batch and...THAT DID IT! I felt like a long-deceased aunt has been hovering over my shoulder and applauding all this time. Our freezer is never without several bags of this cheoreg now. Our family and guests love them and their incredible taste brings back fond memories of past family get-togethers and holiday celebrations. This recipe is one of multiple varieties of gargantak (with added terms cheoreg--correct spelling--and kahke as interchangeable names in the gargantak pages). My recipe is the closest to the recipe that Rose Baboian titles as ‘butter gargantak,’ but not an exact duplicate.”

Rose Baboian (1903-1969) was an Armenian-American cookbook author. She was born in Aintab (present day Gaziantep in Turkey). She was about 17 years old



Author Dawn Essegian Lajeunesse

when she left Aintab and for around two years lived in Aleppo before moving to Massachusetts. Mark Zanger, a Boston-based food reporter, wrote that Baboian’s book “stands out as a model of American ethnic food because she recorded so many traditions.” Her book made Turkish Armenian recipes accessible for younger generations of Armenians who spoke only English. She is considered to have anticipated Armenian American fusion cooking with recipes like “chocolate yogurt.”

In *The Art of Armenian Cooking*, Baboian explains that many staple dishes of Near Eastern cuisine are prepared in a multitude of variations including pilafs, kebabs, sarmas, dolmas, lahmacuns and koftas. Many of Baboian’s recipes include allspice and cinnamon. She gives recipes for Aleppo mortadella and describes techniques of cheese making prior to refrigeration where cheese was preserved in salted brine. She discusses three cheese recipes: “Salted Cheese” (Aghov Banir), “Squeezed Cheese” (Kamvadz Banir) and “String Cheese” (Lar Banir) seasoned with mahlab or nigella seeds (sev hoonding). In her discussion of Armenian pastry Baboian describes three methods of making the pastry sheets for baklava, noting that this pastry is one of the most difficult to make from scratch.

Kofta served with jajek, grilled vegetables, antep ezmesi, Shepherd’s salad and bulgur pilaf. Familiar with both American and Armenian cooking, Baboian notes some basic differences in how food is typically prepared. In American cuisine, she says, the vegetables are usually cooked separately from the meat and cereal grains, while meat and vegetables are cooked together in Armenian cuisine. The recipes in her book have roots in Aintab, but Aleppo, Marash, Kilis, Arapgir, Harput, Izmir and even Watertown, Massachusetts are represented. She writes that her recipes were familiar to persons of many cultures including Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Turks, and Syrians, explaining that the recipes have Arabic, Turkish and Armenian names.

Rose gives several different recipes that can be prepared with yogurt (madzoon) like barley yogurt soup, jajek (which she calls Easter Spinach Salad) and sauce served with koftas. Baboian’s recipes were published before yogurt was widely available in American shops, so she includes instructions for preparing yogurt at home from fresh milk. She has also a yogurt spice cake with cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves served with coconut and walnut topping. Her recipe for fruitcake, also made with yogurt, includes dried fruits, nuts, baking spices and assorted candied fruits. - Excerpt from: https://en.everybodywiki.com/Rose_Baboian

INGREDIENTS:

- Makes about 2 or 3 dozen large rolls
- 4 1/2 teaspoons dry yeast
- 2/3 cup lukewarm water
- 2/3 cups lukewarm milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons finely ground mahlab (See Note)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) melted lukewarm butter (clarified butter is best)
- 4 medium eggs
- 5 2/3 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 2/3 teaspoons baking powder

PREPARATION:

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Remove eggs from refrigerator at least 1 hour before using.
- In a large bowl, soften 4 1/2 teaspoons dry yeast with 2/3 cup lukewarm water. Mix in 2/3 cups lukewarm milk, 1 1/2 teaspoons finely ground mahlab, and 1/2 cup sugar. Stir in 1 cup (2 sticks) melted lukewarm butter (clarified butter is best) and 4 medium eggs (save 1 1/2 tablespoons for glazing).
- Sift together and blend in gradually 5 2/3 cups flour, 2 teaspoons salt, and 2 2/3 teaspoons baking powder. Add a little lukewarm water or flour if necessary to make a medium stiff dough. (Optional additions: diced figs, diced dates.) Knead dough on a floured board until smooth. Place dough in a covered pot or a bowl large enough to hold when dough rises.
- Let the dough rise for 1 to 2 hours until it is doubled in size. (Suggestion: if your oven does not have a proof setting, heat oven to 85-90°F degrees. This will take about 1 minute. Do not overheat – oven thermometer helps. Turn off heat. Place covered pot of dough on rack in oven.)
- Shape into desired shapes (coiled snakes, braids, pretzels or twists. Glaze tops of rolls with beaten egg plain or mixed with equal amount of milk. Optional: Sprinkle sesame seeds or poppy seeds over tops of rolls, if desired. Arrange rolls on an ungreased baking sheet 2 or 3 inches apart. Let rolls rise again in warm place for about 1 hour or until doubled in size. (If rising in oven, remove rolls from oven before preheating oven for baking.)
- Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Immediately remove rolls with a spatula to avoid rolls sticking to baking sheet. Serve hot or cold—plain, with butter, or with jelly/jam. To reheat, put rolls in a moderate oven for about 5 minutes or until hot.
- Note: Mahlab is a spice made from the seeds of a variety of sour cherry known as the Mahlep or Mahleb tree. The spice has a distinctive flavor which tastes similar to cherries and slightly like almonds, with kind of a sharp, sour taste, and it is very popular in baked goods and holiday foods throughout the Middle East, Armenia and Greece. To order, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/mahlab/s?k=mahlab>

For information, see: <https://thearmeniankitchen.com/a-lesson-in-mahlab-mahleb/>

View Dawn’s posts at: <https://justwriteit.live/author/mtnwriter77/>

See:
<https://mirrorspectator.com/?s=Dawn+Essegian+Lajeunesse>
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Dawn-Essegian-Lajeunesse-Author/100063657274165/>



ARTS & CULTURE

Violinist Haig Hovsepien Launches Chamber Concert Series

HOVSEPIAN, from page 13
to highlight Armenian music — of well-known and lesser-known composers — and to bring our national repertoire into conversation with Western classical works. This combination of national and international reflects both my personal artistic vision and my family legacy.”

As for the MCMA’s purpose in “curating programs,” Hovsepien explained, “Curating programs implies thoughtfully designing concert experiences — from choosing the repertoire and deciding how pieces relate to each other, to selecting the right musicians for each work. It’s about shaping a narrative or emotional journey for the audience, not just assembling a list of pieces. For MCMA, my plan is to design the programs and to perform in them, with a rotating ensemble of musicians selected based on their connection to the repertoire and artistic chemistry. I’m also very intentional about how Armenian music can be presented in conversation with the Western canon and other underrepresented voices. Collaboration with other chamber groups — whether it is sharing ideas, helping shape new program concepts, or contributing artistic talent or direction — is also one of the potential aspects of our goals of building a larger culture of meaningful music-making.”

Hovsepien grew up in Belmont. After

graduating from Belmont High School, he attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees under the guidance of violinist Ilya Kaler.

“As a world-renowned violinist [Kaler] is also an incredible mentor whose guidance shaped much of my artistry. Performing alongside him for my final recital before graduating was an honor — a culmination of years of study, growth, and shared musical dialogue. Having the opportunity to experience his artistry and collaborate in a performance setting was an experience that I’ll always carry with me. It is also a great honor that he is a member of MCMA’s advisory board, and we are looking forward to performing together again as part of MCMA’s future concerts,” Hovsepien said.

“Along the way, I’ve been fortunate to win several competitions, which opened doors for me to perform in some incredible venues — including Symphony Hall in Boston, Carnegie Hall in NY, Kulas and Mixon Halls in Cleveland, among others,” he noted.

He has performed widely around the US as well as in Armenia. He is currently the artist-in-residence at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown. He has won several awards, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto

Competition in 2017 and the Darius Milhaud Competition in 2021 and 2022.

Hovsepien, though dedicated to classical music, is also deep into jazz. When he’s wearing his jazz hat, he plays the alto sax. “Jazz has always been an important part of my life: it broadened my sense of rhythm, phrasing, and musical expression in ways that continue to influence how I think about music as a whole,” he said.

And to round off his musical influences, he also plays the sh’vi, a traditional Armenian flute, which, he said, “connected me deeply to my heritage and reminded me of the richness and diversity of musical traditions.”

“These different influences — classical, jazz, and Armenian folk — really shaped who I am as a musician. Today, they all feed into my work with Massachusetts Chamber Music Artists, where I’m creating programs that blend familiar works with the music that our audiences may be hearing for the first time,” Hovsepien said.

There is much more to the life of a musician than simply showing up in a spiffy suit or dress on the night of a performance. Hovsepien explained, “The life of a musician is a constant balance between discipline, creativity and adaptability. It’s not so much a 9-to-5 but rather a 24/7 job. Your schedule can often be irregular, shaped by rehearsals, teaching, performing, traveling, intense practicing and behind-the-scenes planning for projects like MCMA. There’s definitely a large volume of work that is not visible on the surface, but that is the idea with all artists, not only musicians. We have to work on our craft and sharpen it constantly, no matter how much previous experience we might have. As for practice, it really depends on what’s on the horizon. When I’m preparing for a concert or learning new reper-

toire, I might be practicing for a majority of the day, sometimes broken up into focused sessions. But beyond just playing your instrument, there’s also score studying, listening, research, and collaboration that are all part of the process. It’s a never-ending journey, but even on the busiest days, I try to carve out time to stay connected to the music itself — not just the logistics around it.”

He also encouraged everyone to get involved in music at whatever level they are comfortable with. “Follow your curiosity. Whether you’re picking up an instrument for the first time, coming back to music after a break, or simply looking to experience live concerts — there’s no wrong place to start. Music is for everyone, and it’s never too late to learn, explore, or enjoy it more deeply,” he said. “Most importantly, don’t feel like you need a certain background or knowledge to belong in the world of music. Just show up with an open mind and the rest follows.”

He concluded by saying, “Looking ahead, my goal is to build MCMA into a lasting artistic home — both for performers and for audiences. I want it to grow into a respected institution known for presenting chamber music that is thoughtful, bold, and emotionally meaningful. I hope to continue creating programs that bring Armenian music into wider recognition, alongside the great works of the chamber repertoire and new music from diverse voices. I’d like to create a space where people feel connected, where the music we play opens hearts, sparks curiosity, and builds bridges between cultures. That’s the power of music at its best, and that’s what I’m working toward.”

For tickets to the inaugural concert of MCMA at First Parish in Bedford (75 Great Rd, Bedford) on Saturday, November 1 at 6 p.m., visit website at mcmartists.org.

Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc to Perform at Aurora Prize Ceremony on Ellis Island

WASHINGTON — Grammy-nominated artists Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc will headline the 2025 Aurora Prize Ceremony, set to take place on November 6, on Ellis Island. The ceremony, marking the 10th anniversary of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, will honor extraordinary grassroots humanitarians and announce the 2025 Aurora Prize Laureate. Award-winning journalist Judy Woodruff and bestselling author and columnist David Ignatius will co-host the evening.

“The Aurora Prize Ceremony has become a tradition, a celebration of courageous individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting others, and a space where a global community of humanitarians and supporters comes together,” said Armine



Rufus Wainwright (Brandon Michael Young photo) at left, and Aloe Blacc (Zach Bell photo)

Afeyan, CEO of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. “This year on Ellis Island, as we honor the commitment and impact of humanitarian heroes, we also mark a decade of building a platform that amplifies their voices, strengthens their work and grows a network rooted in generational gratitude. We’re glad to welcome Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc into this ongoing effort.”

Held at Ellis Island, a symbol of refuge and resilience, this Ceremony will spotlight the power of private philanthropy in support of human rights and global humanitarian efforts and reinforce the criticality of private giving at a moment of government funding cuts and increasing humanitarian needs.

Renowned for his interpretive brilliance and vocal artistry, Wainwright is one of the most acclaimed vocalists and songwriters of his generation. Born in New York and

raised in Montreal, Wainwright has released 11 studio albums, including “Rufus Does Judy” at Carnegie Hall, his Grammy-nominated Judy Garland tribute. Wainwright has composed for opera and classical music, including his acclaimed debut opera, “Prima Donna,” which premiered in 2009.

“It’s a privilege to perform for a cause that uplifts those working tirelessly, often without recognition, to save lives and uphold dignity,” said Wainwright. “I have been deeply moved by Aurora’s support for modern-day heroes and grateful for the opportunity to help celebrate their impact.”

Blacc, a Southern California native known for hits I Need a Dollar and The Man, rose to global fame with Wake Me Up (produced by Avicii), which topped charts in more than 30 countries. A longtime advocate for social justice, Blacc partnered with Aurora to release the single SHINE, inspired by grassroots humanitarians supported by the Initiative. The song premiered at last year’s Ceremony in honor of those who fight fearlessly to save human lives and alleviate suffering.

“In a world that can feel overwhelming, the stories Aurora brings to light remind us of the extraordinary strength and kindness that still exist,” said Blacc. “It’s an honor to stand with this community once again and celebrate those who choose courage and compassion, even in the darkest moments—a commitment that continues to inspire my work and my partnership with Aurora.”

The event will also feature performances by Kento Suzuki, duduk player and alumnus of the United World College in Dilijan, Armenia, and Diana Adamyman, virtuoso violinist and winner of the 2018 Yehudi Menuhin International Competition. Adamyman’s moving performance at last year’s ceremony was one of the evening’s highlights.

For more information on Aurora or to purchase tickets, visit www.AuroraHumanitarian.org.



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**TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
METRO LOS ANGELES CHAPTER**

Under the Auspices of
His Eminence
Archbishop Hovnan Derderian,
Primate, Western Diocese of the
Armenian Church of North America

A Program Dedicated to
STEPAN ALAJAJIAN
1924 - 2010
Writer, Prosaist and Translator

Keynote Speaker
Hratch Sepetjian

Cultural program
with the participation of
Nune Avetisyan &
Ripsime Rshtuni

Sunday, October 5, 2025, 4 PM
Glendale Central Library

222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale, CA 91205

info@tekeyanla.org



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 23-27 — The Armenian Museum of Fresno is hosting a powerful dual exhibition, “Fresno Armenians: 50 Years Ago,” along with the sound installation “From the Fields of Fresno.” The exhibition features more than 300 photos by Robby Antonyan taken at Armenian gatherings in the city in the 1970s. It opened on June 25, and runs through August 27. The museum is located in the University of California Center at 550 E. Shaw Avenue in Fresno, across from Fashion Fair mall. The museum is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and admission is free.

CONNECTICUT

AUGUST 24 — Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection annual church festival at 1910 Stanley Street, New Britain. Live Armenian band, authentic Armenian food, Armenian dancing, bake sale, Armenian vendor. Sunday, noon to 5:00 pm. Come experience the legendary New Britain Armenian hospitality.

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 24 — ANNUAL PICNIC 12-5PM Lamb Shish Kebab, Chicken Kebab, Losh Kebab and Kheyma. Pastries-Cuisine Table and Armenian Coffee. Live music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Holy Archangels Armenian Church, 1280 Boston Rd., Haverhill MA

SEPTEMBER 8 — Monday, St. James Men’s club and Holy Trinity Men’s Union will have a joint meeting at the Charles and Nevart Talanian Hall at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Mezza 5.45 p.m., Dinner 6.45 p.m. Losh Kebab or Kheyma Meal \$22. Guest speaker will be John Garabedian, lifetime career in the radio business WJIB 720am, and 101.3 FM.RSVP is highly encouraged , email tmu@htaac.org or call the church office 617-354-0632

SEPTEMBER 16 — Holy Archangels 2nd Annual Golf Tournament Hickory Hill Golf Course 200 North Lowell St., Methuen, MA 7:30 AM Registration; 9:00 AM Shotgun Tee off. For Golfer Registration Info and Sponsorship opportunities, contact Mark Kazanjian (508-633-7447) Markkaz55@aol.com

SEPTEMBER 20 — Celebrate Armenia! Heritage. Culture. Traditions. Satuday, 1:30-8 pm. On the occasion of Armenian Independence Day on September 21. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. Rain date: September 27. RSVP appreciated. hello@armenianheritagepark.org

SEPTEMBER 21 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter presents A Summer Concert featuring Greek-Armenian violinist Emilya Gaspar and her mother, pianist Jasmine Atabekyan. The duo will perform Armenian and classical masterpieces. 4.30 p.m. 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Please use Norseman Avenue entrance. Free, followed by a small reception. All donations will support Emilya’s education. For reservations or information, call Sossy at 617-281-1647 or email syogurtian@comcast.net.

SEPTEMBER 27 — Armenian Museum of America Music in Color Concert with Musician-in-Residence, violinist Haig Hovsepian and pianist Joey Vasconi, 7- 9 p.m., 65 Main Street Watertown, MA 02472, (617) 926-2562

SEPTEMBER 28 — Book Launch and Reception. An afternoon with Muriel Mirak-Weissbach on the occasion of the release in English of her book, A German General and the Armenian Genocide: Otto Liman von Sanders Between Honor and State. Sunday, 4 p.m., at ACF. Co-sponsored by NAASR, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Goethe Institut and Berghahn Publishing House. Free and Open to the Public

OCTOBER 4 — National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) - “Celebrating 70 Years- Building the Future of Armenian Studies” Gala at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston. Honorees, Pamela Avedisian and Yervant Chekijian. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities please go to <http://naasr.org/gala70>

OCTOBER 25 — Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church 85th Anniversary Gala Fundraising Dinner, Saturday, 6:00 PM Cocktail, 7 p.m. Dinner & Program, Sheraton Boston Hotel. Celebrate 85 years of Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in New England. Details and tickets: www.holycrossarmenian.com

NOVEMBER 1 — Debut performance of the Massachusetts Chamber Music Artists. Program. Music by Frank Bridge, Komitas, Mendelssohn. Haig Hovsepian and Michael Fisher on violin, Yeh-Chun Lin on viola, Edward Arron on cello and Dina Vainshtein on piano. First Parish in Bedford, 75 Great Road, Bedford. 6 to 7.30 p.m. Tickets \$24 to \$30. Visit www.mcmartists.org.

NOVEMBER 21 — AMAA’s Boston Child Care Committee presents an evening supporting the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan, Armenia, **FEATURING COMEDIAN KEV ORKIAN. COCKTAILS, DINNER & LIVE AUCTION.** Wellesley Country Club, Wellesley Hills. **SPONSOR BY AUGUST 1, 2025, TO BE LISTED ON THE INVITATION!** (Individual Tickets will commence at a later date). For more info visit: <https://amaa.org/hyemindsboston2025/>

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 22 — 12 VOCATIONS: VARIETY OF GIFTS - ONE SPIRIT. Join St. Nersess Seminary and celebrate the vocations of its next 12 alumni, including three bishops, seven priests, a deacon and a lay minister at a gala banquet to be held at Macaluso’s, Hawthorne, NJ. Starts at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$200 per person. Details, invitations, and booklet donations can be found on www.stnersess.edu.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 14 — St. Paul Armenian Church, Syracuse: Annual Shish Kebab Picnic at Ryder Park under the pavilion. Games, Great Food, and Good Times. All are welcome!

To send Calendar items to the Mirror-Spectator email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirror-spectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More” or 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.

Adrineh Mirzayan Amplifies the Armenian Voice Through Film Production

FILM, from page 13

Afterwards, Adrineh said, Hovhannes “was sent to Shushi before World War I to study at a prestigious school called Ryal, (established in 1881). He studied there for eight years, but when war broke out, he fled with an Armenian family and became an orphan. He ended up in Zaqatal [today Zaqatala, a city in northwestern Azerbaijan], losing touch with his family for two years — until one day, a woman who knew his family saw him. She recognized him and notified his family. Fortunately, he was reunited with his mother. Adrineh concluded, “Every time I tell this story, I get teary.”

While in Baku, her maternal grandmother’s father and brothers bought an oil well and became prosperous but all that came to an end when the Bolsheviks took over in 1920. Adrineh’s maternal grandparents got married in Baku but left to live in Iran, which is where Adrineh’s parents married.

Adrineh’s family later owned a villa on the coast of the Caspian Sea in Iran. Many of her childhood memories are tied to that place, as she would spend three months there every summer with her big Armenian family. “Even the smell of a flower can bring back moments we shared with our grandma, aunts, uncles, and cousins,” she recalled.

When asked about her parents’ effect on her life, her face lights up: “My dad was a very influential man... I always looked up to both my parents.”

Her father was a Ph.D. graduate in elec-



trical engineering who studied in Germany and went on to become CEO of the German company Ximena. Her mother devoted herself to humanitarian work for Armenia and Armenian communities.

“It’s no coincidence that I became a producer,” Adrineh said. “I didn’t just wake up one day and decide to become a film producer. Being Armenian is a full-time job. You just do it — and do it well and be proud of being Armenian.”

In 1998, she traveled with her family across Armenia and Artsakh — a journey that would soon shape her role as a cultural influencer in the Armenian community. What she saw reminded her of the stories of survival of her own family and she recalled that she decided she wanted somehow to let the world know about the resilient Armenians.

Adrineh’s work as an executive in hospitality allowed her to develop strong leadership and communication skills in cross-cultural settings. She worked for the Armenian community in California for many years

before she was asked to be part of the distribution committee for the film “Tevanik,” in 2014, which marked the beginning of her collaboration with Avetisyan.

From Hospitality to Film Production

When she viewed “Tevanik” in 2014 for the first time, she said, “I cried the entire time watching the movie. It reminded me so much of my grandmother, of my childhood, of the stories I had heard. I felt alive.” Adrineh recognized Jivan’s potential immediately, though “Tevanik” was the first film he had directed. “I wanted to invest my time in someone with vision who was doing something meaningful for our people.”

Her role as a producer was born out of what she called Armenian patriotism. She became involved in every stage of production, from contracts to the creative process. She said: “Sometimes we rewatch takes several times to choose the best one. I’m emotionally attached. This isn’t just one project; this has been an 11-year journey. I’m part of multiple films.”

When asked about the casting process for the actors for Jivan’s movies, she responded that the casting is never about seeking celebrities. She said: “We have so many stories that need to be told. It’s not about how famous the actor is — it’s about who can truly embody the character that Jivan envisioned.”

As far as the financing of the films is concerned, she noted “at the end credits, all the names are Armenian names.” A non-profit organization was created to accept dona-

tions. The Armenian government’s National Cinema Center reviews film proposals and if it accepts a film, often it provides the greatest financial support.

She added, “the way our strategy works is one film brings in the budget for the next film.” Currently Jivan’s team has grown to six people, working alongside four volunteers, many of whom are from the Birthright Armenia program.

When she started speaking about their upcoming film, “Revival,” Adrineh’s voice lifted with excitement: “It’s about emotional intelligence. There’s a powerful force behind it. Armenia is becoming a hub for AI, and we’re showcasing that talent in this film. I believe something big and beautiful will come from it.”

In addition to her deep dedication to Armenians, Adrineh attempts to connect with all types of people and communities across the world. “To understand people better — to connect with humanity — you must travel,” she said. She has traveled across the globe, including China and Vietnam, and even twice to Africa. She has one more destination remaining on her list of places to visit: Antarctica.

However, Adrineh remains focused on a key mission: “Armenia needs the diaspora, and the diaspora needs Armenia. We must build that bridge.” She is optimistic for the future and, in harmony with the message of Jivan’s forthcoming film, declares “Our Armenians are going to be revived.”

COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

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Moscow and Tehran's Views on the Trump Road

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

As expected, the statement signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan under the mediation of the United States became a subject of serious discussion not only in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the United States, but also throughout the South Caucasus and its neighboring countries. It was evident that there would be two opinions in Armenia: the authorities would be accused of treason by the opposition, while their supporters would point to it as an important achievement from the perspective of establishing peace in the region. However, in all this, we must also pay attention to the positions of the regional players who have a significant role in the South Caucasus.

It was natural for the Islamic Republic of Iran to react, making statements at various levels and in different formats, expressing its position regarding the road and the American presence. Despite the various statements, in my view those statements can be described as mild and cautious. Russia spoke rather cautiously too and refrained from harsh assessments, which means that Russia will still wait to understand what exactly this project will entail. For Moscow and Tehran, it is noteworthy how the road will take shape and what involvement the United States will have in it.

Although the statements from Tehran and Moscow were quite restrained, with only a few minor harsh remarks, they indicate that the document signed in Washington was prepared rather quickly, and that decisions regarding its timelines were made swiftly. Consequently, Armenia and Azerbaijan were unable to inform their neighboring states about the planned agreement or they simply avoided doing so in order not to receive pressure before the signing ceremony. In the coming days, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran is expected to visit Armenia. There is no doubt that the main topic for the

discussion will be the signed statement and its implementation.

Afterwards, the prime minister of Armenia hastened to inform President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin about the contents of this agreement and what details were addressed in Washington.

A number of countries rushed to welcome this trilateral statement. Moreover, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group co-chair countries, particularly France, announced that they are ready to dissolve the Minsk Group, as agreed upon by the two states.

As the first president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian said, "I am convinced that it is only possible to comment on it after

the agreement has been put into effect. At present, I am somewhat puzzled by the varied (though perhaps complimentary) assessments of our friendly Iran's officials and, in particular, by Russia's almost complete silence."

How well the Armenian side will be able to properly explain, present, and convince Iran and Russia that their interests are not being infringed upon will be evident eventually. However, one thing is clear: if for Iran the very existence of this route was already a red line — and this has been repeatedly emphasized by Iran's leadership — then in this case the American presence should be considered by them as a doubly serious and unacceptable circumstance.

As for Russia, throughout history there has been only one instance when the United States had the opportunity to push Russia out of the South Caucasus, including from countries that had previously been within its sphere of influence, and that was in the 1990s, when Russia was extremely weak socioeconomically and could not safeguard its interests even within former Soviet republics.

As for whether the United States will now succeed in securing a presence in Armenia, in proximity to Iran and not far from a Russian military base, that is something only time will tell.



Hypothetical Peace, Damaged Sovereignty and Turbulence in Perspective

By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In the wake of the August 8 agreement signing in Washington, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan remains as complacent as ever. He claims to have obtained guarantees of peace and sovereignty. However, the facts seem to point to the opposite: Armenia's loss of sovereignty over part of its territory, shifting alliances with incalculable economic and military consequences, and a complete lack of clearly-identified gains for Armenia.

The American solution aims to isolate Russia and Iran, an objective that satisfies both the Europeans and Israel. But the Europeans should be concerned with regard to repercussions in the geoeconomic and geopolitical spheres; the Central Asia-Europe trade they were considering in the Samarkand Agreement signed in April 2025, in particular to obtain hydrocarbon supplies and free themselves from dependence on Russian gas and oil, will, go under US control, if the Washington Agreement comes to fruition. An added warning sign for Europe is that an EXXON-SOCAR (Azerbaijan's national gas company) agreement was signed in Washington on the sidelines of the Aliyev-Trump meeting.

One has to search in vain for measures benefiting Armenia in this accord — one can go further and say there are, in fact, none. On the contrary, this agreement weakens Armenia's national security and undermines its sovereignty over part of the territory. The Armenian government and Pashinyan's supporters may try their best to pretend otherwise, but the facts are indisputable. Ironically Aliyev even obtained the release of American military aid to Azerbaijan hitherto forbidden under Freedom Section 907) even though he came to sign a so-called framework agreement for peace and recon-

ciliation. Armenia made no demands in this area. In short, instead of the peace desired by the Pashinyan government at the cost of heavy and incessant unilateral concessions, all the seeds of a future war are in place.

The presence of a private American company providing security on the Trump Road for Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) will not change anything. It will only be there to secure the energy, road, rail, and digital transport infrastructures, but not the rest of Armenian territory. One cannot rely upon the United States to defend Armenia militarily in case of an attack.

The best illustration of the situation is that of the Syrian oil wells, which have been controlled and protected by the American army since 2014. While war has continued to rage on the Syrian territory to this day, including Israeli and Turkish incursions and bombardments of the territory and the overthrow of President Assad, at no time has the United States intervened directly in the armed conflicts: the protection of American oil companies exploiting the wells is their sole mission as if this portion of the territory and its mineral resources does not belong anymore to Syria. The Armenian population must be aware of this and not imagine another outcome.

Pashinyan's smile cannot obscure the fact that Azerbaijan is triumphant on all counts and even reserves the right to sign the "peace treaty" when its other preliminary conditions are met: the first is expressed immediately, it concerns the amendment of the Armenian Constitution in connection with the mention of the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh. The second cannot be long in coming: it concerns the return of Azerbaijanis born in Armenia who left it in the early 1990s. The Declaration of the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs is subtle enough not to mention this last point so as not to spoil the Trumpian jubilation.

Let's analyze the Declaration, its geopolitical consequences and its constitutionality as per the Armenian Constitution.

I – What Does the Text Say?

The official text is ambiguous on many points but revealing on others.


Item 1 simply notes that not all the conditions for signing a peace agreement have been met and that further action is necessary. This corroborates Aliyev's comments.

Item 2 notes that both parties have signed a request to dissolve the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group. Both countries call on other OSCE's participating states to make such a request. The OSCE Secretary General (a Turkish diplomat) reacted quickly and very diplomatically, stating that his organization "was ready to implement the provisions of this declaration" but that their commitment remains to establish a lasting peace.

Item 3 reaffirms the importance of opening communications between the two countries for intrastate, bilateral and international transport while respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and jurisdiction of states. The Armenian Prime Minister considers this phrase to be a firm commitment by Azerbaijan to respect the sovereignty of Armenia. However, Pashinyan's comments of the Declaration clearly demonstrate the ambiguity and fragility of the initialed text. There is no concrete, fixed commitment and Pashinyan himself states that "the document does not contain technical details" and emphasizes that "all future solutions must respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and jurisdiction of states." In short, nothing is defined nor guaranteed.

It is only specified, but without clear explanation, that efforts will be aimed at ensuring "unhindered connectivity between the main part of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous see TURBULENCE page 19

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

‘Peace Treaty’: Armenia’s Humiliating Capitulation

After several years of intense, one-sided negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in March both countries announced they had finally agreed on all 17 points of the “Peace Treaty.” President Ilham Aliyev proclaimed that Armenia had accepted every term Azerbaijan had dictated.

When Armenia requested Azerbaijan to schedule a signing ceremony, Baku declined. Given Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s willingness to make further concessions, Aliyev postponed finalizing the treaty to extract additional demands.

Even when President Trump invited President Aliyev to the White House to sign the “Peace Treaty,” he refused. The document was merely initialed, rendering it non-binding.

On August 11, 2025, Armenia and Azerbaijan finally released the full text of the “Peace Treaty,” formally titled: “Agreement on Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.”

How can Armenia agree to sign a “Peace Treaty” when:

- 1) Azeri troops have occupied parts of Republic of Armenia’s territory since 2021.
- 2) Azerbaijan is holding Armenian hostages in a Baku prison.
- 3) 120,000 displaced Artsakh Armenians are denied return to their ancestral homeland.

The treaty’s promise of a “just, comprehensive, and lasting peace” sounds noble, but remains hollow. No one opposes peace when it is truly “just” and “lasting.” Yet, Aliyev’s continued threats show he covets Armenian land, not peace.

Let’s examine the 17 articles of the “Peace Treaty”:

Article 1: Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize the boundaries of their former Soviet republics. This validates the artificial boundaries imposed by the Soviet Union.

Article 2: The Parties confirm no future territorial claims and pledge not to support acts “aimed to dismember or impair” the other’s territorial integrity. This suppresses a future patriotic Armenian government’s pursuit of historical territorial demands for Western Armenia, Artsakh and Nakhichevan, and silences dissent.

Article 3: The Parties must prevent any third party from using their territory to attack the other. Yet Turkish military forces and Jihadist mercenaries remain in Azerbaijan.

Article 4: Both sides shall refrain from intervening in each other’s internal affairs. However, Azerbaijan demands Armenia amend its Constitution, return the purchased weapons, and expel the EU monitors.

Article 5: The two sides will establish diplomatic relations, implying the ex-

change of ambassadors. Even a minor incident involving Azerbaijan’s future ambassador in Yerevan could serve as a pretext for Baku to attack Armenia.

Article 6: A joint commission will delimit and demarcate the border. In case of a dispute, will Azerbaijan honor international arbitration?

Article 7: “The Parties shall not deploy along their mutual border forces of any third party.” Will Azerbaijan expel the Turkish troops and Jihadist mercenaries in its territory, while demanding that Armenia remove the EU monitors?

Article 8: The Parties “condemn and combat intolerance, racial hatred and discrimination, separatism, violent extremism and terrorism....” This clause could be used as a pretext for the Armenian government to suppress the activism of Artsakh Armenians and opposition groups.

Article 9: The Parties agree to search for missing persons during their past armed conflicts. This provision is commendable, if actually carried out.

Article 10: The Parties agree to cooperate in various fields. This is a benign commitment.

Article 11: The Parties are free to carry out their obligations with other UN members. This clause poses no risks.

Article 12: “The Parties...shall be guided by international law and this Agreement” and not “invoke the provisions of its internal legislation as justification for its failure to perform the present Agreement.” Why then does Azerbaijan demand Armenia change its Constitution?

Article 13: A bilateral Commission will be established to oversee implementation of this Agreement. Will Azerbaijan accept the Commission’s decisions?

Article 14: The Parties shall settle their disputes peacefully. If Azerbaijan refuses to comply with the decisions of the joint Commission or other international bodies, what recourse does Armenia have?

Article 15: The Parties shall withdraw their legal demands against each other from any international forum. This forfeits Armenia’s right to hold Azerbaijan accountable for war crimes.

Articles 16 and 17 are harmless.

Since this capitulating document was signed under duress, it is considered invalid under international law. Pashinyan is intentionally misrepresenting the “Peace Treaty” to convince the voters to return him to power in the 2026 parliamentary elections.

Possible next steps to reject Pashinyan’s and Aliyev’s plans:

- 1) Remove Pashinyan from office before he can sign the “peace” agreement.
- 2) If that fails, vote against the Azeri-dictated new Constitution of Armenia in the upcoming referendum, forcing Aliyev to reject the “Peace Treaty,” and Pashinyan to resign.
- 3) If the Pashinyan-controlled Constitutional Court and Parliament approve the “Peace Treaty,” Armenians still have the chance to reject it by voting against it in a referendum that Aliyev is insisting on to make sure that the people of Armenia, not just the government, is supporting this “Peace Treaty.”
- 4) Finally, Pashinyan should know that a future patriotic government will renounce the “Peace Treaty,” declaring it null and void, along with Trump’s Route.

The Consequences of Being Weak and Desperate

By Vahan Zanoian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

“The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.” —Thucydides, 460-400 BC, Historian and General, author of *The History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Much has been written and spoken about the events of August 8 at the White House. Key documents, signed or initialed, have been made public and debated. Some commentators have hailed them as “massive” and “historic.” Others have criticized them as either pure theater or, even worse, as the kiss of death to sovereign Armenian statehood. And there have been many tones of voices in-between.

But if we look at what happened and, as importantly, why it happened, it basically boils down to a simple and, upon reflection, obvious fact: namely, Armenia was too weak to repel a probable Azerbaijani invasion, and desperate to make a deal.

By most accounts, the initial trigger of the event was the fear of an imminent military invasion by Azerbaijan earlier in the spring on southern Armenia, to establish a link between Nakhijevan and Azerbaijan by force, the so-called “Zangezur Corridor.” To preempt such a contingency, a flurry of diplomatic activity took place, spearheaded by US special envoy Steve Witkoff, between the US, Azerbaijan and Armenia. It basically gave Azerbaijan the route it wanted and a lot more, Armenia the removal of the threat of an imminent invasion, and the US a strategic presence in the southern Caucasus.

At the end, no peace agreement was signed, just a memorandum declaring mutual intentions to pursue peace. Azerbaijan got: 1) an agreement to establish the land route between Nakhijevan and Azerbaijan that it wanted, albeit not by the name and format that it had hoped for. The route will be named TRIPP — Trump Route for In-

ternational Peace and Prosperity — to be managed by an American venture, under Armenian law; 2) full de facto normalization of its use of force to accomplish ethnic cleansing in Artsakh; 3) no requirement to withdraw from the 210 sq. km. of highly strategic territory that it continues to occupy in Armenia proper; 4) no requirement to commit to the release of the Armenian POWs and political prisoners illegally held in Baku; 5) an annulment of section 907 prohibiting the sale of military equipment to it from the US; 6) a dissolution of the OCSE Minsk Group, putting the last nail in the coffin of the status of Nagorno Karabakh negotiations; 7) agreement not to have foreign presence in Armenia along the Azerbaijan border; 8) no mention of the right of the population of Artsakh to return — something that has no international support and is not on the radar of the US either, but that too is a consequence of “the weak suffering what they must.”

In return, Armenia got one critical de facto concession, namely a postponement of an otherwise presumed imminent Azerbaijani invasion in the south — i.e., the (temporary?) removal of a threat. Of course, there were other significant sweeteners, largely designed to appeal to Armenian domestic political sensitivities — such as the absence of the term “corridor,” no foreign troops on Armenian soil, no disruption of the Armenia-Iran border, and no extraterritoriality — all of which also represent the removal of potential threats, but not concrete new offers to Armenia which it did not have before August 8. The defenders of the government’s policy claim that Armenia got much more than a temporary deterrent (more on this below), but these are more future hopeful expectations rather than concrete accomplishments.

Thucydides’ words, spoken some 2,500 years ago, ring true today. Had Armenia been strong enough to repel a new Azerbaijani invasion by itself, none of this would have happened, at least not in the way that it did. Any deal would in the very least have included the release of

the political prisoners and POWs and the withdrawal of Azerbaijan from occupied Armenian territories. Even after the defeat of the 2020 44-day war, this could still have been achieved if Armenia had done more to strengthen its defenses in the past five years.

We should be very clear on this point: It was the fear of an Azerbaijani aggression, combined with Armenia’s presumed inability to repel it, and the government’s desperation to show progress on its “Peace Agenda” prior to next year’s elections, that enabled the events at the White House on August 8. There was no other compelling rationale or justification for it from Armenia’s perspective. Being weak and scared drove this policy and the US president was willing to play along.

The weak will suffer what they must — no judgment here, just a statement of the way it is. We owe it to ourselves to realize this. Those who glorify these “agreements” are doing as much, if not more harm as those to denounce them offhand, because both, each in its way, are distracting the public from the truth, and, as seriously, from drawing the right lessons from the Armenian condition since the 2020 war.

Here is what the sponsors of the August 8 events hope for and want us to believe: In three to four years, TRIPP will be built. Before it is officially launched, Azerbaijan, which so far has violated every provision of the November 9, 2020, ceasefire agreement, will withdraw from occupied territories in Armenia, and even before that, as a gesture of goodwill, it will release all the political prisoners and POWs. Armenia will change its constitution to the satisfaction of Ilham Aliyev, and Aliyev will finally sign the Peace Agreement with Armenia. Azerbaijan will stop, and, over time, reverse the anti-Armenian hate propaganda and “Western Azerbaijan” rhetoric from both the media and school textbooks. It will stop destroying churches, tombstones and other cultural heritage in Artsakh.

see CONSEQUENCES, page 20



COMMENTARY

Hypothetical Peace, Damaged Sovereignty and Turbulence in Perspective

TURBULENCE, from page 17

Republic through the territory of the Republic of Armenia.” What does “unhindered connectivity” mean? Flow of goods without transit fees and control? Flow of persons without any control? In return, the text does not mention or define specific connectivity for Armenia. It evokes vaguely “mutual benefits for the international and intrastate connectivity of the Republic of Armenia.” How can direct connectivity between Iran and Armenia be ensured if a strip of land controlled by a private American company stands in its way?

Item 4 is by far the most harmful because it directly affects sovereignty. Indeed, it grants Azerbaijan the right to “mutually determine third parties” who will work with the Republic of Armenia and the United States of America “to set forth a framework for the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) connectivity project in the territory of the Republic of Armenia.” In other words, Azerbaijan has decision-making power over the connectivity model that will be implemented and the third party that will manage it over the territory of Armenia. Sovereignty? Azerbaijani diplomacy interprets this text as a necessity to ensure “unhindered connectivity” between the main part of Azerbaijan and its autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan. It therefore sets its conditions even before the establishment of the announced working group.

Under these conditions, Azerbaijan does not hesitate to sign items 5 and 6 to affirm its desire to put aside the past and the spirit of revenge and, instead, to build bilateral relations based on trust and mutual respect.

It should be recalled that at no point does this declaration define the benefits for Armenia, and it is completely silent on the right of return of the Armenians of Artsakh, the release of Armenian hostages detained and tried by Baku, or the protection of the Armenian cultural heritage of Artsakh. The absence of any reference to these last points testifies to Azerbaijan’s triumph and Armenia’s formal capitulation on this issue, but also on the issue concerning the part of “real Armenia” territory that is still occupied.

II – Geopolitical Consequences

The reactions of third-party states are enigmatic and one of embarrassment. The Armenian Prime Minister and the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are actively trying to inform those states while downplaying the risks related to the content of the signed agreement.

Iran’s reactions vary depending on the interlocutor. The Iranian president, a supporter of dialogue with the United States, welcomed the agreement and maintained that Iran’s wishes to preserve its communication routes to the North have been taken into account. The Armenian Prime Minister asserted that a rail connection with Iran is planned. At this stage of the matter, there is no evidence to support the statements of the two leaders. The softened tone of the Iranian reaction, however, reflects Iran’s weakened state. The Iranian president expressed “concern that an American-Armenian company is building this road” near to the Armenian-Iranian border.

Russia cannot have failed to be informed of the content of this agreement by Armenia before the meeting in Washington. The diplomatic channels between Russia and Armenia are still vigorous. Thus, the question of Russian strategy remains unanswered: has Russia sacrificed its interests in the Caucasus, and in particular its relationship with Iran, to ensure a better balance of power in the upcoming negotiations on Ukraine with President Trump? Or is it buying time to derail this project by other means? In the absence of information, I will not risk speculating on these questions. However, the statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson gives one pause. Russia emphasizes that “the trilateral agreements concluded by Moscow with the two South Caucasus countries remain valid,” said Maria Zakharova. She added that neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan had officially withdrawn from the 2020 agreement brokered by Moscow to end the six-week war in Nagorno-Karabakh, which included a provision for regional connectivity with Russian participation. Finally, she referred to the 1995 Russian-Armenian bilateral agreements (renewed in 2010) that assign the protection of Armenia’s borders with Turkey and Iran to Russian border guards. How will this border protection fit with the protection of the “unimpeded communication route” by a US controlled corporation? It will be necessary to await the outcome of the Trump-Putin meeting to clarify this Russian stance.

President Putin and the Armenian Prime Minister held talks in preparation for the Trump-Putin summit in Alaska.

The European Union welcomed this agreement, but its statement likely conceals their disappointment. The Samarkand Agreement provided for European investments in Central Asia in the fields of transport, strategic minerals and

energy, in response to the customs tariffs imposed by the United States. The latter has just inflicted a potential coup de grace to necessary Central Asian minerals sought by Europe.

France welcomes the agreement and unwaveringly aligns itself with Washington and its leadership role. President Macron’s Atlanticist approach is nothing new. But France claims with great fanfare to be Armenia’s main protector and Pashinyan’s unwavering supporter. Aren’t the French efforts focused on Syunik threatened by this potentially US-controlled communication channel? This agreement can only create unease in France.

There is also a hidden side that has not yet been revealed in this theatre. France has been working discreetly for some time to bring Turkey and Armenia closer together, and the success of the Washington agreement could also be explained by this as there is a convergence of views to Turkey’s great benefit.

Turkey, which has remained on the sidelines in this affair, is the big winner, along with Azerbaijan and the United States. Turkey and Israel are Trump’s two strategic partners in the Caucasus and the Middle East. Both states get their way: the former gains access to Central Asia; the latter secures the encirclement of Iran.

So, exit France and the European Union.

Exit Iran too, as well as India and China. Those three countries will not welcome American control in this region because this communication corridor cuts off their economic route to Russia and opens the door to a rapprochement between the Turkic and Muslim states of Europe and those of Central Asia — a Turkic-Muslim influence that they so fear.

Through this impromptu agreement (even though the solution of a private American company had been discussed for a year in insider circles in Yerevan, before Trump’s arrival as president), the Armenian government has therefore sacrificed all the so-called strategic relationships it has strived to build over the past two years with Iran, India and China. It must be recalled that Armenia has very little trade with the West: export trade with Europe and the United States is insignificant at 8.4 percent, while trade with Russia represents 39 percent and trade with regional countries (Iran, Georgia, India, China) represents 41 percent. The East-West route serves only Turkish, American, and European interests.

In short, the circumstantial postures of Russia and Iran, and the likely reluctance of India and China, herald a difficult future for the Washington Agreement and for Armenia’s diplomacy and economy.

III - The Consequences at Domestic Political Level

Prime Minister Pashinyan, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the lieutenants of the “Civil Contract” party will nevertheless strive in the days and weeks to convince their supporters, who are dwindling in number (a recent poll shows only 12 percent trust Pashinyan), that Azerbaijan is committed to respecting peace and that Armenia’s sovereignty is not being undermined. The propaganda machine will be put in place, and the takeover of all levers of power will be secured in order to be able to pass agreements that contradict the Constitution and harm national interests.

Following the takeover of the judiciary and of the Constitutional Court in 2020, the attempted control over the Armenian Apostolic Church and the diaspora communities, the economic pressure exerted on refugees from Artsakh, the arrest of opposition party members, and the neutralization of popular figures such as Samvel Karapetyan and Ruben Vardanyan, philanthropists and investors, the next target will be the press. The newspaper Aravot is being evicted from its historic building. It will therefore be important to monitor the fate of independent media, the only power not to have come under the Prime Minister’s sole control. It should be noted that President Trump’s praise for President Aliyev’s longevity and effectiveness can only encourage the Armenian Prime Minister to strengthen his absolute power, assured that he will have the support of both Trump and Aliyev. The Prime Minister’s goal is to remain in power at all costs in 2026 in order to pass the constitutional reform that would confirm the promises made to Azerbaijan.

Indeed, the Washington agreement is unconstitutional. It should be remembered that the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia was adopted by the people in 1995 based on the founding principles of the Armenian statehood and on its national objectives as defined in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia, adopted on August 23, 1990. Those national objectives include the reunification of Armenia and Artsakh but also the struggle for historical injustices.

Which institutions may oppose this anti-national project? The National Assembly is controlled by two-thirds of the Prime Minister’s party, and the Constitutional Court is composed mostly of judges appointed by the Prime Minister and highly remunerated. The opposition parties have still not

created the conditions for impeachment and for a political change acceptable to the population.

The ruling power and its supporters will argue that there is no possible alternative to the Washington Agreement. This is fundamentally false. Even if it were fair, the method is disastrous because there is no negotiation and the strategic thinking is summed up by a simplistic and naive slogan: “crossroads of peace.”

As stated, the peace treaty will not be signed until all Azerbaijani demands are met. Establishing a communication route facilitating East-West trade will not be enough to guarantee a lasting and viable peace. On the contrary, it is a potential source of tension and even of regional conflict.

IV – The Conditions for Peace Are Not Met

Throughout history, the world has witnessed numerous attempts at peace through agreements or treaties. These diplomatic efforts, born out of a sincere desire to end hostilities and promote stability, aimed to resolve conflicts ranging from territorial disputes to ideological differences. While some peace agreements have established lasting peace (mainly in Europe), others have encountered significant difficulties, ultimately proving unsuccessful. These include: The Minsk Agreements (2014-2015), which aimed to de-escalate the war in Donbass (Ukraine); the 2020 Doha Agreement (United States and the Taliban), which aimed to end the war in Afghanistan. The agreement explicitly limited US military action and that contributed to the collapse of the Afghan government; The Oslo Accords (1993-1995) between Israel and the PLO, whose current status is notoriously grim; various peace agreements in Colombia since 1953; and the Angolan Peace Accords (1991, 1994).

The main factors in the failure of these agreements are the lack of guarantees for lasting peace, in particular:

1. The lack of strong enforcement mechanisms. Without a credible third party or sufficient incentives to respect commitments, the parties risk reneging on their commitments. The elimination of the OSCE Minsk Group is a bad omen in that respect.

2. The failure to address root causes: Treaties that focus solely on ending hostilities without addressing underlying political, economic or social grievances are unlikely to endure. It is worth recalling that Azerbaijan has not ceased its policy of hatred and racial discrimination against Armenians. Withdrawal from proceedings before the International Court of Justice is a major historical mistake for Armenia.

3. Insufficient inclusion of all stakeholders. First, it is worth noting the exclusion of a key group: the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, the primary victim of war, which is also the reason why a peace treaty is being discussed. However, both Azerbaijan’s responsibility and the issue of reparations, namely the right of return, are completely ignored. Second, there is a lack of information and involvement of Armenian civil society. Society discovers the content of the agreements at the time of their signing without having taken part to any debate or democratic approval while national interests — national security and the country’s sovereignty — are at stake. Third, there are Armenian nationals held hostage in Azerbaijan, of whom no mention is made in these agreements. These exclusions can only breed resentment, a lack of legitimacy, and possibly a subsequent challenge to the agreement.

4. The presence of ambiguous or ill-defined terms: Vague language can lead to conflicting interpretations and disputes during implementation. Some of these ambiguities are analyzed above.

Regarding the method, the outcome of all the agreements announced by the Armenian side for some time has indicated that there is no negotiation. One side imposes its claims on the other and the other capitulates. Azerbaijan is clearly pursuing a conquering strategic objective, while the Pashinyan’s approach is solely aimed at keeping power and not at pursuing national interests, since he bluntly rejected the concept of nation preferring instead the concept of “real Armenia”.

Every step taken by the prime minister works against Armenia’s interests. It will always be possible to cancel some of the agreements, but the more time passes, the more the chances of reversing them peacefully diminish or disappear. Washington agreement or not, the “real Armenia,” which is shrinking at every step of this uncontrolled process, still does not know whether its immediate future will be peace or war, prosperity or economic debacle. This is all it takes for a disillusioned Armenian population to pack its bags.

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The Consequences Of Being Weak And Desperate

CONSEQUENCES, from page 18

When TRIPP is inaugurated, Azerbaijan and Turkey see will honor its terms and transport only commercial merchandise. Turkey will open the borders with Armenia, and trade and foreign investment will flow, without suffocating the local economy, and Armenian agricultural, construction and certain manufacturing ventures will be able to compete with Turkish producers and prosper. Armenia will thus finally come out of its semi-blockaded and isolated state.

The US will supply Armenia with much better defense technology than Armenia has had so far, and Armenia will benefit disproportionately from US technological and AI cooperation, because, thanks to its domestic competencies, it has higher absorptive capacity in that field than Azerbaijan or any other post-Soviet country. The US, showing uncharacteristic long-term staying power, will keep its interest in maintaining a strategic presence in the south Caucasus, long after Trump's hopes for the Nobel Peace Prize evaporate and long after Trump himself is no longer in office, even if eventually the US comes to terms with Russia on Ukraine and NATO related issues. The US presence will continue to act as a deterrent against further Azerbaijani aggression, irrespective of the status of the Israeli-Iran confrontation.

It is more or less this utopic scenario that, implicitly or explicitly, is being officially promoted. Needless to say, nothing that we have witnessed since the 2020 war and even earlier, either in official rhetoric or in action, can lend any credence to that scenario. Instead, what is clear and empirically demonstrable is that peace with Armenia is not on Ilham Aliyev's agenda. Furthermore, a strong, prosperous Armenia is not part of either Turkey's or Azerbaijan's vision of the future of the southern Caucasus.

Armenia simply cannot survive if it remains weak and desperate. Only by getting independently strong can we hope to realize some of the eventualities listed in that utopic scenario. The biggest risk that we face after August 8 is not the various documents that were signed or initialed at the White house; it is the domestic political necessity to salute those signatures as a victory for the peace agenda and subsequently submit to a new wave of complacency vis-à-vis our national defense.

To get stronger, the Armenian state cannot afford to continue dismissing the resources of the entire Armenian nation. Furthermore, as I have argued repeatedly in past articles, it has become abundantly clear that the Armenian state cannot safeguard the interests of the Armenian nation, as was hoped after Armenia gained its independence and in the early nineties. In fact, it is doubtful that the state can safeguard its own interests, let alone those of the nation. After the loss of Artsakh, the current 29,743 square kilometers does not have the strategic depth to be defensible strictly through the human and material resources that exist within that geographic area. It is therefore imperative for the "nation" to reorganize itself, first, to secure its own survival as a potent political and economic transnational entity, and second, to secure the survival and long-term viability of the state.

New Book on Armenian Church Canon Law Published

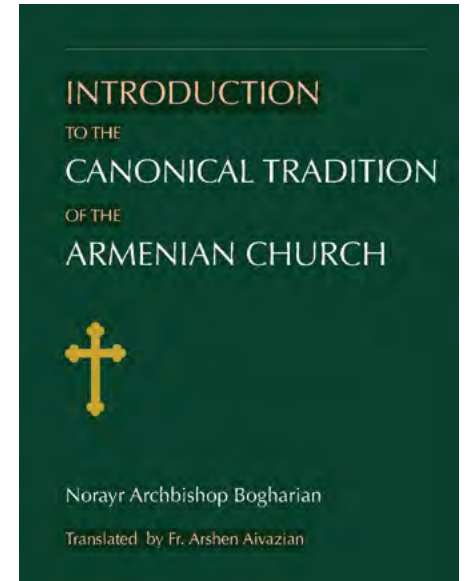
ARMONK, N.Y. — A new book on the canons of the Armenian Church by Archbishop Norayr Bogharian (1904-1997) is now available to the general public. The author is a distinguished theologian and renowned scholar of Armenian Church history and philology, and the author of the multi-volume catalogue of the manuscripts of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as well as authoritative books and numerous articles in the Armenian press.

The original Armenian text on the canons of the Armenian Church has been translated into English by Rev. Arshen Aivazian, a student of the author and himself a student of history and the liturgy of the Armenian Church. He has translated many liturgical texts into English and the Armenian vernacular. He is a former dean of St. Nersess Seminary and has served in parishes in the Eastern and Western Dioceses of North America. The book contains the translation of the Canon Law course taught by Archbishop Norayr Bogharian in

the early 1960s at the St. James Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and is being published under the title Introduction to the Canonical Tradition of the Armenian Church.

After completing the course on Canon Law, a few students, Aivazian among them, received permission from the author to transcribe his original Armenian lecture notes. The English edition is supplemented with explanatory notes by the translator, intended to introduce readers to the historical background and evolution of the Canon Law of the Armenian Church. It is dedicated to the 1700th anniversary of the first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, convened in 325 AD that defined the Orthodox faith in the Nicene Creed. It also coincides with the 60th anniversary of Aivazian's ordination to the holy priesthood.

The project is sponsored by Anton and Laura Sahazizian and Stephen and Lily Mekenian. The book will be available for sale and distribution at the end of August



and may be ordered on the St. Nersess Seminary website at www.stnersess.edu. The book price is \$25 plus shipping and handling.

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2025

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