

FAST Works with Government to Turn Armenia into AI Hub

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — It seems like all aspects of artificial intelligence (AI) are simultaneously fascinating and frightening the world as its role rapidly grows in our daily lives. Armenia is no exception, and there FAST (Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology) is attempting to create a new generation of innovators and spur the development of this



Generation AI students

important field. Its first step is through what it calls the Generation AI High School Project, developed and implemented with the Armenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (henceforth, Ministry of Education). FAST’s executive director, Suzanna Shamakhyan, during

a visit to Boston this summer, explained that this three-year merit-based program was launched in 2023 in 15 schools, and in 2024, 9 of those 15 schools had a second cohort enroll. This September the program is in 23 schools throughout Armenia, with around 900 students in all three high school grades in parallel. Next year it will spread to up to 45 schools throughout the country. By then, any high schooler who wants to choose the program could find a high school offering it.

The program is demanding, with advanced placement level math, statistics and deep machine learning, and students must take qualifying exams each year to be allowed to continue. In the upcoming spring, around 180 will be the first graduates of the program. Consequently, FAST is preparing a program at the undergraduate level to allow these graduates a continuity in their education.

Shamakhyan pointed out that generally, other programs in the field are not integral parts of the school curriculum but are afterschool programs. For example, STEP.ai is organized by the Synopsys Foundation, AGBU, and the Union of Employers of Information and Communication Technologies (UEICT) and is accredited by the Ministry of Education. Its focus is teaching applications of AI and is primarily done online with videos and teacher trainers. The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) AI offerings in its Smart Centers include Geographic Information Systems (GIS) courses with

see FAST, page 2

Russian Officials Issue Contradictory Statements On Armenia–Azerbaijan Washington Summit

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksei Overchuk have offered contradictory statements regarding the outcomes of the US–Armenia–Azerbaijan summit in Washington on August 8.

The Washington summit saw the initialing of the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as an agreement to establish a route between Azerbaijan and its exclave of Nakhichevan through Armenia called the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP).

On September 6, Overchuk told Russian state-run media TASS that he had discussed the roads issue during his recent visit to Armenia in August, and “during meetings with Azerbaijani colleagues in Astrakhan.”

“The construction of such a road will contribute to the formation of a common transport framework for Eurasia. And if such a road appears, it will also contribute to the connectivity of Armenia with Russia. According to our estimates, this will probably be the main road for transporting goods between our countries,” Overchuk said.

Shortly after this statement, Lavrov offered a skeptical remark regarding the Washington summit outcomes.

see CONTRADICTIONS, page 5

Armenian and Azerbaijani Border Delimitation Chairs Cross Border in Historic First

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

YEREVAN (OC-Media) — On September 5, the chairs of Armenian and Azerbaijani border delimitation committees, Mher Grigoryan and Shahin Mustafayev, held unprecedented mutual visits to each other’s respective countries.

According to Armenia’s Foreign Ministry, the parties discussed border delimitation and demining efforts on their shared border. They also discussed the restoration and construction of “necessary infrastructure” and their implementation.

This was the first confirmed meeting between Grigoryan and Mustafayev following the Washington summit on August 8 between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the US, which saw the initialing of the peace treaty, as well as agreement to establish a route between Azerbaijan and its exclave of Nakhichevan through Armenia called the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP).

see BORDER, page 6



The Armenian and Azeri flags

Armenian Envoy’s Brother Arrested

By Tatevik Lazarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The brother of Narek Mkrtchyan, Armenia’s newly appointed ambassador to the United States, has been arrested on suspicion of illegal arms possession and drug trafficking.

The Armenian Interior Ministry said on Thursday, September 4, that Mkrtich Mkrtchyan was at the wheel of a car that was stopped by the police outside Yerevan the previous night. It said the car also carried another man who “fled, throwing away his belongings — a gun and a powder-like mass — on the road.”

“The driver of the car [Mkrtich Mkrtchyan] was arrested on the spot and taken to the Vagharshapat department of the community police,” the ministry spokesman, Narek Sargsyan, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “No banned items were found during his personal search.”

“Measures are being taken to track down the person who fled,” said Sargsyan.

see ARREST, page 4

USA, ARMENIA

Ashot Papoyan Advances Biotech in US and Armenia



DETROIT

Armenia Fest 2025 Celebrates 17 Years of Culture



NEW JERSEY

Zimmerli Explores Evolution of Armenian Nonconformist Art





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Ombudsperson, ICRC Chief Discuss POWs

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Anahit Manasyan, met with Daphnée Maret, the Head of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation, on September 3.

Manasyan lauded the cooperation between her office and the ICRC delegation, attaching importance to the continuity of the ICRC work.

“A number of matters of mutual interest were discussed, including issues pertaining to the rights of the prisoners of war, missing persons and their families,” Manasyan’s office said in a statement.

Armenia, Iran, India Hold Talks in Tehran

TEHRAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On September 8, Tehran hosted the third round of political consultations at the level of regional directors general from the foreign ministries of Armenia, India, and Iran. According to Iranian media, the discussions were held by mutual agreement of the parties.

The three countries highlighted the need to expand cooperation and deepen engagement, particularly in transportation through the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), Armenia’s Crossroads of Peace initiative, and the role of Iran’s Chabahar port, Radar Armenia reports.

They also discussed opportunities to strengthen ties in the economy, trade, culture and people-to-people contacts.

The next trilateral meeting will be held in Armenia next year.

Armenia Ready to Open Turkey Border, Rubinyan Says

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Ruben Rubinyan, a deputy parliament speaker and Armenia’s special envoy for the normalization of relations with Turkey, said on September 8 that Armenia is prepared to open its border with Turkey and establish diplomatic ties with it without delay.

“The key issue is normalization. The entire process is about opening the closed border and establishing diplomatic relations, and discussions are mainly focused on it,” Rubinyan told reporters on September 8.

He stressed that Armenia sees no obstacles on its part and pointed to Armenia’s recent establishment of diplomatic ties with Pakistan as an example of its willingness to engage constructively.

“If there is political will — and from our side, it certainly exists — this can happen in a short time-frame,” Rubinyan emphasized.

Commenting on his expected meeting with Turkish special envoy Serdar Kılıç in the coming days, the deputy speaker said that further details would be shared in due course.

FAST Works with Government To Turn Armenia into AI Hub

FAST, from page 1

some AI topics. COAF and FAST are discussing how their students can collaborate on joint projects.

ST’s approach is to provide the foundation of math and computer science to teach how machine learning works and algorithms are created. Shamakhyan said that the various programs could be considered complementary and do not compete with each other.

FAST’s goal is to make Armenia a STEM or AI hub, and Shamakhyan said that FAST realized through its prior efforts that the way to do this was through changing Armenia’s educational system. Before its Generation AI program, it did a lot of afterschool programs for university students. Shamakhyan said the FAST people realized that even after doing such programs for years, it could not change the overall system in this manner. She continued, “When we were trying to understand what the root cause of the problem is — why we don’t have the talent pipeline at scale — we ended up understanding that the school is one of the main bottlenecks.”

A handful of expensive private schools in Yerevan provide specialized math education. To get a larger stream of students into this field who eventually will either become AI innovators or part of a highly capable workforce for industry, FAST approached Armenia’s Ministry of Education.

Shamakhyan said that the ministry had just approved a strategy for 2030 and was attempting major reforms with the support of the World Bank and European Union in STEM education, but had some challenges in implementation because its system did not have the capacity yet to execute these reforms on this scale. FAST therefore



Suzanna Shamakhyan (ARAM ARKUN PHOTO)

structured its AI program to connect with the larger reforms, which would make it easier for the government to commit to it and take ownership. The World Bank will be funding the creation of all the AI labs that will be needed for the Generation AI program’s schools, estimated to cost about \$1.2 million, she said.

FAST’s team is very aware of the issues of working with a bureaucracy, Shamakhyan said, and with both the government and FAST in agreement on objectives, she opined that “we have a strong public-private partnership,” with the ministry considering Generation AI as its own program. There are over 40 partners, and around 80 experts contributing to the content, development, methodology and teaching of this program, both from the diaspora and locally. She added, “It also has been an

interesting way to demonstrate how you can actually translate the diaspora’s knowledge into actual system reform.”

The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meanwhile published a framework for AI creators’ education, which is basically what FAST does, and invited FAST in 2024 to Paris to showcase Armenia as a case study on how to build curricula. From then on, Shamakhyan said that the Armenian gov-



Generation AI high school students with FAST co-founder and board member Dr. Noubar Afeyan

ernment and FAST have maintained close ties with UNESCO. Armenia’s example has now been presented at four UNESCO conferences, and other international organizations are interested in its statistics.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recently published its own AI literacy framework and FAST is in discussions with it and the Armenian Education Ministry to see how AI literacy content (as opposed to AI creators’ education) can also be embedded into the country’s school system to prepare the general populace for living in an AI world.

Shamakhyan said, “I can tell you from what we are observing — because we participate constantly in AI education conferences and go to places like that — that we are in the forefront of all this.”

When FAST began to work on the curricula in 2022 and 2023, only China and one district with a pilot program in the state of Georgia in the US, were doing AI creators’ education and AI literacy programs.

She noted that globally, China, India and some Scandinavian nations are aggressively pursuing AI education. The rest of the world at present is only focusing on AI literacy.

In other words, Armenia, particularly as a small country, stands out for its ambitious AI creators’ education plans, along with the priority the government, nonprofits like FAST, and the broader ecosystem place on ensuring that AI literacy levels increase. “We have faster conversion because Armenia is small. We have greater chances to do this more affordably and faster,” she said.

Shamakhyan also hopes that after Armenia is made AI-ready, FAST will be able to begin AI literacy courses in the diaspora to make all Armenian people educated in AI.

In Armenian public schools, there is a modular-based education system with tracks or specializations. The Generation AI program is for those students with a physics and mathematics high school major or specialization. Usually geometry, algebra (including calculus and statistics

in different grades) and physics classes are mandatory, with a disproportionately high number of hours.

In the FAST program, regular algebra, around 5-6 hours a week, is replaced by what Shamakhyan calls a very intensive contemporary methodology of active learning in mathematics and project-based learning. This provides a good foundation for AI since basically AI is math and statistics, and as Shamakhyan pointed out,

“Whatever buzz happens at the moment, we keep math as a core knowledge that will allow these kids become whatever they want to become regardless of what disruption takes place next time.”

Besides the revamped math classes, computer science and machine learning are added as separate subjects in extra hours. Shamakhyan said that each year of the three-year high school curriculum has around 350-400 hours for math, computer science, and AI (machine learning or deep learning), which means about half the students’ week is spent in these classes.

In addition, because the Ministry of Education has introduced project-based learning as a mandatory component of high schoolers’ learning, teachers have the opportunity to do this in after school classes, one more hour per day after the usual 9-2 or 9-3 schedule.

Preparation and Support of Teachers

In order for Generation AI to work, the teachers themselves have to be trained first, Shamakhyan said. Math teachers receive training in statistics, theory of probability and other new items in the curricula. Then they receive pedagogical training, as the old Soviet math teaching methodology, while it was at a high level, is outdated in many ways. Instead of assignment work, Shamakhyan said, the new approach includes active learning and real life mathematics.

There is also a teacher supervision program in which in addition to training in methodology and content, an external experienced teacher is hired to help the teachers do their weekly work. This is not mentorship, Shamakhyan said, but supervision, during which the external teacher sits down to help the local teacher do weekly planning and structure the administrative work to lighten the load. This support program for teachers lasts for three years.

She said that some of the math teachers, especially in the provinces, have been neglected for decades, and although this

continued on next page



ARMENIA

from previous page

program does not pay them anything financially, “because we give them this support and materials, because they do something new and see that students have progress, they are so motivated. It is pretty inspiring. When you are a teacher by calling, just a little bit of support, acknowledgment and praise, and changing the perception of the teacher’s role in the community, has a big, big impact on their performance.”

There are no AI teachers in the schools. Shamakhyan explained that they are recruited from industry and university faculties, so they usually are young professionals and professors or recent doctorate holders, who teach AI around four hours a week. FAST determined that it was more efficient to bring in people with the necessary knowledge and train them in pedagogy. Afterwards they are connected with a school computer science teacher so that the teacher does the classroom control and pedagogy, while the outside professional provides more of the content.

The computer science teachers in turn receive help like the math teachers but receive much more knowledge training. As part of the Education Ministry’s STEM reform program, computer science is being embedded in courses starting as early as second grade and continuing all the way till the end of high school, but there are not enough teachers yet so FAST was asked to structure a national teacher training strategy for them.

In connection with educational reforms in general, Shamakhyan said, “I think there is no way Armenia can do it without the support of diasporan-led entities and the private sector...because the institutional strength is not there yet.”

The Ministry of Education is doing large-scale reforms in many directions and the system needs a lot of support both in terms of expertise and implementation, she said. FAST, she stressed, “is an exception as an entity that prefers to work with the system because, at the moment, when you look at what is going on, most of the programs ... are outside of the system because everyone is saying, ‘I don’t want to deal with this.’” The latter approach will just lead to a lot of silos but not greater general change, she remarked. At the same time, she highlighted that many are willing to partner or provide support if they don’t have to directly bear the burden of working with the bureaucracy.

Shamakhyan is optimistic overall, declaring: “I think you can have remarkable results in a very short period of time because we don’t need thousands of teachers. Armenia is tiny. ... Second, I think if we rethink a little bit about how we do the teaching and what the teachers’ role is, that can also change a lot of things, because they don’t need to be the smartest person in that field... because there is so much content that already exists... You can overcome some of these things relatively cheaper than in many other bigger established systems.”

In fact, in Armenia, she said, “It actually worked faster than we were anticipating. We were not planning to scale anything before 2026. The idea was that we would finish one cycle in 2026 and only after that would we scale [up], but because we see a momentum in the system, people don’t resist actually.”

Higher Education and Industry

Only a small portion of the high school graduates will be able to study abroad at top universities, so in order to ensure a continuation of the learning journey of the high school students, FAST has just created a program committee of diasporan Armenians and non-Armenians to prepare an undergraduate program in Armenia. This will be launched in 2026, Shamakhyan re-

vealed.

With educational reforms being promulgated in Armenia, a new law will be published soon concerning higher education. This may allow teaching in English and using a lot of visiting professorship models and joint degrees. After the undergraduate program, FAST will focus on a doctoral one so it will be ready for those who will graduate the undergraduate one. Shamakhyan said it will only then do a master’s program, because there already exist some of these programs now.

The model FAST used with its Advance Research Grants program supporting a diasporan researcher as principal investigator in a project with a research team in Armenia nurturing junior researchers will be a useful framework for international research and put it at a high level. Armenia does not have enough AI senior researchers right now and therefore there are not sufficient doctoral thesis supervisors.

A current problem of the tech sector in Armenia, Shamakhyan said, is that senior specialists are needed but the short-term needs of industry do not allow them to develop since industry headhunts them at an early age. She said that since Armenia can never compete in quantity, it needs to focus on quality. This requires allowing specialists enough time and opportunity to become high-end experts. FAST, she indicated, is currently in talks with a number of big tech companies on how they could support the undergraduate programs in this sense.

The three ideal scenarios are students ending up in a doctoral program and work-

ing in a research center; continuing advanced education up to either a master’s or doctoral level and then conducting industrial R&D for big tech companies; or becoming entrepreneurs founding startup companies, which go through existing incubation programs in Armenia.

The remaining students will just become members of a highly capable workforce for the industry. Shamakhyan said, “And yes, we hope that by saying that we have a sustainable and scalable talent pipeline, this will make it easier to attract businesses to Armenia.” This would solve the recruitment problem that companies at present have due to the lack of people to work in this sector.

Armenia would also become a center of AI education for non-Armenians, Shamakhyan said, adding, “I think we have the luxury of trying to do that because of the diaspora. We have amazing professors in this field globally. If we structure this in the right way, we will be bringing top professors to Armenia, which will make it attractive for the international student.” By 2027, if not earlier, she said it will be realistic to target such students.

Educational Alliances

In addition to its relationship with the Armenian government, FAST works closely with a group of Armenian organizations in the educational field. In the summer of 2024, it and six other diasporan-led well-established organizations began planning a coalition, which was publicly announced in spring 2025. The 405 Educational Alliance (named in honor of the date of creation of the Armenian alphabet) includes

the Armenian Educational Foundation, Armenian General Benevolent Union Armenia Branch, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Ayb Educational Foundation, FAST, Simonyan Educational Foundation’s TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and Teach for Armenia Educational Foundation.

Shamakhyan said that though they all were dedicated to Armenia and knew their roles concerning Armenia’s educational sector, they did not work together a lot, while uniting efforts could accomplish much more. She said, “We hope to also break the notion that Armenians don’t collaborate. I don’t believe in that.”

After creating this alliance, the members are trying to do the right diagnoses of the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system, and then in the next phase deploy new solutions. A membership framework will also be launched so others can join in. “The utopic objective,” she said, “is that we will be able to shape a new model of education for Armenians globally.”

The challenge of preserving the language outside of Armenia is one of the topics being discussed. She said, “The idea is, what if we bring the best of diasporan and Armenian brains together, pilot projects in Armenia – a sort of proof of concept because there is so much space for that kind of thing in Armenia – and then scale them globally. So it is bringing in, and taking out.”

“I think that in the next ten years if the coalition becomes what we hope for it to become it will be a big transformation for Armenia in the space of education, and education impacts everything else,” she con-

Armenia Presents AI Education Model at UNESCO Headquarters

PARIS — Armenia once again took the global stage at UNESCO’s Digital Learning Week 2025 in Paris, presenting its Generation AI High School Project as a national model for AI education. It was the second consecutive year Armenia was invited to share its program at UNESCO’s flagship event on digital learning and education.

From September 2–5, global policymakers, experts, and educators gathered under the theme “AI and the Future of Education: Disruptions, Dilemmas and Directions.” The conference examined

try of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Arthur Martirosyan, who participated in the Opening Ministerial Session on September 2 alongside global counterparts presenting national strategies for AI education.

“Advanced AI education is becoming a part of the school curriculum, creating an opportunity for Armenian students to be not only users of technology, but also creators and innovators in the AI field,” Martirosyan said.

Following the session, Suzanna Shamakhyan, executive director of the Foun-

of Armenia.

Her remarks highlighted the program’s three years of nationwide impact, integration of AI curricula in public high schools, alignment with global frameworks, and the strength of a public-private partnership model supported by the diaspora.

“The Generation AI program is about advanced AI education and is constantly aligned with UNESCO and other international frameworks, giving a central place to the curriculum, methodology and consistent work of teachers,” emphasized Shamakhyan.

“Ensuring both access and readiness has been key to the program’s success. It provides availability across diverse geographic locations and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, accessibility does not mean eliminating merit. Educational practice shows that foundational mathematical knowledge from middle school is essential. When combined with strong motivation, it enables students to excel at a deeper level,” she said.

Starting with the 2025–2026 academic year, Generation AI has expanded to schools in every region of Armenia, making advanced AI education available nationwide and placing the country among the few worldwide to introduce AI at the school level.

FAST, founded in 2017, is building an ecosystem that fosters technological innovation and scientific advancement in Armenia. To date, it has implemented 30 programs reaching more than 24,000 beneficiaries. FAST’s pioneering Generation AI program provides a full educational pathway for future innovators — from high school to doctoral studies.



FAST Executive Director Suzanna Shamakhyan at far right

how AI is transforming pedagogy, curricula, and governance, while also raising complex questions around equity, ethics, and human agency in education.

The Armenian delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Armenia’s Minis-

tration for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST), presented Armenia’s experience with the foundation’s flagship Generation AI program, launched in 2023 in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports



ARMENIA

Court Upholds Arrest of Russian-Armenian Tycoon Karapetyan

By Gayane Saribekian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — An Armenian appeals court upheld on Monday, September 8, a lower court’s decision to extend the pre-trial arrest of billionaire Samvel Karapetyan, who is expected to challenge Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in next year’s parliamentary elections.

The Yerevan court of first instance allowed investigators last month to hold Karapetyan in detention for two more months on charges rejected by him as politically motivated. The tycoon’s lawyers appealed against the decision.

The Court of Appeals upheld it, refusing to order his release from custody. One of the defense lawyers, Aram Vartevanyan,

accused the court of ignoring “undeniable objective legal data” presented by him and his colleagues.

Karapetyan was prosecuted hours after condemning on June 17 Pashinyan’s attempts to depose the top clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and vowing to defend it “in our own way.” His statement immediately provoked a series of furious social media posts by Pashinyan.

“Now I will interfere with you in my own way, you scoundrel,” the premier wrote before Karapetyan was arrested and charged with calling for a violent overthrow of the Armenian government.

Karapetyan was also charged with tax evasion, fraud and money laundering after announcing plans to set up a new

opposition group that will fight for regime change in Armenia. The 60-year-old businessman, who has mainly lived in Russia since the early 1990s and financed many charity projects in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, had never signaled political ambitions before.

His supporters officially launched late last month an “apolitical” movement which they said will spawn a political party ahead of the general elections due in June 2026. Political analysts expect it to be a major election contender.

Hours before the announcement of the appeals court’s decision, Karapetyan issued a fresh statement from jail in which he criticized the economic situation in the country and said his team can quickly

improve it, including by attracting “major international investors.”

“The only one responsible for such a reality is this government, which does not create decent opportunities for our people, discourages them, and breaks their faith in a prosperous future,” read the statement.

Karapetyan, who is believed to be the world’s wealthiest ethnic Armenian, similarly lambasted Pashinyan in his previous statements. He charged, in particular, that Pashinyan has “completely destroyed the country’s external security,” “ruined” its relations with Russia and is now begging the leaders of Azerbaijan and Turkey for peace. The premier and his political allies shrugged off the accusations.

Persepolis Hosts Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra in Cultural Concert

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — On Saturday, September 6, Persepolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Iran’s Fars province, hosted an international and intercultural event, welcoming audiences to a live performance by the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Tehran Times reported.

The orchestra performed in honor of its centenary, delivering a memorable concert that included the iconic Iranian piece *O Iran* (“Ey Iran”) by composer Ruhollah Khaleghi along with several other compositions by prominent Armenian composers.

The artistic initiative was organized through a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance’s Artistic Affairs Department, Fars Province Governor’s Office, the General Directorate of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Fars, and the Provincial Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Prominent figures attending included Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, Fars Governor Hossein Ali Amiri, the Deputy for Artistic Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Nadereh Rezai, as well as Armenian Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Zhanna Andreasyan and Grigor Hakobyan, the Armenian ambassador to Iran, along with

the distinguished international guests. The event commenced with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra performing the national anthems of Iran and Armenia.

Amiri, in his opening remarks, welcomed the international guests and diplomatic delegations, stating that beneath the grandeur of Persepolis, they gathered to listen to the mellifluous sounds of music and to hear the shared language of cultures.

He emphasized that the Armenian Philharmonic’s performance embodies a message of peace and solidarity, highlighting music’s role in uniting hearts. Amiri underscored Iran and Armenia’s longstanding companionship across centuries and praised the concert as a symbol of friendship and cultural cooperation.

He further noted that the event stands as a testament to the path of friendship and cultural synergy, calling for global voices that promote peace and friendship. “Our diplomacy is rooted in human values that bind nations together, and Iranians have always believed that preserving cultural ties strengthens civilizations. This concert is a celebration of peace and friendship,” he stated. He concluded by affirming that the presence of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra at Persepolis is a proud example of international cultural collaboration.

Grigor Hakobyan also expressed his

pleasure at holding the concert at the UNESCO World Heritage site. “It is a great honor to perform here, alongside this symbol of human civilization, and to celebrate the anniversary of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra’s founding,” he said.

Hakobyan emphasized that the concert signifies the deepening bond between Iran and Armenia and the enduring vitality of music as a universal language, promising continued cultural cooperation.

In another segment, Armenian Minister Andreasyan reflected on the cultural ties between Iran and Armenia, describing the event as a symbol of mutual respect and friendship.

She noted that the recent presidential visit to Armenia marked a milestone for bilateral cooperation and that this concert transcends politics, serving as a declaration of peace and cultural coexistence.

Andreasyan praised Persepolis as a luminous monument of ancient civilizations, emphasizing that the event reinforces the enduring cultural

connections between the two nations. She expressed pride in hearing the immortal Armenian musical voice resonating within this majestic historical site and acknowledged the previous concert conducted under the baton of Iranian-Armenian musician and conductor Loris Tjeknavorian at Vahdat Hall, viewing today’s performance as a continuation of that artistic journey. She expressed gratitude to regional authorities and hopes for ongoing cultural exchanges.

In his concluding remarks, Simaei-Sarraf emphasized Iran’s long history of embracing diversity and fostering unity through cultural richness.

He pointed to Persepolis as a symbol of this enduring spirit, asserting that history and culture, rather than military might, define a nation’s legacy. He reaffirmed that the deep-rooted historical ties between Iran and Armenia reflect mutual respect, and that Persepolis exemplifies how civilizations are preserved through culture and history. He called for increased awareness of these principles in contemporary times.

Leader of Armenian Church Again Slams Azerbaijan For Destroying Monuments, Churches

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — One week after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan pledged to continue trying to depose him, Catholicos Karekin II accused Azerbaijan on Thursday, September 4, of destroying Armenian churches in Nagorno-Karabakh and decried the “illegal” captivity of the region’s former leaders.

The supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church again slammed Baku as he hosted an international inter-church conference on the 1,700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea that had brought together Christian bishops.

Addressing participants of the four-day conference representing major Christian denominations, Karekin said it is taking place in “a country that has suffered untold persecution, hardship, and trials for the sake of Christ.”

“Today, our people are also going through trials,” he said, pointing to the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war and the 2023 “forcible displacement” of Karabakh’s ethnic Armenian population that followed an Azerbaijani offensive.

“Azerbaijan continues to illegally hold Artsakh state officials and prisoners of war to this day. In occupied Artsakh, our centuries-old spiritual and cultural heritage, historical holy sites, are currently being destroyed and damaged and also

appropriated under the false pretext of being non-Armenian,” added the Catholicos.

Karekin had already denounced the “sham trials” of the former Karabakh leaders and accused Azerbaijan of committing ethnic cleansing in Karabakh and illegally occupying Armenian border areas during a conference hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Switzerland in May. Azerbaijan’s top Shia Muslim cleric closely linked to the government in Baku protested against “the provocative, revanchist propaganda of the Armenian Church” in a letter to the WCC.

As Karekin attended the WCC forum in Bern, Pashinyan began attacking the church’s top clergy in daily social media posts that sparked an uproar from opposition leaders, prominent public figures and many ordinary citizens. He accused Karekin and other senior clergymen of having had secret sex affairs in breach of their vows of celibacy. The Armenian premier went on to demand Karekin’s resignation.

He insisted last week that he has not abandoned plans to “free” the Echmiadzin seat of the Catholicos with the help of his supporters. Pashinyan’s detractors say his campaign is designed to please Azerbaijan and/or neutralize a key source of opposition to his unilateral concessions to Armenia’s arch-foe.

Armenian Envoy’s Brother Arrested

ARREST, from page 1

The Investigative Committee said, meanwhile, that it has launched a criminal inquiry into illegal possession and trafficking of weapons, ammunition and narcotics. The law-enforcement agency did not indict anyone as of Thursday afternoon.

The incident happened one week after Narek Mkrtchyan was appointed as ambassador to the US. He served as minister of labor and social affairs until then. Mkrtchyan, who is a senior member of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party, claimed to have “learned about the incident from the media.”

“In Armenia, whether it’s my brother or someone else’s brother, everyone is equal before the law,” the envoy told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “There will be an investigation, the guilty will be identified and certainly held accountable to the full extent of the law.”

Mkrtchyan insisted that he will not

intervene in the probe to try to prevent his brother from going to prison. The Yerevan newspaper Hraparak alleged such intervention by another senior ruling party figure, Defense Minister Suren Papikyan. The latter did not immediately comment on the claim.

Interior Minister Arpine Sargsyan dismissed later in the day suggestions that the police are trying to clear the ambassador’s brother of any wrongdoing and shift the blame to his fugitive companion.

“Had the Interior Ministry aimed to cover up a crime, I can assure you that the arrest would not have happened,” Sargsian told reporters.

“The investigation will answer the question of whether Narek Mkrtchyan’s brother passed the bag [with the gun and drugs] on to his friend or it belonged to the friend,” she said. “According to the facts existing at this point, nothing was confiscated from the brother.”



INTERNATIONAL

Armenians Join Intercultural Festival

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WIESBADEN, Germany — In Germany, as in the rest of Europe, social tensions concerning newcomers from foreign countries have grown with the rising tide of immigration; stories of conflict and violence too often overshadow the message of successful integration. So, it is a pleasure to report on events that celebrate successful intercultural exchange.

One such event took place in Wiesbaden, the capital of the federal state of Hesse, on September 6 in the Schlossplatz (castle square). Known as the Intercultural Summer Festival, the gathering is sponsored by the municipality's Office of Immigration and Integration, and features cultural exchange among the many ethnic communities residing in this Rhineland city.

Many associations, clubs, and initiatives set up their information stands to display their cultural specialties, artistic, musical, and of course culinary. The theme uniting the numerous various is intercultural understanding under the motto "Celebrating Diversity and Open-mindedness — Together in Wiesbaden."

Visitors can learn about national characteristics, language instruction opportunities, integration programs, and the characteristic cuisines. In front of City Hall entertainment is provided on a huge stage, with musical offerings, dancing and choral pieces, sketches, and children's programs.

The Wiesbaden Armenian community was well represented by the Democratic Community and Cultural Center (DVK), a social and cultural organization dedicated to promoting Armenian-German



The Armenian-style buffet

understanding and integration in a spirit of peace, equality, and democracy. Their stands offered information about the country, its cultural heritage, including of course music and good food. The aroma of the shish-kebab rotating on skewers attracted visitors of all nationalities and ages.

Warm, sunny weather contributed to the turnout, which Karen Gharslyan, head of DVK, described as "super." The Armenians welcomed "a large number of very different visitors," he said, and "everything that we had to offer was sold out by 5:30 in the afternoon." The overall event program, including stage performances, went on until shortly before midnight.

At midday, municipal leaders addressed the guests with remarks placing a strong accent on integration and intercultural understanding. City Council Chairman Dr. Gerhard Obermayr, Milena Löbcke, head

of the Integration Department, and Ibrahim Kızılgöz, Chairman of the Foreigners' Advisory Council, stressed the role that diversity, friendly intercommunal relations, and democracy have played in the city, as symbolized in the fact that the summer festival has represented open-mindedness and solidarity for almost a half century. The Office for Immigration and Integration along with partner organizations provided information on their activities and projects, including language instruction, as well as procedures for citizenship and official recognition of academic degrees.

As Milena Löbcke put it, "Even though we are living through challenging times, we want to celebrate the spirit of diversity in our city with all those in attendance, and to point out that we live peacefully together in an open-minded city, with a zest for life."

Armenian Cultural Heritage Exhibition Opens in Crete

HERAKLION, Greece (Public Radio of Armenia) — An exhibition dedicated to Armenia's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as recognized by UNESCO, opened in the courtyard of the St. John the Baptist Armenian Church on the island of Crete this week. The event was organized at the initiative of the Embassy of Armenia in Greece.

The opening ceremony was attended by

Armenia's Ambassador to Greece Tigran Mkrtchyan, Archbishop Eznik Petrosyan, Overseer of St. John the Baptist Church, Bishop Tatev Hakobyan, Primate of the Romanian and Bulgarian Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Hellenic Parliament, local authorities, media, and the Armenian community.

Mkrtchyan presented the background of

the exhibition, which features photographs originally taken by former Armenian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Vahe Gabrielyan. The full project, published in Yerevan in two multilingual volumes with over 500 photographs and detailed descriptions, was first introduced to Greek audiences in Athens in 2023 through a selection of 50 photographs.

He noted that the Armenian church in Crete will host several events in the coming days, including the enshrinement of the holy relics of St. John the Baptist, expected to draw thousands of visitors. He emphasized that this will provide a unique opportunity for attendees to discover Armenia's rich and distinctive cultural heritage, further enhancing international interest in the country.

Following the official presentation, the program continued with the opening of an exhibition of dolls dressed in traditional Armenian costumes, accompanied by an introduction from Archbishop Eznik Petrosyan.



The opening of the exhibit

Russian Officials Issue Contradictory Statements On Armenia-Azerbaijan Summit

CONTRADICTIONS, from page 1

On Monday, September 8, he said that it still "remains to be seen" how the initialed peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan would work. At the same time, he assessed the Washington location as "the sovereign right of our neighbors."

"We need to see how [the agreements] will work, because all the enthusiastic reviews that were heard in the first few days after the meeting in Washington then somehow changed to skeptical assessments when the document was published,"

Lavrov said, adding that "it turns out, not everything has been agreed upon there."

TASS quoted Lavrov as assessing it as a foreign policy tactic by which "you need to do something bright, to play it up in the information space."

"I believe that such a method has the right to exist, but if nothing follows it, then it will simply remain a flash in the pan, and we are interested in a real peace treaty being concluded," Lavrov said.

Aside from Russia, skeptical assessments of the Washington deal were offered by ex-

US official James O'Brien, who served as assistant secretary of state in former US President Joe Biden's administration.

O'Brien's comments, published on August 14, argued that the Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements signed in Washington would not bring Armenia a "substantial peace dividend," might not resolve the conflict with Azerbaijan, and could leave Armenia exposed to further risks.

(This story originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on September 8.)

INTERNATIONAL

Turkey Restricts Access To Online Platforms

ISTANBUL (Reuters) — Access to major social media and messaging platforms in Turkey has been restored a day after widespread restrictions were imposed, Netblocks, a global internet monitor, said on Monday, September 8.

Platforms including X, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp were restricted on multiple networks from late Sunday.

The blockage came as the main opposition Republican People's Party called for rallies after police set up barricades in areas around the party's headquarters in Istanbul.

Lavrov: Moscow Hopes For '3+3' Restart

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on September 8 expressed hope that cooperation among South Caucasus countries and their three neighbors — including Russia — would soon resume under the "3+3" format. He made the remarks during a speech to students and faculty at MGIMO University, according to Sputnik Armenia.

"We sincerely hope that work will resume under the initiative originally proposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, namely the idea of establishing the '3+3' platform. That is, the three South Caucasus states — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia — and their three major neighbors — Iran, Turkey, and Russia. We now believe the time has come to relaunch this format," Lavrov stated.

He noted that Iran supports the initiative, while Turkey and Azerbaijan were its initial proponents.

Earlier, Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan told IRNA that the next "3+3" meeting could take place in either Yerevan or Baku.

Akhtamar's Holy Cross Church Reopens for Annual Liturgy

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — With permission from Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Holy Cross Armenian Church on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van was opened for a religious service, according to Anadolu Agency.

Clergy and pilgrims, who arrived for the ceremony were transported to the island by boat.

Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Sahak Mashalyan, his deputy Father Kaspar Karapetyan, and Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, who accompanied the clergy, held brief conversations with visitors.

"Pilgrims have come here from all corners of the world — from America, England, Europe, various parts of Anatolia, Istanbul, and especially from Armenia. Today, we commemorated our past at the 1,100-year-old Holy Cross Church of Akhtamar. We are grateful for this day and express our thanks to the state authorities for making this possible. Let our prayers bring peace from heaven to earth and to all humanity," he said.



INTERNATIONAL

Armenian and Azerbaijani Border Delimitation Chairs Cross Borders

BORDER, from page 1

It remains unclear where the meeting took place. However, on September 5, unconfirmed reports suggested that, “five days” earlier, residents of Kapan in the Syunik region had noticed individuals in Azerbaijani military uniforms driving four unlicensed vehicles, reportedly bearing the word “Turk” on white backgrounds, into the city center. They reportedly left the city that same evening.

A change in the delimitation course following agreement on TRIPP?

The border delimitation commissions of the two countries were created in 2022. Previously, they met in various other venues such as Moscow and Brussels, following which they held recent meetings on their shared border.

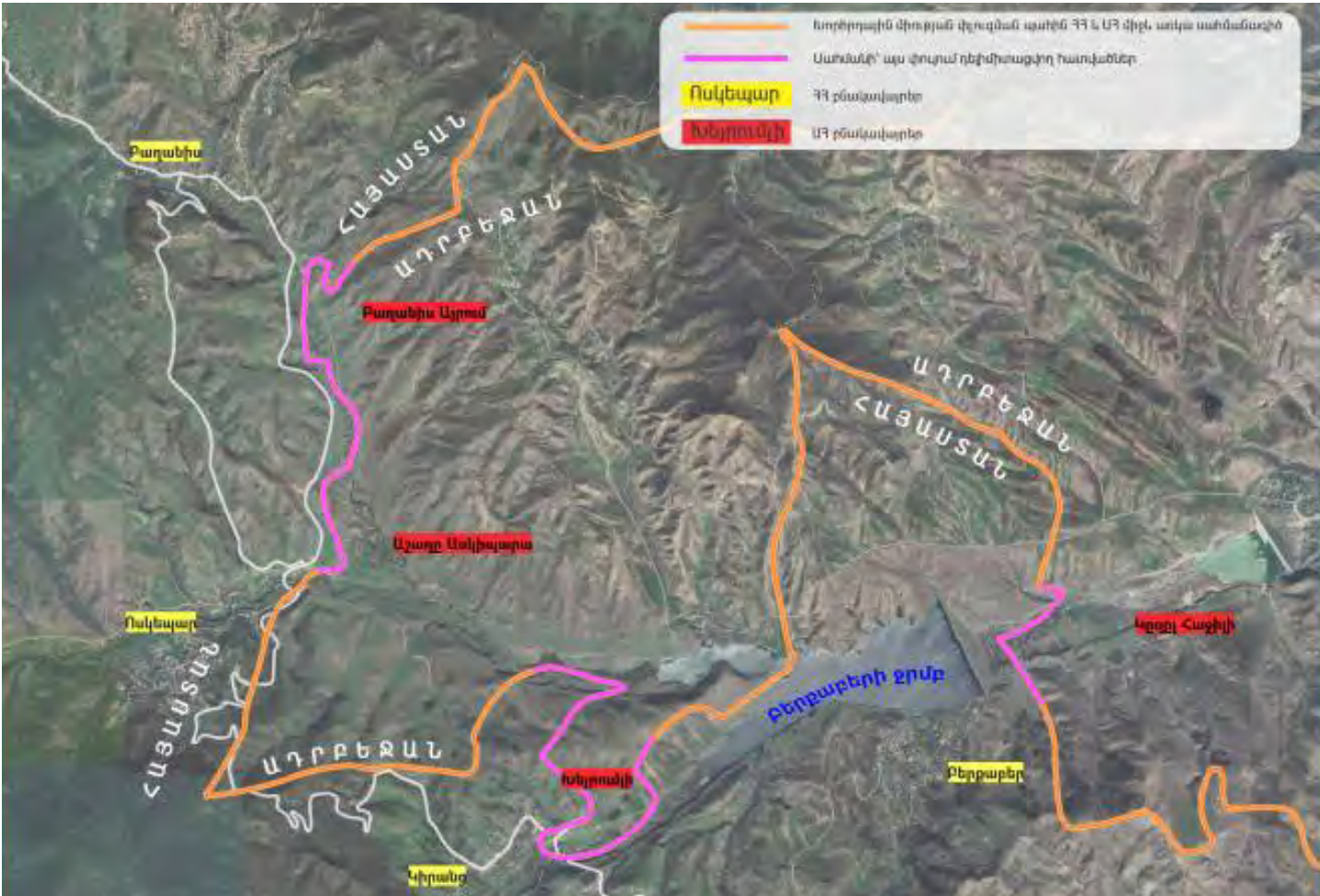
Ahead of the September meeting, on July 10, commission chairs Grigoryan and Mustafayev were present during the meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijani delegations led by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Abu Dhabi.

Armenian and Azerbaijani delegations meeting in Abu Dhabi, led by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. Official photo.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry readout, the leaders, “taking stock of the progress made with respect to the border delimitation process, instructed the respective state commissions to continue practical work in this regard”.

Earlier in winter, two meetings were held — one on January 16 at the border, where they “agreed on starting the complex of works on the delimitation of the state border from the northern section” — from the intersection bordering Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. “And [the second one was] in the southern direction, from North to South: to the border of” Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran.

Tigran Grigoryan, a political analyst and head of the Regional Centre for Democracy and Security in Yerevan, suggested Armenia and Azerbaijan might change the next demarcation location,



The map with the delimitation lines in pink

considering the agreement on the Trump Route, which will pass through Syunik.

However, he told RFE/RL that it was “unlikely” that Azerbaijan would agree on delimitation in areas it gained after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War as a result of its attacks on Armenia.

The most tangible outcome of the works of the border delimitation committees was the border delimitation in the north — Tasvush and Ghazakh section in the spring of 2024.

Armenia’s Prime Minister’s office provided a map showing in pink the areas to be delimited. Map via Armenpress.

The process came shortly after Baku demanded that four abandoned Azerbaijani villages under Armenian control be ‘immediately released’. Days later, Pash-

inyan hinted that Armenia might return control of the four villages to Azerbaijan in a unilateral handover of territory to avoid war.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the First Nagorno-Karabakh War in the early 1990s, several areas along the border of both Armenia and Azerbaijan fell under the control of the opposing side. This included the Azerbaijani villages of Baghanis Ayrym, Ashagi Eskipara, Kheyrimli, and Gizilhajili, which remained occupied by Armenia.

Turkish special envoy to arrive Yerevan Armenian authorities reported that a meeting between special representatives for the Armenia–Turkey normalization process, Ruben Rubinyan and Serdar

Kılıç, will hold a meeting in Armenia “in the coming days.”

The meetings of the special representatives kicked off in January 2022, taking place in various capitals, such as Moscow and Vienna. While Armenia and Turkey have reached an agreement to allow third-country citizens and diplomats to cross the border between the two countries, the Armenia–Turkey land border remains closed, with Turkey conditioning progress with the Armenia–Azerbaijan peace process.

Previously, in July 2024, Rubinyan and Kılıç held their fifth meeting on the Margara–Alican crossing on the border of the two countries. While in April, they met within the framework of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

International Arrest Warrant for Former Head of Armenian State Fund

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — An Armenian law-enforcement agency has issued an international arrest warrant for the former head of a state fund that was closed last year after failing to attract major foreign investment in Armenia.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s government set up the Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) in 2019 in an effort to not only lure foreign investors but also promote Armenian exports and support local businesses. ANIF clearly failed in that mission, leading the government to liquidate it in August 2025.

A year before that decision, a corruption investigation was launched into the fund’s four-year activities that reportedly cost taxpayers at least 10.7 billion drams (\$27.3 million). Armenian opposition leaders have portrayed that as proof of government corruption.

Davit Papazyan, ANIF’s former executive director, was recently charged with money laundering, abuse of power and forgery of documents. The Investigative Committee again shed no light on the accusations when it announced the arrest warrant for Papazyan on Friday.

Papazyan’s current whereabouts are un-

known. He is believed to have left Armenia months before his indictment and has still not commented on it.

Early this year, Papazyan was appointed to the governing board of the US and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) widely blamed for the reported



Former ANIF director Davit Papazyan

deaths of at least 1,800 Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Last month, the London-based Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) appealed to Armenian prosecutors to investigate Papazyan’s role in GHF’s highly controversial food distribution in Gaza.

The AOHR claimed that he “may have been involved in, or facilitated, actions that

amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.” The Office of the Prosecutor-General in Yerevan pledged to look into the appeal. It has made no further statements since then.

Also facing corruption charges is Bella Manukian, the former head of an ANIF subsidiary that invested in 2023 over 1.5 billion drams (\$3.8 million) in an obscure company newly registered in the US state of Delaware. The company, CFW, is understood to have effectively stopped operating a year later. Its chief executive, Karine Andreasyan, is the third indicted suspect in the case.

Andreasyan is a close friend of Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan’s wife, Mariam Pahlavuni. She secured the government funding, significant by Armenian standards, at a time when Avinyan headed ANIF’s board of directors.

Not surprisingly, Avinyan has faced corruption allegations ever since the suspicious investment was exposed by the investigative publication Hetq.am earlier this year. He has denied them.

The Investigative Committee remains unwilling to clarify whether it has interrogated the mayor, who is a senior member of Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party. ANIF also invested in 960 million drams (\$2.5 million) in another company owned by a

school classmate of Avinyan.

Mihran Bulghadaryan, a legal expert and former prosecutor working for Armenia’s leading anti-corruption watchdog affiliated with Transparency International, deplored the lack of official information about Avinyan’s status in the ongoing probe.

“Even if Tigran Avinyan was not complicit in any wrongdoing, there has to be some statement to that effect [by the investigators],” he told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

Pashinyan described ANIF’s questionable operations as a “disgrace” when he spoke at a news conference this spring. But he stopped short of blaming the Yerevan mayor for them.

Although the prime minister has repeatedly claimed to have eliminated “systemic” corruption, no large-scale foreign investment projects have been launched in Armenia during his tenure. What is more, Pashinyan’s government is now facing massive lawsuits by a number of foreign investors who have done business in the country.

ANIF’s most notable achievement was a 2021 deal with a company from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that pledged to build Armenia’s first massive solar power plant. The \$174 million project was subsequently put on hold for still unknown reasons.



Community News

2 Arrested, Another Wanted in Fatal Shooting of UMass Amherst Student in Washington

WASHINGTON (WCVB) — Two teenagers were arrested on September 5 and a third suspect is being sought in connection with the fatal shooting of a Massachusetts college student who was working as a congressional intern in Washington, D.C.

Eric Tarpinian-Jachym, a UMass Amherst student, was one of three people shot on June 30 after police said he was caught in a dispute between rival groups. The Granby native was a rising senior at UMass Amherst, studying politics and finance, and had just started a summer internship in the office of Kansas Republican Rep. Ron Estes.

Chief Pamela Smith of the Metropolitan Police Department announced the arrests in the case Friday morning.

“Our thoughts and prayers remain with the family,” Smith said. “We hope news of these two arrests and a third one pending — I’m confident we’ll get the third one — give Eric’s loved ones some sense of peace.”



Eric Tarpinian-Jachym

Smith said the investigation was led by a detective in the MPD’s Homicide Branch with support from several federal agencies. The U.S. Marshals Service helped to make the arrests Friday morning, she said.

Cmdr. Kevin Kentish of the MPD’s Criminal Investigations Division identified the arrested suspects as Kelvin Thomas Jr. and Jalen Lucas. Both of the suspects are 17-year-old residents of Washington, D.C.

“They’re both charged with first-degree murder while armed, premeditated. Both are being charged as adults,” Kentish said.

Kentish said Thomas and Lucas were shooting in the direction of two others who were riding a bike and that the shooting was related to an ongoing “neighborhood crew dispute.” One of those on the bike was also injured in the shooting but survived.

After the shooting, the suspects left the area in a vehicle that was reported stolen in Maryland several days earlier. That car was subsequently recovered in Maryland.

“Video footage, along with the assistance of community members and an analysis of evidence recovered

see SHOOTING, page 8



Dr. Ashot Papoyan, at left end, and Dr. Garegin Papoian at the right end, with the winners of Deep Origin Hackathon in Armenia (photo courtesy Ashot Papoyan)

Ashot Papoyan Advances Biotech in US and Armenia

By Raffi V. Arkun

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Deep Origin is a company working on simulating molecular interactions to accelerate drug discovery, with a team of about 80 people, in locations spanning from California and Arlington, MA, to Europe and Armenia. Its specialty is making simulation tools, to predict, for example, how a novel medicine interacts with a disease-causing protein, or determine how proteins interact with each other, at either molecular or cellular scales. In the foreseeable future, the company plans to develop technology for simulating processes on organ, tissue, and organism levels. The long-term goal is to replace costly physical experiments in the lab with computer simulations, accelerating drug discovery and treatments. As the current Chief Scientific Operations Officer (CSOO), Dr. Ashot Papoyan oversees tech development and wet lab operations across 11 time zones. “The moonshot goal” of Deep Origin, Papoyan said, “is simulating life.”

Even as a child, Papoyan knew that biology was his calling, and today he loves his job so much that he said, “I don’t know what a 9 to 5 feels like.” Born in Yerevan to engineer parents, Papoyan was surrounded by the sciences throughout his whole youth. He graduated from Artashes Shahinyan Physics-Mathematics School (known colloquially as Phys-Math School), continuing his education at Yerevan State University. By 1999, Papoyan had completed a degree in biophysics and met his college sweetheart, Yelena Bisharyan, who was pursuing studies in genetics. During the summer prior to his senior year of university, Papoyan visited Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, to take summer classes. He also learned about the admission process, what differences exist between American and Armenian schools, the process of obtaining a doctorate, and much more.

Upon returning to Armenia after graduation, Papoyan’s life journey began with his marriage to Yelena. Soon after, he completed the standardized exams and gained admission to Cornell’s doctoral program in plant molecular biology. The couple relocated to Ithaca, NY, where Yelena also pursued her doctorate in immunology and cell and molecular biology.

Biotech Companies

At the conclusion of his studies at Cornell, Papoyan became the first employee and a founding team member of a newly formed biotech company focused on producing transmembrane proteins, difficult to generate in bacteria or yeast, using *Tetrahymena thermophila*, a single-celled organism. In 2011, Tetragenetics secured a grant from the state of Massachusetts to relocate to Cambridge and later to Arlington. The company was ultimately acquired by AbCellera Biologics, a Vancouver-based biotech firm.

In 2019 Papoyan founded a new company, Elm Tree Research, together with Dr. Zorayr Manukyan, to focus on research and clinical trial design, execution and data utilization to provide effective treatment for addictions. The biggest challenge in creating this company, he said, was finding funding, relying on friends and family first before expanding to outside investors. Another connected company, Elm Tree Clinic, of which Papoyan was a managing partner, is associated with the research arm, and treats mental health disorders such as addictions to alcohol or opioids, plus behavioral health services.

After running this company for around four years, Papoyan joined the Biosim-AI team, transitioning to a less involved role in Elm Tree. Biosim was a biotech company based in Armenia founded in 2020 by Papoyan’s older brother Garegin (“Garyk”) Papoian, a professor of chemistry and biophysics at the University of Maryland (who also obtained his Ph.D. at Cornell). The main reason for this

see BIOTECH, page 9

Humanitarians and Philanthropists To Be Honored on Ellis Island as Part Of 10th Anniversary Of Aurora Prize

WASHINGTON — The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative will honor a remarkable group of philanthropists and humanitarians at the 10th Anniversary Aurora Prize Ceremony on November 6.

The milestone event on historic Ellis Island — an enduring symbol of hope for a better future—will celebrate the courage and commitment of local humanitarians risking their lives to save others in some of the world’s most challenging environments. The evening will culminate in the announcement of the 2025 Aurora Prize Laureate, who will receive \$1 million to support their frontline humanitarian work and extend their impact through local humanitarians and grassroots relief organizations.

Alice Greenwald, Board Member of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and Founder of Memory Matters LLC, said: “The symbolic setting of this gathering reminds us why Aurora was founded — to honor those whose generosity of spirit compels them to act with empathy and compassion in the face of great human suffering. The life-changing achievements of philanthropists and humanitarians celebrated by Aurora show that, even in a world that can feel short on empathy, we with are capable of being guided by kindness and concern for others.”

Alongside the Laureate and humanitarians, the Ceremony will honor remarkable philanthropists who embody Aurora’s core value of Gratitude in Action — demonstrating appreciation for the contributions and bravery of others through one’s own actions. These Honorees represent the enduring spirit of modern philanthropy, using their influence and resources to create meaningful, lasting change:

* Henrietta H. Fore, former administrator of USAID, is a leader in advancing economic development, improving health and education, and delivering humanitarian assistance. As the Executive Director of UNICEF, Fore led the organization’s largest ever childhood and vaccination procurement and delivery and spearheaded efforts to assess the impact of climate change on children.

* Graça Machel, founder of Graça Machel Trust and Foundation for Community Development, is a women’s and children’s rights advocate who has dedicated her life to advancing freedom, improving education, and upholding human dignity. A former schoolteacher and the first Education Minister of Mozambique, Machel’s work with The Elders has shone a spotlight on humanitarian and human rights crises around the world.

* Michael Milken, chairman of the Milken Institute, is a financier and philanthropist who has dedicated

see AURORA, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

2 Arrested, Another Wanted in Fatal Shooting of UMass Amherst Student in Washington

SHOOTING, from page 7
throughout the investigation, ultimately led to the identification of three suspects. Once those three suspects were identified, we applied for search warrants,” Kentish said.
“I hope today’s arrest sends a message to individuals who choose to commit violence in our city. If you harm innocent victims in our community, we will hold you accountable,” Smith said.

Family members said Tarpinian-Jachym overcame dyslexia, a heart condition and recent surgery to get to the internship. He was a rising senior, studying politics and finance.
“He was a very kind, gentle soul, and he was a very humble boy,” his sister, Angela Tarpinian-Jachym, said. “It’s a horrible loss, and I don’t know if we’ll ever recover. We’ll learn to cope and move on day by day, but the pain will always be there.”
When President Donald Trump called in the National Guard to battle crime in Washington, D.C., he referenced Tarpinian-Jachym’s death among the recent examples of violent incidents.

Humanitarians and Philanthropists to Be Honored on Ellis Island as Part Of 10th Anniversary of Aurora Prize

AURORA, from page 7
more than fifty years to supporting medical research, education, public health and expanding access to capital. As co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation and founder of the Milken Institute, he has helped accelerate scientific and social progress worldwide, exemplifying the power of strategic philanthropy.
* David Rubenstein, co-founder and co-chairman of Carlyle, is a financier and philanthropist whose global support for arts, education, health, and civic initia-

tives has left a lasting impact. Rubenstein serves as chairman of several leading cultural and educational institutions, advancing public service through thoughtful and deliberate philanthropy.
Reflecting on the significance of the occasion, Dr. Eric Esrailian, co-founder of the next chapter and Board Member of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, added: “The Ceremony will highlight the profound connection between those who sought safety in the past and those who extend a hand to help others today.

Our Honorees are extraordinary individuals who embody the true meaning and spirit of modern philanthropy. Each has dedicated decades to making a tangible difference in the world in various ways, and their generosity extends a legacy of gratitude across generations.”
The evening will be co-hosted by award-winning journalist Judy Woodruff and bestselling author David Ignatius and will feature live performances from Grammy-nominated artists Rufus Wainwright and Aloe Blacc.



From left, Henrietta H. Fore, Graça Machel, Michael Milken and David Rubenstein



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).

☐ \$240 ☐ \$480 ☐ \$700 ☐ other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association

Memo: Sponsor a Teacher 2025

Mail your check to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher

5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056



If you prefer to donate by credit card, please go to:
givebutter.com/0g6lkY



Your donation is tax deductible.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AMAA 106th Annual Meeting Banquet to Honor Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.: A Life of Faith, Service and Music

By Joyce Philibosian Stein

PARAMUS, N.J. — The 106th Annual Meeting Banquet of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will honor Dr. Nazareth E. Darakjian, former President of the AMAA Board of Directors. During his decade of leadership, the AMAA faced many challenges and milestones — including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Artsakh War, the displacement of Artsakh Armenians from their Homeland and their resettlement in Armenia, as well as the global commemoration of AMAA's 100th Anniversary with a successful fundraising campaign. Through these years of both hardship and celebration, Dr. Darakjian led the Board with wisdom and unwavering dedication, guiding the Association on a solid path in continuing its mission with renewed strength.

Nazareth, affectionately known as “Nazo,” is a deeply rooted Armenian Evangelical.

Born in Aleppo, he cherished living in the manse of his devoted parents, his father Pastor Emmanuel and his mother Mary. Pastor Emmanuel faithfully served the churches of Kessab, Aleppo, and Beirut. Mary, a sprightly and well-versed teacher, taught at Aleppo's Bethel School before marrying Emmanuel.

Darakjian fondly remembers his

summers hiking in the mountains of Kessab and swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. Emmanuel and Mary were musicians at heart—his father played the violin, and his mother was a seasoned pianist. As might be expected, Mary diligently oversaw her son's piano practice sessions.

Their intense love of classical music led Emmanuel to purchase a rare reel-to-reel tape recorder in Aleppo in 1957. A true music aficionado, Emmanuel ensured that the lyrical strains of the world's great composers filled their home. Nazo's deep love for music stems from his father's infectious passion.

At the age of 13, the family moved to Beirut, where Darakjian graduated from the respected Armenian Evangelical College. He then earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the American University of Beirut (AUB), with hopes of continuing to AUB's Medical School. However, due to the escalation of the Lebanese Civil War, the family emigrated to Chicago.

In 1978, Darakjian completed his medical education at Loyola School of Medicine, graduating Cum Laude. He was subsequently inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and the Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Honor Society.

Although physics was his favorite



Dr. Nazareth E. Darakjian

subject in high school and his intended major at AUB, a wise friend advised him otherwise, noting the limited job prospects for physicists at the time. As a result, Darakjian pursued postgraduate studies in ophthalmology at Loyola University in Chicago, specializing in diseases and surgery of the eye. As he puts it, “It's a good specialty since it entails a good knowledge and understanding of the physics of the eye.”

Darakjian is known for his wholehearted commitment to the Armenian community, marked by a career of benevolent service. He and his wife, Dr. Ani Darakjian, are active members of the Los Angeles United Armenian Congregational Church. He has served

for many years as a Board Director and Treasurer of Sherman Oaks' Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School.

Darakjian also served as Chairman of the Dilijan Chamber Music Series, affiliated with the Lark Musical Society of Glendale, California. His fervent support of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is evident through his dedicated service as Board Member, Vice President, and President during a dynamic decade of teamwork.

His remarkable legacy includes his beloved wife Ani, his sons—Pastor Haig and Dr. Ara, a psychiatrist—and his grandchildren, six-year-old Paul and four-year-old Elizabeth, both of whom attend Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School.

With this extraordinary pedigree, Darakjian has generously shared the riches of his life.

“Over many years, Nazo has been both a trusted friend and a valued colleague in service. I have seen his unshakable faith, steady wisdom, and generous spirit shine in all he does — both in his leadership of the AMAA and in our personal friendship,” said Gary Phillips, AMAA Board President.

For more information about the upcoming gala or to make reservations, contact the AMAA at amaa.org/events.

Ashot Papoyan Advances Biotech in US and Armenia

BIOTECH, from page 7

switch is what Papoyan termed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: the chance to work with his brother on something as cutting edge as accelerating drug discovery, while also being involved with Armenian science in a business sense rather than philanthropically, was too much to pass up.

In January, 2024, BiosimAI was acquired by and merged with the biotechnology firm Deep Origin, which itself was founded in 2022 by Michael Antonov and was based in South San Francisco, California. Garegin became the chief science officer of Deep Origin. The headquarters remained in South San Francisco, but around half of the company's employees, around forty people, remain in Armenia, Papoyan said, where a lot of deep-tech R&D and software development takes place. Papoyan, who still lives and works in Massachusetts, said he goes to both places quite often. There are also employees working remotely from other parts of the US and Europe.

Two big advantages related to Armenia are its bright scientists, plus the fact that they are also less expensive to hire than their American counterparts. Historically, Armenians have always been strong in mathematical sciences and computer sciences, which is exactly what the company taps into. One difficulty that comes with having employees in different countries is dealing with the different time zones in setting up meetings.

To avoid problems concerning intellectual property rights, Papoyan said that most patents are completed through the US system, due to its intellectual property laws being well designed and more comprehensive.

Papoyan organizes the experiments of the lab in San Francisco, which tests whether the computational predictions are correct in real life. This proves to the world the reli-

ability of the simulation process or tools that the company has developed. He said that the proof of concept, making a prediction, synthesizing molecules, then doing the experiments in the lab, will take roughly six months. Many such tests must be done so Papoyan said it will take two to three years of such testing of predictions to create a good foundation from which to move forward.

Giving Back

Dr. Papoyan has not only been a successful entrepreneur, but he also gives back to the Armenian community, both in the homeland and the United States. Since his first year at Cornell, he has been involved in giving grants to Armenian scientists through the Armenia National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF), founded by Cornell astrophysicist Professor Yervant Terzian. Proposals are sent from Armenia to peers in America for review, and the highest scored innovations receive grants. ANSEF is part of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), which is the umbrella organization of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of American for philanthropy to Armenia. Currently, he is the co-chair of ANSEF alongside Prof. Vatche Sahakian, a physicist at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. Throughout the past 25 years, over 3 million dollars have been given to Armenian scientists through these programs. Armenian science did not have a lot of funding, especially in the early years of ANSEF, which is why it is so important to give young Armenians the chance to really compete with the rest of the world through ANSEF.

Papoyan is a member of the Armenian Society of Fellows (ASOF), where he is involved in several educational initiatives, as well as biology related organizations. He

works on coordinating classes in the mathematical and biological fields.

Dr. Papoyan also has some ideas for how Armenia can continue to be at the cutting edge of science. Computational biology is the “lowest hanging fruit” in his field, in the sense that it is both important and viable. Since the main requirement is software, there will not have to be the costs of new infrastructure or massive industrial needs. This is a prerequisite to moving on to experimental biology, which is more costly and does need the infrastructure of laboratories, freezers, animal housing, etc.

Appropriate available education is important to create the basis for Armenian advancements in science. Private companies have recently realized that Armenians need to have better education, so they are investing in internships and classes in order to improve the pipeline of a qualified workforce. However, Papoyan said that as a small country, Armenia cannot produce large numbers of specialists in all fields, so it needs to carefully choose particular fields on which to focus.

In addition to his support of Armenia, Dr. Papoyan is also active in the Armenian-American community. He is a member of the Knights of Vartan's Ararat Lodge of Boston, but he also has made a great impact as one of the founding members of the Armenian Biotech Group of Boston. He established it together with his wife, Yelena Bisharyan and several colleagues in 2012 as an initiative to connect Armenians in this field. He said that “it started as lunch with a few friends” but it expanded into an organization of over 250 members. There are regular in-person meetings, every quarter, where a member makes a presentation about his work, talking about his company, various initiatives, and what can specifically

be done for Armenia. The organization is intended to be especially impactful for young professionals in biotechnology field, allowing the rare opportunity for an intern to meet a CEO. Bisharyan at present is in charge of the organization.

Advice

“Love what you do and you will become outstanding” are the words Dr. Papoyan lives by. Rather than being a mediocre worker at an unsatisfying job, everybody has the potential to become excellent at something they love, he stressed. One of the biggest worries is finding support for taking a leap of faith, yet Papoyan said he felt that people's nature is to be receptive and forthcoming, something Dr. Papoyan sees every day through the Armenian biotech group. Someone starting out should look for and use all possible resources, Papoyan said, which of course includes Armenian networking.

American citizens have the advantage of various resources through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs of the US government, Papoyan said. The government takes the risk of investing in small startups, and as a result of this the best innovations continually are created in America.

The easiest way to get started is to find a mentor, someone or something you would consider smarter than you, as early as possible, Papoyan advised. This doesn't have to be a person — it could even be a philosophy or book. This holds true for both personal life and profession, he noted. After this step, with a continual desire to learn, everything will fall into place. As long as you love what you are doing, Papoyan concluded, “work” does not feel like a job, and you will never count the hours.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenia Fest 2025 Celebrates 17 Years of Culture, Community, and Camaraderie in Metro Detroit

By Corinne Khederian

ROYAL OAK, Mich. — On a warm August evening, more than 2,000 guests gathered at the Royal Oak Farmers Market to celebrate the 17th annual Armenia Fest—a cherished tradition in Southeast Michigan. Hosted by the Armenia Fest Committee in partnership with the Detroit Knights of Vartan, the event once again brought together the Armenian-American community to honor heritage through food, music, art, dance, and above all, unity.

“Armenia Fest brings together the entire Southeast Michigan Armenian community—including churches, cultural organizations, social groups, businesses, and universities—all under one big tent,” said Festival Co-Chair Greg Mamassian, reflecting on the beautiful collaborative spirit that defines the event.

The evening began with the national anthems of the United States and Armenia, performed by Deacon Rubik Mailian, director of the Komitas Choir and Pastoral Assistant at St. John Armenian Church.

Co-Chair and Musical Director Vaughn Masropian, serving as Master of Ceremonies, welcomed the full-house crowd before introducing clergy and guests. Opening prayers and warm greetings were offered by Very Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian, Pastor of St. John Armenian Church, joined by: Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, Pastor, Armenian Congregational Church; Rev. Hrant Kevorkian, pastor, St. Sarkis Armenian Church; Very Rev. Barouyr Shernezian, Dean, Armenian Theological Seminary and Rev. Fr. Vazgen Andreasian, Pastoral Intern at St. John Armenian Church.

Guests included Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America, and Mariam Khaloyan, director of Congressional Relations.



Packed crowd outside the Farmers Market

Khaloyan highlighted the Assembly’s mission and encouraged young attendees to apply for the Washington, D.C. internship program.

Co-Chair Vaughn Masropian expressed appreciation for the festival’s sponsors, stating, “We’re incredibly grateful to our benefactors—your continued support not only sustains this festival but allows

it to grow year after year. This year’s record-breaking contributions are a true testament to the strength and unity of our community.”

Major sponsors of Armenia Fest 2025 included: the Mardigian Foundation, the Hagopian Family of Companies, the Robert Ajemian Foundation (Peter Sarkisian), the Anusbigian Family — Westborn Mar-

ket, Mark and Dina Artinian — Crispelli’s Bakery and Pizzeria, Michael Artinian, the Diamond Factory, OneCare LTC, the Herman Hintiryan Family, Matthew Bedikian, MAC, Armenian Community Center, Shakeh Basmajian and Family, Helen Parnagian Corrigan, Diana and Martin Shoushanian and St. Sarkis Towers.

continued on next page



Tekeyan Cultural Association
Boston Chapter
presents

A Summer Concert


Greek-Armenian violinist
Emilya Gaspar and
her talented mother pianist
Jasmine Atabekyan
perform Armenian
and classical master-
pieces **Sunday**
Sept. 21, 4:30 p.m.



755 Mount Auburn St. Watertown
Please use Norseman Ave. entrance

Free, followed by small reception. Any
and all donations support Emilya's
education.

Telephone Sossy 617 281-1647 or email
syogurtian@comcast.net for more info



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
FOR ARMENIAN
STUDIES AND
RESEARCH

*Building the Future of
Armenian Studies*

GALA


CELEBRATING 70 YEARS
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2025

FAIRMONT COPLEY PLAZA,
138 ST. JAMES AVENUE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

6PM COCKTAILS
7PM DINNER AND PROGRAM
9:15PM AFTER PARTY

HONORARY CHAIRS
PAMELA WOOD AVEDISIAN
YERVANT CHEKIJIAN

GUEST SPEAKER
DR. ANTHONY W. MARX
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



BUY TICKETS AT
<https://naasr.org/gala70>

QUESTIONS
gala@naasr.org
617.489.1610



COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

A Festival of Flavor, Art, and Cultural Discovery

Guests enjoyed a vibrant selection of traditional Armenian dishes and pastries, prepared by the Ladies Guilds of St. John, St. Sarkis, the Armenian Congregational Church, the Detroit Armenian Women's Club, and Manoogian Manor.

Food vendors such as Uptown Catering, Lavash Grill, Toussounian Catering, and Migma LLC served Armenian favorites.

Educational and cultural displays added enriching context to the celebration, with exhibits from the University of Michigan-Dearborn, the U-M Center for Armenian Studies, the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School, and the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Booths from the Daughters and Knights of Vartan, Papa Nazook Pastries, Pola Pastry, Euro Market and Younique Arrangements offered distinctive shopping experi-



ences, while children enjoyed face painting and a surprise visit from "Mr. Mouse," enhancing the family-friendly vibe.

Music, Dance, and Cultural Expression

Musical entertainment was provided by the Armenia Fest All-Stars, led by emcee and Co-Chair Vaughn Masropian. Their energetic mix of traditional and modern Armenian tunes inspired spontaneous line



Hamazkayin Arax Dance Troupe performing at Armenia Fest

pride that define Armenia Fest.

A selfie wall with the Armenia Fest logo was a new feature added to the event this year by Fest Committee Member Armen Kabodian. "It provides a great opportunity for attendees to pose for photos against the Fest backdrop and exhibit their Armenian pride", said Armen.

Choreg, Charity, and Giving Back

The ever-popular Great Choreg Bake Off, organized by Vendor Chair Noreen Masropian, returned with spirited competition. Talin Hagopian, representing the Armenian Congregational Church, earned first place for her expertly prepared and delicious choreg.

In alignment with its philanthropic mission, Armenia Fest supports vital causes locally and abroad. Proceeds from the 2025 festival will benefit the Knights of Vartan Economic Sustainability Program (ESP), which promotes job creation and entrepreneurship in Armenia.

The Silent Auction, co-chaired by Angela Hagopian Snow and Elise Papazian, with support from Pam Coultis, Madeline Thomasian, and Ani Masropian-Basmajian, featured a variety of donated items. All proceeds will support humanitarian aid efforts in Armenia and Artsakh.



Packed crowd inside the Farmers Market

"What began as a vision 17 years ago by the late Edgar Hagopian has flourished into a beloved annual tradition, thanks to the steadfast dedication of the Armenia Fest Committee and the ongoing generosity of our benefactors," reflected Corinne Khedrian, Fest publicity chair.

Angela Hagopian Snow, Edgar Hagopian's daughter, thought about her father's legacy as she watched attendees enjoying the event. "The Fest continues to fulfill my Dad's founding mission to celebrate and preserve Armenian culture while fostering intergenerational connection and pride," she remarked continuing by saying "My mother, Sarah, brother, Edmond, sister, Suzanne and I are proud to be annual sponsors and volunteers for this wonderful tradition."

"Every year it just gets better," shared longtime attendee Michelle Margosian adding that "My husband and I truly enjoy the Fest — we wouldn't miss it. It's a joyful celebration of who we are as a community."

Regular participants Virginia and Gary Vartanian echoed the sentiment. "The event is a great opportunity to reconnect with friends and enjoy the delicious food offerings," they said. "We're also taking

food home to share with my elderly uncle so he can enjoy it, too," added Virginia.

As the night drew to a close, Co-Chairs Vaughn Masropian and Greg Mamassian expressed their gratitude to everyone who made Armenia Fest 2025 a resounding success. With warmth and sincerity, they acknowledged the unwavering support of attendees, the dedication of volunteers, the talents of the musical and dancing perform-



From left, Gary Vartanian and his wife, Virginia, visiting with Fest sponsor Diana Shoushanian (who sponsored with her husband, Martin Shoushanian)



Group photo of most of the Armenia Fest Committee Members

dancing throughout the night.

A standout performance by the Hamazkayin Arax Dance Troupe captivated the audience with traditional folk dances performed in authentic attire. Under the direction of the skilled Nairyi Karapetian, the Troupe embodied the spirit and cultural

A Legacy of Unity and Cultural Pride

With over 70,000 Armenians residing in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, Armenia Fest remains a powerful reflection of cultural identity, multigenerational connection, and community strength in Metro Detroit.

ers, the blessings offered by the clergy, and the tireless efforts of the entire Fest Committee. They invited all to return for Armenia Fest 2026.

For more photos and videos of Fest 2025, go to Facebook at Armenia Fest Michigan or link <https://www.facebook.com/share/1F7M5xWrE2/?mibextid=w-wXlfr>.



OBITUARY

Giorgio Armani

Italian Fashion King

RIVALTA, Italy (Reuters) — A small group of family members, colleagues and close friends attended a private funeral on Monday, September 8, for Giorgio Armani, the legendary Italian fashion designer who died last week at the age of 91.

The service was held at the church of San Martino in Rivalta, a village about 100 km (60 miles) south-east of Milan and close to Piacenza, the city where he was born.



Italian media reports said Armani would later be cremated and his ashes laid to rest in a family chapel in Rivalta that houses the remains of his parents and older brother. There was no official confirmation of those arrangements.

In a mark of respect, Armani stores closed on Monday afternoon. The city of Milan, Armani’s base since his family moved there in the late 1940s, held a day

of mourning for one of their favorite sons, as did Piacenza.

“We will say goodbye to him as a family and then move forward as he would have wanted. Everything is ready to remember him with his fashion,” his partner Pantaleo Dell’Orco was quoted as saying by Corriere della Sera daily.

Armani died after a five-decade career in which he built a business empire spanning

haute couture to home furnishing, with his name becoming synonymous with elegant simplicity.

He had no children but worked with a trusted group of family members and long-term confidants who are expected to carry on running the business over which he exercised tight control.

Right up to his death, announced last Thursday, Armani was working on a retrospective exhibition and a fashion show to celebrate 50 years of being in business, during Milan Fashion Week in late September. His company has to date not announced any changes to the program.

Over the weekend, thousands came to pay their respects to the man known as “Re Giorgio” (King Giorgio) as his wooden casket, adorned with white roses, was put on display at Armani’s headquarters in Milan.

“I feel very saddened, because he was a man of great style who, of course, has left an indelible mark... We are definitely losing a great, truly great talent,” Milan resident Alessandra Torchio said on Monday.

A few years ago, the little-known fact that the parents of Armani, that quintessential Italian, had fled the Ottoman Empire to Italy in 1915 during the Armenian Genocide, was reported.

Karine Asatryan

Young Mother, Dedicated Caregiver

WATERTOWN — Karine Asatryan was tragically taken from this world on August 31, 2025, at the age of 35.

Born in Yerevan, Armenia, on November 10, 1989, to Gevorg Asatryan and Mariam Nazaryan, Karine was the first member of her family to move to America.

Despite her short time on earth, she lived a full life and left an indelible mark on all who knew her.

Karine was a deeply loving mother, sister, daughter and niece. She was especially devoted to her beloved daughter, Madeline, whom she loved with all her heart and soul.

Karine’s nurturing spirit extended beyond her family; she worked as a caregiver for the family she lived with, giving them the same kindness and compassion she so freely shared with her own loved ones.

Her quiet strength, caring heart and gentle nature were felt by all who had the privilege of knowing her. She was cherished by her parents, Gevorg and Mariam, and will be lovingly remembered by her sister, Meline Asatryan, and her aunts, Ruzanna Krikorian, Emma Harteyan, Jemma Hartenyanyan, and Susanna and Ed Yezdoghlyan, and family. Karine also leaves behind many extended family members — Ken, Martha and Dianna Bedrosian who had known and loved Karine as their daughter/sister, many friends and co-workers, who will all deeply miss her.



Her kindness, respect for others, and unwavering care for those around her will be deeply missed by everyone who had the privilege to know her.

Funeral Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, on Saturday, September 6. Interment will follow at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Watertown.

Arrangements were by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

For those wishing to help support the family and baby Madeline please donate through gofundme link which can be found at the end of her obituary on the website of the Giragosian Funeral Home.

ԹԵՔԵՅԱՆ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՄԻՈՒԹԻՒՆ
ՄԵԾԱԳՈՅՆ ԼՈՍ ԱՆՃԵԼԵՍԻ
ՄԱՍՆԱԾԻՐ

Հովանավորությամբ՝
ԳԵՐԸ. Տ. ՅՈՎԱՆՆ ԱՐՔ. ՏԵՐՏԵՐԵԱՆԻ
Առաջնորդ Հայաստանեայց Առաքելական
Եկեղեցւոյ Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի
Արեւմտեան Թեմի

ՅՈՒՇԱՅԱՆՂԵՍ
ՆՈՒՐՈՐԻԱԾ՝
ՄԵԾԱՆՈՒՆ ԳՐՈՂ ԵՒ ԹԱՐԳԱՆԻՉ
ՍՏԵՓԱՆ ԱԼԱՃԱՃԵԱՆԻ
ԳՐԱԿԱՆ ՎԱՍՏԱԿԻՆ
1924 – 2010

Գլխավոր բանախօս՝
Հրաչ Սեփերճեան

Գեղարուեստական յայտագրին
կը մասնակցին՝
Նունէ Աւետիսեան
Հովհիսիմէ Ռշտունի

Կիրակի, 5 Փոկտեմբեր 2025
Կ.Ե. Ժամը 4:00
Կլենտէյի Կեդրոնական Գրադարան

222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale, CA 91205
info@tekeyanla.org

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

DENNIS M. D EVENEY & SONS
Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com

James “Jack” Giragosian, CPC **Mark J. Giragosian**

Giragosian
FUNERAL HOME

576 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472, Tel: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian
Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



Arts & Culture

The Fresno Premiere Screening of the Award-Winning ‘There Was, There Was Not’

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program and the Fresno State CineCulture program are presenting the Fresno premiere screening of the award-winning “There Was, There Was Not,” on Friday, September 19, at 5:30 p.m. Director Emily Mkrtichian will be present at the screening to discuss her film. The screening is free and open to the public and will be held in the Leon S. and Pete P. Peters Educational Center.

“There Was, There Was Not” follows four women living in the Republic of Artsakh, an unrecognized country reckoning with the aftermath of one war while on the precipice of another. In the midst of this uncertainty, four women build a life with the hope of making their home a better place. When war breaks out again, what began as an observational meditation on women’s roles after conflict becomes an urgent and intimate record of their lives interrupted once again by war. From taking up arms on the front lines to fleeing their homes as refugees, each woman’s life changes irrevocably. Their journey becomes the myth of a homeland lost forever, and the power of story to keep it alive.

“I never meant to make a film that documented war, displacement, and ethnic cleansing,” said Mkrtichian. “I meant to make a film about how women create a sense of home and a better future for their communities, after the rupture of war, displacement, and ethnic cleansing. But history repeats itself.”

“The movie began as a way to connect the stories of my culture I heard growing up with four women who were actively creating that culture, and building a future I wanted to be a part of.”

Mkrtichian is a filmmaker and interdisciplinary collaborator whose artistic practice reflects her upbringing in a displaced, diasporic family, and explores radically personal, alternative archives of places and people, especially from the SWANA



region, and a deep commitment to the healing power of relational, ethical, collaborative storytelling. Her films include the sci-fi short “Transmission,” which premiered at the BFI Flare Film Festival, the short documentary “Motherland,” which premiered at the Full Frame Film Festival and won Best Short Documentary at the Copenhagen International Film Festival, and her debut feature documentary “There Was, There Was Not,” which has been supported by the Sundance Institute, IDA, Chicken & Egg Pictures and HotDocs.

For more information about the film screening contact the Armenian Studies Program at <https://cineculture.csufresno.edu/films/>, or visit our Facebook page at @ArmenianStudiesFresnoState.



Armine Galents, “Katoghike Church in Talin, Armenia,” 1983. Oil on canvas. Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union (photo Peter Jacobs)

Zimmerli Explores Evolution of Armenian Nonconformist Art

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — Nearly 60 artworks — most of which have not been exhibited in decades — reveal a lesser-known cultural landscape of Armenian art during the Soviet era, uncovering hidden perspectives of cultural autonomy within a constrained political system. Topographies of Dissent: Armenian Art from the Dodge Collection, which opens at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers-New Brunswick on September 27, features more than 30 artists who captured the ideological, stylistic and aesthetic diversity of Armenian nonconformism from the 1960s to 1990.

Topographies of Dissent is the Zimmerli’s first exhibition dedicated to Armenian nonconformist art, prompting an international curatorial partnership. Zimmerli curator Julia Tulovsky, head of the museum’s Department of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union and Arts of Eurasia, collaborated with Lilit Sargsyan, one of Armenia’s leading art critics, and Armen Yesayants, an art historian and curator of the National Pavilion of the Republic of Armenia at the 2024 Venice Biennale. Based in Yerevan, Armenia, both guest curators selected works from the museum’s internationally renowned Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art.

“This is a rare opportunity to rediscover these works, some of which have only recently been researched, attributed or restored,” said Lilit Sargsyan. Armen Yesayants added, “While some were shown in Armenia and the former Soviet Union, many are on public view for the first time ever. It sheds light on an underrecognized chapter in both Armenian and Soviet art history, revealing how Armenian artists navigated ideology, memory and identity.”

Topographies of Dissent reflects the cultural atmosphere of Soviet-era Armenia, which, unlike many other republics, allowed for artistic experimentation and a distinct form of national modernism. Armenian artists historically distanced themselves from the explicitly representational and government-approved style of socialist realism. But rather than framing Armenian art under Soviet rule as a simple binary of resistance and repression, the exhibition proposes a more complex “topography,” where tradition, modernist aesthetics and quiet dissent coexisted. Artwork spans five sections that represent the development of Armenian nonconformist art over several decades: National Landscape: Land, Identity, Dream; Facets of “Formalism”; Abstraction; The 3rd Floor Group: Pop Art, Hyperrealism, and Neo-Dada; and Dystopias of the Evil Empires.

Visit zimmerli.rutgers.edu/events for all details closer to program dates.

Guest Curators

Lilit Sargsyan is one of Armenia’s leading art critics based in Yerevan. Her work focuses on the history of Armenian modern and contemporary art within the broader context of the socio-political history of the U.S.S.R. in the post-Stalin era.

Armen Yesayants is a Yerevan-based curator, art historian and cultural manager. He currently serves as Director of Exhibitions at the Cafesjian Center for the Arts, where he has curated and co-organized nearly 50 exhibitions. His curatorial practice spans both Armenian and international contexts, with a focus on modern and contemporary art, post-Soviet visual culture, and the intersections of ideology, identity and memory.

This exhibition is made possible by the leadership support of the Avenir Foundation Endowment Fund, with additional support from the Dodge Charitable Trust — Nancy Ruyle Dodge, Trustee. Generous support for bilingual text was provided by Art Bridges Foundation’s Access for All program.

The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum houses more than 70,000 works of art, with strengths in the Art of the Americas, European Art, Soviet Nonconformist Art and Arts of Eurasia, and Original Illustrations for Children’s Literature. The permanent collections include works in all mediums, spanning from antiquity to the present day, providing representative examples of the museum’s research and teaching message at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, which stands among America’s highest-ranked, most diverse public research universities. Founded in 1766, as one of only nine colonial colleges established before the see NONCONFORMISM, page 14

Media Personality Sona Movsesian to Serve as Emcee for the Armenian American Museum Gala

GLENDALE — The Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California announced recently that Sona Movsesian will serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the upcoming Heritage Gala on Saturday, November 22, at the InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown.

Movsesian is an author and media professional who has been the personal assistant to late-night talk show host Conan O’Brien. She co-hosts the popular podcast “Conan O’Brien Needs a Friend,” engaging in candid and humorous conversations with a unique series of guests. In 2022, she released her memoir, *The World’s Worst Assistant*, which became a New York Times bestseller.

“I am thrilled to be part of the Heritage Gala and to celebrate the richness of Armenian culture and history,” stated Movsesian. “It’s an honor



to contribute to an event that brings the community together to support such an important cultural institution. Plus, they said if I

hosted, they would consider letting me curate a month-long exhibit on my love for lahmajoun!” Movsesian added humorously.

Movsesian is deeply connected to the Armenian community and brings her signature humor and energy to every project she undertakes. Her presence at the Heritage Gala promises to engage guests, create memorable moments, and highlight the importance of celebrating Armenian culture and heritage.

“Having Sona Movsesian as our Master of Ceremonies brings an exciting and dynamic energy to this year’s Heritage Gala,” said Executive Chairman Berdj Karapetian. “Her connection to the Armenian community and her engaging spirit will make this evening unforgettable for all our guests.”

The Heritage Gala is the museum’s signature annual event, uniting community members, leaders, and supporters for an inspiring evening celebrating heritage, culture, and progress. Guests will enjoy an elegant dinner program and live on-stage performances, all in support of the museum’s mission to promote understanding and connection through education, exhibitions, and cultural programming.

The Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California is a world-class educational and cultural institution currently under construction in the heart of Glendale’s Arts and Entertainment District. The museum will feature Permanent and Temporary Exhibitions, an Auditorium, Learning Center, Demonstration Kitchen, Archives Center, and more. Its mission is to promote understanding and appreciation of America’s ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Armenian American experience.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Chef Ara Balayan and one of his assistants from Montebello-based Catering by Herach & Ara at a Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce event. Photos from Catering by Herach & Ara

Armenian Pilaf from Montebello's Catering by Herach & Ara

MONTEBELLO, Calif. — “Catering by Herach & Ara was established in 1984. It serves the Southern California and Southern Nevada communities with comprehensive catering services, event planning, staffing and execution with rentals, support equipment and coordination. Our commissaries are centrally located in Montebello and Anaheim Hills, California,” says the Montebello-based founder, Ara Balayan.

“Our catering team of talented, experienced professionals are solely dedicated and focused on providing the best services for your event, so there is no need to worry about distance or the number of events we are serving on one specific day. Our chefs have tantalized many thousands of guests with their original recipes and creations. Our continental menus offer Armenian, Italian, Mexican, Chinese, Mediterranean, and Japanese appetizers, salads, specialties, and desserts for parties, graduations, weddings, and special events for up to 6,000. We can accommodate dairy-free, gluten-free and other special dietary needs. Themed parties, props and support equipment are also available in making every event as unique and memorable as possible,” adds Ara. “We offer basic drop-off service, family-style and full formal silver service catering with professional uniformed attendants, and have access to well-trained and dedicated service staff throughout the area.”

Because of his years of culinary training and background, Ara Balayan is an expert in cooking a variety of ethnic foods and dishes, including traditional Armenian pilaf for his family and company guests. Here are two of his favorite recipes he has prepared for 37 years at Herach & Ara. His pilaf is simple to make, rich and

delicious, he adds. He has cooked pilaf on a burner, but a large quantity can be put into the oven, which gives “more control and a finer product.”

Ara Balayan's Pilaf

INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup very fine vermicelli, broken in small pieces
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup parboiled rice
Salt to taste

PREPARATION:

Heat the butter in a small skillet. Add the vermicelli and fry until golden brown. Meanwhile, bring the broth to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the browned vermicelli, the rice and salt to taste and stir.

Cover and cook over medium heat until the broth is absorbed, about 15 minutes, stirring to blend the ingredients toward the end of the cooking time. Serve hot.

Makes 3 to 4 servings

Armenian Pilaf for a Party

INGREDIENTS:

6 to 8 tablespoons butter
1 cup very fine vermicelli, broken in small pieces
8 cups (2 quarts) chicken broth
4 cups parboiled rice
Salt to taste

PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Heat the butter in a medium skillet. Add the vermicelli and fry until golden brown. Meanwhile, bring the broth to a boil. Add the vermicelli, the rice and salt, and stir. Turn the rice mixture into a large baking pan. Cover tightly with foil. Place in the oven and bake for 30 minutes.

Uncover and stir until evenly mixed. Cover again tightly with foil. Continue to bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the broth is completely absorbed.

Makes 15 to 20 servings

Note:

Parboiled rice isn't actually a different type of grain, but rather, it gets its name and different flavor from the process of partially boiling it in its husk. Why? Originally it was done to make the rice easier to process by hand, however, nowadays it helps to save more of the original vitamins and minerals found in rice, without the long cook time of whole grains. And, although it might sound like it, this rice is not precooked. For information on parboiled rice, see: <https://carolinarice.com/cooking/beginners-guide-to-parboiled-rice-with-recipe-ideas/#~:text=Bring%20%20%C2%BC%20cups%20of,until%20all%20water%20is%20absorbed.>

Catering by Herach & Ara

Ara Balayan
1460 S. Greenwood Ave.
Montebello, CA 90640
(323) 728-0573
(323) 536-5814 (cell)

Call for rates, menus and catering services.

Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Catering-by-Herach-Ara/471484419674479>

For Corporate Events, Holiday Parties, Wedding & Wedding Rehearsals, Family Reunions, Sports Event or Graduations.

*A story about the Armenian Food Fair & Fest at Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Cathedral in Montebello, CA, where these recipes were published is courtesy of food and wine writer, blogger, and cookbook author, Barbara Hansen, and originally appeared at tableconsersation.com on June 8, 2009. For these recipes, go to: <https://www.tableconversation.com/2009/06/feasting-at-an-armenian-fair.html>

Zimmerli Explores Evolution of Armenian Nonconformist Art

NONCONFORMISM, from page 13

American Revolution, Rutgers is the nation's eighth-oldest institution of higher learning.

Admission is free to the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers. The museum is located at 71 Hamilton Street (at George Street) on the College Avenue Campus of Rutgers University in New Brunswick. The Zimmerli is a short walk from the NJ Transit train station in New Brunswick, midway between New York City and Philadelphia.

The Zimmerli Art Museum is open Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Monday and Tuesday, as well as major holidays and the month of August.

For the most current information, including parking and accessibility, visit zimmerli.rutgers.edu/visit.



The Zimmerli Art Museum



ARTS & CULTURE

Daniil Kolanian

‘The Piano Became the Voice of My Soul’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN-ATHENS — Greek-Armenian pianist Daniil Kolanian (born in Athens in 2008) began piano lessons at the age of five with teacher Marina Gira at the Philippos Nakas Conservatory in Athens. In 2019 he continued with Alexandra Papastefanou at the Kodaly Conservatory. He is currently pursuing his studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne with Prof. Florence Millet.

In 2018, he won Second Prize in the Junior Category of the 41st Greek Piano Competition “Filon.” Two years later, at the 28th International Piano Competition Gianluca Campocihario in Catania, Italy, Daniil was awarded Second Prize in the 2nd Category. In 2021, at the 22nd International Piano Competition de Piano d’Ile-de-France, he won First Prize in the 2nd Category. In 2023 he won 8th National Piano Competition “Unesco” in Athens 1st Prize. In 2024 he received the Yamaha Music Europe Foundation (YMEF) Scholarship. In 2024 he moved to Germany, taking piano lessons with teacher Boris Radulovic. In the same year, he won first prize at the “Beethoven Bonnensis” Music Competition in the category solo-interpretation in Bonn.

Dear Daniil, back in the 1990s in Yerevan, I attended the concert of your father, the eminent classical guitarist Iakovos Kolanian. Was choosing the profession of a musician your own decision, or was it inspired by your father?

Music has been, from an early age, a source of joy and freedom, with the piano becoming the voice of my soul. Inspired by my father’s example, I was drawn to follow the same path. Thus, the decision to dedicate myself professionally to music came

naturally, as an inevitable continuation.

You started piano at the age of five. What drew you to the instrument?

Every time I laid eyes on a piano, I felt it draw me like a magnet, enchanted by its unique sound. Seeing my excitement, my parents encouraged me to begin lessons.

At such a young age, you have already achieved impressive competition results. Winning First Prize at the International Piano Competition in France must have been a special moment. What do you remember most vividly from that experience? And which of these experiences has been the most meaningful to you so far, and why?

What I remember most vividly is the moment I was climbing the steps to the stage. In my mind, I could hear my teacher’s voice guiding me.

Winning First Prize at the International Piano Competition in France, receiving the UNESCO Award in Athens, and being granted the Yamaha Scholarship were all important experiences in my journey. However, I do not consider them decisive for the path of an artist, because I believe that the essence and the true quality of art cannot be defined solely by distinctions and competition successes.

I would say that one of the most meaningful experiences for me was performing as a soloist in June 2024 in Yerevan with the Armenian State Chamber Orchestra.

Which composers do you feel closest to at this stage of your development?

I feel closest to Johan Sebastian Bach and Franz Liszt. With Bach, because out of complexity flows a simplicity that touches my soul. With Liszt, because he embodies the very flame of Romanticism, with imagination, passion, and transcendental challenges that inspire me to go beyond my limits.



You now study in Germany. How is your musical life different there compared to Greece?

Studying in Germany, in the young students’ program (Jungstudium) in the class of the distinguished professor and remarkable musician Florence Millet, I have the opportunity to be among older, high-level students from many countries around the world! I also have the chance to give more performances, both as a soloist and chamber music.

Can you describe your practice routine?

I begin by playing the piece I am working on slowly, in order to identify my weaknesses in that particular work. Once I have overcome those difficulties and feel “warmed up,” I approach it interpretatively, focusing on expression and musical character. My teacher and I also make sure to choose works that bring new technical challenges for me, so that each piece helps me grow and develop as a pianist.

Looking ahead, do you imagine yourself focusing more on solo performance, orchestra/chamber music, or perhaps even teaching in the future?

For me, a complete musician is one who embraces as many facets of the art as possible. I find inspiration in everything that is connected to the genre I serve.

What is your dream performance venue or collaboration?

The venue itself is not as important as the audience — what truly matters is their ability to listen deeply and feel the greatness of the composers’ works. As for collaborations, my dream is to stand alongside capable and inspired musicians.

I know you perform the piano piece Shushiki by Komitas, which has been included in the 2025–2026 piano syllabus for Grade 6 by the British Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examination board, which means that thousands of pianists around the world will become acquainted with and perform this gem of Armenian piano music! Do you feel that your Greek and Armenian heritage influences your approach to music in any way?

Both heritages have shown throughout their history that, despite hardships, they continue to move forward. This inspires me to carry on my own path as well. The musical traditions of both heritages are characterized by deep lyricism and a rich variety of rhythms — elements that I always keep in mind when I perform.

Please tell us about Kolanian family origins?

My great-grandfather, Kevork, together with my great-grandmother, Soghme, were forced to flee from Urfa to Aleppo, Syria, because of the 1915 Genocide. There, they had three children. Later, the whole family decided to emigrate to Brazil. The ship’s first stop was the port of Piraeus in Greece, and at that point my grandfather decided that they would settle permanently in Athens.

I belong to the fourth generation of the diaspora, and it is true that I am not as close to Armenian traditions as I would like to be. This is something that weighs on me, and in the future, I want to learn more and reconnect with them. Last year in June, during my visit to Armenia for my collaboration with the State Chamber Orchestra of Armenia, this need became even more deeply felt within me. In Yerevan was impressed by the layout of Yerevan, with its wide streets, parks, and historic buildings, as well as by its hospitable people. The city’s rich cultural life fascinated me, while my visit to the Geghard Monastery filled me with admiration. The only thing I regretted was not being able to communicate more with the locals, since I don’t know the language something I plan to learn in the future.

What advice would you give to other young pianists preparing for international competitions?

Psychological preparation probably plays the most important role, along with belief in one’s abilities, combined with proper preparation. Competitions do not necessarily determine the value of an artist; after all, history has shown that many great artists, due to their sensitive nature, struggled to win major competitions. Nevertheless, it is a very important motivation for study!



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

Books

Debut Novel Brings One Man’s Armenian Genocide Survival Story to Life Through Time Travel

NICOSIA, Cyprus — *A Week in Berlin*, the debut historical sci-fi novel by Angelina Der Arakelian – Dennington, has just been published. It tells the astonishing story of one man who survived the Armenian Genocide in 1915 after fleeing persecution and losing his family. Settling in Europe, he soon discovers that survival was only the beginning, especially when he gains the ability to relive and alter the past.

Blending researched history with speculative time travel, the novel examines how memory, trauma, and identity intersect, and how one life can ripple across decades. Readers are invited into a story of courage, survival, love and the enduring power of remembering what history attempts to erase.

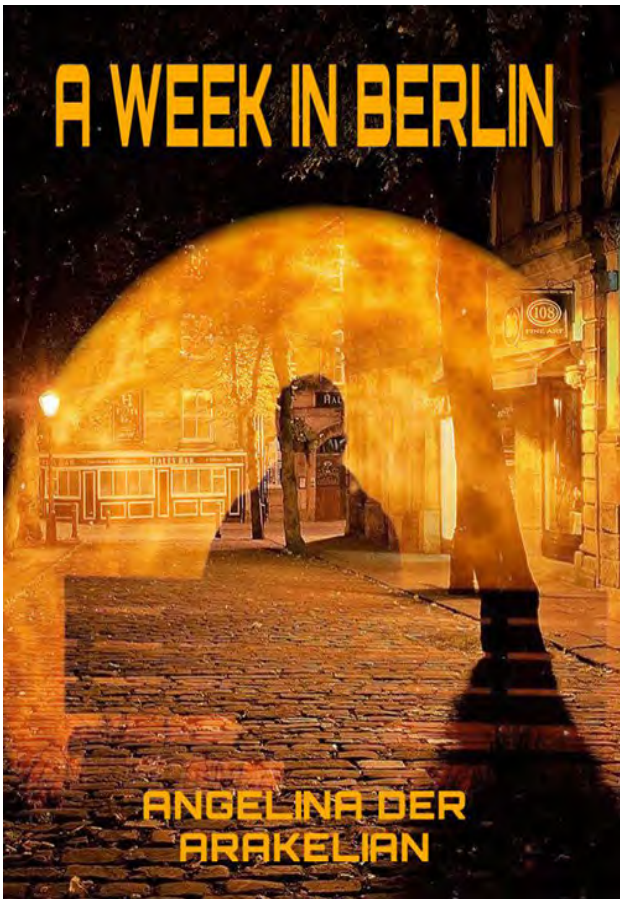
Drawing inspiration from her great-grandfather’s survival story, Der Arakelian – Dennington creates a narrative that is historically grounded yet imaginatively expansive, appealing to readers of literary fiction, historical novels,

and speculative fiction alike. “His survival was a defiance of erasure,” says Der Arakelian – Dennington. “This novel honors that courage and asks: what does it mean to survive when history wants to forget you?”

A Week in Berlin has drawn early comparisons to *The Time Traveler’s Wife*, *Cloud Atlas*, and *The Midnight Library*, for its combination of emotional depth, historical insight, and literary imagination. The novel is now available for purchase on Amazon in eBook, paperback and hardback editions.

Angelina Der Arakelian – Dennington is an award-winning screenwriter, poet, journalist and debut novelist. She draws on her heritage and family history to craft narratives that are emotionally resonant, intellectually compelling, and embedded in history.

A Week in Berlin is available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FMPZW3XS>



The Legacy of a German General and the Armenian Genocide: Otto Liman von Sanders Between Honor and State

ARLINGTON, Mass. — A military ally of the Ottoman Empire, which perpetrated the Armenian Genocide during World War I, the role of Germany has been marred in controversy. German military officers not only participated in many war operations, played a crucial role in organizing and structuring of the Ottoman army. An event on Sunday, September 28 at 4 p.m. on the occasion of the release of *A German General and the Armenian Genocide: Otto Liman von Sanders Between Honor and State*

Armenian Genocide, the first major human atrocity of the twentieth century.

After the armistice, Liman was among many high level German and Turkish military officers who were tried in Malta on charges related to the atrocities, after the armistice. “Who was responsible for his imprisonment? How did he gain his freedom? Why was he never officially rehabilitated? These questions became not just matters of historical justice but a personal obligation, given my family background. I wanted to set the record straight.”

The daughter of Genocide survivors, ancestors, orphaned parents who were saved by compassionate Turks, Mirak-Weissbach was both dismayed and intrigued. “If this German military leader had also acted to protect Christian minorities, I wanted to know more,” she said. “Why was he not acknowledged for these interventions? Who was he really, and what had he done during the war — and why?”

Mirak-Weissbach’s book is perhaps the first in-depth, serious biography of Liman. It is the outcome of years of research in government, military, university, and family archives — including those of Liman’s descendants: documents that helped reconstruct Liman’s life.

This ground-breaking work has received rave reviews by scholars in the history of the First World War and the Armenian Genocide in particular, “The author frames her story as an effort to salvage the reputation of this remarkable person, which she does. Her account of his repeated refusals to obey deportation orders from the Young Turk regime is well-documented, gripping, and fast-paced; the behind-the-scenes drama of his imprisonment on Malta appears here for the first time. A book devoted to Liman von Sanders and his “honor” is ideal to assign in upper-level classrooms, for it provokes the question: What would it take to stop genocide?” Margaret Lavinia Anderson, University of California Berkeley.

Mirak-Weissbach, an Armenian-American, is a graduate of Wellesley College and a Fulbright scholar who completed her graduate studies at the Università degli Studi di Milano. She has published extensively on politics and culture in the Arab

and Islamic world, as well as on Armenia, and has written essays on literature and philology. Her recent publications include *Through the Wall of Fire: Armenia – Iraq – Palestine: From Wrath to Reconciliation* (2013) and *Madmen at the Helm: Pathology and Politics in the Arab Spring* (2012). She serves as the Berlin correspondent for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and is a board member of the Armenian Cultural Foundation. In 2012, she and her husband established the Mirak-Weissbach Foundation, which supports cultural, educational,

and social initiatives in Armenia.

The public is invited to attend the book launch of *A German General and the Armenian Genocide: Otto Liman von Sanders Between Honor and State*, meet and have conversation with the author at the Armenian Cultural Foundation. The event, livestreamed simultaneously by ACMI (Arlington Communication Media, Inc.), will be followed by a reception. The copies of the will be available for purchase at the event or from Berghahn’s website. For questions and more detail, contact the ACF office.



Author Muriel Mirak

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, published by Berghahn Books, will discuss the legacy this leading, highly decorated and in the meantime, controversial German military officer.

The book launch is co-sponsored by the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Goethe Institute and the Berghahn Publication.

Especially invited from Germany, the author of this meticulously researched, documented and thought-provoking reassessment, Muriel Mirak-Weissbach will discuss her findings based on the previously unpublished archival materials to shed light on the life and career of Liman von Sanders’ legacy, the ethical dimensions of his role as the top German military office, the moral dimensions of the conflict and the challenges of the justice during the

ARMENIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION
ՀԱՅ ԱՃԻՆԱԿԱՅԻՆ ՎԻՃԱԿԱԿԱՆՈՒՄ

Presents: A Conversation and Meeting with

Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

"This is a very valid inquiry into a multifaceted, fascinating German general during a late-Ottoman era of extremes... Based on primary sources, the author succeeds in giving a sober, but poignant portrait of a man of 'honor' in times of disregard for human dignity."

— Hans-Lukas Kieser, University of Newcastle, Australia

BOOK LAUNCH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 AT 4 PM

CO-SPONSORED BY:

ARMENIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION, 441 MYSTIC STREET (ROUTE 3), ARLINGTON, MA



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 7-FEBRUARY 28 — Armenian Museum of America, through February 28, 2026 Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries "The Art of Disruption: The Art & Impact of Serj Tankian" World renowned musician Serj Tankian is the lead singer and songwriter for the band, System Of A Down, a visionary poet, visual artist, and outspoken advocate for human rights. Inspired by his 2024 memoir, *Down with the System*, the exhibition immerses visitors in the dynamic intersections of music, painting, and protest that define Tankian's work. This exhibition is curated by Ryann Casey. Sponsored by Carolyn Mugar and the Alan K. & Isabelle DerKazarian Foundation. Hours: Thursday-Sunday 12pm-6pm 65 Main St., Watertown. (617) 926-2562 or armenianmuseum.org

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. On the occasion of Armenian Independence Day on September 21. 1-8 p.m. Saturday. ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY, BOSTON rain date: September 27. For the schedule, email 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

SEPTEMBER 28 — Wellesley Symphony Orchestra performs Alan Hovhanness's *Exile Symphony*, a remembrance and commemoration of the Armenian genocide of 1915. Mass Bay Community College, 50 Oakland Street, Wellesley. 2 p.m. Tickets \$30 on-line and at the door. <https://www.wellesleysymphony.org>

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 19 — CELEBRATING WHAT UNITES US! Highlighting Ireland. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday, 4 p.m. Monthly series in collaboration with the City of Boston Office of Immi-

grant Advancement and Age Friendly Boston RSVP appreciated, hello@armenianheritagepark.org

OCTOBER 24 — 20th Anniversary Celebration of Father Khachatur Kesablian's Ordination to Priesthood. Presentation of Floral (Dzaghga) Pilon by His Eminence, Bishop Mesrob Parsamyan, Primate. Dinner and Program to follow. Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. 6 p.m. For tickets and further information, contact Dara Hagopian, djuke@comcast.net, 508-364-9729, or go to www.stsvartanantz.com. Tickets must be purchased by October 17. No tickets will be sold at the door.

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

OCTOBER 26 — TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents Chekhov's "The Marriage Proposal" in Western Armenian at St. James Armenian Church, a cosponsor along with Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter and the Society of Istanbul Armenians, 4 p.m. Tickets \$75/person at themarriageproposal.eventbrite.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 16 — GIVING THANKS! TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 2pm. Meet & Greet. Share the Warmth: Bring a Winter Hat, Scarf or Gloves for the ABCD Winter Drive, Seasonal Refreshments. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.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/>

DECEMBER 7 CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 4:45pm. Meet & Greet. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Sweet Treats. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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.mirrorspectator.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.

Armenian Museum of America Presents Second 'Music in Color' Concert

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America will host the second performance of its "Music in Color" concert series on Saturday, September 27 at 7 p.m., a new initiative and artist-in-residence program led by acclaimed violinist Haig Hovsepian. Supported by longtime museum benefactor Nancy Kolligian, the program brings engaging live musical experiences to the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries, while deepening public connection to Armenian culture through music.

The "Music in Color: Artist-in-Residence Program" is designed to foster meaningful engagement with the Museum's exhibitions through live performance, educational programming, and cross-cultural collaborations. Audiences will experience the rich tapestry of Armenian musical heritage alongside global influences in an intimate gallery setting.

Haig Hovsepian, described by renowned violinist Ilya Kaler as "one of the most gifted musicians of his generation," is celebrated for his versatility across classical, Armenian, and jazz traditions. He has performed in world-class venues including Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall, and the Koussev-

itzky Music Shed, and has appeared as a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Hovsepian is a dedicated educator and advocate for community engagement through the arts.

Joining Hovsepian for this performance is pianist Joseph Vasconi, hailed for his "adroit facility and depth of understanding." Born in Los Gatos, California, Vasconi began studying piano at age five and has emerged as a distinguished soloist, chamber musician, and collaborator. His accolades include First Prize at the Cunningham International Piano Competition, the United States Open Music Competition, and recognition by the National YoungArts Foundation. He has appeared at festivals such as the Aspen Music Festival and Tanglewood Music Center, where he was awarded the Leonard Bernstein Fellow-



Joseph Vasconi

ship for two consecutive summers. Vasconi earned his Master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music.

As part of his residency at the Armenian Museum of America, Hovsepian and Vasconi will present a concert inspired by "The Art of Disruption: The Art and Impact of Serj Tankian."

"The program was conceived to reflect the Armenian-American identity, bringing together composers from both traditions," explained Hovsepian.

The evening will feature Amy Beach's lyrical *Romance*, Eduard Baghdasarian's evocative *Nocturne*, and Edvard Mirzoyan's dazzling *Introduction and Perpetuum Mobile*. After intermission, the program continues with William Bolcom's nostalgic *Graceful Ghost Rag*, Grikor Hakhtinian's heartfelt *Adagio*, and Paul Schoenfield's jazz-infused *Four Souvenirs*.

"By pairing Armenian and American voices, the concert highlights the dialogue between heritage and innovation that defines the Armenian-American experience, resonating with Tankian's creativity and vision," adds Hovsepian.

The series underscores the museum's



Haig Hovsepian

commitment to innovative programming that brings Armenian art and culture to life through multidisciplinary collaboration. For more information and tickets, visit: www.ArmenianMuseum.org/rsvp



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
SPECTATOR**
SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

CONTRIBUTORS

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

REGIONAL

CORRESPONDENTS

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA
02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.S.A.	\$100 one year
Canada	\$150 one year
Other Countries	\$230 one year

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

Armenia's Approach to Beijing

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Armenia became the last country in the region to establish strategic relations with China. I've argued in my articles that Armenia's approach to China is short-sighted, and it should deepen relations with Beijing. Armenia will inevitably deepen relations with Beijing, given that all surrounding states maintain strong strategic and economic ties with China. The main regional players, such as Russia, Turkey, and Iran, also have strategic relations with China. From this perspective, Armenia has found itself in regional isolation. Furthermore, I conveyed that China would seize the opportunity to establish a strategic presence in the South Caucasus, given Russia's limited capacity to reinvest resources and restore its influence there.

Regarding the United States, the "Trump route" doesn't guarantee an American strategic presence in the South Caucasus. Current business and economic involvement doesn't constitute strategic presence. While increased involvement could lead to one, it's premature to say that it can become a strategic presence. However, as for today, there's little indication that American businesses are interested in the road's operation.

Just two months ago, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan suggested Armenia could seek European Union (EU) membership within 20 years. This means that membership is not currently an Armenian foreign policy option, and EU membership for Armenia is unlikely to happen in the near future. That is why Armenia has no other choice but is forced to find other alternatives. Countries like Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkey have been ready to join the EU for decades but have not been accepted. There is no guarantee that Armenia can be in the EU even in 20 years.

After this statement by Prime Minister Pashinyan on the EU, Armenia decided to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and establish strategic cooperative relations with China. If Armenia's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

was not vetoed by Pakistan, with which Armenia established diplomatic ties just a few days ago, Armenia would have become a member of this organization, and European integration would be even more difficult. Interestingly, Pakistan vetoed Armenia's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, while India vetoed Azerbaijan's. Armenia found itself in a ludicrous situation because Pakistan established diplomatic relations with Armenia a day before the veto.

It should be recalled that Pakistan never recognized Armenia as a state until now and was hostile towards Yerevan, unconditionally supporting Azerbaijan. Although diplomatic relations have been established now, it seems Pakistan's hostile approach remains unchanged.

As for bilateral relations with China, Armenia officially has recognized the One China principle, acknowledging Taiwan as an integral part of China, in an effort to rectify past missteps. It should be noted that the Taiwanese minister of economy's visit to Armenia some years ago strained Armenian-Chinese relations.

Armenia's strategic partnership with China appears driven by a perceived lack of alternative options in Yerevan's foreign policy. Recognizing China's growing influence, Armenia sought membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This belated step could have yielded greater economic benefits and a more diversified foreign policy through earlier and more active engagement with Beijing.

The conclusion is that Armenia's foreign policy priorities are driven by a lack of alternatives rather than its own interests, indicating a reactive approach instead of a proactive, strategic vision.

(Suren Sargsyan is an expert on US foreign policy, researcher and author. He is a graduate of Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Suren Sargsyan is a founder of the Armenian Center for American Studies, a research center based in Yerevan.)



Princeton Must Retire the Atatürk Professorship

By Greg Arzoomanian

Ten years ago, Princeton's Board of Trustees established a special committee to consider the usage of Woodrow Wilson's name at Princeton. That work resulted in the ultimate removal of Wilson's name from the School of Public and International Affairs, and the creation of a "Committee on Naming" of the Council of the Princeton University Community to consider similar future issues.

One naming that especially deserves consideration has to be Princeton's "Atatürk Professorship in Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies," which is named for Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey and anti-Armenian figure that inspired Nazi ideology. The Princeton professorship appears to be the only such named chair in the country that bears Atatürk's name. While no professor has held the title since Atatürk Professor of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies emeritus Heath W. Lowry departed in 2013, the position remains open for new candidates. Just as Princeton exempted Wilson's name from celebration due to his racist ideologies, it must do the same for the Atatürk Professorship: It must be retired.

Last year, historian Taner Akçam came to Princeton to discuss the Armenian Genocide. Relatives on both my father's and mother's sides were among the 1.5 million

Armenians killed in this effort to establish an ethnically homogeneous state by the Turkish Empire in the early 1900s.

In a section on anti-Armenian racism, Akçam showed a slide with the following quote from the eponymous Kemal Atatürk: "The Armenians occupied our craft guilds (*sanat ocaklari*) and adopted an attitude of [being] the owners of this country. ... The Armenians have no rights whatsoever in this prosperous country. Your country belongs to you, to the Turks ... The Armenians and others have no rights here whatsoever."

Concerns surrounding Atatürk don't stop with racism. He arguably inspired the fascists of World War II that came after him. In his book "Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination," Stefan Ihrig cites Hitler, who said that "Atatürk was a teacher; Mussolini was his first and I his second student."

Atatürk also has notoriety in the history of genocide. Although he didn't participate directly in the Armenian genocide, he did end the trials of the genocide perpetrators, as described in politics professor Gary Bass's book "Stay the Hand of Vengeance." So while Atatürk originally called the genocide "a shameful act," his later actions normalized genocide, transforming it into an acceptable form of statecraft — a lesson certainly taken to heart by his self-described student.

The Trustee committee's report noted, "In the course of a thorough and wide-ranging review, it became clear that the controversy surrounding Wilson's name was emblematic of larger concerns about the University's commitment to diversity and inclusivity." Similarly, the honoring of Atatürk is emblematic of a troubled relationship between generations of Princeton professors and Armenian students.

Decades ago at Princeton, the late Ed Tejirian '57 — a friend of mine — was presented a view on the Armenian genocide by former professor Lewis V. Thomas in his book, *The United States and Turkey and Iran: "Had Turkification and Moslemization not been accelerated there by the use of force, there certainly would not today exist a Turkish Republic, a Republic owing its strength and stability in no small measure to the homogeneity of its population."*

Listening to this narrative — one that normalizes the Turkish empire's violent expansionism as a tool for national security — Ed later told me, "As an undergraduate, I didn't feel that I could tell him 'Professor, would you listen to yourself?'"

The Princeton Armenian community's concerns continued thereafter due to the invitation of certain guest speakers on this campus. Aram Arkun '81 wrote a column for the *Prince* on April 24, 1981 titled "On
continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

President Khachaturyan Disparages Diaspora's Support for Armenia

After Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan burnt almost all bridges between Armenia and the diaspora, now the president, Vahagn Khachaturyan, is completing the damage.

In late May, during an interview with foreign journalists attending the government forum, “The Yerevan Dialogue,” Khachaturyan made disparaging remarks about the diaspora. Santiago A. Farrell, international editor of Argentina’s daily newspaper *Perfil*, published the president’s comments on June 22, 2025:

“The Republic of Armenia seeks to gain prominence in Latin America, convinced that, despite the presence of significant [Armenian] communities in some of its countries, its position on the Turkish genocide and the centuries-old conflict with its neighbor Azerbaijan have not been understood in the region, which has in the past turned its back on it in international forums. Perhaps the [Armenian government’s] mistake was leaving the management of diplomatic relations, in countries with a significant Armenian presence [Argentina and Uruguay], in the hands of the diaspora.

“Turkey and Azerbaijan have gone down a different path, the other way around, establishing diplomatic relations and gaining a presence in Latin American countries. We feel we don’t receive support from Latin American countries on many international platforms. The problem was that we paid too much attention to countries with Armenian communities and less attention to those without.

“Turkey and Azerbaijan are very well represented [in Latin America], and therefore have the opportunity to make their views known on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

Here are Khachaturyan’s errors:

1) He wrongly claims that Armenia’s position on the Armenian Genocide and its conflict with Azerbaijan are the reasons for Armenia’s poor relations with South American countries. In reality, several South American countries maintain strong ties with Armenia thanks to their local Armenian communities. None have turned their backs on Armenia, and many have formally recognized the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, it is incorrect to describe the conflict with Azerbaijan as “centuries old,” since that country has only existed for just over a century.

2) He wrongly views Armenia’s ties with the diaspora as a liability rather than an asset. Most countries fortunate enough to have influential Diasporas

actively leverage them to open doors and facilitate high-level introductions to government officials.

3) If some of Armenia’s ambassadors are too incompetent to carry out their diplomatic duties, it is not the fault of the local Armenian communities. Armenia’s leaders are the ones who often appoint their unqualified friends or political supporters for important diplomatic posts. What little some of Armenia’s ambassadors accomplish is mostly due to the contacts established by the local Armenian communities.

4) In several countries, Armenian communities are the primary reason governments maintain friendly relations with Yerevan. Without their activism and lobbying, many foreign capitals would lack both incentive and awareness to support Armenia. The Armenian communities in the United States, Canada, France, Argentina, Uruguay, United Kingdom, Greece, Lebanon, Iran, Russia, and Australia have encouraged their host government’s positive policies toward Armenia.

5) While it’s true that Azerbaijan and Turkey maintain more embassies in South America than Armenia, the local Armenian communities’ influence far outweighs that of Ankara’s or Baku’s envoys, lacking comparable grassroots support.

When Khachaturyan visited Adana, Turkey, in 2011, he caused an uproar by declaring, “We are ready to ask for Turkey’s forgiveness for the bloody clashes in the region, particularly for ASALA. In the name of Armenia, we ask for Turkey’s forgiveness.” The Republic of Armenia has no reason to apologize for ASALA’s actions, which had taken place prior to Armenia’s independence.

Khachaturyan’s disparagement of the diaspora aligns with Prime Minister Pashinyan’s controversial remarks on June 20, 2025, in Istanbul, when he downplayed his own 2019 declaration -- “Artsakh is Armenia. Period” -- by claiming: “I used those words in 2019 because I was patriotic. I was responsible for all Armenians. I was being told that I am the prime minister of all Armenians. Such concepts of patriotism gave us all the disasters.” He continued: “We are not the author of the patriotism that we carry in our heads.” He said: “the prime minister is not responsible for all Armenians. Do not put your trust in me. You solve your own problems in your communities.” Such rhetoric follows his earlier public denouncements of Mt. Ararat, the national anthem and emblem, the Armenian Church, Armenia’s past, and Artsakh.

Furthermore, Pashinyan’s appointee Zareh Sinanyan, as High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, has systematically undermined Armenia’s relations with the diaspora, instead of strengthening them.

Armenia’s officials have an obligation to cultivate positive, productive ties with the Diaspora: invite them to visit, invest, and relocate to Armenia, tap their expertise, and welcome their contributions to nation-building. The Diaspora remains one of Armenia’s greatest strategic assets and deserves to be embraced with open arms, not disparaged.

Princeton Must Retire the Atatürk Professorship

from previous page

the Armenian genocide”: “The Turkish government still denies that the massacres ever happened, and Princeton became a part of this historical distortion when Turkish Foreign Minister İler Türkmen spoke here recently.”

But the troubles really took off with the establishment of the Atatürk Professorship in 1993 with a \$750,000 grant from the Turkish government, and its filling by a lobbyist for that government. It was the subject of articles in, among other places, the *New York Times* and here in the ‘*Prince*.’ Deserving special mention is a 2005 *Prince* article which quotes Darren Geist ’05 noting “Princeton’s position as a center for Armenian Genocide denial.”

To this day, Armenian Princeton students have continued to speak out against the lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide by professors at Princeton. Former Princeton Armenian Society Co-President Katya Hovnanian-Alexanian ’26 previously argued in these pages that the University must properly categorize this crime against humanity.

There have unfortunately been numerous other examples over the decades. But this partial list shows that the attitude towards Armenians on campus has been a matter of sustained interest among Armenian Princeton students. Having a chair named after a virulent anti-Armenian racist is emblematic of the troubling legacy that engenders that unwelcome interest. It is well past time, then, that Princeton retired the Atatürk Professorship.

(Greg Arzoomanian is a member of the Princeton Class of 1979. This commentary ran in the *Daily Princetonian* on September 4.)

LETTERS

Pashinyan Was Not the Only One to Reject OSCE Proposals

To the Editor:

RE: The *Azatutyun* story in your August 30, 2025 issue on Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s statement that he rejected an OSCE Minsk Group proposal for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict before the 2020 war.

On the face of it, that might have been a serious mistake; the prime minister does have his share of serious mistakes, some of which he has acknowledged publicly.

However, if rejecting an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) proposal by Pashinyan was a mistake, why wasn’t it a mistake by the previous administrations who made the same decision many times over 20 years?

Those rejections began with the decision by Robert Kocharyan, Serzh Sargsyan, the next two presidents of Armenia, and Vazgen Sargsyan, eventually a powerful prime minister of the Republic, of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair proposal in September 1997. Their rejection resulted in the removal of President Levon Ter-Petrosian, who had accepted a resolution which we considered the most that could be obtained.

The OSCE co-chairs produced a number of proposals during the 20-year reign of Kocharyan and S. Sargsyan, 1998 to 2008. Although

these two leaders of the republic formally accepted some of these proposals, they placed such conditions they knew could not possibly be accepted by Baku, and thus their response to these proposals amounted to a rejection. For the record, I must add, reluctantly under the circumstances, that the leadership of Artsakh rejected outright just about any proposal that the Minsk Group ever offered.

The proposal rejected by Pashinyan has not been published. At the end of the *Azatutyun* article, one opposition leader describes it as having been offered once before, in 2007, a proposal that was based on the so-called “Madrid principles.” The prime minister should release the text of that proposal; but the opposition leader seems to be knowledgeable about its contents; he should publish it. I find it not so likely that OSCE would offer the same text more than a decade later.

The other point with regard to that proposal is that, if its contents were so favorable to the Armenian side and Pashinyan should have accepted according to the opposition, then why did it not work in 2007, when it was offered to Kocharyan? I will not go into details here, but it is clear that was not a workable proposal. For one thing, the “referendum” on the future status of Karabakh included in the

Madrid principles was understood very differently and unreconcilably by the parties to the conflict; and the status issue has always been a major stumbling block in negotiations.

The responsibility for the inevitability of a new war must be extended to the leaders since 1998. The reaction of the opposition leaders to Pashinyan’s statement sounds disingenuous, to say the least.

The prime minister’s statement can be a “game changer,” as one opposition leader opined in that article, only if we forget the policies of the two decades before Pashinyan assumed the leadership of Armenia.

Finally, it would have been more professional if the reporter had given a chance to the prime minister to respond to the accusations made against him on this occasion.

I understand the politics behind the opposition’s reaction to the prime minister’s admission; but this is bigger than politics. Blind, personalized opposition to, approaching hatred toward, anything Pashinyan says or does cannot lend credibility to the opposition’s charges, even when some are credible; and it does not help Armenia to face the challenges it is facing.

Jirair Libaridian
Cambridge, Mass.
September 3, 2025

EU Sanctions Quietly Extend to Azerbaijani Refinery for Processing Russian Petrol

By Rasmus Canback

The EU’s sanctions against Russia have quietly extended to Azerbaijani state-owned STAR Refinery in Turkey, with Brussels telling OC Media that the refinery was subject to a ban for processing Russian crude oil.

Imports from the refinery are subject to a ban under the EU’s 18th sanctions package, adopted in July 2025. The package bans the import of refined products made from Russian crude if processed in third countries as an anti-circumvention measure.

The legislation named 26 entities subject to export bans on dual-use items, including 11 logistics firms in China, Hong Kong, India, and Turkey. Refineries, however, were not explicitly listed.

When contacted by OC Media, EU foreign affairs spokesperson Anitta Hipper confirmed that STAR, jointly owned by the Azerbaijani government and its state oil company SOCAR, was covered by the package.

“What the EU did with the 18th package adopted in July 2025 is to introduce a ban on imports from third countries of refined products made of Russian crude oil”, she said. “Insofar as the STAR refinery — or any other refinery in third countries — uses Russian crude oil to make products aimed for export to the EU, this will no longer be allowed.”

Hipper stressed that the goal is to cut off Russian oil revenues.

“This is intended to prevent Russian crude oil from reaching the EU market in any form and it is part of the EU strategy to increasingly weaken Russia’s ability to wage war.”

The clarification may spell the end of STAR’s role in handling Russian oil for European buyers. Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Azerbaijan has often been accused of “rebranding” Russian fossil fuels through its infrastructure.

The accusations were repeatedly refuted by the presidential administration of Azerbaijan.

Attention has also fallen on Azerbaijan’s crude fleet. In May, OCCRP reported that the Zangezur tanker had been blacklisted by the UK as part of Russia’s ‘shadow fleet’, and was soon added to the EU’s list as well.

By July, Armenian outlet Hetq revealed that two more Azerbaijani vessels — Shusha and Karabakh — had also been sanctioned. In 2023, all three were rebuilt as Aframax carriers — a medium-haul crude carrier — and regularly transported crude from Russia’s Primorsk port to Turkey’s Nemrut terminal, the gateway to STAR.

STAR refinery itself has faced scrutiny since Azerbaijan controversially shifted its loans from US banks to Russian creditors in late 2023, while refitting its tankers to carry Russian crude.

In 2024, environment watchdog Global Witness reported that most of the crude processed at STAR likely originated in Russia before being exported to the EU.

Transport data showed that over 90 percent of the crude oil came from Russia in early 2024. In the first quarter of 2024, the STAR refinery imported an estimated \$1.2 billion worth of Russian oil, compared with \$500 million two years before.

“For far too long, EU purchases of Russian oil products have funded the war in

Ukraine”, said Jon Noronha-Gant, a senior fossil fuels investigator from Global Witness.

“It is very good news that Brussels is clamping down, stopping purchases from refineries like STAR that have bought so much Russian oil.”

Noronha-Gant added that the EU has all necessary tools to impose the sanctions efficiently.

“The EU has the data, it can enforce its sanctions. By pipeline or by boat, oil products from refineries using Russian oil can be traced and when Brussels shows the political will to take action, it can do so.”

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on September 4.)

Armenia’s History Museum, British Museum Sign Memorandum of Understanding

LONDON (Public Radio of Armenia) — The History Museum of Armenia and the British Museum signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) during an official visit of an Armenian delegation to the United Kingdom September 7–10.

The Armenian delegation was led by Alfred Kocharyan, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS), and included David Poghosyan, Director of the History Museum of Armenia; Syuzanna Khojamiryan, Director of the Yeghishe Charents Museum of Literature and Arts; and Marina Hakobyan, Director of the National Gallery of Armenia.

The MoU was signed in London by David Poghosyan on behalf of Armenia and Nicholas Cullinan, director of the British Museum. The official ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister Kocharyan, Armenia’s Ambassador to the UK Varuzhan Nersesyan, members of the official Armenian delegation, senior representatives of the British Museum, and invited scholars.

In his remarks, Kocharyan emphasized

the importance of strengthening cultural and professional dialogue between the two institutions, stressing that the signed agreement opens new perspectives for co-operation. He noted that the 2024 joint exhibition “Mother Goddess: From Anahit to Mary” at the History Museum of Armenia was already a landmark of dynamic and growing cultural collaboration between Armenia and the UK, serving as a strong

foundation for future projects.

Kocharyan expressed confidence that the memorandum will deepen intercultural cooperation, foster expanded partnerships, create new connections and promote cultural exchange.

As part of the visit, Kocharyan, together with Khojamiryan and Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, also visited the British Library.



The Armenian delegation visiting the British Museum



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԿԱԹՈՂՈՍՈՍԱՆԻ ԿՐԹՈՍԻՆԱԿԱՆ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ

ՀԱՄԱՐՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԲԱՆԴԱՐԱՆՈՒՄ

ՀԱՄԱՍՄԻՌՈՒԹԵՆԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

Please join us as we celebrate
Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church

Anniversary Gala

FAITH • CULTURE • ECUMENISM

Under the Patronage of His Excellency
THE MOST REVEREND MIKAEL MOURADIAN
Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of
Our Lady of Nareg in the USA and Canada

Honoring
His Excellency
ARCHBISHOP RICHARD G. HENNING
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

Keynote Speaker
MR. PETER PALANDJIAN
CEO of Intercontinental Real Estate Corp.


Honorary Presenter of the Servant of God
Cardinal Agagianian
DR. CARA AGHAJANIAN
Dame of the Order of Malta

Master of Ceremonies
MR. ARA J. BALIKIAN, ESQ.
President of the AGBU New England District




Scan for more info

Saturday, October 25, 2025
6:00 PM – Cocktail Reception 7:00 PM – Dinner
SHERATON HOTEL, 39 Dalton Street, Boston, MA
Parking at the Prudential Center Garage



ARMENIAN GENERAL BENEVOLENT UNION
LOS ANGELES SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE



**AGBU LA Special Events Committee
& Tekeyan Cultural Association, LA Chapter
are honored to Invite you to a lecture by**

ROUPEN AVSHARIAN, Esq.

**“Syria - Post Assad Environment
& the Syrian Armenians”**

**Սուրիա: Յետ-Ասատեան
Իրավիճակն ու Սիրիահայուրթիւնը**

THURSDAY, SEP 25, 2025 AT 7:00PM
AGBU VATCHE & TAMAR MANOUKIAN CULTURAL CENTER
2495 E MOUNTAIN ST., PASADENA, CA 91104
Reception to follow • Հիւրասիրութիւն