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Vibrant Argentine-Armenian Community Maintains Culture

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina has the largest community of Armenians in South America and it is an active and influential segment of the Armenian diaspora. Visitors are always amazed when they come to Armenia Street, in the now trendy Palermo neighborhood of Buenos Aires, and see how many Armenian institutions are located there, one next to another, with Armenian flags waving in the air. In fact, many call this area called “pequena Armenia” or little Armenia.



St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral on Armenia Street in Palermo, Buenos Aires (photo Aram Arkun)



There are a number of Armenian bakeries in the Palermo neighborhood, such as Middle Eastern Bakery and Confectionary (photo Aram Arkun)

As in many other countries, the Armenian Church is at the heart of organized community life, with its admin-

istrative headquarters, Centro Armenio, and the Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator, located on Armenia Street. The Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Argentina and Chile, Bishop Aren Shaheenian, provided information and perspectives on the community. (See an accompanying article on the Tekeyan Cultural Association

and its newspaper Sardarabad in this issue.)

While Chile is also part of his diocese, the community there is small, numbering around 3,000, the bishop said, and there is no church there, nor are there any Armenian institutions outside of a Hay Dun (Armenia House) gathering place. He or his clerics visit several times a year for services and events.

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National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia Delights Boston Audience



Soprano Hayarpi Yeghikyan with Sipan Olah (photo Aram Arkun)

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — The National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia completed its tour of the United States with a concert at the Watertown Middle School on Sunday, October 5 presented by the Hi-AM Charity Foundation and the Amaras Art Alliance of Boston, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia, the National Centre of Chamber Music/ Կամերային երաժշուության ազգային կենտրոն and the Klingen Choir and Cultural Association of London.

The 25-member orchestra, based in Yerevan, was conducted by Sipan Olah of London, and featured soprano Hayarpi Yeghikyan, pianist Sona Barseghyan, and violinist Astghik Vardanyan, with Olah also performing as a tenor for some

see CONCERT, page 20

Pashinyan, Aliyev Meet Again

COPENHAGEN (Azatutyun) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of a European summit in Denmark on Thursday, October 2, just days after accusing him of effectively making territorial claims against Armenia.

According to virtually identical Armenian and Azerbaijani readouts of the conversation, the two men discussed the implementation of their August 8 agreements reached in Washington and, in particular, Armenia's pledge to open a US-administered transit corridor to Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan exclave.

"They reaffirmed their willingness to continue working towards further strengthening peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan," read the statement released by Pashinyan's press office.

Yerevan and Baku have offered different interpretations of the transit arrangement that will be named the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP). In a speech at a session of the UN General Assembly in New York last week, Aliyev again said that the TRIPP amounts to the extraterritorial "Zangezur Corridor" that has been sought by him ever since the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Pashinyan objected to the term when he addressed the assembly two days later. He said it runs counter to the Washington agreements brokered by US President Donald Trump and is "perceived as a territorial claim" in Armenia.

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Karabakh War Report Classified without Parliament Debate

By Shoghik Galstian

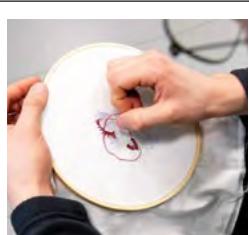
YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Speaker Alen Simonyan has formally classified the findings of a parliamentary inquiry into the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh after unexpectedly blocking their discussion on the parliament floor.

The pro-government majority in the National Assembly set up in February 2022 an ad hoc commission with the stated aim of examining the causes of Armenia's defeat in the war, assessing the Armenian government's and military's actions and looking into what had been done for national defense before the hostilities. Opposition lawmakers boycotted the commission, saying that its primary mission is to whitewash Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's wartime incompetence and disastrous decision making.

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PARIS / YEREVAN

Armenian Embroidery Tradition from Urfa Reimagined Through a Paris-Yerevan Collaboration



CALIFORNIA

New Armenia-Themed Gift Box Celebrates Heritage, Culture & Community

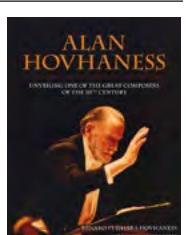
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BOOKS

Alan Hovhaness: The Majesty of The Man Behind The Music

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NEWS from ARMENIA

Cypriot, Armenian Officials Discuss Defense

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — On October 7, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan received the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus Michael Mavros.

During the meeting, the parties discussed topics related to Armenia-Cyprus cooperation in the defense sector.

Authorities Probe Gender Reveal Stunt at Waterfall

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A couple's gender reveal party has sparked backlash after images online showed they had dyed an iconic waterfall during the event.

The Ministry of Environment announced Monday, October 6, that it had received numerous reports about the incident.

Images of the landmark 18-meter Shaki Waterfall in Syunik Province, said to have been taken during the gender reveal party, showed the water briefly turning pink, indicating that the couple is expecting a girl.

The waterfall is designated as a natural monument in Armenia and is therefore under special protection.

Ministry of Environment spokesperson Ani Hakobyan, in a statement on social media, said they had launched proceedings for violations of Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 19 of the Law on Specially Protected Areas. By law, all activities that threaten the preservation of a natural monument are prohibited.

"Dear citizens, we urge you to adhere to the legislative requirements on the preservation of the environment and refrain from any actions that could harm our country's natural heritage," Hakobyan added.

It is unclear what dye was used during the event.

Criminal proceedings have been initiated.

Section of North-South Corridor Opens

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — A newly built 8-kilometer stretch of the North-South Road Corridor's Tranche 2, designed to bypass the Agarak archaeological site, was officially inaugurated on October 3, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure reported.

The road is fully equipped with safety elements, including barriers, signage, and road markings. In addition, a lighting system is expected to be completed in the near future to further improve safety and usability.

The construction was financed jointly by the state budget of Armenia and a loan from the Asian Development Bank, with a total cost of approximately \$22 million.

Work on the project began in January 2023.

Armenian Archbishop Ajapahyan Handed Two-Year Jail Term

By Anush Mkrtchian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — An outspoken archbishop was sentenced to two years in prison on Friday, October 3, three months after being arrested amid Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's campaign against the top clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

A court in Yerevan handed down the sentence to Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan at the end of an unusually quick trial condemned by the church, opposition groups

and other critics of the Armenian government as a travesty of justice. It convicted him last week of calling for a violent regime change.

Ajapahyan was taken into custody on June 27, the day after Pashinyan threatened to forcibly remove Catholicos Karekin II from his Echmiadzin headquarters if the supreme head of the church refuses to resign. Security forces met with fierce resistance from hundreds of angry priests and laymen when they raided the Mother See in a failed bid to arrest Ajapahyan there. The latter surrendered to investigators several hours after the unprecedented raid.

The case against the 62-year-old cleric critical of the government is based on a 2024 interview in which he discussed the need for a coup d'état in the country. The Office of the Prosecutor-General concluded at the time that his remarks do not warrant criminal charges. It now says that he was prosecuted for making a similar statement in June this year.

Ajapahyan, who heads the church diocese in Armenia's Shirak province, continued to reject the accusation as politi-

that they will appeal against the ruling. They have repeatedly portrayed the unusually fast pace of the trial as a further indication that the court is guided by government orders.

"Monsignor Mikael also expected this verdict," one of the lawyers, Ara Zohrabyan, told reporters. "Right from the beginning he was mentally prepared for being subjected to political persecution."

The Armenian Church swiftly condemned the ruling as a "gross violation of the principle of freedom of speech and religion," "direct challenge to the democratic social order" and "one of the clear manifestations of the authorities' anti-church campaign." Condemnations also poured in from Armenian opposition groups and their representatives.

"This ruling is yet another proof that the current government is building a dictatorial regime in Armenia where the courts are turning into a blunt tool in the government's hands," the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) charged in a statement.

Pashinyan has insisted in recent weeks

to appease the fellow member of the ruling Civil Contract party.

A spokeswoman for Simonyan, Movses Harutyunyan, said on Monday, October 6, that the report has been deposited with a division of the National Assembly staff dealing with classified documents. Any parliament deputy with security clearance can read it there, he said. Kocharyan did not react to the announcement.

Opposition members of the Armenian parliament's standing committee on defense and security said they will request access to the report despite being convinced that it is not objective. One of them, Gegham Manukyan, claimed that Kocharyan was barred from presenting it on the parliament floor because even he did not man-

that he has not abandoned his efforts to oust Karekin II despite a backlash from opposition groups and other supporters of the Catholicos. In a July 20 appeal, the premier urged supporters to be ready to "free" the Mother See from Karekin.

Opposition leaders have warned Pashinyan against trying to seize the seat of the Catholicos. They have also told their own supporters to be ready to gather there to defend Karekin.

Pashinyan's campaign has prompted concern from the World Council of Churches (WCC), a Switzerland-based organization uniting 352 Orthodox and Protestant churches. In a July statement, the WCC called on the Armenian government to "refrain from actions or statements" undermining "the principles of religious freedom, due process, and the peaceful exercise of faith."

Almaty Declaration Played No Part in Talks, Sargsyan Says

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Speaking to reporters before a court session on October 7, Armenia's third president, Serzh Sargsyan, said that during his tenure, the Almaty Declaration had "zero importance" in the Karabakh negotiation process.

"Zero. Even the Azerbaijanis didn't dare bring such an argument. If everything had already been decided back then, why was the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group created? Why did the three co-chairs announce five times how the process would proceed? If it was settled, why were both sides interested in continuing negotiations?" Sargsyan said, according to Panorama.am .

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was resolved back in 1991 under the principles of the Almaty Declaration, which affirmed mutual recognition of territorial integrity among post-Soviet states.

Sargsyan's comments challenge that view, emphasizing that during his years in office, neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan based negotiations on that document.



Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan greets supporters during his trial in Yerevan, August 28, 2025

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Karabakh War Report Classified without Parliament Debate

REPORT, from page 1

The commission chairman, Andranik Kocharyan, submitted a report on his findings to Simonyan more than a month ago. The document was expected to be mostly released and debated during a plenary session of the National Assembly later in September. However, Simonyan blocked the discussion, saying that the panel violated an 18-month legal limit on its activities. Kocharyan strongly denied missing any legal deadlines and insisted on the report's inclusion on the parliament agenda.

Simonyan told RFE/RL's Armenian Service on Thursday, October 2, that Kocharyan will be able to present the report during a parliamentary hearing to be held behind closed doors. But the speaker clearly failed

to appease the fellow member of the ruling Civil Contract party.

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age to portray Pashinyan as an "angel" and cover up the premier's mishandling of the disastrous war.

Some commentators have suggested that Pashinyan simply does not want to see a renewed public debate on his handling of the war even if Kocharyan's commission has almost certainly absolved him of any blame for the six-week hostilities that left at least 3,800 Armenian soldiers dead.

Pashinyan sparked a fresh opposition uproar in late August when he admitted rejecting in 2019 a Karabakh peace plan jointly drafted by the United States, Russia and France. He claimed that its implementation would have led to the "loss of Armenia's independence and statehood."

Armenian Embroidery Tradition from Urfa Reimagined Through a Paris–Yerevan Collaboration

YEREVAN/Paris — In early June, 11 artists — Armenian and French, textile and visual artists, students, and professors — gathered in Armenia to continue Heritage Rewoven, a cross-cultural initiative exploring the Armenian embroidery tradition that once flourished in the city of Urfa.

The project is developed by Ochre in collaboration with École des Arts Décoratifs–PSL, one of France's leading design schools. It brings together students, professors, artists, artisans, and researchers from Armenia and the Armenian diaspora to engage with a displaced heritage through creative exploration and exchange.

Urfa embroidery is a traditional Armenian needlework that once adorned household textiles and garments, stitching beauty into the fabric of daily life. Passed down from women to their loved ones, it carried intimate gestures of care and attachment. Over time, as this tradition was uprooted from its place of origin and its transmission interrupted, it came to embody the memory of displacement and resilience. Today, it stands at the center of a collective artistic research, unfolding through encounters between Armenia and France, where heritage becomes a language of collaboration and design.

As part of the program, the group followed a route central to Ochre's story: from Yerevan to Yererouk, on



Professor Orsina Visconti during Urfa embroidery techniques workshop



Practicing the Urfa embroidery

the modern border with Turkey near the city of Ani; onward to Gyumri and Amasia, home to the wool factory Ochre partners with; and finally to Lake Arpi in Shirak Province.

This itinerary retraced the journeys that inspired the organization's founding: early travels to Amasia and its ochre-toned landscapes, which gave the enterprise its name. Along this path, participants deepened their understanding of the Armenian landscape and connected with places that continue to inspire Ochre's work.

Building on the knowledge from workshops conducted at the introductory meeting in Paris in February, the program explored Armenia's expanding craftsmanship and design scene. Highlights included Joining the TUMO Studios' 8th anniversary celebrations and meeting embroidery instructor Mariam Gharibyan, visiting long-time partner Woolway, a studio founded by rug restorer Hayk Oltaci, who repatriated to Armenia from New York and visiting the studio of Maral Shohmahlian, lead artisan for this project, who inherited her savoir-faire from her grand-

mother in Aleppo.

The group was also honored with an official reception by H.E. Olivier Decottignies, Ambassador of France to Armenia, whose encouragement reinforced the project's significance.

The itinerary was designed to serve the main goal of the journey: fostering exploration and dialogue toward the creation of a design for a future collective artwork. Over seven days of intensive exchanges and workshops, the group produced a digital drawing for a large-scale piece (3 x 4 m) — a map weaving together their gestures, perspectives, reflections, and conversations.

The design has now entered production in Armenia, with the completed piece set to debut in Yerevan and Paris in 2026.

The project is funded by the "Armenia 2041" Foundation within the framework of the "Galvanizing Diaspora" Grants Program and the French Embassy / French Institute in Armenia.

For more information, visit ochre.am.

Armenia Engaging All Major Players to Build New Nuclear Plant

The Armenian government is playing the field in search of the best deal to construct a new nuclear power plant to replace the aging Metsamor facility.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced during a question-and-answer session in parliament that negotiations are ongoing with several nations. He added that the government had already decided that Metsamor's replacement will be a "small modular" reactor.

"Now the next question is: with whom will we build, with whom will we cooperate?" he said.

Pashinyan went on to list five countries that have been engaged in discussions — Russia, the United States, China, France and South Korea. He asserted that the government will award the contract purely on the basis of economic considerations.

"We absolutely do not put a political component into it. We must focus on which of the proposals will suit us best in terms of commercial and economic benefits, and based on this, make a choice," he said.

When Pashinyan was in Moscow in late September, Russian officials, including Kremlin kingpin Vladimir Putin, lobbied the prime minister hard for Rosatom, the Russian nuclear entity, to get the job. Just a few days later, Armenian officials announced they are striving to finalize a "123 agreement" with the United States to enable nuclear cooperation and the transfer of sensitive technologies.

Armenia's existing Metsamor nuclear plant is on its last legs and has a maximum extended lifespan of about another decade.

(This article originally appeared on www.eurasianet.org on October 3.)



The Metsamor nuclear power plant. The Armenian government is looking for partners to build Metsamor's replacement. (Photo: Adam Jones, CC BY 2.0, t.ly/LO-66)



INTERNATIONAL

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Russian Senator Questions Feasibility of Trump Route

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Vladimir Jabarov, first deputy chair of the Russian Federation Council's Committee on International Affairs, stated on October 7 that Moscow is pleased there are currently no armed clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but expressed serious doubts about the Trump Route (TRIPP) project, Sputnik Armenia reports.

"I don't think this project will be easy to implement, especially considering that the Trump administration is thousands of kilometers away from the region. Here we have Russia, Turkey, and Iran. Therefore, it must be a road of peace and cooperation, beneficial for all sides, both Armenia and Azerbaijan," Jabarov said during the Moscow-Minsk-Astana-Yerevan-Tashkent-Tbilisi video conference.

He emphasized the future transport corridor should not bring profit to one country at the expense of another.

Turkish Airlines Plans Yerevan Route

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Turkish Airlines announced earlier in October that it will launch scheduled flights to Timisoara, Romania, and Yerevan, Türkiye Today reported.

The airline disclosed the decision through Türkiye's Public Disclosure Platform, stating, "Our partnership's board of directors has decided to launch scheduled flights to the city of Timisoara in Romania and Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, subject to facilities and market conditions."

Erdogan: Joint Declaration Positive Step

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated on October 7 that Ankara closely follows developments in the South Caucasus and sincerely supports all initiatives aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the region.

"We consider the joint declaration signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia on August 8 a positive step and hope it will continue," Erdogan said at the 12th summit of the Organization of Turkic States held in Azerbaijan, Factor.am reports.

Erdogan also addressed developments in Central Asia, welcoming the agreement signed between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan on delimiting and managing border checkpoints.

On August 8, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and U.S. President Donald Trump signed a trilateral declaration at the White House, followed by the initialing of a peace and inter-state relations agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan, Aliyev Meet Again

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Azerbaijani as well as Turkish officials ignored Pashinyan's objections in the following days. Armenian opposition leaders, meanwhile, said that Pashinyan's complaints make mockery of his claims about the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and Armenian control of the TRIPP.

Pashinyan has since continued to insist that "peace has been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan." His Civil Contract party pushed through the Armenian parliament on Thursday a resolution touting the Washington agreements and voicing support for their implementation. The resolution adopted during a session of the National Assembly boycotted by opposition lawmakers, also calls on politicians and pundits in Armenia and Azerbaijan to "refrain from rhetoric and actions that symbolize conflict and/or are aimed at reformulating or inflaming it."

The two opposition groups represented in the parliament denounced it as another attempt by Pashinyan to mislead Armenians. One of them, the Hayastan alliance, said it "has nothing to do with the real peace that our country needs so much." Hayastan also pointed out that the resolution does not call on Azerbaijan to withdraw from Armenian border areas occupied by it, release Armenian prisoners or enable Karabakh's dis-



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, at left, and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met on the sidelines of the European Political Community summit in Copenhagen, October 2, 2025

placed population to return home.

For its part, the opposition Pativ Unem bloc accused Pashinyan of feeding the public with a "new dose of misinformation and empty promises."

The Washington summit also resulted in the initialization of an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty. Baku continues to make

its signing conditional on a change of the Armenian constitution.

Pashinyan's political opponents maintain that the treaty will not preclude a future Azerbaijani military attack against Armenia even if it is signed. They say that his appeasement policy only encourages Aliyev to demand more concessions from Yerevan.

Russia's Tighter Immigration Rules Affect Armenian Truckers

By Narine Ghalechian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — At least several dozen drivers of Armenian commercial trucks regularly transporting goods to Russia are facing travel bans or deportation from the country due to a significant tightening of Russian immigration laws.

Citizens of Armenia and other countries with a visa-free regime with Russia were until recently allowed to stay there for a total of up to 180 days per year. Legal amendments enacted by the Russian government last year reduced that period to 90 days.

The change has first and foremost affected truck drivers shipping agricultural produce and other goods to Russia, Armenia's number one export market. Many of them drive to the vast country on a virtually monthly basis and have to spend several days there on each of those trips.

Some told RFE/RL's Armenian Service on October 6 that they have already been blacklisted by Russian authorities for breaching the 90-day limit. The Russian police do not need court permission to deport and impose three-year entry bans on them.

"Our government did not inform us [about the change]," said one of them. "None of us knew about that when we went [to Russia.] Because of not knowing, we are now losing our jobs."

The man spoke by phone from the southern Russian city of Vladikavkaz where he claimed to have seen "20 to 30" other blacklisted Armenian drivers at a local immigration center.

"Ninety percent of truck drivers have probably used up that limit and been added to the [blacklist] registry," said another trucker.

"We don't know if we will be able to

drive to Russia again," complained one of his colleagues. "It's not that we go there for migrant work. We go in and get out. They should do something good for people like us."

The Armenian government did not immediately comment on the problem. It was therefore not clear whether it has raised the matter with Moscow. According to the government's Migration Service, some 1,100 Armenians were deported from Russia last year.

According to Armenian government data, Russia accounted for 37 percent of Armenia's exports worth \$5 billion in January-August 2025. The Russian market is especially important for Armenian exporters of agricultural produce, prepared

foodstuffs and alcoholic beverages.

In late August and early September, Russian law-enforcement authorities intercepted over 100 heavy trucks belonging to Armenia's leading food-exporting company, Spayka, for still unclear reasons. The crackdown disrupted the company's operations vital for thousands of Armenian farmers. It coincided with Moscow's renewed warnings about severe economic consequences of the Armenian government's desire to eventually join the European Union. The EU absorbed less than 1 percent of Armenian exports in January-August.

New EU Division Formed At Armenian MFA

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a decree to establish a Department for European Integration within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on October 6. The new unit will be separated from the Ministry's existing European Department and will serve as one of its core professional divisions.

In a related move, the Department of Political Planning will be merged with the Department for Coordination of Diplomatic Functions.

On March 26, the Armenian National Assembly approved, in the second and final reading, a draft law initiating the process of accession to the European Union. The draft was originally approved by the government on January 9, following a proposal by the civil initiative Eurovote.

Although the EU has not yet extended a formal invitation for Armenia to begin accession talks, the Armenian president has signed the law. Opposition parties have criticized the bill, calling it legally absurd.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk has also commented, stating that Armenia "cannot sit on two chairs" and will eventually have to choose between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union.



INTERNATIONAL

Argentina's Tekeyan Center and *Sardarabad* Daily Connect Community, Promote Culture

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BUENOS AIRES — The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Argentina is an active part of the Argentine-Armenian community, with its headquarters centrally located on Armenia Street, along with the Armenian Diocese, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, schools, and many other Armenian institutions in the Palermo neighborhood of Buenos Aires. It publishes the trilingual daily newspaper *Sardarabad* and promotes the Armenian language and heritage through a series of activities.

Many cultural events have taken place in its building, according to Susana Dergarabedian Nahabetian, one of the Tekeyan executive members, including book presentations, exhibitions of paintings or sculptures, and film screenings. The embassy of the Republic of Armenia has always been given space to hold its events or presentations here for three decades, she said. For the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an art installation was made of the words in Armenian for we survive (*g'abrink*), and the Tekeyan Cultural Association had it displayed not only at its center but in many other places in Argentina.

For some 15 years now, every July 20, the Argentine holiday of friendship (Dia del Amigo) was celebrated by the TCA with tea for around 150 people. As some of the participating ladies grew older, Susana recalled, they had difficulty in climbing stairs but they still wanted to come to enjoy the warm atmosphere in the Tekeyan center. The construction of an elevator solved that problem.

The Tekeyan center has also attracted visitors from the Armenian diaspora, ranging from the Catholicos of All Armenians to cultural and artistic celebrities. Many have taken photos in front of the center's miniature sculpture of the Sardarabad monument in Armenia, Susana recalled.

History

TCA was first established in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1947 and soon chapters were

created throughout the Middle East. It is affiliated with the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL, or Ramgavar). In Buenos Aires, the ADL published a newspaper called *Surhantag* from 1960-1963 under the editorship of Dajad Mutualupian (Dajad Kntuni) for South American Armenian communities.

When the Armenian-American philanthropist Alex Manoogian visited Buenos Aires in 1968 he encouraged ADL

Later Nahabet planned for a new TCA center and bought and donated two more properties right around the block from the old center on what soon became named Armenia Street. Supporters in this work included Aram Donikian, Haig Shahinian, Barkev Dergarabedian, Taniel Youssefian, Mihran Sarafian and Jose Nargizian, said Sergio. A generous donation from American-Armenian philanthropist Suren Fesjian led eventually to the construction of

Benevolent Union: Mihran Sarafian, Daniel Youssefian, Hovsep Youssefian, Ardash Vaneskeheian, Barkev Dergarabedian, Vartan Shahinian, Jose Nargizian and Jorge Sarafian. In addition, Avedis Barsamian and Avedis Nalbandian, both from Uruguay, supported the paper, as well as Oshin Mosditchian from Brazil.

The leading editorial of the first issue of *Sardarabad*, which appeared on September 6, stated in Armenian that the new newspaper wished to become engaged in the affairs of the community, in particular in the social and ideological realm, through words and thoughts. The name *Sardarabad* was chosen to recall the battle victory in 1918 which ensured the survival of the Armenian people and a fraction of its homeland.

The editorial notes that there is a crisis in the community that is primarily moral and spiritual, dividing it into factions, and calls for peace and cooperation. As criticism is a vital factor in all spheres of Armenian community life, *Sardarabad*, it promises, will be a reasonable critic. The editorial in the second issue of *Sardarabad* amplifies the call for cooperation and solidarity in South American Armenian life.

In addition to Marashlian, editors of the Armenian section included Varuzhan Ajemian, Khachig Janoyan, Hovig Eordekian, Norair Karadanian, Ohan Bodroumian. Sossie Hadjian also helped. Others who contributed editorial work included Daniel Youssefian, Vartan and Haig Shahinian, Mihran Sarafian, Pascual Ohanian, Raffi Bedoyan and Vartan Matteosian.

Sergio Nahabetian said that the newspaper initially was prepared on a



The Tekeyan Cultural Association Suren and Virginia Fesjian Center at night (photo to Aram Arkun)

members to get their own building for activities. Current TCA president Sergio Nahabetian recalled that previously they had to meet in coffeehouses or other Armenian institutions. When Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I visited (1960), they had to go to an Argentine hall to celebrate with him one night.

Sergio said that his father, Nahabet Nahabetian, was moved to purchase and donate a property on Niceto Vega Street (address no. 4777) in the Palermo neighborhood in 1971 or 1972 which became their meeting place.

Initially, the cultural organization that Nahabet Nahabetian and his associates founded was called the Arshag Chobanian Cultural Association. Visits of ADL and TCA leaders from other diasporan communities to Argentina led the local Armenians to change the name of the association to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Sergio Nahabetian said, in order to make clearer the connection between the local organization and those abroad. This happened sometime in 1981.

The ADL continued its own activities. In 1982, Sergio said, it published a small book in Buenos Aires in Spanish on the principles of the ADL by Haig Shahinian (Conceptos básicos de la organización democrática liberal armenia, Organización Demócrata Liberal Armenia).

the current TCA Suren and Virginia Fesjian Center, which was inaugurated in 1998. At the entrance of the center is a replica of the monument in Armenia dedicated to the battle of Sardarabad of 1918.

The first original property was given to the AGBU for the use of their scouts, Sergio said.

In 2023, the center was renovated with the addition of air conditioning and an elevator for handicapped access.

The ADL was one of the eight founding institutions of the community coordinating council *Instituciones Armenias de la República Argentina* (IARA) created on the centenary of the Armenian Genocide and TCA is also a member. Sergio Nalbandian served as the IARA president in 2020. He said, "It was good that it was created, because it is a place where we speak about important matters, not simply daily issues. When important issues exist, we all try to come to agreement and work as one force."

Sardarabad

In 1975 Nahabet founded the newspaper *Sardarabad* and became its first director (the term refers to a combination of publisher and editor-in-chief). The responsible directors of the newspaper, after Nahabet Nahabetian, included, in order, Daniel Youssefian, Mihran Sarafian, Diana Dergarabedian de Pérez Valderrama, and then Sergio Nahabetian until the present, with Susana Dergarabedian Nahabetian serving concurrently now as editor.

Sardarabad initially included articles in both Spanish and Armenian (English articles were added in later years). Kevork Marashlian, who directed the Armenian section of the newspaper in the early years and was also principal of the Argentine AGBU school *Instituto Marie Manoogian* from 1977 to 1989, declared that the establishment of the newspaper was done with the financial support of the following individuals, who were all also involved in the Armenian General

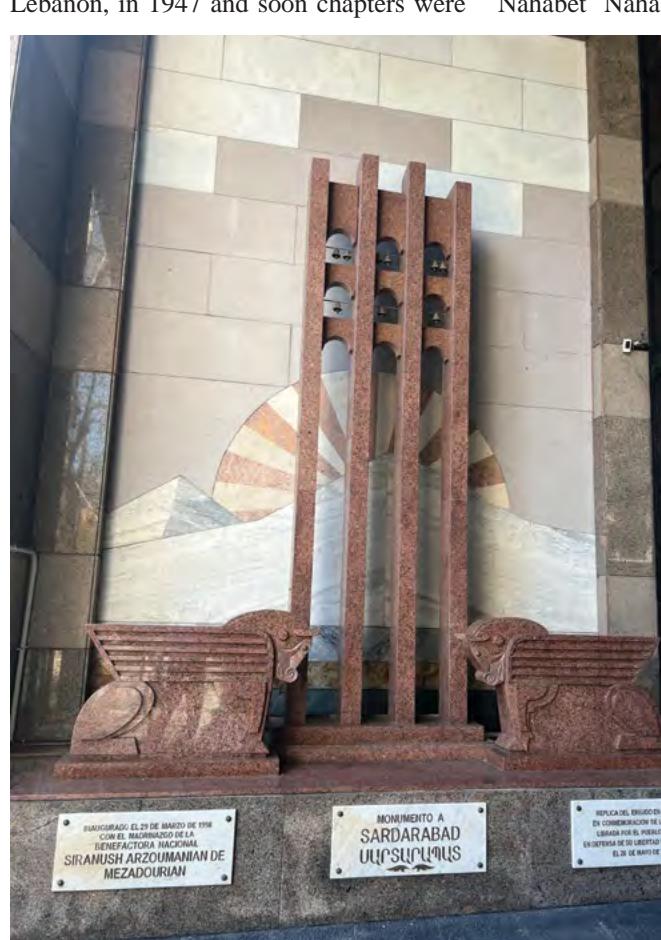


Tekeyan Cultural Association President and Sardarabad Director Sergio Nahabetian

linotype (a typesetting machine) and printed in a different place. Then when philanthropist Manoogian visited Buenos Aires again, Nahabetian said that he donated to the newspaper a Compugraphic machine. In the Tekeyan Center, there was a darkroom in which to prepare the films for the newspaper which were then sent for offset printing. Newer systems followed.

Nahabetian said that when the Covid pandemic shut down everything in Argentina for 6 or 8 months, stores and printing presses were also closed. The last print issue of *Sardarabad* appeared on September 2, 2020. The paper then relied on its website, with news updated daily. He said, "We decided at that time to stop printing, and it was better not to print afterwards too, since it was very expensive and mailing was very difficult. Moreover, we wouldn't be able to continue as a daily, and a weekly newspaper is late in giving news."

The newspaper celebrated its 50th anniversary last month (see its coverage in the *Mirror-Spectator*).



Sculptural replica of the Sardarabad Monument in Armenia, 1998 (photo Aram Arkun)



Argentine-Armenian Community Maintains Culture

ARGENTINA, from page 1

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, the 55-year-old clergyman was elevated to the rank of bishop last year. He was ordained a celibate priest in 2000 and after serving in Italy, Armenia, Great Britain and the Netherlands, in 2019 he came to Buenos Aires to become the pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, the seat of the Armenian Diocese in Argentina. In December 2022 he became the Primate of the diocese. Unlike in North America, no administrative split occurred in the Armenian churches here, which are all under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of All Armenians in Echmiadzin.

While there is no census of the Argentine Armenian population, Bishop Shaheenian declared that it is usually estimated at roughly 130,000-150,000, with a majority being the 4th-6th generations in the country. Consequently, he said: "Often you take a taxi and you start speaking with the driver and you see, as here the name of the taxi driver must be displayed by law, that the driver turns out to have an Armenian last name. When you ask him, he says no, it was my parents or grandparents who were Armenian. They immigrated. I am the 3rd or 4th generation. So through my name I am Armenian."

Such a person, perhaps 40 or 50 years old, does not say initially that he of Armenian descent, Bishop Shaheenian said. When pressed, he might recall that when his grandmother was alive, he would go to the Armenian Church and to events of organizations, and his family still remembers his grandmother and cooks certain foods. However, he married, for example, a Colombian woman, and his children married people of Italian descent, or others, so that, the bishop continued, the call of the blood no longer remains among them.

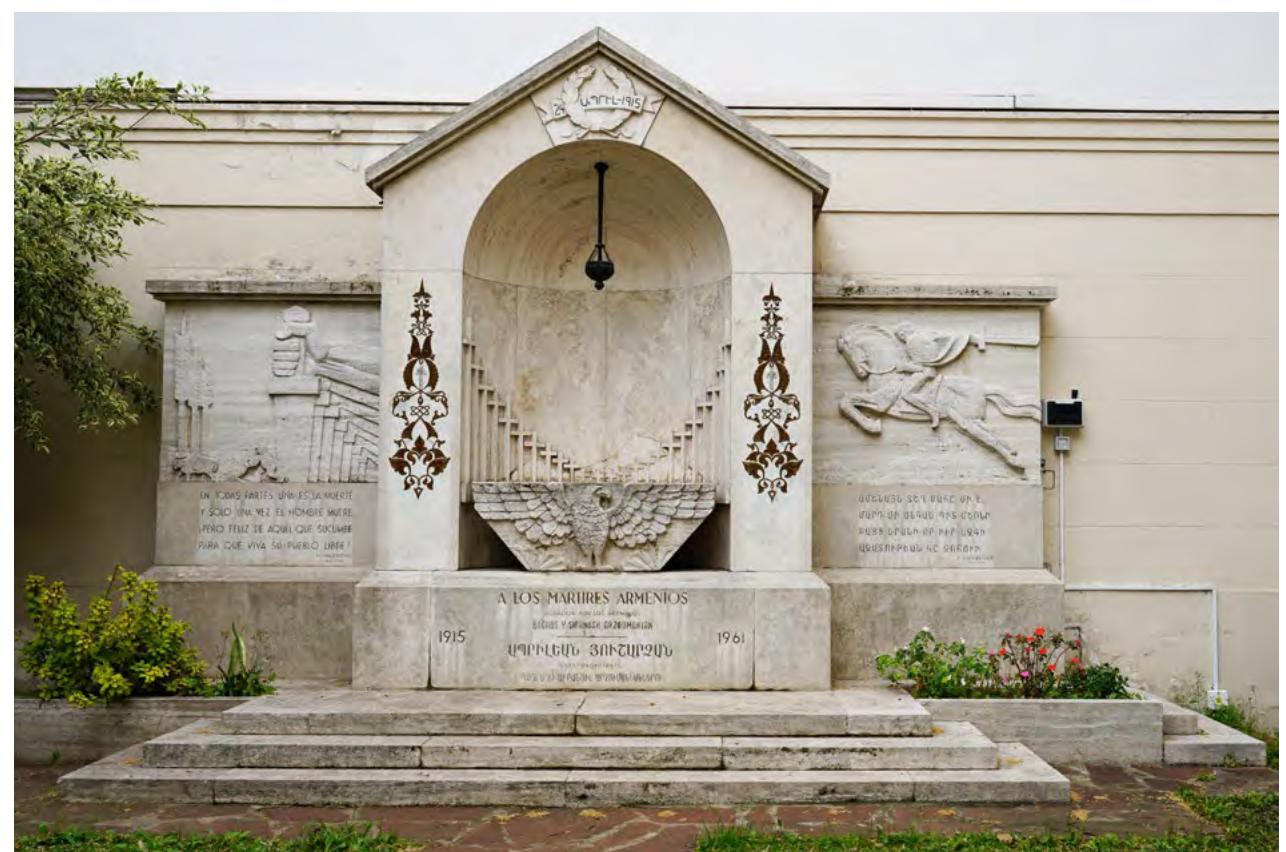
As generations change, the Armenian language is lost, though the bishop did note that some after a certain age may return and want to bring their children or grandchildren to Armenian schools. "This is the tragedy of the entire diaspora," he concluded.



Bishop Aren Shaheenian

While most Armenians in Argentina came either directly from the Ottoman Empire or from intermediary stops in the Middle East or the Balkans after the Armenian Genocide, a new wave of immigrants came after the independence of the Republic of Armenia. They and their children are primarily Armenian speakers, and Spanish is difficult for them, the bishop said. He estimated that they may be 8-10,000 or more, but it is hard to be precise.

The Armenians tend to generally be middle class in Argentina, according to the bishop, who stressed, "The



Monument to the Armenian martyrs of 1915, built in 1961 in the courtyard of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral of Buenos Aires (photo Aram Arkun)

Armenians are an industrious people and there are very few who remain idle." While the economic situation is in general very bad in the country, with high inflation, the majority of Argentine-Armenians remained attached to life in their country. He said that some young people go abroad for jobs, but many return.

The Armenian community appears well respected by Argentinians in general, Bishop Shaheenian said. As one indication of this, he pointed out that there are three levels of government in the country and all three have accepted and recognized the Armenian Genocide. April 24 is a holiday in Argentina and anyone who wishes can take that day off, though it is not obligatory.

The bishop noted that until around two years ago there was no Turkish or Azerbaijani community in Argentina, but recently it seems that their governments are trying to send their youth to Argentina for education.

The Armenian Diocese in particular enjoys good relations with the government. During the year, Shaheenian said, some 10 to 15 high-level government visitors such as ministers or deputies visit. On April 24, the head of the government and various ministers and deputies participate. Armenians both vote in elections and also rich families donate to politicians. When electoral campaigns begin, politicians begin to actively approach the Diocese and other organizations. For example, ten days before the elections, the current president visited the Diocese and had tea and coffee.

A number of Armenians have also achieved high positions in the Argentine government, including at the ministerial level, Bishop Shaheenian added. Two examples are the former Minister of Justice León Carlos Arslanian and the current Director of the Mint Cristina Tchintian.

Institutions

The majority of the Armenians live in the capital of Buenos Aires, and are very well organized, Bishop Shaheenian said. The diocese has six working churches in the city, including St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral (Palermo), Holy Cross of Varak Church (Flores), St. Paul (Liniers), St. James (Valentina Alsino), St. George (Vicente López) and Holy Trinity, a chapel in the Armenian cemetery of Buenos Aires.

There are six working clergymen including the Primate, who declared that at least two more were needed. It has not been possible to prepare Armenian clerics born in South America locally, he said. Consequently, they are requested from Echmiadzin.

When a cleric first arrives from Echmiadzin, Bishop Shaheenian said that he is first sent to Spanish language classes. He is made familiar with the local Armenian community over the first few months with the aid of someone appointed to help him.

There is also a Armenian Roman Catholic church, Our Lady of Narek Cathedral, which is the main church of the Armenian Eparchy of Saint Gregory of Narek of Buenos Aires, and several Protestant churches, including the Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Congregational Church and the Armenian Brotherhood Bible Church (Iglesia Cristiana Evangélica Armenia de la Hermandad).



The Aintab Compatriotic Union (photo Aram Arkun)

Aside from churches, there are many organizations, including the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and four Armenian political parties: the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, the Social Democrat Hnchakian Party, and the Armenian Progressives or Communists.

These organizations have various affiliated groups. In the cultural realm, these include, listed in the above-mentioned respective order of the political parties, the Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural and Educational Society, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Armenian Cultural Union Sharyum [Sharzum], and the Armenian Cultural Union.

Four local dance groups are of a high level. The Primate exclaimed, "I can say that they can compete in their quality with the dance groups of Armenia." Nayiri is affiliated with the Armenian Relief Society, Kaiané to the Armenian Cultural Union, Masis to the Armenian Diocese, and Narek to the Armenian Catholic Church.

There are many choirs connected to various Armenian institutions and schools. Gomidas Choir celebrated its 96th anniversary this year, for example. There are a number of youth groups, and AGBU and Homenetmen each have its own scout group.

continued on next page



INTERNATIONAL

from previous page

Tadrón Theater is a theater and workshop café in the Palermo neighborhood near all the other Armenian institutions founded by Kalusd and Herminia Jansezian in 1996. It presents both Armenian and non-Armenian themed plays, often focusing on human rights and other social themes.

There are online newspapers or periodicals like the trilingual (Armenian, Spanish and English) dailies Sardarabad (Tekeyan Cultural Association), Diario Armenia (ARF) and the bilingual (Armenian and Spanish) Nor Sevan (Armenian Cultural Union), available through their websites, the blogspot Guia Armenia and the Spanish-language monthly Dibet.

There are compatriotic unions of Armenians from Aintab, Hajin and Marash.

Bishop Shaheenian noted that there are multiple Armenian radio stations, which are not in daily operation but usually broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays to provide Armenian news and cultural information in Spanish. There are no television or cable programs, but the radio stations also use YouTube and Facebook.

There is a small home for the elderly in Buenos Aires, sponsored by the Armenian Relief Society, called la Casa de Descanso Onnig Bodourian – Ohannés Diarbekirian. The Primate said that every Friday or Saturday morning, Armenian clergy go to spend time with the elderly, talking, playing backgammon or praying, and once a month they conduct the divine liturgy.

Bishop Shaheenian observed that the Armenian Diocese tries to help all the different Armenian organizations in Argentina in order to strengthen Armenian identity



Names of Argentine-Armenian companies like Shenk ["Building"], a real estate firm, can be seen scattered throughout the city (photo Aram Arkun)

and the community. Moreover, a structure was created to bring together all community organizations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Genocide in 2015, and this coordination, called Armenian Institutions of the Republic of Argentina (IARA), continues to date.

There is an embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Buenos Aires, and honorary consulates in the cities of Rosario and Cordoba, and Armenia Fund has an office in Buenos Aires too.

Schools

There are seven Armenian schools in Buenos Aires: Instituto San Gregorio el Iluminador [St. Gregory the Illuminator Institute], Colegio Armenio [Arzruni Armenian College], Instituto Isaac Bakchellian, and Colegio Armenio de Vicente López belong to the Armenian Diocese; Instituto Mary Manoogian (AGBU); Colegio Armenio Jrimian [Khrimian Armenian College] (ARF), and Colegio Mekhitarista (Armenian Catholic).

All the above schools include levels from pre-kindergarten to high school except the Instituto Isaac Bakchellian, which does not go beyond primary school.

According to Bishop Shaheenian, there are between 280-320 students in each of the four Diocesan schools in Buenos Aires, totally somewhere around 1,200 to 1,300 in the four. The AGBU school is also a large one with many students.

He said that the Diocese sends a cleric to visit the school in Vicente López, one to St. Gregory the Illuminator, and one to the AGBU school daily to bless the food at lunch, remain till the end of the meal and lead a prayer of thanks afterwards. There is a shortage of clergy and the other Armenian Apostolic schools in Buenos Aires are more distant, so it is not possible to reach them daily, but Diocesan clergy visit at least once a month.

In the school of the Diocesan cathedral, St. Gregory the

Illuminator Institute, Bishop Shaheenian said that the first part of the school day until noon is all in Spanish. After lunch, all lessons are in Armenian. Armenian history, geography, culture, language, literature, dance and song are taught for 3-4 hours. The teachers and administrators are all Armenian in the second part of the day, and there are different directors and teachers for the first part.

At St. Gregory, around 40 percent of the students are from families recently immigrated from the Republic of Armenia, so they speak fluent Eastern Armenian, Shaheenian said. They receive lessons in Eastern Armenian, as opposed to the Western Armenian used for the other students.

At present, the bishop estimated that perhaps fifty percent of the younger generation overall still speaks Armenian. Community events generally are done in Armenian, he said, but often they are conducted in two languages, depending on the type of audience. Of course, if they are aimed at non-Armenian Argentinians, they will be conducted solely in Spanish. He stressed that the church and community organizations try to keep the Armenian language and culture alive so that the new generations can be educated.

The Diocesan schools do not offer Saturday or Sunday schools for Armenian (though the Holy Trinity Armenian Evangelical Congregational School does according to its website). Bishop Shaheenian said that those youth who do not attend Armenian schools must learn the language from their families. Some prosperous families prefer to send their children to English, French, German or American schools for career reasons, thinking that the amount of Armenian they learned at home was sufficient.

The Diocese does do outreach through social media and offers classes on topics such as the liturgy and the bible.

According to Argentine law, the Armenian schools cannot exclude non-Armenians as students. Consequently, schools in some neighborhoods like Flores or Valentín Alsina from which part of the Armenian population has moved out to Palermo now have a 40-60 percent non-Armenian student body, the bishop said. However, the St. Gregory the Illuminator School run by the Diocese and the AGBU school each have around 90 percent Armenian students, with 10 or less percent non-Armenians, because their Palermo neighborhood has many Armenians who send their children there.

Cordoba and Smaller Communities

After Buenos Aires, Cordoba is the Argentine city with the next largest Armenian community. It does not have as many Armenians living there as

in the past, Bishop Shaheenian said, with around 10-15,000 there today, with many being 4th or even 5th generation Argentinians.

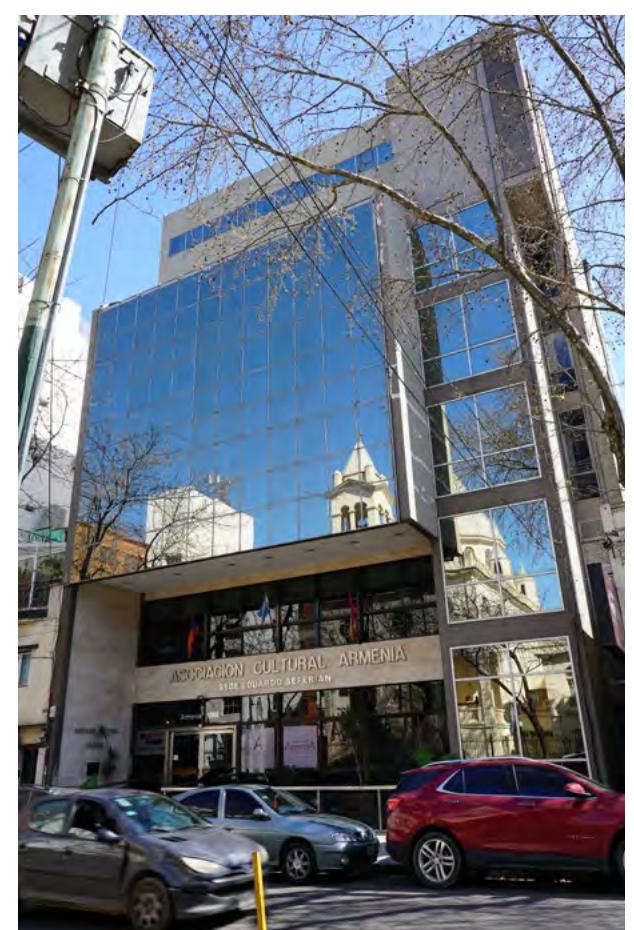
Cordoba's St. George Armenian Church is the first Armenian church founded in South America. Bishop Shaheenian said that he recently spent 4 or 5 days there to help celebrate the 99th anniversary of the community and the church. Next year its centenary will be celebrated. There is also an Armenian Brotherhood Bible Church in Cordoba called Iglesia Evangelica Armenia Maranatha.

Cordoba is the only other city besides Buenos Aires in Argentina with an Armenian school: Instituto General Manuel Belgrano: Colegio Armenio.

The Primate estimated that around 40 percent of the youth in Cordoba speak Armenian, though a higher percentage speak among those 50 years old and older because of the influence of their parents and grandparents.

Armenian community life is similar to that of Buenos Aires, though there are fewer Armenian organizations in Cordoba. The main ones, the bishop said, are the church, the AGBU and the ARF Antranig Club. The AGBU has scout, athletic and dance groups (there is only one dance group in the city but all participate). Homenetmen and the Armenian Relief Society are also active.

Various types of events are organized. If it is a dance, 3-400 people might come, and church events also may reach the same number, the Primate said. When various protests were organized in favor of the Republic of Armenia or during Artsakh war, larger numbers participated, from one to three thousand, as the 4th or 5th generation



Armenia Cultural Association Eduardo Seferian Headquarters (where the ARF and its various affiliated organizations have offices), on which reflections of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral may be seen (photo Aram Arkun)

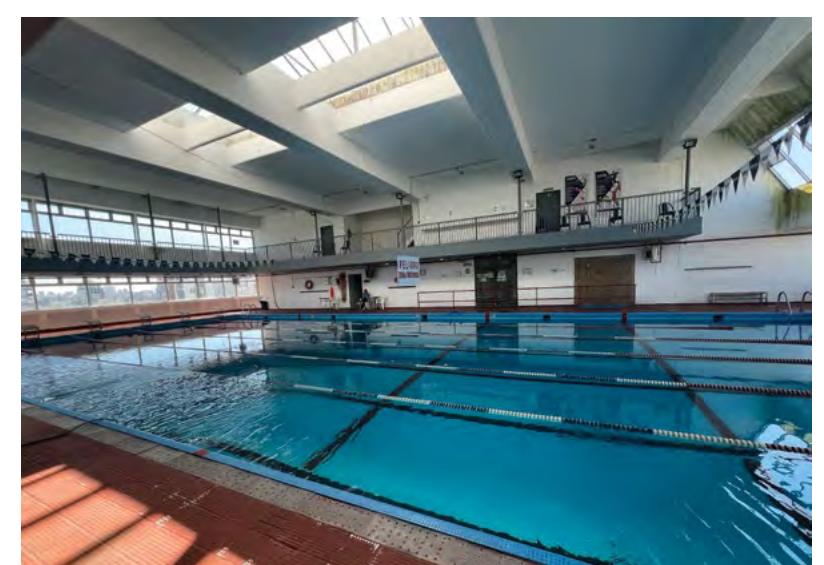
Cordoban Armenians join together in order to defend Armenian identity and the homeland.

There are much smaller Armenian communities in Mar del Plata; La Plata (the capital city of Buenos Aires province), Rosario, Mendoza and Berisso.

They each have their local councils or executives which assemble local Armenians. The small communities rent or buy a small place and call it Hay Dun [Armenian Home], the bishop said. Once a month or even once a week they have Armenian food cooked and come together.

Once or twice a year, clerics from Buenos Aires come to conduct the divine liturgy, he added. Major holidays like Easter or Christmas are celebrated, as well as the founding of the local community, and sometimes April 24. If the bishop cannot come, he sends a priest, but for important events, all clergy come together from Buenos Aires.

Dance groups or choirs also are sent from Buenos Aires to participate in some of the events in these cities.



The famous seventh floor swimming pool at the AGBU Marie Manoogian School (photo Aram Arkun)

As Mar del Plata is on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, in the summer many Armenians go there so that a big event as well as church services are held there by several clergymen.

There is a suburb about 40 minutes or one hour distant from Buenos Aires called Club de Campo Armenia, which is like a gated American community or country club, with its own private security, golf course, soccer field, and large houses or villas. The Primate estimated that there are around 200 homes there. In 2015, an Armenian Genocide memorial was erected there and there is a club house. Only Armenians live here.

He noted that Armenians also have their own soccer team, Deportivo Armenio, the president of which is Armenian, and it is located in the town of Ingeniero Maschwitz, where it has a stadium.



Community News

Dean Shahinian To Receive ANCA Eastern Region's Inaugural Service And Spirit Award

WASHINGTON — The Armenian National Committee of America Eastern Region (ANCA-ER) announced recently that Dean Shahinian, Esq. will receive the inaugural ANCA Eastern Region "Service and Spirit Award" at the 19th Annual ANCA-ER Gala, to be held on Saturday, October 11, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.

The ANCA Eastern Region Service and Spirit Award recognizes individuals whose commitment to public service and generous philanthropy has strengthened the Armenian Cause while upholding the enduring values of Armenian faith, identity and intergenerational continuity. Recipients embody a spirit of service rooted not only in civic engagement but in the preservation of our sacred traditions and devotion to our people.



Shahinian exemplifies this spirit through his quiet yet transformative support for Armenian youth, education and the Armenian Church. He is the principal sponsor of the ANCA Rising Leaders program, a national initiative that annually hosts dozens of Armenian American students in Washington, D.C., for immersive training in advocacy, civic responsibility and public policy. Thanks to Dean Shahinian's support, this program has become a springboard for a new generation of Armenian American leaders devoted to justice, democracy and service.

His philanthropic leadership extends to Armenian youth and Christian cultural education. Through his support of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, Shahinian has funded initiatives that empower young Armenians to explore their heritage and deepen their commitment to faith and learning. He has also endowed the Grace and Paul Shahinian Armenian Christian Art and Culture Lecture Series — named in honor of his parents — at The Catholic University of America and California State University, Fresno. These lecture series have brought world-class scholars to U.S. campuses to explore the spiritual, artistic and cultural legacy of the Armenian Church, helping introduce Armenian Christianity's ancient witness to new audiences.

Tickets for the Gala are available at: <https://givergy.us/ancaer2025>.



Town Love Armenia — filled with delicacies from Armenian-owned businesses across the United States

New Armenia-Themed Gift Box Celebrates Heritage, Culture & Community

OAKLAND, Calif. — After the successful launch of Town Love, a women-owned gifting company that celebrates the heart and soul of Oakland, CA through curated gift boxes, co-founders Kim Bardakian and Nicole Vasgerdsian, longtime friends and both proud Armenian-Americans, are thrilled to announce their newest offering: Town Love Armenia.

This latest gift box is a heartfelt celebration of their Armenian roots — an expression of cultural pride and a tribute to the resilience, beauty, and richness of Armenian heritage in the United States. The box features handpicked products from Armenian makers and artisans based across America, blending tradition and contemporary craftsmanship.

Each Town Love Armenia box offers a curated mix of artisan foods — perfect for gifting or self-celebration as well as a fact sheet outlining interesting tidbits about Armenia and Armenians. Pre-sale orders are now available at www.townlovebox.com. Each box is \$92 and will ship in time for December holiday delivery.

Products inside the Town Love Armenia box include: Ara Zada's Khorovadz Spice (Los Angeles, CA); Henry's House of Coffee's Armenian Coffee (San Francisco, CA); Fastachi's Cranberry Nut Mix (Watertown, MA); Simonian Farms' Dark Chocolate Covered Raisins (Fresno, CA); Chili Chews (Los Angeles, CA); Boyajian's Pomegranate Vinegar (Boston, MA); ZaZa Pita Chips, Za'atar (Brooklyn, NY); Dardiman's CA Crisps, Chocolate Apple Crisp (Los Angeles, CA); and a packet of Armenian cucumber seeds.

"Town Love was born from our passion for community, storytelling, and uplifting small businesses," said co-founder Kim Bardakian. "After honoring Oakland — the town we live in — it was only natural to honor the culture we come from."

"Town Love Armenia is personal," added Nicole. "It reflects our deep love for our heritage and the desire to showcase what Armenians have contributed and continue contributing to the world today. We want to shine a light on the success of the Armenian spirit, especially in times when global attention and support are needed most."

Town Love creates custom gift boxes that celebrate cities and cultures through thoughtfully curated products from local businesses. Founded by longtime friends and community leaders Kim Bardakian and Nicole Vasgerdsian, Town Love is rooted in love — for people, place, and purpose.

For more information or to pre-order in time for holiday delivery, visit townlovebox.com.



Co-founders Nicole Vasgerdsian, at left, and Kim Bardakian

AWWA Announces \$100,000 Grant That Supports Armenian Elder Care Programs In Boston Area

BOSTON — The Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) announced recently the launch of a new competitive grant funding program today, designed to improve the quality of life for Armenian elders in the Boston area.

With up to \$100,000 available, this funding initiative will support nonprofit organizations delivering healthcare, mental health, and social engagement services for Armenians aged 65 and older. Programs prioritized for funding include home care visits, elder day services, and home-delivered meals in the neighborhoods of Brighton, Cambridge, Newton and Watertown.

"Our mission has always been to honor and care for our aging community members. With this grant program, we aim to strengthen local services and ensure our elders live healthy, fulfilling, and connected lives," said Wendy Segrest, executive director of AWWA.

Funding will be awarded for 12-month projects beginning January 1, 2026. Eligible applicants must be based in the U.S., IRS-certified nonprofits in good standing, and providing services to Armenian elders in the Boston area. Applications open today, October 6, and must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, October 31, 2025. Grant recipients will be announced on November 25, 2025, with programs launching in January 2026.

Nonprofit organizations may review full program details and submit applications via the AWWA website. The online application form and required budget template are available on the website at awwainc.org/grant-funding. Applications received after the October 31 deadline will not be considered.

Marjorie Nanian Sworn in as Judge

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Marjorie K. Nanian of Colorado was sworn in as a part-time Municipal Judge Englewood, on August 18. As a Municipal Judge, she will hear traffic offenses and violations of city ordinances.



Nanian was an administrative law judge for Unemployment Appeals, during COVID, for 2-1/4 years prior to moving to Colorado, in order to be closer to her adult children and their families.

As a Michigan native, Nanian practiced law for more than 30 years as a sole practitioner, before moving out-of-state. While a resident, she also wrote for the Armenian Mirror-Spectator for several years.



Two-Day International Conference at Fresno State to Focus on Late Ottoman-Turkish History Books

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State has organized a two-day international conference, “A New History-Writing on Late Ottoman-Turkish History: The Impact of Memoirs,” on Friday, October 17 and Saturday, October 18, on the Fresno State campus. The conference organizers are Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian (Fresno State) and Dr. Ümit Kurt (University of Newcastle, Australia). The conference is sponsored by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation, the Leon S. Peters Foundation, the Ralph Shapazian Memorial Fund, and the Florence Hamparson Memorial Fund.

The conference will feature keynote speaker Dr. Taner Akçam (director of the Armenian Genocide Research Project, the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA) and presentations by eight scholars from around the world.

A reception will be held in the University Business Center Gallery from 6 to 7 p.m., immediately preceding the start of the conference.

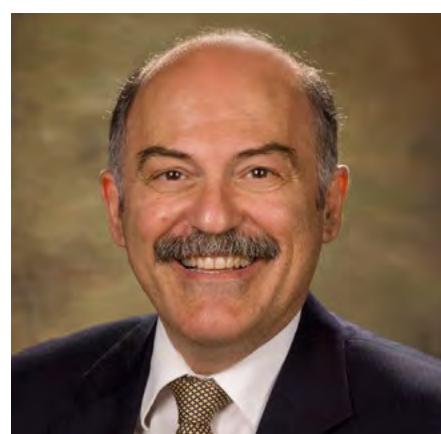
The conference will begin on Friday, October 17, at 7 p.m., with the keynote presentation by Akçam, followed by Panel 1, with Moderator Kurt. The panel will feature presentations by Janet Klein



Prof. Ümit Kurt



Prof. Taner Akçam



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian

(University of Akron), “Reading Against the Grain of Memoirs and Diaries in Researching Late-Ottoman Kurdish and Armenian Histories” and Michael Provence (University of California, San Diego), “How Damned Defenders of Doomed Empires Become Heroes of the Nation.”

The first day’s session will take place in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium.

The second session of the conference will begin on Saturday, October 18, at 10 a.m., with two panels, which will take place in the Smittcamp Alumni House, 2625 E. Matoian Way, Fresno State.

The first panel, moderated by Barlow Der Mugrdechian, includes presentations by Kurt, “Republic of Perpetrators: Talat Pasha’s Genocide Technocrat Mustafa Reşat Mimaroglu”; Yiğit Akin (Ohio State University), “Local Politics, Intellectual Periphery, and the End of the Empire: The Diaries of Yusuf Cemil Bey of Simav”; and Duygu Tasalp (University of Louvain), “The Father Figure in the Memoirs of Unionist Young Turks: Between Victimization, Betrayal and Regeneration.”

The second panel, moderated by David Zakarian, includes presentations by Kent Schull (Binghamton University),

“Reassessing the Role of Ottoman Prison Convicts in the Armenian Genocide: Triangulating CUP Memoirs and Trial Proceedings with Ottoman Prison Statistics”; Merisa Sahin (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), “Ahmed Riza and Selma Riza: An Ittihadist Glance on Women’s Rights”; and Ekrem Yener (Bilgi University) “An Examination of Mehmed Cavid Bey’s Newly Disclosed Diary for Insights into the Thoughts and Relationships of Unionist Leaders.”

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

Honorary Consulate of Armenia in Fresno Calls 15th Mission to Armenia a Success

FRESNO, Calif. (KSEE/KGPE) — The Honorary Consulate of Armenia in Fresno is calling the 15th medical mission to Armenia “high-caliber”.

From September 19 to October 4, Honorary Consulate Berj Apkarian and a team of medical professionals from around the country and world were in Armenia for the medical mission.

The overall goal is to establish lifelong ties between medical professionals in America and medical professionals in countries like Armenia to save lives.

The first part of this mission encompassed the 3rd annual international medical conference from September 23 to 26 at Yerevan State Medical University. For the first time, nursing education and lectures on nurse practitioners were provided at this conference.

Apkarian calls nurses the most essential workforce in healthcare, and with his experience being in healthcare for over 37 years, he knows countries like Armenia need upgrades to their nursing foundation.

The conference was opened by Her Excellency Ms. Kristina Kvien, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, along with Dr. Armen Muradyan, the Dean of the Medical School. Topics covered everything from disaster response to AI in medicine, being discussed by professionals from the University of Irvine, the Cleveland Clinic, UCSF, and more.

During the conference, Apkarian was also surprised by being awarded the title of Honorary Professor of Public Health Faculty. This was presented by the President of the Yerevan State Medical University. This took place during day one of the conference.

Apkarian calls the conference “critical” to keep Armenia’s healthcare on pace with current standards. Along with the conference was the deployment of rehabilitation teams to the Armenian regions of Gyumri and Armavir.

Because of this year’s success with assessment, Apkarian says next year’s rehabilitation team will be larger.

Rep. Issa and Rep. Bilirakis Introduce the PEACE Act

WASHINGTON — Rep. Darrell Issa (CA-48), Vice Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, introduced on October 3 the Preventing Escalation and Advancing Caucasus Engagement Act (PEACE Act), legislation that aims to deter further aggression against Armenia and bolster its enduring peace agreement with Azerbaijan that was achieved by the Trump Administration. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL-12) is an original co-sponsor.

“American leadership is the indispensable element that can truly achieve peace with honor in places that for so long have known only war,” said Issa. “Many thought an agreement to stop the fighting and deter aggression towards Armenia was not possible, but President Trump’s peace agenda is at once strategic and realistic and rejects the

status quo. The PEACE Act puts in place real consequences for any violations of agreement, while reinforcing the Trump Administration’s ongoing diplomatic efforts on behalf of sovereignty and stability.”

“This bill stands with our Armenian partners, promotes accountability for aggression, and keeps the focus on a negotiated settlement that respects sovereignty and regional security,” said Rep. Bilirakis.

“The PEACE Act is fundamental to deterring Azerbaijani aggression and supporting a just and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We applaud Congressman Issa and Congressman Bilirakis for their leadership in introducing this critical legislation upholding US strategic interests in the South Caucasus,” said Timothy Jemal, President, Global ARM.



Knights and Daughters of Vartan Complete 9th Annual 'Back to the Homeland' Mission Trip to Armenia

YEREVAN — On September 21, more than 28 members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan concluded their 9th annual Back to the Homeland (Veratarts Hayrenik) Mission Trip, a transformative journey to visit and evaluate their numerous humanitarian and development projects across Armenia.

The annual mission offers members and supporters the opportunity to witness firsthand the impact of their contributions — meeting students, families, and communities whose lives have been touched through education, housing, economic empowerment, and infrastructure development initiatives.

"For many of our members, this is a life-changing experience," said Past Grand Commander Steven Kradjian. "To see the homeland and meet the people whose lives we've been able to impact — there's nothing quite like it."

A highlight of the trip was the visit to scholarship recipients at Yerevan State University and the National Polytechnic University of Armenia. The Knights of Vartan's Tabibian Family Scholarship, established in 2023 with Dr. Tabibian's donation, supported nine students pursuing degrees in science, technology, and engineering in one year. The students, who expressed profound gratitude in English, shared their academic journeys and learned more about the mission of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

"Providing scholarships to students in Armenia is one of the most impactful investments we can make in the country's future. We are deeply grateful to our donor, Dr. N. Tabibian, for trusting the Knights of



Meeting with students at the Knights of Vartan #106 Basic School in Yerevan

3 young children — now cared for by their grandmother — moved into a newly completed home filled with hope and dignity. It was truly a joy for the group to witness the Movsisyan family settling into their newly built home, filled with hope and gratitude.

"It's not just about aid; it's about restor-

project now enables 60 additional children to attend school in a safe, modern facility.

Other Projects

Aparan #2 School — A newly renovated auditorium, funded by the Knights of Vartan and implemented by the Paros Foundation, will now serve as a hub for school events.

Knights of Vartan #106 Basic School in Yerevan — Full renovation of all classrooms on the 3rd floor of the larger building was completed in 2025, greatly improving the learning environment. This is the 7th consecutive year, making various renovations in the school. The renovation is implemented by the Paros Foundation

Mer Hooy NGP — The facility provides hope and opportunity for at-risk girls who are in need of a healthy social environment. The Daughters of Vartan partner and support every year.

Regarding the Knights of Vartan School #106, Past Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian said, "After first seeing the deplorable condition of the school's physical plant in 2017, it is especially rewarding today to tour the same school and view the beautifully renovated classrooms, gymnasium, and auditorium, the new ARMATH



Economic Sustainability Program recipient Arsen Pasamyan (left) receiving a certificate from Past Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian

Lab as well as knowing the school now has new electrical and heating systems. Our organization's goal is to maintain a safe,

continued on next page



Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly renovated classroom at the Knights of Vartan #106 Basic School in Yerevan. L to R - Past Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian and Past Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian

Vartan with his generous support — it will change lives and shape a brighter tomorrow," said Past Grand Commander Steven Adams.

Thanks to the enduring partnership with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia (FCHA), 65 families have been able to build or complete homes across the country. Among them is the Movsisyan family from Khor Virap Village in the Ararat region. After years of struggling in inadequate housing, and following the heartbreaking loss of the mother in 2024, the family with

ing hope and building a future. That connection to our homeland, and the ability to be part of its progress, is something every member carries home with them," said Past Grand Matron Lisa Kradjian, Daughters of Vartan.

The group also traveled to the Chambarak community near Armenia's eastern border to visit Kindergarten #3, where renovations of the third and final section were completed this year. Originally started in 2016 with the support of the Tri-Lodge of the Knights of Vartan in Los Angeles, this



Yerevan State University (YSU) — Students receive their certificates from the Knights of Vartan's Tabibian Family Scholarship



COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

functional, and comfortable environment for the students, which effectively facilitates teaching, learning, and other school activities."

"The Back to the Homeland mission is more than a visit — it's a powerful reminder of our responsibility to our heritage and our people. For our members, these trips are deeply personal and transformative, connecting us to the land, the culture, and the lives we strive to uplift. Supporting projects in education, housing, and economic development isn't just charity — it's nation-building. Every dollar invested, every hand extended, strengthens

the foundation of a more resilient, self-sufficient Armenia," said Grand Matron Lily Sarkissian, Daughters of Vartan.

Economic Sustainability Program: Investing in Self-Reliance

In response to growing economic needs, the Economic Sustainability Program (ESP) was launched in January 2024 to support families from Artsakh and across Armenia. Designed to empower individuals with business experience but limited resources, the program has already supported 45 families with over \$100,000 in funding.

During the mission trip, members visited six successful ESP projects, including:



A child points out his bed in the kindergarten



Children at play in Chambarak kindergarten

a seamstress workshop; a sushi-making business; a silversmith's studio; a poultry farm with newborn chicks; a bread bakery offering fresh loaves and a family-run pig farm.

These visits highlighted the resilience and creativity of Armenian families striving for sustainable livelihoods.

"These mission trips reaffirm why we do what we do. Seeing the direct impact of our support — whether it's a child walking into a newly renovated classroom, a family moving into their first real home, or a young entrepreneur restarting a business — brings our mission to life," said Past Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan (KDV) leadership visited US Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien, presented the KDV Projects, and discussed opportunities for advancing the ties between the United States and Armenia and our shared goals of peace, stability, and prosperity.

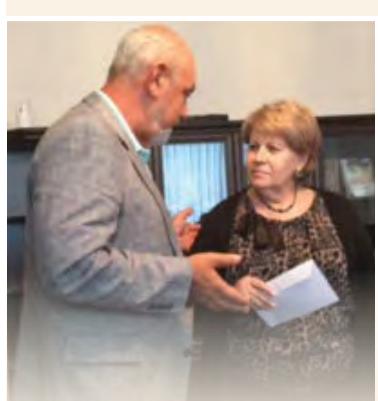
The mission concluded with a celebratory banquet with around 50 people at Tufenkian Kharpert Restaurant, where traditional Armenian dishes were shared. During the evening, Past Grand Commander Hunan Arshakian presented certificates of appreciation to mission partners and dedicated volunteers who provided pro bono support throughout the year.



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 _____

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Address _____

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Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association

Memo: Sponsor a Teacher 2025

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If you prefer to donate by credit card, please go to:
givebutter.com/0g6lky



Your donation is tax deductible.

OBITUARY

Raymond Davidian

Army Veteran, Known for Warm Spirit

WATERTOWN — Raymond Davidian, at the age of 87, passed away surrounded by his loved ones on Saturday, October 4, 2025. Born and raised in Worcester, he was the son of the late Diramayr Rose and Dirahayr Arthur Davidian, brother of the late Rev. Fr. Dajad Davidian and Yeretzgin Rosemarie Davidian.

He is survived by his brother, Albert Davidian and his wife Patty. He was the father of Lori Kashgegian and her husband, Mark; grandfather of Christina Beaulieu and her husband Thomas, Caroline Murphy and her husband Gabe, great-grandfather of Scarlett Beaulieu and Beckham Murphy. He was also the uncle of Ari, Raymond, Susan, Sara, Paul and Angela. He is also survived by several dear cousins and friends.

Raymond's professional life, characterized by his exceptional career in the government sector — specifically the transportation division as senior manager of software development — exemplified his unwavering commitment to public service.

Ray also served in the US Army from 1955-59 in many locations around the US. However, the core of Ray's existence

was his profound love for his family — a trait he inherited from his mother, Diramayr Rose Davidian. The final 18 years of his life were spent residing with his cherished daughter Lori and Mark, weaving countless unforgettable memories together. His home held a special place — a personal corner designed by Ray himself, where he converted the walls into a mini family museum, adorned with pictures of his loved ones. He took great pride in this museum and always enjoyed showing it off to visitors.

Raymond's family time resonated with rich laughter, the exchange of stories, jokes, and immense joy. Walking along his father's path — a fun-loving person and a survivor of the Armenian Genocide — Ray had countless stories to relay, further enriching family gatherings and deepening their shared love for each other. Raymond's interactions with his father, full of light-hearted banter and humor, cemented their bond and unified their family.

An avid traveler, Ray's love for his Armenian heritage deepened with his journey to his Armenian homeland with his family. Ray also made frequent visits to his family and cousins in France, thereby



expanding his family-oriented values beyond borders. Ray's delight in exploring unfamiliar territories and cultures with his family colored their lives with so many memories and experiences.

Additionally, Ray was an integral part of an active Armenian American Civic club in Worcester, where he found companionship amongst Armenian men who echoed his passion for life. This club offered much more than camaraderie — it provided an oasis for brotherhood, laughter, unforgettable memories and spirited card games.

Beyond loving family get-togethers, Raymond's generosity was limitless. He derived immense pleasure helping those in need. Ray also loved treating his family to splendid dinners at iconic city restaurants and captivating moments on Lake Winnipesaukee's shores. So many memories were made there every summer. His love for his family remained constant no matter when or where he was.

Ray, who carried his mother's inherent warmth and giving spirit, was a man known for his wisdom, intellect and humor. His aptitude for friendly games with his family often led to his triumph, fostering fond memories that his family will forever hold dear.

A character at heart, Ray's warm spirit, and exceptional intelligence will be profoundly missed, his legacy — deeply rooted in his love for family and his zest for life — will continue to encourage and live on in those fortunate to have known him.

The funeral service was held at Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown, on Thursday, October 9. Interment was in Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown. Arrangements were by Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown.

At the request of the family, memorial gifts can be made to Saint James Armenian Church or Armenia Tree Project, www.armeniatreeproject.org.

Clement Ashekian

Philanthropist, Dedicated to Family

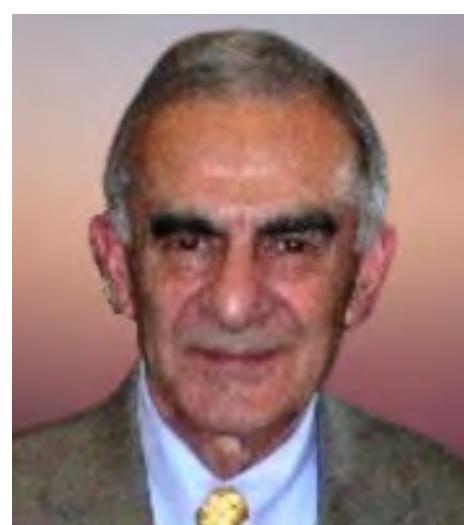
KENSINGTON, Conn. — Clement Ashekian passed away peacefully on Wednesday, October 1, 2025, surrounded by his children and family.

Born on September 19, 1935 in Philadelphia, Clement was the son of Joseph and Haigouhi Ashekian, originally from Kharpert, an Armenian village in Turkey. From humble beginnings, he carried a deep passion for his Armenian heritage while also pursuing the American dream.

Clement met the love of his life, Julia Garabedian, at an Armenian dance. The two soon married and settled in Kensington, where they raised their family. Clement worked as a bank teller by day while attending the University of Hartford at night, eventually earning his degree in engineering. He went on to build a distinguished career at IBM as a senior engineer, where he remained for 34 years.

Engineering was not only his profession, but also a gift he shared with others. Whether repairing cars, installing heating or cooling systems, or tackling electrical and plumbing work, Clement could do it all. His generous spirit meant he was always ready to lend his skills to family, friends, and anyone in need. He was truly the go-to person in every circle of his life.

Clement's dedication extended far beyond his home. A devoted member of the Armenian Church, he served for many



years as parish council chairman at St. George's Armenian Apostolic Church in Hartford and as a diocesan delegate at the national level. He was also a Diocesan Council Member.

Following the devastating earthquake in Armenia in 1988, Clement and Julia devoted themselves to helping children who had been orphaned. Together, they established several orphanages that became home to nearly 9,000 children. Their efforts touched countless lives, and generations continue to thrive today because of what Clement and Julia helped create.

At home, Clement's greatest joy was his

own family. He was a constant presence — always available to listen, to guide and to teach. His wisdom and warmth left an imprint on everyone he encountered.

Beyond his love of family, friends and church, Clement's personal passion was racquetball. An accomplished player, he competed well into his 70s, often besting opponents half his age. In recognition of his achievements, the first racquetball court built in America — in New Britain, Conn. — was named in his honor.

Clement was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, mentor and friend. He will be deeply missed, but his family and commu-

nity take comfort in knowing he is once again reunited with his beloved Julia.

He is survived by his children, Caryn and her husband Michael LaPointe, his son Stephen and his wife Noël, as well as his cherished grandchildren, Alex, Nicole, and Drew, along with many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services to honor Clement's life were held on Monday, October 6, at St. George Armenian Church, Hartford. Burial followed in Fairview Cemetery, New Britain. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. George Armenian Church. Erickson-Hansen Funeral Home, New Britain, is in charge of arrangements.

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Am-Vets Hold Scholarship Night

LOWELL, Mass. — This past Saturday, the Armenian-American Veterans of Lowell, Sam Manoian Post #1, held their annual scholarship award dinner-program evening. The following area students were awarded scholarships: Milla Shirikyan, Elizabeth Simoinian, and Margaret Simonian. Since the Armenian-American Veterans of Lowell began awarding scholarships in 1990, approximately \$220,000 has been given to some 219 students. From left, George Manuelian, Ara Jeknavorian, Milla Shirikyan, George Graham, Richard Jeknavorian (Post Commander), Bruce Kayajanian, George Simonian, and Lucy Simonian.



Arts & Culture

New York Trilogy By Peter Balakian Published

NEW YORK — Pulitzer Prize winning poet Peter Balakian's new book of poems, *New York Trilogy*, has just been published by the University of Chicago Press. In inventive, elliptical language, *New York Trilogy* is a book length poem in three sections. The long poem explores one man's journey, from the late 1960s into the early twenty-first century, a journey that evolves from a series of experiences and events, many of which are set in New York City and the onlooking New Jersey Palisades. The life and imagination of the persona are impacted by various historical events: the Armenian Genocide, Hiroshima, the Vietnam War, the AIDS epidemic, 9/11, the US war in Iraq, and the geo-climate crisis. Balakian's journey to the Syrian desert with the 60 Minutes TV crew in 2009 to find the remains of Armenian Genocide survivors is a prominent segment in the poem.

The literary critic Sven Birkerts writes: "The Trilogy is a feat of contemporary witness, its multiple refractions brought to account in the self of the poet. This is how we integrate fragmentation in our time, and how, after hard passage, we look to transcend."

Reviewing *Ozone Journal* in *World Literature Today* Keith Garibian has written: "Balakian is the preeminent Armenian writer in English today ... attuned to histories of disaffection, disruption, and derangement, he is a master of collage, resulting in poetry of expansive, long sequences; a poetry of montage, fluctuating

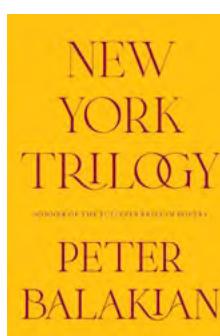
rhythm, and inner tension where motion is skillfully embedded with emotion and a refined intelligence."

And David Wojahn in *Tikkun* writes, "Few American poets of the boomer generation have explored the interstices of public and personal history as deeply and urgently as has Balakian. ... [He finds] within the pitiless hubbub of contemporary consciousness those essential recollections that are the sources of our truest sense of selfhood and [devises] a new method for meaningfully confronting ... the past."

Balakian is the author of nine books of poems including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Ozone Journal*. His memoir *Black Dog of Fate* won the PEN/Martha Albrand Award, and *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* was a *New York Times* bestseller. Balakian's work has been translated into many languages; he teaches at Colgate University.

He will be reading at Columbia University on October 27, and at Goliard Bookshop in Cambridge, Mass. on November 5, and at NAASR in Belmont, Mass. November 6.

To purchase a copy, visit www.press.uchicago.edu.



Alan Hovhaness

Discovering the Genius of Composer Alan Hovhaness

ARLINGTON, Mass. — On Sunday, October 19, at 4 p.m., the Armenian Cultural Foundation, in collaboration with Amaras Art Alliance and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, will host a program dedicated to the legacy of Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000), a 20th-century musical genius whose work transcends borders.

His own words capture his spirit: "Everybody's biography has two levels — inner and outer. The outer level deals with what one has done... But the inner biography is a journey through eternity. I am the traveler of that world whose cartography is impossible."

The occasion marks the release of *Unveiling One of the Great Composers of the 20th Century*, a moving biography by Hinako Fujihara-Hovhaness, offering an intimate glimpse into Hovhaness's life.

The concert will feature Hovhaness's works alongside pieces by Nikola Radan and Komitas (1869–1935), performed by SYLDASON — a captivating duo of Daniela Tošić (voice) and Sylvie Zakarian (marimba). Their unique blend of marimba's warm tones and the human voice's expressiveness creates a universal soundscape that resonates with everyone. Expect a program that weaves together diverse influences, making each listener feel part of a shared human story.

The second half of the program will feature pianist Karine Bagdasarian from Armenia who will provide a presentation of piano works by Hovhaness, prepared for this special occasion.

Sylvie Zakarian, an Armenian-Bulgarian marimba virtuoso, brings elegance and emotion to the stage, earning praise from the *Boston Musical Intelligencer* for her "luscious timbres and moments of levity and longing." She has performed at Carnegie Hall and the Citi Performing Arts Center, and a teaching role at Longy School of Music and Winchester Community Music School.

Daniela Tošić, a founding member of the acclaimed vocal ensemble Tapestry, complements her with a "burnished and warm sound." Her global performances and upcoming album, featuring Macedonian and Serbian songs, highlight her ability to connect genres with authenticity.

Together, SYLDASON's 2024 releases, including George Thantchev's Reche Mama, and their 2026 project, Three Neapolitan Folk Songs by Pasquale Tassone, showcase their innovative spirit.

Karine Bagdasarian, a graduate of the Komitas State Conservatory of Music, has been a long time resident of Boston and worked on a range of institutions, among them Brookline Music School, Leningrad State Conservatory, Newton Country Day School, and Nexus Centre for the Art (Armenia). Aside from teaching, she has performed as a concert pianist in Armenia, Russia, Europe, Canada and US, often premiering new compositions. She has performed live on Armenian national television and appeared with different chamber orchestras, among them the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia.

Marvin Rosen, a pianist, educator, and musicologist, will deliver the keynote address, sharing his deep admiration for Hovhaness's piano works. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University, Rosen has recorded albums like *Fred the Cat: Half a Century of Piano Music* and marked Hovhaness's centennial with a 24-hour radio marathon in 2011. His passion offers fresh perspectives on the composer's legacy.

see HOVHANESS, page 15

Armenian Cultural Days Highlight Armenian Culture In Stuttgart and Göppingen, Germany

STUTTGART, Germany — From October 16 to 26, the cities of Stuttgart and Göppingen will become vibrant stages of dialogue, art, and remembrance. Under the motto "Tell It to Your Children: Values, Knowledge, Traditions," the Armenian Cultural Days Stuttgart invite audiences to a ten-day festival celebrating the richness of Armenian culture through music, literature, film, dance, spirituality, and intercultural exchange.



Acclaimed soprano Karine Babajanyan and pianist Lusine Khachatrian will perform masterpieces by Verdi, Strauss, Gershwin, and Komitas. Jazz enthusiasts will experience the Tigran Tatevosyan Trio, blending Armenian musical roots with contemporary improvisation. Renowned choreographer Rima Pipoyan presents the German premiere of her dance productions "Voskor" and "Khali" — a visual and emotional homage to the symbols and colors of Armenian carpet art.

Distinguished voices such as Tessa Hofmann, Winfried K. Dallmann, Elena Konson, and Iris Lemanczyk bring intellectual and poetic depth to the program with readings, lectures, and discussions on Armenian history, identity, and creativity. The cinematic program features the powerful films "Songs of Solomon," "Asadur" and "Aurora's Sunrise," portraying Armenia's tragic yet resilient cultural memory.

Equally central to the festival are participation and generational exchange: Children and young adults explore family stories and memory culture in the creative workshop "Tell It to Your Children," led by journalist Karnik Gregorian and actor Vic Bagratuni. Families discover Armenian fairy tales with author Ruzanna Danielian, women express their creativity at the Art & Brunch event, and food lovers can join chef and author Zara Safaryan for an interactive Armenian cooking workshop.

The festival will conclude with a festive Holy Liturgy at the Holy Cross Church in Göppingen and a final concert by the ArmTon Trio, presenting sacred and folk songs in new arrangements — a musical bridge between past and present.

"Culture is memory in motion — it connects generations and creates a future," says festival director Rev. Dr. Diradur Sardaryan. "These Cultural Days invite everyone to experience Armenia with heart, mind, and soul."

For more information, see <https://armenische-kulturtage-stuttgart.de>



Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian



Fall Harvest Roasted Butternut Squash and Pomegranate Salad

This Fall Harvest Roasted Butternut Squash and Pomegranate Salad combines all the best produce that fall has to offer into the prettiest salad that's simple to make and healthy, too. Sweet honey roasted butternut squash, salty roasted pumpkin seeds, kale, shredded brussels sprouts, and juicy pomegranate seeds. Tossed together with a sweet and tangy pomegranate vinaigrette," says Tieghan Gerard, Half Baked Harvest founder, Recipe Developer, Food Photographer, Food Stylist, and New York Time's Best Selling Cookbook Author of Half Baked Harvest, Super Simple, Half Baked Harvest Every Day, and Quick and Cozy.

Tieghan has been featured on Good Morning America, Food Network, HGTV, CNN, NBC, CBS, Yahoo!, Food & Wine, People, The Drew Barrymore Show, and Kelly and Mark, among others. She spends her days experimenting with new recipes, photographing her creations, and feeding her family. Her hope is to inspire a love for food in others, as well as the courage to try something new.

"I began my blog in 2012 and have since been featured on The Cooking Channel, Food Network, HGTV, Crate & Barrel, Shape Magazine, Self Magazine, the Huffington Post, and PopSugar, among others. Half Baked Harvest was named Readers' Choice Favorite Food Blog by Better Homes and Gardens in both 2014 and 2016. It was also the recipient of Saveur Magazine's 2016 Award for Most Inspired Weeknight Dinners as well as the 2016 Bloglovin' Best Food Blog Award," she adds.

"This salad will certainly be my fall go-to salad. It's healthy, simple, so delicious, and perfectly fitting for crisp fall nights...and great for Thanksgiving and the holidays," she says.

Having cooked for her large family from a young age, Tieghan loves the feeling of sharing great food—and now she wants to share that feeling with you. This collection leans into the comfort food she's known for, but with an eye toward getting it ready in a hurry. With many recipes doable in one pot or pan, most in under forty-five minutes, and a more-is-more focus on flavor (but not ingredients), you'll be feasting fast. Start your day with Maple Bacon Pancakes with Bourbon Maple



Tieghan Gerard, founder of Half Baked Harvest

Syrup, snack on Cheesy Roasted Shallot Bread, and make Garlic Butter Steak Bites with Bang Bang Sauce your family's new favorite. Enjoy delicious twists like Sheet Pan Mac & Cheese with All the Crispy Edges, and, of course, finish it all off with something sweet, like a Dark Chocolate Pistachio Cake with Cream Cheese Icing.

Relying on basic ingredients and Tieghan's signature knack for making sauces and dressings that you'll want to double to keep on hand at all times, these recipes will make your meals feel like a warm hug. If you've ever needed a belly full of comfort and a plate bursting with fresh, unexpected flavors—and wanted it all right now—Half Baked Harvest Quick & Cozy is for you.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small butternut squash, halved, peeled, and cut into 1/4-inch half circles
- 2 tablespoons honey, more to taste
- 1/2 cup raw pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 head kale, shredded
- 4 cups shredded brussels sprouts
- Arils from 1 pomegranate
- 4-6 fresh figs (optional)
- 1/2 cup shredded gouda cheese (or cheese of your choice)

Pomegranate Vinaigrette:

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- 1/4 cup pomegranate juice
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper flakes

PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 425 °F. On a baking sheet, toss together the butternut squash, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1 tablespoon honey, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Transfer to the oven and roast for 25-30 minutes, flipping halfway through cooking, until the squash is tender.

Line a separate baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the pepitas, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1 tablespoon honey, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, the cayenne, and a pinch of salt. Arrange in a single layer. Transfer to the oven and bake for 8-10 minutes or until the pepitas are toasted. Watch closely.

Meanwhile, in a large salad bowl, combine the kale, brussels sprouts, and pomegranates.

To make the vinaigrette. Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet over high heat. When the oil shimmers, add the shallots and sage, cook until fragrant, 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat, let cool slightly. Add the pomegranate juice, balsamic vinegar, and honey. Season with salt, pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes.

Pour the vinaigrette over the salad, tossing to combine. Add the roasted squash, gently tossing. Top the salad with toasted pepitas, figs, if using, and cheese.

Recipe Notes:

Pepitas are green, naturally shell-free, and can be eaten raw or roasted, offering a smoother texture and sweeter flavor. In contrast, traditional pumpkin seeds have a white, fibrous hull that is typically removed after roasting, though some edible hulls can be consumed.

To Make Ahead: This salad can be made and assembled through step 4. Combine the greens, pomegranates, and roasted squash in a salad bowl, but leave the seeds out. Store the bowl in the refrigerator, covered, and keep the seeds and vinaigrette separate. Then, just before serving, warm the vinaigrette and toss the salad together. Leftovers will keep well for 2-3 days. This salad is delicious warmed or chilled.

For this recipe, go to: <https://www.halfbakedharvest.com>

For how to order cookbooks, go to: <https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/cookbook/>

For articles and stories, see: https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/press/print/?current_page=articles

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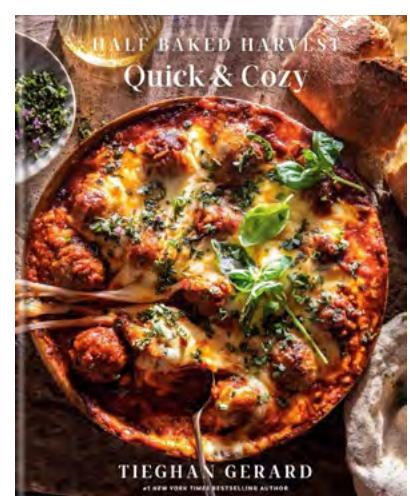
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This recipe was also featured at The Art of Armenian & Middle Eastern Cooking at: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1276081124553581&set=a.556206763207691>



Books

Alan Hovhaness: The Majesty of The Man Behind The Music

By Arpi Sarafian*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

Hinako Fujihara Hovhaness's *Alan Hovhaness: Unveiling One of The Great Composers of The 20th Century* (Classic Day Publishing, 2025) tells the story of a composer championed by some of the greatest conductors and music professionals of the 20th century. Leslie Heward, principal conductor of the BBC Midland Orchestra premiered Hovhaness's first symphony, *Exile*, in 1939. In 1943, the world-renowned conductor Leopold Stokowski performed *Exile* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and commissioned Hovhaness's second symphony, *Mysterious Mountain*, which he premiered with the Houston Symphony for his inaugural concert in 1955.

"Alan's every premiere was a joyous occasion," writes Hinako.

When the Cleveland Orchestra first performed *Mysterious Mountain* in December 1957, "Here was a modern piece full of melody and pleasant to the ear. No dissonance, no noise, no discord, just beautiful sweeping harmony," wrote the Cleveland News. On a similar note, the acclaimed Jazz pianist Keith Jarrett commented on the "profound simplicity" of Alan's 1944 Piano Concerto Lousadzak (The Coming of Light in Armenian) which he recorded in 1989 with the American Composers Orchestra.

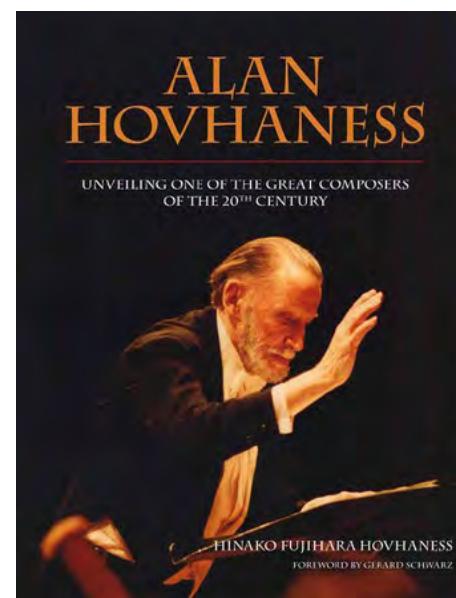
While full of fascinating details about Alan's premieres, his concerts and his relationships with other composers and conductors, *Alan Hovhaness: Unveiling*

One of The Great Composers of The 20th Century is not about the composer's music. The book is about the man behind the music. The project may have originated in the short poems Hinako started composing to bring back into her life the man she could not conceive of living without when she lost Alan in the year 2000. Alan and Hinako, the coloratura soprano he met at a piano recital in 1974, were married in 1977 when the composer was in his late 60s and she in her 40s. Writing down the stories Alan had told her about his life and her own vivid recollections of events she had experienced with Alan helped keep the man she "adored passionately" close to her, she avows.

The story Hinako weaves of the passion, the devotion and the deep commitment she and Alan had for each other reads like a true love story. Alan's January 22, 1983 note to Hinako, "I will be a faithful husband to Hinako all my life. If I fail I agree to be killed" does not sound deceptive. Indeed, his "I will be with you in spirit" and her "In spirit, I will see him again; that is my salvation and hope" is consistent with everything the two believed.

Both Alan and Hinako were spiritual people. Alan was inspired by the majesty and the mystery of mountains and had visions on the top of mountains in his early childhood. When the Cleveland Orchestra performed *Mysterious Mountain* in 1957, "His music evokes an atmosphere of spirituality not often heard in contemporary music," wrote critic Herbert Elwell in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

Interestingly, the events in both of their



lives seem to be supported by the numerous psychic revelations and the dreams and visions that abound in the book. Hinako enthusiastically repeats the words of the psychic who had prophesied their union "a long time ago." Destiny had brought them together, or so Hinako makes us believe. Fact or fiction, what makes the portrait she paints for us of the "polite, distinguished gentleman" so very credible is the sweetness, the almost childlike innocence and honesty of the voice that brings it to life. Hinako gives us no reason to doubt the accuracy of her accounts. Instead, she makes us too fall in love with the "large, innocent animal-like eyes" of "my dearest husband and my whole world." It all comes "straight from my heart."

I find it hard to envision Alan as the "womanizer," a word used, perhaps a trifle too liberally, in the book descriptions and by Hinako herself in her Introduction to the book. In no way does the portrait she creates of the gentle and caring man she knew intimately align with the negative connotations the word carries. It may be true that Alan had six marriages. It may also be true that "his life was led by the women around him," as Hinako notes, yet nothing in her meticulously detailed stories gives the impression of a manipulative or a deceptive man. Alan comes through as a lovable and totally respectable and respectful human being. What ultimately emerges is the man faithful to his beliefs. "Even in the times when his music wasn't so fashionable, he stuck to his thinking and to his distinctive style," writes Gerard Schwartz, Conductor Laureate of the Seattle Symphony, in his Foreword to the book.

Alan and Hinako remained married for twenty-three years until Alan's death in 2000, and perhaps even beyond. The woman who was his close collaborator throughout their married years remained a strong advocate of his music and devoted her later years to preserving his musical legacy.

On hearing the music Alan Hovhaness had composed for his play "Lalezar," the then enormously popular writer William Saroyan wrote to the unknown composer in his October 25, 1950 letter: "Lalezar is one of the most beautiful things I have ever heard."

The letter of recommendation Saroyan wrote to the National Institute of Arts and Letters — which resulted in a \$1,000 grant to the struggling composer — was "the

cause of the biggest break of Alan's career," writes Hinako. Moved by Saroyan's belief in "Alan's God-given talent" and his "love and sympathy" for "a young unknown composer" Hinako has the urge to construct the letters Saroyan wrote Hovhaness from 1941 to 1951 into a story. With rare insight, "I know this is one of my most important subjects, and I have an obligation to let Saroyan's letters be known to the people," she writes. It must be true that when two Armenians "meet anywhere in the world" they will "create a new Armenia" (even if this is a slightly misquoted version of Saroyan's words!).

Indeed, Hovhaness, ne Alan Vaness Chakmakjian in 1911, has numerous compositions inspired by his Armenian heritage. "Prayer of St. Gregory," a piece for trumpet and strings, is beautifully evocative of our sharagans and folk music.

"Alan's music was like inward singing," commented the avant-garde composer John Cage following the 1945 premiere performance of Lousadzak in New York City, to the great delight of the composer who genuinely believed that his music came from secret inner forces. New York Herald Tribune critic Lou Harrison wrote a "rave review" for Alan.

Hovhaness may not be a household



Photo from the wedding of Alan Hovhaness and Hinako Fujihara Hovhaness

name, yet the composer's experimental composition techniques, like mixing Eastern and Western musical traditions, have greatly influenced later composers. Gerard Schwartz highlights the spiritual simplicity, the accessibility and the melodic beauty of Alan's work. "I continue to perform works [by Alan] each season and with great public success. His music has lived on and will continue to be because of its beauty and passion," writes Schwartz.

The stories in the elegant hardbound volume are arranged chronologically, starting with Alan's childhood years in Somerville, Mass., where he was born to an Armenian father, Haroutioun Hovanes Chakmakjian (born in Adana, Turkey) and a mother of Scottish ancestry, Madeleine Scott. Hinako's accounts are sweet and charming. Alan himself was a great storyteller and entertained people with his delightful stories. "He was a very talkative person," writes Hinako.

The book is available for purchase at www.abrilbooks.com. The official book launch will take place at the Glendale Central Library on October 28 at 6 p.m.

St. James Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter & Society of Istanbul Armenians of Boston present NY's TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group in Anton Chekhov's *The Marriage Proposal* A comedy directed by Harout Chatmajian *performed in Armenian with English subtitles* *surprise preshow* Sunday Oct. 26 3:45 pm doors open 4 pm lavish dinner 5 pm show

St. James Armenian Church Keljik Hall 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA \$75 plus cash bar

Reservations at Eventbrite: themarriageproposal.eventbrite.com Or use this QR code

Discovering the Genius of Composer Alan Hovhaness

HOVHANESS, from page 13

To create a warm atmosphere for the event, Hovhaness's family members, William and Coleen Holst, will travel from Seattle to share personal anecdotes that provide a rare glimpse into the man behind the music. Their stories will help to humanize this musical genius, making it a

memorable experience for all attendees.

Copies of Hinako Fujihara-Hovhaness's memoir will be available at a special discount. The concert will be live-streamed, followed by a reception to mingle and reflect. For details, contact the Armenian Cultural Foundation at fdn@armenianculturalfdn@gmail.com.



Laura D. Minasyan

Bridging Cultures — Armenian, Khmer, Swedish, Russian

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN-STOCKHOLM — My longtime friend, journalist and translator Laura D. Minasyan, is among the people I especially value: warm, kind, artistic, multilingual, open to the world yet faithful to her roots and country, and someone who has lived a rich and full life. I first met her and her husband — the well-known Swedish ethnologist Åke Daun (1936-2017) — in Sweden in 1996. Even then, I was especially impressed by the fact that Laura, a translator from Russian and Armenian into Swedish, had also at one point worked with Khmer — the language of Cambodia.

Since then, we have met regularly, especially in Yerevan — the city she calls her home. She has passed on this love for Armenia to her sons, David and Aram.

Dear Laura, let's begin at the very start: you were born in Baku, a city that once had a significant Armenian presence. How did your ancestors come to settle there?

Yes, it so happened that I was born in this city. We lived in the Mantashov House, right in the city center — a building that had once belonged to the Armenian oil magnate Mantashyan. This luxurious four-story building with turrets housed many families of different nationalities. Despite the crowded conditions and the diversity of the residents, everyone lived together quite peacefully. I don't recall any ethnic conflicts. If there were arguments, they were mostly family quarrels. The children playing in the yard never wondered who belonged to this or that nationality.

School bored me; I was a poor student. Everything changed the day our Russian teacher took the class to a library, and a staff member explained what a library was, why it existed, and how we could borrow books to take home. Since then, I've found a purpose in life. Thinking back on school now, I suddenly realized we didn't have a single Azerbaijani teacher. Our teachers in every subject were Russian, Jewish, Armenian, or Greek — but not Azeri. I wondered if perhaps this was just bad luck for my generation, so I checked with my nephews, who attended different Baku schools in the 1980s and 1990s. They confirmed that if Azerbaijanis worked in the schools at all, they were usually principals, janitors, or only taught the Azerbaijani language.

In Soviet Baku, the Armenian population — due to the policy of internationalism, or rather, denationalization — gradually began to lose its national identity. Nevertheless, you maintained a deep attachment to Armenia and Armenian culture. How did that happen?

We spent every summer vacation with our beloved grandmother Zumrut in the Armenian village of Chapni. Sometimes we also visited my father's relatives in Sevan. My father showed me the house in his birthplace Tsakhkunk — with a skylight in the ceiling and a tonir in the middle of the large common room. It was the mid-1950s, and the Sevan Peninsula was still an island then. I remember how we would travel there by boat to visit the Sevan monasteries. Those summer holidays tied me to Armenia, of course. So, there was a great deal of Armenian in me from childhood — though unconsciously, in a scattered way. It is no coincidence that after finishing school, I applied to Yerevan Bryusov Institute of Foreign Languages, but failed the entrance exams miserably. Yet I stayed in Yerevan and became a freelance correspondent for the Russian-language newspaper *Komsomolets*,

covering the capital's cultural life.

And yet you were drawn to distant, unexplored horizons. To go to Leningrad and study such a rare language as Khmer! Surely many people were puzzled. What did knowledge of Khmer give a young Armenian woman? And perhaps the surprise was even greater when, despite this education, you decided to return to Armenia!

Yes, I went to apply to Leningrad University — but not for journalism, for the Faculty of Oriental Studies. The Chinese Department had just opened a new section for Southeast Asian languages. The Khmer section was recruiting students for the next course. The only thing I managed to learn before submitting my application was that Khmer was spoken in the Kingdom of Cambodia — somewhere in Asia. I missed the passing grade by one point, but they accepted me as an auditor in the Khmer group. My friends found me a job as a stoker at a boiler house, which automatically gave me a residence permit in Leningrad. That first year of study was very hard: night shifts at the boiler house, where sleeping was dangerous, and I tried to study whenever I could.

There were six of us in our group — two men and four women. After a year, one of the girls was expelled for poor performance, and I was officially enrolled as a student, which provided a residence permit for the duration of my studies, a stipend, and a dormitory closer to the university. It turned out there were several Armenians on the faculty. The well-known historian Karen Yuzbashyan looked after all Armenian students, and we all attended his lessons in Grabar (Classical Armenian).

Studying Khmer was fascinating. I had developed an interest in Cambodian folklore. My first term paper focused on Khmer fairy tales and the poem *Tum Teav*, while my diploma thesis was a comparative analysis of the Khmer version of the Indian national epic *Rāmāyana* — the *Reamker* — with the versions of other Southeast Asian countries. My coursework and diploma on Khmer folklore were among the first attempts in Russian to analyze and classify this fascinating material. Many years later, Dmitry Elovkov told me that generations of students after us studied Cambodian folklore using my papers and thesis. So, my work was not in vain...

After graduating from university, I was offered a place in graduate school in Leningrad, but after receiving my diploma, I returned to Armenia. I was hired as a senior lab assistant at the Institute of Oriental Studies, but I was to work as an assistant to a very respected academician. The academic historian, a specialist in the "friendship of the Transcaucasian peoples," gradually pulled me into writing his next volume. It was burdensome and unpleasant for me. Besides, there were many everyday difficulties. My small salary didn't last long after paying for a rented room. My only consolation was my wonderful friends.

Later, living in Sweden, the intense events in my family and professional life pushed Khmer somewhat into the background, but I continued to translate Khmer fairy tales into Swedish in my free time. Some of them were published in various Swedish magazines.

So, the next stage of your life was a completely different world: Sweden! In Soviet times, marrying a citizen of a capitalist country was anything but simple. How did the authorities and your family react?

I never met my Armenian prince, but quite unexpectedly a Swedish one appeared. Our chance encounter turned out to be fateful, and this young man spent about a year convincing me. I hadn't planned to leave Armenia, so I couldn't make a final decision for a long time. When we finally decided to marry, all my relatives reacted negatively. Marrying a foreigner in the mid-1970s was difficult. Officially, the authorities did not forbid our marriage, but they created petty obstacles, humiliations, and delays. At the registry office, a stern, henna-dyed woman registered us. She was clearly irritated by the unusual appearance of the bride and groom — we both came in jeans and sweaters. She scrutinized every document, then asked me angrily: "Why are you marrying a Swede? Couldn't you find an Armenian man?" "Unfortunately, not," I replied.

I arrived in Sweden in the summer of 1975. At that time, there were very few Armenians in Sweden — at most about a thousand — mostly from Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Turkey. For comparison, today 5,002 people are registered with the Armenian Church of Sweden, but they estimate the actual number of Armenians living in the country to be at least twice as high.

You conducted interviews with famous Russians for Swedish Radio.

Since my report from Oslo was received with interest by the Russian Service of Swedish Radio, they offered me further collaboration. This partnership lasted 13 years during the Soviet era, and I managed to produce many programs on a wide variety of topics about Sweden and Scandinavia that could interest Soviet listeners. During that time, our guests were mostly dissidents or non-returnees. One of my interviews was with Joseph Brodsky. I was able to contact him through his translator. He himself called my studio, and we recorded a wonderful interview.

A curious incident involved Rudolf Nureyev. My colleague and I went to a ballet rehearsal in which he was performing. My older, more experienced colleague flirtatiously approached Nureyev and asked him a question. He sharply cut her off: "I do not speak Russian with Russian journalists!" Then he turned his haughty gaze on me: "And you... you are not Russian?" "No, I am Armenian," I replied. The gruff man even brightened: "Well, I will talk with you gladly!"

For more than 35 years, you were the wife of the renowned Swedish ethnologist Åke Daun. Thanks to you, he engaged with the Armenian cause, worked toward the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Sweden, wrote articles dedicated to Armenians and the Genocide, for which both of you deserve the highest respect.

Åke Daun indeed made a significant contribution to the development of modern ethnology in Sweden. But he also studied Armenian history, especially the Armenian Genocide, and worked toward its recognition in Sweden. He wrote articles about it in the Swedish press and participated in debates. He even formed a working group of Swedish Armenians for this purpose. On March 11, 2010, the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) adopted a resolution recognizing the mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 as genocide. It was a very dramatic vote. We were there and witnessed the entire process. The decision was made by a margin of just one vote: 131 deputies voted "for," 130 "against," and 88 did not participate. The decision provoked a sharp reaction from Turkey: Ankara recalled its ambassador from Stockholm and canceled the planned visit of Prime Minister Erdogan to Sweden. The timid Swedish government, fearing complications in relations with Turkey, refused to officially recognize its own parliament's decision at the governmental level — to call the genocide by its name.

Although you have lived abroad for half a century and are fully integrated into European society, unlike many Armenians living in various countries, you became a citizen of Armenia, return almost every year, and follow daily events happening in the country. For many, this connection with the homeland may be hard to understand.

Despite an interesting and full life, all this time I lived with a longing for Armenia. My eldest son, who accompanied me on our annual trips to Armenia since childhood, once said: "Mom, you are like a little tree transplanted into foreign soil — you can never really take root." Perhaps that is true.

From the very beginning in Sweden, I devoted myself primarily to work related to Armenia. I led tours for Swedish tourists in the USSR when Armenia was on the itinerary. I came to Armenia with a Swedish Red Cross film crew after the earthquake in December 1988. For several years I worked with a team of Swedish sociologists training social workers in Lori region.

At one point, I read a note about the Swedish missionary Alma Johansson, who worked with Armenian children in an orphanage in Mush during the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. I began collecting information about her and translated her memoirs of the horrors of the genocide into Russian. After that, I started exploring Swedish archives and libraries in search of other materials on the Armenian Genocide. I found many other documents from that time, memoirs of other missionaries, and Armenian refugees, which I have also translated into Russian.

I have no connection to the city where I was born and raised. Since leaving it after finishing school, I have never felt nostalgia. And after those barbarians destroyed the Armenian cemetery, including my mother's grave, Baku has become a cursed city for me. I am ashamed that my passport lists it as my birthplace — a lifelong stigma...





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

OCTOBER 17-18 — Friday and Saturday, St. James Armenian Church 78th Annual Bazaar – Fri. 12-8 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Delicious Armenian Food, Mezze, Pastries, and Baked Goods. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children's Activities, Booths and Local Vendors. 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar.

OCTOBER 18 — The Music for Future Foundation's visiting fellows from Armenia will present a special concert, showcasing their artistic talents while raising awareness and financial support for the Foundation's impactful work. Musicians aged 10 to 18 will perform works by Babadjanyan, Beethoven, Chopin, Dvorak, Khachaturian, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Saint-Saens and Boston premieres by composers Yuri Gevorkyan and Arno Melkonyan. International violinist/violist Ara Gregorian, Chair of String and Piano Chamber Music at the New England Conservatory of Music will also be on hand to discuss music education opportunities in the United States. For tickets and information, visit www.FACSBoston.org

OCTOBER 19 — "Alan Hovhaness: Unveiling the Life of a Musical Genius" Book Launch and Concert. Sunday. Sylvie Zakarian (marimba), Daniela Tosić (vocals), Karineh Bagdasarian (piano). Sunday, 4 p.m., 441 Mystic Street, Arlington. Organized by Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance (AAA), National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

OCTOBER 19 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, creating a New Sculptural Shape. Sunday, 9 a.m. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. Rain date: October 26.

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

OCTOBER 23 — The Armenia Tree Project is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a reception. Meet new executive director Ara Barsam and bid farewell to retiring executive director Jeanmarie Papelian and support ATP's work toward a greener Armenia. Thursday, 6 to 8 p.m. Food and drinks, photo exhibition. Sheraton Commander Hotel, 16 Garden St., Cambridge. Valet parking is available. Registration required by October 6. 617-926-8733.

OCTOBER 24 — 20th Anniversary Celebration of Father Khachatur Kesabyan'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 25 — FallFest at first Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont, noon to 7 pm. All the kebabs, plus homemade pastries, string cheese, and eetch.

OCTOBER 25-26 — Save the dates! First Anniversary Celebration of Holy Archangels Armenian Church Sanctuary Consecration presided by Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan. Saturday, October 25, at 4 p.m.: Worship and acknowledg-

ment of Godfathers of the Church; 5 p.m. Mezza and Wine Reception.

Sunday, October 26, 10 a.m.: Holy Badarak; 2 p.m. Banquet & Program including St. Vartan Award Recipients. Ordinations throughout the weekend **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 7 — Showing of "There Was, There Was Not" documentary, Friday at 7 p.m. West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington Street, West Newton. Following the screening, filmmaker Emily Mkrtchian will join a Q&A discussion moderated by Paul Boghosian, President of Harbor Side Films. Reception hosted by anoush'ella follows. For tickets: \$20/person, westnewtoncineme.org

NOVEMBER 9 — GIVING THANKS: COMING TOGETHER. ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY, Boston. 2pm. View the new Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture. Meet & Greet. Cider & Sweets. 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. (Individual Tickets will commence at a later date). For more info visit: <https://amaa.org/hyeminds-boston2025/>

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.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 18 — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents "GALA KEF Dinner Dance" dedicated to 30th Anniversary of Cultural Committee featuring Ken Kalajian - guitar, Charles Kalajian - percussions, Leon Janikian - clarinet, Harry Bedrossian - oud & vocal. Egavian Cultural Center - 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, 6 - 7 pm Cocktail Hour, 7 pm - Dinner, 8 pm - 11 Band. General Admission : \$60 (\$75 after October 12) Call for tickets: Zara Vartanian: 401-439-5971, Elvira Hovagimian: 860-462-3610.

NOVEMBER 1 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church presents a "Spiritual Music Festival", dedicated to the memory of Maestro Khoren Mekhanejian featuring the Choirs & Soloists of Rhode Island Orthodox Churches. Special guests: Hasmik Mekhanejian, mezzo-soprano (NY), Anahit Zakarian, soprano (NY). In the Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church at 3 p.m. 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Donations Gratefully Appreciated. Refreshments will be served

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.

Documentary 'There Was, There Was Not' to Be Screened at West Newton Cinema

WEST NEWTON, Mass. — The West Newton Cinema Foundation will present a special screening of the internationally acclaimed documentary "There Was, There Was Not," on Friday, November 7, at 7 p.m., at the West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington St.

Following the screening, the film's writer and director Emily Mkrtchian will participate in the Director's Spotlight, a program of the West Newton Cinema Foundation. The question-and-answer discussion will be moderated by Paul Boghosian, President of Harbor Side Films. The film company produces documentaries (PBS), pub-

lic affairs programming as well as major television and cable and streaming projects for networks and private clients. Presently in development is an adaption of Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet, Peter Balakian's memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*.

A reception follows the Q&A, hosted by anoush'ella.

For tickets, \$20/person are available at westnewtoncinema.com

In 2018, Mkrtchian initially set out to make a film about the daily lives and hopes of women in Artsakh, an autonomous, disputed ethnically Armenian territory between Azerbaijan and Armenia with an

enduring legacy of conflict. She followed a minesweeper, an aspiring politician, a women's rights activist, and a judo champion as they navigated a precarious peace while building their lives and communities. In 2020, when Azerbaijan launched a surprise attack and war broke out again, Mkrtchian continued filming as shelling began around her, witnessing her subjects' worlds and dreams immediately transform. The documentary evolved from an observational meditation on strength into an urgent portrayal of survival, capturing the personal and cultural impacts of a homeland at risk of loss, and the power of story

to keep it alive.

Filmmaker Atom Egoyan praised the film as "a deeply felt and beautifully made film."

The documentary has toured festivals worldwide following its world premiere at True/False Film Festival, winning multiple awards, including the Audience Award and First Honorable Mention Jury Award at Argentina's Mar del Plata International Film Festival and the FIPRESCI International Film Critics' Award at the Golden Apricot Film Festival.

Tickets are available at [https://www.westnewtoncinema.com/movie/there-was-there-was-not](http://www.westnewtoncinema.com/movie/there-was-there-was-not)



COMMENTARY

**THE ARMENIAN
MIRROR
SPECTATOR**
SINCE 1932


An ADL Publication

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ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

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Armenia and Azerbaijan at the UN: Two Different Approaches

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Many formal and informal meetings between heads of state, high-level officials as well as civil society took place as part of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly between September 22-30. This is an event which stands out with the speeches delivered by the heads of states, foreign ministers and other top officials. It is crucial for the international political arena as it showcases each country's political, strategic, economic achievements and priorities, foreign policy goals and in general how the country positions itself in the world, hence making it one of the top events for the international community to observe and draw conclusions from.

Armenia is not an exception.

As a common practice, each year Armenia's head of state presents to the world the country's achievements and strategic goals and sends its message from the UN podium. However, this time

the Armenian prime minister travelled to UN later, missing this opportunity for high-level engagements, such as the official reception by US President Trump and his wife. Instead, PM Nikol Pashinyan attended the conference "World Atomic Week" in Moscow discussing small modular reactors with Russian counterparts, although not long ago a memorandum of understanding was signed with the US to cooperate in this area.

Pashinyan visited the United States of America on September 26-27. This year the key takeaway from Pashinyan's UN speech was about peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia's PM used the word "peace" in his speech 26 times, emphasizing "I am pleased to report to the entire international community that peace has been established between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan." Specifically, he mentioned the first bilateral international document between the two countries that has undergone full ratification. Most importantly these efforts will ensure an unobstructed link between mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory. According to him, Armenia will also benefit from international and domestic transport links. Pashinyan once again credited US President Trump for playing a key role in achieving peace, mentioning that Armenia and Azerbaijan have jointly agreed to nominate Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. However, Armenia's PM was not happy with the Azerbaijani president's claims of Armenia's "capitulation," saying that it's "inconsistent with the reality of peaceful agreements and undermines positive progress." Pashinyan was also against the use of the term so-called "Zangezur Corridor," which in Armenian reality "is perceived as a territorial claim from Armenia and is associated with conflict discourse." According to Pashinyan, this term was mentioned several times by the Azerbaijani president even after the adoption of the Washington Declaration, although such a term has never been included in the documents agreed upon in Washington.

It is worth stressing that Pashinyan missed the official reception held in New York on behalf of President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump in connection with the UN General Assembly session whereas Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva attended the meeting. By not attending, Armenia's prime minister missed out on the chance of taking part in discussions related to Armenia and Azerbaijan. Aliyev was the only participant in such a discussion with Trump, expressing Azerbaijan's side of the issue and deepening his personal relations with the US president.

In their interaction Trump even called Aliyev "my friend." He asked Aliyev how the peace was "working out? Good? No shooting? No nothing?" Aliyev in response said, "Everything is finished on August 8." He once again thanked Trump, indicating that he "did a miracle." It is apparent that Aliyev is working on

establishing not only strong formal ties but also a personal rapport with Donald Trump and is succeeding in that.

Even earlier, on August 8, during the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a strategic working group to prepare a charter on strategic partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United States of America, President Trump stated that he was flattered that even before their victory in the elections, Aliyev "had been saying nice things" about him. During that meeting, Trump presented Aliyev with the symbolic key to the White House, which he stated he "does not present very often."

In contrast, the current Armenian authorities seem to have better working relationships with Democratic administrations rather than Republicans. So, it might demand extra efforts from them to keep up with Azerbaijan in terms of relationship-building with Trump and the top members of the Republican Party.

In Aliyev's speech at the General Assembly, delivered earlier than Pashinyan's, he used rhetoric which does not really align with the "peace agenda."

For one thing, Aliyev spoke of Armenia's capitulation, stating Azerbaijan "won, both in war and in peace," whereas Azerbaijan's aggression against Armenia was referred to as self-defense. Aliyev once again expressed his satisfaction at the end of the OSCE Minsk Group, which he called "an obsolete and no longer relevant to the peace process." At the same time, the Azerbaijani president talked of permanent removal of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. In reality, the section is in force but has been waived, just as before. Next year, another waiver will be needed.

While Aliyev used the UN platform to aggressively promote Azerbaijan's narrative on the conflict, Pashinyan opted to pursue strategic energy diplomacy in Moscow. Pashinyan travelled to Moscow, when the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly was pending. Most probably that is why he could not attend the official reception held in New York on behalf of President of the United States Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump. In Moscow Pashinyan attended the conference "World Atomic Week." This followed Pashinyan's statement that Armenia had decided to extend the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant operations until 2036 and is cooperating with Russian Rosatom and other international partners. The Armenian PM again stressed interest in small modular reactors, and mentioned there is a dialogue in this area also with the Russian Federation and Rosatom Corporation.

This issue was discussed earlier with the United States, and just one month before, Armenia had signed a memorandum of understanding with the US on Energy Security Partnership, which also includes cooperation in small modular reactor technologies. The desire to pursue the same partnership with the US's opponent may be viewed as a suspicious political move.

On balance, the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly showed not only the different approaches of the two countries' key strategies but also the growing disparity of their political standing, weight and influence in the world. While President Aliyev used the UN platform and bilateral meetings with the world's top officials to strengthen Azerbaijani ties and push Azerbaijani narrative with influential leaders and the world, Prime Minister Pashinyan chose to focus on energy cooperation with Russia at the expense of high-level diplomatic engagements in New York.

(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.)





COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

US Government Is More Pro-Artsakh Than the Prime Minister of Armenia

Just when we had lost all hope that the United States government would ever say or do anything to support Artsakh, we were pleasantly surprised to see a letter by a high-ranking State Department official who stated all the right things in defense of Artsakh.

The letter, dated Sept. 25, 2025, was written by Paul D. Guaglianone, Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, U.S. State Department. Naturally, we should not confuse words with action, but this is a great start. We need to follow up with our friends in Congress to ensure that the United States government carries out its pledges on Artsakh.

In its letter, the State Department made three important commitments:

1) "The Trump Administration is committed to encouraging both governments [Armenia and Azerbaijan] to provide for the return of ethnic Armenians to Nagorno-Karabakh in the context of a sustainable peace."

2) "We are closely monitoring the trials of detained ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan, and officials at the U.S. Embassy in Baku attend legal proceedings whenever possible."

3) "Finally, we continue to call on the Azerbaijani government to protect Armenian heritage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh."

These three sentences cover the core Armenian demands for Artsakh. The U.S. government has never made such pledges before. We hope they will be implemented, and not remain mere words on a piece of paper.

We must realize that the State Dept.'s letter did not materialize out of thin air. It is the result of persistent lobbying by the Armenian-American community. Over the past several months, Armenian-American advocates and supporters sent more than 100,000 emails and phone calls through the Armenian National Committee of America's (ANCA) national, regional, and local platforms, urging Members of Congress to co-sign the letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Eighty-seven Members of Congress co-signed the letter which was sent to Rubio on July 23, 2025, asking the U.S. government to support the return of forcibly-displaced Armenians to Artsakh, secure the release of illegally-held Armenian prisoners in Baku, and protect Armenian religious and cultural sites in Artsakh.

The congressional letter reminded the Secretary of State of the provisional order of the International Court of Justice in December 2023 compelling Azerbaijan to allow the return of Armenians to Artsakh.

How could it be that the U.S. government cares more about the rights of Artsakh Armenians than Nikol Pashinyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia? After boldly proclaiming in 2019 that "Artsakh is Armenia, period," Pashinyan did the exact opposite by acknowledging that Artsakh belongs to Azerbaijan. To make matters worse, Pashinyan told the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe last week: "I consider the topic of the return of [Artsakh] refugees in this context to be dangerous for the peace process." Instead, he urged Artsakh Armenians to "settle down in the Republic of Armenia." He then added: "Armenia and Azerbaijan must leave each other alone, focus on economic cooperation, and gradually build a dialogue."

Pashinyan has not only abandoned Artsakh Armenians' right of return, but has also ignored the plight of Armenians imprisoned in Baku, fearing that should they be released and return to Yerevan, they could challenge his rule.

The latest indication of Pashinyan's inaction to secure the release of the Armenian prisoners is his awkward interaction with Pres. Donald Trump at the White House on August 8. When Trump asked him if he would "want those Christians released," Pashinyan shamefully asked Trump not to include a reference to the Artsakh prisoners in the Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by himself, Pres. Aliyev, and Pres. Trump. Amazingly, Trump then volunteered to help secure the prisoners' release by telling Pashinyan: "I'll call Aliyev. He'll do it as a favor to me." Trump then added: "if anything goes wrong, just call me directly. I'll fix it."

Two months later, Pashinyan has shown no interest in reminding Trump about his promise to call Aliyev. When an Armenian reporter recently asked him if he has Trump's "whatsapp number," Pashinyan gave an evasive answer by saying, "I cannot disclose the list of my whatsapp numbers."

The only sour note in the State Department's otherwise welcome letter of Sept. 25 is its usage of the term "corridor," a word favored by Azerbaijan, to describe the planned road linking Azerbaijan's mainland with its exclave of Nakhichevan through Armenia. Trump also wrongly used the term "corridor" twice during the White House meeting. In addition, since August 8, Trump has mistakenly said several times that he has solved the conflict between Albania (instead of Armenia) and Azerbaijan, and has also confused Azerbaijan with Cambodia.

Regrettably, neither the letter signed by 87 Members of Congress nor the reply from the State Dept. mentioned the important fact that Azeri troops have been occupying a portion of the territory of the Republic of Armenia since 2021 with no intention of leaving anytime soon. Pashinyan, despite his constitutional responsibility to protect Armenia's borders, has ignored the foreign occupation of the Republic's territory, and when asked what he intends to do to liberate it, his answer has been, "nothing."

How can a peace treaty be signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan while the enemy is occupying Armenia's territory?

The Christian Republic of Armenia: An Alternative Model for the Development of Armenian Statehood

By Arsen Gasparian

In the aftermath of the disasters of 2020 and 2023, as Armenia searches for stable models of governance, the nation finds itself at a critical crossroads. More than ever, Armenian political thought is in dire need of alternatives and constructive discourse. The value system shaped over centuries, along with our national memory and spiritual heritage, have to be transformed not only into cultural pillars but into the very foundation of governance. This article proposes an alternative model of statehood, grounded in Christian moral principles, communal responsibility, and a unifying national vision aimed at overcoming political and economic crises.

This model represents an innovative synthesis of tradition and contemporary governance. Christianity, as an inseparable part of national identity, is harmoniously integrated into the constitutional framework – laying the groundwork for an order that prioritizes spiritual values, ensures continuity in education and culture and revalues the vital connections between the Diaspora and Armenia.

Official Name of the State:

The Christian Republic of Armenia

The new [proposed] constitutional order recognizes the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as the state church. The Church shall not only be protected and supported by the state but will also bear a nationwide responsibility to shape the public agenda, to reinforce national memory, and to serve as a symbol of collective responsibility.

The Constitution does not mandate a complete separation between Church and State; the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church holds a constitutionally privileged status.

In European Union member states such as Denmark and Malta, churches also maintain a similar status. In Iceland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church is officially recognized as the national church. Until recently, the Church of Norway was also a state church, a status that was partially revised in 2012 to grant the Church more autonomy. In democratic Costa Rica, Roman Catholicism is the official

state religion. The Greek Orthodox Church is a prevailing religious institution in Greece supported by the state.

However, these models do not disregard civil liberties. The Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religion. No one shall be compelled to adhere to any religious doctrine. In day-to-day governance and public life, Armenia shall remain secular, just as in the aforementioned states.

Regardless of whether Armenia adopts a presidential or parliamentary system under the new constitution, it is proposed that the political system be restructured based on strengthening party accountability and limiting the number of political parties to a maximum of five. All political parties must be consolidated into two main currents - liberal and conservative. The three historical parties, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (socialists), Ramgavar (democrat-liberals), and Hunchakian (social-democrats) shall operate through the headquarters based in Armenia. In addition to constitutional provisions, this should also be regulated by a new law on political parties in Armenia.

To raise the level of expertise in the National Assembly, it will be mandated that at least 60 percent of members of the parliament must be lawyers with a minimum of ten years of professional experience. The goal is to enhance the legal competence of the legislative body and improve the culture of drafting and adopting laws.

As a symbol of close collaboration between the clergy and state governance, the Constitution shall designate ten archbishops and bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as members of parliament – not through election but by Constitutional order.

Given Armenia's limited human capital and resources, the Constitution must revisit the framework for Diaspora involvement. Diasporan Armenian professionals should be allowed to participate in Armenia's legislative, executive, and judicial branches - serving as vital links of pan-Armenian intellect and capabilities.

Finally, one of the core pillars of the new model is the

strengthening of checks and balances to eliminate the dominance of any one branch of power. This will ensure a balanced and trustworthy political system, founded on accountability and responsibility.

This is the only model capable of enabling the collaborative work of the State, the Church, and the Diaspora for the stable development of Armenia and the Armenian people. When these three pillars are united by a shared worldview, they can pool their unique resources and experiences to confront the challenges facing Armenia. The State provides governance and strategy; the Church offers moral guidance, unity, and love for the people; the Diaspora brings global network and innovation. In the current situation, only this trinity can safeguard Armenia's sovereignty, preserve the national heritage, restore and strengthen state institutions, develop education and science, and promote economic growth.

We are far stronger than we believe. We have forgotten that we possess a great force, both in our personal and national life. I mean our spiritual endurance.

It is enough to look back across the millennia of Armenian history and ask: how did we overcome such tragedies, losses, threats, trials, genocide, earthquakes, wars, and humiliations? What tremendous resilience we showed – the persistence not to despair, the art of survival, of rebuilding upon ruins, of rising from the ashes... And if we have lost our spiritual endurance, then we must find it again and restore it within ourselves, otherwise Armenian will fail.

(Dr. Arsen Gasparian holds a PhD in political science from University of Miami. From 1993 till 1999 he was a member of the Armenian official delegation to the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. He also served as a Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister of Armenia. Since 2014, Dr. Gasparian has been teaching in Miami Dade College and American University of Armenia. He is chairman of Ex Oriente, the Union of Armenian Orientalists.)

National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia Delights Boston Audience

CONCERT, from page 1

pieces. This was the first time this orchestra, founded in 1996, ever performed in Boston.

Armine Manukyan, a board member of Amaras Art Alliance and the principal of Erebuni Armenian Saturday School of Belmont, served as the master of ceremonies and introduced the various pieces, many of which were newly arranged. The first half of the program consisted largely of popular Armenian pieces by Komitas, an Aram Khachaturian medley, a Tigran Mansuri-



Armine Manukyan (photo Aram Arkun)

an medley of soundtracks, several Robert Amirkhanyan pieces, Vagharshak Kotoyan's Im Yerevan [My Yerevan], and, in the presence of the composer, Konstantin Petrossian's Hayastan.

The second half of the program, after intermission, was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Charles Aznavour's birth, with the performance of many Aznavour favorites.



The National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia in Watertown (photo Aram Arkun)



Composer Konstantin Petrossian, standing at left, receives recognition on the stage with Sipan Olah (photo Aram Arkun)



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