

# Supreme Spiritual Council Condemns ‘Illegal Pressure’ on Church, Clergy

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The Supreme Spiritual Council of the Armenian Apostolic Church has condemned what it described as “illegal pressures” and “unlawful persecution” targeting the Church and its clergy, according to a statement issued by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

The Council met from November 4 to 7 at the Mother See in Etchmiadzin under the presidency of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. The sessions were chaired by Archbishop Arshak Khachatryan, Chancellor of the Mother See.

In its official statement, the Council “strongly condemned the blatant illegal infringements and pressures against the rights of the Church and clergy.” It said that the criminal charges and arrests of clerics “are based on unlawful evidence and contradict international standards of fair trial and restriction of personal freedom.”

The Council called on law enforcement authorities “to stop the illegal

criminal proceedings and to release the detained clergymen and civilians in the name of justice.”

The statement reflects months of growing tensions between the Church and the State, accompanied by arrests and prosecutions of a number of senior clerics on various charges, including two archbishops and one bishop.

see PRESSURE, page 2



A meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council was held in Etchmiadzin under the leadership of Catholicos Karekin II. November 7, 2025



## Montreal’s Abaka Newspaper Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

MONTREAL — The golden anniversary of the trilingual *Abaka*, the first Armenian newspaper founded in Canada, was celebrated on Sunday, November 1, in the Centre Arménie of Laval, a suburb of Montreal, with over 300 guests. The event was held under the aegis of the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Canada Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan and the patronage of Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Canada Anahit Harutyunyan and featured a popular star from Yerevan, singer Sophie Mkheyan.



Dr. Arshavir Gundjian

The evening was a successful fundraiser for the newspaper, which is supported by many individual donors as well as the Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board and the Armenian General Benevolent Union Central Board. After the dinner service, the master of ceremonies, Salpi Haladjian Margossian, welcomed guests and invited Avedis Bakkalian, editor of *Abaka*, to speak on the role of the Armenian press, and in particular that of *Abaka*, for the Armenian community.

Margossian then called to the podium Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, the president of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, and one of the main founders of *Abaka*, to speak. He highlighted the great contribution of the group of dedicated people

See ABAKA, page 10



Editor Avedis Bakkalian

# Armenian PM Says Documents on Karabakh Talks to Be Published By Year-End

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, November 10, announced that documents related to negotiations over the Nagorno-Karabakh issue will be made public before the end of the year, responding to criticism from his predecessors over his handling of the talks and the 2020 war with Azerbaijan.

In separate interviews over the week-

end, former Presidents Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan again accused Pashinyan of rejecting a viable peace plan and derailing internationally mediated talks with Azerbaijan. They claimed this was one of the major factors that led to the 2020 war, in which the Armenian side suffered a defeat.

The two former leaders also alleged that, after coming to power through mass

street protests in 2018, Pashinyan mishandled army affairs and relations with Armenia’s allies, notably Russia. Both said the 44-day war could have been stopped earlier, which, they argued, would have put Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in a much better position vis-à-vis Azerbaijan.

In a Facebook post on November 10, Pashinyan said the remarks by Kocharyan and Sargsyan “once again confirm that the Karabakh issue was used by certain forces as a rope to tie the Republic of Armenia to the ‘nearest tree.’”

“The rights of peoples, historical justice, and similar concepts were merely a smokescreen for the real objective,” he wrote.

According to the prime minister, all the proposals presented as efforts to “stop the war” were in fact aimed at tightening the leash. “The ultimate goal of this process of tightening the leash was to end Armenian statehood,” he said. “In that scenario, the Karabakh conflict was meant to conclude only with the loss of Armenia’s statehood. Thanks to the sacrifice of our martyrs and the historical intuition of our people in Armenia and Karabakh, the Republic of Armenia managed to escape that scenario.”

see DOCUMENTS, page 3

## Paul Ignatius, 104, Former US Navy Secretary, Armenian-American Icon, Dies

WASHINGTON — Paul Robert Ignatius, an Armenian-American icon, died on November 6 at age 104.

Ignatius was born in Glendale, California, on November 11, 1920. His maternal grandfather, Avedis Jamgochian, a native of Agn (Egin) in the Kharpert region and an early graduate of Euphrates (Yeprad) College in Kharpert, settled in

see IGNATIUS, page 9



Paul R. Ignatius at NAASR in 2013

### CONNECTICUT

Tucker Carlson Amplifies Claims of Pashinyan’s ‘War On Christianity’



### BOSTON

Boston University and HENAR Kick Off Medical Education Workshops



### BOOKS

Children’s Book Shares Family’s Flight from Aintab to Aleppo







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Sargsyan Says More Died During Shushi's Fall Than Liberation

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said on November 7 that Armenia suffered far greater casualties during the loss of Shushi, a fortress town in Artsakh, in 2020 than during its liberation in 1992.

Speaking on the Imnemnimi podcast, Sargsyan recalled that before Shushi's liberation, Azerbaijani forces had attacked the nearby village of Karin Tak, where fierce fighting caused casualties on both sides.

He emphasized that retaking Shushi in 1992 was the only option available at the time, as Azerbaijani troops were shelling Stepanakert daily with hundreds of rockets. The initial assault failed after Armenian armor was destroyed by enemy tanks, but the following day Armenian forces launched a coordinated attack from two directions, eventually forcing Azerbaijani units to retreat after intense shelling.

Sargsyan stated that during the 2020 war, Armenian losses were significantly higher, adding that by the night of November 5, Azerbaijani troops had already captured half the town.

### MP Says Referendum Required for Any Territorial Exchange

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Sargis Khandanyan, an MP from the Civil Contract, stated during a parliamentary briefing on November 10 that the issue of enclaves between Armenia and Azerbaijan must be addressed within the border demarcation process.

He emphasized that any talk of a territorial exchange is premature as demarcation of enclaves must take place first, and there's currently no timeline for that.

"The demarcation process must continue. At some point — be it in the middle or at the end — the issue of enclaves must be addressed. Once all protocols of the demarcation process are confirmed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, a state border agreement must be signed and ratified. Only then will the two sides decide how to deal with the enclave issue," Khandanyan explained, as reported by 1lurer.am.

He also stressed that land exchange cannot happen without a referendum.

Khandanyan recalled that the most recent Armenian-Azerbaijani border demarcation commission meeting took place in September, based on agreements reached on the TRIPP initiative.

Previously, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated that as a result of demarcation and delimitation, Armenia would regain Artsvashen and other Armenian territories under occupation. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry reiterated its focus on reclaiming Tigranashen and three enclaves in Tavush.

# Kocharyan: Best Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Deal Would Include Russia, US, China as Guarantors

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan claims that the most effective peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan would include Russia, the United States and China as guarantors.

In an interview with the 5th Channel aired late Sunday, November 9, Kocharyan argued that Yerevan's policies have effectively pushed Russia out of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). He recalled that Russian President Vladimir Putin was a co-signatory of the November 9 ceasefire agreement and bore responsibility for its implementation.

Kocharyan criticized the current Armenian leadership for abandoning the terms of that agreement, pointing to the 2022 Prague statement signed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan recognizing Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Artsakh.

"After the statement, what role could Russia have in relations with Azerbaijan? Armenia's statement nullified Russia's mediating mission. The Prague statement inevitably led to the loss of Karabakh," he stated.

Addressing the Washington-mediated peace talks, Kocharyan said the ideal outcome would include guarantees from the three major powers.

"It's always possible to make proposals that build upon what has already been done, not deny it. For ten years, we pursued a complementary foreign policy and maintained good relations with Russia, the US and Europe," he said. "Each of these coun-

tries has its own sensitivities, we just avoided pressing those 'corns' and worked where their interests overlapped."

Turning to domestic politics, the former president argued that the government's per-

no territorial concessions."

Former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan claimed that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan rejected a Russian proposal to halt the 2020 Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) war on October 18-19 despite being fully aware that defeat was imminent.

In an interview with the 5th Channel aired on Sunday, Kocharyan said the Armenian army's General Staff had reported that it lacked the resources to continue fighting, yet Pashinyan chose to press on "so that no one would call him a traitor".

"That decision cost the Armenian people at least 2,500 more deaths and 5,000-6,000 wounded. Is that what a leader does?" he asked.

Kocharyan stressed that from the third day of the war he realized defeat was inevitable and repeatedly urged Karabakh leaders to seek an end to hostilities.

The ex-president also criticized Pashinyan's leadership and military appointments, saying key command positions were filled with loyal but inexperienced officers, leading to poor coordination and supply failures during the 44-day war.



Former President Robert Kocharyan

sistent focus on a peace agenda underscores its lack of tangible achievements. "They've centered their rhetoric on peace because they have nothing else to show," he said, adding that the authorities have failed to deliver on their 2021 campaign promises.

Kocharyan also accused Pashinyan of hypocrisy for portraying himself as a peacemaker. "He's the man who brought the most terrible war to Armenia with the highest number of casualties and now he is posing as a dove of peace," he said. "The most peaceful years in Armenia were during my presidency as we had the fewest losses and

# Armenia Sees Rapid Growth in Solar Power

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — In recent years, the field of solar energy in Armenia has developed rapidly. Solar power plants with a total installed capacity of 1,045 megawatts are already connected to Armenia's power system, exceeding the target set by the national strategy. This progress has been facilitated by state policies implemented in various directions and the programs derived from them.

Ahead of World Energy Saving Day, Hovhannes Abrahamyan, Head of the Energy Regional Markets Department of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia, said at a press conference that the number of solar power plants in the country has increased significantly. He emphasized that this primarily concerns autonomous plants installed by citizens for their own needs.

"The state has been implementing a subsidy program for several years now, under which citizens who purchase solar power plants through loans receive an interest rate

subsidy. Moreover, the amount of this subsidy is higher in the regions, especially in border areas, than in Yerevan. In border areas, the subsidy rate is 14 percent, in Yerevan 9 percent, in other urban areas 11 percent, and in rural communities 12 percent," said Hovhannes Abrahamyan.

In 2022, the program was launched with the state allocating 40 million drams in its first year. In the following years, demand grew so significantly that in the most recent year, the funding reached into the billions of drams.

Since the purchase of solar power plants is carried out through loan programs, the government will continue allocating financial resources for another seven years to cover interest payments.

Throughout the duration of the program, more than 34,000 beneficiaries have been registered. Residents of the Ararat, Kotayk, Armavir, and Gegharkunik provinces, as well as Yerevan, have been particularly active participants.

Abrahamyan noted that the program was halted this summer. The possibility of continuing it in a different format is currently being considered. In particular, at this stage, the significant increase in solar power plants has created certain challenges for managing Armenia's energy system. However, as Abrahamyan emphasized, this does not mean that the development of the solar energy sector will come to a halt.

The government and the ministry are exploring alternative ways to further increase the share of solar power plants. According to the official, one of the main promising options is the establishment of energy storage facilities (batteries). At present, the government is working to regulate the legal framework for these facilities. Once the corresponding legislative framework is finalized, the details of the storage plant construction program will be clarified. The state also plans to promote the construction of solar power plants that include an energy storage component.

# Supreme Spiritual Council Condemns 'Illegal Pressure' on Church

PRESSURE, from page 1

Accusing Karekin II of violating his oath of celibacy by fathering a child, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly urged him to resign, calling for broader church reform. He and his political allies have warned that otherwise the Catholicos, whom they refer to by his lay name, Ktrich Nersisyan, will face a popular protest.

Pashinyan, who says he is campaigning for church reform as a faithful Christian rather than as prime minister, has attended sermons conducted by a priest who was defrocked by the Catholicos for supporting the government campaign.

Last Sunday, Armenian law enforcement authorities arrested the brother and nephew of Catholicos Karekin II on suspicion of obstructing an election campaign of a pro-government party in the Vagharshapat community, which includes Etchmiadzin. The community is set to hold a closely contested local ballot on November 16.

Critics of Pashinyan regard the arrests as part of what they describe as government pressure on Catholicos Karekin II to resign. They claim the premier is targeting the church "to please Azerbaijan and Turkey," which have consistently criticized the Armenian Apostolic Church and its supreme

leader for their stance on the rights of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and their former leaders currently jailed in Azerbaijan. Pashinyan and his allies have rejected the allegations.

In its statement, the Supreme Spiritual Council also emphasized the need for continued attention and coordinated action regarding the issue of Armenian captives in Baku. "The Church reaffirmed its readiness to continue its efforts, in cooperation with Sister Churches and international religious organizations, to contribute to the return of the prisoners and the implementation of legal mechanisms for the protection of human rights," the statement said.





ARMENIA

# Tucker Carlson Amplifies Claims of Pashinyan’s ‘War on Christianity’

Narek Karapetyan, the nephew of jailed Russian-Armenian tycoon Samvel Karapetyan, this week appeared on the talk show of influential US pundit Tucker Carlson to discuss his uncle’s criminal case and claims the Armenian government is cracking down on the Armenian Apostolic Church.

During the show, which was published on Sunday, November 9, Narek Karapetyan, Carlson, and Robert Amsterdam — Samvel Karapetyan’s lawyer — criticized the government of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and accused him of being ‘intent on destroying traditional Christianity or the church’.

Narek Karapetyan claimed that Pashinyan is trying to make Armenia ‘less Christian’, while Carlson, without citing any sources, alleged that Pashinyan is ‘focusing on transgenderism as a good thing [and the] LGBTQ agenda, whatever that is’.

Samvel Karapetyan, owner of the Russia-based Tashir Group conglomerate and one of Armenia’s wealthiest figures, was arrested in June on charges of inciting ‘public calls to seize power’ after publicly defending the Armenian Apostolic Church during a government dispute with the clergy.

From jail, he founded the Our Way (Mer Dzevov) political movement, which his nephew is also involved in. The movement is expected to field candidates to compete against Pashinyan and his ruling Civil Contract party in the 2026 parliamentary elections.

After his arrest, Samvel Karapetyan acquired Amsterdam and his law firm as legal counsel. Amsterdam and his law firm have taken on a variety of high-profile clients in human rights cases around the world, including Russian dissident Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Georgian businessperson Giorgi Bachiashvili, a former aide of Georgian Dream’s billionaire founder Bidzina Ivanishvili. Amsterdam has also represented the Turkish government, and more recently, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patri-



Narek Karapetyan (left), the nephew of jailed Russian-Armenian billionaire Samvel Karapetyan, and Tucker Carlson (photo social media)

archate (UOC-MP), which has been accused of maintaining links with the Russian Orthodox Church, an organization closely linked with the Kremlin.

It is unclear how much Amsterdam is being paid to represent Karapetyan.

Ahead of the show, there were unconfirmed rumors that Carlson had been paid \$400,000 to air the interview, which the Our Way movement has disputed.

OC Media has not been able to confirm the veracity of the claims.

### ‘Global War on Christianity’

Amsterdam had previously joined Carlson’s show to discuss his allegations that the Ukrainian government is persecuting the UOC-MP, claims he repeated during his most recent appearance. A video of the episode released by Carlson’s media outlet showed what were purported to be UOC-MP churches being burned by authorities linked to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyi, but were actually churches

struck by Russian shelling. Another one of the churches on fire in the video was a Ukrainian Greek Catholic church that caught fire in Canada in 2014.

Amsterdam linked his allegations about Ukraine and the UOC-MP — which have been vigorously denied by the Ukrainian government and other media outlets — to Pashinyan’s own dispute with the Armenian Apostolic Church. He also accused the US of allowing both the attacks on the UOC-MP and the Armenian Apostolic Church to continue, claiming the US State Department has “instrumentalized religion as a tool of foreign policy.”

Throughout the almost 1.5 hour show, Narek Karapetyan, Carlson, and Amsterdam cast both the current dispute between Pashinyan and the church and the wider conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan as being symptomatic of a global war against Christianity. Both Carlson and Karapetyan repeatedly implied the wars over Nagorno-Karabakh were about

Christian Armenia vs. Islamic Azerbaijan, rather than wars over territory and ethnicity, which most scholars about the region have agreed were the primary motivators.

Another narrative that Carlson focused on was Israeli support for Azerbaijan.

Following claims by Narek Karapetyan that Israeli drone operators were directly involved in combat against Armenian forces, Carlson said, “so that would mean that Israelis were killing Christians in this war with US tax dollars.”

“I just suppose from an American perspective it’s like, why are my tax dollars being used to murder Christians around the world,” Carlson said.

Breaking with the Republican Party that he has long been a member of and promoted, Carlson has repeatedly criticized Israel in recent years, including regularly referencing Israeli military supplies to Azerbaijan.

In a July 2025 interview with the prominent leftist commentator Ana Kasparian, Carlson used the same narrative, asserting that “Israel sold weapons to Azerbaijan to kill the Christians.”

The episode has been widely promoted by Armenian diaspora media, including the prominent lobbying group the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

Just two days after its release, the video racked up almost 400,000 views on YouTube alone.

(This article originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on November 10.)

## Armenian PM Says Documents On Karabakh Talks to Be Published By Year-End

DOCUMENTS, from page 1

The 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war over Nagorno-Karabakh, in which nearly 7,000 soldiers were killed on both sides, ended largely on Baku’s terms under a Moscow-brokered cease-fire on November 9, 2020. Azerbaijan regained much of the territory around Nagorno-Karabakh as well as parts of the mostly Armenian-populated region itself. Baku completed its seizure of the breakaway region in September 2023, forcing more than 100,000 Armenians — the entire local population — to flee to Armenia.

Kocharyan, Sargsyan, and the other former Armenian president, Levon Ter-Petrosian, have effectively rejected Pashinyan’s repeated invitations to take part in a live debate with him on the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations. Instead, they urged him to publish all documents related to the internationally mediated peace process, claiming that Pashinyan rejected a peace plan before the 2020 war that would have placed Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in a much better position if it had been accepted.

They also accused Pashinyan of turning down a Russian offer to halt the 2020 war earlier, which they said would have left Armenian forces in stronger positions and spared thousands of lives.

Pashinyan has rejected all the accusations. In his most recent Facebook post, the prime minister said the publication of the documents related to the negotiation process will make his arguments “more evident.”

# Armenian Government under Scrutiny over Secret Grants to Research Institute

Armenia’s government allocated more than 207 million drams (about \$515,000) in state funding to a Yerevan-based research institute through a secret mechanism over five years, along with a long-term free-use property grant in the capital, Factor.am reported this week, prompting questions over transparency and political favoritism.

The Ashot Hovhannisyan Institute for Humanities received annual grants from 2020 to 2025 under a government program for supporting civil society organizations. The decisions were classified at the time and declassified only in late October following media requests.

According to documents cited by CivilNet, the Cabinet justified secrecy by referring to “urgent needs to study sensitive issues” linked to the political environment after Armenia’s 2018 revolution and the 2020 war. The funds were issued without competition, despite budget rules stating that civil grants should be allocated via open tender.

The institute also received a 348-square-metre state-owned space in central Yerevan for 15 years free of charge, following a prime ministerial instruction in 2021. In response to CivilNet, the Prime Minister’s Office stated that secrecy was lifted because the research “has lost urgency” after the

Armenia-Azerbaijan agreement reached in Washington on 8 August.

The institute was co-founded by cultural historian Vardan Azatyan, who later became rector of the State Academy of Fine Arts and, in January 2025, a member of Armenia’s Public Council — a consultative body appointed by the government. In past publications, Azatyan praised the 2018 revolution, and in 2024 Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan referenced research conducted “with one of our partner organizations” widely understood to be the institute.

The institute also collaborated with Anna Hakobyan, the common law wife of Pashinyan, on a public education campaign in 2024.

Opposition figures and anti-corruption groups argue that the funding raises concerns over the use of state resources to support entities aligned with the ruling Civil Contract party. Transparency International Armenia said the bypassing of competitive procedures contradicts a 2003 government regulation on grants.

The government has not clarified why the projects were deemed sensitive nor specified which policy decisions relied on the research. The institute stated on the social media that all its work was public

and that the government alone possesses information on the secrecy rationale. It argued that its studies were aimed at “institution-building and transformation after the revolution”.

Civil society organizations have played a central role in Armenia’s post-2018 political landscape, and some critics say the government has developed a network of preferred partners, while other NGOs report barriers to accessing grants or engaging officials. The administration rejects claims of favoritism and says reforms are focused on transparency and accountability.

The Prime Minister’s Office stated that the decisions were declassified after geopolitical conditions changed.

The institute, founded in 2014, says it promotes research in the humanities and contributes to public debate. It did not specify how its work informed government policy, stating that only the government could answer such questions.

Armenia’s Prosecutor General’s Office has not commented on whether it sees grounds to review the funding decisions. CivilNet said it had submitted formal inquiries to both the government and prosecutors.

(This article originally appeared on the site [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on November 5.)





## ARMENIA

# Activists Seek Answers After Suspected ‘Honor Killing’ Of Chechen Woman In Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — More than three weeks after the murder of a young Chechen woman who had fled to Armenia to escape domestic violence, activists are demanding answers from Armenian law enforcement authorities, accusing them of stalling the investigation and allowing the suspects to leave the country.

Aishat Baymuradova, 23, was found dead in a rented apartment in the Armenian capital, Yerevan, on October 20, three days after she was reported missing. Human rights activists, who believe she was likely strangled, demand answers from Armenian authorities over what they describe as an apparent transnational “honor killing.” They suspect involvement of individuals linked to Chechen security structures.

Alipat Sultanbekova, a Russian activist who moved to Armenia to escape prosecution for allegedly discrediting the Russian army following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service that Baymuradova had met online with a woman later revealed to have ties to people close to Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. After meeting that woman and a man one evening, Baymuradova disappeared, she said.

Security camera footage reportedly captured several people entering the building, including a Chechen man who, according to unconfirmed reports, had previously been accused of financing the Islamic State militant group.

Sultanbekova said this is the first known case of a Chechen woman being killed abroad after fleeing domestic violence. “Usually, the relatives or Chechen security agents take such women back home, where they are killed later,” she said.

“In Chechnya, if a family member is seen as having brought shame on the family, they are killed in what’s called an ‘honor killing.’ The same happened to Aishat,” the activist said, adding that Baymuradova had fled after being separated from her child, who remained with the father in Chechnya.

## Suspected Links To Kadyrov Family

According to several reports cited by the BBC, Baymuradova had family ties to Ramzan Kadyrov, the powerful head of Russia’s Chechen Republic. She told friends her grandmother was a cousin of Kadyrov’s father, the late Chechen president Akhmad Kadyrov.

Independent Russian outlet Vazhniye Novosti reported that her father was a retired soldier and possibly a police operative, while her uncle works in the Chechen Interior Ministry.

Baymuradova was reportedly forced into marriage at 20 to a 29-year-old man she had met only a few times. Friends said she suffered physical abuse, was monitored by cameras inside her home, and was often locked indoors without access to her phone. The couple had one child.

## Investigation Stalled

Although Armenia’s Investigative Committee has opened a criminal case, no one has yet been charged or named as a suspect. Activists say there has been no formal search for the individuals identified in connection with Baymuradova’s disappearance.

Baymuradova’s friends, who shared the rented apartment with her, are key witnesses in the case. Ani Chatinian, legal coordinator of the Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor Office, which represents their interests, said the

tional search for the suspects.

“I want Armenians to know that a terrible crime has happened in your country,” she said during a rally in Yerevan’s central square on November 4. “A person was killed, and the perpetrators left without punishment. Foreigners like representatives of Chechen security services should not feel they can act here with impunity.”

Sultanbekova also criticized the lack of public response from Armenian officials. “Your leaders have made no



Aishat Baymuradova, a 23-year-old Chechen woman who had fled to Armenia to escape domestic violence, was found dead in a rented apartment in Yerevan, Armenia

information provided by the witnesses has almost fully clarified the crime.

“The case is 90 percent solved,” Chatinian told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “Delaying further will not lead to any good results.”

Armenian officials have not yet responded to the criticism.

Baymuradova’s body has not yet been buried and remains in Yerevan, according to RFE/RL’s Armenian Service sources.

## Activists Urge Armenian Authorities To Act

Foreign media outlets have published the names and photos of the woman and man who allegedly lured Baymuradova to the apartment. According to the Telegram channel Ostorozhno, Novosti, the man is believed to be the son of a well-known businessman from Grozny.

Sultanbekova called on Armenian authorities to ensure a transparent investigation and to announce an interna-

statement about this case. This is not only about Russians in Armenia — it’s about everyone’s safety,” she said.

## Wider Context

Baymuradova had not informed Armenian authorities or non-governmental organizations that she had fled Chechnya because of domestic violence or formally sought protection in Armenia.

Her case echoes that of Fatima Zurabova, another young woman who fled Ingushetia, also a Russian North Caucasus republic, to Armenia last year after domestic abuse. Zurabova’s relatives, including a senior police official, reportedly traveled to Yerevan to try to persuade her to return. According to information obtained by RFE/RL’s Armenian Service, the Ingush woman has since relocated to a third country.

Human rights groups say Chechen women fleeing domestic abuse are often tracked down and returned home, where many are later killed in so-called “honor crimes.”

# Russia Says Trilateral Agreements With Armenia, Azerbaijan ‘Still Valid’

MOSCOW (Azatutyun) — Russia’s Foreign Ministry said on Friday, November 7, that trilateral agreements signed with Armenia and Azerbaijan following the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war remain “valid and relevant,” emphasizing Moscow’s continued interest in the South Caucasus peace process.

The statement came ahead of the fifth anniversary of the November 2020 ceasefire agreement between the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, which ended six weeks of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh. The ministry recalled that Russia’s peacekeeping mission in the region — deployed after the ceasefire — operated until June 2024, “making an indispensable contribution to stabilizing the situation and ensuring security in the region, at the cost of our soldiers’ lives.”

Approximately 2,000 Russian troops were stationed in Nagorno-Karabakh, but their presence did not prevent Azerbaijan from regaining control of the region in September 2023. The offensive prompted

the mass exodus of the local Armenian population into Armenia.

Following Russia’s withdrawal, both Armenia and Azerbaijan shifted away from Moscow-led peace efforts, first turning to Western mediation and later engaging in direct talks. Those talks led to a landmark border delineation agreement in 2024, marking the demarcation of the first section of their shared border. The two sides pledged to continue the process.

In August 2025, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev witnessed their foreign ministers initial a peace agreement at the White House in Washington in the presence of US President Donald Trump. Trump also signed as a witness to an Armenian-Azerbaijani declaration committing Armenia to ensure “unimpeded connectivity” between mainland Azerbaijan and its Nakhichevan exclave through Armenian territory, with reciprocal benefits for Armenia. The United States is to oversee the project, dubbed

the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIIPP).

In its latest statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry highlighted several key documents derived from the 2020 ceasefire, including the decision of the January 11, 2021 Moscow summit initiated by Russian President Vladimir Putin to establish a Trilateral Working Group (TWG) tasked with unblocking regional economic and transport links. The ministry said the TWG “accomplished extensive work” in developing the legal and technical framework for transport routes between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The ministry also referred to 2021 and 2022 agreements regarding border delimitation and demarcation activities and drafting of a peace treaty between the two countries, calling these four top-level documents “a roadmap for the peace process.”

“The agreements remain valid and relevant. The important foundations built in the trilateral format are being actively

utilized by the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides, including in their direct dialogue,” the statement said, adding that Moscow welcomes the initialization in Washington in August of a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said that Baku and Yerevan “still have a lot to do to make the normalization of their bilateral relations irreversible.”

“This includes signing a peace treaty, restoring transport and economic links in the interests of all South Caucasus countries and their immediate neighbors, completing a fair process of border delimitation and demarcation, and establishing effective civil society contacts,” it said.

“Russia is ready to continue providing comprehensive assistance in all areas to its Azerbaijani and Armenian partners,” the statement concluded, noting that this includes cooperation within the 3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform involving Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Iran, and Turkey.





Azeri Propaganda Displayed on the Streets of Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON — Trucks bearing signs with Azerbaijani propaganda about the 2020 war and the conquest of Shushi in Artsakh were seen Friday evening, November 8 on the streets of Washington, D. C.

Azerbaijani and Georgian Electricity Export Project Takes Step Forward

A joint green-energy project involving Azerbaijan and Georgia has cleared an initial European hurdle, and its blueprint for exporting electricity from the Caspian Basin to the EU will now undergo a cost-benefit analysis.

The European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) opted to include the project, known as the Black Sea Green Energy Corridor, in a group of infrastructure projects under consideration within the framework of a Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP 2026). “Over the course of 2026, all projects in the TYNDP 2026 portfolio will have their benefits assessed,” read an ENTSO-E statement. The results of the cost-benefit analysis are expected to be published in late 2026.

The Black Sea Green Energy Corri-

dor, which partners Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Hungary, was conceived in 2022 with the four participating countries creating a holding company to manage the project. Concurrent with the EU regulatory approval process, consortium members have commissioned a feasibility study, the Azerbaijani government-connected outlet Caliber.az reported.

If it gets a green light, the project will involve laying a power transmission cable beneath the Black Sea connecting Azerbaijan and Georgia to Romania. The power line is projected to have an annual carrying capacity of up to 4 Gigawatts, most of which would be generated by renewable sources.

In the spring of 2025, the consortium members applied to the EU for the Green Energy Corridor to receive special status,

enabling an expedited regulatory approval process.

Azerbaijan envisions linking the Black Sea cable to a trans-Caspian power line that Baku is seeking to build in cooperation with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. If that plan comes to fruition, much of the electricity reaching the EU via the Black Sea cable stands to be generated by wind and solar farms in Central Asia.

ENTSO-E operates under an EU mandate. Its membership comprises 40 Transmission Systems Operators from 36 countries, aiming to ensure “the secure and coordinated operation of Europe’s electricity system – the world’s largest interconnected grid,” according to ENTSO-E’s website.

(This article originally appeared on [www.Eurasianet.org](http://www.Eurasianet.org) November 6.)



The Black Sea Green Energy Corridor. (Image: gov.az)

INTERNATIONAL

Foreign Minister Plans High-Level talks in Denmark

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN. Net) — Armenia’s Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan was in Denmark on a working visit from November 11 to 12, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

During the visit, Mirzoyan was scheduled to meet with Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. In addition, several other meetings and discussions are planned.

“The agenda includes issues related to the development of Armenia-Denmark bilateral relations, as well as the deepening of the Armenia-EU partnership, taking into account Denmark’s current presidency of the EU Council,” the official statement read.

Turkey Demands 2,000 Years in Jail for Mayor

ISTANBUL (BBC) — The prosecutor in Turkey’s biggest city has accused popular mayor Ekrem Imamoglu of 142 corruption offences that command jail terms ranging from 828 to 2,352 years, the BBC reported on November 11.

Imamoglu, considered the main political rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been in pre-trial custody since March on suspicion of corruption.

The Istanbul mayor and his opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) deny any wrongdoing and accuse the president and his allies of launching a crackdown in response to Erdogan’s decline in popularity.

However, the city’s chief prosecutor has targeted not just Imamoglu but 401 others, with allegations of running a criminal corruption network with the mayor as its “founder and leader.”

Pashinyan Meets EU Ambassadors

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with the ambassadors of EU member states accredited in Armenia, on November 11.

The head of the EU delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Vassilis Maragos, also took part in the meeting.

According to a readout from the Prime Minister’s Office, Pashinyan and the ambassadors discussed the current agenda of Armenia–European Union relations, the progress achieved in recent months, and prospects for further cooperation.

Views were exchanged on the situation in the region following the Peace Summit held in Washington on August 8, the resulting peace that has since been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the steps aimed at unblocking regional communication routes, including the TRIPP and Crossroads of Peace projects.

Pashinyan also responded to questions raised by the ambassadors.





## INTERNATIONAL

# AGBU President Sam Simonian Continues Global Tour with Visits to London, France, and Geneva

NEW YORK — In his fourth official visit to AGBU communities since assuming leadership, AGBU President Sam Simonian recently completed a multi-city tour of London, France, and Geneva, reaffirming the organization's commitment to its worldwide network. Over the course of the 10-day trip, he, together with his wife Sylvia and the 11-member delegation visited seven cities, engaging with local chapters, young professionals, and community leaders to discuss shared priorities, strengthen connections, and promote AGBU's mission.

The delegation included Council of Trustees member Elie Akilian and his wife Ela, Central Board Treasurer Nazareth Festekjian and his wife Nila, Central Board member and President of AGBU Europe Camilio Azzouz, Central Board member and Co-President of AGBU France Nadia Gortzounian, Co-President of AGBU France Stéphane Petrossian, Strategic Advisory Council member Nicholas Nazarian, Director of Chapters and Central Board Administration Natalie Gabrelian, AGBU France Executive Director Anouch Dzagoyan, and AGBU Europe Chapters and Young Professionals Relations Manager Simon Landré.

## London Visit

In a meeting with members of the AGBU London Trust and AGBU London chapter, the delegation was presented an overview of the local AGBU initiatives by AGBU Central Board Member and London Trust Chairman Arnaud Attamian, AGBU London Chair Nathalie Piranian, and Vice-Chair Loussiné Khatchadourian. A networking dinner followed with the current and next generation of local AGBU leaders.

Simonian and a subgroup of the delegation also took the opportunity to receive an

update on Armenia's relations in a private audience at the Armenian Embassy with H.E. Varuzhan Nersesyan, Armenia's Ambassador to the UK.

## Paris Visit

In Paris, the presidential delegation was joined by members of AGBU Central Board and Council of Trustees, who had traveled for the Central Board meeting weekend. They gathered at the AGBU Alex Manoogian Cultural Center for a cocktail reception celebrating the Center's 50th anniversary. The milestone event brought together volunteers, alumni, donors, former

teachers, and community leaders, highlighting the center's lasting impact on the cultural and educational life of the Armenian community in France. Notable guests included AGBU Honorary President Berge Setrakian and former President of AGBU France and former Central Board Member Dr. Édouard Attamian. Also, in attendance were former chair of the AGBU Paris chapter and former treasurer and vice chair of the AGBU District of France, Michel Sabbagh, and former vice chair of AGBU France and advisor of AGBU Europe Sona Attamian, architect of the AGBU Center and former Central Board Member Aris Atamian, along with other longstanding members of the AGBU France community.

During the reception, Simonian, Setrakian and Atamian unveiled a commemorative plaque marking the 50th anniversary of the Center, which was inaugurated in 1975 by His Holiness Vasken I of Blessed Memory, Catholicos of All Armenians.

In his welcome, AGBU France Co-President Stéphane Petrossian noted, "France holds a unique place in the Diaspora, and, in every corner of the country, AGBU is deeply rooted, with our chapters and our Young Professionals who embody the future."

Building on this thought, Honorary President Setrakian reflected on the importance of AGBU's longstanding presence and impact in the region and the foundation it provides for future success, before inviting President Simonian to offer his remarks.

During their visit, the larger delegation of the Central Board and Council of Trustees met with members of both the AGBU Paris Chapter and YP Paris. The YPs presented recent activities and upcoming initiatives aimed at strengthening the impact of Arme-

nian young professionals in Paris and beyond. Meetings continued with the France District Committee, where AGBU France Executive Director Anouch Dzagoyan provided an overview of regional projects and prospects for the future. The delegation also visited the AGBU France office and the historic Nubar Library, where Director Boris Adjemian led a guided tour.

## Nice, Marseille, Valence, and Lyon

The two-day visit to the local Armenian community in Nice allowed President Simonian and the delegation to pay tribute to the long-standing presence of AGBU in the



Simonian Touchpoints Tour: London, France and Geneva. Nice: The delegation with members of AGBU Nice and YP Nice.

region and commend the active engagement of the local youth in AGBU initiatives, particularly their remarkable dedication to service in Armenia through programs such as AGBU Armenians Come Together (ACT) and Arménie, Terre de Vie (ATDV). Alina Alman, chair of AGBU Nice/YP Nice remarked: "Our Nice chapter is determined to support the global AGBU initiatives and contribute, at our level, to this shared vi-

sion that unites the Diaspora and Armenia around a common hope."

The trip continued in the South of France, where the delegation met at the AGBU Cultural Center with the AGBU Marseille Chapter and YP Marseille. Discussions focused on AGBU community service programs in Armenia, as well as other local efforts directed toward Armenians and Armenia. "By working collectively, we will succeed in promoting and strengthening the Armenian identity," remarked AGBU Marseille Chair Aurore Bruna. The visit was capped by a welcome reception held at the Center which brought together AGBU members and supporters including the Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Marseille, Ara Mkrtchian.

The delegation continued to Valence, where they met with representatives of the AGBU Valence Chapter and YP Valence at the newly inaugurated AGBU Cultural Center, opened in June 2024.

A welcome reception brought together local entities, including AGBU Valence, YP Valence and AGBU Saint-Étienne Saint-Chamond committee members. Among the attendees were donors and AGBU leaders, Mayor of Valence Nicolas Daragon, and Fr. Antranik Maldjian. "Today, in our new premises in Valence—a place of sharing and friendship—we joyfully celebrate the visit of our president and his executive team, whose presence underscores the significance of this moment," welcomed AGBU Valence Chair Gregory Manoukian.

The last visit in the French itinerary was Lyon, which began with a meeting with AGBU France's longstanding partner Fondation Bullukian, led by its president, Jean-Pierre Claveranne. The delegation then gathered at the Alex Manoogian Cultural Center with representatives of the AGBU Lyon Chapter, YP Lyon and the AGBU Vienne Chapter to discuss community endeavors and priorities. Topics included AGBU Vienne's Saturday School

and AGBU Lyon's participation in the AGBU Internship Program organized in partnership with the French University of Armenia. A community cocktail reception followed, with the attendance of Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in Lyon Nariné Nikolyan, community members and local leaders. As AGBU Lyon Chapter Chair Tatev Setrakyan stated: "Here in Lyon, we made a promise to pro-

mote and transit our culture to everyone we can, to open doors, to build bridges, and to keep the flame alive."

## Geneva Visit

The final stop on the presidential tour was a two-day visit with members of AGBU Suisse, AGBU YP Geneva, and AGBU YP Zurich. A dinner, hosted by Central Board member and Chair of Fondation UGAB Vahé Gabrache and by Central Board member, AGBU Europe President and Secretary of Fondation UGAB Camilio Azzouz, was attended by esteemed members of the community, including Jean Altounian, Vice President of Fondation UGAB and Taline Avakian, Chair of AGBU Suisse.

The conversations touched upon the activities of the local AGBU communities. Committee chairs from the AGBU Suisse entities delivered introductory remarks, followed by inspiring words from H.E. Hasmik Tolmajian, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Swiss Confederation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva, as well as from Very Rev. Fr. Archimandrite Goo-san Aljanian.

The delegation also attended the "Concert de la Résilience," organized by AGBU Suisse and held at the historic Cathédrale Saint-Pierre.

When asked about his key takeaways from the tour, Simonian stated: "In every city, we witnessed AGBU communities working with passion and purpose to build a stronger future. Each city, each committee, and each individual plays a vital role in the continued success of our organization. These visits reaffirmed my belief that our greatest strength lies in our youth, members and volunteers. We must continue to focus on creating the best possible educational opportunities for our youth—they are the heart, the future, and the stewards of AGBU's legacy. By strengthening connections among them and building bridges with Armenia, we are shaping a more united and resilient global Armenian community."



Simonian Touchpoints Tour: London, France and Geneva. Valence: President Simonian with representatives of AGBU Valence and YP Valence at the newly inaugurated AGBU Cultural Center.





# Community News

## TUMO Center Opens in LA

LOS ANGELES — Through a collaboration between the State of California and Community Development Block Grant funds from the City of Los Angeles, TUMO LA is now open at 4146 Lankershim Blvd, North Hollywood, near the iconic Universal Studios.

The journey started back in February 2024 when TUMO broke ground with incredible local support. After months of hard work, we opened doors to LA teens on October 7, and celebrated our grand opening with a festive block party for the community and a special event for our dedicated stakeholders on October 18.

Councilmember Adrin Nazarian, U.S. Representative Luz Rivas, Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez, and LAUSD Board President Scott Schmerelson joined TUMO founders Sam and Sylva Simonian and CEO Marie Lou Papazian in welcoming the community to TUMO LA's new home in North Hollywood.

"What began as a dream to offer teens in Yerevan, Armenia free access to technology and creative ex-



TUMO founders Sam and Sylva Simonian and CEO Marie Lou Papazian (left)

pression has become a global movement," said TUMO Founder Sam Simonian. "Today more than 35,000 students participate every week across Armenia and in centers from Paris to Tokyo. We are proud to now bring TUMO's model to Los Angeles - empowering local teens to take charge of their own learning and prepare for the jobs of the future."

TUMO LA will serve 1,500 teens weekly, giving them a proven pathway into fields like filmmaking, music, animation, game development, 3D modeling, graphic design, programming, and robotics.

Like at every TUMO, learning is a personal adventure here. As students move between self-paced independent learning and expert-led workshops, each one follows a personalized learning path shaped entirely by their own goals and interests.

"In a time when access to opportunity depends so much on privilege, TUMO asserts its commitment to equity and excellence," said Councilmember Nazarian. "To every young person in Los Angeles, this space belongs to you."

TUMO LA marks becomes the 17th center in the organization's growing global network, joining locations in France, Germany, Portugal, Japan, Argentina, the Netherlands, Albania and Switzerland.



Master's in HPE candidate Dr. Suren Brutyan leading curriculum redesign workshop at YSMU

## Boston University and HENAR Kick off Medical Education Workshops

YEREVAN/BOSTON — On October 7-10, more than 150 Armenian doctors participated in the first of 20 medical education workshops conducted by six Masters' degree candidates in Health Professions Education (MHPE), a hybrid program offered by Boston University in collaboration with the HENAR Foundation. The program is designed to equip Armenian physicians, clinical educators, and healthcare professionals with contemporary competencies in leadership, teaching, research, and monitoring and evaluation skills.

The week-long Training-of-Trainer (ToT) workshops were conducted by six Masters' degree candidates in collaboration with BU instructors. The six Masters' students are mid-career physicians in Yerevan interested in advancing medical education in Armenia. MHPE classes started in September 2025, beginning an intensive one-year, 32-credit hybrid program offered for the first time by Boston University and its faculty. Lectures are delivered on-line three days a week by BU faculty.

Meanwhile, the Masters' students will continue conducting ToT workshops every two weeks with 20-30 participants each from their respective institutions, transforming their departments' residency curricula, teaching tools, and evaluation methods. BU faculty will return to Armenia in January and June 2026 to help conduct two other week-long ToT workshops—and then the program will be capped when the students travel to the USA in summer 2026 for six weeks of intensive training at clinics and health centers in the Boston area.

"We are officially launching the Training of Trainers course, which serves as a cornerstone of the Master's Degree Program in Health Professions Education," said Dr. Arman Voskerchyan, co-founder of the HENAR Foundation, highlighting the MHPE program as one of the key milestones in the development of healthcare education in Armenia. "Our goal has always been to be a driving force for change in the healthcare system. That is why we have designed this program as an evolutionary next step — one that unites the agendas of improving educational quality and enhancing healthcare services."

see WORKSHOPS, page 12



ToT participants at NIH

## Fund for Armenian Relief Appoints Kirk Hourdajian to Board of Directors

NEW YORK — The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), dedicated to improving the lives of Armenians through sustainable programs in education, healthcare, economic development, child protection and social services, this week announced the appointment of Kirk Hourdajian to its Board of Directors.

Hourdajian brings more than two decades of leadership experience in sustainability and investing in innovative technology companies. A longtime supporter of Armenian initiatives, he has been actively involved in philanthropic and business ventures that strengthen economic opportunity and preserve cultural heritage in Armenia and across the diaspora.



"We are thrilled to have him on board," said Randy Sapah-Gulian, FAR's chairman of the Board of Directors. "As FAR continues to evolve and amplify its good works for the Armenian people, it has become apparent that the development of technology programs and education in all its forms will become one of Armenia's most important initiatives. To that end, we welcome Kirk to FAR's board as his expertise in strategic growth within those technological markets will help us in driving forward the right kinds of results."

Hourdajian is an investor and operator focused on innovative companies at the intersection of climate, software and AI. For nearly two decades, he has demonstrated a passion for building and backing solutions that advance sustainability and has held leadership roles at Vista Equity Partners, PwC, TPG's Rise Fund and Montauk Capital. Hourdajian spent the early part of his career as a fuel cell engineer at United Technologies and with the Environmental Defense Fund.

Beyond his professional work, he serves as a Deacon at St. John's Armenian Church in San Francisco and sits on the board of Gyumri Information Technology Center (GITC) in Armenia. He also founded the West Coast Investors Climate Network, a community of more than 60 firms advancing climate and impact investing.

Hourdajian holds an MBA from MIT Sloan and a BS in Chemical Engineering from Columbia University.

"I've long admired FAR's ability to turn compassion into action," said Hourdajian. "The organization's deep roots in Armenia and its proven track record of implementing high-impact programs make it a model for how philanthropy and business can partner to create real, lasting change. I'm proud to contribute to that vision."

For more information, visit [www.farusa.org](http://www.farusa.org) or follow FAR on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Catholicos Aram I of Great House of Cilicia Visits UCLA

LOS ANGELES — On Tuesday, October 28, Aram I, Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia delivered an address at UCLA on “Saving Our Planet: A Top Global Priority.” The event was coordinated by The Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA and the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and hosted at the UCLA Fowler Museum.

Catholicos Aram I was joined by Archbishop Kegham Khatcherian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy of the United States, and other members of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The program was opened by Professor Ann Karagozian, director of the Promise Armenian Institute, followed by welcoming remarks from Vice Provost Cindy Fan, and introductions by His Eminence Archbishop Khatcherian. Both Provost Fan and Professor Karagozian remarked that this was His Holiness’ second visit to UCLA; the first was coordinated by the late Professor Richard Hovannisian in 2011.

Catholicos’ talk focused on global warming, which he classified as an existential problem affecting all aspects of human life. Looking at the planet Earth as the only home for humanity, the Catholicos approached climate change as fundamentally an ethical issue, an anthropocentric problem, deriving from humanity’s “uncontrollable and uncritical exploitation of the planet.”

He argued that as stewards of the creation, humans are responsible for guarding, protecting, and developing it and have been given, by the Creator, the right to use the resources of the creation for their own survival; however, he stressed that “a clear distinction must be made between need and greed.”

He highlighted four strategies for addressing or reducing the intensity of climate change: A growing shift from quantitative production to qualitative development; A growing shift from aggressive consumerism to a pattern of responsible living; A



Catholicos Aram I speaks at UCLA



Front row, seated, from left, Archbishop Kegham Khatcherian, Dr. Eric Esrailian and Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia, with Paul Krekorian standing at right.

growing shift from population explosion to family planning and a growing shift from energy-consuming projects to energy-saving programs.

He also acknowledged that global warming has been politicized by powerful governments concerned more about the economy instead of the environment and the future of humanity, as well as transnational corporations that prioritize productivity and profit over sustainability and the planet.

Concluding his remarks, the Catholicos emphasized that the future of the planet calls urgently for “[First] awareness building towards [our] God-given role of stewardship. Second, for building responsible communities which are committed to changing their lifestyle. Three, for governments, transnational organizations and institutions to consider with utmost seriousness the crucial urgency of [the] ecological crisis. Unfortunately, this is not the

case today. Indeed, global warming should become a global warning... for each of us. All of us have a role to play to save the planet.”

Following his remarks, Aram I answered questions posed by UCLA students and members of the community. The event concluded with a public reception during which members of the audience had the opportunity to further interact with the Catholicos.

The event was attended by Dr. Eric Esrailian, benefactor of the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute and chief of the Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Division of Digestive Diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Paul Krekorian, former member of the California State Assembly and former president of LA City Council, members of the late Professor Richard Hovannisian’s family, as well as other distinguished guests, UCLA faculty, students, staff and community members.

**STS. SAHAG AND MESROB  
ARMENIAN CHURCH  
70 JEFFERSON ST PROVIDENCE RI**

## Food Fair & BAZAAR

**NOVEMBER 15 & 16**

SATURDAY 12 PM - 7 PM

SUNDAY 12 PM - 5 PM

**Delicious Armenian Food  
& Pastries**

Lamb shish kebab, losh kebab, baked half chicken, kheyima, kufta, lahmajoon, boreg, yalanchi, choreg, cream khadaif, paklava, katah, kourabia, Armenian coffee and more!

**COME FOR LUNCH, DINNER, OR  
TAKE OUT**

**\$1000 Raffle**

Kids Activities, Nazeli Dance Group,  
Silent Auction and Vendors!

Telephone (617) 924-7400

## Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET  
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN  
PAUL BEDROSIAN  
LARRY BEDROSIAN

## Donation

The Weir Trust, based in Medford, Mass., donated \$25 to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator in memory of Merrit Agabian.

## Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

**John K. Najarian, Jr.**

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220  
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

**www.nardolillo.com**





## OBITUARY

# Paul Ignatius, 104, Former US Navy Secretary, Armenian-American Icon, Dies

IGNATIUS, from page 1

Glendale in 1911, and was thus one of the first Armenians to live there. His parents, Hovsep Ignatius, a rug salesman also from Kharpert, and Elisa Jamgochian, a pianist, married in 1919.

Ignatius was a 1938 graduate of Hoover High School in Glendale, then attended and graduated from the University of Southern California. During World War II he served as a naval officer. He was assigned to the aircraft carrier Manila Bay and was on the carrier when it was attacked in the Philippines by Japanese air and naval forces as part of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. After the war, he earned an MBA from Harvard University.

During his school years, he served as high school class president, acted in plays, and through his parents' friendship with famed director Rouben Mamoulian, made appearances in the films "Becky Sharp" (1935) and "High, Wide and Handsome"

continuing to focus on supply chains and preparing ports and bases from which to stage the war in Southeast Asia.

"At home, there was tension in the family as my children and my wife all thought the war was a bad idea," he said in a 2017 interview with AGBU, an English-language magazine published by the nonprofit Armenian General Benevolent Union. "They thought the policy of the United States at the time was wrong, and, while I disagreed, I am proud that my children were thinking for themselves. I had colleagues whose family relationships suffered, but we survived it."

He was tapped as secretary of the Navy in 1967 after the secretary-designee, John T. McNaughton, died in a plane crash. Ignatius's two-year tenure coincided with the North Korean seizure of the Pueblo, a Navy intelligence ship, in January 1968 in what were thought to be North Korean waters.

One of the Pueblo's 83 crew members was killed, and the others were released after being held for several months in a North Korean prison. The incident led to a Navy court of inquiry over the actions of five officers; it recommended two courts-martial, two letters of reprimand and a letter of admonition. Ignatius's successor, John H. Chafee, who was later a Republican senator from Rhode Island, ultimately ended the proceedings and blocked the courts-martial, saying the months of captivity were sufficient punishment.

Following Ignatius' government service, he was president of the Washington Post for two years and executive vice president of the Washington Post Company at a contentious time surrounding the release of the Pentagon Papers. Ignatius was named to his executive roles at the Post on the recommendation of McNamara, a close friend of the publisher, Katharine Graham.

He also was president of the Air Transport Association for fifteen years. Ignatius was the recipient of the Army Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award, and the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award. In 2010, the US Navy announced that a future Navy destroyer would bear the name USS Paul Ignatius, and in 2017 Ignatius and his family were present for the christening of the ship by his wife, the late Nancy Ignatius, and in 2019 for the commissioning ceremony of the destroyer.

His son David Ignatius, the international affairs columnist for the Washington Post and a novelist, confirmed the death.

Paul Ignatius married Nancy Weiser in 1947. In Washington, Ignatius joined and

his wife in serving on the boards of charitable organizations and was chairman of the St. Albans School of Public Service, which encouraged young people to consider careers in government. He was a trustee of the George C. Marshall Foundation, a library and research institute in Lexington, Va.

Ignatius was no less active in retirement than in his working years. His seemingly inexhaustible mental and physical energy served him well as a tennis player, traveler, and writer. In 2006, Ignatius, along with his daughter Sarah and son Adi, was among a group of National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) travelers led by the late Prof. George Bournoutian who ventured to historic Western Armenia (Eastern Turkey) and the Republic of Armenia, including a return to the Kharpert region from which the Jamgochian and Ignatius families had emigrated over a century earlier. His account of this trip is a centerpiece of the 2nd edition of *Now I Know in Part* (NAASR Armenian Heritage Press, 2011).

He also authored the memoir *On Board: My Life in the Navy, Government, and Business* (Naval Institute Press, 2006) and *5 x 3: Fifteen Books by Three Great Arme-*

*nian Writers* (NAASR Armenian Heritage Press, 2013), which discusses works by William Saroyan, Michael Arlen and Leon Surmelian; and two characteristically witty, insightful, and far-ranging collections of essays, *Coping With Covid: Reflections from a Long Life* (2020), and *Still Coping with Covid* (2022).

Ignatius was predeceased by his wife Nancy (1925-2019). He is survived by his children, David, international affairs columnist for the Washington Post; Amy, New Hampshire superior court judge; Sarah, former executive director of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research; and Adi, an editor at large of the Harvard Business Review; and by nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Ignatius was a long-time member of NAASR and among the earliest to join NAASR's Leadership Circle in 2013. His close association with NAASR deepened when his daughter Sarah became NAASR's executive director in 2016.

(Materials from the *New York Times* and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research were used to compile this report.)



Left to right: David Ignatius, Amy Ignatius, Nancy Ignatius, Sarah Ignatius, Paul Ignatius, Adi Ignatius, and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, on the day Ignatius was sworn in as Secretary of the Navy (from *Now I Know in Part*, 2nd ed.)

(1937). Ignatius also worked for a summer at Warner Brothers after graduating from high school and later worked for film producer Louis de Rochemont, contributing to the 1951 film "The Whistle at Eaton Falls." However, Ignatius's life's work would lie elsewhere; as he wrote, "As time went on, I became interested in national affairs and the opportunity for public service, and my life developed along those lines."

In the 1950s, Ignatius founded Harbridge House, Inc., a management consulting and research firm based in Boston. In the 1960s, he would go on to serve for eight years in the presidential administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Paul Ignatius joined the Defense Department as assistant secretary of the Army for logistics in 1961, during the Kennedy administration, at a time when the United States had become increasingly embroiled in the Vietnam War. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, the former Ford Motor Company president who had recruited Ignatius as one of his "whiz kids" from the world of business and analytics, called him "one of my most valued and trusted associates."

Starting in 1964, Ignatius spent five years as assistant secretary of defense, con-

## John S. Airasian Made Impact on Watertown

WATERTOWN — A Mass of Christian Burial for John S. Airasian, of Watertown, was on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at in the Church of St. Patrick, 212 Main Street, Watertown.

John was born in Cambridge to the late Peter S. and Anna E. (Calles) Airasian. He passed away surrounded by his loving family on Wednesday, November 5, at the age of 82.

He grew up on Oakley Road in East Watertown with his parents and brothers. He attended Hosmer School, East Junior High, and graduated from Watertown High School in 1962, where he proudly served as Class President all four years.

John went on to study business at Boston College (Class of 1966), where he thrived both academically and socially, expanding his lifelong circle of friends. In 1968, following the passing of his father, Peter, the founder of Eastern Clothing, John stepped into the family business. With his brother and co-owner Paul by his side, John led Eastern Clothing for more than 50 years, elevating it to new heights and building a loyal regional following that included professional athletes, local politicians, coaches, and media personalities. His son and current owner, John, continues to operate and thrive for a 3rd generation.

In 1972, John married the love of his life, Marie (Keegan) Airasian. Together, they shared 53 years, raising three children and filling their home in Watertown with laughter, love and cherished memories. Their adventures together included international travel, summers on Long Beach in Gloucester, and vacations in Naples, Fla.

John's greatest joy came from his family, especially his five grandchildren, whom he adored beyond measure. He had a unique gift for connecting with each one individually, creating a special and lasting bond that brought him immense happiness.

Another of John's great loves was his hometown, Watertown, which he proudly called "the best place in the world." Deeply committed to his community, John served as corporator and trustee of Watertown Savings Bank ("the best bank in the world," as he would say), the first President and longtime member of the Watertown-Belmont Chamber of Commerce, and a proud

Rotarian and Paul Harris Fellow. John was one of the Founding Members of the Watertown Boys and Girls Club and he also served an incredible 52 years on the Watertown Traffic Commission.

Among his many civic achievements, John's crowning accomplishment was his decades-long leadership on the redevelopment of the Watertown Arsenal, a former Superfund site. As Chairman of both the Arsenal Reuse Committee and the Arsenal Development Corporation, he oversaw the site's decommissioning, cleanup, transformation, and eventual sale.

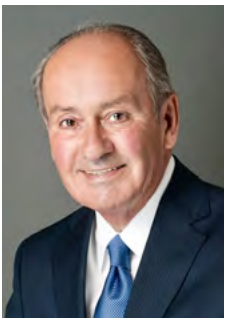
From this work came the creation of the Watertown Community Foundation, the preservation of the Commander's Mansion, and the founding of the Mosesian Center for the Arts, a lasting legacy of his vision and dedication.

John was the beloved husband of Marie F. (Keegan) Airasian; devoted father of Peter Airasian, Robert Airasian and his wife Kim, and John Airasian and his wife Jackie, all of Watertown; and the loving grandfather of Victoria, Robert, Vincent, Michael, and Jack Airasian. He was the brother of the late Peter Airasian (and his late wife Gwendolyn) and the late Paul Airasian (and his surviving wife Terry). He was the beloved son-in-law of Victoria Keegan (and the late Robert Keegan). The dear brother-in-law to Michael and Donna Keegan and Robert and Roberta Patricelli.

He is also survived by his caring nieces and nephew, Lynn FitzGerald, Greg Airasian, Amy Fathers, Melissa Amaral, Elizabeth Farrar, Taylor Keegan, and Jessica Schlueter.

After a Mass of Christian Burial at the Church of St. Patrick, 212 Main St. Watertown, on November 12, interment took place at Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in John's memory may be made to the Mosesian Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street, Watertown, MA 02472.



James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC

Mark J. Giragosian

*Giragosian*  
FUNERAL HOME

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





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Montreal’s *Abaka* Newspaper Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

ABAKA, from page 1  
who helped found and then continued the work of the newspaper over the decades, many of whom have passed away. He stressed that the establishment of *Abaka* was the result of a plan executed through consistent work. The goal was to inculcate a strong Armenian national character to the newly formed Canadian-Armenian community and to make sure its connection with the Armenian homeland and the Armenian diaspora remained constant.

Dr. Gundjian noted that the birth of *Abaka* was the result of the century-old patriotic tradition and inspiration of great leaders and intellectuals of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL or “Ramgavar”), such as Vahan Tekeyan, Mihran Damadian and Kersam Aharonian. He said that the 50 years that were being celebrated that night were truly part of a battle without beginning or end.

After this reference to a battle, Dr. Gundjian thought it appropriate to introduce to the audience Armenian national hero Lt. Col. Sargis Stepanyan, who was present as a guest. He pointed out that Stepanyan had made a supreme sacrifice in defending his homeland and lost three of his four limbs in the process. The entire audience expressed its profound respect for the hero through a thunderous standing ovation.



Mr. and Mrs. Sargis Stepanyan



Amb. Anahit Harutyunyan

After Dr. Gundjian’s speech, Ambassador Harutyunyan expressed her appreciation for the 50 years of consistently broadminded and honest journalistic labor of *Abaka*, which has been supportive of the homeland. She included in her appreciation all those who have been carrying out this difficult work, especially the current editor Avedis Bakkalian, the first editor Arsen Noubar Mamourian, and Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, the latter having played a decisive role in creating the main infrastructure of the Canadian-Armenian community.

MC Margossian then invited the Primate to speak, who in his turn highly appreciated the important mission of *Abaka* which it conducted in the Canadian-Armenian community for 50 years, especially during difficult and turbulent periods of time for the church and homeland. The Primate highlighted the vital importance of the ensemble of our national main structures, the church, the Armenian school and the Armenian press, which comple-

ment each other, and the leaders who have played a big role in their creation and operation, among whom the main driving force, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, was present this evening. The Primate gave warm praise and fatherly blessing to this work dedicated to the Armenian people.

Throughout this first part of the evening, a video playing on a loop on a large screen on the stage showed samples of pages taken from 50 years of issues of *Abaka* which reflected the great events and figures of both Canada-Armenians and the Armenian world. The other main founders of *Abaka*, the late Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian and Edmond Y. Azadian, appeared there, along with the irreplaceable wise benefactor Alex Manoogian. This video was prepared by Berj Kokorian, Avedis Torossian and Aren Torossian.

The next part of the evening began when Margossian introduced and invited to the stage Mkheyan, who appeared

*continued on next page*



The cutting of the anniversary cake





COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

amidst impressive musical and lighting effects. She began her performance with Gomidas’s immortal Horovel song but then instantly switched to her own modern style, though always remaining faithful to the Armenian content. She demonstrated an unrivaled ability to keep an entire hall of people on their feet in an atmosphere of continuous dancing, punctuated by rapturous applause.

Mkheyanyan at times descended from the stage to entice even somewhat reserved audience members into joining the festivities. At the intermission of her performance, Margossian invited the Primate and the ambassador to lead the evening’s notables in cutting a cake representing the 50 years of achievements of Abaka. Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Avedis Bakkalian, Tekeyan Montreal Chapter Chairman Noubar Babikian and ADL Eugene Papazian Chapter Chairman Ara Balian joined this ceremony under the spotlights.



Thanks to Sofi Mkheyanyan

Afterwards, Mkheyanyan continued to enchant the audience with her captivating songs until the late hours finally brought the evening to its conclusion.

[The staff of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator felicitates its sister newspaper Abaka on its golden anniversary and congratulates the event organizing committee, supported by efforts of the Montreal Tekeyan chapter and the members of its ladies committee, for such a successful affair.]



The star of the evening, Sofi Mkheyanyan



From left, Mr. and Mrs. Sargis Stepanyan, Meguerditch Kanondjian, Mr. and Mrs. Garo Donoyan, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Nadia Gundjian, Amb. Anahit Harutyunyan, Primate Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan, Arden Dervishian, Rep. Sona Lakhoyan Olivier, Hon. Consul of Armenia Levon Afeyan and Mrs. Afeyan, and Mr. and Mrs. Diran Avedian



# Tekeyan Cultural Association

# Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia

Since its inception in 2001, The TCA Sponsor A Teacher program has raised \$838,700 and reached out to 7,386 teachers and school staff in Armenia and Artsakh.

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



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

☐ \$240   ☐ \$480   ☐ \$700   ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association  
Memo: Sponsor a Teacher 2025  
Mail your check to:  
TCA Sponsor a Teacher  
5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056



If you prefer to donate by credit card, please go to:  
[givebutter.com/0g6lky](https://givebutter.com/0g6lky)

Your donation is tax deductible.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Community Unites to Bolster Watertown High School Armenian Program

WATERTOWN — Organizations and individuals from throughout the Greater Boston Armenian community came together over the past months to support and expand the Armenian language program at Watertown High School.

Dozens attended and testified at a meeting of the Watertown School Committee last spring, successfully appealing for the addition of a second Armenian class for the coming year in response to the increasing number of students registering. The speakers, who included Watertown High parents and alumni, stressed that having more than two dozen students, with beginning to intermediate to advanced levels of Armenian comprehension, could not possibly be effectively taught in a single class.

The ad hoc committee, the Friends of the Armenian Language Program, then continued the discussion with the Superintendent of Watertown Schools, Dr. Deanne Galdston. They pointed out that, since the new upper-level course would still have students at three different levels of ability, the need for a teaching assistant was evident. Galdston was not opposed to the idea but indicated that the school budget had already been approved and that there was no money in it to cover the salary of an additional teaching assistant.

Undeterred, the committee decided to provide a community grant to the Watertown Public Schools to cover the first-year salary for the part-time teaching assistant, with the expectation that it could work with the School Committee to have the position funded in next year's budget.

A fundraising appeal was made to organizations and individuals across the Armenian community and was met with an immediate and enthusiastic response. Within a week, the committee was able to make the grant to the school system and the position was posted, candidates interviewed, and the teaching assistant hired in the first month of the school year.

"Our work is not done. The task going forward is to sustain and further grow the program, which requires increased student interest and participation," stated Hasmig Mardiros, one of the committee members. "We need to show that the demand for more classes is real, and this burden lies on us."

"This effort shows what we can do as a community when we mobilize our people and organizations," added Aram Kaligian of the Armenian National Committee of Eastern Massachusetts. "Public officials pay attention when we're willing to step up and speak out when they provide a public forum."

Those who contributed to the fundrais-



A bulletin board in Watertown High School

ing for the community grant include the following:

ARS Watertown Leola Sassouni Chapter; St Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church; ARS Cambridge Shushi Chapter; St. James Armenian Apostolic Church; ARF Boston Sardarabad Gomideh; Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church; AYP Greater Boston

Nejdeh Chapter; Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church; National Assoc. for Armenian Studies & Research; Amaras Arts Alliance; Armenian International Women's Association; Massis Bakery; Nina Festekjian; Nartooi Abrimian; Ojig Grigorian; Keri Kaligian; Talar Abdalian; Natalie Minassian and Alissia Margios.

## Boston University and HENAR Kick off Medical Education Workshops

WORKSHOPS, from page 7

"Many of us have been trying for years to marshal the resources of the Diaspora to make a significant, lasting contribution to the improvement of healthcare in Armenia," said Dr. Aram Kaligian, director of the BU-Armenia Medical Partnership. He went on to thank the work of the partners who made this possible — the HENAR Foundation, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Yerevan State Medical University and the Armenian National Institute of Health — for their collaboration. Kaligian also thanked "the intelligent, deeply-committed Masters' students, and all the ToT participants, for joining the workshops to help improve medical residency education and healthcare in Armenia."

Dr. Henry Louis, HENAR project manager of the MHPE program, opened the sessions with an introduction to Instructional Design and applying it to the redesign of medical curricula. He then outlined the day's activities — to break into groups of 20-30 to work with Masters' students and BU faculty to develop goals and learning objectives for their respective medical specialties that can be measurable — so that residency programs are based on demonstrating clinical competency in hands-on patient care rather than on just testing theoretical knowledge of medicine.

Developed by Dr. Jeff Markuns, a family physician at the Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine at Boston University (BUCASOM) and director of the Master of Health Professions Education

program, the program is designed to be practicum-based rather than thesis-based so that by the end of the year the ToT participants will have helped redesign their own medical curriculum, developed clinical teaching tools and monitoring and evaluation methods, and trained their respective departments in their use.

"I firmly believe in the need for change in medical education methodology and in promoting more effective, learner-centered approaches to motivate the next generation of medical professionals," said MPHE student Dr. Lilit Marutyan, a pediatrician and Chief Medical Officer of Wigmore Family Health. "In the short term, I hope to apply the knowledge I've gained to improve the training programs in our Pediatric Department. In the long term, I aim to use this

experience to help launch a new training program for family medicine residents that will strengthen primary care in Armenia."

"I joined the program because I wanted to become part of a global movement to transform postgraduate medical education in my country," said MHPE candidate Hrachuhi Ghazaryan, Chief Medical Officer at Wigmore Women's and Children's Hospital. "Early in my career, and through my exposure to residency models across the developed world, I realized how unprepared our residents often are, despite being strong students at home. This significant 'knowledge-do' gap revealed the systemic shortcomings of our training model and inspired me to become someone who could help change that. The traditional ordinator model, which has shaped postgraduate training in Armenia for decades, no longer meets the needs of our evolving healthcare system. Structured reform is only possible if faculty are empowered to lead it - and I believe this program equips us with the tools to do exactly that."

The Boston University-Armenia Medical Partnership (BU-AMP) is a multi-disciplinary program to coordinate collaboration for the improvement of healthcare in Armenia between the Aram V. Chobanian & Edward Avedisian School of Medicine at Boston University and health policy and healthcare entities in Armenia. For more information, visit <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/armenia/>

Founded in 2021 by Noubar and Anna Afeyan, Ruben Vardanyan, and Arman Voskerchyan, the HENAR Foundation aims to contribute to the transformation of Armenia's healthcare ecosystem. By building and empowering a network of partners, HENAR works to deliver better value, better care, and ultimately better health for current and future generations of Armenians. With support from AIFA (Afeyan Initiatives for Armenia), HENAR is leading efforts to strengthen Armenia's primary care system, with a strong focus on talent development and digital innovation. For more information, visit <https://henar.am>

## Celebrate the Season at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center with Tree Lighting, Holiday Market

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) recently announced the return of its Annual Tree Lighting featuring a Holiday Market, taking place on starting at 11 a.m. on Friday, November

28, at 47 Nichols Avenue. This festive, family-friendly celebration invites community members of all ages to a joyful kick off to the holiday season filled with magic, music and meaningful moments.

Visitors can explore the vibrant line-

up of local small businesses and artisan vendors offering a wide range of holiday gifts, seasonal home decor, handmade soaps and candles, specialty coffee, unique books and much more. The event celebrates everything that makes the holidays special — togetherness, generosity, and community.

"This event is a celebration of both community and creativity," said an ACEC planning committee representative. "It's a chance to support local makers while gathering to share the warmth and joy of the season. Whether you're shopping for that perfect one-of-a-kind gift or simply looking to soak in the festive cheer, the ACEC Holiday Market is the place to be. There will be a special children's corner to keep young ones entertained while you stroll through the booths."

For more information and visit us at [www.acecwatertown.org](http://www.acecwatertown.org)



A scene from a previous ACEC holiday market.





# Arts & Culture

## Mikoyan's Grandson Stas Namin Created Soviet Rock'n'roll And Much More

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN — Anastas Alekseevich Mikoyan, the grandson of the Soviet Armenian politician Anastas Ivanovich (Hovhannesi) Mikoyan (1895-1978), goes by the moniker Stas Namin. Not only is he one of the early performers of Soviet rock'n'roll, but he has in various stages of his career been a painter, photographer, cinematographer and creator in various other artistic realms. He came to Armenia in October to receive a Vahan Tekeyan Award from the Tekeyan Cultural Association for his painting "Sanahin."

### Memories of His Grandfather

Namin's father Aleksei Anastasovich Mikoyan was a pilot all his life and was wounded during World War II. In fact, four out of five children (all sons) of Anastas Mikoyan were pilots, with one, Vladimir, shot down and killed during the Battle of Stalingrad in World War II. And of course, Anastas Mikoyan senior's younger brother, Artem (Anushavan) Mikoyan, was the creator of the MiG fighter jets along with Mikhail Gurevich.



Stas Namin (photo Aram Arkun)

Namin recalled that the four surviving sons ended up having 10 children in all, five girls and five boys. He said they, as children, spent a lot of time in his grandfather's dacha, or summer house, outside of Moscow. When they became teenagers, more grown up, he found a way to continue to bring them all together. He would invite them to lunch on Sundays. Why? Namin said, "because he understands that Saturday night we are all going out, having fun with our friends. Then Sunday, we are tired, so that just to come for lunch — not too early — is very pleasant. More than that, he said we could come with our friends, with guests. So there was a big table."

Namin said that he was very close with his grandfather growing up but never discussed his career or political activity. "At that time," he said, "he was just grandpa, and I knew him as a very kind person, very nice, polite to everybody, not only to his close people but also to his guests."

Namin said that Mikoyan had become a communist because "he was fighting for justice, for rights for the people. That was the ideal of communism in the beginning but he was like that all his life, so his patriotism

see STAS, page 16



General manager and co-owner Nabeel Halaby with partners, Afif Al-Hakim and Wahid Al-Hakim at Carnival Restaurant in Sherman Oaks, CA

## LA's Carnival Restaurant Is a Celebration of Middle Eastern Cuisine

By Christine Vartanian Datian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SHERMAN OAKS, Calif. — Welcome to the Carnival Restaurant in Sherman Oaks, CA. Since 1984, this celebrated Lebanese family-owned restaurant offers a one-of-a-kind Middle Eastern dining experience known for its welcoming atmosphere, exceptional international menu, and a premier level of customer attention and service.

In fact, in 2012, it received the LA Times Readers' Choice for Mediterranean Restaurant.

"From the start, our mission has been to serve high-quality Middle Eastern food in a relaxed, casual atmosphere. Our restaurant can be found at the far end of a shopping center in Sherman Oaks, and continues to serve generations of dedicated customers," says Nabeel Halaby, Carnival's personable and ever-present co-owner and general manager.

"With several highly trained chefs in the kitchen and a menu that caters to today's diverse dietary preferences, Carnival features healthy vegan and vegetarian options alongside an enormous selection of traditional Middle Eastern dishes and specialties. One by one, each dish impresses and shines in its own right, and together the meal becomes what can only be described as a sumptuous feast of authentic food, flavors, and international tastes," he adds.

Steam curls into the air of the ful mudammas (spelled "fool" on the menu for easy pronunciation), which acts as the eye-catching centerpiece for a variety of vegetarian diners. Halaby explains the intricacy of this dish, which is a staple food in Arab, Middle Eastern, and African countries. "Ful is made from fava beans cooked with cumin, garlic, onion, lemon juice and other herbs, and dressed with olive oil and a sprig of mint just before being served. Alongside the ful comes a tray of smoothly textured creamy hummus paired with smoky baba ghanoush, a spread made from fire-grilled eggplants pureed with tahini, garlic, and fresh

see RESTAURANT, page 15



## New Painting At Manoogian Manor Captures Armenian Spirit

By Pam Coultis

LIVONIA, Mich. — As a member of the Metro Detroit Armenia Fest Committee, I was privileged to be invited to the unveiling of a custom painting at the Manoogian Manor on Sunday, November 2. The event, organized by the Manor's Executive Director Vaughn Masropian, was attended by members of local American-Armenian organizations, Armenian clergy, residents and family members.

The guests were warmly greeted by Masropian as they arrived, treated to a lavish mezza, and an opportunity to mingle and meet the artist, William Terian, and his wife.

The painting titled "The Giving Tree," was commissioned by Masropian, as a visual tribute to the Armenian culture embraced at the Manor, and a nostalgic addition to the welcoming foyer. The painting was created by the artist, recognized for his work with the Armenian Weekly and for his portraits of local and national dignitaries. Guests drew close as Vaughn welcomed and introduced the clergy and asked them to say a few words and give a blessing before the reveal.

It was touching that four members of the clergy came together to participate and their heartfelt words about the Manor "as a place where people



The Painting at Manoogian Manor with (L-R) guests Elise Papazian and Solange Messelian.

come to live with dignity and joy."

The painting features a stylized pomegranate tree ripe with fruit, and peacocks ready to enjoy the bounty (both culturally indigenous to Armenia). Guests reacted to the reveal with gasps of admiration and hearty applause. Following the reveal, Masropian informed the crowd that the painting had a dual purpose; not only would it be a nostalgic and beautiful symbol of Armenia for residents and guests, but it would be used as a fund-raising tool to refurbish parts of the Manor. The evening continued as guests mingled, took photos and congratulated the artist.

(Pam Coultis came into the Metro Detroit American Armenian community 30+ years ago as a secretary to Edgar Hagopian (1930-2011).)





ARTS & CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian



## Chicken Phyllo Pies With Parsley Sauce

By Scott Suchman for *The Washington Post*/food styling by Lisa Cherkasky for *The Washington Post*

These savory pies from cookbook author and registered dietitian nutritionist Ellie Krieger have a feathery-light, shatteringly crisp crust made with olive-oil-slathered phyllo dough. They're stuffed with a mixture of ground chicken and finely chopped almonds, and seasoned with a Middle Eastern-inspired blend of aromatic spices. Served with a green sauce made simply by blending parsley with oil, vinegar, red onion, salt and pepper, they're a healthful, special treat to enjoy as a party food, an appetizer, or as a meal with two or three pies on a plate alongside a salad. To refrigerate and heat: The pies can be refrigerated before or after baking. Wrap unbaked pies in foil and refrigerate for up to 1 day, then bake, uncovered, according to the recipe instructions, adding about 10 minutes to the cooking time. Once baked, let cool for 30 minutes, then wrap tightly and refrigerate for up to 4 days. Reheat in a 350°F oven, uncovered, for 20 to 30 minutes or until warmed through.

To freeze and heat: The pies can be frozen before or after baking. Wrap chilled baked or unbaked pies in foil, then place in zip-top bags and freeze for up to 3 months. When ready to bake, remove from the freezer, uncover and place in a cold oven (no need to defrost). Turn the oven on and heat to 375°F for the unbaked pies, or 350°F for the baked. Once the oven reaches temperature, bake for about 30 minutes, or until warmed through and the crust is flaky and golden brown.

INGREDIENTS:

- For the pies:**
- 1/3 cup whole raw almonds
  - 8 tablespoons olive oil, divided
  - 1 pound ground 90-94 percent lean chicken or turkey
  - 1 medium red onion, finely diced
  - 3 cloves garlic, minced or finely grated
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
  - 3/4 teaspoon fine salt
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
  - 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
  - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
  - 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper, more to taste
  - 1 1/2 tablespoons honey
  - 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
  - 1 large egg, lightly beaten
  - Nine (13-by-18-inch) sheets phyllo dough, defrosted overnight in the refrigerator (see NOTE)



Ellie Krieger

**For the sauce:**

- 1/2 cup packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves and tender stems
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

**PREPARATION:**

Make the pies: In a dry skillet over medium-high heat, toast the almonds, stirring frequently, until fragrant and a shade darker, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl, let cool, then finely chop.

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon of oil until shimmering. Add the chicken and cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with a spoon, until the meat is in very small pieces and no longer pink, about 4 minutes. Transfer the chicken, along with any juices, to a plate.

Add 1 more tablespoon of oil to the same skillet and reduce the heat to medium. Add the onions and cook, stirring, until lightly golden, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until aromatic, 30 seconds more. Add the cinnamon, salt, cumin, coriander, black pepper and cayenne and cook, stirring, for another 30 seconds. Return the chicken to the pan, with any accumulated juices. Add the honey and stir to incorporate. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 minutes. Taste, and season with more cayenne, if desired. Stir in the almonds, parsley and egg until combined; you should have about 3 1/2 cups filling.

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350°F.

Place the stack of phyllo on a clean surface and keep it covered with a clean, damp kitchen towel so it doesn't dry out. Lay one sheet of phyllo on a large cutting board, longer side facing you, and use a pastry brush to dab it with the olive oil. Top with another sheet of phyllo, dab it with the oil, and repeat once more, so you wind up with a stack of three layers. (Don't worry if the phyllo sheets don't line up perfectly; just try to get them close enough. If the sheets tear slightly, that's okay.)

Cover the remaining stack of phyllo with a damp towel so it doesn't dry out as you make the pies. With the longer side still facing you, cut the layered phyllo, top to bottom, into 4 strips, each 4 1/2 inches wide. Put 1/4 cup of the chicken mixture about 2 inches from the bottom of one strip and fold the phyllo over the mixture into a triangle-shaped pocket. Continue to fold the strip up to maintain the triangle shape, much as you would fold a flag, forming a triangular turnover. Repeat with the other three strips. Repeat this process two more times so you wind up with 12 pies total. (If you have some filling left over, eat it as a snack or save for another use.)

Place the pies onto 2 large, rimmed baking sheets. Make a couple of small slits in the top of each with a sharp paring knife, then bake for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown and crisp.

Make the sauce: While the pies are baking, in a blender, combine the parsley, oil, onion, water, vinegar, salt and pepper and process until smooth; you should have about 1/2 cup sauce. Serve the pies warm, with the sauce alongside.

Servings: 12 (makes 12 small pies)

NOTE: Depending on the brand, phyllo sheets range in size, including 9-by-14 inches and 13-by-18 inches. Use your best judgment when cutting the strips, and adjust the amount of filling accordingly.

Known from her hit Food Network show "Healthy Appetite," and host and executive producer of the cooking series "Ellie's Real Good Food" on Public Television, Ellie Krieger is a New York Times bestselling, International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP), and two-time James Beard Foundation award-winning cookbook author. She writes two regular columns for The Washington Post, and has also been a columnist for Fine Cooking, Food Network magazines, and USA Today. Ellie is a registered dietitian nutritionist who earned her bachelor's in clinical nutrition from Cornell University and her master's in nutrition education from Teacher's College Columbia University. Her latest book is Whole in One: Complete, Healthy Meals in a Single Pot, Skillet or Sheet Pan.

For this recipe, go to:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/recipes/chicken-phyll-pies-parsley-sauce/>

<https://www.elliekrieger.com/recipe/chicken-phyll-pies/>

For Cherry Phyllo Turnovers, see: <https://www.elliekrieger.com/recipe/cherry-phyll-turnovers/>

For Ellie Krieger's website, see: <https://www.elliekrieger.com/>

For information about Ellie Krieger and her cookbooks, see: <https://www.elliekrieger.com/books/>

For Middle Eastern recipes, see: [https://www.elliekrieger.com/search-page/?search\\_text=middle+eastern](https://www.elliekrieger.com/search-page/?search_text=middle+eastern)

For recipes from the Food Network, see: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/profiles/talent/ellie-krieger>

For recipes at The Washington Post, see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/ellie-krieger/>

For her cooking show, see: <https://www.elliekrieger.com/ellies-real-good-food/>

Connect at:

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRWYEVzV60u5o8SWZ6AyuTA>

[https://www.threads.com/@ellie\\_krieger](https://www.threads.com/@ellie_krieger)

[https://www.instagram.com/ellie\\_krieger/](https://www.instagram.com/ellie_krieger/)

<https://www.pinterest.com/elliekrieger/>

<https://lnk.bio/4bbG>

Copyright 2023 - Ellie Krieger - All Rights Reserved





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# LA's Carnival Restaurant Is a Celebration of Middle Eastern Cuisine

RESTAURANT, from page 13

lemon juice. These two dishes share plate space with a generous helping of a perfect tabbouleh, Carnival's very finely chopped salad of tomatoes, parsley, mint, onions, and bulgur, flavored with olive oil and lemon..."

Carnival's dedicated owners are known for being incredibly attentive, creating an inviting dining environment for all customers. Carnival's famous shawarma, a mix of lamb and beef, has been highlighted as a standout dish, showcasing the restaurant's commitment to serving flavorful, appetizing, well-prepared meals. Whether you're looking for a casual lunch spot or a place to celebrate with your family or a group, Carnival is recognized for providing a memorable dining experience. The staff add to the overall charm of this establishment, making it a must-visit destination for lovers of Middle Eastern cuisine in Southern California.

Halaby was born in Lebanon and came to America at age 16. At the end of any busy evening (Carnival is open 7 days a week), he can often be found sitting around a large table with members of the restaurant's veteran waitresses and staff, talking and laughing about the day's activities. "About 50 percent of our customers are Middle Eastern Jews," adds Halaby, "and the other half are a mix of many other ethnic groups," he adds.

Halaby tells the story of leaving Lebanon as a young man. After spending a childhood in his family home in Beirut, he left the country in 1977 during the early stages of the Lebanese Civil War to join his sister, cousins, and extended family members in Los Angeles. He speaks about this stark transition. "It was a very good experience, he recalls. "I expected a lot of dramatic changes at the time, and did well because of my energy and my determination to succeed. I had to adapt to different circumstances and a new kind of work environment in Los Angeles, and do whatever was needed to find a job at that time. And when you're young, you need to adjust fast to many situations."

The first job Halaby held in Los Angeles was as a

helping in the kitchen washing dishes, investigating parking lot issues in the shopping center, or maintaining the books of a major establishment that serves between 200 and 300 or more customers each day for lunch, dinner, and late night meals – while also supervising Carnival's professional catering services for many Southern Califor-



Wahid Al-Hakim, Carnival co-owner and renowned chef

nia parties, receptions, weddings, and holiday celebrations during the year.

In the restaurant, one is immediately greeted by the bustling sounds of family and friends. Countless families and friends come together to enjoy the splendid meal set before them without concern for anything beyond their homemade grape leaves, international salads, and the family's Lebanese lentil soup made daily (since the menu points it out as the house specialty, one

the shish and chicken kebab, and the sheik almukshi (a traditional Middle Eastern dish of stuffed vegetables, most commonly zucchini or eggplant, with a rich filling of spiced minced meat and pine nuts) are equally appealing."

"Kafta (ground beef) with potatoes, and our daily specials, molokhia, shawarma, stuffed chicken, lamb shanks, shish kebab (beef, lamb and/or chicken), branzino (the Italian name for the European sea bass, a mild, white-fleshed fish popular in Mediterranean cuisine. It is prized for its delicate flavor, firm texture, and flaky flesh), and skewered lamb cubes grilled with onions and tomatoes are just a few of the delicious dishes that are worth mentioning. And our fresh, thick-cut French fries are an all-time favorite with our customers..."

From start to finish, Carnival centers on family. Between describing the activities of his five sons and grandchildren, Halaby articulates the mission of the restaurant. "This restaurant is a family thing, and we want to keep it that way. We can't have it losing its form, going into dysfunction or chaos...once you have a family, you always have a family. These values are evident when one examines our menu of mouthwatering appetizers, entrees, salads, and desserts, that also boasts Mama's Traditional Ashtalia Pudding (a family recipe made with milk, sugar, and orange blossom water and topped with pistachios), and Mama's Homemade Baklava (a syrup-doused pastry made up of countless layers of filo and filled with finely chopped nuts) among its temptations."

"On Mondays, customers hurry in to order our homemade molokhia special, it's one of a kind. Molokhia is a leafy green known as Jute Mallow or Egyptian Spinach, used in a popular savory soup or stew, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. It is characterized by its thick texture and is seasoned with garlic and coriander before being served with rice pilaf or bread. High in vitamins and minerals like iron, calcium, and potassium, molokhia is a nutritious part of various regional cuisines," says Halaby.

Sunday is a big day at Carnival, Halaby adds, thanks to the restaurant's loyal church-going crowd and many dedicated followers. All told, it's a day of family, feast, and enjoyment for young and old, Lebanese and American and all in between.

One review on Trip Advisor says, "Delicious food made with the best fresh ingredients. It made us feel as if we were in Lebanon. We ordered appetizers (hummus, balila, Fattoush salad), kebabs and salmon. Everything was great

and exceeded our expectations." Another review says, "Have been going to Carnival for over thirty years. The best middle eastern food around. The menu is fantastic, the prices are reasonable and the customer service is superb. Their baba ghanoush, tabbouleh and hummus are all delicious, all of their meats are cooked fresh. Their specials are so good. The Friday Special is a chicken with rice. It tastes just like my grandma's cooking once did. If you like home cooking, then this is the place."

In 2023 at the Infaturation.com website, Brant Cox wrote, "Carnival is a Sherman Oaks staple where the people-watching is even

more important than the solid Lebanese food you'll eat. Sure, you'll fill up on well-cooked chicken shawarma and consider ordering seconds of their fantastic lentil soup, but that's not really why you're at this dimly-lit strip mall spot. You're here because it's nice to know places where couples read newspapers in booths together and little old ladies scream 'More baklava, Jeanine!' at their waitresses like it's a family potluck that still exists."

"Our desserts and sweets especially the baklava, knafeh, namoura, and Mama's Traditional Ashtalia Pudding are served with a good strong cup of Arabic coffee. The end results of these dishes and flavors take on a meaning of great pride in a rich heritage and an artful cooking skill that customarily every family must master only at home. You can be assured that Carnival's respected chefs and servers will continue this tradition of cooking and dining excellence to delight your appetite and make you feel at home with every visit," adds Halaby.



municipal maintenance worker, beautifying the railroad tracks and roads in the North San Fernando Valley. He eventually got into the construction business. When his crew and partner moved out of the San Fernando Valley, Halaby took it as a sign to change careers and industries. Meanwhile, his brother Fouad and two cousins had created a new business, Carnival Restaurant, and when Fouad decided to retire, he passed the business on

to Halaby. At the time, it was vital the restaurant stay in the family, Halaby says, so he stepped in to take on co-ownership responsibility with his two partners and relatives, Afif Al-Hakim and Wahid Al-Hakim.

As a co-owner, whatever job needs doing any day of the week becomes Halaby's responsibility, whether it's



can hardly blame them). Every day, forks clatter, men and women tell jokes, children are happy and laugh loudly, and Arabic coffee flows as the staff hurriedly attend the wants of hungry patrons, many of whom have been custom-

ers for decades.

"Freshness is of paramount importance, with many of our prime meats and vegetables purchased from local markets and distributors throughout Southern California," adds Halaby. "Our staples like tabbouleh, grape leaves, hummus, falafel, and baba ghanoush are top notch, and



# Books

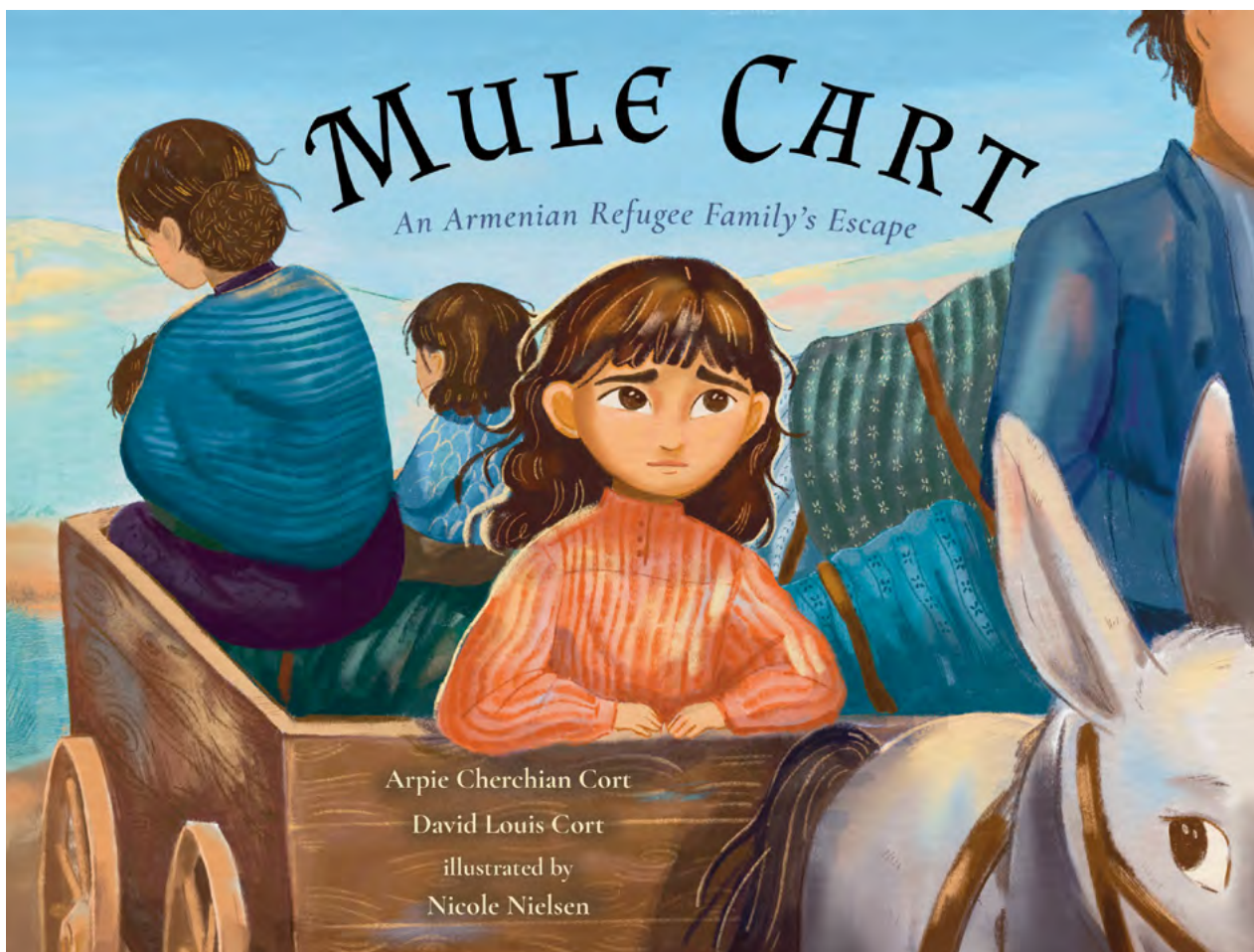
## New Children's Book Mule Cart Shares an Armenian Refugee Family's Flight from Aintab to Aleppo

REDMOND, Wash. — Elementary teachers Arpie Cherchian Cort and her husband David Louis Cort have released *Mule Cart: An Armenian Refugee Family's Escape*, a children's picture book inspired by the true story of Cherchian Cort's family, who fled Aintab in 1920 during the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide.

The story follows 7-year-old Anoosh, who rides with her family in an open mule cart through rain and mud as

they escape toward Aleppo. As cannons boom in the distance, Anoosh finds courage in her mother's songs and in the hopeful pictures she imagines along the way.

"This story has lived in my heart for over twenty years — ever since my Auntie Agnes told me how our family fled Aintab," says Cherchian Cort. "There are so few Armenian stories in children's books. I wanted to help change that."



*Inspired by her family's survival story, educators Arpie Cherchian Cort and David Louis Cort bring an often-overlooked chapter of Armenian history to young readers.*

While *Mule Cart* is a work of realistic fiction, it is grounded in the experiences of thousands of Armenian families who escaped to Aleppo during the early 1920s. Written in simple, lyrical language and brought to life through expressive illustrations, the book invites children to understand history through the eyes of a child — one who finds courage and hope even in the darkest of times.

Cherchian Cort, an educator of more than 30 years, hopes the book will help fill a gap in children's literature.

"Growing up, I never saw stories like mine," she says. "There are still so few books about Armenians. With *Mule Cart*, I wanted to bring more of our stories into the world — stories of resilience, love, and survival."

David Louis Cort is an educator, author, and publisher with Fig Mint Press, the couple's independent publishing company. He and Arpie collaborate on children's and Armenian historical books that honor memory, culture, and hope.

*Mule Cart* is available in hardcover, paperback, and eBook formats through Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and features a free YouTube read-aloud narrated by the authors' daughter, Rebecca Cort @beckabrooke.

Watch the Read-Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze1vKFzHPoQ>

For more information or to purchase the book, visit [www.cherchiancort.com](http://www.cherchiancort.com), <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FSYV28PH> or <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/mule-cart-arpie-cherchian-cort/1147875841?ean=9798999182104>

## Mikoyan's Grandson Stas Namin Created Soviet Rock'n'roll and Much More

STAS, from page 13

was very different than other patriotisms."

At the lunches, there was mostly Armenian food. Namin remembered that when somebody said he did not like beans, his grandfather would declare that he should just try it. As his grandfather grew up in the village of Sanahin in northern Armenia, he and the other villagers did not have the opportunity usually to eat meat. They were poor and needed milk so they could not afford to kill the cows and eat them. This led to Mikoyan till the end of his life primarily maintaining a vegetarian diet. He was abstemious in general when it came to eating, and while he might have a little wine at night, Namin never saw him drink cognac.

Consequently, he did not offer toasts like some Armenians, and in fact had a reserved personality. He took his family to vacation usually in places like the Crimea, but also went back to his native village of Sanahin often, mostly for work, Namin said.

Namin related that though Anastas Mikoyan was a renowned international diplomat at the top ranks of the Soviet government during Nikita Khrushchev's time in power, starting in the Leonid Brezhnev era, the Mikoyan name actually carried negative connotations officially. He said that when his grandfather "found out that Brezhnev started from corruption and started stealing, he understood that all his life what he did before went for nothing, because it was a different country already." He therefore did

not accept Brezhnev's invitation to join him, and from that moment on, Brezhnev started acting against him in various ways.

Namin wrote a biography of his grandfather together with Andrei Rubanov which was first published in Russian in 2022 and then translated into Armenian by Khachatur Stepanyan and published in 2024. Its title, translated into English, is *Anastas Mikoyan: From Ilyich to Ilyich, Four Eras, One Destiny: Documentary Drama*. This liberally illustrated expansive volume (512 pages in Armenian) is based on many archival documents and also includes the remembrances of many Mikoyan family members.

### Music

Namin, born in 1951 in Moscow, was fortunate to have had some of the best Armenian creative minds as his teachers as a child. He said that Arno Babajanian was his first piano teacher while Martiros Saryan taught him drawing. Moreover, the friends of his musicologist mother Nami (after whom he took the last part of his pseudonym) included people like composers Dmitri Shostakovich, Alfred Schnittke and Edvard Mirzoyan and violinist David Oistrakh. Namin said, "They were at our house all the time. Edvard Mirzoyan was my friend too. He was my mother's friend but then we became friends all together."

He said that for thirty years, they had the same joke. When they would meet, he would say, "We are going to take Ararat back. You are going left, Arno is going

left, and I am going right ... no, no, no. We change it. Three ways, so who goes left, who goes right?"

He understood that he was surrounded by giants of culture, but, he said, "I didn't care so much because I was into rock and roll. In symphony, yes, they were geniuses and we were hooligans."

Namin's attraction to rock began with his father, whom he said also loved this kind of music and would take reel to reel tape recorders with him even when he served as an officer on Soviet military bases. His father loved Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Bill Haley and the like.

Namin was sent to Suvarov Military School, a Soviet boarding school, for seven years, and it was there, he said, that he first listened to the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin. He said he taught himself to play guitar by ear. It was there that he created his first band with his friends: "We were not planning to do a career in rock and roll. We were just playing for ourselves. We all were just rock and rollers the same as everywhere in the world."

While Namin was a student at Moscow State University, there was a contest for different student music groups, and three bands, including a new one he founded, won the contest. The prize was permission to make a single at the Melodiya, the state-owned record company of the Soviet Union. His group played a song that was more in the way of the lyric music of the

Beatles (e.g. Something in the Way She Moves). Namin said, "Is it rock and roll? We understand, yes, but they don't understand. So we did this type of music."

It sold 7 million copies but the band did not get paid anything. Melodiya asked them to make another record. In all, Namin said over 60 million copies were sold of their records by the end of the 1980s.

This band, formed in 1969, was called Tsvety in Russian, which means flowers. He said this was "because of flower power and flower children. We were like hippies!" The other members of the band were all Russians initially, and they played songs from the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Jimmi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, etc. In 1975 the Soviet Ministry of Culture banned the band for promoting Western ideology, but it reappeared the next year under the name the Stas Namin Group, only to face new state obstacles.

In 1980, Namin said, he decided to move to Armenia with his band. He said he decided to return to his roots. He said, "We were so popular that to come here was like the Beatles came to Armenia... We were playing concerts filling three stadiums a day, morning, daytime and at night, and at the Winter Palace of Sports."

He organized a music festival in Yerevan in 1981, which was the first major rock festival in the Soviet Union, and also invited foreign bands. He said that in Moscow they

*continued on next page*





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 15** — Annual Fall Bazaar 12-6 PM. Holy Archangels Armenian Church, St. Michael & St. Gabriel. Delicious Armenian Food! Chicken Kebab, Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinners; Delicacies & Pastries; Cuisine Table, Hayastan Table & Anoush Honey. Gift Baskets Raffle. 1280 Boston Rd., Haverhill, MA 01835 Phone (978) 372-9227 or email ArmenianChurchAtHy-ePointe@verizon.net for additional information.

**NOVEMBER 15** — Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian & Friends, 7:30 p.m. Scottish Rite Museum & Library, 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA, Ancestral Songs, Prayers & Lullabies: works by Gomidas, Ganatchian and Toumajan. Tickets: \$85, \$65 - available at [www.FACSBoston.org](http://www.FACSBoston.org). Presented by The Friends of Armenian Culture Society

**NOVEMBER 20** — "Memories Flow Beneath it, From Valley to Quabbin," a film by Roger Hagopian, Sunday, 2—3:30 p.m., Community Room Weston Public Library, 87 School Street, Weston. The Quabbin Reservoir supplies water to 52 metropolitan Boston communities, including Weston. Join us for a showing of Roger Hagopian's 68 minute film on the displacement of people and the loss of a way of life in the Swift River Valley of central Massachusetts.

**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: <https://amaa.org/hyeminds-boston2025/>

**NOVEMBER 22** — Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church Food Festival. 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. Eat-in or Take-out. The Food Festival menu includes lamb, chicken, and losh kebab dinners, and a vegetarian platter; a country store with a variety of Armenian specialties and deserts. The festival also features a jewelry table and gift items from Armenia as well as a Tavloo Tournament at 1:30 p.m. For further information, see [www.stsvartanantz.com](http://www.stsvartanantz.com) or call the office at 978-256-7234.

**NOVEMBER 28** — The Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) will host its Annual Tree Lighting featuring a Holiday Market, taking place on starting at 11 a.m. Friday, 47 Nichols Ave. This festive, family-friendly celebration invites community members of all ages to a joyful kick off to the holiday season filled with magic, music, and meaningful moments. Visitors can explore the vibrant lineup of local small businesses and artisan vendors offering holiday gifts, seasonal home decor, handmade soaps and candles, specialty coffee, unique books and much more. For more information and visit us at [www.acecwatertown.org](http://www.acecwatertown.org). For inquiries contact us at: [market@acecwatertown.org](mailto:market@acecwatertown.org)

**DECEMBER 7** — Christmas Candlelight Concert, Sunday, 6 p.m. Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. Join us for a beautiful concert in the Sanctuary. Purchase tickets at the entrance. A reception will follow the event.

**DECEMBER 12-APRIL 26, 2026** —The Armenian Museum of American is proud to announce the opening of a landmark exhibition, "Arshile Gorky:

Redrawing Community and Connections." This is the first exhibition of Arshile Gorky's work in an Armenian museum, and it caps off a series of programs initiated by the "100 Years of Arshile Gorky" Committee in the City of Watertown. Twenty-five works from lenders across the country including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Housatonic Museum of Art, Yale University Art Gallery, and many private collections. The exhibition is curated by Kim S. Theriault. Sponsored by the JHM Charitable Foundation. Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Hours: Thurs.-Sun., 12pm-6pm. Please visit <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/arshile-gorky> for more information.

**DECEMBER 13** — 130th Anniversary of the Lowell ARF. Program and showing of the award-winning film, "My Sweet Land," the story of the fall of Artsakh thru the eyes of an 11-yr old boy. Holy Archangels, Saint Michael and Saint Gabriel Armenian Church, 1280 Boston Rd., Haverhill. 6:00 p.m. Refreshments to follow. Reservations requested. Call or email Armen Jeknavorian, 978-265-9479; [armenjeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:armenjeknavorian@gmail.com). or Ara Jeknavorian, 617-803-2612, [ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com](mailto:ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com). Adults - \$25. Students - \$15.

**DECEMBER 13** — Feast of St. Barbara, Saturday, 6 p.m. Holy Mass in English followed by a festive dinner and children's masked celebration at 7 p.m. at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Nishan and Margrit Atinikian Hall, 200 Lexington St., Belmont.

**DECEMBER 14** — Celebrate Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Nishan and Margrit Atinikian Hall, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. 7 p.m. An evening of love, laughter, and entertainment (surprise!). Details to follow.

**SEPTEMBER 24, 2026** — Save the Date! Celebrating Contributions! Gala to benefit the Armenian Heritage Park at the InterContinental Boston.

## 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](http://www.stnersess.edu).

## RHODE ISLAND

**NOVEMBER 15-16** — Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church Food Fair and Bazaar. Saturday, 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. Delicious Armenian food and pastries, including lamb shish kebab, losh kebab, baked half chicken, kheyma, lahmajoon, boreg, yalanchi, choreg, cream khadaif and more. Lunch, dinner or takeout. \$1,000 raffle. Kids activities, Nazeli Dance Group, silent auction and vendors. 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

**DECEMBER 12** — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church presents Christmas Concert - "O Holy Night" Featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Soloists, The Junior Choir. Refreshments following Concert in Egavian Hall. Art Exhibition of the Arts Education Program. Special performance by NAZELI Dance group. 7 p.m., in the Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Donations greatly appreciated.

To send Calendar items to the *Mirror-Spectator* email [alin@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:alin@mirrorspectator.com) or [alin.gregorian@gmail.com](mailto:alin.gregorian@gmail.com). You can also visit our website, [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com), and find the "calendar" section under the heading "More" 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.

from previous page

stopped the foreign bands from coming, but fans arrived from all over the Soviet Union. Journalists from Western publications like Time Magazine and Stern covered the event. Time called it "Woodstock, Yerevan style." Some 79,000 fans and 11 bands participated over a period of 9 days.

After these articles in the Western press appeared, Namin said they kicked him out of Armenia. The KGB wrote an official letter that he was anti-Soviet and doing rock propaganda from the West, so they took his passport away in the airport and stopped selling all his records.

As he could no longer work in music, he said, "I decided to move to a different profession and started studying filmmaking, graduated and did some other things until Gorbachev came to power." He made several documentaries.

During the period of perestroika initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, Namin and his old bandmates were allowed to leave the country. He said, "There was freedom so we went to the United States for a big tour, 45 days all around the United States. After that we went on tour all over the world for three years."

In 1987 he created a new band called

Gorky Park with some of the key musicians from the Flowers, and in 1989 organized the international rock festival in Moscow. He also created the Moscow Symphony Orchestra in 1989. He continued to organize many different cultural events as an impresario, founded the Stas Namin Music and Drama Theatre at the end of the 1990s, and began to be more involved in painting, photograph and drawing.

Namin said that he has been coming to Armenia a lot recently, because he obtained an Armenian passport two years ago, although he said that from his point of view it is a very bad time for Armenia, with the last 30 years ruining everything that was done in Soviet times.

Looking back at the accomplishments of his multifaceted career, Namin said, "I am [approaching] 75 and during this long period of time I did many different things. The value is not to do many different things. The value from my point of view is what level I reached in each thing, in each direction." However, he emphasized, "Right now, what is most valuable in my life is my family and my friends."

His website [stasnamin.com](http://stasnamin.com) contains a great deal of information about his art, life, and works.



Stas Namin at the Tekeyan Awards in Yerevan (photo Aram Arkun)



## COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN  
**MIRROR  
SPECTATOR**  
SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**EDITOR**

Alin K. Gregorian

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Aram Arkun

**ART DIRECTOR**

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

**CONTRIBUTORS**

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

**REGIONAL**

**CORRESPONDENTS**

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

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

**VIDEO CORRESPONDENT**

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

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

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

# South Caucasus Facing Global Competition Among China, Russia and the US

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The global competition among China, Russia, and the United States continues to intensify, encompassing various regions around the world. One of the most striking examples of this is the interaction — more accurately, the rivalry — of these superpowers with the countries of Central Asia. In just the past six months, there have been fundamental developments in the region that demonstrate the zenith of this competition and diplomatic activity, and this has important implications for the South Caucasus.

Central Asia is an exceptionally interesting region, as its five states border Iran, Russia, Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and others. Despite certain internal challenges, the region continues to hold significant strategic importance. Moreover, considering that the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan has somewhat reduced US influence in the region, it has created an opportunity for Russia and China to expand their tools and presence there.

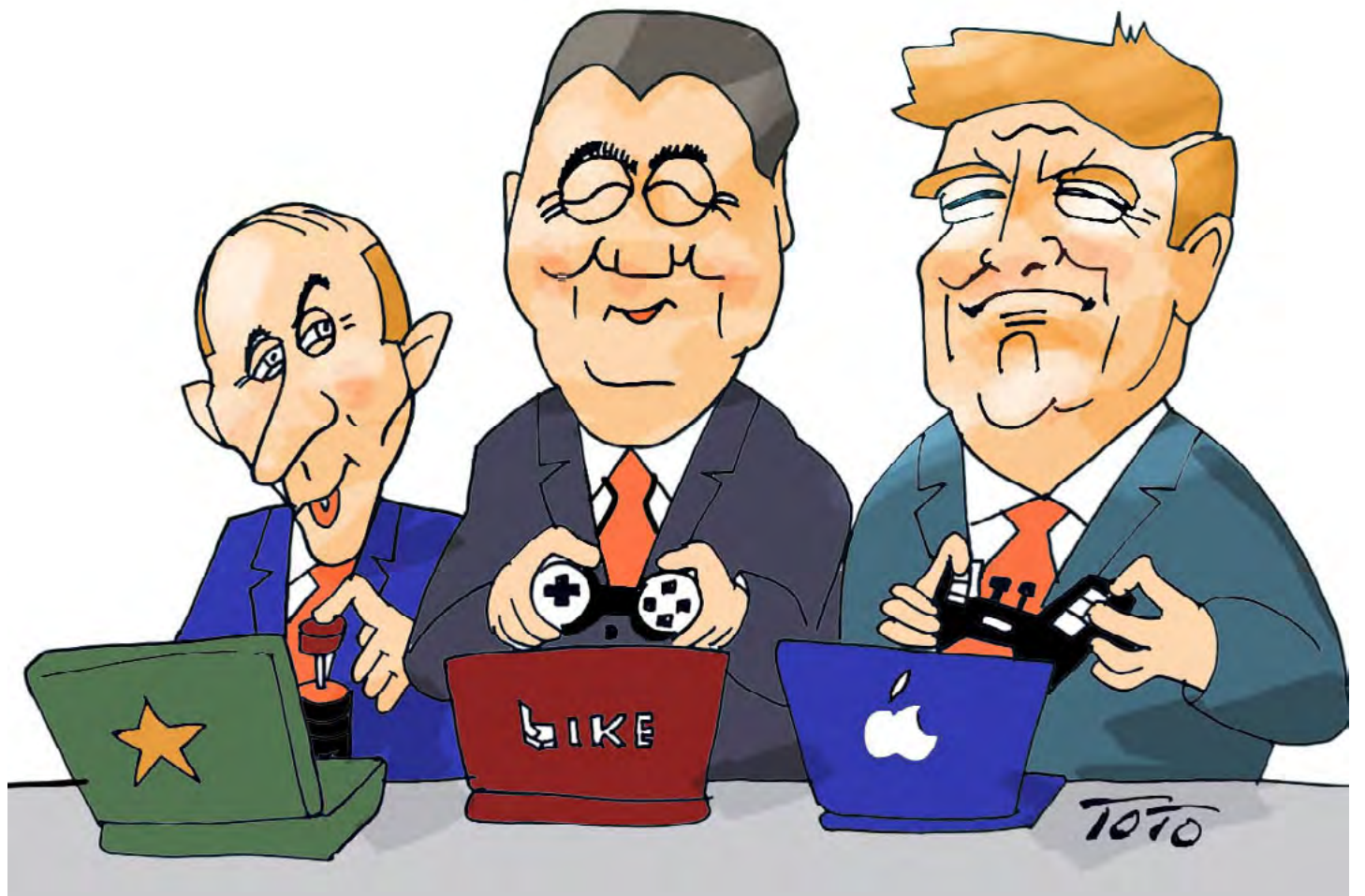
Russia has traditionally maintained close relations with the Central Asian states, given their shared historical past and exis-

tral Asia and the US.

Such intensity of activity indicates that the Eurasian region has become a major arena of competition among global powers. Of course, the South Caucasus states are still far from presenting a unified position — there remain unresolved issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan, while Georgia continues to face its own challenges with Russia. Nonetheless, competition in the region is evident, not so much in a collective regional context, but rather in terms of each global power working separately with individual states.

The recent cooling phase in Russia-Azerbaijan relations appears to have been overcome, as evidenced by the recent meeting between the two countries' leaders. Russia's policy toward Armenia remains relatively stable, and in Russo-Georgian relations, there have been some positive developments. For its part, China has signed strategic partnership agreements with Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

As for the United States, it has also signed similar documents with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, while its earlier agreement with Georgia remains in place, though its implementation is currently suspended due to certain issues in bilateral relations. Moreover, Trump's route could transform the US presence



tence within a single political entity. However, China has also made a strong bid to increase its influence in this region, which it views as vital to its national interests. Therefore, taking into account the organic connection between Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as well as their commonalities and global trade routes, one can draw certain conclusions about the possible future of Armenia and the South Caucasus based on developments unfolding in Central Asia, especially after the implementation of the "Trump route" as a possible trade route connecting China, Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and the EU.

In June 2025, Chinese President Xi Jinping went to Kazakhstan to attend the second China-Central Asia Summit, a high-stakes diplomatic gathering aimed at deepening Beijing's economic and strategic ties with the region. On October 9 Vladimir Putin took part in the second Russia-Central Asia Summit, held in Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe. The discussion centered on expanding cooperation between Russia and the states of the region across a range of areas, including trade, economic, financial, industrial, logistics, and energy ties. Particular attention was paid to strengthening regional security in light of the tense situations in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a final communiqué and a joint action plan for 2025–2027. And finally, on November 6, the Central Asian presidents gathered in Washington, DC, to meet President Trump and deepen strategic ties between Cen-

tral Asia and the US. from a business-oriented one into a strategic presence — if he succeeds in giving this route significant weight by ensuring large-scale trade turnover, thereby connecting China and Central Asia with the South Caucasus and Europe, having an "American checkpoint" in between.

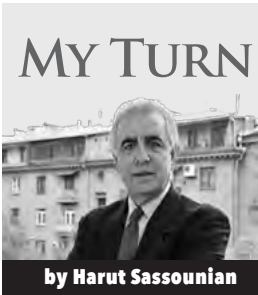
Central Asia is organically connected to the South Caucasus, not only from a shared historical perspective but also because nearly all of these states are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Some remain members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, while others are part of the Eurasian Economic Union, meaning they continue to participate in the same international structures as Armenia. Moreover, through the Belt and Road Initiative, they are linked organically, as several branches of the project will connect China to Europe, passing through Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Therefore, the growing competition in Central Asia is bound to have a significant impact on the future of the South Caucasus, shaping its main directions of development for the nearest future.

(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 Tucker Carlson Exposes Pashinyan’s Assault On Armenian Church to Millions of Americans

For seven years, the West has thoroughly indulged Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, allowing him to get away with all sorts of anti-democratic measures without a single complaint from the so-called Free World.

Pashinyan claims that the West supports his government because he has brought democracy to Armenia, even though he has established a one-man rule, bordering on a totalitarian regime.

Western countries express their uncritical support for Pashinyan not because he has done wonderful things for Armenia, but because he serves their interests. The whole world, including Azerbaijan and Turkey, is overjoyed that Pashinyan is conceding everything, making it possible for them to impose their will on Armenia.

Last week, Tucker Carlson, an American conservative political commentator, exposed Pashinyan’s fake democratic façade to millions of Americans. Carlson, a prominent former Fox News journalist, now hosts the Tucker Carlson Show, which has five million viewers on YouTube and three million on Facebook.

During an 80-minute interview, Carlson spoke with Narek Karapetyan, the nephew of industrialist Samvel Karapetyan, who is imprisoned by Pashinyan for defending the Armenian Apostolic Church, and his attorney, Bob Amsterdam. Pashinyan’s supporters tried to denigrate the interview by falsely claiming that Karapetyan paid Carlson \$400,000.

Within 48 hours of its airing, the interview was viewed on X (Twitter) by 3 million people with 15,000 likes, 5,000 reposts, and 2,500 comments. On YouTube, 330,000 people watched the interview, which so far has garnered 15,000 likes and 4,000 comments. On Facebook, it got 75,000 views, 1,800 likes, and 400 comments. Thousands more viewed it on shared Facebook pages and Instagram accounts.

The conversation began by discussing the facts of the Armenian Genocide. Carlson described the murdered Armenians as “Christian martyrs.”

Turning to Pashinyan’s role in Armenia, Carlson said: “You have a prime minister of Armenia who seems to be intent on destroying traditional Christianity or the Church.” Narek Karapetyan replied: “Our prime minister, six months ago, started to attack the Armenian Church and the head of the Armenian Church. He wants to dethrone him. He imprisoned three archbishops.”

Narek explained that philanthropist Samvel Karapetyan was arrested at Pashinyan’s orders after he told journalists: “A small group of people forgetting Armenian history, forgetting history of our Church is attacking the Armenian Church and the Armenian people. If the politicians will not handle the situation, we will take part in handling it ourselves, our way.” Pashinyan also ordered the confiscation of Karapetyan’s company valued at over half a billion dollars

Carlson stated: “This prime minister, who is clearly authoritarian by definition, is against the Church. So the idea is to break the back of Orthodox Chris-

tianity, of traditional Christianity in Armenia, and to use the police to do it.”

Narek replied: Pashinyan is doing these things because he “gets some information from Turkey and Azerbaijan that you must change the narrative of the Church, to forget the genocide and to have a new head of the Church to go to a peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

Carlson then interviewed Samvel Karapetyan’s attorney, Bob Amsterdam, who said: “In Armenia, there is going to be [on Nov. 14-15] a prayer breakfast...while my client, Samvel Karapetyan, is in jail. Archbishops have been jailed, clerics have been jailed. The leader of the country is trying to split the Church by going to services of a defrocked priest, a man who has said he is going to remove the leader of the Church. This man is being feted by American Christians in Yerevan, Armenia. A man who calls clerics prostitutes, a man who uses language that, at my advanced age, I’ve never heard a leader use against leaders of the Church. And yet, shockingly, this prayer breakfast is going to go on. And I call it a reputation-laundering breakfast. The US Government allows this to go on.”

Amsterdam added regarding the prayer breakfast: “I believe one of the Trump children is going to Armenia. I’m sure Donald Trump Jr. again has no idea of what’s actually going on there. It’s a terrible situation where, because you can’t get into the media to tell them the truth, so many senior people in the United States operate on ignorance and reputation-launder people like Pashinyan.... In Armenia they’ve just arrested not only bishops, but now they’ve arrested three mayors who spoke out and who weren’t helpful, as well as the family of the Patriarch, the Catholicos — the brother and some other relative — again, on completely trumped-up charges.”

Amsterdam then complained that Pashinyan is being pressured into signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan “at a tremendous cost to the people of Armenia. There are tremendous cultural and church relics that are being lost and defiled. There are 120,000 [Artsakhtsis] who have been cleansed from Azerbaijan and no thought has been given to this. We have 23 Christian [Armenian] hostages in Baku, and the prime minister of Armenia did not even speak of them when he was with President Trump. President Trump raised the issue. It is shocking how Armenia has a prime minister who seems to resent his own history as an Armenian. They’ve taken Mount Ararat off [passport] stamps. They don’t talk about the genocide. They attack the Church. The leader of the country wants to remove and appoint the Catholicos. Well, of course, he doesn’t understand what an apostolic Church is. To be an apostolic Church...you have to have a connection to the first apostles, which means your election must be sanctified by bishops, by leaders of the Church, not a political figure. He is shockingly ignorant of his own religion.”

Carlson responded: “It sounds like it’s not his religion. I mean, it sounds like he’s not a believer.”

Amsterdam added: “Samvel Karapetyan is an absolutely, unbelievably principled Christian who is now sitting in his fifth month in jail, innocent of everything other than praising God. And that’s why he’s in jail.”

Amsterdam then criticized the United States government and the European Union for supporting Pashinyan: “Our government has decided, as has the EU frankly, that they are going to go with the SOB [Pashinyan] they know.”

At the end of the interview, Amsterdam urged the public to read the 61-page White Paper titled “Nikol Pashinyan and the Persecution of Samvel Karapetyan and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church,” available online at “free-karapetyan.com.”

# The Mirage of the TRIPP Corridor: Why Washington Should Not Trade Principles for Illusions

By Denk Kalmyk

The recent Opinion column in Stars and Stripes promoting closer U.S. alignment with Azerbaijan through the so-called “TRIPP” corridor reads less like strategic analysis and more like polished lobbying. Behind its optimistic tone lies a familiar agenda: to erase the moral and legal foundations of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act — the only remaining safeguard against rewarding aggression in the South Caucasus.

The author portrays Azerbaijan as a “reliable partner” and “bulwark” against Russia, Iran and China.

This simplistic narrative collapses under even minimal scrutiny. Baku’s foreign policy has never been one of consistent alignment with the West; on the contrary, it is a textbook example of opportunistic balancing. Azerbaijan coordinates militarily with Turkey, trades freely with Iran, and maintains cordial ties with Russia facilitating its oil export bypassing sanctions. At the same time, Azerbaijan has elevated its relations with China to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, giving Beijing direct influence over its logistics and energy infrastructure.

Far from being a U.S. ally, Azerbaijan has become a node in Beijing’s westward expansion — the very devel-

opment Washington claims to counter.

The column’s central argument that the TRIPP initiative will “improve U.S. influence and contain China” ignores this contradiction.

The same infrastructure that supposedly carries “American connectivity” would, in reality, transport Chinese capital, technology and goods.

Repealing Section 907 under these conditions would amount not to strategy, but to self-disarmament. It would subsidize a regime that has already handed strategic corridors to Beijing while continuing to destabilize its democratic neighbor Armenia.

The second fallacy is moral. The author treats the 2023 ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenian population as an inconvenient detail best forgotten. Over 100,000 civilians were displaced within weeks; centuries-old cultural monuments and churches stand under threat; and humanitarian access remains restricted. Ignoring this reality in favor of pipelines and railways signals to aggressors everywhere that human rights and sovereignty are negotiable if the geography is useful enough.

The TRIPP narrative turns Washington’s value-based diplomacy into a commodity auctioned to the highest bidder in oil and transit rights. Third, the economic ar-

gument lacks evidence. The author imagines a seamless corridor linking Central Asia’s rare-earths to Europe via the Caspian Sea, yet provides no data on investment feasibility, regulatory transparency, or security of supply.

In practice, Azerbaijan ranks low in transparency indices, suffers from pervasive corruption, and depends on Chinese financing for major infrastructure. More fundamentally, the column presents the region as a chessboard where the U.S. must choose Azerbaijan to counter Russia and Iran.

This Cold War mentality reduces complex societies to pawns and ignores local consequences.

Armenia, the region’s only democracy and a historic partner of the United States, is treated as collateral damage — an outdated ally sacrificed to realism. Yet real realism requires acknowledging that stable influence cannot rest on authoritarian partnerships alone.

History repeatedly shows that transactional allies become liabilities when regimes change or interests diverge. Azerbaijan’s media repression, dynastic politics, and military adventurism make it an inherently unstable anchor for U.S. strategy.

The call to repeal Section 907 epitomizes this short-sightedness. Enacted in 1992, the law conditioned U.S. aid on Azerbaijan’s ending of blockades and use of force against Armenia. It was not the product of ethnic lobbying but of bipartisan consensus that American assistance must not reward aggression. Those conditions have not only persisted, but culminated in the 2020 and 2023 offensives. Removing the law now would reward precisely the behavior it was designed to deter.

Waivers already provide flexibility for U.S. national security cooperation; abolition would merely signal that coercion carries no cost.

see CORRIDOR, page 20



# Armenian, Italian Military Prosecution Bodies Sign MoU to Enhance Cooperation

YEREAN (Armenpress) — Prosecutor-General of Armenia Anna Vardapetyan and Italian Military Prosecutor-General at the Supreme Court of Cassation Maurizio Block signed a memorandum of understanding on November 7.

The document provides for enhanced cooperation between the Military Prosecutor’s Office of Armenia and the Italian Military Prosecutor General’s Office, the Prosecutor-General’s Office reported.

Ambassador of Armenia to Italy Vladimir Karapetyan, the Military Prosecutor/Deputy Prosecutor General of Armenia Grigor Elizbaryan, and Deputy Prosecutor General Yeghiazar Avagyan, among others, also attended the signing ceremony.

Vardapetyan congratulated the attendees on the occasion of the signing of the memorandum and emphasized that the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Armenia strives to ensure close cooperation with international and regional profession-



Anna Vardapetyan and Maurizio Block al organizations, as well as with the prosecutorial bodies of other countries.

“This cooperation allows the professional capabilities of prosecutors to be aligned with international standards, as well as to ensure faster and closer collaboration with our foreign partners in the context of specif-

ic criminal cases,” said the Prosecutor General of Armenia, adding that the signing of the document is the result of the agreement reached in Armenia in 2024 with Maurizio Block.

“The purpose of the Memorandum is to expand the framework of effective cooperation between the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Armenia and the Military Prosecutor’s Office at the Supreme Court of Cassation of Italy in areas of common interest in the field of criminal prosecution of military cases. By signing this Memorandum, we further strengthen our already established cooperation and commit to carrying out more targeted and multifaceted collaboration in the future,” emphasized Anna Vardapetyan.

The areas of cooperation outlined in the memorandum are comprehensive. They include, among other things, the provision and exchange of information regarding legal acts and practical activities.

## Rachida Dati Files Suit Against Attorney François Devedjian

PARIS (Armenews.com) — Minister of Culture Rachida Dati, a candidate for mayor of Paris, this week filed a complaint with the head of the Paris Bar Association for “serious and repeated breaches of the essential principles” of the legal profession against François Devedjian. At issue are Devedjian’s recurring criticisms of her ties to Azerbaijan and his referral to court for corruption and influence peddling.

Devedjian, known for his support of the Armenian cause, regularly criticizes on social media the ties between Dati, a member of the French government, and Azerbaijan and its leaders. He believes this complaint comes in the wake of his “constant” reminders that the minister is being sent to trial for corruption and influence peddling in the Renault-Nissan affair.

“The constant reminder of her referral to the criminal court for corruption and influence peddling seems to seriously annoy Ms. Dati. Yet this is an objective fact which in no way undermines the presumption of innocence,” he wrote on the platform formerly known as Twitter.

In the same message, the lawyer compared Dati’s attitude to that of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev:

“Like her ‘good friend’ Ilham Aliyev, Ms. Dati clearly doesn’t appreciate those who oppose her and intends to silence them. Alas, France is not Azerbaijan, and citizens – including lawyers – still have the right to speak,” he wrote.

The release immediately triggered a wave of messages of support.

Devedjian concluded his message with a quote from André Gide: “The accusation has the audacity to come from those who have absolutely no legitimacy.”

## Why Washington Should Not Trade Principles for Illusions

CORRIDOR, from page 19

Finally, the piece omits the broader strategic paradox: By rushing to embrace Azerbaijan, Washington risks alienating both democratic Armenia and its own Armenian American constituency — a politically active community that has consistently supported bipartisan measures for accountability and sanctions against war crimes. No durable regional strategy can emerge from ignoring moral consistency at home. The TRIPP corridor, as presented, is less a vision of peace than a mirage of influence. It conflates geography with loyalty and commerce with stability. A truly sustainable U.S. policy would prioritize conditional engagement, balanced regional diplomacy, and enforcement of Section 907. It would recognize that deterrence preserves influence. Washington should remember the lesson every empire learns too late: Once moral leverage is traded for expedient alliances, both are lost. The United States has nothing to gain from underwriting authoritarian adventurism under the illusion of connectivity. The path to real stability in the South Caucasus begins not with new corridors, but with the courage to hold aggressors accountable.

Den Kalmyk is an expert on the post-Soviet space. He was senior lecturer at Yale and Oxford universities from 2001 to 2008. This commentary was originally published in Stars and Stripes ([www.strips.com](http://www.strips.com)).



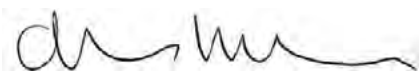
### To Our Readers:

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is the first English-language Armenian weekly published in the US from 1932. Readers can learn of the most important developments in Armenia, as well as international politics, art and culture throughout the world in a convenient and concise format.


The *Mirror-Spectator* has covered the violence and political uncertainty affecting Armenia and Artsakh, supported efforts at humanitarian fundraising, and continued to provide periodic video reports online. Send us your email if you wish to receive our weekly updates.

We continue with our annual tradition of publishing your Christmas and New Year’s wishes, and greetings to relatives and friends in the final issue of the year. In case you wish to give gift subscriptions of the *Mirror-Spectator* for Christmas, for your convenience, we are placing a gift subscription form in the newspaper as well as one below. Your support is what keeps us going and we always enjoy hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Alin K. Gregorian  
Editor



Aram Arkun  
Managing Editor

I/We would like to make a contribution \_\_ \$10,000 \_\_ \$5000 \_\_ \$2000 \_\_ \$1000 \_\_ \$500 \_\_ \$300 \_\_ \$200 \_\_ \$100 \_\_ other By check \_\_ By Credit Card \_\_ Name .....

Billing Address.....City..... State.....Zip.....

Card Number.....Expiration date: Month.....Year..... Security Code.....

Your Christmas Message:

-----

-----

Please make checks payable to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and mail this voucher in the enclosed envelope. The deadline for receiving the messages is Dec. 19, 2025. For gift subscriptions fill out the credit card information above, OR send a check, for: \_\_ \$100 US \_\_ \$150 Canada \_\_\$230

International and write: \_\_ Yes, I/We would like to gift a subscription to: NAME -----

ADDRESS -----