

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR~ SPECTATOR

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## Another Jailed Armenian Bishop Goes On Trial

By Naira Bulghadåarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A district court extended the arrest of an Armenian bishop at odds with the government at the start of his trial on Monday, January 26.

Bishop Mkrtich Proshyan, the primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church diocese in the central Aragatsotn province, was arrested in October amid Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's attempts to depose Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

He was charged

with illegally ordering his subordinates to attend opposition rallies and vote against Pashinyan's party in 2021 parliamentary elections.

Proshyan, who is a nephew of Karekin, denies the accusations. The church's Mother See in Echmiadzin also rejects them as politically motivated.

On the day of Proshyan's arrest, Armenia's Investigative Committee also rounded up at least 12 other Aragatsotn priests. All but one of them were released without charge hours later. Some of them accused investigators of trying to pressure them into giving incriminating testimony against the diocese head.

The criminal case is understood to be based on testimony given by two other local priests who were defrocked by Karekin

see BISHOP, page 2

## Longtime Tekeyan Leader Maro Bedrosian Passes Away

HOUSTON, Tex. — Maro Bedrosian, longtime leader and treasurer of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada,

passed away on January 27, leaving behind loving family, friends, Tekeyan colleagues and a multitude of Armenians in the diaspora and Armenia. She had dedicated her life to the Armenian people and the homeland through her service in the Tekeyan Cultural Association. More details about her life and funeral arrangements will follow in a forthcoming issue. The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the *Mirror-Spectator* staff extend their condolences to the Bedrosian family.

### YEREVAN

Fallen Soldiers Remembered On January 27



### BERLIN

Plea to Stop Genocide Falls On Deaf Ears in 'Homo Politicus'

see Page 6



### GLENDALE

Legacy of Haigazian University Highlighted

see Page 8



Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Armenia Anushik Avetyan and her entourage near the Maraga checkpoint (Armenpress photo)

## Deputy Minister Says Opening Armenia-Turkey Border For Third-Country Citizens Will Boost Economy

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Since the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border to citizens of third countries is currently being discussed, its first and fastest impact will be an increase in tourist flows, said Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Armenia Anushik Avetyan during a tour of the Margara checkpoint on the Armenia-Turkey border, adding that this will especially affect the service sector.

"The opening of the border with Turkey can have a quick practical and positive impact on the economy. It is obvious that many problems are created for business entities when, being a landlocked country, two out of four borders are closed at the same time. As you know, we are highly dependent on the Lars checkpoint, and the opening of the border with Turkey will help business entities in several ways. First, transporta-

tion costs will be reduced, supply chains will be streamlined, and access to markets will be expanded. Closed borders have increased logistics costs for many years and limited competition and created major problems for Armenian producers in terms of finding their place in the global market," Avetyan added, also emphasizing the opening of the border with Turkey from the perspective of Armenia's export diversification agenda.

She said she believes that opening the border will make it possible to reduce dependence on limited routes and destinations, as well as enter new markets and diversify exports.

"At the same time, expert studies show that this will have a positive impact on foreign trade, as well as on the inflow of investments and the investment environment. According to some expert studies, a 20 percent increase in investment flows is expected not only in Armenia, but also in the region. I would like to emphasize that at the moment we are conducting a study to assess in more detail what impact the opening of borders will have on the economy and, perhaps, in the second stage, we will also conduct a study of what interconnections it will have on all economies in the region, what changes it will bring to cooperation and economic development," the Deputy Minister noted, expressing

see BORDER, page 2

## Vance to Visit Armenia, Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON (Azatutyun) — US Vice President JD Vance will travel to Azerbaijan and Armenia next month to build on Armenian-Azerbaijani peace agreements brokered by the United States, President Donald Trump announced over the weekend.

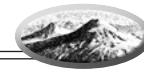
"In February, Vice President Vance will travel to both countries to build on our Peace efforts, and advance the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity [TRIPP]," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social Platform.

"We will strengthen our strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, a beautiful Agreement for Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation with Armenia, Deals

see VANCE, page 5



Vice President JD Vance



## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Mirzoyan, Guyomar Discuss ECHR Cooperation

YEREVAN (News.am) — Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan met with the president of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Mattias Guyomar, on January 27, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia informed Armenian News-NEWS.am.

The two exchanged views on cooperation between Armenia and the ECHR, ensuring the rule of law, and promoting independent justice. Also, they noted with satisfaction the active engagement with the ECHR at various levels.

### PACE Calls for Release of Armenians Prisoners

YEREVAN (News.am) — The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has called for the release of all Armenians held in Azerbaijan. Deputy speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia, Ruben Rubinyan, wrote this week on Facebook

"A short while ago, a resolution entitled PACE 'Progress in the Assembly's Monitoring Procedure' was adopted in Strasbourg, where in the part concerning Armenia, among other things, the assembly expresses deep concern 'regarding information about plans to seize power [in Armenia] by several [Armenian Apostolic] Church clergymen,' and in the part concerning Azerbaijan, among other things, a call is made to release all Armenians held there," Rubinyan wrote.

### Armenia Invites All States to COP17

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia's Minister of Environment Hambardzum Matevosyan on January 26 addressed Azerbaijan's potential participation in COP17, clarifying that all member states of the convention — 196 in total — are invited to the event.

"Armenia is hosting and presiding over COP17, but this is not only our event, it is a global one. The UN is also an inviting party. All countries have already been informed about the dates and the event itself. While formal invitations haven't yet been sent, they will be soon, and each country's environment ministry or designated authority has already been notified," Matevosyan stated, as reported by 1lurer.am.

He added that they expect a high-level turnout, including ministers and senior officials.

"As for which countries will confirm participation and which won't, it's too early to say. The invitations are sent jointly with the UN. This is both our event and a global one. We are inviting all 196 countries. One of the event's themes is working together on shared environmental challenges. No country should be excluded from this process. We are ready to host all delegations," the minister concluded.

# Income Declaration Introduced in Armenia: Why It Matters and How It Works

By **Nina Abgaryan & Shoghik Mikayelyan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — The introduction of mandatory income declaration marks a major change in Armenia's tax system. While this is standard practice in many countries, for Armenian citizens it is something entirely new, which explains the confusion and frustration surrounding it.

Until recently, individuals were not expected to declare their income or deal with taxes themselves. For decades, employers took care of everything: calculating salaries, withholding taxes, paying them to the state, and filing reports through company accountants. This process was initially paper-based and transitioned to electronic systems about a decade ago. Throughout this transition, employees did not need to interact with tax authorities.

Over the past two years, this changed. The government first introduced income declaration for company founders and executives, and later expanded it to include all income-earning individuals. Accordingly, citizens are now required to independently declare all sources of income through the Electronic Reporting System and, when applicable, pay taxes through banks.

Unlike the US system, where individuals calculate their own taxes, Armenia's tax obligations are set by the government. Much of the data — such as salary and bank interest — is already pre-filled using information from employers and banks. Citizens are expected to review and confirm this information rather than calculate everything from scratch. However, they must add any additional income that does not appear in the system.

Income subject to declaration includes salaries, service income, rental income, bank interest, livestock, and income from sales or transactions. Taxes are paid through banks. Businesses continue to be taxed separately, while individuals declare personal income. For example, if someone rents out property, they must declare that income; the tax is calculated automatically, and the landlord pays it — much like how people have long paid their real estate taxes themselves.

Income declaration is not just a legal

requirement; it is part of a broader effort to create a more transparent and fair system. By May 1 each year, individuals must report their income for the previous year. The aim is to reduce the shadow economy, limit corruption, and build trust between citizens and the state.

Some citizens are concerned about privacy. Attorney Vanuhi Gasparyan notes that income declaration does not violate privacy as long as the law is followed. The data is collected strictly for public purposes — such as transparency and tax disci-

to take the following steps: 1. Electronic signature: Visit a mobile operator, pay the required fee, activate the signature, and remember the PIN code. And all these incur fees.

As accountant Levon Hourikyan emphasizes, clear understanding is essential for compliance: citizens need to know which income is taxable, whether additional taxes apply, and how to navigate the electronic system to avoid mistakes or double taxation. He further points out that the declaratory system bears the purpose



Accountant Levon Hourikyan, director of Complex Service LLC

pline — and is accessible only to authorized institutions.

#### Challenges

One of the downsides, according to accountant Gayane Gomtsyan, is that many citizens — especially those unfamiliar with the system — resort to paid services, which increases their expenses.

Additional challenges include technical issues, system delays, lack of electronic signatures or ID cards, fees for bank statements, and low digital literacy — particularly in rural areas and among older citizens. Moreover, many households, both in cities and villages, either lack internet access or do not know how to use it effectively. Another layer of difficulty for those without internet access or digital skills for filing a declaration is as the process of obtaining an electronic signature and an ID card. To obtain them, citizens have

of focused state programs and direct support of citizens' well-being with tax revenues. In other words, when visible, the positive outcomes of income declaration would turn compliance into a habit, not a burden.

#### Temporary Solution

Recognizing how unprepared many citizens were, the government introduced support measures for the 2025 tax year to ease the transition. In that year, the government filed the declarations itself. However, the future of this arrangement remains unclear.

Income declaration is a significant step toward transparency and better governance, but it requires time, guidance, and access to be truly inclusive. Done right, it can become not just an obligation, but a tool that empowers citizens and strengthens trust in the country.

### Opening Armenia-Turkey Border For Third-Country Citizens Will Boost Economy

BORDER, from page 1

confidence that shorter and more affordable logistics routes will allow Armenian manufacturers to enter new markets, reduce dependence on a limited number of destinations, and ensure faster and more flexible supplies.

According to Avetyan, with the lifting of the road blockade and the proximity of the EU-Turkey Customs Union, Armenia's export opportunities to the EU can expand, especially in terms of industrial goods.

She considered it significant that open borders will benefit not only Armenia, but also the entire region.

"The activation of transit flows and the shortening of supply chains are beneficial for all parties involved. This will increase the region's competitiveness and attractiveness on international trade routes," the Deputy Minister summarized.

### Another Jailed Armenian Bishop Goes on Trial

BISHOP, from page 1

and pledged allegiance to Pashinyan last fall. Both men, who continued to occupy their churches with the help of law-enforcement officers, attended the opening session of the trial, sitting next to a prosecutor.

The prosecutor asked the court to extend Proshyan's arrest by three months, saying that the bishop could pressure the witness in the case if released from custody. Proshyan's lawyer, Roman Aharonian, countered that no witnesses have been called to the trial by the prosecution. Meanwhile, the presiding judge agreed to only a one-month extension of the arrest.

Three archbishops in the Armenian Church have also been arrested and indicted since Pashinyan began pressuring

Garegin to resign in June. They too deny different charges leveled against them.

Archbishop Mikael Ajapahyan, who heads the church diocese in Armenia's northwestern Shirak province, was sentenced in early October to two years in prison for calling for a violent overthrow of the Armenian government. Another, even more outspoken archbishop, Bagrat Galstanyan, is standing trial together with his 17 supporters accused of plotting "terrorist acts" in a bid to seize power.

Karekin has refused to step down despite the crackdown. The supreme head of the church insisted earlier this month that it remains "firm and unshaken" in the face of what he called "repressions" unleashed by Pashinyan's administration.

# Fallen Soldiers Remembered on January 27

YEREVAN (Panorama.am and PanArmenian.net) — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Yerablur Military Pantheon on Tuesday to pay tribute to fallen soldiers as the country marked for the first time a state-designated remembrance day for those who died defending the homeland.

Families of Armenian soldiers killed in the 2020 war gathered at Yerevan's Yerablur Military Pantheon early on January 27 to bar Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other senior officials from approaching the graves of their loved ones.

The protest coincided with Armenia's first official observance of a newly established remembrance day honoring those who died defending the homeland. Pashinyan and other government officials visited the military cemetery as part of official commemorations, prompting objections from grieving families.

Vigen Azatyan, whose son Arman Azatyan was a conscript killed during the 2020 war, said many families came to Yerablur with the same intention.

"We are here to prevent Pashinyan and government officials from approaching our sons' graves," the man told reporters.

He said the families oppose the newly designated remembrance day, insisting that September 27, the date marking the outbreak of the 2020 war, should be officially recognized instead.

"For us, September 27 is the real date,"



Flags at the Yerablur Military Pantheon

he said. "Why has nothing been adopted at the state level to mark September 27? Is it because Azerbaijan does not allow it?"

Homeland Party leader Artur Vanetsyan paid tribute to all those killed in the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) wars.

Vanetsyan, a former NSS chief, visited

the Yerablur Military Pantheon, where he laid flowers at the Call of Artsakh memorial complex to honor all those killed in the Artsakh wars, those buried in Artsakh, as well as the victims of the deadly fuel depot explosion in Stepanakert on September 25, 2023.

Speaking to reporters, Vanetsyan described the day as a painful one for the nation.

"Today is an extremely important and difficult day. I truly wish such a day had never existed in our history," he said. "We must bow our heads before our fallen heroes and their parents, children, wives, sisters and brothers. They made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their loved ones to the homeland so that we could live and endure."

Vanetsyan emphasized that Armenia must take every possible step to prevent further losses and secure its future.

"We must ensure that there are no new victims and that our country can develop in peace and safety," he added.

The visit also drew sharp criticism from opposition politician Levon Zurabyan, coordinator of the Armenian National Con-

gress (ANC), who accused Pashinyan of hypocrisy and moral cynicism.

"Nikol Pashinyan's entire persona is embodied in the 'message' of today's official commemoration," Zurabyan wrote on Facebook.

He stressed that Pashinyan had sacrificed "thousands of lives and the security and dignity of millions" to cling to power and to meet the expectations of foreign actors. He linked the sacrifices to his efforts to avoid accusations of treason and to enable "reconciliation" with Azerbaijan and dialogue with Turkey.

A memorial service was held at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to mark the occasion.

The ceremony, led by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, took place at the Mother Cathedral in Etchmiadzin, the headquarters of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the church press service reported.

Clergy and worshipers prayed for the repose of souls for those who sacrificed their lives for the homeland, marking the national day of remembrance and reverence for fallen soldiers.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II celebrated a mass for the fallen soldiers

## Sergey Smbatyan Reappointed UNICEF National Ambassador in Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Sergey Smbatyan, founder, artistic director and principal conductor of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, principal conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, and artistic director of the Khachaturian International Competition, has been reappointed as UNICEF National Ambassador in Armenia.

Smbatyan was first appointed to the role in 2023 and has since worked closely with UNICEF to promote positive parenting and early childhood learning. In 2025, he visited the renovated Artashat Kindergarten No. 4, expressing his support for UNICEF's efforts to expand access to inclusive early learning services for children from refugee and host communities.

In 2024, with the support of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra under Smbatyan's leadership, the building of the Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet was illuminated in UNICEF blue to mark the 35th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The symbolic event was followed by

the opening concert of the 12th Khachaturian International Festival, which was also dedicated to World Children's Day.

In 2023, the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra Support Foundation, led by Smbatyan, raised funds for UNICEF through seven concerts, enabling the organization to provide multifunctional pharmacy vouchers to refugee children with disabilities. In 2024, Maestro Smbatyan met several of the children and families who had received assistance through the program.

"We are pleased to continue our partnership with Maestro Sergey Smbatyan as UNICEF National Ambassador," said Christine Weigand, UNICEF Representative in Armenia. "Over the past years, Maestro Smbatyan has used his voice, art and influence to advocate for the rights and well-being of children in Armenia. His commitment to early childhood learning, inclusion and children's rights demonstrates the powerful impact culture and care can have when united around a shared goal. We look forward to continuing our cooperation to ensure that every child, re-

gardless of background or circumstances, has the opportunity to learn, develop and reach their full potential."

Expressing his gratitude, Smbatyan said he was pleased to be reappointed as UNICEF National Ambassador, noting that the renewed appointment reflects the effectiveness of the partnership for both sides. "What matters most to me is having another opportunity to create value for children," he said. He also highlighted the "Symphonic Fairy Tales" initiative, which introduces classical music to children from kindergarten age, describing it as an integral part of a broader educational process with long-term impact on the popularization of classical music.

The reappointment ceremony was followed by a panel discussion titled "Symphonic Fairy Tales," dedicated to the importance of classical music in early childhood development and preschool education. The discussion was moderated by Anna Avanesyan, host of Public Television's "Parental Meeting" program.

Panel participants included Deputy

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia Araksya Svajyan, UNICEF Early Childhood Development Program Officer Maya Simonyan, Head of Educational Programs at "Symphonic Class A" Tatev Adamyan, Director of Vagharschap's "Vostan" Kindergarten Lusine Avagyan, and Director for Content and Development at the "School of Parents" NGO Lusine Aghabekyan.

During the discussion, UNICEF and the "Symphonic Class A" educational program founded by Smbatyan presented their joint "Symphonic Fairy Tales" initiative, launched in 2025. With the support of the government of Japan, partners developed an educational module and guideline aimed at encouraging young children to explore the world of classical music and art, contributing to their psychosocial well-being. The program has already been piloted in five communities across Armenia and will soon be submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with the goal of scaling it nationwide.



# Recently Transferred Karabakh Armenians Allegedly Unaware They Were Being Sent to Armenia

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

Eleven Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians who have recently been transferred to Armenia have reportedly claimed they were not informed of their final destination, despite Armenian officials and Azerbaijani pro-government media claiming the 11 had submitted petitions for their transfer.

The 11 Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians were handed over to Armenia on January 23.

On Monday, January 26, Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian Tigran Petrosyan wrote on Facebook that their transfer to Armenia was “the final act of ethnic cleansing.” Petrosyan had left the region years before, likely in 2023.

Petrosyan dismissed official statements claiming that the 11 Armenians had petitioned for their transfer, instead citing those Nagorno-Karabakh residents as saying they “weren’t even told where they were being taken.”

“During the expulsion, they weren’t even told where they were being taken. They were brought to the Hakari Bridge [previously connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia], where they were made to sign papers and then they were handed over to the Armenians,” Petrosyan wrote.

Additionally, Petrosyan described the conditions in which Armenians were held in Stepanakert as being “colonial-like.”

“They were forbidden from moving anywhere, meaning that in recent months, they were essentially held as captives,” Petrosyan elaborated.

In a comment to RFE/RL, Petrosyan said that he learned the information from his acquaintance who was among those transferred on 23 January.

On the way, they even thought that they were being taken to be killed, with some of them ‘sobbing in terror,’ Petrosyan said.

Musheg Grigoryan, who previously appeared in Azerbaijani propaganda videos, as well as reportedly testifying against the region’s former State Minister Ruben Vardanyan in 2025, reportedly refused to move to Armenia and was sent back from the Hakari Bridge.

Armenia’s Labour and Social Affairs Minister Arsen Torosyan had claimed the day of the transfer that all of those moved had submitted individual requests to both the authorities in Armenia and Azerbaijan.



A young man stares out at the mountains of Nagorno-Karabakh during the mass exodus to Armenia in October 2023. (Photo Marut Vanyan/OC Media)

However, it remains unclear how the individuals contacted the Armenian side, particularly given that most were elderly and that some reportedly have mental health issues.

#### “Under State Protection”

On Monday, Nver Kostanyan, the spokesperson of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, told News.am that the 11 Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians were under “state protection, [and] undergoing the necessary medical examinations and psychological support.”

RFE/RL reported that Armenian authorities did not contact the relatives of those transferred. Instead, family members said they obtained information only after making repeated attempts to reach officials and learn about their relatives’ condition and whereabouts.

According to RFE/RL, the majority of the recently transferred individuals have been placed at a hotel in Aghveran, Kotayk

Province. The Health Ministry confirmed that three of them were in psychiatric facilities for medical evaluations and that none were in serious condition.

A relative of one of the individuals told RFE/RL that their family member had signs of beatings and abuse.

Amid a lack of transparency surrounding the transfer of the individuals, a number of allegations have emerged regarding the possible reasons behind it.

The handful of Armenians who had remained in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan’s assault on the region in 2023 allegedly had not previously expressed a desire to relocate to Armenia, even when the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) still maintained a presence in Azerbaijan.

The ICRC had facilitated the transfer of some Armenians who remained in the region until it was forced to suspend its activities in September 2025.

Lawyer Ara Ghazaryan, who represents Armenian prisoners held in Azerbaijan at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), suggested that the return of the 11 individuals may be linked to increased Azerbaijani pressure following the arrest of Karen Avanesyan in Stepanakert.

In December 2025, four months after his arrest, Azerbaijan sentenced 58-year-old Avanesyan, who reportedly has mental health issues, to 16 years in prison on charges of “terrorism.”

In the absence of independent observers on the ground, it is impossible to determine the exact number of Armenians left in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The vast majority of the region’s Armenian population was forced to flee to Armenia after Azerbaijan’s September 2023 assault on the region and the surrender of its authorities.

(This story originally appeared on the website [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on January 27.)

## Human Rights Activists Urge Armenian Authorities to Release Body of Murdered Chechen Woman for Burial

By Elizaveta Chukharova

The human rights organization NC SOS Crisis Group has launched a petition calling on Armenia to release the body of Aishat Baimuradova to be buried in Chechnya. Baimuradova’s body has been kept by the authorities for more than three months after her murder in Yerevan.

The authorities in Yerevan have not allowed Baimuradova’s handover to her relatives or friends. Human rights defenders stress that there are people “from human rights activists to Aishat’s friends” who are ready to organize her burial.

In a statement, the NC SOS Crisis Group called on Armenian authorities to “release the body and allow a proper farewell and burial,” noting that this is important both for the friends and loved ones of the murdered woman and “to demonstrate an adequate and dignified attitude towards the victim.” They called on people to sign the petition

on Change.org demanding assistance in ensuring a more transparent investigation into Baimuradova’s murder and prompt information about the progress of the case.

The authors of the petition also proposed creating a rapid response mechanism for cases of enforced disappearances, killings, and other serious human rights violations in Armenia “in order to avoid similar tragedies in the future.”

At the time of publication, only 64 people had signed the petition.

Baimuradova was found dead at the end of October in Armenia’s capital, Yerevan. She had fled Chechnya to escape domestic violence and managed to leave Russia, after which she settled in Armenia. There, she “led the ordinary life of a young woman, worked, and ran social media accounts, hoping that in another country she would be safe,” the petition says.

According to the authors of the petition, after moving, Baimuradova continued to



Aishat Baimuradova

receive threats — “both from relatives and from other people from the Chechen Republic” — in connection with her escape and her critical attitude towards “local, social, political, and religious norms.”

Friends lost contact with her on 15 October, and a few days later she was found dead. According to preliminary information, the woman was poisoned, but the exact cause of death has still not been officially disclosed.

Human rights defenders say that the killing of Baimuradova may be classified as a so-called “honor killing,” a practice that is widespread in the North Caucasus. According to preliminary investigative data, representatives of the Chechen Republic, including individuals linked to the regional authorities, were involved in organizing the killing. It is assumed that they left the territory of Armenia immediately after the crime was committed.

Earlier, the NC SOS Crisis Group had already launched a petition calling for a fair and prompt investigation into the killing of Baimuradova. Human rights defenders believe that the public attention and resonance surrounding the case led to investigators identifying another suspect who left the crime scene, and that two suspects were placed on a wanted list and criminal cases were opened against them.

(This story originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on January 26.)



## INTERNATIONAL

# Azerbaijan Starts Gas Exports to Austria and Germany

**By David O'Byrne**

The Azerbaijani state energy company SOCAR has announced it is selling natural gas to Austria and Germany. But it remains an open question whether Baku can hit its promised target of delivering 20 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas to the European Union in the near future.

Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev, speaking on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, said the new export arrangements bring to 16 the number of countries Azerbaijan supplies with gas, 10 of which are EU members.

Yet the announcement sheds little light on whether Baku remains on track to meet its 2022 commitment to double gas exports to the EU within the next few years to 20 bcm. The original target for fulfillment was 2027, though Azerbaijan has already rolled back on that date.

SOCAR released few details about the supply deals with Austria and Germany: it is uncertain, then, if Baku is increasing EU-bound gas exports or merely redirecting gas already being exported to new buyers. The company has stated only that deliveries will be made via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), the westernmost section of the Southern Gas Corridor that carries Azerbaijani gas to Europe.

The Austrian/German supplies may be linked to a recent announcement by the TAP operating company that it expanded pipeline capacity by 1.2 bcm per year, starting this January. Similarly, the exports to

Germany may be part of a deal with SEFE, a state-owned German energy entity, announced in mid-2025. Under the terms of that deal, SOCAR is supposed to supply up to 1.5 bcm per year for 10 years.

Neither SOCAR, SEFE nor TAP have confirmed details of SOCAR's new exports, while Baku has also been silent on the identity of the Austrian importer and the volume it will import.

This lack of transparency from Baku seems par for the course. The past year has seen a marked reduction in the amount and quality of energy news and data released by both Azerbaijan government agencies and energy companies operating there.

Azerbaijan's Energy Ministry used to release regular monthly bulletins on oil & gas production and exports. But since April 2025 only three bulletins have been issued.

The most recent data, released January 12, shows that Azerbaijan's overall annual gas production in 2025 was 51.5 bcm, up just 2.4 percent on 2024's total, and a far lower rate of growth than needed if Baku hopes to significantly expand exports to Europe. Azerbaijani exports to the EU actually declined slightly in 2025, totaling 12.8 bcm, a 1 percent drop over the previous year's volume.

The most recent data raises concerns that Azerbaijan will not only have trouble meeting its EU commitment but also have enough gas to meet fast-growing domestic demand.

Most of Azerbaijan's gas exports come

from one field, the BP-operated Shah Deniz, production from which is currently being expanded via a second phase of development. However, BP has never confirmed the anticipated expanded rate of Shah Deniz production or disclosed how much gas it expects to produce from the deep gas reserves identified below its ACG oil field. Less than 18 months ago the company was happily trumpeting the ACG discovery, and less than three months ago confirming it expects production to start during the first half of 2026.

The only operator offering clearer targets has been TotalEnergies, whose Absheron field produced 1.6 bcm in 2025. A second phase of Absheron development is planned that could raise annual production to 6 bcm, if TotalEnergies agrees to make the necessary investment. To date an investment decision has not been announced.

The uncertainty about timelines has not stopped Baku from promising a large part of the extra Absheron output to Turkey. Turkish Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar announced January 4 that Ankara had agreed a new deal to take 2.25 bcm per year of gas starting in 2029. With Ankara keen to reduce dependence on Russian gas, the deal is good news for Turkey, assuming the planned expansion of the Absheron field goes ahead.

The lack of information on reserves and future production is matched by a lack of clarity over plans to expand the three pipelines that make up the Southern Gas Corridor. Azerbaijan needs the corridor's overall volume to expand to facilitate any additional exports to the EU.

News of the expansion of the TAP pipeline to facilitate an overall export volume of 11.5 bcm per year does offer some limited confirmation of Azerbaijan's commitment to boost exports to Europe. Still, TAP's current capacity falls far short of the route's maximum potential of 20 bcm per year, the same volume Baku promised to Europe back in 2022.

There is no indication about when or if investments will be forthcoming to expand TAP to its maximum capacity. The same holds true for the TANAP and the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP). Both routes require new compressor stations, with the SCP also requiring the laying of an additional pipeline, to enable Baku to increase EU-bound annual exports to even 16 bcm.

(This story originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on January 22.)

## INTERNATIONAL

### Armenian PM Highlights Deepening Ties with India

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory message to Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's Republic Day, on January 26.

Pashinyan congratulated Modi and the people of India, noting that Republic Day symbolizes the Indian people's commitment to democratic values and devotion to the ideals of freedom.

Pashinyan emphasized that, amid rapid global changes, the mutually beneficial and multifaceted partnership between Armenia and India continues to deepen and expand.

### Lawsuit against Turkey For Sis Catholicosate's Return Continues, Cilicia Catholicos Says

YEREVAN (News.am) — The lawsuit against Turkey for the return of the Catholicosate of Sis continues, announced the office of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church on January 27.

The respective statement reads as follows, in particular: "On the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the lawsuit filed by the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia against the state of Turkey with the demand for the return of the Catholicosate of Sis continues in the same course. We informed the children of our people about important milestones in this direction, considering the aforementioned lawsuit as the lawsuit of our people and our church, as well as the first and bold step in the legal sphere of national demands."

Indeed, after the preliminary instances of the Turkish courts, where having been rejected by the examination, it is now in the cassation instance. The next step will be the Constitutional Court [of Turkey], after which we will petition to the European Court of Human Rights."

### Trump: Peace Council Will Cooperate with UN On Global Conflicts

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — U.S. President Donald Trump, who is set to head the newly established Peace Council, stated during the charter signing ceremony in Davos that the Council's cooperation with the United Nations could create a unique global conflict-resolution format.

"The UN has tremendous potential. And I believe the combination of the Peace Council—represented by those gathered here—and the United Nations can become something truly unique for the world. Not just for the U.S., but for the whole world. We're going to bring peace to the entire world, and God willing, that will be a great legacy for all of us," Trump said, according to Sputnik Armenia.

## Turkish Airlines to Launch Flights to Yerevan

ISTANBUL (Turkish Minute) — Turkey's flagship carrier, Turkish Airlines (THY), has announced plans to begin flights to the Armenian capital of Yerevan in a move that could further strengthen ties amid a fragile normalization process between the two neighboring countries, according to Turkish and Armenian media.

The airline said in a notification to Turkey's Public Disclosure Platform (KAP) last week that its board of directors approved the start of scheduled flights to Yerevan and Timișoara, a city in western Romania, "depending on opportunities and market conditions."

No specific information was provided on when the flights will begin or how frequently they will operate.

Armenia and Turkey have no diplomatic relations. As a result flights between the two countries have been limited in recent decades due to the long-standing political tensions.

The route was previously served by Turkey's now-defunct AtlasJet and resumed in February 2022, when Moldova's low-cost carrier FlyOne, which has a subsidiary in Armenia, launched services to Istanbul, followed by Turkish low-cost carrier Pegasus Airlines with flights between Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport and Yerevan.

Pegasus currently operates daily flights between the two cities. THY is expected to tap into a large transit market, particularly among diaspora Armenians in the United States, with Los Angeles seen as a key hub.

News of the expansion of the TAP pipeline to facilitate an overall export volume of 11.5 bcm per year does offer some limited confirmation of Azerbaijan's commitment to boost exports to Europe. Still, TAP's current capacity falls far short of the route's maximum potential of 20 bcm per year, the same volume Baku promised to Europe back in 2022.

There is no indication about when or if investments will be forthcoming to expand TAP to its maximum capacity. The same holds true for the TANAP and the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP). Both routes require new compressor stations, with the SCP also requiring the laying of an additional pipeline, to enable Baku to increase EU-bound annual exports to even 16 bcm.

(This story originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on January 22.)

## Vice President Vance to Visit Armenia, Azerbaijan

VANCE, from page 1 Great Semiconductor Makers, and the sale of Made in the USA Defense Equipment, such as body armor and boats, and more, to Azerbaijan," he wrote without giving further details.

The TRIPP is a US-administered transit corridor that would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave through Armenia's strategic Syunik region. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan agreed to the controversial arrangement during his talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev hosted by Trump at the White House last August.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan released the first major details of the TRIPP after meeting in Washington on

January 13. A joint US-Armenian "implementation framework" confirmed that a special company controlled by the US government will build a railway, a road, energy supply lines and other infrastructure along the TRIPP and manage them for at least 49 years.

The TRIPP Development Company is to operate under a "front office-back office" model. It will hire private operators that will provide "customer-facing services" such as "initial document collection for verification" and collect transit fees from cargo and individual travelers, using "digital tools" in the process. Armenian officials are to be given a "back office" role.

Aliyev has said that Azerbaijanis traveling to from Nakhichevan "should not see the faces of Armenian border guards."

Pashinyan has signaled readiness to meet that demand, saying that modern technology will be used to exclude physical contact between Armenian officials and Azerbaijani travelers. Pashinyan pointedly declined to say on January 15 whether there will be such contact.

He thus gave more ammunition to his domestic critics who say that the TRIPP amounts to the kind of an extraterritorial "Zangezur corridor" that is sought by Baku. Aliyev made the same point when he met with Trump on January 22 on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"The Zangezur Corridor, including the TRIPP project, is of great importance in terms of regional connectivity," he was reported to have told Trump.



# Plea to Stop Genocide Falls on Deaf Ears in ‘Homo Politicus’

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — What can civilians do to stop, or at least provide aid to victims of war or genocide? By no means an academic question today, it can be best addressed by learning from attempts made in the past, from those rare individuals who had the morality and courage to intervene. This was the approach taken by civil society proponents in Berlin last weekend, who viewed a film documenting one person's attempt to stop the Armenian Genocide, then opened discussion on the implications for our world today.

The film, “Homo Politicus,” which is Latin for political man or activist, was presented on January 23 and 24, at the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam and the AKEBI civil society group office, respectively. In addition to hosts and moderators Ulrich Rosenau and Öndercan Muti, filmmaker and director Haci Orman and genocide scholar Tessa Hofmann provided historical background to the film and the parameters of legal and institutional initiatives developed since World War II.

“Homo Politicus” reenacts an encounter between Johannes Lepsius, a German pastor and humanitarian and Ottoman War Minister Enver Pasha on August 10, 1915. Enver had been a member since 1913 of the so-called “triumvirate” leading the Committee of Unity and Progress (CUP), with Interior Minister Talaat and Naval Minister Cemal, in a government allied militarily with Imperial Germany. The Young Turk regime, as it was known abroad, used the First World war as cover for dealing with the “Armenian question,” eliminating Armenian hopes for reform, by eliminating the Armenian population through genocide.

Lepsius, who had provided humanitarian aid to victims of the Hamidian massacres in the 1890s, returned to Constantinople in 1915, in an effort to stop the genocide and succeeded in getting a private meeting with Enver on August 10, 1915. By then, the death marches were in full swing, as German Ambassador Wangenheim had reported to Berlin. Denied access to the interior, Lepsius conducted interviews with diplomats and humanitarian helpers arriving in the capital, who reported in detail on the ongoing deportations and massacres; the resulting documentation appeared in German as, *The Death March of the Armenian People: Report on the Fate of the Armenian People in Turkey during the World War*.

It was not this account that first acquainted filmmaker Orman with the story, but Franz Werfel's adaptation of Lepsius in his novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. In an exchange with Hofmann, the director confirmed that his was the first film in Turkey that “dealt with the theme of genocide directly – and that remains so today.” There had been documentaries as well as films about Armenians, though on other themes. “Almost all of them,” he added, “were made possible especially thanks to support by Anadolu Kültür and Osman Kavala.” The former is a cultural association founded by Kavala (who has been jailed



Haci Orman and Tessa Hofmann (Photo Ulrich Rosenau)

for the past eight years), dedicated to intercultural dialog, cultural cooperation, and regional peace initiatives. Officialdom in Turkey opposed the film, so it has never been shown in the country. Although, as Orman related, it had been chosen for the Istanbul Film Festival, it was never presented in festivals or normal movie theaters and could be seen only in private viewings. This “unpleasant story” of its fate in Turkey ended with the “curious” disappearance of the raw material from the hard disk. Elsewhere, it has met with positive reactions, he added, in Armenia, Canada, the US and several European countries. “At the moment,” he remarked, “the film is even the subject of a Ph.D. dissertation in France...”

Currently, Orman, who fled to Switzerland four years ago, where he is “free to work,” has two projects on his agenda: the 1921 Berlin trial of avenger Soghomon Tehlirian, often called the “Talat Pasha trial,” and the other, Jakob Künzler, often considered the Swiss counterpart to Lepsius for the work he and his wife did to save thousands of Armenian orphans.

## The Churchman and the Genocidalist

The 20-minute “Homo Politicus” reenacts the dramatic confrontation between Lepsius (Peter von Strombeck) and Enver (Mehmet Yilmaz). Lepsius begins with flattering words for Enver, but when he mentions the eyewitness reports of deportations, Enver categorically denies them. The German pastor appeals to Enver with boldness, to use his power to stop them: “Declare the deportations be stopped and I will praise you in Germany.” Enver insists his guest is “misinformed” and sarcastically lauds Lepsius’s interest as “admirable.” Lepsius proposes an alternative: to send him, Lepsius, with his experience in charity work, to organize the deportations. Enver’s counterproposal reveals his ruthlessness as a dealmaker.

Enver offers to improve the lot of the Armenians if Lepsius hands over to him their insurance policies, an “offer” that the humanist Lepsius finds reprehensible. The “dialogue” develops from this point on as a clash of fundamental values: Lepsius calls for respect of international law and decency, whereas Enver argues that crime (committed by the Armenians) must

be punished, for “justice.” Lepsius pleads for justice and mercy; Enver is “bound by the law” and criminals must pay. Lepsius appeals to history as a judge, while Enver recites cynical aphorisms (“As the Italians say, however the game ends, all the pieces are put back into the same box,” and “In politics, the best way to say certain things at the right time is to say them a little late.”) Formalities exchanged on departure cannot conceal their fundamental moral conflict.

Hofmann’s assessment of the Lepsius-Enver episode is sober: the German humanitarian was forced to conclude that he had no hope of exerting direct influencing to improve the Armenians’ plight; the US and German embassies would do their best. It was useless to try to influence the Young Turk government; the only recourse possible was to document the genocide, to inform public opinion in Germany the best he could, despite the complicit press. On return to Germany, he realized the Foreign Office had no illusions about the suffering of the Armenians and would sacrifice them to save the military alliance.

## And Today?

The Lepsius-Enver episode, Hofmann concludes, “represents a depressing picture of a failed humanitarian intervention.” The two men faced each other on anything but equal footing, Enver, the “high-ranking statesman” and Lepsius, his “barely tolerated guest, whose own government didn’t even dare adopt Lepsius’s concern.” Now the question is: “Where do we stand today?”

She gave a sweeping overview of what has developed in terms of humanitarian legal instruments and organizations since the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, to the 1998 Rome Statute and the subsequent founding of the International Criminal Court. To deal with genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war, these are pillars of international law. But not all nations signed those documents or respected them. The structural weaknesses of these instruments lie in the lack of tools of implementation and independent executive organs, thus the non application of court decisions and sentences, etc. International law may be “juridically binding, but is weak in execution;” thus implementation depends largely on political pressure, international standing and diplomacy. Similarly, with the Responsibility to Protect, and other international mechanisms.

Equally problematic are self-contradictory principles in international law, such as self-determination vs. territorial sovereignty (Kosovo, Karabakh (Artsakh), Scotland, Catalonia) and the outcome is often decided by power not principle.

Hofmann’s conclusion is that we find ourselves in a position today analogous to that of Lepsius 111 years ago. And the options open are those chosen by human rights organizations: collecting and spreading documentation of crimes, confronting political forces responsible.



Enver Pasha, left, and Johannes Lepsius in a still from “Homo Politicus”



## INTERNATIONAL

# Lingua Sinica: Assessing Limits of Chinese Soft-Power Programs in Caucasus, Central Asia

By Diego Benning Wang

Anna Hakobyan, the wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, set social media aflame in Armenia earlier in January, posting videos of her speaking Chinese that drew over 2 million views in two days.

The videos highlight China's sustained efforts to foster understanding and appreciation of the Chinese language and culture across the Caucasus and Central Asia. Even so, language-speaking ability, such as that demonstrated by Hakobyan, is an anomaly among regional elites. While many young people in the regions, especially in major urban centers, have a solid command of English, few can muster even a sentence in Chinese.

Thousands of students from across the Caucasus and Central Asia now study in China, and it seems Beijing is expanding such educational programs every month. In addition, China projects cultural influence through soft-power entities such as Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops attached to higher education institutions in Central Asia.

Despite such expansive initiatives, the number of proficient Chinese speakers among citizens of the Caucasus and Central Asia is low, limiting Beijing's ability to shape regional attitudes towards China and project its influence. Regional engagement with China is largely mediated through Russian, English, and interpreters. Unlike Turkish or Korean, Chinese has not benefited from widely circulating popular cultural exports, such as TV series or pop music, that might motivate informal learning, particularly among younger generations.

Even in Hakobyan's case, she demonstrated only a rudimentary command of Chinese. That is understandable, given that she enrolled in a master's program at Bei-

jing Normal University only in June 2025. She started posting photos of her academic activities in September, mostly images of classroom attendance and university-related materials. Notably, in the background of her social media photo postings, she consistently displayed a narrow, recurring range of books, most prominently works

Mandarin words are formed from multisyllabic units, pauses that split or fuse these syllables incorrectly can significantly affect comprehension.

More broadly, numerous political figures across the Caucasus and post-Soviet Central Asia have lived, studied, or worked in China, but only a few can be considered

ident, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Trained in diplomacy and the Chinese language at the then-Soviet Union's top foreign service institute, MGIMO, Tokayev spent much of his early career in Soviet diplomatic postings related to China and has continued to use Chinese professionally since Kazakhstan's independence, even though he has not resided in China since then.

Public footage shows him speaking Chinese, both on- and off-script, in a wide range of settings, including interviews, formal remarks, diplomatic exchanges, and interactions with university students. His Mandarin is accented but consistently intelligible. While his vocabulary remains practical and sentence structures relatively simple, his Chinese functions as a working language rather than a symbolic display, deployed selectively and pragmatically in China-facing contexts.

The complexity of the Chinese language means that for speakers of Turkic, Kartvelian, and Indo-European languages, Chinese poses a genuine learning challenge that demands sustained commitment and high-quality resources. The language issue, then, creates a substantial barrier for China's efforts to spread its cultural and economic influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Because Chinese has yet to crystallize as a prestige language, its public use by Eurasian political figures remains rare, uneven, and frequently performative.

(Diego Benning Wang is a historian of Eurasia and Eastern Europe. Having received a PhD in history from Princeton University, an MA in Russian studies from Columbia University, and a BA in Russian studies from New York University, he is currently a visiting scholar at Harvard University. This article originally appeared on [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) on January 16.)



(Screenshot from Anna Hakobyan's video)

by Chinese Communist leaders, including multiple volumes of Xi Jinping's writing, as well as English-language editions of works of ancient Chinese philosophers.

In her viral videos posted on January 12, her speech is consistent with memorized recitation rather than spontaneous elocution. Her delivery also consistently features incorrect pause placements that disrupt word segmentation. Because many

proficient in Chinese.

In Kyrgyzstan, two Chinese-born ethnic Kyrgyz politicians, Adyl Junus uulu and Orgalcha Toktobubu, served in the Jogorku Kengesh (parliament) during the past decade, while another MP, Tabyldy Muratbekov, pursued graduate studies at a Chinese university.

Perhaps the leading political figure most conversant in Chinese is Kazakhstan's pres-

## Israel-Azerbaijan Relations Expand amid Iran, Turkey Concerns

BAKU (Middle-East-Online.com) — Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar announced on Monday, January 26, that Tel Aviv is seeking to consolidate its strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, enhancing cooperation across energy, defense, agriculture, tourism and technology sectors. The move is widely seen as a potential provocation for both Turkey and Iran, given the geopolitical sensitivities of the South Caucasus.

Speaking after a meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku, Sa'ar described Aliyev as "a visionary leader guiding his nation to remarkable achievements," adding that he had "held a productive meeting in Baku and thanked the president for his friendship and support for the Jewish community in Azerbaijan."

Sa'ar travelled to Baku with a high-level business and economic delegation, representing Israeli companies and organizations across multiple sectors.

"Our joint goal is to strengthen partnerships in energy, defense, water, agriculture, tourism and more. We are working to consolidate our strategic relations," he said.

Azerbaijani officials confirmed that President Aliyev and Sa'ar discussed expanding cooperation in agriculture, water management, advanced technologies and artificial intelligence. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and

Economy Minister Mikayil Jabbarov also attended the meeting.

"Since the establishment of diplomatic relations over 30 years ago, our friendship has grown into a solid strategic relationship that benefits both our countries economically," Sa'ar told a news conference with Bayramov. He noted that relations had strengthened particularly since Azerbaijan opened its embassy in Israel three years ago.

Trade between the two nations rose by nearly 50 percent between 2024 and 2025, reaching over \$360 million last year.

"There are 20 weekly flights, and 60,000 Israeli tourists visited Azerbaijan in 2025. I believe we can significantly increase that number in 2026," Sa'ar said. He added that Israel sought to invest in Azerbaijan and share technological expertise, highlighting energy cooperation in particular, citing SOCAR's 10 percent stake in Israel's Tamar gas field.

The visit follows recent high-level talks between the two countries' leaders at Davos, which laid the groundwork for deepening bilateral economic, political, and defense cooperation.

"Israel and Azerbaijan are pillars of stability in our regions, with advanced economies," Sa'ar wrote on X (formerly Twitter), emphasizing the strategic and economic significance of the partnership.



Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Bayramov described the relationship as "steadily improving" and "strategically significant," noting that regular political consultations occur between the two foreign ministries, alongside intergovernmental and interparliamentary cooperation. He highlighted opportunities in private-sector engagement, investment and tourism, noting that the number of Israeli visitors doubled in 2025.

The expansion of Israeli influence in Azerbaijan is viewed as a strategic challenge for Iran, given the countries' geographic proximity and the potential for

enhanced intelligence and military coordination. For Turkey, which considers Azerbaijan a key partner in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Israel's deepening presence in Baku could reduce Ankara's regional influence and complicate its traditional balancing role.

Sa'ar is scheduled to continue his regional tour in Kazakhstan, where he will meet President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Foreign Minister Yermek Kosherbayev, and other senior officials. The trip forms part of Israel's broader efforts to restore international ties following global criticism of its military operations in Gaza.



# Community News

## Dr. Edit Khachatryan Announces Candidacy For Glendale Community College Board of Trustees

GLENDALE — Educator, researcher, and community advocate Dr. Edit Khachatryan announced this week that she is running for Glendale Community College Board of Trustees Area 2, outlining a vision focused on student success, strong academic pathways, and collaborative governance.

“Community colleges are one of California’s most powerful pathways to opportunity,” Khachatryan said. “GCC serves students who are starting college, changing careers, or returning to school to build new skills. I’m running to help ensure the promise of community college matches the reality students, faculty, and staff experience every day.”

Born in Armenia, Dr. Khachatryan immigrated to Glendale at age nine and attended local public schools. She began her career as a high school teacher in Los Angeles and Glendale, teaching history, government, and economics. She later served as a Teaching Ambassador Fellow at the U.S. Department of Education, earned a Ph.D. from Stanford University, and spent a decade working



Dr. Edit Khachatryan

nationally to improve outcomes for students through research and systems improvement. Khachatryan is also the founder of Sovoroom, an education consulting firm, and a parent of two children attending the GCC Child Development Center lab school.

As a trustee, Khachatryan will focus on strengthening transfer and career pathways, supporting the whole student, ensuring high-quality learning in every setting, investing in educators and staff, and promoting transparency and shared decision-making. She believes GCC has the potential to be a national model for student-centered, forward-looking education.

She enters the race with the support and endorsement of four current members of the Glendale Community College Board of Trustees: Dr. Sevan Benlian, Dr. Armine Hacopian, Yvette Vartanian Davis and Ann Ransford.

For more information about Edit Khachatryan’s campaign, visit [edit4GCC.com](http://edit4GCC.com).



Haigazian University President Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D. at the Glendale Public Library

## 70-Year Pan-Diasporan Legacy of Haigazian University Highlighted in Special Lecture in Glendale

By Louisa Janbazian

GLENDALE — The Armenian Diaspora Research Center of Haigazian University, in collaboration with the Armenian Studies Program of California State University, Northridge (CSUN), hosted a special public lecture marking the 70th Anniversary of Haigazian University. The event took place on Tuesday, January 20, at the Glendale Public Library and featured a keynote lecture by Haigazian University President Rev. Paul Haidostian, PhD.

The program brought together alumni, academics, community leaders, and friends of Haigazian University from across the Los Angeles area. The evening opened with welcoming remarks by Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, director of the Armenian Studies Program at CSUN and member of Haigazian University Board of Trustees. This was followed by an introduction of the keynote speaker by Dr. Hazmig Baran, Chairman of the Haigazian University Board of Trustees.

Haidostian delivered a warm, insightful, and compelling presentation titled “70 Years of Haigazian University: Its Pan-Diasporan Role and Unique Place in Beirut.” His lecture highlighted the University’s enduring contributions to higher education, community leadership, and the global Armenian diaspora.

Below is a summary of Rev. Dr. Haidostian’s lecture.

### A Name That Speaks

Haigazian bears the name of a devoted educator, pastor, theologian, and martyr. It is not the name of wealth or power, but of sacrifice. His life speaks to us of courage, faith, and unwavering dedication to education. In 1921, The New York Times described him as “the most prominent educator of the Middle East.” His legacy continues—not as memory alone, but as mission.

Haigazian University exists because education is at the heart of the Armenian Evangelical identity. Its calling is to form the whole human being—mind, soul, character, and service—according to God’s image. This University was not built on privilege or inherited land, but on vision, faith, and collective effort. From its beginning, Haigazian has stood as an act of trust in the power of education.

From modest teacher-training programs in the 1940s, the vision expanded and gained appreciation within the Armenian-American community, reaching the Armenian Missionary Association of America and two benefactors from Hadjin, the Philibosian and Mehagian families—who under ideal conditions would have preferred to support Armenian Christian education in Cilicia—now, seeing Lebanon’s

see LEGACY, page 11



Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.

## Soley Secures \$200M Series C to Push AML Cell Stress Drug into Clinic

By James Waldron

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO — [Soley Therapeutics](#) secured \$200 million in series C funds, which the artificial-intelligence-enabled biotech plans to use to take its lead acute myeloid leukemia (AML) asset into the clinic earlier in January.

The South San Francisco-based company’s pipeline is a product of its cell stress sensing platform, which uses AI and “computer vision” to analyze thousands of responses in human cells that are then used to help design new therapeutic molecules, according to the biotech.

The potential of Soley’s tech has already been enough to attract investors like the Doug Leone Family



Soley CEO and co-founder Dr. Yerem Yeghiazarians

Fund, Breyer Capital and Gordon-MD Global Investments. They all returned for the series C alongside new backers Surveyor Capital, which acted as the primary investor, as well as HRTG Partners and RWN Management.

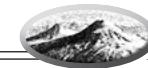
“We built Soley to measure how living human cells, in health and disease, respond to drug exposure and determine their fate,” Soley CEO and co-founder Yerem Yeghiazarians, MD, explained in the January 7 release.

“We then translate this cellular information into a robust portfolio of novel drug candidates across a broad range of disease areas and indications,” Yeghiazarians continued. “We are thrilled by the strong investor support from life sciences and technology-focused funds as we advance our lead programs into the clinic and expand our platform to continue building a first-in-class pipeline.”

The fresh funds have been earmarked for work to take two of Soley’s oncology drugs into the clinic. They are led by a lead asset for AML, with an IND filing penciled in for 2026, while a second asset for solid tumors is due to enter IND-enabling studies.

A portion of the cash will also be used to take forward non-oncology stress-reducing drug candidates for neurodegenerative disorders and metabolic diseases, as well as to continue to scale up the platform.

Soley strengthened its AI capabilities via collaborations with both [Oracle](#) and [Nvidia](#) that were signed in March 2025.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation Condemns Trump Administration's Suspension of Armenian Visas

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation issued a statement condemning the Trump Administration's suspension of Armenian visas. According to the Trump administration, they have indefinitely suspended immigrant visa processing for people from 75 countries, including Armenia. The freeze targets applicants that the Trump Administration deems likely to become a "public charge" — people who they believe may rely on government benefits for basic needs.

California is home to the largest Arme-



Assemblymember John Harabedian

nian-American population in the United States, and Armenians living in California have enriched our state for over 100 years through their leadership and contribution in business, agriculture, academia, government, medicine, technology, the arts, and more.

"The denial of visas will cause real harm by separating families who have followed the law, disrupting California's workforce and economy, and advancing fear-based policies that destabilize our communities. This policy not only disrupts lives in California but also sends a troubling message about who is welcome in America," said Chair and Assemblymember John Harabedian (D-Pasadena).

"The Trump Administration's suspension of processing immigrant visas from 75 countries is yet another manifestation of this administration's cruelty and xenophobia. Blanket bans on people, like those from Armenia, who only want an opportunity to seek the American Dream, are simply unjustified. I am proud to represent the largest diaspora of Armenians in the state. This proud community contributes enormously to our economic and cultural strength. As a member of the California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation, I

fully support our clear position against this new hostile federal policy," said Sen. Sasha Renée Pérez (D-Pasadena).

"Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the country. Banning people based on where they come from does not make us safer — it makes

Trump Administration is a throwback to the failed policies of the past. History has shown that excluding communities has never made us stronger," said Assemblymember Nick Schultz (D-Burbank).

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation serves as a forum for



us smaller. We should be working to fix a broken immigration system with fairness and humanity, not advancing policies that punish innocent people and target entire communities," said Assemblymember Jessica Caloza (D-Los Angeles).

"Armenian immigrants have helped build our communities for over a century, and their contributions across every industry have made California the economic powerhouse it is today. This action by the

members from the California Senate and Assembly to identify key issues affecting Armenian Americans and develop and empower the Armenian American community throughout California. The Foundation encourages advocacy and participation in cultural, educational, and community efforts in California. Through advocacy, the Foundation strives to ensure that California Armenian American's voices are heard and given a platform.

# Armenian Apostolic Church Takes Root in Idaho

BOISE, Idaho — A historic milestone was reached for Armenians in Idaho as the newly established Mission Parish of the Western Diocese celebrated its inaugural Divine Liturgy on Saturday, January 17.

This occasion followed the October appointment of a provisional Parish Council by the Primate of the Western Diocese, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, signaling a renewed commitment to nurturing Armenian spiritual life in the region.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Very Rev. Yeremia Abgaryan, whose heartfelt sermon strengthened the community's faith and reaffirmed its collective resolve to build a vibrant and enduring parish rooted in shared heritage and devotion.

The celebration continued with a fellowship gathering that reflected the warmth and unity of the growing community. Dr. Harutyun Melikyan, Chairman of the Provisional Parish Council, welcomed everyone and encouraged them to take active part in the exciting journey of building the community.

He then introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian, the director of Institutional Innovation at the Diocese, who had



come to Boise especially for the occasion and to develop a strategic plan with the provisional parish council.

In his thought-provoking address on Armenian identity in the 21st century, Tchilingirian spoke about the perceptions and views on identity and heritage in the Diaspora today, as well as a range of issues relevant to Armenian communal

life. He concluded by emphasizing that a strong spiritual and communal foundation must precede any physical structure. He highlighted the values of faith, solidarity, and shared purpose as essential pillars of a healthy and flourishing church community.

This moment stands on the shoulders of years of steady spiritual growth. In April 2018, by the arrangement of the Primate

Archbishop Hovnan, the Divine Liturgy was first celebrated in Boise by Fr. Vazken Movsesian, who delivered a message of resurrection, hope, and communal worship on the eve of Genocide Commemoration. Held at the Greek Orthodox Church and followed by a warm fellowship, that gathering planted seeds that have since borne fruit.

The Primate's visit to Boise in October 2025, together Rev. Vazgen Boyajyan of the Armenian Church in Seattle, who also provides pastoral care to the community in Idaho, further affirmed this progress.

Together, these milestones mark a hopeful and inspiring new chapter for the Armenian Apostolic Church in Idaho—one defined by faith, resilience, and a shared vision for generations to come.

The mission has a Provisional Parish Council to guide organization, outreach and spiritual continuity. The members are Dr. Harutyun Melikyan (Chair), Flora Dermin (Vice Chair), Deanna Boyadjyan Nibbs (First Secretary), Joanie Vernon (Second Secretary), Vahagn Sargsyan (Treasurer) and advisors Armen Baghdasaryan, Tigran Hakopian, Gevork Boyajyan, Andranik Avetisyan and Tania Abadjan.

## Delal Dink Lecture at Harvard University Rescheduled for February 12

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, and the Friends of Hrant Dink, Inc. Boston, have rescheduled the Annual Hrant Dink Memorial Lecture. Originally planned for January 29, the event was postponed due to the inclement weather that brought extreme cold and very heavy snow in the Boston area.

The speaker, Delal Dink is head of the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul, a graduate of Purdue University, and the daughter of the Armenian journalist, intellectual, and humanist Hrant Dink, assassinated 19 years ago.

In her lecture, titled "The Future as Memorial: Commemorating Hrant Dink," Delal Dink will reflect on the work of the Hrant Dink Foundation and its efforts to rethink commemoration not as a static act of remembrance, but as an ongoing invitation to an alternative future. "The Foundation approaches its work as 'remembrance in action' — a living practice refusing to merely mourn loss, but actively build the world Hrant Dink envisioned," reflected Delal Dink.

The rescheduled 2026 Hrant Dink Memorial Lecture will take place on Thursday, February 12, at 1730 Cambridge



Street, Cambridge, in the Tsai Auditorium Harvard University, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and is open to the public.



# Dr. Oz Touts Federal Crackdown on Healthcare Fraud by ‘Foreign Influences’ in L.A.

By Sonja Sharp

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) — Trump administration officials announced a sprawling probe into benefits fraud across California on January 9, citing what they called a massive, coordinated effort by “foreign actors” to fleece government healthcare to the tune of billions of dollars.

The crackdown appeared to center on bogus hospice providers first exposed by the *Times* in 2020 and later investigated by California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta.

“Eighteen percent of the whole country’s home healthcare billing is coming out of Los Angeles County — how is that possible?” said Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “It’s about \$3.5 billion just in

L.A. County for hospice and home healthcare.”

The move comes just days after Washington froze \$10 billion in federal funding for child care in California, New York, Colorado, Illinois and Minnesota over “serious concerns about widespread fraud and misuse of taxpayer dollars.”

“What’s happening in Minnesota pales in comparison to the level of fraud that we believe is occurring in California,” said Bill Essayli, the top federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, referring to the benefits scandal that erupted out of that state’s Somali community late last year.

In a lawsuit filed on January 9, the states’ attorneys general called the child-care fund freeze nakedly political, saying the administration has weaponized allegations of

fraud to blame immigrants for holes in the safety net and tar political rivals as corrupt.

At the briefing, Oz and Essayli told reporters “foreign influences” were draining government healthcare programs, making care inaccessible to Americans while California leaders turned a blind eye.

“These are Russian, Armenian gangs, mafia that are leading a lot of these efforts,” Oz said. “This president will not tolerate having Americans defrauded by foreign influences.”

Essayli laid the blame on Gov. Gavin Newsom.

“He has reigned over more fraud than I think we’ve ever seen in American history,” Essayli said. “Just look at the amount of fraud that’s been perpetrated in the kingdom of California. He is the fraud king.”

The governor hit back at the Trump administration’s rhetoric about lawlessness in his State of the State speech Thursday, with Newsom saying the country faces “an assault on our values unlike anything I’ve seen in my lifetime,” and citing statistics that show violent crime is at historic lows.

## Dr. Anna Aleksanyan To Discuss ‘Trabzon Armenian Women’s Experiences During The Genocide’

FRESNO — Dr. Anna Aleksanyan will deliver a talk titled “Trabzon Armenian Women’s Experiences During the Genocide” on Friday, February 6, at 7 p.m., in the University Business Center (5245 N. Backer Ave.), Alice Peters Auditorium, on the Fresno State campus. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The lecture is the first of a three-part series of public lectures that Aleksanyan will deliver in the spring semester with the theme of “Women and the Armenian Genocide.”

Aleksanyan is the newly appointed Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for the spring 2026 semester. The Kazan Visiting Professorship was established in 2000 and Aleksanyan is the 22nd Kazan Visiting Professor.

Like all the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, Trabzon Armenians received an official order of deportation in June 1915. However, the *Vali* [governor] of Trabzon, Djemal Azmi, made an “exemption” for Ar-



Dr. Anna Aleksanyan

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menian women in the later stages of pregnancy and for children “when the parents so desired. Approximately three thousand children (girls up to 15 years old and boys up to 10) and several dozen women remained in the city. Those Armenians were placed in special institutions, subjected to neglect, starvation, murder, and institutionalized rape. Sexual violence was a tool to foster submission and terror, humiliation, self-hate and stigmatization. After four years, all male children disappeared and the girls who mainly survived did so in Turkish households, to which they were given as gifts or sold to serve as servants or sex slaves.

In 1919, the Turkish Courts-Martial brought the perpetrators of the Trabzon Armenian Genocide to trial in Constantinople. The charges against them included organizing and implementing the massive annihilation of the Trabzon Armenians, the

*continued on next page*



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# 70-Year Pan-Diasporan Legacy of Haigazian University Highlighted in Special Lecture

LEGACY, from page 8

possibilities and needs, wholeheartedly contributed their share. The institution evolved into Haigazian College. Haigazian grew through pan-diasporan cooperation and generosity. Armenian communities from Lebanon, the Middle East, and the Americas shared one vision: to educate future leaders. Today, Haigazian is a home for students from many countries and a bridge between the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia.

From its earliest days, Haigazian embraced international education, critical thinking, and dialogue. Its American-style curriculum meets global standards, allowing graduates to move confidently into universities and professions around the world. Strong international partnerships and lifelong learning programs affirm Haigazian's place in the global academic family.

True education requires encounter—with new ideas, cultures, disciplines, and people. At Haigazian, identity is not weakened by openness; it is strengthened. Armenian history, faith, and values are shared with respect and integrity, welcoming students of all backgrounds. Many non-Armenians encounter the Armenian story here for the first time and become its friends and witnesses.

Haigazian is a source of deep pride—not only because it educates Armenian youth, but because others seek it out. Its graduates serve as educators, diplomats, leaders, and professionals across the world. Recognized by state institutions and international organizations such as UNICEF and enriched by its strong Armenian studies publications in Western Armenian, Haigazian stands as a trusted voice of Armenian scholarship.

In a region often marked by division, Haigazian has chosen peace. It welcomes



Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D. delivers his lecture

thoughtful engagement with justice, ethics, history, science, and faith, while rejecting blind political allegiance. This commitment has preserved the University as a space of dialogue, dignity, and mutual respect.

Haigazian students are not passive learn-

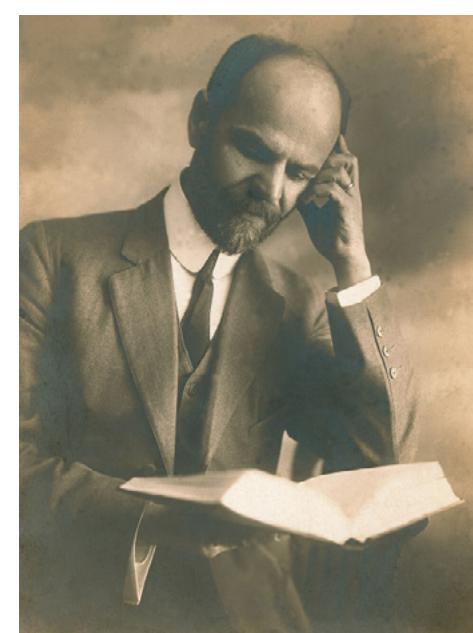
ers; they are active servants. Through student clubs and initiatives, they respond to real human need. After the 2023 earthquake in Turkey and Syria, students mobilized immediate humanitarian aid—proof that education at Haigazian forms compassionate leaders, not only successful professionals.

For 70 years, Haigazian has walked alongside its students through generous financial support. Millions of dollars have been dedicated to especially Armenian and Syrian-Armenian students, ensuring that talent and calling are never lost to hardship. Leadership funds have enabled outstanding graduates to continue their studies across the world.

Service is not an occasional project at Haigazian—it is a daily practice. The University opens its doors freely to community organizations, humanitarian efforts, and educational programs. It stood firm during the Beirut port explosion, during war, and during displacement, offering help even when it itself was wounded.

Through research centers, conferences, publications, digital libraries, and its university press, Haigazian contributes lasting knowledge to Armenian studies and beyond. It invests in thought, memory, and scholarship for generations to come.

Since 1955, Haigazian has endured war,



Dr. Armenag Haigazian

instability, and uncertainty. Yet it remains respected by all communities in Lebanon because it embodies tolerance, hope, and shared humanity. Haigazian exists because it is needed—not only by Armenians, but by society at large.

Education, after all, is an act of hope. And as Armenag Haigazian reminded us: "It is impossible to educate a person without love."



Dr. Hasmig Baran introduces Haigazian President Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.

## Aleksanyan to Discuss 'Trabzon Armenian Women's Experiences During the Genocide'

from previous page

plunder of their property, the rape and murder of Armenian women and children, and the drowning of around 50 pregnant women in the Black Sea. There were twenty sessions of the Trabzon trial, held between March 26 and May 20, 1919, during which witnesses and victims testified. This lecture will discuss the anatomy of the Trabzon Ar-

menian genocide and how sexual violence was one of the main components of it.

Aleksanyan earned her PhD from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. Her research focuses on the gendered aspects of the Armenian Genocide, particularly the experiences of female victims from 1914 to 1918. Before her doctoral studies, she spent

seven years as a senior research fellow and head of the Source Studies Department at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute. Aleksanyan holds a B.A. and M.A. in History from Yerevan State University. From July 2023 to January 2026, she served as a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Armenian Genocide Research Program at the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA.

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

For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, please follow us on our Facebook page, @ArmenianStudiesFresnoState or at the Program website, <https://fresnostate.edu/armenian-studies>.



## OBITUARY

## Osep Sarafian

### Contributed to Development in Armenia

DETROIT (*Agos, Mirror-Spectator*) — Osep Sarafian passed away on January 13 in Michigan, at the age of 94.

Born in Arnavutkoy in 1932, Sarafian attended Getronagan School and St. George's Austrian High School before graduating from the Istanbul Technical University (ITU) Department of Architecture in 1956. After working in Istanbul for several years, he moved to the United States to pursue a master's degree in urban planning at the University of Pennsylvania. During this period, he became a student of the renowned architect Louis Kahn, whose influence resonated throughout his professional career.

In 1960, he began working at the architectural firm Minoru Yamasaki & Associates in Michigan, where he took part in numerous significant projects. After five years in the US, he returned to Istanbul, where he signed off on various individual projects across Turkey, as well as collaborative works with Nisan Yaubyan and Guntekin Aydogan. His portfolio included hospitals, university campuses, sports facilities, stadiums, public buildings, and residential

structures. In 1980, he settled permanently in the US and rejoined Minoru Yamasaki & Associates. He had the opportunity to execute diverse projects in countries such as the USA, Spain, Japan, and Saudi Arabia. Under his firm's name, he also participated in and won several international competitions in Turkey.

Following his retirement as vice president of Minoru Yamasaki & Associates in 1994, he established his own office in Michigan, continuing to provide consultancy services in both the United States and Turkey.

Beyond his contributions to global architecture, Sarafian dedicated his retirement to the development of Armenia. The call of the homeland and the urgent need for help took him to Armenia more than 40 times over 30 years. He was there after the 1988 earthquake; in 1991 he witnessed the independence of Armenia which was followed by incredible hardships due to the lack of electricity and heating and the breakout of war with Azerbaijan and the liberation of Artsakh.

During this period, Sarafian raised more



than \$10 million to benefit projects such as rebuilding Yerevan State University; the American University of Armenia; AGBU Soup Kitchens; the Nork Children's Center; the Cosmic Ray Division of the Physics Institute; the Philharmonic Orchestra; Echmiadzin and the American Armenian Wellness Center.

Since 2003, in partnership with ASIF and the World Bank, Sarafian focused on rural area projects, particularly in the border regions to help keep the villagers on their land and curtail depopulation. He spearheaded efforts for the construction of schools, roads, sewage and clean water systems, and community centers, facilitating development projects in 145 Armenian villages.

Overall, through his tireless efforts, his

fundraising, together with the 9-to-1 World Bank matching program, resulted in over 300 million dollars helping Armenia recover and develop. In recognition of his efforts, he was awarded the State Order of the Prime Ministry of Armenia in 2015.

Sarafian was a member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences and an Honorary Member of the AGBU. In 2023, he was also granted Honorary Membership by the HAYCAR Association, of which he was a member.

He was the husband of Dr. Nadya Sarafian; father of Nora (Raffi) Manoukian, Garen (Dr. Rita) Sarafian and the late Dr. Maro (Darell Meyer) Sarafian; grandfather of Alec Joseph Meyer, Lia Nadia Meyer, Andrew Jake Meyer, Shant Raffi Manoukian, Sona Manoukian, Seta Manoukian, Talia Rose Sarafian, Nadia Lili Sarafian and Lucy Sarafian; brother of Donig (Eliz) Saraf & Norayr (Takouhi) Saraf and dear brother-in-law of Garo (Alix) Nevruz; uncle of Garo (Annette) Saraf, Hagop (Tamar) Saraf, Baret (Erlin) Saraf, Sevan (Nadya) Saraf and Arlin Nevruz.

Osep will also be missed by his friends.

The funeral services were at St. John Armenian Church, Southfield.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations are to St. John Armenian Church <https://abundant.co/stjohnarmenianchurch/ilof> or A.G.B.U. Alex and Marie Manoogian School or The Manoogian Manor

<http://www.manoogianmanor.com/donate>

## Vartkes Moses ('Gus') Guzelian

### Korean War Veteran

WALTHAM, Mass. — Vartkes Moses ("Gus") Guzelian, 96, of Waltham, passed away peacefully on January 18, 2026 from heart failure, with his loving wife by his side.

Born on February 14, 1929, Vartkes was the devoted son of the late Mihran and Makrouhie (Tufenkjian) Guzelian. He was born in Somerville and spent his early childhood in Cambridge and Somerville



He started his career as a stockbroker, then moved into the retail men's clothing business, owning two stores with his brother and in his later years working for Brooks Brothers in Chestnut Hill, finally retiring in his late 70s.

In a most serendipitous crossing of paths, he met Audrey Walsh who would become the love of his life and his wife of 58 years. Together, they raised two sons, Andrew and Edward. His beloved family was the main focus of his life and he felt particularly blessed to be able to spend a large amount of time with his grandchildren, Mark and Peter. His family loved him dearly and looked to him for inspiration, guidance, and support. They will miss him greatly.

In addition to his family and his work, Vartkes was active in St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown, serving on the Board of Trustees and volunteering at many events and activities over several decades. He also enjoyed golf and could often be found at Putterham Meadows in Brookline. He was fortunate to be able to continue playing until he was 90 and accumulated four holes-in-one over his lifetime.

He is survived by his wife, Audrey, sons Andrew (Alice) of Belmont and Edward (Madellaine) of Burbank, CA, grandsons Mark and Peter, brother Astor (Lucy), nephews Michael (Susan) and Eric (Amy), and niece Gail (Ron).

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his sister, Nancy Guzelian.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, January 24, at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, followed by interment at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

before moving to Roxbury. As an adult, he lived in Brookline for many years before spending the last several years in Waltham. He spent portions of summers for over 50 years in Nova Scotia, his wife's childhood home.

In Roxbury, he worked in the family's corner grocery store beginning when he was still a boy.

He served in the US Army in Korea and upon his return attended Boston University, graduating with a degree in accounting.

## Sebuh Oscherician

### Dedicated Deacon

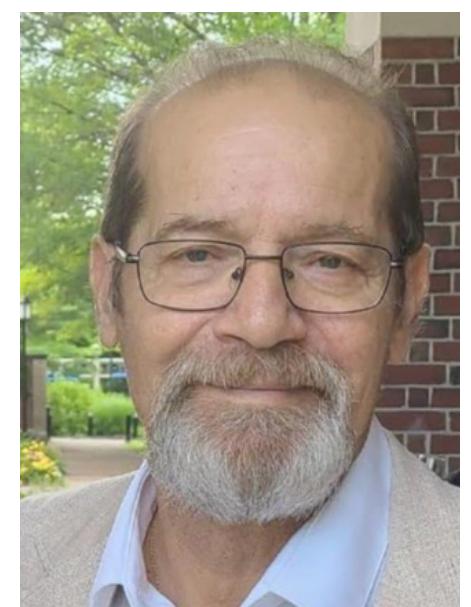
RINGWOOD, N.J. — Deacon Sebuh Oscherician, of Ringwood, passed away on January 15, 2026, at the age of 68.

Sebuh is survived by his wife Margherita "Rita" Oscherician and their two devoted daughters Cristina Nulman (Aric) and Jennifer Utkin (Gregory). Cherished grandfather of Anthony and Austin. Sebuh is also survived by his siblings Constantin, Mihaela, Ovidiu, Livi, Silvia, Felicia, Claudio and Bogdan.

Sebuh dedicated his life to caring for others, serving his community and spending time with his family and friends. Sebuh loved to fish, cook, play backgammon, hockey, soccer and travel.

Sebuh will be missed by many family, friends, parishioners, and all who had the great pleasure of knowing him.

The funeral was held at St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, on Wednesday, January 28. Entombment followed at George Washington Memorial Park in



Paramus. In lieu of flowers the family has requested donations be made in his memory to St. Leon Armenian Church.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# California Institute of Advanced Management Appoints Dr. Maria Cozette Akopian as Associate VP of Marketing / Chief Marketing Officer

ALHAMBRA, Calif. — The California Institute of Advanced Management (CIAM) announced on January 19 the appointment of Dr. Maria Cozette Akopian as its new associate vice president of marketing/chief marketing officer (AVP/CMO). This appointment reflects CIAM's commitment to elevating its institutional visibility, strengthening community partnerships and advancing its mission of values-driven, human-centered management education.

Akopian brings more than 15 years of experience in marketing across media, education and healthcare, distinguished by her innovative vision and commitment to serving diverse communities. She previously served as a professor of marketing at CIAM and continues to teach as an adjunct professor there and at California State University, Los Angeles, where she pioneered the university's first Women's Leadership Development Program.

Akopian holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology, a Master of Business Administration with Beta Gamma Sigma honors

from Woodbury University, and a Doctorate in organizational change and leadership from the University of Southern California.

An award-winning media personality, Akopian is recognized for producing and hosting the first English-language television program to air on Armenian network television. In 2017, she founded Thornebird Marketing Inc., a boutique agency that has served many of Los Angeles' most respected brands through strategic content creation, branding, and digital communication.

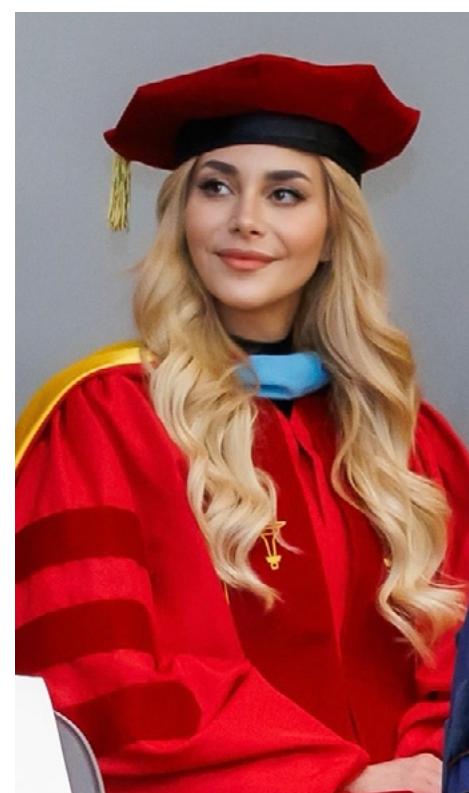
She currently serves as Chief Marketing Officer for the Burbank Police Foundation, where she leads philanthropic storytelling, community engagement initiatives and strategic communications in support of public safety programs, youth development and officer wellness. Her commitment to community service extends through her leadership and active involvement in Armenian cultural organizations.

"Dr. Akopian's appointment marks a

significant moment for CIAM," said the president of the university, Dr. Jack Pandutin. "Her creativity, strategic mindset, and deep commitment to education and community service align beautifully with CIAM's mission and will help propel the institution into its next era of growth."

As AVP/CMO of Marketing, Akopian will lead CIAM's brand strategy, institutional communications, public relations and digital outreach, ensuring the university's message resonates with students, partners and global communities who believe in ethical, socially responsible management.

Founded in 2011, the California Institute of Advanced Management is a nonprofit, WSCUC-accredited graduate institution dedicated to teaching the practice of management as both a science and an art. Guided by the principles of Peter F. Drucker, CIAM's experiential learning model prepares students to become effective, ethical, and socially conscious leaders in a rapidly changing global economy.



Dr. Maria Cozette Akopian

## Undergraduate Talia Hovsepian Is Using Gap Year to Work as Data Analyst for Formula One Team

By Claire Goudreau

BALTIMORE (Johns Hopkins University) — In the world of Formula One racing, the difference between first and fourth can be a matter of seconds. On Aug. 31, Isack Hadjar of Racing Bulls placed third at the Dutch Grand Prix. It was the team's first podium finish since 2021, and the first of Hadjar's career. After 98 minutes of racing, the car crossed the finish line just 3.233 seconds after the winner, McLaren's Oscar Piastri. If Hadjar had been 2.5 seconds slower, he'd have missed the podium entirely.

Talia Hovsepian's world revolves around these numbers. As a student data scientist for the Racing Bulls team, it's her job to optimize. Which parts of the car can be made lighter? Can the downforce distribution be improved?

"There's a particular sensor on our car that we want to replace because it weighs about a kilogram, which doesn't sound like that much, but in the grand scope of the car

that's like three-tenths of a second a lap," Hovsepian says. "Places one through five can be separated by two-tenths of a second, so this matters to us. How do we get the measurements that that sensor would get for us based on all of the other sensors that we have? Can we build a model that will give us these measurements instead of having to have a specific sensor for it?"

Hovsepian recently finished up her sophomore year as an applied math and statistics student at Johns Hopkins University. As a member of Blue Jay Racing, she had some experience designing off-road vehicles.

Now, she's taking a gap year in England to work as a student placement for the Racing Bulls, a team best known for its young, up-and-coming drivers. Other parts of the team, like aerodynamic performance, approach the data scientists with a problem or idea, hoping the solution is somewhere in the numbers.

"It's almost like a project-oriented class

where you have unlimited access to the professor because he sits right next to you all day," Hovsepian says. "But at the same time, they trust me with the same caliber of projects of anyone else in the group."

"I have a direct contribution. ... Knowing that the car is two-tenths of a second faster because of the work that I put in is really exciting for me."

On race days, Hovsepian and the other student placements set up shop in the operations room. Although their headsets can hear other teams' radios, Hovsepian spends most of the race focused on the Racing Bulls driver. Sometimes, the race ends without her even knowing who won. After

working so hard on the car, the team's success is her success.

"I have a direct contribution," she says. "Knowing that the car is two-tenths of a second faster because of the work that I put in is really exciting for me."

Hovsepian will return to Hopkins once her placement ends in June. In the meantime, she's living the racing fan's dream.

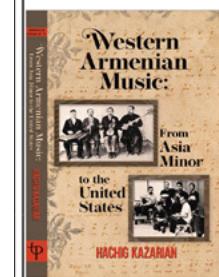
"These are all the things that I've been seeing on TV that I now get to have a part in," Hovsepian says. "In the entryway of our office is last year's car, so like every day I come in and I see a Formula One car and it's like, 'Wow. I actually work for this team.'"



Talia Hovsepian at work

**FRESNO STATE**  
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Armenian Series, Vol. 18  
Fresno State

### "WESTERN ARMENIAN MUSIC: FROM ASIA MINOR TO THE UNITED STATES"

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WITH LIVE MUSICAL EXAMPLES**

**GUEST SPEAKER: AUTHOR HACHIG KAZARIAN  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
PROF. BARLOW DER MUGRDECHIAN**

Silenced for over one hundred years, the Western Armenian music brought to America by the first Armenian immigrants has become an integral part of Armenian culture in the United States. *Western Armenian Music: From Asia Minor to the United States* examines the many facets of Western Armenian music, and how it has been neglected due to the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the deleterious feelings left upon the Armenian people. Kazarian's lecture will incorporate topics from his book while focusing on the musical relationship between Armenian folk music and Armenian sacred music. Throughout the session, attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of how these two distinct musical traditions are related through live performance and recorded musical examples.

Hachig Kazarian was born in Detroit, Michigan and is a retired secondary instrumental music educator with 46 years of teaching experience. He received his professional credentials from the Juilliard School of Music, where he earned a B.S. and M.A. degree in clarinet performance. He also attended Eastern Michigan University, where he received an M.A. degree in Music Literature/Ethnomusicology. Kazarian has performed Western Armenian music for many Armenian churches, societies and patriotic organizations throughout the United States.



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian is the Berberian Coordinator of the Armenian Studies Program and general editor of the Armenian Series of The Press at Fresno State.

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# Arts & Culture

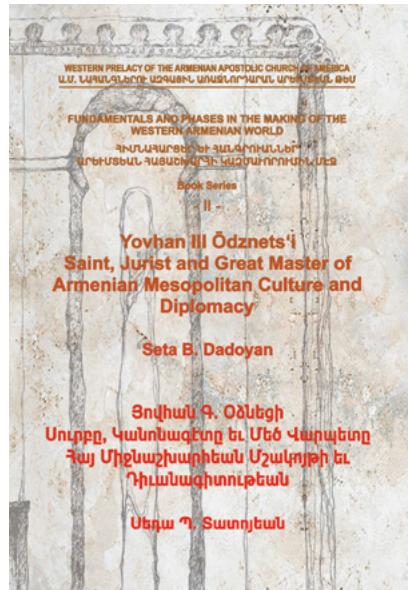
## Books

### New Bilingual Book by Prof. Seta B. Dadoyan Published by Western Prelacy of Armenian Church

*Yovhan III Ödznets'i, Saint, Jurist and Great Master of Armenian Mesopolitan Culture and Diplomacy* is the second bilingual book in the Book Series of the Western Prelacy “Fundamentals and Phases in the Making of the Western Armenian World.” The first was *Nersēs IV Shnorhali Saint and Diplomat and the Persistence of the People and the Church in the Western Armenian World*.

The third in the series is an extensive volume — now in press — titled *Prolegomenon to the Millennial History of the Western Armenian World From ‘Kingdoms’ to an Awakening Politics and Culture – The First Phase Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries*.

The WP Book Series focuses on fresh accounts and analyses of the millennial historical condition and experiences of the Western Armenian World in national and regional contexts. The broad objective is to



make the intellectual culture of the Armenians accessible and available to the public as well as academics. This means making the cultural legacy part of their mindset and horizons of understanding. Because, as the author Prof. Seta Dadoyan says in her Introduction of the first volume on Shnorhali, “what we know, or do not, also what we think we do, wholly or partially, right or wrong, necessarily affects our choices and actions. The public’s knowledge as well as ignorance about historical episodes, events and figures are in turn part of their historical experiences. Consequently, just as knowledge is a significant factor, so is ignorance. People often make wrong judgments out of ignorance.”

To provide the reader with basic knowledge for fundamental historiographic discussions and new perspectives, expounded in the third book, the series started at specific cases, hence the choice of Ödznets'i and Shnorhali. Otherwise, there are almost five centuries between the

see DADOVAN, page 17



## Lydie Belmonte

### *The Artist in Soul and in Life*

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN-MARSEILLE — Lydie Belmonte (born in Marseille) is a French actress, writer, singer, historian and multidisciplinary artist. Born to an Armenian mother and a Spanish father, her multicultural background has strongly shaped both her artistic sensibility and her intellectual interests. Trained in dramatic arts at the Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Marseille, she was awarded a gold medal early in her career. Alongside her acting career, she pursued academic studies and in 1991 earned a master’s degree in history from Aix-Marseille University, focusing on the history of the Armenian community in Marseille. As a stage actress, she has performed in numerous productions and has also written, directed, and performed her own original works. Her creativity extends to cinema and television, where she appeared in several films and TV projects in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Lydie Belmonte is also an acclaimed author, particularly known for her historical and literary works on Provence and the Armenian diaspora (“Little Armenia,” “Marseillaises le dictionnaire,” “The Armenian Blue Cross women”) as well as theatrical pieces *The Entrance (L’Entracte)*, *The Caregiver (La garde-malade)* and “Sacred Souls” (“Sacrées F’Ames”).

**Dear Lydie, your career spans theatre, playwriting, jazz and chanson singing and historical research. How do your colleagues in the arts respond to your academic work? And do your academic peers ever see your artistic pursuits as a kind of diversion?**

I have always been atypical, highly sensitive, multi-potential, and multidisciplinary. I am passionate and curious. You can also add dance and drawing, painting as well. I know I can be unsettling because I don’t fit into boxes, but when I commit to something, I give it my all, with all my heart. If others don’t understand, so be it.

Your book *From Little Armenia to Boulevard des Grands Pins* (Éditions P. Tacussel, 2000) received wide recognition—including a mention at the Grand Prix Historique de Provence and the Georges Goyau Prize of the Académie Française. It was also the first work on an Armenian subject to receive such an award. There was a second edition, *La Petite Arménie (Little Armenia)*, winner of the Academy of Marseille Price, and you currently preparing a third edition, while seeking a national and international publisher. What do you think makes your study unique?

Its uniqueness lies in its soul. With a glowing foreword by Charles Aznavour, it combines scientific rigor with a rich collection of archival documents and intimate testimonies, offering an authentic and deeply human portrait of Armenian Genocide survivors.

Written as a duty of memory and published at a historic moment, just before the disappearance of the last witnesses of the genocide, an excerpt from the book was read at the French National Assembly when France officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. I was profoundly moved to learn that the book has found its place in universities across the world and at the U.S. Senate.

see BELMONT, page 15

### Arlington, Mass. Philharmonic Pays Tribute to Armenia

ARLINGTON, Mass. — The Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Music Director Orlando Cela, will present a concert entitled “Armenia,” on Sunday, February 8, at 3 p.m. The concert will be held at the Arlington High School Auditorium, 869 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA. The entire program will feature works by Armenian composers, including Arlington’s own Alan Hovhaness, and will include: *Ballet Suite* by Geghuni Chitchyan (world premiere); *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra* by Eduard Bagdasaryan, featuring violin soloist Sargis Karapetyan; *Elegy in Memory of Aram Khachaturian* by Arno Babajanian/Arr. S. Arakelian and *Symphony No.1, Exile*, by Alan Hovhaness.

Tickets are available at the door: \$20 General Admission, \$15 Students/Seniors, \$5 Children 17 & Under. Wheelchair Accessible. Masking is optional.

The Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra is part of The Philharmonic Society of Arlington, Inc., a 501(c)3



Orlando Cela

non-profit community organization which also includes The Arlington-Belmont Chorale and The Arlington-Belmont Chamber Chorus. For more information, please visit our website at [www.psarlington.org](http://www.psarlington.org)

This concert is supported in part by a generous grant from the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture, a local agency, which is under the umbrella of the Mass. Cultural Council, a state agency.

### Dr. Hayk Demoyan to Speak at Armenian American Museum

GLENDALE — The Armenian American Museum and Cultural Center of California announces the next installment of its Speaker Series, featuring renowned author and historian Dr. Hayk Demoyan. This program marks the first in a year-long Speaker Series initiative dedicated to the 250th anniversary of American Independence. The event will take place on Tuesday, February 3, at the Adult Recreation Center in Glendale.

Demoyan, a leading voice in Armenian historical scholarship, will present an engaging and thought-provoking discussion exploring his book, *Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage*, which examines

see DEMOYAN, page 16



# Lydie Belmonte: The Artist in Soul and in Life

BELMONTE, from page 14

**Beyond your historical research on the Armenian community in Marseille, do Armenian influences appear in your acting or singing — apart from performing Komitas, of course?**

My Armenian influences are, without a doubt, modesty and hypersensitivity — an empathy that makes me feel everything with depth and intensity, and an oriental, nostalgic undertone. These qualities led me to earn a gold medal in Tragedy and a silver medal in Classical performance. My Armenian grandfather was a gifted storyteller, and my Armenian grandmother sang in Armenian. I never knew them, yet their souls walk beside me and guide my path.

**Can you tell us about your Armenian roots—where does your family come from?**

My grandfather, Nechan Ghougassian (Tatossian), hailed from Palou, near Kharpert. A grain farmer by trade, he narrowly escaped death three times during the Armenian Genocide — a man marked by survival. My grandmother, Elvanik Kevorkian, twenty years his junior, came from Antalya. They met after the genocide aboard a ship carrying survivors to Greece. In Athens, they had two children, and in 1924 they settled in Marseille, where they built a life and welcomed three more children, including my mother, Takouie Georgette. Their journey, etched in loss and resilience, continues to guide me.

**Even if you are French, what consider you Spanish in you and what — Armenian?**

My heart is Armenian, French and also Spanish. I carry my paella side, with a rising influence of beurek and vine leaves! What unites all three heritages? The love

melody.

**Would you say your Armenian heritage has shaped your artistic identity more consciously, through deliberate choices? Or more subtly, as an inner sense of belonging?**

Yes, both, undeniably! Inside and out, in my conscious and unconscious self, I resonate as 'Western Armenian,' of the Diaspora, inheriting a culture and mindset that stretches from before to after the genocide, with its family and intergenerational traumas, its wounds, fears, and doubts. My whole life has been dedicated to 'rendering Justice' through the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, to healing through Art, to creating, transforming, elevating, and transmitting the Armenian, and above all, French, soul and culture, which are entirely my own. I am an Artist in soul and in life. It is a marginal path that demands courage and strength, talent, and also immense work, values inherited from my Armenian grandfather, a genocide survivor I never knew, who guides and protects me, and from my paternal grandmother, the Spanish pied-noir Carmen, exiled from Oran in Algeria, whom I knew and who

accompanyed me until the birth of my two sons. My sons spent their childhood, up to the age of 11, at the TIVOLI Armenian Cultural Center in Marseille. They speak Armenian, studied in an Armenian associ-

ation, and carry both French and Armenian names.

**So, I assume the Armenian traditions still shape your daily life and influence your personality.**

Yes, undeniably. I sometimes cook Armenian dishes, attend the Armenian church, and remain deeply committed to the Armenian cause—within the community, through the transmission of its history and culture. Like blessed bread, my heart multiplies rather than divides, except in the face of injustice and the horrors endured by Armenia and Artsakh. I have even fallen into depression because of it. That is why I have dedicated my next show "Sacrées F'Ames" to the Armenian soldier and martyr Anush Apetyan, who was massacred by Azeri soldiers on September 13, 2022. The play tells the story of women from the dawn of time to the present day, through different archetypes. It is a musical theatre piece combining drama, singing, dance, video, and live performances with dancers. This musical performance is scheduled for March 6, 2026, in Auriol near Marseille, in celebration of International Women's Day, and I dream of performing it one day in Yerevan.

**By the way, have you ever visited Armenia?**

Unfortunately, I have never been to Armenia. Yet I carry it in my heart and soul. I will go one day. When I see the mountain landscapes of Armenia on TV reports, or its historic sites, its energy speaks to me. I feel as if I already know it perhaps from another life. It must be incredibly vibrant!



Lydie Belmonte at the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in September 2022 with the Armenian priest Vahagn and a young seminarian from Yerevan. The seminarian is holding Belmonte's book *Little Armenia*, which was a gift to the Armenian community of Jerusalem.

of food. From my Spanish pied-noir side comes humor, passion, warmth and intensity. From my Armenian side flows modesty, hypersensitivity, tireless worker, and a wistful nostalgia that lingers like a quiet



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# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian



## Fattoush Salad by Feast in the Middle East's Blanche Shaheen

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — Arab American food blogger and journalist Blanche Shaheen has reported on ABC's "View from the Bay," and has hosted the independent film show "Video I" for PBS for 10 years. In 2010, she began hosting her cooking show, sharing decades of treasured Middle Eastern recipes preserved by her talented mother, grandmother, and family. Blanche is the author of the *Feast in the Middle East: A Personal Journey of Family and Cuisine*, and an Emmy Award Winning NBC Lifestyle Correspondent.

"These recipes are handed down from one generation to the next, recipes that many of today's culinary schools, chefs, and restaurants don't know about — however, there were no written measurements," Blanche says. That's when she began a mission of cultural preservation, discovery, research, and writing down the cooking methods and exact ingredients of these old recipes. She launched "Feast in the Middle East," her popular YouTube cooking channel to not only share these recipes with her family, but with the world.

"Since April was officially recognized as Arab American Heritage Month, Arab Americans were flooding social media with their favorite family recipes, from overfilled shawarma wraps and crispy falafel, to artistic hummus plates and buttery baklava. I was excited to be featured on NBC's 'California Live' recently to share one of my own favorite recipes for fattoush salad. I chose fattoush because of the harmonious flavors and textures of sweet and tangy, earthy and crunchy. No wonder this dish has reached popularity worldwide," she says.

"Fattoush is possibly the first salad in history to use croutons. Arabs are extremely resourceful with leftovers, using toasted bits of day old bread as a foundation for main dishes like fattet hummus, or for luscious salads like fattoush to absorb

all of that fruity olive oil. This salad was specifically named for the croutons, as they are an integral part of this dish. The word 'fattoush' means 'bits of something' in Arabic, in this case, bits of crispy pita bread croutons."

To make the perfect salad, Blanche suggests starting with a foundation of crispy romaine lettuce. Ideally use fresh tomatoes in season, from meaty romas to sweet cherry tomatoes. Hydrating Persian cucumbers are ideal since they have fewer seeds. Aromatics like fresh parsley, mint, and red onions or scallions offer zest and peppery balance. Bell peppers add a sweet crunch. While traditional fattoush uses the more bitter green bell peppers, you can use red, orange, or yellow peppers for more sweetness and vibrant color.

"Traditional fattoush often contains fried pita croutons, but that can defeat the purpose of a low calorie salad. Oven-baked croutons do not sacrifice flavor, as a smaller amount of fruity olive oil and seasonings can go a long way to create savory flavor and crunch with fewer calories. You can get creative by adding garlic or onion powder, za'atar, or dukkah spice to your croutons to add layers of flavor. To save time, you can use leftover store-bought pita chips."

For authentic Middle Eastern recipes, purchase Blanche's cookbook: *Feast in the Middle East, A Personal Journey of Family and Cuisine* by going to: <https://feastinthemiddleeast.com/COOKBOOK/>

"While many of these dishes used to take hours to make, Blanche has modernized these recipes to adapt to today's western palate and busy lifestyles. Readers will be able to recreate street foods like Chicken Shawarma and crispy Falafel in their own kitchens using easy techniques and familiar ingredients. Fusion dishes like Baklava Granola with pistachios and cardamom, Middle Eastern Nachos or 'Machos' with pita chips and cucumber yogurt sauce, and a Lemon Cheesecake made with creamy labneh cheese adapt middle eastern spices and ingredients to western tastes. Today the *Feast in the Middle East* YouTube series has brought together a global cooking community in an unexpected and beautiful way. Now viewers are making these recipes in the United States, Canada, India, Australia, Spain, Korea and beyond."

### INGREDIENTS:

1 1/2 cups stale pita bread, cut into roughly 1-inch pieces (or store-bought pita chips if short on time)  
 Olive oil for brushing bread  
 Salt to taste  
 Garlic powder or 1 fresh garlic clove, chopped (or both)  
 2 large tomatoes, diced  
 2 cucumbers (Persian, Japanese or English), diced  
 4-5 scallions, sliced lengthwise into fine strips  
 1 medium green or red bell pepper, diced  
 1/4 medium red onion, finely sliced  
 1 bunch mint leaves, finely chopped, or 1 tablespoon dried mint  
 1/2 cup chopped parsley  
 1 large head romaine lettuce, chopped

### Lemon-garlic vinaigrette:

Juice of 1 large lemon, to taste  
 1/4 cup olive oil, plus extra olive oil for brushing bread  
 Salt to taste  
 3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses  
 1 large garlic clove, minced  
 2 tablespoons sumac

### PREPARATION:

Brush olive oil on both sides of the pita bread pieces, then sprinkle them with salt and garlic powder. Bake the pita pieces in a shallow pan at 400°F until lightly toasted, about 7 minutes. Let cool. You can deep fry the bread by heating up a saucepan of avocado oil on medium heat, then frying the pitas until golden brown. If using store-bought pita chips, you can skip this step.

Combine the lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, scallions, bell pepper, red onion, mint leaves and parsley in a large salad bowl. Combine all the vinaigrette ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid, cover, and shake to blend. Toss the vegetables with dressing. Add the toasted bread pieces to the salad and combine right before serving to ensure extra crunch.

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## Dr. Hayk Demoyan to Speak at Armenian American Museum

DEMOYAN, from page 14  
 historical memory and its continued relevance in today's global and Armenian American contexts. Known for his accessible yet rigorous approach, Dr. Demoyan brings history to life through compelling narratives grounded in scholarship.

Demoyan's most recent publication, *Tiflis: An Illustrated History of Armenian Heritage*, released in November 2025, offers a richly visual exploration of the Armenian presence and cultural legacy in Tbilisi. Through rare imagery and historical context, the book traces centuries of Armenian life, creativity, and community

in the region, illuminating a vital chapter of Armenian heritage.

The Armenian American Museum Speaker Series is designed to foster dialogue, education, and cultural connection through conversations with distinguished scholars, artists, and community leaders. This event offers attendees an opportunity to engage directly with one of the most respected historians in the field.

The event is open to the public. Registration deadline is Sunday, February 1.

Learn more and RSVP for the Speaker Series at [ArmenianAmericanMuseum.org/RSVP](http://ArmenianAmericanMuseum.org/RSVP).



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

## New Bilingual Book by Prof. Seta B. Dadoyan Published by Western Prelacy

DADOYAN, from page 14  
early eighth, the age of St. Yovhan III Ӯdznets'i (r. 717–728) at Dwin, and the twelfth, the age of St. Nerses IV Shnorhali (r. 1166–1173) at Hromkla. Both are presented as "saints and diplomats", to bring out the significance and relevance of their



Prof. Seta Dadoyan

diplomatic legacy. The larger theme is obviously the political role and the career of the Armenian Church in the Near Eastern region.

The unique position and the role of the Armenian Church is a rarely analyzed yet a very basic aspect of the Armenian historical evolution between powerful empires, or the "mesopolitan" condition, as Dadoyan defines it, and particularly in the Western Armenian World. The latter is another major historiographic model that Dadoyan strongly suggests and documents. By the tenth century, and before the fall of the Armenian dynasties and the mass migrations of the people to the west and south, and under the pressure of multiple regional powers, the Western Armenian World took shape and grew, a millennium ago.

Through the Cilician and other polities this much larger world drew its own unique path, so did the Eastern Armenian World as per its circumstances. Throughout, the careers and conditions of the Church and the people in the Western Armenian World were very different from the East, hence the legitimacy, also the urgency to shift paradigms and start new research.

The mesopolitan condition and the historical experiences of the Armenians in the Western Armenian World have their beginnings in the age and career of Yovhan III as well as those of his predecessors. Between powerful and rival Empires, simultaneously doctrinal and diplomatic roles of the Armenian Church became clear during these decades. Great figures of the Church led the people through most precarious circumstances, and their legacy continued beyond the Middle Ages into modern times. The exceptional circumstances of Yovhan III and previously St. Sahak III Dzorap'orets'i (r. 677–703) between the Islamic East and the Christian West are like those of the Pahlawuni catholicoi and Shnorhali too, in the Western Armenian World. During the late seventh century if St. Sahak III embodied grave moments of Armenian history in his personal life through battles, exiles, death and posthumous victory away from his country, around three decades later, St. Yovhan III acted as a Master of Diplomacy in complicated mesopolitan circumstances. He was also a reformer, a jurist, and a theologian-philosopher. This is stage/world in which Grigor II, Grigor III and Shnorhali found themselves and continued the legacy. These are few of the main themes in this book and the WP Book Series.



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## MASSACHUSETTS

**DECEMBER 12-APRIL 26, 2026** —The Armenian Museum of America 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.

**FEBRUARY 3** — CELEBRATE ARMENIA! PRESENTING SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH Tuesday at 7pm, virtual program showcasing schools and programs. offering instruction in language, culture, history & the arts during the school year recognizing their leadership and commitment to excellence. Announcement & Registration: [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Calendar](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Calendar)

**FEBRUARY 8** — The Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Music Director Orlando Cela, will present a concert entitled "Armenia", on Sunday, February 8, at 3 p.m. Arlington High School Auditorium, 869 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington. The entire program will feature works by Armenian composers, including Arlington's own Alan Hovhaness, and will include: Ballet Suite by Geghuni Chitchyan (world premiere); Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra by Eduard Bagdasaryan featuring violin soloist Sargis Karapetyan; Elegy in Memory of Aram Khachaturian by Arno Babajanian/Arr. S. Arakelian; Symphony No.1, "Exile", by Alan Hovhaness. Tickets are available at the door: \$20 General Admission, \$15 Students/Seniors, \$5 Children 17 & Under. Wheelchair Accessible. The Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra is part of the Philharmonic Society of Arlington, Inc. a 501(c)3 non-profit community organization which also includes the Arlington-Belmont Chorale and the Arlington-Belmont Chamber Chorus. For more information, visit [www.psarlington.org](http://www.psarlington.org)

**FEBRUARY 14** — Poon Paregantan ("Great Carnival") Dinner-Dance. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. A terrific family evening of great food, music and dancing. Featuring Leon Janikian, clarinet; Greg Takvorian, oud/vocals; Dave Anisbigian, guitar/vocals; and Art Chingris, Dumbeg. Latest dance tunes from Armenia and America Pop music by DJ Garen. 6 p.m. Adults: \$40. Students: \$15. Children under 6: free. Paid reservations must be made by February 11 either on the church website, [sts vartanantz.com](http://sts vartanantz.com), or by contacting Corie Horan, [coriehoran@gmail.com](mailto:coriehoran@gmail.com), 978-967-6423.

**FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 22** — On exhibit at Boston City Hall, "Geometry as Public Part: Telling a Story," Curriculum Inspired by Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway.

**MARCH 1** — UNDER THE SNOW MOON. Sunday at 4pm, virtual. Virtual program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Registration: [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Calendar](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Calendar)

**APRIL 9** — LET'S GET TOGETHER! Thursday, 7-9pm JOIA BOSTON AT THE HARBORSIDE INN, BOSTON

Young Leaders' Friends Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park Donation: \$30/ person. Advance Reservations. [ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support](http://ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support)

**APRIL 24** — Armenian Genocide Commemoration at the Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon St., Boston, starts 10:30 a.m., with reception to follow. Program details to be announced. Organized by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of MA. Buses from Watertown will be available courtesy of the Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1. The event is free and open to all. For more information, email [bostonagcc@gmail.com](mailto:bostonagcc@gmail.com).

**APRIL 26** — Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Armenian Heritage Park, at the Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston, starts 2:30 pm. Program details to be announced. Organized by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of MA. Buses from Watertown will be available courtesy of the Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1. The event is free and open to all. For more information, email [bostonagcc@gmail.com](mailto:bostonagcc@gmail.com).

**MAY 2** — CELEBRATE PUBLIC ART! ABSTRACT SCULPTURE PERMANENT & ALIVE & WORLD LABYRINTH DAY: WALK AS ONE. Saturday at 12:30 pm. ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK ON THE GREENWAY, BOSTON Join people in cities & towns in 35 countries world-wide: Armenia (Gyumri), Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, many more. Reception following.

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

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.



# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

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# The Trump-Aliyev Meeting and Vance's Visit

By Suren Sargsyan

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

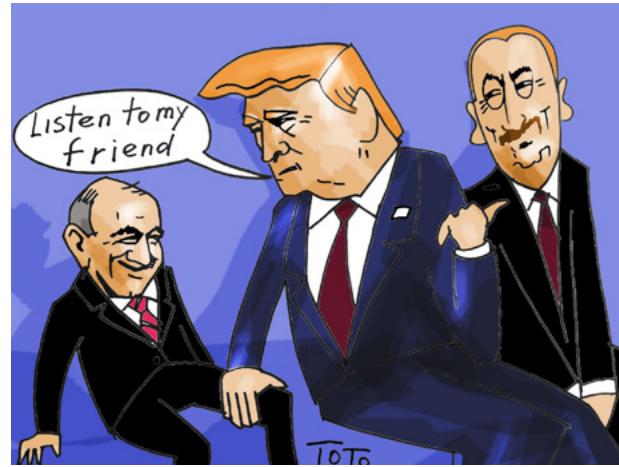
At the end of December, I wrote on my Facebook page that Armenia would soon be visited by the highest-ranking American official in its history. Although I did not disclose who that official would be, I emphasized that a visit at this level had never occurred before. I noted that this would be a historic event, as previously the highest-ranking American officials to have visited Armenia were the Speaker of the US House of Representatives and US Secretaries of State James Baker and Hillary Clinton.

Information regarding Vice President J. D. Vance's visit was not denied by either the Armenian or the American side, which indicated that my information was accurate. Only days later, US President Donald Trump made a post on his social media account announcing that preparations were underway for Vice President Vance's visit not only to Armenia but also to Azerbaijan.

To the best of my knowledge, an Azerbaijan visit was not initially planned. From the outset, Vance was expected to only visit Yerevan, as well as Syunik, where the so-called "Trump route" is currently under construction. Days before President Trump's social media post, a meeting took place between Trump and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Davos. Immediately following that meeting, Trump announced on his social media platform Truth Social: "We will strengthen our strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, a beautiful Agreement for Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation with Armenia, deals for our great semiconductor makers, and the sale of Made in the U.S.A. defense equipment, such as body armor and boats, and more, to Azerbaijan."

It was notable that Trump did not hold a bilateral meeting with Pashinyan while the latter was in Davos. The impression was that with regard to Armenia, all key decisions had already been made and there was no need to discuss anything. Trump's statement revealed a distinct imbalance in Armenian-American and US-Azerbaijani relations.

Specifically, in the Washington-Baku dimension, the statement clearly articulated concrete and practical components of cooperation — deepening strategic partnership, the sale of defense equipment, and the expansion of security cooperation. As for Armenia, the proposed area of cooperation is the nuclear sector, particularly new small modular nuclear station technologies that I have had the opportunity to discuss previously. However, even within US expert and professional circles, there is an understanding that these technologies still require further development and testing before they can be deployed at scale.



A legitimate question arises: why is Armenia avoiding acquiring weapons, ammunition, or other military technologies from the United States, as Azerbaijan has done? If Armenia is able to purchase military equipment from France and India, why does it not do the same with the US, in order to elevate its relations with Washington to a new strategic level? Of course, US legislation and bureaucracy are quite complex when it comes to such transactions, but these obstacles can be overcome.

The upcoming high-level visit serves two primary objectives. First, it aims to consolidate US positions in the South Caucasus — something Washington has been unable to fully achieve since the collapse of the Soviet Union, due to a range of political constraints. In this sense, the primary objective is the advancement of US strategic interests across a broad geographic arc, extending from Central Asia to the South Caucasus.

Second, the visit carries particular personal significance for President Trump, as it relates to the implementation of a project bearing his name. For Trump, the realization of this initiative is closely tied to ambitions for international recognition, including the pursuit of a Nobel Peace Prize, as well as to domestic political messaging and personal branding.

In both cases, this scenario represents a functional and viable approach for advancing the respective objectives.

While the US vice president's visit represents diplomatic engagement, it does not fundamentally alter or significantly strengthen US-Armenia relations or the Armenian-American agenda. Without a defined framework of mutual political, security, and strategic interests, Armenia will remain a passive player in regional dynamics, irrespective of high-level pronouncements or symbolic gestures.

At the same time, if Armenia truly has a chance to establish strategic relations with the United States, then, considering this visit and the overall US activity and regional dynamics, Armenia must rapidly develop multi-dimensional relations with the US, especially in areas where it has never deepened cooperation. Otherwise, the "Trump Route" may remain merely a business presence in the region, without any strategic significance or long-term vision.

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

## Between Political Uncertainty and Military Threats: Syria's Forgotten Armenian Community

## Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian

Syria today remains a politically and militarily fragmented country, defined not only by the legacy of a devastating civil war, but also by unresolved tensions between the country's central authorities and the Kurdish forces operating in the northern and northeastern regions. Periodic clashes, shifting alliances, and contested systems of governance continue to generate instability and uncertainty, particularly for minorities caught between competing centers of power. Under these vulnerable conditions, Christian minorities — including Armenians — are forced to ensure their survival and security without genuine guarantees of equal citizenship.

Historically, Armenians in Syria have formed an integral part of the country's social and cultural fabric. For many decades, Aleppo was one of the most vibrant centers of Armenian diasporic life, with its schools, churches, press and cultural institutions. This strong communal presence, however, sharply declined after 2011 as a result of mass displacement, economic collapse and security instability.

Today, Syria's Armenian community has diminished in number, its institutions

have weakened, and its future is uncertain. What for many years was a self-sufficient community has been reduced to a vulnerable remnant, surviving primarily thanks to Christian churches and support from the diaspora. This situation has created a profound and dangerous rupture in the historical trajectory of the Armenian presence in Syria.

Under these conditions, the three Armenian religious denominations — Apostolic, Catholic, Evangelical — continue to play a broader role than mere spiritual leadership. They function as pillars of community governance, organizers of humanitarian assistance, and intermediaries with the state. During the years of war, churches also became places of refuge and protection, continuing a historical tradition deeply rooted in Eastern Christianity.

Relations between Armenians and other religious communities in Syria have generally been peaceful, but they have always been based on pragmatic coexistence rather than genuine equality. The war exposed the fragile nature of this coexistence and the vulnerability of minorities amid the disintegration of state authority.

Armenian cultural and religious heritage in Syria remains deeply rooted, yet serious-

ly endangered. Places such as Deir ez-Zor serve as reminders that this presence is not merely cultural, but also part of historical memory and collective suffering.

Under the current circumstances, the issue is no longer solely one of reconstruction, but of securing the political and legal conditions for survival. Without equal citizenship, stable security, and genuine rights, the future of Syria's Armenian community remains bleak. The same fate threatens other Christian communities as well, regardless of which force controls a given territory.

Unfortunately, amid rapid geopolitical developments and the serious, ongoing crises unfolding in the region, the condition of Syria's Armenian community seems no longer to be a priority for much of the diaspora. In this environment of limited international attention and limited diasporan capacity, Armenians in Syria remain on the margins, facing existential challenges and an uncertain future.

(Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian is a sociologist, university lecturer, and innovation executive. For a more extensive discussion of Armenians in the Middle East, see Tchilingirian's chapter on the subject published in a book in 2023.)



## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Plans, Just as Today, to Eliminate Armenia

In recent months, there have been several references to an important book in Armenian published by Turkologist Dr. Ruben Safrastyan in Yerevan in 2019. The book is titled: *Mustafa Kemal: The Struggle Against the Republic of Armenia, 1919-1921*.

The reason this book has come to special attention now is that, among other valuable information, it presents the text of a cipher telegram written by Ahmet Muhtar, Acting Foreign Minister of Turkey, to Kazim Karabekir, Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Front Army (Armenia's border) on November 8, 1920. This document was first published in Istanbul in 1960 by Karabekir in his book, *Our War of Independence*.

According to Dr. Safrastyan, this document reflects the position of Turkish President Mustafa Kemal (later known as Ataturk) and would not have been written without his specific direction and approval. Muhtar stated that "this secret order contains the real goal of the [Turkish] government." Furthermore, Kemal had sent a coded telegram to Karabekir on Feb. 5, 1920, instructing him to make preparations to attack Armenia.

The value of this historic document lies in the fact that the hostile position of the Turkish government in 1920 is remarkably similar to its position today regarding the Republic of Armenia. There are stunning parallels between how Turkey viewed Armenia in the past and how it views it now. Such a comparative analysis is also useful for understanding the mindset of Azerbaijan's leadership, Turkey's "junior partner." The secret document has direct relevance to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's persistent efforts to sign a "Peace Treaty" with President Ilham Aliyev, while naively believing that such a piece of paper will deter Azerbaijan from attacking Armenia.

There are so many eerie parallels between what is written in 1920 and what is happening today. I have highlighted in bold letters, parts of the secret Turkish document of 1920 that are just as ominous today:

"There is no doubt that the ceasefire offer, made by Armenia, when it is isolated from both the Western and Eastern worlds, is aimed at avoiding the impending disaster. As soon as Armenia becomes stronger, it will naturally try to fulfill the obligation imposed on it by the Treaty of Sevres to sever our ties with the East, and will also, together with the Greeks, undermine our life and progress. It is impossible that Armenia, which is located at the center of the great Muslim periphery, should with conviction of heart renounce that cruel gendarmerie duty and decide to completely link its fate with Turkey and Islamism. For this reason, it is absolutely necessary that Armenia be politically and physically eliminated from the middle. At the same time, since the realization of this goal depends on the capabilities provided by our power and the favorableness of the general political situation, it is necessary to prepare the important preconditions mentioned above in a coordinated manner. It

follows from this that our withdrawal as a result of a simple ceasefire agreement with the Armenians cannot be a subject of discussion. The fundamental clauses of the ceasefire conveyed to the Armenians should be aimed not at withdrawing from Armenia, but at misleading the Armenians and appearing to be peace-loving towards Europe. However, in reality, the result should be the creation of the necessary preconditions for the gradual preparation and maturation of our goal."

"At present, it is absolutely necessary to demobilize the Armenian army and confiscate its weapons, thus giving no chance of restoring its military structure. Under the pretext of keeping the railways under control and protecting the rights of the Muslim population, it is necessary to establish our military control over the entire territory of Armenia and thus keep in our hands all the roads connecting Turkey with Azerbaijan. The above-mentioned goal must be achieved in a covert and soft way, both in the text of the peace treaty and in the actions arising from it, on the condition of always appearing peaceful in the eyes of the Armenians."

"The acceptance of the principle of a referendum about the border, in the first point of the ceasefire conditions sent to you today for the purpose of handing over to the Armenian government, stems from the desire to hinder the final determination of the borders with Armenia. You can temporarily accept the Brest-Litovsk border line, since the goal is to first obtain a written proposal on the border from the Armenians in this matter and thus prevent the negotiations from reaching a deadlock. However, it is necessary to prepare the ground for a continuous intervention under the pretext of protecting the rights of the Muslim minority remaining on the other side of the border [in Armenia]. Clauses should be included in the agreement that would ensure the seizure of weapons from the enemy [Armenia] and the disarmament of its army as soon as possible. Special efforts should be made to arm the Turks of the region step by step and to create national armed forces. They will connect the East and the West and make Azerbaijan an independent Turkish state."

There are several disturbing similarities between the hostile intent expressed in the 1920 Turkish document with today's situation:

1) The "Peace Treaty" to be signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan will not prevent President Aliyev from carrying out his often-declared intention to invade and occupy the entire Republic of Armenia which he calls "Western Azerbaijan." The best evidence of Aliyev's malicious intent is his constant threats demanding endless concessions from Armenia. The more Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan complies with Aliyev's wishes, the more demanding Aliyev will become.

2) If Pashinyan accepts Aliyev's demand to resettle 300,000 Azeris in Armenia, it would likely spell the end of the Armenian Republic. Aliyev could use the slightest pretext to send his troops to Armenia ostensibly to defend his fellow Azeris.

3) The reference in the 1920 document to: "keep in our hands all the roads connecting Turkey with Azerbaijan" is similar to the current demand of a "corridor" which reflects the age-old Turkish aspiration for a "Turan Road," linking the Central Asian Turkic Republics with Turkey.

## LETTERS

Poland, Finland and China can invade and take over Taiwan.

Given these dynamics plus the Trumpian attitude of "I take what I consider a danger to America's national interest and no one can tell me not to", why can we not expect President Aliyev of Azerbaijan taking the same position and taking over Armenia?

Of course a number of conditions have to be present for such an act such as, for example, Russia witnessing her loss of influence with a future Pashinyan govern-

its Silk Road to pass through Armenian soil. As for the United States, it will declare they tried their best to bring peace in the area but local conditions do not allow American interference as there is no danger to her national security or interests.

There is, however, another way by which Armenia can, indeed, attain American support and assistance and become great again. Several years ago, there was a company called ArmenOil which tried to find oil in Armenia given its proximity to oil and gas rich Azerbaijan. For some unknown reasons this was a failed attempt and was forgotten.

Meanwhile, Armenia has discovered it has rich metals and rare earth products hidden in its under soil. Well, if oil and rare earth materials are the predominant considerations for the United States (see Venezuela and Greenland), then why shouldn't Armenia request that she becomes a protectorate of the United States with the dollar becoming its own currency and extending drilling concessions to America and her companies. The current transactional foreign policy followed by the United States under the "Donroe Doctrine" believes in exactly such premises.

Meantime, Pashinyan, in his attempt to "Make Armenia Great Again," is jailing several of his opponents coming from a group of 26 different political parties in the country and fighting the Church and its leadership while working on the impossible dream of European Union membership, a utopian pursuit at best.

I am sure all of us Armenians in the Diaspora, not only the three million in Russia but also the other four million in the Western Hemisphere, will be following developments during this first half of the New Year with great interest and hoping that the outcome will be positive for the three million people in Armenia for whatever they decide on June 7, 2026.

Miran P. Sarkissian

## MAGA: Make Armenia Great Again!

To the Editor:

The recent adventure of the United States in Venezuela became yet another phase of the "Donroe Doctrine" based on past experiences of the 19th century by this country but misplaced as the actual Monroe Doctrine was structured to keep away European influences in America at that time.

The Venezuelan experience, however, and the claim that it reaffirms the dominance of America in the Western Hemisphere, creates a whole new structure of global politics and influences.

Now that we know America considers herself the dominant power in this hemisphere, it also means the global agreements of the last 80 years since the end of World War II, become ostensibly invalid and we are in a brave new world.

So, America is the master of the Western Hemisphere while Russia can be considered the master of the European and Caucasian Hemisphere and China the master of the Asian Hemisphere. The Middle East and Africa remain areas of dispute and potential conflict between these great powers.

Given this division, America can proceed to take over Cuba and maybe Colombia after showing its dominance in Argentina, Chile and Panama over the past decades and, then Russia can take over Ukraine,

## ARMENIA HAS DISCOVERED IT HAS RICH METALS AND RARE EARTH PRODUCTS HIDDEN IN ITS UNDER SOIL.

ment and using the Azeris as a surrogate to maintain her influence in its own Hemisphere of influence. She did so in Georgia and Chechnya before long and is now doing the same in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Pashinyan is playing a high-risk game to win the upcoming June 2026 parliamentary elections. Playing nice with the United States while reaching out to China and India for military and other kinds of assistance and distancing Armenia from Russia and himself from Putin, the results of such a multi-phase approach can be detrimental to the country.

In case of an Azeri attack, who will come to Armenia's help? Certainly not Russia. The European Union will declare its heartfelt support for Armenia's independence. India will continue selling arms to the country and China will be looking for more concessions for



## Eldad Ben Aharon's Book on Geopolitics of Denying Armenian Genocide Published

Edinburgh University Press has announced the publication of Dr. Eldad Ben Aharon's book, *Israeli-Turkish Relations at the End of the Cold War: The Geopolitics of Denying the Armenian Genocide*. The book examines how covert cooperation between Ankara and Jerusalem in the 1980s was profoundly shaped by Turkey's determination to block international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Drawing on declassified American and Israeli archival materials alongside thirty original oral-history interviews, Eldad Ben Aharon reveals the hidden diplomatic calculations that underpinned this uneasy alignment.

Against the backdrop of Cold War geopolitics, Israel quietly accommodated Turkey's denial policies, prioritizing strategic interests over historical justice. Ben Aharon demonstrates how Turkey's military leadership played a decisive role in easing tensions with Israel following years of estrangement, while the rise of Turgut Özal marked a turning point in strengthening bilateral ties. At the same time, internal di-

visions within Israel's diplomatic corps exposed deep moral and political dilemmas: how to safeguard Israel's standing in Washington and Brussels while tacitly supporting Ankara's position on the Armenian Genocide.

The book situates this clandestine diplomacy within a wider regional and global context, tracing Israel's maneuvering through pivotal events such as Iran's Islamic Revolution, the July 1980 Jerusalem Law, Turkey's September 1980 military coup, and the 1982 First Lebanon War. These developments unfolded

alongside Turkey's 1987 application to join the European Economic Community, the Reagan administration's foreign policy agenda, and the early contours of what would later be called the American "war on terror."

Challenging conventional accounts that emphasize the role of American Jewish organizations or Turkish Jewish intermediaries, Ben Aharon instead highlights the influence of individual diplomats operating largely out of public view. Their calculated

decisions and discreet negotiations forged an alliance that reshaped Israeli-Turkish relations for decades—at the cost of entangling Israel in a politics of denial that continues to reverberate today.

Ben Aharon commented on the book, saying, "I decided to work on this complex topic after encountering a newspaper article in Haaretz in 2003, a few years before I began my academic journey. That article sparked a lasting fascination with the complex relationship between Israel and Turkey, viewed through the lens of the Armenian Genocide. Over time, what began as an intuitive curiosity developed into a sustained research agenda, first through my MA research and later through an extensive PhD project. This book is the result of more than a decade of engagement with the question of how strategic interests, memory politics, and practices of denial became deeply intertwined in Israeli-Turkish relations."

### Reviews

Eldad Ben Aharon's book provides original and important insights into the first "global war on terror" under the Reagan administration in the 1980s. Drawing upon extensive archival research and interviews, this book examines how Cold War-era ontological fears of international terrorism shaped liaison efforts amongst the U.S.,

Israel and Turkey. This notably led to delays in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 for several decades. This compelling work highlights the deep interconnections between security policy and historical memory.— Sarah Leonard, *Dublin City University*

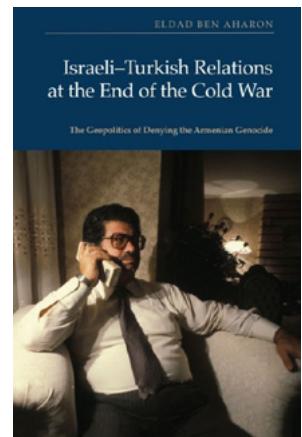
This ground-breaking study examines the evolution of the Israeli-Turkish alliance in the late Cold War era, laying the foundation for a decades-long partnership. It meticulously explores how Israel seized Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide in the 1970s as a launching point to build trust in a country that viewed Israel's close ties with Washington as a means to shape policy. To the surprise of many, the foundations of the alliance endured major political shifts, with the rise of Erdogan and Netanyahu. It is essential reading for anyone interested in Israel-Turkish relations and their impact on the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. Unequivocally, this work positions Eldad Ben-Aharon as a leading authority on Israeli-Turkish ties, just as relations between the two countries have hit rock bottom in the wake of the events of Oct 7th. In short, few can match Ben-Aharon's ability to maneuver the political world of Israel, Turkey, the United States and the Middle East, crafting a compelling and very readable analysis.— Louis Fishman, *City University of New York*

In his carefully researched and argued book, Eldad Ben Aharon shows how the Israeli state's comportment to the Armenian Genocide was the contingent outcome of regional geopolitics and Cold War contexts, ranging from the Iranian revolution in 1979 to Turkish domestic policy. Bridging multiple scales of analysis, *Israeli-Turkish Relations at the End of the Cold War* is a methodological *tour de force* on an unjustly neglected topic.— A. Dirk Moses, *City College of New York (CUNY)*

Eldad Ben Aharon's ground-breaking study sheds new light on how Israeli diplomats, operating under Cold War pressure, worked in quiet coordination with Turkey to suppress international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It reveals how a complex geopolitical climate, shaped by events such as the 1979 Islamic Revolution and Turkey's 1980 military coup, prompted the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to leverage the Armenian issue as a shared concern, deepening ties with Ankara behind the scenes. Based on a rich array of primary sources, this book offers a compelling portrait of Israeli foreign policy in the final decade of the Cold War and of Middle Eastern diplomacy that paved the way for the 'golden years' of the 1990s.— Ofra Ben-gio, *Tel Aviv University*

**Eldad Ben Aharon** is a Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and was previously an Irish Research Council (IRC) Postdoctoral Fellow in International Security at Dublin City University. His work explores the nexus of security, identity, and memory, drawing on insights from securitization theory, foreign policy analysis, and oral history. Ben Aharon has published widely on Israeli foreign policy and its intersections with broader regional conflict dynamics, with his research appearing in leading academic journals, including the *European Journal of International Security, Intelligence and National Security, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Oral History Review, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Journal of Genocide Research and Cold War History*.

Copies of *Israeli-Turkish Relations at the End of the Cold War: The Geopolitics of Denying the Armenian Genocide* are available for purchase from the Edinburgh University Press website. Use code: NEW30 to receive a 30 percent discount.



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