

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932

Volume LXXXIII, No. 39, Issue 4928

APRIL 18, 2026

\$2.00

Aviation, Infrastructure and the Election Campaign: How Does the Iran War Affect Armenia?

By Marut Vanyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — “Dear all, who knows whether the Iranian checkpoint is already open?” asks a Syunik resident in a Facebook group. “No,” “no,” “no,” “not yet,” users respond in the comments.

Unlike superpowers interested in oil, ordinary citizens of Armenia are interested in when the war in Iran will end so that they can go buy cheap cooking oil and washing powder there.

Just a few months ago, at least in Armenia, there was an impression that high-speed trains would soon be running via “Trump’s Route.” This project seemed more realistic especially after the visit of US Vice President JD Vance, but the war that broke out in Iran overshadowed everything and, as they say, there are bigger fish to fry.

Against the backdrop of the upcoming elections in Armenia, those with pro-Russian and pro-Western orientations are actively arguing and discussing this topic. So, where is your America, where did the TRIPP project disappear? Some experts in Armenia ask. One side



An Iranian truck makes its way near the Armenia-Iran border (photo Marut Vanyan)



A trilingual sign at the Armenia-Iran border on the Armenian side (photo Marut Vanyan)

offers the prospect of great economic opportunities, while the US Department announced that we haven’t forgotten – just wait a “little bit.”

The Trump administration remains committed to implementing the Trump’s Route to International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) project, a spokesperson for the US State Department said in response to an inquiry by Armenpress.

see WAR, page 3

Pashinyan Says Armenia–Russia Relations Have Undergone ‘Constructive Transformation’

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

Amidst renewed tension in Armenia–Russia relations following a meeting between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin on 1 April, Pashinyan has said the bilateral relationship is undergoing a “constructive transformation.”

“I evaluate this process positively,” Pashinyan said during his weekly press briefing on Thursday, April 9.

He added that Armenia would “not deviate from the logic of friendly dialogue and will continue along this path.” Pashinyan also disclosed that, based on the agreements reached, he would meet Putin again in the “second half of June.”

see TRANSFORMATION, page 3



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan speaks in Yerevan in April

Korean Blogger Sees Ghost Towns with Vanishing Armenian Traces in Karabakh

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Before 2020, a trip to Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) was almost as easy as traveling to any region of Armenia. Following the 2020 war and a September 2023 Azerbaijani military operation that led to the displacement of the region’s ethnic Armenian population, access has become restricted.

A South Korean travel blogger who recently visited the region described largely empty settlements, see BLOGGER, page 4



YoungMin Skies Channel

Israel Is Continuing Attacks on Lebanon

BEIRUT (Combined Sources) — The Israeli military is continuing its sustained attacks on Lebanon. It has demolished entire villages as part of its invasion of south Lebanon, rigging homes with explosives and razing them to the ground in massive remote detonations.

The Guardian reviewed three videos posted by the Israeli military and on social media, which showed Israel carrying out mass detonations in the villages of Taybeh, Naqoura and Deir Seryan along the Israel-Lebanon border. Lebanese media has reported more mass detonations in other border villages, but satellite imagery was not readily available to verify these claims.

see ATTACKS, page 4



Beirut this month (Ibrahim Amro photo/Getty)

Armenian Court Scraps Catholicos Travel Ban

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — An Armenian court on April 13 struck down a travel ban imposed on Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II earlier this year amid Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s attempts to depose the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

A law-enforcement agency banned Karekin as well as six bishops from leaving Armenia when it indicted them two months ago. The accusations leveled against them stem from Karekin’s January 27 decision to defrock another bishop, who is involved in Pashinyan’s controversial campaign.

They were thus unable to attend an emergency episcopal conference held by the Armenian Church in Austria later in February. Karekin was also not allowed to attend last month’s funeral of neighboring Georgia’s longtime Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II.

Karekin’s office and legal experts questioned the legality of the accusations, saying that Armenian law-enforcement authorities have no jurisdiction over internal church affairs. Lawyers representing the Catholicos challenged the travel ban in court.

see CATHOLICOS, page 2

STEPANAKERT

Stepanakert’s St. Hakob Church Razed



Page 3

NEW YORK

Easter at St. Vartan Cathedral: ‘Stay Close to God’



Page 11

LOS ANGELES

FOX 11 Los Angeles Celebrates Armenian Heritage Month



Page 12



ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Opposition Must Aim Beyond Electoral Victory, Oskanian Says

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Former Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian says the country's opposition has largely consolidated ahead of the June 7 parliamentary elections, with parties unveiling candidate lists and political platforms focused on peace, economic growth, poverty reduction, justice and national unity.

Writing on social media on April 14, Oskanian emphasized that the next critical step is to entrench the idea of a “collective opposition” in the public mindset, shifting the focus from fragmented political efforts to a unified national objective.

“I am convinced that this collective opposition will win the elections,” he said. “However, victory alone is not enough. A higher benchmark must be set.”

The opposition's goal should not be limited to preventing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan from regaining power. He argued that it should also seek to ensure that the ruling party fails to enter the parliament.

Azerbaijan Sends 22 Railcars of Diesel

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On April 14, Azerbaijan dispatched 22 railcars of diesel fuel to Armenia, APA reports.

In addition, four railcars carrying fertilizers were expected to be transported in transit from Russia via Azerbaijani territory.

Earlier, on April 11, it was announced that Azerbaijan would send 887 tons of diesel fuel to Armenia, with the shipment consisting of 15 railcars.

MESA Seeks Return Of Genocide Museum Director

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) sent a letter to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, calling for the immediate reinstatement of Edita Gzoyan as director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and guarantees of the institution's academic autonomy.

The association emphasized that Gzoyan has played a key leadership role in advancing new scholarly research on the Armenian Genocide, modernizing the museum, and integrating young Armenian scholars into the global genocide studies community. Her academic works have been published in leading European and American journals, Sputnik Armenia reports.

In its open letter, the association also referred to Pashinyan's March 12 press conference, during which he said he had personally requested Gzoyan's resignation, arguing that she had presented U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance with a “provocative” book about Nagorno-Karabakh.

Stepanakert's St. Hakob Church Razed

By Marut Vanyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

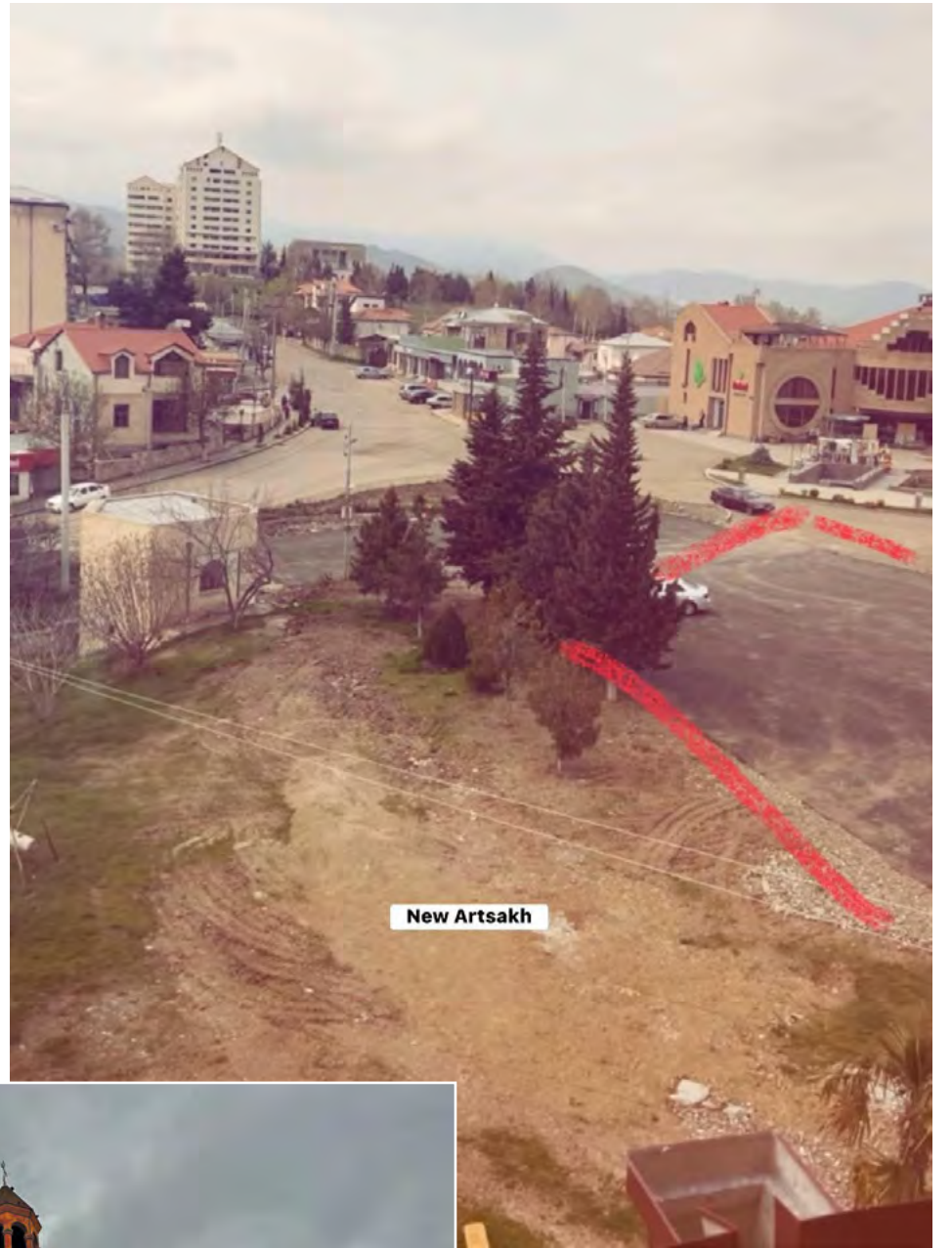
YEREVAN — Every morning I watched from my window as Ter Minas walked down to the St. Hakob Church, which was built in 2005 in Nagorno-Karabakh's capital, Stepanakert. During the Soviet years, as is known, nearly all churches were destroyed or converted into warehouses and theaters. The Stepanakert Theater building used to be a church and was converted into a theater during the same Soviet years. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, church services were held in the theater building itself, until this small church was built and the locals had a real church in which to light candles, get baptized, and married.

The New Artsakh Facebook site has published evidence that Azerbaijan leveled to the ground that little church. The video presented leaves no doubt that it was really destroyed, and former Minister of Culture and Tourism of Artsakh Sergey Shahverdyan posted that he believed it was true.

So after the exodus of 2023, I accidentally met Ter Minas in Yerevan's Opera Square. He had bought new shoes and sat down next to me on a bench to rest a bit.

— Good afternoon, Ter Minas, — I said.

— Oh, good afternoon, — the priest of the St. Hakob Church answers. I don't remember your name, he adds.



New Artsakh

The site of St. Hakob in 2026, according to the New Artsakh Facebook site



Holy Mother of God Cathedral in Stepanakert, 2023 (photo Marut Vanyan)

How strange it was to see Ter Minas at the Opera Square. It seemed that he should always be in that small church in Stepanakert.

If demolishing the parliament building is “okay,” then why demolish the church, especially when Azerbaijan claims that the

country is a country of all religions?

Considering that one of the two churches in the Karabakh's capital has been demolished, the fate of the main one, the Holy Mother of God Cathedral, can also be considered endangered.

Recently, evidence has also been pub-

lished that the Three Taps monument or theater fountain, known to locals in Stepanakert, has been demolished next to the theater. The monument includes stone masks of three men: sad, serious and laughing. This monument is very symbolic, as if reflecting what has happened and is happening to Nagorno-Karabakh. It is both sad, serious, and “laughable.”

After 2023, the Karabakh Armenians face serious psychological issues. The whole life they lived there seems to have never existed. It was just a dream. Imagine, one morning you wake up and you are not at home — a completely different picture is visible from your window. Your street, church, and beloved park are gone. Yet they have all this in Armenia today. It is the same as they had there — even better ones, more beautiful maybe — and it is the same...but it's not.

Armenian Court Scraps Catholicos Travel Ban

CATHOLICOS, from page 1

A court of first instance declared the ban null and void late last week. The Office of the Prosecutor-General told the Sputnik news agency on April 13 that it will appeal against the court order.

Pashinyan began pressuring Karekin to resign last June shortly after the Catholicos accused Azerbaijan of committing ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh and illegally occupying Armenian border areas during an international conference in Switzerland. Three Armenian archbishops and one bishop were arrested in the following months on different charges strongly denied by them. Three of them were moved to house arrest earlier this year.

Pashinyan has used different lines of attack on the church during his nearly yearlong campaign. He said until December that Karekin and other top clerics at odds with him must go because they had secret sex affairs in breach of their vows of celibacy. He then began accusing them of spying for a foreign country, presumably Russia. He has not yet offered any proof of the allegations.

Early this month, Pashinyan's Civil Contract party added a pledge to oust Karekin to its campaign manifesto for the Armenian parliamentary elections slated for June 7. The church's Mother See in Echmiadzin condemned the “unlawful” move.

“The election of the Catholicos and any changes in Church life fall exclusively within the spiritual-canonical sphere and are therefore beyond the competence of political parties and state authorities,” it said in an April 9 statement.

Armenian opposition figures and other critics also maintain that Pashinyan's drive to oust Karekin violates Armenia's constitution guaranteeing the church's separation from the state. Two Western religious rights groups echoed these claims in February. One of them, the Vienna-based Forum for Religious Freedom Europe, spoke of “grave threats to freedom of religion or belief” in Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

How Does the Iran War Affect Armenia?

WAR, from page 1

At an April 11 meeting in Gabala, Azerbaijan, between Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society representatives, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's assistant Hikmet Hajiyev declared: "The implementation of the TRIPP project promises new opportunities for Armenia as a transit country. At a time when global developments — often described as resembling a Third World War — and the ongoing situation in the Middle East underscore the importance of established peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia."

Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Khalil Shirgholami said, "We have expressed our opinion on this in the past and said that we are not against developing Armenia's potential as a transit route. We have also discussed lifting the blockade, the North-South route, and connecting the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf with the Armenian authorities. We have also expressed concern about whether this will create security problems."

Nearly nine months have passed since Trump signed a declaration in Washington about the road, which aims to connect Azerbaijan with its Nakhichevan exclave, but it is still unclear what the route of the road will be or who will ultimately build it. Everything depends on the outcome of the Iran war.

However, predictions continue to be made in Armenia about the Armenia's European future, its relations with Russia and about war and peace.

During the recent Putin-Pashinyan meeting in the Kremlin, the Russian leader made it clear that Armenia cannot sit on two chairs simultaneously.

"Simultaneous membership in the Customs Union with the European Union and the EAEU is impossible; it is simply untenable by definition. The issue is not even a political one; it is purely economic. Some matters require extensive collaborative efforts that must be undertaken over years. These include differences in the evaluation of specific product groups, their market entry, and phytosanitary supervision for agricultural products. Russia and the European Union have entirely different, markedly divergent requirements concerning phytosanitary matters," said Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Ahead of the elections in the summer, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's "happy bus" is traveling through the cities of Armenia, and he is shaking people's hands and getting to know their prob-



The Araks River is at the border of Armenia and Iran (photo Marut Vanyan)

lems. Billboards with portraits of his electoral rival Samvel Karapetyan are installed in large cities of Armenia, and the latter's nephew, Narek Karapetyan, is holding a rally in Yerevan's Freedom Square. Everyone is talking about peace, the development of the country, and everyone is convinced that the program they are proposing is the best. At the same time, there is noticeable indifference among ordinary people, who are really exhausted by all this. "Whoever it is, it doesn't matter. I have to solve my own problems," they would say.

When people talk about TRIPP, it is immediately associated with Armenia's Syunik, through which "Trump's Route" is supposed to pass. But the fact is that on the ground it is Iranian construction companies that are building infrastructure there, digging tunnels and laying bridges and roads. As a result of the war that broke out in Iran, a slowdown in construction is observed today, although the Armenian government assures that it will be completed. In any case,

it is natural that for Iran today the priority is to restore the infrastructure damaged by the US and Israeli strikes in its own country. The war in Iran cannot but have a negative impact on Armenia, especially since it seems that it has not yet been resolved.

While the rusty wagons from the early 1990s continue to stand at the Meghri railway station, Armenia has announced the restoration of the planes at the Syunik airport. A small Czech plane for 18 passengers will again operate flights on the Yerevan-Kapan-Yerevan route. The ticket price is 20,000 Armenian drams.

"Dear citizens, starting today, Kapan-Yerevan-Kapan flights resume, with a frequency of 5 days a week," the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia announced.

Recently, news has also emerged about planes with longer wingspans. Turkish Airlines started operating Istanbul-Yerevan-Istanbul flights.

"Flights on the route Istanbul-Yerevan-

Istanbul will be operated daily. Starting from May 14, the frequency will increase to 10 flights per week, and from June 15 — to 14 flights per week," <http://Zvartnots.aero> noted.

"Turks and Armenians should be friends. Türkiye must be gate to the world for Armenians," "Good news. Hopefully more business and cultural exchange will follow. Next should be visa free travel," "I wish Armenians would visit Türkiye and see there is no hostility against Armenians in Türkiye like hostility against Turkish in Armenia," "Turkey will be flooded with these peasants now. This will serve no interest of Turkey. Just close the borders and cancel flights. Let them pay more and take a longer route," people post under my tweet.

After what is happening in Ukraine and the Middle East, especially in Iran, which is at Armenia's front steps, what is left for little Armenia to do but remain silent and motionless and wait, like the gondola cars in the Meghri railway station?

Pashinyan Says Armenia–Russia Relations Have Undergone 'Constructive Transformation'

TRANSFORMATION, from page 1

During their latest meeting in April, Pashinyan and Putin failed to reach an agreement regarding the future of Armenia's railways, which is currently under Russian management as part of a 30-year concession agreement signed in 2008.

Following the talks, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksei Overchuk stated there were "no objective reasons for selling" the concession to a third party.

However, Armenia has insisted that Russian management means a loss of "competitive advantage" by having international routes pass through the country. In February, Pashinyan said that a country with "friendly relations" with both Russia and Armenia could "purchase the concession management rights" of Armenia's railways, naming Kazakhstan, among others, as a possible fit for the role.

Pashinyan stated that the railway issue "may" be touched upon ahead of talks between Kazakhstan and Armenia in Yerevan on April 9, as the country's Foreign Minister Yermek Kosherbayev and Transportation Minister Nurlan Sauranbayev arrived in the capital.

Meanwhile, he expressed Armenia's reluctance "to do anything behind Russia's back or against Russia."

"At least at this stage, when dialogue opportunities are open and broad, we will continue our work," Pashinyan said.

During his briefing, Pashinyan also stated that there exists "no basis" for the increase in the Russian gas price for Armenia, noting that Armenia has "long-term contracts" with Russia.

Speculation appeared following the April 1 talks, when Putin addressed gas prices, highlighting the significant discount Arme-

nia receives from buying Russian energy.

"The price of gas in Europe exceeds \$600 per 1,000 cubic meters, and Russia sells gas to Armenia for \$177.5 per 1000 cubic meters," Putin said.

In turn, Armenia threatened to leave the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in case of an increase in Russia's gas prices, though adding that such an increase seemed unlikely.

During her briefing the day before, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova burst into laughter for several seconds upon hearing the name of Armenia's Parliamentary Speaker, Alen Simonyan — one of the officials who had suggested such a withdrawal — at the start of a journalist's question.

Only after this outburst did the journalist manage to finish the question, requesting

a comment on Yerevan's threats to leave the two organizations. Zakharova responded with a metaphor, saying the threats reminded her of "threatening a hedgehog by exposing one's capabilities." She apparently implied that it would be impossible to threaten such an animal, or Russia, due to the number of needles or protective barriers it has.

Zakharova further noted her lack of interest in "seriously commenting on the statements of emotional politicians." Instead, focusing on gas prices, she noted that it was the "responsibility of the Armenian leadership to ensure its country's energy security."

She added that the issue was especially relevant given the turmoil in gas markets due to the US–Israel attack on Iran.

(This story originally appeared in www.oc-media.org on April 9.)

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Azerbaijan FM, Russia Deputy FM Discuss Baku-Moscow Cooperation

MOSCOW (News.am) — Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov on Tuesday received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry press service reported on April 14.

The meeting covered the political, economic, trade, and humanitarian aspects of Azerbaijani-Russian relations, as well as regional and international security issues of mutual interest.

The parties noted that the activities of the intergovernmental state commission for economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia play a significant role in the development of bilateral economic ties, and they held discussions on the work done and promising domains within the framework of this mechanism.

Armenian FM, EU Official Meet

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with Kaja Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in Brussels on Tuesday, April 14.

The two discussed initiatives towards consistent implementation of the strategic agenda of the Armenia-EU partnership, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported.

A detailed discussion touched upon the substantive preparations for the upcoming Armenia-EU Summit to be held in Yerevan in May. The agreement on implementing programs aimed at delivering tangible results for the citizens of Armenia was emphasized.

Mirzoyan and Kallas also discussed initiatives aimed at the strengthening of democratic resilience. In this context, agreement was reached on ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of targeted mechanisms aimed at supporting democratic processes.

Armenia Expects Turkey to Open Border

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — In the process of normalizing Armenia-Turkey relations, several steps have already been implemented, while Armenia is now waiting for the agreement on opening the border to third-country citizens to be carried out, said National Assembly Vice Speaker and special envoy Ruben Rubinyan on April 14.

He noted that in the initial phase, flights between Yerevan and Istanbul were resumed after having been suspended for several years. Agreements were also reached on ensuring direct air cargo transportation and on restoring the historic Ani bridge, which is currently in the documentation phase, according to Ilurer.am.

Korean Blogger Sees Ghost Towns with Vanishing Armenian Traces in Karabakh

BLOGGER, from page 1

limited access to Armenian landmarks and visible changes in the landscape.

YoungMin, who posts under YoungMinSkies, traveled to Stepanakert, NKR's former administrative center, after Azerbaijani authorities eased some travel restrictions. He said he did not intend to take sides in the conflict and has previously visited other conflict zones, including Iraq.

"I planned the trip and then found out there was a permit system," he said in an online interview.

The way the permit works, is that the visitor must submit his car information if planning to drive to Karabakh. As the car is supposed to be rented in Azerbaijan, the tourist cannot submit this data before arrival. After YoungMin got his rental vehicle in Baku, and tried to pursue the remaining paperwork, the system bounced back.

"They said there was no match. There was a glitch in the system no matter how



YoungMin

much I tried," he said. He ultimately joined a guided tour instead of traveling independently.

The visit was brief, lasting about 16 hours, including travel from Baku and back in a single day.

On the route to Stepanakert, the group passed through Aghdam, where large-scale construction is underway. "They are building a city for 100,000 people," he said.

ATTACKS, from page 1

The demolitions came after Israel's minister of defense, Israel Katz, called for the destruction of "all houses" in border villages "in accordance with the model used in Rafah and Beit Hanoun in Gaza" to stop threats to communities in northern Israel. The Israeli military destroyed 90 percent of homes in Rafah, in south Gaza.

The tactic of mass destruction of homes in Gaza, where Israel has been accused of committing genocide, was described as domicile by academics, a strategy that is used to systematically destroy and damage civilian housing to render entire areas uninhabitable.

The Israeli military has said they are targeting Hezbollah infrastructure such as tunnels and military facilities, which it claims the armed group has embedded in civilian homes, through these demolitions.

Israel has said that it will occupy vast swathes of south Lebanon, establishing a "security zone" in the entire area up to the Litani River, and that displaced people would not be allowed to return to their homes until the safety of Israel's northern cities is guaranteed, prompting concern there will be long-term displacement.

According to Amnesty International, as of April 11, 2026, more than 2,000 people



The vandalized We Are Our Mountains statue of Stepanakert (courtesy YoungMin Skies YouTube Channel)

But in other areas, he described a different scene. "Very few people were living there, from what I could see, and I think they were mostly construction workers," he said, referring to formerly Armenian-populated settlements of Artsakh.

In Stepanakert, he described the atmosphere as "eerie," citing damaged buildings and blocked streets. YoungMin said he could not determine whether any Armenians remain in the region.

The group was shown the monument known as "We Are Our Mountains," a prominent landmark associated with the region's Armenian heritage.

His first reaction, when he saw this prominent landmark was surprise: "That's the main symbol of Artsakh, right? But I quickly found out its only there because the government wanted to look like that, they are preserving Armenian culture but behind it there was lots of erasure that's happening." He noted the presence of many Azerbaijani flags nearby and said the monument had been marked with graffiti.

"Every place that you can reach has been vandalized," noted YoungMin.

"We asked to see more," he said, referring to Armenian cultural and historical

sites. "But we were denied." He said the group also passed through the city's Renaissance square, where the former parliament building once stood. "I was shocked to see that the parliament building was no longer there," noted YoungMin said.

The tour did not include visits to major religious sites, including the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi and the main cathedral of Stepanakert. It's unclear whether the latter exists or not and in what conditions. There was not enough time left to explore farther, and the guide's message was "they do not approve the Armenian historical presence there."

Months after he left Baku, YoungMin posted a video on his YouTube channel documenting his trip, which drew reactions online, including appreciation from Armenians and criticism from some Azerbaijani viewers. He rejected accusations of bias.

"I came in very objectively," he said. "My goal is to support peace. Don't forget the past but move forward."

An accompanying video segment at mirrorspectator.com brings together segments of the interview and videos that YoungMin recorded in Baku, on his way to Artsakh and in Artsakh itself.

Israel Is Continuing Attacks on Lebanon

Senior officials from several countries have condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon.

The Lebanese government declared April 9 a national day of mourning in memory of those killed in the Israeli airstrikes.

Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed deep sorrow over the high number of casualties resulting from airstrikes across Lebanon on April 8.

In a statement shared on the platform formerly known as Twitter, the Foreign Ministry said it was "gravely saddened" by the hundreds of victims and more than a thousand people reported injured in the attacks.

The ministry extended its condolences to the families of those killed and wished a speedy recovery to all those injured.

Armenia also voiced hope for a de-escalation of tensions and the cessation of hostilities, emphasizing the importance of preventing further violence in the region.

UN Secretary General António Guterres unequivocally condemned the massive strikes by Israel across Lebanon on 8 April and urged all parties to immediately cease hostilities.

(Items from the *Guardian*, Armenpress, News.am, Public Radio of Armenia were used to compile this report.)



Community News

Bryan Ardouny To Be Speaker at Conn. Genocide Commemoration

HARTFORD, Conn. — The Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee will observe the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on Saturday April 25, at 10:30 a.m. at the historic Connecticut House Chamber at the State Capitol, 210 Capitol Ave. The program will honor the memory of the Holy Martyrs of the Genocide and survivors while celebrating the resilience of the Armenian spirit.

The keynote speaker will be Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America. His presentation is titled “We Gather Not Only to Remember.”

Bryan Ardouny was appointed Executive Director of the Armenian Assembly of America in April 2005 following a one-year stint on the Assembly’s Board of Directors. Previously, Ardouny had served as Acting Executive Director, and Director of Government Relations, at the Armenian Assembly where he spearheaded efforts to maintain Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act during the House and Senate floor fights in 1998 and 1999 respectively.

In 2000, Ardouny rallied congressional and community support for an Armenian Genocide resolution, that was slated for consideration by the House of Representatives, but, despite expectations of approval, was pulled from a vote at the last minute



Byran Ardouny

due to the Administration’s invocation of a national security concern.

Ardouny oversaw the Assembly’s continued efforts throughout the years that culminated in the historic passage of the Armenian Genocide resolution in the House of Representatives in 2019 by the overwhelming vote of 405 to 11. The United States Senate followed suit the same year passing a companion resolution by unanimous consent.

Before coming to the Assembly, Ardouny served as Legislative Counsel to a senior Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Ardouny graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Hofstra University and received his law degree from California Western School of Law.

Melanie Kevorkian Brown, chairperson of the Connecticut Committee stated that the Committee is pleased to have someone with Ardouny’s vision and expertise to give thorough and first hand insight into the

see CONNECTICUT, page 11



FOX 11 Los Angeles Celebrates Armenian Heritage Month with Culture, Travel Showcase

By Paul Chaderjian

LOS ANGELES — KTTV FOX 11 is marking Armenian Heritage Month with a new special that brings viewers closer to Armenia and the vibrant Armenian-American community across Southern California.

This year’s broadcast features a virtual journey through Armenia, offering viewers a vivid look at historic landmarks, rich traditions, and everyday life. The special is hosted and reported by the talented, long-time FOX 11 anchor and personality Araksya Karapetyan.

The Armenian travelogue at the beginning of the FOX 11 Armenian Heritage special highlights Armenia’s ancient monasteries, welcoming streets, and a culture built on resilience. It also shows how affordable food and drink, street safety, and deep hospitality make Armenia an inviting destination for travelers.

“This special really opens a window into Armenia,” said Karapetyan. “You see the history, the beauty, the culture, and you realize how accessible and welcoming it is for anyone thinking about going.”

The special includes an update on the Armenian American Museum in Glendale, a landmark cultural project designed to celebrate Armenian heritage and serve as a global hub for education and community. The museum’s design emphasizes connection, identity, and shared history, with architects and builders working to create a space that reflects both tradition and modern vision.

“This museum is about preserving who we are and sharing it with future generations,” Karapetyan says. “It’s a place that connects our past with what comes next.”

Viewers will also meet Tro Khayalian, a mechanic turned artist who transforms scrap metal and discarded car parts into striking works of art. His creations blend Armenian identity with elements of pop culture, turning industrial materials into symbols of pride and storytelling.

Another featured voice is Dr. Andre Panossian, a Los Angeles-based, board-certified plastic surgeon who leads humanitarian missions to Armenia. Specializing in pediatric reconstructive surgery, including cleft lip and palate repair, he works with organizations like Mending Kids to provide life-changing care to children in need.

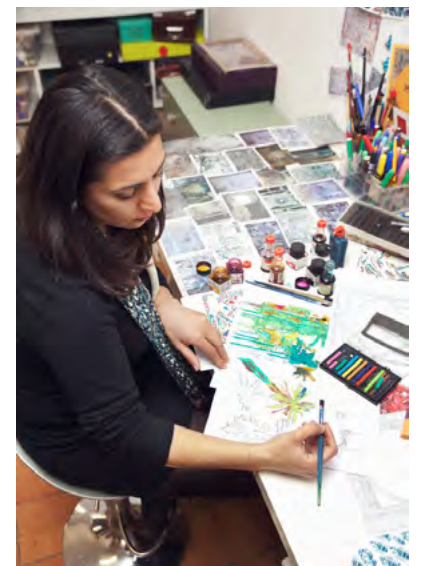
The special also highlights the new TUMO Center in Los Angeles. Originally founded in Armenia, TUMO has grown into a global education model focused on technology and creative learning. The program offers young people hands-on training in fields like animation, filmmaking, and coding, combining self-directed learning with mentorship in a model now replicated around the world.

As part of the celebration, Karapetyan welcomed the Gevorgian Dance Academy to Good Day L.A., FOX 11’s eight-hour morning show she co-anchors, for a live performance that brought traditional Armenian dance to large morning audi-

Children’s Arts & Culture Workshop Launches This Summer in NJ

FAIR LAWN, N.J. — A new Armenian arts & culture workshop will debut this summer from June 22–26, offering children ages 3 to 8 an enriching opportunity to explore Armenian heritage through art and hands-on cultural activities.

The weeklong program - organized by Atelier of Astrid, the creative studio founded by FrenchArmenian artist and educator Astrid Sarkissian, in partnership with Hye Kids Club, a cultural initiative by Taleen Babayan dedicated to Armenian children’s education, language, and creative expression will take place at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn.



Art plants seeds of pride and curiosity as children connect meaningfully with their roots

-Astrid Sarkissian

“Art plants seeds of pride and curiosity as children connect meaningfully with their roots,” said Sarkissian. “By exploring color, texture, and imagination during this workshop, each child will gain a better understanding of Armenian culture.”

Babayan added: “This program celebrates our heritage through creativity, awakening a love for Armenian art and traditions. Our goal is for each child to leave proud of their identity, inspired by the beauty of our culture, and enriched by a purposeful experience.”

Children will dive into daily adventures like crafting Armenian motifs and learning folk songs and dances - activities that foster fine motor skills, cultural pride, and social bonds in a joyful, supportive environment tailored for young learners.

Guest artists will share their expertise through engaging presentations, making each day a fresh celebration of Armenia’s vibrant artistic spirit.

Registration deadline is June 1.

Register at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdoqjrSO_Yw-zyQ2VTfV63QhjE6wB3-iX-LG_ZwGV-ujGT7kPw/viewform.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly to Honor Longtime Leaders and Staff at Boston Celebration

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) will honor six distinguished individuals at its Celebration of Service on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at the Artists for Humanity EpiCenter in Boston. Chaired by Assembly Board Member Herman Purutyán and Laura Bilazarian Purutyán, an alumna of the Assembly's Terjenian-Thomas internship program, the event will recognize the service and contributions of leaders and staff members who have helped shape the organization across generations.

Each honoree will receive the Armenian Assembly of America's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of more than 25 years of service, for helping shape the organization's advocacy, research and scholarship, Armenian Genocide education, and community impact across generations.

"The Armenian Assembly of America is proud to recognize these remarkable individuals whose decades of service have strengthened our organization and advanced our mission in enduring ways," said Assembly Co-Chairs Oscar Tatosian and Talin Yacoubian. "Their continued leadership, dedication, and vision have left a lasting mark on the Assembly and on the Armenian American community as a whole. We are honored to celebrate their contributions in Boston."

Among those Board of Trustees members being recognized is Anthony Barsamian, Immediate Past Co-Chair of the Assembly. A longtime attorney, community leader, and advocate, Barsamian has also served in key roles with the Armenia Tree Project, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, and other organizations devoted to service and public life.

Van Krikorian, Chair Emeritus and Chair of the Armenian National Institute (ANI), is being honored for more than 25 years of

strategic leadership and principled guidance. His stewardship helped reinforce the Assembly's standing as a trusted and credible voice in Washington while advancing strong and responsible engagement in sup-

port of U.S.-Armenia relations. the Armenian National Institute (ANI), whose scholarship and educational leadership have had a profound impact on Armenian Genocide documentation and public education. Over nearly four decades, Dr.

Congressional affirmation of the Armenian Genocide in 2019.

Also to be recognized is Mary Garabadian, the Assembly's longtime archivist, whose more than 30 years of service



port of U.S.-Armenia relations.

Carolyn Mugar, President Emerita and Board Member, has been involved with the Assembly since 1974 and has long been a leading figure in Armenian American civic life. Along with her late husband John O'Connor, she founded the Armenia Tree Project in 1994, while also helping to shape the Assembly's broader impact through decades of grassroots advocacy, nonprofit leadership, and institution building.

The Assembly will also honor staff member, Dr. Rouben Adalian, Director of

Adalian has expanded access to archival resources, strengthened academic outreach, and helped educate generations of students, scholars, and policymakers.

Bryan Ardouny, who started with the Assembly in 1998 and has served as executive director since 2005, is being recognized for his longstanding leadership in advocacy and public affairs. Over the course of his career at the Assembly, Ardouny has played a central role in advancing major legislative priorities, including sustained efforts that culminated in the historic U.S.

helped preserve the organization's institutional memory and strengthen its community ties. As the first employee in the Assembly's history to retire, Garabadian leaves a legacy defined by dedication, care, and deep commitment to the Armenian community.

A Sponsors' Reception will take place on Friday, June 5, ahead of the Celebration of Service on Saturday evening, June 6.

Master of Ceremonies Dr. Henry Ben Morgenthau great-grandson of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau.

111th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

COMMEMORATE

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 3:30PM
ARMENIAN HERITAGE PARK, BOSTON, MA

Keynote Speaker
Nina Shahverdyan

MC
Raffi Barsamian

Performances
Lia Sarkisyan and Arno Melkonyan
Armenia Dance Studio

Poem
Anahid Melkonian

Reflections
Aspram Israyelyan
Argine Harutyunyan

Anthem Singer
Sevan Dulgarian

Procession Led By
Homenetmen Scouts

Bus Service provided by Knights of Vartan

- 2:00 PM Departure from ACEC
- 5:00 PM Departure from Heritage Park

Based on
Antonia Arslan's
memoir
Skylark Farm

THURSDAY
APRIL 23
7:00PM

St. Vartan Room
Presented by
St. John Armenian Church
&
Tekeyan Cultural Association
Detroit Chapter

PAZ VEGA ALESSANDRO PREZIOSI
A FILM BY PAOLO AND VITTORIO TAVIANI
THE LARK FARM
TOUCHED BY PASSION AND TORN APART BY WAR

For questions please contact:
Diana Alexanian: 248-505-6159 | Madisen Lundquist: 503-758-8805



OBITUARY

Hilde Limondjian

Met Museum's Longtime Concert Impresario

By Adam Nossiter

NEW YORK (*New York Times*) — Hilde Limondjian, who spent more than four decades bringing music to the auditorium — and the galleries — of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan, died on Jan. 24. She was 89.

Her death was confirmed by her sister, Jeanette Limondjian, who did not specify where she died. She lived in New York City.

Limondjian was the director of the Met's concerts and lectures series for 41 years, a period during which her fastidious taste melded with an instinct for using the museum's vast resources to enhance her programming.

She was responsible for the New York debuts of renowned artists such as the pianists Peter Serkin, Garrick Ohlsson and Andras Schiff, the oboist Heinz Holliger and the singers Elly Ameling and Cecilia Bartoli. She boosted the fortunes of Orpheus, the acclaimed conductor-less chamber orchestra, and she cultivated new music by the likes of Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

Staging antiphonal music, Christmas concerts and a 12th-century Marian play in the Met's medieval sculpture court, Limondjian was also an innovator in pairing music with era- or theme-appropriate art, a practice that is now standard at museums that also program the performing arts.

As a former art history major at Barnard College and a trained pianist who had studied with Edward Weiss, a pupil of the composer Ferruccio Busoni, she was well qualified to inhabit, and expand, the position.

When she started at the Met in 1969, she later told the *New York Times*, "I thought: 'Well, the concerts take place in the context of the museum, but they're all in the

auditorium, and why? Why, when we have so many beautiful spaces in which we could match the music to the environment?'"

Year after year, she hosted mainstays of the New York music scene, including the Beaux Arts Trio and the Guarneri Quartet, establishing relationships with them so sustained as to be almost residencies. She organized performances of what is known as early music — written in the mid-18th century or earlier — before it was broadly fashionable.

Occasionally, Limondjian veered from her classical predilections, taking her younger assistants' advice to bring in performers like Patti Smith, Nina Simone and B.B. King.

To attract new audiences, she also established hourlong piano recitals that began at 7 p.m.

"I thought it was more informal," she told the *New York Observer* in 2010, after she retired. "And sure enough, in the middle of a sonata with three movements, after the first movement, everybody applauded. So that meant that they were new, because the old audience would just sit back. Which I think is silly — applaud, laugh, whatever you want to do."

Museum officials, including Philippe de Montebello, the Met's director from 1977 to 2008, commended Limondjian's ability to attract top artists on a small budget, attributing it to her refined taste and serious commitment to the music. The artists she featured agreed.

"Her taste is impeccable, and she won't let you just give a program," the pianist Menahem Pressler, a founder of the Beaux Arts Trio, told the *New York Times* in 1994. "It has to mean something, has to have a line throughout."

She also asked musicians to speak to audiences, which was at the time an unusual



concept — "When I first went to concerts, I didn't even know what musicians' voices sounded like," she told the *Observer* — and included lectures on the work that was being performed.

Fred Plotkin, an opera expert, recalled speaking about "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci" at Limondjian's behest. "She was an impresaria, in that she created the vision and then filled it with the people who could be appropriate for that vision," Mr. Plotkin said in an interview.

By the time Limondjian left the Met, in 2010, she had programmed more than 9,000 events, the museum said in the statement announcing her retirement.

"We have a citywide following. We attract the serious music lover," she told the critic Tim Page of the *Times* in 1983. "When Peter Serkin plays Beethoven's Diabelli Variations here, you can hear a pin drop."

Hilde Annik Limondjian was born on Aug. 26, 1936, in Istanbul. After World

War II, when she was 9, she and her mother, Violet (Hakian) Limondjian, a painter, joined her father, Hrant Limondjian, an importer of industrial machines and paper, in the United States, where her sister was born. They grew up in Forest Hills, Queens.

The family was related to the early 19th-century Ottoman-Armenian composer and music theorist Hampartsoum Limondjian, but was otherwise not musical.

Limondjian traced her love of music to a performance of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata that she heard on the radio when she was 11, according to a paid death notice published in *The Times* that she prepared herself, her longtime assistant, Debra Garrin, said.

At 13, she heard the great British pianist Myra Hess play at Carnegie Hall. Amid the wild applause at the end of the concert, the obituary said, "she felt a desire to be of support to Myra Hess and other musicians on the concert stage."

After graduating from Barnard in 1958, Limondjian worked as a tour guide at the United Nations. In 1960, she went to work at the Met for William Kolodney, who had founded the museum's concert series in 1954.

Nine years later, she succeeded him. "This has been my only work in my life," she told the *Times* in 1994.

Limondjian is survived by her sister. Self-effacing and discreet, Limondjian learned early on that her role was to support the performers. When the sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar complained before going onstage that his shirt had not been ironed, she did it for him.

She also learned that it was better not to tell the musicians what to perform.

"I made that mistake my first year," she told James Barron of *The Times* in 2003. "I stood back there and realized it wasn't my dream performance. And since I only wanted dream performances, I realized never to put myself into the role of asking for a particular piece."

Edward Mesrobian

WWII Veteran, Designer of High-End Clothing

WALTHAM, Mass. — Edward Mesrobian, 101, of Waltham, passed away on April 8, 2026, surrounded by his loving family.

He was the husband of the late Julie (Julienne Touloukian), father of Janet Mesrobian and her husband John Moroney, and Ellen Tufankjian and her husband Greg. He was the grandfather of Morgan and Alexander Moroney and Matthew and Michael Tufankjian.

He was born in Newburyport on August 17, 1924, to the late Setrak and late Araksi Mesrobian, both survivors of the Armenian Genocide. He was the brother of the late Armen Mesrobian, and cousin to the late Isabel Talanian and Zaven Kalpakdjian, whom he considered his siblings.

Ed built a career and business as a nationally recognized fashion designer and manufacturer of high-end womenswear, under his own label, Edward Mesrobian Inc. His dresses were worn by First Ladies and many celebrated women.

He served during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

During his lifetime, he was dedicated to Armenian causes including service on the St. James Parish Council, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Council of Armenian Executives.

In addition to his compassion for others, Ed will be remembered for his charm, keen wit and sense of humor, always quick with a joke and to make others smile. He

enjoyed nothing better than spending time with his cherished wife Julie, their family and friends, especially on Martha's Vine-



yard and on Marco Island, Fla.

Funeral Service was held at Saint James Armenian Church, 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown on April 16.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Saint James Armenian Church. Interment followed at Mount Feake Cemetery, Waltham.

Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

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

www.nardolillo.com

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC

Mark J. Giragosian

Giragosian
FUNERAL HOME

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

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

COMMUNITY NEWS

Easter at St. Vartan Cathedral: ‘Stay Close to God’

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

NEW YORK — Through a veil of overcast skies, the newly-gilded gold dome of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral shimmered with a radiant, transcendent brilliance. Beneath that luminous crown, the Easter Sunday Divine Liturgy on April 5 unfolded with solemn beauty and reverence.

Known in Armenian as Sourp Zadig, Easter is the major feast day of the Christian calendar and represents the promise of salvation for all humanity. Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese

cathedral’s intricate beauty, but also captured the serene expressions of faith, hope and devotion shared among the clergy and the faithful. Furthermore, they provided a profound level of closeness and a deep connection between clergy and lay people to Our Lord through the holy badarak.

One Body In Christ

After the reading of Scripture in Armenian and English by the deacons, prayers and hymns were sung together by the choir and congregation.

Holy Communion (Haghortoutiun in Armenian), the climax of the badarak in

we need Him most,” Bishop Mesrop said. “That is what the women who waited at Christ’s tomb taught us on Easter morning. They did not know what story would unfold and didn’t know what Sunday would bring. All they knew was that they loved Jesus too much to walk away. And because they stayed, they became the first witnesses to Christ’s Resurrection, the greatest victory.”

Bishop Mesrop expounded upon his theme of faith by emphasizing that waiting with God is never ‘wasted time.’ “Love that remains near God is always rewarded,”

ever you find yourself today, either in great joy or with a heart that still carries pain, receive the message of Easter: the tomb is empty, Christ is Risen, Love has won, life has triumphed, hope is alive. Stay close to Him.”

Staying hopeful in prayer, even when everything in front of you says, ‘it’s over,’ is exactly what faith asks us of us.

Release of Doves on the Plaza

At the conclusion of the service, a procession of clergy and faithful made their way to the bronze entrance doors for the “Release of Doves” ceremony. This special ceremony remains a beloved, decades-long Easter tradition at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, its spirit enduring regardless of grey skies above.

The godparents of this year’s ceremony were Sarkis and Maral Jebejian, parishioners of St. Thomas Armenian Church in Tenafly, NJ. As members of an Armenian American family whose roots trace back for generations in the life of the Armenian Church, they both carry forward a distinguished legacy of leadership within the Armenian community. Both have honored the foundations laid by those before them while actively continuing that tradition through their own faithful service today.

The Easter Sunday service marked the culmination of Holy Week—the sacred commemoration of the events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—as well as the beginning of Eastertide, the 50-day period known as Heenoonk in Armenian, that lasts from Easter to Pentecost. The latter is dedicated to the mystery of our Resurrected Savior and His encounters with His followers.

Holy Week services took place at the cathedral in the days prior to Easter Sunday, with Bishop Mesrop presiding over the Holy Thursday “Vodunluva” (Washing of Feet) ceremony.

It is worth noting that this year marked the 10th anniversary of the Easter Broadcast from St. Vartan Cathedral. As in previous years, the viewing audience for St. Vartan Cathedral’s Easter Sunday liturgy included thousands of people from across the Diocese and around the world, sharing in the service as it was broadcast over the Internet. The small, dedicated production team included Yervant Keshishian, who directed the program, co-producer and cameraman Mano Baghjajian, and host and narrator Christopher Zakian.



On Easter Sunday, April 5, Diocesan Primate Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan stands before the bronze entrance doors of New York’s St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, for the time-honored “Release of Doves” ceremony that annually concludes the cathedral’s celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Flanking the Primate are the godparents of this year’s ceremony, Sarkis and Maral Jebejian. (Photo Credit: Harout Barsoumian, Bars Images)

of the Armenian Church of America, celebrated the Divine Liturgy before the faithful in the cathedral, as well as to a global audience via the livestream broadcast.

Upon entering the sanctuary to the ethereal hymns of the choir, Bishop Mesrop, accompanied by a procession of clergy and altar servers holding colorful liturgical tapestries, walked among the worshippers, bestowing his blessing and announcing the Good News of Christ’s Resurrection with the words, “Krisdos haryav ee merelotz! Christ is raised from the dead!”

As he processed through the sanctuary, Bishop Mesrop carried the gold hand-cross among the faithful, young and old alike stepping forward to venerate it with a kiss. In that gentle, deliberate movement, Bishop Mesrop’s presence recalled Christ walking among His people, teaching and blessing during the days of His earthly ministry.

The cathedral’s stained-glass windows provided a radiance of luminous color to the sanctuary. White lilies and slender, tapering candles cast a gentle glow upon the altar, evoking the purity and unending light of Christ the Savior.

Throughout the sanctuary, discreetly placed cameras offered those joining from home a sense of reverent closeness, most poignantly in the intimate, front-facing view of Bishop Mesrop in prayer before the holy altar during the service. These thoughtful close-ups not only revealed the

which the faithful unite with Christ and with each other, brought hundreds of worshippers forward to the altar to receive the Sacrament from Bishop Mesrop, supported by Cathedral Vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan, Fr. Bedros Kadehjian, and the large retinue of deacons.

The congregation also played an important role in the badarak by giving and receiving the Kiss of Peace (Voghchooyn), one of the oldest and most beautiful Christian customs. Still practiced by the Armenian Church, members of the congregation ardently declare, “Krisdos ee mech mer haydnetsav! Orhnyal eh haydnoutiunun Krisdosee!” (Christ is revealed among us! Blessed is the revelation of Christ!).

Throughout the service, the soaring voices of the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, directed by Hasmik Mekanjian and accompanied on the organ by Kris Kalfayan, Director of the Gomidas Choir, surrounded participants with an ethereal sense of peace and redemption.

Staying Close To God

Following the Eucharist, Bishop Mesrop delivered his Easter Sunday homily with passion and certainty, stressing the importance of staying close to God no matter how difficult or woeful the circumstances may appear.

“The very moment that tempts us to leave God’s presence is often the moment

he said. “Sometimes God doesn’t ask us to do anything; He simply asks us to stay close. The greatest hope of all is that Christ Is Risen.”

The Primate underscored the fact that because He lives, hope can rise again. “Where-



Diocesan Primate Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan



COMMUNITY NEWS

FAR Board Member Marta Batmasian Honored with Boca Raton Chamber's 2026 Diamond Award

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Philanthropist, business leader and Fund for Armenian Relief Board Member Marta Batmasian was honored last month with the Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce's 2026 DI-



Marta Batmasian

AMOND Award, recognizing her decades of leadership in business, civic life, and charitable work in South Florida and beyond.

Presented annually, the DIAMOND Award honors a woman who is "Dedicated, Inspiring, Accomplished, Motivated, Outstanding, Noble and Driven."

Chamber leaders highlighted Batmasian's role as co-founder of Investments Limited and her record of shaping Boca Raton's cultural and philanthropic landscape and making a lasting impact on her community.

For Batmasian, the recognition reflects her lifelong mantra that success carries responsibility.

When Batmasian relocated to Boca Raton in the early 1980s, the contrast with Boston was immediate.

"All of a sudden, I'm placed in a cultural desert," she said. Rather than accept that reality, she did what she has always done and got to work on finding a solution.

Through the Junior League and other civic groups, Batmasian helped establish what would become the Children's Science Explorium, one of the region's first hands-on science museums. She later supported theater groups, orchestras, and university programs, steadily expanding the city's cultural base.

Her leadership roles expanded to the Palm

Beach County Cultural Council, where she played a key role in allocating funding to over 200 arts and cultural organizations. She also founded the Walk of Recognition, an ongoing initiative celebrating individuals who have made a significant impact on the community.

"We wanted to recognize people who made a difference," she said. What started as a response to what was missing became part of what defines Boca Raton today.

Even as she staked her ground in South Florida, Batmasian never let go of her roots.

"I am Armenian," she said. "Not from Armenia, but I am Armenian."

Born in Istanbul and educated in Europe and the United States, she arrived in America in 1970, determined to build her own path. In Boca Raton, where Armenians were few, her accent often prompted conversations about her cultural identity.

"People would ask where I'm from, and many didn't even know what Armenia was," she said. "So I would explain..."

At home, that identity was constant. Her grandmother, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, lived with her until the age of 100 and spoke only Armenian.

Years later, that journey came full circle when Batmasian received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

"I was sitting there thinking I dreamed of coming to this country, and now I'm being recognized as someone who made a difference," she said.

A Philosophy of Giving

Batmasian's approach to philanthropy began early in her career. As a young couple, struggling to make ends meet in Boston, she and her husband would talk about what they might do if they ever had financial security.

"We used to say, what would we do if we had a million dollars? And my husband answered simply, 'Let's give it away.'"

Over time, that philosophy grew into sup-

port for more than 100 nonprofit organizations, providing funding for scholarships, educational initiatives, and community programs. As both a PhD and a professor at the University of Massachusetts campus in Boston, education has always been important to Batmasian, and it has remained a crucial tenet of her philanthropic endeavors.

"Armenia does not have the mineral resources and all the other wealth that other countries have. Our resource in Armenia is our human resource, and we distinguish ourselves as the most educated people among the 15 former Soviet Socialist Republics," she said proudly.

Commitment to Armenia and Work with FAR

It was a conversation with His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, former Vice Chairman of FAR, who was Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) between 1990 and 2018, that initially sparked Batmasian's interest and involvement with the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), where she has served for many years, including on its executive board.

Once she became involved, she identified what she felt was a much-needed gap in the organization's efforts. While FAR was addressing large-scale challenges, she identified smaller, more personal needs of individuals and communities that often went unmet. Through her efforts, FAR expanded its focus to practical issues, from school heating to basic hospital supplies. Ten years ago, she helped create and brand the AYO! program specifically to identify projects that make Armenian's everyday life easier.

Batmasian is clear about the critical role of the Armenian diaspora. "Without the diaspora, Armenia cannot survive," she said. She also recognizes the challenge of keeping that connection strong across genera-

tions and encourages younger Armenians to take Birthright trips and learn the language and their history.

As important as her Armenian heritage is to her, Batmasian has also intentionally focused on connecting communities across multiple causes. A good example is the Boca Raton Garden of Humanity. This public space is designed not as a monument, but as a place to reflect. The garden gathers quotes, inscriptions, and symbols from all cultures that highlight the consequences of hatred and the need for cross-cultural understanding.

School groups visit regularly, using the space for lessons on history, tolerance, and civic responsibility. Students move through the garden. They stop at benches engraved with words from global leaders, religious figures, and humanitarians. The messages are simple but deliberate. They are meant to be read, discussed, and carried forward.

The idea, Batmasian said, was never to frame the park with a single narrative or assign its meaning to a specific culture or nationality.

"This is not just the Armenian people. This is not just Jewish people. This is about humanity," she said.

The Armenian Genocide, she suggests, should not be understood in isolation. It is part of a broader pattern that demands recognition and response. The garden, in that sense, becomes less about the past and more about a better future.

Even as she is recognized with one of Boca Raton's highest honors, Batmasian remains actively engaged in her work. She continues her philanthropic efforts while also developing a book reflecting on her life and experiences.

Her story, shaped by resilience, identity, and service, continues to evolve as she builds on her success and shares with others along the way.



111th Anniversary of the
Armenian Genocide

**STATE HOUSE
COMMEMORATION**

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 10:30AM
MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MA

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Jermaine McCalpin
MC
Rep. David Muradian

Performances
Dn. Asatur Baljyan and St. James Choir

Anthem Singers
St. Stephens Armenian Elementary School
Erebuni Armenian School

Prayer Led By
Archbishop Richard Henning

Bus Service provided by Knights of Vartan

- 9:00 AM Departure from St. James and ACEC
- 1:30 PM Departure from State House

Tekeyan Cultural Association &
UCLA Armenian Music Program's

Vem Ensemble

2026 Tour



Performing works of
*Komitas, Tchaikovsky,
Suni, Gazarossian,
Khachaturian,
Saryan and
Schubert*

Boston

Sunday, May 3, 2:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity Armenian Church
145 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA

Free admission, freewill donations appreciated.
For more information email tcadirector@aol.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

WHERE ARMENIAN FAITH, CULTURE,
AND COMMUNITY COME TO LIFE

ST. VARTAN CAMP

GREENVILLE, NY



ROOTED IN FAITH. BUILT ON TRADITION. GROWING FOR THE FUTURE.

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

2026 CAMP DATES

STAFF TRAINING | JUNE 24 - JUNE 27

SESSION A | JUNE 28 - JULY 11

SESSION B | JULY 12 - JULY 25

SESSION C | JULY 26 - AUGUST 8

CAMPER | ages 8-15 **CIT** | ages 16-17 **STAFF** | age 18+



INTRODUCING AN EXPANDED ARMENIAN EXPERIENCE!

-  Armenian Faith & Spiritual Life
-  Armenian Music, Language & Cultural Heritage
-  Arts & Crafts
-  Sports, Swimming & Outdoor Adventure
-  Campfires, Community & Lifelong Friendships

...& so much more!

REGISTER NOW!

 stvartancamp.org

 @stvartancamp

 St. Vartan Camp



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square to Take Place on April 26

NEW YORK — The 111th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide will take place in Times Square, at the intersection of 7th Ave and 46th St on Sunday, April 26. This annual event is sponsored by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and co-sponsored by several organizations, including the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), Armenian Bar Association

(TCA).

Bringing together community leaders, advocates, and members of the public, the event continues to be one of the most visible and widely attended commemorations in a landmark city. The program, taking place from 1:30 to 4 p.m., will include remarks from elected officials who support Armenian-American issues and have

recognition from the Turkish government, which continues to deny this crucial piece of history to this day. Genocide recognition is an important step in the eradication of genocide. As Armenians face further injustice in Artsakh, we come together again to call to action the leaders who join us and prevent genocide from ever occurring again.

“Our New York community has come together to commemorate and recognize the Armenian Genocide through this impactful platform,” said committee chair Haig Gulian. “Once again, we gather in the heart of NYC to fight for global recognition of the Armenian Genocide and work towards a world free of the crime of genocide.”

Led by masters of ceremonies Chantelle Nasri, Nairi Diratsouian and Lucine Beylerian, the event will include prayers from clergy members representing the Prelacy, Diocese, Catholic and Evangelical Armenian churches. The event will also include remarks from Genocide prevention scholar Dr. Henry Theriault and Director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, Dr. Jesse Arlen.

Alongside remarks from elected representatives, academic scholars, and religious leaders, Homenetmen Scouts will be in attendance, as well as Armenian Students from the Holy Martyrs Day School and Language School, who will sing the American and Armenian National Anthems. Armfolk Group, an international dance and music group from Armenia and classical soprano vocalist Karina Vartanian.

Dr. Henry Theriault, associate vice president for academic affairs at Worcester State University, is set to deliver remarks on genocide prevention. Dr. Theriault has committed much of his work to genocide education as Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and as a Past President (2017-2021) of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

Dr. Jesse Arlen, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and a research fellow at Fordham University’s Orthodox Christian Studies Center, will deliver remarks.



Dr. Henry Theriault



Dr. Jesse Arlen

(ABA), Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), Armenian National Council of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Tekeyan Cultural Asso-

consistently advocated for the affirmation of the Armenian Genocide in the U.S., as well as scholars and cultural musical performances.

The event will remember the 1.5 million Armenian lives lost during the first genocide of the 20th century and will call for

Bryan Ardouny To Be Speaker at Conn. Genocide Commemoration

CONNECTICUT, from page 5

Genocide, its aftermath and continuing human rights violations and atrocities which have continued to befall Armenians to this day.

The mission of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut, in addition to honoring the memory of the one and a half million victims and as well as survivors of the Armenian Genocide begun by the Ottoman government in 1915, is to support programs and events, itself or with other organizations, to inform the public and remember the Genocide. It is in the process of establishing a suitable permanent Genocide Memorial. The committee also assists in the legislative mandate to provide Genocide related curricula in the public schools. Additionally, the committee seeks to present information about developments in the Diaspora and in Armenia.

Attorney Harry N. Mazadoorian of Kensington Connecticut, a longtime member of the committee stressed the critical nature of this year’s program for Armenians and non-Armenians alike, in light of current rapidly unfolding circumstances throughout the world.

Members of the Connecticut Committee include: Archbishop Khoren Doghramadjian, St. Stephen’s Armenian Church; Rev. Fr. Voski Galstyan, St. George Armenian Church; Rev. Fr. Haroutiun Sabounjian, Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection; Melanie Kevorkian Brown (Chair); Rita Soovajian (Secretary); Diana Dagavarian Colpitts (Treasurer); Richard Arzoomanian, Steven Avakian, Dr. Svetlana Babajanyan; Yn. Patricia Buttero, The Honorable Evelyn Mukjian Daly, Professor Mari Firkatian, John C. Geragosian, State Auditor; Sonia Gulbenk, Kit Kallian, Emma Lopez, Lusine Lopez, Mellie Mardiyan, Professor Armen Marsoobian, Attorney Harry Mazadoorian, Attorney Gregory Norsigian and David Papanian.

The program will conclude with the Martyrs’ Service which was created in 2015 on the occasion of the centennial of the Genocide and the canonization of the Martyrs. Clergy from Armenian Churches in Connecticut will participate in the service.

A reception will follow in the North Lobby of the Capitol building.

NEW YORK CITY

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION



SUNDAY

APRIL 26, 2026

1:30PM

TIMES SQUARE

7TH AVE & 46TH STREET



Arts & Culture

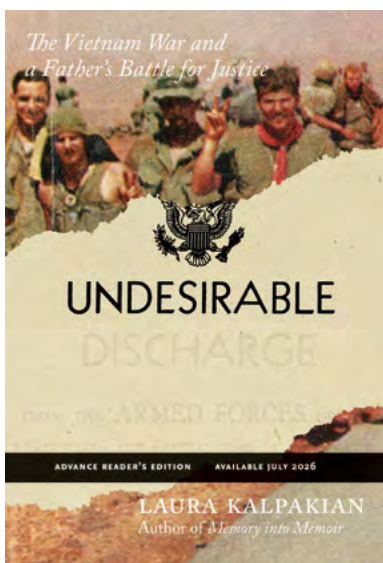
A Daughter Wants to Clear Her Father's Name in New Book

ALBUQUERQUE — The University of New Mexico Press announces the publication of *Undesirable: The Vietnam War and a Father's Battle for Justice* by Laura Kalpakian, available in paperback and e-book on July 7.

Paula Becker, author of *A House on Stilts: Mothering in the Age of Opioid Addiction*, praised *Undesirable* as “a poignant examination of duty,” saying, “This book reminds a new generation that wars fought far away still exact bitter collateral damage from everyone they touch back home.”

In January 1969, angry after a fight with his father, 19-year-old Doug Johnson — in what will be a fateful choice — decides to enlist in the Army. Once in Vietnam as a point man, Doug becomes addicted to speed and heroin, goes AWOL multiple times, and is court-martialed and imprisoned. In order to avoid a second court martial, he agrees to accept an “undesirable” discharge that denies him veterans’ benefits and any recognition of his wartime service. In late August 1970, drugged, malnourished, and clutching the sandal of a dead Viet Cong, Doug staggers off a plane into the arms of his father.

But Doug’s return home is only the beginning of this story. The core of *Undesirable* recounts another war: Doug’s father against the US Army. For three years, he fights to have



his son’s “undesirable” discharge changed to “honorable.” Half a century later Laura Kalpakian — devoted daughter and sister — exhumes the evidence her father collected. From this trove of documents she assembles a heartbreaking story of a father’s love for his son and a son’s experience at war. *Undesirable: The Vietnam War and a Father’s Battle for Justice* demands that we ask what we — and our government — owe to our veterans for the physical, psychological, and emotional sacrifices they and their families make.

Laura Kalpakian is the author of *Memory into Memoir: A Writer’s Handbook* (UNM Press), a memoir, sixteen novels, and five prize-winning collections of short fiction. She lives in the Pacific Northwest.

Undesirable: The Vietnam War and a Father’s Battle for Justice will be available July 7, wherever books are sold. Booksellers can order at a trade discount by contacting Simon & Schuster Distribution Services.



Jaakko Heikkilä

‘Armenia Constantly Stays on My Mind’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/KUKKOLA, Finland — Jaakko Heikkilä (born 1956) is a Finnish photographer known for his documentary-style portraits and

ethnographic approach to photography. He studied civil engineering at the University of Oulu. While studying he started to take photograph and at the end of the year 1989 he left the University for concentrating totally to photography. Heikkilä has photographed groups such as the Meänkieli speakers in northern Scandinavia and Finno-Ugric peoples in Russia, exploring how traditions persist in modern contexts. His images are typically staged yet rooted in real environments, blending documentary and artistic composition. He has exhibited widely across Europe, with shows in museums and galleries in Finland, Sweden, Germany, and beyond. Heikkilä has also published several photobooks combining visual storytelling with anthropological insight (“Our land – Meänmaa,” 1992, “Pomors,” 2001, “Kukkolankoski,” 2005, “Silent Talks,” 2011, “Kitchen Talks,” 2014, “Rooms Hidden by the Water,” 2016, “Sweet Song of Harlem,” 2021, “Philosophy of Wealth,” 2022, etc.).

Dear Jaakko, your work often explores themes of identity, migration, and cultural memory, particularly among minority and marginalized communities. Armenia is relatively little known in Finland. How did Armenia and Armenians come into your focus?

I participated in August 2003 the group exhibition celebrating the 300th anniversary of St. Petersburg. Sitting in the train back to Helsinki I shoved my Pomors book to the man who organized the Church Sings Festival in Helsinki. He leafed through the book, looked at me and leafed again. Then he asked: “Would You like to go to Armenia? We dedicate the 2005 festival to Armenia.” I answered yes without any hesitation. In April 2004 I worked for one month in Armenia. The project then took me to Los Angeles and Venice with the support of Finnish Frame. My first Armenia exhibition was in Venice Biennale 2005 organized by Finnish Frame.

Armenian Unspoken Destinies (2008) is among your published photography books documenting Armenians in Armenia, Los Angeles, and Venice. What did you uncover in this work?

In Los Angeles and Venice I recorded family histories that are somehow linked to the Ottoman genocide. All the stories are really touching. Here is the story of Vahe Berberian in Los Angeles:

“My father was born in 1914, one year before the Armenian massacres. He was just one year old when the deportations started. His entire family, including his father, was massacred. Not many from that village survived. During the deportations my grandmother was worried about my father dying of starvation. She did not want him to suffer. Three times she went to the river, to throw little Raffi into the water. But every time she came back, not having had the courage to do it. She told me that that the river had been so full of dead bodies that it would not have taken the baby.”

And then Seeroon Yeretizian in LA: “My father did not believe in God. Once he took me to an Armenian temple next to the church. Inside there was a heap of skulls. He told me these were the skulls of Armenians killed in the desert, collected and brought to the church. He stood there silently thinking that perhaps his brother was there in the heap. There were large skulls and small children’s skulls. All were smiling — I thought that the Armenian skulls were smiling.”

continued on next page

BOOKS

Nadine Takvorian’s *Armaveni: Not Just Another Story About The Genocide*

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Nadine Takvorian’s debut autobiographical graphic novel *Armaveni: A Graphic Novel of the Armenian Genocide* (Levine Querido, 2026) is a brilliant exploration of what it means to be an Armenian adolescent growing up in America, thousands of miles away from where her grandmother, the eponymous Armaveni, was born. While the book uncovers a family history of deportations and massacres — a history the adults around the teenager refuse to tell — *Armaveni* is not just another story about the genocide. Takvorian’s tale unearths something that transforms the unspeakable experiences of fear and violence into a world where creating a home is still possible. “I am home,” exclaims the ecstatic Nadine as she hugs Mom and Dad at the airport on her return from her “epic trip” to Hayastan, her homeland, and to Bolis (presently, Istanbul) where she still has extended family.

Takvorian’s is a nuanced probe into what it means to be an Armenian in a dispersed diaspora. The panels in the memoir alternate between the fictional granddaughter, Nadine, growing up in the city of San Francisco in the United States in the early 2000’s, and her grandmother Armaveni who, as a 17-year-old adolescent in Marsovan (Merzifan in present-day Turkey) was, in 1915, pushed into marrying Baron Hagop — later Hagop dedeh — the miller of Marsovan, to avoid the fate of hundreds of thousands of Armenians being driven into the desert to starve or to be killed at destination. Baron Hagop was “spared” because “Orders are to keep essential ones. This one is the miller! We need him for flour. Or no bread!”

Takvorian recognizes the historical realities. The facts are all there: “My great-grandfather, who was only 7 years old, was sent to march into Der El Zor. When they reached the Euphrates, the Turks shot the women and children and threw their bodies into the river. They gathered all the boys, including my great-grandfather, and stabbed them all with their bayonets.” The perennial questions of a people forcibly removed from their ancestral lands are also there. “Why is it bad to be *Bolsahye*?” wonders Nadine. Are *Bolsahyes* worthy Armenians who “are keeping our faith and culture in that land. Under extreme circumstances” or are they Turkified Armenians? Will Ararat “always be our mountain. No matter where the borders are?” “Home is somewhere in there. Deep on the other side,” Nadine tells her friend Ani casually, pointing to “the ancient city of Ani, Capital of the Armenian Bagratid Dynasty, 10th century,” from the Armenian side of the border

see BOOKS, page 15



ARTS & CULTURE

Jaakko Heikkilä: ‘Armenia Constantly Stays on My Mind’

from previous page

Venice is one of the European cities with the most Armenian traces. Aside from San Lazzaro Island, what other Armenian sites or subjects did you photograph there?

I never forget the words of Fr. Ulouhodjian on San Lazzaro island: “When Europeans still wandered in forests, we were already in palaces.” Beside San Lazzaro I photographed also in Armenian College quite close to campo Santa Margherita.

In addition to Father Ulouhodjian I photographed and filmed the story of Garo Dermidjian, Hacob on Lido and Arto Keucheyan. Garo stays in my memories as a melancholic warm personality. He told as follows: “All the family was killed In 1915 apart from my father. He stayed for three years with a Kurdish family. Later, his cousin took him to Aleppo. Then he went to Beirut, ended up in Marseille in 1920. He came to San Lazzaro in 1923, left in 1927, married in Lyon in 1930. In 1950 He sent me to San Lazzaro.”

Could you share some interesting or humorous anecdotes from your experiences in Armenia?

Here comes a little story. I started my days just going around in the village for meeting people.

The name of the village was Nazervan. Today the name is Ghazaravan. It was quite early morning. I felt a tap, a tentative greeting, soft as the sunny morning, on my left shoulder. The man pointed and said, “This way, come!”

We walked along a narrow path next to a pile of dung, past the praying piglets. First the man lifted a rag of cloth hanging

in front of the door. Then he opened the blue door.

We were in the cottage, a sanctuary, on the floor of which stone plates had cracked.

dote. But to me it was remarkable and touching moment with him.

Could we say that, alongside Finnish monk Serafim Seppälä’s organized regular trips to Armenia and

Dilijan. Of course, exhibitions are raising awareness. After the first exhibition in Venice Biennale 2005, “Unspoken Destinies” has been in two museums and one Art Hall in Finland. Then in many



Picking herbs, Ghazaravan, Armenia 2004. Photo by Jaakko Heikkilä.

There we sat drinking strong Armenian coffee, without words, without a common language. Suddenly, in the silence, the man walked to a cabinet at the back wall. He picked up the only book in the house, a Bible, the covers and fragile pages of which were partly burned. He stroked the burned pages with his fingers.

“Ottoman, Ottoman Imperium,” he said and took the bible back to the carpet.

This is more a short story than anecdote.

his publications on the country, your photographs have also contributed to raising awareness of Armenia within Finnish society?


I really hope that beside Serafim I have also contributed to raising awareness. Before pandemia 2016 – 2019 we organized together with Marianne Tillman (Armeniatours) six workshops for Finnish photographers in Armenia. Each workshop had ten participants. We were in Ghazaravan village, Echmiadzin and

exhibitions with other series.

On March 8, your exhibition opened at the Aine Art Museum in Tornio and will remain on view until August, featuring your Armenian works as well. Are there other ongoing or future projects related to Armenia?

I don’t have exact plans related to Armenia for now. But Armenia stays constantly in my head. It would be great to donate my photos to the Yerevan Museum of Modern Art.






**Tekeyan Cultural Association
Boston Chapter**

**Armenian Cooking Demonstration
Mortadella + Mushabak with Rita
Balyozian + Roubina Davidian**

Thurs., April 30 Baikar Building
7 p.m.
755 Mt. Auburn St, Watertown
via Norseman Ave. door
\$30 includes reception
Series Coordinator
Rita Balyozian

RSVP Required @ Sossy
Yogurtian 617 281-1647 or
syogurtian@comcast.net
Pay cash or Venmo <https://venmo.com/u/Tekeyan-Boston>
ADD note CookingClass





TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BOSTON & AGBU
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT PRESENT



ALL ASA CLUBS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
ARE INVITED TO

HYEVIBE!

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND DANCING

CHANGE OF DATE:

**APRIL 17
8-11 PM**

- ★ LIVE MUSIC PROVIDED BY BERKLEE ASA
- ★ COME ENJOY SNACKS AND OTHER REFRESHMENTS
- ★ ARMENIAN AND AMERICAN POP / DANCE MUSIC



\$10 FEE

BUY TICKETS NOW!

VENMO: @TEKEYAN-BOSTON

755 MT AUBURN ST, WATERTOWN, MA 02472
@berklee_asa | @tekeyanboston

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 25 — The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut will hold its annual program, on the 111th anniversary of the Genocide, on Saturday, at 10:30 am. Historic Connecticut House Chamber at the State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford. The program will include the Martyrs' Service. Clergy from Armenian Churches in Connecticut will participate in the service. Keynote speaker will be Bryan Ardouny, Executive Director of the Armenian Assembly of America. A reception will follow. For questions call Melanie at 860-651-0629.

MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 12-APRIL 26 —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.

APRIL 23 — Eldad Ben Aharon, "Israeli-Turkish Relations at the End of the Cold War: The Geopolitics of Denying the Armenian Genocide." 7.30 p.m. At the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Presented by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Hybrid event.

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.

APRIL 25 — "Memories Flow Beneath It, From Valley to Quabbin," A film by Roger Hagopian in collaboration with author and historian, J.R.Greene. Local filmmaker Roger Hagopian presents his documentary film, tracing the displacement of people and the loss of a way of life in the Swift River Valley of western Massachusetts. 2-4 p.m. Community Room Saugus Public Library 295 Central St, Saugus

APRIL 26 — "Memories Flow Beneath It, From Valley to Quabbin," A film by Roger Hagopian in collaboration with author and historian, J.R.Greene. Local filmmaker Roger Hagopian presents his documentary film, tracing the displacement of people and the loss of a way of life in the Swift River Valley of western Massachusetts. 2-4 PM Brookline Public Library 361 Washington Street, Brookline Village.

APRIL 26 — The Global Community Engagement (GCE) program of COMPACT at Brandeis University invites you to a special screening of "Ojakh: On the Other Side of the Silence," a documentary by French-Armenian filmmaker Diana Mkrtchyan. The film follows Erhan Arik, a young Turkish photographer, who is unexpectedly confronted by the past when a voice in a dream calls him to reckon with the history of the home he inhabits—once belonging to Armenians displaced during the events of 1915. Join us for the screening followed by a discussion with the filmmaker and main character. 12:00 – 2:00 pm Wasserman Cinematheque, Sachar International Center, 415 South St, Waltham. Free parking is available at the nearby Theater Parking Lot. For questions contact Armine Avetisyan at arminkav@brandeis.edu.

APRIL 26 — The Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley hosts a commemoration. Celebration of Divine Liturgy by the combined Armenian Churches of Merrimack Valley, Saint Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., North Andover, 10 a.m. Youth program during church services. Following Divine Liturgy, prayer service at Church's Martyr's Monument. Luncheon and Musical performance featuring violinist Haig Hovsepian and pianist Ani Hovsepian.

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.

APRIL 30 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter will present an Armenian Cooking Demonstration Mortadella + Mushabak with Rita Balyozian and Roubina Davidian. Series coordinator Rita Balyozian. Thursday, Baikar Building, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, 7 p.m. \$30 includes reception. RSVP Required @ Sossy Yogurtian, 617-281-1647 or syogurtian@comcast.net. Pay cash or Venmo <https://venmo.com/u/Tekeyan-Boston>. Add note: CookingClass

THROUGH APRIL 30 — Watertown, Mass.-based Project Save Photograph Archive, which collects and preserves pictures and ephemera from generations of Armenian families around the world, will have its first exhibition outside Massachusetts this winter. Sponsored by the University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies in Ann Arbor, the exhibition highlights photographs from key moments in Armenian history, as well as photos collected from Michigan and other midwestern families. Hours vary. Center for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan Ann Arbor Weiser Hall 500 Church St., Ann Arbor. 734-647-4143. For more info visit projectsave.org.

MAY 2 — Annual Armenian Spring Food Festival 12-6 PM. Holy Archangels Armenian Church, St. Michael & St. Gabriel. Delicious Armenian Food! Chicken Kebab, Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinners; Cuisine & Pastry Tables and Jingalov Hatz. Summer Baskets Raffle, 1280 Boston Rd., Haverhill, MA 01835. For additional information, call (978) 372-9227 or email admin@archangelsarmenianchurch.org

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.

MAY 3 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association, Boston's Holy Trinity Armenian Church, and UCLA's Armenian Music Program present a concert by the UCLA Vem Ensemble, led by Prof. Movses Pogossian, as part of its 2026 Tekeyan tour, including works of Komitas, Khachaturian, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Schubert and Saryan. Sunday, 2 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Free admission, freewill donations appreciated. For more info, email tcadirector@aol.com

MAY 3 — "Memories Flow Beneath It, From Valley to Quabbin," A film by Roger Hagopian in collaboration with author and historian, J.R.Greene. Local filmmaker Roger Hagopian presents his documentary film, tracing the displacement of people and the loss of a way of life in the Swift River Valley of western Massachusetts. 2-4 PM Wellesley Public Library 530 Washington Street, Wellesley.

MAY 9 — In Her Embrace: A Mother's Day Concert. An evening of song & gratitude featuring Asatur Baljyan (baritone) and Nune Hakobyan (piano). Hosted by Holy Archangels Armenian Church, 1280 Boston Rd., Haverhill, MA 01830. For more information, call (978) 372-9227. A dream. A voice. A journey across silence and history.

MAY 17 — MCMA Presents "Voices From the Homeland," featuring violinist Haig Hovsepian, cellist Suren Bagratuni and pianist Karen Hakobyan. Follen Church, 755 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington, 7 p.m. Tickets \$15-\$30.

MAY 30 — The Armenian Friends of America will host a special spring Dinner Dance on Saturday, with 100% of proceeds benefiting Artsakh refugees. The evening will feature Mal Barsamian, Leon Janikian, Bobby Raphaelian, Ken Kalajian, and Jason Naroian, with vocals by Jason Naroian and John Arzigian. Their extraordinary talent and devotion to Armenian music promise an unforgettable night of culture, community, and celebration. Concert titled Helping Our Homeland – AFA Benefit for Artsakh Refugees, 6:00 PM – 11:30 PM, DoubleTree by Hilton, 123 Old River Road, Andover. Ticket Information (Advance Purchase Only) • \$100 per person, \$950 for a table of 10 (single check required). Tickets may be purchased online at www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org, or by contacting any of the event organizers: Linda Doherty (603-760-8328), Mary Ann Janigian (603-770-3375), Kathy Geyer (978-902-3198), John Arzigian (603-560-3826), Lisa Apovian (508-662-8395), or Lu Sirmaian (978-314-1956)

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

MICHIGAN

APRIL 24 — Friday, 4 p.m., University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies Community Event: 4th Annual Shared Memories: "The Armenian Experience Through Objects and Stories," at University of Michigan, Weiser Hall, 500 Church St., Ann Arbor, MI. Organized by the University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies and cosponsored by Armenian Students Cultural Association and Multidisciplinary Workshop for Armenian Studies and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

MAY 9 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association, UCLA Armenian Music Program, Saint John Armenian Church and Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church present a concert by UCLA's Vem Ensemble as part of the latter's 2026 Tekeyan Tour, including works of Khachaturian, Komitas, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Schubert and Saryan. Vem members, led by founder Prof. Movses Pogossian on violin, include Ally Cho on violin, Damon Zavala on viola, Niall Tarō Ferguson on cello. There will be several guest speakers. Saturday, 7 p.m. St. John Armenian Church, 2001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Free admission, freewill donations appreciated. For info, call Diana Alexanian 248-505-6159 or Madisen Lundquist 503-758-8805,



ARTS & CULTURE

Nadine Takvorian's *Armaveni*: Not Just Another Story About The Genocide

BOOKS, from page 12

between Turkey and Armenia during her trip to Hayastan. Turkey “wasn’t always Turkey.”

History mingles with everyday life in *Armaveni* to further enhance the story’s credibility. Nadine’s relatives want to move to America because there is “no future, no promotions” for Armenians in Bolis. Having friends from Beirut and Egypt, ordering a falafel sandwich or a toasted cheese bourek, all introduced seamlessly into the story, highlight the various geographies where displaced Armenians have made a “home.” Taking the leftover dolmas to school for lunch, on the other hand, albeit with a “Sigh,” underlines traditional Armenian values.

Takvorian has no illusions. The memory and the pain will always be there. The plaintive song of the bird has set the tone. *Groong* (The Crane) by Komitas will forever be grandma’s — and Nadine’s — “favorite song” even if her question to the bird, “Groong, hast thou not news from our homeland?” remains unanswered.

Armaveni offers no “recipes” for healing. There are no “prescriptions” here, no “coping mechanisms” to deal with the trauma and the pain. Just a story that magically heals and brings awareness to the need to create a more compassionate world for humanity. Takvorian understands that there is no running away from the past. “The past does not stay in the past,” she

writes in her Author’s Note. Yet, her story restores faith in a millennia-old culture and an ancient history. Nadine returns “home” to San Francisco, to “just family.” Her final words, “I exist,” reiterate the timeless truth about her people: We are too old to die.

Takvorian makes no attempt to be piteous either, yet her visual story has tremendous emotional appeal. Rather than vibrant reds and blues, the panels are rendered in a “lavender wash” because, the artist explains in an interview with KQED Arts, “the subject matter required restraint.” Her illustrations touch deeply. The images of “gavur women” and children herded into the French school to be set on fire — “FIRE! . . . HELP! . . . The children . . . Mama, I can’t breathe . . . Oh God, please God . . . Hayr Mer vor hergins yes . . .” — or of Baron Hagop, in the middle of the night, frantically knocking on the door of Armaveni’s house to ask for her hand in marriage because “Gendarmes crashed into my home last night . . . they took us to the outskirts of the city . . .,” make the violence and the fear palpable. *Armaveni* will not “let [the world] lie about it.”

Armaveni succeeds in a format that has been gaining enormous popularity. Educators are beginning to see the graphic novel, often dismissed as “juvenile entertainment,” as a legitimate tool for exploring all kinds of stories. A recent example is Children’s Bible: Read and Tell, Dr. Hrayr and Dr. Arda Jebejian’s Western Armenian

adaptation of the Bible in graphic format, with illustrated colorful scenes, designed to be used as “an educational tool during religious studies.” I would like to add that reading for “entertainment” has been known to enhance students’ vocabulary and reading comprehension, as well as their overall performance in school.

It is also worth noting that Takvorian’s book contributes in important ways to the effort of our historians to extend the documentation of our past to include personal accounts — stories families tell, memoirs, diaries, letters — as trusted historical sources. Nadine’s question to her mom, “How come Mamani’s (the little girl’s name for her grandmother Armaveni) eyes are always so sad?” and her, “She cries when she hugs me” are evidence, as worthy as any state archive, of the truth of the story “my parents won’t tell.”



The first-generation Armenian American Nadine Takvorian’s insights into her complicated history are nothing short of inspirational. *Armaveni* is a celebration of life and of the dignity of life.

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MICHIGAN

MAY 10 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association, UCLA Armenian Music Program, and University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies present a concert by UCLA’s Vem Ensemble as part of Vem’s 2026 Tekeyan Tour, including works of Khachaturian, Komitas, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Schubert and Saryan. Vem includes founder Prof. Movses Pogossian on violin, Ally Cho on violin, Damon Zavala on viola/violin, Niall Tarō Ferguson cello. Guest speakers Melissa Bilal, Ronald Suny, Anoush Suny. Sunday, 3 to 5 p.m. Helmut Stern Auditorium at the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Free admission. For info, email armenianstudies@umich.edu

MONTREAL

MAY 8 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the UCLA Armenian Music Program present a concert by UCLA’s Vem Ensemble as part of its 2026 Tekeyan Tour, including works of Khachaturian, Komitas, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Schubert and Saryan. Vem, led by founder Prof. Movses Pogossian on violin, includes Ally Cho on violin, Damon Zavala on viola, Niall Tarō Ferguson on cello. 8 p.m. Tekeyan Armenian Community Center, 825 Manogian St., Ville Saint-Laurent, Québec. Ticket \$35, contact Tekeyan Center at 514 747-6680.

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 24 — Intercommunal Church Service, 7:00 PM Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Philadelphia. This historic Service of Gratitude, Unity, and Commemoration, remembering the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide and honoring America250, will unite the Armenian community in faith. The service will be presided over by Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, Archbishop Anoushavan, and Bishop Mikael Mouradian, with clergy from all five Armenian churches in the Greater Philadelphia area and an Armenian community choir. A special additional ceremony will follow in an adjacent garden. Transportation available.

APRIL 25 — Saturday, 11 a.m., Philadelphia Museum of Art. After eight years of dedicated work, the Armenian Heritage Walk is ready for dedication and the revitalized Young Meher statue is set to be unveiled. This event marks the completion of Phase One, highlighted by the installation of a nearly 15,000 square foot garden and walkway. Philadelphia Museum of Art, North Entrance. The event will be followed by the Armenian Heritage Walk Gala at the National Constitution Center. This black-tie event will honor the completion of Phase One. \$515 per Ticket (includes credit card processing

fee. Please note a ticket processing fee will be added at check out.) 6:00 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program, 9:30 PM Post Reception. National Constitution Center, 525 Arch St, Philadelphia.

MAY 1 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association, UCLA Armenian Music Program, and Villanova Armenian Students’ Organization present as part of the UCLA Vem Ensemble 2026 tour, a concert with works of Khachaturian, Komitas, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Schubert and Saryan. Vem members, led by Prof. Movses Pogossian on violin, include Ally Cho on violin, Damon Zavala on viola/violin, and Niall Tarō Ferguson on cello. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Cinema at Connelly Center, Villanova University. Tickets \$20. For more info/tickets call Vahe at 215-908-9502 or Sira at 267-902-0700

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 25 — Armenian Genocide Remembrance Service and Concert. Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, RI. 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Saturday, 7 p.m. Program includes Armenian Genocide Remembrance Service and Memorial Concert by Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island

APRIL 26 — The Armenian Martyr’s Memorial Committee is presenting a program commemorating the 111th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Sunday, North Burial Ground in Providence at 12.30 p.m. Featuring Special Guest Speaker Dr. Asya Darbinyan, the executive director of the Center for Holocaust, Human Rights and Genocide Education (CHHANGE) at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, NJ. She also serves as vice president of the Society for Armenian Studies. In case of inclement weather, the program will be held at Armenian Evangelical Church Sanctuary, 180 Oaklawn Ave., Cranston.

MAY 3 — Concert “Jazzical Komitas”, features world-renowned pianist and composer Joel A. Martin with guest singer Anahit Zakaryan, laureate of international competitions. Sunday, 5:00 pm. @ Belcourt of Newport, 657 Bellevue Ave., Newport, Suggested donation: \$40. Advance tickets only (no tickets at the door): 401-272-7712. Presented by the Cultural Committee of St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church in collaboration with Belcourt of Newport. Refreshments and complimentary wine to follow.

To send Calendar items email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirrorspectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More” or mail them to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 755 Mount Auburn St., Waretown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Dishing Out Health's Nourishing White Bean and Lemon Soup

This nourishing White Bean and Lemon Soup from Jamie Vespa MS, RD, is a vegetarian, fiber-filled meal ready in about 40 minutes. It's a one-pot meal perfect for make-ahead lunches or easy weeknight dinners. This recipe was featured in the Art of Armenian and Middle Eastern Cooking.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 15-oz. cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained*
- 4 cups lower-sodium vegetable broth divided
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 large carrots, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon each kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
- 3 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 bunch escarole, roughly chopped (sub lacinato kale or chard)
- Zest and juice of 1 fresh lemon
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese plus more for garnish

PREPARATION:

Combine 1 can of cannellini beans and 1 cup of broth in a blender; blend until completely smooth. Set aside.

Heat oil in a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium. Add onions and carrots; cook until softened, stirring occasionally, about 6 or 7 minutes. Add garlic, salt, and pepper; cook 2 minutes. Add remaining can of cannellini beans, chickpeas, and rosemary; stir to combine, and cook for 1 minute, or a little longer.

Stir in blended bean and broth mixture, remaining 3 cups broth, and chopped escarole. Bring mixture to a boil; reduce to a simmer and cook, uncovered, 20 to 25 minutes, or until soup slightly thickens. Stir in lemon zest and juice. Gradually sprinkle in Parmesan cheese, stirring continuously (don't add it all at once or it may clump).

Ladle soup into each of 6 bowls, and garnish with additional Parmesan cheese, cracked black pepper, and chopped rosemary, if desired. Serve with crusty bread.

Notes:

Freeze: Cool soup to room temperature, and then seal it a large zip-top plastic freezer bag. Lay bag flat in freezer, and freeze for up to 3 months.

Thaw: Microwave soup in bag at 50% power for 3 to 4 minutes, or until pliable.

Reheat: Pour soup into a saucepan and heat over medium until soup is warmed through.

* Cannellini beans, often called white kidney beans, are a versatile, creamy, and nutty-flavored Italian staple, perfect for soups, salads, and pasta. These protein-rich, high-fiber legumes are popular in Mediterranean cuisine, especially in minestrone or paired with tuna. They are available dried (requiring soaking) or canned for quick meals.

Jamie Vespa is a registered dietitian who worked as a clinical nutrition specialist and as nutrition editor for *Cooking Light* magazine before devoting herself full-time to her food and nutrition blog, *Dishing Out Health*. Jamie started out providing nutrition counseling to hospital patients, but realized her heart was not in managing chronic disease but in preventing it through encouraging and facilitating healthy eating. She especially loves plant-based food and seasonal ingredients, and she sees food as a way to connect with others and with herself.

Her previous job included serving as a Clinical Nutrition Specialist at Tampa General Hospital. *Dishing Out Health* is a health-centric food blog focusing on all things delicious. "You'll notice a lot of plant-based recipes on the blog, but I enjoy all foods in moderation. You can easily search for gluten-free, dairy-free, and vegan/vegetarian recipes on the blog based on your dietary preferences or health needs," she adds.

"My philosophy is that eating healthy should be rewarding, uncomplicated, and most importantly, delicious."

RECIPE + PHOTO VIA

<https://dishingouthealth.com>

Also see: Jamie's Whipped Brie with Caramelized Persimmons at: <https://dishingouthealth.com/whipped-brie-with-caramelized-persimmons/>

Connect at:

For #TheNewHealthy with Jamie Vespa, go to: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJZt7NVmAen-VlRND_H2yYt6fx48LNSWX

For this recipe, go to: <https://dishingouthealth.com/white-bean-soup/>

Also see: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1391426473019045&set=pb.100064551169859.-2207520000>

For more recipes, go to: <https://dishingouthealth.com/about/>

See: <https://www.healthcentral.com/author/jamie-vespa>

See: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jesscording/2018/02/12/jamie-vespa-cooking-light/>

©2025 Dishing Out Health. All rights reserved.

Pegasus Season Finale 'New Voices' to Feature Three NY Premieres in Showcase of World-Class Artists

NEW YORK — Pegasus: The Orchestra concludes its season on Friday, May 15, at 7:30 p.m. at Merkin Hall, Kaufman Music Center (129 West 67th Street, New York, NY) with *New Voices – A Journey of Armenian Music*, an ambitious and deeply compelling program featuring three New York Premieres and a roster of internationally acclaimed artists.

Led by founder, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director Karén Hakobyan, this season finale offers a rare opportunity to experience Armenian masterworks seldom heard on major New York stages — spanning intimate songs, virtuosic concerti, and electrifying orchestral showpieces — brought to life by world-renowned soloists.

The evening opens with the New York Premiere of Hakobyan's *Vocalise for Voice and Orchestra*, followed by a deeply expressive vocal sequence tracing a poetic arc across generations of Armenian music — from Komitas Vardapet's songs to Arno Babadjanian's *Vocalise* — performed by Metropolitan Opera soprano Tatev Baroyan.

"I feel deeply honored to give the New York premiere of Karén Hakobyan's *Vocalise for Voice and Orchestra*," Baroyan said. "To bring this piece together with Komitas's timeless songs and Babadjanian's *Vocalise*, forming

a continuous vocal journey across Armenian music, is especially meaningful to me. Presenting these voices on a New York stage is both a privilege and a responsibility I embrace wholeheartedly."

The first half culminates in the New York Premiere of Arno Babadjanian's *Cello Concerto*, a gripping and rarely performed work, featuring internationally renowned cellist and Tchaikovsky Competition Silver Medalist Suren Bagratuni.

"Babadjanian's *Cello Concerto* is a work I have long hoped to perform," Bagratuni said. "I am delighted that its New York premiere will take place with Pegasus. It is a powerful and deeply expressive work, and I am thrilled to help bring it to life for new audiences."

The second half opens with the New York Premiere of Edvard Bagdasarian's *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra*, featuring internationally acclaimed violinist Ruggero Alliffranchini, Concertmaster of the Festival Orchestra of Lincoln Center and Pegasus Guest Concertmaster.

"It is a true privilege to champion Edvard Bagdasarian's *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra* in its New York premiere," Alliffranchini said. "This is a work that deserves to be heard more widely — vibrant, expressive, and rich in Armenian character. I am delighted to help

bring this powerful music to new audiences with Pegasus."

The program concludes with exhilarating selections from Aram Khachaturian's *Spartacus*, Gayaneh and Mas-



From left, Tatev Baroyan, Suren Bagratuni, Ruggero Alliffranchini and Karén Hakobyan

querade Suites, bringing the season to a thrilling close with music of sweeping intensity, brilliant orchestration, and unmistakable vitality.

"For me, this finale is a deeply personal journey into the spiritual and emotional landscape of my Armenian heritage. This music carries memory, longing, resilience, and beauty, and I believe it speaks not only to one people, but to something universal in all of us."

For tickets visit <https://www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org/mch/event/PegasusArmenianMusic/>



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

CONTRIBUTORS

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

REGIONAL

CORRESPONDENTS

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

© 2026 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston,
MA and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

COMMENTARY

Iran-Armenia Economic Ties, Trump's 'Bridges, and Plant Day'

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The latest developments surrounding Iran, and particularly the two-week ceasefire, offer some hope that peace may eventually be achieved. Nevertheless, this is not yet a final peace agreement. The ceasefire may be established and remain in force either fully or partially, over the short or long term, depending on how events unfold. The ceasefire itself does not mean that the underlying problems have been resolved. Rather, both sides appear to need time to determine their next steps and reassess their priorities in both the domestic and international arenas. One thing, however, is clear: the situation surrounding Iran will continue to remain tense.

It should not be forgotten that Trump previously threatened potential strikes against Iranian economic infrastructure through social media, vaguely referring to "Power Plant Day and Bridge Day." The specific targets — whether nuclear power plants, conventional power plants, bridges, or other facilities — were not identified in his post. Trump's statements that the United States could strike Iran's economic infrastructure, including bridges, power plants, and other critical facilities, could have serious consequences for Armenia for several reasons. At the same time, if we take into account that only minutes before the ceasefire Iran launched missile strikes against several energy facilities in Gulf states, it becomes clear that even after the ceasefire there may still be further actions and retaliatory measures, not only by Iran but by other actors as well.

would impose 50-percent tariffs on any country that sells arms to Iran may suggest that within weeks he could again consider strikes on Iranian infrastructure again. More broadly, judging from Trump's policy, one may conclude that his objective during the final days of the conflict was to inflict maximum political, military, and economic damage on Iran. Since the United States became involved in the conflict, the goal appears to have been to weaken Iran as much as possible in all these areas.

If government change in Iran cannot be achieved, then the alternative appears to be to weaken that government to the greatest possible extent, deprive it of influence, damage the country's economy, and leave Iran isolated and partially devastated while still preserving the state itself. In other words, the objective appears to be to set Iran back by decades, preventing it from quickly restoring its pre-war resources and political influence. Such damage, however, would not affect only Iran; it would also affect those states that maintain good-neighborly relations with Iran and have major economic projects tied to it.

Returning to Armenia, one of the most important factors is that Iran's power system is directly connected to Armenia's electricity grid. The state-owned Yerevan Thermal Power Plant exports electricity from Armenia to Iran. Under the "electricity-for-gas" arrangement, Armenia exports 3 kWh of electricity to Iran for every cubic meter of gas it receives from Iran. Iranian gas is used exclusively for the operation of thermal power plants and is not supplied to other consumers. In practice, one cubic meter of gas

generates about 4–4.5 kWh of electricity, and the surplus remains within Armenia's energy system. Other thermal plants also participate in supplying the exported electricity, but the exports themselves are carried out through the Yerevan Thermal Power Plant. Moreover, in 2026 Armenia was expected to export slightly more than 1.57 billion kWh of electricity to Iran. For comparison, Armenia's total planned electricity production in 2026 was just under 8.75 billion kWh. This means that the Armenian and Iranian energy systems are interconnected to such an extent that strikes on Iran could also directly harm Armenia, and the consequences could be substantial and measurable.

At present, the "gas-for-electricity" swap deliveries between Armenia and Iran are carried out through the existing Agarak–Meghri (220 kV) and Norduz–Aga-

rak (220 kV) transmission lines. Iran supplies gas to Armenia through the Iran–Armenia gas pipeline, while in Armenia that gas is used primarily at the Hrazdan Thermal Power Plant to generate electricity. Armenia then returns the electricity to Iran through the existing transmission lines. The 400 kV transmission line currently under construction — and discussed for many years — is intended to increase the volume of power exchange, ensure the synchronized operation of the two energy systems, and expand transit within the framework of the North–South energy corridor. Of course Turkey and Azerbaijan cooperate with Iran in the energy sector, including gas-to-electricity and vice versa projects. However, unlike Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan are not heavily dependent on Iranian gas and electricity.

What may threaten Armenian-Iranian energy cooperation today is difficult to determine, particularly because there is still no clear evidence regarding which infrastructure may have been damaged by US strikes in the final hours before the ceasefire. Likewise, what may happen tomorrow remains difficult to predict given Trump's statements and objectives. However, one thing is clear: Armenia could suffer from strikes on and disruptions to Iran's logistics and energy systems, and the consequences could be significant and tangible.

(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.)



It is still difficult to say exactly which systems or facilities the United States targeted hours before the ceasefire, but the risks for Armenia are already quite high. First, it is important to understand that Armenia still receives part of its trade flow through the territories of Iran and Georgia. The border with Turkey remains closed, while the process with Azerbaijan still involves only symbolic transportation, mainly for certain goods coming from Russia.

As for Iran, there are already significant limitations on the potential for trade and communication projects with that country. Strikes on transport and infrastructure projects would make Armenia's already difficult land connection with Iran even more complicated. It is still unclear what kind of damage US strikes inflicted on Iran in the final hours before the ceasefire, making it difficult to accurately assess the situation.

In general, this war is marked by its unpredictability, which makes any forecast about the ceasefire and the future quite difficult. There are several reasons for this. First, there is an impression that Trump's team does not have a clear plan of action or a coherent strategy regarding what it expects from the conflict with Iran, since contradictory statements continue to appear on a regular basis. The same applies to Trump himself, who frequently makes statements that in some ways contradict one another. This suggests that, at the moment, Trump's team does not have a coherent long-term strategy and is instead acting according to circumstances as they develop.

It also appears that the current ceasefire may be used as an exit strategy from the conflict. However, Trump's statement that he



EDITORIAL

Entire Armenian Nation, Guided Uniquely by National Interests, Must Participate in Upcoming Elections



By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, C.M.

This article emphasizes that the Armenian diaspora is an integral part of the Armenian nation. As such, it must at the very least officially participate in the upcoming national elections in Armenia with observers.

Pan-Armenian Responsibility

The next elections of the National Assembly of Armenia will take place on June 7 and electoral campaigning already seems ever-present in Armenian life.

These elections, which will determine the political leadership of Armenia, including, in particular, its prime minister, are of an exceptionally fateful and determinative nature, given the current unprecedented national and international complex and confusing political situation. The fate and character of not only Armenia but our entire nation for many years to come hang in the balance.

Consequently, today the Armenian people as a whole – first and foremost the citizens of Armenia, but also the vast diaspora – are obliged to consider themselves facing a great responsibility, to influence the outcome of these elections with all their abilities, by all means available to them, guided primarily by national supreme interests.

The Role of the Armenian Press

Ahead of the elections, it is expected that the Armenian press will focus increasingly every day through analyses and coverage to direct the attention of Armenian society to the urgent issues raised by the elections.

The list of serious issues raised internally by various domestic political groups is already very large. However, the goal of this article goes beyond this to remind readers of the existence of the vast Armenian diaspora, which has been completely forgotten in the general hullabaloo.

The Great Importance of Armenia-Diaspora Interconnection

The mutual obligations and rights of the Armenian diaspora and the Republic of Armenia towards each other are among the fundamental issues at stake. Unfortunately, since the Armenian Genocide, in other words during the past 111 years, notwithstanding isolated temporary initiatives, this topic has never become the subject of a thorough and profound discussion, analysis and ultimately actionable conclusion in a pan-Armenian manner.

What is even more worrying is the not only openly lukewarm, but downright contemptuous attitude adopted by the current authorities of Armenia towards the diaspora. That is why the author of these lines, raises the issue of defining the mutual obligations and rights of diaspora and Armenia clearly as a subject worthy of serious national discussion in the run-up to the elections in Armenia.

The Role of the Diaspora Concerning the Shaping of the Armenian Government

Starting with this article and with other discussions that may likely follow, the role and indisputable stake of the diaspora in the elections to be held in Armenia, regardless of changing authorities and the whims or goodwill of the prime ministers or leaders of the day, will be clarified.

It is also certain that in the course of discussing this fundamental issue, in the absence of a supervisory structure recognized by the state and nation as a whole, the application of the principle of free expression of opinions will lead to the statement of diverse and often contradictory opinions. As for the author of these lines, in accordance with his already consistently established habit, he affirms that his discussion is based, to the greatest extent possible, within the framework of historical and practical indisputable data, especially on logical and difficult to dispute reasoning.

The most important point that forms the basis of all our other reasoned conclusions is that the Armenian diaspora is an inseparable part of the Armenian nation.

The Specificity of the Armenian Diaspora

It is a well-known fact that many other nations also have members who have left their motherland of their own free will and settled in different parts of the world. Consequently, all these nations have small or sometimes more populous diasporas. However, such people cannot and actually do not have the pretension to consider themselves part of their ancestral nation. At most, they say that they simply belong to a certain nationality by origin.

The situation is fundamentally different for the millions of Armenians who make up the large Armenian diaspora. Their number, first of all, exceeds by many times the number of Armenians living within the borders of mother Armenia itself. Also it is as the result of a brutal and inhuman crime that they were deported, leaving their parental homes, work, schools, and institutions to escape certain death, and they settled initially temporarily in different countries of the world. This group of millions of Armenians, who bore the qualification of the Armenian diaspora, is beyond doubt, at that tragic juncture, and from the very first days, an indisputably inseparable and large part of the Armenian nation.

The Path of the Post-Genocide Diaspora

In order to logically develop our thoughts, let us now follow step by step the successive stages that the collectivity called the diaspora has gone through over the course of 111 years, from the time of the Armenian Genocide to the present day.

Although abstract, if for a moment, as a simple mental exercise, we continue our chain of logic and assume that in those hellish days of the Genocide, an Armenian statehood that justified its name had existed, the authorities and leaders of that day, conscious of their responsibility, would have considered it their primary and immediate duty to undertake the huge work of bringing together and defending in a number of different ways that one large segment of the Armenian nation.

However, we well know that in those days there simply was no such statehood with such abilities.

Having narrowly escaped complete annihilation, the Soviet Armenia of those days which itself experienced quite difficult conditions, and then had to go through the grueling years of World War II, after three decades, was barely able to take the first few, completely imperfect, painful steps to gather its children from the diaspora, which was theoretically its responsibility, by implementing the largely unsuccessful “Nerkaght” repatriation program.

It is not our goal, and it is naturally not possible in this article to further expand on the practically insignificant capacity of the successive regimes of the Republic of Armenia to provide national care to the Armenian diaspora, even after those days, up to our own time. However, it is safe to say that the sum total of the capacity of that work can be generally – unfortunately – accurately qualified with these two words: almost nothing.

In order to prevent any hasty superficial criticism that might be expected in relation to this weighty statement, I must add that the author of these lines is very familiar, through direct personal and very long experience, with all the details of the 1946 repatriation movement, and later with its continuation to a lesser extent in the 1960s. He is also very familiar with certain praiseworthy efforts of the Committee for Cultural Relations with the Armenian Diaspora in those years and later, as well as with the details of the implementation of various summer programs specifically for diaspora Armenian teachers and youth. He is familiar with the extent of the even more appreciable work of the Ministry of Diaspora, which was created in a short period of time during the years of independent Armenia. Finally, he is familiar with the unfortunate halting by the current authorities of the fairly successful initiative of the Ministry of Diaspora, and its replacement with a so-called Diaspora Commissioner, which is completely fruitless and deserving of serious criticism.

Insufficient State Care

The central purpose of this article is, perhaps for the first time, to state openly and loudly that it is unfortunately clear that the total sum of all the above-mentioned works initiated by the Republic of Armenia authorities at all times, could not satisfy in any way the enormous needs and demands of the worldwide Armenian Diaspora. However, it was undeniably its duty to satisfy these needs during the past 111 years so that this vast community, which had great potential and capacity, would be able to at least maintain its albeit imperfect but respectable national character to this day.

Today we emphasize that instead, all of this was accomplished in a wonderful way by that very same unprotected collectivity called the Armenian diaspora, through individual sacrifices and often completely voluntary work worth millions of dollars.

The objectively indisputable consequence of this reality is that the Armenian state of the past and the present and also the foreseeable near future, and all the authorities representing it, are all, morally, directly, and indisputably indebted to all those in the diaspora who in their place have provided that national care.

These latter include all the various selfless charitable, educational, cultural and political organizations that have been created over the years with countless sacrifices and that are still operating today, as well as independent individuals. In these organizations, there are lawyers, scientists, and businessmen who have achieved great success in their careers. They could easily devote their precious time to pleasure or to many highly profitable activities, but they have served and still serve the Armenian nation in a completely voluntary manner through a self-imposed consciousness of national duty.

The Difference Between a Salaried Official and a Dedicated Volunteer

At this point, it is pertinent to draw the attention of the Armenian authorities to the fact that the same work that they carry out in Armenia more or less successfully, with the large bonuses they receive from various state funds, is generally carried out pro-bono by Armenians in the diaspora completely without any pecuniary compensation. Moreover, the latter even donate a portion of their personal wealth towards the implementation of various educational, cultural, charitable and community-benefiting works.

We would like to point out that all of this has been done in the diaspora for 111 long years with great difficulty and yet with tangible success, solely in order to preserve the national Armenian identity of the great collectivity in the diaspora.

Yes, the diaspora itself is the one that completely takes over the enormous responsibility that is undoubtedly the duty of the Armenian authorities, but which has been absent presumably due to their incapacity.

The Diaspora is a Source of Strategic Wealth for Armenia

At this point, it is necessary to also remind the Armenian authorities that the responsive part of the Armenian diaspora is directly an objective source of great wealth for Armenia, provided, of course, that the authorities of the day have the actual ability and awareness to make use of that wealth constructively? Perhaps here it should be recalled that very often, especially in the recent past, public statements were made in Armenia with great pride that “If Azerbaijan is rich in its oil, Armenia is even richer in its diaspora.”

Naturally, just as the usefulness of Azerbaijani oil is revealed only when it is extracted from under the earth, so too would the usefulness of the Armenian diaspora be revealed, especially when the authorities of Armenia realize their duty, make efforts and show their care, and in organized ways bring worthy diasporan Armenians closer to the homeland, instead of rejecting and pushing them away.

Conclusion

Finally, based on the reasoned objective data provided in this article, we now reach the immediate and main goal of the present writing and, in anticipation of the upcoming elections to the National Assembly of Armenia, we address our words to the current authorities of Armenia.

The global Armenian diaspora, representing many millions, is not just theoretically but objectively an inseparable part of the Armenian nation. Therefore, as the only internationally recognized legitimate authority of the Armenian nation, you are certainly indebted to it, and you are also obliged to accept it with affection in its very nature as an inseparable part of the Armenian nation.

Therefore, the Armenian authorities are also naturally obliged to create the opportunity and the specific official method for diasporan Armenian representatives to participate in the upcoming elections to the National Assembly.

Once again, in order to prevent the expected immediate and easy objections as to how the diaspora, which does not have a common organizational structure, will appoint its representatives, we practically and logically point out that it is first the turn of the Armenian authorities.



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Pashinyan's Party Should Be Banned from June Elections for Violating the Constitution

After the June 2021 parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Civil Contract (CC) political party made dozens of promises to achieve within five years, such as defending Artsakh and the rights of its people, etc. However, those promises were either unfulfilled or contradicted by subsequent government actions.

The leaders of CC appointed themselves to top government positions despite lacking qualifications, and enriched themselves through exclusive state contracts, high salaries, and millions of dollars in undeserved bonuses. The same party is now trying to fool the public again for a second time.

On April 3, 2026, CC released its campaign plan for the parliamentary elections of June 7, 2026, and listed 100 key actions to be accomplished between 2026 and 2031.

I will present two of these promised actions:

Point 10, titled "Value-based society," outlines the Civil Contract's plans "to reform" the Armenian Apostolic Church. The CC claims that "the activities of the de facto leadership of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church [poses] a problem of spiritual security, since it has created an opportunity for external forces to try to turn the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church into a base for a hybrid struggle against the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia." This baseless statement is intended to deflect similar accusations against Pashinyan. If any citizen, layman or clergyman, is a foreign agent, the government has an obligation to arrest and charge that person. This is a defamatory claim, similar to those made against Pashinyan.

Point 10 goes on to detail specific steps that violate the Armenian constitution's principle of separation of Church and State. Below is CC's plan:

"a) Removal of the de facto head of the Armenian Apostolic Church (retirement)";

"b) Election of the Catholicosate Vicar in accordance with established procedure";

"c) Adoption of the Statute of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church. The Statute should establish mechanisms for maintaining the established principles, financial transparency, and good conduct of the clergy";

"d) Election of the Catholicos of All Armenians in accordance with established procedure".

Political parties have no right to decide any of the above four steps. The constitution forbids the government from meddling in the internal affairs of the Church, which has long-established procedures. The government can barely

run the country; yet it seeks to manage the Church as well.

Furthermore, CC seeks to offer the clergy personal benefits. Point 10 states: "The Parliamentary majority formed by the Civil Contract party and the government will undertake the inclusion of clergy in the state system of social guarantees." I am not opposed to the clergy receiving benefits such as health insurance and social security, like all other Armenian citizens; however, it is problematic to link these benefits with the government's interference with the Church's hierarchy.

Strangely, Point 10 reiterates that "religious organizations are separate from the state," yet the government has repeatedly violated the constitution and many other laws, while lecturing society about "removing the Church from politics." CC leaders act as if they are the only ones who have the right to violate the constitution with impunity.

The Holy See of Echmiadzin issued a statement condemning CC's illegal violation of "reform the Armenian Church." The Holy See stated: This "is a clear violation of the constitutional order, the Church's right of self-government, as well as the international fundamental principles of freedom of conscience and religion."

We now turn to Point 100 which states: "Organize a conference for pro-state Diaspora organizations to adopt a concept of Armenia-Diaspora cooperation in peacetime, and to form mechanisms for its implementation."

This is the Pashinyan government's latest attempt to divide and weaken existing Armenia-Diaspora relationships, in addition to many other steps by the Pashinyan regime that harm the interests of all Armenians.

Here are some of the other steps that Pashinyan and his incompetent appointee, Zareh Sinanyan, the so-called "High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs for Armenia," have undertaken against the Diaspora.

Instead of utilizing the Diaspora as a valuable asset, the Armenian government is undermining its relationship with seven million Diaspora Armenians.

Pashinyan began his rule eight years ago by shutting down the Diaspora Ministry — the main bridge between Armenia and the Diaspora.

He has repeatedly antagonized the Diaspora publicly. At a 2024 government conference in Yerevan for hundreds of Diaspora Armenians who had come to Yerevan from around the world, Pashinyan rudely said: "We don't need your help. Armenia can take care of its own needs."

In 2025, during his visit to Turkey, Pashinyan told a group of Istanbul Armenians: "Don't rely on me. The Prime Minister is not responsible for Armenians around the world. The Diaspora must solve its own problems in its communities."

We should also add Pashinyan's blacklist of Diaspora Armenians who are banned from entering Armenia simply because they said something he did not like.

In conclusion, if Pashinyan's party wins the majority of seats in the June 7 parliamentary elections, the situation will become more critical for all Armenians, both inside and outside Armenia.

The Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity Through Armenia Hits a Pothole

By Michael Rubin

On August 8, 2025, President Donald Trump hosted Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the White House, where the two foreign leaders signed a peace agreement. The White House released a statement that the agreement, initiated under the Biden administration, is "a landmark achievement for international diplomacy that only President Trump could deliver."

On January 13, 2026, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan returned to Washington to meet with Secretary of State Marco Rubio to discuss implementation of the agreed corridor across southern Armenia, which Trump insisted be named the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP).

If sincerity is the basis of peace, then the chances for a lasting solution are tiny. None of the partners professing to seek peace is sincere. Trump seeks a Nobel Prize and his name on signs. Rubio will play the loyal yes-man to keep his job, regardless of where his moral compass might point. The deeply unpopular Pashinyan—who increasingly seems like the Armenian version of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili—rushes concessions to position himself as the only candidate in forthcoming elections who can deliver peace, no matter that under his watch, Armenia fought two wars and lost both badly. Aliyev, meanwhile, hopes to use the corridor to bifurcate Armenia's Syunik province. Azerbaijan's hostage-taking and kangaroo courts appear designed to humiliate Armenians and undermine peace more than achieve it.

The basic problem with the TRIPP is that it serves no economic purpose. Azerbaijan and Turkey could enjoy trade and transit across Armenia if they established diplomatic relations and ended their blockade. That is a decision that only Ankara can make, as Turkey calls the broader strategic shots for Azerbaijan.

Indeed, while Azerbaijan and Turkey argue they need a corridor to enable trade, they play Trump and Rubio for fools. The entire time that Aliyev whined about Armenia's blockaded border being an impediment to trade, Azerbaijan directed its trade through Iran, a country whose trade relations with Azerbaijan exceed Armenia's. Indeed, in 2022, Azerbaijan and Iran signed an agreement for a new transit corridor through Iran.

While Aliyev struts at the White House, local dynamics that have nothing to do with the United States or even Armenia shape his actions. Just as Azerbaijan used military force to end Nagorno-Karabakh's constitutional autonomy, so, too, did Aliyev last month do the same thing with the landlocked exclave of Nakhichevan, which also had been an autonomous republic. Aliyev will now rule Nakhichevan through an appointed representative, ending any semblance of local rule and continuing Aliyev's transformation of Azerbaijan into the Eritrea or North Korea of the Caucasus.

Aliyev's powerplay over Nakhichevan suggests dark clouds on the horizon, both for Azerbaijan and potentially for the region. Aliyev is the scion of a family dynasty founded by his father Heydar, a former KGB agent and Central Committee Member of the Soviet Union, but one whose son is rumored to be autistic and two daughters hampered by their own personal and social problems, so managing a future transition will be difficult.

While Aliyev was born in Baku at a time when Heydar was the local KGB chief, the Aliyev family roots itself in Nakhichevan, where Heydar himself was born. Over years of Aliyev's rule, Vasif Talibov, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic from 1995 until 2022, consolidated local control and transformed Nakhichevan into his own mafia fiefdom. A desire to kneecap competition best explains Aliyev's decision to impose

direct rule over Nakhichevan. It is the Azerbaijani equivalent of the New York Genovese crime family's infiltration into the Patriarca family's territory in Massachusetts. At the same time, tension grows between the powerful Pashayev family and Aliyev himself. His marriage was supposed to bring unity between the families but instead brought de facto divorce.

What is looming in Azerbaijan is a three-way mafia war, the outcome of which will determine the fate of the Aliyev dynasty. If the Aliyevs lose out, Ilham is likely to launch a new skirmish, if not war, against Armenia to restore an image of strength or use emergency provisions to imprison economic competitors or political threats.

The Nakhichevan mafia machinations also matter for TRIPP, as the Aliyevs, Talibovs, and others now battle over who will profit and receive protection from TRIPP trade. Trump's love for triumphant ceremonies notwithstanding, if Trump and Rubio force TRIPP, they will bring not a peace about which the president and Pashinyan can brag, but rather, a spectacular collapse. There simply can be no lasting peace until Azerbaijan experiences real and lasting reform.

(This editorial was first published at the Middle East Forum website on April 11, 2026.)

Sponsor a Teacher Program

Any inquiries for information about the Sponsor a Teacher Program or donations should be henceforth directed to the central office of the Tekeyan Cultural Association at 755 Mount Auburn Street, Waretown MA 02472, or emailed to Aram Arkun at tcadirector@aol.com.



Sofya Vardanyan, Pink Martini, and the Timeless Music of Alan Hovhaness at Pops

BOSTON — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) presents the 74th annual Armenian Night at the Pops concert on Saturday, May 23, at 7:30 p.m. at Boston's Symphony Hall. In a BSO season dedicated to "E Pluribus Unum: From Many, One," and in tribute to both Armenian heritage and America's 250th anniversary, this special concert features Yerevan-born violinist Sofya Vardanyan, performing with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the baton of conductor Keith Lockhart. Vardanyan will play the rarely performed *Ode to Freedom* by the Alan Hovhaness, alongside a selection of other masterworks.

The evening also welcomes the return of



Sofya Vardanyan

the genre-defying ensemble Pink Martini to Symphony Hall.

Renowned for her expressive depth and technical brilliance, violinist Sofya Vardanyan has captivated audiences worldwide. Born in Yerevan in 1999 into a musical family, she began studying the violin at age seven and received her early training at the Tchaikovsky School of Music for Gifted Children. Vardanyan has performed widely in Armenia and internationally, appearing with ensembles such as the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra and participating in numerous

Entire Armenian Nation Must Participate in Upcoming Elections

ELECTIONS, from page 18

Our demand is that, taking into account the fundamental logical reasoning presented so far in this article, the Armenian authorities first of all officially accept the principle of diasporan participation in the elections. Only after that will it be the duty of the various responsible circles of the diaspora to find a method that is as satisfactory as possible for the general public to appoint its representatives.

Until then, and for now, once again taking into account the expected complex legislative obstacles to civic affiliation, we propose as an indisputable immediately feasible option that the abovementioned representatives of the diaspora be officially granted the status of observers supervising the upcoming elections.

The main and immediately applicable conclusion is that when various European or other official observer representatives are invited to be present at the elections in Armenia, it is beyond a doubt that the Armenian diaspora, which is an integral part of the Armenian nation, should also have the priority right, at least perhaps this time, to be present and thus officially participate in those elections as "official observers."

(The above is an edited translation of the Armenian version published in Baikar.)

international masterclasses with artists such as Ida Kavafian, Levon Chilingirian, Kim Kashkashian, Daishin Kashimoto and Frank Peter Zimmerman. Her festival appearances include the Yerevan International Music Festival and the prestigious Moritzburg Music Festival, where she was awarded the Festival Academy Prize.

An accomplished chamber musician, Vardanyan completed her undergraduate studies at the Hochschule für Musik Detmold in Germany, where she served as concertmaster. She has continued advanced studies in Europe and continues to build a versatile career across solo, orchestral, and chamber music stages, earning worldwide recognition for her artistry.

Alan Hovhaness, one of the most prolific American composers of the 20th century, was born in Somerville, MA, in 1911, and resided in Arlington for many years. He is celebrated for his ability to merge Eastern and Western musical traditions into a transcendent, meditative soundscape and drew inspiration from Armenian sacred music, Asian modalities, and nature. Commissioned by Russian-born conductor Maestro Andre Kostelanetz for the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Hovha-



Alan Hovhaness

ness' *Ode to Freedom* was performed by violinist Yehudi Menuhin at Wolf Trap fifty years ago, on July 3, 1976, with Maestro Kostelanetz conducting the National Symphony Orchestra. *Ode to Freedom* unfolds with a sense of quiet grandeur and introspection; its themes of resilience and hope make it a symbolic celebration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Returning to Symphony Hall this evening is Pink Martini, the internationally adored "little orchestra" that effortlessly

crosses genres — from classical, jazz, and Latin to vintage pop and global folk traditions for a vibrant and multilingual musical experience. Playful, polished, and performing in over 25 languages, Pink Martini has captivated audiences worldwide with its eclectic repertoire and charismatic performances, offering a joyful journey thru different culture and eras.

Tickets can be purchased directly through a special link at www.FACSBoston.org.

Tekeyan Cultural Association & UCLA Armenian Music Program's

Vem Ensemble 2026 Tour

*Performing works of
Komitas, Suni,
Toumajan,
Gazarossian,
Saryan,
Khachaturian
and Schubert*



Prof. Movses Pogossian violin,
Ally Cho violin, Damon Zavala viola,
Niall Tarō Ferguson cello

Philadelphia Friday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.

Co-sponsor Villanova Armenian Students' Organization
Cinema at Connelly Center
Villanova University
Tickets \$20. For more info/tickets call Vahe at 215-908-9502 or Sira at 267-902-0700

Boston Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m.

Co-sponsor Holy Trinity Armenian Church
145 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA
Free admission.
For more info, email tcadirector@aol.com

Montreal Friday, May 8, 8:30 p.m.

Tekeyan Armenian Community Center
825 Manoogian St.,
Ville Saint Laurent, Québec
Donation \$35, contact Tekeyan Center at 514 747-6680

Southfield, MI Saturday, May 9, 7:00 p.m.

Co-sponsors: Saint John Armenian Church, Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church
St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall
2001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield, MI
Free admission. For info, email agop45@sbcglobal.net or call Diana Alexanian 248-505-6159 or Madisen Lundquist 503-758-8805

Ann Arbor, MI Sunday, May 10, 3-5 p.m.

Co-sponsor University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies
Helmut Stern Auditorium at the University of Michigan Museum of Art
525 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI
Guest speakers: **Melissa Bilal, Ronald Suny, Anoush Suni.**
Free admission. For info, email armenianstudies@umich.edu

Altadena, CA Sunday, May 17, 5 p.m.

TCA Beshgeturian Center
1901 N. Allen Ave.
Free admission. For info, email tcawestcoast@gmail.com