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American University Of Armenia Temporarily Switches To Online ‘amid Threats from Iran’

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

The American University of Armenia (AUA) temporarily shifted to remote lectures following threats from Iran to target US and Israeli universities in retaliation for attacks on Iranian universities. The AUA described the move as a “precautionary measure,” while stressing that it has received no direct threats.

The university released a statement on Monday, March 30, noting that all classes planned for the day would be held “fully online.” The next day, university officials announced that classes had gone back to in-person.

It added that the AUA was “monitoring the situation closely” and would provide updates on any changes to the schedule if they occur.

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Armenian Prime Minister Rejects ‘Historical Justice’ Agenda

By Shoghik Galstian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on March 26 that, as head of the Armenian government, he refused to pursue what he described as an agenda of “restoring historical justice,” arguing instead for a focus on building a “just reality.”

“I believe we should pursue a just reality, not the restoration of historical justice,” Pashinyan said at a press conference. “The more we pursue historical justice, the more we will face new historical injustices.”

His remarks come ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for June 7.

Addressing the 2023 displacement of more than 100,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh following Azerbaijan’s military takeover of the region, Pashinyan refrained from characterizing it as “ethnic cleansing.” He said such language would deepen tensions.

“I consider this narrative to be harmful,” he said. “Because we can say ‘ethnic cleansing,’ and they will mirror that accusation... This means entering a path of conflict.”

Instead, Pashinyan said his government’s priority is to ensure housing, employment, security and rights for those displaced, as well as for citizens of Armenia more broadly.

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Glendale’s Armenian American Museum Takes Shape

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

GLENDALE — Though the dream of an Armenian museum in Washington D.C. remains unattained, another dream is being realized in Glendale, where the gleaming metallic shell of a new museum already attracts the eyes of passersby in the heart of the city. This museum’s stated goal is to present the Armenian-American experience as part of an effort to promote the understanding and appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the United States.

Executive Chairman of the Armenian American Museum Berdj Karapetian recently gave a tour of the building site.

He explained that the dry-in phase of construction had been completed, meaning that the roof and other elements have sealed the building off from the outside so that walls can now be put down and the inside completed.



A portion of the gleaming steel outer shell of the museum which is intended to resemble the rugged rocky landscape of historical Armenia (photo Aram Arkun)

A small portion of the inside wall which will have the letters of the Armenian alphabet hand carved into stone is also in place, behind a staircase going to the second floor, and that is where many visitors at present have their photo taken. Karapetian said that the concept was based on the usage of stairs in Armenian churches such as in Noravank.

Karapetian said that the museum contracted with a cultural and museum planning organization called Lord Cultural Resources early in its development to prepare its structural plan. This organization helped create, among others, the Smithsonian

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Berdj Karapetian stands in front of a section of the unfinished alphabet wall (photo Aram Arkun)

International Attorney Robert Amsterdam Makes The Case for Samvel Karapetyan

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — Issues that on the surface appear to pertain to domestic Armenian politics have appeared frequently in international fora and media and conversely internationally known figures have become involved in various Armenian domestic issues. One of these figures is the international lawyer Robert Amsterdam, who lives in London but has offices also in Washington. He has taken on Armenian political prisoner billionaire Samvel Karapetyan as a client and also has spoken out internationally on the problematic relations between the Armenian government and the Armenian Church.

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Samvel Karapetyan



The Tashir Trade Center on Yervant Kochar Street in Yerevan bearing two pictures stating “Freedom for Samvel Karapetyan” on its walls (photo Aram Arkun, October 21, 2025)

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Armenian Opera Joins Opera Europa Network

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Alexander Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre has joined the prestigious international organization Opera Europa.

Opera Europa is one of the largest professional networks of opera houses and festivals in Europe, uniting leading institutions and shaping the development agenda of opera art both across Europe and beyond.

“We are delighted to announce a new member joining our network — the National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre of Armenia. Opera Europa welcomes a country with millennia-old history, rich culture, and deep musical traditions. Proudly standing in the heart of Yerevan, this magnificent theatre is in a new, dynamic phase of development, advancing its mission of high artistic quality. From Tigranian’s moving melodies to Khachaturian’s ballets, Armenian culture resonates proudly across the world. We look forward to the results of this new collaboration,” the organization said in an official statement.

Membership in Opera Europa will provide opportunities to expand international cooperation, promote the exchange of experience, and present Armenian opera art more broadly on global stages.

World Bank Approves \$200M Program for Armenia

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The World Bank has approved a \$200 million development policy operation to support Armenia’s economic transformation and climate governance reforms.

According to the World Bank, the funding aims to help Armenia transition toward a more competitive and globally integrated economy, while also introducing systems for emissions monitoring and management.

It was also noted that the OPEC Fund plans to provide parallel financing of up to \$92.8 million, bringing the total potential support to around \$290 million, Factor.am reports.

The “Armenia Economic Transformation Development Policy Operation” is designed to advance a broad reform agenda, including modernization of the investment and business environment, strengthening competition and consumer protection, and improving the resilience of fiscal and regulatory systems.

“Armenia has an ambitious reform agenda, and we support the country’s efforts to build a more open, competitive, and sustainable economy,” said Fabrizio Zarcone, the World Bank’s Country Manager for Armenia.

He added that a more diversified and resilient economy would create growth opportunities beneficial to all citizens.

Pashinyan’s Visit to Yerevan Church Followed by Arrests

YEREVAN (Azatutyun/PanArmenian.net) — Two teenage brothers and another man were arrested on Sunday, March 29, after confronting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at a church in Yerevan.

Surrounded by his bodyguards and aides, Pashinyan unexpectedly arrived at the packed St. Anne’s Church during a Palm Sunday Mass held there. He started making his way out of it shortly afterwards, with the bodyguards clearing the way for his passage. They upset a young worshiper who told them not to push him and said he wants to keep “standing in the middle” of the church.

“Don’t look at me like that,” the man,

today but were not formally charged with any crime as of Monday evening. Another law-enforcement agency, the Investigative Committee, said it launched a criminal investigation into hooliganism committed against a state official performing their duties or engaging in political activities.

Vartuhi Elbakyan, a lawyer representing the brothers, insisted that they did not commit any crimes when she spoke to reporters outside the Interior Ministry building in Yerevan picketed by their classmates and the latter’s parents demanding their release.

“The boys go to Mass every Sunday,” she said. “They are very pious.”

Elbakyan also insisted that the Mian-

talking to people in the streets on what look like campaign trips connected with the June 7 parliamentary elections. Some of those citizens caused him to lose his temper by openly denouncing his policies or complaining about his government’s track record.

In the most scandalous of those incidents caught on camera, Pashinyan raged at a female refugee from Nagorno-Karabakh who blamed him for Azerbaijan’s recapture of the region that forced its ethnic Armenian population to flee to Armenia. The premier branded the Karabakh Armenians as “fugitives” and said they have no moral right to denounce him, sparking a storm of criticism from not only his detractors but even some sympathizers. He later apologized for his outburst.

Church Condemns Actions

The clergy of the Church of Holy Mother of God and Saint Anna churches condemned the incident, according to a statement by spiritual pastor Father Zenon Barseghyan.

“Any manifestation of violence in the Church is condemnable and unacceptable. The Church is, first and foremost and unequivocally, the house of God, regardless of political views, where people unite in love, compassion, and prayer by living out the commandment of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to love one another.

“We apologize to the devout faithful who came to the Church and inadvertently witnessed this condemnable and unpleasant incident. We urge our faithful children to refrain from the dangerous act of bringing political processes into the Church. We pray that during Holy Week we pass through the path of the Lord’s Passion with repentance and greet the glorious Resurrection of the Lord purified and strengthened,” the statement reads.

The Mother See’s press service also responded to Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister Arayik Harutyunyan, who had blamed the Armenian Church and the Catholicos of All Armenians for the incident at the church, News.am reports.

The Mother See stated that “the incident should be viewed as a consequence of the authorities’ anti-church campaign.



A young man argues with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s bodyguards at St. Anne’s Church in Yerevan, March 29, 2026.

subsequently identified as Davit Minasyan, then told Pashinyan before attempting to slap him on the shoulder.

Videos of the incident showed a Pashinyan bodyguard knocking down one of the brothers moments later. Meanwhile, the premier signaled to his entourage not to react to the man and to carry on. They left the church amid angry cries from other believers.

Miansyan was arrested right after the liturgy along with his twin brother Mikael and another citizen. Footage posted online showed several police officers dragging the 18-year-old high school student from the church courtyard in downtown Yerevan.

All three men remained in police cus-

syans “have no connection” to the third detainee, opposition activist Gevorg Gevorgian. The latter stood next to them during the incident.

Pashinyan’s loyalists blamed it on Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church whom Pashinyan has been controversially trying to depose. The chief of the prime minister’s staff, Arayik Harutiunian, accused Garegin of turning the church into a political “sect.” Opposition figures countered that the incident was the result of what they saw as Pashinyan’s provocative behavior.

Pashinyan has spent the last few weeks touring various parts of Armenia and

American University of Armenia Temporarily Switches to Online ‘amid Threats from Iran’

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“In taking this step, we emphasize that we have received no direct threats against our university, and no indication that we are in any kind of danger, so there is no cause for alarm,” the AUA underscored in its statement.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) issued its warning on March 29, weeks into its conflict with the US and Israel. It warned that Israeli and US universities “in the West Asia region” were “legitimate targets” in retaliation for Iranian universities damaged in US and Israeli attacks.

The IRGC issued the threats following the bombing of Tehran University of Science and Technology, as well as the “targeting Iranian universities with their bombings for the umpteenth time.”

The IRGC urged staff, students of American universities, as well as people residing

near such institutions, “to stay at least one kilometer away from these universities to ensure their safety.”

It also issued a precondition: if the US government wanted its universities “to be spared at this stage beyond the two retaliatory targets, it must, by no later than 12:00 on Monday, March 30 (Tehran time), issue an official statement condemning the bombing of universities.”

“If it also wants to prevent further strikes on its universities in the region, it must restrain its allied forces from attacking universities and research centers. Otherwise, the threat remains valid and will be carried out,” the statement concluded.

Following the threat, the American University of Beirut moved classes online, and the US Embassy in Iraq warned that American universities in Baghdad, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk could also be targeted.

Armenia has good relations with Iran, with whom it shares an open border, unlike Turkey and Azerbaijan. There is also a modest population of ethnic Armenians in Iran, numbering some 60,000 to 80,000, according to various estimates.

Armenia’s government program for 2021–2026 describes the bilateral relations with Iran as “special,” adding that Yerevan is seeking “to further develop” ties. Despite Armenia fostering closer bonds to the West, including the US, Armenia has continued to maintain its cordial relationship with Iran.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan stated in mid-March that Armenia had sent its first humanitarian aid to Iran since the war broke out there on 28 February.

(This article originally appeared on the website www.oc-media.org on March 30.)



INTERNATIONAL

Armenian Connection with Charlemagne In Aachen, Germany

By **Arunansh B. Goswami**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

AACHEN, Germany — Charlemagne, also known as Charles the Great (748–814), was a powerful warlord and the king of the Franks, a Germanic tribe that occupied regions of what is now Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and western Germany. He is widely acknowledged in history as a warrior king, a unifier of much of Western Europe, and a patron of culture and education. In modern times, Charlemagne is frequently referred to as the father of Europe. His father, Pepin the Short, was the inaugural ruler of the Carolingian dynasty, while his grandfather, Charles Martel, played a crucial role in the Battle of Tours in 732, where he effectively stopped the expansion of the Umayyad Caliphate into Europe.

On Christmas Day in A.D. 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Emperor Romanorum, or emperor of the Romans. After Charlemagne's death in 814, his empire was partitioned among his heirs, leading to the establishment of three kingdoms that roughly align with present-day France, Germany and Italy. Interestingly, the chief architect of Charlemagne, Odo of Metz, according to Polish-Austrian art historian, Prof. Josef Strzygowski was of Armenian origin, with his Armenian name being Oton Matsaetsi. He was the architect behind Germigny-dés-Prés, one of the most innovative stone structures in northern Europe. Additionally, he designed Charlemagne's Palace Church in Aachen in 794, whose architectural style influenced various other contemporary church designs.

Recently, the author of this article was in Aachen. The Aachen Cathedral has a long history spanning 1,200 years, tracing its origins back to the era of Emperor Charlemagne, who passed away in Aachen on January 28, 814. As the Frankish ruler, Charlemagne expanded his father's royal estate into a residence known as the Palatinate. However, only fragments of this Palatinate are documented. The core of the Palatinate included the King's Hall, which is now the town hall of Aachen, a court school, and the Church of St. Mary. This church, which is the current cathedral, is the sole remnant of the Carolingian Palatinate that has survived largely intact. It holds significant importance for the cultural history of Europe for three main reasons: it was established by Charlemagne, who governed vast regions of Europe from Aachen; between 936 and 1531, 30 German kings and 12 queens were crowned in Aachen; and the Aachen pilgrimage occurs annually, showcasing the four biblical relics.

Within the cathedral lies the chapel of Charlemagne, whose construction between 793 and 813 symbolizes the unification of the West and its spiritual and political revival under Charlemagne's guidance. Originally inspired by the churches located in the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire, the octagonal core was magnificently expanded during the Middle Ages. In 814, Charlemagne was interred here. Additionally, there exists a medieval chandelier belonging to Emperor Barbarossa (with a diameter of 4.20m), crafted between 1165 and 1170 in Aachen. This chandelier was a gift from Emperor Frederick I and his wife Beatrice of Burgundy. It embodies the vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem as described in the Revelation of St. John. The front of the altar is adorned with a golden frontal known as the Pala d'Oro, which

is believed to have been a gift from either Emperor Otto III or Emperor Heinrich II at the beginning of the 11th century. The reliefs depict scenes from the Passion of Christ. To the right of the altar stands the miraculous statue of Our Dear Lady of Aachen. This statue of the Virgin Mary is thought to date back to the 14th century and represents the patron saint of this church.



Aachen Cathedral. Image Credits: Arunansh B. Goswami.

Since the 17th century, it has become customary to offer dresses and jewelry to her, leading to the popular saying that she is the wealthiest woman in Aachen.

The Gothic choir was consecrated in 1414. The large windows reach a clear height of over 25 meters and cover an area of approximately 1000 square meters. The current stained glass windows, designed in modern styles, were created between 1949 and 1951. They do not serve as a reconstruction of the medieval windows. The double-sided Madonna, adorned with a radiant corona, hangs from the vault. This piece was sculpted by Jan van Steffeswert in Maastricht in 1524. At the center of the choir lies the grave of Emperor Otto III (who passed away in 1002), with his sarcophagus resting beneath the ledger. Additionally, the choir houses the two gilded shrines of Aachen Cathedral: the shrine of Charlemagne, located in the apse, is the older of the two. Since 1215, the relics of Charlemagne (who was canonized in 1165) have been housed within it. This shrine was likely crafted in Maastricht, and its gable depicts Charlemagne flanked by Pope Leo III and Archbishop Turpin of Reims. Sixteen medieval rulers are illustrated along the sides, as they maintained a special relationship with this church as donors. On the opposite gable, the Virgin Mary is shown flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael.

Above them, the three principal Christian virtues — faith, hope and charity — are personified. The Shrine of the Virgin Mary was completed in 1237/38. It contains four significant relics of Aachen, which are venerated as the dress of the Virgin Mary, the swaddling clothes of the infant Jesus, the loincloth of Christ, and the decapitation cloth of St. John the Baptist. The sides depict the 12 apostles, complemented by representations of the Virgin Mary and Charlemagne on the gables. Jesus Christ and Pope Leo III are illustrated on the narrow sides. Since 1349, these relics have been publicly displayed, and this pilgrimage continues to

occur every seven years. Above the door leading to the vestry is the ambo (pulpit) of Emperor Heinrich II, a lectern dating back to around 1020. It is adorned with ancient and medieval drinking vessels and Egyptian ivory reliefs from the 6th century AD.

The Carolingian winding staircase ascends to the location of the throne, which is accompanied by 36 partially ancient

columns and 8 bronze grills from the Carolingian era. Recent studies have indicated that the throne was crafted at the conclusion of the 8th century or the beginning of the 9th century, forming part of the initial furnishings of this church. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether Charlemagne actually utilized this throne. Historical records confirm that from 936 to 1531, a total of 30 kings occupied this throne during their coronation ceremonies. Upon taking their place on the throne, the new monarch followed the legacy of Charlemagne, who himself was never crowned in Aachen. Charlemagne was proclaimed king of the Franks in Noyon in 768 and received the title of Roman Emperor in Rome on Christmas Day in the year 800. The throne is constructed from four ancient marble slabs, secured together by bronze clamps. The staircase leading to the throne comprises six steps, which were partially hewn from an ancient column. The number of steps is believed to reference Solomon's throne as described in the Old Testament. Most of the columns in this area are ancient and crafted from marble and granite, originating from Rome and Ravenna, and were installed in 798. They do not fulfil any structural purpose and serve solely as decorative elements. The bronze grills were produced in Aachen during the 8th century, utilizing the lost wax casting technique, and are richly adorned.

Aachen Cathedral was the first German structure to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city boasts a significant student population hailing from various countries worldwide, with approximately 20 percent of its residents being students. Presently, Aachen is home to 250,000 inhabitants from over 160 nations, making life in Aachen a vibrant and distinctive experience.

(Arunansh B. Goswami is a historian and lawyer from India, and serves as a Fellow at tge Orbeli Analytical Research Centre in Armenia.)

INTERNATIONAL

Jerusalem Easter Rite Restricted over Security Concerns

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Holy Fire ceremony in Jerusalem, scheduled for April 11, will be held in a restricted format, with holy sites in the Old City closed to pilgrims and tourists, according to Israeli police, as reported by Sputnik.

“Given that the current situation does not allow for mass gatherings, Easter events will be symbolic and limited in format. Due to the existing emergency situation and instructions from the Home Front Command, holy sites in the Old City will remain closed to broad public access, based on the police's legal and moral duty to protect human life,” the police press service said in a statement on X, Sputnik Armenia reports.

It was noted that the decision was made after a meeting with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who was not allowed to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on March 29.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Holy Fire ceremony was also held without the participation of the faithful. IranTurkey 4-4

Iran Dismisses Reports Of Missiles Fired Towards Turkey

YEREVAN (News.am) — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan exchanged views on the latest regional developments during a phone call, the Iranian foreign ministry reported on March 31.

According to Araghchi, the reports of missiles fired from Iran towards Turkey are completely baseless.

He did not rule out the repetition of similar actions by the enemies of peace in the region.

“Iran is committed to the principle of good neighborliness and respect for Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and is also ready to cooperate in the investigation of such cases,” the Iranian FM noted.

Pashinyan Meets New EU Mission Chief

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with the newly appointed head of the European Union civilian mission in Armenia, Satu Koivu, on March 31.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as issues related to ensuring regional stability.

Pashinyan congratulated Koivu on assuming the responsible position and highlighted the importance of the EU civilian mission's work in Armenia. He noted that Armenia-EU relations have continued to develop dynamically and emphasized the European Union's consistent support in strengthening democratic institutions.



INTERNATIONAL

International Attorney Robert Amsterdam Makes the Case for Samvel Karapetyan

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The energetic 70-year-old is a native of the Bronx who was educated in Canada, where he also received Canadian citizenship. One of his most famous cases was the defense of oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, CEO of the Russian oil and gas company Yukos, against the Russian government. In an interview this week, he said, “I’ve been acting in the former Soviet Union, that region, for 50 years.”

Moreover, while Jewish himself, he has been involved in cases involving Orthodox or Eastern churches since the 1980s. More recently, he began defending the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 2023 against the Ukrainian government, which is trying to prohibit this church on the grounds that it is connected to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Amsterdam may have come to the attention of Armenian readers previously also through his representation of the government of Turkey against the Gulenist movement. Amsterdam vehemently declared, “The Gulenist movement is an incredibly insidious, dangerous movement operating in the United States that is one of the most anti-Semitic organizations known to the world today.” While the case may have ended, Amsterdam added, primarily about their network of schools, that “they’re still ripping off the American taxpayer.”

He and his law firm, Amsterdam and Partners, take on a mixture of paid clients and pro bono cases. He said, “The only cases we choose are our pro bono cases, where we act for the opposition in numerous African countries — Uganda and Tanzania right now. I’ve done that for many years, and it’s part of my firm’s approach to human rights. ... We choose meritorious cases around the world that we think require advocacy.”

Of course, when he and his firm are being paid, it is the clients who choose him.

On Armenian issues, Amsterdam said, “I can tell you that as a Jew, the Armenian Genocide is something that I’ve taken seriously all my life. You know, I think as a Jew, it’s impossible to ever be a denier of genocide.” He added, “Listen, I’m not going to deny that I completely disagree with the present [Israeli] government’s behavior towards Azerbaijan. And... I have never represented anyone going near [Azerbaijani President Ilham] Aliyev because I’ve always been aware of, frankly, how dangerous a regime it is, because its notorious in terms of what it’s done to their own journalists.”

The Karapetyan Case

Karapetyan, while born in Tashir, Armenia, made his fortune in Russia, and with his Tashir Group conglomerate, became what some assess as the richest Armenian in the world. He is involved in Russia primarily in residential construction, real estate, manufacturing, hotels, retail trade and energy projects, and his firms have won billions of dollars of government contracts. The 60-year-old also has extensive business interests in Armenia, including the monopoly for electricity distribution there, called the Electric Networks of Armenia, a number of large thermal and hydroelectric power plants, a chain of restaurants, many of the largest malls in Armenia and various other real estate holdings.

Karapetyan has been a philanthropist in many different fields in Armenia, such as healthcare, and in particular has remained a consistent donor to the Armenian Church, having sponsored the construction and restoration of many Armenian churches starting from 1995. He was a major funder of the recent restoration of the Echmiadzin cathedral and a benefactor in the construction of the Armenian cathedral in Moscow and its cultural center. He also has supported the restoration of Armenian churches in other parts of the diaspora.

Some commentators see Karapetyan’s influential economic role in Armenia as having some kind of connection with the Russian government due to his successful business career in Russia. Karapetyan’s luxurious French Riviera villa, estimated to be worth 120 million euros, was impounded in February 2024 by the French government under suspicions of actually belonging to the giant Russian oil and gas company Gazprom through a money-laundering operation. Karapetyan challenged this seizure in court and this case appears to still be unresolved.

Karapetyan was included in the Countering America’s

Adversaries Through Sanctions Act list of 210 Russian government officials and oligarchs considered close to the Russian authorities that the US Treasury submitted to Congress in January 2018. However, those on this so-called Putin list were only under consideration for anti-Russian sanctions and the list of oligarchs was apparently only based on the level of wealth (with the implication that such great wealth could only be accumulated while enjoying good relations with the Russian rulers).

When asked about this, Amsterdam retorted that “to my understanding, he’s never met Putin. He has no relationship with Putin...It’s like any number of wealthy Russians I’ve represented in the past who...because you’re Russian, all of a sudden, you’ve gone swimming with Putin. This is not the case.”



Robert Amsterdam (courtesy his LinkedIn page)

Karapetyan was arrested in Armenia after making a statement in condemnation of the attempts of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s government to depose the head of the Armenian Church, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, and several other high-ranking clerics. Karapetyan declared on June 17, 2025: “A small group of people, having forgotten the millennia-old history of Armenia and the Church, have launched attacks on our people and the Armenian Apostolic Church. Since I have always stood by the Armenian Church and the Armenian people, I will become directly involved. If the politicians fail, then we will participate in our own way in all of this.” He was accused by the government of public incitement of the seizure of state power in this statement, which he denies.

“We were contacted, I think, shortly after the charges were brought by some of his lawyers, who ... were assessing international dimensions to the case,” Amsterdam said. He was able to meet his client in prison, together with the other lawyers on Karapetyan’s team, whom he said he found to be very professional, gifted and self-sacrificing.

He also said, “The client himself was extraordinary. ... I’m privileged to work often for people who are devout followers of Christ. And I have to say, with Mr. Karapetyan, I don’t think I saw him ever ... feeling sorry for himself or [in] depression. He was completely alive to his circumstance, principled in his position and feeling completely devoted to his church.”

Amsterdam said that the condition of the prison in which Karapetyan was confined prior to being remanded on December 30, 2025 to house arrest was uncomfortable. On the one hand, he said he wanted to speak cautiously, “because I think he was not unfairly treated by the individuals in the prison.” However, he continued, “Mr. Karapetyan, while young compared to me, is still 60 and it’s no place for any nonviolent offender to be, let alone

someone with no criminal record — let alone someone charged with blatantly political crimes that have just no relevance to law.”

Amsterdam said that instead of house arrest, Karapetyan “should arguably be free to move about because he doesn’t constitute any form of risk. He is also active politically, so he should be able to communicate. He should be able to exercise his political rights, but he is not. And these are these are ongoing violations that are that are occurring every day.”

Amsterdam was present for two days of hearings. He said, “I was very fortunate that I was actually allowed to engage in the legal proceedings in Armenia, which is very rare. You know, I will be grateful always to my colleagues at the bar to allow me to actually plead the case in court.”

There have been other hearings and discussions. Some of the hearings seem to devolve into discussions of minutia such as Karapetyan’s getting a haircut, Amsterdam said.

Money laundering charges were added at one point but dropped. Amsterdam said, “They were just ridiculous again. I mean, there just is not even an interest in the prosecutors in trying to make it credible. ... They’re trying to make it appear incredible because that sort of demonstrates, I guess, Pashinyan’s power.”

When asked what Amsterdam and the rest of the lawyers working for Karapetyan have achieved so far, Amsterdam replied: “I think the attention and the advocacy of the whole team has led at least to him being put in the company of his family, which is an achievement, but it’s not an achievement that allows him to exercise his rights. And there is a cynical way of looking at it, which is that Pashinyan looks less odious having the man at home than having him in prison.”

Amsterdam’s support of his client goes beyond legal actions and includes wide-ranging media appearances and even a speech at the announcement in February of Karapetyan’s candidacy for prime minister of Armenia in the forthcoming elections this year. He and his firm prepared a website called Free Samvel Karapetyan and an extensive 61-page “white paper” in October 2025 called Nikol Pashinyan and the Persecution of Samvel Karapetyan and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church and they periodically send letters to international political leaders, organizations and courts.

Electric Networks of Armenia

On June 18, 2025, the same day that Karapetyan was taken in by the police for questioning, the government announced the intent to seize or nationalize the Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA), which Tashir Group purchased in 2015. Parliament passed a law the next month allowing the initiation of administrative proceedings for this purpose and temporary manager was appointed to the company who was a member of the ruling Civil Contract party. While arbitration was requested by Karapetyan and his family and an international arbitrator (because ENA is managed through the Karapetyan’s Cyprus-registered company) ruled against the expropriation, the Armenian government rejected the ruling, so that the arbitration process is still continuing.

Though Armenia is rejecting the ruling, Amsterdam stressed about the arbitration: “That’s got a lot of teeth... especially with a country like Armenia. That’s not Russia, that is not a superpower.” He continued, “I think these types of actions, which are unprincipled, expropriatory, and clearly political, represent a dramatic threat to the security — the financial security — of Armenia.” In a March 23 letter he sent to the EU (see below), he suggested it send a delegation to inspect government violations of rule of law, including this issue.

Meanwhile, an Armenian administrative court on March 26 rejected a lawsuit filed by ENA against the government’s Public Services Regulatory Commission in connection with the revocation of the company’s electricity distribution license.

While some analysts point to a US effort to wrest control away from Russia of Armenia’s energy sector, and this nationalization could be interpreted in this context, Amsterdam said, “But I think it’s important to note that I have seen no element of the US behind Pashinyan’s behavior with the electric company.”

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INTERNATIONAL

Pashinyan's Calls for End to 'Mirrored' Genocide Accusations Appear to Go Unheard in Azerbaijan

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

Azerbaijan has repeated calls for global recognition of the 1918 massacres of Azerbaijanis by Armenians as genocide, despite efforts by Armenia's leadership to stop mutual recriminations about history amidst peace efforts.

Former Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev, the father of President Ilham Aliyev, issued a decree in 1998 declaring March 31 "the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis," accusing Armenians of killing "tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis."

"Although the systematic killing of the civilian population during the March–April 1918 incidents was committed on the basis of their ethnic origin and religion, these crimes of genocide have unfortunately not yet been recognized at the international level," Azerbaijani Human Rights Defender Sabina Aliyeva's statement read.

During the period, several overlapping wars were ongoing, including WWI, the Russian Civil War, the Turkish–Armenian War, and local conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Thousands were killed in the mass violence, including ci-



Karabakh (Artsakh) residents pour into Armenia in 2023

vilians on all sides in a series of tit-for-tat massacres.

Amidst the backdrop of widespread violence, only Azerbaijan and Turkey appear to use the word "genocide" to describe the massacres of Azerbaijanis at that time.

On Tuesday, March 31, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry in turn issued a statement accusing "radical Armenian groups" of carrying out a genocide against Azerbaijanis.

Such statements contrast sharply with those of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol

Pashinyan, who has suggested moving away from such allegations for the sake of peace.

In his weekly press briefing on March 26, Pashinyan refused to assess the mass exodus of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians in September 2023 as ethnic cleansing in response to a journalists' question, instead dubbing such discourse "harmful."

Referring to the word "genocide" in another journalist's question about the attack on Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, Pashinyan suggested that focusing on such terminol-

ogy was detrimental to peace in the region.

"In general, this race of genocide [accusations] needs to stop. In our region, everyone accuses everyone of genocide," Pashinyan said.

He added that discussions about genocide and return issues — in reference to Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian refugees returning to the region — only trigger mirrored accusations.

"We can call it ethnic cleansing and, in response, receive mirrored accusations of ethnic cleansing, [or call it] genocide and get the mirrored genocide [narrative]," Pashinyan said.

He suggested that it was an entry into "the path of conflict, and that is not my concern," instead stating that his concern was to help refugees settle in Armenia, live in peace, and have homes and jobs.

Pashinyan has insisted that peace has been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the initialing of a peace treaty at the Washington summit in August 2025, but has repeatedly stated it must still be strengthened.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on March 31.)

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Religious Dimension Tied to Politics

Amsterdam believes that Karapetyan's statement and his foray into Armenian domestic politics happened primarily because of the latter's strong connection to the Armenian Church and its head, Catholicos Karekin II. Amsterdam said: "Mr. Karapetyan, I think, is a defender of the church. The church is central to his being. And the attack, the unprincipled attack, on the Catholicos and on the church is something that would probably have motivated him to speak out, to speak out within the constraints of law. And in today's Armenia, I don't think freedom of speech — when it comes to political speech that impacts Pashinyan — is necessarily allowed."

Amsterdam went on further, as he has elsewhere, to compare Pashinyan with Pol Pot: "Not since Pol Pot led Cambodians into the jungle have I seen a leader act so contrary to the traditions, culture and religion of his people. Yes, I've never seen anything like it."

As far as the Armenian Church goes, Amsterdam said, "I've had the privilege of meeting with the Catholicos on a series of occasions. I've also met with numerous members of the clergy because this is so central to our client. And of course, to be honest, it's central to me personally. I have a very, very deep belief in freedom of conscience. And it's something that all my legal life I've been engaged in."

Amsterdam and the other lawyers representing Karapetyan have engaged with religiously oriented American outlets. Both Amsterdam and Karapetyan's nephew, Narek Karapetyan, appeared on the Tucker Carlson show last November.

Amsterdam said that he has appeared on this show four times (primarily talking about the Ukrainian Orthodox Church) and known Tucker for many years. He said, "To be frank with you, I think the development of the interview had very little to do with me. But I think when Tucker found out that I was involved, he jumped on it.... He is a tremendous advocate for the rights of Christians all over the world, and I welcome[d] the opportunity."

When asked whether both the Armenian government and opposition figures like Karapetyan seem to be attempting to approach US Evangelical leaders as a means to obtain US government support (e.g. the International Religious Freedom Summit in Washington in February this year, or the November 2025 Yerevan prayer breakfast), Amsterdam said, "No, I think it's the other way around. I think the United States has prior to Trump, post 9-11, developed a view that religion is foreign policy. People like [former Senator] Sam Brownback and others have made religious freedom part of a State Department

attack on Russia, China and any other perceived enemies of the United States. They have, to some extent, instrumentalized religion. Prayer breakfasts occur in capitals where the United States wants to ... curry favor."

He said, "I think it's been misused to some extent, though I think the US has woken up to the Pashinyan attack on the church. And I think that there have been words said to Pashinyan about how unfavorable that kind of attack is."

As far as the EU's point of view on the Pashinyan government's attempts to get Catholicos Karekin II replaced, Amsterdam said, "Yeah, there is no way under European law for this to occur. The European Court of Human Rights and European law are absolutely black and white on this issue. And I have every confidence we could get an order at the European Court to stop this. I mean, what Pashinyan is engaging in is attempting to basically subvert the [Armenian] Constitution, European law and the European Convention. It's not going to happen."

He went even further, declaring: "This case is worse than any case that has ever come before the European Court. If this were to come before the European court, this would be the worst case of political interference in Europe's history since the Nazis."

When asked why he hasn't brought this case before the European courts, Amsterdam pointed out that he does not legally represent Catholicos Karekin, the government has to take further steps, and then domestic remedies must be exhausted.

International Dimension to Elections and Karapetyan's Case

In August 2025, Karapetyan and his family created the Our Way movement, which led to the creation of a political party called Strong Armenia in January 2026. Strong Armenia in turn announced on February 12 that Samvel Karapetyan is the party's candidate for prime minister in Armenia's forthcoming parliamentary elections this June.

Amsterdam observed that the forthcoming parliamentary elections are subject to international influence. He said, "If you look at the schedule of European leaders who are to attend in Armenia before the election, you might say to yourself that perhaps the EU might be doing what the Americans are saying they're doing because you're having a massive meeting of all EU leaders on May 4 and 5 in Yerevan. This has never happened before. [French President Emmanuel] Macron is coming along with everyone else and I think spending an extra day. So it certainly looks like the international brigade, if you will, are doing what they can to put their finger on the scale when it comes to the election."

He added that a recent report in the US Congress basically denounced European Union meddling in the elec-

tions.

Amsterdam accepted that there are American attempts to influence the upcoming elections (e.g. Vice President J.D. Vance's statement in support of Prime Minister Pashinyan during Vance's February 2026 visit to Armenia) and Russian ones as well.

When asked about efforts to depict Karapetyan as a means for Russian influence, he argued, "If there's anybody who is a foil for either Russia or Azerbaijan, it's Mr. Pashinyan. He tries to use the Russia card every way he can." He declared that there is "this perception that that anyone who isn't in the pocket of the EU or the US must be therefore in the pocket of either Russia or Turkey or Azerbaijan; whereas actually, if you look at it, our client, who is phenomenally wealthy, is the one man in the position to be independent."

On the other hand, Amsterdam said about Pashinyan: "I would say that objectively, a man who wants Armenia to get rid of its declaration of independence, a man who wants to strip the church of its property and its hierarchy, a man who denies the history of Artsakh and the ethnic cleansing, seems to be operating in the interests of Azerbaijan." Moreover, he said, "Mr. Pashinyan has to be one of the least successful leaders that you can imagine. I mean, he has attempted to turn surrender into peace. I have rarely seen a man as unsuccessful with as inglorious a track record, take on and even credibly try to contest an election."

Amsterdam said that there are also many international aspects to the case in terms of the European Court of Human Rights, the United Nations and issues relating to the behavior and independence of the judiciary which will come out over the next few weeks.

Among other things, he said that if the European Union sends a team to make sure all parties have access to the upcoming parliamentary elections in June, one of his roles would be to demand that team include Karapetyan's case in its scope.

On March 23, Amsterdam already addressed a letter to EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas asking for her to meet with Karapetyan and himself to discuss the mandate of a European hybrid rapid response team, insure inclusive engagement with stakeholders such as Karapetyan, and ask for an EU factfinding mission focused on the rule of law and democratic conditions, in order to make sure the forthcoming elections are free and fair.

He also said, "We are intent on bringing an application to the International Commission of Jurists on the lack of independence of the judiciary. We're going to go to the United Nations, to the rapporteur on the independence of judiciary. Believe me, we're not going to shut up while this situation in Armenia continues."

Community News

Fresno to Premiere Screening of Documentary On Genocide Restitution in Post-Recognition Era

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program, The Promise Armenian Institute, UCLA, and the Armenian Film Foundation are presenting the screening of the documentary film “What’s Next? Armenian Genocide Restitution in the Post-Recognition Era,” on Friday, April 10, at 7 p.m. The screening is free and open to the public and will be held in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, 5245 N. Backer Ave, on the Fresno State campus.

Dr. Taner Akçam (Armenian Genocide Research Program, The Promise Armenian Institute, UCLA) and director Carla Garapedian will introduce the film.



Dr. Taner Akçam



Dr. Carla Garabedian

The film documents a March 2023 conference held at UCLA that examined the future of restitution and justice following the United States’ recognition of the Armenian Genocide in 2021. Through discussions among leading scholars, legal experts, and policymakers, the documentary explores the feasibility of launching an Armenian Genocide reparations movement in the post-recognition era, the legal avenues available within the American legal system, and whether the Holocaust restitution movement may serve as a model for Armenian Genocide restitution.

Featured participants in the documentary include Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, AGRP Director Akçam, art historian Dr. Heghnar Watenpaugh, Law Professor Michael Bazyler, journalist Andrew Curry, and Law Professor Mayo Moran, along with attorneys specializing in international human rights law, including Armen Hovannisian, Kathryn Lee Boyd, and Karnig Kerkonian.

For more information about the film screening contact the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669, or to learn more about the documentary, visit bit.ly//AGRP04-10-26.



Ararat Home Gala Keynote Speaker Araksya Karapetyan

Ararat Home Celebrates A Legacy of Service

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — Ararat Home welcomed distinguished guests, community leaders, and longtime friends on February 28, for a Gala held at Anoush Landmark. The elegant evening celebrated the Home’s enduring mission of providing compassionate, loving care to the elderly and honored those whose legacy of support has sustained that mission for generations.

Religious leaders and elected officials were among the esteemed attendees, reflecting the broad community support that has strengthened Ararat Home for decades. Their presence underscored the Home’s vital role not only as a center for care, but as a pillar of service and heritage in the community.

Following opening remarks by Mistress of Ceremonies Arshalous Darbinyan, TV host and personality, and renditions of the American and Armenian national anthems, the invocation and blessing of the tables were conducted by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, Archbishop Fr. Razmig Khatchadourian, representing Archbishop Kegham Khacherian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy, and Reverend Serop Megerditchian, Senior Pastor of the Glendale Armenian Church of the Nazarene, representing the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by Ararat Home Board of Trustees Chair Joseph Kanimian, Esq. He thanked those gathered and the many contributors to the Home’s journey of success. He expressed his gratitude to the members of the Board, the volunteers, the staff, and the Gala organizing committee for their support and commitment to Ararat Home. “The 77th anniversary of the establishment of Ararat Home is a milestone in our community,” he stated.

A video presenting the past, present, and future of Ararat Home, prepared by Darbinyan in collaboration with Insight TV, was enthusiastically received by attendees. Short remarks were delivered afterwards by L.A. City Councilmember

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Certificate of Recognition from the City of Los Angeles presented by Councilmember Adrin Nazarian

Prof. Darbinian To Speak at RI Genocide Commemoration

PROVIDENCE — On Sunday, April 26, the Armenian Martyrs’ Memorial Committee of Rhode Island will commemorate the 111th Anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide at the Martyrs’ Monument, North Burial Ground, Providence, starting at 12:30 p.m. A service in remembrance of the Holy Martyrs will be held with the participation of clergy and deacons from Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, and the Armenian Evangelical Church.



Guest speaker is Dr. Asya Darbinian, the executive director of 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 and is a member of the Armenian Society of Fellows and the Academic Council of the Armenian National Institute. She earned her Ph.D. in History from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. Her research focuses on genocide, refugees, and humanitarian interventions. She has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes and has presented her work at international academic conferences. She has taught courses on comparative genocides, gender and genocide, the Holocaust, and Armenian history at Clark University, Northern Arizona University, and Stockton University.

Prior to her academic work in the United States, she served as deputy director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia.

In the event of inclement weather, the commemoration will be held in the sanctuary of the Armenian Evangelical Church located at 180 Oaklawn Avenue in Cranston.

In addition, on Tuesday, April 21, committee is sponsoring its 26th Annual Rhode Island Armenian Youth Day at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence for children ages 7-14. Registration begins at 8:45 a.m.; the program starts at 9:15 a.m. and concludes at 2:30 p.m.

For more information, call/text Dr. Zarouhi (Zara) Vartanian-Hajinian at 401-439-5971 or e-mail Vartanianz@aol.com. Lunch is provided and there is no charge for the day.



COMMUNITY NEWS

OBITUARY

Seta Ganatchian

Noted Hostess, Community Volunteer in Lebanon and US

WALTHAM, Mass. — Seta Ganatchian of Waltham passed away on March 22, 2026. She was 99.

She was the wife of the late Nishan Tuysuzian; mother of Vahe Tuysuzian, Tsolig Chamlian, the late Dzovig Hajian and the late Shaghig Palanjian. She was the grandmother of Chris, Eileen, Vatche, Vana, Sevag, Talar, Arli, and Pateil; great-grandmother of Remy, Lia, Wesley, Anna, Tro, Nara, Liana, Sevana, Liana, and Mateo and aunt of Ara Surmenian and Dikran Meguerditchian.

She was born to Kenar and renowned composer-conductor Parsegh Gananchian in Cyprus on November 19, 1926. Though she lost her birth mother at the young age of two, her father remarried to Kristine Calfaian whom Seta adored, known to her loved ones as Mami.

At 17 years old, she began work for a daily publication L'orient Le jour in Beirut, helping her family as her father's eyesight weakened. The following year she married Nishan Tuysuzian from Aleppo, Syria. Together they had four children: Dzovig (married to Jack Hajian), Vahe (married to Noushig Saadjan), Tsolig (married to Ara Chamlian), and Shaghig (married to Jack Palanjian). A dedicated and devoted daughter, she was a sister to Aida and Rita, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, she was full of love and generosity.

Seta and Nishan's home became an "agoump", a gathering place after Home-netmen or political party meetings. With a moment's notice, Setta would lay out a feast that was both appealing to the eye and palette, taking pride in the artistic presentation of her food.

Even after her husband's passing, her home in Beirut was always open to Hamazkayin's traveling dignitaries and artists. She looked forward to hosting at least two annual gastronomic events: the Mitchink Open House and her November extravaganza celebrating all her Scorpio born friends with a cake made in the image of a scorpion.

In addition to being a preeminent hostess, Setta was a dedicated volunteer. She was an active member in the Lebanese Red Cross from 1975-1992, the Armenian Relief Society from 1992-2006, and the



Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural and Educational Association from 1961-2015. For ten years she worked as a volunteer in the blood lab at the American University of Beirut and at the Boulghourdijian Doctor's Clinic in Bourg Hamoud.

Seta was brave and adventurous in her volunteer work. During the Lebanese Civil War in the late 1970's she would travel with the Red Cross to the Palestinian refugee camps dispensing much needed medications to a devastated population. And at a time where few would have dared or have been successful, she traveled alone to Lisbon identifying and bringing home to Lebanon the charred bodies of five Armenian young heroes. A hero in her own right, she never gave up. Even after immigrating to the United States in 2015, at the age of 90 she volunteered at Mount Auburn Hospital in the medical records department!

Finally, more than any other endeavor, her greatest passion and mission in life was promoting her father Parsegh Gananchian's work and legacy. Even until the months before her passing she would call Garbis Zerdelian or Zaven Torikian to suggest publications in the Hayrenik about his work, which they often kindly obliged.

Funeral services were held at Saint Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown on Thursday, March 26. Interment followed at Mount Feake Cemetery, Waltham.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Saint Stephen's Armenian Church or the Hamazkayin Parsegh Gananchian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

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Adrin Nazarian, who reflected on the importance of Ararat Home for the community. He presented a proclamation to the Home signed by all City Council members. In return, Kanimian presented a diamond-studded Ararat Home lapel pin to the Councilmember for his contributions to the Home's success.

The evening's keynote address was delivered by Araksya Karapetyan, co-anchor of Good Day LA on FOX 11 Los Angeles. In heartfelt remarks, Ms. Karapetyan reflected on the profound social responsibility of caring for elders and praised Ararat Home for embodying those values with excellence and compassion. Her words resonated deeply with attendees and set a tone of gratitude and pride for the evening. Karapetyan was also presented with a diamond-studded Ararat Home pin in appreciation of her support.

A highlight of the Gala was the recognition of several individuals whose longstanding dedication and generosity have shaped the Home's growth and success: Harry, Margaret and Sue Abrahamian; Hank and

Louise Arklin; The G.A. Foster Legacy Foundation; Armen and Gloria Hampar Family Foundation; John and Hasmik Mgrdichian Foundation; Mgrublian Family; Nora Tertzag Charitable Trust; Maurice and Hilda Yotnegparian. Honorees were celebrated for their years of service, philanthropy, and unwavering commitment to ensuring that future generations of residents will continue to receive the highest standard of care. Their legacy of support stands as a testament to the power of community stewardship. Ararat Home CEO Derik Ghookasian and Board of Trustees Vice Chair Sinan Sinanian bestowed a diamond-studded Ararat Home pin upon honorees.

The Allen G. Orchestra performed musical selections to the delight of those gathered, bringing the evening to a close.

Proceeds from the Gala will directly support Ararat Home's services enabling the organization to continue its noble mission of caring for the elderly with dignity. For more information about Ararat Home and ways to support its mission, visit www.ararathome.org.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Glendale's Armenian American Museum Takes Shape

MUSEUM, from page 1

Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C., the Museum of Human Rights of Canada and the National Museum of Art in Catalonia, Spain.

After receiving the broad input from Lord Cultural Resources, a group from the East Coast called Ralph Applebaum Associates was hired to do the planning of the core exhibition of the museum. Applebaum Associates were also involved with the Canadian Human Rights Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, as well as many other museums, including the United States Holocaust Museum, and now the Ellis Island Museum.

Finally, Karapetian explained, various individual experts and scholars were brought on as advisers to refine the contents of the core exhibition further. These individuals come from different fields of knowledge related to not only education, but public relations and presentation, and some are involved with other museums. Karapetian said, "So we reach out. We don't have a lot of pride or ego."

This group of around 25 scholars includes people like Sebouh Aslanian, Khatchig Mouradian, Rouben Adalian, Peter Cowe, Shushan Karapetian, Hourri Berberian, Taner Akçam, Barlow Der Mugrdichian and Vahram Shemmasian, as well as people in related fields of art, photography and community organization.

An inner circle of individuals, Karapetian said, are helping writing the script and doing the research on artifacts, including Dr. Daniel Ohanian and Dr. Jennifer Manoukian, who work under the name of the Gesarea Armenian Research and Academic Services, and Dr. Hayk Demoyan from Armenia, who is the former director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute. Heading the core exhibition group is Dr. Nathalie Karimian. Her specialty is education, which is crucial in creating the presentations, Karapetian observed.

Another way of getting input has been through test groups, ranging from high school age students to senior citizens. Karapetian said, "We go to them and say, okay, do you think it should be this or do you think it should be that? Or what do you think?"

Exhibition Areas

On the second floor, Karapetian said, there will be two temporary exhibition halls, each about 3,000 square feet, that can be connected to each other. Each can also be divided in half so there can be between one to four temporary exhibitions at the same time.

These halls will be used mostly for non-Armenian-themed temporary exhibitions. Karapetian said that the goal is to bring the non-Armenian population to visit the museum and in certain cases to show that there was also an Armenian presence in their home countries. In addition, these temporary exhibitions can show the younger generation of Armenians a connection that existed between different populations and Armenians.

India is one subject actively being explored by the museum for this part of the museum, in part because there was a large Armenian presence there during a critical period in Armenian cultural development. An exhibition about India can also show how Armenians helped Indian society as well as Armenian. Karapetian said that this could also be a good lesson for American Armenians to see how they too could be engaged in the United States in a positive way.

Moreover, he said that there are some donors to the museum who are Indian who have expressed an interest in working with it to make an Indian exhibition come about.

The core exhibition will also be on the second floor, and it will be permanent but periodically updated. Guests will come up the stairs or an elevator to be greeted with a large 60-foot screen with an introductory video loop showing the Armenian lands, with Armenian music, art and Armenian people. Karapetian said then there will also be certain artifacts that will cover different periods of Armenia history.

A section to the left of the screen will display various markers that identify Armenians, such as the language, alphabet and religion, including pre-Christian and Chris-

tian. It will show the creation of a strong culture, with Armenian art, architecture and so forth on the Armenian Plateau or Highlands, and later on, in Cilicia, where Armenians developed a structured society and various ruling dynasties. Theater-style videos will show different important historical periods on a loop.

It will also show the periods when Armenians existed without a government and contributed to the empires ruling them and them depict the Armenian Genocide as a major break, leading to their forcible removal from their ancestral homeland.

It will show various efforts at rescue and then battles of defense like that of Sardarabad in 1918 as well as the earlier attempts at partisan defense (*fedayi* fighters) and the creation of the first Republic of Armenia.

Another section will include one part devoted to the diaspora created after the genocide, and a second part showing the parallel existence of Armenians in the vari-

schools and community centers, with greater intermarriage occurring in each generation, they will need to find a way to connect to their more complicated past histories. Furthermore, as far as the US is concerned, Karapetian said, "The more we respect and understand each other, the stronger we will be as a nation [i.e. the US], and we will survive."

Collecting Contents

The museum already possesses a small number of physical artifacts for display, particularly about Armenian Americans and about the Armenian Genocide, and is searching for others, Karapetian said. "Some of us over the past years," he said, have — because the museum doesn't have a budget — used our own funds to purchase and acquire artifacts, so we'll be donating that."

He added that the government in Armenia has expressed a willingness to help in identifying objects held by Armenian museums like the National History Museum



The first and second floors under construction (photo Aram Arkun)

ous republics of Armenia, with occasionally convergence.

Another section is devoted to the formation and development of the Armenian-American communities, highlighting their creative contributions to the United States and service in the military and public office. Karapetian explicated: "So we want individuals that are walking tall, to be thinking of us being builders, creators, and people who serve or are loyal to the nation where they live."

There will also be a section with messages from present-day or recently departed successful individuals who impart their messages to the visitors and urge them to speak out for human rights and against prejudice. This could include the Armenian Nobel Prize winners in economics and medicine, Armenian chess and soccer champions, and also ordinary people passing on their wisdom to the next generation. Karapetian said that part of the focus is that people do not have to give up their identity and there is strength and benefit in diversity. Armenians he said want to help preserve society in the US not just for themselves but for others as well.

Eventually an app will be developed to connect visitors to the California state ethnic studies curriculum and prompt youngsters in particular to wonder who invented the alphabet they use, and learn more about the language and religion and culture of their ancestors, even when they may carry more than one ethnic identity. In other words, he said, "Now the museum creates a greater value to society than just an Armenian value."

For Armenians in particular, though there are churches,

and the Matenadaran, which are not being displayed, and so could be used in Glendale. They may lend these items temporarily. Karapetian said about such objects, "So it might not be the top level one, but it still will help connect with what we're trying to show."

When there are unique items, like an astrolabe or an Urartian cuneiform inscription, physical duplicates may be made, Karapetian said. Some things will also be displayed digitally.

There are also rich collections in various churches such as in Echmiadzin, Antilias, or St. Lazarus in Venice, which may be of help. People have been offering to donate various items every week for display too but they need to be examined for suitability. Once the design development of the core exhibition is completed, Karapetian said that a call for artifacts will be publicly issued, specifying the types of articles that are needed.

There are people who have private collections who the museum plans to work with, especially about the Armenian Genocide or Armenian Americans. Some have also created websites about local communities, like Whitinsville in Massachusetts. Karapetian said the museum will work to try to help all communities to use that as a template to create websites about the history of their own communities, and all these will be part of the museum's exhibitions.

The museum's people follow the newspapers to learn about Armenians collecting in different fields. "In time,

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COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

they will all see that the museum is something that can work with them,” Karapetian said.

Programming/Learning Center

Karapetian said that Lord Cultural Resources told the museum that it needed to include features and programming elements in the museum which will keep attracting people to come at different times, over and over again. For this reason, the first floor is set up in such a way that it will not necessarily attract people to go visit the museum exhibits but entice them to see ongoing and changing events.

The museum’s Learning Center, on the first floor, will have a separate entrance so that it can operate independently of the rest of the building, Karapetian said, and will possibly have three rooms. There will be age-appropriate activities for young children of visiting families during the daytime. There will be classes in Armenian language, music and art, and an IT learning center with computers where programming will be taught.

Furthermore, there will be money management and finance classes for the older children who are of high school age. The Glendale school district already has a curriculum about money management and an organization called Junior Achievement also does such programs, so the museum will work with such entities and sponsoring corporations to provide such classes. Karapetian pointed out that 70 to 75 percent of the population living south of the museum are not affluent, with most renting homes. Their children, whether Armenian or non-Armenian, will have the opportunity to benefit from such programs.

Karapetian added that the museum will be working closely with the Glendale Unified School District on a number of things, including ethnic studies, so that there will be programming enabling children to use the museum exhibitions and the space for youngsters for ethnic studies. There could also be programming for seniors, and in this case the museum would work with the neighboring adult recreation center.

Karapetian said that the museum expects to have a lot of field trips from schools. For example, he said that Los Angeles’s Japanese American National Museum or Holocaust Museum averages on an annual basis about 50,000 student visitors, usually in the mornings until around one o’clock. The museum will be working with tour groups to get them to come with buses to the museum. After that, there is the general population which may come on its own.

There will be a souvenir shop on the first floor and administrative offices. There will also be a multipurpose room with a small space for musical, theatrical and movie presentations. It will also serve as a hall for events, holding about 300 people, and as a banquet facility that could hold about 250.

There will be a demonstration kitchen, where individuals or couples can come to classes to learn about cooking dishes of different types of cuisines, Armenian and non-Armenian. Karapetian said that it will also be rented out to companies that want to do team building exercises or receptions.

The type of cuisine demonstrated will vary in accordance with the subject of the temporary museum exhibitions, so that for example India is the focus, the kitchen will demonstrate the preparation of some Indian food dishes, or if Italy, Italian.

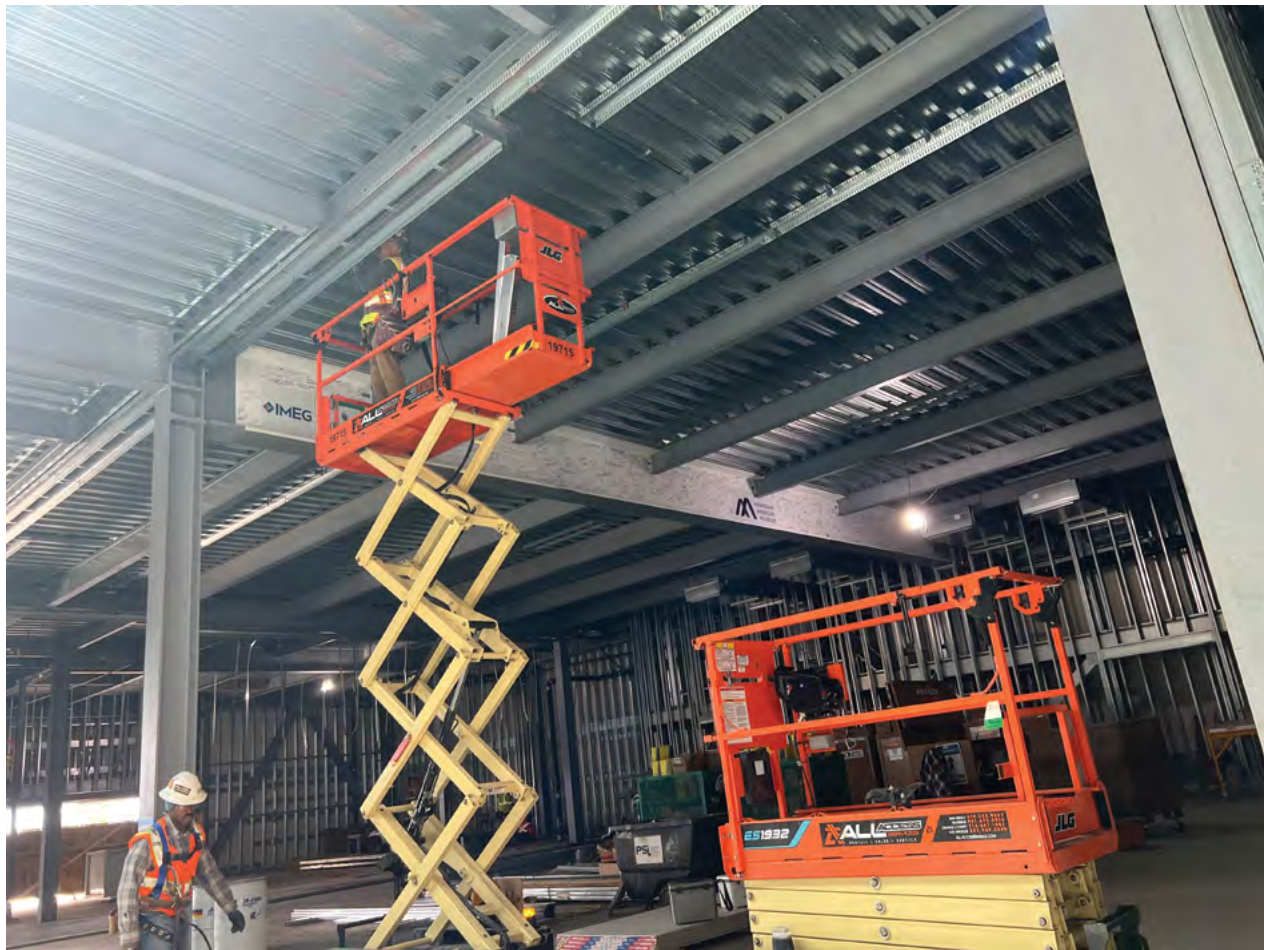
Finally, at the very top of the museum, above the second floor, is an open space which will eventually have a type of rooftop café and outdoor sitting room.

Beyond the Building

The influence of the museum will extend beyond its building. Immediately outside, there is an area that is called the outside plaza, where the museum will have the possibility to put in garden and water features in the future, depending on how donations and finances are at that time. Meanwhile, the city of Glendale is building a new children’s park and a senior park in this area along with an amphitheater.

For two months out of the year, the park will be totally controlled by the museum for programming, Karapetian said, including the week of April 24, Armenian independence day, and Armenian cultural month. The rest of the time, a joint committee with representatives of the adult recreation center, the library and the museum will decide the programming. Furthermore, if all of a sudden the museum wants to have a program outside of the predetermined eight weeks – for example, if the museum inaugurates a new exhibition and wants to use the park then – the museum will still be able to make sure that anything will take place in the park that will conflict with this use.

The city has also given the museum a lease to the land



The pinnacle structural beam which had been signed in a February 2024 ceremony (photo Aram Arkun)

from the end of its building to its parking lot, from its corner all the way to the street, for 55 years, beginning from the date that the museum starts operation. The museum will have two options of 20 years to extend the lease up to 99 years.

Karapetian exclaimed, “It’s almost like owning it.” Moreover, he stressed, this also allows the museum to avoid paying property taxes if one day the government decides to impose property taxes on non-profit organizations, since the property will remain in the name of the city.

The parking structure, the building and everything above the land does belong to the museum, Karapetian said. The museum is incorporated as a 501(c)3, so the donations it receives will not be subject to taxation. On the other hand, any revenue it may generate from the sale of items or parking fees is taxable.

Fundraising and Revenue Sources

Karapetian said that over \$55 million —close to \$60 million — has been raised so far for the museum. Of this, \$22 million has come from public sources: the state of California has contributed \$20 million, the federal government \$1 million and the Los Angeles City Council \$1 million. The city of Glendale has also given almost \$700,000. The bulk of the money, however, almost \$40 million has come from the Armenian community.

Donations have come in many forms and amounts. Karapetian said there were individuals who just sent \$20 or \$50, others who have decided to sponsor a square foot and give it in the name of their grandchild or in the name of their grandparent, and individuals who have become ongoing donors of \$1,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000 on an annual basis.

There are also naming rights in exchange for major donations. For example, the covered plaza is sponsored by a generous Armenian family, the Arakelians. The first-floor corner demonstration kitchen is sponsored by a donation from Avadis “Avie” Tevanian’s family. Tevanian is credited with writing the operating system for Apple computers, and his mother loved cooking, so he fell in love with the idea of the demonstration kitchen. The auditorium is sponsored by Jack and Maro Kalaydjian through a \$4 million donation, while an \$8 million donation gives a donor who temporarily wishes to remain anonymous the naming rights to the core exhibition area.

The total cost will be around \$100 million, but Karapetian said that sum could be reached if the museum on average raises \$4 to \$5 million a year, which he said is an attainable amount of money. That will allow paying for the construction as well as the creation of a nice endowment to sustain the museum and allow other activities such as scholarships and research — and even sustaining some Armenian institutions that may not have the ability to continue their activities without aid.

This could be possible, Karapetian said, because the museum belongs to the entire community, with 10 organizations represented on its board of trustees, including

Diocese, Prelacy, the Armenian Evangelical Union, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the US and Canada, cultural associations affiliated with the three “traditional” Armenian political parties, the Armenian Cultural Foundation (another affiliate of one of those parties, the ARF), and the Armenian General Benevolent Union. [However, it must be noted that the Tekeyan Cultural Association does not have any representation.] The board of governors, Karapetian continued, includes individuals from a wider scope.

While the represented organizations might not directly raise funds for the museum as their first priority, Karapetian said they have been instrumental in opening doors to individuals who might donate funds.

So far, the museum has collected enough money to pay for its expenses without financing. However, Karapetian said, “Going forward, we’re going to need a much faster pace of money to come in. We have about another \$35 or \$40 million that we are going to spend over the next 12 months and we cannot raise all of that money at once.” For that reason, the museum is applying for financing which will be paid off through hopefully raising \$4 or \$5 million annually.

New prospects are approached every month, but, Karapetian said, it takes anywhere from six months to a year to go from identifying a person and making the initial connection to the donor making a decision. Aside from continuing social media postings, fundraising galas, and outreach to foundations and individuals, the museum is always trying new efforts, Karapetian said, to branch out into other types of fundraising venues. So it will attempt golf tournaments or even an exclusive whiskey branded in a barrel specifically for the museum.

There will be a small entry fee to the museum exhibitions. Karapetian says that for other similar institutions in the Los Angeles area, it ranges from \$10-15 for adults, and then there can be special rates for seniors and students, and annual memberships.

Parking will be available at a fee for anyone, which will be another source of general revenue, but if parkers want to go to the museum, that fee will be included in the cost of the museum entry donation. There will be 85 parking spaces.

The temporary exhibitions, demonstration kitchen and auditorium will keep attracting visitors and generate revenue for the museum as well, Karapetian observed. If outside entities want to organize an exhibition at the museum, they will pay a usage fee or lease for the space.

There will be a gift shop and in addition, the Armenian Museum plans to do auctions as a way of raising money. A museum not far away in Los Angeles, the Autry Museum of the American West, has auctions of paintings, sculptures and photos that are so popular that people come from all over the world to participate, and Karapetian said it is very helpful in teaching the Armenian Museum how to do similar auctions.



COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Cracking the Code of Kurabia at Fresno Workshop

FRESNO — On a quiet Saturday morning, the kitchen of St. Paul Armenian Church was transformed into a scene of nostalgia and flour-dusted determination as 42 women gathered for a masterclass in the art of the Armenian kurabia cookie. Sponsored by the Armenian Cultural Conservancy, the workshop is a part of a year-long celebration of the organization’s 10th Anniversary preserving the story of Arme-

nians in the Central Valley.

Led by Julianne (Marashian) Burk of Jul’s Armenian Kitchen, the event centered on the melt-in-your-mouth kurabia recipe shared by Armen Bacon. Burk, a Fresno native who returned home after decades on the East Coast and abroad, shared that her path to the perfect cookie was paved with persistence.

“What an amazing day,” said Armenian Cultural Conservancy Board member Mary Ekmalian. “Our heartfelt thanks to Julianne for sharing her expertise and to all those who helped make this a successful event. It is precisely these types of gatherings that fulfill our mission to preserve and celebrate our rich Western Armenian culture.”

Burk describes the kurabia recipe as “a wild bird she was at-



Julianne (Marashian) Burk, right, explains the trick



Julianne (Marashian) Burk

tempting to capture,” highlighting her philosophy to “try, try again and have fun in the process.” For Burk, the workshop was about more than just baking; it was about reclaiming the “missing editorials” of ancestral cooking that standard cookbooks

often omit.

Following the demonstration, participants enjoyed a lunch of lentil soup and freshly made kurabia, served on tables decorated with Burk’s own vintage tablecloths and yellow lilies. Each attendee left with the kurabia recipe—complete with the chef’s detailed editorial notes—and the recipe for the afternoon’s soup.

The workshop concluded with a “mission accomplished” sentiment from the crowd, many of whom are already looking forward to the next session. For those looking to share their own culinary secrets or seeking a “different perspective” on Armenian home cooking, Burk remains a fixture in the Fresno community, balancing her recipe revival with her professional consulting practice.

“I’ll be here,” says Burk, “seeking those ancestral traditions, one lentil soup at a time.”

The Armenian Cultural Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the evidence of the Armenian experience in the Central Valley of California. They are celebrating their 10th anniversary this year with the opening of their Armenian Heritage Collections Gallery, as well as hosting multiple community cultural events throughout the year.

Jul’s Armenian Kitchen is dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Central Valley Armenian home cooking. Through “recipe revivals” and storytelling, Burk explores the intersection of memory, tradition, and the Western Armenian diaspora.



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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, Watertown MA 02472, or emailed to Aram Arkun at tcadirector@aol.com.



Arts & Culture

Méliné Ter Minassian's One-Woman Show 'Mi Morna' Draws a Full House in Paris

By Aghavni Karnoogian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PARIS — “Mi Morna” or “N’oublie pas, j’oublie” [Don’t Forget, I Forget] drew a full house at the Théâtre du Chariot in Paris for its final performance on March 29. Performing solo on stage, actress and director Méliné Ter Minassian presented a work that blends physical theater, performance, and memory. Born out of research begun nearly ten years ago, but also informed by the 2020 Artsakh War, the play is part of a long-term exploration of memory, heritage and the question of diasporic identities.

Mercedes Chanquia Aguirre is the co-director and the Kraken association is the producer of the show.

The play is based on family memory and an open dialogue with three generations of the actress’s female



Méliné Ter Minassian, at right, with co-director Mercedes Chanquia-Aguirre

ancestors: Gülizar, who was abducted by Musa Bey at the age of 15 in 1899, made famous by a major article by Gladstone in 1889; Gülizar’s daughter, the writer and singer Arménouhie Kévonian; and finally, the historian Anahide Ter Minassian who died in 2019.

Following two consecutive weeks of performances — marking the play’s debut on a theater stage in the French capital — Méliné Ter Minassian in an interview spoke about her art.

She explained that the play builds on an earlier phase: initially, “Mi Morna, Moranum Em” connected Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian through language and characters. The play raises one question: what do we want to pass on and what can we choose not to pass on? Ter Minassian is well aware that she is the heir to a history and at the same time the granddaughter of a contemporary Armenian historian. But for her, it was important not to remain fixated on the command “Remember!”, even

see MI MORNA, page 14



Elen Asatryan, Glendale City Councilwoman, gave certificates of recognition to each panelist (Karine Armen photo)

Women’s Day Celebration By Armenian Women in The Film Industry

By Karine Armen

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALE — Armenian Film Society (AFS) presented the fourth annual Armenian Women in Film on Monday, March 23, at Vertigo Event Venue in Glendale, featuring Arsinee Khanjian, Christine Haroutounian, Madeline Sharafian, and Teni Melidonian, moderated by Sona Movsesian, for an inspiring conversation in celebration of International Women’s Month about their journeys, challenges, and defining moments in the film industry.

“We are excited to celebrate Armenian women’s achievements in the film industry,” said the president of AFS, Mary Karaoghlanian. The Armenian Film Society was founded in 2015 by husband-and-wife Armen and Mary Karaoghlanian. They decided to provide a platform for those filmmakers because of the lack of opportunities in the industry.

Movsesian, asked questions about the panelists’ experiences as filmmakers and storytellers, and about their work in the movie industry. One compelling question concerned their cultural identity as Armenians.

Khanjian talked about the community’s demand that Atom Egoyan make an Armenian movie. He made “Ararat” in 2002. Khanjian added, “It was a clear expectation to serve the history of the Armenian people.

Melidonian, who is the Chief Oscar Officer, said, “People don’t know about the Armenian cinema. When the movie ‘Amerikatsi’ got on the list of top 20 for the Oscars International Feature, it changed a lot of what was possible.”

Melidonian is the Chief Oscar Officer of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She leads strategy, talent relations, special events, and production teams for all awards programs and events. In this role, she oversees the teams responsible for developing and executing the Oscars for a global audience. She serves as the Academy’s primary liaison to Disney/ABC, its broadcast distribution partner.



From left: Madeline Sharafian, Teni Melidonian, Arsinee Khanjian, and Christine Haroutounian (Karine Armen photo)

Photographer Winslow Martin’s ‘My Armenia’ Collection Documents Life Inside Country

WATERTOWN — A new documentary photography exhibition by Arlington, Mass.-based photographer Winslow Martin, “My Armenia (1999–2008),” traces a deeply personal journey through post-Soviet Armenia and the historic moments he witnessed along the way. Opening April 16 through May 30, the exhibition inaugurates Project Save Photograph Archive’s newly expanded gallery space in Watertown.

Project Save is the world’s largest photo archive dedicated to preserving the regional, national and global Armenian experience. Its expansion doubles the group’s space and creates a venue dedicated to exhibitions, public programs, and community engagement opportunities.

Curated by fellow photo documentarian Nubar Alexanian, the exhibition traces Martin’s unexpectedly life-changing journeys to Armenia that began when he accompanied St. James Armenian Church pastor Fr. Dajad Davidian on a trip from Watertown to his ancestral homeland. A former high school history teacher who later turned to photography to document Boston’s music scene as well as community news stories, Martin jumped at the opportunity to cover Fr. Davidian’s visit. He has since made dozens of trips to the region on his own over 27 years, exploring the landlocked country’s rich history and stunning natural beauty. Davidian died in 2018.

Martin’s 30 photos in “My Armenia” cover the period from 1999–2008, when he returned to capture powerful images of culture, history and daily life during a pivotal period. “The people were overwhelmingly welcoming to me, and I had full access because of my connections there,” Martin says. “I witnessed life as it unfolded, and captured major historical events from the inside, like the election of a new head of the Armenian church, and the funerals of victims from the Armenian National Assembly shooting and hostage crisis in 1999.” [The assassination and its aftermath is remembered in Armenia as “October 27.”]

Project Save Executive Director Arto Vaun says Martin’s exhibition, which includes 30 photographs, stands apart for its commitment to documentary photography rooted in lived experience, sustained presence and trust, rather than observation from a distance.

“Winslow captures a dimension of Armenia rarely seen from the outside,” he says. “The photographs are intimate, unfiltered and deeply human. And here, they mark a new chapter for Project Save, as we create a space where historical ephemera and contemporary photography like this meet and inform each other.”

see EXHIBIT, page 15

continued on next page



ARTS & CULTURE



From left: Moderator/author Sona Movsesian, Caroline Haroutounian, Arsinee Khanjian, Teni Melidonian, and Madeline Sharafian (Karine Armen photo)

from previous page

Khanjian, best known for her enduring creative and personal partnership with filmmaker Atom Egoyan, her husband was born in Beirut to an Armenian family whose grandparents survived the Armenian Genocide. She and her family moved to Montreal when she was 17.

Khanjian has appeared in 14 Egoyan films. She has also worked with acclaimed directors including Olivier Assayas, Catherine Breillat and Fatih Akin, and has performed extensively in theater across Canada, France, and Berlin.

In the course of her career, she has received numerous honors, including the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2002), the Order of St. Mesrop Mashtots (2003), the Queen Zabel Medal from the Armenian Church of America, and the Order for “Services to the Motherland” from the Armenian government (2011).

Haroutounian is a director, writer and producer working

between Armenia and the diaspora. Her debut feature, “After Dreaming,” premiered at the Berlinale in 2025 and has screened in Korea, Greece and Brazil. The film was co-produced by Brad Becker-Parton and Carlos Reygadas. Featured as a gem in the New York Times Critic’s Notebook, “After Dreaming” has been hailed as “the most transfixing, formally experimental first feature seen in an age” (BFI) and “a dreamlike film that floats on air, while keeping the sharp fall beneath it in constant view” (Variety).

Haroutounian has also been named one of Filmmaker Magazine’s 25 New Faces of Independent Film. Her short film, “World,” premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and won the top award at the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan. The film has been screened in cultural programs at the Moving Arts Center Amsterdam, the Gorki Theater and the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles.

She is working on her next film, “Black Star Angel,” which won the top prize at the Asian Project Market.

Sharafian is a director at Pixar Animation Studios and a two-time Academy Award-nominated filmmaker. She joined Pixar in 2013 as a story intern and returned in May 2015 in a full-time role, contributing to films including “Coco” and “Onward.” Madeline Sharafian received her first Academy Award nomination for directing the animated short film “Burrow,” created as part of Pixar’s SparkShorts program. The film premiered on Disney+ alongside the Oscar-winning feature film, “Soul.”

In 2025, Sharafian co-directed Pixar’s feature film “Elio” with Domee Shi and Adrian Molina, becoming the first Armenian and only the third woman in Pixar’s history to direct a feature film at the studio.

Sharafian was honored at the Armenian Film Society’s 2025 Gala in recognition of her achievements in directing.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Véronique Kapoïan Favel

‘Over Time My Surname Became a Source of Pride’

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN / VILLEURBANNE, France — Véronique Kapoïan Favel (born 1959, Aubenas, Ardèche), is a French actress and stage director of Armenian origin. Since 1981, she has worked primarily in theatre alongside directors such as Chantal Morel, Serge Papagalli, Philippe Delaigue, Patrick Henry, Gilles Chavassieux, Guy Granouillet, and Mohamed Saïd Ferdane, as well as in film and television. She has appeared in films by Henri Verneuil, Claude Chabrol, Alexandre Adabachian, Patrice Leconte, Éric Barbier, Sophie Fillières, Jean Becker, Gérard Krawczyk, Diane Kurys, Hervé Palud, François Dupeyron, Clovis Cornillac, Rodrigo Sorogoyan and in numerous TV films and series.

Dear Véronique, if I am not mistaken, your first theatrical success was in *Le Dauphinois libéré*, the humorous play by Serge Papagalli in 1995. Can we say that since then you have preferred comic roles?

This comedy, *Le Dauphinois libéré*, written by Serge Papagalli, became—thanks to its success—a kind of family saga that gave rise to seven productions and a feature film between 1995 and 2024. At the same time, I was performing in another production, “La Femme de Gilles,” direct-



ed by Chantal Morel, a tragic solo piece performed over 200 times. This contrast in roles allowed me to explore and deepen all the nuances and diversity an actress can dream of. There is no comedy without tragedy. Tragedy can exist on its own, but the two often come very close to each other. I cannot choose between them—the pleasure is different, but immense in both worlds.

Who has influenced you the most as an actress?

There have been many influences; numerous artists have nourished me. In 1979-1980, I saw Mephisto by Théâtre du Soleil—my first great theatrical experience. I was fascinated, and Ariane Mnouchkine became my first reference. Later, during a workshop, I was immersed within the troupe and learned a great deal, especially about that famous paradox known as “tragic comedy.”

You have participated in several contemporary theatre productions and cultural projects related to the Armenian diaspora. Could you tell us about them?

Within my company, I have staged works by contemporary authors. However, contemporary Armenian theatrical writing has rarely crossed my path—except once. At the initiative of Jean-Paul Bret, mayor of Villeurbanne (twinned with Abovyan city), I was invited to take part in a public reading for the April 24 commemoration. I presented poems by Krikor Beledian, Marine Petrossian, and Violette Krikorian, as well as excerpts from Gérard Chaliand’s book *Mémoire de ma mémoire*. I often return to this book, thinking secretly of adapting it or using fragments of it to evoke both great History and the story of my grandparents. One must find the right form. In it are words that could be mine: “The old women in black of my childhood remembered: those dead without graves were theirs forever.” And to conclude: at a time when I take stock of the years I have lived, it is time to remember this history and give back to our ancestors what is due to them.

In the 1950s-1960s, many performers

of Armenian origin in France changed their surnames to more European-sounding ones. You could have used the name Véronique Favel, but you kept Kapoïan. Did this create difficulties for you?

My mother was French, and my parents’ marriage remains a great mystery. They married in 1953. My mother, a Parisian, followed her husband to live in rural Ardèche (later we lived in Valence), together with my paternal grandmother, “Mamé Zarig,” who raised me. The marriage lasted 17 years. My mother’s family, Norman farmers, opposed the marriage and expressed open racism. Armenia was an unknown land, its language incomprehensible, its food strange—there were many such judgments. As for me, I ate Armenian food and spoke Armenian (until my parents separated when I was seven). Kapoïan was my name. Over time, it became a banner, a source of pride. I loved that uniqueness, that distant country, and the tragic stories of my grandmother led me to the theatre—a place of living emotions. My great regret is that I no longer speak Armenian. Separated from my grandmother, the language disappeared with her. I could have, I should have, I could still relearn it... Life goes fast. Some words remain.

How was your collaboration with Henri Verneuil on “588, rue Paradis”?

It was very brief; I had a small role. It was my second experience in cinema. I felt intimidated in the presence of Henri Verneuil, Claudia Cardinale, and Richard
see FAVEL, page 17

Méliné Ter Minassian’s One-Woman Show ‘Mi Morna’ Draws a Full House in Paris

MI MORNA, from page 12

though it is very widespread among Armenians.

In the show, she constantly shifts between two identities: her own and that of Anahide, her grandmother. And she explains that when she says, “Don’t forget,” it is her grandmother speaking to her, even though when she says, “I forget,” that is also part of reality. Méliné is sensitive to the fact that, toward the end of her life, her grandmother expressed a need to distance herself from the past and encouraged her granddaughter to keep moving forward. Moving yet optimistic in its own unique way, the show is permeated by the hope that future generations will not be fixated solely on a painful memory.

The Distant Experience of War

The play is set in the present, during the 2020 Artsakh War, which is evoked through news audio clips in English, French and Armenian. The audience comes to understand that the intimate experience of this distant war, lived from within the diaspora, has been, in a way, heightened by the intimate and serene experience of the actress’s pregnancy. The moment of the Artsakh War is thus evoked by this ambivalent experience: Méliné Ter Minassian is carrying a baby girl, yet she is also connected live to Stepanakert, where her father—an anesthesiologist and resuscitation specialist—has volunteered. “This dual experience—this feeling of being both there and not there—is very strong during times of war, especially for people who have lived in exile,” the actress confides.

But the project in its current form is also linked to the death of Méliné’s grandmother “on a cold night at the end of winter” in February 2019. Thus, the “Mi Morna” project, which began in 2015, went through various stages before taking its current form.

While the play brings together three generations of female ancestors, Méliné con-



A scene from the show (photo Lou-Andrea Gachot Coniglio)

fided that she has actually slipped into the childhood memories of her grandmother, Anahide Ter Minassian. The initial starting point for the show in 2015 was more of a reflection on the figure of the ghost, specifically, that of her great-great-grandmother, Gülizar, whose lore is still passed down orally in certain regions of historic Armenia, particularly among Kurdish populations. This discovery fueled Méliné’s reflection on the way in which the dead continue to inhabit our bodies, our stories and our voices. For the actress, the theater is precisely the place where these presences can be summoned.

After studying literature, she lived in Armenia for three years and created performances with the Queering Yerevan collective. Trained at the École Jacques Lecoq and the École Philippe Gaulier, she is part of the Nantes-based association Kraken and co-created, among other works, “Du

sucre sur les mains” in 2022. In addition to her artistic activities, she teaches theater to younger generations.

When asked about the interplay of mirrors created by the theatrical framework built around her grandmother’s character, Méliné confessed the deep love she felt for her. “My grandmother was a wonderful storyteller, with a strong, almost theatrical personality. She was already a character in her own right. Bringing her onto the stage felt like a natural choice. This approach allowed me to talk about the passing down of traditions without creating distance, without relaying her words in the indirect style. I don’t say

‘Anahide said’; I become Anahide, and it is she who speaks.”

Trained at the École Jacques Lecoq, Méliné uses the body as a central element—and sometimes even as her sole tool. “It allows us to express what words cannot say, especially when it comes to summoning ghosts, evoking loss, or pain. As for objects, they too carry memories.”

Finally, Ter Minassian does not shy away from the political dimension of her work. “We are all contemporaries of these tragedies (from Artsakh to Gaza and back again), even when our daily lives seem untouched. My hope is that the audience feels a sense of connection, both to the past and to the present, and that they experience a sense of community between the dead and the living. The play addresses realities little known to non-Armenian audiences, such as contemporary Armenian history and the question of diasporic identity.” Thus, “Mi Morna” has a dimension that is both intimate and universal. The passing of generations, the objects that remain, and the question of their transmission are issues that concern everyone, she says.

And the reactions of the Parisian audience confirm this: people who knew nothing

about Armenian history were moved and touched, and left wanting to learn more, having found in this play something that resonated with their own history.



Gülizar and her daughter Arménouhi Kevonian



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



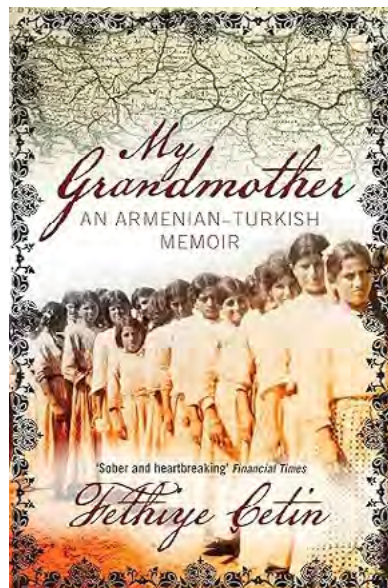
by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Easter Choreg

“This holiday bread is quite similar to the Jewish Challah. Fethiye Çetin, in *My Grandmother*, mentions a special bread being exchanged between certain women each spring in her grandmother’s village. Only later did she realize this must have been choreg, a sign of remembered Armenian heritage made by the women, now mothers and grandmothers in Turkish and Kurdish families. The tradition continues today around the diaspora with small variations. Some families place a coin in the loaf, bringing luck to the person who gets that special slice. Many share their loaves with others. Here’s a recipe to try — adjusting sugar, salt and butter to your own taste.”

This recipe makes 4 large loaves but 8 smaller ones allow you to share more. Halve the recipe if you want to try a small batch first.



INGREDIENTS:

840 grams flour plain flour – and more for kneading
2 tablespoons of dry yeast – sprinkle into 125 ml warm water to dissolve (or follow instructions for “easy blend yeast”)
200 grams sugar
450 grams melted butter and/or margarine (I use half and half)
225 ml milk warmed (just pour it in with the hot melted butter)
5 eggs
1 – 2 tablespoons ground mahleb (or a bit of cardamom if you don’t have mahleb)
a bit of salt
1 beaten egg and sesame or nigella seeds for topping

PREPARATION:

Melt the butter and margarine in a pan, add the milk let it rest until slightly above room temperature.

Place sugar, mahleb, salt and half the flour in a large bowl, making a hole in the center. Beat the 5 eggs into the warm (not hot) milk and butter and pour into the center with the yeast. Beat with a wooden spoon (or on your KitchenAid or Kenwood!) until well mixed.

Add flour and continue stirring with spoon. You will have to leave the spoon aside eventually and mix with your hands. The dough should be soft but not very sticky.

Dust the counter top with flour and place the dough on it. Knead about 10 minutes, adding flour as needed. It should remain a soft dough but not sticking to your hands. Let the dough rise until doubled in a warm place, covered with a clean dish cloth. When it has risen, divide the dough into as many loaves as you wish to make. Knead each of these balls to remove the air bubbles.

Divide each ball of dough into 3. With your hands, roll each small ball into a rope, starting with both hands at the middle and rolling outwards. Place the 3 strands side-by-side and braid them. Place on greased baking sheet.

When all loaves are finished, cover with a dish cloth and let rise until double again.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Beat the egg and brush loaves with it, sprinkling them with sesame or nigella seeds. Some people like slivered almonds on top.

Bake approximately 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of your loaves – they should be golden and toasty brown when finished (check the bottoms too).

Contributed by Susan Pattie.

Go to: <https://www.armenianinstitute.org.uk/food/choreg>

To purchase, go to: <https://www.amazon.com/My-Grandmother-Armenian-Turkish-Fethiye-Cetin/dp/1844678679>

“Growing up in the small town of Maden in Turkey, Fethiye Çetin knew her grandmother as a happy and respected Muslim housewife called Seher. Only decades later did she discover the truth. Her grandmother’s name was not Seher but Heranus. She was born a Christian Armenian. Most of the men in her village had been slaughtered in 1915. A Turkish gendarme had stolen her from her mother and adopted her. Çetin’s family history tied her directly to the terrible origins of modern Turkey and the organized denial of its Ottoman past as the shared home of many faiths and ways of life. A deeply affecting memoir, *My Grandmother* is also a step towards another kind of Turkey, one that is finally at peace with its past. Beyond its historical importance, *My Grandmother* is a deeply human book. It reminds us of the resilience of survivors, the complexities of identity, and the importance of preserving memory. Çetin’s prose is simple but evocative, and her grandmother’s voice resonates with dignity and grace.”



Photographer Winslow Martin’s ‘My Armenia’ Collection Documents Life Inside Country

EXHIBIT, from page 12

“My Armenia” is sponsored by Mass Cultural Council, Watertown Savings Bank, Watertown Cultural Council, and Herman and Laura Bilazarian Purutyan.

Since becoming executive director in 2021, Vaun has led a period of significant growth for Project Save, including its 2024 acquisition of its first permanent, public-facing home in Watertown and this

spring’s expansion of its headquarters to include a dedicated gallery for contemporary photography. The expansion doubles the organization’s space and creates a dedicated venue for exhibitions, public programs, and community engagement.

It also reflects Project Save’s evolving role as a steward of photographic history and a place where history can exist in conversation with the present day. “At a

moment defined by global displacement and instability,” Vaun says, “the stories photographs carry are more vital than ever. Our new space creates a rare space where historical memory and contemporary photography meet—inviting deeper reflection and connection.”

Founded in 1975, Project Save began as a grassroots effort to document the lives of Armenian immigrants through photog-

raphy. Over five decades, the organization has grown into the world’s largest Armenian photographic archive, with more than 150,000 original images and ephemera from communities around the globe. Project Save continues to expand its mission through exhibitions, public programming, and initiatives that bring historical archives into dialogue with contemporary photographic practice.



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.armeniamuseum.org/arshile-gorky> for more information.

APRIL 9 — LET'S GET TOGETHER! Thursday, 7-9pm JOIA BOSTON AT THE HARBORSIDE INN, BOSTON Young Leaders' Friends Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park Donation: \$30/person. Advance Reservations. ArmeniaHeritagePark.org/Support

APRIL 11 — "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, when the Quabbin Reservoir flooded four towns in order to create water infrastructure for 52 Boston metropolitan communities. 2-4 PM Brighton Public Library 40 Academy Hill Rd. Brighton.

APRIL 11 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Boston and AGBU New England District present HyeVibe. All Armenian students' Association clubs and university students are invited for an evening of music and dancing. Live music provided by Berklee School of Music ASA. Snacks and other refreshments. Armenian and American pop and dance music. 8-11 p.m., 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Tickets \$10. Buy through venmo: @Tekeyan_Boston.

APRIL 13 — Monday. Saint James Men's Club Dinner & Fellowship with Knights of Vartan Guest speaker; Dr. Al Sacco, Jr. former NASA astronaut and former navy seal, his honors include, NASDA Space Flight Medal, AICHE Lifetime Achievement Award, New England Institute of Chemist Distinguished Chemist Award [2010], member of the International Academy of Astronautics. He holds four honorary doctorates. 6.15 p.m. mezza, 7 p.m. Dinner Losh kebab and Kheyma. \$25.per person, all are welcome. 465 Mt. Auburn St. Watertown.

APRIL 15 — "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, when the Quabbin Reservoir flooded four towns in order to create water infrastructure for 52 Boston metropolitan communities. 7 p.m. Parlin Memorial Library 410 Broadway Everett.

APRIL 16 — Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) hosts "Dove of Peace: Art Treasures and History from the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association" as CYSCA celebrates Records into the Cambridge Public Library's Archives and Special Collections. Guest speaker Gary Lind-Sinanian, Collections Curator of the Armenian Museum of America. In the Community Room at the Cambridge Public Library (Main), 449 Broadway, Cambridge. Free and open to the public. Program starts promptly at 7, doors open at 6:30 PM, food reception follows the program. Registration required at <https://bit.ly/yerevandove>. For more information, email info@cambridgeyerevan.org

APRIL 16 — "My Armenia (1999-2008)" by Winslow Martin on view April 16 to May 30, 2026 at Project Save Photograph Archive, 600 Pleasant Street in Watertown, Gallery hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-5:30 p.m., Saturdays from 12-4 p.m., and by appointment. Directions and more details at projectsave.org or 617-923-4542. Opening reception Thursday, April 16, 6:30-9 p.m.

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 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.

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 Studios, 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 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.



ARTS & CULTURE

Véronique Kapoian Favel: 'Over Time My Surname Became a Source of Pride'

FAVEL, from page 14

Berry. I have always thought that Verneuil chose me because of my name – out of Armenian solidarity. I remember the screening of the film with the team: the theatre was filled with the Armenian community of Paris, and the emotion of painful memories was palpable. Then came scenes of meals and our Armenian dishes – waves of joy, pride and delight. It was like a metaphor: the cuisine reflected the generosity and vitality of Armenia still alive.

You also acted in *Mado, poste restante*, directed by the Russian filmmaker Alexandre Adabachian. Was there a special connection between you as people of similar origin?

Our connection was primarily artistic. I had gone through auditions, and we had many exchanges before filming. Did my name influence the choice? I do not know. The shoot was very pleasant, though complicated by the language barrier, as the entire technical team was Russian. I retain an excellent memory of it – both relaxed and demanding.

Could you tell us about the Kapoian family?

My grandfather, Ohannès Kapoian, was born in 1880 in Bilecik and died in July 1955 in Aubenas. My grandmother, Zarig Yalarian (or Yaylarian?), was born in 1890 in Bilecik, daughter of Agop Yalarian and Parisse Tepelian. If any of your readers bear these names, I would be glad to hear from them. From my grandmother's stories, I know that her parents were silk breeders in the Bilecik region. She married my grandfather and had six children, the youngest being my father, Kaloust, born in 1925 in Constantinople. I know that three of her children died in refugee camps in Constantinople – of illness, malnutrition, cold, and hardship. My great-grandmother died in 1960 in Aubenas. My grandmother, her eldest daughter Astrid, and my father, then four years old, arrived in Marseille and later settled in Saint-Pierre-sous-Aubenas with work contracts in the Briand silk factory. My grandfather reportedly stayed behind to fight alongside the Greeks against the Turks, as did one of my teenage

uncles, Agop (did he also die?). My aunt Astrid died in France while giving birth to her first child. My only cousin, Joseph Bogossian, died in Lyon in 2002. This exile — or deportation — which began in 1915-1916, followed by years in refugee camps in Constantinople, resulted in nearly thirteen years of wandering before their arrival in France in 1928.

I often think I might have had uncles, aunts, cousins, family gatherings — I saw this in others. I feel immense love and admiration for my grandmother and her strength. She endured exile, the loss of her homeland, her home, her family, the death of four children and the disappearance of another, and the death of her husband. She faced the impossibility of being understood and the necessity of adapting to an unknown world. She lived in linguistic isolation, a silent exile with her memories and a duty to remember. Today I would have so many questions to ask her. My father, the only surviving child, now deceased, always said: "It is ancient history." Perhaps he had heard too much.

How do you maintain Armenian tradition and identity in your life and your art?

In daily life, I often cook Armenian food (my husband is a fan). I have two daughters who are very sensitive to our history and our cuisine. My only brother has four children, three of them boys, and I know how happy our father would have been to see the Kapoian name continue. Long ago, when I performed in improvisation matches at the Bataclan, my father came to watch. I wore a tracksuit with my name written on the back — he was very proud; it was the most important thing for him that evening.

Art has the power to transcend prejudice. It calls for tolerance, empathy, knowledge, and deeper questioning. Thanks to this moment of reflection, you have given me, for which I thank you, I now feel the desire to create a theatrical work around this story — mine and the larger one. I need a partner, collaborators, and a contemporary theatrical language. I am another Arthur Rimbaud...

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

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.

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.

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 Manoogian 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., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.

COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
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SINCE 1932



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TRIPP and the US War with Iran

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The most widely discussed topic these days continues to be the war involving the US and Iran and its future. There are different views on what the region and the world will look like after the end of this war. One thing is clear: nothing will remain as it was before, and serious realignments will take place in the region regardless of the outcome.

It is evident that a change of power has not occurred in Tehran, and there appears to be no significant internal disturbances; therefore, a change of government does not seem likely at this point. Yes, Iran's key infrastructure has been damaged, but this still does not mean the war is over, as aerial attacks are continuing. However, what is important for Armenia is not only what will happen with Iran itself, but also what will happen in Iran's neighboring countries and what developments may occur in the Trump scenario.

The most important question that should concern Armenia is what will happen to Iran and its policy in the South Caucasus after the war ends. We also need to understand what policy the United States is pursuing toward Iran, because the information coming from Washington is highly contradictory. It is still unclear what approaches the Trump administration has on this issue, since President Donald Trump himself periodically makes a variety of statements about ending the war, possible negotiations with Iran, and other developments which sometimes contradict each other.

From Armenia's perspective it is also very important to understand what future the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) will have after the end of the US-Iran war, since one of the main objectives of the TRIPP approach was to exert influence along Iran's external borders. Another goal of this approach was to enable the routing of energy resources in a way that would bypass Iran, allowing them to be transported from Central Asia to the South Caucasus and via Turkey to Europe. TRIPP could also provide an alternative route for Azerbaijan to bypass Iran while connecting with its enclave Nakhijevan, which would make Azerbaijan less dependent on Iran.

All this makes it crucial for Armenia to understand, in the event of continued US-Iran tensions, what the American presence within the TRIPP project would look like, including possible security provision by private US organizations. Would such

actors be regarded by Iran as legitimate targets in the event of future escalation, and if so, which possible types of actions might be taken against them?

In recent days, we have seen that Iran's targets have included not only military but also economic assets, with the intention of striking at US economic interests in neighboring countries. Consequently, the TRIPP, located just a few hundred meters from Iran's border, could potentially become a target for Iran under conditions of heightened escalation – or for any other reason.

Another important question is if the United States moves toward negotiations and the eventual normalization of relations with Iran, to what extent would Washington be willing to continue pursuing the TRIPP project. Iran views the project as problematic, since it would allow Azerbaijan to establish a direct connection with Nakhichevan not through Iran, but through a route crossing Armenian territory.

In other words, either negotiations with Iran begin, during which Tehran may demand that the United States abandon any military or economic projects located near its borders; or, if negotiations do not take place and the war continues, it cannot be ruled out that Iran may also turn this economic project into a target, just as economic projects in certain Arab Gulf countries — currently linked to US interests — have become targets.

At present, Armenia is considered a friendly state by Iran, and anti-Iranian actions typically do not originate from its territory. However, if Iran perceives that its national interests are being challenged, it is natural that Tehran

would act to fully defend those interests.

Another scenario is possible: military operations may be halted without formal peace being established, and the parties may fail to reach a diplomatic settlement. In this case as well, it remains unclear what approach Iran would take toward TRIPP. But if tensions persist, the implementation of this route cannot be considered certain.

(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.)



The Three Brothers' Military Alliance: A New Geostrategic Axis

By Dhanuka Dickwella

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Military alliances are built on the logic of deterrence and the advancement of national interest. But the little-known "Three Brothers Alliance" is built as a totally different, geostrategic axis. It is unique because it connects three nations with no shared borders into a cohesive trilateral force. By 2026, this partnership will have moved beyond symbolic military drills to become a structured, closed, strategic loop where technology, energy, and diplomatic cover are exchanged to bypass the traditional global powers. Who are the so-called three brothers?

From South Asia, India's arch-rival, Pakistan; Armenia's arch enemy, Azerbaijan, from the Caucasus; and finally a revisionist Turkey from West Asia. Other than being three predominantly Muslim nations of both Sunni and Shia populations, what makes them band together is an important strategic question one must raise.

The Mechanics of the Axis: Modus Operandi

Let us get the mechanics of the axis or the modus operandi between Turkish, Pakistani, and Azeri political leadership clarified first. The alliance operates through a three-front strategy, allowing each member to outsource its regional security burdens and share their unique resources.

In front of the subcontinent, Pakistan uses the alliance to internationally isolate India and modernize its military. On the Caucasus front, Azerbaijan leverages Turkish and Pakistani support to deter Iran and cement its control over the Zangza region by knocking Armenia out. In the front of central Asia, Turkey utilizes the coalition as a springboard for its pan-Turkish vision, challenging Russian and Chinese hegemony in the Eurasian heartland.

How does each of those players operate in other respective spheres through their brothers-in-arms? First, let's look at Turkey, the revisionist powerhouse of Ankara.

Turkey: The Revisionist Powerhouse

For Erdogan, the three brothers coalition is a vehicle for neo-Ottoman revisionism. While Turkey remains a NATO member, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pivot-

ed toward a strategic autonomy that NATO cannot provide. Challenging the Russian Caucasus underbelly by arming Azerbaijan and conducting joint drills in the Caspian Sea, Turkey checks Russian influence in the Caucasus and places direct pressure on Iran's northern border. Most importantly, it has gained access to the Caspian seas, circumventing the rule of prohibition of non-Caspian actors' presence. Turkey also advances with its Indian Ocean ambitions through Pakistan. Ankara gains a strategic foothold in the Indian Ocean in exchange for the Milgem class corvettes and KAN fighter jet cooperation. Turkey secures a reliable partner in a region that will define the future balance of maritime power. Ankara leverages technology as diplomacy. It has successfully turned its defense industry (Baykar, TAI) ties into a diplomatic currency, creating a path dependency where Pakistan and Azerbaijan are now technologically tethered to Ankara.

Pakistan: Breaking Isolation through 'Deep Ties'

Now let's look at Pakistan. At its core,
continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Pashinyan Sets Unrealistic Goals For 2050, Long After He Is Gone

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly misled the Armenian public by making false promises since coming to power in 2018.

To preserve his seat, Pashinyan has used three ploys:

- 1) Promise the gullible people a rosy future using the slogan, “There is a future” (abaka ga);
- 2) Exploit the naïve public’s blind trust by making false promises;
- 3) Blame all his errors and the country’s current problems on former leaders, even though he has been in charge for eight years.

Whenever anyone points out his mistakes and deceitful promises, Pashinyan either denies ever making such statements or dodges the question. His excuse is that, since the people elected him, he can do whatever he wants, even though he never told his electors that he would hand over Artsakh to Azerbaijan and relinquish part of Armenia’s territories to the enemy state.

Since the parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place on June 7, Pashinyan is once again busy misleading the public. He and his ministers exaggerate their accomplishments, and act as if Armenia did not exist before 2018, when they came to power.

In order to fool the public, Pashinyan described in 2020 what his imaginary Armenia would look like in 2050, knowing full well that neither he nor his political party will be around by then. He called the plan “A Development Strategy for Armenia until 2050.”

His plan for 2050 is no different from many of his other fake promises. According to the well-known saying, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” Armenia’s citizens must finally wake up and realize that they are being deceived repeatedly by their incompetent but cunning leader.

Here is the list of Pashinyan’s 18 unrealistic goals to be accomplished by 2050:

- Increase Armenia’s population to at least five million.
- Create 1.5 million jobs.
- Overcome poverty through work.
- Increase Armenia’s GDP 20-fold.
- Increase the average salary seven-fold.

- Make a healthy lifestyle a national characteristic; increase life expectancy to 90 years.
- Have the world’s most combat-ready army per capita.
- Have one of the 10 most efficient intelligence services in the world.
- Make learning a national way of life.
- Have at least three universities among the world’s top 200 ranked universities.
- Turn Armenia into a high-tech industrial country.
- Have at least five high-tech companies valued at \$10 billion or more and at least 10,000 operating startups.
- Ensure a healthy environment; make Armenia climate-resilient and energy-efficient.
- Double Armenia’s forested areas.
- Win 25 Olympic gold medals.
- Make the Armenian national football team the winner of the European and/or World Championship.
- Win the title of world individual chess champion.
- Increase to 15 million the annual number of tourists visiting Armenia.

Many of these 18 goals are unattainable. Six years after Pashinyan’s announcement, there has been hardly any progress. Even though there is nothing wrong with having personal or national goals, to achieve them one needs to take the following steps:

1) Set realistic goals with a reasonable chance of success. Rather than getting up on a stage and saying whatever comes to mind, there needs to be an in-depth study before making haphazard public announcements.

2) Ask experts to develop a detailed, realistic, and achievable plan of action. The head of government must first consult specialists in various fields to develop a roadmap for getting the country from here to there.

3) Provide a timeline and incremental milestones. It is not enough to state what you want to achieve by 2050. The government must have a detailed plan that specifies actions to be taken each year until 2050.

4) Include the public in setting national priorities. The Prime Minister should not ignore the will of the people and singlehandedly decide what is best for citizens. He should organize local conferences in each region to ask the public what they would like to see accomplished by 2050. The government should also conduct public polls to obtain reliable data about citizens’ interests.

5) Most importantly, ensure competent leadership now. Before worrying about 2050 — or even 2026 — the country must have a competent leader. Armenia’s citizens have the opportunity in this June’s parliamentary elections to decide who can best lead the country now. Otherwise, they may not have a country by 2050.

from previous page

Islamabad eyes breaking isolation through deep ties. Pakistan’s primary geostrategy is the neutralization of India on every front. Ever since the formation of the three brothers alliance, it has provided the strategic depth Islamabad has long sought. The best example is the Kashmir campaign. Turkey and Azerbaijan have become Pakistan’s most vocal defenders on the international stage, openly criticizing India at the UN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This provides Islamabad with the diplomatic oxygen needed to keep the Kashmir issue alive despite India’s growing global stature.

AESA & Drone Modernization: facing a gap in conventional air power against India’s diverse air power, Pakistan has turned to the JF17 block 3 co-produced with China, but increasingly integrated with Turkish avionics and Turkish Akinchi drones. These tools are designed to challenge India’s cold start doctrine through high-tech attrition and asymmetric assets. Pakistan offers the alliance vast experience in unconventional warfare and special operations expertise, serving as a force multiplier for Turkish interests in Libya, Syria, and potentially the Caucasus.

Most importantly, it is the sole nuclear power with the means of delivering through medium-range ballistic missiles or the MRBMs.

Azerbaijan: The Energy and Transit Hub

Now it’s time to look at Azerbaijan, the energy and transit hub of the three. Azerbaijanis are the glue of the alliance, providing the financial and energy capital that fuels the partnership. At the beginning, Baku was seeking to back its military and political campaigns in the Karabakh wars. Now that it has achieved its primary military objectives against Armenia, Baku is undertaking to create a sphere of influence beyond the borders. Think of the frontier with Iran. In the long run, Baku aims to deter Iran and perhaps extend its border on a weakened Iran. The latest example was what transpired following the 2026 Iranian drone strikes on Nakhchivan. Azerbaijan has utilized the alliance to signal that an attack on Baku is an attack on Ankara and Islamabad. This has effectively created a buffer against Iranian regional ambitions.

Weaponizing transit: Azerbaijan is a critical node in a number of Eurasian trade routes. Most notably, the Middle Corridor (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route - TITR), International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Cau-

casus-Asia). For both China-led belt and road initiative or the BRI and the India-led INSTC, Baku acts as a strategic gatekeeper. Baku’s primary aim is to elbow out Armenia in the long run from playing any significant role in any of those communication channels.

Geostrategy for India: Russia and China: The Looming Challenge

The three brothers alliance has profound geostrategic consequences for three global powers namely Russia, China, and India. Those looming challenges are especially harmful for the Indian interest both in its immediate borders and in its global interests. The three brothers alliance represents a significant “pincer” threat to Indian interests.

India vs. Three Brothers

Trade Route Sabotage: India’s vision for the INSTC relies on a stable Armenia. The three brothers are adamant about dislodging Yerevan’s role, favoring the Zangezur Corridor, which would bypass Armenian sovereignty and link Turkey directly to the Caspian Sea, effectively cutting India’s shortest route to Russia and Europe.

The Afghan Void: As Turkey and Pakistan work to manage the Taliban-led Afghanistan, India finds its “Connect Central Asia” policy increasingly obstructed by a hostile trilateral bloc.

The “Pan-Islamic” Alignment: Turkey’s efforts to form a “Muslim Alliance” with nations like Malaysia and Pakistan create a religious-political bloc that frequently targets India’s internal policies, complicating New Delhi’s “Act West and Look East” diplomacy. In the long run, this would have a profound impact on India’s strategic posturing in the East Asian regions.

The Russian Factor: The ‘Betrayed’ Arbiter

Russia’s relationship with the three brothers is one of managed hostility, interest, and opportunity. Historically, the Caucasus, Caspian, and Central Asia were Moscow’s backyard, but the rise of the Aliyev-Erdogan alliance has shattered that monopoly.

The CSTO Dilemma: Russia is duty-bound by the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) to defend Armenia. However, Baku’s recent military successes, supported by Turkish and Pakistani technology, have shown that Moscow’s security guarantees are increasingly hollow.

Managed Nose-Bloodying: As noted in earlier analysis, Putin has little incentive to save the Aliyev dynasty if it drifts too far toward NATO (Turkey) or Israel. Russia is likely to tolerate, or even encourage, Iranian pressure on Baku to re-

mind Aliyev that without Moscow’s “permission,” the energy pipelines, the BTC and SCP, are indefensible.

Punishing Armenia: By allowing the three brothers to weaken Armenia, Russia keeps Yerevan dependent on Moscow for its very survival. Russia’s “ambiguous” role is a calculated strategy to remain the indispensable mediator while letting the three brothers do the “dirty work” of dismantling Western-leaning tendencies in the region under the current Armenian administration and what may yet to come.

The Chinese Factor: The ‘Silent Engineer’

China views the three brothers not as a military threat, but as a useful logistical tool. Beijing’s primary goal is the security of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at all costs.

The Middle Corridor vs. India’s INSTC: China heavily favors the Middle Corridor (China-Central Asia-Caspian-Turkey) for a number of reasons. The Middle Corridor is the primary route promoted by the three brothers. By backing this route, China effectively marginalizes India’s International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). If Baku and Ankara succeed in controlling the transit nodes, India’s gateway to Europe is effectively under the control of its two greatest rivals: Pakistan and China. In the event of a military flare-up, Beijing could leverage this influence to its advantage, cutting Delhi from its economic lifelines.

The JF-17 Link: The most visible sign of China’s presence in this alliance is the JF-17 Block III fighter jet. While it is a three brothers success story, it is built on Chinese technology. Beijing uses Pakistan as a front to sell military hardware to Azerbaijan, allowing China to expand its defense market in the Caucasus without directly offending Russia.

Asymmetric Dependency: China is the silent financier. By providing the economic backing for infrastructure in Pakistan (CPEC) and Azerbaijan, Beijing ensures that the three brothers remain aligned with Chinese geo-economic goals, even if their military rhetoric is focused elsewhere.

Conclusion: The End of Ad Hoc Diplomacy

The three brothers are no longer just practicing drills. They are building a collective defense system with far-reaching goals. This alliance signals the end of an era where regional conflicts could be managed in isolation. The Caucasus, the Indus, and the Bosphorus are now strategically linked. While Aliyev, Erdogan, and Sharif may badmouth their enemies for the cameras, their real work is in the silent interlocking of their armies – a reality that the world can no longer ignore.

(See also this accompanying video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibwlv_rjrKw).



Iran Thanks Armenia for ‘Humanitarian Support’

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has thanked Armenia for what he described as humanitarian support provided to Iran during its ongoing war with the United States and Israel.

“The support of the Armenian government and people to the Iranian people in the evacuation of Iranians and humanitarian aid is highly commendable,” he said in a weekend post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. “The centuries-old ties between Iran and Armenia have once again shown their strength in a difficult time, and these brotherly steps will remain in the memory of the Iranian people.”

Araghchi’s Armenian-language tweet followed his phone call with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan. According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, the two men discussed “consequences of the continued US and the Israeli military aggression against Iran.” In a statement, the ministry said Mirzoyan offered Yerevan’s condolences over the deaths of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, other officials as well as civilians killed in US-Israeli air strikes.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry released a much shorter readout of the call. It said Mirzoyan discussed with Araghchi “possi-



Injured Iranians

bilities for resolving the situation” around Iran and “humanitarian issues.” It did not elaborate.

The Armenian government has reacted cautiously to the war, declining to criticize the US-Israeli military campaign. Mirzoyan said last week that it has delivered medicines and other humanitarian assistance to the Islamic Republic. He did not reveal the amount of the aid.

The government did not officially report the shipment. Its critics claimed that it was afraid of displeasing the US

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s administration has sought to reorient Arme-

nia towards the West in recent years. It agreed last year to open a US-administered transit corridor for Azerbaijan that would run along Armenia’s strategic border with Iran.

In the months leading up to the ongoing war, Iranian officials spoke out against the transit arrangement. They feared that it could undermine Armenian control of the border and lead to US security presence there. Yerevan sought to allay their concerns. Some observers believe that Tehran will now be even more opposed to the planned Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity.

Armenian Prime Minister Rejects ‘Historical Justice’ Agenda

HISTORICAL JUSTICE, from page 1
He added that recent discussions with citizens during pre-election visits had given him the confidence to publicly address sensitive issues. “I see that this directly relates to the desires, goals and aspirations of the people of Armenia, so we will go that way,” the prime minister said.

Pashinyan also urged voters to support his approach in the upcoming elections. “I believe that the people should stand up for this strategy, and I am sure they will,” he said.

Earlier in the day, speaking at a cabinet meeting, Pashinyan criticized what he called “tendencies” to keep displaced Karabakh Armenians in a “refugee status.” He reiterated his government’s position that, while the opposition emphasizes the right of return, such a prospect is unrealistic and risks renewed conflict with Azerbaijan.

He argued that lasting peace requires not only agreements with Azerbaijan but also a shift in public mindset within Armenia. “Peace is not only an agreement, but a state of mind,” Pashinyan said.

During the press briefing, Pashinyan reiterated that, in the upcoming elections, his Civil Contract party will seek a constitutional majority in parliament, which would allow it to pursue a new constitution without a reference to the 1990 Declaration of Independence in its preamble.

The declaration cites a 1989 act on unification between Soviet Armenia and the then Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast within Soviet Azerbaijan, which Baku views as a territorial claim. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly said that signing a peace deal with Armenia is contingent on the removal of the reference from Armenia’s constitution. Under Armenian law, this can only be done through a national referendum.

“We are the ones who, first of all, need a new constitution without the reference to the Declaration of Independence, because it will allow us to have a lasting state in this region,” the prime minister said.

Asked what his government will do if the new constitution fails to pass in the referendum, Pashinyan said it would pursue a new one. “We will go and persuade our people, explain to them. We have no problem. I am convinced that whatever we discuss with our people honestly and fairly, they will understand, because we are representatives of our people,” he added.

Pashinyan warned last week that any attempt to revise the agreements reached with Baku at a Washington summit last year will result in an “inevitable” war with “disastrous” consequences for Armenia. He also said that his political opponents’ election platforms aim to undermine what he described as the current peace with Azerbaijan. Opposition groups rejected that claim, calling it an attempt to intimidate voters ahead of the elections.

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