

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

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## Trump Avoids Using Term 'Genocide' in April 24 Statement



WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump in his statement on April 24 refused to use the phrase Armenian Genocide, to no one's surprise.

His statement said, in part, "Today, we pay tribute to the countless Armenians who were exiled and brutally massacred during the *Meds Yeghern*. We stand in steadfast solidarity with every Armenian American and Armenians around the world during this day of remembrance for the devastating events that occurred over 100 years ago, which continue to live in the collective memories of these communities today.

"This solemn chapter in human history will forever stand as a testament to the unbreakable spirit of the Armenian people and the hope at the center of Christianity. We honor the profound strength and resolve displayed by the Armenians in overcoming the tremendous tragedies of the past and forging a greater future that is defined by enduring prosperity, security, and peace. We commit to standing with them."

This Armenian Remembrance Day, as we mourn the innocent souls who perished during the tragedy of the *Meds Yeghern*, we renew our sacred calling to protect the innocent, advance the cause for peace among all people, and cultivate a deep reverence for Almighty God, who sustains us through every trial and triumph."

Both Armenian lobbying groups, the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee of America, decried the statement.

Said the Armenian Assembly, "On this solemn occasion of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, the Armenian Assembly of America honors the memory of the see STATEMENT, page 19



Van Krikorian at Harvard (photo Aram Arkun)

## At Harvard Law Talk, Van Krikorian Says International Laws Work Only If Enforced

By Aram Arkun  
*Mirror-Spectator Staff*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Attorney and professor Van Z. Krikorian delivered a wide-ranging talk at Harvard Law School on April 17 as the guest of the Harvard Armenian Law Students Association on human rights law as it relates to the Armenian Genocide and the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh to a mixed audience of Harvard students and community members.

Co-President Anahit A. Melkonyan of the Harvard Armenian Law Students Association introduced Krikorian, noting his extensive knowledge in the field of human rights and international law. He is an adjunct profes-

sor at Pace Law School, attorney and Chair and CEO of Global Gold Corporation. Krikorian served as Armenia's Deputy Representative and Counselor at the United Nations in 1992 and on the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission from 2001 to 2004. He has served as chair of the Armenian Assembly of America (of which he is now chair emeritus) as well as of the Armenian National Institute, and was awarded Armenia's Medal of Honor in 2017. Krikorian has testified before Congress on numerous occasions and has spent decades advocating on human rights issues, including authoring key provisions of the Freedom Support Act and the Foreign Assistance Act.

see KRİKORIAN, page 9

## Dutch and Belgian Resolutions on Armenian Prisoners In Azerbaijan Trigger Outrage in Baku

By Aytan Ahmadova

The Belgium and Dutch parliaments adopted resolutions which also included imprisoned Armenian prisoners in Baku on April 16, resulting in condemnations from the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry and the summoning of both countries' ambassadors on Monday, April 20.

The resolution which was adopted in Brussels by the Belgian Parliament contains 10 requests for the federal government.

The document stipulated that Azerbaijan should respect the principles of sovereignty and integrity and retreat from "the occu-



Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan

piated border territories of Armenia, covering an area of over 200 square kilometers."

According to the local Armenian media, since 2021 Azerbaijan has occupied "more than 200 square kilometers of Armenia's internationally recognized territory in the regions of Syunik, Vayots Dzor, and Gegharkunik."

The resolution also calls other EU members "to urge Azerbaijan to finally sign the peace agreement initiated with Armenia as announced on 13 March 2025."

The resolution addressed the situation of Armenian prisoners in Baku and demanded that the Azerbaijani government ensure their access to transparent and fair trials as a "gesture of goodwill."

A separate resolution adopted by the Dutch Parliament condemned the "deplorable conditions" in which the former leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian prisoners of war were being kept in Azerbaijan. It has also called for their release.

These resolutions were assessed by the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry "as a reckless attempt to undermine Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty."

It decried what it called "utterly biased and unfounded assessments" of Azerbaijan, including "baseless accusations" see OUTRAGE, page 5



## TCA Sponsors UCLA VEM String Quartet Tour of Philly, Boston, Montreal, Detroit and Los Angeles

WATERTOWN — The UCLA Vem String Quartet will have performances in Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal, Detroit and Los Angeles (Altadena) in May, during a tour presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and the UCLA Armenian Music Program. In each of these cities, there are local co-sponsors for presentations and performances.

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AIWA Celebrates 35th Anniversary, As AIWA-LA Marks 30 Years



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JAPAN  
Director Avetisyan Visits Tokyo to Scout Locations for 'The Stateless Diplomat'



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ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Armenia, Turkey Hold Railway Talks in Kars

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian and Turkish officials have met in Kars to discuss reopening the Gyumri-Kars railway.

According to Armenia's Foreign Ministry, on April 28, a session of the Armenia-Turkey working group focused on restoring and launching the Gyumri-Kars railway.

"In the context of expanding regional transport links, the sides stressed the importance of launching the railway as soon as possible," the statement said.

The U.S. Embassy in Armenia described the meeting as "historic progress toward a peaceful and prosperous South Caucasus."

"Armenian and Turkish officials met in Kars to establish a joint working group on reconstructing the railway. Restoring this connection is a key step toward reopening regional routes and strengthening stability," the statement added.

### Philharmonic Tours Europe

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — From April 27 to May 16, the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra will perform at prestigious concert halls in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Spain.

The orchestra will be joined by violinists Augustin Dumay and Sergey Khachatryan, pianist Eva Gevorgyan, Italian cellist Ettore Pagano, and conductors Eduard Topchjan (Armenia), Pier Carlo Orizio (Italy), and Benjamin Zwick (Switzerland).

### Canadian Premier to Visit Armenia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will travel to Armenia next week to take part in the European Political Community (EPC) summit, alongside European leaders. According to the European Commission, he will be the first non-European head of government to attend the forum since its launch in 2022.

The gathering in Yerevan will be held under the theme "Building the Future: Unity and Resilience in Europe". Discussions are expected to focus on strengthening democratic resilience, improving connectivity and bolstering economic and energy security. Leaders will explore ways to deepen cooperation and coordinate actions to create a more secure and united European space.

All 27 EU member states have been invited, along with partner countries including Azerbaijan and Turkey. Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan recently said that neither Baku nor Ankara had yet responded to invitations.

The EPC was established in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with summits held twice a year in both EU and non-EU countries.

# Ruben Vardanyan Moved to Baku Prison As Sentence Takes Effect, Lawyer Says

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Former Artsakh State Minister Ruben Vardanyan has been transferred to the Umbaki Penitentiary in Baku after his prison sentence formally entered into force, according to Siranush Sahakyan, a human rights lawyer representing Armenian detainees before the European Court of Human Rights.

Speaking to Panorama.am on Tuesday, April 28, Sahakyan said Vardanyan's legal status has shifted from pretrial detainee to convicted prisoner, prompting his relocation from a detention facility operated by Azerbaijan's security services to a correctional institution under the Ministry of Justice. She noted that such institutional separation between pretrial detention centers and prisons for convicted individuals is standard practice in both Armenia and Azerbaijan.



Ruben Vardanyan in custody

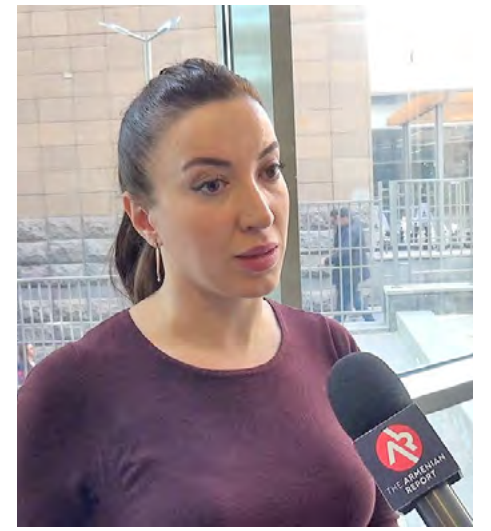
A military court in Baku sentenced Vardanyan to 20 years in prison on charges including crimes against peace and humanity, war crimes, terrorism, and financing terrorism. Sahakyan said the verdict has now taken legal effect.

Vardanyan has publicly stated that he will not appeal the ruling in domestic courts, arguing that the proceedings lacked fundamental guarantees of due process. He characterized the trial as a "staged" exercise that failed to pursue justice in any substantive sense, Sahakyan said.

Under Azerbaijani legal procedures, once a verdict is issued and enforced, detainees are reclassified as convicted prisoners and typically transferred to penitentiary institutions. Sahakyan noted that Armenian detainees captured in 2020 and later convicted were also moved to the Umbaki prison, making Vardanyan's transfer consistent with prior practice.

While there is no confirmed information about the status of other Armenian detainees, Sahakyan said it is reasonable to infer that they have been — or will soon be — transferred to the same facility.

Following the closure of the Baku office of the International Committee of the Red Cross, access to independent, on-the-ground information about Armenian prisoners has significantly diminished. Communication is now limited to monitored



Siranush Sahakyan

In April, the court rejected Azerbaijan's request and set an August 31 deadline for the submission of updated reports. Sahakyan said new details are expected to emerge in the autumn. In a notable development, the court has specifically required Azerbaijan to provide copies or extracts of the verdicts, including their legal reasoning and the evidentiary basis for the charges.

"This decision may compel the Azerbaijani authorities to fulfill their obligation to provide detainees with their judgments," Sahakyan said. "A thorough legal analysis will become possible once we obtain these documents."

She suggested that the delay in providing verdicts may reflect both a strategy to postpone international legal scrutiny and the possibility that written judgments have yet to be fully finalized.

"It appears that the rulings were announced before the reasoning was completed," she said, adding that the authorities may still be shaping arguments capable of withstanding international review.

Sahakyan also confirmed that detainees' communication with family members is now administered by prison authorities. Individuals captured in 2023 are allowed one brief phone call per week, while those detained earlier are permitted one call per month.

"All such communication is subject to monitoring," she added.

## Deputy FM Says TRIPP Is Strategic Project

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan stated during a panel at the World Policy Conference on April 28 that the TRIPP initiative carries far broader significance than merely connecting Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan.

"TRIPP is not just a link between mainland Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan; it is a much larger and strategic project aimed at connecting Central Asia with Europe, as well as understanding commitments for mutual benefits," he said.

He emphasized that Armenia is the full owner of the project.

"This also practically means that Armenia's southern part can be connected with its northern part using the Nakhichevan railway. With the unblocking that will take place, we will have the opportunity to connect not only East with West, but also the Gulf with the Black Sea, which will be a huge transformation for the entire region. We are very interested in implementing this project," Kostanyan noted.

He added that active discussions are un-

derway with American partners on establishing an Armenian-American joint venture in Armenia.

The deputy minister assured that not only feasibility studies have begun, but also the opening of communications in the region is already underway. As an example, after August 8, there has been a precedent of importing grain from Kazakhstan via the railway systems of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

"This is a vivid example of how regional cooperation can work and how creating additional interdependencies in the region can greatly contribute to stability and peace.

As for Armenia and Azerbaijan, the leaders of both countries have repeatedly stated after August 8 that peace has already been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The processes currently underway are what we prefer to call the 'institutionalization of peace,' taking further steps to develop and deepen economic ties between our two countries.

We have already started direct bilateral trade, with fuel imports from Azerbaijan, and we hope this will continue soon, as we

have already clarified what Armenia will export to Azerbaijan.

At the same time, we are also working on people-to-people contacts, organizing meetings between civil society representatives. Notably, such meetings are taking place not only in foreign countries but also in Armenia and Azerbaijan," Kostanyan said.

He also noted the existence of an important format established with Georgian partners in the form of trilateral consultations between foreign ministries.

Earlier, Armenia's Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington endorsed a document on Armenia-U.S. cooperation within the framework of the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) program.

The published document on TRIPP implementation outlines the launch procedures of the initiative and does not create, nor is it intended to create, legal obligations for either Armenia or the United States.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Armenians in Germany Commemorate 1915 Genocide

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — Every year Berlin and Frankfurt host major events on or about April 24, to honor the memory of the victims of the 1915 Armenian genocide, often flanked by smaller gatherings in other locations. This year members of the Armenian community organized remembrance days over a week-long period from April 19 to 26 and throughout the country, in more than 20 cities. Beginning in Braunschweig in Lower Saxony, ceremonies took place inside churches and outside at sites where *khachkars* have been erected, Halle/Saale, Mainz, Cologne, Bremen, Munich, Stuttgart, Kehl, Neuwied, Hamburg, Nurnberg, Höchststadt/Aisch, Bielefeld Giessen, Würzburg and Mülheim in the Ruhr region.

In Leipzig, on April 20, a new *khachkar* was inaugurated. The welcoming remarks were delivered by Pastor Bernhard Stief of the Nikolai Church, Leipzig Mayor Burkhard Jung, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Germany Victor Yengibaryan and the head of the Armenian Cultural Union of Leipzig Anahit Babayan.

During the event, children from the Armenian community sang *Kakavik* and *Lorik* in Armenian with the Propsteikirche St. Trinitatis Leipzig Choir. Further Armenian musical offerings came from Ani Poghosyan on the kanoon, singer Arpi Grigoryan, Tilman Lutwig on the duduk, and Hank Galnkambi on the organ.

After the memorial event, organized by the Armenian Cultural Association of Leipzig, the ceremonial unveiling and consecration of the *khachkar* took place in front of the Leipzig City Hall, adjacent to the Prop stay Church. The *khachkar* was consecrated by the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Germany, Bishop Serape Isakhanyan, with the prayers of Father Hakob, as well as the priest of the Propsteikirche St. Trinitatis, Ralph Kochinka, and Stief of the Nikolai Church.

Prayers and commemorations took place in the historic St. Paul's church in Frankfurt and in the Evangelical Cuisenaire as well as



Ambassador Yengibaryan and Bundestag Vice President Bodo Ramelow honor 1915 genocide victims

at the Ecumenical Memorial for the Genocide Victims of the Ottoman Empire at the Evangelical Luisenfriedhof Cemetery.

In Berlin, on April 24, Yengibaryan and the Vice President of the German Bundestag (Parliament), Bodo Ramelow, together with members of the embassy staff and of the Armenian community, honored the memory of the genocide victims of 1915. The event, organized by the Armenian embassy, took place near the Armenian *khachkar* in the court of the St. Hedwigs Cathedral.

## Genocide Recognition, Ten Years Later

Jonathan Spangenberg, Chairman of the Central Council of Armenians in Germany (ZAD), delivering a commemoration in Frankfurt, referenced the fact that 2026 marks the ten-year anniversary of the historic resolution in the German Bundestag recognizing the genocide of the Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. In that resolution, it was mandated that the genocide should be included

in high school curricula; but with few exceptions, that has not occurred.

Tessa Hofmann, speaking at a memorial gathering in Cologne, raised the same issue. "Only about one-third of the 16 German Federal states [whose state legislatures are responsible for school curricula] include genocide instruction in their curricula, and that in an optional form. Such education," she continued, "must be mandatory..." Hofmann and Spangenberg have presented an appeal to the Conference of Education Ministers, calling for immediate improvement.

Following a keynote speech by Dr. John Eibner, of Christian Solidarity International, dealing with the continuing threats to Armenians and territorial sovereignty, Bischof Serovpé Isakhanyan offered uplifting words, recalling that only three weeks had passed since Easter, with its message of resurrection and hope. He lauded the engagement of the Armenian diaspora in the region and concluded with intercessory prayers and the Hayr Mer.

# Exhibition in Baku Promotes the So-Called 'Western Azerbaijan' Narrative through Art, Watchdog Warns

YEREVAN (Panorama) — An exhibition titled "Western Azerbaijan" by artist Ali Ismayil Aliyev has recently opened in Baku, Azerbaijani media reports suggest.

The solo exhibition is being held at the Vajiha Samadova Exhibition Hall of the Azerbaijan Artists' Union and is organized jointly by the Artists' Union, the so-called "Western Azerbaijan Community" and the Azerbaijan State University of Economics. Organizers state that the works reflect the "historical realities," as well as the national and spiritual values, of what they refer to as "Western Azerbaijan."

The exhibition features paintings spanning different periods of Aliyev's career. Organizers present the works not only as artistic expressions but also as vehicles for preserving and transmitting collective memory.

The opening ceremony was attended by government officials, members of parliament, intellectuals and representatives of the "Western Azerbaijan Community." Speakers emphasized the importance of such initiatives in maintaining "historical memory" and passing it on to future generations, highlighting art's role in shaping national identity and sustaining connections to what was described as a "lost homeland."



According to the Artsakh Monument Watch, which tracks cultural heritage in Artsakh, the exhibition reflects a broader trend of employing cultural platforms to promote political and historical narratives. The report notes that such initiatives, particularly when supported by state-affiliated institutions, illustrate the use of art as a tool for advancing contested interpretations of history.

Aliyev, born in 1960 in what Azerbaijani sources describe as the Basarkechar region, corresponding to present-day Vardenis in Armenia's Gegharkunik Province, reportedly draws on themes of nostalgia for the Goycha region and other territories charac-

terized as "historical lands." His works depict landscapes including Lake Sevan, the Vardenis Mountain Range and stylized representations of Yerevan with Mount Ararat in the background.

The term "Western Azerbaijan," as noted by the Monument Watch, is widely regarded by critics as a politically constructed designation lacking scholarly foundation and applied to the internationally recognized territory of the Republic of Armenia. Analysts argue that its use in cultural contexts contributes to the dissemination of politicized narratives and contested historical interpretations.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Former Iranian FM Appears to Accuse Azerbaijan of Aiding Israeli Operations

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Iran's former foreign minister, now a lawmaker representing Tehran, has appeared to level serious accusations against Azerbaijan during remarks aired on Iranian state television, Iran specialist Vardan Voskanyan said.

Manouchehr Mottaki suggested that, based on expert assessments, Israeli strikes targeting northern Iran may have made use of Azerbaijani airspace. He also referenced reports alleging that Israeli aircraft may have accessed Azerbaijani airports, including for refueling purposes.

Writing on social media on Tuesday, April 28, Voskanyan noted that similar allegations have been circulating widely across Iran's media landscape at multiple levels, contributing to a shift in public sentiment.

"The continued flow of such claims within Iran's information sphere is shaping a public atmosphere that could ultimately influence Tehran's official position on the barbaric Baku regime in the postwar period," Voskanyan said.

## Israeli Plane Takes Detour To Kazakhstan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The plane carrying Israeli President Isaac Herzog took an eight-hour route to Kazakhstan for his two-day visit after Türkiye denied it entry into its airspace on April 27, according to Israeli media.

Channel 12 reported that the aircraft followed an alternative route via Europe and Russia to avoid entering Turkish airspace, extending the flight time to eight hours.

In November 2024, Türkiye also denied Herzog permission to use its airspace for a flight to COP29 in Azerbaijan, after which he cancelled the trip, citing "security concerns," according to TRT World.

Relations between Türkiye and Israel have deteriorated since Israel launched its military attacks in Gaza.

## Armenia Does not Expect Quick EU Membership

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia does not naively believe it will become an EU member in 2028 or 2030, Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan said during a panel discussion titled "EU as a strategic partner" at the World Policy Conference on April 28.

He added that Yerevan views the EU membership process as a strategic direction, the Foreign Ministry reported.

"We are shaping a new and ambitious reform agenda to meet European standards. We believe this reform agenda is, in itself, a very important process for us both domestically and at the national level, which we are implementing starting with the visa liberalization dialogue launched with the European Union," he said.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Paris Commemorates Armenian Genocide

By Jean Eckian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PARIS — During two full days of events, Paris commemorated the Armenian Genocide. It began in the morning of April 24 with a reception for the Armenian community at Paris City Hall, where the new mayor of Paris, Emmanuel Grégoire gave a speech, and was followed at 3 p.m. with a mass for the martyrs at the Armenian Apostolic Church. The service was led by Bishop Krikor Khachatryan.

At 6 p.m. the same day, the Armenian community gathered at the “Jardin de Erevan” [Yerevan Garden], where speeches were given by the co-presidents of the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations in France (CCAF) and Grégoire.

Grégoire reiterated that Turkey’s recognition of the genocide remains “a vital struggle” for Armenia. France, he said, has been “a land of welcome” and “must continue to be so.” “Paris will remain true to its history: a city of solidarity, openness, and refuge.” Addressing the assembly, he spoke of those Armenians who are the pride



The public on April 24 (photo Jean Eckian)



Armenian Ambassador Arman Khatchatryan, third from left, pays his respects (photo Jean Eckian)

of France, such as the Resistance fighter Missak Manouchian or Charles Aznavour, who, with his song *Ils sont tombés*, “put words to the unspeakable” — the genocide.

Memory, he concluded, has meaning only “if it illuminates a future that can be written only in peace.” Paris will “support” Armenia with all its might. “We do not forget the prisoners, and we will display their portraits in public spaces. Armenian culture must continue to thrive, and we will support the creation of a House of Armenia, which will be established in collaboration with all local authorities.”

CCAF Co-Chair Mourad Papazian sin-

gled out Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accusing him of being “the architect of the strategy to deny the Armenian Genocide.” He said, “For as long as the truth is not acknowledged, as long as justice is not served, as long as responsibility is not assumed... history remains unfinished.”

“He then accused Azerbaijan of carrying out “ethnic cleansing” of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, highlighting Azerbaijan’s desire “to erase and humiliate.” “And as if that weren’t enough... 19 Armenians are currently detained in Baku,” he strongly denounced.

Papazian then expressed his emotions,

saying: “The Armenian people are not merely a wounded people. They are a people who inspire us. A people who remind us that dignity is not negotiable. That memory does not fade. That justice always prevails in the end. A people who, despite everything, continue to hope. And this hope compels us. It compels us to rise to the occasion. It compels us to be courageous. It compels us to remain true to who we are.”

Ara Toranian, co-chair of the CCAF, also condemned the imprisonment of the 19 Armenians detained in Baku and the “unpunished crime” for which Turkey remains responsible. He declared: “To remember is to prevent the crime from fully achieving its goal. The duty to remember does not erase the irreparable. But it prevents forgetting from being its completion. Because genocide is a crime without statute of limitations and universal in scope. And in the face of it, humanity has a duty to ensure that neither time nor distance become the allies of the perpetrators. Here, today, by honoring these dead — whom Holocaust denial insults — we offer them what their executioners sought to deny them: a mausoleum in the conscience of humanity. But this demand is not merely a matter of memory. It also engages our present. “Forgetfulness paves the way for tomorrow’s crimes. That is why our struggle continues. For the truth. For justice. For peace. For the release of our hostages. And so that no people will ever be condemned to disappear amid the world’s indifference.”

Arman Khachatryan, ambassador of Armenia to France, concluded his remarks with these words: “We remember —so that silence may never shield crimes, so that truth may stand against denial and revisionism, and so that the future may not succumb to the repetition of the past. For memory is not merely a tribute to the dead. It is a demand upon the living.” April 25

The next day, at 11 a.m in Notre-Dame de Paris a solemn Catholic Mass was celebrated by Bishop Hovhannes Teyrouzian, Bishop of the Armenian Catholics of France.

At 6 p.m., the Armenian community gathered under the Arc de Triomphe in honor of the Armenian veterans who died for France. A ceremony was organized by the National Association of Armenian Veterans and Re-



Mayor of Paris Emmanuel Grégoire (photo Jean Eckian)

sistance Fighters (ANACRA), Volunteers of the French Army from 1914–1918, and Veterans of the 1939–1945 War.

Elsewhere, nearly a hundred municipalities across France, from Marseille, in the south, to Lille in the north, commemorated April 24.

French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu in Marseille stated, “More than a million men, women, and children massacred. A genocide, a crime against humanity. But a great crime, as we know from our history, is not in vain; it does not diminish the greatness of a people, the beauty of a language or a culture, nor, above all, the millennia-old and tragic history that still resonates today in the dark and profound gaze of the children of Armenia.” April 28 Exclusion from Inauguration of New Armenian Embassy in Paris

As we write these lines, the inauguration of a new building that will house the Armenian Embassy in Paris is scheduled for April 28. Located in the very chic 16th arrondissement, this residence is the former property of President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. The following individuals were excluded from this solemn inauguration: Ara Toranian, Mourad Papazian, Hovhannes Guevorguian, representative of Artsakh in France, and Monsignor Krikor Khachatryan, Bishop of the Armenians of France.

In a statement, the representative bodies of the Armenian community in France “regretted the exclusion of diaspora representatives from the inauguration of the new Armenian embassy. This decision appears to us to be a regrettable mistake. It must be acknowledged as such. We hope that this situation can be clarified in a spirit of dialogue.”



Relighting the flame at the Arc de Triomphe (photo Jean Eckian)



## INTERNATIONAL

# Armenians in Tbilisi Denied Permission to Commemorate Genocide near Turkish Embassy

By Mikheil Gvadzabia

Georgia's Interior Ministry has denied a request by an Armenian civil society group to hold a demonstration in front of the Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi on the occasion of the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.

The Armenian Community of Georgia, the organization behind the demonstration, told OC Media that they initially notified Tbilisi City Hall at the end of March about the rally planned for Friday, April 24.

A board member and secretary of the organization, Zhaneta Baghdasarian said that the police contacted them a few days later and informed them that they would not be allowed to hold their demonstration in front of the embassy.

"[The Ministry representative] informed us that we are denied [the opportunity] to hold the event at the specified location, citing the motive to prevent potential risks," a statement from the organization read.

According to the organization, they requested a written document confirming the refusal decision, after which they encountered a "lack of coordination between government agencies."

"The City Hall and the Interior Ministry were not aware of any such decision," the statement said, going on to describe the subsequent communication with both agencies and the difficulties in obtaining an official document.

The organization further noted that the problematic communication continued until April 21, when they were finally able to obtain an official letter from the ministry.

The letter, cited in the statement, referred to the Georgian law on assemblies and demonstrations, stating that the ministry is obliged to maintain a balance between the freedom of assembly and the rights of individuals who live, work, or conduct business in the areas where a demonstration is held. The ministry emphasized that these individuals should not be hindered in doing their activities.

"Given the specified location and its particular characteristics, holding the assembly may lead to a risk of violating the requirements established by the above-mentioned norm; therefore, we ask you to consider the advisability of changing the location of the event," the ministry's statement concluded.

Baghdasarian described the letter and its justification as "unclear," noting that similar rallies had been held near the embassy over the past 20 years.

"The Georgian government knows that our demonstration is peaceful. There have been no provocations, no incidents over these 20 years that would justify restricting our demonstration or our ability to freely express our opinions," she added.

Baghdasarian said that the community organization is not considering holding the rally at another location and, therefore, will not hold the demonstration at all.

"It was a matter of principle for us to hold the demonstration there, as our demand is for Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide," she added.

OC Media has contacted the Interior Ministry for comment on the matter, but had not received a response at the time of publication.

Unlike the April 24 rally, the community held its annual torchlit procession the day before, from the Isani Metro Station to the St. Echmiadzin Church in Avlabari. In this case, the Interior Ministry greenlit the planned route, but emphasized that participants had to remain on the pavement.

Under the protest-related restrictions

passed by the ruling Georgian Dream party and its allies in December 2025, an obligation was introduced to notify the police before holding a protest in "people's movement" zones — including on the pavement — and wait for their response.

The police have the authority to change both the location and timing of a protest. Failure to comply with the law could result in imprisonment on the first offence. Numerous participants of daily anti-government rallies in Tbilisi have received days-long sentences after the legislation was passed.

Before the amendments were adopted, it was mandatory to notify municipal authorities — not the police — only in cases where a protest was expected to block a road; however, there was no obligation to wait for a state response — something

that now exists not only for roadways but also for pavements and is overseen by the police.

Although the Armenian community had largely been able to hold rallies near the Turkish Embassy without restrictions in previous years, there have been exceptions.

In 2017, Tbilisi City Hall told organizers that holding the gathering at that specific location was not advisable, citing potential traffic disruptions.

Earlier, in the case of the 2016 rally, which coincided with tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the organizers said they changed the location of the demonstration at the government's request and in order to avoid potential provocations.

(This story originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on April 24.)

## Putin Honors Armenian Genocide Victims, Says Was One of the Greatest Tragedies of 20th Century

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) — In a message marking Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, Russian President Vladimir Putin paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, describing it as one of the most terrible tragedies of the 20th century.

Putin said Russia bows its head before the memory of the hundreds of thousands of victims of the Armenian people's genocide, recalling the brutal massacre of defenseless and innocent people who were killed, wounded, and driven from their native towns and villages.

He noted that the tragedy shocked the entire civilized world, while its catastroph-

ic consequences clearly demonstrated the dangers of inciting religious hatred, nationalism and xenophobia.

He stressed that Russia's position on this issue has always remained unchanged.

He recalled that in May 1915, this stance was reflected in the joint declaration of Russia, the United Kingdom, and France, which condemned violence against the Armenian people as a crime against humanity and civilization, as well as later in the April 14, 1995 statement of the Russian State Duma.

Putin emphasized that there can be no justification for the policy of mass destruction and deportation of people based on ethnicity, adding that the international

community must unite efforts to ensure that such barbarity is never repeated anywhere.

He also said that the persecutions and repressions of those years became an unhealed wound for many generations of Armenians, but the tragedy united the people, who demonstrated strong commitment to traditions, wisdom, and courage.

"I am convinced that the sons and daughters of Armenia will continue to preserve their national identity, ancient culture, language, freedom, and spiritual values," Putin said.

He concluded by wishing the friendly Armenian people well-being, prosperity, and all the very best.

## Armenia, France to Sign Strategic Document Next Week, Mirzoyan Says

PARIS (Public Radio of Armenia) — Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said that Armenia and France are set to sign a long-negotiated strategic document next week, as Yerevan continues to deepen cooperation with European countries and institutions.

Mirzoyan made the remarks during a meeting in Paris on April 27 with the heads of Armenia's diplomatic missions accredited to European countries and organizations.

In his opening remarks, the foreign minister noted that significant developments have taken place in Europe and in Armenia's relations with the European Union and individual European countries since their last broader meeting in late August.

"Strategic cooperation is being discussed with many countries. In one week, we will

also witness the signing of a long-negotiated document with France," Mirzoyan said.

He added that Armenia has already advanced similar frameworks with other partners, including Germany, noting that while the titles may vary — from strategic partnership agreements to strategic partnership agendas — the substance reflects deepening ties.

Mirzoyan also referred to the "Strategic Partnership Agenda" signed with the European Union as part of Armenia's broader engagement with European institutions.

The minister highlighted several high-level events scheduled to take place in Yerevan on May 4–6, including the European Political Community and Armenia-EU summits, as well as the "Yerevan Dialogue" forum.

Deputy Foreign Minister Vahan Kostanyan, who coordinates relations with European countries, presented the main agenda items for the upcoming summits and the documents expected to be signed.

Foreign Ministry Secretary General David Karapetyan briefed participants on preparations for the Yerevan Dialogue event and its key discussion areas.

During the gathering, participants discussed Armenia-EU partnership, efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation with European countries, as well as ongoing projects and future prospects.

Mirzoyan also presented the progress of regional connectivity projects involving Armenia, including work with international partners aimed at developing economic and transport infrastructure networks.

## Dutch and Belgian Resolutions on Armenian Prisoners Trigger Outrage in Baku

OUTRAGE, from page 1

alleging violations of Armenia's territorial integrity, the rights of ethnic Armenians, and claims regarding the so-called unlawful detention of persons of Armenian origin were strongly and resolutely rejected."

The ambassadors were urged not to damage the bilateral relations and to curb anti-Azerbaijani sentiments in their respective parliaments.

The Azerbaijani Parliament similarly condemned the resolutions on Monday, calling them "one-sided and biased."

"These documents, which distort the history and results of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia and stem from the unhealthy and racist imagination of traditional anti-Azerbaijani and Islamophobic circles, constitute a gross violation of international law and the rule of law, as well as a provocation against the ongoing and important peace process in the region," the parliament said.

Noting that the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliamentary speakers had recently met in Istanbul, the Azerbaijani Parliament said the Dutch and Belgian resolutions "clearly

demonstrate that the "initiators" of these documents are far removed from the real state of affairs in the region."

"Their true intention is not to promote peace and dialogue, but to incite hostility and revenge."

Furthermore, the Azerbaijani Parliament said the Armenian prisoners in question had committed "war crimes and crimes against humanity" and that their crimes had been proven in a "transparent and open trial."

The Azerbaijani Parliament demanded that the Belgian and Dutch parliaments

"end the hate campaign against Azerbaijan and steps that undermine efforts to strengthen peace in the region."

The Azerbaijani pro-government media Caliber cited political analyst Ilgar Velizade as saying these resolutions would not bear fruit.

"In the end, all of them remained without practical implementation, but they continue to stir certain circles and stimulate new anti-Azerbaijani campaigns," Velizade said.

(This article originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on April 21.)



# Community News

## Central Valley Armenian-American Leads Campaign To Support Blood Cancer Research

FRESNO, Calif. — Amber Balakian, a fourth-generation, organic Armenian-American farmer with Balakian Farms and instructor at Fresno City College, has been selected as a 2026 Visionary of the Year candidate for Blood Cancer United. Over the next ten weeks, Balakian and her team are working to raise \$50,000 to support research and treatment advances for people facing blood cancers.

Balakian is part of the Balakian family, whose farming roots in California's Central Valley span more than a century. Today she helps carry forward that legacy through Balakian Farms, a family operation known locally for its seasonal produce and long-standing presence in the community.

"For generations, farming families like ours have depended on strong communities," Balakian said. "This campaign is another way to show up for others in a big way."

The effort supports the Dare to Dream Project, an initiative focused on improving treatment and care for children diagnosed with blood cancers while continuing to advance research that offers hope to patients and their families.

Balakian chose to take on the campaign in honor of her friend Sara Pickering, a blood cancer survivor whose story has left a lasting impression.

Pickering was just 24 years old when she was diagnosed with Stage 2 Hodgkin's Lymphoma. After months of chemotherapy and radiation, she reached remission. A short time later, the cancer returned. At age 25, she underwent a stem cell transplant and faced a long and difficult recovery.

Today, more than two decades later, Pickering continues to share the words that helped sustain her during that time: "We have to believe we are going to get through this." Pickering has coached softball at Stanford University, Fresno State University and Clovis North High School.

For Balakian, stories like Pickering's are a reminder of the importance of research and community support.

Blood Cancer United has helped fund many of the treatment options used today for blood cancers, and the discoveries supported by the organization have also contributed to advances in treating other types of cancer.

Balakian has assembled a team of women from across the community who have committed their time and energy to raising awareness and encouraging support for the cause.

"Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in ten weeks," Balakian said. "Every contribution helps move this work forward and supports families who are currently facing a diagnosis."

Members of the community who would like to support the campaign see RESEARCH, page 7



California State Assemblyman Juan Alanis, center

## California State Assembly Commemorates Armenian Genocide

SACRAMENTO — The California State Assembly on April 20 passed HR-97 (Schultz, Harabedian), recognizing April 24, 2026, as the "State of California Day of Commemoration of the 111th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923." Assemblyman Juan Alanis joined the measure as coauthor with Assemblyman John Harabedian of Pasadena.

HR-97 honors the more than 1.5 million Armenians who were killed between 1915 and 1923, affirms the historical record, and deplores ongoing efforts to deny the genocide. The resolution also pledges continued support for educators who teach about human rights and genocide so that future generations remember what happened and why it matters.

"In Assembly District 22, especially in Turlock, I

am honored to represent a large and enduring Armenian community whose history and resilience are deeply woven into our region and strongly supported by dedicated local leaders such as Deacon Daniel Aydenian," said Assemblymember Alanis, "a respected faith leader and trusted advocate whose leadership has helped sustain and strengthen the Armenian community in our region."

"As an Armenian American and Chair of the Armenian Caucus, it is critically important that we formally recognize the historical reality of the Armenian Genocide and pay tribute to the 1.5 million Armenians who were murdered," said Assemblymember John Harabedian (D-Pasadena). "As we reflect on this horrific injustice, we also celebrate the strength, resilience, and unity of the Armenian diaspora in California and our many contributions to communities across the state."

California is home to the largest Armenian-American population in the United States. Many of those families trace their roots to survivors of the genocide.

"In California we are proud to stand alongside a strong and resilient Armenian community," Alanis added. "Recognizing this truth matters — to them, and to all of us who believe that dignity, justice and human life must always be defended. We remember. We acknowledge. And we stand together."



Assemblyman John Harabedian

## California Armenian Legislative Caucus Asks Pres. Trump To Address Baku Detentions, Artsakh Refugees, and Armenian Genocide

SACRAMENTO— The California Armenian Legislative Caucus sent a letter to President Donald Trump, asking him to address the Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan as well as the plight of Artsakh refugees. The letter appears in full below:

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation expresses grave concern regarding the ongoing illegal detention of Armenians in Baku, Azerbaijan and the unaddressed needs of more than 100,000 forcibly displaced refugees from Artsakh. While we thank the President for his efforts in the "Joint Declaration" of peaceful interstate relations in August 2025, Azerbaijan continues to hold Armenian civilians, soldiers, and former leaders of Artsakh captive, and occupy sovereign Armenian territory to this very day.

Detainees include prisoners of war, civilians, former Nagorno Karabakh officials such as Presidents, State Ministers, and the Speaker of the Assembly who have been held under fabricated charges and subjected to unfair mock trials and inhumane treatment in direct violation of international human rights laws. Refugees include women, children, families and the elderly. We commend the President's plans for the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIPP) connectivity project in the territory of the Republic of Armenia and acknowledge it cannot be completed without establishing peace in the region once and for all.

We strongly urge you to:

- Call for the release of all Armenian POWs political prisoners, and hostages held by Azerbaijan
- Secure the withdrawal of Azerbaijani forces from sovereign Armenian territory
- Ensure the right of return for ethnic Armenians to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh
- Commit to the preservation of Armenian cultural and religious sites in Nagorno-Karabakh
- Ensure the sovereignty and security of the world's first Christian nation and key democratic ally in the region

As you are aware, Azerbaijan's ongoing detention and abuse of Armenian prisoners of war is a part of a broader pattern of aggression perpetuated after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. During and after the conflict, Azerbaijan perpetrated egregious war crimes including execution of civilians, destruction of schools, homes, and hospitals, deliberate targeting of churches and other Armenian Christian heritage sites, and the arbitrary detention and mistreatment of dozens of Armenian prisoners of war.

see CAUCUS, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## AIWA Celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, as AIWA-LA Marks 30 Years

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) marks its 35th anniversary in 2026, alongside the 30th anniversary of its Los Angeles affiliate, with a Pearl Anniversary Gala on Saturday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m. The event will be held at Reflections Venue, located at 109 E. Harvard Street in Glendale.

The gala's master of ceremonies is Jacqueline Sarkissian, KTLA reporter. The keynote speaker of the evening is Silva Harapetian. She is an Emmy-nominated journalist, documentary producer, and Amazon best-selling author with over 20 years of experience reporting for major networks, including CBS, NBC, ABC, and FOX. Musical performances will be by Greg Hosharian and the Armenian Pops Ensemble. The gala will honor founding members of AIWA- Los Angeles, past presidents, and longtime committee members.

Founded in Boston in 1990, AIWA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing women's issues and creating opportunities for leadership, education, and economic empowerment. With affiliates in Los Angeles, New England, Greater New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Yerevan, AIWA has built a global network committed to uplifting women across diverse communities.

For three decades, AIWA's Los Angeles affiliate has played a leading role in advancing the organization's mission. The affiliate has also contributed significant funding to key programs, including the Women's Support Center, the Women's Entrepreneurship Program in Armenia and Scholarships. The affiliate has also hosted numerous educational mini-conferences featur-



Members of the AIWA LA Board

ing expert speakers on women's health, business, social justice, and public policy.

As AIWA celebrates these milestone anniversaries, the organization remains committed to its founding vision: empowering women, strengthening communities, and inspiring future generations of Armenian leaders.

For information about this event, contact Nora Janoyan Balikian at [njanoyan@yahoo.com](mailto:njanoyan@yahoo.com)

## California Armenian Legislative Caucus Asks Pres. Trump to Address Baku Detentions, Artsakh Refugees, and Armenian Genocide

CAUCUS, from page 6

The California Armenian Legislative Caucus Foundation calls on your leadership in addressing this urgent humanitarian issue and ensuring that the Armenian unlawfully detained individuals are released and that refugees from Artsakh can return to their homes safely and rebuild their lives in peace. The protection of human rights and the dignity of all people are fundamental to the American values and foundational to the international rules-based order.

As California serves as the largest number of Armenian Americans in the United States, these atrocities resonate deeply, recalling what ancestors endured over a century ago as a result of the Armenian Genocide in 1915-1923. We acknowledge the suffering of the Armenian Genocide to reaffirm our collective commitment to stand against future ethnic cleansings and genocides and request that you do the same.

On April 20th of this year the California State Senate and California State Assembly are hosting floor sessions in remembrance of the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Genocide is a valid definition of the mass-killings and deportations of Armenians. We hope that you will join us in using the word "genocide" to provide historical justice.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Bruton-Yenovkian at (916) 396-9738.

Sincerely,

Chair, Assemblymember John Harabedian, Senator Bob Archuleta, Senator Megan Dahle, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Senator Suzette Martinez Valladares, Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens, Assemblymember Juan Alanis, Assemblymember Marc Berman, Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, Assemblymember Jessica Caloza, Assemblymember Damon Connolly, Assemblymember Robert Garcia, Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez, Assemblymember Heather Hadwick, Assemblymember Maggy Krell, Assemblymember Diane Papan, Assemblymember Celeste Rodriguez, Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez, Assemblymember Chris Rogers, Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, Assemblymember Nick Schultz, Assemblymember José Luis Solache, Assemblymember Catherine Stefani, Assemblymember David Tangipa, Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur

## Central Valley Armenian-American Leads Campaign to Support Blood Cancer Research

RESEARCH, from page 6

can do so by making a tax-deductible donation or by helping spread the word.

"As Armenians, we understand the importance of standing together," Balakian said. "This campaign is an opportunity for our community to support families who need hope and better treatment options."

Donations can be made through Balakian's campaign page online. Every amount counts towards this friendly competitive campaign.

Go to: <https://pages.ils.org/voy/cca/fresno26/famberbala>

— Christine Vartanian Datian

# Tekeyan Cultural Association & UCLA Armenian Music Program's Vem Ensemble 2026 Tour



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For more information email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com)

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Chu, Friedman, Kasparian and More Honored at TAAL Event

GLENDALE — Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian joined elected officials, dignitaries, community leaders, and media outlets at the Truth And Accountability League (TAAL) event founded and hosted by journalist Vic Gerami, presented by Golden State Bank and underwritten by Mark Geragos, on April 24.

“Commemoration must be more than remembrance. It must be a call to truth, accountability, and action in the face of ongoing injustice,” said Vic Gerami, founder and chair of Truth And Accountability League (TAAL)

The program included remarks by Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian, as well as the presence of Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang, Assemblymember Nick Schultz, Glendale Police Chief Robert William, representatives of Governor Gavin Newsom, and other dignitaries.

Media presence included NBC4 Los Angeles, Fox 11 Los Angeles, ABC7 Los Angeles, KCBS Los Angeles, Yahoo News, Alpha News, and DemoCast.



Vic Gerami with honoree Laura Friedman



Vic Gerami with honoree Ana Kasparian

remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide while also recognizing individuals who continue to use their voices and platforms for justice,” said Gerami. “The lessons of genocide remembrance remain urgently relevant in a world still confronting displacement, hatred, and the denial of human suffering.”

Gerami added, “Tonight also demonstrated the strength of solidarity across communities. By honoring courageous leaders from public service, journalism, advocacy, and the arts, we affirm that truth and accountability remain essential values.”



Mayor Ardy Kassakhian

This year’s honorees were: Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA-28), Congresswoman Laura Friedman (D-CA-30) and Ana Kasparian. Others honored were Sepi Shyne, Former Mayor of West Hollywood and Arpi Jinbashian Krikorian, Artist.

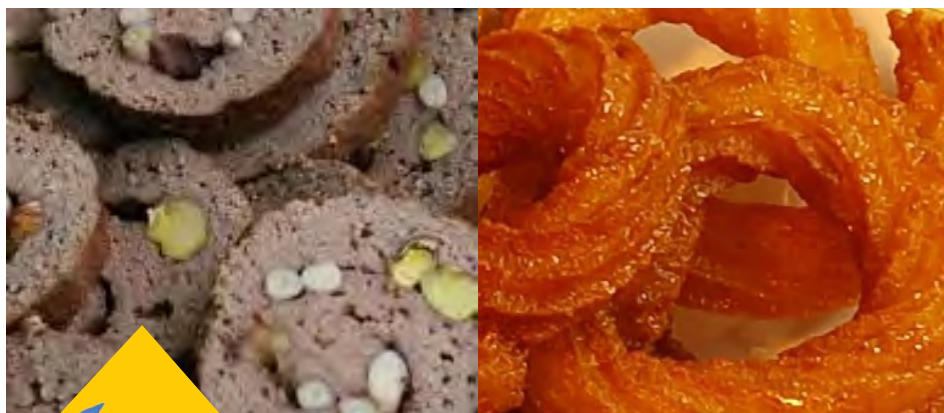
“It was deeply meaningful to gather with leaders and community members to



## Holy Trinity Armenian Church Elects New Parish Council

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On April 16, Holy Trinity Armenian Church installed the new Parish Council from the elections that took place at the Annual Parish Assembly in March.

Front row (L to R): Anoush O’Connor (Secretary), Gregory Kolligian (Chairman), Fr. Vasken Kouzouian (Pastor/President), William Melkonian (Vice Chairman), Stephen Hovnanian (Treasurer); Back row (L to R): Heather Surabian (Asst. Secretary), Suzanna Soukiasian (Advisor), Margarit Gevorkyan (Advisor), Armina Manoukian (Advisor), Alexandra Tashjian (Advisor), Paul Jamgotchian (Asst. Treasurer); not pictured: Richard Diranian (Advisor).



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Van Krikorian Says International Laws Work Only If Enforced

KRIKORIAN, from page 1

Krikorian began with a powerful quote from the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century French novelist Victor Hugo, who declared “If a man has his throat cut in Paris, it’s a murder. If 50,000 people are murdered in the East, it is a question.” Krikorian commented that this is appreciated by human rights victims because what happens in the aftermath of atrocities is denial, and this is what has happened for the most part to the Armenians.

He posed the question of how law might play a role in stopping atrocities and genocide, especially when multiple reports show more than 15 genocides occurred even after the UN adopted the Genocide Convention in 1948, and crimes against humanity began to be defined internationally decades earlier than that.

Krikorian pointed out that the problem is that international systems have been designed to work with democracies but they don’t work when matched with authoritarian regimes. Azerbaijan, with over 300 political prisoners and many other types of human rights violations, is recognized as a dictatorship by many international human rights organizations. As an example, he cited Freedom House, which ranked Azerbaijan in global freedom with six out of a possible 100 points.

He suggested that just as in international trade law, multilateral as opposed to global arrangements could be reached on how to resolve disputes. In other words, countries that really believe what they’re saying in terms of human rights commitments and the rule of law need to come up with a system for themselves with a mechanism to deal with bad actors, Krikorian said, since what we have today is not working.



Anahit Melkonyan, co-president of the Harvard Armenian Law Students Association (photo Aram Arkun)

Harvard Law School, Krikorian said, pioneered the teaching of contracts law by teaching damages first. He reminded the audience that it was Prof. Lon Fuller who pointed out that what really matters is what happens when somebody breaches an agreement and something goes wrong. In such a situation, what is important is whether you can be made whole and fully compensated. Krikorian said that this approach is critical for a country like Armenia or any minorities subjected to atrocities, racial discrimination or genocide.

Laws such as the Genocide Convention are violated far too often without punishment, he said, and in fact, such actions are in many cases being rewarded on account of denial. Here, Krikorian remarked, Armenians have a lot of experience worth sharing. Though the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide were not bashful about admitting what they were doing, and after World War I trials of these perpetrators took place by the Ottoman Empire itself, yet the new Republic of Turkey established by Kemal Ataturk adopted a philosophy that Turkey should be for the Turks and adopted policies of dehumanization of remaining minorities like Armenians.

While US President Donald Trump may have recently threatened the destruction of a civilization, Krikorian said that in fact Turkey was actually destroying the Armenian one in the Republican period. He said, “The Turkish philosophy — the philosophy of most perpetrators — is that we can erase this civilization, erase these people, and then whoever survives will go on to live their lives. They’ll forget all about what happened.”

However, Armenians began to raise their voices by 1965 in the diasporan communities in which they found themselves after the genocide, insisting that what happened could not be denied. This led to a shift in denial strategies by academics, governments or officials who had something to gain by doing this. Apologists said the

Ottomans had to do it and rationalized why. In Turkey, talking about the genocide can subject you to criminal penalty, Krikorian continued.

This “Turkish model,” Krikorian said, is occurring “on steroids” in the aftermath of the 2020 and 2023 ethnic cleansing or genocide in Nagorno Karabakh, and this could apply to other genocides as well. “Nothing happened. If anything happened, they deserved it. They did it to us worse than we did it to them,” are some of the lines being repeated by perpetrators, Krikorian said.

He mentioned the ongoing razing of churches, one of which was just referenced in the Armenian Mirror-Spectator that week, and which has been documented by groups such as Cornell University’s Caucasus Heritage Watch, as well as the documentation conducted by the Artsakh Atrocities Program at Columbia University. The Armenian National Institute, he said, combines this information with that of many other sources.

Meanwhile, he noted that while placed under Soviet Azerbaijani control, Nakhichevan had its remaining Armenian population eliminated in various ways thanks in part to the relations among Moscow, Ankara and Baku, and ancient Armenian monuments and structures were destroyed. The end part of this process has been documented with modern technology.

In 2021, Armenia brought a case before the International Court of Justice, citing multiple international treaties, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, of which Azerbaijan was a member until it was expelled in 2024, passed various resolutions condemning what happened in Karabakh. Yet, Krikorian concluded, the international treaties and mechanisms that exist did not work. He said, “That’s why there is this really overwhelming feeling that the system has failed...And so it is time for a change.”

## The Baku Show Trials

Armenians were captured by Azerbaijan during the 44-day war of 2020 and in November of that year a trilateral statement signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia called for the release of both sides’ prisoners. Armenia released all of its prisoners but Azerbaijan did not, Krikorian related. In 2023, when Azerbaijan took over the remaining territory of Karabakh and when the Armenian population fled, Azerbaijan took additional prisoners.

Officially, 19 Armenians are still kept prisoner in Baku, but these numbers may be much higher. Krikorian said that these 19 were charged with terrorism and genocide and placed on trial. One of the most prominent defendants is Ruben Vardanyan, who was a student in university in Moscow during the period he was accused of terrorism and genocide. Another defendant, Vagif Khachatryan, during his trial said that he apologized because he was not even in Karabakh in that period of time, but the Azerbaijani translator changed this to “I apologize for what I have done in the death of these Azeris.” Levon Mnatsakanyan, former defense minister of the Artsakh Republic and later chief of police, whom Krikorian knew from the 1990s, was tried and convicted, Krikorian said, on fake evidence though in fact he imposed strict discipline on the Artsakh soldiers to protect civilians and respect the rules of war when he commanded them.

These show trials, Krikorian said, have to be viewed in the context of the state-controlled legal system. In fact, he said that “there was probably more of a chance to get a fair trial during the Stalinist era than there is in Azerbaijan today, to be very blunt. Not just lawyers, not just the press, the bar association and the judges — everything is state controlled.”

He noted that a video after the 2020 war from a Turkish source of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey shows the latter’s wife, Emine Erdogan, suggesting that the prisoners of war be kept and only slowly released, in order to get more during negotiations. In fact, that is what Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has done, he said. He also announced last year that Azerbaijan would no longer participate in the European Court of Human Rights or respect its decisions, knowing that eventually the human rights cases of the Armenian prisoners would make their way there.

In the only case of release of some of the Armenian prisoners, recently four were exchanged for two ISIS mercenaries recruited in Syria, who were guilty of severe mutilations and beheadings of Armenians. Krikorian said they were released to Syria to allow Aliyev to avoid having his fingerprints on their actions.

Krikorian made two points concerning denial of genocide and ethnic cleansing at the conclusion of his talk. He mentioned that thanks to the people who fawn over Azer-



Van Krikorian (photo Aram Arkun)

baijan even today, “One of the main lessons that we’ve learned from denial is that there are people in this world who will betray their fundamental principles for money or their own interests. And they will do it even with their religious fervor.”

Finally, he concluded: “These trials reflect what I started with — that the denial of genocide going on in Azerbaijan today and assisted thoroughly by Turkey and a lot of other bad actors, is happening because they’re trying to rewrite history in a much faster way than Turkey and other countries do.”

In a brief question-and-answer session, Krikorian explained that Azerbaijan is able to still exert influence internationally despite its human rights violations and being a dictatorship because of what is called “caviar diplomacy.” The strategy was to lure international companies to invest in Azerbaijan and then have these companies lobby their respective governments. Direct bribery was sometimes used, such as in the case of a Texas Rep. Henry Cuellar, who was indicted for taking hundreds of thousands of dollars of bribes and in return blocking legislation to which Azerbaijan objected. (Pardoned by President Donald Trump in 2025, Cuellar continues to serve in Congress.)

Despite having many good laws on the books in the US against perpetrators of human rights violations, Krikorian declared, “The inconsistency in applying sanctions, the inconsistency that the US has in applying principles, is a huge problem that I feel is not going to be solved while I’m still alive, honestly.” He expressed the hope that the new generation of lawyers in the room might solve it.

Two laws that Krikorian authored are among those not being enforced concerning Azerbaijan. First was Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which imposed sanctions on Azerbaijan until such time as it made substantial progress in lifting the blockades of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, and ceased military activity against them. It was waived by successive presidents until Joe Biden, and then President Donald Trump again waived it, though Azerbaijan not only completed military operations and continued to blockade but also occupies over 200 square kilometers of territory of the Republic of Armenia and poses a threat to the sovereignty of the latter. This could happen, Krikorian said, “because, again, the world has changed so much that we’ve gone backwards to a point where countries feel they can do things and get away with them. And for the most part, they’re right.”

The second law Krikorian wrote is called the Humanitarian Aid Corridors Act (1994). He summarized it as “a really simple principle that no country that receives US aid can block aid going to another recipient — or, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” It is not being used in the case of Armenia because of the initialing in 2025 in Washington of a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia, though portions of that agreement are being violated even today.

Krikorian went further concerning the current situation with Azerbaijan, declaring, “The genocidal intent is still there. So it’s a very dangerous time for all of us.”

Krikorian’s Harvard speech was based on his paper “Addressing Failed Legal Frameworks to Save Churches, Protect Freedom of Religion, and Confront Genocide in a New 21st Century: Doing Better to Do Good,” in the 2026 volume of conference proceedings published by the World Council of Churches titled Freedom of Religion and the Preservation of Armenian Religious, Cultural, and Historical Heritage in Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Multicultural Arts Events Held in Glendale

By Karine Armen

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALE — The Armenian Art Center held a multicultural art day titled “The Glendale Art Show” on Sunday, April 19, at the North 200 block of Orange Street in Glendale. This free public cultural initiative was organized by Knowledge Truck, Inc. (Armenian Arts), a nonprofit organization committed to Delivering Knowledge through arts and community engagement. The event served as a multicultural platform where artists of diverse backgrounds and disciplines came together to present their work to the Glendale community.

Hugh Remar, a Los Angeles-based ceramic artist, said, “I am here at the inaugural Glendale Art Show. I love ceramics, and I am excited to share my art with many international artists and be part of the community.”

Stepan Partamian, executive director of “The Glendale Art Show,” said, “I am excited to see the audience enjoying the Art Show. Art has always been a powerful force for connection, bringing people together across backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.” He added, “Through creative expression, we find common ground, share stories, and build a sense of community.”

The event featured a broad range of art, including visual arts (painting, drawing, photography, and mixed media), sculpture and three-dimensional works, crafts and handmade art, live demonstrations, interactive art experiences, and interdisciplinary performances.

Juan Guillermo Garcia, Glendale Latino Association President and Sister Cities committee member, said, “Glendale is a diverse city. Art and culture not only connect people but also inspire generations and open doors for collaboration and a deeper understanding of our communities.” He continued, “We highlighted arts and crafts from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Japan, the Philippines and Armenia.”



From left: artist Patrick Haemmerlein and Art Show organizer Stepan Partamian (Karine Armen photo)

Artist and designer, Carina Yepremian, said, “My work blends graphic design with cultural storytelling, transforming research and heritage into meaningful, visually compelling pieces.” She proudly continued, “Through my Artsakh silk scarf collection - where each design represents a district and carries its map at the heart. I create work that preserves identity and memory while supporting Artsakh families in need.”

The Glendale Sister City Program had a tent which included Korean, Filipino and Artsakh artists. “The Glendale Art Show” is designed to support both emerging and established local and visiting artists by pro-



Artist Carina Yepremian at the Artaskh table, which was part of the Sister City tent (Karine Armen photo)



Mexican table of the Sister City tent with some Mexican members (Karine Armen photo)

viding opportunities to exhibit, sell, and discuss their work directly with collectors and the public.

There was a surprise performance by a Gata Band from Armenia. The audience danced Armenian circle dances, creating a warm ambiance in the center of Glendale.

## Sponsor a Teacher Program

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



# Arts & Culture

## Alex Minasian

*Making a Living Playing Music*

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

YEREVAN/NEW YORK CITY – Alex Minasian (born 1984) is an American pianist, educator, and impresario known for his versatility across musical genres. He holds two degrees from New York University and established his career at a young age. Minasian studied with renowned jazz pianists including Hank Jones, Don Friedman, Jean-Michel Pilc and James Williams. He has performed at major venues such as Birdland, Blue Note, Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Apollo Theater. Throughout his career, he has shared the stage with artists like James Ingram, Arturo Sandoval, Sheila Jordan and Hugh Masekela. He served as the final pianist for Little Jimmy Scott and as pianist and musical director for Mark Murphy and Billy Vera. Minasian continues to perform widely, including appearances at major jazz festivals and regular engagements in New York.

For more information about Alex see <https://www.alexminasian.com/>

**Alex, what dreams did you have when you began your career, and how close has reality come to those early expectations?**

I just wanted to be able to make a living playing music, which is a pretty hard thing to do in this day and age. I also wanted to play with some of my heroes that I grew up listening to. So far, I've been very fortunate to work as a full-time musician and to have the opportunity to learn from and play with some of my heroes.

Jazz interpretations and improvisations can last too long. Have you ever completely lost yourself — so deeply that you didn't even know how the piece ended?

You have to concentrate very hard when playing this music. I do lose myself in it sometimes, but I'm always aware of where I am in the structure of the piece.

**What is something you've discovered about yourself through your instrument that you couldn't have found any other way?**

You learn to express yourself through your instrument. You become able to reflect on yourself and explore what you're feeling on any given day through music. I also discovered perseverance, as there are many challenges in staying the course, continuing to develop, and pushing forward.

**You cooperated with some celebrities; could you please share some funny or insightful stories connected to them?**

I used to play with the legendary jazz singer Little Jimmy Scott. He was very theatrical when he sang and had many fans from the acting world.

see MINASSIAN, page 13



Jivan Avetisyan and Adrineh Mirzayan in Japan

## Director Jivan Avetisyan Visits Tokyo For Location to Scout Locations for 'The Stateless Diplomat' Mini-Series

TOKYO/YEREVAN — This year filmmaker Jivan Avetisyan's upcoming mini-series *The Stateless Diplomat* was officially selected to participate in the Tokyo Film Commission's "Tokyo Location Fam Tour", an international initiative designed to introduce filmmakers to Tokyo's filming opportunities and encourage future co-productions in Japan and this film is shaping up to become the first Armenian-Japanese co-production in the making - a historic cultural bridge between Japan and Armenia.

The program took place between February 23–27 and brought together 16 filmmakers from around the world, including director Avetisyan and producer Adrineh Mirzayan, for an intensive location scouting trip and networking program across Tokyo and surrounding areas.

"*The Stateless Diplomat*" tells the remarkable story of Diana Apar, Armenia's first Honorary Consul who represented her nation in Japan long before the world was ready to accept women in leadership positions. It is currently in development and is shaping up to become the first Armenian-Japanese co-production, building a unique cultural bridge between the two countries.

see TOKYO, page 13



Jivan Avetisyan visits the grave of Diana Apar in Yokohama

## 22 Pages on Armenian Art in an International Fine Arts Magazine

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of *SunStorm Fine Art Magazine*, published in New York. It was founded in 1975 by Victor Forbes and Jamie Forbes. The magazine is dedicated to classical and contemporary art, publishing articles, interviews, and presenting the works of both established and emerging artists. Over time, it has become an international platform, circulating in dozens of countries and serving as an important medium for the presentation and promotion of artists.

On the occasion of the magazine's half-century jubilee, a special issue was published, with 22 pages devoted to Armenian artists. The cover features art critic Movses Herkelian (Movses Zirani), who lives in Lebanon, Armenia, and Canada, founder-director of the "Noah's Ark" Gallery in Beirut and a long-time contributor to *SunStorm Fine Art Magazine*, pictured together with film actress and painter Jane Seymour.

Included are articles by Movses Zirani on Armenia-based painter Gevorg Yeghiazaryan ("Echoes of the Essence of Eternal Life"), Canada-based artist Berdj Tchakedjian ("The Ease of Nature as the Fertility of Artistic Delight"), and "The Hyllozoist (On the Occasion of Arshile Gorky's 120th Anniversary), all richly illustrated.

The issue also includes an interview conducted by Movses Herkelian in 1979 with Arshile Gorky's sister, Satenik Adoyan, published in English for the first time.

The Armenian section concludes with an interview by editor Victor Forbes with Movses Herkelian on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the "Noah's Ark" Gallery ("Noah's Ark as a Temple of Art"), again accompanied by numerous photographs featuring not only Movses Zirani but also his wife and son—his colleagues at the gallery, Elo and Herag Herkelian.

It should also be noted that this year a more extensive golden jubilee edition of *SunStorm Fine Art Magazine* has been published, the cover of which, among others, also includes the name of Movses Herkelian.

Indeed, a remarkable phenomenon — bringing Armenian art and artists to wide international attention on a prestigious global platform.



Movses Herkelian with Jane Seymour



ARTS & CULTURE

# Alex Minasian: Making a Living Playing Music

MINASSIAN, from page 12

He was also a mentor and friend to actor Joe Pesci when Joe was growing up in Newark, New Jersey, and trying to become a vocalist in his own right. Joe is a great jazz vocalist and has even sat in with us on occasion.

**And my traditional question – your Armenian roots come from...**

...Western Armenia, now called Eastern Turkey. Unfortunately, I don't know exactly from where my ancestors were... anyone who knew the answer to that is long gone. My great-grandmother was a genocide survivor. She saw her whole family killed in front of her, she ended up

in an orphanage in Syria, and eventually made it over to America.

My mother's side is French Canadian and Irish. Even though they are quite different, they both share a strong faith and solid moral values. Unfortunately, I don't speak Armenian. I only know a few words here and there. I used to attend keftimes in New England, and I eat a lot of Armenian food. I especially spend time in Watertown, visiting local bakeries to get my favorite choregs. I also have many Armenian friends, and when I perform, especially in the greater Los Angeles area, there are always a lot of Armenians who come out to support me.

**Who are your favorite Armenian musicians and artists?**

I do like a lot of the traditional Armenian musicians, Richard Hagopian, John Berberian, Mal Barsamian. There are a few great Armenian jazz musicians that I play with as well, bassist Noah Garabedian, drummer Zach Malian, and bassist Ian Ashby.

**Armenia is a very jazz loving country. Have you ever been in your ancestors' homeland?**

I have never been, I would love to, as there are a lot of great jazz musicians there such as my friend, the great pianist Vahagn Hayrapetyan.



## Armenian Museum Hosts Music in Color Youth Program Exploring Art & Music

WATERTOWN — On Saturday, April 11, the Armenian Museum of America presented a dynamic and inspiring “Music in Color” youth workshop. The program was well received, filled with energy, creativity and a genuine sense of joy throughout the day.

After a tour of the “Arshile Gorky: Redrawing Community and Connections” exhibition, author and illustrator Alik Arzoumanian guided younger participants to express emotion freely through color and form by creating their own works of expressionist art. Meanwhile, older students were engaged deeply with sound by listening, interpreting, and translating music into personal artistic expression with accomplished guitarist Raffi Donoian through exploring “The Art of Disruption: The Art and Impact of Serj Tankian” while also creating works of art.

It was a special afternoon of learning how art and music come together to spark imagination across age groups. “The Armenian Museum of America looks forward to building on this momentum and welcoming even more young creatives at future events,” stated Development Director Sarah Hayes. “We thank Museum benefactor Nancy R. Kolligian for her leadership and support of this wonderful program!”



Illustrator Alik Arzoumanian with her young workshop participants at the Armenian Museum of America

## Director Avetisyan Visits Tokyo to Scout Locations for ‘The Stateless Diplomat’

TOKYO, from page 12

During the visit, Avetisyan and Mirzayan conducted extensive location scouting in Tokyo and Yokohama, where Apar lived. As part of the visit, the team also paid tribute at Apar's gravesite in Yokohama, connecting the project to the historical places where her life and legacy unfolded.

“Many years of hard work and dedication to our vision of bringing Armenian stories to the big screen have brought us here to Japan. This is more than a project — it is history coming full circle,” said Avetisyan.

“The Stateless Diplomat” is a six-episode drama inspired by the life of Apar, who rescued 1000 Armenian Genocide survivors seeking asylum in Japan on their way to the U.S.

The project is being developed in collaboration with Mimi Malayan, Diana Apar's great-granddaughter and scriptwriter, and Dr. Meline Mesropyan, a Japan-based researcher specializing in Apar's life and humanitarian work.

Armenian Relief Society CEB supports institutions and programs throughout the homeland and the diaspora. The Central Executive Board of the Armenian Relief Society held its plenary session at its headquarters in Watertown, from March 19-22.

“Making a film requires a collective efforts of all Armenians, including those of the diaspora. We are truly grateful to the ARS for considering our project and for their willingness to provide financial support. We look forward to more Armenian organizations joining our efforts, as this a



Sofronia, Malatesta, Don Pasquale in garden (photo Nils Heck)

profoundly important story that must be told - a story that carries forward the spir-

it, resilience, and trailblazing legacy of Diana Apar, whose voice helped bring Ar-

menian truth to the world,” said Mirzayan.

# Books

## Never Hide from the Devil: N.T. McQueen's Compelling Tale of the Defense of Van

By Christopher Atamian

Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

In the ancient Armenian city of Van, boys become men and neighbors turn into enemies overnight. *Never Hide from the Devil* begins on the eve of the defense of Van in April and May 1915, led in part by the legendary Aram Manoukian, a revered leader who guides the teenagers who are the story's main protagonists, including the narrator Suren Simonian, his siblings, and his friends Mihran and Razmik, as well as his sister and extended family. The first few chapters also crucially establish the friendship between Suren and Hamza, young Armenian and Turkish "blood brothers," teenage boys whose friendship will somehow survive the beginning of the Young Turk plan to exterminate the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.

One of the novel's great qualities is that it is divided into twelve parts and 66 short chapters that play out chronologically over the course of only one month. Each chapter recounts a conversation or encounter that adds to the overall dénouement. This gives the action a play-by-play quality that throws the reader into the midst of the conflict and almost makes them feel as if they were part of Suren's family — they immediately identify with the narrator from the very beginning.

The chapters themselves serve not only as clever chronological devices but as tonal schemes as well. Take the novel's opening chapter, "Fight on Holy Ground": the reader who knows a bit of history, or has researched the novel before reading it, expects a description of an immediate battle between Armenians and Turks, but instead is given a playground fight between Razmik and Mihran, which Mihran ultimately wins:

The voices grow louder as the two keep circling without a swing. One of the boys with wide-set eyes, from Hisoushian School, yells "Fight!" in Armenian. Soon, the word catches fire. Each boy punches the air as he chants. Even Hamza, who only knows a few phrases in our language, joins in. "Mihran! That's his name," Nshan shouts, pointing his finger in the air like a politician....

"You won, Raz. You joined his nose and his mouth. Everyone knows it. Just relax," Hamza says in Turkish. "Don't touch me, Turk. This has nothing to do with you."

In this early description, McQueen manages to set much of the action and the aura of violence that already

engulfs the city. For some reason, as I read this text, I could not help but be thrown back to Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, though the settings and themes differ greatly. Through this fight, we get a hint of the greater battle that will soon ensue between Armenian and Turk — the great line that divides even best friends and turns Armenians and Turks into each other's reflections and "Others," as evidenced slightly later in the text:

Mihran looks at us, and I see something in his face that I haven't seen before, even in Razmik. Something I can't quite understand. Why do you allow him here? Shouldn't he be with his kind beyond the cemetery?" Mihran asks in our language, keeping his eyes on us and nodding his head toward Hamza. We share the same look with the same empty mouths. The rumors I heard at home from Baba and Uncle Tarzi flood back to me.

To recall Micheline Aharonian Marcom's wonderful turn of phrase in *Three Apples Fell from Heaven*, "rumor is a mendacious tatterdemalion": a liar, a ragged, shabby thing. And yet... The rest of Part I of the novel, "Whispers and Rumors," plunges the reader into the fear and uncertainty that the Armenians of Van and Suren's family experience. Before the internet and modern communications, Armenians must rely on hearsay, including asking Hamza—because he is Turkish—if he has heard anything about what is befalling them. The rumors soon

become more precise, as evidenced in a scene between Baba and Tarzi:

"There is no proof, Tarzi. We can't panic over rumors." He polishes the face of his wristwatch with a soft towel—the same watch Pap gave him before he left to fight in the Hamidian massacre and never returned.

"Bah! He's a butcher. They don't call him the 'Horse-shoer of Bashkale' because he races horses."

"Again, more rumors."

"Rumors?...the tanner (Avakian) who moved to Aykesdan? Just last week, two gendarmes arrived and demanded a tax for the war. They took everything but the pork. Everything, Vartan! What will the pasha take from you when they come to the Old City?"

Then, referring to the fact that the Ottomans drafted young Armenian men into the army (where they were abused and even murdered at will), comes the chilling sentence: "They already took our sons." Soon, the market closes for good, and it becomes obvious that war is

about to break out. Armenians have been clever and have armed themselves this time and are able to resist, though both Suren's family and others experience great losses, both physical and material. Women also play an important role in the defense of Van, including Suren's mother and grandmother, and his sisters Araxie and Siroun, who undertake perilous assignments during the siege.

April 22 to April 24 represent the so-called "Great Resistance," followed by the events at Tabriz Gate and the heroic final battle. In one chapter, Aram Manoukian sends Raz and Nshan, mere boys, to defuse bombs with their bare hands. The title "Never Hide from the Devil" refers metaphorically to the idea that it is better to look at the enemy straight on and fight him than to live in fear. More specifically, in Chapter 56, which bears this title, amidst a long disquisition about Suren's mother and Aunt Yeva, Uncle Tarzi muses: "We are all Ottomans, but one wants to destroy the other. Same hair. Two arms. Two legs. They have two eyes but see different things. One heart, but feel different emotions." Then he grabs Suren and tells him poignantly:

Never forget who you are," he says, holding up one finger. "And never, never, hide from the devil." He leans forward, pointing his finger at me. A tear slips from his eye and disappears into his beard. The famous fighter Tarzi? Crying?" Promise me!" he barks, making me flinch. "Yes, sir," I reply.

Much of the novel's subtext, in fact, revolves around an idea that is difficult for the young Suren to grasp at first, and which has been one of the tragedies of Armenian-Turkish history: that two peoples could be so intertwined — and in a sense so similar — and yet end up, after so many centuries, as bitter enemies.

Perhaps the most touching — and telling — scene occurs when both Suren and Hamza find themselves confronted by a Turkish gendarme. If the latter gets his hands on Suren, then he will most definitely be killed. Hamza intervenes one last time for his blood brother and screams for him to run away, although in warning an Armenian he too has likely signed his own death warrant. It is the last time the two will ever see each other, as far as the reader knows.

The novel ends on a positive note, as the Armenians have prevailed — at least for now. As students of history are aware, Van would soon be evacuated, and the Armenians forced to retreat northward toward the Russian Empire, in the direction of what would later become the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. As the author notes in the afterword, this tale is based on historical facts but does not recount an actual family or specific events. The novel is not literary in tone, but it is well written and carefully cadenced throughout, with an epic quality that would lend itself well to the screen. There are many splendid scenes that cannot be summarized in a short review. N.T. McQueen has a strong sense of plot, and the characters are well developed. And given that the novel is written from the side of an Armenian family it cannot help but at times dip into stereotyping both sides. Despite these minor criticisms, *Never Hide from the Devil* remains a gripping page-turner that vividly brings to life a period at the outset of the Armenian Genocide that might otherwise fade from public memory, especially for general readers. That McQueen does so with such brio and vigor is to his credit.



## Aram Andonian's *The Great Crime* (1921) Now Available in English

Aram Andonian's landmark work, *The Great Crime* — the first systematic documentation of the Armenian Genocide, originally written in Armenian in 1921 — is now available in English.

This publication marks a major milestone in Armenian Genocide studies. The book is of profound historical importance for two primary reasons. First, it presents a foundational account of the extermination of the Armenians through the memoir of an Ottoman bureaucrat, Naim Efendi, which includes handwritten copies of approximately fifty-two Ottoman documents — among them direct orders for the killing of Armenians. As such, it offers crucial and compelling evidence of the genocide based on original Ottoman sources.

Second, *The Great Crime* is not merely a compilation of documents. It also conveys the firsthand observations of both Andonian and Naim Efendi regarding the fate of the

Armenians. The work therefore stands as both a documentary record and a firsthand testimonial.

In 1983, the Turkish government sought to discredit Andonian's work, arguing on three principal grounds that the materials were fraudulent: that the Ottoman official in question never existed; that no such memoir could therefore exist (and that, if it did, its original handwritten version should be produced); and that the telegrams themselves were inauthentic due to alleged inconsistencies. As a result, Andonian's work — and the documents it contained — were dismissed for decades and largely excluded from scholarly use.

This position was fundamentally challenged in 2018 with the publication of Dr. Taner Akçam's *Killing Orders*, which directly confronted and decisively refuted these claims, restoring the Andonian-Naim materials as credible and indispen-

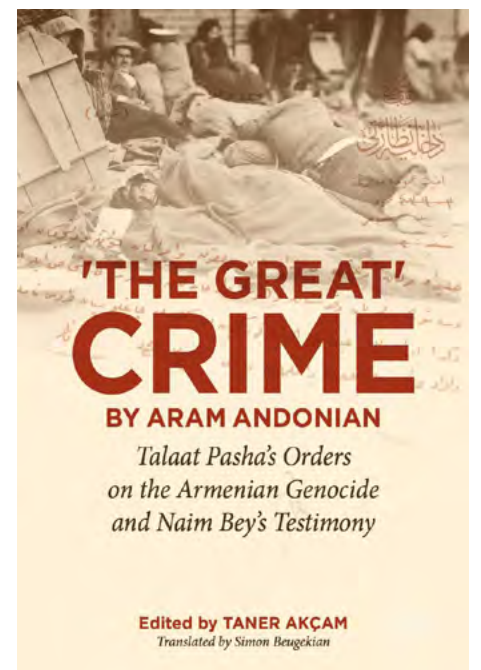
able sources for the study of the Armenian Genocide.

Andonian's work is now accessible to English-language readers. This new edition of *The Great Crime* includes a substantial introduction by Dr. Akçam, which synthesizes the core findings of *Killing Orders* while incorporating new evidence and insights, along with a specially prepared appendix.

Its publication today represents a critical step forward in expanding access to foundational sources and deepening our understanding of the Armenian Genocide.

The publication will be celebrated with a book launch and fireside chat on Monday, May 11, at 6:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) at Glendale Central Library, 222 E. Harvard St., Glendale, CA 91205. The evening will feature a conversation with Dr. Akçam, moderated by Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian.

Learn more about the book and purchase it at the Springer books' website.





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine  
Vartanian Datian



Talene Karkazian demonstrating the difficulty of mixing the dough by hand at the workshop

## California Armenian Home Guild holds A Monté (Armenian Manti) Workshop With Chef: Talene Karkazian

FRESNO — If you ever wished for dumplings that are shaped like boats with the meat visible inside, try making these delicious Armenian dumplings called manti. You can use either ground beef or ground lamb or a combination of beef and lamb, and they are traditionally served with either plain yogurt, a yogurt-based sauce, or a red sauce.

The California Armenian Home Guild held a successful Monté (Armenian Manti) Workshop on Saturday, January 31, 2026. The workshop began in the American Citizens' League Hall (AACL) kitchen where veteran manti maker, Fresno's Talene Karkazian demonstrated how to make the beloved meat mixture and prepare the dough to over 40 enthusiastic participants. Each participant received a ball of fresh dough and was instructed to go into a larger hall set up with covered tables, rolling pins, pizza cutters, small baking tins, and meat mixture and begin making their own manti.

"Manti are dumplings common throughout the South Caucasus and Central Asia. They are made and consumed by different cultures including the Armenians and Turks. The concept of manti first reached Cilician Armenia through cultural interactions between Armenians and Mongols in the 13th century. Then migrating Turkic-speaking peoples learned of manti from the Armenians and took it with them to Anatolia, where it became popular," writes the Mission Food Adventure food blog. "These manti dumplings are a creative variation on the traditional Armenian dish manti. While manti are actually Armenian dumplings, these are more Asian-style dumplings. They encompass all the flavors we know and love from the original recipe from our family."

According to Talene Karkazian, "Early dumplings traveled along the Silk Road with nomadic cultures. They were designed to be portable, nourishing, and shared. Migrators from The Silk Road brought the dumplings to Anatolia, where they evolved into Armenian manti — while Armenian communities took their specific boat-shaped variations throughout their diasporas. Armenians didn't just adopt manti — they transformed it by being the first to bake it. Armenian adaptations include: the dumplings became smaller. They were often baked first, not just boiled, and they were served with garlic yogurt and butter with Aleppo pepper or paprika (or made with soup). In the Armenian culture, manti came a communal dish often made for holidays and family gatherings."

"When everyone finished filling their baking trays, they were labeled and put into the freezer until after lunch. The lunch was manti made by Talene and Mary Ekmalian, with a choice of toppings of garlic yogurt, red sauce, fresh parsley, sumac, Aleppo pepper, and/or cumin, a green salad, and homemade bourma for dessert. Thank you to Azadig Bidanian, Talene Karkazian, Jane Knar, Barbara Mortanian, Cherye Caire, and Patty Torosian who were available to help anyone needing individual assistance," says Mary Ekmalian.

"Talene Karkazian holds a master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences, which includes studies in cooking, sewing, and other creative arts. She has taught fashion at the college level and cooking to junior high and high school students, sharing her knowledge with students of all ages. She learned to cook from her beloved grandmothers, aunts, and her mother -- anyone with the patience to teach her. One of the recipes she is most passionate about is this special manti dish, a traditional dish that has been passed down through her family," added Ekmalian.

### Homemade Armenian Manti Dough, Meat Filling and Soup

#### PART 1: Dough (From Scratch)

##### INGREDIENTS:

3 1/2–4 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 large egg  
3/4–1 cup water (added gradually)

##### Preparation:

Mix flour and salt in a large bowl.  
Make a well and add the egg. Gradually add water until a smooth dough forms.  
Knead 8–10 minutes until elastic. Cover and rest 30 minutes.

#### PART 2: Meat Filling

##### INGREDIENTS:

1 lb. ground beef or lamb  
1 small onion, finely minced or grated  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
Optional: 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

##### PREPARATION:

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix gently. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

#### PART 3: Shaping the Manti

Roll rested dough very thin. Cut into 1 1/2–2-inch squares.

Place a pea- to marble-sized portion of filling in the center. Bring corners up and pinch to form a small dumpling.

Place on lightly floured tray.

#### PART 4: Baking the Manti

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Arrange manti tightly in a baking dish. Bake 25–30 minutes until lightly golden.

#### PART 5: Soup/Broth

##### INGREDIENTS:

4–5 cups chicken or beef broth (hot)  
Salt to taste

##### PREPARATION:

Pour hot broth over baked manti. Return to oven for 10–15 minutes to absorb broth.

#### PART 6: Garlic Yogurt Sauce (Topping)

##### INGREDIENTS:

2 cups plain yogurt  
2–3 cloves garlic, minced or grated  
Salt to taste

##### PREPARATION:

Mix yogurt, garlic, and salt until smooth. Serve spooned over the manti.  
Optional Butter Sauce:

##### INGREDIENTS:

1 to 2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon paprika or Aleppo pepper

##### PREPARATION:

Melt butter, stir in spice, and drizzle over yogurt-topped manti.

Serving notes: Serve hot, in broth, topped with garlic yogurt and optional butter sauce. Eaten with a spoon, halfway between dumplings and soup.

More community ladies excited about filling their take-home containers with manti they will bake at home

Armenian Community School Board Chair Vera Haitayan (right) and her Armenian Relief Society friends were being coached by ARS & Guild member Barbara Mortanian (left)

Three generations enjoying the manti-making experience. Supervised by Cherye Caire (right)

The Armenian Home Guild is a non-profit service organization founded in 1958 to service the residents, raise money for projects, and advance public relations with the community at large. For more information about the Guild, contact Mary Ekmalian at (310) 291-3550.

The California Armenian Home is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1952 by the local community committed to providing a people-centered, planned senior community with skilled nursing, assisted living, memory support and independent living services for all levels of senior living. The home is located in Fresno, and also operates under the name "The Vineyards."

For more information, contact:

The Vineyards - California Armenian Home  
6720 E Kings Canyon Rd.  
Fresno, CA 93727



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

### MASSACHUSETTS

**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](mailto: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](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com)

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

**MAY 4** — St. James Men's Club dinner and fellowship, Monday, featuring special guest speaker Attorney mark Geragos. Reservations Required. For information, email [INFO@STHAGOP.COM](mailto:INFO@STHAGOP.COM)

**MAY 5** — Dr. Taner Akçam and Michael Bazylar will speak on Nazi Looted Art Recovery as a Model for Recovery of AGLA: Armenian Genocide Looted Art. Tuesday, 7.30 p.m., NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Research Program of the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, Armenian Bar Association, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center at CUNY Graduation Center, NAASR/Gulbenkian Foundation Lecutre Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, NYC Times Square Armenian Genocide Committee and St. Leon Amrenian Church.

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

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

**MAY 28** — Save the Date! "Father" by Diana Markosian, art exhibition opening. "Father" traces an emotional journey through photography, video, and archival materials, exploring themes of loss, identity, and belonging. Thursday, 7 p.m., Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown.

**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](http://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)

**JUNE 11** — Save the Date! Music in Color concert series featuring master oud virtuoso John Berberian and acclaimed contemporary artist Antranig

Kzirian, this special evening brings together two generations of musicians in a dynamic exploration of sound, improvisation, and cultural expression. Thursday, 7 p.m., Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown.

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

### MICHIGAN

**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](mailto: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.

### NEW JERSEY

**MAY 4** — Dr. Taner Akçam and Michael Bazylar will speak on Nazi Looted Art Recovery as a Model for Recovery of AGLA: Armenian Genocide Looted Art. Tuesday, 7.30 p.m., St. Leon Armenian Church, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn. Sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Research Program of the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, Armenian Bar Association, Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center at CUNY Graduation Center, NAASR/Gulbenkian Foundation Lecutre Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, NYC Times Square Armenian Genocide Committee and St. Leon Amrenian Church.

### RHODE ISLAND

**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](mailto:alin@mirrorspectator.com) or [alin.gregorian@gmail.com](mailto:alin.gregorian@gmail.com). You can also visit our website, [www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com), and find the "calendar" section under the heading "More" or mail them to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.

## Mother See Publishes Book Based on Vatican Archives' Armenian Genocide Documents

VATICAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin has published German historian Michael Heselmann's work *The Armenian Genocide*, based on previously unpublished documents from the Vatican Secret Archives.

After studying numerous documents, testimonies, letters, and reports preserved in the Vatican archives, Heselmann conclusively reaffirmed the reality and premedi-

tated nature of the Armenian Genocide, the Mother See's press service reported.

"I received permission in 2008 to study the Vatican archives. I was researching a completely different topic when I accidentally discovered a confidential folder on the Armenian Genocide, dealing with the persecution of Armenians. I was deeply impressed by what I found. It turns out the Pope personally wrote to the Sultan

twice, urging him to stop the massacres," the author said, as reported by Sputnik Armenia.

Heselmann contacted his Armenian colleague in Germany, Azat Ordukhanyan, asking whether historians in Armenia were aware of these documents.

"He said no, they were not aware. He even contacted the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia to confirm that they

also had no knowledge of them," Heselmann said.

"We uncovered evidence of those terrible events — reports sent to the Holy See that were shocking and horrifying. This information was published in my book in Germany in 2015, and based on it, the German parliament recognized those events as genocide. The reports came from fully independent and mostly neutral sources," he said.



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**MIRROR  
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EDITORIAL

# These Are the Non-negotiable Demands of the Armenian People Regardless of Election Outcomes

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, C. M.

There are only a few weeks left until June 7, when the elections of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia will take place. For many years to come, the national destiny of our homeland and the Armenians living in Armenia and in the diaspora will depend to a large extent on the outcome of these elections.

Despite the pivotal importance of the current elections, it is with a certain disappointment that we note among some of the current contenders lack of seriousness and clarity, weakness in their actions, ridiculous style, and vain promises. In particular, the efforts of current Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and some of his associates during “election bus tours” to gain popularity by different food tastings or by playing the drums in public squares are at the least inappropriate.

In our previous article, we addressed Armenia-diaspora relations and showed that this is an issue of indisputable importance. We concluded that the diaspora, with its advantages and weaknesses, is an inseparable and rightfully precious part of the Armenian people. Therefore, regardless of the preferences of the current authorities of Armenia and especially the new post-election authorities, these latter are obliged to treat the diaspora as they are obliged to treat any other true portion of the Armenian people. We should not be surprised that the current authorities are in no hurry to address this constructive proposal which is evidently difficult to argue against.

This time, the purpose of our article is to define loud and clear the other non-negotiable demands of all conscientious Armenians directed to the newly elected authorities, so that the citizen approaching the ballot box on June 7 can justly determine his vote.

## Demand One

Yes, peace must reign throughout the territory of Armenia.

This demand is a priority for any country, and especially for Armenia. It is important to point out, however, that the main mistake of the current authorities is that they want to persuade people that this demand must be fulfilled by starting from the position of complete capitulation towards our centuries-old enemies, that is, “concession to all demands.” This classic example of the “mafia victim” is clearly illogical and genocidal, where the victim ultimately becomes a completely surrendered and helpless captive of the insatiable mafia boss who will indefinitely torment him. That is what prevails today with the unacceptable state of relations between Azerbaijan, which is insatiably demanding, and Armenia, which is forever giving way.

The obvious reality is that Azerbaijan has not given the slightest positive response to Armenia’s efforts night and day to sign a “peace agreement” until today.

On the contrary, Azerbaijan does not stop daring to qualify Sevan and Yerevan as Western Azerbaijan through its various mouthpieces.

As for the “Agreement” of last August 8, without any guarantees, it was equivalent to any of by now well-known theatrical performances by Washington’s Trump, and it continues to remain exactly at that level.

It is demanded of the authorities that will be newly elected to pursue and implement the serious work of providing Armenia with a truly just and dignified, lasting peace, secured by guarantees and efficient self-defense.

## Demand Two

The indisputable status of freedom of speech and human rights, and the meticulous implementation of democratic principles at the international level must be established in the internal life of Armenia.

Eight years ago, when today’s regime was formed under the name of the Velvet Revolution, it enjoyed popular sympathy for a time, because it promised the people of Armenia to meticulously implement those very principles. Today, eight years later, the situation has not only returned to some of the ugliness of the previous period, but also, what is more, now the shameless, sick and brutal practice of trampling on the centuries-old sanctities of the Armenian people prevails.

Moreover, the people are subjected every day to the disgusting practice of the arbitrary and capricious implementation of justice and the legal order.

It has become a common occurrence for the authorities, at their own whim, to “arrest” any individual or group they find displeasing, to hold them in custody for months, then release them, and then “arrest” them again, in an incredibly arbitrary manner.

High-ranking church clergy, respected businessmen with their exceptional philanthropy, or young citizens who boldly express their opinions, are subjected to this rude, uncivilized, unacceptable treatment every day.

It is demanded of the newly elected authorities to immediately stop this clearly dictatorial, practice and release all such “detainees.”

## Demand Three

Reestablish respect and reverence for all the spiritual and national sanctities of the Armenian people. Here, the following most important points should be remembered with particular importance.

a. It is demanded that full respect for the centuries-old Armenian Apostolic Church be restored. The newly elected authorities must immediately stop the illegal attitude adopted by the current authorities for some time now towards the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and the Catholicos of All Armenians.

It is unacceptable for the authorities to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of the Armenian Apostolic Church. This indisputable practice, established constitutionally and by the power of our centuries-old traditions, must be immediately adopted by the new authorities.

b. No legitimate Armenian regime can withdraw from the duty of championing the demands connected to the genocide. The claims of the Armenian Genocide are an unnegotiable and unchangeable obligation for the authorities of any and all periods representing Armenian statehood.

c. Eternal Mount Ararat is an unchangeable and unnegotiable historical symbol of Armenia and the Armenian people. Making its spiritual belonging to the Armenian world an object of negotiation is simply a shameful act. Ararat must be returned to its place of honor in national symbols and hearts.

d. “Artsakh is ours” said the Armenian people for thirty years on their political, literary, educational and all other platforms. It is a manifestation of incredible wretchedness to call into question this reality recorded in our centuries-old history.

Notwithstanding our current unfortunate weakness in self-defense, historical realities cannot be put up for sale. Surrender is never a solution... it is demanded of the newly elected authorities to be realistic but never betray our history.

## Demand 4 – The Final One

Our last demand from the newly elected authorities, which also represents the indisputable assurance of realization for all the previous other ones, is the restoration of effective and modern means of self-defense of Armenia, as the first among the priorities.

First, let us emphasize that Armenia has all the required means to bring its military capability in terms of self-defense to the highest modern level. Having written about this in detail many times, we find it unnecessary to present here once again the argumentation confirming this reality with objectively substantiated data.

It is necessary to resolutely repeat that without ensuring self-defense at the highest level, the implementation of all the other just demands we mentioned above will remain an idealistic romantic dream.

For Aliyev, our Armenia is still his Western Azerbaijan. And for the European Union or Trump’s America, our centuries-old homeland, dear to us, is just a passing interest and easily forgotten detail.

## Conclusion

We must conclude by clearly stating that a priori we do not want to approach the Armenian national elections with any particular sympathy or antipathy towards any candidate or political group.

However, it is an indisputable reality that the sympathy and support of the majority of the disinterested and fully aware Armenian people is directed to that candidate or group, singular or plural, that promises to strive by all means to ensure the implementation of the abovementioned nonnegotiable demands defined in this article.

By the way, we are closely following the substantive developments in the current intensifying election campaign. The popularity of the main groups, especially “Strong Armenia” led by Samvel Karapetyan, with a huge following, and the “Armenia Alliance” led by a sea of thousands of torch bearing participants, is already obvious and impressive. They are also clearly in favor of the implementation of our above-mentioned “demands.”

Under these conditions, it is certainly desirable that in the other political groupings, and especially within the Civic Contract movement, large groups of followers of common-sense patriotism emerge, and all join their forces so that the newly elected authorities may enjoy the support of the entire Armenian people, including the entire diaspora.

(The above editorial has been translated from the original Armenian published in *Baikar* weekly and the rest of the ADL coordinated press.)

# Iran War Enters a New Phase

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

In recent months, a clear slowdown has been noticed in the process of normalizing Armenian–Turkish and Armenian–Azerbaijani relations. It has reached a point where the parties themselves openly state that no meaningful progress can yet be recorded and that moving forward remains difficult. Although Armenia’s foreign minister has stated that the intensity of Armenian–American contacts regarding the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) project has not decreased, he did not in any way address the timeline for the implementation of the project’s construction work. In his turn the speaker of the Armenian parliament stated that Turkey is effectively hostage to Azerbaijan’s influence when it comes to normalizing relations with Armenia. Despite this, he also expressed the view that the opening of the borders is approaching; however, it is still unclear whether they will be fully opened or only for third-country citizens and goods.

So, the process has effectively linked the normalization of Armenian–Azerbaijani relations exclusively to the implementation of the TRIPP project, while Turkey, in turn, conditions the normalization of Armenian–Turkish relations on progress in Armenian–Azerbaijani relations. As a result, a chain of three interconnected processes has been formed: the implementation of the TRIPP project, Armenian–Azerbaijani relations, and Armenian–Turkish relations. These have become an interdependent package, where the failure of any one element directly affects the others.

At present, there is no significant progress on the TRIPP project, which also implies a slowdown in the other processes. The prospects for the project’s implementation are partly dependent on Iran–US relations. During the recent war, Iran repeatedly demonstrated its ability to strike not only military but also economic American initiatives in the region, including TRIPP. Therefore, the implementation of the project now depends not only on the United States but also on Iran.

As for Azerbaijan, if TRIPP is not implemented for various reasons, Baku will naturally return to its “Zangezur corridor” agenda. Regardless of whether it is called TRIPP or the “Zangezur corridor,” its strategic objective will remain the same, although the framing will differ. Thus, the following logic emerges: without TRIPP, it is difficult to imagine progress in Armenian–Azerbaijani peace and Armenian–Turkish normalization. If TRIPP is not implemented, the likelihood of alternative and more risky scenarios increases.

The absence of viable alternatives reflects yet another challenge for Armenia. It has become extremely complicated to involve third-party mediators in this issue if the TRIPP process fails. It is difficult to imagine how third countries could mediate the normalization of Armenian–Turkish and Armenian–Azerbaijani relations, not only because Wash-

ington has historical experience in this matter, but also because others are constrained.

For example, Russia is unlikely to take on such a role given its relations with Azerbaijan, and France faces similar limitations. Turkey cannot serve as a mediator due to its lack of neutrality, while China does not have sufficient influence over both parties to play that role effectively. As a result, the issue of finding a mediator becomes even more complex, especially considering that, as noted, Armenia has very limited alternatives and is largely left relying on Trump and the project he has proposed.

In this situation it cannot be ruled out that Moscow may take the initiative and push forward the agreement signed on November 9 under its auspices. However, this would require substantial effort from Moscow, particularly in terms of stabilizing its relations with Azerbaijan. The European Union is also unlikely to serve as an effective mediator, given its limited influence over the parties, especially Azerbaijan.

Therefore, at present, it is difficult to imagine a more realistic and effective mediator than the United States and the Trump administration. Trump’s team will need to act cautiously, especially ahead of the mid-term elections, and pursue a more nuanced approach in the South Caucasus while trying to demonstrate tangible results. After all, peace does not come simply by talking about it.

Achieving peace requires first

and foremost the signing of a formal peace agreement, one that the Trump administration would need to help facilitate.

The United States may indeed be the only viable mediator, yet its regional policy and the current state of its relations with Iran limit Washington’s ability to act more effectively on the TRIPP project. For Armenia’s security, it is natural to favor the rapid normalization of US–Iran relations. This would not only enable economic cooperation with Iran but also facilitate the implementation of the TRIPP project. However, there are still significant challenges that Tehran and Washington must overcome first, and so far they have not succeeded.

(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.)



## Forgetting Is Oblivion

By Aram Arkun

*Mirror-Spectator Staff*

I am reluctant to begin on a somber note, but Armenians find themselves, once again, in a difficult situation. Even though 111 years have passed since the start of the Armenian Genocide, its reverberations continue to haunt us. For example, right behind this stage, there is a Turkish demonstration directed against us. For those who say that this all belongs to the past, clearly this is not just confined to the past but we are living through its aftereffects even now.

Here in the US, while the mayor of New York City has reversed the policy of his predecessor and openly has issued a public statement on the Armenian Genocide, the president of the United States has reverted this year to avoiding the use of the word genocide to describe the events. Despite the dozens of countries around the world which recognize what happened to the Armenians as genocide, denial by Turkish organizations and the Turkish state continues to interfere on all levels of life here and elsewhere. International law has failed in providing any true remedies for the Armenians and has failed time and time again in preventing genocides of other peoples. Never again remains just a phrase.

Meanwhile, the presence of Armenians on lands historically Armenian for millennia shrank with the war of 2020 and the final attack in 2023 by Azerbaijan which led

to the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, internationally known as Nagorno Karabakh.

The Republic of Armenia itself is in a precarious situation. Part of its territory has been forcibly occupied by Azerbaijan, which periodically lays claim not only to a corridor through southern Armenia but also to the remainder of Armenia, which it calls Western Azerbaijan. In other words, the existence of the last sliver of historically Armenian territory still populated by Armenians, and the lives of those Armenians, are now in question. And we are living in a world where might makes right.

In a weakened state, it seems that the current government of Armenia is not able to raise its voice in defense of the rights of the Armenian refugees from Artsakh and their cultural legacy which is being destroyed by Azerbaijan on the lands they were obliged to leave. Furthermore, the Armenian government appears compelled to stop its efforts for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide and any sort of historical justice.

But the Armenians are an ancient people with a strong sense of history. We began recording and reflecting on our history almost immediately after developing our own alphabet in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, with a chain of medieval historians. Moreover, even today, we continue to commemorate the Battle of Avarayr, which we lost over 1500 years ago (a nod here to the Knights of Vartan).

So there is no doubt that we will continue to commemorate the terrible events of the Armenian Genocide and do our best for Artsakh as well. If the Republic of Armenia is unable to raise its voice internationally for a period of time, the Armenian communities in the United States and many other parts of the world do not face the same constraints. We can be the voice for those who are silenced.

One hundred and eleven years is not that much in the Armenian historical context. The relatively recent events

of the Armenian Genocide have left their imprints on all our lives in one way or another. Giving up part of our history would also be giving up part of what makes us who we are, both as individuals and as a people. They are an inextricable part of our identity for better or worse — and how we deal with it determines which of the latter.

As we assemble in Times Square, we raise our voices as part of the Armenian people against the injustice of the Armenian Genocide and the more recent ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, but we also raise our voices against the memory of injustice and abuse of humanity wherever it takes place. Times Square, at the heart of one of the most important cities of the world, symbolically is very important, but it should only be one part of our efforts throughout each year. We must not falter because our unique experiences can give us both the understanding and the motivation to continue this struggle. This struggle not only helps our fellow Armenians but it makes us better human beings, working to make the world a place where never again finally rings true for all people.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association, serving the cultural and educational interests of the Armenian people, thanks the Knights of Vartan and all the other cosponsors for continuing to provide us all with this important platform to deliver our message to the United States and the world, and thanks all those who have joined with us in supporting this vital issue of human rights and justice.

(This is a slightly abridged version of the speech Aram Arkun delivered at Times Square on April 24 this year as executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States, as well as Avak Tbrabed or Grand Recorder for the Knights of Vartan. He is also Managing Editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. The entirety of the Times Square event will be covered in an article in a forthcoming issue of the *Mirror-Spectator*.)



## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## President Donald Trump Sides With Turkey's Denial of the Armenian Genocide

Shame on President Donald Trump for doubling down on his repeated refusals to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. This is what happens when a man with no moral values or principles — a convicted felon (34 counts), in addition to being found liable for sexual assault — is elected President of the United States.

Trump's denials are contrary to the multiple acknowledgments of the Armenian Genocide by the highest levels of the US government:

— On May 28, 1951, the United States Government submitted an official document to the International Court of Justice (World Court) recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

— President Ronald Reagan mentioned the Armenian Genocide in his Presidential Proclamation of April 22, 1981.

— The U.S. House of Representatives adopted, by overwhelming majorities, three resolutions in 1975, 1984, and 2019 acknowledging the Armenian Genocide.

— The U.S. Senate acknowledged the Armenian Genocide unanimously (100-0) in 2019, despite President Trump's failed efforts to block it.

— President Joe Biden issued statements on April 24 of 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 acknowledging the Armenian Genocide.

— All 50 US states have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide.

— More than 30 countries, including over a dozen NATO members, have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide.

Despite all of these acknowledgments, President Trump continues to cave in to Erdogan's denial of the Armenian Genocide by refusing to use the term Armenian Genocide for the sixth time — during the four years of his first term in office and the two years of his second term. We should also not forget Vice President JD Vance's shameful deletion of the term Armenian Genocide from his post on X, shortly after visiting the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan on February 10, 2026.

Since President Trump refuses to utter the word Genocide, fearing to offend his buddy Erdogan, how can Armenians trust him to defend Armenia's security and sovereignty? Trump and Vance should have been universally condemned for their reprehensible behavior. Yet, we have not heard a single criticism from their Armenian supporters. Those who vote for JD Vance for President in 2028 will become complicit in his denial of the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly issued statements criticizing President Trump's continued denial of the Armenian Genocide. The ANCA condemned "President Trump's complicity

in covering up Turkey's crimes." The Armenian Assembly expressed "deep concern that the failure to clearly affirm the Armenian Genocide is contributing to a climate of impunity at the very moment Armenian Christian heritage in Artsakh is under renewed assault."

In contrast to President Trump, dozens of world leaders and major organizations issued strong and unequivocal statements about the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2026. Among them were: President Vladimir Putin of Russia, President of Greece Konstantinos Tasoulas, President of Lebanon Joseph Aoun, the Parliament of Sweden, the Foreign Ministry of Cyprus, Foreign Minister of Uruguay Mario Lubetkin, the World Council of Churches, Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney, President of France Emmanuel Macron, Vice President of the German Bundestag Bodo Ramelow, California Governor Gavin Newsom, the California State legislature, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey also issued a statement on April 24, which he has done annually since 2014. As expected, he distorted the historical facts, stating that "all Ottoman subjects suffered deeply," thus equating the victims of the Armenian Genocide with Turkish soldiers who died during World War I. While Erdogan was shedding crocodile tears, Istanbul authorities once again banned commemorations of the Armenian Genocide on April 24.

Even more disappointing was the statement issued by the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan on April 24. After repeatedly insulting the Armenian nation by raising unnecessary questions about the veracity of the Genocide, he continues to distort the historical facts.

In a lengthy statement Pashinyan issued on April 24, 2026, rather blaming the Young Turks as the perpetrators, he described the "Meds Yeghern" as "a consequence of the practice of drawing the Armenian people into international intrigues." Pashinyan then abused the occasion of the Genocide anniversary to promote his so-called peace agenda. In a troubling assertion, he claimed that Armenia is underpopulated, seemingly preparing the ground for the possible settlement of 300,000 Azeris in Armenia, a demand previously raised by Aliyev.

At Pashinyan's orders, Armenia's public TV (funded by taxpayers) did not broadcast the laying of the wreath by Catholicos Karekin II at the Genocide Memorial on April 24. Carrying out Pashinyan's vendetta against the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Genocide Museum removed website posts on Catholicos Karekin II's visit to the Memorial.

To the delight of Azerbaijan and Turkey, Pashinyan condemned the burning of the Turkish flag by participants in a torchlight procession in Yerevan on the evening of April 23. Thus, once again Pashinyan, Aliyev, and Erdogan find themselves aligned in positions hostile to Armenian national interests.

Pashinyan then further offended the Armenian nation by organizing a large public concert and festive celebration on April 25, the day after the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

How can one blame foreign leaders for their disputable positions on the Armenian Genocide when Armenia's own Prime Minister takes such offensive actions and makes questionable statements?

# Trump Avoids Using Term 'Genocide' in April 24 Statement

STATEMENT, from page 1

1.5 million Armenians systematically destroyed by the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1915, and stands with survivors' descendants in reaffirming historical truth, justice, and vigilance against renewed atrocities.

"The Assembly is deeply concerned that the failure to clearly affirm the Armenian Genocide is contributing to a climate of impunity at the very moment Armenian Christian heritage in Artsakh is under renewed assault. As international attention is absorbed by war in the greater region, Azerbaijan is accelerating the erasure of Armenian churches and cultural presence in Nagorno-Karabakh — a reality that underscores why historical truth must be defended clearly and consistently. The report of the utter destruction of the Mother Cathedral of Stepanakert exceeds the basest practices of vandalism and warrants the strongest condemnation," their statement continued.

Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny noted, "At a time when Armenian churches and cultural landmarks in Artsakh are being destroyed, and Armenian hostages remain unjustly held in Baku, any retreat from clear genocide affirmation carries consequences. Historical truth must be matched by moral consistency and concrete action. Denial, evasion, and ambiguity only encourage further atrocities."

The Assembly's statement continued, "Azerbaijan's conduct jeopardizes the promise of the August 2025 White House agreement on a Peace Framework reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan with U.S. encouragement. The United States cannot be party to policies that compromise the potential of a just and lasting peace.

"While the genocidal Aliyev regime is razing Armenian churches to the ground and continuing to hold Armenian Christian hostages in Baku, a serious question must be asked: why would the United States enter into a strategic partnership agreement with Azerbaijan under such cir-

cumstances?

"The United States must also examine whether pursuing deeper strategic cooperation with Azerbaijan is compatible with America's stated commitments to human rights, religious freedom, and genocide prevention. Washington should not strengthen ties with a government that continues to imprison Armenians, threaten Armenia's security, and erase Armenian Christian heritage in Artsakh.

"The Assembly further urges the Administration to ensure that its policies in the South Caucasus reflect America's stated commitment to religious freedom, human rights, and the protection of vulnerable Christian communities," their statement continued.

In its statement, the ANCA condemned Trump's "continued retreat from American recognition and remembrance of the Armenian Genocide, as reflected in his refusal — for the sixth time — to acknowledge this crime by name in the White House's annual April 24th statement marking the 111th anniversary of the Ottoman Turkish Government's systematic annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians."

"President Trump is doubling down on his disgraceful surrender to Turkish threats — continuing, now for the sixth time, enforcing Ankara's gag-rule against honest American remembrance of this crime — despite recognition by the White House, Congress, all fifty states, and more than a dozen NATO allies," stated ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian.

"President Trump's complicity in covering up Turkey's crimes — actively enabling Ankara's ongoing consolidation of the WWI-era genocide of the Armenian people — is compounded by his Administration's reckless policies arming and enabling Azerbaijan's continued attempts to annihilate Armenians from their historic homeland," Hamparian continued. "In the wake of Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Artsakh's indigenous Armenian population — amid its ongoing occupation of Armenian territory,

abuse of Armenian prisoners, and destruction of Armenian Christian heritage — the United States has a duty not only to speak the truth about the 1915 Genocide, but to end its complicity in pan-Turkic attempts to complete this genocide."

Trump's failure to use the word genocide stands in direct contradiction to his 2024 campaign pledge to "restore peace in the South Caucasus and stop the violence and ethnic cleansing," the ANCA noted.

The ANCA also referred to the February 2026 Vice President JD Vance visit to the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, after which he deleted his public post about that visit under pressure from Ankara. In the post to the platform formerly known as Twitter, his office noted, "Today, Vice President Vance and Second Lady Usha Vance attended a wreath laying ceremony at the Armenian Genocide memorial to honor the victims of the 1915 Armenian genocide." That post was removed and replaced with language stripping all reference to the Armenian Genocide. The ANCA condemned the deletion as a "disgraceful surrender to Turkish pressure" that demonstrated how Ankara "never tires of ritually humiliating America."

Trump's non-recognition stands in opposition to the record established by his predecessor. President Joe Biden formally used the term "genocide" in his April 24 statement in 2021 and throughout his Administration. The United States first recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1951 through a submission to the International Court of Justice. President Ronald Reagan cited the Genocide in a 1981 Holocaust Remembrance statement. In 2019, both the U.S. House (H.Res.220) and Senate (S.Res.150) passed measures affirming that recognition with overwhelming bipartisan support. All 50 U.S. states have formally recognized the Armenian Genocide through resolutions or proclamations.

## TCA Sponsors UCLA VEM String Quartet Tour of Philly, Boston, Montreal, Detroit and LA

VEM, from page 1

Vem will perform work by Khachaturian, Komitas, Toumajan, Suni, Gazarossian, Saryan and Schubert.

The VEM String Quartet is the cornerstone of the Armenian Music Program at UCLA, which in its 13 years of existence has become an internationally renowned leader in celebrating the richness and diversity of the Armenian musical tradition. In residence at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, the VEM has worked with musicians such as Tigran Mansurian, Kim Kashkashian, David Starobin, Armen Hyusnunts, Artur Avanesov, Seth Knopp, and many others. The VEM has performed at various venues in Los Angeles including Zipper Hall, Bing Theater, Schoenberg Hall, and the Hammer Museum, as well as in Boston, Montreal, Detroit, New Mexico, Colorado, and the Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival in Italy. In his review of their performance in Italy, critic Laurence Vittes wrote, "The evening's most memorable music was made by the VEM Quartet... who laid out Eduard Mirzoyan's *String Quartet* with a feline, subtle grace that touched hearts with its gentle melodic content and long-lined eloquence."

The VEM is featured in "Modulation Necklace" and "Serenade with a Dandelion," the acclaimed CDs of Armenian Music by the Naxos-distributed label, New Focus Recordings. It is also featured in the "Stanzas in August" 4-CD set of Armenian music, released by Naxos on May 1.

Vem's current members include Ally Cho, Niall Tarō Ferguson, founder Movses Pogossian and Damon Zavala.

Cho is a doctoral student of Violin Performance at UCLA under the guidance of Pogossian and Varty Manouelian. Her musical journey began in Gold Coast, Australia, where she first picked up the violin at age 5. In 2018, Ally crossed continents to pursue a bachelor's degree in classical violin under the tutelage of Lucie Robert at Manhattan School of Music. Since 2023, Ally has been a part of the VEM Quartet. She aspires to be a virtuoso violinist, captivating global audiences and inspiring future musicians.

Ferguson is a cellist, composer, and orchestrator. He received his bachelor's degree in 2017 from the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, where he studied cello performance with Antonio Lysy and music composition with Ian Krouse and Bruce Broughton. He has participated in many international music festivals and performed on many of LA's premiere contemporary music series. His concert works have been performed throughout California and overseas. As of 2019, Niall is a Program Associate with the Asia / America New Music Institute (AANMI), a collective that pursues cultural exchange through modern music. He is of Japanese descent on his mother's side and of Scottish and Irish descent on his father's.

Pogossian is a celebrated prize-winning violinist, Distinguished Professor of Violin at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, and Founder/Advisor of the UCLA Armenian Music Program. He made his American debut performing the Tchaikovsky *Concerto* with the Boston Pops in 1990, about which the *Boston Globe* wrote: "There is freedom in his playing, but also taste and discipline. It was a fiery, centered, and highly musical performance..." Laureate of several competitions, including the Tchaikovsky International Competition, he performs worldwide. A devoted chamber musician, Pogossian is Artistic Director Emeritus of the Dilijan Chamber Music Series. He has performed with members of the Tokyo, Kronos, and Brentano string quartets, and with such artists as Kim Kashkashian, Jeremy Denk, Lynn Harrell, Ani and Ida Kavafian, and Rohan de Saram. He regularly collaborates with the Apple Hill Chamber Players, teaching annually at their summer music festival in New Hampshire. A committed champion of new

music, Pogossian has premiered over 100 works, and works closely with composers such as G. Kurtág, K. Saariaho, T. Mansurian and Gabriela Lena Frank. Pogossian's discography includes the Complete Sonatas and Partitas by J. S. Bach, solo CDs "Inspired by Bach," "Blooming Sounds," "In Nomine," and, most recently, "Hommage à Kurtág" (2022) and a 4 CD-set "Serenade with a Dandelion." The Bridge Records CD of the "Complete Violin Works of Wolpe" made the 2015 Top Ten list in the *Sunday Times* (UK), and the 2020 releases of Armenian contemporary music: "Modulation Necklace" (New Focus Recordings) and "Con Anima" (ECM) have garnered critical acclaim. As head of the Los Angeles Chapter, he participates in the Music for Food project.

Zavala is a Mexican-American violist and violinist from Oregon. Currently pursuing a doctoral degree in music, Damon dedicates himself to part-time teaching of string chamber studies at UCLA, under the guidance of Brian Chen and Pogossian, and at the SOL-LA Music Academy in Santa Monica. While at UCLA, he participates as a violist in the Armenian Music Program. His VEM experience amplifies his ongoing commitment to showcasing a broad spectrum of cultural expressions in music. This dedication has most recently led him to a

role with the Sphinx Organization, where he currently manages community arts organizations to enhance the representation of underrepresented communities in orchestral settings.

### Schedule

In Philadelphia, the TCA chapter is co-sponsoring the concert with the Villanova Armenian Students' Organization on Friday, May 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cinema at Connelly Center at Villanova University. Tickets are \$20. For info/tickets call Vahe at 215-908-9502 or Sira at 267-902-0700.

In Boston, the cosponsor is the Holy Trinity Armenian Church (145 Brattle St., Cambridge) on Sunday, May 3, at 2 p.m. Admission is free though donations are appreciated. For info, email tcadirector@aol.com.

In Montreal, the Friday, May 8 concert takes place at 8:30 p.m. at the Tekeyan Armenian Community Center (825 Manoogian St., Ville Saint-Laurent, Québec). Donations are \$35 per person. For more information, please contact the Tekeyan Center at (514) 747-6680.

Detroit will have two events. On Saturday, May 9, at 7 p.m., it is cosponsored by St. John Armenian Church and its Music Guild, and will take place at the St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall (2001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield), with free admission. Do-

nations are appreciated. Call Diana Alexanian 248-505-6159 or Madisen Lundquist 503-758-8805.

The second Detroit area event is on Sunday, May 10, 3-5 p.m., with the University of Michigan Center for Armenian Studies as cosponsor. It will be at the Helmut Stern Auditorium at the UMich Museum of Art (525 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI), and includes guest speakers Melissa Bilal (director of the UCLA Armenian Music Program and Promise Chair of Armenian Music, Arts, and Culture), Ronald Suny and Anoush Suni. Bilal's talk is titled "Sonic Recovery: Koharik Gazarossian's Life and Music." Suny will speak on "Grigor Mirzaian Suni, Ethnomusicologist and Revolutionary" and Anoush Suni on "Seda Suny: Armenian American Dance Pioneer." There is free admission. For info, email armenianstudies@umich.edu.

The final concert of the tour will take place in Altadena, CA on May 17 at 5 p.m. at Beshegturian Hall (1901 N. Allen Avenue). The UCLA Armenian Music Ensemble is also participating featuring students Mickey Hashim on shvi, and Hayk Gargaloyan, duduk, with special guests folk singer Hasmik Harutyunyan, Antranig Kzirian, oud, and Verdand Baghdasaryan, kamancha. For information, email tcawestcoast@gmail.com.

### Tekeyan Cultural Association & UCLA Armenian Music Program's

# Vem Ensemble

## 2026 Tour

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



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

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

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

### Boston Sunday, May 3, 2 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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