

## Pashinyan Suggests Parliamentary Investigation into Armenian Church ‘Crisis’

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

YEREVAN — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has suggested that parliament could establish a commission to investigate what he described as a “crisis” in the Armenian Apostolic Church, potentially leading to legislative changes affecting the Church’s governance.

The comments came in an interview with Boon TV published on September 19, amid tensions between Pashinyan’s government and the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Armenian leader had made it clear that he wants to oust the Catholicos — who is now



Samvel Karapetyan (right) meets with Catholicos Karekin II (Official photo)

facing criminal charges along with several senior clergy members — surrounding their refusal to reinstate a bishop, who supported Pashinyan’s reforms. The case against Karekin II has been mired by three judges dropping out, as well as a prosecutor.  
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## Rubio Sees Closer Ties With Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed confidence that US-Armenian relations will grow closer in the years ahead when he congratulated Armenians on their national independence holiday on Monday, September 21.

In a statement issued on the occasion, Rubio said the United States and Armenia have already made “historic progress” on that front over the past year. He pointed to an agreement to open a US-run transit corridor through Armenia which was reached during an Armenian-Azerbaijani summit hosted by President Donald Trump in August 2025.

“We look forward to advancing the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), strengthening economic connectivity, encouraging American  
see RUBIO, page 3

## Russia Turns Off Gas Taps to Armenia

Just days after Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reaffirmed an intention to reduce the country’s dependence on Russian natural gas imports, Russia’s provider, Gazprom Armenia, has taken the seemingly punitive step of announcing a prolonged cutoff of supplies.

Pashinyan told journalists on September 11 that Armenia is actively pursuing alternate sources of gas amid deepening tension in Armenian-Russian relations. Russia provided roughly 82 percent of Armenia’s overall gas imports in 2025.

Just three days after Pashinyan’s comments, Gazprom Armenia, abruptly announced gas supplies to Armenia would be suspended from September 15-25. The company, a subsidiary of the Russian state-controlled energy giant Gazprom, attributed the cutoff to “scheduled maintenance and repair work in the Russian Federation.”

Despite not providing advance warning of the cutoff, the Gazprom Armenia statement assured that the company’s action would not cause a shortage for the Armenian market thanks to the use of “domestic reserves and additional gas supplies from the Islamic Republic of Iran.” Armenian officials had no immediate comment on Gazprom Armenia’s actions and did not announce any plans to offset the suspen-

sion of Russian supplies.

The same day that the cutoff was announced, reports circulated in Azerbaijan that Baku is willing to consider supplying Armenia with significant amounts of gas.

But there is a big catch: Azerbaijani gas would only start to flow after the two countries finalize the provisional peace

deal brokered in Washington in August 2025. Amajor sticking point in ongoing talks is Azerbaijan’s insistence on an amendment to Armenia’s constitution to explicitly recognize Baku’s sovereignty over the long-contested territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which Azerbaijani forces reconquered in 2023.  
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## Pashinyan Insists on End to Russian Management of Armenian Railway

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has continued to call on Russia to give up its long-term management of Armenia’s railway network amid fresh warnings to Yerevan issued by senior Russian officials.

“Our expectation now is that Russia, with our consent, sells the concession rights to a third party — one that is acceptable. Moreover, that third party must be mutually acceptable to both the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation,” he told the Boon TV station in an interview aired at the weekend.

Pashinyan repeated his claims that the current status of the Armenian railways discourages Turkey and Azerbaijan from using a much larger section of Armenian territory for transit purposes.

Sergei Shoigu, the secretary of Russia’s Security Council, dismissed the claims as “absurd” on Thursday, September 18, when he accused the Armenian government of plotting “corporate raiding” against Russian-linked companies operating in Armenia. Shoigu’s deputy Alexei Shevtsov and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin said the next day that such actions would have severe consequences for Yerevan.  
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Russian citizens line up outside the Russian Embassy to join an anti-war demonstration on 20 September 2026, during the final day of Russia’s parliamentary elections (photo AP Photo/Anthony Pizzoferrato)

## Yerevan Among Busiest Russian Polling Stations Abroad

YEREVAN — Yerevan was among the busiest polling locations outside Russia during the country’s parliamentary elections on September 20, according to Russian state media. Russian opposition figures in exile organized the ‘Noon for a Peaceful Russia’ protest, and accordingly a long queue formed outside the Russian Embassy at mid-day on Sunday.  
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**BELGIUM**  
Armenian  
*Khatchkar*  
Dedicated in  
Liège

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**GLENDALE**  
2 Brothers Rescue  
Group of Elderly People  
From Burning Glendale  
Assisted Living Facility

Page 7



**BOSTONN**  
Serouj Kradjian,  
Samvel Yervinyan  
And Band Enthrall  
Boston Audience

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ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Armenia and China Transport Agreement

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — The governments of Armenia and China on September 22 signed an agreement on international road transportation of passengers and cargo, the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure reports.

The document was signed on behalf of the Armenian government by Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia Kristine Ghalechyan.

The agreement regulates reliable international road transportation, contributing to the development of foreign trade relations between Armenia and China.

### Court Places Opposition's MP under House Arrest

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Criminal Court of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of Yerevan on September 22 replaced the detention of Aregnaz Manukyan, a board member of the Mother Armenia party and former MP, with house arrest, imposing a ban on communication with other people, Manukyan's lawyer, Tatavik Soghoian, reported. The decision was made on the basis of a motion filed by the defense.

The defense intends to appeal the decision, especially regarding the ban on communication with other people.

Manukyan was detained on July 9 and subsequently remanded in custody for two months. On September 8, her detention was extended for another month.

### Armenia and Montenegro Discuss Prospects for Increased Tourism Exchange

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — Tourism officials from Armenia and Montenegro discussed opportunities for deepening cooperation on September 22, during a meeting between Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan with Montenegrin Minister of Tourism Simonida Kordic during the International Medical Tourism Conference in Yerevan.

The two discussed the possibilities of expanding cooperation between Armenia and Montenegro in the tourism sector, increasing bilateral tourist flows, as well as developing new destinations.

Papoyan noted that Armenia has continued to take steps to activate international passenger traffic and improve the country's accessibility. At the same time, investments have been made to develop tourism infrastructure.

The parties touched upon rural tourism as a promising direction of cooperation. In this context, Papoyan emphasized the importance of studying and exchanging the experience of Montenegro.

# Two Evenings of Music and Light Held in Yerevan in Memory of Hirair Hovnanian

YEREVAN — On September 11 and 12, the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation held a cultural event in the courtyard of the Saint Anna Church, dedicated to the 96th anniversary of the birth of its founder, the distinguished American-Armenian benefactor Hirair Hovnanian. Over two evenings in the heart of the capital, classical and folk music filled the air, accompanied by an architectural lighting design. The event, which was free to attend, drew hundreds of residents and guests of Yerevan alike.

The first evening featured Hayk Melikyan, Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia and pianist, together with the Komitas Choir of the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. The second evening was devoted to traditional Armenian music, with performances by the Nairyan Vocal Ensemble and the kanon quartet of the Hratch and Suzanne Toufayan Youth Center.

The venue was not chosen by chance. The Saint Anna Church was built through the financing of Hirair Hovnanian himself



The kanon quartet of the Hratch and Suzanne Toufayan Youth Center

and was consecrated in 2015. It stands beside the historic 13th-century Katoghike Holy Mother of God Church. Today, in this very courtyard — where both Hirair and his wife, Anna are laid to rest — the vision they held for the future of Armenia continues to come to life.

"This year we launched a series of cultural evenings that we wanted to feel truly special — and open to everyone," said Ko-

rioun Khatchadourian, Executive Director of the Foundation's Armenia branch. "The courtyard of the Saint Anna Church is one of the city's most distinctive corners, and it was a joy to bring it to life with such a rich program of music and light. Our initiatives may be small in scale, but they're meant to leave a lasting mark — and we hope these evenings will become an ongoing tradition."

## Armenian Government 'Trying' to Reclaim Part of Spending on US Pop Star's Show

By Heghine Buniatian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The Armenian government keeps trying to recover part of some \$6 million controversially spent by it on American pop singer Jennifer Lopez's concert in Yerevan last year, according to Education Minister Zhanna Andreasyan.

Lopez performed at Yerevan's Republican Stadium in August 2025 as part of an international tour. The concert, financed by the government, attracted at least 10,000 spectators who paid its Armenian organizer from 25,000 to 180,000 drams (\$69-\$493) per ticket.

The public funds allocated to the organizer, a private company called Doping Space, exceed the annual budgets of most rural communities of Armenia. Critics

condemned it as reckless extravagance aimed at distracting Armenians from grave national security problems facing their country. Government officials insisted that the spending was worth it because Lopez attracted many foreign tourists to the country.

In an investigative report, RFE/RL's Armenian Service revealed late last month that Doping Space did not use over 500 million drams (about \$1.4 million) of government funding for the show and that the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is still unable to reclaim it. The ministry formally demanded the money back in a June 30 letter to the company. The latter rejected the demand six weeks later.

In an interview with Infocom.am published late last week, Andreasyan said the

ministry is continuing to "talk" to the company about the "saved sum" which it believes must be "returned to the state."

"Their position differs from ours, and we will either reach a mutual agreement to return the funds or there will be a legal process," added the minister.

The government would have easily reclaimed the money in question had it not dubiously exempted Doping Space from a bank guarantee requirement in their contract for the Lopez concert.

Despite the financial dispute, Doping Space was contracted by Andreasyan's ministry to organize the COP17 international environmental summit that will take place in Yerevan next month. The entertainment firm founded in 2023 is to receive 3.5 billion drams (\$9.6 million) in government funding for that purpose.

## Pashinyan Suggests Parliamentary Investigation into Church 'Crisis'

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Pashinyan said on September 19 that at his instruction, the Public Relations and Information Centre under the Prime Minister's Office had prepared a report on the "crisis" that emerged in the Church and "ways to resolve it." Pashinyan said he had reviewed the draft, but the report has not yet been published.

He described the situation in the Church as "terrible," claiming that it had been "seized" by Karekin II, whom Pashinyan refers to by his civilian name, Ktrich Nersisyan.

Pashinyan said he had discussed the issue with the board of his ruling Civil Contract party and did not rule out that parliament could establish an investigative commission after the report is published. He said such a commission could make proposals for legislative changes based on the report.

Pashinyan did not directly answer a question about Russian influence over the Church leadership, but said that the report also addressed the issue.

Amid the ongoing crisis, Russian officials and the Russian Orthodox Church have made statements directly or indirectly supporting the Armenian Church. Moreover, in November 2025, Karekin II's brother, Ezras Nersisyan, received a state award from Russian President Vladimir

Putin, which critics perceived as evidence of his ties to the Russian authorities.

Ezras Nersisyan serves as the head of the Russian and New Nakhichevan Diocese of the Church, and according to declassified documents published by the Armenian National Security Service (NSS) in December 2025, he was recruited by the Soviet Union's KGB and cooperated with the agency from 1986–1988.

During the interview, Pashinyan also claimed that the Church had committed at least one electoral violation, saying that religious organizations are not permitted to engage in political campaigning. He said there should be consequences for such violations, but did not elaborate.

Ahead of the June 2026 elections, Karekin II met with the opposition leader, Russian-Armenian tycoon Samvel Karapetyan.

According to the Armenian Constitution, Armenia is a secular state. Despite the separation of the Armenian state and the Church, ousting the Catholicos has been included in the new government's 2026–2031 program. Many of Pashinyan's critics, as well as constitutional experts, deemed the move as unconstitutional, a claim Pashinyan rejects.

In the same interview, he argued that the Constitution states that relations between the state and the Church "may be regulated

by law."

"The church is not the Catholicos; the church is the community of believers, which, moreover, according to the traditions of our church, participates in the governance of the church," Pashinyan said.

He went on to say that parliament could initiate legislation to provide the faithful with "genuine opportunities" to participate in the governance of the Church.

As possible mechanisms, Pashinyan mentioned establishing parish councils and allowing believers to participate in discussions over the nomination of their "leaders."

On September 17, the Supreme Spiritual Council — the highest executive governing body of the Church — "deemed unacceptable" the government's policy of "interference in the internal life of the Church, as well as the measures of pressure, persecution, and restriction imposed upon the Church through the use of state mechanisms."

"It was noted that such actions violate the constitutional guarantees of the Church's autonomy and the freedom of conscience and religion of the faithful," the statement read.

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



## ARMENIA

# Still Armenian: Inside Yerevan's Shifting Gen-Z Culture

By Diana Grigoryan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Walking along the intersection of Saryan, Pushkin and Parpetsi streets, where Soviet brutalist blocks tower over the vibrant hum of Armenian cafes and bars, the city feels both rooted in history yet unmistakably new.

Generation Z — the transformative generation born between the late 1990s and early 2010s — in Yerevan walks freely along the city center well past midnight with little fear, the city remaining one of the safest in the world.

“Armenia is one of the safest countries in the world,” said Anna Keshishian, 19, a repatriate from the United States. “You can go drinking, stay out late with your friends, then walk home 99% of the time without worrying. The nightlife is larger these days — a lot more diverse events and themes. That seems to be growing.”

Yet beneath the seemingly endless nightlife, Armenian youth navigate a more complicated terrain: societal expectations that linger from generations past, family pressures that never fully loosen their grip, and a gendered divide that places a heavier burden on young women than their male peers.

A sense of inherited misogyny places extra burdens on young women. While young men move through Yerevan's social scene with relative freedom, their female peers contend with a different set of rules, ridiculed by older generations and male peers alike for seeking the same enjoyments. The age-old marriage expectation falls disproportionately on women, a pressure that, while less suffocating than before, has not disappeared. Men are rarely met with the same sense of urgency to settle down.

“Society expects me to kickstart my career. I've personally never been told I should be getting married by now — that would be more in relation to women my age,” explained Vahagn Sefilian, 20, a Yerevan native.

Despite the persistence of these expectations, the traditional social fabric is unraveling. Armenians now question the rigidity of the world in which they were raised. Slowly, broader structures are being forced to reckon

by waves of migrants and tourists, whose presence has altered not only how the capital looks, but how it moves, speaks and behaves. Since 2022, migration and tourism have surged alongside the country's westward political turn.

“It was a big surprise to me when Russians began touring Armenia in large numbers starting in 2022,” notes Georgi Derluguian, a sociologist of the Caucasus and post-Soviet transformation. “Many arrived with almost no knowledge of the country or its culture — a striking gap, given how central Armenia once was to the Soviet cultural imagination.”



Ani Danielyan, 18, a Yerevan native and recent graduate of Anania Shirakatsy Lyceum

The internet has reshaped Armenia psychologically more than any internal force. News, movements and cultural moments that once took years to reach Armenian consciousness now arrive instantaneously.

“Trends used to take a year or two to reach here,” said Keshishian. “But now with Instagram and TikTok, things are up to date at all times.”

Scrolling the same feeds as their peers in Los Angeles, Paris, and Beirut, Armenian youth increasingly measure their own society against a global benchmark and continuously push for progressive change.

This exposure is no longer strictly virtual. Increasingly, Armenian parents are sending their children abroad for university, a decision that would have been unthinkable or unaffordable a generation ago.

“Lots of students are studying abroad after high school, especially with international programs like International Baccalaureate (IB) and Erasmus. We can see how people live in other countries and compare our own lives,” noted Ani Danielyan, 18, a Yerevan native. The IB and Erasmus (the European Union's

flagship student exchange program) have become increasingly common pathways for young Armenians seeking education abroad.

However, the same connectivity that opens worlds of possibility may also narrow it. Armenian youth now navigate two overlapping systems of judgment: the global one they scroll through daily, and the domestic one that has always defined life in a country where everyone knows everyone.

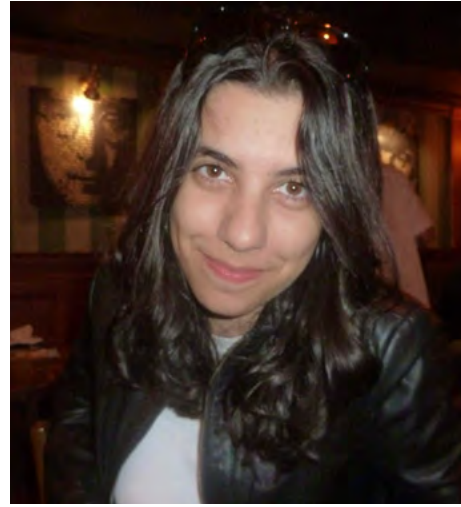
“In Armenia, people and families are very connected; it feels like everyone has an opinion about what you're doing. Online, you're already comparing yourself to peo-

ple around the world, then in real life you're compared to people your family knows,” said Danielyan.

That overlapping scrutiny arrives alongside something her parents' generation never had to manage: an overwhelming number of options.

“My parents' generation had a fixed idea of what being an adult was supposed to look like — study, get a job, get married, have a family,” added Danielyan. “My generation has more options, but that doesn't make things easier. There are more choices, but more pressure to make the right choice.”

For all the outside influence, what emerg-



Anna Keshishian, 19, a repatriate from the United States and student at the American University of Armenia (AUA)

es is something distinctly Armenian. Trends arrive from abroad and are absorbed and reshaped into something unique.

“The way people dress, the music they listen to, the places they go, even the way they talk online can look the same as teenagers in Europe or America,” Danielyan said. “But when it comes to family and expectations, Armenian culture is still there. We're creating our own version of Armenian culture, not copying other countries.”

If Armenian youth are united in reshaping their culture, they are far less united in imagining their country's future. Where their parents' generation was bound together by a single, clear goal, this one has inherited a far more fractured political landscape. “For my parents' generation, their whole thing was gaining independence. For our generation, we lived through the Velvet Revolution,” said Keshishian. “Our parents were all united, going to protest for independence together — our generation protested against corruption. Today, there's a crazy 50/50 split in the country. People will refuse to talk to others with different politics.”

That division sits atop decades of accumulated weight — the residue of Soviet rule, the trauma of a war lost within living memory, and the arrival of thousands of Armenians displaced from Artsakh (Karakakh) whose presence is a daily reminder of what was taken.

“There's this group cynicism in Armenia that I think comes from being a post-Soviet country,” said Sefilian. “And then on top of that, we're also a recent post-war country — people from Artsakh were forced to come here, and that adds to it. People are kind of uptight. You feel it.”

Yet that same weight coexists with something less often noted. “Compared to other republics of the former Soviet Union, Armenian political attitudes are quite different,” explained Derluguian. “People are rather fearless. They speak their minds, often heatedly, in a way you don't see elsewhere in the region.”

Where previous generations absorbed hardship as fate, this one treats it as something to be mended. The instinct is inward first — repairing morale, loosening the ri-



Vahagn Sefilian, 20, a Yerevan native, is pursuing a career in IT

gidity, reimagining what daily life in Armenia can look like — before turning outward to the harder questions of policy, security, and the country's place in the world. Uncertainty remains, but so does the conviction that it can be met.

This generation is not defined by what it has inherited so much as by what it intends to do next.

“My biggest hope is to build a life that I actually enjoy, not just one that looks good from the outside,” said Danielyan. “The definition of what success looks like has changed. Success is about having the freedom to create your own.”

## Rubio Sees Closer Ties With Armenia

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investment, and helping unlock new opportunities for Armenia and the broader region,” he said. “In the coming years, we anticipate deepening the partnership between our two nations.”

In early June, Rubio and Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan signed a separate framework deal laying out practical modalities of the transit arrangement that would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave as well as Turkey through a key Armenian region. The TRIPP would run along Armenia's 43-kilometer border with Iran.

The deal came just days before the Armenian parliamentary elections in which Trump openly supported Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party. Pashinyan's opposition challengers continue to voice serious misgivings about the TRIPP, saying that it could undermine Armenian control over the Syunik province and alienate Iran.

Levon Zurabyan, the deputy chairman of former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress (HAK) party, on Monday described the TRIPP as a “one-sided geopolitical project” that will spell trouble for Armenia.

“It serves the interests of very specific states -- Azerbaijan, Turkey, the European Union, the United States, and Israel -- but is perceived as hostile by Iran, Russia, and China,” he told a news conference.

Following a recent visit to Tehran, Zurabyan cited unnamed Iranian officials as warning that “if we see [the TRIPP] as a threat to our national security we will act the way we do in the Persian Gulf.”

Pashinyan has repeatedly insisted that the TRIPP will on the contrary be good for Iran and Russia.



Georgi Derluguian, sociologist of the Caucasus and post-Soviet transformation

on with a generation that refuses to accept the terms it was handed.

“There isn't as much pressure to get married anymore — the purity culture is slowly eroding,” noted Keshishian. “It's less like meeting someone and getting married instantly, and more like mingling and exploring. That's way more accepted these days.”

These softening cultural attitudes extend far beyond marriage. Raised on worldwide media and unfiltered access to the world beyond their borders, Armenian youth are absorbing new ways of thinking and carrying them home. Compounding that shift is Yerevan itself, a city visibly revamped

## INTERNATIONAL

## INTERNATIONAL

## Elida Kocharyan Secures Armenia's First Medal at European Boxing Championships

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian boxer Elida Kocharyan on September 22 won the country's first medal at the European Boxing Championships in Bulgaria, reaching the semi-finals in the women's competition.

Kocharyan, a three-time U23 European champion, secured at least a bronze medal with a commanding quarter-final victory over Romania's Andrea Crinution.

The bout was stopped in the second round after Kocharyan scored three knockdowns, one in the opening round and two in the second.

The Armenian Boxing Federation said Kocharyan used her physical strength and reach effectively, keeping her opponent at range while landing a series of powerful punches.

The referee stopped the contest after the third knockdown, confirming Kocharyan's place in the semi-finals and securing Armenia's first medal of the championships.

## Armenia's Foreign Intelligence Service Chief Travels to Azerbaijan for Forum

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Chief of Armenia's Foreign Intelligence Service Kristinne Grigoryan has traveled to Azerbaijan to participate in the 4th International Security Forum being held in Baku.

Armenian Prime Minister's Press Secretary Melanya Harutyunyan confirmed the information to Armenpress on September 22.

The forum opened on September 22 under the theme "New Challenges in the Global Security Architecture and the Formation of Effective Cooperation Mechanisms in the Fight Against Terrorism."

The event is being organized at the initiative of Azerbaijan's State Security Service. More than 600 delegates representing over 100 countries and international organizations are participating, including heads and senior representatives of special services.

## Armenian Lawmakers to Travel to Tanzania

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — National Assembly Deputy Speaker Vahagn Aleksanyan and three lawmakers will travel to Tanzania in October to participate in the 153rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. National Assembly Speaker Ruben Rubinyan has authorized the trip.

In addition to Aleksanyan, the delegation includes Civil Contract faction lawmakers Tsovinar Vardanyan and Hasmik Hakobyan, as well as Garnik Davtyan, a lawmaker from the Strong Armenia faction.

They will be in Arusha from October 3 to 10.

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WIESBADEN, Germany — On September 18, the State Parliament of the state of Hesse welcomed members of the German federal government, diplomats, and regional political figures for the official presentation of the Hessian Peace Prize for 2026 to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The prize, established by the Albert Osswald Foundation, was given to Pashinyan in recognition of his "outstanding service" in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

State Parliament President Astrid Wallmann has said the "recent progress" in this process "belongs to the most significant political developments in the southern Caucasus."

As State Minister Ingmar Jung said, "Peace is not to be taken for granted." Pashinyan, he went on, knew this personally; his endurance and ability to make "difficult de-

bakh" even against "tough domestic opposition."

And similar praise came from Hessian State Minister Ingmar Jung: "The path to peace is not an easy path. It demands courage, endurance, and the readiness to make even difficult decisions." Bringing up a thorny point, he added, "This is the case particularly when these decisions come up against opposition in one's own country." In sum: "Political responsibility is demonstrated precisely in those moments when the necessary is not at the same time the most comfortable or easy," he concluded.

In his acceptance speech, Pashinyan emphasized the advantages of the peace process. Since it began in 2024, there had been no casualties on the border, which was unprecedented, he said. In addition, the Armenia-Azerbaijan interstate document regulating the border demarcation, based on the 1991 Alma-Ata declaration; the opening of transportation links and trade routes, to be

two World Wars millions of Germans had lost their homelands; yet, reconciliation, not revanchism, prevailed.

Not a few eyebrows were raised in the room. How can the Republic of Armenia today be compared to Imperial Germany, which was allied in the First World War with the Ottoman Empire, whose wartime regime committed genocide against the Armenians and other Christian minorities? Or to Nazi Germany in World War II, which was responsible for the Shoah, the death of 6 million European Jews, and the devastation of Europe? How can one compare the Karabakh conflict, with its long and complex history, to Germany's imperial conquests and military occupations of nations? Did Armenia do anything comparable?

### For a Just Peace

Pashinyan did not give a press conference after the program, but he did agree to meet briefly with some journalists and media, as arranged by State Parliament Press Officer Benjamin Holler. In reply to a question from the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* regarding the fate of the Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister, replied, "This is of course a very sensitive question for us, and we are, without exaggeration, working on it on a daily basis. As I said, the public coverage of the topic — specifically this topic — isn't always very useful, but in diplomatic dimensions, we are working on it." He added that, since 2020, "more than 20 detainees were returned to Armenia and last year as well, and we hope that this process will continue until all our compatriots are returned to Armenia."

In a follow-up exchange, he answered a second question by the *Mirror-Spectator* regarding the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage sites in Azerbaijan and Karabakh.

"You know," he said, "of course the topic of culture and humanitarian issues are very important, and our region is very complicated. There are many complications from



Muriel Mirak-Weissbach with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Hesse (Photo credit: Hessischer Landtag, Benjamin Holler)

cisions" in the face of domestic opposition, deserved great respect.

### What Price for Peace?

As State Parliament vice-president Dr. Daniela Sommer (representing Wallmann, who was unable to attend for health reasons) concluded, Pashinyan's departure from the path of a "decades-long, enduring, structurally violence-marked conflict is not easy." Pashinyan "assumed responsibility and opened a path of dialogue and diplomacy," she added.

The presentation of the official award was made by Chairman of the Hessian Peace Prize of the Albert Osswald Foundation, Karl Starzacher and Michaela Jäckel-Osswald. The prize carries a monetary award of 25,000 euros.

The theme of responsibility and courage ran like a leitmotif in all the speakers addressing the festive event. In her comments, titled "His Path is Distinguished by Political Courage," Parliamentarian and State Minister in the Foreign Ministry Serap Güler (CDU) stressed Pashinyan's willingness to take risks, as a student, as opposition leader and as leader of the 2018 peaceful revolution, to "go against the wind," and to abandon "mistrust and violence that characterized the region," to give peace a chance. In the November 2020 armistice, he chose peace; after the 2023 expulsions of Armenians from their homeland Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), she said, "old wounds were reopened," and, addressing him, said, "You assumed responsibility" and "recognized Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Kara-

enhanced by the planned TRIPP project, all were positive developments. He expressed his thanks to President Donald Trump whose "leadership was decisive," and to Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, "who is equally deserving of this award," as well as the peoples of both nations, who, despite their suffering, had accepted the peace.

He said one could not change the past but could alter the future. Pashinyan concluded his acceptance speech with warm words of gratitude to the State of Hesse, whose government and people had come to the aid of Armenia following the 1988 earthquake, building a kindergarten and hospital, to the Federal Republic of Germany, and the European Union for their support.

### Questionable Reasoning

In the course of the dignified ceremony, graced with musical offerings from Khachaturian and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy provided by violinist Severin Marks and pianist Julian Hofmann, oblique references were made to opposition to the terms of the peace process.

In Güler's address, she developed a point based on flawed reasoning, that may provide insight into the broader question. Following her praise for Pashinyan's courage in accepting Azerbaijan sovereignty over Karabakh, she drew a distinction between historic Armenia and the Republic of Armenia, adding that it is culture and strong institutions, not the territorial dimensions that count.

"We Germans," she said, "know how difficult it is to accept territorial losses." In

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WE NEED TO WORK ON THIS  
WITHOUT DAMAGING PEACE."**

—PRIME MINISTER NIKOL PASHINYAN

all sides, many people accusing others of damaging cultural heritage sites etc., and we need to work on this without damaging peace."

He continued with consideration of a more general issue: "By the way, it is very important — and I have said this many times in Armenia — that in 1988 with conflict and war, everything started from an argument. It seemed to be an easy question, cultural heritage, etc., etc. No one would have thought it would turn into a bloody war. So, the past is very important, but it is very important not to lose the future by being too dedicated to the past. So now," he concluded, "we are concentrating on the future, of course, without losing our identity, on our side. I think that only if we lose our future will we lose our identity, because identity derives from the past, but to be alive and continuous, we need to have a future — and that is why we are working on the future."



## INTERNATIONAL

# Pashinyan Calls Baku's Portrayal of History 'Unacceptable' as Azerbaijan Doubles Down

By Arshaluys Barseghyan and Rafiq Shahbazov

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called Azerbaijan's attempts to portray Armenian religious sites in Nagorno-Karabakh as not being Armenian "unacceptable and incomprehensible." Meanwhile, Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmet Hajiyev continued to make controversial comments about Armenian heritage in the region.

The battle over monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh has long been central to the conflict over the region, with Azerbaijan often labeling medieval monasteries or heritage as Caucasian Albanian, and denying their Armenian origin despite widespread recognition among international scholars. Caucasian Albania, not related to modern-day Albania in the Balkans, was an ancient Christian kingdom that existed in the South Caucasus.

The dispute escalated after a group of diplomats visited Nagorno-Karabakh earlier in September. The official tour, hosted by Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmet Hajiyev, portrayed Armenian religious heritage as Caucasian Albanian and showed display copies of ancient Armenian manuscripts, implying their empty pages meant they were fake.

The tour was condemned in Armenia, with officials arguing the distortion of history was indicative of rhetoric that could undermine the peace process.

"But I also consider it pointless to set the goal if we set ourselves the task of proving it, for example, to Azerbaijan, because that is a pointless and unfeasible task. We should record that this is an unfeasible task, but that does not change, has not changed, and will not change anything for us," Pashinyan said on September 16.

He went on to argue that "established peace is a value for both Armenia and Azerbaijan," and on both sides "it is neces-

sary to treat peace with care."

In regards to the claims about the origin of Gandzasar (Ganjasar), Pashinyan stated that Armenia responded to Azerbaijan's claims "through the most competent official knowledgeable about this matter" — the director of the Matenadaran, Ara Khzmalyan.

Critics have accused both Pashinyan and the rest of his administration for not delivering an adequate response to Azerbaijan's claims, echoing recurring sentiments that Pashinyan is too willing to make concessions to Azerbaijan.

Amid the ongoing peace process, Armenia has taken a more cautious stance in its response towards Azerbaijan's actions in Nagorno-Karabakh, which have included erasing Armenian religious and cultural heritage, ancient cemeteries, residential areas, and settlements, along with former government buildings.

As Pashinyan's government faced criticism over its response, Armenia's Security Council Secretary Alen Simonyan noted in a briefing on Wednesday that their government could have offered a harsh statement satisfying the Armenian population, "but that will not benefit this much-desired peace."

Simonyan also stated that he spoke by phone with Hajiyev, however he declined to provide details, only stating that they have each other's phone numbers and hold consistent contact — talking to each other "every two days."

According to him, he communicated his concerns "that everything should be done so that such events do not suddenly interfere with the process."

"There is their view and there is our view. The meaning of my work is to first not bring these views together and make them clash with each other," he noted.

On September 17, amidst the renewed dispute, Pashinyan described the Azerbai-

jani narrative of "Western Azerbaijan" — which Armenia views as containing territorial claims — as a "very serious challenge and security threat" to Armenia and "the established peace."

In a Euronews panel in Dubai on the same day, Hajiyev said peace with Armenia is "an uphill struggle," but that Azerbaijan is committed to preserving the Christian heritage on its territory as it is part of its history.

In the wide-ranging panel, Hajiyev told Euronews that "probably [the] Armenian government and Armenian leadership should work to prepare their people for the peace as well."

"Now we won the war, but we are also winning in peace which is an uphill struggle," said Hajiyev.

"Throughout the years of occupation in Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur, our mosques, our Islamic cultural heritage were a subject of complete destruction by Armenia — even the pigs were put inside of the mosques."

"We are not taking it as a sign of revenge, but it's our history and our heritage and we cannot forget that," he added.

Hajiyev further said Azerbaijan is dedicated to "preserving the Christian heritage on the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, regardless of their belonging, and that is a full stop because it's our cultural heritage."

"It's also one of the first places of Christianity since the fourth century: Christianity was adopted by the (Caucasian) Kingdom of Albania as an official religion," while Azerbaijan was "also one of the first countries that adopted Islam."

On 15 September, President Ilham Aliyev spoke about what he described as Armenia's destructive treatment of mosques during a meeting with religious leaders.

Aliyev said that 65 mosques had been completely destroyed by the Armenian state, while some others had been partially

destroyed.

"You have probably seen those photos too. Armenia deliberately kept animals in mosques, including pigs and cows. In other words, it did not refrain from such barbaric acts in order to insult and humiliate us, deliberately inflicting further pain on our people by exploiting our sensitivities. In fact, this was not only an insult to us and our people, but to the entire Muslim world. This is the true face of the Armenian state. We must never forget this, and we never will."

Discussion has also continued on social media in Azerbaijan, with some people agreeing that Gandzasar belongs to the Armenians, while Dadivank (Khudavang) Monastery is associated with Caucasian Albania.

(This article originally appeared on [www.oc-media.org](http://www.oc-media.org) on September 18.)

## Russia Turns Off Gas Taps to Armenia

GAS, from page 1

"If Armenia wants to diversify its gas supplies, Azerbaijan could become one of the most advantageous and natural alternatives from a geographical perspective," an Azerbaijani MP, Azer Badamov, was quoted by the Modern.az news outlet as saying.

It is not an easy call for Pashinyan's government. The lure of Azerbaijani gas may not be enough for it to move to satisfy Baku's condition for finalizing the peace pact, given that the deal faces substantial domestic opposition. And although Pashinyan's Civil Contract Party won a solid majority in parliament in June's elections, it is uncertain whether a national referendum on changing the constitution would secure sufficient support.

Over the medium term, the lingering legacy of over three decades of bitter conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan may leave Armenian officials reluctant to give Baku significant economic leverage over Yerevan at this time.

Pashinyan during his September 11 news conference expressed hope that the pending Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIIPP) would go a long way toward solving Armenia's gas-supply dilemma. But TRIIPP is also intertwined with the finalization of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal.

(This article originally appeared on [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org) on September 15.)

## Armenian Khatchkar Dedicated in Liège

LIÈGE, Belgium (Armenpress) — A ceremony to install and consecrate an Armenian *khachkar* (cross-stone) was held in the courtyard of Saint-Gilles Church in Liège, Belgium, on the occasion of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The cross-stone is dedicated to the mem-

orial Church, Pontifical Legate of Western Europe. The ceremony was also attended by Very Rev. Maghakia Beskisizian, pastor of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Liège and surrounding areas.

The event was attended by Jean-Pierre Delville, Bishop of Liège, Tigran Balayan, Ambassador of Armenia to Belgium, as well as Armenian and Belgian guests.

In his speech, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian spoke about the symbolism of the *khachkar* and the importance of preserving the memory of the Armenian victims, noting that through its symbolism, the *khachkar* conveys a message to Armenians, wherever they may be, to remain faith-

ful to their roots.

The initiative to install the *khachkar* was launched and sponsored by Mushegh Musheghyan, a descendant of Armenian Genocide survivors from Mush. In his

speech, he spoke about the personal and national significance of the initiative.

"I want this *khachkar* to be not only a place commemorating the pain of the past, but also a place of prayer for a peaceful future," Musheghyan said.

A cultural program was also held as part of the event, featuring Armenian traditional music and dance.

## Pashinyan Insists on End to Russian Management of Armenian Railway

RAILWAY, from page 1

"Any violation of these [Russian economic] interests would ... also not go without an appropriate response from the Russian side," Galuzin said in written comments posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry website.

The ministry claimed late last month that Pashinyan wants to scrap the Russian Railways (RZhD) monopoly's concession over the network as part of the West's efforts to drive Russia out of the South Caucasus. Galuzin likewise said Yerevan is acting "in the interests of the geopolitical projects of other states."

RZhD runs the Armenian railways in accordance with a 30-year management con-

tract signed in 2008. Pashinyan first called for the contract's termination in February, prompting angry reactions from Moscow.

Russian-Armenian relations have deteriorated further since then, with Moscow pressuring Yerevan to quickly choose between seeking membership of the European Union and remaining part of a Russian-led trade bloc. Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly repeated his demands for an Armenian referendum on the issue during his talks with Pashinyan held in Kyrgyzstan on September 1.

The two leaders are expected to meet again in Moscow soon. Pashinyan said the railway issue will also be high on their agenda.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian at the Liège khachkar dedication

ory of innocent Armenian victims, Armenpress's Brussels correspondent reported.

The rite of consecration and blessing of the *khachkar* was performed by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian of the Armenian Apos-

# Yerevan Among Busiest Russian Polling Stations Abroad

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# Community News

## UCLA to Host Public Program to Mark 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dink Assassination

LOS ANGELES — In January 2007, the assassination of Hrant Dink in Istanbul set in motion profound social and political responses in Turkey and beyond. To mark the twentieth anniversary of his assassination, the UCLA Promise Armenian Institute's Armenian Genocide Research Program (AGRP) will host Hrant Dink's Legacies: Conversations on the 20th Anniversary of His Assassination, a public program exploring Dink's life and ideas, the impact of his assassination, and the different ways his legacy has evolved over the past two decades.

The event will take place on Saturday, January 30, 2027, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Rd., Mission Hills.

The program will bring together scholars, journalists and activists for a day of reflection and conversation on Dink's life, his assassination, and the different ways his legacy has evolved in Turkey, Armenia, the Armenian diaspora, and in Armenian-Turkish relations.



The late Hrant Dink

"For Hrant, Armenians and Turks were two close peoples who had become distant neighbors. He believed that overcoming this divide required civil rights for all in Turkey, justice for historical injustices, and genuine conversation and engagement between the two peoples. It was this vision that made Hrant a Martin Luther King Jr. for the region," said Dr. Taner Akçam, director of the AGRP.

Dink, founder and editor-in-chief of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos*, and co-founder of the publishing house Aras, was assassinated in Istanbul in January 2007. His deepest aspiration was to bring Turkey and Armenia, as well as Turks and Armenians (including Diaspora) together across historical divides. A passionate advocate for civil rights and historical justice, he fought racism and discrimination in Turkey and envisioned a society where Armenians and other minorities could live as equal citizens.

Twenty years after his assassination, the program will revisit Dink's ideas not as a single, fixed legacy, but through the different ways his life, work, and vision have been remembered and interpreted. It will explore their continuing relevance to questions of democracy, civil rights, historical justice, memory, and Armenian-Turkish relations.

The UCLA program is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Nanor Hartounian, AGRP Program Coordinator (nhartounian@international.ucla.edu). Full program details will be available soon on the AGRP website.



The Glendale assisted living facility which had caught on fire

## 2 Brothers Rescue Group of Elderly People from Burning Glendale Assisted Living Facility

GLENDAL (KTLA) — Two young brothers worked quickly to rescue a group of elderly people after a fire broke out at an assisted living facility in Glendale on September 11.

Glendale firefighters responded to the burning home on the 1800 block of Mountain Street around 4:45 p.m.

As the flames grew and heavy smoke billowed from the home, neighbors Alex Bazinyan, 20, and his brother Narek Bazinyan, 15, realized time was of the essence and decided to run over and help.

"I ran outside and I was looking at the front door when I saw the nurse outside and she was screaming for help," Alex told KTLA's John Fenoglio.

The brothers knew several people were trapped inside the home that was operating as an assisted living facility for seniors.

Narek initially grabbed a garden hose to help quell the flames, but as the blaze grew more intense and screams for help grew louder, they knew they had to run into the fire.



Alex and Narek Bazinyan

There were eight people inside the home — two nurses and six elderly residents, most of whom were unable to walk. The brothers said the nurses were desperately trying to remove the elderly residents from the home but were struggling.

"I see a guy in the back about to be engulfed by the flames," Narek recalled when he entered the home. "The nurse is trying to pick him up. I go and grab his legs and pull him out to the front."

Soon after, two additional neighbors also ran over to help evacuate the residents. "As I'm looking around, I just see flames going up and coming towards me," Narek said. "I tried bringing everyone out as fast as I could. There was smoke everywhere. I was pretty much blinded by the smoke."

The brothers were able to safely rescue all six elderly residents and placed them on the front lawn as they awaited fire crews.

But just as they moved the last person out of the burning home, Alex recalled hearing a loud explosion.

"I heard an explosion come from the house," he said. "I looked back and I didn't understand what exploded, but I just heard a big boom."

Firefighters arrived at the home and were able to extinguish the flames before any nearby houses were affected. The Glendale Fire Department chief said an oxygen tank likely exploded, which collapsed part of the home.

Seven people were transported to the hospital with minor injuries. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

As for Alex and Narek, they said their instincts just kicked in and the only thing they were focused on was quickly rescuing everyone from the burning home.

"It's that instinct of whenever you see people in need, you want to help them out," Alex said. "You don't really think about who it is. We have a really tight-knit community here."

Narek agreed, saying, "If you ever see anyone in need, you should always try to

## Columbia University Launches Minor in Armenian Studies

NEW YORK — Columbia University students can now pursue a minor in Armenian Studies, marking an important expansion of a field with a distinguished history at the University.

Offered through the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS), the new minor introduces students to the history, languages, literature, art, and culture of Armenia and its diasporas. It is one of three new minors established by the department, alongside programs in Arab and Arabic Studies and South Asian Studies.

The launch comes 50 years after the Armenian Center at Columbia was founded in 1976 with the aim of establishing Armenian Studies as a permanent part of the University's curriculum. That effort led to the creation of the Gevorg M. Avedisian Chair in Armenian History and Civilization in 1979. The new minor builds on this legacy while creating a clear academic pathway for a new generation of students.

The five-course program begins with Introduction to Armenian Studies, a broad survey extending from the ancient world to the present and



encompassing political, artistic, and literary history. Students also study Armenian at the elementary level and select two electives in Armenian language or Armenian-related subjects.

Students who demonstrate proficiency beyond elementary Armenian may pursue more advanced language study or complete four approved electives alongside the introductory course. Intermediate and advanced Armenian courses provide opportunities to develop language skills further.

The minor also draws on Columbia's wide-ranging courses related to Armenian history and experience. Current offerings examine such subjects as urban space and conflict in the Middle East; war, genocide, and their aftermaths; internment and incarceration; relations among Armenians, Kurds, and Turks in premodern Asia Minor; and the history and legacies of the Ottoman Empire.

MESAAS and the Armenian Center at Columbia organize lectures, conferences and other academic programs, while the student-led Armenian Society fosters community and Armenian cultural life across the University.

Students interested in pursuing the minor should consult the department's website <https://mesaas.columbia.edu/armenian-studies/>



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## City of Smile USA Announces Board Leadership Transition

BOSTON — City of Smile USA announced this week a leadership transition as Katrina Menzigian and Leon Ariyan, both longstanding members of the Board of Directors, assume the roles of co-chairs. Their appointment marks the next chapter in City of Smile USA's commitment to supporting life-saving pediatric cancer care in Armenia through fundraising, advocacy and strategic partnerships in the United States.

The transition follows five years of leadership by Yelena Bisharyan, whose vision and service helped transform City of Smile USA into a stronger and more sustainable organization.

During her tenure as chair, Bisharyan played a pivotal role in strengthening the organization's governance, expanding its fundraising capacity, building strategic partnerships, and establishing the organizational structure that positions City of Smile USA for continued growth and

long-term impact.

"Yelena's leadership has laid a remarkable foundation for the future of our organization," said Menzigian. "We are grateful for her dedication and are committed to building on that foundation as we continue supporting children and families affected by cancer.

As existing members of the Board, Menzigian and Ariyan bring continuity, institutional knowledge and complementary professional experience to their new leadership roles. Menzigian, based in the Boston area, has spent her career in leadership roles in the global market research and consulting business, currently serving as Vice President, Everest Group. Ariyan's career, based in the New York metro area, includes a number of entrepreneurial leadership roles in the logistics and fulfillment industry, and he currently owns and operates MoxiePrint. Both have actively served the Armenian

community at various organizations throughout their lives.

"It is exciting to serve as Co-Chair alongside Levon," said Katrina Menzigian. "We each bring a different but complimentary set of experiences and skills to the organization. Our priority is to further the goal of ensuring that every child in Armenia has access to life-saving cancer treatment, and we remain deeply committed to helping make that a reality."

"I look forward to working with Katrina, our Board of Directors, and our generous supporters as we continue to grow City of Smile USA," said Ariyan. "Together, we will continue investing in sustainable fundraising, meaningful partnerships, and innovative initiatives that directly benefit children and young adults battling cancer in Armenia."

This leadership transition reflects the continued evolution of City of Smile

USA, the organization's U.S.-based fundraising and philanthropic partner. City of Smile USA works in "close collaboration with City of Smile Armenia, which remains the primary organization providing comprehensive medical, psychosocial, nutritional, and palliative support to children and young adults diagnosed with cancer throughout Armenia. The leadership of City of Smile Armenia and its Board remains unchanged.

Together, the organizations have helped ensure that no child is denied treatment because of financial hardship. Since its founding, City of Smile has supported over 1,000 children and young adults, providing comprehensive care throughout their treatment journey and helping establish Armenia's first domestic pediatric bone marrow transplantation program.

To learn more about the organization, visit [www.cityofsmile.org](http://www.cityofsmile.org).

## OBITUARY

### Rosine (Zanazanian) Patterson Dedicated to Armenian Community

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Rosine Patterson (née Zanazanian), passed away peacefully after a sudden illness, surrounded by her family and friends on September 16 at Lahey Clinic in Burlington.

Rose was born in 1936 in Aleppo, Syria, to Armenian Genocide survivors Antranig and Eliza Zanazanian (née Vartanian).

Her life was devoted to the service of others, to her family, and to the Armenian community.

She attended the Guiligian School and the American High School (later called the Aleppo American College).

After graduation she worked as a physician's assistant before emigrating to the United States in 1962, first settling with her cousins, the Manoukians, in Washington, DC.

She graduated from the Hanna Harrison practical nursing program and began working as a psychiatric nurse. Through her work she met her future husband Dr. Robert Patterson, who was a medical student at the time. She lived in Ohio and Wisconsin before settling in Lexington, MA with her husband, where she lived the rest of her life. Rose was instrumental in helping her parents, four siblings and extended family get settled in the United States, some in Massachusetts and others in California.

Rose was devoted to the Armenian community and played major roles in several Armenian charity organizations including the Armenian Relief Society, the Armenian Nursing Home in Jamaica Plain, MA where she was president for several years, the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center where she served on the board, and

Hai Guine. She played a significant role in the early development of the St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, and has continued to support the school, most recently with a donation to aid the current expansion.

Her father helped found the St. John Armenian Apostolic Church in Hollywood, and Rose continued his legacy by supporting their rebuilding and relocating fund.

Rose's passion for helping others led her to earn a Master's of Social Work from Simmons College in 1982. She used her skills collaborating with her husband in psychiatric practice, primarily helping with Armenian patients who spoke little or no English. She also served as a translator for others in need across the community; she spoke Armenian, Turkish, Arabic, French, English, and some Spanish in later years.

After the Armenian earthquake in 1988, Rose went twice to Yerevan to assist in relief efforts. She took her parents to Armenia in the 1970s and returned with her own family and grandchildren in 2025. Rose was always looking for ways to help newly arrived Armenians, which led her to buy Parretti's Park Place restaurant in Waltham, which she ran tirelessly for 4 years.

Among her most significant roles in the family and the community was connecting people for friendship and support. She and Bob made a home that welcomed anyone in need. Her love and eagerness to support others was always her top priority. She spent several years alternating between Lexington, Mass. and her younger sister Sossi's home in California in order to care for Sossi after she experienced a disabling



author of the Armenian-American Cookbook. She had prepared a meal for a choral group, and came upon one of the members in tears by the dessert table. It was Rose Baboian's daughter who said that she had not had lar halva like her mom's since her mom had passed away.

Rose is survived by her husband Robert "Bob" Patterson. She was the mother of John Patterson and his wife Jennifer Ulrich of New York City and Elissa "Lissa" Patterson of Michigan. She leaves two grandchildren, Lars and Ruby Patterson. She was predeceased by her siblings Ohannes "Jano" Zanazanian, Genie Zanian, Nerses Zanazanian and Sossi Tabibian. Additionally, she is survived by extended family and friends.

Funeral Services were held at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown on Friday, September 25. Interment was private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in her memory to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES), 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown, MA 02472 or St. Stephen's Armenian Church, 38 Elton Ave., Watertown, MA 02472.

Arrangements were by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

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The assembled religious leaders and the US president (Official White House photo by Joyce N. Boghosian)

# Armenian Christian Leaders Meet With President at the White House

WASHINGTON — On September 16, Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan joined fellow Armenian Christian leaders for a historic meeting with President Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House.

Organized through the initiative of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia to the United States, in cooperation with the White House Faith Office, the meeting brought together leaders of the Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical communities in America, along with Armenia's Ambassador to the U.S., Amb. Narek Mkrtchyan. Paula White-Cain and Jennifer Korn of the White House Faith Office also participated.

The conversation focused on the Christian and civilizational bonds shared by Armenia and America, religious freedom, Armenia's unique heritage as the first nation to embrace Christianity, and the im-

portance of faith and spiritual values in fostering peace and mutual understanding.

Together, the Armenian religious leaders offered a prayer for God's blessing upon the people of Armenia and the United States, for the friendship between the two nations, and for continuing efforts toward peace and stability.

Joining Bishop Mesrop were Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Archbishop Gegham Khacherian, Bishop Mikael Mouradian and Rev. Henrik Shahnazarian.

“The gathering was a meaningful opportunity for Armenian Christian leaders to bear witness to our shared faith and to lift up in prayer the peoples of Armenia and the United States, their friendship, and the hope for a lasting peace,” Parsamyan said, reflecting on the meeting.



**Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.**

# Dr. Nubar Berberian 2026 Annual Awards



Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students

of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

## ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com,
- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 26, 2026**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2026** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winners will receive their awards in **November, 2026**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

**Watertown, MA, July 20, 2026**

## ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Goethe-Institut Boston Hosts Artist Öğrenci's Exhibition Centered On Lake Van, Memory, Migration and Displacement

BOSTON — The Goethe-Institut Boston presents “Cemetery of the Nameless,” a powerful site-specific installation by Berlin-based Turkish artist Pinar Öğrenci that uncovers a chilling connection between environmental collapse, forced migration, and forgotten histories of violence.

Installed in the ornate 19<sup>th</sup>-century Grand Hall of the Goethe-Institut's Back Bay brownstone, the exhibition transforms the historic building into a landscape of memory and disappearance. Drawing on years of research in and around her hometown of Van in eastern Turkey, Öğrenci explores how a rapidly changing environment can reveal long-hidden stories of human suffering.

At the center of the exhibition is Lake Van, whose receding waters, caused in part by climate change, have exposed extraordinary underwater formations known as microbialites. Resembling giant corals, stalagmites, or fossilized monuments, these rare mineral structures have become the starting point for Öğrenci's unsettling investigation into what landscapes remember and what societies choose to forget.

The exhibition's title refers to cemeteries along the Turkish-Iranian border where refugees and Kurds are buried anonymously, often identified only by forensic registry numbers. Through film, photography, and installation, Öğrenci traces stories of people who vanished while fleeing conflict, persecution, and economic hardship. Their stories intersect with earlier histories embedded in the region, including the Armenian Genocide, border



Film still from “Sedimented Lives” by Pinar Öğrenci, 2025/04

scapes marked by violence and loss. In doing so, she transforms technologies of surveillance into acts of remembrance. At a moment when climate-driven migration, border politics, and the ethics of emerging technologies dominate global headlines, Cemetery of the Nameless offers a powerful and deep human perspective on how ecological crises and human displacement are inextricably linked.

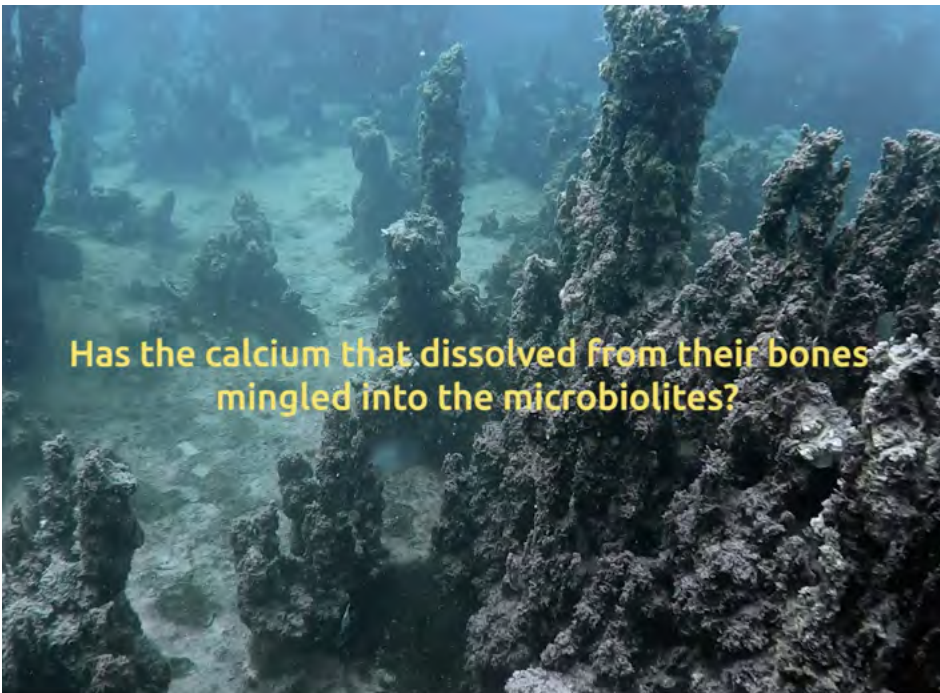
Artist and filmmaker Pinar Öğrenci

MAXXI Museum, Rome (2016), SALT Galata, Istanbul (2015-6). She had solo exhibitions at the Harvard Art Museums (2026), Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MKG, 2025), Frac Bretagne (2024), Berlinische Galerie (2023), Kunst Haus-Hundertwasser Museum in Vienna (2017) and Depo İstanbul (2017). Her works included private and public collections such as Neue Galerie Kassel, Fraqu Bretain France, Harvard Art Museums, Stadt Museum Berlin and İstanbul Modern Museum. She was awarded by Villa Romana Art Prize in 2024 and selected for

Humbolt University inherit fellowship for 2026-27.

The exhibition opens with Öğrenci in person on Thursday, October 15, 6–8 p.m. Exhibition viewing hours are: Tuesday, October 20, 12–6 p.m.; Wednesday, October 21, 12–6 p.m.; Thursday, October 22, 12–8 p.m.; Friday, October 23, 12–8 p.m.; Saturday, October 24, 12–4 p.m.; and Sunday, October 25, 12–4 p.m.

The Goethe-Institut Boston, is located at 170 Beacon Street, Boston. Admission is free, but RSVP for the exhibition opening.



“Sedimented Lives” (screenshot)

violence, and decades of displacement. In a provocative artistic gesture, Öğrenci asks a question that is both poetic and disturbing: Could the minerals released from generations of unburied bodies lost in and around Lake Van have become part of the very microbialites now emerging from its waters? The lake becomes not simply a body of water, but an archive of collective memory, where environmental change exposes layers of human history that have long remained hidden. Another striking dimension of the project is its use of drone and aerial imaging technology. The same tools increasingly associated with surveillance, border control, and AI-assisted warfare are repurposed by the artist as instruments of witnessing. Rather than tracking targets, Öğrenci uses these technologies to document fragile ecosystems, migration routes, and land-

(1973, Van, Turkey) lives in Berlin. Displacement, migration, survival and resistance are cornerstones of her films and installations. Her works are decolonial and feminist readings from the intersections of social and political research, everyday practices, and human stories that follow agents of forced migration. Öğrenci engages with place, site and architecture as the materialisation of violence. Her practice serves as a response to a collective past often left in silence and urging her audience to imagine a future built on justice, equality, and collective healing.

Her works have been exhibited widely at museums, art institutions including Manifesta 16 (2026), HKW (2025), Venice Biennial (2024), Harvard Art Museums (2024), documenta fifteen (2022), 12th Gwangju Biennial (2018), 6th Athens Biennial (2018), Sharjah Biennial13 (2017),





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian EyeCare Project to Honor Founder and President Dr. Ohanesian with Lifetime Achievement Award

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Armenian EyeCare Project (AECPP) will welcome friends, donors, supporters, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to its annual Gala on November 14 in Newport Beach, where AECPP Founder and President Dr. Roger V. Ohanesian will be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The recognition celebrates more than three decades of leadership and service that has transformed the delivery of eye care throughout Armenia.

Since embarking on his first humanitarian mission to Armenia in 1992, Ohanesian has led efforts that grew into one of the country's most impactful and long-term healthcare initiatives. Through AECPP, he has helped establish a comprehensive eye care system, restore sight to countless individuals, train generations of physicians, and create sustainable programs that continue to improve eye health nationwide.

Ohanesian first traveled to Armenia in 1992, where he witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of the 1988 earth-

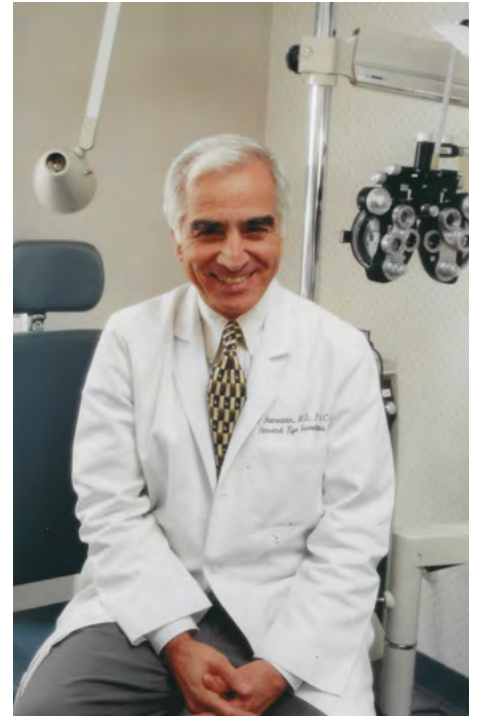
quake, the collapse of the Soviet healthcare system, and the ongoing conflict that had left countless individuals without access to quality medical care. Confronted by preventable blindness, inadequate medical infrastructure, and significant unmet needs, he recognized that Armenia required more than temporary medical missions. It needed a long-term solution. That realization led to the founding of the Armenian EyeCare Project.

From the outset, Ohanesian championed a groundbreaking model centered on sustainability, local capacity building and medical education. He established Armenia's first ophthalmology subspecialty fellowship training programs, enabling talented Armenian physicians to receive advanced training in the United States and return home equipped to lead their specialties. This commitment to education laid the foundation for Armenia's emergence as a regional center of excellence in eye care.

Under his leadership, AECPP introduced numerous landmark initiatives that trans-

formed eye care across Armenia. Among the most notable was the launch of the "Bringing Sight to Armenian Eyes" program and the deployment of the Mobile Eye Hospital, which brought state-of-the-art surgical care directly to underserved communities throughout the country. As AECPP expanded, it established subspecialty clinics in Yerevan, strengthened partnerships with Armenia's Ministry of Health and leading international institutions, modernized surgical education through a dedicated wet-lab training center, and helped shape Armenia's national blindness prevention strategy.

Through the 2010s, his vision continued to drive national innovation. AECPP launched Armenia's first national Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) Program, helping save the sight of vulnerable premature infants. The organization also established the Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Childhood Blindness in Yerevan; expanded pediatric eye care services through collaborations with Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and



Dr. Roger V. Ohanesian

the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); strengthened ophthalmic infrastructure through Regional Eye Centers; and introduced nationwide diabetic eye disease screening and treatment programs utilizing modern technologies, including artificial intelligence-assisted screening models.

In recent years, AECPP has continued to expand its reach through Diagnostic Eye Clinics, upgraded Primary Eye Clinics in the regions of Armenia, enhanced diabetic management initiatives in partnership with the World Diabetes Foundation and nationwide training programs for ophthalmologists, nurses, and family physicians focused on pediatric vision screening. These efforts reflect Ohanesian's enduring commitment to creating a comprehensive and sustainable eye care system that serves all Armenians, regardless of geography or socioeconomic status.

Today, the impact of his work can be measured not only in infrastructure and programs, but in transformed lives. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians have benefited from screenings, surgeries, treatments and preventive care. Millions of dollars of advanced ophthalmic medical equipment have been donated to Armenia. Dozens of local physicians have received advanced subspecialty training, and hundreds of volunteer ophthalmologists from around the world have participated in AECPP medical missions, helping build local expertise and strengthen Armenia's healthcare system for future generations.

Beyond his accomplishments as a surgeon, educator, and humanitarian, he is widely respected as a leader whose passion for Armenia has inspired countless colleagues, volunteers, physicians, donors and partners. His efforts have been recognized with numerous honors, including the Presidential Medal of Armenia and the ASCRS Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award, among other international recognitions.

"Roger did not simply establish an organization; he built a movement dedicated to bringing sight, hope, and development to Armenia," said AECPP Vice President Dr. John Hovanesian. "Roger's commitment has transformed lives and elevated the standard of eye care across the nation. We are honored to celebrate his extraordinary legacy and lasting contributions."

For additional event information, visit [www.eyecareproject.com/gala](http://www.eyecareproject.com/gala).

2026

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# Arts & Culture

## Garod Collective Brings Rare Armenian Films To Brooklyn

By Garen Torikian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Five short films by Armenian women, made between 1994 and 2026, screened at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Cinema on Wednesday, September 16, under the title “Post-humous Traces.” The roughly ninety-minute program was assembled by Garod Collective, the New York Armenian duo Cynthia Nahhas and Nanor Vosgueritchian. Its premise, in the collective’s own words, was family, parenthood and identity seen through loss. Four of the five treat loss as something which occurs within a family, while the fifth goes looking for Armenia itself.

Nahhas and Vosgueritchian met as students at the American University of Beirut, moved separately to New York in 2021 for graduate school, and reconnected there. They started the collective in early 2025, after a run of Genocide commemoration events that struck them both as too large and too impersonal to resemble anything relatable. Since its founding a little over a year ago, Garod has run photo-archiving workshops, backgammon socials, listening parties, and language classes. Wednesday’s screening was their first at the illustrious BAM Cinema in Brooklyn, to an audience of over 140.

The program notes suggest that the films offer “mythical images of a homeland constantly out of reach” — a familiar promise in diasporic films. However, what made this programming unique was their experimental nature, as well as their diversity in style. Across thirty years the films range from grain to pixel and from muted tones to full color; some are scratched and hand-spliced, while others are clean, bright, and flatly digital.

It is Anahid Yahjian’s piece, “Domestic Demon” (2026), which opened the evening. It is a beautiful and dizzying array of pictures, arranged with a frontality that recalls Parajanov. Each shot is meticulous, ranging from the intimate, the grotesque, the bizarre, and the amusing, as Yahjian narrates the way others see her not long after giving birth to her first child.

In the middle of the event, acting as its fulcrum, was Gariné Torosian’s “Girl From Moush” (1994). It is the oldest film in the program and the shortest: six minutes of photographs and film stock hand-spliced into a homeland the filmmaker, born in Beirut and raised in Toronto, had never seen. Here, an unnamed narrator speaks to another person, narrating their experiences of being Armenian, in Armenian. She pleads her desires to have someone (anyone!) hear her words, and to acknowledge her feelings. The imagery, detached from the narration, is a series of stills of various Armenian monuments and

see BAM, page 16



Samvel Yervinyan, left, and Serouj Kradjian (photo Aram Arkun)

## Serouj Kradjian, Samvel Yervinyan and Band Enthrall Boston Audience

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — Serouj Kradjian and his band, with guest star Samvel Yervinyan, enthralled a full house at the Huntington Theatre on Sunday, September 13, in an event organized by the Hye Cultural Alliance.

Aside from Armenians, there were Russians as well as people from various other backgrounds that evening.

Kradjian, a Grammy-nominated two-time Juno Award-winning pianist, delighted in fusing classical music, such as the works of Johann Sebastian Bach or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with disparate contemporary music and genres from the Middle East or Latin America, while often maintaining a strong, pulsating beat. Yervinyan, famous through his many years of performing with the Greek composer and pianist Yanni (Yiannis Chryssomallis), presented a virtuoso performance.

Kradjian spoke in both Armenian and English, and although the pieces he performed drew from various musical heritages, at the heart of the evening were a number of well-known Armenian songs like Groong [Crane] and other compositions by Gomidas. He presented a number of his own compositions, including one called Gorusd yev Baikar [Loss and Struggle], which he wrote during the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, when his friend from Toronto died as a volunteer.

During his remarks in between numbers, Kradjian said that while Armenians may differ in their ways of thinking and politics, it is our culture and unique music which unite us and we should nourish it so it continues to live on perpetually.

see SEROUJ, page 13



From left, Hye Cultural Alliance (HCA) leaders Naira Balagyozyan and Raya Gevorgyan, Serouj Kradjian, Samvel Yervinyan, HCA members Lusine Avalyan and Anna Arzumanyan, Ani Sinanyan, Haig Ashod Beylerian (photo Nimcat Photography)

## Big Names And Global Footprint at Armenian Film Festival

By Karine Armen

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALE — The Armenian Film Society (AFS) held its Fourth Armenian Film Festival from September 17 to 20, with an opening reception held on September 16 on the Glenmark Hotel rooftop.

Armen and Mary Karaoghlanian lead the AFS, which began 11 years ago as a small event at Abril Books in Glendale and has grown into a year-round platform that champions Armenian films and brings Armenian filmmakers together.

The Karaoghlanians began by organizing film festivals in 2023. AFS has also organized events promoting women filmmakers who have not always received the same visibility, resources or opportunities as men.

At the opening night, Armen Karaoghlanian welcomed everyone and said, “Movies have the power to unite us all. Whether you are



From left: Cinematographer Mko Malkhasyan, director/producer Inna Sahakyan, Golden Apricot Film Festival Cofounder Susanna Harutyunyan, festival volunteer Animari Khachikyan, actor Karren Karagulian with his wife Lana. (photo by Karine Armen)

watching a film with a friend, family member, or a stranger, we get to share that experience.” His wife and 5-year-old son were standing next to him. “I started watching movies with my son recently. We watch, discover, and talk about the films together. This is what it is all for. These festivals are for the future generation.”

Karaoghlanian emphasized the Armenian filmmakers from China to Estonia and their partnership with the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Armenia. Event participants included Glendale City officials, actors, producers, movie industry professionals, and Miss Universe - Armenia.

Glendale City Councilmember Alek Bartosouf said, “I’m grateful

see FILM, page 13

ARTS & CULTURE

Big Names And Global Footprint at Armenian Film Festival

FILM, from page 12

to the organizers, sponsors, and filmmakers who make the Armenian Film Festival come to life in Glendale.” He added, “It is programs like this that bring people together, and for Armenian-Americans like myself, help strengthen our roots in the Armenian culture and community.”

A meeting with cinematographer Arseni Khachaturan at Lumen Coffee Frogtown/ Karmir Film Lab LA near the Los Angeles Riverwalk. Khachaturan is Armenian from Belarus who has worked with noted directors. He said, “Curiosity is essential for learning and growth.” His last movie was “The Drama” with Robert Pattinson and Zendaya, released earlier this year.

The first day of the film screening featured “Atonement,” starring Boyd Holbrook, Hiam Abbass and Oscar winner Kenneth Branagh. The day also featured a question-and-answer with writer/director Reed Van Dyk and Palestinian actress Abbass, who lives in Paris. The movie is produced in the U.S. but includes the story of an Armenian family from Iraq.

On Friday, September 18, there was an opportunity to meet Karren Karagulian, who was honored at the 2025 Armenian Film Festival for his remarkable career and his performance in “Anora,” which won Best Picture at the Academy Awards. Karagulian will next appear alongside Brad Pitt in “The Further Mis-Adventures of Cliff Booth,” directed by David Fincher and written by Quentin Tarantino.

Saturday morning there was a screening of “A Woman Today” by Robert Guédiguian, the noted French-Armenian director.

Michel Petrossian composed the film’s score.

Susanna Harutyunyan, cofounder of Yerevan’s Golden Apricot International Festival, attended the screening of the short films shown. She talked about the importance of collaboration with AFS.

The festival’s final day featured short films. Director Kristina Davidjans grew up in Estonia. Her short film was called “The Eel.” Davidjans said, “Filmmaking can be a lonely pursuit, even when you are surrounded by people who genuinely want the best for you. Everyone sees things differently, which makes staying true to your own vision all the more difficult. Still, it is worth remembering that your personal conviction, even when other people’s feedback makes you begin to doubt it, can offer audiences something truly unique.” She continued, “And the truth is, the more personal the subject or perspective, the more universal it often becomes. I, too, sometimes lose sight of this amid all the noise.”

The AFS Film Festival closed with the U.S. premiere of the French movie “De Gaulle - Part I: Resistance” starring Simon Abkarian. The film, directed by Antonin Baudry, explores Charles de Gaulle’s journey during World War II, from military leader to a defining figure in French politics between 1940 and 1945. The film has become a surprise massive hit. The second part will be released soon.

Abkarian is an acclaimed French-Armenian actor, playwright and director whose career spans theater, film, and television. He won the Molière Award for Best Actor, has hundreds of credits, including



Armen and Mary Karaoghlanian with Glendale City Council member Alek Bartrosouf (photo by Karine Armen)

films such as “Ararat,” “Casino Royale,” “Persepolis,” and “The Army of Crime.” Abkarian received a standing ovation for his performance in the film at the Cannes Film Festival.

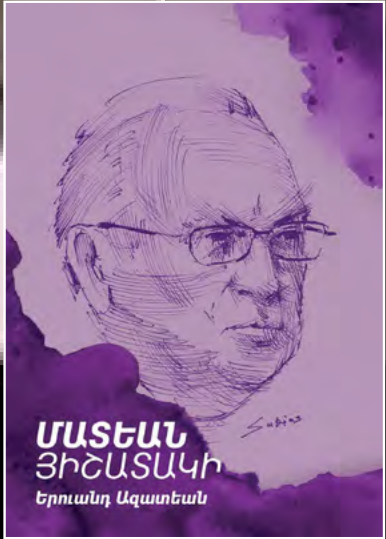
The AFS is expanding globally but that means increased funding. “The immediate focus is continuing to grow the festival in Los Angeles while expanding its interna-

tional presence,” said Karaoghlanian. “We want the festival to remain an essential destination for filmmakers, a place where significant films premiere, meaningful industry relationships form, and new filmmakers are discovered.”

For more information visit <https://www.armenianfilmsociety.com/armenian-film-festival>



## Edmond Y. Azadian: Book of Remembrance



**A bilingual Armenian and English commemorative volume dedicated to the writer, pundit and public figure Edmond Y. Azadian has been published by the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada. For copies, email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com) or write to Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472.**

Serouj Kradjian, Samvel Yervinyan and Band Enthrall Boston Audience

SEROUJ, from page 12

The performers in the band that night included Haig Ashod Beylerian on guitar, Ardashes Sinanyan on the drums and Ani Sinanyan on the violin (and singing Tsaghkats Baleni [Blossomed Cherry Tree], composed by Khachatur Avetisyan). The audience also was encouraged to participate by clapping and even singing along during a few songs.

The Hye Cultural Alliance, led by cofounders Raya Gevorgyan and Naira Balagyozyan, continues this fall in its mission of promoting and preserving Armenian culture in the diaspora as well as giving back by supporting people in need in Armenia and in



Ani Sinanyan and Haig Ashod Beylerian (photo Aram Arkun)

the Greater Boston community.

For more about forthcoming events, see <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61571989260854>



From left, Ardashes Sinanyan, Serouj Kradjian, Ani Sinanyan, Haig Ashod Beylerian (photo Nimcat Photography)



ARTS & CULTURE

# Books

## Jennifer Manoukian’s *Purist Pursuits*: An Invitation to Redefine Purism

By Arpi Sarafian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

That Western Armenian, the language spoken by most Armenians in the diaspora, is still alive must be evidence of its openness to grow and to evolve, readiness to change being an essential characteristic of language. Especially in a multi-lingual universe, such as the Ottoman Empire where Western Armenian took root, words, themselves not fixed entities and all too often dependent on their contexts for meaning, are borrowed from the surrounding languages as needed, to eventually become part of the recipient language.

Jennifer Manoukian’s groundbreaking *Purist Pursuits: Language, Global Ideas, and the Creation of Western Armenian in the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford University Press, 2026) is built on the premise that the social realities surrounding the evolution of Western Armenian, starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1915 Armenian Genocide and beyond, have not been adequately examined.

In the realm of the diverse cultures and populations of the Ottoman Empire, avers Manoukian, words from Turkish, Arabic and other languages were constantly borrowed by Western Armenian. Manoukian deplores the fact that in their eagerness to create a pure language that would be in line with the rising nationalist ideologies that started with the 1840’s, the “intellectual purists” of Istanbul, who were at the helm of the creation of Western Armenian, cleansed the language of loanwords in favor of previously used or newly coined Armenian words, based on the belief that one nation should speak one language.

Using “pure” Armenian was never a historical norm, asserts Manoukian. There were indeed more than 70 dialects — regional non-standard varieties of spoken Armenian — in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, Western Armenian being only one “among many valid language varieties worthy of scholarly attention.” It was only in the 1890s that the purified vernacular of the Istanbul dialect, referred to as Western Armenian, replaced Classical Armenian — in use since the fifth century primarily as a written language — and spread as a spoken language. The merger of the written and the spoken languages was completed

in the aftermath of the 1915 Genocide, in the diaspora.

“Language purity in and of itself [is] a myth,” notes Manoukian. Indeed, protecting language from foreign influences to keep it “pure” is an impossibility as no language exists in complete isolation. The constraints of purism on self-expression, adds Manoukian, create intense anxiety, as they ignore “the inherent geographic, social, and situational variability of spoken language.” It may in fact have been unrealistic, for a linguistically diverse population, to make the use of the 1890s Istanbul dialect — cleansed of its Turkish borrowings — the sole model for speech. Yet, to claim that the current status of Western Armenian as “definitely endangered” — as classified by UNESCO in 2010 — is largely due to contemporary speakers choosing to abandon it altogether because of their feelings of anxiety, “a direct result of the ideology of purism fashioned in the Ottoman period,” would be downplaying the complexities of maintaining a standard Armenian language in a globally dispersed diaspora.

The ideals of stability and unity are not inherently negative. It is the insistence on fixed, rigid forms of “correctness” that creates the paralyzing anxiety and the fear of failure that would incite speakers to refrain from using the language. A comment from one of my freshman students on his high school English Composition essays sums it all up: “I used to get my essays back bleeding.” One does not need policing to teach “correctness.” In fact, telling students not to worry about mechanical correctness/rules in the early stages of their composing helps create the non-threatening environment they need to acquire the necessary skills to get their meaning across.

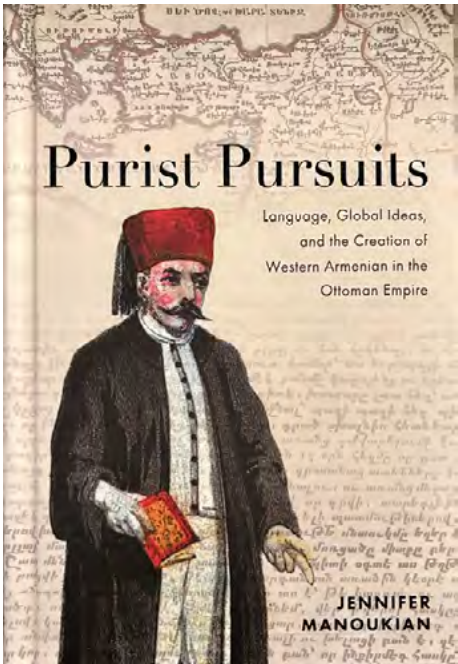
Rather than dismiss the notion of a “pure” language altogether, redefining “purism” to include borrowings would perhaps be more realistic and certainly more useful. Extending the language into the surrounding culture need not be perceived as a dismissal of the “ideal of stability” of the standard language, no matter how “impure” at times. Mixing languages creates a strong emotional connection. I grew up surrounded with five languages and still mix all five in casual settings. My telephone conversations with friends teem with foreign expressions. My grocery list is almost exclusively in Arabic. That I do not replicate this mixing in more formal exchanges — both written and oral — has never created any anxiety. One makes the necessary shift and picks the right voice for the right context instinctively, just as one picks the appropriate attire for the appropriate occasion.

priate occasion.

If integrating words from a language one feels comfortable with is not perceived as corruption, then Western Armenian can have the added advantage of serving as a vehicle of communication, a lingua franca, in a multilingual diaspora. Putting the language to everyday use — even to misuse and abuse — to develop the necessary fluency may just be the key to saving Western Armenian from sinking.

Dichotomies are not helpful. *Purist Pursuits* itself evidences the possibility of a harmonious mixing of opposites by blending Manoukian’s own experience of her research with her otherwise meticulously researched project. The book opens with the almost conversational, “In the fall of 2001, I was working at an Armenian research center in New York . . . One evening, on my way out . . .” The generous use of the pronoun “I,” “My project,” “What I argue is . . .,” “I could not have imagined how much I would enjoy. . .,” adds a most welcome personal touch that in no way detracts from the “objectivity” or the “formality” — quintessential prescriptions for academic writing — of her project. Almost one hundred pages of Notes and an extensive Bibliography of sources further enhance the book’s “scholarliness.”

Manoukian traces the creation of West-



ern Armenian with amazing confidence and clarity. Her focus on social situations and the social history of language connects language to its users, countering what she characterizes as the “largely people-less studies of the Armenian language.” It is now up to future generations of researchers to detail the different approaches that would help sustain and reverse the demise of Western Armenian, which may or may not be on its deathbed.

According to modern-day philologists, notes Manoukian, “Languages pass through the phases of birth, life and death,” as all organic forms do true to the laws of nature. Recalling William Saroyan’s famous words on his deathbed, “Everybody has got to die, but I have always believed an exception would be made in my case,” some of us would like to believe that “an exception [will] be made in [our] case.”

The book is available through Amazon or Stanford University Press.



### 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.



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Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter

Գինեձօն

Յավերժական Հայաստան: Նորատուսի Խաչքարերը  
Մուրը Նշաններ, Մոռացված Ձայներ և Հավատքի Արձագանգներ  
Eternal Armenia Khatchkars - The CrossStones of Noratus  
Sacred Symbols, Forgotten Voices, and the Echoes of Faith

Գլխավոր բանախօս, հեղինակ և լուսանկարիչ  
Դավիդ Քարամյան  
DAVID KARAMIAN  
Keynote speaker, author and photographer



David Karamian will present his newest book, *Eternal Armenia: Khatchkars - The CrossStones of Noratus*, a three-year project exploring the ancient cemetery of Noratus, home to the world’s largest surviving collection of Armenian khatchkars (cross-stones). Through photography, history, and cultural reflection, the presentation offers a journey into one of Armenia’s most extraordinary sacred landscapes and the enduring legacy of its Christian heritage.

Կիրակի, 4 Հոկտեմբեր 2026-ին,  
կ.ե. ժամը 5:00-ին  
Sunday, October 4, 2026, 5:00 PM  
ԹՄՄ Պեշկետիւրեան կեդրոնին մէջ:  
Tekeyan Cultural Association Beshgeturian Center  
1901 N. Allen Avenue, Altadena, CA 91001  
info@tekeyanla.org



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine  
Vartanian Datian



## Middle Eastern Rice with Spices, Pistachios, Cashews and Raisins

By Lara Dunston, Asia-based travel and food writer, writes:

“This Middle Eastern rice recipe with spices, nuts and raisins makes a spiced rice dish inspired by Arabic rice dishes from the Middle East, such as Arabian machboos and kabsa, Palestinian qidreh and Syrian maqluba. While authentic in flavor, our rice dish is stir-fried in the speedier Asian-style rather than slower Middle Eastern pilaf method.

My easy recipe is fantastic with smoky kofta kebab or garlicky shish tawook, and salads such as fattoush and tabbouleh. It’s one of our best Middle Eastern recipes and one of our most popular recipes. While my recipe is authentic in taste — there are few more quintessential Middle Eastern spice blends than the ‘seven spice’ mix known as ‘baharat’ and nuts such as pistachios and cashews — the technique I use is inauthentic. Instead of the pilaf method, I use the Asian stir-fry method to use up leftover rice.

The next day, I combine any leftover Middle Eastern rice with kofta kebab meat or garlicky chicken leftovers, which I break up into bite-sized pieces and quickly stir-fry again. The result is a wonderful rice dish that makes an easy yet comforting meal for a filling lunch or casual dinner.

My recipe is inspired by the spiced Arabic rice dishes that we fell in love with during our many years living and working in the United Arab Emirates, and travelling in the Middle East as travel and food writers and guidebook authors.

During my time working as an academic in Abu Dhabi, then Dubai, I was lucky to eat Emirati food, including Arabian rice dishes, in the homes of my female students, at the end of semester picnics they organized for us, and at their lavish weddings — where a Bedouin delicacy of roasted baby camel on a mountain of spiced rice was the highlight.

I say “lucky” because in those days it was next to impossible to find Emirati food outside local homes or cultural events. Most Arabic restaurants served the

cuisines of the Levant — mainly Lebanese food, but also Syrian food. The other popular cuisines eaten out in restaurants were Iranian/Persian, Moroccan, Afghani, Pakistani, and Indian.

It was far easier to find restaurants that specialized in an Indian regional cuisine than Emirati cuisine, which is why I treasured the chance to try the food of the Emirates whenever I could. One of the most popular Emirati rice dishes was machboos, also written as makbus or maqbus, and also called kabsa. Eaten right across the Arabian Peninsula, where every country claims it as their national dish.

Made in the UAE with the beloved Emirati spice blend, bezar — a mix of turmeric, cumin, cardamom, coriander, star anise, cinnamon, fenugreek, fennel seeds, chili, and pepper — machboos is served with everything from fried fish to braised chicken cooked in a tomato based spiced broth.

Another Arabic rice dish I adored was hashweh, that is best known in the Arabian Peninsula countries as a Bedouin rice dish, but is cooked right across the Middle East and thought to have originated in Palestine. A versatile rice dish, hashweh is eaten as a side dish to grilled meats at home, but during religious holiday feasts and celebratory meals for weddings, hashweh serves as a bed for larger roasted meats such as a lamb or goat that are piled on top, and used as a stuffing in baby camel — ‘hashweh’ in fact means ‘stuffing’ in Arabic.

Like machboos, hashweh rice is heavily spiced — in this case, typically with a spice blend of cardamom, cumin, cinnamon, star anise, nutmeg, and pepper that infuses the rice as well as the minced meat, usually beef — and is garnished with nuts, such as almonds and pine nuts. Of all the Arabic spiced rice dishes, it’s machboos and hashweh that have probably most influenced my Middle Eastern rice recipe.

Middle East specialists after eight years living in the United Arab Emirates, and over 12 years writing on the MENA region and Europe, our home is now Siem Reap, Cambodia, and our work these days focuses largely, but not solely, on Asia and Australia.”

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/4 cups cooked jasmine rice
- 2 tablespoons pistachios
- 2 tablespoons cashews
- 2 tablespoons olive oil divided, more to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons raisins, any variety

### PREPARATION:

Remove the leftover cooked jasmine rice from the refrigerator, use a fork to thoroughly separate the grains and set aside. Combine all the dried spices in a bowl or glass jar until well incorporated and set aside.

In a big flat-bottomed wok, fry the pistachios and cashews for a minute or two until they start to color, continually stirring them so they don’t burn, then transfer to a dish and set aside.

In the same wok, heat a tablespoon of olive oil over high heat, add the dried spices, stir to incorporate well, then add the cooked jasmine rice, thyme sprigs and raisins, and stir fry until the spices, nuts and thyme, are evenly distributed and the rice has changed color and is hot.

Taste, adjust the seasoning to suit your palate, transfer to a serving plate, garnish with more fresh thyme sprigs and lemon slices and serve immediately while piping hot.

Note: Garnish: thyme sprigs and lemon slices.

For this recipe, go to: <https://grantourismotravels.com/middle-eastern-rice-recipe/>

Lara Dunston is a Cambodia-based travel and food writer who has experienced over 70 countries and written for The Guardian, Australian Gourmet Traveller, Feast, Delicious, National Geographic Traveller, Conde Nast Traveller, Travel+Leisure Southeast Asia, DestinAsian, TIME, CNN, The Independent, The Telegraph, Sunday Times Travel Magazine, AFAR, Wanderlust, International Traveller, Get Lost, Four Seasons Magazine, Fah Thai, Sawasdee, and more, as well as authored more than 40 guidebooks for Lonely Planet, DK, Footprint, Rough Guides, Fodors, Thomas Cook, and AA Guides. She and her husband Terence Carter are food and travel writers and photographers who have lived in Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East since 1998. They have authored hundreds of travel and food stories for the world’s best publishers, hosted culinary tours and writing and photography retreats, and are currently developing cookbooks in Siem Reap. Siem Reap is a vibrant resort city in northwestern Cambodia and the primary gateway to the ancient temples of Angkor. Lara also loved being the Asia editor for Truth Love and Clean Cutlery, a guide to the world’s most ethical, responsible, altruistic, and sustainable restaurants; founding editors include Alice Waters, Jill Dupleix and Giles Coren.

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Lara is a Cambodia-based travel/food writer, culinary tour host, itinerary creator, restaurant consultant



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR  
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

**SEPTEMBER 26 and 27 — Choral & Chamber Music Festival, Saturday, 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, 3 p.m.** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Details and tickets at: <https://htaac.org/event/holy-trinity-music-festival/>

**OCTOBER 5 — Monday, Saint James Men’s Club Social Event** combined with Holy Trinity Men’s Club, mezza 6:15 pm, 7:00 pm, Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner. Our Guest speaker will be; Pierre Terjanian, the new director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Please RSVP at the church office, 617-923-8860 we expect a large audience for this event, Located 465 Mt. Auburn Street , Watertown.

**October 16-17 — St. James Armenian Church 79th Annual Bazaar – Friday 12-8 pm, Saturday 11 am-7 pm.** Delicious Armenian Food, Mezze, Pastries, and Baked Goods. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children’s Activities, Booths and Local Vendors. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information please visit [www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar).

**OCTOBER 17 — Radius Ensemble** will open its 28th season with a performance of Armenian-American composer Mary Kouyoumdjian’s *Studies on Rage for Each Day of the Week*. Kouyoumdjian is an acclaimed Armenian-American composer and was a 2024 Pulitzer Prize Finalist and 2025 Grammy nominee. 8 p.m., at the brand new Thomas Tull Concert Hall at MIT, 201 Amherst St., Cambridge. There’s a garage beneath the building (\$11) and it is a wheelchair accessible venue. Tickets are \$42 for general admission, \$37 for seniors, and \$15 for students. They can be purchased here: <https://radiusensemble.org/products/textures>

**OCTOBER 21 — Film Screening & Mill Talk** by filmmaker Roger Hagopian: *Destination Watertown- the Armenians of Hood Rubber*, Wednesday, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation, 154 Moody St., Waltham. Free to the Public but registration required.

**OCTOBER 24 — The New England Couples Ministry, Saturday, at 5 p.m.,** will hold a special program, titled “Willing the Good of the Other: Marriage Through Every Season,” which will offer encouragement, practical wisdom, and Christ-centered teaching for building stronger, healthier relationships. Beautiful evening of dinner, music, fellowship, and inspiring teaching with Rev. Nareg Terterian. Whether you are married, engaged, dating, or single, all are welcome. Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. \$50 per person. To RSVP or more info, call 617-229-9294.

**OCTOBER 25 — “Voices Across Time: Armenian Piano Music: A Homage to Robert Mirak,”** Piano Recital and CD Launch by Alessandra Pompili. Works by Stephen Minas, Alan Hovhaness, Emanuel Melik-Aslanian, Loris Tjeknavori-

an, Komitas, George Gurdjieff, Diane Goolkasian Rahbee, Aram Khachaturian, and Koharik Gazarossian. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington, Sunday at 5 p.m. Free and Open to the Public - Reception to follow.

**NOVEMBER 12 — City of Smile** will host an astonishing, Magical Mystical Night. City of Smile helps treat children in Armenia who are suffering from cancer. 7 to 10 p.m., Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont St., Watertown.

**November 13 —Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA)** Boston’s Child Care Committee presents an evening in support of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan. The event will feature Manet-Miriam, star of “La Voix” (The Voice) Canada, with special guest Melanya Geghamyan, founding principal of the Avedisian School. 6 p.m. Dinner and live auction. Wellesley Country Club, Wellesley Hills. For more info and reservations visit: <https://amaa.org/hyeminds2026/>

**NOVEMBER 15 — GIVING THANKS! TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 2pm./Meet & Greet. Share the Warmth: Bring a Winter Hat, Scarf or Gloves for the ABCD Winter Drive, Seasonal Refreshments. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**NOVEMBER 21 and 22: Save the Date.** America’s oldest Armenian Church Celebrates 135 years. Banquet November 21. Divine Liturgy November 22. Details to follow.

**DECEMBER 6 — CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 4:45pm. Meet & Greet. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Sweet Treats. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

RHODE ISLAND

**OCTOBER 24 — The Cultural committee** presents Dinner Dance Honoring the 1st Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Sahak Gabrielyan, Priest of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church. Featuring the music of; Ken Kalajian ( guitar), Charles Kalaijan ( percussion), Leon Janikian (clarinet), Harry Bedrossian ( oud & vocal). Cocktail Hour 6-7 p.m., Dinner 7 p.m., Dance 8-11 p.m. Saturday, Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. For tickets please call: Zara Vartanian (401) 439 -5971, Elvira Hovagimian (860) 462- 3610. Tickets \$ 60 (\$ 75 after October 18). 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.

Garod Collective Brings Rare Armenian Films to Brooklyn

BAM, from page 12

landscapes, acting as if they were a personal home movie.

“World” (2020), by Christine Haroutounian, was a masterclass in subtlety. It explores the relationship between a young, lonely woman and her dying mother. Much was unsaid between the two, yet the entire history of their relationship was deftly communicated. Similarly, Naira Sargsyan’s “General Cleaning” (2020) focuses on a specific family’s interpersonal relationships, as they clear their home and prepare for a move. The protagonist, the grandfather, is a caretaker at a graveyard, and while the film is permeated with sadness, there are moments of levity that make it feel like one is inhabiting a real Armenian home.

The last film of the evening was “Farewell” (2004) by Maria Saakyan, who trained at Moscow’s prestigious VGIK and graduated in 2003; “Farewell” is her final student work. She died of cancer in 2018, at thirty-seven, making this viewing a truly rare treat. What little dialogue that appears in the film is in Russian, but it’s not a prerequisite for enjoying the piece, which has a young child imagining the life of her recently deceased father. Saakyan spent her working life trying to build

an Armenian cinema, and she is the only filmmaker here for whom “post-humous traces” is a literal description.

As it was the New York premiere of “Domestic Demon,” Yahjian was present for questions after the screening. She described the piece as being her interpretation of two terrible events in 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic, and the birth of her first child, after which she suffered post-partum depression. Trapped indoors as a result of the virus and the requirements of domesticity, the film went through many cuts, both visually and aurally, until it resulted in a piece which, as Yahjian put it, was both personal and meant to be general enough for other mothers to relate to. It was crucially vital to her that the film’s dialogue be spoken in Western Armenian, as it’s a language woefully underrepresented in cinema.

A homeland constantly out of reach turns out, in these five films, to be a domestic condition. What screened was mostly interiors: a bright suburban home in Los Angeles, a grandfather’s half-packed house, a room where a daughter waits out her mother’s death. These films show that the Armenian homeland in these films is not far away: it is in the next room, behind a door nobody opens.



Cynthia Nahhas, at left, and Nanor Vosgueritchian

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



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## COMMENTARY

# Russian Military Base in Armenia Is a Test of The Future of Armenian–Russian Relations

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The Russian 102nd Military Base in Armenia was one of the few topics that was not discussed in Armenia's domestic political discourse. Discussions about it were minimal, unlike other controversial issues on the Armenia–Russia agenda, including the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), gas prices, certain restrictions imposed on Armenia, and so on. It also was not a contentious issue on the bilateral Russian-Armenian agenda around which intense political debates could develop. Yet this topic was brought onto the agenda following the meeting between the Russian president and the Armenian prime minister, when Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the military base could be withdrawn from Armenian territory at an accelerated pace if Armenia did not need it.

This then became a serious and heated topic of discussion in Armenian political and political-science circles. It was the Russian side that brought the issue onto the agenda and directed the responsibility for the decision toward Yerevan with the formulation, "if Yerevan does not need it." In other words, Russia appeared to be waiting for Armenia to declare that it wanted the military base withdrawn.

Armenia's response surprised many, particularly pro-Western forces, because Armenia countered that if Russia wanted to withdraw the military base, Armenia would not object. This was stated at the level of the prime minister, and, in essence, the responsibility for making the decision was shifted back to the Russian side, so that Russia would make the decision. Thus, it appears that the two sides shifted responsibility for the decision onto each other, while at the same time bringing the issue of the military base's withdrawal into the public debate and onto the political agenda.

The Russian military base in Armenia was established with several objectives, the first of which was to maintain a military presence in the South Caucasus. This became particularly important after the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia and Russia's departure from the Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan. The base remained Russia's only foothold in the South Caucasus. In addition, it was a military base located directly opposite the border with NATO member Turkey, which had strategic significance from the perspective of NATO–Russia confrontation. It was also one of the components of Russia's status as a great power, because having a military base in another country's territory underscored Russia's role as a global player.

The presence of the military base played an important role in maintaining the balance of power in the South Caucasus. Its presence was not in Turkey's interests, since the base of a rival state was located directly on its border. On the other hand, it was not making Iran nervous, at least from the perspective that there could not be another type of military presence in Armenia apart from the Russian one. This made Armenia and the region more predictable and controllable for Tehran, even if the military presence belonged not to Iran itself but to a country with more or less friendly relations. It was also an indicator of the strategic and military-diplomatic partnership between Russia and Armenia, something that was proudly emphasized in both countries.

The base played a certain role in ensuring regional stability, considering the security architecture that existed before the 2020 war while Russia and Armenia were strategic allies. Formally, its existence also pursued the goal of protecting Armenia and was presented as a deterrence mechanism, if not for Nagorno-Karabakh, then for Armenia's security.

However, the picture changed significantly after the 2020 war, the transformation of the nature of Russian–Turkish relations, the Russia–Ukraine war, and various other processes which took place in the South Caucasus over the past five to six years. The military base lost some of its importance and significance for both Armenia and Russia, although this was determined primarily by regional realities rather than by bilateral relations.

Putin's statement regarding the military base was unexpected, and it appears that its purpose was to encourage Armenia to view its relationship with Russia not through individual agenda items, but as a comprehensive package. Ultimately, the CSTO

is an international organization, as is the EAEU, while bilateral relations include the price of gas, the railway issue, the nuclear power plant issue — which, incidentally, Armenia has stated it is ready to cooperate with Russia on — as well as the economic restrictions that Moscow applies toward Yerevan. In other words, Russia is placing its bilateral and multilateral relations with Armenia into one comprehensive and large package that includes all security and economic issues.

This means that if Armenia wants to distance itself from Russia, the corresponding step would amount to total disengagement. Putting the question of a referendum before Yerevan means that Russia appears to want Yerevan to approach the entire spectrum of its relations with Russia through the referendum, rather than focusing only on membership in the EAEU. This leaves Yerevan in a more difficult position, because the stakes become considerably higher.

The essence of the referendum could become not only Armenia's withdrawal from the EAEU, but a broader reconsideration of the nature and level of relations with Russia, since Russia is turning all the issues on the agenda into one unified package. As a result



of such a referendum, Armenia and Russia will not become enemies, but the economic, political, and military relations that have been built between them over many years will either be reduced to zero or become insignificant. Here, it is important to emphasize that Russia is Armenia's number one trading partner, and the economic ties between the two countries number in the thousands. In other words, Russia is saying that relations should take on a new format, the basis for which could be not the policy of the Armenian government, which many consider pro-European in Moscow, but the Armenian people. That is, if the desire to distance Armenia from Russia comes not from the Armenian government, but from the Armenian people, then the decision belongs to the people, and it should be a public decision, with the people assuming responsibility for its consequences.

The escalation of these issues could also mean that Armenia is simply receiving a strong rationale for not distancing itself from Russia and not leaving the EAEU, because the alternatives cannot be provided by the EU. Therefore, there may be no need to make such a choice. Conversely, if Armenia wants to obtain greater independence from Russia, this becomes more difficult — not because of the circulation of the military-base issue itself, but because Russia's relationship with Armenia is being viewed not only through economic ties, but also through military, geopolitical, energy, communications, and other dimensions.

The reality is that Armenian-Russian political, military, and strategic relations are currently at their lowest level in recent decades. However, in the economic sphere, they remain significantly strong and deeply interconnected. Therefore, Russia's approach appears to be that either integration and the deepening of relations in all areas move along the same path and in the same direction, or they do not move forward at all and instead move toward a reduction in the level of bilateral relations, similar to what happened between Georgia and Russia after 2008.

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



## COMMENTARY

# Never Again Means Never Again for Everybody

By Arthur Atanesyan

“When my Jewish grandmother told me about the Holocaust, she told me: ‘Never again.’ This is not ‘Never again.’ Never again means never again for everybody.”

A Jewish student at Rutgers University said these words in April 2026 while interrupting an event featuring an Israeli soldier. The student’s intervention was emotional and controversial, but his reference to his grandmother carries a meaning that goes far beyond that particular university event.

What does “Never Again” actually mean? Is it a promise concerning one people, one historical tragedy and one particular memory? Or is it a universal principle - that no civilian population should again be subjected to mass killing, destruction, displacement and the loss of its home?

For me, as an Armenian, this question has another painful dimension. We know what happens when warnings are issued before a catastrophe, but the warnings do not generate sufficient preventive action.

Gaza after the ceasefire

The latest reports from the United Nations make it impossible to treat the Gaza crisis as something that ended with the ceasefire framework.

The latest OCHA Humanitarian Situation Report, dated 11 September 2026, continues to document serious humanitarian and protection concerns across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In Gaza, military activity continues to cause civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, while humanitarian operations remain constrained by access, security and funding problems. Most people remain displaced and face severe difficulties obtaining adequate shelter, water and essential services.

The humanitarian situation is particularly severe for women and children. OCHA’s latest reporting documents continuing attacks affecting populated areas and serious deficiencies in water, sanitation and essential infrastructure. As the rainy season approaches, displaced Palestinians remain exposed to difficult conditions in overcrowded and often inadequate shelters.

And this is not only a Gaza story.

In the West Bank, OCHA documented more than 1,600 settler attacks causing Palestinian casualties or property damage between January and August 2026, across 275 communities - an average of 6.7 attacks every day. The report also documents continuing demolitions and displacement.

The human cost becomes harder to reduce to statistics when individual families are considered. On September 10, an Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza killed a man, his wife and their two daughters, aged eight and twelve, while they were reportedly asleep in their home. Two days later, The Guardian reported the death of 27-year-old Iman Shalouf, who was eight months pregnant, after she was shot in the head while sitting in a tent in Khan Younis; both the woman and her unborn child died. A ceasefire that does not reliably protect civilians from continuing attacks cannot by itself amount to a durable peace. The humanitarian crisis is therefore also a crisis of security, territory and displacement.

Is “voluntary emigration” really voluntary?

Perhaps the most disturbing development in the current Israeli political debate is the renewed discussion about the future of Gaza in terms of Palestinian departure.

In September, far-right Israeli ministers again promoted plans for what they call “voluntary emigration” of Palestinians from Gaza. At the same time, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar said on September 9 that the government has no plans to deport Palestinians from Gaza. The distinction is important. It would be inaccurate to describe mass deportation as an established Israeli government policy. But it would be equally misleading to dismiss the political significance of senior government ministers openly advocating mass emigration.

The central question is simple: how voluntary is de-

parture when the conditions for remaining have become unbearable?

This is where the Armenian experience becomes relevant.

Karabakh: the warning before the catastrophe

Nagorno-Karabakh did not empty in a single day.

For months, the Armenian population lived under increasingly severe restrictions and humanitarian deprivation. The Lachin Corridor was blocked for nine months. Food, medicine and other essential supplies became scarce. International institutions issued warnings, while human rights organizations documented the deterioration.

In February 2023, the International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan to take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor in both directions.

And Armenian experts were warning even more explicitly about the danger. On January 10, 2023, Dr. Hayk Kotanjian and I published an appeal in the Armenian Mirror-Spectator warning that the Armenians of Karabakh were facing a direct threat of genocide. The article warned about the humanitarian consequences of the Lachin Corridor blockade and called for urgent international action based on human rights and international law.

The argument was not that the international community should wait until a catastrophe occurred and then condemn it. It was precisely the opposite: preventive action was necessary before the situation became irreversible.

The warning was there. The humanitarian evidence was there. The international mechanisms were there. But prevention failed.

After Azerbaijan’s September 2023 military operation, more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians crossed into Armenia within days. UN agencies subsequently documented more than 115,000 refugees from Karabakh arriving in Armenia. And Armenian officials from Karabakh remain imprisoned in Baku. In February 2026, Amnesty International described the trials of 16 ethnic Armenian defendants as a “travesty” and said that their prosecution before a military court raised serious concerns and was incompatible with fair-trial guarantees. Amnesty International’s assessment therefore reinforces concerns about whether these proceedings can provide genuinely fair and impartial justice.

Assessing the consequences of Azerbaijan’s blockade and military intervention in Karabakh, former International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo warned in August 2023 that there was a reasonable basis to believe that genocide was being committed against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. He argued that the deliberate deprivation of food, medicine and other essential goods could constitute genocide under Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention and warned that, without immediate action, the Armenian population could be destroyed within weeks. Ocampo’s August 2023 expert opinion was therefore not simply a retrospective assessment: it was an explicit warning intended to trigger prevention. Yet the warning did not produce sufficiently effective international action. Instead, Armenia was increasingly left in what might be described as the position of a “lonely state” - expected to accommodate the demands of the victor and adjust to the new geopolitical reality, rather than seeing the rights and security of Armenians treated as a matter requiring effective international protection.

Gaza is not “another Karabakh.” The historical, political, military and legal circumstances are different and should be carefully distinguished rather than superficially equated.

The more important lesson is something else: Karabakh was a test of whether the international community could recognize a danger before it became a catastrophe.

It was also a missed opportunity to demonstrate that early warnings, preventive diplomacy and international pressure can actually protect a population before displacement becomes irreversible.

Armenia, Israel and an uncomfortable history

This question also has a particular resonance for Armenia because of the complicated history of Armenian-Israeli and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations.

Israel was a major supplier of arms to Azerbaijan before and during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Israel accounted for 27 percent of Azerbaijan’s imports of major arms in 2011–2020 and 69 percent in 2016–2020. Israeli-supplied loitering munitions, unmanned aerial vehicles and other systems were used during the 2020 war.

This does not establish a direct causal link between Israeli arms transfers to Azerbaijan and the later humanitarian crisis in Gaza. But it does raise a broader question about international responsibility: when states transfer

military capabilities into conflict zones, how seriously are the foreseeable consequences for civilians and regional stability taken into account?

This is also why Armenia’s position on Palestine is relevant. Armenia formally recognized the State of Palestine on June 21, 2024, and established diplomatic relations with Palestine on September 27, 2024, well before the cruel events unfolding today, when Spain, Ireland, Norway and Slovenia had only recently taken the same step. The Armenian Foreign Ministry explicitly linked this position to international law, the principle of equality of states and support for a two-state solution.

For Armenia, this should not be merely a symbolic foreign-policy gesture. It can be part of a consistent position.

What does “Never Again” require?

“Never Again” should not be understood as a privilege belonging to the victims of one particular genocide. If it has a universal meaning, then the identity of the victims cannot determine whether their suffering matters.

Jewish organizations and activists have made precisely this argument. Jewish Voice for Peace, for example, has used the formulation “Never Again for Anybody” in its discussion of Gaza.

This is not an attempt to diminish Jewish historical suffering. Quite the opposite. It is to universalize its moral lesson.

There is also a deeper connection to the history of the very concept of genocide. Raphael Lemkin, the Polish-Jewish jurist who coined the term “genocide,” was deeply influenced by his early exposure to reports of the destruction of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. His experience contributed to his conviction that international law needed to protect national, ethnic and religious groups from destruction. He later made it his life’s mission to establish genocide as an international crime, helping pave the way for the UN Genocide Convention of 1948.

This history matters. The Armenian demand for recognition of the 1915 Genocide is not simply about preserving Armenian memory. At its strongest, it is also a demand that the lessons of mass atrocity be transformed into international mechanisms capable of preventing future atrocities.

That is why recognition of the Armenian Genocide should not be understood only as an Armenian historical demand. It can also be understood as part of a universal commitment to prevention.

And this principle should also apply when the victims are Palestinians.

It is possible to condemn Hamas’s killing of Israeli civilians and hostage-taking, to recognize Israel’s responsibility to protect its population, and at the same time to insist that these concerns do not erase the obligation to protect Palestinian civilians under international humanitarian law.

One does not have to choose between the humanity of Israeli victims and the humanity of Palestinian victims. That is precisely what “Never Again” should mean.

The Karabakh case should remain part of Armenian public and political memory, both in Armenia and in the Diaspora, while the situation in Gaza demands international attention. The two cases of Gaza, and Karabakh should not be equated. But both demonstrate the dangers of allowing prolonged insecurity, deprivation and displacement to continue after serious warnings have already been issued.

Recognition of a historical genocide should not remain only an act of historical remembrance. If “Never Again” is a genuine principle, recognition of past genocide should strengthen a commitment to preventing mass violence in the present and future.

Armenia cannot determine the future of Gaza. Nor should Armenian foreign policy be reduced to choosing one geopolitical camp against another. But Armenia does have an experience that gives it a particular reason to speak about prevention.

Its position should therefore be grounded in several principles: support for Palestinian self-determination and a viable political settlement; protection of civilians and humanitarian access; respect for international law; and a willingness to remind the international community of what happened in Karabakh - not to equate the two cases, but to demonstrate the consequences of ignoring early warnings.

The world had an opportunity in Karabakh to demonstrate that early warnings matter. It did not use that opportunity effectively. Gaza presents another test of whether the international community has learned to act while there is still time.

(Arthur Atanesyan is a professor at Yerevan State University.)



## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Pashinyan Makes Anti-Armenian Statements at International Conference In Yerevan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke on September 17, 2026, at the “Comprehensive Security & Resilience 2026” international conference in Yerevan, organized by the think tank Women & Global Security Architecture. Among those present were the ambassadors of Great Britain and Finland.

During his lengthy remarks, Pashinyan made a series of statements that are contrary to Armenia’s national interests, admitting that he has made numerous concessions in the hope of achieving an elusive peace. He described his approach as avoidance of the “ping-pong” policy of “mechanical reciprocity.”

Pashinyan’s major mistake is that he foolishly believes — and is trying to convince the gullible Armenian public — that he has established peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. No matter how many times he repeats his false claim of a non-existent peace, President Aliyev refuses to sign the negotiated peace agreement, even after stating that he has dictated all 17 points of the proposed text. Aliyev is not finished with his demands for concessions from Pashinyan. Why should Aliyev stop, seeing that Pashinyan is accepting all of his demands? Even after going to the White House on August 8, 2025, to meet with President Trump and Pashinyan, ostensibly to sign the peace agreement, Aliyev refused to sign it. He merely initialed it.

Without realizing it, Aliyev is doing a big favor for Armenia by refusing to sign the so-called peace agreement which is replete with concessions to Azerbaijan. He has repeatedly demanded that the Republic of Armenia change its constitution, a demand Pashinyan has sheepishly accepted. This demand may seal the fate of the peace agreement if Armenia’s citizens refuse to approve the new constitution in a referendum.

Pashinyan falsely claimed that “basing the country’s foreign and security policies on internationally recognized political and legal principles has helped remove previous obstacles to Armenia’s access to international arms markets.” This is what happens when an incompetent “leader” makes ignorant decisions on behalf of the Republic of Armenia. International arms sales are not based on a country’s boundaries or policies. They are primarily based on the country’s ability to pay for the purchase. No one cares about internal or external prob-

lems. If you have the money, that is the only thing that the seller cares about. This is how international trade works. Countries that manufacture weapons are willing to sell them to anyone who has the ability to pay, regardless of the buyer’s violations of human rights or international laws.

The craziest thing Pashinyan said at the conference was: “We were five minutes away from losing the statehood and sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia.” He was referring to Azerbaijan’s occupation of eastern parts of the territory of the Republic of Armenia in September 2022. Azerbaijan was successful in that attack because Pashinyan, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, had given the orders not to return fire when Azeri soldiers crossed Armenia’s borders.

Armenia is now on the verge of collapse because of Pashinyan’s numerous concessions to Azerbaijan which only encourage Aliyev to demand more. Why should he stop when he sees that the Prime Minister of Armenia is willing to give him everything he asks for? Until Pashinyan came to power in 2018, Armenia was able to defend its territory and sovereignty. Because of Pashinyan’s incompetent leadership and provocative actions and statements against Azerbaijan, Artsakh was lost, and soon, perhaps, Armenia will be as well.

In his speech, Pashinyan attacked an unnamed history teacher who reportedly told his students: “Children, know that you must grow up and go to liberate Moush and Van.” No one knows whether this story is true, but the problem is that Pashinyan, who single-handedly makes all decisions for the country, is now trying to dictate what one teacher supposedly told his students. Pashinyan has no right to interfere in what happens in a classroom. He has much more critical issues to be concerned with. He has not understood that individuals have the freedom to express themselves in a democratic country. No government official should pressure the people on what subject they can talk about. The situation is completely different when it comes to what declarations the Prime Minister makes. He should neither demand Armenian lands from Turkey nor say that he does not have such demands. What a regular persons says has no consequence. But, what the Prime Minister says can have serious political and military consequences. Because of that, he should simply remain quiet.

Even though the Armenian government cannot do much right now about the lost territories of Artsakh and Western Armenia, it does not mean that those lands should be forgotten. Someday, when the geopolitical situation in the region changes, Armenians can seek to regain their lost territories, but only if they have not given up. Such a situation may well arise in the future, long after Pashinyan has left the scene. In the meantime, he should not pledge to hand over our historical rights to our enemies forever.

# The Republic and the Diaspora: A Future to Build Together

By Berge Jololian

On September 21, Armenia marked 35 years of independence. After generations in which so much of our future was decided elsewhere, we have a republic in which to help shape it ourselves. That is an extraordinary inheritance. What will we build with it?

David Muradyan, a young man from Alaverdi, offers one answer. He enrolled in a programming course at the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)’s SMART Center. In a recent profile, COAF describes him as a software engineer pursuing a master’s degree in artificial intelligence at the French University in Armenia. He credits the program with helping him gain confidence, friendships and a scholarship.

His story gives the anniversary a human meaning. An opportunity reaches a young person, who discovers how much more he might do. Imagine that possibility extending across a generation: young Armenians gaining the skills and confidence to pursue their ambitions at home.

For Armenians abroad, there is something familiar in that hope. Across the Diaspora, families built new lives, educated their children and established businesses, churches and community institutions. They became part of the countries they called home while finding ways to remain Armenian. That experience is a source of pride — and of possibilities still unfolding.

TUMO offers one example. Founded by Sam and Sylva Simonian, whose lives took them from Lebanon to the United States, it developed an educational model in Armenia that later reached Paris through cooperation with TUMO Yerevan. Armenian creativity had become something others wanted to learn from.

These achievements belong to founders and supporters, teachers and local teams, and the students themselves. They show what becomes possible when international experience meets the knowledge and initiative of people in Armenia. Independence Day is an occasion to renew the trust that allows this partnership to grow.

Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan recently emphasized a point that should frame every serious Armenian political debate: the world has more than 8 billion people, but only about 195 countries. Armenia, with only about 3 million

people, is one of those states.

That state must be protected.

This is not a small observation. It is the foundation of serious Armenian statecraft. For Armenians, the Republic of Armenia is not simply a government, a party, or one political leader. It is the rare and irreplaceable institutional vessel of Armenian survival in a world where statehood is precious and not guaranteed.

Families still carry the grief of war. Armenians displaced from Artsakh face the work of rebuilding their lives. Building Armenia’s future also means helping families meet today’s needs for housing, healthcare, employment and dignity. Celebrating independence does not diminish those losses. It reminds us why the country in which so many hopes now rest must become stronger.

That shared concern leaves room for serious disagreement. Armenia’s citizens must remain free to challenge their government and choose another. Armenians abroad can contribute to public debate while respecting those democratic choices. Our responsibility is to help ensure that the country remains strong and free enough to continue making them.

### Making Room for Each Other

Trust begins with how we speak to one another.

On September 11, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called for a relationship organized around development, with neither Armenia nor the Diaspora acting as the other’s mentor. He cited TUMO and COAF among the examples. Yet his blunt dismissal of further second-hand goods risked overshadowing his acknowledgment that earlier assistance had mattered.

The invitation to partnership deserves a hearing. It will travel further when the prime minister speaks with appreciation for the people he hopes to engage. On subjects involving loss, identity and belonging, the government must explain its intentions carefully and listen to concerns. People who helped Armenia through difficult years deserve to feel that their experience still has a place in its future.

Readers have a responsibility too. Before reacting to an alarming claim, we should examine the original statement, its context and the evidence. A headline can turn an awkward remark into an accusation of betrayal. Official explanations deserve the same scrutiny.

Some disagreements concern policy itself and require debate. Diaspora strength, for example, can grow through education, cultural life and effective institutions without another family leaving Armenia. Recognizing that strength helps communities feel valued even when they disagree with the government.

A doctor abroad and colleagues at a hospital in Armenia can improve patient care while disagreeing about the prime minister. A government can welcome an engineer’s expertise while accepting that engineer’s criticism. The country benefits when such cooperation becomes ordinary.

We can ask a shared question of government policy, public commentary and our own contributions: Does this strengthen the Republic of Armenia?

### The Strength to Choose

Armenia’s effort to broaden its diplomacy, diversify defense cooperation and develop wider trade connections is a direction worth supporting. Its purpose is to build capability and give the country more room to act. For a small state, strategic autonomy does not mean needing no one; it means never being left with only one choice.

Every compromise must be judged by what it means for Armenia’s sovereignty and security. Some demands must be refused. But a refusal needs a strategy for withstanding the pressure that follows. The government must explain what its decisions secure and what they risk. Critics advocating another course should explain how it could produce a better outcome.

Stronger defenses, a more resilient economy and dependable partnerships give Armenia greater freedom to negotiate, resist coercion and defend its choices. Building that capacity takes sustained work — and deserves support across political differences.

The European Political Community gathering and the first EU–Armenia summit, held in Yerevan in May, show how Armenia is widening its relationships. The EU meetings advanced cooperation in transport, energy and digital connectivity. That engagement is continuing. Yerevan is scheduled to host the first Armenia–UK Business Forum on October 5–6, creating another opportunity to connect Armenian businesses with international investment and expertise.

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# The Republic and the Diaspora

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Defense cooperation offers another example. Armenian personnel trained alongside American, French and Greek forces in Eagle Partner, while cooperation with India includes military education and technical capacity. The value lies in the skills Armenia develops and its wider choice of partners. Armenian servicemen are also studying at Poland's War Studies University. A British-supported course completed in July helped Armenian personnel qualify as military instructors. Such cooperation strengthens Armenia's ability to educate its own forces and retain knowledge within its institutions.

Armenia's partnership with the United States and the TRIPP framework for regional transport, energy and communications links offer further possibilities for investment under Armenian sovereignty. Success should reach Armenian businesses and workers through new customers, useful infrastructure and opportunities to develop their own expertise. The peace process can create time for this work, while lasting security still requires capable defenses and dependable institutions.

The government's work in widening these options deserves recognition and scrutiny of its results. The capabilities Armenia builds should endure through changes of leader-

ship. A stronger country is an inheritance every future government—and every young person like David — will need.

## A Partnership That Lasts

The Diaspora can help turn these openings into lasting relationships. A professional can mentor an Armenian colleague. A university can sustain an exchange. A business owner can help an Armenian producer find customers abroad. These relationships can begin modestly and deepen over time.

Because it exercises public power, the government has a particular responsibility to make participation fair and accessible. An offer of expertise deserves serious consideration and an understandable answer. Useful work should survive a change of minister. People in Armenia must help set priorities; their knowledge is essential to making a partnership succeed. Fair treatment gives people a reason to return with their next idea.

Belonging cannot depend on wealth, relocation or loyalty to a politician. Time, experience, advocacy and steady attention all have a place.

The Republic should also take a lasting interest in Armenian life abroad. Western Armenian education, community schools and cultural institutions have worth beyond their immediate usefulness to a government program. Teacher exchanges, shared

research and cultural cooperation can help sustain them while respecting the independence of Diaspora organizations. Reconciliation grows through that respect and through work whose value people can see.

The objective is not to keep any particular government in control of Armenia.

It is to keep Armenia in control of Armenia.

David's story reminds us of what working together can accomplish. A programming course helped open a path toward work and further study. Our ambition should be to make such opportunities available to many more young Armenians, wherever they grow up.

At 35, the Republic gives us a country in which to help make that happen. We can honor those who brought it this far by helping the next generation inherit a stronger Armenia, with more opportunities to build a life and greater freedom to shape its future.

That is a future worth building together.

(Berge Jololian is an Armenian-American IT and cybersecurity specialist based in Yerevan, Armenia. He writes on Armenian statehood, sovereignty, regional security and the geopolitics of the South Caucasus, with a particular interest in the strategic challenges facing small states in a changing international order.)

## H.H. KAREKIN II'S MESSAGE ON ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

On September 21, Armenian Independence Day, a special prayer service for the Republic of Armenia went forward at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, presided over by Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Marking the 35th anniversary of Armenia's independence referendum, the clergy of Etchmiadzin's monastic brotherhood offered prayers for peace and security for the Armenian people throughout the world.

Later in the day, the Catholicos of All Armenians visited Armenia's Yerablur military cemetery, where he



paid tribute to the memory of those who gave their lives for the protection of the homeland and independence. His Holiness led a large group of clergy, faithful, and military families in a requiem service, and then laid flowers on the gravesites.

On the same occasion, he issued a special message to the Armenian faithful:

From the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, We extend Our Pontifical blessing to our people in the homeland and the Diaspora and offer congratulations on the occasion of Independence Day.

Today, we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of Armenian independent statehood. Throughout these years, our homeland has endured numerous trials; yet, our people have never faltered or lost hope. Even at the cost of great sacrifice, they have continued the sacred mission of nation-building and dedicated their potential to the national awakening.

Independence Day serves as a call for us to re-evaluate the path we have traversed and the course of our lives. In today's complex circumstances, it is more essential than ever to remain united and stand together around the homeland, so that we may successfully confront internal and external threats. Empowered by the spirit of Independence Day, let us devote ourselves wholeheartedly to building up and brightening our country, and let us defend—with the utmost zeal and responsibility—our people's right to a free and secure life on this sacred land. Let us hold fast to the hope, faith, and love bestowed by Christ; remain faithful to our national and spiritual values; and together forge a just, law-abiding, and harmonious society for the sake of our secure and bright future.

We offer prayers to God, asking that He preserve our homeland in peace, guide our people with the wisdom of His Holy Spirit, and grant us a life of prosperity and progress. Amen.

With blessings,

Karekin II  
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