

Armenia Risks Being Hurt by U.S. Policy to Economically Choke Iran

By Irina Atanyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Tensions between the United States and Iran have entered a new phase. With the war entering a six-month quagmire, Washington seems to now target Iran’s economy. On August 24, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the launch of efforts aimed at



Iranologist Armen Vardanyan

economically isolating Iran. On the same day, the United States imposed sanctions on more than 60 individuals, organizations, and other entities linked to Iran.

Bessent said that any country or company cooperating with Iran should be prepared for US sanctions and warned that continued financial ties with Iran could result in exclusion from the dollar-based financial system.

This makes Armenia’s position partic-

ularly difficult: Yerevan is simultaneously deepening its relations with both the United States and Iran, as it announced in its five-year program.

In one section, it notes, “Maintaining active political dialogue with Iran and expanding trade and economic ties are among the priorities of bilateral relations. Cooperation with Iran in the energy sector will continue to deepen, border winfrastructure will be developed, and connectivity routes through Iran will be expanded, including the North-South and Persian Gulf–Black Sea routes.”

At the same time, the program calls for deepening the strategic partnership with the United States and implementing the TRIPP project.

“Based on the Charter on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Armenia and the United States of America, bilateral partnership will be further deepened,” according to the plan.

TRIPP (Trump Regional Infrastructure and Peace Program) is a US-backed transport connectivity initiative aimed at unblocking regional communication routes and connecting Azerbaijan with its Nakhichevan exclave through Armenia, under Armenian sovereignty and border

control. The framework for the initiative gained momentum last year, when Armenia and Azerbaijan initialed a peace agreement at the White House in the presence of US President Donald Trump.

Just how Armenia can navigate relationships with these two powerful yet antagonistic allies remains to be seen.

Political analyst Suren Surenyants noted that Armenia’s main challenge in the current situation is to preserve its flexibility in foreign policy.

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Police Arrest Four for Spitting on Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate

JERUSALEM (News.am) — Israeli police this week have detained four people on suspicion of spitting at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem in the Old City. Three more people were detained on suspicion of desecrating Muslim graves, The Times of Israel reports.

Police said four other suspects were detained “in real time” after allegedly spitting at the Armenian Patriarchate compound. Later the suspects were all released under restrictive conditions after officers questioned them on suspicion of conduct that could harm public safety, the police statement said.

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Former President Kocharyan Placed in Two Months of Pre-trial Detention

By Ani Ghulinyan

Former President Robert Kocharyan has been placed in pre-trial detention for a period of two months. On Tuesday, August 25, Kocharyan, his son and four other individuals were arrested on charges of large-scale corruption during his time in office.

The Prosecutor General’s Office initiated criminal prosecution against Robert Kocharyan for abusing

his official authority, accepting a particularly large bribe, and laundering particularly large sums of money. Criminal proceedings have also been initiated

against nine other individuals, including Sedrak Kocharyan, former President Serzh Sargsyan, former Prime Minister Andranik Margaryan, former Yerevan Mayor Gagik Beglaryan and others. Kocharyan’s son, Sedrak Kocharyan, was also placed into pre-trial detention for a two-month period on Wednesday.

A travel ban has been imposed as a preventive measure against Sargsyan after he was called to the Anti-Corruption Committee and released the same day.

On Tuesday, August 25, Kocharyan was taken to hospital after being transported from the Anti-Corruption Court. The hearing on the investigators’ motion to remand him in custody continued in his absence.

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Another Judge Declines to Try Armenian Church Head

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A second judge refused to preside over the trial of Catholicos Karekin II when it resumed on Friday, August 28, amid Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s continuing attempts to depose the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Karekin and six archbishops and bishops went on trial three weeks ago on charges stemming from the defrocking in January this year of another, pro-government bishop involved in Pashinyan’s controversial campaign. Their lawyers maintain that Armenian courts and law-enforcement bodies have no jurisdiction over internal church affairs. The Armenian constitution guarantees the ancient church’s independence and separation from the state.

A judge of the court of first instance in Vagharshapat, a town comprising the Echmiadzin seat of the Catholicos, recused himself from the unprecedented case moments after the start of the trial on August 7. The judge, Hakob Manukyan, cited a conflict of interest.

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Pashinyan, Aliyev Discuss TRIPP, Border Delimitation at Bishkek Meeting

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (Azatutyun) — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev discussed further steps towards implementing a US-backed regional connectivity project and advancing peace between the two countries as they met in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Monday, August 31.

The meeting, the first between the two leaders since Pashinyan was re-elected prime minister following his party’s victory in the June 7 parliamentary elections, took place on the sidelines of a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

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Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev during a meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, August 31, 2026

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Archaeologists Probe Finds at Yeritsvank Monastery Complex

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Archaeologists are studying artifacts unearthed during recent excavations at the St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church within the historic Yeritsvank Monastery Complex in Armenia's Syunik Province.

Excavations were carried out in July and August by an archaeological expedition from the Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum-Reservations. According to tradition, Yeritsvank was founded by Yeritsak, a bishop of Syunik, in the late fifth or early sixth century. The latest excavations have lent support to the theory that the monastery was fortified with two concentric defensive walls in the 10th and 11th centuries, transforming the complex into a stronghold. A two-story chapel-mausoleum was subsequently built on the northern side of the complex in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The agency said the excavation work has been completed, but archaeologists will continue examining the artifacts to establish their origins, history and significance.

Former Tax Chief Detained in Bribery Probe

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian authorities have ordered the detention of former State Revenue Committee Chairman Gagik Khachatryan as part of a criminal investigation into alleged large-scale bribery and money laundering, the Investigative Committee said on September 1. Investigators carried out urgent searches and other procedural actions at the homes of Khachatryan and his son, as well as at the offices and branches of about 21 companies linked to them. The agency said it had decided to seek Khachatryan's detention pending a court hearing.

Karapetyan Calls for Stronger Educational System

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — Samvel Karapetyan, leader of the Strong Armenia party, on September 1 called for an education system that guarantees equal opportunities for children across the country, saying a strong Armenia must begin with strong schools.

In a message marking September 1, Knowledge and Schooling Day, Karapetyan said every child and young person should have access to quality education and a safe, well-maintained learning environment. "Thousands of children and young people are entering educational institutions for the first time, while many others are returning to schools and universities to continue their studies," Karapetyan said.

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"Each geopolitical center is trying to impose very tough preconditions, and in this sense, wiggle room for countries with a degree of agency, including Armenia, is genuinely shrinking. Under these circumstances, the Armenian authorities are obliged to pursue a very cautious, balanced foreign policy," he said.

Surennyants also linked the issue to the implementation of TRIPP. In his view, as long as US-Iranian relations remain unresolved, moving the project into the practical stage could create risks.

"On the one hand, there is a desire to bring TRIPP to life very quickly; on the other hand, there is a very high likelihood that if this work enters the practical stage, the Islamic Republic of Iran could target that infrastructure, considering it a threat to itself," he added.

Surennyants says that for this reason, the Armenian government should avoid taking abrupt steps. "The problems are very



Political scientist Suren Surennyants

serious. That is why I am often surprised that at this stage the Armenian government is so enthusiastic about talking about the implementation phase of TRIPP without taking these risks into account," he continued.

As for the provision in the government program on deepening relations with Iran, Surennyants said he believed that the document itself cannot have a decisive impact on global geopolitical processes.

According to him, the most desirable scenario for Armenia would be a reduction in regional tensions. He said, "The most desirable situation for Armenia would be for both the war in Ukraine and the tensions around Iran to end, so that our room for maneuver increases. Otherwise, many of our foreign policy programs may either be revised or never implemented."

Following Surennyants' assessment, the issue can also be viewed from the perspective of how important a partner Iran is for Armenia.

Iran expert Garik Misakyan stressed that Armenia's ties with Iran have not only political but also vital importance. He par-

ticularly highlighted energy cooperation involving gas and electricity, as well as existing infrastructure and transport links between Armenia and Iran.

According to Misakyan, Armenia should pursue a particularly cautious diplomatic policy in the current situation, taking into account its geographical position and its shared border with Iran.

In his assessment, the impact of US-Iran tensions on Armenia could become more apparent once TRIPP enters the practical stages of construction and eventual operation.

Armenia-Iran relations involve not only trade, but also energy, infrastructure, and transit cooperation.

The two countries have a "gas-for-electricity" arrangement under which Armenia receives gas from Iran and supplies electricity to Iran in return.

A tunnel project in Kajaran is also being implemented with the participation of an Iranian company. The project is an important part of the North-South transport corridor.

In 2025, trade between Armenia and Iran amounted to approximately \$770 million, while around 20 percent of Armenia's foreign trade passes through Iranian territory.

Against the backdrop of these existing ties, the new US sanctions raise the question of whether they could affect ongoing Armenian-Iranian projects.

The Armenian government is clearly aware of the tightrope it has to walk on and has addressed the situation surrounding US-Iran relations. Earlier, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had said Armenia had managed to maintain reliable relations with both countries.

"We cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and despite all the difficulties and problems, our mutual trust with Iran has deepened during this period because we have acted in accordance with our agreements and understandings, while at the same time managing to maintain reliable relations with both the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said.

Pashinyan also stressed: "We do not play games with our partners. We present our positions directly and honestly, and we are



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grateful to them for understanding our particular circumstances."

On August 20, addressing the intensification of US economic pressure on Iran and its potential impact on Armenia, Pashinyan said Yerevan was concerned about the situation and was working with both sides.

"We are, naturally, very concerned about the situation related to the United States and Iran, and we are also working very closely on this issue with both the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our wish is for this situation to be resolved as soon as possible."

There is currently no basis to claim that the United States is preparing to impose sanctions on Armenia. However, it is important to understand which areas of Armenian-Iranian cooperation could potentially be affected by the new US restrictions. This is where Iran expert Armen Vardanyan offers his assessment.

Vardanyan said he considers the likelihood of direct US sanctions against Armenia to be low.

According to him, Armenia has good relations with Iran, but the sectors that are usually targeted by US sanctions are not currently relevant to Armenia.

"It is true that Armenia's relations with Iran are at a good level, but the sensitive sectors that are consistently targeted by US sanctions do not apply to Armenia. We are mainly talking about oil purchases, because the US usually imposes sanctions on countries that buy oil from Iran. Armenia does not buy oil from Iran," he said.

Vardanyan recalls that the United States has previously pressured other countries over oil trade with Iran.

"Years ago, when the Iranian crisis deepened again, Trump demanded that several of his allies stop buying oil from Iran, otherwise he promised to impose sanctions on them, and some countries complied with that demand. For example, South Korea, which was a major buyer of Iranian oil, stopped buying Iranian oil. Japan did the same," he explained.

In his assessment, the current US policy does not pose a direct threat to Armenia, although there could be indirect risks.

Vardanyan also stresses that Armenia cannot completely cut its economic ties with Iran: "Armenia simply cannot stop trading with Iran. It has to [continue], because it has closed borders."

The dilemma is not new. Vardanyan recalled concerns expressed by the United States during the construction of the Armenia-Iran gas pipeline.

"Years ago, there were some concerns regarding the energy sector. For example, when the Armenia-Iran gas pipeline was being built, there were several statements from the United States, but Armenia managed to reach an understanding, and no sanctions were imposed on Armenia," he said.

According to Vardanyan, the situation is also different today given the deepening of Armenian-American relations.

"Armenia's relations with the United States are improving significantly, and I do not think the US will impose any sanctions on Armenia," he concluded.

But if US-Iran tensions continue and Washington's economic pressure expands to third countries cooperating with Iran, it will be crucial for Armenia to preserve its flexibility, avoid abrupt steps, and prevent itself from being forced to choose between the two sides.

Armenian Envoys Discuss Economic Priorities, Trade Ties at Annual Ambassadorial Assembly

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — As part of the annual conference of Armenia's ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions abroad, a two-day series of discussions was held on the economic component of the Government's 2026-2031 program, economic development priorities and prospects, and the promotion of international trade ties, at the end of August.

The Foreign Ministry said in a press release that at the beginning of the series of presentations, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan delivered welcoming remarks, emphasizing the importance of continuously developing capacities in this direction and consistently promoting Armenia's economic interests through diplomatic missions, in the context of expanding the functions of the ministry and

institutionalizing the foreign trade component.

Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan delivered a presentation, outlining the current indicators of Armenia's economic development and the results expected under the Government's new program, as well as the main directions of Armenia's economic development.

In the context of diversifying economic relations, the dynamics of developing partnerships in new directions, the results achieved, and the importance of consistently promoting business ties were discussed.

Armenia's annual ambassadorial assembly started last week in Gyumri. President Vahagn Khachaturyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered opening remarks on the first day.



ARMENIA

Armenia Government, Lydian Armenia Sign Development Agreement for Amulsar Gold Mine

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Armenian government and Lydian Armenia signed a community development agreement for the Amulsar gold mine project, on August 31, under which the company will provide between \$7 million and \$9 million annually to support development in communities affected by the project.

The agreement was signed by Lydian Armenia, the Economy Ministry on behalf of the Armenian government, and the municipalities of Jermuk, Vayk and Sisian, Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan said.

Under the agreement, Lydian Armenia will provide the equivalent of: \$7 million annually during the construction phase; \$7 million or \$9 million annually during the production phase, depending on the average gold price during the relevant period; and \$10.5 million for the initial 18-month period from July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026.



The government and Lydian representatives at the press conference.

The agreement also provides for the creation of the Amulsar Community Development Foundation, which will be responsible for managing and administering most of the funding for community development projects.

The agreement was also signed by Lydian Armenia CEO Hayk Aloyan and the mayors of Vayk, Sisian and Jermuk — Mkhitar Matevosyan, Hovsep Arakelyan and Manan Gevorgyan, respectively.

Gnel Sanosyan, the government’s representative at Lydian Armenia, as well as Vayots Dzor Gov. Vahagn Arsenyan and Syunik Gov. Robert Ghukasyan, attended the signing ceremony.

The agreement establishes a common legal and institutional framework for providing, managing, allocating and monitoring financial support for the socioeconomic development of communities affected by the Amulsar project, Papoyan said.

The communities designated as affected by the project are Jermuk, Kechut, Gn-devaz, Saravan, including Saralanch and Ughedzor, and Gorayk.

Kremlin Criticizes Armenia for Saying It Would Welcome Russians Feeing Potential Mobilization

By Ani Ghulinyan

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has called Armenian Security Council Secretary Alen Simonyan’s recent statements about welcoming Russians fleeing a possible future wave of mobilization “provocative,” accusing him of repeating a narrative she says is “inspired by the Ukrainian junta and its Western sponsors.”

The developments are unfolding against the backdrop of Armenia’s foreign policy pivot towards the West, deepening ties with Ukraine, and Russia’s continuous warnings about Armenia leaving the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Zakharova said that Simonyan talked about the issue with a journalist who is “a foreign agent,” and it is not the first time he has expressed a negative opinion on Russia.

“It is with regret that we observe the continuing tendency among representatives of Yerevan to issue public statements that undermine bilateral cooperation with Moscow,” said Zakharova.

Simonyan made the remarks earlier in an interview with independent Russian TV channel Dozhd (“Rain”), currently operating in exile from Latvia. He explained that, since Russians are legally permitted to enter Armenia with their passports, nobody will ask them why they are visiting, and that they are simply welcomed.

Following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the first mobilization in September 2022, there has been a significant increase in the number of Russians in Armenia. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has denied and called the reports about the new mobilization “informational ducks” — a term the Moscow Times says he uses to describe something as being false. However, there has been widespread speculation that a new wave of mobilization will be announced following the parliamentary elections in September.

Another unresolved dispute between Russia and Armenia concerns the ban on Armenian products, which the Armenian side connects to worsening Armenia–Russia relations.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin said on Sunday that Armenian claims about alleged Russian sanctions on Armenian agricultural exports are “manipulative.” He insisted that restrictions on Armenian fruit and vegetable imports are about sanitary norms, not politics.

The sweeping restrictions began in the leadup to the June parliamentary elections in Armenia, which the Kremlin clearly expressed hope Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party would lose. The import bans have continued since Pashinyan’s party won the election and expanded into other spheres as both the EU and the Armenian government have attempted to soften the impact by diversifying exports.

Galuzin stressed that Russia has always been especially strict when it comes to phytosanitary control, and that Armenian leadership has also admitted that certain products were of substandard quality.

The relationship between Armenia and Russia grew more tense when Pashinyan said Armenia will soon submit an official application for EU membership on August 24. Pashinyan described the move as an essential step before Armenia holds a national referendum on joining the union. The announcement sparked condemnation from Moscow, which called on Armenia to choose between the EU and the EAEU.

Pashinyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to meet on Tuesday to discuss Yerevan’s desire to join the EU and its cooperation with the EAEU during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

(This article originally appeared on the website www.oc-media.org on August 31.)

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The case was then assigned to another local judge, Serzh Rushanyan. The latter ruled that it should be forwarded to a court in Yerevan. Rushanyan argued that prosecutors do not specify in their indictment where Karekin and the other defendants committed their alleged crime.

“If it is decided as a result of the dispute that this case does fall under my jurisdiction, we will meet at the next court hearing,” said the 29-year-old judge.

Both the trial prosecutors and defense lawyers objected to the decision.

“This shows that judges realize that this is a dubious case,” one of the lawyers, Ara Zohrabyan, told reporters. “There is their conscience, justice and truth on one side, and political pressure on the other. They probably found this way out.”

Zohrabyan argued that Karekin makes major decisions at his Echmiadzin headquarters. He said he is worried that an overtly pro-government judge could take

over the case in Yerevan.

Karekin and the other indicted clergymen chose not to attend the second session of the trial condemned by the Armenian opposition and key Armenian Diaspora organizations. The church’s Mother See insisted on Thursday that the charges leveled against them constitute “an illegal interference in the internal life of the Church.”

Pashinyan began pressuring Karekin to resign in June 2025 shortly after the Catholics accused Azerbaijan of committing

ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh and illegally occupying Armenian border areas during an international conference in Switzerland. Three Armenian archbishops and one bishop were arrested in the following months on different charges strongly denied by them. They were all moved to house arrest this year.

Pashinyan repeatedly attacked Karekin while presenting his government’s five-year policy program to the Armenian parliament. He said the next day that the government will unveil soon a report on the “crisis” in the church before enacting, together with the ruling Civil Contract party, unspecified legal amendments relating to the church. Pashinyan also said he is ready to meet Karekin to discuss his “reform agenda.”

“The Government has neither the authority nor the constitutionally established competence to make the reform of the Church part of its program or, at its own discretion, impose any ‘proposals’ or demands upon the clergy,” the church’s Supreme Spiritual Council countered in a statement issued on Wednesday.

The council headed by Karekin again rejected Pashinyan’s “blatantly false accusations” and accused him of “openly violating the country’s Constitution and disregarding rights enshrined in international law.”

Former President Kocharyan Placed in Two Months of Pre-trial Detention

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The arrest came a day after a heated discussion in parliament, during which Pashinyan told Levon Kocharyan, an opposition MP and one of Robert Kocharyan’s sons, that their family’s assets would be seized entirely as part of the new government’s plan to return illegally acquired state assets.

In response, Levon Kocharyan criticized Pashinyan for inciting political persecution and interfering in the work of the courts, arguing that this behavior is incompatible with democratic values.

The next day, the Anti-Corruption Committee conducted searches at several dozen addresses belonging to the second Presi-

dent of Armenia and his family members as part of the criminal proceedings investigating corruption crimes. Law enforcement officers also searched Levon Kocharyan’s apartment.

Levon Kocharyan’s defense team will now appeal the decision to search the apartment. Kocharyan’s lawyer, Erik Aleksanyan, argued that the search amounts to launching actual criminal prosecution against him, which means the Prosecutor General should have first submitted a request to parliament to strip Kocharyan of his parliamentary immunity.

Robert Kocharyan’s office has denounced the action as the latest political “attack.” Levon Kocharyan accused Pash-

inyan of sharing the details of the ongoing investigation and leading the investigation while doing so, after Pashinyan threatened his opponent in the parliament shortly after the arrests.

An MP for the opposition Armenia Alliance, Kristine Vardanyan, said that the best way to keep any property during the rule of Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party is to reach an agreement with them or not engage in politics at all. She also called out the other alleged illegally acquired properties by the team members of Civil Contract, such as millionaire businessperson Khachatur Sukiasyan, who, in her words, does not get the same attention from authorities as the Kocharyan family.

INTERNATIONAL

Armenian Diplomats Visit Margara Border Crossing

YEREAN (Pan.am) — Armenia's Foreign Ministry leadership and heads of Armenian diplomatic missions abroad, led by Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, visited the Margara checkpoint on the Armenia-Turkey border this week.

During a tour organized as part of the annual workshop, State Revenue Committee Chairman Eduard Hakobyan presented the work carried out to renovate and equip the checkpoint, stressing that it is ready for operation.

The Armenian side has reconstructed the Margara checkpoint on the Armenian-Turkish border, spending about 1 billion drams for that purpose, while Turkey has yet to move to open its Alican checkpoint on the other side of the border. Yerevan and Ankara agreed back in 2022, four years ago, to open the border to citizens of third countries "at the earliest possible date."

In mid-May, Armenia's foreign minister said the Armenian-Turkish dialogue had matured to the point where full normalization could be achieved at any moment, including with significant economic gains.

The Armenian-Turkish border has been closed since the early 1990s.

MFA Declines to Answer Questions About Azerbaijan Prisoners

YEREVAN (news.am) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Armenia has declined to say whether it has petitioned to Baku with a request for a third-country-party visit to the Armenian prisoners held in Azerbaijan, reports Azatutyun, the RFE/RL's Armenian service.

The MFA had reported late last month that Armenia had applied to a neutral country with a request to organize a consular visit and visit the Armenian prisoners in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Also, the MFA had emphasized that Baku's consent is necessary for organizing this visit.

Azatutyun had sent a query to the ministry asking whether Armenia had already officially petitioned to Azerbaijan for a third-country-party visit to these Armenian prisoners. And if so, what response they had received from Baku. Also, the MFA was asked which country had agreed to visit the approximately 20 Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan.

The MFA, however, did not respond to any questions from Azatutyun.

"Work toward addressing the issues of Armenian prisoners held in Baku is ongoing. Given the sensitivity of the issue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not consider it appropriate to make public additional information about the work being done," the MFA of Armenia stated.

Lisbon's Gulbenkian Museum Reopens After Renovation, with Its Original Vision Restored

By Carlota Rebelo

LISBON (Monocle) — Xavier Salomon landed in Lisbon nine months ago to become the director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum but the dark-oak bookshelves in his office are still empty. "I keep joking that I've been living out of boxes because the focus has been entirely on the museum," he says with a smile. Rome-born Salomon arrived in the Portuguese capital from the Frick Collection in New York, tasked with overseeing a major renovation. "It's a huge honor and responsibility to reshape a museum for the next 50 years," says Salomon. "There isn't going to be another redo of the Gulbenkian anytime soon so you have to think carefully about everything that you do. It's part of a legacy."

Opened in 1969, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum is a modernist masterpiece in Avenidas Novas, just north of the city center, set within capacious landscaped gardens, woodland and ponds. The museum houses the private collection of the namesake Constantinople-born Armenian businessman, collector and philanthropist who made his fortune brokering deals between European interests and oil companies in the Middle East. In almost every deal he secured himself a commission, which earned him the nickname "Mr. Five Per Cent."

Gulbenkian was thought to have been the richest man in the world when he died in 1955. In his will, he stated that his fortune should be used to establish a foundation in Lisbon (where he lived in his final years) to improve its citizens' quality of life via art, education, science and charitable work. Today, the campus includes the foundation's HQ, with a 1,200-seater auditorium that is home to the Gulbenkian orchestra and choir. There's also an art library, modern-art center and the museum itself, ensconced by lush greenery and water features.

When Monocle visits, the museum's team is completing final touches before reopening the doors after a 16-month ren-



Teresa Nunes da Ponte, the lead architect of the renovation (Rodrigo Cardoso photo)

ovation. It's a sunny morning and a queue of a few dozen people forms outside, eager to explore the revamped institution. "This project was all about restoring the original vision for the museum, while upgrading the technical infrastructure — lighting, ventilation, security and the displays," says Teresa Nunes da Ponte, one of the architects who led the renovation. "Over the years, the museum had several interventions and we wanted to strip it back to how it was intended; to let the materials speak for themselves and treat the architecture of the building as an art piece in itself."

A key moment came when the team found



Xavier Salomon, the museum's director (Rodrigo Cardoso photo)

photographs from the 1970s of the museum in its original state. With no paint on the walls, the building's materials — warm wood, cold stone, bronze and glass — shine through. "There are no hard corners," says Nunes da Ponte. "As you move through the exhibition, you can peek at what's coming next. Now, it's not just about the physical space; we are almost restoring the museum's original atmosphere and feel."

The renovation was already halfway through when Salomon joined the museum so any input that he had needed to be added quickly. He had two clear propositions: the first was to keep the windows as unobstructed as possible to maintain a relationship between the interiors and the gardens; the second was to bring back the European galleries' green carpeting. The latter choice wasn't merely aesthetic but also to help provide a different feel as visitors crossed between rooms and to reference the vibrant tones of the garden. "There's this idea that carpets are old-fashioned and ugly but as soon as I started to see it laid down, I knew that it was right," says Salomon.

The museum reopened to the public on the same day that the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation marked its 70th anniversary. "When it was decided that we should do a renovation, it was important that it was done soberly and elegantly," says the foundation's president, António M Feijó. The literature and humanities scholar believes that the institution's discreet nature is its greatest strength. "I always like to say that our museum is a 'cold' institution — not a 'hot' one — meaning that we should let the objects shine by themselves," he says.

The museum is home to more than 6,000 objects, with 1,000 making up the permanent collection. The pieces span Egyptian antiquities, Islamic art and the work of

European old masters; Chinese porcelain, sculpture, tapestries and jewelry. "The collection is finite and we can't add anything to it because it's based on what the founder collected," says Feijó. "He personally chose every piece. It all had to be in mint condition and he never failed in his appraisal of items. His taste was impeccable."

Luísa Sampaio, the Gulbenkian's head of collections and lead curator of painting and sculpture

One of the biggest transformations comes at the end of the museum, when you turn into the René Lalique Room, which houses the largest collection by the jeweler outside of his native France. The cabinets are curved in a nod to the art nouveau and art deco turns of Lalique's work. "We have on display his best piece of work, the 'Dragonfly' corsage ornament," says the museum's head of collections and senior curator, Luísa Sampaio. She is the longest-serving member of staff, having started as a receptionist in 1989. After seeing many other changes made in the past, she was apprehensive about the renovation but her doubts dissipated once work began. "There's an enormous cohesion between such diverse areas and cultures," she says. "In all of them, we have recovered that original ideal of the 1969 museum. I think that the public won't be disappointed."

As staff line up to welcome the first visitors, Salomon stands by the door. In lieu of a speech, he offers a handshake and a smile to everyone as they enter. "As a director, I'm just shepherding the place and making sure that everything works," he says. "The public are the real owners."

Celebrations of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's 70th anniversary continue through 2026. For more information, visit gulbenkian.pt

INTERNATIONAL

Putin Reiterates Call for Armenian Referendum on EU Entry

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (Azatutyun.am) — Russian President Vladimir Putin again called for a referendum in Armenia on whether the country should remain in the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) or seek membership in the European Union as he met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Tuesday.

The Russian leader’s renewed proposal came despite several previous rejections by Pashinyan, who has said that while striving to diversify its political and trade relations, including with the EU, Yerevan sees no urgent need for such a referendum

at this stage.

Putin said Moscow needed clarity on Armenia’s intentions and argued that membership in the EU and the EEU is incompatible because of their differing economic and tariff policies.

“The sooner Armenia decides on the EU accession issue, the better. Moscow needs to understand how to develop its relations further,” Putin told Pashinyan during the part of their talks streamed online.

The meeting, held on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, was the first between the two leaders since Pashinyan’s reelection as prime min-

ister. Putin did not publicly congratulate Pashinyan on his reelection amid growing tensions between Moscow and Yerevan over what Russia sees as Armenia’s increasing Westward tilt.

Putin referred to Armenia’s 2025 law on commencing the process of accession to the EU, saying that the adoption of legislation initiating membership in another economic organization effectively amounts to a declaration of withdrawal from the EEU.

“The Armenian people must be given the opportunity to choose,” he said.

The EEU also includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Pashinyan again made clear that his government is not prepared to hold such a referendum yet.

“This issue is not yet ripe enough to be put to a referendum,” he said.

“It is important to us that our country should have alternatives. This is our legitimate right. But it does not mean that we are dissatisfied with the EEU, although there are some problems there as well,” Pashinyan added.

He insisted that Armenia’s law on starting the EU accession process does not violate the nation’s obligations to the EEU. He also noted that any withdrawal from the bloc would require six months’ notice, which Armenia has not given.

“The situation should be regarded from this standpoint,” Pashinyan said.

The latest Pashinyan-Putin talks took place amid rising tensions between the two countries, including over trade restrictions Russia imposed on Armenia several months ago. The Armenian government has described those measures as unreasonable and contrary to EEU rules.

Kremlin officials had also said before the meeting that Putin would raise the recent arrests of Armenian opposition figures critical of the Armenian government’s policies, including its efforts to move closer to the West.

No such remarks were made during the streamed portion of the discussions.

One day before the Bishkek talks, Putin sent a birthday message to jailed former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan, wishing him “spiritual strength and resilience in the face of the challenges that you and your family are currently facing.”

Many observers in Armenia interpreted the tone of that message as a sign of Kremlin support for Kocharyan, who leads the second largest opposition alliance represented in the Armenian parliament.

Venice Armenian Summer Course Session Concludes

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

VENICE — For 41 years, Venice has hosted a three-week intensive summer course in Armenian language and culture. It is organized by the Padus-Araxes Armenian-Italian Cultural Association, under the presidency of Archbishop Levon Zekian, a distinguished scholar and religious figure.

This year, the course brought together 28 participants born and living in from 15 countries: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The teaching staff consisted of Professors Jesse Arlen (US), Artsvi Bakhchinyan (Armenia), Avedis Jenanian (Italy), Tamar Mangasar (Turkey), Sossi Soussanian (Hungary), and Theo Van Lint (United Kingdom), who taught the Armenian language and various subjects related to Armenian studies. Extracurricular duduk lessons were conducted by



Aram Ipekdjian (Austria), while traditional dance lessons by Artsvi Bakhchinyan.

The teachers and participants attended the Divine Liturgy in the Medieval Armenian church of the Holy Cross in Venice (the oldest Armenian Church in the West) and the Solemn Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Our Lady’s Assumption at the Mother Monastery of San Lazzaro. They also attended two lectures by Artsvi Bakhchinyan, entitled “The Armenian Contribution to World Science” and “The Armenian Contribution

to World Art,” as well as Archbishop Levon Zekian’s lecture, “The Forty Years of the Venice Summer Intensive Course and Future Perspectives.” Cinematographer Ashot Mkrtchyan, who had arrived from Armenia, regularly filmed classes and extracurricular activities with the aim of producing a documentary about the course.

And thanks to the direct Yerevan–Venice air connection, among the many languages heard in the streets of Venice, Armenian was not an uncommon one either...

Erdoğan: Türkiye Will Continue to Contribute to Peace Process

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on August 31 that Turkey will continue to contribute to the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan during a meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Bishkek, according to the Turkish Anadolu news agency.

The sides discussed Turkish-Azerbaijani

ni bilateral relations, as well as regional and global developments, Anadolu reported, citing Erdoğan’s office.

Erdoğan said that under the current conditions in the region, the importance of steps being taken to enhance cooperation between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, particularly in energy, infrastructure and transport, has become more evident.

He said that deepening relations in all areas based on the principle of “one na-

tion, two states” would benefit both countries.

Referring to the Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization process, Erdoğan said Türkiye will continue to contribute to the peace process, stressing that the establishment of peace will give new impetus to the development of the region.

During the meeting, the Turkish president also invited Aliyev to attend the COP31 summit to be held in Antalya.

Police Arrest Four for Spitting on Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate

JERUSALEM, from page 1

Earlier, Arab media outlets had released surveillance footage showing at least one incident of spitting at the Cathedral of Saint James, the main church of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. According to these media outlets, the incident took place the night before the video was released.

At the same time, the police statement suggests that the four arrested individuals could have committed similar acts later in the week. Thus, it is about at least several separate episodes of desecration of the territory of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

Three more adult suspects were detained in connection with the desecration of Muslim graves. Police released a video in which three people approach a tombstone, after which two of them kick it. Police continue to investigate incidents of desecration of religious shrines in the Old City of Jerusalem.

A story in the Jerusalem Post quoted Kegham Balian, a Jerusalemite-Armenian reporter, wrote that the suspects had also thrown rocks at the window of an Armenian woman filming the event, while shouting “Get back inside, you daughter of a w****!”

Pashinyan, Aliyev Discuss TRIPP, Border Delimitation at Bishkek Meeting

MEETING, from page 1

Pashinyan campaigned in the elections on a platform of continuing efforts to build lasting peace with Azerbaijan after more than three decades of conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh that included two deadly wars over the disputed region.

Less than two years after Azerbaijan militarily forced ethnic Armenians out of the region, Yerevan and Baku initiated an agreement on the establishment of peace and interstate relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan at a Washington peace summit on August 8, 2025.

Pashinyan and Aliyev also signed a joint declaration, witnessed by US President Donald Trump, regarding the establishment of the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), a land connection between mainland Azerbaijan and its western exclave of Nakhichevan via southern Armenia.

The offices of the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders issued virtually identical statements on the talks, which were also attended by senior officials from both sides.

According to the Armenian prime minister’s office, Pashinyan and Aliyev discussed further practical steps related to the implementation of TRIPP and stressed the importance of connectivity projects within the framework of this initiative.

The two leaders also emphasized the role of their respective state commissions on the delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the importance of continuing their work in line with agreements reached between the two countries.

“Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Ilham Aliyev agreed, through direct bilateral engagement, to continue the steps to further consolidate lasting peace, advance the normalization of inter-

state relations, and strengthen connectivity,” the statement said.

Both sides highlighted the export of Azerbaijani petroleum products to Armenia, the transit through Azerbaijan to Armenia of grain and other goods originating in third countries, and the establishment of trade relations between the two countries as “important practical manifestations of the dividends of peace.”

Pashinyan and Aliyev also welcomed contacts between the two countries’ business communities and discussed opportunities for expanding “mutually beneficial” economic, trade, and energy cooperation.

The two leaders also positively assessed confidence-building contacts involving parliamentarians and civil society representatives, saying they “contribute to strengthening mutual trust and supporting the broader peace agenda.”



INTERNATIONAL

Deportation, ‘International Wanted List’ Mark New Escalation in Baku-Moscow Tensions

BAKU (JAM news) — Two developments on August 17 highlighted the continuing fragility of relations between Baku and Moscow. Russia deported Bakhtiyar Hasanov, chairman of the Azerbaijani National-Cultural Autonomy in Moscow, to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, in turn, placed three Russian citizens on an international wanted list: Moscow 24 TV presenter Ivan Knyazev, political consultant and media expert Semyon Uralov, and journalist and adviser to the Russian transport minister Alexei Chadayev.

The fact that the two developments occurred on the same day may at first suggest that they were reciprocal measures. However, the process that culminated in Hasanov’s deportation had begun well before August 17, with his case under consideration for at least several months. Therefore, while there is no public evidence of a direct causal link between the two decisions, both developments fit into the broader pattern of the prolonged deterioration in Azerbaijani-Russian relations.

Deportation of Bakhtiyar Hasanov

According to open sources, Bakhtiyar Hasanov was detained in Russia in June 2026 and placed in a temporary detention center for foreign nationals. He appealed against the decision to deport him, but the court rejected his appeal.

According to sources, Hasanov’s Russian citizenship was revoked in September 2025. In autumn 2025, the Agentstvo media outlet established that Hasanov’s passport, issued in 2019, was listed as invalid in a Russian government database. Hasanov himself denied at the time that he had been stripped of his citizenship.

One of the key questions is the legal basis on which his citizenship was revoked. Open sources provide no complete or unequivocal explanation for the decision.

The case also carries political significance because of Hasanov’s status. For many years, he cooperated with official Moscow bodies dealing with diaspora and interethnic relations and served on public councils. His deportation is therefore also being viewed as part of a broader trend of pressure on the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia.

Growing Pressure on the Siaspora

Since the summer of 2025, several prominent members of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia have been stripped of their citizenship, detained or expelled from the

country. The names of Arshad Khankishiyev, Elshan Ibrahimov and Javid Rzayev have been mentioned in this context.

Russian nationalist and Kremlin-aligned media have largely portrayed these measures as part of efforts to combat illegal migration, alleged links to criminal groups and security concerns. However, final court rulings on all the allegations made against these individuals are not publicly available.

This process took on a more overtly political dimension following an operation targeting Azerbaijani families in Yekaterinburg in June 2025. The deaths of the Safarov brothers during the operation prompted a sharp reaction from Baku. Moscow linked the operation to an investigation into crimes committed many years earlier, while the Azerbaijani side focused on reports of violence and torture against those detained.

Since then, the issue of the diaspora has gradually moved beyond the social and cultural sphere and become one of the instruments of political pressure in relations between the two countries.

Baku’s Charges against Three Russian Citizens

On August 17, Azerbaijan’s Prosecutor General’s Office said that Ivan Knyazev, Semyon Uralov and Alexei Chadayev had been placed on a wanted list as part of a criminal investigation.

The investigation relates to programs published on Uralov’s YouTube channel on July 14 and August 13. According to the Azerbaijani authorities, the broadcasts contained calls for the violent overthrow of the country’s constitutional order, violations of its territorial integrity, terrorist activity and incitement of ethnic hatred.

The criminal case is being investigated under Articles 214-2, 281.2 and 283.2.1 of Azerbaijan’s Criminal Code. A court ordered the three men to be detained in absentia.

Excerpts from the broadcasts published by Azerbaijani media include remarks about a possible military operation against Baku, military pressure on Azerbaijan from the Caspian Sea and the use of physical violence against the country’s leadership. However, the Prosecutor General’s Office has not published full transcripts of the broadcasts, expert assessments or all the episodes on which the charges are based.

The accused reject Baku’s allegations. Alexei Chadayev denied inciting ethnic hatred, saying that his criticism was directed not against the Azerbaijani people but against the country’s political leadership.

Semyon Uralov, for his part, described the Azerbaijani authorities’ decision as politically motivated. In subsequent Telegram posts, he continued to sharply criticize the political systems of post-Soviet countries, including the Azerbaijani authorities.

The response indicates that the case has moved beyond the legal sphere and become part of the broader information confrontation between the two countries.

The term “international wanted list”, used by Azerbaijani media, does not mean that a wanted person will automatically be arrested in another country.

Even if Interpol issues a Red Notice, it does not constitute an international arrest warrant. Each country decides whether to detain a wanted person in accordance with its own laws. In addition, Interpol’s constitution prohibits the organization from intervening in matters of a political, military, religious or racial character.

The outcome of Baku’s request will therefore depend on the legal evidence submitted, as well as on how other countries assess the case — as a criminal prosecution or as a continuation of the political confrontation.

Ukraine Factor

The latest escalation in Azerbaijani-Russian relations comes against the backdrop of the growing prominence of the Ukraine issue.

On August 6, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov made his first official visit to Kyiv since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and visited Irpin. Azerbaijan reiterated its support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The two sides also discussed the possibility of supplying Azerbaijani gas to Ukraine.

Against this political backdrop, former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko visited Baku on August 16-17 and met Ilham Aliyev. The presentation to Aliyev of a certificate naming him an honorary citizen of Irpin could be perceived in Moscow as a symbolic political gesture.

There is no evidence confirming a direct link between these developments and Hasanov’s deportation. However, the

Azerbaijani leadership’s increasingly open articulation of a position on Ukraine that differs from Moscow’s fits into the broader picture of growing discontent in Russian political circles.

New Mechanisms of Mutual Pressure

One notable change in relations between Baku and Moscow over the past two years has been the increasingly active use of law-enforcement and administrative mechanisms in the context of their political confrontation.

Russia has applied citizenship and migration laws, as well as criminal legislation, against members of the Azerbaijani diaspora. Azerbaijan, in turn, has used criminal prosecution mechanisms against individuals linked to Russian media over statements that Baku regards as posing a threat to the country.

This does not in itself mean that the legal arguments put forward by either side are unfounded. However, the fact that such legal measures are being taken against the backdrop of political crises in bilateral relations inevitably raises questions about their selective application and possible use for political purposes.

At this stage, a complete political rupture between Azerbaijan and Russia appears unlikely. The two countries have significant mutual interests in areas including trade, transport, logistics and regional security.

At the same time, a return to the previous level of relations also appears difficult. Instead, an emerging model seems to be characterized by political mistrust alongside continued, limited cooperation.

Azerbaijanis living in Russia, as well as diaspora organizations maintaining social ties between the two countries, could find themselves particularly vulnerable in this confrontation. The use of diaspora representatives as instruments in an interstate dispute, particularly when accompanied by ethnic rhetoric, increases the risk that tensions could extend beyond diplomatic relations and affect relations between the two societies.

The events of August 17 therefore have broader significance than two separate legal decisions. They point to the emergence of a new model of relations in which Baku and Moscow, while continuing to cooperate, are increasingly making use of political and legal means to exert pressure on one another.

Baku Summons Polish Ambassador over TVP World Program on Human Rights in Azerbaijan

By Nate Ostiller

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry has summoned Polish Ambassador Paweł Radomski over a TV segment aired by the Polish public broadcaster TVP World which discussed the deteriorating human rights situation in Azerbaijan, as well as referring to the government of President Ilham Aliyev as a “dynasty.”

The segment entitled “Azerbaijan’s peace comes with repression,” aired on the channel’s Eastern Express program on August 26. Host Benjamin Lee was openly critical of the government’s crackdown on media and civil society in the country, and characterized the transfer of power from late President Heydar Aliyev to his

son as “hereditary.”

Lee specifically mentioned the jailing of journalists from independent media outlet Toplum TV, as well as the arrests of opposition figures and the ongoing imprisonment of scholar and OC Media contributor Bahruz Samadov.

The segment’s guest, Turkish researcher Turkan Bozkurt, largely brushed off Lee’s criticism of the government, instead claiming “every country has issues with human rights.”

‘I don’t think it is fair to compare Azerbaijan with countries like Russia or Iran’, she added.

Responding to questions about the consolidation of power by the Aliyev family, Bozkurt said “executive continuity was

necessary for the structural stability” of Azerbaijan.

Two days later, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry released a statement on the summoning of Radomski, saying the segment contained “completely unacceptable allegations” and that Lee displayed “provocative behavior.”

“The broadcasting of negative content against Azerbaijan on a public broadcaster funded by the Polish government was assessed as an unfriendly step that contradicts the existing spirit of partnership between our countries and has the potential to seriously harm bilateral relations,” the statement added.

The following day, the stridently pro-government media outlet Caliber

published a lengthy article criticizing Poland and the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk on a variety of issues, including personal attacks against Tusk and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.

“The summoning of the Polish ambassador to the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry should prompt Warsaw to reflect: partnership sits uneasily with double standards, when one thing is said at the negotiating table and another from a state television screen. [Former Polish President] Lech Kaczyński understood this. It is time Donald Tusk and Radosław Sikorski learned the same lesson,” the article concluded.

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



Community News

Azerbaijan Appeals Court Denies Armenian Prisoners' Verdicts

WASHINGTON — The unjust imprisonment of Armenian hostages continues. Earlier this month Azerbaijan's Court of Appeals rejected the appeals filed by Armenian hostages, including former Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) officials, seeking to overturn the unlawful and politically motivated verdicts handed down by the Baku Military Court, reported the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly).

In February 2026, the Baku Military Court sentenced five Armenian hostages to life imprisonment, including former Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan, former Artsakh Defense Army Commander Levon Mnatsakanyan, David Manukyan, Davit Ishkhanyan, and David Babayan. Two additional former Artsakh presidents, Arkadi Ghukasyan and Bako Sahakyan, were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, reportedly because of age-based sentencing restrictions under Azerbaijani law. Other Armenian hostages received prison terms ranging from 15 to 19 years.

An independent report, Justice Under Pressure: Independence of Lawyers and the Right to a Fair Trial in Azerbaijan, issued in May 2026 by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), exposes the structural and institutional flaws of the Aliyev regime's justice system, with particular attention to the unlawful trials against the former Nagorno-Karabakh officials. These proceedings have been widely condemned as political show trials lacking any genuine legal basis. The Court of Appeals' decision further confirms the failure of the judicial system in Azerbaijan and underscores the regime's continued efforts to conceal its gross violations of international humanitarian law through state-orchestrated sham trials.

The Court's decision ignores a key vote by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives. The Committee adopted an amendment in July by a bipartisan 44-7 margin, calling on Azerbaijan to immediately and unconditionally release all Armenian hostages.

In August 2025, as part of the signing of the Armenia-Azerbaijan agreement at the White House, President Trump told Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan that he would personally raise the release of Armenian hostages with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

"The decision of Azerbaijan's Court of Appeals demonstrates that the Aliyev regime intends to continue violating international norms and its assumed obligations, at the expense of Armenian hostages, for which the House Foreign Affairs Committee sent a clear message to immediately and unconditionally release them," said Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan.

"These court decisions are a serious setback to genuine peace," see APPEAL, page 10



Pharmacist dispenses medication and provides counseling to ensure that patients understood their treatment plans

Healing and Hope

The 2026 AMAA Armenia Medical Mission

By Dr. Albert and Sue Phillips

PARAMUS, N.J. — On July 2, 2026, a team of 32 volunteers departed for a 10-day Armenia Medical Mission. For the past 17 years, Dr. Albert and Susan Phillips, together with Dr. Chris Tashjian, have organized and led these annual medical missions, bringing compassionate healthcare and the love of Christ to communities throughout Armenia.

Due to the unprecedented number of volunteers who wished to participate this year, the mission was divided into two teams, allowing the outreach to expand to additional regions of the country.

Dr. Albert and Susan Phillips led the northern team, returning to the Lori region to serve the communities of Stepanavan and Ijevan. Ijevan was a new clinic location this year, reflecting the mission's continued expansion into underserved areas of Armenia.

Dr. Chris Tashjian led the southern team, returning to Sisian while also establishing a new clinic in Vardenis. Vardenis represents an important area of focus for the AMAA's ongoing outreach and development efforts. As in previous years, patients from surrounding villages were transported by bus to the clinic sites, ensuring that individuals in remote communities had access to medical care.

Patients were welcomed into the clinics, where they first underwent triage, including vital signs, urine testing, and electrocardiograms when indicated. Nurses and medical students then obtained medical histories before patients received additional diagnostic testing, including laboratory studies and ultrasound examinations when necessary.

Finally, patients were evaluated by physicians, who provided comprehensive medical care while also offering prayer and words of encouragement. Prescriptions were written for a wide range of medical conditions, most commonly hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Medications were dispensed at no cost, and pharmacists provided counseling to ensure that patients understood their treatment plans.

This year's mission cared for 939 medical patients, while the dental team provided treatment for 141 patients. In addition to medical and dental services, the mission offered nutritional education, physical therapy evaluation and instruction, psychological counseling for both emotional and spiritual needs, and specialized training for children with special needs.

Throughout each clinic, patients were invited to local church services, where members of the mission team and local pastoral staff shared the hope and message of Jesus Christ.

A hallmark of the AMAA Medical Mission is the close partnership between visiting volunteers and their Armenian counterparts. Through the AMAA's longstanding investment in medical outreach, Armenian physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals now work alongside U.S. volunteers during the mission and continue caring for patients after the teams return home.

This collaboration has created an effective and sustainable model of healthcare that combines quality medical treatment with compassionate Christian service. see AMAA, page 9

New Director Named For the Diocese's Zohrab Information Center

NEW YORK — The Eastern Diocese in August announced the appointment of Deacon Hovhannes Khosdeghian as the new director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, the Diocese's research and information facility housed in the St. Vartan Cathedral complex.

Khosdeghian brings to the position a distinguished background in Armenian scholarship, education, and service to the church. Trained as a scholar during his education as a member of the Mekhitarist order, he has devoted much of his career to teaching and promoting the Armenian language, culture and Christian heritage.

This marks a return to the Zohrab Center for Khosdeghian, who was an associate scholar on its staff during the 1990s. More recently, in 2024, he re-joined the Diocesan staff to head Armenian Language Ministry in the Ministries department. In that role he has created and led Armenian-language programs for students of all ages, from university-level learners to young children.



Hovhannes Khosdeghian

For many years he has served as principal of the Armenian School of St. Vartan Cathedral, where he continues to be a familiar presence serving on the holy altar.

Khosdeghian will continue to lead the Diocese's Armenian Language Ministry effort, while overseeing the Zohrab Center's extensive collection and continuing its mission as a resource for scholars, students, and the wider public interested in Armenian history, religion, language, literature, and culture. He can be contacted via e-mail at DnHovhannes@armenian-diocese.org.

Khosdeghian succeeds Dr. Jesse Arlen, who led the Zohrab Center through a productive period of scholarship and programming. The Diocese expresses its gratitude to Dr. Arlen for his dedicated service and looks forward to a new chapter for the Center under Dn. Hovhannes' leadership.

Since 1987, the Zohrab Center has served as an important intellectual and cultural ministry of the Eastern Diocese, bringing Armenian scholarship to a broad audience through its library and research resources, lectures, conferences, and other educational programs.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Zamanigian Bequest Makes AECP International Medical Fellowships Possible

Mary Ann Zamanigian was a dedicated supporter of the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECP) in her lifetime. After her passing, the late Zamanigian will continue to make a lasting impact toward quality eye care in Armenia through her estate.

Notably, a substantial bequest from the late Zamanigian will make it possible for physicians in Armenia to continue their ad-

vanced medical education and training in ophthalmology through international fellowships sponsored by Zamanigian's legacy gift.

Dr. Arpine Petrosyan is the first physician in Armenia to be selected as the first Zamanigian Fellow. Specializing in oculoplastics and neuro-ophthalmology, Petrosyan will be participating in a yearlong medical fellowship at the University of California Irvine.

"This fellowship is more than an educational opportunity," Petrosyan said. "It is an investment in my future and in the future of my country. As a physician from Armenia, I am honored to learn from outstanding professionals in Irvine and to gain knowledge, skills, and experience that I could not easily obtain at home. My greatest goal is to return to Armenia and use everything I learn to improve patient care, contribute to medical education, and support the development of our healthcare system. I believe that knowledge has its greatest value when it is shared, and I hope to pass on what I learn to my colleagues and future generations of physicians. This fellowship gives me the opportunity to make a meaningful difference — not only in my own career, but also in the lives of the patients and communities I will serve in Armenia."

Zamanigian held a keen interest in the medical field, pursuing a degree in radiology and working at the Rhode Island Blood Center for many years. She also deeply valued service and education, which makes the allocation of her generous contribution to AECP particularly meaningful.

"Mary Ann's gift to the Armenian EyeCare Project was more than a donation," said her cousin, Dr. Gary Zamanigian. "It stands as a permanent testament to her lifelong, unwavering commitment to serve. Through her benevolence, she ensured that her legacy would have an enduring impact. Her decision to allocate a significant portion of her estate stands as proof of her integrity, her compassion, and her steadfast dedication to the welfare of others. Through this final act of generosity, she leaves a legacy defined by the long-lasting good her gift will accomplish."

If Dr. Petrosyan could, she would say this to Mary Ann: "Thank you for believing in people you may never have met. Your generosity has opened a door that will shape my career and, I hope, positively impact many lives in Armenia. I want you to know that I see this fellowship not as a destination, but as a great responsibility. Thank you



Dr. Arpine Petrosyan

for making this opportunity possible. Your support will create an impact that reaches far beyond one individual. It will touch the lives of many patients and families in Armenia for years to come."

AECP is beyond grateful to Mary Ann Zamanigian for her invaluable support and the lasting impact her legacy gift will have toward fulfilling the organization's lifelong mission: to eliminate preventable blindness in Armenia and make quality eye care accessible for every child and adult in the country.

OBITUARY

H. Kenneth Norian

Business, Civic, Legal and Armenian Community Leader

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — H. Kenneth Norian was born on April 15, 1933 in New Jersey and passed away peacefully at home in Beverly Hills on August 25. Born to Siran and Harry Norian, Armenian immigrants whose families came from Aintab, Turkey, Ken was the third of four brothers, and grew up in a close-knit family that remained an important part of his life. Ken attended Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey, where he distinguished himself as a natural leader, serving as student body president. He went on to Yale University, where his most significant achievement was serving as business manager of the Yale Daily News, a role that reflected both his leadership abilities and his keen interest in business and communications. Following Yale, Ken served as a first lieutenant in the United States Army Artillery. After completing his military service, Ken partnered with his brother to establish a real estate development company, where they built custom homes in northern New Jersey. In 1963, Ken married Cynthia Dickranian, whom he had met at a party in New Jersey. Two years later, the couple moved west to California, where Ken became deeply involved in the business, civic, legal, and Armenian-American communities. For nineteen years, Ken served as president of Premier Market of Beverly Hills. Under

his leadership, he expanded the company's home-delivery service and wine business in ways that were decades ahead of their time. Ken served as treasurer of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce and was a founding director of the Beverly Hills Education Foundation. For eleven years, he served as an Administrative Appellate Law Judge through the California State Bar Court, which handles attorney discipline matters under the jurisdiction of the California Supreme Court. He continued his service to the legal community as a volunteer lay arbitrator, helping resolve attorney-client fee disputes for the State Bar of California. Ken's Armenian heritage remained a lifelong, foundational part of his identity. He served as a Fellow Trustee of the Armenian Assembly of America since its inception. He was also a devoted benefactor of the Armenian Church of North America, Western Diocese, and a forty-year Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International. Ken strongly supported the election campaigns of Governor George Deukmejian. His civic involvement reflected his belief that citizenship was not passive, but something to be actively lived. Ken remained deeply committed to preserving and strengthening the Armenian-American community for future generations. For all of Ken's professional accomplishments, public service, interests, and

lifelong pursuits, his greatest source of pride was his family. He and Cindy built a marriage and family that spanned more than six decades. They were the proud parents of four children: Thomas Archer; Timothy Katcher and his wife, PJ; John Mathew and his wife, Gia; and their daughter, Cathleen Caroun. They were also blessed with eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild, who brought immense joy and pride to their lives. Ken will be remembered not only for what he accomplished, but for the way he approached life. He was an avid reader, a music lover, and had a genuine curiosity about new technology. His generosity, work ethic, humor, and enthusiasm for life will live on in the generations that follow him. A memorial service was held on September 3, at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to the Armenian Assembly of America, the Western



Diocese Camp Endowment Fund, or the St. James Armenian Apostolic Church of Los Angeles Memorial Fund.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

The 2026 AMAA Armenia Medical Mission

AMAA, from page 7

The dental ministry has likewise continued to make a meaningful impact. In addition to providing treatment, the dental team educates children and families about proper oral hygiene practices, contributing to measurable improvements in dental health and a reduction in preventable tooth decay over the years.

The success of the Medical Mission depends upon the dedication of every participant. Physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, therapists, medical students, non-medical volunteers, and our faithful Armenian translators each play an indispensable role. Together, they function as a unified team with a common purpose: to serve God by caring for the physical and spiritual needs of the Armenian people.

The impact of the Medical Mission extends far beyond the clinics themselves. Each year, volunteers return home with their lives transformed through service, inspiring continued involvement, and cultivating the next generation of AMAA supporters and mission participants.

Planning is already underway for the 18th AMAA Armenia Medical Mission in 2027.

For additional information or to apply, visit the AMAA website and select the Armenia Medical Mission link under the Projects section.

(Dr. Albert and Sue Phillips are Founders/Directors AMAA Armenia Medical Mission.)



Dr. Albert Phillips converses with a patient

10



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BAIKAR WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

SAVE *the* DATE

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2026

 ST LEON CHURCH HALL
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Details to follow!

THANK YOU FOR 10 YEARS OF
SUPPORT, TRUST, AND COMMUNITY.



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

Anti-Armenian Hate Material Distributed in Glendale

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian National Committee of America Glendale Chapter (ANCA Glendale) released a statement strongly condemning the anti-Armenian hate material distributed in recent days throughout the residential neighborhood surrounding Glenoaks Elementary School. The chapter is in contact with Glendale Unified School District officials and the Glendale Police Department to ensure that the incident is fully investigated and that those responsible are identified and held accountable.

The material was designed to resemble a one-hundred-dollar bill and folded so that it would appear to be dropped currency, inviting residents and children to pick it up from sidewalks and lawns. When unfolded, the reverse displays the word “STUPIDIANS” in the colors of the Armenian flag, along with the message, “THIS IS AMERICA NOT STUPID ARMENIA.”

The timing and location are particularly troubling. This week, Glenoaks Elementary launched the nation’s first Western Armenian Dual Language Immersion Program, a historic milestone for the Armenian American community and for the preservation of Western Armenian language and



culture for future generations.

“Our community worked for years to make the Western Armenian Dual Language Immersion Program a reality, and this week we should be celebrating what that means for our children and future generations,” said ANCA Glendale Chair Lucy Petrosian. “Instead, families are finding hateful material scattered in the very neighborhood where these children walk to school. Our children deserve to learn their language, celebrate their heritage, and feel safe doing so. We expect this incident to be taken seriously and fully investigated, and those responsible to be held accountable.”

ANCA Glendale notes that this incident is the latest in a series of acts directed at Armenians in Glendale and across the region. In recent years, hate flyers have been posted at Armenian churches and community institutions, and Armenian schools have been vandalized. Each of these incidents has been publicly condemned, yet in nearly every case, no one has been held accountable. That pattern of impunity is precisely what emboldens the next person to commit another act of hate.

Glendale is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the world. Those who distributed these hateful flyers did so anonymously and under cover of night, in the expectation that the community would absorb the insult quietly and move on. The community’s voice will be loud and clear against this hate-inciting anti-Armenian speech.

ANCA Glendale thanks the principal and staff of Glenoaks Elementary School for their quick attention to this hate incident. ANCA Glendale is ready to support the school district and the Glendale Police Department in any way needed as they address this issue.

Any resident who has found this or similar material should report it to the Glendale Police Department.

2026-2027
ADMISSION
OPEN

FIRST DAY

St. Thomas Armenian Church’s
Kirikian
ARMENIAN SATURDAY SCHOOL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 9:00 AM

School Hours 9:00 AM - 1:15 PM

Toddlers, Nursery to 7th Grade, Ages 2 ½ - 12

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venmo@kirikianarmenianschool (last 4 of cell - 3203)

CONTACTS

Ani@lacapan.com or Talar@sarafian1.com

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<https://www.facebook/kirikianarmenianschool>

www.armenianschoolstthomas.com

174 Essex Drive | Corner of 9W & E. Clinton Avenue | Tenafly, NJ 07670 | (201) 567-5446

Azerbaijan
Appeals Court
Denies Armenian
Prisoners’ Verdicts

APPEAL, from page 7

Khaloyan continued. “Global Magnitsky and other sanctions should be applied to the responsible Azerbaijani officials — as the United States and other countries have for egregious cases of human rights violations.”



Credible reports documenting physical abuse and the deteriorating health of Armenian prisoners underscore the urgent need for consistent and effective steps to save their lives and end the Aliyev regime’s blatant disregard for fundamental human rights.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Lacrosse Builds a Team, a Community and an Olympic Dream

By Grace Yacobe

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PHILADELPHIA — On the lacrosse field, Armenia is still a young team.

The program began taking shape in 2023, when Johnny Mouradian began traveling to Armenia with a vision of introducing the sport to the country while connecting Armenian lacrosse players across the diaspora. By 2024, Armenia's men's and women's teams were competing in North America and internationally.

But when Armenian players take the field, they are playing for something bigger than the scoreboard; they are building a national program from the ground up

lacrosse just got the lead towards the end, and I kept playing through college, and now we're here," Nick Palandjian said.

For Ara Atayan, the attraction came early.

"My sister picked up a stick. I just love the energy, the pace, the strategy behind the game, and the skill set, so I've been playing since five, played through college, and playing now with Armenia," he said.

Now, they are using the sport they grew up playing to represent Armenia.

Armenia's national team is unusual in that many of its players do not live in Armenia.

Yev Gevorkyan, who is involved in building the program, said the Armenian diaspora has played a central role in its development.

"Our diaspora plays a huge role," Gevorkyan said. "Currently, the vast majority of our National teams consist of diaspora players."

Diasporan players have also participated in camps and clinics in Armenia, helping introduce the sport to young Armenian athletes and build connections that the organization hopes will shape the future of lacrosse

in the country.

Recruitment happens through several avenues.

"We rely on our social media outreach and word of mouth; we search recruiting sites for youth through early college players and we try to connect with youth camps and events to spread awareness," Gevorkyan said.

In Armenia, the organization is currently supporting lacrosse in "15 or 16 sports

academies," according to Gevorkyan.

The organization also has a developmental program called Team Armenia, which is open to anyone who has Armenian heritage. The program allows players to participate in local and international tournaments while Armenia Lacrosse works to expand opportunities for high school and youth players. The goal is to make lacrosse more accessible to young athletes in the country and eventually create a pipeline of players who can compete for the national teams.

One father said he learned through a local Armenian newspaper that the team was being formed. His sons had played lacrosse throughout their lives, and the opportunity seemed like a natural fit.

"My sons played across his whole life, though it would be a great idea, and we made a phone call, and one thing led to another, and here we are," he said.

"As, like, an older guy, I'm just happy to be a part of a team, honestly," Palandjian said.

He also described the opportunity to mentor younger players.

"But just to be able to be a leader and not be as emotional as we were when we were younger and just have perspective on the game and on life. It's been pretty cool, just helping people get, like, job interviews and talking off the field and all that stuff," he said.

Shahe Katchadurian described the range of ages within the program as an opportunity for older players to share what they have learned.

"It's cool to shed some of the light that, you know, we've gained from growing up, playing college across, and now being in the workforce, you know, there's a lot of knowledge that we share to them, and we just want to help them grow, and, uh, you know, succeed in whatever they're going to do," he said.

Atayan said the younger players also affect the older players.

"I think the cool part is just the perspective they give us, you know, they, as younger guys, they have to look up to us, because we're older, have a little more experience. So we're held accountable, but at the same time, they just bring a new energy to it, and they make lacrosse super fun again, almost like we're teenagers playing," he said.

Declan Palandjian added that having more younger players brings fresh legs: "I definitely appreciate the youngsters' fresh legs. I probably don't have the gas tank I used to, but it's nice to be able to run hard and then come off knowing you've got a young, fresh guy going on."

For the parents watching, the experience has also become about more than athletics.

One parent described watching her child play as a source of pride because he is representing his country and heritage.

"You know, it's a sense of pride that he's playing for his country and all his heritage," the parent said.

The team's travel has also helped build those relationships.

The players described traveling internationally with Armenia Lacrosse, including a trip to Portugal.

"We've been lucky enough to travel a



The men's Armenia Lacrosse team (Grace Yacobe photo)



The men's and women's Armenia Lacrosse teams. (Grace Yacobe photo)

and working toward the Olympics.

During a recent Philadelphia friendlies weekend, Armenia's men's team defeated Brazil 20-11 and Chile 11-4. The women's team faced Brazil twice, falling 20-14 and 18-9.

For the players, the significance of the weekend extended beyond wins and losses.

"I always played physical sports growing up, football, hockey, and lacrosse, and

bunch for Armenia lacrosse. Notably, I was able to go to Portugal last year, and we had a great time on and off the fields. diving into Portuguese culture a bit and playing a lot of fun lacrosse," Katchadurian said.

Atayan added, "Yeah, second, the Portugal trip, it was the first time I got to play with everybody. I'd known Shahe growing up, and then kind of knew Declan from a distance, and got to meet Nick, and it was, like, the first time we were all together, and that was just pretty special, because it all clicked right away."

For Gevorkyan, representing Armenia through lacrosse carries significance beyond competition.

"Lacrosse has been such a huge part of my life and has given me so much. It is called the Medicine game in that it is a sacred gift designed to heal the mind, body, and spirit," he said. "Sharing that connection with other lacrosse players and other Armenians is very special and has been amazing to witness these last couple of years."

Gevorkyan said representing Armenia is an honor and a responsibility.

"It is an absolute honor to be able to be a part of this. We all have so much pride in who we are, our history and where came from," he said.

"Coach [Morgan] Radners from the women's side always says this is so much bigger than us and just to be able to help leave this program better than when I got here is something I strive for everyday so that we can continue to grow and give opportunities to young men and women in Armenia and in the diaspora," Gevorkyan added.

That identity is also intentionally incorporated into the program.

He said the national teams participate in language and history courses and incorporate Bible studies into the program's weekly messaging.

The program's immediate focus is the European Sixes Lacrosse Championships in Spain in November and qualifying for the World Championships.

Beyond that is the goal that repeatedly came up when the players were asked about the future of Armenian lacrosse.

"2028 Olympics," they said.

When asked if there was anything else, the response was simple:

"Olympics, Olympics and more Olympics"

For the players, that means more than competing under an Armenian flag.

It means helping build something that can outlast them.

AGBU 120 YEARS

AGBU 120TH ANNIVERSARY

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Arts & Culture

Fresno State Library to Host Exhibit by Ara Oshagan

FRESNO — The Fresno State Armenian Studies Program presents “Ara Oshagan: Armenian Diasporic Trajectories-Los Angeles, Beirut, Artsakh, Fresno” — a photographic exhibition tracing diasporic displacement, continuity and futurity across four interconnected Armenian cities and spaces. The exhibition is the first in a series of events in 2026-2027 marking the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Studies Program.

An opening reception for the exhibition will be held on Sunday, September 13, 4-6 p.m., at the University Library (5200 N Barton Ave), Leon S. Peters Ellipse Gallery, 2nd Floor, Fresno State.

Los Angeles, Beirut, Artsakh and Fresno are Armenian diasporic spaces connected through a trajectory of displacement, migration and cultural continuity. Each holds a distinct place



Ara Oshagan

in the Armenian experience as well as Oshagan’s history as an artist and diasporan. Los Angeles, Beirut and Fresno are sites of diasporic life and presence while Artsakh represents an ancestral homeland that has become diasporic overnight. Oshagan’s work documents and explores these spaces, communities and stories as they persist across generations. They form a fractured trajectory connecting diaspora, belonging, memory and futurity.

The exhibition will include work from a recently launched collaboration between Oshagan and the Armenian Studies Program that examines the Armenian community’s deep roots in the San Joaquin Valley.

Employing photography, collage and installation, the exhibit is a palimpsestic vision that intertwines documentary with the speculative, text with image, fact with fiction, ancestral with AI (predictive) technology and personal with collective history. Oshagan’s own history and identity is entangled in his work as he lives and works among displaced and diasporic communities.

Oshagan is a diasporic multi-disciplinary artist, curator and cultural worker whose practice explores collective and personal histories of dispossession, legacies of violence, see OSHAGAN, page 13



The Little Singers of Armenia

Little Singers of Armenia To Present Concert with English Twist

Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — They are recognized internationally as an outstanding vocal group, and informally called cultural ambassadors of Armenia. The Little Singers of Armenia choir, founded in 1992 by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Tigran Hekekyan, has performed extensively in cities and countries throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America, spreading knowledge of Armenian music to audiences of multifarious language groups and musical cultures. Their repertoire reflects their experience, as it embraces works spanning centuries and genres, from sacred music of the early Christian era through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the classical, and beyond, to include jazz and contemporary music. And they sing in the original languages of the works.



Acclaimed harpist Alexander Boldachev

central figure in English music in the 20th century: A Ceremony of Carols and Friday Afternoons. The second part of the program takes one back to the Renaissance, with works by William Byrd (1540-1623), a contemporary of Shakespeare, and Baroque composer Henry Purcell (1659-1695). It concludes with two pieces by a living composer John Rutter.

Thus, the Little Singers will be taking the audience on a journey through centuries of English music.

From England they will move across continents, to ancient India. Just before the concluding pieces by Rutter, the Little Singers, accompanied on the harp by Boldachev, will perform two works by Gustav Holst, Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda and Summer (from Two Eastern Pictures). The first is a collection of hymns from the ancient Sanskrit that the composer himself translated into English. The Rig Veda is one of four Vedas, the sacred texts of the Hindu religion, first transmitted orally, then written, and are considered the oldest texts in the Indo-Germanic language group. The four hymns to be performed at the concert are dedicated to natural elements and gods. Summer, again from classical Sanskrit literature, is based on a text by the poet Kalidasa.

see SINGERS, page 13

Qanon Virtuoso Marianna Gevorgyan Wins at ICMA Awards

LOS ANGELES — Qanon (kanun) player Marianna Gevorgyan won the “Best Instrumentalist” award at the InterContinental Music Awards (ICMA) competition in the “Best Musician” category.

This year, the competition attracted participants from more than 100 countries, with several of the 3,500 musicians taking part. Gevorgyan is representing the Republic of Armenia, proudly carrying the Armenian flag,



Armenian surname, and showcasing Armenian culture through the traditional national instrument — the qanon and any time is the winner.

In 2025, Gevorgyan was honored with the title of Global Icon Awards. In 2020, she received the Grand Prize at the World Folk Vision Global Cultural Initiative and has been the recipient of numerous first-place awards at international music competitions.

Gevorgyan is also a solo qanon performer with the Tagharan Ensemble of Ancient Music of the National Centre of Chamber Music of Armenia named after Komitas, under the artistic direction of Sedrak Yerkanyan.

‘Syunik: The Last Border of Armenia’ Showing at Fresno State with Director Ashot Poghosyan

FRESNO — “Syunik: The Last Border of Armenia” will be screened on Friday, September 18, at 7 p.m., in the Grosse Industrial Technology Building, Room 101 (2255 E. Barstow Ave.) on the Fresno State campus. The screening, organized by the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State, is free and open to the public.

“Syunik: the Last Border of Armenia” is a film about an ancient cradle of Christianity caught in a tightening vise — and why preserving it is a responsibility of the Christian world. Director Ashot Poghosyan will be present to discuss the film.

The movie takes viewers on a journey through one of Armenia’s most historically significant provinces. It focuses on the region of Syunik with sweeping cinematography and historical narration. Among the landmarks shown in the film are Karahunj, the village of Khndzoresk, the mountaintop petroglyphs of Ughtasar, the southern borderlands of Meghri and the towering monastery of Tatev, tracing the region’s place at the heart of Armenian civilization, Christianity and national identity.

For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, visit <https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>.



ARTS & CULTURE

Little Singers of Armenia to Present Concert with English Twist

SINGERS, from page 12

The Story Behind the Collaboration

Why did Hekekyan choose such a program, with works spanning thousands of years and from distant cultures? It came from a meeting of musical minds: Two years ago, the world-renowned harpist Boldachev heard the Little Singers of Armenia's recording of Britten's music and expressed a desire to perform a joint concert. Now, two years later, that wish has materialized in Yerevan. Agreement had been made to perform A Ceremony of Carols, and further discussion led to discovery of Holst's large-scale four-movement work, Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda, which they thought would complement the Britten beautifully.

As expressed in the concert program, "Perhaps the central message of An Evening of English Music is not simply to present the music of another country and different historical periods, but to discover within this music what is universal: the beauty of the human voice, the power of the word, and the extraordinary ability of music to create a space for mutual understanding."

Cosmopolitan Artists with Multicultural Repertoires

Like the Little Singers of Armenia, Boldachev is a musician with an international

repertoire embracing several musical genres. He is also a composer, conductor, and producer, widely recognized as a leading figure in classical crossover, who has redefined the role of the harp in contemporary music. He has expanded its artistic language and audience, having performed in more than 50 countries across five continents. He has appeared at major venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Musikverein in Vienna, and the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, but also on unconventional stages including Burning Man and at the FIFA World Cup Opening Ceremony, sharing the stage with Robbie Williams.

As a prolific composer, Boldachev has written and arranged more than 300 works, blending classical virtuosity with rock, jazz improvisation and electronic soundscapes. His recordings have received international recognition, including an ICMA nomination and prestigious awards. When he is not performing on stage, he is teaching as an Adjunct Professor at Azusa Pacific University and a Guest Professor at the Royal Academy of Music (London), Milan Conservatory, and the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. Actively involved in theatre, film, and social initiatives, he is the founder of World Harp Day and the Zurich Harp Festival. Boldachev's artistic vision is driven



The Little Singers led by artistic director and conductor Tigran Hekekyan

by a single belief: that anything is possible — using the harp as a universal voice to connect cultures, genres, and communities worldwide.

Much the same may be said of the Little Singers of Armenia, founded in 1992 under the auspices of the Armenian Little Singers International Association of Hekekyan, and Yerevan Municipality. The choir has taken part in international competitions as well as festivals since 1995 in western and eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the

United States,

Recognized as a Choir of the European Union, the Little Singers were nominated as Cultural Ambassador by the European Federation of Choirs in 2001 and awarded the Leonardo da Vinci silver medal by the European Academy of Natural Sciences. It has also received some of the highest awards bestowed by the President of Armenia, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Mayor of Yerevan. It has performed with renowned conductors and has recorded several CDs. The achievements of the choir mirror those of their founder, Hekekyan, who has received his nation's highest awards. He has created other choirs in addition, including the Armenian Radio Chamber choir and, in addition to his conducting, he has been a professor of conducting at the Yerevan Komitas State University since 1985, has served as juror in international competitions, and guest lecturer abroad.

Tickets for the September 14 concert are available through the online platforms toms.am and tkt.am. Ticket prices range from 5,000 to 7,000 drams.

Fresno State Library to Host Exhibit by Ara Oshagan

OSHAGAN, from page 12

identity and (un)imagined speculative futures. He works in photography, film, collage, installation, book arts, public art and monuments. He has published four books of photography and has presented his work at the Annenberg Space for Photography, International Center of Photography in NY and TedX Yerevan. Oshagan is based in Los Angeles, is an artist-in-residence at 18th Street Art Center, a curator at ReflectSpace Gallery in the City of Glendale and the Exhibition Director of the upcoming Armenian American Museum in Glendale.

"Ara Oshagan: Armenian Diasporic Trajectories" entangles past, present and future while tracing historical continuity and fragmentation in the diaspora and imagining a tomorrow where return to indigenous lands is a possibility.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program, the Leon S. Peters Foundation, the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation, the Ralph Shabazian Armenian Memorial Fund and the Florence Elaine Hamparson Armenian Memorial Fund.

Admission is free for the opening reception.

For more information: <https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>.

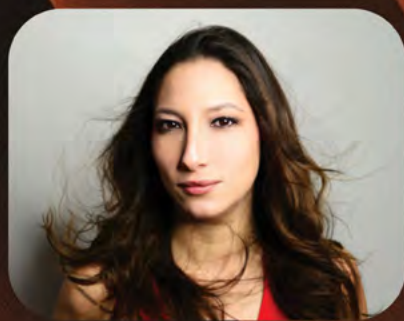
The exhibit will be on display from September 1 to 30, 2026 and is open to the public: Monday-Thursday: 10AM-7:30PM; Friday: 10:00AM-4:30PM; Saturday: 10:00AM-4:00PM

Sunday: Noon-7:30PM.

Tekeyan Cultural Association Greater New York
in collaboration with the Armenian Radio Hour
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Featuring works by
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Naregatsi, Babajanian
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ERIC
SILBERGER
violin

Sunday, September 27, 2026

4PM

West Side Presbyterian Church
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Tickets \$75, \$50, \$40

bit.ly/romantic-soul-trio



Books

I Can't Go On. I Will Go On: Sarah Ignatius's *The Kaleidoscope of Destiny*

By Arpi Sarafian

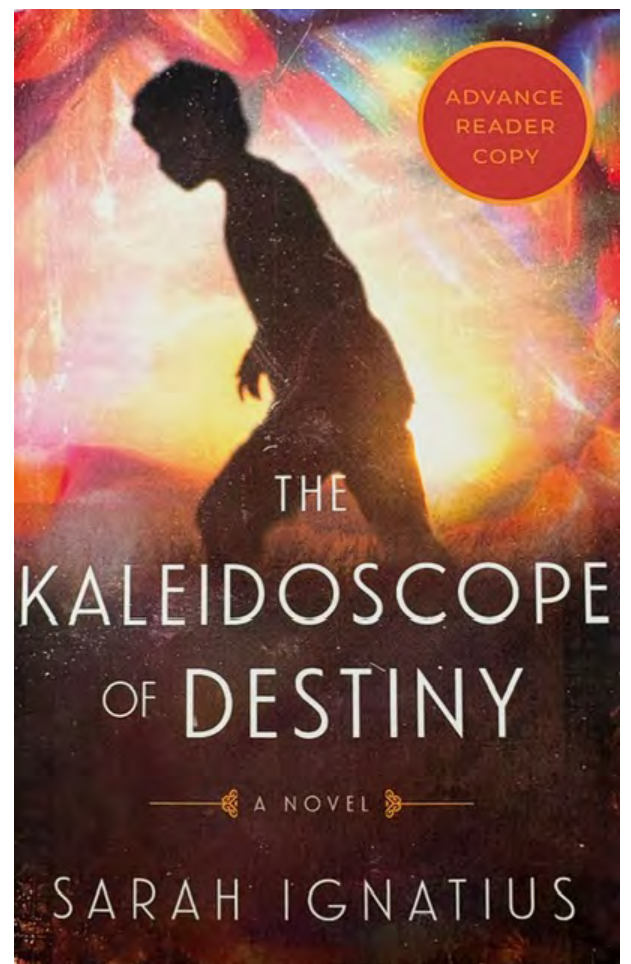
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Sarah Ignatius's brutal portrayal of the forced exile of the entire Armenian population living in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 takes her debut novel, *The Kaleidoscope of Destiny* (Koehlerbooks, 2026), beyond the unjustified arrests, the deportation camps and the mass killings it depicts. The unimaginable horrors suffered in the scorching heat of the desert by the women and the children along with the older men on their way to their final destination make the question Arakel Mazmanian ponders as he nears his devastated hometown — “What turns someone into a killer?” — totally irrelevant. For there can be nothing bigger than the incredible cruelty of Arakel's journey. The now-fifteen-year-old is the only member of his family to survive the atrocities. Can the mere fact of his being alive be redeeming?

The story of Arakel, the thirteen-year-old son of the Mazmanian family, starts with the terrifying rumors and the arrests of all but the “essential craftsmen” of the Ottoman Armenian town of Kharpert. Arakel's seventeen-year-old brother Mateos gets picked up for the labor battalion. His law-abiding father is arrested and imprisoned, to later “disappear.” The fear and the helplessness are palpable. Ignatius draws the reader right into the midst of the chaos of departure—the cherished be-

longings, the carpeted pillows and the rugs of the family sold or carted away for “safe keeping”—and the savagery of the “brutes,” the gendarmes flanking the lines of the starving refugees as they are marched over hills and valleys, tripping over loose rocks and getting tangled in thorny bushes. Arakel's seven-year-old sister Anoush is kidnapped by a nomadic horseman. Women drop dead, exhausted. Naked bodies float in the Euphrates, its water turned red from the killings. Ignatius brings to life the misery at the Death camps along the Deportation route in horrifyingly vivid scenes. People wander around like skeletons. There is the appalling stench of the thousands of freshly dead corpses piled on top of each other at Goeljuk Lake in Mezre, the town near Kharpert. Can fiction measure up to the reality of the atrocities?

One leaves the novel haunted by the darkness in a soul that could devise the demonic plan to exterminate a whole people. Nothing will ease Arakel's feeling of being abandoned by a God who allowed it to happen. “The desert tested me but not like your Saint Jerome. It wasn't a choice or a religious scholar's quest. It was a journey no one wanted to take,” is his response to President of Euphrates College Reverend Henry Riggs's, “Have you ever heard of Saint Jerome?” We share the boy's outrage at the injustice, at best the randomness, of it all. Why did he survive while the rest of his family disappeared with no trace? His brother Mateos's unpublished story of



“strength and fearlessness” fades against the urgency of Arakel's “I have nothing left to lose . . . I have no reason to hope . . . why did I keep going ?” Is survival the torment of having to go on, when “I can't go on?”

Nonetheless, a “second chance” always remains a possibility. When his family falls apart, Arakel creates a “new family” with Nishan and Tamar at the orphanage in Aleppo, belying his own, “Once you've crossed into the land of the dead, you can never go back.” The eyes of Khalid Efendi, the Bedouin camel caravan master who kidnaps Arakel and adopts him, are “warm, like Father's or Grampa's.” One even starts to wonder if a new “togetherness” with the German Dr. Conrad and his medic Fritz, Arakel rides with on horseback from Aleppo to Mezre as their interpreter, could redeem the loss of his family. Can what has been broken be brought back together?

Ignatius has no easy answers. Yet, “hav[ing] the strength to make it *home* . . . to huddle *together* under the thick blanket” remains the ultimate longing. Even on the deportation route, Arakel's family are grateful they are “together.” Arakel and Anoush laugh and joke as they make a game out of naming their donkeys. Mother points out the field of red and yellow poppies and sheep grazing on a nearby hill to Anoush. “It's strange how peaceful they look,” she muses.

While it confronts the desolation and the devastation boldly, *The Kaleidoscope of Destiny* also evokes the goodness in the hearts of men. Arakel's Turkish friend, Mehmet's mother offers refuge to his family. The son of the Kurdish boatman who helps Arakel flee into the Der-sim Mountains salvages the strongbox Arakel drops into the current as they cross the lake in a small ferry boat. The box holds the single thing left of his family — the story Mateos was writing before he was arrested. As the kaleidoscope of the title might suggest, the possibilities of rebuilding what has been broken are endless. The little Kurdish boy is “hopeful, with an easy laugh, and a genuine smile.”

I would like to add that in a story, that otherwise does a remarkable job of bringing to life the cruelties of the journey no one wanted to take, there are perhaps a few too many explicit statements of regret and ambivalence: “We should have left long ago for America with Uncle Mihran” or, “It's my own fault for hoping Father or Mateos might make it back home.” While it is true that Arakel is only a young adolescent overwhelmed by the horrors he has to witness, his “I wish I'd never come here . . . I was not meant to go back home . . . It was always an empty dream . . . and now, here I am, cold and alone. Surrounded by death,” borders on sentimentality. The brilliant pace alone of the separation scene from the orphanage, or of the final stretch of the ride to the hospital in Mezre (almost home?) with Dr. Conrad and Fritz, would have fully engaged the reader.

Ignatius's painstaking “documentation” of the historical atrocities may seem ironic in light of the ongoing attempt, following the recent ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, to erase all trace of Armenians having lived on their ancestral lands for millennia. Yet, the story must be told. Ignatius exposes its horror unflinchingly.

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BOSTON CHAPTER PRESENTS

Between the Figural and Abstract

an illustrated talk by
Kim Servart Theriault,
author of *Rethinking Arshile Gorky*

**Friday
September 18
7 p.m. sharp**

Baïkar Building, 755 Mt. Auburn St.,
Watertown. Use Norseman Ave. entrance.
Free admission. For more info, email
tcadirector@aol.com.

ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe
Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Rack of Lamb with Dijon
& Panko Crust

“Rack of lamb is special occasion-worthy but quick and easy enough to prepare any night of the week. This classic French preparation is the way I learned to cook it over 20 years ago when I was an apprentice at L’Auberge Chez Francois, and it’s still my favorite method. You sear the racks in a blazing-hot pan, brush them with Dijon mustard, coat them with seasoned breadcrumbs, and then finish cooking them in the oven. The meat turns out exceptionally flavorful, especially considering how simple the recipe is,” says Jennifer Segal, a trained chef, mom, and author of the blog and bestselling cookbook *Once Upon a Chef*. She is known for her foolproof, updated spins on everyday classics.

Jennifer’s recipes hone in on exactly what you feel like making in today’s busy and often hectic times. She is the founder of the *Once Upon a Chef* cooking blog that showcases family-friendly recipes from a chef’s point of view. Her recipes

have been featured on numerous websites, magazines, and television programs, including *The Huffington Post*, *WJLA’s Good Morning Washington*, *FOX5DC*, *SeriousEats.com*, and *Parade.com*.

Before creating her blog, Jennifer attended the Maryland-based L’Academie de Cuisine, considered one of the top cooking schools in America. She cooked at the acclaimed L’Auberge Chez Francois, and was director of marketing for a prominent restaurant group, both in the Washington D.C. metro area.

“I left the restaurant business in 2003 when my first child was born. Now, I’m cooking for my family and sharing all my tested and perfected recipes. The recipes on my site reflect my life; as a mom, I need easy meals the whole family will enjoy but the chef in me needs to eat too,” she says. With the authority of a professionally chef and the practicality of a busy working mom, Jennifer teaches readers how to improve their cooking skills one recipe at a time. She lives in Maryland with her husband and children.



Jennifer Segal Photo by
Johnny Miller (Clarkson
Potter, 2021)

INGREDIENTS:

Two 8-rib “frenched” lamb rib racks (1 1/2 to 2 pounds each), trimmed of fat and silver skin (see note)
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme (or 3/4 teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme)

Servings: 4

PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 400°F and set an oven rack in the middle position. Sprinkle the lamb racks all over with 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon of pepper.

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a heavy ovenproof skillet (cast-iron or stainless-steel; see note) over high heat. With your exhaust fan on, sear the lamb for 4 minutes on each side, or until nicely browned. Don’t worry about searing the ends; they’ll brown in the oven. (The bones of the racks will hang over the edges of the skillet; that’s okay.)

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the panko with the remaining teaspoon of oil, the thyme, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Toss until the panko is well coated with the oil and seasonings.

Using a spoon or brush, spread the mustard all over the meat – you can do this right in the pan (after you’ve removed it from the heat), using tongs to maneuver the racks – then arrange the racks fat/meatier-side up in the skillet. Sprinkle the panko mixture over the mustard coating on the top and sides of the racks (don’t worry about the bottom sides), pressing with your hands to adhere.

Slide the pan into the oven and roast for 15 to 18 minutes, or until a thermometer inserted into the center of one of the roasts registers between 135°F/57°C (medium) and 140°F/60°C (medium-well). Keep in mind that these temperatures account for the fact that the temperature will continue to rise several degrees while the meat rests. Transfer the racks to a cutting board, cover with foil to keep warm, and let rest for 10 minutes. Cut into single or double chops.

Note: The only time-consuming part of the recipe is trimming the fat and silver skin off the racks. Jennifer recommends asking your butcher to do this for you, but if you have to do it yourself, this is a good tutorial. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPLxMuO2Cow>

For this recipe, see: <https://www.onceuponachef.com/recipes/rack-of-lamb-with-dijon-panko-crust.html>

Once Upon a Chef, the Cookbook: 100 Tested, Perfected, and Family-Approved Recipes Hardcover – April 24, 2018 by Jennifer Segal (Author), Alexandra Grablewski (Photographer). Order at: <https://www.amazon.com/Once-Upon-Chef-Cookbook-Family-Approved/dp/1452156182>

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Armenian Poets Celebrated in
National Literary Magazine

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Eleven Armenian writers from around the globe are featured in a specially curated section of the current issue of *Hanging Loose*, the oldest independent literary journal in the country.

Every semi-annual issue — roughly a hundred pages of work by American and international writers — turns over about twenty percent of the magazine to a guest editor, who selects poets and poems for that special section, sometimes with a particular theme.

In this issue — *Hanging Loose* number 119, just out — distinguished Armenian-American poet Alan Semerdjian is guest editor. In the introduction to his selection of work by Armenian and Armenian-American poets, titled “Through the Darkest Corridors,” he says this: “Wherever we are, there is Armenia. And wherever Armenia is, there is the ghost of the Genocide hovering near it, inextricably

tied. May we all learn from that which haunts us, and may it become our greatest folio of instruction.”

Thus the section focuses on the continuing impact of the Armenian Genocide, as it affects contemporary writers’ lives, memories, and art. All the poems are in English, though some are translations from Armenian. For those, the original Armenian language versions appear on facing pages — a proud first for *Hanging Loose*.

Poets and translators featured in the magazine include Diana Arterian, Peter Balakian, Lory Bedikian, Tamar Marie Boyadjian, Tatev Chakhian, Gregory Djanikian, Sarah Giragosian, Silva Kaputikyan, Karén Karslyan, Margarit Ordukhanyan, and Marine Petrossian.

Information about purchasing the magazine, ISSN: 0440-2316, can be found on the *Hanging Loose* Press website: <https://www.hangingloosepress.com>





ARTS & CULTURE

Mek Gallery Presents Exhibition by Rafael Megall

GLENDALDE — Mek Contemporary presents “Idols In Bloom,” the gallery’s inaugural exhibition and a solo presentation of work by Rafael Megall. On view from September 24 through November 6, the exhibition opens with a reception on Thursday, September 24, 6–8 p.m.

“Idols In Bloom” brings together paintings in which porcelain figurines, floral forms, and Armenian ornament appear in states of repetition, fragmentation, and recombination. Across the exhibition, Megall considers how objects and images acquire meaning through personal and collective memory, and how inherited forms can remain alive through transformation.

At the center of the exhibition is an expanded conception of the idol. In Megall’s work, an idol is not necessarily an object of worship, but something invested with significance through attachment, memory, and experience. His figures draw from the decorative porcelain figurines commonly found in Soviet-era domestic interiors. Collect-

ARMENIAN ORNAMENT MOVES THROUGH THE PAINTINGS AS AN ACTIVE STRUCTURE RATHER THAN A DECORATIVE BORDER

ed, displayed, and often passed between generations, these objects became part of the visual language of everyday life, carrying associations with family, home, and a social world that has since changed.

Megall subjects these familiar figures to a process of fragmentation and reassembly. He reconfigures their forms and combines pieces to create new composite bodies. Rather than reconstructing a lost original, the paintings allow new forms to emerge from what remains. Their instability reflects the way memory itself is reconstructed: partial, layered, and continually altered by time and experience.

Armenian ornament moves through the paintings as an active structure rather than a decorative border. Megall draws on inherited ornamental traditions and reshapes them within his own visual language. The patterns weave through the figures, alternately obscuring and revealing them while linking separate elements across the composition. Flowers introduce a parallel language of growth and change. In the larger compositions, flowers, ornament, and porcelain bodies overlap within dense fields of image and pattern; in the smaller panel paintings, botanical forms appear independently, concentrating the exhibition’s concerns with transience, remembrance, and renewal.

The title *Idols In Bloom* brings these elements together. The idol suggests attachment and inherited meaning, while the bloom suggests emergence and continued life. Megall holds these states in tension, approaching fracture not sim-



Porcelain Kaleidoscope #1” by Rafael Megall

ply as loss but as a condition from which something else can take form. Across the exhibition, Megall suggests that continuity does not depend on remaining unchanged, but on the ability of images, objects, and cultural forms to be transformed, reassembled, and seen anew.

Megall (b. 1983, Yerevan) studied at the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts from 1998 to 2004. His solo exhibitions include *Stories of Idols and Icons* at Concilio Europeo Dell’Arte / InParadiso Art Gallery, Venice (2022); *The Room of the Riddles* at MMoMA, Moscow (2021); and *The Panthers in My Blossoming Garden*, presented at



“Apes of the Garde” 2024 by Rafael Megall



“Imperial Blossom” by Rafael Megall

the Pavilion of the Republic of Armenia during the 57th Venice Biennale and subsequently at the National Gallery of Armenia, Yerevan (2017).

His work has been included in exhibitions at Museum Kampa, Prague; Tang Contemporary, Singapore and Bangkok; Haugar Art Museum, Tønsberg; Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen; Fondazione Stelline, Milan; and the National Gallery of Armenia, among others. Publications on his work include *Megall: Idols and Icons*, published by Rizzoli in 2022, and *Rafael Megall: Paintings 2009–2015*, published by Skira in 2015.

His honors include the Gold Medal of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, the Arshile Gorky Honorable Medal, Lorenzo ii Magnifico Award at the Florence Biennale and the title of Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia.



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR

OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

- SEPTEMBER 12** — The Massachusetts Chamber Music Artists will present “Crossroad,” a concert, at Follen Church, 755 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington, at 7 p.m. Performers will be Haig Hovspeian on violin, Ismael Guerrero on cello and Matias Cuevas on piano. The program will feature Armenian composer Gayane Chebotaryan’s Piano Trio, followed by Astor Piazzolla’s *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* and conclude with Brahms’ Piano Trio No. 1. Tickets are \$15 through \$30, depending on age. For more info, visit mcmartists.org.
- SEPTEMBER 15** — **ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT** at Hickory Hill Golf Course 200 North Lowell Street, Methuen. 7:30 a.m. registration, 9:00 a.m. Shotgun Tee-Off; sponsored by Holy Archangels Armenian Church; for more information, contact Mark Kazanjian (508) 633-7447 or Markkaz55@gmail.com.
- SEPTEMBER 18** — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Boston Chapter presents “Arshile Gorky: Between the Figural and Abstract,” an illustrated talk by Kim Servart Theriault. Friday, 7 p.m. Baikar Building, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Free admission. For more info, email tcadirector@aol.com.
- SEPTEMBER 19** — Daughters of Vartan Merrimack Valley Chapter fundraiser, jewelry classes with Karine Abgaryan. Two sessions: Gold collection 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Silver Armenian Coin Collection, 2 to 4 p.m. Each session \$50. St. Gregory’s Church Hall, 158 Main St., North Andover. RSVP Naro Khandjian at 339-927-8603. All ages welcome.
- SEPTEMBER 19** — Join the 15th Annual New England Walk for Life sponsored by the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry New England Chapter. Saturday. Registration 10.30 a.m., start 11.30 a.m. from St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 564 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, to Faire on the Square, Saltonstall Park, Watertown. Registration Fee, \$30; \$15 for students and children. Proceeds benefit ABMDR. For info and to register, visit www.abmdr.am/ne.walk or call 617-331-0426.
- SEPTEMBER 19** — **CELEBRATE ARMENIA!** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Saturday, 1pm-8pm. Joyful celebration of culture, tradition and heritage through music, dance, cuisine. Storytelling and community in honor of Armenian Independence Day. 1pm-8pm.rain date: September 27
- SEPTEMBER 24** — Celebrating Contributions! Gala to benefit the Armenian Heritage Park’s Endowed Fund for Care and Maintenance. Honoring Raffi and Nina Festekjian, Distinguished Leaders in Philanthropy, Business, and the Arts. InterContinental Boston, 6 p.m. Reception. 7 p.m. Dinner and Program. For reservations:ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support or email: hello@armenianheritagepark.org
- 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 Tjeknavorian, 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
- 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

NEW JERSEY

- SEPTEMBER 13** — Barrymore Film Center will screen Elia Kazan’s 1963 Oscar Winning film “America, America”. This groundbreaking film, which Kazan called his favorite, brings together a deeply personal story with an important human rights history. Set in the late 1890s during a period of oppression and violence toward Christian minorities--Armenians and Greeks-- in Ottoman Turkey--the film tells the story of Kazan’s uncle’s harrowing odyssey out of Turkey with his Armenian friends who are fleeing the massacres that have ravaged their communities. The film will be introduced by Pulitzer Prize winning poet and New York Times bestselling author Peter Balakian, and renowned film historian Foster Hirsch. 5 to 8 p.m. 1 Park Avenue in Fort Lees. For more go to barrymorefilmcenter.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 Kalajian (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 or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirrorspectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More” or mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.

Mass. Chamber Music Group Launches Second Season on September 12

LEXINGTON, Mass. — The group Massachusetts Chamber Music Artists opens its second season with “Crossroads”, a program that explores the places where cultures, traditions, and musical voices intersect. The event will take place on Saturday, September 12, at 7 p.m., at the Follen Church, 755 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington. From Armenia to Argentina to Germany, Crossroads traces unexpected connections across continents and generations, revealing how music transcends borders while giving voice to the unique stories and traditions that shape our world. The evening opens with Armenian composer Gayane Chebotaryan’s expressive *Piano Trio*, a work that blends rich lyricism with the distinctive colors and rhythms of

Armenia’s musical landscape. It is followed by Astor Piazzolla’s electrifying *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, a work that re-imagines the spirit of tango through the lens of the concert hall. The program concludes with Johannes Brahms’s monumental *Piano Trio No. 1*, a masterpiece whose sweeping melodies and emotional depth have made it one of the cornerstones of the chamber music repertoire. Founder and artistic director of MCMA, violinist, Haig Hovsepien is joined by acclaimed musicians Ismael Guerrero, cello and Matias Cuevas, piano, bringing together three distinguished artists for a program of remarkable range and intensity. Tickets can be ordered online at <https://www.mcmartists.org/concert-season/crossroads>.



Haig Hovsepien



Ismael Guerrero



Matias Cuevas



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COMMENTARY

Is It Inadvertent that the Civil Contract Regime’s Plans Lead to the Complete Destruction of the National Character Of the Armenian People and Homeland?

It is with deep awareness of the seriousness of this supposition as well as concern that we pose the question of the above headline.

About three months have passed since the regular elections of the Armenian National Assembly on June 7. Despite the fact that before the elections, the country was initially transformed into a total theater in various ways, then obvious violations were allowed on election day, and finally, despite the well-documented complaints submitted to the Constitutional Court about these irregularities, which were argued at length, the latter gave its laconic one-sentence answer that “everything is in order.” We preferred not to engage in a series of fruitless debates in connection with the elections in those days. We preferred instead to allow the newly-elected National Assembly to be formed and, although the Civil Contract majority was weakened, to begin to formulate its plans for governance over the next five years, with the slim hope that they would include reformed programs, subject to counterbalance.



Considering the aforementioned indisputable realities, apart from Armenia’s inexorable Turkic neighbors, there is no one who might ever advocate the weakening of the Diaspora.

The Civil Contract members must ask for forgiveness for this unbelievable anti-national, destructive idea, alongside their other current openly pro-Turkic statements.

Let’s move on to the next element. Undoubtedly, another component of the current government’s policy aimed at weakening the strong national identity of the Armenians is the policy of attacks unleashed against the Armenian Apostolic Church and its clergy, especially the Catholicos of All Armenians.

The prime minister of Armenia, by occasionally reciting psalms and sometimes attending the holy liturgy, cannot distract the attention of alert Armenians from this shameful and destructive struggle he has unleashed against the Church and the clergy.

It is gratuitous to use the weaknesses of the personal lives of some clergy, though we would never condone them, as an excuse for this destructive struggle.

Indeed, the prime minister does not reveal anything new by calling public attention to these weaknesses with outraged concern, because every informed person is well aware that for thousands of years, as in the case of many other churches, the Armenian cleric has not ceased to be a man with human weaknesses.

It is also worth reminding the prime minister of this circumstance, as his own personal life became a subject of public attention when it was revealed that until months ago he felt free to have a life partner and many children, without having assumed the obligations of legal marriage expected by civil society and especially those required by the Armenian Apostolic Church. Under such circumstances, it would have been best if he had simply remained silent about this.

On the other hand, it is a reality known especially by the Armenian people that the Armenian Apostolic Church, especially in the absence of statehood, has contributed for many centuries to the mission of preserving the national identity of the Armenian people.

It continues to fulfill this centuries-old invaluable and undeniable role, not only in Armenia in recent decades, but especially for all Armenians worldwide.

By the way, it is appropriate to recall that the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin are not the property of the Republic of Armenia, but it and its administration belong to the entire Armenian people.

Together with all this, at this point, we especially wish to call attention to two main condemnable circumstances created by the authorities in recent months.

The first is the unlawful and unconstitutional judicial actions, whereby the Catholicos of All Armenians and high-ranking clergymen are summoned before civil courts in connection with purely internal church administrative matters, in which neither the prime minister nor the court has any authority to intervene.

The authorities and the prime minister himself should be severely condemned for this unprecedented shameful act.

The second concerns the so-called “five-year government program” put forward by the authorities in recent days, in which, among the many worrying anti-national provisions presented, we especially point out the section of the proposed constitutional amendments where the authorities want to reserve for themselves the right to intervene in the internal administrative decisions of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

On this fundamental issue, we would like to clearly declare once again to the Armenian authorities and especially to the prime minister that the Armenian Apostolic Church does belong to the entire Armenian people throughout the world and is accountable only to them, in accordance with its national statutes.

Any encroachment by the authorities into its internal administrative and spiritual affairs will be subject to the strictest condemnation of the Armenian people throughout the world.

These anti-national aspirations of the authorities to subjugate our church are simply an obviously futile effort to please the Turks and Azeris.

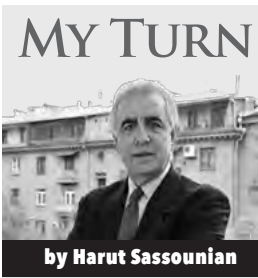
There are also other, perhaps less publicized but more dangerous components of the Civil Contract authorities’ pro-Turkic policy that undermine the Armenian national identity.

Not so long ago, it would have seemed unimaginable for the Armenian authorities to have the audacity to state without shame that the globally recognized Armenian Genocide should be forgotten so as not to disturb our implacable neighbors.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



Can Raphael Lemkin’s Relatives Force the Lemkin Institute to Remove his Name?

MY TURN
by Harut Sassounian

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, a Pennsylvania-based non-profit organization, was renamed in 2023 to support those who are at risk of becoming victims of genocide and other mass atrocities.

The Institute was named after Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959), a Polish-Jewish lawyer and Holocaust survivor who, in 1944, coined the term genocide to describe what until then had been referred as Armenian massacres. In 1948, after tireless efforts, he succeeded in having the United Nations adopt the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, making genocide an international crime.

The Institute, an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff, aims to honor Lemkin’s work by trying to protect threatened communities around the world, including the Armenians of Artsakh. On September 5, 2023, the Lemkin Institute issued a 127-page report, indicating an increased risk of mass atrocities, particularly genocide, against Artsakh Armenians.

In 2025, Joseph Lemkin, a lawyer who is a relative of Raphael Lemkin, objected to the use of the Lemkin name by the Lemkin Institute because of its designation of Israel’s killings of Palestinians in Gaza as genocide. Joseph Lemkin is a Zionist and supporter of Israel whose father was Raphael Lemkin’s first cousin, according to The Times of Israel.

Joseph Lemkin was quoted as saying: “They distort his [Raphael’s] legacy and appropriate his name to advance a definition of genocide which is inconsistent with what we believe was his life’s work,” said Joseph Lemkin, 57. “To me, it tarnishes his memory by attaching to his name allegations that trivialize the whole concept of genocide.” Joseph Lemkin threatened to sue the Lemkin Institute over the naming dispute.

In April 2026, Joseph Lemkin and the European Jewish Association (EJA) submitted a legal memorandum to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations, objecting to the Institute’s use of Lemkin’s name. “As an institution, they can publish whatever they want. But they cannot pretend to carry Raphael Lemkin’s name and at the same time misrepresent his heritage, which was completely against these beliefs,” said Rabbi Menachem Margolin, the EJA’s chairman and founder. “What they did is completely illegal, and so we started a campaign with the authorities in Pennsylvania to shut them down or at least change their name.”

EJA’s attorneys have sent letters to various Pennsylvania officials asking them to investigate the Lemkin Institute’s tax-exempt status as a Section 501(c)3 charity. The group has also enlisted the help of Amichai Chikli, Israel’s hardline minister of Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, who wrote to Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro urging him to make this investigation a priority. One of the law firms representing Joseph Lemkin accused the Lemkin Institute of defending Hamas, backing Hezbollah, and targeting the United States -- allegations that the Institute says are false and defamatory.

Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, the Lemkin Institute’s director, explained in an email: “There are several members of the Lemkin family who support our work and who understand how we use Raphael Lemkin’s studies and analyses in our own prevention mechanisms.”

The Lemkin Institute issued the following statement on Oct. 14, 2025: “We have Lemkin family members on our side who reached out to us after October 7, 2023 [the Hamas attack]. Peter Lemkin, in whose childhood home Raphael Lemkin was a frequent visitor, has been particularly supportive, offering encouragement, sharing insights into Lemkin’s work, and informing us of his family’s close collaboration in the effort to get the Genocide Convention ratified by states.... It is only our work on Israel that has brought about a coordinated smear campaign in the United States with dangerous, precedent-setting implications.” Peter Lemkin, who lives in the Czech Republic, has joined the Lemkin Institute’s board.

The core of the dispute over the Lemkin Institute’s use of Raphael Lemkin’s name is in reality a political, rather than a legal issue.

Raphael Lemkin’s relatives have no control over the use of his name, unless, they have specifically inherited the legal rights to the use of his name. There are no known documents indicating that Raphael Lemkin bequeathed such rights to any of his relatives. None of his relatives have inherited his estate since Raphael had died in abject poverty.

Even if there were evidence of such an inheritance, there is a 30-year limit for the name’s commercial use under Pennsylvania law. Raphael died in 1959. Thus, according to Pennsylvania law, such a right would have expired in 1989. Furthermore, that statute covers those who have died in the state of Pennsylvania. Raphael died in New York City.

Regarding the political dispute involving some of Lemkin’s relatives who are staunch supporters of Israel, there are other relatives who have no objection to the Institute’s criticism of Israel’s actions toward the Palestinians in Gaza. Indeed, one of Raphael’s relatives decided to join the Institute’s board.

Therefore, Raphael’s relatives who object to the Institute’s name have neither the legal nor political authority to reject its use. There is a high probability that should this issue end up in court, the Lemkin Institute is expected to prevail.

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Similarly, they have the audacity to state without shame that Mount Ararat, an indelible symbol of the Armenian people confirmed by the Bible which inspired generations, should ultimately be erased from our political, educational, and literary references, because it also disturbs our relentless neighbors.

Finally, let us not forget another fawning concession of the Civil Contract to hostile neighbors, openly declaring that the centuries-old Artsakh of the Armenians, an inseparable part of the Armenian world, is no longer Armenia, but Azerbaijan.

All of these are the unilateral concessions conducted until today by the Civil Contract, in return for which it tells the Armenian people that it has been able to secure only the *promise* of a piece of paper called a “peace agreement.” We note with regret that the authorities at the same time pretend not to see Azerbaijan’s arrogant attitude of calling even Sevan and Yerevan by Azerbaijani names and calling all of Armenia Western Azerbaijan.

Finally, the efforts of the government to put itself and the Armenian people into a deep sleep with numerous other pro-Turkic gestures is crowned by the attempt to bury thousands of years of Armenian history into oblivion when Mr. Pashinyan calls “Real Armenia” the greatly and permanently diminished territory of 29,754 square kilometers (which is itself subject to division in two, thanks to the implementation of the “Zangezur Corridor” eagerly awaited by the newly created relentless “friends” of Armenia).

In the face of all these facts, however, it is necessary to realize that there is also a well-meaning, and, forgive us for saying, irresponsible segment of the Armenian people, living in Armenia or living in the Diaspora, which is happy to see that finally wonderful and pleasant opportunities for work and leisure have been created in Armenia today. The nightlife rivals well-known European centers with its

dazzling variety. Likewise, we often hear news of important international businesses opening branches in Armenia, which otherwise might arouse the envy of larger countries.

Such people ask, as criticism, what more those who express dissatisfaction with today’s authorities expect.

First, let us state definitely that for every Armenian, without exception, it is undoubtedly a delight to enjoy all the opportunities for pleasure, entertainment, and fun in Armenia. However, every aware Armenian has the responsibility and need to penetrate that surface level and think more profoundly.

One of the main goals of this article, which raises such alarming points, is to point out that the obvious goal of our unyielding neighbors is first to extinguish all awareness of national principles and traditions in the Armenian people, erasing all the ideals that have nourished its centuries-old longevity. It is obvious that in this way, the goal is to simply make it natural for forthcoming generations in the newly-created so-called “Real Armenia” to live in a state devoid of Armenian character and to make the national character of its territory of 29,754 sq. km. unrecognizable so that it can easily and “naturally” become a part of their ultimate goal, the Pan-Turanic great territory they dream of extending from Europe to Asia without a break. They may certainly “nobly” write “sahi Ermenistan” (Real Armenia) in Turkish on geographical maps.

Let us conclude by referring again to the title of this article that the supreme duty of today’s conscientious Armenian is to not allow the Civil Contract Party government, consciously or unconsciously, to lead the Armenian people and the Armenian homeland towards the destruction of their national identity.

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Coordinated Press

(The above editorial is a translation from the Armenian original.)

Armenia–Russia Relations: Beyond The Politics of Symbolism

By Suren Sargsyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Much has been said about Armenian-Russian relations and the dynamics of their development. Indeed, the relationship is going through a particularly interesting phase. Relations between Armenia and Russia have never reached this level of tension during the post-Soviet period.

It would be difficult to characterize the relationship as hostile, but it would be equally difficult to describe it as friendly. The two sides are strained and increasingly distant from one another, yet there has been no formal “divorce.”

Armenian-Russian relations are entering a new phase in which priorities and interests are being reassessed. Yet the old agenda largely remains in place, even though it is already beginning to show cracks.

Put simply, the form and substance of Armenian-Russian relations no longer correspond to contemporary geopolitical realities, but neither side appears ready to fundamentally realign the relationship. What Armenian-Russian relations need is a restart — something that neither Yerevan nor Moscow currently appears prepared to pursue.

Armenia does not want to leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) or the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), while Russia, for its part, does not appear prepared to isolate Armenia from these structures, despite increasingly tough statements from both sides.

Much has recently been discussed about Russian President Vladimir Putin’s decision not to congratulate Armenia’s prime minister on his re-election. I and others had expressed the view that the Russian president would congratulate Prime Minister see RELATIONS, page 20

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Nikol Pashinyan, but that formal diplomatic gesture did not take place. However, this does not mean that Russia failed to recognize the results of Armenia’s elections or that the Armenian prime minister lacked legitimacy. In fact, after the elections, the first country visited by the Armenian prime minister was Russia, and the first foreign official he met was Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. Clearly, if such a meeting took place, it demonstrates that Russia recognizes not only the outcome of Armenia’s elections but also the legitimacy of its government.

At the same time, Putin — who formally did not congratulate Pashinyan on his re-election — is expected to become the first foreign leader to meet with the Armenian prime minister in the coming days, according to Russian media reports. It is also important to remember that on June 27, Putin and Pashinyan held a telephone conversation. According to the official account of that conversation, the two leaders exchanged views on the agenda of Armenia-Russia relations, particularly on issues that had emerged in bilateral economic relations.

Regarding the possibility of holding a referendum in Armenia on EU membership — a possibility mentioned in the joint statement adopted on May 29 by the leaders of the four EAEU member states — Pash-



inyan emphasized that such a referendum would, in practical terms, become possible only after Armenia formally applies for EU membership and the issue becomes a concrete political matter. In other words, Pashinyan conveyed to Putin that Armenia is not currently discussing EU membership as a concrete issue and that no immediate decision or process regarding membership exists.

Against the backdrop of such intensive contacts and discussions, it would there-

fore be inaccurate to define the current state of Armenian-Russian relations primarily through the message conveyed by Putin’s decision not to congratulate Pashinyan. A single diplomatic gesture, or the absence of one, does not fundamentally alter the nature of bilateral relations.

Put differently, Putin’s failure to congratulate Pashinyan had no direct connection to Russia’s recognition or non-recognition of the election results or the legitimacy of the Armenian government.

Putin was the first major foreign leader not to congratulate Pashinyan. Yet the Russian prime minister was the first foreign official to meet with him. Putin was also among the first foreign leaders to speak with Pashinyan by telephone, and he is expected to be the first foreign head of state to meet with the Armenian prime minister. As for Armenia’s own position, as Armenian authorities have repeatedly stated, there is currently no issue of withdrawing from the EAEU or joining the EU on the government’s immediate political agenda.

Consequently, Armenian-Russian relations are likely to continue developing within the framework of the existing agenda, but under new geopolitical circumstances and in an environment characterized by a certain degree of tension. The relationship is therefore neither a friendship nor a rupture. It is a strained partnership operating under an increasingly outdated framework—one that requires a fundamental reassessment, even if neither Yerevan nor Moscow is currently ready to undertake that process.

(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.)

Young Armenian-American Coach Makes Massachusetts High School Soccer History

ARLINGTON, Mass. — At just 22 years old, Ara Naroian has been named the head coach of the Arlington Catholic High School boys varsity soccer team, becoming one of the youngest varsity head coaches in Massachusetts and, according to available records, the youngest in state history.

For Naroian, the appointment is about far more than his age. It represents years of dedication to the sport, a commitment to developing young athletes, and the opportunity to serve as a role model for the next generation of Armenian-Americans.

A Winchester, Massachusetts, native and a 2022 graduate of Winchester High School, Naroian has immersed himself in coaching since graduating. He has worked with players of all ages through private training, coached at the club level with the Boston Bolts, and most recently served as the junior varsity coach at Arlington Catholic. His work ethic, leadership, and ability to connect with student-athletes ultimately led to his promotion to lead one of the state’s respected high school soccer programs.

“This opportunity means everything to

me,” Naroian said. “I’ve always believed that age shouldn’t define someone’s ability to lead. What matters is your preparation, your character, and the relationships you build with your players.”

Naroian’s rapid rise is uncommon in Massachusetts high school athletics, where varsity head coaching positions are typically filled by individuals with decades of experience. His promotion reflects the confidence Arlington Catholic has placed in his vision for the program and his ability to lead student-athletes both on and off the field.

As an Armenian-American, Naroian hopes his journey encourages other young people in the community to pursue leadership opportunities, whether in athletics, education, business, or other professions.

“I want young Armenians to know that they don’t have to wait years to chase their goals,” he said. “If you’re willing to work, continue learning, and earn people’s trust, opportunities can come much earlier than expected.”

The upcoming season carries added significance for Arlington Catholic. The



Ara Naroian



Ara Naroian at left

team will honor the memory of Matthew Driscoll, a former player who passed away earlier this year after battling cancer. Driscoll was known throughout the program for his resilience, commitment, and selflessness, and Naroian has made it a priority for the team to play in his memory throughout the season.

“My responsibility extends beyond winning games,” Naroian said. “It’s about building young men of character, creating a culture of accountability, and honoring those who have impacted our program.”

With preseason preparations underway, Naroian is focused on establishing a dis-

ciplined, team-first culture while building toward long-term success. Although his appointment has drawn attention because of his age, he hopes his legacy will ultimately be defined by the impact he has on his players and the example he sets for future generations.

For the Armenian community, Naroian’s achievement serves as a reminder that leadership, dedication, and perseverance can open doors at any age. His appointment marks a significant milestone not only in his own career but also for young Armenian-Americans striving to make their mark in athletics and beyond.