

Russia Ready to Turn Screws on Armenia

Russia’s carrot-and-mostly-stick approach to Armenia increasingly complicates things for Yerevan.

Unable to persuade Armenia to abandon its efforts to join the European Union, Russia is now signaling that it is adopting a harder line.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan evidently is taking the menacing tone of recent Russian statements seriously. It appears the price of keeping the Kremlin at bay for now is the suspension of a nuclear cooperation deal with the United States and an accompanying commitment to have Rosatom, Russia’s nuclear energy entity, build Armenia’s next-generation reactor.

Armenia over the past two years has grown increasingly defiant of Russia, Yerevan’s traditional geopolitical overlord. Pashinyan’s government downgraded security ties with Moscow, while taking steps to reorient the Armenian economy away from the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) toward the European Union.

Russia presently is Armenia’s dominant trade partner and clearly does not want to lose its influence in the South Caucasus. Officials in Moscow have maintained that Yerevan cannot be a member of both the EAEU and EU, and have adopted a carrot-and-mostly-stick approach to steer Armenia back into a stable Russian orbit.

see RUSSIA, page 6

Armenian, Iranian Leaders Hold Fresh Talks

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called for closer “coordination and collaboration” between Armenia and Iran when he met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Friday, October 9, for the second time in two weeks.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meet in Turkmenistan, October 9, 2026.

The talks took place on the sidelines of a Commonwealth of Independent States summit in Turkmenistan the day after a phone call between the foreign ministers of the two neighboring states. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan visited Tehran as recently as on Monday, October 12.

see IRAN, page 6



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the opening ceremony for the Amulsar gold mine on October 10, 2026 (official photo)

Controversial Amulsar Gold Mine Opens in Armenia after Long Delay

By Ani Ghulinyan

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has opened the Amulsar gold mine — a long-stalled project that has been in the pipeline since 2016 amidst continued environmental protests. Pashinyan said the opening of the controversial mine without protests was a ‘success story.’

The Amulsar gold mine is located in Armenia’s Vayots Dzor province, near the resort town of Jermuk, and is op-

erated by Lydian Armenia company, a subsidiary of Lydian International, registered in the British tax haven of Jersey.

Construction of the gold mine began in 2016 but has been halted since June 2018 due to local protesters blocking access to the project. The blockade ended during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020. Environmental activists have expressed concerns that the mining process and the use of cyanide to extract gold

could affect the Arpa and Vorotan rivers, and consequently Lake Sevan — Armenia’s largest freshwater reserve.

However, Lydian Armenia argues that it was introducing the best international practices in health and safety, environmental management, and social responsibility. They cite the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) that they conducted in accordance with international standards back in 2016.

see MINE, page 2

Wounded Armenian Woman Details Assault by Azeri Soldier

By Ruzanna Stepanian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — An Armenian woman who was seriously wounded by an Azerbaijani soldier in her home on October 1 insisted on Monday, October 12, that he held her two children hostage and tried to kill them when she came to their rescue.

“If I hadn’t acted at that moment, neither I nor the children would have been alive now,” Ani Avetisyan told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service days after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan rebuked her for taking on the armed intruder.

Avetisyan rushed to her family’s house in Shaki, a village in the Syunik province, after being alerted about the intrusion by one of the teenage children. She confirmed her sister’s assertion that the Azerbaijani serviceman, Nasimi Musayev, held them at gunpoint.

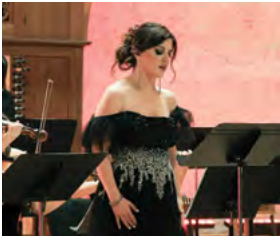
see ASSAULT, page 2



Ani Avetisyan, a resident of the village of Shaki, speaks to RFE/RL at a hospital in Yerevan, October 12, 2026

YEREVAN

A Musical Journey in Yerevan



Page 4

GLENDALE

Community Spirit Shines At ABMDR’s Annual Walkathon In Glendale



Page 7

NEW YORK

TCA Greater New York, Armenian Radio Hour, Present Masterpieces For Piano Trio



Page 13



ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Over 45,000 Artsakh Armenians Have Armenian Citizenship

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — More than 45,000 people forcibly displaced from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) have obtained Armenian citizenship, while more than 53,000 applications for citizenship have been submitted, Deputy Interior Minister Armen Ghazaryan said on October 17.

Speaking to reporters after a parliamentary debate on issues facing displaced Artsakh Armenians, initiated by the ruling Civil Contract party, Ghazaryan said the authorities were working to simplify the citizenship process.

“We are simplifying the procedures our compatriots have to go through as much as possible,” he said.

No Plans to Increase Housing Aid, Minister Says

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenia has no plans to increase financial assistance for displaced people from Artsakh to purchase housing, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Arsen Torosyan said on October 13.

Speaking to reporters, Torosyan said the 2027 state budget had been designed to cover both previously issued housing certificates and new ones.

He urged beneficiaries to consider purchasing homes outside Yerevan, where housing may be more affordable.

As of October 12, authorities had issued 8,643 housing certificates under the government’s program for displaced Artsakh Armenians, of which 4,991 had been used, he said.

Torosyan also said that almost all displaced people from Artsakh in Armenia were employed.

Opposition MP Discusses Prisoners With Greek MEP

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Armenian opposition lawmaker Ishkhan Saghatelian on October 13 discussed the release of Armenian prisoners held in Baku, the protection of Artsakh’s cultural heritage and the rights of displaced Artsakh Armenians during a meeting with Greek Member of the European Parliament Yannis Maniatis, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) reported.

Saghatelian, a member of the ARF and a lawmaker with the Hayastan faction, met Maniatis, vice-president of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group in the European Parliament, to discuss a range of issues.

The two also discussed ways to deepen ties between the S&D group and the ARF.

Saghatelian outlined the ARF’s positions on Armenia’s domestic political developments and external challenges, with particular focus on securing the release of Armenian prisoners held in Baku.

Controversial Amulsar Gold Mine Opens in Armenia after Long Delay

MINE, from page 1

Following the 2018 Velvet Revolution in Armenia, the issue gained prominence again, as some of the leading activists against the mine, including Lena Nazaryan, a current member of the ruling Civil Contract party, were elected to parliament.

While there was a lack of public trust in the assessment ordered by Lydian Armenia, Pashinyan’s government ordered a \$450,000 assessment of the mine from Earth Link & Advanced Resources Development (ELARD).

In the results published in 2019, the company identified several omissions and issues in the project’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and said that the assessment presented by Lydian was incomplete. However, the report also concluded that the mine would not damage the local ecology, particularly the groundwater, contrary to the fears of locals and environmental activists. Following the new assessment, Pashinyan announced in 2021 that “there is a possibility that the mine will open.” He argued that, in a country facing the risk of conflict, when tensions rise, tourism will decline, but the mine will still boost the economy. In 2024, the government greenlit the mine.

The Grand Opening

On Saturday, October 10, Pashinyan published a video of himself arriving at the site of the main opening event by helicopter, accompanied by government officials and party members. In his speech, he described the event as a “success story,” describing the process leading to it as practice the government should adopt in other investment projects.

“We have to talk about why we can organize this event in such a ceremonial environment without protest or similar actions nearby,” Pashinyan said.

He said that the government tried to address public concerns in the past years by raising awareness and showing Armenians that the project was theirs and not something from outside.

Lydian Armenia holds a 75.5 percent share in the mine, while the Armenian government holds 12.5 percent.

“Let us finally state that the mineral resources that turned into gold before our eyes today belong to Armenia and are the property of the people of Armenia. And it has been of utmost importance to us to demonstrate that this wealth will serve the development and prosperity of Armenia,” Pashinyan said.

During the opening, Economy Minister

Gevorg Papoyan said that the Amulsar gold mine is expected to generate an annual \$130 million in taxes, duties, and royalties for Armenia’s state budget, and could boost the country’s GDP by around 1.5 percent. However, Papoyan believes that the significance of the Amulsar gold mine project goes beyond investment and tax revenues.

“This is not just a story about major investments, job creation, and substantial tax revenues. It is also a story about standards — mining standards,” he said.

The government’s representative on Lydian Armenia’s board of directors, Gnel Sanosyan, said three communities near the Amulsar gold mine — Jermuk, Vayk and Sisian — will receive \$7–9 million annually. Sanosyan said that Lydian Armenia has also committed to allocating \$5 million toward the establishment of the Jermuk National Park.

Territorial Administration Minister Davit Khudatyan said mining and tourism can co-exist without harming nature. The minister also addressed the opportunities that the mine’s operation would create for communities in Vayots Dzor and Syunik provinces. Among those benefits, he said, were thousands of well-paid jobs and stable contributions to communities, anticipated changes to schools, nurseries, roads, other major infrastructure projects and social programs funded by tax revenues.

An Opening Ahead of COP17

The opening of the mine came ahead of the COP17 biological diversity convention scheduled to take place October 19–30 in Yerevan. There, governments will gather to evaluate their collective progress towards achieving 23 ambitious biodiversity targets by 2030. The conference, symbolized by the endemic Yerevan Blue Butterfly, will emphasize closing implementation gaps, scaling up international nature finance, and finalizing equitable mechanisms for sharing the financial benefits of digital genetic resources.

Back in 2020, Armenian civil society organizations and the CEE Bankwatch Network — the largest network of grassroots environmental and human rights groups in Central and Eastern Europe — applied to the Bern Convention, blaming the Armenian government for breaking international agreements on biodiversity by funding the Amulsar mine and risking the protected areas around it. The convention recommended that the government halt the process.

Over the following years, various groups

submitted different complaints, raising concerns about corruption, the exclusion of affected communities from decision-making processes, and the undermining of social licenses.

After Pashinyan’s remark about the mine opening without new protests, some long-standing anti-Amulsar environmental activists took to social media to explain why they were no longer protesting the mine.

Tehmine Yenokyan, from the Green Armenia NGO, was involved in court proceedings for 10 years when, back in 2015, eleven residents of the village of Gndevaz and two non-governmental organizations filed a lawsuit seeking to have a number of legal acts that gave the green light to the Amulsar project declared unlawful. Their requests were partially met in 2024.

“If one day you decide to ask where Amulsar’s guardians, the environmentalists, are, remember that no one took the winning Administrative Court verdict seriously. The opinions of the community’s residents counted for nothing, and no official public hearings on the Amulsar issue were held in Jermuk. Even the violation of the Bern Convention, and the Committee’s demand to halt construction and carry out a new EIA wasn’t worth a penny,” she wrote on social media following Pashinyan’s Saturday remarks.

Another former Amulsar activist, Arman Gharibyan, wrote: “Preempting some people’s hysterical comments along the lines of ‘you used to fight for Amulsar, so why are you silent now?’, let me say that after seven years I am older, I have less energy, less free time, and weaker health. I have lived through a war and the deaths of loved ones, dealt with cancer, and run into very great injustices and disappointments...”

At the same time, Lydian Armenia has previously sued MPs, activists, lawyers and even a government ministry for speaking out against the mine.

On October 10, Armenian civil society representatives condemned the launch of the Amulsar gold mine, calling it a threat to the country’s environmental security and international obligations. They stated that the development of the mine ahead of COP17 is in contradiction to Armenia’s declared environmental goals and demanded an immediate halt to the mine’s operations, a new environmental impact assessment and a review of state support for the project.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on October 12.)

Wounded Armenian Woman Details Assault by Azeri Soldier

ASSAULT, from page 1

“I stepped forward, he saw me, pointed [his assault rifle] at me, fired a shot and missed,” the 39-year-old said, speaking from her hospital bed. “I stepped further forward... He pointed the gun at my son to shoot him. I pulled it away with my hand which got injured [by a second shot.]”

“Then he threw me onto the bed and started hitting me,” she went on. “That’s when I started fighting back. I told my daughter to go open the gate. I tried to get my son out too, but he wouldn’t leave. At that point, [Musayev] pointed the gun at my chest, intending to shoot, but I forcefully pushed the weapon down, and [a third gunshot] hit my foot.”

A wounded Avetisyan managed to stab Musayev with a kitchen knife before he fled the house and was caught shortly af-

terwards. She lost one of her fingers and needs to undergo more surgeries on her fractured foot in a hospital in Yerevan.

Pashinyan downplayed the armed attack an ordinary “criminal incident” on October 7. He also effectively blamed Avetisyan for the gunfire, saying that she should have waited for the police to arrive at the scene instead of taking on the armed soldier.

Avetisyan countered that although she called the local police just before rushing to Shaki from the nearby town of Sisian, police officers arrived in her house at least five minutes after Musayev fled it. Sisian’s police station is closer to Shaki than a local hotel where she heard about the intrusion, added the woman hailed by many in Armenia as a hero.

Pashinyan’s remarks caused outrage

among opposition leaders and other critics of the Armenian government, who portrayed the incident as further proof that it has failed to secure the country’s border with Azerbaijan. Shaki is located at least 20 kilometers away from the nearest section of the long border.

According to Azerbaijani authorities, Musayev deserted his military unit deployed on the Armenian border on September 26. Armenia’s National Security Service (NSS) claimed to have been notified by them about his disappearance on September 29. Like many government critics, Avetisyan decried the NSS’s failure to issue security alerts to residents of Shaki and other local communities.

“Had they warned us, I would not have sent the kids to school and we would not have stayed in Shaki,” she said.



ARMENIA

The Closed Education Cycle: Where Does Functional Illiteracy Begin in Armenia?

By Irina Atanyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — There is a generally accepted view that the Armenian educational system is very strong and produces thousands of strong graduates each year. The data, however, is undermining that assumption, showing gaps in understanding, analyzing, and applying knowledge in real-life situations.

For the first time, Armenia participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2025. The study, conducted from March to May 2025, involved around 7,000 students from 295 schools. PISA assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science, focusing not only on their textbook knowledge but also on their ability to apply that knowledge in different situations.

The data showed that Armenian students performed poorly across all three areas. In reading, around 19 percent of Armenian students reached the minimum Level 2 proficiency, compared with an international average of 69 percent. In mathematics and science, the corresponding figure in Armenia was 28 percent, compared with an international average of 65 percent.

These results do not mean that all Armenian schoolchildren are lacking in their reading or writing abilities. PISA measures functional literacy — the ability to understand text, find relevant information, draw conclusions, distinguish facts from opinions and apply knowledge in practical situations.

When presenting the PISA results, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Zhanna Andreasyan noted that the results had been expected.

“These results were expected for us. We consider them a baseline indicator. The reason is that most of the children who participated in PISA had studied under the old curriculum. The new curriculum was introduced fully in their schools later, and they had studied under its framework only during the final months. Therefore, the impact of the new curriculum will become clearer in the 2029 PISA assessment,” Andreasyan said.

But the problem is not limited to the new standards and curriculum. If a child does not properly learn to read, understand what they have read, and express their thoughts clearly in primary school, understanding more complex material later becomes more difficult.

According to education expert Atom Mkhitarian (an expert at the International Scientific-Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia and a former trainer for the Council of Europe and expert for the European Union’s Erasmus+ program), the low PISA results cannot be explained solely by the fact that students studied under the old curriculum; the problem is broader.

“For a long time, our education system has been dominated by an approach based on memorization and reproduction of material. A child learns the material and reproduces it, but is not always able to understand its meaning or apply it in another situation. In other words, we should ask not only, ‘What does the student know?’ but also, ‘What can the student do with what they know?’” Mkhitarian notes.

Mkhitarian points out that the problem does not lie solely with teachers or

students. It is also influenced by teaching methods, textbooks, the assessment system, teachers’ preparation and workload, as well as the socioeconomic conditions of schools and families.

“This is a systemic problem. These factors are interconnected, and when one link in the chain does not work, its consequences become visible in students’ results,” the education expert emphasizes.

At the same time, the picture in primary education is not uniformly negative. According to the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) 2023 results, Armenia’s fourth-grade students scored an average of 513 points in mathematics on a 0–1,000 scale, above the international average of 502. In science, their average score was 457 points on the same scale, below the international average of 494.

According to Atom Mkhitarian, the TIMSS and PISA results do not contradict each other because they assess different age groups and different sets of skills. Relatively strong performance in primary school does not necessarily mean that this knowledge will later develop into the ability to solve more complex problems, analyze information, and apply knowledge in new situations.

One of those links in the chain can already break down in primary school.

Some third-grade children still struggle to read and write. If a child has difficulty reading and understanding simple text at that age, they will have to spend subsequent years filling that gap instead of acquiring new knowledge.

“The issue is not simply whether a child is promoted to the next grade. Gaps need to be identified in time, and the child needs to receive support. Schools should not wait until assessments such as PISA show that there is an educational problem. Early identification needs to be strengthened, and individualized instruction should be introduced. Assessment should not merely record whether a child has moved on to the next grade; it should show which skills the child has acquired, which they have not, and what support is needed to move to the next stage,” Mkhitarian explained.

Lack of Schooling

Mkhitarian also drew particular attention to children who do not attend school.

“Many school-age children simply do not attend school. They have been left outside both PISA and the attention of schools and the relevant authorities,” he notes.

In response to an inquiry, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS), said that as of January 2026, 10,441 children who were subject to compulsory education were outside the education system. According to them, the main reasons for children remaining outside compulsory education are socioeconomic.

At the same time, the ministry said there are no significant concentrations of such children in particular communities.

The ministry also said that a procedure established by a 2021 government decision is in place to identify children who are not attending school and refer them for appropriate support so that their right to education can be restored. Under the procedure, guardianship and trusteeship bodies, the Unified Social Service and local administration bodies are involved in working with children and their families. Representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs may also

become involved when necessary.

Even for children who do attend school, however, teachers have limited time. In a 45-minute lesson, when a classroom may have 25–30 students, it is difficult to cover the required material, listen to each child, understand their difficulties, and make sure everyone has understood the lesson.

“If the goal is simply to deliver the material and hear from a few students, it is possible to manage within the time available. But if we want each of the 25–30 students to read, think, ask questions, discuss, justify their views, and apply what they have learned, 45 minutes is quite a limited amount of time. However, I would not see the problem as being only about the length of the lesson. More important is how that time is organized. Modern teaching does not mean that the teacher should speak for 45 minutes while the students listen,” he said.

He added, “At the same time, individual work is genuinely more difficult in large classes. Therefore, we need to discuss optimal class sizes, teachers’ workloads, teaching methods, and additional professional support.”

Private Tutors

Many parents today send their children to private tutors to make up for material they have not managed to cover at school or to help them perform better. According to the education expert, the widespread use of private tutoring may also indicate that some parents do not have sufficient confidence in relying solely on school education.

“Of course, not all cases are the same. Some parents send their children to private tutors so that they can perform better, prepare for an Olympiad, or get ready for an exam. But if a child attends private lessons simply because they cannot understand the school curriculum without them, then there is a problem. If a parent believes that without additional paid assistance their child cannot learn what they are supposed to learn at school, it means the school is not fully providing the support the child needs,” he said.

“This is also an issue of inequality. Families that can afford private tutoring have an opportunity to fill their children’s educational gaps, while other children are left dependent solely on the school’s resources. The quality of school education should be raised so that private tutoring is a choice, not a necessity,” Mkhitarian emphasized.

The work experience of private English teacher Meri Grigoryan also shows that children often turn to private tutoring to fill educational gaps. According to her, many students have not properly mastered the basics of English: they struggle to read, have a limited vocabulary or are afraid to speak. Some children, even after studying English for several years, are unable to independently understand or form simple sentences, she said.

“Parents usually contact me when they see that their child is struggling to keep up with the school curriculum. During private lessons, we can work with the child individually and identify exactly where they are having difficulties. Many parents themselves do not know enough English to explain the material to their children or help them with homework. There are also parents who do not have enough time because of work and daily responsibilities, so they turn to a specialist,” Grigoryan said.

According to her, around 10 years ago, children’s foundational knowledge was, in some cases, stronger, and they were able to concentrate on lessons for longer periods. Today, children’s attention is shorter.

“Today, children’s attention shifts very quickly from one thing to another, so more engaging and modern methods are needed. But it is possible to work effectively with these children as well; we simply need to find the right approach for them,” she notes.

Psychologist Ani Apitonyan also addressed this changing environment. According to her, children today learn not only at school and within the family, but also online and through various information environments.

“Today’s child learns not only at school and within the family, but also through various online and information environments, where they interact with numerous sources at the same time and receive large amounts of information quickly. The education system needs to study this environment and understand the conditions in which children’s attention and interests are formed. Reforms, meanwhile, should be based on facts and research,” Apitonyan said.

In these conditions, turning to private tutors also has psychological reasons.

“When a parent does not have the necessary knowledge or time, they turn to a specialist. In some cases, this is also done because the parent wants to preserve their relationship with the child. If a mother has to become her child’s teacher every day and the child does not complete the assignments, this can create tension in their relationship,” Apitonyan noted.

This issue is also connected to the way homework is organized in Armenia.

“The educational process continues at home as well, but the main work should be done at school. At home, a child should have relatively short and clear assignments. When much of the work intended for school is moved into the home, the parent is forced to take responsibility not only for the child’s upbringing but also for their education,” she stressed.

In such circumstances, the parent’s role changes. They are no longer simply monitoring the child’s education but must explain, assist, and supervise. According to Apitonyan, boundaries are also important here.

“Parents should be informed about their child’s progress, setbacks, behavior and difficulties. They should participate in school life and take an interest in their child’s education, but boundaries must also be maintained. A parent is not a teacher. If they completely take on the teacher’s role at home, this can lead to conflicts between the child and the parent,” she said.

Mariam Karapetyan, a writer and associate professor and researcher in the field of literature, journalism and media, said she is personally involved in her children’s education. She said she is cautious about hiring private tutors because it is not always easy to find a specialist one can trust.

At the university, Karapetyan is known as a patient person, but that patience does not always remain intact when she studies with her own children.

“When I do schoolwork with my children at home, I sometimes lose my patience when that childish stubbornness kicks in,” she said.

According to her, when a child does not understand the material, she tries to explain



ARMENIA

UN Human Rights Council Adopts Armenia-authored Resolution on Women’s Rights in Digital Technologies

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The UN Human Rights Council has unanimously adopted an Armenia-authored resolution on strengthening international cooperation to promote and protect the rights of women and girls in the context of digital technologies.

The resolution, titled “Strengthening international cooperation for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls in the context of digital technologies,” was presented by an interregional group comprising Armenia, Estonia, Rwanda, Uruguay, Senegal, Sweden and Kazakhstan.

The resolution addresses both the opportunities offered by digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, and the human rights challenges associated with their development and use.

It focuses on three interconnected priorities: access to technology, the full participation of women and girls in the development and governance of digital technologies, and protection from technology-related risks.

Among other objectives, the resolution seeks to address gender-based digital divides and gaps in technological skills, promote women’s and girls’ participation in the governance of digital technologies and AI, and respond to emerging risks such as discrimination, algorithmic bias and inadequate representation in datasets.

A key element of the resolution is the promotion of international cooperation, reflecting the cross-border nature of digital technologies and the need for stronger multilateral cooperation on their effective governance. It encourages the exchange of knowledge and expertise, capacity building and joint responses to existing and emerging challenges.

The resolution establishes a new comprehensive framework for international cooperation, linking human rights and gender equality with science and technology.

Presenting the resolution at the UN Office in Geneva, Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambas-

A Musical Journey in Yerevan

YEREVAN — On September 24, the Komitas Chamber Music House in Yerevan hosted a concert by the “Tagharan” Early Music Ensemble, entitled, “From German Baroque to Spanish Sounds.” The ensemble performed under the direction of its artistic director and conductor, Sedrak Yerkanyan, Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia. Soloists were soprano Lusine Arakelyan and pianist Anahit Dilbaryan.

Beginning with works from the German Baroque repertoire, including compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, the artists moved in time and space to Spain and Latin American music, with works by Isaac Albéniz, Sandoval, Guastavino and Torroba.

Arakelyan is a laureate of international competitions and guest soloist of various European concert companies and orchestras. She recently returned from a major project organized by the “Grandi Voci” Program in Vienna, where she performed pieces from Mozart operas, as well as the famous aria from Dvořák’s “Rusalka.” She performed under the direction of Gregory Buchalter, a conductor associated with the Metropol-



Lusine Arakelyan



Sedrak Yerkanyan, left, and Anahit Dilbaryan

itan Opera.

Her concert performance displayed her powerful lyric-dramatic soprano voice and strong portrayal of character — both qualities that made clear her vocation for the opera stage.

Dilbaryan, recipient of the President of the Republic of Armenia’s Award and laureate of international competitions, is an outstanding musician who performs regularly in Armenia and abroad. A pianist with a high level of professionalism and musical interpretation, she is a soloist with the Assonance Ensemble, a guest pianist of various concert companies, and works with the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra.

Both musicians are dedicated teachers whose music students have distinguished themselves in international competitions.

sador Hasmik Tolmajyan, highlighted the opportunities created by digital transformation. She noted that discriminatory design of technologies and AI, non-representative datasets and algorithmic bias can reproduce and deepen existing inequalities.

Tolmajyan stressed the importance of keeping the rights of women and girls at the center of collective efforts as technologies continue to develop rapidly.

According to Armenia’s Foreign Ministry, the resolution

was co-sponsored by around 50 countries representing all UN regional groups. The initiative is presented as a continuation of Armenia’s efforts to promote the use of technology and innovation as tools for advancing gender equality in multilateral platforms.

The resolution also reflects Armenia’s stated commitment to advancing gender equality in the context of digital transformation, taking into account the country’s relatively high representation of women in the technology sector.

The Closed Education Cycle: Where Does Functional Illiteracy Begin in Armenia?

EDUCATION, from page 3
it again and encourage them. However, children’s refusal to study can sometimes create tension.

“When a child does not understand the material, I try to explain it again and present it in a different way. But when they do not want to study or refuse to do an assignment, it gets on my nerves. The children are still young, and at that age, the parent’s influence is stronger and more consistent,” Karapetyan noted.

The information environment in which children live today also affects their learning. According to Karapetyan, students’ phones are collected at school and are generally not used during lessons. At home, however, a phone can become a source of distraction.

Her younger son, for example, may get tired while doing homework, take a break, and play a football game on his phone.

“A phone can also be useful. For example, children can use it to gain certain knowledge about geography or other subjects. But, of course, there are also negative consequences. When a child gets tired while studying and immediately switches to a game, it becomes difficult for them to return to their schoolwork,” she added.

Karapetyan said that children’s successes can strengthen their motivation, while an excessive amount of homework can have the opposite effect.

“When a child succeeds at something, it motivates them. But when there is too much homework, a child can become tired and frustrated. In that case, learning becomes not an interesting process but a burdensome obligation,” she said.

However, there are also other cases in which children simply do not want to study. This is also reflected in the

PISA results: some students stated that they considered school a waste of time.

According to the Apitonyan, the reasons for such an attitude should be sought in the environment and conditions in which the child studies.

“If a child does not see school as important, they are likely not to want to study either. But we need to understand why they think that way. Perhaps the teaching methods do not correspond to their age and interests. Perhaps they do not see a connection between what they learn and real life. Perhaps there are problems with the teacher. We need to understand why a child does not want to do an assignment. Maybe they have not understood the material, maybe the assignment is too difficult, maybe they are tired, or maybe they are afraid that they will be criticized if they make a mistake,” Apitonyan explained.

At the same time, according to PISA data, 22 percent of Armenian students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds were considered academically resilient, meaning that despite socioeconomic difficulties, they achieved comparatively high results.

According to Apitonyan, for such children, education can sometimes become an opportunity to change their environment.

“If a child sees that education can help them change their life, that can become a powerful source of motivation. Sometimes the supportive words of a single teacher or another important adult can have a significant impact on a child,” Apitonyan emphasized.

The next stage of the education cycle is preparation for university admission. At this stage, students often turn to private tutors to prepare for entrance examinations. According to Mkhitarian, a problem can arise when they

only study to the test.

“If, in order to successfully pass an exam, a student has to spend months solving only test banks and memorizing the correct answers, that system can encourage mechanical preparation. But multiple-choice questions themselves are not necessarily a problem. What matters is what they assess,” the education expert notes.

Mkhitarian says more practical, analytical, and open-ended tasks are needed, requiring students not only to choose the correct answer but also to justify it and apply their knowledge in a new situation.

If a student who arrives at university from school later chooses to become a teacher, the same problem can return to the school system. Mkhitarian describes this as a closed cycle: an underprepared school student leads to an underprepared university student and an inadequately prepared teacher unable to teach properly.

According to Mkhitarian, it is necessary to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the teaching profession, as well as improve professional training and career opportunities.

“Being a good teacher is not only about knowing your subject. A teacher must be able to make that knowledge accessible to different children. They must understand how to work with a struggling student, how to encourage an active student, and how to create a collaborative classroom environment,” Mkhitarian emphasized.

The problems of the education system did not emerge overnight, and they cannot be solved with a single reform. The starting point should be identifying and addressing problems in time, so that they do not move from one grade to another, from one stage to the next, and eventually become a problem for the entire system.



INTERNATIONAL

‘Uniquely Prepared’: Former Senior Trump White House Official Endorses Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan for WHO Chief

GENEVA — Hugh Dugan, who served on the White House National Security Council as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for International Organization Affairs under President Trump, has endorsed Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan, the Armenian pediatric oncologist nominated by Botswana, for Director-General of the World Health Organization.

In a letter addressed to the representatives of WHO Member States, Dugan commended Dr. Tamamyan’s candidacy “in full support.” He described the physician and global health leader as the candidate best placed to restore the organization’s credibility and modernize how it works.

Dugan grounded his endorsement in his

physician who has built national systems, unified fragmented institutions, and led multi-country networks across Europe, Asia, and North America.”

The letter points to Dr. Tamamyan’s consolidation of Armenia’s pediatric oncology services, his success in raising survival rates in resource-limited settings, and his coordination of 28 countries through SIOP Asia and the POEM Group. Together, Dugan wrote, these “demonstrate the administrative discipline, operational modernization, and managerial clarity WHO urgently requires.”

Dugan was direct about the state of the organization. Member States, he wrote, have noted that WHO’s operating sys-

stronger national systems, respect for sovereignty and non-politicization, and operational modernization.

“His leadership is grounded in measurable outcomes, not rhetoric; in institution-building, not patronage; and in a clear-eyed understanding of how WHO must evolve to meet 21st-century threats while supporting Member States’ diverse needs.”

The letter closes with a call to Member States: “Today, Member States require a leader who can modernize WHO’s operating system, strengthen its technical core, and rebuild trust across all blocs. Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan is uniquely prepared and equipped to meet that moment.”

Dr. Tamamyan welcomed the endorsement. “I am deeply honored to receive this endorsement from Hugh Dugan,” he said. “I am grateful for his kind words and his trust in me, and for his friendship and advice.”

Growing International Support

Dr. Tamamyan’s candidacy has so far been endorsed by hundreds of leaders, professionals and organizations around the world. They include Princess Dina Mired of Jordan, a humanitarian and global health leader; Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, the South African-American physician, inventor of Abraxane, philanthropist, and executive chairman of the Los Angeles Times; and Judy Habib, Board Chair of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Individual endorsers also include the CEO of the Max Foundation; the president of the Mediterranean Task Force for Cancer Control; the Board Chair of World Child Cancer; and the former CEO of City of Hope and of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Endorsing organizations include the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP); Childhood Cancer International, which unites more than 200 childhood cancer organizations worldwide; the GI Cancers Alliance, which brings together more than 120 patient advocacy groups and organizations globally; the China Anti-Cancer Association; the Egyptian Cancer Society; the Kazakhstan Cancer Society; the African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC); the ACT for Children Foundation; the Steering Committee of London Global Cancer Week; and the Harvard-based Global Health Catalyst initiative, among others.



Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan

own experience at the White House, where he “witnessed directly how the World Health Organization’s performance shaped national-security decision-making during the earliest phase of the pandemic.”

“That experience underscored a truth shared across Member States today,” he wrote. “WHO’s future effectiveness depends on leadership capable of restoring scientific seriousness, operational agility, and institutional credibility.”

He wrote that Dr. Tamamyan meets that test: “Dr. Tamamyan brings a rare combination of clinical authority, global health leadership, and complex organizational management experience. He is an outsider with deep insider knowledge — a

tem “increasingly resembles a mainframe whose maintenance has been deferred,” marked by “over-layered processes, slow decision cycles, and underweighted managerial competencies in past leadership selections.”

“Dr. Tamamyan’s candidacy directly addresses this gap,” the letter continues. “He has repeatedly modernized systems, introduced performance accountability, and built durable institutions without reliance on entrenched bureaucratic networks.”

Dugan listed the priorities he said Member States share across regions and political traditions: scientific independence and credibility, faster emergency response and data transparency, equitable access and

Uruguayan-Armenian Doctor Named President of World Endoscopy Organization

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Dr. Asadur Jorge Tchekmedyan of Uruguay assumed the presidency of the World Endoscopy Organization (WEO) for the 2026–2028 term on September 26, during the closing and presidential transition ceremony of ENDO 2026 in Cape Town, South Africa.

The transition was marked by the symbolic passing of the WEO crystal globe from outgoing President Dr. Lars Aabakken.

WEO is an international umbrella organization serving the global digestive endoscopy community. It brings together regional organizations such as the Interamerican Society of Digestive Endoscopy (SIED), the European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE), and the Asian Pacific Society for Digestive Endoscopy (APSDE), together with its member societies across the five continents.

He will serve for two years.

Tchekmedyan is a Uruguayan gastroenterologist and digestive endoscopist. He leads the Digestive Endoscopy and Gastro-

enterology services at Asociación Española in Montevideo and has more than 25 years of work in colorectal cancer screening and interventional endoscopy. He served as President of SIED from 2018 to 2021 and as President of the Uruguayan Society of Gastroenterology. He is a Fellow of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (FASGE) and SIED (FSIED), and has served as an external expert/advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He has participated in many conferences in Armenia, as well.

His inaugural message organizes the term around three priorities: Connect, Train, Care. The focus is on strengthening connections among societies and endoscopists, making education more accessible across regions, and keeping patient care at the center of endoscopy.

In his comments, he said, “Ultimately, everything we do must return to the patient. Behind every procedure, there is a person trusting us with their care. That is



Dr. Asadur Jorge Tchekmedyan

why Connect and Train exist. And care must also extend to one another — to our colleagues and teammates. We have seen our colleagues stand by their communities through earthquakes, natural disasters, and human-made crises around the world,” he said. “WEO must keep us together — through science, solidarity, and a shared sense of humanity.”

INTERNATIONAL

Mirzoyan Meets with Ukrainian FM

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan met with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha on the sidelines of the Warsaw Security Forum on October 13.

According to a statement issued by Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the FMs discussed opportunities for developing bilateral relations between Armenia and Ukraine, emphasizing the importance of maintaining dynamic political dialogue.

Mirzoyan and Sybiha addressed possible ways to expand trade ties between the two countries.

“They exchanged views on initiatives in multilateral platforms and discussed international and regional developments, efforts to resolve existing issues, and opportunities for peace,” the Armenian ministry said.

Mirzoyan Says Border With Turkey Should Open

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — The border with Turkey is still closed, but the process of normalizing relations is already quite mature, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Ararat Mirzoyan stated at the Warsaw Security Forum on October 12.

Referring to regional developments, the Armenian Foreign Minister also announced that peace has already been established with Azerbaijan.

Mirzoyan also answered the question of the extent to which the process of normalizing relations with neighboring states is conditioned by Armenia’s cooperation with the European Union and the policy pursued in the European direction.

The minister clarified that he does not consider these two processes to be directly interconnected.

He stressed that Armenia aims to improve relations with neighboring countries no matter what, and this is in no way connected with the country’s European aspirations.

Armenia Foils Attempt To Smuggle early 70 kg Of Marijuana from Iran

YEREVAN (Panorama) — Armenian authorities have seized 69.3 kg of marijuana smuggled from Iran and arrested two Armenian citizens suspected of involvement in the trafficking operation, on October 12.

The suspects, identified by their initials as N.H. and V.T., collected the drugs on September 29 from a stash near the village of Nrnadzor, following instructions from an Iranian national whose identity has not yet been established, the NSS said.

The two men were travelling towards Yerevan in a Mercedes-Benz ML operated by V.T. when security service officers intercepted them in the Meghri municipality in southern Armenia, the agency said.



INTERNATIONAL

Russia Ready to Turn Screws on Armenia

RUSSIA, from page 1

To pressure Armenia, Moscow has imposed bans on a variety of Armenian imports in apparent violation of the spirit of EAEU's free-trade rules. Russian officials at the same time engaged in a fleeting charm offensive. Until recently, everything that Russia tried had failed to dissuade Pashinyan from pursuing EU accession.

But an autumn intimidation blitz by top Russian officials appears to have gotten Pashinyan's attention.

On October 4, Dmitry Medvedev, the erstwhile Russian president who now is a member of Russia's Security Council, issued a far-from-subtle threat that if Russia cannot get its way with peaceful means, it may consider a resort to force.

"The current Armenian leadership decided it was right to change the direction of its development," Medvedev said, referring to the Pashinyan government's EU intentions. "I am certain that this, too, will lead to nothing good. The worst thing that could happen to Armenia is its transformation into a new Ukraine."

Even with the Russian army bogged down in Ukraine, and the Russian economy in tatters as it struggles to absorb the costs of war, the Kremlin retains the means to wreak havoc in Armenia. The Russian military maintains about 5,000 combat-ready troops at a base outside Gyumri, Arme-

nia's second city. Moscow also controls the country's energy and electricity supply systems.

Medvedev's comments may have been designed to reinforce a message delivered in late September by Rosatom's chief, Alexei Likhachev, whose visit to Yerevan was clearly aimed at reviving the company's chances of securing a contract to build a new nuclear plant to replace the aging Metsamor facility. Citing a looming electricity deficit in the coming years in Armenia, Likhachev asserted that a large-scale Rosatom reactor was Yerevan's best option to close the gap.

A state-aligned Russian media outlet also opined that Armenia's opting for Rosatom "could contribute to improving Russian-Armenian relations."

Since signing a nuclear cooperation pact with the United States during Vice President JD Vance's February visit to Armenia, Pashinyan's government had been leaning towards replacing Metsamor with one or more American-built small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs).

Likhachev's sales pitch apparently contained an offer that Pashinyan found hard to refuse, however. A day after Likhachev's departure from Yerevan, Pashinyan's stance on the nuclear plant issue made an abrupt U-turn.

On October 1, Pashinyan seemed to

parrot Likhachev's position that SMRs would be insufficient to meet the country's fast-growing electricity needs, given the government's ambitions to transform the country in the South Caucasus' digital hub. He added that a 1-megawatt plant based on Russian VVER-1000 technology might be a better solution. A final decision should be made in the coming months, Pashinyan indicated.

Pashinyan's political position now stands to become increasingly complicated as he tries to thread a geopolitical needle, keeping Russia content while maintaining his pursuit of EU membership and a lasting peace with Azerbaijan.

On October 7, EU Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos offered encouragement for Armenia's accession bid, telling journalists in Brussels that "Armenia is really moving a lot toward the European Union. At this point, it is the only country with which we are negotiating visa liberalization."

Meanwhile, the Armenian government's dissatisfaction with the EAEU shows no signs of easing. Pashinyan aired grievances about the EAEU during an October 2 Eurasian Intergovernmental Council session.

"Restrictions and administrative barriers remain in place, which continue to significantly hamper the full and effective functioning of the single market," the official

Armenpress news agency quoted the prime minister as saying. He called for "constructive dialogue aimed at eliminating existing barriers to the export and transit of Armenian products in accordance with EAEU law."

In the event that Yerevan hands the nuclear plant contract to Rosatom, it is difficult to predict how the Trump administration might respond. A fundamental building block of Armenia's economic development strategy is TRIPP, a US-backed transit corridor project that is also the centerpiece of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process. Losing out on the nuclear plant contract could potentially diminish US interest in TRIPP's development, or potentially prompt Washington to accelerate efforts to build out the transit route. At the same time, both Russia and Iran oppose TRIPP.

On October 1, Alexey Shevtsov, another member of Russia's Security Council, assailed TRIPP as an initiative designed to establish an American military presence in Armenia.

"In Armenia, in full accordance with classical post-colonial models, yet another 'state within a state' is being established, of which Westerners created many in the former Soviet republics," the Russian broadcaster RTV1 quoted Shevtsov as saying.

(This story originally appeared on www.eurasianet.org on October 7.)

Azerbaijani Ruling Party Condemns Turkey for Criticizing Hijab Ban

By Rafiq Shahbazov

BAKU (OC-Media) — Azerbaijan's ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) has criticized Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's adviser Oktay Saral for speaking out against Azerbaijan's hijab ban in schools. It called on Turkey and its ruling party to respect Azerbaijan's internal affairs.

Saral's remarks on October 12 came amid protests in Azerbaijan over the enforcement of school uniform rules affecting students who wear hijab. On October 13, the YAP responded by accusing some Turkish media outlets and social media platforms, including pro-government sources, of disseminating false and biased information about Azerbaijan.

The party's statement appeared to respond to criticism from Turkey over the school uniform controversy.

Saral described the refusal to allow hijab-wearing students to attend classes in Azerbaijan as unacceptable in a post on social media.

"How can it be morally or legally justified to turn away a student at the school gate because she covers her head for religious reasons? The hijab is not an obstacle; it is a requirement of faith! The right to education must not be sacrificed to ideological impositions!"

"We expect Azerbaijan to reverse this mistake as soon as possible. Rather than putting obstacles in the way of young people's futures, we should help them move forward. In this day and age, such an approach must never be allowed to prevail."

In a statement published on October 13, the YAP decried what it called an "information campaign directed against Azerbaijan." The party said it was "necessary" for it to express its position now that Saral — "a person holding the status of chief adviser" to Erdoğan, and other MPs of the ruling Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP) had "joined such a campaign."

The YAP has appeared to link Saral's criticism of the dress code policy to criti-

cism from Turkey of Azerbaijan's "Islamophobia" and ties with Israel.

In its statement, the party rejected criticism of Azerbaijani-Israeli relations, stressing that Baku supported Palestinian statehood under a two-state solution, with East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, and had provided financial and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians.

It additionally said that Azerbaijan's relations with the Islamic world are also "based not on any political conjuncture, but on the principles of mutual respect, equality, and solidarity."

"Our country's contributions to strengthening Islamic solidarity are highly appreciated by Muslim states," the YAP said.

This appears to be an indirect response to Erdoğan's UN General speech in September, where he criticized restrictions on wearing hijab in schools, calling them "an attack on women's most fundamental rights" and linking the issue to "Islamophobia." Erdoğan did not mention Azerbaijan by name, but many viewed the comments as being directed at Baku.



A young Azerbaijani woman in hijab and glasses walks along the street of the old town with traditional Azerbaijani souvenirs

Returning to Saral's comments, the YAP accused the adviser and Turkish MPs of making "populist and irresponsible statements without taking into account the essence of the issue."

"Such statements contradict the spirit of Azerbaijani-Turkish brotherly relations and may serve to create artificial tension in the public sphere," the party said, adding that the state treats all religions equally.

It defended its apparent hijab ban by saying it derives from Azerbaijan's secular policies, which are "also enshrined in the constitution of the republic of Turkey."

"The New Azerbaijan Party believes that representatives of the Justice and Development Party, especially persons holding senior state positions, should demonstrate political responsibility in their statements and respect the sovereignty, constitutional order, and internal affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan," the party said.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on October 13.)

Armenian, Iranian Leaders Hold Fresh Talks

IRAN, from page 1

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said he discussed with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi "the implementation of the agreements reached during the visit." It gave no details. The Iranian side issued no readout of the call.

According to Pezeshkian's office, he discussed with Pashinyan ways of expanding Armenian-Iranian relations "across all fields."

"The Iranian president said greater coordination and closer collaboration would help build mutual trust, deepen understanding and further strengthen bilateral relations," the office said in a statement. "He also stressed the need to maintain stable and lasting relations between Tehran and Yerevan."

Pashinyan's office reported, meanwhile, that the two leaders expressed confidence that "Armenia-Iran relations will rise to a new level in the near future." They previously met on September 23 during the UN General Assembly in New York.

The official readouts made no mention of the Armenian government's plans to open a US-administered transit corridor for Azerbaijan along Armenia's border with Iran. Araghchi signaled Tehran's lingering concerns about the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) during his October 5 meeting with Mirzoyan.

The top Iranian diplomat was reported to say that Yerevan should take seriously "the consequences and concerns arising from the presence and interference of third par-

ties in the affairs of the Caucasus region." For his part, Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf reportedly told Mirzoyan that the South Caucasus "must not become an arena for geopolitical rivalry among foreign powers."

"Iran is satisfied with the complete transparency we have demonstrated throughout the TRIPP process," Mirzoyan said in the Armenian parliament recently.

The Iranian ambassador to Armenia, Khalil Shirgholami, earlier called for the creation of a "mechanism" to manage "potential risks of US presence and threats to Iran" emanating from the TRIPP. Shirgholami said the US and Israeli military campaign against the Islamic Republic underlined the perceived risks.



Community News

Bipartisan Resolution Honors Armenia's Natural Heritage

Recognizes Armenia Tree Project (ATP) Ahead of COP17

WASHINGTON — More than three decades ago, in the aftermath of the 1991-1994 Artsakh war and the devastating environmental impact, Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) President Carolyn Mugar, along with her husband John O'Connor, spearheaded what would become one of the most transformative environmental efforts in Armenia's modern history: the Armenia Tree Project (ATP), which has planted upwards of 10 million trees, restored landscapes, strengthened communities, and built environmental resilience across Armenia.

Earlier this week, Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs David Valadao (R-CA) and Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) introduced H.Res.1616, a historic bipartisan resolution that recognizes the importance of biodiversity conservation, welcomes the Republic of Armenia as host of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), commends ATP's extraordinary contributions as it approaches the planting of its 10 millionth tree, and supports the protection of Armenia's sovereign territory and natural heritage.

It also recognizes that U.S.-Armenia cooperation on conservation advances shared economic, security, and humanitarian interests, and that exchanges between the two countries strengthen their strategic partnership and enduring friendship.

The Armenian Assembly ardently supported the bipartisan resolution. Working closely with the Armenian Caucus, the Assembly helped shape the measure to account both for the accomplishments of the environmental efforts in Armenia and the contributions of the Armenia Tree Project toward achieving those goals.

"As co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, I'm proud to introduce this bipartisan resolution recognizing Armenia's strong commitment to conservation and environmental stewardship," said Congressman Valadao. "COP17 provides an important opportunity for leaders around the world to come together to address critical environmental challenges, and I commend Armenia for taking a leading role in this important conversation while strengthening the enduring partnership between our two nations."

"Armenia holds a special place in my heart, and I have been proud to stand with the Armenian people throughout my time in Congress," said Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. "Hosting COP17 gives Armenia a great opportunity to show the world the beauty of the country they have fought so hard to preserve. As nations come together in Yerevan to confront the loss of biodiversity and find better ways to protect our natural resources, Armenia will be at the center of that important work. I'm

see RESOLUTION, page 11



Arpine Zohrabyan receiving award for Team Arpz, as the team that had raised the most funds

Community Spirit Shines At ABMDR's Annual Walkathon in Glendale

GLENDAL — On Saturday, October 3, close to 400 supporters converged on the plaza of the Glendale City building, in Glendale, California, to participate in the 21st annual Walk of Life, the walkathon of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR).

With its message of solidarity and hope, the event drew strong community support and avid youth participation. In addition to individual teams of walkers, there were several teams representing local schools, colleges, organizations, and businesses, among them the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School Cancer Awareness Club, Glendale Community College Scholars Program, Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School, Megerdumian Law Marrow Matchmakers, Rose and Alex Pilibos Armenian School (Pilibos MORE United), St. Francis High School, and Warriors for Life.



ABMDR president Dr. Frieda Jordan addressing the attendees

During the opening ceremony, remarks were delivered by Walkathon Committee co-chairs Medik Aghamalian and Khachig Boghossian. "For the past 27 years, ABMDR has provided matched donors to those who suffer from life-threatening blood-related illnesses and whose last hope of survival is to have a stem-cell transplant," Boghossian said. "Toward this goal, we have recruited over 33,500 donors in 32 countries, and facilitated 45 bone marrow transplants to date, all thanks to our communities and dedicated volunteers and supporters like yourselves."

see WALKATHON, page 10



Members of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School team

101 Members of Congress Support Measure to Ask Rubio to Continue Waiver of Military Support for Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON - One hundred and one Members of Congress signed an Armenian Assembly-supported bipartisan, bicameral letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio regarding the continued waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan.

In the October 5, 2026, letter led by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) and Armenian Caucus Leader Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), 101 Members of Congress recognize the Administration's mediation of peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also warn that Azerbaijan's conduct continues to undermine the peace process. The lawmakers express concern over the reauthorization of the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, which restricts U.S. assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan, and note that the waiver was extended following last year's White House summit without leading Azerbaijan to release the Armenian hostages held in Baku.

The letter highlights that in February 2026, Azerbaijan sentenced 16 Armenians, including former political and military leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh, to terms ranging from 15 years to life in prison, following trials widely condemned by international human rights organizations, legal experts, and the European Parliament. The lawmakers note that June 23, 2026, marked the 1,000th day of the hostages' detention, and that their imprisonment calls into question Azerbaijan's genuine commitment to long-term peace.

The Members also raise concerns about Azerbaijan's continued occupation of an estimated 241 square kilometers of Armenian territory following military incursions into Armenia in 2021 and 2022. They warn that this presence within Armenia's internationally recognized borders creates asymmetry in ongoing border delimitation talks, even as Armenia has taken concrete steps to resolve Soviet-era territorial disputes. The letter further cites the forced displacement of more than 100,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and ongoing reports of the destruction of Armenian churches in the region.

"Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act has stood for more than three decades as a principled provision of law, ensuring that U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan reflects its conduct toward Armenia and the Armenian people," said Armenian Assembly Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khaloyan.

"We thank Senator Peters and Representative Bilirakis for their leadership and the 101 Members of Congress, from both parties and both

see RUBIO, page 9

COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Church Hosts Inaugural Choral/Chamber Music Festival

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston recently welcomed more than 100 performers and a captivated audience for its inaugural Choral and Chamber Music Festival, an evening celebrating the rich musical traditions of Armenia and the United States.

Held in celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the festival brought together musicians and choral ensembles from throughout Greater Boston for an evening of classical and spiritual music, highlighting both Armenian and Western musical traditions.

The program opened with the Consonare Chamber Players, who performed works by two pioneering American women composers, Amy Beach and Florence Price. Their music offered a meaningful reflection on the depth and diversity of the American musical tradition as the nation celebrates its 250th anniversary.

The evening continued with performances by five choral groups: the Erevan Choral Society, Canton Choral Society, ArtNova Hamazkayin Choir of Boston, Create Symphonia and the Harvard Glee Club.

As one of Cambridge's longstanding institutions, Holy Trinity was especial-

ly pleased to welcome the Harvard Glee Club, connecting the festival to the broader Cambridge community and celebrating the vibrant musical culture for which the city is known. The participation of the Glee Club alongside Armenian and Greater Boston choral ensembles created a unique evening of musical exchange and collaboration.

Together, the more than 100 performers presented a program that crossed cultural and musical traditions, bringing Armenian and Western classical and spiritual music together under one roof.

An intermission with hors d'oeuvres also provided an opportunity for performers and audience members to gather and connect during the evening. The evening concluded with a particularly meaningful moment as performers and audience members came together to sing Hayr Mer and "God Bless America." The shared singing offered a fitting conclusion to an evening centered on music, community, and cultural heritage.

Holy Trinity Armenian Church is proud to have launched this festival as an opportunity to celebrate music, culture, and community, and looks forward to building upon its inaugural year in the future.



Members of the Harvard Glee Club

'Protection of Women in Armenia' Subject of Talk by Maro Matosian

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — The Tufenkian Foundation and the Women's Support Center are jointly sponsoring a luncheon featuring a talk by Maro Matosian, the executive director of the Women's Support Center in Armenia, on November 9, at the Iroquois Club.

The talk by Matosian is titled "Protection of Women in Armenia."

Matosian is the founder of Women's Support Center, which serves as a domestic violence center, offers protection, reeducation and empowerment of vic-



Maro Matosian

tims. The organization promotes social change and aims to educate the community on gender equality and domestic violence and its consequences. In 2024, the Parliament in Armenia approved the WSC-proposed

legislation to amend the Domestic Violence and Criminal Law, in order to offer better victim protection of and accountability of the perpetrator.

Matosian founded the organization in 2010 in response to the prevalence — and acceptance — of domestic violence in Armenia with a pilot grant from Tufenkian Foundation, the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) and the US Agency for International Aid (USAID). Matosian expanded the program to advocate for the defense of women's rights in Armenia and in 2011 also opened a shelter for domestic violence victims and for the first time introduced international standards

and methodology in Armenia providing comprehensive assistance to victims of DV. She is one of the founding member of the Coalition to Stop Violence against Women.

According to a 2011 Wilson Center report, between 1988 and 1998, 30 percent of all murders in Armenia were cases of domestic violence, overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. Then, the issue gained center stage in 2010, when Zaruhi Petrosyan, a 20-year-old mother of an infant girl, was beaten to death by her husband and mother-in-law. Neighbors reported that her husband, Yanis Sarkisov, had thrown her body down a flight of stairs so he could claim that she died as a result of the fall. Sarkisov received a 10-year prison sentence, while his mother, who gained custody of Zaruhi's child, faced no charges.

An estimated 17.2 percent of women in Armenia reported experiencing domestic violence. However, this likely underrepresents the true prevalence as gender-based violence is significantly underreported in the country. According to the World Bank, 43 percent of survivors stated that they had never talked to anyone about their abuse.

Established in 1999, the Tufenkian Foundation addresses social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges facing Armenia. Since its inception, it has supported various community initiatives as well as civic activism and public advocacy campaigns to help improve life in Armenia.

The Iroquois Club is located at 43248 North Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$35. Luncheon will be served at 11:30 a.m. To attend, RSVP Linda Karibian by October 26, at (248) 496-6292 or ldkaribian@yahoo.com

Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

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

www.nardolillo.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC

Mark J. Giragosian

Giragosian
FUNERAL HOME

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



Tekeyan Cultural Association
Boston Chapter

invites you to an

Armenian Pickling Demo

VARIOUS VEGETABLES
MADE INTO FERMENTED
TUTTOO ('TURSHI')

**With Master Chef
Betty Arouyan**

Enjoy wine, cheese, dessert & take home a bottle of your own pickled veggies

7 pm Oct. 28

Wednesday, with series
coordinator Rita Balyozian

BAIKAR BUILDING 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown
Use Norseman Ave. Entrance

RSVP to Sossy 617 281-1647 syogurtian@comcast.net
\$25/person including reception and bottle of tuttoo
Cash or Venmo <https://venmo.com/u/Tekeyan-Boston>

<https://www.facebook.com/TekeyanBoston>



COMMUNITY NEWS

New Seminarians Start New Academic Year at St. Nersess Seminary

ARMONK, N.Y. — The 2026–27 academic year is underway at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. “We are happy to welcome back our seven returning full-time students and three new students who are preparing for service in the Armenian Church,” shared Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Dean.



Three new seminarians, deacons Arman Avedyan, Johnathan Dergazarian and Boghos Keleshian

This fall, St. Nersess welcomes three new seminarians: Dn. Arman Avedyan, Dn. Johnathan Dergazarian, and Dn. Boghos Keleshian. They join returning students Dn. Armen Bandikian, Dn. Karo Boyadzhyan, Sdn. Serge Demirbacak, Dn. Sargis Ginosyan, Dn. Shane Janian, Sdn. Vrej Pilavdjian, and Dn. Thomas Toghram-



Group photo

adjian. In addition, the Seminary welcomes six hybrid part-time students (including two applicants for 2027 fall semester), all preparing for various forms of service in the Armenian Church.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, Keleshian resides in Sydney, Australia, where he serves at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection. He holds a Bachelor of Medical Sciences and a Master of Teaching in Early Childhood and Primary Education, both completed in Sydney.

“I believe that through serving the congregation, we serve God and express our love for Him. I am here to learn how to become a faithful servant of the Church as I grow in faith, emotional maturity, and spiritual life. My hope is to return to Australia and continue offering my humble service to my beloved congregation. I am grateful

to St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and my fellow seminarians for this humbling experience.”

Originally from Boca Raton, FL, Avedyan previously served at St. David Armenian Church. He studied classical voice and opera at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia. Over the years, his love for liturgical music drew him closer to the Armenian Church and became an integral part of his service.

Before coming to St. Nersess, he built a career in sales and marketing in the specialty food industry.

“My path to seminary was not a straight one, but rather an answer to a calling that has followed me for many years. Taking this step with my wife, Gohar, and our son, Matteos, has made this journey that much more meaningful,” he siad.

Dergazarian is from Pasadena, CA, where he has served at St. Gregory Armenian Church for more than 10 years. He earned his degree in political science and religion from the University of California, San Diego. In 2023, he was ordained to the diaconate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese.

“Since I was 8 years old, I knew that one day I would come to seminary. Every month, my Sunday School class would observe the Badarak from the balcony. My first Badarak on the altar was on Easter Eve, and that day marked the beginning of my service to the Armenian Church,” he said.

St. Nersess Seminary provides tuition-free education to all new and returning seminarians through the generosity of supporters.

101 Members of Congress Support Measure To Ask Rubio to Continue Waiver of Military Support for Azerbaijan

RUBIO, from page 7
chambers, who have reaffirmed the principles behind Section 907, as the Armenian hostages held in Baku mark more than 1,000 days in captivity,” Khaloyan concluded.

The letter calls on the Administration to engage with Azerbaijan in order to secure the release of the hostages. It also urges the removal of Azerbaijani military forces from Armenian territory. To demonstrate the United States’ commitment to ensuring all parties take the peace process seriously, the letter recommends withholding U.S. military assistance if meaningful steps are not taken.

Along with Senator Peters and Representative Bilirakis, the letter was signed by Senators Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ed Markey (D-MA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Angela Alsobrooks (D-MD), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Andy Kim (D-NJ), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), John Fetterman (D-PA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Peter Welch (D-VT), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), as well as Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA), Jim Costa (D-CA), Vince Fong (R-CA), Laura Friedman (D-CA), Robert Garcia (D-CA), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), Young Kim (R-CA), Mike Levin (D-CA), Sam Liccardo (D-CA), Ted Lieu

(D-CA), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Dave Min (D-CA), Kevin Mullin (D-CA), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Luz Rivas (D-CA), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Lateefah Simon (D-CA), David Valadao (R-CA), George Whitesides (D-CA), John Larson (D-CT), Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Sarah McBride (D-DE), Carlos Gimenez (R-FL), Hank Johnson (D-GA), Nikki Budzinski (D-IL), Jesús “Chuy” García (D-IL), Jonathan Jackson (D-IL), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Delia Ramirez (D-IL), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Brad Schneider (D-IL), André Carson (D-IN), Jake Auchincloss (D-MA), Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Lori Trahan (D-MA), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Haley Stevens (D-MI), Shri Thanedar (D-MI), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Wesley Bell (D-MO), Valerie Foushee (D-NC), Maggie Goodlander (D-NH), Chris Pappas (D-NH), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Rob Menendez (D-NJ), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Steven Horsford (D-NV), Susie Lee (D-NV), Dina Titus (D-NV), Laura Gillen (D-NY), Dan Goldman (D-NY), George Latimer (D-NY), Mike Lawler (R-NY), Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Grace Meng (D-NY), Tom Suozzi (D-NY), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Mike Carey (R-OH), David Taylor (R-OH), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Gabe Amo (D-RI), Seth Magaziner (D-RI), Greg Casar (D-TX), Jasmine Crockett (D-TX), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX), Sylvia Garcia (D-TX), and Don Beyer (D-VA).



Edmond Y. Azadian: Book of Remembrance



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



COMMUNITY NEWS

Community Spirit Shines at ABMDR's Annual Walkathon in Glendale

WALKATHON, from page 7

Boghossian also announced that ABMDR's Summer Internship Program, launched two years ago, continues to make big strides. Through this initiative, high-school and college students from the Diaspora receive training at the ABMDR Lab, in Yerevan, gaining knowledge and hands-on experience in HLA-typing and bone marrow/stem cell donor matching.

In her remarks, Committee co-chair Medik Aghamalian thanked the walkathon's sponsors, including Paulette Malekian (of Engel & Volkers); Dr. Vergine Madelian, for donating her own creations of hand-made Christmas ornaments and cards; Jivan Coffee; Print on All; USC Mann



Walkathon Committee co-chairs Medik Aghamalian and Khachig Boghossian

School of Pharmacy; Adrine Ambarchyan Financial Services; Alien Milling Technologies; Tamara Ice Cream; Porto's Bakery; and McDonald's.

Aghamalian also thanked Aleko Boghoskhanian for his volunteer work as the longtime photographer of the walkathon.

The invocation was performed by Father Megerditch Keshishian of the Western Prelacy.

Next to address the attendees was ABMDR co-founder and president Dr. Frieda Jordan, who said, "We are here today to walk in honor and in support of our loved ones. The miles we walk are more than just steps; they are a show of solidarity, a statement of hope, for all our cancer patients, and we want to tell them they are not alone in their fight."

Next, Jordan invited Shakeh Boghoskhanian, a cancer



Walkathon Committee members and supporters



The St. Francis High School team



The Alex Pilibos Armenian School team.

survivor and leader of the Warriors for Life team, to share her story with the attendees.

Boghossian said, "When I heard about this walk and that it was called 'Match for Life,' I knew I wanted to participate. And that's how Warriors for Life came to be. Today, we walk for the people who are still fighting. We walk for the families who are waiting for a match. And we walk for the people who are going to get a second chance at life because someone they may never meet decided to become a donor."

Prior to the start of the walkathon, a number of teams were presented with Certificates of Achievement. They included Team Arpz (Arpine Zohrabyan) as the team that had raised the most funds, and the Glendale Community College Scholars Program team as the one that had the most participants. In addition, an Inspiration Award was presented to Shakeh Boghoskhanian and her Warriors for Life team; and the Ferrahian High School team was recognized for its important role in raising funds for the walkathon.

Following the ribbon-cutting, the 5-K walk-run looped through central Glendale, concluding at the plaza of the Glendale City building, where the festivities continued. The event also gave participants the opportunity to join ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors, while volunteers were on hand to answer questions and welcome new recruits.

For more information, visit abmdr.am.

COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Berberian Trust Fund Awards Recipients Named

WATERTOWN — The management of Tekeyan Cultural Association's "Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund" has announced the names of the Armenian students awarded in 2026 for their academic studies.

They are Alex Avaneszadeh, Mikayel Arsenyan, Gaianeh Kasparian and Diana Grigoryan.

Avaneszadeh is a senior at American University, majoring in political science, graduating in 2027. He was born in Los Angeles.

Arsenyan is a student at Toronto University, Mississauga, majoring in political science, graduating in July 2027. She was born in Yerevan, Armenia.



Dr. Nubar Berberian

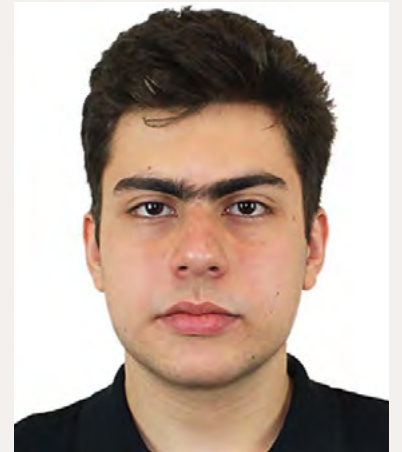
bequeathed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.. The Board of Directors of TCA decided to establish the irrevocable “Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund” and accomplish his will and use yearly interests to give awards to college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.

This year is the ninth year the award has been given.

To apply for 2027 year awards, email your request to: TCADirector@Aol.com.



Alex Avaneszadeh



Mikayel Arsenyan



Gaianeh Kasparian



Diana Grigoryan

Bipartisan Resolution Honors Armenia's Natural Heritage

RESOLUTION, from page 7
proud to help lead this bipartisan resolution celebrating this moment and ensuring Armenia can protect its natural heritage for generations to come.”

“Conservation is not independent of security or sovereignty,” said ATP Founder Carolyn Mugar. “By welcoming Armenia as host of COP17 and affirming U.S.-Armenia cooperation on forestry, water management, and wildfire prevention, this resolution treats Armenia’s forests as the strategic national asset that they are. We thank the leadership of the Congressional Armenian Caucus for this important legislative initiative.”



ATP Founder
Carolyn Mugar



Sponsor a Teacher Program

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

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH
79th Annual
BAZAAR

FRI, OCTOBER 16, 2026
12 – 8 PM

SAT, OCTOBER 17, 2026
11 AM – 7 PM
(KITCHEN OPENS AT 12 PM)

DELICIOUS ARMENIAN FOOD

Shish, Chicken and Losh Kebab | Imam Bayeldi | Eetch
Kheyma (available 12:30-2:30pm & 4-7pm) | Mezze Items

FABULOUS DELICACIES AND PASTRIES

Boreg | Manti | Tourshi | Choreg | Khadaif | Baklava | Tahin Hatz | Simit & More!

BOOTHS AND VENDORS

Armenian Vendor & Local Artisans | Sunday School Bake Sale | Children's Activities

SILENT AUCTION

Visit **AUCTRIA.EVENTS/STJAMES** to register.
Auction opens Fri, Oct. 16 at 9 am and ends Sun, Oct. 18 at 9 pm.

CHANCE AUCTION

Wide range of items and experiences! Available in-person only.

BAZAAR SITE

\$100 RAFFLE

\$5,000, \$1,000, \$750 and three \$500 prizes!
Drawing will take place Sat, October 17th.

SILENT AUCTION

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

WWW.STJAMESWATERTOWN.ORG/BAZAAR

ST. JAMES ARMENIAN CHURCH

465 MOUNT AUBURN ST. WATERTOWN, MA | (617) 923-8860 | INFO@STHAGOP.COM



Arts & Culture

Isabel Bayrakdarian And Friends to Perform ‘Ancestral Songs, Prayers & Lullabies’ at Fresno State

FRESNO — Grammy-nominated soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian will perform in concert at 7:30pm on Friday, October 30, 2026, as part of the Philip Lorenz Keyboard Concert Series, in conjunction with the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program. The concert will take place in the St. Paul Armenian Church sanctuary located at 3767 N. First Street in Fresno.

Concert sponsors include: Dr. Ishkhan Bayrakdarian and Family, Varouj and Lena Altebarmakian, the AGBU Greater Fresno Chapter, the Helen Zevart Peterson Armenian Fund, the Knights of Vartan, Yeprad Lodge and St. Paul Armenian Church.

Bayrakdarian will take the audience on an intimate journey through songs, prayers, and lullabies that speak to the universal themes of love, longing, faith, family, and belonging.

Inspired by the rich musical traditions of her ancestral homeland, Bayrakdarian reimagines these timeless songs through a richly layered performance that brings together music and live art. As the program unfolds, visual artist Kevork Mourad creates live drawings in real time, weaving a parallel narrative of memory, imagination, and storytelling.

Together, music and image intertwine to create a deeply immersive experience that transcends language and celebrates our shared humanity.

Bayrakdarian is an eagerly anticipated visitor to opera houses and concert halls the world over. She has become as celebrated for her beauty, presence and style as for a strikingly multihued voice that’s wholly in sync with the rest of her.

A winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions — the same year she graduated from the University of Toronto cum laude with a biomedical engineering degree — Bayrakdarian thereafter found her career taking rapid wing. She scored a notable success in the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s world premiere production of William Bolcom’s “A View from the Bridge;” the following year, she walked away from Plácido Domingo’s prestigious Operalia competition with first prize.

Bayrakdarian is the recipient of many awards, including the Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition Award, Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee and the Diamond Jubilee Medals, the Arbor Award from the University of Toronto, the George London Foundation Award, Canada Council’s Virginia Parker Prize, and the Republic of Armenia “Komitas Medal.” Most recently, she was awarded the “Movses Khorenatsi” medal, the Republic of Armenia’s highest cultural award.

Accompanying Bayrakdarian in the concert are: Ellie Choate, harp; Rayo Furuta, flute; and Mher Mnatsakanyan, duduk.

Tickets are priced at \$30 for general admission; \$20 for seniors, and \$5 for students, and are available on line at <https://www.keyboardconcerts.org/>



Tina Demirdjian and Raffi Wartanian holding the new poetry anthology, Jewel City Review, Volume 3 (photo by Karine Armen)

Glendale Brings in Power of Poetry to Unite Community

By Karine Armen

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDAL — Glendale Central Library hosted a free poetry event on Saturday, September 26, during which poet Laureate Raffi Joe Wartanian presented the third annual Jewel City Review (JCR) anthology of poetry. The day was also notable for the passing of the torch to the city’s new poet laureate.

A diverse group contributed to the anthology. Some had taken poetry workshops organized by Wartanian; others had participated in Artful Conversations at Brand Library & Art Center, a collaborative poetry workshop led by poet Tina Demirdjian and art historian Valerie Taylor.

Other guest poets included Kim Shuck (Poet Laureate of San Francisco, 2017-2021) and Rhonda Mitchell (Poet Laureate of Altadena).

Since 2023, through community workshop readings, the Poet Laureate Program has invited contributors of all ages, experiences and language backgrounds to discover that poetry belongs not only to professional writers or the pages of books; it belongs to anyone willing to pay attention, wonder, and speak.

The City of Glendale and the Library, Arts, & Culture Department announced Tina Demirdjian as the city’s next poet laureate in July; she began her post in September. The event marked the official transition between the two poet laureates.

Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian gave Wartanian a Certificate of Recognition from the City of Glendale and a Mayor’s Commendation. Kassakhian said, “We were very fortunate to have our first Poet Laureate be someone who is a polyglot, a musician, a writer, and can sport a man bun better than I ever could.” He added, “We can use more arts and culture in our city.”

Demirdjian read her poem as a farewell and note of gratitude to Wartanian.

Demirdjian has an impressive portfolio. She has taught poetry in Glendale, Los Angeles and Hacienda Heights/La Puente School Districts since 1991, working especially with English Language Learners from all backgrounds. This cause is close to her heart, as her parents, immigrants from Istanbul, to New Jersey, did not teach her to speak English. It was in Kindergarten that she learned English, but she recalled that she was always labeled as “foreign,” even though she had been born in the US.

“Teaching poetry and using it to empower students is a gift for me,” she said. Her goal is to harness their stories so that they have agency and ease over language. “Everything shapes who we are and how we approach the world,” said Demirdjian when asked about her diverse background.

continued on next page

‘Voices Across Time’ Concert at Armenian Cultural Foundation Pays Homage to Robert Mirak

ARLINGTON, Mass. — The Armenian Cultural Foundation, will host a special piano recital on Sunday, October 25 at 5 p.m. The free concert, entitled Voices Across Time: Armenian Piano Music, is an homage to Dr. Robert Mirak, who served as president of the Cultural Foundation (ACF) from 1992-2025.

The event is also a tribute to major diaspora Armenian composers and will conclude with a reception. A CD issued on the occasion by the ACF and Prima Facie label, will be available at the conclusion of the concert.

From the United Kingdom, renowned pianist Alessandra Pompili will take the audience through a musical journey of reflection and faith, a cornerstone of the Armenian cultural identity. Through short pieces, capturing impressions, emotions and remembered scenes, the concert will reconcile the trials and tribulations of life with the final voice: quiet hope on the horizon.

The concert, will comprise four parts: Invocation, Faith, Rediscovered Voices and Epilogue, includes pieces by Stéphan Elmas, Komitas, Alan Hovhaness, George I. Gurdjieff, Koharik Gazarossian, Loris Tjeknavorian, Aram Khachaturian and Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee. Some of the pieces will be world or United States premieres.



The late Robert Mirak

A distinguished scholar, entrepreneur and humanitarian, Mirak’s life reflected a deep commitment to learning, community, and cultural preservation. Through his insight, vision, and dedication, the oldest Armenian library-museum in the western hemisphere, was transformed from an idea into a vibrant “Shrine for culture.” Today, the ACF library, named after poet, lexicographer and philosopher, Eghia Demirjibashian (1858-1908), is a regional research center and repository of Armenian literary and musical treasures as well as unique multilingual collection in the Armenian Diaspora.

A graduate of Williams College, the University of Minnesota and Oxford University, Mirak earned his doctorate at Harvard. He became widely respected for his pioneering work in Armenian-American history, see MIRAK, page 17

ARTS & CULTURE

TCA Greater New York, Armenian Radio Hour, Present ‘Romantic Soul: Masterpieces for Piano Trio’

RIDGEWOOD, N.J. — The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Greater New York Chapter, in collaboration with the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey, presented an unforgettable afternoon of music on Sunday, September 27, at West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood. Titled “Romantic Soul: Masterpieces for Piano Trio,” the concert brought together three accomplished musicians for a celebration of classical music and Armenian musical heritage.

Hilda Hartounian, chair of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Greater New York Chapter, warmly welcomed the guests and expressed her pleasure in presenting such talented musicians. In her remarks, Hartounian spoke about the importance of bringing outstanding music and Armenian cultural heritage to the community and reaffirmed the TCA’s commitment to promoting and preserving Armenian culture and heritage through meaningful cultural programs.

The concert featured Ani Kalayjian on cello, Tanya Gabrielian on piano, and Eric Silberger on violin, whose remarkable artistry and musical chemistry captivated the audience throughout the afternoon.

The carefully curated program featured masterpieces from the classical and Romantic traditions, beautifully interwoven with elements of medieval Armenian traditional music. The inclusion of Armenian musical themes added a distinctive cultural dimension to the program, creating a meaningful connection between Armenia’s rich musical heritage and the great works of the Western classical tradition.



The musicians with the members of the TCA Greater New York Chapter and the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey



Ani Kalayjian on cello, Tanya Gabrielian on piano, and Eric Silberger on violin

The musicians’ exceptional artistry, sensitivity, and powerful interpretations were evident throughout the performance. Their expressive playing and seamless collaboration drew the audience deeply into the music, leaving the crowd mesmerized by their talent. Each performance was met with enthusiastic applause and warm appreciation.

The concert also reflected the spirit of collaboration within the Armenian community, with the TCA Greater New York Chapter and the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey joining efforts to present an afternoon that celebrat-

ed both Armenian heritage and the universal language of music.

The elegant setting of West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood provided a beautiful and intimate backdrop for the performance, allowing the audience to fully appreciate the artistry of the piano trio.

To learn more about the Tekeyan Cultural Association Greater New York Chapter and stay informed about upcoming cultural programs and events, follow us on Facebook @tekeyangreaternewyork and Instagram @tekeyangreaterny.

Glendale Brings in Power of Poetry to Unite Community

from previous page

She founded the firm Poetry Consults, which serves as a facilitator, team builder, and event producer. She also founded the Armenian Dress & Textile Project (ADTP), a 25-year-old collective that organized a recent exhibit and month-long public programming of her ancestors’ clothing and embroideries from the Ottoman Empire in collaboration with Litavie Art Gallery, with



from left: Glendale Mayor Ardy Kasakhian and Raffi Wartanian (photo Karine Armen)

support in part from the City’s Arts & Culture Commission.

As Poet Laureate, Demirdjian said she will use this platform to expand her experience working with students in classrooms and teaching in museums and galleries by offering workshops for Glendale’s community at large.

Wartanian said, “Serving as Glendale’s first poet laureate has been a tremendous honor and a path to connect with community members who share common passions and interests.” He added, “I have learned so much from all of you, and that has been immensely gratifying.”

A poet, educator, musician, and composer, Wartanian became Glendale’s first poet laureate in 2023. During his tenure, he invited several poets to read their poems and teach poetry at Glendale libraries. He brought together an audience and participants, creating a safe, welcoming environment where creativity flowed. Many participants overcame their fear of writing and submitted their poems to the annual Jewel City Review anthology.

The Poet Laureate Program has unit-



From left: Rhonda Mitchell (Poet Laureate of Altadena), Kim Shuck (Poet Laureate of San Francisco), Raffi Wartanian, and Tina Demirdjian (photo Karine Armen)

ed writers and readers through 12 workshop-readings with 33 featured poets at six locations across the city. These quarterly workshop-readings culminated in a new annual poetry magazine, Jewel City Review. In its first year, JCR published 17 individual poems by 13 poets. In our second year, JCR published 112 individual poems by 54 poets. Now in its third year, JCR was proud to publish 91 poems by 42 poets.

ARTS & CULTURE

‘Revival’ Has Star-studded Hollywood Premiere

BURBANK, CA — An extraordinary eight-year cinematic journey culminated on Saturday, October 3, as the Artsakh Arts & Cultural Foundation (AACF) hosted the highly anticipated Hollywood premiere of *Revival*, the latest feature film by internationally acclaimed, award-winning Armenian director Jivan Avetisyan, at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, California.

An international European co-production between Armenia, Lithuania and Cyprus, *Revival* brings together an acclaimed international cast and creative team in a powerful cinematic exploration of humanity, war, technology and the resilience of the human spirit.

The red-carpet event welcomed international film stars, filmmakers, producers, community leaders and supporters of Armenian cinema for an unforgettable evening celebrating the power of storytelling and the enduring cultural legacy of Artsakh.

The premiere marked the culmination of years of dedication and perseverance, as the filmmakers overcame the challenges of a global pandemic, the 2020 Artsakh War, the nine-month blockade of Artsakh and numerous obstacles associated with an ambitious international production.

Beyond celebrating the completion of the film, the weekend created an opportunity for artists to experience Armenian heritage firsthand and witness the warmth, solidarity and unity of the Armenian-American community.

Following the screening, Avetisyan received a standing ovation from the audience in an emotional tribute to his artistic vision and unwavering commitment to bringing the stories of Artsakh to international audiences.

The premiere welcomed members of the film’s international cast, including Emmy Award-winning actor and Hollywood legend Armand Assante, acclaimed German actor Heino Ferch, Robin Hairabian and French actress Clémence Baudouin. Internationally renowned actress Maia Morgenstern also stars in the film but was unable to attend the premiere.

Joining the cast were director Jivan Avetisyan, creative producer Viken Attarian, screenwriter Monique Peterson and members of the international creative and production teams whose contributions helped bring the film to life.

Notable guests included Arthur Sarkisian, Jack Topalian, Shahan Minassian, Ken Davitian and Bobby Khan, alongside community leaders, cultural advocates and supporters of Armenian cinema.

AACF Chairman Garo Madenlian, Chief Financial Officer Arthur Chalekian and Secretary Adrineh Mirzayan led the organization of the event. Madenlian and Chalekian also served as supervising producers of *Revival*, while Mirzayan served as an executive producer.

AACF also serves as the fiscal sponsor of “*Revival*,” supporting the film’s production and its mission of bringing the stories of Artsakh to international audiences. More broadly, the foundation supports artistic, cultural and historical initiatives that preserve Armenian heritage, celebrate Armenian contributions to the world and promote greater awareness of Armenian history and culture.

European Coproduction

“*Revival*” is an international European co-production between Armenia, Lithuania and Cyprus, bringing together filmmakers, producers and creative professionals across borders.

The Lithuanian co-production partner is Aikštės Filmai, represented by producer Kęstutis Drazdauskas, while Cyprus is represented by Caretta Films, led by producer

Constantinos Nikoforou.

The production was also made possible through the support of the Ministry of Culture of Cyprus and the Cinema Foundation of Armenia, whose contributions helped advance the film’s production.

Cyprus played a particularly significant role in the production, serving as the on-screen setting for Marseille, France.

Among the most memorable outcomes of the premiere weekend was the impression the Armenian community left on the film’s international cast.

Throughout their visit, cast members repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to experience Armenian culture, learn more about the history and heritage of the Armenian people and connect with a community whose warmth and generosity made them feel genuinely welcomed.

They were particularly struck by the re-

Evening of Reflection and Celebration

The premiere began with a red-carpet reception, where cast members, filmmakers, producers, sponsors and distinguished guests gathered for photographs and interviews with members of the media.

Among those conducting interviews were Armine Amiryan of USArmenia TV and Nona Melkonian, who spoke with the film’s stars and creative team about their experiences, the significance of the project and the importance of bringing Armenian stories to international audiences. Louisa Sharamatyan provided social media coverage, capturing moments from the evening and sharing the celebration with audiences beyond the theater.

Following the red carpet, guests gathered inside the theater for an introductory program featuring remarks by AACF Chairman Garo Madenlian, executive producer

meaningful cinematic project.

Ferch, one of Germany’s most respected film and television actors, shared his perspective on participating in an international production that brings together artists from different cultural and national backgrounds.

He highlighted the collaborative nature of filmmaking and the importance of telling stories that resonate beyond the immediate circumstances in which they are set. He also praised Avetisyan’s commitment and artistic vision, emphasizing the value of films that connect audiences across national and cultural boundaries.

Robin Hairabian spoke about the personal and emotional dimensions of the film and the privilege of helping tell a story rooted in Armenian history.

He reflected on the experience of participating in a production that combines deeply personal human experiences with broader themes of war, resilience, sacrifice and hope.

Mirzayan, AACF secretary and executive producer of “*Revival*,” reflected on the extraordinary eight-year journey required to bring the film to the big screen.

She spoke about the dedication, perseverance and collective effort that carried the project through a global pandemic, the 2020 Artsakh War, the nine-month blockade of Artsakh and numerous production challenges.

She acknowledged the international cast, production partners, creative team and supporters who remained committed to the film through its many stages.

Mirzayan emphasized that completing and premiering the film represented more than an artistic achievement. She said it served as a testament to what can be accomplished through persistence, collaboration and a shared belief in the importance of ensuring that the story of Artsakh continues to reach the world.

Following the screening, Avetisyan addressed the audience, reflecting on the film’s long and challenging journey and expressing his appreciation to the cast, crew, producers, creative collaborators, sponsors and supporters who helped make *Revival* a reality.

Avetisyan’s filmmaking has consistently explored the human consequences of war and the struggles of the people of Artsakh. With “*Revival*,” he brings these enduring concerns into conversation with contemporary questions surrounding technology, artificial intelligence, morality and the future of humanity.

The evening reached an emotional high point as the audience rose to its feet in a standing ovation, recognizing both the achievement of *Revival* and Avetisyan’s continued dedication to filmmaking that explores the human consequences of conflict and the resilience of those who endure it.

“*Revival*” is Avetisyan’s fourth feature film, following “*Tevanik*,” “*The Last Inhabitant*” and “*Gate to Heaven*.”

Through these films, Avetisyan has established a distinctive cinematic voice, exploring the lives of ordinary people caught in extraordinary historical circumstances, particularly the conflicts surrounding Artsakh.

His upcoming cinematic projects include “*Angels 2020*,” “*Black List*,” “*Baa’bel*,” “*The Stateless Diplomat*,” “*Apricot Sky*” and “*5000 Years – 9 Months – 7 Days*,” continuing his commitment to telling powerful stories through international filmmaking.

Following the Hollywood premiere, “*Revival*” will return to the big screen for a special public screening on Monday, November 9, at the historic Alex Theatre in Glendale.

Tickets for the November 9 screening are available now at <https://thealex.evnsong.com/events/revival-tickets>.



The cast and production team of “*Revival*” at its premiere

markable unity they witnessed among Armenians, the deep bonds connecting community members and the collective pride in preserving their cultural identity and sharing their heritage with the world.

From welcoming dinners and visits to cultural landmarks to the red-carpet celebration and post-premiere gathering, the international guests experienced firsthand a community united by its history, traditions, hospitality and enduring connection to Artsakh.

Set against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating 2020 Artsakh War, “*Revival*” explores the intersection of human relationships, tragedy, scientific advancement, artificial intelligence and the timeless struggle between destruction and renewal.

Blending powerful human drama with elements of science fiction, the film follows interconnected lives confronted by the consequences of war, technological innovation and profound moral choices. It examines the ethical challenges posed by emerging technologies while confronting the devastating human consequences of conflict.

Assante portrays Jean Perbost, chair of robotics at the University of Marseille, whose involvement in advanced technology brings questions of artificial intelligence, ethics and human responsibility into sharp focus.

Through its international cast and multi-layered narrative, “*Revival*” examines the relationship between humanity and technology, the consequences of war and the possibility of hope and renewal in the face of extraordinary adversity.

Although deeply rooted in the Armenian experience and the tragedy of Artsakh, the film addresses universal themes of survival, moral responsibility, identity and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

Adrineh Mirzayan and principal cast members Armand Assante, Heino Ferch and Robin Hairabian.

Garo Madenlian welcomed the audience and reflected on AACF’s mission and its longstanding collaboration with Avetisyan. Recognizing fellow foundation founders Adrineh Mirzayan and Arthur Chalekian, he emphasized the importance of preserving the history, identity and cultural heritage of Artsakh, particularly following the forced displacement of its indigenous Armenian population.

He underscored the responsibility of Armenians and friends of Artsakh everywhere to ensure that the voices and experiences of its people are neither silenced nor forgotten.

Madenlian reflected on the power of memory, culture, language, identity, courage and collective determination to sustain a nation through its darkest moments. He emphasized that cinema provides a powerful means of reaching audiences across cultural and national boundaries.

He concluded by thanking Avetisyan, the international cast and crew, the producers, partners and supporters whose dedication helped make the film and the premiere possible.

Assante addressed the audience about the importance of storytelling that challenges viewers to confront difficult questions about humanity.

He reflected on cinema’s ability to transcend borders, communicate shared human experiences and encourage audiences to consider the ethical responsibilities that accompany technological progress and conflict.

He also offered warm praise for Avetisyan, recognizing the director’s artistic vision, dedication and ability to unite an international cast and creative team around a



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe
Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



Potato & Garlic Shrimp Niçoise Salad with Green Onion Vinaigrette
(Courtesy Idaho Potato Commission)

Potato & Garlic Shrimp Niçoise Salad
With Green Onion Vinaigrette

“Established in 1937, the Idaho Potato Commission (IPC) is a state agency responsible for promoting and protecting the famous ‘Grown in Idaho®’ seal, a federally registered trademark that assures consumers they are purchasing genuine, top-quality Idaho® potatoes. Idaho’s ideal growing conditions differentiate Idaho® potatoes from potatoes grown in other states. Idaho® russet potatoes consistently average high solids, season after season. This, coupled with low-moisture content, simply makes them better than those grown elsewhere.”

“Idaho® potatoes are delicious, nutritious, and loaded with important vitamins

and nutrients, like vitamin B6, potassium and vitamin C, that help keep your body fueled and strong all day long. They are fat-free, cholesterol-free and a good source of dietary fiber. Potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C, with one potato providing 30% (27 mg) of your daily recommendation. This water-soluble vitamin acts as an antioxidant and

can stabilize free radicals to help prevent damage to cells. Vitamin C aids in collagen production, a process that helps maintain healthy gums and is important in healing wounds. Vitamin C boosts iron absorption and may help support the body’s immune system (Gropper 2008). Data from the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals indicates that potatoes rank in the top five of dietary sources of vitamin C for Americans (Cotton et al. 2004).”

A classic Niçoise salad is a famous French dish from Nice. It features raw tomatoes, hard-boiled eggs, small black Niçoise olives, and tuna or anchovies, all dressed with extra-virgin olive oil. Modern and international versions often add cooked green beans and boiled potatoes. Here’s an updated version from author, recipe developer, and food stylist Danielle Kartes.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Idaho russet potatoes
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 6 cups fresh spinach
- 1 15-ounce can mild green olives (or olives of your choice)
- 1 pound large 16-20 shrimp
- 4 eggs
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 1 pound fresh green beans

Green onion vinaigrette:

- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 green onions
- 1/4 cup white vinegar
- The juice and zest of one lemon
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 cup olive oil

PREPARATION:

In a large pot cover the peeled potatoes with water by 1 1/2 inches. Add 2 teaspoons of salt and bring to a boil. Cook for 20-25 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

While the potatoes cook, assemble the salad. On a large platter place the spinach as a base, then make a pile of the tomatoes and the olives.

Once the potatoes have been cooking for 10 minutes, add the eggs and boil for 10 minutes. Remove the eggs to cool.

During the potato cook, add the cleaned green beans to the potato water as well. Boil 3-5 minutes, then remove and place in a bowl of cold water to stop the cooking.

Peel the cooked eggs, set aside, then make the vinaigrette.

In the work bowl of your food processor, add all the dressing ingredients except the olive oil. Pulse until well combined, then slowly add the olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the cooked potatoes from the water. Do not rinse. Allow to cool only slightly while you cook the shrimp.

In a skillet, add butter, olive oil, garlic, and shrimp. Cook over medium-high heat 3 minutes, flipping the shrimp once halfway through the cook.

Once the shrimp are cooked cut the potatoes into large chunks and place in the center of the salad. Season with salt and pepper.

Add the shrimp to another corner. Add the eggs sliced in half, then cover the salad with the dressing.

Serves 4 to 6

THE IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION

The Idaho Potato Commission is a state agency with many responsibilities, including the promotion of Idaho® potatoes. The Commission is funded by a tax levied on all Idaho-grown potatoes. It is currently set at 12.5 cents for every 100 pounds of potatoes. The funds generated from this tax are used to advertise, promote and do research to expand the markets for Idaho-grown potatoes. The commission is directed by nine commissioners, five of whom are potato growers, two are packers/shippers, and two represent processors. In 2012, the Idaho Potato Commission celebrated 75 years of service.



Established in 1937, the Idaho Potato Commission (IPC) is a state agency that is responsible for promoting and protecting the famous “Grown in Idaho®” seal, a federally registered trademark that assures consumers they are purchasing genuine, top-quality Idaho® potatoes. Idaho’s ideal growing conditions, including rich, volcanic soil, climate and irrigation, differentiate Idaho® potatoes from potatoes grown in other states.

Contact:

- 661 South Rivershore Lane, Suite 230
- Eagle, ID 83616
- Phone: (208) 334-2350
- Fax: (208) 334-2274
- <https://idahopotato.com/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/famousidahopotatoes>
- <https://www.instagram.com/idahopotatoes>



ARTS & CULTURE

Five Armenian Films to Be Shown at New York's Asia Society

NEW YORK — A special program of five films made by Armenian filmmakers from different parts of the world and across different periods will be presented by New York's Asia Society, a nonprofit cultural organization, on October 23-25, 2026. The screenings, organized under the title *Our Century: Spiraling Through Armenian Cinema*, take place at the Asia Society and Museum theater located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street) in New York City.

"The Asia Society film program strives to highlight underseen masterpieces from across the region, and those working towards their recognition," says Asia Society Film Curator Inney Prakash. "This program presents a rare opportunity to engage with a rich national cinema across a span of six decades."

Our Century: Spiraling Through Armenian Cinema is guest curated by film curator and critic Sona Karapoghosyan. "This series of films follow characters who are constantly on the move; their journeys unfold across borders and landscapes, but also through memory, history, identity, and imagination," she notes.

The program opens on October 23 at 6:30 p.m. with a screening of the recently restored, rarely shown film "Hello, It's Me" (Frunze Dovlatyan, Armenia/USSR, 1966, DCP, 137 min. In Armenian and Russian with English subtitles). The film is a fictionalized biography of physicist Artem Alikhanyan, a pioneer of Soviet nuclear physics during the Second World War and founder of an important cosmic-ray research center on Mount Aragats. The distinguished Armenian stage and screen actor Armen Dzhigarkhanyan plays Artem, as the film moves between Russia and Armenia and between two different time periods. "Filled with melancholy and the pain of loss, this



Scene from "After Dreaming"

anti-war film explores technological progress and its consequences for basic human relations, while reflecting on the tensions between scientific ambition, personal sacrifice, and the passage of time," notes Karapoghosyan. "Hello, It's Me" was the first Armenian film to screen at the Cannes Film Festival in 1966.

Familiar films from the 1990s comprise the second day, beginning with Atom Egoyan's "Calendar" (Canada/Arme-

nia/Germany, 1993, DCP, 74 min. In English and Armenian with English subtitles), screening on Saturday, October 24 at 12:30 p.m. The film follows a photographer who visits Armenia shortly after independence to photograph twelve Armenian churches for a calendar. "Calendar" is double-billed with a rare screening of Arby Ovanessian's film, "Lebbeus/Thaddeus" (Iran, 1967, DCP, 33 min. In Persian with English subtitles), a documentary following a pilgrimage of Armenian Christians to the Monastery of Saint Thaddeus, located in Chaldoran County in northwestern Iran.

Also screening on Saturday, October 24, at 3:15 p.m. is "Last Station" (Harutyun Khachatryan & Nora Armani, Armenia, 1994, DCP, 98 min. In Armenian with English subtitles). "Last Station" tells the story of Egyptian-Armenian actors Nora Armani and Gérald Papasian, who travel to Los Angeles in search of the American dream. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with Nora Armani.

The program concludes on Sunday, October 25 with a 2:15 p.m. screening of "After Dreaming" (Armenia/USA/Mexico, 2025, DCP, 105 min. In Armenian with English subtitles), the directorial debut of Christine Haroutounian. In this surrealist drama, a soldier guides a young woman through Armenia's war-torn landscape, while keeping a secret from her. The screening is followed by a Q&A with Christine Haroutounian.

The Asia Society thanks the Armenian General Benevolent Union for their support and sponsorship of *Our Century: Spiraling Through Armenian Cinema*.

Tickets for each screening are \$15 for the general public and take place at Asia Society in New York, 725 Park Avenue at 70th St. A limited amount of complimentary tickets will be available to students with ID at the box office on the day of each screening.



Scene from "Hello It's Me"

Armenian Museum to Present 'Beyond the Curtain: Materiality and Devotion in Armenian Art'

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America will host the exhibit "Beyond the Curtain: Materiality and Devotion in Armenian Art," starting on October 22. This exhibition includes more than 20 objects from the museum's collection, and it is curated by Anahit Gasparyan. The exhibition examines Armenian religious art through the materials that have shaped devotional experiences, inviting visitors to consider how faith becomes tangible through art, ritual, craftsmanship, and sacred objects.

At the heart of the exhibition is the Mardin Altar Curtain, a remarkable textile that provides a point of entry into the material and visual world of Armenian religious practice. This piece was exhibited at the Tufts University Art Galleries in 2021. The exhibition is also anchored by the Garabed Gospel, which was completed in the year 1207, connecting the presentation to the traditions of medieval Armenian Christianity and demonstrating the enduring relationship between material culture and religious devotion.

Rather than approaching religion as an abstract concept, "Beyond the Curtain" considers how the physical materials of religious objects have helped shape the experience of faith. Manuscripts, reliquaries, crosses, textiles, clothing, and other sacred objects reveal the significance of the

materials from which they were made. Parchment, metal, thread, wood, and other materials become carriers of devotion, artistry, ritual, memory, and cultural continuity.

Through these objects, the exhibition encourages visitors to look closely at the ways materials themselves can communicate meaning. The tactile qualities, craftsmanship, decoration, and histories embedded within sacred objects offer a deeper understanding of Armenian religious life and the communities that created, used, preserved, and passed these objects from one generation to the next.

"'Beyond the Curtain' places particular emphasis on medieval foundations of Armenian Christian material culture that continues to shape Armenian art across later centuries," explained Gasparyan. "Rather than asking what these objects symbolize, I hope visitors will ask what these materials do: how cloth conceals and reveals, how parchment carries sacred language, how metal and precious stones reflect light. Together, these materials make devotion physical."

The Armenian Museum of America is located at 65 Main St., Watertown. The gallery hours are Thursday through Sunday from 12 to 6 p.m. For more information, visit www.armenianmuseum.org.



This 18th century reliquary is said to contain a thorn from Christ's Crown of Thorns alongside several other relics. Multiple reliquaries of this kind are rare and were often associated with major ecclesiastical centers: this example may have come from the See of Cilicia at Sis or the See of Vaspurakan at Aghtamar. Donated to the AMoA by Paul and Vicki Bedoukian.



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

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

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

OCTOBER 24 — Fall Fest Armenian Bazaar at First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont, 12-7 p.m. Dinner options include beef, chicken, lamb or losh Kebabs, vegetarian plates, pastries, string cheese, Choreg. Home of the double skewer. For information, call 617-484-4779 or email office@facbelmont.org.

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.

OCTOBER 28 — The Boston chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association is sponsoring an Armenian pickling demo with master chef Betty Arouyan. Various vegetables will be made into fermented tuttoo. Enjoy wine, cheese and dessert and take home a bottle of your own pickled veggies. 7 p.m. Baikar Building, 755 Mount Auburn St. RSVP to Sossy at 617-281-1647 or syogurtian@comcast.net. Tickets \$25 per person, including reception and bottle of tuttoo. Series coordinated by Rita Balyozian.

NOVEMBER 12 — An enchanting evening to benefit children in Armenia with cancer, hosted by City of Smile USA. Special performance by illusionist Joel Acevedo from Boston’s Hit Show “Four-Handed Illusions.” Thursday, 7 p.m., at Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, live performance. Tickets \$150 per person. For tickets: call Cynthia (339-222-9900) or online see QR code in Mystical Illusions Flyer.

NOVEMBER 14 — Annual Fall Bazaar 12-5 PM Lamb, chicken & Losh Kebab Dinners, Cuisine Table, Pastries, Hayastan Table & Farmer’s Market. Holy Archangels Armenian Church 1280 Boston Rd. Haverhill.

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 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church Food Festival. 11 a.m. – 6. p.m., 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Eat-in or Take-out. The Food Festival menu includes lamb, chicken, and losh kebab dinners, and a vegetarian platter, a country store with a variety of Armenian specialties and deserts. The festival also features a jewelry table, an antique treasures boutique, gift items from Armenia as well as a backgammon tournament and narrated tours of the church’s sanctuary. For further information, call the church office at 978-256-7234.

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

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 9 — The Tufenkian Foundation and the Women’s Support Center are jointly sponsoring a luncheon featuring a talk by Maro Matsian, the executive director of the Women’s Support Center in Armenia, on November 9, at the Iroquois Club, 43248 North Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$35. Luncheon will be served at 11:30 a.m. To attend, RSVP Linda Karibian by October 26, at (248) 496-6292 or ldkaribian@yahoo.com

RHODE ISLAND

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

To send Calendar items email alin@mirrorspectator.com 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.

‘Voices Across Time’ Concert at Armenian Cultural Foundation Pays Homage to Robert Mirak

MIRAK, from page 12

particularly his landmark study *Torn Between Two Lands: Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I*, which remains an essential contribution to the field. His writing combined rigorous scholarship with a profound understanding of immigration, identity, and the enduring strength of cultural memory. Mirak served on the faculty of Boston University as an adjunct professor until he left his academic career to take responsibility for the family businesses. In 2014, he published *Genocide Survivors, Community Builders: The Family of John and Artemis Mirak*, a tribute to his parents.

Alongside his academic achievements, Dr. Mirak carried forward a family tradition of entrepreneurship and philanthropy rooted in service to both the Armenian and broader American communities. Through his leadership in business and his generous support of educational, cultural, and

charitable initiatives, he helped strengthen institutions devoted to scholarship, music, and the arts. Together, with his daughters, he continued his father’s generous support of social, educational, medical, and agricultural projects in Armenia and Arlington.

Remembered for his intellect, integrity, and generosity of spirit, Robert Mirak leaves a lasting legacy as a bridge between heritage and contemporary cultural life.

Known for her “iron-steel technique, infallibility in touch, capacity of self-control and clear and limpid phrasing.... a trenchancy that is out of the ordinary...” “Pompili has performed as a soloist to critical and public acclaim throughout Italy, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Iceland, Germany, Poland, and the United States.

Pompili is the artistic director and co-founder of the professional concert season *Ashley Notes* in the UK and pianist-in-residence of the Società Dante

Alighieri in Manchester.

A specialist in the piano music of Alan Hovhaness, Pompili has premiered many of his works in concert and on disc. She has released two CDs on Hovhaness’ piano works containing premieres which were selected as a Naxos Critics’ Choice for June 2015 and has since been broadcast internationally, receiving critical acclaim.

She is also associated with religious music for piano, particularly with Liszt’s *Via Crucis*, which she has performed more than 200 times across Europe since 2009. Her performance at the Vatican Museums was recorded live by Vatican Radio and broadcast through the EBU during Holy Week 2013. In 2024 she released a studio recording of *Via Crucis* on the Prima Facie label.

The recital, free and open to the public, will take place on Sunday, October 25 at 5 pm at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington.



Alessandra Pompili



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN
**MIRROR
SPECTATOR**
— SINCE 1932 —



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

CONTRIBUTORS

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

REGIONAL

CORRESPONDENTS

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

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepiyan, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is
published weekly, except two weeks in
July and the first week of the year, by:
Baikar Association, Inc.
755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA
02472-1509
Telephone: 617-924-4420
FAX: 617-924-2887
www.mirrorspectator.com
E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com
For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

Russia’s Renewed Push for Influence In the South Caucasus

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Russia’s policy in the South Caucasus, particularly toward Armenia, has become noticeably more active in recent weeks. In particular, this concerns regional communications and infrastructure, concerning which Russia has begun making more proactive proposals to Armenia. Recent statements by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk regarding the restoration of certain sections of Armenia’s railway infrastructure are particularly noteworthy.

Essentially, Russia has offered to help Armenia restore two railway sections: one running from Yeraskh, south of Yerevan, toward the northern part of Azerbaijan’s Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, and another connecting Gyumri to the Turkish border. It presents these projects as part of a broader process of unblocking regional transport links.

Also noteworthy is the unplanned trilateral meeting between Putin, Pashinyan, and Aliyev on the sidelines of the gathering of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) leaders. Although the meeting was brief, it is evident that Russia is seeking to position itself within the process of normalizing bilateral relations, including by exploring the possibility of becoming involved in the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP).

Of course, the question of Russia’s involvement in the project will be discussed and potentially resolved through negotiations between Moscow and Washington. If the two great powers reach an understanding, Armenia and Azerbaijan will have relatively little say in determining Russia’s role.

A phone conversation between Putin and Trump took place on the same day as the trilateral meeting. It is difficult to imagine that Russia’s potential participation in the project could have been discussed during their telephone conversation. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that the issue was raised and may continue to be discussed at lower levels. Regarding Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk’s October 2 statement, he clarified that an important meeting is expected to take place in the near future – one that will help move these issues forward. Most likely, he was referring to an upcoming visit to Armenia by the head of Russian Railways, during which all these matters are expected to be discussed. This visit will most likely take place before Pashinyan travels to Moscow, as the railway issue will naturally also be discussed with Putin.

Russia’s increased activity is hardly surprising. Moscow has

largely lost its influence over both Armenia and Azerbaijan since 2020. It no longer has the same instruments of pressure or the leverage it once enjoyed, while both countries are pursuing their foreign policies more actively and paying considerably less attention to Moscow. Moreover, Azerbaijan is embroiled in serious disagreements with Russia, and Aliyev periodically makes statements that are clearly unwelcome in Moscow.

For example, Aliyev recently stated that there are two superpowers in the world: the United States and China. Naturally, Moscow is unlikely to take kindly to Russia being excluded from that list. In reality, Moscow lost its influence over Armenia and Azerbaijan in several stages. The first came in the aftermath of the 2020 war, followed by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which further weakened its regional position. The subsequent complete depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenian population and the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers dealt another significant blow to Moscow’s standing in the region. It was against this backdrop of declining Russian influence that Trump proposed the TRIPP project, which can essentially be viewed as a consequence of Moscow’s diminishing role in the South Caucasus.

Most likely, Russia will exert more active pressure on Armenia in the coming period, potentially along several fronts. This could include raising gas prices, imposing restrictions or sanctions on certain Armenian goods, and taking other measures that could have a significant impact on Armenia’s economy and its consumers. It is also possible that Russia could impose restrictions affecting Russian tourists traveling to Armenia. Russian visitors arriving by air represent a significant share of Armenia’s tourism market, and approximately 10 flights arrive in Armenia from Russia each day. Given the importance of Russian tourism to Armenia’s economy, any restrictions that reduce these tourist flows could have a substantial economic impact.

Such steps could become more likely if Moscow and Yerevan fail to reach an understanding on several key issues, particularly Armenia’s relations with the European Union, a subject about which Russian officials have repeatedly raised concerns.

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

The Armenian Genocide in Polish Literature

By Grzegorz Pełczyński

Ceghaspanutjun [Tseghasbanutium] is the term for the Armenian Genocide during World War I. It is rather little known in Poland. Much more well-known is the term Holocaust - the genocide of the Jews.

It must be remembered: Armenians in Turkey had been murdered since the end of the 19th century; 300,000 of them died in 1894-1895, and 20,000 in 1909. Then the rule in this country was taken over by the Young Turks, who dreamed of a great empire, from the Balkans to Mongolia, inhabited exclusively by Turkic peoples. The first obstacle to the fulfillment of these dreams were the Armenians, who inhabited mainly the eastern part of what was then Turkey (former Western Armenia). In 1915, the Turkish government began the planned extermination of the entire Armenian population in the country. So Armenians were cruelly killed in their villages and cities, or they were displaced and driven to desert areas to die of hunger and thirst. About 1.5 million of them were murdered.

In Polish literature — in its works of fiction — the extermination of the Armenians during the First World War, or even earlier, was a topic discussed very rarely.

Already in the 1920s, soon after the Armenian Genocide, it was mentioned in two novels written by outstanding Polish writers. The first is *Przedwiośnie* [The Early Spring] by Stefan Żeromski, published in 1924. Describing the fate of a young

Pole, Cezary Baryka, the author presents a highly complicated situation of the Polish nation during the October Revolution and in the initial period of the existence of his country. And since Baryka lived in Baku when the massacre of Armenians took place there, which was part of what started in Turkey in 1915, Żeromski could not ignore it. He obtained information on this subject from two Polish women who had lived in Baku at that time.

According to Żeromski, the massacre of Armenians committed in this city in September 1918 by Azerbaijanis (called Tatars in the book), with the help of the Turkish army, was revenge for the pogrom of Azerbaijanis committed against them by Armenians in March of that year. Well, the situation in the entire Transcaucasia, including Baku, was very complicated at that time. Żeromski did not explain it properly, and he did not devote his novel to it.

This could have been done by the famous Polish film director Filip Bajon in a TV series based on *Przedwiośnie* in 2002. But its first two episodes show that Armenians are to blame for what happened in Baku in 1918. Armenians living in Poland protested against it, accusing Bayon of allowing Azerbaijani historical interpretations to be imposed on it. It is necessary to add here that Azerbaijani television was a co-producer of the series.

In any case, the novel’s descriptions of thousands of Armenian corpses scattered throughout the city, which were then load-

ed onto carts and trucks to be taken to the sea, remain shocking. Baryka was also forced to do this work. He quickly got used to it, despite its gory nature. That was the case until he saw the body of a young, beautiful girl, which shook him. Suddenly, a dialogue began to take place between the murdered Armenian woman and the young Pole — the girl was filled with grief for her life ending so quickly and so painfully, while the boy could only muster a look of desperate astonishment. The Armenian woman finally asks him: “Don’t forget my wrong, young coachman! Take a good look at human crime! Beware! Remember!”

The next novel about the Armenian Genocide is *Choucas* by Zofia Nałkowska, printed in 1926 in “Tygodnik Ilustrowany”, and published in the form of a book the following year. Its subtitle — *Powieść międzynarodalna* [An International Novel] — informs about the author’s intentions. It postulates the integration of nations that, opposed to each other during the past war, should now somehow come to a common understanding. The writer gathered representatives of these nations in a Swiss sanatorium. She spent some time in a similar sanatorium and met Armenians there.

Therefore, among the heroes of her novel there are also Armenians: Miss Hovsephian, Mr. Peynirian and Miss Sossé Papazian. They all escaped the massacres in Turkey though they saw what happened and were scarred.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Long Live Pashinyan's Democracy! Cramming The Jails with Facebook Critics

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is totally intolerant of anyone who disagrees with him, even though he repeatedly portrays himself as a staunch defender of democracy.

In addition to violating hundreds of laws, including numerous provisions of the Constitution, Pashinyan has directed security officers to arrest those who criticize him on Facebook. Foreigners who post similar comments from overseas may be placed on the government's blacklist, and barred from entering Armenia, or arrested upon arrival.

This is what happened to Anush Hadjyan, who lives in the Los Angeles area. She is a citizen of the United States, not Armenia. On April 24, 2025, Anush shared someone else's message criticizing Pashinyan on her Facebook page and added a few words of her own: "Finish off the Turkish puppet of the Nikol clan."

Anush's harsh words were an emotional outburst in reaction to Pashinyan's questioning of the facts of the Armenian Genocide. However, it is much more reprehensible for the prime minister himself to use such vile and violent language against his political opponents. Yet no judge in Armenia dares to hold him accountable for his own transgressions.

More than a year later, on June 13, 2026, Anush was detained at Yerevan airport without explanation after traveling to Armenia. She was taken to a police station in the city and held there for eight hours before being released pending trial. In the meantime, she was prohibited from leaving the country.

As a US citizen, Anush contacted the US Embassy in Yerevan for assistance. An embassy employee said all she could offer was a list of local attorneys. In my view, the employee failed to provide adequate help. The embassy should have checked on Anush's welfare and sought to ensure that her rights as a US citizen were protected.

Anush hired a local attorney on her own and appeared in court almost two months later. She was pressured to admit guilt for her 2025 Facebook post, and her attorney advised her to comply. She was fined the equivalent of \$2,000 and also paid thousands of dollars in attorney fees.

Anush paid the fine the same day, received a receipt, and was told she was now free to travel. However, when she attempted to drive to Georgia, she was stopped by Armenia's border guards and prevented from proceeding, even after showing her court-issued release certificate. After two hours of detention at a local police station, she was finally allowed to cross into Georgia.

What is truly astonishing is that government officials appear to monitor the Facebook pages of countless Armenians, in Armenia and throughout the

Diaspora, searching for comments critical of Pashinyan in order to prosecute those who post them. One would think the government has more urgent matters to deal with than monitoring people's Facebook pages.

Anush is fortunate not to have been jailed. Many others have been arrested over Facebook posts. Here are some examples:

Artur Danielyan, a well-known Pashinyan critic, was arrested last week, just hours after calling him "scum" on Facebook.

Playwright Vahram Sahakyan was arrested on September 29 on charges of inciting "hatred, intolerance and hostility" over a Facebook post he published in January 2025. He was placed under administrative supervision and released on the condition that he refrain from posting on Facebook.

Artak Avetisyan was acquitted last month after being arrested in May. The initial "hate speech" allegation was later replaced with a charge of serious "hooliganism." He had lashed out at Pashinyan on Facebook during the parliamentary election campaign.

In February, another critic was arrested and charged with hooliganism, two months after posting an offensive video about Pashinyan on TikTok. Around the same time, a 55-year-old woman from Akhuryan was prosecuted for reportedly making disparaging remarks about the prime minister and his family in a private online message.

Armenian lawyer Aleksandr Kochubayev was detained in 2025 after publishing a social media post criticizing law enforcement and judicial officials. Gayane Mesropyan from Artsakh was arrested in March 2026 over a Facebook post criticizing Pashinyan. Meanwhile, more than 1,000 posts containing vile comments directed at Artsakh Armenians went uninvestigated by the authorities.

On October 1, outspoken Armenian opposition parliamentarian Edgar Ghazaryan received a suspended two-year prison sentence for strongly criticizing a Constitutional Court ruling issued two years earlier. A Yerevan court convicted him of spreading "defamatory information" about the justices. His sister, Lilit Ghazaryan, was forced by her boss to resign after 22 years as deputy head of the government's drug regulatory agency.

Even academics have lost their jobs for criticizing Pashinyan. Ruben Melikyan, a prominent pro-opposition lawyer who had taught law for 23 years at Yerevan State University (YSU), was fired in July. Two other YSU lecturers who supported the opposition, Alen Ghulyan and Shushan Vardanyan, were also dismissed that month.

However, Pashinyan's supporters enjoy protection from prosecution. Earlier this year, one man told the media that Catholicos Karekin II should be "hit on the head with a stone and killed." No charges were filed against him.

In 2023, then-Speaker of Parliament Alen Simonyan spat in the face of a Canadian-Armenian critic in Yerevan. Yet, the police detained the victim, not Simonyan.

Artur Papyan, the chairman of the Yerevan Press Club, accused the Armenian authorities of a "coordinated effort to intimidate the public and silence dissent." He also condemned the fact that "overt threats and hate speech directed at oppositionists go completely unpunished."

from previous page

Miss Hovsephian, always dressed in black, resembles the titular choucas — black birds that fascinate the inhabitants of the sanatorium. This is how she talks about murdering her compatriots:

The Turks murdered them in their apartments, on the streets, and in prisons. Little boys were taken to town squares and slaughtered with axes and knives, while behind the police cordon their mothers howled in agony and went crazy. Entire Armenian cities, entire armies of ghosts, entire hosts of those about to die were driven through swamps and deserts along trails along which the corpses of those who had gone before were rotting. As they went, they died of hunger and plague — men, women and small children. They stopped to rest in cemeteries, in the poison of bodies merely covered with dirt. And again they moved on, and in the grass between the graves there were people dying of typhus and cholera (...). Near the cities, one often saw a hand lying on the ground, sometimes gnawed bones, or pieces of rotting human flesh dragged by dogs from shallow, mass graves. The waters of the Euphrates were poisoned and stank of corpses.

Mr. Peynirian, in turn, came from Constantinople, where diplomatic missions were, where Europeans with interests in Turkey lived, and therefore the Turks treated Armenians in this city more leniently. However, he had to leave the city, where his mother lived. He knew that his mother was still alive, but he could not correspond with her. He had some remnants of his former fortune, allowing him to live a modest life. "And he was waiting here —

for what? It is unknown. For new political changes, for the awakening of international conscience, for a miracle. Because all the promises of America and Europe have failed," the author adds accusingly.

And finally, the youngest of the three Armenians, Sossé Papazian, "probably also experienced a lot — and she remembered something of it too well, something terrible. It was known that when she had a strong fever and was delirious, she saw a single, well-known, monstrous vision that filled her with terror and despair."

Compared to *Przedwiośnie*, in *Choucas* there is much more information about Ceghaspanutjun, as well as the entire history of the Armenian nation. The topic of this international novel provided the opportunity to develop Armenian themes, and Nałkowska did so. We admire the knowledge acquired by the author, although it is not known how she acquired it, as well as the mastery with which she wove it into the narrative.

I would also like to draw attention to a mention in Władysław Jan Grabski's novel *Bracia* from 1934, which deals with current Polish issues. One of its characters, while in Paris, accidentally met an Armenian who did not arouse his sympathy. He looked with dislike at this "thin brunette with a Semitic nose. What a confusing character! History question mark! The Turks complain that the Armenians oppress them, with usury and murder insidiously, and the Armenians shout about the Turks' atrocities and organized pogroms. Who to believe here if both sides present their arguments with such faith?"

The writer clearly did not bother to es-

tablish the facts and deliberately or unconsciously decided to relativize the issue.

The next novel, which contains quite a lot about Armenians and their genocide, is *W stanicy* [In the Outpost] by Józef Łobodowski, the second volume of his novel series, usually referred to as the "Ukrainian trilogy", published in London in 1958. Its hero, Staś Majewski, like Cezary Baryka from *Przedwiośnie* [The Early Spring], tries to leave Russia in revolution. Along the way, he experiences many adventures and meets different people. A Cossack friend named Chubar tells him how during World War I he was stationed among the mountains beyond Yerevan, in Igdir. There was a group of Armenians who hid in the mountains and were not murdered. Russian soldiers ensured their safety and also gave them food in exchange for their services.

In 1961, a *List do starego tureckiego znajomego* [A Letter to an Old Turkish Friend], written by Bohdan Gębarski, was published in the weekly *Kierunki*. It is probably not a work of fiction. However, I decided to mention it because it is not devoid of certain elements characteristic of fiction. Moreover, it is the most famous work in Polish literature devoted to the Armenian Genocide. It has been translated into many languages. It was also published by Polish Armenians as a brochure in their own publishing series.

The sender of A Letter..., who is, in a way, the narrator, addresses a Turk he met before the war about the genocide committed by his compatriots. He reminds him of his questions about this issue, which he was unable to answer, explaining that he

was a child during the war. But this question undoubtedly irritated him. Maybe that is why he did not make any contact with a Pole for a quarter of a century. And suddenly, after such a long time, he sent him a letter in which he expressed his satisfaction with the acts of justice visible in the modern world, mentioning the Eichman trial and decolonization. The addressee responded with an open letter — *List do starego tureckiego znajomego* — in which he again asked questions about Armenians murdered by the Turks. He was able to answer most of them himself.

However, he still does not know why the Turks do not respond to their crime and try to convince the world that it did not happen at all:

I cannot understand your current indifference towards the crime that has been weighing on you for forty-something years. I don't understand how a nation can live in these conditions, love its homeland, laugh and be happy, write and read humorous books, visit abroad and host foreigners. I think this is what German society would have been like if Hitler had won World War II. But then the whole world would be mad. I cannot help but notice that although over a hundred years have passed since this genocide, the Turks have not changed their attitude.

Gębarski is also the author of a short novel titled *Morituri. Opowieść o 1915* [Morituri. A tale of 1915], also about what happened in Turkey that year. So far, it is the only larger work in Polish literature entirely devoted to this subject. Unfortunately, it was not published during the

see POLAND, page 20



FASF Turns Generosity into Opportunity For Families of Fallen Soldiers

YEREVAN — Two recent successful fundraising campaigns by the Friends of Armenian Soldier and Family (FASF) have turned supporters’ generosity into tangible opportunities and meaningful experiences for families of Armenia’s fallen soldiers.

Founded by Adam Kablanian, FASF partners with other organizations to support programs that address the needs of families who have lost loved ones in service to Armenia. Its two most recent campaigns supported very different initiatives: a sustainable livelihood program for families and a summer camp for children and their mothers.

Through its partnership with ZINAPAH, FASF provided a \$15,000 grant to support a rabbit-breeding program benefiting 10 families of fallen soldiers. ZINAPAH matched FASF’s \$15,000 contribution, bringing the total funding for the program to \$30,000.

The program offers participating families an opportunity to develop a small, sustainable source of income. Rather than simply addressing an immediate need, the initiative gives families the means to build something that can con-

tinue to benefit them over time.

FASF’s second campaign supported a very different kind of need. The foundation provided \$18,000 to ZINAPAH to help make possible a four-day camp in Dilijan for nearly 300 children of fallen soldiers and their mothers. With ZINAPAH matching FASF’s contribution, the campaign set a \$36,000 combined fundraising goal and successfully reached it.

The children attended the camp in four groups, spending four days in the beautiful surroundings of Dilijan filled with friendship, play, and new memories. For children growing up without their fathers, the camp offered not only a welcome break before the new school year, but also the opportunity to spend time with others who share a similar family experience. Their mothers, too, had the chance to come together and share those days with other families.

The two programs reflect different forms of support. One focuses on creating an opportunity for families to strengthen their economic future; the other provides children with the simple but precious experience of joy, friend-



Adam Kablanian

ship, and togetherness.

The campaigns also come at an exciting time of growth for FASF. Ed Kirakosyan, a CEO, investor and entrepreneur, recently joined the FASF Board, bringing his experience, philanthropy, and energy to the organization and its continuing efforts to support families of Armenia’s fallen soldiers.

“Both of these programs demonstrate the meaningful impact that can be cre-



Ed Kirakosyan

ated when people come together around a shared purpose,” said FASF Founder Adam Kablanian. “We are grateful to our donors, to ZINAPAH, and to everyone who helped make these initiatives possible. Whether we are helping a family establish a source of income or giving a child four days of happiness and friendship in Dilijan, our goal is to create meaningful opportunities and support for families who have sacrificed so much.”

Payment to Director James Cameron Raises Eyebrows about Financial Priorities

By Ani Ghulinyan

YEREVAN (OC-Media) — Filmmaker James Cameron, known for directing “The Terminator” (1984), “Aliens” (1986), “Titanic” (1997), and “Avatar” (2009), will visit Armenia in October to meet with representatives of the film industry and movie fans in Yerevan. His visit is sponsored by Yerevan Municipality.

Authorities have not released how much they have paid for the director’s attendance, but ticket prices for the event

vary from 5,000 drams (\$14) to 150,000 drams (\$415). The event, titled “In Conversation with James Cameron: A Cinema Legend, Live in Yerevan,” is organized by Mezzo Production but is initiated by Yerevan Municipality.

In recent years, Armenia’s municipal authorities and government have played a significant role in organizing various events, concerts, meetings and festivals.

“This is a unique opportunity to meet one of the most influential filmmakers of our time, hear his stories from the world

of cinema, and discover the creative thinking behind some of the most notable projects in world cinema,” City Hall said, regarding the event.

The Armenian government is still trying to recover part of the roughly \$6 million it spent on Jennifer Lopez’s August 2025 concert in Yerevan. The show was organized with public money but produced by a private firm, Doping Space, which sold tickets ranging from \$69 to \$493 each. An RFE/RL investigation found that the company left more than ֏500 million (\$1.4 million)

of the funding unspent, and the Education Ministry has been unable to retrieve it.

The same company, Doping Space, was paid \$6 million from the state budget to organize a Snoop Dogg concert in Yerevan. Although the concert never took place, the company has not yet returned the money. The government blamed the company for failing to reschedule the show following Azerbaijan’s attack on Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and demanded a refund.

Armenian social media users have criticized the choice to pay for Cameron’s visit, with some complaining that the Yerevan municipality has turned into an event-planning company, while major infrastructural issues such as road quality, air quality, and traffic control remain unresolved.

Yerevan’s recent 2,808th birthday celebrations featured themed live music stages spread across central Yerevan, alongside the “Discover Armenia from the Sky” International Balloon Festival. Residents and visitors gathered at the Cascade for jazz, Diana Abgar Park for rock, Freedom Square for classical music, and Northern Avenue for traditional tunes and wine tasting, while Republic Square hosted electronic beats.

And that was just one of many recent events held across Armenia.

In August, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan organized a two-day event called Varchafest — a state-sponsored music festival for emerging young artists. It cost nearly 179 million drams(\$500,000) of the Armenian budget and took place in Sevan.

Pashinyan has also organized the Festival series of state-funded cultural events, which have been held since he came to power in 2018. Critics argue that the concerts allow Pashinyan to shift focus from pressing security concerns. In the past, some have also raised questions about the transparency of the selection process for those contracted to organize the events.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on October 12.)

The Armenian Genocide in Polish Literature

POLAND, from page 19
author’s lifetime (he died in 1978). And yet Gębarski, although he usually dealt with journalism in magazines, coped with artistic prose quite well. *Morituri* was published by Armenians only in 1992 in the above-mentioned publishing series. In the same year, it was published in Armenia in Armenian, translated by Anahit Ter-Ghazarian.

The novel takes place at the beginning of World War I and its protagonists are officers of the Turkish army, also of Armenian nationality. Brave and liked by their colleagues, they are unexpectedly doomed to extermination. They begin to be gradually separated from the remaining members of the officer corps.

I must also mention the references to *Ceghaspanutjun* made by the famous poet Wiktor Woroszyński in a work titled *Literatura. Powieść* [Literature. A Novel]. This work represents a specific literary genre called *sylva*, fashionable in Poland, especially in the 1970s — these are supposedly chaotic notes that form a coherent whole. In Woroszyński’s *sylva* you can read about the genesis of his poem “Oczy Metakse” [The Eyes of Metakse]. While in Yerevan in 1954, the poet watched the dance of a very young Armenian woman whose movements seemed to him marked by the trauma that her grandparents had probably

experienced and which, in turn, was passed on to her through her parents.

The second mention is a quote from the minutes of the meeting of the leadership of the Young Turk Ittihad party, as if it were a fragment of a conversation. The main speakers are Dr. Mehmed Nazim, one of the most prominent party activists. He states authoritatively that all Armenians must be exterminated. Others agree with him.

Having mentioned longer or shorter fragments concerning the extermination of Armenians by Żeromski, Nałkowska, Łobodowski, Woroszyński, and above all two works by Gębarski, it must be said that this is really not much. Even if I mentioned poems on this topic, because *Oczy Metakse* is not the only one, the thesis would still hold that Polish literature is not very interested in this topic.

There is no such work written in Polish as *Czterdzieści dni Musa Dah* [Forty Days of Musa Dah, written by Franz Werfel. Apparently this novel was very popular in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. The Jews locked inside felt similar to the Armenians who were besieged by Turkish troops on Mount Musa.

The topic of the Holocaust in the context of the small number of works about the extermination of Armenians written by Poles is by no means accidental. They were more interested in the extermination

of the Jews because Poles had witnessed it. Ceghaspanutjun took place far from the areas inhabited by them, and besides, it took place during a crucial time for them during the First World War and the fight for independence.

Moreover, in Poland in the interwar period the Armenian community was small and assimilated. Refugees from Turkey very rarely chose Poland as their place of settlement. Therefore, there were no people who could remind about this genocide due to genetic connections with the murdered.

Contemporary Armenians living in Poland remember it much more. But most of them came to Poland from Armenia over the last thirty years, so their identity was shaped by the memory of the crime committed in 1915. Maybe what is still stuck in their heads will somehow be expressed in the works of Polish writers.

(Grzegorz Pełczyński is a cultural anthropologist, researcher in religious studies, and publicist, as well as a PhD professor at the University of Wrocław. Since 2004, he’s the chairman of the Ethnographic Committee of the Poznań Society of Friends of Learning. He’s a member of both the Association Internationale des Etudes Armeniennes, and the Historical Committee of the Evangelical Methodist Church. He’s also the creator and executive editor of the Our Europe journal.)