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## HALO Trust Making Karabakh Safe by Removing One Mine at a Time

By **Alin K. Gregorian**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – People in Karabakh, according to HALO Trust, the world's largest humanitarian mine-clearing organization, are more likely to be the victims of landmines than the inhabitants of almost any other country. And a third of the victims have been children.

HALO Trust has been clearing landmines in Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) since 2000.

Now, the group, according to Andrew Moore, HALO's regional director for the Caucasus and the Balkans, has launched a crowd funding campaign for the first time ever to clear the last minefield in the village of Myurishen, Martuni Region. The goal is to raise \$30,000 for that one particular field which measures 1.8-acres and is land that can be used for grazing or gathering wood, near which 500 people live with their livestock and animals.

"This is the first year that there have been no fatalities in Karabakh," Moore said.



Mikhail Merjumian, a landmine victim, and his wife, in Artsakh

He cautioned, however, that fall planting is exactly when accidents can happen as farmers plow or move their livestock.

"We are aiming to make Nagorno Karabakh free of mines by 2020. It is heavily fortified," he noted.

There have been at least five people injured in landmine accidents in Myurishen  
see LANDMINES, page 20



Charles Aznavour receiving his star from state Sen. Kevin De Leon

## Aznavour Honored by Star on Walk Of Fame

By **Kevork Keushkerian**

HOLLYWOOD – Thursday, October 27, was a memorable day for the Armenian community in Southern California, as legendary singer Charles Aznavour was honored in a private ceremony at the Pantages Theatre. David Green, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the Nederlander Organization, welcomed the guests and introduced state Sen. Kevin de Leon to do the honors.

De Leon, in honor of Charles Aznavour's return to the US and his upcoming performance at the Hollywood Pantages Theatre on October 28, presented him with an honorary Hollywood Walk of Fame Star Plaque, recognizing his contributions to the Arts and the Armenian Community.

see AZNAVOUR, page 20

## A New Global Approach for An Armenian Problem

By **Alin K. Gregorian**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – On Friday, October 28, a new movement was launched in the Armenian world, one that aims to reshape how Armenians think of themselves and one in which they can join hands across

the world as a network to help each other in the diaspora as well as Armenia.

The launch of Global Armenians was done through full-page ads in the *New York Times* and *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* on Friday. The date was chosen to coincide with the 110th anniversary celebrations of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) in New York.

see GLOBALISM, page 12

## Balakian Receives Pulitzer for Poetry at Centennial Ceremony

NEW YORK – On October 13 Peter Balakian picked up the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for poetry at the 100th anniversary ceremony of the Pulitzer Prizes held at Columbia University.

Balakian was one of seven recipients in the fields of Letters, Drama, and Music.

The winners had been announced in April. Among the others were Viet Thanh Nguyen in fiction for his novel, *The Sympathizer*, Lin-Manuel Miranda in drama for the musical "Hamilton" and jazz composer Henry Threadgill for "In For a Penny In for a Pound." Among the 14 prizes in journalism were Kathryn Schultz for feature writing at the *New Yorker*, Alyssa J. Rubin for international reporting at the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* staff for breaking news reporting.

see PULITZER, page 12



Peter Balakian at Pulitzer Prize ceremony



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Patriarchate Seeks Election in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul will apply to the Turkish authorities with a request to obtain permission to hold elections of a new Patriarch. The decision was made at a meeting held at the Patriarchate on October 26, according to the official website of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul.

The seat has been vacant since 2008 because of the catastrophic illness of Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan; Aram Ateshyan has served as Patriarchal Vicar ever since.

There are a total of four candidates vying for the leadership of the church in Istanbul.

"The rules and traditions of the Church consider the seven years of absence as enough for dissolving the covenant. Therefore the eight years of absence of the Patriarch confirms the dissolution of the Patriarchal covenant," according to the report issued after the meeting. (See related editorial on page 18.)

### Azerbaijan Fires Shots Toward Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Azerbaijani side violated the ceasefire 20 times at the line of contact with Karabakh forces last night, Artsakh Ministry of Defense reports.

The rival used firearms of different calibers as it fired more than 240 shots in the direction of Armenian positions.

The front divisions of the NKR Defense Army refrained from responding to the provocative actions of the rival and continued with the reliable protection of the military posts.

### Armenian PM Meets Greek Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Karen Karapetian on November 1 met with Ambassador Nafsika Nancy Eva Vraïla of Greece.

Karapetian stressed the continuous development of the Armenian-Greek relations.

Karapetian said it is necessary to take active steps aimed at utilizing the existing potential especially in the economic cooperation field.

Vraïla stated that historically the two people have had close ties and that Greece is ready to continue the joint projects and develop the cooperation, and both stressed the need to deepen business ties. The Greek Ambassador informed that next year the visit of the delegation of Greek business professionals is expected in Armenia to get acquainted with Armenia's investments opportunities and discuss the prospects of expanding the economic ties.

The process and development of cooperation in tourism, education and cultural spheres were also covered during the talk.

## INSIDE

### AIWA Conference

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Levon Aronian Maintains Ranking in FIDE List

PARIS (Panorama.am) – FIDE, the international chess body, published its 2016 rankings on November 1. World Champion Magnus Carlsen (2853) heads the list. Italian player Fabiano Caruana (2823) is in second place, and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave is third.

As the Chess Federation of Armenia reports, GM Levon Aronian (2795) remains in fifth place.

Other Armenian chess players are included in top 100 list as well: Vladimir Akopian (2675) is 68th, Sergei Movsisian (2672) is on the 74th place, and Gabriel Sargsian (2667) is 81st.

Women World Champion Hou Yifan (2635) is the 1st in the list of the world strongest 100 women chess players. Among our chess players Elina Danielian (2444) is the 34th, Lilit Mkrtchian (2439) is 37th.

Richard Rapport (2730) is the first among junior players. Wey Yi (2706) is on the second place and Duda Jan-Krzysztof is the third. Manuel Petrosian (2551) from Armenia is 37th, Tigran Harutyunyan (2501) is 56th, and Haik Martirosian (2496) is 61st.

FIDE also published rapid and blitz ratings lists. Carlsen (2894) is leading the rapid list as well. Hikaru Nakamura (2839) is second and Aronian (2770) is in 12th place.

## Armenia and Asian Development Bank to Sign 50M Euro Loan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia and the Asian Development Bank plan to sign a 50 million euro loan contract for the implementation of Armenia-Georgia Border Regional Road (M6 Vanadzor-Bagratashen) Improvement Project.

The goal of the program is to reconstruct and improve M6 highway in the north of Armenia leading to Georgia: a total of 51.5 kilometers. The period to pay back the loan is 22 years, 15 of which is a grace period.

The European Investment Bank has already allocated a 51-million-euro loan as a co-funding of the project.

## Armenian Government Budget to Be Cut In 2017

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian government plans to spend by \$2 million less in 2017 for state administration needs, according to a draft budget presented in parliament committees this week.

The bulk of the cuts in the total amount of more than 1 billion drams will not affect senior officials as the salaries, bonuses and allowances for trips will remain at almost the same level.

More than half the costs, 550 million drams (about \$1.2 million), will be cut by the presidential administration. Chief of presidential staff Armen Gevorkian told lawmakers on November 1, that there will be job cuts at the National Security Council.

Lawmakers, however, were more interested in the efficiency of spending of sizable allocations made from the presidential administration to different non-governmental and non-profit organizations.

Asked by media why no costs are cut for the president proper, considering that Armenia has switched to a parliamentary form of government due to last year's constitutional reform, Gevorkian said: "Put up with the idea that the institution of the Republic's President will fully function in accordance with the powers vested in it by the current Constitution till April 2018."

The National Assembly, meanwhile, is due to spend about 390 million drams (about \$820,000) less. Hrair Tovmasian, the chief of National Assembly staff, said that the saving is due to the fact that the number of members of parliament after 2017 elections may be reduced from 131 to 101 under the reformed Constitution.

The executive will cut 176 million drams (about \$370,000). Minister David Harutiunian, the chief of government staff, said that this saving is due mainly to the transfer of government building to the state property registry.

# Armenian Judge Urged to Resign After Scathing ECtHR Ruling

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior judge of Armenia's Court of Cassation who upheld a controversial ruling in a Yerevan family's property compensation dispute with the government has been urged to resign after the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) challenged his conduct in a ruling described by some leading Armenian lawyers as "unprecedented."

The plaintiffs, the family of Yuri Vardanian, Artashes Vardanian and Shushanik Nanushian, had claimed the Armenian authorities paid them only less than a fifth of the real market value of their house estimated at 276 million drams (about \$580,000) in compensation after it was demolished as part of a government-backed redevelopment project in central Yerevan.

Courts in Armenia, including the Court of Cassation, the country's highest judicial instance, ruled in favor of the government, after which the family sued the Republic of Armenia at the Strasbourg-based court.

The ECtHR decision on the so-called Vardanian and Nanushian v. Armenia case publicized last week recognized that the Republic of Armenia violated "the principle of legal certainty and equality of arms, lack of a fair hearing by an impartial tribunal and deprivation of property."

In its verdict the European Court also gave an assessment to the current chairman of the Armenian Court of Cassation Arman Mkrtumian, referred as Judge M. "Judge M.'s conduct, lacking in the necessary detachment demanded by the principle of judicial neutrality, raised an objectively justified fear that he lacked impartiality when deciding the applicant's case within the meaning of Article 6 § 1 of the Convention," the ruling reads.

Leading Armenian lawyer Gevorg Gyoazian described the kind of assessment as "unprecedented" for Armenia. "Being familiar with the rulings of the ECtHR I can say that to date I haven't seen a ruling on Armenia in which the ECtHR would expressly state an opinion about a specific judge," he said over the weekend.

Another leading Armenian lawyer, Yervand Varosian, argued that after such a decision Mkrtumian must leave his current post.

"If the authorities want to achieve real changes in the judicial system, it will be impossible to do so without personnel changes," he said.

Gyoazian said that while he did not agree with opinions that judges themselves should compensate damages incurred by Armenia under ECtHR rulings, he still thought that the govern-

ment should somehow respond to the judge's actions.

"The judge had a clear interest to be in favor of the government in this case. And naturally after the ECtHR makes such an assessment, the government of a law-abiding state must somehow react to that, up to using disciplinary means against a given judge," he said.

Judge Mkrtumian himself could not be reached for comment. First Deputy Head of the Judicial Department Anna Vardapetian said he was busy and could not answer media questions.

"In this regard the Judicial Department or any other body cannot express any position, because it is an assessment of the Strasbourg court. In any case, rulings of the European Court cannot serve as a basis for disciplining a judge, especially when the matter concerns legal assessments," Vardapetian said.

The ECtHR's latest decision is intermediate and gives an opportunity to the Armenian government and the applicants to reach a settlement. Otherwise, the Strasbourg-based court itself will set the size for the compensation.

The plaintiffs declined to make any comments on the case, saying that they were expecting a corresponding offer from the government.

# Margaret Ahnert Continues to Empower Armenian Female Journalists

NEW YORK – Margaret Ahnert is a household name in Armenia, especially among aspiring young female journalists. As a philanthropist who cares about empowering the young talents of Armenia in the media, the celebrated author of the award-winning book, *The Knock at the Door: A Journey Through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide*, is a frequent visitor to and activist for the nation of her roots.

In 2010, Ahnert established the Ester Ajemian Scholarship Program in partnership with Fund for Armenian Relief. Since then, more than 20 young, female scholars have become the proud beneficiaries of her generosity.

The program is named after Margaret's mother Esther, the heroine of *The Knock at the Door*. The fund, which is administered by FAR, provides full tuition and monthly stipends to female graduate students in Armenia.

This year, five young women have been awarded the scholarship to attend the journalism program at Yerevan State University. They are Amalya Margaryan, 22, from Tavush Province; and Marine Khachatryan, 22, Lusine Ghazaryan, 21, Emma Vardanyan, 22, and Ani Minasyan, 22, from Yerevan.

"When I learned I won the competition and would be awarded this scholarship, I felt so happy. It is very difficult to study and work at the same time, but I do. Yet, as young professionals are not paid very competitively it is really very hard to cover the tuition fees solely from my salary. So, it is a very important investment for my career and for

my personal growth," said Margaryan.

Minasyan has wanted to be a journalist since her early years at school. Four years of studying the subject only strengthened her love for her profession, and she decided to pursue a master's as well. "I work at ATV currently

moments in the history of the 20th century. It serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of awareness in society and the power of prevention.

Robert Morgenthau, grandson of U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr., said that a holocaust might have



Margaret Ahnert, center, with flowers, with the young scholarship winners in Yerevan

and if I were not awarded the scholarship I would have to put nearly all my salary toward my tuition," she said. "It is a great responsibility for me to be among the five girls who received this scholarship, especially as we know personally the individual who cares enough for us to further our studies in the profession that we want to pursue. I will do everything to prove my best."

By the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015, *The Knock at the Door* had been translated into 10 languages. The book itself has been an important educational tool for generations of Armenians and non-Armenians about one of the darkest

been prevented if this book had been written prior to World War II.

Herself a media specialist, Ahnert worked for years as a television producer and a teacher before publishing *The Knock at the Door*. Her interests and achievements are multiple. She received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for humanitarian service, and the Distinguished Humanitarian Award from The Little Flower Children and Family Services in New York. She has also worked as a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, taught art appreciation classes, and ran the Fernwood Resort and Hotel in Bushkill, Penn.



## ARMENIA

## Catholicos of All Armenians Meets with Diplomatic Corps Accredited to Armenia

ETCHMIADZIN – On October 18, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, met with the accredited heads of diplomatic missions to the Republic of Armenia. As part of the program “Ambassadors Without Borders,” the meeting was held in the Yerevan residence of the Lebanese Ambassador.

Jean Makaron, the Lebanese Ambassador to Armenia and the initiator of the program, welcomed the attendees. He expressed his gratitude to the Catholicos of All Armenians for accepting his invitation, and participating in the program with a discussion titled “The Armenian Apostolic Church’s Mission in the Past and at Present.”

The Catholicos of All Armenians welcomed the Ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions, expressing his appreciation to the Ambassador of Lebanon for organizing a beautiful meeting.

During the discussion, Karekin II reflected on the establishment and centuries-old service of the Armenian Apostolic Church, also speaking about her important role in the preservation of the national identity.

“The mission of the Armenian Church extends between the borders of the centuries-old history of the Armenian people, and the path opened through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. She has suffered together with her people and been martyred with her children, always keeping bright the life-giving hope of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church, which developed and is still ongoing from history through the Resurrection until today. From the Golgotha cross- drawn with the traces of blood of Jesus Christ, it reaches to the Holy Sepulcher, resurrected and renewed again by the triumphant example of the Lord,” he said.

“Through prayers to God and with satisfaction, today we note that due to an identity based on Christian faith and doctrine, the Armenian people today, also survived as a predominantly faithful Christian nation. Although the Armenian nation

was deprived of her homeland and 1.5 million of her children after the Armenian Genocide in 1915, and scattered to various places and corners of the world. Faithful to their boundless devotion of following Jesus Christ, and even under those stressful conditions, they created a strong united Christian spiritual-national body, which today we call the Diaspora. The spiritual homeland is connected to his homeland- the Republic of Armenia, through invisible and unbreakable, numerous and

active impact on the country’s socio-economic life. From the first days of the independence, through her active participation, the Armenian Church undertook finding the solution to problems resulting from the above-mentioned phenomena. Today the Armenian Church has an active presence in various segments of Armenian society: The Armed Forces, health, education and science, culture and the Armenian identity. In this sense, the Church puts more efforts to fix and maintain

the spiritual and moral values in society. We consider it important to record the mission of the Armenian Church in the field of religious education and upbringing, giving an identity and necessary cognitive knowledge about the Armenian Church to the young generation of Armenian Christians. The Mother See has a Social Service Office, which aids and support to nearly 20,000 people,” stated Karekin II.

He also referred to one of the important activities of the Church, the ecumenical and interreligious relations, directed at the friendship between people, cooperation and strengthening of the spirit of peaceful coexistence. The Catholicos attested with satisfaction that the accredited diplomatic institutions in the RA and the ambassadors, personally contribute to those relations and the strengthening of mutual ties. He expressed gratitude to them for their effective cooperation with the Mother See and ecclesiastical institutions.

The Catholicos also answered the ambassadors’ questions which related to church programs directed at poverty eradication; ways of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; the peace-making efforts of the Armenian Church; interchurch relations and the situation in the Middle East.

The Catholicos of All Armenians was accompanied by Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisyan, Director of the External Relations and Protocol Department of the Mother See; Rev. Karekin Hambardzumyan, Dean of the Gevorkian Theological Seminary; Rev. Aghan Yernjakyan, and Prof. Armen Charchyan, Director of the Izmirlian Medical Center.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II with some of the members of the diplomatic corps

countless threads. In other words, today Armenia and Diaspora are the two pure eyes of the Armenian Church, through which he can see and clarify the national-social issues and their solutions,” Catholicos Karekin II stated.

Speaking on the present-day aim, he mentioned that the Armenian Church is implementing improvements in the social life with new inspiration and enthusiasm.

“You understand the devastating earthquake, the Karabakh conflict and the blockade of the country had a neg-

## Russian Gas Company Offers New, Lower Tariffs For Armenian Consumers

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Russian gas monopoly Gazprom’s subsidiary in Armenia has asked the local regulators to lower tariffs for consumers as well as approve new ones for certain groups of citizens and corporate bodies after an apparent request from the country’s authorities.

Last week the possibility of lowering gas prices for Armenian consumers was addressed during a meeting of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and visiting Gazprom chief Alexey Miller.

Gazprom, which provides the bulk of Armenia’s natural gas, already lowered its price by 9 percent, to \$150 per thousand cubic meters, as recently as in April, which resulted in a 6-percent reduction of the retail price for households and small businesses in the country from July 1.

Speculation about a possible further cut in the gas price began in September shortly after former Gazprom executive Karen Karapetian was appointed Armenia’s new prime minister.

During the first meeting of his cabinet later that month Karapetian, in particular, told the Armenian ministries of energy and labor as well as state utility regulators to explore ways of making electricity and gas cheaper for low-income households and some businesses.

“This must be done at the expense of economic entities that provide such services, rather than the state budget,” Karapetian said in a clear reference to energy suppliers.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Gazprom Armenia said that in its application to the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC) it seeks the approval of lower prices for both individual consumers using less than 10,000 cubic meters of natural gas a month as well as corporate consumers using higher amounts.

The decrease sought by the company for households is expected to make over 5 percent – from current 146.4 to 139 drams per cubic meter (the current exchange rate of the U.S. dollar in Armenia on average is 473 drams).

Corporate users, meanwhile, are offered to pay an equivalent of \$242.1 per thousand cubic meters instead of current \$257.

In addition, the company offers some differentiation in its tariffs. Thus, for consumers that are entitled to family or social benefits Gazprom Armenia offers a 100-dram-per-cubic-meter tariff for 600 cubic meters consumed during a year.

For farmers keeping greenhouses from November 1 to March 31 the company offers a tariff of an equivalent of \$212 per thousand cubic meters and for processing companies it offers the same tariff all year round.

Payments, according to Gazprom Armenia, will be accepted in drams in accordance with the average price of the US dollar formed on the Armenian currency market following the publication by the Central Bank of Armenia of the exchange rate for the 25th day of the preceding month.

“To encourage corporate consumers in Armenia’s market to increase the volumes of gas consumption and expand their activities, all consumers using 10,000 cubic meters of gas and more per month, except liquefied natural gas filling stations, state budget-funded organizations and electricity generators using natural gas at thermal stations for supplying electric power to the domestic market, for every 1,000 cubic meters of gas consumed above 10,000 will be asked to pay only an equivalent of \$212,” the company announced.

“For newly established gas consuming companies, whose monthly gas consumption will make 10,000 cubic meters or more, gas supply conditions and tariffs will be determined additionally, as a result of discussions between Gazprom Armenia and PSRC.”

A PSRC official said later that if approved, the new tariffs are likely to become effective as of January 1, 2017.

Vahagn Khachatrian, an economist affiliated with an opposition party, described the possible reduction of gas tariffs in Armenia as “predictable” since, according to him, gas prices

offered to the country’s consumers by the Russian monopolist are “inflated.” He further claimed that Gazprom Armenia receives excessive profits.

Gazprom Armenia has not yet explained how much it is going to reduce the tariffs. But

Khachatrian fears that it may again come “at a price” for Armenia. He, in particular, pointed out the 2013 gas deal as a result of which the Armenian government ceded its remaining 20-percent stake in the gas distribution network to Gazprom on account of accumulated debts.

## Belgian Senate President Urges Criminalizing Denial of Armenian Genocide

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – President of the Belgian Senate Christine Defraigne visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial this week, accompanied by Vice-Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Hermine Naghdalyan and Head of the Armenia-Belgium Deputy Friendship Group Shirak Torosyan.

Defraigne and members of her delegation laid flowers at the memorial to the Armenian



The members of the Belgian delegation visiting Armenia went to the Tsitsernakaberd Genocide Memorial Complex.

Genocide victims and paid tribute to the memory of the victims with a minute of silence. Noting that Belgium was one of the first countries to recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide, Defraigne said: “We continue the work at the Senate and we attach importance to the adoption of a bill criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide, which is important for the heirs of both genocide victims and its perpetrators. We would like the Armenian and Turkish communities to come together one day.”



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Turkey Detains Noted Journalist

ISTANBUL (News.am) – Within the framework of operations against the opposition *Cumhuriyet* daily of Turkey, police also detained well-known journalist Kadri Gürsel.

At the orders of the Prosecutor's Office, police detained 13 employees of *Cumhuriyet*, including its chief editor as well as its consultant, Kadri Gürsel, according to *Milliyet* daily of the country. They are charged with supporting the Gülen movement and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which Turkey considers to be terrorist organizations,

Gürsel has written numerous articles in favor of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations. In one of his articles, Gürsel even advised the Azerbaijanis to forget about Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

And during a visit to Yerevan, Gürsel had laid flowers at the Armenian Genocide Memorial.

## Death Penalty Will End EU Talks with Turkey

BERLIN (Deutsche Welle) – Official Berlin has strictly condemned the police operations in Turkey against reporters and the *Cumhuriyet* news agency, Steffen Seibert, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman told reporters.

Seibert underscored that Merkel greatly values press freedom and that this issue is being discussed during meetings between Germany and Turkey.

He also touched upon the announcements of Turkish officials regarding reinstating death penalty in Turkey. "Our stance regarding death penalty is clear and unchanged. A country using death penalty cannot become EU member. Therefore, reinstating death penalty will become the end of Turkey's membership talks to EU."

## Syrian Army Says Rebel Bombardment of Aleppo Killed 84 in Three Days

ALEPPO, Syria (Panorama.am) – Syria's army said on October 31 the Nusra Front and other terrorist groups had killed 84 people, mostly women and children, in Aleppo during the past three days, in a bombardment that included chemical weapons and rocket fire, according to Reuters agency.

The report says the Nusra Front broke allegiance with al Qaeda and changed its name to Jabhat Fateh al-Sham in July. It is one of the main militant groups taking part in an offensive against government-held western Aleppo that began on October 28.

Syrian state media reported on Sunday, October 30, that militants had fired poison gas at the Hamdaniya district of government-held western Aleppo. Rebels called that accusation a lie.

In a statement on Monday, the Army and Armed Forces High Command said rebels had targeted schools and civilians, fired 20 poison gas canisters, 50 Grad rockets and ignited 48 fires.

## Buenos Aires Celebrates Armenia

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – Thousands of people attended the festival Buenos Aires Celebrates Armenia on October 25 organized by the government of the City of Buenos Aires and the Armenian community in Argentina, with shows that included Armenian dances and music, food stands and artistic and cultural events.

The singer Grigor Mirzoyan was the main attraction, accompanied by the Argentine-Armenian band Nor Arax, the violinist Aida Simonian and singers Valeria Cherekian and Arman Gasparyan. The Armenian folk dances groups Nairi, Masis, Kaiane and Narek interpreted the songs with traditional Armenian dances.

The event in an outdoor park was attended by the Secretary for Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism of the Nation Claudio Avruj, President of National Bank Carlos Melconian, Archbishop Kissag Mouradian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church for Argentina and Chile and the Consul of Armenia in Argentina, Ester Mkrtumyan.



Participants in the Portugal Western Armenian education camp

## Western Armenian Summer Education Workshop: The Next Steps

LISBON, Portugal – The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation brought together 41 educators and creators in Western Armenian from nine countries in July, to collectively develop learning tools for language acquisition.

The group was composed of educators, academics, writers, musicians, artists, actors and IT specialists. The participants were divided into seven groups. Each group worked on finding tangible solutions for specific challenges related to the revitalization of Western Armenian. As a result, seven initiatives were undertaken which will directly contribute to learning Western Armenian through modern and innovative means.

The initiatives are:

The organization of a summer academic program of continuous education for teachers, combined with a summer camp for students, which would take place once a year. Learning from each other, students and educators will together develop best practices for Armenian language acquisition. These practices will then be shared widely.

The development of tools and curricula for formal and informal settings which focus on contemporary reading and writing methodologies adapted to Western Armenian.

The organization of a forum for principals and education leaders, where topics such as school culture, curriculum reform and other related issues would be discussed and best practices shared.

The creation and adaptation of games for both children and young adults, connected to social media platforms, which would enhance language acquisition and

practice.

The production of music that connects song and language. This would include the creation of new songs, re-recording of existing songs and other musical genres of learning.

The publication of a series of translations of children's books into Western Armenian from the following languages: English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Hebrew, Persian, Italian, Polish and Swedish. The books would be for several age groups. The goal is to release 60 titles in three years.

The set-up of a web-portal through which the above-mentioned information and tools will be shared and communicated, connecting stakeholders around the diaspora with one another.

These projects will be developed and implemented by the participants of the Summer Education Workshop and other invited experts.

In addition to developing the above mentioned specific initiatives, the week-long intensive workshop produced a remarkable group dynamic. Creativity and practical outputs went hand in hand. "What an achievement!" commented one of the participants during the concluding session referring to the excitement generated.

During the next several months each of these seven initiatives will be developed further. "The Armenian Communities Department is keen to support such initiatives," announced Director Razmik Panossian. He added: "This workshop has the potential to have a real impact over the next several years on the way Western Armenian is taught

and acquired, thanks to its participants and the outputs they will deliver."

The Summer Education Workshop was organized and coordinated by Ani Garmiryan, the Department's Senior Officer responsible for Western Armenian revitalization projects, with the support of Ani Koulian. The workshop participants were: France: Hasmig Chahinian, Anaid Donabedian, Meline Gazarian, Jirair Jolokian, Chouchane Kerovpyan, Maral Kerovpyan, Sose Manakian, Anouche Mekhsian, Dzovinar Mikirditsian, Anahid Sarkissian. Belgium: Janet Avanesian, Shoghher Margosian. Greece: Maral Kurkjian. Portugal: Vahan Kerovpyan. Lebanon: Anke al-Bataineh, Shant Demirjian, Nelly Komolian, Taline Ordoghlian, Hagop Yacoubian. Turkey: Natali Bagdat, Sevan Degirmenciyan, Kayane Gavrilof, Maral Hergel, Arusyak Koc, Narod Kurugoglu, Maral Satar. USA: Chris Bedian, Vahe Berberian, Hagop Gulludjian, Amy Hughes, Shoushan Karapetian, Silva Mesrobian, Serouj Ourishian, Sanan Shirinian. Canada: Lory Abrakian, Hasmig Inejikian, Sonia Kiledjian. Armenia: Christian Batikian, Nairi Khatchadourian, Gevorg Palanjyan, Sevana Tchakerian.

This initiative is part of the Armenian Communities Department's ongoing work on the revitalization of Western Armenian, emerging out of the September 2015 Conference "Innovation in Education: Challenges of Teaching Western Armenian in the 21st Century," which was supported and held at Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO) in Paris.

## DAAD and UNHCR Join Forces to Provide Higher Education Scholarships for Syrian Refugees in Turkey, Middle East

BONN, Germany – The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The aim is to create new prospects for Syrian refugees through access to higher education in the MENA region and Turkey. The DAAD and UNHCR agreed to pool their capacities to reach a higher impact for their HOPES project (DAAD) and the DAFI (UNHCR) scholarship program.

The EU-funded HOPES project targets Syrian refugees who are eligible to study in Lebanon, Jordan, Northern Iraq, Egypt and Turkey. Scholarships will be provided in order to enable them to assume or to finish higher education. Next to the refugees, also scholarships for students from the host countries are available. 400-600 scholarships shall be awarded during the project's lifespan until the end of 2019.

Since the beginning of the DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) program in 1992, UNHCR has awarded more than 8,000 university scholarships primarily to undergraduate refugee students in the country of first asylum. In the light of the civil war in Syria, the

German Foreign Ministry, who is the main donor for the DAFI program, has announced to provide additional DAFI scholarships for Syrian refugees in the region.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier: "In 2016, Germany is funding 2,500 new DAFI scholarships mostly for Syrian, but also for Afghan and African refugees. With its commitment to higher education for refugees, Germany creates perspectives for young refugees allowing them to take their future into their own hands and become more self-reliant, hence, also contributing to the well-being of their communities."

Coordination between HOPES and DAFI has intensified considerably since the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in June. With UNHCR offering to make use of already existing structures, the DAAD was able to reach a quick first impact with the HOPES project and enable students to start or continue their studies already in the upcoming fall semester.

"We are very pleased to join forces with UNHCR in order to really make a difference for young, talented people in the

region. By working together, synergies are created and more people will be able to receive funding for their studies," said DAAD President Professor Margret Wintermantel.

DAAD and UNHCR have launched a joint advertisement campaign for their scholarships which has reached a considerable amount of eligible candidates. In Turkey, the largest number of applications was registered. 13,500 candidates applied for a total of 1,500 available scholarships provided by DAFI, HOPES and a local institution. 90 of the scholarships will be funded by HOPES, 750 by the DAFI program. The selection processes and award procedures in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Northern Iraq are ongoing. The decisions are taken by joint HOPES-DAFI selection committees.

Launched in April 2016, the project HOPES is implemented by a consortium led by the DAAD. Partners are the British Council, EP-Nuffic and Campus France. HOPES follows a comprehensive approach to enable Syrian refugees and vulnerable youth to enter the higher education systems in Lebanon, Jordan, Northern Iraq, Egypt and Turkey.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey Rejects Europe's 'Red Line' On Press Freedom After Detentions

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – Turkey's prime minister said he had no regard for Europe's "red line" on press freedom on November 1 and warned Ankara would not be brought to heel with threats, rejecting criticism of the detention of senior journalists at an opposition newspaper.

Police detained the editor and top staff of *Cumhuriyet*, a pillar of the country's secularist establishment, on October 31, on accusations that the newspaper's coverage had helped precipitate a failed military coup in July.

The United States and European Union both voiced concern about the move in Turkey, a NATO ally which aspires to EU membership. European Parliament President Martin Schulz wrote on Twitter that the detentions marked the crossing of "yet another red-line" against freedom of expression in the country.

"Brother, we don't care about your red line. It's the people who draw the red line. What importance does your line have," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told members of his ruling AK Party in a speech in parliament.

"Turkey is not a country to be brought in line with salvos and threats. Turkey gets its power from the people and would be held accountable by the people."

Prosecutors accuse staff at *Cumhuriyet*, one of few media outlets still critical of President Tayyip Erdogan, of committing crimes on behalf of Kurdish militants and the network of Fethullah Gulen, a U.S.-based cleric blamed for

orchestrating the July coup attempt.

Journalists at the paper were suspected of seeking to precipitate the coup through "subliminal messages" in their columns before it happened, the state-run Anadolu agency said.

*Cumhuriyet* vowed "we will not surrender" in a front-page headline. Dozens of people staged a vigil in front of its Istanbul offices overnight, some wrapped in blankets as they slept on benches while police guarded barriers outside.

"Even if *Cumhuriyet's* executives and writers are detained, our newspaper will continue its fight for democracy and freedom to the end," it said in a defiant editorial which described the arrests as the start of an attempt to close the paper.

It said its pages had repeatedly warned that Gulen's movement represented a danger to the Republic and wanted to abolish secularism. The paper said it had in the past been targeted by prosecutors and judges aligned with Gulen.

Turkey's authorities have bristled at the Western reaction to the abortive coup, in which rogue soldiers used fighter jets and tanks to attack parliament and other key buildings, killing more than 240 people, many of them civilians.

They see European leaders as quick to condemn widescale purges of suspected plotters, but reluctant to accept the gravity of the putsch and the threat to the state.

"We have no problem with press freedom. This is what we can't agree with our European

friends. They always bring up press freedom when we take steps in our fight against terrorism," Yildirim said.

He said Turkey could draft a "limited measure" to bring back the death penalty if a political compromise could be reached on the issue, a move that could spell an end to its efforts to join the European Union.

Crowds have repeatedly called for the re-introduction of capital punishment, which Turkey abolished in 2002 as part of the EU accession process, and Erdogan has said he would approve it if parliament voted for it.

Turkey has classified Gulen's network of followers as the "Gülenist Terror Organisation" (FETO), ranking it as an enemy of the state alongside the Kurdish PKK militant group, which has waged a three-decade armed insurgency, and Islamic State.

Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999, denies involvement in the coup attempt.

More than 110,000 of Gulen's suspected followers have been sacked or suspended and 37,000 jailed pending trial since the coup attempt. Rights groups say the scale of the purges show Erdogan is using the coup attempt to crush all dissent.

The latest detainee on Monday evening was veteran Turkish journalist Kadri Gursel, who began writing for *Cumhuriyet* in May, bringing the number of those held to 13, the paper said. Three more staff targeted by the investigation

are abroad.

It said the detainees, some of whose computers and phones were confiscated, were not being allowed to speak to lawyers for five days under emergency rule imposed after the putsch.

The staunchly secularist paper was established in 1924 by a confidant of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk just six months after he established the Turkish Republic.

Political violence has dogged its history. Seven of its writers have been assassinated since 1978 and some were among those jailed after coups in 1971 and 1980.

*Cumhuriyet's* previous editor, Can Dundar, was jailed last year, convicted of publishing state secrets involving Turkey's support for Syrian rebels. The case sparked censure from rights groups and Western governments worried about worsening human rights in Turkey under Erdogan.

Since the attempted coup, 170 newspapers, magazines, television stations and news agencies have been shut down, leaving 2,500 journalists unemployed, Turkey's journalists' association said in a statement on Monday.

"We are not going to learn from you what press freedom is. We support it all the way," Yildirim said of European criticism.

"But we won't see criminals, their accomplices, and supporters of the separatist (PKK) and FETO terrorist organizations as innocent. Let the judiciary do its job. If there is nothing

## Armenian Makes Official Visit to Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (Armenpress/Public Radio of Armenia) – During an official visit to Indonesia, Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian on November 1 met Vice-President of Indonesia Jusuf Kalla, the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced.

Kalla welcomed the Armenian foreign minister in Jakarta and attached importance to the further deepening of the bilateral ties. At the meeting the sides stressed the need to intensify the political dialogue between Armenia and Indonesia, expanding the mutual cooperation between vari-

ous ministries, boosting the trade-economic cooperation and in this context attached importance on holding business forums, establishing cooperation between the chambers of commerce, as well as promoting ties between people and tourism. They also exchanged views on a number of international and regional issues and the efforts aimed at solving them.

encourage educational and cultural exchange. The two discussed the situation in the Middle East, the Syrian crisis, the fight against terrorism and conflicts. Marsudi briefed Minister Nalbandian on the processes taking place in South-Eastern Asia and presented her country's approaches. Edward Nalbandian presented the efforts of Armenia and the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries towards furthering the Karabakh peace process. Nalbandian invited Marsudi to visit Armenia. At the end of the meeting the Foreign Ministers signed an agreement on elimination of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports, also as a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries. Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Indonesian Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education Mohammad Nazir signed a Letter of Intent on cooperation in the fields of science, technology and higher education.



Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi

ous ministries, boosting the trade-economic cooperation and in this context attached importance on holding business forums, establishing cooperation between the chambers of commerce, as well as promoting ties between people and tourism. They also exchanged views on a number of international and regional issues and the efforts aimed at solving them.

The same day Nalbandian visited the Parliament of Indonesia, where he met Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives Agus Hermanto and members of the Commission of Foreign Affairs. Issues related to the development of cooperation between the parliaments of two states, the formation of friendly relations, the cooperation within the international parliamentary formats were discussed.

Nalbandian presented the joint efforts of Armenia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group aimed at creating appropriate conditions for moving forward the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process.

Nalbandian and Hermanto shared the

## NATO-Russia Tensions Move to Balkans with Military Drills

PODGORICA, Montenegro (BBC News) – NATO is holding a civil emergency exercise in Montenegro while neighboring Serbia prepares for joint training with 150 Russian paratroops.

Russia dislikes Montenegro's policy of increasing ties with NATO and the EU.

There have also been arrests in Montenegro and Serbia over a suspected plot to topple outgoing Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic.

In addition, a large arms cache was found near the family home of Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic on Saturday.

There are suspicions that the arms were to be used in an assassination attempt against Vucic, a pro-EU reformer, though he himself played down that theory.

In Montenegro, officials have accused Russia of plotting against Djukanovic.

The four-day NATO exercise in Montenegro began on Monday, and involves NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

Focused on the Niksic area, the aim is to practice for a major flood or chemical emergency.

There are 680 participants, from 32 NATO and partner countries. Israel, Azerbaijan and Kosovo are among the non-Nato countries involved.

### 'Slavic Brotherhood 2016'

Russian Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev paid an unexpected visit to Belgrade last week.

The Serbian-Russian military exercise, starting on Wednesday, is called "Slavic Brotherhood 2016". Units from Belarus will also take part.

The Russian military says the drills will take place near Belgrade, until 15 November.

Serbia has, nevertheless, increased ties with NATO over the years, including membership of the alliance's Partnership for Peace programme.

NATO's bombing of Serbia and Montenegro in 1999 and its intervention in Kosovo left a legacy of bitterness among Serb nationalists. Russia has forged close ties with some of them, reviving centuries-old pan-Slavic patriotism.

NATO's action resulted in the ousting of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. The nationalist leader died in 2006 while on trial in The Hague for war crimes.

Since splitting from Serbia in 2006 Montenegro has forged close ties with the EU and NATO. It is expected to join Nato early next year, but EU membership is not likely before 2020.

Montenegro, with a population of some 630,000, has in recent years seen an influx of Russian money, homebuyers and tourists.



Serbian transport helicopter: the air force will train with Russian paratroops this week near Belgrade

# Community News

## A Worthy Tribute To Savior of Orphans During Genocide

By Kevork Keushkerian

LOS ANGELES – Maria Jacobsen (1882-1960) was a Danish Lutheran missionary who went to Kharpet, Turkey in 1907 and started to work with Near East Relief to save Armenian orphans from Ottoman Turkish atrocities. Her eyewitness accounts of the deportations and massacres of Armenians were published in her book entitled “Diaries of a Danish Missionary: Harput, 1907-1919.”

Eventually, Jacobsen took hundreds of orphans to Jebail, Lebanon and continued to care for them in her Birds Nest Orphanage, where she became known as “mama” for nearly four thousand orphans until her death in 1960. As she had requested, she was buried, at the entrance of her beloved Birds Nest Orphanage.

The “Friends of Maria Jacobsen” presented a concert in her memory, under the auspices of all three denominations of the Armenian Church, which took place on Friday, October 21, at Glendale Presbyterian Church.

After the invocation by Armenian Church Leaders, Dr. Garbis Der-Yeghiayan, Chairman of the “Friends of Maria Jacobsen” Board made the opening remarks. Next, a short video presentation featured highlights from the care that “mama” had lovingly extended to her adopted children.

The ISM Production’s Chamber Orchestra was conducted by Sir Vartan Melkonian, conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London, who had especially flown in for this occasion.

Melkonian was one of the orphans Jacobsen cared for. He was brought up in the early 1950s as an orphan in the Birds’ Nest Orphanage until the age of 8. He then lived rough, along with thousands of other orphans like him, in the slums of Beirut, Lebanon.

In 1972, fleeing the civil war in Lebanon, he went to the United Kingdom and after working as a singer on several TV shows, he became a conductor of classical music in London’s most famous halls conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and others, since 1985. His life is a true success story of “rags to riches.”

In gratitude to the orphanage that looked after him as a child, he established a children’s charitable trust to inspire underprivileged children. Recently, he was honored by Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House

of Cilicia, with an encyclical and the “St. Mesrob Mashdots” insignia.

The musical program was composed of: Mozart’s *Symphony No. 40* (1st movement); *The moon and I are Neighbors* by Lebanese composer and singer Rahbani & Feirouz, which was adapted and further composed by Vartan Melkonian; Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 6* (1st movement), a favorite of Maria Jacobsen; Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg’s *Holberg Suite*; *Armenian Folk Songs* from Komitas-Aslamazyan and *A Symphonic Poem ‘Farewell to Maria’* (2nd movement) by Melkonian.

This musical program was sheer ecstasy for classical music lovers, and a worthy tribute from a grateful orphan to his beloved caregiver. After the musical program, Melkonian received an honorary Doctorate from Dr. Garbis

see TRIBUTE, page 7



Sir. Vartan Melkonian



TCA vice president Edmond Azadian, at left, reads TCA plaque to honoree Hrayr Toukhanian

## Detroit Tekeyan Hosts Arkun Lecture on Van and Honors Toukhanian

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – The Detroit chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) presented a lecture by Aram Arkun on the defense of Van-Vasburagan and honored filmmaker and videographer Hrayr Toukhanian on October 28 at the Armenian General Benevolent Union Alex and Marie Manoogian School.

TCA Detroit chapter chair Diana Alexanian introduced Arkun as a historian who is the executive director of the TCA of the US and Canada, as well as assistant editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Arkun placed the events of 1915 in Van city and province in historical context, and illustrated his talk with maps and photographs of the fighters and buildings in Van.

He indicated the factors leading to tension between Armenians and the Ottoman government and the spread of violence throughout the province. The Armenians in Van city fought off government forces from April 20 to mid-May, and were rescued by Russian troops and Armenian volunteers. They fled to the Caucasus with the first Russian retreat, though many came back after the Tsarist government reestablished its occupation of the region. The final Armenian exodus from Van took place in 1918.

Arkun showed how all three Armenian political parties in Van, the Constitutional Democrat Party (heirs of the Armenagans), the Social Democrat Hnchagian Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), cooperated in 1915. While during the 1896 defense of the city, the Armenagans were dominant numerically, this changed by World War I. The ARF had surpassed the Armenagans in numbers, so that Aram Manugian took charge of the joint civil administration while the Constitutional Democrats under Armenag Yegarian led the military defense.

The defense saved the lives of many Armenians who were able to escape  
see DETROIT, page 7



TCA chapter chair Diana Alexanian, at left, gives speaker Aram Arkun a plaque with a famous quotation from William Saroyan

## Marc Tognozzi Memorial Fund Joins Effort to Build Home for Syrian-Armenian Family

TARZANA, Calif. – The Marc Tognozzi Memorial Fund, in partnership with the Paros Foundation, recently joined in the efforts to fund a project to build a home for a Syrian Armenian family in the village of Ishkhanadzor in Artsakh’s Kashatagh region.

“Armenia and Artsakh have a tremendous opportunity to help Armenians from Syria who wish to repatriate,” said Esther Tognozzi. “By helping a family move into a permanent home in Artsakh, it will give them a firm base from which to launch their new lives.”

More than a dozen Syrian Armenian families are living in temporary conditions in Ishkhanadzor waiting for a new home. Many partially destroyed homes in this village are awaiting restoration in order to be given to a family. The Paros



Marc Tognozzi

Foundation hopes to launch construction prior to the onset of winter, with the goal of having a home ready for a family in the spring.

With the ongoing support of family and friends, the Marc Tognozzi Memorial Fund has provided critical funding for several projects in Armenia including: support for families of the fallen soldiers from the four-day war; The free Apelian Dental Clinic at the Prkutyun Special Children’s Center, which provides free dental services to disabled children and impoverished families living in the Shengavit community of Yerevan; the renovation of two classrooms at the Hatsik Village School; winter boots for children in need via the Share-a-Pair project; relief efforts in Kessab; and, firewood for heating and cooking for impoverished families in Gyumri.

The Paros Foundation underwrites all administrative expenses, thus allowing 100 percent of all contributions to be allocated directly to these projects. The Paros Foundation would like to thank the Tognozzi Family, their extended family and friends for their continued support.

Donations to the Marc Tognozzi Memorial Fund are accepted online at [parosfoundation.org/marc-tognozzi-fund](http://parosfoundation.org/marc-tognozzi-fund). Or via mail to: The Paros Foundation, 918 Parker Street, Suite A14, Berkeley, CA 94710. The Paros Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. All contributions to The Paros Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



**COMMUNITY NEWS**

## Detroit Tekeyan Hosts Arkun Lecture on Van and Honors Toukhanian

DETROIT, from page 6  
 afterwards to the Caucasus, though there were many losses during the withdrawals. It also hindered the military plans of the Ottomans. It gave Armenians experience in local administration and military action which was helpful a few years later in the first Republic of Armenia.

After this lecture, a short video on the defense of Van by Toukhanian was screened. It contained photos accompanied by Armenian music. Toukhanian's family is originally from Van. He is a past president of the Vasbouragan Compatriotic Society. He continues to serve as an active member of its executive and webmaster of its internet site, vasbouragansociety.com.

Alexanian then invited Edmond Y. Azadian, vice president of the TCA of the US and Canada, to make a presentation honoring producer and director Hrair Toukhanian. Azadian praised Toukhanian's decades of service to the Armenian community, and highlighted his 1982 film, "Assignment Berlin," on the Tehlirian assassination of Talat Pasha, as well as his achievements in his profession as a commercial filmmaker. Toukhanian's multiscreen presentation, the "Wide World of Ford," for Hemisphere 68, was watched by over six million people.

Azadian presented Toukhanian with a plaque honoring his community service. After this, Vaughn Mesropian, president of the

Vasbouragan Society's central executive board, took the podium to recognize Toukhanian's extensive contributions to the work of this

organization. Many members of the Vasbouragan Society, including its executive, were present.



From left, Diana Alexanian, Aram Arkun, Edmond Azadian and Hrair Toukhanian

## President of Haigazian University Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian to Speak at Fresno State

FRESNO – Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, president of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon, will present a talk on "Armenian Educational Life in Lebanon: Haigazian University" at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 14, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus.

The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Fall Lecture Series which is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

Haigazian University was founded in 1955 and is a liberal arts university that



Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian

emphasizes a challenging curriculum, good teacher-student relations, and empowerment through the free search for truth.

Haidostian will discuss the mission of Haigazian University in the context of Armenian life in Lebanon. The University faces a variety of challenges related to regional tensions, socioeconomic problems of its students, as well as securing a stable financial future. He is well placed to speak about these challenges and about the general status of higher education in Lebanon.

Haidostian was appointed president of Haigazian University in 2002. He received a Masters in Divinity (M. Div.) from the Near East School of Theology in Beirut in 1987 and a Ph.D. in 1994 from the Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the Chair, Central Committee of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Haidostian is actively involved in the leadership of numerous international, regional and local educational, ecclesiastical and ecumenical bodies and institutions.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

## A Worthy Tribute to Savior of Orphans During Genocide

TRIBUTE, from page 6

Der-Yeghiayan, president of Mashdots College.

But the best had yet to come from the "Friends of Maria Jacobsen" as on Sunday, October 23, a special reception was held and Maria Jacobsen's bust was unveiled at the courtyard of Bethania Lutheran Church in Solvang, a town with a sizable Danish community, near Santa Barbara.



The bust of Maria Jacobsen

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## OBITUARY

# AGBU Young Professionals Launches Newest Group in Houston

HOUSTON, Texas – On October 15, the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) Network officially launched its newest group here. In celebration of the founding, 30 Armenian young professionals gathered to mingle, play games, share stories and learn more about one other. The launch of YP Houston was spearheaded by chair Anais Babajanian and steering committee members Irene Alvarez, Taleen Asadourian, Sofia Mnjoyan and Nicole Sabbagh, who came together to establish the first YP group in the Southern United States.

The afternoon's activities included a testimonial from Avo Mavilian, one of the founding members of YP Chicago, who shared a story about how the YP network shaped his life: "The AGBU family has been a part of my life for as long as I remember, from my siblings attending AGBU schools to me participating in AGBU scouts to my wife interning with the AGBU Summer Internship Program and later being a founding member of YP Chicago. Through these periods, I have had the benefit and privilege of building a global network of Armenians who continue to build on the AGBU legacy of benevolence and bring a positive impact to the communities they call home."

In the past decade, Houston – the fourth largest city in the United States – has developed



On October 15, the AGBU Young Professionals Network officially launched its newest group in Houston, Texas.

a number of industries, most notably medicine and energy. It is home to a growing Armenian young professional community, a mix of both natives of Houston and new transplants exploring personal and professional opportunities in Texas. YP Houston hopes to encourage members and the community through career development, fairs and counseling; networking within the local Armenian group, greater Houston community, and global YP network; and promoting business

development in Armenia.

The AGBU Young Professionals (YP) is a growing network of groups and supporters for young Armenians between the ages of 22 to 40.

For more information on YP Houston, visit <https://www.facebook.com/agbuyphouston/> or write to the steering committee at [agbuyphouston@gmail.com](mailto:agbuyphouston@gmail.com).

## OBITUARY

### R. Carol Norigian

BOYNTON BEACH, Fla. – R. Carol Norigian, 73, of Boynton Beach, formerly of Cranston, RI, died unexpectedly on Saturday, October 29.

She was born on December 16, 1942 in Providence, RI, the youngest child of the late Bedros Peter Norigian and Satenig (Proodian) Norigian.

She leaves her siblings, Marion Der Vartanian, Gerald G. Norigian (Lillian) and Zaven Richard Norigian (Rose), and was the sister of the late Deacon A. Edward Norigian. She was also the sister-in-law of Dolores Norigian and the late Harry C. Der Vartanian. She was the aunt of Chris Der Vartanian, Lisa Lombardo (Anthony), Sharon D'Antuono (Robert), Tania Alexander (Gary), Zaven Norigian (Shawn), and Gregory Norigian. She was the Godmother of Patricia Rendine (Paul). She had several grandnieces/nephews including Alexandra

Lombardo, Matthew, Michael D'Antuono, Amara D'Antuono, and Luke and David Alexander.

Norigian was devoted to the Armenian Church and several Armenian organizations. She was a member of St. David



Armenian Church in Boca Raton, Florida, and Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence. She played significant roles in related organizations of each Church, namely the Parish Council and Women's Guild, and, additionally, was a Diocesan Delegate representative. She held several leadership positions in organizations such as the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Armenian Students' Association which has been vital in awarding hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to students of Armenian descent without political bias.

Funeral services were on Thursday, November 3 in Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, with burial at Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.

### Clara Russian Genocide Survivor

ARLINGTON, Mass. – Clara Russian died on October 5. She was 101.

She was a survivor of the Armenian Genocide.

She was the wife of the late Hagop Russian. She leaves her son, Arsen Russian of Arlington and daughter Linda Adalian and her husband Khosroff of Winchester; grandchildren Christian and Sevan Adalian and great-grandchildren Areg and Shant Adalian as well as a cousin, Teresa Brundage of Peabody.

The funeral was from St. Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown, on October 11, followed by interment at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Arlington.

Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights of Vartan Delegation Opens Yerevan Office

YEREVAN – The Knights of Vartan Inc., currently celebrating its 100th anniversary, has extended its base of operations in the United States to Yerevan, Armenia by opening its Communications Office in Yerevan on September 19, 2016, in a newly renovated office in the Tigran Metz Publishing building in central Yerevan.

Established in Philadelphia in 1916, during the Armenian Genocide, the Knights of Vartan in July of this year declared “Veradardz Hayrenik” (“Back to the Homeland”) as the focus of its 2nd century of service.

Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Steven Kradjian, accompanied by Daughters of Vartan Grand Matron Sona Manuelian, led a delegation of 31 members of the Knights to Armenia, representing a majority of the lodges in North America, and 12 members of the Daughters of Vartan, to launch the Knights of Vartan Communications Office and conduct site visits to partners in service to the people of Armenia.

The Communications Office in Tigran Metz will be staffed by a full-time Knights of Vartan Liaison, who will manage in-country communications on multiple media platforms, reporting to Grand Commander Kradjian. The Liaison in the Communications Office will facilitate and monitor collaborations of the Knights with its partners, manage Knights of Vartan publications, and will facilitate program planning and supervise implementation. Formal policies and written procedures enable the Communications Office to maintain continuity throughout the initial 5-year term, with up to three extension options as authorized by the Knights of Vartan supreme body in July 2016.

When Grand Commander Kradjian visited Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II in October 2015 at Holy Echmiadzin to present a commissioned painting commemorating the Centennial of the Sainted Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, the Knights of Vartan was contacted by the office of Hon. Hranush Hakobyan, Minister to the Diaspora, who invited the Knights national leadership to make an



Hranush Hakobyan and Grand Matron Sona Manuelian

official visit to the Ministry. At that official visit on October 2, 2015, Hakobyan encouraged that in its Centennial year, the Knights of Vartan should convene a meeting in Yerevan and increase its presence in Armenia. Kradjian pledged to the Catholicos and to Hakobyan that the Knights would return to Armenia in 2016 to convene a special meeting during its 100th anniversary year.

On July 9, 2016, the Knights of Vartan supreme body delivered and funded a mandate to establish the Knights of Vartan Communications Office and a permanent presence in Yerevan.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan delegation visited Holy Echmiadzin on September 18, where Karekin II received several members of the delegation in his office where he welcomed the Knights of Vartan to Armenia and gave them his blessing.

After opening the Communications Office on September 19, the Knights convened an official delegates’ meeting on September 20 at the Marriott Armenia Hotel, where Kradjian marked the start of Knights of Vartan operations in Armenia. He said: “For

## Begins Second Century in Armenia



The new Knights of Vartan Communications Office in Yerevan

most of the past one hundred years, the Knights of Vartan has provided community leadership and support quietly, drawing no attention to its work. The 25th anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia and the centennial of the Knights of Vartan mark the time to expand our operations in Armenia, establish networks, partnerships and resource channels in Armenia for the greater benefit of our people.”

Grand Matron Sona Manuelian also led a delegation of Daughters of Vartan in support of the Knights of Vartan’s historic expansion. Kradjian announced that the Daughters of Vartan are invited and welcome to utilize the



Hranush Hakobyan and Grand Commander Steve Kradjian

Communications Office ad libitum.

### 100th Anniversary Celebration

A formal 100th Anniversary Celebration for the Knights of Vartan was organized on September 19, by the Hakobyan, at the Komitas Kamerayin Institute. Hundreds of guests attended, representing the Government, Clergy, and virtually all NGOs in Armenia. Minister Hakobyan presented the President’s Movses Khorenatsi Medal to Past Commander Hrant Gulian for his service to the Republic; and Commemorative Medals of the Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly to Past Grand Commanders Robert Barsam, Bob DerMatoian, Haig Deranian, Nigoghos Atinizian, and Past Commander Jack Medzorjian and Past Matron Eva Medzorjian; and the Boghos Noubar Medal of the Ministry of the Diaspora to Commander Leo Manuelian, Commander Tigran Sahakyan and Past Commander Ari Minnetyan. Father Dajad Davidian was awarded with the joined Hakob Meghapart Medal of the Ministry of the Diaspora and the Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice.

Grand Commander Steven Kradjian and Lieutenant Grand Commander Hunan

Arshakian were awarded the Special Medal of Patriotism for their leadership in establishing the Knights of Vartan in Armenia. Kradjian presented to Hakobyan the Knights of Vartan Award in gratitude for successful collaboration in service to the Armenian people.

### A Century of Service

Throughout the past century, the Knights of Vartan, through several of its members and chapters across the United States have provided humanitarian aid to Armenian communities in vulnerable regions.

For the last two decades, for example, the Knights of Vartan has partnered with the World Bank Armenian Social Investment Fund and the Armenian Territory Development Fund who, with funds leveraged up to 19-to-1 dollars raised, have provided repairs and renovations to 235 schools in Armenia; with the Armenian Church Eastern Diocese through the Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP); with the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia; with NAASR through the Knights of Vartan Fund for Armenian Studies, and other programs. As these programs are expanding annually, the need for a base of communications in Armenia became apparent. For this reason, the delegation made a number of visits to Knights-supported programs.

### Fuller Center for Housing, Armenia

During this visit, the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia announced the completion of a house for the seven-member Toroyan family in Geghashen, Kotyak Province, a home which was sponsored by the Knights of Vartan. Commander Leo Manuelian and Grand Matron Sona Manuelian for several years have been managing the Fuller Center’s partnership with the Knights and Daughters of Vartan.

Grand Matron Manuelian and Kradjian attended the Toroyan house blessing on September 22, celebrated by Fr. Dajad Davidian, a 55-year Knight, in a moving ceremony. The Toroyan family received a supervised microloan to pay for materials needed to complete the building of their home over one year. Under this program, the family will repay the Fuller Center the microloan interest-free and inflation-free over 30 years, while local tradesmen volunteer their time and labor to help complete the home. The re-paid money will be recycled to support another housing project in a similar way, thus expanding the fund at a time when the housing need in villages remains extensive. The program grows over time, such that currently the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia, led by President Ashot Yeghiazaryan, with colleagues Alla Asatryan and Rouzanna Sakanyan, completes approximately 100 family homes per year in regions throughout Armenia. The housing need is great, and the Knights and Daughters of Vartan contribute to fulfilling that need.

### Knights of Vartan Sports Complex, Tavush

In the Tavush region, the Knights of Vartan Sport Complex was opened on September 22, 2016 and consecrated under the auspices of Archbishop Bagrad Galsdanyan, the Minister of Sport, Hon. Gabriel Ghazaryan, Fr. Aram Mirzoyan of St. Hovhannes Church in Berd, and Father Armen. The complex, including gymnasium, two soccer fields, pool, playground and state of the art utilities and fixtures, was personally financed by Commander Tigran Sahakyan, his family and Mamigonian Lodge of New York; construction is being supervised by staff of the Ministry of Sport. In addition, on the recommendation of Sahakyan, Kradjian awarded the Knights of Vartan Medal “For extraordinary service to the Armenian people in the name of the Knights of Vartan” to Minister Ghazaryan, Hayk Khookasyan, and Armen Zaimcyan, for all of their assistance on the project. On the sports complex property is also a 20-foot-tall khatchkar, consecrated with the complex. It features the cross in the form of a sword of General Vartan, his strong and brave image and the cross boldly facing Azerbaijan across the border only a few hundred yards away.

### New Armenian Monument, Koghb

In the border village of Koghb, a crossroads which was the site of several car accidents, was redesigned and constructed by the Atinizian family to incorporate a new roundabout and monument of Armenian History for the town in the name of the Knights of Vartan. The new roundabout was the scene of an assembly by the entire village community, including students released from school for one hour to attend this opening ceremony, teachers, clergy and business leaders. Grand Commander Steve Kradjian addressed the assembly and conferred on Mr. Kevork Atinizian the Knights of Vartan Award for extraordinary service to the Armenian people in the name of the Knights of Vartan. Archbishop Galsdanyan consecrated the roundabout and monument on September 22. Past Commander Arman Izmirlian and his wife Seta pledged to the assembled town leaders that he would improve the decaying bus stop adjacent to the roundabout, extending the service to the village in the name of the Knights of Vartan.

### Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP)

The CASP program partnered with the Knights of Vartan serves orphans of the border region, and is led by Fr. Aram of the St. Steven’s Church in Berd. The Knights and Daughters of Vartan delegation visited the Church and met briefly with the children and the ministry staff. Filmmaker and member Knight Paul Boghosian commented on the significance of the Knights of Vartan expansion of operations in Armenia, emotionally describing the great unmet needs of children and families especially in these border regions; he exhorted that “As members of the Knights of Vartan we all must do our best to safeguard and improve these young Armenian lives.”

### Knights of Vartan School, Yerevan

The Knights of Vartan since 1993 has supported the school in Yerevan now officially known as the Knights of Vartan School, serving Kindergarten through 9th grade. It is one of the many schools the Knights of Vartan has supported via its partnership with the World Bank Armenian Social Investment Fund and the Armenian Territory Development Fund. Students at this school have achieved the highest standards of learning in all academic subjects, particularly excelling in mathematics and physical science. Over the years the school has expanded and improved its space, now serving 980 students. The Knights of Vartan delegation witnessed fully modernized classrooms and other classrooms and facilities in clear need of repair, requiring lighting, basic classroom furniture, and repair of stairs, and floors. An auditorium used by students more often than weekly has only natural light through high windows at the right time of day, and stadium style seating with splintered broken wooden chairs. Member Knight Dr. Garry Zamanigian committed to fund the installation of lighting in the auditorium at the Knights of Vartan School.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Impressive Talents Highlight AIWA's 25th Anniversary

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) held its 25th anniversary celebration from September 29 to October 2 at the Charles Hotel with an impressive group of speakers renowned in a variety of professions. The weekend began early with a welcome reception at the Armenian Cultural Foundation in Arlington on the evening of September 29, while the formal conference program began the next morning at the Charles and continued on Saturday, October 1. A banquet that night was followed by an AIWA leaders workshop on October 2 and a reception and exhibit opening that afternoon at the Armenian Museum of America.

There were 35 speakers in panels at the conference on September 30 and October 1 covering a wide range of topics relevant to women. It began with a session on women's leadership, which included Dr. Sharyn S. Boornazian as facilitator, and panelists Dr. Ani Ross Grubb of the Carroll School of Management at Boston College, Alexandra Pittman, the founder of AVP Global Consulting, LLC, which specializes in research and evaluation for human rights, women's rights and social justice organizations and movements, and Monique Svazlian Tallon, the chief executive officer (CEO) of Higher Path Consulting and the author of *Leading Gracefully*. It was followed by keynote speaker Dr. Linda Hill, the Wallace Brett Donham Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School, who has authored several books on management and leadership.

An afternoon panel on leaders in politics and public life was facilitated by AIWA Executive Director Jennifer Phillips, and included panelists Maro Matosian, the executive director of the Women's Support Center in Armenia and Toufenkian Foundation Country Director, Linda Melconian, the first woman Majority Leader in the history of the Massachusetts Senate, Anna Ohanyan, the



The three AIWA founders cut the anniversary cake together, surrounded by board members, founders, affiliate presidents and speakers.

on the morning of October 1. The fourth panel, on leaders in science and creative technologies, was also that morning, and was facilitated by Christine Anne Soussa, president of the AIWA San Francisco Affiliate and a leader in the Symantec sales team. This panel included Suzanna Khatchatrian, Senior Software Engineering Manager at IBM, Marie Lou Papazian, the CEO of the Simonian Educational Foundation and Managing Director of the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies in Armenia, as well as cofounder of the Education for Development Foundation, Katherine Sarafian, producer and vice president of production and strategic tal-

Children of Armenia Fund and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Hunter College, was on women's leadership and cultural identity. It included panelists Dr. Hasmig Baran, a faculty member at the California State University, Northridge, in the Armenian Studies Program, Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu, McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History at MIT, Carolyn Mugar, Executive Director of Farm Aid and founder of the Armenia Tree Project, and Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Court of Appeals Gabrielle R. Wolohojian.

In the full program, even mealtimes were opportunities to listen to speakers. Katherine Sarafian spoke on "Fostering Creativity:

bration, AIWA Vice President of Community Relations Carolyn Atinizian Yardemian and AIWA Los Angeles affiliate President Silva Katchiguiyan greeted the banquet guests on Saturday night. The majority of the banquet was ably run by the young and capable mistress of ceremonies Rep. Katherine S. Kazarian of the Rhode Island House of Representatives. In her initial remarks, Kazarian related the dramatic stories of her ancestors as they survived the Armenian Genocide and came to the New World. She introduced a video about AIWA's history, which interviewed three AIWA founders, Eva Medzorjian, Barbara Merguerian, and Olga



From left, AIWA celebration cochairs Carolyn Atinizian Yardemian and Silva Katchiguiyan, September 30 morning keynote speaker Linda Hill, Ani Kharajian, Joy Renjilian-Burgy



A group of conference attendees with the Saturday morning keynote speaker, Selina Dogan, seated, second from right

Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College, and Anna A. Turcotte, lawyer, Westbrook Maine City Council member and author of the memoir *Nowhere, A Story of Exile*.

The third panel, on leaders in arts and entertainment, was facilitated by filmmaker, director, writer and journalist Carla Garapedian, and included actor and film director Nora Armani, Teni Melidonian, the Managing Director of publicity and corporate communications for the Aacemy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Sona Movsesian, executive assistant for Conan O'Brien of the "Tonight Show," and Anush Yemendjian, the Manager of Event Marketing at the Hollywood Reporter.

Selina Özuzun Dogan, member of the Turkish parliament, was the keynote speaker

ent planning of Pixar Animation Studios, Dr. Nancy Simonian, founding CEO of Syros Pharmaceuticals, and Lilit Yenokyan, a Senior Software Engineer at Netflix.

Ani Kharajian, Senior Director, New Markets, Executive Education at Harvard Business School, and the incoming president of AIWA, moderated the fifth panel, on leaders in business and entrepreneurship. The panelists included Hasmik Asatrian, who runs the Basen Hotel in Sisian, Armenia, Juliana Del Aguila Eurnekian, president of Karas Wine, Anna Gargarian, Curator and Cultural Project Manager of HAYP Pop UP Gallery, and Vera Manoukian, Senior Vice President of Operations at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc.

The sixth and final panel, with facilitator Nicole Vartanian, Executive Director of the

Safety Innovation and Leadership" at lunch on September 30, while Dr. Ani Kalayjian, the founder of Meaningful World and author of the handbook *Disaster and Mass Trauma*, spoke at lunch the next day on the "Aftermath of Trauma: The Healing Process from Within."

In between the panels, presentations were given on AIWA programs, such as scholarships, publications, the Women's Entrepreneurship Program in Armenia, and the Women's Support Center in Armenia.

In addition to all the serious discussions, lectures and networking, there was also some live entertainment provided. On the evening of September 30, Sylvie Zakarian performed on the marimba, Jasmin Atabekian on the piano, and Serena Tchorbajian, soprano, sang, while the banquet ended with music and dancing.

As co-chairs of the 25th anniversary cele-

Proudian, and presented the contributions of Alice Kanlian Mirak (1940-2000) and Agnes K. Missirian (1929-1994). AIWA programs were also depicted in Armenia, the United Nations, and the diaspora.

Kazarian recognized some of the celebrities in the audience, such as brother and sister alpine skiers Arman and Ani Serebrakian, who represented Armenia in the 2014 and 2010 Olympics respectively. Fr. Vart Gyozyan of the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe blessed the meal.

AIWA vice president Joy Rengilian-Burgy, associate professor of Spanish and co-director of Latin American studies at Wellesley College, recognized outgoing AIWA president Suzanne Moranian, who led the organization for over a decade. She stressed Moranian's humanity, and declared that AIWA members treasured



## COMMUNITY NEWS



AIWA banquet MC Rep. Katherine Kazarian

her “leading by grace and honesty.” Moranian balanced the demands of work as a historian and scholar, family life (she is now a grandmother), and the responsibilities of leading AIWA, she added.

Morianan in her turn declared that Alice Mirak was a visionary, who in the early days stated that AIWA should not just be an events organization, but should envision projects to create a legacy and a future for women to come for generations. AIWA followed this path, and the Mirak family created a leadership gift for the AIWA fundraising campaign by pledging \$100,000 to AIWA in the name of Alice Mirak. Moranian encouraged others to follow this noble example.

The three aforementioned AIWA cofounders were called to the podium to receive beautiful scarves. Medzorian exclaimed, “The most important thing is to have a dream, to have a passion—to really care about something. The most important thing that we can care about today is our homeland. ... Make that dream come true!” Proudian related an anecdote from a meeting in Detroit, pointing to the importance of support from the males around her.

After acknowledging support from the community and her appreciation of the AIWA video, Merguerian declared, “the thing that fills me with the most happiness this evening is to see the young generation here who planned this conference, and to know that we have younger people who are going to carry on our journey to make the world a better place for women and for everyone.”

During the banquet, Kazarian presented five AIWA awards. The first, for Leadership in Government and Public Service, was given to Selina Özuzun Dogan, an attorney and member of parliament of the Republic of Turkey. Dogan thanked her family and all the women who contributed to make her who she is today. She said that by receiving this award, she was indeed “very much encouraged,” and added, “I hope that this award is going to encourage other young women in my country and my community.”

Houry Gebeshian, the first female Olympic gymnast to represent the Republic of Armenia, this summer in Rio, received the Leadership in Fortitude Award. Gebeshian not only appeared in the Olympics, but pioneered a move on the uneven bar named after her as “the Gebeshian.” She was the only elite gymnast who both trained and coached herself while working as a physician’s assistant at night.

Gebeshian declared, “Most importantly, I am an Armenian woman. It is because of my Armenian bloodline that I am capable of handling so many things.” Her Armenian spirit, she said, pushed her to make herself better, as she never gave up on realizing her dreams, “just like our martyrs who never gave up on their beliefs.” She ended with the words, “It is never too late to deliver a dream.”

The award for Leadership in Innovative Sustainability was given to Carolyn G. Mugar. ATC executive director Jeanmarie Papelian and Elaine Mosesian accepted the award on her behalf.

Mugar’s message included the exhortation that “we all can do what we need to do to shape a positive and progressive future for Armenia and for everywhere we are as Armenians.”

The award for Leadership in Entrepreneurial Work went to Carolyn

Rafaelian, founder, chief executive officer and chief creative officer of the jewelry chain Alex and Ani. While she could not be present in person, she had prepared a video message, and also sent her mother Lucy Rafaelian, who emotionally expressed her appreciation for the honor and proclaimed that “we are true Armenians – *gettse Hayasdan!*”

Finally, the Leadership in Arts and Sciences award was won by Katherine Sarafian producer and vice president of production, and strategic talent planning of Pixar Animation Studios. The movie “Brave” which she produced broke the mold as it was centered around a female heroine. Sarafian, “It has been a very emotional couple of days here. I think I willed up ten times an hour.” She praised AIWA’s efforts, and said, “The amount of support that the sisterhood of Armenian women offers is staggering.” Sarafian exclaimed that she no longer could resist and just bought a lifetime AIWA membership that afternoon.

At the conclusion of the program, Moranian enumerated many ways in which AIWA works for Armenian women, in Armenia, as a NGO at the United Nations, fighting for reproductive health care and rights, and breast care, supporting women through scholarships in universities to promote their education and



From left, AIWA founders Barbara Merguerian, Olga Proudian, and Eva Medzorian

empowerment, and organizing panels and conferences in many countries. She said, “We look for ways to unite Armenian women, wherever they were, wherever they are, wherever they will be...we are here to help meet those needs

and create strengths.”

She cited family members, and her alma mater Wellesley, as the two main sources of inspiration in her life to help people. She said, “I hope that each of you will try to think of ways in which you can teach somebody—perhaps a child, a grandchild, [or] people around you—how you can inspire them to serve those around them.” She admonished all to remember that “When you empower women, you empower everybody.”

Morianan then introduced her successor, the new AIWA president-elect, Ani Kharajian. Kharajian said that she will work to connect women and lead, after listening to what AIWA members desire for the future. Through leveraging technology and social media, borders will become less meaningful. AIWA has a lot of resources to help Armenia and the diaspora. Ultimately, she stressed, “it is really about promoting and enriching the lives of women.” AIWA needs to set “really, really big stretch goals.”

AIWA Celebration Committee co-chair



## Former Massachusetts Senate Majority Leader Linda Melconian at AIWA

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – There were so many interesting and talented Armenian women at the AIWA conference that it was not possible to cover all their talks or interview them. Three, however, were briefly interviewed, including this week’s focus, Armenian-American politician Linda Melconian. Last week’s issue of the *Mirror-Spectator* contains an article on Sona Movsesian, and a piece on Selina Dogan will be forthcoming.

**By Aram Arkun**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Linda Melconian, the first woman Majority Leader in the history of the Massachusetts Senate, is well known in Armenian circles not just for her own successful career in American politics, but for her role in getting a resolution on the Armenian Genocide passed in the US House of Representatives. She was serving at the time as Assistant Counsel to Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr., the Speaker of the House of Representatives. She said, “I was the staff person responsible for making House Resolution 148.” The Turkish ambassador tried to dissuade the American legislators, but O’Neill, traveling in Israel at the time, asked Melconian’s opinion, and after a conference call with all the political leaders, went ahead with it.

She recalled meeting with Armenian legislators in the past. She said, “We had delegations from Armenia and other delegations from countries of the former Soviet Union that came to the Massachusetts Senate in that period of transition, in the early 1990s. They wanted to see a democratic constitution in their countries, and they wanted to model their constitution after the Massachusetts constitution because this constitution has the strongest declaration of rights of any state constitution in the United States – and it is even stronger than the federal Bill of Rights.”

Melconian has also participated in previous AIWA conferences. In 2000, she was a keynote speaker at the Yerevan conference while she was still Massachusetts Senate Majority Leader. She said, “I have not been to Armenia since 2000, so I am looking forward to going again and seeing what changes have taken place. I am so inspired by the young people from Armenia that are here that are so engaged and eager. They are no different from what I was as a 22-year-old kid working for Tip O’Neill. I think Armenian women like all women have to overcome the barriers within. I think that is more of an issue than the barriers without, like the structural barriers. ...They need to think of themselves as unlimited ...and aim for the stars, aim for the top.”

Melconian often gets requests from Armenian Americans for advice and mentorship, especially from those who aspire to enter public life, and she is happy to oblige. On the broader topic of change for women, she said that if we elect a woman as president of the US, that will affect the whole world, including, no doubt, Armenia. Amazingly, only 8 women right now are heads of state in the world.



AIWA celebration committee cochairs Carolyn Atinizian Yardemian at left, and Silva Katchiguan



Suzanne Moranian, outgoing president of AIWA, left, and Ani Kharajian, new president of AIWA

Atinizian Yardemian later reflected on the extensive set of AIWA events: “AIWA’s 25th Anniversary Celebration was a tremendous success. We set out to deliver a conference aimed at reaching across generations to address the issues and challenges facing Armenian across the globe. We brought together over 300 guests from around the world to connect and engage with each other throughout the various parts of the weekend.” In addition, the conference panels were sold-out. Atinizian Yardemian concluded, “We have enjoyed remarkable positive responses from all who attended #AIWA25 and are determined to deliver even more engaging and energizing programs and networking opportunities in the future.”

(All photographs accompanying this article are by Kelly Cianflone of SCKY Art Photography.)



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Seeking a Global Approach for an Armenian Problem

GLOBALISM, from page 1

The initial signatories whose names appeared in the advertisements include Ruben Vardanyan, Dr. Nubar Afeyan, Vartan Gregorian, Charles Aznavour, Lord Ara Darzi, Ambassador Edward Djerejian, Dickran Tevzizian, Samvel Karapetyan, Charles Aznavour and Salpi Ghazarian.

Afeyan, interviewed on Monday, October 31, said the choice of the newspapers reflects both the international world and Yerevan, as the capital city of the Armenian world.

"It is the notion of one world. We are essentially saying that it is time to think differently," he said. "What is next? We are entering a period of broad discussion. Far be it for us to prescribe what this means."

(He stressed that the advertisements were not paid for nor endorsed by the AGBU.)

According to the ad, Global Armenians presents: "An opportunity for the Armenian



Dr. Nubar Afeyan

world to pivot toward a future of prosperity, to transform the post-Soviet Armenian Republic into a vibrant, modern, secure, peaceful and progressive homeland for a global nation.

"An opportunity for Armenians not only to have survived Genocide, but to reconstitute and thrive.

"An opportunity for Armenia to secure long-lasting social and economic improvement, for our citizens today as well as for our children and the future of our global nation."

The idea is to work within the framework of established organizations with great reach and deep resources, both in Armenia and the diaspora, such as the AGBU or the Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA). Both

### THE FUTURE FOR GLOBAL ARMENIANS IS NOW

*Historic Opportunity for Armenians to Unite and Together Enable Armenia's Future*

This weekend, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), one of the oldest non-profit organizations in the U.S. and the world's largest Armenian organization, celebrates its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary in New York City. Underscoring this milestone is the extraordinary opportunity to reshape the future of Armenia, and to reflect on how every one of us can contribute toward a stronger Armenia tomorrow.

Over the years, AGBU, an organization established to address the challenges facing Armenians both in the homeland and the Diaspora, has fostered socioeconomic initiatives and addressed educational, cultural and humanitarian needs worldwide. We congratulate AGBU on its unparalleled role in preserving the Armenian identity throughout a vast network of Diasporan communities.

Forcibly displaced from their ancestral homeland and dispersed, Armenians living across the world have made major contributions toward advancing their adoptive countries. Long ago, we learned to adapt to our host countries, to be loyal citizens, even as we maintain our common historic identity, language and, through the leadership of the Armenian Church, our Christian faith.

We salute the longstanding contributions of all those individuals and organizations, such as the Armenian Missionary Association, the Armenian Relief Society, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the many others, who have contributed to sustaining the Diaspora through charitable projects.

We also recognize the enormous contributions made toward Armenia's development since its independence by philanthropists Kirk Kerkorian and AGBU's Louise Manogian Simone, among others. Their pioneering work since the early 1990s has helped to build vital institutions and infrastructure.

A quarter century after gaining its independence from the former Soviet Union, the state of the young Republic of Armenia remains vulnerable, as does the state of the Armenian identity globally. Today, we stand at a historic crossroads. While we are certainly aware of our many challenges, we equally recognize the unprecedented opportunity ahead.

**An opportunity for the Armenian world to pivot toward a future of prosperity, to transform the post-Soviet Armenian Republic into a vibrant, modern, secure, peaceful and progressive homeland for a global nation.**

**An opportunity for Armenians not only to have survived Genocide, but to reconstitute and thrive.**

**An opportunity for Armenia to secure long-lasting social and economic improvement, for our citizens today as well as for our children and the future of our global nation.**

Moving forward, we must have a much higher level of sustained commitment from the Armenian community worldwide, whether through social impact or commercial investment, innovation, expertise or active involvement. In the long run, we must aspire to bring Armenia to no less than the same global standards as those of the countries in which many of us in the Diaspora live.

Beyond individual efforts, we want to instigate an unprecedented spirit of partnership and coordination among all Armenian organizations and individuals. We call on all Armenians to engage in pioneering and long-term investment to restore the social, economic, cultural and technological strengths of the nation, with Armenia at its core. At the same time, we urge the government of Armenia to respond to this clarion call by adopting new development strategies based on inclusiveness and collective action.

Individuals, as well as public and private organizations dedicated to the advancement of Armenia, must come together, pool their resources and collaborate to deliver a better tomorrow for the Armenian people. We believe that in order to succeed, we cannot operate in isolation as Armenian citizens or as Diaspora Armenians, but rather together as a united force.

We, the undersigned, are launching this effort with a long-term commitment toward collectively advancing the nation. We welcome all those who can join.

United, we represent "Global Armenians." And for Global Armenians, the time for bold initiative is now.

<b>Noubar Afeyan (U.S.)</b>	<b>Lord Ara Darzi (U.K.)</b>	<b>Andrew Mkrtchyan (Armenia)</b>
<b>Ruben Vardanyan (Russia)</b>	<b>Edward P. Djerejian (U.S.)</b>	<b>Mikhail Pogosyan (Russia)</b>
<b>Gagik Adibekyan (Luxemburg)</b>	<b>Charles Ghallian (U.S.)</b>	<b>Greg Sarkissian (Canada)</b>
<b>Abel Aganbegyan (Russia)</b>	<b>Salpi Ghazarian (U.S.)</b>	<b>Sam Simonian (U.S.)</b>
<b>Andre Andonian (Japan)</b>	<b>Vartan Gregorian (U.S.)</b>	<b>Serge Tchuruk (France)</b>
<b>Father Mesrop Aramyan (Armenia)</b>	<b>Pierre Gurdjian (Belgium)</b>	<b>Honorable Dickran Tevzizian (U.S.)</b>
<b>Garos Armen (U.S.)</b>	<b>Artur Janibekyan (Russia)</b>	<b>Ralf Yirikian (Armenia)</b>
<b>Charles Aznavour (Switzerland)</b>	<b>Samvel Karapetyan (Russia)</b>	

**THE IDEA FOUNDATION OF ARMENIA**  
WWW.IDEA.AM

The full-page ad that appeared in the New York Times and Hayastani Hanrapetutyun

can be "inclusive platforms for identity, culture and prosperity."

The IDeA Charitable Foundation was established as a platform to support the implementation of programs that can assist Armenia in transitioning from a survival model to one of prosperity, according to its website. Among the projects implemented through it have been the reconstruction of St. George Cathedral in Tbilisi, the Tatev Revival (Wings of Tatev), the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and the United World College Dilijan.

Global Armenians, he said, can become a "clearinghouse of projects through multiple sources," which can be helped by Armenians, and not just by money, but also by volunteering.

He stressed, "We want this to be inclusive and to expand as a group. We really want everybody's ideas."

Afeyan said the idea originally sprang from Armenia 2020, a project conducted by a small group including Afeyan and another signatory, Vardanyan, with the Armenian government, between 2001 and 2008. The idea was put forth around 2005, Afeyan said. Discussions began last summer to hone it. He stressed that neither he nor the other signatories, who now number more than the ini-

tial group of about 30, will dictate what the program does.

The novel approach is that instead of someone being diasporan or from Armenia, they would just be "one global Armenian," one with an expanded definition of oneself. "The concept of me being a Boston Armenian is very limiting. When we see a problem in Syria, or Armenia, kids in Armenia without a bright future ... it should be my shared responsibility" to help.

Money, he said, is not the sole objective. "It is a mindset. There is a long-term commitment to bring one's talent, time, expertise, commitment toward advancing the global Armenian nation."

He said he hoped more women and young people would be a part of this process.

The launch is meant to "be an initiative for people to think about upping our game," to realize that we are all "one and the same thing."

In effect, it means that Armenians will be part of a network which will make taking collective actions that much more efficient.

"We talk about cooperation but we hardly ever conceive of collective action" in concrete terms, Afeyan said.

In the press release issued by the group,

Vardanyan said, "Armenia needs support from its worldwide community if it is to succeed. While a number of initiatives are underway by various groups that demonstrate a record of success, delivering programs that have impact on the people of Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, there is still a great deal of work left to be done," said, "We ask all Armenians to join with us to advance our country's culture and infrastructure, and propel Armenia into a successful and sustainable future."

Now, particularly Armenia and the Syrian-Armenian community are facing mounting problems.

"We want to get discussions going in the talk in the coming weeks and months. This is a long-term kind of project," Afeyan said. "There is a serious challenge in front of Armenia."

He expressed hope that the new government in Armenia, led by Prime Minister Karen Karapetian, is going to make a positive difference in the nation.

"It is a pretty difficult road ahead [for Armenia]. There are a variety of particular challenges. They lack a strategic plan of their own," Afeyan said. They have to stabilize the situation and manage the crisis, but at the same time, they need to step outside of crisis mode and plan for the future.

This notion of a collective sentiment is one that is fairly alien to the Armenians, as many advance individually but not necessarily as part of a group.

Afeyan said, "The reason we are this way is because we are the product of centuries of survivalism. Everyone was out for themselves" to get through whatever existential challenges they faced. "Survival or preservation of the last century are a different concept than progress," he said. Now, there needs to be a different outlook since the communities globally are in a different place.

The issue of corruption is one that naturally comes up every time investing in Armenia is discussed. A better way, he said, is to utilize entities that are already "deploying \$50-\$100 million a year that are not subject to these things."

Examples he cited include TUMO, IDeA, the Armenian Church, the AGBU, Children of Armenia Fund, the Armenia Tree Project, etc.

Harkening back to Armenia 2020, he said, Armenians globally should think about the priorities of what needs to be done. "Which sectors should we invest in? We should identify projects."

Afeyan said that the Scottish (GlobalScot), Singaporean as well as the Jewish models have served as examples for Global Armenians.

One example that Armenia has already copied successfully from other nations is that of Luys Foundation, which helps send exceptional university students from Armenia to study abroad, at the best universities around the world and then return to serve the homeland.

Plans are underway to schedule public meetings, with a website to be unveiled as well at the conclusion of the process.

# Balakian Picks up Pulitzer for Poetry at Centennial Ceremony

PULITZER, from page 1

Prof. Daniele Allen, director of the Edmond J. Safra Center For Ethics at Harvard University, was the keynote speaker. The awards were presented by Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University.

The Pulitzer committee cited Balakian's *Ozone Journal* for "poems that bear witness to the old losses and tragedies that undergird a global age of danger and uncertainty." Writing about *Ozone Journal* in *Consequence Magazine*, Keith Jones wrote: "Balakian is a master of—the drifting, split-second mirage, the cinematic dissolve and cross-cut as well as the sculptural, statuesque moment chiseled out of consonant blends and an imagistic, jazzman's ear for vowels. . . beautiful, haunting, plaintive, urgent, in our dying world's age, these poems legislate a vital comportment to the demands of our shared present, timely and untimely both." And David Wojahn in *Tikkun* wrote: "Few American poets of the boomer generation have explored the interstices of public and personal history as deeply and urgently as has Balakian." Balakian is the first Armenian American to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize since William Saroyan in 1940.



Peter Balakian with Henry Threadgill, winner for musical composition and Viet Thanh Nguyen winner for fiction.

# Arts & Living

## Pianist Levon Hovsepien to Be Honored November 5

BELMONT, Mass. – “Levon Hovsepien and Friends,” a concert honoring the pianist, will be held on Saturday, November 5 at 7 p.m. at First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave.

The concert will commemorate Hovsepien’s 25 years of service to church and the Greater Boston community.

Hovsepien is director of music and organist at First Armenian Church, where he has served since 1991. Classically trained, Hovsepien has embraced a variety of musical styles since arriving in America 25 years ago. He performs in churches, clubs and concert halls throughout New England and regularly volunteers his services for fundraisers and charity events. He enjoys teaching students at his Bravo Piano Studio located on Myrna Street, Burlington, and at the Powers Music School in Belmont.

Several of Hovsepien’s musical collaborators will join him onstage for a lively evening of music with an international flair. Scheduled performers include: Edgar Brut, tenor; Zarina Irkaeva, cello; Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo soprano; Nancy Tutunjian Berger, soprano; Knarik Nerkararyan, soprano; Sammy Andonian, violin and John Baboian, guitar.

Hovsepien began his studies at the Sayat-Nova Music School in Yerevan, Armenia. He furthered his musical education at the Tchaikovsky Special Music School for Gifted Children and earned a Master’s Degree with honors at Komitas Conservatory. He had performed throughout Armenia, Estonia, and Moldova, appearing as a soloist with the Yerevan Symphony Orchestra and on Armenian National Television. After attracting major critical attention in Armenia, he was awarded a full scholarship to Longy School of Music in Cambridge. He earned his Artist Diploma and Master’s Degree with Honors, and continued his intense performance and teaching careers.

He made his New York debut in 1994 and became known for his compelling interpretative style and



Levon Hovsepien

expansive technique. Levon Hovsepien was a prize winner at the Arlington Concerto Competition, has appeared as a soloist with the Salem Philharmonic Orchestra and the New England Philharmonic Orchestra. His “Favorite Piano Masterpieces” CD was featured on WGBH Radio, as well as stations throughout Moscow and Yerevan. He has had numerous guest artist appearances, including a reception honoring the former President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosian and the late Senator Edward Kennedy.

Hovsepien is a faculty member at the Powers Music School. He accompanies music students at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Boston and the Chelmsford public schools.

The concert and reception are free and open to the public and all are welcome. A free will offering to support the church’s music programs and facilities is appreciated.

He resides in Burlington with his wife and children.

For further information, contact the church office or visit [Facebook.com/FirstArmenianChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/FirstArmenianChurch/)



Judith Diers, left, Chief of Adolescent Development and Participation of the Programme Division at UNICEF Impact and Ambassador, and Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, right, with dancers from the AGBU Children’s Center and his wife, Irina Igithkanyan, center

## AGBU Partners with UN, Permanent Mission of Armenia, to Celebrate UN Day With HOKIS Performance

NEW YORK – On October 24, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) – in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – organized a flash-mob by the HOKIS performers at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in celebration of UN Day and the World Development Information Day.

Fusing traditional Armenian performance art with original compositions and modern dance, the event was a preview of the world debut of HOKIS, a musical spectacular showcasing the talents of young participants of two of AGBU’s partner programs in Armenia: the AGBU Nork Children’s Center and the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies. The performance opened with welcoming remarks by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN Zohrab Mnatsakanyan: “The UN is about the future and the future of children. They are inheriting the world from us and this should remind us that we all have a duty to them.” Judith Diers, chief of adolescent development and participation of the Programme Division at UNICEF Impact, also delivered an address on the occasion: “It is important to realize the rights of every child and adolescent and not only to understand their priorities and needs but also enhance their strength, imagination and creativity to co-create a world that we, the adults, cannot even imagine.”

Attended by delegates of UN member states, representatives of UN agencies, academics and civil society, the performance demonstrated an example of unity and inspiration through creativity, partnership and concerted effort. “This is more about not forgetting who our children are and how they think and express themselves as human beings,” the creative director of HOKIS, French Armenian filmmaker and producer Patrick Malakian, explained at the conclusion of the performance.



Fusing traditional Armenian performance art with original compositions and modern dance, the event was a preview of the world debut of HOKIS, a musical spectacular showcasing the talents of young participants of two of AGBU’s partner programs in Armenia.

## Sayat Nova Dance Company to Perform at Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade

BOSTON – The Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston has been selected to perform in the 90th Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. The 2016 parade will mark the first appearance by the group.

Each year, the Macy’s Parade creative team looks for performance groups across the country that have the talent and abilities to captivate more than 3.5 million live spectators and more than 50 million television viewers.

Founded in 1986 by director/choreographer Apo Ashjian, Sayat Nova is a non-profit organization that relies solely on the commitment and dedication of its supporters.

Over the past 30 years, the company has had approximately 500 volunteer members contribute to their mission, which is to preserve and promote the Armenian culture through dance.

They have performed at various prestigious venues including Boston’s Hatch Shell, Boston Common’s Outside the Box Festival, the Emerson Majestic Theatre, Jacob’s Pillow, Gillette stadium, and Armenia’s Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

Their most recent production, “Journey Through Time,” is filled with energetic dancing, dynamic lighting, life-size stage props, and an emotional tale of history, triumph, and pride. As part of a rich culture, Armenian folk dancing is a reflection of the life and legacy of the Armenian people. Each dance symbolizes the spirit of the Armenian people and celebrates the existence of the Armenian heritage.

Since 1924, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade has given thanks to what Macy’s values most – its loyal fans.

## A Musical Family Affair at Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Museum of America and the Composer’s Union of Armenia will present a concert, “From Our Family to Yours: Music of Different Nations,” on Sunday, November 20, at 3 p.m. The program, featuring Jasmin Atabekyan and the Gasparyan Family Quartet, will be held on the 3rd floor of the Armenian Museum of America, in the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries.

The program will include works by Armenian and international classical composers, as well as Armenian popular music. The family quartet is comprised of internationally known musicians including Atabekyan on piano, Vahagn Gasparyan on guitar, and Emily and Daniel Gasparyan on violin. The quartet members, and the quartet itself, have been named winners in a number of international music competitions.

Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the concert. Both the concert and the reception are free and open to the public. This concert is made possible by a generous donation from the Dadourian Foundation and will be under the direction of Konstantin Petrossian.



From left, Vahagn Gasparyan, Jasmin Atabekyan, Emily Gasparyan and Daniel Gasparyan



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Malgre Sangre, When The Word Meets Itself

By Arpine Konyalian Grenier

My father, an orphaned survivor from Konya, lived working and praying, and in a way that's what I do as a doer of poetry. *Ora et labora*. There is a component of will here, more like what drives exaptation (expanded adaptation), a fairly new concept, quality and generosity driven. It heralds evolving through adapting but also through active and conscious will and effort without the singularity of the short lived "i", the person, the nation, the electron destined for chaos. Breath evolves accordingly, so do culture and identity. If it weren't for love, weren't for ethics, we say.

shed skin for shed blood for shed spite  
despite the Armenian  
American or not

meaning to dream to lost object to gaze so unlikely  
a human theme but corpse still baring  
mother seed on a still point  
= confusion

I am an Armenian-American from Beirut, Lebanon where a variety of religions, languages and nationalities coexist(ed) in a rare mixture of oriental simultaneity and occidental individualism. I have no mother tongue, as my mother tongue has lost me. I implode within this loss, seeking the chaos sustaining the world of languages, after a derivative of the past, time and history abolished because of what escapes or survives the disintegration of experience. As a doer of poetry, I am after the meta-linguistic polytonality of experience, constructing (not describing) a space at the edge of meaning; at a threshold as if, above which there is meaning and articulation, below which there is nothing but a cry of impaired linguistic capacity driven by the need for a state of being yoked with the self, simultaneously aligned with "the other". I hear Rumi's three only words - hamdim, pistim, yandim - I'm created (graced?), weathered (seasoned?), consumed (finished off?). He was from Konya too; he was not orphan.

orphaned tenacity and patience the additional  
lurking to be registered while light slowly  
if it were ordinary language terrain  
life riding over  
one bears witness to

with the body and place of an absent body  
disclosing addressing negotiating  
for breath

Otherwise, denial rules as unresolved dependence, and aesthetic values increase while art and culture fade away. Fear dampens our wisdom and guilt distorts our sense of direction; the ensuing hegemonic monolith exacerbates the distance between cultures, creates pressure, anger, tragedies, scapegoat.

the last colony's eradicated  
sing do not recite

the pull of the sun endorses heart  
liturgy alternates the hour

inward and outward the techne  
between being and charity  
parrhesic in nature

Poetry makes language happen, renews culture blinded by its own compass. With poetry, words and phrases meet circumstance without competing, continuous and inclusive, free of gendered tropes, instinctive. We were never created, we were always light, how dark we have become.

dab into the red and draw limbs lacerated from the climb  
stray roots and wrinkles

then spare the grounds in black boxes with no labels  
for supper we'll plough soft land for muscle

the endothelial (wo)man wakes  
s/he has orange hair

rancid roses of crystal in it

hello coughs out the sutures s/he's clutched for years  
stuck to the insides of everyman

hello! s/he looks up

light panels on the ceiling simple-soldier gray  
the bloody face in rapture

No more plaster for cracks, no fuss, no silence, no stutters either, nor protagonists, antagonists or narrators, but for participants and evolutionary terrain re-forming mindsets focused on the impermanence and insignificance of all things human, all things except the need to connect just because -

do I need an interface?  
pieces of human that I am

software software please  
touch this heart perk  
this essential

my lens against your compassion  
so many pieces color of self

l'histoire de retrouvailles

We human expats, nomads, exapting without con ceit, con jecture; con templative, con vivencia. A translation is occurring at the moment of enunciation as the "word" meets itself. Uncertainty is operative, so is solidarity.

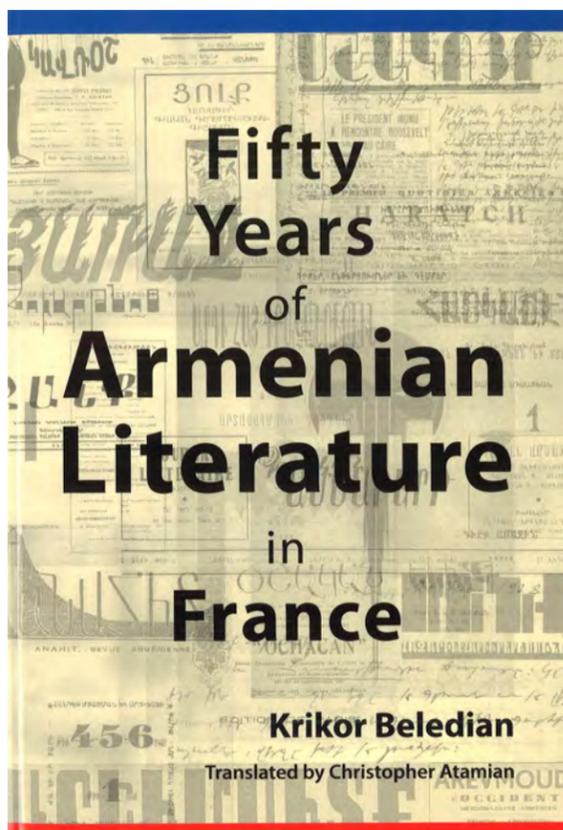
you and me computationally irreducible  
the sun's epinoia I am glad to tell  
the kings the queens blanked

Celan reads, [...] There are roses in the house [...] where they beat my father and mother to death: what bloomed there, what blooms there?"

Birds have rhythm, chimps have categories; the human has both. The human is poetry.

(Arpine Konyalian Grenier is an independent scholar and poet, author of four collections: *St. Gregory's Daughter*; *Whores from Samarkand*; *Part, Part, Euphrates*; *The Concession Stand: Exaptation at the Margins*. Recent work can be found at the *Journal of Poetics Research*, *Big Bridge*, *Word/for/Word* and *Barzakh*. She lives and writes in Los Angeles.)

## Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France published by California State University, Fresno



*Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* by Krikor Beledian; translated by Christopher Atamian; edited by Barlow Der Mugrdechian (6" x 9", 640 pp. \$20 paperback, ISBN 13: 978-0-912201-51-1), Volume 6 in the Armenian Series, by The Press at California State University, Fresno.

FRESNO – California State University, Fresno, Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian announced that Krikor Beledian's *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* has been published by the Armenian Series of The Press, at California State University, Fresno.

Translated from the original French into English by Christopher Atamian, *Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* is a groundbreaking study of the Armenian literary scene in the important Armenian Diaspora community of France.

"This volume will provide a wealth of material useful to both scholars and to the reading public," said Armenian Series General Editor Prof. Der Mugrdechian.

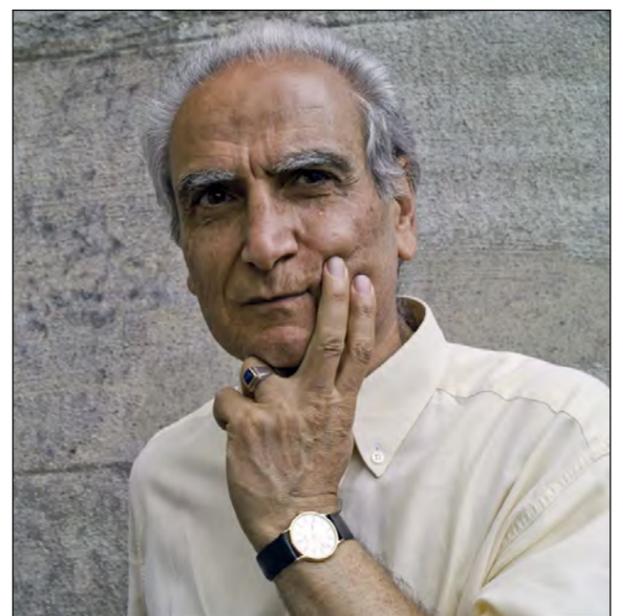
*Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* examines Armenian literature as it emerged in France between 1922 and the beginning of the 1970s. It retraces the literary history of the period starting with Armenian immigration until the passing away of the movement's main representatives. It also examines the most significant works published in that period, studying the issues raised by a literature of exile, one born after an event that was experienced and interpreted as a "national catastrophe."

This work is a major addition to the study of Armenian literature with its in-depth analysis of the various figures and periods in Armenian literature in France. Among those figures are Arshag Chobanian, Minas Cheraz, Shavarsh Missakian, Mguerdtch Barsamian, Shavarsh Nartuni, Hratch Zartarian and Vazken Shushanian, to name only a few.

*Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* is a work that provides a context for Armenian literature of the diaspora, while at the same time focusing on the works of authors living in France.

"The work is a valuable addition to the growing number of critical studies of Armenian literature produced in the Diaspora," said Der Mugrdechian. "It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the intellectual, emotional, and existential challenges faced by Armenian authors in France."

Author and literary critic Beledian has lived in Paris since 1967,



Krikor Beledian

and has become intimately aware of the Armenian literary scene in France. He is an accomplished writer in his own right, as well as prolific critic.

Beledian has produced a comprehensive and fascinating view of the Armenian literary landscape in France, one that will be of lasting significance to the study of Armenian literature.

*Fifty Years of Armenian Literature in France* is available for \$20 (plus tax and shipping) through The Press at California State University, Fresno.



ARTS & LIVING



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Prosciutto and Asparagus Pasta

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 ounces angel hair pasta (or any style pasta)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 large onion, sliced or diced
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, cut into strips
- 1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-in. pieces
- 1 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream
- About 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

### PREPARATION:

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and return to pot to keep warm. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large pan over medium heat. Cook onion, garlic, and mushrooms until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the prosciutto and asparagus and cook until asparagus is bright green, about 2 minutes. Add the cream, parmesan cheese, black pepper, and red pepper flakes, and toss. Reduce heat to simmer and cook until sauce has thickened, about 3-4 minutes. Pour sauce with vegetables over the pasta and toss to coat. Serve with extra parmesan cheese, if desired. Serves 4.

Originally published in Sunset Magazine, March 2012.  
Go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/prosciutto-asparagus-pasta>

\*Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>

\*For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>

## Saving the Children: Sarah Corning And the Armenian Genocide

YARMOUTH, Nova Scotia, Canada (*The Vanguard*) – When she was born in North Chegoggin, Nova Scotia, in 1872, no one would have predicted Sarah Corning would one day be presented as a hero to the King of Greece.

In 1922, Corning was instrumental in the evacuation of Armenian and Greek orphans from the besieged city of Smyrna in what is now Turkey. Today, the extent of the atrocities visited upon the

Corning became a central figure in the evacuation of the port city of Smyrna, helping guide orphans in a home run by an American nurse, eventually guiding thousands of children to the harbor, where U.S. sailors rowed them out to the safety of naval vessels, the *Vanguard* reported this year.

After the rescue, she helped establish an orphanage in Greece for the stateless orphans.

She was summoned to Athens in June 1923, where King George II of Greece awarded her and others involved in the rescue mission, the Silver Cross Medal of the Order of the Saviour, an honor comparable to the Order of Canada.

Corning worked at the orphanage until 1924, when she returned to Turkey to work in a residential training school until 1930 when the Near East relief effort was disbanded.

Upon retirement, she returned to Chegoggin, where she lived until her death in 1969 at age 97.

The epitaph on her headstone in the Chegoggin Baptist Church Cemetery reads: "She lived to serve others."

Writer/author Sandra Phinney told the *Vanguard* earlier in 2016 that Corning's story pulled at her. "Imagine a rural teenager from Yarmouth in the late 1800s going to the US to become a nurse, then helping out in the Halifax explosion, then being a nurse in a foreign land and doing so much to help people, at great personal risk," Phinney said.

"Her courage was monumental at many levels, and Canadians need to hear about Sara," she added.

Only recently has Corning's work been recognized at home in Yarmouth County. In September, a seniors' care home named part of its facility for the nurse from rural Nova Scotia.

"We were intrigued and in awe of her heroic role in rescuing 5,000 Armenian and Greek orphans from near-certain death," Randy Saulnier, vice chairman of the Villa Saint-Joseph board said at a ceremony in September.

Corning is recognized elsewhere, too. There is a Sara Corning Centre for Genocide Education in Toronto that supports research and education on the topics of human rights and genocide.



Sarah Corning

Armenian community after the First World War is acknowledged as an act of genocide.

Corning trained as a nurse in the United States and joined the American Red Cross during the First World War.

In December 1917, she was amongst the first to volunteer to tend the sick and suffering after the Halifax Explosion.

Shortly after the First World War, as part of Near East Relief – an American organization helping displaced people of the Balkans, Asia Minor and the Middle East – Corning went overseas.

In 1921, working for a relief agency, Corning arrived in a small village at the foot of Mount Ararat in what is now Turkey to take charge of an orphanage. The following year she was in the city of Smyrna, which the Turks were trying to take back from Greece. Corning was part of a team that opened a clinic to help Smyrna's sick and wounded, but it was shut down by Turkish soldiers. A second clinic also was shut down.

In 1922, as fighting and lawlessness escalated,

## Springsteen Superfan From Lodi Inked Up in Boss Tattoos

LODI, N.J. (*Garfield-Lodi Daily Voice*) – Laura Krikorian hasn't had it easy.

The disabled Lodi resident, now 50, suffered a pair of strokes at 29 and a heart attack at 45.

She says one thing helped her through it all: listening to Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band.

The proof of her fandom is on her body. She has adorned her-

self with a slew of tattoos related to the Boss, including an incredibly life-like sketch of the famous Jersey rocker on her leg.

In all, the superfan has 10 tattoos related to Springsteen and his music.

"When I am lost I always find the answers in his music," said Krikorian, who said her favorite song is *Backstreets*.

She even has some of the lyrics of the song tattooed on her chest: "Hiding on the backstreets where we swore forever friends. On the backstreets until the end."

Other tattoos depict phrases like, "It ain't no sin to be glad you're alive," and "Show a little faith – there's magic in the night." She also has a tattoo that states, "Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band will live in my heart forever."

"His music just does something for me," said Krikorian, who has been to more than 30 of his shows. She said the music has helped her spiritually. "I don't listen to anyone else but him," she said.

Krikorian said she started getting her tattoos about six or seven years ago. Most of her work is done by the artists at Lola's Tattoos in Bogota. "I just kept getting them and I will probably still get them," she said.

Ultimately, she'd like to be able to show her tattoos to Springsteen himself.

"I'd love to meet him and thank him for his amazing music that helped me through plenty of rough times," she said.



One of Laura Krikorian's many Boss tattoos



Laura Krikorian and her puppy

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Նիւ Ծղրղի - 2016

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# Nouneh Sarkissian Makes It on Her Own Terms in London

By Charlotte Pearson

LONDON (*Daily Mail*) — I am sitting in a sumptuous drawing room overlooking the Thames, enjoying watermelon slices and cherries from a silver salver. My hostess, Nouneh Sarkissian, 62, is the wife of Armenia's ambassador to Britain.

She also has one of the world's largest collections of David Linley furniture and numbers the designer himself — the Queen's nephew — among her closest friends. A journalist by background, she is now a successful children's author (Linley hosted the launch party for her latest book, *The Magic Buttons*, at his flagship store last December). But there is nothing showy about Nouneh.

Her exquisite furniture collection — bespoke Linley tables, chairs and bookshelves, alongside art deco treasures, antiques, rare pieces of Japanese art and old masters — is referred to with quiet appreciation.

Nouneh can't tell me exactly how many Linley pieces there are, but they seem to be everywhere, blending in seamlessly in this immaculate Chelsea town house. "We met David at the wedding of Armenian friends in Beirut in 1995 and have been close to him and [his wife] Serena ever since. We like his style. If I buy a set of Russian Imperial chairs, he will build a table to match. We don't consider our Linley collection to be furniture. We see each item as a work of art that will be passed down to future generations," she says.

Nouneh's husband Armen — an astrophysicist and former prime minister of Armenia — is now serving his third stint as Armenian ambassador in the UK. As well as being a prominent diplomat and politician, he is one of Armenia's most esteemed scientists and professors, and was, therefore, in a perfect position to broker oil and energy deals with the West when his country gained economic freedom from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Hence his wealth, and the seven-story house at one of London's best addresses (he's also one of the creators of the cultishly popular tile-matching video game Tetris, which may have helped, too).

But Nouneh is too erudite and polite to talk about money. She and Armen met at school in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia when she was 14 and he was 15.

In contrast to their current gilded existence, they grew up in the austerity of the Soviet regime — a life Nouneh remembers as repressive, but also secure and nurturing of creative talent.

"My father was a journalist and my mother a teacher, so we were part of the intelligentsia. There were no classes in our society back then, just layers, and we were the second layer, after the nomenklatura — politicians and dignitaries who were allowed to travel and had access to foreign goods.

"We weren't rich but we were educated, with enough money to feed and clothe ourselves. I never felt deprived. It wasn't a bad childhood and I knew no different," she says.

Nouneh does, however, recall some sinister moments. "There was always a sense that we were being watched," she recalls. "My mother would say to us, 'Be careful. Don't tell jokes. The walls have ears.'

"And you felt it from a young age. It is something I will never forget. The fear was everywhere — that's how the regime lasted so long," she explains.

"My father, as a journalist, had to be very careful to use the right words and phrases. When he became the editor-in-chief of the monthly newspaper *World of Books*, he had to make sure not to allow the 'wrong' titles to be reviewed. You could lose your life for using the wrong word or picture. I remember a story of someone spilling tea on Stalin's photo in a newspaper and having to go for an interrogation. The fear was even worse during his regime; I was born a year after his death — nine years after the Second World War ended — and can still remember seeing people who had lost limbs fighting in the war. It was very gruesome."

But there was an upside to growing up in a communist regime: the huge emphasis that was placed on culture. "Our schools were amazing," says Nouneh, "and we were given tickets to theatre, opera, classical music and the best ballet in the world — all for free!"

Nouneh was a bright talent in her own right; her early promise evident when she got herself a job at a local radio station aged 10, which meant travelling half an hour on her own by bus every Sunday morning.

"I was given children's books to read on air. They would pay me some roubles, which I then gave to my mother, who needed them. I also wrote children's stories and tried to get them published," she says.

It was at secondary school that she met — and fell in love with — her husband. "He is my first and my only," she smiles. "Armen was the best student at our school and I was the best actress. We did Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw plays — in English, because learning English was a big part of a communist education back then — and I always landed the main parts."

"Because of this, I had boys running after me. But I was an inde-



© Debra Hurford Brown  
Nouneh Sarkissian at her Chelsea home in London

pendent soul and always said no. Armen became curious and thought, 'Who is this girl rejecting all the boys?'"

The two wound up at a Young Communists conference together, "which was very boring," so she invited the other students back to her house.

Armen was wowed by her father's book collection and asked to borrow a volume of poetry, "which was against the rules, as my father hated loaning his books." Fearing her father's wrath if the tome was not returned, Nouneh tracked down Armen at school to retrieve it, "and this was how our friendship started," she explains.

They went together to Yerevan State University — Armen to study physics and Nouneh languages. Upon graduating, Armen was offered a position at Cambridge University. "He was invited 13 times by different universities before the communists allowed it."

By the time he arrived in the UK in 1984, he and Nouneh were married with two sons, Vartan, now 36, and Hayk, 32. "Wives were not allowed to go abroad with Soviet scientists. We were kept behind as hostages. It was right after Hayk's birth, so that was difficult. Moscow only allowed me to visit him for one month in April 1985.

"I was 30 and when I arrived in London [en route to Cambridge] it was the first time I had ever been abroad. Before that, I had only travelled around the Soviet Union to places like Siberia, which are beautiful but, of course, all any of us wanted was to see London and Paris.

"I fell in love with London. Armen and I said, 'If only we could live here for the rest of our lives...' At the time it didn't seem possible, but Gorbachev had just come to power and declared his glasnost and perestroika — loosening censorship and allowing greater communication. We had friends from the West who told us about chewing gum, bell-bottom jeans and 'Jesus Christ Superstar' — and, slowly, people began to rebel."

Once the communist regime collapsed in 1991 and Armenia became independent, the country's first elected president asked Armen — by then a prominent academic — to open an embassy in London, and by 1992 Nouneh and the boys had joined him there. After several years as ambassador, Armen was appointed prime minister of Armenia in 1996.

Nouneh spent two years commuting between London (where the boys were at top public schools) and Yerevan to visit her husband, with her mother coming to London to stay with their sons while she was away.

After stepping down as prime minister because of illness (from which he has now recovered), Armen became ambassador for a second time.

He then gave up the role for a few years to focus on other projects, before taking it up again in 2013, this time on an honorary basis.

Nouneh points proudly to a framed photo of Armen bowing to the Queen when she gave her blessing to his most recent appointment in 1998. "She said, 'Armen, you are the champion of all ambassadors. This is the third time you have come back to us.' I admire Her Majesty so much. She is such a gracious soul and so intelligent."

Nouneh and Armen are also friends with Prince Charles: they gave him a private tour when he visited Armenia in 2013. "The prince and my husband share a passion for preserving heritage," explains Nouneh. "Armenia has some of the earliest Christian churches and our basilicas and sacred monuments have been beautifully preserved. Charles loved it."

The Sarkissians have their own charity, Yerevan My Love, which restores "dilapidated and destroyed late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings" and repurposes them as music, community and sports centers where disadvantaged children can develop their talents.

The charity has held events at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, as well as in Yerevan. "The Prince has supported all of these and our charity has partnered his Prince's Trust project at Dumfries House [a Palladian mansion in Ayrshire, which was restored for the community]."

Art and culture have retained a major influence on Nouneh. The holiday she and Armen most look forward to each year is their annual pilgrimage to the Mozart Festival in Salzburg.

And she found a channel for her own creativity through writing — for many years as a freelance arts journalist for Armenian publications and now through her children's books, which are beautifully illustrated, full of imagination "and each with a strong moral."

*The Magic Buttons* is her 14th book and the first to be published in English. (She has written 10 in Armenian and three in Russian.) It tells the story of a little girl called Pearl, who is sent to live with her grandparents in Spic-and-Span Town after a plague takes hold in their village; she spins off on an adventure to save everyone, picking up friends with names such as Tumbletash along the way.

It is inspired by Nouneh's childhood and the close relationship she had with her grandmother growing up. "I sat down to write something that would reflect my own experience but when the words started to flow it became something completely different — a fantasy fairy tale. The story developed on its own, which is the magic of writing," she says. Nouneh is now working on a sequel.

When she isn't writing or playing the dutiful ambassador's wife, Nouneh's energy goes on her English bulldog Kolo — "my first dog, and I am totally in love with him" and her grandchildren, Savannah, 4, and Armen, 2, Vartan's children with his American wife.

"Savannah has such an imagination. She loves books and loves us to sit down and write stories together. Many of my best ideas come from her. We write about little domestic problems that can seem very large to children, such as worrying about needing the loo on the way to school and whether this will make you late," she says.

Her sons feel British, she says, though they are still proud of their roots. "I miss the less formal relationship between people in Armenia — the way you can just ring someone's doorbell, have a coffee, empty your concerns and come home feeling better. We have a home in Yerevan and my sister [her only sibling, a graphic designer] is there, so we visit often. But I love London as much now as I did the day I arrived. There is no other place like it."

Nouneh admits that she has forfeited some of her potential to support Armen's career, but she clearly relishes family life and feels any sacrifices she's made have been worth it. "I adore being a grandmother. My younger son Hayk is still single. I keep saying to him, 'Hurry up! I want more grandchildren while I am still young.'" She adds, "When I push too much, he says, 'You find me a woman then. I have just three conditions: she must be beautiful, clever and kind.'"

"At least they live close to me. What I did to my mother by moving away!" Her idea of a perfect Sunday is the family coming together at their house in Surrey.

"I think I did sacrifice my own ambitions for the wellbeing of my family," she says. "But I never regret it. I have two beautiful children who are mentally strong and ambitious [Vartan runs his own cyber-security company and Hayk works with his father]."

"If my life was ever frustrating, I tried not to show it. I was like 'happy face' — she assumes an exaggerated smile that brings to mind the grinning emoji — "because this was what everyone needed from me...Happy Mum. Sad face never works."

"It's difficult to find the right balance in a relationship. Armen is strong and I'm strong. That could have been a clash, but I let him be our leader and he appreciates me for it. He always says he couldn't have done any of it without me."



# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 5 — Levon Hovsepian and Friends, celebrating 25 years** of pianist Levon Hovsepian's service to church and Community. Saturday, 7 p.m. First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. An evening of lively performances featuring several of Levon's musical collaborators, past and present. Free admission and reception to follow. Free will offering appreciated to benefit the Church's music ministry and facilities. Info: 617-484-4779, or [www.Facebook.com/FirstArmenianChurch](http://www.Facebook.com/FirstArmenianChurch).

**NOVEMBER 5 — Fundraiser for SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) and Mer Doon** home for young girls who have aged out of orphanages, at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington. Writer Margaret Ajemian Ahnert and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author Stephen Kurkjian will speak. Saturday, 7 p.m. Cheese and wine reception. All funds to benefit The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR). There is no cost for admission, however donations will be accepted.

**NOVEMBER 7 — Dr. Anna Ohanyan will be the speaker at the St. James Men's Club** dinner meeting. Social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Ohanyan is the Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations and the Chair of the Political Science and International Studies Department at Stonehill College. Her presentation topic will be "Lenin's Revenge: Fractured Regions in Russia's Peripheries and How They Threaten the World." Ohanyan is the Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations and the Chair of the Political Science and International Studies Department at Stonehill College. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA

**NOVEMBER 12 — National Association for Armenian Studies & Research 60th Anniversary Gala.** Boston Marriott Burlington. Keynote Eric Bogosian, actor and author of Operation Nemesis. Master of Ceremonies Adi Ignatius, Editor-in-Chief, Harvard Business Review. 6 pm - Reception. 7 pm - Dinner and Program. For reservations, email [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org) or call 617-489-1610.

**NOVEMBER 14 — Trinity Men's Union Dinner and Meeting, featuring Guest Speaker, Ray Flynn,** former Mayor of Boston and Ambassador to the Vatican, 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge.

**NOVEMBER 15 — Thank You Reception for All Supporters of Armenian Heritage Park.** Armenian Cultural and Educational Center. Watertown. 7:30 p.m. During the evening, supporters will receive the Armenian Heritage Park

Commemorative Book, which will acknowledge all supporters in the category of giving that combines all their contributions since the campaign's inception. Deadline for first time supporters and for supporters to increase their contribution is September 22. Contributors are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All supporters are invited.

**NOVEMBER 18 and 19 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, Annual Bazaar and Food Festival,** 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, Phone 978-256-7234, website [www.stsvartanantz.com](http://www.stsvartanantz.com) (for more information), Armenian Food and Pastries, Armenian Music (Saturday 5 to 8), Vendors, Children's Activities. Friday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**NOVEMBER 19 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association's 40th Annual Luncheon/Auction** at the Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont St., Watertown at 11 a.m. Ticket price, \$75. Proceeds to benefit the mission of the AWWA. For more information about this event or for tickets, please call Stephanie Ciccolo at 617-522-2600

**NOVEMBER 20 — Concert, "From Our Family To Yours: Music Of Different Nations,"** featuring Jasmin Atabekyan and the Gasparyan Family Quartet, 3 p.m., Adele and Haig Der Manuelian Galleries, Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown. The concert is funded by the Dadourian Foundation, co-sponsored by the Composer's Union of Armenia, and free and open to the public. There will be a reception following the concert.

**NOVEMBER 22 — Armenian Business Network (ABN) in collaboration with Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)** will present the Boston Fall Soiree 2016, 7-10 p.m. at Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. Start your Thanksgiving celebrations early while contributing to a great cause! All proceeds will benefit COAF programs in rural Armenia. Buy Tickets at [www.COAFKids.org/FallSoiree2016](http://www.COAFKids.org/FallSoiree2016) Tickets are limited. Sapóre Ristorante & Bar will serve a sampling of its hors d'oeuvres. Open bar.

**DECEMBER 2 and DECEMBER 3 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar,** Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

**DECEMBER 11 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** Celebrating the 25th anniversary of Armenia's independence and the 50th anniversary of the Erevan Choral Society, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring soloist Vagharshak Ohanyan, Baritone (from New York). Details to follow.

**DECEMBER 18 — St. James 85th Anniversary Name Day Celebration & Banquet,** Abp. Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

(Eastern), Presiding. Honoring Koko & Nancy Kassabian, Parishioners of the Year. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

**DECEMBER 18 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk.** Coming Together on Common Ground in Peace and Harmony. 5:00-6:30 p.m., Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. All are invited. Details forthcoming.

**DECEMBER 31 — 2017 New Year's Eve Celebration!** Featuring Entertainment by Alfred Galstyan. Save the Date — Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St, Watertown. [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org)

**MARCH 11, 2017 — Mark your calendars. Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston** - 30th anniversary celebration. Details to follow.

**MARCH 18, 2017 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston - "30 Years and counting" - FULL PERFORMANCE,** at Waltham High School, Robinson Auditorium, 617 Lexington Street, Waltham. Details to follow.

## MICHIGAN

**NOVEMBER 5 — St. Sarkis Armenian Church Annual Bazaar,** 2-10 p.m. St. Sarkis Lillian Arakelian Hall, Dearborn. Vendors, Kids' activities, Attic Treasures. Bulk foods and kebab dinners. Music by Sam Arslanian and Garo Tavitian. For more details go to [www.saintsarkis.org](http://www.saintsarkis.org).

**NOVEMBER 13 — St. John Music Guild Presents "Pipes and Strings"** featuring concert organist Dr. David Wagner, Violinist Sherri Marttila and Jason Borngesser on Trumpet, accompanied by Affinity Strings. Open to the public. Seating is limited. Tickets \$20 for adults, students and children under 18, \$10. St. John Armenian Church, 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. For information and tickets, call Annette Mamassian at 248-702-4892 or email [music@sjchurch.org](mailto:music@sjchurch.org).

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 12 — Official opening and consecration of St. Nersess Seminary,** starting at 10.30 a.m. Saturday. His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, will officiate. Guests will be directed to offsite parking with shuttle service provided. Space is limited and RSVPs are required. Please call 914-273-0200 or email [info@stnersess.edu](mailto:info@stnersess.edu). 486 Bedford Road, Armonk, NY.

**MARCH 10, 2017 — Save the date! Armenia Fund USA,** Eastern Region Affiliate's Gala Dinner benefiting Toxic Pollution Cleaning in Akhtala, Armenia. New York Athletic Club, 180 Central Park South, NYC. Details of the event will follow.

## Music of Hayg Boyajian Performed in Belgium, Armenia

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Composer Hayg Boyajian, a Grammy Award nominee, attended in September two concerts of his compositions in Europe. The first concert took place in Brussels,

Belgium at the Hay Doun Hall and was the opening concert of the Vitrage Festival. Several Boyajian songs (Lieders) based on German and French texts were sung by sopranos Miriam Mnatsakanyan, Lilit Khachatryan, Hasmik Asatryan and Anna Balaian, all accompanied by pianist Armen-Levon Manaseryan who also performed two solo piano compositions of Boyajian.

The second concert took place in Yerevan, Armenia, at the Opera and Ballet Concert Hall. The concert was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Armenia's independence. It featured the world premiere of Boyajian's concerto for piano and orchestra, a complex and virtuoso composition in three movements, with the gifted virtuoso pianist Julietta Vardanyan, who is well known on the European concert circuits. The concerto was conducted by Ruben Asatryan. Both soloist and conductor have performed Boyajian's works in the past.

Both the Brussels and the Yerevan concerts were well attended and audiences responded with enthusiasm to Boyajian's compositions.

Boyajian's piano concerto is available on You Tube at [https://youtu.be/v4mrW\\_SM3Tg](https://youtu.be/v4mrW_SM3Tg)



From left, Ruben Asatryan, Julietta Vardanyan and Hayg Boyajian



Hayg Boyajian speaks, as pianist Julietta Vardanyan stands with conductor Ruben Asatryan.

## COMMENTARY

## Election of a New Istanbul Patriarch

By Edmond Y. Azadian

After seven years of uncertainty, it looks like the election of a new Armenian Patriarch is in the offing. In 2008, Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan was incapacitated because of an incurable disease. He was reduced to a shell of his former self, having lost his mental faculties completely. On June 30, 2010, Archbishop Aram Ateshian was assigned as vicar general by the clergy council. During the intervening years, confusion has reigned in the Istanbul Armenian community, which has been divided into two camps: one seeking the election of a new Patriarch, and the other opting for a co-adjutor Patriarch.

Such a situation was indeed unprecedented in the history of the Patriarchate nor had the Armenian Church canons foreseen or addressed such a case.

The Turkish government responded to neither camp, thus letting the community languish in confusion.

On October 6, 2016, the General Clerical Assembly convened under the presidency of Archbishop Sahak Mashalyan and pronounced Archbishop Mutafyan retired, thus paving the way for a new election.

Archbishop Mutafyan was the 84th Patriarch and now the community is awaiting the election of the 85th.

The Istanbul Patriarchate has played a crucial role in Armenian history; it still is the head of the Armenian community in Turkey and maintains its place in the general hierarchy of the Armenian Church globally.

The Patriarchate was created after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 by Fatih Sultan Mohammad II. It was created to serve as a counterweight against the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. It was used, abused and sometimes protected by succeeding Ottoman rulers. Since the Ottoman government had devised the Millet system, the conquered nations were governed through their spiritual heads. The sultan reached out to his Armenian constituency through the Patriarch, who consequently rose to a position of power. For a certain time in history, the Istanbul Patriarchate wielded more power than any other See in the Armenian Church hierarchy, including the two Catholicosates and the Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

The Sultans used the Istanbul Patriarchate as a political tool to control also the Patriarchate in Jerusalem, which was in competition with the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches in the Holy Land; as a consequence, Armenians also benefit from that competition. When Catholicos Sahak Khabayan was uprooted from the Catholicosate of Sis in 1914, he was declared by Jemal Pasha to be the supreme spiritual head of all Armenians, headquartered in Jerusalem, to counter Holy Echmiadzin, which was under Russian control.

The Armenian national constitution was ratified by the Sultan in 1863. Some principles and regulations from the constitution are still used by the Armenian churches and dioceses around the world, to this day.

Although technically the Armenian community does not need to ask for government permission to hold elections, the permission is supposedly to "oversee the orderliness of the election process." That is, of course, a euphemism for government control. A fly cannot move in the Armenian community without the government's sanction or permission, contrary to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, which supposedly guarantees the internal freedoms of Turkey's minorities.

It is not only President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that is complaining about the restrictions of that treaty; all his predecessors have agreed on this point and violated the clauses of the treaty with the collusion of its signatories.

There are 42 Armenian community charities (vakif) in Istanbul; those include churches, schools and hospitals. None of them has been allowed to hold elections for a long time. An official must have given a nod for the community to be able to take action and prepare for this election.

We must not have the illusion that anything has changed in Turkey. Any Patriarch must continue to serve the Turkish gov-

ernment first, before serving his community.

During a recent interview given to Civilnet, the current Vicar General confessed that Archbishop Mutafyan was given an instruction sheet with talking points whenever he traveled overseas. At one time, he was forced to visit European capitals to promote Turkey's bid to join the European Union, infuriating Armenians around the world.

That is the price a religious leader there has to pay to preserve the interests of his flock. Armenians outside Turkey must recognize the confines of the Patriarch's responsibilities in Turkey.

Archbishop Ateshian's letter to Erdogan against the vote in the German Bundestag recognizing the Armenian Genocide was out of line and characterized by his competitors in the Patriarchal election as "an act to promote his personal interests."

At this juncture, there are four candidates. According to community leaders in Istanbul, the favorite candidate would be the Turkish-born Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). But, he has refused to be in the race. That leaves the other four: Archbishop Aram Ateshian; Archbishop Sahak Mashalyan, Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of Armenians in Germany, and Archbishop Sebouh Chooljian, Primate of Gougark, in Armenia.

Besides the ability to serve the community and navigate through the legal and illegal mazes created by the Turkish government, the elected Patriarch must possess the moral character to uphold church unity around the world; with Antelias in open competition with Echmiadzin and the Patriarch in Jerusalem in an ugly revolt, it is a serious issue to maintain healthy relations with the Holy See while Turkey is domestically unstable.

It is too early to predict the outcome of the election. One thing is certain: the Turkish authorities have to gauge the level of loyalty to them, before allowing the public to vote.

Once vetted by the Turkish government, pundits in Istanbul believe that there will be an open and fair election.

During his tenure as Vicar General, Ateshian has ruffled some feathers. The editor of *Agos*, Pakrad Eutukyan, said that "he is not my choice." The archbishop wishes to secure credit for the



renovation of St. Giragos Church in Diyarbekir and Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar. Archbishop Bekjian has been most vocal in his bid for the office, yet many believe he has been away too long from the community to be in touch with the current mood there. Archbishop Chooljian, with a broader worldview, is still considered to be too assimilated to the culture of Armenia. Archbishop Mashalyan, very articulate and dignified, claims that he is not rushing to throw his hat in the rink, but will not turn down the honor if elected.

Turkish law requires that all the candidates be Turkish citizens. But violating the terms of the Lausanne Treaty, the government has closed down the Holy Cross Armenian Seminary and the Greek Seminary in Heybeli, which could prepare Turkish citizens as members of the clergy. They also forbid seminary students to be trained in other countries, in essence, cutting off routes for new candidates.

Despite all those manmade problems, it is a miracle that already four candidates are competing and that there are even a few more deserving ones serving other communities.

Armenians in Turkey are unanimous in vowing: "Whoever is elected will enjoy our respect."

We cannot contradict them.

## Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY



**My Turn**

**By Harut Sassounian**

## Armenia and Diaspora In Quest for a New Start

Ever since Armenia's independence, the Armenian world has been divided into three loose categories: those supporting or in some capacity interacting with the government; various opposition groups; and those who are independent or inactive. Regrettably, there has been hardly any effort to bridge the gap between these groups. On the contrary, there has been plenty of harsh rhetoric, accusations, and confrontations.

Even though the Armenian government and the opposition have different priorities, Armenians everywhere share a common set of interests and concerns regarding the economy, human rights, rule of law, Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) conflict, emigration, Diaspora's survival and securing justice from Turkey for the 1915 Genocide. The authorities have been preoccupied with governing the country and securing Armenia's and Artsakh's borders, while the opposition has focused on fighting corruption and pursuing transparent elections.

In recent months, for the first time in the last quarter century, one can see the first glimmer of hope that serious

changes are on Armenia's horizon. Possibly motivated by the recent turmoil in Yerevan and upcoming parliamentary elections, the government seems intent on carrying out serious reforms by appointing a competent technocrat as prime minister and giving him a *carte blanche*. Indeed, within a short period of time, the new PM has dismissed several untouchable sacred cows.

As Prime Minister Karen Karapetian has energetically moved forward with long overdue reforms, he has confounded both the power elite and those in opposition. By his actions, Mr. Karapetian has discomfited many high-ranking officials who had felt that their jobs and incomes were secure for life. Meanwhile, the opponents of the regime are also in a quandary of how to react and what to expect from the new head of government. Some have rushed to express their lack of trust by stating that nothing will change as long as the current leaders remain in office, while others have adopted a more reasonable wait and see attitude. The prime minister recently warned all sides that he would not hang around a single day longer if he saw that his efforts were fruitless.

Another significant recent development has been the reawakening of the Diaspora after a lengthy period of dormancy. Last September 30, prominent Armenians, including Serj Tankian, Atom Egoyan, Alexis Ohanian, Chris Bohjalian, Eric Bogosian and Sebu Simonian issued a petition on [change.org](http://change.org), calling for Justice Within Armenia. So far over 4,000 individuals have signed this petition.

A few days later, Canadian-Armenian actress Arsinee Khanjian issued a highly critical Open Letter after being detained by Armenian police during a protest in Yerevan on July 27. Khanjian outlined the government's shortcomings, urging Diaspora Armenians not to be "ambivalent

bystanders" and engage in transforming the social conditions in Armenia.

On October 28, another group of 23 prominent Armenians, including Abel Aganbegyan, Charles Aznavour, Edward Djerejian, Vartan Gregorian, and Ruben Vardanyan, issued another Open Letter urging "Global Armenians...to unite and together enable Armenia's future." The signatories called on "all Armenians to engage in pioneering and long-term investment to restore the social, economic, cultural, and technological strengths of the nation, with Armenia at its core." The Open Letter was published in *The New York Times* and *Hayastani Hanrapetutyoun*.

What Armenia really needs is a full partnership with the Diaspora to accomplish all the suggested reforms in the above mentioned petition and two open letters. The government should welcome the participation of all Armenians to improve the country's social, economic, political, and military structures in order to create a just, prosperous, well governed, and secure Homeland.

The only way to transform Armenia into a highly-developed and democratic country is to welcome the involvement of as many of the 10 million Armenians worldwide as possible, regardless of their country of residence. Since Armenia (including Artsakh) is the Homeland of all Armenians, everyone has the right and obligation to contribute to its Renaissance.

The major missing factor from the foregoing petition and open letters is a mechanism for organizing the Diaspora to sustain its own continued existence, while extending crucial assistance to the Homeland in a coordinated and systematic manner. To accomplish this imperative objective, Armenians need to establish a democratically-elected Diaspora structure with representatives in Armenia's Parliament.

# It's Hard To Be Gay in Armenia

## Widespread Prejudice in Armenia Leaves Few LGBT-Friendly Public Spaces

**By Arman Gharibyan**

Life for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people in Armenia, a socially conservative society where homophobia remains entrenched, is not easy.

The difficulties are multiplied for those living outside the capital, where society is even less tolerant towards LGBT people. Socialising is particularly difficult, with no LGBT-friendly venues and few public places where gay people can be sure they will not be subject to abuse.

Arthur (not his real name), 25, said that there were no public entertainment spaces in Gyumri or Vanadzor, the country's second and third largest cities respectively, where LGBT people could feel safe.

"It is impossible for me to go to a coffee shop and not hear hurtful comments or catch hostile glances. Once I got into a verbal exchange with one of the customers because of an off-the-cuff remark by him, but the manager came and demanded that I leave, saying that the dispute began because of me," said Arthur, who lives in Gyumri.

Instead, Arthur and his friends go to Yerevan on weekends, over 120 km away, where they can feel more at ease.

"Yerevan also does not have a particularly friendly attitude towards gays, but this is the only place in Armenia where you can feel relatively free," he said.

Sergei Gabrielyan, head of the New Generation NGO, believes that such intolerant attitudes towards LGBT people in more remote places of the country has caused internal migration.

"An LGBT person who lives in the province tries at all cost to enter any educational institution in Yerevan to move to the capital. Outside the capital, it is extremely difficult to live a gay lifestyle," Gabrielyan said, whose organisation works to protect the rights of LGBT people across Armenia.

"Living in the provinces, an LGBT person is forced to hide his own nature, because he will not be accepted as an equal," Gabrielyan said.

Research on attitudes towards LGBT people published earlier this year by the Pink Armenia NGO shows that the country still has a long way to go.

According to the survey, 93.8 per cent of the 1,017 people interviewed said they did not want to see gay couples holding hands in the street and 97.5 per cent were against them kissing in public.

LGBT people are "one of the most marginalised, least visible and discriminated against groups" in Armenia as well as in neighbouring Georgia, according to a June report by the Tbilisi-based Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG).

"Despite a degree of success achieved in recent years, ... members of the group continue to face violence, oppression, and harassment from the general public, as well as specific institutions, including medical facilities and the workplace. Bias-motivated violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) frequently goes unreported and, hence, remain without proper investigation and retribution," the report said.

Life in the capital is by no means easy. Among the hundreds of restaurants, pubs and coffee shops in Yerevan, not a single public entertainment venue caters to the members of the LGBT community.

In 2012, the DIY Club in Yerevan - known as a gay hangout - was firebombed and its owner harassed.

Since then, no one has dared to open a public entertainment venue for LGBT people in Armenia.

There is a private social club for gay men and transgender women in Yerevan, which is open daily to members and their friends.

Nelly (not her real name) the club's 32-year-old director, is originally from Vanadzor. When she moved to the capital to join her brother, she found out that he was gay.

"I accepted him from the very beginning. Through my brother, I met this community," she explained.

She opened the club last year following her brother's death "so that people like him can feel comfortable here," she continued.

Nelly launched by handed out 100 membership cards to people who are still the core visitors to the club.

"I try not to let many people in, so that my [customers] feel comfortable here. I know everyone personally. I try to make sure there are no problems, and they listen to me," she said.

Nelly said she believes that many in the city are aware of her club, but does not expect any attacks.

"We do not interfere. These people need entertainment. I told them - do not leave the club, do not attract attention so as to not disturb others."

Among those in the know, the club is much valued resource.

**Today, there are homosexuals who publically acknowledge their sexual orientation... In the 2000s, there were many cases of homosexuals who were murdered. Today, the level of physical violence has decreased, relatively.**

"This is the only place where I can be who I want to be," said Milena, a regular visitor. "None of the local visitors... will cast me side-long glances. No one will make unpleasant remarks about me."

Ashot, a security guard at the club, who did not want to use his real name, told IWPR he did his best to protect visitors from unpleasant experiences.

"When strangers try to enter the club, I try to explain in my own way that there is no admittance. Sometimes I just say that this is a gay club, and people will go away. It happens that they are persistent in wanting to enter, but I certainly will not allow it," he said.

In the absence of LGBT clubs, some members of the community try to organise their own parties.

Sarkis, 26, explained how he and a friend had begun putting together nights out.

They first had to reach an agreement with the management of a club, ensure the premises would be protected and put together a guest list.

"The first party was attended by about 160 people," he said. "We were able to organise great fun for them, but we were very

tense."

Earlier that day he had received phone calls threatening to blow up the club if the party went ahead. Later, a group of unknown people tried to break down the door and get inside.

"After that, we thought for a long time that it was no longer worth organising LGBT parties," Sarkis said.

However, demand remained so high that Sarkis and his friend organised another two club nights, the last one attended by around 250 people.

"This was an unprecedented figure for Armenia. It proved that the community needs such events," Sarkis said.

Vahan Ishkhanyan, editor-in-chief of *Inknagir Literary Magazine*, has written about LGBT issues for a long time.

His first article on gay men was published

in 2002, when homosexuality was still officially illegal in Armenia.

"Journalists did not want to touch this topic. When I published my first article, after reading it, one of the local editors said with fear that he wouldn't like his son to read this article," Ishkhanyan said.

The following year Armenia joined the Council of Europe and homosexuality was decriminalised.

Despite deep-rooted discrimination, social attitudes towards LGBT people have indeed softened since then.

"Today, there are homosexuals who publically acknowledge their sexual orientation," Ishkhanyan said. "In the 2000s, there were many cases of homosexuals who were murdered. Today, the level of physical violence has decreased, relatively. We see people who look different from others in their appearance. It was not like that before. When I see these changes, I begin to believe that there will be new changes."

(Arman Gharibyan is a freelance journalist in Armenia. This essay originally appeared in the Institute for War and Peace Reporting.)



# HALO Trust: Making Karabakh Safe by Removing One Mine at a Time

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since 1995. The HALO Trust cleared three minefields in the village between 2007 and 2011, removing 38 anti-personnel mines, two anti-tank mines and three other explosive items. The minefield being cleared through crowd funding is the only minefield remaining.

Moore, visiting the US from the group's headquarters in Scotland, spoke at length recently about HALO's legacy in Karabakh.

"We are confident that we know where all the minefields are," Moore said.

So far, he said, the group has cleared more than 300 minefields in the republic, accounting for 90 percent of the mines. According to HALO, a total of 23,500 mines have been cleared in Artsakh.

Since the end of the war in 1994, there have been 370 civilian casualties from mines and unexploded ordnances.

The single largest donor to HALO in this effort is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), followed by the governments of the UK and Netherlands.

There are three kinds of mines, Moore explained. The first is the anti-personnel blast mines, which blow off legs; the second is the anti-personnel mines, with scattered shrapnel fragments upon explosion and the third is anti-tank mines, which explode when a vehicle drives over them.

In Karabakh, an agrarian country, farmers driving their tractors have been killed or severely injured driving over those mines. According

to the brochure, families living near minefields are some of the poorest and most food insecure, since they have to choose between cultivating land they know is mind and letting their children go hungry.

Moore added that HALO has the full cooper-

campaign – Safe steps for the people of Karabakh – to clear all the landmines in Karabakh with an impact on civilians by 2020. An anonymous donor has pledged half of the \$8 million required – if the HALO Trust can raise matching funds.



Mikhail Merjumian and his family

ation of the Nagorno Karabakh government and that their work is contained to the interior and not the border with Azerbaijan, which is still fairly active.

The crowd-funding project is part of a larger

As part of this outreach effort, the group has produced a brochure, with stunning photos by photojournalist Scout Tufankjian. There will be an exhibition and auction of some of her pictures in 2017.

The total budget for Artsakh this year has been \$2.3 million, with large private donations.

It is not only by demining that HALO is impacting Artsakh; the group employs 170 Armenian staff.

"We recruit and train local people. It creates employment," he said. Notably, he added, HALO has two demining teams composed of women.

The employment, he said, is "transformative" for families, many of whom are heads of households.

Moore stressed that the level of poverty in the rural areas of Artsakh was remarkable. "They are as poor as any [country] we saw," he said.

Globally, the group has a presence in 19 countries, with a total staff of around 6,000.

"We have overcome a lot of resistance," he said. "It is one of the last countries in the world to employ deminers."

In addition, HALO is developing projects with the Armenia Tree Project and the TUMO Center.

As of this writing, 77 percent of the amount sought for the village of Myurishen had been raised.

This year marks the 19th anniversary of the late Princess Diana's visit to a HALO site in Angola, one of her most iconic pictures, in which she walked through a field wearing a HALO mask and body shield.

HALO, short for Hazardous Area Life-support Organization, was founded in 1988.

To donate toward demining Myurishen, visit <https://www.halotrust.org/minefreenk/>

## Can Iran Pull Turkey, Iraq Away from Brink of War?

By Saeid Jafari

"He insults me. You are not on the same level as me! You are not my equal! Scream all you want from Iraq! It will not change anything! We will do what we want to do." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan uttered these words October 11 when addressing Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, in the latest round of verbal sparring between the two neighbors. Turkey, which once had "zero problems" with its neighbors, today has strained relations with every single one of them.

Despite its tensions with Turkey, Tehran is well-positioned to bring Ankara and Baghdad closer amid their escalating war of words – but could Iran be successful in this endeavor?

Having encountered numerous problems with former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Erdogan was supportive of Abadi's coming into office. Indeed, most observers were expecting that tensions between Iraq and Turkey would lessen when Maliki stepped down. However, it appears that Erdogan is determined to repeat the cycle of tension between Turkey and its neighbors as

well as other regional actors. The state of Turkish relations with Syria, Armenia, Egypt, Russia, Iran and Iraq clearly demonstrates Ankara's confused foreign policy on Erdogan's watch.

The recent controversy over Turkey's military presence in Iraq – while different from previous incidents in some aspects – has one major aspect that is being repeated: It is a reminder of the role that Turkey has played in Syria. Ankara was one of the first capitals to seriously call on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down and was also one of the first countries that proposed military action against the Syrian government. Neither of these demands have materialized, thus forcing Ankara to adopt a more subdued policy.

This raises the possibility that Turkey's new approach toward Iraq, and especially Mosul, is related to its defeat in Syria. Speaking in the city of Bursa on Oct. 23, Erdogan charged that Mosul has historically belonged to Turkey. These remarks come against the backdrop of past statements that Iraq is not capable of addressing the Mosul challenge on its own. This new Turkish approach has resulted in a rare case of political unity between the various factions in Iraq. From Abadi to Shiite cleric Muqtada al-

Sadr, all have condemned the Turkish president's rhetoric.

One key question is what Iran's position toward Turkey is amid these developments. One high-ranking Iranian diplomat who spoke to Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity said, "Turkey could not achieve its objectives in Aleppo and now it is looking for the same thing in Iraq and Mosul. Naturally, however, Ankara will not get a better result in Iraq."

The Turkish pro-government daily Dirilis Postasi argued Oct. 16 that Iran is conducting a massacre in Mosul, charging that Tehran has for two centuries created bloodshed in the Islamic world so that it can have access to the Mediterranean Sea. There was no accompanying explanation of when precisely Iran has hatched such plots, or any sources or pieces of evidence for the latter. Yet, the article can perhaps be seen as a sign of a new negative Turkish approach toward Iran.

A review of recent developments in Iraq and Syria shows that Ankara has generally seen its efforts to play a role worth its standing in the region end in failure. Though Turkey's entry into the Iraqi and Syrian conflicts has received a lot of media attention, in the end, it has not resulted in any tangible Turkish gains – and especially in the military sphere. Thus, the big picture appears to be that Erdogan's new approach is the result of his dissatisfaction with the regional situation – dissatisfaction that is the result of the approaches of both Abadi and the United States. Ultimately, this appears to have led Erdogan to decide to act autonomously and pursue his objectives in Iraq and Syria without waiting for the West.

Al-Monitor spoke with Alireza Miryousefi, the head of the Middle Eastern Studies Group at the Foreign Ministry's think tank, the Institute for Political and International Studies. He said, "Unfortunately, following the Arab Spring, Turkey made some miscalculations and adopted hasty positions. It has been dealing with the consequences of its mistakes for the past five years. Questioning the legitimacy of borders or talking about the necessity of a new Sykes-Picot Agreement are not considered constructive positions. The positive point here is that, similar to Iran, Turkey will also benefit the most from stabil-

ity in the region. Therefore, Iran should definitely try to lessen the gap between different political approaches in the region with high-level diplomatic negotiations."

In a live TV program on October 22, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim spoke about Turkey's continuously reaching out to Iran with the hope of finding a solution to the crises in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, there is no sign that Turkey is withdrawing from Syria, and it does not appear that Erdogan is planning to change course for now. What will Iran's reaction then be if Turkey continues with its current approach? Will there be any attempts at mediating between Baghdad and Ankara?

Speaking to the Iraqi Kurdish Rudaw news channel Oct. 30, Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign policy adviser to the Iranian supreme leader, announced Tehran's preparedness to step in, saying, "Iran is ready to mediate between Turkey and Iraq to prevent war."

Meanwhile, a high-ranking source in the Iranian Foreign Ministry told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, "Iran is certainly interested in such a thing happening and it has made several attempts in this regard. However, the Turkish side is not interested as it believes that it can manage the issues in Mosul and Iraq through military force and the way it sees fit. However, not only does the Islamic Republic [of Iran] not believe in such a solution, but the realities of the region show that Turkey's planned approach is unrealistic."

Former senior Iranian diplomat Nosratollah Tajik agrees, though he predicts more Turkish pragmatism in the end. Tajik, a former ambassador to Jordan, told Al-Monitor, "Iran and Turkey have different objectives and approaches regarding Mosul. Turkey has historical claims about Mosul that make the situation more complicated, while it is in Iran's interest to have the Iraqi government win the conflict in Mosul and destroy one of the main bases of Daesh [Islamic State]. Turkey will follow a destructive pattern, but in the end it will have to accept the new order – although it is trying to allocate a bigger share for itself in the new order."

(<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/11/iran-mediator-iraq-turkey-tension-mosul-operation.html#ixzz4Ont0xJf6>)

### Aznavour Honored by Star on Walk Of Fame

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De Leon characterized Aznavour as a musical icon and a great humanitarian who, over the course of eight-decades, has performed countless shows across the globe, while writing and recording over 1,200 songs in eight languages, and selling more than 1,800 records worldwide.

In 1988, Aznavour was named "Entertainer of the Century" by CNN and *Time*. Aznavour ranks as one of the greatest singers of all time and as a master of the chanson.

After gratefully accepting the Hollywood Walk of Fame Star Plaque, Aznavour said he was both honored and humbled. Speaking in his native language of French, he graciously answered a barrage of questions put forward by members of the news media, who had flanked him from all sides, hardly giving him room to breathe.

This event was put forward by Baydzar Tovmassyan, De Leon's field representative. De Leon represents District 24, including Hollywood and Little Armenia, and has been the California Senate president since 2014.

The ceremony was attended by many high profile figures of the Armenian-American community, including Very Rev. Pakrad Berjikian, Diocese Vicar General; Rev. Vicken Vasilian, pastor of St. Garabed Church in Hollywood and a representative from the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia.