

PG
03

► Article
Jerusalem Patriarchate Up for Grabs

PG
05

► The GENOCIDE
State of Hawaii Recognizes Artsakh's Independence

PG
07

► Arts & Society
Armenian Culture Week in Tokyo

News from Armenia

President Serj Sarkisian Convenes National Security Council Session



The National Security Council of the Republic of Armenia was assembled for a session on Saturday, chaired by the President of the Republic of Armenia and the Chairman of the National Security Council Serj Sarkisian.

In his opening address to the participants of the session, the President said: «For about a quarter century our country has lived through a hard path of the making of democratic institutions. The making of our statehood has been anchored on the rule of law, freedom of speech, political pluralism and other fundamental principles, none of which has ever been questioned. Unfortunately, of course, there had been time periods when these principles were more of a declarative nature and did not correspond to the realities. Meanwhile, we have always been conscious there are values beyond private, group, partisan or other interests. The most important among those is securing the domestic tranquility and solidarity in our country, which becomes even further valuable in the face of ongoing regional and geopolitical developments.

The preservation of this value itself also suggests a continuous political race and the exercise of other means for the expression and protection of various interests as established in democratic societies.

However, recently it has become even more emboldened that certain people have got intentions and attempt to take their agenda items out of the political frameworks and seek to find other solutions. Up until today the evaluations given to specific actions and the analyses of those issues have remained in the political domain.

Page 02 ►►

Armenia in Constant Contact with Military/Diplomatic Representatives of Foreign Countries



The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia is in constant contact with international organizations and diplomatic/military representatives of foreign countries for necessary consultations and exchange of information regarding the developments on the contact line of Nagorno Karabakh-Azerbaijani opposing forces.

This was stated by the Press Secretary of the Ministry of Defense of Armenia Artsrun Hovhannisian.

Along the entire length of the contact line of Nagorno Karabakh- Azerbaijani opposing forces, on April 1 and throughout the morning of April 2, the adversary undertook large-scale offensive military actions, during which the adversary shelled with missile-artillery units not only Armenian defense positions, but also civilian settlements. According to the data of the Defense Army, the Azerbaijani armed forces fired MM-21 (Grad) multiple rocket launcher on April 2, at 08: 30 in the direction of Martuni (NKR), killing 12 year old Vaghinak Grigoryan and wounding two other children.

The Defense Army conducts successful defensive battles throughout all directions of the contact line, causing significant losses to the adversary's manpower and equipment. According to the Defense Army's information, in addition to other losses caused by the Defense Army, in the northern part of the contact line the Defense Army destroyed a hostile attack helicopter which was attacking the Armenian positions.

News from the World

President Sarkisian Meets With US Vice-President Joseph Biden in Washington DC

On March 31, President Serj Sarkisian, who was on a working visit to the United States of America, left Boston for Washington DC where, on the same day, he had a meeting with US Vice-President Joseph Biden at the White House. Biden had last met the President almost a

year ago, particularly on the occasion of the interreligious prayer dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide held at the Washington National Cathedral on May 7, 2015, reports the press service of the RA President.

The interlocutors stressed the fact that Armenia-US relations have always been developing progressively since Armenia's independence thanks to joint efforts

Page 02 ►►

News from Armenia

Page 01 >>

President Serj Sarkisian Convenes National Security Council Session

I believe today is the high time to discuss such actions and other related phenomena with a view to the national security. It is our tasks to evaluate to what extent those existing challenges endanger the vitally important interests of the citizen, society and the state, and to formulate a common approach what shall be the means to neutralize those challenges.

The aforementioned shall in no ways entail the state had no definite stance regarding that set of issues so crucial for the normal functioning of the society, or is now formulating new approaches.

Specifically speaking, the state has never endorsed any ambiguous propaganda of violence; for good or bad – even though it is not an issue at the moment – has been doing its best to oversee the legitimacy of the funds generated, to some extent has reacted to the use of dubious financial resources for political ends, and has periodically responded to the disproportionate employment of technical and organizational assets for the sake of the protection of private interests.

Of course, all this is integral part of daily duties of relevant public authorities. However when all such negative phenomena are being pooled together to serve certain interests against the national security, the attitude towards it shall be different in principle. What shall it look like, we are here to discuss today.

Through discussions at the National Security Council session a common approach was formulated on how to evaluate those phenomena challenging the national security, and the issue of adequate measures based on the level of their gravity was considered. The members of the Council were unanimous that means to neutralize any challenge emerging for the national security of the Republic of Armenia shall be in accordance with the standards of justice and rule of law.

PM: "All State Structures in the Republic of Armenia Are Prepared to Do Everything in Their Power in Order to Stabilize The Situation"

On Sunday morning Prime Minister Hovig Aprahamian called a consultative meeting on the large-scale attacks undertaken by the enemy on the night of April 2 along the line of contact between Karabakh and Azerbaijani forces. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of International Economic Integration and Reforms Vache Gabrielyan, Minister-Chief of Government Staff David Haroutunian, Minister of Healthcare Armen Muradian, Minister of Emergency Situations Armen Yeritsian, First Deputy Defense Minister David Tonoyan and Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian.

The Prime Minister noted that this unprecedented act is another overt manifestation of Azerbaijan's policy aimed at undermining the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"After retaliating and inflicting significant losses on the enemy, Armenian armed forces have regained full control of the situation. All State structures in the Republic of Armenia are prepared to do everything in their power in order to stabilize the situation."

Reporting on the situation, First Deputy Defense



Minister David Tonoyan said the enemy has undertaken unprecedented hostilities ever since 1994. At the moment, intensive military operations are continuing at the line of contact between Karabakh and Azerbaijani forces. Armenian armed forces have retaliated adequately.

While giving appropriate instructions to relevant government agencies, Prime Minister Hovig Aprahamian stressed the importance of providing timely and accurate information to the public at large.

Kids Wounded in Azerbaijani Armed Raids in Stable Condition

The children hospitalized in the wake of the armed raid targeting Nagorno-Karabakh's town of Martuni on Saturday morning are now in a stable condition, Tert.am has learned from Armen Arakelyan, Chief of Staff at the Nagorno-Karabakh Ministry of Health.

One child, identified as Vaghinak T Krikorian, 12, was

killed in the armed attack launched from a BM-12 "Grad" (Hail) vehicle.

One of the wounded children has been moved to the Stepanakert hospital after a surgery, Arakelian said, adding that they intend to move also the other young patient to that medical center.

News from the World

President Sarkisian Meets With US Vice-President Joseph Biden in Washington DC

Page 01 >>

and the reciprocal political will and stated with satisfaction that the current agenda of bilateral interstate relations includes various spheres (political, economic, humanitarian, security), within the scope of which the two countries make more and more achievements every year.

According to President Serj Sarkisian, thanks to reciprocal efforts, the Armenia-US partnership is currently at the highest level in the history of the bilateral relations, evidence of which are the different high-profile visits that have been made over the past couple of years. The head of state praised the assistance that the United States provides for Armenia's economic development and for the reforms being implemented in different spheres.

Serj Sarkisian also attached great importance to the role of the US in maintaining security and stability in the region, especially the active role of the US in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. During the meeting, besides the agenda of Armenia-US relations, the sides touched upon the state of the South Caucasus, as well as current international affairs and

challenges. In that context, the interlocutors exchanged views on the process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and the developments unfolding in the Near East.

The President of the Republic of Armenia stated that Armenia relies on the active intervention of the international community and especially the co-chairing countries to take action to alert the Azerbaijani authorities while they still can make a change.

President Sarkisian expressed his satisfaction with the attention that US Congressmen have paid to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and their active efforts for a peaceful settlement. According to the President, the Congressmen's actions can set an example for the parliamentarians of many other countries.

Serj Sarkisian stated that Armenia is strictly concerned about and strictly condemns the actions of terrorist groups located in the immediate vicinity of the country. The President regretted to note that the atrocities are killing several Armenians of Iraq and Syria and turning them into refugees, damaging and eliminating samples of the centuries-old Armenian spiritual and cultural heritage in the region.



Vice-President Biden praised Armenia's efforts aimed at providing numerous Syrian refugees with shelter and creating the conditions that make it possible for Syrian-Armenians to live and work.

The interlocutors voiced hope that active and effective mechanisms would be developed to solve the problems facing minorities in the Middle East, foster the return of Christian communities and protect their centuries-old culture and heritage. Serj Sarkisian and Joseph Biden also expressed confidence that they could resist the existing challenges through combined efforts.

Jerusalem Patriarchate Up for Grabs

By Edmond Y. Azadian

In recent years, sexual scandals plaguing the Catholic Church in the US and elsewhere have become routine. These scandals dominate the headlines and have weakened the Catholic Church, which besides being a religious institution, is also a powerful political force. For instance, it was revealed recently that Pope Francis had played a major role in the US-Cuba rapprochement. When there is such a powerful institution with awesome political clout, there certainly will be other forces offended or hurt by that clout and they will resort to any means at their disposal – in this case, the news media – to retaliate.

Having said that, the Catholic priests caught red-handed cannot be absolved as the courts have been handing down guilty verdicts in many cases, resulting in embarrassment and huge damages for the church and its coffers.

The issue of clergy celibacy is considered the root cause of those abuses while the Catholic Church obstinately remains attached to that anachronistic practice. The Catholic Church has gone through many reforms, and has still more to face, yet the issue of clergy celibacy is not on the agenda.

As we review the media coverage, more often than not, the Catholic Church seems to be singled out for exposure. Other denominations certainly experience similar problems, but we learn about them only casually or seldom.

When you don't have tangible facts at hand, you are on a very dangerous road to prove a conspiracy theory. But when you extrapolate the facts you may state with a certain confidence that there must be validity to such a conspiracy in operation and their motivation is a power struggle.

Warring factions always count on the weaknesses of the opponent to exploit and to score points or victory. And the Catholic Church – or its sinning clergy – has been exposing those weaknesses.

The above introduction was presented in order to outline the parameters of this multidimensional problem.

Now it seems that the scandal has come to knock on the doors of the Armenian Church. News has been circulating in Israeli and Armenian news outlets as well as social media about sexual abuse by Armenian clergy. The scandal has many components. Armenians being part of the human race, they are also preconditioned to be afflicted by the vices of the rest of the humans. An element of primitive pride sometimes keeps us in the mode of self-denial. We think that there cannot be drug addiction among Armenians, nor domestic violence, nor prostitution, etc. In reality, all of the above are part and parcel of our social fabric. The issue remains how to identify them, find the root causes and face them realistically and how we treat them or deal with them prudently.

During the last week in February, an Israeli TV channel called Israel Today aired a 15-minute documentary titled "Demons of the Past," where an accuser, named Hrayr Yezegelian, is featured entering the Armenian Monastery of St. James in Jerusalem to face Fr. Khat Jundurian, who allegedly had abused him sexually at age 13 when he was a seminary student.

Viewing the video clip circulating on Facebook, it seems it is carefully choreographed and staged.

The same alleged victim, Mr. Yezegelian, 38, also accused Archbishop David Sahakian, who was the dean of Jerusalem Seminary in 1990. According to the Le Progres newspaper, a lawsuit was filed against the archbishop on July 22, 2013, and on January 22, 2015, the French law enforcement agencies launched an investigation. He was charged with sexual abuse of a child under 15. The archbishop passed away in the middle of March in Decienes (Rhône), France at the

age of 81. He had been serving the Diocese of Lyon in France.

According to a knowledgeable writer, Nahabed Melkonian, who has released an article on the Internet ("When Pandora's Box Has Been Opened"), another priest from the St. James Brotherhood, Fr. Norayr Kazazian, visited Fr. Khat in Bethlehem, asking him to admit misconduct and apologize to Hrayr Yezegelian. During three consecutive visits, he secretly recorded "the confessions" of Fr. Khat, probably to be used by the producer of the program on TV.

The interesting item to note is that the alleged victim has confessed on Facebook: "This individual has found the perfect prey in me and abused me for years also, even long after leaving the seminary school."

This raises the question of why he would return to the seminary after leaving if he were offended by the conduct of his abuser.

In the aftermath of the airing of this documentary by the TV station, an attorney, Roni Aloni-Sdovnik, has filed a lawsuit against the Patriarchate, seeking 15 million Israeli shekels in damages.

Officially, the Patriarchate has been silent so far.

The incident has several dimensions: a) The veracity of the accusation which in turn touches on b) the issue of celibacy and c) what the Israeli station gains by airing the incident, at the same time implicating the Patriarchate as an institution, beyond the alleged individual culprit.

A background check reveals that after the Israeli army's occupation of Beirut, Lebanon, in 1982, the Yezegelian family moved to Jerusalem, where the Patriarchate provided them with housing, according to its long-held tradition. The three brothers have been enrolled at the seminary, but they have chosen not to enter into the priesthood. Hrayr, at the age of 38, seems to be a lifelong student, studying psychology. He seems to be a drifter, in need of some psychological help.

In the meantime, he decided to join the Mormon Church. For many years, the alleged sexual abuse did not bother him enough for him to take action. Only after the expiration of the statute of limitation did he come out to accuse his alleged abusers. In a dubious collaboration, Fr. Norayr Kazazian has secretly videotaped Fr. Khat Jundurian's confession. He also invited the Israeli TV to shoot the confrontation of the "victim" and the "abuser" while interfering during a church service.

We cannot absolve the predators and we can only sympathize with the "victim" if indeed the accusation has a foundation. But the theatrical denouement of the situation smells fishy. The people and the TV channel have gone too far and their actions do not pass the smell test. If Hrayr was indeed a victim, he is being victimized again along with the institution of the Patriarchate, which faces public embarrassment, beyond the 15 million shekel lawsuit.

The TV channel Israel Today has yet to dedicate a documentary to Yeshiva students who spit at the faces of the Armenian clergy and desecrate the walls of the churches, which the police and the courts ignore.

Another suitable topic for the same TV channel to investigate might be the causes for the dwindling Armenian community in Jerusalem. Indeed, in 1967 the Armenian community in Jerusalem was 10,000 to 15,000 strong. Today, the count is below 1,500.

Even if Hrayr Yezegelian's accusation have no foundation, we cannot rule out abuses in a monastic setting, where male celibate priests live together. Until the fifth century, Armenian catholicoi and archbishops were married and raised families. Gradually, celibacy made inroads in the church, with ascetic monks sacrificing worldly pleasures and taking a vow of celibacy. There were even stylites, ascetic monks who drove the self-punishment to the extreme by living on top of pillars for many years on. The self-flagellation of celibate priests is well-described poetically in Gregory



of Narek's Book of Lamentations.

The celibate priests practiced monastic life in isolation. The monasteries were called anabat (wilderness or desert).

Archbishop Malachia Ormanian states in his book, The Armenian Church, that the celibate priests could not assume pastoral positions nor perform sacraments of marriage and funerals, because they were not supposed to come into contact with parishioners or the public.

In today's globalized world, these canons have outlived their usefulness. The celibate priests no longer observe the rigors of monastic life; they are out in public. The temptation is overpowering and that is why we come across clergy promiscuity and sexual abuse. One of the priorities in reforming the Armenian Church must be the abolition of celibacy, which is seldom truly practiced anyway. The elimination of celibacy is not a cure all but it will certainly reduce the number of incidences and some will be honest with themselves and relieve the church of hypocrisy. After all, it is not celibacy that creates child abuse, but since people who can find a life in a pseudo-celibate life can often be around children, it is an ideal situation for them to find victims.

Armenians occupy one fourth of the old city of Jerusalem – a disproportionate figure compared to the size of the population. In addition to many churches and monasteries, the Patriarchate also owns prime real estate there.

The St. James Brotherhood in Jerusalem has historically been a source of pride and embarrassment. For centuries it has trained clergy for Armenian Churches around the world. Many scholarly volumes have been produced there. And, Jerusalem's Patriarchate houses the largest collection of illuminated manuscripts after the Matenadaran in Yerevan. But it has also rocked the Armenian world with sporadic scandals, with valuable real estate "lost" from time to time, manuscripts and chalices disappear, and sexual abuse and promiscuity are reported from time to time. Sometimes, some priests are worthy of blame in those cases. But the Patriarchate's possessions are prime reasons for encroachment by others.

Many discredited methods are implemented by other religious orders and the Israeli government to bilk chunks of Armenian properties.

During the Camp David summit in July 22-25-2000, Ehud Barak of Israel and PLO leader Yasser Arafat had almost signed a peace agreement, under President Clinton's prodding. But the deal fell through because of some sticking points. Along with a number of critical matters, Israel insisted on keeping the Armenian Quarter under its rule, which Arafat refused.

That historic fact can attest to the importance of the Armenian Quarter for the Israeli government.

There are a number of properties lost or leased for 100 or 200 years. There may also be others which remain unreported.

The holy places are governed by a set of regulations

Better to Support Armenian Activists Than Criticize Azeri & Turkish Lobbying

By Harut Sassounian

For years, many critical books and articles have been written about foreign countries and domestic groups for hiring lobbying firms or making campaign contributions to influence government officials.

One such article was published last week by L. Michael Hager in the Foreign Policy Journal titled, "The Best Congress AIPAC Can Buy." AIPAC is the acronym for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. The author acknowledges that "there is nothing illegal or morally wrong with lobbying Congress or candidates for office. In fact, it can serve a useful purpose in educating members and candidates about matters subject to legislation. The problem comes when the lobbyists use money to secure access or buy support for proposed bills and resolutions." After that benign introduction, however, Hager concludes that "for the sake of our democracy, the flow of interest group money that is buying off our elected lawmakers must be stopped."

Hager states that "nowhere is the influence and power of a political lobby more evident than in the annual Policy Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)" held on March 22-24 in Washington, DC.

Conference speakers addressed "more than 15,000 pro-Israel Americans (including 2/3 of the current Members of Congress). Among the speakers were 30 members of the U.S. Congress, 25 of whom received 2016 contributions from pro-Israel PACs and individuals, averaging \$36,000 per recipient (\$908,000 in total).

From each of those speakers, AIPAC gains a public expression of high level support for Israel."

Hager reported that the AIPAC conference attracted nearly 400 speakers, including "Vice President Joe Biden and Presidential candidates Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz and John Kasich." According to the writer, "AIPAC generated contributions in the amount of \$212,927 for Hillary Clinton and \$203,850 for Ted Cruz. Marco Rubio received \$132,552 and Lindsey Graham \$74,200. No surprise that all of those candidates have pledged 'full support' for Israel."

The author considers "The AIPAC-led pro-Israel lobby" as "probably the strongest, best organized and most effective lobby network in Washington, DC. For the 2015-2016 election cycle, the pro-Israel network has already dispensed \$4,255,136 in contributions. The largest single amount (\$259,688) went to Senator Charles Schumer of New York."

Hager explains that "AIPAC itself does not make political contributions and is in fact legally prohibited from doing so. Instead it uses its considerable resources (\$3 million annual lobbying budget) to link current and aspiring members of Congress with pro-Israel donors. AIPAC's projection of invincibility encourages political candidates and officeholders to accept pro-Israel contributions or risk seeing those funds go to their opponents. For example, former Congressman Paul Findley and former Senator Charles Percy lost their seats for failure to adhere to the AIPAC line."

The author's criticisms emanate from his concern that "the appearance of conflict of interest erodes citizen

trust in government. Given the critical importance of money for reelection campaigns, political contributions such as mentioned above have the potential to corrupt or create the appearance of corrupting otherwise honest officials."

Hager acknowledges that AIPAC is "only one part of a larger picture, dominated by congressional fundraising and lobby contributions," such as "Defense, pharmaceuticals, the NRA and other lobbies..."

In my view, it is justified to criticize lobbying firms and their paymasters when they violate U.S. laws. However, it is more important to strengthen one's own lobbying efforts than disparage what others are doing. While it is necessary from an Armenian perspective to monitor closely the lobbying firms hired by Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenians should focus on what they can do to support their two public affairs organizations in Washington – The Armenian Assembly and Armenian National Committee of America. Despite their limited staff and resources, these Armenian-American groups have been successfully countering the activities of major lobbying firms hired for millions of dollars by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Fortunately, Armenian-American groups do not need such exorbitant sums to pursue their political goals in Washington because it costs much less to present the truth of their just cause, unlike Turkey and Azerbaijan which have to spend huge amounts of money to deceive the politicians and the public!

www.TheCaliforniaCourier.com

Tankian: It's Apparent That Azeris Had the Weapon Of Surprise

Although both Armenia and Azerbaijan claim each other as aggressors, it's obvious that the Azeris had the weapon of surprise on their side, American-Armenian musician Serj Tankian, who is lead singer of the world-renowned American Armenian rock band System of a Down, wrote on his Facebook page.

According to Tankian, there have been three developments this week on the Nagorno-Karabagh resolution effort "that have led to what seem to be a very distributing all out war on the border of Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan".

"1. [Recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh independence by Hawaii] may have led Azerbaijan to believe that time is against them in the eventual

recognition of the Republic of Karabagh. 2. A meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (a corrupt despot who inherited the oil rich regime from his father) hours before the resumption of violence, may have given Aliyev the feeling that the U.S. would condone his outright aggression to seize Karabagh. 3. A meeting in Switzerland between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan over last weekend," Tankian wrote.

"Although both sides claim the other as aggressors, for me it's obvious that the Azeris had the weapon of surprise on their side and went in with full armaments immediately and claim to have taken over land. Kissing the ass of oil should not have produced war, right? Wrong," he said.



Jerusalem Patriarchate Up for Grabs

Page 03 ►►

enshrined in what is called the Status Quo. Those regulations had been established through a firman (decree) issued by the Ottoman Sultan Osman III in the 18th century. After the Ottomans, British colonial rule and the Jordanian administration have observed it carefully, the Israeli authorities are officially committed to it, but in the case of the Armenians, the regulations are being undermined at a steady process.

The St. James Brotherhood is technically independent from outside interference. Even the supreme authority of the Armenian Church legally has no say. That is why

some clergy out there demonstrate their arrogance with impunity.

As the brotherhood weakens, opportunities are offered for intruders. If today Fr. Norayr Kazezian serves as a conduit to exposed so-called scandal, we may rest assured that other elements are being tested continually because the prize is so valuable.

In addition to the illuminated manuscripts there are other archival materials vital for Armenian history. For example, during World War I, the archives of the Constantinople Patriarchate were moved to Jerusalem for safekeeping. They contain crucial documents about the Armenian Genocide. No one for sure is aware of

their fate.

St. James Brotherhood always prided itself with many scholarly works. The last Mohican was perhaps Archbishop Norayr Bogharian, the guardian and the cataloguer of the manuscripts. After his death, no catalogs have been published to our knowledge. The sexual abuse scandal seems to be the tip of the iceberg. The TV exposure and the invasion of the Patriarchate do not auger well.

Indeed, the "Demons of the Past" have been resurrected but their target seems to be somewhere beyond the predators – it is the destiny of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

The GENOCIDE

State of Hawaii Recognizes Artsakh's Independence



On March 29, the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii passed Resolution 167 on recognition of the independence of the Artsakh Republic, reports the Armenian National Committee of America. Hawaii is the seventh State of the United States of America to recognize the Artsakh Republic. Prior to this, the legislatures of California, Louisiana, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine and Georgia had passed similar resolutions.



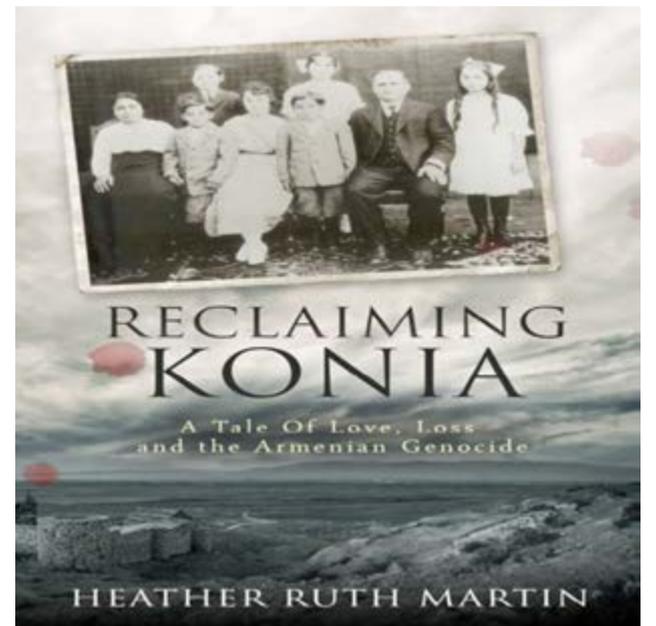
Martin to Present 'Reclaiming Konia'. A Tale of Love, Loss and the Armenian Genocide

On Thurs., April 7, the Armenian Museum of America will host a book reading by Heather Martin, the great-granddaughter of Melkon Jenanyan and author of the recently published novel *Reclaiming Konia: A Tale of Love, Loss and the Armenian Genocide* based on his life story, reports Armenianweekly.com.

Jenanyan was an Armenian preacher who escaped the Ottoman Empire before 1915 with his wife and children. As we approach the 101st anniversary since the Armenian Genocide, which are still denied by Turkey, the novel becomes even more timely. "But the book is about more than justice and the political acknowledgement of the genocide by Turkey that is so needed," says Martin. "Growing up, my father was really, really clear: Melkon, his grandfather, wanted nothing to do with the old country or ways. He refused to teach his children either Armenian or Turkish even though he personally wrote his sermons in both languages. Melkon never spoke of any violence he experienced, violence which caused them to leave before the 1915 genocide killed 1.5 million Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks. It wasn't until I was inspired to write his story that I felt an enormous connection to my ancestry and an overwhelming need to fight for justice, a fight he had avoided when he was alive."

Martin is painfully aware that if Jenanyan had not escaped with his wife and children, she would not be here today to share his story as a survivor. "Ultimately this novel was about more than just the political component. I had the chance to help my ancestors heal from a trauma that occurred over 100 years ago through my writing. In the process I have rekindled the family legacy and joyful memories of those who have passed on."

"We are so pleased to offer free programs so that we can continue our mission of educating the surrounding communities about past and present Armenian culture," said Anna Kaczmarek, the program coordinator for the



Armenian Museum of America.

Heather Ruth Martin is the CEO of Heather Martin, Inc., a business consulting firm. She is also a writer for the *Huffington Post*.

The Armenian Museum of America, located at 65 Main St. in Watertown, will host the author for a book reading, Q&A, and reception on Thurs., April 7, at 7:30 p.m. The program will be held on the 3rd floor in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries.

For more information, visit http://www.armenianmuseum.org/calendar/event/?event_id1=21 or contact Kaczmarek by e-mailing anna@armenianmuseum.org or calling (617) 926-2562.

For more information, contact Heather Martin by e-mailing hmartin@reclaimingkonia.com, calling (551) 208-6979, or visiting www.reclaimingkonia.com.

Diana Markosian's Best Photograph: the 105-year-old Armenian Who Escaped Genocide

The guardian. This is a photo of Movses Haneshtyan, seeing a picture of his former home for the first time in a century. He started to cry and then sing: "My home. My Armenia." He touched the image as he sang, then kissed his hands, as if it might take him back.

Movses last saw his home in 1915, when he was five. When soldiers entered his village, he escaped with his father holding his hand. "Half the road was covered with dead people," he told me. This marked the beginning of what Armenians refer to as the "great crime" – the genocide of the Armenian people in their homeland, now part of modern-day Turkey.

During the first world war, the Ottoman empire initiated a policy of deportations, mass murder and rape to destroy the Armenian presence within its borders. By the war's end, more than one million people had been killed. To date, 29 countries have officially recognised the killings as genocide, but the Ottomans' heirs in the Turkish government don't fully acknowledge it.

In 2013, I travelled to Armenia to meet Movses and nine other survivors to ask them about those distant days. They were all frail and elderly. Three were willing to help me: Movses, Yepraksia Barseghyan-Gevorgyan and Mariam Sahakyan. We established the exact coordinates of the villages they'd left behind. I then set out to find them.

Movses, who is 105, gave me a map, and I followed it as closely as I could, finding everything he had described: the sea, the tree with the fruit he remembered eating, the goats he shepherded, even the rubble of what was once his church.

Yepraksia, now 108, had escaped her village by crossing a river nearby. She watched as Armenians were killed and thrown into the water. It was "red, full of blood", she told me. Mariam, 102, escaped to Syria with her mother and older brother, whom they dressed as a girl for safety. They hid in the grass when the soldiers came. They walked at night for three days and hid during the day. But once they got to Syria, she was separated from her family.

I took a picture of what remained in each village, and last year I brought each one back for the survivors. They grabbed at them, as if by holding them close they could be transported back there.

I am Armenian, but I was born in Moscow and raised in America. This is a part of my history, which I knew about but never fully embraced. My great-grandfather survived the genocide because his neighbours, who were Turkish, hid him. So this series was personal, a way of trying to understand that part of myself.

I had asked each of the survivors what I could do for them. Movses asked me to find his church, which was now a



ruin, and leave his portrait there. Yepraksia asked me to find her lost brother, even though all she had of him was a drawing. "He liked to put me on his shoulders and play with me at the orphanage," she said. "I don't remember much else about him except he has blue eyes, like mine." Mariam asked me to go to her village and bring some soil. She wanted to be buried in it. When I did so, she opened the package and said: "You've brought the smell of my village to me."

The GENOCIDE

Worcester to Host Exhibit “Historical Documentation of the Genocide”

The month-long exhibit “Historical Documentation of the Armenian Genocide” will open on Sunday, April 3 at the Worcester Public Library, panarmenian.net reports. The ceremony will include a performance by the The Greater Worcester Armenian Chorale, the local premiere of the film “The Wind” starring Olympia Dukakis and Shirleyann Kaladjian, and remarks by Worcester Mayor Joseph M. Petty. The exhibition includes government documents, official reports, communications, photographs, letters, books, magazine and newspaper articles that were published during the years of the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1923. In “The Wind,” two modern Armenian women are faced with an unexpected encounter from the past and with the unresolved legacy of the Armenian Genocide. Upcoming events related to the exhibition at the library include the screening of the movie “The 100 Year Old Survivor” on April 5; and a lecture “Resisting Genocide from World War One to Today” by Khatchig Mouradian of Clark University’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies on April 13.

Charles Aznavour to Participate In Aurora Awards

Legendary French-Armenian singer Charles Aznavour will visit Armenia in April 2016. This is what Aznavour’s press speaker Kristina Sarksian told “Armenpress”. “We are preparing to visit Armenia to attend the Aurora Awards,” she said. There are no other details about Aznavour’s visit. Notable French-Armenian singer, songwriter, actor and public figure Charles Aznavour was born on May 22, 1924 in Paris. He has composed and performs many famous songs and has sold nearly 100 million albums. Since 2009, Aznavour is Armenia’s Ambassador to Switzerland, as well as Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the UN Headquarters in Geneva and to other international organizations.



Diaspora News

Lebanon

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos expresses support to NKR President



After learning about the clashes taking place at the Line of Contact of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan, His Holiness Aram I, Supreme Patriarch immediately contacted President of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan and expressed his support and the support of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia to the army of brave soldiers of Karabakh. “Within the whole meaning of the word, we support Karabakh, its brave army, people and government. The protection and reinforcement of Karabakh’s independence are a sacred duty for us. Especially on these days when Karabakh has been attacked by Azerbaijan, the sons of our nation in Armenia and in the territory of the Diaspora need to express their support for the defense of Karabakh in action because the defense of Karabakh is the defense of Armenia and vice versa,” Catholicos Aram I said. The Supreme Patriarch also expressed his high appreciation to the President of Karabakh for his exemplary patriotism and courage. President Sahakyan explained to Aram I in detail how the Azerbaijanis made a surprise attack last night and how the Armenian army powerfully attacked and pushed the Azerbaijanis back, making them suffer heavy human losses and military casualties. He added that the clashes continue. Aram I also had a meeting with newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Lebanon Samvel Mkrtychyan. They talked about the political situation in Lebanon and the Armenian community of Lebanon.

Argentina

Pope Praises Argentina’s Armenian Church Leader for 25 Years of Service



A celebration was held on March 22 in Buenos Aires for the 25 years of Episcopate of Archbishop Kissag Mouradian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church for Argentina and Chile. Pope Francis, an old friend of the Armenian Archbishop, sent him a letter for the occasion, reports Agencia Prensa Armenia. “Dear brother,” said the letter of the Pope. “On March 22 the Armenian community will celebrate your 25 years of episcopate. From here I join this celebration and prayer of thanksgiving. May the Lord reward all the good you did and keep doing. I thank God for your ministry and pray that it remains fruitful. And please, I ask that you do not forget to pray for me. Please give my greetings to the beloved members of the Armenian community.” The celebration was attended by national government authorities, representatives of other Armenian churches, representatives of the Armenian Embassy in Argentina and members of the Armenian community. Alberto Djeredjian, member of the Administrative Institution of the Armenian Church, said that Mouradian is “the backbone of our community.” In turn, the Archbishop said: “I was sent to Argentina for five years, but after I fulfilled that period and having full mutual agreement, I decided to stay. I hope we continue to work together for the welfare of the Armenian Nation and the Armenian Church.”

Diaspora News

Jerusalem

Armenian Experts to take part in Restoration of Edicule of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Armenian experts will participate in restoration of the Edicule of the Tomb at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine Theophilos announced the restoration of the Edicule on March 22 in the presence of Custodian of the Holy Land Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa and Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Nourhan Manougian. Mediamax reports citing Russian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

The ceremony was held near the Edicule, where special scaffolding was set.

The decision on restoration was made according to the results of the Edicule's technical examination conducted by specialists from National Technical University of Athens.

The current construction above the Edicule was built in 1810 by the project of Greek architect N. Komninos after a destructive fire in the Church of the Resurrection in 1808.

The Edicule has not been restored since 1810. The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem agreed upon the restoration project with the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and Armenian Patriarch. The restoration is to be accomplished by specialists from National Technical University of Athens in coordination with employees of University of Florence and experts from Armenia.

Restoration works will begin in a few weeks and last no less than 8 months.

Pilgrims will still have access to the sacred place during the restoration.

USA

Maria Mehranian Elected President of Armenia Fund



Armenia Fund, Inc., the U.S. Western Region affiliate of Hayastan All Armenian Fund announced that its Corporate Board unanimously elected Maria Mehranian as the organization's new Chairperson. Mehranian succeeds Mr. Antranik Baghdassarian, who completed his tenure in early 2016.

"Mr. Baghdassarian's strong belief in attracting a larger public participation through educating the Armenian Diaspora on Armenia's successes as well as the challenges facing our Homeland, introduction of new projects benefitting residents of Armenia and Artsakh who are faced with economic hardship proved successful and resulted in a serious increase both in the number of donors and collected funds. We thank Mr. Baghdassarian for his years of dedicated service to Armenia Fund as well as for his very generous support of the organization." – said Ara Vardanyan, Executive Director of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. Newly elected President, Mehranian is the Managing Partner and Chief Financial Officer for Cordoba Corporation, a full service civil engineering, construction management, and program management firm specializing in transportation, education and facilities as well as water and energy. Cordoba is headquartered in Los Angeles, with offices in San Francisco, Santa Ana, and San Diego, California.

For over twenty years, Mehranian has dedicated her career to building Cordoba into one of the top engineering consulting firms in the nation also leading it into international markets by heading multimillion dollar planning projects.

Having been appointed by California Governor Jerry Brown, Mehranian has been serving on the Los Angeles Water Quality Control Board since 2008, chairing it in 2012 and 2013.

Mehranian served as President of Armenia Fund, Inc. also in 2004-2008, establishing the Executive Office of the organization and laying the cornerstones for growth. For her extraordinary contribution to furthering Armenia Fund's mission in the United States Mrs. Mehranian was recognized with a Special Commendation by the President of Armenia,

Robert Kocharian in 2007. Ms. Mehranian is also the recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

"I thank Antranik Baghdassarian for his hard work and commitment to the cause of strengthening Armenia's independent statehood and I welcome Mrs. Mehranian's election as the new Chair of Armenia Fund U.S. Western Region, an affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund – an organization that has a crucial importance for Armenia's and Artsakh's development. Building upon the successes of the recent years, Mrs. Mehranian steps in also as a Special Envoy to deepen the cooperation between the two U.S. affiliates of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund that has been discussed during the previous year, develop the strategic roadmap and an operational network of the solidified nationwide operation, elevating the organization to a new level," said Grigor Hovhannissian, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States.

"I am honored and humbled by the Corporate Board's unanimous vote of confidence. I always believed that a big part of Armenia Fund's mission is to bring together the Armenian Diaspora's best and the brightest around Armenia and Artsakh. As Armenia's challenges change, so does Armenia Fund. More and more of the heavy infrastructure is being built by the government, allowing Armenia Fund to concentrate more on development projects. This takes not only financial resources, but also the know-how of many Armenian Americans who hold a unique and priceless knowledge, so desperately needed for ensuring Armenia's long term development and competitiveness in the global marketplace." – said Maria Mehranian.

Armenia Fund's Corporate Board is composed of the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian Cultural Foundation, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of U.S., the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Relief Society of Western U.S.A., the Nor Serount Cultural Association, the Nor Or Charitable Foundation, the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.



Arts & Society



Armenian Culture Week in Tokyo



From March 22 to 27, Armenian and Japanese artists participated in various events held as part of Armenian Culture Week in Tokyo, reports the press service of the RA MFA.

The weeklong events kicked off at the Daykanyama Hillside Terrace where Japan's Shogakay Union presented the art of Japanese aesthetics with Armenian motives and showcased the works of Armenian designer and painter Arev Bedrosian and Japanese painter Makoto Maeda.

The events also included Arax Mansourian's solo concert with Japanese pianist Takahiro Akiba, as well as the joint classical music concerts of Armenian and Japanese musicians. Screenings of Armenian and Japanese films were also held on the sidelines of the weeklong events.

The Armenian Culture Week events were organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Japan with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), community structures, the Komitas Union, the Galeri Ginza Ichome and other societies.

Lebanese-Armenian Photographer Gabriel Panosian Holds Personal Exhibition

On March 23, Lebanese-Armenian photographer Gabriel Panosian opened his personal exhibition in the hall of the American University of Armenia with the support of the RA Ministry of Diaspora and the American University of Armenia. Among the



participants of the event were RA Deputy Minister of Diaspora Serzh Srapionyan, President of the American University of Armenia Armen Der-Kyureghian, as well as artists and intellectuals. In his opening remarks, President of AUA Armen Der-Kyureghian noted that the peculiarity of the photos was mainly the reflection of the natural games of light and shade in the sky at night. Deputy Minister Serzh Srapionyan transmitted the welcoming speech of RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan in which the Minister particularly said the following: "The Ministry of Diaspora discovered the unique photographic art of Gabriel Panosian and helped organize the first exhibition of these photos. These photos uniquely affirm the wonders of nature that are the unique manifestation of an Armenian's thoughts and feelings."

Serzh Srapionyan wished Gabriel Panosian success and prolific creative activity.

Expressing gratitude to the RA Ministry of Diaspora and personally to the Minister for taking the initiative and organizing his exhibition, Gabriel Panosian mentioned the following: "I had never thought I would hold my personal photo exhibition. Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan reminded me about this when she saw my photos for the first time and considered them new manifestations of photographic art."

The photographer added that Armen Der-Kyureghian had suggested organizing a photo sale during the sixth exhibition and that all proceeds from that sale would go to the Syrian-Armenian students pursuing their studies at the American University of Armenia.

Afterwards, Narek Ghazaryan and Areg Mikayelyan greeted the attendees with their poems and songs.



André Manoukian: Playing Jazz High in Mountains is A Dream

Playing jazz high in the mountains is a pleasure close to epicurean austerity, famous French Armenian jazz musician André Manoukian said in an interview with Liberation, News.am reports.

"We spent our school years in Lyon, and went to the mountains in Chamonix during all our holidays. I climbed Mont Blanc with my father. And here I understand how strongly Mother loved us, since she accompanied us, being afraid of height. These expeditions

were a suffering for her. And every time we set out for an expedition, she asked whether the route was "Manoukianative" or not. "Manoukianative" route was the one which didn't take your breath away too much.

When you play jazz in front of an audience, you have an "inner rhythm." The same is in the mountains. Playing in the mountains is a dream. The sound is wonderful there. I have been experimenting this for six years. 400-500 people attended the first concert on the bank of Blanc Lake in Chamonix. They climbed for three hours. A Nepal flute player and his tabla accompanier were on the bank. It was a magic! No producer in the world would have created a thing like that!"



Children's Ensembles Of Abovyan Cultural Union Performed Successfully At Festival In The Hague



The Dakota Theater of The Hague hosted a Spring Festival on March 19. As reports Hayern Aysor, citing the Diary of the Netherlands, after the various afternoon children's events, the audience witnessed musical performances by the ensembles of nations with different cultures, including the children's ensembles of Abovyan Cultural Union of the Netherlands under the

direction of Svetlana Aghajanyan and Gagik Avetisyan.

The event aimed at strengthening the cross-cultural ties between different nations in the Netherlands is called "Free Stage".

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