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## News from Armenia

### Defense Army Refrains from Taking Actions against Peaceful Settlements and Objects



The disinformation circulated by the Azerbaijani side that Armenian positions fired at Azerbaijani houses and a school in the northeastern direction, is another provocative attempt to increase the tension of the situation. As "Armenpress" reports this was stated in the press release of the press service of the Nagorno Karabakh Defense Ministry, which says:

"It is noteworthy that the Azerbaijani side, which constantly carries out actions to destabilize the situation on the contact line, continues spreading disinformation about the fact that yesterday Armenian divisions in the northeastern part of the border fired at Tapkarakoyunlu area, targeting buildings and the village school.

The Defense Ministry press service informs that the news spread by Azerbaijani propaganda is nothing more than a provocative disinformation in an artificial attempt to increase the tensions of the situation.

The Defense Army subdivisions refrain not only from targeting peaceful settlements and objects, but also preventive steps and response actions towards adversary positions are being taken only in case of strict necessity."

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### Vatican Says Pope Planning Armenia Trip in June



Pope Francis is planning to visit Armenia in June, reported the Associated Press.

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, stressed Friday that the trip was still in its planning stages and that no itinerary had been set. But he said that the dates under study were for the second half of June.

Francis' proposed trip would come 15 years after St. John Paul II visited Armenia.

It was during that 2001 trip that John Paul inked a joint declaration with the His Holiness Catholicos Karenkin II, Catholicos of All Armenians recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

## News from the World

### Armenian President: Armenia and Cyprus have exemplary cooperation in European formats



Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades hosted an official dinner on March 15, in honor of Armenian President Serj Sargsian.

The two Presidents made mutual toasts during the dinner, the Department of Mass Media and Public Relations of the Presidential Administration informed. They referred to the centuries-old friendship and similar values of the nations, the strengthening of interstate relations, deepening of relations between Cypriot and Armenian peoples.

"The stories of our peoples are often identical and common.

When we were persecuted, we were persecuted for the same values, the founder and bearer of which were we. When we fought, we fought together, relying on our values and way of thinking. And even today, faithful to our principles and our firm beliefs we support each other in our foreign policy agenda.

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News from Armenia

# Armenia Ranks 121st among Happiest Countries of the World

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Ahead of the Happiness Day defined by the UN (March 20), a new list of the happiest countries has been published. "Armenpress" reports Armenia ranks 121st among 157 countries.

The widespread interest in the World Happiness Reports, of which this is the fourth, reflects growing global interest in using happiness and subjective wellbeing as primary indicators of the quality of human development. Because of this growing interest, many governments, communities and organizations are using happiness data, and the results of subjective well-being research, to enable policies that support better lives. This year, for the first time, the World Happiness Report gives a special role to the measurement and consequences of inequality in the distribution of well-being among countries and regions. Other factors influencing the index are GDP per capita, healthy life length, corruption and so on.

Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia and Sweden are the top 10 happiest countries.

Georgia is the 126th, Azerbaijan is the 81st, and Iran is



the 105th. Russia ranks 56th and the USA ranks 13th. The bottom 10 are Madagascar, Tanzania, Liberia,

Guinea, Rwanda, Benin, Afghanistan, Togo, Syria and Burundi.

# NGO to Build Hiking Trails and Eco-camps in Southern Armenia



"I don't need to see the route, I feel it by my feet," says Armen Kazarian adamantly, as he swiftly navigates the lush terrain of Southern Armenia for an afternoon hike. Armen is probably the only blind hiking tour guide in the world, or at the very least, the only one in Armenia.

Over a decade ago, he was working at an international bank as an accountant in Moscow, when all of a sudden his eyesight quickly began to deteriorate. Before he knew it, he was nearly 90% blind. No longer able to continue his desk job, he was at a crossroads. What followed was a spiritual journey that took him

first through Sochi, where he worked as a massage therapist for 4 years, and finally, back to his native land. In Armenia, Armen met Siranush, now his loving wife. The two resettled in Armen's hometown of Kapan. It was in Kapan, capital of the Syunik region, surrounded by some of Armenia's most breathtaking landscapes that made Armen realize perhaps he had gained more than he had lost. His senses rejoiced in the healing powers of nature and he reconnected with the people and landscapes that so profoundly shaped his youth.

With all the tourists that travel to Armenia each year, less than 1% make the trip to Kapan, making the city and its surrounding villages extremely neglected and underexposed. Meanwhile, Kapan is a mere hour's drive from Tatev Monastery, one of the largest tourist attractions in Armenia.

"For too long, Kapan has been branded only as a place for mining," says Armen, "Too long it's been neglected as a touristic destination by the international community. The situation needs to change, needs to become more sustainable and encourage eco-friendly practices. Tourism is a great place to start for that." Recognizing the incredible potential of Southern Armenia to provide joy and healing to others, it wasn't long before Armen and his wife made the

bold decision to launch an NGO called ARK Armenia, which immediately started marking hiking trails in the region, making various landmarks accessible to the tourists passing by. Before long, they were acquiring volunteers, who provided valuable labor, helping build the region's first eco-camp and marking more hiking trails.

This is why ARK Armenia has recently launched an ambitious effort called the ARK Bridge Project, which is raising \$3,764 to mark and map a hiking trail from Tatev to Kapan. The project will lead tourists to integrate with local, rural communities and find shelter in newly built eco-camps along the way. The campaign started mid-February and will be running until the end of March, 2016.

To learn more about the ARK Bridge Project visit their Indiegogo page. You can download the budget sheet here.

ARK Ecological NGO is a registered NGO based in Kapan, Armenia. Its mission is to develop ecotourism infrastructure in the region and spread sustainable ideas of organic farming and permaculture to the great community. ARK's activities mainly rely on crowdfunding, volunteering and use of recycling materials. If you'd like to be a volunteer, please visit our website: [www.arkarmenia.org](http://www.arkarmenia.org).

News from the World

Page 01 ▶▶

# Armenian President: Armenia and Cyprus have exemplary cooperation in European formats

The proof of this is Mr. Anastasiades' visit to Yerevan last April, when he stated that crimes cannot go unpunished and that "naturally, Cyprus and Armenia are fighting together against the criminals of the 20th century's first genocide."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The common history and ties of our peoples is the source of inspiration for the development and expansion of our interstate cooperation. I am pleased to note that our political dialogue, especially in recent years, is developing. Mutual visits of heads of parliaments

of Armenia and Cyprus and foreign ministers speak to this fact. There are many cultural and educational ties. Normal activity in all of these areas is provided by bilateral legal framework. I want to highlight our bilateral military cooperation, which is strengthening year by year.

Armenia and Cyprus exemplary cooperate in international and European formats too. And the fact that we rely on principles of international law regarding issues of vital importance for our countries, but at the same time continue to closely cooperate in multilateral

fields, once again proves that our relations are above any kind of political interests, based on friendship set in the past, present and future brotherly cooperation", President Serj Sargsian said.

The President also spoke about the Armenian-Cypriot historical past, the political and economic relations between the Kingdom of Cilician Armenia and Kingdom of Cyprus.

Serj Sargsian also highlighted the visit of Cypriot high ranking officials to the commemorative events of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

# The Doves Are No Longer Safe in Turkey

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Hrant Dink, the courageous journalist who believed that he could promote democracy in Turkey by getting the people to face the dark history of that country, was assassinated on January 19, 2007 in front of the editorial offices of Agos, the bilingual weekly which he had founded with the hope of engaging Turks and Armenians in a cathartic dialogue. He used to believe that Armenians in Istanbul lead a very isolated life and that if those in Turkey knew the Armenians better, all prejudices would vanish.

By the same token, by exposing facts about the Armenian Genocide, he believed that he was not only serving a historic truth, but that he was also promoting human rights to cleanse Turkey of its grisly past, and pave the way for democracy.

In view of his bold statements about Turkey's human rights abuses and denial of the Armenian Genocide, people were always worried about his security. He, however, always comforted them, believing that Turkish society was changing and maturing. He also believed that he was living like a dove and people always protected doves. Unfortunately, he was wrong.

In the process of the investigation of Dink's murder, a document dating back to 1997 has surfaced labeled "confidential." In addition to Dink's name, the name of the then-vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, Mesrob Mutafyan, was also used. The document stated, "an individual named Firant Dink is among our targets due to his pro-Armenian activities. He is the editor-in-chief of Agos periodical, published in Istanbul by Armenians and is in close ties with the vicar of the Patriarchate, Mesrob Archbishop Mutafyan, famous for his Armenian nationalist inclinations."

It turns out that the "deep state" in Turkey had targeted Hrant Dink long ago, as revealed by recent court documents.



Indeed, in October 2014, Istanbul's 5th High Criminal Court made a decision to begin Hrant Dink's trial from zero. Prosecutor Gokalp Kokçu filed a lawsuit against 26 former and current officials who are believed to be implicated in the assassination.

Contrary to the statement in the above documents, Dink and the Patriarch were never close and their antagonism toward each other was very public. Only after Dink's assassination did the Patriarch realize how close their destinies had been and he tearfully acknowledged that fact in his eulogy at Dink's funeral.

It almost feels like that moment was the beginning of the end for the Patriarch.

Perhaps it would be impossible to prove medically that Patriarch Mesrob developing dementia at a relatively young age was the result of the fear he experienced after so many death threats and actual bombs thrown at his headquarters in Kumkapu.

At this time, the Patriarch has been reduced to a shell of his former self. An Istanbul court recently appointed the Patriarch's 78-year-old mother, Mari Mutafyan, as his

custodian. She will be entitled to represent her son by court order.

In the meantime, the Patriarch's health has put the Armenian community in an impasse. The Turkish authorities cynically do not allow for the election of a new Patriarch as long as the incumbent is alive, never mind that he is in a vegetative state.

In any civilized country, such religious matters would be handled by the respective community it is affecting, but not in Turkey.

The fear that pushed the Patriarch over the edge and into his current state is shared by the entire Armenian community in Turkey and that fear is fanned by the government itself.

In a recent press conference in Armenia, a specialist in Turkish studies, Tiran Lokmagozyan, stated: "Armenians have double fear in such cases. The first one is that the security of the state is under threat. In addition, there are individual fears for being Armenian. It is a well-known fact that whenever such incidents take place in Turkey, minorities, including Armenians, become the first target. We witnessed that when Turkey took measures against the Kurds, the name of the Armenians was heard more often, as if the battle was against the Armenians in the first place. The police made announcements through loudspeakers calling Kurds Armenians to insult them."

No only do the police use the name of Armenians as an insult, but officials, beginning with the prime minister himself, Ahmet Davutoglu, justify also the Genocide, which at last count, they had said they did not commit. In a recent speech decrying the Kurds, who had opened an office in Moscow, Davutoglu said that the Kurds are colluding with Russians as "Armenian gangs did during World War I."

Armenians have always lived in fear for a reason. The Turkish government has regularly encouraged the hatred and distrust of Armenians and from time to time, has terrorized them officially, even after the Genocide. In 1942, they instituted the confiscatory "wealth tax" (varlik vergisi) to bankrupt the community and to send affluent Armenians to the labor camp of Askale, where many perished under harsh conditions.

The pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, was directed against the Greeks, while Armenians would also share their plight. The pogrom was instigated by a false-flag operation concocted by Ankara to incite the mob. Turkish agents were sent to Salonika to bomb the house where Ataturk had been born. That was enough cause to begin a rampage in Istanbul against Greeks and Armenians. The Turks are masters of such intrigues; during the war in Syria, a plot was discovered, whereby the head of the Turkish security services (MIT), Fidan Hakan, was ready to bomb the tomb of the father of Fatih Sultan Muhammed (the conqueror of Byzantium) in Syria to justify an invasion. Even recent bombings in Ankara are believed to be false-flag operations to justify the murderous rampage against the Kurds in the country's eastern region or Western Armenia. Although Prime Minister Davutoglu said that his government was "almost certain" that this week's explosion was the work of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the facts suggest otherwise. Indeed, a news item which was published in Nokta newspaper on March 13 states: "It appears that the Turgev Foundation established by President Erdogan and his family had already sent a message to its members BEFORE the Ankara bombing around noon, warning them to stay away from the bombed area. So the governing party had warnings about the bomb but shared the information with 'his' people rather than all his citizens." Turkey has become a dangerous place. Mr. Erdogan has unleashed the violence, with the hope and belief that he can control it to the very end.

After the most recent Ankara bombing, President Obama repeated his mantra that the US will stand by Turkey, however, no word or concern was expressed about the victims of the government onslaught.

Criticism in the western press is getting louder and louder, asking the West to abandon Turkey as a NATO ally. One of the last such articles was signed by Dough Saunders in Toronto's Globe and Mail, with the following conclusion: "Mr. Erdogan has destroyed the unified and open Turkey he earlier helped create. And he has done so using the tools not just of an authoritarianism but now by silencing the media, of totalitarianism. It is time to stop treating Turkey as an ally, but as a country that has stepped beyond the pale."

To figure out the irony of the situation, it suffices to refer to a news item which reports that Istanbul Governor Vasip Sahin met with Armenian, Jewish, Greek and Muslim religious leaders and at the conclusion of that meeting he said to them that Istanbul has been a city where people from different religions live and that all the religious communities have been living in peace "in the city of harmony and fellowship."

And this, when the eastern region of the country is a war zone, where Kurds cannot rescue even their dead from the streets and when the minorities are stricken by fear in the entire country.

Had Hrant Dink been warned early enough that the doves are no longer safe in Turkey, perhaps he would be alive today.

*"The Armenian Mirror-Spectator"*

## U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Faces Criticism at Glendale Appearance

By Harut Sassounian



Richard Mills, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, spoke at the Western Prelacy in La Crescenta, California, on March 10, during his tour of Armenian communities throughout the United States to brief them on his diplomatic work in Armenia.

In his welcoming remarks, Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, expressed the hope that "the United States, as a champion of justice and human rights, will in due time join the scores of nations that have formally acknowledged the indisputable truth of the Armenian Genocide."

Amb. Mills spoke about the progress Armenia has made in the last two decades and presented the four priorities being pursued by the U.S. Embassy:

1) deepening business and trade relations between Armenia and the United States;

## U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Faces Criticism at Glendale Appearance

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- 2) countering corruption;
- 3) strengthening democracy, human rights, and civil society;
- 4) creating a better understanding of U.S. foreign policy goals.

The Ambassador explained that the United States encourages reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey by continuing to support the Protocols that were signed in 2009, but not ratified. Speaking of the Armenian Genocide Centennial, Amb. Mills remarked that "Armenians were massacred and marched to their deaths by the Ottoman Empire," carefully avoiding the term 'Armenian Genocide.'

At the end of the Ambassador's presentation, I had the privilege of being called upon to ask the first question. I respectfully commented:

"I know that ambassadors don't decide U.S. foreign policy. You are simply the messenger. I would like to go on record to say that it is deeply offensive to the Armenian community for you to come here and not use the word genocide to describe what happened to Armenians in 1915. I am not blaming you. It is not your fault! You know what happened and the U.S. government knows what happened. American officials have repeatedly recognized the Armenian Genocide since 1951. I have written a book that documents U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide which

I will be happy to give you. It is not understandable to Armenians and non-Armenians around the world why the U.S. government is now reluctant to use a word that describes what it acknowledged a long time ago. This reluctance puts the United States at a disadvantage when its officials give lectures to Armenians in Armenia about democracy, morality and justice, and yet they fail to comply with their own principles. The U.S. government should be an example to the rest of the world! I am just using you as a messenger. I see that one of your colleagues from the State Department is here with you. I hope that you would transmit my message to your superiors in Washington."

Amb. Mills gave the following brief answer: "My only response will be to reiterate Pres. Obama's goal which he set forth in his statement on April 24th: 'We want full, frank and just acknowledgment of what happened from the Turkish government and Turkish people.'"

Regrettably, the U.S. Ambassador was simply following Pres. Obama's deplorable reluctance to utter the words 'Armenian Genocide,' despite his repeated promises to do so as a candidate. Regardless of whether Pres. Obama and his underlings use the term genocide, the fact remains that the United States has repeatedly acknowledged the Armenian Genocide at the Presidential and Congressional levels.

Nevertheless, the Armenian-American community and Armenians worldwide have an obligation to confront and reject every attempt to minimize or distort the proper characterization of the Armenian Genocide. Remaining silent upon hearing such reprehensible terminology is an insult to the memory of the Armenian Martyrs, particularly when unacceptable euphemisms are uttered in Armenian church halls and community centers.

Amb. Mills was probably surprised by the adverse reaction of the audience to his statements not only regarding the Armenian Genocide, but also his faulty claim that Turkey was fighting against ISIS!

Unfortunately, we cannot expect every American Ambassador to sacrifice his/her diplomatic career by telling the truth to power as did John Evans, the former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. He boldly acknowledged the Armenian Genocide at a great personal cost, during a similar tour of the Armenian communities in the United States.

Amb. Mills should be commended for his efforts to improve U.S.-Armenia relations. However, his superiors in Washington should be made aware that his good work is being undermined by their shameful word games regarding the Armenian Genocide!

[www.TheCaliforniaCourier.com](http://www.TheCaliforniaCourier.com)

## Turkey Fails. Arab Journalist Calls On International Community To Recognize Armenian Genocide

### Interview by Araks Kasyan

"The Armenian Genocide is the greatest human tragedy. We cannot say that it is the Armenian's issue, no, it's an international problem, because the impunity of the international community became a reason for the repetition of such crimes in the future".

These are the words of an Arab journalist Talal Khrayis, who is currently in Armenia. Reporting for a number of authoritative agencies, such as the French France 2 and Arab Assafir, he has specialized in the field of the military journalism.

In recent years Khrayis has been carrying out active works especially in the regions of Syria and Lebanon, witnessing the ongoing operations.

Armenpress had a talk with Khrayis, revealing the initial causes of his warmth behavior towards Armenian people.

- How did you get acquainted with the Armenians and the Armenian issue?

- We lived in Lebanon. My family was great, my parents had 8 children, we needed money and I had to leave

school at the age 13 to find work. I found a job in the "Zartonk" Daily, headed by Nazareth Nazaryan (he means Nazareth Topalian, co editor of Zartonk back then - Editore's Note -), who is the author of the Atlas of the Armenian genocide. And I was helping him during the preparation work of the Atlas book which consists of over 1600 pages. Those images have remained in my memory. These people loved me very much.

They changed my life, suggested to go Vahan Tekeyan's School to study music and I agreed with pleasure. My life began to change to better. One day, Nazareth said that I call my dad, because he wanted to speak with him. I did not know what he would say. When I told my father, he thought, that I have done something wrong. But when he came to Nazareth, the latter said. "Your son likes the work which he is doing with us. He does it with a great pleasure, but he needs to go to school. He will work with us in the morning, the afternoon will go to school, and we'll take care of all the expenses". At that time there was Hovakimyan Manukyan Charitable Association in Lebanon (he means the AGBU - Editor's Note -), they paid my tuition costs, helped me for the issue of my education, because I had already lost a few years. Later, I moved to Bulgaria, where I was studying medicine, and these costs were covered by the Armenians. My relations with the Armenians and the Armenian issue

start from here. I kept this in my memory. The Armenian community helped me a lot to become human being and educated.

- Turkey has been continuing denying the Armenian Genocide for 100 years. What should happen to Turkey, so that it reaches the consciousness of recognizing the Armenian Genocide and compensating for that?

- At this point Turkey is losing, as it loses ISIS. These terrible scenes, which are shown by the media, are not real. Islamists lose in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon border. Turkey is no longer strong, and Europe has no confidence towards it. The Turkish government has a lot of problems. If you ask if the Armenian Genocide will be recognized, I say yes. I travel to Europe and I see that 2-3 years ago, no one was talking about genocide, and now many journalists are coming to Armenia. The governments are not strong in Europe, there is a strong media. All the Media work in favor of the Armenian people. The Armenian community also has become strong, because it sees that it has a young state Armenia, for which it has to make certain steps. Turkey fails and Armenia rises. Armenia is a peaceful country. Despite it has lived a big tragedy, it continues to struggle peacefully and politely, asking the world not to repeat the Genocide.

*Armenpress.am*

### Press Release

## Four Exceptional Humanitarians Chosen as Finalists for the \$1 Million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity

Aurora Prize CoChairs George Clooney and Elie Wiesel join the Selection Committee in congratulating finalists for the inaugural award The Aurora Prize Selection Committee announced the four Aurora Prize finalists as Marguerite Barankitse, from Maison Shalom and REMA

Hospital in Burundi; Dr. Tom Catena, from Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan; Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central

African Republic. "Armenpress" was informed about this from the press service of Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA).

## The GENOCIDE

# Boston Cardinal to Hold Armenian Genocide Commemoration

Boston Archdiocese will hold its first commemoration of the victims of Armenian Genocide this April. This decision was announced by Boston Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley, who will preside over prayer service on April 23 at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in the South End, the Boston Globe reports.

The Cardinal refers in his announcement to the statement (full article in Armenian) made by Pope Francis at St. Peter's Basilica on April 12 in 2015, where the pontiff of Catholic world named the murders of Armenians in Ottoman Empire the first genocide of the 20th century. "Pope Francis made clear that the church acknowledges the suffering of so many who lost their lives in witness to their faith and that, tragically, such witness continues

through the persecution of Christians taking place throughout the world today. Building on our bond as Christians, the Archdiocese of Boston joins with our Armenian brothers and sisters to make this remembrance in common prayer to our Lord," said Cardinal O'Malley. The state's Armenian religious leaders will attend the event at Boston Cathedral.

Priests of Armenian church in Boston fathers Antranig Baljian and Arakel Aljalian praised Cardinal's decision, which is "building bridges of Christian unity". "Catholics and Armenians are standing together more strongly than ever. The vitality and fidelity of the Armenian community which will be expressed April 23 is a demonstration of the victory of good over evil," noted Armenian fathers.



### Press Release

# Four Exceptional Humanitarians Chosen as Finalists for the \$1 Million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity

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The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity is a new global award that will be given annually to individuals who put themselves at risk to enable others to survive. Recipients will be recognized for the exceptional impact their actions have made on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes, having overcome significant challenges along the way. One of the four finalists, the ultimate Aurora Prize Laureate, will receive a grant of US\$100,000 and the chance to continue the cycle of giving by nominating organizations that inspired his or her work for a US\$1 million award.

The Aurora Prize was created by the co-founders of 100 LIVES, a pioneering global initiative seeking to express gratitude to those who put themselves at risk to save Armenians from the Genocide one hundred years ago. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, the annual Aurora Prize aims to raise public consciousness about atrocities occurring around the world and reward those working to address those issues in a real and substantial manner.

"All four finalists are being recognized because they have found the courage to fight against injustice and violence inflicted upon those most vulnerable in their societies," said 100 LIVES Co-Founder and Aurora Prize Selection Committee Member Vartan Gregorian. "We created the Aurora Prize not just to honor, but to support the unsung heroes who reclaim humanity and stand up to such oppression and injustice. One hundred years ago, strangers stood up against persecution on behalf of our ancestors, and today we thank them by recognizing those who act in the same spirit in the

face of modern atrocities."

Marguerite Barankitse, from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi, saved thousands of lives and cared for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. When war broke out, Barankitse, a Tutsi, tried to hide 72 of her closest Hutu neighbors to keep them safe from persecution. They were discovered and executed, whilst Barankitse was forced to watch. Following this gruesome incident, she started her work saving and caring for children and refugees. She has saved roughly 30,000 children and in 2008, she opened a hospital which has treated more than 80,000 patients to date.

Dr. Tom Catena is the sole doctor at Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan. An American physician, Dr. Catena is the only doctor permanently based near the country's border with South Sudan, and is therefore responsible for serving over 500,000 people in the region. Despite several bombings by the Sudanese government, Dr. Catena resides on the hospital grounds so that he may be on call at all times. His selfless acts have been brought to light by a number of media and aid organizations, and he was named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People in 2015.

Syeda Ghulam Fatima has worked tirelessly to eradicate bonded labor, one of the last remaining forms of modern slavery. Fatima is the general secretary of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front Pakistan (BLLF), which has liberated thousands of Pakistani workers, including approximately 21,000 children, who were forced to work for brick kiln owners in order to repay debts. The interest rates are too high for workers to pay off, trapping the workers in forced labor and poor—often brutal—conditions. Fatima has survived attempts on her life and repeated beatings during the course of her activism.

Father Bernard Kinvi became a priest at age 19, after losing his father and four sisters to prolonged violence and illness. Father Kinvi left his home country of Lome, Togo to Bossemptele, a small town just inside the border of the Central African Republic, to head a Catholic mission which consisted of a school, church and the Pope John Paul II Hospital. In 2012, civil war broke out in the Central African Republic between Muslim Seleka rebels and the anti-balaka (anti-machete) Christian militia. Amidst the violence, Father Kinvi's mission provided refuge and health services to those on both sides of the conflict, saving hundreds of people from persecution and death.

From July to October 2015, nominations were received from around the world through a public portal on [www.auroraprize.com](http://www.auroraprize.com). Candidates were nominated for their selfless work, from battling bonded labor to harboring refugees, to delivering frontline care in conflict zones. One of the four finalists will be announced as the inaugural Aurora Prize Laureate during a ceremony in Yerevan, Armenia on April 24, 2016. Selection Committee Co-Chair George Clooney will present the award. The Aurora Prize finalists will be celebrated as part of a weekend of events bringing together leading voices in the humanitarian field, including the International Center for Journalists, International Rescue Committee and Not On Our Watch to discuss some of the most pressing humanitarian issues the world is facing today, and acknowledge those confronting them.

100 LIVES is a new global initiative rooted in the events of the Armenian Genocide, during which hundreds of thousands of Armenians were saved by the courageous and heroic acts of individuals and institutions. A century later, 100 LIVES seeks to express gratitude, to share remarkable stories of survivors and their saviors, and to celebrate the strength of the human spirit.

100 LIVES is an initiative of the IDeA Foundation (Initiatives for Development of Armenia), a charitable foundation committed to promoting socioeconomic development in Armenia through investments in long-term, non-profit projects.

About the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity Recipients will be recognized for the exceptional impact their actions have made on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate will be honored each year with a US\$100,000 grant as well as the unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by nominating organizations that inspired their work for a US\$1,000,000 award.

The Aurora Prize Selection Committee includes Nobel Laureates Elie Wiesel, Oscar Arias, Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former President of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former Australian Foreign Minister and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans; President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian; and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney.

The Aurora Prize will be awarded annually on April 24 in Yerevan, Armenia.

## Diaspora News

### Alexander Mantashev Educational and Cultural Center of Batumi celebrated Mother Language Day



On March 19, 2016, the Sunday school of the Alexander Mantashev Educational and Cultural Center of Batumi hosted an open lesson entitled "Our Native Language" to celebrate Mother Language Day, reports the Educational and Cultural Center of Batumi to Hayern Aysor.

The schoolchildren, under the direction of teacher Satenik Danielyan, held a discussion, exchanged ideas and gained new knowledge. It was especially touching to see the children recite poems and sing in Armenian.

The guests were the children's teachers and parents. In her speech, the Center's director Sona Hovhannisyan emphasized the modernity and importance of the topic and expressed her gratitude to teacher Satenik Danielyan and to all the schoolchildren and their parents.

Pastor of the Holy Savior Church, Father Ararat Gumbalyan gave his blessing to the children, addressed the gathered with a farewell speech and also expressed his gratitude to them.

### Almelo Celebrates Tsaghkazard (Palm Sunday)



On March 20, the GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR Armenian Church of Almelo celebrated TSAGHKAZARD (PALM SUNDAY), which is one of the holidays of the Armenian Church and symbolizes the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem that turned into a real celebration, as reported on the Facebook page of the Armenian Sunday School of Almelo, according to Hayern Aysor.

The people greeted JESUS with branches of OLIVE TREES AND PALM TREES. The

tradition is very symbolic, and we transmit it to the generations.

The schoolchildren of the Armenian Sunday School of Almelo participated in this beautiful all-Christian celebration with great excitement. With the help of their teachers, they prepared and illustrated beautiful paper boxes, after which they watched the film "JESUS" and participated in a church ceremony.

### Armenian Community Of Tehran To Organize March Of Protest To Turkish Embassy On April 24th

On April 24th, the day of remembrance of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian community of Tehran will hold a march of protest. This is what PR director of the diocesan council of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran Gaspar Amirkhanian mentioned in an interview with "Armenpress".



"The march will start from the area near the Armenian Genocide memorial adjacent to the Armenian Prelacy. We will lay flowers and pay our respects. Afterwards, the church will serve a Holy Mass, and we will move towards the Turkish embassy in Iran where we will submit our letter," Gaspar Amirkhanian said.

According to him, this year the Armenian community plans on holding different kinds of events in an attempt to engage Iran's intellectuals and state officials of different levels. "The issue of recognition of the Armenian Genocide has always been a priority issue for the Armenians of Iran. We regularly make efforts in that direction throughout the year. The "Husk" organization conducts studies, and a wide circle of Iranian intellectuals publish articles. The topic of the Armenian Genocide is reflected in an Iranian magazine on a regular basis. We also work actively in the field of information, but I believe the efforts are still not enough. During the events dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, the deputy speaker of the Iranian parliament condemned the Armenian Genocide. That was a great achievement for the Armenian community. We hope to achieve more success on the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide," Gaspar Amirkhanian said.

He noted that being consistent with the solution to the issue of recognition of the Armenian Genocide is one of the provisions stated in the pre-electoral platforms of the two Armenian deputies who made it to parliament recently, including Karen Khanlarian and George Abrahamian. According to Amirkhanian, the Armenian community is working together in that direction. Touching upon the Artsakh issue, Gaspar Amirkhanian noted that the Iranian-Armenian community has stood by Artsakh's side since the very first days and still has strong ties. According to Amirkhanian, Iranian-Armenians visit Artsakh from time to time and actively collaborate in different spheres, including the sphere of education. As far as the Iranian authorities are concerned, Gaspar Amirkhanian mentioned that the Iranian government has always played a positive role in the solution to the Artsakh issue.

### Interesting Facts Have Emerged During Trial Over Dink's Murder

Interesting facts have emerged within the scope of the criminal case instigated against Turkish state officials in relation to the murder of renowned Istanbul-Armenian figure and founding editor-in-chief of Agos Weekly Hrant Dink. According to the article by correspondent of Agos Weekly Uygur Gultekin, all security units of Istanbul had received orders to ensure the safety of the representatives of Agos Weekly just three months before Dink's murder. The writing dated 12 October 2006 particularly read as follows:

"On 11 October 2006, Patriarch of the Armenians of Turkey Mesrop Mutafian sent a note to the governor's office, demanding the governor to ensure the safety of all the schools, hospitals, churches of the Armenian community of Turkey and all the other Armenian institutions, taking into consideration the tense socio-political situation.

Also taking into consideration the fact that on 12 October 2006, the Parliament of France passed a law criminalizing denial of the "so-called" Armenian Genocide, I ask you to reconsider and tighten the previously set security measures at all the places belonging to Armenian citizens, whose names and addresses are noted in the attached list, warn all the representatives to be alert and

inform the territorial security department about all the developments and rule out the emergence of all problems that can emerge," the Turkish official's writing reads, according to Ermenihaber. The writing was sent to the Department of Intelligence of Istanbul, the Department for the Fight against Terrorism, the governor's office and all the regional security units of Istanbul.

The list of schools, churches, hospitals and other Armenian institutions attached to the mentioned writing included the Agos Armenian Weekly. Despite all this, no security measure was taken for Agos Weekly, and the newspaper's editor-in-chief was killed in front of the entrance to the editorial office just three months later.

On the ground of the new accusation brought in relation to this, on April 19, Head of the Intelligence Department Engin Dinc, Head of Regional Security of Trabzon of the time Reshat Altay and Head of the Intelligence Department of Istanbul of the time Ahmet Ilhan Guler will be brought before the court under the charge of ignoring a premeditated crime, and Head of the Regional Security of Istanbul of the time Jelalettin Jerah and Head of the Security Department of Istanbul Sabri Uzun will be brought before the court under the charge of misuse of official position.

Arts & Society

# Armenia's Ererouyk, Ani Pemza Among 7 Most Endangered Heritage Sites in Europe



The Archaeological site of Ererouyk and the village of Ani Pemza in Armenia, have been named part of the 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe in 2016. The remaining endangered sites include Patarei Sea Fortress in Tallinn in Estonia, Helsinki-

Malmi Airport in Finland, Colbert Swing Bridge in Dieppe of France, the Kampos of Chios in Greece, the Convent of St. Anthony of Padua in Extremadura of Spain, and the Ancient city of Hasankeyf and its surroundings in Turkey, reports Public Radio of Armenia.

Europa Nostra, the leading European heritage organization, and the European Investment Bank Institute (EIBI) made the announcement during a public event at the Ateneo Veneto in Venice, Italy.

These gems of Europe's cultural heritage are in serious danger, some due to lack of resources or expertise, others due to neglect or inadequate planning. Urgent action is therefore needed. Expert missions to the sites will be arranged and feasible action plans submitted by the end of the year. "The 7 Most Endangered" has the support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, as part of Europa Nostra's network project "Mainstreaming Heritage."

Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute, together with other partners and the nominators, will visit the 7 selected sites and meet with key stakeholders in the coming months. The heritage and financial experts will provide technical advice, identify possible sources of funding and mobilize broad support.

The 7 Most Endangered for 2016 were selected by the Board of Europa Nostra from the 14 sites shortlisted by a panel of specialists in history, archaeology, architecture, conservation, project analysis and finance. Nominations were submitted by civil society or public bodies which form part of Europa Nostra's vast network of member and associate organizations from all over Europe. Ererouyk is a superb monument of Early Christian architecture, an architecture of great variety and distinction, today often subjected to neglect, if not willful destruction, in most of its original homeland around the Eastern Mediterranean. Armenian religious architecture, amongst the finest and most innovative, is well represented by Ererouyk. The monument dates back to the 6th century and lies on a rocky plateau close to the river that forms the border with Turkey, in the vicinity of the ancient capital Ani. All around the three-aisled basilica lay the remains of funerary and other relevant monuments which deserve immediate study and preservation. This is crucial for the understanding of a settlement within a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural framework during the Middle Ages, as demonstrated by relevant archaeological findings that also need to be studied and displayed.

The site is in constant danger from earthquakes, a danger increased by the condition of the monument. Yet, if preserved and well managed, it has the potential to give life to the whole region as a site that will attract visitor, with the nearby Soviet-era style village of Ani Pemza, built in 1926, serving as a potential center for cultural tourism.

The Centre of Studies and Documentation of Armenian Culture in Italy (CSDCA) submitted the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016.

# Shadowmatic Wins two Major Prizes at IMGA

Armenia-based Triada Studio's Shadowmatic won the Best Technical Achievement and People's Choice Award prizes at the 12th International Mobile Gaming Awards (IMGA), Panarmenian.net reports.

The IMGA is the mobile gaming industry's leading showcase for groundbreaking innovations, displaying exceptional quality and new trends in mobile entertainment, whether the games are made for the iPhone, for Android Phones or other platforms. The popular Shadowmatic 3-D puzzle game includes 9 rooms and over 70 levels. Each room has a unique atmosphere with a related musical composition that can be downloaded from iTunes. Shadowmatic features gorgeous graphics, secondary objectives, nonlinear level progression and 3D parallax view.

The game employs a special system of hints that could be used in case of necessity. First hint is a word or a phrase that implicitly hints at the hidden silhouette's practical, visual, or any other properties and functions. Second hint is another word or a phrase, which, in conjunction with the first hint, will provide more context for the silhouette, making your guess easier. Third hint is the title of the hidden object. Final hint reveals an image of the shadow that you're expected to project. However, the developers suggest that refraining from using any hints at all is deemed to make the game more enjoyable and fun.

Shadowmatic was included in Apple's list of the best games of 2015. The tech giant

# 'Armenia, My Love' Secures Limited Los Angeles Theatrical Release

Armenia My Love's Romanian American Filmmaker Diana Angelson Receives The Distinct Honor of Being Recognized as One of the People

That Commemorated the Genocide in A Special Way by Reuben Vardanyan's 100 Lives Foundation, Whose Co-Chair is George Clooney

Armenia, My Love, a gripping drama based on real life events that occurred during the tragic Armenian Genocide of 1915, has secured a limited Los Angeles theatrical release at two prestigious Laemmle Theaters beginning on Friday April 15, 2016.

In Pasadena, the film will screen at the Laemmle Playhouse 7, located at 673 East Colorado Boulevard, 91101. Concurrently, Armenia, My Love will screen at the Laemmle NoHo 7 which is located at 5240 Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood, 91601.

The timely release of the emotionally-riveting feature film that recognizes the horrific circumstances faced by more than one million innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, nearly coincides with the 101 Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

Under the multi-talented hands of Romanian American director Diana Angelson (Dracula: The Impaler, The Second Coming of Christ), who also stars in and wrote the screenplay, Armenia, My Love revolves around the plight of a once happy Armenian family, living in Turkey in 1915, whose dreams for the future become memories in the eyes of the most famous Armenian American artist, who lives to paint the story of his shattered childhood.

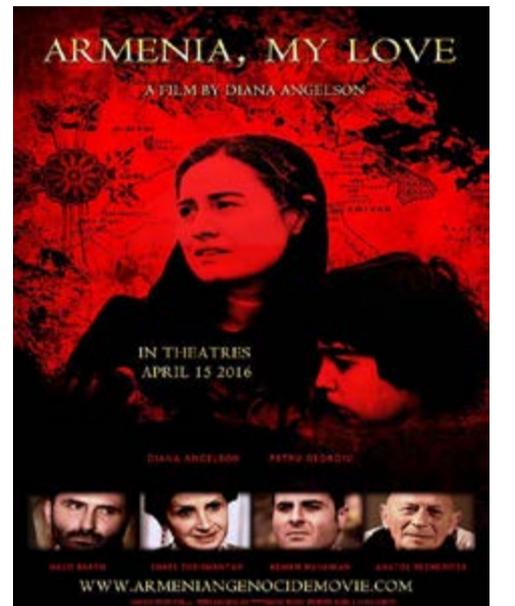
"While Armenia My Love does expose the harsh realities faced by the entire Armenian People who were violently ripped from their homeland," said Angelson who felt compelled to produce this film by her many Armenian friends and connections and the powerful story they had to share. "It is Armenia, My Love's strong messages of hope, love, faith, perseverance and strength that I wanted to prevail."

And so they did. So much so that Angelson was chosen by Reuben Vardanyan's 100 Lives Foundation, whose co-chair is George Clooney, as one of the people that commemorated the Genocide in a special way. George Clooney's wife, Amal Clooney presented Armenia's case in front of The European Court of Human Rights.

Armenia My Love is brought to life by a highly-regarded cast along with Angelson including the incomparable Shake Tukhmanyan (Lord of War, Sideways), Arman Nshanian (Palco & Hirsch, Leo's Oscar) and Nazo Bravo (Armenian American, 4 Minutes), who is also an increasingly-popular Armenian Rapper, among others.

Also proving to be a vital player in the film is the awe-inspiring artwork created by esteemed Romanian artist Paula Matei which adds yet another layer of depth to Armenia, My Love. Another distinction, adding potency to Armenia, My Love, is the way it is masterfully shot and edited with happy scenes in color fading to black and white during the genocide.

For further information on Armenia, My Love or would like to schedule an interview with Diana Angelson, please contact Lauren Lewis at (818) 970-0052 or llewispr@aol.com.



recognized Shadowmatic as the Game of the Year and Best Innovative Game of the Year in several countries simultaneously.

The puzzle won the title of Game of the Year for iPhone in China, India and Russia, as well as Best iPhone Games in the United States, Britain, France and Germany. In Hong Kong and Taiwan,

the game won in the category Most Innovative Game of the Year for iPhone, and received the title of the Most Brilliant Bestseller for iPhone in Korea. Also, Shadowmatic was named the Best iPhone Game in Japan.

Also, the puzzle scored the Excellence in Visual Art and Media Choice awards at DevGAMM conference awards.



## Arts & Society



# ATP Scales Up Environmental Education With New Coalition Of Partners



“There are mounting environmental challenges facing Armenia that affect the welfare of entire communities, and infringe on a student’s right to attain the highest standard of health. Therefore environmental education is a pathway to future social

and economic stability,” explains ATP Country Director Lucineh Kassarian. Moving beyond tree planting alone, Armenia Tree Project has made environmental education one of its core programs since 2005. The idea has been put into practice through active collaboration with NGO’s, government ministries and international organizations to develop new education approaches to accommodate the needs of schoolchildren. Last month, ATP organized and participated in three public events geared toward environmental education and the potential for its expansion in schools at the national level.

“Many organizations are operating in this field, but there was a lack of cooperation,” notes Environmental Education Program Manager Alla Sahakyan. It was this realization that led to the strengthening of the Environmental Education Network (EEN) in 2014. ATP has led this two-year project aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to implement environmental education programs.

The “Empowering Environmental Education Network for Strengthening Environmental Governance in Armenia” project was funded by the EU’s Strengthening Environmental Governance by Building the Capacity of NGO’s Project, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and delivered by the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). EEN now involves more than 30 civil society, education and international organizations operating in Armenia.

The conference held on February 17 as part of the abovementioned project was focused on making recommendations for improved environmental education policies and cooperation between stakeholders. The presentations and discussion were intended promote participatory decision-making and to inform the government on ways to incorporate environmental issues into policies and strategies such as the State Program of Education Development for 2016-2025.

“We strongly believe in the power of environmental education. It brings together concerned adults and the young generation,” noted UNICEF’s Armenia Representative Tanya Radocaj at the event. “It brings the energy of young people, of children, upfront.”

This energy has been the driving force for ATP’s education programs, beginning with the publication of the “Plant an Idea, Plant a Tree” teacher’s manual and the opening of two education centers sponsored by Michael and Virginia Ohanian of Boston. In 2015, for example, more than 3,500 students visited the Ohanian education centers in Karin and Margahovit villages.

As a follow up to the global climate change negotiations that took place in Paris in December, ATP and its partners organized a round-table discussion on February 4 that focused on the role of education and raising awareness around climate change in Armenia. The Paris talks broke new ground when 195 nations reached an agreement on the need to address climate change and its impact. Several experts were on hand to discuss the negotiations and its relevance to Armenia as a developing country that is also feeling some of the effects of a changing climate, including long, dry summers and extreme weather events that can wreak havoc on roads, topsoil and crops.

The importance of education—which is outlined in Article 6 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—was touched upon during the discussion. “We should expand the word education beyond schools and engage whole communities, both formally and informally,” noted Aram Gabrielyan, UNFCCC National Coordinator, at the roundtable. Another participant in the discussion, Anahit Gasparyan, the senior specialist of the National Institute of Education, noted that when teachers have a low level of familiarity with an issue such as climate change, they are unable to pass it on in an effective way, so improved environmental training practices are useful in bridging the gap of “scalability.” Diana Haroutyunyan, the UNDP Climate Change Program Coordinator, expressed

confidence that in the global context, it is important to find out how people learn so as to adapt methodologies accordingly. The discussion was followed by a series of working meetings of the EEN members in Tsaghkadzor, where the participants developed EEN’s future strategy of “an environmentally conscious generation for a green and sustainable planet.” “One of the key achievements of the project implemented with UNDP/GEF support is the inclusion and support of extra-curricular environmental education as a strategic approach. This was a direct result of the series of roundtables jointly organized with EEN members and policymakers,” adds Sahakyan.

“We’re inspired by the level of interest and activity in the field of environmental education in Armenia. When we started in 2005 there were very few working in this area, and now through EEN we have developed working relationships with NGO’s and government who are committed to improving the quality and impact of this important field,” concludes Kassarian.

# Meg Ryan’s Film Based on William Saroyan Novel Featured at Sonoma Festival

By Danielle Saroyan - Armenian Agenda



In Meg Ryan’s directorial debut, she directed and starred in a film called Ithaca, based on Armenian American William Saroyan’s novel titled The Human Comedy. This year at the Sonoma International Film Festival (SIFF) in Northern California, Meg Ryan will

be honored with a Sonoma Salute Award at a tribute event on Thursday, March 31. The event will begin with a screening of Ithaca at 3:30 PM.

Based on Pulitzer Prize-winning author William Saroyan’s 1943 novel, Ithaca centers around the fictional town of Ithaca, California during World War II. It is a story about 14-year-old Homer Macauley, who is determined to be the best and fastest bicycle telegraph messenger anyone has ever seen. His older brother has gone to war, leaving Homer to look after his widowed mother, his older sister, and his 4-year-old brother. The Human Comedy is based on Saroyan’s personal life, growing up in Fresno with his siblings and his mother.

Ryan was inspired to film this movie when she read The Human Comedy while going through her divorce with Dennis Quaid, when her son Jack – who is also cast in the movie – was 8. “I kept thinking, ‘How do you become a man? I mean is he going to be all right?’ And I remember reading all kinds of things, and I got to this book, and it’s about so many things...there was so many great ideas inside of it,” she said in an interview with Deadline.

The film Ithaca was initially released on October 23, 2015, starring Meg Ryan, Tom Hanks, Sam Shepard, and Jack Quaid. The Human Comedy had previously been made into a film in 1943 with actor Mickey Rooney. That year, Saroyan won the Academy Award for Best Story for this film. Ithaca will be featured at SIFF, which kicks off on March 30 and runs through April 4. In the 19th year of SIFF, nearly 200 filmmakers from around the world are expected to attend. The film festival will feature more than 90 hand-selected films including independent features, documentaries, world cinema, and short films. The Festival is dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers around the world and inspiring film lovers.

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