

## The Chişinău meeting was a good preparation for the next meeting - President of the European Council



Moldova - Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and EU chief Charles Michel meet in Chisinau, June 1, 2023.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met on June 1 for the third time in less than three weeks for fresh peace talks mediated by the European Union.

They reported no concrete agreements following the meeting held on the sidelines of a European summit in Moldova's capital Chisinau.

Aliyev and Pashinyan were joined by EU chief Charles Michel, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

European Council President Charles Michel summarized the five-sided meeting held in Chişinău, the statement was published on the official website of the Europe Council.

"We recently had a very good meeting with President Aliyev, Prime Minister Pashinyan, French President Emmanuel Macron

and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

We had the opportunity to address all the topics discussed in Brussels in May: communication, security and rights, border delimitation, peace treaty.

This meeting was a good preparation for the next meeting to be held on July 21 in Brussels. It means that we are working hard and intend to support all positive efforts towards normalization of relations.

I have also announced that I plan to invite President Aliyev, Prime Minister Pashinyan, Chancellor Scholz and President Macron again within the framework of the next meeting of the European Political Community, which will take place in Spain. It means that the EU will do everything to help, support, and make greater progress in the direction of normalizing relations," said Michel.

Armenian Foreign Ministry Expresses Deep Disappointment Regarding United States' Response to Aliyev's Threats

p. 2

European leaders call for release of all prisoners of war, Élysée Palace says after Armenian-Azerbaijani talks in Chisinau

p. 4

It seems that Armenia and Azerbaijan are not opposed to 1975 maps being used as basis for delimitation works. Pashinyan

p.3

Russia 'takes note' of Armenia's position regarding Ukraine conflict, says Kremlin

p. 5

## Armenian Foreign Ministry Expresses Deep Disappointment Regarding United States' Response to Aliyev's Threats

The Armenian Foreign Ministry has expressed its dismay at the U.S. reaction on May 31, welcoming Azerbaijani President Aliyev's stated readiness to grant "amnesty" to Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian leaders if they resign and "surrender" to Baku. Aliyev's remarks "contained clear threats" to Armenia's territorial integrity and the security of Karabakh's population. Washington "should react appropriately to such statements," said a ministry spokeswoman.

The Armenian side has always welcomed the efforts made by the US in the process of establishing peace, stability, and security in the South Caucasus, Ani Badalyan, spokesperson for the Armenian Foreign Ministry, said today in response to a May 30 U.S. State Department statement, in which it welcomed Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's remarks on the consideration of amnesty for Nagorno-Karabakh officials.

"We think it should be obvious to all our partners that in the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, both the recognition of each other's territorial integrity and inviolability of borders based on the Alma-Ata Declaration and addressing the rights and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are key. As we emphasized in the



statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on May 29, the recognition of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan cannot be interpreted as authority to carry out ethnic cleansing and arbitrariness against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh," the spokesperson said.

"It is impossible not to notice that the statements made by the President of Azerbaijan on May 28 not only did not offer dignified solutions to the aforementioned problems, but also contained clear threats to the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Armenia and the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in security and with dignity in their homeland, which the Armenian side has repeatedly raised the alarm. Our partners have been alerted about this many times. We believe that the United States, based on its own values of democracy and human rights protection and its commitment and involvement in the establishment of lasting peace in the region, should adequately

respond to these statements to prevent the expansionist policy of the Azerbaijani leadership towards the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and attempts of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh," Ani Badalyan said.

On Tuesday, the Department of State said in a statement that the United States looks forward to a productive meeting between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Chisinau.

"We are pleased to see that talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan have continued. As Secretary Blinken said, peace is achievable in the South Caucasus. We recently expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Pashinyan's commitment to peace, and we welcome President Aliyev's recent remarks on the consideration of amnesty," the statement reads.

The State Department also warned that aggressive rhetoric can only perpetuate the violence of the past; constructive dialogue—both public and private—can create peace, opportunity, and hope.

"The United States stands ready to support the efforts of both parties to conclude a durable and dignified peace agreement," the statement says.

## Armenian Defense Minister, US Under Secretary discuss issues related to the Armenian- Azerbaijani border



On June 2, Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papiqyan had a telephone conversation with Colin Kahl, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from MoD Armenia, a number of issues related to the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and

regional security were discussed.

The progress of the agreements on the development of the Armenian-American defense cooperation reached as a result of discussions with Dr. Kahl during the working visit of Minister of Defense Suren Papiqyan to the USA in September were discussed.

## It seems that Armenia and Azerbaijan are not opposed to 1975 maps being used as basis for delimitation works. Pashinyan

Armenia and Azerbaijan, in all probability, are not opposed to the 1975 maps being used as a basis for the border delimitation works, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced during the meeting with the Armenian community following the five-sided meeting held in Chişinău, reflecting on the results.

"In general, I should consider the discussion productive," said the Prime Minister.

Pashinyan reminded that it was agreed in Prague that Armenia and Azerbaijan should mutually recognize each other's territorial integrity based on the Almaty Declaration. The Almaty Declaration was signed in December 1991, after the collapse of the USSR. The Almaty Declaration was about countries recognizing each other's territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders within existing borders.

"We reached that agreement in Prague, and in Brussels we went one step further, we came to the understanding that Azerbaijan recognizes the territorial integrity of Armenia's 29,800 square kilometers, and Armenia recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan - 86,600 square kilometers," said the Prime Minister.

He emphasized that the understanding is that the issue of the rights and security of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh should be discussed in the format of the Baku-Stepanakert dialogue, which should take place with international involvement, so that this agenda is not forgotten.

"Today there is one very preliminary detail that is important. Why I say very



preliminary, because we need to check Azerbaijan's reaction to today's meeting. It seems that the parties are not opposed to taking the 1975 maps as a basis for further delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This means another step to reaffirm the territorial integrity of 29,800 square kilometers and 86,600 square kilometers," Pashinyan added.

## Armenian PM discusses blockade of Lachin corridor with Deputy Chair of PACE committee



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Paul Gavan, the first deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Committee

on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons.

The latter arrived in Armenia on a fact-finding mission within the framework of the preparation of the report "Ensuring free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor."

In this context, issues related to the humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh as a result of Azerbaijan's illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor were discussed.

The Prime Minister noted that the Azerbaijani side has suspended gas and electricity supplies from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, and food is transported only through peacekeepers. Noting that all this is being done by Azerbaijan in order to carry out ethnic cleansing and genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Prime Minister emphasized the adequate response of the international community to the developments.

## PM Nikol Pashinyan attends inauguration of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attended on June 3 the inauguration ceremony of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Ankara.

Prime Minister Pashinyan was

welcomed by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu at the presidential complex.

Leaders and high-ranking representatives of other countries were also present at the event.



## European leaders call for release of all prisoners of war, Élysée Palace says after Armenian-Azerbaijani talks in Chisinau

European leaders have called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to respect all their commitments, in particular that of releasing war detainees as soon as possible, the Elysee Palace said in a statement after EU-mediated talks between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.

“They also recalled the importance of the contribution of the EU monitoring mission in Armenia. Finally, they stressed the importance of defining



rights and guarantees for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh,” the statement reads.

According to the press release, French President Emmanuel Macron particularly insisted on the importance of not indulging in any hostile rhetoric and of continuing the efforts for a return to peace for the benefit of all the

populations in the region.

## Problem won't be resolved without Baku-Stepanakert dialogue, says Speaker of Parliament



Speaker of Parliament Alen Simonyan has said that direct dialogue between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan would also be highly important for Azerbaijan because if the dialogue fails to take place the problem won't be resolved.

Asked whether the formation of an international mechanism for dialogue

between Stepanakert and Baku is a principled matter for Armenia, given the fact that Azerbaijan doesn't agree to it, Simonyan said: “We must reach a point where Azerbaijan starts to speak about it because otherwise there won't be a beneficial situation for Azerbaijan itself, there will be a big gap which it won't be able to fill for years, decades. If Azerbaijan doesn't sit down and speak with the Armenian population living in Artsakh, that wound will someday [open].”

He added that international pressure and the international factor have big role. The Speaker said Armenia has success in this direction.

The problem won't be resolved without

dialogue between Baku and Stepanakert, Speaker Simonyan said.

“The other option is genocide, which we won't allow. The Azerbaijani authorities should think that this issue is far more important for them than for us,” he concluded.

Speaking about a possible peace treaty, Simonyan called for guarantees to be in place for implementation of the terms of the agreement. As an example, he mentioned the 9 November 2020 trilateral statement, which Azerbaijan is regularly violating while Russia – who is supposed to guarantee its implementation – fails to give proper response.

## Secretary of Armenia's Security Council emphasizes the need for Azerbaijan's constructive position in the negotiation process

On May 30, Armenian Security Council Secretary Armen Grigoryan participated in a panel discussion with Azerbaijani President's Assistant Hikmet Hajiyev.

During the event held in the framework of the “GLOBSEC 2023 Bratislava Forum” in Slovakia, he presented the position of the Armenian side regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations.

The Secretary of the Security Council

referred to the issues regarding the international mechanism regarding the security and rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, demarcation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and border security processes, unblocking of regional channels.

The Secretary emphasized the need for a constructive position of Azerbaijan in the negotiation process, calling to refrain from extreme aspirations.



## Russia ‘takes note’ of Armenia’s position regarding Ukraine conflict, says Kremlin

Moscow is taking into consideration Armenia’s stance regarding the Ukraine conflict but continues to develop its allied relations with Armenia, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has said.

“We are taking note of it,” TASS quoted Peskov as saying when asked to comment on Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s statement that Armenia is not Russia’s ally in the Ukrainian conflict.

Peskov noted that this is “an important statement.”



“We know that there are certain nuances in Armenia’s approaches regarding the conflict around Ukraine, we are taking this into consideration,” Peskov said.

The Kremlin spokesperson added that Russia continues to develop its allied relations with Armenia.

In an interview with CNN Prima News, PM Nikol Pashinyan said that Armenia is not Russia’s ally in the war with Ukraine.

## Slovenia closely monitoring the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, Parliament Speaker says



Slovenia highly values the good and friendly relations with Armenia and is eager to further strengthen these ties, particularly through inter-parliamentary cooperation, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia Urška Klakočar Zupančič told reporters after a meeting with Armenian National Assembly Speaker Alen Simonjan.

“A significant framework for deepening

the relations and consolidating political dialogue between Armenia and the European Union is the Partnership Cooperation Agreement. This Agreement is important for strengthening cooperation across various domains, including facilitating mobility between the European Union and Armenia, which is particularly valuable for Armenian citizens,” she said.

“Slovenia and Armenia are both members or partners in several major international organizations, including the United Nations. As you may know, Slovenia has submitted its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2024-2025. In this context, I express my sincere hope that Armenia will endorse and support our candidacy

in the upcoming elections on 6 June,” the Speaker added.

“Within the UN, Slovenia and Armenia share many common objectives in areas such as peace and security, promotion of effective multilateralism, environmental issues, and human rights. As I emphasized during my meeting with President Simonjan, if elected as a non-permanent member, Slovenia will proactively engage with each member individually to seek solutions to international crises through dialogue and close cooperation,” she noted.

Urška Klakočar Zupančič stressed that they closely monitor the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“In this regard, we welcome the European Union’s sustained presence in the region and express our support for the deployment of a new EU Civilian Mission in Armenia. We believe that this mission will contribute to the security of the population, foster regional stability, and build trust among the parties involved,” she said.

## Armenia rules out any corridor with “special regime”

Armenia rules out any extraterritorial corridor for Azerbaijan.

All infrastructure will be under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Armenia, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan told reporters on May 30.

“We have always been ready and remain ready to continue the discussions within this framework to reach unblocking

of regional communications, which is important for the Republic of Armenia, as well,” Grigoryan said.

Commenting on Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s statements on so-called “Zangezur corridor,” the Deputy PM said discussion on any corridor with a special regime is excluded.

“We have stated on many occasions

that it is a red line. No such issue will be discussed,” he stated.



## Armenia, US to cooperate in nuclear safety

Armenia and US will cooperate in nuclear safety. The Government today okayed a draft presidential decree on approving the agreement "On the exchange of technical information and cooperation on nuclear safety issues between the Armenian Nuclear Safety Regulatory Committee and the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission" signed in Washington on March 14.

The new agreement expands the cooperation on nuclear and radiation safety regulation in the field of atomic energy use.

According to the Armenian



government, It will contribute to the exchange of advanced experience and knowledge on security issues and the introduction of new technologies. The cooperation offered by the agreement is aimed at strengthening the regulatory

infrastructure in Armenia, developing the skills and abilities of the personnel, which will contribute to the extension of the operational period of NPPs, the implementation of safety analysis and assessment in the licensing stages of the construction of new NPPs in Armenia.

The scientific and technical assistance received under the agreement will contribute to physical protection, implementation of nuclear weapons non-proliferation guarantees, safety of radioactive materials and waste, implementation of environmental monitoring and development of safety regulatory documents.

## Ground broken for new checkpoint on Armenia-Iran border

Armenia will build new border crossing point at the Iran border. Ground for the new facility was broken today in a ceremony attended by Chairman of the State Revenue Committee Rustam Badasyan, Head of the Yerevan Office of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development George Akhalkatsi, Syunik Governor Robert Ghukasyan, representatives of international structures and other state bodies.

The reconstruction and modernization of the Meghri border crossing point is being carried out with credit and grant funds provided by the EU and the EBRD.

Armenia and EBRD signed an agreement on loan of 21,146,263 euros on



February 7, 2020.

The current infrastructure at the Meghri BCP is outdated. The operational, technical, engineering, environmental and safety conditions at the BCP need to be improved in order to meet modern safety and security requirements and adhere to

international border management standards.

The Project aims to reconstruct and modernise the road border crossing point facilities at Meghri BCP. The Project involves demolition of the existing outdated buildings, construction of new modern facilities and installation of modern equipment for the performance of border, customs and other controls in line

with modern standards.

The construction works will be carried out by Tana Energy Management Company, winner of an international tender. Roughton International Limited Company will carry out technical quality control of the construction works.

## \$70 million Armenian-American steelworks under construction in Yerashk

A major Armenian-American metallurgical plant with 70 million USD investment is under construction in Yerashk, Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan said on social media.

"The plant is a 30-meter-high structure

with 16,500 square meters area, where the annual output will be 180,000 tons. 200 workers are already employed there, and after its launch the number of workers will be 1000," he added.



## Armenian Gold Mine Closed ‘Due to Azeri Gunfire’

The Russian owner of Armenia’s largest gold mine has indicated that it will not restart open-pit operations there because of continuing cross-border fire from near-by Azerbaijani army positions.

The Sotk mine, which employs more than 700 people and is located on the volatile border with Azerbaijan, has stood idle since an upsurge in skirmishes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in mid-April. Its employees say that they have repeatedly come under fire and been evacuated after trying to return to work.

Fighting at that section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border escalated on May 11-12, involving exchanges of artillery fire and resulting in several casualties from both sides.

“The situation of constant danger for the employees of the enterprise persists for more than a month,” read a statement released by the mine operator, GPM Gold, late on Tuesday. “As a consequence, further work of the Sotk open pit has become impossible due to circumstances beyond the Company’s control.”

The subsidiary of Russia’s GeoProMining group added that it has therefore decided to “stop the operation of the open-pit mine” and put its workers on unpaid leave.

Hovannes Harutiunyan, an Armenian deputy minister of local government and infrastructures, predicted GPM Gold’s decision earlier this month. Harutiunyan told lawmakers in Yerevan that the company

plans to switch to underground mining due to the periodical border clashes and Azerbaijani gunfire targeting its open-pit facilities.

The GPM Gold statement said nothing about that, however. Nor did it shed light on the uncertain future of GeoProMining’s gold smelter located in Ararat, a town 50 kilometers south of Yerevan.

The company already lost control over a large part of the mountainous area’s gold deposits following the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh and the resulting Armenian withdrawal from the Kelbajar district bordering Sotk. This appears to explain why total taxes paid by it plummeted from 20.8 billion drams (\$53 million) in 2021 to just 3.2 billion drams in 2022.

## The launch Armenia’s first satellite bolstered interest in space research

The launch of the first Armenian satellite bolstered significant interest in Armenia towards space research and space technologies, Head of the Armenian delegation, Ambassador Armen Papikyan said at the 66th Session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

“Currently a number of research teams are conducting diverse studies, including development of an educational CubeSat, use of space-based technologies for remote environmental observation and monitoring environmental pollution, as well as land use and management,” he said.

“Armenia continued working on further development of an enabling national environment for space related sector. We plan to review our national legal regulatory framework in order to identify its deficiencies and to also improve it in line with the LTS guidelines,” Amb. Papikyan added.

He noted that the first National Space



Strategy, which is envisaged to be adopted by the end of this year, will define the strategic direction of future efforts of Armenia in the domain of space.

“We attach particular importance to developing effective national capacities for using the space-based information and

satellites observation data in the area of disaster management and mitigation of climate change impact,” Arman Papikyan said.

“We consider the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) as an important framework, where the application of space technologies could help,” he said.

## We are not Russia's ally in the war with Ukraine. And our feeling from that war, from that conflict, is anxiety because it directly affects all our relationships: Nikol Pashinyan

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan gave an interview to the CNN Prima News within the framework of his official visit to the Czech Republic on May 4-5.

The transcript of the Prime Minister's interview is presented below.

**CNN Prima News** – It is obvious that the main problem of Armenia today is the situation in Nagorno Karabakh. About 120,000 Armenians remain in Nagorno Karabakh at the moment. They depend on one land corridor controlled by Russian troops. So, what is the economic, humanitarian and security situation of the population in Nagorno-Karabakh at the moment?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – You know that Azerbaijan has illegally blocked the Lachin Corridor since December last year. We say illegally, because according to the tripartite declaration of November 9, the Lachin Corridor was established to ensure the connection of Nagorno Karabakh Armenians, Nagorno Karabakh with the Republic of Armenia. And according to the tripartite declaration, Azerbaijan should not have any control over that corridor. Moreover, the corridor is not only a road, but also a 5 km wide safety zone. The blocking is therefore illegal.

As a result of the blockade, a humanitarian crisis has emerged in Nagorno-Karabakh, because, firstly, people are deprived of the right to move, and secondly, the supply of food and basic necessities takes place with interruptions, through the peacekeepers and the Red Cross. And the consequence of this is that people can buy goods in stores only with coupons issued by the government of Nagorno-Karabakh, so that food stocks can be managed.

Natural gas and electricity cuts in



Nagorno-Karabakh have been continuous since December of last year, and at the moment natural gas and electricity are not supplied to Nagorno-Karabakh. The most important consequence of this during the winter months was that all schools and kindergartens, higher education institutions were closed, and about 30,000 children and students were deprived of their right to education. Of course, with the weather getting warmer, kindergartens, schools, and universities have already opened, and the educational process has been restored.

The next important fact that should be noted in this context is the following. Already in February 2023, the International Court of Justice made a provisional decision obliging Azerbaijan to unblock the Lachin Corridor and ensure the movement of citizens and goods through the Lachin Corridor. Azerbaijan not only did not comply with the requirement of that decision, which is legally binding because the International Court of Justice is the highest international court, but also illegally set up a checkpoint in the Lachin Corridor about ten days ago. This is a violation not only of the tripartite declaration of November 9, 2020, but also of the decision of the International Court of Justice.

So, why is Azerbaijan doing all this? Our assessment and belief is that these are not isolated actions, but preparations to carry out ethnic cleansing in Nagorno Karabakh, when I say ethnic cleansing, it is about that according to Azerbaijan,

Armenians should not live in Nagorno Karabakh at all.

**CNN Prima News** – Since the beginning of the 90s, Armenia has been quite dependent on Russia from a security point of view, you have a Russian military base in Armenia, you have Russian weapons, you are both members of the Security Treaty Organization, so I have a kind of two-fold question: was it a smart move? and on the other hand did you have other options?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – Basically, today we are in a situation where there is some disappointment regarding the activities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, because the Collective Security Treaty Organization is the main mechanism by which the Republic of Armenia was supposed to ensure its security. But during the aggressions undertaken by Azerbaijan in May and November 2021 and September 2022, the inadequate response of the Collective Security Treaty Organization has caused some disappointment, first of all, among the people of Armenia, because there was some confidence that the Collective Security Treaty is a reliable security mechanism.

But it did not happen, and this was also the reason why we did not consider it possible to establish a consensus on a number of fundamental documents during the CSTO Yerevan summit. But I want us to look at the issue from the opposite side as well, because it is also harmful for the organization, because, in fact, what happened with Armenia in the period I mentioned, is first of all a blow to the reputation of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. In other words, this will also have certain consequences for the organization itself.

**CNN Prima News** – I think throughout

the war, and at the summit in Yerevan last November, when you refused to sign the document, and Mr. Lukashenko was shocked, and Mr. Putin was obviously angry, I haven't seen him that angry in a long time, and he left in frustration.

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – These are working situations, and after that a working lunch was held, and we discussed the current state of affairs and how we can overcome the situation in a calm, respectful atmosphere.

**CNN Prima News** – How is your personal relationship with Vladimir Putin? He seems like a very cold person, almost emotionless. Do you have a working relationship with him, or do you have a personal relationship or not, or is it a matter of the two states?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – In general, I must say that the impressions seen from the screens, the impressions of real life, the complications that we are experiencing and the difficult periods that we are in, are actually different layers. And yes, our communication with the President of the Russian Federation has been very intense and continues to be intense.

We will meet at least 2 times this month. And I must say that it is both a personal contact, a political contact, and a working contact. Another thing is that, especially now, we do not discuss much, or we hardly discuss the issues that are not related to the agenda of our bilateral relations or our regional agenda. I will tell you something honestly: Armenia has too many problems to bear the problems of the wider region and parts of the world on its shoulders. Unfortunately, our concerns are more than enough, and in our relations with the European Union, the United States and Russia, we are trying to solve the problems of our agenda, which, as you can see, unfortunately, is not always successful.

**CNN Prima News** – And what is Armenia's position regarding the Ukrainian war, Russian aggression on Ukraine, because

on the one hand you are Russia's ally, on the other hand we are witnessing very undesirable actions by the Russian Federation in Ukraine.

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – You said that we are Russia's ally. Of course, this was never said out loud, but I think it is visible. We are not Russia's ally in the war with Ukraine. And our feeling from that war, from that conflict, is anxiety because it directly affects all our relationships.

In the West they notice that we are Russia's ally, they mostly notice it, in Russia they see that we are not their ally in the Ukraine war, and it turns out that we are not anyone's ally in this situation, which means that we are vulnerable. Because, it seems that there is an option to avoid among all these collisions, but also the truth is that the more complicated the situation, the narrower the chances for avoiding. We are avoiding not because we don't have opinions about the situation, but we're avoiding it because of what I said a moment ago, that our concerns are, unfortunately, more than they will allow us to be more involved in coping with other problems.

**CNN Prima News** – Armenia is in a very difficult political situation. Your big neighbor is Turkey, Russia is another big regional power, there is also Iran, and the European Union seems to be quite far away, but how can the European Union realistically help solve the complex issue facing Armenia, the Nagorno Karabakh issue? Do we actually have options, are there any levers in our hands?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – First of all, our strategy stems from what you mentioned. Look, you say that we are in a difficult geopolitical situation. Actually, we are not in a difficult geopolitical situation, we are in a geographical situation.

In other words, our complexity is not from geopolitics, our complexity is from geography, because no matter how the politics of the world changes, our geography

will not change. And for that reason, we offer and have offered the following political vision to our people, that the primary goal of our foreign policy should be normal relations, first of all, with our immediate neighbors, no matter how difficult it is even to hear, because history has brought with it so much complexity, so much negative baggage.

**CNN Prima News** – You came to power as a result of the Velvet Revolution in Armenia, which reminds all Czechs of the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Two years later, you faced the biggest challenge of the Armenian people since the beginning of the 90s. Did you expect to face such a challenge?

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – I can say, I think that interview has been published, it was definitely before the revolution. Once I was asked who is your ideal politician, I named two people, if my memory serves me right, I must have said Nelson Mandela and Václav Havel. And indeed the revolution that we carried out, those examples and the example of Czechoslovakia, of course, were always in my mind and before my eyes. Could I have assumed, yes, I could have assumed, but on the other hand, I couldn't have assumed that it was actually not only a challenge, but in this case, a geopolitical trap, and a stalemate.

Of course, I think about it a lot and, of course, I ask myself questions, and I must say directly that I have not yet found the answers to all the questions for myself. To assume, of course, one can always assume, but of course, a person is optimistic by nature and is an optimist, although there is such a saying, that an optimist is a poorly informed pessimist. Naturally, the more I learned after assuming the post of Prime Minister, the more optimism decreased.

**CNN Prima News** – Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your time and I wish you success in your difficult task.

**Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan** – Thank you.

## Violent Policeman Indicted After Public Uproar



**(RFE/RL)** - Facing a public uproar, Armenian law-enforcement authorities reversed on Friday their decision not to prosecute a senior police officer who beat up a teenage waiter at a hotel in the resort town of Dilijan.

A regional prosecutor ordered investigators to not only indict but also arrest Arsen Ghaytmazian, the chief of the Dilijan police department's investigative unit.

A video circulated on Thursday shows Ghaytmazian repeatedly hitting the 17-year-old waiter, Araz Amirian. According to Amirian's lawyer, the drunk officer assaulted him on April 10 after being told to pay for a hotel room upfront.

Armenia's Investigative Committee said later on Thursday that it has not brought criminal charges against Ghaytmazian because he has cooperated

with its criminal investigation, "fully regretted" his actions and apologized to the young man. It said a prosecutor overseeing the probe has approved the decision.

The decision was strongly condemned by the victim's family and human rights activists. It also sparked outrage on social media. Two pro-government members of the Armenian parliament added their voice to the uproar.

"We, the parents, haven't forgiven and will not forgive him and we will not withdraw our complaint," the waiter's mother, Araksya Artinian, told RFE/RL's Armenia Service. "He must be put on trial."

The Office of the Prosecutor-General announced afterwards that the chief prosecutor of northern Tavush province encompassing Dilijan instructed the local division of the Investigative Committee to reopen the criminal case, charge Ghaytmazian with assault and seek court permission to hold him in detention.

The policeman will face between three and seven years in prison if tried and found guilty. According to the Interior Ministry, he was earlier suspended

pending an internal police inquiry.

"I am ready to apologize to those public circles who may be disappointed with the work of the law-enforcement system because of this case," said Argishti Kyaramian, the head of the Investigative Committee.

Kyaramian said his Tavush subordinates were wrong to close the case. But he at the same time sought to shift the blame onto the regional prosecutor, arguing that the latter endorsed the initial decision not to prosecute the officer.

Artur Sakunts, a human rights activist, accused the Investigative Committee of trying to dodge responsibility for what he sees as an attempted cover-up of the assault. He said that both the Tavush prosecutor and the investigator in charge of the case must at least be fired.

Ani Chatinian, another activist, said police brutality remains a serious problem in Armenia despite police reforms declared by the authorities. She argued that law-enforcement officers are still rarely prosecuted for such abuses.

## Armenia hails 'significant progress' in talk over connectivity unblocking, notes 'common understanding' with Azerbaijan

The Government of Armenia has released details on the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Armenia-Russia-Azerbaijan working group led by the deputy prime ministers of the three countries Mher Grigoryan, Alexey Overchuk and Shahin Mustafayev respectively which took place on June 2 in Moscow.

"The session proceeded in a constructive atmosphere. Significant progress has been recorded with satisfaction around the coordination of the methods



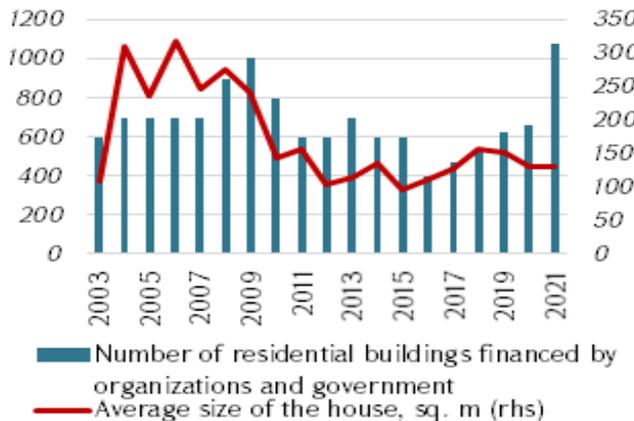
for organizing unblocking of transport connections between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. In

particular, a common understanding was achieved on implementing concrete steps in the direction of restoring and organizing railway connection in the Yeraskh-Julfa-Meghri-Horadiz route. The results of the negotiations will be reported to the leaders of the Republic of Armenia, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The parties agreed to continue to work within the framework of the trilateral working group," the Armenian government said in a statement.

Continued from # 1424

# A BOOM BORROWED AGAINST THE FUTURE?

By Narek Karapetyan



Source: Yerevan Municipality and the RA Central Bank.

CHART 7

## The scale and size of residential construction

private houses. Although in Armenia, most of the residential construction is financed by individuals, during the last decade construction financed by organizations has increased. Particularly, during the booming years of the 2000s overall 310 thousand square meters of residential area were launched, and in 2015-2021 was launched more – 472 310 thousand square meters. As a result, if in 2003-2008 only 12% of the constructed residential area was financed by organizations, in 2015-2021 the figure was 32%.

### The short and long term costs of supporting residential construction

The bottom line is - the structure of the construction sector has shifted considerably in the last decade, particularly since 2015. Construction increased faster in Marzes than in Yerevan, while in Yerevan construction has shifted from private houses to residential complexes (1), from bigger to smaller houses (2), and from more expensive to cheaper construction (3). These shifts were accompanied by an overall decline in the sector.

The government subsidy schemes were designed to reverse the declining trend, but they supported the structure shifts. But

<sup>4</sup> Interest rate - 12%, time to maturity – 20 years, loan servicing - annuity of equal payments.

<sup>5</sup> On the assumption that RA economy will have 11% real GDP growth and 7% growth of GDP deflator in 2022, and till the end of the year the growth rate of income tax returns will be equal to the growth rate of January-September.

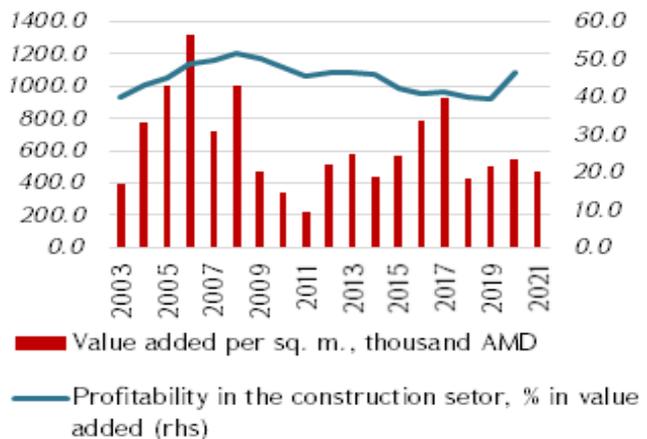


CHART 8

## Prices and profitability in the construction sector

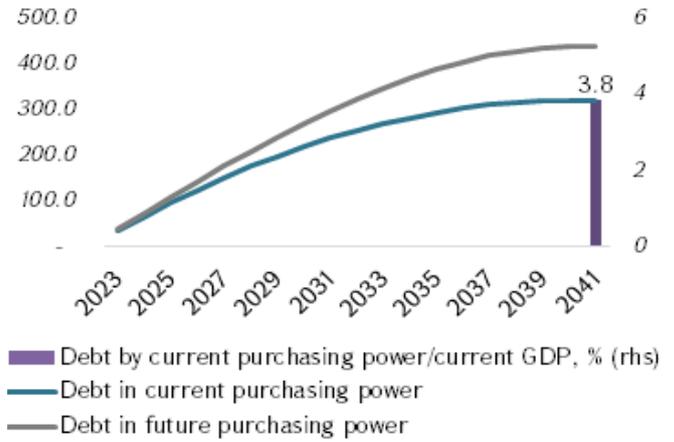
do we know the real costs of government support?

The short-term costs are well-known. The volume of subsidies (income tax return) increased from 2.4 bln in 2017 (0.04% of GDP) to an estimated 37 bln AMD in 2022 (0.4% of GDP).

But a bigger portion of the subsidies granted during this period is an explicit liability for the future. We modeled a possible trajectory for future liabilities based on the assumptions of typical mortgage loan characteristics<sup>4</sup>. We also adjusted future payments by expected inflation – to assess their current purchasing power. Following our estimates, while in 2017 the Government assumed liabilities equal to 0.4% of GDP, in 2022 it assumed 1.6%, which raised the overall costs of supporting residential construction to 2.1% of GDP.

All liabilities, accumulated in 2017-2022 are estimated at 440 bln AMD, which should be serviced by 2041. Under current purchasing power, this is equal to 318 bln AMD or 3.8% of 2022 GDP<sup>5</sup> (chart 9).

Government will accumulate liabilities almost equal to 1 trillion AMD, the present purchasing power of which will be equal to 8% of 2022 GDP.



Source: Yerevan Municipality and the RA Central Bank.

Note: For calculating present purchasing power for future payments 4% inflation assumption was applied.

CHART 9

**Costs of mortgage loans subsidies by current and future payments (adjusted by inflation), % in GDP**

CHART 10

**Projections of government explicit liabilities on mortgage loans as of the end-2022, bln AMD**

Are these costs justified? In 2017-2022 the Government on average spent around 0.2% of GDP on mortgage subsidies, while accumulated liabilities around 3.8% of GDP. For the same period, residential construction was only 1.9% of GDP. In 2021 and 2022 costs of government support are almost equal to the value added of residential construction.

It can be argued, that residential construction should not only be measured by its value added, but also by its multiplier effect on other sectors, which is usually estimated to be quite high. For example, following ILO estimates, investments in construction would yield a 3.5 dollar expansion of GDP per 1 dollar, and up to 500 jobs per 1 million dollars in middle-income countries<sup>6</sup>.

But even if we assume a multiplier that high, residential construction in Armenia is oversubsidized from a fiscal or economic

perspective, as the government can't collect as much taxes to compensate for the current and future expenses<sup>7</sup>. This implies, that the program of support should have a new system of targets and priorities, particularly considering, that construction is a non-exported sector, while the priorities of government economic policies are focused on the exported sector. And, as the biggest portion of expenses is for the future, the deadline for the program in Yerevan for 2025 does not answer this.

These new priorities for supporting the sector may include social or urban development targets. More importantly, supporting schemes of government should incorporate clear cost-benefit analysis – both in the designing and implementation phases. And the key here is – not to miss the future liabilities for the government in the calculation.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst, C., & Sarabia, M. (2015). The role of construction as an employment provider: a world-wide input-output analysis. ILO.  
<sup>7</sup> The tax to GDP ratio in Armenia is 23%. If 1000 AMD cost is associated to the same volume of residential construction, and the latter has 3.5 multiplier, the Government can collect only 800 AMD of taxes (1000\*3.5\*0.23).

## United Armenian Church leaders warn Biden that forcing Artsakh into Azerbaijan is a death sentence for Christian Armenians



The spiritual leaders of America's Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical faithful have joined forces in a powerful public warning to President Biden that forcing Artsakh under Azerbaijan is a "death sentence for the Armenians of this sacred land, home to 120,000 men, women, and children."

In a letter sent yesterday to the White House, the Church leaders wrote: "We, the spiritual leaders of American Christians of Armenian heritage, call on you to stand firmly against any attempt to force the Christian Armenians of Artsakh under Azerbaijan, a country that is openly committed to ethnically cleansing the indigenous population of this ancient part of the Armenian homeland."

The signatories to the letter are Archbishop Hovnan Derderian (Western Diocese Prelate), Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian (Eastern Prelacy Primate), Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan (Eastern Diocese Primate), Bishop Torkom Donoyan (Western Prelacy Prelate), Bishop Mikhael Mouradian (Eparch Armenian Catholic Eparchy), Reverend Hendrik Shanazarian

(Interim Minister, Armenian Evangelical Union), and Zaven Khanjian (Armenian Missionary Association of America Executive Director).

The full text of the interdenominational letter is provided below.

May 30, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the spiritual leaders of American Christians of Armenian heritage, call on you to stand firmly against any attempt to force the Christian Armenians of Artsakh under Azerbaijan, a country that is openly committed to ethnically cleansing the indigenous population of this ancient part of the Armenian homeland. Any settlement that subordinates the at-risk citizens of democratic Artsakh to dictatorial Azerbaijan is a death sentence for the Armenians of this sacred land, home to 120,000 men, women, and children, and, of course, countless holy sites.

We make this urgent appeal in the

wake of our longstanding calls for you to withdraw your waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and fully enforce this provision of U.S. law. As we have shared with you in the past, Armenia, the world's first Christian nation, remains a landlocked, blockaded, genocide survivor state, striving to survive on the frontiers of global freedom. Our great nation must stand with Armenia in every way, beginning with a suspension of U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan, a country that would erase our ancient nation from the map of the world. We must never, as Americans, be complicit in such genocidal violence.

We look forward to learning of your renewed leadership in saving Christian Armenian lives and advancing a truly democratic peace that respects the right to self-determination of Artsakh, an early cradle of Christianity.

We pray that the Almighty Lord bless you abundantly and His wisdom leads your endeavors with success, spreading peace, justice, and prosperity to the world.

Sincerely,

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian

Western Diocese Prelate

Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian

Eastern Prelacy Primate

Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan

Eastern Diocese Primate,

Bishop Torkom Donoyan

Western Prelacy Prelate,

Bishop Mikhael Mouradian

Eparch Armenian Catholic Eparchy

Reverend Hendrik Shanazarian

Interim Minister, Armenian Evangelical Union

Zaven Khanjian

Armenian Missionary Association of America Executive Director

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<https://eoiyerevan.gov.in/pdf/guard%20rfp-01-06-2023.pdf>

Last date of submission of bids: 17 July 2023

For enquires(email only) contact: [hoc.yerevan@mea.gov.in](mailto:hoc.yerevan@mea.gov.in)



**Head of Chancery  
Embassy of India  
Yerevan, Armenia**

## Armenian Buenos Aires picture book presented at the Foreign Ministry

The Armenian Buenos Aires picture book, published at the initiative of the Armenian Embassy in Argentina with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, was presented at the Foreign Ministry today. The book presents the history of the Armenian community of Argentina and the Armenian heritage in Buenos

Aires, including squares and parks with Armenian names, Armenian churches, monuments commemorating the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, khachkars (cross-stones), educational institutions, cultural associations, etc. The photos in the book were taken by photographer Davit Hakobyan.

During the event, Deputy Foreign



Minister Paruyr Hovhannisyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Argentina Hovhannes Virabyan, Ambassador of Argentina to Armenia Mariano Vergara, photographer Davit Hakobyan delivered remarks.

The important role of the century-old Armenian community of Argentina both in the public life of Argentina and in the

development of Armenian-Argentine interstate relations. At the same time, the rich Armenian cultural heritage in Argentina, particularly in the capital city of Buenos Aires, as well as the caring attitude of the Argentine authorities towards the Armenian community and the diverse Armenian presence were emphasized.

The presentation was attended by members of the delegation of the Senate of Argentina and Chamber of Deputies, members of the National Assembly, diplomats, heads of educational and cultural institutions, media, representatives of the Argentine Armenian community and other guests.

# ARMENIA

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