

Electric Yerevan: The sit-in on Baghramyan Avenue enters 7th day



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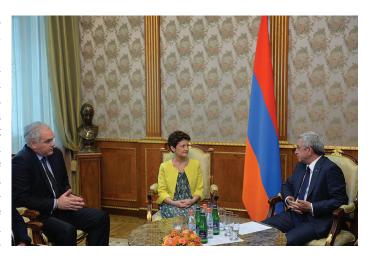
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President Serzh Sargsyan received on June 26 Thea Tsulukiani, Minister of Justice of Georgia, and Giorgi Mghebrishvili, Minister of Corrections of Georgia.

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The president welcomed the guests and their participation in the first Armenian-Georgian Forum for Legal Cooperation held in Yerevan. Expressing his satisfaction with the fact that Armenia and Georgia continue to conduct high-level political dialogue and deepen multi-sectoral cooperation, Serzh Sargsyan stressed that it lays the groundwork to add new dimensions for partnership. In that context, the Armenian president attached importance to the relationship between the two countries' legal affairs ministries and expressed the hope that the forum for legal cooperation will continue on a regular basis, thereby bringing its contribution to the further strengthening and development of friendly ties between Armenian and Georgia. Serzh Sargsyan underscored that the mentioned ministries mainly deal with problems faced by both Armenian and Georgian citizens, and, hence, it is important to find effective solutions to them through mutual discussions and exchange of experience so that citizens can feel the difference.

At the meeting, President Serzh Sargsyan once again expressed his sincere support for the friendly people of Georgia on the occasion of the floods and natural calamity in Tbilisi and expressed the hope that Georgia's government and Tbilisi's local authorities will try their best to quickly overcome the effects of the calamity. The Armenian president reiterated Armenia's readiness to render necessary assistance to the friendly country of Georgia.



During the meeting, Serzh Sargsyan also emphasized that our country is keen on developing and deepening Armenian-Georgian interstate relations under new conditions created by Armenia's membership in the EAEU and the conclusion of the Georgia-EU Association Agreement.

Ministers Thea Tsulukiani and Giorgi Mghebrishvili underscored that they intend to follow the legal cooperation format established during the Armenian justice minister's visit to Georgia and make it a tradition, as well as to conduct exchange of experience and promote cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Armenian DM attends NATO meeting on Afghanistan

On June 25 the delegation headed by Armenian defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan participated in the meeting of Defense Ministers of the countries contributing to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

The Defense Ministers of NATO partner countries discussed the progress of NATO mission in Afghanistan, the political and security situation in the country. The participants decided to start the second stage of the mission on May 1, 2016. The NATO presence will be restricted to capital Kabul and its neighborhood.

Minister Nalbandian reiterated Armenia's commitment to contribute a 131-member group until the end of the mission. Within the framework of the visit Minister Ohanyan participated in ministerial consultations organized by Germany, where the strategy of the mission was discussed.

The same day Seyran Ohanyan met with Georgia's newly elected Defense Minister Tinatin Khidasheli. The parties discussed the perspectives of defense cooperation and exchanged views on issues of international and regional security.

PACE adopts Res. on Azerbaijan, removes the word "occupation" with regard to NK

After a marathon of amendment voting, PACE approved its resolution on democratic institutions in Azerbaijan by 140 votes to 13.

The Assembly voted 85 to 78 to accept the amendment tabled by the Armenian delegation to exclude the term"occupation" with regard to Nagorno Karabakh.

The Parliamentary
Assembly says in the final text
of the Resolution it "is fully
aware of the NagornoKarabakh conflict which dominates to a large extent the



Azerbaijani foreign policy agenda."

The draft resolution read: "The Assembly is fully aware of the occupation by Armenia of Nagorno Karabakh and seven other provinces of Azerbaijan, which dominates to a large extent the Azerbaijani foreign policy agenda."

Electric Yerevan: The sit-in on Baghramyan Avenue enters 7th day

Thousands of people continued to hold a nonstop demonstration in Yerevan on Sunday night, rejecting its organizers' calls to unblock a key street in the city center voiced after concessions made to the protesters by President Serzh Sargsyan.

The No To Plunder youth movement leading the campaign against a controversial rise in electricity prices decided to move its weeklong street protests back to Liberty Square and thus reopen Marshal Bagramyan Avenue to traffic.

One of its leaders, Vaghinak Shushanyan, announced the decision on Sunday evening in a speech delivered from a barricade erected at the blocked street section. He cited the risk of renewed violent clashes with riot police deployed nearby as well as President Serzh Sargsyan's announcement on Friday that the Armenian government will at least temporarily subsidize the energy tariffs.

"By staying here longer we won't be physically prepared to endure more police beatings and jets of water," Shushanyan told the crowd.

"I stand for continuing the struggle with different methods," he said. "We could again shut down Bagramyan Avenue at any moment."

The 24-year-old activist argued that while No To Plunder has still not received a "clear answer" from the Armenian authorities to its demands for a scrapping of the energy price hike it has succeeded in ensuring that Armenians will not pay more for electricity for the time being.

"With their unity the people have forced the authorities to step back," he said. "From now on, citizens will continue to pay the old price."

The speech angered many in the crowd. They responded by jeering Shushanyan and chanting "Bagramyan!" and "Shame!" Some of them also bitterly argued with other young protesters who backed the decision announced by Shushanyan.

Immediately after Shushanyan finished his speech, several hitherto unknown activists jumped onto the makeshift podium to make angry statements accusing No To Plunder of betrayal and urging the protesters to remain camped out on the street leading to the presidential palace.

Only several hundred people joined the



No To Plunder leaders in marching to nearby Liberty Square.

"I am begging you to get out of Bagramian," Shushanyan wrote on Facebook later in the evening.

The warning came amid fresh police threats to break up the "illegal" demonstration. In a statement, the Armenian police said they are allowed to use force under an Armenian law on public gatherings.

At one point, phalanxes of police clad in full riot gear and backed up by a water cannon began moving towards the protesters. However, they moved back shortly after several dozen Armenian opposition politicians and prominent public figures lined up in front of the barricade in hopes of preventing violence.

Valeri Osipyan, a deputy chief of the Yerevan police, skirted reporters' questions about crowd dispersal when he again approached the barricades at around 11:00 pm local time. Osipyan said only that he wants to warn the protesters to stop breaching "the rules of cohabitation" with residents of nearby apartment buildings.

"We are calling on the police to understand and protect us," Tigran Khachumian, one of the activists remaining on Marshal Bagramian Avenue told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

Khachumian also said that the new protest leaders are not seeking regime change and only want the Armenian authorities to officially reverse a more than 17 percent rise in electricity fees that was approved by state regulators on June 17. "The people are simply demanding what they demanded yesterday and the day before," he said.

President Serzh Sargsyan defended the price hike on Friday, saying that it is needed for saving the Armenian energy sector from collapse. Still, he said that the Armenian government will subsidize the electricity tariffs to make sure that Armenian households are unaffected, at least for now, by the price hike.

CONDOLENCES TO MR ARSEN GHAZARYAN

With deep sorry we've been informed on the recent timeless passing away of Mrs **AMALYA YESAYAN**, mother of a prominent intellectual, benefactor and businessman, President of the Union of Businessmen (Employers) and Manufacturers of Armenia (UMBA), Co-Founder of the "Apaven" Co. Mr **ARSEN V. GHAZARYAN**.

The entire Noyan Tapan Media Holding staff expresses its deepest condolences to Mr Ghazaryan, all the family members, relatives and friends of Mrs Yesayan of the blessed memory.

4 www.nt.am POLITICS

Armenian President Offers Plan On Energy Price Hike

Bowing to pressure from thousands of protesters blocking a central Yerevan avenue for the sixth consecutive day, President Serzh Sargsyan announced on June 27 that his government will effectively suspend a controversial rise in electricity prices in Armenia.

Serzh Sargsyan said the government will keep the tariffs unchanged for consumers by subsidizing their increased cost at least until the release of findings of an international audit of Armenia's Russian-owned power distribution network.

Speaking at an emergency meeting with senior government officials, he said he remains "deeply convinced" that state regulators were right to raise the tariffs by more than 17 percent last week. He said he opted for the "meticulous" audit in an effort to address a lack of popular trust in the Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA) utility and Armenian state bodies dealing with the energy sector.

The audit, he went on, will determine whether the more than 17 percent price

hike approved by state regulators last week was economically justified or resulted from alleged corruption and mismanagement in the ENA. The loss-making company will be held accountable if it is found guilty of forcing households and corporate consumers to bear the financial burden of fraud among its senior executives, he said.

Conversely, the Armenian government will stop covering the extra cost of power supplies if the ENA is cleared of major wrongdoing, added the president. He gave no estimates as to the monetary value of the subsidy, saying only that the government will tap into "funds that were set aside for further strengthening our security."

Accordingly, Sargsyan called for an end to the nonstop protests on Marshal Bagramyan Avenue, one of Yerevan's main arteries leading to the presidential palace. He also urged young leaders of the protests to get involved in the planned audit and reiterated his offer to meet them and discuss their demands.

"It is inadmissible to go over the top; the police are capable of accomplishing any task," Serzh Sargsyan warned in a thinly veiled threat to forcibly end the protests.

"For God's sake, please stop paralyzing the city center," he said. "The burden of responsibility born by all of us would only increase. Switch to more serene actions. Unblock Bagramyan Avenue."

Activists of the No To Plunder movement, which organized the protests, were not satisfied with Sargsyan's latest offer to defuse the crisis, saying that it did not meet their main demand for the decision on the tariff rise to be revoked. One of them, Vaghinak Shushanian, told that they are calling on Armenians to turn out on Marshal Baghramyan Avenue on Sunday for a vote at 18.00 local time that will determine their attitude towards the plan and further actions.

Meanwhile, the thousands of people rallying on Marshal Bagramian Avenue were in no rush to disperse and unblock the street.

Russia 'Very Closely Monitoring' Events In Yerevan

MOSCOW (RFE/RL)-Russia has called for a "legal" solution to the continuing standoff over electricity prices in Armenia and warned against a destabilization of the political situation in the South Caucasus country allied to it.

"Armenia is our closest partner," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters late on Tuesday. "We are bound by historic links with Armenia and the Armenian people."

"We are very closely monitoring what is going on there and hope the situation will be settled in the near future in strict accordance with the law and that there will be no violations of the law," Peskov said, according to the RIA Novosti agency.

Russia's ambassador to Armenia, Ivan Volynkin, also reacted on June 23 to the ongoing street protests in Yerevan against a controversial rise in electricity prices. "This situation can be settled only at a negotiating table, which is what has been repeatedly proposed by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan," Volynkin told journalists.

"We want to see a stable situation in



Yerevan and Armenia in general and are against any conflicts here. Armenia can develop only in stable conditions," he said in what appeared to be a warning addressed to scores of mostly young people demonstrating in Yerevan.

A civic group leading the protests has twice rejected Sargsyan's offers to meet with its leaders and discuss their demands. It says that the president knows their views and should simply reverse the price hike.

Unlike the United States and the European Union, the Russian officials did

not criticize the Armenian authorities for using force against protesters and some journalists on Tuesday morning.

The Kremlin has been highly critical of sustained anti-government protests in ex-Soviet states and Ukraine in particular. It has accused Western powers of encouraging and even financing "color revolutions" there to weaken Russia's presence in what it considers its "near abroad."

Some Russian state-run media and pro-Kremlin pundits have already alleged that the West has a hand in the Armenian standoff.

Protesters against power tariff hike in Armenia have no claims to Russia - A. Iskandaryan



When commenting on the fact that Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA) Company that submitted an application for a rise in electricity tariffs in Armenia is a daughter company of Russia's Inter RAO UES, political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan said that it does not necessarily mean the protesters have claims to Russia.

"Stereotypical thinking leads people to assume that if it is a Russian company, there must be an anti-Russian component. I suppose that some people can say anything and that one can always find people who show their emotions that way. Yet there is simply no background for widespread anti-Russian sentiment in Armenia," the expert said.

He invited attention to the fact that the demonstrators have appealed to the authorities, the president, rather than they "gather outside the office of Electric Networks of Armenia". Protesters also

believe that it is up to the Armenian authorities to deal with the problem of the Russian company, Iskandaryan added.

He stressed that it is a social protest, not a political one, and it was the power price hike that prompted people to take to the streets.

"It does not resemble the Ukrainian maidan. Maindan had a different, foreign political nature, but here the character of protests is domestic: it is annoyance with the economic situation. An economic stagnation has been observed in the country since 2008. The country remained in that situation for long, and there is growing annoyance with the economic scheme. Of course, it is a specific rise in prices which is a pretext, rather than a cause," the expert noted.

"In Armenia there is a culture of street political activity. Rallies have been staged regularly since 1991. A culture of achieving something through rallies does exist in Armenia. A year ago a pension reform was scrapped. Rallies against the gas price increase took place in Yerevan, and the decision on transport fare hike was suspended. People are accustomed to the fact they can take to the streets and gain their end in some cases. True, they may not gain it, either," Iskandaryan said.

It should be noted that amid numerous statements of Russian politicians, MPs and senators about some similarities with the Ukrainian maidan and intrigues of 'external forces', Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin said on June 24 that statements to the effect that the situation in Armenia was provoked from outside need to be proven. "We will carefully examine everything that preceded it, but I would not jump to conclusions," he said.

As was reported, Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA) Company earlier submitted a bid to the Public Services Regulatory Commission about a rise in electricity tariffs. The parliamentary opposition considers it unfounded and serving the interests of that company. The current night-time tariff for the population is 31.85 drams per one KWh, the daytime tariff is 41.85 drams. The bid of ENA proposed raising the tariffs to 48 and 58 drams respectively. Yet the Commission satisfied the bid of ENA only partially on June 17. The tariffs in Armenia will increase by 6.93 drams, and not by 17 drams. The Commission's decision will take force on August 1, 2015. The decision triggered non-stop protests staged by 'No to Robbery' civic initiative. The participants demand that the head of state revoke the Commission's decision, which at the same time does not suit ENA Company as well. Rally participants say that their protest is purely social by nature.

U.S., EU Concerned Over Armenia Unrest



The United States and the European Union on June 23 expressed concern at the use of force by the Armenian police against scores of people who took to the streets of Yerevan to protest against rising energy prices.

The U.S. Embassy in Armenia praised the "responsible and generally respectful behavior by both protestors and police" at the start of their standoff in the city center on Monday evening.

"However, we are concerned about reports of excessive police use of force to disperse the crowd on the morning of June 23, as well as several reports of abuse while in police custody," it said in a statement. "In addition, we are troubled by reports that journalists and their equipment were specifically targeted during the operation."

The U.S. mission went on to urge the Armenian authorities to conduct a "full and transparent investigation" into those reports.

The U.S. concerns were echoed by Dirk Lorenz, the acting head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan. "Reports about excessive use of force against a peaceful rally, as well as on violence directed against journalists are alarming," he said in a statement.

Lorenz too called for an "impartial" inquiry into the violence. "A genuine dialogue between authorities and the civil society is the only way to overcome tough and unpopular economic decisions," he added.

Russia, Armenia Discuss Energy Fees As Yerevan Protests Go On

President Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister Abrahamyan discussed on June 26 with a visiting Russian government member the increased cost of power supplies by Armenia's Russian-owned electric utility, which has sparked angry street protests in Yerevan.

It was announced after their talks with Russian Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov that a Russian-Armenian intergovernmental commission economic cooperation will organize an independent audit of the under-fire power distribution network.

Sokolov arrived in the Armenian capital on Thursday to cochair, together with Abrahamian, a regular session of the commission. His visit followed concerns expressed by Moscow in connection with the ongoing nonstop protests against a more than 17 percent rise in electricity prices in Armenia. A senior Russian diplomat on Wednesday urged the Armenian government to work out a "compromise solution" with the protesters camped out on a major Yerevan thoroughfare.

"We discussed the entire agenda of our intergovernmental commission," Sokolov told reporters on Friday after the meeting of the Russian-Armenian body.

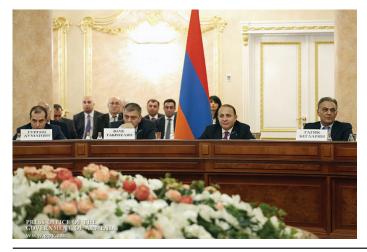
Asked whether the energy tariff issue was also on the agenda, he said: "Of course it was. We discussed all issues." He declined to comment further.

Official Armenian press releases on the commission meeting as well as Abrahamian's separate talks with Sokolov made no mention of the issue.

Later on Friday, the Armenian government's press office reported that Deputy Prime Minister Vache Gabrielyan and Energy Minister Yervand Zakharyan held a "discussion" with Sokolov that focused on "Russian-Armenian cooperation in the area of energy."

A statement by the office said they specifically discussed "the situation that has arisen around the Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA)," the national power distribution network belonging to Inter RAO, a Russian energy corporation. It gave no other details.

Sokolov met with President Sargsyan afterwards, reportedly telling him that the Russian-Armenian commission decided to initiate an audit of the ENA that will involve representatives of "all interested parties." The company's books will be inspected in a transparent manner, he said, according to a statement by





Sargsyan's office.

The statement quoted Sargsyan as also stressing the importance of a "meticulous audit" involving representatives of Armenian civil society.

Inter RAO is a successor to Russia's now defunct Unified Energy Systems conglomerate that bought the ENA in 2006. In the last few years the ENA has posted growing losses, which many in Armenia believe blame on poor management.

The company's outstanding debts totaling over \$225 million are a key reason why Armenian regulators last week raised the ENA tariffs for a third time in two years. The price hike infuriated many Armenians feeling that they are forced to pay for corruption and inefficiency within the ENA.

The Armenian press reported in the months leading up to the price hike that Inter RAO plans to sell its loss-making Armenian subsidiary. Energy Minister Zakharyan confirmed those reports last month. He also did not deny reports that the Tashir Group of Samvel Karapetyan, an Armenian-born Russian billionaire, is interested in acquiring the ENA.

Karapetyan has so far made ambiguous statements to that effect through his Yerevan-based brother Karen, a parliament deputy and former chief of President Serzh Sargsyan's staff.

Some Armenian observers have suggested that a new ENA owner might be willing to abandon the price rise and thus meet the key demand of the Yerevan protesters. Abrahamian on Thursday defended the unpopular measure.

There have also been calls in Armenia for Inter RAO to inject more cash into the ENA and restructure the company, instead of trying to sort out its financial troubles at the expense of Armenian consumers. The Russian group, which also owns Armenia's largest thermal power plant, posted \$13.4 billion in operating revenue last year.

The Russian calls for Armenian government concessions to the protesters seems to reflect fears in Moscow that the unrest could grow into the kind of popular revolt that toppled Ukraine's pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych last year. Some pro-government Russian politicians and media have alleged that Western powers orchestrated the ongoing protests to install a pro-Western regime in Yerevan. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin disputed these allegations on Wednesday.

Russian Loan To Finance More Arms Supplies To Armenia



Armenia will purchase soon more Russian-made weapons with a \$200 million loan that has been provided to it by the Russian government, it emerged on June 26.

President Serzh Sargsyan said that the disbursement of the "concessional export loan" was formalized at a meeting of a Russian-Armenian intergovernmental commission on bilateral

cooperation that took place in Yerevan earlier in the day.

Serzh Sargsyan told the Russian co-chair of the commission, Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov, that the funding will enable Armenia's armed forces to "considerably expand the assortment of modern weaponry in their arsenal." A statement by his office did not specify what type of new military equipment will be purchased for them.

Sargsyan's announcement came less than two weeks after Armenia's top military official in charge of arms procurements flew to Moscow for talks with representatives of Russia's Defense Ministry and state intermediary agency for arms exports. The Armenian Defense Ministry said the official, Alik Mirzabekyan, will discuss with them "supplies of products designed for military use."

Russia has long been the principal source of weapons delivered to Armenia. A military alliance with Moscow and membership in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) entitles Yerevan to receiving Russian-made weapons at discounted prices or even free of charge.

Armenia ranked 66th in International Business Compass 2015



Armenia is ranked 66th among 174 countries in the BDO International Business Compass 2015 index.

Other countries in the region are ranked as follows: Georgia 43rd, Turkey - 57th, Russia - 100th, Azerbaijan -65th and Iran - 163th.

Armenia's partner in the Eurasian Economic union Belarus is rated 85th, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are placed 73rd and 102nd respectively.

Switzerland tops the list, followed by Singapore and Hong Kong.

The study covers 174 countries from 6 continents. Countries with less than 150.000 inhabitants as well as Cuba, West Bank, Somalia and Western Sahara are not

included. Luxembourg is also excluded due to its special economic structure and its exceptional per capita investment flows.

The BDO International Business Compass measure the attractiveness of a country as a multi-dimensional concept in three dimensions: the economic, politicolegal and socio-cultural conditions.

The BDO International Business Compass measure the attractiveness of a country as a multi-dimensional concept in three dimensions: the economic, politicolegal and socio-cultural conditions. The appeal of a country is associated with its level of development. It is understood as a combination of economic, politico-legal and social factors.

Inter RAO UES does not confirm reports on sale of Electric Networks of Armenia

Inter RAO UES does not confirm the reports on the intention to sell the Electric Networks of Armenia, official representative of the Russian energy holding told TASS.

"We do not confirm the information on the sale of the company," he said.

Russian Kommersant daily reported earlier that the ongoing protests in Armenia against the planned electricity price hike and the promise of the authorities to nationalize the Electric Networks of Armenia could make the Inter RAO UES to sell the Company.





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1 ROOM

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- •1696.Tumanyan str., 5/4, stone bld, 1 bedroom, h 3m, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 160.000 LISD
- •1440.Northern Ave., Newly built, 3rd floor, 110 sq.m., 1 bedroom, h-3m,euro repaired, heating system, ,furnished,parking,. Price: 350.000 USD.
- •1715- Sayat Nova Ave., 5/4, 70sq.m, stone bld, h-4m, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 110.000 USD
- •1680- **Mashtots Ave.,** 5/4, 68sq.m, 1 bedroom, old repair, possibility of gas. Price: 86.000 USD. •1674. **Abovyan str.,** 2nd floor,70sq.m., 1 bedroom,
- capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 135.000
- +1698-Aram str., Newly built, 14/5, 62sq.m, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, AC, security system, parking. Price: 120,000 USD.

2 ROOMS

- +3003.Sayat-Nova str, 5/3, 105sq.m, 2bedrooms, stone building, capitally repaired. Price: Negotiable •1560.Northern Ave., Newly built, 10/3, 130 sq.m.,
- 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate
- Price: control, parking. 400.000 USD.
- +2818.Northern Newly built, 3rd floor, 120sq.m, 2 bedrooms,2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, Ac, f u r n i s h e d . Price:400.000USD
- •1156.Komitas Ave.. Hambardzumyan str. 5/3. 110sq.m, 2 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, kitchen is furnished. Price: 150.000 USD negotiable.
- built, 1st floor, 143 sq.m, 2 bedrooms, zero state, Price: 2000 USD per sq.m.
- •2300.**Northern ave**., Newly built, 6/2, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking. Price: 400.000 USD.

3 ROOMS

- +3046.Amiryan str., Newly built, 9/9, 81sq.m., without divisions. Price: Negotiable.
- +3012.Aram str, Newly built, /7th floor, 136sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking, facing to bulvar, Price:300.000 USD negotiable.
- +2998.North Ave, Newly built, 9/6, 181sq.m, 3bedrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking, Price: 700.000 USD
- +2682.Aram Str., Newly built, 13/6 187sq.m., 3 bedrooms,2 bathrooms, 2 open balconies, capitally rea-paired,heating systen, 2AC, 2 garages, view to gar-den. Price: 550.000 USD negotiable.
- •2958. Pushkin str., 5/2, 140 sq.m., stone building,4 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: Negotiable.
- •2895.Northern Ave., Newly built, 3rd floor, 300sq.m,3bedrooms, 2 bathrooms,capitally repaied, climate control, AC. Price: negotiable
- +2802.Amiryan Newly str., built,8/4, 166sq.m,3bedrooms, 2 bathrooms,capitally repaired, central heating,AC,security system. Price:320.000 USD.
- •1104.Komitas Ave., Aram Khachatryan str., 5/2, 125sq.m.,stone bld, h-2.75m.,3 bedrooms, office, 2 bathrooms, old repair, gas, garage. Price: 130.000
- •2836.Pushkin str., 4/4,5, 400sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC. Price: 460.000 USD.

•2990.North Ave., Newly built, 11th floor, 295sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price: Negotiable.

PREMISES

- •1789. Charents str. Land-1270sq.m,5 storied building, each floor-400sq.m.,basement, capitally repaired, parkings. Price:4.000.000 USD negotiable *1598.Komitas, Nairy Zaryan str., 1000 sq.m., working restaurant,1st line, capitally repaired. Price:
- •1603.Northern Ave., Ground floor of the building, 160 sq.m.,zero level, window glasses. Price: 2.600.000 ÚSD.
- •2035.Tumanyan str., Ground floor of the building, 220sq.m.,1st line, facade-55m.,capitally repaired, h-5m., cellar. Price: Negotiabel
- •2013.Tumanyan str., Ground floor of the building, 265sq.m.,1st line, capitally repaired, heating system, cellar. Price: 1.300.000\$ negotiable
- ◆2012.**Mashtots Ave.,** 5/1,2, 140sq.m.,window glasses, capitally repaired, AC. Price: 1.100.000\$ negotiable
- •2155.Mashtots ave., 3storied building, 540sq.m., window glasses,parking. Price:3.600.000 USD floor-180sq.m, each
 - +2020.Hr. Kochar str., Land-300sq.m,1st_line, 4storied buildina. 1080sq.m.,each floor-270sq.m, h-3.6m,without divisions, parkings, 3 access. Price:1.400.000 USD negotiable
 - +1986.Cascade, Land 3storied 1000sq.m. building 1200 sq.m., unfinished, Price:1.000.000 USD.
 - +2167.Sayat Nova str., newly built, 38sq. m, capitally repaired. Price: 200.000 USD
- +2175.Tumanyan str, Ground and 1st floorof the building, 600sq.m, ground floor300sq.m, 1st floor-220sq,m, basement-80sq.m, - 1st line, zero level, 2 entrances, facade-15m, 4 window glasses, capitally reapired, heating system, AC, Price: 3500 USD per reapired, heating system, AC,
- +2172. Isahakyan str, 92sq.m, 1st line, 7 degrees above zero level, facade-9m, 2 window glasses, h-3.20m, 2 halls, cabinet, bathroom, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 450,000 USD

LANDS

- +2122. Davitashen, 1800 sq.m., water, gas, electricity, possible to sell separately 600 sq.m., and 1200 sq.m. Price: 150 USD per sq.m.
- +2121 Demirchyan str., . 1338 sq.m.,building permits. Price: 2million USD.
- ◆2013.Cascade. 1000 sq.m. building permits, first line, gas, water and electricity possibilities. Price 460 000LISD
- •1402.Hr. Kochar Str., 1100 sq. m.,facade -25 m. Price negotiable.
- •2090.Lori region, close to Stepanavan, Gyargyar village, 6 hectares, forest 2 hectare has building permits, 3 water source, electricity. Price: 100.000USD. •2406.Avan, Mher Mkrtchyan block, 1000 sq.m.,
- electricity, gas, water, the district is inhabited. Price: 30USD per sq.m
- +2310.Monument, Babayan str. 1000 sq. m, facade-25m, privatized, Price:350 USD negotiable
 •2107. Monument, 2400sq.m, building permits, building project. Price: 400 USD per sq.m.
- •2413.Ashtarak roadway, 1000sq.m, building permits, building project. Price: Negotiable •2414 Demirchyan str. land-750sq.m., building permits. Price:750.000 USD.

PRIVATE HOUSES

- •3739.Nork Marash Land- 2000sq.m, two separate houses, total bld-600sq.m,capitally repaired, swimming pool, sauna, guard house. 2 car parking, garden. Price: 950.000 USD
- •3348.Blur, Barbyus str. Land 800 sq.m, 3 storied bld.-700 sq.m, 4bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control. Price: 1.2 million USD
- •3146. Aygestan, Land-500 sq.m., 5 storied bld-765 sq.m.,each floor-180 sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, hjeating system,elevator. Price: 2.300.000 USD.
- •3583.Nork-Marash, Land-1100sq.m,2 storied bld-520sa.m.6 bedrooms.5 bathrooms, capitally repaired,heating system, AC, swimming pool, garden. Price:1.350.000 USD.
- •3432. Aygedzor, Land 1021 sq m ,3 storied bld.-501 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, boiler room garden, swimming pool, sauna, garage, security system. Price:1.000.000 USD
- •3576.Avan, Tsarav Akhbyur /near Botanical garden/, Land-560sq.m., 4 storied building-560sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4bathrooms, a kitchen, office, capitally repaired, heating system, swimming pool, garden, 2 car parking. Price: 850.000 USD
- •3606.**Avan,** Tsarav Akhbyur/near Botanical garden/. Land-1000sq.m.,3 storied building-750sq.m.,6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitally repaired, heating system swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking. Price-1.500.000 USD •3574.Blur, Land-779sq.m.,2 storied building-720sq.m.,4 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, heating system, sauna swimming pool, garden. Price: 2.000.000 USD
- •3590 Blur, Barbyus str., Land-450 sa.m., 4 storied building-470sq.m.,3bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: 680.000 USD
- •3651.Blur, Barbyus str., Land-900sq.m.,5 storied building-800sq.m.,4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price:1.700.000 USD.
- •3401.**Antarayin str,** Newly built, land-700sq.m, 3 storied bld-690sq.m, 5 bedrooms, capitally repaired. Price: 1.300.000 USD
- •3712 Cascade Newly built, land-450sq.m, 4 storied bld-600sq.m, zero state. Price: 550.000 USD

NEWLY BUILT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

- •74. Cascade, Verin Antaravin, 136-315 sa m., walls plastered, electricity, water, gas, euro windows,no exploitation fees. Price:1200 USD per sq.m, parking -15.000 USD
- •107.Monument, Verin Antarayin. inhabited, 8 floors, gas, windows, street view -1000 USD per sq.m., city looking -1500 USD per sq.m., parking - 4 million USD preliminary.
 •87.Sayat-Nova str., 21 floors, 3 bedrooms -188
- sq.m., 199 sq.m., Price 1900 USD per sq.m., 2 bedrooms have a beautiful sight - 117 sq.m., 120 sq.m., 124 sq.m., Price: 1700 USD per sq.m., climate con-
- •93. Kievyan str., Given to the operation in October 2011, 16 floors, walls plastered, windows, exterior doors, h -3, 15 m, gas,parking. Price: 1500-1600USD per sq.m,parking-12 000 USD. Possible with mortgage, for 13 years term.
- •94.**Masiv.** 3floors,8 flats,each flat has 3 bed-
- rooms, 210 sq.m., parking. Price: negotiable.
 •130.**Antarayin str.,** 34 flats, 110-275 sq.m., 4
 penthouses-200-275sq.m,available sevices-car wash, cleaning service, garbage removal service, parking. Price: Negotiable
- •131.Busand str., commercial, office and residential areas, penthouse, available sevices-car wash, cleaning service, garbage removal service, parking. Price: Negotiable



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1 ROOM

+2037.Baghramyan str., 5/2, 60sqm, 1 bedroom, euro repaired, gas, heating system, AC, modern furnished, equipped. Price:negotiable
•2189. Vardanants str., Newly built, 24/12, 90 sqm,

1 bedroom, capitally repaired, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD.

•2099.Sayat-Nova Ave., 12/6, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired,gas, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price:600 USD.

•1972.Northern ave., 8/4, 80sq.m.,1bedrrom, 2

bathrooms, open kitchen, capitally repaired, climate Price: 1200 USD

*2171.**Tumanyan str.**, Newly built, 5th floor, 94 sq.m., 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, capitally repaired, central heating, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD

•2367 Northern ave., Newly built, 9th flloor, 98 sq.m., capitally repaired, heating system, furnished equipped. Price: Negotiable.

2 ROOMS

+2302 North Ave, Newly built, 11/4, 137sq.m, 2bedrooms, 2bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2000 USD

Price: 2000 GGL North Ave., Newly built 16/15 173sq.m., 2bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price:5000 USD
•2290 **Bayron str.**, Newly built, /5th floor, 220sq.m,

2bedrooms, study, open kitchen, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, furnished, parking. Price: 4000 USD

•1780. Amiryan str, Newly built, /13th floor, 82 sq.m, 2 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system,

AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 1700 USD negotiable.

•942.**Teryan str.** 4/3, 130 sq.m.,2 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnishred, equipped. Price: 1500 USD.

•1950.Buzand/Mashtots area. Newly built,8th floor, 163 sq.m.,2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired,climate control furnished, open balcony. Price: 2500 USD.

•1681.Northern Ave., Newly built,6/2,130 sq.m.,2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating

system, AC,parking. Price: 2000 USD.

1535. Busand str., Newly built, 7/4, 82sq.m,2bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable.

2089. Northern ave., Newly built,8/6,120sq.m.,2

bedrooms,2 bathrooms, capitally reapired, climate control, furnished, equipped. Price: 2500 USD •1738. Amiryan str., 8/8, 159sq.m.,2 bedrooms, 2

bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, parking. Price: Negotiable

•1951. Busand str., Newly built, 13th floor,

122sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control. Price: 2500 USD

•1406.**Sayat Nova ave.,** 7/3, 110sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally reapired, heating system, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable

+2109.Northern ave., Newly built,10/4, 137sq.m. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, central heating, furnished, equipped, parking. Price: 2000 USD

• *2243.**Buzand str,** Newly built, 17/4, 125sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 2000 USD • **Amiryan str,** Newly built, 14/5, 120sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, partly furnished. Price 2000 USD

3 ROOMS AND MORE

+2347 Teryan str. Newly built, 10/8, 320sq.m, 3bedrooms, office, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price: Negotiable

•2277.Kievyan str. duplex, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, with or without furniture Price: Negotiable

+2310 Busand str., Newly built, 190sq.m, 3bedrooms, 3bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2500 USD

 2316 Northern Ave, Newly built,6th floor, 227sq.m.,4bedrooms, 2bathrooms, guest toilet, capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2500 USD

 2303 Hanrapetutyan str Newly built, 9/5, *2303 Hanrapetutyan str Newly built, 9/5, 165sq.m, 3bedrooms, 1bathroom, 1 guest toilet. captially repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2000 USD *2286.Sose str, Newly built, 12/2, 154sq.m, 3bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally reapired, furnished, equipped. Price: 1700 USD *2257.Northern Ave., Newly built, 17/16, 160

sq.m.,3 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system,

AC, parking. Price: Negotiable
•2021.**Teryan Str.,** Newly built,9/8,9, 245 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms,capitally repaired, heating system, furnished. Preliminary price: 3500 USD. •2005. Northern Ave., Newly built,8/8, 130 sq.m, 3

bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnished, parking. Price: 2200 USD. •1723. Northern Ave., Newly built,8/4., 170 sq.m 3

repaired, furnished, equipped. Price: 2000 USD.

1981. Vardanants Str., Newly built, 14/14, 140 sq.
m,3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, 3 open baconies, furnished, equipped,parking. Price: 2000 USD.

•1793.**Teryan str.**, Newly built, 8th floor, 260 sq.m.,3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, climat control, parking, unfurnished (possible to furnish), Price: 3500 USD.
•1720.**Amiryan str.**, Newly built, 16/10, 179 sq.m, 3

bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, cellar- 25sq.m, with or without furniture,

heating, AC, cellar-25sq.m, with or without terriffere, parking, Price 3000 USD negotiable

•2195.Northern ave.,
Newly built, 3rd floor,
300sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitally repaired,climate control, AC, Price:5000 USD parking.

•2261.Hin Yerevantsi, /North Avenue/, Newly built, 10/3, 124sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped, parking. Price:

•2084.Tumanyan str., 4th floor, 200sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price:5000 USD repaired, climate control, parking. Price:5000 USD •2252.Northern ave, 7th floor, 350 sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, open balconies, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price Negotiable.

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PRIVATE HOUSES

Baghramyan str., Land-200sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m.,4 bedrooms, 3bathrooms,capitally repaired, furnished. Price: 3000 USD

Aygedzor, Land-1000sq.m, 2 storied bld-240sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathroosm,capitally repaired, furnished. Price:2000 USD

•1337 **Daytashen** Land-406sq.m,3 storied bld-306sq.m, 4bedrooms, 2bathrooms, capitally 306sq.m, 4bedrooms, 2bathroo repaired, furnished. Price:3900 USD

•1323.Monument, Babayan str, Land-400sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m, 4bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired. Price: Negotiable

◆1248. Aygedzor, Land - 1021 sq m ,3 storied bld. - 501 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, sauna, boiler room garden, swimming pool, garage, alarming system, security system. Price: 8000 USD.

•999.**Aygedzor,** Land -1000 sqm, basement + 2 floors- 310 sqm, capitally repaired, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, newly furnished, equipped, sauna, swimming-pool. Starting Price: 5000 USD.

•1094.Noy block, Land-450sqm, 2 storied building - 220sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool, garden. Price: 2000USD.

•1195.Nork, Armenakyan str., Land - 2000 sq.m,

4 storied bld.-520 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4bathrooms,

capitally repaired, heating system, sauna, gym, furnished, swimming-pool, garden. Price: 4.000 USD neaotiable.

negoriable.

1142.**Djrvej**, Bagrevand community. Land-1000 sq.m., 3 storied bld.-700 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, pantry, playing room, capitally repaired, no furniture/ can be furnished, if necessary/garage for 2 cars. Price: 4 000 USD.

1293.Nork-Marash, Land-1100sq.m,2 storied bld-520 sq.m, 6 bedrooms,5 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, swimming pool, garden.Price7.000 USD

•327. **Nork-Marash,** Land-500sq.m.,4 storied building-600 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking. Price-4000 USD

◆1306. **Tsarav Akhbyur** /near Botanical garden/, Land-1000sq.m., 3 storied building-750sq.m., 6 bed-rooms, 5 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitally repaired, heating system swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking, with or without furniture. Price:6000-8000 USD negotiable

•1288. **Tsarav Akhbyur** /near Botanical garden/, Land-560sq.m., 4 storied building-560 sq.m., 4 bedrepaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool,garden, 2 car parking. Price: 5000 USD +1197. Blur, Land-779sq.m.,2 storied building-

720sq.m.,4 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, heating system, sauna swimming pool, garden. Price:8000 USD

*1312. **Blur, Barbyus str.,** Land-450sq.m., 4 storied building-470sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: Negotiable

17. Blur, Barbyus str., Land-900sq.m.,5 storied building-800sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: Negotiable.

◆1323.Monument, Babayan str, Land - 400 sq.m, 3 storied bld-300sq.m, each floor-100sq.m, 4 bed-rooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating sys-tem, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable

PREMISES

2049.**Teryan str,** ground floor+basemnet, 1st line, 200sq.m, repaired. Price: 6.000 USD •1693.Malatia-Sebastia 4 storied building,

1200sq.m, each floor-300sq.m, 2 separate entrances, climate control, 2 elevators, basement, entrances, climate control, 2 elevators, basement, parking. Price: 15USD per sq.m.

•1526.**Byuzand str.**, 5/semi-basement, 170 sqm.,

4-5 degrees below zero level, window glasses, cellar - 50 sq.m.,6 rooms, the largest is 30 sq.m., 2 entrances, 2 lavatories. Price 2000 USD per month, neaotiable.

*1408.**Zarobyan str.**, /parallel to Baghramyan str./, 2 storied building,600 sqm. ground floor- hall and kitchen,1st floor 5 rooms, bathroom, open balcony, capitally repaired, gas, heating system,park-

cony, capitally repaired, gas, heating system,parking. Price: Negotiable.

*1462.**Teryan str.**, 3 storied building, 800 sq.m., capitally repaired, AC, parking, Price: 10.000 USD.

*1945.**Mashtots Ave.**, 5/1,2, 140sq.m., window glasses, capitally repaired, AC. Price: 8000 USD.

*1943.**Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 265sq.m.,1st line, capitally repaired, heating system, cellar. Price: 7000 USD.

•1868.**Tumanyan str.,** Ground floor of the building, 220sq.m.,1st line, facade-55m.,capitally repaired, h-5m., cellar. Price: 15.000 USD.

•2087.Northern ave., Ground floor of the building, 100sq.m,1st line, zero level, capitally repaired,

window glasses. Price: Negotiable.

•2033.Abovyan str, 388sq,m, Ground floor of the building, 3 degrees above zero level, windoq glasses, h-3m.,basement-235sq.m, capitally repaired, heating system, AC. Price: 15.000 USD •2031.Vardanants str, 500sq.m, ground floor of the building, 2 entrances, facade-20m, window glasses, without divisions, ,basement-250sq.m, Price:8000 USD

+2027.Sayat Nova str, 95sq.m, ground floor of the building, 2 entrances, 7 degrees above zero level, 4 window glasses, capitally repaired. Price: 4.000 USD 10 www.nt.am SOCIETY

Gyumri Massacre Case 'Transferred To Armenian Jurisdiction'

Russia has agreed to allow Armenian law-enforcement authorities to prosecute a Russian soldier who has confessed to murdering the seven members of an Armenian family in Gyumri last January, President Serzh Sargsyan announced on June 26.

Sargsyan was cited by his press office as revealing a Russian "decision to transfer the murder case to the jurisdiction of Armenia's Investigative Committee" at a meeting with Russia's visiting Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov.He also spoke of its "further judicial investigation by a relevant Armenian body."

A statement by the office did not clarify whether this means that the soldier, Valery Permyakov, will be extradited to Armenian investigators or at least be tried by an Armenian court.

The Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed source in Russia's Office of the Prosecutor-General as only confirming that "the indictment in the Permyakov case will be supported by the prosecutor's office of Armenia." It did not elaborate.

Permyakov has been kept under arrest at the Gyumri headquarters of the Russian military base in Armenia ever since being arrested hours after a local couple, their daughter, son, daughter-in-law and 2-year-old granddaughter were found dead in their home on January 12. The seventh member of the Avetisyan family, a 6-month-old baby boy, died of his stab injuries a week later.

Permyakov admitted murdering them during his separate interrogations by Russian and Armenian law-enforcement officials. His motives remain unclear.

Russian authorities made clear immediately after the shock massacre that Permyakov will not be extradited to Armenia. This caused outrage in Armenia, with many fearing a Russian cover-up of the case. Thousands of people demonstrated in Gyumri on January 14-15 to demand Permyakov's handover to the Armenian side. Some of them clashed with riot police near the local Russian consulate in Armenia's second largest city.



The unprecedented protests forced Armenia's Prosecutor-General Gevorg Kostanian to formally ask his Russian counterpart Yuri Chayka to ensure that the high-profile case is transferred to Armenian jurisdiction. Still, even after Kostanian's letter to Chayka Russian officials insisted that the detained soldier will be tried by a Russian military court.

Sargsyan's announcement of what looks like a Russian U-turn on the issue came amid continuing street protests in Yerevan against electricity price hikes initiated by Armenia's Russian-owned power distribution network.

Amnesty International urges Armenian authorities to investigate alleged police abuses

The Armenian authorities must urgently ensure an impartial, independent and thorough investigation into allegations that police used excessive force - including dousing people with water cannon - to disperse a mainly peaceful demonstration before arresting more than 200 protesters on the streets of the capital Yerevan early this morning, Amnesty International said.

Yerevan police said they arrested 237 people after a crowd marched away from round-the-clock protests in a central square towards the presidential headquarters. Since 19 June, thousands of people have taken part in the demonstrations against rising electricity prices in Yerevan and elsewhere, including the town of Gyumri where 12 others were arrested.

"For the Armenian authorities to disperse what was up until then a peaceful demonstration is a heavy-handed tactic that must be avoided to protect the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Video footage showing high-powered jets from water cannon flinging peaceful protesters to the ground is a cause for concern," said Denis Krivosheev, Deputy Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

"It is our understanding that the Armenian authorities are investigating the protesters for 'hooliganism', rather than the heavy-handed police response. They must not do this at the expense of an impartial and independent investigation into the police's alleged use of excessive force, including water cannon,



against demonstrators who may have obstructed traffic but were peaceful. Any security forces found responsible of violations must be disciplined or prosecuted."

In a statement, police said that stones were thrown and that at least seven protesters and 11 police officials were injured. No serious injuries were reported.

Police and an eyewitness also confirmed that journalists were targeted as well as peaceful protesters. Despite the journalists showing press credentials, police confiscated and damaged video equipment.

"The allegations that police specifically targeted journalists have worrying implications for freedom of expression, and must also be independently investigated," said Denis Krivosheev.

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A Personal Tribute on the Passing of Kirk Kerkorian



By Harut Sassounian

Publisher, The California Courier

Since his passing on June 15, thousands of journalists have highlighted Kirk Kerkorian's amazing business accomplishments and substantial charitable contributions. However, these journalists had never met this great man, as he rarely gave interviews to the media.

Having worked with Mr. Kerkorian

for almost three decades as Senior Vice President of The Lincy Foundation and President of the United Armenian Fund, I would like to offer a personal tribute about this compassionate Armenian-American and wonderful human being.

I remember vividly the first time I met Mr. Kerkorian. It was at a Beverly Hills restaurant in the mid 1980's during a

small gathering of wealthy Armenians who supported Gov. George Deukmejian's reelection. I was there as editor of The California Courier newspaper. When I walked over to introduce myself, Mr. Kerkorian recognized me right away and told me that he was a regular reader of my weekly columns. I was greatly surprised and flattered....

The next time I met Mr. Kerkorian was in his Beverly Hills office on November 1, 1989, eleven months after the devastating earthquake in Armenia. We discussed the possibility of forming a coalition of seven major Armenian-American organizations, including The Lincy Foundation, to airlift humanitarian aid to Armenia. Mr. Kerkorian offered to pay the full cost of transportation and went on to generously pledge to cover not only the cost of one airlift, but "all future airlifts as long as

Armenia needed assistance." Within a few days, the United Armenian Fund was born which successfully delivered over the next 25 years \$700 million of relief supplies to Armenia and Artsakh, on board 158 airlifts and 2,250 sea containers

In 1998, Mr. Kerkorian invited me to travel with him to Armenia, his first trip during which he pledged to Pres. Kocharian to allocate \$100 million (raising it later to \$242 million) to build or renovate tunnels, bridges and dozens of schools throughout Armenia and one



in Artsakh; hundreds of miles of highways, roads and streets; 34 cultural institutions and museums; 3,700 apartments in the earthquake zone; and \$20 million of loans to small businesses. These projects not only dramatically improved Armenia's infrastructure, but also provided much needed employment to over 20,000 workers. Mr. Kerkorian asked me to supervise these projects, in my capacity as Senior Vice President of The Lincy Foundation.

Over the years, Mr. Kerkorian's Lincy Foundation contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to Armenians worldwide, including \$14 million to provide heating oil for Armenia's freezing population during the harsh winter of 1993, \$4.5 million in 2006 to all 28 Armenian schools in Lebanon, and millions of dollars to Hayastan All-Armenia Fund's projects in Artsakh. It

is estimated that from 1989 to 2011, The Lincy Foundation contributed over \$1 billion, split equally between Armenian and non-Armenian charities.

In 2011, when The Lincy Foundation closed its doors, unfounded and false rumors began circulating about the supposed reasons for its closure. The fact is that Mr. Kerkorian had planned all along that at a certain advanced age he would no longer deal with the deluge of daily requests for funding from around the world and distribute the bulk of his wealth after his

passing

I would like to conclude by mentioning some of the likes and dislikes of this remarkable Armenian-American:

- Mr. Kerkorian detested the divisions among Armenians. It upset him to no end that Armenians could not get along with each other. He often said: "Why can't they unite and march in the same direction?" He was pleased to see seven major Armenian-American organizations working together

under the umbrella of the United Armenian Fund.

-He cared deeply about the destitute condition of the people in Armenia and was constantly worried about emigration. He sought to create jobs so Armenians won't have to leave their homeland.

- He hated the limelight and never lent his name to any building or institution.
- He was extremely wealthy, yet lived very modestly and spoke gently and politely. He preferred that people address him as Kirk rather than Mr. Kerkorian.

Finally, no one had to prompt Kirk to donate money to worthy causes. He often volunteered to make large contributions without being asked.

The Armenian nation and the world owe him a great debt of gratitude.

European Court reiterates liberation of Lachin was vital: Armenian FM

An interview with Aravot daily Armenian Foreign Minister speaks about the European Court rulings on Chiragov vs. Armenia and Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan cases and referred to their possible impact on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Question: Mr. Minister, the first question has somewhat general nature. What is the opinion of the Republic of Armenia on the European Court of Human Rights?

Edward Nalbandian: Armenia highly values the role of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the effective protection of the human rights of the 800 million people of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Armenia has always supported the processes and reforms aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and full implementation of the activities of the ECHR.

Question: Ever since the publication of the Chiragov case by the ECHR, Azerbaijan tries to manipulate it, to interpret it in its own arbitrary version, in particular claiming that the Court blamed Armenia for the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories. Is that the case?

Edward Nalbandian: As for the interpretations of Azerbaijan as if the ECHR judgment on the Chiragov vs. Armenia case allegedly refers to the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories by Armenia, it should be stressed that the Judgment of the Court does not contain any such assertion.

Furthermore, in the 168th paragraph of the case the Court reiterated its principled position that this Judgment applies only to the protection of the rights pertaining to the European Convention on Human Rights, and nothing more. As it is mentioned in the case the Judgment refers to the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights on the protection of property, respect for

private and family life and effective remedy.

Question: In your comment just after the Judgment was issued you said that the issues related to the right of the refugees and displaced persons to return are integral part of the negotiation process, they can be settled as a result of the comprehensive resolution of the issue. Can the ECHR's Judgment have an impact on the negotiation process?

Edward Nalbandian: The decision of the Grand Chamber of the ECHR on the admissibility of the case notes that it may be reasonable for applicants to wait for the outcome of political processes such as peace talks and negotiations which, in these circumstances, may offer the only realistic hope of obtaining a solution. At the same time the decision finds that irrespective of the ongoing negotiation process the individuals have the right to pursue the protection of their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Azerbaijan notorious of its violations of the human rights does not shay away to exploit for its political calculations the Judgment of one of the most prominent institutions on the human rights protection. Once again Baku tries to present the issues related to the protection of human rights, including the rights of refugees, in its own arbitrary interpretative manner, thus falsifying the whole essence of the Case. The Judgment of the ECHR on the Chiragov case pertains to an individual court case, to the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and cannot have any impact on the negotiation process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution.

Question: Does the Judgment any-how touch the circumstances that made the applicants leave their homes?

Edward Nalbandian: To the observation of the Armenian side that



Nagorno-Karabakh has exercised its right to self-defense, in the paragraph 197 of the Judgment the Court takes note of the claims that the district of Lachin was of military strategic importance and that there was a need to deliver food, medicine and other supplies into Nagorno-Karabakh. In fact the Court takes note that under the conditions of the Azerbaijani aggression the liberation of Lachin had a vital importance for the survival of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh ensuring the access of its population to the essential supplies.

Question: What was the reaction from Baku on the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case?

Edward Nalbandian: You are right, on the same day of the Chiragov's case Judgment, the Court adopted another Judgment protecting the rights of Mr.Sargsyan who was forcefully displaced by Azerbaijan from the Gulistan village of the Shahumyan region. In both cases the Judgments of the Court are almost symmetrical. In both Cases the Court has registered the violation of the same rights of the Convention. It is noteworthy that Baku tries to circumvent any mentioning of the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case.

It should be noted that this is not the first time that the Court makes Judgments on the protection of the rights of the displaced persons. As it is mentioned in the 129th paragraph, the Court examined for the first time the rights of

displaced persons in 1996 and later on has had a number of similar cases where it in accordance to the European Convention protected the rights of displaced persons.

Question: Are there any formulations in the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case which, as you mentioned, make Azerbaijan to refrain from mentioning about this Judgment of the Court?

Edward Nalbandian: The 32nd paragraph of the Sargsyan vs. Azerbaijan case notes that in April-May 1991 the USSR Internal Forces and the specialpurpose militia units (the OMON) of the Azerbaijan SSR launched a military operation with the stated purpose of so called passport checking. However, that was only the pretext to expel the Armenian population of a number of villages in the Shahumyan region, forcing them to leave their homes and flee to Nagorno-Karabakh or Armenia. The expulsions were accompanied by arrests and violence towards the civilian population. In 1992, when the conflict escalated into a full-scale war, Shahumyan region came under attack by Azerbaijani forces. The Armenians in other regions faced the same fate. The ECHR confirms that Azerbaijan exercised violence and expelled the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. In the 216th paragraph of the Case the Court observes again that the applicant is one of the hundreds of thousands of Armenians who fled during the conflict leaving property and home behind. Getting familiar with the materials of the Case it becomes clear why Azerbaijan stays silent about this Judgment.

Question: Is it possible to consider the Judgments of the ECHR as interference in the conflict resolution?

Edward Nalbandian: While examining the issues within the Court's jurisdiction the Court notes in the 216th paragraph of the Sargsyan case that it is the responsibility of the parties to find a political settlement to the conflict. In other words the Court itself underscores

that its Judgment is not related either to the settlement of the conflict or to any of its elements and hence once again refutes Azerbaijani falsifications. The Court goes on to state that the comprehensive solutions to such questions as the return of refugees to their former places of residence, or payment of compensation can only be achieved through a peace agreement.

In the paragraph 236 of the Case the Court underlines the importance of the peace process in the framework of the Minsk Group Co-chairs and observes that the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence is one of the elements contained in the Madrid Basic Principles which have been elaborated in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and form the basis of the peace negotiation. Here again the ECHR reiterates that its Judgment pertains neither to the conflict resolution nor to its elements, including the right to return of refugees and internally displaced persons, which should find their solution within the only internationally mandated framework of the conflict resolution - the Co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group.

That the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process runs within the framework of the Minsk Group Co-chairs and has nothing to do with the mentioned Judgments of the ECHR has been once again confirmed on June 22nd in Strasbourg during the Summer Session of the PACE by Igor Crnadak, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Referring to the Chiragov and others vs. Armenia and Sargsyan vs. Azerbaiajn cases he said that the Committee of Ministers monitors the execution of the judgments. At the same time he stressed that the mediation for the settlement of the conflict is done by the OSCE Minsk Group, and the peaceful settlement was a joint commitment by Armenia and Azerbaijan upon accession to the Council of Europe.

However, even after the unequivocal statement of the Chairman of the

Committee of the Ministers, Azerbaijan continues to boast that allegedly the Judgment of the Court pertains to the conflict resolution.

Question: What Azerbaijan strives to achieve by such policy?

Edward Nalbandian: The manipulation of the Judgment of the ECHR can harm the efforts of the Minsk Group Cochairs aimed at the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. By this Azerbaijan again tries to shift the negotiation process of the conflict settlement to other formats, mislead the international community, and undermine the efforts of the Co-chair countries.

Based on its own arbitrary interpretation of the Judgment of the ECHR Azerbaijan already makes statements alleging that the withdrawal of the armed forces will ensure conditions conducive to the return of the refugees and that this issues should in no way be considered as a compromise. Therefore, Azerbaijan by its arbitrary and selective interpretations once again opposes the proposals contained in the five well-known statements of the leaders of the Co-chair countries. Baku forgets that the Co-chairs consider these elements as an integrated whole as any attempt to select some elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution. This is another evidence that Azerbaijan is not ready for the conflict settlement based on the norms and principles of the international law and elements proposed by the heads of the Co-chair countries in their statements at L'Aquila, Muskoka, Deauville, Los Cabos and Enniskillen. This attitude of Azerbaijan does not allow reaching a comprehensive settlement, which would also solve the issues of the refugees and displaced persons.

In the absence of any grounds to justify its non-constructive approach opposing the Co-chairs Azerbaijan resorts to falsifications as the last available possibility under its disposal. The exploitation of the ECHR Judgment on the Chiragov case is just the last evidence of this attitude.

Lebanese-Armenian designer founds Beirut's first free fashion school

Creative Space Beirut (CSB), Lebanon's first free fashion school, was founded by Lebanese-Armenian fashion designer Sarah Hermez, Al-Monitor reports.

The school is inconspicuously housed in a run-of-the-mill, weathered apartment building tucked in a corner of the raucous neighborhood of Mar Mikhael - the capital's capital of cool, generously lined with characterful bars and eateries, home to many an engaging art and design studio. The ambitious CSB, founded in 2011, operates out of an average-sized flat, its spatial modesty belying the bountiful tutelage it offers.

A nonprofit, CSB runs a three-year program catering to students from underprivileged backgrounds. It relies primarily on the generosity of donors for sustainability and it admits only four new students a year, choosing to offer a compact cohort a fulfilling experience rather than overreaching and providing more students with less.

"Design education has become institutionalized, and more about how much money you have than talent," said the initiative's founder, 29-year-old Kuwait bred, Lebanese-Armenian fashion designer Sarah Hermez. "Back in the day, designers would go work under others and build their way up, but today without a degree it's impossible to get a job. We're trying to provide equal opportunities to people who don't have access to the elitist world of design."

A product of the unconventional academic coupling of fashion design and media/cultural studies at the New School's Parsons School of Design and the New School's Eugene Lang College for Liberal Arts in New York, Hermez graduated wanting to do more than "fashion for fashion's sake."

Her desire to merge her zeal for social work with her love for fashion motivated her to move back to her native Lebanon. "I didn't know what I wanted to do," she said, "but I knew there was so much work to be done here." She worked in the textile



department of a boutique furniture store, taught preschool to Palestinian refugees and explored other opportunities within the very different worlds of NGO work and design, but nothing fit quite right.

Then, during a visit to New York, a conversation with her former professor, Lebanese-American designer Caroline Shlala-Simonelli, sparked what Hermez called "the American light bulb moment - that 'aha' moment Oprah talks about." After listening to Hermez articulate the desire to marry her passions, and her frustration with not knowing how to do so, Simonelli suggested she start her own, free school. She even offered to help her do it.

Luckily, Hermez and her fledgling initiative were extended a number of supportive hands. A friend from Donna Karan in NY donated \$100,000 worth of fabric for the future students to work with. "We had fabric and a professor but we needed a school," she recalled. "It was my job to make that happen."

Hermez hopes to eventually grow CSB into a school for all manners of design, not just fashion, believing that marginalized communities can greatly benefit from the problem-solving skills the discipline imparts.

U.S. consular services to be retored by next week

U.S. Embassy Yerevan expects to be able to restore full visa services by next week thanks to the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs' hard work to resolve the technical issues that affected consular systems worldwide. Due to the backlog of pending visa cases caused by these technical issues, we remain unable to print visas within the usual 2-3 business

Non-Immigrant Visa **Applicants** (Tourists, Businesspeople, Students, etc.):

If you scheduled an appointment and were informed that your appointment was cancelled by the Consular Section, please call +374 60 27 0113 to reschedule your interview.

If you were interviewed, your visa was approved, and the Consular Section has your passport, you can pick up your passport and visa at the U.S. Embassy:

- Monday, June 29 from 4:00 5:20 PM
- Tuesday, June 30 from 2:00 3:00 PM
- Wednesday, July 1 from 4:00 5:20 PM
- Any work day afterwards from 5:00-5:20 PM. (Please note that Friday, July 3 is an Embassy holiday.)

If you were interviewed, your visa was approved, and you have your passport, the passport may be dropped off at the Embassy beginning Monday, June 29th. Your passport and visa will be available for pick-up one calendar week from the day the passport is dropped off, unless it is a holiday or weekend, in which case the passport and visa will be available for pickup on the next working day after a calendar week has passed.



If you were interviewed, your case required additional administrative processing, and your case number has been posted on our website, you may return your passport to us beginning Monday, June 29th. Your passport and visa will be available for pick up one calendar week from the day the passport is dropped off unless it is a holiday or weekend in which case the passport and visa will be available on the next working day after a calendar week has passed.

Fuller Center for Housing Armenia celebrates 400th home milestone

The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia team and the Global Builders volunteer team from the U.S., led by Cynthia Reimers Erickson, celebrated the 400th home milestone in Lejan village of Lori Region.

It's the call of blood and the will of helping others that brings Cynthia Erickson to Armenia already 10 years; and she comes not alone, but with teams of volunteers who do tremendous work in short time building homes for Armenian families in need of decent housing.

The day was of triple celebration; the 400th home milestone construction became more noteworthy with the 10th year celebration of the dedicated veteran team leader, Cynthia Reimers Erickson and a devoted, selfless volunteer Charles Takesian - 10 years with Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, 10 years of dedicated and selfless service to help the dream of having a decent home of the families in need come true.

"I am very happy to be working with the Fuller Center Armenia all these years. They have dedicated and extremely com-







petent staff who have generous hearts and are devoted to helping their fellow Armenians be successful in Armenia. It is a pleasure for me to bring a team of Americans to Armenia to work with these selfless folks and contribute to the completion of a suitable home for a family. Armenia is in my blood and, for me, this is the best way I can honor the memory of

grandparents my and their family members who were deprived of their lives and their homeland - by helping others gain home and strengthen their homeland," said Cynthia Reimers Erickson.

Many families

have felt the constructive force of Cynthia Erickson's team. This time the Margaryans from Lejan Vilage of Lori Region were among the happy ones, who have been the eyewitness of the unreal seeming change of their house since June 15.

The Margaryans lost their house during the 1988 earthquake and since then they have been living in a temporary shelter (domik).

"Each time I see the Armenian families becoming homeowners it fills me with special joy and sense of pride. Today it's the 400th times I am the eyewitness of such happiness. I hope that we will still build many more homes with the help of our friend, Cynthia, who helped us in our mission throughout her 10 years of devotion, her team and many other volunteers who come to Armenia to help build homes," said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia President Ashot Yeghiazaryan.



State Department Slams Turkey In Annual Human Rights Report



WASHINGTON

An annual US human rights report on Turkey has slammed a series of violations over the past year, focusing particularly on the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

"The judiciary and law enforcement agencies were politicized, the government reassigned thousands of police and prosecutors in response to an anti-corruption investigation, the government closed the investigation and destroyed evidence," the report presented by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on June 25 stated.

It cited Turkey's most significant human rights problems in 2014 as impunity and weak administration of justice, government interference with freedom of expression and assembly, and inadequate protection of minority and vulnerable populations.

Human rights reports are released by the US Department of State every year for all countries receiving assistance from Washington and all UN member countries.

The latest report on Turkey also criticized Ankara for not effectively implementing the law that provides criminal penalties for official corruption and said that "some officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity."

Corruption cases against dozens of suspects originally detained in December 2013 on suspicion of bribery, money laundering, and misuse of state-owned land in real estate deals, were closed or not pursued, while thousands of police and prosecutors linked to the cases were reassigned, the report stated. It added that the government closed the investigation and destroyed evidence that was gathered, publicly accusing many police officers involved in the probe of a conspiracy to overthrow the government.

"Many of the suspects had family or business ties to the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) top echelon."

Four ministers implicated in the scandal resigned from their ministries but continued as members of parliament. The constitution protects members of parliament from criminal investigation, but delegates investigatory responsibility to the parliament itself. On October 17, parliament convened a commission to

conduct a long-delayed official investigation into corruption allegations against the four former ministers, namely Erdogan Bayraktar, Egemen Bagis, Zafer Caglayan, and Muammer Guler. The inquiry had not reached a conclusion by year's end. Immediately following the corruption allegations, however, the government opened misconduct cases against the police investigation, it added.

The report also addresses the government's interference with freedom of expression, stressing that the penal code and antiterror law retain multiple articles that restrict freedom of expression, the press, and the Internet.

"At least seven journalists remained in jail at year's end, most charged under the anti-terror law or for connections to an illegal organization. Self-censorship was common because journalists feared that criticizing the government could prompt reprisals," it says.

The report says several organizations, including the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Freedom House, reported Turkish authorities' continued abuse of the anti-terror law and criminal code to prosecute journalists, writers, editors, publishers, translators, rights activists, lawyers, elected officials, and students.

"President Erdogan frequently attacked journalists by name in response to critical reporting. In August 2014, while campaigning, Erdogan targeted the Economist journalist Amberin Zaman over her remarks on Muslim society in a television program; Erdogan called her a 'shameless militant disguised as a journalist' and told her to 'know your place, you shameless woman.' In September 2014, Ceylan Yeginsu, a New York Times reporter based in Istanbul, had her photograph published on the front pages of pro-government newspapers and received thousands of threatening online messages after President Erdogan took issue with a story she had written. Human rights and press freedom activists asserted authorities filed numerous civil and criminal complaints against journalists, authors, and publishers for ideological reasons under various laws that restrict media freedom," it said.

The report also touches on worker rights issues and negligences in worker health and safety, citing the May 13, 2014 mine disaster in which 301 miners died of carbon monoxide poisoning after an explosion at a coalmine in Soma, in the western province of Manisa. Mine management at the time had shut off gas sensors, fire alarms, and communication systems to avoid slowing productivity, the report stated. Workers also reported that safety equipment at the mine was antiquated and faulty.

The report also refers to the mine disaster that killed 18 miners after they were trapped underground by a flood at a coalmine in the Ermenek district of the Central Anatolian province of Karaman on October 28, 2014.

According to a report released on November 26, 2014, the Energy Ministry's General Directorate of Mining, along with two companies that operated the Ermenek mine, were responsible for the accident after reopening the mine prematurely following an inspection in August 2014.

ANCA presses Obama Administration for action on Syrian Armenians



Armenian Americans are calling on the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress to take urgent action to address the pressing humanitarian crisis facing the Syrian Armenian community, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

Taking action via the ANCA's website, local advocates are encouraging their elected officials to respond to two sets of priorities. The first, in Syria, is for the U.S. government to ensure that international aid actually reaches Armenians and other at-

risk populations. Gaps in the delivery of assistance have left many communities - particularly minority populations - outside the stream of international relief supplies and support. The second, in Armenia, is for the Administration to provide direct U.S. support and facilitate increased international aid for Armenia's refugee and resettlement programs. Armenia has, to date, received only very limited international aid for rental subsidies, social services, work-training, health care, and other basic needs.

U.S. assistance to Syrian Armenians has consistently been part of the ANCA's ongoing dialogue with the Obama Administration on a broad range of Armenian American priorities. Congress, the ANCA continues to raise the issue in the run-up to Senate and House passage of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 foreign aid bill. ANCA Government Affairs Director Kate Nahapetian testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations earlier this year detailing Armenian American concerns. The House version of the measure, adopted by the Appropriations Committee earlier this month, spotlights the broader need to provide humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees. The ANCA is currently working with Senate Appropriations Committee members to address the Syrian crisis as well as expand assistance to Karabakh Nagorno and Armenia. Committee consideration of the measure is expected in July. Armenian Americans can take action by sending an ANCA webmail legislators visiting http://www.anca.org/aid.

U.S. Report Highlights 'Systemic Corruption' In Armenia

The U.S. State Department has described "systemic corruption" as one of the most frequent and serious forms of human rights violation in Armenia, saying that the authorities in Yerevan are not doing enough to tackle it.

"Allegations of persistent corruption at all levels of government undermined the rule of law, although the government took limited steps to punish corruption by lowand mid-level officials," the State Department said on Thursday in its latest annual report on human rights practices around the world. "There were numerous reports of systemic government corruption, including in such activities as urban maintenance, construction, public administration, the judiciary, state procurement and auctions, health care, taxation, law enforcement bodies, and military personnel," reads the report. "There were reports of embezzlement of state funds, involvement of government officials in questionable business activities, and tax privileges for government-linked companies."

These corrupt practices are a "significant" hurdle to Armenia's sustainable economic development, says the report. "In the view of many observers, oligarchs linked to the government or holding government posts monopolized the economy," it adds.

Commenting on these claims on Friday, a senior lawmaker representing the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) admitted that corrupt remains a "serious problem" in Armenia. But Hovannes Sahakian insisted that the government is committed to combatting it.

"We must draw a red line and not allow corrupt officials and their relatives to thrive among us," Sahakian told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am).

The government pledged to reinvigorate its stated fight against corruption in February when it announced plans to set up a new Anti-Corruption Council that will be headed by Prime Minister Abrahamian and comprise several ministers and other top state officials. It also

urged the political parties represented in the Armenian parliament and civic groups to nominate their representatives to the council.

None of those groups expressed readiness to join the body. Local anti-graft watchdogs like the Anti-Corruption Center (ACC), which operates as the Armenian branch of Transparency International, are highly skeptical about the government assurances.

"We don't see a genuine process of combatting corruption," Sona Ayvazian, the ACC's deputy director, insisted on Friday. "We don't even expect that something can change in this environment of [government] inactivity."

Armenia ranked, along with four African states, 94th of 174 countries and territories evaluated in Transparency International's most recent Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released last December. It occupied the same position in the 2013 CPI which covered 177 nations.

Red Hail: Works by Armenian photographers on display at Kafka House in Prague



www.nt.am

Works by Armenian photographers are on display at Franz Kafka's House in Prague within the framework of the Prague Ouadrinale.

"The last room on the third floor of the Kafka house definitely makes one thing clear: Scenography is much more than stage design for theater. It is the art of combining images, sounds and objects to create something new," The Deutsche Welle

writes.

The Armenian photographer Vahan Stepanyan and his three colleagues took 50,000 photos of schoolgirls with dolls in the ruins of a church and used 10,000 of them for an eerie film they show in Prague as part of the installation, "Red Hail... because it never ends."

The photos are based on documents of the Norwegian missionary Bodil

Katharine Biorn, who worked in Armenia in an orphanage in 1905. One year, she raised money in Norway to give each of the girls a doll for Christmas and photographed all the happy children with their new toys.

After the 1915 massacres of the Armenian people, Mother Katharine - as she was called - tried to find out what happened to those girls. She couldn't find a single one of them. They had all been murdered. Altogether, 500,000 children were among the victims of the massacre.

"We've been wanting to work with these photos for a long time. Bodil Katharine Biorn's grandson gave us access to the approximately 60 surviving shots in a Norwegian Archive," explained Stepanyan. The black-and-white film they made also features sacred music specially written by the Armenian composer Tigran Hamasyan.

The soundtrack for the new staged pictures revives the atmosphere of the original ones, as if time had stopped and still held the laughter of these children. The result is a very aesthetic and moving work of art.

Time for Azerbaijan to return to reality: Armenian FM



Armenian and Czech Foreign Ministers Edward Nalbandian and Lubomír Zaorálek discussed a wide range of issues on bilateral agenda, including the political dialogue, cooperation within international organizations, the legal framework, trade and economic relations.

The parties attached importance to the reciprocal visits and development of inter-parliamentary ties.

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Minister Nalbandian referred to the process of settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

He said "Azerbaijan uses the Nagorno Karabakh conflict to justify its authoritarian system and violation of human rights."

He added, however, that the world is sick of Azerbaijan's use of oil dollars. "A vivid example was a recent resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where Azerbaijan failed," he said.

"I think it's time for Azerbaijan to return from the virtual world of oil and khavier to reality," Nalbandian stated.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast

Aries (March 20-April 19)

Your ruling planet (or avatar) Mars, moves into Cancer today, June 24. Your focus shifts at this time to matters of home, property, and family. Through the next 7 weeks you may be handling heavy work around your home, and/or making repairs. This is an accident prone sector for you. Use caution.

Taurus (April 20-May 19)

You are in an especially cordial frame of mind at this time, and likely to invite people to your home, or to share whatever you have to offer. Your spirits are high and you have a need to be social. You are interested in whatever feels luxurious, looks beautiful, or tickles the senses. Going overboard would be all too easy!

Gemini (May 20-June 20)

You are experiencing a major change in the areas of shared resources, investments, alimony, or inheritance. At this time you are mentally quarreling with yourself or with others over finding a solution to the problem. You want things as they were and that is not possible. Ask your Supervising Self for a perspective change.

Cancer (June 21-July 21)

Mars, the warrior energy, enters your sign for 6 weeks. You will need to be more conscious of setting boundaries around yourself. Speak up about what you will and will not do. You may feel edgy and quick on the trigger. Maybe this is necessary at this time. The Crab often hides in his hole until he is forced to protect himself.

Leo (July 22-August 21)

You have a desire to break loose from routine now. You may be more forward and inventive than is your norm in personal relationships. Unusual twists may develop concerning artistic interests. Travel, publishing, church, and legal interests are favored.

Virgo (August 22-September 22)

There may be a crisis with your children or a lover this week. There are elements of obsessive thinking and criticism involved. Be intentional about keeping an open mind and don't insist on a black and white answer. Ultimately this situation is about necessary change and growth

through metamorphosis. Pretty words, but not a lot of fun.

Libra (Sep. 23-Oct. 22)

Your energy is high and your mind is busy at this time. You want to enjoy things of beauty and romance now. It could be hard to concentrate upon mental work that requires attention to detail. If you must do so, then check everything twice. This is a week for the arts, for love, and for fun!

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Mars, one of your ruling planets, enters your 9th house for 6 weeks. You will notice a shift into a new direction. It will likely be related to contacting people at a distance, preparing to travel, seeking professional advice, or focused on education. Drive within the speed limit.

Sagittarius (Nov 22-December 20)

This is a fine time for love, romance, play and enjoying your children or grand-children. You may be traveling or on an exotic vacation. Any activities related to travel, education, publishing, or the law are favored. Your luck is strong so drop a dollar or two on games of chance.

Capricorn (December 21-January 19)

You need to make significant changes in your daily life in order to enhance your personal health. This may include a change of work venue or re-organizing your schedule to accommodate an exercise routine. Others may not see this, but you know quite well what is happening to your body.

Aquarius (January 20-February 17)

A new friendship or romance that begins now may be really exciting. Unfortunately it is not likely to be stable or long lasting. The relationship comes along to snap you out of a rut and open your eyes to new possibilities. This is a good time to investigate high tech equipment.

Pisces (February 18-March 19)

This is a week of favorable change in relation to your work, health, or both. Those under treatment will get good news about progress. Those who are employed will have improvements in equipment or special help from co-workers. A positive attitude will serve you well.

ARMENIAN POETRY

Vahan Teryan

THE LAST POET

Am I the last singer, then, my country's last poet? Is this death or sleep enveloping you, bright Nayiri?

Wherever I walk on this earth I dream of your luminescent countryside, and your language that rings like prayer.

Rings always, deep and clear. Burns and pierces. Are those blazing roses burning? Or my fiery wounds?

Anxious. Alone. I call you. Shine on, my dream Nayiri. Am I your last singer then, my country's last poet?

THERE WERE BENE-FITS TO BLINDNESS

I realize now, as everyone does, you were commonplace, run-of-the-mill. I was the one forcing flat pictures to life wishing to see what I willed.

I was the one who filled, out of need, your small heart and your mind, endowed your tiny concerns with what I wanted to find.

I know at last, and alas, you are like most of your kind. But how many times I've wished I remained in the dark about you and blind.

TO AN UNKNOWN GIRL

(Walking toward and past me)

Light is failing, night is falling. House to house the dark comes calling. A stranger walks toward me, alone, her face familiar as my own.

As in fairy tales, the fountain dances beside us, blessing our passing glances. Her calm gait, her rhythmic stride continue into what I write.

Fate's gift: this moment occurs, luminous and without words like a scene from a romance but just a small happenstance.

Award-winning Armenian pianist Tigran Hamasyan performs on Akhtamar Island

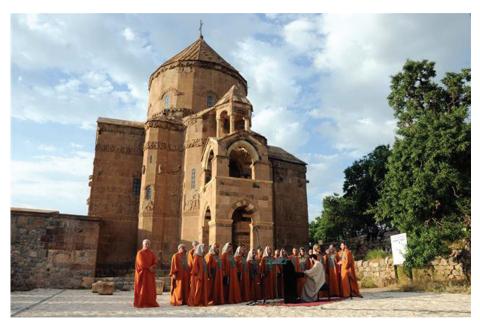
Award-winning Armenian jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan performed a concert on June 23 outside the Akhtamar Church on the historical Akhtamar Island in Van, the Hurriyet Daily News reports.

The concert on Akhtamar Island was "vigorous," said Tamar Nalci, the project coordinator at Anadolu Kültür (Anatolian Culture), a non-profit cultural institution that organized Hamasyan's concerts in Turkey.

"Tigran Hamasyan is a reputable Armenian jazz pianist who performs mini concerts at historical sites and churches with the company of the state chamber choir of Armenia [Hover]. This is a concert of church music."

Tigran Hamasyan is accompanied by a group of 25 musicians. This has been our second concert. It attracted much interest. The concert was vigorous," Nalci said after the concert held on the historical island.

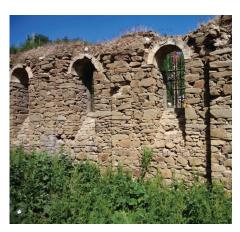
Van Deputy Mayor Cahit Bozbay and Geva? District Mayor Sinan Hakan were among the attendees of the concert, along with a number of local residents.



Hamasyan will continue performing in various Turkish provinces until June 30 in a project called "Luys i Luso." He will also perform in 100 churches in Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, England, Germany, Luxembourg, Russia and the U.S.

Hamasyan, 27, who started playing piano at the age of three and won the Montreux Jazz Festival in 2003 and the Thelonious Monk Institute piano contest at the age of 18, performs traditional Armenian music in his concerts.

Armenian trace being erased in Mush



A 1,600-year-old century Armenian cemetery in Mush has been ruined by treasure hunters and state policy, Akunq.net reports, quoting the Dicle

News Agency.

According to the source, there were 299 Armenian churches, 94 monasteries, 53 pilgrimage sites and 135 schools with 5,669 students in Mush before 1915.

Hayrettin Aslan, head of an Armenian union in Mush, calls attention to the fact that the Turkish state policy deliberately pursues the aim of erasing the Armenian trace from the region, thus erasing the historic memory of the city, as well.

Noting that the cemetery has a history of 1,600 years, Aslan noted that the history of a whole nation faces the danger of obliteration.

He said the treasure hunters also cause great damage to the cemetery. He noted that "Armenians and Kurds peacefully lived in the city before the Armenian massacres."

"If we want to live in an atmosphere of peace, love and respect, we have to take care of the Armenian history," he added

He noted that there are other Armenian monuments in the region, which also face the threat of demolition and added: "Armenians had even built infrastructures in the mountainous regions of Mush before 1915. Now the Armenian churches, monasteries and schools are on the verge of disappearance, and the government and the political-social organizations should be sensitive towards the issue. A history of millennia is jeopardized."

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