

Armenia stands strong behind Artsakh – Foreign Minister

These days, amid the internal political developments in Armenia, Azerbaijan accumulates manpower, artillery and military equipment along the Line of Contact with Artsakh, which gives grounds to assume that Baku is preparing for a new adventurism.

The international community, first and foremost the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, should undertake relevant



efforts aimed at deterring Baku, make it to withdraw its military equipment, artillery and manpower from the frontline and strictly adhere to the 1994-1995 ceasefire agreements.

We continue to be convinced that there is no alternative to the peaceful negotiated settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Use of force can have unpredictable consequences for the entire region.

Azerbaijan should not have any illusions that in the light of internal political developments in Armenia, it could embark on any actions against Artsakh and realize its aggressive intentions. People of Armenia is united when it comes to defense of Nagorno-Karabakh and would never allow any encroachments towards Artsakh.

As before, today as well, Armenia stands strong behind Artsakh and is determined to ensure its security.

Armenia Marks Genocide Anniversary



Armenia marked on April 24 the 103rd anniversary of the 1915 genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, with tens of thousands of people silently walking to the Tsitsernakabert memorial and laying flowers there throughout the day.

As always, the annual procession began with a prayer service held by Catholicos Garegin II by the eternal fire of the hilltop memorial overlooking central Yerevan. The ceremony was attended by President Armen Sarkissian, acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and other senior state officials.

The genocide anniversary commemorations came the day after Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan stepped down amid massive nationwide protests against his attempt to extend his decade-long rule. Serzh Sargsyan did not visit

Tsitsernakabert.

Karapetyan mentioned the dramatic events in Armenia in a written address to the nation released on the occasion. "The Genocide changed the fate of our people and made us suffer many trials and tribulations in the following decades," he said. "However, we turned out to be stronger than the murderers and were strong enough to return to life, create an independent State and be the master of our destiny.

"Today, we are facing another difficult period in our modern history," Karapetyan went on. "Yesterday, I called on all political forces to refrain from politicizing this day. I am grateful that my appeal was accepted, and today we can show to the world that despite many challenges and unresolved internal issues, we are united around the com-

mon cause."

"We reaffirm our determination to build a solid statehood, a free and civilized society, and nothing can distract us from our way to building the country of our dreams," concluded the statement.

President Sargsyan's office publicized, meanwhile, a message which he received from President Emmanuel Macron of France, one of two dozen nations that have officially recognize the slaughter of some 1.5 million Armenians as genocide. Macron said France, which has an influential Armenian community, stands with Armenia in remembering the victims of the genocide.

Turkey continues to deny a premeditated government effort to exterminate the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. Its vehement denials are dismissed by most scholars outside Turkey.

"The historical record on the Armenian Genocide is unambiguous and documented by overwhelming evidence," the International Association of Genocide Scholars said in 2007. Pope Francis and his predecessor John Paul II prayed at Tsitsernakabert when they visited Armenia in 2016 and 2001 respectively. They both officially recognized the genocide.



Serzh Sargsyan resigns as Armenian PM



Armenia's Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan stepped down on April 23 after ten days of unprecedented street protests against his attempt to extend his decade-long rule.

The announcement sparked jubilant scenes in the streets of Yerevan filled with hundreds of thousands of people demanding his resignation. The sound of car horns and fireworks reverberated across the Armenian capital.

Jubilant crowds were converging on the city's central Republic Square where Pashinyan, who launched the campaign on April 13, was due to address supporters later in the day. Some of them sang, danced and clapped their hands.

It was not immediately clear whether Sargsyan's exit will be followed by fresh parliamentary elections. Armenia's First Deputy Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan will likely serve as premier at least in the interim.

Serzh Sargsyan publicly rejected the demands for his resignation as recently as on Sunday morning. At a televised meeting with Pashinyan, he accused the opposition leader of blackmailing "the legitimate authorities of the state." "A faction that got 7-8 percent of the vote [in the April 2017 parliamentary elections] cannot speak on behalf of the people," he said, referring to the opposition Yelk bloc, of which Pashinyan is a leader.

Pashinyan was detained more than an hour after that tense meeting while holding a fresh demonstration in Yerevan. The arrest only added to popular anger with Sargsyan, with tens of thousands of people flocking to Republic Square on Sunday night.

The protests resumed in Yerevan and other Armenian cities the following morning. Pashinyan was set free in the afternoon shortly after Karen Karapetyan visited him in custody.

Serzh Sargsyan, 63, is a native of Nagorno-Karabakh who was one of the disput-

ed region's top military commanders during the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan. He was appointed as Armenia's defense minister in 1993 and went on to hold other key security positions in Yerevan.

Serzh Sargsyan was first elected president in a hotly disputed 2008 ballot marred by opposition allegations of fraud and a deadly post-election government crackdown on pro-

testers in Yerevan. His reelection in 2013 was also denounced as fraudulent by Armenia's leading opposition groups.

In 2014, Serzh Sargsyan initiated a controversial constitutional reform that turned Armenia into a parliamentary republic. He stated at the time that he "will not aspire" to the post of prime minister after completing his second presidential term on April 9, 2018.

Serzh Sargsyan downplayed that pledged last month when he signaled his plans to become prime minister and thus remain the country's most powerful man. He cited the increased risk of renewed war in Karabakh and other security challenges facing Armenia.

Opposition parties accused him of breaking his pledge to cling to power. But only one of them, Pashinyan's Civil Contract, moved to scuttle Sargsyan's plans with street demonstrators.

Pashinyan, 42, began his nonstop protests in Yerevan after a two-week walking tour of Armenia's northern and central regions. His movement has proved particularly popular with young Armenians, who have taken to the streets in unprecedentedly large numbers.



France stands by Armenia to commemorate genocide anniversary – Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron has addressed an April 24 message to Armenian President Armen Sarkissian. The message reads:

“Mr. President,

We stand by You to remember the April 24, 1915 in Constantinople and the killing of 600 Armenian intellectuals, which marked the start of the first genocide of the 20th century. We will never forget the murdered men, women and children, who died of hunger, cold and agony on their way to exile.



France, which deplored the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire with the voices of Georges Clemenceau, Anatole France and Jean Jaurès, hosted a great number of survivors.

As early as May 25, 1915, France, along with Great Britain and Russia, called the massacres a crime against humanity and civilization. In September 2015 the French navy managed to save 4,000 refugees from Musa Dagh.

The memory of the genocide and the meaning of its lessons refers to each of us. On this 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide I address my warmest and most friendly thoughts to You and Your people.

Please, accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration.”

Acting PM, Pashinyan to hold talks on political transition



Hours after forcing Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan to resign, opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan said on Monday that he will meet with Armenia's new and acting premier, Karen Karapetyan, on April 25 for talks on a ‘transfer of power to the people.’

Pashinyan said they will discuss, among other things, the holding of fresh parliamentary elections in the “shortest possible logical period of time.”

The leader of the protest movement made the announcement as tens of thousands of people rallied in Yerevan's Republic Square to celebrate the resignation of the man who has ruled Armenia for the last ten years. “The first phase of our popular velvet revolution is over,” he declared.

Karapetyan took over as Armenia's top government official at an emergency meeting held following Sargsyan's resignation. “Ongoing political development must not affect our normal work in any way,” he told ministers. “I am calling on our fellow citizens and political forces to show utmost vigilance and respect for the law and rights of other citizens.”

In remarks publicized by the government's press office, Karapetyan made no mention of the elections demanded by Pashinyan.

It is unclear whether Serzh Sargsyan will also resign as chairman of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), which holds the majority of seats in the parliament. Karapetyan is the party's first deputy chairman.

In his speech, Pashinyan warned Sargsyan against trying to maintain his hold on power from behind the scenes. “I hope that the HHK leadership will explicitly and unconditionally recognize the victory of the popular velvet revolution,” he said.

The Armenian constitution gives parliamentary parties seven days to propose candidates

for prime minister. The HHK's parliamentary leader, Vahram Baghdasaryan, told RFE/RL's Armenian service that his party expects to nominate the next premier as well.

Baghdasaryan declined to speculate about possible candidacies. He said the party leadership will make a decision after Karapetyan's talks with Pashinyan and other political leaders.

For its part, the HHK's junior coalition partner, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), expressed hope that Armenia's leading political groups will agree on an “agenda that would include a timetable and a roadmap for rapid reforms necessary for the country.”

Meanwhile, other opposition parties hailed Sargsyan's exit. Former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress (HAK) said it paves the way for the “establishment of democracy in the country.” The HAK too called for a “smooth transfer of power.”

Pashinyan also reached out to those Armenians who might feel threatened by Sargsyan's ouster. “I want to appeal to entrepreneurs who are worried about this political process and ... may be packing up to leave the country or remove capital from Armenia,” he said. “Please do not do that because there will be no vendettas, no hatred, no revenge.” He vowed to strive for an “atmosphere of national unity.”

Pashinyan was also anxious to deny any “geopolitical” implications of the unfolding regime change in Yerevan. In that context, he described as “very important” the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman's reaction to the dramatic events in Armenia.

“Armenia, Russia is always with you!” the spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, wrote on Facebook.

“I hope there will be similar reactions from other key representatives of the international community,” said Pashinyan.

ANCA defends U.S. Artsakh aid against Azerbaijani attack

Direct U.S. assistance to care for Artsakh's (Nagorno Karabakh) most vulnerable citizens and the completion of lifesaving de-mining efforts were the main focus of foreign aid discussions with State Department and USAID officials and key Senate and House appropriators this week, as the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and public health leaders worked to build upon two decades of direct U.S. aid to the region.

"We continue to articulate the case for continued U.S. aid to Artsakh – a vital American investment in peace that has remained under relentless attack by Azerbaijan since it was first launched with ANCA backing in the Fiscal Year 1998 foreign aid bill," said ANCA Chairman Raffi Hamparian, who was joined by internationally respected public health expert Dr. Alina Dorian, ANCA Eastern Region Chairman Steve Mesrobian, and ANCA Western Region advocate Leonard Manoukian for several days of meetings with Administration and Congressional leaders this week. In addition to U.S. foreign aid priorities, the delegation discussed expanding trade initiatives, Armenian Genocide remembrance, the situation in Armenia, and a broad array of ANCA foreign policy priorities.

"We are – with sufficient Congressional funding for the HALO Trust – within clear reach of a mine-free Artsakh and are, today,



well positioned to meaningfully expand Artsakh's regional rehabilitation services for the most vulnerable – children, adults, and the elderly with disabilities. The substance and the symbolism of

Health, who has worked on Artsakh health priorities since 1994, offered first-hand accounts of the vital role the United States must play in assisting Artsakh's population in greatest need. "As a public



America's life-saving assistance to Artsakh represents an investment in peace, one that we will not allow Baku to block," said Hamparian.

Dr. Dorian, a professor at UCLA's Fielding School of Public

health practitioner, our programs are always built on the backs of certain humanitarian principles and tenets – adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," explained Dorian. "Unfortunately, most of these tenets are not upheld in programming and assistance provided to Artsakh due to its tenuous political 'frozen conflict' situation, the most ironic of which is that there is no United Nations (UN) presence in Artsakh – at all. No UNICEF, no World Food Program (WFP), no World Health Organization (WHO), no UNAIDS, no United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Azerbaijan stands against these UN humanitarian service arms working in Artsakh."

Hamparian, Dorian, and the ANCA delegation shared these concerns with Senate Appropriations Committee members Chris

Van Hollen (D-MD) and House Appropriations Committee member David Valadao (R-CA), both of whom led efforts to ensure continued Artsakh assistance as part of the recently passed Fiscal Year 2018 foreign aid bill. Similar discussions were held with Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Democrat Robert Menendez (D-CA) and with the USAID Assistant Administrator Brock Bierman.

In testimony submitted to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees earlier this year, the ANCA called for \$10 million in U.S. assistance to Artsakh, including \$6 million for ongoing de-mining and rehabilitation efforts and \$4 million to implement Royce-Engel proposals to strengthen regional peace.

The HALO Trust, which has been de-mining in Artsakh over the last 17 years, has destroyed over 8,733 anti-personnel mines, 2,584 anti-tank landmines, 180,858 small arms ammunition, 12,423 cluster bombs and 48,572 other explosive items in Artsakh. The HALO Trust looks to complete Artsakh de-mining efforts by 2020.

The ANCA's focus for rehabilitation efforts is The Baroness Cox Rehabilitation Center, which provides high-quality, specialized, medical care each year to approximately 1,000 local and regional patients, and has treated over 15,000 to date. Among those receiving treatment – both at the Center and in their homes – are patients with spinal cord injuries, elderly stroke victims, and infants and children born with disabilities, such as cerebral palsy and spina bifida. The Lady Cox Center sends trained rehabilitation nurses to communities across Artsakh, serving those who do not have access to the Stepanakert location. The Center strives to dispel cultural stigmas, many rooted in the Soviet-era, associated with disabilities, and works – via speech, occupational and other therapies – to ensure that its patients are given the opportunity to live happy and fulfilling lives.



PACE co-rapporteurs welcome Serzh Sargsyan's courageous decision' to resign

The PACE co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Armenia, Giuseppe Galati (Italy, EPP/CD) and Yuliya Lovochkina (Ukraine, SOC), have reacted to the recent developments in Yerevan.

"We welcome the courageous decision of Prime Minister Sargsyan to resign from his post in order to defuse the mounting tensions in the country. We hope that this will lead to a new and constructive dialogue between all political forces in the country with the aim of finding a lasting solution to the current situation, in line with the relevant Constitutional provisions," said



the co-rapporteurs.

In the meanwhile they stressed that all who were detained while peacefully demonstrating should be released and the right to peaceful assembly should be fully respected. At the same time, they expressed concern at reports from the Ombudsman of increased hate speech and even incitement to violence against individuals on social media, and called for the fundamental rights of all citizens to be respected.

The co-rapporteurs announced that they will continue to follow developments in Yerevan closely.

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum demands that the authorities of the Armenia immediately free all persons detained during the peaceful demonstrations

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum demands that the authorities of the Republic of Armenia immediately free all persons detained by the police during the peaceful demonstrations in the past nine days. These include Nikol Pashinyan, Sasun Mikaelian and Ararat Mirzoyan who are members of parliament and other detained leaders of the protests such as Davit Sanasaryan and Armen Grigoryan who have done nothing other than to organise people in exercising their right to free assembly.

The situation also requires that the authorities show restraint in dealing with continuing



protests undertake a dialogue with the protesters and their leaders to bring about a solution which is acceptable to both sides.

The recently signed Comprehensive and Enhanced Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) between the EU and Armenia can only be implemented if peace returns to the streets of

Yerevan and other Armenian regions and both sides work for a solution which leads to early elections which will establish the democratic legitimacy of the elected authorities.

Only a leadership elected, in free and fair elections, can oversee the implementation of the CEPA and re-establish a legitimate basis for the reforms which await Armenia. The path of repression which the current leadership of the country appears to have embarked on marks a road to nowhere and risks the prolongation of the current crisis without any guarantee that lasting social peace can be established and a prosperous future for the country be ensured.

EU closely following ongoing developments in Yerevan

The Delegation of the European Union and EU Member State Embassies in Armenia have issued a statement on recent political developments in Armenia. The statement reads:

Constitutional changes to transform Armenia into a parliamentary Republic have been followed by the inauguration of President Armen Sarkissian on 9 April and the election of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan on 17 April. The Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the European Union was unanimously ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on 11 April.

In this context, the European Union trusts



that Armenia will make renewed efforts to pursue an inclusive reform process towards strengthening democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law,

including the independence of judiciary.

The European Union is closely following ongoing developments in Yerevan and other cities. Citizens have a legitimate right to exercise freedom of assembly in a peaceful manner and in accordance with the law. State authorities have a duty to ensure public safety and health by applying the law in a fair and proportionate manner. It is important that all parties involved continue to show restraint and responsibility.

The European Union stands ready to continue working in partnership with state institutions and civil society, supporting Armenia on its path towards democratic and economic reforms for the benefit of the citizens.

Ontario Premier, Toronto Mayor pay respects on 103rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide



Premier Kathleen Wynne and Mayor John Tory joined hundreds gathered at the Armenian Community Center of Toronto Sunday afternoon to mark the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, CBC News reports.

"More than 100 years later, it is so important for us to keep the memory of all of those who were displaced, deported and killed alive in our hearts and our minds," Wynne said. "We know

that many of those who survived the Armenian genocide found refuge here in Ontario."

Wynne said Sunday that Ontario was one of the first regions in the world to recognize the genocide.

"The Armenian community here in Ontario, along with Armenians around the world have worked hard to ensure what happened to the Armenian people and their culture is both

recognized and remembered," she said. "You remind us that we must be vigilant, and you remind us that we must speak out against hatred or prejudice or violence of any kind."

The premier also made note of the Armenian Community Center's efforts to help Syrian-Armenian families affected by the Syrian refugee crisis.

"You punched way, way, way above your weight in that work," Wynne said. "It's a testament to your kindness and generosity, and it's a reflection of the kind of province that we are working to build together."

In speaking to the those gathered to mark the anniversary, Tory said it was his honor to stand with the Armenian community, and he added he would work with the center to find a place to permanently memorialize the Armenian genocide in Toronto.

Like the premier, Tory also noted the center's contribution to helping Syrian refugees. "Nothing that you could do here would do more honor to those who were lost in the genocide than to do that work of bringing these people here and making them feel welcome and continuing to honor them, and to make sure they are receiving the all of the advantages of our way of life," he said.

Cyprus House hears speech on Armenian Genocide

It was inconceivable that 103 years after the Armenian Genocide there were civilized states that succumbed to Turkey's pressure not to recognize the 'extinction plan' applied by Ankara in 1915, the Armenian Representative at the House Vartkes Mahdessian said on Friday, Cyprus Mail reports.

Mahdessian was addressing the House plenary, which itself called on the international community to recognize the crime, which is marked on April 24 every year.

The Armenian representative in his address to MPs expressed his gratitude that Cyprus was the first European country to pass a parliamentary resolution recognizing the genocide in 1975. In 2015, Cyprus was the first county in the world to then make it a crime to deny the Armenian Genocide, he said.

"It is truly unthinkable that civilized states, who appear to be protectors of human rights and democracy, continue to yield to the pressure exerted by Turkey, taking advantage of its geostrategic position and purchasing power, which stops them from recognizing the Armenian Genocide," said Mahdessian.

He said the genocide was a tragedy that shocked the then civilized world and which



created deep wounds like no other event in the long course of the Armenian nation.

Between 1915 and 1923 more than 1,500,000 Armenians were killed, tortured, or forced to die in the inhospitable desert of Deer Zor, while more than 800,000 became refugees and became scattered around the world, shaping the Armenian diaspora as it is today.

Mahdessian noted that a century and a bit later, "Turkey continues to stubbornly refuse to acknowledge its blood-stained past and the commission of these crimes".

"Using a well-organised policy plan, diplomacy, extortion and intimidation, reinforced by false academic evidence, falsified data and a number of threats, Turkey attempts to silence any attempt to reveal the truth," he added.

As to why Turkey has so stubbornly refused

to recognize the Armenian Genocide, while Germany has recognized the Holocaust of the Jews, Mahdessian said that the main reasons were the legal consequences of such a move and its impact on Turkish society.

"Turkey is not willing to pay even one cent to the survivors of the Genocide and their offspring, since it would not be only for the Armenians, but also the Greeks, the Assyrians, and perhaps the Kurds, and the Cypriots," he concluded. As part of the anniversary events this weekend, on Saturday, from 3pm to 6pm, a blood drive will be organised at the Armenian Primary School NAREK.

On Tuesday, April 24, the anniversary date, at 5pm, a youth march will take place, which will start from Makarios Avenue parking lot across from the Zena Kanther Building, which will head to Armenias Street by 7pm to meet up with other members of the community.

The marchers will then head for the Monument of the Armenian Genocide at the Armenian Church, where at 7:30pm there will be a memorial event with the main speaker being House President Demetris Syllouris. Also attending the event will be the Armenian Archbishop of Cyprus.

Constantine Orbelian: "My Intention Is To Make A Night At The Opera A Memorable Event Once Again..."

World-famous director Andrejs Zagars produces the opera "Manon" in Yerevan



By
**Gourgen
James Khazhakian**

Chief Correspondent

...It all started in December 2016 when **Andrejs Zagars** who had headed the Riga National Opera Theatre for 17 years and directed 13 productions in 23 countries, revived the opera by Massenet, "Manon", in Moscow, to much critical acclaim. That production in 2017 received the Golden Mask Award in four opera nominations: the best director, the best production, the best male part (the Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia, soloist of the National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre after A.I. Spendiaryov **Liparit Avetisyan** - des Grieux) and the best female part (**Evgeniya Afanasyeva** - Manon).

The Director and the Artistic Head of the Opera and Ballet Theatre **Constantine Orbelian, Jr.** was so impressed by that production that he decided to invite Zagars and his team to produce "Manon" in Yerevan. They were personally acquainted as Orbelian, in his capacity of an orchestra conductor, works with **Elina Garanca**, who, in Zagars' opinion, is the best mezzo-soprano in the world. (Garanca is of Latvian origin and she sings in the best opera houses such as Paris Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Covent Garden, etc). It is worthy to note that Orbelian and Zagars coproduced a Yurmala concert in 2017 with two American stars – the tenor **Lawrence Brownley** and the soprano **Sarah Coburn**.

Andrejs Zagars highly values our **Liparit Avetisyan**, who stars in the Yerevan staging of "Manon" as well.

"*Liparit is very gifted, he displays a very high level of discipline gained with years of schooling, his timbre is wonderful, his performance is very consistent for a ten-*

or, and after his Moscow performance his career has taken a serious international turn, he is booked for years ahead by the Royal Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, the best German opera houses", says Zagars.

"*When Mr Orbelian invited you to stage "Manon" in Yerevan, did you accept his invitation on the spot or did you take some time to consider?*", - your author asked Mr Zagars.

must also say that for me, both as a director and as an actor, the theatrical competence of singers is very important. I am very pleased with the fanatical work of the young Armenian singers as they very rapidly responded to my lessons of stage actors performance. Generally speaking, I see a huge potential in Yerevan, I am listening new voices every other day, and I am confident that we will continue our cooperation with Maestro Orbelian, will stage new productions..."

Constantine Orbelian says: "*At the first night of "Manon" in Moscow, I met Andrejs Zagars, we talked things over and decided to stage a co-production in Yerevan. You know, I saw an absolutely luxurious "Traviata" in Riga, directed by Zagars, starring **Hasmik Grigoryan** (the daughter of the late **Gegam Grigoryan**). Thus Zagars has a soft spot for Armenians (Orbelian smiles). After the first night in Moscow and my conversation with Zagars, I contacted **Anton Getman** who heads the Stanislavsky Theatre in Moscow where "Manon" was staged, with a request to sign a contract allowing us to stage that opera, and they agreed, as they were planning to produce the ballet "Manon" and were eager to avoid confusing their audience with both opera and ballet of the same name in their repertory.*

And we have brought to Yerevan, thanks to the "Spayka" company, four truckloads of all the stage sets, costumes and ev-

everything else.

*We have also had costumes made for our performers, purchased various accessories, and today we are performing a rehearsal, or more precisely, a preview. Our production is to be premiered on the 4th and 5th of October, to coincide with the visit of the President of the French Republic **Emmanuel Macron** who is expected to attend the Francophony Summit meeting in Yerevan. (Just imagine - "Manon" turned out to be one of the*



He answers: "Three years ago I visited Armenia twice as the Head of the Riga Opera. My aim was to audition young singers, and I was highly surprised by the number of young performers with naturally beautiful voices, but who needed good schooling, coaching for the further development of their voices, belcanto, Verdi, modern music, Italian, French. Speaking of our Yerevan rehearsals of "Manon", I was fascinated to work with young voices free of operatic cliches. I

President's favourite operas!).

So this is the first preview. "Manon" has a very complex score, and Zagars thinks that no less than five runs are needed for the artists, performers, soloists, the orchestra, the choir, dressmakers and stage personnel.

Our artists worked day and night, learned French with fanatical resolve, learned their parts... It was a very significant master-class for everybody involved, including the stage technicians, lighting operators, dressmakers, in the sense of how a really busy theatre works. Of course, we have brought here a practi-

believe it is what our people need, that our singers must be kept in constant creative tension", says the Maestro. He says he hopes the French Embassy in Yerevan will provide financial support as promised, and he also relies on the support of everybody who is not indifferent to the fate of the Armenian opera and ballet, which is our brand on the international stage.

The rising star **Julietta Alexanyan** who won the first prize in the Khachaturian Contest last year, takes the part of Manon.

"The leading female part will also be performed by our excellent soloist **Mary**

At present, a new production of Chukhajyan's operetta "Karine" directed by **Jirayr Papazyan** is playing. And Bizet's opera "Carmen" is scheduled for the premiere - the Theatre is taking it to Dubai in September, and the absolutely new production of the "Magic Flute" is scheduled for the first night in June.

Does the Artistic Head and Director see any evidence of creative progress of the collective? "The progress is too weak a word - we are growing everywhere - the orchestra, soloists, technical personnel...

But we do have too many problems, from light-bulbs and bathrooms, which



cally finished product, but here, on the spot, we had to make adjustments, for example, the stage technicians had to learn to replace props in ninety seconds, and much more besides... The Stanislavsky Theatre in Moscow employs eighteen stage technicians and we had only eight. So we had to hire ten more...

The lighting master arrived from Sweden and he told us that out of 40 spotlights only a

dozen were operational... We are facing many problems, of which our public has no inkling and which we have to urgently resolve within three months..."

And here it transpires that a whole number of financial issues are being settled out of Mr Orbelian's pocket. "I am investing in the future of the Theatre, I



Movsesyan, and de Grie will be given to our young talented tenor **Hovannes Andreasyan**. The Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia **Perch Karazyan** is also singing the male leading part. Therefore we have two, or even three sets of performers", says Constantine Garievich.

we must resolve..."

...Unfortunately, it is impossible to raise the level of pay in the Theatre, as AMD 85 million of state support has been discontinued, and on top of that the fiscal authority imposed a fine for 2013 - a hefty sum of AMD 105 million - for administrative offences.

Orbelian says: "Fortunately, there is the "Ardshinbank" who help us with various issues".

And... "... I intend to make the Theatre beautiful, spotlessly clean and warm, so that a night at the opera would become an event to remember, as it used to be in the past..."

Photographs courtesy Opera and Ballet Theatre press-service (by Tigran Arakelyan)

EMS Conference

Emil Artin International Conference

Dedicated to the 120th Anniversary of Emil Artin (03.07.1898-20.12.1962)

Yerevan, the Republic of Armenia, May 27-June 2, 2018.

The conference is organized by:

- Armenian Mathematical Union
- Yerevan State University
- American University of Armenia
- Committee of Emil Artin Junior Prize in Mathematics
- Institute of Mathematics of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia
- University of Bergen

Academically supported by the Steklov Mathematical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The aim of the conference is to provide a forum where specialists will meet to share ideas of latest research in Algebraic Structures, Mathematical Logic, Number Theory, Pure and Applied Mathematics, Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science.

The conference will be held at the Yerevan State University and American University of Armenia.

Conference Topics:

- Classical and non-classical Algebraic Structures,
- Algebra and Logics, Number Theory,
- Geometry and Topology, Analysis and Equations,
- Boolean and De Morgan functions, Cryptography and Discrete Mathematics, Applied Mathematics,
- Universal Algebra, Computer Science and IT,
- Artin L-functions, Dynamical Systems,
- Quantum information theory, Quantum Logic and Quantum Computation, Quantum Groups and Quantum Quasigroups.

Invited speakers that confirmed their participation:

- Sergey Adian (Steklov Mathematical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences)
- Ara Basmajian (City University of New York, Hunter College, USA)
- Lilya Budaghyan (Bergen University, Norway)
- Tullio Ceccherini-Silberstein (Universita' del Sannio, Italy)
- Rostislav Grigorchuk (Texas A&M University, USA)
- Alexander Guterman (Moscow State University, Russia)
- Vadim Kaimanovich (University of Ottawa, Canada)
- Jörg Koppitz (Potsdam University, Germany)
- Aleksandar Krapež (Mathematical Institute SASA, Belgrade, Serbia)
- Hayk Melikyan (North Carolina Central University, USA)
- Daniele Mundici (University of Florence, Italy)
- Alexander Olshanskii (Vanderbilt University,



USA)

- Alexey Parshin (Steklov Mathematical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences)
- Evgeny Plotkin (Bar Ilan University, Israel)
- Victor Pambuccian (Arizona State University, USA)
- Nikolay Romanovskiy (Sobolev Institute of Mathematics, Russia)
- Anna Romanowska (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland)
- Hanamantagouda Sankappanavar (State University of New York at New Paltz, USA)
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Registration fee for the conference is \$200 for participants and covers the conference materials and coffee breaks. **Banquet:** \$50. All fees are due upon arrival, at the registration desk.

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The deadline for conformation of participation and submission of abstracts is April 1, 2018 by E-mail address: amu@ysu.am. Please submit one-page abstract in LaTeX and PDF formats (in English) to amu@ysu.am.

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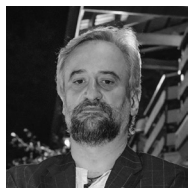
We are looking forward to welcome you in Yerevan, Armenia for the Emil Artin International Conference.

Sincerely,

Prof. Yu. Movsisyan

President of the Armenian Mathematical Union

"Zorats Qarer": One of the Most Mysterious Places in Armenia Older than Stonehenge



Compiled by
*Gourgen
James Khazhakian*

Chief Correspondent

The ancient monument of "Zorats Qarer" is an equivalent to England's Stonehenge, only older and cruder.

All Armenia, and especially the mountainous region of Zangezur, is rich in beautiful remains of prehistoric times. In the various areas of Sisian town are found many megalithic monuments which are among the oldest structures in stone. Examples of this megalithic culture are the dolmens and the arrangements of menhirs at Angelakoth which belong to the second millennium B.C. Leaving Sisian on the road NNE from the center

ry, though the alignment is not ideal for the purpose. In any case, the site is beautiful and ancient, well worth the visit.

"Zorats Qarer" is one of the most mysterious places in Armenia that is 1770 m above the sea level. It is also known as "Tsits Karer" (Stake Stones) and "Ghoshun Dash" in people's tales.

In the recent times, in particular in mass media, the monument has been named as "Carahunge"; this prehistoric monument consisting of hundreds of standing stones on area of about 3 hectares.

Many of these stones have smooth angled holes. The monument has partly been explored by astronomer El.Parsamyan, archaeologist O. Khnkikyan, academician P. Heruni and by others. No doubt, Zorats Qarer is an unique historical-cultural archaeological site.

and destroyed, and some of the found materials were removed to the History Museum of Armenia.

Destroyed tomb refers to the period of Middle Bronze Age, B.C. I quarter of the II mil. Archaeological materials of different times have been founded from the noticeable residence's surface from surrounding area of "Zorats Qarer", dating back approximately the same era. Above mentioned materials refer to B.C., III-I mil.

Noting out the exceptional role and importance of "Zorats Qarer" monument in the research work of social – cultural problems of ancient Armenia, the Government of Armenia gave to the "Zorats Qarer" monument historical and cultural reserve status by its 26 June, 2009 decree.

According to 2 December, 2010 decree



of town, climb up the hill, then turn hard left where you see the rusting steel umbrellas. This road will lead you in a couple of km to Zorats Qarer, a Bronze Age settlement/cemetery site left of the road, around whose large chamber tombs are a series of standing stones, some with holes pierced in them. It is universally assumed that this is an early observato-

In the center of main structure there is a sarcophagus tomb, anciently the cell of it was robbed. The fragments of shell protected on the cell's floor evidence that it is a structure of 15-14 centuries B.C.

Until 1931 in the surrounding area of the monument, under one of the vertical standing huge stones, accidentally a tomb was opened

territory of "Zorats Qarer" historical-cultural reserve is determined 50 hectares. It was included into the category of special protected territories and was given to "Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum-Reservations" non-commercial state organization of the Ministry of Culture.

"Leadership as a business skill": Ralph Yirikian hosted by the American University of Armenia

The experience of VivaCell-MTS accumulated over a decade can become a guide for those interested both in the business management and in leadership. Over the years, during a series of lectures organized for different audiences, VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph C. Yirikian presents civilized ways to succeed, contribute to the development of telecommunications industry and society. Upon the invitation of the American University of Armenia, in the scope of the "Business Leadership" course, Ralph Yirikian recently presented the faculty and students of the University with the main principles of leadership with precise examples. Also, he talked about the qualities required for future leaders.

During the interactive communication, the students got acquainted with the business management culture of VivaCell-MTS - a company which has reached a competitive position in the telecommunication industry for more than ten years and continues to keep its position in a highly competitive market: "Take a look at our work environment in VivaCell-MTS. Employees feel safer and protected, than any other local organization. Why? Because basic human rights are respected and protected, and employees would never feel that their job would be risked if he or she commits a mistake. Instead, it focuses to help managers lead better, to communicate more with employees, to establish an environment of trust. This is primarily the reason why VivaCell-MTS has ensured to succeed in such a strenuous and constantly changing market. The leadership listens to its team members, and team members feel free to share their ideas, without the fear of being diminished or ridiculed," Ralph Yirikian said.

VivaCell-MTS General Manager presented the major factors of ensuring the long-term development of a Company: "Continuous development of technologies, the need to satisfy constantly changing consumer preferences and needs and serious competition make us constantly review



the strategy and apply innovative solutions. Nevertheless, VivaCell-MTS maintains its position as the market leader, not only for considering business just as it is, but also for considering it as a lever in the development of the country and society. The healthy working environment, the courage to set new standards, the will to be guided by moral values, the responsibility committed towards the society and the consistency of achieving the results are the foundation of the long-term development of the Company."

Presenting leadership as a skill, Ralph Yirikian noted, "Leadership is also a skill as many other skills and abilities we are aware of. And every skill implies a continuous process of development. When leaders help employees feel worthy and safe, the natural reaction is trust and cooperation." Based on his own experience, VivaCell-MTS General Manager gave pieces of advice to students. According to Yirikian, young people should not think about being a leader, as well as about quick income.

Speaking about the distinctive features of the leaders, VivaCell-MTS General Manager noted: "Good leadership means that the employee will ensure

that there is integrity and trust in whatever is done; the employee will have a vested interest in helping the leader meet the organizational goals; the employee will have a clear understanding of the direction the organization is taking; and they will feel valuable and protected, knowing that the leader will always care for them."

Ralph Yirikian urged the students to gradually pass through all the career development stages by considering them as the most important stages for acquiring experience. "It is necessary to have a systemic thinking in order to understand the trends in the telecommunications industry, to have profound knowledge on global developments, as well as to master the value chain process and the art of managing people. And first of all, it presumes the existence of a work experience in creating a value in all phases of the chain. Consequently, it is necessary to avoid the delusion of dividing the jobs into "black" and "white", thus, considering working process as an opportunity to learn, practice and a chance to create something new. Work is an effort and deserves respect. Tomorrow you will be able to appreciate the effectiveness of

the employee and guide him/her only if you do such work today."

At the end of the lecture, the speaker also touched upon the idea of making mistakes as an important factor in self-development. "Don't be afraid of making a mistake, and do not focus on it too much after having made the mistake. Simply analyze your steps and make conclusions. The mistakes are avoided by those, who don't do anything at all."

The next topic discussed during the lecture referred to the concept of a "team". "There can't be a strong leader without supporters, without a team. Strong leader is just the first one among his or her equals. He or she does not impose his or her "I" upon the people surrounding him. On the contrary, he or she contributes to the healthy development of their "I's. Strong "We" is the harmonious entity of the strong and not pressured "I's. It's a hard, but creative process bringing individuals into a team. In my opinion, this should be the subject of study of Armenian specialists involved in leadership issues," Ralph Yirikian concluded.

The audience also got acquainted with the important steps of business ethics in VivaCell-MTS, as well as with the Company's core values.

Glendale City Council approves Armenian American Museum

Asbarez – The Glendale City Council on April 17 directed City Staff to negotiate the final Ground Lease Agreement for the Armenian American Museum's Downtown Glendale site with a lease term of up to 95 years at \$1 per year and approved the Museum's Stage 1 Design Plans. The landmark approval marks a major milestone for the historic project and a major victory for Museum supporters.

On the eve of the 103rd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Museum supporters and community members packed into Glendale City Hall to witness the historic vote by the Glendale City Council. Museum representatives presented their vision for a three-story, 59,800 square-foot cultural and educational complex that would be located in the southwest corner of Central Park. The Museum will feature Permanent & Traveling Exhibitions, Performing Arts Theater, Demonstration Kitchen, Learning Center, Archives, Café, and Store. City Staff and urban design firm SWA Group also presented their vision for a redesigned Central Park that would preserve the park's open space, improve its amenities, and serve the community as "Glendale's new gathering place" with the Museum as its focal point.

"We are pleased that the Glendale City Council and City of Glendale officials share our vision of building a world class cultural

and educational center in the heart of Downtown Glendale that will be the pride of our entire community," stated Museum Co-Chair Western Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

"The Armenian American Museum is a historic project that will celebrate culture, education, and empowerment and will serve as a bridge that will connect our diverse community members together in the spirit of humanity," stated Museum Co-Chair Western Prelate Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian.

In 2014, the Armenian American Museum and City of Glendale agreed to an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement that would have located the Museum on City-owned land near the Glendale Community College. In 2016, the City proposed bringing the project to Downtown Glendale's Arts and Entertainment District to join the Downtown Central Library and Adult Recreation Center on the Central Park block. City and Museum officials have been performing their due diligence tasks and responsibilities with the goal of securing a final Ground Lease Agreement for the Museum site.

"We join our community members in celebrating this historic milestone that brings us one step closer to building a cultural and educational center that is by the community for the community," stated Museum Co-

Chair Bishop Mikael Mouradian.

"The Armenian American Museum will have a long-lasting and impactful legacy that is an investment in our next generation and the future of our community," stated Museum Co-Chair Reverend Berdj Djam-bazian.

Glendale City Council's approval of the Stage 1 Design Plans is the first major approval for the project leading to the Stage 2 Plans review and the final Ground Lease Agreement consideration anticipated for Summer 2018. The initial term of the Ground Lease Agreement will be 55 years with options to extend the lease term for four 10-year periods totaling 95 years with a ground lease rate of \$1 per year.

"We are looking forward to working with our City and community members to help make this historic project a reality and create a positive impact that will ripple through generations to come in our community," stated Museum Executive Committee Chairman Berdj Karapetian.

Following the landmark approval, the Armenian American Museum plans to launch its capital campaign to raise funds for the construction of the cultural and educational center. The Museum will be hosting a Community-Wide Telethon on September 9, 2018 and holding its inaugural Gala at the Dolby Theater on December 9, 2018.

A fruit garden meant for agricultural purposes is on sale in an administrative district of Yerevan.

The garden covers an area of 40 hectares.

The total number of trees is 1150 of which 500 apricot trees, 350 black plums, 200 Greek nuts and other.

The area is supplied with water both for drinking and irrigation it also has gas and electricity.

Moreover the road leading to the garden is covered with asphalt and there is a farm house and a greenhouse nearby.

**For further information phone
099 10 54 53**

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

Listen closely to your inner self. If you have tolerated a rule well beyond its time, you may rebel and demand to do something different now. Plan a few hours of refreshing change. Try something new. Allow your restlessness to steer you in the next direction.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

On April 24, 2018, your ruling planet, Venus, enters the second house of income and self-worth. She will remain there until mid-May. Your concerns about finances will feel lightened. Debts owed to you may be paid. Meanwhile others will let you know how much you are appreciated.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

Venus enters your sign this week and will be traveling “with you” until May 19, 2018. Her presence gives you an air of poise and people will simply like how you look. Often when Venus is prominent we become more interested in art forms and want to make things in the environment more attractive. We are also more interested in beautifying ourselves.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You may feel out of sorts for a couple of weeks. Your feelings are in conflict with your ideal self and your values. You want to put your best foot forward, but circumstances do not feel quite right. If the conflict is deep, it is usually best to wait and not yield to whatever pressure is around you. You will soon sort it all out.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

There is a surprise to meet in your ninth sector of legal interests, higher education, travel, and church affiliations. Open your mind in these arenas so you will gain a bigger picture. The surprise may be coming from yourself and your changing attitudes. Don't hesitate to explore whatever seems appropriate.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

You have a desire to reach outward to others. You want to share ideas and express yourself in a larger framework. Circumstances on the romantic front are favorable with one who shares intellectual interests. Activities involving teaching/learning are favored, along with good aspects for travel.

Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)



You have a desire to reach outward to others. You want to share ideas and express yourself in a larger framework. Circumstances on the romantic front are favorable with one who shares intellectual interests. Activities involving teaching/learning are favored, along with good aspects for travel.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

This is an especially favorable time to be on vacation. Cosmic aspects favor travel, social life, and educational interests. You may want to go for short distance travel over the weekend. Activity increases with respect to siblings and neighbors. Contacts there will be pleasant.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

An inspiration that began near the first of this year is beginning to show one or two signs of growth. This is likely to be in the arena of financial resources. Your product is gaining a small following. Keep it on track and you will see greater rewards in the future.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

From now through next week your attitude may be somber. Perhaps you are thinking about your primary relationship and what could be done to improve it. Usually this comes from a bump in the road between you. We need to experience such times so that we can make necessary corrections in our thinking. If you think your partner is at fault and needs to be corrected, take another look. You aren't all sweetness and light either.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Your partner may surprise the dickens out of you early this week. Drive and handle tools carefully. Your reflexes may be off center. You may be taking a sober look at one or more relationships. Even the very closest friends cannot know each other from the inside. Give everyone a break, including yourself.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

You have a desire to celebrate. The temptation to overspend is strong. Consider what would be fun and interesting that doesn't require a big expenditure. Activities concerning education, publishing, the law, and travel have positive aspects. You are talkative and in an exploring frame of mind.

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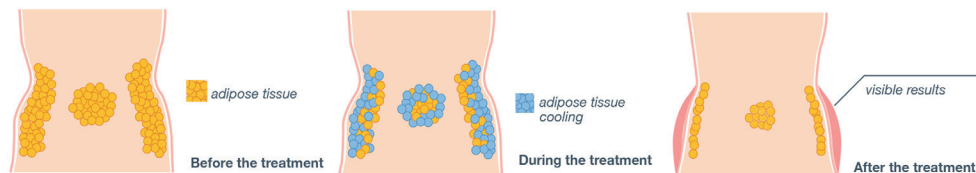
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