

Armenian PM explains “what could have been different” and calls for unity to solve urgent issues



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has confirmed Russian President Vladimir Putin’s assertion that he could have stopped the war in Nagorno-Karabakh three weeks before the Armenia-Azerbaijan ceasefire brokered by Moscow on November 9.

In a lengthy post on Facebook, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has explained what could be an alternative to the current situation and outlined the urgent issues to be solved now:

Of course, it makes a lot of sense to go back and answer the question, what would have been different if it had not been this way.

So, the Armenian side stated at the highest level and publicly that in 2011 in Kazan Armenia was ready to hand over the 7 regions in exchange for an interim status and a further referendum on the status of Karabakh, but Azerbaijan did not agree and put forward new demands.

There is a video proving this, it is available on the Internet. In other words, back in 2011 Armenia undertook to hand over the 7 regions and was ready to sign an agreement on that, but Azerbaijan put forward new demands.

What demand could have been put forward by Azerbaijan? For example, to remove the status of Karabakh from the agenda altogether, not to grant the Lachin corridor a special status. The issue of Shushi, by the way, is not in not among these new demands, because it is also resolved by the Madrid principles, which the Armenian side accepted in 2007 as a basis

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“We have always felt the support of friendly France” - PM receives French humanitarian mission delegation

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received on November 28 Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Secretary of State of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic who is leading a delegation for the flight with humanitarian assistance from France to Artsakh-based Armenians.

During the meeting with Secretary of State Lemoyne, the Prime Minister highly appreciated his contacts with French President Emmanuel Macron and thanked them for rendering humanitarian assistance to the Armenians of Artsakh. “We are grateful to friendly France for correctly presenting the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh to the international community and for providing humanitarian aid,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs declared that in tune with the spirit of Armenian-French friendly relations, the French President has reaffirmed his commitment to provide continued humanitarian aid to the Armenians from Artsakh. To this end, France is sending a second humanitarian mission. He noted that France is ready to contribute to the protection of Armenian religious, historical and cultural heritage under the control of Azerbaijan.



Both sides stressed the importance of the assistance provided by international humanitarian organizations. Then, the Prime Minister met with members of the delegation accompanying the humanitarian flight.

Greeting them, Nikol Pashinyan noted: “Dear colleagues, I very much appreciate the mission with which you have arrived. We have always felt the support of friendly France. The activities of the Armenians of France, which they carry out in Armenia, are also of particular importance to us. In this regard, we had no doubt that the Armenian community of France would stand by Armenia and Artsakh. I want to thank you for this mission. We are living in difficult times, I am sure that with the support of our friends, our compatriots, Armenia and Artsakh will overcome this difficult situation.”

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne thanked the Prime Minister for his kind remarks and introduced the members of the delegation, which is composed of representatives of the State, international and private humanitarian organizations, the French-Armenian community, including Youri Djorkaeff, Goodwill Ambassador for Armenia, as well as the management of the Aznavour Foundation.

In their speech, the members of the delegation emphasized that Armenia and Artsakh can rely on the support of France and the Franco-Armenian community, which testifies to the close Armenian-French friendship, which will be continued. The Prime Minister thanked the French delegation for their words of support and for the work done. Nikol Pashinyan asked them to convey his warm greetings and gratitude to French President Emmanuel Macron.



Prime Minister receives ICRC representatives



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan today received representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), led by Head of the ICRC delegation to Armenia Claire Meytraud.

The Prime Minister voiced his concerns over the scope of work to be done to ensure

the return of the captives and the search for the missing and bodies of the dead. Nikol Pashinyan stressed the need to increase the ICRC's resources, including human resources, and noted that the Government of the Republic of Armenia is ready to make every effort to promote the most effective and rapid implementation of the above-mentioned work. The Prime Minister noted the need for the ICRC to provide regular information on the condition, health and detention conditions of detainees.

Claire Meytraud briefed the Prime Minister on progress in their efforts. She provided information on meetings with Armenian captives. The Head of the ICRC delegation in Armenia expressed satisfaction with the

cooperation of the Nagorno Karabakh authorities with the Russian peacekeepers, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia.

At the same time, Ms. Meytraud especially emphasized the importance of the map provided by the RA Ministry of Defense with the markings of specific places, which increases the efficiency of the search. She cited the existence of mined areas and bad weather conditions as a serious impediment to the ongoing search activities.

The meeting discussed issues related to effective cooperation in the aforementioned areas and to the process of exchanging war prisoners.

France not recognizing independence of Artsakh, Foreign Ministry says



The French government has made clear that it does not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent republic despite a resolution adopted by France's Senate on November 25.

The resolution calls on the government to "recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and use this recognition as an instrument of negotiations for the establishment of a sustainable peace." It also urges the government to pursue a tougher European response toward Turkey, which has supported Azerbaijan in Karabakh the conflict, and an international war crimes investigation.

In a statement on the resolution issued late on Thursday, a French Foreign Ministry spokesperson said: "During the [Senate] debate preceding the vote, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Secretary of State for Tourism, French People Abroad and the Francophonie, recalled the French government's position on this issue: France does not recognize the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic."

"Our responsibility as co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group is to work towards a negotiated solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in particular on the issue of the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the outcome of this negotiation cannot be determined beforehand and unilaterally," added the statement.

"Our priority today must be to ensure the safe return of those displaced by the conflict of the past few weeks. In his address to the Senate, the Secretary of State further noted that no state has yet recognized Nagorno-Karabakh."

On November 25 the Senate of France has adopted a resolution on the necessity to recognize the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. The resolution was passed with 305 votes in favor, 1 against and 30 abstentions. During the Senate session the MPs called on the government to act, stand by the Armenian people and recognize the independence of Nagorno Karabakh.

Armenian businessman named Economy Minister

The founder and chief executive of Armenia's largest food delivery company has been appointed as economy minister in a government reshuffle announced by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan following the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The 44-year-old businessman, Vahan Kerobyan, is the sixth new cabinet member named by Pashinyan over the past week. The five others are the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, labor, emergencies and education.

Pashinyan announced the cabinet shakeup on November 18 amid anti-government demonstrations sparked by significant Armenian territorial losses suffered during the war. He has since continued to reject opposition demands for his resignation and snap parliamentary elections.

Kerobyan set up the Menu.am company together with his wife and a friend in 2012. He previously managed an Armenian supermarket chain that went bankrupt and



was purchased and rebranded by other investors.

Kerobyan has publicly supported the current government and Pashinyan in particular. Still, he criticized government policies during the prime minister's meeting with a group of entrepreneurs held this summer.

Pashinyan recalled this fact when he introduced Kerobyan to senior Ministry of Economy officials on November 27.

"He now has an opportunity to carefully listen to business and the private sector and not only raise the sector's problems with

the government but also personally address them," said Pashinyan.

Kerobyan said, for his part, that the war and the continuing coronavirus pandemic have created new economic challenges for Armenia. He also said that the Armenian economy could grow by 10 percent annually in the near future, an ambitious target set by Pashinyan earlier this year.

The economy is now projected to shrink by about 7 percent in 2020 after three consecutive years of robust growth. The government forecast a less drastic GDP contraction before the war with Azerbaijan that broke out on September 27 and was stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire on November 10.

In its budget bill submitted to the Armenian parliament early this month, the government said economic growth will resume and reach a 4.8 percent rate already next year. The International Monetary Fund offered last week a less optimistic outlook for the Armenian economy.

France tells Turkey to remove ‘mercenaries’ from Karabakh

France expects Turkey to withdraw Syrian mercenaries recruited for Azerbaijan during the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh, a senior French official visiting Armenia said on November 28.

“French President Emmanuel Macron was the first to call things what they are and state that Turkey transported Syrian mercenaries from the Turkish city of Gaziantep to Nagorno-Karabakh,” Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, a secretary of state at the French Foreign Ministry, told a news conference in Yerevan held at the end of his two-day visit.

“France expects concrete actions from Turkey so that Turkey removes the mercenaries from the region,” he said. “Paris is going to discuss with its European partners sanctions against Turkey.”

France has been pressing the European Union to impose the sanctions because of Turkish actions in the eastern Mediterranean where Turkey and EU members Greece and Cyprus are locked in a dispute over natural gas rights. Relations between Ankara and Paris have been increasingly



tense in recent months.

Macron accused Turkey of recruiting jihadist fighters from Syria for the Azerbaijani army shortly after the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in and around Karabakh on September 27.

Russia also expressed serious concern in the following weeks about the deployment of “terrorists and mercenaries” from Syria and Libya in the Karabakh conflict zone. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his foreign and defense ministers repeatedly raised the matter with their Turkish counterparts.

Ankara has denied sending members of Turkish-backed groups to fight in Karabakh on Azerbaijan’s side. Azerbaijan also

denies the presence of such mercenaries in the Azerbaijani army ranks.

Multiple reports by Western media quoted members of Islamist rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under Turkish control as saying in late September and October that they are deploying to Azerbaijan in

coordination with the Turkish government. Armenia has portrayed those reports as further proof of Turkey’s direct involvement in the war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire on November 10.

Artsakh Defense army claimed to have captured two Syrian fighters during the fighting. Both men are now prosecuted in Armenia on relevant charges.

Lemoyne discussed the issue at a meeting with Armenian Foreign Minister Ara Aivazian held earlier on Saturday. According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, they stressed “the importance of removing foreign armed terrorists brought to the region by Turkey.”

Armenia, Artsakh Republic FM's discuss prospects of Karabakh conflict settlement

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh Masis Mayilian met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ara Aivazian.

Masis Mayilian once again congratulated Ara Aivazian on his appointment as Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, expressing confidence that through the coordinated efforts of the two ministries it will be possible, in the current difficult



circumstances, to find effective solutions to the complex challenges facing the two Armenian states and to achieve the pan-Armenian goals.

The Foreign Ministers touched upon the prospects of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh con-

flict settlement process. The ministers also discussed the steps taken to retrieve from the areas of recent fighting the bodies of Armenian servicemen fallen as a result of the aggression against the Republic of Artsakh, to clarify the fate of the missing persons and to release the prisoners of war and hostages.

Masis Mayilian noted that the international recognition and restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Artsakh, which would guarantee the rights of its citizens to live freely and with dignity in their native land remains on the foreign policy agenda of the Republic of Artsakh.

European Parliament Calls for Urgent Sanctions on Turkey

Members of the European Parliament on November 26 voted in favor of a resolution calling on the European Council to impose urgent sanctions against Turkey.

The measure was promoted by what the European Parliament called Turkey's "illegal activities in the Varosha suburb of the city of Famagusta" in Cyprus.

In 1974, the Turkish army fenced off Varosha, a beach resort immediately after the invasion of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots who fled from Varosha were not allowed to return and with public entry prohibited, Varosha has effectively become a ghost town.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan angered Cyprus when he visited Verosha on November 15. Ankara backed the partial re-opening of Varosha in a move criticised by the United States, Greece and Greek Cypriots.

Erdogan's visit this month capped months of tensions between Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, as well as Europe, when Ankara began exploring for natural resources off the coast of Cyprus. This prompted a military buildup on the Eastern Mediterranean,



alarming other states such as Egypt.

Members of the European Parliament on Thursday warned that Turkey's decision to partially open the town of Varosha, "weakens prospects of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem, exacerbating divisions and entrenching the permanent partition of the island".

They also called on Turkey to transfer Varosha to its lawful inhabitants under the UN temporary administration in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 550 (1984) and to refrain from any actions that alter the demographic balance on the island through a "policy of illegal settlement."

In response, Turkey's Foreign Ministry

condemned the resolution, saying: "We completely reject the non-binding resolution adopted by the MEPs on our country and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

"This decision, which is undoubtedly dictated by the Greek Cypriot administration, once again demonstrates how disconnected from reality and prejudiced the EP is on the Cyprus issue," he continued.

Earlier this month, the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, criticized Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Northern Cyprus during which he called for a "two-state" solution in the island.

"These [actions] will cause greater distrust and tension in the region and should be urgently reversed," he said.

The island of Cyprus was divided in 1974. The island's Greek Cypriots live predominantly in the south, and Turkish Cypriots in the north since the 1974 war. Several peacemaking efforts have failed and the discovery of offshore resources has complicated the negotiations.

Tehran vows response to assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist



The assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh who was the head of the Iranian Defense Ministry's research center will not remain unanswered, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on November 28.

"Our enemies know that Iranian people are brave, and this crime will not remain unanswered, the answer will be given at the

right time," the IRIB TV and radio corporation quotes him as saying.

On Friday, the Fars news agency reported an attempt of the nuclear scientist's life near the city of Damavand in the Tehran province. Later on, the Iranian Defense Ministry confirmed that he had been wounded and died in hospital.

Azeri football official declared wanted by Armenian authorities for inciting genocide



The Committee of Investigations of Ar-

menia has placed the Azeri Qarabağ football club's PR manager Nurlan Ibrahimov on a wanted list on charges of inciting ethnic and racial hostility, directly or publicly inciting genocide and endorsing or justifying genocide and other crimes against peace and safety of humanity.

A Yerevan court has issued an arrest warrant for Ibrahimov.

On November 26 UEFA announced that it has banned for life the Azeri football official for "racist behavior" and Qarabağ football club was fined 100,000 euros.

During the recent Artsakh war, Ibrahimov had made a statement on social media calling for the killing of "all the Armenians, old and young, without distinction".

ARSEN V. GHAZARYAN: I DON'T THINK MOST OF OUR BUSINESSMEN ARE DISAPPOINTED, EVEN GOING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY



It was announced few days ago that PM Nikol Pashinyan has started a series of meetings with representatives of the business community to discuss Armenia's economic activity and the restoration of the investment climate. He has met first with Arsen V. Ghazaryan, President of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia, UMBA (a role model businessman, maecenas, benefactor, intellectual and citizen), and some others like Khachatur Sukiasyan, Founder of SIL Concern, Samvel Aleksanyan, Founder of Alex Holding, etc. We've talked with President of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA) Arsen V. Ghazaryan.

He said that they discussed the issues of economic recovery and development in post-coronavirus, post-war situation, increase of investments, structural change of the economy, issues of concern of the business elite, etc.

"The Prime Minister instructed our Union also to organize individual meetings with leading businessmen of different branches and I will present that list after discussing it in the Union the day after tomorrow," said Arsen Ghazaryan.

- The fact that the Prime Minister met with the businessmen who are

mainly considered his "close oligarchs", caused confusion among many...

- I met as the Head of a non-governmental organization, the issues of that format were discussed with me which I mentioned, about the others I learned from the press, - with whom PM met.

But I have been instructed to give the list of prominent businessmen in the field of production, trade, services, transport who have something to say, offer solutions or offer constructive innovations, to clarify their list, to give it for starting a series of individual meetings.

- Mr Ghazaryan, after the war, especially in the situation after our defeat, and the current moods in society, what moods do the businessmen have? Many people are waiting for the borders to be opened so that they just let them leave the country...

- You know what... I have been a businessman for about 27 years, 20 of which I have been the President of the UMBA... We have seen many trials, and the mentioned private businessmen have succeeded to save and develop their businesses overcoming Golgotha sufferings. And they have succeeded so much that I told the Prime Minister yesterday that during these nine months

of the coronavirus we were able to accept the blow with honor, and we did not have an economic collapse. And we were going even to talk about the growth rates in 2021. I do not think that most of our businessmen are disappointed, they want to leave the country. We will get out of this, first of all, psychological crisis we have now, we will get out of these material and technical losses, which are being restored. The key is psychological. I am sure of that.

- Can the resignation of the Prime Minister and the government, the change of power change anything positively in the business environment?

- As the Head of an NGO, and a businessman, I've always been trying to have constructive relations with any government in the office. We've always been away of political issues. That is why we worked as a public organization under four presidents and 18 prime ministers.

I do not want to comment on this. I know, today there is an incumbent government that is trying to make changes, we must try to maintain our economies, try to develop, offer solutions. And the other issues are the problem of political parties.

- But the business environment is not free from all that, after all, there is a problem of trust, will the businessmen trust the Prime Minister who signed a defeat document?

- The issue of trust and trust mandates are given through elections. I am in favor of any change, any reconstruction should be within the framework of the law and constitutionality. Any other approach is instability, deepening of watersheds, - it is unacceptable, especially for our Nation today.

HRAPARAK (hraparak.am), 23 November 2020

Translated, edited and compiled by Gourgen James Khazhakian, Honored Journalist of Armenia

Médecins Sans Frontières team, humanitarian aid brought from France to support Armenia

French Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne personally attended the ceremonial donation of humanitarian aid to Armenia.

French Ambassador to Armenia Jonathan Lacote, Aznavour Foundation Director Kristina Aznavour, French Goodwill Ambassador for Armenia Youri Djorkaeff and others attended the ceremony.

This second relief plane from France has brought humanitarian aid envisaged for assisting the Armenians who were affected from the Artsakh-Azerbaijan war. The aid will be distributed among the medical facilities in Armenia.

Lemoyne and Armenian health minister



Arsen Torosyan signed a document which states that France has donated a 5-tonn capacity mobile medical station with the ability of treating 500 patients and a COVID-19 batch consisting of 5 generators, 5 extractors, 25000 gloves, 900 protective gear and 10000 FFP2 masks and 2500 hygiene items.

“First of all, I’d like to thank Jonathan Lacote, because we’ve been closely cooperating ever since the pandemic began, when health workers were arriving from France to assist our doctors and exchange experience. We highly appreciate any assistance from France, given the many years of friendship between our countries,” Torosyan said.

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) also arrived in Armenia as part of partnership. The organization will provide medical treatment, physical and psychological rehabilitation, equipment and material support.

The French delegation said that humanitarian support from France will be continuous.

Russia thinking over establishing railway for transporting goods to Artsakh

In the sidelines of the program of supporting the population of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) affected by the war, the operative group of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia, together with the representatives of Stepankert administrative district, distributed construction materials to the population. ARMENPRESS reports, citing the press release of the Ministry of Emer-



gency Situations of Artsakh, reconstruction of residential buildings continues.

At the moment the Russian side is also discussing the issue of establishing a railway for making transportation of goods more effective.

“It will allow to save time for the transportation of goods. As a result, the restoration of the damaged infrastructures will continue at a faster pace”, reads the press release.

Pashinyan continues meetings with business community representatives

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan continues meetings with the representatives of the business community aimed at discussing issues relating to the restoration of economic activity and investment climate in Armenia, the PM’s Office told Noyan Tapan.

On November 27 the PM held a meeting

with Unicomp director general Armen Baldryan and Grant Thornton Armenia chairman of the board Gagik Gyulbudaghyan.

The topics for discussion included issues relating to strengthening the government-business ties, ensuring the continuation of business projects and restoring the economic optimism.



Putin: Armenia Not Recognizing Artsakh was ‘a Significant Factor’

By Harut Sassounian

President Vladimir Putin of Russia made several important comments in his response to journalists on Nov. 17, regarding the recent Artsakh War ceasefire that he brokered between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Russian leader started by providing the background of the Artsakh conflict: “It all started in the already remote year of 1988, when ethnic clashes took place in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait. Armenian civilians fell victim to these events, and later it spread to Nagorno-Karabakh. And since Soviet Union’s leaders did not react duly to these events... let me say it again: these are sensitive issues, and I do not want to side with anyone or decide who was right or wrong. It is no longer possible to determine this now, but it was necessary to put things in order and protect civilians, and this was not done. At that point, the Armenians themselves took up arms, and this protracted conflict, a conflict building for many years broke out.

Eventually, it led to a declaration of independence, sovereignty and self-reliance by Karabakh in 1991. The Bishkek agreements were signed in 1994 and this Bishkek memorandum stopped the hostilities at that time. What happened as a result? Karabakh declared independence, as I have said, and another seven adjacent regions came under the control of Armenians, that is, Armenia.”

In response to a journalist’s comment that “no one recognized Karabagh’s status,” Putin stated: “That is true: no one recognized it then or later. By the way, Armenia itself did not recognize it. ... With regard to recognizing or not recognizing Karabakh as an independent state, there may be different approaches, but this undoubtedly was a significant factor, including in the course of the bloody conflict that I hope has ended. Because the very fact of the non-recognition of Karabakh, including by Armenia, has left a deep imprint on the course of events and the way it is perceived. To put it bluntly, after the former Georgian leaders’ undoubtedly criminal moves, I mean the attacks against our peacekeepers in South Ossetia, Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We recognized the expression of the will of the people living in Crimea to reunite with Russia as just, and we met the people halfway, we did so openly. Some people may

like it, others may not like it, but we did it in the interests of the people who live there and in the interests of Russia, and we are not ashamed to speak about it openly. This did not happen with Karabakh, and this, of course, has significantly influenced the developments there.” Later in the interview, Putin added: “Armenia did not recognize the independence and sovereignty of Nagorno-Karabakh. In terms of international law, it meant that Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjoining districts were an inalienable part of the Republic of Azerbaijan.”

This is an important declaration by President Putin. Armenia has been reluctant to recognize Artsakh’s independence out of a concern of a backlash from the international community. It was feared that such a move would have disrupted the peaceful negotiations and could have possibly resulted in war or at least rejection and sanctions against Armenia by the United Nations.

Armenia’s leaders, up until Putin’s above comments, had no idea that not recognizing Artsakh’s independence was viewed by the Russian leader as a mistake, negatively affecting Russia’s support. During the past decades of negotiations with the Minsk Group of mediators, including Russia, one wonders if any of Armenia’s leaders ever asked Putin or his predecessors for their reaction to Armenia’s possible recognition of Artsakh. If Armenia’s leaders did not raise this issue, it was a major mistake. Had Armenia known that Russia would have welcomed its recognition of Artsakh, the subsequent events, including the recent war, would have turned out much different. Some Armenians had suggested that if Artsakh had been united with Armenia, that would have compelled Russia to defend Artsakh from any foreign attacks based on the mutual defense treaty between Russia and Armenia. As I suggested previously, maybe at this late stage, Armenia would finally listen to Putin’s advice and recognize Artsakh’s independence or unify it with Armenia in order to have a bargaining chip in the negotiations with Azerbaijan. In response to another question regarding the status of Artsakh, Putin stated: “Yes, there is this problem since Karabakh’s final status has not been settled. We have agreed to maintain the status quo. What happens next will be decided eventually by future leaders and future participants in this process. I think if proper conditions are cre-

ated for normal life and relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, between people in everyday life, especially in the conflict zone, are restored, it will create an environment for determining Karabakh’s status.” This response provides a ray of hope that with time, Artsakh may be able to attain its goal of securing an independent status. Interestingly, President Putin left such a decision to “future leaders and future participants in this process.”

Another question was regarding the territories surrounding Artsakh and the status of Shushi prior to its occupation by Azerbaijan. President Putin explained that the return of the territories surrounding Artsakh to Azerbaijan was first suggested by Russia in 2013 and supported by France and the United States. He said that this would have preserved Artsakh’s status quo “as an unrecognized state,” and its final status to be resolved in the future. Putin stated that there would have been no war if Armenia had agreed to the return of refugees of both sides to their previous homes.

Regarding the City of Shushi, Putin confirmed that its transfer to Azerbaijan was never raised. Putin recalled that 20 days before the end of the war, while Azerbaijan had only conquered “an insignificant part” of Artsakh, he had managed to convince President Aliyev to end the hostilities on condition that Azeri refugees would be able to return to Shushi, under Armenian control in the presence of Russian peacekeepers. However, Prime Minister Pashinyan told Putin that this condition is unacceptable to Armenia and continued the fighting, resulting in the loss of Shushi. President Putin added that there was no “treason” on the part of Pashinyan.

President Putin also made several important deferential remarks regarding Turkey. The Russian leader acknowledged that “Azerbaijan is an independent sovereign state, and has every right to choose allies as it deems fit. Who can deny it this right? This is my first point. Second, as I have already mentioned, nobody has recognized Karabakh’s independence, [not] even Armenia. What does this mean in terms of international law? It means that Azerbaijan sought to recover territories which Azerbaijan and the entire international community view as Azerbaijani territory. In this context, it had the right to choose any ally

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Involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence – Prosecution

The organized and coordinated involvement of armed terrorists and mercenaries is proved by sufficient evidence obtained in time of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh and Republic of Armenia, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Armenia said in a statement.

The military and political leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan violated the requirements of numbers of international treaties on September 27, 2020, unleashed aggressive war against the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh; preliminary investigation was initiated on the case, data were obtained on use of mercenaries, members of various terrorist groups specially recruited by Azerbaijan from the first day of the war. The latter carried out international terrorism in order to destabilize the internal state of a foreign state, by means of organizing and carrying out actions such as explosions, arson and other similar actions, continued killing people, destroying buildings, structures, roads, means of transport and communication or other property.

On that basis, according to the materials obtained on October 12, 2020, a criminal case was initiated under Article 389 of the RA Criminal Code and joined to the criminal case initiated on the case of unleashing an aggressive war against the Republic of Artsakh.

During the preliminary investigation, on suspicion of committing crimes under Article 389, Article 390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Points 1 and 2, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code, mercenaries: Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkher, a resident from the village of Atmi, near the city of Sarmad, a citizen of the Arab Republic of Syria, born in 1988 and a citizen of the Arab Republic of Syria, Yusef Alabet Al Haji, born on 03.05.1975 in Edlib region, Jser Al Shahur city, village Al Ziedie participating in the aggressive war unleashed by the Republic of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh were arrested on October 31, 2020 by the body conducting the proceedings.



In the scope of proper judicial procedure with sufficient evidence obtained Muhhrab Muhammad Al Shkher was charged under Article 389, Article 34-390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code and Yusef Alabet Al Haji was charged under Article 389 of the RA Criminal Code, Article 34-390, Part 1, Point 1 and Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code. Detention was chosen as a preventive measure against them.

In the course of the preliminary investigation, factual information was obtained about the participation of a number of other mercenaries in the actions unleashed by the military and political leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in particular Ahmad Al-Tayebi /35 years old, citizen of the Syrian Arab Republic, residence of Reyhany, Turkey/, Abu Stef Al-Hindavi /35 years old/, about Abu Diab Halabi / 30 years old/.

Decisions were made by the body conducting the proceedings on the involvement of the above-mentioned persons in a criminal case under Article 389, Article 390, Part 3, Point 1, Article 395, Part 3 of the RA Criminal Code and detention was chosen as a preventive measure against the latter and they were declared wanted.

During the further preliminary investigation and in the result of operative-investigative measures undertaken, as well as urgent investigative and other judicial actions, factual data was obtained on the leader of the international terroristic group called "Sultan Suleyman Shah", Muhammad Al-Jasimi, titled "Abu Hamsha", arab national / born in 1985/ for recruiting more than two

thousands mercenaries in the Syrian Arab Republic for material compensation and transporting them to Azerbaijan to involve in the war against the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, including for leading operations in place.

Based on the above, a decision was made on November 8, 2020 regarding Muhammad Al-Jasimi to initiate a criminal case against him under Article 38-389, Article 390, Part 3, Points 1 and 2, Article 395, Part 3, Points 1 and 3 of the RA Criminal Code. Detention was chosen as a preventive measure against the latter, he was declared wanted. The preliminary investigation is underway.

Objective evidence proves the presence of extremist terrorists and mercenaries, members of international terrorist groups during the whole time of the war in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, their active participation in the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and war crimes against the people of Artsakh. After the adoption of a joint trilateral statement on finishing the military actions by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, there is no information about their withdrawal from the conflict zone.

Moreover, according to the published information, measures are being undertaken to locate the terrorist groups and the mercenaries living in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic to the territories occupied by Azerbaijan. If this information is true, it may be assessed as a step aimed at concentrating terrorist groups in the region, thereby increasing the threats against the population of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, as well as against the security, stability and relative peace of all countries in the region.

The Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Armenia reaffirms its readiness to expand cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral forms in order to prevent new terrorist acts and establishment of new terrorist centers in the region, as well as it tries to detect such attempts and identify the persons involved in them to make them liable.

who could assist it in this endeavor.... You can assess Turkey's actions any way you want, but it can hardly be accused of violating international law."

It is noteworthy that Putin did not mention Turkey's violations of international law by recruiting terrorists from Northern Syria and transporting them to Azerbaijan to fight against Artsakh. Given Russia's multiple interests in cooperating with Turkey, it is not surprising that he ignored Turkey's crimes.

President Putin gave an unexpected reason for blocking Turkish peacekeepers

from joining Russians in Artsakh. He stated that it was because of "the bitter legacy of the past, the tragic and bloody events that took place during the First World War, the genocide. This is a factor that can be recognized or rejected; some people do and others don't recognize it. This is not a problem for Russia; we have long recognized it. But why provoke the Armenian side by the presence of Turkish military personnel on the contact line? I believe that President Erdogan was and is fully aware of this."

Finally, President Putin justified Prime Minister Pashinyan's agreement to cease the hostilities. He added that any rejection

of the signed agreement would be "suicidal" for Armenia.... "It would be a huge mistake." Putin also acknowledged that even though he had good relations with Armenia's previous leaders, Russia's relationship with Armenia did not change after Pashinyan came to power. This statement could be explained by the fact that since the Armenian opposition is critical of Pashinyan signing the ceasefire agreement, Putin is reluctant to criticize him because his opponents, should they come to power, would reject the agreement which could possibly restart the war with Azerbaijan.

The status and security of Artsakh a priority – Armenia's Representative to the OSCE

The status and security of Artsakh, safe and dignified return of the recently displaced population of Artsakh are priorities and need to be addressed urgently, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Armen Papikyan said in an address to the Permanent Council meeting under the current issue "On the Situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh"

"Armenia's position on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was and is consistent and is based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Moreover, we fully endorsed three main principles – refraining from the threat or use of force, territorial integrity of states, equal rights and self-determination of peoples – proposed by the Minsk Group Co-chair countries and agreed upon by the OSCE in 2009 and today I thank our American colleague for referring to those principles," Ambassador Papikyan said.

He noted that Armenia always considered the format of Co-Chairs as the only internationally mandated mechanism to deal with the conflict and was always supportive of their active engagement in the settlement process.

"Our genuine desire to find a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has been challenged by maximalist demands of Azerbaijan, which being encouraged and instigated by Turkey started a large-scale war on September 27 against Artsakh, with direct involvement of Turkish military and FTFs and jihadists, in clear



defiance of all principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and further emboldened by the subdued reaction of international community or absence thereof. On one occasion I have already said that by launching an aggression Azerbaijan violated all provisions of the Helsinki Final Act – the constituent document of this organization," he added.

"Today we have to state that thanks to Russian President Vladimir Putin's personal engagement and actions, the people of Artsakh are not living under the constant shelling, man and women are not dying under the cluster munition or white phosphorus, children are not spending days and nights in basements while guessing from the sound where the shell will hit next time. Young soldiers, indoctrinated by one side and defending their homeland from another side, are not dying in the frontline. This is the main achievement of the trilateral statement of 9th November and we all have to recognize that," Armen Papikyan noted.

"We also have to recognize that the situation created in the result of use of force simply cannot be considered as a fait accompli and cannot serve as a basis for negotiations and political sustainable settlement

of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Status and security of Artsakh, safe and dignified return of the recently displaced population of Artsakh and addressing urgent humanitarian, social and other issues related to the return of the civilian population to normal life are priorities and should be addressed urgently. The trilateral statement of November 9 should be considered without prejudice to the final political and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Only political and negotiated settlement may bring peace and harmony to the South Caucasus region, without the dangerous and destabilising engagement of the third party. Therefore, Turkey cannot and should not play any role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because by its actions it hinders any progress in the settlement process," he said.

He thanked the US Ambassador for raising this issue and appreciated the efforts and engagement of France, Russia and the United States, within the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship format.

"We hope to see more active and target oriented undertakings to achieve peaceful and negotiated settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs continue to remain the only internationally agreed format for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and enjoy full support of Armenia," the Ambassador concluded.

Armenia Fund Thanksgiving Day Telethon Raises \$22.9 Million

LOS ANGELES—Armenia Fund raised \$22.9 million during its Thanksgiving fundraising drive, culminating the 23rd annual International Thanksgiving Day Telethon held on November 26, providing a critical lifeline to Armenians who have been left homeless and destitute by recent aggression.

The event united the Armenian-American community in a show of strength and devotion to help those back in the homeland who are going through their most difficult time in a generation. The \$22.9 million was raised between November 9 and Thanksgiving Day as monies raised for the telethon began coming in about 2 weeks prior to the actual telethon show.

During the telethon, celebrities, civic leaders and other luminaries from the Armenian-American community took time to remember and honor the fallen, uplift the community and serve as a symbol of hope for those in Armenia going through dark days. As the history of Armenians in the United States has proven over and over,



better days lie ahead when the community comes together.

The telethon was streamed globally at armenianfund.org and broadcast nationwide via DirecTV and U-Verse. It was also available over-the-air in the Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno and New York media markets.

“We are overwhelmed by the response from the Armenian-American community and all who donated during this telethon,” said Armenia Fund Board Chair Maria Mehranian. “Many families in Armenia have lost their homes and loved ones following unprovoked aggression from Turkish-backed Azerbaijani forces and have to

rebuild from scratch. Funds raised through this telethon will help them get back on their feet sooner.”

Since September 27, Armenia Fund in the United States has already raised more than \$102 million from the community through its #ArtsakhStrong campaign to help those displaced by the recent violence, most of whom were forced from their homes empty-handed right at the beginning of the winter season. The fund has provided

temporary shelter, transitional housing, transport, food and medical care for those in need of help with every single dollar received allocated exclusively for humanitarian purposes.

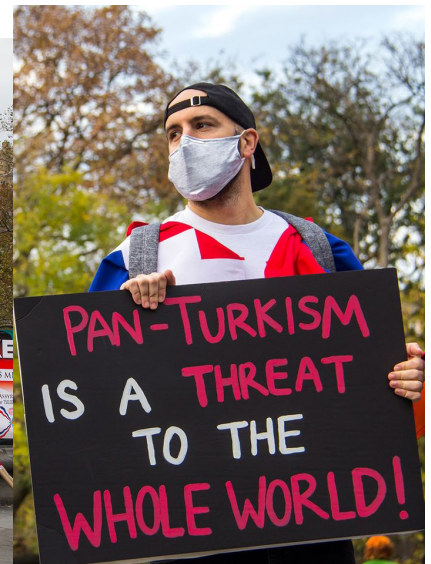
While the situation on the ground is changing daily and the people of Armenia and Artsakh mourn and reflect, Armenia Fund is stepping up to help our people survive this period of great hardship. We are focused on helping our Armenian brothers and sisters rebuild and thrive and we stand united with them now more than ever to help them emerge even stronger.

Armenian community in US calling to stop the cultural genocides by Turkey and Azerbaijan

“The Armenian community of the greater New York area gathered at Washington Square Park in downtown Manhattan in a

silent protest, calling for the US to recognize Artsakh’s independence and stop the cultural genocides being perpetrated by

Turkey and Azerbaijan”. AGBU wrote this on Facebook.



Azerbaijan artificially delays the process of exchange of PoWs: An urgent call from Armenia's Ombudsman

Armenia's Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan has called upon the international community, and in particular the international organizations on human rights to focus on the issue of Azerbaijani authorities artificially protracting the process of exchange of bodies and captives, which has been the case during the military activities, and continues now after the completion of military actions.

"With the objective of delaying the aforementioned process, the Azerbaijani authorities state that the exchange of the captives will take place after completing the process of bodies' exchange, at the same time unreasonably protracting the process of exchange of bodies. By all these delays Azerbaijan grossly violates the fundamental requirements guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions," the Ombudsman said.

It is obvious, he said, that Azerbaijan aims at creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and tension in the Armenian society, disrupt the mental immunity, cause psychological/mental suffering to the family members of the deceased soldiers and prisoners of war.

Studies of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia prove that such treatment is a result of the organized and disseminated hatred, as an inseparable systematically applied policy of torture and inhuman treatment.

In particular, the Human Rights Defender has repeatedly stated that starting from September 27, 2020, the military attacks by the Azerbaijani military forces against Ar-



menia and Artsakh have been accompanied by torture and inhuman treatment, massive destruction of the civilian settlements, and other gross violations of human rights, which took place also with the help of the jihadist mercenaries and terrorists along with the dissemination of hatred.

"Throughout the military actions, as well as after the cessation of hostilities, the mass media, particularly the Azerbaijani social media sources ceaselessly publish videos and photos, which depict the degrading treatment by Azeri military forces of the Armenian soldiers' bodies, torture and degrading treatment of the captives, both civilians and military," Arman Tatoyan said.

The aforementioned is being accompanied by delightful comments and glorification from Azeris (the evidence to this is recorded). This has been an inseparable part of the methods applied by Azerbaijan during September-November 2020 war.

According to the Human Rights Defender, throughout the war activities it has been obvious that the Azerbaijani authorities endorse/promote these cruelties and degrading treatment, having an objective

of instigating hatred and hostility in Azerbaijan against ethnic Armenians, glorifying those who commit these atrocities.

The results of the investigations of the Human Rights Defender affirm that these vicious events, which are beyond any human imagination and against all international requirements, have systematic and well-spread nature, starting from Azerbaijani political authorities and ending with cultural and sport figures. The Human Rights Defender possesses all necessary evidence, which attest to these facts.

After completion of the military activities the torture and inhuman treatment of the Armenian prisoners of war/captives by Azeri military forces have taken a new spin: the number and volume, as well as the level of cruelty have significantly increased. It is obvious that those who commit the torture and cruelties, as well as those who take videos are the representatives of the Azerbaijani military forces, whose activities are endorsed by their leadership.

The Ombudsman stressed that in current circumstances the liberation/release of the captives, their safe return, the exchange of bodies have become an urgent matter, requiring immediate resolution.

"Therefore, I call upon the international community, in particular the organizations, which have a mandate to protect human rights: It is an urgent necessity to resolve this issue with all the means possible and by real actions to release the people from the most atrocious war crimes and cruel captivity," Tatoyan said.

Armenia PM: It is necessary to implement realistic programs in the field of military industry



A sitting of the Military Industry Committee chaired by the Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan took place in the government on November 30.

In his speech Pashinyan referred to the issue of development and improvement of the military-industrial complex.

"After the adoption of the law on the Military-Industrial Complex" in Armenia in 2015, the military industry is one of the most discussed topics in our country. But, in fact, we can state that the results we have today are not at all satisfactory, because, unfortunately, we have not been able to form such systems so that we can state – the military-industrial complex in the Republic of Armenia has been sufficiently formed. We also need to summarize what happened in the previous period, to assess the shortcomings of the previous period and understand what realistic programs we can have in the field of military industry. The goal is that first, the complex be able to

become the driving force of our country's economy and industry, on the other hand, be able to meet our security needs in line with modern challenges", said the Prime Minister.

During the meeting a discussion was held on the directions of development and what to do next in the conditions of the realities formed after the war.

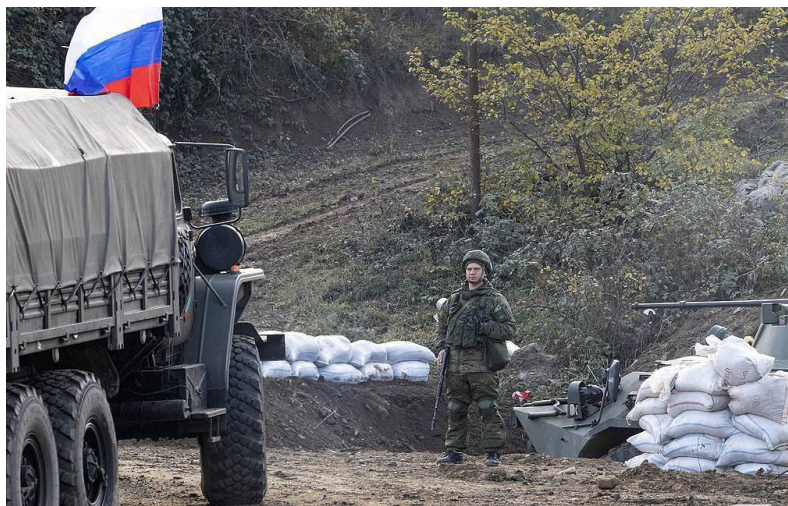
Reforms of the education system and meeting the demand for specialists needed for the military-industrial complex were considered a priority.

The list of special research and experimental design works for 2020-2021 has been presented.

Russian peacekeepers set up field hospital in Karabakh

Servicemen of a special-purpose medical detachment have opened a field hospital in Stepanakert to provide medical aid to residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Russian Defense Ministry reported on November 30, TASS reports.

“Subdivisions of a special-purpose medical detachment have opened a field hospital in Stepanakert,” the statement said. The ministry specified that the hospital was set up on the premises of an airport in Stepanakert.



The specialists of the detachment will provide medical care for a peacekeeping contingent as well as for the local residents. The hospital can accommodate up to

40 people.

The ministry noted that over 60 medical specialists arrived in the region, including military surgeons, general physicians, and epidemiologists. They were brought by military transport aviation Il-76 aircraft from Khabarovsk to Yerevan.

In all, in order to deploy the special-purpose medical detachment of the Eastern Military District 122 servicemen, 54 units of automotive and special equipment, 66 tonnes of material supplies will arrive in Nagorno-Karabakh, the ministry added.

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for negotiations. It clearly states that the population of Nagorno-Karabakh must have the same proportion as in 1988. In other words, there should be 90% and more of Azeri population in Shushi.

So, we have had this situation since 2011, and since 2013 Azerbaijan has been going to military escalation. In 2013-2015, the escalation with the logic of subversive actions reached its peak, leading to the four-day war in April 2016.

Azerbaijan formulated its above-mentioned demands, regardless of the document put on the table by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. The demands of Azerbaijan and their fulfillment by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs became a priority because the alternative was war.

Assuming the post of the Prime Minister of Armenia in 2018, I have naturally taken note of this. And in this situation, let's understand what was the alternative to what happened?

The alternative was to address the people and say we either have to hand over the 7 regions without the status of Karabakh, or there will be a war. What would people say? They would have said 'no, we will stand up and fight for our homeland.' And the war would start and it would turn out that Armenia started a war.

Had I said no, we have to surrender, people would have said "Nikol is traitor" and another war would have started.

At any stage, including during the Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercises, I could go to the Turks and say, "Let's solve the issue without war." They would have said "give a specific schedule when you hand over the territories." If I signed, people would have said "Nicole the traitor", if I didn't sign, war would have started.

As of 2018, the Karabakh issue was a deadlock, from which there was only one way out – unconditional handover of territories, without guaranteeing that Azerbaijan would not make new demands. And in the context of these new demands, increasing the likelihood of war again.

Many now say that we needed to work more closely with our friends. But who said that the friends had a different vision of resolving the issue? Isn't it obvious now that that vision completely coincides with the one described above?

What have we done? We have prepared for war as much as possible. Now it turned out that we were badly prepared. But what are we badly prepared for? The July battles showed that we were not poorly prepared to fight against Azerbaijan. But Turkey, mercenaries, this is another story that will still be talked about.

They say we had to stop the war sooner. The price to stop the war sooner was the same. Handover of 7 districts. If handing over 3 districts in the conditions of a deadly threat to the loss of Shushi and Stepanakert is a betrayal, how could the handing over of

7 districts in relatively better conditions not be a betrayal?

Well, what should we do now? We must stabilize the situation and not make it worse. The most important issue now is the issue of captives, missing persons and those who have possibly sheltered somewhere, which must be resolved very quickly.

But let's look at this issue through the eyes of the opposite side. He sees that the delay in this issue allows the conflict to deepen inside Armenia, even to start clashes inside, the mini-manifestations of which have already taken place.

Relatives of our soldiers, dear ones, will they accelerate the solution of the issue of prisoners and missing people in these conditions? Of course not: On the contrary, they will prolong it as long as possible, rubbing their hands and waiting for what new disasters this will lead to inside us.

You will ask a very right question: what should we do, not fight? Definitely fight, fight stronger, but not against each other, but together. For the solution of the issue. The solution of the issue will accelerate only in one case. if everyone understands that there will be no internal conflicts over this issue.

Who is guilty of what and what responsibility he will have to bear will definitely be established. But now we need to focus on solving the problem together, not fighting each other. I am convinced of this.

Holy Lance (Geghard) was Brought out

The Armenian Apostolic Holy Church celebrate the Feast of the Apostles St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew on November 28.

Yet in 2015, according to the Pontifical Encyclical of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; the feast was proclaimed as Pilgrimage Day of Holy Lance (Geghard).

On the Feast, a Divine Liturgy was offered in St. John the Baptist and St. Vardan Chapel-baptistry of the Mother See.

On this solemn occasion, the Holy Lance (Geghard) was taken out to the Cathedral,

and during the celebration of Divine Liturgy was remain there.

At the conclusion, the Pontiff of All Armenians conveyed His Blessings to the attended pious people and our Fatherland, with the miraculous Holy Lance.



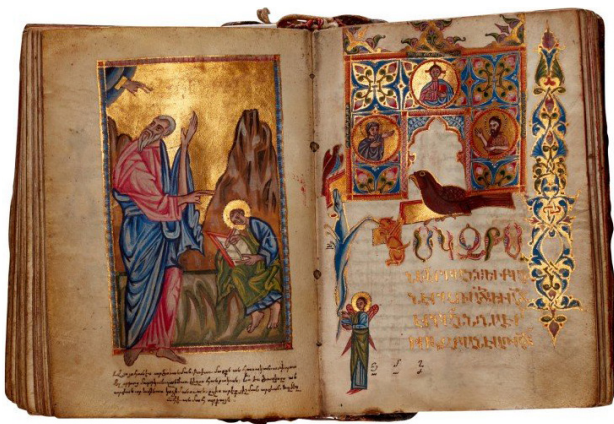
17th-century Armenian illuminated gospel book being auctioned at Sotheby's

A 17th-century Armenian illuminated gospel book is being auctioned at Sotheby's.

The manuscript is expected to be sold

have been placed so far. The lot closes on December 1.

The Matenadaran depository of ancient manuscripts offers Armenian charitable and cultural organizations and benefactors, if possible, to purchase this valuable manuscript rich with miniatures.



for 7,000 – 10,000 GBP. Twenty-two bids



“It is desirable that the manuscript remains in the national environment and, if possible,

be housed in the most important center of Armenian manuscripts, the Mashtots Matenadaran,” reads a post on Matenadaran's Facebook page.

Kim Kardashian promotes charity for children of Artsakh

Reality star and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian promotes the “Holiday Backpacks for Artsakh” initiative of the UCLA and UC Berkeley HRI chapters, which aims to bring holiday cheer to the children displaced by the war in Artsakh.

“Pack a backpack with toys, school and

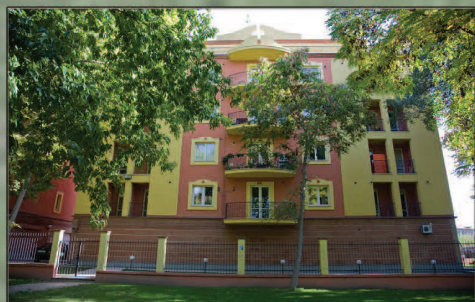


art supplies, personal care items, clothing and accessories, a personal note, and more, and gift it to a child displaced by the war in Artsakh,” Kardashian calls in a Facebook post.

The backpacks will be distributed to students at Project Hope centers.

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Dr. Tigran Paytayan

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Fax: +41 52 632 09 11

AZAD Pharma AG

Bahnhofstrasse 9
CH-3125 Toffen
Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10
Fax: +41 31 810 40 11

Canada

AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.

1895 - 55th Avenue
Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9
Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99
Fax: +1 514 636 75 55

Atlit Inc.

16 Westminster Ave.,
Suite 306A
Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1
Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91
Fax: +1 514 369 81 67

China

Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza,
#102 Moganshan Road
310051 - Hangzhou China

Phone +86-571-8761 5336
Mobile +86-153-5505-0903
Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963

Germany

AZAD Pharma GmbH

Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a
DE-78315 Radolfzell
Phone No: +49 7732 939101510
Fax: +49 7732 9391016

Armenia

AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC

Vanahovit 8, Proshian
Ashtarak Ave., Kotayk Marz
Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62
Fax: +374 93 40 34 40



The publisher: NT Holding LTD
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող
ԼՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպագրանակը՝ 1500
Circulation: 1500 print copies and
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:

TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN

Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:

GAYANEH ARAKELYAN

Director of the weekly:

MARINA HARUTYUNYAN

Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**

Computer Design: **Ashot Khalapyan**

Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

ISSN 1829-0604

Գրանցման վկայականի համար՝
03ԱՑՑՑ6368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.
Registration certificate and the date:
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: contact@nt.am

URL: www.nt.am

Address in Armenia:

28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA
Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-22 (+374 60) 35-11-24

Address in France:

Masion De L'Armenie,
Paris 17e-95, Bld. Gouvion, France
Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72

Address in USA:

1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112,
Glendale, CA, USA, 91206
Tel.: +1 (818) 646 10 72

Հասցե՝ Խաչակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009