

PM Pashinyan chairs first meeting of Economic Policy Council



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan chaired the first sitting of the Economic Policy Council under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, held via video link.

Arthur Javadyan, Chairman of the Board at the Centre for Economic Perspectives Foundation, Artak Kamalyan, Member of the Board for Industry and Agriculture of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Gurgen Aslanyan, Chairman of the Armenian Economic Association, Eugene Kandel, Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Zareh Asatryan, Member of the Center for European Economic Research, Levon Barseghyan, Professor at U.S. Cornell University, Ruben Enikolopov, Assistant Professor at the New Economic School in Moscow, Vladimir Asriyan, Professor at the Barcelona School of Economics, Alexander Auzan,

Dean of the Faculty of Economics of Moscow State University participated in the session as members of the Council.

In his speech, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan particularly said:

“Dear members of the Economic Council, participants, I am glad to host the very first meeting of the Council.

Before I begin, I would like to sincerely thank members of the Council for accepting the invitation to join and for your willingness to support Government of Armenia through providing objective economic advice on the formulation of economic policies.

This format is ever important now, when the global economy is going through transformative turbulence as the result of pandemic, hastening pace of digital transformation,

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On an official visit to Georgia, Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan met with the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament Shalva Papuashvili.

The Speaker of the Georgian Parliament welcomed the visit, noting that the fact that Vahagn Khachaturyan is paying his official visit in the capacity of the President of Armenia to Georgia is of great significance. "The centuries-old friendship between our countries gets strengthened by such high-level visits," he said.

Expressing gratitude for the warm reception and hospitality, President Khachaturyan noted: "Armenia highly values and greatly supports the Arme-

Armenia, Georgia interested in the expansion of special good-neighborly relations

nian-Georgian relations. The centuries-old brotherly relations between the Armenian and Georgian peoples are still based on mutual respect and friendly cooperation between the two countries."

The inter-parliamentary cooperation, the organization of regular meetings between the friendship groups and the committees operating in the parliaments of the two countries were especially emphasized during the meeting.

Both sides stressed the need for further development and expansion of the special good-neighborly relations between Armenia and Georgia.

Issues of regional security and strengthening of stability were touched upon, it was noted that both Armenia and Georgia are interested in the establishment of lasting and stable peace, as it is the main and the most important guarantee for the development of the region.

Vahagn Khachaturyan and Shalva Papuashvili stressed that the relations between the two countries based on mutual trust, continuous dialogue and cooperation have always been at a high level, and will continue so in the future.

At the end of the meeting, the President Khachaturyan made a note in the book of honorary guests of the Georgian Parliament.

"I am glad to pay my first official visit to Georgia, a country with which we have thousands of years of deep religious, cultural and civilizational similarities. I am confident that my visit will be a new impetus for further strengthening and deepening of relations between our countries," said President Khachaturyan.

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Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar.

PM Pashinyan receives EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus

The Prime Minister praised the Armenia-EU partnership, highly appreciating the efforts of the EU and European Council President Charles Michel for regional stability. In the context of regional peace and the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Nikol Pashinyan stressed the importance of the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs.

Toivo Klaar noted that the European

Union attaches importance to the deepening of cooperation with Armenia and supports regional dialogue.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the implementation of the agreements reached as a result of the Brussels meetings. Issues related to the work of the Delimitation and Border Security Commission and the unblocking of regional infrastructure were touched upon.

Armenian FM, EU envoy discuss implementation of agreements reached in Brussels

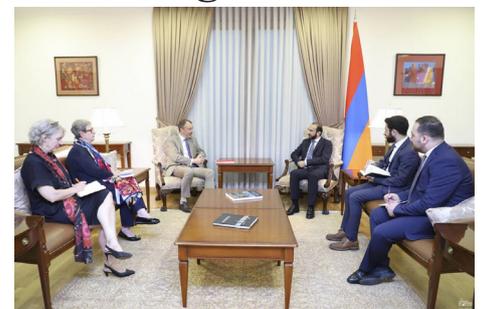
Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan received EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar.

Ararat Mirzoyan presented Armenia's position on the establishment of regional peace and stability, the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and in this context reaffirmed the need to resume the work of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

The parties discussed the implemen-

tation of the agreements reached as a result of the Brussels meetings. Minister Mirzoyan stressed the inadmissibility of arbitrary, untrue interpretations of the agreements, stressed the need for rhetoric and practical steps to ensure a constructive atmosphere.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the work of the Commission on demarcation and border security, the unblocking of the region's economic and transport infrastructure.



Minister Mirzoyan considered unacceptable Azerbaijan's continuous attempts to destabilize the situation in the South Caucasus through belligerent statements and border provocations.

page 1 ➔ climate change and geopolitical tensions. Some of the challenges, such as accelerating rate of inflation and disruption of supply chains are especially challenging for small economies. Armenia is not an exception.

We have registered robust economic growth during the first quarter of 2022, but we do understand that a longer term sustainable economic development will largely depend on flexibility and effectiveness of our today's reforms and projects.

I am sure that the Economic Council



will grow into an institution that will help, support and guide economic reforms in Armenia, and I am firmly committed to support activities of the Council through open, transparent but constructive dialogue.

I wish all participant successful and fruitful discussion”.

Then, issues related to the further activities of the Council were discussed. The participants of the meeting expressed confidence that the discussions to be held within the framework of the Council will contribute to the formation of steps, ideas and proposals aimed at overcoming the existing challenges in the field of economy and finding effective solutions.

The next meeting of the Council is planned to be held in July in Armenia.

Deputy PMs of Armenia, Russia, Azerbaijan discuss opening of communications, clarify approaches on border and customs control

On June 3, 2022, the 10th sitting of the trilateral working group chaired by Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexei Overchuk and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafa took place in Moscow.

The parties discussed and clarified their approaches to border, customs and other types of control, as well as the safe passage of citizens, vehicles and goods through the territories of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan by roads and railways.

During the meeting, an exchange of views took place on the possible routes of the road connecting the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakh-ijevan.

The parties will continue working to implement the agreements reached by the leaders of the Republic of Armenia, the

Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan on unblocking transport links in the region.



60 injured as protesters clash with police in Yerevan

Clashes between the protesters of the ‘Resistance’ movement and policemen took place during a protest action in front of the RA Prime Minister’s Palace in Yerevan, Armenia

Sixty people applies to various medical centers as of 22:30 as protesters clashed with police in Yerevan, the Ministry of Health informs.

According to the Ministry, 39 are po-

lice officers.

One of the injured is undergoing surgery at Heratsi Hospital Complex, others are being examined, Yerevan State Medical University Chief of Staff Shushan Danielyan said in a Facebook post.

Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan and Deputy Minister Armen Nazaryan are visiting the Heratsi Hospital.

The clashes took place as protesters

of the opposition “Resistance” movement gathered in front of the government cottages.

A number of protesters were detained, the exact number is yet to be released by the Police.

Opposition parties have been staging rallies for weeks demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, accusing him of mishandling negotiations with Azerbaijan over Artsakh.

Root causes of the conflict should be addressed: Michel reiterates EU's commitment to promote a stable and peaceful South Caucasus

For a sustainable normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is important to address all outstanding issues at hand, including advancing discussions on the future peace treaty and addressing the root causes of conflict, President of the European Council Charles Michel said in a statement.

In the context of the past days' tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, President Michel reiterated the EU's commitment to deepen its cooperation with both countries to promote a South Caucasus that is secure, stable, peaceful and prosperous for the benefit of all people living in the region.

He welcomed the first historic meeting of both countries' Border Commissions on 24 May and stressed the paramount importance of ensuring stability and security along the state border between Armenia and Azerbaijan as delimitation will be pursued.

More broadly, President Michel stressed that for a sustainable normaliza-



tion of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is important to address all outstanding issues at hand, including advancing discussions on the future peace treaty and addressing the root causes of conflict. In President Michel's opinion, all core issues that had led to the first Nagorno-Karabakh war as well as to the renewed hostilities in 2020 will need to be addressed by all stakeholders to create conditions for lasting and equitable peace.

As with any legacy of conflict – terminology is particularly sensitive in this context. President Michel's statement on outcomes of the leaders meeting on 22 May should not be interpreted as favoring a pre-determined outcome of discussions

either way. What ultimately matters most is that all issues are comprehensively addressed; this includes rights and security of all populations.

Connectivity was specifically discussed in Brussels on 22 May to advance opportunities for unblocking the region. In this context, both parties confirmed there were no extraterritorial claims with regard to future transport infrastructure. Speculation to the contrary is regrettable.

Finally, President Michel stressed the need to prepare populations for peace and the paramount role public rhetoric plays in this regard. He welcomed Yerevan and Baku's leadership and stated intentions to engage in good faith in ensuring a conducive atmosphere for the continuation of the talks and expressed the EU's readiness to step up its support to confidence building measures.

EU Special Representative Klaar will be traveling to the region in the next days to follow up on all aspects under discussion.

Armenia, Greece keen to deepen bilateral defense cooperation

Armenian Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan received the delegation led by the Deputy Minister of National Defense of Greece Nikos Hardalias.

The Armenian Minister of Defense hailed the current level of the Armenian-Greek cooperation in the defense sphere, stressed the necessity of developing the cooperation especially in the military-technical direction.

Nikos Hardalias reaffirmed the readiness of the Greek side to develop cooperation, noting that the warm, friendly relations between the two countries oblige to deepen cooperation in order to meet the existing challenges.

Issues related to regional security were also discussed during the meeting. The Minister of Defense presented the security

situation in Artsakh after the 44-day war and the existing threats.

On the same day, the delegation led by the Deputy Minister of National Defense of Greece was received by the Deputy Minis-

ter of Defense of the Republic of Armenia Karen Brutyan. The possibilities of developing cooperation in the military-technical sphere were discussed.



Canadian FM receives Special Envoy Dion's report on ways to support Armenian democracy

Mélanie Joly, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced on June 3 that the Honorable Stéphane Dion, Ambassador to Germany and Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe, has submitted his report on increasing Canadian support for Armenian democracy. Special Envoy Dion produced the report following a fact-finding mission to Armenia from February 24 to March 2, 2022.

Canada and Armenia are long-time partners and are both committed to advancing democratic progress. Given this, Special Envoy Dion's recommendations center on increasing Canada-Armenia partnerships by:

- establishing regular consultations,
- strengthening Armenia's democratic institutions,
- supporting Armenian NGOs,
- growing Armenia's engagement with multilateral institutions,
- increasing Canada's engagement with the vibrant Armenian diaspora and;

- promoting inclusive economic growth.

Special Envoy Dion assessed the best ways Canada could support Armenians in their efforts to improve their democracy. He conducted consultations with a wide range of

stakeholders in Armenia, including senior members of Armenia's government, Canada, Europe, and the United States, as well as with representatives of civil society groups, international organizations, business communities and the media.

Special Envoy Dion concluded that it is entirely possible for Canada to have a positive and significant influence in the advancement of democracy in Armenia through a realistic and well-targeted strategy that focuses on increased administrative support for the National Assembly of Armenia and a permanent Canadian pres-



ence in Armenia.

Minister Joly thanked Special Envoy Dion for his critical work including the recommendations put forward in his report. Canada is resolute in its support of Armenian democracy.

"Canada is proud to accompany Armenia in the realization of its democratic ambitions. Special Envoy Dion's report lays out the concrete measures that will be critical to support Armenians in improving their democracy and their quality of life," Mélanie Joly said.

Azerbaijani forces have committed 89 crimes against population of Artsakh since November 9, 2020

The Armed Forces of Azerbaijan have committed a total of 89 crimes against the population of the Artsakh Republic since the signing of the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, the Prosecutor's Office of Artsakh informs.

Seventy-two criminal cases have been initiated.

According to the Prosecutor's Office, 16 people



attempted to be killed (44 were civilians), 43 were wounded and 43 were physically assaulted.

From November 2020 until today, Azerbaijani forces regularly open fire from positions located near the villages of Stepanakert, Askeran, Martuni and Shushi regions at nearby Armenian settlements or in the air, in an attempt to intimidate the civilian population, keeping them in

constant fear. 101 were killed (3 were civilians), 101 were

Foreign Minister of Armenia receives Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organization



Tourism Organization.

Ararat Mirzoyan stressed that the development of the tourism sector is one of the priorities for the Government of Armenia, and in this regard, he commended that the cooperation between Armenia and the WTO is developing effectively.

Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan received Zurab Pololikashvili, the Secretary General of the UN World

The Foreign Minister of Armenia noted that this year marks the 25th anniversary of Armenia's membership in the UN WTO,

which makes the holding of the 67th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in Yerevan even more symbolic.

During the meeting, the interlocutors touched upon the potential of tourism development in Armenia and the projects implemented in the field. They exchanged views on the implementation of new programs and initiatives in cooperation with the UN World Tourism Organization, as well as opportunities and prospects for attracting foreign investment in Armenia's tourism sector.

New Argavand-Shirak Road commissioned in Yerevan



The newly-built Argavand-Shirak Road was opened in Yerevan on June 4 in a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Deputy Prime Minister Hambarzum Matosyan, Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan, Asian Development Bank Vice President Shixin Chen, other officials.

The contract for the construction of the

road section was signed on July 16, 2019, between Levantina Ingenieria y Construcción Company (Spain) and the Yerevan Municipality. The contract is worth \$26 million. The construction works were commenced on September 6, 2019.

The Argavand-Shirak Road is part of the western circular road of Yerevan, and serves as a link between the Malatia-Se-

bastia and Shengavit administrative districts of Yerevan.

The total length of the road is 2.7 km, and the average width is 26 m. The road section also includes a 252-meter-long, 28-meter-wide metal bridge over the Hrazdan River, as well as a road crossing between Isakov and Babajanyan streets.

All the existing conduits in the impact zone of the road have been relocated, underground communication pipes have been installed under the sidewalks. Exterior lighting systems are equipped with LED energy-saving luminaires.

Within the framework of the construction of the Argavand-Shirak Road section, 26 households received compensation amounting to about 265 million AMD.



Fly Arna receives Air Operator License



Fly Arna, Armenia's national airline and a joint venture company between the Armenian National Interests Fund (ANIF) and Air Arabia Group, on June 3 announced that it has received its Air Oper-

ating Certificate (AOC) and Air Operator License (AOL), which allow it to start operating from Yerevan's Zvartnots International Airport.

Securing the AOC and AOL highlight that Fly Arna has met all the professional capabilities, adheres to all safety regulations needed for aircraft operations and has proven fit-to-fly ability following the completion of rigorous inspections by the Civil Aviation Committee of the Republic of Armenia (CAC). Fly Arna will continue to work closely with the Civil Aviation Committee to finalize the launch date.

Thanks to the cooperation of the Civil

Aviation Committee of the Republic of Armenia, the Fly Arna's team successfully obtained the operating license on time after meeting all the required standards and passing all inspections. This important milestone will now allow the airline to start its operations and reflect the confidence of the Armenian aviation sector, its potential and the role that Fly Arna will play in supporting its long-term prospects.

Fly Arna has been assigned the reservation code G6 by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The carrier will use Airbus A320 aircraft and will follow the low-cost business model of Air Arabia.

EBRD's \$20 million loan will help finance telecoms growth in Armenia

Armenians will see their fixed and mobile phone services improve as a result of a US\$ 20 million loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to leading Armenian telecoms company Telecom Armenia to finance growth, including network expansion in rural areas, and refinance existing debt.

Telecom Armenia is undertaking a seven-year multi-million network improvement programme to upgrade fixed and mobile networks around the country, including in rural areas. Additional financing is provided by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Ameriabank, amounting to a total financing package of \$45 million.

The investment comes in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which emphasized the need for faster and more reliable internet connections. The project supports 4G mobile network expansion and the rollout of a state-of-the-art fibre to the home network across the capital Yerevan, secondary cities and rural areas, increasing the digital connectivity and competitiveness of businesses across Armenia and making the network greener and more energy efficient.

"As well as enhancing digitalization and energy efficiency, the project is con-



sistent with the EBRD's two strategic priorities for Armenia, strengthening private sector competitiveness and promoting sustainable infrastructure through commercialization and green economy transition," said Dirk Werner, the EBRD's Director for Telecoms, Media and Technology.

Aleksandr Yesayan, Team Telecom Armenia's Chairman and co-founder said: "We welcome our long-term partnership with the EBRD, especially given the reduced investor appetite amid global developments. This support will enable us to accelerate our capital investment program and expand and upgrade both our fixed and mobile networks and improve service quality to both individual subscribers and business clients, which will spur competitiveness, innovation, and economic growth in Armenia."

Hayk Yesayan, Team Telecom Armenia's CEO and co-founder said: "This

funding will significantly speed up the region's best 25 GB/s Next Generation Network construction. Bringing this network to life is our strategic project. As part of the building process, we are going to connect our mobile system to the new fixed broadband infrastructure and greatly increase the quality of mobile and fixed communications throughout all Armenia."

This is the first major signing since EBRD's recently appointed Head of Yerevan Resident Office. George Akhalkatsi started the role in early May. He said: "I am excited to sign this important transaction with a major private sector player in Armenia. We believe the project will bring tangible benefits to Team Telecom customers and have a positive effect on wider economy."

Telecom Armenia is the leading fixed-line operator in Armenia and the country's second largest mobile operator. It was acquired in October 2020 by telecom entrepreneurs Hayk and Aleksandr Yesayan. The project's refinancing component will be used to refinance Telecom Armenia's existing debt, incurred during the company's leveraged buyout in 2020, and simplify its capital structure.

Armenia registers positive progress in field of food safety

A positive progress has been registered in the field of food safety in Armenia in the recent years, Head of the Department of Food Safety at the Food Safety Inspectorate Vahe Danielyan said, calling this a result of not only the good job of the Inspectorate, but also the increase in the level of demand of the society.

“Back in 2007 when the State Food Safety and Veterinary Inspectorate was founded, I was working an inspector in Yerevan that time. During the inspection there was not a single store where we didn’t find a large number of expired products. This was connected not only with the bad control, but also with the lack of awareness among the citizens. The culture of paying attention to the expiry date while buying a good didn’t exist among the citizens. But today the picture is completely different. Today we can find



unique cases when expired food is sold”, he said.

However, according to him, looking at only the expiry date of the product is not enough as he says attention should be paid also on the whole information existing on the good, which relates to the consumer. The Inspectorate’s aim is to make citizens pay attention to the full text of the mark through respective awareness-raising cam-

paigns.

There is also positive progress in the approaches of economic entities. Vahe Danielyan says this is seen in the reduction of the number of business suspensions. In 2021 the Inspectorate made decisions on suspending the operation of more than 60 economic entities.

“When we detect non-compliance in any economic entity and apply a restriction, we are consistent that they eliminate the shortcomings after which only we allow them to resume their operation”, he said.

By keeping the problems of the field in focus, the Inspectorate will toughen the control and will carry out large-scale awareness-raising campaigns within the public.

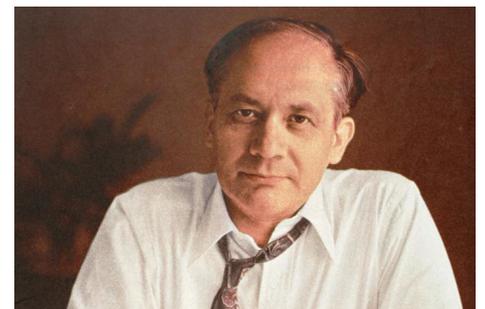
Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute announces Lemkin scholarship for foreign researchers

The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute foundation announces 2022 Lemkin Scholarship program for foreign young researchers and PhD candidates. Raphael Lemkin scholarship is intended to extend research on the Armenian Genocide, promote multilayered research of the theme and engage young scientists.

The program will enable one up to 40-year-old foreign PhD students or young researchers who specialize in the field of genocide research and work on their doctoral thesis, to spend one month in Armenia and conduct their research at the archives of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, as well as other local scientific institutions and libraries.

- The duration of the scholarship is one month.
- The AGMI Foundation will cover travel and accommodation expenses.

- The deadline for application is August 15, 2022. The name of the winner will be known on August 31, 2022.
- At the end of the program, the scholarship holder is required to make a report and present a summary of the work done within the month. He/she will also submit an article as a result of a research to be considered for publication in the International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies within 1 year from the end of his/her visit to Armenia.
- A round-table discussion with the Armenian specialists and the AGMI Foundation researchers will be organized during the program with the scholarship holder.
- The program will run from October 1. Required documents for the submission:



- CV or resume
- Research proposal (not less than 2 pages)
- List of published works (if any)
- Two letters of reference
- A filled application form.

The winner will be selected by the Scientific Council of the AGMI Foundation.

The applications should be sent to info@genocide-museum.am. It’s necessary to mention “Lemkin scholarship 2022” in a subject line.

US State Department documents destruction of Armenian religious heritage by Azerbaijan in a new report

In the 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom the US Department of State documents Azerbaijan's ongoing destruction of Armenian monuments and refers to the attempts to "Albanize" the Armenian heritage in territories under its control.

The reports quotes a bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church as saying that, since May, the government refused access of Armenian pilgrims to a monastery in the territory, which has been under Azerbaijani control after the 2020 war.

The reports reminds that in a resolution adopted on September 27, 2021, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) condemned the damage "deliberately caused to cultural heritage during the 6-week war, and the deliberate shelling of the Holy Savior (Ghazanchetsots) Cathedral in Shushi, and "the destruction or damage of other churches and cemeteries during and after the conflict."

The resolution also stated PACE remained "concerned, in the light of past destruction, about the future of the many Armenian churches, monasteries, including the Dadivank monastery, and cross-stones and other forms of cultural heritage which have returned under Azerbaijani control." The resolution expressed "concern about a developing narrative in Azerbaijan promoting a 'Caucasian Albanian' heritage to replace what is seen as an 'Armenian' cultural heritage."

"There were numerous reports during the year of vandalism and destruction of Armenian cultural and religious sites, as well as deliberate actions by the government to sever and distort the connection of religious sites to their Armenian heritage. Government actions and rhetoric stating churches were "Caucasian Albanian" prompted international observers, Armenian officials, civil society representatives, and the Armenian Apostolic Church to express grave concerns about the preser-



vation of Armenian ties to historical and religious sites now under Azerbaijani control," the State Department report reads.

For example, it notes, on May 4, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated the Azerbaijani-funded reconstruction of the Holy Savior Cathedral in Shushi was "in accordance with the original architectural style in order to restore the historical image" of the city and attributed renovations of the site to reflect "Caucasian Albanian" heritage. Armenian officials said such statements attempted to conceal the church's Armenian roots and structure, including the original spire. In a letter to UNESCO, Armenia's acting Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Vahram Dumanyan accused Azerbaijan of actively implementing "a policy of falsification of historical facts" by calling the sites of Armenian cultural heritage in newly returned territory "Caucasian-Albanian." On September 27, Caucasus Heritage Watch (CHW) reported the Azerbaijani government embarked on an extensive campaign after the November 2020 ceasefire to claim Armenian heritage sites either do not exist or have "Caucasian Albanian" origins.

The report also reminds that following the November 2020 ceasefire, leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church requested Russian peacekeepers protect the medieval Dadivank Monastery in the district of Kealajar. The government initially allowed Armenian pilgrims to visit the church, but access became increasingly difficult throughout the year. According to media reports and Armenian Apostolic Church authorities, two groups of pilgrims were

denied access to the monastery in February and April. Azerbaijani authorities cited COVID-19, flooding, and road damage as reasons for denying access to groups of pilgrims who were ready with Russian peacekeeper escorts to visit the monastery, according to the Armenian Apostolic Church. By year's end, in addition to the monastery, no Armenian pilgrims had been permitted visits to any religious site in Azerbaijani-controlled territory (where no Russian peacekeepers were present) since May 2.

The State Department notes that on May 26, BBC reported the removal of a cross atop St. Yeghishhe Armenian Church in Mataghis. A video reposted in March by Armenia's ombudsman Armen Tatoyan on social media had shown soldiers wearing Azerbaijani and Turkish insignia desecrating the church.

"In June, *The Art Newspaper* published a report using satellite images that detailed the destruction of medieval Armenian churches in Agulis, Nakhchivan. The churches were seen in 1977 images but were missing in images from 2016 and 2019. The destruction included Surb Stepanos (Saint Stephen), likely founded in the 12th to 13th centuries, the medieval Surb Tovma (Saint Thomas), Surb Kristapor (Saint Christopher), Surb Hovhannes Mkrtych (Saint John the Baptist), and other ancient churches, such as Mets Anapat Surb Astvatasatsin (Greater Hermitage Holy Mother of God) and Surb Hakob Hayrapet (Saint Jacob of Nisibis). *The Art Newspaper* also chronicled the destruction of Armenian heritage throughout Nakhchivan, which once included 89 churches, 5,840 cross-stones, and more than 22,000 tombstones, according to documentation from 1964-87 collected by independent researcher Argam Ayvazyan. Because religion and ethnicity are closely linked, it is difficult to categorize many incidents as being solely based on religious identity," the State Department said.

AGBU and Matenadaran launch a publication on ancient manuscripts of Artsakh



The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the Matenadaran — Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts have announced the release of *Manuscript Heritage of Artsakh and Utik*, co-authored by Hravard Hakobyan, Ph.D. in Art History; Tamara Minasyan, Ph.D. in Philology; and Vahe Torosyan, Ph.D. in History.

The publication was made possible by a grant from the Lawrence Terzian Fund of the AGBU within the framework of the AGBU Artsakh Research Grants, which aim to raise awareness and enhance knowledge of Artsakh, its history, culture, and existing issues. The late Mr. Terzian was a professor of English at New York University, the founder of *Industrial Design* magazine and author of numerous books and over 200 published articles, many of which are about Armenian writers and literature.

The work is an exceptional asset to promote international recognition of the cultural heritage of the two historical provinces of Armenia, Artsakh and Utik. These provinces have long been home to countless theological, historical, educational, and ritual manuscripts, most of which are now preserved at the Matenadaran. The collective efforts of the co-authors prove the centuries-long Armenian presence in these regions.

The volume consists of three parts and

reflects the history of Artsakh and Utik, presents the scriptoria and educational centers of these regions that operated adjacent to the large monasteries, as well as reveals the iconographic peculiarities of illuminated manuscripts created between



the 13th and the 18th centuries. “The manuscript heritage of Artsakh and Utik, as a harmonious part of the history and cultural heritage of these provinces, is rich in numerous Christian architectural and sculptural monuments, khachkars (cross-stones), and medieval secular buildings, which we must preserve and hand down to generations,” notes the editor of the book Professor Karen Matevosyan, Doctor of Historical Sciences.

Co-author Tamara Minasyan notes, “In the current political and regional developments when the neighboring countries make every effort to falsify the history and present the Armenian cultural heritage as their own, particularly Caucasian Albanian, these scientifically proven revelations can serve as a strong foundation to resist the flow of disinformation. If their attempts are somewhat successful in ruining our cultural and architectural monuments, it is much more difficult for them to reach our manuscripts. Particularly the manuscript colophons are exceptional sources that un-

questionably prove the centuries-long Armenian presence in Artsakh and Utik.”

Manuscript Heritage of Artsakh and Utik is one of the 18 projects funded in the framework of the AGBU Artsakh Research Grants established in the aftermath of the 44-day Artsakh War. During a gathering at AGBU Armenia to celebrate the launch of the publication, AGBU Armenia President Vasken Yacoubian elaborated on the AGBU Artsakh Research Grants mission. “The 44-day Artsakh War demonstrated a huge knowledge gap within the international community about the Artsakh history in general and its cultural heritage in particular. The project aims to penetrate all the spheres of Artsakh’s history to raise awareness about data-driven and unbiased facts. In this regard, Matenadaran, as the main repository of ancient manuscripts and sources, can be one of the key pillars to intensively promote this initiative.”

With dissemination of this content among scholars and wider audiences, AGBU and Matenadaran are helping to prevent the falsification of Armenian history. The publication is already being circulated in Europe. The authors have also participated in various international conferences. “We plan to share the book with all the foreign embassies in Armenia, international cultural institutions, universities abroad, as well as within international scientific circles and centers. We strongly believe that through this publication, the world will uncover the rich cultural heritage of Artsakh and Utik,” noted Director of Matenadaran Dr. Vahan Ter-Ghevondyan.

British Embassy in Yerevan hosts celebration on Queen's 96th birthday

The British Embassy hosted a celebration of the 96th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II. This year, the Queen's Birthday Party had a special significance as we celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years since her coronation. The Queen has ruled for longer than any other monarch in British history. Her unstinting service not just to the United Kingdom but the entire Commonwealth is truly an inspiration.

British Ambassador to Armenia John Gallagher said in his welcoming speech:

"Her Majesty The Queen has been, and continues to be, a great role model for her citizens in the UK. She is not just a great model but a great female role model. And Armenia is blessed with great female role models too. I'm really proud that the British Embassy, through our programme fund-

ing and capacity building, provides support to really inspiring women who are dedicated to enhancing Armenia's prospects. [...] So, just as Her Majesty The Queen has been an enduring figure for 70 years, and hopefully many more, I am confident that the partnership between Armenia and the UK will also endure."

This year we also celebrate the 30th anniversary of UK-Armenia diplomatic relations.

Many guests from the Government of Armenia, the National Assembly, members of the diplomatic corps, business and civil society representatives and friends of the UK joined us in celebration.

The Guest of Honour Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia emphasized in his speech:

"The United Kingdom has been a cru-



cial partner for the newly independent Armenia in its pathway of building its statehood, and today it contributes to the ongoing democratic reforms and strengthening of the rule of law in our country."

At our party we served traditional British food and drinks, and entertained our guests with a fantastic repertoire of British and Armenian music. A key highlight of the celebration was the display of photographs taken at various stages of Her Majesty's reign by Yousuf Karsh, renowned photographer of Armenian origin.

Azerbaijan yet to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law vis-à-vis Armenian POWs



Impunity for past atrocities can lead to the most serious violations, the ultimate manifestation of which are genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN Mher Margaryan said at the UN Security Council open debate on "Strengthening accountability and justice for serious violations of international law."

"We are equally reminded that strengthening accountability and justice for such crimes is essential for the realization of the rights to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence," he said.

"As a long-standing advocate of genocide prevention agenda, Armenia supports efforts towards advancing early warning capacities of the United Nations to monitor and respond to conditions with

imminent risk of atrocities, which includes systematic policies of promulgating hate speech, incitement to violence on the basis of ethnicity or religion, as well as denial, justification or even glorification of atrocity crimes, in particular, when such incendiary acts are state led, conducted or cultivated at the highest political level," the Ambassador stated.

"Time and again, Armenia alerted the international community about the dangerously mounting level of hate speech and racist rhetoric dominating the political discourse in Azerbaijan where state-led anti-Armenian policies – extensively reported and documented by international institutions – seek to dehumanize one particular nation, which come to manifest that genocidal ideology does not merely belong to the past," he added.

He noted that the fact that a large-scale military aggression was unleashed amidst the unprecedented global pandemic in the fall of 2020 is a crime of global proportion in itself and should be evaluated and addressed as such. "attempt to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by use of force, caused thousands of deaths and devastation, putting the lives of tens of thou-

sands of civilians under existential threat," he said.

"Azerbaijan is yet to abide by its obligations under the international humanitarian law vis-à-vis the Armenian POWs and civilian hostages who continue to be held in captivity. It should commit, in good faith, to the preservation of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage and effectively address anti-Armenian rhetoric including at the level of public officials and institutions, in accordance with the provisions stemming from the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination," Mher Margaryan noted.

As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice has a central role in ensuring justice and accountability and upholding the faith in international law.

Armenia remains strongly committed to strengthening accountability and justice agenda, which necessitates in-depth understanding of the patterns of past as well as recurring violations and a victim-centered approach, particularly in conflict situations.

Online fundraiser to provide biology and chemistry lab kits to every school in Artsakh

The Tufenkian Foundation announced on June 3 the launch of its new online fundraiser, which will provide portable biology and chemistry laboratory kits to every school in Artsakh. The kits include microscopes, slides with specimen samples, blank slides, Petri dishes, a mortar and pestle, chemical cups, and other materials.

The campaign comes after the success of the Foundation's biology laboratory kit distribution to all 29 schools across Artsakh's Martuni region last year. Donations to the online fundraiser can be made [here](#).

Throughout the world, educators recognize the importance of laboratory investigation as an essential method for students to learn about science. A laboratory experience that is integrated with the instructional unit can significantly enhance students' learning experience.

Moving beyond the mostly passive experience of learning through classroom instruction or from a textbook, laboratory work helps to create a real-world association with the information being conveyed. By actively engaging the students in the learning experience, laboratory work also helps to better reach students who learn more effectively by working hands-on or collaboratively.

Unfortunately, schools in Artsakh are under-resourced, with most having no laboratory equipment at all for students to learn about the sciences first-hand through experimentation.

To begin to address this issue, last fall, the Tufenkian Foundation donated biology laboratory kits to all 29 schools in the Martuni region. These kits were specially designed to be integrated with the 7th-grade biology curriculum, supporting specific assignments throughout the school year. The kits are also comprised of equipment to be



used outside the classroom where students could collect their own samples.

Feedback from the Martuni Regional School Administration as well as from direct feedback from the teachers and the students themselves has been overwhelmingly positive. Based on this feedback, the Tufenkian Foundation has decided to further expand the school science laboratory initiative, both geographically and by subject.

"The students enjoy participating in the hands-on lessons since they can see and do everything themselves," explained Herher village's Alice Siserian Elementary School 7th grade science teacher, Lusine Arakelyan. According to her, the students have been much more engaged in the classroom since her school received a portable biology laboratory kit last September. "Lessons are much more interesting and enjoyable this way," she added.

The Tufenkian Foundation's new campaign will provide biology and chemistry labs to every school in Artsakh. There are two aspects to the school laboratory initiative. The first is to build upon last year's success and expand the program to distribute biology laboratory kits to the remaining 77 schools in Artsakh. Of these, there are 23 large schools that have multiple 7th-grade classes, bringing the total number of biology laboratory kits required to 120.

The second aspect is to expand the pro-

gram to include chemistry laboratory kits, which can be used for 7th, 8th, and 9th-grade classes. Like the biology laboratory kits, these kits have also been designed to support the class curriculum. A total of 153 chemistry laboratory kits would be required to reach all of Artsakh's 106 schools.

The laboratory kits will be ordered in the late spring and will be delivered to the schools at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.

The cost of outfitting the rest of the schools in Artsakh (i.e. those in Stepanakert as well as those in the Martakert, Askeran, and Shushi regions) with biology laboratory equipment for 7th-grade classwork is approximately \$17,700. The cost of outfitting all of Artsakh's schools with chemistry laboratory equipment to support their 7th, 8th, and 9th-grade curricula is approximately \$18,800. The total cost for both initiatives is approximately \$36,500.

This program will reach thousands of students throughout Artsakh. Among the most important benefits of this program will be the opportunity for students to augment what they learn in the classroom with real-world, first-hand experience, perhaps facilitating a greater interest in the sciences. It also provides students who learn more effectively by doing or by working with others a chance to explore science in a way in which they can more easily process the subject matter.

"Beyond the educational benefits, this program will reach into every community in Artsakh, sending the message that they are not alone and have not been forgotten and that Armenians outside of Artsakh continue to stand with them during these difficult times," said Tufenkian Foundation public relations director Rupen Janbazian.

Nominations now open for 2023 Aurora Prize

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has announced that the nominations are now open for the 2023 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, given on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors. Anyone can put forward modern-day heroes who risk their own lives, health or freedom to save the lives, health or freedom of others suffering as a result of violent conflict, atrocity crimes or other major human rights violations.

“The Aurora Prize sheds light on some of the most crucial issues in the world, raise awareness on these particular dark corners where we need the voice of humanity and humanitarian engagement. For me, it is an honor and a privilege to have been named one of the Laureates and to get a chance to expand my work, providing medical care and rehabilitation to the victims of ISIS terror, as well as strengthening the sustainable peace and development in a region where the last Genocide had happened. There are still atrocities like that happening all over the world today, and we need to focus on the human values to survive this crisis. We need to get involved,

we need to support the people who are fighting the injustice and the indifference,” said 2019 Aurora Prize Laureate Mirza Dinnayi, Co-Founder and Director of Luftbrücke Irak (Air Bridge Iraq).

The Aurora Prize Laureate is selected based on the candidate’s demonstration of courage, commitment, and impact, and receives a US \$1,000,000 award to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with the focus on helping the most destitute. Nominations for the 2023 Aurora Prize can be submitted until October 31, 2022.

To nominate a candidate, one needs to fill out an [online form](#) on the Aurora website. The nominations are then assessed according to the selection criteria by the Aurora Prize Secretariat and Expert Panel to narrow the overall list to 20 nominees. Members of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee later review this shortlist, drawing upon their own expertise, nomination forms, and additional information assembled by the Secretariat to determine the Aurora Humanitarians and eventually, the Aurora Prize Laureate. Since the launch of the Aurora Prize, the Secretariat has re-

ceived more than 4,100 nominations from 144 countries and territories all over the world.

“Every year, we receive more and more testaments to the strength and resilience of the spirit of humanity that compels extraordinary people around the world to help others while facing unimaginable danger. Despite the risks and challenges, these humanitarians put the life and safety of others above all else. Their stories are a source of hope in our trying times, and members of the Selection Committee and I cannot wait to hear more of them,” noted Lord Ara Darzi, Chair of Aurora Prize Selection Committee and Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London.

On April 24, 2022, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative announced the names of 2022 Aurora Humanitarians. The announcement was made in the Matenadaran, the national repository of ancient manuscripts located in Yerevan, Armenia. One of the Humanitarians will later be named the 2022 Aurora Prize Laureate.

Armenian, Georgian football legends to meet in Yerevan

The football legends of Armenia and Georgia will meet in a match in Yerevan on June 16.

The match dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Football Federation of Armenia will take place at Hanrapetakan (Republican) Stadium after Vazgen Sargsyan and will kick off at 19:00.

The Armenian team will feature Yura Movsisyan, Marcos Pizzelli, Edgar Manucharyan, Robert Arzumanyan, Karlen Mkrtchyan, Gevorg Kasparov, Arthur



Edigaryan, Levon Hayrapetyan, Valeri Aleksanyan, Arthur Sarkisov, Ararat Arakelyan, Samvel Melkonyan. Keeper

Roman Berezovsky will coach the team.

The Georgian national team will feature Levan Koblishvili, Alexander Iashvili, Gocha Jamarauli, Jano Ananidze, Giorgi Demetradze, Otari Martsvaladze and others. The coach of the team is David Mujiri, the assistant coach is Mikhail Kavelashvili.

A concert program is planned before the match and during the break.

Tickets go on sale next week. All proceeds from the sale will go to charity.

Sixth edition of Armenian Film Festival to be held in Sydney and Melbourne

The sixth edition of the Armenian Film Festival in Sydney and Melbourne will feature several unique documentaries and drama films, with a spotlight on Artsakh and the Armenian Genocide, reports the Armenian National Committee of Australia.

The 2022 Armenian Film Festival is back after a Covid-induced two-year hiatus and will showcase eight feature films, hosting four international guests across two cities on 3-5 June 2022 in Melbourne and 9-19 June 2022 in Sydney.

A key component of this year's festival is the focus around the Republic of Artsakh, following the 2020 Artsakh war and the ongoing occupation of the ancient Armenian homeland by Azerbaijan.

Co-Directors of the Armenian Film Festival Australia Margaret Tcherkezian Chater and Hourie Demirjian said: "We seek to raise awareness of the plight of the people in that region that has received little

awareness."

The festival's Gala Night will feature Jivan Avetisyan's multi-award winning film 'Gates to Heaven', an intriguing drama set during the 2016 four-day war. The story follows a German military journalist who returns to Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) to cover the war.

Emile Ghessen's '45 Days: The Fight For A Nation' will also be screened over multiple sessions in both Sydney and Melbourne. Ghessen tells the story of the 2020 Artsakh war and post war from an Armenian perspective in a humanistic feature documentary. The Former British Royal Marines Commando turned documentary filmmaker was on the ground when Turkey-backed Azerbaijani forces launched full-scale attacks on the Armenian inhabited region. Ghessen will be in Australia to host insightful Q and A sessions.

Nora Martirosyan's first film 'Should The Wind Drop' was selected as Armenia's

official film for Best International Feature Film category at the 94th Academy Awards in 2022, and the 'We Are Our Mountains' short film, directed by Arnaud Khayadjanian, tells the difficult story of a people who continue to fight for independence.

Two offerings at this year's Film Festival will also feature the harrowing stories of the Armenian Genocide. These include, two-time Academy Award winning producer Nick Vallelonga's 'Songs of Solomon', which depicts the life of Komitas Vartabed, an Armenian composer and priest set against the backdrop of the Armenian Genocide.

Ani Hovanisian's 'The Hidden Map' tells the story of an American-Armenia who travels to Turkey in search of her ancestral homeland and discovers the silenced stories of a forbidden past. Hovanisian will also be in Australia to discuss her film.

Mona Lisa: Man dressed as old woman throws cake at da Vinci painting

A man disguised as an elderly woman in a wheelchair has thrown cake at the Mona Lisa; Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting at the Louvre in Paris, the *BBC* reports.

The piece, which was undamaged, was left with white cream smeared across its protective glass.

The perpetrator, seen wearing a wig and lipstick, urged people to "think of the Earth" while being led from the scene.

The incident on Sunday was described by witnesses as being "jaw-dropping."

The activist, who was also seen throwing roses in the gallery, was escorted out by security. "Think of the Earth," he declared.

"There are people who are destroying the Earth. Think about it. Artists tell you: think of the Earth. That's why I did this."



A 36-year-old man was detained and sent to a police psychiatric unit, the Paris prosecutor's office confirmed on Monday, adding it had started an investigation into

the damage of cultural artefacts.

The Renaissance painting had glass installed in the 1950s to protect it after an acid attack.

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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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