

## Armenian soldiers sent to Kazakhstan



Armenia - Armenian soldiers board a military transport plane bound for Kazakhstan, Yerevan, January 7, 2022.

Armenia’s Defense Ministry said on January 7 that it has sent 100 soldiers to Kazakhstan as part of a Russian-led “peace-keeping” operation designed to help the Central Asian country’s government quell angry protests sparked by a sharp rise in fuel prices.

“During the mission, the peacekeeping unit of the Armenian Armed Forces will solely perform the functions of protecting strategically important buildings and infrastructure,” it said in a statement.

The ministry released photographs of Armenian troops boarding a military transport plane bound for Kazakhstan. It did not say whether they will be deployed in Almaty, the country’s largest city and the epicenter of unprecedented unrest that began five days ago.

The troops are part of a 2,500-strong military contingent deployed by Russia and four other former Soviet republics making up the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Kazakh President Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev asked the military alliance for urgent intervention on Wednesday as mobs stormed government buildings, setting some of them on fire, and looted businesses.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, the current holder of the CSTO’s rotating presidency, announced hours later that the bloc will send troops to help “stabilize and normalize the situation” in Kazakhstan.

Pashinyan spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone on Friday. His office  page 3

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## Armenia following with concern the events unfolding in Kazakhstan – MFA



Armenia is following with concern the military clashes in Kazakhstan, the Ministry of foreign Affairs said in a statement.

“The reports about the penetration of terrorist groups are alarming. We strongly

condemn violence, we are convinced that it cannot be a way to solve political problems,” the Foreign Ministry said.

“We believe that steps need to be taken to prevent further clashes, to restore the

atmosphere of tolerance necessary for peaceful political processes in the country, including peaceful rallies, and for the exercise of the right to freedom of expression,” it added.

CSTO troops will be deployed to help stabilize the situation in Kazakhstan. The announcement was made by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who chairs the CSTO Collective Security Council.

The protests were first sparked by rising fuel prices but have broadened to include political grievances.

President Tokayev accused foreign-trained “terrorist gangs” of being behind the unrest.

## Armenian PM, Iran’s President talk bilateral relations, regional processes

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi.

The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to the further development of Armenian-Iranian relations. The importance of close cooperation between the governments of the two countries aimed at strengthening economic ties was stressed.

Nikol Pashinyan and Ebrahim Raisi also referred to the processes taking place in the region.

The President of Iran congratulated the Prime Minister and the Armenian people on New Year and Christmas.

In his turn, Prime Minister Pashinyan congratulated the Christians of Iran on New Year and Christmas, and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for creating the



necessary conditions for the preservation of the identity of the Armenians of Iran.

The interlocutors agreed to continue high-level contacts between the two countries.

## Georgian PM congratulates Armenians on Christmas, commends “good-neighborly relations”



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garib-

ashvili has congratulated the Armenians on Christmas.

“I wish a Happy Feast of the Glorious Nativity and Epiphany of Christ to our Armenian compatriots and the friendly Armenian people,” Gharibashvili said in a message. “This centuries-old history, grounded in

brotherhood and mutual respect, is defined by the good-neighborly and friendly relations between our nations that, I am convinced, will carry on into the future,” the Prime Minister noted.

He wished peace, health, joy, and success to all.

## Prime Minister visits military positions ahead of the New Year



Accompanied by the Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited military positions, as well as the N military regiment of the Ministry of Defense on the occasion of the New Year and Christmas.

Nikol Pashinyan met with the soldiers and commanders serving in the military positions, toured the military bases, got acquainted with the work done on the front line, the conditions for carrying out service, as well as the living conditions of the servicemen.

Nikol Pashinyan encouraged a group

of officers and soldiers who stood out with their devotion, courage and bravery during their service. The Prime Minister wished the servicemen good and safe service and health. **“Gentlemen officers, sergeants, privates, I congratulate all of you on the oc-**

**casion of the New Year and Christmas. I wish you an honorable and trouble-free service. Please, convey congratulations to your family on behalf of my and the Government and wish the best for 2022. May you have a good service and return to your homes,”** said the Prime Minister, thanking them for the dedicated service.

On the eve of the New Year, Nikol Pashinyan took part in a festive dinner with the servicemen.



page 1  said they discussed the situation in Kazakhstan and “joint steps taken within the framework of the CSTO.”

Toqaevev declared, meanwhile, that order has been “basically” restored in the country. But he said Kazakh security forces will

continue “counterterrorist” operations.

Kazakhstan’s Interior Ministry said 26 “armed criminals” have been “liquidated” and more than 3,000 of them detained. It added that 18 police and national guard troops have been killed since the start of the protests that escalated into deadly vio-

lence on Wednesday.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Vahan Hunanyan, said on January 7 that Yerevan has no plans yet to evacuate Armenian citizens from Kazakhstan. None of them has been injured in the continuing unrest, he said.

## Armenia to organize online session of CSTO Collective Security Council: Pashinyan, Putin hold phone talk



Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan held a telephone conversation with

Russian President Vladimir Putin, discussing the proposal of Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to hold an online session of the CSTO Collective Security Council, the Kremlin press service reports.

“During the telephone conversations with Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, Vladimir Putin discussed the situation in Kazakhstan, which

is shifting towards settlement.

The sides expressed support to the proposal of Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to hold a meeting of the CSTO Collective Security Council in a video conference mode in the nearest future. Nikol Pashinyan said that the Armenian side, as the current CSTO chair, will deal with the organization of that meeting”, the statement says.

## U.S. committed to continue working with Armenia for a better future – Ambassador

In her holiday message to the Armenian people, US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy reflects on her time in Armenia and reaffirms the United States' commitment to continue working with Armenia for a better future.

The Ambassador praises Armenia's rich cultural traditions,



long history, natural beauty, and famous hospitality, but, above all, the Armenian people who – with their talent, vitality, resilience, and creativity – are the country's greatest asset.

Ambassador Tracy and U.S. Embassy staff wish all a peaceful, healthy, and prosperous new year.

## The US has stood by Armenia throughout many challenging times – MFA

on January 7, Republic of Armenia and the United States of America celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

“Since Armenia regained its independence, the United States has been providing a continuous support to our ancient people and young Republic. Nowadays, the US is one of our most important international partners in all areas – from security to development, from economy to reform programs,” the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The statement reads, in part:

Armenia highly values the US involvement in a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group.

We can state confidently that our thirty-year partnership is based on common

values such as protection of human rights, adherence to democratic principles, and the rule of law.

We emphasize with satisfaction that in 2019 the Armenian-American relations were raised to a qualitatively new level of Strategic Dialogue.

President Biden's statement on April 24, 2021, and resolutions of the both houses of the US Congress in 2019 on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide have become a significant step in ensuring the supremacy of human rights, restoration of historical justice, and prevention of crime of genocide anywhere in the world.

The United States has stood by Armenia throughout many challenging times in our history, and we always remember that. Armenia, in its turn, has participated in and supported American initiatives in the fight



against international terrorism, promotion of peace, and security. We will continue to do that.

The American-Armenian community has been contributing vastly to our bilateral relations through its active involvement in all areas of our multifaceted cooperation.

We have no doubt that the agenda of our bilateral cooperation will turn a new page to utilize its expansive potential for the benefit of our two nations.

## Special Representatives of Armenia and Turkey to meet in Moscow on January 14 – MFA

The first meeting of the special representatives of Armenia and Turkey will be held on January 14 in Moscow, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vahan Hunanyan informed.

No further details were provided.

Armenia will be represented by



Ruben Rubinyan, Chairman of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Turkey has appointed Serdar Kilic, former Ambassador to the US, as special envoy to discuss steps for normalization of ties with Armenia.



**(RFE/RL) - Davit Tonoyan, a former defense minister arrested three months ago, pledged to shed more light on the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh on January 3 as he continued to strongly deny corruption charges leveled against him.**

Tonoyan warned that he must not be made a scapegoat for Armenia's defeat in the six-week war.

"A visible desire to find the scapegoat is hovering, so to speak, in the political scene, but I think that there will be surprises in this regard," he said in written comments to the press circulated by his lawyers. "One thing is clear: we are witnessing a fanatical desire to discredit me and the defense system."

Tonoyan, two generals and an arms dealer were arrested by the National Security Service (NSS) in September in a criminal investigation into supplies of allegedly outdated rockets to Armenia's armed forces. The NSS charged them with fraud and embezzlement that cost the state almost 2.3 billion drams (\$4.7 million). All four suspects deny any wrongdoing.

The NSS said in September that a pri-

## Jailed Former Defense Minister Warns Of 'Surprise' Revelations

vate intermediary delivered the rockets to Armenia in 2011 and that the Defense Ministry refused to buy them after discovering that they are unusable.

Seyran Ohanyan, Armenia's defense minister from 2008 to 2016, confirmed afterwards that 70 percent of them were not accepted by the military during his tenure. The rebuff forced the supplier to store the rockets at a Defense Ministry arms depot, he said.

Tonoyan insisted on Monday that the ammunition did not go past its expiration and was successfully used during the Karabakh war. He complained that the NSS cancelled a planned test-firing of those rockets during the probe described by him as "not objective."

One of Tonoyan's lawyers, Sergey Hovannisyan, also slammed the NSS investigators for not carrying out the forensic tests. He said they would have proved that the rockets are usable and the investigators would have had "no choice but to close the criminal case."

The NSS declined to comment on that.

In an October 11 statement, Tonoyan's legal team noted that he possesses "a great deal of information" about defense issues but is not publicizing it to disprove the accusations because he places Armenia's national security above his personal interests.

Asked whether he thus sent a warning to Armenia's political leadership, the former minister said: "Up until now I have maintained restraint in terms of getting involved in political processes ... There will still be occasions to present to the public my clarifications about the 44-day war through an investigative commission to be formed [by the Armenian parliament,] provided that it works objectively and impartially."

"As I said in my November 20 statement, I am ready to bear my share of responsibility. But only for what I did, and not for what I did not do."

Tonoyan stopped short of openly accusing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of ordering the criminal proceedings against him. He blamed instead other, unnamed officials for what he considers baseless charges.

Pashinyan appointed Tonoyan as defense minister just days after coming to power in May 2018. The latter was sacked in November 2020 less than two weeks after a Russian-brokered agreement stopped the devastating war.

Some senior pro-Pashinyan parliamentarians blamed Tonoyan for Armenia's defeat in the six-week war. The prime minister faced angry opposition demonstrations at the time.

## Armenia wants CSTO mechanisms to work, says Security Council Secretary amid peacekeeping deployment

Armenia attaches importance to the responsibility that it assumed as part of the CSTO Chairmanship, the Secretary of Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan said in an interview to Public Television.

"One of the most important questions is why didn't the Republic of Armenia, when it had asked for help in time, receive such help, while today Armenia is reacting when it is receiving such request.

First of all, I'd like to say that it is the stance of responsibility here. We attach great importance to the responsibility that we've assumed. There is another question

here as well – is Armenia interested that the CSTO mechanisms work?

The answer is definitely yes. And if the answer is yes, then Armenia, proceeding from this answer, tried to take steps for the CSTO mechanisms to function," Grigoryan said.

"I'd like to note that the Prime Minister of Armenia, upon receiving reports on the developments in Kazakhstan and the request of Kazakhstan's President Tokayev, launched consultations with all other CSTO member-state leaders so that the CSTO provides help. Everyone provided information and gave their assessment to



the situation, and Armenia also made its decision.

At that time, there were no revolutionary processes there, there were terrorist acts happening. You've seen videos online showing armed people outside. And the decision was made within the framework of the logic of ensuring stability and security," Grigoryan said.

## Armenian government greenlights ratification of free trade agreement between EAEU and Singapore

The Armenian government has greenlighted the ratification of the framework agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Singapore.

The Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation stipulates a commitment to the multilateral development of the interaction of the parties, the purpose of which is to promote the trade of goods, services, the expansion of cooperation, as well as the provision of modern standards for capital investment, establishment of companies and ensuring modern standards for protection of activity.

At the same time, the above-mentioned agreement stipulates the intention of the parties to conclude agreements on free trade in goods, investments and services, in accordance with the rules and authorities defined by the latter.

The purpose of the agreement is to create a favorable environment, conditions for the development of mutual trade relations, to promote economic cooperation between the parties in areas of mutual interest, as well as to eliminate trade and investment barriers between the parties, reduce business costs and increase economic effi-



ciency.

The government also approved the ratification of the Agreement on Free Trade between EAEU member states and Singapore.

## Armenian Government hands over its stake in Zangezur Molybdenum Combine to ANIF trust management



The Republic of Armenia, being the owner of about 15% (15.000033%) shares of Zangezur Copper and Molybdenum Combine (ZCMC) CJSC, has transferred to the trust management of the State Interest Fund of Armenia (ANIF) about 15% simple shares.

The mandate of ANIF includes partic-

ipation in the management of strategic assets in the Republic of Armenia, in cases when the investor wants to have a state participation. In this regard, ANIF hails the fact that the Republic of Armenia will realize its 15% share in ZCMC through a professional structure.

ANIF attaches importance to the state-private separation, exclusion of interests, implementation of mechanism of checks and balances.

It is common practice in the mining industry, especially in developing countries, when mining companies, as a host country, offer a small stake in the host country out

of goodwill to create common values and a fair distribution of profits.

We hope that this cooperation will be the beginning of new economic opportunities, making the combination of the interests of the state, the society and the investor a priority. In this context, the willingness of all parties, including other stakeholders, to take action to improve sustainability performance and to introduce best mining practices is of particular importance. We are convinced that this is a precondition for the effective management of the mining sector in the modern world," ANIF said.

## Georgia will not attend second meeting in 3+3 format: Envoy

Georgia will not participate in the next 3+3 Caucasus platform meeting to be held in Turkey, the country's Ambassador to Turkey George Janjgava said on January 3.

"Georgia will definitely not attend the 3+3 meeting," Janjgava told *Daily Sabah*.

Ankara has made frequent calls for a six-nation platform comprising of Turkey, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia "for permanent peace, stability and cooperation in the region," describing it as

a win-win initiative for all regional actors



in the Caucasus.

Russia last month hosted the inaugural meeting of the regional platform, which Tbilisi refuses to attend,

Still, Georgia supports enhanced relations and cooperation in the region with other neighboring countries. Janjgava underlined that Georgia sees both Turkey and Azerbaijan as "our strategic partners" and views Armenia as a "historical and good neighbor" in a neighborhood also home to Iran.

## Retailers in Armenia now banned from displaying tobacco products and substitutes

Retailers in Armenia are now banned from displaying tobacco products as some important provisions of tobacco control law come into force.

On 11 February 2020, the Parliament of Armenia voted to pass the *Law on reduction and prevention of harm to health as a result of use of tobacco products and their substitutes*.

These provisions prohibit the public display of any tobacco product, such as traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, liquid-based nicotine products (vapes), and electronic nicotine delivery devices at



trade centers or in public catering establishments, says MP Arsen Torosyan, who was Minister of Health at the time the law passed.

The public display of empty boxes, blocks, trademarks or symbols is also prohibited.

Arsen Torosyan says “the full application of these provisions over time will significantly reduce tobacco use in the country, which will significantly improve the health of the population and the development of the country’s econ-

omy.”

The ban on smoking in cafés and restaurants will come into force in March 2022.

## Armenia lifts the ban on import of Turkish goods

As a result of interdepartmental discussions, a decision was made not to extend the embargo on Turkish goods, the Ministry of Economy reported.

Over the past year, the ban on Turkish goods has had both positive and negative economic consequences, the Ministry said.

On the positive side it pointed to newly established or expanded production of light industry goods, construction materials, furniture, but the main negative effect of the

embargo is the significant impact on inflation, which has been reflected especially in a number of consumer goods.

The Ministry said there have been a number of requests from Armenian businessmen to lift the ban on the import of Turkish goods. It noted that a number of businesses have started to produce goods to replace Turkish ones, and added that they will be consistent in ensuring the viability and competitiveness of such com-

panies in the new conditions, assisting them with additional tools if necessary.

With the lifting of the ban on the import of Turkish goods, the principle of reciprocity is expected to create more favorable conditions for the export of Armenian goods, the Ministry of Economic stated.

Armenia had imposed the ban on January 1, 2021 in response to Turkey’s role in the 44-day war against Artsakh.

## Turkish airline Pegasus applies for permission to operate Istanbul-Yerevan flights

Turkish airline Pegasus has applied to the Civil Aviation Committee of Armenia to obtain permission to operate Istanbul – Yerevan – Istanbul flights. Press secretary of the Ministry of Territorial Development and Infrastructures Sona Harutyunyan confirmed the news to Public Radio of Armenia.

“Pegasus has submitted an application to operate two flights a week from February,” she said, adding that the Civil Aviation Committee has begun



reviewing the application and will make

a decision within a reasonable time frame.

Earlier, the Armenian airline FlyOne Armenia received permission from the local aviation authorities to carry out charter flights on Yerevan-Istanbul-Yerevan route and is awaiting a similar decision from the Turkish side. be given seeds originating from the Gavar region, famous for its high-quality potato crops. This initiative is expected to benefit over 3,200 people.

## Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's congratulatory message on the occasion of New Year and Christmas

Dear people,

Dear compatriots.

In these moments of the start of the New Year, our thoughts and hearts are first of all with our brothers and sisters and their families who sacrificed their lives for the homeland.

After the tragedy of the 44-day war of 2020, in many families that had lost their sons, babies were born: our martyrs fallen on the battlefield are being reborn.

They are reborn in the literal sense, because many newborns in 2021 bear the name, surname and patronymic of their martyred brother. Same name, surname, patronymic.

This is a profound revelation, the victory of life, the embodiment of mythology. born in 2001, dead in 2020, reborn in 2021.

I want to bow first to the fathers and mothers who have made such a decision, because they give a new impetus not only to their families, but also to our homeland, to live, to overcome despair, to believe in the future and to live for the future.

Encouraged by this process and taking into account the wishes of many families, the Government will launch a state program to restore reproductive health in the families of the victims starting from January 2022. And in all cases where it is not possible to fully restore reproductive health, the families of our martyred children will have the opportunity to apply to state-funded surrogate mothers.

From January 1, 2022, the program of state support for the third and each subsequent newborn starts, according to which each family, regardless of their social status, will receive 50 thousand AMD monthly state assistance for the third and each subsequent newborn until the age of six.

I am saying all this to show that the Revival is a state policy, and Revival should be the motto of 2022. I hope that in many of our families, babies named after martyrs that are relatives, friends, or even strangers



will be born in 2022.

Such decisions, of course, are connected not only with financial, but also with more socio-psychological factors. Such decisions are made primarily by believing in the future, and restoring, strengthening and developing faith in the future is our greatest mission.

The success of the policy of opening an era of peaceful development for our homeland and the region is a way to strengthen faith in the future, and though we realize that it is not up to us alone, we will consistently pursue that path to change the situation and atmosphere around the Republic of Armenia and our region. Ensuring security is our biggest challenge today, and experience shows that peace is the most reliable way to ensure security.

Parallel to this, the key issue is the reform of our Armed Forces, the army. Armenia must have a professional army, moreover, with more and more involvement of women. In the strategic perspective, conscription should be significantly changed, transforming into mandatory combat training exercises, which should take place several times in a lifetime, with a certain frequency.

I want to emphasize that politically our army will not set a task of conquering territories, its task is to protect the security and territorial integrity of our country.

Dear people,

All the steps of the Government are aimed at revival and a peaceful future. The

opening of regional communications, the delimitation and demarcation processes of the borders, yes, contain many risks, but also many opportunities, and our policy is aimed at managing and neutralizing the risks, and using the existing opportunities.

The settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

with the full protection of the rights of the Armenians of Artsakh is our strategic goal.

Our Government has always stood with Artsakh before and after the war. In 2021 alone, the Government provided more than 128 billion AMD (\$ 267 million) in assistance to Artsakh. According to the 2022 budget, we plan to allocate more than 144 billion AMD (\$ 300 million) to Artsakh, and we must also think about mechanisms to make these allocations and their use more effective.

Dear people,

2021 was a difficult year, which began with the socio-psychological and political crisis caused by the horrors of war. At times, it seemed that post-war unrest would escalate into chaos and civil clashes. But I want to note also that 2021 became a proof of the viability of Armenia and the Armenian people, because to the surprise of many, we were able to return the process to a full political course, giving the citizens of the Republic of Armenia the opportunity to express themselves and make decisions of their own free will.

The early parliamentary elections in 2021 received great international attention because the international community still finds it astonishing that Armenia was able to hold free, fair, and democratic elections in such conditions.

Today, yes, the international community sees Armenia as a leading force for democracy, and this is an achievement that we must not lose. Our

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## 80% of Artsakh occupied, 40 000 people deprived of home: Baroness Cox urges UK action to address humanitarian issues

Eighty percent of the historically Armenian land of Nagorno Karabakh is now occupied by Azerbaijan, member of the House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox said at the House of Lords Debate on Refugees: Mass Displacement.

“In 2020, more than 91,000 people fled to Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh; 88% of them were women and children. More than 40,000 people were deprived of their homes in areas such as the Shushi and Hadrut regions, which are still under the occupation of the Azerbaijani armed forces,” Baroness Cox said. “I have had the painful privilege of visiting the region more than 85 times, during the wars in the 1990s and in 2020. Last September, I visited Syunik region in Armenia to witness the suffering caused by Azeri military incursions into Armenian territory, causing displacement of local villagers



within Armenia itself,” she added.

Baroness Cox noted that countless refugees describe the anguish of the loss of loved ones, and Azerbaijan still violates the conditions of the 2020 ceasefire by detaining Armenian prisoners of war and civilians, and perpetrating atrocities, sometimes taking a prisoner’s phone to film horrendous activities, then sending the pictures back to their families. “Refugees also describe the loss of live-

lihoods, agricultural lands, water resources, and other vital infrastructure. Yet the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh have received almost no support from the British Government. The UN Secretary-General’s official spokesperson in May last year unequivocally indicated that it is Azerbaijan that, despite the calls of the international community, and the UN in particular, has not provided permission for unhindered humanitarian access in Nagorno-Karabakh, and that situation remains the same,” she stressed. In conclusion, Baroness Cox Government to confirm that the UK will no longer turn a deaf ear to this cry for help, and will ensure the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to the thousands of Armenians displaced by war.

page 8 ➔ task is to make democracy, the assessment of being democratic, a real factor for the security, prosperity and development of our country. Democracy should become the driving force of revival and the future. Armenia once again demonstrated its commitment to democracy and democratic values in the local elections in the period of October-December 2021.

And yes, democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights must be inviolable in our country, the opportunities for individuals to live freely, to create, to work and achieve results should be supported and promoted.

In this regard, the reforms we are implementing in the field of education and science are of fundamental importance to us, because the opportunity will remain just an opportunity if we do not give our citizens the ability to use it. And this can be done only through the development of education, science and technology. In 2021, the voluntary teacher certification program was successfully launched, as a result of which the salaries of many teachers have already increased by 30 to 50 percent. The process of voluntary certification will con-

tinue in 2022, thus not only increasing the attractiveness of the teacher’s work, but also creating guarantees that only properly qualified teachers will enter the classroom, whose work will make our children and generations more competitive.

Our program of building, reconstructing or renovating 300 schools and 500 kindergartens has already started. In 2022, we will have more than 100 schools and at least 100 kindergartens that will be in this process. We are making some changes to the formulas of the subsidy programs to be implemented in the communities in order to further expand the opportunities of building kindergartens for the communities.

With the 2022 state budget, we have increased science funding by more than 80 percent. From January 1, the salaries of science workers will increase, please focus on this, by 40 to 165 percent, but that is not all, and the process will continue until 2026. With this we make the scientific work attractive for young people, but we also encourage the scientific community to make a more active and greater contribution to the development of our country.

Dear people,

Dear compatriots,

I do not want to overfill this New Year message with additional data, nor do I want to create an impression that everything is great. It is clear that we have not overcome the shock of war and will not overcome it for a long time. This situation is exacerbated by the ongoing epidemic of COVID-19, the economic consequences of which are now being felt by everyone more than in 2020. Unprecedented global inflation, which is a consequence of the restrictions imposed due to COVID in 2020-21, has entered everyone’s home and most citizens today are living worse than at the beginning of 2020.

But our response to the consequences of the war and COVID must be thinking, working, efforts. Thinking, working, efforts. This is what we should make of the year of 2022, the year of Armenia’s real and strategic growth. As a result of the war, we are at a zero point, and perhaps it is time for time to work in our favor. Raise the toast for free, peaceful, revived and reconstructed Armenia and Artsakh.

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas!

## France will pay more importance to Armenia, Artsakh also during its current presidency at EU Council – expert



Taking over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, France will automatically give more importance to the issues relating to Armenia and Artsakh, not only as a friendly country of Armenia or as an OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair, but also as an EU Council chair now, Expert at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, French-Armenian political scientist Gaidz

Minasyan told ARMENPRESS, stating that the Armenian diplomacy must be very active in coming six months in order to achieve a result.

“France has long attached importance to the issue of Armenia and Artsakh because it is both a friendly state for Armenia and is one of the Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group. Therefore, France should automatically give more importance to Armenia and Artsakh, now also at the level of the EU presidency”, he said.

According to him, both the French presidency at the EU and the French presidential elections to be held in April 2022 are an exclusive occasion for Armenians and Armenia to try to move forward with

Emmanuel Macron, who is well aware of Armenian issues, for achieving peace, stability, development in the region, for the return of Armenian captives from Azerbaijan and on other matters.

Mr. Minasyan said that the recent visit of French presidential candidate Valérie Pécresse to Artsakh has further increased the importance of the issue of Nagorno Karabakh in the context of the French presidential campaign, but noted that it’s still difficult to predict what will be the position of Macron and other candidates on that issue.

France assumed the presidency of the Council of the European Union on January 1, 2022 for a six-month term.

## Poland takes over OSCE Chair, will focus on making progress towards peaceful resolution of conflicts

Poland takes over the OSCE Chair today and will focus on making progress towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts in the OSCE area, in line with OSCE principles and commitments.

“It is an honor and a privilege to assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE for 2022. Our goal will be to continue efforts to rebuild confidence and trust, as well as to act as an honest broker and mediator between participating States,” said Zbigniew Rau, Poland’s Foreign Minister and the new OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

“Poland will focus on supporting the OSCE’s conflict resolution formats and processes, and special attention will be given to promoting comprehensive assistance to conflict-affected populations,” said Minister Rau. He emphasized that Poland’s efforts will be guided by a human-centred perspective.



“It will be crucial for us to safeguard the fundamental OSCE principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent documents,” stressed the new Chairman-in-Office. “A genuine dialogue among participating States must be based on international law principles and a strong commitment to already existing OSCE mechanisms,” indicated Minister Rau.

The Chair highlighted, that conflicting interests require joint efforts to advance solutions. Thorough discussion deserves thorough attention, and the Polish Chair-

manship will ensure that all voices are heard and all advice taken into account.

The Chairmanship will also focus on economic co-operation, which is essential in the pursuit of peace and security. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability and fragility of states’ economies and responding to this challenge through effective multilateralism will be one of Poland’s priorities. Minister Rau emphasized: “Our Organization is a joint effort and a collective exercise. Mobilizing the good will of the participating States is essential for the success of the exceptional endeavor that is the OSCE.”

Minister Rau will officially inaugurate the Chairmanship and outline Poland’s priorities at the session of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 13 January 2022.

## Charges pressed against Israeli kamikaze drone maker suspected of attacking Armenian positions

Israeli drone-maker Aeronautics and three of its senior employees were charged on January 5 with violating the law regulating defense exports in its dealing with one of its most prominent clients, *Haaretz* reports.

A gag order issued by the Rishon Letzion Magistrate's Court prevents the publication of further details.

The firm has been under investigation for the past several years. In 2018 the Justice Ministry said prosecutors intended to press charges against its employees for aggravated fraud and violations of the defense export law.

In an unusual announcement in August 2017, the Defense Ministry said that it had suspended the marketing and export



license for one of the firm's attack drones to a significant customer in a foreign country. Police later launched an investigation into the matter.

That same month it was reported that the Defense Ministry's Security Agency opened a probe into a complaint alleging that Aeronautics representatives demonstrated the use of a kamikaze drone in

Azerbaijan by attacking a manned position of the Armenian army.

The company denied the claim at the time and said that any operational use of the aircraft was only carried out by the buyer of the drone. Aeronautics Defense added that it never carries out demonstrations against live targets, as was the case in this instance.

Founded in 1997 under the name NETS Integrated Avionics Systems, Aeronautics manufactures UAVs for military surveillance and defense and for the commercial sector. The company nearly collapsed in 2011, but was rescued by private equity investors Viola, Beresheet and KCPS, which today hold a combined 36 percent of its shares.

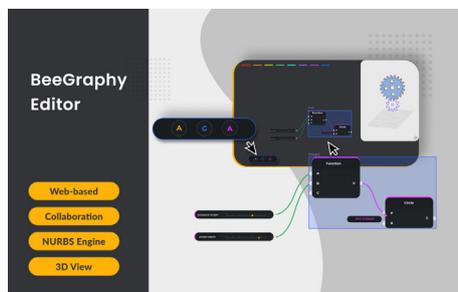
## Armenian company presents a revolutionary innovation in 2D and 3D modeling

Armenian BeeGraphy company launches the first in the world online store where ready-to-produce 2D and 3D parametric models are presented and can be used in many industries such as manufacturing, multimedia, gaming, AR and VR, etc.

The uniqueness of the BeeGraphy Shop lies in the fact that the models undergo parametric changes directly in the shop in the online mode and can appear in a new scheme and parameters. The customized model file is possible to download in STL or OBJ formats (including 2D cuts), used in production, for example, by printing on computer machines (CNC) or 3D printers.

**The first in the world online parametric modeling software.**

BeeGraphy has created an online editor for 2D / 3D parametric modeling, the analog of which does not exist in the world! BeeGraphy modeling software uses NURBS-based mathematical modeling algorithms to maximize the models' ac-



curacy.

**The key features of BeeGraphy Editor are:**

1. Parametric 3D modeling editor online
2. Real-time collaboration
3. Customer-designer-manufacturer working communication improvement and increased speed and efficiency in the process.
4. API: allows the integration of BeeGraphy and NURBS-based models to other online platforms or educational institutions
5. Cloud Storage: allows saving large 3D and 2D design files on servers

6. 3D view: allows designers to see how the model looks in the development stage as well as to share with partners and clients. This feature will help many designers avoid additional services and save time and money.

Along with the full launch of BeeGraphy Editor, registered users of the editor will be able to present their parametric 2D / 3D models for sale directly in the BeeGraphy Shop, creating a new source of revenue.

The BeeGraphy Editor online modeling software is currently in the final stage of development (V1.0). The first major release of the software will be in 2022 on February 27. BeeGraphy is there for 3D builders and designers to try out the tools and capabilities of online software for an exclusive free subscription to May 1, 2022. The comments and opinions of builders and designers will support the enrichment of the tools and opportunities and their user-friendliness.



The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) raised a record-breaking \$8.4+ million on December 11 during its second virtual gala, “Home Is Calling.” Donations will be invested in the construction of a second SMART Center in rural Armenia, the *Armenian Weekly* reports.

The second SMART Center will be built in Armenia’s Armavir region, where COAF began its mission to rebuild the country’s rural communities 18 years ago. By introducing innovative, non-formal educational hubs to rural communities, COAF is accelerating the pace of progress in Armenia’s most disadvantaged regions. The COAF SMART Center currently operating in Lori has already provided crucial education, healthcare, psychological, and social support services to more than 2,500 children and their families, across 27 communities. Armavir’s SMART Center will replicate this investment in the education and holistic development of Armenia’s

## COAF raises over \$8.4 million to build another SMART Center in Armenia

rural families and children, creating economic and social stability, alongside educational opportunities and career resources, in isolated rural communities.

This year’s benefit was met with enormous generosity, including an astounding five million dollars in anonymous donations and stunning commitments from longtime supporters, including the Vahe Fattal Foundation, whose contribution will establish a Digital Design Studio in the Armavir SMART Center. Another one million dollars was gifted by COAF founder and chairman Garo Armen.

“Home Is Calling” brought together a community of people dedicated to uplifting Armenia’s youth and investing in the future of the country. Outstanding donations included: Armen and Janette Avanesians and Family, \$150K; JHM Foundation, \$150K; Jack and Zarig Youredjian, \$150K; Peter and Marilyn Sarkesian / Ajemian Foundation, \$105K; Victor Zarougian and Judith Saryan, \$100K (\$50K supporting COAF’s expansion into Artsakh); Haig and Hilda Manjikian, \$100K; and Michael Panosian/ToughBuilt Industries, \$100K. Further contributions were made by Tacori and Levon Travel, who donated two extraordi-

nary pieces of jewelry and a \$1,000 travel voucher for COAF’s raffle. Pledges also came in from students in COAF’s beneficiary communities and children as young as seven.

This year’s benefit was co-hosted by Araksya Karapetyan of Good Day L.A. on FOX 11 Los Angeles, COAF Head of Development Haig Boyadjian, world-renowned auctioneer Gabriel Butu, US-Armenia television anchor Armine Amiryan, and Tony Award winner Andrea Martin. Entertainment included musical performances by opera singer Gurgen Baveyan, pianists Aida Avanesyan and Svetlana Hakobyan, the talented Aghvan Papoyan and Arthur Mnatsakanyan, local artist Gor Sujyan, and the Carpet Jam family of musicians. A string of celebrities made guest appearances, including award-winning actor Ed Harris, New York Times best-selling author Chris Bohjalian, California State Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian, poet and writer Peter Balakian, Nobel laureate Ardem Patapoutian, comedic actress and playwright Lory Tatoulian, actor Garik Papoyan, comedian and writer Vahe Berberian, and California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara.

## Top US phone firms reject call to delay 5G rollout

Two of the biggest US phone firms have rejected a government request to delay the rollout of 5G services this week, the *BBC* reports.

The US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) made the request over concerns about aviation safety.

However, AT&T and Verizon did say they will implement temporary safeguards.

Plane makers have warned that C-Band spectrum 5G wireless signals may interfere with sensitive aircraft electronics and could disrupt flights.

In a joint letter, the chief executives of AT&T and Verizon said the proposal to delay for a fortnight the introduction of 5G services, which are due to start on 5 January, would be “an irresponsible abdication

of the operating control required to deploy world-class and globally competitive communications networks.”

However, they also said that they will not deploy 5G around airports for six months, similar to an approach adopted in France.

“The laws of physics are the same in the United States and France,” the letter said.

“If US airlines are permitted to operate flights every day in France, then the same operating conditions should allow them to do so in the United States,” it added.

But the FAA said circumstances in France are different, including that telecom firms operating in that country use lower power levels for 5G than are allowed in the US.



The aviation industry and the FAA had previously raised concerns about potential interference of 5G with aircraft equipment like radio altitude meters.

Last month, the bosses of the world’s two biggest plane makers, Airbus and Boeing, made an appeal to Mr Buttigieg in which they said “5G interference could adversely affect the ability of aircraft to safely operate”.

## Armenian Church celebrates the Feast of Holy Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ



On January 6, the Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the commemoration of the Birth and Baptism of Jesus Christ. God was incarnated and appeared to the people. During the Baptism of Jesus God, the Father said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17) and the Holy Spirit descended on Christ in the form of dove, so God appeared to the people for the second time. So, both Theophanies revealed by means of the Birth and Baptism of Jesus Christ are celebrated in the Armenian Church jointly on January 6. The feast starts on the eve, in the evening of January 5, and is continued after

the midnight. On the eve a solemn Candlelight Divine Liturgy is celebrated and on January 6 a solemn Divine Liturgy is celebrated. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy Blessing of the Waters Service is conducted symbolizing the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan at the commencement of His ministry. By means of His Baptism Jesus blessed water.

Celebrant priest pours out the Holy Chrism drop by drop into water and blesses the water. According to the tradition people take some blessed water with them to use it as a medicinal remedy for the sick. After Blessing of the Waters Service the priests visit the houses of the faithful to proclaim the Christmastide Good News of the Birth of Jesus Christ and hence the tradition of Blessing of the Houses was formed.

The Birth of Jesus happened in this way. “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ... And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Naz-

areth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Lk 2:1-7) The Son of God was born in poverty, in a manger. The witnesses of His Birth were the shepherds living out in the fields nearby, whom the angels had appeared and brought the good news of the Birth of the Savior singing: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” (Lk 2:18)

Soon afterwards some men who studied the stars came from the East and worshipped Baby Christ, presented him gifts and returned to their countries.

*Source: Qahana.am*

## NFT of Armenian TV series Musk Factor sells for AMD 3.8 million

A non-fungible token (NFT) of the Armenian series Musk Factor has been sold on the prestigious OpenSea platform for AMD 3.8 million (over \$7,700).

“It is no secret that NFTs or non-fungible tokens have become the trend of 2021. NFTs are especially interesting for artists and illustrators, because they get the opportunity to digitize and sell their work. Simply put, NFT is a unique intellectual, digital asset whose copyrights can be sold. NFT can be a work of art, music, video, or even a Twitter post. It is wonderful that our society is beginning to enter the world of NFTs. We are extremely happy that the NFTs we created have aroused great interest among the international community,” said Rafael Tadevosyan, general producer of Musk Factor.

Musk Factor’s NFTs present the world of the future as the film’s creative team sees it. Thirty-three NFTs will be released during each season of the film.



“If the film presents cryptocurrency and NFTs as the inevitable future of mankind, why not start engaging in it today without waiting for the future?” says the producer.

“And if the NFTs we sell provide us with an opportunity to engage another world-famous actor, why not use the chance?” he adds.

Virtual reality and artificial intelligence technologies play an important role in the world during the period presented in the 10-part Armenian film Musk Factor.

The events are unfolding in 2032: spreading across the globe is the religion

that proves that God is a programmer, the creator of Bitcoin Satoshi Nakamoto is becoming the second savior, and Einstein’s theory of relativity is completely rejected, which allows the growth of new technologies.

Elon Musk has already colonized Mars. An Armenian engineer leaves for Mars, leaving his family to contribute to the project and help humanity move to Mars. His son, Adam creates a digital clone of his father, so that he can somehow make up for his father’s lack.

Later, Adam and his friends develop the idea by creating a social network that uses the technology of creating human clones. But in order to grow a company, friends must face challenges such as raising funds, building team spirit and discovering talent, as well as overcoming many obstacles.

## Armenian State Symphony Orchestra announces cooperation with leading IT companies

The Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, led by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Sergey Smbatyan, and Alexandr Yesayan, the Chairman of the Honorary Board of Trustees of the Foundation for Support of the orchestra are designing a framework of cooperation with representatives of the IT community.

Joint projects are expected to be implemented together with leading IT and communication companies. This cooperation aims to galvanize the orchestra's efforts in promoting Armenian classical music and Armenian composers, following its mission of presenting our performing traditions in classical music abroad. In these efforts the orchestra will be joined by Members of the Honorary Board of Trustees the Founda-



tion – the Co-Founder of Team Telecom Armenia Alexandr Yesayan, the Chief Product Officer and Founding Partner of Picsart Creative Platform Mikayel Vardanyan, the President and Co-founder of Service Titan Software Technology Platform Vahe Kuzoyan, the Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of COAF Garo Armen and others. MoUs have been signed with

these supporters to frame the future cooperation.

The Armenian State Symphony Orchestra is reputed for its innovative projects, which very often incorporate high-tech solutions in delivering classical music to large audiences, including the employment of Artificial Intelligence. Many of these projects receive wide recognition across the world offering new creative approaches to the dialogue between the areas of classical music and IT. This cooperation is also expected to contribute to the efforts of positioning Armenia in the larger context of cultural innovations globally, as well as to the promotion of the Armenian classical music heritage in the world.

## Armenia to host inaugural Extraordinary Travel Festival



Award-winning travel photographer, blogger and filmmaker Ric Gazarian and public speaker and points expert Stefan Krasowski announce the 2022 premiere of an international travel festival that is designed to inspire, convene and support the world's most accomplished and avid adventure travelers.

The inaugural *Extraordinary Travel Festival* will take place in Yerevan, Armenia from October 14-16, 2022, and bring together more than 300 of the world's most daring and ambitious explorers in a series of seminars and conversations that will help foster new connections and enable deeper travel planning in a post-pandemic world.

“Imagine 300 plus Marco Polos types,

all gathering in a single location,” said Co-Founder, Gazarian, whose blog and website @GlobalGaz, feature stories and images from his colorful travels to 145 countries around the globe since. “The idea is to share knowledge, connect doers with dreamers, and help these extraordinary travelers research and plan their next eye-opening adventure.”

“As the world seems to get smaller with social media, accomplished travelers strive to discover the road less traveled. We endeavor to discover and explore and simply be surprised with some experience we were not anticipating. We think getting off the tourist path and into the real world in a more deep, extraordinary way is just what's needed,” says Krasowski, who has traveled to every country in the world.

The Extraordinary Travel Festival will be hosting travelers who dream about planning their next trip to destinations that are challenging-to-visit, such as: Libya, Madagascar, or Iraq. It will also convene explorers who are passionate about seeing remote, pristine and extreme destinations, like Antarctica, Socotra, or Pitcairn Island.

Throughout the three-day festival, more than 40 speakers from all corners of the globe, from Russia to Panama to Kuwait to South Africa, will be taking the stage or leading breakout sessions about deeper, more out-of-the-ordinary travel experiences that are outside the norm.

The speakers will inspire attendees with motivational talks of how they accomplished the impossible, for example, walking from London to Cape town, or living on a remote island in Micronesia. Other speakers will provide actionable information about how to obtain difficult visas or keep yourself safe when traveling to destinations in conflict.

The Festival will also be organizing pre-conference trips, dinners and evening parties in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Armenia was just named “World's Leading Heritage Destination 2021”.

“This event is about building community within this group of accomplished and avid travelers while learning about practical and actionable advice on how to create that next amazing travel experience,” added Krasowski.

# ARMENIA

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