

HIGH-LEVEL ARMENIAN-FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS TOOK PLACE IN PARIS

At the Élysée Palace there took place a meeting between the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, who is in France of official visit, and the President of France François Hollande. At the conclusion of the meeting, signed were documents aimed at the development and deepening of the Armenian-French relations in a number of areas. In particular, the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and Government of the French Republic on the French University in Armenia, Memorandum of Intentions between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France and the RA Ministry of Economic Development and Investments on the cooperation in the area of tourism, a framework cooperation agreement between the RA National Academy and French University of Armenia, l'Université Fédérale Toulouse midi-Pyrénées, National Center for Scientific Research, National Polytechnic Institute of Toulouse, Toulouse III Paul Sabatier University,



Toulouse 1 Capitole University, and the University of Toulouse-Jean Jaurès. The Presidents of Armenia and France recapped the results of the negotiations with the joint statements for the mass media.

In This Issue

Russia will continue to mediate Karabakh peace process: MFA

p.3

Expert: The voter will not orient due to promises as much as due to how much was done or missed

p.9

A Diasporan Minister of Diaspora: A Proposal

p.14

Noyan Tapan Press-Center

Noyan Tapan Press Center holds different discussions, press conferences, round tables, teleconferences, seminars each week which are broadcast live on the Internet. We invite you to take advantage of the Center, as well as to place your banner in our Press Room. **Tel: 060 35 11 22.**
Address: Isahakyan 28, 3rd floor, Yerevan, 0009

Noyan Tapan Printing House

is offering coloured and black and white offset and digital printing of books, brochures, booklets, journals, etc with high quality and low prices **Tel: 060 35 11 22**
Address: Isahakyan 28, 3rd floor, Yerevan 0009

President Met With The President Of French Senate Gérard Larcher

President Serzh Sargsyan met with the President of French Senate Gérard Larcher.

The parties concurred that the Armenian-French interparliamentary dialogue will continue to play a special role in the strengthening of the relations between the two friendly states.

Serzh Sargsyan noted with satisfaction that the National Assembly of Armenia has formed a good tradition of maintaining friendly relations with many of the European parliaments, including the Senate of France, and it is necessary to preserve and develop that tradition.

According to President Sargsyan, true to the spirit of the Armenian-French relations, parliamentary cooperation is manifested also in the multilateral platforms such as Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, OSCE, and NATO. The President hailed the readiness of the French delegation at the European Parliament to constantly hold in the focus of their attention issues which are important for Armenia.

Serzh Sargsyan also praised the efficient cooperation of Armenia and France in the framework of Francophonie.

At the meeting, the parties discussed also issues pertinent to the Armenia-EU relations, the NK peace process, regional issues and challenges.

The President of Armenia spoke also about the indispensable role of France in the international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide and expressed gratitude to the parliamentarians for their persistent fight against intolerance and hatred.



At the conclusion of the meeting, President Serzh Sargsyan made an inscription at the Livre d'Or of the Senate of the French Republic.

"It is a special pleasure to be hosted here – the Senate of the friendly France, a place full of history. Recapitulating the rich and exclusive French culture, it has truly become a venue of the perfect cohabitation of the new and old. I live the feeling of pride and exhilaration finding myself in the place where 17 years ago the resolution on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was adopted. It reiterated once again the leading role of France in the protection of universal human rights and, of course, unconditional solidarity with the Armenian people," wrote the President of Armenia.

Armenia open to normalizing relations with Turkey without preconditions – FM



Armenia is open to normalizing relations with Turkey without any preconditions, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said at a joint press conference with visiting Foreign Minister of Greece Nikos Kotzias.

Minister Nalbandian said he hopes Turkey will once adopt a similar stance and will respect the agreements reached.

Minister Nalbandian reminded about the Armenian President's initiative to normalize relations with Turkey without preconditions, which the latter turned down. "Although two protocols were signed, Turkey refused to ratify and implement those," he said.

Minister Nalbandian said that "as a nation subjected to the first genocide of the 20th century, Armenia feels obliged to make efforts to prevent new genocides, new crimes against humanity."

"We are taking steps on different international platforms, including the UN in that direction," Minister Nalbandian said, adding that a number of resolutions have already been adopted.

The Minister reminded that the UN recently accepted Armenia's initiative to proclaim December 9 as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

Russia will continue to mediate Karabakh peace process: MFA



“Russia intends to continue its mediating mission in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement together with the French and US Co-Chairs and on the basis of the provisions stipulated for in the five joint statements of the Presidents of Russia, the United States and France,” Spokesperson for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova told a press conference today.

She reminded that the statements stress the unacceptability of the use of force in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict and urge the leaderships of Armenia and Azerbaijan to solve

disputable issues on the basis of the principles of non-use of force or the threat of force, territorial integrity and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Maria Zakharova said that Russia will continue individual efforts, considering the country’s close relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, which allow for frank exchange of opinion on key issues.

She reminded that Russia played a direct role in the signing of the ceasefire agreement in 1994, which remains in force to date. “An important phase in Russia’s mediating efforts was the adoption of the Moscow Declaration in 2008, which stipulates for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict through direct dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This is the first and the only document bearing the signatures of the Presidents of the two countries,” the Spokesperson said.

At a trilateral meeting mediated by Russia in 2011, the parties agreed to implement an investigation mechanism. Russia played a key role in ceasing the large-scale military actions in April last year by inviting the Chiefs of General Staffs of Armenia and Azerbaijan,” Zakharova said.

She stressed that “observance of all above-mentioned agreements is key to the consistent continuation of the peace process aimed at reaching a sustainable resolution to the conflict.”

No negotiations because of April aggression against Artsakh – Edward Nalbandian

The lack of talks on Nagorno Karabakh is connected with the huge blow to the negotiation process caused by the aggression against Artsakh last April, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said at a joint press conference with visiting Foreign Minister of Greece Nikolaos Kotzias.

“This pushed the negotiation process back,” Minister Nalbandian said. He added that Armenia and the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries are making efforts to create conditions conducive to the furthering the negotiation process.

The comments come after Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov accused Armenia of freezing the Karabakh talks.

“It’s well known that the international community, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and Armenia are speaking the same language, while Azerbaijan is speaking a different language,”



Edward Nalbandian said. He blamed Azerbaijan for the failure to implement the agreements reached at Vienna and St. Petersburg summits.

Minister Nalbandian stressed that there is no alternative to the negotiations, and the OSCE Minsk Group

Co-Chairs maintain efforts to further the negotiation process.

“The Co-Chairs will arrive in Armenia on March 27 and will visit Stepanakert, as well,” Edward Nalbandian informed.

President Serzh Sargsyan Received The Minister Of Foreign Affairs Of Greece



President Serzh Sargsyan received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Nikos Kotzias, who has arrived to Armenia on official visit.

Welcoming the guest to our country, the President of Armenia underscored that the Armenian-Greek ties date back millennia and the history of these relations is full of manifestations of friend-

ship. Based on that friendship, the two countries in 25 years since Armenia's independence have formed close friendly relations.

President Sargsyan noted that Armenia strives to further and deepen the exciting cooperation with Greece, to invigorate the political dialogue, to the economic relations, bringing them up to the current high level of political relations.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece Nikos Kotzias fully agreed with President Sargsyan on this issue. He expressed belief that it is necessary to strengthen deep feelings of friendship, which the Armenian and Greek people have for each other, with the cooperation in all areas. He assured that Greece possesses political will to do it, and there exists a legal field – over three dozen of signed agreements and treaties which allows to achieve that goal.

The parties stressed the importance of carrying on with the consistent work aimed at the enhancement of the cooperation in different areas such as education, including military education, culture, economy, transportation, tourism, and others.

Minister Nikos Kotzias underscored that all prerequisites are in place to establish a strategic partnership and cooperation between Armenia and Greece.

Russia is not interested in Turkey's mediating involvement in the Karabakh settlement



Russia is not interested in Turkey's mediation in the process of the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement. The director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Armenia Ruben Safrastyan at the press conference in Yerevan expressed such a point of view on March 13, referring to the statement of Recep Erdogan in Moscow.

According to him, Turkey periodically makes efforts to intensify its role in the settlement of the conflict, but so far in vain. He recalled Turkey's attempts to become a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. "Of course, Yerevan will never agree to this, as

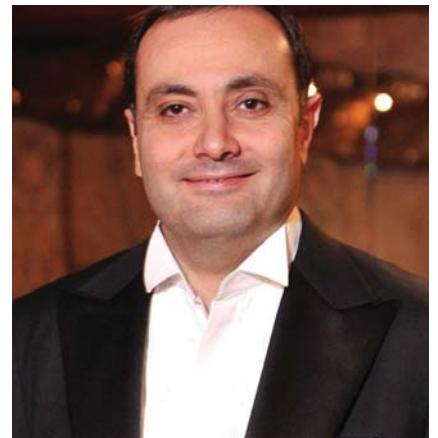
Ankara has a unilateral position on this issue and it provides unconditional support to Baku. Turkey is constantly trying to imitate its participation in the negotiation process, aiming to enhance its international image, as it seeks to become one of the regional centers of influence", Safrastyan said, and in this context added that Russia is certainly not interested in Turkey reaching the desired goal on this issue.

According to expert, Erdogan's statements are empty and there is nothing beyond them and this is just a manifestation of Turkish centuries-old diplomacy.

To note, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the need to organize comprehensive negotiations on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Speaking with the initiative to organize negotiations, Erdogan said that what is happening on the contact line shows how critical the situation is. The head of the Turkish state expressed confidence that Russia, as one of the countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group, can play an important role in the settlement of the conflict.

ArmInfo

Vardan Toghanyan appointed Armenia's Ambassador to Russia



President Serzh Sargsyan has signed a decree, relieving Oleg Yesayan of the duties of Armenia's Ambassador Extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Russia.

According to another presidential decree, Vardan Toghanyan has been appointed Armenia's Ambassador to Russia.

Amnesty International: Activists in Azerbaijan targeted by 'government-sponsored' cyber attack

Azeri human rights activists, journalists and political dissidents have been the targets of a fraudulent and sustained 'spear phishing' campaign using emails and Facebook chat, apparently aimed at gaining access to their personal information and private communications, said Amnesty International in a new report launched today.

The investigation reveals that the attacks, which can compromise passwords and contacts, have been directed at various government critics for the past 13 months. Victims told Amnesty International they believed the Azerbaijani authorities are behind the attacks.

"Our research reveals that a targeted and coordinated cyber campaign is being waged against critical voices in Azerbaijan, many of whom are long-time victims of government repression," said Claudio Guarnieri, Senior Technologist at Amnesty International.

"The malware used has been



designed with the express intention of gathering as much private information as possible about a target. Given the profiles of those targeted, it is not hard to see why victims believe the authorities are responsible."

The report, 'False Friends – how fake accounts and crude malware targeted dissidents in Azerbaijan', details how victims have been targeted

using a practice known as 'spear phishing', which involves an email with an attachment containing a virus – known as malware – being sent to a target from a fake address. Amnesty International: Activists in Azerbaijan targeted by 'government-sponsored' cyber attack Amnesty International: Activists in Azerbaijan targeted by 'government-sponsored' cyber attack

UN: Unrest in southeast Turkey 'has killed 2,000'



About 2,000 people were killed and entire neighbourhoods razed in southeastern Turkey in 18 months of government security operations

characterised by massive destruction and serious human rights violations, the United Nations said on Friday, Reuters reports.

The UN human rights office said in a report on the period July 2015-December 2016 that up to 500,000 people, mostly Kurds, had been displaced, while satellite imagery showed the "enormous scale of destruction of the housing stock by heavy weaponry".

The UN investigators documented numerous killings, disappearances and torture, as well as other human rights violations. The most serious abuses took place during periods of curfew imposed for several days at a time.

The investigators were not granted access by Turkey and as of last month the UN had not received any formal response to its concerns, the report said.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein said in a statement on Friday that Turkey had "contested the veracity of the very serious allegations" in the report.

He was particularly concerned that Turkey appeared not to have launched any credible investigation into the hundreds of unlawful killings, adding that an independent investigation was both urgent and essential.

"It appears that not a single suspect was apprehended and not a single individual was prosecuted," he said.

“Tsarukyan” Bloc will not form pre-electoral coalition with Republican Party

“Tsarukyan” Bloc will not form pre-electoral coalition with Republican Party, stated the Bloc’s member Deputy Naira Zohrabyan to radio station “Svoboda”. According to her, if Tsarukyan and his supporters wished to form a coalition with RPA, which according to Zohrabyan is responsible of the crisis situation in all sectors, they would not refuse from further cooperation in 2012. She also expressed confidence that in case of absence of pressure and terror upon voters, falsifications and bribes, the “Tsarukyan” Bloc will have 50% +1 votes and will form the government. At the same time, another chairman of the Bloc, “Alliance” Party leader, Deputy Tigran Urikhanyan stated that if “Tsarukyan” Bloc will not have absolute majority in elections, it will form post-electoral coalition with other political forces except RPA. Earlier, about the impossibility of cooperation with RPA stated “Elk”, ORO blocs and the Armenian National Congress Party. The “Armenian Revival” Party does not exclude the possibility of cooperation with RPA if its voice will be decisive in state decision making. And only ARM “Dashnaktsutyun” did not exclude the possibility of after electoral coalition with RPA. At



the same time, the sources of ArmInfo in RPA, also informs about the creation of after electoral coalition with ARFD as according to inner polls and analyses of the Party, it will not manage to have absolute majority by itself. The maximum index RPA hopes for is 46%.

ArmInfo.

Armenia’s Communist Party: People who appreciated Soviet Union turn to us

The residents of many Armenian towns and villages seemed to be intimidated and didn’t take proper interest in the programs and ideas of the Communist Party of Armenia during the first seven days of the election campaign.

Deputy candidate of the United Communist Party of Armenia, Vazgen Safaryan, said the aforementioned on Monday within the framework of the extended format session of the party.

In his words, during the recent week the representatives of the Communist Party have visited a number of Armenian towns and villages, where they met with the residents and presented them their program. However, there was no interest and inspiration from the side of the people. According to the party representatives, the people seemed to be intimidated. However, those who attended the meetings with the communists listened attentively to their proposals on how to introduce into the modern world and the world of future all the best that used to be in the past, i.e. free education for everyone, free apartments for the young, etc.

“Mainly people who appreciated the Soviet

Armenia and who built it through their labor turn to us,” Safaryan said.

In his words, it will not be difficult to return to Armenia everything good that existed during the socialist regime: in case of organizing the country’s economy correctly it will be possible to find funds also for free education and free medicine.

“Our program is aimed at ensuring 7-8 percent annual economic growth. We will be able to achieve this through the development of industry and internal cooperation ties,” Safaryan said.

On Monday, the Communist Party representatives gathered in Yerevan to discuss the first week of the election campaign and determined their future plans.



Armenia ex-minister: Many people made up fortune in army through corruption but I stopped that



Many people made up fortune in the army through corruption but I put end to that, former Defense Minister of Armenia, Seyran Ohanyan, who tops the candidate list of Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanian alliance, said on Monday at the meeting with the Union of Veterans of Armenia held in Yerevan.

In his words, the accountability of the army to the society has unprecedentedly risen in the recent years, and this experience should be used in governing the state. “It is necessary to establish justice in the country, the need for which our society feels very sharply,” Ohanyan added.

ORO Bloc promises to attract investments and grants amounting \$1.5-2 billion yearly

Former Foreign Minister and candidate from the Ohanyan-Raffi-Oskanian bloc Vardan Oskanian promises to attract investments and grants of \$ 1.5-2 billion annually if he wins the elections. He stated this on March 10 during a meeting with voters in Hrazdan.

In his opinion, the complex social and economic situation in the country has no objective reasons and is due to the inaction of the authorities. He believes that only the potential of the Armenian Diaspora is enough to improve the economy. However, the ex-minister noted that there are no little resources within the country, which gradually leave it. "People do not trust the current



authorities and keep funds in banks, but if they have confidence, these finances can go into circulation, and Diaspora Armenians will again invest in the Armenian economy", he stressed, adding that the change of power will affect positively on this process.

Seyran Ohanyan, the leader of the bloc, said that Armenia needs the

same radical changes as the ex-President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili conducted to eradicate corruption and other negative phenomena. "We are behind Georgia for a step, as Armenia needs radical and tough changes in a number of spheres", he stressed. At the same time, Ohanyan believes that Saakashvili's anti-Russian policy was unjustified, therefore, Armenia should not follow the path of the former Georgian leader in the external vector. "Armenia should combine its development with strengthening relations with Russia, as well as deepening cooperation with the West", he resumed.

Armenian Revival party stands for creation of professional army



Armenian Revival party stands for creation of a professional army, a move that will help to solve the problem of employment.

Dozens of strong men from 30 to 50 who have long been unemployed would willingly agree to become professional military men, leader of the party Arthur Baghdasaryan said during a campaign meeting on Sunday.

After retraining, they will be able to join the army and get money for it. Baghdasaryan believes the Armenia's budget permits to maintain a professional army. In addition, as a result of a more active fight against corruption, free budget funds can also be used to maintain a professional army.

L. Zurabyan: For 18 years Republican Party has not ruled the country, but robbed and devastated it

If law-enforcement authorities would accomplish their duties properly, then no political force can distribute electoral bribery, Deputy Chairman Armenian Political Party Levon Zurabyan stated during the meeting with the voters of Kond district in Yerevan.

He called the voters not to accept bribes neither from any of political forces, nor from leading Republican Party, as well as no other force positioning itself opposition. Zurabyan strongly criticized also the Republican Party of Armenia, stating that the Party led the country to devastation and socioeconomic crisis.

"For 18 years that Party has not ruled the country, but robbed and devastated it," politician noted, adding that the country faced to menace of Azerbaijani aggression. "We have no right to sleep already, we have to take certain steps to exit the current situation," Zurabyan resumed.

Karen Karapetyan: The state system of Armenia has not taken place yet



The state system of Armenia has not taken place yet, said the Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan during the meeting with the voters of Syunik region. "We do not have a system that would limit the wrong approaches and steps of high-ranking officials", the Prime Minister said. At the same time, he assured the determination of the ruling Republican Party, in case of victory in elections, to build such a state that no Armenian will want to leave the country. "We realize what a heavy burden we take on ourselves, but we are ready for this responsibility", the Premier assured. According to him, the main capital of Armenia is the man. "We must create such conditions so that he can fully realize his potential, we must create favorable conditions for the creative person", the Prime Minister summarized.

Armenia, Greece keen on boosting economic cooperation

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received today a delegation led by Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotsias, Government's Press Office reports.

"This year ushers in the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Greece. Our friendly relations are at a very high level, but we are keen to intensify the cooperation with Greece and take it to a new level," Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said addressing the guests.

Stressing the need to boost economic exchange, the Prime Minister said there is great untapped potential in this area. Karen Karapetyan welcomed the ongoing bilateral cooperation within international institutions and the fact that the two countries have similar positions on a number of issues on international agenda.

Pleased with his stay in friendly Armenia, the Greek Foreign Minister conveyed warm greetings on behalf of Prime Minister of Greece Alexis Tsipras.

"We have always been brotherly peoples. The purpose of my visit is to create a strategic partnership," Nikos Kotsias said. Highly appreciating the Armenian-Greek political dialogue, the Greek Foreign Minister agreed in that economic relations are on a low level, and there is a need for their harmonious development.



As they discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation, the parties highlighted the role of the Armenian-Greek joint commission on economic, industrial and scientific-technical cooperation. In particular, the interlocutors discussed the possibility of holding an Armenian-Greek business forum. In this context, Prime Minister Karapetyan suggested clarifying the areas of mutual interest to the two countries' business circles and actively working on joint projects.

Armenia eyes sustainable economic growth from 2018

Reuters — Armenia is ready to take unpopular steps including cutting state spending and eliminating barriers to private investment in order to get the ailing economy back on a sustainable footing by next year, its prime minister said.

"Regular structural reforms will be implemented in Armenia, even if these reforms are unpopular," Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan told Reuters in an interview.

Cutting administrative expenses, and plans to reduce the budget deficit to 2.7 percent of national output this year from the 5.9 percent expected for 2016, might impact economic growth. But the measures were necessary, he said.

"It will have a negative impact ... but we want to compensate it through private investment," Karapetyan said.

"I think we will be able to withstand (problems) and achieve 3.2 percent growth this year."

He said that his government would also focus on fighting corruption and "eliminating all barriers that impede business from developing."

According to officials, the government is



preparing an economic development programme that will target growth of between 4-5 percent from 2018.

Karapetyan said a new centre for strategic initiatives would look to draft short- and long-term projects with the private sector.

He said it was "realistic" to try to attract \$850 million of investment this year, with the bulk coming from the private sector.

Armenia attracted \$513 million in foreign direct investment in the first half of 2016, up from \$323 million in the same period a year ago, according to national statistics office data.

Countries with significant investments in Armenia include Russia, Germany and France and the main sectors attracting funding are agriculture, energy and tourism.

Sargsyan invites French firms to invest in Armenia

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met with members of the Movement of French Enterprises (MEDEF), which acts as an important link between French firms and high-ranking officials and private sector representatives from different countries.

This structure responsible for international cooperation supports and contributes to the activity of French firms and creates conditions for them to realize their programs. It also enables French companies functioning abroad to raise issues of interest and problems with a view of seeking solutions.

Following the meeting the Tashir Group of Companies and the Schneider Electric Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Addressing the meeting, President Sargsyan introduced the investment opportunities in Armenia and invited French companies to invest in the country. "I assure we're ready to demonstrate an individual approach to every investor, taking into consideration his needs."

Expert: The voter will not orient due to promises as much as due to how much was done or missed



The ruling Republican Party presented a pre-election program, in fact, devoid of quantitative specifics, it is without numbers and facts. The reason for this is that the authorities are well aware that the voter, when making a choice, will be guided not so much by the predicted numbers or promises of growth as on the basis of what was done or missed by the RPA during its reign. Atom Margaryan, Associate Professor of the Department of Economic Theory of ASEU, Candidate of Economic Sciences, stated this on March 13 in Yerevan, commenting on the presented programs of political forces participating in the pre-electoral parliamentary race.

According to expert, the RPA program echoes the previous government's program of activities, which is "not entirely logical". "The program of activities should flow from the electoral program, and not vice versa", he said, but this, he said, is a subjective factor, it has a completely logical explanation, since the pre-electoral emphasis is placed on the personality of the prime minister as a "charismatic leader". The focus is the same - investment, stimulating the business environment, fighting corruption and reducing poverty in the country. "The program is quite realistic. Not putting an artificially high bar

and promising to provide 3.2% growth in 2017, 4-5% in 2018, it is quite possible to achieve growth of 5-6% or more by the end of the five-year plan", he said.

According to Margaryan, the future government will be a coalition including RPA and ARFD. Currently, the ARF program is not enlightened by numbers. The only thing the expert stressed is the bringing the minimum amount of pensions into line with the minimum consumption basket.

In contrast, the programs of "Free Democrats" and "Tsarukyan" Bloc have specifics in the context of numbers and expectations. "They both promise 6.5-7% economy growth in 2017. I consider the given bar to be a hard-to-reach", he stated. According to the expert, a 0.2% growth in 2016 indicates a period of recession or stagnation in the Armenian economy during the past year. Under these conditions, when there is no prospect of lifting sanctions from Russia in the foreseeable future and a complete lifting of sanctions from Iran, and lack of expectations in terms of appreciation of oil prices, in an attempt to ensure a 6-7% growth in trying to attract hard-to-reach and expensive credit funds for Armenia only inexpedient, but also dangerous. At the same time, the economic component of the "Free Dem-

ocrats" program, in his opinion, will become a cornerstone for the future government, and the position of the "Tsarukyan" Bloc on the release of SMEs from taxation having turnover up to 60 million for 3 years deserves attention and application.

In general, as Margaryan noted, despite the long-term program modifications, the job is an ungrateful one because of the negative external shocks and high level of turbulence in global economy, the "Free Democrats" and "Elk" Bloc programs include not only short-term and mid-term development. "Elk", for example, is highlighted by the proposed long-term institutional changes", the expert said. The programs of the "Elk" bloc, however, the economist believes are high-tech. "It provides a clear program for the development of the country's military-industrial complex and it is no coincidence that its key point is to raise the salaries of servicemen", he noted.

"The Armenian Revival" proposes to set a maximum bar for the provision of agricultural loans in 10% of which 5% will be compensated by the state budget, which is also somewhat realistic", Margaryan said. But, at the same time, in his opinion, having offered to freeze the accumulative pension system, it is necessary to take into account that we are deprived of the resource for subsidizing such loans.

What about the Congress-People's Party of Armenia and ORO, as the expert considers, ORO is viewing the ways of economic development in details by increasing the level of education. The Congress-People's Party of Armenia program of friendly neighboring and of good will which proposes to 55% of saving the military expenditures in order to direct them to new jobs. "But the question is how to do it. Since at the moment it is difficult and almost impossible", he said.

To note, Sunday, March 5, 2017, in accordance with national legislation in the Republic of Armenia, a campaign began. It will last 26 days. April 1, 2017 in the Republic of Armenia is a day of silence, and on April 2 the Parliamentary elections will be held. 9 political forces participate in elections.

Armenia to Open Consulate in Iraqi Kurdistan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL)—President Serzh Sarkisian on Monday gave the green light to the opening of an Armenian consulate general in Iraqi Kurdistan, underscoring Armenia's growing ties to the region that enjoys considerable autonomy within Iraq.

Sarkisian signed a corresponding decree more than one week after it was formally approved by Prime Minister Karen Karapetian's cabinet. "The opening of the consulate will help to step up productive bilateral cooperation," read a government statement released on March 2.

As recently as on February 17, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian held fresh talks with Iraqi Kurdistan's President Massoud Barzani on the sidelines of an international security conference in Munich. According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, the planned opening of the Armenian mission in Erbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi region, was high on the agenda. A ministry statement said Nalbandian thanked the Iraqi Kurdish leadership for its "comprehensive support" on the issue.

The two men also discussed regional security and ways of deepening bilateral commercial ties, added the statement.

Armenia's trade with the Kurdish region and other parts of Iraq has



grown considerably in recent years. Armenian exports to the Middle Eastern nation account for the bulk of bilateral trade which stood at \$138 million last year.

Armenian cigarettes are by far the most important item in those exports. According to Armenian government data, the Iraqi market generated over two-thirds of the Armenian tobacco industry's total export revenue in 2014.

Speaking at the March 2 cabinet meeting in Yerevan, Nalbandian said that Iraqi Kurdistan accounts for most of the Armenian-Iraqi commerce due to "security and other favorable factors." The Kurdish autonomy has been the most stable and peaceful part of Iraq ever since the 2003 overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Iraq's central government has also supported efforts to deepen Armenian-Iraqi commercial ties. It helped to launch two years ago commercial flights between Yerevan and Baghdad that are carried out via Erbil.

The Armenian government announced plans to open a consulate in Erbil at around the same time. Barzani welcomed those plans when he met with Nalbandian in Munich in February 2015.

Iraqi Kurdistan is thought to be home to several thousand ethnic Armenians. Some of them are former residents of Mosul who were forced to flee their homes when the city was captured by the so-called Islamic State in June 2014.

Hearings on Dink murder case resume in Istanbul



Agos – Trials of public officials, including former police chiefs Celalettin Cerrah, Engin Dinç, Ramazan Aküyrek, Ali Fuat Yılmaz,

Ahmet İlhan Güler, continue today.

During the previous round, arrested suspect Ali Fuat Yılmaz, former chief of the Office C of Istanbul Directorate of Security Intelligence Branch, completed his defence. In this round, cross examination of Yılmaz will be carried out. After the cross examination, witnesses will be heard.

The court decided to hear 52 people as witnesses, including Muammer Güler, former Minister of Interior and the Governor of Istanbul at the time of murder; former police chief Hanefi Avcı; former police chief Recep Güven; former deputy police chief Emin Arslan; Hüseyin Yavuz-

demir, the Governor of Trabzon at the time of murder; former inspector Ayşegül Genç; former deputy police chief of Istanbul Hakan Aydın Türkeli; former chief of Istanbul counter-terrorism branch Selim Kutkan and journalist Nedim Şener.

Friends of Hrant: the case is still focused on a single branch

Friends of Hrant made a statement in front of the courthouse before the hearing. Speaking on behalf of Friends of Hrant, Bülent Aydın said, "We came close to the truth, but the case is still focused on a passive branch. Clarifying the Dink murder would pave the way for clarifying other dark murders."

\$95 Million to be Invested in Tatev Gate Project

YEREVAN (Arka)—Armenian Prime Minister Kar-en Karapetian during a working visit to the Syunik province on March 11 had a consultative meeting with representatives of the Foundation for Armenia Development, and was presented the Tatev Gate investment project, the government's press office said.

The Tatev Gate complex will be built next to the Halidzor station of Tatev cableway, which will feature information, entertainment and service infrastructures and quality services designed to increase the flow of visitors.

The already finalized general development plan calls for establishing a visitor hub, a national kitchen and catering outlets, as well as a center of national traditions, ancient Armenian games and other entertainments. The project requires investment of 95 million USD in six strategic directions, with a prospect of about 1,500 jobs and increased influx of tourists—up to 400,000 annually.

International financial organizations may be engaged in the project. Welcoming the idea, Karapetian urged those responsible to finalize the project and begin substantive discussions in the government.

The 5.7-kilometer-long Winds of Tatev ropeway in the south of Armenia—built by Austrian-Swiss Doppelmayr/Garaventa transports visitors from the village of Halidzor across the Vоротan gorge to the village of Tatev—allows tourists and visitors to bypass a 90-minute drive on a road in and out of the Vоротan River Gorge to a walking distance of the Tatev monastery.



The cable car travels at a speed of 37 kilometers per hour (23 miles per hour) and a one-way journey takes 11 minutes. At its highest point over the gorge, the car travels 320 meters (1,056 feet) above ground level. It has two cabins, each capable of carrying up to 25 passengers. The cable car is part of a \$45 million-dollar public-private effort to develop tourism at Tatev and in the overall region of Syunik. The aerial tramway was officially registered by a representative of the Guinness World Records as the world's longest aerial tramway built to transport visitors.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation launches 'Zarmanazan' Western Armenian revitalization programs

The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is launching the educational project "Zarmanazan" as part of its Western Armenian revitalization program. The initiative will incorporate two components that will mutually nourish each other:

A summer camp for children between the ages of 10 to 15, in a creative and playful world, aimed at encouraging the practice of Western Armenian.

A training internship designed for Western Armenian teachers or teachers-in-training in the Armenian Diaspora, leading to university certification by the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris (INALCO).

For 25 days, children and teenagers will reside together with a team of 15 experienced facilitators in

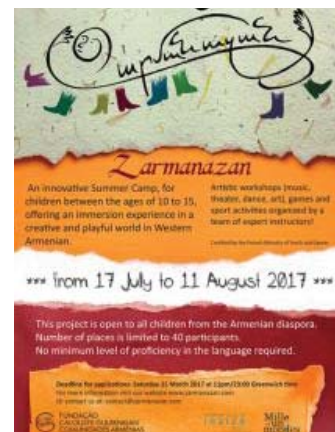
an inspiring environment. While totally immersed in Western Armenian, they will create, discover, learn, and have fun through engaging workshops in music, arts, theater, dance, as well as various sports and games. Through these activities, language will become a natural means of communication and creation.

The Zarmanazan camp, organized in partnership with the Mille et un Mondes organization in Lyon, will offer a space for meeting and interaction between all participants who will have the opportunity to learn from one another and develop friendships, living an enriching and unique experience.

The camp is open to all children and teenagers living in the Armenian Diaspora. The number of places is limited to 40. There is no requirement for a minimum level of proficiency in Armenian.

The teacher development component of the camp will host 15 teachers (or teachers-in-training). They will follow an intensive program combining expert direction with practical training, interactive lectures, and the latest pedagogic approaches and materials.

The location of the camp is in La Bourboule, France



France Recognized Right of Armenian Army to Punish

In Paris Francois Hollande and Serzh Sargsyan made a public statement for the media. According to the official website of the Armenian president, Hollande particularly announced: "France is an OSCE Minsk Group co-chair country together with the United States and Russia, and we want to work towards a solution. First, in order for us to avoid repetition of incidents of the past weeks and months, in order to have mechanisms of investigation of incidents which will prevent such incidents and punish the actions that expose peace."

An agreement on stationing investigation mechanisms was reached after the April war, during the meeting in Vienna. Later France, the United States and Armenia regularly repeated the necessity to bring into being that agreement, Russia was silent and Azerbaijan refused.

The introduction of this mechanism would mean the failure of Azerbaijan's policy on the Karabakh issue. At the same time, it would indicate "recognition" of the current border. Azerbaijan is taking actions to prevent this, and Russia is obviously the country it relies on.

Russia's stance is not as clear as that of the

United States and France. The available information allows assuming that Moscow is not against the mechanisms but has some reservations. Again, proceeding from the scarce publicly available information, on the other hand, these reservations concern the strategic relations with Azerbaijan, and on the other hand, to prevent the presence of the United States.

Azerbaijan is trying to restore the so-called "three-partite" Russia-Azerbaijan-Armenia format, hoping to return the process to the pre-April logic, where it had a lot of freedom to act thanks to Russia. Armenia insists on two conditions to continue the negotiations – the agreements in Vienna and the issue of the status of Artsakh.

In this context, Hollande's statement is important because it is something new. Speaking about the need to introduce the mechanisms of investigation, he speaks about punishing, not preventing, which is for the first time. Punishment can be both political and military, and it is hard to tell what content is placed inside this word, not ruling out the nuances of translation. On the other hand, this is a new circumstance which itself may indicate new tendencies in the process

of both the political and military "settlement" of the issue.

After all, if the co-chairs and Armenia agree on the mechanism of investigation, can Azerbaijan alone resist? If the issue is not resolved, does it mean that Baku has the direct or indirect support of one of the co-chairs? It is possible that this co-chair is not against but does not announce about it.

A new situation occurs which was expressed in the past few weeks in the conflict area. The Armenian armed forces changed the tactics and delivered some preventive blows, including with the use of new equipment and investigation mechanisms.

In other words, the Armenian side has taken up the process of "unilateral" introduction of their own investigation mechanism. Hence, in the result of Azerbaijan's militaristic policy "the right to punish" has been passed to Armenia, and Hollande's statement in Paris may indicate the recognition of that circumstance. Unless the co-chairs have reached agreement on the introduction of investigation mechanisms, only the Armenian side will maintain peace and "punish the actions that threaten peace".

Lragir.am

Baku's Angry About Change in Karabakh

By Naira Hayrumyan

On March 10 the OSCE office in Baku addressed a statement to that organization on changes in the disposition of Karabakh. "Unfortunately, we encounter unacceptable elements, such as the deployment of the OSCE observation mission at the line of confrontation, which is a change of the modus operandi and is not in line with agreements reached at the level of presidents," the statement holds.

In fact, Baku is blaming OSCE for deploying a mission of observers in Karabakh without its consent.

The mission of the OSCE C/O's personal representative Andrzej Kasprzyk has been present in Karabakh since 1995, after the end of the war. The mandate of the representative's office had a limited number of staff who periodically monitored the situation and reported to OSCE.

After the war in April 2016 OSCE insisted on increasing the number of observers, as well as enlarging the mandate. The enlargement of the mandate might suppose different functions, from detecting ceasefire breaches to certain actions.

In fact, Baku informs that OSCE has enlarged its mandate without Azerbaijan's consent. And this is a new situation in the Karabakh settlement where the international mediators kept the parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan and do not undertake anything with which none of the sides agrees.

Is it possible that OSCE has made up its mind to take a unilateral step in Karabakh, receiving the consent for unilateral deployment of observers from the Armenian side?

After the sides had agreed to station mechanisms of investigation of incidents in Vienna and Saint Petersburg, and Azerbaijan objected, experts asked a question whether the OSCE could install such equipment on the Armenian side unilaterally.

It is possible that Baku hints at this in its vociferous statement. This question was asked to the American co-chair of the Minsk Group Richard Hoagland visiting Baku but he did not comment.

What kind of deployment of OSCE observers in Karabakh is meant? What equipment do they have and do they have a mandate for any actions in case of ceasefire breaches?

In this regard, the statement of the president of France Francois Hollande during the meeting with Serzh Sargsyan in Paris is significant. He stated that the breaches should not only be detected but also punished.

Has France offered its services to Armenia for the mechanisms of "investigation of incidents and punishment"? Did the French co-chair of the Minsk Group Visconti mean this when he announced in Baku that the process has moved from ground zero?

If France or OSCE have expanded the mission in Karabakh with a view to strengthening the ceasefire, this changes all the disposition. And Baku's indignation is clear in this case.

Azerbaijan Blocks OSCE Monitors In Karabakh

BAKU (RFE/RL)—Azerbaijan has made clear that it will not allow the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to deploy monitors on the Armenian-Azerbaijani front lines around Nagorno-Karabakh.

“In the absence of withdrawal of the Armenian troops from the occupied territories, such a deployment would lead only to further consolidation of the status quo and prolongation of the conflict,” the Azerbaijani mission to the OSCE headquarters in Vienna said on Thursday.

The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to the expansion of a small OSCE team periodically monitoring ceasefire in the Karabakh conflict zone when they met in the Austrian capital in May last year. The talks, hosted by then-U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, came just over a month after the outbreak of the worst fighting along the Karabakh “line of contact” in over two decades.

In a joint statement issued at the time, Lavrov, Kerry and a senior French official said Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sarkisian also pledged to “finalize in the shortest possible time” a mechanism for OSCE investigations of ceasefire violations. None of these two measures backed by Armenia has been put into practice to date.

“Unfortunately, we are faced with introduction of unacceptable elements such as deployment of OSCE observers to the Line of Confrontation, which is a change of modus operandi of [the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office] and not in line with agreements reached at the level of Presidents,” the Azerbaijani mission said in a statement read out at Thursday’s meeting of the OSCE’s Permanent Council.

“Azerbaijan cannot accept such a dangerous development in the conflict zone as it contradicts the very purpose of entire [OSCE] Minsk process,” it added.

The existing OSCE team led by Andrzej Kasprzyk consists of a handful of officials who regularly travel to Karabakh and the Armenian-Azerbaijani border to



briefly monitor the parties’ compliance with the ceasefire regime. The Azerbaijani statement suggests that the OSCE would like to not only expand the largely symbolic mission but also have the monitors stationed in or around Karabakh.

Baku has been just as reluctant to allow international investigations of truce violations there. The Russian Foreign Ministry revealed in November that Aliyev said “there is no need to investigate armed incidents” at a follow-up meeting with Sarkisian held in Saint-Petersburg in June. Yerevan has since repeatedly accused Baku of walking away from the confidence-building agreements.

The Azerbaijani delegation said the truce safeguards sought by the U.S., Russian and French mediators must be “synchronized with settlement of the conflict.” It claimed that the Armenian side is insisting on these measures in order to avoid “substantive negotiations” on a Karabakh peace.

“Such negotiations are not happening now because they were dealt a very serious blow by Azerbaijan’s April [2016] aggression against Karabakh,” Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian countered on Friday. “This is why Armenia and the three mediating countries are continuing efforts to create appropriate conditions for advancing the negotiation process.”

“We should keep trying to move this process forward. But first and foremost, we have to prevent the kind of

events that occurred in April last year,” Nalbandian told a joint news conference with his visiting Greek counterpart, Nikos Kotzias.

Lavrov said on Monday that a “de-escalation of the situation” in the conflict zone is essential for the resumption of “substantive” peace talks. The Russian minister said the two warring sides should therefore take the confidence-building measures agreed at the Vienna summit.

French President Francois Hollande likewise called for the launch of “verification mechanisms” in Karabakh after meeting with Sarkisian in Paris on Wednesday. Hollande said they are needed to “prevent and even sanction actions that might be contrary to peace.”

Speaking after talks with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, Lavrov also said that the parties are still far apart on “two or three” elements of a framework peace accord that has been advanced by the Russian, U.S. and French mediators for the past decade. He did not specify them. Nalbandian also refused to shed light on these sticking points.

The proposed deal calls for the liberation of virtually all seven districts around Karabakh that were fully or partly occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces in 1991-1994. In return, Karabakh’s predominantly Armenian population would be able to determine the territory’s internationally recognized status in a future referendum.

A Diasporan Minister of Diaspora: A Proposal

BY RAFFI BEDROSYAN

From The Armenian Weekly

When the Government of Armenia decided to establish the Ministry of Diaspora in 2008, the objective was to form a partnership between the Armenian state and Armenians in Diaspora and to help strengthen the ties between Armenia and Armenians abroad, by preserving the Armenian national identity in the Diaspora and the historic homeland. This was to be accomplished by developing multiple pan-Armenian initiatives in educational, professional, entrepreneurial, cultural, social, and sports fields, as well as by combining the talents, skills, resources and capital of both Diaspora and Armenia Armenians. Thanks to the strong personality and leadership of the first and only Minister of Diaspora, Hranush Hakobyan, the Armenia-Diaspora partnership has been founded on a solid base, with many success stories.

But there are also many failures, particularly in the areas of Diaspora investment. When Karen Karapetyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, sent an appeal recently to the Diaspora Armenians to strengthen their ties and commitment to Armenia, the response from several Diaspora organizations and activists within Armenia was mostly negative, citing several examples of failed initiatives due to corruption and bribery. Some even blamed the Armenian government for thinking of Diaspora just as a “cow to be milked” (ktan kov).

So, where do we go from here? Is there room for improvement? Are there better alternative ways of growing the Armenia-Diaspora partnership? Are there different ways of solving recurring issues related to mutual trust, confidence or cooperation between the partners? With the impending elections in Armenia next month, I believe it is appropriate to re-assess the form of governance for the Ministry of Diaspora.

Despite all the good intentions, goodwill, and accomplishments of the Ministry of Diaspora, there are serious problems between Diaspora Armenians and Armenia. The initial enthusiasm of the first few years is long gone, when Diaspora Armenians were much more willing to visit, live, work and play, and more significantly, invest in Armenia. There is now a general lack of trust and discontent by the Diaspora Armenians to-

ward Armenian government leaders. When it comes to the issue of investing in Armenia, there is widespread conclusion that investments mostly disappear due to bribery and corruption. When it comes to the issue of governing Armenia, there is heavy criticism of the Armenian government leaders. Growing protests by a multitude of Diaspora intellectuals, celebrities, and artists against the Armenian government leaders is a testament to that.

Armenian government leaders, as well as Armenians living in Armenia may very well tell the protesting Diaspora intelligentsia: “If you want to make a difference, you better move to Armenia, come and live and vote in Armenia, instead of just complaining from abroad.” However, I suggest the Diaspora Armenians would have a much more defensible argument, if they focus on improving the relationships between Diaspora and Armenia. The very reason for the establishment of the Ministry of Diaspora is the Diaspora Armenians.

There is an absolute need to reverse the vicious cycle of mistrust, and as a first step, I suggest that the Minister of Diaspora be a Diasporan Armenian. Along with the additional suggestions given below, there should be confidence—building measures taken by the new government, in order to encourage Diasporan investment into Armenia again. If the government is successful in creating credibility and a level playing field for investors from abroad, the source of potential foreign investment would not only be limited to Diaspora Armenians, but would also attract international investors as well, without the need for appeals from the Prime Minister.

I would like to add the following points. The Armenian government does not and will not take seriously the Diaspora intelligentsia protesting against poor governance. However, it would seriously consider any proposal that would improve relationships and flow of investment from Diaspora to Armenia.

The Diaspora organizations and, more importantly, Diaspora Armenians as individuals and investors, would have more control, trust and confidence if the “one window” into and from Armenia is an effective Diasporan, with all the facilitations and dealings handled transparently by the Diaspora Ministry, at least until the perception of mistrust has been eliminated.

As the Diaspora is not a homoge-

nous body and spread in communities worldwide with quite distinct resources, capabilities, and characteristics, it is suggested to have six deputy ministers to be responsible for Armenian Diaspora in Europe, Russia, North America, South America, Middle East and Far East/Australia. These deputy ministers would coordinate all activities related to investment, repatriation, cultural, educational, and social exchanges closely with the staff of Armenian Embassies in the countries where Armenian Diaspora communities exist. Two examples of already successful implementers in this regard are the Armenian Ambassadors in Canada and Austria.

As an alternative source of funding the Diaspora Ministry activities and to lessen the burden on the Armenian government budget, the Diaspora Ministry could be financed entirely by Diaspora contributions. As an example of the resources required, for a million Diaspora Armenians, even a \$10 annual dues could result in an annual budget of \$10 million for Ministry staff and activities, much higher than the present finances of the Ministry. This alternative proposal would also trigger a healthy competition among the various political, cultural, and religious Diaspora organizations in membership drives.

Appropriate Diasporan Minister (and deputy ministers) of Diaspora could be selected by the President and government of Armenia, chosen from candidates nominated by Diasporan organizations and public at large. The details for nomination and selection of the candidates can be adapted from a variety of tried and tested processes elsewhere, with obvious priority given to non-partisan, trustworthy and capable Diasporan individuals. Diaspora relations of Israel and India would act as successful role models.

The primary purpose of this article is to open up the subject for discussion by government leaders in Armenia as well as among Diasporan community leaders, political, religious, cultural organizations, and interested individuals. The problems have been discussed and argued for many years without any solutions, and it is my hope that by soliciting comments and constructive criticism of this proposal, we can perhaps strive toward a workable, achievable and fair solution to improve the Armenia-Diaspora partnership, for the mutual benefit of all Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), and the Diaspora.

Glendale Mayor Devine, State Sen. Lara Endorse Zareh Sinanyan

GLENDALÉ— Zareh Sinanyan announced this that Glendale Mayor Paula Devine and California State Senator Ricardo Lara have endorsed his re-election bid for Glendale City Council.

“In the four years Zareh has spent on council, and especially while serving as Mayor, he continually demonstrated his concern for all of Glendale’s residents by listening to everyone before making decisions and by treating everyone who appeared to speak at council with kindness and respect. He is fair, thoughtful and methodical in his decision making. I know he will continue to be a strong advocate for Glendale on a diverse range of issues,” said Devine, whose endorsement was announced Tuesday.

Paula Devine was elected to the Glendale City Council in 2014 and currently serves as the Mayor of the City of Glendale. Mayor Devine previously the Chair of the Glendale Commission on the Status of Women, on which she has served for eight years. Paula initiated the CPR Program (Commission Project Rescue) which provides the Glendale Police Department with funds to pay for temporary emergency housing for Domestic Violence victims.

Senator Lara’s endorsement was announced Wednesday.



“Councilmember Sinanyan has a proven track record that demonstrates how he will approach the many decisions that come before council. He has the experience and background that can help Glendale address the important issues of today. I know that Zareh is the right person to lead Glendale into a brighter future,” said the state senator.

Lara is one of the most influential members of the State Senate, chairing the powerful Appropriations Committee and serving as a member of the Energy, Utilities and Communications, Governance and Finance, Governmental Organization, and Banking and Financial Institutions commit-

tees.

After serving Glendale for the past four years as councilmember and mayor, Councilman Zareh Sinanyan has decided to run for reelection in April. Sinanyan’s first City Council victory came in 2013 in a hotly contested race. While in office, Sinanyan fought to provide transparency for all residents, and sought to nurture a business friendly environment. Although, it is important to attract large businesses to Glendale, Sinanyan believes the City Council must foster an environment which will allow our own residents to grow their businesses locally instead of moving them abroad.

Contributions of Armenian Women in Turkey Highlighted at Parliament

ISTANBUL—Selina Dogan, an Armenian member of the Turkish Parliament representing the Republican People’s Party (CHP) used the occasion of International Women’s Day on Wednesday to highlight Armenian women who contributed to Turkish society, reported the Agos newspaper.

Dogan named Armenian intellectuals Elbis Gesaratsyan, Sirpuhi Düsap, Zabel Asadur, Zabel Yesayan and Hayganuşh Mark, who are considered as the first feminists of Turkey.

The member of parliament stressed that while many statements had been on the occasion of International Women’s Day, the absence of these prominent



women gave her pause.

“This means that either the way we discuss this issue is not right or we are

not being sincere,” said Dogan who argued that minority women were being forgotten in history of women’s struggle in Turkey/

“While Halide Edip is naturally remembered with respect, her contemporary Zabel Yesayan, with whom she exchanged letters, is ignored. While dear Sabiha Sertel has the place she deserved in the feminism history of this country, nobody remembers her contemporary Elbis Gesaratsyan. While Nezihe Muhiddin, who struggled for enfranchisement of woman and whom I respect deeply, was making feminist history, her counterpart Hayganush Mark, who published a women’s magazine for 14 years, is not remembered at all,” said Dogan.

Soundgarden's Chris Cornell Releases 'The Promise' for New Armenian Genocide Film

WATERTOWN, Mass. (A.W.)—On March 10, American musician, singer, and songwriter Chris Cornell released a new original song entitled “The Promise” for the forthcoming feature film *The Promise*, about the Armenian Genocide. Cornell, who is best known as the lead vocalist, primary songwriter, and rhythm guitarist for U.S.-rock band Soundgarden and as lead vocalist and songwriter for the super-group Audioslave, also unveiled a lyric video for the song, featuring images from the film *The Promise*.

Chris Cornell (Photo: chriscornell.com)

According to a statement released by Cornell, his proceeds from the song will be donated to the International Rescue Committee. “The International Rescue Committee responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster,” reads a part of the statement.

The song is now available at all streaming services and digital retailers including iTunes, Apple Music, and Spotify. (Photo: chriscornell.com)

“There are a couple of really amazing documentaries about the Armenian Genocide, and one of them was about the phenomenon that people who had literally minutes to grab what they could from their homes would take photos before anything else—before jewelry even,” Cornell told *Rolling Stone* magazine, when asked about the new song for the film. “I was really moved by that; the idea of what is most important to people in a crucial second.”



The world premiere of the late Kirk Kerkorian’s legacy project—the much anticipated Armenian Genocide epic *The Promise*—had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) on Sept. 11, 2016. The film had the honor of being designated as one of the gala presentations of the prestigious festival and is slated for wide release in the United States on April 21. (Read the *Armenian Weekly*’s coverage of *The Promise*’s world premiere here)

The song is now available at all streaming services and digital retailers including iTunes, Apple Music, and Spotify. The lyric video and the song’s lyrics are available below.

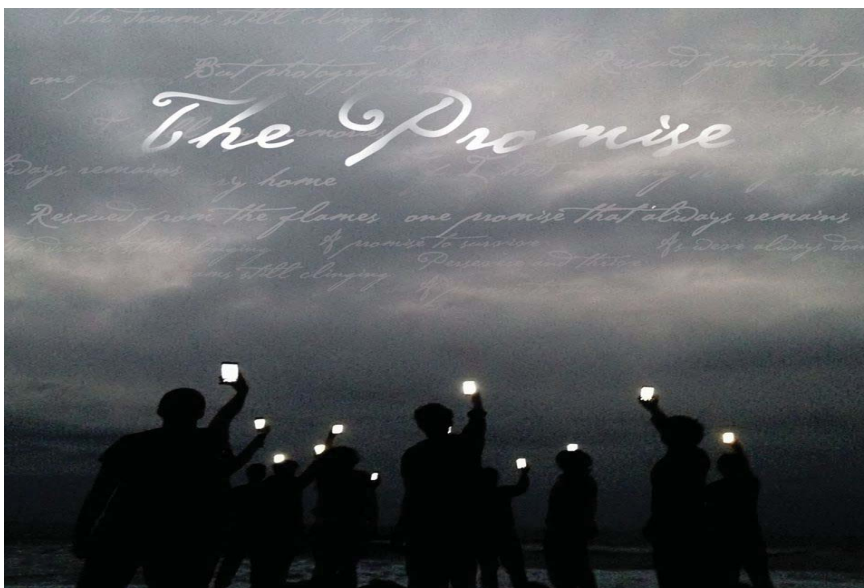
“The Promise”

*If I had nothing to my name
But photographs of you
Rescued from the flames
That is all I would ever need
As long as I can read
What’s written on your face
The strength that shines
Behind your eyes
The hope and light
That will never die*

*And one promise you made
one promise that always remains
No matter the price
A promise to survive
Persevere and thrive
As we’ve always done*

*And you said
“The poison in a kiss
Is the lie upon the lips”
Truer words were never shared
When I feel
Like lies are all I hear
I pull my memories near
The one thing they can’t take*

*And one promise you made
one promise that always remains
No matter the price
A promise to survive
Persevere and thrive
As you’ve always done*



Gndevaz Cave: Armenia's Hidden Ice Wonders Await the Intrepid

By Yeranuhi Soghoian, Hetq

I must doubly pay attention as I make my way along a narrow path descending into the Arpa River gorge in Armenia's Yeghegnadzor Province.

The snow has softened here and there and I can wind up buried in it if I misstep and slide. My two friends, Vachagan and Hrach, old hands at mountain climbing, help keep me safe.

"First, firmly plant your



heel on the snow, get a grip, and then walk," Vachagan instructs. We'll be walking for about one kilometer, down along a winding path, until we reach the gorge near the village of Gndevaz. Our destination is a cave filled with stalagmites.

Here, a brief description is in order. When discussing mineral formations in caves, we often talk about stalactites and stalagmites. A stalactite is an icicle-shaped formation that hangs from the ceiling of a cave, and is produced by precipitation of minerals from water dripping through the cave ceiling. Most stalactites have pointed tips.

A stalagmite is an upward-growing mound of mineral deposits that have precipitated from water dripping onto the floor of a cave. Most stalagmites have rounded or flattened tips.

The term "stalactite" was coined in the 17th century by the Danish Physician Ole Worm who coined the Latin word from the Greek word *σταλακτός* (*stalaktos*, "dripping") and the Greek suffix *-της* (*-ites*, connect-



ed with or belonging to).

Stalagnates are formed by the merger of the two.

The tallest stalagmite in the world, measuring 67.2 meters, and the biggest in Latin America, was discovered in Martin Inferno, a cave in Cuba's province of Cienfuegos. The tallest in Europe, measuring 35.6 meters, is found in Buzgov, a cave in Slovakia.

The cave at Gndevaz has no name, and, as far as I know, no one has measured the stalagmites inside. While they won't break any world records, my friends say they should be better well known in Armenia. The formations are best seen from December until the weather warms the gorge.

Hrach Babajanyan, a 21-year-old native of Gndevaz, says he used to



hike down the gorge as a kid with his brother. "When the water dripped, it formed a glacier of sorts. It was great. With the predominant cold weather of these recent years, an ice tower formed. It's a miracle when viewed up close," Hrach says.

One good thing about the road to the cave is that it's tough going and you need a guide to get there. Thankfully, this means the risk of

someone destroying these natural wonders is minimal.

"Groups of hikers come and visit the cave. Usually, they'll telephone and I'll guide them. Otherwise, they can lose their way. I also check to see that no one damages the ice formations," Hrach says.

Vachagan, from Jermouk, also escorts visitors to the cave. "People have to come prepared with the right gear and all. While we're not



climbing mountains, it's a difficult descent down the gorge. The cave is also beautiful in the summer, when everything is green."

The boys regret that the expedition was organized for the afternoon. They say the view is best as the sun goes down. It's at dusk when the vanishing rays of the sun, behind the mountains, give off majestic hues of orange, violet and blue.

Hrach says the cave could really boost local tourism in the winter. He remembers taking a group of foreign tourists to the cave and how they were left speechless.

Hrach, a student majoring in tourism at the Yeghegnadzor branch of the State Economics University, says that hikers can now spend in the night in the village. Upon graduating this year, he wants to return and develop local tourism.

"Today, not many work in their field of education. I'll be one of them. It's a tourist area. The resort town of Jermouk is ten kilometers away. We can organize tours to Gndevaz for those staying at Jermouk.

Fly With Me: Armenia to premiere Eurovision 2017 song on March 18



Armenia has chosen the song for Eurovision 2017.

Late last year the Public TV Company of Armenia (AMPTV) announced an open competition for submissions for Artsvik's entry for the 2017 Eurovision Song Contest. More than 300 composers and songwriters from all over

the world submitted their work but only 10 songs were shortlisted. After a careful consideration, AMPTV's creative team, together with Artsvik, have made their choice – Fly With Me, Eurovision's official website reports.

Fly With Me was composed by Lilith and Levon Navasardyan, who are known to Eurovision fans for Aram MP3's Not Alone from the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest, Mika's Love (Junior Eurovision 2015) and Iveta Mukuchyan's LoveWave from last year. Lyrics were written by Avet Barseghyan and David Tserunyan.

According to AMPTV, both the music and lyrics were inspired by this year's slogan for the Eurovision Song Contest; Celebrate Diversity. Featuring folk and traditional rhythms and elements not only from Armenia, but also from Europe, Africa and even Asia, Fly With Me showcases the beauty of diversity and

proves that our stories and voices are the vivid colours of this world.

Artsvik said:

My song tells a story of a girl, who is the metaphorical symbol of love. She embodies the colours, the stories and the voices that make us who we are.

Fly With Me encourages everyone to come with me on this girl's journey of championing diverse and beautiful human nature. I think nowadays it is especially important to embrace our heritage and our traditions.

We, the people – our colours, our stories and our voices make up this world. We must never forget that this girl's light and love is one for all of us.

Artsvik's song for Eurovision 2017 will be premiered on the official Eurovision Song Contest channel on YouTube on Saturday 18th March at 18:30 CET.

Yerevan to host Music Drive rock festival

Yerevan will host the first Music Drive International Rock Festival from March 24 to 27. The festival will be held at the National Academic Theatre after Gabriel Sundukyan, but will be accompanied by side events at clubs and the neighboring English Park.

The three-day rock festival has been initiated and organized by the Armenian Ministry of Culture and the Rock Association. According to Minister of Culture Armen Amiryan, the festival will be funded from state budget and informed that 32 million AMD has been allocated for this purpose.

Why a rock festival? "Because rock means youth, freethinking and freedom we all aspire to. I'm confident the festival will become an annual tradition and we'll welcome every spring with this beautiful event. It will bring new color and new spirit to the city," Armen Amiryan says.

The festival will bring together eight rock bands from England, the United



States, Sweden, Denmark, etc.

General Coordinator of the festival Vardan Grigoryan says some well-known bands and virtuoso musicians have been invited.

The festival aims to ensure Armenia's presence on international rock arena, establish traditions in the sphere and provide for an opportunity for exchange of best experience, Vardan Grigoryan says.

ARMENIA

Yezeguelian Hotel & Residence



In the Green Park
Near Congress Hotel
24 Studios and Apartments
€250 Per Week
(Payment Upon Arrival)

**In the Center
of Yerevan**



Warm Welcome
24/7 Security
Free Cafe & Bar



Kitchen, Refrigerator
Safe, TV, Internet

All Conveniences
Air Conditioned
Apartments



Modern
Rest Rooms

RESERVATIONS:

011 374 91 57 01 70
011 374 91 73 91 91

Yezeguelian@aol.com

Paris Office: 34 Avenue des Champs Elysees
Phone: 011 33 1 43 59 66 72
Yerevan Address: 8, Khorenatsi St.

They shall not perish: Armenian Genocide documentary to premiere in the US in April

This April, public television stations across the United States will premiere *They shall not perish: The Story of Near East Relief*. The documentary is produced by Shant Mardirossian and award-winning writer/director George Billard, the Broadway World reports.

They Shall Not Perish details the unprecedented humanitarian efforts of thousands of Americans who saved a generation of orphans and refugees after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during and after World War I.

The one-hour documentary film features the stories of American diplomats, missionaries and relief workers who, as witnesses to the Armenian Genocide, responded to a call to action and mobilized the largest non-governmental international humanitarian movement undertaken by American citizens. Motivated by nothing but a moral sense of duty, these men and women – among them industrialists, ambassadors, teachers, nurses, advertisers and Presidents – helped bring care and comfort to millions of suffering refugees in extremely harrowing circumstances.

Narrated by six-time Emmy award nominated actor Victor Garber, the film is set against a mix of historical footage, archival photographs and utilizes contemporary interviews from leading academic experts such as Taner Akçam, Peter Balakian and Keith David Watnough. In addition, the letters of American officials, relief workers and orphans are brought to life through the voices of leading actors – Michael Aronov, Kathleen Chalfant, Dariush Kashani, Andrea Martin, Ron Rifkin, Tony Shalhoub and Kara Vedder – taking the audience on a journey from the depths of cruelty to the triumphs



THEY SHALL NOT PERISH
The Story of Near East Relief

April 8, 2017

The Times Center

242 W 41st Street New York, NY 10036

"The effort to heal and comfort millions of desperate people, and to rescue, feed, and train 132,000 orphan children has revived hope and inspired ideals in two generations, in eleven countries, on three continents."

- NER Chairman, James Levi Barto

www.theyshallnotperish.com

of survival.

Executive Producer Shant Mardirossian, inspired by his grandparents' escape and survival during the genocide, says he produced this film "not just to remember those we lost in the genocide, but to shed light on an important chapter of American history when ordinary citizens stood together against a great injustice and saved the lives of 132,000 orphans." These historic rescue efforts led to the formation of the Near East Relief – known today as the Near East Foundation – an organization that continues to help improve the lives of vulnerable communities and refugees throughout the Middle East and Africa by implementing innovative, community-led economic development initiatives.

With a focus on an often for-

gotten yet important chapter in American history, *They Shall Not Perish* challenges the notion of what values a nation should aspire to demonstrate, and raises the question of when and if humanitarian concerns should override strategic national interests. "Today, as we confront an exploding refugee crisis, it's imperative that we consider the humanitarian consequences when formulating U.S. foreign policy", says the film's director, producer and writer George Billard.

Distributed nationally by 3 Roads Communications, *They Shall Not Perish* premieres on public television stations nationwide beginning April 1, 2017.

The official premiere and discussion with the filmmakers will take place on April 8, 2017 at the Times Center.

The Noyan Tapan Noah's Ark
HIGHLIGHTS

The publisher: NT Holding LTD
Circulation: 1500 print copies and
15,600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format
Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպագրանակը՝ 1500
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝
ՆՏ հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ
Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝
03ԱՅ89368, տրված 11.01.2013 թ.

President of the NT Media Holding:
Tigran Harutyunyan
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:
Gayaneh Arakelyan
Director of the Weekly:
Marina Harutyunyan
Chief Correspondent: **Gourgen Khazhakian**
Proofreader: **Susanna Mkrtchian**
Layout: **Diana Grigoryan**
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ. Հարությունյան
Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993.
ISSN 1829-0604
Registration certificate and the date:
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: contact@nt.am
URL: www.nt.am

Address in Armenia: 28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA.
Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-23
(+374 60) 35-11-22

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

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

Հասցի՝ Բաժնեկցան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009