

## Armenian, French Defense Ministers discuss regional security issues



France - French Armed Forces Minister Sebastien Lecornu (right) meets Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan, Paris, June 20, 2023.

**Armenia`s Defense Minister Suren Papikyan met with his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu in Paris on June 20 for further talks on closer military ties between their countries.**

As part of his working visit to France, Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan had a meeting with French Minister of Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu. Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajyan also participated in the meeting.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, the welcoming ceremony of the Defense Minister of Armenia took place with the participation of a military band and guard of honor, the national anthems of the

Republic of Armenia and the French Republic were performed.

After the solemn welcoming ceremony, discussions were held regarding the current course of implementation of the agreements reached at the meeting held in Paris on September 27, 2022.

Issues related to regional security were discussed. At the end of the meeting, Minister of Defense Suren Papikyan thanked French Minister of Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu for the eventful working visit to the French Republic and warm welcome.

The Armenian minister attended the opening ceremony of the Paris Airshow earlier on Monday, on June 19.

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## At a meeting with MEPs, Armenian PM stresses the need to send an international fact-finding mission to Lachin corridor

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the delegation led by the chairperson of the European Parliament's Security and Defense Subcommittee Nathalie Loiseau.

The Prime Minister emphasized the close cooperation with the European Parliament and highly appreciated the resolution adopted by the latter on ensuring the uninterrupted operation of the Lachin Corridor.

Nikol Pashinyan expressed confidence that the visit of European Parliament delegation members will contribute to assessing the situation in the region. The Prime Minister added that the humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh is worsening as a result of the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor, as food supplies have been



blocked for several days. In this context, the Prime Minister highlighted the entry of the international fact-finding mission into the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh. Nikol Pashinyan also added that Azerbaijan continues its aggressive rhetoric and ceasefire violations, which increases tensions in the region.

For her part, Nathalie Loiseau emphasized the need for steps to ensure peace and stability in the region, as well as to reduce the risks of tension.

In this regard, the interlocutors highlighted the activities of the European Monitoring Mission in Armenia.

Reference was made to the possibilities of unblocking regional transport infrastructures and border delimitation. Prime Minister Pashinyan presented the positions of the Armenian side on these issues.

Thoughts were also exchanged on the course of institutional reforms and further programs implemented in Armenia with the assistance of the EU, as well as the process of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations.

## Maria Zakharova comments on the incident that happened near the Hakari bridge on June 15



The incident at the Lachin Corridor checkpoint on June 15 is related to the general problem of the absence of a demarcated Armenian-Azerbaijani border, Maria Zakharova, the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, announced during the press conference, commenting on the incident that happened near the Hakari bridge.

"The Lachin Corridor incident is related to the general problem of the absence

of a demarcated Armenian-Azerbaijani border. The Russian side has repeatedly called on the effective work of the bilateral commission with the advisory support of the Russian Federation. We are ready to help in demarcation and determining the border, which has become another bone of contention between the parties.

The accusations directed at the Russian peacekeepers are absolutely groundless. We strongly recommend toning down the media rhetoric in this regard. The peacekeepers are working closely with the parties to settle the situation," Zakharova said.

Earlier, the border guard service of the National Security Service of the Republic of Armenia reported that on June 15, around 08:40, a group of soldiers of the border guard service of Azerbaijan attempted to

advance towards the Hakari bridge in order to raise a flag on the territory of the Republic of Armenia. It is noted that as a result of the measures taken by the Armenian side, the advance of Azerbaijani servicemen and the attempt to raise a flag on the territory of the Republic of Armenia was prevented.

In one of the videos spread on the Internet, it was seen how the Azerbaijani military, accompanied by the Russian peacekeepers, tried to place the Azerbaijani flag on the Hakari bridge.

Later, during a meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Russian Ambassador to Armenia Sergey Kopirkin was presented with Armenia's strong dissatisfaction with the incident involving Russian peacekeepers near Hakari Bridge.

## PM Pashinyan receives Kansas Governor and Director of Joint Staff of Kansas National Guard

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received the Governor of the US state of Kansas, Laura Kelly, and Director of Joint Staff of Kansas National Guard Michael Venerdi, Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister highly commended the cooperation with the state of Kansas in various directions and expressed

confidence that Mrs. Kelly's visit will give a new impetus to the cooperation.

In particular, the interlocutors discussed issues related to the expansion and deepening of cooperation in the fields of economy, agriculture and military education.

Laura Kelly emphasized the willingness

and interest in strengthening ties with Armenia.

Reference was made to the process of democratic reforms in Armenia. Prime Minister Pashinyan emphasized the support of the US administration in pushing forward the Armenian government's institutional reform agenda.



## ‘A matter of UN Security Council’, Pashinyan warns that Azeri disregard for ICJ ruling has led to humanitarian crisis

The humanitarian situation in Nagorno Karabakh is getting worse, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan warned on June 22.

Speaking at the Cabinet meeting, Pashinyan said that Azerbaijan continues to keep the Lachin Corridor blockaded despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) February 22 ruling ordering it to lift the blockade.

“The court stated that the ruling is binding for Azerbaijan. But the court’s decision is not implemented; neither people nor vehicles or goods are moving along the Lachin Corridor. Furthermore, even the passage of Red Cross vehicles has been banned. These are important facts which themselves counter Azerbaijan’s claims that the powers and countries speaking about the situation in Nagorno Karabakh and Lachin Corridor are allegedly interfering in Azerbaijan’s internal affairs. The non-fulfillment of the International Court of Justice ruling and ensuring the implementation of the ruling is a matter of the international agenda and we must approach this issue with this logic,” Pashinyan said.

The Armenian Prime Minister said it’s

important to note that the non-fulfillment and disregard of the ICJ ruling has led to a humanitarian crisis.

“The population of Nagorno Karabakh is deprived of natural gas, power and other external supplies, while local electricity production capacities are sufficient only for partial supplies. External supplies of food and other essential goods into Nagorno Karabakh are suspended; there is a significant shortage of medication. There’s even no chance to transport critically-ill patients in such conditions. Everything is being done to make the lives of Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh impossible. This is what the policy of ethnic cleansing looks like, which we’ve been warning about for many years,” Pashinyan said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan offered the following solution to the issue. “First of all, the binding February 22 ruling of the International Court of Justice must be implemented and this is a matter of the international agenda, including a matter for the UN Security Council, because this body is authorized to ensure the implementation of the ICJ rulings. Secondly, the international mechanism for Baku-Stepanakert dialogue must eventually be launched to



address the issue of the rights and security of Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh. In regard to the Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, our position remains the same: we must apply all efforts to sign the treaty of establishing peace and relations,” the Armenian PM said.

The United Nations’ highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - ordered Azerbaijan on February 22 to “take all steps at its disposal” to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. Azerbaijan has so far ignored the order. Furthermore, Azerbaijan then illegally installed a checkpoint on Lachin Corridor in violation of the terms of the 2020 ceasefire declaration.

## Armenian MFA on Russian peacekeepers’ participation in Azerbaijani actions near Hakari bridge

In response to the comment of the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry regarding the incident near Hakari bridge in Lachin corridor, Spokesperson for the Armenian Foreign Ministry Ani Badalyan has mentioned the following.

The incident of June 15 took place not in the Lachin Corridor, as the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry notes, but in the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, on the Armenian side of the Hakari Bridge.

There is a clear contradiction in the interpretation of the Russian side. If, due to the lack of demarcation of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is not possible to say exactly where the border line passes, and this is the reason for the ongoing problems, as the official

representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry claims, then the question arises, on what basis and principle the Azerbaijani flag was being installed on this particular part of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, on our side of the bridge.

It is not clear why Russian peacekeepers participated in that operation in Azerbaijan, when both the purpose and even the location of the operation were clearly outside the scope of the peacekeepers’ functions and responsibility. We remind that the only relevant function of the Russian peacekeepers in that area was to keep the 5 km wide corridor of Lachin under control.

By the way, after the June 15 incident, the Azerbaijani side completely blocked the Lachin Corridor, as a result of which

even humanitarian supplies, including food and medicine, are not transported to Nagorno-Karabakh, including by the ICRC, and patients in grave condition are not being transported from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenian medical institutions, gas and electricity supply continues to be disrupted.

In conclusion, she called on the parties that signed the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020 and other trilateral statements to steadily fulfill their commitments instead of looking for excuses.

On June 15, a group of Azerbaijani border guards attempted to advance in the direction of the Hakari bridge to plant a flag in the territory of the Republic of Armenia. The attempts were foiled by the measures taken by the Armenian side.

## We saw with our own eyes the complete and illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan. Nathalie Loiseau



Blocking the Lachin Corridor is illegal and must be stopped, chair of the Security and Defense Subcommittee of the European Parliament Nathalie Loiseau announced, reaffirming the European Parliament's position on the issue of blocking the Lachin Corridor.

Nathalie Loiseau noted that they came to Armenia to express their support for the democratic processes and reforms they have witnessed over the years, as well as for all the peace-oriented efforts aimed at the idea of establishing peace with neighboring Azerbaijan.

"We wanted to make sure and assess the situation ourselves and also see how the European Union's civilian mission, which has been operating along the border for four months, is working. Yesterday we

had a meeting with officials in Yerevan, including Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other high-ranking officials. Today we were in Goris, where we met with the governor of Syunik, the head of the community of Goris, residents of Nagorno-Karabakh located in Armenia and talked with them about the 44-day war and the blocking of the Lachin corridor.

We also approached the entrance to Lachin Corridor and saw with our own eyes the complete and illegal blockade of Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan. We heard about the increasing number of armed incidents and the invasion of the sovereign territory of Armenia. We learned about the incident in Yeraskh, where civilians were targeted. We also learned about the incident at the entrance to Lachin Corridor, where Azerbaijanis tried to raise a flag. I would like to send a strong message: as much as Armenia is devoted to peace, Azerbaijan is obliged to present evidence that it is also devoted to peace. The European Union is making efforts to facilitate the contacts between the leaderships of Armenia and Azerbaijan," Loiseau said.

According to her, the European Union

is making efforts to reduce tension and the presence of the EU mission in Armenia should contribute to reducing those tensions.

"As you know, it once country decides to start a war, but to stop it, the goodwill of both countries is needed. The time has come for a lasting peace to be established. I want to reaffirm the position of the European Parliament: the blocking of the Lachin corridor is illegal and must be stopped. The rights and well-being of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh must be protected and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia must be respected. I will take this message with me to Brussels, I will testify about what we saw and heard while in Armenia.

Since the blocking of the Lachin Corridor is illegal, I also send a message to the European ambassadors accredited in Baku, if Azerbaijan invites them to an illegally located checkpoint, they should refrain from accepting the invitation, remaining faithful to the terms of the ruling of the International Court of Justice," Loiseau concluded.

## Step that incite tensions unproductive: US looking forward to host new round of talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan

We look forward to hosting another round of talks in Washington soon as the parties continue to pursue a peaceful future in the South Caucasus region, Principal Deputy Spokesman for the US Department of State Vedant Patel told reporters at a briefing.

"We continue to believe direct dialogue is key to resolving issues and reaching a durable and dignified peace. We continue



to believe that steps that are going to incite tensions and elevate tensions are certainly unproductive right now as talks between

Armenia and Azerbaijan are proceeding in different venues," he said.

"We'll continue to engage on this and look forward to hosting another round of talks very soon," the Spokesman said.

Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers were expected to start new round of talks in Washington on June 12, but the meetings were postponed at the request of the Azerbaijani side.

## Russia calls on Yerevan not to abandon the trilateral format, and on Baku to take steps to unblock Lachin Corridor

Russia calls on Yerevan not to withdraw from work in the trilateral format, and on Baku to take steps in the direction of unblocking the Lachin Corridor, official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova, said during the press conference.

"The interruption of Yerevan's activities has a negative impact on the situation

in the region and leads to the aggravation of the situation on the ground. And we call on Baku to take steps in the direction of unblocking the Lachin Corridor and not to make the population of Karabakh a hostage of political differences with Yerevan," said Zakharova.

She also stated that Moscow continues

to work through Russian peacekeepers for the complete unblocking of the Lachin Corridor and expects that the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides will fulfill all the obligations assumed by the tripartite agreement.

"It is as relevant as it was before," added Zakharova.



## MEPs join EU Mission for a patrol near Lachin corridor for better understanding of the security situation

The delegates of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) of the European Parliament on June 21 visited the operational hub of European Mission in Armenia (EUMA) in Goris to get better understanding of the security situation in border areas between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the ground. Following the briefing by Head of EU Mission in Armenia Markus Ritter, the delegation led by Ms Nathalie Loiseau and the Ambassador to EU Delegation in Armenia Andrea Wiktorin joined EUMA for a patrol near Hakari bridge on the Armenian side, leading to Lachin corridor.

**Markus Ritter: EUMA acts in a way**



**as a spotlight of the international community**

As part of the welcome speech, Markus Ritter highlighted that EU Mission in Armenia “acts in a way as a spotlight of the international community on incidents and

ceasefire violations in Armenian-Azerbaijani border areas.” At the end of the visit, Nathalie Loiseau expressed support for EUMA as well as “for the peace aspiration in the region,” and thanked all the involved parties for organising the visit.

**Nathalie Loiseau: European Parliament supports EUMA as well as the peace aspiration in the region**

Besides the operations of newly launched EU Mission in Armenia, the purpose of the three-day long visit of the SEDE delegation was to assess the security situation in Armenia as well as the normalization process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

## France deplores shots that hit civilians in Armenia’s Yeraskh



France deplores the armed incidents that have occurred over the past 48 hours at several points on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including shots that have hit civilian personnel in Yeraskh on Armenian territory, the French Foreign

Ministry said in a statement.

It calls for restraint, de-escalation and the protection of civilian populations.

France also reaffirms its support for the full implementation of the order of 22 February 2023 of the International Court of Justice concerning the restoration of traffic in the corridor.

“France is fully mobilized for a return to peace for the benefit of all populations in the region. Negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued recently at the highest level on June 1 in Chisinau, on the sidelines of the European Political Community Summit. The President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, and the Prime

Minister of Armenia, Mr. Nikol Pashinyan, held talks, alongside the President of the Republic, the German Chancellor, Mr. Olaf Scholz, and the President of the European Council, Mr. Charles Michel. This meeting marked the will to move forward on the various subjects under discussion, which must be settled exclusively through negotiation,” the Ministry said.

The Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Catherine Colonna, also visited Armenia and Azerbaijan in April, in order to help the two countries progress towards a peace agreement. These efforts are carried out in close coordination with the European Union and the United States.

## Russian FM accuses the West of insincerity in the efforts to help Armenia and Azerbaijan reach peace

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has accused the West of insincerity in the efforts to help reach a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“Unfortunately, in what the United States is doing now, and in what the European Union is doing, we no longer see a desire to help negotiate, but a desire to penetrate the region, a desire to suppress the legitimate interests of the Russian Federation and a desire to establish themselves as forces that will play almost

a decisive role here,” Lavrov told reporters following a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), [TASS](#) reports.

In his opinion, such actions of the West reflect the desire “to expand into regions that are far from the borders of NATO members and EU members, and this has little to do with a sincere desire to help stabilize the situation.”

“Our partners in both Yerevan and Baku, I hope, understand this. At least we

are frankly discussing what is happening,” Lavrov said.

“We are not opposed to other international players trying their hand at mediation,” he assured. At the same time, the Russian Minister warned: “The main thing is that this mediation should pursue the goal of ensuring agreements that will reflect the balance of interests of the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples, the Armenian and Azerbaijani states.”

## Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan received the Resident Representative of the UNDP Armenia office



Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Khachatryan received Natia Natsvlishvili, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program in Armenia.

Emphasizing the importance of Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the bilateral cooperation agenda, the parties exchanged ideas on the current and prospective projects implemented in this direction. In particular, the cooperation aimed at increasing the resilience and socio-economic development of the border communities, promoting the “green” economic agenda, as well as the development of health, educational and environmental infrastructures was highlighted by both sides.

During the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister Khachatryan emphasized the importance of the involvement of international,

including UN, agencies in Nagorno-Karabakh in order to get acquainted with the created situation and address the humanitarian problems of the population. The Resident Representative of the UNDP Armenia office, in turn, expressed concern about the created situation, expressing readiness to continue the provision of assistance aimed at the rehabilitation of border communities of Armenia.

Natia Natsvlishvili reaffirmed her readiness to support Armenia’s current reform agenda, highlighting the need to expand cooperation in the specified directions.

## Moody’s changes Armenia’s outlook to stable from negative, affirms Ba3 rating

Moody’s has affirmed the Government of Armenia’s Ba3 local and foreign currency long-term issuer ratings, as well as the foreign currency senior unsecured ratings. Concurrently, Moody’s has changed the outlook to stable from negative.

The decision to change the outlook to stable reflects Moody’s assessment that risks to Armenia’s credit profile are balanced, compared to Moody’s last review in March 2022 where risks were assessed to be skewed to the downside. Armenia’s economic and fiscal metrics have improved markedly over the past year amid a surge in income, capital and labor from Russia, part of which Moody’s expects to be sustained.

Moody’s expects Armenia’s economic growth to remain robust over the next few

years, even as it moderates towards trend. The rating agency also expects Armenia’s fiscal metrics to stabilize at around the current levels for the next few years, with the debt burden at lower levels than pre-pandemic, making for higher fiscal strength. However, improvements to the country’s economic and fiscal profile are counterbalanced against higher geopolitical risks.

The affirmation of the Ba3 ratings balances Armenia’s robust growth potential and moderately high institutions and governance strength, against its relatively small and middle-income economy, which constrains its capacity to absorb shocks. Armenia also faces elevated geopolitical risks, which weighs on the sovereign rating.

Armenia’s local and foreign currency country ceilings remain unchanged at Baa2 and Ba1, respectively. The four-notch gap between the local currency ceiling and the sovereign rating balances the government’s small footprint in the economy and strong institutions against elevated geopolitical tensions with neighboring countries and its moderate current account deficits in most years that expose the economy to external shocks. The two-notch gap between the foreign currency ceiling and local currency ceiling incorporates Moody’s assessment of Armenia’s moderate policy effectiveness and an open capital account, indicating low transfer and convertibility risks even in times of stress.

## Armenian products showcased at JFEX 2023 exhibition in Japan



On June 22, Armenia’s Ambassador to Japan Areg Hovhannisian visited the International Food and Beverage Expo “JFEX 2023.”

Armenian food, canned goods, wine and brandy were also showcased at the exhibition.

The Ambassador pledged the Embassy’s support to the company importing Armenian products.

The Ambassador also hailed the fact that the sale of Armenian products in

Japan is gradually increasing and the range of goods is expanding.





## ConFEAS 2023: Global Capital Markets Conference Engaged 40 Speakers in Yerevan

Four areas of capital markets, including Trading, Post-Trade, ESG, and Public Relations, were discussed during the ConFEAS 2023, an annual International Conference of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges. The conference returned with a brand new format and gathered in Armenia around 200 participants, including 40 speakers from Exchanges, CSDs, Banks, Regulatory Bodies, Investment Companies, and IFIs from more than 30 countries to touch upon the most recent developments,



sector initiatives and challenges.

The annual ConFEAS event, previous-

Baymarkets, stock exchanges, and central depositories from Greece, Poland, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Egypt, Romania, Hungary, Georgia, and Armenia, players from the private sector such as TBC bank, SPRING PR-Company, AICA - Angel Investor Club of Armenia and Team Telecom Armenia, engaged in extensive panel discussions. They covered diverse subjects, including trading and post-trading, sustainability and ESG, financial education, investment, and public relations.



challenges, and potential in modern capital markets.

During their opening speeches, Armen Nurbekyan, Deputy Chairman of the Central Bank of Armenia, and Rafayel Gevorgyan, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, emphasized the strategic significance of fostering capital market growth in Armenia. They highlighted the need for constructive dialogue between the public and private sectors to ensure alignment between regulatory policies and private

ly held in Abu Dhabi and Bucharest, has been held for the first time in Armenia this year. Konstantin Saroyan, Secretary General of the Federation of Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges, mentioned: "This event presents a remarkable opportunity for all participants to acquire new knowledge and establish valuable connections through networking."

High representatives and experts from renowned organizations such as Bloomberg, EBRD, Ernst & Young, Euronext, Blockstation, Eric Salmon and Partners,

Vachik Gevorgyan, Chief Executive Officer of Apricot Capital CJSC, the General Investment Partner of ConFEAS 2023, reflecting on their operations in Armenia as an investment and fintech company, mentioned several challenges that are being solved through joint efforts of ecosystem players and regulators. "We are actively addressing the issues by enhancing connectivity with local counterparts and supporting the efforts of the Armenian Stock Exchange and Central Depository in implementing new software solutions. Additionally, we prioritize workforce development through training programs and advocate for regulatory updates to keep pace with rapid technological advancements".

Throughout the conference, there was a strong emphasis on fostering ecosystem development through collaborative endeavors, adopting best practices, and capacity building.



## PACE calls on Azerbaijan to ensure free and safe movement along Lachin corridor

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) voted 48 to 16 with one abstention to adopt a resolution on Ensuring free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor.

Recognizing that the absence of free and safe access through the Lachin corridor is part of a much broader issue, the Assembly is convinced that a humanitarian response alone is not sufficient and that a political solution is needed.

Welcoming the negotiations underway between Armenia and Azerbaijan under the auspices notably of the European Union and the United States of America, the Assembly stresses that the current situation is not sustainable and may well lead to the Armenian population being forced to leave their homes and communities if there is no resolution to the conflict. In this context, it urgently calls for addressing the issues of the rights and security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh through dialogue between Baku and Stepanakert and a neutral international involvement in any peace implementation mechanism to be put in place.

Noting the interim measures decided by the European Court of Human Rights on 21 December 2022 under Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court calling on the Government of Azerbaijan “to take all measures that are within their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage through the Lachin Corridor of seriously ill persons in need of medical treatment in Armenia and others who were stranded on the road without shelter or means of subsistence”, the Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to implement this decision with no further delay.

Noting that the International Court of Justice [ordered](#) Azerbaijan to urgently “take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions”, the Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to also comply with this order urgently.

While noting that the mirror applications brought by Azerbaijan against



Armenia were rejected by both international courts, the Assembly believes that Armenia must also play a role in de-escalating the tensions, and that it should be open to some form of international monitoring with the aim of assessing the veracity of Azerbaijan’s allegations regarding the illegal weapons being brought into Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to invite a Council of Europe delegation to visit the Lachin corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh for a fact-finding mission, to assess the situation on the ground. It also calls on Azerbaijan to let other international organizations access the region, including United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in line with their respective mandates and relevant principles regulating international humanitarian assistance.

The Assembly recognizes the crucial role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in transporting patients through the Lachin corridor, reuniting separated families and transporting medicines, medical equipment, seeds and food to the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh, as far as it was able. It recognizes, as a key point, that such interventions should not be required, and that the fact that they are is a clear evidence that there is no free and safe access through the Lachin corridor.

In the full recognition of Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity, the

Assembly calls Azerbaijan for a genuinely constructive and peaceful approach towards its neighbor Armenia and the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh. It strongly encourages Azerbaijan to invest all efforts for a free and safe movement both ways along the Lachin corridor. In the meantime, it urges Azerbaijan to restore electricity and gas supplies without delay or impediment, and to agree with Armenians a new route for gas supplies and the electricity grid through Armenian and not Azerbaijani territory.

The Assembly is extremely worried by the hostile and threatening rhetoric used against Armenians at the highest level of Azerbaijan’s leadership and urges Azerbaijan to repudiate such rhetoric and take steps to tackle both hate speech, including by public and high-level officials, and hate crimes. To this end, Azerbaijan is encouraged to introduce and implement appropriate legislation with the assistance of the Council of Europe.

The consequences of the absence of free and safe access through the Lachin corridor have shown that confidence-building measures would certainly be useful in addressing certain situations. The Assembly therefore recommends Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in confidence building measures under the auspices of the Council of Europe, notably with the involvement of medical doctors, journalists, youth and civil society. It also invites the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe to offer her good services to establish and foster dialogue and co-operation between the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan.

The Assembly invites both Armenian and Azerbaijani parliamentary delegations to discuss the possible steps towards the establishment of a conducive and fruitful dialogue based on topics of mutual interest, with a view to decreasing tensions and building sincere co-operation, which would help to dispel fears and mistrust.



## Russia's trade partners clamp down on sanctions loopholes in face of EU pressure



BY GABRIEL GAVIN

Countries like Armenia and Kazakhstan have seen trade with Russia soar. Now they're determined not to be hit by EU restrictions.

YEREVAN, Armenia — The war in Ukraine has created a booming black market as companies across Eastern Europe and Asia cash in by shipping banned goods to Russia.

But now governments in countries like Armenia and Kazakhstan are promising to rein in trade in military hardware and luxury goods out of fear of being hit with retaliatory measures as the EU moves to crack down on sanctions [loopholes](#).

As members of the Moscow-led [Eurasian Economic Union](#), the two former Soviet republics, along with Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, are part of a single market designed to break down customs barriers and boost trade. That makes restricting the flow of potentially sensitive goods technically difficult, but that has put the pair in the EU's crosshairs as the bloc seeks to strengthen existing restrictions when it publishes its long-awaited 11<sup>th</sup> package of sanctions against Russia.

Mnatsakan Safaryan, Armenia's deputy foreign minister responsible for sanctions policy, told POLITICO that while the Eurasian Economic Union mandates the free movement of goods, "We cannot fall under sanctions ourselves by getting involved in shadowy activities and circumvention, bypassing sanctions."

"We are very much concerned that such developments, getting under sanctions as a country or our companies getting under sanctions, will affect our economy and make it unbearable for Armenia economy-wise and security-wise," he said.

### Risk and reward

According to customs figures collated through the Trade Data Monitor platform, Armenian exports to Russia shot up by 463 percent between 2022 and 2023, and are now worth more than €328 million.

Washington [accused](#) the South Caucasus nation of being a "transshipment point" to "illegally redirect restricted items to Russia or Belarus." Several Armenian firms have been sanctioned by the U.S.

A draft of the EU's latest sanctions package, seen by POLITICO, shows Brussels is planning to follow suit and impose tighter trade restrictions on at least one of those companies — Tako, an Armenian importer of electronic and telecommunications goods already [sanctioned](#) by the U.S.

Armenia has now publicly committed to working with the EU and the U.S. to block trade in 'risky items' and prevent its businesses ending up on the wrong side of the rules. A list drawn up last month by Yerevan applies [strict control measures](#) to goods that could be ultimately used by the Russian arms industry.

As one of the only emerging democracies in the region, with a government that has overseen significant progress on [civil liberties](#) and [press freedom](#), Yerevan is distancing itself from its traditional ally Russia and pushing for closer ties with the West.

The EU is now the country's second-largest trade partner and has stationed a civilian monitoring mission to observe its borders in the wake of incursions from neighboring Azerbaijan. Brussels is building on that to put parallel imports on the agenda.

The EU appointed David O'Sullivan, the bloc's former ambassador to Washington, as its special envoy for sanctions implementation. In April, O'Sullivan embarked on a tour of the former Soviet Union, visiting Kazakhstan to [discuss](#) "unusual trade flows" of manufacturing products, before heading on to Yerevan for [talks](#) with Safaryan and his team.

David O'Sullivan, the bloc's former ambassador to Washington | Mark Wilson/Getty Images

"The Commission has mobilized its trade and customs services to spot the redirection of trade flows from certain third countries acting as possible gateways to Russia," a senior EU official with direct knowledge of the discussions, granted anonymity to speak frankly on a sensitive political issue, told POLITICO. "Outreach to the countries in question is underway to reach a shared assessment, compare data and discuss remedial measures as appropriate."

### Toeing the line

Kazakhstan is of particular concern after the value of its exports to Russia almost doubled from around €490 million to over €800 million in a year, according to Trade Data Monitor. Even though selling to Russia has [proven lucrative](#) for the country's businesses, Brussels last month lavished [praise](#) on Kazakhstan for working to exclude restricted goods.

"We do not support anti-Russian sanctions, but we comply," Kazakhstan's Economy Minister Alibek Kuantyrov [said](#) last week, pointing out that close trade ties with Moscow puts its companies at risk of being sanctioned.

As with Armenia, the government has put in place [strict rules](#) on goods like electronics that analysts fear could be stripped down to their components and repurposed for military uses.

Speaking to POLITICO in April, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis [said](#) that EU member states should send a "clear message" both to third countries and to European companies. "Our society has made a clear choice: Values matters and cannot be traded for business as usual with aggressor," he said.

According to Safaryan, unpicking decades of close trade ties with Russia is no easy feat, and pragmatism is more useful than ideology. He insisted there's been no pressure from Moscow to keep sanctioned goods flowing. "Our policy has been based on our dialog with the EU and the U.S.," he said, "but we also work with Russia to help navigate these issues as our economies are very much connected."

## French-Armenian Resistance hero Missak Manouchian to enter France's Panthéon



Missak Manouchian, an Armenian genocide survivor who went on to become a French Resistance hero, will enter France's Panthéon mausoleum of revered historical figures next year, President Emmanuel Macron announced in a statement on June 18, *France24* reports.

"Manouchian carries a part of our greatness", Macron said in the statement issued by the Élysée Palace, adding the French-Armenian poet and communist embodied France's "universal values" of

liberty, equality and fraternity.

Macron said Manouchian will be inducted into the Panthéon – which already honours eight other French Resistance heroes, including Jean Moulin – on February 21, 2024.

According to the wishes of his family, his wife Mélinée will join him in the mausoleum, although she will not receive the "pantheonisation" of her husband – the rare tribute reserved only for those who have played an important role in French history, such as Victor Hugo, Voltaire and Marie Curie.

Manouchian arrived in France in 1925 as a stateless refugee after fleeing the Armenian genocide with his brother, and joined the country's communist Resistance movement in 1943 during World

War II. He led a small group of fighters that carried out a string of successful attacks against the occupying Nazi forces.

In 1944, the group, which included a number of Jews, was put out of action when 23 of its members were rounded up and sentenced to death by a German military court.

Manouchian was shot by a Nazi firing squad on February 21, 1944.

By entering the Panthéon, Manouchian will become both the first foreign and communist Resistance fighter to be awarded the honour.

In his tribute, Macron also pointed to the "bravery" and "quiet heroism" of Manouchian and other foreign Resistance fighters.

## Armenia still the target of Azerbaijani hate speech - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

Azerbaijan continues to propagate racist stereotypes and perpetuate animosities, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) said in its 6th [report](#) on Azerbaijan.

It said that public discourse in Azerbaijan has been marked by the use of inflammatory rhetoric in public statements by politicians, including at the highest political level, and other public figures, as well as by the wide dissemination of hateful and dehumanizing content against Armenia.

The report stated that discriminatory language in Azerbaijani school textbooks

against Armenians exists.

"In this context, ECRI is deeply concerned that the use of hate speech linked to the long-lasting conflict and confrontations with neighboring country Armenia, has been observed among young people in and outside schools and could eventually provide a breeding ground for further hostilities," the ECRI said in the report.

The commission also addressed the infamous "Trophy Park" in Baku.

"The opening of the Baku Trophy Park in April 2021, where Armenian military equipment and personnel were portrayed very negatively, also raised a lot of

criticism. ECRI shares the grave concerns expressed by other international bodies, including the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and the CERD about the language of "aggression" and regular resort to adversarial narratives that propagates racist stereotypes and perpetuates animosities."

"ECRI has received numerous reports with graphic accounts of violence against Armenians, including wilful killings or the extensive destruction of their property during and after the 2020 armed conflict and confrontations in and around Nagorno-Karabakh," it added.

## With no medical supplies, blockaded Nagorno Karabakh suspends all non-essential surgeries and other healthcare services

All non-essential surgeries and checkups have been put on hold in all hospitals of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh), the Nagorno Karabakh Ministry of Healthcare said in a statement.

The move comes days after Azerbaijan blocked Red Cross medical evacuations that were being carried out amid the blockade of the Lachin Corridor.

"The two-way movement of patients from Nagorno Karabakh and supplies of

medical items and medicine by the International Committee of the Red Cross is completely blocked by Azerbaijan for already five days. Due to the halt of medicine imports, the medicine supplies in the stationary sector have dropped to 40%, and 20% in the outpatient sector. Taking into account the situation, all non-urgent checkups and interventions (surgeries) in all medical facilities are cancelled starting today. Approximately 175 patients with various diagnoses are waiting for the

opportunity to be transported to hospitals in the Republic of Armenia for treatment. Patients requiring urgent transportation have cancer and cardiovascular diseases," the Ministry of Healthcare said, adding that 8 children are hospitalized in the intensive care and neonatal department at the Arevik hospital. Another 8 patients are under intensive care in the Republican Medical Center, three of whom are critically-ill.



## “A man-made crisis purposefully created by the Aliyev regime,” – Congressmen call for U.S. support to Artsakh



The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the U.S. Congress has held a hearing on Safeguarding the People of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Congressmen and scholars speaking at the event called on the Biden Administration to pressure Azerbaijan to end the blockade of Lachin Corridor.

The U.S. cannot accept the threat of genocide or ethnic cleansing in Nagorno Karabakh, U.S. Congressman Chris Smith said.

This hearing was open to Members of Congress, congressional staff, the interested public, and the media.

“Given the history of the Armenian people, no one should be surprised there is fear... only 2 years ago President Joe Biden officially recognized the Armenian genocide of 1915-1917, during which 1.5 million Armenians were deported, massacred or marched to their deaths. Those atrocities were committed over 100 years ago, but for many Armenians it feels like

yesterday. That is the context in which recent actions taken by the government of Azerbaijan are being experienced and interpreted,” Congressman Jim McGovern said, adding that during the 2020 war, some 90,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh were forcibly displaced. Today, more than 40,000 are still displaced.

“[The pro-human rights response is] to ensure civilian protection, which means taking any and all actions we can to prevent further escalation of tensions that could lead to more war and new atrocities,” he added.

AEI’s Michael Rubin said if the U.S. State Department wishes to succeed in bringing peace to Nagorno-Karabakh, it should waive Section 907, enforce the Humanitarian Corridors Act, Apply Global Magnitsky Act Sanctions, Limit Exports of Dual Use Goods, Protect Cultural Heritage and take other actions.

The Former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John M. Evans said that it is ultimately for the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh and the Azeri authorities to decide how they are going to live together as neighbors in the future. “It [is] justified for the US to lift its waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, which prohibits the sale of military equipment to Azerbaijan. It would be well to put the brakes on Turkish and Israeli arms sales to Baku... it may be more urgent than ever to engage

the Azerbaijani government in a serious discussion, at the highest levels, of the way ahead, emphasizing that “ethnic cleansing” of the Armenians of Karabakh is not acceptable,” Evans said.

Congressman Frank Pallone noted that the Azerbaijani blockade of Lachin Corridor has caused severe shortages of food, medical supplies, drinking water, energy, and other essentials – creating a dire humanitarian crisis for the 120,000 people living in Artsakh.

“As other members and witnesses have clearly stated, this is a man-made crisis purposefully created by the Aliyev regime to severely worsen the quality of life for the people of Artsakh,” Pallone said.

“I think it’s past time that the United States start better leveraging the diplomatic tools at our disposal, including sanctions, to finally bring this purposeful crisis to an end. Our country has a critical role in bringing these aggressions and expansionist behaviors to an end by helping the innocent civilians of Artsakh to live in their lands without the constant fear of attack & supporting their aspirations of self-determination as discussions between Armenia & Azerbaijan are reportedly set to resume...in Washington next week, I call on the Administration to... prevent... militaristic behavior from dictating the terms of a final agreement, as that will not lead to... lasting peace,” he added.

## Sam Brownback calls for U.S. congressional Nagorno Karabakh Human Rights Act, section 907 sanctions against Azerbaijan

Former U.S. Senator and former United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback has called on U.S. lawmakers to introduce a Nagorno Karabakh Human Rights Act that would clearly stipulate the standards of protecting the security of the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh.

Brownback was a speaker at the hearing on Safeguarding the People of Nagorno-Karabakh at the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the U.S. Congress.

In his speech, Brownback said that



“120,000 Christians are being suffocated, blockaded by Azerbaijan”.

He said that Azerbaijan is disregarding the International Court of Justice ruling

and is backed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

He called on a U.S. Congress delegation to visit Nagorno Karabakh.

Brownback said that he himself couldn’t enter Nagorno Karabakh when he tried to do so during his visit to Armenia as part of Philos Project.

The former U.S. official called on U.S. President Joe Biden to apply Section 907 sanctions against Azerbaijan if it doesn’t lift the blockade.

## Prime Minister Pashinyan Disparages Armenia's Coat of Arms & National Anthem

BY HARUT SASSOUNIAN, PUBLISHER, THE CALIFORNIA COURIER

With each passing day, the situation is getting worse in Armenia and Artsakh because of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's endless compromises to Azerbaijan and Turkey, his defeatist attitude and incompetence.

Coming to power, he misrepresented himself as a democrat, but soon turned out to be a dictator. Five years ago, Pashinyan promised at a huge public rally: "If in the result of the process of [Karabagh] negotiations there will be an option for settlement that I would personally consider to be a good option, let no one think that I will sign any confidential paper or take any secret action. If I see that there is an option that really needs discussing, I will come, stand here and present to you all the details, after which you decide whether to accept that settlement option or not. If you decide to do it, we will do it. If you decide that we are not, we will not do it. You are the supreme authority and you will have the final say. There can be no doubt." However, ever since that solemn pledge in 2018, he has not asked the people to make a single decision on any issue.

Pashinyan:

— Made threatening statements against his political opponents, jailed his party's rivals in local elections, had protesters arrested, and banned prominent Diaspora Armenians from entering Armenia because of their criticism of his regime;

— Divided Armenia's population into two hostile camps and alienated the Diaspora from Armenia;

— Completely mismanaged the 2020 disastrous war resulting in the deaths of thousands of young Armenian soldiers and the loss of most of Artsakh;

— Failed to secure the release of Armenian prisoners of war from Azerbaijan;

— Was unable to protect Armenia's borders from repeated Azeri attacks in the last two years;

— Was unable to open the Lachin Corridor blockaded by Azerbaijan for six months, resulting in the deprivation of 120,000 Artsakhtsis from food and

medicines;

— Repeatedly criticized Armenians' yearning for Mount Ararat, saying that it is no longer in Armenia's territory.

— Weakened Armenia's military;

— Dismissed Armenian claims to Western Armenia by announcing that Armenia has no territorial demands from any of its neighbors;

— Traveled to Ankara to attend Pres. Erdogan inauguration, embarrassing himself and Armenia;

— Gifted Artsakh to Azerbaijan. Contrary to Pashinyan's misrepresentation that Armenia's former leaders have given away Artsakh, Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said last week: "For the first time... Armenia has recognized Karabagh as part of Azerbaijan."

No wonder, Aliyev and Erdogan are pleased with Pashinyan.

Last week, while addressing the Parliament, Pashinyan made questionable statements about Armenia's coat of arms and national anthem, both of which are enshrined in Armenia's Constitution. In other words, Pashinyan's criticisms were anti-constitutional.

Here is how Pashinyan described Armenia's coat of arms: "What is depicted there? Noah's ark on Mount Ararat; the emblems of the four thrones, dynasties, kingdoms.... Moreover, what has that emblem to do with the state founded in 1991? Looking at the center [of the emblem], Noah's ark is on Mount Ararat; today's territory of Armenia's Republic is under floods; and a lion that has not lived here for a long time under normal conditions." This is "about the duality that exists in each of us, historical Armenia and real Armenia.... Should real Armenia serve historical Armenia or should historical Armenia serve real Armenia? ... After all, six of the 12 capitals of historical Armenia are located in the territory of the Republic of Armenia. And when was the last time you were in those capitals. Did you see their condition? Did you assess their condition? We are talking so much about traditions; we are talking about the values;

our capitals. Our historical symbols are in ruins today. Forgive me, this is also not something to say, but certain [historical] capitals located outside Armenia may turn out to be in better condition than those located in the territory of the Republic of Armenia."

Closing his remarks, Pashinyan did not miss the opportunity to also complain about another one of Armenia's state symbols—the national anthem—on the very day that Armenia celebrated the Day of State Symbols. He said: "Today, the official words of our anthem end as follows: it ends in 'sacrifice.' The ideology itself is correct, so I don't have any problem with the text, but it ends with a 'sacrifice' line and 'sacrifice' scene. I've been thinking a lot lately, of course, it may not be easy to implement from a purely esthetic, poetic point of view, but I think it would be very correct from a political point of view for the anthem of the Republic of Armenia to end with the following lines: 'Look at it, our sacred sign in three colors, let it shine against the enemy, let Armenia be always glorious.'"

Pashinyan was suggesting shortening the anthem by cutting its last four lines: "Death is the same everywhere, a man will die but once, but blessed is the one who is sacrificed for the freedom of his nation." This is yet another attempt by Pashinyan to weaken the nationalistic feelings of Armenians to appease Armenia's enemies. The lyrics of the anthem were written by well-known poet Mikayel Nalbandian in 1861. The anthem was adopted by the first Republic of Armenia in 1918. It was readopted by the current Republic of Armenia with minor wording changes.

What will Pashinyan suggest next: Changing Armenia's flag and the country's name? Yet, this is the same man who self-righteously declared: "I can't imagine a man who can love my homeland more than me. Such a thing is not possible. It is out of question." Even the Soviets kept Mount Ararat on Soviet Armenia's coat of arms. How can the Prime Minister of independent Republic of Armenia be less nationalistic than the leaders of Soviet Armenia?



## Amerikatsi: Film on Armenian repatriate honored with silver award at Geneva International Oriental Film Festival

Director Michael Goorjian's film "Amerikatsi" received the Silver FIFOG 2023 award at the Geneva International Oriental Film Festival (FIFOG), the National Cinema Center informs.

The film tracks the story of Armenian-American Charlie, who repatriates to Armenia in 1947, only to end up in a Soviet prison. Hopeless and alone, he discovers he can see into a nearby apartment from his cell window, where a native Armenian man, unaware that he is being watched, slowly reveals the soul of Armenia hidden behind the iron curtain.

As a young boy, Charlie escaped the Armenian genocide by stowing away in a trunk bound for the United States. His family was not so lucky. Despite his tragic start, as an adult, Charlie has managed to maintain his child-like wonder for the world. However, like so many refugees and orphans, there's a hole in Charlie's

big heart.

In 1947, Charlie repatriates back to Armenia only to be greeted by the harsh reality of Soviet Communism. The soul of Armenia has been suffocated beneath the iron curtain. Almost immediately Charlie is arrested for the absurd crime of wearing a tie by a jealous Russian Commander, DMITRY, whose wife, SONA, has taken an liking to him. To further ensure Charlie doesn't influence other prisoners with his "cosmopolitan" ways, he is placed in solitary confinement.

Just as he appears to be succumbing to the terror of his situation, Charlie discovers that the prison wall outside his cell window had been damaged during a recent earthquake. And through a hole he can see into a nearby apartment building...

The Armenian couple who live in the apartment, TIGRAN and RUZAN, become

Charlie's only connection to the outside world. Every chance he gets he watches them, living vicariously through the details of their private lives, sharing meals with them, laughing, crying, singing and dancing with them. All the while discovering the Armenian culture he never knew. Charlie begins to care deeply for Tigran, sympathizing with this Soviet Armenian who has been forced to suppress his passion for music, food, art and life. But then, in an unexpected twist of fate, Tigran discovers that Charlie has been watching him, to Charlie's surprise, Tigran does not report him, but instead allows Charlie further into his world.

Through these two prisoners of circumstance, our belief in love and magic is revived and Charlie ultimately finds what he came to Armenia in search of ... a homeland.

## In the Mountains: Tatev to host Immersive Festival of Syunik History and Legends

On 24 and 25 June, Tatev will host an immersive festival of Syunik history and legends "In the Mountains" will be held.

Theatrical performances, master classes, music, national dances and games, traditional dishes and a tour of historic old villages. The two-day festival program includes various events aimed at the development of cultural and gastronomic tourism in Syunik.

The guests and tourists of the festival will have the opportunity to participate in various events, and at the same time enjoy the mountain panorama of Syunik and the spectacular flight of the "TaTeVer" aerial tramway over the Vorotan gorge, the destination of which is one of the significant spiritual, educational and architectural monuments of the Middle Ages, Tatev monastery complex of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

**"Festivals play a significant role in the tourism industry. The Tourism Committee of the Republic of Armenia is promoting tourism in four main directions: adventure, culture, gastronomic and nature. All these 4 directions will be present in the festival "In the Mountains", which is key in attracting tourist flows. We are always eager to organize interesting events in order to make Armenia an attractive destination for international tourists. Emphasizing**

**the international market, the Committee implements the program of educational visits, within the framework of which we host media representatives and bloggers from different countries. Representatives of popular periodicals from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Austria will attend the festival "In the Mountains", said the Head of The Tourism Committee of the Republic of Armenia Sisian Boghossian.**

The festival will have several directions, including interests of different age groups.

"History of Syunik. travel through time" interactive performance about Syunik's historical events and prominent figures will take place near Tatev Monastery after which the visitors will take part in national games and dances.

A fair will be organized throughout the day at the Halidzor station of the Wings of Tatev aerial tramway, where craftsmen will demonstrate traditional crafts of the region and hold master classes for visitors. As part of the musical program, the group Tarup Trio by Miqayel Voskanyan will perform.

A dance floor with a DJ, large children's entertainment and leisure zone is also planned.

During the festival actors from Syunik will be involved in staging of the special dinner-performance "Medieval dinner with the noble Orbelian family".

There will also be a tour to the Old Halidzor village to watch the interactive performance "Local lifestyle in the 17<sup>th</sup> century", and on the second day of the festival a visit will be paid to the Old Khndzoresk village.

**"Our goal is to boost, through the festival "In the Mountains", the flow of tourists to Syunik, Tatev, as well as to present the rich history and culture of Syunik through theatrical performances and games. We hope that guests will appreciate the hospitality of the people of Syunik, enjoy the beautiful mountain views and have a fun weekend. The festival is also significant in that the new flow of tourists to Tatev will have a positive socio-economic impact on the entire community", says Ani Davtyan, project manager of the festival.**

The festival "In the Mountains" is held with the support of the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia. Festival organizers are Tatev Revival Foundation, Ruben Vardanyan Foundation, Impulse Management Company and TaTeVer aerial tramway.

## Coin dedicated to 100th anniversary of Armenian cinema put into circulation

On June 20, 2023, the Central Bank of Armenia put into circulation a coin dedicated to the “100th Anniversary of Foundation of Armenian Cinema.”

Individual Armenians attempted to shoot Armenian films indifferent countries of the world since the 1910s. On April 16, 1923, the government of Soviet Armenia founded the Petkino (State Cinema), later renamed as “Haykino”, “Hayfilm” (“Armenkino”, “Armenfilm”). This is how the history of Armenian cinematography began. In 1926, Hamo Beknazaryan, the founder of homegrown cinema, made the first silent feature film, “Namus”, and in 1935, the first Armenian sound film, “Pepo”.

In 1938, by the film “The Dog and the Cat”, Lev Atamanov founded the Armenian animated cinema; in 1954, the first Armenian color film “The Secret of the Mountain Lake” was shot. The film production actually started off in the 1950-60s as many memorable films were shot, including “The Song of the First Love” (directors: Yuri Yerznkyan and Laert Vagharshyan), “What’s All the Noise of the River about” (director: Grigor Melik-Avagyan), “Tzhvzhik” (director: Arman Manaryan), “The Boys of the Orchestra” (directors: Henrik Malyan and Henrik Margaryan), etc, in which Hrachya Nersisyan, Avet Avetisyan, Vagharsh Vagharshyan, Khoren Abrahamyan, Varduhi Varderesyan, Metaqsya Simonyan, Mher Mkrtchyan, Sos Sargsyan, Armen Dzhigarkhanyan and other actors shone with all their mastery.

In Cannes in 1965, Henrik Margaryan’s film “The Priest’s Promise” was included for the first time in the short film program of the festival, and “Hello, It’s Me” by Frunze Dovlatyan was included in competition section in 1966. Many feature, animated and documentary films were shot in the 1970-80s. Sergei Parajanov (“The Color of Pomegranates”), who was considered a cinema



innovator with his unique worldview, and Artavazd Peleshyan (with his epic films using virtuoso editing and addressing national and universal themes), came to international fame and stood out in the world cinematography with a unique style. Robert Sahakyants’ films were widely recognized in the animation genre.

In 1985, Albert Mkrtchyan’s film “The Tango of Our Childhood” was presented at the Venice International Film Festival, and the film’s leading actress Galya Novents won a special jury award.

During the independence period since 1990s, the Armenian cinema continued with some ups and downs. Private studios opened and production volumes increased. By a decision of July 20, 2006 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, “Hayfilm” film studio named after H. Beknazaryan was renamed to the “National Cinema Center of Armenia”, which is an organization implementing state cultural policy in the field of cinematography. The National Cinema Center of Armenia has largely contributed to production, promotion and development of the Armenian cinematography, and the newly emerged generation of directors endeavors to expand the creative horizons of Armenian cinema while looking to hold best traditions.

The 100-year history of Armenian

cinematography has created more than 700 feature films, about 2500 documentary, factual documentary and nearly 300 animated films.

Collector coins are made of precious metals and are issued to present to the society the national, international, historical and cultural, spiritual and other values of the country, to immortalize these values in the metal and to meet the demands of the numismatic market.

Like any other currency the collector coins have face value which makes them the means of payment. However, the face value of these coins is much lower than their cost price which includes the cost of the precious metal used for manufacturing of the coin, mintage and other expenses. Low face value and high cost price allow these coins to be considered as the items of collection and not the means of payment used in money circulation. The collector coins have also the sale price set by the Central Bank of Armenia.

As the items of collection the collector coins are issued in very restricted quantities and are not reissued. Numismatists, collectors and all interested persons can buy the Armenian collector coins in the sales salon “Numismatist” which is in the building of the Central Bank of Armenia and is open for everyone.



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