

Armenia, Azerbaijan confirm commitment to 1991 Almaty Declaration and each other's respective territorial integrity



Belgium - European Council President Charles Michel hosts talks between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Brussels, May 14, 2023

The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan again pledged to recognize each other's territorial integrity, the European Union's top official, Charles Michel, said after hosting fresh talks between them on May 14.

EU Council President says the exchanges during his meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev were frank, open and result-oriented.

"They focused on progress on the path towards Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization. The leaders shared a common willingness for a South Caucasus at peace. I commend their respective efforts. Together, we reviewed all issues on our agenda," Michel said after talks with the leaders of two countries in Brussels.

Following the recent positive talks held in the United States on the peace treaty, the momentum should be maintained to

take decisive steps towards the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, he stressed.

"On border issues, we reviewed progress and the next steps regarding the delimitation of the border. In this context, the leaders agreed on the resumption of the bilateral meetings on border issues. The leaders confirmed their unequivocal commitment to the 1991 Almaty Declaration and the respective territorial integrity of Armenia (29,800 km²) and Azerbaijan (89,600 km²). The ultimate delimitation of the border will be agreed through negotiations," the President of EU Council said.

"On connectivity, the sides made clear progress in their discussions aimed at unblocking transport and economic links in the region. Positions on this topic have now come very close to

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Deputy Foreign Ministers of Armenia receive the U.S. Ambassador

On May 8, Deputy Foreign Ministers Vahe Gevorgyan and Vahan Kostanyan received Kristina Kvien, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia; Noyan Tapan was informed from MFA Armenia.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the negotiations between Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Baryamov held on May 1-4, in Washington DC.

The Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs once again reiterated the positions of the underscoring.



Armenian side regarding the key issues related to normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Touching upon the ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan, in violation of the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, as well as the humanitarian crisis unfolded in Nagorno-Karabakh - the urgent need for all interested partners to take active steps towards ensuring stability in the South Caucasus region was

Azerbaijan disregards meeting held in Washington, and planned talks in Brussels and Moscow by launching attack – MFA



Azerbaijan's provocation is an open contempt for the Washington talks, the meetings planned in Brussels and Moscow, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The comments come after the Azerbaijani armed forces opened fire on the

sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia using mortars and artillery early this morning. Three Armenian soldiers are wounded.

"These repeated violations of one of the fundamental principles of international law – the non-use of force or the threat of force – demonstrate the contempt of the Azerbaijani side for the agreements reached, including the obligations assumed by the tripartite declaration of Sochi on October 31, 2022," the Ministry said.

"These actions of Azerbaijan, aimed at destabilizing the situation, are also an

open contempt for the meeting in Washington aimed at the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the meetings planned in Brussels and Moscow, and the efforts made by international partners interested in stability and peace in the South Caucasus," the statement reads.

The Foreign ministry called on the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan to stop the groundless, unjustified and shameful attempts to disrupt the negotiation process by using force and thereby put pressure on Armenia.

Armenian PM attends Victory Day parade in Moscow

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attended the military parade dedicated to the 78th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War in Moscow's Red Square.

Before that, in the Kremlin, Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed the Prime Minister of Armenia and the leaders of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan,



Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan who arrived in Moscow to participate in the military parade.

After the military parade, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the leaders of other countries laid flowers at the memorial to the Unknown Soldier.

Too early to speak about signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan – Armenian PM



Azerbaijan's actions are provocative and are aimed at nullifying the progress achieved during talks in Washington on May 1-4, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on May 11.

Early this morning the Azerbaijani forces opened fire at Armenian combat positions located in the direction of Sotk in Gegharkunik province. Four Armenian

soldiers were wounded in the attack.

"Today's provocation also aims at disrupting the trilateral meeting expected in Brussels on Sunday, May 14, and the five-party talks expected in Chisinau on June 1. Experience shows that Azerbaijan needs the negotiations process only for getting an excuse for escalation and war, while escalation is used exclusively for nullifying any progress reached in talks,"

he said.

The Prime Minister said that another goal is to distract the attention of Armenia and the international community from the fact of establishment of an illegal checkpoint in the Lachin corridor by creating new crisis in new place. He stressed that despite Azerbaijan's attempts the issue remains in the focus and the active communication with the international community on the issue should continue.

PM Pashinyan said he is still determined to participate in the Brussels meeting, but added that signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan on Sunday is unlikely.

"The draft Agreement on Peace and Establishment of Interstate Relations is in an initial stage and it's too early to speak about signing it," the Prime Minister stressed.

"With today's actions Azerbaijan calls into question the fundamental agreements reached in Prague on October 6, 2022 and in Sochi on October 31, 2022. These documents underline that Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity based on the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1991," Pashinyan stated.

page 1 ➔ each other in particular on the reopening of the railway connections to and via Nakhchivan. Their respective teams have been tasked to finalize an in principle agreement on the modalities for the opening of the railway connections and the necessary construction works together with a concrete timetable. They also agreed to draw upon the support of the World Customs Organization in supporting this work," he added.

"On humanitarian issues, there has been an understanding that further detainees would be released in the coming weeks. I also stressed the need to safeguard the mutual understanding that soldiers who have simply got lost and crossed to the other side would continue to be released through a speedy procedure. We

also discussed the importance of stepping up work on addressing the fate of missing persons and on demining," Charles Michel said.

"We continued our exchanges on the issue of the rights and security of Armenians living in the former Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. I encouraged Azerbaijan to engage in developing a positive agenda with the aim of guaranteeing the rights and security of this population, in close cooperation with the international community. I also raised the need for a transparent and constructive dialogue between Baku and this population," he continued.

"I believe that it is important to refrain from hostile rhetoric, engage in good faith and show leadership to reach

mutually-acceptable solutions," he continued.

"The EU has no hidden agenda. Our sole aim is to help Armenia and Azerbaijan reach a comprehensive and fair peace. We are ready to contribute to their joint efforts. We have agreed to hold the Brussels meetings as often as necessary. Leaders will meet again in Brussels in July. And as was already announced publicly, we will also meet again in the very near future together with President Macron of France and Chancellor Scholz of Germany on the margins of the 2nd European Political Community Summit in Chişinău. I also intend to invite the leaders for another such meeting in the margins of the third EPC summit in Granada in October," he concluded.

US calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to distance forces along the line of contact

The United States Department of State has commented on the May 11 Azerbaijani attack on Armenia, stating that ‘this kind of violence’ undermines the progress made by the two countries during their talks.

State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said at a May 11 press briefing that “this kind of violence, we believe it undermines the progress made by Armenia and Azerbaijan toward a durable and dignified peace,” and called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to reach an agreement at their upcoming summit in Brussels on May 14th to “distance their forces along the border, as discussed by Secretary Blinken during



their participation of these negotiations that we hosted here in Washington, D.C., at the beginning of May.”

Commenting on the foreign ministerial talks hosted by the U.S. in early May, Patel said they view these negotiations “as important, positive steps in which we felt the two countries had the opportunity to engage on some important issues, see the

other side’s point of view.”

“And we believe that there continues to be a durable path forward. We believe that there is a peaceful solution to this. It’s why we, from the Secretary on down, have continued to be so deeply engaged on this. But I’m not going to get ahead of these talks themselves,” Patel added.

The State Department spokesperson added that the U.S. was “obviously were happy to host these two countries at the beginning of May.”

“We believe that those talks were fruitful and laid the groundwork for a continuation of these talks beginning in Brussels, and we’ll let that process play out,” Patel said.

No progress over most important issues in talks with Azerbaijan, says Armenia’s top security official



Armenia and Azerbaijan haven’t made progress around the most important issues in the negotiations, the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan said on May 9.

He said that these most important

issues concern the acknowledgment of the 29,800 square kilometers of Armenia’s sovereign territory and creation of an international mechanism for Stepanakert-Baku talks and international guarantees.

“Today, we can’t even preserve elements of the 9 November trilateral statement, because, for example, Azerbaijan must not be present in the Lachin Corridor under this statement, but it is there at this moment. It’s highly important for us to have international guarantees or an institute of guarantors for resolving such issues. So that everyone adheres to all agreements,” Grigoryan said.

Speaking about the latest Armenia-Azerbaijan talks in Washington D.C.,

Grigoryan did not disclose details but said that some progress has been made, albeit not over the most fundamental issues.

Mentioning the upcoming talks in Brussels, he added that Armenia will try to bring the approaches closer to one another as much as possible and move forward.

Grigoryan also commented on Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu’s remarks on the Nemesis monument in Yerevan. He said that the Turkish FM’s comments are inappropriate. “This is Armenia’s internal affair, and no one has the right to interfere,” he said. Grigoryan reiterated that Armenia wants to normalize relations with Turkey without preconditions.

Deputy FM describes Washington talks as ‘productive’ phase

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Paruyr Hovhannisyan has said that the Armenian-Azerbaijani foreign ministerial talks were a “productive” phase in terms of approximating the stances around a possible peace treaty.

Speaking at a press briefing on May 12, Hovhannisyan told ARMENPRESS that there are a number of issues that have yet to be discussed during the upcoming May 14 Brussels summit.

PM Nikol Pashinyan said on May 11 that Azerbaijan sought to nullify the progress in the Washington talks with its

latest aggression.

Asked what progress the prime minister was referring to, Hovhannisyan said the progress pertains to the sides having a better understanding on each other’s stances.

“This was done. The American side did everything possible to create a positive atmosphere. It was truly a productive phase for bringing closer the positions around a possible peace treaty. Of course, there are a number of highly important issues that have yet to be discussed, and that’s why the highest-level meeting is being

organized in Brussels, which will be followed by the foreign ministerial meeting in Moscow, and there will be other meetings as well,” Hovhannisyan said.

Speaking about the Azeri military attack on Armenian positions in Sotk on May 11, Hovhannisyan said that Azerbaijan has been behaving in this manner ever since the 1990s.

“I’ve been serving at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1995, and I can’t recall a single phase of negotiations without such provocations taking place either before or after the meetings,” he said.

Blinken, Michel discuss “opportunities for supporting a sustainable and durable peace” between Armenia and Azerbaijan

United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and European Council President Charles Michel have discussed “opportunities for supporting a sustainable and durable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan” during a phone call, the U.S. State Department reported.

“Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke today with European Council President Charles Michel. Secretary Blinken and President Michel reaffirmed U.S.

and EU support for Ukraine’s sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. They also discussed opportunities for supporting a sustainable and durable peace



between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a readout.

In turn, Secretary of State Antony

Blinken tweeted: “Great to speak with European Council President Charles Michel today to discuss support for Ukraine, South Caucasus peace, and our deep transatlantic partnership.”

Armenia and Azerbaijan held foreign ministerial talks in the United States on May 1-4. Blinken participated in the opening and closing sessions of the talks. After these talks, the EU announced that a new round of talks between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan

is planned for May 14 in Brussels.

The Azerbaijani military has been shelling Armenian positions near Sotk since 06:00, May 11.

Probes to reveal fifth columnists, reasons of defeat in war – vows Investigative Committee’s chief



The chief of Armenia’s top law enforcement agency has said that the criminal probes into the ‘fifth columnists’ who operated within the Armenian military will

eventually reveal those responsible for the defeat in the 2020 Second Nagorno Karabakh War.

“The fifth column existed and still exists, and numerous [criminal] cases are being investigated in this regard,’ Chairman of the Investigative Committee Argishti Kyaramyan told reporters on May 9. “Some of the cases have already been concluded, some were made public, but some remain undisclosed due to the interests of the investigation, but the time will come when our society will get the

answers to all questions of concern, it will clearly know who those fifth columnists are, because of whom and why we lost, and how the circumstances of this defeat began and ended. I promise you this,” Kyaramyan said.

Asked on the alleged desertions in the military during the war, Kyaramyan confirmed that there are multiple criminal investigations into alleged desertion and other cases but refused to disclose numbers.

U.S. Ambassador, British Embassy Chargé d’Affaires visit Tomb of Unknown Soldier in Yerevan on Victory Day

U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien, together with the U.S. defense attaché Colonel Gregory Pipes, visited Victory Park in Yerevan on May 9 to lay a wreath at the Eternal Flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the U.S. embassy said in a press release.

“Ambassador Kvien and Colonel Pipes laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame in Yerevan’s Victory Park to honor the contributions and sacrifices made by the Armenian

people to defeat the Nazis and end World War II,” the U.S. embassy said.

The British Embassy’s Chargé d’Affaires Paul Morris also laid a wreath at the monument on May 9.

“To commemorate Victory Day, Chargé d’Affaires of the British Embassy Yerevan Paul Morris laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame at the Victory Park. We remember with profound gratitude the huge sacrifices made by all Allies during the Second

World War in the fight against tyranny,” the British embassy said in a statement.



Precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals are Armenia's top exported goods, according to Q1 data

Armenia exported goods worth over \$1,6 billion in the first three months of 2023 – 2,3 times more than in Q1 of 2022, according to official data released by the Statistical Committee.

Precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals and related goods amount to the bulk of the exports.

Imports amounted to more than \$2,5 billion – a 89,1% growth compared to the same period of last year.

Overall, Armenia's foreign and mutual trade amounted to more than \$4,2 billion – twice more than in 2022 Q1.

Russia was the top export destination, with exports totaling over \$838 million



(4,5 times more compared to 2022 Q1).

The second top export destination in Q1 2023 was the UAE with over \$288 million in exports (13,2 times increase). Goods worth over \$100 million were exported to the Netherlands (80,5% growth).

Overall, Armenian exports to EEU

member states amounted to more than \$878 million, while exports to EU countries totaled more than \$185 million.

Most of the exports (over \$382 million) were precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals and related goods (jewelry and other products made from precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals), which is a 4-time growth compared to the same period of last year. The second most-exported goods are vehicles, equipment and mechanisms (over \$270 million – a nearly 17-time growth). Some \$208,4 million of food products (53,3% growth) were also exported in Q1.

Minister of Economy: Relocation impact on Armenia's economic growth is estimated at one third

ArmInfo. The relocation impact on the economic growth of Armenia is estimated at one third. RA Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan stated this in an interview to the Public Television of Armenia.

Last year, according to him, 37,000 companies were opened in Armenia, of which 12,000 were LLCs and CJSCs, and 25,000 were individual entrepreneurs. All of them are involved in creating high economic growth. But we have to accept that all this is happening due to government reforms, as well as large-scale stimulus programs being implemented and the transformation of the global economy due to the geopolitical situation, the head of the department said.

In this regard, he drew attention to the fact that even before the start of the war in Ukraine; in particular, in the first 2 months of 2022, Armenia managed to ensure a 12% economic growth. Kerobyan stressed that the environment created over the years in the country allowed foreign citizens to stay in Armenia, rather than move to another country. In particular, in this context, the minister noted that the retention rate in Armenia is relatively higher than in other countries where



foreign citizens also relocated. In total, he stressed that 110 thousand people moved to Armenia, of which 57% have Armenian surnames. "That is, these are people who returned to Armenia, rather than immigrated," he said.

It should be reminded that during a press conference on May 2, Head of the Central Bank of Armenia Martin Galstyan, referring to the results of a survey conducted by German Economic, noted that the vast majority of immigrants have long-term plans with Armenia. And at least half of the citizens who moved to Armenia plan to live here for more than a year.

According to preliminary data from the RA Statistical Committee, in Armenia, the growth of economic activity in Q1 2023

accelerated to 12.2% per annum (from 9.6% Q1 2022), far exceeding even the pre-Covid 6.5% growth in Q1 2019. The service sector, the trade sector and the construction sector continue to be the drivers of economic growth. It should be noted that the Central Bank of Armenia forecasts a slowdown in GDP growth to 5.8% for 2023, expecting a slowdown in export and import growth to 14.3- 14.6%. According to the forecast of the International Monetary Fund, the GDP growth of Armenia will slow down in 2023 to 5.5%, and according to the forecast of the World Bank - to 4.1%. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development expects Armenia's GDP growth to slow down to 4% in 2023. The Asian Development Bank forecasts a slowdown in Armenia's GDP growth to 6.5% in 2023. According to the forecast of the Fitch rating agency for 2023, Armenia's GDP growth will slow down to 6.1%, and the S&P rating agency expects the Armenian economy to grow by an average of 4.3% per year over the next few years. According to actual statistics, Armenia's GDP growth in 2022 accelerated to 12.6% from 5.7% in 2021 (against a 7.2% decline in 2020).

Tourism in Armenia grows over 80% in Q1

451,850 tourists visited Armenia in the first three months of 2023 – 81,2% more than in 2022's Q1, according to official data released by the Statistical Committee.

Most of the tourists – 237,040 – are citizens of Russia, followed by Armenian citizens living abroad – 74,186.

53,707 citizens of Georgia and 25,458 citizens of Iran also visited Armenia in the reporting period.

Furthermore, visits from Turkey grew more than twice – with 2,712 citizens of Turkey having visited Armenia in January-March (2,2 times more than last year).



Armenian delegation participates in DEFEA 2023 Defense Exhibition in Greece



An Armenian delegation has participated in the DEFEA 2023 international defense and security expo in Greece.

The delegation included representatives from the Armenian Ministry of Defense and the Military Industrial Committee, the Armenian Embassy in Greece said in a press release.

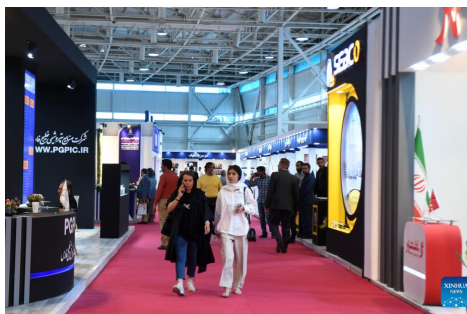
DEFEA is a high-profile international defense exhibition where international companies present land, naval, aerospace, and national and cyber security defense systems.

Greek Defense Minister Nikos



Panagiotopoulos opened the exhibition.

Armenian businessmen participate in Iran Expo 2023



Twenty-three businessmen from Armenia participated in the Iran Expo 2023 in Tehran with the support of the Ministry of Economy. Vardan Kostanyan, trade attaché of RA in Iran, also participated in the event.

The 5th Export Potential Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran, known as Iran Expo 2023, was held at Tehran International Exhibition Center on May 7-10.

The exhibition brought together 750 Iranian companies and representatives

from over 65 countries, including Russia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

The exhibition showcased Iran's export capabilities and products across 12 sectors, including manufacturing, energy, technical and engineering services, medicine, and so on.

Within the framework of the event, B2B meetings were held between Armenian and Iranian businessmen and certain agreements were reached.

President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi was present at the opening of the event.



Lawmaker hopes Speaker's Ankara visit for PABSEC will contribute to normalization with Turkey



The installation of the Nemesis monument in Yerevan was discussed between Speaker of Parliament of Armenia Alen Simonyan and his Turkish counterpart in Ankara where Simonyan was on a visit for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) meeting, MP Babken Tunyan said on May 10.

Tunyan, a member of the Armenian delegation to PABSEC, said at a press conference that numerous other issues were discussed.

Another Armenian delegate to PABSEC, Gevorg Papoyan, stressed that BSEC is

an economic organization but because of conflicts between member states the participants are mostly discussing political affairs.

Speaker of Parliament Alen Simonyan also participated in the session.

Tunyan highlighted that Simonyan's visit to Turkey is a significant event. "And we hope that it will contribute to the normalization of relations with Turkey despite all the difficult problems and challenges facing us," he said.

Asked by reporters whether or not the Nemesis monument issue was discussed at the meeting, Tunyan said: "The issue relating to the Nemesis monument became subject to discussion during the meeting between Speaker of Parliament Alen Simonyan and his Turkish counterpart Mustafa Şentop, where we also participated. The Turkish side said that they don't understand how that monument was opened on the backdrop of the efforts for normalization of relations. Mr. Simonyan answered by saying that if there is the will

for normalization of relations, we don't believe that such events could become an obstacle for normalization because there've been, are, and will perhaps be far more significant obstacles," Tunyan said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said that Turkey would take action if the monument isn't removed. But Tunyan said that the Turkish side did not communicate such approach to them in Turkey. During the session Tunyan was elected Deputy President of PABSEC.

Nemesis was unveiled in Yerevan on April 25 to honor the participants of Operation Nemesis, a 1920s program of assassinations of Ottoman perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide.

In response, Turkey closed its airspace to Armenian flights heading to a third destination and threatened to take further actions if it isn't removed.

On May 9, Yerevan city authorities announced that they have no intention of removing the monument.

ECHR rejects request for provisional measures against Armenia because jailed Azeri soldiers' rights are duly guaranteed

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has rejected an application filed by the families of the two Azerbaijani soldiers who are currently jailed in Armenia seeking provisional measures against Armenia.

The family members of the two Azeri servicemen claimed that their relatives are being ill-treated in Armenian detention. However, the Armenian government

presented evidence to the ECHR that the rights of the Azeri servicemen envisaged under the convention are guaranteed in Armenia.

The ECHR rejected the request for provisional measures based on the Armenian government's presented stance, the Office of the Representative of Armenia for International Legal Affairs said in a press release.



Lemkin Institute carries out fact-finding mission in Armenia's Syunik

At the joint initiative of the Center for Law and Justice "Tatoyan" foundation and the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, the Lemkin Institute carried out a special fact-finding visit to Syunik province of Armenia.

The goal of the mission was to monitor the situation on the ground, namely the blockade of the road of life connecting



Artsakh to Armenia by Azerbaijan.

The group observed the recently installed Azerbaijani checkpoint.

The visit proved that Azerbaijan uses the checkpoint as a means to isolate Artsakh from the outside world and creates humanitarian crisis in Artsakh.

The two institutions will come up with detailed report based on the results of the mission.

Armenian Journalist's Assets Frozen After Corruption Report

(RFE/RL) - A court in Yerevan has frozen assets of an Armenian newspaper and one of its journalists who has accused a leading political ally of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of illicit enrichment.

In a video report posted on the 168 Zham newspaper's website this month, the journalist, Davit Sargsyan, described Yerevan's Deputy Mayor Tigran Avinyan as a "nouveau riche" whose family has been "steadily getting richer" ever since Pashinyan came to power in 2018. It detailed the family's allegedly extensive business interests developed in the last five years.

The reported claimed, in particular, that Avinyan's mother bought an expensive apartment in central Yerevan before becoming recently a co-owner of two firms and a 9-hectare plot of land in southern Armavir province.

Avinyan, who will be the ruling Civil Contract's candidate in upcoming mayoral elections in the Armenian capital, took the newspaper to court. He is seeking an unprecedentedly hefty compensation for the "slandorous" report which he claims damaged his "business reputation."

Acting on Avinyan's demand, the court decided earlier this week to freeze 18 million drams (\$46,000) worth of assets belonging to 168 Zham and Sargsian personally pending its verdict in the case. The sum is huge by Armenian media



standards.

Avinyan, who also served as Armenia's deputy prime minister from 2018-2021, defended the legal action when he spoke to reporters on Thursday.

"I can only advise media outlets to bear in mind before slandering anyone, lying about anyone that they can face such proceedings," he said. "But I am otherwise not an enemy of the media."

The 34-year-old politician did not specify which parts of the 5-minute video authored by Sargsian and posted on 168.am are untrue.

"Avinyan's real aim is to inflict significant material damage on me and thereby silence me," Sargsian countered in a Facebook post.

The journalist, who is highly critical of the Armenian government, insisted that he simply shared with viewers credible information that was earlier reported by other media outlets and not refuted by Avinyan.

Press freedom groups also criticized the lawsuit, saying that no Armenian media outlets or journalists have risked such heavy fines before.

"We are seeing a typical case of an official trying to muzzle and punish a media outlet," said Shushan Doydoyan of the Yerevan-based Center for Freedom of Information. She noted that Avinyan did not demand that the paper retract its corruption claims before he filed the lawsuit.

Pro-opposition and independent publications increasingly accuse members of Pashinyan's entourage of enriching themselves or their cronies and breaking their anti-corruption promises given during the 2018 "velvet revolution."

Last month, hackers hijacked the YouTube channel of another newspaper, Aravot, as it was about to publish a video report detailing expensive property acquisitions by several senior government officials and pro-government lawmakers.

Earlier this year, Pashinyan blamed such reports for a drop in Armenia's position in an annual corruption survey conducted by Transparency International. He publicly urged senior officials to sue media outlets "falsely" accusing them of illicit enrichment.

In 2021, the Armenian parliament controlled by Pashinyan's party tripled maximum legal fines set for defamation.

Brussels summit was more substantive this time, says Deputy FM

The conversation in the May 14 trilateral Pashinyan-Aliyev-Michel talks in Brussels was more substantive, Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Paruyr Hovhannisyan said at a press conference.

President of the European Council Charles Michel [said](#) after the talks that there has been an understanding that further detainees would be released in the coming weeks.

Asked whether or not this means that the jailed Azeri soldiers who had trespassed into Armenia would get swapped with the Armenian captives held illegally in Azerbaijan, the Deputy FM said: "It was said very clearly, that there are many



agreements on Armenian captives, and these agreements must be implemented. This was a direct message, and I don't recall any mention of a swap. The call was simply about the previously reached agreements."

Speaking about Michel's mention of recognizing each other's territorial integrity, the Armenian Deputy FM said that it refers to the borders that existed at the time of the Soviet Union's collapse. "This is what it was about, and it is in line with the Almaty Declaration, he was simply reiterating that principle," Hovhannisyan said at the press conference on Europe Day and the Armenia-EU relations.

The meeting was mostly aimed at achieving progress with concrete steps, Hovhannisyan added. "And the issues announced by the President of the European Council shows that the conversation was more substantive."

Australian State of Tasmania recognizes the Armenian Genocide

Australia's State of Tasmania has recognized the Armenian Genocide, reports the Armenian National Committee of Australia.

The Tasmanian House of Assembly today adopted a historic motion to recognize the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides.

Tasmania thus becomes the third Australian state after South Australia and New South Wales to recognize the genocide.

The House joins the members of the Tasmanian Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Communities in honoring the memory of the approximately 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children and over 1 million Assyrians and Greeks who fell victims



to the first genocide of the 20th century.

It condemns the Genocide of the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks and all other acts of genocide committed during the 20th century, as the ultimate act of racial, religious and cultural intolerance.

The lawmakers recognize the

importance of remembering and learning from such dark chapters in human history, to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not allowed to be repeated.

They condemn and oppose all attempts to use the passage of time to deny or distort the historical truth of the Genocide of the Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks and other acts of genocide committed in the 20th century.

With the resolution the House also acknowledges the 34 UN member states (including US, Canada, France, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland) that have recognized the Genocide.

United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee calls for sanctions against senior Azerbaijani officials

The United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee has called for sanctions against senior Azerbaijani officials for manufacturing a humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh with the blockade.

"150 days into Baku's blockade of Nagorno Karabakh, it is clear that [Azerbaijani President] Aliyev is manufacturing a humanitarian crisis & cutting off power for critical infrastructure. Sanctions for senior Azerbaijani officials must be on the table as we apply pressure to open



the Lachin Corridor," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee [tweeted](#).

Lachin Corridor – the only road linking Nagorno Karabakh with Armenia and the rest of the world – has been blocked by Azerbaijan since 12 December 2022. The United Nations' highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - ordered Azerbaijan on 22 February 2023 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.

Turkey's Erdogan faces second round in fevered race for presidency

A run-off between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his main challenger looks increasingly likely, after Turkey's most closely fought election in decades, the BBC reports.

Turkey's Supreme Election Council says Erdogan is on 49.49% of the vote, with his rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu on 44.79%, with nearly all the votes counted.

If neither men secure 50%, there will be a second poll in two weeks' time.

Erdogan has told his AK Party supporters in Ankara that he is ready for a run-off poll if necessary, but believes he can still win outright.

Kilicdaroglu has vowed to win the election in a second round, saying his rival failed to get a vote of confidence from the people.

The election comes against the background of soaring inflation and in the aftermath of devastating earthquakes.



Under Turkish Pressure, Armenia's Leaders Make Excuses for Nemesis Monument

By Harut Sassonian, May 10, 2023

Just when we thought that we had heard everything about the current Armenian government's questionable positions on Artsakh, Armenia, and Armenian interests, we are now facing another monumental mistake by Armenia's leaders.

On April 25, 2023, the descendants of those who killed the Turkish masterminds of the Armenian Genocide inaugurated the Nemesis Monument in Yerevan. In attendance were opposition members of Parliament, and surprisingly, Tigran Avinyan, the Deputy Mayor of Yerevan, who is a member of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's political party.

Nemesis was the name of the operation which was organized by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation to eliminate several Ottoman leaders who were responsible for the Armenian Genocide. This operation implemented the death verdicts issued in absentia by the Turkish Military Tribunal in Istanbul, in 1919, against the Genocide perpetrators, since they had fled from the country. Talaat Pasha, the main culprit in the Armenian Genocide, was killed by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin, in 1921. A German court found him not guilty due to Talaat's massive crimes.

Talaat's remains were brought from Berlin to Turkey in 1943. The Turkish government 'honored' Talaat by naming avenues, mosques, schools, hospitals and a memorial after him in Istanbul. This would be just as shameful, had the German government named schools and avenues in Berlin after Hitler! Another Genocide organizer, Minister of War Enver Pasha, is buried in the same memorial in Istanbul. His remains were brought in 1996 to Turkey from Tajikistan where he was assassinated in 1922 by an Armenian.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu retaliated against the Nemesis Monument by announcing that Turkey banned overflights by Armenian airlines from Turkish skies. Furthermore, Cavusoglu brazenly announced that Turkey would take additional steps against Armenia, if the Nemesis Monument is not dismantled. Thus, Turkey violated the rules of IATA (International Air Transport Association) which states that countries cannot ban

overflights for political reasons. Armenia should take legal action against Turkey under IATA rules and ban the overflights of Turkish Airlines over Armenia's skies.

This unwarranted Turkish retaliation is taking place at a time when the governments of Armenia and Turkey are negotiating for over a year to open their mutual border and normalize their relations. Even though it is announced that these negotiations are taking place "without any preconditions," in reality, Turkey has made several demands, such as Armenia declaring that Artsakh is part of Azerbaijan by recognizing its territorial integrity, allowing the so-called 'Zangezur Corridor' to cross Armenia's territory, linking mainland Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhichevan, which would mean that the 'Corridor' is under the sovereignty of Azerbaijan, not Armenia.

Even if Turkey would open the border someday, it will shut it down again if Armenia does not meet any of Turkey's future demands, thus continuously blackmailing the Armenian government. Turkey's current demand to dismantle the Nemesis Monument is an early warning of more demands to come from Turkey, such as dismantling the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex in Yerevan, banning the burning of Turkish flags on April 24, and removing from Armenia's Declaration of Independence the paragraph that states: "The Republic of Armenia supports the task of achieving international recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia in 1915."

This is the result of prostrating oneself in front of the unrepentant enemy and begging for peace. In response to the Turkish ban of Armenian overflights from Turkish skies, Armenia's leaders criticized their own country for erecting the Nemesis Monument in Yerevan, rather than telling Turkey that they have no right to interfere in Armenia's domestic decisions. In the process of trying to appease Turkey, Armenia's Prime Minister and the President of the Parliament made a number of anti-Monument statements. So, it is OK for Turkey to glorify Talaat, the Turkish Hitler, but not OK for Armenia to honor those who killed the butcher. Armenia's leaders, rather than making excuses for

the Nemesis Monument, should have demanded that Turkey dismantle the Talaat Pasha Memorial in Istanbul.

Prime Minister Pashinyan made the excuse that the Nemesis Monument was authorized by the City of Yerevan, not the government of Armenia. The Monument was approved by the Yerevan City Council on Sept. 14, 2021. Pashinyan contradicted himself by first telling the Armenian Parliament that the decision to authorize the Monument was made "to avoid being labeled traitors.... But by doing so, we actually keep betraying the state and national interests of our country." He then went on to say that "a wrong decision was made and the implementation of that decision was wrong." Pashinyan also stated that "one of the shortcomings of democracy is when the authorities or the government leader is not controlling everything and everyone." This is a shocking statement from someone who came to power claiming to promote democracy, yet he does not seem to understand the basic principles of democracy. Pashinyan, in fact, controls everything and everyone in the country!

Meanwhile, the President of the Armenian Parliament Alen Simonyan, during a press conference in Ankara last week, also made excuses by saying that Turkey should not view the Nemesis Monument "as an expression of the foreign policy of the government of Armenia nor as an unfriendly act. The Armenian government's foreign policy is conducted by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister." Simonyan further said that only "opposition members of the Parliament had attended the inauguration of the Nemesis Monument." Cavusoglu replied that the Armenian government's excuses are "insincere and untrue. No one should try to deceive us by saying that it does not fall within their jurisdiction."

Armenia's leaders need to draw an important lesson from this episode. Unless Armenia immediately rejects Turkey's attempts to interfere in Armenia's internal affairs, I fear that the Turkish government will be emboldened to impose further demands which will severely restrict Armenia's sovereignty.

EU mission fully implements its mandate, says Armenian deputy FM



The EU civilian monitoring mission in Armenia is fully implementing its mandate, the Deputy Foreign Minister of

Armenia Paruyr Hovhannisyan said on May 12.

Asked on the Azerbaijani attacks in Sotk and the EU mission's reaction, Hovhannisyan said that the mission couldn't have reacted to the aggression because their role is to regularly visit all sections of the border and prepare reports for Brussels.

"The observers couldn't have reacted in any way. Their role is to regularly prepare reports for Brussels and EU member states, regularly visit all parts

of the border. Their presence is already a contribution in terms of improving the situation. This created a safer environment on the ground psychologically. And in this regard the mission is fully implementing its mandate," he said.

He said that the Armenian authorities had no doubts that provocations would happen, and that's what happened on May 11.

"But at this moment we can positively assess the activities of the [EU] mission," Hovhannisyan said.

Armenia-Azerbaijan foreign ministerial planned in Moscow days after Brussels summit

The meeting between Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov in Moscow is scheduled for May 19, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Paruyr Hovhannisyan said Friday.

"The meeting is planned for May 19, if no changes take place," Hovhannisyan said at a press briefing.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev are scheduled to meet in Brussels on May 14.

Hovhannisyan said the Moscow meeting can be viewed to some extent as a logical continuation of the Brussels summit, but noted that each format has its specificities.

Knowledge is power: Idram Junior participated in the International Mental Arithmetic Olympiad

On May 6 and 7, the fourth international mental arithmetic Olympiad was held at the Karen Demirchyan sport/concert complex, in which participated more than 600 children from different parts of Armenia and Russia. The Olympiad was organized by IQ Center Global Education, a large-scale activity in the field of additional education.

According to the director of IQ Center Yulia Gasparyan, IQ Center, being the founder of the Association of Mental Arithmetic of Armenia and the sole and official representative of the international associations PAMA Global and SAMA Global, the founders of mental arithmetic in the world and in the region, has been providing thousands of children in Yerevan and regions with the opportunity to study mental arithmetic for six years now.

"We are glad that the Idram Company, which emphasizes education and promotes children's financial literacy, supported the main educational event of the year with its Idram Junior application. Idram Junior prepared many gifts for the participating children". According to Tatevik Hovhannisyan, head of Idram's marketing department, Idram does not only value financial literacy. "We cooperate with those companies and are on the side of the events that contribute to raise the educational level and general development of children."

According to Sevak Shirachyan, head of marketing projects of Idram Company, Idram Junior is the only financial application in Armenia for children that enables children to make contactless payments, top up their phone number and make

transfers to their family members. "It is important for us that children learn to be financially literate from childhood, to be able not only to shop, but also to manage their finances. We will soon have news in the application, so follow us on our social media pages," Sevak Shirachyan says.

There will be an exhibition throughout the event for more than two thousand parents accompanying and supporting the participants. The Olympiad will be summed up with an award ceremony. All 600 participants will receive special gifts from IQ Center Global Education. And dozens of winners will receive special gifts from sponsors and partners of the Olympiad.

THE COMPANY IS CONTROLLED BY CBA

There are many children in Nagorno-Karabakh who have problems with access to food – Anna Hakobyan

Anna Hakobyan, the wife of the Prime Minister of Armenia, is on a two-day visit to the Republic of Croatia. She is participating in the “Summit of Spouses of European Leaders”.

On May 9, at the invitation of Croatian President Zoran Milanović, Anna Hakobyan participated in the welcoming dinner served in honor of the high-ranking guests who arrived in the country, ARMENPRESS was informed from the Office of Anna Hakobyan.

First ladies and gentlemen from around 10 countries attended the dinner. Together with Anna Hakobyan, Queen Letizia of Spain, Mrs. Linda Rama, wife of the Prime Minister of Albania, Mrs. Aigul Zhaparova, wife of the President of Kyrgyzstan, First Lady of Latvia Andra Levite, Mrs. Lydia Abela, wife of the Prime Minister of Malta, Husband of the President of Hungary István Veres, Husband of the President of Slovenia Aleš Musar, First Lady of Serbia Tamara Đukanović, representatives of the diplomatic corps, the World Health Organization and other senior officials attended the dinner.

During the dinner, Prime Minister’s wife Anna Hakobyan had a series of short conversations with those present.

On the second day of her visit to the Republic of Croatia, Prime Minister’s wife Anna Hakobyan participated in the



“Summit of Spouses of European Leaders”.

After the portrait ceremony, the summit started with the participation of Armenian Prime Minister’s wife Anna Hakobyan, Croatia’s First Lady Sanja Milanović, Queen Letizia of Spain and spouses of more than a dozen countries’ leaders.

One of the topics of discussion was the issue of preventing and combating childhood obesity, during which first ladies of different countries made statements, presenting their country’s experience, innovative solutions and established priorities.

The participants of the discussion noted that every third school-aged child in the European region has a tendency to obesity. They noted that obesity, especially at an early age, is a challenge for all countries, and the fight against it is possible only with joint efforts.

During the discussion, Armenian Prime Minister’s wife Anna Hakobyan gave a

brief speech.

“I must honestly say that this topic was not in the center of my attention, perhaps for objective reasons, due to such important issues as the war, the blockade of the Lachin Corridor and the humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh. There are many children in Nagorno-Karabakh who have problems with access to food. But I attach great importance to this topic, thank you for the invitation to be here. The government of the Republic of Armenia is making efforts to prevent the problems discussed here, from now on the issue will be in the center of my attention as well. We have to fight against the problem in the early stage, so that it doesn’t get more complicated later,” said Mrs. Hakobyan.

At the end of the discussion, the Zagreb Declaration was adopted, according to which the representatives of the countries participating in the summit declare and accept the need for joint work in the fight against childhood obesity, undertake to provide the necessary environment for healthy food and physical activity for children.

A cultural visit to the Croatian National Theater, as well as vocal and ballet performances, were also organized for the first ladies who arrived in Zagreb.

India interested in Armenia’s Academic City project in terms of involving students and investments

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Zhanna Andreasyan has held a meeting with the new Ambassador of India to Armenia Nilakshi Saha Sinha.

Andreasyan congratulated the ambassador on assuming office and wished her productive work for the benefit of the development of Armenian-Indian friendly relations. The minister expressed conviction that the new ambassador will have her contribution in strengthening and deepening the relations between Armenia and India.

“We have very good experience of cooperation,” Andreasyan said at the meeting, according to a readout. “I am sure that with your appointment this cooperation will deepen in all directions, which is truly very important. We are happy that over 2800 Indian citizens are studying in our universities. I think this number can grow

significantly, we will be only happy for the opportunity of developing cooperation between universities,” Andreasyan said.

The Armenian minister proposed to consider the deepening of cooperation in medical education and IT and to discuss exchange programs, as well as joint educational-research initiatives.

Presenting the 2030 Education Development Program of Armenia, Andreasyan pointed out the Academic City project, which ensures new prospects of cooperation in higher education. Cooperation in vocational education was also highlighted given India’s experience.

Ambassador of India to Armenia Nilakshi Saha Sinha attached importance to the prospects of deepening and developing relations with Armenia.

She said that deepening the inter-university cooperation is a priority. “In this

context we are interested in the Academic City project, in terms of both involving more students and investments,” she said.

Speaking about possible cooperation in sports and youth, Andreasyan proposed to consider exchange programs for athletes and coaches and joint training camps, as well as seminars and joint programs for developing youth tourism. The Armenian minister stressed the importance of programs for developing sports medicine.

Andreasyan attached importance to cooperation in culture. The Indian side’s inquiries on establishing a cultural center in Gyumri, namely a separate museum-gallery, and holding joint exhibitions and festivals were addressed.

Other issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

H. Hovnanian Family Foundation announces Fellowship Grant availability

The H. Hovnanian Family Foundation, in its pursuit of advancing the talent, knowledge and visibility of professional Armenians in all spheres of life, announces the opening of its Fellowship Grant program. The Fellowships are intended to enhance the development and professional networking of Armenians in all cultural, scientific, educational and competitive fields by supporting their participation in prestigious international events. By increasing the visibility of well-educated and talented Armenian specialists actively partaking in important, worldwide events, we raise the stature of Armenians globally and that of the Republic of Armenia.

Fellowship grants are open to students, professors, NGO leaders, scientists, artists, legal experts, athletes, academics, medical professionals, and other individuals to cover the costs associated with their participation as invited keynote speakers



or presenters at academic conferences and forums, educational seminars, as well as literary and scientific competitions. Artists are eligible to apply if invited to showcase their artwork at prestigious art exhibitions. Athletic professionals, who are accepted to international trainings and competitions are also encouraged to apply. Fellowship grants will help cover expenses associated with event participation including travel, accommodation and meals.

Armenian Fellowship grants will be awarded on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis to individuals of Armenian descent worldwide. Applicants will be considered based on their level of experience, type and quality of event for which they have been invited to present, academic/professional achievements, financial need, strong third-party recommendations, and evidence of the individual's motivation, standing and abilities. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year with no deadline other than a requirement for full submission at least 60 days in advance of the event start date.

For more information, including application and required supporting materials, please visit the U.S. and Armenian Fellowship sections on the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation website.

Belgium to open an embassy in Armenia



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Hadja Lahbib, announced the opening of the Belgian embassy in Armenia. Lahbib also stated that Belgium wants to

contribute to the EU observation mission in Armenia.

"In the Caucasus, Belgium will also be present in Armenia. The country was covered until now by our Embassy in Moscow, and geopolitical developments require monitoring on the ground, Lahbib announced. Belgium's increased diplomatic attention in a country and a region which has a strong Russian influence is part of the European neighborhood policy with regard to the countries to the east of the EU and bears witness to the concern for preserving security and stability in this

strategically important region.

Belgium fully supports European efforts that can contribute to the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in particular through an EU civilian observation mission in Armenia, to which Belgium wishes to contribute. Our country also attaches great importance to stability and good neighborliness in the South Caucasus. The opening of a diplomatic mission in Yerevan, in addition to our already existing embassy in Baku (Azerbaijan), stems from this vision".

Two Armenian chess players to participate in Olympic Esports Series final

Two chess players representing Armenia will participate in the final round of the Olympic Esports Series tournament, the press service of the Chess Federation of Armenia informs.

Shant Sargsyan, Samvel Ter-Sahakyan, as well as Alexander Bortnik, Alexey



Sarana, Bassem Amin, Maxim Chigayev, Ngoc Truong Son Nguyen and Alexander Rakhmanov have received the right to participate in the final.

The tournament will take place from June 22 to 25 in Singapore.

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Armenian Identity Card

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

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

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

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.
- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.
- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.
- Ensure the security

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

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