

## Latest statements made by Azerbaijan are ‘direct blow’ to peace process – Armenian PM



*Nikol Pashinyan, at the meeting of the ruling Civil Contract party in Gavar, January 13, 2024.*

The latest statements coming out of Azerbaijan are a serious blow to the peace process, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on January 13.

“In my assessment, the statements voiced from Baku in the recent period are a serious blow to the peace process. Why? For several reasons. The first reason is the following, as you know, we’ve publicly agreed for several times that peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the delimitation and demarcation of borders, should be based on the 1991 December Alma-Ata Declaration.

This means that Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other’s territorial integrity with the understanding that the territory of the Republic of Armenia is precisely as much as the territory of the Armenian SSR, and Azerbaijan’s territory is precisely as much as the territory of the Azerbaijani SSR.

That’s exactly what the Alma-Ata Declaration says, that the Soviet Union has collapsed and the Soviet republics that have joined the Alma-Ata Declaration gain independence with their territories and the administrative borders that existed between

the Soviet states become state borders. This means that the border delimitation process isn’t about creating a border. Meaning, our delimitation commissions must not go and create a border, but they should rather restate the borders that have existed at the time when the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration was adopted,” the Prime Minister said at a meeting of the ruling Civil Contract party in Gavar.

Pashinyan said that these agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan were recorded in the quadrilateral statement adopted as a result of the 6 October 2022 Prague meeting, as well as during the meeting in Sochi held afterwards, and during the Brussels meeting on 15 July 2023.

“Why do I find these statements voiced from Azerbaijan to be a blow? Because what they are saying on the highest level is directly contradicting this logic and this agreement,” Pashinyan said.

PM Pashinyan also warned that Azerbaijan is attempting to generate territorial claims against Armenia, which is “totally unacceptable.”

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## Prime Minister Pashinyan congratulates new French PM Gabriel Attal, conveys invitation to visit Armenia



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has congratulated the new French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal on his appointment.

“I cordially congratulate you on your election as Prime Minister of the French Republic, and I wish you success in your

high mission,” PM Pashinyan said in a letter to PM Attal. “Citing the Armenian-French age-old friendship and special relations, I am sure that during your tenure our governments will cooperate with new vigor to further deepen the multi-sectoral partnership between Armenia and France. Certainly, the 2021-2026 Armenian-French Economic Cooperation Roadmap is an effective instrument for that goal, and I am hopeful that we will utilize all existing opportunities to secure its successful implementation. I’d like to underscore that Armenia highly appreciates France’s important, consistent efforts in the process of resolving the geopolitical

challenges that our country is withstanding and establishment of lasting peace and stability in the region. I am deeply grateful for your constant attention towards Armenia-related issues and your warm, friendly attitude towards the Armenian people. I’d be happy to host you in Armenia on an official visit, which will intensify our highest-level commitment to enhance our bilateral cooperation. I once again congratulate you on assuming the office of the Prime Minister of the French Republic and I wish you good luck in your initiatives. Please accept, honorable Prime Minister, the assurance of my highest consideration.”

## The Prime Minister receives the Foreign Minister of Greece



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis.

In his welcoming speech, Prime Minister Pashinyan said: “Dear Minister, I welcome you and your delegation to the Republic of Armenia. This is a very important visit for us, because we have a rather comprehensive agenda with brotherly and friendly Greece, as well as very important cooperation within the framework of the European Union. First of all, I would like to thank you for the support that Greece, together with the European Union and the international community in general, has provided and is providing to us. Of course, we do not think that we have been able to fully use the potential of developing our relations, both bilaterally and

multilaterally. I hope that as a result of this visit, we will increase the level of use of that potential. I would like to ask you to convey my warm greetings to Prime Minister Mitsotakis. I hope we will be able to have new meetings. I think we had a very important conversation in Granada, and of course deepening our relations with Greece is very important for us.”

In turn, the Greek Foreign Minister noted. “Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister, it is an outstanding honor for me to be here and see you in person. I had a very productive and constructive meeting with my friend and colleague Foreign Minister Mirzoyan. Our two nations are linked by strong historical ties, and we not only want to maintain these ties, but also to further promote them, because we believe that the Armenian people are not only our partners, but also our close friends. We have brotherly relations from the depths of centuries. Mr. Prime Minister, my visit here is a strong signal for our bilateral relations and for the willingness of the Prime Minister of my country, who sends you regards. I would like to emphasize that the Greek government is ready to support

Armenia in all possible directions, both in the relations with the European Union and within the scope of the dialogue on the integration of Armenia into the European family”.

The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to the further development and strengthening of Armenian-Greek relations. In particular, issues related to cooperation in political, economic, humanitarian and other spheres, opportunities for implementation of new joint programs were discussed.

The sides exchanged thoughts on the processes taking place in the South Caucasus, including the course of negotiations on the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty, the steps taken by the Armenian government to solve the problems of people forcibly displaced as a result of Azerbaijan’s ethnic cleansing policy against the people of Nagorno Karabakh. In this regard, the parties attached importance to the support of the international community.

Reference was also made to the further development of relations between Armenia and the European Union.

## Azerbaijan raises issue of 4 villages, Armenia - 32: Pashinyan proposes practical solutions to the enclave problem

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has emphasized the imperative for practical steps based on mutually agreed-upon maps regarding the adjustment of territories, borders, as well as issues of enclaves and exclaves with Azerbaijan.

“Azerbaijan raises the issues

of four villages, while the Republic of Armenia raises the issues of 32 villages, the vital territories of which have been occupied, including those in the region of Gegharkunik.

Given our commitment to recognizing each other’s territorial integrity on the basis of the Alma-Ata Declaration, we state that there should be no occupied territories between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Therefore, if it is determined that



Armenia controls territories that ‘de jure’ belong to Azerbaijan, Armenia will have to withdraw. Similarly, for territories that ‘de jure’ belong to Armenia but are currently controlled by Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan will have to withdraw,” PM Pashinyan said Saturday.

“This is the political agreement that has been recorded, but it is impossible to implement it practically without a mutually agreed map.

There is one way to adjust the territories: to politically base the maps expressing the provisions of the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration, go to see the reality on the ground and match the realities to the maps.

“The opposite approach means creating a situation that will constantly lead to escalations, which can’t be a foundation for peace,” Pashinyan said.

He noted that Artsvashen has been under the occupation of Azerbaijan for 30 years.

“A political agreement has largely been reached that this issue should be addressed through a certain model. The same approach should be applied here, using mutually agreed-upon maps as the basis for accurately addressing the territory and the problem,” noted Pashinyan.

## EU diplomats briefed on Armenia’s vision on new avenues of deepening partnership with the European Union

On January 12, Armenian Ambassador to the EU Tigran Balayan participated in the roundtable discussion with Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors of the EU member states, high-level representatives of the European Commission and EEAS. The meeting was organized by the Permanent Representative of Greece to the EU Ambassador Ioannis Vrailas in a follow-up to the Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan’s participation in the EU Foreign Affairs Council on December 11, 2023.

During the discussion Ambassador Balayan presented Armenia’s vision on new avenues of deepening partnership with the European Union, following EU



Council decisions. He touched upon the ideas and proposals that are aimed at the intensification of Armenia-EU relations with a final goal of upgrading them to a qualitatively new level.

The participants expressed full support for Armenia’s ambitious reforms and

rapprochement agenda and promised to continue the cooperation in this regard.

In his introduction and while answering many questions from the colleagues, Ambassador Balayan outlined Armenia’s approaches for long-lasting peace in the South Caucasus region.

Armenia’s Ambassador gave a detailed presentation on the reasons and consequences of the Ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh, underlining that the feeling of impunity in Baku, which once again manifested two days ago with more irredentist, menacing and provocative statements of the Azerbaijani president, is already threatening the very fragile situation.

## Armenia received 411 readmission applications from EU countries in 2023

Last year Armenia received a total of 411 readmission applications from EU countries, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Arpine Sargsyan told lawmakers on January 10.

She said that Armenia approved over 92% of the applications.

Sargsyan made the comments during parliamentary committee hearings on the bill on ratifying the protocol on the application of the Armenia-EU readmission agreement between Armenia and Austria.

The Deputy Minister said that statistically Armenia is in a very good situation, which gives EU partners trust to continue cooperation with Armenia within the

framework of the readmission process.

“From January to December of 2023 we received 411 applications among EU countries, and 92,99% received positive response from our side. This doesn’t imply that Armenia refuses to receive the people who are residing irregularly in various EU countries. In many cases the persons in question could still be in unclarified circumstances who are not subject to readmission. And those who are not subject to readmission did not receive positive response,” she said.

Most of the applications are made from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Romania, Denmark,

France, Switzerland, Greece, Italy and Norway.

Speaking about the bill on ratifying the protocol, Sargsyan said that so far similar protocols have been ratified with Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, France, Estonia and Poland.

“Practice shows that such agreements contribute to more constructive visa liberalization talks between Armenia and the EU. This also allows to underscore Armenia’s readiness to ensure readmission processes for persons residing irregularly in various EU countries,” the Deputy Minister added.

## Armenia to strengthen ties with Diaspora via local commissioners

The Armenian government plans to enhance the country’s ties with its Diaspora through special commissioners who will work with Armenian communities around the world.

Diaspora Commissioners will be appointed in various cities across the world with large presence of Armenians.

Zareh Sinanyan, the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs of Armenia, told Armenpress that his agency has a list of potential candidates for the job.

“Over the past two years we’ve been mostly working in the communities, explaining what the commissioner’s job is going to be like. The first commissioner was appointed in 2023 to Poland by the Prime Minister. We are now considering

several candidates and the appointments will be made soon. We have a big list that’s under consideration. We will work with the candidates, and when the time comes, we will ask the prime minister to make the appointment,” Sinanyan said.

Launching the network of commissioners is expected to increase the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs.

The commissioners will have a “very simple” job, Sinanyan explained. “The Office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs has a limited staff, whereas we have a very big Diaspora. Therefore, we need people on the ground to act as the link between the community and my office,” he said.

“In the past there was a practice when our diplomats were the contact persons of the community. As a result they became community attachés instead of dealing with diplomacy. We want to avoid this and that’s why we are launching the institute of commissioners. We are not going to send anyone from Yerevan to the community, we will appoint the commissioner from within the community. They will be well-known, acceptable people for the community.”

The number of commissioners in any given country will depend on the size of the local Armenian community.

Upcoming appointments are expected in several countries of Western Europe.

## Armenia hasn’t received offer on direct talks with Azerbaijan – MP

Armenia hasn’t been offered to engage in direct, bilateral talks with Azerbaijan, a senior lawmaker has said.

“I assume that no offer has been to Armenia to take part in bilateral negotiations with Azerbaijan at any given time and place,” Sargis Khandanyan, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, told reporters when asked to comment on statements made from Baku on bilateral talks.

“We attach importance to the formats that have already been developed to be continuous, because they convey international reputation to the negotiations, further legitimize the negotiations and make the risks more manageable. Particularly, foreign ministerial talks were held in Washington, and summits were held in the EU platforms,” the MP said.

Bilateral discussions continue in the delimitation commission talks.

Direct bilateral talks took place in December 2023 on the release of POWs. Khandanyan said Armenia is ready to continue talks.

“Our priority is the content and stipulation of the principles of the talks, regardless where they will go on, or if the talks will be bilateral. If the principles aren’t recorded, then the agreements won’t have the value we expect,” he said.

## Breach of Armenia's territorial Integrity "unacceptable" To Iran

The Iranian ambassador in Yerevan, Mehdi Sobhani, on January 18 reaffirmed Iran's strong support for Armenia's territorial integrity, saying that any violation of it is unacceptable to Tehran.

"We have always supported Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and anything that causes a violation of Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity is not acceptable for us," Sobhani told reporters.

Asked what concrete action Iran will take in case of such a violation, he said: "It won't be violated."

The remarks came amid Azerbaijan's

renewed demands for an extraterritorial corridor to its Nakhichevan exclave that would pass through Syunik, the sole Armenian province bordering Iran. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said on January 10 that people and cargo transported to and from Nakhichevan must be exempt from Armenian border controls.

Last week, a Turkish government minister said that new roads and railways needed for the functioning of that corridor should be built by 2029. The Iranian Foreign Ministry responded by repeating its strong opposition to "geopolitical changes"

in the South Caucasus.

Iran has repeatedly warned against attempts to strip it of the common border and transport links with Armenia. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi reportedly told a visiting Azerbaijani official last October that the "Zangezur corridor" sought by Baku is "resolutely opposed" by the Islamic Republic.

Raisi spoke less than two weeks after Azerbaijan's recapture of Nagorno-Karabakh which raised more fears in Yerevan that Baku will also attack Armenia to open the corridor.

## Greece supports stronger Armenia-EU ties

Greece supports the strengthening of the Armenia-EU ties and the deployment of the EU monitoring mission in Armenia, Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis has said.

"Regarding the Armenia-EU relations, Greece supports strengthening relations with Yerevan and the deployment of the EU monitoring mission in Armenia," the Greek FM said at a joint press conference with his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan in Yerevan.

"Greece will work to strengthen institutional dialogue on the level of our expert skills, being one of the oldest EU members," the Greek FM said.

Thanking Mirzoyan for the warm reception, Gerapetritis added, "I am happy and honored to be in Yerevan for the first time as foreign minister, and to reiterate the excellent level of bilateral ties and our willingness to further deepen our



relations. Indeed, Greece and Armenia have strong historical ties, friendly relations that have been built over centuries. And I have also regular contact and cooperation with my good friend and colleague."

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said that he presented to his visiting Greek counterpart George Gerapetritis the situation in the South Caucasus after the forced displacement of the Armenians of

Nagorno-Karabakh, and the peace process.

"Certainly, I comprehensively presented to my colleague and his delegation the situation in the South Caucasus after the forced displacement of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and also the peace process and the details and problems of that process," Mirzoyan said at a joint press conference with Gerapetritis.

FM Mirzoyan said he also presented the Crossroads of Peace project.

He added that Armenia is committed to continue the peace talks and establish peace in the South Caucasus despite all challenges and difficulties, as well as Azerbaijan's destructive conduct in some cases.

"We believe that in case of displaying mutual constructive approach, in case of political will, we will be able to reach a tangible destination in the issue of establishing peace in the nearest future," Mirzoyan said.

## Pashinyan responds to Azerbaijan's statements on Armenia's arms acquisition

At the session of the initiative group of the 'Civil Contract' party held in the city of Gavar on January 13, the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, referred to the statements made by Azerbaijan regarding Armenia's implementation of reforms in the army and arms acquisition.

"On the one hand, Azerbaijan presents territorial demands to Armenia, announces that it will strengthen its army, on the other hand, complains that Armenia is buying weapons from France and India. What is the logic here?"

Any country has the right to have an army, no one can question it," Pashinyan stated.

According to him, it is understandable that all this should be put in the context of regional security. "Armenia may have concerns regarding Azerbaijan's armaments, and Azerbaijan may have concerns about Armenia. This is the reason why we say: let's sign a peace agreement in a way that does not make war possible," said PM Pashinyan.

Nikol Pashinyan, stated on that when he reviews Azerbaijan's proposals regarding the peace treaty, he sometimes gets the impression that the country is attempting to create a document that legitimizes future wars. PM Pashinyan noted that such an approach is beyond logic.

He noted that Armenia offered to withdraw the troops from the border defined by the Alma Ata Declaration, but Azerbaijan refused. Azerbaijan also rejected Armenia's proposal to demilitarize the border zones.

"I can make another offer: let's sign an arms control agreement so that Armenia and Azerbaijan reach a concrete agreement regarding arms and have the opportunity to monitor each other in terms of fulfilling these agreements. Of course, this is a new proposal, but if we sincerely want to move towards peace, all these issues can be addressed," Pashinyan noted.

## Armenia, NVIDIA mull expansion of cooperation



Armenian Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan met with Shanker Trivedi, Senior Vice President Enterprise Business at NVIDIA. The interlocutors discussed the possibilities of cooperation, including in artificial intelligence. Reference was made to the possibility of expansion

of the company's activities in Armenia.

Minister Kerobyan also met with the head of Micron Technology and heads of a number of other high-tech companies and briefed them about Armenia's business environment and opportunities.

"Our goal is to promote the presence of technology giants in Armenia, and encourage the existing ones to expand their activities," Kerobyan said in a Facebook post.

## Margara border crossing point on Armenian-Turkish border ready for use after renovation

The Margara border crossing point on the Armenian-Turkish border is ready for use after a major renovation, Deputy Chairman of the State Revenue Committee of Armenia Karen Tamazyan said at a press conference at Armenpress.

"In terms of customs and passport control, as well as border guards, the infrastructure is ready so that the passenger service can be carried out properly," he said.



Turkey unilaterally blocked its border with Armenia in 1993. In 2022, the two countries agreed to open the land border for citizens of third countries and diplomatic passport holders. The agreement is yet to be implemented.

## Armenia could become a transit country for India to EAEU and European countries – Minister

Armenian Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan had a meeting with Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways of India, within the framework of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in the state of Gujarat, India.

Deputy Minister Narek Teryan and Armenian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to India Vahagn Afyan were also



present at the meeting.

A number of issues related to increasing the volume of trade between the two countries, expansion of logistics infrastructure, India-Iran-Armenia trade channels were discussed.

Vahan Kerobyan emphasized that Armenia can become a transit country for India to EAEU and European countries.

## 3,945,010 AMD to the Health Fund for Children of Armenia: The Power of One Dram for January to go to Armenian Mothers fund

Idram and IDBank summarize the December program of the “The power of one dram” initiative. The “one drams” collected for the payments made by the clients of the two companies in December, 3.945.010 AMD, will be sent to the Health Fund for Children of Armenia.

Summarizing the year, Tatevik Vardevanyan, the Head of Idram&IDBank communication unit, notes, that they managed to support more than a dozen initiatives and foundations. “During 2023, we have directed more than 40 million drams to various initiatives: healthcare, educational programs, as well as initiatives to support our compatriots forcibly displaced from Artsakh,” notes Tatevik Vardevanyan.

The “one drams” accumulated during the January 2024 will be directed to the “Armenian Mothers” fund.

According to Narine Manukyan, director of the fund: “The cooperation between us and Idram has years of history and we are happy that this month too we had the opportunity to work with our partners for the sake of hundreds of children’s health improvements. The project is very important for us, because this year in the



rehabilitation treatment we included children with disabilities, who were forcibly displaced from Artakh. They have the need to receive the treatment. In “Erasi Tun 1” and “Erasi Tun 2” children rehabilitation centers they will receive free rehabilitation therapies.”

You can become a goodwill ambassador without spending any extra money. For that, you just need to make all your payments via Idram&IDBank application, IDBanking.am online platform, via terminals of two companies, and for each payment you make, the companies will donate one dram to good deeds.

By the way, “The Power of One Dram” has directed more than 150 million drams to dozens of initiatives throughout its activity, contributing to the development of various sectors of our country and

building a better future for our people.

In 2023, “The Power of One Dram” was directed to:

The “Music for the Future” Foundation, for the “Talentum” educational program: AMD 3.008.215

Installation of solar water heaters in private households in rural areas of Artsakh: AMD 6.463.511

The program to reveal the professional potential of war participants: AMD 3.389.788

Public organization “Road of Life”: AMD 3.520.698

“Hayordi” camp: AMD 3.482.779

Children of Armenia fund: AMD 3.480.466

SOS - Children’s villages: AMD 3.500.572

Hayq to the World educational program: AMD 3.397.784

Hayordi-Artsakh initiative: AMD 3.580.216

Greenhouses for Artsakh Armenians in Syunik: AMD 3.588.848

Health Fund for Children of Armenia: AMD 3.945.010

COMPANIES ARE SUPERVISED BY CBA

## Steel plant to be moved from Yeraskh to Ararat: Armenian government will provide over \$8.7 million loan

The Armenian Government will provide funds for to GTB STEEL LLC for the construction of steel plant in the village of Ararat. The decision was made at a sitting on January 11.

“The construction of the steel plant in Yeraskh settlement by the company was stopped due to certain circumstances,” the government said.

The executive will thus provide a budget loan of 3,500,000,000 drams (about \$8.7 million) with an annual interest rate of 8 percent for 4 years.

The construction site in Yeraskh, a border village 55 kilometers south of Yerevan, came under fire from nearby Azerbaijani army positions on a virtually daily basis

in June.

The automatic gunfire, which left two Indian workers seriously wounded, began one week after the Azerbaijani government protested against the \$70 million project. It claimed that building the industrial facility without its permission is a violation of international environmental norms. The Armenian Foreign Ministry brushed aside Baku’s “false” environmental concerns, saying that they are a smoke-screen for impeding economic growth and foreign investment in Armenia.

Despite making defiant statements, Armenian and U.S. investors behind the project suspended work on the plant and

started moving construction and industrial equipment from the site later in the summer.

In a statement issued after its weekly meeting in Yerevan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s cabinet confirmed that the facility is now being constructed just outside the town of Ararat, several kilometers from Yeraskh.

It said that the investors wasted 2 billion drams on the construction work in Yeraskh and now need additional funding. The low-interest government loan, repayable in four years, will be channeled into the project through a state investment fund, added the statement.

## Effective human rights protection of all persons affected by Karabakh conflict key to success of Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process – Mijatović



Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities should ensure focus on human rights protection in their peace talks and establish strong human rights safeguards for all persons affected by the conflict, said the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, as she published her [Observations](#) following her visit to Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the Karabakh region, from 16 to 23 October 2023. It was the first time in decades that a human rights mission of this kind was able to visit the Karabakh region.

The visit was prompted by the mass displacement of over 101,000 Karabakh Armenians who fled to Armenia in the space of only a few days at the end of September. It followed Azerbaijan's military action on 19 and 20 September, its subsequent full control over the region and the prolonged disruption in the movement of people and access to essential goods, services and energy supplies experienced by Karabakh Armenians as a result of a nine-month blocking of the road along the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan. In Armenia, the Commissioner spoke with Karabakh Armenians who had left and were staying in shelters provided by the authorities. In Khankendi (referred to as Stepanakert by Karabakh Armenians) in Azerbaijan, following the departure of its population, the Commissioner witnessed empty streets, abandoned premises and almost no sign of the presence of civilians. On the basis of what she could hear and see, the Commissioner concluded that at the end of September 2023, Karabakh Armenians found themselves abandoned

without any reliable security or protection guarantees by any party, and that, for them, leaving home was the only reasonable option available.

While welcoming the efforts made by the Armenian authorities to provide all those in need who arrived from the Karabakh region with the first basic assistance, the Commissioner stressed that Karabakh Armenians who fled to Armenia, and in particular those belonging to vulnerable groups, should be guaranteed access to all necessary support in the immediate, medium and long term. "Council of Europe member states should maintain a focus on providing financial support to ensure that the humanitarian needs of displaced persons and their host populations can be fully met", added the Commissioner.

The Commissioner stressed that recently-displaced Karabakh Armenians in Armenia should be given the possibility of returning in safety and dignity – even if it seems hypothetical for most at the moment – including by finding flexible solutions, in particular as concerns their citizenship and legal status. Pending a possible return, ways should be promptly found, including by establishing security guarantees, for Karabakh Armenians to temporarily access their homes or places of habitual residence, and visit graveyards where loved ones are buried. It is incumbent on the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure that property left behind by Karabakh Armenians is protected from looting, theft or being taken over. The few ethnic Armenians who have stayed in the Karabakh region should also benefit from all human rights protection, including by having their freedom of movement secured.

The Commissioner expressed the hope that all internally displaced persons who so wish will be able to return as soon as possible in safety and dignity. More generally, the Commissioner stressed that

all persons displaced by the long-lasting conflict have the right to return to their homes or places of habitual residence voluntarily and under conditions of safety and dignity, regardless of whether they have been displaced internally or across borders.

"All allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law and serious human rights violations reported in relation to the conflict need to be effectively and promptly investigated, the perpetrators brought to justice and if found guilty after a fair, independent and impartial trial, sentenced and punished. This includes allegations relating to the circumstances of the blocking of the Lachin corridor, the mass displacement of Karabakh Armenians and the military operation of 19 to 20 September", said the Commissioner. She added that this must be done through a victim-centred approach that treats the victims and their families with sensitivity and compassion. A comprehensive approach to dealing with the past and addressing the serious human rights violations committed in the context of the conflict over the Karabakh region should also be put in place.

Other human rights issues addressed in the Commissioner's Observations include the need to protect people from mines and explosive remnants of war; the situation of persons detained in connection with the conflict, including the conditions of their detention and level of contact with their families; and the importance of clarifying the fate of missing persons throughout the region and to provide answers to their families. Lastly, the Commissioner called on the authorities in both countries to combat hate speech and promote mutual understanding and trust, including by involving civil society in establishing human rights-compliant memorialisation and reconciliation processes.



## In 2023, 220,000 real estate transactions were carried out in Armenia, which is 7.2 percent more than in 2022. The activity report of the Cadastre Committee was discussed



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Cadastre Committee to participate in the discussion of the activity report 2023 of the Committee.

The head of the Committee, Suren Tovmasyan, and his deputies reported on the reforms and measures implemented during the reporting period.

It was reported that in 2023 the works of adjusting the cadastral maps of the communities covered by the orthophotomaps, correcting the administrative boundaries of the communities and cadastral districts in the cadastral maps have been carried out and are ongoing. There is a simplified procedure for correcting the borders of individual plots.

As a result of the cadastral map adjustment works, significant support was provided for the implementation of urban development and investment programs, the administration was significantly reduced, and the complaints submitted by the citizens were satisfied. Corrected cadastral maps are the basis of state registration of rights. Correction of cadastral maps of 344 settlements was carried out, of which 186 were corrected during 2023. Administrative boundaries of 21 communities and the city of Yerevan with a length of about 2400 km have been corrected.

Of approximately 100,000 unidentified property units, 19,000 were examined, of which 9,500 were identified and mapped as appropriate.

Within the framework of the creation and introduction of the pilot sectoral cadastre, the digitization and integration of automobile roads in Shirak region into the national geoportal was carried out.

Adjustment and comparison of cadastral maps with orthophotomaps, roads of interstate, republican and regional significance were clarified and marked, rendering of roads in the national geoportal was carried out.

During the previous year, 93 objects were digitized: a total of 701,669 km, 1 interstate, 12 national and 80 local roads.

In the field of citizen service, the range of online services has been expanded. The number of online applications increased (35.8 percent of applications were submitted online).

The list of information provided online has been expanded; new information packages have been developed. The mobile application of online services has been introduced.

Compared to previous years, the number of visits to maparmenia.am and e-cadastre.am platforms has significantly

increased. Maparmenia: 28,936 visits in 2023 against 1883 in 2022. E-cadastre.am website had 855 thousand 708 visits in 2022, and 1 million 159 thousand 406 in 2023.

Online requests for information (automated response) have also increased. If in 2020 3 thousand 203 online requests were received, in 2023 the number increased to 43 thousand 199.

The registration process of arbitrary structures is also being carried out in order to include them in the property tax base. This will also contribute to increasing the budgets of the communities.

The officials informed that 220,000 real estate transactions were carried out in the republic last year, which is 7.2 percent more than in 2022. The number of transactions decreased by 6 percent in Yerevan. According to Suren Tovmasyan, 60,000 real estate transactions were carried out in Yerevan last year, against 64,000 in 2022. It was noted that transactions intensified in Vayots Dzor, Kotayk, and Gegharkunik regions. In 2023, the Cadastre Committee handled 800,000 transaction applications instead of 700,000 in 2022.

In 2023, 10 thousand 121 newly built residential areas were commissioned in Armenia. In this regard, the Prime Minister noted. "Here, the statistics are very interesting. The number of residential areas commissioned in 2018 is 2 thousand 285, in 2019 - 3 thousand 246, in 2020 - 4 thousand 235, in 2021 - 6 thousand 364, in 2022 - 6 thousand 463, in 2023 - 10 thousand 121: In other words, since 2018, 32 thousand 714 newly built residential areas have been commissioned. This is a very encouraging number."

In the current year, it is planned to carry out reforms in the fields of service provision and registration, to develop a strategic document for the exchange and integration of spatial data, to implement a data-based policy in order to provide citizens with accurate information.

## LA County calls on Azerbaijan to release Armenian hostages

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, unanimously approved a [motion](#) introduced by Supervisor Kathryn Barger and co-authored by Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell that throws the weight of Los Angeles County behind calls for the release of Armenians being held hostage by Azerbaijan.

At least 36 Armenian prisoners are captive and remain in Azerbaijani custody. Additionally, Azerbaijan has been holding eight former military and political leaders of Artsakh captive as political prisoners since September 2023.

“This is about accountability,” said Supervisor Kathryn Barger. “We need to hold Azerbaijan accountable for violations of humanitarian law. As leaders of a County that is home to the greatest number of Armenians outside of Armenia itself, we must do what is within our power and use



our voice to condemn Azerbaijan’s violations of human rights and urge the return of all Armenian hostages and prisoners of war. We have a moral obligation to do so. I am proud to stand in solidarity with the Armenian community.”

“The conflict between Azerbaijan and the people of Armenia impacts our Armenian community in Los Angeles County,” said Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. “We must make it clear that these crimes against

humanity will not be tolerated by our government. We support the Biden administration in urging the Azerbaijan government to immediately return all Armenian prisoners of war and work toward a solution for lasting peace in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.”

The motion notes that the only “crime” committed by these individuals was

the peaceful exercise of their political rights; they are being held under false and fabricated charges.

A letter will be sent with all five Supervisors’ signatures to United States President Joseph Biden, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, and Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen urging the Administration to take action at the federal level and suspend all U.S. military and economic assistance to Azerbaijan.

## Robert Kennedy Jr. pledges to do everything to peacefully restore Armenian sovereignty over Artsakh



US Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. has pledged to do everything to

peacefully restore Armenian sovereignty over Artsakh.

“I will do everything in my power to peacefully restore Armenian sovereignty over Artsakh,” Robert Kennedy Jr said, speaking in Southern California.

Last month Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. pledged that his administration would mobilize the international community to sanction Azerbaijan, secure the safe

return of Armenians to their Artsakh homeland, and support their right to self-determination.

In a 2.5-minute video statement titled “RFK Jr. On How to Avert War in Armenia,” the presidential candidate stressed, “I want to commit this country to the restoration of the sovereignty of Armenia and Artsakh, and to the restoration of its territory. Instead of starting another war somewhere, I want to stop one.”

## UK House of Lords Committee holds hearing on Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia-Azerbaijan relations

The International Relation and Defence Committee of House of Lords held a hearing on Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia-Azerbaijan relations on January 10. During the hearing, Thomas de Waal and Marina Nagai were invited to give their independent opinions questions raised

by the House of Lords committee peers.

The Armenian National Committee of UK participated in the hearing with the presence of its Chairperson Annette Moskofian. Previously, ANC-UK sent briefings to be distributed to the committee members on War crimes, Ethnic Cleansing

and Genocide, Destruction of Cultural and Religious heritage and POWs and illegal abductees. ANC-UK also asked Luis Moreno Ocampo, Lemkin Institute, the Tatoyan Foundation, the Etchmiadzin, HART and Global Witness to submit reports to the committee ahead of the session.

## Lemkin Institute condemns brutal attack on Armenian Quarter in East Jerusalem

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention has strongly condemned the recent brutal attack on the Armenian Quarter in East Jerusalem by armed mobs associated with an Israeli-Australian businessman Danny Rubenstein. It reiterates the call to protect the cultural heritage of the Armenian Quarter and respect the will of its residents, who continue to resist the forcible development of their land.



The most recent incidence of violence occurred on December 28, 2023, when an armed mob of about thirty people associated with Israeli-Australian businessman Danny Rubenstein attacked the historical area called Goveroun Bartz (the “Cows’ Garden”), injuring several Armenians, including a priest and students of the Theological Seminary. According to the local activists, two Armenian residents were arrested by Israeli police while none of the attackers were apprehended. This incident, together with others, occurred after a controversial land development deal was canceled by the Armenian Patriarchate in November. The deal, originally signed by the Armenian Patriarchate in July 2021, would have granted Danny Rubenstein’s company, XANA, rights to build a luxury hotel on the property, destroying many historic buildings in the area. The deal

was canceled after the Patriarchate faced pressure from the local Armenian community, the greater Armenian Diaspora, and Palestinian authorities. Since November, XANA has sought to claim the Cows’ Garden by use of force.

Prior to the attacks in the Armenian Quarter, there were other incidents in which Israeli extremists harassed Jerusalemite Armenians. For instance, on January 29, 2023, an Armenian restaurant in the Christian Quarter of East Jerusalem was attacked. Continuing harassment and attacks on Jerusalemite Armenians together with coercive and possibly illegal construction in the Cows’ Garden pose an existential threat to the oldest Armenian Diaspora community in the world. This threat is very alarming, especially after the tragic fate of the 4000 year-old Armenian community in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), where, in September, Azerbaijan forcibly

displaced more than 100,000 Artsakh Armenians – the entire Artsakh population – from their ancestral home to Armenia.

“In the context of the violent climate against Christians in Israel fueled by Prime Minister Netanyahu’s far-right government and the ongoing genocide against Palestinians unfolding in Gaza and the West Bank, attacks on the Armenian Quarter can be

also viewed as another attempt by Israeli extremists to create a homogenized Jewish ethnostate in Palestinian territories. It is crucial for international organizations and the UN to keep an eye on the tense situation in the Armenian Quarter and protect the 1600-year-old neighborhood and its inhabitants from violence and elimination,” the Lemkin Institute said.

The Lemkin Institute stressed that such events contribute to an environment conducive to mass atrocities and genocide; recognizing and responding to these warning signs promptly is essential for preventing further escalation against Armenians. Moreover, it expressed full support for the resistance of Jerusalemite Armenians and calls on relevant authorities to ensure the safety and territorial integrity of the Armenian Quarter and the rest of East Jerusalem by all necessary means.

## Israeli FM slams Turkey’s Erdogan for genocide after Turkey backs South Africa’s ICJ case



Foreign Minister Israel Katz slammed Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in an X, formerly Twitter, post on Friday afternoon, as Turkey backed South Africa’s accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice, the *Jerusalem Post* reports.

Katz posted, “The President of Turkey

@RTErdogan, from a country with the Armenian Genocide in its past, now boasts of targeting Israel with unfounded claims. We remember the Armenians, the Kurds. Your history speaks for itself. Israel stands in defense, not destruction, against your barbarian allies.”

## Photo exhibition in Place de la Bastille of Paris raises awareness about Nagorno- Karabakh's at-risk Armenian heritage



Paris has opened a photo exhibition in the Place de la Bastille on the endangered Armenian heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The exhibition, titled Nagorno-Karabakh: Endangered Armenian Heritage has been organized by Paris City Hall and

L'Œuvre d'Orient, a French, Catholic association, and will be open until January 15.



Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian attended the opening ceremony and thanked Paris City Hall and L'Œuvre d'Orient for supporting Armenia and the Armenian people.



## Armenian genocide memorial to be erected in Irvine's Great Park

Irvine is getting closer to erecting a memorial dedicated to the victims of the Armenian genocide within the Great Park, the [Orange County Register](#) reports.

Early plans for the memorial, approved by the Great Park Board on Tuesday, Jan. 9, include a potential location, the size of the memorial and how the memorial will be funded. City leaders unanimously approved the Orange County Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee's proposal and directed staff to work with the committee in developing a schematic design and budget.

The proposed location is what will be called the Heart of the Park, a yet-to-be-completed area of the Great Park in its expansion over 300 acres of amenities. Because it is surrounded by a dense forest, the location will provide privacy and peace, said assistant city manager Pete Carmichael.



And the size of the memorial will be consistent and commensurate with the vertical and horizontal area provided within the surrounding forest, approximately 20 feet wide and 15 feet high, said Lauren Jung, the city's senior management analyst.

The Orange County Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee, comprised of 11 members representing various Armenian organizations from around the county, hopes for construction to begin in the first half of 2026 and be completed

in 2027, according to a staff report.

The Heart of the Park, where the memorial will be located, is slated for initial grading beginning this year with subsequent construction starting in 2026. That area "is a mix of quiet contemplation and social interaction," Carmichael said.

The process of homing an Armenian genocide memorial in Irvine began in 2022 after a video surfaced in which Mayor Farrah Khan appeared to joke and laugh with representatives of local Turkish groups, among them a man who has been outspoken in denying the genocide.

Khan, at the time, said the genocide was not a topic of conversation and the video was released out of context. Members of the Armenian community met with Khan, and she said she would support finding a place in the city for a memorial.

## Azerbaijan continues the historical-architectural distortion of captured Church of St. Hovhannes the Baptist



The historical-architectural distortion of the captured Church of St. Hovhannes the Baptist in Shushi continues, the Scientific Research Center of Historical and Cultural Heritage informs.

Saint Hovhannes the Baptist Church in Shushi, Artsakh is better known to the people as Kanach Zham (Green Church). The church got the name because it used to have a green dome. It was built at the beginning of the 19th century, over time it has been restored and improved several times until 2020. During the 44-day war, Saint Hovhannes Church was one of the favorite places not only of Artsakh residents, but also of tourists.

After the seizure of Shushi by the Azerbaijani armed forces in November 2020, Kanach Zham was one of the first monuments to be subjected to vandalism and distortion.

In photos shared on Azerbaijani social network as of November 15, 2020, the church appears in a half-destroyed state. Unlike Shushi's Ghazanchetsots or Holy

Savior Church, which was damaged as a result of deliberate targeting during the military operations, Kanach Zham did not suffer any damage during the war.

Therefore, it is not difficult to prove that the Saint Hovhannes Mkrtych Church was deliberately destroyed after the signing of the tripartite statement.

French journalist Emmanuel Grynszpan visited Shushi and photographed the damaged church on December 26, 2020.

On July 4, 2022, the State Service for the Protection of the Historical Environment of the Republic of Artsakh issued a statement that the Hovhannes Mkrtych or Green Hour Armenian Church of Shushi was completely destroyed by the Azerbaijanis and it is being turned into an Orthodox church under the name of renovation.

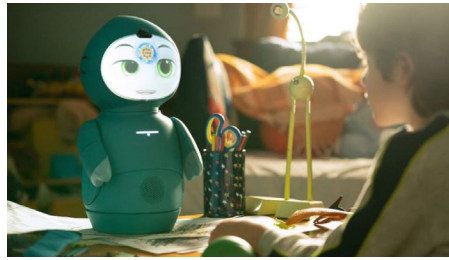
On January 1, 2024, a video posted on one of the Azerbaijani YouTube channels clearly shows that the construction works continue in the area of the church.



## Moxie Robot developed by Paolo Pirjanian's Embodied wins top prize at CES 2024

Moxie, a playful robot developed by Embodied, a company founded by Armenian American Paolo Pirjanian, has received top prize in the "Artificial Intelligence" category at the CES 2024 international consumer electronics exhibition in Las Vegas.

Moxie AI is a revolution in child development. Moxie AI is a compassionate companion that will be your child's friend,



tutor, and mentor. Using cutting edge technology, Moxie AI incorporates a holistic

approach that helps your child learn essential developmental skills through play and tracks the developmental milestones in a mobile device App. Moxie AI provides a safe, non-judgmental space for children to learn and practice social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills, building confidence to help kids reach their full potential for life-long success.

## Academy names Teni Melidonian Chief Oscars Officer



The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences announced that Teni Melidonian was named to the newly-created position of Chief Oscars Officer, [Deadline](#) reported.

According to the entertainment news outlet, Melidonian will lead strategy, talent relations, special events and production teams for all awards programs and events.

This is a promotion for the longtime AMPAS executive, who as the lead liaison with Disney/ABC, the Academy's broadcast distribution partner, headed Oscars ad sales, marketing, advertising and synergy strategies supporting audience growth opportunities globally, according to [Deadline](#).

In her new role, Melidonian will collaborate closely with the Oscars producers and show host, Disney/ABC and Academy leadership, including the Board of Governors and its committees, and oversee the teams involved in developing and executing the Oscars for a global viewing audience, [Deadline](#) reported.

The announcement was made on January 9 by Academy CEO Bill Kramer.

"Teni is creative and forward-thinking—and her years of Academy experience

and strong knowledge of our awards are a huge asset for our organization during this exciting and historic time. She played a critical role in the success of last year's show. MaryJane is a truly innovative leader, and her prowess in producing top-notch events is exceptional. I am deeply grateful for their strategic partnership and support," Kramer said in a statement.

Melidonian was most recently Executive Vice-President of Oscars Strategy. She began her career at the Academy of Motion Pictures in 2005 as a publicist, advancing to head communications and publicity and overseeing brand strategy and marketing before moving over to lead the Oscars Strategy team. Prior to the Academy, Melidonian worked in Washington, including at Armenia's Embassy to the United States.

## AI to hit 40% of jobs and worsen inequality, IMF says

Artificial intelligence is set to affect nearly 40% of all jobs, according to a new analysis by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the BBC reports.

IMF's managing director Kristalina Georgieva says "in most scenarios, AI will likely worsen overall inequality".

Ms Georgieva adds that policymakers should address the "troubling trend" to "prevent the technology from further stoking social tensions".

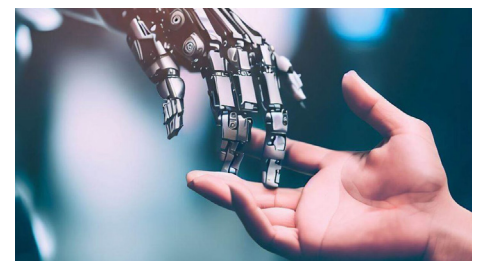
The proliferation of AI has put its benefits and risks under the spotlight.

The IMF said AI will likely affect a

greater proportion of jobs – put at around 60% – in advanced economies. In half of these instances, workers can expect to benefit from the integration of AI, which will enhance their productivity.

In other instances, AI will have the ability to perform key tasks that are currently executed by humans. This could lower demand for labour, affecting wages and even eradicating jobs.

Meanwhile, the IMF projects that the technology will affect just 26% of jobs in low-income countries.



Ms Georgieva said "many of these countries don't have the infrastructure or skilled workforces to harness the benefits of AI, raising the risk that over time the technology could worsen inequality among nations".

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