

Prime Minister of Armenia, President of France meet in Paris



The meeting between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and French President Emmanuel Macron took place at the Élysée Palace.

The President of France first expressed his condolences to the Prime Minister on the death of Christian Ter-Stepanyan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to UNESCO, Personal Representative of the Prime Minister of Armenia to the International Organization of La Francophonie. Emmanuel Macron once again emphasized France's support to Armenia in the direction of further development and overcoming existing challenges.

Nikol Pashinyan thanked for the warm hospitality and condolences. The Prime Minister emphasized the development of Armenian-French cooperation in all fields, stressing the interest of the Armenian government in this matter.

The interlocutors discussed issues related to the process of normalization of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. The importance of the principles set down in the four-sided Granada declaration

of the Prime Minister of Armenia, the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany and the President of the European Council was emphasized in the matter of the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Reference was made to the humanitarian problems of more than 100,000 persons forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing policy, as well as to the steps taken by the Armenian government to overcome them. The support of the international community in solving the existing problems was highlighted.

Issues related to further deepening and expansion of Armenian-French cooperation in economy, infrastructure development and other fields were also discussed. The parties expressed their willingness to consistently continue the work in that direction.

Nikol Pashinyan and Emmanuel Macron exchanged thoughts on the issues of regional peace and stability, as well as Armenia-European Union cooperation.

No third country can establish control over any part of Armenia's sovereign territory – MFA

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No third country can establish control over any part of Armenia’s sovereign territory – MFA

No third country can establish control over any part of Armenia’s sovereign territory, Spokesperson for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ani Badalyan said in a statement.

The comments come after Russian Foreign Ministry’s official representative Maria Zakharova said that under the tripartite statement dated November 9, 2020, the Russian border guards must control transport communications between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan through the territory of Armenia.

“The Government of the Republic of Armenia recently published the “Crossroads



of Peace” project, the basic principles of which make it clear that in case of the opening of regional communications, the Republic of Armenia should implement border and customs control in its territory through its state institutions,” Ani

Badalyan said in response.

She reminded that a special department was recently created within the National Security Service of Armenia to ensure the safety of these communications, as well as the safe passage of goods, cargo, vehicles and people in case of the opening of regional communications.

“The Republic of Armenia has never, in any document, agreed to any limitation of its sovereignty, and control of a third country cannot be established over any part of its sovereign territory,” the Spokesperson stated.

Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council discusses prospects for peace in the region with US official

On November 8, Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council Armen Grigoryan received US Senior Adviser on Caucasus Negotiations, American Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Louis Bono.

The parties referred to efforts aimed at establishing long-term peace and stability in the region



and the process of normalization of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations. Within the framework of the above, Armen Grigoryan introduced the positions of the Armenian side.

The interlocutors also discussed other issues of mutual interest.

PM Pashinyan, Minister of State Ahmed bin Ali Al Sayegh discuss development of Armenia- UAE ties

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received on November 8 Ahmed bin Ali Al Sayegh, Minister of State at the UAE Foreign Ministry responsible for trade and economic affairs.

Prime Minister Pashinyan welcomed the Emirati delegation’s visit to Armenia and stressed the importance of implementing joint steps in the direction of developing and enhancing bilateral

trade-economic ties, the Prime Minister’s Office said in a readout.

Pashinyan said that bilateral partnership has been of dynamic nature in the recent period.

Ahmed bin Ali Al Sayegh said he’s had productive discussions with Armenian officials and outlined directions of expanding cooperation and possible projects.

Other issues pertaining to the relations

of the two countries and topics of mutual interest were also discussed.



“Crossroads of Peace” project to benefit the region and the world, Armenian PM says at 6th Paris Peace Forum

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan participated in the panel discussion on “Cooperation in the conditions of competition, building peace and building a safer world” with the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili within the framework of the “6th Paris Peace Forum”.

PM Pashinyan gave a speech, in which he particularly said,

“Honorable Prime Minister Garibashvili,

Dear moderator,

Dear participants of the 6th “Paris Peace Conference”,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to President Macron for the wonderful organization of the Forum, warm hospitality and invitation.

One of the pillar records of the Forum documents is that 2 billion people worldwide, live in conflict-affected areas. From the point of view of the Republic of Armenia, it would be more precise to write that sentence as follows: as a result of ethnic cleansings, more than 500,000 Armenians no longer have the opportunity to live in their homeland.

500,000 is the number of Armenians who were forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan and became refugees as a result of ethnic cleansing. About 360,000 of them were forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan since the beginning of the 90s, as a result of the Sumgait and Baku massacres and Armenophobia. Since then, Armenophobia has been the state policy in Azerbaijan.

And before that, under the Soviet Union, due to administrative and psychological pressures, Armenians had to leave Nakhichevan and many other areas of Azerbaijan.

Around 26,000 Armenians flee Nagorno-Karabakh during the 44-day war of 2020. And as a result of the large-scale attack and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, around 105,000 Armenians were forced to leave Nagorno-Karabakh within a week.

For long time, we have alerted the international community that such a prospect becoming more and more realistic, especially after the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor in December 2022.

But the international community did not take any adequate measures and we cannot blame those people who claim that the forced displacement of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, took place with the silent or behind-the-scenes agreement

of some of the international players.

Nevertheless, dear participants, I have not come to this peace Forum to talk about war. I have come to talk about peace, even though Azerbaijan has started to call the Republic of Armenia “West Azerbaijan” after implementing yet the minimum of its plan of Armenian cleansing.

The concept of so-called Western Azerbaijan, which is a concept of preparing a new war against the Republic of Armenia, is propagated in schools, universities, and mass media of Azerbaijan.

And all this despite the fact that we seem to be close to signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan, notwithstanding the fact that the abovementioned issues raise significant questions regarding the sincerity of Azerbaijan.

But it does not shake our commitment to the peace agenda and we hope to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan in the coming months based on the following three principles agreed upon in the negotiations held in Brussels:

Principle number 1. Armenia and Azerbaijan fully recognize each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, based on the understanding that Armenia’s territory covers 29.800 km² and Azerbaijan’s 86.600 km².

Principle number 2. Armenia and Azerbaijan confirm their unequivocal commitment to the 1991 Almaty Declaration as a political framework for the delimitation.

For your information Almaty Declaration was signed by the 12 republics of the Soviet Union on December 21, 1991. Under that declaration, the 12 republics of the former USSR, including Azerbaijan and Armenia, recognize each other’s territorial integrity, sovereignty, the inviolability of existing, that is, administrative borders, and therefore the existing administrative borders between the republics of the Soviet Union become state borders.

Principle number 3. Future transport arrangements for unblocking transport and economic links in the region will respect the principles of sovereignty, jurisdiction, reciprocity and equality of all countries.

We reached an agreement on these principles during the negotiations with the President of Azerbaijan in Brussels, and these agreements were recorded in the statements of the President of the EU Council, Charles Michel, following the May 14 and July 15 2023 trilateral meetings.

French President Emmanuel Macron

and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also expressed their support for these principles, which is expressed in the quadrilateral statement of Granada signed by Charles Michel, Olaf Scholz, Emmanuel Macron and me.

And if Azerbaijan doesn’t reject those principles, it means that signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan in the coming months becomes very realistic. Unfortunately, the president of Azerbaijan refused to participate in the five-party meeting in Granada, last month.

The planned trilateral meeting in Brussels in October did not take place, and I have not received an invitation to the next meeting from Charles Michel. I hope our EU partners are committed to their obligations.

Honorable participants of this Forum,

Our region, the South Caucasus, needs peace, which is a situation where all the countries of the region live with open borders, are connected by active economic, political, cultural ties, and have accumulated experience and tradition of solving all issues through tools of diplomacy and dialogue.

To provide such a situation will be very difficult without reopening the transport communications, and taking this into account, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has presented the “Crossroads of Peace” project.

This is a plan to connect our regional countries, including Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkiye, with railways, roads, cables, gas pipelines, power lines, or strengthen existing connections. As you know, at the moment we do not have any functioning road, nor any functioning railway, cable, pipeline or power line with either Turkey or Azerbaijan, and we propose to change this situation positively.

The “Crossroads of Peace” project will also bring benefits to Georgia and Iran, including bilateral, as well as in terms of strengthening ties with Azerbaijan, Turkiye, and Armenia. The details are provided in our Crossroads of Peace brochure, which is distributed to you, and I hope that we will be able to implement the project as a guarantee of stable and long-term peace in our region.

The implementation of this project will be beneficial not only for our region, but for international trade, connectivity and stability. And I hope for support not only regional countries, but from the international

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U.S. to continue to engage towards Armenia-Azerbaijan peace, says State Department



Peace between Armenia and

Azerbaijan continues to be a ‘priority’ for the United States, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel has said.

He said the U.S. is still ready to host the next round of Armenian-Azeri peace talks.

“Of course,” Patel said at a press briefing when asked whether Washington is

still an option for the next round of the negotiations. “Outside of everything that of course is going on in the world that often sometimes takes up a lot of the oxygen in this room, peace between those two countries continues to be a priority for us, for Secretary Blinken, and it’s something that the department will continue to engage towards,” Patel added.

BP projects have helped fund Azerbaijan military aggression – The Guardian

BP’s fossil fuel projects in Azerbaijan have helped fund the military aggression against Karabakh Armenians though the transfer to billions of dollars to the Azerbaijan government since 2020, a campaign group has claimed, The Guardian reports.

Global Witness said Azerbaijan’s share of two large oil and gas projects operated by the British oil company had earned its government more than four times its military spending since 2020, the year Azerbaijan unleashed war in Nagorno-Karabakh.



Analysis by the NGO suggested that Azerbaijan’s economic reliance on BP, its largest foreign investor, had indirectly helped to fund Azerbaijan’s military aggression against Armenians in the region, which has forced more than 100,000 people to flee the territory since early

September.

In the same month senior figures representing BP, including its chair, Helge Lund, and former chief executive John Browne, visited Baku to attend the 100th birthday celebrations of Azerbaijan’s late former president Heydar Aliyev and reiterate its commitment “to long-term partnership with Azerbaijan,” according to a company statement.

According to The Guardian, BP has supplied Baku with oil and gas worth almost \$35bn (£28.6bn) since 2020 under a “production-sharing agreement”.

Sweden’s Ambassador joins EU Mission for patrol in Armenia’s Kapan



On a trip to Armenia’s Syunik region, Sweden’s Ambassador to Armenia Patrik Svensson visited Meghri, the

southernmost community of Armenia.

At the Meghri checkpoint of Armenian-Iranian state border, the senior staff of the checkpoint hosted the Ambassador for an informative overview of the checkpoint facilities and border operations.

A visit was also made to Tatev, where community leader Samvel Lalayan and his team briefed the Ambassador on the local situation and development projects. They

discussed ongoing projects supported by Sweden, such as SALAR International’s efforts to strengthen democracy and promote good governance at the local level.

In Kapan, the Ambassador also joined EU Mission’s Forward Operating Base patrol to witness the observer mission’s activities aimed at contributing to human security in conflict-affected areas at the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

Mayor of Paris will grant honorary citizenship to Artsakh Armenians on December 10



Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo will grant honorary citizenship to representatives

of Artsakh Armenians on December 10.

“A tragedy continues to unfold in Armenia. Azerbaijan is guilty of arbitrarily detaining former Artsakh officials and destroying Armenian heritage in this territory,” the Mayor said in a post on X.

She discussed the issue with Luis Moreno Ocampo, former prosecutor at the International Criminal Court and author of a report on the genocidal process that was implemented by Azerbaijan during the blockade of the Lachin corridor.

“Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, the 100,000 refugees and political prisoners detained by Azerbaijan. I will present the honorary citizenship of Paris to the representatives of the Armenians of Artsakh on December 10, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day,” Hidalgo said.

“Paris also calls for the immediate release of all Armenian prisoners held by Azerbaijan,” she stated.

What happened in Nagorno Karabakh was a form of genocide – Luis Moreno Ocampo

The European Union has a role to play in helping end violence in the world, Luis Moreno Ocampo, former Chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), said at a press conference on November 7.

“We need a lot from the European Union, the EU was created with an idea to end violence in Europe, but we need something else. Not just ending violence in Europe, but also helping end violence in the world,” Ocampo said.

“2023 is a year of genocide. We say ‘never again,’ but in 2023 there is a genocide in Darfur, that has been ongoing for the latest 20 years, there is a genocide in



Ethiopia, there was a genocide in Nagorno Karabakh, there is a genocide coming against Armenia, there is a genocide being committed by HAMAS against Israelis in Israel, and there is a genocide being committed by Israelis against Palestinians, by blockading two million people,” he noted.

“This is the world today and we are going in the wrong direction, in particular because today Europe is also buying weapons preparing for a permanent war. So, we are investing billions in war and nothing in peace. I think that should be transforming, and the European Parliament has a role to play,” he said.

Ocampo noted that what happened in Nagorno Karabakh, the blockade of the Lachin corridor was a form of genocide. “Under the Genocide Convention, one form of genocide is creation of conditions to destroy a group,” he said.

Armenia to launch new Environmental Protection Agency

The Armenian government plans to launch a new environmental protection agency.

Authorities seek to replace the current Forestry Committee with the Environmental Protection Agency. The relevant functions currently carried out by other agencies will also be covered by the new body.

“We are now carrying out an 8-hour patrol in forests and national parks, but we need 24-hour patrols.



These changes are aimed at this,” Minister of Environment Hakob Simidyan said at the Cabinet meeting on November 8 where the decision was approved.

Environmental Protection Agency officers will be authorized to file proceedings, calculate damages and hand out fines, and use force if the offender fails to comply.

The agency will have 1176 employees. The agency will be fully operational in 2024.

Parliamentary committee approves Pashinyan Administration's 2024 budget

The financial-credit and budgetary affairs committee of parliament has approved the Pashinyan Administration's 2024 state budget draft.

The policy and approach is aimed at properly implementing the government action plan, finance minister Vahe Hovhannisyan told lawmakers.

"The school building program has the most important place in this

budget. Naturally, we must implement all expenditures and actions in a way for it to increase the economic potential of Armenia, in order to be able to ensure higher economic growth in the future, at the same time maintain fiscal stability, keep the level of debt manageable and do everything to keep the debt below 50%," he said.



The deficit is projected at 3,2 billion drams.

"But given the demand of additional expenditures and expected projects, we have planned that the entire amount that was previously directed as support to Nagorno-Karabakh, 144 billion drams, will come up from the deficit and appear

in our expenditures as support to our compatriots. As a result, next year we will have 4,6% deficit," the minister added. He said that this won't have significant impact on the fiscal situation. The money that was previously being allocated as a loan will now be released as expenditure, implemented by Armenia.

The 2024 budget envisages 2 trillion 566 billion drams in tax revenues. Hovhannisyan said that his number will likely grow.

Current expenditures will amount to 2 trillion 321 billion drams, while capital expenditures will amount to 710 billion drams.

The budget draft received 4 votes in favor and one vote against in the committee. It will now be debated in the plenary session of parliament.

Armenia buys Zen Anti-Drone System from India - EurAsian Times

Armenia has contracted to buy the India-developed Zen Anti-Drone System (ZADS), a Counter Unmanned Aerial System (CUAS) designed to provide comprehensive security against drone attacks, EurAsian Times reported citing sources familiar with the deal.

Officials who did not wish to be identified confirmed to the EurAsian Times that Armenia has contracted the Hyderabad-based Zen Technologies for US\$41.5 million for the anti-drone system order that includes both training solutions and

an anti-drone system.

The anti-drone system from Zen Technologies works on drone detection, classification, and tracking of passive surveillance, camera sensors, and threat neutralization through jamming drone communication.

Zen Technologies Limited announced that at the board meeting held on October 28, 2023, it approved the establishment of a Branch office in Armenia to tap the business opportunity, including providing sales, support, and service.

The article mentioned that in 2022



India signed a contract to supply PINAKA multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRL), anti-tank munitions, and ammunition worth US\$250 million to Armenia.

Armenia to direct 41% of capital expenditures in 2024 to defense sector

41% of capital expenditures envisaged in the 2024 state budget will be directed to the defense sector, Finance Minister Vahe Hovhannisyan has said.

The 2024 budget envisages 710 billion

drams in capital expenditures.

"41% of capital expenditures will be directed to the defense sector," the minister told lawmakers during a parliamentary committee hearing on the 2024 budget.

555 billion drams will be allocated to the defense sector, which is 7% more than in 2023.

"Defense expenditures will amount to 5,3% in the GDP," Hovhannisyan said.

The Power of One Dram for November to Greenhouses for displaced Nagorno-Karabakh residents



Idram and IDBank summarize the October program of the “The power of one dram” initiative. During the previous month, the entire amount collected from the “one drams” transferred for each payment made by the Bank and Idram customers, the sum of which is AMD 3,580,216, was transferred to the “Hayordi” initiative.

In early October, as a result of the developments in Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), “Hayordi” took under its roof about 110 of Armenians forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh and provided them with basic necessities, in order to slightly alleviate their situation.

The next program of “The power of one dram” is also dedicated to compatriots forcibly displaced from NK. During November, the accumulated amount from all payments made through the Idram and IDBank platforms will be transferred to the construction of greenhouses in Syunik for displaced NK citizens. As a result of the recent developments in NK, more than 100,000 residents were forced to leave NK.

More than 5,000 of them found their new home in Syunik region. The goal of this project is to build greenhouses for 50 families living in Syunik region and change the lives of at least fifty families. The program is presented on the ReArmenia platform, with which Idram and IDBank signed a memorandum of cooperation a year ago.

Artak Grigoryan, operational director of the ReArmenia platform, said: “Many times we have witnessed the impact of “The power of one dram” by supporting important and good works in various fields. Today, all our attention is focused

on integrating our compatriots from Artsakh [NK] and putting their lives on a solid foundation. We are glad that “The power of one dram” will support the project of providing greenhouses to the residents of Artsakh [NK] in Syunik this month. The project will allow Artsakh [NK] residents settled in rural communities to be self-sufficient and, to a certain extent, survive the latest disaster. The project will allow the people of Artsakh [NK] settled in rural communities to be provided with a stable source of income and to get back on their feet after the last disaster. I am confident that this cooperation will prove the effectiveness of joint and coordinated actions.”

You can also join this initiative by becoming a goodwill ambassador. For that, you just need to make all your payments through Idram and Bank platforms.

COMPANIES ARE CONTROLLED BY THE CBA

UK Government donates vital medical equipment to Armenia’s National Centre for Burns

The UK Government has donated vital medical equipment for the rehabilitation and treatment of burn patients to the National Centre for Burns and Dermatology under the Ministry of Health of Armenia. These packages include essential anesthesia materials, intubation and laryngoscopy supplies such as endotracheal and tracheostomy tubes, laryngeal mask airways, and emergency cricothyrotomy sets.

UK Ambassador John Gallagher and Chris Perkins, the Head of the Political and

Press Section of the Embassy, personally delivered these crucial materials to the Director of the Burns Centre, Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, and Armen Melkonyan, the Head of the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Health. They gave their heartfelt appreciation for the donation.

This donation follows the vital assistance provided by UK-Med’s Emergency Medical Team to burn patients injured in the devastating explosion at the fuel

storage facility in Nagorno Karabakh on 25 September. These dedicated medical professionals tirelessly performed surgeries and rehabilitation therapy at Mikaelyan Hospital in Yerevan from 11 to 28 October. Those burn patients who continue to receive treatment have now been transferred from Mikaelyan Hospital to the Burns Centre.

“We hope that these supplies will make a significant contribution to the treatment of the patients,” Ambassador Gallagher said.

South Korea to open Embassy in Armenia



The South Korean Foreign Ministry

plans to open embassies in 10 countries in Europe, Africa, South America and the Pacific by the second half of next year, the Foreign Ministry announced on November 7, Korea JoongAng Daily reports.

This is the first time in 16 years that the South Korean government has opened 10 or more embassies in a year.

The Foreign Ministry said the move aims to expand South Korea’s diplomatic capability and network.

The countries where the new embassies will be opened are Luxembourg, Lithuania, the Marshall Island, Slovenia, Sierra Leone, Armenia, Estonia, Jamaica, Zimbabwe and Georgia.

Armenia's GDP growth expected to reach 7 percent in 2023 – IMF

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, led by Iva Petrova, visited Yerevan during September 13-25 to hold discussions with the Armenian authorities for the 2023 Article IV consultation and the second review under the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with Armenia. At the conclusion of the discussions, Ms. Petrova issued the following statement:



“I am pleased to announce that the IMF team has concluded discussions for the 2023 Article IV consultation and has reached a staff-level agreement for the conclusion of the second review under the authorities’ economic reform program, which is supported by an IMF three-year SBA. The agreement is subject to approval by the IMF’s Executive Board, which is scheduled to consider the review in mid-December. The Board approval would enable access of about US\$24.3 million (SDR 18.4 million), bringing the total access to about US\$72.9 million (SDR 55.2 million).

“Notwithstanding the unfavorable global economic environment, Armenia’s strong growth momentum continued in 2023 with the economy growing by 10.5 percent in the first half of the year supported by robust private consumption and services trade. Inflation has remained subdued, including due to proactive monetary policy, exchange rate appreciation, and falling food and transportation prices. However, service price inflation has been stickier. The overall fiscal balance recorded a surplus of 0.7 percent of GDP through September 2023 and central government debt remains sustainable. The banking system has strong capital and liquidity buffers, and its profitability continues to remain high.

“We expect growth to ease, reaching 7 and 5 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively, as income and capital flows

moderate, and global and domestic financial conditions continue to remain tight. While growth could surprise on the upside in the event of a renewed bout of income and capital flows and strong implementation of reforms, downside risks are elevated, including from geopolitical tensions, tight global financial conditions, slowdown in external demand, and abrupt reversal of capital flows.

“The authorities have responded proactively to the needs of the more than 100,000 ethnic Armenian refugees from Nagorno Karabakh, including by providing cash support to address essential needs, temporary shelters, as well as financial aid to cover accommodation and utility expenses. The ongoing comprehensive assessment of their medium-to-long term needs—including those related to housing, education, employment, and social protection—would assist in their integration in Armenia.

“The draft 2024 budget appropriately accommodates refugee support, while ensuring macroeconomic stability. The fiscal deficit is expected to support priority social and capital expenditures, with efforts continuing to improve revenue mobilization. It should also help keep the economy from overheating and maintain a moderate debt level.

“Amid deflationary pressures with a still positive output gap, the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has started gradual

normalization of monetary policy and should continue its data-dependent approach to ensure inflation expectations remain anchored. The flexible exchange rate should remain a key shock absorber. The CBA continues its efforts to strengthen its prudential and supervisory frameworks to help

stem financial sector risks, including from rising housing prices.

“In the medium term, it is important to maintain the strong policy and reform momentum, building fiscal buffers and further strengthening medium term sustainability; keeping inflation expectations anchored; safeguarding financial stability; completing governance reforms; and boosting productivity to deliver sustained and inclusive growth. The knowledge-based, export-oriented, and investment-driven growth strategy envisaged in the 2021-26 Government Reform Program requires a steadfast implementation of structural reforms and an enabling investment environment. To achieve this, it is important to develop and implement concrete and fully costed employment and export strategies; upgrade the insolvency framework and prioritize governance reforms to support investment and improve the business environment; implement the public investment management action plan to improve the implementation and quality of capital expenditures; and create fiscal space through revenue enhancing tax policies—including via rationalization of tax expenditures—and ongoing tax administration reforms.

“The IMF team thanks the Armenian authorities, representatives of civil society, private sector, development partners, and diplomatic community for fruitful discussions and cooperation.”

Armenia's Central Bank set to develop an effective model for comprehensive regulation of cryptocurrencies

The Central Bank of Armenia has initiated measures for the development and implementation of an effective model of comprehensive regulation and control of virtual assets.

In order to adequately respond to the risks arising along with the emergence of virtual assets, the Central Bank monitors the developments of the field of virtual assets both in Armenia and in the world, the Central Bank of Armenia said in a statement on November 6.

In 2018, the Central Bank issued a statement on virtual assets, informing the public about the high risk and danger of transactions with virtual assets.

According to CBA, In recent years, a number of problems related to virtual assets have become apparent, including: the growth of individuals' investments in virtual assets occurs in the conditions of insufficient protection of their interests, accompanied by unscrupulous preservation of funds and insufficient transparency of information, liquidity and pricing,

the field of virtual assets is characterized by a high degree of interconnection of different cryptosystems, vertically



integrated vulnerable structures of functions in a single organization or group, inadequate management systems, high level of liabilities, containing, among others, risks of conflicts of interest and financial stability,

the anonymity of virtual asset transactions and the volume of cross-border transactions increase the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing associated with them,

a number of services provided by virtual assets are similar to traditional financial services in their content, therefore should be regulated by the same legislation, but actually operate outside the current legislation, which creates an unequal competitive environment for traditional financial service providers.

The CBA says international standard-setting organizations (IOSCO, FSB, IMF, BIS, FATF) have expressed a clear position emphasizing the need for unified and comprehensive regulation of virtual assets by all countries due to the non-localized (virtual) nature of the virtual assets market and cross-border circulation.

Taking into account the above, as well as global developments related to this field, the Central Bank has initiated measures for the development and implementation of an effective model of comprehensive regulation and control of virtual assets.

For effective regulation, the Central Bank will adopt the "same activity, same risk, same regulation" principle, according to which virtual asset service providers that offer services similar to traditional financial activities should be regulated in the same way.

The regulation will enable an adequate response to the existing and possible risks in the field of virtual assets, while creating a clear legal framework for the development of innovations and technologies in the field of virtual assets.

Minister of Economy briefs Japan's Ambassador on Armenia's "dry port" project

On November 10, Minister Vahan Kerobyan received Japan's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia Fukushima Masanori.

The interlocutors emphasized the importance of development of trade and economic relations between Armenia and Japan and the expansion of business ties.

The parties discussed a number



of issues related to Vahan Kerobyan's

upcoming visit to Japan, Armenia's participation in the exhibition "EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan."

The Ambassador noted that the Japanese market will be interested, in particular, in Armenian agricultural products, Armenian culture and history.

The Minister also presented the project of construction of a "dry port" in Armenia to the Ambassador.

Azerbaijan has steadily established itself as a serial violator of justice and rule of law, Armenian envoy tells UN



Azerbaijan has steadily established itself as a serial violator of justice and rule of law, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Mher Margaryan said in a statement at the UN General Assembly plenary session under the agenda item "Report of the International Court of Justice."

"As the principal judicial body of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice has a central role in upholding the rule of law, peace and stability by offering legal avenues for resolving disputes. The Report demonstrates an increase in the Court's level of activity, which underscores the confidence of Member States in the Court's mandate and in its capacity to provide a credible and impartial forum of adjudication. The Report also evidently indicates that the Court's role extends beyond mere dispute resolution: its judgements provide clarity on essential matters of international law, while they also influence inter-state conduct and shape international practice," Amb. Margaryan said.

"Adherence to the international law is indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security; it is indispensable for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and suppression of acts of aggression, as prescribed in the UN Charter. It is in line with these principles that, in 2021, Armenia instituted interstate proceedings at the ICJ under

the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to address the systemic violations directed at individuals of Armenian ethnic or national origin by Azerbaijan and to protect and preserve their rights from further harm," he noted.

Mher Margaryan stressed that Azerbaijan's persistent failure to uphold its international commitments under the Convention has recently culminated in the perpetration of a premeditated ethnic cleansing, which involved the deliberate disruption of all movement along the Lachin corridor (the only humanitarian lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia), and an imposition of a 10-month-long blockade targeting a population of 120,000 people, with the subsequent use of military force.

"Notably, the need to abide by the legal obligations vis-a-vis the Lachin corridor has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice through the indication of a provisional measure, adding to the earlier orders issued by the ICJ against Azerbaijan – those concerning the protection of the Armenians held in captivity by Azerbaijan, the preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage, as well as the prevention of incitement of racial hatred and discrimination, including at the level of officials and public institutions," he stated.

The Ambassador emphasized that not only has Azerbaijan failed to comply with the legally binding Orders of the Court, but, in total violation of its obligations, it has, instead, embarked on manipulative distortions, which completely go against the wording of the Court, as they go against the basic rules of interpretation – and, indeed, the common sense.

"Today, it should be beyond any

reasonable doubt for anyone in the international community, within the United Nations and its Security Council that Azerbaijan has steadily established itself as a serial violator of justice and rule of law, whose pervasive record of unchecked and disproportionate violence has consistently displayed a most dangerous pattern of transgressions in the region, as demonstrated, most recently, by the massive armed attack launched against the besieged population of Nagorno-Karabakh on 19 September, which took lives of innocent civilians, including children," Ambassador Margaryan said.

"Azerbaijan's aggressive, violent conduct has eventually resulted in the mass displacement of the entire ethnic Armenian population, who were forcibly driven out of their ancestral land, leaving behind their homes, their schools, their churches, their places of worship, the graveyards of their loved ones, thousands of monuments and artefacts of the vast Armenian cultural and religious heritage. It was in response to this violent aggression, that, on 29 September, Armenia submitted another appeal to the International Court of Justice requesting to take measures to prevent displacement of the ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh and to ensure their right to safe and dignified return to their homes," he noted.

"Effective enforcement of the decisions of the International Court of Justice is paramount in ensuring that the rule of law prevails over unilateral actions, for it is vital to sustaining the credibility and integrity of the international legal system. The United Nations has the responsibility to uphold compliance and accountability to pursuit of which Armenia is fully committed," the Ambassador concluded.

EU executive proposes to grant Georgia EU candidate status

The European Union's executive recommended on November 8 that the bloc grants formal candidate status to Georgia, if and when it fulfils remaining conditions, Reuters reports.

"The Commission recommends that the (European) Council grants Georgia the status of a candidate country on the understanding that certain reforms steps



are taken," Reuters quoted European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as saying.

The outstanding conditions include Georgia aligning itself with the EU's foreign policy sanctions, pushing back against disinformation and political polarization, as well as ensuring a free and fair 2024 election.

Conference entitled ‘The Rights of Artsakh Armenians and the European Union’ held in European Parliament

A conference entitled “The rights of the Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh Armenians and the European Union” was held in the European Parliament, which was organized and hosted by MEP Costas Mavrides (Cyprus, S&D) in cooperation with The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) and the “Europeans for Artsakh” platform.

Armenpress Brussels correspondent Lilit Gasparyan informs the conference was aimed at elaborating on the developments in Artsakh since 2020 war from the perspective of international law, human rights as well the response of the international community, the main players involved in mediation, with a particular focus on the role of the EU.

Costas Mavrides stated in his opening speech that the main goal of the conference was not only to not forget the ethnic cleansing carried out by the regime of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, but also to establish justice.

“Criminals must be punished for committing crimes against humanity, with the ultimate goal of preventing their recurrence in the future.

That is why I have been advocating for years the need to make the EU’s acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court mandatory for the third countries.

It is equally important to ensure the safe return of the Armenian population to Nagorno-Karabakh and guarantee respect for their rights by Azerbaijan. The European Parliament has always been on the side of the Armenians because we defend respect for human rights and international law, and we will intensively continue our efforts in this direction,” Mavrides said.

Armenia’s Ambassador to Belgium and Head of the Mission of Armenia to the EU, Tigran Balayan in his speech stated that he was present at the conference not only in his official capacity, but also as a person whose family had been subjected to ethnic cleansing and left their homeland after the aggression carried out by Aliyev

in front of the eyes of the world and the international community.

“Since 2020, every step taken by the government of Azerbaijan has fully complied with the 14 factors of atrocity crimes defined by the United Nations. Our task is to use all possible legal means from our arsenal to hold the Aliyev regime accountable for ethnic cleansing and serious war crimes,” Balayan said, adding that the Aliyev regime must pay for everything and individual sanctions must be imposed. According to the ambassador, if crimes remain unpunished, they are doomed to be repeated. Balayan is confident that the European Parliament, within its powers, can apply individual sanctions against key members of the regime.


The Chairman of Hay Dat Committee of Europe Gaspar Karapetyan, in his speech said that the European Parliament, as a body elected by the people, fulfills its task with honor. Gaspar Karapetyan noted that the European Parliament had repeatedly condemned Azerbaijan and demanded that the executive bodies of the EU take clear steps and impose sanctions against Azerbaijan. “Despite this, the EU executive body wittingly or unwittingly, served the interests of Azerbaijan. But we will continue to mobilize both civil society and political forces in Europe, to demand that EU executive bodies take responsibility for their policy both politically and legally. Human rights cannot be a tool for promoting geopolitical interests,” Karapetyan said.

One of the key-note speakers of the conference, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, mentioned in his speech that genocide is not just mass murder, and what happened to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh is a type of genocide. “Blocking the Lachin Corridor meant creating conditions for the extermination of the people,” said Moreno Ocampo and emphasized that the Council of Europe can play an important role and call the EU member states to account, so that they also investigate and come to the conclusion that what happened is genocide.

Co-Founder of the Lemkin Institute and Director of Legal Affairs Irene Victoria Massimino in her speech drew attention to the issue of the integration, which is often exploited by the EU. “How can some government officials ask people who have been discriminated, stigmatized, persecuted in prison, killed and tortured to integrate into a society that discriminates, stigmatizes, persecutes in prison, kills and tortures? Integration is, at a minimum, a naive option,” Massimino said, noting that during the genocidal blockade of the Lachin corridor, the international community had refused to adequately resolve the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh with regard to the right to self-determination. In her opinion, the principle of “separation for salvation” could also be applied.

According to the speaker, diplomatic action could be taken to find a fair solution to the problem based on the demand for autonomy that has lasted for more than three decades. “Now the entire region of Nagorno-Karabakh is left without indigenous Armenians and under the definite and concrete risk that every trace of Armenian identity will be deliberately destroyed forever on this land,” added the Lemkin Institute co-founder.

In her opinion, today there are three important points that the EU should talk about. First, the EU must demand the immediate release of all Armenians illegally detained in Baku. It is necessary to help the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh register their property that they were forced to leave, and immediately create an independent fact-finding mission that will collect all the atrocities committed.

International human rights activist Karnig Kerkonian emphasized in his speech that calling crimes by their names is a legal obligation. According to the speaker, ethnic cleansing is part of a process that leads to crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. According to the human rights activist, the international community, including the EU, had failed to protect  page 12

page 11 → the rights of Artsakh Armenians. “They are now obliged to act towards the urgent restoration of these rights,” he said.

Kerkorian noted that thinking about the past is necessary for accountability, because there can be no peace without justice.

“The law should be a tool for peace.

In case of failure to prevent genocide and other mass crimes, accountability mechanisms should be put in place to determine individual and state responsibility. Responsibility cannot act as an option, but as an absolute necessity or a necessary step for restorative justice,” said Kerkorian, emphasizing that even the territorial integrity cannot be a license for crimes

and genocide.

During the conference an exchange of ideas took place, the main goal of which was to understand how the European Parliament and MEPs could be useful to the Armenians of Artsakh. Those present noted the Republic of Armenia is also in danger; and inaction could lead to serious consequences.

Armenian Ombudsperson in Copenhagen presents issues of disclosing torture cases among displaced persons



The Human Rights Defender of Armenia Ms. Anahit Manasyan on November 6-8 participated in the 14th international conference of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in Copenhagen.

The Secretary General of the Armenian Human Rights Defender's Office Nina Pirumyan also participated in the conference entitled “Torture and other

ill-treatment: the role of National Human Rights Institutions.”

The aim of the international conference was to study and define the role and challenges of states and human rights institutions in addressing and preventing the risks and root causes of torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

Anahit Manasyan presented to international partners the experience of working as a human rights defender in the Republic of Armenia as a national preventive mechanism.

The work of the Public Council attached to the Defender and the culture of cooperation with civil society organizations on issues related to torture and other forms of ill-treatment were noted.

During separate discussions, Ms. Anahit Manasyan presented issues regarding

specific mechanisms for identifying, addressing and ensuring rights against torture and other forms of ill-treatment of forcibly displaced persons, emphasizing the importance of the mentioned issue in the context of recent events, in particular the forced deportation of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

In that context, the issues raised within the framework of the fact-finding work carried out by the Human Rights Defender were emphasized.

The Human Rights Defender has reached a number of agreements on further cooperation with partners who are members of the Global Alliance of National Institutions and expressed her readiness to participate in new initiatives related to the protection of human rights.

G7 FMs express grave concern over humanitarian consequences of displacement of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh

The G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union have expressed grave concern over the humanitarian consequences of the displacement of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh after the military operation conducted by Azerbaijan.

“We urge Azerbaijan to fully comply with its obligations under international humanitarian law and welcome international efforts to address urgent humanitarian needs for those who have been displaced,” the Foreign Ministers said in



a joint statement.

They underlined the support for advancing a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the principles of non-use of force, respect for sovereignty, the inviolability of borders, and territorial integrity.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan has welcomed the G7 statement on humanitarian consequences of forced displacement of Armenians from Nagorno Karabakh.

“We underline that strong international steps and clear public commitments by all involved parties are paramount for normalization btw Armenia and Azerbaijan in line with Granada statement, and to address needs of Armenians forcibly displaced from Nagorno Karabakh. Armenia has such a commitment,” the Foreign Minister said in a post on X.

page 3 community in general. Definitely we are in front of very important, let's say historic crossroads.

Let's make it crossroads of peace".

Then the Prime Minister answered the questions of the panel discussion moderator and the audience.

Moderator, Special Advisor of Institut Montaigne Michel Duclos – Prime Minister Pashinyan, I think that the missed opportunity of the Granada meeting disappointed you. Some people say that the European leaders, including of course France, did something wrong, for example, by not inviting Turkey or others. How do you assess what happened in Granada?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – Thank you. You know, the fact is that the meeting of Granada and its format was agreed already on July 15, 2023 in Brussels. Therefore, it was not a matter of planning in a week, or ten days, or even a month in advance.

The three of us, President Michel, President Aliyev and myself, had agreed on that, and we had a preliminary agreement on the format of the Granada meeting, which I think took place in June. The first five-sided meeting was held there, and we reached a preliminary agreement that the next five-party meeting will take place. It is a very important circumstance that the list of participants was decided there, and after that, on July 15, we reaffirmed it in Brussels.

By the way, it was announced about it publicly. We did not know, I was not informed, that there was another agenda, because when we were preparing for the Granada meeting, the perception was that everything was agreed. The refusal of the President of Azerbaijan to participate in the Granada meeting, I think, was not related to other factors, it was just a matter of addressing an already agreed issue.

Moderator, Special Advisor of Institut Montaigne Michel Duclos – Do you think Iran has a specific plan regarding the problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – We know that Iran has clearly stated that it supports the peace process on the basis of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and indivisibility of borders. By the way, these are the principles I mentioned in my introductory remarks. And these principles were also agreed upon during the tripartite meeting in Brussels.

By the way, the purpose of the Granada meeting was to reaffirm the already agreed principles. This is very important. You see, now many people are discussing, trying to evaluate the possibility of signing a peace

treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia. There is no exaggeration, if Azerbaijan reaffirms what has already been agreed, it will mean that 70 percent of the work is done. Now the most important nuance is whether Azerbaijan will reconfirm what was already agreed in Brussels during our negotiations, set down in Charles Michel's public statements.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan to France Leyla Abdullayeva – Thank you. I am the ambassador of Azerbaijan to France. I want to welcome the speakers and you, the moderator. I would like to address the issue that you, dear moderator, addressed. France is worried about the so-called threat that Azerbaijan may pose France against Armenia. Let me emphasize that this fear is completely ungrounded, because what Azerbaijan has done so far is to reassert its sovereignty over its territory, which, by the way, is recognized by the international community. So, in fact, we got what belonged to Azerbaijan under international law. And as Azerbaijan has already announced and reaffirmed, we are interested in peace. We are not only interested, Azerbaijan has also initiated the normalization process with Armenia immediately after the end of the 2020 war.

And of course, Azerbaijan supports direct dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And I would also like to refer to the Granada meeting and Azerbaijan's position regarding that meeting. The President of Azerbaijan clearly stated that on the day before the Granada meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France visited Armenia and announced the decision to arm and send arms to Armenia. Was this really aimed at peace and normalization of relations? Arming Armenia, arming a country with revanchist ideology. On the other hand, France was going to participate in the meeting as a mediator. Thus, the country that publicly supports one of the parties, and publicly announces the decision to send weapons, and claims to be a mediator. On the other hand, the leaders rejected the participation of the Turkish president. Azerbaijan gave this explanation publicly. And I would like to repeat the position of Azerbaijan, which is about the normalization of relations, the restoration of lasting peace in the region. Azerbaijan's principled position regarding the peace treaty is that this treaty should be based on international law, recognition of internationally recognized borders, and recognition of the sovereignty of all countries in the region. Thank you.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – We heard about Azerbaijan's intentions, which I consider positive. But on the other

hand, I would like to draw your attention to the increasing wording by Azerbaijan, calling the Republic of Armenia "Western Azerbaijan". This is a very disturbing message and it is very important that this narrative is sponsored by the official government. But there is a very simple question – there is no need for additional arguments. If Azerbaijan reaffirms the three principles on which we reached an agreement with the participation of the President of Azerbaijan, it will mean that we can continue to move forward.

I would like to address the issue related to France and Armenia. Every sovereign country has the ability to have an army and acquire weapons, etc., etc.

Moderator, Special Advisor of Institut Montaigne Michel Duclos – Every country has the right to defend itself.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – Yes, I said opportunity, I should have said right. Azerbaijan also buys a huge amount of weapons. Azerbaijan's budget for acquiring weapons is three times more than that of Armenia. But, in general, my main message is what I have already said, if Azerbaijan reaffirms the three principles that have already been agreed upon, it will mean that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Azerbaijan in the coming months will be more than realistic. Let's move forward.

Question – My question is addressed to both of you. Israel's war against Hamas reduces attention to developments in Ukraine, and in general, developments in Eastern Europe and beyond. Do you fear that the wars in the Caucasus are being left out of that attention and that the EU enlargement process may gradually wane?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan – First of all, I would like to welcome the decision of the EU Commission, which recommends European Council to grant Georgia candidate status. This is very important. I will not congratulate Prime Minister Garibashvili now, I will officially congratulate when the European Council makes a decision. We think this is a very important process and we are following developments very closely. We hope and wish Georgia every success on this path.

Unfortunately, as Prime Minister Ghari-bashvili said, we have many conflicts in the world, and our mutual task is to continue working to address all conflicts, realizing that it is not an easy thing. If it was easy, it would have been solved a long time ago. Unfortunately, we are now in a situation where we have a personal and political responsibility to address the conflict and do our best to succeed.

Armenia issues stamp dedicated to 50th anniversary of victory of legendary Ararat-73



On November 8th, 2023, a souvenir sheet with one postage stamp dedicated to the theme “Sport. 50th Anniversary of the Victory of “Ararat-73” has been put into circulation.

The souvenir sheet with one stamp was cancelled by the Deputy Minister of High-Technological Industry of the

Republic of Armenia Davit Sahakyan, the Chief Executive Officer of “HayPost” CJSC Arayik Abrahamyan, the President of the Philatelists’ Armenian Association Hovik Musayelyan, the footballers of “Ararat-73” Norayr Mesropyan, Sergey Poghosyan, Sergey Bondarenko.

The postage stamp of the souvenir sheet with the nominal value of 380 AMD depicts a football ball where episodes of the cup awarding ceremony to “Ararat” football team are presented.

The upper part of the souvenir sheet depicts the football players of “Ararat” football team as well as the logotype dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the Victory of “Ararat-73”. The bottom part

of the souvenir sheet depicts the photo of “Ararat” football team at its full strength.

The souvenir sheet and the postage stamp depict the inscriptions “USSR CHAMPION AND CUP WINNER”, “ARARAT-73” and “50TH ANNIVERSARY” in Armenian and English languages.

In 1973, “Ararat” football team not only won the USSR Cup, but also the title of the USSR Champion in one season.

Date of issue: November 08, 2023
 Designer: David Dovlatyan
 Printing house: Cartor, France
 Stamp diameter: 38,0 mm
 S/sheet size: 90,0 x 90,0 mm
 Print run: 10 000 pcs

Letters from Seven Years’ War opened 250 years later

Letters confiscated by Britain’s Royal Navy before they reached French sailors during the Seven Years’ War have been opened for the first time, the BBC reports.

Written in 1757-8, they were sent by loved ones for crew onboard a French warship, but never reached them.

Prof Renaud Morieux, who discovered the letters, said they were about “universal human experiences”.

The Seven Years’ War was a battle mainly between Britain and France about control of North America and India.

It ended with the Treaty of Paris, which gave the UK considerable gains.

Prof Morieux, a University of Cambridge academic, unearthed the collection of 104 letters from the National Archives



in Kew, and said it was “agonising how close they got” to reaching their intended recipients onboard the Galatee.

The French postal administration took them to multiple ports in France to attempt delivery, but were unsuccessful.

The Galatee was captured by the British on its way from Bordeaux to Quebec in 1758.

Upon learning the ship was in British hands, French authorities forwarded the letters to England, where they were handed to the navy and ended up in storage.

British Admiralty officials deemed the letters had no military significance.

Prof Morieux said he only asked to look at the box in the archives “out of curiosity” before discovering them.

“I realised I was the first person to read these very personal messages since they were written,” he said.

“Their intended recipients didn’t get that chance. It was very emotional,” said Prof Morieux, whose findings were published in the journal “Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales”.

Armenia presents tourism potential at World Travel Market in London

On November 6th, Armenia’s Ambassador to UK Varuzhan Nersesyan visited the Armenian pavilion at the annual exhibition of the World Travel Market organized at

Excel London.

The stall representing Armenia offers the visitors an opportunity to get acquainted with the Armenian tourism industry.

The Armenian Tourism Committee and 8 tour operators represented Armenia’s potential and attractiveness in the field of tourism.

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