

## Armenia can become a regional electricity hub – PM



Armenia can become a unique regional hub of electrical energy, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Eurasian Congress in Sochi.

“The economic growth and activity indexes of Armenia create a favorable foundation for highly optimistic forecasts for both the current year and foreseeable future,” Pashinyan said, noting the “impressive” economic growth of Armenia.

GDP growth comprised 12,6% compared to 2021.

“This is the highest indicator since 2008,” he said, referring to the GDP growth.

“The growth in manufacturing, trade, including trade services and construction also contributed to this,” Pashinyan added.

Exports grew 77,7% in 2022, while exports to EEU countries tripled.

“Sustainable growth is only possible in case of balance of the three main components, economic growth, social responsibility and environmental balance. Eurasia has huge potential for economic growth, and we must jointly carry out major projects

in energy, digitization, logistics, climate agenda and other areas of mutual interest,” PM Pashinyan said.

The Armenian Premier said logistic security is among the most important factors for the development of economies in EEU countries. He added that ensuring energy security requires literate approach.

“Based on the current geopolitical realities, we need a new approach for energy agenda. Armenia is currently working in the direction of gradual liberalization of the electrical energy market, which creates new opportunities and favorable conditions for interstate electrical energy trade. We are developing our output capacity, carrying out major reconstruction of substations and transmission lines, the construction of the Armenia-Iran and Armenia-Georgia high-voltage lines, which contribute to the formation of the North-South electrical energy route and create new opportunities for electrical energy exports, imports, transit and seasonal exchange. Thus, Armenia can become a unique regional hub of electrical energy,” Pashinyan said.

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## Situation in the zone of responsibility of Russian peacekeepers remains tense, Pashinyan tells Putin

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in Sochi.

“I am very happy to talk once again about the current state of bilateral relations and regional issues, which we discussed in detail during the previous meeting,” Putin said at the beginning of the meeting.

“Indeed, we meet regularly and discuss a wide range of issues. Today we will also discuss bilateral agenda and regional issues. We will also discuss the situation



in Nagorno Karabakh, in the zone of responsibility of the Russian peacekeepers, unfortunately the humanitarian situation there remains tense,” PM Pashinyan said.

“There has been no gas and electricity in Nagorno-Karabakh for several months, the situation in the Lachin Corridor continues to be quite tense,” he added.

PM Pashinyan noted that now the supplies of food to Nagorno Karabakh are carried out with the support of Russian peacekeepers.

“It is a limited amount of food. The humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh continues and it is also a very important issue and I am sure we will discuss it today,” he said.

## Armenia interested in developing comprehensive cooperation with UK



Armenia is interested in developing comprehensive cooperation with the United Kingdom and expects the same from

the UK, Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Alen Simonyan said at a meeting with Sir Lindsey Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons of the UK Parliament.

It was noted that over three decades, Armenia and the United Kingdom have formed an ambitious agenda for bilateral relations based on common values and principles. The parties discussed issues related to the strengthening of human democratic institutions.

The Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly voiced hope that the

Armenia-UK Comprehensive and Enhanced Agreement would be finalized in the near future and signed as soon as possible.

“Armenia, as a young parliamentary republic, attaches more importance to effective inter-parliamentary cooperation and interaction between parliamentarians. I note with satisfaction the mutual visits and active cooperation of friendly groups operating in our parliaments during the last two years,” said Alen Simonyan.

The Armenian Parliament Speaker invited his British counterpart to Armenia.

## Armenia, Turkey FMs express willingness to continue working towards full normalisation of relations

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a phone conversation with the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Hakan Fidan.

Ararat Mirzoyan congratulated Hakan Fidan on his appointment as the head of

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

The sides have expressed their willingness to continue working towards full normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey.



## Armenian Minister, German Ambassador discuss the possibility of concluding a migration partnership agreement

Minister of Internal Affairs of Armenia Vahe Ghazaryan received on June 8 Viktor Richter, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to Armenia. The issue of the possibility of concluding a migration partnership agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany was discussed at the meeting.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, welcoming the guest, Vahe Ghazaryan highly appreciated the effective bilateral cooperation between the two countries. He also referred to the close cooperation that is carried out in Armenia through the National Central Bureau of Interpol, as well as through the Criminal Police Liaison

Officer of the Ministry of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Referring to the construction of a new center for asylum seekers in Armenia, the Minister thanked the Federal Republic of Germany for the financial support provided for the construction of the shelter.

Noting that the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Armenia is at an important stage of reforms, Vahe Ghazaryan, on behalf of the European Union, expressed special thanks to international partners for providing multifaceted support.

Viktor Richter thanked for the warm reception. He particularly emphasized the cooperation formed in migration and other directions.



The possibility of concluding a migration partnership agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany was also discussed. The parties expressed readiness to continue and strengthen the effective bilateral cooperation.

## Mirzoyan, Hogan discuss Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization process



Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a telephone conversation with US acting Assistant Secretary of State for

European and Eurasian Affairs Derek Hogan.

Ahead of the discussions which are planned in Washington in a few days, the key issues of the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan were touched upon, including border delimitation and security, proper addressing of the rights and security issues of the people of the Nagorno Karabakh. Minister Mirzoyan emphasized the

importance of ensuring the maximum possible certainty in the delimitation process, particularly the commitment regarding the map of 1975.

Ararat Mirzoyan once again drew the attention of the American side to the aggressive rhetoric expressed by the top leadership of Azerbaijan in parallel with the negotiation process, stressing the need to exclude the threat of use of force and mutual respect for territorial integrity

## Azerbaijan attempts to derail agreements, Armenia warns at meeting of CSTO Security Council chiefs

Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan delivered a speech on June 8 at the CSTO meeting of Security Council Secretaries.

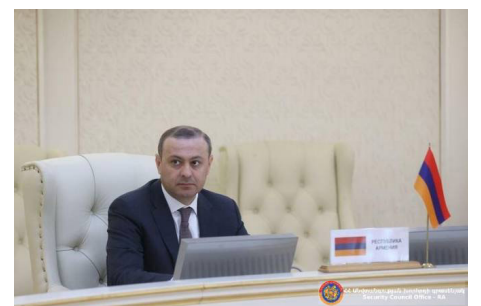
Grigoryan spoke about the regional security challenges, emphasizing that Azerbaijan continues its policy of the use of force or threat of force and is attempting to derail the implementation of previously reached agreements. The Secretary of the Security Council said that Azerbaijan also continues to escalate the situation not only on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, but also in Nagorno Karabakh and Lachin

Corridor.

Secretary Grigoryan said that the non-acknowledgment of the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia's sovereign territory and attempting to relate it with the non-implementation of the delimitation process of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is ungrounded.

Armen Grigoryan called on his colleagues to give an unambiguous and targeted assessment to the current situation in Nagorno Karabakh and take effective measures in order for the 120,000 Armenians living in Nagorno Karabakh not

to be subjected to ethnic cleansings. He said that in this context creating an international mechanism ensuring the rights and security of the population in Nagorno Karabakh remains a priority for Armenia.



## Armenian-Azerbaijani Talks In Washington Postponed

**(RFE/RL)** - Azerbaijan has postponed fresh talks between its Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan slated for next week, official Yerevan said on May 8.

Bayramov and Mirzoyan were due to begin on June 12 a fresh round of negotiations in Washington to try to build on progress towards an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty made by the two sides in recent weeks.

A spokeswoman for the Armenian Foreign Ministry said the talks have been delayed "at the request of the Azerbaijani side." She did not give a reason for the delay.

"The public will be duly notified of the new dates of the meeting," she added in a short statement.

The Azerbaijani news agency Turan was the first to report earlier in the day that the Washington talks have been

postponed. It cited unnamed diplomatic sources as attributing the postponement to a scheduling conflict and "logistical" issues.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry essentially confirmed the information. "We hope that the meeting will take place in the near future," a ministry spokesman said, adding that the new date will be announced by the U.S. State Department.

"Regarding the exact date of the next round of talks, we don't have any specific dates to announce at this time," a State Department spokesperson said in written comments to RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

The official also said Washington looks forward to again hosting Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks. "Direct dialogue is the key to resolving issues and reaching a durable and dignified peace," added the official.

The two foreign ministers held

four-day negotiations outside Washington one month ago. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met together with European Union chief Charles Michel a week later. They held two more meetings in the following weeks and are due to meet again in July.

The two sides say that despite Pashinyan's pledge to recognize Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh through the peace treaty, they still disagree on other sticking points.

Tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and "the line of contact" around Karabakh have steadily increased over the last few weeks, with the sides accusing each other of violating the ceasefire on a virtually daily basis. Armenian officials and pundits claim that Baku is ratcheting them up in a bid to clinch more Armenian concessions.

## Armenia, EU continue dialogue on visa liberalization, Foreign Minister says

EU-Armenia relations deepened significantly in 2022, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said at the National Assembly on June 5.

The Foreign Minister said the Armenian Prime Minister paid three visits to Brussels last year, where he held private talks and participated in tripartite meetings with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and President of the EU Council Charles Michel.

Referring to the quadrilateral meeting in Prague between the Prime Minister of Armenia, the President of Azerbaijan, the President of France and the President of the European Council on October 6, Minister Mirzoyan reminded that under the Prague statement, the EU deployed a



two-month monitoring mission to Armenia, which was later extended.

The Foreign Minister said the institutional framework of the partnership established by the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement continued to function effectively. In

this context, he emphasized the agreement reached with Brussels on starting Armenia-EU dialogue on political and security issues.

He noted that talks on visa liberalization continued in 2022, the legal framework between Armenia and EU expanded.

Referring to financial indicators, Ararat Mirzoyan said that during 2022, projects worth 195.7 million euros were approved with European structures, projects worth 86.3 million euros are in the approval stage, significant works have been carried out, but another 900 million euros have not yet reached the approval stage.

## EU Mission planning to open three additional operational hubs in Armenia

The EU Mission in Armenia plans to open the three additional operational hubs in Jermuk, Ijevan and Yeghegnadzor in the upcoming months, gradually reaching full operational capability in near future.

On 1 June, EUMA Head of Mission Markus Ritter together with the Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, Head of EU Delegation in Armenia, welcomed an EU delegation from COEST Working group in Martuni. Mr Ritter introduced them to the mission's mandate and its activities. He also updated the participants on security developments on the ground, based on observations gathered from the mission's patrols.

In the first three months of EUMA's



existence, the mission conducted more than 300 patrols in total from its hubs in Goris, Jermuk and Martuni. Every week, the patrols cover more than 3800 km of distance. "The mission was launched in an unprecedented speed, starting its

operations this February," Mr Ritter said.

"Our goal is – among others – to contribute to stabilizing the security in border areas. And according to numerous Armenian officials, EUMA has contributed to a certain stabilization of the situation. However the situation remains volatile," Mr Ritter added.

EUMA is a non-armed, civilian and non-executive mission with the aim to observe and report to the EU on the security situation on the ground. The mission is deployed on the Armenian side of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, with Headquarters in Yeghegnadzor, six Forward Operating Bases and a small liaison office in Yerevan.

## Michael Roth informs that Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations will continue with the participation of Germany and France



The Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the German Bundestag Michael Roth informs that the negotiations

between Armenia and Azerbaijan will continue in various formats, including with the participation and inclusion of the EU, France and Germany, ARMENPRESS reports, Roth said at a press conference held in Yerevan.

"In the near future, intense negotiations will take place in Washington. Those negotiations

will continue in various formats with the participation and inclusion of the EU, France and Germany," Roth said.

Referring to the question regarding the participation of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the recent five-party meeting in Chisinau, he said that the main actor is the EU, all the paperwork is carried out by the European Union in the person of President of the European Council Charles Michel.

"We, as two medium-sized European countries, are simply part of that great commitment of the European Union. And we would like to make our modest contribution to the peace process," he said.

Roth also noted that the participation of the German Chancellor in that process received quite positive reactions among the Armenian community.

## In Syunik, United States Ambassador to Armenia observes tense situation at border with Azerbaijan

United States Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien has visited the Syunik Province, the United States Embassy said on social media.

"During her visit to Syunik province, Ambassador Kvien met with local officials, civil society, and residents who shared

their pervasive security concerns. The Ambassador also traveled to Tegh where she observed first-hand the tense situation at the border. Everyone deserves the safety and security a just and durable peace would bring," the United States embassy said in a Facebook post on Thursday.



## Semi-precious stones, precious metals, machinery named top Armenian exports in January-April

Armenia exported goods worth 2 billion 158 million 463,4 thousand dollars in January-April of 2023 – a 2,1-fold growth compared to the same period of 2022. Most of the exports went to Russia, according to official statistics.

Precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals and related items comprised most of the exported goods.

In the reporting period the exports to fellow EEU member states stood at 1 billion 109 million 873,2 thousand dollars, increasing 3,8 times compared to 2022, while exports to EU countries comprised 234 million 989,7 thousand dollars, dropping 9,5%.

Most of the exports – 1 billion 64 million 44,8 thousand dollars worth – were shipped to Russia, a growth of 3,8 times compared to January-April 2022, according to the Statistical Committee data. The



second top export destination for Armenian goods in the reporting period was the United Arab Emirates – with 372 million 641,8 thousand dollars (8,9-fold increase). China is third top destination with 135 million 017,4 thousand dollars – a growth of 20,1%.

Armenian exports to neighboring Georgia and Iran also increased. Exports to Georgia (51 million 502,1 thousand dollars) grew 46,1% while exports to Iran

(35 million 630,2 thousand dollars) grew 5,9%. The data shows a massive, 183,1-fold growth of exports (347,8 thousand dollars) to Romania.

Exports to the Republic of Korea grew 78 times, comprising 9 million 764,8 thousand dollars. Exports to France totaled 2 million 883,9 thousand dollars – a 98,5% growth.

Most of the exported goods (508 million 61,2 thousand dollars) comprised precious and semi-precious stones, precious metals and goods made of precious and semi-precious stones and precious metals. The second top exported goods in the reporting period were vehicles, equipment and mechanisms (368 million 439,8 thousand dollars, 15-fold growth). Food was the third top exported product (269 million 987,9 thousand dollars, 43,6% growth).

## Armenia, China report 39.4% increase in commodity turnover

On June 7, the 11th session of the Armenian-Chinese Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Affairs was held in Beijing under the co-chairmanship of Armenia's Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan and China's Deputy Minister of Trade, Deputy China International Trade Representative Ling Ji.

Issues related to the deepening of trade and economic relations between the two countries were discussed. In particular, the expansion of trade turnover, promotion of investments, interaction in the



fields of agriculture, industry, digital

economy, tourism and aviation, interregional cooperation and a number of other

issues were discussed.

At the end of the meeting, the protocol of the session was signed and the main directions of further cooperation were outlined. Trade turnover between Armenia and China in 2022, increasing by 39,4% compared to the same period the previous year. Commodity turnover in January-March 2023 was \$448.8 million, a 43,5% compared to the same period last year. China continues to be Armenia's second largest trade partner.

## World Bank forecasts 4.4 percent economic growth in Armenia in 2023



The World Bank forecasts 4.4 percent economic growth in Armenia in 2023. The

GDP growth is expected to stand at 4.8 percent in 2024 and 5 percent in 2025.

Global growth has slowed sharply and the risk of financial stress in emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) is intensifying amid elevated global interest rates, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report.

Global growth is projected to decelerate from 3.1% in 2022 to 2.1% in 2023. In EMDEs other than China, growth is set

to slow to 2.9% this year from 4.1% last year. These forecasts reflect broad-based downgrades.

"The surest way to reduce poverty and spread prosperity is through employment—and slower growth makes job creation a lot harder," said World Bank Group President Ajay Banga. "It's important to keep in mind that growth forecasts are not destiny. We have an opportunity to turn the tide but it will take us all working together."

## Russia ready to discuss financial issues on building new nuclear power plant in Armenia, says PM Mishustin

Russia is ready to discuss the financial issues and parameters of building nuclear power plants in the territories of Eurasian Economic Union members, including Armenia, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said at the Eurasia Is My Home exhibition which was attended by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The heads of government were briefed on Rosatom's most effective plant, a joint Russian-Belarusian project. This nuclear power plant has two reactors with 1200 megawatt capacity. The first unit is already



operational while the second is undergoing tests. Mishustin told Pashinyan at the expo that Belarusian companies financed a bit over 40% of the costs.

Rosatom chief Alexey Likhachev said that they are responsible for adhering to the strictest norms of Russia and the IAEA - quality, efficiency and safety.

PM Pashinyan said that he was briefed that Rosatom isn't offering reactors with capacity lower than 1200MW.

Likhachev told Pashinyan that Rosatom can build reactors with capacities of 1000, 600 or 400 MW, but it would be more expensive.

## Deputy PM Tigran Khachatryan received the newly appointed WB regional director for South Caucasus

Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Khachatryan on June 9 received World Bank's regional director for South Caucasus Sebastian Molyneux, on the occasion of the end of his term of office, and Rolande Pryce, who replaced him in that position. Carolin Geginat, Country Manager of the World Bank for Armenia, also participated in the meeting, the press service of the Government informs.

Thanking Mr. Molyneux for his active and effective activities in Armenia, Tigran Khachatryan referred to the important results recorded in the framework of cooperation with the World Bank in recent years.

Congratulating Rolande Pryce on her appointment, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed confidence that all the necessary prerequisites are in place to effectively implement current programs and promote new initiatives of bilateral interest.

Sebastian Molyneux commended the effective cooperation with the Armenian government in energy, education, social protection, healthcare and a number of other directions.

Expressing gratitude for the warm reception, the newly appointed regional director of the WB for South Caucasus assured that the World Bank will continue to support Armenia in implementing its



reform agenda in the coming years.

During the meeting, the interlocutors also discussed a wide range of issues related to the current and perspective programs in the sidelines of the Armenian Government - World Bank cooperation.

## Company behind smelter in Armenia's border village of Yeraskh to continue activity despite statements from Azerbaijan



The GTB Steel LLC, which is building a black metal scrap processing plant (smelter) in Armenia's Yeraskh, will continue to carry out its activities in the border community in accordance with all the requirements defined by the Armenian legislation and for the benefit of the Republic of Armenia, the Company said in response to a statement by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Environmental Protection.

In a statement released earlier today the Ministry said the the construction/operation of the smelter would harm the environment of their country.

Without giving much importance to the above-mentioned statement of Azerbaijan,

but taking advantage of the opportunity to provide more detailed information about our project to the Armenian society and based on its own commitment to carry out transparent and accountable activities, GTB Steel LLC announced:

*The owner of the metal smelter under construction is GTB Steel LLC, which, in compliance with RA legislation, applied and received a positive conclusion on the impact on the environment from the watchdog, the Armenian Ministry of Environmental Protection, with appropriate test requirements that comply with all international standards. The conclusion confirmed that all modern technologies for the exclusion*

*of negative impact on the environment will be implemented and all adequate measures will be taken. It should also be noted that the smelter is not in operation and is still under construction.*

GTB Steel said it will continue its activities in the border community of Yeraskh, which is so important for the Republic of Armenia, following all the requirements specified by the Armenian legislation, and for the benefit of the Republic of Armenia.

"Perhaps, this is the reason for the reaction of the neighboring state. Despite of the above-mentioned actions with hostile motives, we are fully committed to continue our project in the border community of Yeraskh, which is highly important for the economy of the Republic of Armenia," the company said.

Armenian Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan announced about the construction of the plant in a Facebook post earlier this month.

Almost 200 people already work at the construction site. After the launch of the facility, the number of employees will be 1,000. The mill will have its own melt-shop and mainly produce rebar, angles and pipes.

The Minister said a total of 70 million USD would be invested in the joint Armenian-American project. The plant will be located 800 m away from Nakhijevan.

## The CSTO countries intend to increase the number of joint exercises



The Secretaries of the Security Councils of the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) discussed security challenges and threats in

the region at the meeting held in Minsk, ARMENPRESS reports, citing TASS.

"Directions of cooperation in the military and migration spheres, as well as in the information space, were outlined. The importance of increasing the number of CSTO military exercises at different levels", the press service of the Security Council of the Russian Federation announced after the meeting.

The representatives of the CSTO countries paid special attention to the joint fight against international terrorism and

extremism, strengthening the anti-terrorist potential of the organization. The Security Council of the Russian Federation noted that tasks were set to block the ways of recruiting citizens and traveling to different places to participate in terrorist activities.

"Taking into account the increase in terrorism threat in the immediate vicinity of CSTO's zones of responsibility, decisions were made regarding the implementation of a complex of operational and preventive measures," the press service added.



## ICJ ruling on Azeri checkpoint in Lachin Corridor expected soon

Armenia is waiting for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on its request regarding Azerbaijan's checkpoint in Lachin Corridor, the Representative of Armenia for International Legal Affairs Yeghishe Kirakosyan told reporters on June 8.

"As of this moment, after our application we've received a response from the Azerbaijan side regarding our request, we have also submitted our response to that, we've also presented additional evidence, and at this moment we are waiting for the decision by the International Court of Justice, which will be presented soon," Kirakosyan said after the inauguration of the International Courts and Arbitrage



master's educational program at the Yerevan State University.

The United Nations' highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – ordered Azerbaijan on February 22 to "take all steps at its disposal" to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor

in both directions. The Lachin Corridor has been blocked by Azerbaijan since 12 December 2022.

Kirakosyan said that Azerbaijan not only ignores the February 22 ruling by the ICJ but is also further escalating the situation by installing a checkpoint in Lachin Corridor. "Since then we've regularly presented information to the court that Azerbaijan is not implementing the court's decision. After the checkpoint was installed, there was a need to apply to the court with a new request, asking it to further specify the interim measures indicated on February 22, to clarify it further, given Azerbaijan's unlawful conduct," Kirakosyan said.

## We hope Azerbaijan will also agree to implement EU mission on its side, but have not received optimistic signals - Roth

The Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the German Bundestag Michael Roth hopes that Azerbaijan will also agree to the activities of the EU civilian mission on the Azerbaijani side, but no optimistic signals have been received in this regard, Roth said this in a conversation with journalists in Yerevan.

"We are grateful to the Armenian government for inviting the EU civilian

mission to carry out its monitoring in Armenia. We are happy to state that the EU mission will expand its activities in the near future. And we fully hope that the Azerbaijani side will also agree to the activity of such a mission on the Azerbaijani side," said Roth.

However, as for the establishment of such a mission on the Azerbaijani side, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign

Affairs of the German Bundestag said that they did not receive any optimistic signals from Azerbaijan, although they consider that the issue of peace and stability is not only Armenia's issue.

"Azerbaijan should also become a participant in universal regional security and stabilization of peace. This is a proposal that we present to the parties and are waiting for their response," he said.

## Freedom House commends the readiness of Armenian authorities to participate in the Forum for Democracy

The Freedom House says it was honored to host the second Armenian Forum for Democracy alongside Armenian NGO Union of Informed Citizens.

"This year, the Armenian Forum for Democracy focused on navigating democratic development in the face of security challenges. During the forum, Freedom House President Michael Abramowitz joined Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President Vahagn Khachaturyan, and US Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien for key conversations about civil society, regional security challenges, human rights, and other critical issues," the Freedom House said in a statement.

"We welcome the readiness of the Armenian authorities to participate in the

event and the open and transparent discussions with civil society. We urge the Armenian government to follow up on the remarks made during the forum and to continue the close cooperation with the civil society of Armenia to advance the agenda of human rights and democracy," it added.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President Vahagn Khachaturyan, Deputy President of the National Assembly Ruben Rubinyan, Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan, members of the Government, MPs, representatives of diplomatic corps accredited in Armenia, civil society and expert circles were present at the Armenian Forum for Democracy on May 31.



"Democracy is the main brand of Armenia, and this is our belief and our strategy. It is not at all the result of coincidences. This is a conscious political course that the government and people of the Republic of Armenia are pursuing," PM Pashinyan said, addressing the forum.

## Resolution condemning blockade of Artsakh introduced in U.S. Senate



U.S. Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) today introduced a bipartisan Senate resolution condemning Azerbaijan for its blockade of the Lachin Corridor and urging the United States to take immediate steps to end the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

The resolution was also introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr (D-N.J.-06) and is cosponsored by Senator Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

“Azerbaijan’s blockade of the Lachin Corridor—the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) to Armenia—is inhumane and unacceptable,” said Senator Padilla. “This blockade has created a humanitarian crisis, rendering the 120,000 Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh without access to food, medicine, and other basic necessities. Our resolution would make it clear that the United States must take action to hold Azerbaijan accountable.”

“I stand with my colleagues today in

condemning Azerbaijan’s ongoing blockade of Artsakh. It’s clear that Azerbaijan’s blockage of the Lachin Corridor is coordinated and intended to shut off the only supply route for much of Artsakh’s food, medical supplies and transport, and other essential goods,” said Congressman Pallone. “We stand united in telling Azerbaijan to end this intentional humanitarian crisis.”

“Armenian and allied Americans thank Senators Padilla, Rubio, and Menendez for enforcing concrete costs and real-world consequences on Azerbaijan over its six-month-long blockade of Artsakh – starting with the immediate cut-off of all U.S. military aid to Baku,” said Armenian National Committee of America Executive Director Aram Hamparian. “American taxpayers should not be asked to subsidize the armed forces of an authoritarian regime that neither needs nor deserves U.S. support.”

“We commend Senator Padilla and along with Senator Rubio for spearheading this timely bipartisan resolution in the face of Azerbaijan’s ongoing attempts to eliminate the Armenians of Artsakh. Our message is clear, we urge Congress to defend Artsakh against tyranny, stand up for democracy and human rights, and oppose genocide,” stated Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

“We strongly support its passage.”

Azerbaijan began its blockade of the Lachin Corridor—a vital lifeline that connects the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) with Armenia – on December 12, 2022, under the guise of an environmental protest. Since then, severe shortages of food, medical supplies, and other essentials have created a dire humanitarian crisis for the 120,000 people living in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has also sabotaged important civilian infrastructure such as power transmission lines and fixed-line internet.

In April, Azerbaijan consolidated its blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh through establishing a military checkpoint along the road – in violation of the 2020 ceasefire, and against calls by the International Court of Justice to ensure unimpeded access to the region. This man-made crisis purposefully created by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev threatens to severely worsen the quality of life of Nagorno-Karabakh’s residents.

Unfortunately, the current international strategy to reopen the Lachin Corridor is simply not working. The Aliyev regime is taking premediated steps to remove the ethnic Armenian population from Nagorno-Karabakh and deprive them of the opportunity to live freely, democratically, and with dignity.

## Paris City Hall adopts resolution on provision of urgent aid to the people of Artsakh

The City Council of Paris has unanimously adopted a resolution on “provision of urgent aid to the people of Artsakh and those who have taken refuge in the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian Embassy in France informs.

The resolution emphasizes that 120,000 residents of Artsakh are cut off from the rest of the world as a result of the illegal blocking of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan since December 12, 2022, and refers to the Council’s resolution of November 27, 2020 calling on the government to recognize the Republic of Artsakh,



to the assistance provided to the people of Artsakh by various administrative territorial units of France, to the numerous calls of support and solidarity to the Armenian people, to Yerevan’s membership

in the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF), and attaches importance to providing support to the Artsakh Armenians.

The City Council also authorizes the mayor of Paris to call on other administrative territorial units of France and foreign cities that are members of the AIMF to join the initiative of urgent support, the aim of which is to support the people of Artsakh who have taken refuge in the Republic of Armenia and to deliver food to the people of Artsakh through a humanitarian convoy.

## Advice to Aliyev: Continue Destroying Azerbaijan's Reputation

BY HARUT SASSOUNIAN, PUBLISHER, THE CALIFORNIA COURIER · JUNE 2023, 5

Even though Azerbaijan, with the help of Turkish and Israeli weapons and hired Islamic terrorists, won the 2020 Artsakh War, Pres. Aliyev has been destroying his country's international reputation.

With his barbaric actions during and since the war, Aliyev has undermined the interests of Azerbaijan. As a result, he has made himself a hated pariah and the laughing stock of the entire world. While Russia is cuddling him for its own political interests, the West is tolerating him to benefit from Azerbaijan's oil and gas.

I am very pleased that Aliyev is doing so many negative things in the eyes of not only Armenians, but also the entire world.

There are many examples of Aliyev's misdeeds. Here are some of them:

During the 2020 war, Azeri soldiers committed barbaric acts that violate the international law, such as: beheading captured Armenian soldiers and civilians, mutilating their bodies, torturing them, trying the captives in court and sentencing them to lengthy jail terms.

In violation of international conventions, Azerbaijan used banned cluster and phosphorous bombs to kill Armenian soldiers during the 2020 war.

Azerbaijan systematically destroyed and defaced hundreds of Armenian cultural monuments and desecrated dozens of Armenian churches in Artsakh in violation of the Hague Convention on "the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict."

Azerbaijan continues to violate the ceasefire agreement signed by Pashinyan, Aliyev and Putin at the end of the 2020 war. Here are some examples: Not releasing many of the Armenian Prisoners of War, shooting at civilians in Artsakh, occupying parts of the territory of the Republic of Armenia, taking new Armenian hostages, and threatening Armenia and

Artsakh with further attacks if they do not comply with Azerbaijan's wishes.

Aliyev has dehumanized and demonized Armenians by describing them with vile adjectives, such as "leeches" and "wild animals." In 2005, during the visit of a German delegation, the Mayor of Baku, Hajibala Abutalybov, shamelessly told them: "Our goal is the complete elimination of Armenians. You, Nazis, already eliminated the Jews in the 1930s and 1940s, right? You should be able to understand us."

Aliyev dispatched dozens of fake eco-activists to block the Lachin Corridor during the last six months, depriving 120,000 Artsakhtsis of food and medicines. These so-called eco-activists were more like eco-terrorists. Azerbaijan then placed a checkpoint at the Lachin Corridor further violating the 2020 agreement.

In addition, Azerbaijan periodically cuts off the Internet and electricity of the Artsakh population, keeping them isolated, in the dark and without heat in freezing temperatures.

Instead of a simple transit road, Azerbaijan repeatedly demands a corridor to cross from eastern Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, which implies Azeri sovereignty over Armenia's territory, in violation of 2020 agreement. By insisting on the Corridor, Aliyev is actually delaying Azerbaijan's access to Nakhichevan through Armenia.

Aliyev declares that all of the territory of the Republic of Armenia is 'Western Azerbaijan.' This is sheer nonsense. Whereas Artsakh and Armenia are thousands of years old, Azerbaijan did not exist until a century ago.

Aliyev made the ridiculous pledge that Artsakhtsis will live under Azerbaijani rule just like all of its other citizens who are also repressed. Artsakhtsis remember well their barbaric mistreatment by Azerbaijan. Blockading them now shows how much worse they will be treated in the future.

Aliyev repeatedly urges Armenia to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan. Any

treaty signed by Azerbaijan is a meaningless piece of paper as we see from Aliyev's violations of the 2020 agreement.

To make matters worse, State Dept. spokesman Matthew Miller welcomed Aliyev's outrageous statement that he will give amnesty to all Artsakh officials who resign. Instead, Miller should have condemned Aliyev's unacceptable threats to invade Armenia and Artsakh.

Aliyev dismissed the demands of scores of world leaders and international organizations as well as the UN Security Council, the World Court and European Court of Human Rights to release the Armenian POWs and unblock the Lachin Corridor.

After the 2020 war, Azerbaijan established a racist Military Trophies Park in Baku, displaying wax models of Armenian soldiers with hooked noses and distorted faces. After complaints and condemnations by the international community, the exhibit was closed down.

In February 2004, an Azeri soldier, Ramil Safarov, used an axe to chop the head of a sleeping Armenian soldier in Hungary during a NATO program. In return for Azerbaijan loaning Hungary several billion dollars, Safarov was released prematurely with the understanding that he will serve the rest of his life sentence in a Baku jail. However, Aliyev welcomed Safarov as a national hero, pardoned him, promoted him to the rank of major, and gave him a free apartment and eight years of back pay. This is Azerbaijan's compensation to Safarov for committing a cold blooded murder.

As a result of all these war crimes, Aliyev has destroyed his and Azerbaijan's reputation around the world. He should be arrested and tried by the International Criminal Court as a war criminal.

Despite Aliyev's reprehensible actions, world powers keep closing their eyes ignoring his many crimes, blinded by Azerbaijan's oil and gas.

## Amanda Freitag, star of the American cooking TV show Chopped visited Yeremyan Academy



Amanda Freitag, a famous American chef, and star of the Chopped cooking TV show, visited to Armenia on June 1-6 as part of the joint initiative of the Culinary Diplomacy Project and the US Embassy. The Diplomacy Project aimed to promote a sustainable food value chain and culinary entrepreneurship. On June 2, during her visit, the famous chef was hosted by the Academy of Culinary Arts and Hospitality of Yeremyan Projects and shared her experience and skills with the students.

Armenia's appeal as a gastronomic hub and the uniqueness of Armenian cuisine and products sparked Freitag's interest, which served as key motivations for her visit to the country.

"Passing on the knowledge and experience I've gained from my teachers is important to me. That's why I'm here in Armenia, to share my expertise globally. I'm captivated by the operations of this new culinary academy and the cooking practices here. The fresh, simple Armenian

food and bread-baking culture have really impressed me. Local dishes are incredibly delicious. I believe New York needs a restaurant showcasing Armenian cuisine," stated Amanda Freitag.

Freitag had a meeting with Davit Yeremyan, the Founder of Yeremyan Projects. She got an in-depth look at the Academy's state-of-the-art classrooms, kitchen facilities, and educational offerings. Yeremyan, acknowledging the importance of such ventures, stressed that the Academy was founded to foster knowledgeable ambassadors for Armenian cuisine—one of the worlds oldest.

"We founded the Academy in 2019 having a vision to educate a new generation of chefs who could rise to international standards. In pursuit of this goal, we carried out extensive research into global practices, carefully considering various factors before selecting the British model. Our educational programs bear the certification of Activate Learning Group, City of Oxford College, UK. Our alumni are not just competitive in the domestic market, but also make their mark in international spheres. Alongside their culinary education, students enhance their proficiency in English, apply their learning in practical environments, and seize numerous training opportunities actively."

Davit Yeremyan noted that the institution had 1500 graduates in the last four

years. Some graduates work in different countries, including the USA and Europe. Twenty percent of the graduates work in the restaurants of Yeremyan Projects.

Amanda Freitag organized a competition for the future chefs of Armenia studying at Yeremyan Academy, following the format of the renowned American cooking show Chopped. Amanda gave the contestants baskets of food with mystery ingredients, challenging them to prepare an appetizer, main course, and dessert using the basket's contents. She was very impressed by the enthusiasm and creative approaches of the participants.

Along with Amanda Freitag Karen Khachatryan, the head of the "Culinary Art" educational programs of the Academy of Culinary Arts and Hospitality of Yeremyan Projects, the chef of Renommée restaurant, evaluated the teams' work. The participants were awarded certificates.

The meeting with the world-famous chef and the chance to get her professional advice was a unique experience for the students of the Academy. They were very enthusiastic about that experience, so they spared no effort to show all their skills and creative potential.

A series of cooking demonstrations, master classes, and workshops with Armenian chefs and food entrepreneurs were carried out as part of Armenian visit of the famous American chef Amanda Freitag.

## Monthly non-oil export from Iran to Armenia up 144%

The value of Iran's non-oil export to Armenia increased by 144 percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20), as compared to the first month of the past year, the spokesman of Trade Development Committee of the Iranian House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced, Tehran Times reports.

Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran exported non-oil commodities worth \$32 million to Armenia in the first month of this year.



The value of Iran's non-oil export to Armenia rose by 62.5 percent in the

past Iranian calendar year. Iran exported commodities worth \$478 million to Armenia, while the figure was \$294 million the previous year.

Liquefied natural gas, iron and steel rods, bitumen, light oils and related products, unalloyed iron and steel products, bituminous mineral oils, floor coverings, liquid cream, linear alkylbenzene, and rebar were

Iran's major products exported to Armenia in the past year.

## Armenia's TUMO Labs make it to the final of 2023 ETF Green Skills Award



Armenia's TUMO Labs has made it to the final of the 2023 ETF Green Skills Award.

The European Training Foundation unveiled the ten finalists on June 8. The award recognizes initiatives at the forefront of driving the transition towards a sustainable and green future and have demonstrated exceptional commitment and innovation in promoting and developing green skills throughout the world.

This year's ten finalists encompass a diverse range of backgrounds and expertise, representing various countries. They were selected from nearly 600 applications from over 60 countries.

Other finalists come from Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Morocco with Spain, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA with Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and

Zimbabwe.

TUMO Labs represents the educational direction of the EU TUMO Convergence Center. This tuition-free applied science and engineering hub connects higher-education with industry. Anyone over the age of 18 can participate in the program designed specifically for TUMO Labs.

The TUMO Labs education program is based on the just-in-time methodology so that the projects and guided self-learning content correspond to the constantly evolving tech and science industry.

The winners of the Green Skills Award will be selected by **public vote open until 29 September (23:59 CEST)** and will be announced at an award ceremony in late 2023.

*"Having the opportunity to choose ten finalists out of 600 applicants tells it all: the ETF Green Skills Award 2023 has attracted topical proposals from across the globe",* said ETF Director, **Pilvi Torsti**. *"This is encouraging for the coming decades are critical if we are to find scalable solutions for a more sustainable world in the future. Most of the proposals demonstrate remarkable dedication in driving the green skills agenda forward within their communities,*

*and I really wish them success. The ETF will continue to support countries in this direction".*

The Green Skills Award is a global initiative that was first introduced by the ETF in 2021. It provides ideas and inspiration from all over the world about innovation happening thanks to individuals and institutions. The initiative has become a source of good practice that can inspire people everywhere to make real change happen in creating circular and carbon-neutral economies and societies.

The previous two editions of the award received 198 applications and **26,700 votes from around the world**. The winning initiatives range from upskilling refugees in solar energy to promoting environmental awareness in schools:

The European Training Foundation is the EU agency supporting the countries of the EU neighbourhood to reform their education, training and labour market systems. In line with the objectives of the EU Green Deal and the European Year of Skills, it actively supports progress towards sustainable, carbon-neutral, and circular economies and societies through skills development.

## Rare Armenian manuscripts to be restored through Bank of America grant

As part of its Art Conservation Project, Bank of America provided a grant to the Armenian Museum of America of Watertown, Mass., to restore 21 illuminated manuscripts from its collection, one of which dates back to the 13th century, the museum announced today. Bank of America selected the Armenian Museum of America as one of the 23 cultural institutions that have been named recipients of the 2023 Bank of America Art Conservation Project, a program that provides grants to nonprofit cultural institutions to conserve important works of art.

This year's recipients represent a diverse range of artistic styles, media, and cultural traditions across China, Colombia, France, Lebanon, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S.

The Armenian Museum of America has the largest collection of Armenian artifacts in the United States. Among them is an extremely rare collection of 21 handwritten and hand-illuminated manuscripts, of which approximately 10 are on display in the museum's galleries at any given time. One example is a small hymnal, or sharaknots in Armenian, which contains hymns to be chanted and performed on

feast days. Attributed to the prolific artist Karapet of Berkri, the illumination depicts the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

Since 2010, Bank of America's Art Conservation Project has supported the preservation of paintings, sculptures, and archeological and architectural pieces of critical importance to cultural heritage and the history of art. More than 237 projects across 40 countries managed by nonprofit cultural institutions received funding to conserve historically or culturally significant works of art that are in danger of deterioration.

"We are incredibly grateful to Bank of America for providing us with this leadership grant so our manuscripts will be preserved so that they can be viewed by the public and studied in perpetuity without risk of further damage. This partnership will allow visitors to view the art and culture of the past, and to see it in the context of the present in our galleries," said Jason Sohigian, executive director of the Armenian Museum.

"By the medieval period, Armenians had a rich literary society. Since then, many manuscripts and illuminations have been looted or destroyed, a process that

intensified during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Preservation has taken on a renewed importance, as Armenia's cultural heritage remains at risk," he added.

"The Armenian Museum of America is an indispensable resource for the preservation of the rich heritage of the Armenian people. The conservation of these artifacts enriches the community and allows people of all backgrounds to appreciate how the inspirational story of the Armenian people fits into the history of America," said Miceal Chamberlain, President, Bank of America Massachusetts.

The conservation of these rare books will be completed by experts from the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, which is the largest and most significant Armenian library and archive in the world. The manuscripts require restoration and preservation due to worn edges, light damage, and dust.

The Art Conservation Project is one demonstration of BofA's commitment to promoting cultural sustainability and making the arts more accessible and inclusive in communities.

## Fujian Museum in China puts spotlight on Armenian culture

Armenian Cultural Treasures of the 19th and 20th Centuries, kicked off at the Fujian Museum in China on May 18 and will continue through July 18. The Fujian Museum and the Yerevan History Museum have joined together to organize it, [China Daily](#) reports.

Armenian Prime Minister's Assistant Hakob Abrahamyan, chairman of the "Centre of Armenian-Chinese Partnership" Armen Mkhitarian, representative of the Yerevan History Museum Lusine Amirjanyan and coordinator Gevorg Orbelyan, representatives of other museums of China took part in the opening ceremony.

With the aim of showing the history and culture of Armenia — unfamiliar to many Chinese — in a vivid way, the exhibition tries to explore similarities between Chinese and Armenian cultures. It shows artifacts related to the Tea Road of Ten Thousand Miles, tea culture and



other aspects of cultural heritage that are important to both countries, according to Shi Zhang, curator of the exhibition.

A number of Armenian costumes and decorations are on display. According to Shi, Chinese and Armenian people share a love for red, regarding the color as auspicious, and often wear red during important events like wedding ceremonies. Moreover, the plant, animal and geometric patterns on their clothes are similar to some of those in China.

A wool rug on display, with Armenian words showing it was made in 1899 by a rug-weaving school, has an exquisite pattern of feathers, scrolls and plants. According to Shi, the highlands of Armenia are one of the cradles of rug weaving. Samples of ancient rugs discovered in archaeological sites in Armenia date as far back as the 7th century BC.

"Rugs have a religious meaning in Armenian people's lives, and that is why they are so important. Many Armenians believe the patterns on the rugs can expel evil things, so they often put sick children in them to try to dispel sickness and ensure safety," says Shi.

"Every part of the exhibition shows the communication between civilizations. Both China and Armenia are ancient civilizations, with frequent trade and cultural exchanges and close historical ties. The friendship and cooperation between people from these two countries continues to this day," says Shi.

## HayPost issues postage stamp dedicated to Armenian films

A souvenir sheet with one postage stamp dedicated to the theme "Armenian Films" has been put into circulation.

The souvenir sheet was cancelled by the Deputy Minister of High-Technological Industry of the Republic of Armenia Davit Sahakyan, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia Arayik Khzmalyan, the Chief Executive Officer of "HayPost" CJSC Arayik

Abrahamyan, the Chairman of the Union of Cinematographers of Armenia Harutyun Khachatryan, the film-director Mikael Dovlatyan, the actor and the Honored Artist of



the Republic of Armenia Khoren Levonyan, the President of the Philatelists' Armenian Association Hovik Musayelyan.

The postage stamp of the souvenir

sheet with the nominal value of 800 AMD depicts the fragment from the Armenian film "Saroyan Brothers" (directors – Khoren Abrahamyan, Arkady Hayrapetyan), which was screened in 1968.

The souvenir sheet depicts the film's art director Frunze Dovlatyan on the film set, featuring one of the film's main characters ("Hayk").

The souvenir sheet also depicts the inscriptions "SAROYAN BROTHERS" and "ARMENIAN FILMS" in Armenian and English languages.

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