

# FOREIGN INVESTOR (VIASPHERE) VINS BOTH IN USA & ARMENIA AND ARAM VARDANYAN LOSES

## Viasphere wins 6 court cases. Two more to go !



*Viasphere v. Aram Vardanyan*



*Aram Hambarcumi Vardanyan*

*See p.p. 8-10*

## Armenian PM congratulates Trump on Independence Day

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory message to U.S. President Donald Trump on the occasion of United States Independence Day. The message reads in part:

"The noble ideas advocated by the U.S. Founding Fathers – freedom, equality and democracy – are close to the Armenian people, the best proof of which was the velvet nonviolent revolution in Armenia. The new political and social realities that emerged following the revolution allow us to upgrade our relations to a qualitatively new level. We are ready to do everything possible to strengthen and expand our bilateral relations, based on shared values, mutual respect and an atmosphere of trust.

We highly appreciate the valuable assistance that the United States continues to provide to



Armenia in the areas of strengthening democracy and civil society, protecting human rights,

developing the economy, fighting corruption, strengthening the security system, expanding peacekeeping capacity and in many other spheres. Your support is called for today more than ever.

We attach great importance to the role reserved to the United States as an OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the establishment of peace and stability in our region.

I should note with satisfaction the special role played by the vibrant U.S.-based Armenian community, which is building bridges of friendship between our countries with its active structures and unconditional commitment to promoting the Armenian-American relations."

## Ambassador Armen B. Smbatyan Presents Credentials to the President of Israel



On 2 July Ambassador Extraordinary to the State of Israel His Excellency Prof. **Armen B. Smbatyan** (residence in Yerevan) has presented his credentials to Israel's President **Reuven Rivlin**.

After the official ceremony a *tete-a-tete* meeting between the Ambassador Smbatyan and Israeli President was held.

The President congratulated the Armenian

Ambassador on his appointment and wished good luck in his diplomatic mission, noting that the Ambassador's previous huge experience will be useful for the development of relations between the two countries in the most various fields.

The Ambassador Smbatyan thanked the Israeli President for the warm reception and assured that he will spare no effort to make his contributions for the further development of the Armenian-Israeli relations.

The sides stressed the existing potential for advancing mutually beneficial cooperation.

During the meeting the Armenian Ambassador presented to the Israeli President the Armenian foreign policy priorities, Armenia's stances over international and regional issues and the process of transitioning into a parliamentary system of administration.

The sides also touched upon the Armenian



community of Israel and prospects of developing bilateral economic and sectoral cooperation.

In his exclusive interview with The Highlights Ambassador His Excellency Professor Armen B. Smbatyan told that there is "the huge interest" from various Israeli circles to Armenia.

## Jewish people cannot ignore "the suffering of Armenians," Israeli President says

Armenia's non-resident Ambassador Armen Smbatyan on July 3 handed his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, The Jerusalem Post reports.

Careful not to use the word 'genocide,' Rivlin told him that both as a City Council member of Jerusalem and as a Member of Knesset, he had frequently voiced the opinion that the Jewish people who suffered so much could not ignore the suffering of another people.

He said that when Armenians had come to the old city of Jerusalem following the "terrible tragedy that had befallen them during

the First World War," they were warmly welcomed by the Jewish residents.

Rivlin said he believed that the "Armenian catastrophe" should be regarded in historical not in political terms.

Smbatyan, who is stationed in Cairo, had been to Yad Vashem the previous day. In commenting on the Holocaust, remarked on how challenging it is for Israel to ensure that such a devastating calamity never again imposes itself on either the Jewish or the Armenian people. He saw a distinct unifying characteristic between Armenians and Jews in the dynamic



of the human spirit and the will to survive.

"We talk about the genocide that was inflicted on Armenia, but it's not a political issue," he said. "It's

an issue of humanity."

Acknowledging the importance of remembering the past, Rivlin said that it was even more important to live for the future.



## Armenia Marks Constitution Day

Power in Armenia today truly belongs to the people, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said, referring to this major provision of the country's Constitution, as the South Caucasus nation marked the 23rd anniversary of the adoption of its Basic Law on July 5.

Armenia's post-Soviet Constitution was adopted in a disputed referendum in 1995. Since then it was amended twice. Under the most recent changes adopted in a disputed 2015 referendum the country has become a parliamentary republic.

"I want to congratulate you on the occasion of Constitution Day, and I think that we have a great achievement 23 years after the adoption of the Constitution. Article 2 of the Constitution states that power belongs to the people of the Republic of Armenia, and today power in the Republic of Armenia truly belongs to the people, and I congratulate you all on this occasion," Pashinyan told people in the town of Goris as he toured the southernmost Armenian province of Syunik on July 5.

Pashinyan, who led peaceful anti-government protests in April-May that brought him to power, went on to assure the public in a region that was ruled for years by a controversial governor allegedly involved in violent crimes that "the time of local feudal lords in Armenia is over."

"The citizen of the Republic of Armenia is free and proud. The citizen of the Republic of Armenia is responsible for his or her country, and we will fully bear that responsibility together. This is our main message," Pashinyan said.

"The prime minister of the Republic of Armenia and other officials are serving the people, and this is the main change that has taken place. Never let this important change, this victory of yours go under any circumstances, because this is the formula for solving all problems. You must have a government that serves you, and you do have the government that serves you. Never let a government that will serve clans, corruption and plunder be established in Armenia."

As part of his working visit to Syunik Prime Minister Pashinyan made stops at several communities to have meetings with local leaders and members of the public. He answered numerous questions of local residents concerning their social, economic and other issues.

*The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia was adopted by a national referendum on July 5, 1995 when the citizens of the republic voted for the adoption of the Constitution of independent Armenia, thus expressing the wish to live in a free and democratic state.*

*Constitution Day is a public holiday for*



*Armenia and its citizens, which marks the creation of a new governmental framework and the beginning of another era for the country, which for over seven decades had been a Soviet satellite.*

*The Armenian Constitution was last amended with a referendum held in December 2015, in which the overwhelming majority of citizens cast their ballot in favor of shifting to a parliamentary form of government.*

*The coat-of-arms of the Republic of Armenia was confirmed on August 23rd 1990 by the Armenian Supreme Counsel. The new modern design is based on the coat-of-arms of the first Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), which originally was designed by architect Aleksandr Tamanyan and painter Hagop Kodjuyan.*

*In the center of the shield is Mount Ararat – the symbol of the Armenian nation. On its peak rests Noah's Ark, which, according to the Bible, came to rest here after the great flood. Surrounding Mount Ararat are symbols of old Armenian dynasties.*

*At the bottom of the shield are five objects: a broken chain representing our freedom and independence; a sword, which stands for the power and strength of our nation; a bundle of wheat flower, representing the industrious nature of the Armenian people; a feather pen symbolizing the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Armenian people, and a tricolor ribbon – the flag of the Republic of Armenia.*

*The Armenian flag has three equal sized horizontal bands: the top stripe is red, the middle one blue and the bottom stripe is orange. The colors on the Armenia flag represent its people.*

*The red symbolizes the Armenian Highland, the Armenian people's continued struggle for survival, maintenance of the Christian faith, Armenia's independence and freedom. The blue stands for the will of the people of Armenia to live beneath peaceful skies. The orange symbolizes the creative talent and hard-working nature of the people of Armenia.*

## Armenia's ex-Defense Minister accused of overthrowing Constitutional order in 2008

Armenia's Former Defense Minister, Colonel General Mikael Harutyunyan is accused of having overthrown constitutional order in a preliminary agreement with others between February 23 and March 3, 2008, the Special Investigative Service informs.

A criminal case has been initiated under Article 300.1 of the Criminal Code of Armenia (Usurping state power, i.e. seizure of state power, in violation of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, or keeping it with violence, as well as, actions aimed at the overthrowing of constitutional order of the Republic of Armenia, or the violent breach of territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia).



Mikael Harutyunyan is accused of breaching Article 8.2 of the Constitution that was in place in 2008, which stipulates that "The armed forces of the Republic of Armenia shall ensure the security, defense, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia as well as the inviolability of its borders. The armed forces shall maintain neutrality in political matters and shall be under civilian control," as well as part 12 of Article 55, which states that only "in cases of armed attack against the Republic, imminent threat thereof or declaration of war the President shall declare martial law and may order general or partial mobilization and shall take a decision on the use of the armed forces."

The Special Investigative Service says Mikael Harutyunyan and other officials actually declared a martial law in the republic in violation of the Constitution and used the armed forces for political purposes against citizens participating in peaceful rallies.

Investigation into the case is under way.



## Sargsyan`s brother held by National Security Service

Aleksandr Sargsyan, a controversial brother of Armenia`s former President Serzh Sargsyan, spent the night at Armenia`s National Security Service (NSS) after being detained along with his son, Hayk, following a search of their apartment on July 4.

As of Thursday afternoon the NSS did not yet report any details of the raid, grounds for the detention of the Sargsyans or their legal status.

Following nearly nine hours of the search NSS officers were seen carrying with them several bags of yet undisclosed items before Aleksandr Sargsyan was taken to the NSS. The law-enforcement agency promised to release details and footage of the operation later on.

The 62-year-old brother of the former president, who is better known to the public as “Sashik,” is thought to have made a big fortune in the past two decades. Unconfirmed reports in the Armenian press have said that he spent millions of dollars buying real estate in Europe and the United States.

Aleksandr Sargsyan was briefly detained on June 25 by police who found weapons in his car. Later Valery Osipyanyan, the chief of the Armenian police, said that it was found out that the weapons were possessed by Sargsyan legally.

Meanwhile, Serzh Sargsyan`s second, youngest brother Levon Sargsyan and his two children are suspected of “illegal enrichment” and could face prosecution on relevant charges after law-enforcement authorities discovered nearly \$7 million held by them in an Armenian



bank.

The State Revenue Committee (SRC) launched criminal proceedings against them last week shortly after announcing that a company linked to Levon Sargsyan has been fined 800 million drams (\$1.7 million) for tax evasion.

The SRC said that while searching Sargsyan`s home its investigators found documents showing that he, his son Narek and daughter Ani deposited a total of \$6.8 million in the unnamed bank “in the second half of 2017.” It said that the ex-president`s youngest brother and Ani Sargsyan failed to disclose these sums to a state anti-corruption body while Narek did not file any income declarations at all.

Under Armenian law, such declarations are mandatory for high-ranking state officials and their family members. This legal requirement applies to Levon Sargsyan because he has long worked as ambassador-at-large at the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

In a separate probe the Special Investigation Service last month brought charges of illegal enrichment against Vachagan Ghazaryan, Serzh Sargsyan`s longtime chief bodyguard, who was remanded in custody on June 28. Ghazaryan carried over \$1 million worth of cash in a bag during his arrest. Police found another \$1.1 million as well as 230,000 euros (\$267,000) in cash when they searched his apartment earlier in June.

## Director of Hayatsan All-Armenian Fund arrested on embezzlement charges



The National Security Service (NSS) has arrested the executive director of a pan-Armenian charity headquartered in Yerevan, accusing him of embezzlement.

The NSS said on July 3 that Ara Vardanyan, who has managed the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund for the last ten years, admitted using its funds mostly donated by the Armenian Diaspora for online gambling and other “personal purposes” after being taken into custody on Monday.

“In the past week alone, Vartanyan transferred about 14 million drams (\$29,000) from a bank card of the fund to online casinos,” read an NSS statement. “That amount totaled about 130 million drams in the period

from 2016 to 2018.”

According to the statement, Vardanyan told investigators that he used fresh funds raised by Hayastan as well as his own money to compensate the charity for the “waste.”

The security agency added that it is now auditing Hayastan`s financial documents to detect possible other instances of embezzlement and “verify the legality” of its expenditures. It did not say whether Vartanyan will be formally charged.

Hayastan has implemented over \$350 million worth of projects in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh since being set up in 1992. The fund`s current Board of Trustees is headed by President Armen Sarkissian and comprises Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, other senior Armenian state officials, Catholicos Garegin II as well as prominent members of Armenian communities around the world.

In recent years the fund has partly financed, among other things, the construction of a second highway connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. The 116-kilometer-long road was inaugurated last year.

Most financial contributions to Hayastan have been made in annual telethons broadcast from Los Angeles. The charity raised over \$12.5 million at the most recent telethon aired in November. Most of that money is due to be spent on two agricultural-development projects in Karabakh.



## No change in EU relations after Armenia revolution, Armenian FM says

The big difference between Armenia's 'velvet revolution' and other revolutions like Ukraine was Armenia's "security architecture," Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an interview with the EU-observer during a recent visit to Brussels.

"Look at Azerbaijan. Look at Turkey. We're a country that has been blockaded for 27 years by these two states, a country which has existential security threats ... We can't afford a security vacuum for ten minutes," Mnatsakanyan said.

"Russia today is playing the role which provides hard security [for Armenia]. Is there anyone else standing there ready to help?" he said.

"Look at the countries who are trying to become NATO members [Georgia and Ukraine]. How long have they been in the queue? Ten years, is it? We can't afford 10 minutes," he said.



The way the West has coziered up to Azerbaijan's authoritarian regime for its oil and gas also showed that realpolitik governed EU actions more than it cared to admit, Mnatsakanyan said.

"National interests drive the vision of every government ... the EU very much values relations driven by its energy interests," the minister said.

That understanding of harsh re-

ality was visible on the streets of Yerevan in May, when Armenian people "of all classes" displayed "political literacy" as well as moral outrage, he added.

"Which flags did you see in the streets? Only the [Armenian] tricolor – because that's what it was all about ... it was a strictly domestic affair," he said.

"People in their thousands expressed that they wanted to live

in a just society ... they did not express that they wanted to bring geopolitics into this, that they wanted to review relations with Russia," he said.

The revolution was more than cosmetic, he said.

Mnatsakanyan said Armenia "does have an independent foreign policy". Asked what Russia might do if Yerevan quit the Eurasian bloc in favor of closer European ties, he said:

"What happened in Armenia [the Velvet Revolution] – was it democratic enough for you? Was it good enough? Or does it have to be anti-Russian for it to qualify as democratic?" he said.

He also indicated that EU officials were also less than keen to upset the status quo.

"Are we going to sit down [with top EU officials] and hear them say: 'Are you with Russia or not?' – that conversation will never happen," he said after his EU visit.

## Investigators seek to question Kocharyan over 2008 crackdown



Investigators have summoned former President Robert Kocharyan for questioning in connection with a deadly post-election crackdown on opposition protesters in Yerevan that occurred in March 2008 during the final weeks of his rule.

The recently appointed head of Armenia's Special Investigative Service (SIS), Sasun Khachatryan, told reporters on July 4 that they want to interrogate him as a "witness." "There are no inhibitions regarding the names [of individuals relevant to the investigation] and posts held by them," he said.

Kocharyan's press secretary, Victor Soghomonyan, said, meanwhile, that the former presi-

dent has not yet received a summons from the SIS. He told that Kocharyan stands ready to testify over his actions before and during the worst street violence in Armenia's history that followed a disputed presidential election.

Soghomonyan said on Tuesday that the ex-president, who governed Armenia from 1998-2008, is not in the country at the moment.

SIS investigators have for years avoided questioning Kocharyan or his successor Serzh Sargsyan amid opposition allegations of a cover-up of the use of lethal force against supporters of opposition candidate Levon Ter-Petrosyan who protested against the official election results.

Eight protesters and two police servicemen were killed as security forces quelled the daily protests in Yerevan on the night from March 1-2, 2008. Nobody has been prosecuted in connection with those deaths so far.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was a key backer of Ter-Petrosyan in 2008, told the SIS to finally solve the killings when he presented Khachatryan to the law-enforcement agency's senior staff on June 12.

On July 3, the SIS issued an arrest warrant

for retired General Mikael Harutiunyan, who served as defense minister during the 2008 unrest. It charged Harutiunyan with illegally using the armed forces against the protesters, saying that amounted to an "overthrow of constitutional order."

In Khachatryan's words, Harutiunyan has not yet been arrested because he left the country before the launch of the criminal proceedings against him. The SIS chief did not comment on the former minister's whereabouts.

Kocharyan declared a state of emergency and ordered army units into downtown Yerevan late on March 1, 2008 amid vicious clashes between protesters and security forces trying to disperse them. According to the SIS, Harutiunyan started "illegally" deploying troops in the Armenian capital a week before the unrest.

Kocharyan has repeatedly defended the post-election crackdown in the past, saying that it prevented a violent seizure of power by the Ter-Petrosian-led opposition. Earlier this year, he blamed Pashinyan for the post-election bloodshed. Pashinyan was the main speaker at the anti-government protest broken up on that night.



## EU to invest €160 million in Armenia in the next four years – Federica Mogherini

The European Union will invest €160 million in Armenia in the next four years, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said at a debate on EU-Armenia relations at the plenary session of the European Parliament.

“We are ready to support many different fields of action – and just to name a few examples – from Small and Medium Enterprises, to helping to improve the business environment or investing in energy efficiency. And the list could continue,” she added.

“We are ready to use our new External Investment Plan to incentivize private investment in strategic sectors for the Armenian economy,” Mogherini noted.

She said it was great pleasure to welcome the new Foreign Minister of Armenia [Zohrab Mnatsakanyan] to Brussels, very soon after the new government took office, in what was a smooth, democratic, peaceful transition, for our first Partnership Council with Armenia.



“Let me say that we could not have chosen a better moment to have this first meeting and it was indeed for me a pleasure to conclude, in one way, a long journey and at the same time, begin a new journey together. As you all know, last November we signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia. Last April, the Armenian Parliament ratified the Agreement unanimously, with the then-government and the opposition voting together,” the High Representative stated.

“I can say, having worked both

with the previous government and now the new one, I really personally believe that all Armenian parties understand very well that a partnership with the European Union is something vital for the country,” she said.

“It is not about geopolitics, it is not about spheres of influence, it is not a partnership against somebody else, it is a partnership for, first of all, our citizens – the citizens of Armenia, our own citizens in the European Union –, for economic growth, for job creation and for better and stronger democracies. It is a partnership that can help ad-

vance the demands raised by the Armenian people, also in this latest month,” Mogherini added.

“The Foreign Minister [Zohrab Mnatsakanyan] informed me of the ambitious – very ambitious – reform agenda of the new government, and the first concrete action it has already taken in the fight against corruption. During the Partnership Council we also agreed on the importance of an effective and independent judicial system, also as a precondition for economic and social development. This is the right time for Armenia to work on a new Criminal Code and a new Criminal Procedural Code,” Mogherini noted.

“These are important reforms – not because the European Union asks for them, but because the people of Armenia ask for them. They have been asking for these reforms for long and now, I think, we have the instruments – including this agreement – to accompany and encourage a government that is putting these reforms at the core of their action,” she said.

## U.S. Envoy “confident” about more trade, investments in Armenia

(Yerevan- RFE/RL)- United States Ambassador Richard Mills believes the recent political changes in Armenia will help bring more American trade and investments to the South Caucasus country.

“I am confident that this new chapter in the Armenian history is going to spark a lot of interest from U.S. businesspeople – whether they are members of the [Armenian] Diaspora or not – in trading with Armenia and investing in Armenia,” Mills said on Wednesday evening while attending a festive event in Yerevan dedicated to U.S. Independence Day.

Mills said he already witnessed that interest last week in Washington where he attended a Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which this year is featuring Armenian culture.

“And I heard from the Dias-

pora Americans and also from American businesspeople of all backgrounds that they were very interested in Armenia if the new government follows through on its commitments to make this a more equitable society, a more level-playing field for all businesses and if they can root out some of the problems of corruption,” he said.

“And I think American businesses are interested in some of the key sectors that the government is also focused on – IT, agriculture, tourism and energy, in particular. So, I am confident we are going to see more trade, more investments in the years to come.”

In his congratulatory message to U.S. President Donald Trump on July 4 Nikol Pashinian, who became Armenia’s prime minister on the wave of anti-government protests in April-May, expressed readiness to “strengthen and ex-



pand” Armenia’s relationship with the United States.

“The new political and social realities that emerged following the revolution [in Armenia] allow us to upgrade our relations to a qualitatively new level... We are ready to do everything possible to strengthen and expand our bilateral relations, based on shared values, mutual respect and an atmosphere of trust,” he said.

In his message to Trump, the 43-year-old premier also praised large-scale U.S. assistance provided to Armenia since independence.

Earlier, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo did not rule out that resumed assistance to Armenia will be considered by the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Armenia received \$177 million under Washington’s Millennium



Challenge Account (MCA) program for the rehabilitation of its rural irrigation networks a decade ago. The U.S. froze further MCA aid after a disputed 2008 presidential election that was followed by a harsh government crackdown on the Armenian opposition.

The administration of former President Serzh Sargsyan tried unsuccessfully to restore Yerevan's eligibility for the aid scheme in the following years. U.S. officials said, among other things, that it was not doing enough to combat widespread corruption.

Answering the question from RFE/RL's Ar-

menian Service on prospects of resumed U.S. assistance under the MCA program, Ambassador Mills said on Wednesday that he did not have any "new news" on that. But he added: "Again the way the Millennium Challenge Corporation works is that Armenia will have to meet some criteria, hit some standards in the areas of fighting corruption, political liberty, media freedom. So, we will be working with the government to encourage them, to support them in making some changes that will help Armenia meet those criteria so that next year, when the Millennium Challenge Corporation

is deciding on compacts, Armenia can be considered."

"I know that the Armenian people and the Armenian government want to make those changes. They want to fight corruption, they want to make it a more free society, a more just society, because it is good for Armenia, not just because it might get a compact from the Millennium Challenge. It's really what Armenia needs and what I heard the Armenian people were demanding on the streets two months ago," the U.S. ambassador to Armenia concluded.

## MEPs back EU partnership agreement with Armenia

MEPs gave their consent to the EU-Armenia comprehensive and enhanced partnership agreement on July 4, paving the way for deeper cooperation in different sectors.

The negotiations on the new EU-Armenia comprehensive and enhanced partnership agreement (CEPA) were launched in 2015 and concluded in 2017. The agreement was then signed by both sides in November 2017. The final agreement marks a deeper political dialogue between the EU and Armenia, broadening the scope of economic cooperation and providing new opportunities for closer ties on energy, transport, infrastructure, environment, trade, education and other sectors.

MEPs backed the deal by 573 votes to 50, with 45 abstentions.

### Domestic reforms

The new partnership agreement is not the end point in terms of EU-Armenia cooperation, but a tool to promote domestic reform



and its implementation, says a separate resolution, adopted with 598 votes to 52 and 27 abstentions. MEPs call on Armenia to make significant progress on how elections are run, the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, money laundering, tax evasion and abusive oligarchic control and on media freedom. Effective implementation of these key reforms may unlock further prospects for cooperation, including the opening of a visa liberalisation dialogue, MEPs add.

### Trade

MEPs regret that the Agreement cannot include the removal of tariff barriers, due to Armenia's membership of the Eurasian Economic Union. However, they stress that it does not prevent the EU from being Armenia's main trading partner and first donor, thus demonstrating that the EU does not expect its partners to privilege deeper relations with the EU at the expense of their relations with third parties.

They also call on the Commission to ensure that EU assistance

to Armenia is not directed towards sectors affected by Russian sanctions in the EU.

### Peaceful transition of power

MEPs applaud the citizens of Armenia on the recent peaceful transition of power and welcome the restraint shown by the law enforcement bodies, though some unjustified arrests of peaceful demonstrators raise concerns. They congratulate Nikol Pashinyan on his election as the new Prime Minister of Armenia and look forward to increased cooperation.

### Quote

EP's rapporteur László TŐKÉS (EPP, HU) said: "This final vote in the European Parliament sends a strong message of support to the Armenian citizens. The EU is ready to support the reform efforts to which the new government has committed. We encourage them to continue combating corruption and reforming the electoral framework, in line with the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission."

## Armenia could get \$100 million from Millennium Challenge Corporation, Rep. Speier says

New Armenia deserves broadest assistance from the US, Congresswoman Jackie Speier said in an interview with the Voice of America.

According to her, discussions are under way on the congressional and executive levels on providing major assistance to Armenia by the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

"It's a difficult process, and getting the assistance ratified will not be easy. However, I'm cautiously optimistic," Speier said.

In case the project is approved, Armenia might get over \$100 million.



The congresswoman said new Armenia is the source of her optimism.

She said the US is interested in seeing Armenia flourish and prosper. "The US can help Armenia independently ensure its energy needs by using innovative technologies," she said.

Jackie Speier will lead a Congressional delegation to Armenia in the coming months.

"It's going to be an extremely important visit. I would like to offer our support to Armenian citizens, to the new government of Armenia and the new Prime Minister," she said.



## FOREIGN INVESTOR IN ARMENIA WINS BOTH IN USA & ARMENIA

### *Viasphere wins 6 court cases. Two more to go !*

As we move higher and higher in the IT sector, the Intellectual Property becomes more and more critical and a must issue. Other item is protecting once investments and assets.

Below are unprecedented achievements of a Foreign Investor that has been able to protect all of the above in Armenia by taking to proper actions against its own general director who, in the Investor's own words, "has defrauded the company for many years and by substantial amounts". Getting 6 court final verdicts and judgements is indeed unprecedented. This is the story of Viasphere International, a Silicon Valley investor vs **Aram Hambarcumi Vardanyan**, the previous General Director of Viasphere Technopark CJSC established in 2001, the first and the most successful it/High-tech Technopark and Incubator. There are close to 1000 advance researchers working for 12 entities. This epic journey and the resilience is a testimonial that foreign investor can protect himself or herself.

This article contributors have been **Anthony Moroyan** ("Tony"), the CEO, Chairman and the Founder of Viasphere International, Inc. ("Tony"), an American Armenian veteran from the Silicon Valley, one could say even a legend who has been contributing continuously since 1991 and helping with the strategic plan how to build the Armenian IT and High-Tech industry since 1991), attorneys from USA and Armenia (who have been involved in these cases for years) as well as some others.

**No doubt, The Highlights readers can find below an interesting and valuable reading for investors and for Armenia!**

«Viasphere International, Inc., a USA investor has been registering landmark court trials both in Armenia and in USA. The remaining two cases are at court. One in Armenia, relating very important and vital topic of the Intellectual Property protection. The other is malicious prosecution case against Aram Vardanyan in USA (Silicon Valley). Next hearings on July 17 and July 19, 2018.

Viasphere International Inc. ("VSI"), a California Corporation is a very potent early investors in helping to set the strategic blue prints to build the IT industry in Armenia. VSI founded Viasphere Technopark CJSC ("VT"), a fully owned subsidiary in Yerevan Armenia as a High-Tech Business Park and Incubator to help to build a solid bridge with the Silicon Valley, CA and with other global hotspots to attract investors and multinationals like Synopsys and start-ups to Armenia.

VSI and its high-quality and internationally diverse shareholders from the US Silicon Valley, Japan, Europe and other geographies had done both monetary and time and effort investments in Armenia. The impact has been **phenomenal** in evangelizing Armenia as a choice

destination for high tech investments and operations. One of many such successful efforts was being instrumental in convincing multinationals like Synopsys to move to Armenia. VSI was instrumental in setting an ambitious goal with select Diaspora and Armenia entities and individuals to realize major events such as the first Global Armenian High Tech Business Forum and Conference (ArmTech Congress) in 2007 which set a new benchmark in the Silicon Valley among all countries who had tried to evangelize their country, e.g. Dubai, India, China, Russia, European countries.

As it was mentioned above, in 2000, VSI for-



**PM Nikol Pashinyan,**  
**"the Chief Architect" of the**  
**Velvet Revolution who promises to turn**  
**Armenia into a country of "Rule of Law"**

mally purchased and set up a facility in Yerevan. Both Armenian Government top officials and foreign diplomatic corps, including USA Embassy representatives were present at the opening. The investment was done with the full participation of the US Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia as an important USA investment and commitment.

**Aram Hambarcumi Vardanyan** ("Aram") had been giving the representatives of VSI that as if he is "a top scientist as well as very ethical, religious person" and "with extensive experience in management"...

...He was hired to be the local General Director of the Viasphere Technopark CJSC.

Extensive efforts by VSI was done to turn this facility into the first commercial High-Tech Hub in Armenia. VSI had housed many foreign and local companies since its conception.

However, around late 2010, disturbing signals were received about Aram Vardanyan by VSI and its shareholders.

At 2011 VSI shareholders meeting, direct questions were asked to Aram. He was not able to give satisfactory answers regarding the financials and operations of VT as the General Director of VT, also about questionable behav-

ior and even matters of fraud.

To note, Aram was previously granted extraordinary number of shares of VSI and was given a good compensation package, also was appointed as the General Director of VT. Aram had entered into several very strict and well defined US agreements that included: confidential info and inventions assignment agreement (that included formal declaration that he had no prior patents and inventions, etc. and that all inventions and IP developed by him during his engagement as employee belonged to VT), stock purchase agreement, stock option agreements, ethical behavior agreement not to violate USA and Armenia laws. He was also appointed to the Board of Directors' of VSI in USA because of the efforts of the Founder of VSI.

Aram was not re-elected to the Board of VSI at the February 2011 shareholders meeting and shareholders (included all voting shares except Aram) voted to investigate many allegations about Aram's extensive wrongdoings, deception and fraud.

After further investigation in Armenia following the February meeting, Aram was terminated as the General Director of VT. This was done through VSI lawyers in Armenia.

Aram started to harass the management and the employees with phone calls and damaging actions. Even certain serious threats were made to VSI and VT related individuals.

VSI and VT did not have any choice but to take legal actions against him starting in USA.

Threads and various forms of attacks increased and launched against the employees and management of VT as well as VSI.

Below are very brief summaries of the extensive pain, resources, legal expenses incurred to bring Aram and in certain cases related people to justice.

VSI Board decided instead of instructing VT and VSI to liquidate VT facility and take their jackets and leave Armenia after more than 20 years of extensive work to help build the IT industry, to stay, fight and bring Aram to justice. This was despite the very painful experiences we were going through because of awful revelations about Aram that came to light. The main reason was to show resilience and determination as a foreign investor and a major contributor of developing the IT industry in Armenia and establishing the global network for Armenia. We could not let one person such as Aram to get away with massive fraud and many other damaging behavior and actions that he had taken despite being treated royally by VSI.

The legal actions are extensive especially when during the federal court jury trials that Aram had been involved in VSI witness tampering, threatening and even trying to bribe.

He even tried in the court room, after the judge had left the room, to threaten one of the



witnesses that was going to appear next day. This was discovered, and the Judge came back to the court room and after finding out Aram's behavior gave him the most direct ultimatum that if A.V. tries in any way to give any signals to any witnesses he will be severely penalized. The story is very colorful and will be published in detail later.

The following are few line summaries of the 8 cases that have occupied VSI priorities from 2011 to 2017.

All the cases have been won against Aram except two remaining cases: Case #8 (very important IP case in Armenia against Aram) and Case # 5 (in State of California for malicious prosecution against Aram).

The reason the Case # 8 is especially crucial and very dangerous for Armenia because it involves IP fraud. We all worked hard many years ago to have Armenia adopt the International Patent, Trademark and Copyright laws. This is the first topic any viable IT company confirms before setting up operations off shore. In fact, this was one of the first questions Synopsys and other companies asked when I convinced them to come to Armenia.

But, having the law is not enough. The application and upholding the law by Armenia's courts and legal structures must be well tested to proof that it is so. The IP case against **Barva LLC** (a local Armenian entity originally owned 100% by Aram during his fulltime employment by VT, and later, Aram had added his spouse as the major co-owner) for fraudulent ownership of the IP developed at VT and by VT engineers and his then quite young son **Arman Vardanyan** who was given the authorship of the patent that when discovered had surprised everyone. This case is about to test the Armenia's commitment to and upholding the International laws that Armenia is a signatory of.

It is interesting that the next hearing and hopefully the final hearing will be taking place **at the watch of the new Government**. The Government that was able to change the country thru a "Velvet Revolution" as it is termed, and its very success and existence is to bring "Rule of Law" and justice while trying to convince the foreign investors about Armenia's new commitment to justice and

upholding important factors like IP.

**We, as the VSI and VSI shareholders, as a passionate Diaspora and passionate about what Diaspora considers "Sacred Armenia" cannot allow a person like Aram and some of his family members defraud not only the foreign investors but cause harm to the Armenian Employees that work in Armenia and against the interests of High Tech and IT industry of Armenia!**



*Viasphere Technopark, Yerevan, Armenia*



*Tony Fadell, Global IT Award Laureate 2017  
with the young specialists at the yard of the Technopark*

The legal actions and efforts have been extensive in time, efforts and money spent since 2011. Unfortunately, we cannot cover the details here. It will fill hundreds of pages. **This will come later.**

Viasphere International, Inc. of California, USA and its fully (100%) owned subsidiary, Viasphere Technopark CJSC (the first successful commercial business park and incubator of Yerevan, Armenia) have been involved in extensive litigation against Aram Hambarcumi Vardanyan,

Barva LLC (his and his wife's owned entity) and his son Arman Vardanyan. VSI today prevails in all 6 cases (3 in Federal Court in USA, one in State of California Court, USA and 2 Armenia court cases).

The proper information, e.g. case number, etc. have been added to give the reader access to public records, etc.

Importantly, the FBI is aware also about certain aspects of these cases involving Aram and related people.

of directors violating fiduciary responsibility as a board member, taking undeclared rents and payments from Technopark located entities and even from employees, and doing misrepresentations).

**Result: Aram Lost.**

**VSI prevailed on each and every one of its causes of action. The Court ordered that all of Aram's shares of VSI common stock be cancelled. There was undisputed testimony during the jury trial that Aram had attempted to bribe one witness and threatened another. Judge Lloyd ordered that Aram should not have contact with VSI witnesses.**

**Court: (Federal Court)-United States District Court, Northern District of California, Case No. 5:12-cv-01536-HRL, Magistrate Judge Harold Lloyd, filed March 27, 2012.**

**Final status: Aram Lost.**

**2-USA- Aram Vardanyan v. Anthony Moroyan-USA Federal court.**

Aram Vardanyan wanted to maliciously attack Anthony Moroyan with fabricated claims. The Court dismissed 99% of Aram's case, and in doing so expressed that he had not seen anything during the two and half years of overseeing the cases that supported even the 1% remaining claim. Aram battled on this 1%, but as the case was approaching trial, he voluntarily agreed to have the remainder of his action dismissed. The Court awarded VSI costs associated with this action against Aram.

**Result: The case was ultimately dismissed in its entirety.**

**Court: (Federal Court)-United States District Court, Northern District of California, Case No. 5:12-cv-06-HRL, Magistrate Judge Harold Lloyd, filed December 28, 2012.**

**Final status: Aram Lost.**

**3-USA - Aram v. Viasphere International, Inc.-USA Federal court.**

In yet another action by Aram (case claims without bases), this case was originally filed in the VSI. However, Judge Lloyd separated it from the VSI case (because of which the VSI case against Aram would take place before and separate from any claim

**1-USA- Viasphere International v. Aram Vardanyan-USA Federal Court.**

Full 9-member Jury trial at USA Federal court in Northern California. Vast amount of documentary evidence and witnesses both from Armenia and USA. This case exposed all the defrauding that was done by Aram Vardanyan in 7 major claims (stealing intellectual property related to Zenith anti-hail system, of fraud, concealing his actions from VSI and its Board



of Aram against VSI or Moroyan). He then joined it with Case 2 above. It was dismissed in the same way as Case No. 2.

**Result:** The case was ultimately dismissed in its entirety and as in Case 2, VSI was awarded its costs.

**Court:** (Federal Court)-United States District Court, Northern District of California, Case No. 5:12-cv-01536-HRL, Magistrate Judge Harold Lloyd, filed September 17, 2012.

In addition to achieving ultimate victory in the three cases, during the 5+ years of litigation Aram brought many motions, including motions to dismiss VSI's complaint, motions for summary judgment, motions for injunctions against VSI, and more. VSI prevailed on each of the motions.

**Final status:** Aram Lost.

**4-CA State Court - James Sumner and Anthony Moroyan v. Aram Vardanyan, his lawyer in USA and his lawyer in Armenia following breach by them of a confidentiality agreement**

Judgment was entered against Aram and his Armenia lawyer. Aram's side lost. At the last minute his US lawyer was dismissed after representing that he had no involvement in the filing of a law suit in Armenia in breach of the agreement. Once again during the lawsuit Aram and his lawyers brought motions to quash service of summons, motions to dismiss, and motions for a change of venue from San Francisco to Los Angeles (where Aram's lawyer is). VSI prevailed on all these motions.

**Result:** Judgment entered against Aram and his Armenia lawyer in excess of \$18,000, in addition to VSI's costs.

**Court:** (CA State Court)- San Francisco County Superior Court, Case No. CGC14539465, filed February 17, 2013, various judges. Trial judge

**Final status:** Aram Lost.

**5-CA State Court - Anthony Moroyan v. Aram Vardanyan, for Malicious Prosecution.**

This is the follow up case against Aram HH Vardanyan for his malicious

Attack and prosecution of Anthony Moroyan with unfounded and fabricated claims in Case 2 above.

**Status:** Result: Judgment entered against Aram and his Armenia lawyer in excess of \$18,000, in addition to VSI's costs.

**Court:** (CA State Court)- San Francisco County Superior Court, Case No. CGC14539465, filed February 17, 2013, various judges. Trial judge

**Final status:** Aram Lost.

**6 - Yerevan, Armenia Court - Aram Vardanyan v. Viasphere International, Inc. and Anthony Moroyan- Armenia court case**

This was yet another attempt to harass Vi-

asphere International, Inc. and its management with fabricated causes. Aram V and his team trying to win in Armenia with whatever means they could. Their objective was to take away the legitimate assets of a Foreign Investor as have been other cases. If he had won in Armenia, we were told the USA wins would have not mattered. After all efforts and methods by Aram, he had to withdraw the claim. Aram accused both for many unfounded allegations. Result:



*Arman Vardanyan,  
son of Aram Vardanyan*

**Final status:** Next Court hearing is on 16.07.2018 and 19.07.2018

**Court:** (CA State Court) - County of Santa Clara Superior Court, case no. 17CV307967

**7 - Case Yerevan, Armenia Court - Aram v. James Sumner and Tony Moroyan - Armenia court case**

Aram used confidential information of US Arbitration by bridging California, USA Arbitration laws and a specific Confidentiality Agreement with the Arbitration Judge by filing a court case in Armenia. The claim was to obligate Anthony Moroyan and James Sumner to deny the defamation information spread about Aram Vardanyan for insulting him. Of course, Aram was the one who disclosed the information about him and his behavior. Aram accused both of making an improper comment during a mediation proceeding in Case 1.

**Result:** Aram Lost

**Result:** The claim has been rejected under the judgement dated 17.10.2014.

**Court:** (Armenia Court) - Court of General Jurisdiction of Kentron and Nork-Marash Administrative Districts of Yerevan. Case No. YEKD/2-486/02/12, Claim submission date of 13.11.2012.

Aram Vardanyan has appealed the judgement and the appeal has been rejected under the decision of RA Civil Court of Appeal which entered into force 03-04-2015.

**Final status:** Aram Lost.

## 8 - Yerevan, Armenia Court

**Plaintiffs:** Viasphere Technopark and the Four (4) employees of Viasphere Technopark (Aleksandr Hovhannisyanyan, Georgi Danielyan, Hrant Vardanyan (not related to Aram) Samvel Vardanyan (not related to Aram))

**Respondents:** Arman Vardanyan (Aram's son), Aram Vardanyan, Barva LLC (a company that Aram has that was used for defrauding Viasphere) and Agency for IP of Republic of Armenia. Armenia court case.

Patent case. An important benchmark case to defend the Intellectual property of a foreign investor brought by Viasphere and its employees.

a-To recognize the right of co-authorship of the 4 employees of VSI to the technical solution mentioned in the invention patent N2505 granted to "Barva" LLC.

b-To transfer invention patent N2505 of hail suppression acoustic generation granted to "Barva" LLC by the Agency of IP of RA to the 4 employees.

c-To obligate the RA IP Agency to undertake data changes in the State register of invention registration by noting Hrant Vardanyan, Samvel Vardanyan, Aleksandr Hovhannisyanyan, Georgi Danielyan, Hrant Vardanyan as patent holders (right holders) of the invention patent N2505 of hail suppression acoustic generator as well as the authors of the invention mentioned in that patent.

The case is at its final phase in Armenia. The upcoming meeting is on July 19, 2018.

**Result:** The claim has been rejected under the judgement dated 17.10.2014.

**Court:** (Armenia Court) - Court of General Jurisdiction of Arabkir and Qanagker-Zeytun. Case No. YEAQD/1321/02/14; Claim submission date of 25.04.2014.

Under the 01.11.2015 dated decision of RA Civil Court of Appeal the previous judgement of the Court of First Instance has been returned to the Court of First Instance for a new examination. The next court date hearing is set on 10.07.2018.

**Final status:** Next Court hearing is on 19.07.2018

...In Summary, any foreign investor should do his homework before investing in any foreign country and take precautions and put in place controls. In spite of these, he or she might get defrauded no matter what one does. In the case of investments in Armenia,

"DO NOT TAKE YOUR JACKET AND LEAVE" - stay and fight we did and you can win!

Our 27 years of journey in Armenia was very rewarding in spite of many impediments.

Now that the country seems to be moving faster to "Rule of Law", the progress is expected to be major.>



## Pashinyan wants to “upgrade” Armenia’s ties with U.S.



(Yerevan – RFE/RL)

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expressed readiness to “strengthen and expand” Armenia’s relationship with the United States when he congratulated President Donald Trump on U.S. Independence Day on July 4.

“The new political and social realities that emerged following the revolution [in Armenia] allow us to upgrade our relations to a qualitatively new level,” he said in a congratulatory message to Trump. “We are ready to do everything possible to strengthen and expand our bilateral relations, based on shared values, mutual respect and an atmosphere of trust.”

Pashinyan similarly called for “new impetus to our bilateral cooperation” on July 3 when he visited the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan to personally congratulate Ambassador Richard Mills on America’s national holiday.

Pashinyan was congratulated by Trump a week after being elected prime minister on May 8. “I look forward to working with you on the many areas of mutual interest for our two countries, including strengthening trade ties, democratic institutions, and regional security,” read a letter sent by the U.S. president.

In his message to Trump, the 43-year-old premier also praised large-scale

U.S. assistance provided to Armenia since independence. “Your support is called-for today more than ever before,” he said, listing the areas of economic development, democracy building, human rights and security.

Pashinyan said at another meeting with Mills held on May 18 that he would welcome U.S. assistance to wide-ranging reforms planned by his government. The U.S. envoy reported afterwards ongoing U.S.-Armenian discussions on “how the U.S. government can help the new government.” He specifically mentioned the possibility of renewed U.S. aid to Armenia under Washington’s Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) program.

Armenia received \$177 million in MCA funding for the rehabilitation of its rural irrigation networks a decade ago. Washington froze further MCA aid after a disputed 2008 presidential election that was followed by a harsh government crackdown on the Armenian opposition.

The administration of former President Serzh Sargsyan tried unsuccessfully to restore Yerevan’s eligibility for the aid scheme in the following years. U.S. officials said, among other things, that it is not doing enough to combat widespread corruption.

According to Pashinyan’s press office, the premier also discussed with

Mills on Tuesday “ways of attracting more U.S. investments” to Armenia. It did not say whether they spoke in that context about the nearly two-week disruption of operations of the U.S.-based mining company Lydian International, one of the largest foreign investors to have done business in Armenia.

In 2016, Lydian began building gold mining facilities at the massive Amulsar deposit in the country’s southeastern Vayots Dzor province. It claims to have since invested over \$300 million in them.

All roads leading to Amulsar have been blocked since June 23 by a group of residents of nearby communities protesting against gold mining operations planned there. They say that the multimillion-dollar project, if implement, would severely damage the local ecosystem. More than 1,400 people working for Lydian, many of them also local residents, have therefore been unable to go to work.

Pashinyan has criticized the blockage, while pledging to look into Lydian’s and other mining companies compliance with Armenian environmental regulations. But he has so far refrained from ordering police to forcibly unblock the construction site.

Lydian’s senior Armenian executives have warned that the company could eventually sue the Armenian state and seek billions of dollars in damages if it fails to resume its operations at Amulsar. They have said that other Western companies will avoid investing in Armenia if the project is scuttled.

The U.S. Embassy has strongly supported the Amulsar project. Mills argued last year that it has been deemed “fully compliant” with environment protection standards set by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).



## VivaCell-MTS News: As Usual, Supporting the Nation...

**The assessment in the regions is over.**

**The process of informing the families about being included in the program is launched**

VivaCell-MTS and Fuller Center for Housing Armenia team will soon start the construction works in different regions of Armenia. With the bilateral cooperation agreement, the parties will continue the mission of housebuilding program in the current year. The assessment in the regions is already finished. Now, the process of informing the families that they have been included in the program is launched. The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia team visited one of the beneficiary families in Zarinja village of Aragatsotn region.

Three years ago, the *Atoyans* tried to solve their housing prob-

*my brother's family, 11 people in total, in our paternal house. Without support, it is impossible to finish the construction in the coming years,"* shared Aram.

The representatives of the organization informed the Atoyans about being included in the program during the last visit.

*"The program is aimed to help large families in housing need, who are unable to build their homes on their own and need a helping hand to get out of the difficult situation. Cooperation with VivaCell-MTS is that helping hand to support families to stay in Armenia and to create a better Homeland for generations,"* said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia President **Ashot Yeghiazaryan**.

As a result of the need assessment, the selected family will complete the construction of the house with-

in program. During that period, students were given the opportunity to gain theoretical knowledge in sales and customer service and to turn that knowledge into practical skills through directly working with customers at VivaCell-MTS service centers operating in Yerevan and in different regions of Armenia.

During the graduation ceremony held at VivaCell-MTS headquarters, before receiving their certificates of completion, the "VivaStart" alumni participated in a competition, which once again gave an opportunity to demonstrate their professional knowledge and practical skills gained through the program.

The students were divided into 4 teams and each of the teams using SWOT-analysis method analyzed the services provided by Viva-

Cell-MTS. All graduates received an opportunity to use the recently launched "X" tariff plan for one month period free of charge.

The competition allowed the graduates to once again strengthen their knowledge and hone their skills, which afterwards, was followed by the awarding of the certificates by VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.

*"For the third year in a row, we are implementing the "VivaStart" educational program, the basis of which is providing the students with professional and practical skills to give them a huge professional potential and experience for their further development. Today, we witnessed one more time that thanks to "VivaStart" students acquire not only industry-related knowledge but also form critical*



lem. *Aram*, the family father, took a loan to purchase a house. The building the family acquired was in poor condition with dilapidated flooring, leaking roof, deteriorated doors and windows and did not justify the family hopes; they were able to live there only two months. Renovating the purchased half-built house has become a distant dream for Aram.

*"My entire family works hard, but during these years all we could acquire was this half-built house. We hoped that we could renovate it on our own, create decent living conditions, but the years are passing, our children are growing and the needs grow too. We live with*

*in a year and will move to a live in a house with all housing facilities.*

### 8th group of "VivaStart" program's graduates awarded with certificates of completion

"VivaStart" educational program is implemented by Armenia's leading telecommunication operator VivaCell-MTS since 2015. It aims at enabling students of various universities to specialize in sales and customer service.

Today 34 graduates of the "VivaStart" 8th group received their certificates for successfully completing the internship program in February-April in the scope of the



Cell-MTS. The four main directions of the analyses were:

1. VivaCell-MTS voice and data services
2. "My VivaCell-MTS" mobile application
3. Customer service
4. Sales of mobile phones and devices

Each team was given 7 minutes to present the results of the analysis. The best presenter Lilit Ghazaryan and the 4 most active participants Artashes Agaryan, Siranush Karapetyan, Rimma Grigoryan, Hasmik Harutyunyan were awarded with power banks

*and analytical thinking. Therefore, it is not surprising that program's alumni are in high demand not only in the telecommunications sphere, but in the labor market in general,"* VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

Since the start of the program in 2015, 218 students have participated in the program. 100 students out of "VivaStart" alumni already use their professional knowledge and skills at different companies, including VivaCell-MTS competitor companies. 20 of the students, having shown the best results, have been employed at various VivaCell-MTS service centers.



**VivaCell-MTS' new base-transceiver station provides voice and Internet services in over 80% of the area of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge and the Khosrov Forest State Reserve**

VivaCell-MTS has installed a new base-transceiver station on Mount Dahnak, providing cellular and Internet connection in over 80% of the area of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge and the Khosrov Forest State Reserve. The project was implemented in collaboration with The Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets.

The newly installed station will allow for a shorter response time in case of emergencies, especially during fires, and will enable the installation of IP and GPS state-of-the-art cameras for the online monitoring of the area. The monitoring will help detect the movement of wild species and will serve for collecting information, raising the effectiveness of the scientific research works conducted in the Refuge. In addition to transferring information in real time, the

rupted power supply of the base station during night hours. However, as a backup option, a diesel generator will be deployed automatically in case of prolonged poor weather conditions or heavy precipitation, to ensure uninterrupted provision of mobile and Internet connection.

The news of the installation of a base-transceiver station on Mount Dahnak was first announced on VivaCell-MTS official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MTSArmenia/>). General Manager Ralph Yirikian showed the page followers via Facebook Live



*“An operation of the station solves several problems, the most important being the opportunity to monitor wild species more productively in Mount Dahnak and neighboring sectors in the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge area. The newly installed station will allow for a quicker response in case of emergencies, especially during fires in over 80% of the area around the Khosrov Forest State Reserve. Cellular and Internet connection availability will become an essential help to operate the newest satellite and GPS devices for wild species data collection. The station's environmental component are the solar panels, which have an important impetus on environmental culture and mentality, a dimension that FPWC has been working since establishment. Solar panels provided by the FPWC are a successful precedent of the partnership of non-profit and private sectors in finding a consolidated solution to environmental issues”*,- said FPWC Founder **Ruben Khachatryan**.

The Caucasus Wildlife Refuge is located near Urtsadzor village



base-transceiver station will also provide the rangers of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge with reliable cellular communication, so necessary in this high-altitude area.

The base station, located at over 2500 m above the sea level, is 100% powered by solar energy. Because of the nature of the terrain relief and the remote location of the electric power supply line, laying power lines from the regular electricity source would have been difficult and ineffective. In general, the high-mountainous landscape adds to the difficulty of the construction works. Climbing up the mountain area is difficult even for special transportation vehicles.

The location of Mount Dahnak is particularly suitable for installation of solar panels. On average, the solar panels, providing power supply to the base station, generate 3 kWh electricity. Along with the solar panels, accumulator batteries have been installed to ensure the uninter-

rupted power supply of the base station during night hours. However, as a backup option, a diesel generator will be deployed automatically in case of prolonged poor weather conditions or heavy precipitation, to ensure uninterrupted provision of mobile and Internet connection.

*“The installation of the solar-powered base-transceiver station on Mount Dahnak has a number of objectives. It enables us to provide voice and data services within a wide radius that is very important for ensuring reliable connection between the rangers and transferring real-time information via surveillance devices. The use of renewable energy sources, as an alternative power supply solution for base stations and in projects implemented by collaborating organizations, is one of the most important long-term objectives of VivaCell-MTS. Installation of base stations in mountainous, unpopulated areas is not guided by return-on-investment consideration even in the long term, and is aimed solely at supporting important environmental initiatives and eco-tourism,”* said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**.

of Ararat region and covers a 2000 ha area stretching along the border of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve. It has become a migration corridor for endangered species, serving as a buffer zone for the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, where a significant growth of the territory's biodiversity, particularly an increase in the number of the Bezoar goats, is reported.

This is not the first base station to have been installed on Mount Dahnak. Already in the year 2014, VivaCell-MTS installed a base-transceiver station in a high-altitude area adjacent to the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, that provides broadband Internet and cellular connection on the territory of the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge and its surrounding areas. The digital cameras, equipped with SIM-card modules, provided by VivaCell-MTS, allow real-time transfer of the information from the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge to the Urtsadzor Eco-Training Center.



## Artsakh MFA calls out Azerbaijani attempts to manipulate UN Security Council resolutions

In view of the ceaseless attempts of Azerbaijan to manipulate the UN Security Council resolutions on the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict, the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh has issued the following clarification:

The UN Security Council resolutions on the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict were adopted in 1993, during the active hostilities, and were aimed at putting an end to the war and to start political dialogue. This was due to the main requirement of all four resolutions – cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts.

The UN Security Council resolutions have never been implemented due to the position of Azerbaijan, which categorically refused to be bound by the obligations to cease the hostilities, while insisting on Artsakh's unilateral concessions undermining the military security. Even after passing the resolutions, Azerbaijan had repeatedly violated the ceasefire agreements, which is explicitly stated in resolution 884, and rejected the proposals on the establishment or extension of ceasefire.

Moreover, Azerbaijan failed to comply not only with the most important requirement of the resolutions on an immediate ceasefire, cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts, but also with all the other ones: to refrain from any actions that obstruct the peaceful solution of the conflict (Resolutions 822, 853); to continue the negotiations through direct contacts between the parties (Resolution 853); to restore the economic, transport, and energy links in the region (Resolution 853); to ensure the unimpeded access for international humanitarian relief efforts (Resolutions 822, 853, 874).

Azerbaijan demonstrates the same selective approach to the "Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council Resolutions 822 and 853", which was agreed upon and proposed to the parties by the OSCE

Minsk Group. The basis of this proposal, supported by the UN Security Council Resolution 874, is the provision on the recognition of the leadership of Nagorno Karabakh as one of the three parties to the conflict.



The episode with the May 1993 appeal of the Italian Chairmanship of the CSCE Minsk Conference to the conflicting parties for confirming their readiness to implement resolution 822 adopted on April 30, 1993 is a characteristic example of Azerbaijan's real and not declared attitude to the UN Security Council resolutions. Despite the fact that Azerbaijan was the initiator of passing this resolution, it left the request of the Italian Chairmanship unanswered.

Through all its actions, Baku demonstrated that it considered the UN Security Council resolutions not as a means of ending the war, but as an instrument for achieving a military advantage.

Azerbaijan's sabotage of the resolutions devalued them to an extent that the UN Security Council ceased to adopt new resolutions, and the mediators were forced to search another political and legal basis for a ceasefire. It became the April 15, 1994 statement of the Council of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Bishkek Protocol signed by the Parliament Speakers of Nagorno Karabakh, Armenia and Azerbaijan on

May 5-8, 1994, which ultimately paved the way for the May 12, 1994 Agreement on a complete ceasefire and cessation of military activities. It should be stressed that under this agreement, all the parties publicly confirmed the co-

ordinates for the line of ceasefire, thus defining the status quo post bellum. The violation of the line of ceasefire by Azerbaijan during the April 2016 aggression became a serious challenge for the entire conflict settlement process. Restoration of the line's configuration as of May 1994 is an indispensable factor for maintaining peace in the region and an effective deterrent.

Azerbaijan's attempts to present the UN Security Council resolutions, which Azerbaijan itself violated, as having binding force in the settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict have no legal reasoning and pursue hidden goals that run counter to the negotiation process.

Neither before nor after passing the resolutions, the UN Security Council considered the issue of political settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict, refraining from direct mediation initiatives in support of the CSCE / OSCE efforts, which is directly stated in the resolutions. This is also indicated by the fact that after signing the May 12, 1994 trilateral termless Agreement on a full ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, the UN Security Council no

longer returned to the issue of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict.

It should also be taken into account that according to the UN Charter, the Security Council can make both decisions and recommendations. When considering issues related to the legal force of the UN Security Council documents, the International Court of Justice concluded that the decisions of the Security Council are binding for states, while the recommendations are not. All the resolutions of the UN Security Council adopted with regard to the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict are recommendatory and not binding.

If Azerbaijan really had considered the resolutions of the UN Security Council as binding and referred to them, proceeding from the interests of achieving final peace, then it would have implemented the requirements and appeals of the resolutions, which mostly refer to Baku.

On the contrary, the targeted policy of the Azerbaijani authorities on destabilizing the situation on the Line of Contact between the armed forces of the Republic of Artsakh and Azerbaijan, Baku's refusal to implement confidence-building measures and to reduce tensions, its propaganda of xenophobia and hatred towards Armenians, refusal to negotiate directly with Artsakh, as well as its efforts to isolate Artsakh by preventing the visits of representatives of specialized UN agencies to the Republic run counter to the letter and spirit of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Against the background of the incessant threats by the Azerbaijani authorities and, in particular, the statements by the military leadership that the order for the offensive will be given "at exactly the right moment, taking into account the international political situation", it becomes obvious that Azerbaijan makes another attempt to manipulate the UN Security Council resolutions in the interests of war, not peace.



## NASA to award its highest honor to Yervant Terzian



NASA has announced it will award the Distinguished Public Service Medal, its highest honor, to astronomer Yervant Terzian, the Tisch Distinguished Professor Emeritus, the Cornell University informs.

The medal will be presented by NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine at the NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston on Aug. 2. The ceremony will be broadcast live at noon EDT on NASA TV.

“Dr. Yervant Terzian has dedicated his life to education, public service and scientific research,” according to NASA in its award citation. “He has used his enthusiasm for space exploration and education to bring inspirational experiences to students and the general public across the country.”

NASA continued: “Dr. Yervant Terzian has made an indelible impact on education and inspiring young minds. ... He has evoked comprehension and wonder in his students and in his public audiences. These accomplishments and his eminent humanity prove Dr. Terzian worthy of this Distinguished Public Service Medal.”

Terry Herter, chair and professor of astronomy, agrees. “Dr. Terzian has been a relentless, eloquent ambassador for the sciences over his entire career, reaching

and influencing undergraduates, graduate students, colleagues and the general public. This is a very well-deserved award.”

Terzian has served on eight NASA committees, including the Hubble Space Telescope Fellowship Committee, NASA’s Diversity in Science Education and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory’s Radio Astronomy Evaluation Committee. For 20 years, Terzian directed the NASA New York Space Grant Consortium, comprising 19 universities and five industries and science centers. In 2012, the 52 state NASA Space Grant directors elected Terzian chairman.

“The Space Grant has been very successful in implementing space programs for the brightest students across New York state to provide them with opportunities to develop their interest in space,” said Terzian. “This is what will keep the United States as the leader.”

For 12 years, Terzian served as a visiting lecturer in astronomy for the American Astronomical Society, traveling across the U.S. enhancing college communities’ scientific understanding of the universe. He has also contributed to dozens of radio and television programs for public listeners, on topics such as life in the universe, NASA and the space program, the U.S. space shuttle program, and the state

of astronomy.

Terzian said he has been inspired throughout his life by the ancient Greeks and their deductive method of science. “When I was very young and asked my father why there were stars, I was not satisfied with the answers, and I started reading everything I could from the American Library in Cairo,” he explained. “The description of nature through our science, through our scientific methods, is still young, and we should expect major discoveries in the future. From the work humans have achieved so far, we can deduce that we are not alone in the universe, and the day will come that we will find life in other planets.”

Terzian is known for his studies of stellar evolution and the discovery of regions of hydrogen gas between distant galaxies – a finding that indicated the presence of unseen matter in intergalactic space. His research using national radio astronomy observatories has been supported by NASA and the National Science Foundation. He is the author or co-author of more than 235 scientific publications and the editor of seven books, including “Carl Sagan’s Universe.”

A member of the faculty since 1965, Terzian served as chair of Cornell’s Department of Astronomy from 1979 to 1999. He initiated the National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates program at Cornell, which offers summer research for students, particularly women and members of underrepresented groups.

Among Terzian’s many honors are NASA’s Lifetime Achievement Award and the Republic of Armenia’s Gold Medal, its highest honor for scientific achievement. He was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2001.

At Cornell, Terzian has been recognized for the excellence of his teaching with the Clark Distinguished Teaching Award in 1984 and the Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellowship Award in 2001.



## Yerevan's "Magic Swing" is to be a Magic



By  
**Gourgen  
James  
Khazhakian**  
Chief  
Correspondent

This author's wonderful memories and reflections on Crystal Castle, a gigantic and a really enchanting staging with participation of the Bolshoi stars, technical inventions, 14 trucks bringing here decorations, costumes etc from Moscow via snowy mountains (!) , in a word, a miracle that came true thanks to the incredible will, talent and personal financial investment by our universally beloved Maestro **Constantine**

of the staging is a really unbelievable. Thus, this author has got knew that thanks to the Maestro Orbelian, Yerevan Theater has got very powerful screen projection system that is unique in the South Caucasus, with a capacity of 50 thousand liumens, with a screen meeting requirements of the large enough area, and this gives a nice chance to use the most advanced technology solutions in staging.

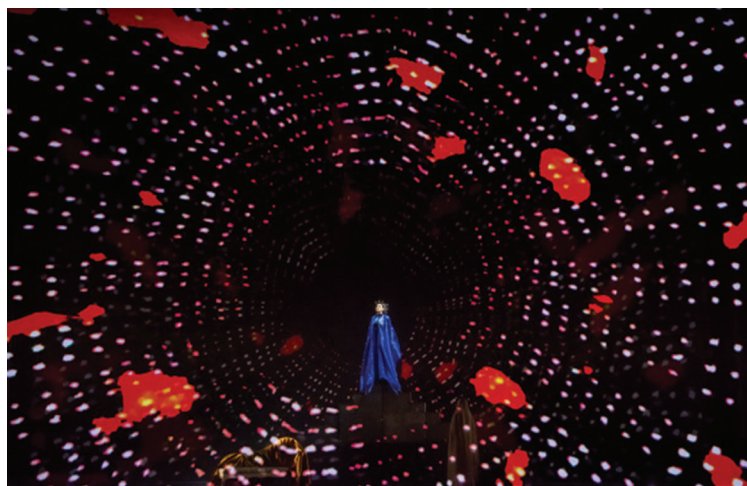
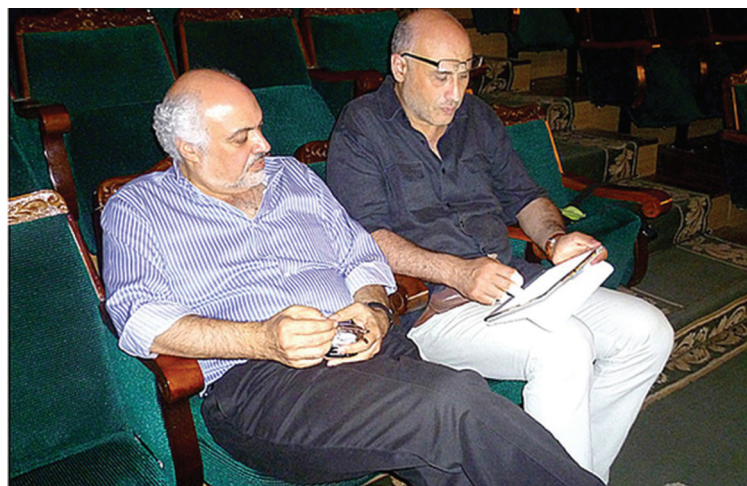
The use of the screen animation by Italian director **Paolo Micicé** was wide enough.

Senior Paolo is known in Armenia. Let us remind that in the fall of 2017 in Yerevan took place another unique event based on a very interesting synthesis of the music and

In order to overcome the obstacle of language, the theater invited a baritone residing now in Germany **Mkrtych Babajanyan** who participated in the premiere of opera "Sasuntsi Davit" by **Haro Stepanyan** in the Town of Shushi in 2017.

Speaking to Armenian newspress, director Paolo Micicé said: "I am in Yerevan Opera Theater for the second time and it is wonderful that I am amazed and surprised by the orchestra, choir (principal conductor **Karen Sargsyan**), soloists..."

And our surprise was a fact that Paolo mentioned all the names of all the soloists involved in this opera, - **Sofia Sayadyan** (Night Queen), **Perch Karazian**



**tine ("Kotik") Orbelian, Jr.**, have been a "hot'n'fresh" yet, and here you are – another messa in scena grandioso.

So, just a few days ago in the National Opera and Ballet Theater, the general rehearsal of Mozart's "Magical Shingle" opera was held. And the technical saturation

the cutting-edge technologies presenting masterpieces of the Greatest Italians, **Verdi** and **Michelangelo**.

As to "our" "Magic Flute", only various arias from it were presented in Yerevan within the years, and the most popular of them was Night Queen aria.

(Tamino), **Julietta Alexanyan** (Pamina), **Kim Sargsyan** (Papageno), **Alina Pahlevanyan**, **Zohrab Zohrabyan**, **Ruben Nurijanyan**, **Marina Deinyan**, **Anna Mnatsakanyan** and others.

*Photographs courtesy The Natl Opera and Ballet Theatre Press Service*



## New exhibition at Metropolitan Museum of Art to focus on Medieval Armenia

The Metropolitan Museum of Art will soon unveil "Armenia!," which explores Armenian arts and culture through its history, Blouinartinfo reports.

Charting the history of Armenia from its conversion to Christianity in the early fourth century to its prominent role in international trade routes in the 17th century, the show looks at how Armenians developed a national identity. It also emphasizes on how they upheld and transformed their traditions as they traveled to other parts of the world.

The display features more than 140 gilded reliquaries, richly illuminated manuscripts, rare textiles, liturgical furnishings made of precious materials, khachkars (cross stones), church models, and printed books. "These demonstrate Armenia's distinctive imagery in their homeland and other



major Armenian sites, from the Kingdom of Cilicia on the Mediterranean to New Julfa, in Safavid Persia," the museum writes. Also on view would be select comparative works that highlight how Armenians interacted with other cultures.

The exhibition focuses on major Armenian centre of production

covering from west to east. "The emphasis is on images of Armenians, from self-portraits to depictions of male and female rulers, donors, theologians, and historians," the museum adds. "Special attention is given to works by major artists such as T'oros Roslin, Sargis Pidzak, Toros Taronatsi, and Hakob of Julfa working in the

Armenian homeland, the Kingdom of Cilicia, and New Julfa."

Almost all the works in the exhibition are provided by major Armenian repositories and most of them are on view in the U.S. for the first time. More than half of the works on display are on loan from The Republic of Armenia with the support of The Ministry of Culture. Additional works are drawn from The Met and other American and European institutions. According to the museum, "photographs of Armenian architecture and landscapes by noted Armenian-Canadian photographer Hrair Hawk Khatcharian and his assistant Lilit Khachatryan will provide context for the works in the exhibition.

"Armenia!" runs from September 22, 2018, through January 13, 2019 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

## Armenian folk culture presented at the first day of Smithsonian Festival

The first day of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival began on June 27 with a downpour of rain, but this did not dampen the spirits of the artisans, specialists and volunteers on the National Mall, nor of the guests, many of whom had traveled from far corners of the United States to see this year's two festival components, called Armenia: Creating Home and Catalonia: Tradition and Creativity, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator reports.

The theme uniting both the Armenian and Catalan exhibits is the linkage between cultural heritage and economic enterprise. The Armenian exhibits include demonstrations of various types of crafts, including ironworking (the old-fashioned way with an anvil), pottery, carpet making, weaving, lace making, and stone and wood carving, and various food-related displays, including cooking demonstrations, lectures on Armenian wine, and volunteers collecting information from

visitors on their family food traditions. Live music and dance were ever-present, with folk and jazz the dominant varieties of the former. Even Armenian games, in the form of the frik or spinning top, were demonstrated, and there was a shadow puppet show. There were panel discussions, and storytelling and film screenings will also be part of forthcoming programs.

Craftsmen came from various parts of Armenia, not just the capital, and as most did not know English, they were paired with interpreters, some of whom were also ethnographers or academic specialists in related fields.

When guests wanted to take a break from wandering among the various exhibits and demonstrations, they could go to food booths which in the Armenian case featured a variety of traditional foods and wines. A store offered various Armenian, Catalan and other folk items for sale.

For many visitors, it seemed as



if a corner of Armenia had been transplanted or recreated temporarily in the capital of the United States. It was an unprecedented event on Armenian culture in the United States in terms of scale and outreach.

The Smithsonian Institution, supported by USAID and the US Embassy in Armenia (and through the My Armenia Cultural Heritage Tourism Program), partnered with the government

of the Republic of Armenia and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. Consequently, at the evening reception, President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian spoke, along with Carolyn Mugar of the Armenian Assembly of America, and various Smithsonian officials, including Sabrina Lynn Motley, the director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

## Zodiac Weekly Forecast



**Aries (March 20–April 19)**

Irritability and a tendency to short temper may be your companions this week. Beware the temptation to obsess over minor issues. Take especially good care of your body at this time. You are in a physically low cycle and subject to accident or minor injuries with tools, or vehicles.



**Leo (July 22–August 21)**

This is likely to be a really favorable week if you spend time with home, hearth, and family. Do not push anyone's "hot" button, because the result won't be amusing. Being near a body of water would soothe your soul.



**Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)**

Aspects to Jupiter, your planetary avatar, promise a beautiful week. You may enjoy one or more soulful connections with friends or family. An unexpected gift may come your way. It is not necessarily expensive, but it is meaningful to you.



**Taurus (April 20 – May 20)**

Venus, your ruling planet, moves into the sector of life related to children, recreation, and romance. The goddess of love is happy in this territory and often brings new energy and light wherever she goes. Opportunities to share your love, personal or humanistic, will prove rewarding.



**Virgo (August 22–September 22)**

Stay behind the scenes at this time. Support the team. Don't press to get your way if there is opposition. Life will be smoother this way. Spend more than usual time in the quiet zones. It will be refreshing. If you must press forward, prepare for an energy consuming battle.



**Capricorn (December 21–January 19)**

Aspects are not the best for the Goats at this time. You may feel isolated or as though no one around you can possibly understand who or what you are. The inner critic could overrun your mind if you allow it. Remember that feelings come and go like waves. They never remain the same.



**Gemini (May 20–June 20)**

Drive and handle tools carefully this week. Give special attention to unusual messages or to new people who enter your life during this time. A "teacher" crosses your path in the form of a person, a book, or the right message that will steer you in the next favorable direction.



**Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)**

You have a need to be alone and quiet during this month. That is why social life is in a dip. Give attention to your inner life and notice what your thoughts may be manifesting. Is it really what you want in your future? Think carefully. Focus on your dreams as a means of discerning what has been unconscious and wants to surface.



**Aquarius (January 20–February 17)**

Taking a bold path may suit your preference now, but it is not the greatest of ideas. You will meet pushback from unexpected places. A better tack is to use your power of persuasion in order to gain a following. Carefully explaining the wisdom of your desired path gains supporters, one at a time.



**Cancer (June 21–July 21)**

This is a fine time for a vacation. You would especially enjoy the natural world, so make it a point to take walks and let yourself be nourished by plant life, sunshine and flowers. Relationships with children and/or lovers go favorably.



**Scorpio (October 23–November 21)**

This looks like a week in which you really want to say your piece, but you have a sense that would be a bad idea. Agreed. Your ruling planet, Mars, continues to retrograde. If someone "attacks" you, then you may safely defend yourself. But if you want to snipe at anyone, you'd best keep it to yourself for now.



**Pisces (February 18–March 19)**

Your overall creativity is up a couple of notches. Interests such as poetry, painting, crafts and anything that allows you to enjoy the display of color will perk up your senses. Love and spiritual life flow freely through your heart at this time.



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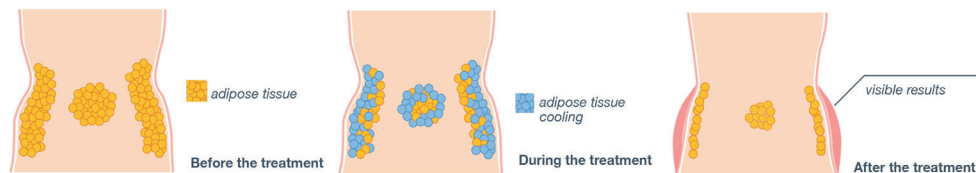
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