

Nikol Pashinyan: “The Government will do its utmost, but the effort, position, behavior of one person is much more important, and you are that one person.”



After a regular meeting of the Commandant’s Office, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a daily briefing with Mher Davidyants, Director of Nork Infectious Diseases Hospital, and Vaghinak Minasyan, Senior Police Lieutenant, Inspector of the 5th Special Battalion of the Yerevan Police Department.

To being with, the Premier advised that at present about 200 coronavirus patients in Armenia are waiting for their turn to be hospitalized. “I am saying this with a feeling of deep bitterness, but today there are about 200 patients waiting for their turn to be hospitalized. In other words, our healthcare system is working so hard that we do not have time to accommodate them. Moreover, we already have a case when a person infected with the coronavirus died due to delay in medical care,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister noted that the reasons for delay are twofold. The patient’s relatives were a little late in passing the correct information to the healthcare system. Information arrived too late; the reaction was delayed and resulted in the patient’s death.

The Premier stressed that the Commandant’s Office meeting participants came close to the decision on the announcement of a total lockdown, but following some discussion they noted that such a decision might not lead to the desired outcome.

“This is not the right solution, not only because we might face challenging economic consequences, but by and

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Georgia reiterates willingness to assist Armenia's Covid-19 response efforts

The Georgian Government has reaffirmed willingness to provide assistance to Armenia in fighting the coronavirus.

During a phone conversation today the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Georgia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and David Zalkaliani exchanged views on the steps taken to prevent the spread of a new type of coronavirus and to address the socio-economic consequences of the epidemic at the national level.

The Georgian Foreign Minister expressed his support to Armenia in the fight against the epidemic and reaffirmed the readiness of the Georgian government to provide assistance.

Minister Mnatsakanyan highly assessed the close cooperation at the level of differ-



ent departments of Armenia and Georgia, the regular contacts and mutual assistance in addressing the challenges caused by the pandemic, including organization of the return of Armenian and Georgian citizens to each other's territory.

Foreign Ministers Mnatsakanyan and Zalkaliani discussed a wide range of issues on the bilateral agenda. In this regard, Min-

ister Mnatsakanyan called for the deepening of practical cooperation between the two peoples based on centuries-old friendship and strategic interconnection in all the directions outlined by the two leaders during the Prime Minister's visit to Georgia in March. Foreign Minister Mnatsakanyan reaffirmed his invitation to Georgian Foreign Minister Zalkaliani to visit Armenia.

In the context of multilateral cooperation, reference was also made to the forthcoming events within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Foreign Ministers Mnatsakanyan and Zalkaliani exchanged views on security issues, emphasizing the need to maintain international and regional peace and security in the context of the pan-Armenian conflict.

Azerbaijan's Armenophobic propaganda undermines the peace process – MFA Spox

Azerbaijan's Armenophobic propaganda and its war threats seriously undermine the peace process, Spokesperson for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan has said.

According, to her, the top leadership of Azerbaijan and state agencies have been competing in delivering hysterical Armenophobic statements with no substantive content.

"It seems that the Azerbaijani leadership is attempting desperately to exceed its previous Armenophobic statements, which is not an easy task to do amid its consistent decades-long anti-Armenian discourse," Naghdalyan said in a statement.

She noted that the authoritarian leadership of Azerbaijan, which promotes hatred among its people and puts forward war threats, instrumentalized the fighting against COVID-19 to commit massive



human rights violations in its country. Recently, a number of reputable international and regional organizations have raised their voice against these practices of Azerbaijan.

"Nevertheless, even though the Armenophobic propaganda and war threats of Azerbaijan are meant for domestic consumption, they seriously undermine the peace process and demonstrate that not the population, but the top leadership of Azerbaijan is not prepared for peace," the Spokesperson said.

"The anti-Armenian actions of the leadership of Azerbaijan have already received their legal assessment by the international bodies. In this vein, the ECHR ruling on "Makuchyan and Minasyan vs Azerbaijan and Hungary" case condemned Azerbaijan's racist policy, which was manifested by pardone, release and glorification of the murderer Ramil Safarov," she added.

"The current authorities of Azerbaijan, which consider Armenophobia as the main source of their legitimacy and domestic consolidation, pose a threat not only to Artsakh, Armenia and all Armenians, but also to regional peace and security," Anna Naghdalyan stated.

She added that the security system of Artsakh and Armenia is comprehensive and consolidated enough to effectively address and confront such threats.

page 1 large because we are convinced that the poor quality of enforcing the quarantine would preclude us from achieving the desired results. The flash mob of recent days has convinced us that we are dealing with such total non-compliance with the established rules that if we now close the borders of the settlements of the Republic of Armenia, we will come across with instances of non-compliance in buildings, courtyards, etc. We might thereby break down the backbone of the economy, and eventually return to some 600-700 new cases per day as soon as the lockdown is lifted," Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Head of Government said the country has reached a critical point and is going through hell. "The solution to this problem, at least in the medium term, can only be achieved when a truly nationwide anti-epidemic movement sparks in Armenia, and each of us will proceed from the assumption that he / she and his relatives may die due to a shortage of hospital beds. Each of us should be guided by the presumption that he or she is infected and should not infect others," the Prime Minister said.

The Premier noted that the World Health Organization has reconsidered its previous estimate as regards the mandatory requirement of wearing masks in public areas. "Today's WHO assessment is exactly in line with our decisions. Consequently, one of

the most important tasks of the anti-epidemic movement should be to neutralize counter-measures regarding anti-epidemic actions and provide total support to the government in taking anti-epidemic steps. We have only one way out of this situation: walking out of hell until we reach the other side. We have already crossed the red line where the hell begins. But I would like to say that the government is taking two steps in this situation: first, we speak directly, honestly and keep in close touch with society, and second, we are taking all necessary steps to increase the number of beds in hospitals and intensive care units," the Prime Minister emphasized.

Director of the Nork Infectious Diseases Clinical Hospital Mher Davidyants noted that for two months now the hospital staff has not known what rest is. "We are all cut off from our families and spend all day in the hospital. There are cases when a person is diagnosed with COVID-19, but the infection runs in a very mild form, in some cases asymptomatic, but in this case there is an essential fact: if we take this situation seriously, if we do not strictly follow the prescribed rules and measures, we will jeopardize the health and life of those around us. Let us not forget that our parents and grandparents are among them," he said, adding that recently the disease has changed its course, and if in March there

were mainly mild and moderate cases, now severe and extremely severe cases prevail. "I consider it important to single out cases when people turned for medical help too late, and in the reception we saw a group of people with low oxygen, and, unfortunately, we have problems with the stock of available beds," Mr. Davidyants said, urging citizens to help the country's healthcare staff and comply with anti-epidemic rules.

"Dear citizens, I am now asking all of you to help us, the medical workers. We have been working without any complaint in recent months and will continue to do so. I told my team that we will fight until the last patient is discharged. I ask everyone to observe the anti-epidemic measures: please wear masks, strictly limit the scope of your contacts, leave home only in case of emergency, disinfect your hands frequently and observe social distancing rules," Mr. Davidyants said.



PM makes decisions on appointments of new Police Chief, NSS Director and Chief of General Staff



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made decisions over new appointments,

the PM said in a statement on Facebook. "Dear compatriots, I have made several

important decisions.

Accordingly,

Lieutenant-General Onik Gasparyan will be appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

Colonel Argishti Kyaramyan will be appointed Director of the National Security Service.

Colonel Vahe Ghazaryan will be appointed Chief of Police.

The decisions will enter into force de jure after being signed by the President of the Republic.

I want to thank Lieutenant-General Artak Davtyan, Colonel Eduard Martirosyan and Colonel Arman Sargsyan for the work and efforts done during this period", Pashinyan said.

The decisions will come into force after the President signs relevant decrees

Armenian tax service explains chief's surprise resignation

(RFE/RL) - Davit Ananyan, the head of Armenia's State Revenue Committee (SRC), has resigned after refusing to obey Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's orders to fire one of his subordinates, the national tax service said on June 5.

The SRC's press office said that Pashinyan and Ananyan had "differences of solely working nature related to a personnel issue." "Mr. Ananyan preferred to resign, rather than fire one of the efficient cadres with long experience in the [taxation] sphere," it said in a statement.

The statement, which is highly unusual for an Armenian government agency, did not name that official or give other details.

An SRC source told RFE/RL's Armenian service that Ananyan objected to the sacking of Mher Martirosyan, the chief of a major customs terminal outside Yerevan which drew Pashinyan's ire earlier this week.

As part of his efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus in Armenia, the prime minister shared on his Facebook page a photograph of people standing in a line at the terminal and failing to observe social distancing. He demanded that Ananyan deal with the problem.



Pashinyan's spokeswoman, Mane Gevorgyan, declined to confirm or deny that Ananyan quit because of rejecting the premier's demand.

Pashinyan was reticent about the resignation when he addressed lawmakers via a video link later on Friday. He thanked Ananyan for his performance before promising "new changes" within the tax and customs service.

"We hope that the substantive changes, which began during Mr. Ananyan's tenure, will deepen and expand further," said Pashinyan.

Ananyan gave no reasons for his unex-

pected resignation when he announced it on Thursday.

Some media outlets claimed afterwards that several other senior SRC officials have also decided to step down. The SRC did not comment on those reports.

Ananyan, 48, promised a tough crackdown on tax evasion when he took over the SRC in May 2018 shortly after the "Velvet Revolution" that brought

Pashinyan to power. The Armenian government's tax revenues have risen significantly since then, a fact regularly touted by Pashinyan.

The premier declared on Friday that "2019 was a historic year for Armenia in the budgetary sense." He argued that the SRC exceeded its tax revenue target by 104 billion drams (\$215 million).

The SRC collected about a total of 1.5 trillion drams (\$3.1 billion) in various taxes and customs duties last year, up by 16.4 percent from 2018.

Bulgaria sends medical supplies to Armenia



The Bulgarian Government has sent medical supplies in support to Armenia's fight against coronavirus, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs.

On June 3, on behalf of the Government of

maktchieva handed over 500 sets of medical supplies (protective uniforms, helmets and

Bulgaria, the Ambassador of Bulgaria to Armenia Maria Pavlova Tsotsorkov-Kay-

goggles) to Armenia's Deputy Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan.

"We appreciate the support of our partners and this friendly step in our united struggle against the epidemic," the Foreign Ministry said.



Canada stops military exports to Azerbaijan and bans arms sales to Turkey

On May 29th, 2020, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) published its annual report on Canada's Military Exports, where it had mentioned that no military export permits were issued to Azerbaijan during 2019, reported the Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC).

Since the sale of armored vehicles from private Canadian companies to the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2017, this is the second year in a row that Canada has not included Azerbaijan in the list of countries with whom it trades military goods. Following Turkey's "Operation Peace Spring" in Syria in October 2019, Canada also banned military exports to Ankara, which was renewed indefinitely in April 2020.

Following the publication of the report, on June 4th, 2020, the ANCC sent a letter to Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon. Francois-Philippe Champagne, com-



mending the government's decision and urging the minister to continue refraining from engaging in arms trade with both Turkey and Azerbaijan.

In the letter, ANCC Co-Presidents, Hrag Tarakdjian and Shahan Mirakian said: "Turkey and Azerbaijan pose a significant military threat within their immediate region and beyond. While Turkey continues to destabilize the Middle East and threaten the very existence of local minorities, Azerbaijan has significantly increased its

military preparedness, constantly signalling a renewal of hostilities in the Republic of Artsakh, while threatening to attack the Republic of Armenia directly."

ANCC's co-presidents also shared their hope that based on Canada's arms export regulations and Ottawa's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty, military export permits bound for Turkey and Azerbaijan will become subject to a more rigorous assessment

process.

"Canada simply cannot become complicit in the unspeakable war crimes and human rights abuses sanctioned and carried out by regressive dictatorships such as Turkey and Azerbaijan," mentioned the letter.

"We will continue to monitor the trade of military goods between Canada, Turkey and Azerbaijan and ensure that our government always does the right thing," concluded Tarakdjian and Mirakian.

Colorado House of Representatives passes bill on Holocaust and Armenian Genocide education

The Colorado House of Representatives has unanimously passed House Bill 1336 – Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Public Schools – which requires Holocaust and Armenian Genocide education as a condition for High School graduation in Colorado, ANCA Colorado reports.

ANCA Colorado thanked the original sponsors, Representative Dafna Michaelson Jenet, Representative Emily Sirota, Senator Steve Fenberg, and Senator Dennis Hisey, as well as "honorary Armenian" lawmakers Rep. Daneya Esgar and Senator Dominick Moreno, for championing this bill and making sure that



the Armenian community was included in the process from the very beginning.

It also expressed special gratitude to partners – the Coalition against Global Genocide and Jewish Colorado – for working hand in hand with ANCA Colorado to

make the cause of genocide education a reality.

"And a huge thank you to all the organizations, in particular Armenian National Committee – Western Region, Armenians of Colorado and ADL – Anti-Defamation League, for making sure that the State of Colorado has the funds to implement the law," the Committee said in a Facebook post.

Next steps: third reading (final/formal vote) in the House; Senate committees; Senate second and third readings; Governor's signature.

Armenian government to finance budget deficit from both external and domestic sources – minister

The Armenian government is going to finance the 2020 state budget's envisaged deficit both from external and domestic sources. There is already an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over a certain sum of money, the rest is expected to be funded at the expense of domestic sources, Finance Minister Atom Janjughazyan said during the joint session of the parliamentary standing committees.

The minister reminded that due to the current novel coronavirus crisis they have proposed the Parliament to fix nearly 324 billion drams instead of the envisaged 162 billion drams in deficit. "According to the data published in April it is expected that the global economic decline will be nearly 3.5%. For the EU, around 7.5% decline is



forecast, for Russia – 5.5%.

And this supposedly will also have an impact on our forecasts of this year. And under the conditions of these 324 billion drams in deficit we assessed that we need additional 260 billion drams for implementing the anti-crisis measures", the minister said.

There is already an agreement with the IMF, the sums to be attracted will be used for meeting the needs of the state budget. "A total of 280 billion USD is already available. But the 35 million USD will be

available based on the results of the revision of the second program expected in autumn.

It's expected we will finance the difference by issuing additional state debt in the domestic market", the minister added. "We believe that the trust is quite deep, and our cooperation with the local investors has a history of already decades.

Within this framework we expect that it would be possible to finance the difference by issuing a debt from the domestic sources", the minister said, adding that they also consider other sources, through other international financial organizations.

Minister Janjughazyan assured that the current rating allows to think also of issuing Eurobonds in the international financial market.

Tax revenues grew by 16.4% in 2019: Armenian deputy PM introduces budget performance

The performance of the 2019 state budget met the criteria set by the fiscal rules. The tax revenues and expenditures grew in 2019, Deputy prime minister of Armenia Mher Grigoryan said at the joint session of the parliamentary standing committees, introducing the report of the 2019 budget performance.

He reminded that in 2019 the economy of Armenia continued growing at faster rates compared to 2018 and a high 7.6% economic growth was registered compared to the previous year. In the same period the global economic growth comprised 2.6%, the average growths of the EU and the EAEU comprised 1.4% and 1.6% respectively.

"In 2019 the 12-month inflation comprised 0.7%, and the average inflation – 1.4%. The volumes of loans provided to residents by commercial banks and the deposits

attracted continued growing at high rates in 2019, and the declining trends in interest rates of loans and deposits with the dram were obvious. The implementation of the 2019 state budget was in accordance with the criteria set by the fiscal rules. The capital expenditures of the state budget surpassed the amount of the state budget deficit", he said.

In September 2019 Armenia successfully

distributed foreign currency bonds worth 500 million USD for a 10-year term in the international capital market, with a 4.2% profitability.

In 2019, nearly 1.5 trillion AMD revenues entered to the state budget, which was an increase of 16.7% or nearly 223 billion AMD compared to the figure of the previous year. Tax revenues grew by 16.4% or 206 billion drams. Tax revenues-GDP ratio rate comprised 22.35%. The state budget expenditures in 2019 comprised nearly 1.6 trillion AMD, ensuring the annual program by 92.4%. In 2018 the budget expenditures grew by 12.6% or nearly 182 billion drams.

The deficit-GDP rate comprised 1% against the predicted 2.2%. As of December 31, 2019, the government's debt comprised nearly 3.2 trillion AMD (6.8 billion USD or 50% of GDP).



The UAE's Global Efforts in Response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease(COVID-19)



The UAE's Global Efforts in Response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
Last update: 4 June 2020



Overview on the UAE Global Efforts:

- The UAE is one of the first countries to reach out and extend a hand of help to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, where it has started early planning of many humanitarian initia-

tives to help curb the spread of the virus.

- While the UAE continues its constant work of supporting the global efforts aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 disease, it has provided more than 708 tons of medical aid, personal protection kits and supplies to 62 countries worldwide to date, with direct beneficiaries exceeding 708,000 health workers.
- In addition, 65 million indirect beneficiaries profited from the UAE's global efforts in combatting the spread of the virus.

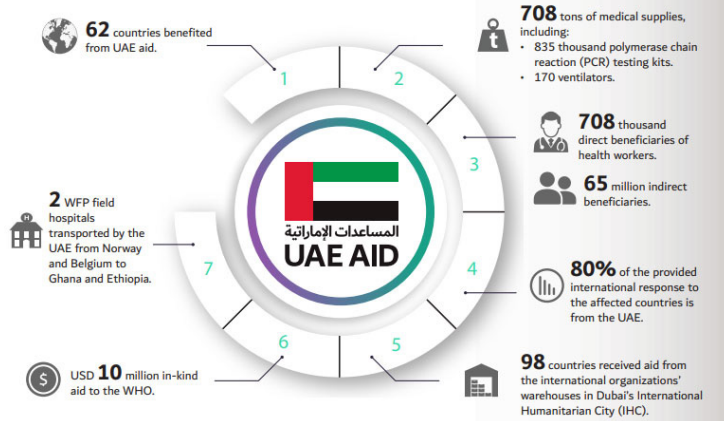
Efforts of the Dubai's International

Humanitarian City (IHC):

- The UAE is regarded as the main lifeline for the logistic operations of the international organizations' strategic ware-

houses in Dubai's IHC where the UAE is the first responder to the global crises, especially the provided assistance in relation to the current (COVID-19) pandemic.

- In fact, more than 80% of the international response was provided as assistance sent from Dubai's IHC to the affected countries worldwide.
- In addition, Dubai's IHC dispatched more than 132 shipments to 98 countries around the world so far since the beginning of this year, and working as a central hub to distribute the personal protections kits.



Upcoming flights to/from Armenia

The Armenian Civil Aviation Committee has presented the schedule of upcoming flights to Armenia.

SCAT airline will operate Nur Sultan-Yerevan-Nur Sultan flight on June 5 (arrival in Yerevan at 04:30, departure at 06:00).

On June 6 Belavia will carry out Minsk-Yerevan-Minsk flight (arrival in Yerevan at 02:45, departure at 03:35).

On the same day Red Wings will operate Moscow-Yerevan flight (arrival in Yerevan at 21:40).

Belavia will operate a second Minsk-Yerevan-Minsk flight on June 7 (arrival in Armenia at 02:45, departure at 03:35).

On the same day SKYUP airline will carry out Kyiv-Yerevan-Kyiv flight (arrival in Yerevan at 19:00, departure at 19:55).

On June 8 Belavia will operate Minsk-Yerevan-Minsk flight (arrival in Yerevan at 02:45. Departure at 03:35). Upon the Commandant's instruction, the Tourism Commit-

tee of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia will accompany the arriving passengers to the places of self-isolation.



Azerbaijan cannot be trusted as a reliable partner: Armenian Ambassador briefs OSCE on Safarov case

Armenia's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Ambassador Armen Papikyan has briefed the Permanent Council on ECtHR ruling on "Makuchyan and Minasyan vs Azerbaijan and Hungary" case.

According to him, the case discloses the real face of Azerbaijani authorities, whose actions, encouragements, distortions, exaggerations, manipulations and disinformation, their effective hate propaganda became an obstacle to peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"The prevailing level of hostility towards Armenians could not contribute to creation of an environment conducive to peace. The case vividly illustrates that under no circumstances Azerbaijani authorities can be entrusted with the responsibility of providing security to any part of the Armenian people. Therefore, under no circumstances the people of Artsakh cannot be left without secure lines of defense," Armen Papikyan stated.

He noted that the actions of Azerbaijan clearly demonstrate that this country cannot be regarded as a reliable partner in bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly when it comes to delivering on such commitments as fighting hate crimes.

Below are Ambassador Papikyan's remarks in full:

The purpose of introducing this current issue is to inform the participating States of the essence and details of the case and thus expose the latest attempts of the authorities of Azerbaijan at manipulation and disinformation, and denial of any wrongdoing in case of Ramil Safarov, the Azerbaijani military officer convicted of premeditated brutal murder of Armenian military officer in 2004, thus justifying and endorsing the glorification of that despicable hate crime.

The case in question was brought to the Strasbourg Court by Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan and Hungary (application no. 17247/13) after Ramil Safarov, who was convicted by the court in Hungary to serve a life-time sentence for decapitating by an axe of Armenian military officer Gurgen Margaryan while in his sleep and attempted murder of another Armenian officer during the NATO/PFP courses in Hungary back in 2004.

On 13 April 2006 the Budapest High



Court found Ramil Safarov guilty of the exceptionally cruel and premeditated murder of Gurgen Margaryan and of preparation for murder of Hayk Makuchyan. Based on the conclusions of the Hungarian court the crimes were committed with vile motives and exclusively because of the Armenian nationality of the victims.

On 31 August 2012 Safarov was transferred to Azerbaijan to continue serving his sentence there, was pardoned by the President of Azerbaijan immediately upon his landing in Baku, was given a hero welcome by the Government of Azerbaijan, its state officials including Mr. Ayaz Guliyev, the then Azerbaijani parliamentarian, Member of the OSCE PA and currently the Vice President of the same august body as well as Ms. Ganira Pashaeva, Member of the Azerbaijani Delegation to PACE at that time. Moreover, next day, on 1 September 2012 Safarov was promoted to the rank of major by the Minister of Defence during the course of a public ceremony. On 6 December 2012 he was provided use of a flat belonging to the State housing fund and he was also awarded eight years of salary arrears.

I am giving all these details in order for the participating States to clearly see that people who are trying today to convince the international community of their commitment to peace and tolerance, are in fact the same people who glorified the murderer who committed a heinous hate crime.

On 26 May 2020 the European Court of Human Rights in its ruling concluded that the actions of Azerbaijan to grant an impunity for a serious crime perpetrated by the axe murderer Ramil Safarov have no justification. "The Court considered that Azerbaijan had assumed responsibility for the enforcement of R.S.'s prison sentence upon his transfer, and from that point on, it had been called upon to provide an adequate response to a very serious ethnically-biased

crime for which one of its citizens had been convicted in another country. Instead of enforcing R.S.'s sentence, however, he had been set free and treated as an innocent or wrongfully convicted person and bestowed with benefits."

The measures taken by the high-ranking officials of Azerbaijan, including a specially dedicated page to Safarov opened on the President of Azerbaijan's website led to impunity which was coupled with the glorification of his extremely cruel hate crime. Safarov had in effect been granted impunity in Azerbaijan for the crimes committed against his Armenian victims. The Court concluded that Azerbaijan was in violation of its obligation under Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights (Rights to Life) to effectively deter the commission of offences which put others' lives at risk.

Moreover, the Court found sufficient evidence to conclude that Safarov's pardon and other measures in his favour had been racially motivated, whereas the ethnic bias of his crimes had already been fully investigated during Court proceedings in Hungary.

Moreover, the Court noted the statements by Azerbaijani officials calling Safarov a patriot and a hero. "It deplored the fact that the majority of those statements had expressed particular support for the fact that R.S.'s crimes had been directed against Armenian soldiers and considered that the very existence of the website suggested that he had been pardoned because of the ethnic nature of his attack."

Attempts by the Azerbaijani Government to deny the factor of ethnicity of the victim were not sufficient "to refute the overwhelming body of evidence from the applicants that the various measures leading to R.S.'s virtual impunity, coupled with the glorification of his extremely cruel hate crime, had had a causal link to the victims' Armenian ethnicity." Therefore, the Court found that Azerbaijan was in violation of Article 14 (Prohibition of Discrimination) in conjunction with Article 2 (Right to Life).

The Safarov transfer and subsequent an immediate release and glorification caused an outrage and wide-spread condemnation from countries all over the world,

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from such international organizations as the EU, Council of Europe. The European Parliament adopted a resolution in this regard, and various Parliamentary Assemblies reacted to this case.

As this Delegation underlined earlier, if we fail to condemn Azerbaijan's position on this issue, we would condone the words and the actions of Azerbaijan as it implicitly condones such acts itself. Fanning the flames of hatred, state sponsored and propagated Armenophobia in and by Azerbaijan provides a pretext, a reason, a motivation, better yet, a license to those who are inclined to operate outside the law, thinking they are doing national duty.

It is symptomatic that such brutality is being referred to by Azerbaijan as an "incident", thus encouraging self-appointed avengers to commit such despicable acts of vengeance operating outside the law. The Azerbaijani Government has never expressed any remorse regarding this ethnically motivated hate crime by the murderer whose words were "My job is to kill all [Armenians], because until they live, we will suffer".

The action of Azerbaijan clearly demonstrates that this country cannot be regarded as a reliable partner in bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly when it comes to delivering on such commitments as fighting hate crimes.

This whole case discloses the real face of Azerbaijani authorities, whose actions, encouragements, distortions, exaggerations, manipulations and disinformation, in short, their effective hate propaganda became an obstacle to peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The prevailing level of hostility towards Armenians could not contribute to creation of an environment conducive to peace. The Safarov case vividly illustrates that under no circumstances Azerbaijani authorities can be entrusted with the responsibility of providing security to any part of the Armenian people. Therefore, under no circumstances the people of Artsakh cannot be left without secure lines of defense.

Senator Menendez requests GAO review of skyrocketing U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan

Alarmed by a U.S. military aid program to Azerbaijan that has "skyrocketed" to more than \$120 million over the past three fiscal years, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) today formally requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) provide the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with a detailed report on this assistance program and its compliance with Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

Enacted in 1992, Section 907 places statutory restrictions and requirements on U.S. taxpayer funding to Azerbaijan until that government takes "demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh."

"We thank Senator Menendez for ensuring that the rapidly and recklessly expanding U.S. military aid program to an increasingly hostile Azerbaijan complies with all relevant provisions of U.S. law," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "His request today for a formal GAO assessment will bring much-needed sunshine – in the form of public scrutiny and Congressional oversight – to a secretive security scheme that, by all accounts, crosses multiple legal, moral, and humanitarian lines."

Senator Menendez, who serves as the



Committee's Ranking Member, called on the GAO to "initiate an assessment that considers, at a minimum, the following questions:"

1. What is the nature and quantity of all U.S. foreign assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan pursuant to the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, broken down by year, funding account, and implementing agency?

2. Was Congress informed of this assistance prior to its provision, as required by the waiver authority as outlined in the law? Was Congress informed through a formal Congressional notification, through a consult note, or through another procedure?

3. Since 2002, did the extensions to the waiver of Section 907 contain certifications of the elements as outlined in the law?

4. What is known about how assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan pursuant to the Section 907 waiver impacted ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

5. What is known about whether any of the assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan pursuant to the waiver was used for offensive purposes against Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh, or may have enabled such offensive purposes, however indirectly?

6. In addition to the impacts described in questions four and five, what else is known about the impact of foreign assistance provided to the Government of Azerbaijan pursuant to the Section 907 waiver?

Senator Menendez's letter is the latest in a series of Congressional calls for clarification on increased Azerbaijani security assistance, particularly in the face of increased Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) during the global COVID-19 pandemic. On May 21st, Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Vice-Chairs Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) were joined by over a dozen Congressional colleagues in calling on Secretary of State Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Esper to condemn Azerbaijan's large-scale military exercises. The Congressional leaders were concerned that the over \$100 million in military assistance "appears to have allowed Azerbaijan to shift resources toward offensive capabilities and further threaten Armenian lives and regional stability."

ANCA renews call on State Department to reprogram \$25 million in Armenia aid to fight Covid-19

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) today renewed its call on the U.S. Department of State to immediately reprogram at least \$25 million from the Congressionally appropriated aid package for Armenia to help fight the worsening COVID-19 pandemic.

“As the urgency of battling the COVID-19 pandemic grows day by day, the ANCA calls on the U.S. Department of State to accelerate reprogramming funds to help Armenia flatten the curve,” remarked ANCA Chairman Raffi Hamparian. “Any delay in reprogramming funds – at this point – will come at the cost of lives across Armenia. This is not acceptable,” added Hamparian.

In a letter sent on April 3, 2020, to the State Department making this \$25 million reprogramming request, the ANCA Chairman thanked the Administration for its initial emergency allocation and expressed the Armenian American community’s appreciation for all those at the Department of State and partner agencies who are striv-



ing selflessly to represent the United States, protect American citizens, support our allies, and help end this pandemic.

On the day the ANCA letter was sent, April 3rd, there were – according to the World Health Organization – 69 new COVID-19 cases and a total of 640 confirmed cases in Armenia; on June 4th, there were 697 new cases and a total of 11,221 confirmed cases. The Johns Hopkins University’s Coronavirus Resource Center cites an incidence rate of 398.79 per 100,000 people in Armenia.

On April 17, 2020, the Department of State confirmed to the ANCA, through a communication by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Caucasus and Eastern

Europe, George Kent, that the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan is open to adjusting the existing U.S. aid program to help Armenia meet its urgent priorities related to the COVID-19 crisis. According to a June 4th RFE/RL news item, the U.S. has allocated \$5.4 million in new assistance to combat COVID-19 in Armenia. A May 22nd U.S. Embassy press statement referenced that an additional \$1.2 million in “previously allocated assistance” has been redirected to address the implications of COVID-19.

In its April 3rd letter, the ANCA noted to the U.S. Department of State that the European Union had already announced that it is reprogramming \$33 million in existing funding to help Armenia bolster its COVID-19 efforts, and also made \$18 million in additional funds available for Armenia to acquire medical devices and equipment, support small and medium-sized businesses, and help ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches low-income families.

Australian MP Mike Freeland supports Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Joint Justice Initiative

The Federal Member for Macarthur, Dr. Mike Freeland has signed an Affirmation of Support for the Joint Justice Initiative of the Armenian-Australian, Assyrian-Australian and Greek-Australian communities, who are calling for Australian recognition of the Genocides suffered by their ancestors.

The February 2020 launch of the Joint Justice Initiative at Australia’s Parliament House featured the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU), Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) and Australian Hellenic Council (AHC), which declares Australia’s recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides as a priority on behalf of their communities.

Freeland, a Jewish-Australian, was a paediatrician before being elected to Federal Parliament in 2016. He has since served on the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health,



Aged Care and Sport and on the standing committee for Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

“We thank Dr. Mike Freeland for supporting national Australian recognition of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides,” said Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU) Executive Director, Haig Kayserian.

“The Joint Justice Initiative strives to lead Australia onto the side of truth and justice on this issue of primary importance to the Armenian-Australian, Assyrian-Australian

and Greek-Australian communities, and we believe Dr. Freeland’s support brings us a step closer to achieving our goal.”

The Joint Justice Initiative has so far announced the support of Freeland, Senator Eric Abetz, Senator Larissa Waters, Senator Pat Dodson, Jason Falinski MP, Josh Burns MP, John Alexander MP, Senator Andrew Bragg and Bob Katter MP, with a promise of more announcements to come.

On 25th February 2020, over 100 Federal Australian parliamentarians, diplomats, departmental officials, political staffers, academics, media and community leaders were treated to cultural performances, food, wine and brandy, as well as the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, which affirmed that the signatory public affairs representatives of the three communities were jointly committed to seeing Australia recognize the Turkish-committed Genocide against the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian citizens of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

Armenia, Iran reinstate visa-free regime

The temporary suspension of the visa-free travel between Armenia and Iran came to an end on May 31, the Armenian Foreign Ministry informs.

Citizens of Iran with ordinary passports can now enter the Republic of Armenia without a visa.

At the same the Ministry reminds that the state of emergency regime is still in place in Armenia until June 13. Therefore, restrictions on the entry and exit of persons from the territory of the Republic of Armenia will be maintained until the end of the state of emergency.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges the citizens of Armenia to plan a visit to the



Islamic Republic of Iran only in very urgent cases.

The visa-free regime between the two

countries was suspended in February due to the spread of Covid-19.

Hayastan Fund's "COVID-19: United Against the Pandemic" campaign raises over \$ 376,000

Thanks to the generosity of thousands of people from around the world and despite the current global crisis, the Hayastan All Armenian Fund's "COVID-19 Armenia: United Against the Pandemic" campaign has raised over \$ 376,000 as of June 3rd, 2020, \$ 230,000 of which has already been directed towards the fight against the Pandemic.

The infographic below shows the geography of the campaign as of 31.05. 2020.

The Armenia Fund expresses gratitude to over 700 individual donors and organizations as well as 15 Armenian communities around the world for their continued trust and support.

In addition to the \$230,000 of support to the healthcare sector, thanks to the gener-



osity of the Fund's local affiliates, an estimated \$250,000 worth of in-kind donations of medical equipment and supplies have

also been provided to the Healthcare Sectors in both Armenia and Artsakh.

New Armenian school set to open in Valence, France, in September 2020

The French-Armenian Kevork Arabian School in Valence, France will officially open in September, Zartonk Media reports.

It is the first everyday Armenians school to open in the diaspora for years.

This project is undertaken by the CCAV (French-Armenian Cultural Center of Valence, France). It is co-chaired by Archbishop Norvan Zakarian and Mr. Andre Hasbanian and was initiated by the AGEFAV (Management Association of the Future School). The school will be named after the main benefactor Kevork Arabian.

The premises will accommodate a school group consisting of a kindergarten, a primary school, and rooms dedicated to the cultural center.

The AGEFAV (Management Association of the Future School), founding group of



this school, has the mission of ensuring a good administrative and pedagogical management of the school.

AGEFAV aims to offer a high-quality school (kindergarten and primary school) providing an excellent education. To make this happen, the pedagogical team will adapt the teaching methodology to the psychology of each pupil, taking into consideration their social and cognitive development.

The educational and pedagogical project

of this school will be based on six key principles:

Development of pupils' sense of belonging through the learning of Armenian language, culture and history.

Compliance with the French National Education program to ensure all basics are acquired before going on to secondary school.

Training pupils to learn English with the goal to achieve an elementary level as fluent as the Armenian language.

Promotion of extracurricular activities (initiation to computers, chess, theater ...), essential to personal development and make them grow.

Initiation of pupils to Christian education through pastoral activities.

Pupils awareness to environmental and societal issues, to prepare them for the challenges of the future.

Domestic political fight during COVID-19 war has no justification: Ex-President Levon Ter- Petrosyan2020

First President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosyan commented on the current situation in the country caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) calling it a war.

In a report titled Simple Syllogism published at ilur.am, the ex-President said:

Coronavirus has declared a war to Armenia

The burden of running the war falls on the shoulders of the leadership

Who is fighting against the leadership, willingly or unwillingly betrays the nation.

The domestic political fight during the war is madness which has no justification".



Turkey Attempts to Take Over Armenian Properties in Jerusalem



By Harut Sassounian

An article in the Jewish Press of February 13, 2020 exposed the activities of the Turkish Government to take over the Armenian and Christian Quarters of Jerusalem. The article by journalist Baruch Yedid is titled, “Turkey Working to Take Over Armenian Quarters in Jerusalem’s Old City.”

Jerusalem’s Armenian “residents have told TPS [Tazpit Press Service] about efforts of Turkish officials in recent years to persuade them to deny the Armenian holocaust perpetrated by the Turks a century ago and other actions to acquire property owned by local Christians, according to Yedid.

A Jerusalem Armenian, whose grandfather had survived the Armenian Genocide, told TPS that 40 minutes into a meeting with a Turkish female diplomat, she tried to convince him to drop his activities for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. “I realized that she wanted to persuade me to cease my activity to preserve the Armenian massacre.” The Armenian said that he immediately showed the door to the Turkish diplomat who understood that the Armenian community will never give up on the recognition of the Genocide. “We will wait another 100 years, but we will never rescind our demand for compensation until we reach a payment agreement, like the one that Israel signed with Germany,” the Armenian said.

Other Armenian property owners in Jerusalem told TPS that Turkish government representatives recently offered them \$3,000 grants for their various needs. However, Armenians rejected the Turkish bribes, calling them “silencing grants designed to ensure that the Turkish government will not be sued for the 1915-1917 massacres.” Even though the Israeli journalist Yedid uses the term ‘massacre’ in line with the Israeli Government’s denialist policy, he quickly deviates from that policy by explaining that “the Armenian exter-

mination was a deliberate and systematic genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War against the Armenian population in its territory. Even after World War I, Turks, Kurds, and Arabs continued to massacre Armenians until 1923, and it is widely believed that about half the Armenians in Turkey, about 1.5 million people, were murdered.” Turks and Kurds did commit Genocide against Armenians, but I am not aware of any massacres of Armenians by Arabs.

Yedid continued his article by citing examples of Turkish attempts to purchase Armenian properties in Jerusalem: “Turkish pressures are also manifest in its activity to acquire Armenian assets. TPS learned that a few months ago, the residents of the Armenian Quarter were shocked to find that one of their homes was sold to a Muslim, three times its real value. An inquiry revealed that funding for the purchase of the Armenian property came from Turkey. Following the incident, some of the community leaders met to review the chain of events and took action to prevent the leakage of the community’s assets to the Turks. There is still a lingering fear among the Armenians of the Turks taking over or buying more property.”

Yedid cited another Turkish scheme to take over Christian properties in Jerusalem: “One Christian trader, who asked to remain anonymous, said that the Turks recently transferred to the Jordanian Waqf [Muslim endowment] very old ownership certificates, some crumbling, including Ottoman-era documents and property ownership documents in the Armenian and Christian Quarters. The trader, who showed TPS photos of several of the certificates, says the Turks have asked the Waqf to verify the documents which are being used to purchase the assets.” It is paradoxical that the Turkish government would not disclose from its archives the certificates of properties (deeds of trust) owned by Armenians prior to the Genocide, yet it would send copies of property certificates to a Jordanian Waqf.

Yedid also covered in his article “the growing Turkish activity in Jerusalem and its support for the Muslim Brotherhood [which] are of concern to Israel. In its recent annual intelligence assessment, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Division has, for the first time, defined Turkey as a threat.”

Yedid then described Israel’s reluctance to recognize the Armenian Genocide: “Israeli officials have often raised the possibility of recognizing the Armenian holocaust

as a counter-reaction to Turkish activity against Israel, which includes the hosting of Hamas’ terrorist headquarters in Turkey. Over the years, Israel has refrained from officially recognizing the Armenian genocide, fearing that such recognition would damage diplomatic relations between Israel and Turkey.” This is a nonsense argument as Israel’s relations with Turkey are already damaged and its recognition of the Armenian Genocide will not cause any further damage, just like last fall’s recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the U.S. House and the Senate did not negatively affect US-Turkish relations.

The Israeli journalist correctly pointed out that “Turkey monitors all publications on the Armenian genocide and considers the issue of great significance to Turkish national security, and accordingly, the Turks have not relented with their attempt to persuade the Armenians in Jerusalem to cease their commemorative endeavors.”

Yedid also reported that the Turkish government has been encouraging Turkish tourism to Jerusalem by paying the cost of travel to mosques in Jerusalem and the West Bank: “Turkish nonprofits operate in Jerusalem daily, helping mainly the Muslim Brotherhood and Jerusalem religious activities. A source in the Armenian Quarter said that Turkish tourists in the Old City have also recently been working against the Armenians, tearing up posters and publications about the Armenian genocide. Graffiti inscriptions in condemnation of the Armenians were sprayed on the Quarter’s walls.”

Furthermore, the Turkish ‘Heritage’ Society is active in Jerusalem “in the fields of education, culture, real estate and welfare, and also carries funding for the ‘convoy project’ to transport thousands of Muslim worshipers to mosques as well as funding tens of thousands of meals to break the Ramadan fast,” according to Yedid.

Similarly, TIKa, Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, funded several projects in Jerusalem. Dozens of mosques and houses have been renovated by Turkey.

It is up to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem to counter the Turkish efforts by precluding local Armenians from selling their properties to Turkish buyers. The Armenian Government’s Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs should assist the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem to oppose the Turkish attempts to encroach on the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem.

Ibuprofen tested as a coronavirus treatment

Scientists are running a trial to see if ibuprofen can help hospital patients who are sick with coronavirus, the BBC reports.

The team from London's Guy's and St Thomas' hospital and King's College believe the drug, which is an anti-inflammatory as well as a painkiller, could treat breathing difficulties.

They hope the low-cost treatment can keep patients off ventilators.



In the trial, called Liberate, half of the patients will receive ibuprofen in addition to

usual care.

The trial will use a special formulation of ibuprofen rather than the regular tablets that people might usually buy. Some people already take this lipid capsule form of the drug for conditions like arthritis.

Studies in animals suggest it might treat acute respiratory distress syndrome – one of the complications of severe coronavirus.

19 violinists from a dozen countries to participate in 16th Khachaturian Competition

Nineteen violinists will participate in the 16th Khachaturian International Competition. The musicians will represent the Republic of Korea, Russia, France, Luxembourg, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Japan, Austria, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Greece and Armenia.

The 16th Khachaturian International Competition will kick off on June 6, the composer's birthday.

Given the situation created by the coronavirus and the restrictions on the freedom of movement across the world, organizers have decided to hold the competition online.



The whole competition, the opening and closing concerts will be broadcast on the official website of Khachaturian competition. A number of technological innovations will be used throughout the competition.

The event will be held on June 6-15 and will feature violinists aged 16-32. Aram Khachaturian's works will also be per-

formed within the framework of the competition.

The winner of the competition will receive \$10,000, the second and third prize winners will get \$5,000 and \$3,000 respectively.

A number of special prizes will also be awarded.

The Khachaturian Competition is a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. Organized by the Aram Khachaturian Competition Cultural Foundation, the event aims to identify talented young musicians and provide them with opportunities for professional advancement.

Armenian PM, family recover from Covid-19

Nikol Pashinyan and family have recovered from Covid-19.

"We've just received the results of our double test. All results are negative," Pashinyan said in a Facebook post.

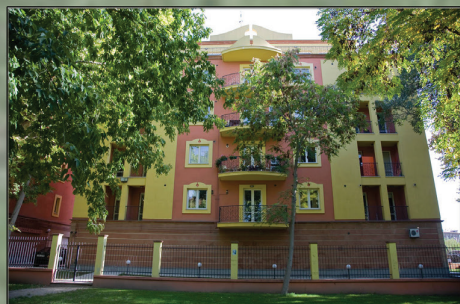
"Of course, we need to reconsider the timing and circumstances of contracting the virus. But for now, it's important that we're all healthy and immune. Thank you for all the good wishes to us during this time," the Prime Minister said.

He's now returning to full-time work.



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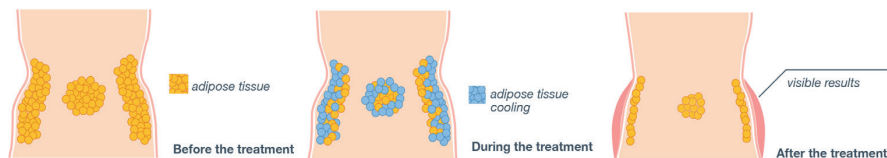
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