

Armenian Parliament triggers snap elections



The Armenian National Assembly on November 1 failed to elect a new prime minister, triggering early elections

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Armenian, Lebanese defense ministers sign military cooperation agreement

BEIRUT: Caretaker Defense Minister Yaacoub Sarraf and his Armenian counterpart held a meeting on November 2 that resulted in an agreement of military cooperation between the two countries, a Defense Ministry statement said.

The meeting between Sarraf and Davit Tonoyan took place at the Defense Ministry in Yarze, and was also attended by caretaker Tourism Minister Avedis Guidanian and an Armenian delegation.

Also during the meeting, Sarraf suggested that the countries establish a committee to coordinate and increase cooperation between Lebanon and Armenia in such sectors as culture, tourism and trade.

“The [military] agreement paves the way for more agreements between Lebanon and Armenia in the future,” the statement quoted Tonoyan as saying.

According to Friday’s statement, the two ministers also discussed the violations of



Lebanese sovereignty by Israel.

“Lebanon has no violent intentions against any side, but it will defend its sovereignty and rights when needed,” the statement quoted Sarraf as saying.

Both ministers then visited the headquarters of the United Nations peacekeeping force in south Lebanon, located in Naqoura, and Armenian troops serving in the area as part of the organization.

CSTO dismisses Yuri Khachaturov as Secretary General

The Collective Security Treaty Organization on Friday dismissed its secretary-general Yuri Khachaturov, who was charged over the summer by Armenian authorities for breaching the country’s constitutional order in connection to the March 1, 2008 post-election standoff between protesters and security officials that resulted in the deaths of eight civilians and two police officers.

“At the decision of the Collective Security Council of the CSTO, Y. Khachaturov is dismissed from the position of Secretary General of the organization,” the CSTO said on its website.

Deputy Secretary General Valeriy Semerikov has temporarily assumed the duties of Secretary General.

Khachaturov was not remanded to custody at the time he was charged and was released on bail with a note that he would return to Armenia to face the criminal charges.



Also charged with the same provision was former president Robert Kocharyan, who was remanded and later released after a higher court overturned his remand ruling.

Khachaturov was to have held his post until 2021. With his dismissal, Armenia still has the right to appoint its candidate for the post, which is held by a member country on a rotating basis.

On November 2, Armenia’s Acting Foreign Minister Zohrab

Mnatsakanyan said that Yerevan has not made a clear decision on whether it would nominate a candidate for the post or not, but it has a roster of likely candidates.

“Armenia has candidates. Based on our assessment they can and will maintain the normal process of the organization’s secretariat. We are sure that we can implement this function if we were to decide to nominate a candidate. We have sufficient resource in Armenia to be able to have can-

didates,” he said, adding that he can’t get ahead of the processes and say if they will nominate a candidate or not.

Asked if Armenia will be able to maintain the right to nominate a candidate for CSTO Secretary General, Mnatsakanyan said that the issue is on the agenda. He said negotiations with member states of the organization have resumed and that “nothing is final yet”.

He emphasized that the decision must be acceptable for all six countries of the organization, stressing that Armenia’s primary interest is for the CSTO—as a collective security organization—to continue functioning effectively.

CSTO will convene its security council on November 8 in Astana, Kazakhstan. Mnatsakanyan and Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan will attend the relevant sessions, where the Khachaturov’s replacement will be an agenda item.

Parliamentary elections in Armenia scheduled for December 9



Armenians will go to the polls to elect their next parliament on December 9 after a formal dissolution of the National Assembly has been confirmed in the South Caucasus country.

President Armen Sarkissian signed a decree late on November 1, calling early elections after lawmakers failed for a second time, in accordance with a prior political agreement, to elect a new prime

minister.

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced last month he was resigning from the post of prime minister in order to dissolve the parliament still dominated by the former ruling party and force early elections. He will continue to perform his prime-ministerial duties until a new parliament and prime minister are elected.

Under the Armenian Constitution, snap

elections can be called only if the prime minister resigns and the parliament fails to replace him or her with someone else within two weeks.

The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) on November 2 unanimously approved the schedule and timetable for the main events of the December 9 elections.

Thus, in accordance with the CEC decision, the maximum number of candidates for political parties or alliances is to be determined within 10 days after the appointment of the elections.

Political parties or alliances are to submit their documents for registration no later than 25 days before the vote – i.e. until the end of the working day on November 14.

The registration of the lists of candidates submitted by political parties or alliances is to take place on November 14-19 and the election campaign will be held from November 26 through December 7.

The political team of acting Prime Minister Pashinyan, who came to power on the wave of anti-government demonstrations last spring, is tipped to win the upcoming polls by a landslide.

Armenian Parliament triggers snap elections

Snap parliamentary elections are to be held in Armenia after the country's National Assembly on Wednesday for the second time in two weeks failed to elect a new prime minister in accordance with a political agreement.

The failure of the vote comes amid a push by Nikol Pashinyan to force fresh general elections in December in a bid to unseat his political opponents, who have maintained a majority in parliament despite the change of government last May.

Under the Armenian constitution, snap elections can be called only if the National Assembly fails to elect a prime minister within two weeks after the prime

minister's resignation. Pashinyan resigned for tactical reasons on October 16.

The pro-government Yelk Alliance, which holds only nine seats in parliament, and members of the second-largest parliamentary faction controlled by wealthy businessman Gagik Tsarukyan formally nominated Pashinyan for the second voting, which was held on the assumption that it would fail due to prior political agreements.

From among 70 lawmakers registered for the session none voted "for" or "against" Pashinyan's candidacy. Thirteen lawmakers abstained from voting.

As a result, Pashinyan's formal bid did not gather enough votes

and the National Assembly will, therefore, be dissolved by virtue of law.

In his speech preceding the vote Pashinyan described today's event as historical for Armenia. "What is historical about it is not that for the first time a parliament in Armenia is dissolved and we are going to have the first early parliamentary elections in our country. What is historical about it is that after the nonviolent, velvet, people's revolution that took place in April-May we fully return the power in the Republic of Armenia to its citizens. We return to the citizens and the people of the Republic of Armenia the power to decide the fate of further political processes,"

Pashinyan said.

Under the constitution, new elections shall be held no earlier than within 30 days and no later than within 45 days – approximately in the first half of December.

Later on Thursday, President Armen Sarkissian issued a decree appointing the pre-term parliamentary elections for December 9.

Pashinyan will continue to perform his prime-ministerial duties in the interim.

The political team of Pashinyan, who came to power on the wave of anti-government demonstrations last spring, is tipped to win the upcoming polls by a landslide.

Armenian, Azerbaijani FM's will meet again this year, Minsk Group Co-Chairs say

International mediators promoting a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have commended Armenia and Azerbaijan for “implementing constructive measures in good faith”, and expressed support for the two countries’ leaders readiness to continue their dialogue as they issued a press statement after completing their five-day regional tour on November 2.

The statement published on the official website of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s (OSCE) said that the Minsk Group’s co-chairs Andrew Schofer, of the United States, Igor Popov, of Russia, and Stephane Visconti, of France, together with the personal representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk visited the region from 29 October to 2 November.

“The main purpose of the visit was to discuss the results of the conversation between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan [acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Ilham Aliyev] on the margins of the CIS summit in Dushanbe [Tajikistan] in September, outline next steps in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, and review the overall evolution of the situation on the ground,” the statement said. Besides meeting with political and military leaders in Yerevan and Baku, the international mediators also met with “the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh and visited the districts of Kelbajar and Agdam.”

“On October 31, the Co-Chairs participat-



ed in an OSCE ceasefire monitoring mission along the Line of Contact near Agdam. In Baku, the Co-Chairs met with representatives of Azerbaijani communities affected by the conflict. While in the region, the Co-Chairs discussed the situation with representatives from the ICRC and UNHCR.

“In their meetings with the Co-Chairs, the leaders in both capitals confirmed that the level of violence has fallen significantly since they reaffirmed in Dushanbe their commitment to reduce tensions. In their consultations, the Co-Chairs received additional details about the implementation of the Dushanbe understanding, including with regard to the establishment of direct communication links. The Co-Chairs

welcomed these developments, commended the sides for implementing constructive measures in good faith, and expressed support for the leaders’ readiness to continue their dialogue.”

According to the statement, the Co-Chairs stressed the importance of “sustaining a climate of trust for intensive negotiations on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.”

It said that the foreign ministers [of Armenia and Azerbaijan] agreed to meet again before the end of the year.

“The Co-Chairs will soon travel to Vienna to brief the OSCE Permanent Council and the members of the Minsk Group,” the statement concluded.

Mikayel Minasyan recalled as Armenia’s Ambassador to Holy See, Portugal and Malta

Mikayel Minasyan, the son-in-law of former President Serzh Sargsyan, has been recalled from his ambassadorial posts in the Vatican, Portugal and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta following a decree issued by Armenian President Armen Sarkissian this week.

According to an official report, the president’s November 1 decree was “based on the prime minister’s recommendation.”

Minasyan was appointed Armenia’s ambassador to the Vatican in 2013. He served as first deputy chief of the presidential staff in 2008-2011. Political analysts increasingly regarded him as Sargsyan’s political and public relations strategist during that period.

During Minasyan’s stint as Ar-



menia’s ambassador to the Holy See the Pope conducted a mass in the Vatican on the Armenian Genocide Centennial in 2015. The following year Pope Francis paid a visit to Armenia where he reaffirmed his recognition of the 1915 Armenian massacres in Ottoman

Turkey as genocide.

During his years of work in public office Minasyan, 41, mostly kept low profile, but he is also thought to have controlled several private TV stations as well as a number of online news services.

Minasyan’s diplomatic career

appeared to be in limbo after the resignation of his father-in-law Sargsyan as prime minister in April 2018.

The health minister in the Pashinyan government in July sacked Minasyan’s father, Ara Minasyan, from the position of executive director of a leading Yerevan hospital.

Incidentally, investigators in Yerevan said on Friday that fraud charges have been brought against Ara Minasyan, whose whereabouts at this moment are not known to the Armenian authorities.

According to the Investigative Committee, Ara Minasyan was put on the wanted list and the court was asked to issue an arrest warrant for him.

Watchdog says Armenia enjoys Internet freedom

Armenia has improved its status in an annual report released by a U.S.-based watchdog that believes that the South Caucasus nation now enjoys internet freedom.

In the “Freedom on the Net 2018” report released on November 1 Freedom House says

Armenia has upgraded from “partly free” to “free” nations after “citizens successfully used social-media platforms, communication apps, and live-streaming services to bring about political change in the country’s Velvet Revolution in April.”

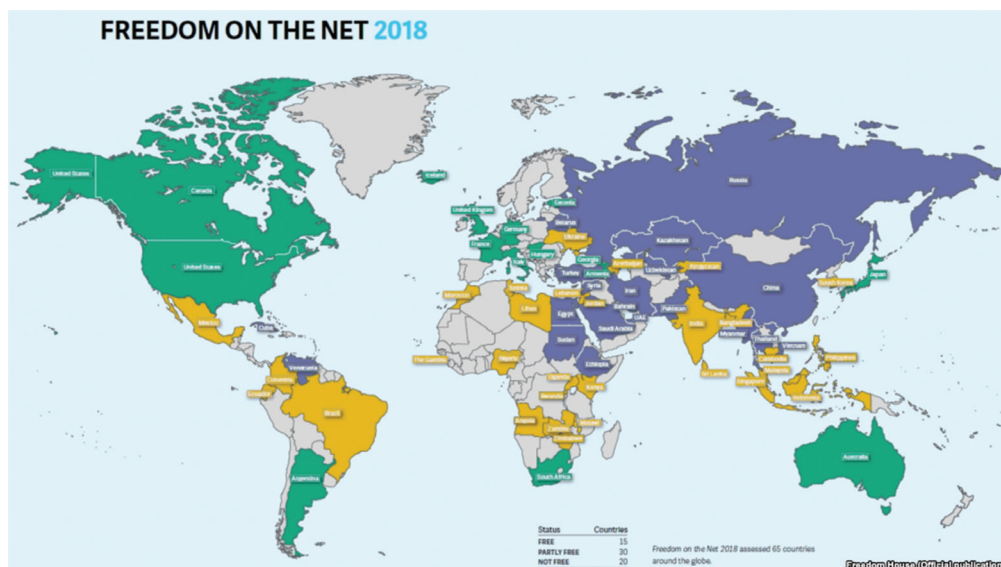
Armenia thus joins another South Caucasus country, Georgia, in the “free” category.

The report says that Armenia’s case demonstrates that “digital activism fuels political, economic, and social change: the Internet continues to serve as a tool for democratic change.”

According to the level of its freedom on the net Armenia is ranked 27th globally. In the region only Georgia is ahead of Armenia in 25th place. Azerbaijan is considered “partly free”, ranking 60th, while Turkey and Iran are among “not free” countries.

Russia as well as Armenia’s two other allies in the Eurasian Economic Union – Belarus and Kazakhstan – are also placed among “not free” nations in terms of internet freedom.

“This year has proved that the internet can be used to disrupt democracies as surely as it can destabilize dictatorships,” said Adrian Shahbaz, Freedom House’s research director for technology and democracy, as quoted by the watchdog’s website.



Armenian Parliament passes amnesty bill

The Armenian National Assembly on October 31 voted to approve an amnesty bill timed to the 100th anniversary of the First Armenian Republic and the 2800th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan marked this year.

Seventy-two lawmakers of the 105-seat body voted in favor of the bill, with no one voting against the measure or abstaining from the vote.

The second reading of the bill and its final adoption are expected on November 1.

Acting Justice Minister Artak Zeynalyan, who presented the draft legislation in parliament, said the proposed amnesty would in one way or another apply to an estimated 6,500 people, with 660 of 2,888 due to be released from prisons.

Specifically, according to Zeynalyan, convicts serving sentences of up to three years in prison are to be released and prosecutions of people, launched before October 1, 2018, on charges punishable by up to three years in prison are to be discontinued. Amnesty will also cover people who committed crimes by negligence and face up to five years in prison.

First and second-group disabled convicts serving sentences of up to six years in prison as well as some other categories of convicts, including pregnant women, people aged above 60 or below 18 who meet specific criteria, are

also to be covered by the amnesty.

The current amnesty also applies to members of the Sasna Tsrer armed group that seized and held for two weeks a police compound in Yerevan in July 2016 and members of the radical opposition Founding Parliament movement who were tried and convicted of plotting a coup in 2015.

The amnesty does not apply to people who committed heavy crimes, were engaged in trafficking, obstructed journalists’ professional work, committed high treason, terrorist acts,

sabotages and other serious crimes.

As for convicts serving life sentences, according to the acting justice minister, an individual approach will be shown in each case, as, he said, the Ministry is not entitled to revise sentences of such convicts.

Families of a number of convicts serving life sentences have staged protests in front of the National Assembly building demanding that the current amnesty, which the government describes as the largest ever in Armenian history, be also somehow applied to their relatives.

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azatyun.am (RFE/RL)

Recovery processes taking place in Armenia's economy - Pashinyan

Strictly positive, recovery processes are taking place in Armenia's economy. They will inevitably lead to the implementation of goals put before the government, acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in his remarks during the debate of the election of PM in the Parliament.

"Launch of economic recovery, economic transformation is taking place in Armenia. I have released our vision on the economic progress two months ago, and the political record is the following: we need to turn from a mining, betting country to a country with an economy directed for technological production, export. I want to announce that this process is taking place in Armenia right now", he said.

The government has a tool according to which companies, which make investments in a priority sector, create jobs and are in line with certain standards, are exempted from customs duties. Within the frames of this, the increase of number of jobs comprised 30% compared to the previous year, and that of equipment comprised 70%.

The import of capital goods during January-September 2017 increased by 75.5%. The talk concerns import of devices, equipment, machinery, and the analysis shows that these imports mostly do not refer to the mining industry, but they deal with other production sectors. "We have a trend in the agriculture sector, transformation from the so-called old and uncompetitive agriculture to a modern and technological agriculture", Nikol Pashinyan said.



Pashinyan said 0.9% growth has been recorded in industry field in September which is quite low. The reason is that currently one of the largest mining industry companies faces problems, it almost doesn't operate. According to the acting PM, the impact of the mining industry field on the overall figure is quite great.

"Compared to September of the previous year, 11.4% growth has been recorded in the processing industry. These figures show that the share of mining industry in industry has decreased, and that of the processing industry has greatly increased", he said.

3.5% growth has been recorded in the construction sector, whereas this figure was double-digit at the beginning of the year.

Pashinyan said there is a decline of growth rate in export, there was a decline in export in September 2018. "About 15% less goods were exported from Armenia this year in September. Last year in September 57 million USD raw materials from mining sector were exported from Armenia. This year in September this volume comprised 44 million USD", Nikol Pashinyan said.

Oil and copper price decline in global markets will impact Armenian economy

Oil and copper prices will decline in the international markets in the near future which will have an impact on the Armenian economy, acting Minister of Finance of Armenia Atom Janjughazyan said during the discussion of the state budget of 2019.

"In general, the pace of growth from the point of view of the global economy is stabilizing, but in partner countries, there is a trend of slowdown in growth, particularly in Russian and the EU member states. It's predicted that the global economy will grow by 3.9% this



year, and the same in 2019.

We have to take into account

the tendencies of foreign trade and global economy. Copper

price decline to some extent is predicted, which will have some impact on our economy.

The next is oil, which is also a key economic factor for our strategic partner, which is important in terms of the economic development of Armenia, and here also there are predictions of decline", the acting minister said.

According to Atom Janjughazyan, this can become a reason for thinking about diversification of economy in Armenia and diminishing the dependence on any factor to a minimal level.

Pashinyan announces intent to introduce 23% flat income tax with further 3% decrease in five years

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan highlights the need to have a simple and flexible taxation system for encouraging investments and ensuring investment flow.

Speaking in parliament on November 1 at the final round of electing a PM, he presented the upcoming reforms in the tax system.

“On this path we are ready to apply the following tools. As you know, the VAT overpayment refund institution has been introduced since January 1, 2018. And citizens, businessmen, can receive VAT tax overpayments every 6 months. With tax code amendments we are going to cut this 6 months to three months, with a prospect of entirely eliminating this timeframe in the future,” he said.

He said that the most important and the most discussed issue is

changing the income tax.

“Having a flat income tax is a very delicate issue. When we say flat income tax, we mean not only the same income tax level for all salaries, but also the equality of income tax- profit tax and dividend tax blocks. The initial intent of the government is to set up a 23% flat income tax as a result of the tax legislation amendments with a condition that we will reduce this indicator up to 20% during the coming five years, again for everyone. This will be an extremely important change” he said.

He said it will be important in terms of investments, the development of high tech sector.

“We are now ready to take a step of reducing the income tax by more than 10% for high tech sector employees, and we hope that this will lead to increase of investments in the sector,” he added.

Number of Government vehicles to be significantly reduced

The Government of Armenia is making efforts to reduce the number of Government vehicles, ARMENPRESS reports. Chief of Prime Minister’s Staff Eduard Aghajanyan told the reporters at the National Assembly after the discussion of the state budget of 2019.

“In general, our Government pursues the path of optimization of all the processes. At the moment we are working in the direction of reducing the number of government vehicles. Soon the Government will bring forward a proposal, according to which the government vehicles will be significantly reduced”, Aghajanyan said.

Aghajanyan added that they will try to minimize the social impact on the drivers.

Aghajanyan also mentioned that if the Government takes drastic measures and makes reductions in all the directions, there will be serious social impact. “There



are no calculations at the moment yet, but the activities of the new Government will

be aimed at the optimization of the state system”, he said.

Alaverdi Copper Factory sooner or later will be either upgraded or closed – acting deputy PM

The Alaverdi Copper Factory sooner or later must be upgraded or closed, acting deputy prime minister of Armenia Tigran Avinyan told reporters during the opening of ArmProd EXPO 2018 17th international exhibition.

Avinyan said the problem is not linked with the government, it’s mainly linked with the judicial case between the Teghut CJSC and VTB Bank. “We are trying to reach the logical solution of the problem as soon as possible, and at the moment the talks are moving forward positively, and I think that we will reach that solution in the nearest future”, he said, adding



that at this stage the continuation of the Factory’s operation, as well as upgrading and environmental issues are being dis-

cussed.

Asked at what stage are the talks with the Chinese company on constructing a new copper factory, the acting deputy PM said at this stage active works are being held with the Chinese partners.

“The session of inter-governmental commission with China will be held in November, and I think certain developments will take place. The project is quite large and has its own complications, but the government expressed readiness to make all efforts for the process to take place and the project to be environmentally safe”, he added.

Buquicchio reaffirms positive view on proposed electoral reform in Armenia

(Yerevan –RFE/RL) The Venice Commission has always said that amendments to electoral legislation should be made at least one year before the elections, but they should not be opposed when it is a question of improving, the Council of Europe body's president, Gianni Buquicchio, said in Yerevan on November 1 when asked by RFE/RL's Armenian Service to comment on the government-drafted amendments to the Electoral Code that twice failed to gain enough votes in the Armenian parliament late last month.

"You should not change the rules of the game just before the game, of course. But when there are good amendments we should not oppose it," added Buquicchio, effectively contradicting the arguments of the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia that blocked the passage of the amendments, referring to the Venice Commission's principle.

At its recent session the prestigious European body discussed the draft amendments submitted by the Armenian government, but it did not examine the text in full. "My personal assessment was that many of these amendments were good ones, improving the situation in the electoral legislation," Buquicchio said, reaffirming his position voiced on October 20, a few days before the failed vote on the electoral reform package in the Armenian parliament.

"So, my position was that the amendments were welcome. I would have preferred, of course,



Armenia/CoE-Nikol Pashinian, acting Prime Minister of Armenia, meets with Gianni Buquicchio, President of the Venice Commission, Yerevan, 31 Oct, 2018

that everything was done with more time, more dialogue, etc. But we are also to consider the specific political situation of Armenia and the need to clarify the situation in order to have a stable political scene," he added.

Buquicchio's statements had been differently construed by the Armenian government and its political rivals. While acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his allies in parliament took Buquicchio's assessment as a go-ahead for the reform, the HHK insisted that the Electoral Code cannot be amended just six weeks before the expected elections.

The Venice Commission's head said that the elections, which are likely to be held under the current electoral laws, will clarify the situation.

"If the present interim government wins the elections, it will have a parliamentary majority

and will be in a position to govern the country well, making all the reforms they intend to do," he said. "I held yesterday meetings with several authorities in Armenia – the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the minister of justice, and they gave me the impression of being committed to change the situation in Armenia to make the necessary reform in order to improve even more the constitutional set-up of the country in many fields, including the electoral legislation. Because after the elections I think the amendments which were proposed and not adopted by parliament will be again studied, I recommend that the authorities do this in an open and transparent attitude and in dialogue with all the political forces of Armenia. And, of course, the Venice Commission will be there in order to help and contribute to have the best possible electoral

legislation."

In Buquicchio's words, while it is important to have a good electoral legislation, "it is more important that the electoral process is an honest one, without fraud."

"Much depends on the mentality and the culture... the culture of the society and the authorities," he said.

Buquicchio said that the next Armenian government will have also other fields to be engaged. "There are a lot of things to do in the field of the judiciary, in the field of the political parties-related legislation, not to speak about economic problems and other important reforms. But I am seeing a good will to go further and this is good. Of course, we must be prudent and, as you know, the proof of the cake is in eating it. So, let's see whether all these good intentions will be followed by a real implementation. But I am confident, I am optimistic for the future of your country," the Venice Commission's president said.

The failure of the electoral reform package in parliament also raised concerns among most of the extra-parliamentary parties that consider running for parliament in early elections in December.

Particularly smaller parties fear that the preservation of the so-called regional lists of candidates running for parliament in individual races along with party lists will debase the political process, keeping the way open for the former ruling party and its "criminal oligarchy" to re-enter the legislature.

'A sector of challenges and changes' – acting minister of labor and social affairs congratulates social workers on professional holiday

Acting minister of labor and social affairs Mane Tandilyan has addressed a congratulatory message to social workers on their professional holiday – the Social Workers Day.

"Since 2009, November 4 is marked as the Social Workers Day in the Republic of Armenia. Social work has passed a long path, during which its goals and issues have become clear. That is, to provide comprehensive assistance, support people and families

who are at a difficult time in their lives, inspire confidence for their own strengths and capabilities, assuring that they themselves can change their lives and lifestyle.

Social work is a sector of challenges and changes, while social workers are people gifted with high human qualities and professional skills, the focus of whose work are people, and the goal – improvement of peoples' quality of life. Being a social worker isn't simply a profession, it is a lifestyle,

a daily work requiring patience.

One of the priorities of the ministry of labor and social affairs is to make the establishment and development process of the institution of social worker more qualitative, regulated, targeted and purposeful. In this context, the introduction and sustainability of an integrated social services system has a great role, which should create the type of environment, conditions and toolbox for social work and social workers that would enable

to maximally realize the mission of social workers – to assist the citizens who truly need it.

Dear social workers, you are the representatives of our state toward whom trust also develops trust towards the state, social protection and tomorrow.

I heartily congratulate you on the occasion of your professional holiday and I wish you good luck in your honorable and difficult work," Tandilyan said in the congratulatory address.

Saudi Journalist's Murder Exploited for Selfish Interests by World Powers



**By
Harut
Sassounian
Publisher,
The California
Courier**

www.TheCaliforniaCourier.com

The heinous murder of prominent Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi has been exploited by leaders of several countries for their selfish political and economic gains, ignoring the vile nature of the crime. The main participants in this ugly game are Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United States.

On October 2, 2018, Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi citizen, visited Saudi Arabia's Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, to finalize his divorce documents so he could marry his Turkish fiancée, Hatice Cengiz. Khashoggi never left the Consulate. He was murdered and reportedly dismembered by a special team of Saudi investigators who were sent to Istanbul the day before, and after the killing immediately returned to Saudi Arabia on two separate private jets.

Khashoggi, who had worked for years for the Saudi government in important positions, left Saudi Arabia and settled in the United States in 2017 after becoming disillusioned with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's limitless powers. Khashoggi began writing critical opinion columns in the Washington Post, while Saudi leaders made several unsuccessful attempts to lure him back to his native land.

Initially, Saudi Arabia announced that Khashoggi had left its Consulate in Istanbul within an hour or so of his arrival. However, after leaks from the Turkish government that there was no video of Khashoggi exiting the Consulate, the Saudi authorities changed their story, claiming that the dissident journalist was killed during a fistfight at the Consulate. A week later, the Saudi leaders changed their story once again, stating that Khashoggi's murder was premeditated and not accidental. Saudi Arabia proceeded to fire five security officials and

arrested a dozen others, claiming that neither King Salman nor the Crown Prince had any advance knowledge of the murder plan. Given the fact that the Crown Prince is in total control of the country, no one believes that he was unaware of Khashoggi's killing by the Kingdom's top security and intelligence officials.

In the meantime, the Turkish government, which has been in constant rivalry with Saudi Arabia for the dominance of the Sunni Islamic world, has been leaking to the Turkish media drip by drip the evidence of Khashoggi's murder. Initially, the Turks claimed that the information came from Khashoggi's apple watch which had recorded his torture and murder. When experts advised that the apple watch did not have such a capacity, it became clear that the Turkish government used the watch as a cover up for its secret recording devices installed inside the Saudi Consulate.

In my opinion, the Turkish government's continuous leaks to the media were meant to send a message to Saudi authorities that it would make public potentially embarrassing evidence about Khashoggi's killing, unless the Saudis would pay a large ransom for Pres. Erdogan's silence. It is well-known that the Turkish economy is in shambles and desperately needs tens of billions of dollars to cover its foreign debts. Not hearing a positive response, Erdogan warned the Saudis that he would personally go on national TV and reveal the "naked truth," unless the Saudis accommodated the Turkish demands. During his speech last week, for the first time, Erdogan made public the timeline of Khashoggi murder and raised serious doubts that it was accidental. However, the Turkish President seemed to keep the hope alive that the Saudis will eventually meet his shakedown demands by not making public all of his secretly collected evidence. In his speech, Erdogan neither mentioned the name of the Saudi Crown Prince nor the Turkish possession of audio/visual materials which had recorded Khashoggi's painful death. Instead, Erdogan asked several questions that he probably knew the answers, such as: where is Khashoggi's body and who

is the Turkish collaborator who whisked it away at Saudis' request? Meanwhile, to squeeze the Saudis further, the Turkish press published last week gruesome images of Khashoggi's dismembered body!

The third culprit is the United States, more specifically, Pres. Trump. When he first got the news that Khashoggi was murdered at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, Pres. Trump kept emphasizing his own "great achievement" of selling \$110 billion of advanced U.S. weapons to Saudi Arabia during his last year's visit, ostensibly creating "450,000 jobs for American workers." As usual, Pres. Trump exaggerated the financial benefits as he had not signed a contract for the sale of \$110 billion of U.S. weapons. There was actually an agreement to sell only \$10-\$20 billion of weapons in the next five years. Furthermore, a year ago Pres. Trump had said that the same weapon sale would create 40,000 American jobs, not 450,000. However, a few days after Khashoggi's murder, Pres. Trump exaggerated his numbers, this time to 500,000 jobs. A week later, he increased it again to "one million jobs," and then to "over one million jobs."

Regardless of how many jobs would be created and how many billions would the sale of the weapons bring, Pres. Trump never expressed his condolences to the Khashoggi family. Even though Pres. Trump kept warning Saudi Arabia of "severe consequences," he valued the price of the weapons more than a human being's life! The only American 'punishment' was the suspension of U.S. visas to the 18 Saudis who were sent to Istanbul to murder Khashoggi.

Regrettably, most heads of states do not care about human beings! What's in it for me or my nation is the common practice. In the process, leaders are willing to lie, cheat, and even murder.

Khashoggi's Turkish fiancée did the right thing by refusing Pres. Trump's invitation to the White House. She did not want her grief to be exploited by a politician who only cares about his own selfish gains rather than the pain and suffering of the family members of a mutilated murder victim!

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care aides, home care aides, and home health aides. Home health aides might also provide limited assistance with things such as taking blood pressure or offering medication reminders.

Nursing care is more related for patients after surgery, traumas, different chronic diseases

Rehabilitation service is for people who need professional rehabilitation in their recovery periods after some types of diseases and surgery. Dementia / Alzheimer /special care is for people with dementia in all stages when you worried about their safety or a health problem.

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Transportation is a key issue for older adults and for people with temporary or permanent disabilities especially in Armenia where the streets and buildings are not adjusted for disabled people. Yerevan Home Care is providing a transportation service for people that are in wheelchairs.



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Armenian Acting Vice-Premier Dismisses Corruption Claim



Armenian acting Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan has denied any wrongdoing after a local online magazine published a story alleging his possible involvement in a corruption scheme.

On October 29, Hetq.am reported that the company founded by Avinyan had won a \$35,000 grant from the Agricultural Development Fund at the time when the latter already occupied the post of Armenia's vice-premier.

The publication further noted that the Fund's director Gegham Gevorgyan was appointed Armenia's minister of agriculture in October.

On November 1, acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told journalists that he had ordered

an examination of the case. "I will draw my own conclusion based on the results of that examination. I do have explanations, but I want it to be clear that there can be no manifestation of corruption in Armenia," said the popular leader, who vowed to battle corruption when he came to power on the wave of anti-government protests in May.

Talking to media on the margins of a production exhibition on Friday, Avinyan ruled out any corrupt practice on his part, insisting that the fruit-drying company founded by him in 2011 went through a rigorous selection process, most of which was completed even before the Pashinyan team came to power.

"There can be no conflict of interests here. Our company applied for that program in February. Nine of the 10 stages of the selection process were completed before the revolution, and I was even mostly unaware of the process. The ultimate 10th stage took place a few days after I was appointed deputy prime minister," Avinyan explained.

Acting Minister of Agriculture Gegham Grigoryan also denied any role in providing the grant to the company linked with Avinyan. He also ruled out any link between his appointment and the Fund's decision on grants. "I have worked in this field for two years and was the director of a fund that is one of the largest structures within the ministry. Before that I worked in the government system for 10 years," he said, implying that his appointment was a merit-based decision.

Acting Deputy Prime Minister Avinyan, meanwhile, welcomed the probe ordered into the case by Pashinyan, saying that it will help officials stay more vigilant and will reveal some bad practices in the media field as well.

"The morals that used to ex-

ist in the political field [before the power change] were also present in the media field, and I don't exclude that some corruption continues in the media field even now. In general, different stories have been published about me, about different officials, and I do have some reasonable suspicions that some of these stories have been ordered," Avinyan said, without giving names.

The row over the company linked with Avinyan followed another publication that alleged that the 29-year-old deputy prime minister smoked marijuana inside the government building. Avinyan's office denied that information and announced its intention to file a lawsuit against the media outlet that published the report over libel.

On November 2, Avinyan said that libel suits against media will not be "a consistent policy." "It was a concrete case, and I hope that it will also send a message to certain websites and media outlets disseminating misinformation that such activities are not just unreasonable, but may also result in liability," the senior official said.

Lusavor Hayastan Party to run for parliament individually

Lusavor Hayastan (Bright Armenia) party has released a statement about the format of its participation in the upcoming early elections of parliament.

"Lusavor Hayastan party has put the mission of systematic, irreversible reforms at the foundation of its establishment. The party's participation in the first parliamentary elections by the Yelk alliance of parties became historic and fateful not only in the modern history of our people, but also individually for each party of the Yelk alliance. The revolution that took place in Armenia has qualitatively changed the political priorities in the country by enabling equal participation opportunities for the first time to each subject that takes part in political processes.

As a result of long discussions with the Hanrapetutyun [Republic] party, Lusavor Hayastan



party has made a decision to participate in the upcoming elections of the National Assembly [parliament] by the Lusavor Hayastan party list, with its own vision and programs.

Lusavor Hayastan will also involve in its list representatives from other political forces and active civil groups sharing similar ideology.

After the Yerevan City Council election, highly valuing the jointly passed path together with the Hanrapetutyun party by the Luys alliance, the parties will continue cooperation in the Yerevan City Council within the framework of the Luys faction.

Lusavor Hayastan party thanks its partners from the Yelk alliance by finding the many years of extra-parliamentary and parliamentary productive work with the two – Hanrapetutyun and Civil Contract parties, to be invaluable and important. We believe that the powerful potential of united joint work is not exhausted, therefore we wish each of them good luck in the upcoming election for the benefit and welfare of the Republic of Armenia and citizens of the Republic of Armenia," the statement says.

Early election of parliament will take place December 9 in Armenia.

Lavrov discusses Artsakh participation in peace talks

MOSCOW—The issue of returning representatives of Artsakh to the Karabakh conflict resolution negotiations must be decided by the sides to the conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint press conference with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger on November 2.

“We’ve already commented on [Armenia’s Acting Prime Minister] Nikol Pashinyan’s statements about involving Nagorno Karabakh [Artsakh] as a party to negotiations. This is the kind of issue that should be decided by the conflicting countries. There was a time when representatives of Nagorno Karabakh participated in the negotiations, but the format has changed and for many years now the negotiations are held only by Armenia and Azerbaijan. Certainly we proceed from the positions that Armenia is taking into account the approaches of Nagorno Karabakh in the negotiations process. Changing the negotiations format requires the consent of both sides, which at this moment doesn’t exist,” Lavrov said.

He noted that the conflict resolution process is being mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group



Co-Chairs, who are currently in the region for meetings with the leadership of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Lavrov attached importance to this kind of contacts in terms of resolving the conflict.

Lavrov also mentioned an agreement reached between Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Dushanbe, Tajikistan to create communications mechanisms between the two leaders.

“As far as I know during the Dushanbe meeting the Armenian prime minister and Azerbaijani president reached an agreement that dialogue must be continued and that the foreign ministers must meet. The sides noted that Armenia and Azerbaijan are ready to work with the OSCE Minsk Group

Co-Chairs. We can only welcome these decisions. As long as the [fervent] political processes, which we are following, in Armenia haven’t ended, it’s hardly going to be possible to discuss clear options for coming out of the crisis,” said Lavrov.

Speaking about the Karabakh conflict resolution process, the OSCE Secretary General also addressed the Pashinyan-Aliyev meeting in Tajikistan, calling it “productive”. He expressed hope that the meeting will contribute to restoring trust.

“During the upcoming ministerial council in Milan in December we will express our support to the work of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, and we will call on the conflicting sides to find political will for

the settlement of the issue. It is important for the sides to work in a constructive atmosphere, to avoid provocative rhetoric, which will allow to de-escalate the tension in the line of contact. This kind of an atmosphere is extremely necessary in order for the sides to go for difficult compromise, which are required for long-lasting and comprehensive peace,” Greminger said.

Meanwhile, Russia’s Minsk Group Co-chair Igor Popov, who just returned from a tour of the region, told reporters Friday that Yervan and Baku have expressed desire to continue the dialogue on the Karabakh conflict resolution issue.

“We are hopeful that a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries will take place next month, during which the key issues of settlement will be discussed, as well as the measures on strengthening of trust that can be adopted – taking into account the situation, taking into account how the relations between the leaders of the two countries will be built. From a principal point of view we have understood that a desire to continue high level dialogue exists,” said Popov.

Armenia climbs six notches in WB Doing Business 2019

Armenia is ranked 41st in the World Bank’s Doing Business 2019.

Sylvie Bossoutrot, Country Manager of the World Bank for Armenia, speaking on October 31 at a press conference in Yerevan, said Armenia went six notches up, compared with the previous year, when it ranked 47th.

Armenia stands between Slovenia (the 40th rank) and Slovakia (the 42nd rank). It outdid Turkey (the 43rd rank), Moldova (47), Kyrgyzstan (70), Ukraine (71), Uzbekistan (76) and Tajikistan (126), but it is left behind Georgia (6), Azerbaijan (25), Kazakhstan (28), Russia (31) and Belarus (37). Sylvie Bossoutrot said that Armenia has improved some indicators, including the easy business doing indicator, which rose 2.06 notches to 75.37.

Armenia has its highest result on the business launch indicator – 8th rank.



Bossoutrot said that Armenia has facilitated registration of companies, and this has improved the indicator and reduced business registration time from 4.5 to 3.5 days.

She also pointed out a number of indicators improved, compared with the previous year.

Speaking about other categories, where Armenia improved indicators, but where are still some faults so far, Bossoutrot singled out per-

mission for construction (the 98th rank), immovable property registration (14) and bankruptcy recognition (95).

Only two indicators remained unchanged, compared with the previous report – the intra-board trade (44) and loan reception (46).

Tigran Khachatryan, acting economic development and investments minister, on his side, said that despite the achieved progress, the government will continue its efforts to improve the indicators.

He voiced intention to improve the country’s ranks on all the indicators related to regulation to higher than median level and to have Armenia among at least the top ten countries in the ranking.

The ranking is topped by New Zealand, Singapore and Denmark, and Somaly is in the very tail of the raking.

UConn Professor Is Excavating Site of Early Occupation in Armenia

In July 2018, University of Connecticut (UConn) associate professor of anthropology Daniel Adler and Keith Wilkinson, University of Winchester, UK, co-directed excavations at an Early Pleistocene archaeological site in northern Armenia known as Haghtanak-3. The site documents the earliest human occupation of Armenia, and may be more than 1 million years old.

During the excavations, participants from five countries unearthed stone tools from deep layers at the site, and sediment samples were collected for dating and environmental reconstructions.

The goals of this research are to excavate highly contextualized archaeological, chronometric, and paleo envi-



ronmental data with which to test hypotheses about the timing and nature of early human expansion into the region, the technological abilities of these groups, and how changing climates and environments may have affected this process.

Stone tools are some of the earliest and most easily identifiable artifacts made by hu-

mans, Adler says, and are made by flaking off smaller pieces of stone with a hammer stone. It is thought early humans used these tools for various purposes, such as cutting meat and plants.

By studying these tools, the researchers hope to learn about the early humans who made and used them, and understand

more about their technological evolution. Dating of the sediments in which the tools were found is done by colleagues at the University of Glasgow, UK.

In July 2019, Adler's graduate students and an international team of specialists will be joined at Haghtanak-3 by a group of UConn undergraduates enrolled in the Archaeological Field School in Armenian Prehistory, an Education Abroad program that trains students in archaeological excavation and recording methods.

Funding for the 2018 field season was provided by the Leverhulme Trust Leverhulme Trust, UConn's Norian Armenian Programs Committee, and UConn's Office of the Vice President for Research.

New gallery displays Armenian objects of 'witness and survival'



The long-stored "objects of witness and survival" of the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown will be spotlighted in a new first-floor gallery opening on November 15, *The Boston Globe* reports.

Many who survived the Genocide of 1915-1923 fled their homeland, some secretly harboring sacred objects as they passed through border stations on their journey to the United States.

At first, the objects were honored quietly in bedroom shrines. But eventually many were donated to a group of Armenians in the Boston area who wanted to protect them for future generations.

The founders of the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown rented the basement of a Belmont church, which served as the museum from 1986 to 1990, when it moved to its

current quarters at 65 Main St.

As if by reflex, some of the objects were boxed again. That is, until this past January, when Jennifer Liston Munson joined the museum as its new executive director.

"Now," she said, "we are able to emerge from that initial impulse of protect and preserve, to present and share."

The museum's long-stored "objects of witness and survival" will be spotlighted in a new first-floor gallery opening on Nov. 15. At a free opening reception, guests can enjoy food and refreshments, speeches by museum leadership, and live music by Armenian cellist Kate Kayaian.

The museum's collection is a vast repository, with 5,000 ancient and medieval Armenian coins, more than 3,000 textiles, religious artifacts, ceramics, medieval illuminations, and

library. The 1969 brutalist-style building was designed by Ben Thompson, a member of the Architects Collaborative and founder of Design Research.

Now the building is undergoing a "reinvention process," Munson said, with the aid of Virginia Durruty, an architect who most recently redesigned galleries in the Louis Kahn building at Yale University.

"As we speak, the carpeting covering the concrete floors is being lifted up and will be polished," Munson said in an interview earlier this fall. A metaphor, she added, "for the difficulty of the Armenian history."

One of the donated objects that will be highlighted in the new gallery is a medieval reliquary arm — a hollow metal-and-brass arm designed to house the bones of a saint. It was bequeathed to the museum by a woman named Aghavni Demirjian.

In 1916, Demirjian's mother was escorting a friend to a Russian border crossing when she encountered two women who feared they would be searched and their reliquary arm confiscated. They gave the sacred metal arm to Demirjian's mother, who brought it with her to the United States and kept it in a shrine in her Rhode Island bedroom.

When she died, her daughter donated the reliquary arm to the museum.

"Of course, this is very relevant right now," Munson said. "We have so many refugees, we have so many people fleeing their homeland."

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

You have more energy than you know how to manage this week. Use caution when driving because your accelerator foot is probably a bit heavy. Pour that muscle into making improvements in your environment and the neighborhood. Be aware of your tendency to overwhelm others now.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Many of you may be experiencing the need for medical attention. If this is not so, do not worry. For some the health focus is more related to improving diet and exercise. You may be hearing the Inner Critic and trying to keep up with its demands. Let it go. It catastrophizes everything.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

This week Mercury moves into Sagittarius and takes you into the land of important “others” in your life. You will be spending quite a long time there, until Dec. 1, 2018. Now is the time to learn lessons about how to be in relationships. If you owe any apologies get them ready now.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You are in a reasonably good place with yourself at this time. Your heart and mind are flowing together. You have no conflict between your feelings and your thoughts about those feelings. This is a time for reflection on important subjects. You can make good decisions now.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

During the next two weeks you will be contemplating your existence. You are thinking about how you can position yourself in order to feel more sense of meaning in your work, your family, and your relationships. Some may be pondering on the level of the spiritual. “What is the ‘best’ that I can become?”



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

Mercury, your planetary avatar, moves into the territory of home, hearth, and family. It will be there, making a retrograde loop before it leaves on Dec. 1, 2018. Things of the past may float up in your mind for reflection. If this occurs, ask yourself what you learned from the experience. It probably would help you now. Family concerns may occupy your attention.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Venus, your ruling planet, is retrograding back into your sign, where it will remain through November. This is a time in which you may be unsure of where you want to direct your energies. Consider your past history. If you could take today's perspective and advise the person you were in years past, what counsel would you give?



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

You need to get out and about this week. Restlessness and high energy want you to keep on moving, whatever else you may do.

Work with those who share your rhythm this week, or you may say things that you'll wish you had not. We each have our own drumbeat and yours is unusual right now.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

Mercury travels slowly through your sign between now and Dec. 1, 2018. It will be going through its retrograde cycle before it moves along. Take care with any decision of importance because you likely will find reason to change your mind. New information keeps popping up to muddy the works. This is normal with Mercury retrogrades. Do not beat yourself because you can't seem to move forward.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

You may need to concentrate to avoid critics, whether they be internal or external. Instead of accepting blame or guilt, use the energy to make improvements wherever they are needed. Avoid contracts and business negotiations for a week or so because misunderstandings may develop.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

You may need to concentrate in order to avoid critics, whether they be internal or external. Instead of blame, use the discipline to tackle a project that requires concentration. It is best to avoid promises and contracts right now because you may need to renege later.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Communication with those from a distance will be favorable and supportive to your soul self. The time is auspicious for activities related to travel, the internet, publishing, teaching, higher education, and the law. You have a poetic turn of mind at this time. You likely will enjoy reading spiritual or philosophical material.

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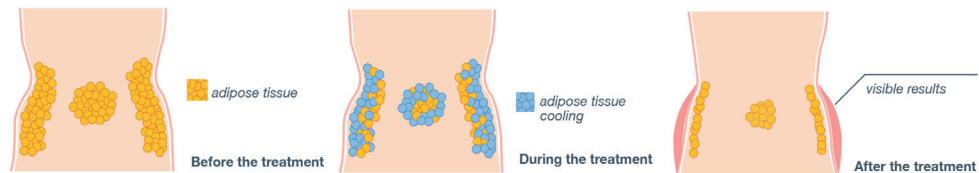
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