

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan Meets with Businessmen



Arsen V. Ghazaryan: The Most Important Thing is that the Government Feels the Pulse of the Problems in the Economy so that It can Respond

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On 22 July PM **Nikol V. Pashinyan** met with the reps of the Armenian business elite led by the President of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA, umba.am) **Arsen V. Ghazaryan**.

Below The Highlights present interview of Mr Ghazaryan with Iragir.am on details of the meeting.

But before that we'd like to put **the appeal of Arsen Ghazaryan to Armenian businessmen**:

“The days later, on 23 August we will mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of Armenia, a historic event which the Armenian people unanimously, with boundless inspiration and faith ratified through a nationwide referendum, adopting the way of centuries-old dream inherited from Ancestors, to live independently and freely.

We felt and feel such a powerful inspiration every time when we are witnesses of the Armenian Soldier's Holy Patriotism, the victorious heroism of the Armenian Army.

From Avarayr to Sardarapat, from his native birthplace to Berlin, the Artsakh Liberation War, this victorious path was passed by the Armenian Warrior with a high awareness of his duty to his Nation and the Homeland, always feeling the fullest support of the rear. And the victorious march of the Armenian Soldier has been more and more stronger and stable every time when the whole Nation was united. The devotion was united, the Armenian society stood in front of the enemy as one united fist.

We witnessed unprecedented manifestations of unwavering devotion and unity during the «Four-Day War» (2-5 April 2016), and the recent days, during the suppression of the enemy's insidious encroachments in the Tavush Marz, when the Armenian Soldier once again proved the strength of his arm and mind, and the entire Armenian people in Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian Diaspora once again showed his unlimited support and unity to the Homeland and the Victorious Armenian Army.

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Foreign Ministry calls out Azerbaijan's practice of inciting violence against Armenians abroad

The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the recent cases of violence against Armenians.

“Recently, cases of violence against Armenian citizens and members of Armenian communities have been registered in different countries of the world. There have been cases of obstruction of the normal work of the Armenian diplomatic service abroad, of the Armenian communities, of deliberate destruction of their personal and office property, which in some cases have threatened the security of the diplomatic staff as well. Racist steps are being taken to disrupt Armenia's trade and economic ties with various countries,” the Ministry said in a statement.



“The expanding geography of these actions and the involvement of Azerbaijani officials in the actions against the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Armenia show that the above-mentioned actions are directed by the state structures of Azerbai-

jan,” the statement continued.

The Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the practice of inciting ethnic clashes in different countries, which is another manifestation of Baku's irresponsibility that fully fits into the Azerbaijani leadership's policy and rhetoric of provoking hostility between the two peoples without geographical restrictions.

The Ministry calls on compatriots to be vigilant, not to give in to any provocation, and in any such situation immediately contact the local law enforcement bodies, Armenian community structures, RA diplomatic representatives.

Armenian Ambassador in Russia calls on Armenians to be consolidated and remain in the limits of law

Ambassador of Armenia to Russia Vardan Toghanyan addressed the Armenians community in Russia in relations with the protests organized by Armenians. Vardan Toghanyan said in his message that in the recent days the Embassy regularly receives information from different Armenians that they have plans to organize protests and some social media users call on other Armenians to gather in Moscow or other Russian cities.

“Sharing the concerns and emotional situation of each of you I have to mention that such calls in this particular situation cannot contribute to the solution of problems fac-



ing us. For this reason, I ask each of you not to participate in any initiative or protests. The activities of the side provoking these tensions hope for such response from our side.

I also ask you not to make such calls on social networks, not to spread footages and photos that can foster the escalation of the already escalated situation and preserve vigilance in any situation”, Toghanyan said.

The Ambassador highlighted being more consolidated in such situations, have a joint approach, coordinate the activities and prevent any provocative measure.

“We continue working operatively, are in constant touch with our community organizations and Russian authorities. Our main issue is acting in line with the Russian legislation”, Toghanyan concluded.

Armenia NSS reveals attempts of obtaining information by Azerbaijani special services

Armenia's National Security Service has revealed attempts by the Azerbaijani special service on obtaining information, the NSS issued a statement.

“The NSS revealed that the staffers of the special services of Azerbaijan are using the phone numbers of different mobile operators of Armenia and call the Armenian citizens stating that they are conducting surveys in Armenia, in particular for get-



ting reconnaissance information about the current situation in the Armenian Armed

Forces. In particular, calls were made from the following numbers – 094-39-75-95 and 093-52-72-08.

The NSS urges the Armenian citizens not to contact, not to provide information or answer suspected calls, but in case of receiving calls on surveys, answer only after knowing the identity of the person calling”, the statement says.

Co-Chairs appeal to Armenia and Azerbaijan to prepare for serious substantive negotiations



The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stéphane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America) and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (PRCIO) Andrzej Kasprzyk released the following statement on July 25.

The Co-Chairs and PRCIO welcome the relative stability along the Azerbaijan-Armenia border since 16 July. The Co-Chairs appeal to the sides to take advantage of the

current reduction in active hostilities to prepare for serious substantive negotiations to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict. The Co-Chairs stress once more that refraining from provocative statements and actions, including threats or perceived threats to civilians or to critical infrastructure, is essential during this delicate period.

The Co-Chairs note that recent public statements criticizing the joint efforts of the co-chairing countries, and/or seeking unilaterally to establish new “conditions” or changes to the settlement process format are not conducive to resuming a constructive dialogue. The Co-Chairs reiterate that political will to achieve a lasting peaceful settlement is best demonstrated by refraining from maximalist positions, adhering strictly to the ceasefire, and abstaining from provocative statements and actions.

The Co-Chairs and PRCIO express appreciation for the strong engagement by leaders of international organizations including the United Nations, OSCE, and European Union, whose calls for strict adherence to the ceasefire and renewed dialogue under the auspices of the Co-Chairs have aligned with and supported the Co-Chairs’ own intensive mediation efforts. We note as especially positive the impartiality of such interventions, which have urged the sides to focus on reducing tensions rather than on assigning to others the sole responsibility of causing the recent escalation. The Co-Chairs welcome the growing international consensus calling for de-escalation and a swift return to negotiations in good faith without conditions.

The Co-Chairs reaffirm that the principles and elements as laid out in their statement of 9 March 2019 continue to form the basis of their mediation efforts. The Co-Chairs are prepared to meet with the leaders or their designees at any time. The Co-Chairs also emphasize that OSCE monitors should return to the region as soon as possible.

Armenian PM discusses recent escalation with UN Secretary General

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a phone conversation with the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the latter’s initiative.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan underscored that Armenia highly appreciates the constant attention the Secretary General pays to the peace and security in the South Caucasus. The Prime Minister of Armenia presented the escalation at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in result of the provocations undertaken by Azerbaijan, emphasizing that those actions have been carried out regardless the call of the Secretary General for a global ceasefire amid the pandemic.

“I want to inform you that Armenia made every possible step to cease hostilities and de-escalate the situation on the border,” Nikol Pashinyan noted.

Touching upon Azerbaijan’s violations of arrangement reached on the cessation of hostilities, Prime Minister Pashinyan added that in the current situation we are



observing contradictory statements and actions by the political-military leadership of Azerbaijan.

“We understand that there is a difficult domestic situation in Azerbaijan. But we cannot be hostage to a trap to which President Aliyev pushed himself. Years of spreading hatred towards Armenians and war threats created an illusion of military superiority which is now being painfully collapsed. We don’t know whether Azerbaijani leadership lacks capacity or willingness to prevent

ceasefire violations and provocative rhetoric,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister reiterated Armenia’s commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict, underscoring the ultimate importance of expanding the OSCE monitoring capacities and implementing previously reached agreements on that.

“It is necessary for the authorities of Azerbaijan to publicly renounce the use and threats of use of force. Azerbaijani leadership should recognize that there is no alternative to the peace talks,” the Prime Minister noted.

The UN Secretary-General expressed concern over the escalation in the region, stressing the need to take immediate steps towards the reduction of escalation, including through the implementation of agreements aimed at consolidation of the ceasefire. Antonio Guterres reiterated his support to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship.

Armenian Consulate condemns Azerbaijani violence against protesters in Los Angeles

The Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles has strongly condemned the provocations of the Azerbaijanis in front of the Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Los Angeles on July 21st, 2020.

“Considering the sequence of events, it is evident that the obstruction of the peaceful protest of the Armenian community was planned in advance and had an orchestrated nature,” the Consulate said.

The Armenian Consulate General in Los Angeles considers the violence against the peaceful demonstrators unacceptable.

Tuesday’s protest at the Azerbaijani Consulate, organized by the Armenian Youth Federation, drew a crowd of more than



3,000, according to Los Angeles Police Department estimates.

As Armenians were arriving at the demonstration site ahead of the 2 p.m. scheduled start time, a group Azerbaijanis, numbering less than 50, were waiting. Los Angeles Police officers escorted them across the street to prevent potential clashes, as has been

witnessed in other such demonstrations this week.

However, this did not stop the Azerbaijanis from inciting violence and instigating the Armenians, as they began throwing water bottles at the arriving protesters, promoting them to cross the street. A small scuffle ensued and was quickly broken up by police. This incident forced the closure of eastbound and westbound lanes of the commonly busy Wilshire Boulevard for more than 30 minutes.

As the protest was winding down, one of the Azerbaijanis across the street threw a water bottle, which hit a female Armenian protester, prompting those in her immediate vicinity to charge at the Azerbaijanis. A fight broke out, during which an LAPD sergeant was unwittingly hit in the face.

MEPs urge Azerbaijan to install the OSCE investigative mechanism



On the initiative of MEP Costas Mavrides (S&D), 29 MEPs from seven political groups sent a letter to the EU High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell on July 24.

The MEPs call on the EU to use its leverage to put in place genuine and effective confidence-building measures and urge the authorities of Azerbaijan to install the OSCE investigative mechanism for cease-fire violations.

The original letter is below:

Honourable High Representative/

Vice-President,
Dear Mr. Borrell,

Amid a global pandemic, we have been witnessing a dangerous escalation of the situation on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 12 July 2020, leading to tragic losses on both sides and with a potential to turn into a war, destabilizing the whole region and thus the eastern neighborhood of the European Union.

While clearly expressing our full support for the efforts of the OSCE Minsk group and the 2009 Basic Principles i.e. the non-use of force, territorial integrity and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, it is essential to actively work towards tackling hate-speech and war rhetoric.

It is crucial that the EU uses its leverage to put in place genuine and effective confidence-building measures, notably the OSCE investigative mechanism for cease-

fire violations which would prevent the sides from blaming each other for initiating deadly attacks. Armenia has agreed to discuss the details of the mechanism. Azerbaijan must do the same.

The sides must immediately resume negotiations and work towards a sustainable, peaceful resolution of the conflict. It is evident that there can be no military solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. It is our goal to have a peaceful, prosperous and safe EU neighborhood and we must take concrete steps in this direction.

Yours sincerely,

Alfonsi François, Ara-Kovacs Attila, Asimakopoulou Anna-Misel, Barrera Fernando, Castaldo Fabio Massimo, Christoforou Lefteris, Fourlas Loucas, Fragkos Emmanouil, Georgiou Giorgos, Georgoulis Alexis, Guillaume Sylvie, Hautala Heidi, Heide Hannes, Kaili Eva, Kouloglou Stelios, Kountoura Elena, Kovatchev Andrey, Kypourou Stelios, Liberadzki Bogusław, Mavrides Costas, Papadakis Demetris, Papadimitriou Dimitrios, Santos Isabel, Schreijer-Pierik Annie, Sonneborn Martin, Spyraiki Maria, Stefanuta Nicolae, Tomac Eugen, Vozemberg Elissavet.

Lebanese MPs propose to designate April 24 as National Day to commemorate Armenian and other genocides

Massis Post – A number of members of the Lebanese Parliament from various parties signed a joint resolution authored by Samy Gemayel, Member of Parliament and President of the Kataeb Party, calling for legislation that declares April 24 a national day commemorating the arrests, attempted extermination, and forced deportations by the Ottoman Empire of Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians and other minorities during and after the first world war.

The resolution also stipulates that all schools, institutions, and universities devote the first session of the 23rd of April to the historical events that took place in 1915 to educate students about the dangers of racism, discrimination of all kinds and the importance of safeguarding human rights.

In addition, the resolution states that the Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians and other minorities affected by the Ottoman Empire's genocidal policy, who fled to Leb-



anon for refuge, constitute an essential component of the Lebanese people and are an integral section of Lebanese society. The events of 1915 coincided with the great famine that struck Mount Lebanon between the years of 1915–1918, in which one-third of the country's population at that time (between 120,000 and 200,000 people) perished.

The legislation, coordinated with the S.D. Hunchakian Party, was initiated by Araz Bedros, a Lebanese-Armenian political activist and op-ed columnist, who worked closely with Gemayel and the Kataeb Party

in drafting the proposed law.

“With persistence and determination, we can reach our goals,” said Bedros. “As a descendant of the Armenian Genocide survivors, I feel like all Genocides are mine to commemorate. After all, keeping silence is a crime and an encouragement for new massacres. It is time for future generation to be educated about the dark Ottoman era. We shouldn't have to explain what a genocide is and the way Armenians were tortured and deported. These crimes should be taught in schools, to cultivate a future generation against all genocides and humanity who would never tolerate another massacre. I am hopeful that the Lebanese parliament and Armenian MP's continue what we started and rush the bill to a vote,” she added.

The Lebanese Parliament recognized the Armenian Genocide in May 2000.

Putin says situation on Armenian-Azerbaijani border a sensitive issue for Russia



In light of the recent escalation Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the relations with CIS countries, namely Armenia and Azerbaijan, with permanent members of the Security Council, the Kremlin reports.

Minister Mikhail Mishustin, speakers of both chambers of the Russian parliament – Valentina Matviyenko and Vyacheslav Volodin; Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev; head of the presidential

administration Anton Vaino; Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev; Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; Federal Security Service head Alexander Bortnikov; Foreign Intelligence Head Sergey Naryshkin; and Special Presidential Representative on environmental protection, ecology and transportation Sergey Ivanov.

The meeting was attended by Prime

Minister Anton Vaino; Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev; Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; Federal Security Service head Alexander Bortnikov; Foreign Intelligence Head Sergey Naryshkin; and Special Presidential Representative on environmental protection, ecology and transportation Sergey Ivanov.

At least 17 servicemen have been confirmed dead after the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border escalated on July 12.

According to the Armenian Ministry of Defense, the situation has been relatively calm over the past days, with irregular shooting reported in the direction of Armenian positions.

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The manifestations of the latter are various, including the activity that our compatriots are showing these days, bringing their Contribution to the Militaries' Insurance Fund.



The Armenian business class has always stood out with its patriotic activities, its participation and contribution to national preservation initiatives and the strengthening of the Armenian Army.

Therefore, I call on both Armenian businessmen and our compatriots who have achieved success in their endeavors abroad, to participate in the replenishment of the Militaries' Insurance Fund as much as possible, thus giving a more targeted, purposeful and systematic character to our support to the Armenian Army, - in the name of our future victories, support of the peaceful daily life of our Homeland and the strengthening of the Statehood."

- Mr Ghazaryan, together with the businessmen you've met with the Prime Minister on 22 July, what discussion took place, what moods and expectations do the businessmen have?

-This meeting was organized within about four weeks, in our Union, we collected questions from 500 people, edited 19 questions and proposals and sent them to the Ministry of Economy. During this period, the Ministry responded in written form for some of those 19, and a reference was prepared for the meeting with the Prime Minister, so at the meeting both of us were ready to participate in the discussion.

We had seven speeches instead of the planned nine, we did not manage two 'cause our discussion was quite long, - 2 hours 25 minutes instead of one hour planned. The speakers made suggestions on the issues of management during the pandemic, the activation of the construction sector, construction permits, mortgage lending, so

that the construction sector can be restored quickly.

Questions were raised about a delicate field, such as viticulture and winemaking, we also discussed the enlargement of agricultural farms, the unification of the land users, creation of cooperatives without which the volume of agricultural production would not grow. There was even talk on editing the Property Tax Law.



One of our (UMBA) members suggested that in parallel with the application of the Law, in case of widespread declaration of income, a reduction of expenses should be applied which would lead to a reduction of the social burden of that property tax burden. We also talked on the fact that within four months the Government regularly responded to our proposals to preserve jobs under pandemic, to reduce the possible spread of the infection, and to provide employment in the economy.

And we evaluated several Government programs that led to the a situation when we had several situations.

First, we were very worried during the first two months of the pandemic, but there was no commodity famine in Armenia. From the end of May to June we thought that the production volumes would be gradually restored in different spheres, except for tourism, which is still in collapse. And we can state that today business is able to provide the basis for further economic development. And this is already a hot work of the both sides. The Prime Minister also discussed in detail with us conceptual issues related to economic policy, strategic issues of the Country's development. We in turn told Mr Prime Minister that we would dedicate our "What to Do - 3" conference to the opportunities of economy recovery during

the pandemic because we attach great importance to it. This conference should take place in 1-1.5 months, with the participation of the Prime Minister Pashinyan.

...In general, it was a very constructive and binding working atmosphere. Mr Prime Minister instructed the Deputy Prime Minister and the three ministers to hold regular discussions with the business community.

Before that meeting, we had discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Economy.

The most important thing is that the Government can feel the pulse of the problems observed in the economy so that it can respond. In this sense, we describe the atmosphere as a very constructive one, and a little bit obliging, so that we, as the Union, can respond to the problems of our members in time.

-In other words, is the optimism of businessmen maintained during the crisis?

-We have made a statement twice during these 4-5 months. We are optimistic, because, first of all, we are able to keep our jobs, to pay the salaries to our employees.

Although there have been some restrictions in many areas, we are optimistic 'cause we are confident that if we organize and can manage to coordinate our responsibilities properly with the rights of the Govt., we will succeed. And if we look at the current indicators of the Statistical Committee, in which we must believe unequivocally, our economy is slowly entering to a phase of recovery.



- In other words, do you predict that there will be a recovery by the end of the year despite there are different forecasts that a big decline is expected in the economy this year?

- I have given two interviews during these months where I said: please, let's compare the current situation

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PM: “Digitalization is a revolutionary process: we should work to develop both content and the technical aspects”



The Digitalization Council met on July 20 in the Office of Government, chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The draft of Armenia's 2020-2025 digitalization strategy was discussed during the meeting.

Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry Stepan Tsaturyan presented the goals of the strategy and the roadmap for their implementation. He noted that Armenia holds leading positions in the development of e-government, digital technologies, and the successful initiatives implemented so far provide a good basis for digital transformation.

According to Stepan Tsaturyan, the digi-

talization strategy envisages digital transformation of state institutions, individual economic sectors and society through the development of innovative technologies, cyber security, and data processing policy in the system of

public administration to ensure interoperability of systems, introduction of common standards, implementation of educational programs and various digital tools. It is expected to provide high-quality public services, achieve increased governance efficiency, institutional digitization, infrastructure development, data-driven decision-making, and develop highly-skilled workforce.

The strategy will be implemented in 2 stages: 2020-2021 and 2022-2025. The strategy was discussed with the professional associations of the agencies con-

cerned, based on stakeholders' proposals. Issues relevant to common standards of digitalization, the coverage and scope of per-sector services, interdepartmental cooperation, development of cyber security infrastructure, interoperability of data systems and harmonization of the efforts underway in the field of digitalization were discussed during the exchange of views that followed. A number of organizational issues were raised in this context.

The Premier underscored that digitalization is a revolutionary process: “we should work to develop both content and the technical aspects.” In addition to technical standards, the digitalization strategy should set clear-cut political goals, visible benchmarks, so that the public at large could have an accurate idea of the proposed goals and results.

In this context, Nikol Pashinyan prioritized the need for active public communication, broader awareness of digital transition processes, and gave relevant instructions to those responsible. In conclusion, the Head of Government told the stakeholders to amend the draft strategy and proceed with further work.

WHO and EU deliver more medical supplies to Armenia

A shipment of 28 000 medical gowns and 20 000 N95 medical respirators for healthcare workers has arrived in Armenia. The items will enable those on the frontline to respond effectively and safely to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The supplies were procured by WHO, with the financial assistance of the European Union, as part of continued support to help Armenia respond to the pandemic.

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, the UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia Shombi Sharp and Coordinator of WHO health emergencies programme for the South Caucasus Vasily Esenamanov handed over the newly arrived protective equipment to Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia Lena Nanushyan for further distribution in the country.

The gowns and respirators that arrived



in Armenia were acquired considering the needs of country's health system and will be provided exclusively to healthcare workers.

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the European Union and WHO Regional Office for Europe have been actively supporting Armenia in its battle against the virus. On 20 June, a group of experts co-funded by the European Union and WHO arrived in Armenia to help scale up the response in the country. On 1 July, 10 000 tests were

delivered, helping Armenia widen testing for COVID-19 across the country.

This support to Armenia is part of the European Union's response to the outbreak of COVID-19, currently affecting more than 216 countries and territories. On 27 March 2020, the European Union announced an assistance package of €30 million to help prevent, detect and respond to the COVID-19

pandemic in six countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, including Armenia.

The funds initially will be used to meet immediate emergency needs, such as procuring critical supplies for health-care workers, frontline responders and patients. In the longer term, the assistance will go towards strengthening the country's capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

Armenian Army proves the most efficient and intellectual in the region – PM

The Armenian Armed Forces, the Armenian Army not only showed high combat efficiency during the recent clashes, but also reaffirmed the status of the most efficient, most intelligent army in the region, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told a cabinet meeting on July 23.

The Prime Minister's speech in full is provided below:

As you know, on July 12, Azerbaijan attacked our border positions in Tavush region. The Armenian Armed Forces not only repulsed the enemy's attacks, but also inflicted significant damage on it.

The Azerbaijani side has suffered numerous losses, including in armaments and state – of – the – art equipment, which is a clear victory for the Armenian military force, the military – industrial complex.

Much stronger was the moral and psychological blow to the enemy, and the incidents on the border have resulted in an unstable domestic political situation in Azerbaijan, which forces the country's leadership to resort to new provocations to direct the energy of internal discontent against Armenia and Artsakh.

Against the background of all this, I consider it necessary to make some important notes.

First, Azerbaijan attacked the sovereign territory of Armenia. I must emphasize once again that the positions that became the center of the events of the last two weeks are in the sovereign territory of Armenia. Azerbaijan's accusations against Armenia of aggression against it are simply absurd.

Azerbaijan undertook the attack when Armenia was involved in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and in a conditions when Azerbaijan was



refusing to negotiate with the main party to the conflict, Artsakh.

All the attacks of Azerbaijan were resolutely repulsed, the Armenian side more than strengthened its position on the border. The Azerbaijani myth that its army can defeat the Armenian army, and therefore Armenia and Artsakh must make concessions, simply vanished.

We had long been urging Azerbaijan not to try to talk to us from the position of force, in the language of force, with threats of force. And now we can say that Armenia not only rejected the threat of force around at the diplomatic table, but also showed on the battlefield that those are baseless and do not reflect the real balance of power. When I say real balance of power, I do not mean only the number of weapons and the Armed Forces, but first of all the quality of their actions, the level of management.

Now we can say for sure that the Armenian Armed Forces, the Armenian Army not only showed high combat efficiency, but also reaffirmed the status of the most efficient, most intelligent army in the region. And this is not just a statement, but a conclusion drawn from a detailed analysis following the events after July 12. Our army has always been and continues to be a source of national pride and once again reaffirmed its status in Tavush.

I also attach importance to the fact that

the Armenian society showed unanimous support and trust in its legitimate government, and the Armed Forces. I would like to emphasize the unity of our compatriots in the Diaspora, their dedication to helping Armenia, their prudence and soberness. These days, our compatriots in the Diaspora once again showed that we are one whole, one family, one spirit, one identity.

Beloved compatriots,

Dear colleagues,

During these past days we demonstrated a responsible and confident attitude to the international community. We remained committed to the three ceasefire agreements, which were being successively violated by Azerbaijan, causing new losses to its armed forces each time.

We did not come forth with threats against the people of Azerbaijan, its civilian infrastructure, even when the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan threatened to fire a missile at the Metsamor nuclear power plant. By the way, this threat should be subject to a serious international investigation, because it shows the essence of Azerbaijan as a terrorist state.

After July 12, the international community issued numerous calls to condemn the ceasefire violations and to end the violence. The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and their countries have made a great contribution to the resumption of the ceasefire. In this regard, particularly effective was the involvement of the Russian Federation, as expressed at the level of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

Turkey was the only country trying to provoke more violence instead of calming down the situation. Given the country's destabilizing ag-

gressive policy in a number of bordering regions and its traditional anti-Armenian policy reflected in the justification of the Armenian Genocide, this action of Turkey was not a big surprise. But the increase in its aggression raises the need for some revision of our policy, including in terms of our participation in international formats to curb Turkey's aggression, this behavior of Turkey was not a big surprise.

Beloved compatriots,

Dear colleagues,

There is no doubt that we are coming out of this ordeal victorious, confident in our power, in the endurance of our people and society.

But we also need to draw certain conclusions. We cannot ignore what happened. We cannot ignore the fact that in 2016 for the second time since April, Azerbaijan applied to force, when there was a peace process, when there was a call from the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to refrain from provocative actions and rhetoric. Azerbaijan used force at a time when the whole world is concentrating its forces and resources in the fight against the global pandemic that has befallen humanity.

Whatever, we have strengthened our position after the victorious battles in July, and this is reflected in the following:

First. The general security system of Armenia and Artsakh needs to be further strengthened. From this point of view, I attach great importance to our close cooperation with the Artsakh Republic, and to ascribing new content to that collaboration, in line with existing threats.

Second. The Republic of Artsakh must become a full-fledged party to the negotiations.

Third. Azerbaijan must publicly renounce the use of force and take credible



steps to end anti-Armenian rhetoric.

Fourth. Negotiations must be meaningful. Azerbaijan's approach that the talks are a continuation of the war, and that their goal is to resolve military issues at the negotiating table, makes the whole negotiation process meaningless. Negotiations make sense if Azerbaijan is ready to back down from its maximalist approach and is ready to compromise. The recognition of the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination without any restriction, the security of the people of Armenia and Artsakh cannot be compromised under any circumstances.

Fifth. In recent days, Azerbaijan has targeted the civilian population and infrastructure of a number of border villages in Tavush region. The countries supplying weapons to Azerbaijan must clearly realize that the use of these weapons is a crime against the civilian population, as it gives the impression that it is not Azerbaijan fighting against the Armed Forces and the civilian population of Armenia, but international corporations producing high-precision lethal weapons and their specialists. The conflict, which has been going on for three decades, is seriously damaging the border settlements of Armenia and the people living in Artsakh, violating their political, economic, environmental, movement and other rights. The approach that these rights can be exercised only after the settlement of the conflict is not acceptable.

The problems of the people living in the conflict zone should become a priority part of the negotiation agenda.

Sixth. Monitoring of the ceasefire that existed before the epidemic is in fact very limited. It is necessary to introduce effective international monitoring, which will be permanent and will have control mechanisms that will record which side violated the ceasefire each time. Such monitoring activities

can be carried out by the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, which has years of experience in the region, and can ensure the constant presence of OSCE observers in the region, both at the state border and on the line of contact.

Providing direct on-the-spot communication between the military is an effective tool for preventing and clarifying incidents.

Seventh. Armenia will continue to work with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. We have resolutely rejected and will reject Turkey's attempts to destabilize the region by manipulating the conflict.

Beloved compatriots,

Dear colleagues,

The victorious battles of July 2010 showed that as a result of non-violent, velvet, people's revolution, and subsequent democratization, fight against corruption, reforms, a new concept of army development, our country and society have reached a new level of endurance and unity. We can be inspired by this fact, but that enthusiasm must be transformed into daily creative work to develop the economic, political, military and diplomatic potential of our country. And we will win, because our victory is the victory of justice, the victory of truth, the victory of humanity. Thank you.

Recent escalation the logical outcome of Azerbaijan's 'pugnacious policies,' says Armenia's Ambassador to Poland

There is enough clear evidence that the most recent escalation of the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in the Northern Tavush region is the logical outcome of pugnacious policies of Azerbaijan, Armenia's Ambassador to Poland Samvel Mkrtchian said in an interview with the Warsaw Institute.

"If one follows the warmongering rhetoric of the President of Azerbaijan, the Defense Minister and other high ranking officials pronounced during last weeks and months advocating for a military solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, you see that the provocation which triggered the developments starting July 12th was not out of the blue," he said.

The Ambassador noted that the Armenian side has been continuously warning its international partners that this type of situation is of high probability and, preventive and restraining political and diplomatic steps should be taken to tame the Azerbaijani ill-intentioned fervor.

"To our disappointment, our warnings have been somewhat overlooked," he stressed.

Speaking about the role of Russia and Turkey, Ambassador Mkrtchian said "the two countries are acting completely differently."

"Turkish Defense Minister, Foreign Min-



ister, the President and other officials in the course of the last week have already made several statements and comments voicing their unequivocal support to Azerbaijan, also in terms of possible military involvement. This is extremely unhelpful and not only encourages and emboldens Azerbaijan to continue along the dangerous path of escalation, but also raises profound questions on whether that country can play any credible and positive role in the South Caucasus," the Ambassador said.

"At this point it is abundantly clear that Turkey is a destabilizing factor in our region and a serious challenge to Armenia's security. Moreover, Turkey's attempts to intervene in the conflicts in its neighboring regions has already undermined the security and stability thereon," he added.

"These facts make even more impossible for Turkey to play any role in the issues

related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, within international, and particularly the OSCE framework. Armenia will continue to consistently work towards maintaining and strengthening the international and regional security, while closely cooperating with international partners to this end," Amb. Mkrtchian noted.

To the contrary, Russia, he said, though being an ally to Armenia and being bound by military security agreements, opted a balanced approach offering its mediation services not only as the co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, but in its national capacity as well.

He stated that "the situation we are currently in, necessitates as quick as possible to engage in negotiations in good faith. Azerbaijan should eventually comprehend that we live in the same region and we need to build a common security space."

"To achieve that goal, in the first place, the right of Nagorno Karabakh people to self-determination should be unconditionally respected, international legally binding mechanisms should be utilized to exercise it and define the status of Nagorno Karabakh. By doing so the full potential of the South Caucasus will be unblocked and we all will equally benefit," Samvel Mkrtchian said.

Armenian PM's wife urges Azerbaijani women to join Women for Peace campaign



Spouse of the Armenian prime minister Anna Hakobyan commented on the recent clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis abroad.

In a Facebook post, Anna Hakobyan said on July 13, when the active military operations have started on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border as a result of the Azerbaijani attack and had a tendency to deepen, she has urged the Azerbaijani women and mothers "to call on their country's leadership to stop the military operations and do not endanger the lives of Azerbaijani and Armenian soldiers".

"I did this as author of the Women for Peace campaign, which aims at uniting women against wars, creating a favorable environment so that the leaders of the conflicting countries will search for solutions to conflicts around negotiation table.

Several mothers of Azerbaijani soldiers responded to this call through Azerbaijani media outlets greatly controlled by the leadership, and the answer was the following: "As a mother of a soldier I state: Fight. Go ahead Azerbaijani soldier. Fight. Homeland is the only mother of soldier. The fight for the homeland is a sacred fight".

Thus, according to the Azerbaijani state propaganda, the Azerbaijani mothers rejected my call on stopping the military operations and moving towards peace. Instead, they announced that they are sending their sons to fight and die in the sacred fight. A large number of Azerbaijanis were killed in the following days", Anna Hakobyan said.

She said it's already several days the "sacred fight for the homeland" has gone be-

yond the boundaries of the conflict zone.

"Azerbaijanis living in Russia, different European countries started various actions against Armenians in that cities in order to avenge their killed compatriots. Firstly, they were stomping on Armenian apricots, then banned the sale of the apricot in the trade centers owned by them, then attacked the Armenian women during the protest, set on fire the vehicle of the Armenian embassy, broke the cars, stores of Armenians, attacked and beat an Armenian man.

The Azerbaijani actions didn't go unanswered: our compatriots, of course, had to defend themselves", she said, adding that now not only the life of soldiers is under danger, but also the life of Armenians and Azerbaijanis living in Moscow, Brussels, Los Angeles, etc.

"I urge the Azerbaijani women and mothers to be more courageous and join the Women For Peace campaign.

As violence brings new violence", Anna Hakobyan said.

Azerbaijan was, is and will remain an aggressor – Frank Engel

Former MEP Frank Engel thinks that the Azerbaijani leadership-initiated border escalations recently to divert the attention of its citizens from domestic problems. In an interview with ARMENPRESS Engel said that every time Azerbaijani leadership faces domestic problems, they focus the attention of their citizens on the “Armenian threat” by attacking either Armenia or Artsakh. Frank Engel also talked about the Azerbaijani threats to strike Armenia’s nuclear power plant and Turkey’s behavior in the context of the clashes.

-Mr. Engel, on July 12 Azerbaijan carried out aggression in the north-eastern section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. As a result of the clashes that lasted for a few days both sides suffered casualties. How would you comment on the recent days’ actions of Azerbaijan?

-It is sadly not the first time this happens, and one might assume it won’t be the last. It seems that every time something goes awry in Azerbaijan’s internal politics, the attention of the public is diverted to “the Armenian threat” by attacks on the territory of Artsakh or Armenia proper. After decades of rigorous indoctrination of the Azerbaijani public, after decades of school curricula that have brainwashed generations of young people there, it isn’t surprising that this has worked every time until now. The trouble is that the current authorities of Baku may have taken it a step too far this time, as evidenced by the demonstrations and violence of a delirious mob demanding that finally there be all-out war. You can’t play this game forever. Sonner or later, Aliev will become the victim of his own rhetoric. That will of course be an extremely dangerous development for Armenia.

-There have been different opinions about the goals of the actions of Azerbaijan. In your opinion what goal did the Azerbaijani leadership pursue and what task did they try to solve by provoking tension at the border?

-Their goal is to divert attention from internal problems. This time they also sacked the Foreign Minister in the process, I don’t know what is cooking in Azerbaijani power circles right now. But it seems clear to me



that the public in Azerbaijan demands that after years of the country shining off internationally, they finally get their share in the riches of the country, which are so far strictly confiscated by the ruling elite. Azerbaijan is facing distribution struggles, and the public is asking itself why the “Armenian problem” is not finally solved, if that is what keeps them poor. They also do no longer accept the sacrifice of officers and soldiers every few months in gratuitous acts. But as I said, the danger is: they will demand more, they want a real war. Aliev doesn’t, that would utterly ruin his wealth and governance system.

-Apart from provoking border tensions, Azerbaijan kept Armenian civilian settlement under artillery fire for a few days which is well documented and the facts have been presented to the international community. How would you comment on the behavior of Azerbaijan of targeting civilians?

-The Baku authorities will not want to risk a death toll like four years ago, when their public was outraged at the massive casualties, they suffered for nothing. And as they are allowed to deny their aggressive role internationally, with hardly anyone on the front stage of international politics finally calling them out as the eternal warmonger, they will always claim that the civilian targets were a sad consequence of Armenian attacks. But when a society has been indoctrinated into sheer hatred and bloodthirst for such a long time, they revel in images of helpless victims of their military might. It is sick, but that’s what the whole system of Azerbaijan is. Sick. Only a sick society would cheer at the images of dead Armenian villagers.

-Mr. Engel, the representative of the defense ministry of Azerbaijan threatened to strike Armenia’s nuclear power plant. How

would you react to this announcement of Azerbaijan?

-They are obviously desperate for attention. No-one in their right mind would contemplate carrying out such an attack, Azerbaijan itself would suffer dramatic consequences, as would Turkey, and their lands become uninhabitable for centuries. But it also shows again a point I just made: Azerbaijan is a sick system and a sick society; they would no longer be restrained by the most elementary threads of human decency in their anti-Armenian madness. They urgently need to be sanctioned by the international community. But the good thing is: after Baku openly threatened a crime against humanity, every observer of the situation should now understand why Azerbaijan has refused international monitoring of the border between it and Armenia and Artsakh. It should be abundantly clear to everyone that Azerbaijan is the aggressor, has been the aggressor and will remain the aggressor.

-Turkey did not remain indifferent towards the tensions on Armenia-Azerbaijan border. The president, foreign and defense ministers of Turkey made statements in support of Azerbaijan. How would you comment on the behavior of Turkey during those days and what can be the reason for such a behavior by Turkey?

-Oh, Turkey is active on all the wrong fronts right now. With regard to Armenia, the Republic of Cyprus, Greece. Of course, it will notionally stand by Azerbaijan no matter what happens, because its supposed patronage of that state is about the only patch of geopolitical relevance which Erdogan has left. Not to mention the total dependence on Azerbaijan for energy, as Turkey would no longer be able to afford anything else than Azerbaijani oil and gas which they get virtually for free. Azerbaijan sort of helps Turkey avoid bankruptcy after the totally erratic policies of Erdogan brought his country to the brink of economic collapse. But only as long as it stands in unconditional support of Baku. The funny thing is that in Azerbaijani-Turkish relations, it is really now Azerbaijan calling the shots.

... Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan Meets with Businessmen

with the 2008-2009 financial and economic crisis, as a result of which Armenia's GDP fell by 14%. We were able to restore it. It does not matter how much the GDP will decrease, it is clear that in 2020, compared to 2019, we will not have the same figures, neither in terms of GDP growth, nor in terms of tax revenue collection.

We will have some declines, but it is important that we will lay the grounds for recovery in 2020. And that this is a world catastrophe, the economies of all the countries see it, is a fact. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund regularly change their forecasts even for Armenia.

But the essential thing is that the production and export potential is to be preserved in our basic branches. The important thing is that the neighboring markets do not collapse, so that we can strengthen our programs, re-equip them, - to bring investments in 2021 and so recover.

We have recovered before, and in 2010-2011 we already had a certain index of economic growth. **- Does the Government create the preconditions for that restoration with its activities?**

- As all the countries of the world today are following the path of trial and error, this is a unique pandemic in history, the damages are disappearing from different places, our Government is trying to give operative solutions. And there are 21 support programs. If they continue to maintain this pace, and I am sure they will, I think there will be adequate responses.

We all understand that only by helping to each other we will be able to get out of this psychological, economic and health epidemic.

For instance, everyone is complaining about putting on a mask, but large European countries have returned to our formula. Today our healthcare system is enduring, we are not in a collapse. It takes only three simple behaviors for us to maintain in our teams as well so that we can get out of this situation as soon as possible.

Only the time will tell when that this "soon" will be.

In the words of *Avag Harutyunyan*, an UMBA active member, a winemaker and the Founding Director of Maran Company, *"this time the businessmen encouraged PM Pashinyan"*.

He said that format of this meeting with PM was significantly different from all the previous ones held before and after the revolution.



"This meeting was different from the previous ones, as it was more conceptual and very interesting, because it was not this or that issue we asked was discussed, but the conceptual components or the big reasons that gave rise to that issue. In-depth analysis was done. The most interesting thing was that the Prime Minister Pashinyan for the first time considered this in the overall strategy. In other words, when we raised, for instance, the issue of property tax, procurement of grape or construction, it was considered within the general concept of the development of the state - coronavirus pandemic, war, current situation, etc.", Mr Harutyunyan said.

He pointed out that meetings with the previous authorities were a platform for resolving personal issues, someone was bringing up the issue of his personal business and it was an occasion to say something to the Prime Minister. This time, however, according to Mr Harutyunyan, as serious questions – on the Country's development, so people felt uncomfortable or found it inappropriate to raise small personal or narrow sectoral issues. Avag Harutyunyan said the discussion was a very positive one, and the Prime Minister was in positive mood, even was joking. *"Besides, it was obvious that he was looking at the issues from a much broader perspective than we expected"*, he stressed.

In Avag Harutyunyan's words, the situation this time was opposite one: *"The businessmen came to give hope to the Prime Minister that we are at your side, go ahead with confidence..."*

Of course, the Prime Minister responded by saying that the Government will do everything to move the economy forward. As for winemaking, according to Harutyunyan, *"...this year there is very big quantity of grape, and little money, the containers are full, there is no room, but we have an ideal harvest, so a slightly different approach should be shown to this field..."*

This year it is different: the peasantry has not entered into the dirty games with the govt on the power formation, falsified elections, etc., today the peasantry is very clean, fair, but alone with its problems.. Now the State says to grape farmers: I am at your side, I give you an interest-free loan as much as you need. And this is a very great thing as it has never been before like that. "The Government offered interest-free loans to producers for 18 months, businessmen asked them for 24 months. *"Can you imagine a 24-month interest-free loan, a six-month soft loan? This creates very good conditions so that we do not offend the villagers. Now it is our turn to narrow ourselves down a bit, but the harvest will not remain,"* says the winemaker.

Mr Harutyunyan reminds that for 17 years they raised issues before the Government, but did not give a solution because of the personal interests of some people, including top-ranking officials.

And... *"in this year and a half, many global problems in the field of wine-making have been solved, and now we are moving in a dynamic, rational way with the reps of the Govt."* The businessman thinks that the coming year will be a good time for this sphere, as now the European and Chinese markets are recovering, moreover, not only Armenians buy Armenian wine in Europe, as before, our wine is known and loved in the European markets. Harutyunyan believes that *"..this trend will continue. The situation is bad this year, but we are expecting a prosperous time for the next year..."*

Recent News from Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator

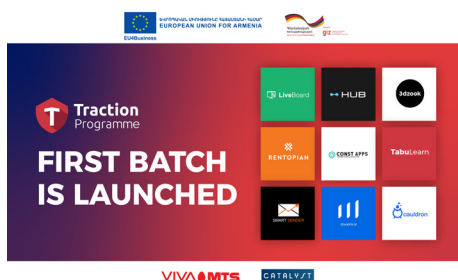
Armenia Startup Academy Traction Programme First Batch is launched The European Union and Viva-MTS support New Startup Growth Programme by Armenia Startup Academy

We are thrilled to announce the start of the First Batch of newly launched Armenia Startup Academy Traction Programme - a 10-week mentorship-based programme designed to help companies at post-prototype stage with early traction to accelerate their growth and raise their first or follow-on rounds. The programme is implemented by **Catalyst Foundation** supported by the **European Union's EU4Business "Technology Development for Armenia"** project implemented by GIZ. **Viva-MTS**, Armenia's leading telecommunications operator joins the initiative as a corporate partner and supporter.

Throughout the 5 cycles of the Armenia Startup Academy pre-acceleration programme 65 startups have graduated. In total, less than €250K was spent during the 2,5 years on running the programme, while companies that graduated ASA disclosed raising more than €3 million of funding. While things evolve, Armenian startups start facing new challenges, which are more sophisticated by their nature. As a response to an existing need in the ecosystem for a next-level programme, Academy team has designed the Traction Programme.

Over the 10 weeks of the Traction programme, participating startups will work closely with leading professionals in **Sales** and **Growth Hacking**, establish their growth frameworks, refine and validate their strategies and get support for **Fund-raising** and expanding to international markets. Under the light of the Covid-19 pandemic the programme will be held remotely. More information about the programme can be found [here](#).

The first cohort of 9 companies reflects a diverse range of startups that bring new



waves of innovation in industries such as edutech, transportation, media, HR, marketing and more.

The selected cohort of the first Traction Programme includes:

CauldronApp helps companies save applicant screening and interviewing time by recruiting through challenges.

ConstApps is an E-commerce mobile application builder providing marketing solutions to allow for customer retention.

Dowork is a collaborative platform for project time and cost estimation.

dzook is a technology converting simple photos into illustrated portraits, which can be used in different areas such as video editing, plugins for drawing and design tools, 3D animation, etc.

Hub Technologies democratizes the shipping industry and connects shippers directly with carriers without charging brokerage fees.

LiveBoard is an interactive whiteboard application for online tutoring and distance learning.

Rentopian is an all-in-one software for event rental business operations.

SmartSender is an AI-powered retention marketing automation platform allowing for omni-channel customer retention.

TabuLearn is an end-to-end provider of data science and AI services allowing anyone who has access to data to build AI models and extract actionable insight for their business.

About the European Union

The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

About EU4Business Technology Development for Armenia Project

EU4Business "Technology Development for Armenia" is part of the EU4Business "Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia" project, which is co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by German Development Cooperation GIZ through the Private Sector Development and TVET South Caucasus Programme. It aims at creation and further development of investable and innovative ventures in Armenia leading to stronger and competitive tech and innovation ecosystems with potential export orientation, increased number of Science2Business2Education cooperation platforms and higher participation in HORIZON 2020 and HORIZON Europe innovation programmes.

About Viva-MTS

Viva-MTS (MTS Armenia CJSC) is Armenia's leading telecommunications operator, having the widest network reach and spreading a wide range of Voice and Data services all across Armenia. Having the best of the Armenian people interest at heart since its launch on 1st July 2005 and in a short period of time Viva-MTS has managed to build a nationwide network and a considerable customer base. Viva-MTS drives innovation and aims at always being at the forefront of any development serving the Armenian mobile communications market. The company follows the guidance provided by ISO 26000 (International Standard of Social Responsibility) and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 (Information Security Management System). For more information visit www.mts.am.

About Catalyst Hi-Tech and Entrepreneurship Development Foundation

Catalyst Hi-Tech and Entrepreneurship Development Foundation aims to contribute to the development of the tech entrepreneurship ecosystem in Armenia. The Foundation has a number of initiatives aiming to fuel the Armenian startup ecosystem with competitive skills and develop a pipeline of capable companies, including **Hero House**, **Armenia Startup Academy**, **AI Incubator**, **Entrepreneurial Assistant School**, **Startup Boost Weekends**, etc.

British newspaper presents Artsakh as a fast-developing tourism destination



The British “Kensington Chelsea & Westminster London” newspaper in its July-August issue has published an article about Artsakh, the Embassy of Armenia in the

attracts travelers and ensures a fascinating and extraordinary experience.

The article notes seven reasons



UK informs.

The Republic of Artsakh is presented as a fast-developing tourism destination that

The architecture of Artsakh started developing in pre-Christian times.

Gastronomic pleasure

Traditional Artsakh cuisine consists of various dishes for every taste, Local products are environmentally friendly and incredibly tasty.

A dose of adrenaline

Taking into account the distinctiveness of the local nature, Artsakh is a real paradise for fans of outdoor activities, offering climbing, mountaineering, fishing, hiking and horseback riding, flights on airplanes,



why it's necessary to visit Artsakh:

Wildlife and peace

Discover the unspoiled nature of Artsakh – the pure air, thick forests,

high mountains, and turbulent rivers that shape this fascinating nature.

In touch with antiquity

Artsakh is a land of ancient monuments spread all over the country.

bike trips and tours on SUVs.

Get a blast of positive emotions

One more thing that distinguishes Artsakh from other travel destinations is the incredible hospitality of its residents.

Dive into rural life

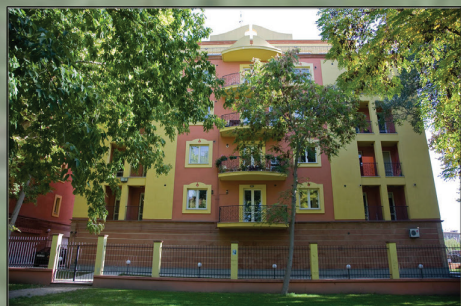
Artsakh is an attractive place to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Feel the spirit of the holiday

Exciting festivals and celebrations are held throughout the year in Artsakh, which are an excellent opportunity to get to know the traditions and culture.

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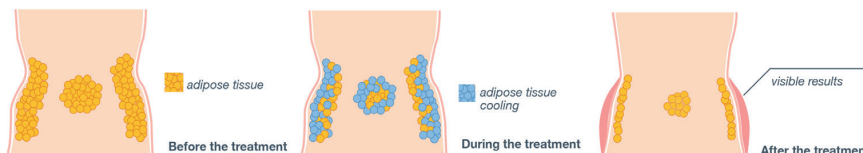
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