

“Armenian Crossroads” – PM presents details from North-South, East-West Road project



Armenia - Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan chairs a cabinet meeting in Yerevan, February 17, 2022.

In the context of the opening of regional connections the Armenian government re-formulated the North-South project and is terming it “North-South, East-West” Project, or “Armenian Crossroads”, the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Cabinet meeting.

“As a result of our latest discussions, I mean the topic of opening regional connections, we have basically re-formulated the North-South project and made it a “North-South, East-West” project. We hope to implement this project with fast pace. Essentially this means that one of the branches, I mean the North-South, East-West, or in short one of the branches of the Armenian

Crossroads, will connect north with south, meaning, essentially, from the Republic of Armenia to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the other branch, essentially, Azerbaijan, Armenia and in the future towards Nakhijevan and Turkey. We place this project in this general context. We hope we’ll have a construction company by yearend who will implement the work. Of course, the east-west section of the road project isn’t done but we will realize this in the context of reaching further agreements,” Pashinyan said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Cabinet meeting that the pre-qualification tender for the Sisian-Kajaran section of the North-South Road was announced on February 17.

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Mirzoyan, Lavrov discuss Armenia-Turkey normalization

On February 15, RA Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan had a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Ararat Mirzoyan and Sergey Lavrov referred to the implementation of the agreements reached through trilateral statements of November 9, 2020 and January 11 and November 26, 2021.

The interlocutors attached importance to the steps taken to increase the level of stability and security on the



Armenian-Azerbaijani border, and the formation of mechanisms on demarcation and

of normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey.

demarcation issues.

During the telephone conversation, the Armenian and Russian Foreign Ministers referred to the cooperation in bilateral, multilateral platforms, as well as to the issues of regional and international agenda.

They exchanged views on the process

Armenia's acting President receives US Ambassador

Acting President of the Republic of Armenia Alen Simonyan received US Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia Lynne Tracy.

At the beginning of the meeting, the interlocutors congratulated each other on the 30th anniversary of establishment of Armenia-US diplomatic relations.

Alen Simonyan stressed that the United States has been a stable partner and friend of our country since the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

The parties referred to the working visit of the delegation led by Alen Simonyan to Washington in January. Alen Simonyan referred to the meeting with the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. He briefed the Ambassador on the details of the working visit, emphasizing the effectiveness of a number of meetings



with US partners and the readiness to develop the ongoing programs.

They exchanged views on the implementation of joint projects within the

framework of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Armenia-US diplomatic relations.

Armenian soldier wounded in Azerbaijani shooting in Artsakh

At around 16:15 on February 15, the Azerbaijani troops violated the ceasefire regime in the eastern border zone of the Artsakh Republic.

Conscript of Artsakh's Defense Army Khachatur Khachatryan was wounded in the shooting.



The condition of the soldier is assessed as serious.

The Russian peacekeepers have been informed about the incident.

At present, the operative-tactical situation in the mentioned part of the line if contact is stable.

27 bridges, 5 tunnels: Infrastructures Minister describes monumental Sisian-Kajaran road project



The Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Gnel Sanosyan said the new Sisian-Kajaran road section will be “a well-maintained, safe road in line with modern standards.”

Sanosyan said it is a massive project with rather encompassing infrastructures.

“The total length of the North-South Road is approximately 560 kilometers, and these 60 kilometers are one of the key sections. Now we have an average of 50 km/h speed on the current road from Sisian to Kajaran. We will have 100 km/h speed with this new road, and the travel time will be reduced by two hours. It will be a well-maintained safe road in line with modern standards, which is very important from a strategic point of view,” Sanosyan

said.

He added that the road is an entirely new road with 27 bridges. The total length of the bridges are 4,7 kilometers. There are tunnel sections with a total length of more than 12 kilometers. There will be 5 tunnels in total, with one of them being 8,6 kilometers in length.

“We will do everything so that major international companies have serious interest in this project. We will have a contractor by yearend if no obstacles happen,” he said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Cabinet meeting that the pre-qualification tender for the Sisian-Kajaran section of the North-South Road was announced on February 17.

Pashinyan said that this project is of great strategic importance. The project is worth a few hundred million dollars.

“Essentially, an investment project of this size has never been implemented in the history of independent Armenia,” Pashinyan said.

“I want to say that as a result of the lat-

est discussions we have re-formulated the North-South project and made it a “North-South, East-West” project. We hope to implement this project with fast pace. This means that one of the branches of this road will connect Armenia with Iran, the other branch will connect Armenia with Azerbaijan, then in the future towards Nakhichevan and Turkey. We place this project in the general context. We hope we’ll have a construction company by yearend who will implement the work. Of course, the east-west section of the road project isn’t done but we will realize this in the context of reaching future agreements,” Pashinyan said.

The pre-qualification phase will last 70 days.

Pashinyan added that concrete works are now underway for the construction of the Yeraskh-Julfa-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz railway. He expressed hope that the agreements that have been reached will soon be recorded in the form of any document, and the process would take full-swing implementation already de jure.

The opportunities related to unblocking are visible – Deputy PM

The opportunities to unblock transport and economic ties in the region, particularly the opening of railways, are visible, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said in a briefing with journalists, commenting on the Prime Minister’s speech about the Yeraskh-Julfa-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz railway.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, there are no new agreements at the moment, but in any case, the agreements on the issue will be formulated in a written form in accordance with the legal requirements.

“There are common symmetrical perceptions that the potential for unblocking, in particular the opening of the railway, are visible”, said Mher Grigoryan.

To the question whether there are concrete agreements at the moment, the Dep-



uty Prime Minister answered that at the moment there have been official statements on all the agreements.

Mher Grigoryan referred to the agreement between the Prime Minister of Armenia and the Azerbaijani side reached in Sochi on November 26, 2021 mediated by the President of Russia and reaffirmed during the December 14, 2021 meeting

mediated by the President of the European Council on the restoration of the railway.

“In particular, the Brussels statement clearly states about the agreement, the approaches of the parties regarding the railway,” the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expressed hope on February 17 sitting of the government that the agreements reached on the Yeraskh-Julfa-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz railway will be registered in the form of a document, and the de jure process will be fully start.

On February 9, Pashinyan announced in the National Assembly that a working group has been set up to organize the construction of the Yeraskh-Julfa-Ordubad-Meghri-Horadiz railway.

Armenian FM, German State Minister discuss cooperation, regional issues

On February 18, Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan held a meeting with Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany Tobias Lindner in Munich.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the effective cooperation between the two states in bilateral and multilateral formats. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia commended the positive dynamic of the friendly relations between Armenia and Germany, anchored in historical ties, common values and mutual interests.

Ahead to the 30th anniversary of estab-

lishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Ararat Mirzoyan and Tobias Lindner expressed their readiness to deepen the cooperation between the two countries.

The sides exchanged views on a number of urgent issues of regional and international agenda. Minister Mirzoyan presented the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and on the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The need for comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the mandate of the OSCE



Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship was emphasized.

The sides stressed the importance of immediate repatriation of the Armenian prisoners of war and other detainees.

During the meeting the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey was also touched upon.

Marseille preparing to celebrate 30th anniversary of twin-city relationship with Yerevan



The French city of Marseille is preparing to celebrate the 30th anniversary of twin-city relationship with Yerevan. High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan discussed the issue with Deputy Mayor of Marseille Michèle Rubirola on February 18.

“Marseille has been the gateway to France for French Armenians,” High Commissioner Zareh Sinanyan said, expressing

gratitude for the warm welcome. Sinanyan then shared an update on the situation in Artsakh, noting that Armenia strives for peace in the region.

“Getting the Genocide recognized should be tied to the recognition of Artsakh’s independence. If the Armenian Genocide were not denied, we would not have witnessed the last Artsakh war,” he said.

During the war, Deputy Mayor of Marseille Michèle Rubirola was rallying around Artsakh, calling on the city Council to recognize Artsakh’s independence. Now, Marseille is preparing to celebrate the 30th anniversary of twin-city relationship with Yerevan.

“We are waiting for proposals from the Armenian side to properly and actively



celebrate this event,” she stressed. The sides agreed to discuss proposals with the Yerevan Municipality and move forward together.

Artsakh Parliament adopts law on territories occupied by Azerbaijan

Artsakh’s National Assembly voted unanimously to adopt the Law on Occupied Territories of Artsakh.

The law applies to the territories occupied during and before the 2020 war. It gives a clear status to the territories occupied as a result of the three Artsakh wars.

“This law is not only the legal formulation of the political position of the state, but also regulates the legal relations in the territories occupied by Azerbaijan, clarifies the scope of responsibility of Azerbaijan,” Artsakh’s State Minister Artak Beglaryan

said in a social media post.

“The law deals with economic relations and procedures, the use of the subsoil and other natural resources, and the protection of human rights,” he said.

The law stipulates that foreigners must obtain an entry permit from the Republic of Artsakh to visit the occupied territories, and those carrying out humanitarian missions must at least inform the Artsakh authorities.

“We are well aware that we have limited legal mechanisms to perform the func-



tions specified in the law and to achieve the goals, but we must make maximum use of the existing legal and political mechanisms in that direction. The territories of the Artsakh Republic must be de-occupied and our citizens must return to their homes,” Beglaryan said.

Iran planning to host second 3+3 South Caucasus format meeting



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has welcomed the arrangements to hold the next meeting of the 3+3 South Caucasus Platform in Iran, hoping that the meeting would contribute to regional security and stability, *Tasnim* news agency reports.

In a telephone conversation on February 14, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov talked about the trend of ties between Tehran and Moscow and some issues of mutual interest at the regional and international levels, including the Vienna talks.

The Russian Foreign Minister welcomed Iran's plan to host the second meeting of the 3+3 platform on the South Caucasus and expressed hope that the conference would further ensure the interests of regional countries and maintain stability and security in the region.

For his part, Amirabdollahian described

the forthcoming session of the 3+3 South Caucasus Platform as an "opportunity for consensus and synergy to deepen regional cooperation in favor of the interests of the countries and people of the region."

The first session of the 3+3 regional consulting platform was held in Moscow on December 10.

Participating in the meeting were the Deputy Foreign Ministers of Russia, Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, as well as the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran.

Georgia skipped the meeting although it was invited to participate.

UNESCO responds to alarms about desecration of Armenian monuments by Azerbaijan, hopes to send mission soon



UNESCO continues working to send an Independent Technical Mission to Nagorno Karabakh, a spokesperson for the

organization told *Armenpress*.

The comments come in the wake of alarms about the cases of distortion and destruction of the Armenian historical-cultural heritage in the territories of the Republic of Artsakh currently under Azerbaijani control.

UNESCO hopes the mission will be possible soon.

"We continue working to send a UNESCO Independent Technical Mission

within the framework of the 1954 Convention. We hope that it will be possible soon, but for the moment the necessary conditions are not in place. So discussions are still ongoing," Thomas Mallard, Press Officer at UNESCO, said.

He noted that the "heritage and history shouldn't be the subject of any political instrumentalization" and urged all Member States all over the world, to respect this principle.

European Parliament calls on EU to actively engage in finding lasting NK settlement

In the resolution on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy-annual report 2021, the European Parliament reaffirmed its "unwavering support to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, and in particular as regards their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders as well as the respect for the will of the people to decide their own future and foreign policy, free from outside interference".

The European Parliament also called for the full implementation of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia, stressed the need for increased EU and Member State engagement in the South Caucasus for the region's



stability and prosperity as well as to counteract the influence and interference of regional powers.

The EP also called on the EU, its Member States and the Vice President/High Representative to actively engage in finding a lasting settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh and

to prevent a further escalation of tensions in the region, notably by pressing Azerbaijan and Armenia to address post-war issues, including the demarcation of borders and the release of all remaining prisoners of war.

The MEPs note that the OSCE Minsk Group remains the only internationally recognized format for the resolution of this conflict, on the basis of the principles of territorial integrity, non-use of force, self-determination and equal rights, and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The European Parliament also called for the OSCE Minsk Group's swift return to its mediating role.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar. The Head of the European Union Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Victorin was also present at the meeting.

The Prime Minister attached importance to the continuous development of Armenia-EU relations and the joint efforts in that direction. Nikol Pashinyan stressed that the agenda of democratic reforms continues to be among the priorities of the

PM Pashinyan, EU Special Representative discuss 2.6 billion euro investment package for Armenia

Armenian government, adding that the commitment of the Armenian authorities to the process of democratic reforms is inviolable. The interlocutors discussed issues related to the progress of the EU's 2.6 billion euro investment package for Armenia. In this context, the effective implementation of the 80 million euro package in Syunik region was especially important.

The Prime Minister praised the efforts of the President of the European Council Charles Michel in strengthening mutual understanding and stability in the region.

The meeting focused on the situation in the South Caucasus region after the 44-day war, steps taken to defuse the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and ensure stability. In particular, they exchanged views on the meetings mediated by the President of the Russian Federation in

Sochi, the President of the European Council in Brussels and the President of France, as well as the results of the quadripartite videoconference on February 4 and the implementation of the agreements reached.

The importance of the entry of the UNESCO mission and international humanitarian organizations into the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone was emphasized, given the threatening statements made by Azerbaijan against the Armenian cultural heritage and the steps already taken to destroy a number of Armenian monuments.

The need for the full implementation of the peace process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group for the lasting settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the intensification of the Co-Chairs' activities was stressed.

Positive dynamics of joint projects - the beginning of new projects – Yerevan Mayor receives EU Ambassador

Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan and First Deputy Mayor Levon Hovhannisyanyan met with the Head of the European Union Delegation, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, Noyan Tapan was informed from the press service of Yerevan Municipality.

“Today, Yerevan is implementing a number of cooperation programs with EU institutions, which cover various areas of the urban economy. Within the framework of the Yerevan Energy Efficiency Program, community kindergartens are being renovated, energy efficiency equipment and solar photovoltaic panels are being installed, providing seismic-resistant and comfortable conditions,” the statement reads.

Within the framework of the Yerevan bus program, the city's transport network will be replenished with 100 new buses. €

25 million has been allocated to fund their acquisition, of which € 20 million is an EBRD loan and € 5 million is a grant from the Eastern European Energy Saving Partnership (E5P).

Within the framework of the “Covenant of Mayors” initiative, in the sidelines of “The European Union for Yerevan: Sun community” program photovoltaic panels and lighting systems will be installed in more than 90 buildings in Yerevan by the end of February.

Highlighting the mutually beneficial cooperation with the European Union, the Mayor of Yerevan stressed that the projects already being implemented are a good basis for new initiatives.

Congratulating Hrachya Sargsyan on assuming the post of Yerevan Mayor, Andrea Wiktorin noted that the European

Union expresses its readiness to expand cooperation.

“Mr. Mayor, I hope that the joint programs will go faster, we will soon see results. I reaffirm our readiness to ensure the continuity of joint programs, as the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the Prime Minister and the city authorities are aimed at the common good,” said the Head of the EU Delegation.

The Mayor of Yerevan proposed to install solar stations on the roofs of two administrative buildings of the municipality, Shengavit sports school, within the framework of the joint program. After the meeting, Hrachya Sargsyan accompanied Andrea Wiktorin to the City Hall tower to observe the possibilities of the program on the spot.

Armenia, Saudi Arabia keen to promote economic ties

On the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud in Munich.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the perspectives of establishing relations and cooperation between Armenia and

Saudi Arabia, expressing their readiness to undertake active works for the formation of bilateral and multilateral agendas between the two countries.

Ararat Mirzoyan pointed to the reciprocal potential for the development of cooperation in the fields of information and high technologies, healthcare, tourism, and

culture.

During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers emphasized the importance of promoting trade and economic ties, implementing investment programs, and establishing contacts between the business circles.

400-450 permanent jobs: Government expresses its support to new major investment program

The Armenian government approved on February 17 the Industrial Greenhouse Complex investment program.

The program will be implemented in Lchashen community of Gegharkunik province.

Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Gnel Sanosyan said the talk is about a major investment program. “The total cost of the investment program is 48 million Euros. With the draft the government expresses its readiness and support to the implementation of the program. As a result of the direct sale of the land, about 22 million drams will enter the community budget. The program will be implemented on a total area of 115 hectares, will include the lands of Lchashen and Varsar settlements”, the minister said.



The program envisages constructing a major greenhouse complex with a total area of 45 hectares and an industrial nursery with an area of 2.7 hectares. The construction works will last 60 months. During that period 350-400 temporary jobs will be created, however, after the completion of the program, there will be 400-450 permanent jobs. The minister said nearly 75% of the workers will be women.

“Nearly 12,000 tons of vegetables will be produced annually, 80% of which is expected to be exported. There is an important condition in this project that the lands acquired as a result of the government’s support must serve only for this program”, he added.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the government is interested in such major investments. “The main message must be that the normal process of investment programs is not obstructed in any way. This is important for the government because we have put very ambitious economic growth figures, but its main part is ensured by the private sector. Therefore, we must do everything for the public and private investment programs not to meet any artificial obstacles”, the PM said.



Armenian FM meets with German businessmen in Munich

On February 18, The Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan held a meeting with German businessmen in Munich.

The CEOs and representatives of Veridos, Giesecke+Devrient (G+D), Secunet

and other leading German companies attended the meeting.

Minister Mirzoyan made a tour at the Giesecke+Devrient(G+D) center.

Armenian wines win medals at the ProdExpo 2022 exhibition in Moscow

The 29th ProdExpo 2022 International Exhibition was held in Moscow on February 7-11. The Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia presented the Armenian wines. Deputy Minister of Economy Arman Khojanyan also took part in the exhibition.

As ARMENPRESS was informed from the Ministry of Economy, “ProdExpo” is the largest international exhibition of food and alcohol in Russia and Eastern Europe. This year the exhibition had about 2660 participants from 73 countries.

15 Armenian wine companies participated in the “ProdExpo” in the united pavillion of the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, 4 of which presented their prod-

uct in Russia for the first time.

A tasting competition was also held within the framework of the exhibition, where the pomegranate wine of “Tiran” of the Armenian GS Wine Company, which participated in the exhibition for the first time, was awarded a with a gold medal and a diploma. More than two dozen wines of Armenia Wine Company won gold and silver-bronze medals.

“For us, ProdExpo is one of the most important exhibitions, taking into account that Russia is the largest market for the export of Armenian wine. Consumption of Armenian fruit wines has been declining in Russia since January as a result of



the adoption of a law on fruit wine labeling. Therefore, our participation was very important, which gave our producers the opportunity to establish new partnerships with companies engaged in the import and sale of wines,” said Zaruhi Muradyan, Executive Director of the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia.

Baku's threats to arrest Artsakh President an attempt to conceal own war crimes



The statement of the Azerbaijani authorities related to the criminal prosecution of the President of the Republic of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan is aimed at concealing their own war crimes, misleading the international community and intimidating the peaceful population of Artsakh, the Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh said in a joint statement.

“The Azerbaijani authorities have always pursued a policy of isolating Artsakh from the outside world, concealing human rights violations and war crimes against peace by falsifying facts. In doing so, they continue to grossly violate the absolute international requirements of human rights and humanitarian law,” the Ombudsmen said.

“The practice of targeting Armenia's, Artsakh's, as well as international public figures, experts and journalists; blackmailing and persecuting them with so-called blacklists is the best proof that the calls and statements of the Azerbaijani authorities about peace are false, are veiled for the outside world with the purpose of concealing their real intentions,” they added.

“In reality, for years a policy of sponsoring hatred and hostility towards Armenians has been carried out with ethnic and religious pillars as two main grounds,

with deep intolerance. In fact, a genocidal policy has been carried out, which is still going on,” the Human Rights Defenders noted.

“Even in the education system there is a policy of hatred and enmity towards Armenians, ensuring similar reproduction in the future, the spread of hatred in the society (based on facts). This policy is the source that nurtured and encouraged the atrocities and torture by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the civilian population of Armenia and Artsakh; the ethnic cleansing of the civilian population during the 44-day Artsakh war, with various armed attacks and criminal acts before and after that war,” they added.

According to Tatoyn and Geghamyan, “the Azerbaijani authorities are directly responsible for war crimes against humanity, including destruction of almost all civilian communities in Artsakh, using terrorists and mercenaries to deliberately target, kill

tems of Armenia and Artsakh and resulted in sharp increase in deaths. In the same way, by initiating criminal cases against various public figures, human rights defenders and journalists (including international ones), they tried to cover up the atrocities committed and future atrocities against the peaceful Armenian population of Artsakh,” they said.

“After the 44-day war, this policy of the Azerbaijani authorities has intensified and took new forms. They do not allow people to rebuild their lives after the war, they constantly try to create an atmosphere of despair for the civilian population through daily criminal encroachments on the security of people, life and other vital rights and other terrorist acts. The above assessments of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh are based on reliable, concrete facts and have been included in our numerous reports,” the Human Rights Defenders noted.

“Therefore, the purpose of the persecution announced by the Azerbaijani authorities against the President of the Republic of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan is nothing but to intimidate every person living in Artsakh, to cause panic among the civilian population. Even the wording of the Azerbaijani law enforcement agencies clearly testifies to this goal. This, in turn, means that the persecution is politically motivated; is based on blatant manipulation of facts,” they added.

They call the attention of the international community to the fact that the Azerbaijani authorities will continue to falsify the facts, misleading with new methods, such as hiding their criminal acts against the civilian population behind calls for peace, until they are held liable for their genocidal policies; subjected to targeted response and punished for their criminal acts.

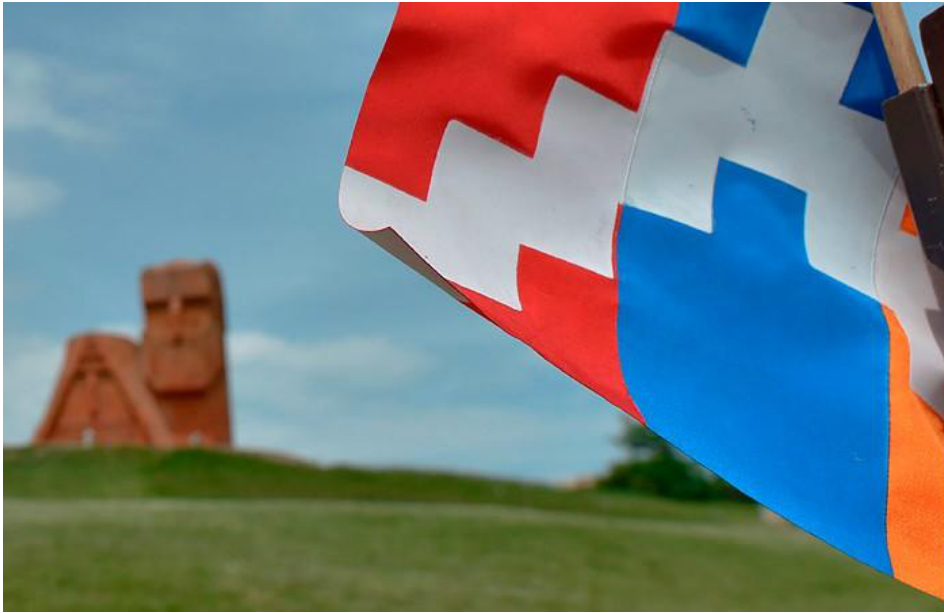
This joint statement will be sent to international organizations in separate letters.



80 and injure 165 civilians, torture Armenian captives; for mutilation of the killed servicemen's bodies; for depriving the 40,000 civilian population of Artsakh of their homeland and houses, for forcibly displacing them, for desecrating the Armenian historical and cultural monuments in Artsakh, for vandalizing them.”

“The Azerbaijani authorities are responsible for the internationally unacceptable armed attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic, which paralyzed healthcare sys-

Artsakh Parliament urges Minsk group Co-Chairs to resume mediating activity



The events that took place in Artsakh (formerly the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region) in February 1988 fundamentally changed not only the subsequent chronicle of the indigenous Armenian people living here, but also other peoples of the former Soviet Union, the National Assembly of Artsakh said in a statement on the occasion of Artsakh Revival Day.

The day celebrates the first protests that led to the start of the Karabakh movement on 20 February.

“Tens of thousands of people, using the liberal and democratic ideas proclaimed in the USSR, sought to restore historical justice through peaceful rallies in Stepanakert and other parts of the region, the unfulfilled dream of several generations to reunite the Armenian region with Armenia,” the Parliament said.

“The movement, which was gaining momentum day by day, initially adopted a path of solving the issue in a peaceful way through legal and political means, which was unequivocally confirmed on February 20 at the 20th special session of the former representative body, the regional Council of People’s Deputies. The historic decision to withdraw the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) from the Azerbaijani SSR and reunite it with the Armenian

SSR signaled a new stage in the Artsakh national liberation struggle, the Karabakh movement, the civilized determination of the people of Artsakh to advance legally,” the MPs said.

Unfortunately, they added, the leadership of the Azerbaijani SSR was not able to use the unique opportunity to resolve the issue correctly, as a result of which the region found itself in a trap of lasting instability and Azerbaijan’s temptation to solve the issue by military means.

“As a result of the February 20 decision expressing the will and desire of the absolute majority of the population of the region, Artsakh righteously became a symbol of pride and national awakening of all Armenians. The wave of the Karabakh movement spread all over the world and as a result of the organized struggle of all sections of the Armenian people, the two Armenian republics were formed in the early 90s of the last century,” the statement reads.

The Republic of Artsakh, proclaimed on September 2, 1991 in accordance with the requirements of international and domestic law, was a conscious haven on the road to a united Armenian state.

“Our people paid a very high price in the struggle for the freedom and indepen-

dence of Artsakh. Thousands of Armenians sacrificed their lives in the wars of 1991-94, 2016 and 2020. The Republic of Artsakh exists today and continues its struggle for international recognition due to the self-sacrifice of those brave people,” the MPs said, paying homage to their immortal memory.

“In the last 34 years, we have come a long way in terms of development, victories and failures, and during this period the idea that the future of Armenian Artsakh is guaranteed only by the prospect of living freely and independently has been strengthened,” the Parliament added.

Expressing the collective will and opinion of the people of Artsakh, the National Assembly of the Artsakh Republic reaffirms its commitment to the historic decision of 20 February 1988 and its determination to defend its right to live freely on its own land.

The MPs draw the attention of all international actors, first of all, the parliaments of the Minsk Group co-chairing countries, to the fact that the Armenian people of Artsakh have struggled for centuries to preserve their identity, created material and cultural values that are under threat as a result of the occupation of some territories by Azerbaijan.

The Parliament calls on the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to take immediate steps to resume the negotiation process on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in accordance with the OSCE mandate.

“Local peace and stability in the region can only be achieved by respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of the Artsakh Republic. That is why the Armenians of Artsakh started their liberation struggle in 1988 and are ready to continue it with the determination to achieve the final goal,” the National Assembly concluded.

Police Chief of Armenia and the Lithuanian Ambassador discuss issues related to new directions of cooperation

The Chief of the Police of Armenia, Major-General Vahe Ghazaryan on February 17 received Ambassador of Lithuania to Armenia Inga Stanytė-Toločkienė.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Police of Armenia, Vahe Ghazaryan, greeting the guest, congratulated on the occasion of the National Day of Lithuania.

He highly appreciated the established cooperation between the Police of Armenia and the Embassy of Lithuania.

“Vahe Ghazaryan, highlighting the planned visit of the Chief of the Police of Lithuania to Armenia, hoped that it



will further promote the collaboration of the law enforcement bodies of the two countries.

Major-General Vahe Ghazaryan expressed willingness to strengthen the cooperation.

Ambassador Inga Stanytė-Toločkienė, thanking for warm welcome, referred to the programmes of the Embassy of Lithuania, which include a number of directions. “She also highlighted the connection of the law enforcement bodies of the two countries, and pointed out a number of examples of effective cooperation.

The Chief of Staff of the Police Armen Mkrtychyan presented the reforms held in the Police. Mostly it was talked about the launch of the center of patrol service and the operative management.” The Police of Armenia reports. The sides discussed issues related to new directions of cooperation and also other issues presenting mutual interest.

Putin says he does not want war

Russia does not want any war and this is why it submitted its proposals on security guarantees in Europe and hopes that their key points will be taken into account during negotiations, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a press conference following his talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on February 15, TASS reports.



The first face-to-face meeting of the two leaders since Scholz took office lasted slightly over three hours and received high marks from both of them: the Russian president noted its business-like atmosphere, while the German chancellor said not a single subject was omitted.

When asked about the prospect of war, Mr Putin told reporters: “Do we want this or not? Of course, not. That is exactly why we put forward proposals for a process of

negotiations.”

But the two men clashed when Mr Putin said there was a precedent for war in Europe – the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s – which he said was waged by Nato against Serbia without UN Security Council approval.

Scholz said the situation was different because there was a danger of genocide by Serbs against non-Serbs, to which Putin said “what was happening in eastern

Ukraine’s Donbas region was also a genocide, against ethnic Russians.”

Mr Putin also said that Nato had so far failed to address Russia’s “basic” security concerns. He is demanding that the issue of Ukraine joining Nato be addressed now – even through Ukraine is a long way from even starting an application to join the alliance.

Scholz said the build up of troops was “incomprehensible”, but there was still a chance that diplomatic solutions could ease the tensions.

“I expressed that the troop build up is seen as a threat,” Scholz said at the media briefing. “Of course, we are very concerned, there are more than a 100,000 Russian troops on the border with Ukraine, and we find this incomprehensible.”



A demonstration was held outside the UN Armenia Office in Yerevan demanding the international community and the UN to take measures and prevent the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Artsakh by Azerbaijan.

Gayane Abrahamyan, a former lawmaker and the representative of the For Equal Rights Educational Center, told reporters that the demonstration is organized by several NGOs and public figures.

“The Azerbaijani side is falsely claiming that the heritage which is in Artsakh for centuries isn’t Armenian. This is a lie, however the actions that they are carrying out for decades cause concern that one day we won’t be able to counter these lies. That’s why we are stressing that we have months. If we don’t fight against these lies now and don’t apply to all possible international organizations, namely UNESCO, we will simply lose the Armenianness of Artsakh, because the Azerbaijani authori-

Demonstrators in Yerevan ask United Nations to prevent destruction of Armenian monuments by Azerbaijan



ties are trying to erase our trace. By doing so, they are trying to rule out the right to self-determination from the Armenian side and generally any aspiration in Artsakh,” Abrahamyan warned.

She reminded that the International Court of Justice ruled that Azerbaijan must take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and



other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts.

Abrahamyan said they will meet the UN Armenia Office administration after the demonstration. She said they’ve addressed a letter to UNESCO last week.

Another member of the initiative, Seda Grigoryan, highlighted the need to ensure access of international monitoring groups to the territories which Azerbaijan captured during the war. “According to the information I have the Armenian authorities are doing everything they can so that such groups are dispatched there, but Azerbaijan is denying access. International observers



must go and see the monuments on the ground and document them,” she said.

Baroness Cox raises “deep concern” about fate of Armenian churches in Azerbaijani-controlled territories

Member of the House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox has shared her “deep concern” about the threat to Armenian churches from Azerbaijani forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In an open letter, Baroness Cox points to the intention of Azerbaijan to remove symbols of Armenian Christian heritage.

This includes, she writes, “161 churches, including the historic monastery at Dadivank, Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi, the ancient city of Tigranakert, Azokh Paleolithic Cave and the Nor Karmiravan tombs.”

In February 2022 Azerbaijan set up a new working group to “remove fictitious traces written by Armenians on Albanian religious temples”.

“The destruction of cultural and religious heritage is a war crime under international law,” Baroness Cox said.

She reminded that in December 2021, the International Court of Justice said Azerbaijan should ‘take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and other places of worship,



monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts.’ Yet in February 2022, Azerbaijan set up a new working group to ‘remove fictitious traces written by Armenians on Albanian religious temples.’



An article featuring the findings of a major COVID-19 research conducted by the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) has been published in *Frontiers in Immunology*, one of the world's leading medical journals.

The results of the landmark research, which was conducted by ABMDR in collaboration with various Armenian scientists, pertain to the specific manners in which the COVID-19 virus affects ethnic

Frontiers in Immunology: Covid-19 research by Armenian scholars featured in one of world's leading medical journals

Armenians. The article was published in the February 3 issue of "Frontiers in Immunology."

A preeminent journal in its field, *Frontiers in Immunology* publishes rigorously peer-reviewed research across basic, translational, and clinical immunology. "Frontiers in Immunology" is the official Journal of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS).

Commenting on the publication of the ABMDR article, Dr. Frieda Jordan, president of the organization, stated, "I think this is a historic milestone, as the results of a critically-important and timely research conducted by a team of Armenian scien-

tists is being shared with the global medical community, contributing to a better understanding of a devastating pandemic."

The ABMDR article, published in the "Viral Immunology" section of "Frontiers in Immunology," was co-authored by Dr. Anahit Hovhannisyanyan, Dr. Vergine Madelian, Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan, Armine Hyussyan, Alina Sirunyan, Rubina Arakelyan, Zorayr Manukyan, Levon Yepiskoposyan, Karine R Mayilyan, and Dr. Frieda Jordan.

ABMDR's COVID-19 research was supported in part by Dr. Carolann and George Najarian and the Armenian Medical Society of California.

Paris FC announce new Armenian shareholder

Ligue 2 side Paris FC have today released a statement announcing the arrival of Armenian investors Noah Football Group as minority shareholders. Pierre Ferracci remains the majority shareholder.

Noah Football Group becomes the third foreign investor in Paris FC, after the Kingdom of Bahrain who joined the club in June 2020 and BRI Sports Holding in October 2021. The group has also joined the board of directors of Paris FC, through Roman Gevorkyan.

"NOAH continues to actively expand in European football and develop new strategies that will contribute to the overall growth of the clubs that are part of the group. We are particularly sensitive to the development of the Academy and the emergence of young talent in the region. Paris FC has a great project to climb to Ligue 1 and also has a goal of qualifying for the Women's Champions League for the club's

women's team. One of the aims of our arrival is to support this ambitious project", said Roman Gevorkyan, future administrator of the club.

Through this investment, Noah Football Group continues its integration in the development of European clubs, notably Noah FC in Armenia (D1 Armenian), Siena in Italy (Serie C) and now Paris FC. Industrial synergies and sporting exchanges between the clubs will encourage the development and promotion of talent.

In this context, Noah Football Group will also encourage the arrival of a sponsor from a sector of activity where the club didn't yet have a partner. Paris FC will announce this arrival in March.

This new arrival will once again strengthen the Club's development and support its international dimension. *"I am very pleased to welcome Noah Football Group and Roman Gevorkyan to Paris FC.*



This new arrival reflects the club's desire to continue its international development. The will to train young talents is a common base between Paris FC and the clubs owned by the Noah Football Group," said Pierre Ferracci, President of Paris FC.

After the arrival of Roman Gevorkyan on the board of directors, the Paris FC board of directors will be enlarged in the coming months to include managers from companies in the Paris region who wish to support the club's project. The control of the club will continue to rely on a regional and national majority base.



Armenia acquires over 100 thousand doses of Pfizer vaccine

Under a contract signed between the Ministry of Health and the American pharmaceutical company Pfizer, 100 620 doses of the Pfizer vaccine against

COVID-19 were imported to Armenia, the Ministry of Health informs. After distribution, the Pfizer vaccine will be available in primary health care and mobile vaccination centers.

Another home damaged in 2020 Artsakh war renovated by Tufenkian Foundation

Another family in Artsakh’s Martuni region was given the keys to its renovated home last week. The home of the Grigoryan family of Herher village had sustained major damage by Azerbaijani shelling during the latest war.

The Grigoryan home was hit three times by Azerbaijani fire in Oct. 2020. Its roof, doors, exterior walls, and windows were severely damaged as a result. “The home was no longer habitable. We are thankful for the Tufenkian Foundation and all its donors for renovating our home and allowing us to stay in our village,” Marat Grigoryan explained during an intimate ceremony on Feb. 8, which marked the completion of renovations. Six members of the Grigoryan family live in the family home. Marat, who participated in the 2020 War, recently got married and hopes to build a family in the home he grew up in. “We intend on putting down roots here,”

Marat said.

The ceremony was attended by the village mayor Arman Aleksanyan, representatives from neighboring villages, as well as representatives of the Tufenkian Foundation’s Stepanakert and Yerevan offices.

The residents of Herher and its surrounding villages came under heavy bombardment during the 44-day war against Azerbaijan in 2020. Early in 2021, thousands of families who had fled the region during the intense battles returned to their homes, many of which had sustained substantial damage. Many of these villages are now only a few kilometers from the Azerbaijani border.

“Our priority is renovating the damaged homes in the region. We also do our best to help our wounded soldiers by renovating their homes and making them more accessible,” explained Tufenkian’s Artsakh project manager Edgar Danielyan.



After consultations with Artsakh authorities following the 2020 War, the Tufenkian Foundation decided that it would carry out its work in the Herher cluster Martuni region of Artsakh: in Herher and its surrounding villages, including Tsovategh, Kherkhan, and Machkalashen. The Grigoryan’s home is the ninth home in the region that the Foundation has renovated over the past year.

The Tufenkian Foundation has also assembled an integrated plan composed of complementary initiatives that contribute to meeting the educational, health, economic, and other needs in Artsakh’s Martuni region.

New St. Sarkis Armenian Church consecrated in San Diego



More than 15 years in the making, the new St. Sarkis Armenian Church was consecrated in San Diego. The church is located at 13925 El Camino Real, near Del Mar, *Asbarez* reports.

The jubilant weekend of ceremonies took place from January 28 to 30 and was

presided over by Western Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian of the Armenian Apostolic Church of North America, and Parish Priest Very Rev. Fr. Pakrad Dz. V. Berjekian.

More than 350 attendees, each day, occupied the new sanctuary for Friday’s

Opening of the Door Ceremony, Saturday’s Consecration, and Sunday’s first regular Divine Liturgy service (“Badarak”) in the new church. The clergy, public officials, parishioners, friends, and other special guests, celebrated with remarks, presentations and sacred music—and were masked according to State COVID Protocol.

Newly-commissioned stained glass windows, paintings, mosaics, crosses and icons adorned the sanctuary as the church was formally consecrated. An overflow tent outside with live a video and audio feed accommodated additional parishioners, and receptions followed every service.



Hovhannes Tumanyan's private library to be digitized



The digitization of the private library of renowned Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanyan and the creation of e-library will be fulfilled by the funds saved as a result of the operation of the solar power station installed in the Tumanyan Museum.

Director of the Hovhannes Tumanyan

House Museum Ani Yeghiazaryan told Armenpress that the initiative has been proposed by the Armenian Energy Agency foundation which launched the program “Solar Energy for the Benefit of Cultural Heritage”, and the total financial assistance has been provided by HSBC Armenia Bank.

“This was really a very necessary initiative for us, and our cooperation started very quickly. Why is this important for us? Firstly, the share of electricity consumption of the whole year is ensured. Secondly, the money saved as a result of our talks with the Ministry of Culture will be directed to one of the key programs of the Museum – the digitization of Tumanyan's private

library and the creation of electronic library”, she said, adding that the Museum has dreamed of implementing this program for years, but it was impossible because financial resources were lacking.

According to Mrs. Yeghiazaryan, this was the best chance to have the poet's rich library, which has nearly 8000 books, in electronic platform and make it available to the people.

The Museum Director hopes this will be an impetus for both the investors and organizers so that the program continues and other cultural centers are also able to use this opportunity.

The solar power station is operating at the Tumanyan Museum since January 2022.

Armenian students make it to the final of The Earth Prize international competition

The team of Armenian students has made it to the final of The Earth Prize international environmental competition. 12th grade students of Ayb school Ilya Lalazaryan, Nane Yengibaryan and Meri Shushanyan represent Armenia with Rene'Mask project of recycling medical masks. Chemistry teacher Lilit Hambarzumyan is the scientific supervisor of the project.

A total of 650 teams from 516 schools representing 114 countries had applied for participation the competition. In the final stage the Armenian students will compete with teams from Great Britain, Vietnam, Switzerland, Taiwan, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Jamaica

and Kenya. Eton Collage (Great Britain), Havergal College (Canada), International School of Zug and Luzern (Switzerland) and others are among the top ten schools.

The author of the *RenéMask* project is Ilya Lalazaryan. As a result of research, experiments and discussions at the school, under the guidance of chemistry teacher Lilit Hambarzumyan, Ilya has developed a method for obtaining fuel from face masks in the laboratory. Thus, *RenéMask* offers a solution to two major problems – environmental pollution and growing demand for alternative energy sources. Through chemical processing of masks, it is possible to get liquid fuel, which can be used in heat transfer devices



and some engines.

The Earth Prize is an environmental sustainability competition for teams of 13–19-year-old students attending the same school. The winning solution will have real-world impact potential.

On March 25th, one of the Finalist teams will be announced as The Earth Prize Winner and will receive a prize of \$100,000, to be split in half between the team members and their school. Three runner-up schools will also be awarded \$25,000 each.

Japanese duduk player Yasutaka Tarumi honored with diploma for popularizing Armenian music

Japanese duduk player Yasutaka Tarumi has been awarded a diploma by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia for his significant contribution to the active dissemination of Armenian music in Japan,

the Armenian Embassy in Tokyo informs.

Ambassador Areg Hovhannisyan handed over the diploma to the Japanese musician today. The prospects of implementing joint programs were also discussed at the meeting.



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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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