

Armenia, Japan keen to deepen bilateral cooperation: Armen Sarkissian, Yoshihide Suga meet in Tokyo



On a working visit to Tokyo, President of the Republic of Armenia Armen Sarkissian met with the Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga on July 24.

The Prime Minister welcomed the working visit of the President of Armenia to Japan and thanked him for participating in the official opening ceremony of the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo.

President Sarkissian congratulated the Prime Minister on the successful organization of the Olympic Games in an unprecedented situation, noting that he was impressed with the opening ceremony and the high level of organization of the event.

During the meeting, Armen Sarkissian and Yoshihide Suga touched upon the bilateral agenda and the opportunities for deepening the Armenian-Japanese relations. The parties noted that there is a great potential for the expansion of bilateral trade and

economic relations, which has not been fully tapped.

President Sarkissian stressed that Armenia is interested in expanding relations with Japan. The President noted that as member of the Eurasian Economic Union, Armenia, with its stable financial system, can serve as a base for Japanese companies to enter the markets of Eurasian countries. He added that Japanese companies can be involved in projects implemented in various sectors of Armenia, in particular the EU-financed programs to be launched.

President Sarkissian emphasized the cooperation with Japanese companies in the fields of innovation, food security, high technologies, artificial intelligence. Speaking about the ATOM (Advanced Tomorrow) presidential initiative aimed at the development of science and technology in Armenia, the President noted that he would be glad to cooperate with Japanese companies and implement joint programs within the

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History can never be the strong point of Azerbaijan – Armenian MFA



By making false territorial and historical claims against Armenia, the Azerbaijani side is trying to remove the Karabakh conflict from the international agenda on the one hand, and to create new threats to regional security and stability on the other hand, Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in comments to *Armenpress*.

“Trying to substantiate such a fake agenda, the Azerbaijani side does not shy away from attributing blatant falsifications to the November 9 trilateral statement. If we follow the logic of Azerbaijan’s inter-

pretation of the above-mentioned document’s reference to the displaced persons, the Armenian refugees must return to Nakhichevan, Gandzak, Baku, Sumgait, other territories of present-day Azerbaijan cleansed of Armenians,” the Ministry said.

The comments come after a statement by representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan containing territorial and historical claims to Armenia.

“As for the historical demands made against Armenia by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, it is difficult for us to understand the Azerbaijan’s criteria of definition of the term “historical.” We have to remind again that history can never be the strong side of a country whose geographical and political name has a history of a century, and the name of Azerbaijan is even newer than that,” the Foreign Ministry stated.

“The efforts of the Azerbaijani leader-

ship to sow and maintain lasting enmity between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples are a constant threat to regional peace and security. Before accusing Armenia of racism, Azerbaijan must explain to the international community the message of Baku’s “trophy park,” which is nothing but a shameful “monument” of racism and hatred,” the statement reads.

“Armenia will continue to stick to the position of realization of the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination, the de-occupation of the territories of Artsakh subjected to ethnic cleansing and return of the Armenian population to those territories in line with the November 9 trilateral statement. Only the resumption of the Karabakh peace process under the co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group can create preconditions for local peace in the region,” the Ministry stated.

Pashinyan, Putin talk on phone

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The parties discussed in detail a wide range of issues of mutual interest in the region. Reference was made to the implementation of the agreements reached within the framework of the trilateral statements of November 9, 2020 and January 11, 2021, in particular, the issue of the re-



turn of prisoners and the reopening of regional communication routes.

The ongoing and future issues of bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy and defense were discussed.

In the context of the situation in the region, Nikol Pashinyan stressed the key role of Russia in maintaining peace and stability. The parties stressed the importance of the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Armenia’s new Parliament to convene first session on August 2



The National Assembly of 8th convocation will convene the first session on August 2, President of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) Tigran Mikuchyan announced at the special sitting of the CEC.

The session will kick off on Monday, at 10 am.

Three political forces will be represented in the 107-seat National Assembly. The Civil Contract Party will hold 71 seats, Armenia Alliance and I Have the Honor Alliance will have 29 and 7 mandates, respectively. Co-Chairs.

Azerbaijan's provocative steps creating new challenges for the region, Armenia's acting PM says

The military-political situation in the region remains tense, Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on July 22

"Azerbaijan's provocative actions and maximalist aspirations create new threats to the region, Armenia and Artsakh," the acting PM said.

He emphasized the key role Russia is playing in ensuring stability and security in the region.

"The joint group of forces of the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation, as well as the Russian peacekeeping



contingent in Nagorno Karabakh are of key importance in ensuring stability and security in the region," Pashinyan said.

At the same time, he added, "Azerbai-

jan intends to disrupt the implementation of the trilateral statements of November 9 and January 11, namely when it comes to the opening of regional communication routes and lifting the blockade of Armenia."

The acting PM noted that Armenia continues to attach importance to unblocking of regional communications and is ready to continue the work in that direction with a view to reaching concrete results.

"We expect Azerbaijan to meet its written commitment to return all Armenian prisoners of war, civilians and other detainees," he said.

Pashinyan congratulates 'Armenia' and 'I Have the Honor' Alliances for making it to parliament

The National Assembly of 8th convocation will consist of 107 MPs, the Civil Contract Party will have 71 mandates, acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on July 22.

The *Armenia Alliance* and *I Have the Honor Alliance* will have 29 and 7 mandates respectively.

Pashinyan congratulated everyone on holding free and competitive elections

under the conditions of crisis. He congratulated the *Armenia Alliance* and *I Have the Honor Alliance* on entering the Parliament.

He underlined that for the first time in Armenia's history the elections helped overcome the domestic political crisis rather than creating one.

Nikol Pashinyan noted that the Civil Contract Party is ready for constructive work based on mutual respect both inside

and outside the National Assembly for the sake of the security, prosperity and progress of the country.

"We are determined to fully fulfill our obligations to the people and are ready to cooperate with both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary refraining from ant hate speech, insults and degrading wording," he said.

Robert Kocharyan will not take up the parliamentary mandate

Armenia's second President Robert Kocharyan will not take up his parliamentary mandate. Representative of the Armenia Alliance Aram Vardevanyan submitted a relevant application to the Central Electoral Commission on July 21.

"I have been a member of Parliaments of both Armenia and Artsakh, but I have always been a man of executive power due to my character. I am convinced that now it is better to give way to my teammates, each of whom, I am sure, will become a good deputy," Kocharyan said in a state-

ment.

"With this step, I also express my consent to thousands of my teammates, who conveyed to me the opinion that after the positions of the President of the Artsakh Republic and the Republic of Armenia I should not be tempted by the mandate of a deputy. After all, people voted for me as the candidate for the Prime Minister of the Alliance," he added.

"At the same time, I consider it necessary to emphasize that my refusal to go to the National Assembly does not mean leav-

ing the struggle. The faction is the presence of the Alliance in the National Assembly, and I continue to be the leader of the Alliance and will contribute to our expected victories through daily consistent work," the second President said.





Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Armen Grigoryan received the heads of the diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia.

The main theme of the meeting was the situation resulting from the encroachment of Azerbaijan into the sovereign territory of Armenia, particularly the infiltration of the Azerbaijani armed forces into the Syunik and Gegharkunik regions, as well as creating a new area of tension in the vicinity of Yeraskh settlement of Ararat region of Armenia.

During the meeting, Armen Grigoryan mentioned that alongside with these actions, official Baku is making false terri-

Acting Foreign Minister Armen Grigoryan receives heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia

torial-historical claims against Armenia, which clearly indicate Azerbaijan's aggressive intentions towards the territory of the Republic of Armenia. It was stressed that the inadequate response of the international community to the use of force and mass atrocities against the people of Artsakh, including ethnic cleansing, encouraged Azerbaijan to make the use of force as a permanent tool of policy, threatening regional security and peace.

In this context, Armen Grigoryan especially emphasized. "The Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people will not tolerate such violations of their rights. Today, the Armed Forces of Armenia are entirely fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure the territorial integrity of Armenia. Armenia will use its entire military-politi-

cal toolkit, cooperating with relevant bilateral and multilateral measures."

Armen Grigoryan stressed that Armenia expects a clear reaction from international partners to such violations of international law by Azerbaijan.

He specifically emphasized that without the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, and, finally, the settlement of the conflict, the region will constantly encounter new attempts of undermining the security.

"Armenia is willing to be involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process based on the approaches proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, which reiterate the principles formed by the Co-Chairs, including the right to self-determination," said Armen Grigoryan.



On a working visit to Tokyo, President Armen Sarkissian met with the representatives of the famous Japanese company YAMAHA.

President Sarkissian was briefed the company's activities and new projects, the capacities and opportunities of artificial in-

Armenian President, Yamaha representatives discuss perspectives of cooperation in AI

telligence equipment, as well as work on international cooperation.

President Sarkissian discussed the possibilities of cooperation with the representatives of the company. In particular, the parties referred to the implementation of joint programs in the field of artificial intelligence and their directions, as well as the company's representation in Armenia.

YAMAHA is one of the oldest Japanese companies (founded in 1887) with a multi-billion turnover and world-renowned reputation. In addition to musical

instruments, it produces specialized audio equipment, state-of-the-art information and telecommunications equipment, electronic and automated devices, and artificial intelligence components.

One of YAMAHA's special projects is the Yamaha AI project (YOO) system, which analyzes musicians' performance, while synchronizing it with other musical instruments. YAMAHA also manufactures small vehicles such as motor boats, motorcycles, bicycles, snowmobiles, industrial robots and other equipment.

PACE rapporteur to visit Baku to gather information for report on Karabakh war

Paul Gavan (Ireland, UEL) will visit Azerbaijan on behalf of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) from 26 to 28 July 2021, to gather information for his report on "The humanitarian consequences of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan".

He will hold meetings with parliamentarians, including the Speaker of the National Assembly (Milli Mejlis), and with representatives of different ministries deal-

ing with the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. He will also have an opportunity to hear from displaced persons, and will meet with the Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan and civil society representatives.

The visit will also allow him to understand better the role and contribution of international organizations working on this issue in Azerbaijan, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations High Commis-



sioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He already visited Armenia in the context of the preparation of this report in May 2021.

Mr Gavan plans to continue his work over the summer and aims to complete his report in September.

page 1 ➡ framework of the initiative. He noted that for this purpose he plans to meet with the management of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to discuss cooperation opportunities.

The President also touched upon the cooperation in the environmental sphere and the importance of the implementation of a joint program to improve the environmental condition of Lake Sevan.

Armen Sarkissian also thanked the Government of Japan for its assistance to

programs in various fields.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga noted that Japan is also interested in deepening bilateral relations and cooperation. He stressed that the activities of the famous Japanese figure Eiichi Shibusawa are a good example of friendship between the two peoples, and the Japanese side is ready to develop bilateral relations.

The parties stressed the need to give a new quality to the Armenian-Japanese re-

lations, to start a new page of cooperation. In order to get acquainted with each other's potential, opportunities, develop target projects, President Sarkissian proposed to create a joint Armenian-Japanese structure named after Eiichi Shibusawa with the participation of Armenian-Japanese companies.

The meeting also touched upon multilateral cooperation within international organizations.

European Court obliges Azerbaijan to pay 30,000 euros to Armenian national held in captivity for 22 months

The European Court of Human Rights has obliged Azerbaijan to pay EUR 30,000 in non-pecuniary damage to Armenian national Artur Badalyan who was held in captivity for 22 months.

The applicant, Artur Badalyan, is an Armenian national who was born in 1978 and lives in Haghartsin in the Tavush region of Armenia.

The case concerns the applicant's complaint that the Azerbaijani forces arrested him near the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and held him captive for 22 months.

Relying on Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment) of the



Convention, Mr Badalyan alleges that he was ill-treated during his detention, leaving him with serious mental-health issues upon his release.

Also relying on Article 5 (right to lib-

erty and security), he alleges that his detention was unlawful. He argues in particular that as a civilian and not a prisoner of war he should have been immediately released or informed of the reasons for his detention in a language that he understood, brought before a judge and given the possibility to challenge the

lawfulness of his detention.

The Court rules that Article 3 and Article 5 have been violated and obliged Azerbaijan to pay EUR 30,000 to the applicant.

Azerbaijan sentences 13 Armenian POWs to 6 years in jail

A Court in Baku has sentenced 13 Armenian prisoners of war to six years in jail.

The court ruled that after serving the sentence they will be immediately extradited.

The prosecutor asked the court to exclude Articles 214.2.1 and 214.2.3 from the indictment (terrorism committed by a group of persons in a preliminary conspiracy, by an organized group or criminal association (criminal organization) with the use of firearms and objects used as



weapons), 279.2 (attack on enterprises, institutions, organizations or on individuals as part of armed formations or groups not

provided for by law).

He called for the defendants to be found guilty under Articles 318.2 (illegal crossing of the state border of Azerbaijan by an organized group) and 228.3 (illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, storage, transportation or carrying of weapons, accessories, ammunition, explosives, etc. committed by an organized group) and assign each of them a punishment in the form of imprisonment for a period of seven years.

Armenia to have an alternative corridor to Russia: Georgia starts construction of Algeti-Sadakhlo road



Georgia plans to build more than 20 roads by 2024, one of which is expected to become an alternative compact corridor from Armenia to Russia, *Public Radio correspondent Gita Elibekyan* reports from Tbilisi.

The road from the border with Armenia, from the Sadakhlo checkpoint to the border with Russia, will allow Yerevan to become part of the East-West European Highway.

Georgia has recently received a loan from the European Investment Bank for the construction of a new road leading to the Armenian border.

Tbilisi starts construction of new Algeti-Sadakhlo road postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The road will halve the time needed to reach Russia.

It will bypass Marneuli and other surrounding settlements, becoming a new transit route for cargo transportation from Armenia to Russia. It will join the project of the century, the East-West Highway (E-60), which is the second largest European transit corridor.

“There will be a modern road in the territory of Georgia from the border with Armenia to the border with Russia. The project is unprecedented for both Georgia and Ar-

menia,” says Paata Tsagareishvili, Director of the Transport Corridor Research Center. He believes it will facilitate the cargo transportation and contribute to the development of tourism in Georgia.

In Georgia, the construction of both the East-West highway and the North-South Road is under way. According to political scientist Giorgi Gobridze, Georgia will try to maintain its transit role in the conditions of new realities in the region.

“These infrastructures significantly shorten the distance between countries and make traffic even safer. Algeti-Sadakhlo plays an important role for both countries. In general, Georgia is interested in improving economic relations with Armenia and all other neighboring countries, and that is what it is doing today,” Gobridze says.

Armenia to participate in Dubai Expo 2020

Armenia will participate in Dubai Expo 2020 international exhibition to be held from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 in Dubai, UAE. The expo was postponed due to the coronavirus-related restrictions.

This year's event will feature representatives from 192 countries, a record for expos organized so far. Held every five years, countries come together under one roof to present their attractiveness to the

world. The organizers expect about 25 million visitors – both locals and foreigners – this year.

By the decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the Minister of Economy has been assigned to coordinate the organization of Armenia's participation in Dubai Expo – 2020.



As a result of negotiations with the Emirati side, the organizers of the exhibition have provided a package of support and special conditions for Armenia's participation. According to the organizers, the support package includes about 1.5 million in property and services.

The Dubai Expo-2020 international ex-

hibition will present the cultural, educational, scientific, economic values and heritage of different countries.

The exhibition area will be divided into three zones, each of which has its own name: Stability, Mobility and Opportunity. The Armenian pavilion will be located in the Opportunity section.

During the 11 thematic weeks of the exhibition, Armenia will present its potential to the advanced technological world, which

can open up new opportunities for establishing business relations and promoting cultural heritage.

A four-day “Made in Armenia” exhibition will be organized as part of the event. Armenian companies will get the chance to showcase their goods, establish business ties, find foreign partners and investors.

Investment Support Center-attended investment programs discussed in Government



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan chaired a consultative meeting to discuss issues related to the implementation of a number of investment programs attended by the Ministry of Economy and the Investment Support Center (ISC). Heads of government departments, as well as representatives of the companies implementing the programs were in attendance.

In his opening remarks, Nikol Pashinyan stated, in part: “We have come together to discuss the bottlenecks we may face in implementing investment programs. In fact, today’s meeting brings together the investors and the representatives of the organizations concerned to see whether they can tackle the problems. We need to understand the root causes behind the problems that have aroused specific concerns in the business community.”

Nikol Pashinyan noted that the purpose of the discussion is to hear the problems that hinder the implementation of programs and find appropriate solutions. The first investment program, which was presented, referred to the construction of a new multifunctional complex at the beginning of Azatutyun Avenue in Yerevan. With an estimated cost of USD 10 million, the project is supposed to create some 220 new jobs. In the meantime, there is a water canal of historical and cultural significance running across the construction area.

Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan, Acting Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Vahram Dumanyan, Deputy Minister Ara Khzmalyan, Director of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Republic of Armenia Pavel Aveti-

syanyan came up with clarifications about the project.

After taking note of their comments, Nikol Pashinyan gave those responsible 10-days to present to the investor the necessary guidelines and standards, as well as to amend the relevant government decision. “The businessman should get the answer to what we need to preserve and how,” the Acting Premier said.

The next investment program referred to the construction of a tourism-cultural complex in the Lusarat community of Ararat Marz. Estimated at USD 14 million, the project will help create 50 permanent and 500 temporary jobs. The investor advised that they were going to build a winery and a recreation center on the site. The problem with the project is that the complex is planned to be implemented in the area of historical Artashat.

Director of the NAS RA Institute of Archeology and Ethnography Pavel Avetisyan said it is necessary to see whether there are archeological assets in the mentioned area. According to Mr. Avetisyan, the archeological surveys may take at least two months to complete. Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan considered it inadmissible to implement the project on the site of the Old Artashat, which may contain archeological assets.

Nikol Pashinyan suggested starting excavation work as shortly as possible. In case there are important archeological materials unearthed in the area, the regional administration will have to offer another site in the same community for implementing the program. The investor agreed to the proposal and expressed readiness to work closely with the archeological group.

The next investment program referred to the modernization of the Children’s Railway Park in Yerevan. The project is estimated at USD 160 million. It implies rebuilding the park in accordance with international standards. The project has been

discussed at the Yerevan Town Hall, and the latter came up with strong objections to its original version.

After taking note of the opinions voiced by the investor and the Mayor of Yerevan, the Acting Prime Minister suggested improving the project and developing a mutually acceptable version. Nikol Pashinyan stressed that the park should continue to be a highlight through improved infrastructure and a better environmental situation.

The Old Khndzoresk investment project was presented next, which envisages an investment of USD 32 million and over 400 new jobs. The project seeks to rehabilitate and preserve the historical and cultural assets of Old Khndzoresk and Old Goris. The developer noted that the project is being hindered due to illegal facilities available on the plots.

The representatives of specialized agencies came up with explanations on this issue. The Acting Prime Minister considered unacceptable preventing the implementation of an investment program due to illegal buildings. He stressed that the government will adopt an appropriate decision.

The meeting next referred to the following projects – establishment of a ski resort on Mount Aragats, construction of an international standards-compliant hotel complex in Kapan, development of tourist facilities near the Devil’s Bridge, construction of a multifunctional Czech complex - Grand Bohemia - in Yerevan, as well as investment projects in the fields of industry and energy. Innovative solutions to the problems raised were discussed during the meeting.

The Acting Premier gave specific instructions to those in charge, emphasizing that the issue of improving Armenia’s investment framework, stimulating and attracting investments is a priority for the government, and continued work has to be done with all investors.

“I will continue to be a friend of Armenia and Armenians in the European Parliament,” Nathalie Loiseau tells Nikol Pashinyan

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received member of the European Parliament from France, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Defense and Security at the Commission on Foreign Relations of the European Parliament, head of La République En Marche party delegation to the European Parliament Nathalie Loiseau.

Greeting Mrs. Loiseau, Nikol Pashinyan highly appreciated her pro-Armenian activities in the European Parliament. Highlighting the resolution recently adopted by the European Parliament, as co-authored by Mrs. Loiseau, which makes special mention of the problem of Armenian prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan, the Acting Premier emphasized the need to facilitate the reinstatement of peace and stability in the region.

“I would like to highlight the appeal formulated in the resolution for Turkey to acknowledge the fact of and recognize the Armenian Genocide. I wish to emphasize that it is not only a matter of historical truth for us it, but also a key component necessary for correctly assessing and interpreting the regional situation,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

Pleased with the current status of relations between Armenia and the European Union, the Acting Prime Minister described them as dynamically developing. “In June, I met with European Council President Charles Michel in Brussels, after which Olivér Várhelyi came to Armenia and officially announced a 2.6 billion euro-worth support package for Armenia. Two days ago, European Council President Charles Michel paid a follow-up visit, during which we outlined our cooperation programs,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Acting Prime Minister stressed the importance of Armenia’s relations with France. “Proud of our relations, we say that the Armenian-French relations are of a privileged nature. On June 1 this year I had an important meeting with President of the



French Republic Emmanuel Macron. We believe that furtherance and deepening of bilateral relations with France should stand high on our agenda. I highly appreciate the role played and the commitment assumed by the President of France in terms of his constructive approaches to security issues in our region,” Nikol Pashinyan emphasized.

Thankful for the warm welcome, Nathalie Loiseau congratulated Nikol Pashinyan on his Civil Contract party’s victory in the early parliamentary elections. “You thereby demonstrated that democracy is what matters most to you. This is all the more important in the regional context. I arrived here as a representative of the European Parliament, in particular as Chairperson of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Security and Defense, but also as a French woman, a member of President Macron’s government, who is well aware of my visit. I fought hard for the European Commission to remind Turkey of the need to recognize the Armenian Genocide, because it is impossible to build a future if we fail to face the past. Like many other French parliamentarians, I will continue to be a friend of Armenia and Armenians in the European Parliament,” Mrs. Loiseau said. She noted that in her capacity of Chairperson of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Security and Defense, she would like to find out what the EU has still to do to stabilize the situation in the region. “I would like to see if there is hope for the exchange

of new prisoners; is it possible to continue the de-mining efforts; can we continue to assist the displaced persons, which the EU delegation is already doing, and what do you think about the border provocations, the last of which just happened yesterday,” Mrs. Loiseau said.

She stressed the importance of preserving Nagorno-Karabakh’s cultural heritage and granting free access to international organizations to that end.

“I would also like to know what we can do to facilitate access and ensure the preservation of heritage. You mentioned the recent visit of the European Commissioner, you hosted him and now you are hosting a parliamentary delegation. I am happy to see Armenia in the center of attention of the European Union. I would like to learn your opinion about those areas where the European Union would better have a greater presence, and in what areas you would like to see more commitment on the part of France,” the member of the European Parliament noted.



The interlocutors discussed issues related to EU-Armenia relations, to the prospects for Armenian-French interaction and to regional developments.

Nikol Pashinyan stressed that Mrs. Loiseau is considered a great friend of the Armenian people and Armenia: “You are defending the truth, democracy and human rights, which gives your activity a special weight.”

Armenia hands over chairmanship of OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation to Austria

Under the motto, ‘rebuilding trust and confidence through implementation of politico-military commitments’, the Armenian FSC Chairmanship has sought to implement and protect OSCE commitments to prevent further erosion of European Security, said Armen Papikyan, the Chair of the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC), during his remarks at the last FSC meeting under the Armenian FSC Chairmanship.

“We assumed the Chairmanship following a year when peace and security were challenged in the OSCE area of responsibility,” Papikyan said. “Over the past three months we made significant efforts to promote the Forum as a key platform for a meaningful, genuine and open dialogue by discussing issues of major concern.”

He provided an overview of the activities organized by Armenia since it took over the FSC Chairmanship in April. These included nine security dialogues that addressed a range of topics including compliance with international humanitarian law, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1325, the challenges of new generation warfare, arms control and disarmament, transparency in military ex-



ercises, small arms and light weapons and stockpiles of conventional ammunition, and preventing and combating terrorism in all forms.

Outlining challenges faced during the FSC Chairmanship, Papikyan described a “fragmentation” of the OSCE area and European security and “a disproportional attention towards different conflict and crisis situations in the OSCE area”. He also noted the erosive effect of an increase in disagreements among participating States on the conventional arms control regime and confidence- and security-building measures. “Deliberations in the FSC during the Armenian Chairmanship showed that these factors continued to challenge the security and stability in the OSCE area,” he added.

He commended the participating States of the Forum for reaching consensus on

key issues during the Armenian FSC Chairmanship. He also recognized their engaging discussions during the Tenth Annual Discussion on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which was organized by the Armenian FSC Chair.

Sharing a vision for rebuilding trust and confidence in the future, Papikyan called for a “genuine dialogue in the spirit of Helsinki”, for renewing respect for shared OSCE principles and commitments and for reinvigorating co-operation.

“No matter how important OSCE political military commitments and obligations may look on paper, they cannot ensure security and confidence without the political will of the participating States,” he said. “Current security crises demand not words but actions. Commitments are a means to an end and not an end in itself. They are the reflection of the political will of participating States to address security challenges.”- Papikyan closed the session by thanking the Swedish 2021 OSCE Chairpersonship, the FSC Troika and OSCE staff for their support and reaffirmed Armenia’s readiness to work closely with Austria as the incoming FSC Chairmanship.

Military attachés briefed on situation on Armenian-Azerbaijani border

Levon Ayvazyan, Head of the General Department of Defense Policy and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Defense of Armenia, received military attachés of foreign Embassies accredited in Armenia.

The situation on Armenia-Azerbaijan border caused by the Azerbaijani provocations, particularly, in Yeraskh direction, was presented to the military attachés.

It was emphasized that the aggressive

rhetoric of the Azerbaijani military-political leadership on the territorial aspirations towards the Republic of Armenia undermines the efforts for lasting peace in the region.

It was noted that the Armenian side, committed to the peaceful settlement of the situation, reserves the right to take all necessary measures to prevent and counteract such incidents.

It was also emphasized that Armenia

expects a clear reaction from international partners to such violations of international law by Azerbaijan.





The Azerbaijani servicemen violated the rights of the residents of Tegh community of Syunik region of Armenia by criminal acts of July 19, 2021, Armenia's Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan said in a statement.

In particular, on the basis of complaints and alarms, the fact-finding work of the RA Human Rights Defender revealed the following:

First, it turned out that on July 19, 2021, between 10 and 10 in the morning one of the residents of Tegh village, Syunik region, was harvesting grain with a combine on the land owned by him and his family.

The land of the mentioned resident of Tegh village is located next to the positions of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness of the work, the combine operator had to collect the wheat in the marginal parts of the land as well.

When the combine operator finished the work in one of the peripheral sections,

Azerbaijan's criminal actions violate the rights of Armenian border residents – Ombudsman

he was about 150 meters away from that place, deep in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, he noticed that a number of Azerbaijani armed servicemen were approaching him. The Azeri servicemen threatened the resident of Tegh village with weapon, shouted and dragged him, tried to take him to their positions.

The fact-finding works confirm that the servicemen of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces actually illegally deprived of liberty the farmer, resident of a village in the Syunik region of the Republic of Armenia, who had been harvesting grain on his own land.

The combine operator immediately called the head of the Tegh community. After that, due to the efforts of the community leader, the RA Armed Forces and the command staff of the local Russian border troops, the combine and the combine operator were returned to the Armenian side at around 4:30 pm.

The ombudsman will provide objective evidence of the incident in question, including to international and intergovernmental bodies.

The Ombudsman's fact-finding work revealed that in addition to the incident, the Azerbaijani armed forces fired on the night of July 19-20, 2021, in the immediate vi-

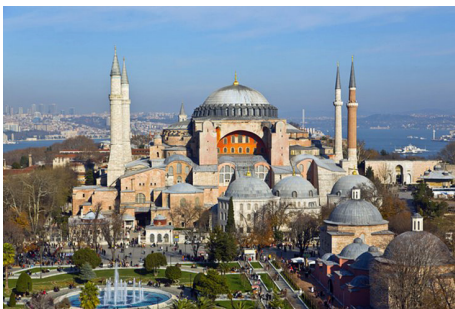
cinity of the villages of Khnatsakh and Aravus in the Tegh communities, disrupting the peace and peaceful life of the villagers.

The shooting stopped only as a result of preventive measures taken by the Armenian Armed Forces protecting the civilian population.

All the mentioned information was confirmed by the head of the Tegh community and testimonies of the residents, media publications, as well as the official statement of the RA Ministry of Defense on the July 19 incident.

The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia specifically states that the above-mentioned criminal acts of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, which grossly violate the rights of the civilian population of the Republic of Armenia, should be viewed as a joint intention.

This is also confirmed against the background of the shootings that the Azerbaijani armed forces continue to provoke in other parts of the Armenian border, near civilian settlements, deliberately disrupting the peaceful life of the border population, violating their rights to life, health, property, mental integrity and other vital rights.



UNESCO asks Turkey for report on Hagia Sophia after mosque change

added to tensions with Greece.

A month later Ankara ordered another ancient Orthodox church to be converted into a mosque.

The Holy Saviour in Chora was a medieval Byzantine church decorated with 14th-century frescoes of the Last Judgment that remain treasured in the Christian world.

The UN body's World Heritage Committee asked Turkey to submit by Feb 1, 2022 "an updated report on the state of conservation of the property."

It said it "deeply regrets the lack of dialogue and information" over Turkey's intention to change of status of Hagia Sophia and Chora museums.

The committee expressed "grave con-

cern about the potential impact of changes at these key components may have on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property" and urged Turkey to engage in international cooperation and dialogue before any further major changes are implemented at the property.

The World Heritage Committee is meeting in China for its annual session to review its list of sites with UNESCO's coveted world heritage label, which is seen as boosting prestige and tourism.

If it is unhappy with the state of conservation of a site it can be listed as in danger or even deleted, as happened this year with the waterfront of the English city of Liverpool.

The World Heritage Committee of the UN's cultural agency UNESCO on July 23 asked Turkey to submit by early next year a report about the state of conservation of the Hagia Sophia, expressing "grave concern" over the consequences of its conversion into a mosque, *AFP* reports.

Turkey's move last year to convert the revered Byzantine-era Hagia Sophia cathedral from a museum into a mosque sparked fury from the international community and

Senator Chris Van Hollen criticizes Turkey's "malign actions" against Armenians

US Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) has criticized Turkey's "malign actions" against Armenians, the Armenian Assembly of America reports.

The remarks were made during the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on U.S. Policy on Turkey with Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

During the hearing, Chairman of the Committee, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) referred to the Artsakh war and Turkey's counterproductive role in the South Caucasus.

In his opening remarks, Chairman Menendez cited the "pattern of Turkish aggression that has become the norm."

He stated: "Last summer, Erdogan provided military support to Azerbaijani strikes against ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. He also facilitated the passage of militants from Syria to fight on the side of Azerbaijan. Yet these actions solicited no penalty from the Trump Administration. No concrete reaction from the international community. No sanction. This is unacceptable."

Chairman Menendez said he "ex-

pects more" from the Biden Administration and looks forward to "understanding how the State Department views Turkey's role in last year's war and what measures can be taken in response."

During an exchange with Under Secretary Nuland, Chairman Menendez asked her if she is familiar with Turkey "facilitating the transfer of fighters from Syria to Azerbaijan during the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh."

Under Secretary Nuland responded by requesting to "discuss that last point in a separate session" and "in another setting."

Chairman Menendez pressed on that he would be "looking forward to

hearing from the Department" and whether there was an investigation of the "Turkish drones used by Azerbaijan in the war last summer that included U.S. produced parts, which I find totally unaccept-



able."

In Under Secretary Nuland's written testimony, she referred to Nagorno-Karabakh and how "we also press Turkey to avoid entanglements in regional conflicts that threaten long-term stability. The role played by third parties, including Turkey, in last year's fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict exacerbated regional tensions. We have pressed Turkey to urge Baku to release all detainees immediately, to support the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and to help the sides work towards a sustainable, long-term political solution to the conflict."

Coronavirus cases expected to increase in Armenia

The growing trend of new coronavirus cases in Armenia will continue in coming days, Deputy minister of healthcare Lena Nanushyan said at the Cabinet meeting on July 22.

"If last week we were recording up to 200 cases, this week we have already surpassed 200. Yesterday we have reported 220 new cases, today this number is 225. According to our forecasts, the growth trend will continue in coming days. Currently, 3790 infected people receive treat-

ment, 660 of whom in hospitals. 282 of them are in serious condition and 48 in critical condition", the deputy minister said.

She urged the people to get vaccinated to prevent the new wave of the disease. "The virus in the region is in tense situation, and the death cases are less in those countries where a lot of vaccinations are carried out", she noted.

The deputy minister informed that the number of daily vaccinations in Armenia

against COVID-19 passes 5000.

In his turn acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said more than 200 new cases of coronavirus have been registered in the country over the past two days. He called on to separate the number of Armenians and foreigners who get vaccinated and highlighted the importance of raising the vaccination rates which, he said, would allow to live normally under coronavirus and would not lead to lockdown.

Very Rev. Dr. René Léonian Appointed New Head of the Chair of Armenology Chair at the Catholic University of Lyon



Recently, Very Rev. Dr. René Léonian was appointed Head of the Armenology Chair of the Catholic University of Lyon by the Rector of the University, in consultation with the Dean of the University's Faculty of Theology.

Below are the highlights of an interview with Rev. Dr. Léonian posted on the University's Website.



site.

- Dr. Léonian, can you briefly present yourself?

- I am René Léonian, an ordained minister of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in France. I am married, and have two children and six grandchildren. I was born in Marseille. My grandparents, both from my father's and mother's side were from Cilicia and survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

- What is your professional passage?

- I received my theological ed-

ucation at the University of Evangelical Theology in Paris. My first Pastoral service was in Lyon, where I served for nine years. While in Lyon I worked on my doctoral thesis at the Lyon Catholic University and a few years later, I presented my thesis with the theme *The Origins of the Armenian Evangelical Church*. My adviser for my thesis was Professor *Krikor Beledian*, who at the time was the Head of the Armenology Chair of the Catholic University of Lyon.



I also graduated with Master's Degree in Social Affairs from Lyon University and received a Diploma from the National Institute of Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department of Paris-Sorbonne University. I was a postgraduate student in Science and Education at the University of Lyon for my Ph.D. degree.

Throughout my service, I have lived in many countries. First and foremost, I have lived in Armenia, where I have been the representative of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and French "Hope for Armenia" organization for seventeen years. In Armenia I was also Senior

Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, the Founding President of the Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia as well as Consultant for the Office of the President of Armenia.

As a pastor, I have also served in Uruguay, Greece, Canada, and in France (Lyon, Paris and Valence). I have been General Secretary of the French Bible Society as well as chaplain of prisons in Paris. I have also worked as the Chancellery of the Office of the Armenian Embassy in France. I am the co-founder of Lyon's Christian Radio-Fourvière. Currently I am the President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Eurasia.

- Why is it important that Chris-



tianity in Armenia should be presented to the academic world?

- Christianity has originated in Armenia – one of the first in the world. Its faith, history, traditions and martyrdom are subject of respect. It is an opportunity and honor for the academic world to allocate a special place for the Armenian Church.

We should also remember that the Chair of

➡ page 13

page 12 ➡ **René Léonian...**

Armenology at the Catholic University of Lyon was established in 1987 on the initiative of the then spiritual leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Lyon Bishop



Norvan Zakarian.

-What are your goals when you take on this position?

- My goal is to make this Chair a sustainable one. I want to pay tribute to all my predecessors who have done a job worthy of admiration. I will be glad to see once again regular participants in these courses, and I hope I will attract newcomers too.

In the future, I will be attentive to the offers of the participants and future participants. Together we will try to make Armenia, Armenians and Armenian Christianity more accessible for a larger audience.

- What will be the topics of the courses offered by the Chair of Armenology this year?

- For 2021-2022, we have chosen the following topics:

- The history of Armenia and the Armenians from the origins to our days;
- Armenian churches (Apostolic, Catholic, Evangelical). History, theology and spiritual values;
- Perspectives of relations between the Churches. remember that the Chair of
- Perspectives of relations between the Churches.

Medical University News: Receiving and Honouring Noubar Afeyan



There are, of course, differences between the US-made Pfizer and Moderna, British AstreZeneca, Russian Sputnik-V and Chinese CoronaVac vaccines, but those differences should not become a reason for someone not to get vaccinated, Professor **Noubar Afeyan**, Co-founder and Chairman of Flagship Pioneering and Moderna Therapeutics, a leading way pharmaceutical and biotechnology company, Co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, said at a meeting with the members of the Scientific Council of the Yerevan State Medical University on July 21 presided by the University Rector Professor **Armen A. Muradyan**, em-



phasizing that any of the vaccines is definitely better than not being vaccinated at all.

According to Mr. Afeyan, the issue is not if there are risks in case of being vaccinated, but what to expect if not being vaccinated.

“There is noting that you can put in your body, or breath or eat or inject that does not pose any danger”, Noubar Afeyan said, adding that he does not blame those who are skeptical towards the vaccines, since a pandemic like coronavirus never happened in the past. At the same time, he called for public responsibility.

“One can endanger his own life. That’s his decision. But he will endanger the lives of others as well”, Noubar Afeyan said.

The same day Noubar Afeyan has been named Honorary Doctor of the Yerevan State Medical University.

Mr Afeyan who is of the Armenian origin also visited Homeland Defender Home of the University, a rehab center for injured Heroes where one of them, **Vardan Vardanyan** gifted his famous compatriot a souvenir saying that “I want this composition crafted by our hands make your life and home more beautiful”.



Entrepreneur, venture capitalist, inventor, technologist, and CEO Noubar Afeyan has dedicated his career to improving the human condition by systematically creating science-based innovations that serve as the foundation for startup companies.

Afeyan was born in Beirut, Lebanon. His family moved to Montreal, Canada in 1976. Afeyan graduated from McGill University with a BS in Chemical Engineering in 1983. He earned his PhD in Biochemical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1987.

He serves on the boards of a number of public and private Flagship companies, including Moderna, where he is chairman, Rubius Therapeutics, Omega Therapeutics, Tessera Therapeutics, Seventh Sense Biosciences, and others. Previously, he was a member of the founding team, director, and investor in highly successful ventures including Chemgenics Pharmaceuticals, Color Kinetics, Adnexus Therapeutics and Affinova.

FIDE World Cup: Haik Martirosyan on his win against Mamedyarov, expectations from next round



Armenian Grandmaster Haik Martirosyan has talked to FIDE website about his win against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Azerbaijan) and the expectations from the FIDE World Cup.

Haik M. Martirosyan, former under-16 world champion, and currently Armenia's number seven player (2632) eliminated world's #6 Shakhriyar Mamedyarov in Round 3.

In the first game, Mamedyarov, playing with White, sacrificed a pawn out of the opening for some compensation but Martirosyan defended well and outplayed his opponent in the endgame. Not wanting to play for a draw in the second game with White, Martirosyan went all-out for a win against Mamedyarov's very dubious opening set-up.

In a highly complex position, his su-

perb move 35. Kf2! blocking the f-pawn and preparing an assault on Black's king was enough for Black to realize that he had to exchange pieces and simplify to an easily drawn rook ending.

"Playing against Mamedyarov was very hard, because he is a top player, a very strong player," Martirosyan said.

He will take on Ante Brkić of Croatia in Round 4.

"I know him from the Olympiad, he is a strong player, and it's not going to be easy," he said.

The 2021 FIDE World Cup is a 206-player knockout taking place in Krasnaya Polyana, near Sochi, Russia from July 12 to August 6. The prize fund is almost \$1.9m, with \$110,000 for the winner, while the finalists also qualify for the 2022 Candidates Tournament.



American Studies program launched at Yerevan State University

The U.S. Embassy in Armenia has announced the launch of a new graduate degree program in American Studies, through the International Relations program at Yerevan State University.

Funded by the U.S. Embassy in Armenia and implemented in partnership with Arizona State University, the American Studies Center is recruiting applicants for the new graduate program now through August 20, 2021. The inaugural class of graduate students will begin this two-year degree program during the September 2021

semester. Scholarships to cover partial tuition fees are available to aspiring applicants on a competitive basis.

In coordination with Arizona State University, Yerevan State University designed an interdisciplinary curriculum with courses on topics including American politics, foreign policy, history, economics, and society. Additionally, and with support from the U.S. Embassy—Arizona State University will host six Armenian scholars during the 2021-2022 academic year for training, research, and further development

of curriculum for the American Studies program at Yerevan State University.

Strong partnerships and shared values are the foundation of U.S.-Armenia relations. The U.S. Embassy proudly supports this partnership and will continue to invest in the education of a new generation of Armenians who will acquire academic expertise in American Studies and join us in further strengthening the understanding, cooperation, and friendship between the United States and Armenia.

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AZAD Pharma AG AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Switzerland

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Durachweg 15
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Phone No: +41 52 632 09 10
Fax: +41 52 632 09 11

AZAD Pharma AG

Bahnhofstrasse 9
CH-3125 Toffen
Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10
Fax: +41 31 810 40 11

Canada

AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.

1895 - 55th Avenue
Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9
Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99
Fax: +1 514 636 75 55

Atlit Inc.

16 Westminster Ave.,
Suite 306A
Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1
Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91
Fax: +1 514 369 81 67

China

Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza,
#102 Moganshan Road
310051 -Hangzhou China

Phone +86-571-8761 5336
Mobile +86-153-5505-0903
Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963

Germany

AZAD Pharma GmbH

Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a
DE-78315 Radolfzell
Phone No: +49 7732 939101510
Fax: +49 7732 9391016

Armenia

AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC

Vanahovit 8, Proshian
Ashtarak Ave., Kotayk Marz
Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62
Fax: +374 93 40 34 40



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Address in Armenia:

28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA
Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-22 (+374 60) 35-11-24

Address in France:

Masion De L'Armenie,
Paris 17e-95, Bld. Gouvion, France
Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72

Address in USA:

1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112,
Glendale, CA, USA, 91206
Tel.: +1 (818) 646 10 72

Հասցե՝

Իսահակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009