

Armenia extends state of emergency until June 13



Armenia - A Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. May, 14, 2020.

The Armenian Government decided to extend the state of emergency until June 13.

Addressing the government sitting on May 14, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said there is no alternate to the decision.

While no strict restrictions will be imposed, it will allow to organize certain activities, he said.

“Sometimes we need to establish special entry and exit regimes in certain settlements due to the threat of the spread of the coronavirus, and this is only possible under the state of emergency,” the Prime Minister said.

Besides, he emphasized the importance of activity of the Commandant’s Office, which can only function under the state of emergency. Explaining why restrictions were applied at an earlier stage, Pashinyan said it was necessary for several reasons.

First, he said we had to increase the capacities of the hospitals. He noted that the number of beds reserved for coronavirus patients has been increased from 300 to 1,500.

Second, the Prime Minister said, “we had calculations that should the disease spread according to the Italian scenario, we’ll have 10,000 deaths.”

The overall strategy is to avoid returning to stricter restrictions, but it will be unavoidable in one case.

“If we expire our capacities, i.e. if we have over 1,500 patients needing treatment, we’ll have to return to stricter

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Armenian, Russian FM's talks bilateral cooperation, Karabakh peace process

Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan had a telephone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the initiative of the Russian side.

The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Russia discussed issues on bilateral agenda, as well as cooperation between regional structures within the framework of the CIS, EAEU and CSTO.

Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and



Sergey Lavrov touched upon the Nagorno Karabakh peace process.

In the context of addressing the problems caused by the new type of coronavirus, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan attached importance to the unconditional commitment of all parties to the conflict to the provisions of the five-party statement adopted on April 21 with the participation and mediation of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Armenia condemns Azerbaijan's large-scale drills under the conditions of Covid-19 pandemic

The Armenian Defense Ministry has said any attempt of Azerbaijani military equipment and manpower to approach the state border with Armenia or the line of contact with Artsakh will be seen as provocation and will result in relevant consequences.

Azerbaijan will hold large-scale operative-tactical exercise on May 18-22. The exercise is exclusively offensive, during which massive artillery, air, and high-precision weapons will be fired at the enemy's operational depth.

The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia has issued a statement, drawing the attention of the OSCE, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Of-



fice and the international community to the fact that the large-scale military exercise in Azerbaijan, according to established tradition, takes place without a prior notice.

"This is another manifestation of the neglect and gross violation of the Vienna Document," the Defense Ministry said.

The Armenian Defense Ministry condemns the conduct of the exercises that

escalate the security environment in the region, under the conditions of a global challenge for joint actions against the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the call for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to establish a global ceasefire.

"We call on the Azerbaijani side to exercise restraint and respect the commitments to the international community," the Ministry said.

At the same time, the Ministry said any attempt of Azerbaijani military equipment and manpower to approach the state border with Armenia or the line of contact with Artsakh will be seen as provocation and will result in relevant consequences.

Armenia imports raw materials for production of Covid-19 tests

On May 14, the third special flight organized by Commandant's Office transferred a new batch of medical supplies and equipment from China to Armenia.

The cargo includes protective medical masks, personal protective equipment (PPE), gloves and glasses, medicines and laboratory raw materials for COVID-19 diagnosis tests, devices and means for disinfection,



monitors, air supply devices, artificial respiration and oxygen supply devices.

Most supplies were purchased on funds

from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia.

Medical supplies and equipment procured by the United Nations World Food Programme with financial support of the EU and other international donors, as well those donated by China's state agencies, the Armenian and Chinese benefactors were also transferred to Armenia.

No decision will be made without the elected authorities of Artsakh – Pashinyan



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has once again stressed the importance of Artsakh's return to the negotiating table.

"No solution is possible without the participation of the elected authorities of Artsakh," Pashinyan told a press conference on May 16.

He noted that ensuring the return of Artsakh to the negotiating table is complex because the international community, the Minsk Group has been working in the current format for the past 22 years," he stated.

Nikol Pashinyan said "we cannot make decisions on behalf of elected authorities of Artsakh."

"If there is a solution which I will think is at least worth not to be rejected without consulting with the people, we'll bring it to the attention of the Security Councils and Parliaments of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh," the Prime minister stated.

He noted that since 2018 he has concluded an "agreement" with people that should leave no room to manipulation.

Since 2018 I have made such a public agreement with the people, that there can be no room for.

"I'm asked whether we can agree to an anti-Armenian solution to the Artsakh issue. You should ask yourself the question. Will you agree to an anti-Armenian solution? Because the man sitting at the negotiating table represents the people of Armenia," he said.

The Prime Minister stressed that there is one distinct principle – nothing is decided unless everything is decided.

page 1 ➔ measures," he stated. The Prime Minister added that of 2,218 active cases, only 600 need treatment.

As for ventilators, the Prime Minister said Armenia has ensured hundreds of devices, and is preparing to buy more. However, he added, that specialists have come to the conclusion that ventilators should be used in extreme cases, and there are only six people on ventilation today.

PM Pashinyan also referred to the "conspiracy theory" with many believing the coronavirus is a "bluff."

"The fact is that over 70 percent of patients show no symptoms and often refuse to believe they have been ill until the virus touches a family member," the Prime Minister stated.

He once again urged to follow three rules – keep social distancing, avoid touching the face without disinfecting the hands and use only clean and disinfected tableware.

He emphasized the importance of decentralized fight against Covid-19, where responsibility is delegated to every citizen.

Solving Constitutional Court crisis with any formula in Parliament being discussed – Pashinyan

Due to the current situation caused by the novel coronavirus in Armenia it wouldn't be possible to hold the constitutional amendments referendum for at least a year, but the state is discussing of solving this issue in the parliament, with any option, partially or completely, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said during an online press conference on May 16, asked whether it is possible to solve the Constitutional Court crisis through Parliament, not through a referendum.

The reporter also said that the Armenian government has also sent inquiries to the Venice Commission over the CC crisis and asked why this option was chosen.

"As part of the referendum, we also planned to apply to the Venice Commission as a result of our discussions. But

our prediction is that the coronavirus will exist in our reality for at least a year, which means that we cannot hold a referendum for at least a year because we have stated that for us the interest of public health is higher from any political interest. Thus, it's impossible to hold a referendum during the coronavirus pandemic. But on the other hand, we cannot wait for the solution of the situation around the Constitutional Court, until the end of the coronavirus. Even if we wait, we have formed a commission on Constitutional amendments: constitutional amendments should take place in the future, and in this context, we will solve, which, according to the preliminary calculations, may be put up to referendum in June 2021", the PM said.

"But now we have applied to the Venice

Commission, and the issue of solving the CC crisis in the parliament with any formula, partially or completely, is being currently discussed", the PM said.

He said nothing hinders the work with the international partners aimed at receiving effective and also consensus-based solutions as much as possible.

Armenia was planning to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments on April 5, 2020. The referendum was proposing to suspend the powers of president of the Constitutional Court Hrayr Tovmasyan and 6 judges. However, the referendum didn't take place as the country declared a state of emergency to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

PACE hails Armenia's ratification of Lanzarote Convention

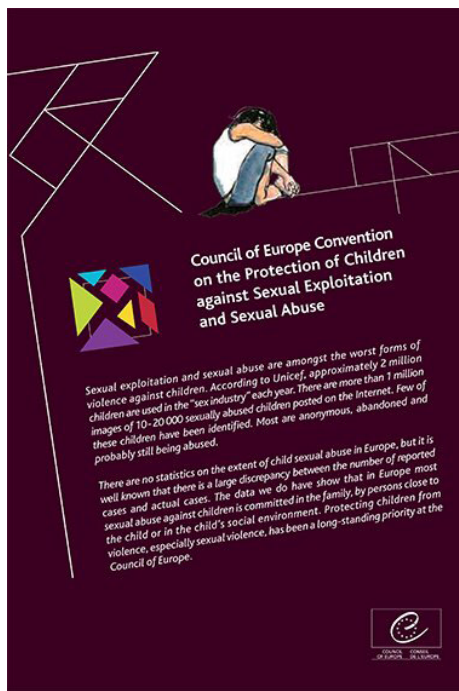
The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has commented the ratification of the Lanzarote Convention by the Armenian Parliament.

“Very pleased that the National Assembly has ratified the Lanzarote Convention to protect children,” said PACE Armenia monitor Kimmo Kiljunen.

“Another good sign of commitment from Armenia as a Council of Europe member state!” he added.

The Armenian National Assembly voted 79 to 12 on May 15 to ratify the Convention earlier this week.

The Council of Europe Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as



the Lanzarote Convention” requires crim-

inalization of all kinds of sexual offences against children.

It sets out that states in Europe and beyond shall adopt specific legislation and take measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect child victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

Armenia had signed the convention back in 2010. The ratification process will be concluded when the ratification instrument is deposited at the Council of Europe. Armenia will then become the 47th state to have ratified the Lanzarote Convention, leaving Ireland as the only Council of Europe's member that will not have done so. Tunisia is a non-member State that has also ratified the Convention.

Former parliament speaker goes on trial

A court in Yerevan began on May 14 the trial of former parliament speaker Ara Babloyan and one of his former aides who are facing criminal charges rejected by them as politically motivated.

Babloyan and Arsen Babayan were charged last October with abusing their powers and forging documents to help Armenia's former leadership install Hrayr Tovmasyan as chairman of the Constitutional Court in March 2018. Babayan was arrested but freed on bail three weeks later.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) indicted the two men as Tovmasyan faced growing government pressure to resign. It claimed that the former Armenian parliament elected him court chairman in breach of the country's constitution.

The SIS said that Babloyan illegally ac-

cepted and announced the resignation of Tovmasyan's predecessor, Gagik Harutyunyan, before receiving a relevant letter from him. It said that Babayan, who was the deputy chief of the parliament staff at the time, backdated the letter to enable Tovmasyan to head the Constitutional Court before the entry into force of sweeping amendments



to the Armenian constitution.

The amendments introduced a six-year term in office for the head of Armenia's

highest court. Tovmasyan, 49, became chief court justice under the previous constitution which allows him to hold the post until the age of 70.

Both suspects strongly deny the accusations. Babloyan maintains that Harutyunyan's letter of resignation was dated March 1, 2018 and that he received and signed it on March 2, 2018, not three days later, as is claimed by the SIS.

In a statement issued ahead of the first court hearing in the case, Babayan charged that he and the former speaker are subjected to “crude political persecution” and will expose during their trial “pathetic and blatant violations” of the due process committed by investigators.

The SIS and prosecutors deny any political motives behind the criminal case.

Artsakh MFA statement on 26th anniversary of ceasefire agreement disseminated in the OSCE

The statement of the Artsakh Foreign Ministry on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the agreement on the Full Cessation of Fire and Hostilities has been disseminated in the OSCE.

The trilateral agreement on the full cessation of fire and hostilities signed by Artsakh, Azerbaijan and Armenia, under the mediation of Russia, entered into force on May 12, 1994.

“The ceasefire agreement has been the only tangible achievement in the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict settlement process, which resulted from the full-fledged trilateral negotiations, with the direct and equal participation of one of the main parties to the conflict – the Republic of Artsakh,” the Foreign Ministry said in the statement.

“The path to the termless ceasefire was not easy. The previous attempts to put an end to the war were undermined due to the position of Azerbaijan, which, being confident of its military-technical superiority, hoped to solve the conflict by force. Dip-



lomatic success was possible only after the Defense Army of Artsakh had repelled the armed aggression of Azerbaijan, ensured the safe borders of the Republic and thereby seriously undermined the potential of Baku aimed at resolving the conflict by military force,” the Ministry added.

According to the Foreign Ministry “it is difficult to overestimate the full significance of the Agreement of May 12, 1994, which allowed to transfer the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict to the political-diplomatic track and to create conditions for the parties, with the support of the mediators, to focus their efforts solely on finding ways to the final settlement of the conflict

through negotiations.”

Unfortunately, it said, this achievement was not developed in the subsequent years, due to the return of Azerbaijan to its previous policy of confrontation, threats and refusal to negotiate directly with Artsakh.

“The agreement of May 12, 1994 demonstrates that the progress in the conflict settlement process depends on two key conditions: exclusion of any illusions for the possibility of resolving the conflict by force and organization of full-fledged trilateral negotiations, in which each of the parties to the conflict negotiates on its own behalf and on the issues within its competence,” the statement continued.

The Ministry said the Republic of Artsakh reiterates its commitment to the exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict and exerts consistent efforts to fully maintain the ceasefire, while being ready to decisively prevent any attempt by Azerbaijan to unleash another aggression.

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Court again refuses to free Kocharyan

A court in Yerevan has denied bail to former President Robert Kocharyan charged with overthrowing constitutional order in 2008. The next court hearing is scheduled for May 19.

His lawyers, as well as three former Prime Ministers of Armenia – Karen Karapetyan, Khosrov Harutyunyan and Vazgen Manukyan and ex-Prime Minister of the Republic of Artsakh Anushavan Danielyan had peti-



tioned the court to release Kocharyan on bail.

The ex-officials had guaranteed that in freedom, Kocharyan would demonstrate

appropriate behavior and would not shy away from appearing before the body conducting the proceedings.

Kocharyan and three other former officials stand trial on charges of overthrowing the constitutional order in 2008 following a presidential election. The clashes between police and protesters on March 1, 2008 saw at least ten killed.

He rejects the charges as politically motivated.

USAID raises assistance provided to Armenia by \$11.5 million

On May 13, 2020, USAID and the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia signed an amendment to the Development Objective Cooperation Agreement for More Participatory, Effective and Accountable Governance, adding \$11.5 million in assistance funding.

This action brings the total amount of USAID assistance provided within the framework of this Agreement to \$51.4 million since its inception in 2013. The Agreement advances broad-based democratic governance reforms through promoting initiatives on transparency and accountability, local governance and decentralization, as well as participatory and inclusive electoral and political processes and rule of law.



USAID assistance additionally supports civil society and media programs to increase the level of informed civic activism and promote access to diversified and objective sources of information, with a special emphasis on media literacy.

USAID and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia also signed an amendment to the Assistance Agreement for a More Competitive and Diversified Private Sector, adding \$7.5 million in assistance funding.

This action brings the total amount of USAID assistance provided within the framework of this Agreement to \$91.8 million since its inception in 2010. The Agreement supports Armenia to achieve broad-based economic growth that generates productive employment and promotes equality of opportunity.

USAID assistance focuses on key areas of strategic importance, such as agriculture, tourism, energy, and water; facilitates innovation; enhances workforce skills; and creates a more conducive business environment.

Additionally, it provides support for improved key infrastructure services, including water and energy, vital for enterprise growth and development.

Plane from China carries new batch of medical supplies to Armenia

A plane from Beijing, China, transported the latest batch of essential personal protective equipment purchased by the United Nations World Food Program for the Armenian Ministry of Health to equip Armenian medical facilities fighting COVID-19.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) has worked with the Armenian government and its partners to transport 125,000 pieces of personal protective equipment to Armenia to protect health workers at the forefront, including 80,000 medical uniforms and protective equipment – glasses, face shields, etc.

WFP was able to purchase equipment

worth \$ 1 million thanks to donations from the My Step Foundation, the Izmirlian Foundation, the Galust Gulbenkian Foundation, the St. Sargis Humanitarian Foundation, and the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the support of Eduardo Eurnekian's companies, as well as the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs in the Republic of Armenia.

The air transportation was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As long as the needs continue to grow, WFP continues to seek support from its partners so that it can provide support to the Armenian population and government during this difficult time.

All over the world, the United Nations is uniting its forces and working with governments to make medical equipment available to people in need. In Armenia, the UNHCR, in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator and the WTO, is in charge of the freight forwarding sector to assist the Government of Armenia and its partners in supplying medical equipment, food and non-food items. Thanks to the strong partnership with the national authorities, the aircraft will continue to transport medical equipment from Armenia and the world's key hubs to Armenia.

India provides Armenia with Hydroxychloroquine drug for Covid-19 treatment

Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Avet Adonts received on May 14 Indian Ambassador to Armenia Kishan Dan Deval.

The parties hailed the high level of bilateral friendly relations, emphasizing the close cooperation established within the framework of the fight against the novel coronavirus. They also touched upon the



steps taken to organize the repatriation of the citizens of the two countries.

On behalf of the government of India, the Ambassador conveyed a batch of Hydroxychloroquine drug for the treatment of about 5,000 Covid-19 patients in Armenia.

Reference was made to a wide range of issues of cooperation in various spheres.

Lithuania sends medical supplies in support to Armenia's Covid-19 relief efforts



Moderna Therapeutics co-founded by Noubar Afeyan, one of the first biotech companies to begin human trials of an experimental vaccine for the coronavirus is now ready to move onto the next phase of

testing.

On May 7, Moderna announced that the Food and Drug Administration had cleared its application to proceed to a clinical trial involving about 600 people.

“The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) completed its review of the Company’s Investigational New Drug (IND) application for its novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19) vaccine candidate (mRNA-1273) allowing it to pro-

ceed to the Phase 2 study,” Moderna said.

The company said a 600 participant Phase 2 study is expected to begin shortly. The Company is finalizing the protocol for the Phase 3 study, which is expected to begin in the early summer of 2020.

More than a dozen companies, including known vaccine producers like Johnson & Johnson, or Sanofi, are involved in a global race to develop a vaccine

EU and Austrian Development Agency provide 11 motoblocks to Armenia's rural communities

Eleven motoblocks have been provided on May 13 to a total of 15 rural settlements of Sarapat and Amasia communities of Shirak region with the financial support of the European Union.

The equipment will be used in a rotating manner by vulnerable producers identified in the communities. This support is part of the European Union’s immediate assistance to Armenia in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 crisis in the agricultural sector.

During the EU’s first visit in Sarapat community, in total 5 motoblocks have been provided to 6 rural settlements, Goghovit, Sarapat, Musayelyan, Arpeni, Tsoghamarg, Torosgyugh.

In his speech, Shirak Governor Tigran Petrosyan mentioned: “Due to the situation created as a result of the epidemic, food security and the continuous development of agriculture are becoming very important priorities. From this point of view, new

technological solutions in agriculture and the growth of land cultivation are becoming a priority. I am glad that our partners from the European Union responded to our needs and today, keeping our high level of cooperation, we receive targeted support for the agribusinesses of Amasia and Sarapat communities of Shirak region.”

In Amasia community, in total 6 motoblocks have been provided to 9 rural settlements for the common usage: Amasia, Aregnadem, Bandivan, Gtashen, Jrajor, Hovtun, Voghji, Meghrashat, Byurakn.

“The need for these motoblocks was identified in cooperation with the Governor’s Office just one month ago and, with the support of the European Union, the Austrian Development Agency managed to respond in time for the machines to be used for the current season, enabling vulnerable groups to be self-reliant in agriculture in a sustainable manner,” noted Pascal Bokkers,

Team Leader of the EU-GAIA project.

During the handover memorandums were signed both with the Head of Sarapat community Mr. Artush Manukyan and the Head of Amasia Community Ms. Jemma Harutyunyan. In addition, the beneficiaries were instructed on how the new equipment is best and most effectively used. All attendees adhered to the required sanitary and social distancing measures.



Armenian President wants to lead the country to new digital age, making it an AI hub – Italian TV

As part of an extended report on Artificial Intelligence – the “superpower” that many governments of technologically advanced countries are using – Italian Public broadcaster Rai-Radiotelevisione Italiana presents the perspectives of Armenia’s technological advancement.

Journalist Barbara Carfagna travels to small but agile countries such as Armenia and Israel, whose economies grow thanks to the massive use of Artificial Intelligence, to understand how computing power can help people.

In Armenia she holds meetings with President Armen Sarkissian, the heads of a number of tech companies and visits the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies.

“Currently, we are at the crossroads of the classical world and the new quantum world,” President Sarkissian says. The journalist notes, in turn, that the President’s political vision stems from science, like quantum theory, which in the last century turned classical physics and society upside down, causing the changes we are undergoing due to technological advances. She emphasizes that Armenia is one of the small countries that face great difficulties and tries to jump forward due to large investments in technology, like most technologically advanced countries – Korea, Israel and Singapore.

“We live a quantum life, and the first thing we need to do is change the educa-



tion system. Armenia can become a world leader not in terms of military, political or physical strength, but can be a leader in development, being a data hub with global capacity,” President Sarkissian says.

“There is a lot of talk about Israel’s success, which is a small country, and about Singapore, a port in the ocean, with a significant flow of goods and a trade hub. In the new, immaterial world, there is another possible ocean – the information ocean. In this period, it is possible to become a hub where data is processed and released,” President Sarkissian says.

“The quantum world is the world where we are using the results of quantum mechanics and electrodynamics. This is the world where the relations between groups of people are changing,” Armen Sarkissian further elaborates.

According to him, political events, developments, revolutions can take place in different ways. Values, institutions, procedures must be reinterpreted.

“Nations that remain in the classical world will face insurmountable contradictions, as society will change, even if politics remains the same. It’s not about being democratic or non-democratic, it’s about answering the

following question: have we entered the quantum world or not?” the President adds.

On Artificial Intelligence, President Sarkissian says “AI systems will be able to process huge amounts of data.”

“All aspects of our lives will change

radically, in a way we can’t even imagine. We need to find the best way to process that data,” he adds.

The journalist notes that President Armen Sarkissian, who has spent his entire life between the University of Cambridge and the business world, wants to lead his country to a new digital age, making it a leader in the field of artificial intelligence.

The Program also refers to the President’s Advanced Tomorrow (ATOM) initiative aimed at the development of technologies and Artificial Intelligence.

“We are creating a city on research and development of artificial intelligence, where we will host large companies from Italy, France and the United States. First, a platform for cooperation with these enterprises will be created. Then we plan to have the best students there, creating new educational methods like TUMO for the new generations,” says President Sarkissian.

He also shares the dream to establish an AI-bases entertainment center – an AI-bases Disneyland as a museum of the future, where children will get acquainted with science and travel to the future.

Armenia warns Azerbaijan over war games

(RFE/RL- Yerevan) - The Armenian military has warned Azerbaijan against heightening tensions in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone during large-scale exercises which the Azerbaijani army will hold next week.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry announced earlier this week that the five-day exercises will involve around 10,000 soldiers, hundreds of tanks and artillery systems, and dozens of warplanes and helicopters. It held similar drills in March.

In a statement released on May 14, the Armenian Defense Ministry condemned the upcoming war games, saying that they pose a threat to the "regional security environment." It accused Baku of ignoring United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's recent call for a global ceasefire so the world can focus on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

"We are calling on the Azerbaijani side to show restraint and honor its obligations to the international community," read the statement.

"At the same time, we notify that any attempt to move military hardware and personnel close to the Armenian border or the Line of Contact with Nagorno-Karabakh would be viewed as a provocation and have



appropriate consequences," it warned.

Truce violations in the conflict zone have decreased significantly since Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met for the first time in September 2018. The two leaders and their foreign ministers have held regular talks since then.

Still, there have been signs of increased tension on the frontlines in recent weeks. Karabakh's Armenian-backed army claimed to have shot down an Azerbaijani military drone on April 21 and said a week later that Azerbaijani forces have fired mortars on its frontline positions for the first time in almost a year.

Meeting with the Azerbaijani army top brass on May 2, Azerbaijan's Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov said the likelihood of hostilities has increased dramatically because of what he called Armenian "provocative actions." Armenian Foreign

Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan denounced that statement.

The Defense Ministry in Yerevan reported on May 13 that Azerbaijani troops fired from heavy machine guns at a border village in Armenia's northern Tavush province. It released photographs of bullet holes and other damage caused to one of the village houses.

The U.S., Russian and French mediators co-heading the Minsk Group renewed their calls for the conflicting parties to "strictly" observe the ceasefire and "avoid provocative actions in the current environment" when they held a joint video conference with Mnatsakanyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov on April 21.

Speaking on May 12, Mammadyarov accused Yerevan of hampering progress in Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks. "Azerbaijan is committed to a political settlement of the conflict but negotiations cannot continue endlessly," he warned.

Mnatsakanyan rejected Azerbaijani "threats of use of force" and insisted that the Armenian side is prepared to negotiate a peace deal based on "mutual concessions."

Process of revealing real owners of mining companies will continue – PM Pashinyan



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan assures that concrete processes have taken place for revealing the real owners of mining companies, these processes will continue.

During online press conference on May 16, the reporter said that back to December

2019 the PM stated that the list of owners of mining companies in Armenia will be published in January-February. Pashinyan was asked why this issue has been forgotten.

"It has not been forgotten, quite the contrary, many concrete processes have taken place. Legislative changes have taken place for revealing the real owners. And based on these changes, the deadline for submitting declarations of persons involved in the field has been set on February 20, 2020. I mean that this process is completely in process", the PM said.

Pashinyan said this is a new system not only in Armenia, but also around the world,

and the declaration system of real owners still needs to work, develop, and the legislative changes must take place. However, he said that the names of real owners are revealed, at least at the public level. "There are also some criminal cases, and I think that all answers to these questions will be clear during the investigation of these criminal cases and successful passing to the judicial stage. But I mean that this process is not forgotten, it moves on and will go to the end", he said.

On April 23, 2019, the Armenian parliament adopted the bill on revealing the real owners of mining companies.

Libya's Interim Government Recognizes Armenian Genocide Once Again



By Columnist Harut Sassounian

Libya's Interim Government recognized the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2020, for the second year in a row. On April 19, 2019 the provisional government had issued a similar recognition.

While this recognition may surprise many people because there is hardly a single Armenian living in Libya, there are, however, geopolitical reasons for taking such an action. Ever since the toppling and killing in 2012 of Muammar Gaddafi, the leader of Libya, the country has been in constant turmoil with various military factions fighting each other to rule Libya.

The officially recognized government of Libya is limited around coastal Tripoli and Misrata, while most of the Libyan territory is occupied by the Interim Government led by military leader Khalifa Haftar. The internal civil war has been considerably expanded by the interference of external powers in Libya's domestic affairs. Turkey and Qatar have supported the Central Government with Islamic fighters and military hardware, while the Interim Government has been endorsed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The countries on the opposing sides in Libya are also involved in diplomatic clashes and mass media wars. Last month Saudi Arabia announced that it was blocking access to Turkish news agencies and websites. In return, Turkey blocked Saudi and Emirati news outlets. Furthermore, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan supports the Muslim Brotherhood, while Saudi Arabia, Egypt and UAE are opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt

and Turkey have been feuding ever since the pro-Muslim Brotherhood President of Egypt Mohammed Morsi, supported by Turkey, was toppled in 2013. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and UAE have asked their citizens to boycott Turkish products and travel to Turkey.

These various regional and internal feuds have prompted the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Libyan Interim Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on April 24, 2020. Here is the text of the announcement translated into English:

"We recall today the genocide of the Armenian population by Turkey which falls on April 24 of each year. The State of Libya commemorates this anniversary in implementation of Government Decision No. 238 of 2019, which approved this day as a national day to revive it.

"Turkey's criminal actions against the Armenian people by burning, deliberate killing, forced deportation, and other ugly acts contrary to all divine laws is a crime against humanity and it must be recognized and granted an official apology to the Armenian people and compensate them for the pains that these massacres have caused which cannot be forgotten from the memory of Armenians and the whole world. As we condemn this crime devoid of any element of humanity, we again call upon the countries of the world to recognize this heinous crime.

"It is today's Turkish government, in its new situation, which commits crimes against the peoples of the world by its blatant interference in their internal affairs. Perhaps what it carried out yesterday by bombarding the city of Tarhuna [Libya] with missiles and drones, killing children, the elderly and women, destroying humanitarian convoys, food and medical aid, fuel tanks, bringing in mercenaries and supporting terrorists are other crimes added to a chain of Turkish crimes against people and confirms to the whole world the extent of Erdogan's arrogance and his disregard for all international laws and norms."

On April 19, 2019, the Libyan Interim Government had issued a similar statement through its Foreign Ministry which reads as follows:

"The Interim Government officially ad-

opted a resolution in March recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

"On 24 April 1915, the Ottoman authorities rounded up, arrested, and deported from Constantinople (now Istanbul) to the region of Ankara, 235 to 270 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders, the majority of whom were eventually murdered.

"This was followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly, and the infirm on death marches leading to the Syrian Desert. Driven forward by military escorts, the deportees were deprived of food and water and subjected to periodic robbery, rape, and massacre.

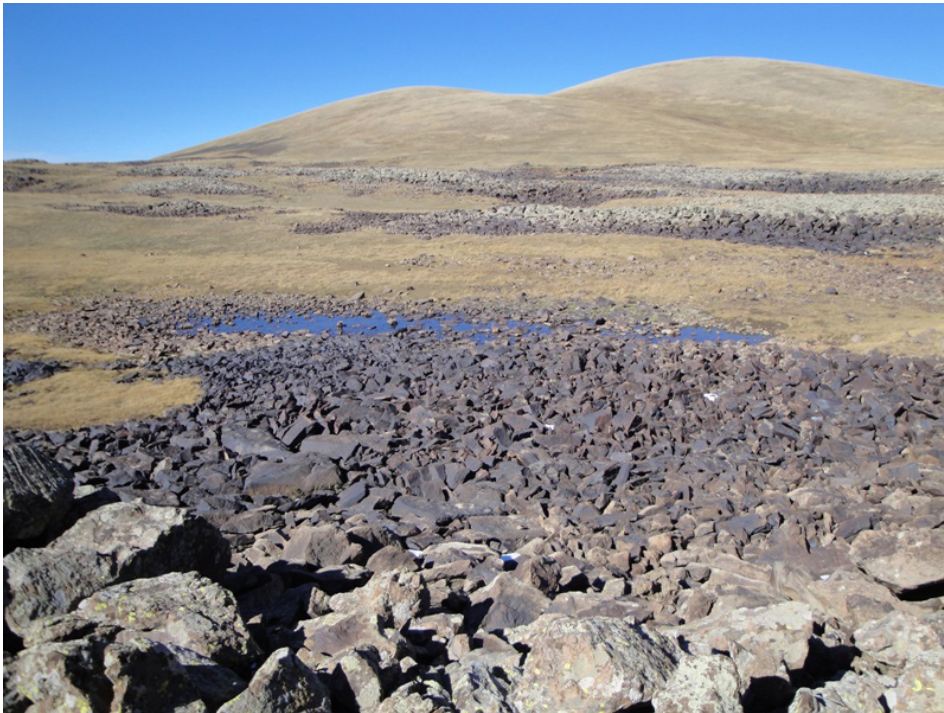
"The final death toll of the genocide is reported to be 1.5 million."

It should not be surprising that the Libyan Interim Government has issued a statement on the Armenian Genocide because it serves its anti-Turkish political agenda. It would have been more surprising if such an announcement would be made contrary to its own interests.

All countries cater to their national interests. The Armenian government must also act in a similar manner. Libya is a good example. This is the second year in a row that its Interim Government has recognized the Armenian Genocide. What has been the reaction of the Armenian Government? We are not aware of any public comment to this effect. Wouldn't it be proper for the Armenian Foreign Ministry to issue a statement welcoming the Libyan announcement? Someday the Interim Government may become the legally recognized government of Libya. Now is the time for Armenia to establish friendly relations with Libya. As Turkey has been isolating Armenia from its neighbors by its blockade and its anti-Armenian economic and diplomatic efforts, Armenia in response should join hands with supportive countries and isolate Turkey to whatever degree it can.

By establishing good relations with the Libyan Interim Government, Armenia would also be in a good position to affirm its relations with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates and mend its non-existent relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I am sure these countries would appreciate the friendly hand extended by the Government of Armenia.

Ivory Carvings on Ughtasar, Syunik Marz



deer and predators are stamped on the massive rocks.

The largest number is the Bronze Age (III-II millennia BC) petroglyphs, which depicts the life and beliefs of the ancient tribes of the Armenian Highlands, hunting animals: bezoar upright and horned deer,

*By Gourgen James Khazhakian
Chief Correspondent*

Armenia is rich not only in castles, monastic complexes, churches, but also in petroglyphs. The petroglyphs in Gegharkunik, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor and other regions have serious “biography”. In Syunik Region, about 30 km from Sisian, on the heights of the Syunik (Zangezur) mountain range, at an altitude of about 3300 m above sea level, the Ughtasar old site is located; it

the horizontal or vertical flat surfaces of the copper and rock rocks with a depth of 2-6



goats, geese, deer, pictures of a horse, a dog, a boar, a leopard. Sculptures of a beast and a human fight, a dog defending a goat herd against the onslaught of a group of predators, other are masterfully carved. The petroglyphs have reached us in an almost harmless state. Only a small part is affected by the wind, being damaged and



cm and a width of 2-20 mm.

The content of the petroglyphs is diverse: they include scenes of hunting, nature, enchantments, cosmic imaginations, and especially the worship of the sun. The oldest rock paintings in Ughtasar date back to V-IV millennia BC. Large-scale images of



torn off the surface of the rocks, and some is covered with a layer of soil.

is rich in petroglyphs.

More than 2,000 petroglyphs have been found scattered at the foot of the mountain, around small ponds formed by volcanic craters, in valleys and terraces. They are one of the oldest monuments in Syunik. Most of the petroglyphs are engraved on

Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator Recently...



Viva-MTS reopens its service centers in Yerevan and regions

Upon the Commandant's decision, Viva-MTS has resumed operation of all service centers across Yerevan and the regions, except for the ones located in the territory of the Dalma Garden Mall and the Zvartnots Airport.

The whole range of services is available at service centers.

The service centers are equipped with preventive means, are regularly disinfected, the staff is provided with masks, gloves and alcohol-based hand sanitizer gels, and is trained for taking the required preventive measures as recommended.

Attention: Viva-MTS encourages its subscribers to keep the 2 meter social distancing requirement. It is also recommended to wear face masks for prevention purposes, whenever possible.

The service centers are operational Monday through Friday, **from 10:00 to 18:00**. The full list of Viva-MTS service centers along with addresses, is available on the Company's official website: <https://www.mts.am/en/individual-customers/help/customer-care/>



[vivacell-mts-service-centers](#)

The Partners of the Years to Build Houses in the Regions Again



Due to the pandemic, Viva-MTS and the "Fuller Center for Housing Armenia" have slightly changed their work methods. Discussions take place remotely, and visits to families are carried out with the acting restrictions in mind. However, the goal of the long time partners to assist project beneficiaries has remained unchanged. All regions

of Armenia are in the center of attention. The determination of the partners to build a house, to free the families from metal containers and from unfavorable conditions is adamant. The launch of 2020 housing program has been announced.

"I address all the families included in this year's housing program. Despite the situation we live in now, we have always strived to keep our social programs going. We are not back to our normal life yet, but that is not an obstacle for implementing the programs that have been planned. You now clearly understand we cannot do the construction works together yet, but I want you to stay optimistic and believe that we will have that chance sooner or later. We stand by your side and your cherished dream of having a home will come true. That's what all of us – you, the 'Fuller Center for Housing' in Armenia, and



our Company – strive for. Stay healthy and strong, and believe in a better future," Viva-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

In Mkhchyan village of Ararat region the site of the foundation for the house is already prepared. By the end of the year, a stone house will be built in the area. Next to the land lot intended for the house, a metal container, barely 18 square meters, is installed. It used to serve as a home for **Asya Gulinyan** and her son's family for over 10 years. The terrible condition of the metal container is visible from afar. The conditions inside are even worse

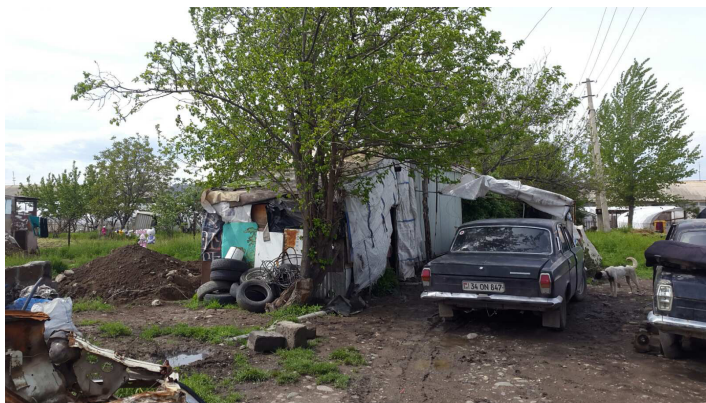
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... The dilapidated iron shelter has become unbearable for the family, especially now that they have to stay at home. Asya, being happy with the idea of having a stone house, is looking forward to the fulfillment of her dream. This is particularly important for her granddaughter's healthy childhood.



The baby is due in a couple of days.
“Finally, a light came on in our



house. We had very hard times in the container. We dreamed and strived to have a home, but we did not succeed. I am glad that we will finally get rid of these unbearable conditions. Our little one will grow up in a decent home,” said Asya Gulinyan.

“The situation in the country in connection with the pandemic has certainly affected the pace of construction work, but it has not stopped it. Since the families are fully engaged in the construction works, the foundation works have been underway,” “Fuller Center for Housing Armenia” President **Ashot Yeghiazaryan** said.

AMD 91 million has been allocated by Viva-MTS for the current year's housing program.

VoD option in the updated version of “MTS TV”



In the updated version of the “**MTS TV**” application, one can now watch his/her favorite programs, TV series and movies with the possibility of VoD (videos on demand).

For that, the user needs to update the already installed “MTS TV” app on the mobile device.

“MTS TV” app’s VoD consists of four categories:

- TV shows
- TV series
- TV movies
- Kids

The cartoons in the VoD’s “Kids” section are available in Armenian. No additional money is charged for using the VoD.

Please be reminded that the “MTS TV” app allows watching Armenian HD channels, as well as many foreign TV channels at high-quality via mobile devices.

To use the “MTS TV” app, one just needs to download the “MTS TV” app

and register by simply entering a phone number and other required information.

Using the application is AMD 1000/30 days.

“+Video” service: unlimited “YouTube” and “TikTok” within “X” tariff plan

Viva-MTS informs that till 30 June 2020, inclusively, when using “YouTube” and “TikTok” apps within **pre-paid** and **postpaid** “X” tariff plans, as well as **option 2** of the “Yev” tariff plan the megabytes of the main Internet-package are not consumed.

“+ Video” service is currently available and is automatically activated for subscribers with an active package* of the above-mentioned tariff plans.



Via the new service, one can watch and upload videos and listen to music on “YouTube” and “TikTok” unlimited as much as s/he wants.

Join Viva-MTS’ official TikTok page at tiktok.com/@viva_mts .

Note

Starting from 1 July 2020, when using “You Tube” and “TikTok” apps, megabytes provided within the tariff plan will be consumed.

**when using the mentioned applications while the packages provided by the tariff plan are active, the main Internet-package is not consumed.*

Italy to lift coronavirus travel restrictions from June 3



Italy's government has signed a decree that will allow travel to and from the country from 3 June, as it moves to ease its coronavirus lockdown measures, the BBC reports.

It will also allow travel between the re-

gions – which has so far been tightly restricted – from the same day.

The move marks a major step in the country's efforts to reopen its economy after more than two months of lockdown.

Italy has one of the highest death tolls in

the world, but its infection rate has fallen sharply in recent days.

More than 31,600 people have died with the virus in the country, the third highest figure behind the US and UK.

It was the first country in Europe to impose nationwide restrictions when coronavirus cases began to surface in northern regions in February.

But it began to relax those measures earlier this month, when it allowed factories and parks to reopen on 4 May.

Shops and restaurants are also due to reopen from 18 May providing social distancing is enforced.

Catholic churches are preparing for the resumption of Mass on the same day, but there will be strict social distancing and worshippers must wear face masks. Other faiths will also be allowed to hold religious services

Armenia to be supplied with 70 additional ventilators – PM

Armenia will be supplied with 70 additional ventilators to tackle the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a press conference on May 16, presenting 100 facts about the new Armenia.

“In order to resist the novel coronavirus disease nearly 100,000 test kits were acquired and we continue acquiring medical equipment, personal protective items. In particular, Armenia will be supplied with 70 additional ventilators (at the moment we have 100). It is also planned to acquire additional ambulances



and high-capacity cars”, he said.

Pashinyan informed that the process of purchasing mobile X-ray scanners and other medical equipment for diagnosing and treating the virus has already started.

Production of face masks launched in Armenia which is capable of meeting the domestic demand and also conducting an export. The same relates to the production of alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

“As a result of the government-community-civil society-private sector partnership, single elderly people, large, needy families and other vulnera-

ble groups, as well as those instructed to be self-quarantined have been provided with over 50,000 food and hygiene items, worth 13,000 AMD on average”, the PM added.

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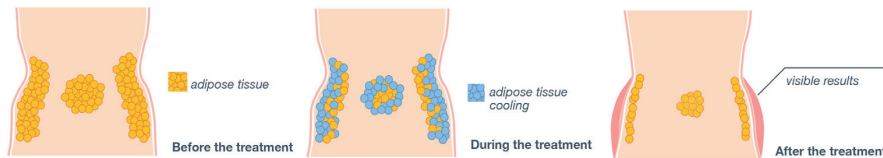
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