

Turkey remains a threat to Armenia's security: PM address UN General Assembly



On Turkey's threat

Turkey remains a serious threat to Armenia's security, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an address to the UN General Assembly. "By refusing to establish diplomatic relations and overtly assisting Azerbaijan against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, Turkey remains a serious threat to Armenia and the Armenian people, who experienced the deep tragedy of genocide and continue of the 20th century and continue to face the denial of truth and justice," the Prime Minister stated.

On relations with neighbors

The Prime Minister said that the various degree of tension existing in the relations among Armenia's neighbors and strategic partners put the country in a very challenging condition.

"Russia is our key strategic partner and ally. Georgia and Iran are our strategic neighbors. We have a strategically significant agenda and partnership with the United States, the European Union and its member states. We observe with concern sets of disagreement among our friends, strategic partners and allies," Nikol Pashinyan stated.

He noted that "these realities put significant challenges to us, because we face a persistent risk of not being correctly understood by some of our friends or, even worse, all of them."

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Armenian FM, EU's Mogherini discuss bilateral agenda in NYC

Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on September 26 met with Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission in New York on the sidelines of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the Armenian MFA told Noyan Tapan.

Minister Mnatsakanyan expressed gratitude to Mogherini for the support and cooperation.

The FM and the High Representative discussed wide range of issues relating to the Armenia-EU agenda. They highly valued the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) as an im-



portant achievement and appreciated its role as a key tool to support the reforms in Armenia by the EU and expand the mutual partnership with the Union. In this context the minister emphasized the importance of launch of visa liberalization dialogue with the EU for the Armenian side.

The sides also exchanged views on the

10th anniversary of Eastern Partnership and the future vision of this initiative. Minister Mnatsakanyan said for Armenia the EaP is not a neighborhood format with the EU states, but a cooperation platform with the countries located in the eastern part of Europe based on common European values and principles.

The meeting participants also exchanged views on regional issues.

The minister introduced Mogherini on the recent developments of the Nagorno Karabakh peaceful settlement process and the meeting held with the Azerbaijani FM in New York on September 23 with the participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Armenian President, PM offer condolences over Jacques Chirac demise



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Armen Sarkissian have offered condolences over the demise of France's ex-President Jacques Chirac.

"France lost a great statesman. Dedicating his whole life to France and embodying the greatness of France, he further elevated France's reputation by combining his unflinching service to the homeland with steps aimed at defending the rights and sovereignty of other peoples," PM Pashinyan

said in a message.

He noted that the Armenian people will never forget President Chirac's sincere friendship, his resolute contribution to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by force of law, and his involvement in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"The Armenian people are also grateful for Shirak's efforts to preserve Armenian cultural heritage, including his personal at-

tention to the cultural monuments of Ani, the historic capital of Armenia," Pashinyan added.

"President Chirac was indeed one of the symbols of the revival of Armenian-French interstate relations. We remember with great warmth his state visit to Armenia, the opening of the French Square in Yerevan with his participation, as well as the unprecedented Year of Armenia in France," the Prime Minister said.

President Armen Sarkissian said "with his activity Jacques Chirac exemplified patriotism, dedication, unyielding spirit, perseverance and great responsibility. His death was a great loss for France he dedicated his life to."

"The name and deeds of Jacques Chirac will always remain in our memory and in our hearts as a close friend of the Armenian people and Armenia," the President added.

Former French President Jacques Chirac died aged 86 on September 26. Mr Chirac served two terms as French president from 1995 to 2007

Prosecutor General denies pressuring Harutyunyan, highlights witness protection

Prosecutor General Artur Davtyan says there is a need to develop the institution of witness protection in Armenia.

He said the Criminal Procedures Code has envisaged for many years' protection and security measures, but no mechanisms were in place. "Numerous difficulties emerged in practice," he told reporters.

"Currently a legislative package is there, and we hope that as a result the protection measures will be utilized, clear mechanisms will exist, the material technical base will be ensured," Davtyan said.

Davtyan was speaking about the issue in relation to ex-police chief Hayk Harutyun-



yan's death.

Journalists noted that Harutyunyan was a witness in the ongoing March 1 investigation, and asked about the safety and protection of other witnesses, namely Grigor Grigoryan aka The Sheriff, Harutyunyan's

deputy in 2008.

"The bodies carrying out respective intelligence actions must follow, take actions envisaged by law, to reveal any pressures if these were to happen against anyone," Davtyan said.

Davtyan was also asked about an article published in the press which alleged that he has pressured Harutyunyan into giving false testimonies. Davtyan denied the information.

"Anyone who knows me knows that this is impossible, the Prosecutor General's position doesn't allow this legally or morally".

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"We are doing our best to remain a reliable partner and a good friend for all of them without damaging our relations with any of them without developing relations with one of them at the expense of others," Pashinyan continued.

He pledged that Armenia will spare no efforts to make the region's geopolitical environment safer.

On Karabakh peace process

The peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is of crucial importance for the stability and the security of the region, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in his speech at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

"Since my very first day in office I have been taking steps in this very context. With this end in view, I publicly stated that any solution of the NK conflict must be acceptable for the people of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. It's noteworthy, that I was first Armenian leader to voice such position about the settlement of the conflict. I was heavily criticized in my country for such a formula of solution which places the three parties of conflict on an equal footing. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that this is the only way to the peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict because it offers a possibility of compromise, mutual respect and balance.

I introduced this formula not only publicly, but also within the negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. In order to move forward I expected similar statement from Azerbaijan. However, the highest authorities of Azerbaijan remain on their position which aims at a solution of the NK conflict acceptable only for the people of Azerbaijan. What does it mean in reality? It means that the Azerbaijani authorities do not have any intention to solve this conflict, instead they want to defeat the people of Nagorno Karabakh, they don't want to seek any compromise. What they aim at is a revenge for the unsuccessful attempted aggressions against the people of Nagorno Karabakh in 1990s and in 2016. This is why they are inflaming anti-Armenian sentiments among their people. This is why they are spreading enormous resources on armament. This is why the anti-Armenian hate speech has become official policy in Azerbaijan", Pashinyan said.

The PM added that in fact, the Azerbaijani authorities want to bring back the Soviet time status of Nagorno Karabakh. "But it is a futile effort because the people of Soviet-era Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region declared their independence and exercised their self-determination as did Azerbaijan seceding from the So-



viet Union. This position of Azerbaijan is tantamount of claiming restoration of Soviet Union. Azerbaijani government presents the NK conflict as a territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We totally disagree with such an interpretation of the conflict. It is not a dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This dispute is not about territorial claims. It is about people, about real men and women and their right to live in their homeland in the way that their ancestors lived over many centuries. Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani authorities do not want to talk to these people and negotiate with them because they want to have that territories, but not the people. To be more precise, territories without the people", the Armenian PM said.

He considered important to explain the reason why he is referring to this part of the story. "Do you think I want to contribute to the tension in our region? Of course, not. On the contrary, I want to make it clear that the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh is a very complicated and very painful issue for the peoples of the region, that it is impossible to settle it without hard and consistent work, without compromise, mutual respect and balance. Therefore, I want to invite my Azerbaijani counterpart, President Ilham Aliyev, to accept the formula that will create condition for our breakthrough in the peace process. Any solution to the NK conflict must be acceptable for the people of Armenia, the people of Nagorno Karabakh and the people of Azerbaijan. We need to work together to translate this formula into reality", he said.

EU reaffirms support for judicial reforms in Armenia

The new head of the European Union Delegation to Armenia reaffirmed on September 27 the EU's readiness to assist the Armenian government in reforming the country's judicial system.

Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin said EU officials look forward to seeing and evaluating a final government plan for judicial reforms.

"I think it is impressive and we have to welcome the fact that the Armenian government is really active to introduce a judicial strategy and to implement reforms," Wiktorin told reporters. "This is work in progress. They are finalizing the strategy. The strategy will be seen by experts."

"You are in a very difficult phase and you are tackling one of the most difficult problems. Ten years ago I saw what it means if normal people have no confidence in the judicial system and judges," said the diplomat who had served as Germany's ambassador in Yerevan from 2007-2009.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan vowed judicial reforms and urged supporters to block court buildings across Armenia in May after a Yerevan court released from prison his bitter foe and former President Robert Kocharyan, who is facing serious criminal charges. He demanded a mandatory vetting of all Armenian judges, saying that many of them remain linked to the country's former leadership.

Pashinyan has since repeatedly stated that he wants to make the Armenian judiciary "truly independent." His critics say; however, he is on the contrary seeking to gain control over the courts.

Wiktorin declined to comment on the opposition allegations about government pressure on the judiciary. "The EU is in direct



contact [with the government,]" she said. "If we have [critical] things to deliver we will do this directly."

Donald Tusk, the outgoing head of the European Union's top decision-making body, welcomed the Armenian authorities' "focus on creating an independent, efficient and accountable judicial system" when he visited Yerevan in July.

The reform process is also closely monitored by the Council of Europe and its Venice Commission in particular. According to an internal Venice Commission report, Armenian and Council of Europe officials agreed later in May that a general vetting of all judges "would be neither necessary nor useful." Instead, the Armenian authorities will expand legal mechanisms for disciplinary proceedings against judges and anti-corruption asset declarations filed by them, said the report.

Pashinyan, Stoltenberg discuss Armenia-NATO cooperation



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Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan who was in New York on a working visit met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Greeting the NATO Secretary General, the Prime Minister noted that Armenia appreciates the partnership with NATO, espe-

cially in the framework of peacekeeping missions and is interested in its deepening. In turn, Jens Stoltenberg welcomed the Armenian Prime Minister, stressing that Armenia is an important partner for NATO, and the bilateral Individual Partnership

Program is a good basis for continued strengthening of interaction.

The parties exchanged views on issues related to the Armenia-NATO experience. Reference was made to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process. Prime Minister Pashinyan noted that Armenia sees the resolution of the conflict exclusively in the framework of a peaceful process, and has repeatedly stated it following the Revolution.

The NATO Secretary General stressed the importance of the Armenian Premier's commitment to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, noting that NATO supports the efforts for a peaceful settlement in the context of regional peace, stability and security.

The interlocutors took the opportunity to exchange views on the current situation of and challenges to international and regional security.

Ex-Defense Minister charged for abuse of official powers



Vigen Sargsyan, a former Armenian defense minister who was the former ruling Republican Party's top candidate in last year's general elections, has been charged with abuse of power, it was announced on September 25.

The Investigative Committee claimed that Sargsyan violated government rules for the distribution of government-funded housing to Armenian army officers and their families when he served as defense minister.

In a statement, the law-enforcement agency said that in January 2018 Sargsyan

personally allocated 29 apartments to families, bypassing a Defense Ministry commission which is supposed to make such decisions. It said he also ordered the commission to give other apartments to servicemen chosen by him.

Sargsyan was indicted on two counts of abuse of power punishable by heavy fines and up to four years in prison, said the statement.

The committee added that it has sent the case to another law-enforcement body, the Special Investigative Service (SIS), for further investigation. It did not specify whether it will seek or recommend the former minister's arrest.

Sargsyan, who now lives and studies in the United States, rejected the accusations as politically motivated, saying that the Armenian authorities are keen to "deal yet an-

other blow to the standing of the Armenian Armed Forces and army top brass."

In a Facebook post, Sargsyan also condemned the investigators for not notifying him about the accusations before announcing them. He said they could have easily contacted him by e-mail or phone.

Sargsyan gave no indications that he is ready to cut short his post-graduate studies and return to Armenia. He said he has authorized a lawyer to contact the SIS "represent me in further processes."

"I am outraged but also calm because individuals involved in the apartment distribution saga and the process investigated in this separate case, including those who received and did not receive apartments, are well aware that the process was carried out in accordance with the law, clear principles and standards," added Sargsyan.

Minsk Group Co-Chairs to visit the region in near future

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs intend to visit the region in the near future. The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stéphane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America) met separately and jointly with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

The Co-Chairs were joined in their meetings by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Andrzej Kasprzyk. They also met with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Slovak Foreign



Minister Mammadyarov, and senior officials of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairs briefed the two Ministers on their activities since the joint meeting in Washington in June, including recent consultations in Paris and Geneva on the humanitarian and security dimensions of the conflict.

The Co-Chairs noted the positive effects of the sides' efforts to minimize violence during the summer period, including the use of the existing direct communication links, and expressed deep regret over the recent fatality.

The Co-Chairs and the Ministers continued their discussion of additional measures to reduce tensions and sustain an atmosphere conducive to peace and favorable to substantive talks.

Recalling their 9 March statement, the Co-Chairs encouraged the sides to minimize the use of rhetoric that is inflammatory or prejudices the outcome of negotiations.

The Co-Chairs intend to visit the region in the near future.

Luxury Hotel ‘donated’ to Armenian Government

(RFE/RL – Yerevan) - The Armenian government completed on September 26 the nationalization of a luxury hotel handed over to it by a former senior official facing a corruption investigation.

The Golden Palace hotel located in the resort town of Tsaghkadzor has until now belonged to Armen Avetisyan, a former chief of the Armenian customs service, and his family. They offered to donate it to the state last November after the National Security Service (NSS) moved to prosecute Avetisyan for illegal entrepreneurship and money laundering.

The NSS claimed in October 2018 that Avetisyan financed the construction of a similar five-star hotel in Yerevan when he headed the State Customs Committee (SCC) from 2001-2008. The financing was carried out through an obscure



company registered in Cyprus and falsely presented as foreign investment, it said.

It remains unclear whether Avetisyan was formally charged afterwards.

In February this year, the then NSS director, Artur Vanetsyan, said that the Tsaghkadzor hotel's transfer to the state is "in progress."

The government completed

that process at a weekly meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan. The latter said that the government should decide before the end of this year what to do with the presently disused property.

Armenia's State Property Management Committee estimates the hotel's market value at around \$16.5 million. The head of the government agency,

Narek Babayan, said some investors have already offered to buy it at a higher price.

"But I believe that an auction would be the best option in case of a sale [of the hotel,]" Babayan told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

The NSS launched the investigation into Avetisyan shortly after Avetisyan alleged that former President Robert Kocharyan and his family accumulated hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of assets when he ruled Armenia from 1998-2008.

Kocharyan dismissed the allegations, challenging law-enforcement authorities to prove them. In an August 2018 interview, he also insisted that Avetisyan did not make a huge personal fortune while in office.

The former customs chief faced corruption allegations by opposition figures and media throughout his tenure.

Yandex CEO to discuss the future of self-driving cars at IT congress in Armenia



Yandex founder and CEO Arkady Volozh will join the Congress as part of the Distinguished Speakers Series happening next month in Yerevan. WCIT's Distinguished Speakers Series is a special series of speeches and intimate conversations with consequential figures from inside and outside the ICT industry, including founders of some of the most recognized and respected names in tech whose vision, imagination and grit have made the information revolution possible, and special guests whose voices ought to be heard.

Arkady Volozh founded Russian tech company Yandex in 1997 and became CEO in 2000. Yandex is now one of the largest tech companies in Europe. At the time of the founding of Yandex, Volozh was already an established and successful force in the IT industry, having already co-founded Russian provider of wireless networking technology InfiNet Wireless, as well as CompTek In-

ternational, one of the largest distributors of network and telecommunications equipment in Russia.

As part of the Distinguished Speakers Series, Volozh will discuss the future of transportation and self-driving cars.

"With a presence in over 10 countries and over 60 million online users in Russia alone, Yandex is the largest and most influential internet company in Russia and the CIS, as well as a global player at the cutting edge of AI and driverless cars. All of this took place under the vision and leadership of Mr. Volozh, we are delighted to have him as a distinguished speaker and a participant at WCIT 2019." said Alexander Yesayan, chairman of the WCIT 2019 Yerevan organizing committee, president of the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises of Armenia (UATE) and co-founder of UCom!, the largest telecommunications provider in Armenia.

This year, WCIT will address The Power of Decentralization: Promise and Peril and explore how information and communications technology is transforming our lives for better and for worse, and its impact on profits and prosperity, safety and security, democracy and humanity.

WCIT 2019 is expected to attract more than 2,500 participants from more than 70 countries.

WCIT 2019 will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9, 2019. The Congress is hosted by Armenia with the support and under the high patronage of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA). Its main organizing body is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE).

Armenia's economic growth projection for 2019 raises from 4.3% to 4.8% - ADB

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) published the updated version of the Asian Development Outlook 2019 report according to which the forecast for Armenia's economic growth has improved, rising to 4.8% from the 4.3% forecast of the April 2019 report.

The ADB's updated report says the growth in Asia remains stable, forecasting 5.4% economic growth in the region, or by 0.3% less from the forecast made in the April report. In 2020 up to 5.5% economic growth is expected. Excluding the new industrial entities with high incomes (Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan), up to 6.0% economic growth is forecast in the region in 2019 and 2020.

The economic growth of the subgroup of the countries of Central Asia has increased with this Update, comprising 4.4% instead of 4.2% for 2019, and 4.3% instead of 4.2% for 2020. It's worth noting that Armenia is among the countries the economic growth forecast of which has been among the highest based on this update result. It is stated in the report that within the two years the deficit forecast expanded for Armenia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, narrowed for Georgia and Turkmenistan.

According to this Update, as Armenia grew robustly on private consumption in

the first quarter of 2019, its growth projection for the whole year is raised from 4.3% to 4.8%, while the earlier forecast of 4.5% growth in 2020 is retained. It is forecast that inflation in 2019 will be 3%, and the updated forecast for 2020 will remain unchanged 3.2%.

“Growth moderated from 8.7% year on year in the first half of 2018 to 6.8% in the same period of this year—still robust, reflecting buoyant domestic demand. Industry excluding construction performed strongly, expanding by 5.2% as growth in manufacturing and mining outweighed lower electricity production. Construction grew by 3.5%, largely from higher household construction. Services rose by 9.8% on strong gains in information technology, finance, insurance, and recreation. Unfavorable weather constrained agriculture, which, having contracted by 8.5% in the whole of 2018, contracted further by 6.9% in the first half of 2019. On the demand side, private consumption expanded by 14.0% in the half year, encouraged by moderate inflation, positive consumer sentiment, and low interest rates that boosted consumer borrowing”, stated in the Update.

The Update says downward revisions to the regional growth outlook stem largely from escalating trade tensions, which have

affected in particular the more open economies of East and Southeast Asia. Also dampening the growth outlook are deteriorating prospects in the advanced economies and declining investment in developing Asia. In Central Asia and the Pacific, however, increased public spending should support growth higher than forecast in April. Downside risks to the region's prospects have intensified. The trade conflict may yet intensify, possibly moving beyond tariffs. Evidence already shows it reshaping trade patterns, supply chains, and foreign investment. This Update also notes a buildup over the past decade of debt in the region, both public and private, that could erode financial stability and render economies more vulnerable to shocks. Taking a longer view, this Update examined the growing importance of cities in developing Asia. It highlighted rapid urbanization in the region and its potential to deliver sustained income and job growth. To function well as labor markets and fulfill their promise, cities need to upgrade their transport systems, plan urban expansion better, and enlarge the supply of adequate and affordable homes. Crucially, cities need to ensure that they are environmentally sustainable, the report said.

Exports from Armenia to Singapore to be exempt from customs duties



The Armenian government on September 26 approved signing three economic cooperation agreements with Singapore.

The first one was the signing of a free trade agreement between the EAEU, its member states and Singapore.

Minister of Economy Tigran Khach-

tryan said the agreement aims at creating a beneficial environment and conditions for the development of mutual commercial relations and promotion of economic cooperation between the sides in areas of mutual interest, as well as to eliminate the trade and investment barriers, reduce business expenditures and raise the economic efficiency.

The second draft was about the signing of the comprehensive economic partnership agreement between the EAEU and Singapore. The agreement aims at promoting trade of goods and services, expanding the cooperation, ensuring capital investments, etc.

The Cabinet also approved the proposal

to sign the agreement on services trade and investments between Armenia and Singapore. The agreement, in fact, liberalizes the processes of conducting trade services and investments between Armenia and Singapore.

“The agreement is expected to contribute to boosting the bilateral economic relations and discovering new markets for both sides”, the minister said, adding that according to this agreement the exports from Armenia to Singapore are completely exempt from customs duties.

Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan urged the businessmen to thoroughly examine the aforementioned agreements for conducting effective activity.

Armenia firmly committed to global fight against terrorism – Foreign Minister



Armenia remains a staunch advocate of enhanced international collaboration to combat terrorism, regardless of geography, underlying motives or narratives, Armenia's Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said at UN Security Council meeting on "Cooperation of the United Nations with Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: The Contribution of CSTO, CIS and SCO in Countering Terrorism Threats."

"No country in the world is immune to terrorism. The international community should stand united and work hand in hand to counter terrorism in all its dimensions. Any attempts to justify inspirers or perpetrators of terrorism or violent extremism, as well as those inciting hate crime and violence, especially in conflict environment, should be decisively and unequivocally condemned, at all levels," the Foreign Minister stated.

"It is our deep conviction that terrorism should not be associated with any particular civilization, religion, nationality or ethnic group. We are gravely concerned by the instances whereby entire communities are deliberately targeted for the mere fact of belonging to a particular ethnic or religious community. The meticulously planned acts of barbarism and vandalism against cultural monuments as well as annihilation of several world heritage sites in Iraq and Syria represent a case in point and a matter of

serious concern for the humanity," he added.

Minister Mnatsakanyan reminded that Armenia was among the first member states to resolutely condemn persecution of civilian population perpetrated by the Islamic State, Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaida and their affiliates.

"The brutal crimes against the Armenian population in the Syrian cities of Kessab and Deir-ez-Zor, the deliber-

erate destruction of cultural and religious monuments and mass atrocities committed by ISIS and Al-Nusra terrorists have demonstrated that terrorism is, essentially, a manifestation of fundamental denial of human rights," he noted.

"Armenia has demonstrated consistent commitment to help bring lasting change in the areas affected by the crisis, as reflected through the deployment of our national humanitarian mission in Syria, in response to the request of the Syrian authorities and the Armenian community in Syria," Mnatsakanyan continued.

He said Armenia remains firmly committed to the global fight against terrorism and is actively engaged in international and regional activities to this end.

"The competent authorities of Armenia continue to contribute to the effective implementation of the CIS Programme of Cooperation for 2017-2019 on countering terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism," the Minister said.

He noted that representatives of national security agencies, special services and law enforcement bodies have con-

sistently participated in the joint counter-terrorism exercises of the CIS under the general coordination of the Anti-Terrorism Center of the CIS. As we speak, the two final stages of the "Ararat-Antiterror 2019" exercise are being carried out in Armenia, with the participation of the competent state security agencies from seven countries of the CIS including Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).

Armenia is actively engaged in the regularly conducted joint operations of the CSTO Member States «Канал», «Нелегал» and «Прокси» as well as in the joint counter-terrorism exercises of the CIS conducted under the coordination of the Anti-Terrorism Center of the CIS.

"Armenia attaches equally high importance to its work within other regional and sub-regional organizations to which it is member, or with which it has close co-operation. As a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), we are looking forward to further expanding the agenda of our partnership and taking our dialogue forward. Against the backdrop of the current international agenda with proliferating threats, challenges and conflicts, co-operation among states from sub-regional to regional to global levels has been and remains relevant as ever in helping identify common solutions and sustainable dialogue for the maintenance of international peace and security," the Foreign Minister concluded.



Armin Wegner Asked Franz Werfel Not to Write his ‘40 Days of Musa Dagh’

By Harut Sassounian

Part III

Below is the third piece of a four-part series that details the exchange between the two historic figures, Armin Wegner and Franz Werfel:

“Radio and press continued to feed on me. In the end, a severe illness knocked me down, which I haven’t overcome to this day. I was commissioned by a book club to write an in-depth work on Jewish Palestine. It stole laborious hours from my great Armenian novel, which would have been finished long ago, under other circumstances. Nevertheless, I have finished the first volume, although it still needs a revision. The draft of the second volume is about half way done, as well as parts of the fourth volume, which I had started previously.

When I returned from a sanatorium in Meran on December 12 (fairly recovered), and ready to go back to work again, I heard that you had read a chapter from a proposed Armenian novel in Berlin. By the way, the public oration of some sections of my Armenian novel took place on an evening in the Herrenhaushaus, which the Association of German Narrators organized for me in November 1930, and which was reported to the press at that time.

Dear and honored Franz Werfel, you may now ask with certain rights, why I am writing all this to you? Isn’t it always charming to see different poets use the same material as they shape it according to their temperament, personality and creativity? How many various Madonna paintings do we appreciate based on this artistic impulse, directed to the same motives in the times of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? And, has this somehow affected the fame, success and creativity of the artists? Didn’t it strengthen it, on the contrary?

Unfortunately, we live in other times today, not in an age of cultic community as we did then. In our case, we also deal with a work in which documents from the years of the Armenian deportation are a necessity. Documents which I, despite my own personal experiences, used heavily, as well. I must necessarily draw a parallel, where in some places, the content – in isolated cases, even in the exact wording – completely match. I see this when I have the newspaper reports of your last lecture in which all of those

facts are listed, which Johannes Lepsius so vividly left in his journal in his own written judgment about his interview with Enver Pasha.

I hope you don’t misunderstand me! It is not only the right, but the duty of a writer to use such documents. Nevertheless, it is not pleasant to see such parallels revealed in the eyes of the public. In every poetic work, it’s not only the invention, but all the facts operate with and for the work, which the poet draws from the events and intellectual currents of his or her time. Contemporary history, even many literary works of their contemporaries, becomes a quarry for the significant artist, from which he or she breaks the building materials for their work. Emerson recognized this very well when he called Shakespeare a “library” of his time.

The moment I explain this to you, you will also understand the concern that has come my way, since I heard of your new project. Deep down, internally, such concern is certainly not the case. The characters of each poet are necessarily filled with his own flesh and blood, no matter how much he takes them from history, just as a good portrait at the same time shows the features of the master who painted it. But outwardly and economically, this concern is bigger; because your message forces me, at least regarding my first volume, which I would like to postpone until the completion of the second one, to publish it sooner than I intended.

I cannot stay indifferent if a genius, a much more famous and successful poet, like Franz Werfel, should come out with a novel that echoes with the conclusion of my own theme. Because with that he will take away from the public the punch-line stuff that my work amounts to, and for which it was actually written. Obviously, I cannot finish the last volume and publish it, before completing the other volumes. Perhaps my fear, caused only by the newspaper notes about your lecture, is unfounded, but imagining your book published makes me feel like a North Pole explorer, who after months of life-threatening hardships, arrives at the pole, realizing that someone else had arrived before him a few days earlier.

If I make this presentation so detailed to you, it will first of all be to prove to you the extensive background of my work, with regard to the shaping of the

destiny of Armenia. But there is also another reason that moves me – I am told by members of the Academy, and by friends who attended your last lecture, that you had said that the whole thing would initially be an indeterminate plan, and you did not even know if you were going to execute it at all. If this is correct, then my message should probably not be without influence on your decision.

It is possible that you, as a member of the Academy of the Arts, had heard of my plans, and the honorary award bestowed to me two years ago. Or, perhaps, my offer to the publisher Zsolnay, who is so close to you, or at least through literary circles in general? I suppose this is not the case, since, as a rule, writers knowingly do not cultivate the same materials at the same time, especially not when a project is in an advanced stage.

On the other hand, it proves once again the genius of your poetic vision, to devote your time and talents to the same formidable event. And yet, I was not only fighting for my own life’s work here, but I also would have to warn you against continuing it.

Despite the equality of all primal humanity, Asia, the Asiatic characters, and Turks as well as Armenians, are so utterly remote from us that the design of Asia for any European poet, if he really wants to penetrate into the interior, remains an enticing as well as dangerous mystery. Although I have lived in the country for many years in close relationship with Armenians and Turks, although my Armenian and Turkish friends have provided me with rich personal, unpublished material, and although my own records of the Armenian people and their deportation fill out numerous booklets, documents which I have left, with the consideration of my planned work, to my dear friend Johannes Lepsius, yet I know the infinite psychological difficulty of the task.

Even for you, it is possible, that this dangerous labyrinth, once it gets you, will lure you deeper and deeper. I do not know. If I had known beforehand to what extent my Armenian novel and the work on it would expand with the years, would I have had the courage to dare to get involved with it? My participation in this human tragedy has probably been the deepest and most central shock of my entire human experience.”

Diner de Gala du 28 anniversaire de l'Indépendance de la République d'Arménie



“Organisé par le Conseil de Coordination des Associations Arméniens de la Côte d'Azur représentant les associations Ecole Barsamian, Eglise Arménienne Ste. Marie, Jeunesse Arménienne de la Côte d'Azur, Union des Dames Arméniennes de Nice,



SOS Arménie Côte d'Azur, Chambre Economique Franco-Arménienne de Nice Côte d'Azur, Association des Parents



d'Élèves de l'Ecole Barsamian le diner de gala du 28e anniversaire de l'indépendance de la République d'Arménie avec 300 participants était un événement sur la Côte



d'Azur. La soirée a débutée par des danses traditionnelles des enfants, suivie de la Marseillaise et l'hymne Arménien, chant “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité”. Après le discours de bienvenue de Garen Ajderhanyan Président du Conseil de Coordination des Associations Arméniennes de la Côte d'Azur, c'est Eric Ciotti Député Président de la Commission des Finances du Conseil Général, représentant son Président Charles-Ange Ginesy a remis la médaille du département à Mme. Hilda Badem qui a servie l'Ecole Barsamian depuis 31 ans de services exceptionnelles pour l'éducation des enfants et qui sera bientôt à la retraite, avec l'acclamation debout de la salle.

Il a été procédé à l'inauguration de la nouvelle installation de climatisation de la salle de fêtes financés en partie par le Conseil Général des Alpes-Maritimes et le bienfaiteur Ashot Tunyan. Travaux d'installation en main d'œuvres réalisés bénévolement par M. Artak Hakopyan HF Construction. Suivi du discours de M. Hovhannes Igityan



Député du Parlement Arménien Vice-Président de la Commission des Affaires



Etrangères qui a remercié le public pour leurs présence et leurs implication dans la vie de la nation comme citoyens Français exemplaires et fière de leurs origines Arméniennes. Étaient aussi présents le Rév. Père Gomidas Hovnanian de l'église Apostolique Arménienne Ste. Marie de Nice, de la Fédération de Russie M. Stanislav Oranskiy avec une délégation, Mme. Marion Curlin représentant la communauté Américaine et Mme. Laura Albanese la communauté Italienne et leurs délégation. M. Marc



Benveniste représentait le Consistoire Centrale Israélite et son Président Maurice Niddam. La soirée s'est terminée avec des chants traditionnels Arméniennes du star Marten Yorganyz et les danses populaires Kotchari jusque tard dans la nuit.”

U.S. Senate panel backs increased U.S. assistance to Armenia

The full U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations has unanimously adopted a bipartisan provision – spearheaded by Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC) of the panel’s foreign aid subcommittee and Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) – “to direct that additional funds be made available... for Armenia to further democratic and economic reforms,” reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).



The Graham-Van Hollen Amendment was passed unanimously as part of the FY20 Senate Foreign Aid Bill (S. 2583) as part of the “Manager’s Package,” which is legislative language proposed by the panel’s leadership.

The provision is in addition to recommended appropriations of \$17.6 million from the Economic Support and Development Fund (ESF), \$1.5 million for battling narcotics trafficking, \$600,000 for International Military Education and Training and \$1 million in Foreign Military Financing. The Senate maintained parity in appropriated military assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The U.S. Senate panel’s action follows this June’s overwhelming House passage (268-152) of an amendment by Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Jackie Speier (D-CA), to the FY20 foreign aid

bill, which appropriated an additional \$40 million in aid for Armenia’s democratic reforms.

Regarding Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh), the Senate expressed it was “concerned with the protracted conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and endorses the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Process.” It calls on the Secretary of State and USAID Administrator to “consult with the Committee on programs that can further create conditions for resolution of the conflict and help address the humanitarian needs for all victims of the conflict.” In June, the House adopted an amendment, offered by Rep. TJ Cox (D-CA), appropriating funds for life-saving de-mining programs and expanded rehabilitation services in the Republic of Artsakh.

“We thank Chairman Graham and Sena-

tor Van Hollen for adding this pro-Armenia provision to the full Appropriations Committee’s bill,” said Tereza Yerimyan. “While we would have liked to have seen a concrete dollar figure increasing aid to Armenia and Artsakh, we will continue to work with Senate and House leaders during the conference process to ensure continued Artsakh aid and the expansion of U.S. assistance for Armenia’s democratic and economic development.”

In the months leading up to Senate consideration of the FY20 foreign aid measure, thousands of Armenian community advocates supported the effort in increase aid to Armenia and Artsakh, through ANCA’s Rapid Responder online Congressional outreach campaign. Earlier this year, the ANCA testified before a key House panel and submitted testimony to the Senate calling for \$10 million in U.S. assistance to Artsakh as part of its \$70 million aid priorities package for Armenia and Artsakh.

The Senate Appropriations Committee’s action today sets the stage for a full Senate vote, after which a House-Senate “conference” will reconcile differences, adopt, then send the measure to the President for his consideration.

Armenian FM meets with OSCE Secretary General in New York

Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on September 26 met with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger in New York, the Armenian MFA told Noyan Tapan.

During the meeting the sides exchanged views on the cooperation programs between the OSCE Secretariat and the Armenian foreign ministry. Minister Mnatsakanyan said Armenia attaches importance to the partnership with the OSCE Secretariat in various spheres.

The officials also touched upon the cooperation opportunities within the frames of the OSCE Partnership Program with Armenia, as well as highlighted implementing



joint projects at all three platforms of the OSCE.

At the request of the Secretary General, the Armenian FM introduced the current state of the peaceful settlement process of

the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, in particular his recent meeting with the Azerbaijani FM in New York under the mediation and participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Both positively assessed the relative decrease of tensions in recent months. Minister Mnatsakanyan said the Armenian side attaches importance to the constant efforts aimed at strengthening the ceasefire and reducing tension, as well as installing respective mechanisms. The need to take consistent actions to form atmosphere of trust was also emphasized, also through the implementation of agreements reached in the past.

Ambassador of China to Armenia Tian Erlong highly assesses relations between two countries

Ambassador of China to Armenia Tian Erlong referred to the Armenian-Chinese relations on September 27 during après conference dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, emphasizing that the friendly and partnering relations between the two countries dynamically develop.

“The Armenian-Chinese relations have historical roots. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992 the relations became more stable. There are no issues between our countries from political perspective, there is high level mutual trust and frequent mutual visits are paid”, ARMENPRESS reports the Ambassador as saying.

According to him, trade and economic relations between the two countries develop firmly and confidently. “Starting from 2009 China remains Armenia’s top 2nd trade part-



ner. I mean for separate countries, since if we take the EU as a whole, China becomes 3rd. Mutual trade turnover between Armenia and China amounts to 10 or 11% of Armenia’s foreign trade turnover”, Tian Erlong said, adding that according to Armenia’s statistics trade turnover amounted to 500 million USD during the period of January-July 2019.

According to him, humanitarian cooperation’s also actively develops between the two countries and achievements in the

sphere of education are also significant.

“Confucius Institute successfully operates in Armenia. We see that the Armenian public, particularly the youth are greatly interested in Chinese language. Starting from last year Armenian-Chinese friendship school operates here”, he said.

Tian Erlong highlighted the inter-state agreement on visa liberalization, noting that mutual visits increase year by year.

The Ambassador emphasized that China sees Armenia as a reliable regional partner with which China will continue developing cooperation in the spheres of politics, economy, education, science and so on.

He also referred to the support provided by China to Armenia, noting that his country provides assistance to Armenia as much as it can, referring to the buses and ambulances brought to Armenia.

Iran’s Rouhani to attend Eurasian Union Summit in Yerevan

Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani has accepted Armenia’s invitation to attend next week’s summit of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in Yerevan, the Armenian government announced on September 27.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s office also confirmed the participation of the presidents of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in the summit scheduled for October 1. It said the leaders of the five EEU member states will be joined at a separate session by Rouhani as well as Moldova’s President Igor Dodon and Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.



Pashinyan announced his decision to invite Rouhani to the summit in early August. He said it was agreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the other EEU heads of state.

Iran and the EEU signed a preferential trade agreement in 2018. The deal was

strongly backed by Armenia, the only member of the trade bloc that has a land border with the Islamic Republic. The current and former Armenian government said it will boost Armenian-Iranian trade.

Pashinyan made clear last year that despite renewed U.S. sanctions against Iran his government will “deepen not only economic but also political relations” with Tehran. He paid an official visit to Iran in February this year.

In a magazine interview published earlier this month, Pashinyan insisted that the United States is not pressuring Armenia to curtail Armenian-Iranian ties.

Kim Kardashian says has “big plans” for Armenia

American reality TV star Kim Kardashian has pledged to explore the possibility of manufacturing her new shapewear line in Armenia and other business opportunities during her upcoming trip to the country.

Kardashian has been invited to participate as a “special keynote speaker” and panelist in the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) that will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9. The forum is expected to bring together 2,500 tech professionals from more than 70 countries.

“I will be visiting Armenia in the next 2 weeks and hope to seek ways I can help increase trade and hopefully create jobs for Armenians which includes @skims production there in the future,” Kardashian said late on Thursday.

“I’ve been working extremely hard on this matter and hope my trip to Armenia will bring some amazing news because I have big plans!” the Armenian-American celebrity added in a series of tweets.

She was responding to a September 25 appeal from the Armenian National Commit-

tee of America (ANCA) posted on Twitter. The lobby group praised Kardashian for championing U.S. recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey.

The ANCA also said: “We saw that you are making some @skims products in Turkey. Please consider making them in Armenia which is known for great craftsmanship & service.”

“We consulted with experts and searched globally for the best in class options, some which was found in Turkey,” replied Kardashian. “We believe strongly against discrimination of any kind; against anyone or any nation based on the past.”

She stressed that she remains “very passionate” about Armenian genocide recog-

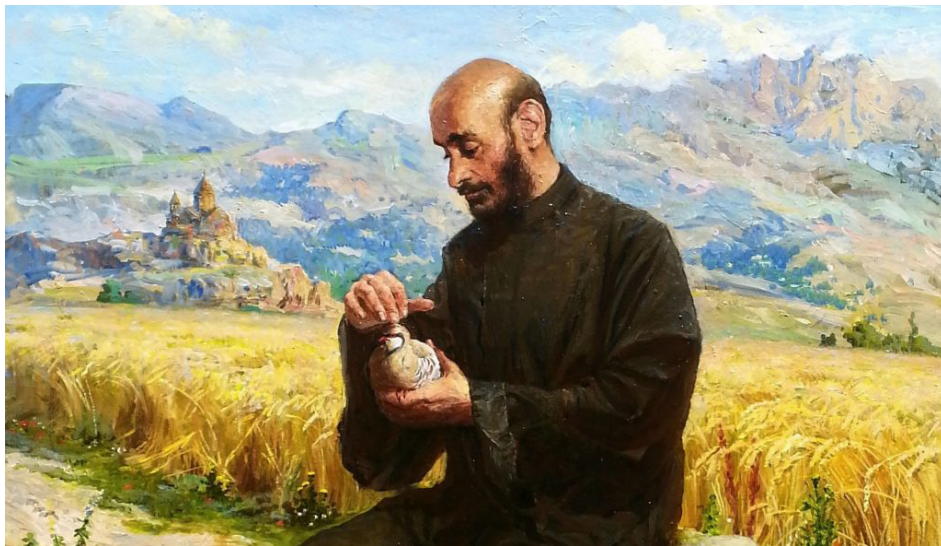


nition.

The ANCA appeared satisfied with her response. “We look forward to your upcoming trip to Armenia,” it said.

It will be Kardashian’s second trip to Armenia. The 38-year-old first visited her ancestral homeland in April 2015 together with her husband and rapper Kanye West and sister Khloe.

Music by Komitas plays at all metro stations in Yerevan



Music by Komitas plays at all metro stations in Armenia’s capital Yerevan on the composer’s 150th birth anniversary.

Born on September 26, 1869, Komitas (Soghomon Soghomonian) was an Armenian priest, musicologist, composer, arranger, singer, and choirmaster, who is

considered the founder of the Armenian national school of music and is recognized as one of the pioneers of ethnomusicology.

On April 24, 1915, the day when the Armenian Genocide officially began, he was arrested and put on a train the next day together with 180 other Armenian notables

and sent to the city of Cankiri in northern Central Anatolia, at a distance of some 300 miles.

His good friend Turkish nationalist poet Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, the writer Halide Edip, and the U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau intervened with the government, and, by special orders from Talat Pasha, Komitas was dispatched back to the capital, but the nightmare he had experienced left a deep ineradicable impression on his soul. Komitas remained in seclusion from the outer world, absorbed in his gloomy and heavy thoughts – sad and broken.

In the autumn of 1916, he was taken to a hospital in Constantinople, Hôpital de la paix, and then moved to Paris in 1919, where he died in a psychiatric clinic in Villejuif in 1935. Next year, his ashes were transferred to Yerevan and buried in the Pantheon that was named after him.

Recent News from the Armenian Leading Way Telecom Operator Company

VivaCell-MTS and “Synopsis Armenia” support the European University in giving students opportunities to strengthen their practical skills

Recently a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Armenia’s leading telecommunications operator VivaCell-MTS, “Synopsis Armenia”, and the European University. The memorandum provides for joint actions aimed at strengthening the knowledge obtained at the university, as well as developing practical skills. The memorandum was signed by VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**, “Synopsis Armenia” Director **Hovik Musayelyan** and the Rector of the European University **Heghine Bisharyan**.

In particular, according to the tripartite document, “Synopsis Armenia” will provide educational materials and manuals for the training of qualified specialists from students of the department of “Microelectronic Circuits and Systems”. Internships at VivaCell-MTS will be organized for the students to help them develop theoretical knowledge into practical skills.

Within the framework of the memorandum, it is also planned to retrain the teaching staff of the department at least once in three years, as well as organize co-teaching practices. It is also important that the best graduates of the “Microelectronic Circuits and Systems” bachelor’s program are given the opportunity to continue their education at the master’s program of the department.

“Our cooperation aimed at supporting gifted young people continues and that is only natural. Telecommunication is a dynamically evolving industry and therefore the educational materials and the curriculum require regular revisions. Instruction shall also comply with modern day demands. The communication between education and business shall be kept alive continuously. The utmost role of a university is to provide job markets with proficient and efficient human resources. The fundamental knowledge and practical skills need to be delivered to students together not separately. Quality education is a basic means to ensure economic growth and human development. Efficient education is crucial in defining our perspectives, and how strong and competitive our youth will be in the days to come,” VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

“ highly appreciate the signing of this trilateral agreement, as many years ago it has also helped in establishment of the new specialty: “Microelectronics in telecom-



munications”. Many highly qualified staff have been trained in this program, many of whom have been hired by Synopsis, VivaCell-MTS and other ICT companies. I want to thank all the people who were at the forefront of this project. I hope that this mutually effective partnership will continue for a long time,” - said Hovik Musayelyan, Director of Synopsis Armenia, a member of the Board of Trustees of the European University.

The cooperation between VivaCell-MTS and Synopsis Armenia with the European Academy started in 2011.

“Years ago the European University jointly with VivaCell-MTS and Synopsis Armenia founded the trilateral cooperation. In EU was formed the “Microelectronic Circuits and Systems” Chair. The purpose of the cooperation was the implementation of a unique model of university-production cooperation in higher education system of the RA. The program implemented by the Chair is a successful example of training professionals in the field of information and telecommunications with state-of-the-art knowledge and practical skills, what the labor market shows,” Rector of the European Academy **Heghine Bisharyan** stated. “Through many years of effective joint work by “Synopsis Armenia” and the university high-quality specialists, now we can record our successes. During these years 21 students have been awarded RA Presidential Educational Awards and RA State Educational Awards in IT sphere,” **Heghine Bisharyan** added.

Heghine Bisharyan also mentioned that the Chair is furnished with 4 auditoriums with modern hardware and software equipment, for which VivaCell-MTS has invested about 142 million AMD. Students use 20 complete sets of software tools from Synopsis. Curricula are available in 4 languages.

Around 110 out of the total 123 graduates of the “Microelectronic Circuits and Systems” department are currently employed in the leading IT companies, with some 67 of them having joined “Synopsis Armenia”.

Young volunteers of the Birthright Armenia program visit VivaCell-MTS

VivaCell-MTS hosted 45 Armenian volunteers, aged 21 to 32, who arrived from a number of countries. In a conversation with VivaCell-MTS General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**, the young people got acquainted with the success story of the Company, its fundamental values, corporate social responsibility strategy and learned about the developments in telecommunications sector in Armenia.

The heartfelt meeting at the Company inspired the young people even more in their desire to discover their homeland and their roots. The conversation with **Ralph Yirikian** was revealing in terms of the tools for proper business management.

“VivaCell-MTS greets and appreciates the decision of the young volunteers from the Diaspora to visit their homeland and their willingness to participate in various volunteer projects in different regions of Armenia. We must remember that the path to success is not an easy one, but with clear goals, steps to achieve them, patience, responsibility and a good-minded team, anything is possible,” said VivaCell-MTS General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.

Young volunteers shared their impressions and opened up about their reasons for visiting Armenia. Some just want to get acquainted with the Armenian culture, others want to learn Armenian, and gain experience each in their spheres of interests, some other stay and live in Armenia and implement various programs and projects in Armenian communities.

The meeting was accompanied by an interesting Q/A, discussions and ended with a tour at the Company’s head office.

In total, more than 25 youth groups visited VivaCell-MTS within the framework of the programs implemented by “Birthright Armenia”. The program has been operating in Armenia since 2004 and has already had 1900 participants from 50 countries.



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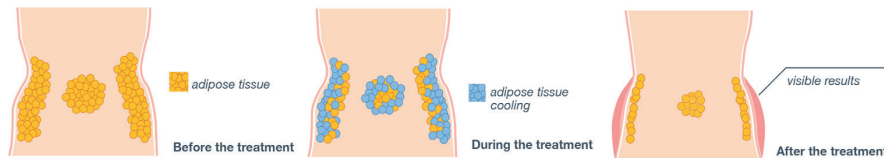
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