### Macron urges withdrawal of Azerbaijani troops from Armenia



France - Nikol Pashinyan, Emmanuel Macron meet at Elysee Palace in Paris, June 1, 2021

French President Emmanuel Macron again demanded that Azerbaijan withdraw its troops from Armenia's border areas when he met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Paris on June 1.

Macron also called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to demarcate their border through negotiations and without "any fait accompli on the ground."

"The Azerbaijani troops must leave Armenia's sovereign territory," he said after greeting Pashinyan at the presidential Elysee Palace. "I am calling on the parties to return to the positions held by them on May 11. France is ready to facilitate discussions."

"We stand in solidarity with Armenia and we will continue to do so," he added in a statement to the press made before a lunch meeting with Pashinyan.

Macron was quick to voice strong support for Yerevan after Azerbaijani forces reportedly crossed several sections of the border and advanced a few kilometers into Armenia's Syunik and Gegharkunik provinces on May 12. "They must withdraw immediately," he tweeted after a May 13 phone call with Pashinyan.

The U.S. State Department similarly urged Azerbaijan to "pull back all forces immediately and cease further provocation" on May 14.

Baku maintains that its troops took up new positions on the Azerbaijani side of the frontier and did not cross into Armenia.

Tensions at the contested border sections rose further after six Armenian soldiers were captured by Azerbaijani forces on May 27. Pashinyan proposed hours later that both sides withdraw their troops from those areas and let Russia and/or the United States and France, the two other countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group, deploy observers there.

In a joint statement issued the following day, the French, Russian and U.S. diplomats co-heading the Minsk Group backed the proposed troop disengagement. But they did not specify whether their countries are ready to send observers.

Macron said on June 1 that France will do its best to achieve a "de-escalation and re-establishment of dialogue between the parties." He indicated that the border crisis and the broader situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone will be high on the agenda of his meeting with Pashinyan.

Pashinyan thanked the French leader for having "spoken the language of truth since the outset of the crisis." "This is extremely important for overcoming crisis situations in our region," he told reporters before the talks.

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### Armenia's acting PM Nikol Pashinyan meets with French Senate President Gérard Larcher



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was paying a working visit to France, met with President of the Senate of the French Republic Gérard Larcher.

Welcoming Nikol Pashinyan's delegation to France, Mr. Larcher congratulated Armenia's Acting Prime Minister on his birthday. The Senate President stressed the importance of Nikol Pashinyan's visit, considering it another opportunity to discuss issues high on the bilateral agenda and outline steps to

counteract the processes unfolding around Armenia.

Gérard Larcher said the French Senate is taking steps in this direction. He appreciated the fact the OSCE Minsk Group has intensified its efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. "We raised the issue of Armenian prisoners of war with the President of the European Parliament, which resulted in the European Parliament passing a resolution that we assess as quite a positive step. We are not satisfied with this, our efforts will be continued," Mr. Larcher said, stressing that Azerbaijan's latest offensive raises concerns about Armenia's territorial integrity.

Taking the opportunity, Nikol Pashinyan once again thanked the authors of Senate's resolution on the need to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence and everyone who supported the passage of such a document. "The document was of great importance in this difficult situation. The people of Karabakh saw that they were not left alone in their struggle. We hope that France will continue to play an important role in the processes initiated by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, and the Minsk Group will be more active in dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," Nikol Pashinyan said, noting that he had discussed this issue with President Macron.

The Acting Prime Minister introduced the steps taken to resolve the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, and in this context, touched upon the latest regional developments.

### The Netherlands renews call for release of Armenian POWs

In a letter to the Parliament, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Sigrid Kaag, referring to the discussions on the Karabakh issue in the EU Council of Foreign Ministers, said that the Netherlands stressed the need for the immediate release of Armenian prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan.

"The Netherlands emphasizes the possibility of immediate withdrawal of troops from the border between the two



countries and return to the negotiating table," she said.

"On 28 May, at the initiative of the

Netherlands, the EU issued a new joint statement expressing deep concern over border developments and stressing the need to ease tensions, immediately withdraw the troops from the border and clarify the issue of demarcation exclusively through negotiations.

"The statement also includes a call for the immediate release of Armenian prisoners of war held Azerbaijan," Sigrid Kaag noted.

### Armenia, Kazakhstan keen to deepen bilateral relations

On a working visit to Nur-Sultan, President Armen Sarkissian met with the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Minister of Trade and Integration Bakhit Sultanov and other officials.

Welcoming the President of Armenia, President Tokayev said the visit was of great importance, as it would be an additional impetus for cooperation between the two countries. "Armenia is a friendly country for us. Relations and cooperation between our countries are based on traditions," he said, adding that his country is interested in further expansion of ties.

"We work and cooperate within a

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strong integration structure, the Eurasian Economic Union, we are a CSTO member, we cooperate closely in the CIS, the UN, the OSCE and other structures. I think all this should have a positive continuation," he said.

Expressing gratitude for the hospitality, President Sarkissian particularly said "For me, a visit to Kazakhstan is always a visit to friends. Our peoples, and in recent years the states, have deep-seated relations."

"I agree that the potential for cooperation between our countries is great. Although our countries are physically far from each other, in the 21st century our countries are becoming much closer thanks to trade, new technologies, artificial intelligence, information technologies. Of course, the scope of cooperation is very

large – education, new technologies, food processing. I would like the cooperation to be much deeper and more comprehensive. "

The Presidents of Armenia and Kazakhstan spoke about cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO. The President of Armenia referred to the problems and challenges facing Armenia and the region in the postwar period.





## EU's Charles Michel welcomes Armenia's willingness to solve border crisis with Azerbaijan through peaceful means



On a working visit to Brussels, acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with European Council President Charles Michel.

The interlocutors discussed the process of Armenia-EU cooperation, the programs envisaged within the framework of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into force on March 1 this year, in particular, joint measures and actions aimed at institutional reforms and strengthening of democracy in our country.

Nikol Pashinyan stressed that Armenia attaches great importance to active cooperation within the framework of the Road Map of the agreement, which will contribute to the implementation of democratic values, protection of human rights, fight against corruption, rule of law, as well as public administration, including

Charles Michel welcomed the reforms launched in Armenia over the past three years and the steps taken by the Armenian government to strengthen democracy. In this regard, the President of the European Council attached importance to the effective implementation of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. He stressed the EU's readiness to further deepen and expand the partnership in fulfilling the priorities of the Armenian government.

The Acting Prime Minister provided details on the situation in the South Caucasus after the 44-day Artsakh war, in particular, on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Nikol Pashinyan stressed the need for the representatives of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces to leave the sovereign territory of Armenia, provided information on the diplomatic and actions in that direction, as well as on his proposal on resolving the situation at the May 27 sitting

of the RA Security Council.

The Acting Prime Minister stressed the need for the international community to respond adequately to Azerbaijan's provocative actions, to take steps to ensure the return of Armenian prisoners of war, and welcomed the resolution adopted by the European Parliament calling on Azerbaijan to release all Armenian prisoners of war immediately and without preconditions.

The President of the European Council welcomed the position of the Armenian side on the peaceful, political solution of the problem on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and expressed the EU's readiness to support that process.



### Pashinyan expects to get power from people on replacing "velvet mandate with steel mandate"



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan expects that their party will get a power of replacing the "velvet mandate with a steel mandate" from the people during the upcoming parliamentary elections, in order, as he says, to correct the "spine" of the country.

"I was telling the representatives of our team the following: now our responsibility is higher than in 2018, because in 2018 the situation was different. In fact, the entire Armenia was supporting our position, but today the position of every person standing by us is ten times more important for us", he said during the meeting with the residents of Abovyan town in Kotayk

He stated that from now on they have no right to make a mistake on any issue. Pashinyan thanked the supporters of his team for the trust and urged not to doubt his words.

"I love, respect and appreciate each of you, like anyone in my family. I also have a duty before each of you, like I have before each member of my family. I have a duty before each fallen soldier like I have before my son", he said.

"Huge efforts and capabilities are required from us. And today we came to say that we will make these efforts", he noted.

According to him, these meetings now are more necessary to them, rather than citizens, in order to get the mandate, the power and energy. "We must receive the power from you on replacing the velvet mandate with a steel mandate and correct the spine of our country with that steel mandate", he said.

Snap parliamentary elections in Armenia will be held on June 20, 2021.

Next

## **EU Ambassador to Armenia, Syunik Governor discuss prospects for enhanced mid-term cooperation**



On a visit to Syunik, EU Ambassador to Armenia Andrea Wiktorin arrived in Kapan, where she was greeted by Melikset Poghosyan, Governor of Syunik. The meeting was devoted to the humanitarian situation in the region and prospects for enhanced mid-term cooperation, and the Ambassador highlighted the importance

of working together for the benefit of the people in Syunik.

During her stay in Kapan, the Ambassador visited the Kapan Plastic Waste Processing Plant, set-up with EU green agenda funds in order to generate building materials from plastic waste, a project implemented by Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development and Kapan municipality.

The Ambassador had a walk in the municipal park with Gevorg Parsyan, Mayor of Kapan and took the opportunity to interact with representatives of local initiative groups and youth council of Kapan. They have implemented participatory projects on renovation of public spaces to promote outdoor activities

and tourism with support of the EU, the Communities Finance Officers Association and People In Need. After listening to concerns and ideas for municipal development raised by the local initiative groups, the Ambassador highlighted the need for comprehensive approach to address community challenges and the importance of collaboration between local authorities and the civil society organizations. The visit to Syunik was concluded by a visit to the amazing Tatev Monastery.

The EU humanitarian & development support to the southern region of Armenia is ongoing and increasing to strengthen the resilience of its people and businesses.

### Kocharyan's Bloc Opens Hundreds of Campaign Offices

(Yerevan - RFE/RL) - An opposition alliance led by former President Robert Kocharyan on May 4 claimed to have opened about 800 campaign offices across Armenia for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Armen Gevorgyan, the Hayastan (Armenia) alliance's top campaign manager, said they will report to regional campaign headquarters also opened by the bloc.

Kocharyan and two opposition parties allied to him set up Hayastan on May 9 one day before the snap polls were formally scheduled for June 20. The bloc is expected to be one of the main challengers of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his Civil Contract party.

Although campaigning for the polls will officially start on June 7, all major election contenders have effectively launched their campaigns. In particular, Kocharyan has been holding meetings with members and supporters of his bloc in various parts of the country.

Gevorgyan said that Hayastan will be

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holding both indoor and outdoor rallies in the coming weeks.

"Strangely enough, our supporters prefer indoor meetings which allow them to directly communicate with alliance representatives and leaders in a question-and-answer format," Gevorgyan told a news conference.

Aram Vardevanyan, Hayastan's campaign spokesman, strongly denied allegations by some government loyalists that Kocharyan's bloc is getting ready to hand out cash to voters. He said it has alerted law-enforcement authorities about groups of government-linked "provocateurs" reportedly offering to buy

votes on behalf of the bloc.

"We have nothing to do with vote buying, fraud or any other activity of this kind. We are the first to strongly oppose that," he said.

Vardevanyan claimed that the Armenian government itself is trying to buy votes with additional economic aid allocated to mostly rural communities in recent weeks. He singled out a government announcement about mowers and similar agricultural equipment donated to five remote villages earlier this week.

Vahagn Aleksanyan, a spokesman for Pashinyan's party, denied any connection between the aid and the elections.

"Let them count how many community projects have been subsidized by the state for the last three years preceding this pre-election period," he told RFE/RL's Armenian Service.

Aleksanyan said he too has heard rumors about vote buying planned by Hayastan. But he acknowledged that he has seen no evidence in support of those claims so far.





### Armenia, UN sign 2021-2025 Cooperation Framework



Armenia's acting Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan and UN Resident Coordinator in Armenia, Shombi Sharp signed the 2021-2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) for Armenia at the Government.

Prior to the signing ceremony, Mher Grigoryan made a welcoming speech, noting that all the areas and directions mentioned in the document play a key role for Armenia. Particularly, in his speech, the Acting Deputy Prime Minister noted "Thanks to the document to be signed today, I think we will focus more our joint efforts to implement the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030."

Signed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mher Grigoryan and the UN Resident Coordinator, Shombi Sharp, the Cooperation Framework is the key strategic document that will frame the work of all UN agencies working in Armenia in the upcoming five years.

Nationally owned and anchored in national development priorities, this compact determines the collective offer of 20 resident and non-resident UN entities to the country, expressing a total financial commitment of USD 230 million for the benefit of the people of Armenia.

During the signing ceremony, Mr. Sharp stated:

"This Cooperation Framework represents a major new milestone for the already deep partnership between the Republic of Armenia and the United Nations. We believe this joint effort together with our partners will make an important contribution to helping the country move forward with resilience through these difficult times of dual crisis from pandemic and conflict, towards a brighter future, peace and prosperity for all in Armenia. This compact articulates an ambitious, collective vision of the entire UN Development System in Armenia, all UN Agencies striving together to improve people's well-being and capabilities; foster economic "green" transformation; strengthen responsive and effective governance systems and enhance gender equality, while leaving no one behind."

The Cooperation Framework is a result of a 14-month long consultation process with the Government of Armenia, other national partners, including civil society organizations, international finance institutions, development partners, private sector, academia, and international NGOs. It also integrates the aspirations of the people living in Armenia widely surveyed through the UN75 Global Survey. The Cooperation Framework reflects, as well, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and response measures.

The Cooperation Framework builds on successful collaboration between the Government and the UN as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the 2016 – 2020 cycle which saw greater access to sustainable economic opportunities; improved systems of democratic governance; progress in reducing gender inequality; strengthened migration, border, and asylum management systems; improved access to basic education and social protection services; more accessible quality health services and improved environmental sustainability.

## Criminal prosecution of Armenian POWs a malicious violation of international law

The criminal cases against 16 Armenian servicemen, as well as the torture and psychological pressure of other Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians set a precedent for a malicious violation of international law, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Official Baku has started criminal prosecution against Lyudvik Mkrtchyan and Alyosha Khosrovyan, captured during the recent aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh.

"Continuing to violate the norms of humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, which explicitly states that prisoners of war are released and repatriated immediately after the cessation of hostilities, Azerbaijan has brought trumped-up criminal charges against 14 captured Armenian servicemen, which also violates the trilateral statement of

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November 9, 2020," the Foreign Ministry said.

"The criminal cases against 16 Armenian servicemen, as well as the torture and psychological pressure of other Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians set a precedent for a malicious violation of international law. It is clear that Azerbaijan instrumentalizes the captured people as political hostages and tools to pursue other goals," it added.

Official Baku also blatantly defies the relevant decisions of the European Court

of Human Rights (ECHR) on providing information on Armenian servicemen and civilians held in Azerbaijani captivity.

"Despite numerous calls from the international community, Azerbaijan continues to conceal the true number of the prisoners, denying the captivity of dozens of Armenian servicemen and civilians. Moreover, Azerbaijan denies the detention of those whose captivity in Azerbaijan has been documented both through video coverage and testimonies of repatriated prisoners, which raises suspicions of a number of serious crimes," the statement reads.

All Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives held in Azerbaijan must be immediately released and repatriated without any preconditions, the Ministry stated.



## Belgian trade mission due in Armenia to study the prospects of cooperation



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium Alexander De Croo in Brussels.

The interlocutors attached importance to the continuous development of political and economic relations between Armenia and Belgium, and the high-level contacts.

Nikol Pashinyan and Alexander De Croo stressed the interest of the governments of the two countries to expand trade and economic ties, implement joint programs in various sectors of the economy and promote democratic reforms in Armenia.

In this regard, the interlocutors attached importance to the effective implementation of the measures envisaged by the Roadmap of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU.

The parties discussed the agenda of the reforms being implemented in the Republic of Armenia, especially the reforms in the sphere of the police. Alexander De Croo emphasized the need for popular reform and stressed the EU's commitment to continuing its support for Armenia.

Emphasizing the development of economic ties with Armenia, Alexander De Croo noted that a Belgian trade mission will visit Armenia to study the prospects and opportunities for the development of trade and investment relations between the two countries. The visit is planned to coincide with the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Armenian community in Belgium.

During the meeting, the parties referred to the provocative actions of the units of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, stressed the need for their withdrawal from the sovereign territory of Armenia and a peaceful solution to the situation. The Belgian Prime Minister noted that the developments are a matter of concern, and the issue is in the center of their attention.

Both sides agreed on ensuring the return of Armenian prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan and the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

### Artsakh plans to boost ecotourism and agricultural tourism

The Tourism Department of the Ministry of Economic and Agriculture of Artsakh is carrying out observations after the recent war and is taking actions to create alternative tourism directions in the Republic.

"After the war 80% of the main tourism sites of Artsakh are occupied by Azerbaijan at this moment, but this doesn't mean that we have lost our potential. There are many sites which have a great tourism potential,



and the Republic of Artsakh, in the person of the Tourism Department, is working on creating alternative directions", head of the Tourism Department Gevorg Arakelyan told Armenpress.

He informed that they have already carried out monitoring, organized cognitive visits to the alternative directions, one of them is the Patara-Tsmakahogh-Kolatak-Vank village direction.

Mr. Arakelyan stated that they are planning to boost ecotourism and agricultural tourism because the country has a big potential for that.

### Iran's exports grow 40% due to cooperation with EAEU – minister

Iran's Minister of Energy Reza Ardakanian said Iran's exports increased by 40% during the 18 months of temporary activity of the Eurasian economic agreement, IRNA reports.

Expressing that during about 18 months of the temporary performance of this agreement, there was about 40% increase in exportation, the minister added: "There

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was a decrease of about 13% in imports from EU member states".



He stated that detailed negotiations are underway between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union on ensuring the continuation of the agreement.

The interim agreement on free trade zone between EAEU, member states and Iran has been signed on May 17, 2018, on the sidelines of the Astana Economic Forum.







### Tourists returning to Armenia: local tour companies register progress in the field

Tour companies in Armenia are registering progress in the field after the recent war in Artsakh and during the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic.

Representative of Smart Travel Armenia tour company Lusine Barseghyan told Armenpress that the sector is gradually recovering.

"After all these developments we are trying to present Armenia in a new way and attract the attention of foreigners with different and interesting tours. We have two big groups which have already made bookings. They have selected the directions across Armenia. They are in particular excited with the tour to Goris-Tatev monastery-Kndzoresk. These groups will arrive from Russia", she said.



Diving Club NGO Chairman Tigran Azizbekyan noted that before the war diving was significantly growing in Armenia as it is quite a convenient place for developing that direction.

"Lake Sevan is interesting because it is a diving peak of 2000 meters, so it's very interesting for each diver", he said, adding that good visibility and not big waves in the Lake also contribute to having an interesting time.

He noted that already many tourists are interested in diving in Armenia and are making bookings.

Representative of Yeghegnut hotel in Goris town Anush Malintsyan said that despite the coronavirus pandemic, the recent war and the current situation in Syunik province, tourists visit the hotel and spend their vacations.

"Currently we have tourists in our hotel, and we also have bookings. This makes us happy a lot. Tourists visit us from Russia, Ukraine, some tourists have recently visited us from France", she said.

### Operation of Gyumri's Shirak airport to be suspended for renovation work



From July 15 to September 15 of this year planned renovation works will be carried out at Gyumri's Shirak airport. Namely, the runway will be completely renovated, "Armenia International Airports" CJSC informs.

During the construction works, the operation of the airport will be temporarily suspended. Relevant aviation authorities have been notified in advance in accordance with requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

In response to media reports claiming that construction works are being carried out at Gyumri's Shirak airport so that the airport can be used for military aircrafts as well, "Armenia International Airports" CJSC informs that the airport has always been considered to be a joint base for RA Civil Aviation and RA Ministry of Defense Air Force aircrafts and helicopters.

"Shirak" is Armenia's second airport and has been operating since 1961.

## Thunder-2021: CSTO to hold special exercise on the territory of Armenia



The Collective Security Treaty

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Organization will hold a special exercise "Thunder-2021" on the territory of Armenia this year. Aviation and armored vehicles will be involved, said CSTO spokesman Vladimir Zainetdinov, Interfax reports.

"During the exercise, which is planned to be held on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, practical actions will be

worked out in two stages with the use of armored vehicles, special vehicles, aviation, UAVs, and search dogs," Zainetdinov told reporters on May 3.

He noted that from June 1 to June 3, negotiations were held in Armenia to prepare the exercise. It envisages formation of special forces of the CSTO Collective Rapid Reaction Force.

The Noyan Tapan Highlights





### French Parliament working out new resolution on Armenian POWs: Nikol Pashinyan meets Richard Ferrand in Paris



On a visit to France, Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with National Assembly Speaker Richard Ferrand.

The President of the National Assembly welcomed Nikol Pashinyan's visit to Paris, congratulated him on his birthday and wished him success in his future activities.

"Armenia is a friendly country for France. We attach great importance to the continuous development and expansion of bilateral relations. During the difficult period for Armenia, we were in constant contact with our Armenian colleagues, our lawmakers were by Armenia's side. With our steps we will continue to contribute to overcoming the challenges facing the

Armenian people," said Richard Ferrand.

Nikol Pashinyan thanked for the warm reception and noted that Armenia has felt the support of friendly France, including the members of the Senate and the National Assembly, in all difficult times. "It is not only about politicians, only a month ago there was a poll in Armenia. When asked to name the most friendly country to Armenia, the majority of

respondents answered 'France.' Naturally, we are interested in France having a greater presence in Armenia," said Nikol Pashinyan, attaching importance to the expansion of the presence of French business and investors in Armenia. The Acting Prime Minister stressed that the

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economic component of bilateral relations should be more weighty.

Nikol Pashinyan referred to the situation in Armenia after the Artsakh war, noting that the main issue is the security situation around the country. The Acting Prime Minister presented the circumstances of the incidents on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and

stressed the friendly attitude of France. "In this regard, France expressed a clear, unequivocal, non-misleading position," said Nikol Pashinyan, noting that Armenia, in cooperation with international partners, is trying to resolve the border situation through diplomacy.

Touching upon the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Nikol Pashinyan stressed the active role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-

Chairs in that process. The Acting Prime Minister also stressed the need for the independence of Nagorno Karabakh by the French Senate, as well as the importance of the resolutions adopted to ensure the return of Armenian prisoners of war.

Richard Ferran added that they are

paying close attention to the processes taking place in the South Caucasus. "France is by Armenia's side, please convey our message to the Armenian people. We will do our best to establish stability and prosperity in Armenia, he said, that Armenia can continue to rely on France in the future.

The French side once again stressed the



protection of Armenia's territorial integrity, the need to ensure the speedy return of prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan, and the

preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno Karabakh, the involvement of UNESCO in this matter. "We hope that after the upcoming elections Armenia will restore its unity and move towards the future," Mr. Ferran said.

He informed that a new resolution on the return of Armenian prisoners of war is being worked out in the French National Assembly. Mr. Ferran said members of the Armenia-France parliamentary friendship group are planning

a visit to Armenia.

During the meeting the interlocutors discussed the situation in the South Caucasus region, the forthcoming elections in Armenia, the implementation of democratic reforms in Armenia and a number of other issues of mutual interest.







## Azerbaijani servicemen violating the rights of border village residents – Armenian Ombudsman



Azerbaijani armed servicemen are illegally stopping villagers in the pastures located in the vicinity of Verin Shorja, Nergin Shorja, Norapak, and Kut villages of Gegharkunik region, and are demanding explanations on where they are going, for what purpose and what they transporting, Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan said in a statement.

According to him, Azerbaijani servicemen are also attempting to legally search the cars and are threatening the population.

"In particular, in June three alarming calls were received about the fact that several dozen Azerbaijani servicemen with vehicles regularly move towards the pastures of Verin Shorja village of Vardenis community, to the area where the barns are located and where the villagers graze their animals. Over the past week, they have set up positions closer to the Verin Shroja plateau, making the use of the pastures almost impossible," the Ombudsman said.

Moreover, he said, at one of the Azerbaijani positions located closer to

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the plateaus, Azerbaijani servicemen are illegally stopping villagers, and demanding explanations from them.

"Furthermore, the Human Rights Defender's Office was alerted on June 3 that Azerbaijani armed servicemen are still located in the immediate vicinity of Kut village of Geghamasar community, as a result of which the villagers are able to use only a small segment of the pastures. Moreover, the Azerbaijani armed servicemen are swearing at the shepherds, and threatening with weapons.

The cattle barn in Norabak village of the Geghamasar community, is under the illegal control of the Azerbaijani armed servicemen, and the residents are deprived of the opportunity to use it. There are streams near the barn that were also used for agricultural purposes, but now the villagers can no longer use them.

In the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, the apparently illegal presence of Azerbaijani armed servicemen in the immediate vicinity of the villages of Gegharkunik region, and their openly criminal acts, seriously endanger the lives and health of the residents of border villages of Armenia, and completely disrupt their everyday life and mental integrity.

Pastures, hayfields, other land plots cannot be used because:

- 1) Servicemen of the Azerbaijani armed forces are illegally present in those territories;
- 2) These territories are directly in the target of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

All this was confirmed by studies conducted by the Office of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, including the Gegharkunik regional subdivision.

"The issue is that the need to use these lands is especially urgent for the village residents due to seasonal demands. The harvest season is already due to begin, and the villagers are facing acute problems. This can lead to a sharp decrease in the number of livestock, as there are insufficient conditions for raising them," Arman Tatoyan said.

According to him, all of this will deepen the existing social problems.

"The rights of the border residents of Armenia are guaranteed by the Constitution of Armenia and by international standards. Any process related to the state borders cannot be acceptable if the normal life of the border residents is undermined, and if their rights have been grossly violated and continue to be violated or remain under the threat of being violated," the Ombudsman emphasized.

Thus, according to Ombudsman, the creation of the security zone is an absolute necessity for the purpose of the restoration of the rights of the people, and their protection from threats of violations.





### Nikol Pashinyan meets with Armenian community in France

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with representatives of the Armenian community in France at Armenia's Embassy in Paris.

The Acting Prime Minister first had a separate meeting with Co-Chair of the Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations of France Ara Toranyan, and member of the Board of Trustees, secretary of the local office Petros Terzian.

During the meeting Nikol Pashinyan touched upon the results of his talks



with President Emmanuel Macron, the circumstances of the 44-day war in Artsakh, the steps taken to resolve the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process within the OSCE Minsk Group framework and the need to tap the potential of the Armenian Diaspora.

In this context, Nikol Pashinyan appreciated the consolidation of Diaspora Armenians, especially

during the war, and the invaluable support to the homeland. The Acting Prime Minister answered in detail all the questions of interest to the audience.

### Russian Ambassador visits Armenia's Syunik region



Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Armenia Sergey Kopirkin has been on a working visit to Syunik region since June 2.

The head of the Russian diplomatic mission got acquainted with the service of the Russian-Armenian border guards at the checkpoints located on the Goris-Kapan highway (Vorotan, Shurnukh), as well as the peculiarities of the problems the border guards of the Russian Federal Security Service solve.

Upon his arrival in Kapan, Amb. Kopirkin was greeted by Mayor Gevorg Parsyan, who briefed the ambassador on the current socio-economic situation in the city, and thanked Russia for the participation of border guards in ensuring security in the region.

The officials discussed the situation in Armenia's south, including that in the border communities. The Ambassador said Russia has a significant contribution to ensuring Armenia's security within the frames of fulfillment of its allied duties. In particular, the number of Russian border guards has increased, material-technical and financial resources have been provided for their operation.

The Syunik Governor thanked Russia and its leadership for stopping the recent bloodshed in Artsakh and for the invaluable contribution to the post-conflict recovery. He also highly appreciated the service of the Russian border guards in the province.

The sides also discussed the socioeconomic development of the province, and in this respect the Ambassador stated that Russia will continue assisting the utilization of the province's economic potential, also in the tourism sector. He also emphasized the visible presence of the Russian capital in the province, as well as the funding for the UN projects by Russia aimed at assisting the local population and developing the economy.

The Russian Ambassador also congratulated the Governor on the launch of the CIS Youth Capital program, within the frames of which a number of events will take place in the town of Kapan.



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### Top Economist Exposes Erdogan's Lies on **Bankrupt Turkish Economy**

By Harut Sassounian

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, who is completely ignorant about economics, met with the chief executive officers of 26 major American companies and told them many falsehoods about the Turkish economy. The reality is that the Turkish economy is bankrupt and millions of Turkish citizens are on the verge of starvation, while the coronavirus is raging like wildfire, making Turkey the fifth largest country in the world in terms of infections.

Here are some of the lies Erdogan told the American CEO's:

"None of the problems experienced in many countries and the disruptions in the supply chain have been experienced in Turkey. At a time when many economies in the world came to a standstill, we continued our investments in both the public and private sectors.

"Thanks to the efforts of our private sector, the support of our state and dynamic epidemic measures, our economy closed 2020 with growth. With a rate of 1.8%, we became the country with the highest growth in the G-20 after China.

"Despite the serious economic contraction in our traditional export markets and the contraction in foreign demand, we reached an export figure of \$170 billion. The trade volume between Turkey and the United States increased by 4 percent and exceeded \$21 billion.

"In the January-April period of 2021, our exports increased by 33.1 percent compared to last year.

"Our industrial production increased by 12.3 percent in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the same quarter of the previous year. We also observe a significant increase in investment demand in Turkey.

"The total direct investments of the United States in Turkey reached \$13 billion, while the investments of Turkish companies in the United States reached \$7.2 billion. I would like to thank all

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American companies who trust Turkey and the Turkish economy."

Surprisingly, Erdogan then decided to tell the American CEO's of President Joe Biden's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, thus informing them of the horrible mass crimes committed by Ottoman Turkey against the Armenians.

"Even though President Biden's statement about the 1915 events puts an additional burden on our relations, I believe that the meeting we will hold with Mr. Biden at the NATO Summit [in June] will herald a new era," Erdogan stated hopingly.

Erdogan then contradicted his many cruel, inhuman, anti-Semitic and racist public statements and policies by claiming: "We have never, and never will, allow distorted mentalities such as xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and racism to find ground in our society. We resolutely continue our efforts to reform the economy, freedoms, laws and justice according to changing conditions and needs. We presented our Human Rights Action Plan and our Economy Reform package to the public."

Here is the list of the CEO's that Erdogan met with: Cargill, David Webster, Senior Vice President – Food Ingredients and Bio Industrial Ventures; DowAksa, Douglas Parks, CEO; Hilton, Chris Nassetta, President and CEO; MetLife, Nuria Garcia, President — Europe, Middle East and Africa; Netflix, Spencer Neumann, CFO; Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Stan Deal, CEO; Kellogg Company, Steven Cahillane, President and CEO; Google, Karan Bhatia, Vice President - Public Policy, Europe, Middle East and Africa and Asia-Pacific; GE Aviation, John Slattery, President and CEO; Varian Medical Systems, Chris Toth, CEO; PepsiCo, Silviu Popovici, CEO Europe; Amazon, Susan Pointer, Vice President — Public Policy; Cheniere Energy, Anatol Feygin, CCO; Citi, David Livingstone, President and CEO — Europe, Middle East and Africa; Procter & Gamble, Loic Tassel, President — Europe; Progress Rail, Marty Haycraft,

President and CEO; Tellurian Inc., Octavio Simoes, President and CEO; Medtronic, Rob ten Hoedt, Senior Vice President and Head of Europe; Archer Daniels Midland, Ismail Roig, President — Europe, Middle East and Africa; Microsoft, Samer Abu Ltaif, Corporate Vice President — Head of Europe and Middle East; Cisco, Michael Timmeny, Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Strategy; Honeywell Aerospace, Mike Madsen, President and CEO; Nova Power Solutions, Steve Ziff, President and CEO; The Coca-Cola Company, Jenny Stoichkova, President — Europe and the Middle East; Johnson & Johnson, Giorgio Milesi, President -Emerging Markets; and Baker Hughes, Zaher Ibrahim, Vice President — Middle East, Turkey, North Africa.

Let us now turn to one of the top economists in the world, Daron Acemoglu, an Armenian born in Turkey, who is now Professor of Economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. His name is often mentioned as a future Nobel Prize nominee.

During a video interview, Acemoglu directly contradicted Erdogan's propagandistic picture of the Turkish economy, by stating: "I have great fear the economic crisis may deepen in Turkey."

Here are excerpts from Acemoglu's description of the deplorable condition of the economy in Turkey:

"When Turkey went to the presidential election and all the power gathered in the palace, it had a great impact on the economic policy.

"These nationalist and authoritarian populist regimes or these movements generally weaken state capacity when they come to power. This is both a strategy and something they do unintentionally because they can't rule legally. We see this in India, Brazil, Turkey, Russia, and Hungary."

"The countries where the most people died from the coronavirus in the world were Brazil, Turkey, India, Russia and populist authoritarian regimes such as America during the Trump administration.

"Turkey has





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been experiencing the page 11 most critical economic crises in the last five

years. There were major crises that started not only after the pandemic, but also before the pandemic. The increase in debts, the worsening of balance sheets, could a correct result be brought against them? No. Why? There are few people in the bureaucracy who can deal with the economy properly and improve it. Especially the cadres established under Berat Albayrak [Minister of Economy and Treasury and Erdogan's son-in-law] could not bring the right approach to what needs to be done. Democracy has

many advantages over dictatorships and authoritarian systems. But one of the biggest advantages is their tendency to keep the biggest mistakes, talents and incompetence in the lead, is much weaker. Especially when the presidential election in Turkey and all power gathered in the Palace, this had a great impact on the economic policy.

"Especially in the last five years, unemployment and inequality have reached very high levels [in Turkey].

"Shopping malls and construction companies, which have had a huge problem in their balance sheet for five years, are still standing. How long will

they be able to stand? What will be the effects on banks? How long will we be able to keep the interest rate policy this way, while our reserves have decreased so much? These dimensions are likely to go much more negative.

These problems are not only in Turkey, there are problems in other parts as well, but wherever you see these problems, you see the role of decisions not to manage the economy correctly."

I hope the American CEO's will pay more attention to Acemoglu's accurate assessment than to Erdogan's propaganda which has led Turkey to economic disaster.

### There is mutual understanding with Russia at highest level on solution of Armenia-Azerbaijan border situation - Torosyan

There is mutual understanding with Russia at the highest level over the solution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border situation, Chief of Staff at the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia Arsen Torosyan told reporters in the Parliament on June 4.

Commenting on the recent visit of Armenia's caretaker minister of defense Vagharshak Harutyunyan to Moscow and the negotiations, Mr. Torosyan said: "Negotiations continue at the highest level. The Moscow talks were quite comprehensive with clear emphasis. And they will continue in order to achieve the solution which we have repeatedly stated: the Azerbaijani troops must leave



Armenia's sovereign territory, and this will take place as a result of the cooperation with our strategic ally and partners, as well as of the work of our Armed Forces".

He assured that the domestic political processes do not in any way impact the intensity of the work of state agencies.

"There is mutual understanding at the highest level with our only partner in our security system over the solution of the situation. They are making all efforts for it to happen without any fire. No one in the region, as well as Armenia doesn't need large-scale war, but its possibility still exists", Arsen Torosyan said.

Commenting on the statements of the Azerbaijani President, Torosyan assured that the Armenian officials have never discussed and will not discuss an issue of Zangezur "corridor" or any other "corridor", it is not enshrined and will not be enshrined by any document.

## Universal Postal Union declines to register Azerbaijani stamps promoting xenophobia against Armenians

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has decided not to register the "Azerbaijan 2020" postage stamps issued by Azerbaijan in their database, as those stamps contradict the relevant provisions of the Union Convention and Code of Conduct, the Ministry of High-Tech Industry informs. The Union has asked Azerbaijan to reconsider issuing the stamps. Following the military aggression against Artsakh unleased by Azerbaijan in 2020,



the Ministry of High Technologies of

Armenia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent letters to the Union drawing attention to "obvious hatred and xenophobia against Armenians" in the postage stamps issued by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of Azerbaijan.

The leadership of the Universal Postal Union informed the Armenian side about their about-stated decision.

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## Tufenkian launches campaign to rebuild the homes of two wounded Artsakh soldiers





The Tufenkian Foundation recently launched a crowdfunding campaign to rebuild the homes of two Artsakh soldiers who were wounded in last year's war against Azerbaijan. The campaign, which aims to raise a total of \$40,000, is part of Tufenkian's Wounded Soldier Support Initiative.

Since the 2016 April War, the Tufenkian Foundation has been actively supporting wounded soldiers and their families. Focusing on the area of accessible housing, Tufenkian provided assistance to veterans disabled during the first Artsakh

War in the early 1990s, the April 2016 war, as well as those injured during other attacks along the line of contact over the years.

"Unfortunately, the 2020 war has significantly increased the number of wounded soldiers. We have been working closely with Artsakh's Ministry of Defense to identify veterans and families of fallen soldiers who need immediate assistance regarding accessible housing," said Tufenkian's director of public relations, Rupen Janbazian. "We at Tufenkian have a long track record of assisting our wounded soldiers and the families of our fallen heroes and we are happy to announce that the Tufenkian Foundation will be matching the first \$10,000 raised."

The campaign aims to renovate the homes of two soldiers—both named Hayk—who live in the town of Martuni, Artsakh with their families.

Thirty-year-old Hayk was wounded last year while fighting in the area of Koghak.

He sustained injuries on his head, ear, and lung while fighting alongside his brother. Hayk lives with his mother and brother in a house that is in desperate need of renovations and repairs.

Twenty-seven-year-old Hayk was struck by shrapnel in many parts of his body and suffered severe burns during last year's war. His home, which he shares with his parents and two sisters, was targeted by Azerbaijani shelling last year and suffered structural damages. It is in need of a new roof as well as repair and renovation of the interior.

"Our supporters now have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of two of our heroes and their families. I urge you all to join our online fundraiser and give what you can to this important, meaningful cause," Janbazian added.

Donations can be made through the <u>Tufenkian Foundation's GiveButter</u> <u>campaign</u>.

## Armenians in Cyprus call on Russia to pressure Azerbaijan over POWs

The Armenian National Committee of Cyprus on Wednesday held a protest outside the Russian embassy in Nicosia calling on Moscow to exert pressure on Azerbaijan to release Armenian war prisoners held by the Azeri military, Cyprus-Mail reports.

The group delivered a petition to Russian ambassador to Cyprus, Stanislav Osadchiy.

"The issue of the war prisoners is purely a humanitarian one and therefore there is no place for blackmail and micro-politics,"

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Hagop Kazanjian, chairman of the Armenian National Committee of Cyprus, told the Cyprus News Agency.

The resolution states that they are protesting the continuing threats and the



intervention of Azerbaijan in the sovereign rights of Armenia.

"Armenians around the world feel that Russia's role as a strategic partner and guarantor of Armenia's sovereign rights is being challenged," the resolution added.

"We urge you to continue to put pressure on Turkey and Azerbaijan, whose expansionist aspirations extend from the Aegean, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East to the Caucasus," said the petition.

The head of the Solidarity Movement, Eleni Theocharous, who participated in the protest, condemned "the new unprovoked offensive action

of Baku" and noted that the prisoners should be released under the law of war.

She added that Russia must intervene to defuse the situation and for the release the prisoners based on bilateral agreements.

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### Tigran Hamasyan wins Deutscher Jazzpreis award, named International Artist of the Year

Armenian jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan has been awarded the Deutscher Jazzpreis 2021 for Piano/Keyboards and has been named International Artist of the Year.

"I am really honoured to receive two awards from Deutscher Jazzpreis for my latest album <u>The</u> <u>Call Within</u>," Hamasyan says. "I

would like to thank the organisation and jury members at Deutscher Jazzpreis. Also big thank you and congratulations to all the incredibly talented musicians who have



been nominated and awarded this year. To my German fans: We will meet soon!"

The Jazzpreis is a new jazz award launched by the German government's

Commissioner for Culture and Media. Winners were announced in a livestreamed awards ceremony this afternoon.

Tigran Hamasyan's 2020 Nonesuch album, *The Call Within*, is a journey into his dreamlike inner world, taking inspiration from his interest in maps from different eras, poetry, Armenian folk stories,

astrology, geometry, ancient Armenian design, rock carvings, and cinematography, and creating what *Record Collector* calls "a kaleidoscopic tapestry of sound."

## St. John Garabed Armenian Church in Carmel Valley, California, aims for fall opening



Progress continues on the new St. John Garabed Armenian Church in Carmel Valley. When fully completed, the new campus on El Camino Real will feature a sanctuary that reaches 93 feet in height, a social hall, a youth center, education and cultural building, an Armenian Heritage Park and picnic and meditation spaces, *Del Mar Times* reports.

Plans have been in the works for over 12 years for the church to move from its North Park facility to North County. According to Beth Broussalian from the church's building committee, the first phase of the project is fully funded and they will focus on raising additional donor funds to support the second phase.

The interior of the dome is in the process of being built and framing of

the rooms has been completed. Outside, parking spaces have been poured and landscapers have prepared the underground irrigation. In the coming month the windows, except the stained glass windows, will be installed and the dome will be completed. By the end of June, the widening of El Camino Real with the acceleration and deceleration lanes will be finished.

In August, the church expects the stained glass windows, pews, altar and interior décor to be installed in preparation for occupancy in September.

### "Eternity Square" to honor the fallen heroes of Artsakh wars

The Tovmasyan Foundation will establish an "Eternity Square" – a monument to the the heroes who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the homeland. Construction on the site has already begun.

The square is located near the Alphabet Park on the road from Yerevan to Aparan. The Tovmasyan family is building a church in the area.

Relatives of the victims of the First Artsakh War, the four-day April War and the Second Artsakh War will be able to plant a fruit tree named after their martyred hero in the "Square of Eternity" and get

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harvest annually.

The square, planned to be shaped in the form of a symbol of eternity, will be a square of khachkars and will also be equipped with benches and a parking place.

"Every time I come to Yerablur, I see

crying mothers near the gravestones, and I understand how much we owe them. I initiated the construction of this square with the idea that mothers who lost their sons will be able to plant a tree and see their son's tree bloom every year as well as get harvest to immortalize their hero's name," said Artak Tovmasyan, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Tovmasyan Foundation.

Releasing the doves of peace into the sky, the Tovmasyan family cherishes the hope and dream that the doves, a symbol of love, hope and purity, will bring peace to our country.





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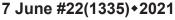
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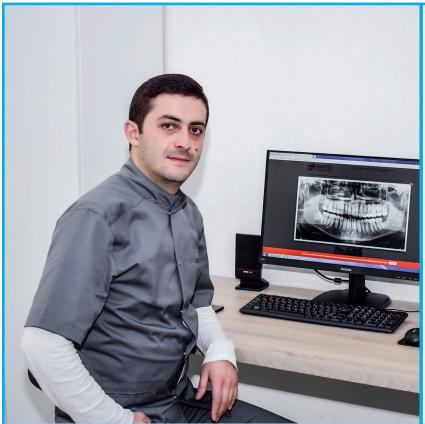




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