

Armenia’s Pashinyan talks to Macron, Trump at Notre-Dame opening



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan attended the reopening ceremony of Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris.

The event was attended by French President Emmanuel Macron, US President-elect Donald Trump, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Polish President Andrzej Duda, Croatian President Zoran Milanović, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev and leaders of other countries and heads of government.

French President Emmanuel Macron delivered a speech during the event, in which he touched upon the restoration work of Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris and emphasized the importance of the reopening of the cathedral for his country and people. Next, Archbishop Laurent Ulrich of Paris performed a church service.

The high-ranking guests toured Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris. In the evening, Nikol Pashinyan and Anna Hakobyan participated in the official dinner hosted by Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron at the Élysée Palace for the Heads of State and Government participating in the reopening ceremony of Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris.

Armenian diplomatic staff moves from Damascus to Beirut

Armenia, US defense chiefs meet at Pentagon

Canada supports Armenia’s peace efforts, Prime Minister’s Special Envoy says

No steps yet – senior official on possibility of ICC lawsuit against Azerbaijani leaders

p. 2

p. 4

p.3

p. 5

Armenian diplomatic staff moves from Damascus to Beirut

Due to the security situation in Syria, the diplomatic staff of the Embassy of Armenia in Damascus will temporarily continue its work from Beirut, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs.

After the announcement of a hotline at the embassy in Damascus last week, the embassy responded



to calls received regarding obtaining visas to Armenia, passports, and the possibility of evacuation. There is currently no safe option for the latter.

Subsequently, contact with Armenian citizens will be maintained from the Armenia's Embassy in Beirut through the following hotline: +96176447205 (mobile).

FM Mirzoyan and Estonian FM discuss deepening of Armenia-EU partnership



On December 7, during his working visit to Manama, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of

Estonia Margus Tsahkna.

The FMs discussed the cooperation between Armenia and Estonia, also taking into account the current challenging

circumstances, the foreign ministry said in a readout.

The meeting held on December 5 in Malta, aimed at further deepening cooperation with the Nordic-Baltic (NB8) countries, as well as the importance of ensuring the continuity of cooperation in this format, was touched upon.

FM Ararat Mirzoyan and FM Margus Tsahkna discussed prospects for further deepening of the Armenia-EU partnership. Minister Mirzoyan briefed his counterpart on the active discussions taking place within the Armenian society regarding this matter.

The Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Estonia also exchanged views on regional developments as well as the challenges faced by democratic institutions.

Armenia hosts session of PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Armenia hosts the session of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

PACE Secretary General Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis has also arrived in Armenia to participate in the session.

Before the start of the session, the PACE

Secretary General and the chairperson of the session, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs Pablo Hispan, were received by Armenian Parliament Speaker.

The participants of the session were first greeted remotely by PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos. Speaker Alen

Simonyan then offered an opening speech.



Canada supports Armenia's peace efforts, Prime Minister's Special Envoy says



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Stéphane Dion, the Canadian Prime Minister's Special Envoy for European Union, Europe and Armenia.

The Prime Minister welcomed Stéphane Dion's visit to Armenia and emphasized the latter's role in the consistent development of Armenia-Canada relations. Nikol Pashinyan highlighted the

importance of expanding ties with Canada in various fields and that country's support in promoting democratic reforms in Armenia. The Prime Minister emphasized that reforms in the public administration system, the development of institutional capacities, and the implementation of reforms in the judicial and legal sphere are of strategic importance for the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Stéphane Dion noted that Canada welcomes the steps of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the protection of human rights, strengthening of democracy and the implementation of reforms in other areas and is ready to continue supporting our country. According to the

Canadian Prime Minister's Special Envoy, the opening of an embassy in the Republic of Armenia will also contribute to the development of bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, high technologies, education and culture.

The interlocutors discussed issues related to the implementation of joint projects in various areas issues.

They exchanged views on the latest developments regarding the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty. In this context, Prime Minister Pashinyan touched upon the Armenian side's positions on various issues. Stéphane Dion stressed that Canada expresses its support for the Armenian Government's efforts towards peace.

Combating corruption is strategic priority of Armenian government – Deputy PM

The fight against corruption is the Armenian government's strategic priority and raising awareness is its most important component, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan has said.

Grigoryan made the remarks at a conference on challenges in the fight against corruption, organized as part of the Uniting Efforts to Prevent Corruption one-month national campaign. The conference was organized on the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day.

"The government has numerously said on the highest level that the fight against corruption is our strategic priority. We are committed to the provision defined in the government action plan whereby the government is determined to wage unwavering fight, with the involvement of all stakeholders, against corruption, to ultimately eradicate all manifestations of corruption," Grigoryan said.

He added that ever since taking office in 2018, the Pashinyan Administration has made consistent efforts to create and develop an institutional anti-corruption



system.

"We realize that an effective fight against corruption is only possible through a coordinated and regulated manner. Our citizens must realize that corruption hinders the implementation of key reforms, which in turn indirectly impacts their quality of life," the Deputy PM said.

He said raising awareness is of utmost importance.

Grigoryan said the development of a targeted awareness policy and anti-corruption education are of key importance. This, in turn, will ensure a broader public involvement and support in anti-corruption reforms.

Minister of Justice Srбуhi Galyan

greeted the participants of the conference through a video message.

In her remarks, Galyan said the fight against corruption requires united efforts.

"For six years our country has been consistently combating corruption, with the idea of zero tolerance for corruption at the core. Over the course of the years, we were able to develop institutions that are in charge of fighting corruption in any given direction," she said, adding that Armenia is no longer among the countries that do not have institutional systems for fighting corruption.

Mission Director of USAID/Armenia John Allelo attached importance to the conference. He said that the USAID integrity program in Armenia is aimed at developing zero tolerance for corruption in the country. "This includes targeted support to the Corruption Prevention Commission and the Justice Ministry as main structures," he said.

Allelo said the USAID has provided support in planning the actions in the 2023-2026 anti-corruption strategies.

Armenia, US defense chiefs meet at Pentagon

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosted Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan at the Pentagon on December 5.

The two leaders met to discuss the strategic relationship between the U.S. and Armenia, which includes a longstanding partnership between Armenia's Defense Ministry and the Kansas National Guard.

"Your visit is historic," Austin said as he welcomed his counterpart. "Armenia extended its hand to the United States and I'm proud to host you here today."

He added that the U.S. supports a sovereign, independent and prosperous Armenia and that relationship between the two nations continues to grow closer.

Austin highlighted the Kansas National Guard's role in helping Armenia advance its defense reform agenda.



This summer, the U.S. and Armenia completed the second iteration of Exercise Eagle Partner, a bilateral exercise aimed at bolstering interoperability and readiness between the two countries during peacekeeping operations.

The first iteration of the exercise was held in 2023.

The secretary also noted that, over the past two years, the U.S. has provided Armenia with key security assistance used

for armored ambulances, a cybersecurity operations center and a national training center.

Austin added that the U.S. plans to sustain the momentum in strengthening the relationship.

He also emphasized the United States support for peace and stability in the South Caucasus region.

"We're building on a strong foundation," he said. "Our troops served shoulder to shoulder during the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan, and we continue to work together in the NATO Kosovo force."

"It is our first meeting, and we have a full agenda," Austin said. "I look forward to hearing about your vision for Armenia's armed forces, and about the prospects for peace in the South Caucasus."

Aftermath of Azeri attack in Nagorno-Karabakh discussed at PACE committee session

The Yerevan session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights featured, among others, a discussion about the humanitarian consequences resulting from the Azeri attack in Nagorno-Karabakh, a senior lawmaker has said.

PACE has decided to hold the committee session in Armenia on December 9-10.

Vladimir Vardanyan, a Member of Parliament, chair of the parliamentary committee on state-legal affairs and a member of the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, was asked by reporters whether the Armenian delegation will raise the issue of the POWs held in Azerbaijan.

"We can't form the agenda," Vardanyan

said. "But of course during the discussions about holding this session in Armenia we couldn't avoid discussing these issues. The agenda issues included the legal and humanitarian consequences that had to do with the aftermath of the Azerbaijan military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. We've had the opportunity to discuss these issues. We discussed it in a closed format within the framework of the agenda," Vardanyan said.

Vardanyan said PACE did whatever it could in the matter of POWs: the resolutions adopted in PACE clearly called for an urgent release of the POWs. "We can't demand PACE to do anything more. All agenda issues related to the POWs were raised, and received their solutions in the resolutions," the MP said.

He reminded that PACE has not ratified the Azerbaijani delegation's credentials this year, and hence the Azeri delegates are not participating in the sessions.

December 9 marks the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, while December 10 is Human Rights Day. The session is held in Yerevan also due to discussions about these issues and the commemoration days.



French Ambassador to Armenia joins EUMA patrol in Khachik village

Ambassador of France to Armenia Olivier Decottignies has visited the headquarters of the EU monitoring mission (EUMA).

In a post on X, EUMA said the French ambassador joined its observers for a

patrol in Khachik village.

"Honored to host the Ambassador of France to Armenia Olivier Decottignies at our headquarters, where he was briefed on the latest work of the Mission. He also

joined a patrol in Khachik village to witness our efforts on the ground. Grateful for the continued support and collaboration," EUMA said on X.

No steps yet – senior official on possibility of ICC lawsuit against Azerbaijani leaders

At this moment there are no steps towards filing a lawsuit against Azerbaijani leaders in the International Criminal Court (ICC) but nothing can be ruled out, Armenia's Representative for International Legal Matters Yeghishe Kirakosyan has said.

Kirakosyan was asked by reporters why Armenia hasn't filed a lawsuit against Azerbaijani leaders since joining the ICC by ratifying the Rome Statute.

He said that the ICC tries individuals for alleged genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.

The ICC initiates proceedings in three ways: at the initiative of the prosecutor, upon the presentation of the situation by states, and at the initiative of the UN Security Council.

"As of this moment there are no steps



yet, but nothing can be ruled out," Kirakosyan said.

He declined to comment when asked whether the Armenian side plans to file a lawsuit against Azerbaijani leader Ilham Aliyev for ethnic cleansing against Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. "I cannot voice issues that could become subject of internal discussions," he said.

Kirakosyan said he attaches great importance to Armenia's joining the Rome

Statute because any legal process, be it at the ICJ or ICC, had and will have highly important security significance.

PM Nikol Pashinyan had recently suggested that at some phase he'd be open to discuss the possibility of Armenia and Azerbaijan reciprocally dropping their International Court of Justice (ICJ) lawsuits against each other. Kirakosyan refused to comment but said there is no such issue presently.

"I wouldn't want to express my stance because it would turn out that I am commenting. It's best to refrain from comments at this moment. At this moment there is no such issue. The examination of our lawsuits continues, the procedural steps necessary for the examination of lawsuits continue," he said.

Traditional contacts and partners were not always helpful – Armenian Deputy FM on foreign policy diversification



Deputy FM Vahan Kostanyan has presented at a panel discussion during Manama Dialogue 2024 the Armenian foreign policy priorities, emphasizing that Yerevan

is now focused on diversification.

"Our policy is very simple. It can have two dimensions. First, it's our relations with our neighbors, four neighbors that we have: Georgia, Iran, Azerbaijan and Türkiye. And we do believe that we need to have at least neighborly relations with four of them.

And the second dimension of our foreign policy priorities is diversification of our foreign policy. As we saw that our

traditional contacts and partners were not always helpful. But also in general, the objective which is put nowadays for our foreign policy is a bit different.

And to define it in a short way, it will be to protect our sovereignty, our territorial integrity, inviolability of our borders, but also democracy. And now we are trying to develop our foreign relations with our partners, bearing in mind this perspective," Deputy FM Kostanyan said.

U.S. senior diplomats discuss next steps in Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process in Baku

On December 6, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck and the U.S. State Department's senior advisor for Caucasus negotiations Louis Bono visited Baku for high-level meetings with Azerbaijani officials.

According to a post published on the U.S. Embassy's X microblog, they discussed



with Azerbaijani officials the next steps in the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process, aimed at establishing a sustainable and dignified peace. The meeting also touched upon opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperate on climate issues following the success of COP29.

Armenia, Bahrain mull cooperation in tourism and economy

On December 8 in Manama Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani.

The interlocutors discussed opportunities for developing cooperation between Armenia and Bahrain in tourism and economic sectors through specific initiatives, as well as promoting business

ties by encouraging investments. An agreement was reached to identify necessary steps and future cooperation priorities through political consultations between foreign ministries of the two countries.

Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Bahrain also exchanged views on regional issues. Minister Mirzoyan emphasized that despite the challenges of recent years and

the current ones, the Republic of Armenia is making maximum efforts to create a stable environment and establish peace in the South Caucasus, and the signing of the treaty on the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan could be a significant step in this direction.

The latest developments in the Middle East were also touched upon.

Armenian Ministry of Economy says businesses could be greatly interested in Iran's Chabahar port



Iran's Chabahar port could be of great interest for Armenian logistical companies after completing the construction of the necessary infrastructures, according to a senior official at the Armenian ministry of economy.

Haykaz Nasibyan, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Economy, told Armenpress that the port could become a highly important hub for Armenia for developing and strengthening commercial ties across the world.

Nasibyan highlighted the recent visit by ministry of economy officials and

Armenian businessmen to Iran, when memoranda of cooperation were signed.

During the exploratory visit local officials briefed the Armenian delegation on the Chabahar port capacity, infrastructures and trade prospects. The Armenian private investors got acquainted with the conditions at the port and discussed prospects of possible cooperation.

"The government of Armenia attaches importance to the development and deepening of economic relations with Iran. Numerous mutual-visits have taken place. During this visit, issues pertaining

to the Armenian-Iranian economic agenda were discussed, as well as the course of implementation of the previously achieved agreements, the memorandum of understanding signed during the intergovernmental commission meeting, as well as possible cooperation in new directions. The visit also had an exploratory component. It is no coincidence that the delegation included representatives of Armenian logistical companies," Nasibyan said.

The official described Chabahar as a port with great potential, and after the completion of the construction of necessary infrastructures it could become of great interest for Armenian logistical companies. Armenian companies are not yet using the port.

Mr. Nasibyan lauded the meeting between the Armenian delegation and Iranian officials.

He said that at the end of the meeting the sides signed memoranda of cooperation, which will soon transform into agreements and the Armenian companies will be able to conduct activities in the Chabahar port.

Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran.

TUMO Labs Launches Cybersecurity Initiative to Empower Armenia's Next Generation of Cyber Defenders

TUMO Labs, a leading tech and engineering hub for students 18+ which serves as a key component of the EU TUMO Convergence Center, has launched a one year-long ambitious cybersecurity initiative. The project, titled Building Skills and Careers in Cybersecurity for Young Armenians, aims to give young Armenians the critical skills, knowledge, and networks they need to address Armenia's cybersecurity landscape.

This initiative is implemented in partnership with the Information Systems Agency of Armenia (ISAA) and co-funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and ISAA and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH as part of the Partnership for Strengthening Cybersecurity project.

The initiative includes four major components:

1. Content Development: TUMO Labs will create accessible self-learning modules in cybersecurity for their Guided Self-Learning program, covering basic to advanced levels, developed with input from industry experts and the TUMO Labs network.
2. Cybersecurity Sprints: This includes two intensive four-week sprints, where teams tackle real-world cybersecurity challenges. Mentored by industry professionals, participants will showcase their solutions in a final pitch event, where top teams can secure initial funding.
3. 42 Yerevan Coding Bootcamp: A bootcamp dedicated to cybersecurity for Main Curriculum graduates of 42 Yerevan, equipping them with career-focused expertise in the field.



4. Project-Based Learning: Participants will complete projects related to cybersecurity to gain real-life experience. This project will also allow students who completed the Guided Self-Learning course in cybersecurity to put their knowledge to the test.

This initiative reflects TUMO Labs' commitment to delivering free, high-quality education for those 18 and over. The Building Skills and Careers in Cybersecurity for Young Armenians is a pivotal step toward strengthening Armenia's digital resilience, preparing young Armenians to fill crucial roles in the digital economy and meet the global demand for cybersecurity talent.

About TUMO Labs

TUMO Labs is a key initiative of the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and serves as the primary educational component of the EU TUMO Convergence Center for Engineering and Applied Science. As a dynamic learning hub, TUMO Labs offers cutting-edge, hands-on programs focused on advancing skills in technology, science, and engineering. These free, immersive programs are available to individuals 18 and older, empowering them to explore and advance their expertise in these transformative fields.

About ISAA

The Information Systems Agency of Armenia was established in 2022 to support the advancement of Armenia's digital agenda. Under the joint leadership of the Government and the Central Bank of Armenia, the Agency is tasked with implementing key standards for the delivery of public services and digital initiatives. By fostering a trust-based e-Society and

e-Economy, ISAA aims to create a secure, open, and efficient digital environment, supporting the seamless integration of digital services across public and private sectors. ISAA is committed to strengthening the nation's cybersecurity efforts, ensuring the protection of critical infrastructures to maintain a secure, resilient digital ecosystem for Armenia.

About GIZ

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been operating in Armenia since the early 1990's and opened its Country Office in Yerevan in 2002. GIZ Armenia, as a longstanding partner of the Government of Armenia, is a strong implementing organization working on behalf of the German Government towards providing quality and results-driven integrated solutions for global challenges in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. With the aim of contributing to a more democratic, inclusive, green, and prospering Armenia worth living in, we work with a focus on three core areas: 1. Sustainable Economic Development, Training, and Employment; 2. Peaceful and Inclusive Societies; and 3. Climate and Energy – Just Transition.

Armenia proven readiness to close the page of enmity in South Caucasus, FM tells OSCE Ministerial Council

Armenia has continuously proven its readiness to sign a peace deal with Azerbaijan and close the page of enmity in South Caucasus, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said in an address to the 31st OSCE Ministerial Council.

“We are confident that peace has no alternative as the people in our region has already suffered a lot from bloody conflicts. Against all odds, we are determined to continue our efforts to reach the desired goal. In this regard, the connectivity project called “Crossroads of Peace” proposed by the Armenian side has a potential to increase trust, build confidence and foster better interaction between the countries of our region,” Minister Mirzoyan said.

“We believe that full normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey, particularly establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of the borders can be another important contribution to peace and stability in the region,” the Foreign Minister noted.

Below is the Foreign Minister’s speech in full:

Distinguished Chair, Excellences,
Dear colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the Maltese Chairmanship for chairing this Organization through another challenging year for all of us.

During the year Armenia has spared no efforts to ensure that the OSCE remains afloat in the face of existential challenges, particularly by contributing to the Organization’s efforts in enhancing trust and cooperation among participating states and calling for the swift utilization of the early warning and conflict prevention toolbox. Alas, we have all failed in our endeavors – failed collectively and individually.

Whilst Armenia has long been advocating for the full implementation of the OSCE’s principles across its entire area

of responsibility, alerting on the early warning signs of the use of force and calling for the swift and decisive actions, the OSCE’s mechanisms and conflict prevention toolbox have not only been inactive but also muted, to say the least.

But our criticism should be perceived only in the context of our strong desire to have an effective security Organization with its autonomous institutions that act in strict compliance with their mandates, commitments and principles without a backward glance to any other consideration.

Excellencies,

The challenges that the entire world faces nowadays makes us to be more vigilant in the issues related to peace and stability. Having this in mind, Armenia continues its constructive engagement in negotiations aiming to fully normalize relations with Azerbaijan.

This year the bilateral negotiations led to the signing of the Regulation for border delimitation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which recognized the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration as a basis for delimitation of the border. On the ground, we succeeded to delimit more than 12 km of the border, and we hope that this document will pave the way for efficient continuation of the process and thus will largely contribute to stability in the region.

We have also managed to achieve some progress towards signing the Peace Agreement between our two countries. We have agreed upon Preamble and 15 out of the 17 Articles of the draft Agreement, and if there is enough political will, it can be concluded and signed swiftly. Well, Armenia has continuously proven its readiness to sign the Agreement and close the page of enmity in South Caucasus.

We are confident that peace has no

alternative as the people in our region has already suffered a lot from bloody conflicts. Against all odds, we are determined to continue our efforts to reach the desired goal. In this regard, the connectivity project called “Crossroads of Peace” proposed by the Armenian side has a potential to increase trust, build confidence and foster better interaction between the countries of our region.

We believe that full normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey particularly establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of the borders can be another important contribution to peace and stability in the region. To this end, we continue the dialogue with our Turkish counterparts and take some practical steps which include joint assessment of the bridge between Armenia and Turkey as well as the technical requirements for the border crossing by the Gyumri-Kars railway. Once the agreements are implemented, they will have positive impact on the people of the region and beyond.

Dear Colleagues,

As we are approaching the important milestone of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, it is an opportune moment that each and every participating state clearly and unambiguously reaffirms its commitment to the core principles of the OSCE. In this regard Finland’s leadership will be crucial in steering the OSCE toward greater relevance and effectiveness, particularly in strengthening early warning and conflict prevention efforts.

To conclude, we would like to assure our Finnish friends that Armenia stands ready to work closely to advance the important work of this Organization.

I thank you.

Rapprochement with Türkiye can positively affect normalization with Azerbaijan, says Armenian Deputy FM

Armenia is sincerely interested to normalize relations with Türkiye and believes that the normalization of relations with Ankara can positively affect the normalization processes between Armenia and Azerbaijan as well, Deputy FM Vahan Kostanyan said at a panel discussion during the Manama Dialogue 2024 international forum.

“We are sincerely interested to normalize relations with Türkiye. And we believe that the normalization of relations with Ankara can positively affect the normalization processes between Armenian and Azerbaijan as well.

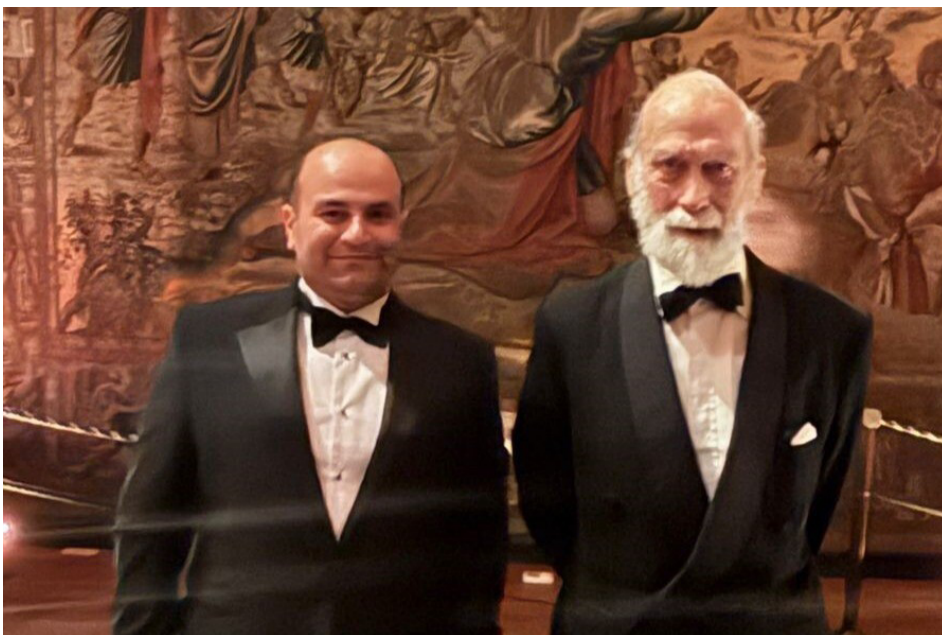
But also bearing in mind that Armenia is getting closer with our Western partners, here probably I should come back with a question to a distinguished colleague. Where does Türkiye see its foreign



policy? Both in the region, but also with the European Union and with the West. It is clear that Armenia wants to get closer with the European Union; the people of Armenia have European aspirations. And

with the opening of the border, Türkiye, which is also a member of the Customs Union, can become a bridge between Armenia and the EU,” Kostanyan said.

Prince Michael of Kent accepts invitation to visit Armenia



Armenian Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Narek Mkrtychyan, during a visit to the United Kingdom, met with Prince

Michael of Kent.

Directions of future cooperation and the provisions of the 3-year memorandum

signed in 2023 were discussed at the meeting, the ministry said in a press release.

Possibilities of organizing the second South Caucasus and Middle East Family Placement Conference in Armenia were discussed. In the context of promoting and developing the family placement institution, Prince Michael of Kent suggested to organize joint initiatives in other countries as well, namely in Gulf states and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Prince Michael of Kent accepted Minister Mkrtychyan’s invitation to visit Armenia.

Prince Michael of Kent is involved in around 100 charities and organisations, including being Patron for Care for Children organisation, which cooperates with the Armenian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to develop the family placement institution in Armenia and beyond.

36 years after the devastating earthquake in Spitak

December 7 marks the 36th anniversary of the devastating earthquake in Spitak. The earthquake hit 40% of the territory of Armenia, densely populated regions with 1 million people.

The cities of Spitak, Leninakan (now Gyumri), Kirovakan (now Vanadzor) and Stepanavan, as well as hundreds of villages were totally or partially destroyed. Twenty-five thousand people were killed, 500 thousand were left without shelter. 17% of the buildings were destroyed, the work of 170 industrial companies was halted.

Immediately after the earthquake



Armenians all over the world united and offered comprehensive support to the Motherland. "SOS Armenie," "Aznavour for Armenia" and tens of other organizations were created. Many Diaspora Armenians rushed to Armenia, bringing food, clothes

and medicine.

Many of them – doctors, psychologists, constructors, architects – stayed in Armenia and personally participated in the rescue works.

A number of countries of the world continued to support Armenia years after the earthquake. Italians built a whole dwelling district in Spitak, Norwegians built a hospital, which was named after great humanist F. Nansen.

A school built by Englishmen was opened in Gyumri. Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher participated in the opening ceremony.

Iran launches advanced module to deploy satellites to higher altitudes, media say

Iran sent into space on Friday, December 6, its heaviest-ever payload using the Simorgh carrier rocket including an advanced module for transferring satellites to higher-altitude orbits, Reuters reports.

The Samān-1 transfer module, along with a CubeSat and a research payload "were successfully placed in an elliptical orbit with a high point of 410 km and a low point of 300 km," said the broadcast.

The launch comes as the United States and European countries claim Iran is transferring ballistic missiles to Russia that would be likely used in its war with Ukraine within weeks. Iran has denied

this.



The Simorgh, a two-stage liquid-fueled satellite launch vehicle, is built by Iran's defense ministry and Armed Forces Logistics, said Iranian media.

In January, Iran said it had simultaneously launched three satellites for the first time using the Simorgh rocket.

One satellite weighing 32 kg and two nano-satellites of less than 10 kg each were sent to a minimum orbit of 450 km, with the two smaller devices aimed at testing narrowband communication and geopositioning technology, Iranian media said at the time.

In September, Iran put into a 550-km orbit the Chamran-1 research satellite with the Qaem-100 satellite carrier.

ICRC representatives visit Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited in December the Armenians who are imprisoned in Azerbaijan, ICRC Armenia Communications and Prevention Manager Zara Amatuni told [Armenpress](#).

She said the ICRC conveyed to the detainees packages sent by their families. The prisoners had the opportuni-

ty to contact their family members.

"In addition, as it happens from time to time, the family members of the imprisoned persons in Baku were given the opportunity to prepare packages containing personal belongings, which were conveyed to the prisoners during the ICRC visit, in agreement with the Azerbaijani side," Amatuni said.



Implications of Trump Presidency for the South Caucasus and Armenia



The Trump presidency may introduce changes to US foreign policy that will directly or indirectly affect the South Caucasus—and Armenia in particular. However, the United States' national interests in the South Caucasus are expected to remain consistent in the long run. New risks as well as opportunities for engagement may emerge for Armenia under the Trump administration.

The US has significant objectives when it comes to the South Caucasus, although it is not considered a region of vital national interests according to US foreign policy documents. US interests include promoting democracy, facilitating the resolution of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict, the opening of the Armenia–Turkey border and the establishment of regional communications, as well as curbing the influence of Russia and Iran in the region. The significance of the South Caucasus has grown in recent years amid intensifying US–Russia rivalry, Russia's waning dominance over the region, and the growing geopolitical importance of transit routes that traverse the region.

The Ukraine War and US–Russia

Relations

The War in Ukraine and intensifying rivalry between the United States and Russia have already greatly impacted the South Caucasus by increasing regional tensions, with negative implications for Armenia. The outcome of the Ukraine War will be [the most significant external factor](#) affecting South Caucasus geopolitics. If Donald Trump acts upon his [promise](#) to reduce US military aid to Ukraine, this will eventually bolster Russian positions, whether or not a formal agreement is reached between the sides. This may also ultimately result in Russia increasing its presence in the South Caucasus.

In a less likely event of the US and Russia agreeing to a comprehensive package that normalizes bilateral relations, American involvement in the South Caucasus will probably be reduced. Conversely, an escalation in Ukraine, increased US–Russia confrontation, and a weakening of Russia's positions might lead to greater US involvement in the region.

For Armenia, these shifting dynamics demand a balancing act between maintaining at least the current level of dialogue

with the US and avoiding straining relations with Russia.

US Stance on Iran

Instability or any major conflict involving Iran would pose security risks for Armenia. Iran has been one of the supporters of Armenia's territorial integrity and has [opposed](#) the use of force to change borders. Iran's isolation could also disrupt arms shipments from India, Armenia's largest weapons [supplier](#).

During his first term, Donald Trump pursued a “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran, which may [continue](#) during his second term, including a new wave of economic sanctions. Trump's strong [support](#) for Israel and the hardline stance of his key [administration](#) appointees may also increase the importance of Azerbaijan, a strategic ally of Israel.

However, Trump has also stated that he does not seek a regime change or a war, instead intending “[to make a deal](#)” with Tehran. Iran has also signaled an [interest](#) in engaging in dialogue with the United States. This would be more favorable for regional stability and Armenia, which could consider positioning itself as a platform for informal, track-two diplomacy.

Armenia–Azerbaijan Negotiations

US engagement in facilitating Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations reached its [peak](#) during the Biden administration. However, these efforts have not resulted in a peace agreement, largely due to Azerbaijan's incessant [demands](#), which show no signs of abating.

Future US involvement in facilitating Armenia–Azerbaijan negotiations will hinge on the broader dynamics of US–Russia relations, on how close the parties are to signing a peace agreement, and whether the US President-elect will see it as a personal opportunity

➔ page 12

page 11 to strike a deal. One factor that could indirectly impact regional dynamics is global oil prices. If Trump's policies result in a lowering of oil prices, this will diminish Azerbaijan's capacity to purchase arms—an important consideration for regional security.

US-Armenia Relations

Under the Biden administration Armenia-US relations have been upgraded to a [Strategic Partnership Commission](#), expanding the areas of cooperation. Under Trump, the existing commitments are likely to persist, but overall investment in democracy promotion is likely to decrease.

At the same time Armenia should be mindful of the limitations of US

involvement when it comes to its security. The US can help upgrade the Armenian army through training and capacity-building, and can also potentially exert diplomatic pressure on Azerbaijan. But Washington has not publicly pledged—and according to American experts is unlikely to pledge—security guarantees to Armenia, irrespective of who is in the White House.

Trump's [criticism](#) of Vice President Harris for her inaction during “persecution and forced displacement of 120,000 Armenian Christians in Artsakh” and his promise to “protect persecuted Christians”—views shared by several of his [nominees](#)—create space to raise issues critical for Armenia. In this framework

Armenia should highlight its national identity and history as a Christian nation while raising its outstanding security issues. Armenia can also leverage its friendly relations with India in fostering its ties with the new administration.

In these changing and uncertain circumstances, the best path forward for Armenia is to work toward a settlement that will not jeopardize its security in the long term, and enhance its deterrence strategy, by focusing on strengthening its army and bolstering its self-defense capabilities while developing stronger ties with security partners.

Author: Nvard Chalikyan, Research Fellow, APRI Armenia

CoE Committee of Ministers urges Azerbaijan to implement ECHR ruling in Gurgen Margaryan case



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has issued a new decision as part of its monitoring of the implementation of judgments in the case of Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan, concerning the 2004 murder of Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan by an Azerbaijani serviceman in Budapest, according to the press service of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

In 2004, during a NATO training course in Budapest, Azerbaijani officer Ramil Safarov gruesomely murdered Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan and attempted to kill another Armenian officer, Hayk Makuchyan. Safarov was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Hungarian court. However, after being transferred to Azerbaijan in 2012, he was pardoned, awarded, and granted material and official privileges.

Highlighting the importance of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgment, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has outlined the following demands:

Four years after the ECHR ruling, the Azerbaijani authorities have yet to implement the required individual measures.

The Committee reiterates its call for the immediate payment of the applicants' representatives' expenses.

It has also requested evidence that the pardon-related letters published on the Azerbaijani president's website have been removed.

The Committee further emphasized that individuals guilty of such serious crimes must be deprived of the right to hold public office.

It has once again demanded clarification regarding the legality of other privileges granted to Safarov.

The Committee stressed that such actions must be prevented in the future and that any pardons or privileges granted for such crimes must adhere to the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Over 1,9 million tourists visit Armenia in 10 months

1,926,405 tourists visited Armenia in January-October of 2024, 5,8% less compared to the same period of last year, according to the Tourism Committee. The figure is 15% higher compared to the same period of 2019.

Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan attended the committee's yearend event, where the figures were published.

The event focused on the tourism development trends, main indicators and legislative reforms in the sector.

"We plan to implement numerous new programs in 2025, and if necessary, we will increase budget allocations for this," the minister said. "We are ready to support the development of the business environment in Armenia through various



programs," Papoyan said.

Papoyan expressed confidence that the cooperation with the World Bank will proceed successfully and the TRIP project will be launched, which envisages up to 100,000,000 dollars investments in the tourism sector. The program is expected to make the country's tourism more competitive and attractive.

In 2024 Armenia received a number of international awards, including Best Destination for 2025 by Lonely Planet, and the inclusion in the Top 10 Developing Travel Destinations by Wanderlust Magazine.

In addition, the Italian Association of Travel Journalists named Vayots Dzor province the Best Destination for Food and Wine.

In 2024 parliament adopted a new law on tourism to regulate the sector. More than 90 foreign journalists visited Armenia for an exploratory trip and over 500 articles were published in the foreign media. Authorities also developed the country's tourism and investment guideline.

Concert in São Paulo marks 100th birth anniversary of Charles Aznavour

Organized by the Embassy of Armenia in Brazil and supported by the São Paulo branch of the Brazilian Social Service of Commerce (SESC – Serviço Social do Comércio) and the Brazilian branch of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (UGAB Brasil), the Armenian National Jazz Orchestra performed in the packed hall of Sesc Avenida Paulista, delivering a captivating performance of the famous Armenian singer and composer Charles Aznavour's enchanting songs.

The concert, dedicated to the 100th

anniversary Charles Aznavour, featured the orchestra's unique arrangement of French chanson and contemporary Armenian jazz. Inga Arshakyan's and Gor Sujyan's setlist of Aznavour's best showcased exceptional musicianship and creative flair.

Ambassador of Armenia to Brazil Armen Yeghanyan attended the concert. In his remarks, Ambassador Yeghanyan emphasized the significance of cultural exchange between Armenia and Brazil, praising the orchestra's role in fostering that exchange.

"This concert was a testament to the universal language of music, bridging cultures and captivating hearts," said Ambassador Yeghanyan.



Thanks to financing of 120 million drams from Mikael Vardanyan 4 villages of Tavush will have gas and 3 villages will have water supply



3 villages of Tavush region: Kirants, Acharkut and Berkaber have been completely gasified. The works have been conducted within the framework of the subsidy program.

The share of the community which is 35 percent of the total budget amounting about 82 million drams was provided by benefactor Mikayel Vardanyan. Moreover, in Barekamavan, the program has been fully implemented with financing of Mikayel Vardanyan, who provided around 18 million drams.

As a result of gasification, several problems in the mentioned 4 areas of the region will be solved simultaneously. The social and living conditions of the residents will be improved, the amount of deforestation will decrease.

In order to support the major repair of the drinking water system, the benefactor provided another 20 million drams to 3 areas of Berd community: Verin Karmiraghbyur, Artsvaber, Norashen. For the implementation of two programs Mikayel Vardanyan provided totally 120 million drams.

Furthermore, thanks to the benefactor's financial support, since 2006 and up today 28 rural communities have also been supplied with gas and 42 communities with drinking water.

100th anniversary of Sergei Parajanov celebrated in Athens



On December 3-4, at the initiative of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Greece and with the participation of the Michalis Cacoyannis Foundation (MCF), in collaboration with the Greek Directors Guild (GDG), and with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia, "Parajanov Days" were organized in the Greek capital of Athens, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Sergey Parajanov.

The series of events kicked off on December 3 at the Michalis Cacoyannis Foundation Hall, where Alexandra Georgopoulou, the Foundation's Coordinator of Cultural Programs and International Cooperation, offered opening remarks, followed by the screening of film-essay "In My World" by director Ruben Gevorgyan (1979, 1989) and Parajanov's (1967) "Hakob Hovnatanyan" documentary film.

During the second part of the event the attendees had the opportunity to view a photo exhibition of the great artist's works in the central hall of the foundation, which included Parajanov's paintings from different periods and photos of exclusive sketches for the performance of "Hamlet". The latter were being shown outside of Armenia for the first time.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Armenia Tigran Mkrtchyan noted in his speech that exhibitions of Parajanov's paintings were organized in Greece in 1994 during the 35th Thessaloniki International Film Festival and in 2001 at the Melina Merkour Cultural Center in Athens.

He added that one of Parajanov's

masterpieces – the "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors", was awarded a gold medal in the "Best Direction" nomination at the First Thessaloniki International Film Festival in 1966.

"Sergey Parajanov is undoubtedly one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. The cultural heritage he left behind is an inexhaustible wealth that not only does not lose its interest, but also increases its geography day by day, and, most importantly, all this happens naturally. It is difficult to relate to his art once and not want to return to it again and again. I know many people who, when visiting Armenia, consider it a priority to visit his house-museum," the Ambassador said.

"Parajanov has become one of the main visiting cards of our country. I think that this has its own deep and yet undiscovered mystery. Parajanov is the type of artist



who overcame his time, the environments in which he found himself, willy-nilly, and became a true pioneer, a leader towards new, yet undiscovered spaces and times," Ambassador Mkrtchyan noted in his speech.

The reception was followed by hospitality and tasting of Armenian drinks.

On December 4, Sergey Parajanov's film "The Color of the Pomegranate" was screened. Christos Xenos, a representative of the Greek Film Directors Association, spoke about the peculiarities of S. Parajanov's films and their unique nature. This was followed by a discussion on Parajanov's art and especially the film "The Color of the Pomegranate."

Ilze Paegle-Mkrtchyan, co-author and translator of the book "Parajanov's Worlds and Scenarios: Letters from Prison", presented the background of the creation of the film and provided comments on some episodes of the film.

At the same time, she referred to Parajanov not only as a director and artist, but also as a writer, presenting excerpts from his scripts and letters.

Film director, journalist for the Greek Public Radio and Television and author of the documentary "The Pomegranates of Nagorno-Karabakh" Thomas Sideris spoke about Parajanov's character, especially noting Parajanov's use of space in "The Color of the Pomegranate."

"Instead of depicting realistic environments, Parajanov constructs spaces loaded with symbolic meaning. The film's visual

language uses objects, colors and the arrangement of physical space to reflect the inner emotional and spiritual world of the main character, the Armenian poet Sayat-Nova," the director noted.

The digital restoration of the film "The Color of Pomegranate" was carried out (2004) by the World Film Foundation (Martin Scorsese Foundation) with the funding of the "Material World" Center, and the exclusive screening

took place with the permission of that foundation.

The screenings of the films were carried out with the support of the Armenian Film Center and the World Film Fund. The exhibition of Parajanov's paintings and sketches was made possible thanks to the support of the Parajanov Museum.

The events were attended by the Primate of the Greek-Armenian Diocese, His Eminence Bishop Khoren Arakelyan, representatives of the clergy, members of the Greek Parliament, diplomats accredited in Greece, representatives of Armenian community structures, intellectuals, and journalists.

Paris unveils famed Notre-Dame Cathedral after five-year reconstruction



France celebrated the reopening of the Notre-Dame Cathedral on Saturday at a special church service that featured a standing ovation for the firefighters who saved the 12th-century landmark from destruction during a 2019 blaze, [France 24](#) reports.

A two-hour service attended by incoming US president Donald Trump among



other world leaders began with the archbishop of Paris knocking on the doors of the cathedral three times.

“Notre Dame, model of faith, open your doors to bring together the far-flung children of God in joy,” archbishop Laurent Ulrich commanded, banging with a

wooden staff crafted from a roof beam that survived the inferno five years ago.

Trump could be seen sitting on the front row as guest of honor next to French President Emmanuel Macron, with invitees marveling at the freshly cleaned walls, new furniture and state-of-the-art lighting installed as part of the overhaul.

In a short speech, Macron expressed the “gratitude of the French nation” for the restoration work, achieved at frenzied speed over the last five years. France had “rediscovered what great nations can do – achieve the impossible”, he said.

The reconstruction effort cost around 700 million euros (\$750 million), financed from donations, with the re-opening achieved within a five-year deadline despite predictions it could take decades.

Workers had to overcome problems with lead pollution, the Covid-19

epidemic, and the army general overseeing the project falling to his death while hiking in the Pyrenees last year.

One surprising absentee on Saturday was Pope Francis, the head of the Catholic Church.

He sent a message addressed to the French people and weighed into a row about whether the place of worship and tourist attraction should remain free to enter.

The “immense” numbers set to visit Notre-Dame should be welcomed “generously and free of charge”, he said, clearly opposing a proposition from the French culture ministry to charge for entry.

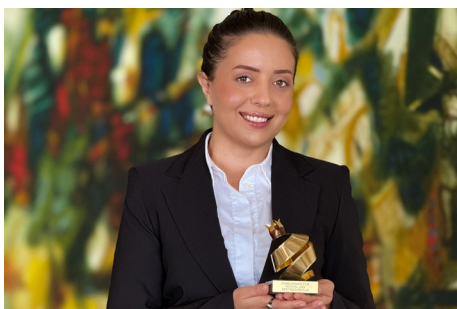
The exact cause of the 2019 blaze has never been identified despite a forensic investigation by prosecutors, who believe an accident such as an electrical fault was the most likely reason.



Anna Maxim’s *The Reverse Side of the Medal* named Best Feature Film at 2024 Pomegranate Film Festival

The *Reverse Side of the Medal*, a sports drama by filmmaker Anna Maxim about the life and career of weightlifter Nazik Avdalyan, was named Best Feature Film at the 2024 Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto, Canada.

Having received a serious injury as a result of a car accident, Nazik Avdalyan dropped out of the big sport for 7 years, then came back and, despite the distrust of others and inhuman bodily pains, became



a two-time European championship gold

winner.

The film’s director Anna Maxim portrays Avdalyan in the movie.

The cast includes Khoren Levonyan, Sos Janibekyan and Mkrtych Arzumanyan.

A video from the awarding ceremony was shared online on the film’s Facebook page.

Maxim said the Pomegranate award is her film’s first award.

Subscribe and watch Noyan Tapan programs on Noyan Tapan TV, and Noyan Tapan YouTube Channels.



Noyan Tapan introduces: "Urgent questions" welcoming the Candidate of Political Sciences, politician Gurgen Simonyan



<https://www.youtube.com/@Noyan-TapanTV> (in Armenian)



<https://www.youtube.com/@NoyanTapan> (in Russian)



<https://www.youtube.com/@NoyanTapanLiveTV> (Special)

You can also watch them on our social pages on Facebook

Call us for advertisement and PR through +374 55 509050 or +1 818 967 5677.

AZAD

AZAD Pharma AG

AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

<p>Switzerland</p> <p>AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG</p> <p>Durachweg 15 CH-8200 Schaffhausen Phone No: +41 52 632 09 10 Fax: +41 52 632 09 11</p> <p>AZAD Pharma AG</p> <p>Bahnhofstrasse 9 CH-3125 Toffen Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10 Fax: +41 31 810 40 11</p>	<p>Canada</p> <p>AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.</p> <p>1895 - 55th Avenue Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9 Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99 Fax: +1 514 636 75 55</p> <p>Atlit Inc.</p> <p>16 Westminster Ave., Suite 306A Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1 Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91 Fax: +1 514 369 81 67</p>	<p>China</p> <p>Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG</p> <p>Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza, #102 Moganshan Road 310051 -Hangzhou China</p> <p>Phone +86-571-8761 5336 Mobile +86-153-5505-0903 Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963</p>	<p>Germany</p> <p>AZAD Pharma GmbH</p> <p>Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a DE-78315 Radolfzell Phone No: +49 7732 939101510 Fax: +49 7732 9391016</p> <p>Armenia</p> <p>AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC</p> <p>Vanahovit 8, Proshian Asharak Ave., Kotayk Maiz Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62 Fax: +374 93 40 34 40</p>
---	---	---	---

The publisher: NT Holding LTD
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝
ՆՏ Հորիզոն ԲԻՐԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500
Circulation: 1500 print copies and
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:
TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:
GAYANEH ARAKELYAN
Director of the weekly:
MARINA HARUTYUNYAN
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**
Computer Design: **Ashot Khalapyan**

Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

ISSN 1829-0604
Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝
03ԱՑՑՑ68, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.
Registration certificate and the date:
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: contact@nt.am
URL: www.nt.am

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

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

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

Հասցե՝ Իսահակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009