

Armenians around the globe celebrate 28th anniversary of independence of Artsakh



September 2, 2019, marks the 28th anniversary of the declaration of independence of Artsakh, formerly known as the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

On this day in 1991, a joint sitting of lawmakers from the Nagorno Karabakh provincial council and the Shahumyan regional council proclaimed the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) within the borders of the former NKAO and Shahumyan region. The move was in line with the then-active legislation, particularly the April 3, 1990 law which entitled national autonomies to determine their status on their own.

On December 10, 1991, a few days before the official collapse of the Soviet Union, Nagorno Karabakh held a referendum, where the overwhelming majority, 99,89%, of the population voted in favor of complete independence from Azerbaijan. After this, Azerbaijan totally blockaded NKR and launched military aggressions.

The Artsakh Liberation War began when for the first time in September of 1991 Azerbaijan bombarded Stepanakert with Alazan rockets from Shushi. In 1994, at the request of Azerbaijan a trilateral (Azerbaijan, NKR, Armenia) ceasefire agreement was signed on May 12.

15 years after independence, in 2006, the people of Artsakh adopted the country's Constitution through a referendum, again on September 2.

Celebrations are held annually on this day in Artsakh.

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Security of Armenia and Artsakh a top priority, PM Pashinyan says

This day is historic for all of us in Armenia, Artsakh, in the Diaspora and for all Armenians, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a congratulatory message on Artsakh's Republic Day.

“This day 28 years ago Artsakh was proclaimed a republic, de facto becoming independent and choosing the path of building an independent statehood, which was full of challenges, achievements and losses, wars and victories.

«The Artsakh liberation war is one of the brightest chapters in the history of the Armenian people and the embodiment of our collective pride. 28 years have passed since that historical day: today free and independent Artsakh is a developed political and



historical reality,” the Prime Minister said.

He added that “unity is the key to our victories, our cohesive and unshakable will in quest of freedom, for the sake of independence, and on our way to preserving and developing our national identity.”

“That is how our nationwide victories were achieved. The Velvet Revolution was

another embodiment of such a nationwide unity, having at its heart our struggle for a free, democratic and developing homeland. The Velvet Revolution's values are pan-Armenian values; they will continue to take root among all Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora,” he noted.

“The security of Armenia and Artsakh is our top priority. The fate of Artsakh is the focus of attention of all Armenians, and we will pursue our efforts to safeguard the results of the Artsakh Liberation War for self-determination and security of the people of Artsakh, as well as to achieve a peaceful and just solution to the problem,” Nikol Pashinyan continued.

Artsakh's freedom earned through its people's lives, blood and boundless love



The 28 years of Artsakh's independence have represented the history of struggle, tenacity, heroism, and victory of the entire Armenian nation, the history created by our people, Armenian President Armen Sarkissian said in a congratulatory message on Artsakh's Republic Day. “The longing for freedom on our historical land of Artsakh comes from the depth of centuries. From time immemorial a strong foundation of the Armenian statehood was established on that piece of land, a powerful and combat-ready army was shaped, scientific, educational centers, and cultural values were created, traditions of a peaceful coexistence and good neighborly rela-

tions were enrooted and most importantly, a forceful will and unbeatable spirit to defend the native land and families at any cost was formed,” President Sarkissian said.

He added, however, that history is not only the past. History is also the present, history is being created also for the future.

“In 1988, we all collectively were dreaming of a free Artsakh; later, when the freedom was endangered and the Armenian nation was engaged in yet another fight for survival, we all were praying to God for Artsakh's salvation. Today, when independence has become a reality, we all demand a peaceful and secure Artsakh,” he added.

“Freedom and peace were not handed to

the people of Artsakh, they were earned through their lives, blood, a boundless love for the native land and dedication of the thousands of sons of the Armenian nation, and were secured 28 years ago in the Artsakh Declaration of Independence,” Armen Sarkissian continued. “Today, there is still much to be done in our complicated and changeable times. Those, who fell for the liberation and independence of Artsakh, people, who live in Artsakh and give an example of heroism with their daily life, as well as our future generations deserve the future of Artsakh to be shaped as a history of victories, peace, and good neighborly relations,” he noted. According to the President, “Today, more than ever, we are firm and steadfast in defending the Republic of Artsakh – a symbol of our Armenian unity, and its heroic people. Armed with this very conviction, I convey my sincere best wishes to Artsakh in all its undertakings leading to success and victory.” “I congratulate us all in Artsakh, Armenia, and Spyurk on the occasion of the Republic of Artsakh Day. Together, we will defend and protect our victories and achievements. God bless Artsakh, Armenia, and our nation,” the message concluded.

Armenian PM vows tougher fight against corruption

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on August 27 again claimed to have eliminated “systemic corruption” in Armenia while saying that Armenians expect a tougher anti-graft fight from the authorities.

“The fight against corruption, investigations into corruption-related crimes and especially the recoveries of damage caused by corruption are not unfolding on a scale which we and the public have the right to expect,” he said. “There are many objective and subjective problems here and institutional problems are not the least important of them.”

The authorities should step up that fight by creating “new institutional structures,” Pashinyan told government officials and civil society representatives making up an anti-corruption advisory council headed by him. In that context, he praised an anti-graft strategy and a three-year plan of actions stemming from it drafted by the Armenian



Justice Ministry in June.

Speaking at the council meeting, Justice Minister Rustam Badasyan said both documents, which will be submitted to the government for approval, have been amended since then. He said they continue to call for the creation of anti-corruption courts and a special law-enforcement agency empowered to prosecute state officials suspected of bribery, fraud and other corrupt practices.

The proposed Anti-Corruption Committee would inherit most of its powers from the existing Special Investigative Service (SIS), a law-enforcement body tasked with

combatting various crimes committed by state officials. A key SIS division dealing corruption and abuse of power would be incorporated into the committee.

In Badasyan’s words, these and other anti-graft measures should significantly improve Armenia’s position in Transparency International’s global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

Armenia ranked, together with Macedonia, Ethiopia and Vietnam, 107th out of 180 countries and territories evaluated in the 2017 CPI released shortly before last year’s “Velvet Revolution.”

The number of corruption investigations launched by Armenian law-enforcement authorities has risen significantly since the dramatic change of government. The most high-profile of these cases have targeted former top government officials and individuals linked to them.ing dispute.”

Artsakh FM hails push for restoring full-format negotiations



The first meeting of the Central Offices of the Foreign Ministries of the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia was held in Stepanakert, with the participation of the heads of the diplomatic and consular services of the Republic of Armenia abroad.

During the meeting, Artsakh’s Foreign Minister Masis Mayilyan presented the main priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Artsakh and the position of the authorities on the process of its international recognition, as well as the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict settlement.

Masis Mayilyan noted, in part, that the strengthening of the statehood of Artsakh, as well as certain global trends, according to

which the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination is considered as the basis for the resolution of ethno-political conflicts, “have opened new opportunities and prospects for the settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict.”

The Foreign Minister also stressed the importance of ensuring the sustainability and irreversibility of the positive trends in the process of international recognition of the Republic of Artsakh.

Touching upon the process of peaceful settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict, Masis Mayilyan hailed the positions of the leadership of the two Armenian states on the restoration of the full-format negotiations, with the direct and full-fledged participation of official Stepanakert, fully coincide, outlining some steps towards the achievement of this goal.

Further, an exchange of views took place on the common foreign policy agenda and the development of new ideas and approaches for addressing the challenges facing the two Armenian states in the international arena. In this context, practical steps on the implementation of joint initiatives and programs were discussed, as well as a range of issues on the agenda of consultations between the Ministries and their respective offices were identified in accordance with the Plan of Consultations between the two Ministries.

An agreement was reached to hold regular meetings in such a format.

U.S. ‘understands’ Iran’s importance for Armenia



Official publication

The United States is not pressuring Armenia to curtail its relations with neighboring Iran because of the U.S. sanctions against Tehran, according to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In an interview with the French-Armenian magazine “Nouvelles d’Armenie” publicized by his press office on August 31, Pashinyan was asked whether the sanctions are causing Armenian serious problems.

“I don’t want to make grandiose statements but our diplomats have succeeded in scoring a very important victory in this regard,” he replied. “Our American partners seem to have gotten a good grasp of the issue. They have started to understand that Iran is one thing for Washington and another for Armenia.”

“I can say that at the moment we are not subjected to any pressure [from the U.S.,]” added Pashinyan.

Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, a close associate of Pashinyan, made similar comments when he visited Washington and spoke at the Atlantic Council think-tank in July.

“We don’t want the United States to put pressure on Armenia for joining in its Iran sanctions agenda,” Mirzoyan said. He argued that Iran serves as one of his landlocked country’s two conduits to the outside world due to closed borders with the two other Muslim neighbors: Azerbaijan and Turkey.

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton discussed the U.S. sanctions with Pashinyan during an October 2018 trip to Armenia. Bolton said traffic through the Armenian-Iranian border will become a “significant issue” because Washington will be enforcing the sanctions “very vigorously.”

Pashinyan made clear afterwards that that his government will “deepen not only economic but also political relations” with Tehran. He paid an official visit to the Islamic Republic in February.

Pashinyan reaffirmed Yerevan’s strong interest in the implementation of Iranian-Armenian energy projects in an interview with leading Iranian media outlets cited by the Armenpress news agency on Monday. He noted with satisfaction the ongoing construction of a third transmission line that will link the Armenian and Iranian power grids.

The Armenian leader also pointed out that he has invited Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani to a summit of the Eurasian Economic Union that will be held in Yerevan next month. Iran and the Russian-led trade bloc signed a preferential trade agreement last year.

ICRC: Over 4,500 missing as a result of the Karabakh conflict



August 30 marks the International Day of the Disappeared aimed at raising awareness of governments, communities, media and public worldwide about the plight of people who went missing because of conflict, violence, migration and natural disasters. This represents a global humanitarian tragedy on a large scale. Some go missing in action. Some are forcibly disappeared. Each year, thousands lose contact with their loved ones as they flee fighting or seek a better

life elsewhere. Many never return and are never heard from again.

At the end of 2018, more than 139,000 cases of missing persons were being followed by the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). This figure has further increased in the first semester of 2019 to reach over 145,000. It is only a fraction of all the people believed to be missing worldwide because of past and current armed conflicts, natural disasters or migration.

These numbers only reveal part of the tragedy, as behind every missing person there are countless more people affected. Families and communities suffer from the uncertainty of not knowing the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones and they struggle with the multiple consequences that disappearances have on their lives.

“We urgently need stronger political will

and commitment from all actors to implement their obligations on the missing. We ask States to live up to their responsibilities and to take the necessary steps to address this profound yet overlooked humanitarian challenge”, says Peter Maurer, ICRC President.

In connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the ICRC has registered over 4,500 missing people, both military and civilians, through its delegations in Yerevan and Baku and its mission in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In line with its mandate under the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC assists the parties to the conflict with its expertise, and by acting as a neutral intermediary to support their efforts and encourage them to do all possible to clarify the fate of the missing people.

Cyprus considers opening Museum of Armenia



Armenia, Cyprus and Greece have agreed to boost cooperation between the Diaspora structures of the three nations, create a youth network, develop professional platforms, establish ties between renowned specialists of the three countries.

The issue was discussed at a meeting in

Cyprus between Zareh Sinanyan, Armenia’s High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, Fotiu Fotis, Commissioner for Humanitarian and Foreign Affairs of the President of Cyprus, and Antonios Diamantis, Greek Deputy Foreign Minister for Diaspora.

Zareh Sinanyan and Fotiu Fotis separately

discussed the bilateral relations established between Armenia and Cyprus and referred to the deepening of cooperation between Diaspora organizations.

Speaking about the Armenian community, Mr. Fotis said Cyprus is doing its best to ensure that Armenians preserve their national identity, and is supporting the Armenian organizations, schools and churches.

He revealed plans to build a Museum of Armenia in Cyprus and said the country anticipates funding from the European Union.

“This museum will be important not only for the Armenian community, but also every person visiting Cyprus,” he said.

Zareh Sinanyan welcomed the idea and pledged to support the initiative. According to him, the historic similarities between the histories of Armenia and Cyprus contribute to the deepening of cooperation between the two countries.

Government Plans Tax-Free Zone in Gyumri

The government has announced plans to set up a free economic zone in Gyumri, a move welcomed by the mayor of Armenia's second largest city.

Under a bill approved by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's cabinet on August 29, the tax-free zone would occupy more than 300 hectares of land adjacent to Gyumri's international airport.

"The free economic zone is expected to become an important hub for logistical services provided in electronic commerce," said Economy Minister Tigran Khachatryan. It is primarily designed to accommodate warehouses used for international e-commerce and foster "export-oriented manufacturing activities," he added



during a cabinet meeting.

Gyumri Mayor Samvel Balasanyan has for years lobbied for such a measure. He stressed on Friday the tax haven's economic significance for a city that has long been suffering from high poverty and unemployment rates.

"We are going to have new jobs and there will be lots of in-

vestments," Balasanyan said at a meeting with Armenia's ambassadors abroad accompanied by Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Minister for Local Government Suren Papikyan.

A government statement on the bill spoke of thousands of jobs to be created in Gyumri in the coming years

Armenia already has two free economic zones where companies meeting certain conditions are exempt from virtually all taxes. One of them was set up near Meghri, a small town on the country's border with Iran, in late 2017.

The Meghri zone has attracted few Armenian, Iranian or other firms so far. The Armenian government blames this fact on former government officials and their cronies who it says had privatized land plots in and around the zone at disproportionately low prices and are now obstructing economic activity there. In Papikyan's words, the government has asked to courts to declare those privatization deals illegal.

Opposition lawmaker downplays economic data



Armenia's macroeconomic performance this year has not been as good as is claimed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, a senior opposition parliamentarian said on September 2.

Pashinyan regularly touts official statistics showing continuing growth in various sectors of the Armenian economy. At a cabinet meeting last week, he cited "good" macroeconomic indicators registered in July. He declared that GDP growth could reach double-digit rates in the coming years.

"I have the impression that either the prime minister gets inaccurate reports about the economic situation or he simply showcases only those figures that are more or less positive," said Mane Tandilyan, a leader of the opposition Bright Armenia Party and the

chairwoman of a parliament committee on finance and budgetary affairs.

Tandilyan, who served as labor minister in Pashinyan's cabinet from May to November 2018, argued that the Armenian economy is now expanding more slowly than in 2017 or the first few months of 2018. She also claimed that Pashinyan and other government officials gloss over other, more alarming economic data.

"I am concerned about a sharp drop in the volume of cargo shipments," she told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "There has been a nearly 50 percent drop in the cargo turnover [so far this year.] It means that the turnover, exports of goods is falling."

Tandilyan also said that despite a sizable rise in its tax revenues the government carried out only one-quarter of planned capital expenditures on infrastructure projects in the first of this year. That further slowed economic activity in the country, she said.

Pashinyan admitted on August 29 that GDP would have increased more rapidly this year had the government's major capital spending projects not fallen behind schedule. He blamed that on delays in the selection of contractors and signing of contracts with them. Government agencies should therefore do a better job of organizing this infrastructure spending next year, added Pashinyan.

Yerevan to have \$270,000,000 skyscraper

Armenia's Minister of Economy Tigran Khachatryan held a meeting with Laura Investment representatives to discuss the company's upcoming project on building a 270,000,000 dollar skyscraper in Yerevan.

The skyscraper will be a 270 meter, 71-storey multifunctional residential complex. The developer of the project told the minister that construction will last 5 years. Laura Investments also briefed on the seismic safety actions in the project.

The company is planning to build the tower in an area adjacent to the Dalma Gardens, where Laura Investments will also improve other infrastructure and build parks, playing grounds, a recreation zone and a ropeway.

Minister Tigran Khachatryan said that investors will have the government's support wherever required. He also proposed to con-



sider the opportunities of utilizing local potential in realizing the project.

Microsoft's Regional General Manager for CEE to keynote WCIT 2019 in Yerevan

Anke den Ouden, Microsoft's Regional General Manager of 24 countries in CEE and Central Asia, will be one of the keynote speakers at the The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) in Yerevan.

Gary Vaynerchuk, CEO and Co-Founder of VaynerMedia, Stan Shih, Co-founder of Acer, Narayana Murthy, Co-Founder of Infosys, Jensen Huang, President and CEO of NVIDIA, and Min Kao, Co-

Founder of Garmin are among the speakers that have confirmed their participation in a major IT event.

WCIT is a place for global tech leaders and aspiring innovators to meet, discuss, and shape our Digital Future. Featuring the most profound leaders of the industry, the largest congress on IT will explore the ways technology transforms our lives.

WCIT 2019 will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9, 2019. The Congress is hosted by Armenia with the support and under the high patronage of the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA). Its main organizing body is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE).



Amulsar Operator Slams Environmental Auditors



(RFE/RL – Yerevan) - A British-American mining company has accused a Lebanese-based consultancy of misleading the Armenian government about the environmental risks of its project to develop the Amulsar gold deposit in southeastern Armenia.

In a statement released late on Friday, the company, Lydian International, also challenged the government to name rival mining firms that have allegedly helped to disrupt the multimillion-dollar project.

“The Government of Armenia has said publicly that Lydian and the Amulsar Project have been the subject of a campaign by rival mining companies providing support to opponents of the Amulsar Project ... When will the Government of Armenia identify the rival mining companies conducting this campaign, how much has been paid to oppose the Amulsar Project and who has been paid?” read the statement.

It apparently referred to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s comments made during an August 19 video address to the nation.

Pashinyan suggested that some of the other mining companies operating in the country have sponsored environmentalists’ campaigns against Lydian in an effort to scuttle the Amulsar project. He said they thus hope to avoid spending large sums of money on complying with “unprecedentedly high environmental standards” which the government is planning to enforce in Armenia’s entire mining industry.

Pashinyan signaled his government’s plans to allow mining operations at Amulsar, citing the written findings of an environmental audit of Lydian’s project

conducted by ELARD, a consulting firm contracted by the government in February.

ELARD submitted a 200-page report on the Amulsar project to Armenia’s Investigative Committee earlier in August. The committee cited the report as concluding that toxic waste from the would-be mine is extremely unlikely to contaminate mineral water sources in the nearby spa resort of Jermuk or rivers and canals flowing into Lake Sevan.

According to the law-enforcement agency, ELARD found greater environmental risks for other rivers in the area but said they can be minimized if Lydian takes 16 “mitigating measures” recommended by ELARD. Lydian expressed readiness to take virtually of all those measures.

However, ELARD experts offered a different interpretation of their report during a video conference with Armenian government officials and lawmakers moderated by Pashinyan on August 29. They said that they cannot definitively evaluate the Amulsar project’s potential impact on the environment because Lydian had submitted flawed and incomplete information to the Armenian authorities.

Armenian environmental activists said the experts’ latest statements substantiate their long-standing assertions that the Amulsar project is too dangerous for the country’s ecosystem. According to one of those activists, Anna Shahnazaryan, those statements mean that some Armenian officials sided with Lydian to give Pashinyan inaccurate information about the issue.

“State bodies must now investigate to find out whether the Investigative Committee or

others have done a bad job in this process or whether Lydian has continued to mislead [the government,]” Shahnazaryan told RFE/RL’s Armenian service.

Lydian charged, however, that it was the ELARD consultants who misled Pashinyan.

“While Lydian welcomed ELARD’s rightful conclusion about the lack of impact on Lake Sevan and the Jermuk water source, yesterday’s regrettable performance by ELARD reveals more about an apparent lack of capacity to review and analyze complex details of more than 20,000 pages of professional studies provided to them by leading global experts than it does about Lydian or the Amulsar Project,” said its statement.

“ELARD’S comments during yesterday’s call regarding available data appear to be about a ‘wish list’ of what they would have preferred to be able to review,” it added. “When asked, ELARD did not give any reference to any industry standards that Lydian did not comply with.”

Lydian again argued that its environmental impact assessments submitted to the authorities had been certified by more authoritative Western environmental consultancies. The company also stressed that it had been granted the mining license in line with Armenian law and has been “illegally deprived” of its ability to mine gold at Amulsar since June 2018.

In July 2018, Pashinyan instructed the Investigative Committee to launch a criminal inquiry in order to establish whether a government body that issued Lydian’s operating license in April 2016 broke any laws or regulations. The committee said it has no evidence of such violations when it publicized the ELARD report on August 16. The head of the law-enforcement body, Hayk Grigoryan, and the man leading the inquiry, Yura Ivanyan, stood by that conclusion during Thursday’s video conference.

Still, it emerged on Monday that the Investigative Committee has launched an internal inquiry into the impartiality of Ivanyan’s actions. A spokeswoman for the committee pointed to a media revelation that Ivanyan is related to Aramays Grigoryan, who was Armenia’s environment minister at the time when Lydian won the license. She said the committee will clarify whether this fact influenced the Amulsar probe.

Moody's upgrades Armenia's rating to Ba3, changes outlook to stable from positive



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the COAF SMART Center of the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) in Debed village of Lori province.

The PM toured the Center, got acquainted with the investment program and the works carried out so far.

COAF SMART is an informal education environment, providing equal opportunities to 150.000 young and elderly peoples of villages.

In his remarks the Armenian PM said it's a great honor for him to visit the Center, adding that he planned this visit long ago because he has repeatedly heard about this successful project.

"I really expected what I saw here. I want to specifically thank for the efforts made as a result of which we have such a center of revival in Armenia's heart which is the birthplace of Tumanyan", Pashinyan said.

Talking about the revolution the PM said in reality the revolution in Armenia started earlier than it took place. Of course, political processes launched in 2018, but developments were taken place earlier which

were not perceived by many as revolutionary and the economic foundation of the revolution. Pashinyan said the economic base of the revolution are the people who implemented new ideas in the business, science and economy, as well as programs being out of the traditional oligarchic circles.

"We see that there are various initiatives. And we also see the change of attitude of several figures of the Diaspora on the actions in Armenia", he said, adding that today the situation is different, the perception among the Diaspora has changed and people came to the conclusion that the logic of charity should change into a logic of development. "That is to implement programs which will change the people", he noted.

According to him, the new formula should be the following: programs must be implemented so that people will believe in themselves. This is the formula of the revolution that took place in Armenia, according to the PM. Pashinyan said previously people were believing in the political leaders, had hopes with them. But in 2018 they believed in themselves and understood that they are a

decisive force.

The Armenian PM stated that this process started long ago. "The revolution tells children the following: you can change the world. This is the key point of these programs –to help the people to believe in their strengths. So you see that a person aged 40 or 50 studies with a child in the same room. When I was a lawmaker, I studied English together with 9th grades school-children at the American University of Armenia", he said.

Pashinyan highlighted that today it is necessary to build the highway of hope. He emphasized the presence of such educational Centers through which the child prepares for tomorrow.

COAF SMART is the world's most innovative initiative for the advancement of rural communities. COAF SMART seeks to empower Armenia's village youth through resources and opportunities to explore their intellectual curiosities and push the boundaries of the fields of study that compel them.

U.S. Armenians Sue Turkey to Visit Their Native Land Without a Passport

BY HARUT SASSOUNIAN

A unique lawsuit, unrelated to the Armenian Genocide, was filed on May 29, by two Armenian-Americans against the Turkish government in the United States Federal Court, Central District of California.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Barkev Ghazarian, 88, and his son, Garo Ghazarian, claiming “statutory elder abuse, intentional affliction of emotional distress, violation of international law, breach of fiduciary duty, and intentional interference with expectation of inheritance,” according to a 44-page complaint filed by the law firm of Kerkonian Dajani LLC.

Plaintiff Barkev Ghazarian is a United States citizen born in Kaladouran, Turkey, on April 20, 1931. He currently resides in Glendale, California. His son, Garo, born in Beirut, Lebanon, is also a United States citizen who lives in Glendale.

The complaint alleges that the Plaintiffs suffered personal injury caused by tortuous acts or omissions of the Turkish government’s employees or agents in the United States.

In the 1930’s Kaladouran was a small Armenian village in the outskirts of Kessab, Syria. Barkev Ghazarian was baptized as an Armenian Christian “at a sacred ceremonial site in Ballum, Turkey, in 1931,” according to the lawsuit. Ballum or Barlum is the ancient site of Greco-Roman ruins, located at a short distance from Kaladouran. For centuries, local Armenians, including Barkev’s family, went on pilgrimages to Ballum to perform their religious and cultural rites.

In 1939, Kaladouran was divided between Syria and Turkey, leaving Barkev’s home on the Syrian side, while his family’s fields and lands remained on the Turkish side. Since Ballum was also left under Turkish control, the Armenians of Kaladouran could no longer practice their rituals in that locality.

On October 11, 2017, Barkev decided to go to Turkey to visit Ballum. He submitted his visa application to the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., indicating that his expected entry date would be December, 23, 2017. In the visa application, under the category of “Type of passport,” he checked the box for “Other,” and under “please specify,” he wrote, “Armenian minority Christian (Treaty of Lausanne).” Barkev also indicated that he was born in Kaladouran, Turkey, and was seeking entry “for religious pilgrimage” purposes. He intended “to pass native religious and cultural tradi-

tions to his son, Plaintiff Garo, and progeny,” according to the lawsuit.

Coincidentally, on October 8, 2017, Turkey suspended issuing visas to U.S. citizens in retaliation to a similar ban by the United States to Turkish citizens until December 28, 2017. Barkev did not possess a U.S. passport, but even if he did, Turkey would have refused to issue him an entry visa under the ban. The Turkish Embassy received Barkev’s visa application 71 days prior to his arrival in Turkey, whereas the Embassy required that such applications be submitted at least 30 days prior to his expected date of departure. Having received no response from the Turkish Embassy, Barkev sent a reminder on December 6, 2017, inquiring about the status of his visa application.

On December 11, 2017, an employee of the Turkish Embassy called the office of Barkev’s son Garo, indicating that the Embassy did not know what type of visa Barkev was requesting, even though it was clearly marked “short stay” on the visa application. In response, Barkev sent an email to the Embassy on December 18, 2017. Then, on December 21, 2017, he sent a reminder to the Embassy by overnight mail. On December 22, 2017, on the same day that Barkev was supposed to fly to Turkey, the Embassy’s Consular Section sent an email to Barkev instructing him to reapply to the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles with a passport. The complaint filed by Barkev’s attorneys stated that Turkey’s representatives “harassed, agitated, confused and thwarted Barkev, intending to devalue his identity as an Armenian Christian born in Turkey.”

The lawsuit also quoted Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, proclaiming: “Armenians have no rights at all in this prosperous country. The land is yours, the land belongs to the Turks. In history this land was Turkish, therefore it is Turkish and will remain Turkish forever. The land has finally been returned to its rightful owners. The Armenians and the others have no rights here at all. These blessed regions are the native lands of the true Turks.”

The lawsuit further stated that “by such proclamations, and then through a series of legislative, executive, administrative, and other official and/or unofficial acts, Defendant established the Targeted Policy at the very founding of the Republic of Turkey. The core purpose of the Targeted Pol-

icy was to strip native Armenian Christians of their rights and identities by dehumanizing, degrading, expropriating, alienating, disenfranchising, liquidating and otherwise severing Armenian Christians from their native lands and their native customs and religious practices on such lands. This Targeted Policy has been pursued, institutionalized, enhanced and adhered to by Defendant’s successive governments and agents.”

The lawsuit accused Turkey and its agents of violating the following international agreements by their mistreatment of Barkev:

1. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights;
2. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons;
3. The Treaty of Lausanne;
4. The European Convention on Human Rights;
5. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
6. Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing;
7. The Madrid International Plan on Ageing;
8. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Unfortunately, Barkev’s health has deteriorated since his planned visit to Turkey in 2017 to the extent that he is no longer able to travel. This was the last chance Barkev had to visit his native land and practice his religious rites as a Christian Armenian. The Turkish government deprived Barkev of that opportunity by not granting him a visa.

On June 10, the U.S. Federal Court asked the Plaintiffs to show cause in writing, no later than June 28, as to why the case should not be dismissed for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. As requested by the Court, the Plaintiffs filed a 25-page memorandum on June 28 explaining that Turkey, as a foreign Sovereign, does not have the right to violate U.S. and international humanitarian laws, particularly on American soil.

On July 11, the Federal Court decided that it would “defer a determination about its jurisdiction until after Turkey has been served and had an opportunity to provide its views on the issue.”

This lawsuit provides a unique opportunity to affirm the rights of Armenians to visit without a visa their native lands now occupied by the Turkish government!

Armenia to test revised curricula standards in September 2020



Yerevan /Mediamax/. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Armenia has begun revising the national and per-subject curricula standards for the public education system.

The updated standards will be introduced for testing in one of the marzes in September of 2020.

The revision is conducted by local and international experts. The final document will establish the range of school subjects, system of evaluation, teaching methods, basic curriculum, and the knowledge and skills school graduates are expected to have.

The curriculum has been changed notably.

“We have substantially reduced the workload, especially for middle school students, and adapted the curriculum to the peculiarities of age groups. Previously, students would choose the natural sciences and mathematics group in high school and obtain more advanced knowledge in phys-

ics and mathematics, but children often wanted to study advanced subjects from other groups as well. The new curriculum is more flexible. Regardless of the group, students can choose two and more additional subjects,” expert Gagik Melikyan told the press.

The revision of standards is guided by development of abilities and skills of the pupils. The range of subjects will expand and include integrated subjects.

“The natural sciences group in high school will have humanitarian social studies. Students will learn through projects the materials that used to be taught within social studies, history and some other subjects. The humanities group will have the subject of natural sciences.

The experiments for sciences taught in the 7th-9th grades have been distributed between the natural sciences classes for the 5th and the 6th grades, according to the age groups, which will make studying science

in higher grades easier for the students,” explained expert Artashes Torosyan.

Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Arevik Anapiosyan has said that schools used to introduce new subjects for any innovation, but the approach has changed: now the topics will be included in one or several subjects.

“The topics in question include media literacy, sustainable development, democracy, critical thinking, and learning to learn. We try to teach them through all subjects. Our goal is not to increase the workload and the number of subjects, but to organize the learning process and discuss topics in an integrated format,” she said.

The ministry is cooperating with foreign partners in order to obtain financing for the most costly program, retraining for teachers. If it secures the required amount, the revised curricula standards will be introduced in all Armenian schools in 2023.

Film on Armenia's Velvet Revolution to screen at Toronto Film Festival



I Am Not Alone – a documentary on Armenia's Velvet Revolution will screen at

the Toronto International Film Festival on Saturday, September 7.

The 2018 Armenian revolution fuels Garin Hovannisian's gripping documentary about a modern-day political power struggle and the citizen activists who refused to accept it.

This chronicle of the 2018 Armenian revolution combines gripping front-line reportage with new interviews that describe incidents the cameras could not capture.

Hugely informative, briskly paced, and offering a laudable balance of perspectives, I Am Not Alone is a feat of nonfiction storytelling and a must-see for anyone eager to make sense of recent history.

Helmed by Garin Hovannisian (codirector of 1915, which re-examines the Armenian genocide), I Am Not Alone extracts fascinating commentaries from an array of individuals on both sides, including Pashinyan and, most surprisingly, Sargsyan.

Yerevan to host Second International Print Biennale

KulturDialog Armenien will organize the Second International Print Biennale, Yerevan 2019 at the premises of the "HayArt" Cultural center in Yerevan from September 7 to December 15.

The Second International Print Biennale, Yerevan 2019 is divided into two sections – the contest that will continue through November 7 and additional exhibitions that will extend from September 14 to December 15.

The time from September 7 until November 7, 2019 will be dedicated to the exhibition of artworks by printmakers from all over the world. The contest exhibition of the biennale will feature 335 art works by 216 artists from 50 countries.

The international jury of the biennale consists of 5 professionals, who will select the winning works and artists during the two days after the opening ceremony. The jury will be presided over by Prof. Dr. Mateusz



Otręba (Poland) and will comprise Vice President Margarit Lehmann (Switzerland), Herbert Maier (Germany), Lian Ng (USA), and Sona Harutyunyan M.A. (Armenia).

On the occasion of the award ceremony at the premises of the "HayArt" Cultural center on September 10th, 2019, the jury will award a Grand Prix (Medal), a First Prize (Medal), a Second Prize (Medal), and a Third Prize (Medal), Special Prizes by "All Armenian Fund", "Russian Scientific

and Cultural Center" and also Diplomas for outstanding works of special interest.

All works presented at the contest will be on display until November 7.

The second part of the biennale will focus on contemporary Polish, Chinese, German, French, Estonian and Armenian printmaking: The five solo exhibitions of printed works by the Polish artist Tomasz Winiarski (starting September 14th), Armenian artist Samvel Hambardzumyan (starting September 18th), Chinese artist Minjie Zhang (starting October 5th), German artist Jürgen Middelmann (starting October 25th), French artist Brice Ammar-Khodja (starting November 1st) and one group exhibition of Estonian artists (starting October 3rd) will give the audience an insight into current trends of the Polish, Chinese, German, French, Estonian and Armenian art in the field of printmaking.

RaiNews: Armenia – a Silicon Valley in the Caucasus

Armenia has been witnessing a real boom in the IT and telecommunications sector for some years, the Italian RaiNew writes in an article titled "Armenia: A Silicon Valley in the Caucasus."

Author Martino Seniga travels to Armenia to tell about the technological and educational challenges facing the country.

He notes in the report that Armenia, which

produced 20% of the weapons produced in the Soviet Union, has now moved to the web and cyberspace.

"Today, numerous startups and companies operating on the web are flourishing in the capital Yerevan, some of which are among the global leaders in their sector," the reports states.

The author informs that between October

6 and 9 Yerevan will host the World Congress on IT 2019, one of the main meeting points for experts in the sector.

Artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, e-commerce, distance education, cybersecurity, smart cities, startups and incubators are some of the themes that make up the meeting agenda.

Lilit Hovhannisyán becomes 1st Armenian artist to be awarded Los Angeles Certificate of Appreciation

Lilit Hovhannisyán has become the first ever Armenian artist to be awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the City of Los Angeles.

Pop star Lilit Hovhannisyán was awarded the honor by the LA City Council for including the city of Los Angeles in her ongoing Dream World Tour, organizing an excellent concert and promoting the Armenian culture and arts on a top level.

Los Angeles City Council member awarded Hovhannisyán the certificate during a City Council session. All members of the City Council were in attendance in the televised ceremony.

Lilit Hovhannisyán thanked the Council members and emphasized that Los Angeles



has a special place in the Armenian community's life.

“This kind of appreciation by the Los Angeles City Hall has great meaning and importance for me. As a result of the Armenian Genocide 1,5 million Armenians were killed, and thousands of Armenians sought

a second homeland in different countries around the world. Los Angeles is one of the cities which took in Armenians after the genocide. I am grateful to this city not only for this certificate, but also the warm attitude towards my countrymen during different times,” the pop star said at the event.

As part of her Dream World Tour Hovhannisyán has already performed in Kuwait, France, Denmark, Sweden,

Germany, Austria and other countries.

Concerts are scheduled to take place also in the US, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Lebanon and elsewhere.

IDC conference to advocate for passage of Armenian Genocide Resolution

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) will, once again, serve as a major sponsor of the In Defense of Christians (IDC) National Leadership Conference, to be held September 10-11th, in Washington, DC. During this national gathering, prominent faith leaders will join human rights advocates from across the United States in urging elected officials to take concrete action to preserve Christianity in the Middle East.

“The ANCA is proud to be a sponsor of the In Defense of Christians National Leadership Conference,” remarked ANCA Government Affairs Director Tereza Yerimyan.

“IDC has accomplished so much over the past six years in shaping U.S. policy re-



garding the plight of Christians and other vulnerable minorities in the Middle East. The ANCA is pleased that the conference will once again advocate for – as a major policy goal – Congressional passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution,” added Yerimyan.

U.S. Senate and House Armenian Genocide legislation (S.Res.150 and H.Res.296) aim at establishing, as a matter of U.S. policy, 1) the rejection of Armenian Genocide denial, 2) ongoing official U.S. government recognition and remembrance of this crime, and 3) the importance of education about the Armenian Genocide in preventing modern-day atrocities.

Over 100 U.S. Representatives have cosponsored H.Res. 296, which was spearheaded by Representatives Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL).

The Senate version, led by Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Ted Cruz (R-TX), currently has 18 cosponsors. The ANCA supports immediate consideration and passage of both measures.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

You have enough energy to spare. Apply heavy muscle to exercise or a chore that needs to be done. Otherwise you may become snappy and are liable to pick a fight. Work with those who share your rhythm this week, or you may say things that you'll wish you had not. We each have our own drumbeat and yours is faster than most at this time.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

Financial concerns have a way of working out favorably. You need to be open to discussion and negotiation to find the “right” solution. You have an unusual opportunity coming your way early in the week that will materialize fairly soon.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

Warning to those on diet and exercise programs: this week it is just too easy to break training. If you mean what you've promised to yourself, don't go anywhere in which you would be in harm's way. It is a time in which you feel more outgoing and extroverted. Social life is a pleasure.



Taurus (April 20 -- May 20)

You have many favorable aspects this week. The planets offer positive passage with relation to travel, fun, romance, education, and legal interests. Move forward in any project that interests you.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

You are in high gear this week. You must use your wits and think quickly. You rather like this kind of stimulation, but use caution with the accelerator. There may be a cop on every corner. Pay attention to what you are doing with knives and other tools. Your reflexes are off a notch.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

Circumstances from your past may be particularly troublesome at this time. If needed, a legal consult could be very helpful. Stay within the expected limits now. Don't stretch your boundaries beyond the line.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

The lead paragraph pertains to you. Your mind is like a chattering magpie. You may feel the need to contact family members for serious discussions. Calm yourself by sorting and organizing your personal items and tools at home.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Your aspects favor business and projects involving your home or property. You lean toward the introverted interests at this time. Take time to enjoy books, writing, and movies that you have wanted to see.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Mistakes in paperwork or filing may become an irritant this week. Double check everything to save yourself some trouble later. Back your way carefully out of domestic trouble. Your resistant attitudes are not helping the situation at all.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You may have one or two unusual experiences this week that could be written off as coincidences. They are not. Look for the meaning in each and let them teach you something you need to know. Teachers come in many forms and sometimes when you least expect it.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

You have more energy than you know how to manage this week. Use caution when driving because your accelerator foot is probably a bit heavy. Pour that muscle into making improvements in your environment and the neighborhood. Be aware of your tendency to overwhelm others now.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Your feelings are exuberant and your mind is chattering like a magpie. Make an effort to watch the faces of others. They may not be so absorbed with your ideas as you are. Write about what you are thinking so you can take a good look at it later. Not everything you plan is practical, but it will probably lead you to creative territory.

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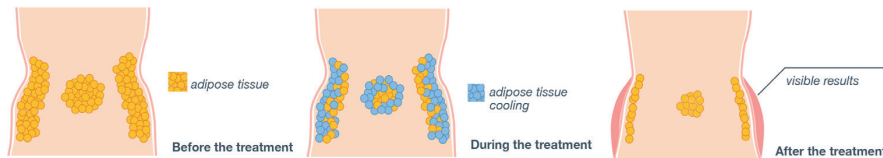
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