

# US Department of State refers to the atrocities of the Azerbaijani armed forces during the aggression against Armenia



The US Department of State published a report on the human rights situation in Armenia, in which it also referred in detail to the atrocities committed by Azerbaijani servicemen during the September aggression against Armenia.

The report mentions that there are credible reports that during the September conflict, Azerbaijani forces committed unlawful killings involving summary executions of Armenian soldiers in Azerbaijani custody.

It is noted that the International Committee of the Red Cross studied the cases of missing persons as a result of the conflict with Azerbaijan. It is noted that after the 2020 war, 203 people (including 20 civilians) are considered missing, and 3 military personnel are considered missing as a result of the September

13-14 conflict.

The US State Department also addresses the illegal execution of 7 Armenian servicemen by Azerbaijani servicemen, which, according to the Human Rights Watch NGO and investigative journalists of Belingcat, was filmed in mid-September 2022.

The report also mentions the cases of inhumane treatment of the bodies of Armenian female servicemen during the September conflict, attacks on civilian infrastructure by Azerbaijani forces, targeting of emergency vehicles.

The report also presents cases of violations of human rights in Armenia, including the use of force by the security forces, bad conditions in prisons, arbitrary arrests, and restrictions on freedom of speech.

## Pashinyan holds phone call with Putin

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan held a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday, the Prime Minister's Office reported.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh resulting from the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan was discussed, according to a read-out issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

In this context, PM Pashinyan discussed the March 5 Azerbaijani terror attack in



Nagorno Karabakh and its consequences. The Armenian Prime Minister attached

importance to a targeted reaction by Russia in context of overcoming the crisis in Nagorno Karabakh.

Views were exchanged around the process of Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization of relations.

Issues concerning the implementation of the 9 November 2020, 11 January 2021 and 26 November 2021 and 31 October 2022 trilateral statements be-

tween the leaders of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan were discussed.

## Armenian Parliament Speaker briefs counterparts on ongoing blockade of Artsakh

Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Alen Simonyan held a number of meetings with heads of parliaments of different countries within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Bahrain dedicated to peace and security issues, Parliament's press service informs.

During bilateral meeting and the official dinner, the Speaker presented the situation following the 44-day war to the heads of parliament, detailing the cases of anti-Armenian propaganda carried out by



Azerbaijan and the invasion of the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Issues related to the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and

unresolved humanitarian issues were discussed with the President of the Belgian Senate, Stephanie D'Hose.

The President of the Hungarian National Assembly, Laszlo Kover, was briefed on the consequences of the crisis of Lachin corridor, and the results of discussion of the issue on various international platforms were also discussed. The Speaker of the National Assembly also met with the head of the Egyptian Parliament.

## Armenian Defense Minister briefs NATO's former Secretary General on regional developments

Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan received Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the founding president of the international political consulting organization "Rasmussen Global" and former Secretary General of NATO, and the organization's representatives.

At the request of the guest, the Minister of Defense presented the latest developments in the region and the resulting situation.

A number of issues related to regional security were discussed at the meeting.





## Armenia set to employ international genocide prevention mechanisms to avert ethnic cleansing in Artsakh – PM

Armenia will employ international genocide prevention mechanisms to prevent ethnic cleansing in Artsakh. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on March 16 he has given relevant instructions to the Foreign Ministry in this regard.

“The Azerbaijani state propaganda has long been creating an information background for large-scale attack on Nagorno Karabakh, and the trends of escalation are visible on the ground, as well,” the Prime Minister said.

“Our assessment remains the same. The military-political leadership of Azerbaijan is preparing for ethnic cleansing and genocide of the people of Nagorno Karabakh. This has actually been enshrined in the February 22nd decision of the International Court of Justice, where it is clearly recorded that the blockade of the Lachin corridor can lead to irreversible humanitarian consequences of the people



of Nagorno Karabakh,” he said.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of taking measures to employ international genocide prevention mechanisms. “I mean, in particular, the mechanisms available within the framework of the UN, and I have given relevant instructions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this regard,” PM Pashinyan stated.

He attached importance to sending an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin corridor and Nagorno Karabakh, noting that it is important in terms of addressing the groundless statements

of Azerbaijan claiming that Armenia has an army in Nagorno Karabakh and that Armenia is transporting military cargo to Artsakh.

“These claims are groundless, and Azerbaijan is trying to use those as an excuse for a new military escalation in the region. Therefore, dispatching an international fact-finding mission to Nagorno Karabakh and the Lachin corridor is becoming a necessity in this regard, as well,” he said.

“There is a Defense Army in Artsakh and its existence is justified as long as the people in Nagorno Karabakh are facing a threat of ethnic cleansing and genocide,” he said.

PM Pashinyan stressed, however, that the Defense Army is not the only mechanism to prevent genocide in Nagorno Karabakh. “One such mechanism is the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno Karabakh,” he said.

## Pashinyan, Blinken discuss humanitarian crisis in Artsakh

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a telephone conversation with Antony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

The interlocutors discussed issues related to the humanitarian crisis caused by Azerbaijan’s illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor.

Nikol Pashinyan and Antony Blinken exchanged thoughts on the perspectives of settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations and the opening of communication channels in the region.

The US Secretary of State reiterated his call for the immediate reopening of

the Lachin Corridor and emphasized that the US is ready to continue supporting the above-mentioned processes.

During the telephone conversation, Prime Minister Pashinyan expressed his concern regarding the recently increasing aggressive rhetoric by Azerbaijan.

## Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan resigns

Yerevan Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan announced his resignation at the sitting of the Yerevan City Council.

“It was an honor for me to be the Mayor of Yerevan, to serve the city, and I will continue to serve the Republic of Armenia,” he said.

He said Deputy Mayor Tigran Avinyan will lead the Civil Contract Party list during the upcoming elections.

“I hope the Party will receive the



vote of confidence of Yerevan residents, and we will be able to continue to implement the priority programs for the city, which we started together in 2018,” Sargsyan said.

Hrachya Sargsyan was elected Mayor in December 2021 at an extraordinary meeting of the City Council. Before that, from October 29, 2018, he had held the position of the Deputy Mayor of Yerevan.

## French Senate hosts conference “In support of Armenia and Artsakh”

The French Senate hosted an exclusive conference “In Support of Armenia and Artsakh,” featuring prominent French intellectuals and parliamentarians.

The conference was organized under the auspices of the presidents of the two houses of the French Parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly, Gérard Larchet and Yael Braun-Pivet.

Bruno Retailleau, chairman of the international awareness group on Nagorno-Karabakh, head of the Republicans faction of the Senate, and Bernard Kushner, former minister of foreign affairs of France, the founder of “Doctors without borders” and “Doctors of the World” organizations, offered opening remarks.

The French intellectuals expressed their deep concern about the ongoing



and unconcealed policy of Armenophobia and ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan, sounding the alarm about the existential threats faced by the people of Artsakh as a result of the latter, and called on the international community to immediately take effective steps to lift the blockade of Artsakh that has lasted for almost 100 days, to guarantee the right of Artsakh Armenians to live safely and with dignity

on their native land.

At the end of the conference, the co-chairs of the France-Armenia friendship groups, Gilbert-Luc Devinaz and Anne-Laurence Petel, Chairman of the France-Artsakh Friendship Group Francois Pupponi and Artsakh's Representative to France Hovhannes Gevorgyan, made closing remarks.

Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian, Father Grigor Khachatryan, leader of the French Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, deputies of the French National Assembly and members of the Senate, heads of regional and city authorities, French cultural and public figures, many journalists, as well as representatives of the Armenian community were also present at the conference.

## EU must push Azerbaijan to lift the blockade of Lachin corridor – Anders Fogh Rasmussen

The EU must push Azerbaijan to lift the blockade of the Lachin corridor, NATO's former Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said after he visited the entrance of the corridor.

“In December last year, it was blocked by Azerbaijanis. Since then, no civilian or commercial traffic has been able reach Nagorno-Karabakh. This has left some 120,000 residents without access to essential goods and services, including life-saving medication and health care,” he said.

“Europe cannot close its eyes to a humanitarian crisis happening on our borders. The EU must use its relationship with Azerbaijan and push them to lift the blockade and fulfil their international commitments. If we do not, a humanitarian risks becoming a humanitarian catastrophe,” he said.

Chairman of the international political consulting organization “Rasmussen Global” and former Secretary General of



NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen held meetings with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other officials on March 13.

## Armenia renounces CSTO Deputy Secretary-General quota



Armenia has submitted a proposal to the CSTO on relinquishing its quota of Deputy Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the

Armenian Foreign Ministry has confirmed the news to Public Radio of Armenia.

“We’ve presented a respective proposal to the CSTO,” foreign ministry spokesperson Vahan Hunanyan said, when asked to comment on media reports claiming that Armenia has formally renounced its quota of Deputy Secretary-General.

Currently, the CSTO Secretary General has three deputies: Valery Semerikov (Russian Federation), Samat Ordabaev (Kazakhstan), Takhir Khairuloev

(Tajikistan). The Secretary General is appointed for a three-year term, from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025, this post is held by Imangali Tasmagambetov.

Appointment to positions according to the quota is carried out by the Secretary General on a rotational basis every three years on the proposal of the CSTO member states. The number of such posts in the secretariat is assigned to countries in proportion to their contributions to the budget.



## Armenia seeks to take Azerbaijan's non-compliance with ICJ ruling to UN Security Council

Armenia is working in the direction of raising the issue of Azerbaijan's non-compliance with the world court order on unblocking the Lachin Corridor at the UN Security Council, the Representative of Armenia on International Legal Matters Yeghishe Kirakosyan told lawmakers on March 20.

The International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan on February 22 to "take all steps at its disposal" to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. The Lachin Corridor has been blocked by Azerbaijan since 12 December 2022.

Kirakosyan reiterated that the ICJ ruling is binding and Azerbaijan must comply with it.

"Unfortunately, we are facing the reality that Azerbaijan is simply ignoring the

ruling, not only ignoring, but also trying to distort the content of the ruling on all official levels. This was recently seen in the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister's letter addressed to the UN Secretary General, to which our minister's letter has been submitted as a response," he said.

Kirakosyan said that article 94 of the UN Charter provides for a certain narrow description pertaining to the rulings. But attempts in the past to bring rulings on provisional measures before the UN Security Council have failed. The cases related to a permanent member, who exercised its right to veto and the issue didn't make it to final debates.

"But in our case I think we should work in that direction. I know that our colleagues at the foreign ministry are working in that direction. It is highly important for the matter to enter the agenda

at the UN Security Council. And we must maximally utilize all diplomatic channels to ensure a favorable discussion of the issue," Kirakosyan said.

Taking the issue to the UNSC has two perspectives, he added. First is the formal point of view, there's article 94 of the charter which gives such an authority to the Security Council. The second logic is chapter 7 of the UN Charter – its mandate for ensuring international peace and security.

"The idea is that the non-fulfillment of this ruling creates risks for international peace and security. So we have the chance to raise this issue at the Security Council at least under two logics. It is obvious that the non-compliance with the court's decision, that is the continuation of the blockade, creates very serious risks for international security."

## Artsakh committed to negotiations in an internationally recognized format – MFA

In response to the proposal of the office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to hold a meeting between the representatives of Azerbaijan and Artsakh, Artsakh's Foreign Ministry has reiterated its position that such meetings can take place with the mediation of Russian peacekeepers, in the same place as last on March 1.

The Ministry said the discussions should focus on humanitarian, infrastructural, technical issues, without their unnecessary politicization.

At the same time, the Ministry stressed that "the closure of the Lachin corridor and the continuation of the humanitarian crisis are unacceptable and do not in



any way contribute to the formation of a favorable atmosphere for negotiations."

"We are convinced that Azerbaijan must properly implement both the obligations assumed by the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020, and the requirements of the decision of the International

Court of Justice, refraining from the use of force or the threat of force and from unilateral, extremist approaches. Only in that case favorable conditions will be created for further discussions," the Foreign Ministry said.

As for the political issues of the settlement of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict, it reminded that Artsakh is committed to the negotiations aimed at the comprehensive settlement of the conflict, which should take place in an internationally recognized and approved format, under the conditions of the presence of international guarantees of the equal rights of the parties and the fulfillment of the assumed obligations.

## Dictator Aliyev's continued violence against Armenians demands condemnation in strongest terms – MEP Peter van Dalen



Dictator Aliyev's continued violence against both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia demands total condemnation in the

strongest terms, member of the European Parliament Peter van Dalen (the Netherlands) said at the Parliament on Tuesday.

"I am outraged by Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin Corridor. And don't forget: Aliyev has had troops within the borders of Armenia for several months. I recently witnessed the devastation of their shelling near the southern city of Goris myself," the MEP said during the debates on the report on EU relations with

Azerbaijan.

He said the report falls short on Commission President Von der Leyen's reprehensible gas deal with President Aliyev.

"Those few billion cubic meters of gas would have been available elsewhere. And above all: Aliyev now feels supported by the EU in his aggressive policy. The gas deal is a geopolitical mistake that needs to be dropped," he stated.

## Armenia reports \$1 billion turnover in high-tech industry for first time

In 2022, for the first time in the history of Armenia, a turnover of more than 1 billion dollars was recorded in the field of high-tech industry, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Hakob Arshakyan said at the "Investor's Day for the IT Sector" event in Yerevan.

He said the number of employees in the sector exceeded 40 thousand for the first time.

Referring to the activities of "Enterprise Armenia" investment support center, the National Assembly Vice-Speaker emphasized the support of the structure in supporting investors in the country. "We welcome the entry of international companies into Armenia, which contributes to the creation of similar Armenian companies," said Hakob Arshakyan.

The speaker referred to the increase in



funding for science, noting that it amounts to more than 30 billion drams in 2022.

Arsahkyan urged to join forces to train high-quality specialists in order to overcome the challenges in the changing and developing geopolitical environment.

Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan, Minister of High-Tech Industry Robert Khachatryan, Director General of "Enterprise Armenia" investment support

center Levon Ohanesyan, US Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia Kristina Kvien made speeches during the event. They referred to the problems of the sector and outlined ways to solve them.

From the point of view of the development of the sector, the effective cooperation of the business sector and government agencies was highlighted. The necessity of training new specialists in the field was emphasized; the reforms aimed at improving the operating conditions of the IT sector companies were highlighted.

Then, in the format of panel discussions, the issue of our country's workforce in the field the quality of education in some professions, as well as the implementation of general data protection regulations were addressed.

## 30 speakers from 9 countries, 2 000 visitors and 120 companies: DigiTec 2023 the largest to date

On March 10-12, the "DigiTec 2022" summit and the exhibition of the same name took place in the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concert complex. The theme of the conference was "Ambitious tech: Resilience of open economies in the conditions of increasing world instability."

There were 30 speakers from 9 countries, 2,000 visitors were registered, and 120 companies were represented at the 17th annual exhibition. On March 10, at the official opening of the summit, the technological community was welcomed by Minister of High-Tech Industry Robert Khachatryan, UATE President Alexander Yesayan, President of "DigiTec" summit Raffi Kassarian, Ambassador of the European Union to Armenia Andrea Wiktorin, Ambassador of the German Federation to Armenia Viktor Richter.

At the summit, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE) and Yerevan Municipality. Digitization works are being carried out with great momentum in Yerevan, which will make life easier for citizens and make interaction with the community more accessible.

A memorandum of cooperation was

also signed between the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Ministry of High-Tech Industry and SADA company. With the memorandum, government agencies and Google Cloud partner SADA will join efforts to develop equal opportunities for education in Armenia, boost the digitalization of the educational system, in the direction of implementing Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals services and tools. The document was signed by Ministers Vahan Kerobyan, Robert Khachatryan, Deputy Minister Arayik Khzmalyan on one side, and Tony Safoian, President and CEO of SADA Company, on the other.

On March 11, a round of 15-minute venture capital speed meetings or "pitch sessions" was organized between startup founders and CEOs, giving the opportunity to present their ideas to the 5 venture capitalists participating in the event. Parallel to the main summit program, Granatus Ventures' Impact Tech investment forum took place, which was a unique opportunity to meet startups, investors and key players in the tech industry with high social, health and environmental impact. The forum explored how technologies

can solve the most complex problems of sustainable development on a global scale.

The "Enterprise Armenia" investment promotion center and USAID Armenia organized the "Investors Day for Tech" event consisting of three discussions. The main goal of the event was to outline the systemic problems of the IT sector and develop solutions together with the representatives of the important structures of the government, specialists in the field and the business community. Discussions were about the skilled labor market, the lack of STEM education in Armenia's higher education institutions, as well as data protection regulations in Armenia.

"AMADEE-24", the organizational team representing the Austrian Space Forum in Armenia, was also presented to DigiTec for the first time. According to the organizers, the forum will take place in 2024 under the theme "From Garni (RA) to Garni (Mars)". The AMADEE-24 simulation of the flight to Mars is for scientific research purposes. Iterations of this simulation run every two years. To carry out the mission, a country is chosen, where a crew of six supposed astronauts participates in a flight and a test landing on Mars.



## Google Workspace for Education to be introduced in Armenian schools

The Armenian Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, and a market leader in professional services SADA have signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

The MOU was signed by ministers Vahan Kerobyan, Zhanna Andreasyan (signed by the deputy minister), Robert Khachatryan on the one hand, and SADA President and CEO Tony Safoian on the other hand.

Under the MOU, the RA State Bodies and Google Cloud partner SADA combine the efforts to introduce Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals services and tools for developing education system digitalization and equal opportunities for education in the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia.

"The RA State Bodies value the experience of the world's leading companies in the provision of technology services and



make efforts to improve the level of education in the public schools of the Republic of Armenia and to implement the necessary tools for the measurement of educational quality. We are ready to create favorable conditions and develop an action plan to ensure the integration of Google Workspace for Education tools and services into the RA educational system and ensure adequate resources for the provision of toolkit integration services," said Vahan Kerobyan, RA Minister of Economy.

"We attach importance to the necessity of digitalization of the educational system in our homeland Armenia, improvement of the quality of education as a result, and development of distance education. SADA will ensure integration of the RA education system to Google Workspace for Education tools and services and will implement Chrome OS along with Chrome OS devices in cooperation with Google and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia," Tony Safoian, President and CEO at SADA, said after the signing ceremony.

SADA will also provide resources to support Project Management, Engineering, and Change Management Disciplines and will support the RA State Bodies in obtaining a license to use Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals services and tools in compliance with Google's qualification conditions.

## Sarsang water levels dropping at alarming rate amid blockade, Artsakh authorities say



Artsakh authorities are sounding the alarm that the Sarsang Reservoir water levels keep dropping 50cm every day amid the Azeri blockade, [Artsakhpress](#) reports.

Since January 9 Azerbaijan has been barring Nagorno Karabakh authorities from accessing and repairing the damaged power transmission line which supplies Nagorno Karabakh with electricity from Armenia.

"The only source of electricity we have now is the Sarsang Reservoir," Ararat Khachatryan, the acting chairman of the Water Committee of Artsakh said.

"The water levels are over eight meters

lower compared to the same period last year. Today the inflow is 4 cumecs, which is a very low indicator. The Tartar flow can reach up to thirty, forty or fifty cumecs. The consumption is a lot higher now. When water levels are high, less water is actually consumed for obtaining electricity, but when the water levels drop, pressure also drops and it takes more water to get the same amount of electricity," Khachatryan explained.

The official expressed hope that the reservoir's levels would increase in springtime, but even if that were to happen the result won't be satisfactory.

"Since January 9, Azerbaijan has been impeding and barring us from carrying out repair works in the territory under its control where the high-voltage electricity transmission line supplying Artsakh from Armenia passes. Before the blockade, especially in winters, when the electricity supplied from Armenia was insufficient, we were using the Sarsang Reservoir. After

the war we are left with only five small HPPs in Artsakh, which work only under 20% capacity," Khachatryan said, warning that if the power line doesn't get fixed soon there will be insufficient water levels in Sarsang.

Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan earlier warned that the significant decrease of water resources in Sarsang Reservoir (which had a capacity of 600,000,000 cubic meters) will lead to a serious crisis in spring and summer first of all for the Azerbaijani farmers themselves because the water resources won't be sufficient enough for irrigating the 96,000 hectares in Azerbaijan's Tartar, Aghdam, Bardi, Goranboy, Yevlakh and Akhjabad regions. The Artsakh authorities said that the residents of these regions should be aware that they won't have irrigation water and will subsequently lose income and harvest thanks to their own authorities and the self-proclaimed "eco-activists".

## Aliyev's speech a clear manifestation of territorial claims – Armenia MFA

The speech of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev delivered on March 16 during the summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States was a clear manifestation of territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia and preparation of another aggression, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"Presenting the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia under the fictitious name "Western Azerbaijan," the President of Azerbaijan grossly violates the UN Charter, the UN GA Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the UN Charter, the Alma-Ata Declaration, but also his own commitments undertaken by the Prague and Sochi statements to which he is referring in this exact speech," the Ministry stated.

It said "Azerbaijan continuously obstructs the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent regions, while at the



same time announcing that it is going to resettle the territories that came under its control as a result of the deportation of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh."

"Having violated basically all the articles of the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020 and with the rhetoric, which he himself admits as fictitious, about the corridors the President of Azerbaijan is obstructing the process of opening of regional communications," the statement reads.

"The bellicose rhetoric of the leader of Azerbaijan is aimed at completely disrupting the efforts to establish stability in the South Caucasus and resorting to the use of large-scale force against both the

sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, the insulting language used against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is accompanied by actions aimed at creating a humanitarian catastrophe on the ground, demonstrates Azerbaijan's unconcealed policy of ethnic cleansing at the highest level," the Ministry said.

Moreover, it added, "voicing such provocative theses in Ankara aims not only to undermine the ongoing peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also to hinder the positive dynamics in the process of normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations."

"All partners interested in the stability and peace of the region should give an assessment to this policy of the President of Azerbaijan without any hesitation and take active steps to eliminate the violations of international law by Azerbaijan and exclude the manifestations of the use of force," the Foreign Ministry concluded.

## 146th IPU Assembly: Armenian delegate criticizes CSTO for inaction amid Azeri occupation

Armenian Member of Parliament Hasmik Hakobyan (Civil Contract faction) criticized the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for its inaction over the occupation of sovereign territories of Armenia – a CSTO member – by Azerbaijan.

Hakobyan delivered remarks at the meeting of parliamentary delegations of CSTO member states during the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Bahrain.

"In May and November 2021, as well as in September last year, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military aggression against the Republic of Armenia which resulted in over 150 square kilometers of sovereign territories of Armenia being occupied. In this situation the military and political support from CSTO partners was important for Armenia. And we regret that

our organization, the CSTO, still doesn't have a clear political assessment that an attack has taken place on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, and that Azerbaijan has occupied territories of a CSTO member country," Hakobyan said in her speech.

Speaking about the humanitarian crisis and security-related issues in Nagorno Karabakh, Hakobyan underscored that Azerbaijan is not complying with the International Court of Justice February 22 ruling to open the Lachin corridor – the only road linking Nagorno Karabakh to the outside world.

"For three months, along with the blockade of Lachin corridor and creation of a humanitarian disaster, Azerbaijan continues to terrorize the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh. The

Azerbaijani military is regularly violating the ceasefire. Recently they opened fire on a peaceful civilian who was farming. And on March 5, as a result of a sabotage ambush committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces, three police officers of the Nagorno Karabakh police were killed and one was injured," the legislator said.

Hakobyan called on the parliamentarians to condemn Azerbaijan's use of force, as well as provocative manifestations of a large-scale military attack.

*The United Nations' highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - ordered Azerbaijan on February 22 to "take all steps at its disposal" to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. The Lachin Corridor is blocked by Azerbaijan since 12 December 2022.*



## Peace treaty must guarantee Armenia's sovereignty, the rights and security of Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh – European Parliament

The European Parliament voted 534 to 10 with 66 abstentions to adopt a [report](#) on EU-Armenia relations.

Noting that the armed Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which over the years has caused immense suffering and destruction, has significantly hampered the socio-economic development and stability of the whole South Caucasus region MEPs voice conviction that durable and sustainable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan cannot be achieved through military means and the threat of force, but requires a comprehensive political settlement in accordance with international law, including the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the 1975 OSCE Helsinki Final Act, namely the non-use of force, territorial integrity and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and the OSCE Minsk Group's 2009 Basic Principles and all the agreements reached between the two parties, including the Alma Ata 1991 Declaration.

The European Parliament reaffirms that in order to be effective, a comprehensive peace treaty must include provisions that guarantee the integrity of Armenia's sovereign territory, the rights and security of the Armenian population residing in Nagorno-Karabakh and other conflict-afflicted areas, and the prompt and safe return of refugees and internally displaced people to their homes; recalls that the root cause of the conflict, which is the situation and security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the status of the formerly autonomous region, remains unresolved; calls on the international community to keep its attention on this conflict, which is a matter of stability and security for the whole region.

The Parliament strongly condemns the large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan in September 2022 against multiple places in the sovereign territory of Armenia, which constituted a serious breach of the ceasefire and contradicted earlier commitments, including those made as part of EU-mediated talks; condemns military incursions into the internationally recognized territory of Armenia since May 2021; recalls that this follows violations of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia as reported in

May and November 2021; urges the return of all forces to their positions held on 9 November 2020 and stresses that the latest September aggression has no direct link to the long-lasting conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh; reiterates that the territorial integrity of Armenia must be fully respected in line with international law and the UN Charter and calls on the Azerbaijani authorities, therefore, to immediately withdraw from all parts of the territory of Armenia and to release the POWs under their control; urges the EU to be more actively involved in settling the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; emphasizes that both sides have to respect the principle of territorial integrity, which is key for peace in the region;

The MEPs condemn the blockade of the Lachin corridor; urge Azerbaijan to remove any obstacles that would hinder freedom and security of movement along that corridor as stipulated by the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020; call on Armenia and Azerbaijan to address all concerns relating to the functioning of the Lachin corridor through dialogue and consultations with all the parties involved;

The European Parliament urges Armenia and Azerbaijan to fully implement the tripartite ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020 in all its aspects and condemns Azerbaijan for regular violations of the ceasefire; stresses the need to advance discussions on the future peace treaty, to address the root causes of the conflict and to refrain from any steps that could lead to further escalation; recalls that the implementation of Article 9 of the ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020 cannot go against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia.

It urges the governments of both countries to fully engage in the drafting of a comprehensive and mutually acceptable peace treaty that should address the security of the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees and the protection of cultural, religious and historical heritage; welcomes in this regard the meetings of the foreign affairs ministers of both countries on 30 September 2022 in Geneva and on 8 November 2022 in Washington D.C.;

The Parliament welcomes the establishment of the civilian European Union Mission in Armenia under the common security and defense policy, which aims to help increase security in the region by decreasing the number of incidents in conflict-affected and border areas in Armenia, to reduce the level of risks for the population living in such areas and thereby to contribute to the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the ground, while at the same time increases visibility of the EU in the region; welcomes Armenia's willingness to facilitate the upcoming mission on its territory and calls on Azerbaijan to allow the presence of the EU mission on its side of the border as well; calls for the demarcation process to be internationally facilitated by the EU and/or OSCE in order to ensure credibility, fairness and sustainability;

It reiterates the need to agree on, and implement through peaceful means, transport and communication between the western regions of Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan, which does not infringe on the territorial integrity of Armenia; insists that the modalities of goods transport on this route need to be agreed bilaterally between Armenia and Azerbaijan; notes that the unblocking of regional transport and communication links will present a significant opportunity for socio-economic development in the entire South Caucasus region;

The Parliament suggests the establishment of a temporary international guarantee mechanism for the safety and security of the Armenian population and all returnees in Nagorno-Karabakh; highlights the importance of international mediation, given the significant power imbalance between the sides, and the EU's particularly important role in this context to ensure a fair agreement and the protection of the rights of the Nagorno-Karabakh population;

It calls for the granting of access to international humanitarian organizations to Nagorno-Karabakh, especially the United Nations, and recalls that currently only the International Committee of the Red Cross is allowed access to the region, which is insufficient

➡ page 10

to accurately assess the conditions and needs of the population residing there.

The Parliament continues to be seriously concerned about the fate of Armenian POWs and civilians detained during and after the conflict and still illegally held by Azerbaijan; welcomes the release of some of them; condemns the sentencing and continued detention of the 33 confirmed POWs and civilian captives; underlines that their imprisonment is contrary to all the calls from the international community, including Parliament, to release all remaining POWs and civilian captives; stresses that both Armenia and Azerbaijan are parties to the Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, which stipulates that POWs must at all times be humanely treated and must be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities; regrets, however, that the fate and whereabouts of over 200 Armenians, including 20 civilians, in relation to the 2020 war remain unknown; notes that the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has started procedures and requested information

from Azerbaijan in relation to at least 18 missing persons; calls on all sides to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared, and to treat dead bodies with dignity; demands once again the immediate and unconditional release of all the remaining detainees, including those captured during the recent military confrontations, and for them to be treated in accordance with international humanitarian law;

It condemns in the strongest possible terms the torture, mutilation and killing of Armenian military personnel, including women, and eight unarmed Armenian POWs by Azerbaijani armed forces in September 2022; deplores the fact the perpetrators filmed these heinous acts and posted them on social media themselves; takes note of reports by human rights groups, in particular by Human Rights Watch, classifying this act as a war crime; calls for a full independent and impartial investigation to identify those responsible and hold them accountable for their actions.

Members of the European parliament support the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey in the interest

of reconciliation, regional stability and security as well as socio-economic development and welcomes the progress achieved so far, including the resumption of flights between the two countries; call for the speedy implementation of agreements reached by the special representatives; recalls that the previous attempt to normalize relations between Armenia and Turkey through the signing of 2009 protocols failed because of Turkey's unilateral support for Azerbaijan and its decision to make the opening of the border and establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia conditional on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; call on both sides to engage in the process in good faith and without preconditions and calls for the EU to actively support this process; expresses the hope that this may give impetus to the normalization of relations in the South Caucasus region; encourage Turkey once again to recognize the Armenian Genocide to pave the way for genuine reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples, and to fully respect its obligations to protect Armenian cultural heritage.

## 146th IPU Assembly: Armenian delegate criticizes CSTO for inaction amid Azeri occupation

Armenian Member of Parliament Hasmik Hakobyan (Civil Contract faction) criticized the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for its inaction over the occupation of sovereign territories of Armenia – a CSTO member – by Azerbaijan.

Hakobyan delivered remarks at the meeting of parliamentary delegations of CSTO member states during the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Bahrain.

"In May and November 2021, as well as in September last year, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military aggression against the Republic of Armenia which resulted in over 150 square kilometers of sovereign territories of Armenia being occupied. In this situation the military and political support from CSTO partners was important for Armenia. And we regret that our organization, the CSTO, still doesn't have a clear political assessment that an attack has taken place on the sovereign



territory of the Republic of Armenia, and that Azerbaijan has occupied territories of a CSTO member country," Hakobyan said in her speech.

Speaking about the humanitarian crisis and security-related issues in Nagorno Karabakh, Hakobyan underscored that Azerbaijan is not complying with the International Court of Justice February 22 ruling to open the Lachin corridor – the only road linking Nagorno Karabakh to the outside world.

"For three months, along with the blockade of Lachin corridor and creation of a humanitarian disaster, Azerbaijan

continues to terrorize the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh. The Azerbaijani military is regularly violating the ceasefire. Recently they opened fire on a peaceful civilian who was farming. And on March 5, as a result of a sabotage ambush committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces, three police officers of the Nagorno Karabakh police were killed and one was injured," the legislator said.

Hakobyan called on the parliamentarians to condemn Azerbaijan's use of force, as well as provocative manifestations of a large-scale military attack.

*The United Nations' highest court – the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – ordered Azerbaijan on February 22 to "take all steps at its disposal" to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. The Lachin Corridor is blocked by Azerbaijan since 12 December 2022.*



## Armenian Genocide Square inaugurated in Haifa, Israel



On Monday, 20 March 2023, the Armenian Genocide Square was inaugurated in the city center of Haifa, Israel, the Armenian National Committee of Jerusalem informs.

The ceremony took place despite great

pressure from the Turkish Embassy in Tel Aviv. Present at the event were the mayor of the city of Haifa Mrs. Einat Kalisch-Rotem, city council members, the Armenian Ambassador to Israel HE Dr. Arman Agopian, representatives of the Armenian

Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the ANCJ and members of the Armenian communities of Israel and representatives of various communities of Haifa.

Earlier this month the city council of Haifa voted unanimously to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and erect a memorial to the victims in the city.

Haifa thus becomes the second city in Israel to recognize the Armenian Genocide after Petah Tikva (east of Tel Aviv), where a memorial to the victims was erected in April 2020.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Ambassador to Israel had demanded that the country's government ban the erection of the monument in Haifa.



## Taner Akcam shares research revealing when decision was made to commit Armenian Genocide

Dr. Taner Akcam shared new revelations about the planning of the Armenian Genocide during a lecture at Fresno State University on March 3, the *Armenian Mirror Spektator* reports.

Akcam, director of the Armenian Genocide Research Program at the Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA, has discovered new telegrams and validated previously known documents sent by members of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) political party during the First World War which shed new light on how and when the decision was taken to implement a full-scale annihilation of the Ottoman Armenian population.

Akcam related how some of the leading scholars of the Armenian Genocide have disagreed on the extent to which the Genocide was premeditated. Vahakn Dadrian,



known as the father of Armenian Genocide scholarship, and Akcam's mentor, believed that there was always a long-range goal to eliminate the Armenian people, and the First World War merely gave its perpetrators, CUP, the political party that ran the Ottoman Empire as an authoritarian one-party state from 1913-1918, the pretext and cover to enact their plans.

Akcam revealed that while the ultimate decision to eliminate all Armenians in Anatolia and Western Armenia was taken by the CUP's Central Committee in Constantinople (led by the triumvirate of Mehmet Talat, Ismail Enver, and Ahmet Jemal), he displayed new evidence showing that the "first decision" to annihilate Armenians was taken in Erzurum on December 1, 1914.

It was the Central Committee of the Teshkilat-i Mahsusa ("Special Organization," the corps of ex-convicts and Kurdish tribesmen who were answerable directly to the CUP leaders), headquartered in Erzurum, which on that date gave the order to their forces that "those suspected of being potential leaders of the revolt or liable to carry out attacks against Muslims should be arrested and eliminated."



## We have no right to be sad because of existing challenges – Noubar Afeyan

One hundred years ago the dreams were the same as ours today – to unite, to organize and create an independent Armenia, entrepreneur, inventor, and philanthropist Noubar Afeyan said at the first convention of the Future Armenian initiative.

Unfortunately or fortunately, he said, the same struggle continues today.

“Throughout history we have not had big chances to dream of, outline and create our future. Others have been creating our future, and we have only followed their



directions. About 30 years ago we were given an interesting chance to manage our future, but we never did because of troubles,” he said.

“We have no right to be sad because of the existing challenges,” Afeyan said. He voiced hope that the conversations that take place during the three days of the convention would bring about conflicting ideas.

“I think you should agree while disagreeing, speak to each other while listening, support while also criticizing, and cooperate while competing. Finally I want you to rejoice together even through suffering. If you reach that goal, the future of Armenia will be brighter,” he said.

## Innovative horizontal skyscraper: Project of EU TUMO Convergence Center presented

TUMO has presented the project of the EU TUMO Convergence Center for Engineering and Applied Science, designed by the world-renowned Dutch firm MVRDV.

Only six stories tall but stretched over 200 meters at the edge of the Hrazdan Gorge, the building occupies 17,000 square meters. It is made up of



300 modular spaces arranged inside a giant hall that creates a unique interior

ecosystem.

This building within a building represents a highly energy efficient solution that blends the indoor with the open air. The center will feature learning and research programs, conference and exhibition spaces, working and retail facilities, becoming a technology and innovation hub.

## Armenia’s natural beauty, unique cultural heritage – U.S. Ambassador shares impressions from Syunik, Vayots Dzor trip



United States Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien shared her impressions from her trip to Syunik and Vayots Dzor.

“While traveling to Syunik and Vayots Dzor, I had the chance to experience Armenia’s natural beauty and unique cultural heritage, taste some delicious regional foods, and meet some of Armenia’s



talented artisans,” Ambassador Kvien tweeted. “I look forward to seeing more!”

United States Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien traveled to Syunik and Vayots Dzor on March 10 to “discuss the



economic and security situations in the regions” with the governors of the two provinces.



## Armenia announces “Step Toward Home” 2023 program for Diaspora youth

The Office of Armenia’s High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has begun accepting applications for the two-week “Step Toward Home” 2023 program. The program allows Diaspora Armenian youth aged 13-18 to come to Armenia, discover their homeland, and strengthen their national identity.

This year, the “Step Toward Home” program will host 600 Diaspora Armenian youth from June 19 to August 26 and will be divided into five stages. The program includes Armenian language (Eastern

Armenian, Western Armenian), Armenian studies, national song and dance courses, visits to historical and cultural sites in Armenia, museums and educational institutions, meetings with state and public officials, artists and cultural figures, as well as sports and cultural events.

The Armenian Government covers all the costs related to the Armenian part of the program. Diaspora Armenian youth who have not participated in the “Ari Tun” and “Step Toward Home” programmes in previous years can participate; they can



cover their own travel expenses for arrival and departure to Armenia and purchase a two-week travel insurance.

The applications must be submitted on the official [website](#) of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Applications will be open until May 10.

## Armenian Embassy in US hosts reception in honor of Nobel laureate Ardem Patapoutian



The Armenian Embassy in the US, in close cooperation with the Armenian community of Greater Washington area, has initiated a series of meetings with

prominent Armenians, the aim of which is to inspire especially the young generation with their life journey. The first reception of the series took place on March 12, 2023, in honor of the Nobel Prize winner in the field of physiology/medicine, scientist of Armenian origin Ardem Patapoutian.

The event was attended by representatives of the Armenian community, as well as representatives of US executive and legislative bodies, diplomatic corps, scientific

circles, and students of the US universities.

Armenia’s Ambassador to the US Lilit Makunts offered opening remarks. Dr. Patapoutian shared his life story, the difficulties and successes he encountered on the way to his achievements and answered the questions of the audience.

During the event, works by world-known Armenian composers were performed by the Chamasyan Sisters.

## Armenian cross-stone unveiled in Sint-Niklaas, Belgium



Sint-Niklaas, Belgium on Saturday. Attending the solemn ceremony were the Armenia Ambassador to Belgium Anna Aghajanyan, Armenian priests and others.

“This cross is very important to us,” said the Nersisyan family from Sint-Niklaas, who supported the transportation of the monument. “Armenian people are very religious. For us, this cross is a way of talking to God. We had been thinking of erecting such a monument in Sint-Niklaas for a long time, but were not quite sure where to start. We are very happy that we can unveil the cross today. The placement of the stone next to the church is deliberate. Not only from a religious point of view, but also for safety.”

An Armenian cross-stone (khachkar) was officially unveiled in the city of

## Armenian chef Karen Torosyan awarded the second Michelin Star



Armenian chef Karen Torosyan of the Bozar restaurant in Brussels was honored with a second Michelin Star on March 13.

For many years, Karen Torosyan at the Bozar Restaurant has been a veritable model of culinary savoir-faire. A rigorous and exacting chef, he re-interprets the classic recipes with a very personal sense of detail and plenty of emotion. Among the many creations on offer, the most remarkable are his 'en croute' dishes.

He has developed his restaurant and his innovative cuisine patiently and conscientiously, to be finally rewarded with Two MICHELIN Stars.

"We have the most beautiful profession in the world," Torosyan said as he received the award during the ceremony at Royal Theater in Bergen. "Cooking is more than a passion, it's a calling."

"I came to Belgium 25 years ago not speaking a word of French and here I am. I want to thank Jean Pierre Bruneau who made me fall in love with the world of restaurants and to David Martin, the first person who really believed in me. I was lucky that he gave me the possibility to take over the restaurant five years ago and he believed in me. The world of restaurants and of a restaurateur is mad but it is the best job in the world. Only those who are in it know, know what I

mean," he said.

Michelin star is the ultimate hallmark of culinary excellence. Michelin stars are awarded to restaurants judged to be of a particularly high standard. Eateries that make the grade can be awarded one, two, or three stars, and the accolade is much-coveted by chefs around the world. The star system was first introduced in 1926, with a single star denoting "a very good restaurant". The second and third stars were added in 1933, with two stars meaning "excellent cooking that is worth a detour", and three stars "exceptional cuisine that is worth a special journey."

The Michelin Guide has been published annually since 1900 and was originally intended to help drivers find mechanics, hotels, and of course, good restaurants, on their travels.

## National Geographic recommends planning a trip to Armenia this spring

The *National Geographic* advises to plan a trip to Armenia this spring.

"A country in the South Caucasus, Armenia is a land of natural drama, characterized by mountains interspersed with ancient, solitary churches. Come from March to explore the depths of the Caucasus Mountains on hiking trails, swim in thermal pools overhanging verdant gorges or roam around city parks turned technicolor in the springtime bloom," author SJ Armstrong writes.

The National Geographic says since the end of 2021, Armenia can be thru-hiked in its entirety thanks to the Transcaucasian Trail, the first itinerary aiming to link up



the South Caucasus in one mammoth path. The 500-mile Armenian leg is the country's only long-distance route, weaving together natural diversity and cultural heritage — desert canyons, forested hills, ancient monasteries and Silk Road caravan sites — with top-notch hospitality.

It also advises to visit the quiet mountain town of Jermuk divided by a plunging gorge and the rippling Arpa River, the Debed Canyon, a forested ravine, where the Debed River cleaves a path through the Caucasus Mountains in northern Armenia.

Travelers are also recommended to visit the country's second-biggest city Gyumri, which is central to Armenia's cultural offering and has long been a magnet for artists and craftspeople, and certainly Yerevan, — the rose-washed capital sit beneath a leafy canopy, which blooms bright fuchsia in the spring.

## Armenian shooter Elmira Karapetyan wins bronze at European Championships

Armenian shooter Elmira Karapetyan claimed third place and was awarded a bronze medal at the 2023 European Championships in Tallinn, Estonia.

She scored 577 points in the 10m event and placed third among 59 participants.

Greek athlete Anna Korakaki triumphed in an intense 10m air pistol



competition to win gold. The competition

was hotly contested between Korakaki and French shooter Camille Jedrejewski. However, the Greek athlete was able to take the lead and secure victory.

Eight Armenian athletes participated in the European Championships led by coaches Seyran Nikoghosyan and Andranik Ayvazyan.



# ARMENIA

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## Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security

and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders. The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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