

EU Agrees To Extend Border Mission In Armenia



The Council of the European Union has adopted a decision extending the mandate of the European Union Mission in Armenia (EUMA) for a further two years, until 19 February 2027, with a budget allocation of over €44 million for the period from 20 February 2025 until 19 February 2027.

EUMA is an essential component of the EU's efforts in supporting peace and stability in the region. The Mission is tasked with observing and reporting on the situation on the ground, contributing to human security in conflict-affected areas

and supporting the confidence building between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where possible. The mandated tasks of the Mission remain unchanged – EUMA is and will remain an unarmed civilian mission, the EU said in a press release.

The mission, headed by Dr. Markus Ritter, comprises over 200 personnel including international and local staff. EUMA observers and civilian experts come from 25 EU member states and the third contributing state, Canada. EUMA was launched by the decision of the Council

on 20 February 2023, when it also started its operational activities.

Armenia welcomes the extension of the mandate of the EU Mission in Armenia by EU Council for another two years, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said in a post on X.

“The Mission has proven to be one of the pillars of stability in the region. We appreciate the support of each and every EU Member State and their participation on the ground,” the Foreign Minister said.

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Armenian, Georgian foreign ministers discuss development of strategic partnership

The strategic partnership between Armenia and Georgia is based on centuries-old friendship and close cooperation, Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili said during a joint press conference with Armenian FM Ararat Mirzoyan in Yerevan.

Botchorishvili said bilateral visits are highly important for the relationship between the two countries that have reached strategic partnership. "Of course, this strategic partnership is based on the centuries-old friendship and close relationship that connects us, this foundation is strong between our peoples and countries. The

circle which we call strategic partnership allows us to further develop relations in all directions," the Georgian FM said.

FM Maka Botchorishvili emphasized that Armenia has traditionally been among the top 10 economic partners of Georgia.

"We have greater opportunities for developing our economic relations. We see the growing trends in tourism, many Armenians visit Georgia, and we are very happy to host them, and we are very happy that they are among the top three inbound tourists."

Botchorishvili said the discussion with

FM Mirzoyan focused on development of cooperation, particularly in tourism, transportation and other areas. "We already have enhanced relations, but there is still potential for deepening the ties. I am very happy that together with my colleague we really want to further deepen and develop this relationship," the Georgian FM said.

Yerevan will host the 14th session of the Armenia-Georgia Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation today. The meeting will be chaired by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze.

Armenian Ambassador, Iranian Vice President discuss bilateral relations

Grigor Hakobyan, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Islamic Republic of Iran met with Seyyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Head of the Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) and Co-Chair of the Armenian-Iranian Joint Intergovernmental Commission.

According to a statement issued by the Embassy of Armenia in Iran, the parties highlighted the importance of the 18th

session of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission held in Tehran last year. They touched upon the need to further deepen the bilateral cooperation within the framework of the commission.

Ambassador Hakobyan and Vice President Pourmohammadi also discussed a number of issues on the bilateral agenda, particularly issues related to the transport, infrastructure, and energy sectors.

The meeting was preceded by a private

conversation between the Ambassador and Peyman Mirab, Iranian secretary of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission.

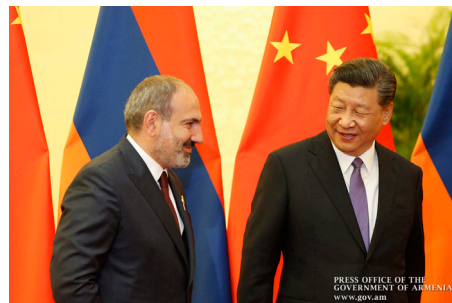


Development of relations with China based on equality, trust and respect among Armenia's foreign policy priorities – PM

Continuous development of bilateral relations with China, based on equality, mutual trust and respect, is among Armenia's foreign policy priorities, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a congratulatory message to Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, on the occasion of the Chinese New Year.

The Prime Minister noted that the relations between the Republic of Armenia and the People's Republic of China have been formed on the basis of friendly ties dating back to historical times.

"I am hopeful that in the near future there will be an opportunity to further expand the multifaceted cooperation established between our two countries



through joint efforts, raising bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. In this context, I also attach importance to the strengthening of cooperation between Armenia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization under the Chinese presidency," Pm Pashinyan wrote.

In a message to Prime Minister Li Qiang, PM Pashinyan attached importance to the dynamics of the development of friendly relations between Armenia and China at the bilateral and multilateral levels, and express readiness to continue to make maximum efforts to raise them to a qualitatively new level.

"I am convinced that active cooperation in regional initiatives of mutual interest, high-level mutual visits, as well as cooperation in multilateral platforms, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, will contribute to the implementation of the above-mentioned goals," the Armenian Prime Minister said.

Armenia has proposed to ensure railway freight communication between western regions of Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan – PM

Armenia has proposed Azerbaijan to ensure rail communication between the latter's western regions and Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a press conference on January 31

"We propose to ensure railway freight communication from the western regions of Azerbaijan to the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan and vice versa through the territory of Armenia, more specifically through Meghri," PM Pashinyan said.

He noted that the other railway between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Tavush region has been heavily damaged due to landslide and the renovation will require huge investments.

"We have also proposed a railway connection from Yeraskh through the territory of Nakhijevan to Meghri and vice versa,"



the Prime Minister said, adding that Armenia should use these connections through the territory of Azerbaijan for international trade or cargo transportation, and Azerbaijan should use the territory of Armenia for international trade or cargo transportation.

According to the Prime Minister, it will be possible to think about passenger transportation when the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan ease.

"We have made this proposal and are expecting a positive response from Azerbaijan. I don't really understand why they should reject it. We have found a solution that solves the issues posed by both sides," PM Pashinyan said.

He emphasized that the proposal fully complies with the Crossroads of Peace project and meets the expectations that Azerbaijan has been raising during negotiations.

"We are not against unhindered communication, but unhindered does not mean bypassing the jurisdiction of the Republic of Armenia. The modern world seeks to ensure unhindered communication in all directions, and we are ready for these solutions," Pashinyan concluded.

We can jointly take care of protecting our shared national interests, Kobakhidze to Pashinyan

"Our countries are bound by long-standing ties of friendship and partnership. This has evolved into a strategic partnership between our two nations, which is of great importance for the security, prosperity, and sustainable development of the entire region", Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said at a joint press conference with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

"The world is full of challenges. Recognizing them is extremely important and further emphasizes the necessity of close



cooperation. We can jointly take care of protecting our shared national interests.

The developments in our countries

are also influenced by global trends, making our cooperation crucial in this regard.

Georgia has always expressed its readiness to contribute to stability and peace in the region, which is a prerequisite for regional prosperity, peace, and stability. We are prepared to make our best efforts in this area moving forward.

It is very important to show respect for strategic interests, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. And on this occasion, I want to express my gratitude to our friends for defending our inviolability and sovereignty at the highest levels", he said.

Canadian FM calls for unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners held in Azerbaijan

In a letter addressed to the Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) – amidst the ongoing sham trials of Armenian POWs and former Artsakh leaders in Baku – Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly strongly denounces Azerbaijan's aggressive rhetoric and calls for:

- The unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners of war and arbitrarily detained ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan;
- The respect for Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- The safe and dignified return of Armenian civilians to their ancestral lands and cooperation on demining;

- The preservation of Armenian cultural heritage; and

- The resolution of the Artsakh issue through the OSCE Minsk process, in line with the Helsinki principles and the need for a just and durable peace in the South Caucasus.

Armenia ‘not bad’ within EEU but people want options for future, says Pashinyan

Armenia feels alright in the Eurasian Economic Union but the authorities cannot ignore the people’s aspirations in terms of developing options for the country’s future, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said.

“We don’t feel bad in the EEU today,” Pashinyan said at a press conference when asked on the matter. “But on the other hand, we cannot fail to notice the aspirations of at least a certain and very tangible

part of our people to develop options for Armenia’s future because today is a very important phase for us to speak about the strategic future of our country. But that conversation about the strategic future can’t take place without options. And our balancing and balanced foreign policy is for this too,” Pashinyan said.

There are two options, he said, first when there is no choice, and there is nothing to think about. Second, however, “we

must develop a choice, so that whatever we choose is organic, real, not fake. Our policy is aimed at that. We will continue the path in this direction. This path is also a process where perhaps the difference between real and honest friends and unreal and dishonest friends will be [revealed],” Pashinyan said.

Asked about the EEU and Iran, Pashinyan said Armenia has always supported stronger ties between the bloc and Tehran.

Simplified transit procedures could be considered in unblocking routes with Azerbaijan, says Armenian FM



Armenia considers the possibility of simplifying transit procedures through its territory for transport connection with Azerbaijan in case of unblocking the connection routes, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan has said.

Armenpress asked FM Mirzoyan to comment on Azerbaijani leader Ilham

Aliyev’s latest statement regarding the unblocking of routes in the region.

“We support the idea of unblocking connections in the region,” Mirzoyan said at a joint press conference with his Georgian counterpart Maka Botchorishvili. He said that Yerevan’s position in the matter is well-known. Mirzoyan said Armenia has conveyed constructive proposals to Azerbaijan and is waiting for a response.

Armenia’s vision for the unblocking would bring great economic benefits to the entire region, including Armenia itself, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Mirzoyan said.

“Our approaches are reflected in the Crossroads of Peace project which is based on the principles of territorial integrity and countries’ sovereignty over

connections and infrastructures,” he said.

Mirzoyan emphasized that all countries seek to simplify logistics in the present days.

“If the routes are unblocked with Azerbaijan, we too see some simplified procedures that could be applied, from which Armenia and Azerbaijan could benefit,” Mirzoyan said, reaffirming that Yerevan’s position regarding the matter is unchanged.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev recently said that Armenia’s Crossroads of Peace project is meaningless without Azerbaijan. He claimed that Armenia must provide unobstructed passage between Azerbaijan proper and its exclave of Nakhchivan.

Accession to EU will close EAEU market for Armenia, Russian Deputy PM says

Yerevan knows that Armenia’s accession to the European Union will lead to its withdrawal from the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the closure of the EAEU market for this country, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Overchuk told journalists on January 29.

“The solution here is very obvious. Opening markets with the European Union will mean closing markets with the Eurasian Economic Union. Otherwise, our producers in the Eurasian Economic Union will suffer, this is obvious,” the Russian Deputy Prime Minister noted. He specified



that for Armenia, “zeroing import customs rates with the EU will automatically mean a return to customs tariffs with EAEU.”

“For us, of course, this is a signal that the beginning of joining the European Union is the beginning of leaving the EAEU,”

Overchuk said. He is confident that “this is absolutely obvious to anyone who is at least a little familiar with how these two integration associations are structured.”

Overchuk noted that the process of Armenia’s accession to the EU will be lengthy, and urged to wait for the results of the hearings in the Armenian parliament on this issue.

Earlier this month the Armenian Government greenlighted the bill on launching the process of EU accession. The Armenian Parliament is likely to pass the bill.

Peace is crucial for freedom and democracy, Pashinyan says at Washington event

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has attended a reception organized by Save Armenia on the occasion of his visit to the United States.

Co-Chair of the International Religious Freedom Summit, Save Armenia Member of the Board Sam Brownback welcomed PM Pashinyan's visit and emphasized the commitment of the organization to support Armenia in advancing its agenda. He said that Save Armenia's goal is to unite Christian leaders and other stakeholders in supporting Armenia.

Save Armenia co-founder Robert Nicholson, diplomats, public figures and politicians also participated in the event.

In his remarks, PM Pashinyan thanked the organizers of the event and said it is an honor to be present at the reception with organizations and friends who have supported Armenia and the Armenian people for decades.

"Of course, I have to say that now Armenia is at a crossroads, at a highly important period of time for our country. It is very important to define, to determine the best method of supporting Armenia on this important and difficult path. Our region is generally extremely difficult, full of deep historic confrontations that are



reflected today. But I think today we must focus on the kind of agenda that would open prospects for the future, which is the most important thing. If you ask me what's the most effective method of supporting Armenia from the U.S. perspective I'd say it would be the inclusion of the agenda of achieving peace in South Caucasus in the list of priorities of the U.S. political elite because we promote freedoms, including religious freedom, but you know I think the best tool to protect freedoms of the people is sustainable peace because a conflict environment is the most convenient environment to violate all possible human rights.

This is why we are now focused on the peace agenda, because we believe that in our region the existence of sustainable peace is the only way to guarantee a

proper environment for democracy, protection of human rights, and development of Armenia. I hope you know that now Armenia moves towards democracy, we try to deepen democracy and place it on institutional foundation for it not to be dependent on political will of ruling forces.

This is very important. I believe that democracy is irreversible in Armenia. Now, there is only one tool through which an attempt is made to derail Armenia's path of democracy, it is the tool of war, escalation and conflict. This is why we are so much focused on this agenda, because we believe that peace is highly important and crucial for freedom, including religious freedom, democracy and development, for the future and happiness of our people. We certainly also rely on our friends, our friends at Save Armenia. We highly appreciate what has been done so far and we hope that your support will be continuous and you will be more and more focused on supporting the peace agenda. We hope that our peace agenda will also become your agenda, which, I think, will serve for global prosperity, global victory of democracy, freedom and happiness," Pashinyan said.

Norwegian parliament speaker highlights Armenia's democratic path in difficult geopolitical neighborhood

Norway's Speaker of Parliament Masud Gharahkhani has attached importance to Armenia's democratic path in the difficult geopolitical conditions.

"Armenia has very difficult geopolitical neighbors, but it is the only country that truly wants to advance democracy, anti-corruption and the right values," President of the Storting Gharahkhani told Armenpress during his visit to Armenia as part of the NB8 delegation.

"Therefore, I think we can help by sharing how our country was built on those values," he said when asked about possible directions of cooperation between Armenia and Norway.

Gharahkhani pointed out the possibility of cooperating in the energy sector. He said Norway is an important country in terms of oil and gas and plans to invest in renewable energy in the future.

Although not an EU member, Norway shares the union's values, he added.

Gharahkhani commended the EU integration process in Armenia.

"You have to work if you want to be an EU member. You have to work to assure that your country is built on democracy, rule of law, gender equality and human rights," he said.

He said that his colleagues in the NB8 delegation who are from EU member

states have told the Armenian authorities that they will promote the process.

Asked about the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process and the role of the international community, Gharahkhani said, "Your path towards a Euro Atlantic solution depends on the negotiations of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Thus, I think the international community must encourage to achieve peace." The speaker attached importance to establishment of peace.

In a world where democracy is on the decline, democratic countries like Armenia and Norway must support each other, he added.

Armenian, Georgian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation meets in Yerevan

Prime Ministers of Armenia and Georgia Nikol Pashinyan and Irakli Kobakhidze chaired the session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation between the two countries.

The focus was on trade and economic cooperation, leveraging opportunities created by free trade agreements, large transport and infrastructure projects, as well as the importance of developing tourism, the digital economy and transit corridors.

Nikol Pashinyan highlighted the successful cooperation with Georgia in various sectors. "The session of the Economic Cooperation Commission is very important because we are discussing very specific issues, decisions and agreements that directly affect our countries and the welfare of our societies, as well as strengthening our relations. In the context of strategic partnership, independent Armenia and Georgia have developed cooperation well over the past 30 years, achieving successes and overcoming many obstacles. I would like to emphasize the great potential we have to strengthen and enrich our relations. This cooperation is an idea that we are committed to and based on specific policies, we can work in this direction. We fully respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty," he said.

"We have a good understanding of how important peace and stability are in the



Caucasus. Every step we take is aimed at achieving this goal. I believe that we already have new achievements. I am confident that 2025 will be the beginning of new ambitious projects as a result of all our efforts and joint initiatives. We can take joint steps in various sectors, including communications, energy, information technologies, security, healthcare, education, culture and people-to-people contacts. We can also take joint steps to simplify the delimitation and demarcation process, which will increase both passenger traffic and trade volumes and we will have the opportunity to improve legal and legislative relations between our countries, creating easier opportunities for business transactions and operations," stated Nikol Pashinyan.

Irakli Kobakhidze said, in turn, "It is very important to have close cooperation to defend the national interests of our countries together. Our relations,

partnership and friendship have a strong historical foundation." "This is an exceptional friendship that connects the Georgian and Armenian peoples. These relations have been politically translated into the signing of a Strategic Partnership Declaration, which will elevate the cooperation between Georgia and Armenia to a new level. This provides a very solid foundation for further strengthening our political relations, economic ties

and other connections between our countries. Georgia has always expressed its readiness and is still ready to contribute and play a role in establishing stability and peace in the region, which is an essential condition for the development and prosperity of our countries," stated Irakli Kobakhidze at the Commission session.

"Of course, we are ready to cooperate on these matters with our Armenian friends and partners. Georgia and Armenia firmly support each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. I would like to thank you once again for your unwavering support for Georgia. We are pleased that Georgia remains an attractive tourist destination for our Armenian friends. Every year, nearly a million Armenian tourists visit Georgia, which is an impressive number for a small country like ours. I would like to confirm our readiness to further deepen our relations between our countries," the Georgian PM said.

Combined Resolve-2025: Armenia participates in multinational military drills at US military base in Germany

The field mobile hospital of the Military Medical Support Department of the Ministry of Defense is participating in the Combined Resolve-2025 multinational military exercise held at the US military base in Hohenfels, Germany.

The medical personnel of the Armenian Ministry of Defense and the US National Guard partners involved in the exercise perform triage of the wounded in difficult



conditions, provide emergency medical care, perform surgical interventions, as

well as organize evacuation – the next stage of medical care.

The goals of the exercise are to increase the level of training of the hospital staff, improve the professional skills of organizing work in realistic and complex conditions, to maximize the level of coordinated organization of medical support in a multinational environment.

Armenia, Wizz Air discuss development of new routes

Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan received representatives of Wizz Air Group on January 29. The meeting was also attended by Lusine Gevorgyan, Chairwoman of the Tourism Committee of the Armenian Ministry of Economy.

During the meeting, issues related to the airline's upcoming activities in the Armenian market and increasing tourist flows to Armenia were discussed.

The parties touched upon the development of new routes, the possibilities of increasing flights to Armenia, as well as the prospects for expanding cooperation with the Tourism Committee.

The Minister noted that it is necessary to develop and present to the Armenian side a roadmap of proposals and actions,

which will be discussed and decisions will be made according to priorities.



Yerevan Mayor Offers Major Concession on Bus Fares as Protests Loom



One day after ruling out major concessions, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan on January 28 pledged to scale back the impending significant increase in the cost of public transport in the Armenian capital.

The unpopular measure, effective from February 1, will replace the existing bus and minibus fees of 100 drams (25 U.S. cents) per ride with a complex tariff system involving electronic payments for season tickets. Commuters will have to pay 9,000 drams (\$22) per month, 24,000 drams per quarter and 90,000 drams per annum for an unlimited number of bus,

trolleybus or metro rides. More importantly, a ticket valid for 180 minutes is due to cost around 300 drams.

The two opposition groups represented in the city council have been actively campaigning against the higher bus fares. They have called on citizens to boycott them and continue paying 100 drams from February 1.

Avinyan insisted as recently as on Monday that he will be not bow to the opposition pressure and will enforce the price hikes as planned. He reiterated that they are necessary for cutting losses incurred by Yerevan's transport network and buying more buses needed by it. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan defended the measure in a televised interview aired over the weekend.

Nevertheless, the mayor, who is a senior a member of Armenia's Civil Contract

party, announced on Tuesday that the municipal administration will also introduce a new, one-ride ticket that will cost 150 drams. In a video address posted on Facebook, he said its price will remain unchanged this year and could only be raised by up to 10 percent annually from 2026 onwards.

The major concession did not satisfy the opposition campaigners, notably former Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan and his National Progress party.

"The mayor has a hearing problem because the public clearly says: 100 drams at most," a senior member of the party, Grigor Yeritsyan, wrote on Facebook.

The higher transport fees were initially due to take effect about a year ago. The municipal administration repeatedly delayed their entry into force in 2024 amid strong resistance from the opposition.

Armenia, Italy discuss perspectives of defense cooperation

Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan received the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Armenia, Alessandro Ferranti.

The Defense Minister congratulated

Ambassador Ferranti on his appointment and wished him success in advancing cooperation between Armenia and Italy.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the current state and prospects

of bilateral defense cooperation, as well as issues related to regional and international security.

What I heard during my meetings in Baku was very different from what we sometimes hear in the public space – Magdalena Grono

For the EU, it's very important that the normalization process between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues in a calm and positive environment, building on past achievements and successes reached in various formats, European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Magdalena Grono has said.

Grono told Armenpress in an interview that during her



“Zangezur Corridor.” Do you have the impression that Baku is preparing for a new attack on Armenia, and how credible do you find Azerbaijan’s statements that it is pursuing peace?

EUSR Magdalena

Grono: All my interlocutors in Baku expressed the view that “the conflict has been settled”, that “the situation has been

Baku visit she heard encouraging statements regarding peace and stability in the region that were often different from what is said in the public space.

Armenpress: Mrs. Grono, on January 8, during your visit to Baku, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, once again made threats against Armenia, essentially casting doubt on the possibility of establishing peace in the South Caucasus. During your meeting with Aliyev in Baku, did you address these threats, and what do you think—can peace in the South Caucasus be achieved under conditions where the leadership of Azerbaijan regularly threatens Armenia and makes unfounded territorial claims?

EUSR Magdalena Grono: You are indeed referring to an element of the context in which my visit to Azerbaijan took place. Issues relating to public rhetoric, the need to prepare populations for a peaceful future, to address and lower threat perceptions, including through public reconciliation efforts and positive rhetoric that commits to peace, were among the points raised in my meetings in Azerbaijan. For the EU, it's very important that the normalisation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues in a calm and

positive environment, building on past achievements and successes reached in various formats, most recently on their bilateral track. In our exchanges in Baku, I heard encouraging statements regarding peace and stability in the region; these were often different from what we have heard in the public space, in particular on the continuation of the normalization process between the two countries. I believe an important first stage of normalization is already seeing results: Azerbaijan and Armenia have a structured and well-organised framework for their discussions, with a clear commonly agreed basis and scope. Now is the time to display the political will that is needed to turn the page of conflict once and for all, to agree on mutually acceptable solutions for all outstanding issues, and to ensure a peaceful and more prosperous life for all populations in the region.

Armenpress: The President of Azerbaijan is demanding that Armenia stop acquiring weapons, while at the same time, he is rapidly building up his country's arsenal. Parallel to this, Azerbaijan's leadership continues to spread false claims that Armenia's Constitution contains territorial demands against Azerbaijan, and there is ongoing rhetoric about the so-called

stabilised”, that there is “no intention to use force” and that the normalisation process should continue in all its dimensions. Again, what I heard during my meetings was very different from what we sometimes hear in the public space. The 11th meeting of Armenia's and Azerbaijan's border commissions took place on 16 January, as planned. I would like to welcome and commend the parties' continued exchanges of views on future delimitation works and agreement reached on proceeding further with concrete delimitation works from the North to the South. This sends a very positive signal and I very much hope that similar progress will be ensured on other tracks, be it regarding the draft peace treaty, connectivity and resumption of communication links, or humanitarian issues. We are certainly strongly encouraging both sides to make a commitment to progress and warned about the negative impact of certain tendencies to the contrary.

Armenpress: Azerbaijan has repeatedly issued threats against the EU monitoring mission in Armenia, also falsely alleging that the EU mission is engaged in espionage against Azerbaijan. How do you respond to these accusations, and did you raise

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page 8 ➡ this topic during your meetings with Azerbaijani officials?

EUSR Magdalena Grono: Azerbaijan's views on the EU Mission in Armenia were also raised by my interlocutors in Baku. We always carefully listen to any criticism or divergent views - and try to understand what grievances there may be, and what may lie behind them. We seek to clarify potential misperceptions - but we are equally committed to dispelling any possible disinformation. This is also relevant for the criticisms we hear about EUMA activities. As far as perceptions are concerned, I made it clear during my meetings that, the EU does not intend to create new dividing lines, engage in "zero-sum games" or promote a "hidden agenda" in the region. The EU Mission in Armenia has been deployed on the basis of a sovereign request from the Armenian authorities. At all stages - before, during and after its deployment - the EU kept the Azerbaijani authorities informed. Given sensitivities associated with third-party presence on the ground and the long history of conflict, I assured all interlocutors that we take our role with a high degree of responsibility. We can therefore reiterate that all allegations regarding "spying activities" or "destabilization objectives" are disinformation and do not correspond to neither the mandate and goals set for the Mission, nor its operations. The EU Mission in Armenia is and will remain an exclusively civilian, unarmed mission.

Armenpress: As part of your regional visit, you also travelled to Armenia, where you met with several high-ranking officials. How do you assess the results of your visit? What is your impression of the steps the Armenian government is taking toward achieving peace in the South Caucasus?

EUSR Magdalena Grono: Yes, following my meetings in Baku, I was also received at the highest level in Yerevan, in particular by Prime Minister Pashinyan

and a number of key government interlocutors. As in Azerbaijan, I also met with civil society representatives. These visits were very intense and rich, and to a certain degree also encouraging. In Yerevan, I voiced strong support for ongoing reforms, but also for the courageous steps taken in the framework of the normalisation process with Azerbaijan. Despite the ups and downs of the process, the Armenian leadership has been engaging with a forward-looking approach, with a clear willingness to turn the page of enmity and establish a stable and peaceful environment. Critics would say that much more could have been done, and we would certainly like to see more progress soon. At the same time, if we look at the pace of work, the structured framework of negotiations and the overall dynamics in the bilateral interaction, I would say that these were completely unthinkable some years ago.

Armenpress: What practical steps is the European Union prepared to take to achieve peace in the South Caucasus, given Azerbaijan's actions to artificially prolong the process and its threats against Armenia?

EUSR Magdalena Grono: The EU has been heavily involved over the past few years in the Armenia-Azerbaijan normalisation process, primarily through Brussels leaders level meetings convened at the time by the previous President of the European Council, Charles Michel. In addition to other international efforts, this platform had given Armenia's and Azerbaijan's leaders the space needed to move forward through a structured agenda. Since the landmark joint Azerbaijan-Armenia statement of 7 December 2023, as a result of which the sides agreed on the organization of COP29 and a mutual release of prisoners, Armenia and Azerbaijan indicated that they would continue their discussions for the implementation of more confidence building measures and called on the international community to

support their efforts. This is precisely the context in which my recent visits to Azerbaijan and Armenia took place. Together with Baku and Yerevan, we explored how the EU could be most helpful in supporting Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization and broader regional cooperation. At this stage, we have identified several areas, again with the understanding that the EU stands ready to also do more. In Baku and Yerevan, we agreed that the EU would continue its support to ongoing Azerbaijan-Armenia bilateral talks, would focus on concrete aspects of connectivity and humanitarian issues, especially regarding demining and addressing the issue of missing persons, and would also promote regional cooperation initiatives.

Armenpress: In the context of unblocking regional communications, Armenia has proposed the "Crossroads of Peace" project. Are you familiar with this project, and what is your position on it?

EUSR Magdalena Grono: I'm of course familiar with the "Crossroads of Peace" project put forward by Armenia since 2023. Its overall scope and basic principles, I believe, are not really contested by anyone. But the details and practicalities are something that still needs to be fully agreed by the sides. It is indeed a useful and interesting framework, also from the point of view of showing concretely how a future South Caucasus at peace could look like. As a first step, I very much hope that Armenia and Azerbaijan would be able to agree on modalities for cargo transit between the Western regions of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan in the near future and open up also communications that link up Armenia to the broader region. In addition to the exchanges I had in the region, the statements made in Yerevan and in Baku on the matter following the meeting of the leaders in Kazan on 24 October 2024 give me reason to believe that an agreement is attainable - and we remain ready to support parties to reach it.

PACE President regrets decision of Georgian delegation to withdraw from the Assembly



PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos regrets the decision of the Georgian delegation to withdraw from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe following the Assembly's vote to "ratify the delegation's credentials, subject to conditions."

"This jeopardises the dialogue that could help to advance democratic standards in Georgia," he said.

Earlier, the Assembly decided to ratify the credentials of the Georgian delegation, but suspended many of its members' rights and said it would reconsider the credentials in April in light of progress made by the Georgian authorities on reversing "democratic backsliding" in the country.

The credentials were challenged on the opening day of the Assembly's winter plenary session in Strasbourg.

In a resolution based on a report by Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica (Latvia, EPP/CD), the Assembly said it would reconsider the credentials at its April 2025 part-session "in the light of progress achieved" on a series of issues, including:

- the organisation of "new genuinely democratic parliamentary elections", held under strict international monitoring and conditions of political independence of state institutions and election administration
- immediate and effective steps to "enable Georgia to resume the European integration process" an immediate end to police brutality and human rights abuses
- the release of all political prisoners before the Assembly's 2025 April part-session

Although approving the credentials, the Assembly suspended a number of

rights of members the Georgian delegation "as a clear sign of its condemnation of police brutality and other human rights abuses". They may not join five of PACE's nine committees, become rapporteurs, observe elections or represent the Assembly at certain events.

The Assembly also said it would "explore ways of strengthening the participation of Georgian extra-parliamentary opposition and civil society in its actions with regard to Georgia".

Georgia announced Wednesday that it was withdrawing its delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) after the resolution was passed..

"We, the members of the Georgian Parliamentary Delegation in Strasbourg and Tbilisi, have debated and, by a collective decision of the Georgian Dream team, are ceasing our work in the Parliamentary Assembly beginning today," Thea Tsulukiani, the head of the Georgian delegation to PACE, told reporters in Strasbourg.

Ex-US Senator Bob Menendez jailed for 11 years for bribery

Former New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez has been sentenced to 11 years in prison, following his conviction on bribery and corruption charges, the BBC reports.

Last July, a jury found Menendez guilty on 16 counts for accepting gifts, including gold bars, cash and a Mercedes-Benz, in exchange for helping foreign governments.

Prosecutors were seeking at least a 15-year sentence, citing in court documents the "rare gravity" of the ex-senator's

crimes.

Lawyers for Menendez, 71, had called for a shorter sentence paired with community service.

Before receiving his sentence, Menendez cried while addressing the courtroom.

"Other than family, I have lost everything I ever cared about," he said, according to court reporters. "Every day I'm awake is a punishment."

He then asked the judge "to temper

your sword of justice with the mercy of a lifetime of duty".



PACE elects Vahe Grigoryan judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Armenia

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) January 29 elected Vahe Grigoryan as judge to the European Court of Human Rights in respect of Armenia.

Mr Vahe Grigoryan, having obtained a majority of votes cast, is elected judge of the European Court of Human Rights for



a term of office of nine years which shall commence not later than three months after his election.

Judges are elected by PACE from a list of three candidates nominated by each State which has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights.

Pashinyan Again Makes Anti-Armenia And Anti-Diaspora Statements

By Harut Sassounian

The biggest tragedy of Armenians worldwide is that Armenia is ruled by a Prime Minister who is not only incompetent, but also anti-Armenian.

During his interview with Armenia's Public TV last Saturday, Nikol Pashinyan repeated once again his nonsense about the difference between 'Real Armenia' and 'Historic Armenia.' He even claimed that 'Historic Armenia' is the enemy of today's 'Real Armenia.' Just because wars and invasions have shifted Armenia's boundaries over the centuries, it does not mean that there is no such thing as 'Historic Armenia.' Don't be surprised if one day Pashinyan claims that Armenia has only existed since 2018 when he came to power!

What Pashinyan is trying to do is deprive Armenians of the right to even dream of restoring 'Historic Armenia,' someday in the future. He naively thinks that by announcing that Armenia does not have any territorial demands from its neighboring countries, he will be able to convince Azerbaijan to sign a meaningless peace treaty with Armenia. The fact is that Pres. Aliyev has zero interest in signing a peace treaty. On the contrary, he repeatedly threatens to attack Armenia. He describes the Republic of Armenia as 'Western Azerbaijan,' demanding the settlement of 300,000 Azerbaijanis in Armenia.

Rather than saying that we have no demands from anyone, Pashinyan should just keep his mouth shut. He should neither say we have demands nor say that we do not have demands. The reason is that Armenia is currently weak and cannot confront militarily its much stronger enemies — Azerbaijan and Turkey. However, it is wrong to declare that we do not have any territorial demands because that would give up Armenians' right to regain someday their lost territories. To keep that dream alive, Armenia does not need to have a powerful army. It just needs to preserve its historic memory

and transmit it to future generations until the day when, due to unexpected circumstances, the opportunity arises to recover what Armenians had lost. If they do not keep the dream alive, even when such an opportunity comes up, Armenians will not be able to take advantage of it because they have voluntarily given up that right.

The best example is what the Jews were able to accomplish after losing their homeland 2,000 years ago. By preserving their dream of "Next Year in Jerusalem" and transmitting it to future generations, they were able to take advantage of the opportunity created in the 20th century to return to their historic homeland.

In his interview on Public TV, Pashinyan stated that no one will sell weapons to Armenia if we keep mentioning Ararat as being our mountain. This is totally false. Saying Ararat or Arakads has nothing to do with acquiring weapons. It has everything to do with knowing how to run a country and a military, and having the funds to pay for the needed weapons. If saying Ararat would have deprived Armenia of obtaining weapons, how did Armenia acquire, before Pashinyan, billions of dollars of weapons which were regrettably captured by Azerbaijan during the 2020 war and are now displayed in Baku?

When Pashinyan was asked about the appropriateness of his riding a bicycle or making an omelet on Facebook, while the country is on the edge of war, he replied: "all the institutions of our country are working even when I am riding a bicycle."

Pashinyan also excused his constant concessions to Azerbaijan by explaining that he does not want to respond to Azerbaijan's escalatory rhetoric which is aimed at provoking new hostilities. He does not seem to understand that making concessions to the enemy does not deter war. On the contrary, it increases Aliyev's appetite to demand more concessions.

When asked about a Diasporan Armenian's dream to return someday to his ancestral homeland, Pashinyan nonchalantly

and insultingly said: "He lives in Australia, wants to return to the birthplace of his grandfathers, let him return. What does that have to do with the Republic of Armenia?" He continued: "Our compatriot lives in Australia, wants to return to the homeland of his grandfathers, which could be anywhere in the world, including Mush, Ardahan, Sis, but for that we should make our soldiers a target? Is that what we want? In other words, we want missiles to fall on our military units at any moment because there are people in Canberra who want to return to the birthplace of their grandfathers, which is Adana. Is this logical?"

In response to a question as to why he has done nothing to secure the release of the Armenian hostages in Baku, Pashinyan replied: "There are superpowers today that have citizens in the same situation in different countries and they are unable to bring them back for years."

During his meeting with a group of Swiss-Armenians in Zurich last week, Pashinyan raised unnecessary questions about the basic facts of the Armenian Genocide: "We need to also return to the history of the Armenian Genocide. We need to understand what happened and why?" Pashinyan is probably the only Armenian in the world who does not know what happened in 1915. He then continued with a nonsense question: "How is it that in 1939 there was no agenda for the Armenian Genocide? And how is that in 1950 the Armenian Genocide agenda appeared?" Pashinyan does not even know that the term genocide did not exist in 1939. It was coined in the 1940's by Raphael Lemkin. Until then Armenians referred to the mass murders of 1915 as massacres.

As soon as a new patriotic leader comes to power in Armenia, he should announce that every one of Pashinyan's orders, laws, statements and agreements are null and void.

ANC-International Says Pashinyan's Comments on Armenian Genocide are 'Dangerous'

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, speaking to a group from the Armenian community of Switzerland, made several inflammatory comments and engaged in outright genocide denial. Specifically, Pashinyan called into question the official narrative of the reasons given to the perpetrators of the genocide against the Armenian civilian population of the Ottoman Empire, claiming more work needs to be done to understand "why" and "how" the event occurred. Crucially, Pashinyan also questioned the "appearance" of Armenian Genocide recognition advocacy in our communities stating: "How is it that in 1939 there was no agenda for the Armenian Genocide, and how is it that in 1950 the agenda for the Armenian Genocide appeared."

This comment directly aligns with the genocide denial narratives promoted by the Turkish government and misinformation campaigns that are actively levied against recognition efforts in various countries.

While the prime minister is hiding behind the pretext of simply seeking more information, the mere questioning conceals a deeper layer of twisting reality and continued attempts of "concessions" for, Turkey. It is incredibly disrespectful toward the 1.5 million Armenian victims of the Genocide to have their victimhood and martyrdom questioned. It is further infuriating to hundred-year efforts of the Armenian people, to historians and academics, including Turkish ones, who have dedicated significant efforts towards the recognition of the historical truth and the seeking of Justice and compensation.

First, the term "genocide" did not exist in 1939 as it was coined by Polish-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1944. Lemkin further pushed for an international sensitization about the topic, with many academics including Armenians advancing the issue of the Genocide of the Armenians on the agenda as well.

These efforts were taking place after World War II, when the international diplomatic and geopolitical situation was

evolving exceptionally, with the establishment of the United Nations and its charter and the establishment of international judicial institutions that prioritized and focused their mission on the prevention of genocides and promotion of international norms that sought justice and punishment to perpetrators of acts against humanity such as the "UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" of 1948, a situation that did not exist and was not conceivable in 1939.

Seizing the opportunity, the Armenian Diaspora increased its campaigning efforts on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the establishment of the official historical narrative. These efforts have culminated in the Armenian Genocide being recognized by hundreds of international institutions and organizations, many countries, the Parliament of the European Union, the Council of Europe and at the United Nations level. Its historical truth cannot be denied, nor can the enormous efforts of the Armenian people to reach these levels be put under question.

Therefore, the "response" to what changes happened to the agenda are straightforward and easily accessible to those truthfully wishing to know the truth.

We invite the Prime Minister to also consult his own Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has also historically dedicated efforts toward the recognition of the Armenian Genocide on the international stage. To answer "why" the Genocide happened, the Ministry's official website, as of this publication, states that "the Young Turks government, hoping to save the remains of the weakened Ottoman Empire, adopted a policy of Pan Turkism – the establishment of a mega Turkish empire [...] the Armenian population became the main obstacle standing in the way of the realization of this policy. Although the decision for the deportation of all Armenians from the Western Armenia was adopted in late 1911, the Young Turks used WWI as a suitable opportunity for its implementation". The website further adds an interesting passage that considers

the final phase of the genocide being the complete denial and refusal of Turkey to accept responsibility and falsify the reality of the events that occurred stating "Turkey has consistently fought the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide by any means, including falsification of historical facts, propaganda campaigns, lobbying"

We invite the Prime Minister to consult these simple, widely available and accepted historical facts and understand that conflict resolution cannot be achieved through concessions of historical truth, quite the opposite, it can only happen with acceptance of responsibility from Turkey of the reality of the Armenian Genocide and the continued efforts toward the establishment of justice and truth.

Commenting on the situation, President of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, Kaspar Karampetian, expressed his profound disappointment for the prime minister's actions, judging the statements to be "irresponsible", further stating that it is "shameful for the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia"

"Engaging in this type of Genocide denial and historical revisionism is dangerous to an almost criminal degree. At a period during which our nation recently faced genocidal ethnic cleansing and is actively seeking the preservation of the Armenian heritage of Artsakh, promoting any type of genocide denial is unacceptable. Armenian Genocide recognition efforts have been the focal commitment of the Armenian community, a fight that allowed survivors of the very genocide to organize and mobilize around their dignified right for Justice. Any denialism needs to be met with firm rejection and an immediate change of servile policy against those who plot the extermination of the Armenian people and of Armenia," said Karampetian.

A N C - I n t e r n a t i o n a l
January, 29, 2025

Turkiye seeks to record South Caucasus status quo in Armenia-Azerbaijan treaty, says scholar



Turkiye seeks to become a top decision-maker on the global stage but South Caucasus doesn't have the kind of significance for it as before, according to a scholar.

Academician Ruben Safrastyan, a top expert on Turkiye, told Armenpress that the latest developments in Syria have greatly strengthened Turkiye's positions. Ankara has assumed huge obligations, to control the transition of power in Syria. Nevertheless, according to Safrastyan, Turkiye doesn't seek to get involved with the same intensity in the regional processes in South Caucasus.

Armenpress asked Safrastyan on the possible impacts of the developments in Syria on the South Caucasus region.

"Right now, Turkiye wouldn't want the situation in South Caucasus to escalate for it to have to interfere. If we were to look at this strategic issue more broadly, then we have to mention that an important phase

of geopolitical changes is happening now in the Middle East, the purpose of which is to some extent the US withdrawal from the region, which would lead to Turkiye trying to fill that vacuum by agreeing its steps with the American side and getting support. This also gives the chance to conclude that Turkiye will not seek a highly active role in South Caucasus by escalating the situation," Safrastyan said.

According to Safrastyan, Turkish President Erdogan is pursuing a strategic goal of making Turkiye one of the top decision-makers in the world. Erdogan had even announced that the world is much bigger and not limited to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

But South Caucasus, according to Safrastyan, is not of the same significance to Turkiye as several years ago.

"Turkiye is now interested for the status-quo stemming from its strengthened positions in the region to be documented in the Armenian-Azerbaijani treaty and be favorable for Azerbaijan. I think, in the foreseeable future Turkiye will not want for an escalation or new war to happen here," Safrastyan said.

Asked why Turkiye is not suppressing the Azeri leader's belligerent and maximalist rhetoric, Safrastyan said that a differing outlook has emerged between Turkiye and Azerbaijan: Ankara pursues

geopolitical and strategic aspirations, global projects, while Baku's outlook is a lot smaller and narrower.

"What matters for Baku is not the signing of the peace treaty with Armenia, but extorting big concessions, thus it is using the belligerent rhetoric to pressure Armenia. Nevertheless I am not convinced that the foundation of this rhetoric is unleashing war against Armenia, because reality and rhetoric are different things. Despite this, we should remain vigilant and be ready to withstand any opportunism or aggression," the academician said.

According to Safrastyan, currently Turkiye doesn't want to oppose Russia or Iran as well, but it is not ruled out that Ankara will try to strengthen its positions further in the future.

"Turkiye is simply involved in another, bigger game, and for example, it achieved success in Syria because the positions of Russia and Iran had gotten weaker. In turn Russia is mainly focused on the conflict with Ukraine and wouldn't want a new hotspot to emerge in South Caucasus. For centuries Russia, Iran and Turkiye had been fighting for our region and as a result of an interesting combination of circumstances now all three of them are against a drastic escalation of the situation in the South Caucasus," he said.

Government Defends Universal Income Declaration amid Criticism

(RFE/RL) - Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other government officials defended on January 30 the ongoing introduction of mandatory universal income declaration in Armenia which is due to be mostly completed by May 1.

Financial disclosure in the country has until now been mandatory only for senior state officials and members of their families. A law enacted by the Armenian government just over two years ago essentially extended the legal requirement to all citizens. The government said this will further complicate tax evasion and make it easier for the authorities to identify people who are really in need of government aid.

The more than 700,000 Armenians who have jobs or businesses registered with tax authorities have to submit such income declarations electronically by May 1. They must report not only their

wages but also remittances or other cash donations not exceeding 300,000 drams (\$750) per transfer. Officials have assured people that they will not end up paying more taxes.

But as the legal deadline approaches, there are growing complains from ordinary taxpayers about a lack of clarity in the disclosure procedures. The fact that the electronic filing system created by the State Revenue Committee (SRC) is still not functioning properly is adding to the discontent.

Pashinyan acknowledged "widespread tension" caused by the measure and sought to address it during a weekly cabinet meeting in Yerevan. He insisted that his government is seeking to minimize misuse of public funds earmarked for social programs, rather than increase its tax

revenue. And he again said that some of the citizens eligible for poverty benefits, tax breaks or other aid have substantial incomes hidden by them.

For his part, Deputy Finance Minister Arman Poghosyan said: "The most important goal is to introduce a comprehensive system of registering people so that the government gets to know citizens, their financial status and social needs better and comes up with fact-based policies and uses targeted tools."

Opposition lawmakers remain critical of the universal income declaration system, saying that it is cumbersome and will not serve the declared purpose. They are also unconvinced by the government assurances that the tax burden on the country's population will not increase as a result.

Former Senior USAID official Colin Thomas-Jensen joins Aurora as Director of Communications, Advocacy, and Impact



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative on January 31 announced the appointment of Colin Thomas-Jensen as Director of Communications, Advocacy, and Impact. Thomas-Jensen will lead efforts to support the initiative's growing network of local humanitarians, including advocating for more effective, sustainable funding for individuals and local organizations that offer assistance and protection in communities with the greatest need.

Thomas-Jensen joins Aurora from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where he was the National Security Advisor to the USAID Administrator.

"I am thrilled with the opportunity to advance Aurora's efforts on behalf of brave local humanitarians on the front lines of the world's most acute crises," Thomas-Jensen said. "With governments and armed groups increasingly emboldened to restrict humanitarian access for international relief efforts, it has never been more important to strengthen the global network of local responders and advocate for innovative and sustainable initiatives to support their life-saving work."

Thomas-Jensen began his career as a humanitarian responder with USAID in Sudan during the Darfur Genocide. Through his work with the International Crisis Group and the Enough Project, Mr. Thomas-Jensen has developed and led impactful advocacy efforts for more effective international responses to genocide

and mass atrocities. From 2010 to 2017, he worked in senior policymaking roles with the Department of State and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

"We are delighted to welcome Colin Thomas-Jensen to the Aurora team. Colin's strong belief in our collective responsibility to address the world's most pressing challenges echoes the very core of Aurora's mission," said Armine Afeyan, CEO of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. "His experience advancing humanitarian and human rights efforts will undoubtedly help us achieve even greater impact in this pivotal phase of our journey."

Founded on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world. To date, Aurora has already changed the lives of more than 3.4 million people across 60 countries and territories, deploying funding toward 463 projects that support emergency response, food, water, education, medical care, psychosocial support and more for underserved communities.

Aurora will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year with a series of landmark events, including the Human Rights and Humanitarian Forum in Los Angeles in May, the announcement of the 2025 Aurora Humanitarians in New York in September, and the reveal of the 2025 Laureate during the Aurora Prize Ceremony at Ellis Island in November.

Prior to joining Aurora, Colin was the National Security Advisor to the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Previously, he was a Senior Expert for Peace Processes at the United

States Institute of Peace and the Senior Advisor for Africa at WestExec Advisors. From 2013 to 2017, he was a Senior Policy Advisor to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Deputy Director of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations' Washington, D.C. office. From 2010 to 2012, he worked at the U.S. Department of State as the Special Advisor to the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Earlier in his career, Colin worked for USAID as a humanitarian responder in Darfur, Sudan, in 2004, and in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake.

Colin has held senior research and policy positions with the Center for American Progress, where he helped found the Enough Project, and at the International Crisis Group. In 2017 and 2018, he was a member of the United Nations Panel of Experts for South Sudan. His research and analysis have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Current History*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

After graduating from Pomona College, Colin served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, teaching high school English in Ethiopia and Mozambique. He holds an MA in African Studies from the University of London's School for Oriental and African Studies.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with a focus on helping the most destitute. Uniquely dedicated to discovering and supporting the world's unsung humanitarian heroes in order to enable and raise awareness of their courageous work, Aurora has made a significant impact on the lives of those in greatest need.

Monsieur Aznavour: Charles Aznavour biopic nominated for four César Awards

Charles Aznavour biopic *Monsieur Aznavour* has been nominated for the César Award in 4 categories:

Best Actor: Tahar Rahim
 Best Costumes: Isabelle Mathieu
 Best Decorations: Stéphane Rozenbaum
 Best Visual Effects: Stéphane Dittoo

The award ceremony will take place on February 28.

The César Award is the national film award of France. First awarded in 1976, the César Award is considered the highest film honor in France, the French film industry's equivalent to the Molière Award for theatre, and the Victoires de la Musique for music.



In cinema, it is the French equivalent to the Academy Award.

Alanis Morissette, Rod Stewart, Billie Eilish and other huge stars play at FireAid concert for LA

Musician Alanis Morissette and rock singer Rod Stewart took to the stage with other big names like Green Day, Billie Eilish, Lady Gaga, Joni Mitchell and Jelly Roll at the FireAid benefit concert on Thursday (January 30) to raise funds for people affected by deadly wildfires in California this month, Reuters reports.

"Maybe one of the most important gigs we've ever played," Green Day lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong said in an interview before the show. He said the band had recorded several albums in Hollywood and regarded Los Angeles as a "second home."

"We've been coming here for 30 years, so it's just really important for us to sort



of do our part in a small way," Armstrong said.

Other acts for the fundraising event include Gracie Abrams, Katy Perry, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sting and Stevie Nicks. Dave Matthews and John Mayer will perform together for the first time.

The shows are scheduled for Thursday at the Intuit Dome and the Kia Forum in Inglewood, just outside of Los Angeles. They will be shown live in select AMC Theatres and stream on Netflix, Max, Apple TV, Prime Video, Spotify, YouTube and elsewhere. Audio will be available through iHeartRadio.

Parts of Los Angeles, the second-largest U.S. city and the home of many musicians, were devastated last week by fast-moving wildfires that killed 28 people and destroyed more than 16,000 homes and other structures.

Pan-Armenian Winter Games 2025: Tehran's team wins yukigassen tournament

The team from Tehran has won the yukigassen tournament at the 2nd Pan-Armenian Winter Games in Jermuk.

The Tehran team is competing in alpine skiing, snowboarding and yukigassen (snowball fighting).

Henrik Khaloyan, a member of the Pan-Armenian Games World Committee and representative of Iran, told Armenpress that the idea of unity behind the

games is highly important.

"Youth and sportsmanship are united here," he said.

"The difficulty of the winter games is that now it is the active academic year season and the members of Armenian unions can't skip it," he added.

The number of participants this year is three times more than during the first games.

Aramazd Babayan, the yukigassen coach of the Tehran team, likewise attached importance to the unifying nature of the event. He said that the tournament is a good opportunity for Diaspora-Armenians to connect with each other.

The local team from Jermuk as well as the Khoy team from Armavir region were the runners-up in the yukigassen event.

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

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

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

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

Հասցե՝ Իսահակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009