

President Khachaturyan, Prime Minister Pashinyan chair opening session of annual Ambassadorial Meeting



President Vahagn Khachaturyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan have chaired the opening session of the annual ambassadorial meeting.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan and Deputy Prime Minister

Tigran Khachatryan also participated in the meeting.

Armenian Ambassadors from around the world gather in Armenia once every year for a meeting with government officials.

PM Pashinyan delivered a speech at

the meeting, highlighting the key role and significance of diplomatic representations.

Pashinyan touched upon the Armenian foreign policy priorities and challenges.

Afterwards a discussion around foreign policy agenda on existing challenges and opportunities for resolving them was held.

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Armenian MFA, Observer Research Foundation to host inaugural Yerevan Dialogue September 9-11



The Armenian Foreign Ministry, in partnership with Observer Research Foundation, will host the inaugural edition of Yerevan Dialogue under the title “Shaping Tomorrow Today” September 9-11.

Speaking about the Dialogue, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan stated: “Convening for the first time Yerevan Dialogue will provide a vital platform to ask critical questions, voice diverging opinions & converging insights to seek sustainable solutions for Shaping Tomorrow Today.”

Below is the full message by Minister Ararat Mirzoyan:

“The world is changing rapidly before our eyes. The evolving landscape of global relations, the erosion of international law, the crisis of multilateralism present stark

challenges. Democracy is under strain. The decline of cooperation on peace and security threatens to fray the very fabric of the global order. The hybrid threats and climate change continue to affect daily livelihood in more places of the globe.

At the same time, we witness a quest for better connectivity and new routes to connect Asia and Europe as well as remarkable digitalization, innovation and technological advancement.

All these changes make it clear that strong, like-minded, and value-based partnerships are more essential than ever.

Our region, the South Caucasus, historically a cultural highway and major trade pathway, stands at an important crossroads today. It has been facing tremendous upheavals, including those that have deeply affected human lives and the region’s overall economic development, its present and future. We are at a historic juncture with a real opportunity to make a right choice, to take a right path towards a more peaceful, secure and prosperous future.

Dialogue and open conversations are both prerequisites and a unique way to fill in the vacuum. Yerevan Dialogue,

convening for the first time, in the capital of Armenia, will provide a vital platform to ask critical questions, voice diverging opinions and converging insights while seeking sustainable solutions. With this in mind, we have invited both leaders and experts from diplomacy, politics, business, academia and culture from more than 80 countries and organizations. We look forward to all contributions aiming to address the pressing issues of our time, Shaping Tomorrow Today.”

#YerevanDialogue2024, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia in partnership with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), will address a wide range of topics around five thematic pillars:

The Emerging International Order
Connectivity
Green Transitions and the Future of Energy

Digital Societies as Stable and Safe Economic Engine

The Future of Work

Armenian, Slovenian FMs discuss ongoing projects

On August 27, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan had a phone conversation with Tanja Fajon, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

The interlocutors discussed the

current steps towards promoting issues on the bilateral agenda and touched upon the ongoing projects.

The Ministers agreed to continue the active political dialogue and contacts in order to ensure continuity of visits and engagement in platforms of mutual interest.



Gurgen Arsenyan appointed Armenia’s Ambassador to Russia

Gurgen Arsenyan has been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the Russian Federation. A relevant decree has been signed by President Vahagn Khachaturyan.

According to another presidential

decree, Vagharshak Harutyunyan has been recalled from the post of Armenia’s Ambassador to Russia.

Arsenyan was elected to the National Assembly in 2021. His parliamentary powers were terminated on August 13, 2024.



Armenia ready for opening of regional communications, but sovereignty cannot be challenged – PM

Armenia is ready to ensure communication between Azerbaijan proper and Nakhijevan, but Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity can in no way be challenged, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a press conference on September 1.

"The regional communications have not been opened until now, among others, due to comments by a number of Russian colleagues having nothing to do with or contradicting the logic of the November 9 statement. The comments have often contradicted the decree of the Russian President dated November 10, 2020," the Prime minister said.

He emphasized that Armenia is seriously interested in the opening of regional communications under the Crossroads of Peace project, which "we are ready to start implementing tomorrow."

PM Pashinyan said he has been



receiving letters of support from leaders of different countries, as well as a number of Russian colleagues.

Iran vows increased EAEU trade through Armenia ties

The deputy head of the Aras Free Zone Organization has indicated that enhancing collaboration between Iranian and Armenian enterprises will lead to an increase in trade exchanges with member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), [IRNA](#) reports.

According to Ali Navid's remarks, these exchanges encompass a wide range of products, including cellulose, wood and furniture, automotive and related sectors, construction materials, metals, cosmetics, food, apparel, oil and gas, and chemicals.

He noted, "Armenia can source necessary items for its market from the offerings of the Aras Free Zone. Additionally, the Aras Free Zone provides Armenia with the advantage of optimal productivity at the Nordooz border, which can be utilized for the storage and transfer of goods."

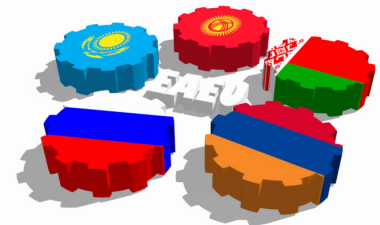
Navid further stated that the trade volume between Iran and Armenia has

reached \$600 million, highlighting that Armenia can also import goods from India and China via the Nordooz border.

A delegation of Armenian business representatives, comprising traders and investors from sectors such as furniture and wood, construction materials, electricity and electronics, food, and tourism, recently visited the Aras Free Zone.

The Aras Free Zone Organization (AFZO) is an economic zone situated in the northwest of Iran, adjacent to the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Founded in 1993, AFZO's primary objective is to draw foreign investments and foster economic growth within the area.

The zone provides a range of incentives for international investors, such as tax exemptions, streamlined customs processes, and enhanced legal independence. Additionally, AFZO is focused on improving regional infrastructure, which includes



transportation systems, industrial parks, and residential developments.

The Aras Free Zone has successfully attracted investments from multiple countries, particularly in sectors like agro-industry, manufacturing, and services. This zone not only encourages foreign investment and economic progress in a strategically significant part of Iran but also facilitates regional collaboration with Armenia and Azerbaijan, thereby enhancing trade and economic integration in the Caucasus region.

U.S. FBI Legal Attaché for Armenia and Georgia discusses future cooperation at the Armenian Investigative Committee

The Deputy Chairman of the Armenian Investigative Committee, Arsen Ayvazyan, on Tuesday received Alexander W. Tyguy, the newly appointed legal attaché of the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Armenia and Georgia.

According to the Investigative Committee of Armenia, while congratulating Alexander W. Tyguy on assuming his new position, Arsen Ayvazyan expressed confidence that the warm and effective cooperation established between the Investigative Committee of Armenia, the FBI, and the U.S. Embassy in Armenia would continue to develop successfully, given Mr.



Alexander W. Tyguy's extensive previous experience and the opportunities created by the Memorandum of Cooperation

signed between the Investigative Committee of Armenia and the FBI in 2023.

Alexander W. Tyguy, expressing gratitude for the warm reception, conveyed his belief that the cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries, along with the further implementation of joint programs aimed at strengthening the Armenian Investigative Committee, will significantly enhance

efforts by both sides in combating transnational crimes and contribute to the development of criminal justice in Armenia.

Putin, Aliyev discuss preparation of Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal

Russian and Azerbaijani Presidents Vladimir Putin and Ilham Aliyev discussed the Russian leader's recent visit to Baku and the preparation of the Azerbaijani-Armenian peace treaty by telephone, the Kremlin press service reported.

"The leaders commended the successful results of the Russian President's recent state visit to Azerbaijan. It was noted that the consistent implementation of the agreements reached during the talks will contribute to the further deepening

of allied relations between Russian and Azerbaijan," the press release said.

Referring to the situation in the South Caucasus, the Presidents touched upon the preparation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty, delimitation and demarcation of the border, as well as unblocking of transport corridors.

Putin reiterated Moscow's readiness to continue to assist Baku and Yerevan in developing mutually acceptable solutions.

The Russian leader paid a state visit to



Azerbaijan on August 18-19. On August 23, Putin called Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to inform him about the results of the Baku visit.

Iran's Foreign Ministry emphasizes friendly, constructive relations with Armenia



At the press meeting, Iranian Foreign Ministry representative Nasser Kanaani did not comment on the issue of the US delivering radar and anti-aircraft

equipment to Armenia. Instead, Kanaani addressed the friendly, constructive, and close relations between Armenia and Iran.

In his speech, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson emphasized the mutual desire of Armenia and Iran to develop friendly, constructive, and comprehensive relations.

Kanaani particularly highlighted the joint efforts and cooperation to strengthen stability and security in the region. The spokesperson also underscored the importance of maintaining common borders,

which, according to him, are beneficial for economic and commercial development and prosperity.

However, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson also noted: "We do not comment or interfere in countries' bilateral issues or their relations with other countries. However, as a general principle, we are generally pessimistic about the role of the United States in the region, as well as the US military presence in the region. This pessimism stems from the US government's history of destabilizing activities in various countries in the region."

‘From regional swamp towards Europe’, pundit weighs in on visa liberalization talks

Political analyst Davit Stepanyan has hailed the EU’s decision on starting a visa liberalization dialogue with Armenia. He said the move is definitively a positive step for Armenia in all areas.

“As a result, we will have a facilitated visa regime with EU countries,” Stepanyan told Armenpress. “I view this step first of all from a political perspective. We will do one more step allowing us to be closer to Europe. Given the fact that our region is full of threats and challenges, up to the threat of losing Armenia’s sovereignty, in case of the abovementioned decision a step is made from the regional swamp towards Europe, which will allow us to have broader bridges. Our citizens in turn will have much more opportunities to travel to EU countries and study there,” Stepanyan said, adding that this will in turn increase the country’s educational level, which is highly important. The decision will also have positive impact economically, according to the analyst. Business ties will be facilitated: traveling to Europe for exchange of experience will become much easier for small business owners.

“The risks related to illegal migration and failure of reforms are definitively taken into consideration in this process. The number one country that is treating the visa liberalization issue strictly is our friendly France, given the painful issue



concerning illegal migration. Everyone understands that many illegal migrants could potentially travel to France from Armenia to live there. But fortunately, we have readmission agreements with various EU countries, and after the visa liberalization it will be much more difficult for illegal migrants to stay there than now, because there will definitely be stricter policies. We can see that with the example of Georgia. Many citizens of that country violated migration laws after visa liberalization, but afterwards we saw how many people returned to Georgia. And today many of them are deprived of the opportunity to travel to Europe,” the analyst said.

In terms of the risks related to the failure of reforms in Armenia, Stepanyan said it’s up to the authorities to make the next move. He said the government should continue the reform process by making legislative changes.

“The people also want this. If the authorities give it the shape which the EU

expects, I think the risks will be eliminated. Nevertheless, the risks exist at this moment,” Stepanyan said.

The issue of political asylum seekers in the EU is no longer actual because Armenia is a democratic country and people don’t have the need to seek asylum in any other country, he added.

“Such grounds existed in the past, because many were subjected to political persecution. Some were applying and receiving asylum. But now the situation is different, there are no political persecutions in our country. This is a fact. You can criticize or not like the current government, but the fact that there are no such occurrences in Armenia since 2018 is definitely obvious and welcomed by the EU,” Stepanyan said.

Asked whether or not some restrictions would possibly be enforced after liberalization, Stepanyan said that this would depend on the conduct of the Armenian nationals.

“If people properly maintain the liberalization regime there won’t be problems, but if they behave like Georgians then there will be restrictions, which, by the way, are still in place for Georgia. I am aware of cases when some people who arrived to our country from Georgia were banned from boarding a plane to Vienna despite it simply being a transit destination. Thus, everything depends on us,” the political analyst said.

EU Mission in Armenia marks 3,000 patrols to border areas

On August 18, the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) marked 3 000 patrols to border areas. The patrol went up to 3 000 meters in the Jermuk area to observe and report on the situation on the ground.

EUMA conducts patrols from 6 forward operating bases in Yeghegnadzor, Kapan,

Goris, Jermuk, Martuni and Ijevan.

EUMA Mission in Armenia (EUMA) was launched by the decision of EU Foreign Affairs Council on 20 February 2023, when it also started its operational activities.

EUMA 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. EUMA is an essential component of the EU’s efforts in supporting peace and stability in the region.

Georgia plans to build new highway to Armenia



The Georgian government plans to start the construction of a 30km new Rustavi-Sadakhlo highway leading to the border with Armenia, local media reported.

The 4-lane highway will feature 11 bridges and crossings and will be built parallel to the current road, according to

Novosti Gruzia.

The construction will cost 250 million euros. The project is funded by the European Investment Bank as part of the East-West international road project.

Local authorities are now expropriating land from owners in Marneuli for the project.

Armenian industrial production grows

Industrial production grew 18,2% in the first half of 2024 compared to the previous year's same period, the Armenian Statistical Committee has said.

The total worth of the industrial production in the reporting period was 1 trillion 408 billion 107,2 million drams.

Mining industry dropped 9,2% (219 billion 875,9 million drams).

Process manufacturing grew 27,7%



and the output comprised 1 trillion 827,2

million drams.

Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply grew 13% (172 billion 469,8 million drams).

Water supply, sewage and waste management and processing grew 5,3%, comprising 14 billion 934,3 million drams.

The highest growth in the industrial production was recorded in March (30%), comprising over 262 billion drams.

Armenia, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchanges keen to develop cooperation under new MoU

On August 13, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Hayk Yeganyan, CEO of the Armenia Securities Exchange (AMX), and Abdulla Salem Alnuaimi, Group CEO of the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX). This MoU aims to establish mutually beneficial cooperative relations and strengthen the strategic partnership between the two exchanges. The signing ceremony was also attended by Saker Aslan, COO of the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

AMX emphasizes the importance of exchanging experience and implementing partnership programs that will serve the development of Armenia's capital market and create opportunities to open markets for potential foreign investors on a bilateral basis. The exchanges aim to leverage professional expertise and contribute to the creation of a competitive capital market through joint programs.

Through this partnership, Armenia, and particularly the Armenia Securities



Exchange, aims to become an important link connecting the dynamic markets of the Middle East and Europe, promoting the implementation of mutually beneficial financial programs.

In May, during the annual investment conference AIM Congress in Abu Dhabi, representatives of the Armenia Securities Exchange were invited to the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, where they became acquainted with the exchange's operations, the possibilities of a new trading platform, and exchanged experiences. The

conference was followed by various discussions and meetings aimed at experience exchange between the specialists of the two exchanges, which laid the foundation for the signing of today's Memorandum of Understanding.

Both parties are hopeful that this new stage of cooperation will create new opportunities and growth prospects for both exchanges, strengthening their positions as key players in the financial market.

ADX is the second-largest market in the Arab region. ADX is a market for trading securities; including shares issued by public joint stock companies, bonds issued by governments or corporations, exchange-traded funds, and any other financial instruments approved by the UAE Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA). ADX is part of ADQ, one of the region's largest holding companies with a broad portfolio of major enterprises spanning key sectors of Abu Dhabi's diversified economy.

Armenia to host laser tag IT Cup in September



Armenia will host laser tag IT Cup from September 14. It aims to create a communication environment between the employees of different IT companies.. The championship will be hosted by

LaserWar Armenia. IT companies will compete for the title of the best strategic team.

Representatives of the IT, Web3 and fintech community will participate in the tournament in separate teams. The winning teams will receive cash prizes, the best players will receive gifts.

“We are happy to hold the laser tag IT Cup. This is not just a military tactical game-tournament. It cultivates team spirit, forces out-of-the-box thinking, and brings together the brightest minds in our tech community in an environment that fosters

collaboration, innovation, and most importantly, fun. We look forward to seeing how the teams will strategize and compete in this dynamic environment. And, why not, it’s also a brilliant networking platform. Representatives of the IT, Web3 and fintech community will establish unique connections and discuss sectoral issues and issues within the framework of the championship,” the initiators of the event say.

It should be noted that the IT Cup championship of laser tag sports is being held for the fourth time.

US Embassy to provide \$74,000 to Matenadaran for preservation of rare manuscripts from Nagorno Karabakh

The US Embassy will provide \$74,000 through the Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation to the Matenadaran – the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts – for preservation of rare manuscripts and archival documents produced in ancient Armenian monasteries in Nagorno-Karabakh.

US Ambassador to Armenia Kristina Kvien made the announcement during a visit to Yereruyk Basilica in Armenia’s Shirak region.

Ambassador Kvien, along with Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport Zhanna Andreasyan, officials, and representatives of the Shirak region and Anipemza community, visited and toured the historic site of Yereruyk Basilica. This significant event underscored the United States’ commitment to supporting the preservation and restoration of Armenia’s rich cultural heritage, through the \$175,000 investment from the U.S. Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation to conserve this magnificent monument.

“Our collaboration in cultural preservation highlights the strong partnership between our nations. Together, we are preserving history and fostering mutual understanding and respect,” said Ambassador Kvien.

Yereruyk, an ancient basilica dating back to the 4th-5th centuries, stands as a testament to Armenia’s early Christian architecture and historical significance.



The site, which has faced challenges due to natural and human factors, is a focal point for preservation efforts aimed at safeguarding Armenia’s cultural legacy for future generations.

While in Yereruyk, Ambassador Kvien announced an award of \$74,000 – through the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation – to the “Matenadaran” Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts for preservation of rare manuscripts and archival documents produced in ancient Armenian monasteries in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Through the Ambassadors Fund, the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan has provided \$1.6 million in funding to support 15



conservation projects since 2005. The Yereruyk initiative includes the fortification of the monument’s walls, replacement of eroded stones, installation of a drainage system to reroute water, improvement of the monument environment, and its preparation as an area for the exhibition of the existing monumental stones.

Other recent AFCP projects for Armenia include, preservation of Sanahin Monastery in Lori Province, restoration of endangered frescoes at St. Hovhannes Church in Meghri, Syunik Province, and preservation of the Areni-1 Cave in Vayots Dzor. See a complete list of previous AFCP projects in Armenia. Learn more about AFCP.

How Armenia's 'Crossroads for Peace' plan could transform the South Caucasus

By Sheila Paylan

Armenia's "[Crossroads for Peace](#)" initiative, [unveiled](#) by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the Tbilisi Silk Road Forum in October 2023, is an ambitious regional transport proposal aimed at connecting Armenia with its neighboring countries—Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Georgia. The initiative seeks to revitalize and develop crucial infrastructure—roads, railways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines—to facilitate the flow of goods, energy, and people across these nations, connecting the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea through easier and more efficient transportation links.

The initiative also represents a significant part of Armenia's peace agenda in the South Caucasus amid negotiations with Azerbaijan. Armenian leaders envision these renovated and newly built routes as conduits for cultivating economic, political, and cultural ties between the countries involved, thus advancing long-term peace and stability in the region. With the potential to economically benefit the region, promote peace and cooperation in the South Caucasus, and reduce Armenia's dependence on Russia, the West should support the Crossroads for Peace plan with more robust diplomatic backing and infrastructure investment.

Decades of instability

The South Caucasus, straddling the juncture between Europe and Asia, has long been a region of strategic importance plagued by persistent instability and conflict. Most notable has been the Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which emerged in the early 1990s and led to the closure of the Armenia-Azerbaijan and Armenia-Turkey borders, severely restricting Armenia's trade and hardening political divides.

The conflict experienced a significant turning point on September 27, 2020, when Azerbaijan launched a major offensive, triggering the worst escalation since 1994. After six weeks of intense fighting, a Russia-brokered [ceasefire](#) was signed on November 9, 2020, which stipulated

concessions of Armenian-controlled territory within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan [blockaded](#) Karabakh for nearly ten months starting on December 12, 2022, leading to a humanitarian crisis. On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched a military assault that seized full control of Karabakh and forced [more than one hundred thousand ethnic Armenians to flee](#) to Armenia. The United Nations [estimates](#) that only about fifty Armenians remain in the region.

The Karabakh conflict ended on January 1, 2024, with the Karabakh authorities announcing that their unrecognized government [ceased to exist](#). Consequently, the initial rationale behind the closure of the Armenia-Azerbaijan and Armenia-Turkey borders no longer holds. Despite this, both Azerbaijan and Turkey, with the latter often aligning with the former's policies, continue to refuse to reopen their borders with Armenia. This refusal persists even in the face of Armenia's Crossroads for Peace initiative—a proposal that would be beneficial for regional development.

Corridors and crossroads

The [Trans-Caspian Corridor](#), also known as the "Middle Corridor," is an increasingly important channel for transportation and cross-border trade connecting the Central Asian states with Europe. It primarily involves the transport of goods and resources across the Caspian Sea, bridging Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan via maritime routes. From Azerbaijan, the goods are then transported through Georgia and Turkey, reaching European markets. Though trade volumes and capacity are still relatively low, the corridor holds immense strategic opportunities, as it offers a viable alternative to the traditional, longer routes through Russia or the southern maritime paths via the Suez Canal, significantly reducing transit time and avoiding geostrategic hotspots.

The [Eurasian Northern Corridor](#), offering both road and rail options, is currently the primary route for transcontinental transport but largely traverses Russian territory. Western sanctions, investment

deterrents, and financial restrictions tied to Russia's war on Ukraine complicate this corridor's use, and potential instability in Russia might eventually further weaken this route's reliability. More direct routes through Central Asian and South Caucasus nations could diminish the value of the Eurasian Northern Corridor, aligning with US and European Union efforts to reduce dependencies on Russia. The development of the Trans-Caspian Corridor offers such a strategic alternative, diversifying energy supplies to Europe and enhancing trade connectivity between Asia and Europe, while bypassing Russian influence.

Armenia's Crossroads for Peace initiative, therefore, would create a vital complementary set of routes, enhancing the strategic depth and utility of the Trans-Caspian Corridor. By developing infrastructure such as the [Yeraskh-Julfa-Meghri-Horadiz railway](#), Armenia would offer new logistic pathways linking the Caspian region directly to the Mediterranean and Black seas through Armenian territory. This would not only shorten transit times and distances between Asia and Europe but would also introduce reliable alternative routes.

Additionally, the integration of Armenia into the Trans-Caspian Corridor could stimulate economic growth in the region by attracting foreign investment focused on logistics and infrastructure development. Armenia could become a central node in Eurasian trade, enhancing the corridor's capacity and security. This strategic expansion would diversify the transport routes available to major trading powers and fortify the economic independence of Armenia and its neighboring countries by reducing their reliance on Russia.

Moreover, the Crossroads for Peace initiative is premised on the principles of sovereignty and jurisdiction, ensuring that infrastructure within each country's borders remains under its control. The idea is to promote mutual respect and cooperation among its neighboring nations, facilitating equal and reciprocal management of border and customs controls. This ensures that each country would

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be able to safeguard its interests while promoting shared economic growth.

Obstacles in the path

However, Crossroads for Peace faces significant geopolitical hurdles. Azerbaijan has so far [refused to support](#) Armenia's initiative, with analysts [stating](#) that neither Baku nor Ankara had been consulted. While the Armenian government should intensify its outreach on Crossroads for Peace, Armenia's neighbors should judge the initiative in good faith on commercial viability, rather than on geopolitical grounds.

If realized, Crossroads for Peace could significantly benefit both Azerbaijan and Turkey by boosting regional trade and opening new markets. For Azerbaijan, it could provide a more direct route to European markets, while Turkey could see enhanced trade corridors that bypass less stable regions. Additionally, the project could serve as a diplomatic bridge, easing longstanding tensions and transforming a historical conflict into a hub of international commerce. For Turkey in particular, supporting this initiative could [strategically position](#) it as a peace broker in the region, which could strengthen its diplomatic relationships not only with its immediate neighbors but also across Europe and into Asia.

Baku has instead called for the development of the "[Zangezur Corridor](#)," which would connect mainland Azerbaijan directly with its exclave of Nakhchivan through Armenia's southernmost Syunik province. Azerbaijan's conception of Zangezur includes not only a railway link, but also a highway between the two parts of Azerbaijan, and demands that it would have [extraterritorial status](#), which would require Armenia to cede control over a strip of its own territory. Crucially, Zangezur envisions opening a single transit route with Azerbaijan, whereas Crossroads for Peace aims to open several border crossings with both Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Armenia has [firmly stated](#) that any discussions involving the loss of sovereignty and territorial integrity or third-party control over its territory are nonnegotiable red lines. Indeed, Baku has [insisted](#) that a detachment from Russia's Federal Security

Service guard Zangezur; having [just kicked Russian border guards out](#) of the country, it's understandable why Armenia would balk at the installation of more Russian agents on its territory.

Azerbaijan's Zangezur plan is also detrimental to Western interests in several ways. First, it would hinder the broader Western strategic objective of stabilizing and economically developing the South Caucasus—critical for energy routes and geopolitical balance among Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. By stalling broader regional integration initiatives, Azerbaijan's position perpetuates dependence on existing routes that run through Georgia, which face logistical and capacity hurdles, and which could be susceptible to disruptions by external geopolitical influences.

This ongoing tension and the resultant lack of comprehensive peace and cooperation in the South Caucasus allows Russia and Iran to exert their influence there. Armenia's isolation forces it to maintain its reliance on Russia, countering Western efforts to promote democratic governance and market liberalization in the area. This situation becomes increasingly dangerous as autocratic Azerbaijan [deepens its ties with Russia](#). Simultaneously, Iran benefits by positioning itself as a crucial partner for Armenia in [energy and trade](#), while also providing diplomatic support by [rejecting the Zangezur plan](#) to maintain clout in the South Caucasus.

By keeping the Armenia-Azerbaijan and Armenia-Turkey borders closed, Azerbaijan impedes Armenia's economic and connectivity opportunities, limiting the scope for Western engagement and investment in the region. This keeps Armenia overly dependent on trade with Russia. Baku has long complained about Armenia's close ties with Russia and should welcome Yerevan's desire to open trade with Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as its commitment to leave the Moscow-led [Collective Security Treaty Organization](#).

The Crossroads for Peace initiative, therefore, offers a more promising path. By opening up the region and paving the way for a new era of mutual economic growth and cooperation in the South Caucasus, Crossroads for Peace could serve as a catalyst for regional stability and

prosperity. This initiative not only counters the restrictive nature of the Zangezur plan but also aligns economic incentives with geopolitical opportunities.

How the West can help

Armenia's Crossroads for Peace initiative deserves more robust support and engagement from Western nations. By backing Armenia's efforts to integrate into the Trans-Caspian Corridor and promote cooperation across the South Caucasus, Western countries can help ensure that the region develops into a vibrant economic hub that is less dependent on Russia. Increased investment in infrastructure, clear diplomatic backing, and strategic partnerships, such as the recent [upgrade in US-Armenia relations](#), can solidify the West's commitment to promoting a more balanced geopolitical landscape in this region.

This should start with applying diplomatic pressure on Turkey and Azerbaijan to engage constructively with the initiative and entering security pacts with Armenia that help deter aggression and maintain open and secure trade routes. Subsequently, Western countries should implement targeted funding and financial incentives along with technical assistance for the construction and modernization of infrastructure in the region. Potential new trade agreements and the promotion of private sector involvement encouraging Western businesses to invest in and partner with local firms within the framework of Crossroads for Peace would also help make the initiative more viable.

Enhanced Western support for Armenia could also serve as a catalyst for broader regional cooperation and prosperity, setting a precedent for peaceful conflict resolution and cooperative development efforts. Western policymakers should therefore help integrate Crossroads for Peace into regional connectivity plans that promote open, stable, and cooperative international systems and can make Armenia a key player in the diversification of transit routes across Eurasia.

Sheila Paylan is a human rights lawyer and senior legal consultant with the United Nations. The views expressed herein are her own and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.

In Loving Memory : A Tribute to Raymond Yezeguelian



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the untimely passing of lawyer, businessman and Armenian patron of France Raymond Yézéguelian .

Raymond Yezeguelian dedicated his

life to serving those in need, advocating for the rights of the underprivileged and fostering a spirit of unity and compassion among us all.

Raymond was a friend, a mentor and an inspiration to many. As we mourn the loss of such a remarkable individual, we also celebrate Raymond Yezeguelian's extraordinary life and the countless ways in which he touched our hearts and changed our community for the better. His legacy of kindness, generosity and unwavering commitment to making

the world a better place will continue to live on.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends and all those whose lives were enriched by Raymond's presence.

May he rest in peace and may the memory of his incredible contributions bring comfort to all who grieve this immense loss.

Farewell to our great friend and benefactor.

In sorrow and with great respect
"Noyan Tapan" editorial team

Pashinyan comments on Erdogan's statement about Turkish involvement in Second Nagorno-Karabakh War

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has commented on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's [statement](#) in July when the Turkish leader admitted that Turkish troops were involved in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Pashinyan, asked to comment on the statement at a press conference, said that the Armenian intelligence agencies had knowledge of Turkish involvement.

"I wouldn't want to talk about the painful events of the past, but in order not to leave the impression of dodging the question, I can only say this, which we had said in the past officially too, during the 44-day war our military and intelligence saw Turkish flags, Turkish servicemen, Turkish commandos, high-ranking officers in multiple locations, and let's not forget that the large-scale Azerbaijani-Turkish

military exercises took place before the 44-day war, and Turkish F-16s and pilots were airborne during the entire war, they were serviced by Turkish personnel," Pashinyan said.

The Armenian Prime Minister said he wouldn't want to speak about the issue now given that there is some positive dynamics in the Armenia-Turkey relations, albeit slow.

French Armenian journalist Agnès Vahramian appointed director of franceinfo radio

French Armenian journalist Agnès Vahramian has been appointed director of franceinfo, a radio network operated by the French national public television broadcaster France Télévisions, Radio France CEO Sibyle Veil announced on Tuesday, August 27.

She will take up her duties on September 16. Until recently, she was



France Télévisions' Middle East correspondent and war correspondent in Ukraine after having been a correspondent in the United States. She had previously been deputy editorial director of France 2, editor-in-chief of "Envoyé Spécial" and then of the 8 p . m . news on France 2.

Agnès Vahramian succeeds Jean -Philippe Baille, who has been head of franceinfo since January 2021.

Normalization with Armenia on top of agenda as Turkish, Azerbaijani FMs meet in Ankara



Normalization of relations with Armenia was on top of the agenda as Turkish and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers Hakan Fidan and Ceyhan Bayramov met in Ankara on August 27, the Hurriyet Daily News

reports.

The two ministers also raised bilateral issues including economic and trade cooperation as well as energy, transportation and other relevant areas.

The last round of talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan was held in July 2024 under the initiative and with participation of the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhan Bayramov met in Washington, D.C. in the framework of their participation in the NATO 75th Anniversary Summit.

The parties noted the progress

Armenia and Azerbaijan have achieved towards the conclusion of a historic peace deal and establishment of interstate relations, and agreed to continue the work.

Turkey and Armenia are also in talks for the establishment of diplomatic relations and opening the sealed border.

Turkish and Armenian special envoys recently met on the border as part of normalization efforts. They announced that they will start technical works for the resumption of the functions of a railroad between the two countries.

A cruel dictatorship run by mafia dynasty: Irish Senator slams Baku for banning PACE members

Irish Senator Paul Gavan has called Azerbaijan a cruel dictatorship run by a family mafia dynasty. He is one of the 76 members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to have been blacklisted by Azerbaijan.

"I can confirm I am one of the PACE members banned from entering Azerbaijan. I wouldn't have it any other way. A cruel dictatorship run by a family mafia dynasty. Responsible for ethnic cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh and oppression of its own citizens," Mr. Gavan said in a post on X.

Azerbaijan has banned 76 politicians from 26 European countries from entering the country. Baku has stated that it will only lift the ban if its delegation's



mandate to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is restored.

Earlier this year, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided not to ratify the credentials of the Azerbaijani delegation, citing the country's failure to meet key commitments. The Assembly expressed serious concerns regarding Azerbaijan's ability to conduct free and fair elections, the separation of powers,

the weakness of its legislature in relation to the executive, the independence of the judiciary, and respect for human rights. This resolution was adopted with 76 votes in favor, 10 against, and 4 abstentions.

The Assembly also highlighted the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, noting that Azerbaijan's leadership "did not acknowledge the very serious humanitarian and human rights consequences" resulting from the lack of free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor. The Assembly also recalled its condemnation of the September 2023 military operation, "which led to the flight of the entire Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to allegations of ethnic cleansing."

Armenia, Georgia to explore ways for further expansion of bilateral defense cooperation

Armenian and Georgian Defense Ministers Suren Papikyan and Irakli Chikovani held a face-to-face meeting in Tbilisi. The Defense Ministers were then joined by the delegations of the two countries.

The Ministers highlighted the intensification and enhancement of cooperation

in the field of military education, as well as the importance of establishing long-term and stable peace in the region.

The parties agreed to explore the possibilities of further expansion of bilateral defense cooperation embracing new fields through mutual visits of different

groups.

The Defense Ministers of the two countries also discussed a number of other issues related to Armenia-Georgia cooperation in the field of defense and regional security.

Azerbaijan can buy weapons from Italy and Armenia can't buy weapons from France? Pashinyan rebukes accusations



Azerbaijan is attempting to accuse Armenia of rearmaments to cover up its own rearmaments, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said.

"We are being accused, for example, for having military-technical cooperation with France, and India. There is the following trend in Azerbaijan, they say that extra-regional countries are arming Armenia, referring to France. But it is obvious, and public, that Azerbaijan, for example, is buying weapons from Italy. It's a country next to France, why can Azerbaijan acquire weapons from Italy, and Armenia can't acquire weapons from France? Azerbaijan

is acquiring weapons, for example, from Pakistan. Why can Azerbaijan acquire weapons from Pakistan and Armenia can't acquire weapons from India? They say the EU, the West is arming Armenia. But Azerbaijan is acquiring weapons from Slovakia, Serbia, Bulgaria. At least three EU member countries have military-technical cooperation with Azerbaijan. And Azerbaijan is acquiring huge volumes of weapons from Israel," Pashinyan said.

Pashinyan said Armenia is well aware of these processes through intelligence gathering and doesn't always publicly announce it.

PM Pashinyan said that some independent experts claim that the Azeri accusations, particularly in terms of the constitution and the weapons supplies, are actually meant to serve as a smokescreen for the Azeri actions itself: to accuse Armenia of having territorial claims in its constitution to cover up their own territorial claims in their constitution, and to

accuse Armenia of rearmaments to cover up their own rearmament issue.

He said it's not fair to accuse Armenia in conditions of constant threats it is getting. Furthermore, Pashinyan said he offered to develop mutual arms control mechanisms. "We are saying, you have concerns? So do we, let's form a mutual arms control and reduction mechanisms. This proposal was made publicly and is still in force," Pashinyan said.

"I have numerously said that every country has the right to have a strong and combat ready army. International law and the UN Charter find the right to have a military and the right to self-defense an inalienable right. Any country has the right to defense itself, and this right cannot be disputed because international law also contains a well-known obligation for states, the obligation to protect its citizens," Pashinyan said, adding that the ongoing reforms in the Armenian military have exclusively this goal.

Second Global Armenian Summit in Yerevan to feature crucial discussions

From September 17th to 20th, 2024, the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia will host the Second Global Armenian Summit in Yerevan.

The summit will provide a unified platform to discuss the current challenges and issues facing Armenia and the Diaspora, as well as opportunities for sustainable development. Topics ranging from national security to high technology, economics, science, repatriation, and the vitality of Diaspora communities will be addressed across various formats. Approximately 1,000 representatives from both the Diaspora and Armenia will convene to engage in these crucial discussions about the present and future.

High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan told Armenpress that several advisory groups worked jointly with his office to develop the agenda of the summit.



More than 180 speakers from 20 countries will also participate in the event.

Guests will include officials from Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Poland and other countries. The list of speakers includes U.S. Congressmen, as well as state and city officials, academics and other renowned individuals.

"The first summit was actually the first step that helped us develop new relationships, new approaches, and make adjustments in our work, because we heard numerous opinions, views and issues, and made conclusions," Sinanyan said.

High Commissioner Sinanyan stressed the importance of promoting the projects of his office during the conference to involve more people. "And our compatriots expect the same; they come here to present their projects and companies to involve new partners. And it is no coincidence that we organize the most various expos during the summit," Sinanyan added.

This year's summit will have a different format: instead of the many panel discussions where not everyone gets the chance to speak, this year organizers have limited the number of such discussions and substituted it with workshops: meetings of small groups where every participant will engage in the debates.

Discussions will also cover the situation in the Armenian communities around the world, such as in Ukraine, Syria and Lebanon, given the current developments.

Notable Achievements of Composer Hasmik Harutyunyan in the United States



The works of Armenian composers working in the field of contemporary music always attract significant attention. Taking advantage of the fact that our compatriot, the young and distinguished composer Hasmik Harutyunyan, residing in the United States, has achieved prestigious first-place positions in international competitions and festivals, we have decided to highlight her notable achievements.

The composer gained international recognition in Barcelona, securing first-place honors at the online international arts competition-festival held on July 1 of this year. The festival, titled "Paints of the Spanish Sun," welcomed international artists and art enthusiasts from around the world to compete and attend various virtual events. Hasmik Harutyunyan's

song "My City" (lyrics by Hasmik Harutyunyan), performed by the children's and youth ensemble "Arevner" named after Armen Divanyan, impressed the jury and showcased Armenian musical culture on the international stage.

The jury members noted: "Since we evaluated the participation solely as a composer, we highly appreciated this work. It was good and professional. It is evident that the age of the performer was also considered during its creation.

Congratulations on the excellent work." Hasmik Harutyunyan also won the first prize at the international competition-festival "Welcome to England" held in England, presenting the song "Ding-dong" (lyrics by Mikula Leontovich). The juries of these competition-festivals consisted of renowned musicians and producers from around the world, who selected the winners based on their exceptional talent



and contribution to music.

At the competitions and festivals, honorary certificates were also awarded to Arpine Hovhannisyan, the artistic director of the children's and youth ensemble "Arevner" named after Armen Divanyan, for her professionalism, love for creativity, and significant contribution to the development of talent in the field.

ARMINE ATOYAN
 Musicologist,
 Editor-in-Chief of the magazine "Yerazhisht,"
 Member of the Union of Journalists of Armenia

Restoration of Sanahin and Haghpat monastic complexes to be completed this year

The restoration of the Sanahin and Haghpat monastic complexes in Armenia's Lori province is expected to be completed this year.

Specialists of the Department for Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports visited the UNESCO World Heritage sites today to assess the progress.

The southern group of monuments of the Sanahin Monastery is being restored with funding from the US Ambassadors' "Fund for the Protection of Cultural Values."

The meeting was attended by the



Deputy Mayor of Alaverdi, representatives of the US Embassy, the authors of the project, specialists of the organization carrying out technical oversight.

Certain deviations from the approved project were recorded in the restoration works of Zakaryans' tomb. It was decided to change the type of basalt offered on site

to suit the project. The restoration works of the mausoleum have been temporarily halted; the proposed changes will be discussed by the new scientific-methodical council.

The western wall of the Haghpat monastery complex and the tower collapsed as a result of the earthquake are

being restored by order of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. The project costs about 54 million AMD. The collapsed tower has already been completely restored, the foundations of the walls and towers have been fortified, other repair works planned by the project are in progress.

2024 Paralympic Games open in Paris: Armenia represented by three athletes

The 2024 Paralympic Games opened in Paris in glorious conditions as about 4,400 athletes made their way along the Champs-Elysees to Place de la Concorde.

As with the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games opening ceremony was taking place outside of a stadium for the first time in the French capital.

Athletes from 184 delegations are set



to take part in the 22 Paralympic sports, competing for a total of 549 gold medals in Paris.

Armenia is represented at the event by three athletes: Greta Vardanyan (powerlifting), Smbat Karapetyan (wheelchair racing), and Sargis Stepanyan (shot put).

7th Yerevan Book Fest to take place September 6-8



Gallery of Armenia.

The program of the festival includes a book fair, exclusive opportunity to meet with Armenian and foreign writers, stand-up performances, presentations, concerts and other events, City Hall said in a press release.

The festival is organized by the Yeghische Charents Literature and Arts Museum and the Book Fest educational-cultural organization, with support from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the EU's Versopolis project.

Yerevan City Hall is the main sponsor of the festival.

The 7th Yerevan Book Fest will take place September 6-8 at the National

10 must-see historic sites in Armenia – The Collector

As the first country to adopt Christianity as a state religion, Armenia boasts the world's oldest Christian churches and monasteries, all set in immensely picturesque locations, reads an article published by [The Collector](#).

Author Laura Pattara notes that the country has been under Soviet rule for seven decades, and has been at the center of conflict for millennia due to its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia,

“Discover ancient pagan temples, medieval Christian monasteries, and Soviet-era monuments and memorials, and you’ll understand why Armenia is considered



a superb historical powerhouse,” Laura Pattara writes.

She lists 10 must-see historic sites in Armenia. These include:

1. The Armenian Genocide Museum, Yerevan
2. Mother Armenia Monument

in Victory Park, Yerevan

3. Garni Temple
4. Geghard Monastery
5. Tatev Monastery
6. Khor Virap
7. Lake Sevan and Sevanavank Monastery
8. Orbelian Caravanserai
9. Areni-1 Cave Complex
10. Dilijan Old Town

Chelsea Clinton joins Aurora Prize Selection Committee



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, dedicated to addressing on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world, has appointed Chelsea Clinton, vice chair of the Clinton Foundation, to the Selection Committee of the global Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity. Dr. Clinton is renowned for her efforts to improve lives, inspire emerging leaders around the world, and drive awareness and action around critical issues including health equity.

The Aurora Prize is a \$1 million award that recognizes individuals who risk their own lives to save the lives of others suffering due to violent conflict or atrocity crimes. The Aurora Prize Laureate receives a unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by using those funds to empower grassroots humanitarians.

“We are delighted to welcome Chelsea Clinton to the Aurora community. Her longstanding dedication to social change makes her a perfect addition to the Selection Committee, and I am looking forward to working alongside her to shine a light on heroic individuals risking their lives to help those in need,” said Lord Ara Darzi,

Chair of Aurora Prize Selection Committee and Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London. “Chelsea brings a fresh perspective and deep expertise that will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and ensure a wide range of viewpoints are considered during the selection process.”

A longtime public health advocate, Dr. Clinton also serves as vice chair of the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI). In addition to her foundation work, Dr. Clinton has taught at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and written several books including the #1 bestselling *She Persisted*. She is also the co-author of *The Book of Gutsy Women* and *Grandma’s Gardens* with Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and of *Governing Global Health: Who Runs the World and Why?* with Devi Sridhar.

“We all have a role to play in tackling our greatest global challenges,” said Chelsea Clinton, Vice Chair of the Clinton Foundation. “I am honored to join the 2024 Aurora Prize Selection Committee and to continue our partnership through the Clinton Global Initiative to support humanitarian leaders who are making a critical difference in the world.”

The 2024 Aurora Humanitarians shortlisted for the 2024 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity were named

on September 18, 2023, at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) annual meeting in New York City. The eighth Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity was awarded on May 9, 2024, to Dr. Denis Mukwege, a world-renowned gynecological surgeon and human rights activist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Dr. Mukwege is the president of Panzi Hospital and Foundation in the DRC, which he founded in 1999 to address the systemic issue of maternal healthcare and maternal mortality. Amidst ongoing conflict and critical healthcare needs stemming from war, the hospital has become one of the world’s preeminent treatment centers for survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

About the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative seeks to address on-the-ground humanitarian challenges around the world with a focus on helping the most destitute. The Initiative’s flagship program, the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, is dedicated to supporting the world’s unsung humanitarian heroes bringing tangible positive change to vulnerable and underserved communities. To date, Aurora has impacted nearly 3.4 million people in need and initiated and supported 430 projects in 56 countries and territories.

“Step to Home” program concludes, hosting 600 Diaspora Armenian youths from 20 countries



of the Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, has concluded. This year, the program was conducted in 6 stages, hosting 600 Diaspora Armenian youths from 20 countries, aged 13-18.

According to the office of the Armenian Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs,

during the closing ceremony of the 6th stage, Chief Commissioner Zareh Sinanyan emphasized the program’s goal of contributing to the preservation of national identity and strengthening connections with the homeland among Diaspora Armenian youth.

“Step to Home” is one of our office’s annual programs. I sincerely hope that during the two weeks of the program, you discovered Armenia in a new way and made friends with whom you will continue to stay in touch after the program ends,” said Zareh Sinanyan, addressing the participants.



It is noted that all expenses for the Armenian stage of the project are covered by the Armenian government.

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