

Heavy fighting goes on in NKR



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Azerbaijan starts aggression against NKR on April 2

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Armenian side has 18 KIA and 35 wounded: Serzh Sargsyan

President Serzh Sargsyan convened the sitting of the National Security Council on April 2. Issues related to the gross violation of the 1994 ceasefire agreement by Azerbaijan and the large-scale military actions against the Nagorno Karabakh Republic were on the agenda of the sitting.

During the sitting, Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan reported on the provocative actions of the Azerbaijani side and the steps taken by Armenian forces to rebuff the aggression.

"Dear colleagues, as you know, the Azerbaijan armed forces undertook provocative actions all along the line of contact with the Karabakh forces. These were the most large-scale military actions ever since 1994 undertaken by the Azerbaijani side.

The NKR Defense Army regained control of the situation thanks to timely and skilled actions. The rival used air force, all types of armored vehicles and artillery. The losses of the Azeri air force, infantry and armored vehicles are sustainable. We also have losses: as of now, 18 are reported killed, 30 wounded," the President said.



"The provocations continue, there is some tension in the north and south, but the Karabakh forces keep the situation under control," the President said. He added that measures have been taken to ensure the security of the population in frontline villages.

"I think the Foreign Ministry needs to cooperate with the NKR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and work towards signing an agreement on mutual assistance. It's necessary to develop the text of the agreement and hold discussions in the

National Assembly. The Republic of Armenia will fully meet its obligations of ensuring the security of the population of Nagorno Karabakh. We have all legal basis for it as a party to the ceasefire agreement signed in 1994.

"Besides the Armed Forces, other agencies are also doing their work; we keep in touch with our partners from international organizations. However, as I have said on many occasions, we have to solve our problems ourselves and not rely upon anyone," the President said.

Armenia, Argentina FMs discuss issues on bilateral agenda

On March 31, Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, who is in Washington D.C. within the delegation headed by the President of Armenia, held a meeting with Susana Malcorra, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.

Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Argentina touched upon different issues on bilateral agenda, including organization of high-level visits, expansion of the legal framework, cooperation within international organizations, fostering of inter-parliamentary ties, facilitation of economic cooperation; exchanged thoughts on joint efforts for further development of cooperation. On this matter, Minister Nalbandian informed Susana Malcorra about the efforts to-be-exerted and guidelines given during Armenian-Argentinean consultations on the development of Armenian-Argentinean relations held at the President's Office last week.

The Ministers commended the high level of the Armenian-Argentinean relations, stressing Argentinean-Armenians' valuable input in their further strengthening. Edward Nalbandian expressed gratitude for numerous expressions of solidarity by Argentina with Armenia and the Armenian people.

Minister Nalbandian invited Susana Malcorra to visit Armenia.



Sargsyan, Biden meets in Washington

President Serzh Sargsyan praised the U.S. role in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process and Washington's contribution to broader regional security when he met with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in Washington on March 31.

The two men held talks in the White House ahead of a global nuclear security summit hosted by President Barack Obama.

Serzh Sargsyan is among around 50 heads of state that were invited to the annual summit. Russian President Vladimir Putin is boycotting it, apparently unwilling to join in a U.S.-dominated gathering at a time of increased tensions between Washington and Moscow.

"The Vice President stressed that the United States is committed to a democratic, prosperous, and secure Armenia at peace with its neighbors," the White House said in readout of the meeting with Serzh Sargsyan. "The Vice President thanked President Sargsyan for welcoming more than 20,000 Syrian refugees."

A statement by the Armenian presidential press office said Biden and

Sargsyan discussed Armenia's relationship with the United States, international efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the situation in Syria.

Serzh Sargsyan was reported to reaffirm his view that U.S.-Armenian relations are now "at their highest level in their history." He spoke of deepening bilateral political, economic and security ties.

"Serzh Sargsyan also attached great importance to the U.S. role in maintaining peace and stability in the region and, in particular, the active U.S. involvement in the process of a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," said the statement.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, who is also taking part in the summit, discussed the unresolved dispute with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington on Wednesday. "We want to see an ultimate resolution of the frozen conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh that needs to be a negotiated settlement and something that has to be worked on over time," Kerry said after the talks.

"We are grateful to the U.S. government for their efforts in finding ways to resolve long-lasting conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan," Aliyev said for his part.

The Azerbaijani leader blasted the U.S. and the two other mediating powers, Russia and France, as recently as on March 19. In a speech in Baku, he claimed that the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group are "helping to freeze the conflict" and thus siding with Armenia.

Serzh Sargsyan told Biden that Yerevan expects the mediators to "make the Azerbaijani authorities sober up."

According to the White House, Biden "expressed concern about continued violence, called for dialogue, and emphasized the importance of a comprehensive settlement for the long-term stability, security, and prosperity of the region."

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, who accompanied Sargsyan on the trip, met with James Warlick, Washington's chief Karabakh negotiator, in the U.S. capital on April 31.

Heavy fighting goes on in NKR

Heavy fighting continued in and around Nagorno-Karabakh on April 3, with Karabakh Armenian forces saying that they went on the counteroffensive and regained territory seized by the Azerbaijani army the previous day.

Karabakh's Defense Army reported "fierce" clashes in the northeast of Karabakh and the southernmost section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani "line of contact," which is adjacent to Iran.

In a statement issued on Sunday morning, the army said its troops won back a "tactically important" position near the northern village of Talish. "The enemy was pushed back, suffering considerable losses," it claimed. "Two soldiers from the Karabakh side were wounded during the hostilities."

"Karabakh forces are also conducting successful operations at the southern section of the frontline," the statement said, adding that they destroyed three Azerbaijani tanks and one armored personnel carrier there.

The Azerbaijani military confirmed later in the day that "Armenia tried to

regain positions lost by it" but claimed to have thwarted those attempts. "The enemy also subjected settlements and other civilian facilities near the line of contact to intensive shelling," it said.

It claimed to have destroyed as many as 10 Armenian tanks in the process. The spokesman for the Karabakh army, Senor Hasratian, denied that claim, saying that the Armenian side has lost only one tank and destroyed 14 Azerbaijani tanks since the Azerbaijani army began its offensive on Saturday morning.

Eighteen Armenian soldiers were reportedly killed and 35 others wounded on Saturday. The Azerbaijani side has acknowledged 12 combat deaths so far.

In another statement released early in the afternoon, the Defense Ministry in Baku said the Azerbaijani army has decided to "unilaterally suspend its counteroffensive and retaliatory measures against the enemy." "If the Armed Forces of Armenia do not end their provocative actions ... the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan will resume offensive operations using all weapons at their disposal," it said, accord-

ing to Haqqin.az.

Armenia's Defense Ministry swiftly dismissed the announcement as an "information trick," while the Karabakh army called in "disinformation" and "an imitation of ceasefire."

The army said that even after Baku's statement Azerbaijani troops continued to shell not only Karabakh Armenian positions but also civilians. In particular, it said, they fired on the northeastern Karabakh town of Martakert from Grad multiple-launch rocket systems and 152-milimeter howitzers.

Karabakh's Armenian-backed military made clear at the same time that it is ready to "discuss" the proposed truce "in the context of the restoration of the previous positions" of the two warring sides.

The military authorities in Stepanakert began reinforcing their frontline troops on Saturday night by deploying heavy artillery and calling up hundreds of reservists. Hundreds of other Armenians, most of them veterans of the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan, reportedly headed to the frontline from Armenia overnight.

World Powers React: Armenia, Azerbaijan urged to return to ceasefire

The United States and the European Union condemned on April 2 a dramatic upsurge in ceasefire violations in Nagorno-Karabakh, saying that the warring sides should immediately restore the truce.

"The United States condemns in the strongest terms the large-scale ceasefire violations along the Nagorno-Karabakh Line of Contact, which have resulted in a number of reported casualties, including civilians ... We urge the sides to show restraint, avoid further escalation, and strictly adhere to the ceasefire," U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement.

"We reiterate that there is no military solution to the conflict," added Kerry.

The EU's foreign and security policy chief, Federica Mogherini, likewise described the escalation as "deeply worrying." "I call on the parties to stop the fighting immediately and observe the cease-fire," she said. "The sides must show restraint and avoid any further actions or statements that could result in escalation."

In a further sign of Western concerns about the escalation, Foreign Ministers Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany and Jean-Marc Ayrault phoned their Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian to discuss the situation in the war zone. It was not immediately clear



whether they also had phone calls with Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

The heavy fighting followed Kerry's talks with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan held on the sidelines of this week's global nuclear security summit in Washington. Kerry urged both leaders to seek a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

In televised remarks aired on Saturday evening, President Serzh Sargsyan said he asked Kerry as well as U.S. Vice President Joe Biden to "rein in Azerbaijan so that it stops violating the ceasefire." "But you saw what happened just hours after those meetings," Sargsyan told Armenia's top security officials.

Kerry said in his statement that Washington remains "firmly committed to working with the sides to reach a lasting and negotiated peace" in its capacity as one of the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

U.S., Russian and French diplomats co-heading the Minsk Group also expressed "grave concern." "The Co-Chairs call upon the sides to stop shooting and take all necessary measures to stabilize the situation on the ground," they said in a joint statement. "They reiterate that ... that war is not an option."

The mediators did not specify whether they plan to visit the conflict zone or arrange fresh Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks in the coming days.

Russia 'deeply concerned' about Karabakh fighting

Russian President Vladimir Putin on April 2 expressed serious concern at the outbreak of heavy fighting around Nagorno-Karabakh and urged the warring sides to "immediately" restore the ceasefire which Russia brokered more than two decades ago.

The TASS news agency quoted Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, as saying that the Russian leader is "deeply concerned about reports about the resumption of hostilities" along the Armenian-Azerbaijani "line of contact."

"President Putin is calling on the parties to the conflict to immediately stop gunfire and show restraint in order to prevent fresh human casualties," Peskov

said. Putin "regrets that the situation has again degenerated into an armed confrontation," he added.

Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu, meanwhile, had emergency phone calls with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, Shoygu discussed with them "the need to take urgent measures to stabilize the situation in the conflict zone."

The Russian Foreign Ministry, for its part, said that Moscow is closely monitoring the situation in the conflict zone. "We are calling on the sides to show restraint and immediately renounce any type of violence," the ministry spokeswoman,

Maria Zakharova, said, according to the Interfax news agency.

Zakharova also said that Moscow has already launched "consultations" with fellow mediators from the United States in connection with the unprecedented escalation.

Peskov noted that the three mediating nations have recently made "energetic efforts that could eventually lead to the conflict's resolution."

The hostilities broke out as the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents attended a global nuclear security summit in Washington hosted by U.S. President Barack Obama. They did not immediately make public statements on the escalation.

Dangerous Days in Karabakh. Thomas de Waal



Thomas de Waal, international expert on the Caucasus and Nagorno Karabakh conflicts at Carnegie Endowment, has published an article on the recent escalation between Azerbaijani and Armenian armed forces.

The twenty-one-year ceasefire in and around Nagorno Karabakh had been looking very precarious. A tragic outbreak of fighting there could be dangerous for the whole region.

Many had feared a day like this for years and now it has arrived. Reports from the ceasefire line of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict speak of fighting and dozens of soldiers being killed.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh is not "frozen" as it is often misleadingly termed. The 1994 truce there has held due to the restraint and political calculation of the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders, who have decided that it is not in their interests to go back to war with one another over the disputed territory.

But in recent years the situation has become a lot more dangerous. When the war ended in the 1990s, the Line of Contact dividing the two sides was a relatively quiet zone with barbed wire and lightly armed soldiers sitting in trenches.

In the last decade, Azerbaijan has used billions of dollars of its oil wealth to buy a formidable arsenal of new weapons, including helicopters, drones, MiG aircraft, and heavy artillery, many of them purchased from Russia. Armenia has also strengthened its defenses, also mainly with weapons acquired from Russia (but at discounted prices).

With all these heavy weapons, around 20,000 men on either side, and just six unarmed OSCE monitors in the conflict zone, the potential for a serious outbreak of fighting has never been greater.

Everyone knows that a new Karabakh war would not just be tragic for Armenia and Azerbaijan, but devastating for the entire South Caucasus region.

The first indications are that this is indeed the worst violence since the ceasefire of May 1994. In the last 24 hours, both sides have reported heavy casualties, including among civilians. The Azerbaijani side says it has captured strategic heights in the north-east of Karabakh, destroyed six tanks, and killed more than 100 on the Armenian side.

The Karabakh Armenian authorities claim to have killed more than 200 Azerbaijani soldiers.

Armenian side reports that it has destroyed one Azerbaijani helicopter, two drones, and three tanks. The Armenian Defense Ministry released a video that showed a downed drone and ruined houses.

This is more than the customary resumption of low-level vio-

lence that is often observed in the spring, when the snows melt in the highlands of Karabakh and soldiers begin shooting at one another.

This is something much more serious. Big violations of the Karabakh ceasefire tend not to be accidents but to have a political cause. There are strong vertical chains of command from the officers on the ground to the presidents in Baku and Yerevan.

The Azerbaijani side has more reason to break the ceasefire. As the losing side in the conflict of the 1990s, when it lost almost one seventh (or about 13.6 percent) of its de jure territory to the Armenians, Baku knows that one of its few tools of pressure on the Armenians is to violate the ceasefire and remind them that the status quo can be shaken.

However, once fighting begins, it becomes irrelevant who started it, as the Armenian side is capable of conducting military operations of its own into Azerbaijani-controlled territory on the other side of the line. Pictures from Azerbaijan show civilians leaving the conflict zone, some of them on foot.

The Azerbaijani media have been citing the four UN resolutions of the 1990s, which call for Armenian military withdrawal from the conflict zone, as if to remind the world of Azerbaijan's right to use military force.

The most curious aspect of this is that both presidents, Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan, have been in Washington attending President Obama's Nuclear Summit. Both men had serious discussions with senior U.S. officials such as Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden. However, the U.S. government was unable to arrange for a bilateral meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders.

This naturally leads to speculation about why the fighting should start at this particular moment.

Any analysis of this is pure guesswork. One line of thinking is that Moscow may have somehow managed to provoke the fighting in order to discredit the reputation of the United States as a peacemaker—even though Russia and the United States are still formally partners as two of the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Under this scenario, President Vladimir Putin can then intervene as the real peacemaker between the two sides and demand a peace deal that includes Russian peacekeepers on the ground.

The trouble with this theory is that Russia, although the most important secondary actor in the Karabakh conflict, does not control the situation on the ground. It is not powerful enough to make the Armenian or Azerbaijani military forces do as it wants. They are strongly independent bodies, answerable only to their own presidents. Russia's ability to shape events is probably smaller than it looks.

It is more likely that one of the two parties to the conflict—and more likely the Azerbaijani side, which has a stronger interest in the resumption of hostilities—is trying to alter the situation in its favor with a limited military campaign.

The dangerous aspect to this is that, once begun, any military operations in this conflict zone can easily escalate and get out of control. An unpredictable conflict environment combines with a tough macho political culture where it is seen as a sign of weakness to compromise. And, as the Prussian general Helmuth von Moltke said, "No battle plan ever survives contact with the enemy."

Gas Price Talks: Armenia eyes another Russian discount

Although Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan has already stated that an agreement has been reached with the Russian side on a gas price reduction and that it will be "in the interest of the consumer", some experts continue to be skeptical that ordinary citizens will be able to really benefit from this deal.

"That there will be a reduction, it is for sure, but we are going to discuss exactly how much [the price will be lowered]," Abrahamyan said late last week, adding that the issue was discussed also during the visit of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to Russia where he met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. "There is an instruction to departments to conduct discussions in the direction of [gas price] reduction."

A local newspaper, Haykakan Zhamanak, cites its informed sources, speculating that a preliminary agreement has been reached at the Armenian-Russian negotiations that a 12-percent discount will be offered to Yerevan.

At present, Armenia gets the bulk of its gas from Russia's gas monopolist Gazprom

that supplies the fuel at a price of \$165 per 1,000 cubic meters. Russia already lowered the price for Armenia last September as until then Armenia would get the natural gas at a price of \$189 per 1,000 cubic meters. At that time, however, the retail price of natural gas in Armenia, which is \$335, did not change.

This price is valid until April 1 of this year. It is expected that the new deal and the new gas price for Armenia will be announced during the April 7 visit of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to Yerevan.

After that, perhaps, the Public Services Regulatory Commission will address the matter of the tariff of natural gas supplied to households and businesses in Armenia.

Economist Vilen Khachatryan considers it possible that the general gas price will be lowered, but he is skeptical about the possibility of its reduction for the population.

"There will be a price reduction at the border, but not for the population. They will find some reasons to justify it," the economist told ArmeniaNow.

Khachatryan reminded that the Armenian side began to negotiate with the Russians over the price reduction when international oil prices fell to \$27 per barrel, while now it is \$40.

"For Russia raising or lowering the price of gas is not a short-term decision, and so one should not have high expectations. Now there are no grounds in the Russian economy today to start selling gas at low prices to different countries," the economist added.

Opposition lawmaker Hrant Bagratyan on Tuesday stated in parliament that the whole "gas price thing" was a game, since it is not Armenia that buys the gas, but a Gazprom affiliate in Armenia.

"I am not interested in the price at which Gazprom sells gas to its affiliate. The gas price at the international market today has fallen from \$200 to \$80. Why shouldn't ours be lowered?" he said, claiming that Armenia has failed to take advantage of its location at the crossroads of oil and gas transits.

By Sara Khojayan

Armenian Central Bank approves another rate cut



The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) lowered the minimum cost of borrowing in the country for a third time in as many months on Tuesday, citing a further drop in inflation and "weak" consumer demand.

The CBA's governing board cut its refinancing rate by 0.25 percent to 8.25 percent. The two previous rate cuts were announced on February 16 and December 22.

The benchmark rate stood at 6.75 percent when the Armenian dram began weakening against the U.S. dollar in October 2014 amid falling cash remittances from Armenian migrant workers in Russia. The CBA raised it to 9.5 percent in January 2015 and 10.5 percent in February 2015, a move that helped to stabilize the Armenian currency's exchange rate.

The Central Bank began gradually easing its monetary policy in August. The authorities in Yerevan have since reported a steady

decrease in inflation.

A statement by the CBA said the national consumer price index was actually down by 1.4 percent year on year last month. It attributed the deflation to the decreased cost of foodstuffs imported to Armenia.

"In case of anticipated economic developments as well as the absence of additional internal and external risks, the CBA Board will continue to ease monetary terms," added the statement. That could further stimulate economic activity in Armenia.

According to official statistics, the Armenian economy grew by around 3 percent last year despite a fall in domestic consumption, another consequence of the decreased remittance inflows. The World Bank forecast last month that economic growth in the country will slow down to 2.5 percent this year.

Government data indicates, however, that Gross Domestic Product increased more rapidly in the first two months of the year on the back of strong performances of the manufacturing and non-trade services sectors. The National Statistical Service (NSS) also recorded a nearly 24 percent surge in Armenian exports in January-February 2016.

The CBA said on Tuesday that these reported upswings offset the macroeconomic impact of what it described as "weak consumer demand." According to the NSS, the total volume of retail and wholesale trade fell by around 2 percent. This might also explain why Armenian imports shrunk by over 22 percent in the two-month period.

Sargsyan to Armenian Americans: Come to Homeland, make investments



President Serzh Sargsyan has called on ethnic Armenians in the United States to make investments in Armenia as he held a meeting with representatives of the community this week.

Sargsyan, who is on a trip to the United States, addressed leading representatives of the U.S. East Coast Armenian Community, attaching importance to the Diaspora potential for promoting business links with Armenia.

"Taking advantage of your connections with the American business circles, you can give a significant impetus to the foreign direct investments in Armenia. We do not fully utilize the untapped potential of the Armenian Americans; I strongly believe that if they are purposefully

engaged the success stories will follow," Sargsyan said, as quoted by his press office.

"I have said it on other occasions and reiterate it today: Come to Homeland, make investments, make profit and, thus, contribute to the state-building, create new employment opportunities and help us with the development of the country. Armenia has got an untapped potential to attract investments, especially in the areas of infrastructure, mining, agriculture, reprocessing agricultural products, information technologies and engineering. It is obvious that concurrent to the development new opportunities arise for large investment, especially in the areas of tourism, healthcare, financial markets."

Sargsyan emphasized that there are free economic zones in Armenia that provide tax and customs benefits for the purpose of attracting foreign investment, contributing to the growth of export through the application of new technologies and creating new employment opportunities and guarantees of sustainable economic growth.

"The capability and significance of every single one of us is in direct relation to the capability and significance of our homeland. Indeed, it is the only formula for viability of the Armenian people, key to its eternity," the president of Armenia said.

"In this context we stand ready to discuss your investment projects, new ideas, creative proposals; we stand ready to establish favorable conditions and environment for their implementation; we stand ready to encourage you exercise your entrepreneurial skills in homeland.

"Armenia today certainly needs financial investments, but for the development of our country it more needs talents, skills and invaluable expertise of our Diaspora fellows. If we tap the potential of our Diaspora inasmuch as another Massachusetts community, such as Irish, does that would give a great impetus to the development of Armenia."

Unpaid grape farmers resume protests

Hundreds of farmers again blocked traffic on a major highway in Armenia on March 29 to protest against a local winery's continuing failure to pay for grapes that were purchased from them last autumn.

The private company based in Kaghtsrashen, a village in the southern Ararat province, has still not paid them, citing major losses incurred in recession-hit Russia, the main export market of Armenia's wine and brandy industry.

Most of the protesters were Kaghtsrashen farmers who are owed approximately 200 million drams (\$420,000) in total. Some of them sold their grapes to the winery for as little as 50 drams per kilogram.

The angry villagers already closed a nearby section of the national highway running southeast of Yerevan on March 15 after the company failed to meet a deadline for payments set by it in February. They agreed to disperse after company representatives as well as two Armenian deputy ministers of agriculture assured them that they will get paid by March 31.

The company failed to honor that pledge, triggering the fresh protest on the highway. "All we want is our money," said one of the protesters. "We are not demanding anything else."

"They owe me 2 million drams but I now have to borrow 1 million drams to invest in my vineyard so that we can feed our kids," said another angry farmer.

Two provincial vice-governors arrived at the scene to urge the protests to unblock the road. They said government officials and winery executives will meet them in Kaghtsrashen on Saturday to make an important announcement. They did not elaborate.

The farmers eventually ended the protest. Many of them were skeptical about the latest government pledge.

"We've been hearing such promises for eight months but have still not seen any results," one of them told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "I've received no money since September."

Several other Armenian wineries have also failed to pay up on time, triggering similar protests in other villages in Ararat and the neighboring Armavir province in the last few months. Agriculture Minister Sergo Karapetyan downplayed the protests in late December, saying that more than 80 percent of grape farmers across the country have already received payments. Karapetyan argued that most of the distilleries increased the volume of their grape purchases from farmers in 2015 despite their financial troubles caused by a sharp depreciation of the Russian ruble.



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1 ROOM

- 1696. **Tumanyan str.**, 5/4, stone bld, 1 bedroom, h-3m, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 160.000 USD.
- 1440. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 3rd floor, 110 sq.m., 1 bedroom, h-3m, euro repaired, heating system, furnished, parking. Price: 350.000 USD.
- 1715. **Sayat Nova Ave.**, 5/4, 70sq.m, stone bld, h-4m, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 110.000 USD
- 1680- **Mashtots Ave.**, 5/4, 68sq.m, 1 bedroom, old repair, possibility of gas. Price: 86.000 USD.
- 1674. **Abovyan str.**, 2nd floor, 70sq.m., 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 135.000 USD
- 1698- **Aram str.**, Newly built, 14/5, 62sq.m, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, AC, security system, parking. Price: 120.000 USD.

2 ROOMS

- 3003. **Sayat-Nova str.**, 5/3, 105sq.m, 2bedrooms, stone building, capitally repaired. Price: Negotiable
- 1560. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 10/3, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price: 400.000 USD.
- 2818. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 3rd floor, 120sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, furnished. Price: 400.000USD
- 1156. **Komitas Ave.**, Hambardzumyan str. 5/3, 110sq.m, 2 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, kitchen is furnished. Price: 150.000 USD negotiable.
- 2949. **Aram str.**, Newly built, 1st floor, 143 sq.m, 2 bedrooms, zero state, Price: 2000 USD per sq.m.
- 2300. **Northern ave.**, Newly built, 6/2, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking. Price: 400.000 USD.



3 ROOMS

- 3090 **Dzorap Newly built**, 190sq.m, 2 bedrooms, study, 2 bathrooms, capitally renovated, parking. Price: 460.000 USD
- 3090. **Busand str./Near Republic Square/**, Newly built, /6th floor, 116sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms one in master bedroom, capitally renovated, open balcony. Price: 350.000 USD negotiable
- 3046. **Amiryan str.**, Newly built, 9/9, 81sq.m., without divisions. Price: Negotiable.
- 3012. **Aram str.**, Newly built, /7th floor, 136sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking, facing to bulvar. Price: 300.000 USD negotiable.
- 2998. **North Ave.**, Newly built, 9/6, 181sq.m, 3bedrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price: 700.000 USD
- 2682. **Aram Str.**, Newly built, 13/6 187sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 open balconies, capitally repaired, heating system, 2AC, 2 garages, view to garden. Price: 550.000 USD negotiable.
- 2958. **Pushkin str.**, 5/2, 140 sq.m., stone building, 4 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: Negotiable.
- 2895. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 3rd floor, 300sq.m, 3bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, AC. Price: negotiable
- 2802. **Amiryan str.**, Newly built, 8/4, 166sq.m, 3bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, security system. Price: 320.000 USD.
- 1104. **Komitas Ave.**, **Aram Khachatryan str.**, 5/2, 125sq.m., stone bld, h-2.75m., 3 bedrooms, office, 2 bathrooms, old repair, gas, garage. Price:

130.000 USD

- 2836. **Pushkin str.**, 4/4,5, 400sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC. Price: 460.000 USD.
- 2990. **North Ave.**, Newly built, 11th floor, 295sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price: Negotiable.

PREMISES

- 1789. **Charents str.** Land-1270sq.m, 5 storied building, each floor-400sq.m., basement, capitally repaired, parkings. Price: 4.000.000 USD negotiable
- 1598. **Komitas, Nairy Zaryan str.**, 1000 sq.m., working restaurant, 1st line, capitally repaired. Price: negotiable.
- 1603. **Northern Ave.**, Ground floor of the building, 160 sq.m., zero level, window glasses. Price: 2.600.000 USD.

•2035. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 220sq.m., 1st line, facade-55m., capitally repaired, h-5m., cellar. Price: Negotiable

•2013. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 265sq.m., 1st line, capitally repaired, heating system, cellar. Price: 1.300.000\$ negotiable

•2012. **Mashtots Ave.**, 5/1, 2, 140sq.m., window glasses, capitally repaired, AC. Price: 1.100.000\$ negotiable

•2155. **Mashtots ave.**, 3storied building, 540sq.m., each floor-180sq.m, window glasses, parking. Price: 3.600.000 USD

•2020. **Hr. Kochar str.**, Land-300sq.m, 1st line, 4storied building, 1080sq.m., each floor-270sq.m, h-3.6m., without divisions, parkings, 3 access. Price: 1.400.000 USD negotiable

•1986. **Cascade**, Land 1000sq.m. 3storied building 1200sq.m., unfinished, parking. Price: 1.000.000 USD.

•2167. **Sayat Nova str.**, newly built, 38sq. m, capitally repaired. Price: 200.000 USD

•2175. **Tumanyan str.** Ground and 1st floor of the building, 600sq.m, ground floor 300sq.m, 1st floor-220sq.m, basement-80sq.m, - 1st line, zero level, 2 entrances, facade-15m, 4 window glasses, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, Price: 3500 USD per sq.m,

•2172. **Isahakyan str.**, 92sq.m, 1st line, 7 degrees above zero level, facade-9m, 2 window glasses, h-3.20m, 2 halls, cabinet, bathroom, capitally repaired, heating system. Price: 450.000 USD

LANDS

•2122. **Davitashen**, 1800 sq.m., water, gas, electricity, possible to sell separately 600 sq.m., and 1200 sq.m. Price: 150 USD per sq.m.

•2121. **Demirchyan str.**, 1338 sq.m., building permits. Price: 2million USD.

•2013. **Cascade**. 1000 sq.m. building permits, first line, gas, water and electricity possibilities. Price 460.000USD

•1402. **Hr. Kochar Str.**, 1100 sq. m. facade -25 m. Price negotiable.

•2090. **Lori region**, close to Stepanavan, Gyargyar village, 6 hectares, forest 2 hectare has building permits, 3 water source, electricity. Price: 100.000USD.

•2406. **Avan**, Mher Mkrtyan block, 1000 sq.m.,

electricity, gas, water, the district is inhabited. Price: 30USD per sq.m

•2107. **Monument**, 2400sq.m, building permits, building project. Price: 400 USD per sq.m.

•2413. **Ashtarak roadway**, 1000sq.m, building permits, building project. Price: Negotiable

•2414. **Demirchyan str.** land-750sq.m., building permits. Price: 750.000 USD.

PRIVATE HOUSES

•3739. **Nork Marash** Land- 2000sq.m, two separate houses, total bld-600sq.m, capitally repaired, swimming pool, sauna, guard house. 2 car parking, garden. Price: 950.000 USD

•3348. **Blur, Barbyus str.** Land - 800 sq.m, 3 storied bld.-700 sq.m, 4bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control. Price: 1.2 million USD

•3146. **Aygestan**, Land-500 sq.m., 5 storied bld-765 sq.m., each floor-180 sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, heating system, elevator. Price: 2.300.000 USD.

•3583. **Nork-Marash**, Land-1100sq.m, 2 storied bld-520sq.m, 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, swimming pool, garden. Price: 1.350.000 USD.

•3432. **Aygedzor**, Land - 1021 sq m, 3 storied bld.-501 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, boiler room garden, swimming pool, sauna, garage, security system. Price: 1.000.000 USD

•3606. **Avan**, Tsarav Akhbyur/near Botanical garden/, Land-1000sq.m., 3 storied building-750sq.m., 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitally repaired, heating system swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking. Price-1.500.000 USD

•3574. **Blur**, Land-779sq.m., 2 storied building-720sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, heating system, sauna swimming pool, garden. Price: 2.000.000 USD

•3590 **Blur, Barbyus str.**, Land-450 sq.m., 4 storied building-470sq.m., 3bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: 680.000 USD

•3651. **Blur, Barbyus str.**, Land-900sq.m., 5 storied building-800sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: 1.700.000 USD.

•3401. **Antarayan str**, Newly built, land-700sq.m, 3 storied bld-690sq.m, 5 bedrooms, capitally repaired. Price: 1.300.000 USD

•3712. **Cascade** Newly built, land-450sq.m, 4 storied bld-600sq.m, zero state. Price: 550.000 USD

NEWLY BUILT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

•142. **Verin Antarayan str.**, 14 floors, 65-133sq.m, capitally renovated, parking. Price: 900-1300 USD

•74. **Cascade**, Verin Antarayan. 136-315 sq m., walls plastered, electricity, water, gas, euro windows, no exploitation fees. Price: 1200 USD per sq.m, parking -15.000 USD.

•107. **Monument**, Verin Antarayan. inhabited, 8 floors, gas, windows, street view -1000 USD per sq.m., city looking -1500 USD per sq.m., parking -4 million USD preliminary.

•87. **Sayat-Nova str.**, 21 floors, 3 bedrooms -188 sq.m., 199 sq.m., Price 1900 USD per sq.m., 2 bedrooms have a beautiful sight - 117 sq.m., 120 sq.m., 124 sq.m., Price: 1700 USD per sq.m., climate control, gas.

•93. **Kievyan str.**, Given to the operation in October 2011, 16 floors, walls plastered, windows, exterior doors, h -3, 15 m, gas, parking. Price: 1500-1600USD per sq.m, parking-12 000 USD. Possible with mortgage, for 13 years term.

•94. **Masiv**. 3floors, 8 flats, each flat has 3 bedrooms, 210 sq.m., parking. Price: negotiable.

•130. **Antarayan str.**, 34 flats, 110-275 sq.m., 4 penthouses-200-275sq.m, available services-car wash, cleaning service, garbage removal service, parking. Price: Negotiable

•131. **Busand str.**, commercial, office and residential areas, penthouse, available services-car wash, cleaning service, garbage removal service, parking. Price: Negotiable



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1 ROOM

- 2037. **Baghramyan str.**, 5/2, 60sqm, 1 bedroom, euro repaired, gas, heating system, AC, modern furnished, equipped. Price: negotiable
- 2189. **Vardanants str.**, Newly built, 24/12, 90 sqm, 1 bedroom, capitolly repaired, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD.
- 2099. **Sayat-Nova Ave.**, 12/6, 1 bedroom, capitolly repaired, gas, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 600 USD.
- 1972. **Northern ave.**, 8/4, 80sqm, 1 bedroom, 2 bathrooms, open kitchen, capitolly repaired, climate control. Price: 1200 USD
- 2171. **Tumanyan str.**, Newly built, 5th floor, 94 sq.m., 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, capitolly repaired, central heating, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD
- 2367. **Northern ave.**, Newly built, 9th floor, 98 sq.m., capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished equipped. Price: Negotiable.

2 ROOMS

- 2302 **North Ave**, Newly built, 11/4, 137sq.m, 2bedrooms, 2bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2000 USD
- 1780. **Amiryan str**, Newly built, /13th floor, 82 sq.m, 2 bedrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 1700 USD negotiable.
- 942. **Teryan str.** 4/3, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped. Price: 1500 USD.
- 1950. **Buzand/Mashtots area**. Newly built, 8th floor, 163 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, climate control, furnished, open balcony. Price: 2500 USD.
- 1681. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 6/2, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, parking. Price: 2000 USD.
- 1535. **Busand str.**, Newly built, 7/4, 82sq.m, 2bedrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, parking, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable.
- 1738. **Amiryan str.**, 8/8, 159sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, parking. Price: Negotiable
- 1951. **Busand str.**, Newly built, 13th floor, 122sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, climate control. Price: 2500 USD
- 1406. **Sayat Nova ave.**, 7/3, 110sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable
- 2109. **Northern ave.**, Newly built, 10/4, 137sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, central heating, furnished, equipped, parking. Price: 2000 USD.
- 2243. **Buzand str**, Newly built, 17/4, 125sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 2000 USD
- **Amiryan str**, Newly built, 14/5, 120sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, partly furnished. Price 2000 USD



- itally repaired, climate control, AC, parking. Price: 5000 USD
- 2261. **Hin Yerevantsi**, /North Avenue/, Newly built, 10/3, 124sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped, parking. Price: 1700 USD
- 2084. **Tumanyan str.**, 4th floor, 200sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, climate control, parking. Price: 5000 USD
- 2252. **Northern ave**, 7th floor, 350 sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, open balconies, capitolly repaired, climate control, parking. Price Negotiable.

PRIVATE HOUSES

3 ROOMS AND MORE

- 2358 **V. Sargsyan str**, Newly Built, 7/4, 145sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, one guest toilet, capitolly renovated, furnished, underground parking. Price: 3000 USD negotiable
- 2353 **V. Sargsyan str. 8/5**, Newly built, 98sq.m, 2bedrooms, capitolly renovated, furnished, Price 1500 USD
- 2347 **Teryan str.** Newly built, 10/8, 320sq.m, 3bedrooms, office, 3 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished. Price: Negotiable
- 2277. **Kievyan str.** duplex, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, with or without furniture. Price: Negotiable.
- 2310 **Busand str.**, Newly built, 190sq.m, 3bedrooms, 3bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2500 USD
- 2316 **Northern Ave**, Newly built, 6th floor,

- 1335 **Baghramyan str.**, Land-200sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished. Price: 3000 USD
- 1336 **Aygedzor**, Land-1000sq.m, 2 storied bld-240sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished. Price: 2000 USD
- 1337 **Davtashen** Land-406sq.m, 3 storied bld-306sq.m, 4bedrooms, 2bathrooms, capitolly repaired, furnished. Price: 3900 USD
- 1323. **Monument, Babayan str**, Land-400sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m, 4bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitolly repaired. Price: Negotiable
- 1248. **Aygedzor**, Land - 1021 sq m ,3 storied bld. - 501 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, capitolly repaired, central heating, AC, sauna, boiler room garden, swimming pool, garage, alarming system, security system. Price: 8000 USD.
- 999. **Aygedzor**, Land -1000 sqm, basement + 2 floors- 310 sqm, capitolly repaired, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, newly furnished, equipped, sauna, swimming-pool. Starting Price: 5000 USD.
- 1094. **Noy block**, Land-450sqm, 2 storied building - 220sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool, garden. Price: 2000USD.

- 1195. **Nork, Armenakyan str.**, Land - 2000 sq.m, 4 storied bld.-520 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, sauna, gym, furnished, swimming-pool, garden. Price: 4.000 USD negotiable.
- 1142. **Djrvej**, Bagrevand community. Land-1000 sq.m., 3 storied bld.-700 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, pantry, playing room, capitolly repaired, no furniture/ can be furnished, if necessary /garage for 2 cars. Price: 4 000 USD.
- 1293. **Nork-Marash**, Land-1100sq.m, 2 storied bld-520 sq.m, 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, swimming pool, garden. Price: 7.000 USD
- 327. **Nork-Marash**, Land-500sq.m., 4 storied building-600 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking. Price-4000 USD
- 1306. **Tsarav Akhbyur** /near Botanical garden/, Land-1000sq.m., 3 storied building-750sq.m., 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitolly repaired, heating system swimming pool, garden, sauna, 2 car parking, with or without furniture. Price: 6000-8000 USD negotiable
- 1288. **Tsarav Akhbyur** /near Botanical garden/, Land-560sq.m., 4 storied building-560 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4bathrooms, a kitchen, office, capitolly repaired, heating system, furnished, equipped, swimming pool, garden, 2 car parking. Price: 5000 USD
- 1197. **Blur**, Land-779sq.m., 2 storied building-720sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, study, capitolly repaired, heating system, sauna swimming pool, garden. Price: 8000 USD
- 1312. **Blur, Barbyus str.**, Land-450sq.m., 4 storied building-470sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: Negotiable
- 1317. **Blur, Barbyus str.**, Land-900sq.m., 5 storied building-800sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: Negotiable.
- 1323. **Monument, Babayan str**, Land - 400 sq.m, 3 storied bld-300sq.m, each floor-100sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable

PREMISES

- 2049. **Teryan str**, ground floor+basemnet, 1st line, 200sq.m, repaired. Price: 6.000 USD
- 1693. **Malatia-Sebastia** 4 storied building, 1200sq.m, each floor-300sq.m, 2 separate entrances, climate control, 2 elevators, basement, parking. Price: 15USD per sq.m.
- 1526. **Byuzand str.**, 5/semi-basement, 170 sqm., 4-5 degrees below zero level, window glasses, cellar - 50 sq.m., 6 rooms, the largest is 30 sq.m., 2 entrances, 2 lavatories. Price 2000 USD per month, negotiable.
- 1408. **Zarobyan str.**, /parallel to Baghramyan str./, 2 storied building, 600 sqm. ground floor- hall and kitchen, 1st floor 5 rooms, bathroom, open balcony, capitolly repaired, gas, heating system, parking. Price: Negotiable.
- 1462. **Teryan str.**, 3 storied building, 800 sq.m., capitolly repaired, AC, parking. Price: 10.000 USD.
- 1945. **Mashtots Ave.**, 5/1, 2, 140sq.m., window glasses, capitolly repaired, AC. Price: 8000 USD
- 1943. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 265sq.m., 1st line, capitolly repaired, heating system, cellar. Price: 7000 USD
- 1868. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 220sq.m., 1st line, facade-55m., capitolly repaired, h-5m., cellar. Price: 15.000 USD.
- 2087. **Northern ave.**, Ground floor of the building, 100sq.m, 1st line, zero level, capitolly repaired, window glasses. Price: Negotiable.
- 2033. **Abovyan str**, 388sq.m, Ground floor of the building, 3 degrees above zero level, window glasses, h-3m., basement-235sq.m, capitolly repaired, heating system, AC. Price: 15.000 USD
- 2031. **Vardanants str**, 500sq.m, ground floor of the building, 2 entrances, facade-20m, window glasses, without divisions, ,basement-250sq.m, Price: 8000 USD
- 2027. **Sayat Nova str**, 95sq.m, ground floor of the building, 2 entrances, 7 degrees above zero level, 4 window glasses, capitolly repaired. Price: 4.000 USD

Davit Tonoyan Meets Foreign Ambassadors and Military Attaches



On 3 April the First Deputy Defence Minister of Armenia Davit Tonoyan received military attaches of foreign embassies accredited in the Republic of Armenia.

During the meeting a briefing on the situation on the contact line of the Karabakh-Azerbaijani armed forces

was held during which the situation outcome from a large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan and the actions of the NKR Armed Forces to restrain and neutralize the aggressive actions of the adversary were presented. The aggression possible reasons and its expectations by Azerbaijan were also discussed. Mr

Tonoyan mentioned in his speech that the Armenian side was ready for any development, up to a direct military support to the NKR Defence if it was needed. At the end of the meeting the First Deputy Defence Minister answered the questions of the participants.

And a day before, on 2 April Mr Tonoyan received Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France, Germany and Italy to the Republic of Armenia as well as a member of the European Union delegation responsible for political issues.

During the meeting, the First Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia presented the situation on the contact line between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijani forces in the night of the April 1st-2nd and the following day as well as measures implemented by the Armenian side to restrain and neutralize the adversary's offensive operations.

Hawaii Recognizes Nagorno Karabakh Republic's Independence

Hawaii became the seventh state to rally in support of the democratic development and right to self-determination for the people of Artsakh today, voting unanimously to recognize the Nagorno

Karabakh Republic, reported the Armenian National Committee of America.

The Hawaii House of Representatives consideration of H.R. 167 took place despite enormous pressure from the Azerbaijani Embassy to quash the measure, with the key vote taking place just 24 hours before

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Washington, DC to join President Obama and other world leaders in the nuclear summit.

The historic vote specifically voiced encouragement for Artsakh's (Nagorno Karabagh) continuing efforts to develop as a free and independent nation and formally called the internal community to recognize the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as a free, independent, and sovereign democracy.

"Today the people of Hawaii stood



Thank you Hawaii
FOR RECOGNIZING
ARTSAKH'S INDEPENDENCE



ANCAWR.org

on the side of freedom and independence for the people of Artsakh - standing strong against powerful lobbying interests seeking to undermine fundamental American

and Armenian principles of democracy and self-determination. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to Representatives Angus McKelvey and John Mizuno for leading this effort and the entire House of

Representatives for taking such a strong stance along with our grassroots for their efforts," stated ANCA WR Executive Director Elen Asatryan.

The Nagorno Karabakh Republic Representative to the U.S. Robert Avetisyan hailed the decision, stating, "I am grateful to the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii, Representative McKelvey,

Representative Mizuno, and all their colleagues who supported this motion. It reinforces Artsakhsis' confidence that our achievements do not go unnoticed; that a free and independent Nagorno Karabakh

Republic will eventually be recognized as such by the entire civilized community of nations."

Both Avetisyan and Asatryan offered special thanks to

community advocate Artur Artenyan, who worked tirelessly in support of the measure, with the support of the growing Hawaii Armenian community.

In 2014, through local community efforts, the Hawaii legislature publicly debated and then rejected a pair of Azerbaijan-initiated anti-Armenian measures, dealing a high-profile setback to Baku's

well-funded effort to enlist U.S. state legislatures in its increasingly aggressive campaign against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. Artenian and Rudy Dekermenjian were on hand at the state capitol

during the introduction and the vote.

In the days leading up to the unanimous vote on H.R.167, the ANCA Western Region worked with Artenyan and key House legislators, offering insights on Artsakh's two decades of democratic development and economic progress in the face of increased attacks by Azerbaijani

forces, which hit record levels in 2015.

Hawaii joins Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, Louisiana, California and, most recently, Georgia in adopting legislation which supports the independence of Artsakh.

U.S. Embassy's fourth annual Women's Mentoring Program launched in AUA

On March 30, Leigh Carter, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills, kicked off the U.S. Embassy's fourth annual Women's Mentoring Program with a press conference held at the American University in Armenia (AUA). The 2016-2017 mentoring program, which is organized in partnership with AUA PSIA (Political Science and International Affairs) Program and the Women and Youth Development and Support Center, was timed to coincide with and celebrate Women's History Month. Key speakers at the press conference included mentors Hasmik Sahakyan, President of Women and Youth Development and Support Center NGO and Shushan Doydoyan, Head of Personal Data Protection Department, Ministry of Justice.

U.S. Women's History Month is celebrated every year in March to recognize the contributions of women to society. President Obama recently stated: "Because of the courage of so many bold women who dared to transcend preconceived expectations and prove they were capable of doing all that a man could do and more, advances were made, discoveries were revealed, barriers were broken, and progress triumphed... Through hardship and strife and in every realm of life, women have



spurred change in communities around the world, steadfastly joining together to overcome adversity and lead the charge for a fairer, more inclusive, and more progressive society."

The U.S. Embassy and AUA first established the Women's Mentoring Program in 2010. Mentors provide career advice, share their personal expe-

riences, and serve as role models to promising young students. In 2016-17, 61 Armenian women from a variety of professional fields will mentor 62 women BA and MA student from different universities as well as students from the "Houso Aygi" Young Women Charitable Foundation and the Mer Doon Organization.

54 Members of Congress call on Obama to press Aliyev on Karabakh peace

In the days leading up to President Aliyev's visit to Washington for an international nuclear summit this week, more than 50 U.S. Representatives have joined with leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in calling upon President Obama to leverage this visit to pressure the Azerbaijan leader to stop obstructing the implementation of the life-saving Royce-Engel peace proposals for Nagorno Karabakh, reported the Armenian National Committee of America.

The letter, authored by Chairman Ed Royce and Representative Brad Sherman, a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, builds upon an earlier Congressional letter, sent to the State Department last December, in support of three practical peacekeeping measures, known collectively as the Royce-Engel proposals:

- An agreement from all sides not to deploy snipers, heavy arms, or new weaponry along the line of contact.

- The placement of OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact.

- The deployment of additional OSCE observers along the line of contact to better monitor cease-fire violations.

In response to this earlier letter, the Obama Administration voiced support for the Royce-Engel proposals, specifically commenting that: "...the urgency of implementing such measures has never been greater." Despite this rhetorical support from the Obama Administration - and the longtime backing for these measures by the OSCE Minsk Group, Armenia, and Nagorno Karabakh - their implementation has, to date, been blocked by the Azerbaijani government. The authors of the Royce-Sherman letter seek to overcome this impasse by encouraging President Obama to work on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit with all the key stakeholders in a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement to implement these concrete, common-sense peace-keeping measures.

"We want to thank Chairman Royce and Congressman Sherman and all their U.S. House colleagues who joined with them in this bipartisan initiative to deliver a powerful, pro-peace message to



Azerbaijani President Aliyev when he visits Washington on March 31st: Stop the killing and strengthen the ceasefire," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian.

"We are - in light of the Obama Administration's persistent unwillingness to challenge Aliyev's aggression - deeply gratified that Congress has stepped up to assert U.S. leadership and offer American solutions - most notably in the form of the Royce-Engel proposals. We are particularly proud that these recommendations - withdrawing snipers and heavy arms, adding OSCE observers, and deploying gunfire locator systems - were born here in the U.S. Congress. They represent practical steps toward peace, supported by the U.S. and the OSCE and accepted by both Armenia and Artsakh, but - sadly, still obstructed by Azerbaijan."

Joining Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA) in cosigning the letter to President Obama are Representatives: Karen Bass (D-CA), Don Beyer (D-VA), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Judy Chu (D-CA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Katherine Clark (D-MA), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), Mike Coffman (R-CO), Jim Costa (D-CA), Jeff Denham (R-CA), Robert Dold (R-IL), Keith Ellison (D-MN), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), John Garamendi (D-CA), Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Chris Gibson (R-NY), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Janice Hahn (D-CA), Steve Israel (D-NY), Jim Langevin (D-RI), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Sander Levin (D-MI), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Tom McClintock (R-CA), Bettie McCollum (D-MN), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Devin Nunes (R-CA), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Charlie Rangel (D-NY), Loretta

Sanchez (D-CA), John Sarbanes (D-MD), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Adam Smith (D-WA), Jackie Speier (D-CA), Mark Takai (D-HI), Dina Titus (D-NV), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Dave Trott (R-MI), Niki Tsongas (D-MA), David Valadao (R-CA), Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), Randy Weber (R-TX), and Peter Welch (D-VT).

The full text of the letter is provided below.

Armenian Americans from across the U.S. have reached out to U.S. legislators in support of the Royce-Sherman letter through the ANCA's online activism portal by visiting anca.org/action and through a national call-in day on March 14th. Later that week, ANCA advocates from across the U.S. arrived in Washington, DC for the Fly-In for Peace, Prosperity and Justice, during which they shared the Royce-Sherman Congressional letter, discussed Karabakh peace, and addressed a broad range of Armenian American community priorities in contacts with over 200 Congressional offices.

Mr. President:

We are writing in advance of planned visits to Washington, DC by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia for the 4th Nuclear Security Summit, to underscore the importance the United States attaches to ending threats and acts of aggression, deterring a renewed outbreak of war, and creating the conditions for a fair and enduring peace in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

As supporters of a non-violent, negotiated peace, we appreciated the Department of State's letter of November 12, 2015 voicing the Administration's support for our bipartisan appeal, dated October 26, 2015, which was endorsed by 85 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, recommending specific steps to reduce violence, save lives, and keep the peace process moving forward. As you know, this State Department letter reaffirmed the Administration's support for "proposals to withdraw snipers, expand OSCE's role via an OSCE investigative mechanism, and deploy sensors along the Line of Contact and the Armenia-Azerbaijan international border." We welcome Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh's support for these peace-keeping measures, and remain

hopeful that Azerbaijan will lift its objections and allow for their timely implementation.

It is in this spirit that we urge you to work on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit with all the key stakeholders in a Nagorno-Karabakh settlement to implement concrete, common-sense peace-keeping measures that have been proposed by Members of Congress and

supported by your Administration:

- An agreement from all sides not to deploy snipers - or, for that matter, any escalation of heavy arms or new weaponry - along the line of contact.

- The placement of OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact.

- The deployment of additional OSCE

observers along the line of contact to better monitor cease-fire violations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We will continue to support your Administration's efforts within the OSCE Minsk Group to reach a fair and durable resolution of status and security issues related to Nagorno-Karabakh, and look forward to hearing of your actions in this regard.

'Pro-Armenian' writer detained in Azerbaijan



A renowned Azerbaijani novelist who infuriated Azerbaijan's government in 2013 with a book that cast a sympathetic light on Armenians was detained and reportedly barred from leaving the country on Wednesday.

News reports from Baku said that Akram Aylisli was detained at Baku airport early in the morning shortly before he was due to fly to Frankfurt, Germany on his way to an international literary festival in Venice.

Citing his wife Galina, the Turan news agency said an airport passport control officer told Aylisli that Azerbaijani authorities have banned him from travelling abroad. He was then taken into police custody.

The Azerbaijani Interior Ministry confirmed the detention. "Aylisli was detained because of provoking a conflict situation at a passport control desk of the airport," a ministry spokesman said.

"The police are now investigating the incident."

According to Turan, the 78-year-old writer was not released from custody as of 7 p.m. local time.

One of Azerbaijan's most famous writers, Aylisli fell out of government favor in 2013 after publishing the controversial novel, "Stone Dreams," in a popular Russian magazine. The novel portrays brutal campaigns by his fellow Azerbaijanis against Armenians -- including the notorious January 1990 pogrom in Baku in which Armenians were murdered by the dozens and expelled from the city.

In a February 2013 decree, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stripped Aylisli of the official title of "People's Writer" as well as a presidentially awarded pension for "distorting facts in Azerbaijani history and insulting the feelings of the Azerbaijani people."

The novel also sparked government-organized demonstrations in Baku, with angry crowds gathering outside Aylisli's apartment block, shouting "Shame!" and setting photos of the author alight. A leader of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party accused the writer of secretly being Armenian, while some Azerbaijani lawmakers called for a DNA test to determine his ethnic origin.

Aylisli dismissed the criticism and accused Azerbaijani officials at the time of exploiting the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for their own political gain. He defended "Stone Dreams," saying he felt it is his responsibility, as an Azerbaijani, to acknowledge his country's role in the conflict.

The novel was translated into Armenian and printed in Armenia by a private publisher later in 2013.

Ban Ki-moon plans trip to Armenia at the end of April

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon plans to make his first official visit to Azerbaijan and Armenia and a second visit to Georgia at the end of April, a source from the UN Secretariat told TASS on March 31.

The source could not give the exact dates, but said the trip would be made shortly after the signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement convened by Ban Ki-moon on April 22.

Secretary-General's spokesman Stephane Dujarric neither confirmed nor denied the information on Thursday.

On March 11, Georgia's First



Deputy Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani said Ban Ki-moon was plan-

ning an official visit to his country.

"The Georgian Foreign Ministry is paving the way for this visit, it is a working process, the concrete date will become known shortly," he told reporters, marking the importance of the visit for Georgia.

Ban Ki-moon visited Georgia in June 2007, making a short stopover in Tbilisi on his way from Afghanistan to Europe and meeting with the then president, Mikhail Saakashvili.

According to information on the website of the UN Secretariat, Ban Ki-moon has never visited Azerbaijan and Armenia since he took office in 2007.

Recent News from VivaCell-MTS

Tariff for roaming to Artsakh decreased

VivaCell-MTS informs that effective April 2, 2016, the tariffs of roaming in 374 97 network for incoming and outgoing calls in the direction of networks of Armenia and local destinations will be 5 AMD per minute. The same tariff applies to SMS messages in the same directions. The announced tariff will stay in force until further notice.

Housewarming in Gegharkunik Region

In 2015, in the frames of the housing project, renovation and construction of half-built houses were implemented in all regions of Armenia; 40 socially vulnerable families have become beneficiaries of the project.



The heads of partnering organizations implementing the project - VivaCell-MTS and "Fuller Center for Housing" Armenia visited Ddmashen community to participate in the housewarming ceremony of the Melikyan family.

Over years the Melikyans had been moving from one place to another, then for 15 years they had lived in a trailer. Ten years ago the family finally bought a half-built house hoping that they would be able to finish the construction, but the dream remained unfulfilled.

"It is indescribably difficult to live, moreover, to raise children in a trailer. My sons have never felt the joy of having their own home. Last year was my son, Taron's first New Year in a stone half-built building. Today my family has a home. Thank you!" said Leyla, the mother of the family.

"Personal happiness is the precondition of success. Homelessness, unemployment, various problems affect the person's psychological condition and happiness. It is not by chance that I frequently mention hope and belief in my speeches. Sometimes a little act of kindness can fundamentally change a person's life making him / her more confident, self-sufficient, tolerant, and successful. This approach has become a core value for us from the beginning of VivaCell-MTS operation, for it is important

for the better future of our country and our nation. Our cooperation with "Fuller Center for Housing" Armenia is aimed at the achievement of these objectives. We are happy to state that we have had our investment in the happiness of yet another Armenian family," said VivaCell-MTS General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.

Since 2007, VivaCell-MTS has contributed AMD 228.3 million for the basic reconstruction or renovation of houses thus improving the life quality of 480 people with social needs in 10 regions of the country, including 31 villages, of which 10 are borderland villages.

The experience of the leading telecommunications operator in Armenia in ensuring the development of economy, maintaining competitive advantage and reaching success is a valuable example for audiences from various walks of life. This time it was the students of the Leadership School that met with VivaCell-MTS General Manager



Ralph Yirikian and got acquainted with the achievements of the company over the last ten years, its strategy and responsible attitude towards the business.

The lecture was held in an interactive format. The participants had the chance to get acquainted with the chronology of VivaCell-MTS achievements: the history of creating innovative solutions, introducing the corporate social responsibility culture to Armenia, as well as launching the first and only 4G network in the country.

"A leader should set an example for others and realize the role a business has in increasing the reputation and boosting the economy of the country. It has been a great responsibility for us. Now we are the leaders in the telecommunication sphere with the number of customers (60% of the market share) and service centers (86 service centers around the country) as well as with network coverage (2G, 3G, 4G). VivaCell-MTS' model of administration has created an atmosphere of healthy competition based on mutual respect, which, in its turn, has had a positive impact on the country and the society. No matter which sphere you end up working in, remember that your business will be successful only if it is aimed at the development of the economy in general," said VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

During the lecture the students of the Leadership School got acquainted with the benefits of the system of transparent administration of processes.

Yerevan through the eyes of foreigners

Young journalists, photographers and videographers from Armenia and Russia have gathered in Yerevan to participate in "Yerevan 24" event. They attend lectures and master classes, then will explore the city for 24 hours covering the everyday life of the capital during a 24-hour period in articles, photo and video reports. From April 1, 06:00 till April 2, 06:00 the world will have a chance to follow the life in Yerevan on www.24.rusrep.ru website.

The participants were also interested to show the operation of the VivaCell-MTS network and to see how people work in the Company. For making their own reports the

young journalists visited one of the 4G base stations in Yerevan and were hosted at VivaCell-MTS headquarters.

"Yerevan-24" is a special project in the genre of experimental journalism for journalists, photographers and videographers. The participants will go on calls with ambulance, fire brigade and police; will show what is happening behind the scenes of a theater; will visit a maternity department and will do shopping at Yerevan markets. The rhythm and everyday life of our capital city will be presented in hundreds of articles, photo and video reports.

All the video, photo and text materials are sent and received and posted on the websites through VivaCell-MTS 3G/4G network. The Company has provided the eight dozen foreign participants and organizers of the project with mobile numbers and 4G Wi-Fi routers giving them an opportunity to speak within VivaCell-MTS network for free, as well as use 3G/4G Internet for sending and broadcasting reportages.

The best works will be included in an article in "Russkiy Reporter" journal. Readers from Armenia, Russia and neighboring countries will get acquainted with the life in Yerevan. The organizers of the event have acquired permission for video shooting in a number of venues: educational institutions, museums, cafes, restaurants,

scientific institutions, entertainment centers, hospitals and city services. We have tried to cover all the spheres of the life in the capital. Each of the participants will be assigned two venues, but they are free to visit as many places as they can during one day. Most interesting articles are often written about places that are off the beaten path.

The articles are written in real-time format and sent to the administrator of the website. The procedure is very easy. One can also attach photos. It is mandatory to mention where and when the article was written as well as the name of the author. The editorial board, comprising of journalists of "Russkiy Reporter", experienced par-

ticipants of the event, photo editors and correctors, reviews the article. The edited versions are then published on the website.

VivaCell-MTS sums up the results of MNP over 2 years

The MNP was introduced by the decision of the PSRC, on April 1, 2014. As a telecommunications operator, VivaCell-MTS has complied with the requirements of the legislation by investing significant resources and organizing proper training for the staff in order to implement the MNP and to make it as smooth as possible for the subscribers. VivaCell-MTS is com-

mitted to the quality in serving our subscribers, which equally applies to MNP.

The only year when more subscribers ported out than ported in was 2014 (-1,734), when MNP was introduced. However, throughout 2015, more numbers ported in than ported out, with the Mobile Number Portability net gain equaling to 2,957, which was the biggest in the market, in the frame of the MNP. This year also, as of March 31, more subscribers ported in than ported out, with net addition of 17.

VivaCell-MTS remains the unsurpassed leader of the telecom market in terms of market and also revenue share.

Sergey Smbatyan: "At the "Al Bustan" Fest the Armenian Musicians were Warmly Received"

By George Chakhalian

State Youth Orchestra of Armenia this year as well, for the third time in a row participated in the traditional "Al Bustan" festival in Beirut as the official orchestra.

Below The Highlights readers can read an interview with the SYOA Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor *Sergey Smbatyan*.

- *Maestro Smbatyan, what was the main feature of this year's festival?*

- I must say that this year's Youth Orchestra performed with a number of young but already internationally acclaimed performers such as singer *Anna Kasyan* (Georgia), violinist *Leticia Moreno* (Spain), cellist *Edgar Moreau* (France), others. It is suffice to say that Anna appears in almost all concerts of the legendary conductor *Ricardo Muti*. She lives in Tbilisi, and unfortunately, has never been in her Motherland Armenia, but we hope that this year she will perform with our orchestra in Yerevan. Anna is a real "Opera Diva", and her performance at the festival closing gala concert really amazed the audience ... And the cellist Edgar Moreau was perfect as well, a wonderful pianist *Gloria Kampaner* of Italy played Beethoven concert with our orchestra in a perfect manner, Leticia Moreno, with who I performed Shostakovich at the Penderecki Festival in Warsaw last year, this time played Wieniawski with the SYOA. I was also impressed by solo concert of pianist Alexei Volodin of Russia who played Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev. Before that I used to listen recordings of his performances,



and after this really amazing concert I definitely decided that we would invite this talented pianist to perform with our orchestra in Yerevan.

As always, we played works of the Armenian composers: the Great Aram Khachaturian, and also John Ter-Tadevosyan's "Lyrical Poem".

Within only ten days the Youth Orchestra played six concerts, and they all had various programs.

I believe you'd agree that this was a bright indication.

I should add that this year the world marks the 400th anniversary of the death of the great William Shakespeare, so the Festival could not bypass this memorable anniversary. So we performed "Falstaf" by Elgar and Tchaikovsky's "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliette." The Festival's Artistic Director, guest conductor of the A.L.Spendiaryan Opera and Ballet Theatre *Gianluca Marciano* and myself directed each three concerts of the Youth Orchestra.

- *And what was the audience's reaction?*

- There were jam-packed hall, the audience was very warm, naturally, there were many Armenians there...

...The most important thing here is that we - pls do not consider this an immodesty

- we are able to shape abroad good opinion on the culture of Armenia by our performances.

By the way, another proof of the above mentioned was that we received an invitation to participate next year as well as the official orchestra of the "Al Bustan" Festival.

Again, today it is not easy to find an orchestra that performs six concerts at the highest level in ten days, and with different programs, and, of course, the members of the Board of Trustees of the Festival assessed that fact properly.

- *Now let's talk about upcoming projects ...*

- By the moment the most important of them is the "Aurora" Award ceremony to be held on April 24, and the Youth Orchestra has honor to perform there.



In this connection, let me remind you that due to our initiative 24/04 orchestra played on April 24 2015.

Coming back to the "Al Bustan" Fest, I would like to underline the role of its Artistic Director Gianluca Marciano in the Festival's being a success, and also the fact that he led the Orchestra in three brilliant concerts.

Notably, on April 4 Maestro Marciano will head the new staging of the "Norma" opera in Yerevan, - in accordance of the will of the Maestro *Gegham Grigoryan* of the blessed memory who wished "Norma" as well as "Tosca" to be headed by Gianluca...



Armenian President visits Watertown, Boston

On March 28, President Serzh Sargsyan started his working visit to the United States of America. In Massachusetts, President Serzh Sargsyan visited Watertown, which has many residents of the Armenian descent, who is last two centuries established there strong national structures.

First, President Sargsyan was hosted at the Armenian library-museum of America which was founded in 1971. The Museum is an important structure which presents Armenian cultural heritage - coins, articles made of ceramics, pottery, carpets, religious articles, stamps, textile, metal work, maps, printed works and a rich collection of medieval miniatures. The President toured the premise of the library-museum, familiarized with the exhibits, and conversed with the staff about the activities of this cultural establishment. The President of Armenia augmented the collection of the museum with a picture of Janshem which he presented to the museum.



during the First Republic of 1918-1920 and subsequent decades. At the Center, the President of Armenia met with the representatives of the ARF. Serzh Sargsyan greeted and stressed the equal importance of the patriotic activities of the traditional

parties and wished them all the best.

On the first day of his visit to the United States, President Sargsyan visited also the Armenian Churches of Saint Stepanos and Saint Trinity. In 1991 at the proposal of the Armenian community of Watertown, the Saint Stepanos street was renamed into Artsakh street, while on August 6, 2012 the House of Representatives of Massachusetts adopted a resolution urging the President of the United States and Congress to support independence of Nagorno Karabakh and its right for self-determination.

The visit to the Saint Trinity Church concluded the first day of the working visit of the President of Armenia to the US. In the Book of Honorary Guests of the Saint Trinity Church, Serzh Sargsyan made an inscription and stressed the special role of the Armenian Church in the preservation of the Armenian identity and highlighted the importance of its historic mission.



Afterwards, Serzh Sargsyan visited Paykar Center of Ramkavar Liberal Party and Hairenik center of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, familiarized with the activities of these two Armenian traditional parties and conditions they work in. Hairenik Center of Boston is the oldest Armenian center on the East coast. The East coast ARF office, headquarters of the Armenian Relief Society, Hairenik radiostation, editorial staff of Armenian Weekly and Hayrenik Weekly papers are functioning here.

The ARF party archives are also kept here - in Hayrenik center. It contains materials related to the activities of the Party



ISIS blocks Armenians, other Christians from leaving Syrian city of Raqqa



The handful of Christian families remaining in ISIS' Syrian stronghold of Raqqa have been forbidden from fleeing the city, according to a tweet from a secret group that reports from inside the caliphate, Fox News reports.

The activist group Raqqa is Being Silently Slaughtered said

the black-clad terrorist army issued a decree that any Christians or Armenians still within city limits may not leave. It is believed that there are just more than 40 Christian families left in the city, and that they have been forced to register with the extremist group and to pay a "jizya," or a minority tax in exchange for being unharmed.

"Any Christian living within Syria or Iraq is in a very dangerous and precarious position," David Curry, president and CEO of Open Doors USA, a Christian advocacy organization, told FoxNews.com. "We want to see the Christian church survive in the Middle East, especially in the areas occupied by the Islamic State."

Raqqa first fell into rebel control in March 2013 after a battle between Al Qaeda-linked jihadi group Al Nusra and Syrian President Bashar Al Assad's regime, becoming the first provincial capital under rebel control. ISIS has since used the city as a launching point to increase their caliphate.

According to Raqqa is Being Silently Slaughtered, there are about 43 Christian families left in the city.

Soghomon Tehlirian to be commemorated in Berlin on 120th birth anniversary

It was on March 15, 1921 that Armenian avenger Soghomon Tehlirian assassinated Talaat Pasha, one of the masterminds of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 2, Tehlirian's 120th birth anniversary, representatives of the Armenian community will gather on Hardenbergstraße in Berlin, the place Talaat was assassinated, to hold an event in memory of Tehlirian.

Tehlirian shadowed Talaat as he left his house on Hardenbergstraße on the morning of March 15, 1921. He crossed the street to view him from the opposite sidewalk, then crossed it once more to walk past him to confirm his identity. He then turned around and pointed his gun to shoot him in the nape of the neck.

Talaat was felled with a single 9mm parabellum round from a Luger P08 pistol. The assassination took place in broad daylight



and led to Tehlirian's immediate arrest by German police.

"I killed him, but I am not a murderer," Tehlirian said of himself.

After a two-day trial Tehlirian was found not guilty by the German court, and freed. He eventually moved to the United States and lived out his years in San Francisco.

JCRC speaks out on the Armenian Genocide

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston (JCRC), representing the organized Jewish community in Boston, agrees with the message of the editorial by Andrew Tarsy ("Recognition of Genocide Long Overdue," Journal, March 17) that "American Jews have a wrong of our own to right" when it comes to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

"The time has come, 101 years after the extermination of over one million Armenian citizens, for the United States to acknowledge the massacre by the Ottoman Turks in 1915 as genocide,"



Jeremy Burton, JCRC Executive Director writes in the Jewish Journal.

"Armenians and Jews share a tragic historical bond. It was only thirty years

after the Armenian Genocide that six million Jews were killed by the Nazi regime."

Last October, the JCRC of Greater Boston and the JCRC of Greater Rhode Island led the efforts of the Jewish Council of Public Affairs (JCPA) - the consensus body of the American Jewish community - to issue a resolution that urges our Congress and the President to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

As Tarsy stated so powerfully: "When we participate in the blurring of historical memory, we dishonor the dead and endanger the living."

IDeA Foundation and National Geographic team up for development of tourism in Armenia

Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA) Charitable Foundation and National Geographic Partners have signed a memorandum of understanding to conduct a preliminary review of sustainable tourism development opportunities in Armenia. The initial research will include recommendations on product potential for developing Armenia's cultural and natural attractions based upon the three pillars of sustainable tourism:

- environmentally-friendly practices;
- support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage;
- and delivering social and economic benefits to local people.

Costas Christ, editor at large for National Geographic Traveler, will travel to Armenia in late April to lead a preliminary tourism development assessment on behalf of National Geographic. Christ, who is recognized as one of the world's foremost experts on sustainable tourism, works with National Geographic's Travel group, for which he serves as director of sustain-

able tourism and oversees field audits for the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World.

As part of the Armenia research trip, Christ will meet with government representatives, community leaders, business owners and tourism operators to assess the challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development to promote economic growth, while safeguarding Armenia's natural treasures and rich cultural heritage for future generations. Working closely with IDeA, Christ's recommendations will provide guidance on tourism strategy based upon globally recognized criteria for sustainable tourism principles and practices.

"Global scope and collaboration and using best international practices and standards for creating new local benchmarks are among the key principles of IDeA Foundation and based on that we are starting to work with National Geographic Partners. I am sure that this cooperation will help us to explore the best ways of pre-



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senting Armenia to the world and include them in the IDeA's Tourism Development Strategy," said Edgar Manukyan, CEO of IDeA Foundation.

"Armenia is a beautiful country with a rich and proud cultural heritage. Protecting that heritage and caring for the environment are fundamental to Armenia's sustainable tourism development strategy to deliver economic and social well-being for the Armenian people. I am looking forward to working with such a visionary organization like IDeA to introduce Armenia to the world," said Christ.

Relics of St John the Baptist to be taken to Gavar Diocese

On 2 April, the commemoration day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, with the blessing of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; the Mother See will solemnly transport the relics of St. John the Baptist from the Gegharkunik Diocese.

The 14th century cross reliquary will be taken to the Gavar Diocese, the Holy Mother of God Church. From there, at 10:30 a.m., the clergy and faithful will walk by procession, and take the relic to the St. Karapet Church, where a Divine Liturgy will be offered.

At the end of Holy service the relic will be used for the service of the blessing of the four corners of the world (Andastan).

The relics of St. John the Baptist will remain in the Church narthex until 5 p.m. for the faithful to have the opportunity to be blessed by the sacred relics.

Charles Aznavour will participate in "Aurora" Award ceremony

Legendary French Armenian singer Charles Aznavour will participate in the "Aurora" Award ceremony in Yerevan on April 24, the singer's spokesperson Christina Sargsyan told Armenpress.

"We are planning to visit Armenia to be present at the award ceremony of the "Aurora" Prize," she said.

The co-founders of 100 LIVES and the Aurora Prize Selection committee - co-chaired by Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney - will honor the Aurora Prize finalists for their exceptional acts of humanity with a weekend of events from April 22 through April 24, 2016. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and in gratitude to their saviors, the Aurora Prize celebrates the strength of the human spirit that compels action is the face of adversity.

Recipients will be recognized for the exceptional impact their actions have made on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes. On behalf of the sur-



vivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate will be honored each year with a US\$100,000 grant as well as the unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by nominating an organization which inspired their work for a US\$1,000,000 award.

The Aurora Prize will be awarded annually on April 24 of each year in Yerevan, Armenia.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast

Aries (March 20-April 19)



You must be sharp as a tack to manage everything and even then, mistakes are still possible. There may be many phone calls, messages, letters, quick conversations, rapid decisions, and/or papers to write. The period is favorable for probing into causes and finding the bottom line to any matter. Beware of the tendency to jump to conclusions or acting before all the facts are clear.

Taurus (April 20 -- May 20)



You may have a tendency during this period to slide into old and outmoded patterns of emotional behavior. Maybe this will be brought on by the re-entry of someone in your life. While it may be fun for a short time, very quickly you will become fatigued with it and shake loose of that outdated habit.

Gemini (May 20-June 20)



You may feel the need to bring an abrupt halt to your relationship with a business or organization that is pulling a power play. The IRS is out of bounds. You have to deal with them. However, you probably can find another bank, insurance company, or other business that promises more fair play.

Cancer (June 21-July 21)



People of the past may resurface. You will be glad to see these individuals, but more likely you will be reminded why they are no longer in your life. Somehow they are associated with old wounds in your past and you would just as soon let those memories go back to the ethers.

Leo (July 22-August 21)



You are in a handicapped spot right now. You may have legal or ethical issues on your plate. The Powers That Be are running the show and almost any move you make outside of the box will be challenged. For the time being you are surrounded. Accept this with grace for the present.

Virgo (August 22-September 22)



A sudden change concerning joint resources, debt, taxes, insurance matters may cause you to reel wildly for a bit. There could be a certain amount of drama in this department, such as a sudden need to access a large sum of money. Hold onto your natural caution. Think about this before you accept the drama at face value. Is it your drama or that of someone else?



Libra (Sep. 23-Oct. 22)

Venus, your ruling planet, has entered the 7th house of relationships and will be there until late April. She brings improvements in clientele, social life, and partnerships. This is a good time to ask for a consultation if you need it. You are especially able to balance with others during this period in order to resolve win-win solutions.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It is of paramount importance that you control your mouth this week, especially in the work arena. Although you have an opinion about whatever is happening, let it go and say nothing unless asked for it. Being "right" is not as important as maintaining human relations. This is not a good time to argue.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 20)

Whatever is occurring at this time is clearly intense and emotion-laden. You may feel as though your very life depends upon making your point of view heard and acknowledged. It is important to play your personal political cards carefully. Don't attempt a takeover unless you are prepared for a serious push-back.



Capricorn (December 21-January 19)

The Capricorn Goat is so focused on his or her direction that he sometimes becomes overbearing and pushy to others. Now is a time in which partners or other significant people are not cooperating. They may be fatigued with your constant management and delegation of projects. Ease off if you want to maintain these relationships.



Aquarius (January 20-February 17)

A project begun in December is showing signs of growth and development at this time. Although it needs more work, at this point it shows the possibility of manifestation. You may be in the midst of persuading others to your point of view. They are listening, so carry it further. Your mind is both steady and imaginative now.



Pisces (February 18-March 19)

A wound, whether emotional or physical, is due for healing now. Pisces is a sign that often feels "alone" in a crowd. But right now there is a healing presence who rides shotgun with you. The physical wound is most likely something with which you were born and now has a better solution.

Eurovision 2016: Armenia's Iveta Mukuchyan records official postcard

In the past few days, a crew working for the host broadcaster of the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest has visited Armenia to record the official postcard that will be shown before the actual song during the live show. Despite the persistent rain, Iveta Mukuchyan, who will sing LoveWave in Stockholm, enjoyed the experience a lot. Check out our footage right here!

"We had only one day for the shoot, but

we had so much stuff to do! Despite the constant rain, we still managed to get a lot of beautiful shots of some of Armenia's most iconic places. We also tried to include some symbolic elements like apricot trees, a huge chess board and, for the first time, you'll see me making traditional Armenian bread Lavash. It was truly amazing and I'm really looking forward to seeing the postcard in May. I think you're going to love it", explains Iveta Mukuchyan.



The postcards in the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest follow a unique concept that links the artists to their respective home countries. "This year's concept is very unique. We are trying to present the country through the artist - their hobbies, interests, etc. We are using various shots to make the postcards even more beautiful", says director Oliver Martin. "And we're having a great time in Armenia. The capital is very beautiful, people are kind and very hospitable. It's a pleasure to work with Iveta. She's very creative and professional. I think the postcard is going to look great."



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