

28 years after the devastating earthquake in Spitak



December 7 marks the 28th anniversary of the destructive earthquake in Spitak. The earthquake hit 40 % of the territory of Armenia, densely populated region with 1 million people.

The cities of Spitak, Leninakan, Kirovakan and Stepanavan, as well as hundreds of villages were totally or partially destroyed. Twenty-five thousand people were killed; 500 thousand were left without shelter. 17% of the buildings were destroyed; the work of

170 industrial companies was halted.

Immediately after the earthquake Armenians all over the world united and offered comprehensive support to the Motherland. "SOS Armenie," "Aznavour for Armenia" and tens of other organizations were created. Many Diaspora Armenians rushed to Armenia, bringing food, clothes and medicine.

Many of them – doctors, psychologists, constructors, architects – stayed in Armenia and personally participated in the rescue

works.

A number of countries of the world continued to support Armenia years after the earthquake. Italians built a whole dwelling district in Spitak, Norwegians built a hospital, which was named after great humanist F. Nansen.

A school built by an Englishmen was opened in Gyumri. Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher participated in the opening ceremony.

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President Sargsyan visits Artsakh

On 8 December Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan welcomed President Serzh Sargsyan of the Republic of Armenia at Stepanakert Airport.

In one of the military units located in the republic's central region the Presidents partook at an opening ceremony of new barracks.

On the same day Presidents of Artsakh and Armenia convoked a consultation in the NKR Defense ministry with the participation of the Defense Army supreme command-staff devoted to the issues of army-building and current situation on the borders.



Nalbandian to Steinmeier: Azerbaijan keeps aggravating the situation

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian had a meeting with OSCE Chairman-in-Office, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on the sidelines of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg. The parties exchanged views on the activity of the OSCE and referred to issues on the agenda of the OSCE Ministerial Council. Minister Nalbandian hailed the sup-



port of the German presidency to the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs' efforts towards the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

Edward Nalbandian called Frank-Walter Steinmeier's attention to the fact that Azerbaijan refuses to implement the agreements reached the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits and keeps aggravating the situation at the line of contact.

Iran to help set up Meghri Free Zone in Armenia

Iran's Minister of Industries, Mines and Trade Mohammad-Reza Nematzadeh said on December 5 that Iran will contribute to construction and operation of Meghri Free Zone in Armenia, IRNA reports.

Nematzadeh made the remarks in a meeting with Armenian Minister of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan.

Nematzadeh said that Iran has good experience in setting up free zones and is ready to share experience with Armenia to help set up Free Trade Zone.

'Iran and Armenia enjoy potential for expansion of economic and industrial relations and their level of exchanges should be upgraded.' The minister said Iranian and Armenian private sectors are interested in promotion of trade and economic relations. 'We should use the potential of the private sector for upgrading trade by removal of banking and insurance hurdles.'

The official said Iranian banking system and Export Guarantee Fund is ready to remove commercial barriers.

'Holding joint meetings within framework of commission and visit of officials can serve as an effective factor to identify problems and barriers to go ahead with commercial, industrial and mineral cooperation.'

He said Iranian technical and engineering service companies are capable enough to contribute to designing industrial and com-

mercial infrastructural projects in Armenia. 'As for mineral exploration and exploitation, especially copper, iron ore and gold and designing steel production projects, Iran is also ready to put its technical and engineering potential at the disposal of Armenia.'

Iran is ready to sign preferential tariff deal with Eurasian union, said Nematzadeh, adding, 'Regarding membership of Armenia in the Union, we expect its support to conclude the deal.'

The Iranian minister said that Iran has distinguished scientific status, especially in the nano-technology, bio-technology, information technology and telecommunications.

He called for signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for transfer of technology and knowledge with Armenia.

The Armenian Minister welcomed contribution of Iranian investors to Armenian projects, especially its mineral projects.

'For construction of free zone we will use Iran's experience and expansion of the relations can further provide the ground for Iran's membership in Eurasia.'

He said that Iran and Armenia have firm political ties based on good neighborly friendship and that economic and commercial relations between the two countries should be upgraded in pace with their friendly and political ties.

'Iran's insurance coverage to the industries can help development of the industry in Ar-

menia.'

He said that his country specially and fully supports conclusion of a preferential trade agreement and Iran's membership in Eurasia.

The Armenian minister said Iran's help to set up Meghri free zone will serve as first step to that end. 'Although the membership and conclusion of the agreement can lead to expansion of commercial and economic relations, the two-way ties should further expand irrespective of the issues.'

He noted that elimination of custom barriers is one of the most important barriers to promotion of bilateral commercial relations.

'Armenian government pays special attention to elimination of barriers and problems facing the private sector and entrepreneurs and not only supports Iran's stances but also considers it as partner of its interests.'

He said a deal on nano-technology had been signed during his recent visit to Iran.

'The information technology exhibition will be held in Armenia in June 2017 with presence of well-credited international companies and active presence of Iranian companies in the expo is welcomed.'

The 14th Iran-Armenia Joint Commission session opened in Tehran on Monday morning co-chaired by Iranian Minister of Energy Hamid Chitchian and Armenian Minister of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan.

Lavrov, Kerry, Ayrault issue joint statement on Karabakh



Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries have issued a joint statement:

We, the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Secretary of State of the United States John Kerry, and Foreign Minister of France Jean-Marc Ayrault – remain fully committed to a negotiated settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In light of the dramatic escalation in violence along the Line of Contact in April, we express concern over continuing armed incidents, including reports on the use of heavy weapons, and strongly condemn the use of force or the threat of the use of force. There is no military solution to this conflict and no justification for the death and injury of civilians. We are also aware of allegations of atrocities committed on the field of battle in April, which we condemn in the strongest terms. We appeal to the sides to confirm their commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict as the only way to bring real reconciliation to the peoples of the region. We also urge them to adhere strictly to the 1994/95 ceasefire agreements that make up the foundation of the cessation of hostilities in the conflict zone.

We call on Baku and Yerevan to honor the agreements reflected in the Joint Statements of the 16 May Summit in Vienna and the 20 June Summit in St. Petersburg. We welcome the sides' progress in

implementing the exchange of data on missing persons under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We urge the parties to remove all remaining obstacles to expanding the mission of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and to make progress on a proposal to establish an OSCE investigative mechanism. The proposals should be implemented together with the immediate resumption of negotiations on a settlement. We would like to reiterate our call to the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to demonstrate flexibility and to return to the negotiation table with the firm aim of moving toward a sustainable peace on the basis of the current working proposals. Unless progress can be made on negotiations, the prospects for renewed violence will only increase, and the parties will bear full responsibility.

We remind the sides that the settlement must be based on the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely: non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and additional elements as proposed by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries, including return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control; an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance; a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh; future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will; the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation. Our countries will continue to work closely with the sides, and we call upon them to make full use of the assistance of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs as mediators.

The Co-Chair countries are prepared to host a meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan when they are ready. We firmly believe that the Presidents need to engage in negotiations in good faith at the earliest opportunity. Continuous and direct dialogue between the Presidents, conducted under the auspices of the Co-Chairs, remains an essential element in building confidence and moving the peace process forward.

Steinmeier calls for intensification of Karabakh talks

The OSCE is concerned by the recent events in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier said, addressing the OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg.

“In April, there was an escalation in the zone of the conflict, which shows that there is a danger of the re-ignition of this conflict,” Steinmeier said.

According to him, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains dangerous and it is necessary to hold negotiations to find a solution to this conflict. He also attached importance to the humanitarian aspects of the conflict resolution.

Steinmeier expressed full support for the OSCE Minsk Group. “There is a format for mediation in the negotiations on this conflict – this is the OSCE Minsk Group. It is now necessary for this process to get a second wind,” he added.



Armenian Lawmaker accused of assaulting reporter



An Armenian journalist on December 7 claimed to have been assaulted and verbally abused by a parliament deputy while covering a National Assembly session in Yerevan.

Vahe Makaryan, a correspondent for the “Hraparak” daily, said Ruben Hakobyan was angered by his questions about his current political ties when they spoke in a parliament corridor.

“I was going to explain something to him,” said Makaryan. “But before I could utter a word he swore at me and punched me in the face. Frankly, I didn’t think that we were going to brawl, rather than talk, in the National Assembly.”

Hakobyan declined to deny or confirm the violence when he commented on the

incident. “He acted like the worst hooligan,” he said of the reporter. “He said ‘you are violating ethics rules and I will teach you a lesson.’ I realized that I’m talking not to a journalist but a thug.”

“He probably didn’t like the teaching lesson given by him and he’s now complaining about that,” Hakobyan told journalists.

Asked whether he indeed punched Makaryan, the lawmaker replied: “If there was something illegal, he can file an appeal and clarify things in a legal manner.”

Makaryan, whose left eye was visibly swollen, said he has not yet decided whether to lodge a formal complaint with law-enforcement authorities or the Armenian parliament’s Ethics Com-

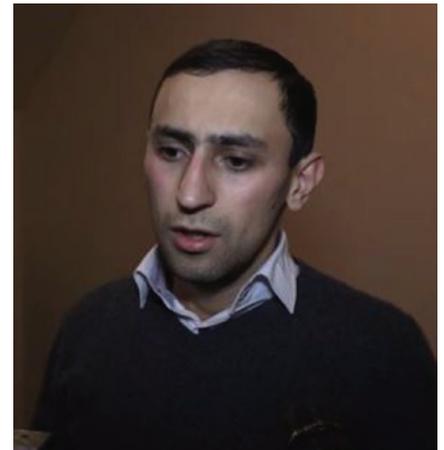
mission.

Armenia’s human rights ombudsman, Arman Tatoyan, expressed serious concern at the incident later in the day. “I hope that all details [of the incident] will be objectively ascertained as soon as possible ... I will spare no effort to prevent more such incidents in the future,” he said.

“Nothing can justify violence against a journalist performing their professional duties,” added Tatoyan.

Hakobyan, 60, was elected to the parliament on the opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party’s ticket in 2012. He was the party’s deputy chairman at the time. He quit Zharangutyun last year.

Hakobyan was previously affiliated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.



Armenian PM eyes long tenure

(Yerevan –RFE/RL) Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said late on Monday that he would like to retain his post after the end of President Serzh Sargsyan’s tenure in 2018 if his government succeeds in improving the economic situation in Armenia.

Sargsyan has yet to clarify what he will do after completing his final presidential term and Armenia’s transition to the parliamentary system of government. He has declined to rule out the possibility of becoming prime minister.

In a November 26 speech, Sargsyan made clear only that Karapetyan will stay on as prime minister if his ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) wins the parliamentary

elections due in April.

“If our government, our team works effectively and if it is needed, I see myself as prime minister [after 2018,]” Karapetyan told Armenian media.

“I didn’t come to work for six months,” said the premier appointed in September. “But at the same time, if we produce results, if our citizens, workers, scientists see that we are on the right track ... we will try to work for a long time.”

He also said that he has not discussed the matter with Sargsyan. “Discussing that issue would amount to saying that I am not prepared to work for less than 3-4 years,” he said. The main official rationale for Sargsyan’s

decision to name Karapetyan prime minister was to speed up economic growth and ease hardship in Armenia through faster reforms. The 53-year-old former business executive has repeatedly pledged to toughen the fight against corruption and create a level playing field for all businesses.

Nine of Armenia’s current 19 government ministers did not serve in the former cabinet headed by Hovik Abrahamyan. Most of the newcomers are technocrats handpicked by Karapetyan.

The premier defended his cabinet appointments. “I picked individuals with whom I had gone a long way, individuals who I’m sure will not use their posts for personal en-



richment and business lobbying,” he said.
 Armenian opposition lawmakers dismiss Karapetyan’s reform

agenda as a pre-election ploy. They say that the government reshuffle is only aimed at mitigating public discontent with Sargsyan’s administration ahead of the parliamentary elections.

Karapetyan, who had long managed Armenian and Russian subsidiaries of Russia’s Gazprom giant, also defended on Monday Armenia’s accession to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). “Unfortunately, we don’t manufacture many goods that are competitive or recognizable in Europe,” he said. “After joining that club [EEU] we have an opportunity to operate in a 200 million-strong market.”

Karapetyan went on to argue that membership in the EEU does not prevent Armenia from forging closer commercial links with the European Union. He said Armenia could become a “platform” for European companies seeking to bypass Western economic sanctions against Russia and retain access to the Russian market.

EFSD council approves disbursement of the second tranche of US\$ 100 credit to Armenia

The Council of the Eurasian Fund for Stabilisation and Development (the EFSD, the Fund) has approved disbursement of the second tranche of the EFSD financial credit of US\$ 100 million to the Republic of Armenia. The key areas of reforms supported under the EFSD programme include strengthening the financial soundness of the energy sector, raising the efficiency of the public finance management, and improving the investment climate. In the framework of the programme, the reforms to promote de-dollarization of the economy, greater credibility of the banking sector, and higher exports have also been continued. The assessment of Armenia’s performance prepared by the Manager is generally positive.

Implementation of the tranche’s conditionalities had a positive effect on strengthening the financial sustainability of the energy sector. Owing to improved methodologies of tariff margin calculation and the forecast of electricity generation and distribution aimed at greater flexibility of the tariff policies and enabling demand and supply shock smoothing, the Electric Network of Armenia CJSC [closed joint-stock company] has fully repaid accumulated arrears to the Armenian NPP, Yerevan CHP, and the High-Voltage Network totaling US\$ 50 million that is equivalent to 56% of the companies’ electricity supply (turnover) over the period of the arrears repayment (December 2015 – July 2016).

A range of legislative acts have been developed to improve the efficiency of the public finance management. In early October 2016, the National Assembly of Armenia adopted the first ever national Tax Code that stream-

lines and improves the tax legislation in the framework of a single document. With the Tax Code coming into effect, the tax potential of the economy will be significantly strengthened—the cumulative growth of tax revenues in 2017-2021 is estimated at 2% of GDP—and the tax policies will become more stable and predictable. Amendments to the Procurement Law have been presented for the consideration of the National Assembly of Armenia to expand the practice of electronic public procurement for the needs of government bodies, thus facilitating more efficient budget spending and reducing risks of corruption. The reforms to improve the investment climate have been continued. Simplified and expanded access of potential investors to information detailing the rules of doing business in construction, as well as expanded practice of using an electronic system of issuing construction permits will help reduce transaction costs in the construction sector and make the sector more attractive for investors.

A register of moveable assets has been created to improve accessibility of credit for the private sector by introduction a secured transaction framework and to reduce the cost of loans by lowering the risk premium. The country’s monetary authorities have adopted a range of regulatory and legal acts aimed at reducing the level of dollarization of deposits and loans, strengthening the credibility of the banking system and promoting exports. These measures have serves as an additional incentive for exports development that has been the key driver of Armenia’s economic growth in recent years.

One indicative condition had not been met

by the control date for the second tranche (1 October 2016). It is related to establishing 10 new centres of integrated social services operating as ‘one stop shops’ to supplement the 18 centres created under the first tranche. The failure to implement this measure is explained by the fact that the premises transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in late 2015 – early 2016 to house the centres of integrated social services did not meet the seismic resistance standards, therefore a range of additional measures had to be taken resulting in delays in implementing the steps. The Ministry has drafted a new schedule of launching 20 centres of integrated social services, under which only two centres are to become operational by the control date for the third tranche (1 October 2017), while the remaining centres will become operational in 2018. The Fund Council has recommended the Government of the Republic of Armenia to reconsider and agree with the Manager the parameters of this condition for the third tranche in accordance with the new schedule of launching the centres of integrated social services.

The EFSD Council has also recommended to supplement the conditionality of the third tranche of the financial credit with new control targets aimed at maintaining the fiscal and debt sustainability and present the updated reform programme for the consideration of the EFSD Council in early 2017. These adjustments will, in particular, facilitate lowering the budget deficit in 2017 to the level of 2.8% of GDP planned by the Government against 5.9% of GDP forecasted for 2016, and bringing the debt burden down in the medium-term perspective.

Armenian Parliament Approves State Budget for FY2017

The National Assembly approved on December 8 the Armenian government's draft 2017 budget calling for a major reduction in public spending strongly criticized by the parliamentary opposition.

The budget commits the government to spending a total of 1.36 trillion drams (about \$2.9 billion), down by almost 17 billion drams from this year's nominal target. Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said in September that budgetary expenditures will actually decrease by as much as 100 billion drams (\$210 million).

The government is to collect 1.21 trillion drams in taxes and other revenue in 2017. The 2016 budget calls for a state revenue of almost 1.19 trillion drams. Karapetyan said that budgetary revenue will rise by as much as 70 billion drams in real terms next year.

This means that the recently reshuffled government will fail to meet the 2016 budgetary targets because of worse-than-expected tax collection. Finance Minister Vartan Aramyan predicted recently that the shortfall



in tax revenue will total approximately 80 billion drams.

Aramyan defended the spending cuts as the parliament began debating the proposed budget on November 17. He said Armenia urgently needs to cut its growing budget deficit which is projected to reach almost 6 percent of Gross Domestic Product in 2016. The

government plans to bring the deficit down to 3 percent of GDP in 2017.

Opposition lawmakers rejected these arguments during ensuing heated debates. "This is written proof of the fact that the government is acknowledging its inability to develop the country," Levon Zurabian of the Armenian National Congress (HAK) charged before the parliament passed the bill by 83 votes to 24.

Deputies representing the opposition Prosperous Armenia (BHK) and Orinats Yerkir parties also voted against the austerity budget. "The 2017 budget does not mark the slightest step forward," said the BHK's Mikael Melkumian.

Vahram Baghdasaryan, the parliamentary leader of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia, called the opposition criticism "demagoguery" and "pre-election ploys" as the National Assembly wrapped up the debates on Tuesday. "This bill is realistic and congruent with the government's policy program," he said.

IMF approves US\$21.24 million for Armenia under Extended Fund Facility

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed today the fourth review of Armenia's performance under a three-year arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The completion enables the release of SDR 15.65 million (about US\$21.24 million), bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to SDR 66.52 million (about US\$90.28 million). The extended arrangement for SDR 82.21 million (about US\$111.57 million) was approved on March 7, 2014.

In completing the review, the Executive Board also approved the authorities' request for a modification of the end-December 2016 fiscal balance performance criterion. The revenue shortfall has been mainly due to exogenous factors, and the higher capital expenditure, which is externally financed at concessional terms, in large part reflects a catch-up of past under-execution and provides some counter-cyclical support.

Following the Executive Board's discussion on Armenia, Mr. David Lipton, First Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair, said:

"Program performance has been broadly satisfactory despite continued adverse external developments that have contributed to subdued domestic demand, weak revenues, and deflationary conditions. Looking forward, the outlook remains challenging, calling for sustained policy efforts to secure macroeconomic and financial stability and to foster sustainable and inclusive growth.

"Revenue shortfalls, together with counter-cyclical over-execution of foreign-financed projects, are expected to widen the 2016 fiscal deficit. Nevertheless, the authorities remain committed to fiscal consolidation and debt sustainability, as embodied in their fiscal rule, which aims to ensure that debt remains below 60 percent of GDP over the medium term. In this context, they have developed a fiscal consolidation plan for 2017 and beyond. It will be important to carry out this consolidation plan in a growth-friendly manner. Moreover, the new tax code should support the consolidation efforts, but it is also essential to implement measures that improve the prioritization and monitoring of foreign-fi-

nanced capital expenditure and that further strengthen revenue administration.

"The central bank's monetary policy easing over the past year has helped reduce key market interest rates and supported a nascent recovery in bank lending. Going forward, the objective should be to bring inflation closer to the CBA's target of 4 percent, while maintaining exchange rate flexibility to respond to external shocks and strengthen competitiveness. At the same time, enforcing the new minimum capital requirements and integrating financial stability considerations into the CBA's operational framework will help support the financial sector's resilience and strengthen the macroprudential framework.

"Pursuing further structural reforms remains essential for fostering sustainable and inclusive growth. Strengthening domestic competition and regulatory reforms are pivotal to creating a more broad-based, private sector-led economy. In this context, the authorities' planned amendments to the law for enhancing economic competition protection is an important step."

Armenia expected to join European Common Aviation Area



Armenia and the European Union will start talks on comprehensive air transport agreement. The negotiating groups will be formed in the near future.

“Under the planned agreement, Armenia will join the European Common Aviation Area. As a result, the parties will liberalize their markets, thus providing air companies with access to routes without restrictions, and therefore, use the capacities of the 500 mln market under unbiased and equal conditions,” the General Department of Civil Aviation of Armenia said in statement today.

On 1 December 2016 the Council adopted a mandate that will allow the Commission to start negotiations on a comprehensive air transport agreement with Armenia.

Comprehensive EU-level aviation agreements aim to increase Europe’s international connectivity, ensure a high-quality service and more choice for the passengers, and boost the international competitiveness of the EU’s aviation industry.

The agreement with Armenia will take the form of a Common Aviation Area Agreement, since Armenia is one of the countries with which the EU is creating closer ties under its neighbourhood policy.

Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Commission session wraps up in Tehran

The 14th Iran-Armenia Joint Economic Commission session, which aimed to boost bilateral trade turnover, came to an end on December 5 in the Iranian capital of Tehran, Mehr News reports.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the session, Iran’s Energy Minister said holding of the meeting and exchange of delegations were signs of strong determination of both sides to bolster and expand cooperation as all levels.

“Iran pursues the policy of deepening multilateral ties with all neighboring states,”

noted the official adding “progress and development of Armenia and success of its government and nation are deemed as on-wards moving of Iran.”

The Iranian official maintained that volume of trade turnover between Iran and Armenia has been disproportionate to political relations of the two sides; “similar sessions are expected to pave the path for reinvigoration of bilateral ties.”

Chitchian, while recalling that Tehran and Yerevan inked a comprehensive cooperation document during the Joint Economic Com-

mission session, urged all committees and working groups to implement provisions of the agreement.

“The document envisions cooperation in the fields of energy, electricity exchange, natural gas, Aras River environmental, banking and insurance, trade and economy.”

He added that based on the deal, which is signed on the eve of the visit of President Rouhani to Armenia, Iran will establish free trade zone on Armenian territory.

Also at the closing ceremony, Armenian Minister of Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan said the 14th edition of the session marked a cornerstone for further collaborations between Tehran and Yerevan asserting “the event remains as a turning point in age-old relations between the two countries, a point which marks the commencement of an indefatigable endeavor.”

He further expressed optimism that, with perseverance, efforts of both parties would yield fruitful results in the near future.

The volume of trade turnover between Iran and Armenia currently stands at over 400 million dollars and given that the Caucasus region country is allowed to export more than 6,000 groups of commodities to the EU by payment of customs duties, Iran could grasp the opportunity to deploy its goods to Europe through Armenia at lower costs.





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1 ROOM

- 1792.**Amiryan str.** Newly built, /10th floor, 78sq.m, 1 bedroom, one bathroom and a guest toilet, open kitchen, capitally renovated.
- 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.

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.**, Hambarzumyan 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
- 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

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

- 2175.**Tumanyan str.** Ground and 1st floorof the building, 600sq.m, ground floor300sq.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 Mkrtchyan 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

- 3802.**Vahagni distr.** Newly built, land- 1550 sq.m, 3storied bld-880sq.m, 9bedrooms, capitally renovated. Price: 880.000 USD.

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

NEWLY BUILT RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

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

- 74.**Cascade**, Verin Antarayin. 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 Antarayin. 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.**Antarayin 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, capitally repaired, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD.
- 2099. **Sayat-Nova Ave.**, 12/6, 1 bedroom, capitally repaired, gas, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 600 USD.
- 1972. **Northern ave.**, 8/4, 80sq.m., 1 bedroom, 2 bathrooms, open kitchen, capitally repaired, climate control. Price: 1200 USD
- 2171. **Tumanyan str.**, Newly built, 5th floor, 94 sq.m., 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, capitally repaired, central heating, furnished, equipped. Price: 1000 USD
- 2367. **Northern ave.**, Newly built, 9th floor, 98 sq.m., capitally repaired, heating system, furnished equipped. Price: Negotiable.

2 ROOMS

- 2362. **Amiryan str.**, Newly built, /5th floor, 160sq.m, 2bedrooms, a study, 2 bathrooms, capitally renovated, furnished, parking. Price: 2000 USD
- 942. **Teryan str.** 4/3, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnisred, equipped. Price: 1500 USD.
- 1950. **Buzand/Mashtots area.** Newly built, 8th floor, 163 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, furnisred, open balcony. Price: 2500 USD.
- 1681. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 6/2, 130 sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking. Price: 2000 USD.
- 1535. **Busand str.**, Newly built, 7/4, 82sq.m, 2bedrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable.
- 1738. **Amiryan str.**, 8/8, 159sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, parking. Price: Negotiable
- 1951. **Busand str.**, Newly built, 13th floor, 122sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control. Price: 2500 USD
- 1406. **Sayat Nova ave.**, 7/3, 110sq.m., 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, parking, equipped. Price: Negotiable
- 2243. **Buzand str.**, Newly built, 17/4, 125sq.m, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: 2000 USD
- **Amiryan str.**, Newly built, 14/5, 120sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, partly furnished. Price 2000 USD

3 ROOMS AND MORE

- 2373. **Tumanyan str.**, 6/3, stone bld, 100sq.m, 3bedrooms, capitally renovated, furnished. Price: 1300 USD
- 2363. **Arami str**, Newly built, /4th floor, 120sq.m, 2 bathrooms and a guest toilet, a dressing room, capitally renovated, furnished. Price: 2000 USD
- 2358. **V. Sargsyan str**, Newly Built, 7/4, 145sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, one guest toilet, capitally renovated, furnished, underground parking. Price: 3000 USD negotiable
- 2347. **Teryan str.** Newly built, 10/8, 320sq.m, 3bedrooms, office, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price: Negotiable
- 2277. **Kievyan str.** duplex, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally repaired, with or without furniture. Price: Negotiable.
- 2310. **Busand str.**, Newly built, 190sq.m, 3bedrooms, 3bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2500 USD
- 2316. **Northern Ave.** Newly built, 6th floor, 227sq.m., 4bedrooms, 2bathrooms, guest toilet, capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2500

- USD
- 2303. **Hanrapetutyun str** Newly built, 9/5, 165sq.m, 3bedrooms, 1bathroom, 1 guest toilet. capitally repaired, furnished, parking. Price: 2000 USD
- 2005. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 8/8, 130 sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, furnished, parking. Price: 2200 USD.
- 1723. **Northern Ave.**, Newly built, 8/4., 170 sq.m 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, open kitchen, capitally repaired, furnished, equipped. Price: 2000 USD.
- 1981. **Vardanants Str.**, Newly built, 14/14, 140 sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, 3 open balconies, furnished, equipped, parking. Price: 2000 USD.
- 1793. **Teryan str.**, Newly built, 8th floor, 260 sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, study, capitally repaired, climat control, parking, unfurnished (possible to furnish), Price: 3500 USD.
- 1720. **Amiryan str.**, Newly built, 16/10, 179 sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, central heating, AC, cellar- 25sq.m, with or without furniture, parking, Price 3000 USD negotiable
- 2195. **Northern ave.**, Newly built, 3rd floor, 300sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, capitally repaired, climate control, AC, parking. Price: 5000 USD

- 1142. **Djrvej**, Bagrevand community. Land-1000 sq.m., 3 storied bld.-700 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, pantry, playing room, capitally 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, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, swimming pool, garden. Price: 7000 USD
- 327. **Nork-Marash**, Land-500sq.m., 4 storied building-600 sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, garden. Price: Negotiable
- 1317. **Blur, Barbyus str.**, Land-900sq.m., 5 storied building-800sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, capitally 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, capitally repaired, heating system, AC, furnished, equipped. Price: Negotiable



- 2084. **Tumanyan str.**, 4th floor, 200sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price: 5000 USD
- 2252. **Northern ave**, 7th floor, 350 sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, open balconies, capitally repaired, climate control, parking. Price Negotiable.

PRIVATE HOUSES

- 1335. **Baghramyan str.**, Land-200sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 3bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price: 3000 USD
- 1336. **Aygedzor**, Land-1000sq.m, 2 storied bld-240sq.m, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price: 2000 USD
- 1337. **Davtashen** Land-406sq.m, 3 storied bld-306sq.m, 4bedrooms, 2bathrooms, capitally repaired, furnished. Price: 3900 USD
- 1323. **Monument, Babayan str**, Land-400sq.m, 3storied bld-300sq.m, 4bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, capitally repaired. Price: Negotiable
- 1248. **Aygedzor**, Land - 1021 sq m , 3 storied bld. - 501 sq.m., 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, study, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally repaired, heating system, sauna, gym, furnished, swimming-pool, garden. Price: 4.000 USD 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, capitally repaired, gas, heating system, parking. Price: Negotiable.
- 1462. **Teryan str.**, 3 storied building, 800 sq.m., capitally repaired, AC, parking, Price: 10.000 USD.
- 1945. **Mashtots Ave.**, 5/1, 2, 140sq.m., window glasses, capitally repaired, AC. Price: 8000 USD
- 1943. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 265sq.m., 1st line, capitally repaired, heating system, cellar. Price: 7000 USD
- 1868. **Tumanyan str.**, Ground floor of the building, 220sq.m., 1st line, facade-55m., capitally repaired, h-5m., cellar. Price: 15.000 USD.
- 2087. **Northern ave.**, Ground floor of the building, 100sq.m, 1st line, zero level, capitally 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, capitally 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, capitally repaired. Price: 4.000 USD

Armenia maintains efforts towards consolidation of democratic institutions: FM



Statement by Edward Nalbandian, Foreign Minister of Armenia at the Open Government Partnership Summit 2016

Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Armenia thanks the Government of France for its efforts towards advancing the agenda of Open Government Partnership (OGP) and for the extended hospitality. Our appreciation also goes to the civil society Co-Chair – the World Resources Institute. The Summit is an opportunity to galvanize our engagement in OGP initiative promoting fundamental values necessary for the inclusive and sustainable development of our societies.

Between 2011 and 2016, in line with two Action Plans Armenia implemented tangible reforms in major sectors such as the law-making activities, public procurement, access to and freedom of information, healthcare, education, local self-governance, mining industry. Through the implementation of more than 20 commitments targeted actions have been undertaken to meet main OGP challenges on improving public services, ensuring effective management of public resources, promotion of public confidence.

The cutting-edge tools, such as crowd-sourcing and co-design were widely used in the drafting process of Armenia's Open

government partnership Third Action Plan (2016-2018). Government officials came together with Civil Society Organizations, experts and private sector partners to discuss and elaborate the suggested action plan commitments.

Most of the declared Summit priorities including on transparency and anti-corruption, sustainable development and climate change are included in our new Action Plan. Armenia joined other states in signing Paris Agreement on climate change. The Government of Armenia provided its final national progress report on the Millennium Development Goals. The roadmap for national implementation the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been drafted. All these processes have been done in an inclusive manner based on multi-stakeholder public discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Armenia continues its efforts aimed at consolidating democratic institutions, strengthening the rule of law, national mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights and in this regard sustains strong partnership with the international organizations and initiatives. Last December by the nation-wide referendum Armenia adopted amendments to the Constitution aimed at improving the governance system with increased transparency

and accountability. It was followed by the adoption of a new Electoral Code to meet the necessary legal changes in line with the requirements of the amended Constitution. It is noteworthy that both the Constitutional reform and the new Electoral Code have received positive feedbacks from our international partner organizations. To further strengthen the public trust in the election process the Government accepted the proposal coming from the opposition and the discussions on the draft Code were held with the involvement of all parliamentary political factions and civil society representatives.

In Armenia, we have vibrant civil society, which is an indicator of our growing democracy, and an integral part of Armenia's public life with increasing participation in and contribution to the effective governance. The presence of our Civil Society Organizations among Summit participants, including among members of our OGP National Working Group, is the best illustration for that.

It is noteworthy that at the last global summit of Open Government Partnership, Armenia received a top award and was recognized as a leader in our region for increased efficiency in the activities of its local self-governance authorities and improved public services based on the principles of open governance. Our Civil Society Organizations awarded the Armenian government for advancing freedom of information and joining the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are cognizant that challenges remain. Our new Action Plan is aimed at exploring new tools to directly connect to the society, to mainstream the Open Government Partnership principles in all domains of governance, and to apply human-centered approaches in policymaking. With this in mind, we are looking forward to work hand in hand with all partners to achieve the objectives of Open government partnership.

Thank you.

Access to Power: Pence Calls Sarkisyan; Erdogan & Aliyev Call Trump



*Harut
Sassounian*

Shortly after the November 8 elections, I wrote a column suggesting that Armenian-Americans make every effort to contact President-elect Trump or his aides before the January 20 Presidential inauguration, after which it would be much more difficult to have access to the President.

I am happy to report that one such successful connection was made last month by the joint efforts of Armenia's Ambassador to Washington, Grigor Hovhannissian, and President of Prime Health Care, Mike Sarian of Glendale, California, who has extensive contacts with high-ranking Republicans.

As a result, Vice President-elect Mike Pence called President Serzh Sarkisian on December 1 to thank him for his earlier congratulatory letter to President-elect Trump. According to the Armenian President's website, Pence and Sarkisian stressed the importance of expanding political and economic relations between Armenia and the United States. "President Sarkisian and Vice President-elect Mike Pence discussed also issues of mutual interest, including regional problems and challenges."

The Armenian President's website drew special attention to the fact that the Pence-Sarkisian "phone call was initiated by the American side." In contrast, Azerbaijan's President Aliyev and Turkey's President Erdogan were the ones calling Trump on November 9 and 17 respectively, making Vice President-elect Pence's call to Sarkisian politically more valuable! Trump may have asked

Pence to make the call to Sarkisian due to his familiarity with Armenian issues during his 10-year tenure in the House of Representatives. As a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Congressman Pence voted for a Congressional Resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide in 2005, but voted against similar resolutions in 2007 and 2010, expressing concern for the possible fallout on US-Turkey relations.

Erdogan's and Aliyev's other disadvantage was that their phone calls to Trump were most probably arranged through hired multi-million dollar public relations and lobbying firms in Washington, whereas Armenia did not have to spend a penny for the Pence-Sarkisian phone conversation. This successful access to the newly-elected Trump Administration confirms the importance of getting involved in American political life, so that when the need arises, such arrangements can be made with relative ease.

Furthermore, the phone calls between Trump and leaders of several countries, including those of Taiwan, Turkey and Pakistan, came under intense scrutiny by the U.S. media. China's leaders were upset that Trump spoke with the President of Taiwan. No U.S. President or President-elect has done so since 1979, due to the U.S. "One China" policy which recognizes Taiwan as part of the People Republic of China.

The controversy regarding Turkey involves Ivanka Trump's participation in her father's phone conversation with Erdogan which some view as a conflict of interest. Ivanka was closely involved with the Trump Towers project in Istanbul and Turkish business partner Mehmet Ali Yalcindag. She attended the 2012 opening celebration of Trump Towers in Istanbul. During the

phone call, Trump told Erdogan that he and Ivanka admire him and Yalcindag. Trump's lavish words were intended to relieve the irritation caused by his earlier announced plans to ban all Muslim immigrants. In response, Erdogan had demanded that Trump's name be removed from the Istanbul Towers.

Another controversial phone call was the one Trump made to Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Trump was quoted as heaping lavish praise on Pakistan, its people and culture which drew a harsh response from India, an important U.S. ally and Pakistan's archenemy. In contrast, back in 2012, Trump had tweeted: "Get it straight: Pakistan is not our friend. We've given them billions and billions of dollars, and what did we get? Betrayal and disrespect — and much worse. #TimeToGetTough."

Finally, readers may recall that in my last week's column I had commended the Armenian government for blocking Pakistan's request for Observer status in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), due to Pakistan's pro-Azerbaijan, pro-Turkey, anti-Armenia, and anti-Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) policies. The Turkish media disseminated my column, although mistakenly attributing to the Armenian government my four suggestions to counter Pakistan at the UN, US Congress, Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and support India in the Kashmir conflict with Pakistan.

Armenian-Americans should continue their efforts to cultivate good relations with the Trump Administration and Members of Congress in order to counter all anti-Armenian attempts by Azerbaijan, Turkey and their high-priced lobbying firms in Washington!

Obama's UN envoy refers to Armenian Genocide

In a speech hailing the work of Holocaust survivor and Nobel peace laureate Elie Wiesel, Barack Obama's U.N. Envoy Samantha Power lamented the injustices that continue to this day. Among these, she listed: "Genocide denial against the Armenians." Power didn't elaborate the Associated Press reports.

The term has long been taboo for U.S. officials, including President Barack Obama, who have instead talked of mass atrocity and historical tragedy. But Obama's U.N. ambassador last week went further than her boss by describing the event as genocide.

According to AP, those five words risk infuriating Turkey, which has fiercely opposed any genocide reference and whose strategic role as a key American partner and NATO ally in an unstable part of the world has led U.S. officials to exercise extreme caution when referencing the century-old massacre. They're also surprising given Power's status as the nation's second highest-ranked diplomat and what sounded like her implicit criticism of Obama.

When he first ran for president, Obama promised he would recognize the killings as genocide if elected. But he has repeatedly stopped short of doing so. Marking Armenian Remembrance Day in April, Obama called the killings the first mass atrocity of the 20th century and a tragedy that must not be repeated.

Before entering government, Power was a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who wrote extensively about America's responses to genocide. Officials say she has lobbied hard behind the scenes for Obama to formally recognize the Armenian killings as genocide.

Kurtis Cooper, Power's spokesman, said the genocide reference came in the context of honoring Wiesel's life and were meant to "convince others to stand up, rather than stand by, in the face of systemic injustice, mass atrocities and genocide like the one he was forced to endure." He said they don't reflect a change in administration policy.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said there has been no



change in U.S. policy.

"The president and other senior administration officials have repeatedly mourned and acknowledged as historical fact that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, and stated that a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests," Toner said.

President Ronald Reagan in 1981 did refer to the "genocide of the Armenians." But presidents since have avoided such language.

President Jimmy Carter came close to saying genocide in 1978 by describing a "concerted effort made to eliminate all the Armenian people" and calling it "probably one of the greatest tragedies that ever befell any group." He noted that unlike after the Holocaust, no justice occurred akin to the Nuremberg trials of top Nazi officials.

As a campaign surrogate eight years ago, Power released a video imploring Armenian-Americans to vote for Obama, saying he would follow through on his promise to talk frankly about what happened.

French Interior Minister Blacklisted By Azerbaijan

France's newly appointed Interior Minister Bruno Le Roux has been banned from entering Azerbaijan because of his "illegal" trip to Nagorno-Karabakh last year, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said on December 7.

The ministry spokesman, Hikmet Hajiyev, said anyone visiting "occupied territories of Azerbaijan" without Baku's permission violates the country's "laws, territorial integrity and sovereignty."

"The law is law and everyone is equal before it," Hajiyev added, according to Azerbaijani news agencies.

In recent years, the Azerbaijani government has blacklisted hundreds of foreign lawmakers, other dignitaries and even journalists on the same grounds. Many of them used their visits to Karabakh to show support for the territory's de facto secession from Azerbaijan.

Le Roux was the leader of the ruling Socialist Party's faction in France's lower house of parliament before being appointed as interior minister by President Francois Hollande on Tuesday. He headed a French parliamentary delegation that travelled to Karabakh through Armenia in September 2015 on what it called a fact-finding mission.

The five members of the delegation also inspected a section of the heavily militarized Armenian-Azerbaijani "line of contact" around Karabakh, walking through Karabakh Armenian army trenches and monitoring the ceasefire regime there. They met with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan just before that trip.

Speaking in the Armenian capital at the time, Le Roux said that he and his Socialist colleagues are seeking more first-hand information about the Karabakh conflict. They

also want to "forge close and friendly links with that place," he said.

French parliamentarians, most of them with close ties to France's influential Armenian community, visit Karabakh on a regular basis despite vehement protests from Azerbaijan.

Some of them are members of the Circle Of France-Karabakh Friendship, a pro-Armenian grouping of French deputies, senators and local government officials formed in 2013. Le Roux has also been affiliated with it.

In the United States, meanwhile, pro-Armenian members of the House of Representatives hosted an annual reception on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to mark the 25th anniversary of Karabakh's declaration of independence from Azerbaijan. The event featured speeches by some of those lawmakers as well as a

former U.S. ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, and Karabakh's visiting prime minister, Arayik Harutiunyan.

Harutiunyan praised the U.S. for supporting confidence-building measures aimed at minimizing ceasefire violations in the Karabakh conflict zone. "We are glad that the U.S. shares our position in the protection of the rights of the Karabakh people and inadmissibility of military activities," he said in remarks cited by the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

He also blamed Azerbaijan for last April's heavy fighting in Karabakh and said Baku is continuing to seek a military solution to the dispute.

According to the ANCA, the Podesta Group, a Washington-based lobbying firm working for the Azerbaijani government, circulated letters to the U.S. congressional offices condemning the event.



Chris Bohjalian: My proud pilgrimage to my homeland

By *Chris Bohjalian*
The New York Times

The forward trenches in the hills just beyond the abandoned village of Talish, in Nagorno-Karabakh, are reminiscent of World War I: long, endless, slits in the ground, the dirt buttressed by wood, with periodic firing posts and dugouts. Stacked tires packed with dirt stand in for sandbags, but otherwise it looks like the Western Front 100 years ago. Behind the trenches, alongside the road, tanks are angled to counterattack.

On the first day of September, the sky cerulean, Capt. Gegham Grigoryan, 32, stood with me and pointed toward the northeast — toward Azerbaijan and the minefield and buffer zone less than a mile away.

"If you want peace, you should prepare for war," he said, shrugging.

Earlier this year, Nagorno-Karabakh, his small, unrecognized Armenian republic, got war. Azerbaijan attacked across the eastern border in the small hours of April 2, breaking a cease-fire that had largely held since 1994. Here in Talish, the 400-person village was so badly shelled that today it has been abandoned and the residents resettled in other parts of the country.

Captain Grigoryan, a father of two girls, has a degree in international relations, but believes that Nagorno-Karabakh needs him in the military: "It is better for me to wear a uniform than a suit."

Very few Americans could find Na-

gorno-Karabakh on a map. (Very few of us, of course, could find Armenia and Azerbaijan, either.) I went there this summer for the same reason that I return every year to Armenia and the remnants of Armenian civilization that are scattered across eastern Turkey: This earth is in my blood, and my visits are a pilgrimage. I am an Armenian-American, but only at midlife did I understand the draw of this ancient land for me.

The line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan is strategically significant; it is one of those hot spots that could destabilize the Caucasus. Armenia and Azerbaijan share a border with Iran. After Azerbaijan attacked Nagorno-Karabakh in April, the two sides battled four days before agreeing to a cease-fire. It was a brief, violent conflict involving tanks, artillery and drones that left hundreds of soldiers dead. In the fighting in Talish, Azeri soldiers executed and mutilated an elderly Armenian civilian couple and beheaded a captured Armenian soldier, leading a United States representative, Brad Sherman, Democrat of California and a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to call for an investigation into Azeri war crimes.

Although the Armenians are Christian and the Azeris are Muslim, the issue has little to do with religion. Azerbaijan insists it owns Nagorno-Karabakh, citing its right to territorial integrity. Nagorno-Karabakh argues that it is entitled to exist independently because of the right of all peoples to self-determi-

nation.

Certainly there are analysts who argue that the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh are an occupying force. I don't agree. But I don't side with Nagorno-Karabakh simply because of my DNA. I believe that history is on the Armenians' side.

In 1988, Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian majority — then part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic — voted to become part of the Armenian Soviet Republic. (In the 1920s, Karabakh's Armenians had insisted that self-determination was their prerogative under the Soviet constitution. Nevertheless, in 1923, Joseph Stalin gave Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan.) But the Soviet Union was incapable of managing the violence that erupted — including Azeri rage directed at Armenians in the Azerbaijani cities of Baku and Sumgait — forcing most Armenians to flee to Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh. On Sept. 2, 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed itself an independent country, and for the next three years its Armenians fought a war with the Azeris, which they would win in 1994, with the help of Armenia itself. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 30,000 people would die, and perhaps as many as one million were displaced.

Nagorno-Karabakh is largely unrecognized by the international community (though seven American states have passed resolutions urging the United States government to support its inde-

continued on p. 14

Chris Bohjalian: My proud pilgrimage to my homeland

from p. 13

pendence). The republic is a fledgling democracy of 140,000 people, facing off against an oil-rich dictatorship with a population of 9.5 million. Its only ally is Armenia, which is often the small republic's lifeline. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has assigned diplomats from France, Russia and the United States to try to broker a permanent agreement, but they've made little progress.

"Azerbaijan has shown consistently it is incapable of governing Nagorno-Karabakh," said Ruben Melikyan to me when we had coffee recently in the Nagorno-Karabakh capital of Stepanakert. Mr. Melikyan is the country's ombudsman, or human rights defender. "It's not merely an issue of a people's right to self-determination. It's a people's right to self-determination who are in peril of extermination."

This is no small distinction. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has threatened to shoot down passenger planes that fly into the new Stepanakert airport; the airport has yet to open. He promoted to major the Azeri soldier who murdered an Armenian soldier in his sleep during

a peaceful, NATO-sponsored training seminar in Budapest. And most recently President Aliyev broke the ceasefire with a huge, unprovoked offensive into Nagorno-Karabakh in April, an onslaught that included the shelling of two schools. (It was nighttime so the schools were empty, but among the first casualties in the war was a 12-year-old boy killed in a missile attack.)

After spending time with people in Nagorno-Karabakh, it's clear to me that the only way the nation will ever again be a part of Azerbaijan is if Azerbaijan conquers it. And despite Azerbaijan's being vastly larger, I can't imagine that ever will happen. Armenians had lived on this land for centuries before it was incorporated into Azerbaijan. My first day there I went to a baptism of 39 Armenian children in a church built in 1673. Dadivank, the Armenian monastery in the north, began construction in the ninth century. Its frescoes, which date from 1297, are as lovely as any I've seen in Tuscany.

Its people are fiercely protective of their home. Among the parents I met at that baptism were Anton and Arenaz Abkarian. Their three children, all under 5, were baptized that afternoon.

They have a small farm. But when the Azeris attacked in April, Mr. Abkarian went straight to the front lines as a volunteer. His wife and his mother ran the farm.

"Who will defend my children and my family if not me?" Mr. Abkarian asked me rhetorically. He is a quiet, unassuming young man, but his smile is broad when he talks about his country or shares the honey from his apiary.

The fact is, the only dog Azerbaijan has in this fight is pride. It has the oil; Nagorno-Karabakh has scrub brush and pomegranates.

But for the Armenians it is a fight for survival. It is the retention of a part of our homeland. Yes, we were ethnically cleansed from Van and Anatolia and Cilicia — virtually all of Turkey but Istanbul — during the Armenian Genocide. Three out of every four of us there were systematically annihilated during World War I.

And so Nagorno-Karabakh is our line in the sand. It is why Anton Abkarian rushed to the front and Gegham Grigoryan traded his suit for a uniform. It is why this small country, as tiny as it is, always has enough soldiers for the trenches.



Azerbaijan Continues to Deny Destruction of Religious, Cultural Heritage of Armenians

OTTAWA, Canada—The Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) is marking the 11th anniversary of Azerbaijan’s destruction of the historic Armenian cemetery of Djulfa by calling on the Canadian government to hold Azerbaijan accountable for the systematic destruction of Armenian historical, cultural and religious sites and monuments.

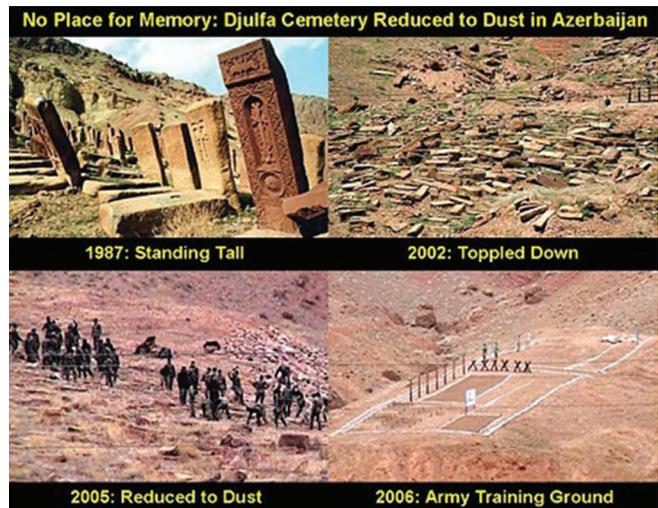
On December 10, 2005, the government of Azerbaijan began the final demolition of the historic Armenian cemetery in Djulfa, an ancient Armenian city now located in Azerbaijan. This marked the final blow to the 10,000 intricately hand carved khachkars (cross stones) which were erected between the 6th-17th centuries. Khachkars are a uniquely Armenian form of stone carving which UNESCO has recognized as being both culturally and religiously significant to the Armenian people and constitutes as part of humanity’s shared intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding.

By December 15, 2005, the final destruction was complete. Approximately 200 Azerbaijani soldiers gathered at the Nakhichevan-Iran border to desecrate the remaining grave markers at the Djulfa Armenian cemetery. The cemetery has since been replaced with an Azerbaijani military training base.

Despite clear evidence and condemnation by international bodies such as the European Parliament and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Azerbaijani authorities continue to deny this crime, while still promoting the destruction of all Armenian religious and cultural sites in the country.

Shahen Mirakian, President of the ANCC stated “The Armenian monuments represent unique architectural value and the international community should be aware of the policy of their destruction that can only be defined as cultural genocide”

Mirakian called on the Canadian government to exert the necessary



pressure on the Azerbaijani government to end this campaign. “The annihilation of the civilization of a people is incompatible with any country aspiring to become an honest broker for peace, justice and equality around the world. Azerbaijan cannot be regarded as such, until it faces its own history, and respects the rights and freedoms of other nations” said Mirakian.

The ANCC is the largest and the most influential Canadian-Armenian grassroots human rights organization. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout Canada and affiliated organizations around the world, the ANCC actively advances the concerns of the Canadian-Armenian community on a broad range of issues and works to eliminate abuses of human rights throughout Canada and the world.

Parliamentary Friendship Group for Armenia announced in Australian Federal Parliament



The Parliamentary Friendship Group for Armenia was announced in the Federal Parliament of Australia by the group’s elected Chair, Trent Zimmerman MP.

The Member for North Sydney has been working closely with fellow MPs and the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU) to re-form the group after the most recent Federal Elections.

Zimmerman told the House of Representatives: “Our relationship

with modern Armenia – which celebrated 25 years of independence just this year – is an important one. I am pleased this has been recognized through the establishment of a Parliamentary Friendship Group for Armenia and I am honored to have been appointed as its Chair.”

He added: “I want to thank the many members who have helped establish the group, including the Member for Hunter (Joel Fitzgibbon MP) and the Member for Bennelong (John Alexander MP) – both of whom have been such strong supporters of the Australian-Armenian community. I also want to particularly acknowledge the advocacy of the Armenian National Committee which has done so much to encourage the formation of the Group.”

ANC-AU Managing Director, Vache Kahramanian welcomed the formation of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Armenia.

“The Armenian National Committee of Australia always looks for ways to improve ties between Australia and Armenia, and the formation of this group – which has a sister group in Armenia’s National Assembly – is critical to achieving this goal,” said Kahramanian.

The Armenians and the Warlpiri: Two genocides that sparked a pilgrimage to the outback

By Paul Daley
The Guardian

History is often best understood outside of the books that record it, when it is experienced in the lands that staged it, by its actors' descendants.

And history, for all its serpentine connections and resonances, is what inspired two priests – Bishop Haigazoun Najarian and Deacon Nishan Basmajian from the Armenian Apostolic Church of the holy resurrection in Chatswood, Sydney – to recently undertake a 4000km pilgrimage deep into Warlpiri country in the Northern Territory.

At the remote community of Lajamanu – over a thousand kilometres from Darwin – Najarian presented the local community Baptist church with two ornately engraved Armenian “khachkars” or cross stones. The cross stones were blessed before a congregation of local elders, children, dogs and a delegation of non-Indigenous visitors – the culmination of three years' planning by Australian Catholic University academic Judith Crispin.

During the service Najarian evoked the difficulties that the Warlpiri and Armenians faced, historically and currently. Both, he said, had been subject to massacres – the Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Turks and the Warlpiri by white settlers, miners and police – and they'd had to fight for the survival of their respective cultures.

Crispin explained how it took her three years to convince the Armenians – who had never been to remote Australia – to visit Warlpiri country.

“They've not been anywhere remote in Australia before so it was a big thing for them. I'm working on a project related to the Armenian genocide, which is how I know the priests, and I've been visiting Lajamanu twice a year for four years now ... so it was really just a case of bringing together the two groups,” she said.

“It occurred to me that rather than just feeling sickened by my (Australian) government's ongoing refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide, or to dignify Aboriginal people with a complete account of past massacres, I might possibly facilitate a mutually supportive relationship between Armenians



and Warlpiri.”

After the service at Lajamanu, a mutual statement was hand-written and signed by the Armenian clerics and by the local pastor and Warlpiri elder, Jerry Jangala Patrick.

It reads: “Together we acknowledge the past massacres of Yapa people and other Australian Indigenous people and the genocide of Armenian people in 1915. We stand together today as brothers in solidarity.”

The Australian government, like many other liberal democracies, refuses to formally acknowledge the mass killings of Armenian people that began in 1915, as “genocide”. Turkey expends enormous diplomatic and political effort to ensure that countries such as Australia do not formally acknowledge the slaughter of the Armenians as genocide.

The beginning of the attempted annihilation of the Armenians coincided almost precisely with Australia's participation in the British invasion and failed occupation of Gallipoli in April 1915. There are witness accounts by Australian prisoners of war of the Turkish mistreatment and killing of the Armenians – though this has never been part of Australia's carefully cultivated Anzac story, a myth that relies heavily on continued warm relations between Ankara and Canberra.

Indeed, the Turks have lobbied successive federal governments intensively to ensure that mention of the Armenian genocide did not cruel centenary commemorative celebrations around the 100th anniversary of the Anzac Gallipoli invasion. At one point the Turk-

ish government threatened to ban Australian politicians who had formally acknowledged Armenian genocide from Anzac commemorations at Gallipoli in 2015.

In Australia, at least, the Anzac story has eclipsed the history of what happened to the minority Armenian Christians, about a million-and-a-half of whom died in Ottoman purges.

The Australian War Memorial, despite having ample material in its collections about the Turkish orchestrated mass murder of the Armenians, does not tell the story.

Anzac, more than any other, has, of course, become Australia's foundation story – at the expense of so much pre- and post-colonial history. The story of the failed invasion and occupation on a distant finger of the Ottomans supersedes, in public and political consciousness, that other invasion – that by the British Empire of this continent on 26 January, 1778, that preceded frontier wars and battles across the continent that culminated in massacres of Indigenous people well into the 20th century.

While the continuing violence and oppression of Australian Indigenous people, and their social disadvantage, can be linked directly to the trauma of the frontier and the ensuing assimilation-ist policies, the last accepted “massacre” of up to 100 Indigenous people happened at Coniston in 1928.

Coincidentally the man who led the Coniston massacre, mounted constable George Murray, was a former Anzac light horseman

who served at Gallipoli. His tactics of pursuit and “dispersal” of the Indigenes – including many Warlpiri – were an acquired part of his training as an Australian Light Horseman. Murray was, naturally, exonerated after the white establishment rallied around him

(another shameful story, for another time, involving some of Australia’s most revered public families).

Anyway, such are the roots that link seemingly disparate strands of history.

Of his visit to Lajamanu, Najarian says: “I

did not know what to expect – the only common thing I could share with the people was suffering, loss of land, a culture, tradition and identity ... The catch was our suffering because of the genocide ... and the suffering of the Aboriginal people.”

Three Armenian films submitted for Golden Globe consideration

Three films from Armenia have been submitted for consideration for Best Foreign Film in the 74th annual Golden Globe Awards: *The Last Inhabitant*, *Hot Country*, *Cold Winter*, and *Earthquake*, Asbarez reports.

“As a filmmaker raised in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) I have listened to stories of hardships endured by my family and villagers, and of their struggles into dealing with such a devastating inter-ethnic conflict.” So says Jivan Avetisyan, a prolific 35 year-old Armenian director with a solid documentary background, who was born in mountainous landlocked region in the Southwestern tip of Armenia bordering with Azerbaijan and totaling a mere 4400 square km. He even had to do his mandatory military service there, in the province’s Defense Army from 1999 to 2001.

It is not surprising that he decided to make it the setting of *The Last Inhabitant*, his eighth feature film. An adaptation of Tsovinar Khatchatryan eponymous novel, a writer who happens to also be an official at the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs where she serves as the Chief Specialist for the head office. To better help understand the intricate complex-

ities of what the filmmaker is alluding too, he offers a brief historical background of the situation he knows firsthand. “From 1987 to 1990, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the most critical inter- ethnic conflict, and one of the most violent, took place, the Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. A mass deportation of Armenians from Azerbaijan, URSS, was conducted, including some from the village of Gyurjevan.”

It is 1988 and Abgar is the only Armenian of Christian faith left in the aforementioned village, now devastated and in near ruins, after everyone else has been deported. Because of his skills as a stonemason, he is assigned to help build a mosque by the Azeri occupants. He also has to take care of his daughter Yurga, traumatized after witnessing her husband’s murder. As the situation deteriorates around them with increasing enemy danger and lack of food, they find solace in their memories of an idealized past, when peace and happiness still prevailed. The last resort for those who have not much to hope for. With its often elegiac and poetic approach the film is able to achieve a touching portrait of survival and at the same time humanizing the protagonists and their fate, how tragic it may be...

The 35 year old director hopes that *The Last Inhabitant* will be seen as “a strong message that we need each other regardless of race, culture and religion in order to survive and preserve our racial identity. This film is about people who have appeared in a hell after they have lost their paradise, people who are saved by love, virtue and self-sacrifice.”

As clashes are happening to this day in that region, this is a message surely to resonate deeply for the Armenian community but also for all the victims of ethnic cleansing over the world.

Hot Country, *Cold Winter* is a film directed by David Sarafian about the Armenian experience after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. One can dispute Russian President Vladimir Putin’s remark calling the breakup “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe;” but what is indisputable is that on a personal level a lot of people who lived in the former Soviet republics suffered a lot of depravity when they suddenly became independent countries in August of 1991 and their lives radically changed.

And some of the most suffering people there were the members of intelligentsia, who found themselves without means of existence and no sense of purpose. In the film, Armenian director David Sarafian mixes realism and poetry to explore another dark period in the history of his long-suffering people. But don’t expect to get all the answers to the many questions asked by this film.

Earthquake is a film is based on the real events surrounding the disastrous earthquake which struck Armenia in 1988. The terrible earthquake claimed at least 25,000 lives and left about half a million people homeless. For director Sarik Andreasyan it was a very special project, in which he wanted, after almost 30 years, to tell the story not only of death and destruction but also to show the hope and community spirit in the face of the nightmare.



Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

There seems to be minor agitation occurring at work or among your friends. Do not fall into the “catastrophic” attitude with others. The issue is minor in the scheme of

things. This is a good time to work on a solitary project that requires concentration and the use of the large muscles in your body.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

For the next three weeks your activities are on display. Others are noticing your performance, so make it great. You may be standing in the limelight. Your leadership gifts come to the foreground at this time. Change is happening all around you

and it may be a challenge to keep up with it all. Do the best you can. No one can expect more.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

You have likely been dealing with a decision concerning joint property or family issues. You have spent a few weeks in this process. Although you want to come to a final solution, that may elude you right now. Be

patient and know that the right answer will come soon. Set it aside to percolate before you take action.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You are in a reasonably good place with yourself at this time. Your heart and mind are flowing together. You have no conflict between your feelings and your thoughts about those feelings. This is a time for reflection

on important subjects. You can make good decisions now, but be aware of the upcoming Mercury retrograde and don't commit the farm.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

You are concentrating on adding something fresh and new to an old activity or structure in your life. It is possible that the “structure” has to do with relationships. This week it is probable that you will have an “ah ha!” moment that helps you pull everything together with a fresh slant.

everything together with a fresh slant.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

This is a time of cooperation between you and your lover or children. If a spouse is in the picture, things may be strained but there is probably no overt disagreement. Let your intuition flow and guide you.

Give attention to your dreams. Ask your higher self for answers at night and they will be there in the morning when you waken.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Venus, your ruling planet, moves into the sector of life related to children, recreation, and romance. This time the name of the game is “intensity” between you and anyone in

these sectors. Relationships are challenging right now. Sidestep any temptations to manipulate others and avoid falling into traps of those who want to “play” you.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Drive and handle tools carefully. Your reflexes are a little off target right now. Changes may be occurring in your primary relationship. One or the other of you is probably

trying to hang onto what is familiar. Changes and growth must be allowed to happen or the relationship will become stale. Let things flow naturally. No force allowed here.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

You are in a long term process of building something important into your life. This week a friend or an acquaintance might offer a sugges-

tion that could be valuable to your process. It may not be perfect, but could lead you to find a solution if you give it attention.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

An individual who outranks you provides help in the background. Concentrate on maintaining the straight and narrow in encounters of love or romance. Lying and especially cheating, will bring you far more harm than good. For a

breather from the fray, immerse yourself in movies, plays, or good books that bring you pleasure.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

It is necessary that you give attention to an issue of control that threatens to split one or more of your relationships. Either of you may be

the one who is seeking power and it may be quite subtle. You may be attempting to get what you want through manipulation. Don't pursue this and don't let someone do it to you. Take the high road.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

This is a fine time to enjoy books and/or TV, meditate and journal. Give yourself time for self-exploration and even just “diddling around” and relaxing. Your dreams are meaningful and your intuition

strong. Focus on art, music, dance, and color—whatever gives you pleasure

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1988 Armenian tragedy plays out in 'Earthquake'

"Earthquake" proves an earnest, deeply felt drama set against the 1988 calamity that devastated a large swath of northern Armenia (then part of the Soviet Union) and caused more than 25,000 deaths, Gary Goldstein writes in the Los Angeles Times.

According to the author, what the film lacks in high-octane disaster-movie thrills it makes up for with its focus on personal relationships, acts of heroism and a capable visual sense.

The script by Hrant Barsegyan, Arsen Danielyan, Aleksey Gravitskiy and Sergey Yudakov reflects

true stories of rescue and survival culled from documentation and the accounts of eyewitnesses. The result is a crisscross of credible characters whose life-and-death journeys help frame the film's gripping, often grim narrative.

These vivid folks include a vengeful young man reunited with the driver who caused the car crash that, years ago, killed his parents; an older couple at odds over their unmarried pregnant daughter, a gravely injured mother searching for her missing child, an unruly band of looters, a selfless Russian truck driver and other desperate souls.

"Director Sarik Andreasyan confidently juggles the demands of his large cast, the precarious action scenes and a clear commitment to veracity. The earthquake and its ruin, although set in the Armenian city of Leninakan (now called Gyumri), were effectively re-created on an abandoned Moscow factory site. (Pre-earthquake scenes were shot in Gyumri)," the article reads.

"Sporadic dips into melodrama, some on-the-nose dialogue and acting, and an occasionally intrusive score hinder but don't negate this ambitious film's power and conviction," the author concludes.



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