



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, August 18, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. RA MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION CONTINUES ORGANIZATION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION FROM GEORGIA TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

The RA ministry of transport and communication jointly with several passenger transportation companies has organized transportation of more than 1,600 people in taxis, minibuses and buses in recent days. NT was informed by spokeswoman for the RA minister of transport and communication Susanna Tonoyan that people were transported free of charge from the Bavra crossing point to Yerevan and Gyumri.

On August 9, 208 people were transported from Kobuleti to Armenia in 13 taxis, and 160 people were brought from Bavra to Yerevan in 7 PAZ buses.

On August 10, 224 people were moved from Kobuleti in 14 minibuses, 115 ones were brought from Bavra to Yerevan in 5 buses.

On August 11, 224 people were moved from Ureki to Armenia in 14 minibuses, 240 were transported from Bavra in 2 buses and 6 minibuses.

On August 12, 192 passengers were transported in 12 minibuses, 46 ones were moved from Bavra to Yerevan in 2 buses, 46 were moved from Bavra to Gyumri, and 16 passengers were transported in a minibus.

On August 13, 192 people were transported from Kobuleti in 12 minibuses.

On August 14 the ministry was in constant touch with the Armenian embassy in Georgia and the Armenian consulate in Batumi. The ministry is ready to provide, in case of necessity, vehicles for transporting people to Armenia.

330 passengers left and 286 arrived by using services of South Caucasian Railways company (Yerevan-Tbilisi route) on August 6-13. 446 people left and 1,000 ones arrived by Yerevan-Batumi railway in the indicated period.

2. TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS FROM GEORGIA TO ARMENIA PROCEEDS NORMALLY [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

19 wagons of wheat were transported from the Georgian port of Poti to Armenia on August 14. 4 ships loaded with wheat are currently in Poti, and one ship has already been unloaded. A ferry of 76 wagons (various goods) is being unloaded. 27 wagons of wheat are in Tbilisi, 10 wagons will be loaded with gasoline in Poti, NT was informed by spokeswoman for the RA minister of transport and communication Susanna Tonoyan.

According to her, 108 wagons of various goods, including diesel fuel, gasoline, aviation kerosine, saltpeter, tractors, were transported from Georgia to Armenia by South Caucasian Railways company on August 11-14.

28 wagons of goods were exported from Armenia on August 11, 14 wagons on August 12, 23 wagons on August 13, and 16 wagons on August 14 by South Caucasian Railways company.

By data of Apaven cargo transportation company, on August 14, a ship loaded with 106 wagons, including 75 wagons with various goods to be imported into Armenia, entered the Georgian port of Poti.

Besides, two days ago a ship with 380 containers, including 120 ones with goods for Armenia, reached Poti. This ship was unloaded and on 8 am on August 14 the loading of goods, including those to be sent to Armenia, began. Out of 620 containers aboard the ship that arrived in the port of Batumi, more than 200 containers are with goods for Armenia.

It is noteworthy that 57 wagons of various goods were exported from Armenia on August 4-7, whereas the number of wagons with exported goods made 127 on August 8-10.

3. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT: ARMENIA IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN RAPID PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF GEORGIAN-SOUTH OSSETIAN PROBLEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

At the August 14 sitting of the National Security Council, during which the situation that has formed in the region in recent days was discussed, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan expressed his concern about the current situation and welcomed the constructive positions aimed at establishing peace



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and stability in the region. In his words, any attempts to solve the existing problems in a military way are fraught with tragic consequences. He underlined that Russia is a strategic ally of Armenia, while Georgia is a friendly country, therefore, Armenia is greatly interested in rapid peaceful settlement of the problem. He restated Armenia's willingness to be a "humanitarian corridor" and provide humanitarian aid to the sides.

NT was informed by the RA president's press service that at the sitting, the problems facing Armenia in the present situation were discussed, and the issues of regular supply of all the goods imported into Armenia were examined.

In connection with the current situation, the president instructed to establish a regime without entry visas for transit travels of citizens from EU member states.

On the same day S. Sargsyan sent a message of condolence to Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, expressing his condolence on many deaths as a result of the recent events in Georgia. He noted that Armenia is ready to provide the necessary humanitarian aid to those who suffered and to solve urgently the problems to arise.

4. STEPAN GRIGORIAN: CONFLICT IN GEORGIA HAS PASSED INTO FIELD OF RIVALRY BETWEEN WEST AND RUSSIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

Today the parties of the conflict in Georgia are Russia and Georgia. Russia is no longer a mediator in settlement of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as it has become a party in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, Stepan Grigorian, head of the Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation, stated at the August 14 discussion organized by the National Civil Initiative.

In his words, by its actions in the conflict zone, Russia in fact stopped the implementation of programs of EU and NATO in the region, first of all, the US- and NATO-implemented programs on development of Georgia's military sector.

S. Grigorian also said that the conflict in Georgia has passed into the so-called global field of rivalry between the West and Russia. At the same time, in his opinion, the events in Georgia are not yet over and are in progress. Based on that, S. Grigorian considered it expedient to give a political assessment of the Georgian events later.

As regards the position of the Armenian side on this issue, the political scientist said that it is quite difficult to orientate oneself as both state are of great importance. He also expressed satisfaction at the Armenian foreign ministry's statement on the Georgian events, calling this statement balanced.

5. RELATIVES OF THOSE ARRESTED UNDER CASE ON MARCH 1 EVENTS INTEND TO STRUGGLE UNTIL RELEASE OF LAST POLITICAL PRISONER [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

More than 20 activists of People's Movement (PM), wives and relatives of those arrested under the case on March 1 events staged their regular - 28th protest outside the prosecutor general's office on May 15. They were holding placards "We Demand Justice" and "We Demand Punishment for the Real Organizers of the March 1 Events". This time too, they demanded that the political persecutions be ended and all the political prisoners be released.

To recap, such protest actions have been held every Friday since April 7. After each action, the protesters hand a written demand to the prosecutor general's office but no answer has been received so far. "We, women of the Republic of Armenia, believe that all this represents political persecution of the opposition by the authorities, and we raise our voice against these illegalities," the letter-complaint reads.

Protester Anzhela Alaverdian told NT correspondent that they will stage protests until the last political prisoner is released. "There are political prisoners, hostages in Armenian prisons. A few people have been released. It is like taking two drops of water from an ocean," she said. In her words, "the azatamartiks were arrested for several empty cartridges, whereas the real criminals and killers are at large and even beat journalists."

6. "HIMA" ANNOUNCES ITS DECISION TO JOIN ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

"Based on the necessity of making crucial reforms in Armenia and increasing the role of the youth in this issue, and being guided by the determination of People Movement's leaders to give a pivotal role to young forces, we state that we support the Armenian National Congress, considering it an evolutionary and victorious key point of People' Movement and we join this structure to bring this final stage of the



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struggle to a successful finish and create a dignified and free Armenia," is said in the August 15 statement of "Hima" youth initiative.

The authors of the statement see the only way to get the state out of the inadmissible situation, which has formed as a result of systematic violations of laws and the Constitution, in the consistent struggle of People's Movement.

7. IN OPINION OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER, VICIOUS ECONOMIC SYSTEM CREATED IN ARMENIA WAS BASIS OF MARCH 1 OPERATION WITH USE OF FORCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

The March 1 operation with the use of force was carried out by 100%. The vicious economic system created by Robert Kocharian and Serzh Sargsyan forms the basis of such diligence displayed by the power structures, Hrant Bagratian, former prime minister of Armenia, chairman of "Freedom" party, stated at the August 15 sitting of the public committee on inquiry into the March 1 events in Yerevan. In his words, the March 1 events showed that Armenia has the highest index among CIS countries by controllability of state structures, including power ones.

H. Bagratian said that the state's total control over the majority of representatives of the authorities, including members of the government and parliament, served as a basis for the cruelty that the power structures showed to the people. In his words, it is property that makes them vulnerable and easy to control, that is, they fear to lose their property rather than some post or another. "The involvement in this model makes people vulnerable, easy to control and linked with this vicious system which they cannot leave," H. Bagratian said.

According to him, in this way the March 1 events have all every reason to happen again. At the same time, he underlined that there are some ways out of the current situation, and "Freedom" party that makes part of the Armenian National Congress is now working on such mechanisms, one of which, in the words of H. Bagratian, is the opposition's ability to control the masses.

8. ARF READY TO MAKE EFFORTS SO THAT NEIGHBORING PEOPLES OF SOUTH CAUCASUS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN PEACE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

The ARF Bureau on August 15 issued a statement, presenting its position in connection with the last week's developments in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict.

The statement reads:

"The last week's developments in the South Caucasus, the actual war with its tragic consequences, the international tension and the possible developments reveal new realities which are directly related to the prospects of our region and cannot but worry Armenia and the Armenians. What happened in our immediate neighborhood is creating new challenges both in political and economic sense. The first reaction is, of course, a pain for thousands of deaths and ruined fates of all the sides.

Today's supertask is to rule out such a situation in future. The 1990s' stage of solving interethnic issues by force is over, and the recent events showed once again the tragic nature and lack of prospects of such a mode of action.

On the one side we should realize that Georgia is our immediate neighbor and its stability and natural development are of great importance to us, while Russia is Armenia's strategic partner and plays a role in Caucasus, on the other hand it is obvious that the region will not benefit from the straining of EU-Russia-U.S. relations.

Despite assurances of Armenian officials that there are no problems in the issue of commodity transportation, we are concerned and we expect friendly Georgia not to create any obstacles in this difficult situation.

For us, the situation is extremely important from the viewpoint of three aspects. The first one is the problem of strengthening the Artsakh people's right to be in control of its destiny of its own free will. The recent events clearly showed that Azerbaijan's ambitions to solve the problem by brute force are unpromising and may cause more unpredictable shocks in the region. Artsakh cannot be part of Azerbaijan. We must protect our national and state interests in a most definite and comprehensive way at negotiations on the conflict settlement and we must demand that the sides should first of all sign a legal document excluding the use of force.

The second aspect is the problem of autonomy and protection of the rights of Georgia's Armenians, especially Javakh, as an ethnic minority. Here we cannot be indifferent and we want to believe that Georgia will adhere to the principles of international law in this issue.



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The next aspect is perception of the necessity of the maximum unity in the issues of the country's security and the fundamental internal state and national problems. This is a matter of responsibility before the people and history.

We hope that after fierce confrontation both the conflict sides and the international community will find ways to calm the region and settle the existing problems in a civilized manner. Armenia can and must join these efforts.

The ARF Dashnaktsutyun is confident and ready to make efforts so that foundations of cooperation and development will finally be created in the South Caucasus and the neighboring people will have an opportunity to live in peace."

9. NEWLY-APPOINTED MEMBER OF CEC EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT ELECTORAL VIOLATIONS IN ARABKIR COMMUNITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

A number of citizens who visited recently the office of "Heritage" party expressed their concern about the mass distribution of electoral bribes - by means of collection of citizens' passport data - by Albert Yeritsian, a possible candidate for the post of head of Yerevan's Arabkir community. The newly-appointed member of the RA Central Electoral Commission (CEC) from "Heritage" party Hovsep Khurshudian informed the head of the RA police Alik Sargsian and the head of the RA National Security Service Gorik Hakobian about it in his open letter of August 15. Copies of the letter were sent to the prime minister Tigran Sargsian and the head of the RA president's control service Hovhannes Hovsepian.

According to H. Khurshudian, various citizens who came to the office of "Heritage" told them that the heads of several hospitals and polyclinics that are located in Arabkir community and are under the jurisdiction of Yerevan mayor's office have instructed the residents of Arabkir district who work at these medical institutions to secure certain number of voters in favor of A. Yeritsian and prepare respective lists with passport data. The employees of these institutions were threatened to be dismissed if they do not carry out these instructions.

Taking into account the fact that the above mentioned actions represent gross violations of the Electoral Code, H. Khurshudian requested to use the necessary punitive measures in order to prevent cases of administrative pressure on voters, distribution of electoral bribes, other electoral violations at the pre-election stage and in the preceding period, and to reveal and punish those guilty.

BUSINESS

10. HENCEFORTH QUALIFICATION OF AUDIT COMPANIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY PRIVATE SECTOR AS WELL [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

The organization of courses on qualification of audit services is being liberalized and transferred to the private sector. The RA minister of finance Tigran Davtian said at the August 14 briefing that until now the qualification of audit activity has been done only by the ministry, whereas henceforth it will be also implemented by specialized NGOs that will undergo the necessary procedures in order to fulfil this function.

According to T. Davtian, henceforth the certificates granted by international audit organizations will also be acknowledged by the state.

It was mentioned that there are about 30 audit companies in Armenia.

DIASPORA

11. HYORDIK'S EVENT'S PORTION OF PROCEEDS DONATED TO SPONSOR-A-CHILD PROGRAM [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

On July 26 the New York Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Hyortik chapter brought to together youth from all corners of the Armenian community for its annual summer bar party. The Hyortiks donated a portion of the event proceeds to the ARS Sponsor-A-Child Program. Established in 1992, the program provides financial support to children whose parents were killed in the devastating 1988 earthquake in Gyumri, Armenia and in the Artsakh struggle for self-determination. Over 7,000 children have been assisted by sponsors who annually contribute \$130 per child, per year.



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12. KNIGHTS OF VARTAN VISIT WESTERN DIOCESE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

On August 7, 2008, His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the U.S. Western Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church received the Knights of Vartan. The meeting was marked by the enthusiastic and warm atmosphere of discussions wherein possible venues of cooperation between the Knights and the Diocese were considered and discussed.

Western Diocese also informs that Mr. and Mrs. Joseph and Alyce Dorians donated \$40,000 to cover certain expenses.

13. U.S. WESTERN DIOCESE BUILDS A COURT THANKS TO THE DONATIONS OF THE FAITHFUL [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

The U.S. Western Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church was able to create a wonderful facility for our faithful especially the children. This initiative came true thanks to the generous donation of Mrs. Jean Barsam in the amount of \$60,000, made in the memory of her late husband Mr. Vardkes Barasam, Mr. David Shahpazian from Fowler also made a generous donation in the amount of \$4,400 towards the installation of Basketball Goals in the court. The Office of the Western Diocese expresses its sincere appreciation to these exemplary and generous faithful for their God-pleasing efforts.

14. WESTERN DIOCESE CELEBRATES THE RISE OF THE MOTHER CATHEDRAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

On September 14, 2008 at the Nazareth and Sima Kalaydjian Hall of the Arshag and Eleanor Dickranian Diocesan Complex in Burbank a Banquet will be held. During the evening, organized by the U.S. Western Diocese, the members of the Armenian Community will have a chance to share in the joy of the May 3rd commencement of the construction of the Mother Cathedral.

15. ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY CELEBRATES 8 YEARS OF ITS ACTIVITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

In August Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry celebrated 8 years of success and during Match For Life gala shared with 300 presents the process of the future developments of creating a Stem Cells Harvesting Center in Armenia.

At the gala event, presided by Master of Ceremony Mark Geragos, Chair of the ABMDR board of directors, several key supporters were recognized for their contributions: Naz Atikian, as Woman of the Year, George Najarian, Man of the Year, Karineh Khudikian and Armond Aghakhanian, Volunteers of the Year, and Horizon TV, business of the year.

Over \$40,000 was raised at the event, the proceeds to go toward ongoing DNA tissue typing in order to find Matches for Life for needy patients as quickly as possible.

Following a Champaign reception which included a chance to win a half-karat diamond donated by Design by Naz, the program and honoree awards commenced over dinner.

The night's program included a video showing a young Armenian girl, Meline, celebrating her 18th birthday thanks to a stem cell transplant facilitated by the ABMDR and relaying the exciting news that the organization's new Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Armenia is nearing completion. When officially open this coming fall, it will provide a safe and cost effective means of harvesting stem cells to be used in bone marrow stem cell transplantations. The Center will bring state-of-the-art medical and research technology to Armenia, transforming Yerevan into a regional center for stem cell harvesting and blood component separation, bringing not only revenues from other countries in the region, but positioning the Center as a vital and active player among international transplantation centers worldwide.

In order to treat Armenians suffering from incurable blood-related diseases (leukemia, lymphoma, aplastic anemia), bone marrow transplants require compatible tissue types that match the genetic makeup of the patient, which is most likely to come from other Armenian donors. Currently the ABMDR has identified 1,276 patients in need, and from its registry of 14,000 donors has found over 900 potential matches and facilitated 8 transplantations around the globe.



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16. ARTUR AYVAZIAN BECOMES OLYMPIC CHAMPION [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

Ukraine's Artur Ayvazian of Armenian descent won the men's 50m rifle prone final of Shooting at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

According to Radio Liberty, 35-year-old Artur Ayvazian was born in Yerevan. He has been engaged in sports for 23 years. He currently serves in the army. Until today his greatest sport achievement was the bronze medal won at the 2005 European championship. A. Ayvazian took part in the previous two Olympic Games.

SOCIAL

17. TURKISH FOOTBALL FANS MAY ARRIVE IN ARMENIA WITHOUT ENTRY VISAS ON SEPTEMBER 1-6 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

At the August 14 sitting, the Armenian government approved the draft decision on allowing visits without an entry visa for Turkish citizens on September 1-6. During the draft's presentation, the head of the RA police Alik Sargsian said that the decision was made in connection with an Armenia-Turkey football match scheduled for September 6.

In response to Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian's question about whether it is not too early to start that process on September 1st, the police head replied that 20,000-25,000 citizens of Turkey are expected to arrive in Armenia during the indicated period, and some of them are likely to spend 1-2 days in our country.

SPORTS

18. ARMENIA WINS 5th BRONZE MEDAL AT BEIJING 2008 GAMES [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/16/08]

Armenia's Olympic team won 5th bronze medal at Beijing 2008 Olympic Games on August 15 - thanks to weightlifter Tigran Martirosian. Yesterday Greco-Roman wrestler Yuri Patrikeyev won 4th bronze medal for our team. Prior to that Armenia had won three medals in Beijing: weightlifters Tigran Martirosian and Gevorg Davtian and wrestler Roman Amoyan were the medalists.

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.