



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. PARUYR HAYRIKIAN ASSESSES POSITIVELY INITIATIVE TO HOLD WIDE POLITICAL DISCUSSION ON KARABAKH PROBLEM [Aravot, 11/21/08]

The Armenian president's initiative to hold a wide political discussion on the Karabakh problem is positive in itself, the chairman of the National "Self-Determination" Union Paruyr Hayrikian said at the conclusion of a discussion on November 20. In his words, the two previous presidents of the country considered themselves very wise and did not deem it necessary to meet with various political figures. P. Hayrikian said that the position of the current president is quite simple and represents the logical continuation of his policy.

2. VAZGEN MANUKIAN DOES NOT SHARE CONCERN ABOUT DANGER OF NOT PRO-ARMENIAN SOLUTION OF KARABAKH PROBLEM [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 11/21/08]

Discussions on solution of the Karabakh problem with Armenian political forces may give only positive results, the leader of the National Democratic Union, former prime minister of Armenia Vazgen Manukian expressed an opinion during the November 20 talk with reporters.

V. Manukian did share the recent concern of the press regarding the danger of solving the Karabakh problem not in favor of the Armenians. In his words, the country is now governed by the people who passed the turmoil of the Karabakh war and they will not permit that the solution will contradict the interests of the Armenian side.

In his opinion, no rapid solution to the Karabakh problem should be expected. V. Manukian said that the precedents of Kosovo, as well as South Ossetia and Abkhazia may play a positive role in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. He also attached importance to the fact that after the Russian-Georgian war it has become clear that the regional conflicts cannot be resolved in a military way. At the same time V. Manukian pointed out to some uncertainties in the Madrid principles of the Karabakh conflict settlement, in particular, those related to the status of Nagorno Karabakh, the mechanisms of ensuring the population's security, and a land border with Armenia.

3. HEADS OF 50 ARMENIAN PARTIES PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION ON SETTLEMENT OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 11/21/08]

On the initiative of Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan, a consultation on the current stage of negotiations on settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh problem was held with the participation of heads of the country's political forces at K. Demirchian Sport and Concert Complex in Yerevan on November 20. S. Sargsyan said such consultations on issues of importance to the country will be held regularly.

Consultations may also be held in an Armenian region, to which the problem under discussion is related. All the political forces, including extraparliamentary parties, will be invited to take part in discussions. According to the president, the discussions will be closed, and after their conclusion the participants may provide information to the mass media, but without references.

In his opinion, the institution of political consultations will contribute to an exchange of opinions about problems of strategic importance to Armenia and the formation of a common approach, as well as to the establishment of a political field in the country. The president had announced his initiative to invite such consultations in his address at the National Assembly.

According to spokesman for the RA president Samvel Farmanian, only the heads of the parties were invited to the discussion. 50 out of 65 heads of parties, who had been invited, attended the meeting. In particular, out of the parties of the political coalition, "Prosperous Armenia" did not participate because its chairman Gagik Tsarukian is not in the country. The parliamentary opposition - "Heritage" was represented by the chairwoman of the party's board Anahit Bakhshian.

Out of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) member parties representing the radical opposition, only the chairman of the Marxist Party David Hakobian was present. In his words, the leader of ANC Levon Ter-Petrosian did not boycott the discussion, he just allowed the ANC member political forces to "freely maneuver".



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

Despite the president's admonition to limit each speech to 3 minutes, the discussion on Karabakh problem lasted 5 hours.

4. ACCORDING TO ANC, AUTHORITIES NOT INTERESTED IN HOLDING INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO MARCH 1 EVENTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The Armenian National Congress (ANC) and "Heritage" party on November 20 issued a joint statement on the work of the fact-finding group of experts. The statement reads:

"On November 14 the Fact-finding group started its work. At the very first sitting, the group made decisions based on consensus. By one decision, Vahe Stepanian was elected the head of the Fact-finding group, while by another decision, the group was to work in the Office of the RA Ambudsman who expressed a willingness to ensure the necessary office conditions for organizing efficiently the group's work. Both decisions were praiseworthy as they aimed to ensure the neutrality of the activity of the fact-finding group and its independence from political influence.

Despite the above mentioned facts, the presidential staff interfered in the work of the fact-finding group, obliging that the building of the National Assembly must be the place of work, without having an authority (envisaged by a legal act) to do so.

Taking into account the fact that the presidential staff has illegally interfered in the work of the Fact-finding group, as well as the fact the group has been forced to work at an institution where the principles of not establishing the identity of a witness and keeping the witnesses and experts from any influence are not ensured, it becomes obvious that as a result of this, the security of Fact-finding group's work from possible pressure, therefore its efficiency in terms of revealing the facts of the March 1 crime will considerably decline.

These actions of the authorities show once that they are not interested in the fact-finding group's holding an objective and independent inquiry into the March 1 events. The Armenian National Congress and "Heritage" party demand that the authorities give up their attempts to put pressure on the fact-finding group and keep its activity under control. We state once again that if this pressure and attempts to hinder the group's work continue, we will have to recall our representatives".

5. WIDE DISCUSSION ON KARABAKH PROBLEM HELD ON INITIATIVE OF ARMENIAN PRESIDENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

On the initiative of the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan, a discussion on the subject "The Process of Peaceful Solution of the Nagorno Karabakh Problem" was organized on November 20. The heads of the parties registered in Armenia were invited to the discussion, NT was informed by the RA presidential press service.

Noting that such meetings will have regular character, S. Sargsyan said: "I had stated in my address to the National Assembly and the people that I would put forward an initiative to invite regular thematic consultations on strategic issues of vital importance to the country, and I would invite the heads of all the parties. It is the first consultation in this format".

He expressed a hope that such a mechanism of discussions will raise the role of parties in the decision making process and develop the political field. In his words, each of the meetings will be dedicated to one concrete subject. He did not rule out that in the future discussions will take place outside the capital city, in a place related to the subject of discussion.

The president said that the discussions will be closed which will allow all the participants to engage freely in discussions and express any approach.

6. ACCORDING TO "NATIONAL UNITY", RELEASE OF PERSONS IMPRISONED UNDER CASES OF MARCH 1 EVENTS TO IMPROVE SITUATION IN COUNTRY [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

During the November 20 sitting of the National Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry into the March 1-2 Events in Yerevan and their Causes, the deputy chairman of "National Unity" (NU) party Sargis Muradkhanian made a statement, in which NU proposes that the Ad Hoc Committee submit a petition to the president Serzh Sargsyan - a petition on the "release of the persons imprisoned under the cases on the March 1-2 events through the high presidential intervention". According to the authors of the statement, this position of their party aims to strengthen Armenian statehood, establish solidarity and develop democracy in the country.

"NU" believes that such a humane step of the Armenian president will reduce the tension in the internal political life, improve the situation in the country and become a serious impulse for all political



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

forces to unite around the Armenian president and act jointly in order to consolidate the nation and confront the challenges threatening Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, and it will also contribute to formation of a political atmosphere excluding a repetition of the March 1-2 events in the future".

The Committee made a decision not to discuss the statement of "National Unity". In the words of the Committee's chairman, secretary of "RPA" faction Samvel Nikoyan, the Committee is ready to discuss any proposal made by its member, but not by a political force because in its activities the Committee must be independent and not constrained by a political force whose representative is a member of the Committee.

7. FACT-FINDING GROUP OF EXPERTS APPLIES TO MASS MEDIA AND CITIZENS WITH REQUEST TO PROVIDE MATERIALS ON MARCH 1-2 EVENTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The fact-finding group of experts, which was set up by the October 23 order of the Armenian president, applies to all television and radio companies, other mass media outlets, and citizens with the request to provide as soon as possible any materials that may have a connection to the March 1-2 events in Yerevan, including audio and video recordings, other materials. The group is based at the following address: 134a room, 19 Marshal Baghramian Avenue, Yerevan 0095. Phone: 521385, fax: 588469.

8. LEADERS OF SEVERAL POLITICAL FORCES OF ARMENIA TRUST PRESIDENT'S POLICY ON KARABAKH PROBLEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

After the November 20 discussion on the Karabakh problem held with political forces on the initiative of the Armenian president, the worries about the possibility of a not pro-Armenian solution of the problem were mainly dispelled, the chairman of the Democratic Party of Armenia Aram Sargsyan said during a talk with reporters.

According to A. Sargsyan, his worries were related to the issues of the return of territories, the referendum to be held on status of Nagorno Karabakh, and the deployment of peacekeeping forces at the contact line of the conflict. However, it became clear from the discussion that for the time being, those principles of settlement, around which further negotiations will be conducted, are being specified. A. Sargsyan expressed confidence that the Armenian leadership does not try to reach a rapid solution to the Karabakh problem and is not going to make unilateral concessions.

The chairman of the United Labor Party (ULP) Gurgen Arsenian told reporters that he did not put forward any proposal during the discussion. In his words, by giving its votes to Serzh Sargsyan at the two stages of the presidential election, ULP had twice expressed its trust in him. "We trust S. Sargsyan now too and we are sure that the policy he conducts will reduce the challenges threatening Armenia and result in a solution of the problem which we all anticipate," the ULP leader stated.

9. ARF ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO 4 PRINCIPLES IN SETTLEMENT OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The ARF believes that it is necessary to develop a common package, in which the sequence of the steps necessary for settlement of the Karabakh conflict as well as the mechanisms of their implementation will be indicated. As Armen Rustamian, representative of the ARF Armenia Supreme Body, chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee of Foreign Relations, said during a talk with reporters on November 20, the implementation of the package is also possible in a stage-by-stage version.

According to him, ARF attaches importance to the use of 4 main principles in the solution of the Karabakh problem. The issues of status of Nagorno Karabakh and ensuring guarantees of its security should be recognized as primary. The next principle is making mutual demands concerning refugees and the return of territories. A. Rustamian pointed out that the problems of Shahumian and Getashen should be discussed at negotiations.

He also considered it necessary to clarify the role of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia in the negotiation process. In his words, being a conflict party, Karabakh should participate in negotiations, while Armenia should act as a guarantor of Nagorno Karabakh's security.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

10. RA SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARY TO LEAVE FOR IRAN ON NOVEMBER 23 [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

A delegation led by National Security Council Secretary Artur Baghdasarian will leave for the Islamic Republic of Iran on a two-day official visit on November 23. According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, meetings with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Majlis Chairman Ali Larijani, Secretary of the National Security Higher Council Sayid Jalili are planned during the visit.

11. MIATSUM DEMANDS STOPPING ALL BARGAININGS OVER LIBERATED TERRITORIES OF ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The Miatsum (Joining) national initiative uniting all forces concerned with the current state of Nagorno Karabakh settlement and the issue of return of liberated territories organized an action of protest near the building of the RA Foreign Ministry on November 21.

The action participants demanded stopping all bargainings over the liberated territories of Armenia and exerting efforts for quick resettlement of the territories. According to them, infringements on blood and memory of the Armenians perished for the liberated territories are sacrilege and high treason. The main principle of conflict settlement variant proposed by the union is the idea of Artsakh's joining with Armenia.

According to Zhirayr Sefilian, a member of the initiating body, the former Commander of the Shoushi special battalion, the head of the In Defence of Liberated Territories initiative, ceding any liberated territory is dangerous and will result in complete destruction of the military-political security and defence system formed in the country. In his words, the liberated territories are the integral part of the homeland, and any retreat from homeland's borders is a betrayal.

In the opinion of another member of the initiative, RA NA Zharangutiun (Heritage) faction member Zaruhi Postanjian, the Artsakh issue is the problem of all Armenians and not only of the person holding the post of the RA President. According to her, the Armenian people has the right to be informed of the process of negotiations over the conflict settlement.

Miatsum is also going to hold notification events in all Armenian regions and in NKR. Similar events have been already held in Echmiadzin and Armavir though the respective bodies tried to hinder their holding.

12. SENTENCING SMBAT AYVAZIAN TO IMPRISONMENT IS A CONSEQUENCE OF POLITICAL ORDER, NOR ZHAMANAKNER PARTY STATES [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

Sentencing Smbat Ayvazian, a Political Board member of the Hanrapetutiun (Republic) party, the former RA Minister of State Revenues, to two years' imprisonment is a consequence of a political order and he is a political prisoner. According to the statement of the Nor Zhamanakner (New Times) party, imprisoning and isolating from society a figure having an active political position purely on the basis of policemen's evidence is a bright example of a political retribution.

NZ condemns all anti-legal actions continued against political figures and demands immediately releasing S. Ayvazian.

It should be mentioned that under the November 19 judgement of general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities S. Ayvazian was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

13. ACCORDING TO GALUST SAHAKIAN'S ESTIMATION, DISCUSSION WITH PARTICIPATION OF LEADERS OF 50 PARTIES IS A GOOD PRECEDENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The discussion over the Nagorno Karabakh settlement held with the participation of leaders of 50 parties on the initiative of the RA President is a good precedent, which formed the model of public discussions. Galust Sahakian, the head of the RA National Assembly RPA faction, stated at the November 21 press conference adding that such discussions will be permanent henceforth.

He did not agree to the observation of the journalists that no representatives of opposition took part in the discussion and said that the opposition took part in the meeting. "As to the parties involved in the Armenian National Congress I think these forces have not been taking part in anything for a long time. They just sent "messages" to society that the problem will be already solved in December and tried to



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

ensure political progress that way, but their hopes were not justified after yesterday's event," G. Sahakian emphasized.

He said that naturally, there were contradictions in the views of parties taking part in the discussion, but everybody held the same opinion that Karabakh can never be part of Azerbaijan. "I think the Nagorno Karabakh problem should be solved by the package variant and the issue of Karabakh status should be in the focus of it," the RPA faction head stated.

14. IN GALUST SAHAKIAN'S OPINION, IF THERE WERE SNIPERS ON MARCH 1, THEY ACTED ON OPPOSITION'S PART [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

"I think the people, who created the March 1 situation, who wanted to seize the power by the non-constitutional way, had snipers, if there were such." Galust Sahakian, the head of the RA NA RPA faction, stated at the November 21 press conference commenting upon the recording spread by the opposition on November 20, according to which faction Secretary Samvel Nikoyan confirms that the Police used a sniper on March 1.

According to G. Sahakian, it was not beneficial for the authorities to use snipers during the March 1 events: the authorities called for consolidation, and some people tried to settle some issues inside the country. He affirmed that the March 1 events were ruled by foreign forces, which wanted to see Armenia as a semi-state.

Touching upon temporary stopping of opposition rallies, G. Sahakian said that this decision of the opposition is positive for supporting the authorities in the issue of negotiations over the Nagorno Karabakh settlement. According to him, opposition's silence also means that the latter agree to the approach adopted by the authorities over the problem settlement. "The authorities were able to present to the international community that irrespective of anything everybody holds the same opinion over the Nagorno Karabakh problem in Armenia," G. Sahakian said.

15. ACCORDING TO OPPOSITION, SAMVEL NIKOYAN CONFESSED THAT SNIPER WAS ATTACHED TO POLICE ON MARCH 1 [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

During a talk with foreign journalists, the chairman of the parliamentary ad hoc committee on inquiry into the March 1-2 events Samvel Nikoyan said that during the March 1 operations against demonstrators, the police were given fire-arms and a sniper. The coordinator of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) Levon Zurabian announced this at the November 20 press conference.

According to a recording of the interview of S. Nikoyan and his interlocutors (the recording was presented to the reporters), when responding to the question: "What types of weapons were used by police on March 1?", the chairman of the parliamentary ad hoc committee replies: "By our law, our police have the right to use such special antiriot weapons as protective shields, batons, water-cannons, tear gas, then various types of Cheryomukha tear gas, and fire-arms. Fire-arms are an individual gun of a policeman and a Kalashnikov. And a sniper. These weapons were provided to them". Then S. Nikoyan continues: "There are attempts to accuse the police by saying: "You could have hit him in the leg so that he would not die." Just imagine some people standing and fighting with each other (I will show you a filmed shot and you will see): a demonstrator threw something once, and it was a grenade, it exploded, a soldier died, and they were wounded. Then another demonstrator is running to throw something. If they allowed him to throw, it might also be a grenade, but when he fired, it might be a stone in his hand, you couldn't see there whether it was a stone or a grenade. If you allow him to throw, it may be a grenade again".

A. Zurabian reminded that out of the 10 citizens killed during the March 10 events, 5 died from gunshot wounds in their heads. He concluded that those shots were fired by a sniper or snipers. L. Zurabian declined to tell when the above mentioned interview took place, and who and when gave the recording to ANC.

According to him, the authorities are trying to organize the work of the fact-finding group of experts in the building of the National Assembly in order to control the group. If this situation continues, in the words of L. Zurabian, ANC and "Heritage" party will recall their representatives from the group.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

16. POLICEMEN WERE NOT ARMED DURING ON-THE-SPOT CHECK IN LIBERTY SQUARE ON MORNING OF MARCH 1, DEPUTY HEADS OF RA POLICE SAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

At the November 20 sitting of the National Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Inquiry into the March 1-2 Events in Yerevan and their Causes, the deputy heads of the RA police Armen Yeritsian and Hovhannes Hunanian provided explanations about police actions during the March 1-2 events.

They spoke in detail about the on-the-spot check conducted early on the morning of March 1 in Liberty Square, as well as about the police operations under their direction on March 1 in various parts of Yerevan, including in the area adjacent to the French embassy. In their words, the policemen who came to Liberty Square at dawn were taken aback by the "fierce" resistance of the demonstrators. Later it turned out that the demonstrators had been informed in advance about the decision to conduct an on-the-spot check by police, and the policeman who informed them about it has been disclosed and arrested. The deputy heads of the RA police stated that the policemen were not armed even by batons, but they were assisted by an armed patrol service.

It should be mentioned that representatives of the opposition Levon Zurabian and David Shahnazarian who had been invited to the committee's sitting did not attend the sitting. The committee chairman, secretary of the National Assembly "RPA" faction Samvel Nikoyan announced that they will be invited again as the committee considers it important to hear both the law enforcers and demonstrators.

17. APPROACHES OF ARMENIA AND KARABAKH TO ISSUE OF KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT WERE AND REMAIN DIFFERENT, VAHRAM ATANESIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The political discussions on the Karabakh problem, which have been launched in Armenia, have no relation to the discussions held in Karabakh since May, the chairman of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic's National Assembly Standing Committee of Foreign Relations Vahram Atanesian said at the November 21 press conference. Assessing positively the discussions with various political forces that the Armenian president initiated, he at the same time noted that the NKR president started holding such discussions earlier and they have regular character. It was stated that there is only one issue - the issue of international recognition of the NKR - on the agenda of the discussions held in Karabakh. The discussions are continuing and the political forces will come to a common conclusion by late 2008.

V. Atanesian expressed an apprehension that the discussions organized in Armenia may create an impression for the outside world that the country's society lacks a united approach to solution of the Karabakh problem. Whereas, they in the NKR have a clear idea about the way of solving the problem, as well as what kind of agreement should be signed and how it should be implemented. The Karabakh side's formula of solving the problem is the international recognition of the NKR within the borders acceptable to the republic's population and under conditions of supremacy of national security.

According to V. Atanesian, the approaches of Armenia and Karabakh to the conflict's settlement were and remain different. For example, the territorial issue cannot be an agenda issue for Nagorno Karabakh today, and it is one of the differences. In response to the question about whether it is possible that at some moment of negotiations Armenia will start being guided by its own interests, he replied that no decision can be imposed on Karabakh.

V. Atanesian said that the Mayendorf Declaration signed by the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia is not a document that predetermines the Karabakh conflict's settlement. He expressed confidence that if ever such a document is signed, it will without fail bear the signature of the Karabakh side.

V. Atanesian does not consider Karabakh's participation in negotiations in 1994-1997 as effective because the then foreign minister of the NKR had to sit at the negotiation table together with the representative of the Azerbaijani community. Today when the NKR is a successful state, it is unacceptable to participate in negotiations in this format. At the same time he reminded that in those years the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan regularly met, and the real negotiations on the problem were conducted between them.

In the opinion of V. Atanesian, no immediate solution to the Karabakh problem should be expected. He considered the latest visit of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs as one of the visits envisaged by the schedule.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

18. OFFICE OF RA PROSECUTOR GENERAL READY TO ASSIST FACT-FINDING GROUP OF EXPERTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The results of the investigation into the criminal case opened in connection with the March 1-2 events in Yerevan, and issues related to cooperation of the prosecutor's office, the National Assembly ad hoc committee and the newly-created fact-finding group were discussed during the November 21 meeting of the RA Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepian and the CE Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg, NT was informed by the RA prosecutor general's office.

A. Hovsepian said that as of November 21, 7 accused persons are under preliminary arrest, and the investigation into their cases finished in early September 2008 and a period was established for familiarization with the materials of the investigation. Based on a petition of the defence, the established period has been twice extended by the prosecutor who controls legality of the investigation. The accused and their defence lawyers have been given time to familiarize themselves with the material evidence, and the issue of sending the criminal case to court will be decided after the accused and their lawyers familiarize themselves with the case materials and the possible petitions are discussed. According to the prosecutor general, in case of the criminal case going to court, the publicity of the trial will be ensured.

Presenting the results of the investigation at the request of T. Hammarberg, the prosecutor general also spoke about the work to determine the legality and adequacy of police actions during the indicated events. In his words, as early as in March instructions were given to the investigation body to examine legality of the actions of the police in general and some policemen. The policemen and servicemen of the RA police troops who took part in the operation to prevent mass disorder - about 500 persons were questioned, several documents, including police registers, as well as the fire-arms and special weapons of the policemen and servicemen were seized. The clothes of the dead persons and the subjects found in their bodies were sent for an expert examination.

The investigation revealed that there was a sniper among the police troops, and he was questioned in June. By the conclusions of the expert examination, none of the bullets taken from the bodies of the injured and killed persons was fired from the gun of the sniper.

As regards the special weapons used, the prosecutor general said the current methodology of expert examinations of Armenian institutions does not provide an opportunity for identification so help of international experts is of importance. T. Hammarberg informed A. Hovsepian that he had discussed this issue with several other foreign experts and he will provide the data of a highly experienced expert from the UK, which may prove useful for Armenian experts and the investigation body in this issue.

The prosecutor general assured T. Hammarberg that the prosecutor's office is ready to provide the information at its disposal to the fact-finding group of experts, just as it provides information to the NA ad hoc committee. At the same time A. Hovsepian expressed a hope that the fact-finding group will succeed in discovering facts of use to the investigation.

"Various persons and forces have announced that they have information about the mass disorder but they have not provided this information to the investigation body, explaining they don't trust. An independent fact-finding group of experts was created, I think there are no grounds to distrust it and I hope that these materials, if they really exist, will be given to the group," the prosecutor general said, noting that the prosecutor's office will only be grateful if the fact-finding group discovers new facts as it will help ensure the comprehensiveness and completeness of investigation.

19. COOPERATION WITH COUNCIL OF EUROPE IMPORTANT FROM VIEWPOINT OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

During the November 21 meeting with the CE Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg, the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan evaluated Armenia's cooperation with the Council of Europe as useful, considering it important from the viewpoint of democratization and human rights protection in the country.

According to a press release of the RA presidential press service, the interlocutors discussed some issues related to the work of the newly-created fact-finding group on inquiry into the March 1-2 events. The other agenda issue addressed by the sides was related to the imprisoned persons and their trials.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

20. ACCORDING TO SERZH SARGSYAN, WITHOUT IMF'S SUPPORT ARMENIA WOULD FAIL TO ACHIEVE GREAT SUCCESS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

During the meeting with the Deputy Managing Director of IMF Murilo Portugal on November 21, the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan expressed a high opinion about IMF's efforts to assist Armenia with economic development and stability. He said that without this support Armenia would fail to achieve great success. He also expressed his satisfaction at the approval of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement by the Executive Board of IMF recently.

Noting that in the past 15 years Armenia has reached serious economic achievements, recording an impressive growth, M. Portugal said that they are glad to be a partner of Armenia and make part of this success by providing financial assistance and advice.

According to the RA presidential press service, the global financial and economic crisis was discussed at the meeting. In the words of M. Portugal, it poses a serious challenge to each country. The sides exchanged ideas about raising Armenian economy's resistibility under these conditions, the steps envisaged by the government to reduce the impact of the crisis, and the possibility of attracting additional financial resources. S. Sargsyan said that the existing difficulties are an extra stimulus for promoting the reforms in tax policy and administration sector and improving the efficiency of the government system.

21. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT RECEIVES IMF DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan received today Deputy Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Murilo Portugal and the delegation headed by him.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that the president highly assessed the efforts of IMF directed towards support to economic development and stability of Armenia and noted that without that support Armenia could not have reached great success.

Serzh Sargsyan said he is glad that the Executive Board of IMF approved Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility program.

Noting that during the last fifteen years Armenia has reached serious economic achievements, M Portugal said that they are happy being partner of Armenia and being a part of the success either by financial assistance or by consultation.

During the meeting they also referred to the global financial economic crisis. IMF Deputy Managing Director noted that it is a serious challenge for each country. The sides exchanged opinions over the increase of resistance of Armenia's economy, steps of the government directed towards smoothing the impact of the crisis.

22. URGENT NA SESSION TO BE CALLED NOVEMBER 26 [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian signed a decree on calling an urgent session November 26 at 12:00 o'clock on the initiative of the Armenian government, NA's public relations department informed Armenpress.

23. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT LEAVES FOR DRESDEN TO BE PRESENT AT ARMENIA-CHINA GAME [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian President, Chairman of the Armenian Chess Federation Serzh Sargsyan promised at November 7 meeting in Jermuk with the Armenian Olympic team to be present in one of the games of the Armenian chess-players in the 38th World Chess Olympiad.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that today the president left for Dresden and on November 25 will be present at the Armenia-China game of the last round of the Olympiad.

24. PREPARATORY WORKS OVER EXPORT OF ELECTRICITY TO TURKEY GOING ON [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Preparatory works over exporting electricity from Armenia to Turkey are being held. Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian said the reporters that according to the agreement, within six months the Turkish side must be able to solve all the issues connected with the restoration of sub-stations, relevant license and import. Several days ago the Turkish side informed that the works pass normally.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

A. Movsisian expressed hope that from March 2009 the export of electricity will start.

BUSINESS

25. 17 MILLION DRAM CREDIT TO BE PROVIDED TO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

At the November 20 sitting, the Armenian government approved the project for financing the credit program on development of small and medium enterprises.

The RA minister of finance Tigran Davtian said that the project can be viewed in the context of measures for reduction of the possible impacts of the global economic crisis. By the project, additional money of 17 bln drams (about 55 mln USD) will be allocated to the German-Armenian Fund that will provide sums to banks which in their turn will finance small and medium enterprises.

The prime minister Tigran Sargsyan considered the draft as an important measure to overcome the global financial crisis. According to him, the provision of credits will create an opportunity for thousands of small and medium enterprises to receive loans and create jobs, and the expansion of SME's opportunities is one of the best anticrisis measures.

T. Sargsyan announced that that SMEs in the marzes (provinces) where mining companies are located will also be financed under the project, which will reduce the negative effects of the global economic crisis.

He said that the World Bank envisages providing a 250 million dollar credit in addition to the 50 million dollar one. Negotiations on this credit are now being conducted with WB. The prime minister expressed a hope that the first tranche of the indicated credit will be received in the first quarter of 2009. Unlike CIS countries, according to the prime minister, Armenia has a relative advantage: it is the country's banking system that has withstood the crisis and also shows quite good indices, operating at a profit of over 20 billion drams.

It was mentioned that the German-Armenian Fund was established based on an intergovernmental agreement between Armenia and German. It has about 10 thousand borrowers and a 100% index of credit repayment.

During the sitting of the Armenian government, the chairman of the Central bank of Armenia Arthur Javadian presented the draft law on All-Armenian bank. He said that it is planned to create an All-Armenian bank in early 2009.

26. GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS DOES NOT AFFECT AMOUNT OF INVESTMENTS IN ARMENIA'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

According to international experts, despite the global financial crisis, the amount of investments in the IT sector is growing. The investments attracted by Armenian IT companies have also increased as compared with last year, the director of the Enterprise Incubator Foundation Bagrat Yengibarian announced at the November 20 press conference.

In his words, it became clear from a conversation with the president of Macadamian company (Canada) which has a subsidiary in Armenia that a growth of investments in IT industry was recorded both in Canada and the U.S. "Macadamian and National Instruments have doubled the number of employees in their Armenian subsidiaries which means that a decline in investments is out of the question," B. Yengibarian noted, adding that the other foreign IT companies have also increased the number of their employees in Armenia.

The executive director of the Union of IT Enterprises of Armenia (UITE) Karen Vardanian said the global financial crisis has had a various impact on IT companies around the world, depending on the extent of the damage done by the crisis to the sector serviced by the given company. Engineering centers of foreign companies mainly operate in Armenia, demand for IT engineering solutions has not declined and so the crisis has not had a highly negative impact on Armenian IT sector, while in some subsectors a growth has been recorded.

Nevertheless, K. Vardanian expressed an opinion that with the aim of withstanding the consequences of the global financial crisis in Armenia in the next three years, the state and private sector should develop a strategy with a list of measures, as it was done in a number of countries. One of the issues on the agenda of the meeting of heads of Armenian IT sector to be held in Dilijan on December 5-7 will be dedicated to such a measure. During the event, issues of relations of Armenia's IT sector and tax and customs bodies will be discussed, as, according to K. Vardanian, a slowdown of reforms has been noted here. Besides, the problem of developing electronic government in Armenia will be examined. It is



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

also envisaged discussing together with Georgian experts the opportunity of using Georgia's experience in the development of electronic payment systems. The annual amount of electronic payments makes 20 million dollars in Georgia.

K. Vardanian said that this is the first "without-tie" meeting of Armenian IT sector's heads, in which representatives of foreign companies will take part. The previous 7-8 meetings had 60-100 participants.

27. DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IMF: SOUND MONETARY POLICY IS CONDUCTED IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

A delegation headed by the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Murilo Portugal is in Yerevan with the aim of participating in the jubilee events dedicated to the 15th anniversary of the Armenian national currency. The delegation was received by the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan on November 21.

At the beginning of the meeting, M. Portugal stated that the jubilee of the Armenian national currency bears evidence of the sound monetary policy that Armenia has conducted so far.

As NT was informed by the RA Government Information and PR Department, the possible developments related to the global financial and economic crisis and the measures to reduce their impact on Armenia were discussed at the meeting. The prime minister presented the government approaches and policy which are based on the use of the instruments for maintaining the macroeconomic indices and the financial sector's stability and encouraging economic growth.

28. ARMENIAN PM DISCUSSES POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS OF WORLD FINANCIAL CRISIS WITH MURILO PORTUGAL [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan received today the delegation headed by Deputy Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Murilo Portugal, who arrived in Armenia to participate in celebrations dedicated to the 15th anniversary of circulation of Armenian national currency.

At the beginning of the meeting he noted that the anniversary already witnesses about the serious financing policy carried out in Armenia by now.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that the sides also discussed the possible developments of world financial and economic crisis and events directed towards smoothing their impact on Armenia.

The prime minister presented to the guest the government's approaches and policy which is based on applying tools promoting the economic growth and maintaining macroeconomic indexes and stability of financial sector.

29. ARMENIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO COOPERATE WITH IRANIAN BUSINESSMEN [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

A business delegation from the Ilam State of the Islamic Republic of Iran visited Armenian Development Agency (ADA) to develop trade-economic relations with Armenia.

The public relations department of ADA told Armenpress that the delegation headed by the trade organization of Ilam State, included manufacturers, outstanding representatives of trade and market sphere.

The general director of the agency R. Harutyunian noted that the two countries are in close relations which will contribute to the expansion of relations in the sphere of trade and investments.

Tempos of economic growth of Armenia, the investment environment and the prospective branches which have a great potential of development have been presented to the Iranian businessmen.

The 30% of 3,700 enterprises established in Armenia with foreign capital are Armenian-Iranian joint ventures.

R. Harutyunian also referred to the programs of reforms of tax and customs administration implemented by the Armenian government.

The head of trade organization of Ilam presented the state: it is in the southwestern part of Iran and borders with Iraq. During the last years Japan made investments in the oil-chemical industry sphere. The state Ilam has a great potential in tourism sphere, construction materials, food, high quality fruit, vegetables are mainly produced there.

According to the head of the organization, the state is a reliable gate for the further economic developments.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

Members of the delegation were interested especially in the investment conditions in the construction sphere.

The Iranian side invited the general director of ADA R. Harutyunian to Ilam to get acquainted with the potential of the state and its business opportunities closer.

30. M. PORTUGAL SAYS THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MONEY TO ARMENIA IN CASE OF NECESSITY [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

The International Monetary Fund trusts Armenia and the support program of 14 million dollars approved November 17, testifies of this.

November 22 assistant to the head of International Monetary Fund Murilo Portugal told journalists that in case of necessity the IMF will provide additional money to Armenia: it will promote Armenia's integration into the world economy.

According to him, though Armenia is in a worse condition as compared with the neighboring countries from the point of view of being blockaded, during the last years the country registers a high indicator of implementation of economic programs, high tempos of economic growth and low tempos of inflation, reduction of the level of poverty.

"The circumstance that in spite of other countries Armenia this year preserved the tempo of economic growth speaks about the limited influence of the world financial crisis on the country's economy and that the financial stability has no vulnerable sides.

Besides, Armenian banks continued the profitable activity, the capital investments and the inflow of official transfers continued", the specialist said.

M. Portugal registered that the sizes of foreign investments did not reduce in Armenia. According to him, the 75% of transfers and the 70% of foreign direct investments in Armenia came from Russia during the three months of this year.

IMF specialist predicted that the economic growth in Armenia will reach 8% in 2009 which will be lower than the indicators of the last few years but will be considered higher compared with other countries. In parallel with it the general economic growth of developed countries will reduce.

M. Portugal noted that after the world financial crisis the first signs of recovery of the economies of the countries will be registered in the end of 2009.

DIASPORA

31. NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION, ARTSAKH SOCIAL-ECONOMIC ISSUES, DIASPORA-MOTHERLAND RELATIONS DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

President of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakyan met in New York, November 22, Congressman, co-chair of the Congress Armenian Caucus Frank Pallone.

Central information department of the office of Karabakh president told Armenpress that during the meeting a wide range of issues related to the settlement of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict, recent developments in the South Caucasian region, Artsakh-USA ties, and social-economic situation in the republic were discussed.

Bako Sahakyan highly underscored the activities of Congressman Pallone in supporting and objective elucidating the Armenian issue and the Nagorno Karabakh problem. Frank Pallone in his turn expressed readiness to continue with the same patience his activities to further develop and strengthen relations between Artsakh and the United States of America.

November 22 President Bako Sahakyan met also with representatives of Eastern USA Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party Hovsep Avagyan and Karo Ketsemanyan. A wide range of issues related to social-economic situation in the republic, the current stage and prospects of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement, further development of Artsakh-Diaspora ties were discussed during the meeting.

The President noted the importance of giving a new impetus to the relations with the Diaspora, particularly making the involvement of Spyurk in the life of the Motherland more active.

According to Bako Sahakyan, for effective implementation of this it is necessary carry out activities in a systemized manner, establish permanent and stable relations between all the three parts of the Armenian nation. The president underlined that realization of national projects requires further cementing the Artsakh-Armenia-Diaspora trinity.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

On the same day President Sahakyan visited Armenian National Center of the Saint Gregory the Illuminator church of the Eastern USA Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church and met representatives of local Armenian community.

Bako Sahakyan introduced to the participants current social-economic situation in the republic, the current stage and prospects of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process and answered questions raised by the participants of the meeting.

November 23 in the framework of "Hayastan" All-Armenian fund's forthcoming telethon NKR President Bako Sahakyan met in Los Angeles minister of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Hranoush Hakobyan.

Issues related to Diaspora-Motherland relations were discussed during the meeting. The key role of Artsakh in further cementing these relations was mutually underlined.

On the same day the President met members of the governing body of the Western USA Hnchakyan Social-Democratic Party at the head of chairman Hambig Safaryan.

A wide range of issues related to Artsakh-Diaspora relations, Nagorno Karabakh problem and social-economic situation in the NKR were discussed during the meeting. Bako Sahakyan underlined that it was necessary further strengthen ties between the Diaspora and Artsakh, do everything to form an atmosphere of constructive cooperation between different political forces. It was mutually noted that Artsakh and its future represent one of the most important components of cohesion and unity.

November 23 President Sahakyan had a tete-a-tete meeting with American –Armenian philanthropist Vahe Karapetyan. Issues related to the realization of different projects in Artsakh were discussed during the meeting.

32. PRESIDENT OF NAGORNO KARABAKH DELIVERS SPEECH AT "TELETHON 2008" EVENT [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

NKR President Bako Sahakyan delivered a speech November 23 in Los Angeles at the Gala Dinner Party organized by the "Hayastan" All-Armenian fund within the frameworks of "Telethon -2008".

The speech of the Karabakh president runs as follows:

"Respected compatriots,

Dear friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very much happy to have an opportunity to welcome once again at this overcrowded hall. This is the best evidence of the fact that Artsakh and Diaspora are united and consolidated, that Artsakh-Armenia-Diaspora trinity has been strengthening and becoming more practical day by day.

First of all I congratulate you as citizens of the United States of America on electing new president. Indeed, the victory of Barack Obama is an important event in the history of America and world democracy. I hope that his readiness to address issues the Armenian people face will contribute to further strengthening and diversifying relations between our countries.

I would like also to thank all of you that even today when the USA faces financial crisis you are ready to contribution to the development and prosperity of your Motherland. At the bottom of our hearts we are grateful to you for such a great devotion and kind-heartedness.

Friends, a full year has passed since our previous meeting. I would like to introduce you changes, which also owing to you have taken place in Artsakh within this time period. In virtue of your immediate assistance in different settlements of the republic new schools, kindergartens, medical institutions and water pipes have been built and rebuilt; a number of programs are in progress. Practical and realistic programs have been carried out to solve social problems, to increase living conditions of people and improve demographical situation, a strategically important sphere for our state.

Recently we solemnly celebrated an unprecedented event – the Grand Karabakh Wedding. As a result nearly 700 new families were formed in Karabakh. This undertaking was carried out under the patronage of our compatriots from Russia and its goal is to stimulate birthrate and having many children in our country. This is very important for the future of our people and republic. In this respect I want to introduce an important figure: the programs being carried out resulted in nearly 3000 marriages registered within the 10 month period of the current year. This is against the background of 750 to 800 marriages, which were registered annually in the last five years.

Considerable changes have taken place also in the size and structure of the state budget. The 2008 state budget exceeds that of the previous year more than 1,3 times. The volume of monies allocated to agriculture, forestry and water industry by current year state budget exceeds that of the 2007 more than 3,8 times, in the sphere of social security 1,5 times. In the spheres of education and science the difference is 27%, in capital investments it is 22%, and in the sphere of culture it is around 29 percent.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

Reforms have been implemented in the spheres related to investments and entrepreneurship too. As a result of these reforms the country's economy has received more than 10 million dollar foreign investments in the current year.

In spite of positive changes it must be noted that the current year is a quite difficult one for our republic. Almost all settlements of the republic have suffered from unprecedented frost and strong winds. It caused several million dollar damage to our economy. However, the people of Artsakh were able to cope with those difficulties also and came off with flying colors. It became possible by dint of exerting every effort, systemized and consolidated work of population, personnel of the armed forces and authorities of the republic.

Artsakh people are well aware that only through laborious work they can build and enrich their country, make the land of their ancestors flourishing and prospering, leave free and independent, strong and invincible Motherland to the generations to come. You, our world-spread compatriots, our sisters and brothers who are always ready to be useful to their Motherland and nation on the other side of the ocean, have important role to play too.

The best proof of this can be considered the annual telethons organized by "Hayastan" All-Armenian fund. The entire Armenian people have been united around this idea. I want to assure you that every cent you contribute to the Motherland will give its worthy result, will be multiplied and serve its very purpose. Your kind deeds will be memorized and passed from generation to generation.

Compatriots, the "Telethon-2008" is again devoted to the development of Armenian and Artsakh economy especially to revival of the countryside, securing development of villages and rural settlements and improving living standards of the population. The sums collected during the already traditional telethons will be spent on building and reviving state infrastructures, as well as on securing normal living conditions for people.

The top priorities of our economic development are the spheres of education, science, culture, health protection, capital construction. The solution of problems related to the security of our republic is of great importance too. Strong and efficient army is the most important guarantee of security of our people. The authorities of the state are have been doing everything possible to keep the army always ready to fulfill the tasks put before it.

Friends, I am very much confident that we will continue to build our country together, do our best so secure quiet, peaceful and worthy life for the people of Artsakh on the land of their ancestors land and make their homes and the Motherland prosper.

This year we have celebrated the 20th anniversary of Artsakh Heroic Movement with in a great way and reiterated publicly that we are resolute in our choice. The land of Artsakh has been and will always be an Armenian. We have paid too high price to live a free, independent and secure life in our own land and not even for a moment we have right to forget about blood that has been shed by the best sons of the Armenian people. The best perpetuation of the memory of our martyrs will be the strong and prosperous Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

We said many times before and will always say that the independence and security of Artsakh are of exclusive values cannot be subject to any speculation.

Compatriots, the future of Artsakh is a task for the entire Armenian people and only being united and consolidated we can realize our national goals, only together we can secure bright and radiant future for dear to all of us Artsakh and the worldwide Armenians.

Thank you and all the best!"

33. RA MINISTER OF DIASPORA LEAVES FOR U.S. COMPLETING HER VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

On November 15-17, RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian was in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil on a working visit completing her regional visit to Latin America.

During the two-day visit the Minister of Diaspora visited three Armenian churches and took part in the liturgy served by leader of Diocese of Brazil of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Tatev Gharibian, which was followed by a reception at the Primacy. Then Minister Hakobian on behalf of the RA Ministry of Diaspora laid a wreath to the memorial of victims of the Armenian Genocide.

The same day, on November 16, the Minister left for Osasco, which is the sister-city of Gyumri. The Armenian delegate visited the cross-stone-memorial donated by Gyumri Mayor's Office and placed in Osasco and joined the crowd gathered in the Armenian Center of Osasco, among which was also Mayor Emidio de Souza reelected lately. The Mayor had arrived in the Armenian center to greet the RA Minister and to reaffirm his readiness to establish close cooperation with the Armenian city of Gyumri. Minister Hakobian made a speech during the meeting.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

The Minister also met with the Armenian society of Sao Paulo in the Armenian Club of the city. She made a long speech presenting the strategy adopted by the newly created Ministry, events implemented, as well as necessity of establishment of close cooperation new in the respect of quality between the two parts of the Armenian people. In the same place she had a tete-a-tete talk with Federal deputy of Brazil Sidney Carvalho aimed at further development of the Armenian-Brazilian relations. Minister Hakobian's next meeting was at the Armenian General Benevolent Union where discussions with administrative members of all Armenian structures functioning in Brazil took place, which was followed by an official dinner in honor of the Minister of Diaspora. Brazilian deputy Arnaldo Faria de Sa was also among those present, with whom the Minister discussed the possibilities of establishment of closer relations between the two parliaments, ways of reconsideration of activity of Brazil-Armenia deputy friendship groups and making active the contacts in the Federal Parliament of Brazil, as well as the current stage of the process aimed at recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the Federal Parliament of Brazil.

On November 17, Minister Hakobian visited the national Durian college, which is the only Armenian educational center in Sao Paulo. After college pupils performed national hymns and Armenian songs the Minister first addressed to the college pupils then had a private meeting with the college administration and Armenian language teachers. The importance of undertaking proper steps aimed at raising the educational level, teachers' participation in retrainings in Armenia, printing of Mother Tongue and Literature textbooks in Western Armenian in Armenia were touched upon during the discussions.

According to the report of the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, visit's last meeting was with the Board members of the Brazilian branch of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, after which Minister Hranush Hakobian left for the United States.

34. TURKISH MINISTRY OF CULTURE TO RESTORE HONENTS CHURCH AND ST SAVIOUR'S CATHEDRAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism has initiated to restore a number of historic monuments in Ani ruins. The first two initiatives regard Tigran Honents Church and Ebul Menecehr Mosque. Parallel to this work the Ministry should demand that Armenia solve the problem of work done in the border quarries. As the Marmara daily reported referring to a publication in the Taraf newspaper, Turkey's goal is to give an international resonance to this issue, thus preventing the work of quarries. Excavation work should be done around the walls of Tigran Honents Church and cleansing work should be done around it. The specialists have already started to study the wall-paintings inside the church. Work is also done to restore Saint Saviour's Church.

The Ministry has planned to make the Ani region an important tourism center. Therefore, the village of Ocakli situated in the very territory of Ani ruins will be restored in the social-economic and cultural aspect. Training and educational programs for local inhabitants will be organized, which are aimed at strengthening the necessity of preserving historic monuments in people's consciousness. Books and booklets on Ani will be made, DVDs will be released to promote tourism. The proper Turkish bodies will cooperate with the Sorbonne University of Paris in this direction.

35. ARGENTINA-ARMENIA STAMPS ISSUED IN BUENOS AIRES [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/21/08]

On November 17 two stamps issued for the first time jointly by the National Postal Company of Argentina and Haypost were put in official circulation in the Buenos Aires' Siranush hall. The solemn ceremony was organized by the National Postal Company of Argentina and the Embassy of Armenia. Nearly 500 people were present at the event including high-ranking officials of the government of the city of Buenos Aires, representatives of the National Postal Company of Argentina, philatelists, Argentinian diplomats and foreign ambassadors accredited in Buenos Aires, journalists, clergymen, many Argentinian Armenians.

The President of the National Postal Company of Argentina Eduardo Di Cola and Ambassador of Armenia to Argentina Vladimir Karmirshalian made congratulatory speeches in the hall decorated with placards of stamps depicting the Argentinian Malambo and the Armenian Hoy Nazan dances, after which they made the cancellation ceremony of the stamps' first day.

The official part of the event was followed by the solemn concert with the participation of Armenian and Argentinian artists, during which the traditional songs and dances of the two friendly peoples were presented.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

ARTS

36. MONIKA MANUCHAROVA REPRESENTING ARMENIA IN “JUNIOR EUROVISION 2008” TAKES THE 8TH PLACE [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

In the 6th international song contest “Junior Eurovision 2008” held in the town of Lemesos, Cyprus November 22 Armenian representative Monika Manucharova with 59 points took the eighth place. She was the second to perform.

The winner of the contest became Georgia with 154 points, represented by “Bzikebi” trio. The second came Ukraine, followed by Lithuania, Malta, FYR Macedonia. Belarus and Russia took the sixth and the seventh places respectively.

Representatives of 15 countries participated in the contest.

37. EXHIBITION OF WORKS OF PETROS ASLANIAN OPENS IN THE ARMENIAN EMBASSY IN GREECE [Azg, 11/24/08]

Exhibition of works of the outstanding painter Petros Aslanian opened November 19 in the Armenian embassy in Greece.

Press service of Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that the exhibition, which is organized by the Armenian embassy, is dedicated to the 17th anniversary of Armenian independence. It involves works of the last years of the Diaspora Armenian well known painter.

The Armenian ambassador Vahram Kazhoyan delivered an opening speech. The ambassador highly assessed Petros Aslanian’s art stressing the importance of the fruitful activity of the honored arts figure.

Representatives of Greek authorities, Armenian ecclesiastic classes, business circles, the Armenian community and mass media as well as diplomats accredited in Greece took part in the event.

The exhibition will last by November 30.

38. THE “MAGICIAN AUTAMN” DOCUMENTARY FILM OF RUBEN AND VAHE GEVORGIANTS AWARDED “FILM WITHOUT BORDERS” PRIZE IN THE “LEAF FALL 2008” INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL [Azg, 11/24/08]

In the “Leaf Fall 2008” 15th international film festival the “Magician Autumn” documentary film of directors Ruben and Vahe Gevorgiants was awarded with the “Film without Borders” prize by the CIS executive committee. The festival was held in Minsk, capital of Belarus.

R. Gevorgiants told Armenpress that the film was shot in 2007. It is about the world famous director Toninio Guera.

“This is the first film shot in collaboration with my son and I’m very happy for the prize”, R. Gevorgiants said.

“The Magician Autumn” was awarded with the chief prize in the “Golden Buben” festival which was held in the town of Khanti-Mansiysk, and in the Moscow “New Film 21st Century” festival got “Grand Prix” prize.

Vigen Chaldanian’s “Priestess” was also presented in the film festival and won “For the sake of Faithfulness towards Kindness and High Intellectual Ideals” diploma and the hero of the film Hovhannes Babakhanian was awarded with “Delicate embodiment of love theme and the creation of a dramatic role” diploma.

SOCIAL

39. H. DEMOYAN SAYS “THE CONVENTION ON PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF GENOCIDE CRIME” NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

On December 9 “The Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Genocide Crime” becomes 60 years old.

Head of the Genocide museum-institute of National Academy of Science Hayk Demoyan told Armenpress that with the adoption of the convention no concrete functioning mechanisms were established to exclude genocides, as mechanisms of prevention were not mentioned.

According to him, the convention is incomplete and needs to be reviewed.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

“Today there is a task to create a new comprehensive document. It must presume concrete steps of actions and prevention so that the international community and the humanity don't face a new fact of genocide. But the humanity entered the 21st century with a new genocide for instance the events taken place in a number of African countries”, H. Demoyan said. According to him, the impunity contributed to commitment of new genocides.

According to H. Demoyan the registration of the concept of “cultural genocide” remained outside of discussions in 1940s. “If registered in the document, the policy of demolition of Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey and Azerbaijan would be regarded as cultural genocide. It would be an effective instrument against Azerbaijan and Turkey to show the international community what is going on”, head of the Genocide museum-institute said.

H. Demoyan also expressed concern that the UNESCO chief director Koishiro Matsuura, who must have condemned the cases of demolition of Christian monuments in Azerbaijan, visits the country and takes part in an event.

“The Convention of Prevention and Punishment of Genocide Crime” was adopted in 1948 by the UN General Assembly and entered into force from January, 1951.

It gives the legal definition to the genocide. The term “Genocide” has been created by lawyer Rafael Lemkin basing on the assassination of Assyrians, the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide.

At present nearly 137 countries ratified the Convention.

40. LABOR FAIR FOR HANDICAPPED PEOPLE TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 25 [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

A labor fair for handicapped people will be held November 25 in Yerevan with participation of 20-25 organizations. The head of the “Unison” NGO Armen Alaverdian told Armenpress that 15 companies including “VivaCell MTS”, “Coca Cola”, “Unicomp”, “HSBC” and “Converse” banks have already presented applications for participation.

This is first such like event in Armenia. “The employment issue of a handicapped person is one of the prior issues today, we must show to the society that a handicapped person is able to work and take care of himself/herself too,” A. Alaverdian said.

The employers will present vacancies of computer worker, secretary, manager and others. A. Alaverdian noted that a response is great among the handicapped people as well with who the NGO is working, supporting with consultation, help in writing resumes and other issues.

“We are trying to do everything to make the handicapped people competitive,” A. Alaverdian said. Each handicapped person, without age limitations, who is able to work, may visit the fair.

The fair is being conducted within the frameworks of a month of protection of rights of handicapped people.

41. “FAMILY AND CHILD SUPPORT CENTERS” OPEN IN COMMUNITIES OF TAVUSH PROVINCE [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Within the frameworks of “Healthy Beginning 2” program “Family and Child Support Centers” opened in Achajur, Khashtarak and Sevkar villages of the Armenian Ijevan region, Tavush province.

The program carried out with the support of “Bridge of Hope” NGO is funded by Danish Foreign Ministry together with “Mission East” organization.

The head of the Armenian office of “Mission East” organization Anna Avetisian, head of “Bridge of Hope” NGO Susanna Tadevosian were present at the opening of the centers.

By the way such center earlier opened in Berkaber village of Ijevan region and November 26 will open in Aygehovit, Getahovit, Azatamut communities.

42. RENOVATION OF ROOFS OF VANADZOR APARTMENT BUILDINGS CARRIED OUT [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Roofs of two apartment buildings in Vanadzor have been renovated through co-financing.

Head of the apartment household department of Vanadzor municipality Grisha Paravian told Armenpress that the municipality invested 6 million 301,500 drams in the renovation of the roof of Vardanants 84 building and 2 million 147,800 drams – for the renovation of Tevosian 13 “b” building.

G. Paravian assured that the renovation of the roofs of apartment buildings will continue next year.



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

43. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT TO THE RESIDENTS OF VANADZOR [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

In the branch of “Ayg” center of psychological services, which functions for already one year in Vanadzor, psychological support is being provided to the children and the adult people.

An official from Vanadzor municipality told Armenpress that the center provides psychological support to the applicants as well as to the schools, kinder gardens and medical institutions in the issues of despair created as a result of stress, fear, insomnia, marriage relations, difficulties in communicating, shyness, professional choice, slowness of intellectual developments, difficulties with the environment.

Besides, theoretical and practical courses are organized here for psychologists and other specialists, also a club for psychological debate functions where active discussions are held by students of different faculties of Vanadzor Pedagogical Institute, high grade pupils, professors, pedagogies, representatives of different organizations.

44. MONUMENT TO THE VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE IN GYURI TO OPEN DECEMBER 7 [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

“To Innocent Victims with Merci” – is the title of documentary film of Samvel and Tigran Matosians dedicated to the creation of a monument to the victims of disastrous earthquake in Spitak.

The authors of the film for around a year followed with camera the works of preparation of the monument by Moscow-based distinguished sculptor laureate of Lenin Prize, honorable citizen of Gyumri Frid Soghoyan and his sons.

“The film starts with chronicle of those tragic days twenty years ago and its difficult consequences. The film is shot with one breath. Samvel and Tigran are highly assessed in Moscow. They have been awarded a number of awards of international festivals,” Nerses Hovhannissian, Armenian People’s artist, laureate of state award, Moscow-based film director said.

Nikolay Rizhkov, member of the highest chamber of Russian State Duma, actor Armen Jigarkhanian, football player Nikita Simonian gave exclusive interviews for the film.

The monument will open on the day of the earthquake December 7 in Gyumri.

45. CONFERENCE ON KARABAKH ISSUE HELD IN FRANCE [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

On November 21, conference on “The Role of the International Law in the Karabakh Conflict Settlement Process” took place in the mayor’s office of Alforville, one of the suburbs of Paris, densely-populated with Armenians. The conference was held by the NKR Permanent Representative in France Hovhannes Gevorgyan.

An official from the NKR permanent representation in Armenia told Armenpress that mayor of Alforville, member of the French Assembly Rene Rouquet, members of the local self-governing bodies, French deputies, journalists, and members of the Armenian political and public organizations, as well as citizens of Alforville participated in the conference.

During the event, organized with the support of the mayor’s office of Alforville, a documentary film on Nagorno Karabakh was shown. At the end of the event Hovhannes Gevorgyan presented book entitled “Artsakh”, published by the NKR Permanent Representation in France.

46. S. OHANIAN PRESENTS J. GASPARIAN A SYMBOLIC SWORD [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian received today the Armenian world famous duduk player, composer, Armenian national artist, prizewinner of numerous international contests Jivan Gasparian.

Spokesman for the Armenian Defense Minister, Colonel Seyran Shahsuvarian told Armenpress that the minister congratulated the famous master on his 80th anniversary and wished him long life, unlimited energy, creative success and realization of wishes.

S. Ohanian noted that Jivan Gasparian’s enormous contribution to the recognition of Armenian song art in the world arena is invaluable. Thanks to him Armenia presents itself to the world through duduk which sounds from the most respectable stages of the world and in the most famous films exciting the hearts of people and giving them true pleasure.

“Being unaware of Armenian national instruments one day the world saw with surprise how an ordinary wooden instrument seizes souls of people so easily creating a breath taking mood. And in this respect the importance of your patriotic activity which lasted for dozens of years is hard to overestimate



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 24, 2008

as the culture always had a vital importance for the Armenian people who presented themselves through our talented compatriots”, the defense minister said.

Afterwards S. Ohanian presented J. Gasparian a symbolic sword wishing that the sword and duduk always be inseparable.

At the end of the meeting the outstanding master thanked the minister for his warm reception and presented the minister his CD which was spread all over the world and noted that he meets with “the most intelligent General he has ever known”.

SPORTS

47. ARMENIAN AND UKRAINIAN CHESS PLAYERS – LEADERS OF 38th WORLD CHESS OLYMPIAD [ARMENPRESS, 11/24/08]

Armenian chess players won the Serbian team in the World Chess Olympiad and together with the Ukrainian team lead the tournament with 17 points before the last 11th round which will take place on November 25. The Israeli team is on the third place with 16 points.

Before that, in the ninth round, the Armenian team was defeated 1.5:2.5 by the Israeli team. In the last 11th round the Armenian chess players will play with Chinese team and the Ukrainian chess players – with the USA team.

Armenian women team was defeated 1.5:2.5 by the Polish team in the 10th round and now occupies the eighth place with 14 points. The leader of women tournament is the Polish team with 17 points, Ukrainian and Georgian chess players are in the second and third places with 16 points.

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

Please be advised that the AGBU Armenia News Bulletin is for general reference only and should not be reprinted in any form without the explicit written permission of AGBU. All rights reserved.

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.