



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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AGBU NEWS

1. **AGBU YP Yerevan extends a helping hand to build a house**
Karapetyans' Dream To Have A House Came True [AGBU Armenian Representation, 11/17/09]

24 members of the Young Professionals (YP) Yerevan team of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) together with Fuller Center for Housing Armenia visited Geghard village of Kotayk region to help build a home for the Karapetyan family. The family of six will soon have its own house.

With the support of the Fuller Center, “Tufenkian” and “Hye Dzmer Pap” (“Armenian Santa”) charity foundations, and VivaCell company, the family of Karapetyans living in the Geghard village of Kotayk region, purchased a small land at first. The Karapetyan family was finally able to see their lifelong dream of owning a home come true.

For the last 19 years the family of 6 has lived in indescribable conditions in a cabin made of scrap metal donated by the village authorities.

“We only had this small cabin, which the village authorities had donated to us. It's a metal cabin with a leaking roof and imagine how cold it was in the wintertime. It was out biggest dream to have our home”, said Senik Karapetyan, father of the family.

Learning about the poor social conditions of the family several organizations joined efforts and provided the family with a long-term interest free loan. At first they bought the land and then started



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building the house. Initiators and AGBU YP Yerevan extended a helping hand to help complete the construction of the house.

Eldest son of the Karapetyans is an active participant of the building process. He is currently serving in the Armenian army. The family is planning to finish the construction of the house before their son's return from the army.

Since 2000 the Fuller center has helped more than 500 families to build their houses. AGBU has worked with the Fuller Center for three years and helped construct homes for families like the Karapetyans all around Armenia.

2. AGBU and Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin Youth Centers participate in a painting competition in a Yerevan park [AGBU Armenian Representation, 11/17/09]

On Saturday, November 14, students of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Youth Centers participated in a painting competition on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of consecration of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians. In one of the beautiful parks of Yerevan the children painted for a whole hour catching the attention of hundreds of passersby. Papers and pencils, watercolors and oil paints, music in the air, interesting topics, bright smiling faces and an hour to paint.

Today, the six Youth Centers of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and AGBU in Yerevan, Etchmiadzin, Vanadzor and Ashtarak have more than 3000 children studying different arts and crafts and receiving spiritual education. Very soon, a new Youth Center will open its doors in Gyumri.

Reverend Father Komitas Hovnanian, Director of the Youth Centers, made a welcoming speech and emphasized the important mission of the Youth Centers in educating our young generations, "These Centers have been operating for 16 years now. Wonderful children aged 5-18 learn different arts and crafts, receive spiritual education, develop their national consciousness in these Centers, and what is more important they learn the secret of being good individuals. These children carry creative souls and they cannot become bad citizens of their country", said Father Komitas.

"When you are in touch with the spiritual world, you have different views and different thoughts about life, your human nature is changed and you do not see the bad in everything, you imagine a bright future", said 15-year-old Susanne Davtian, a student of the Youth Center.

Children finished their work and are waiting for the evaluations. The paintings will be graded by specialists and the winners will be awarded.

3. AGBU Europe campaign for Karabakh [Azg, 11/18/09]

The AGBU Europe issued the following statement recently:

"It is time for the EU to support the development in Nagorno - Karabagh and contacts between Karabagh and Azerbaijan.

AGBU Europe's new is campaigning to press the European Union to provide humanitarian and development assistance to Nagorno Karabakh, to establish confidence building measures between Karabakh and Azerbaijan and to send observers to help monitor the cease-fire.

Nagorno Karabagh has been effectively independent since it won the war against Azerbaijan in 1994 but there is a real risk that the war will resume. Isolated from the world by geography and politics, the small Republic can count on no one's help except Armenia's.

Karabakh is reserved special treatment by the international community. There are other non-recognized states in the region: Transdnistria, Abkhazia or South Ossetia. These all benefit from some form of international peacekeeping; they are involved in some form of internationally funded projects; and their residents enjoy contacts with the other countries. Not so Karabakh.

The European Union is not involved in policing the cease-fire, they fund almost no development or humanitarian project there, and have not sponsored contacts between the inhabitants of Karabakh and of Azerbaijan. Far from frowning on Azerbaijan's policy of boycott of Armenia and Karabakh, the European Union has largely followed Baku's wishes. In fact, Karabakh is the only part of the region, which the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, has not visited.

Most people in the EU would agree that this policy is wrong. But they are unlikely to act unless we, European citizens, tell them to change course."



POLITICS

4. Igor Muradian: Nagorno Karabakh problem is just an occasion for Turkey to delay ratification of protocols [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

The Nagorno Karabakh problem is just an occasion for Turkey to delay the ratification of the protocols. Political scientist Igor Muradian expressed such an opinion at a November 16 press conference. In his words, Turkey has understood that the protocols is a plot against it, planned by the U.S. and coordinated with Europe. According to the political scientist, its goal is to suppress Turkey.

"To all appearances, Turkey is not interested in the Nagorno Karabakh problem. Now Turkey needs to stop the process with Armenia," I. Muradian said. According to him, neither Armenia nor Turkey are ready for the continuation of that process on their own. One of the most important issues is whether the U.S. will be able to be a guarantor in the process of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations till the end. However, in his opinion, the U.S. is no longer able to support that process, thanks to which Russia gains dividends.

I. Muradian also said that in all probability, a long pause is expected in the normalization process of Armenian-Turkish relations.

5. Haykazun Alvrtsyan: The issue of the borders of the region has stopped being issue of two countries only [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

The importance of the Upper Lars border check-point must be restored as after the possible opening of the Armenian-Turkish border it will lose its importance, director of the "Center of Studies of Western Armenian Issues" Haykazun Alvrtsyan said today at the meeting with the reporters. According to him, the issue of the borders of the region has stopped being issue of two countries and is of general importance.

"The opening of the Upper Lars border check-point is not only the issue of Russia and Georgia. The possible opening of the Armenian-Turkish border shows that the West and Europe needs open borders in the whole region," he said.

H. Alvrtsyan said that as a result of the recent changes in the region, it is obvious that Upper Lars check-point loses its political importance, which on its turn is promoted by the possible opening of the Armenian-Turkish border and construction of Iran-Armenia railway with which Armenia may enter to faraway countries.

"Georgia and Russia understand it very well. The changes in the region made these two countries conduct negotiations over the opening of the Upper Lars border check-point," he said.

H. Alvrtsyan noted that the changes in the region will also make Georgia change its dictating position toward Armenia. "Realizing that it is being isolated and is losing its role in the region, Georgia does everything to restore its relations with Russia. The Georgian side realizes quite well that one day the expensive roads we have with Georgia may be replaced by the cheaper ones with Turkey," Alvrtsyan said.

He noted that no matter Georgia is putting forward its interests, Armenia will also benefit from the opening of the Upper Lars border check-point.

6. Armenian Prime Minister – member of the Armenian Republican Party [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan has become member of the Armenian Republican Party.

Spokesman of the party Edward Sharmazanov told Armenpress that the prime minister applied to pass to the rows of the party and the administration body of the party gave positive response to it.

Sharmazanov also informed that November 28 the 12th assembly of the Armenian Republican Party will be called which will elect new executive body of the political force.

The party is headed by the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan. It has 65 mandates in the parliament. National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan is also member of the party.

7. According to Vahan Shirkhanian, current opposition of Armenia unable to achieve special election [Noyan Tapan, 11/17/09]

The Social Democrat Hunchak Party (SDHP) is against any relations with Turkey until this country recognizes the Armenian Genocide and starts paying compensation. Member of the SDHP



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Central Board Vahan Shirkhanian once again voiced this position of their party at the November 16 press conference.

In his words, the authorities are trying to show that Armenia would benefit from the border's opening. "It is not true. Armenia will not develop in case of opening the border because today Armenia invests 270 million euros in Turkey, whereas Turkey invests only 1 million 700 thousand euros in Armenia, and this proportion will remain the same if the border opens. We will not receive any economic benefit," V. Shirkhanian declared, adding goods will continue to be imported from Istanbul, and not from Kars. According to him, the people is still unable to influence the policy conducted by the authorities, but if the developments "become obviously harmful to Armenia, the people will rise," V. Shirkhanian stated.

In his words, "if on September 1-2 the opposition had made a call and had taken the people to the streets and kept them there for a few days, the protocols would not have been signed and it would have been possible to achieve a special election". While considering the ARF's street public events as a current move, V. Shirkhanian, however, expressed an opinion that the ARF does not have the status of the Armenian National Congress (ANC). At the same time, V. Shirkhanian believes that the current opposition is unable to achieve a special election. But if the people see a real threat to the country, they will form a new opposition which will carry out a power shift.

V. Shirkhanian noted that although the views of SDHP do not coincide with those of ANC, he does not consider it necessary to leave ANC, because "the restoration of the constitutional order remains a task".

Vardan Khachatryan - a deputy of the National Assembly, former member of Heritage party, presently a member of the SDHP Political Board - made the possibility of a special election conditional upon the development of Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, also upon international pressure. He expressed conviction that if the tension grows, some unpredictable developments may occur in society, and neither a special election nor a power shift can be ruled out.

8. Turkish boy expelled from school in France for denying fact of Armenian Genocide [Noyan Tapan, 11/17/09]

13-year-old Mustafa Dogan, a student of the French college in the city of Nance, France, was expelled from school for denying the fact of Armenian Genocide in his composition. The school gave two days to Mustafa to collect information about the Armenian Genocide, to speak with people having experienced the Genocide, to apply to sources being alternative to the Turkish ones in Internet and to correct his views.

According to Marmara, the History teacher of the French college had assigned the students to write a composition about the Armenian Genocide and the events of 1915. The Turkish student, who had debated with his teacher before, this time got angry and wrote in his composition: "Even if a genocide was committed, the Armenians deserved it."

Zaman newspaper's Paris correspondent wrote that the law envisaging a criminal punishment for denial of the Armenian Genocide has not been yet ratified in France but it is already being used now. This incident is rather typical. The school teacher earlier being concerned with Mustafa's assertions invited his father to school and explained to him that according to the French laws, the boy commits a crime by denying the Armenian Genocide. Boy's father, Mehmed Dogan answered that he is not aware of such a law's existence. The teacher said that it is clear who encourages the boy.

Later Mehmed Dogan said that the teacher showed a racial approach and made the 13-year-old boy angry. He added that he does not believe, either that a genocide had been committed but he is sorry that his son wrote that the Armenians deserved the Genocide.

A Turkish organization functioning in France is going to send its representative for a meeting with the school's headmaster this Friday. It was mentioned that in his talk to Zaman's correspondent the headmaster supported the History teacher and considered the punishment fair.

BUSINESS

9. Turkish businessman says they need time to get to know Armenia [Armenpress, 11/18/09]

The relations between the Armenian and Turkish peoples may develop in a good sense as all the prerequisites exist for it, Turkish co-chair of the Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council Serdar Dinler told Armenpress.

According to him, in reality the 99% of the Turkish public is not aware of the existing conflict between the Armenian and Turkish peoples.



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"In 1992 for the first time a book was published in Turkey which referred to the conflict. In schools nothing was taught about the Armenian and Turkish cultural relations which might have given information to the young people about the neighboring state. We need time to acquire as much information about Armenia as Armenia has about Turkey," he said.

According to him, recently twice in a year conferences are conducted in universities about the Armenian culture. "We are learning, we need a little time. Now Turkey does not want to have any issues with neighboring states. We hope that the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border will give an opportunity to Armenian and Turkish young peoples to get to know each other," the Turkish co-chair said.

DIASPORA

10. Armenian diplomat appointed Ambassador of France to Argentina [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

Under French President Nicolas Sarkozy's decree, French Armenian diplomat, Head of Elysee Palace Protocol Jean-Pierre Astvatsaturian was appointed Ambassador of France to Argentina. According to the Zartok newspaper, the newly appointed Ambassador will arrive in Buenos Aires soon.

11. Meliksetians' family in Brest transfers 1 million roubles to account of Armenian Apostolic Church religious community [Noyan Tapan, 11/17/09]

Rafael Meliksetian, his wife Anahit, children Narine and Samson residing in Brest transferred 1 million roubles to the account of the Armenian Apostolic Church religious community.

According to diaspora.by, the family of Meliksetians calls their compatriots for taking part in the fund-raising for the church construction. "We need your assistance and support. We are the children of the same nation. Let's hold each other's hands in solidarity and build our church in the Belarusian fertile land. Each brick coming from soul is important for us in our little part of Armenia."

ARTS

12. Exhibition of works by Armenian painters to be opened in Cyprus [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

Opening ceremony of a unique exhibition of works by more than twenty Armenian painters will take place on November 28 at the Armenian Prelature's Utudjian Hall in Nicosia. According to Gibrahayer, the exhibition will be held under the patronage of Hagop Pakradouni Member of the Lebanese Parliament. The exhibition will be open daily between 18:00 - 22:00, from 29 November to 6 December 2009.

13. Event dedicated to 140th birth anniversary of Komitas held in Tehran [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

A jubilee event dedicated to the 140th birth anniversary of Komitas was organized on November 12 at the Komitas hall in Tehran, on the initiative of the Art Union of Tehran Ararat organization.

According to the Alik daily, before the opening of the event the participants stood in silence for a minute to honor the memory of Academician Harmik Davtian. Then Shaghik Georgian gave an opening speech. Lecturer of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory Karine Brutian presented great composer's biography. Conservatory's students played the piano and violin. Fragments from pieces by Komitas were presented. Episodes from Komitas' life were shown on a canvas, Komitas' singing sounded. The Ararat choir conducted by Araks Khachatrian performed at the end of the program.

14. Young solo performer of "Premiere" theater Ed. Ghazaryan has been recognized the winner of the contest of vocalists after S. Rakhmaninov [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

Armenian young solo performer of "Premiere" theater Eduardo Ghazaryan living in Krasnodar, has been recognized the winner of the contest of vocalists after S. Rakhmaninov conducted in Rostov on-Don.

"Yerkramas" newspaper reports that 80 young performers from different regions of Russia participated in the contest, who implemented a program consisting of classical works. The contest jury voted unanimously for the Armenian young man. Ed. Ghazaryan is a graduate of the Cultural and Art Department of Cuban's State University.



15. Construction of Charles Aznavour house-museum finished [Armenpress, 11/18/09]

The construction works of the house-museum of the world singer Charles Aznavour have completely been finished. Armenia's chief architect Narek Sargsyan said that currently samples of the museum are being placed. According to him, the museum will consist of two parts: the one will be intended for Charles Aznavour to live there, and the second public part will serve as a museum.

The official opening of the house-museum is intended for the first quarter of the coming year.

RELIGION

16. Visit of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II to Syrian Arab Republic finishes [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

President of the Syrian Arab Republic Doctor Bashar al-Assad received Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and the delegation accompanying him being in Syria on an official-pastorial visit on November 15.

During the meeting the sides touched upon centuries-old Armenian-Syrian historic-cultural contacts and deepening of relations in various spheres developing progressively. B. al-Assad attached special importance to Syrian Armenian community's role and significance and efforts made by the Armenians in development of country's economy and public life.

His Holiness the Patriarch expressed gratitude to the President of Syria for care and kind attitude to the Armenian community. Meanwhile he evaluated very highly the position of Syria's political leadership, in particular, of President Assad towards national religious minorities mentioning that Syria as a country and state can serve as an example for religious tolerance and public solidarity.

Regional problems were also touched upon at the meeting. The normalization process of Armenian-Turkish relations was specially discussed.

According to the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, the same day Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II met with Prime Minister of Syria Mohammad Naji Otri. Issues related to further expansion of Armenian-Syrian bilateral economic relations and development of partnership in all spheres were discussed at the meeting.

Then a patriarchal solemn saint liturgy was served in Damascus Saint Sargis Church, conducted by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

A reception in honor of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II was organized on November 15 at Damascus Kasr an-Nubala hall. General Mufti of the Syrian Arab Republic, Minister of Industry, Deputy Foreign Minister, heads of diplomatic representations accredited in Syria, diplomats, journalists, public-political figures, representatives of the Armenian community were present at the reception.

The visit of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II to the Syrian Arab Republic finished on the November 16 morning.

17. Surb Astvatsatsin Church of Shoshkavank consecrated [Noyan Tapan, 11/17/09]

The Surb Astvatsatsin Church of Shoshkavank was consecrated by the head of the Artsakh diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Pergev Martirosian on November 12.

Shoshkavank as a sacred place dates back to the 13th century. The church was thoroughly repaired with the donations of former Minister of Defence of the NKR Samvel Babayan and his brother Karo Babayan, while the expenses on equipping the area with modern amenities and constructing the adjacent structures were covered by businessman Tigran Khachatrian from Artsakh.

The Archbishop Pergev Martirosian together with clergymen of the Artsakh diocese started the consecration ceremony early in the morning. They consecrated the Holy Altar, the icon of the Mother of God, the four pillars of the Altar with the names of the four Evangelists written on them, the font, and the other pillars of the church.

Following the consecration ceremony, a Holy Liturgy was celebrated in Shoshkavank (after a long period of interruption) by the Archbishop Pargev Martirosian. In his sermon, the head of the Artsakh diocese stated that prayers in this church were interrupted because during the years of godlessness the church underwent the same ordeal as the whole people, sharing their fate. "The yoke of godlessness was also thrown off by the Artsakh liberation struggle, and God granted a victory to us and blessed us to restore our sacred places," the Archbishop said.



According to the information system of the Artsakh diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the ceremony was attended by Speaker of the NKR National Assembly Ashot Ghulian, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the NKR Ararat Danielian, NA deputies, high-ranking officials, and the faithful.

SOCIAL

18. Monument of outstanding astrologist Victor Hambardzumyan placed in Yerevan [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

Monument of outstanding astrologist Victor Hambardzumyan has been placed in the park in front of the State University on Abovyan street and will officially open in coming days. The monument is 3.20 meters high and is placed on 80-cm-long platform.

The author of the monument is well-known monument-maker, professor of Yerevan Fine Art Academy Taniel Hakobyan.

19. About 5650 citizens applied to the US embassy in Armenia to get US not-migration entrance visa [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

About 5650 citizens applied during the ten months of this year to the US embassy in Armenia to get US not-migration entrance visa.

An official from the embassy's consulate department told Armenpress that about 2400 people applied to get tourism or business visas, 100 applications have been presented for getting students' "F" type visa. Applications for getting "J" type students' visas have also been received which is given for studying in USA or to those leaving for USA within the framework of cultural exchange program.

In the first nine months of 2008 the number of applicants for US not-migration entrance visa was 7654. Last year the 53,3% of applicants for US not-migration entrance visa were rejected.

The embassy charges 131 USD for US not-migration entrance visa. Once in few years the State Secretariat is carrying out studies during which the direct and indirect expenses of issuing visas are examined. The last increase of price was registered in 2007.

This year no changes are expected in the procedure of applying for visas.

20. A state headquarter established in Artsakh to conduct the regular national money gathering of "Hayastan" all-Armenian fund in an efficient way [Armenpress, 11/17/09]

A state headquarter has been established in Artsakh for conducting the regular national money gathering of "Hayastan" all-Armenian fund in an efficient way, headed by NKR Deputy Prime and Finance Minister Spartak Tevosyan.

Media and Information department of NKR government told Armenpress that a consultation was held today, where a number of issues connected with money gathering were discussed.

S. Tevosyan noted that there are already positive responses from numerous Karabakh state, public and business institutions and individuals, who have expressed readiness to actively participate in money gathering. A decision has been adopted at the consultation to address a relevant application to Artsakh population.

The money gathered as a result of all-Armenian donation will be extended for the reconstruction of Shushi town.

21. House-building to be implemented in 2010 in rural communities of Shirak province having homeless families [Armenpress, 11/18/09]

House-building will be implemented in 2010 in rural communities of Shirak province having 10 and more homeless families. Head of Urban Development Department of Shirak governor office Albert Margaryan told Armenpress that there are 11 similar communities in the province. Dwellings will be constructed also in Akhuryan, which ranks the second with its number of homeless people; there are 184 homeless there.

"The documents of all the homeless people of Akhuryan have already been sent to Urban Development Ministry for examination, and the head of the community has already extended the necessary territory for construction. We hope that the house-building will start at the beginning of the next year in Akhuryan", A. Margaryan noted.



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SPORTS

22. Iranian Armenian swimmers take part in Asian Swimming Championship in Iranian national team [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

Iranian Armenian swimmers Emin Novshadi and Gamer Dilanchian took part in the Asian Swimming third round competitions in the Iranian national team consisting of 6 swimmers.

According to the Alik daily, the Iranian national team won a silver medal in the 4x100 meters free-style competitions. In the 100 meters butterfly style Emin Novshadi improved Iran's former points. Iranian swimmers won two gold, one silver and one bronze medal.

Levon Aronian shares 4-5th places in Mikhail Tal Commemorative Tournament [Noyan Tapan, 11/16/09]

Mikhail Tal Commemorative Tournament finished on November 15 in Moscow. Levon Aronian (Armenia) beat Viswanathan Anand (India) in the last round and shared the 4-5th places with him with 5 points each. Vladimir Kramnik (Russia) won the tournament with 6 points.

Commemorative tournament's participants and a number of invited renowned grand masters will take part in the Lightning Chess World Tournament between November 16 to 18.

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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.