



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, July 23, 2010

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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### POLITICS

1. 3 Bills, defining denial of Armenian Genocide as a crime, in French Senate [Armenpress, 07/21/10]

The bill, defining the denial of the Armenian Genocide as a crime, which has already been adopted by the French National Assembly (Lower Chamber), but not is involved in the agenda of the Senate yet, is again on focus of discussions. Armenpress reports that the Turkish 'Hurriyet' daily expressed anxiety about the fact there are 3 bills, defining the denial of the Armenian Genocide as a crime. The authors of the bills are the deputies, representing the socialist and communist parties.

The French Parliament adopted a resolution on condemnation of the Armenian Genocide 2001. The French National Assembly (Lower Chamber) adopted October 12, 2006 a bill on defining the denial of the Armenian Genocide as a crime. Now it is expected that the bill will be brought into agenda of the Senate by several senators before the forthcoming elections. According to the bill, the one, who dares deny the Armenian Genocide will have to pay a penalty of 45 000 euros or will be sentenced into 5 years of imprisonment.

Citing some French media, the Turkish 'Hurriyet' daily also reports that the possibility of discussing the bill in the Senate is quite big. In France there are over 500 000 Armenians, who have the electoral right. There are over 500 000 Turks in France. Only 60 thousand of them have the electoral



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right. 'According to some experts, the French political figures will endeavor to support the Armenian Diaspora,' 'Hurriyet' reports.

## **2. ANM and ANC to work actively [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

"Armenian National Movement" party will continue carrying out active work. Newly elected chairman of the ANM administration Aram Manukyan said today at a press conference that active work is expected to be carried out with the international establishments, empower and activate territorial institutions and their work, increase the level of involvement of the young people in the party.

He said cooperation with the Armenian National Congress will continue. "We will carry out active joint work. The results of the activity of the ANM will be obvious in a very short period of time, it will also strengthen the ANC," Manukyan pointed out.

Speaking about being elected as chairman of the administration A. Manukyan said that he strived not to take the office and he even did not dream of it but it was his destiny and he does not see any problems and is ready to work. "The team work is quite succeeded in the ANM, we have wonderful friends and we are surrounded with good people, thus we are going to work with great enthusiasm," Manukyan pointed out.

Referring to the newly-elected staff of the administration, he noted that changes have taken places: three out of 31 members are women.

## **3. Gagik Minasyan says the Azerbaijani side carries out unpromising policy [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

The Azerbaijani side is carrying out unpromising policy and it can change nothing with its low shows, representative of the Armenian Republican Party's parliamentary faction Gagik Minasyan said today at a news conference, referring to the recent developments over the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement.

Gagik Minasyan said the Azerbaijani side has become the victim of its propaganda convincing its people for so many years that it will never agree to the independent status of Nagorno Karabakh.

He reminded that the OSCE Minsk group co-chairing countries on different platforms once again registered the three principles on the basis of which the NK conflict must be solved: these are – right of people to self-determination, territorial integrity and non-usage of force. Minasyan said this is what the Armenian side wants and what Azerbaijan is afraid of.

"The Karabakh conflict settlement process goes forward logically. It is obvious that the threat is not admissible for the international community and Azerbaijan continues coming forth with war statements reasoning it that a part of its territories is controlled by Armenia," G. Minasyan said.

Gagik Minasyan said in case of such destructive behavior of Azerbaijan it is clearly obvious that the NKR authorities must become participants of the process. Without it the settlement of the conflict is impossible.

## **4. Hayk Demoyan: 'Turkey suffered a defeat in the Armenian-Turkish diplomacy' [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

The process of regulation of the Armenian-Turkish relations was frozen, as the Turkish side understood that the process of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide has its own principle and development. It will not depend on any subcommittee, committee or protocol, according to Hayk Demoyan, director of RA NAS Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute.

At today's meeting with journalists the historian said that Turkey has already suffered a defeat in the Armenian-Turkish diplomacy and will not undertake any steps in the direction of improving the bilateral relations.

'Turkey had to suffer a defeat, otherwise it would 'lose' Azerbaijan, as Armenia had stated clearly that no any concession would be made in the Nagorno Karabakh issue,' Hayk Demoyan stated. He added that the issue also refers to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and everyday Turkish-Kurdish confrontations.

Turkey cannot preserve good relations both with the West and East. As a result, the ties with the West, which have been preserved since the World War II, will be broken. It is expected that the West will try to apply several cudgels,' Hayk Demoyan said.

He described one of the slogans of the Turkish policy as following: 'If Turkey cannot enter into Europe, the Turks will appear in Europe'. The Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute added



that there are a number of Turkish deputies in both the lower and the upper parts of the German authorities. 'Within the community those deputies tend to create an intellectual group, which is expected to have a serious influence on the inner political life of Europe,' Hayk Demoyan said.

## **5. RA President says the document, presented to the sides in Saint Petersburg, gives an opportunity to continue the talks [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

'The Nagorno Karabakh issue is currently being negotiated within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, the Co-Chairs of which are the US, France and Russia. The Minsk Group's offers, called Madrid Principles in 2007, were presented to the sides as a base for the regulation. Then the two sides adopted the document as a base, on which the talks have been carried out for three years.

The latest offers were presented to the sides during the meeting in Saint Petersburg,' RA President Serzh Sargsyan said today at the meeting with the members of 'Miasin' Youth Movement in Lake Sevan. According to the President, the matter is that Azerbaijan should answer whether it accepts the offers as a base for talks or not. 'The rest and the statements of Azerbaijani officials are from the sphere of wishes. The rest, they speak about, is their ideas about the negotiations,' Mr. Serzh Sargsyan noted. He added that the talks will go on, in case Azerbaijan says it approves the offers. Otherwise, the President said, some other ways out should be found. President Serzh Sargsyan reminded that three principles are available for the regulation of the issue- Helsinki Final Act's principle of territorial integrity of states, principle of non-usage of force or threat of force, principle of self-determination of peoples.

'As the Azerbaijani side have always been speaking about the principle of territorial integrity, the OSCE Co-Chairs stated clearly at the meeting in Almaty that no any principle can have supremacy towards another one,' President Serzh Sargsyan said. He added that the foreign ministers of Russia and France and US deputy Secretary of State spoke quite tough about the warlike statements of Azerbaijan.

'The talks currently go on. Armenia and Azerbaijan should answer whether they accept the latest offers, presented at the meeting in Saint Petersburg, as a base for talks or not. We say that the document gives an opportunity to continue the negotiations. We wait for the respond of Azerbaijan. The rest of the statements, conclusions are either wishes or comments on previous stages of the talks.

Their own comment is intended for the people of Azerbaijan. Maybe they want to inspire their people or take a desire as a reality, but this is a useless amusement. We never want to be engaged in a useless amusement. We say that the issue should be settled and the settlement is possible via mutual concessions. Nonetheless, there is an important circumstance and we will not accept any step or offer until it is solved,' RA President Serzh Sargsyan said.

## **6. Francis Ricciardone: 'The US will continue to call on Turkey to ratify the Armenian-Turkish protocols' [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

The U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations discussed July 20 the candidacy of Francis Ricciardone for the office of US Ambassador to Turkey. An official from the Armenian National Committee of America reported Armenpress that Armenian-oriented Senator Robert Menendez addressed to the candidate a lot of inquires on the policy of the US about the issue of the Armenian Genocide. Francis Ricciardone cited the April 24 address of US President Barack Obama and described the events of 1915 as 'massacres' and 'extreme cruelty'.

'The relief of the regional integration is a priority for the US. The normalization of the Armenian and Turkish relations will help the stability and prosperity of the whole region,' he said. 'The United States will continue to call on Turkey to ratify the Armenian-Turkish protocols and will support the projects on creation of arena of mutual understanding,' Francis Ricciardone stated. He pledged to do his best to call the Armenian-Turkish protocols into life in case he is appointed the US Ambassador to Turkey.

The diplomat says that during the years of his mission to Turkey he will keep the issues of Armenia, Cyprus, Iran and Afghanistan on focus. US President Barack Obama announced support to the candidacy of Francis Ricciardone for the office of US Ambassador to Turkey early July. The candidate is currently the US Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan. He has served as U.S. Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Palau (2002–2005). The members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations will also address written inquires to the candidate. The committee will vote next week after getting the answers. In order appointed the US Ambassador to Turkey, the candidacy of Francis Ricciardone must be approved by the Senate.

## **7. Election results at 16th congress of APNM rigged, former member of party Karapet Rubinian says [Noyan Tapan, 07/21/10]**



In his open letter to the Armenian Pan-National Movement (APNM), former vice speaker of Armenia's National Assembly Karapet Rubinian stated his decision to leave the party, noting that the elections held at the July 17 congress of APNM were rigged. At the 16th congress of APNM, K. Rubinian, among 40 other candidates, was nominated as member of the party's new board, but he was not included in the newly-elected 31-member board.

Presenting the reasons for his decision, K. Rubinian wrote:

I am leaving the APNM.. According to my observations and information, the results of the elections of APNM members at the July 17 congress were rigged.

It is a very strange and regrettable phenomenon as it occurred in a party which advocates liberal democratic principles, in a party which as part of the Armenian National Congress has protested and struggled over two years against the unfair rigged 2008 presidential elections.

It is also regrettable that this happened under the conditions when the first Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian took the processes prior to and during the congress under his control in order to prevent the Armenian authorities' plans to split the Armenian National Congress. Yet under such strict control, despite all assurances given by the organizing committee, an "exemplary" voting paper, according to which, for example, I was not to be elected to the board, had suddenly appeared during the vote.

Since even sick minds cannot imagine me in the "conspiratorial wing", as a person who has closed a deal with the authorities, it only remains to assume one thing - Mr. Ter-Petrosian is thus punishing me for criticizing the policy of the Armenian National Congress, more specifically, he is keeping dissent away from the APNM board.

To tell the truth, I am enraged, but I would not leave the party only for this reason. Unfortunately, all this is combined with some irreversible and highly degradation processes within the APNM".

In his letter, K. Rubinian also calls on his friends who were delegates of the APNM congress to "sincerely and soberly analyze the conduct of the latest congress".

## **8. Yaprak Somnez: Opening of the Armenian-Turkish borders without preconditions to be beneficial for the two countries [Armenpress, 07/22/10]**

A number of researchers from the International Relations Department of the Turkish "Akdeniz" university are carrying out an international program in the Caucasian and Middle Asian regions, including studies of 1991-2010 developments. Yaprak Somnez, a researcher of the program, said the project has been launched with the efforts of professor Nekati Ijikan, aiming at establishing "academic bridge" between their university and regional universities, increase the level of awareness about the "Akdeniz" university in the countries of the region, assist the students in developing their academic research skills.

The participants of the program are carrying out studies about the social-economic, political situation in the countries in an empiric way – through interviews, meetings, visits. The research includes Armenia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Georgia, Turkmenistan, and also the USA.

Researcher Yaprak Somnez has been sent to Armenia. She is conducting meetings with the representatives of the political and expert circles. The researches made in all the countries will be involved in one complete work that will be published in October. Yaprak Somnez noted that in the book the research works of the universities of the countries included in the studies may also be involved.

In an interview to Armenpress Yaprak Somnez, speaking about the future of the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations noted that the establishment of relations between the two countries without preconditions and the opening of the border will be beneficial for the two countries. "Here I got convinced that the differences between the two peoples are very few. Even the wedding ceremonies are being conducted in the same way. With their friendly and warm attitude people here are like the Turks. First of all we must open the border as from the economic point of view we can say that from this situation only Georgia earns money. The trade turnover between Armenia and Turkey takes place through the territory of Georgia and gives that country an opportunity to earn huge sums," she said. According to her, though Armenia has good relations with its two neighbors - Iran and Georgia - the borders are closed from two sides. "We are living in the 21st century when everything is very much politicized, but for the people we must undertake that step and open the border," Somnez said.

She also visited Tsitsernakaberd, the memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. As to the Armenian Genocide issue she refused to speak about "this sensitive issue for Armenians".



## **9. No violation of cease-fire regime registered during monitoring of the line of contact of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani Armed Forces [Armenpress, 07/23/10]**

Today in accordance with the earlier achieved agreement with the NKR authorities the OSCE mission conducted a regular monitoring of the line of contact of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani Armed Forces in the eastern direction of Seysulan settlement of Martakert region, NKR.

NKR MFA Press-Service told Armenpress that from the positions of the NKR Defense Army the monitoring was conducted by Field Assistants of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Antal Herdich (Hungary), Zhaslan Nurtazin (Kazakhstan) and Hristo Hristov (Bulgaria).

The monitoring passed in accordance with the planned schedule. No violation of cease-fire regime was registered.

The monitoring mission from the Karabakhi side was accompanied by representatives of the NKR Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

## **10. Vahan Hovhannisyan says Armenia must continue claiming opening of Armenian-Turkish border [Armenpress, 07/23/10]**

Armenia must continue claiming the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border, as it has been closed by Turkey illegally, head of the NA ARF faction Vahan Hovhannisyan said today at a meeting with journalists. According to him, the closing of the border is a way of conducting war.

"Armenia has serious legal levies here and must continue claiming the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border. There are numerous international conventions, particularly, the convention on the countries, which do not have entrance to sea", V. Hovhannisyan said. According to him, the right solution in the current stage is the recalling of the signatures of the Zurich documents.

He added that the regulation process of Armenian-Turkish relations has reached a deadlock. "Turkey has distinctly said that it will not ratify the protocols as long as there is no Azerbaijan-inclined solution in the regulation process of the issue. In my opinion, we must not put the stress on ratification of the protocols, but should remember that our goal is opening of the border with Turkey, and the protocols were just a way to open the border," V. Hovhannisyan said.

## **11. Levon Zurabyan says K. Rubinyan's behaviour is a result of inner discontent [Armenpress, 07/23/10]**

A session of the civic council of the Armenian National Congress (ANC) will be held July 28, chaired by Levon Ter-Petrosyan, coordinator of the ANC Levon Zurabyan said.

Referring to the criticism related to the latest convention of the Armenian National Movement voiced by Karapet Rubinyan, the coordinator considered it a result of inter-party discontent "And we do not comment on the inner processes of the ANC member-parties," he said.

In regard to the Nagorno Karabakh issue the speaker said that it is of primary importance to return Nagorno Karabakh to the negotiation process as a negotiating party.

He noted that he has not yet read the decision of the Hague International Court connected with Kosovo, but has always considered that in the context of the negotiation process of the Nagorno Karabakh issue the Kosovo process of gaining independence needs serious examination.

## **BUSINESS**

## **12. Gagik Minasyan says stable economic growth to be registered in coming months [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

The increase of GDP (gross domestic product) by 6.7% in the first quarter of the current year is a good result, according to Gagik Minasyan, chairman of the NA's finance-crediting and budget affairs standing committee. He said today at a meeting with journalists that the growth, registered in the industrial sphere, made 12.3% as compared to the results of the first quarter of the last year.

'It is quite gratifying that it is already several months growth has been registered in the sphere of industry. It has an essential influence on the GDP indices. The implementation of anti-crisis programs is giving its results. I am sure till the end of the year the indices will remain positive,' Gagik Minasyan said.

As compared to the results of the same period of the last year, the volume of services, provided to the society, increased by 6.1%. As compared to the results of May, the volume increased by 12% in June. The growth in the construction sphere made 4.1%. In contrast to the construction sphere, the



indices of the agricultural sphere reduced by 13.1%. 55.9% growth was registered in the exportation indices, and 24.4% in importation indices.

'In this quarter we registered that the rate of inflation reduced by 1.1%. Despite this, the index of inflation is still high in the Republic. It makes 7.3%. The state should undertake all the measures in order to make the index of inflation 5.5%.' Gagik Minasyan said.

He mentioned that under conditions of economic growth the state may spend the revenue in several directions. The revenue can be added to the next year's budget or be spent for the implementation of several projects. In that case some amendments are expected to be made to the budget.

### **13. Volume of tourism increases in Armenia [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

After the crisis the volume of tourism increased in Armenia. The decline, registered last year, is in its restoration period now.

At today's meeting with journalists Amalya Stepanyan, head of the Armenian Hotels Union, presented the results of the survey, carried out in the hotels, which are involved in the union. She mentioned that some progress has been registered in the indices of inner tourism. 'It is senseless to speak about serious achievements, but it is necessary to design serious projects for the coming years,' she said.

Mkrtich Grigoryan, general director of 'Ani Plaza' Hotel, spoke on the results of growth and said that the rumors, according to which those positive results were registered due to the rise in the number of the Persians in Armenia, do not correspond to the reality. He also touched upon the survey, carried out in 'Ani Plaza' Hotel, and mentioned the indices increased by 25% as compared to the results of the same period of last year.

Yeghishe Tanasyan, deputy chairman of RA Travel Agencies Union, said the rise in the level of tourism is connected with the rise in the number of corporative, state and official visits. 'Last year the crisis affected this sphere seriously, but the progress of this year is a fact. We intend some historical-cultural, adventurous programs for 2011-2012,' Yeghishe Tanasyan said. He added that the sum, spent on advertisement campaigns, has not been reduced yet.

The speakers also mentioned that the revenue, which comes from tourism sphere, will increase in accordance with the relief of the crisis in Europe, as it is not a secret, that in contrast to the rise in the number of Asian tourists, it is the number of European tourists, which has some influence on the economic growth.

### **14. China interested in importing Armenian products [Armenpress, 07/22/10]**

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan received today delegation headed by the deputy commerce minister of the People's Republic of China Chjun Shan.

Governmental press office told Armenpress that welcoming the guests the prime minister highly assessed the level of the development of the Armenian-Chinese relations and pointed out the importance of the opening of "Shanxi-Nairit" Armenian-Chinese joint venture of chloroprene rubber production.

Tigran Sargsyan expressed gratitude for the technical assistance provided by the Chinese government and informed that this year in September he is going to visit China to participate in the events dedicated to the Armenian National Day within the framework of the "Shanghai Expo 2010" exhibition.

In the consolidation of the humanitarian ties the head of the government highlighted the development of the relations between the culture ministries of the two countries and activity of Confucius Institute branch in V. Brusov State Linguistic University.

Chjun Shan expressed gratitude for the reception and conveyed to the prime ministers the greetings of the Chinese prime minister. He noted that China highlights deepening of relations with Armenia in different spheres.

The interlocutors also discussed the prospects of the activation of trade-economic partnership and implementation of joint programs pointing out the usage of the full existing potential.

They also referred to the increase of the status of the inter-governmental commission on economic cooperation. In that pre-context the increase of the export of Armenian products to China and promotion of tourism were highlighted.

The Chinese deputy commerce minister told the prime minister that as a result of meetings with the foreign affairs, economy and energy and natural resources ministers a number of arrangements on boosting cooperation have been achieved.



Armenian prime minister said he is pleased with the specification of the strategic directions of the Armenian-Chinese partnership and asked to convey his greetings to his Chinese counterpart.

## **15. Website dedicated to cooperation between Armenian government and donor organizations to be launched [Noyan Tapan, 07/22/10]**

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met on July 21 with representatives of international donor organizations in the Office of Government. Welcoming the guests, the prime minister stated that such meetings help identify priorities and strategic areas of cooperation.

Armenian Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian made a report on cooperation between Armenia and international donor organizations. He presented the government priorities and international donor organization-supported programs implemented in various fields.

NT was informed by the press service of the government that the representatives of donor organizations thanked the prime minister for having initiated the meeting and underlined the importance of such meetings. A number of issues of mutual interest were discussed. Those present pointed out the need to have a joint action database and ensure coordination of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between donor organizations.

Summarizing the meeting results, the prime minister instructed the RA ministry of economy to take measures on the launch of a website dedicated to cooperation between the Armenian government and donor organizations in order to provide information on joint programs. It was decided to hold meetings in this format every three months.

## **DIASPORA**

## **16. Turkey has no Right to Interfere In Armenian Patriarch's Election [Noyan Tapan, 07/20/10] By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier**

Although the Treaty of Lausanne is supposed to protect the rights of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey – Armenians, Greeks, and Jews – these rights are routinely violated by the Turkish government. Armenians in Turkey, fearing the government's wrath, rarely dare to object to the repeated violations of their civil rights. Worse still, Istanbul Armenians sometimes invite Turkish officials to intervene in their community's affairs in order to settle their internal and personal disputes.

The latest example of such blatant interference was the selection of Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, as Deputy Patriarch, after doctors had diagnosed the current Patriarch of Turkey, Mesrob Mutafian, as suffering from incurable dementia.

Six months ago, after a two-year delay during which the Patriarchal seat was practically vacant due to Patriarch Mesrob's incapacity, the Patriarchate's Religious Council wrote to the Turkish government seeking permission to elect a coadjutor (co-Patriarch). The Council then set up an Election Committee in order to organize such an election once Ankara gave its permission.

To complicate matters, the Election Committee, exceeding its authority, sent its own letter to Turkish officials, asking for permission to elect a new Patriarch rather than a co-Patriarch.

Both initiatives made the serious error of inviting the interference of the Turkish government into the Armenian community's internal religious affairs. Furthermore, both requests contradicted the Patriarchate's almost 600-year tradition and practice of not having a co-Patriarch, unlike the Holy See of Etchmiadzin, the Catholicosate of Cilicia, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The request to elect a new Patriarch was also improper, since a new Patriarch can not be elected, while the existing Patriarch is still alive, as Patriarchs are elected for life.

Taking advantage of the dissension within the Armenian community, the Turkish government finally responded on June 29, allowing the election of a Deputy Patriarch, but not a co-Patriarch or a new Patriarch. By so doing, Turkish officials violated the Armenian community's religious rights, ironically, at the community's own request!

In authorizing a Deputy Patriarch to represent the Patriarchate, the Turkish government has in effect weakened the status of that historic institution. Since Patriarch Mesrob is mentally but not physically incapacitated, he may live for many years, while the Patriarchate is led by a mere Deputy Patriarch. Such an eventuality would serve Turkey's interests which has always sought to assimilate the Armenians by bureaucratic obstructions, and depriving it of a freely elected and capable religious leader.

Within 48 hours of the government's edict, Archbishop Ateshyan, who de facto ran the Patriarchate as Chairman of the 26-member Religious Council, convened a meeting which unanimously



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elected him Deputy Patriarch. No other clergymen were given a chance to submit their candidacies for that post.

While Armenians worldwide remained silent, with the exception of Primate of Germany, Archbishop Karekin Bekciyan, a few courageous Armenians in Istanbul dared to raise their voices in protest. The Election Committee, which the Turkish government disbanded, filed a lawsuit against Ankara's decision, demanding the election of a new Patriarch, not just a Deputy.

Where do we go from here? Armenian religious and lay leaders outside Turkey should protest the undue interference of the Turkish authorities in the internal affairs of the Armenian Church in violation of the Lausanne Treaty.

More importantly, Armenians in Turkey should come together and declare that the office of the Deputy Patriarch is a temporary arrangement, not a long-term solution. Without asking for Ankara's permission, the Armenian community should organize a new election to elect a co-Patriarch, who would then become Patriarch after the demise of the presently incapacitated Patriarch Mutafian.

Whether the Armenian community decides to elect a new Patriarch or a co-Patriarch is its own business, and not that of Turkish officials. It is important that the Istanbul Armenian community coalesces around a common position and avoids further dissension. If the local Armenian community becomes united and enjoys the backing of Armenians and others around the world, the Turkish government, which prides itself as a secular and democratic regime, would be more reluctant to politically interfere in the Armenian minority's religious affairs.

## ARTS

### **17. French-Armenian tenor Ruben Elbakyan prepared a surprise for the Armenian audience [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

World famous tenor Ruben Elbakyan, who September 29 2007 had a brilliant concert in Al. Spendiaryan Opera and Ballet National Academic Theatre, is again in Armenia. He has prepared a surprise for the Armenian audience. In conversation with "Armenpress" Ruben Elbakyan said that this time he arrived in Armenia for completing the work on the video clip to the well-known "Besame Mucho" song. He wished that the heroine in the clip be an Armenian beauty: the happy selected is the Armenian model Lilit Karapetyan. And why exactly that song has been chosen, the tenor said the choice has been based on the demand of the 5000-member fan group registered in the "Facebook" social network (by the way the 90% of the fans of the singer registered in the network are foreigners). "They asked me to come forth in a lighter genre so that my performances be available for a wider circles of listeners," he said, adding that after hundreds of performances of that song he tried to be devoted to its original.

Ruben Elbakyan said that the video clip presents his own life. "I remember my first love and childhood. By the way, in the episodes presenting the childhood my son Hayk-David and daughter of the heroine, Lilit, Anzhelika are playing," he said.

In response to the question whether in his opinion the video clip will have the same success in Armenia as his solo concert, the singer said, "As far as the people have already adopted by voice, I think that this well known song in my performance will also be warmly received," he said.

This year April 24 Ruben Elbakyan was invited by the president of the Paris' Armenian Genocide Committee to perform Armenian and French anthems under the Triumphal Arch with the orchestra of the French National Police. By the way, after April 24 performance general of the French army said about the singer: "On April 24, 2010 we needed a magnificent voice to sing Armenian and French anthems under the Triumphal Arch. It was amazing."

Speaking about the coming programs, Elbakyan said that November 29 he is going to give a solo concert in the famous and old "Dejazet" theatre of Paris where Mozart performed. The tenor also noted that it is a very responsible concert as it must by all means be justified like it was done April 24. The singer will perform with the same orchestra.

### **18. Armenian culture to be presented in Serbia [Armenpress, 07/22/10]**

In the fall of the running year Armenian culture will be presented in the Novi Sad town of the Republic of Serbia. Press service of the Armenian Culture Ministry told Armenpress that the ministry is carrying out a great number of partnership programs the one of which will be implemented in Serbia. As part of the event, exhibitions, film showings and book presentations will be organized.

### **19. Film about Armenian Genocide shown in US Congress [Armenpress, 07/22/10]**



In one of the working buildings of the House of Representatives of the US Congress a film telling about the Armenian Genocide – “Disaster – A Genocide” was shown.

The 90-minute film has been shot by German director Erik Fridler. After watching the film members of Congress Adam Schiff, Brad Sherman and Frank Pallone came forth with speeches criticizing Turkey. In April the film was shown on a number of leading TV channels in Germany.

## **20. The Yerevan History Museum in the first half of the running year had more than 6 000 visitors [Armenpress, 07/23/10]**

The Yerevan History Museum in the first half of the running year had more than 6 000 visitors. Director of the museum Armine Sargsyan told Armenpress that the museum has no issue of acquiring new materials, during the recent period every time new materials are being received mainly as donations. The donations are being made by Yerevan people, diaspora Armenians. They provide different documents, photos, personal things. The museum cooperates with archeologists and the materials found as a result of the excavations in Yerevan are also being provided. The samples are being presented both during temporary and permanent expositions. The museum keeps 89 000 samples.

During this year various events have been conducted in the museum: exhibitions dedicated to the 65th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, puppet exhibition on the International Day of Protection of Children’s Rights were conducted.

In the coming future too the museum will carry out active work. Now the program dedicated to the 2792 anniversary of establishment of the Erebuni-Yerevan is being clarified. It is expected to exhibit works of Japanese photographer Takuji Shimura dedicated to Yerevan.

## **RELIGION**

### **21. Rev. Vahram Melikyan: September 19 ceremony in the St. Cross Church of the Akhtamar is a delayed and not complete step [Armenpress, 07/23/10]**

Two representatives of the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin will participate in the September 19 Liturgy in the St. Cross Church of the Akhtamar. Director of the Holy See press service Rev. Vahram Melikyan told Armenpress that the turning of the church into a museum rose a wave of discontent not only in the Armenian Apostolic Church but also among the Armenians all over the world. In 2007 the Turkish government restored and reopened the Armenian St. Cross Church on the Akhtamar Island of Lake Van as a museum. The opening ceremony was done without prayer that is why the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin did not participate in it.

“We are glad to see change in the attitude of the Turkish authorities who allowed to conduct Holy Liturgy in the church once in a year. But what must be done September 19 is a delayed and not complete step,” Rev Vahram Melikyan said.

Historian, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute Hayk Demoyan described this ceremony as another staged show by Turkey. He also expressed opinion that the opening of the church is an example of violation of Treaty of Lausanne as it has not been allowed to place cross on the dome of the church. At the same time on the walls of the St. Cross Turkish flags and pictures of founder of Turkey Atatürk are put.

In this respect the Holy See abstained from comments, only adding that it is full of hope that the decision will be reviewed and the St. Cross will operate fully serving the Armenian community. It would also be natural if the church be provided to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

## **SOCIAL**

### **22. School of Lchap reconstructed by French volunteers [Armenpress, 07/21/10]**

Governor of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosyan received today three volunteers- Mikayel Chaparyan, Balik Karaoghlyan, Frank Tevejyan- who arrived in Armenia, Lchap village of Gegharkunik province with 20 French volunteers. Hayk Simonyan, head of the community of Lchap, reported to Governor of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosyan that it is the fourth year, since French volunteers have arrived in Lchap for the implementation of various benevolent projects and worked with the children of the educational establishments and nursery schools of the community for two weeks.



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The delegation of the volunteers is consisted of not only Armenians of the Diaspora, but also representatives of other nations. Governor of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosyan welcomed the three volunteers and mentioned that any investment and assistance is important for the province. After the meeting the volunteers told Armenpress that this year they intended to reconstruct one classroom in the school of Lchap, as well as place a new door and 9 windows, in order to secure heating in a part of the school in winter.

The volunteers brought some money, fundraised in France, for the thorough reconstruction of the classroom. Balik Karaoghlyan and Frank Tevejyan mentioned that it is the second year they arrived in Lchap and that within the period they managed to get new friends.

## **23. Serzh Sargsyan meets with the scholarship holders of the “Louys” Foundation [Armenpress, 07/22/10]**

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met with the 30 scholarship holders of the “Louys” Foundation. Director of the educational programs of the foundation Zhaklin Karaaslanyan told the reporters that the vision of the “Let’s Develop Armenia” program was discussed with the Armenian president, issues on applying the acquired knowledge in Armenia has been discussed.

“Thirty students who were present at today’s meeting this year have got scholarship, but overall we have 70-75 students: five of them have applied to the universities included in the list of the foundation and are waiting for response. As of the moment, we have 70 students which will get scholarships from the foundation for studying abroad in September,” Karaaslanyan said. According to her, the students may study in the 25 leading universities of the USA, Canada, Europe, China and Australia.

Armenians all over the world and people having Armenian roots may apply to the program, but the majority of the people are from Armenia. The director of the educational programs said that all the students are ready to apply their knowledge in Armenia.

Anahit Evoyan, public affairs officer of the Foundation, said that all the students and assistants are in the Yenokavan village of the Armenian town of Ijevan where they want to understand what they are going to do in 4 communities of Armenia during the coming two weeks implementing “Let’s Develop Armenia” program. It will last for a month. The main issue of the program is to learn how new knowledge and skills must be continually applied and put them into operation through new programs.

Ani Darbinyan said sponsored by the “Louys” foundation she is studying in Ireland and in future wishes to work in Armenia.

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Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

*Established in 1906, AGBU ([www.agbu.org](http://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.*