



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, December 11, 2009

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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POLITICS

1. **Court rejects petition to release Nikol Pashinian as candidate for position of National Assembly deputy [Noyan Tapan, 12/09/09]**

The general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash administrative regions on December 7 rejected the petition to release from prison the editor-in-chief of Haykakan Zhamanak daily Nikol Pashinian as a candidate for the position of a deputy of the RA National Assembly and to enable him to participate in the election campaign under equal conditions.

However, as stated in an announcement that the Armenian National Congress (ANC) issued on the same day, on December 5 Nikol Pashinian was registered as a candidate to run in the by-election to the RA National Assembly, and this status allows him to fully exercise his rights envisaged by the Constitution and the law.

The announcement notes that under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the RA Constitution's Article 3 Part 3, "the state shall be limited by fundamental human and civil rights as a directly applicable right". In addition to this constitutional norm, the RA Electoral Code provides that the state shall ensure free implementation of a citizen's election campaign. By the same electoral code, imprisonment of a nominated and registered candidate for the position of a National Assembly deputy is envisaged only in case of consent of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC).

Thus, according to ANC, the authorities, through the above mentioned court decision without CEC's consent, committed a gross violation of the RA Constitution and the law. "In the given case, any other comment is made-up and forced. Thus the authorities start the first day of the official election campaign with a flagrant illegality with respect to the opposition candidate to the National Assembly," the announcement reads.

The pre-election staff of Nikol Pashinian reports that a pre-election fund (account number 220318000829-000) was opened in ACBA Credit Agricole Bank. Money to the above mentioned account of N. Pashinian's pre-election fund can be transferred from any bank operating in the territory of Armenia. Natural persons may make payments of up to 50 thousand drams, juridical persons may make payments of up to 150 thousand drams.



2. 15 political prisoners remain at Armenia's prisons, Human rights activists declare [Noyan Tapan, 12/09/09]

"Existence of political prisoners in the country is a fact of gross violation of human rights," Co-chairwoman of Helsinki Civil Assembly Natalia Martirosian declared at a December 9 discussion. Reporting that the discussion is dedicated to December 10, day of adoption of UN Human Rights Convention she added that it is marked in various corners of the world. While, according to N. Martirosian, no hall is provided in Armenia for discussions to be held on the subject of human rights.

Head of the Center for Law and Freedom, human rights activist Vardan Haroutiunian in his report under the title The Term Political Prisoner: Armenia's Political Prisoners mentioned that there is no country in the world admitting existence of political prisoners. "Authorities of all countries declare that the issue of political prisoners should be decided at the court and all dictators speak about tolerance," he said. According to V. Haroutiunian, Armenia is not an exception. "Hundreds of people became political prisoners in our country, and all of them were supporters of the opposition candidate," the human rights activist declared. He emphasized that today 15 political prisoners remain at Armenia's prisons.

Director of Assembly's Vanadzor office Artur Sakunts in his report touched upon all resolutions on Armenia adopted by PACE. In his words, these resolutions one after another confirmed that the opposition is persecuted by the authorities in Armenia.

Head of the Armenian National Congress Center for Legal Protection, former RA Deputy Prosecutor General Gagik Jhangirian gave a report on the subject Political Trials in Armenia.

3. Serzh Sargsyan: "If Turkey drags the ratification of the documents Armenia will immediately use the opportunities stemming from the international right" [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

"The Republic of Armenia is ready to implement its international commitments and ratify Armenian-Turkish protocols. The same we expect from Turkey. If Turkey drags the ratification of the documents Armenia will immediately use the opportunities stemming from the international right," Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said today at a joint press conference with his Latvian counterpart Valdis Zatlers. Armenian president assigned relevant state bodies to prepare additions in part of the legislation referring to the signing of international agreements, ratification and annulling. The Armenian president sent the protocols to the Armenian Constitutional Court which must make its decision January 12. "We continue the process. We all must understand that as much the process is being dragged the more obstacles are being created. Political events in future may be obstacles," Serzh Sargsyan said.

According to him, Armenia is thankful to all those states, international organizations, political and state figures with the mediating activity of which Armenia and Turkey managed to pass this way.

At the same time, he said, the efficiency of this process or its failure must be fully ascribed to Armenia and Turkey. "We highly assess the position of the US President Barack Obama connected with the Armenian-Turkish relations, Armenian Cause. He has many times stated his position both publicly and during personal contacts. As connected with the recognition of the Armenian genocide, necessity of viewing by Turkey its history in an unbiased way, US president stated at the Turkish parliament as well. Of course, it is very important that Turkey understands that peace and security will be established in Caucasus only in case of normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, Armenian president expressed assurance. "Turkey's goal is to tie Armenian-Turkish relations with NKR issue. I must once again repeat that from the beginning this attempts are condemned to failure," S. Sargsyan said.

4. Bako Sahakian: Mighty, independent, sovereign, democratic and legal state is exclusive value having no alternative for us [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

December 10 twice became turning in Artsakh's modern history. As it is mentioned in NKR President Bako Sahakian's congratulatory address on the occasion of the Day of Referendum of NKR State Independence and Constitution Day, in 1991 on this day the Armenians of Artsakh expressed their collective will and confirmed the resolution of building an independent statehood. And in 2006 on the same day country's basic law, the Constitution was adopted again through a national referendum, which was a regular great victory of Artsakh having defended its independence and freedom, firmly standing on the way of democracy.

Reminding that December 10 is also the International Day of Human Rights B. Sahakian mentioned that this fact in itself is symbolic as the Artsakh movement, Nagorno Karabakh Republic's birth and existence are a component of human rights, reflection of the universal basic principles of nations' equality and self-determination right.



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"A mighty, independent, sovereign, democratic and legal state is the exclusive value having no alternative for us," Bako Sahakian's congratulatory address read.

5. According to Giro Manoyan, Armenia should leave "football diplomacy" process just today [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama was efficient for the Turks and met their interests. Giro Manoyan, Head of ARFD Hay Dat (Armenian Cause) Yerevan Office, made such an observation at a December 10 press conference. In his words, the fact that B. Obama praised Turkey's policy and R. Erdogan again spoke about the necessity of a progress in the Nagorno Karabakh issue is evidence that Turkey this time also managed to make its view acceptable for the U.S.

According to G. Manoyan, in consideration that Turkey continues conditioning its relations with Armenia by the Nagorno Karabakh settlement the RA authorities should declare the failure of the Armenian-Turkish negotiations just today. The ARFD figure added that unless Armenia just today leaves the process called "football diplomacy," it will be difficult to stop the process later.

G. Manoyan also mentioned that to prevent ratification of the Armenian-Turkish protocols in the RA National Assembly the ARFD faction members will work with the majority trying to influence their position. "The issue of the protocols should be of no less significance for them than the package of tax amendments to which they opposed," G. Manoyan said. As to the Constitutional Court, according to him, there is no necessity of mass actions to influence that instance. "CC should make a decision on the basis of the law and not on the circumstance that 100 thousand people hold an action of protest," G. Manoyan concluded.

BUSINESS

6. Armenia to participate in regional meeting of tour operators in Turkey [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

On the initiative of the Armenian mission of the USAID a regional meeting of tour-operators will take place in Turkey. Director of the Armenian office of the Academy for Educational Development Anush Yedigaryan told Armenpress that in the exhibition in the Turkish town of Izmir December 10-12 Armenia will be represented by the representatives of the Armenian Development Agency and Armenian Association of Tour Operators. Armenian tourism packages and services will be presented in separate pavilion.

December 13-14 with the participation of Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Georgian tour operators a conference will be conducted in Istanbul the goal of which is to discuss regional tourism issues and development prospects.

The financing of the Armenian side is ensured by the USAID which Human Potential Development Program is being carried out by the Academy for Educational Development. The Georgian and Azerbaijani sides are funded by GTZ company.

7. RA prime minister says an attempt is being made on establishing legislative mechanisms in order high-ranking officials are not engaged in business in Armenia [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

A commission may possibly be set up in near future by the Armenian president with the involvement of authoritative persons of the Republic of Armenia, who will follow the activity of about 500 high-ranking officials, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan stated today at the forum conducted in Yerevan on the occasion of the International Day of Fighting against Corruption.

According to him, the government has submitted to National Assembly a bill directed toward making the activity of about 500 high-ranking persons of Armenia more transparent, which suggests an establishment of united, open electronic register, where, taking into consideration the best international experience, those 500 high-ranking officials must present their individual registrations. With the support of EU parliament members that law has been simplified as much as possible and has been made easily applicable.

Armenian prime minister said that the persons, who are to be involved in the staff of the future commission, will follow also the press publications and revelations, which may possibly take place, and the registrations presented by the mentioned officials.

"The essence of the strictest demand of the law is that eventually we will realize together with you the constitutional norm, according to which parliament members and ministers have no right to be



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engaged in business. In order to realize that constitutional norm we need legislative mechanisms, and we intend to apply those mechanisms. This is the first and most important direction of fighting against corruption," T. Sargsyan pointed out.

8. IMF to continue assisting with reforms in Armenia [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan on December 8 received the International Monetary Fund's Resident Representative in Armenia Nienke Oomes who is completing her mission in Armenia, and Guillermo Tolosa who will replace N. Oomes in this position.

T. Sargsyan thanked N. Oomes for her efficient activities, then he had a talk with G. Tolosa who, prior to assuming his new position, worked at the IMF Strategy, Policy and Review Department.

The RA Government Information and PR Department reports that the interlocutors exchanged ideas about the problems caused by the global financial and economic crisis. T. Sargsyan pointed out these problems to be dealt with by the Armenian government in cooperation with the IMF. N. Oomes in her turn assured the prime minister that the IMF will continue to assist with the reforms underway in Armenia and to provide all possible support to help with solution of the existing problems.

ARTS

9. At Beirut's third international festival-exhibition of children's paintings Armenian representative Lilit Tamrazyan awarded the third prize [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

Beirut's third international festival-exhibition of children's paintings with the participation of children from over 30 countries was held December 8 in the hall of UNESCO of Lebanon's capital. Works of 20 Armenian talented children were among 1700 paintings presented at the exhibition.

Press service of Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that on the decision of the commission, the Chechen representative has won the contest's main prize in 10-14 age group, Hungary has occupied the second place and Armenian representative Lilit Tamrazyan has been awarded with the third prize.

During the award-giving ceremony Lebanon's Culture Ministry handed the award won by Lilit to Armenian Ambassador in Lebanon Ashot Kocharyan. The ambassador expressed gratitude to the event organizers and said that the award will be sent to Yerevan through the Armenian Embassy in Lebanon and will be ceremonially handed to Lilit Tamrazyan.

10. Armenian music evening held in Washington [Armenpress, 12/11/09]

Armenian Embassy in Washington in collaboration with well-known "Smithson" national museums establishment organized December 8 an evening of Armenian music with the participation of Armenian composer Tigran Mansuryan, world-famous alt-player Kim Kashkashyan and instrumentalist Robin Shulkovski.

Armenian Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department told Armenpress that the program of the evening included well-known works of Sayat-Nova and Tigran Mansuryan.

More than 350 Armenian and foreign musicians and art lovers as well as representatives of international organizations and Armenian community were present at the event.

RELIGION

11. St. Sargis Church of Javakhk's Diliska village reopened [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

The ceremony of reopening and re-consecration of St. Sargis Church of Javakhk's Diliska village constructed in the first half of 19th century was held today.

Press service of the Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that Armenian Ambassador to Georgia Hrach Silvanyan, numerous residents of Diliska, Akhalkalak and of nearby villages, as well as heads of Armenian institutions in Georgia were present at the ceremony.

The consecration ceremony was performed by Primate of the Georgian Diocese of the Armenian Church Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan.

The reconstruction of Diliska's St. Sargis Church was implemented on the initiative and with the financial support of philanthropist Samvel Nahatakyan.



12. Five domes and crosses of newly-built Surb Hovhannes Church in Abovian consecrated [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

The five domes and crosses of the newly-built Surb Hovhannes Church in the city of Abovian were consecrated on December 8 by the head of Kotayk Diocese Bishop Arakel Karamian, with the participation of diocesan priests.

According to the press service of the Kotayk Diocese, the benefactor of the newly-built church is National Assembly deputy Gagik Tsarukian.

SOCIAL

13. Application deadline for Terjenian-Thomas 2010 program extended [Noyan Tapan, 12/09/09]

The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) announced that the application deadline for the 2010 Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program in Washington has been extended to January 10, 2010. The eight-week summer program, now entering its 33rd year, is designed to provide college students of Armenian descent the opportunity to intern in the nation's capital, while taking part in a full schedule of educational, social and cultural activities. Interns will have the opportunity to discuss Armenian-American issues during meetings with Members of Congress and other government officials. Partial and full housing scholarships for the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program in Washington are available to eligible students on a competitive basis. Applications are available on the Assembly's web site at aaainc.org.

According to the above mentioned web site, the Assembly also offers a similar internship program in Yerevan, Armenia. The Yerevan program provides students the opportunity to live and work in Yerevan. Students will work at Armenian government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), medical centers, as well as meet with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh officials and tour historical sites in and around the country. The application deadline for this internship program is February 15, 2010.

14. Education and Science Minister is carrying out an active work in conducting reforms in the sphere of secondary and pre-school education [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

Armenian Education and Science Ministry is carrying out an active work in conducting reforms in the sphere of general education.

Armenian Science and Education Vice-Minister Manuk Mkrtchyan said at today's press conference that the new system of school management councils and the exemplary statute of secondary schools are in the process of formation. They are among the sub-legislative numerous changes directed toward the full appliance of the new law on general education, which are to wrap up by the end of the running academic year.

Reforms are carried out also in the sphere of pre-school education. A pre-school kindergarten education for children of the age of 4-5 is intended to organize on a principle of 0-grade for province communities, where there are not kindergartens. Deputy Head of the General Education Department of Education and Science Ministry Artak Poghosyan said that 140 community kindergartens are to operate in the territory of the province schools of the republic.

The education and science representative also said that Education and Science Ministry has approved the "Tiin Card" initiative, according to which the school-children, particularly the children from socially insecure families will be given plastic cards to make payments exclusively in the cultural centers of the republic – in museums, theatres, etc. The initiative is being implemented by "Armeconombank".

Thanks to the general appliance of these cards the "trade" of the sale of event tickets in schools will stop. The talks on the demand of its oversight and practical impossibility will stop as well", he said.

15. As of today the number of people infected with A/H1N1 reached 54 [Armenpress, 12/10/09]

As of today the number of people infected with A/H1N1 reached 54. As of yesterday their number was 49. No threat to the lives of the infected is registered. The majority of them have been treated and signed out.

Aide to the Armenian healthcare minister Shushan Hunanyan told Armenpress that at the moment in Nork infection hospital about 60 patients are being treated among who are those with influenza, H1N1.



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According to initial information, during the 30 days about 31,500 cases of respiratory diseases have been registered in the republic, which is twice more as compared with the same span of the past year.

To smooth the tensed epidemic situation the Healthcare Ministry continues its steps.

16. 20th anniversary of Republican HIV/AIDS Prevention Center marked [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

A conference on vital problems of HIV/AIDS was held in Yerevan on December 8. The event was devoted to the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Republican HIV/AIDS Prevention Center of Armenia.

RA Minister of Healthcare Harutyun Kushkian said the center has achieved significant success, to which the daily hard work of its highly qualified staff has contributed much. In his words, today the center is a modern institution which has been in the front line of the fight against AIDS over the past 20 years.

"This center is a unique structure carrying out various activities, including measures on HIV/AIDS prevention, epidemiological studies, final clinical and laboratory diagnosis, out-patient treatment, medical control and statistical investigations, advisory services and monitoring," the minister said.

17. Noyemberian regional hospital under repair [Noyan Tapan, 12/10/09]

The Noyemberian regional hospital in Tavush marz is being repaired with co-financing of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's local bodies of Germany, Switzerland, Australia and Lebanon. According to information submitted by the Fund, major repairs are being carried out with the proceeds from a concert given in Cologne, Germany and also with part of the money raised during the Telethon 2009. The Union of Armenian Doctors and Medical Workers in Germany will donate medical equipment to the hospital.

Despite its current poor state, the hospital continues to provide services to residents of the region and Lori marz as well. About 1,400 citizens receive medical services in the hospital a year. Only part of the hospital is now being repaired so that the other units, in particular the maternity home and the surgery unit, can continue functioning.

Repairs of the roof, the construction of an elevator well, and the installation of metal-plastic windows have been completed. Repairs of power supply, heating and air conditioning systems, tiling work, and decoration of walls and ceilings is underway.

SPORTS

18. Armenian men's chess national team to take part in World Team Championship [Noyan Tapan, 12/09/09]

The World Chess Team Championship will start on January 4 2010 in the city of Bursa, Turkey. National teams of Armenia, Russia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Israel, U.S., Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Greece will take part in it.

Armenia's team for the fourth time will perform in this world competition. The Armenian chess players took the third place in the previous three championships. The Armenian Chess Federation has established national team's staff: Levon Aronian, Vladimir Hakobian, Gabriel Sargsian, Arman Pashikian, Tigran L. Petrosian, and Tigran Kotanjian are registered according to chessboards. Team's principal coach is Arshak Petrosian.

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through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.