



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, January 22, 2010

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POLITICS

1. According to Turkish Foreign Ministry, CC's decision undermines fundamental objective of Armenian-Turkish protocols [Noyan Tapan, 01/19/10]

On January 18, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey spread a press release, which read:

"The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia has declared its decision of constitutional conformity on the Protocols between Turkey and Armenia signed on 10 October 2009 with a short statement on 12 January 2010. The Constitutional Court has recently published its grounds of decision. It has been observed that this decision contains preconditions and restrictive provisions which impair the letter and spirit of the Protocols.

The said decision undermines the very reason for negotiating these Protocols as well as their fundamental objective. This approach cannot be accepted on our part.

Turkey, in line with its accustomed allegiance to its international commitments, maintains its adherence to the primary provisions of these Protocols.

We expect the same allegiance from the Armenian Government."

The RA Foreign Ministry Press Service is expected to comment upon Turkish Foreign Ministry's statement today.



2. Nikol Pashinian sentenced to 7 years' imprisonment [Noyan Tapan, 01/19/10]

Yerevan Kentron and Nork-Marash communities' general jurisdiction court presided by judge Mnatsakan Martirosian by the January 19 judgement sentenced Haykakan Zhamanak daily's editor-in-chief Nikol Pashinian to 7 years' imprisonment.

The court considered as proved the charge brought to him by part 1, Article 225, RA Criminal Code, on organizing mass disorders on March 1 2008 in Yerevan. The court found him not guilty by part 1, Article 316, RA Criminal Code, on using violence to a power representative not dangerous for his life and health on October 23 2007, due to the lack of proof.

It should be mentioned that prosecutors Koryun Piloyan and Haroutiun Haroutiunian had petitioned to sentence N. Pashinian to 6 years' imprisonment by part 1, Article 225 and to 2.5 years' imprisonment by part 1, Article 316, with partial addition of measure of punishment, in total to 8 years' imprisonment.

As N. Pashinian's lawyer Lusine Sahakian said in her interview to journalists, they are going to appeal against the judgement at the Criminal Appellate Court. According to her, passing such a sentence is immorality. According to the lawyer, even the prosecutors had petitioned to sentence N. Pashinian to 6 years' imprisonment by part 1, Article 225.

3. Armenia officially established diplomatic relations with more than 140 states [Armenpress, 01/20/10]

Armenia has permanent presence – embassies, consulates, representations – in South and North Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and in 40 newly-independent countries.

Press and Information Department of the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that since 1991 the Armenia's government has quickly and effectively established friendly, diplomatic and economic ties with the outside world. Armenia has officially established diplomatic relations with more than 140 states. Twenty six countries have embassies in Armenia and the residences of ambassadors of 60 countries accredited in Armenia are outside of the country.

The Republic of Armenia has permanent representative missions in eight international organizations – Black Sea Economic Cooperation (residence in Istanbul), CIS (residence in Minsk), Council of Europe (residence in Strasburg), EU (residence in Brussels), NATO (residence in Brussels), OSCE (residence in Vienna), UN (residence in Geneva and New York).

Armenia is actively participating in the discussion of global issues becoming member of more than fifty prominent international organizations.

4. The statement of the Turkish Foreign Ministry is an attempt to avoid commitments [Armenpress, 01/20/10]

The statement of the Turkish Foreign Ministry is an attempt to avoid commitments, Chief for Political Affairs of ARF Bureau Kiro Manoyan said at today's press conference referring to the statement of the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry on the decision of RA Constitutional Court.

According to him, Turkey blames Armenia, but contrary to its legislation, it has not started a process at all. According to K. Manoyan, Turkey tries to blame Armenia for what it does not want to do, which means that Turkey has no mood of ratifying the protocols till April".

"The decision of RA Constitutional Court is an occasion for Turkey to drag out the process," K. Manoyan said. He is of opinion that the delay of the process by Turkey is connected with Azerbaijan. According to K. Manoyan, Turkey wants to use the ratification process of the protocols as a levy, and if it ratifies them today, then the possibility of putting pressure in Karabakh issue by its side will decrease in some way. Referring to Karabakh conflict, K. Manoyan noted that a circuit agreement on that issue will not be signed in near future.

"The possibility of coming to some solution in Karabakh issue in near future is little especially for the reason that there is no change of position by Azerbaijan. As long as Azerbaijan does not say that the status of Nagorno Karabakh is possible outside of Azerbaijan, the Armenian president will not sign any protocol, contract or agreement over the principles," K. Manoyan pointed out.

5. According to Turkish Foreign Minister, there are unacceptable preconditions in RA Constitutional Court's January 12 decision [Noyan Tapan, 01/20/01]



RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian had a phone conversation with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and expressed concern over Turkish Foreign Ministry's statement.

According to Turkish media, A. Davutoglu, in his turn, told his Armenian counterpart that there are unacceptable preconditions in RA Constitutional Court's January 12 decision. He said that Turkey is loyal to the spirit of the signed protocols and expects the same resolution from the Armenian side. According to A. Davutoglu, the notification process started in Turkish society straight after the signing of the protocols, and the protocols were submitted to the parliament, while the Armenian side has not submitted them to the parliament yet.

It should be mentioned that the Turkish Foreign Ministry spread a statement on January 19 in which it mentioned that the decision CC adopted on the correspondence of Armenian-Turkish protocols to the Constitution contradicts "the spirit and content of the protocols and contains unacceptable preconditions."

6. Before expressing the ambition of becoming member of the EU, Turkey must come into terms with its past [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

Before expressing the ambition of becoming member of the EU, Turkey must come into terms with its past and then selecting the democratic and good-neighborly direction make basic changes on legislative level and undertake practical steps by carrying out reforms in its state and value systems, says the statement of the Assembly of European Armenians released on the third anniversary of murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who was shot to death by a Turkish nationalist, as well as on this year's 95th anniversary of Armenian Genocide.

The statement says that Turkey wishes and seeks to become a European country and EU member, incessantly promising to undertake positive and serious steps for coming close to European standards.

Turkey, which stubbornly avoids the responsibility of the Armenian Genocide, according to the statement, by violating an international law, for already 20 years, blockaded Armenia. During the recent months, under the international auspices and guarantees, on a minister's level signed an inter-state level agreement, but short time later Turkish president, prime minister and foreign minister started making statements agreeing their ratification with unintended and not-agreed new preconditions, the statement says.

7. O. Yesayan appointed Armenian ambassador to Russia [Armenpress, 01/22/10]

At the end of the previous year Armenian Ambassador to Russia Armen Smbatyan was elected executive director of CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund.

On that occasion Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan signed on January 21 a decree on dismissing Armen Smbatyan from the office of the Armenian ambassador to Russia.

Armenian presidential press service told Armenpress that with another decree of the president Oleg Yesayan was appointed Armenian ambassador to Russia (residence in Moscow).

BUSINESS

8. V. Ayvazyan is sure that this year the registration of an economic growth is realistic [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

The Armenian government will not only ensure the intended economic growth of 1.2 %, but will surpass that index as well, Chairman of NA Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Vardan Ayvazyan said at today's meeting with journalists.

According to him, though in 2009 the financial and economic crisis had a deep impact on the Armenian economy, the registration of an economic growth this year is realistic thanks to the anti-crisis program implemented by the Armenian government. For achieving success V. Ayvazyan also attached importance to the right investment of financial means.

"There are many concerns in regard to the growth of the foreign debt. Of course, that anxiety exists and it is objective, but without financial resources economic shifts and serious achievements will become impossible.

Thanks to the extensive policy implemented by the Armenian government we will manage to achieve the intended results", the chairman of the committee concluded.



9. V. Ayvazyan says in case of the opening of the Armenian-Turkish borders an economic growth of five percent will be registered [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

An economic growth of five percent will be registered in case of the opening of the Armenian-Turkish borders, Chairman of NA Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Vardan Ayvazyan said at today's meeting with journalists. According to him, in that case the economic dividends are obvious, as first of all it will give Armenia an opportunity of entering into economically developed market.

According to him, the concern that in case of opening the borders the Armenian market will be filled with Turkish products and the latter will start competing with local producers do not correspond to reality, for the Armenian government can provide privileges to local producers.

"The export of Armenian products to Europe through Georgia reduces the compatibility of our products; the transport expenses are too much, and the export of our mining-raw products to Turkey and other states by open borders will result in a large economic profit," V. Ayvazyan said.

DIASPORA

10. Constitutional Court Limits Protocols' Damage to Armenian National Interests [Noyan Tapan, 01/21/10] By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier

After months of bickering among Armenians the world over about the Armenia-Turkey Protocols, the Constitutional Court of Armenia on January 12 pronounced its judgment on whether the obligations stipulated by the Protocols comply with the constitution.

The Court's task would have been relatively easier, if it were to simply deal with the legal aspects of the Protocols which would have required a yes or no decision followed by a brief explanation. Yet the fact that the Court's verdict was eight pages long and contained scores of clarifications, interpretations, explanations, and restrictions, indicated that the Justices of the Court had to walk a tightrope between safeguarding Armenia's relations with major foreign powers and minimizing the potential damage the Protocols could cause to the Armenian national interest.

Since the Court was apparently reluctant to reject outright these badly-negotiated and poorly-worded Protocols, it did the next best thing: accept the Protocols after placing a large number of restrictions on their legal interpretation and implementation. Thus, the Court's decision partially vindicates all those who have been expressing their serious reservations regarding the negative aspects of the Protocols.

Here are some of the main interpretations and limitations that the Court placed on the Protocols:

1) The Court made all clauses of the Protocols conditional on the implementation of two main obligations: "establish diplomatic relations" and "open the common border." The Justices thus made these two actions a necessary prerequisite for the fulfillment of all other obligations to be undertaken by Armenia and Turkey.

2) The Court narrowly interpreted the "open the common border" clause of the Protocols, indicating that Armenia was simply making a commitment "to resolve legal-organizational and institutional issues connected to safeguarding the normal operation of border checkpoints." Significantly, the Court used the term "checkpoint" rather than "border," thereby indirectly refusing to accord legal recognition to Armenia's present boundary with Turkey. As it was Turkey that closed the border, it alone is responsible for re-opening it. Armenia's obligation, on the other hand, is limited to simply making the necessary administrative arrangements to permit passage through a checkpoint.

3) The Court ruled that only those international treaties that have been ratified under the constitution of the present Republic of Armenia could be considered legally valid. The clear implication is that border issues regulated by treaties pre-dating the Republic's existence cannot be considered valid. This interpretation contradicts frequent Turkish declarations that the Protocols reconfirm Armenian territorial concessions to Turkey, specifically referencing the 1921 Treaty of Kars. Indeed, the Court pointedly downplayed the overall significance of these Protocols by mandating that all future treaties that establish and further develop relations between Armenia and Turkey require its specific approval.

4) The Court countered the text of the Protocols which included specific language about multilateral obligations, by asserting that the documents in question were "exclusively of a bilateral interstate nature." The Justices thus precluded Turkey from interfering in the Karabagh (Artsakh) negotiations and making the improvement of Armenia-Turkey relations conditional on the resolution of that conflict.

5) The Court took issue with Turkish statements that the aim of the historical commission envisaged by the Protocols is to review the facts of the Armenian Genocide. The Justices clearly stated



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that the provisions of the Protocols could not contradict the preamble of the constitution which includes a reference to Armenia's Declaration of Independence. Article 11 of the Declaration stated: "The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia."

The key question now is what happens next?

At a minimum, the Constitutional Court has limited some of the damaging aspects of the Protocols by ruling that any laws emanating from the Protocols, after parliamentary ratification, cannot violate the constitution of the Republic of Armenia.

Of course, it would be far more preferable if the Parliament were to reject these Protocols outright. Regrettably, this is unlikely, as the Parliament is dominated by pro-government deputies. If rejection is not a possibility, the President of Armenia and the Parliament should at least consider specific reservations or changes to these Protocols in line with the Constitutional Court's decision.

Failing that, Armenians who oppose the Protocols must pin their last hope on the Turkish Parliament's insistence that it would not ratify the Protocols until Armenia withdraws from Artsakh. Should the Turkish Parliament not ratify the Protocols, it would be highly ironic if Armenians had to rely on Turkish actions in order to protect their national interest!

11. Canadian journalist Naomi Klein to deliver Hrant Dink memorial lecture at Bogazici University in Istanbul [Noyan Tapan, 01/19/10]

Award-winning Canadian journalist Naomi Klein will deliver Hrant Dink memorial lecture titled "The Power of Being Consistent: Insisting on Palestinian Humanity in the Western Media" at Bogazici University in Istanbul on January 25. The lecture is organized by the departments of history, sociology, political science, and international relations at Bogazici University. According to Turkish mass media the lecture will be presented in English and will be translated into Turkish.

12. Hranush Hakobian: Hrant Dink's death was a loss not only for Armenian people but also for whole progressive mankind [Noyan Tapan, 01/19/10]

The 20th anniversary of the massacres of Armenians committed in 1990 January in Baku and the 3rd anniversary of murder of editor-in-chief of the Agos weekly of Istanbul, Hrant Dink was marked on January 19. In this connection the RA Ministry of Diaspora representatives visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex on January 19.

According to RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian, Hrant Dink's death was a loss not only for the Armenian people but also for the whole progressive mankind as he was a symbol of freedom and democracy. "H. Dink wanted non-democratic Turkey having closed society to be really liberated from the situation in which it had appeared. He wanted all nations living in Turkey to be protected in the respect of human rights and freedom. He wanted relations to be established between Armenia and Turkey only after Turkey's recognizing the Armenian Genocide and admitting the black page of its history," the Minister said.

According to H. Hakobian, H. Dink was a victim of the Genocide: he perished for his ideas, for being Armenian. "No matter how hard Turkey tries to meanly silence people, all the same the justice, the truth will pave their way. History should not be misrepresented, and Turkey should stand face-to-face with its history, should admit the truth, should recognize the Armenian Genocide. Turkey cannot remain closed so long, and all the same the people will mature and will understand what the Turk criminals committed," H. Hakobian said.

ARTS

13. Hamazkayin Association Cyprus to present Armenian traditional dances and Baghdasar Aghpar performance [Noyan Tapan, 01/19/10]

The Sipan, directed by Janna Tahmizian, Dance Ensemble of Hamazkayin Cultural and Educational Association Cyprus Oshagan Chapter will present Armenian traditional dances. The concert will take place at the Strovolos hall in Nicosia on 10 April. And on 2 May The Timag Theater Company, directed by Janna Tahmizian, of Hamazkayin Cultural and Educational Association Cyprus Oshagan Chapter will present Baghdasar Aghpar performance. It will take place at Pasydy hall in Nicosia.

14. A fair of books for junior to be conducted in Yerevan [Armenpress, 01/20/10]



A fair of books for junior will be conducted February 19-21 in Yerevan, organized by Khnko-Aper Library. Director of the library Ruzanna Tonoyan told Armenpress that it will be conducted in the foyer of the library, where the books published in the recent period will be presented. This fair is going to be more extensive compared with the previous ones, books of about 10 publishers and authors will be presented.

"Numerous books have been published in the recent period and the fair is a good occasion for presenting them. Such events appear to be one more opportunity of propagating the junior book and of bringing a child close to the book. The practice shows that after similar events the number of the readers increases", R. Tonoyan said. Workshops and open classes will also be conducted during the days of the fair, people invited from province libraries will participate in them as well.

The Library after Khnko Aper organizes a great number of cultural events during the year, conducts anniversary events, book discussions and morning performances.

15. Four wall-paintings by M. Avetisyan to be restored this year [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

Four wall-paintings by the distinguished artist Minas Avetisyan are intended to be restored this year. The painter's son, director of Minas Museum in Jajur Arman Avetisyan told Armenpress that an initial agreement has been reached with Italian restoring specialists to involve 4 more works in the restoration process. The wall-paintings are placed at the walls of "Hay Electric Condenser" factory of Gyumri.

The wall-painting of "The Birth of Toros Roslin" was moved last year to the museum of Jajur from the half-collapsed building of electric engineering by the Italian specialists, which has been completely restored over the year.

The first of Minas' wall-paintings has been restored in 1990s by Bulgarian specialists.

16. Armenian President hands 2009 state awards to art figures [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan handed today awards to the representatives of literature and oratory, music, fine art, architecture and urban development spheres whose works the members of the contest commissions have recognized as the best ones.

Presidential Press Office told Armenpress that the president congratulated the winners of the awards, saying that "It is a delighting responsibility for me to once again say words of gratitude on behalf of our state and people to those who develop our culture, who in our opinion, managed to erect stable works," the president said.

Serzh Sargsyan noted that the time has come to expand the involvement of state prizes and establish two new prizes—in the correct and natural, humanitarian and public spheres. The head of the state said that he also made a decision to enlarge the prize fund, doubling the amount of the encouraging money award.

The president noted that though the financial-economic crisis gave hard blow to Armenia and the difficulties caused by it have not been fully overcome, the state even on such difficult moment must not forget the importance of literature, culture, and role of an intellectual and show it not only with a word but with a work.

The art figures expressed gratitude to the president for the continuative support to the cultural sphere and noted that his attitude is the best encouragement for the new creative work.

17. David Muradyan dismissed from the office of deputy culture minister [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

With the decree of the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, David Muradyan has been dismissed from the office of the deputy culture minister, governmental press service told Armenpress.

18. New book was published on Iranian-Armenian painter Sumbat Der Kiureghian [Armenpress, 01/22/10]

Armen Der Kiureghian, professor of engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, has published a book about the life and work of his father, Iranian-Armenian painter Sumbat Der Kiureghian.

The book presents Sumbat's biography and art, written by his son, as well as 120 pages of color reproductions of Sumbat's paintings, personal anecdotes and letters.



Der Kiureghian compiled the material over a period of nine years, drawing on archival resources in Iran, Armenia and the United States. The foreword is written by Armenian cultural anthropologist Levon Abrahamian. Haroutiun Samuelian.

Sumbat particularly painted Iranian and Armenian village scenes and landscapes. According to www.mirrorspectator.com, through his art, he played the role of a mediator between East and West: he brought a European artistic style to Iran and he introduced Iranian lifestyle, folk traditions and landscapes to Western audiences.

19. "Mixed Parallels" film by Hovhannes Galstyan to be presented at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam [Armenpress, 01/22/10]

"Mixed Parallels" film by Hovhannes Galstyan will be presented at the 39th International Film Festival of Rotterdam to be conducted from January 27 to February 7. Director of the National Cinema Center Gevorg Gevorgyan told Armenpress that the film is included in "Bright Future" program of the festival; it is going to be the European premiere of "Mixed Parallels".

The International Film Festival of Rotterdam has been conducted since 1972 and is considered to be one of the most famous festivals of Europe. From the very beginning the festival aimed at presenting various films, especially the innovative and not commercial films of the Far East. The non-contest nature of the festival has changed since 1995. This year 15 films will struggle for "Tigers", which appear to be the symbol of Rotterdam.

RELIGION

20. Catholicos of All-Armenians and Russian President discuss issues on the development of Armenian-Russian relations [Armenpress, 01/22/10]

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met January 21 with the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill.

According to ITAR-TASS news agency, the conversation took place before the award ceremony of the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Peoples. The Catholicos of All-Armenians and the Russian President became the laureates 2009 of that award ceremony.

During the conversation the interlocutors referred to Armenian-Russian ties, including the development of inter-church relations.

It's also informed that Holy Patriarch Cyrill is going to visit Yerevan in March.

SOCIAL

21. Less violation of journalists and Mass Media rights in 2009, than the previous year [Armenpress, 01/20/10]

"In 2009 journalists and Mass Media rights were less violated as compared to the results of the previous year," Armen Melikyan, Head of the Speech Freedom Defense Committee, said at a joint press conference with an expert Mesrop Harutyunyan.

According to the statistics, 11 cases of violence against journalists, 14 cases of putting pressure on Mass Media employees, 13 cases of "getting the needed information and spreading it" right violation were registered which is fewer as compared with 2008 correspondingly with 7, 2 and 1. M. Harutyunyan represented the above mentioned violations, trials launched on those cases and also noted that the statistics provided by the committee are not completely accurate: the Mass Media representatives do not always agree to publicize the cases of impeding their professional activities. There is a "hot line" available in the committee. Tel. numbers are: (37493) 107085 (cell) and (37410) 533895 (office).

22. 9394 people got jobs during 2009 [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

At the beginning of 2009 the unemployment rate in RA was 6.3% which increased to 7.1% at the end of the year. RA labor and social affairs ministry annual report showed that there are 99,308 job seekers in the republic and among them 84,493 people got a status of unemployed.

Over 9,394 people got jobs during 2009 and among them 24.7% are young people. 33,300 unemployed were granted unemployment benefit, though the previous year the number of people who got unemployment benefit was 21,043. The National Labor Inspection Board carried out 405 inspections and



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701 check-ups. About 5,087 cases of violation of labor rights of employees were registered and 427 cases of not registering an employee. 1595 employers were legally imposed a penalty amounting to 204 million AMD: 70 million AMD is already seized. Cases of over 1 billion 633 million AMD unpaid salary were registered 393 million of which was then paid to the employees. Over 651 orphans were taken care of in 8 children's homes affiliated to the ministry and 651 children were taken care of in 7 boarding institutions. In the frames of the "Nursing Family" project 22 children are currently being taken care of in 20 families.

23. Armenian government to provide 100 000 USD assistance to Haiti [Armenpress, 01/21/10]

The government decided at its today's session to provide 100,000 USD assistance to Haiti to smooth somehow the consequences of the January 12 disastrous earthquake.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said that Armenian citizens have many times questioned why Armenia is not operatively responding to this disaster.

"We understand the approach of our citizens, as we ourselves, have seen and felt on our skin to what consequences the earthquake brings. I want to inform the public that we responded immediately after the earthquake. From the first hours the issue was taken under the direct control of the president. The Emergency Situation Minister reported that a rescue team consisting of 50 people is ready to immediately leave for Haiti to help. Unfortunately we could not do it because Haiti was not ready to receive the aid and there were many technical issues," the prime minister said.

Armenia offered to display a material support, it was suggested to provide necessary devices, but, the prime minister said, the international organizations noted that there is a problem in transporting the devices and it is purposeful that the aid be a financial one.

24. Public Television to show today the film of "Baku, January 1990: An Ordinary Genocide" [Armenpress, 01/22/10]

The documentary film of "Baku, January 1990: An Ordinary Genocide" will be shown today at 22:30 p.m. on the first channel of the Public Television.

The premiere was held on January 19 at the international scientific conference organized by the Armenian National Academy of Sciences and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Armenian massacres in Baku.

An official from the Public Relations and Information Center of the Armenian presidential working staff told Armenpress that the film which tells about the events of January 13-19 of 1990, is the first in the program of "An Ordinary Genocide", within the frameworks of which documentary films telling about the genocide, massive violations and expatriation committed against the Armenians of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh will be prepared.

The program, the coordinator of which is Marina Grigoryan, is implemented with the support of the Public Relations and Information Center of the Armenian presidential working staff.

"Baku, January 1990: An Ordinary Genocide" film has already been translated into English and Russian. The showing of the film in different countries is intended in near future. It will also be spread through a net and compact disks.

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