



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Thursday, May 26, 2011

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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### POLITICS

1. **President Serzh Sargsyan sent a proposal to the National Assembly to declare general amnesty [Armenpress, 05/21/11]**

Guided by Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Article 81 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and Article 90 of the Law on the "National Assembly Charter", President Serzh Sargsyan today sent a proposal to the National Assembly to declare general amnesty on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Armenia's independence.

2. **ANCA: U.S. Legislators Urge Foreign Aid Panel to Increase Aid to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh [Noyan Tapan, 05/23/11]**

Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ) was joined this week by Congressional colleagues in calling on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations to expand U.S. aid to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh and support a number of other pro-Armenia provisions in the Fiscal Year 2012 foreign aid bill, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

"We join with Armenian Americans from across the country in thanking Congressman Pallone and each of the signatories to this letter for their principled support for Armenia's growth, Artsakh's security, and a fair and lasting peace for all the peoples of the Caucasus," said ANCA Executive Director Aram



Hamparian. "We will continue to work with legislators in both the House and Senate in seeking to ensure that each of the provisions in this letter are included in the final version of the foreign aid bill."

In a May 20th letter to Subcommittee Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-TX) and Ranking Democrat Nita Lowey (D-NY), the House members noted that "Armenia is a crucial ally in a strategic region of the world between Europe and the Middle East and it has extended its full support in the war on terror." Regarding Nagorno Karabakh, the letter explained, "It is more important than ever that the United States maintain a principled stand for peace in this region and support Nagorno Karabakh. There is no question that Nagorno Karabakh is an example of how democracy can be born from conflict and progress into a popularly supported government."

Over all, the Congressional Armenian Caucus members urged the key House foreign aid panel to include the following provisions in the FY2012 Foreign Aid bill:

- At least \$ 60 million in economic support funds for Armenia.
- At least \$ 10 million in development aid to Nagorno Karabagh.
- The strengthening of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and maintaining military aid parity to Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- The removal of barriers to U.S.-Nagorno Karabagh contacts and communications.
- Support for the reinstatement of Nagorno Karabagh in the OSCE Minsk Group peace process.
- At least \$ 10 million in military aid to Armenia.

Rep. Pallone was joined by 28 Congressional colleagues in cosigning the letter to the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee leadership, including: Reps. Gary Ackerman (D-NY), Joe Baca (D-CA), Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Howard Berman (D-CA), Bruce Braley (D-IA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Jim Costa (D-CA), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Barney Frank (D-MA), Elton Gallegly (R-CA), Rush Holt (D-NJ), James Langevin (D-RI), Daniel Lipinski (D-IL), Stephen Lynch (D-MA), Edward Markey (D-MA), James McGovern (D-MA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Steven Rothman (D-NJ), Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), John Sarbanes (D-MD), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Jackie Speier (D-CA), and Henry Waxman (D-CA).

### **3. Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia to meet in June [Noyan Tapan, 05/23/11]**

The Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia, Ilham Aliyev, Dmitry Medvedev and Serzh Sargsyan, will hold a tripartite meeting in June, Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesman Elkhan Polukhov said.

### **4. New Times party getting ready for parliamentary elections [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

The "New Times" party is preparing for the coming parliamentary elections. Leader of the party Aram Karapetyan said they may participate in the elections either alone or in an ally.

Aram Karapetyan noted that currently negotiations are underway with few political forces, particularly with Social-Democrat Hnchakyan Party and Ramkavar Azatakan Party.

"It is yet early to speak about the creation of ally. It will be specified in fall. But the process is not frozen, we continue discussions with different political forces", he said.

Referring to the authorities-HAK (Armenian National Congress) dialogue, Aram Karapetyan said there is no dialogue as a whole. There are certain conditions for starting it. He said the dialogue may be welcomed only in case of concrete systematic changes.

### **5. President of Poland plans to visit Armenia in late July [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

The solution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement depends only on Armenia and Azerbaijan, Zdzislaw Raczynski, Polish ambassador to Armenia said at a news conference today in Yerevan NATO information center, in response to the question about the role of NATO in the Karabakh conflict settlement process. According to him, the NATO Secretary General has many times noted that the organization cannot assume any role in this issue. "I hope that Armenia and Azerbaijan will come to mutual concessions", the ambassador stressed.

Raczynski noted that in late July President of Poland is planning to visit Armenia. Referring to the history of Poland's membership to NATO and the way it passed, the ambassador noted that his country became member of the establishment as a result of long years of work. According to him, Armenia has chosen another system of security but it actively cooperates with NATO.

### **6. Amnesty offer of President to be discussed Wednesday [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**





Azerbaijan displays military aggression, Russia will implement its commitments assumed in front of its strategic partner", Sharmazanov said.

Nevertheless, Sharmazanov urged to be sober, and rely only on the Armed Forces of our country.

## **10. Davit Harutyunyan: New Electoral Code to bring the elections on new level [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

More than ninety changes have been made in the amended electoral code. The National Assembly started the second reading discussion. The amendments will make changes in the whole electoral process starting from pre-electoral, ending with post-electoral processes, chairman of the state-legal affairs standing committee of the NA Davit Harutyunyan said at a news conference today.

He said the changes also relate to the rights of observers, summing up the voting, organization of processes in the post-electoral rounds, etc. Davit Harutyunyan said one of the important changes is the right of opposition to have a representative at the electoral commission who may oversight the process of elections.

The parliamentarian said even in countries where the elections are passing without issues the Electoral codes are being amended. "And in the countries where the public trust toward elections is not big, the Electoral codes are changing more frequently to respond to the raised issues, improve the quality of elections. The Electoral Code has been changed from exactly this viewpoint, criticism was also taken into consideration", he said.

## **11. Parliament approves the amended Electoral Code [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

With 73 for, 11 against, 1 abstained the National Assembly of Armenia approved today the amended variant of the Electoral Code. Chairman of the state legal affairs standing committee Davit Harutyunyan once again pointed out that a number of suggestions of political forces, non-governmental organizations, opposition were taken into consideration while working out the code.

On his part, rapporteur Ara Simonyan expressed hope that the new Electoral Code will give an opportunity to conduct good elections.

Member of the Armenian Republican Party Rafik Petrosyan, addressing to the parliamentary opposition, pointed out that the latter has no room to complain as the suggestions it has presented were taken into consideration.

## **12. NA discusses amnesty offer of the President [Armenpress, 05/25/11]**

Armenian National Assembly is discussing today the offer of the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to declare amnesty on the occasion of 20th anniversary of Armenia's independence. Presenting the essence of the amnesty, Justice Minister Hrayr Tovmasyan noted that the amnesty is expression of kind will of the president, a humanistic step.

"But this amnesty must not be perceived as expression of kind will only, but a new expression of perception of responsibility. It does not mean weakening of soberness. Moreover, the concerns we have toward future oblige us to be more tolerant toward violations", Tovmasyan said.

The amnesty offer intends setting free people sentenced for 3 years, who served at least 1/3 of their term. The offer intends setting free first or second group handicap people sentenced for maximum 5 years, 60-year old people, as well as pregnant women or those having child under 3.

The amnesty will be spread on 396 convicts and on 379 partially.

## **13. Tigran Sargsyan meets outgoing US Ambassador [Armenpress, 05/25/11]**

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan had a farewell meeting with outgoing US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch.

Government's Press Office reported that the Prime Minister expressed gratitude to Ambassador Yovanovitch for the work she has done during her tenure and wished success in her future activity. Tigran Sargsyan highly appreciated her personal contribution to the programs implemented in Armenia with the support of the United States.

The US Ambassador, in her turn, assessed the years of her tenure in Armenia as productive and expressed confidence that the Armenian-American cooperation will continue to develop dynamically. "The US is interested in deepening its relations with Armenia," Yovanovitch stated.



During the meeting the interlocutors exchanged thoughts over a number of issues of mutual interest.

## **BUSINESS**

### **14. Bako Sahakyan met chairman of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadyan [Noyan Tapan, 05/23/11]**

On 21 May President of the Artsakh Republic Bako Sahakyan met chairman of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadyan.

According to the Central Information Department of the Office of the Artsakh Republic President, issues related to the development of banking in Artsakh as well as cooperation of the two Armenian states in this sphere were discussed during the meeting.

### **15. Serzh Sargsyan visits Zvartnots airport [Armenpress, 05/25/11]**

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visited today "Zvartnots" airport, familiarized with the process of construction of the new building, participated in the opening of refrigerator complex. President's press office reported that the refrigerator complex has been built for assisting Armenia's farmer economies, particularly for effective organization of purchasing of the harvest, keeping it in refrigerators till the formation of convenient price. The farmers will have an opportunity to use the kept agricultural goods for getting bank credits.

"Armenia International Airports" has invested about 6 million USD for the construction of the refrigerator complex.

Before getting acquainted with the possibilities of the refrigerator complex, the president of the republic toured in the construction platform of the new building, then together with Argentinean Armenian businessmen Eduardo Ernekyan discussed the development programs the company has assumed while taking the management of the airport.

Serzh Sargsyan was told that the new building was projected in accordance with the international demands for passenger flows and has an opportunity to serve about 3 500 000 passengers annually. It also has an international security zone, halls for serving top passengers, etc.

It was noted that the construction is by 78% completed and now is the final stage. About 160 million USD investments have been made. The new building will be exploited in fall 2011.

## **DIASPORA**

### **16. Arman Yeghiazaryan: Number of repatriates to increase after adoption of law On Repatriation [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

The Armenian government approved the law "On Repatriation" worked out by the Armenian Diaspora Ministry. It will soon be presented for the discussion to the National Assembly. The law has been worked out on the basis of "Concept on organization of Repatriation Process" which has also been approved by the government.

Head of the Repatriation Department of the Diaspora Ministry Arman Yeghiazaryan said speaking to Armenpress that the world experience and particularly the Armenian one shows that if there exists big Diaspora and issue of preservation of Armenian identity the main way of the solution of the issue must be repatriation. "If we want to promote the repatriation in Diaspora and improve of ethnographic situation in Armenia, we must conduct repatriation", he said, saying that he named the concept "repatriate" and "repatriation" definitions, the priorities connected with the state regulation, fix the basic principles of the RA law "About Repatriation".

"After the adoption of law, I think that the number of repatriated people will sharply increase", the head of the department said, adding that the document will already clearly set up a state authoritative body and undertake necessary events.

"I think the expected mass will fluctuate from 1500-2000 people. The number of people applying for getting RA citizenship is incomparably large, but it does not mean that they will all live in Armenia", he said, noting that it is difficult to separate them but the "repatriate" conception intends a person who comes to Armenia to live for good.

"When we are saying "repatriate" we mean an Armenian living outside of Armenia who is not Armenian citizen or being a citizen of other state acquired RA citizenship", Yeghiazaryan said, adding that the



issues of citizens are being regulated by migration legislation, according to him, not RA citizens may be considered repatriates.

About 7-7.5 million Armenians are living in Diaspora.

## **17. Harut Sassounian: Council of Europe not Deceived By Erdogan's Double-Talk [Noyan Tapan, 05/24/11] By Harut Sassounian, Publisher, The California Courier**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made an embarrassing appearance before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) last month.

Erdogan was invited to the podium after lavish praise by Mevlut Cavusoglu, who was acting more like a Turkish lobbyist than President of PACE. Cavusoglu is a founding member of the ruling AKP party and member of the Turkish Parliament.

In his lengthy speech, the Prime Minister shamelessly lectured European Parliamentarians about democracy and freedom. Given his country's dismal human rights record, Erdogan should have not raised such issues! Claiming that Turkey's accession was "vital to the European Union," he described as "foolish" those who opposed Turkey's EU membership "for populist or artificial reasons."

Making a series of dubious and inflated claims about his government's accomplishments, Erdogan asserted that: "Turkey has achieved historic reforms, especially in the area of democratization.... The government has also worked to lift restrictions on freedom. Freedoms have been strengthened in the last decade, and many issues are now discussed freely that could not have been discussed a decade ago. There is zero tolerance of torture, and barriers to freedom of expression have been removed. Some have alleged that there are restrictions on freedom of expression, but this is wrong.... The press is free, and freely criticizes anyone and everyone.... In Turkey, 26 journalists have been detained or arrested, because they are criminals, not because they are journalists." These incredible words are uttered by a Prime Minister who does not hesitate to sue newspapers simply for publishing a cartoon likeness of him!

When Erdogan finished his speech, Cavusoglu shielded him from further embarrassment by allowing only a handful of Parliamentarians to ask 30-second questions.

Erdogan was displeased when Swiss Parliamentarian Andreas Gross reminded him about "the dark side of Turkish history," asking him why Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk was being persecuted for exercising his right to free speech.

In response to Parliamentarian Anne Brasseur's (Luxembourg) question about censorship in Turkey, Erdogan claimed that the Turkish "judiciary is independent and is entitled to conduct its investigations as it saw fit."

Armen Rustamyan, Chairman of the Armenian Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, asked Erdogan what was the point of signing the Armenia-Turkey Protocols, if Turkey is not going to open its border with Armenia until the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict is resolved?

The Prime Minister responded that Turkey could not let Armenia "usurp the rights of Azerbaijan" and would indeed keep the border closed until the Karabagh issue is resolved. Erdogan then made a series of outlandish statements. He inadvertently reminded his European audience of the Turkish deportations of Armenians during the 1915 genocide by stating that even though Turkey could, it would not deport the 40,000 undocumented Armenian workers! He also complained that Armenia is not sufficiently pressuring its Diaspora. The Prime Minister seems to have forgotten that millions of Turks living illegally in Europe could also be deported! Erdogan carefully avoided responding to Rustamyan's question about his personal order to dismantle the "Armenian-Turkish Friendship Statue" in Kars!

The most embarrassing part of the PACE meeting was Erdogan's rude answer to French Parliamentarian Muriel Marland-Militello who asked about the protection of religious minorities in Turkey. Erdogan insulted the lady by point out that in the Turkish language an ignorant person is described as someone from France, which she clearly happens to be! He invited her to Turkey, so she could learn about his country. To Erdogan's chagrin, Marland-Militello turned out to know much more about Turkey's minorities than the Prime Minister himself. As she disclosed during a subsequent press conference, Marland-Militello is a descendant of an Armenian family that had escaped from Turkey during the genocide! Erdogan also falsely claimed that the Armenian Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island is "now open for worship." The fact is that the Turkish government converted the church into a state museum, allowing Divine Liturgy to be performed there only once.

Another member of PACE, Naira Zohrabyan, having been blocked by Cavusoglu from asking a question, chased Erdogan down the corridor after the session and pushed her way past his bodyguards to hand him a photo album of murdered Armenian children during the genocide.

While the Prime Minister may easily impress his devout followers at home, he completely embarrassed himself during his appearance at PACE in Strasbourg. In view of his blatantly deceptive



statements, one would hope that Erdogan would appear more frequently in front of European audiences so he could help convince them that Turkey does not belong in Europe!

## ARTS

### **18. Bako Sahakyan receives a group of cultural workers and actors from the Republic of Armenia [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

On 21 May President of the Artsakh Republic Bako Sahakyan received a group of cultural workers and actors arrived from the Republic of Armenia and the USA who will organize in Stepanakert a literal-musical performance on the motives of Franz Werfel's "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" novel. Central Information Department of the Office of the Artsakh Republic President told Armenpress that the NKR President noted the importance of combining the efforts of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora for mass coverage of the pan-national events, which is among the pivotal directions of patriotic education of the younger generation, as well as introducing the history of the Armenian people to the international community.

It was mutually underlined that such events should be organized periodically in different hearths of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

Minister of culture and youth affairs Narine Aghabalyan and head of the NKR Writers' Union Vardan Hakobyan partook at the meeting.

### **19. Exhibition in the National Assembly [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

On May 23 in the Green Hall of the National Assembly the exhibition of the paintings of the painter Haroutyun Haroutyunyan (Artin).

NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan, the deputies, representatives of the NA Staff, journalists attended the opening of the exhibition.

Painter Haroutyunyan was born in Yerevan, graduated from Panos Terlemezian Fine Arts College, Yerevan Fine Arts and Theatrical Institute. He joined the USSR Artists' Union.

Haroutyun Haroutyunyan's paintings have been shown in a number of personal and group exhibitions, numerous works have been kept in private collections.

According to the art critic Emma Budaghyan, Haroutyun Haroutyunyan's painting themes emanate from his inner world and the rich palette of the nature, finding their colour and movement, become a picturesque landscape.

Haroutyun Haroutyunyan thanked the NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan for the honour of showing his works in the parliament.

### **20. The Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan participated in the honoring evening of Charles Aznavour in New York [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

On May 20, in New York the Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan took part in the honoring evening of Charles Aznavour organized by the Armenian Benevolent Foundation.

Over 600 people were present in the evening: the USA congressmen, representatives of American culture and Armenian community.

The Armenian Foreign Minister said that he was happy for implementation of programs devoted to Armenia with Charles Aznavour during 10 years of being the Armenian Ambassador to Paris. He also said that they planned to carry out new programs. The Minister Nalbandyan informed that the Armenian Ambassador, National hero Charles Aznavour under the patronage of Armenian and French presidents would give a concert devoted to the 20th anniversary of Armenia in Olympia Hall of Paris.

## RELIGION

### **21. Armenian Church to soon have legal status in Georgia [Armenpress, 05/25/11]**

"I think in near future Georgia will start giving legal status to all its religious organizations", assistant to the president of Georgia Van Bayburd said, speaking about giving legal status to Armenian church in Georgia.

"This issue will get positive solution. Not only Armenian Apostolic Church, but the Georgian Muslims as well as all other religious organizations will have status", Van Bayburd said.



He said during the past six years in Armenian-populated Samtskhe-Javakhq and Kwemo-Kartli 45 new churches were built. "Another issue is that we do not have priests. We hope that when His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin B visits Georgia and meets Georgian Patriarch Ilya II they will discuss the issues and solve them", Van Bayburd said.

## SOCIAL

### **22. Bako Sahakyan received a group of participants of the "Legal, political and historical bases of the NKR's formation" international conference [Noyan Tapan, 05/23/11]**

On 21 May President of the Artsakh Republic Bako Sahakyan received a group of participants of the "Legal, political and historical bases of the NKR's formation" international conference organized in Stepanakert.

Issues related to state building in Artsakh, Azerbaijani-Karabagh conflict settlement and regional trends were discussed during the meeting. Special attention was paid to deepening and widening ties between scientific-analytical centers of Artsakh, Armenia and abroad.

According to the Central Information Department of the Office of the Artsakh Republic President, the Head of the State underlined that Artsakh was interested in such relations considering it a significant factor for having a more profound view of the regional processes.

Deputy speaker of the National Assembly Arthur Tovmasyan partook at the meeting.

### **23. Six thousand apartments built in Armenia for refugees [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

During the past 22 years 6 thousand apartments have been built in Armenia for refugees. Head of the State Migration Service of the RA Territorial Administration Ministry Gagik Yeganyan said at a news conference today that more than half million Armenians were displaced from their houses as a result of the Azerbaijan's policy of ethnic cleansing in 1988-1992. About 360000 of them found shelter in Armenia. According to him, from 2004 the Armenian government has directed its efforts toward ensuring 3500 needy refugees families will hostels. Starting from 2005 noticeable means have been allocated from the state budget with that aim – each year about 3-5 million USD.

"But unfortunately, as a result of the financial economic crisis there was no opportunity to continue the program neither last year nor this. Currently 1175 families are waiting for apartments", Yeganyan noted, saying that for accomplishing this program 45 million USD will be needed.

He assured that the issue remains one of the important ones for the government.

### **24. Narek Sargsyan - new chief architect of Yerevan [Armenpress, 05/23/11]**

Yerevan mayor Karen Karapetyan presented today at the working consultation the new chief architect of Yerevan Narek Sargsyan. "I positively assess our joint work with Mikhael Hasratyan. He was dismissed from the office according to his own resignation application, I do not exclude that Mr Hasratyan will stay in the system in other status if he expresses such wish", the mayor said.

### **25. Preparation works for conduction of population census are underway [Armenpress, 05/25/11]**

The preparation works for the conduction of main population census scheduled in Armenia for October 12-21 are underway. Karine Kuyumjyan, head of the population census and demography department of the Armenian National Statistical Service, told Armenpress that the works are ongoing as planned.

In late April regular sitting of the population census committee took place, the process of preparatory works was presented. In May sittings of provincial and urban committees are being held.

Kuyumjyan said as of the moment the prior issue is the financing, currently negotiations are being held with donor organizations. There is an issue of giving salaries to about 16 000 employees engaged in the census works. She said the World Bank, governments of Norway, India will support in conduction of the population census, Italian government will also provide certain assistance.

Overall about 2.5 billion AMD is necessary for the conduction of the population census, working out of materials and publishing them, Kuyumjyan said.

## SPORTS



**26. President Serzh Sargsyan received Vic Darchinian [Armenpress, 05/21/11]**

President Serzh Sargsyan received today super flyweight IBO world champion Vic Darchinian.

The President of Armenia congratulated the renowned athlete on his recent victory in a spectacular fight vs. Yonhny Perez and on receiving the IBO world champion title. The President wished the world champion continuous success and stressed that here, in Armenia we follow closely all his fights and take pride in his and our all other compatriots' victories in sports.

According to the Press office of the President of the Republic of Armenia, Vic Darchinian said that it was emblematic that the fight took place on April 24, on the day of commemoration of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and he won.

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Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

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