

# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

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## French Defense Chief Visits Armenia Amid Deepening Ties

By Astghik Bedevian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun/AFP) — France will provide more weapons and other military assistance to Armenia to help it defend its territory, French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu said during a first-ever visit to Yerevan on Friday, February 23.

“Threats hanging over Armenia force us to move forward faster,” he told Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. “It is very important for us to react and take necessary steps quickly.”

Speaking after talks with his Armenian counterpart, Suren Papikyan, held earlier in the day, Lecornu confirmed that Armenia took delivery the previous night of the first batch of French night-vision devices

commissioned by it last year. The Armenian military will also soon receive air-defense radar systems and more armored personnel carriers from French manufacturers, he said.

The French defense group Thales signed with the Armenian Defense Ministry a contract for the supply of three GM200 radars during Papikyan’s visit to Paris last October. Papikyan and Lecornu signed at the time a “letter of intent” on Armenia’s future acquisition of short-range surface-to-air missiles manufactured by another French company.

Lecornu indicated that the supply of the Mistral air-defense systems is a matter of time. What is more, he see FRANCE, page 2

## France Honors French-Armenian Hero Missak Manouchian

By Jean Eckian

PARIS — Through the voice of French President Emmanuel Macron, France honors Missak Manouchian, a great figure of the French Resistance, hero of a singular story of a stateless Armenian poet who fought against the German occupiers on French soil. It would take several columns to write the story of this committed man who, with his comrades, carried out over 90 attacks and acts of sabotage, killing 150 Germans and wounding 600 more. The Nazis called it the Army of Crime.

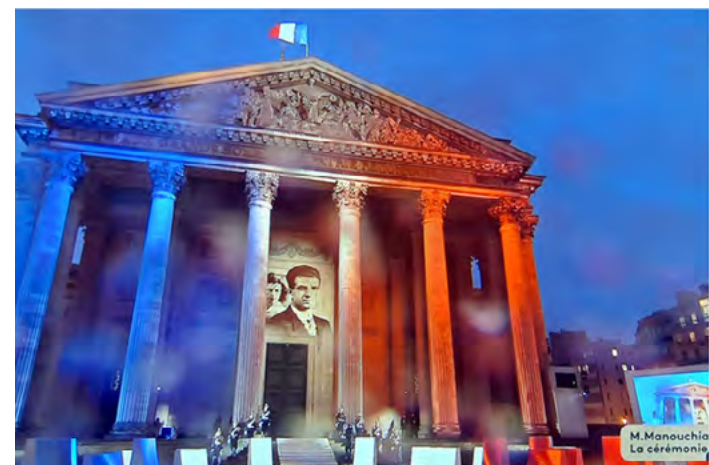
On February 21, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manouchian’s execution by the Nazis in 1944,



Missak Manouchian

France admitted the glorious resistance fighter to the Panthéon mausoleum, home to the greatest figures in the land of human rights.

see MANOUCHIAN, page 7



Scene from the Pantheon ceremonies



Rally in Stepanakert. December 25, 2022 (Marut Vanyan Photo)

## A New Reality for Displaced Artsakh Armenians

By Marut Vanyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — The shock is gone, and so is the attention, it seems. What bothers Artsakh (Karabakh) Armenians after the ethnic cleansing, in their new lives in Armenia?

“All the same, Stepanakert is a wonderful city... I am there every night in my dreams. I saw the cars flying through the streets like airplanes. Just as we see on the Internet what the future cities will be like,” says Armen Mirzoyan, who was forcibly displaced from Artsakh in September 2023 and now lives in Abovyan, Armenia. “I was breathing there, the nature was different there, the air was different, everything was different. Everyone is guilty for this disaster. If you can’t keep something, they take it from you. I wonder if the Azerbaijanis will be able



Artsakh is ours. Abovyan, Armenia. January 9, 2024 (Marut Vanyan Photo)

to live in Stepanakert,” he asks, before answering himself, “I don’t think so.”

see DISPLACED, page 4

## Ukraine’s Zelensky Reportedly Will Visit Armenia

By Artak Khulian and Shoghik Glastian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky is planning to visit Armenia next week amid the South Caucasus country’s mounting tensions with Russia, a diplomatic source told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service on February 26.

The visit will likely take place on March 4, the source said, adding that Zelensky will also travel to Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry pointedly declined to confirm or deny the information, saying only that it informs the public about the visits of foreign leaders “in due course.”

Ukraine’s charge d’affaires in Yerevan, Valeri Lo-

bach, was also coy about the possibility of such a trip. “The spring will bring positive events to Armenia,” he told reporters on Friday.

News of Zelensky’s possible trip followed Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s recent visits to Germany and France during which he stepped up his criticism of Russia. In particular, Pashinyan for the first time denounced the Russian invasion of Ukraine, saying that it violated a December 1991 declaration in which newly independent Soviet republics recognized each other’s Soviet-era borders.

Lawmakers representing Pashinyan’s ruling Civil Contract party on February 26 gave more indications that the Ukrainian president, who has not visited any see ZELENSKY, page 3

### ARMENIA

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### ATLANTA

ACYOA Seniors Serve on Mission Trip in Atlanta

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### NEW YORK

Mardanyan Makes Waves with Carnegie Hall’s Musical Armenia

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# Arts & Culture

## 'Armenia, My Home' Premieres On PBS Stations Across the Country

NEW YORK —PBS will show the premiere of "Armenia, My Home," a spectacular visual journey through Armenia, premiering February 27 on PBS (check local listings). From filmmaker Andrew Goldberg, the documentary promises viewers a breathtaking exploration of Armenia's rich cultural tapestry, featuring stunning cinematography, striking archival photographs, incredible interviews, and vibrant music.

The documentary, narrated by Andrea Martin ("Only Murders in the Building"), features prominent



Andrea Martin (photo Jeff Vespa)

voices from the Armenian diaspora including actor Eric Bogosian ("Succession"); author Chris Bohjalian (HBO's "The Flight Attendant"); Pulitzer Prize-winning author Peter Balakian (*Black Dog of Fate*); journalist Araksya Karapetyan ("Good Day LA"); author Dawn Anahid Mackeen (*The Hundred-Year Walk*); Conan O'Brien's famed assistant Sona Movsesian; and Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of NY. Additional voices include educator Dottie Bengoian, internationally renowned artist Michael Aram, comedian Vahe Berberian, and scholars Ron Suny and Salpi Ghazarian.

"Armenia, My Home" celebrates the modern-day, independent Armenian Republic and its people, and offers a lens into the nearly 3,000-year-old storied past of the world's first Christian nation. From medieval monasteries nestled in northern forests to the spectacular Hellenistic temple of Garni, the documentary takes viewers on a compelling journey through Armenia's diverse landscapes. Sweeping from the Caucasian mountains with stunning views of the peaks of Mount Ararat, "Armenia, My Home" seamlessly blends the epic with the every day, evoking the deep emotions felt by Armenian Americans for a heritage that has endured for millennia. The film incorporates the spiritual charm of Armenian music throughout, telling a story that resonates with the fusion of East and West.

"For so many that we interviewed in this film, Armenia is more than a country, it's a part of who they are — a community that has survived and flourished, despite untold enemies who sought to conquer them. This is more than a story of a nation, it is the story of some of the most resilient people alive," stated director Andrew Goldberg.

"It's an honor to narrate this documentary exploring Armenia's storied past and vibrant culture," said Emmy Award-winning actress Andrea Martin. "As an Armenian-American, I am deeply connected to our ancient see PBS, page 17



## Frunze Dovlatyan Soviet Armenian Classic Film in Spotlight at Socially Relevant Film Festival

NEW YORK — The 11th Edition of SR Socially Relevant™ Film Festival opens March 13 at the Maysles Documentary Center and continues March 14 at MRHS, March 15-17 at Cinema Village, March 18 at the National Arts Club for the Awards Ceremony. The festival covers a broad range of social issues. The official Selection including the short films line up can be found on the festival's website under the 2024 Program, totaling 53 films this year, nine of which are Armenian-themed. The Armenian films are as follows:

- "Barev Yes Em" (Hello It's Me), by Frunze Dovlatyan. It is one of the historic milestones of Armenian cinema, and was inspired by the lives of two physicists. "Love and death, war and creation, the problem of memory [...] with unexpected freshness. It's a great film," Sergei Parajanov said about it.

The film will be the Spotlight Screening of the 11th annual edition of SR Socially Relevant™ Film Festival. It stars Armen Djigarkhanian, Rolan Bykov and Margarita Terekhova in her film debut. The film was seen by 10 million people when first released in 1966.

"Barev Yes Em" screens at Cinema Village on March 17 at 5 p.m., to celebrate 100 years of Armenian Cinema as it steps into its second century.

- "The Forgotten Homeland," by Essam Nagi is a documentary about life at the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. 2022, from Egypt.

- "Partings and Landings," by Kardash Onnig is a documentary about the filmmaker's Armenian survivor family migrating from their ancestral home in Turkey to Syria, Lebanon, and the US.

- "Edge," by Sona Khachatryan is a short documentary about the edges of Yerevan, where the environment shapes the stories of its inhabitants.

- "250km" by Hasmik Movsisyan is a narrative short where a 14-year-old boy embarks on a treacherous 250-kilometer journey to save his family.

- "Blockade" by Hakob Melkonyan is a documentary about the inhabitants of the Armenian village of Chinari trying to survive the war between Azeris and Armenians, and a blockade.

- "Manuscripts Don't Burn" by Mariam Ohanyan is a documentary about the Armenian heritage of Lviv, and the history of the Armenian church there, closed during Soviet times.

- "The Desire to Live" by Mariam Avetisyan is a documentary web series about post-war life in Artsakh and the aftermath of the 2020 war.

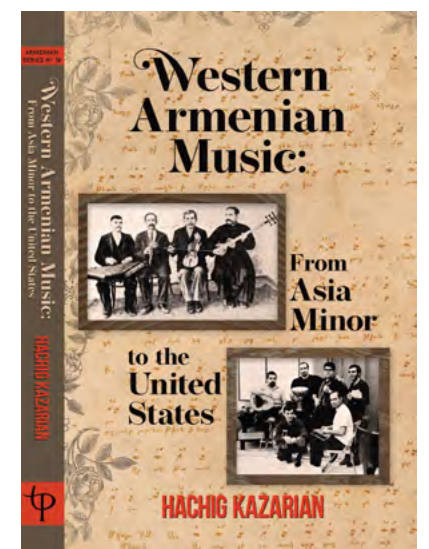
- "Metamorphoses," by Trocquet Valère & Fert Florence, is a narrative short see FESTIVAL, page 14

## Hachig Kazarian To Discuss Western Armenian Music

FRESNO — Musician Hachig Kazarian will speak in a virtual presentation on "Western Armenian Music: An Artist's Perspective" at 11 a.m. (California time)/2 p.m. (New York time) on Saturday, March 9.

The event is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2024 Lecture Series.

Silenced for over one hundred years, the Western Armenian music brought to America by the first Armenian immigrants has become an integral part of Armenian culture in the United States. Artist and musician Kazarian, author of *Western Armenian Music: From Asia Minor to the United States* (Armenian Series, The Press at California State University, Fresno, 2023), will examine the many facets of Western Armenian music, and how it has been neglected due to the Armenian Genocide of



1915. He will discuss his motivation for why he wrote the book *Western Armenian Music*, and based on his many years of research and musical performances, Kazarian will address the accuracy of transcription, authenticity, and the documentation of Western Armenian music.

Kazarian was born in Detroit to immigrant parents of the Armenian Genocide. He is a retired secondary instrumental music educator with 46 years of teaching experience, which includes a suburban Detroit school system and the Clark County schools in Las Vegas, Nevada. He received his professional credentials from the Juilliard School of Music, where he earned a B.S. and M.A. degree in clarinet performance. He also attended Eastern Michigan University, where he received an M.A. degree in Music Literature/Ethnomusicology. Kazarian has performed Western Armenian music for many Armenian churches, societies, and patriotic organizations throughout the United States. He has been a leading role model for many young Armenian-American clarinetists for decades and performs as he was taught by an Armenian immigrant musician.

The Zoom registration link is: <https://bit.ly/armenianstudieshachigkazarian>. For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, visit <https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>.



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



## Sweet Biscuits from Mediterranean Meals for Mom

Helen Adourian is the successful blogger and entrepreneur at Mediterranean Meals for Moms. She is also a licensed cosmetologist and fashion consultant. When she married her husband John, they traveled extensively which gave her extra time to discover and refine her true culinary passion and creativity. Having two sets of twins since then, Helen has made it her goal to create a variety of healthy and organic foods for her family as often as possible. "I am a first-generation American-Armenian, and I like to incorporate and create traditional dishes and recipes from my family's Turkish-Armenian background and heritage."

"I was born in Chicago, Illinois, and live and work in California. My parents were both born in Turkey; my father is from Kayseri, and my mother is from Istanbul. Kayseri is renowned for its culinary specialties such as manti, pastirma



Helen Adourian Saman, John Saman, and their family

and sucuk. Manti is the most popular dish in Kayseri for the local people and tourists. My in-laws are from Dikranagerd, and I also post special family recipes that I've learned from my husband's relatives."

"I love to cook and bake especially traditional meals and baked goods from my Armenian culture. My paternal grandparents were a big part of my childhood and I remember them when I cook and bake because I remember the fondest memories with them in the kitchen. Our family likes this sweet biscuit bread (choreg) any time of year, and it's delicious served with butter, honey, jam, and Armenian coffee or tea," adds Helen.

### INGREDIENTS:

2 1/2 to 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup butter (1 stick)  
3/4 cup powdered sugar  
1 large egg (room temperature)  
1 tablespoon mahleb\*  
4 oz. cream cheese (about 1/4 cup)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
4-5 teaspoons water for rolling out  
Glazing: 1 large egg yolk  
Sesame seeds as garnish

### PREPARATION:

Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside.

In another bowl, mix together the egg, oil, butter, and cream cheese; slowly add the dry ingredients to this mixture, and stir to combine.

Refrigerate the dough for an hour or a little longer.

On a large clean work surface, roll out the dough and shape into desired shapes.

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Place biscuits on parchment-lined baking sheets and brush the tops with the egg and sesame seeds, if desired.

Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly golden brown. (Baking time will depend on the size of your biscuits and the shapes you've made).

\*Mahlab, sometimes spelled mayleb, is a small, wild cherry pit from the St. Lucy cherry. It's commonly used in Greek cooking and it's also used heavily in Middle Eastern dishes. The cherries' pits are ground into a meal-like substance.

Follow Helen at her Mediterranean Meals for Mom's page on Facebook, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/MediterraneanMealsforMoms/>

For this recipe, go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1556708281129450&set=pb.100064760706556.-2207520000>

Check out Helen's recipes at: <https://helenadourian.wordpress.com/>

For Helen's Gluten-Free Easter Bread (Choreg), see: <https://helenadourian.wordpress.com/page/2/>

For her Easter Bread (Choreg), see:

<https://helenadourian.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/easter-bread-choreg/>

"I've also made a major lifestyle change for the past few years, and have lost 80 pounds. I share my journey and weight loss tips along with recipes and Armenian keto food on my Instagram Helens\_Keto\_Journey." Helen owns her own business selling and promoting wine that is keto-friendly, low carb/low sugar, and organic. For details, see: [www.helensketovino.com](http://www.helensketovino.com).

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## Soviet Armenian Classic in Spotlight at Socially Relevant Film Festival

FESTIVAL, from page 13

about a series of mysterious metamorphoses that lead two inspectors to an investigation into the humorous world of artist Saré, (Evguenia Sarkissyan).

"Barev Yes Em" and "The Forgotten Homeland" screen only in-person in the cinema. The other Armenian films screen in person (except the last four) and online. The online streaming starts on March 19.

The main themes of the festival are 100 Years of Armenian Cinema, Black History, BIPOC films, Aging and Disability, Women, LGBTQI+, and more. The Festival's YouTube Channel has the trailers of the selection and the live Meet the Filmmakers

interviews.

The SRFF 2024 competition award categories are The Vanya Exerjian - Empowering Women and Girls Award, Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best Narrative Short, Best Documentary Short, Best Actor, and Best Actress. The Finalist Screenplay Awards are sponsored by InkTip and NetworkISA.

"Eleven years have gone by quickly. We're proud to have had the opportunity to present over 700 socially relevant films from 40 countries. The work of these talented and dedicated filmmakers has offered us the bonus of learning about the human condition, filmmaking, and ways of engaging

an audience as the first steps towards raising awareness of social issues," Festival Founding Artistic Director Nora Armani.

SRFF was founded by Actress/ Filmmaker Armani in 2013 as a response to the proliferation of violence and violent forms of storytelling in media and entertainment. Following a family tragedy that cost the lives of two of her dearest and nearest, namely her cousin Vanya, and uncle Jack Exerjian, Armani founded the festival to commemorate them in a meaningful way. SRFF believes in the power of the film medium in raising awareness of social issues and promoting positive social change. This new edition deals with topics such as

Climate Change, Family and Adoption, LGBTQ Rights, Home and Health, Disability, Incarceration and Freedom, New York City, Racism, and BIPOC cultures.

The Mission of the SR Film Festival is to shine the spotlight on filmmakers who tell compelling, socially relevant, human-interest stories, across a broad range of social issues without resorting to violence and violent forms of storytelling.

Early Bird \$5 tickets, the Trio \$12, are available for a limited time before regular prices become effective. Students enter for free with a valid ID.

For more information visit <https://www.ratedsrff.com/>



COMMUNITY NEWS

# ACYOA Seniors Serve on Mission Trip in Atlanta

By Jennifer Morris

NEW YORK — The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Seniors from across the Eastern Diocese just returned from the 4th annual ACYOA Seniors Mission Trip. The ACYOA Central Council partnered with Habitat for Humanity of North Central Georgia and the Armenian Church of Atlanta Mission Parish in Roswell, Ga., over the weekend of February 15-18.

The Mission Trip was underwritten by a grant from the Dadourian Foundation, along with funds from the ACYOA Central Council, which covered the participants' lodging, ground transportation, meals, and donation fees to take part in a Habitat for Humanity house build.

Nineteen young adults, ranging from college students to working professionals, participated in the trip and were immersed in service, education, witness, worship, and fellowship. They traveled from 9 states (Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin), representing 11 parish communities of the Eastern Diocese. They were joined by group leader Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, along with Jennifer Morris of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, along with St. Nersess Seminary graduates Deacon Alex Calikyan and Deacon Johnny Chadoyan.

The group arrived in Roswell, GA on Thursday evening. Early Friday morning, Fr. Kelegian led the participants in prayer and reflection before the group took off for Gainesville, GA, the site of the Habitat for Humanity house build. After meeting the Habitat staff and acclimating themselves with the tasks ahead, the group got right to work—eager to lend a hand for two full work days as they diligently prepared materials and cleared the land for the build.

First-time participant Cynthia Panthier said: “My first time on this mission trip

was special for me not only because I was able to give back to the community, but I was also able to go out of my comfort zone and reignite a passion inside of me. I'm thankful for what the mission trip gives to people, and what it gave to me. Bonding with families, giving a family a home, and making new friendships: this weekend made a huge impact on me and gave me memories that will last a lifetime.”

**Among the Atlanta Faithful**

After a full day on the build site, the participants broke up into four groups and visited four homes of parishioners from the Atlanta Mission Parish. The participants entered their homes as strangers and left feeling like family, sharing life stories and spending time getting to know each other. Participants gathered back at their hotel together and participated in another late night of engaging group discussions that provided space for the participants to be vulnerable and grow deeper in their faith and prayer life.

Saturday's work on the Habitat worksite was especially meaningful, as participants worked alongside the future homeowner. A returning participant from the Atlanta Mission Parish, Emma Freeborn, reflected on her experiences by sharing: “I feel thankful to have had the opportunity to serve on the ACYOA mission trip for a second year. One thing that really impressed me this year and last year was the enthusiasm of all the ACYOA members to serve. At the Habitat for Humanity site, we formed smaller teams by task and area of the house and were able to work efficiently and effectively. Since everyone was eager to help, we were able to complete a substantial part of the siding of the house. It showed how much of a difference we can make when people come together with a common motivation and goal.”

At the end of the work day, and af-

ter an emotional closing reflection, the group witnessed a baptism ceremony for two young adults from the Atlanta parish. Concluding the service, the young adults

ple who eagerly wanted to put their Christian values to work. They worked hard for Habitat for two days in inclement weather. They had deep reflections about their faith.



Members of the ACYOA Seniors help construct a house in Roswell, Ga. (Photo by Jennifer Morris)

provided and served dinner to parishioners and spent time in fellowship playing cards, chess, and tavlo.

The trip concluded on Sunday as the group participated in the Divine Liturgy, celebrated by Fr. Kelegian. After liturgy, Jennifer Morris and Lerna Lacinian of the Diocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries spoke about the ministries of the ACYOA and Diocesan Summer Camp programs, St. Vartan Camp and Hye Camp.

Fr. Yeprem shared: “It was a joy and privilege to be with a group of young peo-

They were pastoral on home visits. They did it all with joy and fervor.”

After a closing fellowship meal and parting conversations with members of the parish community, the group said their tearful goodbyes—eagerly awaiting a chance to meet at future national and regional ACYOA programs.

Follow @ACYOA on Facebook and Instagram to stay up-to-date on upcoming events, or subscribe to their email newsletter by visiting [www.acyoa.org](http://www.acyoa.org). Feel free to contact Jennifer Morris at [jenniferm@armeniandiocese.org](mailto:jenniferm@armeniandiocese.org).

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## WOMEN AND POWER IN MEDIEVAL ARMENIA:

Between Local Dynasties and Eurasian Empires

**PROFESSOR ZARA POGOSSIAN**  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE

**Date:** March 21, 2024  
**Time:** 5 p.m.  
**Location:** Heritage Hall\*

The Catholic University of America  
Father O'Connell Hall  
620 Michigan Ave., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20064

\* Heritage Hall is located on the main floor of Father O'Connell Hall.

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

**For information and registration, email [isec@cua.edu](mailto:isec@cua.edu).**  
To request accommodations for individuals with disabilities, please call 202-319-5683.

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**PRESENTS**

**NORA ARMANI**  
in

**MERCEDES AND ZARUHI**

PLAYWRIGHT: Anush Aslibekyan  
ENGLISH ADAPTATION: Nora Armani

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