

The Armenian Relief Society (ARS INC.)
71st International Convention –Armenia
October 4- 9, 2015

The ARS 71st International Convention Convened in Yerevan, Armenia

The official opening of the Armenian Relief Society's 71st International Convention took place on October 4, 2015 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Yerevan, Armenia. Several officials were present, including the Republic of Armenia's Minister of the Diaspora, Hranoush Hagopyan, ARF Bureau member Hagop Der Khatchadourian, the director of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (AFJD) Kaspar Garabedian, ARS convention delegates and supporters.

A formal agreement of cooperation with regards to cultural, educational, and social projects was signed between the Ministry of the Diaspora and the Armenian Relief Society.

The ARS "Ararat" Award of Excellence was bestowed upon Dr. Eleni Theocharous, member of the European Parliament and head of the EU-Armenia group, in appreciation of her voluntary humanitarian and medical assistance during the Artsakh conflict. Currently, Dr. Theocharous continues her dedicated work on a political level while promoting and supporting the Armenian cause at the European Parliament.

The "Ararat" Award of Excellence was established in 2003. It is granted to individuals in recognition of their outstanding commitment to humanitarian endeavors and in deep gratitude for their unsolicited and meritorious service to the Armenian people.

ARS 71st International Convention Concludes

The ARS, Inc. 71st International Convention was held from October 5-9 in Yerevan, Armenia. Attending the meeting were 54 delegates elected from 12 regions and 10 chapters at large, as well as observers, guests, and representatives of sister organizations. The official guests included ARF Bureau member Hagop Der Khatchadourian, Hamazkayin CE member Meguerditch Meguerditchian and former ARS Exec. Board members Maro Froundjian (Canada) and Shakeh Basmajian (Eastern USA).

CEB Chairperson, Vicky Marashlian, called the convention to order. The delegates elected Houry Najarian and Nelly Vekilian to co-chair, and proceeded by electing Hrip Gananian, Rita Hintlian, Nazeli Avakian and Maral Matossian as secretaries. Maro Froundjian was appointed as Parliamentarian.

The ARS Canada delegates were Armine Karabetian (representing Canada, member of auditing committee and proposed budget), Anna Boulguarian, Varsenig Sarkissian (nominating committee), Houry Najarian (Convention chair) and Annie Ohanian (credentials committee). The convention elected 6 guests, among which was Seta Malkhassian from Canada.

During the five days, the convention considered and evaluated the ARS Central Executive Board's activities for the past four years. Along with educational, health, social and assistance programs for the needy, the convention paid particular attention and adopted corresponding resolutions for the following: the crisis in the Middle East; standing in solidarity with our compatriots in Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhs; providing care packages to soldiers; helping border villages with their various issues; the financial support to the new building of Sosse Kindergarten in Stepanakert; the financial hardships facing the ARS in Greece and Syria; and the immediate needs of the other Armenian communities.

In view of the Azerbaijani army attacks against the Armenian civilians living in border villages, the ARS convention adopted a Declaration of condemnation against these vicious acts.

ARS Central Executive Board Elected

The convention concluded by electing the 2015-2019 Central Executive Board (CEB) members as follows: Caroline Chemavonian, Silva Kouyoumjian and Sonia Akellian (Eastern USA), Nyree Derderian, Rita Hintlian and Maral Matossian (Western USA), Varsenig Sarkissian (Canada), Liza Avakian (Europe), Alesya Bejanyan (Armenia), Anna Der Hagopian (Syria), Nelly Vekilian (Lebanon).