

# ROA CORRUPTION SHOULD BE ELIMINATED

*Posted on November 3, 2011 by Keghart*



Category: [Opinions](#)



**Prof. Osheen Keshishian, [The Armenian Observer](#), 2 November 2011**



In his address in Beverly Hills, California, on September 25, 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Armenia, President Serzh Sargsyan delivered a somewhat balanced speech to a large crowd of Armenians and American officials.

**Prof. Osheen Keshishian, [The Armenian Observer](#), 2 November 2011**



In his address in Beverly Hills, California, on September 25, 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Armenia, President Serzh Sargsyan delivered a somewhat balanced speech to a large crowd of Armenians and American officials.

After mentioning the difficult trek Armenia took to regain independence, the President did not shy away by pointing out some of the "bitterness" our Diaspora Armenians faced in Armenia. Quoting him verbatim: "Many of our fellow Armenians have experienced the enthusiasm of living and working in our Fatherland. Unfortunately, some of them have experienced the bitterness of disappointment, too...However, we must first of all openly and freely discuss the reasons of bitterness." Then he invited people for a dialogue on this and other issues.

We have heard this before, and probably we will hear it again. The President went on to point out, and I quote him. "Corruption, of course, remains one of the greatest challenges, and we are continuing to fight this phenomenon which was inherited from the Soviet era and has gained shades in recent decades in virtually all walks of life, from education to civil works, from social security to agriculture...I do not even marginally doubt our ability to find the necessary solutions. We have the will and the potential to do it. Thank you".

But government statistics indicate that corruption has not diminished, on the contrary, it has grown by leaps and bounds. (Read his remarks one more time).

The major problem, I think, is more than that – in my view, it is the lack of the application or enforcing the laws, starting from officials to judges who are supposed to enforce the laws. This lack of application of the rule of law by officials, including all phases of justice, is rampant and no one (maybe a few) gets punished for the injustices committed.

All this leads to corruption, monopoly, political pressure, poverty, and particularly leads to emigration from the Fatherland. I have written about it several times.

I don't want to give names that have suffered great losses and have lost their love for the Fatherland.

Just last week a Glendale, California resident, Oshin Peroomian, a young and staunch nationalist and an educated man, moved to Armenia with his family to live there. After going through the legal process to defend his property and family, finally erupted and penned a lengthy detailed article

about the injustice committed against him, and decided to go to the European Court to pursue justice. His article, "[Corruption in Armenia: Esti Hametsek](#)" was published in several newspapers and was placed on the internet, explaining in detail all the horrors he went through. Just type his name and the article will pop up. He is not the only one to burst in anger. Several months ago, renowned philanthropist Vahakn Hovnanian complained about his misfortunes and spoke out on television in Armenia about corruption and particularly about the monopoly which raises prices on everything.

There are many more cases, business people losing hope and giving up. There are people who will say "Well, there is corruption in other countries too." The President knows it well and said we should be able to eliminate it.

Corruption breeds cronyism, specially monopoly, which leads people to desperation because prices are controlled by a few, to say the least, and automatically promotes high prices even for basic needs - including food (e.g. a kilo of sugar doubled in price in two years, bread and cheese similarly), without mentioning the basic needs of a household, particularly heating, and the rates are exorbitant now that winter is on the threshold, families are worried as to how they will warm their homes.

Meanwhile the salaries remain the same, and if they are raised they are raised so little that it would not make a difference. Unemployment is getting higher and higher and thus poverty will be augmented. All these lead people to thinking on leaving the country for greener pastures - Russia seems to be the most enviable place because the Russian government actually is promoting immigration into Russia by providing jobs, homes, transportation and citizenship. Several engineers from the Metsamor Nuclear Plant are working in other countries for triple of their salaries.

The President, in his speech in Beverly Hills this year, spoke about emigration and spoke very clearly and hoped that a remedy will be found to stop or slow down the emigration.

Of course, these shortcomings in Armenia cannot be remedied overnight, nor can they be eliminated entirely, but serious and planned efforts should be undertaken by the government to alleviate a large percent of these endemic problems. We need introspective thinking and powerful medicine for the accurately diagnosed ills, otherwise rancor and anger will be fostered. The President asked for open discussion and that's what we are doing. He suggested to work with the Diaspora on these issues. All countries have similar problems (that's not an excuse), including the US, but the culprits are punished and changes are made.

Despite all these there are several positive improvements in Armenia.

Just to point out a few examples: external trade turnover during the past nine months was \$525.3 million, an increase of 26.7%; industrial production was \$740.8 million, an increase of 9.6%; agriculture growth registered 18.6%; brandy production increased 17%; maternal mortality is down; malaria is completely wiped out; Armenia is ahead of its neighbors in the UN welfare ranking, and others too, but all these do not justify the negative developments which are forcing people to emigrate. These ills could be cured if we have the will and foresight since we are living in a daunting period.

The President said, "I do not even marginally doubt our ability to find the necessary solutions."

We expect and hope that the new decade will show signs of improvements.

