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## AUA Hosts Book Discussion of ‘Nowhere, a Story of Exile’

YEREVAN, Armenia — On November 3, the Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Governance (BAPG) program of the American University of Armenia (AUA), in collaboration with Newmag publishing house, hosted a discussion of the book *Nowhere, a Story of Exile* by Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte.

Astvatsaturian Turcotte was born in Baku and witnessed violence against Armenians as a child. Back in the 80s, she used to keep a diary. Years later, she re-visited her childhood memories, translated them into English, and published a book in 2012. Recently, Newmag publishing house translated her book into Armenian and published it.

During the session at AUA, Anna talked about her traumatic memories and how she overcame them. She also elaborated on how her family managed to escape Baku and started everything

from scratch; her life as a refugee; and her struggles to find herself, all against the backdrop of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The book, written in the form of a diary of a teenage girl, narrates the entries in her diary about the pogroms, annihilation, and violence committed against the Armenians of Baku in 1988. As the author notes, she and her family witnessed how life was changing rapidly, and they knew it would never be the same again. “Sometimes my grandmother could not accompany me, and I went out alone and had to keep my eyes down, trying to hide my face and Armenian eyes when people were walking past me. I walked as fast as I could and prayed to God to save my people and me from the hatred around us,” she writes in the book.

Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte is an Armenian-American writer, lecturer, philanthropist, and activist. She has lectured extensively about the plight of Armenians in Azerbaijan in the context of human rights and international law, and defended the political rights of Armenians to establish autonomy in Nagorno-Karabakh. She was instrumental in gaining passage by the legislature of the State of Maine of a 2013 resolution recognizing the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In 2015, she was elected a member of the Westbrook, Maine, City Council.

*Founded in 1991, the American University of Armenia (AUA) is a private, independent university located in Yerevan, Armenia, affiliated with the University of California, and accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission in the United States. AUA provides local and international students with Western-style education through top-quality undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs, promotes research and innovation, encourages civic engagement and community service, and fosters democratic values.*

