



UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW  
SUBMISSION FOR TURKMENISTAN

NGO Submission

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## ABOUT HRF

The Human Rights Foundation (HRF) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. HRF unites people in the common cause of defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy. Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world.

HRF's Center for Law and Democracy (HRF-CLD) is a program of HRF. HRF-CLD promotes legal scholarship in the areas of comparative constitutional law and international law, with a focus on international human rights law and international democracy law.

## INTRODUCTION

This submission was prepared by HRF for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Turkmenistan. In this submission, HRF evaluates Turkmenistan's implementation of recommendations made during its previous UPR, as it relates to the current human rights situation in the country, which is characterized by systematic, widespread, and gross violations of human rights, including: violations of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, enforced disappearances, and torture.

## FOLLOW-UP ON THE PREVIOUS REVIEW

1. The most recent UPR of Turkmenistan by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council was reviewed during the thirtieth session of the UPR Working Group on May 7, 2018. In its third UPR, a total of 191 recommendations were made to Turkmenistan, with the government accepting 172 recommendations and noting 19.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Human Rights Council, Working Grp. on the Universal Periodic Review of the 30th Session, *Report on the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Turkmenistan*, Infographic, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session30/TM/TURKMENISTAN\\_Infographic\\_30th.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session30/TM/TURKMENISTAN_Infographic_30th.pdf).

2. As a UN Member State, Turkmenistan has committed to protecting, promoting, and respecting the individual rights and fundamental freedoms laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Turkmenistan has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture (CAT), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
3. Among many recommendations, the most commonly made by UN Member States suggests that Turkmenistan should ratify particular international conventions and rescind reservations to core human rights instruments. Despite the number of States that have made these recommendations, critically, Turkmenistan has yet to ratify the:
  - a. Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture (CAT);
  - b. Convention for the Protection of All Persons From Enforced Disappearances; and
  - c. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
4. Domestically, the Turkmenistan Constitution of 2016 (Constitution) formally protects several human rights (*see infra Turkmenistan's National Framework For Protecting Human Rights*). However, despite these formal constitutional guarantees, in practice, individuals in Turkmenistan are subjected to human rights violations, not least by the very existence of laws that criminalize and impinge on their fundamental freedoms.

## TURKMENISTAN'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

5. The Constitution<sup>2</sup> provides a framework with several key provisions relating to the protection of the fundamental rights and freedom of its citizens.
6. In relation to the protection of individuals under the law, *Article 4* of the Constitution states:

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution of Turkmenistan, 2016, *Const. Project* (2016).

*The state shall be responsible for every citizen and shall create conditions for free development of an individual, protect the life, honour, dignity and freedom, personal inviolability, natural and inalienable rights of a citizen.*

7. In relation to the equal protection of individuals under the law, the Constitution states in *Article 28*:

*Turkmenistan shall guarantee the equality of rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen, and also the equality of a person and a citizen before the law regardless of their nationality, skin colour, gender, origin, property and official status, place of residence, language, religion, political beliefs, and other circumstances.*

8. *Article 33* prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment:

*No one shall be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment [...]. A person can be arrested by the court only on the grounds precisely specified by law or with the approval of the prosecutor.*

9. The right to privacy is protected in *Article 37*:

*Everyone shall have the right to private liberty, personal and family secrets and their protection from arbitrary interference in their privacy, as well as infringement of the rules of secrecy of correspondence, telephone and other means of communication.*

10. Freedom of expression, as well as the right to information, are protected in *Article 42*, which states:

*Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of opinion and expression. No one shall have the right to prohibit an individual to freely express his/her opinion as well as prevent its dissemination in accordance with the law.*

## POLITICAL BACKGROUND

11. From 1925 to 1991, Turkmenistan was a constituent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), known as the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic

(TSSR).<sup>3</sup> Turkmenistan's incorporation into the Soviet Union facilitated an increased unity amongst the formerly sectarian nature of the Turkmen tribes.<sup>4</sup>

12. Turkmenistan declared independence on October 27, 1991, and in 1992, adopted its Constitution, replacing the Soviet-era constitution that had been in effect since 1978.<sup>5</sup> Turkmenistan's first President, Saparmurad Niyazov, came into office after the fall of the USSR in 1990, leading as the Head of the Turkmen Communist Party.<sup>6</sup> In a 1994 referendum, Niyazov extended his term until 2002, and in 1999, secured his presidency for life, through a parliamentary vote.<sup>7</sup>
13. Following a 16-year presidency, Niyazov died in 2007. His former dentist, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, won the presidential election as leader of the Democratic Party.<sup>8</sup> In 2008, Berdymukhammedov implemented a new constitution, which established a multiparty system and divided power between the president and a unicameral parliament.<sup>9</sup>
14. In 2012, Berdymukhammedov was elected for a second term, though there were indications that the election was fraudulent.<sup>10</sup> The following year, multi-party parliamentary elections were held, but the political process remained in the government's control. Only parties with official recognition from the government participated in the election, and individual candidates were carefully screened to

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Stronski, *Turkmenistan: High Price of Authoritarianism*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Jan. 30, 2017), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/01/30/turkmenistan-at-twenty-five-high-price-of-authoritarianism-pub-67839>.

<sup>4</sup> Viktor Zhmuida, *Government & Society in Turkmenistan*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkmenistan>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Turkmenistan: U.S. Interests and Turkmen Reality*, Wilson Center (Dec. 7, 2009), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/turkmenistan-us-interests-and-turkmen-reality>.

<sup>7</sup> Agence France-Presse, *Turkmenistan's Leader is Voted President For Life*, The New York Times (Dec. 29, 1999), <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/29/world/turkmenistan-s-leader-is-voted-president-for-life.html>.

<sup>8</sup> *Turkmenistan 2007 Elections*, Global Security <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-politics-2007.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> *Milli Gengesh and Mejlis*, Inter-Parliamentary Union <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/TM>.

<sup>10</sup> *Turkmenistan President wins Re-election with 97% of Vote*, The Guardian (Feb. 13, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/13/turkmenistan-president-wins-election>.

ensure loyalty to Berdymukhammedov.<sup>11</sup>

15. In 2016, Berdymukhammedov amended the Constitution to extend the length of the presidential term from five to seven years, and removed the upper age limit, which was previously set at 70 years old.<sup>12</sup> He was reelected in 2017, and in 2019, during an unexpected public absence, his son, Serdar, began assuming several public positions, including that of Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>13</sup>

16. In September 2020, a bicameral legislature was approved to guarantee ex-presidents a seat in the upper chamber.<sup>14</sup> In February 2022, Berdymukhammedov announced an early presidential election, and that he would not be running.<sup>15</sup> However, his son's candidacy was announced,<sup>16</sup> and in a familial transfer of power, Serdar won a vast majority of the votes in the snap election,<sup>17</sup> which was notably devoid of presidential debates, featured the unauthorized delivery of ballots, and was marred by significant voter fraud.<sup>18</sup> Serdar was inaugurated as the third President of Turkmenistan in March 2022.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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<sup>11</sup> Joshua Foust, *Inside Turkmenistan's Surreal Presidential Election*, The Atlantic (Jan. 7, 2012), <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/inside-turkmenistans-surreal-presidential-election/251021/>.

<sup>12</sup> *Turkmenistan Drafts New Constitution Extending Presidential Term*, Reuters (Feb. 15, 2016), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkmenistan-president/turkmenistan-drafts-new-constitution-extending-presidential-term-idUSKCN0VO1WH>.

<sup>13</sup> Wojciech Gorecki, *Turkmenistan: The Beginning of the Berdymukhammedov Dynasty*, Centre for Eastern Studies (Mar. 15, 2022), <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2022-03-15/turkmenistan-beginning-berdimuhamedow-dynasty>.

<sup>14</sup> World Report 2021, *Turkmenistan Events of 2020*, (2021) Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/turkmenistan#159201>.

<sup>15</sup> *Turkmenistan Holds Presidential Vote with Autocratic Incumbent's Son Poised to Win*, Radio Free Europe (Mar. 12, 2022), <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-presidential-election-serdar-berdymukhammedov/31749400.html>.

<sup>16</sup> *Turkmenistan's Leader's Son to Run for President, in Succession Move*, France 24 (Feb. 14, 2022), <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220214-turkmenistan-leader-s-son-to-run-for-president-in-succession-move>.

<sup>17</sup> Victoria Clement, *Turkmenistan's Presidency and Serdarism*, Central Asia Program (Apr. 8, 2022), <https://centralasiaprogram.org/meet-boss-boss-turkmenistans-presidency-serdarism>.

<sup>18</sup> *Serdar Berdymukhammedov Takes the Reins as Turkmenistan's President*, Radio Free Europe (Mar. 19 2022), <https://www.rferl.org/a/serdar-berdymukhammedov-turkmenistan-president/31760986.html>.

17. Freedom of expression is severely curtailed in Turkmenistan. Any written opposition or criticism of the regime is considered treason,<sup>19</sup> and social media users who post critical comments about the government are subjected to intimidation and even imprisonment.<sup>20</sup>
18. The Turkmen regime has employed technological methods to monitor its population, and private discussions and expressions of dissident views are severely restricted. Intrusive supervision by State security services includes the use of tactics such as: physical surveillance, monitoring of telephone and electronic communications, informers, software to eavesdrop on Voice over Internet Protocol calls, remote computer camera operating, and recording keystrokes.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in September 2019, Berdymuhammedov amended the Criminal Procedure Law which further expanded the government's ability to monitor communications systems, regardless of their ownership.<sup>22</sup>
19. Internet access in Turkmenistan is expensive and censored, with the country ranking last in the global index for internet connection speed.<sup>23</sup> Internet resources are arbitrarily blocked, and the State also limits and blocks internet access to many social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and messenger applications,<sup>24</sup> as well as platforms that provide independent information about the state of civil and political affairs.<sup>25</sup>
20. Residents access blocked internet resources through censorship circumvention tools, such as virtual private networks (VPNs). However, VPNs are also regularly blocked by officials. In March 2021, the Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights

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<sup>19</sup> *2021 Turkmenistan*, Reporters Without Borders (Apr. 19, 2021), <https://rsf.org/en/country/turkmenistan>.

<sup>20</sup> *Freedom in the World 2020 Turkmenistan*, Freedom House (2021), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkmenistan/freedom-world/2020>.

<sup>21</sup> *How Turkmenistan Spies on its Citizens at Home and Abroad*, Open Democracy (Aug. 16, 2018), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/how-turkmenistan-spies-on-its-citizens/>.

<sup>22</sup> Freedom House, *supra* note 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Turkmenistan: New Internet Restrictions, New Cases of Persecution of Outspoken Activists*, Civicus Monitor (Mar. 5, 2021), <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/05/03/turkmenistan-new-internet-restrictions-new-cases-persecution-outspoken-activists/>.

<sup>24</sup> *Turkmenistan 2021*, Amnesty Int'l (2022), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/turkmenistan/report-turkmenistan/>.

<sup>25</sup> *Internet in Turkmenistan, Already the World's Slowest, Faces Further Restrictions*, Radio Free Europe (Jan. 13, 2022), <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-internet-slowest-restrictions/31652467.html>.



(TIHR) learned that residents from across the country were reporting extremely slow VPN services,<sup>26</sup> likely due to deliberate measures by officials to block access to information.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, there were reports of internet users being summoned, questioned, and intimidated by security services because they had used VPNs to access online content critical of the government.<sup>28</sup> At the end of March 2021, problems with VPNs remained, with users reporting access to such services as unstable and frequently interrupted.<sup>29</sup>

21. Turkmenistan also employs transnational repression tactics against peaceful critics of the regime. In April 2020, Rozgeldy Choliev, a Turkmen resident of Russia, was repeatedly subjected to pressure for posting videos critical of Turkmenistan's government online.<sup>30</sup> Choliev's relatives in Turkmenistan were also subjected to intimidation by the police, due to his civic engagement.<sup>31</sup> In September 2020, when Choliev flew to Turkey to connect with other Turkmen activists, he was denied consideration for re-entry and asylum status in Russia, his country of residence at the time.<sup>32</sup> Choliev continues to post videos critical of the government in exile.

22. Since July 2020, Malik Allamyradov, a Turkmen student at Russian State University of Kalmykia, has been running a YouTube channel called 'For Turkmenistan's Honour,' on which he frequently criticizes the Turkmen government.<sup>33</sup> Due to Allamyradov's social media presence, Turkmen officials have intimidated his parents and nephew in Turkmenistan, demanding that Allamyradov delete his YouTube channel and cease all government critique.<sup>34</sup> Allamyradov has also been subjected to informal threats of deportation

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<sup>26</sup> Civicus Monitor, *supra* note 23.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> *Turkmenistan: Internet Welcome, or no VPNs Allowed Here*, Eurasia Net (Mar. 23, 2021), <https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-internet-welcome-or-no-vpns-allowed-here>.

<sup>29</sup> Civicus Monitor, *supra* note 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Turkmenistan: NGOs Document Widening Crackdown on Dissent*, Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Jun. 22, 2021), <https://tmhelsinki.org/en/article/1525feab-0619-43a9-bb84-e4c6be2c95cd>.

<sup>31</sup> *Continued Repression Under New President*, Civicus Monitor (July 27, 2022), <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2022/07/27/continued-repression-under-new-president/>.

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, *supra* note 30.

<sup>34</sup> Civicus Monitor, *supra* note 23.

from Russia to Turkmenistan.<sup>35</sup>

23. Turkmen human rights activist Sultan Ovezov, based in Turkey, participated in several online conferences in January 2021 to discuss human rights in Turkmenistan, with his face exposed for identification.<sup>36</sup> The conferences were streamed on Telegram and YouTube and were organized by Turkmen activists.<sup>37</sup> In February 2021, security service and plainclothes officers visited Ovezov's mother in Turkmenistan, and without identifying themselves, questioned her about Ovezov's civic engagement and demanded that he return to Turkmenistan."<sup>38</sup>

24. Most recently, in November 2022, Turk activist Nurberdy Bazarov was detained near Istanbul, at the request of Turkmen officials, for his outspoken dissent toward the regime.<sup>39</sup> He faces illegal incarceration and torture if deported back to Turkmenistan.<sup>40</sup>

25. As part of the Turkmen regime's COVID-19 denial campaign that countered information from independent media sources revealing a serious national outbreak,<sup>41</sup> officials pressured healthcare workers into silence and threatened them with repercussions if any information about COVID-19 cases was leaked.<sup>42</sup>

26. The Analytical Center for Asia found that most medical workers in Turkmenistan were barred from bringing their mobile phones to work in order

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<sup>35</sup> Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, *supra* note 30.

<sup>36</sup> *Journalist Detained, threatened in Turkmenistan*, Committee to Protect Journalists (May 15, 2018), <https://cpj.org/2018/05/journalist-detained-threatened-in-turkmenistan/>.

<sup>37</sup> *Closed Civic Space in Turkmenistan*, International Partnership for Human Rights (June 2021), <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CLOSED-CIVIC-SPACE-IN-TURKMENISTAN-JUNE-2021-1.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> *Memorial Human Rights Centre*, Turkmen Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (May 4, 2021), [https://www.iphronline.org/turkmenistan-dec\\_20\\_mar\\_21.html](https://www.iphronline.org/turkmenistan-dec_20_mar_21.html).

<sup>39</sup> *Detained Turkmen Activist May Face Deportation From Turkey*, Radio Free Europe (Nov. 8, 2022), <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-activist-turkey-deportation/32120847.html>.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

<sup>41</sup> Hashim Talib Hashim, Ahed El Abed El Rassoul, John Bchara, Attaullah Ahmadi & Don Eliseo Lucero-Priso III, *COVID-19 Denial in Turkmenistan Veiling the Real Situation*, Archives of Public Health, 80 (Jan. 4, 2022), <https://archpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13690-021-00779-x>.

<sup>42</sup> *In Turkmenistan, Internet Access is Minimized*, Analytical Center for Central Asia (2019), <https://acca.media/en/1093/in-turkmenistan-internet-access-is-minimized/>.

to prevent them from disclosing to the public how many COVID-19 patients they had.<sup>43</sup> TIHR reported that security officers detained a doctor working in a quarantine facility for bringing his phone inside, and a clinic in Ashgabat forced doctors and nurses to sign nondisclosure statements obliging them not to speak about conditions.<sup>44</sup>

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

27. There is virtually no freedom of the press in Turkmenistan, as the State controls all broadcast, electronic, and print media. The regime blocks websites including Reuters, BBC, Wikipedia, RFI, and Wired.<sup>45</sup> While some provisions exist for private outlets, they must secure state licensing and air positive coverage of the government.<sup>46</sup>
28. State officials regularly suppress journalist voices and retaliate against locals who assist foreign outlets.<sup>47</sup> Journalists collaborating with foreign media are closely monitored by the State's security departments. In 2020, independent reporter Nurgeldi Halykov was imprisoned for disclosing information regarding the visit of a World Health Organization delegation, to an exiled news outlet.<sup>48</sup> Halykov remains in prison, despite international condemnation of his detention.
29. In January 2021, independent Turkmenistan-based journalist Soltan Achilova was nominated for the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.<sup>49</sup> When the award ceremony was streamed on Euronews, its broadcasts were temporarily terminated in Turkmenistan, and resumed approximately one week

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<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> Freedom House, *supra* note 20.

<sup>45</sup> *Dozens of Foreign Website & Social Networks Blocked in Turkmenistan*, Turkmen News (Aug. 7, 2019), <https://en.turkmen.news/news/dozens-of-foreign-websites-social-networks-blocked-in-turkmenistan/>.

<sup>46</sup> Viktor Zhmuida, *supra* note 4.

<sup>47</sup> Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 14.

<sup>48</sup> *Turkmen Authorities Should Immediately Release Imprisoned Reporter*, Human Rights Watch (Sep. 16, 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/16/turkmen-authorities-should-immediately-release-unjustly-imprisoned-reporter>.

<sup>49</sup> *Recognizing Human Rights Defenders*, Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders <https://www.martinennalsaward.org/hrd/soltan-achilova/>.

later.<sup>50</sup>

30. To cover up the COVID-19 outbreak, officials tracked down medical workers sharing COVID-19-related information with exiled media. In June 2021, blogger Murat Dushemov interviewed a doctor at a state clinic, to discuss the COVID-19 situation in Turkmenistan.<sup>51</sup> Thereafter, Dushemov was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for having attempted to bribe a doctor, and received additional trumped-up charges of 'intentional medium bodily harm' and 'intimidation,' for allegedly assaulting his cellmate.<sup>52</sup>

## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES AND TORTURE

31. The regime uses enforced disappearances to silence opposition leaders and activists. Human rights NGO Prove They Are Alive! has documented 162 cases of enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan since 2022.<sup>53</sup> At least 27 of those individuals have died in prison in solitary confinement.<sup>54</sup> Many of the disappeared are believed to be in Ovadandepo Prison, where torture, long-term incommunicado detentions, inhumane conditions, and holding practices are exercised.<sup>55</sup> Prison conditions are harsh, and security forces routinely torture prisoners to extract confessions or punish inmates, which has resulted in unreported deaths. There are also suspected burial grounds in the nearby Karakum Desert, of prisoners who have died as a result of this mistreatment.<sup>56</sup>

32. The fate of many individuals who disappear in Turkmenistan's prisons following convictions on what appear to be politically motivated charges, are unknown,

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<sup>50</sup> *Turkmen Television Stops Broadcasting Euronews Channel*, Chronicles of Turkmenistan (Mar. 2021) <https://en.hronikatm.com/2021/03/following-the-tv-footage-about-soltan-achilova-turkmen-television-stops-broadcasting-euronews-channel/>.

<sup>51</sup> *Repression of Dissent in Turkmenistan*, Amnesty International (2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/turkmenistan/report-turkmenistan/>.

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> *Disappeared List 2021*, Prove They Are Alive, [https://provetheyarealive.org/disappeared\\_list\\_2021/](https://provetheyarealive.org/disappeared_list_2021/).

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 14.

due to a lack of transparency and closed or non-existent trials. However, it is widely accepted that archaic torture methods are endemic within the Turkmen prison system.<sup>57</sup> Boris Shikhmuradov, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was convicted of participating in a plot against former President Niyazov.<sup>58</sup> His wife reports that he has been tortured, and it is unclear whether he is alive and still in prison.<sup>59</sup>

33. Azat Isakov, a Turk dissident and harsh critic of the Turkmen regime who had been living in Russia for over six years, went missing in October 2021.<sup>60</sup> Russia's Interior Ministry stated that Isakov flew from Moscow to Turkmenabad, but according to multiple sources, Isakov had lost his passport and repeatedly said he did not want to return to Turkmenistan.<sup>61</sup> Chemen Ore, another Turkmen human rights activist, stated that she learned that Isakov is in Turkmen security services' custody.<sup>62</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

34. HRF urges the government of Turkmenistan to:
- a. Protect the rights of all individuals to freedom of expression and association, and ensure that activists, journalists, and opposition groups can operate peacefully and safely within and outside of Turkmenistan without fear of retribution in the form of censorship, harassment, arbitrary arrest, and detention, torture, ill-treatment, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances, among other types of punishment;
  - b. Allow for free and unbridled internet access and repeal all prohibitions against independent international news media platforms without unjust

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<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> *Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting: Freedom of the Media*, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Mar. 29-30 2007), <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/d/24836.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> *Perspectives of the Disappeared*, Eurasia Net (Aug. 31, 2021), <https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-remember-the-disappeared-but-dont-forget-their-families>.

<sup>60</sup> Rachel Denbar, *Activist Missing in Turkmenistan*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 18, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/18/activist-missing-turkmenistan>.

<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

surveillance and retaliation;

- c. Ensure that, absent compelling evidence of criminal conduct, individuals who have been arbitrarily detained, in violation of their rights to freedom of expression and association, are released and that those in detention receive humane treatment;
- d. Repeal government practices that facilitate censorship and ensure that an individual's freedom of speech and expression is respected; and
- e. Cooperate with regional and international human rights mechanisms by allowing special procedure mandate holders to execute an independent assessment of the human rights situation in Turkmenistan and advise the government accordingly.