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## **Turkmenistan: Continuing failure to fulfil promises**

Politically motivated harassment, detentions and imprisonments continue unabated in Turkmenistan despite the government's promises to uphold human rights, Amnesty International said today, ahead of the government's second anniversary.

The government of President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov came to power on 14 February 2007, after the death of then President Saparmurad Niyazov, amid hopes that he would improve the country's abysmal human rights record marked by repression of any form of peaceful dissent.

"While President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov reversed some policies of his predecessor, he has still to live up to his promises of human rights reform by swiftly ending enforced disappearances, releasing prisoners of conscience, ending torture or other ill-treatment and lifting restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and religion," said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

"Journalists, civil society activists and religious believers are still subject to harassment and intimidation by the new government."

An Amnesty International document, released today, [\*Individuals continue to be at risk of violations in Turkmenistan\*](#), lists cases of many people who are waiting for justice. The organization notes that the situation of several individuals whose cases had been acted on by the international community has improved. However, releases from prison were most often due to pardons which were not part of fully transparent fair trials.

"The list of human rights violations is long: clampdown on dissent, unfair trials, internal exile, enforced disappearances all continue two years after the government's pledges to improve the human rights situation. Unless it takes immediate measures, there will be little to distinguish the present government from the previous one," Nicola Duckworth said.

Amnesty International is concerned that as part of their policy to silence civil society activists and deny freedom of the media, the authorities launched a new wave of repression in April 2008. The organization learnt of many cases where journalists who cooperated with foreign media outlets that published information critical of the authorities were subjected to harassment and intimidation.

Amnesty International calls on President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov and his government to live up to the promises they gave and to fulfil their international obligations.

**See also:**

*Turkmenistan: Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review: Third session of the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council, December 2008*

*Turkmenistan: No effective human rights reform*

*Amnesty International's recommendations to the new government of Turkmenistan*