Turkmenistan Issue



Overview

Turkmenistan''s government imposes harsh restrictions on free expression and exerts total control over access to information.

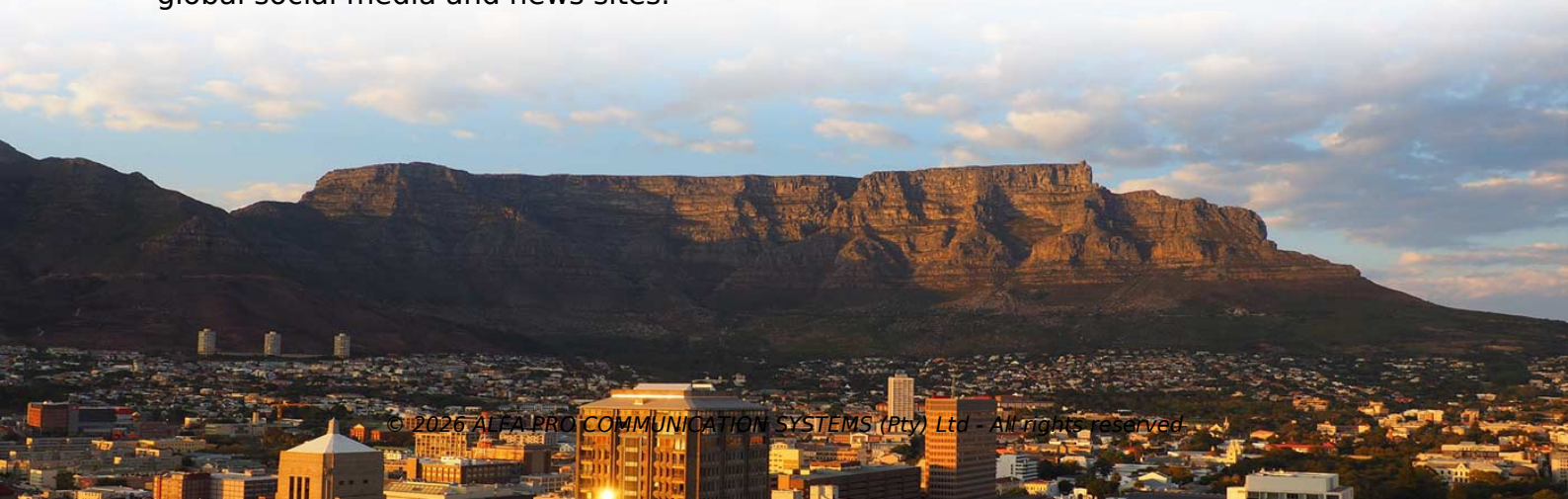
Key Takeaways

Turkmenistan faces severe human rights abuses, systemic corruption, environmental crises, and social neglect, making it one of the most isolated and repressive countries in the world.

Human Rights and Governance

Turkmenistan remains highly authoritarian, with the government suppressing freedoms of expression, assembly, religion, and association. Political reforms have reinforced centralized power, with the People's Council, headed by the ex-president, overseeing all policy decisions. Arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture persist, while activists and dissidents, including those abroad, face threats or detention upon return.

Women, girls, and LGBTI individuals experience significant restrictions, and adult consensual same-sex conduct is criminalized. Independent civil society and media are virtually nonexistent, and the state tightly controls information, including internet access through a heavily censored national network called Turkmenet, blocking global social media and news sites.



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Corruption and Social Neglect

Corruption is entrenched in daily life, affecting access to education, healthcare, and employment. Only a minority of secondary school graduates continue to higher education due to limited university quotas and bribery. Healthcare is inadequate, contributing to the lowest life expectancy in Central Asia at 69.

3 years, despite Turkmenistan's relatively high income per capita. The government prioritizes resource extraction over human development, misrepresenting conditions through propaganda and failing to address systemic poverty and inequality.

Environmental Challenges

Turkmenistan faces a severe water crisis, exacerbated by climate change, outdated Soviet-era infrastructure, and inefficient irrigation systems. Agriculture, particularly cotton cultivation, consumes the majority of water resources, with 30–60% lost to evaporation or leakage. Mismanagement and lack of a cohesive national strategy threaten both domestic stability and regional security, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable water practices.

Social and Cultural Restrictions

The government enforces strict cultural and social controls, including bans on teaching minority languages, restrictions on media, and limitations on personal freedoms such as dress, hair, and public behavior. Forced labor, particularly in cotton harvesting, continues, and citizens face severe consequences for attempting to bypass censorship or express dissent.

International Relations and Oversight

Turkmenistan remains largely closed to international scrutiny. While some diplomatic engagement occurs, such as meetings with the EU and the US, the country's poor human rights record has prevented comprehensive cooperation agreements. International organizations continue to raise concerns about enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and lack of civil liberties.

In summary, Turkmenistan's key issues include authoritarian governance, human rights violations, systemic corruption, social neglect, environmental crises, and strict cultural controls, all of which contribute to the country's isolation and the ongoing hardship of its population.

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The vast, arid landscapes of Turkmenistan, stretching across Central Asia, are facing a profound and growing threat—a deepening water crisis that casts a shadow over its future stability,

Human rights in Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan ''s human rights record has been heavily criticized by various countries and scholars worldwide. Standards in education and health declined markedly during the rule of President

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Security cooperation has grown more visible. Turkmenistan''s long border with Afghanistan has long been a vulnerability, and while Ashgabat avoided involvement in the U.S.-led

Turkmenistan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Turkmenistan during the year. Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: enforced

Central Bank of Turkmenistan—200 Manat commemorative

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In honour of the 30th anniversary of Turkmenistan obtaining the status of permanent neutrality from the UN on 12 December 1995, the Central Bank has introduced into circulation converted polymer

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During its annual human rights dialogue with Turkmenistan in June 2024, the EU raised continued concerns about enforced disappearances and “a number of individual human rights cases ...

How Turkmenistan''s Government Neglects Its People (And Why the

Credit: Depositphotos Turkmenistan is one of the world''s most isolated – and little understood – countries. The picture its government presents to the world, and in propaganda to its

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Turkmenistan

Significant human rights issues included reports of: recent cases of forced disappearance; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment by police and prison officials; harsh and life-threatening

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Azatlyk reported in April that police in eastern Turkmenistan issued warnings to and fined at least two high school teachers because about a dozen of their students were allegedly suspected to ...

Visiting Session of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan

Today, President Serdar Berdimuhamedov held a visiting session of the Cabinet of Ministers to consider the country''s socio-economic development, including Balkan velayat, and a

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An independent voice from Turkmenistan Political Prisoner Murat Dushemov May Be Facing New Term on False Charges Turkmen civil activist and political prisoner Murat Dushemov has not r 19.06.2025

Turkmenistan News & Features

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RFE/RL''s Turkmen Service is the only independent source for news and information in the country, with special emphasis given to topics such as democracy and human rights.

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Despite a change in Turkmenistan''s leadership in 2022, the country remained ruled by one of the most oppressive and authoritarian governments in the world, with no progress in its

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