

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/turkmenistan-two-journalists-freed-after-seven-18-02-2013,44090.html>

---

Europe/Ex-USSR - Turkmenistan

Seven long years

## Two journalists freed after seven years in prison in appalling conditions

18 February 2013

---

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that journalists and human rights activists **Annakurban Amanklychev** and **Sapardurdy Khadjiyev** were released during the weekend on completing seven-year jail sentences in appalling conditions.

"We are delighted that these two journalists have finally been freed," Reporters Without Borders said. "We often feared for their lives during these past years, in which [reports of terrible prison conditions occasionally reached us](#). Nonetheless, they are in very poor shape after this ordeal. Nothing will be able to redress the seven long years of unjust detention.

"Justice has still not been rendered to their colleague, **Ogulsapar Muradova**, [who died in detention shortly after their arrest](#). And anyone who dares to criticize the authorities is still jailed or confined to a psychiatric hospital. How many other journalists, media assistants and human rights defenders still languish in Turkmenistan's terrible prisons? It is hard to say because so little information filters out from what is one of the world's most closed and repressive countries."

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, Amanklychev and Khadjiyev were released on 16 February and have returned to their homes. Their years in detention have left serious after-effects, including cardiac and psychological problems, partial loss of vision and other ailments that are due to be diagnosed.

They [received their jail sentences in August 2006](#) on charges of "possession of illegal firearms or ammunition." Muradova, the correspondent of [Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty's](#) Turkmen service was tried and convicted at the same time but died in September 2006 after being beaten by guards in Ovodan Depe high security prison, to the north of the capital Ashgabat.

All three journalists were arrested after helping Galaxie-Presse, a French TV production company, make [a documentary on Turkmenistan](#) for the *France 2* programme [Envoyé Spécial](#).

No convincing investigation was ever conducted into Muradova's death, while Amanklychev and Khadjiyev [served their sentences in almost complete isolation in a prison in an extremely hot desert region near the western city of Turkmenbashi](#).

Reporters Without Borders twice occupied the Turkmen embassy in Paris, [in 2006](#) and [2008](#), to press for an explanation for Muradova's death and to demand the release of her two colleagues.

Turkmenistan has for years been [ranked among the last three countries in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), along with North Korea and Eritrea.

*(Photo: AFP - Bertrand Guay / AFP)*

---

