



Yazmammed Annammedov, a Jehovah's Witness, (in the photo with his family) remained in a labour colony throughout 2001. Source of photo: Office of General Counsel of Jehovah's Witnesses.

IHF FOCUS: freedom of expression; freedom of media; freedom of association; independence of the judiciary and fair trial; security services; conditions in prisons and detention facilities; religious intolerance; conscientious objection; freedom of movement; national minorities; women's rights.

Turkmenistan remained the most authoritarian country in the former Soviet Union in 2001. In power for more than 15 years, President Niyazov exercised almost full control over decision-making and the work of authorities in the republic. Meanwhile the personality cult around him reached unprecedented levels. As the 10th anniversary of independence approached, the media indulged in unrestrained eulogies of their beloved *Turkmenbashi* (Father of the Turkmen) and the Golden Age he is claimed to have lead the country into. During the year he was also bestowed with the epithet "the Great" to standing ovations¹ and hailed as a prophet² on account of his moral code *Rukhnama*.³

There was no active opposition in the country, and by subduing any element of

critical thinking and witch-hunting members of minority religions, the authorities apparently attempted to erase all views diverging from the line sanctioned by the President. With almost unlimited powers, the National Security Council (KNB) observed every walk of life and kept citizens in a state of fear. A striking lack of information on current affairs in the state-run media kept citizens on edge. The judicial system was corrupt and subservient to the Government and basic civil rights were violated just as frequently in court as out of court. While the President continued to grant lavish funds to megalomaniac projects, such as the weaving of the longest red carpet in the world for the Independence Day celebrations, the population suffered

in silence from the Government's failure to make effective use of the billion-dollar revenues generated by oil and gas exports and undertake adequate economic and social reforms.⁴

In contrast to neighbouring countries, Turkmenistan did not support the US-led military operation in Afghanistan, but refrained from taking a stand in the conflict, citing its neutrality as recognised by the UN in 1995.⁵

The neutrality claimed by President Niyazov was far from the Swiss version he commended so highly and, in practice, resulted only in the increased isolation of the country from the international community. Keen on fostering national pride and awareness within the population, the President also initiated a drive to strengthen the role of Turkmen culture, which was realized at the price of diversity and respect for minority traditions.

In February, President Niyazov, who was made the leader of Turkmenistan for life in 1999, announced that he would step down at the latest in 2010, when he promised multi-candidate elections to select his successor. However, he also stated that the potential successor would have to be ethnic Turkmen, have five years' experience in politics and have resided in Turkmenistan for at least ten years. Given these conditions the number of potential candidates shrunk to a few persons in the ranks around the President.⁶ The exiled opposition remained scattered, although it gained some strength by the defection of former Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov in November.

Freedom of Expression

There was no freedom of expression, or to quote one journalist: "[in Turkmenistan] freedom of speech means the chance to use different positive expressions about *Turkmenbashi the Great* and his politics".⁷ All previous opponents of the regime had either been effectively silenced or resided abroad in, for example, Russia, Turkey, Swe-

den and the Czech Republic. To prevent the emergence of any new opposition elements, the authorities closely monitored persons suspected of having critical opinions or contacts with exiled dissidents.

◆ Dissident Nuberdi Nurmamedov, who was released from prison under a general amnesty in December 2000, remained under strict police surveillance. Reportedly, he was also made to sign an official document in which he pledged not to leave his home in Ashgabat. This document effectively forced him into internal exile. Mr Nurmamedov, who was formerly chairman of the opposition party Agzybirlig, was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of armed hooliganism in February 2000. There is strong evidence to suggest that the charges against him were fabricated and that he was imprisoned because of his open criticism of government politics. Mr Nurmamedov was only released on condition that he confessed to the crime, repented and took an oath of loyalty towards the President on state-TV.⁸

◆ On 1 November, former Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov released a sensational statement in Moscow to declare open opposition to the Government of Turkmenistan. According to his statement: "Turkmenistan has been turned into a primitive police state [where] the President has preserved the worst and most notorious Soviet style methods and supplemented them with obsolete methods for managing a traditional Oriental society".⁹ Mr Shikhmuradov had an exceptionally long political career behind him in a country where reshuffles among government officials take place almost every week; he had served as Vice Premier Minister, Foreign Minister and special envoy for Caspian Sea Affairs. Only in March 2001 did he fall out of favour and was named Ambassador to China, a post not considered to be particularly prestigious. He was finally dismissed at the end of October. It was believed that the

President turned against him out of fear that he might become a dangerous political rival.¹⁰ The day after Mr Shikhmuradov declared his opposition, the Turkmen authorities opened a criminal case against him, charging him with involvement in illegal trade during his time as Minister. However, despite an official request, the Russian authorities refused to detain and extradite him, citing the fact that he is a citizen of Russia.¹¹ Reportedly, the Turkmen authorities continued to exert pressure on Mr Shikhmuradov and his family throughout the year.¹²

Authorities announced in the beginning of the year that the State Library was to close down. Founded in 1895 and housing more than 3 million books, the library had functioned as a meeting place for generations of students, academics, journalists and authors. The decision was reportedly intended to prevent the library from developing into a centre for subversive thought. The measure was also seen as a follow-up to the 1998 decision to close down the Academy of Sciences.¹³ Moreover, in March the authorities ordered all libraries to confiscate the publications of some twenty authors who either "inaccurately depicted" the country's history or had emigrated for political reasons.¹⁴

Freedom of Media

No private media existed, and all state-owned media were under direct control from the Government, which exercised rigid pre-publication censorship.¹⁵ The newspapers, including ten Turkmen language publications and one in Russian, differed in name and format only. They were primarily devoted to praise of the President and his political visions, lengthy extracts from his speeches, and samples of his adages and thoughts. The newspapers also typically ran fares about successful harvests and joys of the worker in old Soviet style as well as insipid descriptions of folk holidays. More sensitive issues were only covered with ex-

treme politically motivated carefulness. For example, drug problems and HIV were only discussed in the context of prevention.

The output of the state-owned TV and two state-owned radio stations followed the same pattern as the newspapers. Like the printed media, the broadcast media hardly dealt with current developments, and even more rarely referred to coming events, but focused on the "glorious past" of the country.¹⁶ When the rest of the world turned to New York and Washington in the aftermath of 11 September, the media in Turkmenistan was absorbed with reports related to the upcoming anniversary of independence and the "Golden Age" experienced since 1991. The coverage of the terrorist attacks more or less dealt only with accounts of the President's condolences to the American people.¹⁷

In November, the authorities decided to restrict Internet access to materials on the President's whimsical policy of appointing officials¹⁸ and the opposition declared by former Foreign Minister Shikhmuradov. According to the Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations, this measure could be described as another step in the monopolization of circulation of information in Turkmenistan. Already in spring 2000 all independent Internet providers were liquidated, leaving the state-run service with a monopoly.¹⁹

Freedom of Association

The Government remained hostile to independent organisational activities. All organisations with even the slightest political intentions were denied registration. A small number of NGOs were officially registered, but they all had uncontroversial agendas, such as nature conservation, and were only involved in limited activities. Typically, they had less than a dozen members.²⁰ NGOs that were not officially recognized but still attempted to function were harassed. For example, in the summer months the authorities repeatedly summoned representa-

tives of some forty-five unregistered NGOs to warn them that their activities were illegal.²¹ Meanwhile the authorities continued to dictate the agenda of a number of organisations set up to ostensibly fill the void that the repression of an independent civil society has resulted in.²²

Independence of the Judiciary and Fair Trial ²³

The judiciary was fully dependent on the executive branch. The President appointed judges at all levels and oversaw that the courts functioned in line with the interests of the regime. The public prosecutors were granted broad powers and were involved in all phases of the judicial process. Defendants were routinely denied due process rights, such as the right to a public hearing, to receive legal counsel and to be represented by a lawyer, to have access to evidence and to call witnesses to testify on their behalf. Almost all lawyers available were employed by the State. According to some reports, defendants were coerced to confess the crimes they were charged with. While corruption pervaded the judicial system, no effective measures were taken to tackle the problem, although the President carried out media covered drives to rid state bodies of bribed officials from time to time.

Security Services

In January, the number of agents employed with the KNB, successor to the Soviet era KGB, was increased from 1,500 to 2,500. In particular, the departments responsible for drug trade and political and religious agitation were strengthened.²⁴ Acting with impunity, KNB agents were frenetic in monitoring persons suspected of sharing views or being involved in activities in conflict with the interests of the regime. KNB agents resorted to threats, unwarranted searches, arbitrary detention and physical abuse.²⁵ Following the 11 September

events and the escalation of the crisis in Afghanistan, the KNB intensified its monitoring activities.²⁶

Conditions in Prisons and Detention Facilities²⁷

Although the mass amnesties in 1999 and 2000 helped improve the situation somewhat, overcrowding remained a pertinent problem in the country's prisons and detention facilities. The number of prisoners exceeded the permissible number by up to three times. In some detention centres as many as 15-17 persons were accommodated in cells intended for five persons, which forced the detainees to sleep in turns. Detainees were reportedly only served scarce amounts of food of poor quality and not given enough water. A typical meal consisted of a bowl of vegetable soup, and the standard water ration was half-a-litre per person a day for both drinking and washing. While infectious diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and tuberculosis flourished in most prison colonies, medical treatment and medicines were hardly ever available. As a result, the mortality rate among detainees was extremely high. The situation was reportedly worst in the prisons in the region of Lebap. When asked to describe the conditions in one of the colonies in this region, a detainee was quoted as saying: "we are dying like flies, there is a new corpse every day".

The prison officers widely resorted to ill-treatment and torture. Even the slightest offence on the part of a detainee was taken to warrant a punishment in the form of physical abuse. For example, detainees found to have violated the internal rules were regularly beaten with truncheons. Irrespective of the season, detainees were also often placed in punishment cells wearing only underwear, a practice that contributed to the high death tolls. In the colonies in the Lebap region the prison officers were notorious for using electric shocks to subjugate detainees. Despite the

prevalence of ill-treatment and torture, the authorities continued to deny the existence of such a problem.

In December, in connection with the holy month of Ramadan, some 9,000 prisoners were released under a general amnesty similar to those of the two previous years. The authorities claimed that the measure reduced the prison population to one half.²⁸ However, while the media praised the President's "humanitarian action", there were allegations that the process of selecting prisoners to be released had been largely corrupt: authorities, including heads of prison colonies, security committee officials, Prosecutor's Offices and courts, reportedly took bribes for adding names to the amnesty list that was signed by the President.

Religious Intolerance

The authorities continued to deny registration to all religious communities except to those loyal to the officially recognized Sunni Islam Board and a few parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church.²⁹ The 1996 Law on Religion was used as a formal pretext for the refusals. According to the law, a religious community must have at least 500 members over the age of 18 to qualify for registration. However, although there is nothing in the law to warrant such an interpretation, this requirement was applied on a local rather than on a national basis. Registration was also sometimes allegedly withheld when a religious community managed to meet the overly strict requirements.³⁰

Muslims

The authorities took a tougher position toward unofficial Islam in 2001. In June, President Niyazov ordered the only independent *madrassah* (Muslim school) still existing in the country to close down. According to local media the President found that the school in Tashauz did not function in a satisfactory way, confusing students with the education it offered. The President

also criticised the school for employing relatives of the country's chief *mufti* (Muslim leader), Nasrullah Ibn-Ibbaddulah, who is a native to Tashauz. Teaching of Islamic studies continued at the department of theology at the Ashgabad University, but was strictly controlled by the Government.³¹ Members of the Shiite Muslim minority reportedly faced harassment.³²

Non-Muslim Communities

Throughout the year minority religious communities without legal status, including inter alia Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witness, Hare Krishna and Baha'i communities, were subjected to harassment. In a persistent pattern, the authorities cracked down on meetings and arrested, intimidated and abused members of unsanctioned communities. On numerous occasions persons hosting meetings were evicted from their apartments, while foreigners attending meetings were expelled from the country. Places of worship were also closed down, and from time to time local media denounced members of minority congregations. Several religious activists were forced to live in internal exile, and at least 10 activists were believed to be in prison in early 2001, serving sentences on fabricated charges. The campaign against unregistered denominations involved authorities at all levels, and the ultimate goal seemed to be to crush all forms of minority religious activities.³³

◆ On 9 April, KNB officers detained Evgeniy Samsonov, a Russian citizen affiliated with the Word of Life Church, in his apartment in the eastern city of Turkmenbad. Following the arrest KNB officers reportedly tortured him for two days in an attempt to coerce him to admit that he had acted against President Niyazov.³⁴

◆ On 6 May, a Baptist community in Mary had scheduled a service a few kilometres outside the city. The meeting place had been chosen to avoid a crackdown by the

authorities. However, when the service began KNB officers appeared and put an end to the meeting. The officers also took the personal data of everyone present. Pastor Vasily Korobov and two of his colleagues who had come to the service from Ashgabat were arrested and interrogated for a total of nine hours. Following the interrogation they were escorted back to Ashgabat. Twice during the trip of over 300 kilometres the escort stopped at police checks, where the KNB officers ordered those in charge never to let the three Baptists and the car they were in pass through again. The following day pastor Korobov was summoned to the KNB headquarters in Ashgabat and warned that he would be "in very big trouble" if he did not stop conducting services.³⁵

◆ On 15 November, more than forty persons were detained when police, KNB and local administration officials raided a World of Life Church service held in the home of Olga Ryzhkova in Ashgabat. After the arrest the participants were interrogated and fined sums between 250,000 and 1 million *manats*, which is the equivalent of 190 US dollars at the official exchange rate. They were only released and given back their identity documents once the fines were paid. The foreign nationals who attended the service were later expelled from the county, while other participants reportedly feared being denied state services or losing their jobs.³⁶

◆ Baptist pastor Shageldy Atakov remained imprisoned throughout the year. The pastor was arrested in December 1998 on allegedly falsified charges of swindling and forging documents. In March 1999 he was fined the extortionate amount of 12,000 US dollars and sentenced to two years in prison, and in August 1999 the sum and the prison term were doubled. During his imprisonment pastor Atakov was repeatedly tortured and forcibly treated with psychotropic drugs. At

the beginning of the year his health was very poor and he reportedly did not expect to survive. In May the authorities offered to release him if he and his family agreed to emigrate. Because he declined the offer, his imprisonment continued. However, following unprecedented waves of international pressure he was released on 8 January 2002, although the terms of his release remained somewhat uncertain since he was not granted any release certificate. After the release the KNB continued to keep him under close surveillance in his family's home in Kaaka.³⁷

Six Jehovah's Witnesses were imprisoned in Turkmenistan as of the end of 2001. They were usually incarcerated for their refusal to swear regularly an oath of loyalty to the President and Fatherland or to perform military service. Without an oath on the Koran, they could also not benefit from the President's annual amnesty.

◆ Yazmammed Annamammedov remained in labour colony throughout 2001. He was arrested in November 1999 and sentenced a month later to four years in a corrective labour colony after being found guilty for having pistol cartridges, gunpowder and explosive material in his home. He and his wife stated that these items were planted in their home during the search by the police and the prosecutor. He was later transferred to the city of Turkmenbashi into another colony (usually only inveterate law-breakers are handled that way), because of refusal to give an oath of loyalty to the President and State. Mr Annamammedov has a wife and three minor children.³⁸

◆ On 24 September the Supreme Court upheld an earlier ruling according to which Jehovah's Witness Maria Segzekov, her husband and two children were to be evicted from their home. Ms Segzekov was charged with hosting unsanctioned religious meetings in the family's home, thus violating the terms for using the state-owned apartment and disturbing neigh-

bours in the building. The Supreme Court also noted that she had neglected earlier orders to stop organizing gatherings. Ms Segzekov and her husband said that they intended to appeal the ruling.³⁹

Conscientious Objectors

As part of the campaign against unregistered religious communities (e.g. Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses), the authorities also continued to imprison young male members for refusing to serve in the army out of religious conviction.

◆ On 15 May, KNB officers allegedly tortured Dmitri Meinichenko, a member of a Baptist church in Ashgabat. A few days earlier Mr Meinichenko had been drafted for military service and taken to a military unit in Serdat, where he had refused to take the military oath. KNB officers reportedly insulted and humiliated him and beat him with a truncheon on the knees, the buttocks and the head. When he continued to refuse to take the oath they forced him to hold the wires from a telephone and sent currents through his head, as a result of which his face was distorted and the saliva in his mouth became frothy and acrid. Finally, the KNB officers put a hood on his head and beat him in his face and neck. Following the torture he was held in the KNB office over night before being escorted back to his unit.⁴⁰

Freedom of Movement

During the year a number of measures were taken to deprive citizens of opportunities to uphold cross-border contacts and to receive information from abroad. In general, few visas were issued to foreigners, and in several cases KNB agents warned citizens not to send the invitations required to obtain visas to their relatives and friends abroad.⁴¹ At a meeting broadcasted on TV in late January, the President was seen telling KNB officials that: "we must make sure that [foreigners] come and go on time

and that they do not disturb the good order of our country".⁴²

In April, the President declared that diplomas from academic institutions abroad would no longer be recognized in the country. As earlier reforms in the sector of education have reduced the number of colleges and universities substantially, an increased number of young persons have opted to pursue degrees in the neighbouring countries in the last few years. However, the new policies effectively discourages studying abroad. The reform was also retroactively applied to all degrees obtained after 1993.⁴³

In May, new regulations to limit access to international telephone calls were introduced. According to these regulations citizens wishing to make international calls had to deposit a large sum with the state telecommunications company in advance. As not many persons could afford this service, it was easy for the authorities to have their phones bugged. If opting to call abroad from outside their homes the citizens had to buy expensive phone cards and go to special phone offices, where calls were also tapped.⁴⁴

In June, severe restrictions regarding marriages between citizens and non-citizens were imposed. These marriages were to be based on a special contract, establishing the obligations of the parties in case the marriage is dissolved. Before such a contract could be concluded, two basic requirements were to be met. Firstly, the non-citizen was requested to deposit a sum equivalent to U.S.\$50,000 (57,000 Euro) with the Turkmen authorities as a guarantee for the welfare of children born within the marriage. Secondly, the non-citizen was required to have lived in the country for at least one year and own a place of residence of his/her own. The authorities stated that the decree was aimed at protecting women from being duped into abusive relationships and at defending longstanding cultural traditions. However, in

practice the major impact of the decree was to further curtail the right of citizens to uphold close relations to foreigners, including citizens from the neighbouring states who represented the largest group of affected marriage candidates.⁴⁵

In a positive development, a December decree provided for the abolishment of exit visas as of 1 January 2002. From that date on, citizens were only required to hold a visa for the foreign State they intended to visit. However, the authorities retained the power to temporarily restrict the right to leave the country of citizens initiated into state secrets, involved in crimes or drafted for military service.⁴⁶ The OSCE welcomed the decision, saying that it fully conformed to the agreements reached in June, when the OSCE rotating chairman visited Turkmenistan.⁴⁷

National Minorities

During the year the authorities initiated a number of measures that seemed aimed at fostering the “Turkmenization” of the country. In March, the President announced that the State Opera and the State Ballet Theatre were to be closed down, and as one of the major reasons for his decision he stated that the repertoire of the two institutions were not fully in line with the mentality of the people of Turkmenistan. “One cannot implant a form of art that arose in another place, [but instead] one should develop one’s own national art”, the President was quoted as saying. In line with this, he wanted to replace the Opera and Ballet with a Drama and Music Theatre more responsive to “national feelings” and based on modern Turkmen playwrights.⁴⁸ The President also shut down the State Philharmonic Orchestra and the State Circus, arguing that they had lost their relevance and that the Turkmen people did not want them.⁴⁹

In the beginning of April, school authorities in the region of Dashoguz introduced a requirement for all schoolgirls to wear a traditional Turkmen dress in class.

Since close to 40 percent of the inhabitants in this region are Uzbek or belong to some other minority group, the new dress code also affected many pupils for whom a Turkmen national attire was alien and at variance with their culture. However, though privately upset, parents of children representing ethnic minorities did not dare to voice their indignation in public, as they feared possible repercussions.⁵⁰ In what seemed a follow-up measure, the Ministry of Education announced in June that it would become mandatory for all students and schoolchildren to wear a traditional embroidered Turkmen headgear when attending classes. Boys were also recommended to start wearing ties, while girls were forbidden to wear trousers, miniskirts or skirts with splits. It was explicitly noted that no exceptions would be made for members of ethnic minorities.⁵¹

In November, a number of Russian-speaking teachers holding positions at the well-reputed Polytechnic Institute sent a letter to the President, drawing his attention to what they found to be a desperate situation on their part. While a transition to Turkmen as the sole language of instruction was under way in the academic sphere in the country, the teachers were threatened with dismissal due to insufficient knowledge of the state language. In their letter, the teachers agreed that everyone ought to know the state language, but also pointed to the problematic legacy of the Soviet era, during which time Russian was used throughout society. Moreover, the teachers stressed that it was very difficult for them to learn Turkmen as long as they did not receive any support from the management of the Institute. The teachers appealed for their competence not to be discarded, and called for a postponement of a full transition to instruction in the state language until the necessary preparations, involving all current staff members, have been effected. Although 70% of the population in the country is ethnic Turkmen, Russian is still

widely used in many spheres of the society.⁵² According to Human Rights Watch, a growing number of Russian-speakers left the country during the year.⁵³

Women's Rights⁵⁴

The President took every opportunity to praise the women of the country for their efforts in bringing up new generations of well-behaved citizens, but in practice his policies served to oppress women rather than help them in their roles as mothers.

A law that came into force in 1998 drastically cut maternity leave allowances and child benefits. In addition, it deprived single mothers of the right to financial support altogether, thus reinforcing negative stereotypes about such women. Due to the provisions of this law many women struggled hard to secure subsistence of their families. Meanwhile employment opportunities for women deteriorated as a result of extensive lay-offs that were carried out in the sectors of health care and education in 2000. In rural areas, strong traditions continued to prevent women from even at-

tempting to complete a higher degree or pursue a career outside the home.

No statistics were available, but reports indicated that the number of abortions was alarmingly high. Abortions were officially prohibited because President Niyazov was eager to see birth rates rise. Women seeking to terminate their pregnancies were therefore forced to visit back-street clinics, where they often were overcharged and operated on by non-professionals. In addition, although studies indicated that many women suffered from domestic violence, the topic was taboo in society and not recognized by the authorities.

There were also few places where women could turn with their problems. The so-called Union of Women coordinated a network of some 30 NGOs throughout the country. However, this network functioned under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, and its aim was rather to spread propaganda than to offer concrete help. Only a small number of independent women's NGOs existed, and most of them were unregistered and lacked resources to engage in any broader range of activities.

Endnotes

- ¹ On the sixth jubilee conference of the world's Turkmen in Ashgabat in May President Niyazov was awarded the new title for "his great services to the Turkmen people". The President himself claimed that the constant praising of his person was a burden for him in his work but did not take any concrete measures to put an end to it. RFE/RL, "President Niyazov Gets Another Title - The Great", *Turkmen Report*, 24 May 2001.
- ² Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Konstantin Arzybov (pseudonym), "Turkmen President's Prophet Motive", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 55, 8 June 2001.
- ³ The 10th anniversary of independence prompted President Niyazov to write a book of spiritual conduct to serve as a guiding star for all Turkmen in their daily lives. The book, which the President found should rank in importance alongside the Koran and the Bible, was adopted by the Parliament on 19 October. RFE/RL, "Turkmenistan Adopts President's Code of Ethics", *Turkmen Report*, 19 October 2001.
- ⁴ RFE/RL, Maxim Stepanenko, "Niyazov Outshines Stalin in Personality Cult", *Turkmen Report*, 26 October 2001; and Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Polina Mikhailova (pseudonym), "Niyazov's Woeful Record", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 80, 2 November 2001. For more information on social reforms see Women's Rights.

- ⁵ President Niyazov only allowed the Turkmen territory to be used as a base for the distribution of humanitarian aid. Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Nazik Ataeva (pseudonym), "Niyazov Ponders War Options", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 72, 1 October 2001. For more information on the fight against terrorism and Turkmenistan see the IHF report *Human Rights and Terrorism in the Central Asian OSCE Member States*, December 2001, at www.ihf-hr.org/reports/Bishek/FirstPages.pdf
- ⁶ RFE/RL, "Turkmen Leader Promises Elections at the End of the Decade", *Turkmen Report*, quoting Reuters, 18 February 2001.
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- ⁸ RFE/RL, Bruce Pannier, "Turkmenistan: Opposition Leader Freed But Remains a Kept Man", *RFE/RL Newslines*, 11 January 2001.
- ⁹ RFE/RL, "Former Turkmen Minister Attacks President", *Turkmen Report*, 1 November 2001.
- ¹⁰ RFE/RL, Bruce Pannier, "Former Turkmen Foreign Minister, in Opposition Exile, Now Wanted on Criminal Charges", *Turkmen Report*, 2 November 2001.
- ¹¹ RFE/RL, Anatoli Volk, "Shikhmuradov Will Have a Hard Time Heading the Opposition to Ashgabat", *Turkmen Report*, reprinted from *Gazeta*, 13 November 2001.
- ¹² RFE/RL, "Executive Interview with Boris Shikhmuradov on Afghan Conflict, Situation in Turkmenistan", *Turkmen Report*, 30 November 2001.
- ¹³ RFE/RL, "State Library of Turkmenistan to Close", *Turkmen Report*, 12 January 2001.
- ¹⁴ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*, at www.hrw.org/wraka/
- ¹⁵ Freedom House (FH), *Nations in Transit 2001*, at www.freedomhouse.org
- ¹⁶ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Nazik Ataeva (pseudonym), "Obedient Turkmen Media", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 54, 1 June 2001.
- ¹⁷ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Nazik Ataeva (pseudonym), "Niyazov Ponders War Options", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 72, 1 October 2001.
- ¹⁸ The President has a well-established record of constantly reshuffling officials on all levels, thus punishing them for alleged shortcomings in their work. Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Sasha Rokot (pseudonym), "Niazov Anti-Corruption Drive", *Reporting Central Asia*, No. 67, 31 August 2001.
- ¹⁹ RFE/RL, "Internet Access Censored in Turkmenistan", *Turkmen Report*, quoting the Centre for Journalists in Extreme Situations, 15 November 2001.
- ²⁰ FH, *Nations in Transit 2001*.
- ²¹ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*
- ²² FH, *Nations in Transit 2001*.
- ²³ Based on FH, *Nations in Transit 2001*.
- ²⁴ RFE/RL, "Turkmenistan to Tighten Controls on Foreigners", *Turkmen Report*, quoting Reuters, 30 January 2001.
- ²⁵ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*
- ²⁶ Vitaly Ponomarev, Memorial (Moscow), 28 November 2001.
- ²⁷ Unless otherwise noted, based on RFE/RL, Vitaly Ponomarev, "'Lawlessness' in Turkmen Prisons", *Turkmen Report*, 23 July 2001.
- ²⁸ RFE/RL, "Turkmen Prison Amnesty Starts", *Turkmen Report*, 5 December 2001.
- ²⁹ Keston Institute, Felix Corley, "Turkmenistan: 'Every Believer is Controlled'", *Keston News Service*, 6 November 2001.
- ³⁰ RFE/RL, Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Turkmen Leader Tightens His Grip on Unofficial Islam", *Turkmen Report*, 28 June 2001.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*

- ³² RFE/RL, Jean-Christophe Peuch, "Rights Groups: Turkmenistan Represses Non-Traditional Religions", *Turkmen Report*, 16 February 2001.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Human Rights Without Frontiers, Barbara G. Baker, "Turkmen Secret Police Arrest Russian Christian", 19 April 2001.
- ³⁵ Keston Institute, Felix Cortley, "Secret Police Raid Baptist Service and Ban Pastor from Leading Worship", *Keston News Service*, 10 May 2001.
- ³⁶ Keston Institute, Felix Corley and Igor Rotar, "Protestants Fined Thousands of Dollars", *Keston News Service*, 16 November 2001.
- ³⁷ Keston Institute, Felix Corely, "Freed Baptist Under Surveillance", *Keston News Service*, 27 January 2002; Keston Institute, Felix Corley, "Atakov Freed from Prison, but Pressure Continues"; *Keston News Service*, 10 January 2002; and Human Rights Without Frontiers, Barbara G. Baker, "Turkmen Convert Prepares to Die in Prison", 6 February 2001.
- ³⁸ Information from the Office of General Counsel of Jehovah's Witnesses, 22 March 2002.
- ³⁹ Keston Institute, Felix Corley, "Jehovah's Witness Family Loses Supreme Court Appeal", *Keston News Service*, 4 October 2001.
- ⁴⁰ Keston Institute, "Baptist Conscientious Objector Tortured", *Keston News Service*, 18 May 2001.
- ⁴¹ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2002*
- ⁴² RFE/RL, "Turkmenistan to Tighten Controls on Foreigners", *Turkmen Report*, quoting Reuters, 30 January 2001.
- ⁴³ RFE/RL, "Niyazov Makes Further Cuts in Education", *Turkmen Report*, 25 April 2001.
- ⁴⁴ RFE/RL, "International Calls in Turkmenistan", *Turkmen Report*, 15 May 2001.
- ⁴⁵ Eurasia, Rustem Safronov, "Turkmenistan's Marriage Decree Helps Deepen the Isolation of Citizens", *Eurasia Insight*, 19 June 2001, at www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061901.shtml
- ⁴⁶ RFE/RL, "Exist Visas Abolished in Turkmenistan", *Turkmen Report*, 24 December 2001.
- ⁴⁷ OSCE, "OSCE Chairman-in-Office Welcomes Abolition of Exit Visas in Turkmenistan", 28 December 2001.
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