

Civic Solidarity Platform Working Group on the Fight Against Torture
Civic Solidarity Platform Turkmenistan Working Group
Crude Accountability

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN TURKMENISTAN



Prepared by Jeffrey Dunn
2023

About the Project

In 2022-2023, Crude Accountability, in cooperation with members of the [Turkmenistan Working Group](#) and the [Working Group on the Fight Against Torture](#) of the [Civic Solidarity Platform](#) (CSP), initiated a project to research the issue of enforced disappearances in the region of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

With generous funding from [Austausch, e.V.](#), a German human rights NGO, the project focuses on the issue of enforced disappearances within the context of the OSCE December 2020 decision, which was adopted by consensus at the Ministerial Council Meeting in Tirana, Albania in December 2020, for an [expanded OSCE commitment on torture prevention](#). This commitment includes the fight against enforced disappearances and incommunicado detention.

Focusing on the Balkans, Belarus, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine, the project draws attention to the ongoing horrors of enforced disappearances in the context of conflict and repression. The Balkans, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Ukraine provide examples of enforced disappearances in conflict zones—both as a tool of regimes and armies, and as a product of war. Belarus, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are examples of regimes that use enforced disappearance as a tool of repression, even in peacetime. However, the use of enforced disappearances in all seven regions is one that is related to repression, as our policy papers demonstrate.

About Crude Accountability

Crude Accountability is a non-profit organization committed to defending the human rights and environment of communities affected by oil and gas development in the Caspian and the Black Sea regions. Crude Accountability works to hold governments and corporations accountable for their actions and advocate for sustainable and just energy practices. For more information, please visit Crude Accountability's website at <https://crudeaccountability.org>

About Civic Solidarity Platform

Civic Solidarity Platform is a network of human rights NGOs, activists, and experts from across Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The platform collaborates to promote and protect human rights, democratic principles, and civil society participation within the OSCE region. For more information, visit <https://www.civicsolidarity.org/>



About the Author

Jeffrey Dunn

Jeffrey Dunn is research coordinator at the US non-profit, Crude Accountability. Dunn focuses his research on sanctions evasion and corruption in Eurasia, particularly as relates to natural resource extraction, and enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan.

Dunn is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (2017-2021) with a Bachelor of the Arts in Russian, Eurasian, Polish Studies and Political Science. He specialized in Russian history, politics, and culture.

Summary

For over two decades, Turkmenistan has violated both international and domestic law by forcibly disappearing at least 162 individuals, with the possibility of hundreds more undocumented cases.ⁱ

Enforced disappearances are an extreme violation of fundamental human rights and a gross form of torture of the disappeared, their families and loved ones, and the citizens of Turkmenistan as a whole. It is used to intimidate the whole of a society and root out dissent. Turkmenistan openly flouts its OSCE commitments by engaging in this illegal practice.

Between 2015-2018, the Turkmenistani government made several concessions in the face of mounting pressure from the OSCE and the international community, releasing limited information on some of the disappeared, allowing family visitations, and the receipt of food parcels in a limited number of cases. The government also accepted recommendations within the framework of the May 2018 UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR).ⁱⁱ However, the concessions made were extremely limited and short-term. The information provided in these concessions were unverifiable and often contradictory. The Turkmenistani government outright lied in later communications regarding the disappeared. Several dozen of the disappeared whose terms ended in 2019-2022 have not been released. This was the result of an OSCE engagement strategy with the Turkmenistani government that became less public and more focused on “quiet diplomacy,” allowing the Turkmenistani authorities to stop short of making further substantial progress in addressing the crisis.

In this context, we offer several recommendations for the OSCE to ensure the values of the organization are maintained and to encourage observation of the rule of law in Turkmenistan.

Enforced Disappearances in Turkmenistan

Since 2013, the Prove They Are Alive! campaignⁱⁱⁱ has documented 162 enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan, which share a consistent pattern:

- 1) There is no verifiable information about the whereabouts and condition of these people after their trial and in some cases, after their arrest;
- 2) None of them have any contact with their families, and no official information about their whereabouts and health has been provided by the government of Turkmenistan;
- 3) After their conviction, none of the disappeared have had access to legal representation, external medical experts, or visitation from international monitoring organizations, including the International Red Cross.^{iv}

Of the 162 individuals forcibly disappeared, 95 are considered cases of continued disappearances. Of these 95, 71 are current, meaning the Prove They Are Alive campaign believes them to be incarcerated and without contact with the outside world. The other 24 are in question because of a lack of verifiable information from the government. The remaining 67 are considered not current for the following reasons: 29 individuals have died in custody, 12 have been released, and 26 continue to serve their sentences but with food parcels and family visitations.^v

Thirty two^{vi} individuals have served their terms but are being held past their original sentencing; most of them have been imprisoned since 2003 and continue to be disappeared.^{vii}

The Prove They Are Alive! campaign has documented 61 cases of enforced disappearances of persons accused of involvement in an alleged coup attempt against then-President Saparmurat Niyazov on November 25, 2002, and 3 cases of people sentenced for allegedly helping their family members flee from Turkmenistan.^{viii} These individuals are known as the “Novemberists.” In the wave of mass repression that followed, a group of high-profile government and military officials were arrested, swiftly and unjustly tried, and sentenced to long prison terms. These prisoners have not had access to legal representation or medical care, nor have they been allowed any contact or correspondence with the outside world, including with their families, who do not know if their loved ones are dead or alive.^{ix}

In 2003, in response to this wave of mass repression, the OSCE participating states invoked the Moscow Mechanism with respect to Turkmenistan. Within the framework of that Mechanism, OSCE Rapporteur Dr. Emmanuel Decaux issued a report documenting the extensive human rights violations that were perpetrated in the arrest, trial, and subsequent imprisonment of the Novemberists.^x

Despite international pressure, the government of Turkmenistan continues to ignore inquiries about the fate of the Novemberists, who were incarcerated two decades ago.

The Novemberists only comprise one category of the disappeared, however. Across the 162 cases, there are four categories outlined as follows:

-The Novemberists (those convicted for their direct or indirect involvement in the alleged coup attempt on November 25, 2002).

-Those charged with “Islamic extremism.”

-Those charged with economic crimes and/or abuse of power.

-Civil society activists.

Due to the secretive, authoritarian, and corrupt nature of the Turkmenistani government, this list is inevitably incomplete. First, the list of disappeared could be much larger, with previous estimates suggesting several hundreds of enforced disappearances just three years ago. Second, there is reason to suspect that the Turkmenistani authorities are covering up the deaths of those forcibly disappeared (such as 5 unconfirmed deaths among the 25 current cases requiring further investigation). The Turkmenistani authorities refuse to speak officially about the suspected and confirmed deaths.^{xi}

Cases of the Disappeared

We highlight several cases here, which demonstrate the cruelty of the Turkmenistani regime in dealing with the disappeared.

Batyr Berdyev is perhaps the most well-known of the Novemberists. The Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan held several other diplomatic and journalistic posts including ambassador to the OSCE. Berdyev was arrested on December 7, 2002 and charged with involvement with the alleged coup attempt and his confession was broadcast on national television. Testimony suggests he was beaten and tortured during his arrest and the investigation. He was convicted on January 21, 2003 and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment (5 in prison and the rest in a strict security colony). After his arrest, there was no contact permitted between him or his family. Rumors spread that he died while in custody, including one in October 2004, another that suggested within his first year of imprisonment, one in 2007 from a heart attack, and one final rumor that he was killed in 2006 following the death of former-President Niyazov. Two interactions with the Turkmenistani authorities, including with former-president Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, suggested that Berdyev was still alive. Once in 2007 with the former president’s visit to Columbia University and a second time during a meeting between Turkmenistani officials and Berdyev’s family in 2012. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) delivered a communication to the Turkmenistani government inquiring about Batyr Berdyev in 2017, but no reply was ever given.^{xii}

Rustem Dzhumaev served in both the Turkmenistani Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, and was arrested in 2002 for allegedly participating in the attempted coup by providing shelter to the alleged culprits. He was convicted in January 2003 and sentenced to 18 years of imprisonment (5 within prison, 13 in a strict security colony). Since sentencing, his family has received no official information regarding his whereabouts or his condition. Dzhumaev is among the 25 cases in question, as conflicting information

suggests that he either died (alleged in October 2004) or that he is still in custody. The latest inquiry into his status by the WGEID from 2018 remains unanswered by the Turkmenistani government. His sentence ended in 2020 but he has not been released, and no information has been provided about him by the government.^{xiii}

The Turkmenistani regime has long practiced collective punishment, in which relatives, friends, and even neighbors of individuals perceived by the authorities to be threatening to the regime are also at risk of persecution.^{xiv}

The cases of Boris and Konstantin Shikhmuradov are examples of this. **Boris Shikhmuradov**, who served his country in several administrative and diplomatic positions within the Turkmenistani government including foreign minister, was arrested in December of 2002 on charges of organizing the alleged coup. He gave a televised “confession” to his charges during which he was obviously drugged, with visible signs of torture and abuse marking his body. He was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment (5 years in prison, the rest in a strict security colony). One day after his sentencing, the Turkmenistani government changed the verdict to a life sentence, which was absent from Turkmenistani law. Unconfirmed reports suggest he died while in custody. In 2009, the WGEID delivered a communication to the Turkmenistani government regarding his case, but it was left unanswered.^{xv}

Konstantin Shikhmuradov, Boris’ younger brother, was also charged with involvement in the coup and was disappeared in the same purge in which his brother was arrested. Konstantin’s sentence ended in 2019 yet he has not been released nor has the Turkmenistani government provided verifiable information on his status. The Turkmenistani authorities also targeted Konstantin’s wife and son. In June 2007, Aina Shikhmuradova and Aman Shikhmuradov were convicted of bribery (\$160) and forging documents related to a driving instruction course that Aman had just completed. They were sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment but were released on amnesty in September 2007. The case of Konstantin Shikhmuradov and his family is an example of collective punishment used as a means of terror.^{xvi}

The Turkmenistani government does not act alone in this practice, often collaborating with security forces within and outside of the OSCE^{xvii} to harass those who are outside the country.

This was the case for **Annamurad Atdaev** and his family. Atdaev was a student at the University of Al-Azhar, Egypt when he was forced to return to Turkmenistan to renew his passport. Once there, he was detained and interrogated by the Turkmenistani authorities. After he refused to inform to the security services on his fellow students’ views and activities, he was convicted of criminal involvement in an Islamic extremist group in December 2016 and sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment in a strict security colony. His wife, Daria Atdaeva, a Russian citizen living in Russia, was denied all means to visit him. After several inquiries on her husband’s status, the Russian authorities began to harass Daria and her mother, who shared one household, forcing them to leave the country.^{xviii}

When the Turkmenistani authorities do not have other security forces to collaborate with them, they lure dissidents abroad back to the country. This was the case for **Omruzak Omarkuliev**. A second-year student at the Osmaniye Korkut Ata University Faculty of Engineering, Turkey, Omarkuliev established an

association of Turkmenistani students in Turkey. He reported to RFE/RL Turkmenistan that he was approached by Murat Akmammedov, Head of the Consulate of Turkmenistan in Ankara, who took interest in this student association and convinced him to attend an event in Turkmenistan in preparation for the March 25th, 2018 parliamentary elections. Omarkuliev was not allowed to board his return flight to Istanbul in late February 2018, later being informed that he was banned from leaving the country. He attempted to board a second flight in early March, after his pleas to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Prosecutor General's Office were ignored. Communications between Omarkuliev and RFE/RL Turkmenistan ceased after this incident. According to unconfirmed data, he was convicted in May 2018 and sentenced to 20 years of deprivation of liberty (with the first 5 years to be served in prison). Reports on his status are conflicting and unreliable, with the Turkmenistani government stating that he had completed 17 months in the military and had since returned to his family in Turkmenistan.^{xix}

According to both international and Turkmenistani law, enforced disappearances are illegal. Enforced disappearances are considered grave violations of human rights guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.^{xx} They are also a form of inhuman and degrading treatment both for the disappeared and their families, thus falling under the scope of the UN Convention against Torture.^{xxi} Turkmenistan has ratified both international treaties. Article six of the constitution of Turkmenistan stipulates that international law takes precedence over domestic legislation. Turkmenistani law does not permit and has never permitted full isolation of prisoners, regardless of the crime committed.^{xxii} However, Turkmenistani authorities continue to act outside of the law and have developed the inhumane method as a systemic tool to silence and eliminate anyone who they deem as a “threat.”

While the situation in Turkmenistan remains bleak, humanitarian victories have been won through the efforts of OSCE diplomats and the international community. In 2014-2016, Turkmenistan was challenged on the issue of the disappeared by international civil society, the OSCE, and the European Commission. In 2018, Turkmenistan was confronted again by the European External Action Service during its annual Human Rights Dialogue, by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), and the United Nations Universal Periodic Review, which offered numerous recommendations on ways to improve the country's human rights record, including on enforced disappearances.

Victories resulting from these efforts include:

- In 2014-2016, the Turkmenistani authorities permitted the notification of convicted Novemberists' deaths in custody and the release of their bodies to their families for burial.
- In 2015, the Turkmenistani authorities acknowledged at the OSCE HDIM the existence of a problem concerning “people sentenced to long prison terms” in their statements.^{xxiii}
- In 2015-2021, limited, and often contradicting, information was disclosed and provided to international organizations on 28 cases.

- In 2016, the Turkmenistani delegation to the OSCE HDIM claimed that the government had released some of the people from the Prove They Are Alive! list and informed the EU about a few others. However, this information could not be verified.
- In mid-2018, many prisoners previously held incommunicado in the Ovadan Depe prison on convictions of “Islamic extremism” were granted visits by family and food parcels (previously withheld by the Turkmenistani authorities). Some were transferred to colonies with less strict security regimes.
- In September 2018, the Turkmenistani government announced its acceptance of almost all recommendations made by other countries within the framework of the UPR regarding enforced disappearances, prison conditions, prevention of torture, and allowing visits to the country by UN special procedures, including the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID).^{xxiv}

Unfortunately, progress within the country stagnated after this balance gave way to a softer approach and greater focus on quiet diplomacy. The Turkmenistani authorities took this as a sign of weakness, imitated dialogue during closed meetings with foreign diplomats, halted sharing information on the disappeared, and failed to implement any of the UPR recommendations. The discussion of a visit by the WGEID to the country was abruptly discontinued by the Turkmenistani government. The number of prisoners granted food parcels and family visitations has not increased since 2018.^{xxv} Moreover, a number of prisoners convicted of “Islamic extremism” who had been granted visitations and parcels in 2018-2019, were again forcibly disappeared in 2020-2021 at the Ovadan Depe. This was under the pretext of instability in neighboring Afghanistan. Political factors have a clear impact on the ability of political prisoners to have communication with the outside world.^{xxvi} Lastly, dozens of prisoners from the list of the disappeared whose terms expired in 2020-2022, have not been released.

Not only has Turkmenistan failed to uphold its OSCE commitments, but Turkmenistan’s Third Periodic Report submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee in March 2020 falsely states “the Ministry of Internal Affairs has not received any complaints from citizens concerning the enforced disappearance of detained persons or persons sentenced to deprivation of liberty from remand centers or penal institutions. The appropriate law enforcement agencies are required to conduct a full criminal investigation into any reports of such disappearances.”^{xxvii} These are clear lies from the Turkmenistani government, demonstrated by four communications from the WGEID on individual cases (Batyr Berdyev, Rustem Dzhumaev, Serdar Rakhimov, and Boris Shikhmuradov) and a general letter from the Working Group on October 5, 2018.^{xxviii} These communications have not been answered. The report also states that between 2015 and 2019, no cases of “extremism and terrorism” were heard by Turkmenistani courts. The Prove They Are Alive! campaign has several conviction statements and other documents which confirm that cases of “extremism and terrorism” were tried by Turkmenistani courts within the timeframe.^{xxix}

The practice of enforced disappearances and misinformation represents a continuity in conduct among the three presidencies (Saparmurat Niyazov, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, and currently Serdar Berdymukhamedov). These, in addition to the severe suppression of civil liberties and denial of access to the country for foreign human rights organizations and international observers, indicate a systemic disregard for human rights and international law. It is in this sense that the approach of the OSCE has failed and needs reconsideration. Turkmenistan, like other OSCE participating states that fail to implement the commitments of the organization, demonstrates that written policy and quiet diplomacy alone will not alter the situation.

Recommendations

We call upon the OSCE and participating states to enact the following recommendations in their engagement with Turkmenistan:

1. The OSCE and participating states must demand an immediate and permanent halt to enforced disappearances in Turkmenistan. All prisoners whose sentences have expired should be immediately released. Incommunicado detention of all individuals listed among the disappeared should end immediately. Verifiable information on all individuals should be released to the OSCE and individual families immediately. All individuals still imprisoned should receive family visitations, food parcels, health care, and legal representation within a strict timeframe. Turkmenistan must be reminded that as an OSCE participating state it is obligated to comply with OSCE commitments and recommendations. Turkmenistan must also be reminded that as a member of the United Nations, it is obligated to comply with international law which prohibits the practice of enforced disappearances. These demands should be in the form of public diplomatic condemnation of the Turkmenistani government, with the support of civil society and other participating states.
2. The OSCE must rebalance its interactions with Turkmenistan by renewing public efforts to pressure the government and partnering with civil society and the greater international community to do so, including the UN treaty bodies, relevant UN special procedures, UN Human Rights Council, European External Action Service, and governments of concerned states. This renewal should be adopted as a general policy approach when interacting with noncompliant participating states. Quiet diplomacy and written statements alone have failed, so it is imperative that the OSCE revisit and finetune tactics that have worked in the past. As demonstrated from 2015-2018, applying public international pressure yields significant results.
3. The OSCE must demand an invitation to inspect the Turkmenistani prisons and guaranteed access to those listed among the disappeared. This invitation should also be extended to other international bodies, such as the WGEID and the International Committee of the Red Cross. To achieve this, the OSCE should work closely with concerned participating states and civil society to increase pressure. The findings of the OSCE should be shared with civil society to increase transparency.
4. The OSCE must demand greater and genuine interaction from the Turkmenistani government with the international community and civil society. The current approach has allowed Turkmenistan to remove itself from the attention of the international community and shield itself from scrutiny by ignoring demands, inquiries, and recommendations. If the practice of enforced disappearances is to end in Turkmenistan, the international community and civil society must have access to the country and the Turkmenistani government must engage with said bodies. Ensuring the inclusion of international organizations, concerned participating states, and civil society in the above recommendations will encourage this interaction and help to cement it as a new reality for the Turkmenistani authorities.

Conclusion:

For over 20 years, at least 162 individuals have suffered at the hands of a hypocritical, corrupt, and repressive regime in Ashgabat. Many have died serving their terms, others have survived, but have been held past their sentences. The treatment to which they have been subjected is barbaric. Some progress towards justice was made from 2015-2018, but only after public pressure was applied on the Turkmenistani authorities. That progress was halted when the approach of the OSCE returned to business as usual, using quiet, behind-closed-doors, diplomacy, and written statements only. The policies of the OSCE should be revised.

As a participating state, Turkmenistan is obligated to uphold the values, principles, and commitments of the OSCE, which have at their core respect for human rights and international law. That is why the OSCE must implement a renewed public approach to engagement with the Turkmenistani authorities, which utilizes the strengths of the organization—involvement of participating states, international organizations, and civil society. This public approach should demand that the Turkmenistani government cease all acts of enforced disappearances, allow genuine inspection of its prisons by OSCE and other international organization officials, and engage with the international community in a transparent way.

These recommendations would be important steps towards rectifying the pain and suffering the Turkmenistani authorities have caused to countless Turkmenistani lives. They would also ensure that the country properly upholds its OSCE commitments and international law, sending a clear signal that human rights are at the core of the OSCE's work, and that hypocritical regimes can no longer sweep their crimes under the rug. By the principles of this organization, by the fundamentals of international law and basic human rights, the Turkmenistani authorities cannot be allowed to continue operating above the law.

Endnotes

ⁱ Note, Human Rights Watch produced a 2021-chapter report on the events within Turkmenistan. Attention is given to the issue of enforced disappearances in connection with a general assault on human rights and civil society within the country. The case of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov is also raised in this report.

Human Rights Watch, “Turkmenistan: Events of 2021,” 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/turkmenistan>. Accessed December 28, 2022.

ⁱⁱ Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” November 2021. https://provetheyarealive.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Disappeared-in-Turkmenistans-prisons_report_Prove_November-2021_final.pdf, page 2. Accessed December 20, 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ www.provetheyarealive.org

^{iv} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” page 7.

^v Ibid, page 1, with slight alterations based on the release of two individuals who were forcibly disappeared under the charges of Islamic extremism.

turkmen.news, “Turkmenistan: Two Muslims Convicted on Religious Reasons Released,” October 12, 2022. <https://telegra.ph/Turkmenistan-Na-svobodu-vyshli-dvoe-musulman-osuzhdennyh-po-religiozным-motivam-10-12>. Accessed December 28, 2022.

^{vi} Note that Gulgeldy Annaniyazov was just recently released from prison but was moved to a location under armed guard and is not allowed to leave the immediate area. He is not allowed to return home. A civil society activist, Annaniyazov organized an anti-government demonstration on July 12, 1995. He was detained and tortured eight days later. He was convicted on January 4, 1996 and sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment (5 years in prison, the rest in a high security colony). He was freed under amnesty in 1999. In 2002, he made two trips to Russia (via Kazakhstan) to meet with opposition figures. On his second trip, September 1, 2002, he was detained by the Russian authorities at Domodedovo airport. He was immediately returned to Kazakhstan who detained him for more than three days. In December 2002, he was given asylum in Norway with the assistance of UNHCR. In June 2008, he returned to Turkmenistan and was arrested after crossing the Kazakh-Turkmenistani border illegally. He was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment with an additional 5 in exile.

^{vii} See Appendix: terms served but not released.

^{viii} Ibid, pages 3-4.

^{ix} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” pages 3-4.

^x Prof. Decaux, Emmanuel. “OSCE Rapporteur’s Report on Turkmenistan”, OSCE, March 12, 2003. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/5/18372.pdf>. Accessed December 20, 2022.

^{xi} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” page 1.

^{xii} Ibid, page 26.

^{xiii} Ibid, page 31.

^{xiv} Note, Amnesty International published a report in May 2021 regarding cases demonstrating this exact practice. The report details how the Turkmenistani authorities detained and threatened a 14-year-old child over his uncle’s political views. The boy’s uncle, Rozybai Jumamuradov, is located outside of Turkmenistan but continues to criticize the government from abroad, particularly during discussions with members of Turkmenistani opposition groups on social media. He also participated in a public protest in Istanbul in July 2020 and was formerly employed by Turkmen service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Turkmenistan. His nephew’s mother was also detained and threatened as well as a previous incident where the boy’s father was summoned for questioning. The family also received unidentified phone calls threatening to kill them if they did not cease communications with Jumamuradov. Another activist, Devlet Bayhan, had his family targeted as well. Two of his family members were forced from their jobs and another family member was threatened with the death of their son, who is currently serving in the Turkmenistani military.

Amnesty International, “Turkmenistan: Threats Against Relatives of Dissidents Abroad,” May 13, 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur61/4115/2021/en/>. Accessed December 20, 2022.

^{xv} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” pages 43-45.

^{xvi} Ibid, page 45.

^{xvii} In addition to the collaborative efforts of the Turkmenistani and Russian security forces, the Prove They Are Alive! Campaign and Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation have heard testimony regarding similar efforts taking place with Turkish and Egyptian security forces. One such example is provided below: Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, “Turkmen Activist Faces Deportation D. Taganova Risks Arbitrary Detention, Torture,” October 12, 2020. <https://tmhelsinki.org/en/article/d689d693-2388-4871-bd0d-bf82c76fd676>. Accessed December 28, 2022.

^{xviii} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” pages 52-53.

^{xix} Ibid, pages 91-92.

^{xx} United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner, “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”, December 16, 1966. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>. Accessed December 20, 2022.

^{xxi} United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner, “Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”, December 10, 1984. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>. Accessed December 20, 2022.

^{xxii} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” page 1.

^{xxiii} Prove They Are Alice Campaign, “The International Community Should Take Urgent Steps to End Enforced Disappearances in Turkmenistan,” August 30, 2017. <https://provetheyarealive.org/the-international-community-should-take-urgent-steps-to-end-enforced-disappearances-in-turkmenistan/>. Accessed December 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIVv2r34SN8&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf1p5vLh77s&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IO3anXFjAok>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RaB8DtXMnY>

^{xxiv} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” page 2.

^{xxv} Ibid, page 2.

^{xxvi} The Prove They Are Alive! Campaign recognizes that during the period of 2020-2021, the Covid-19 pandemic had reached its peak across the globe. This undoubtedly resulted in the restriction of access to prisoners across the world. However, the Turkmenistani government officially denied the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic. <https://archpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13690-021-00779-x#:~:text=Turkmenistan%20remains%20one%20of%20the,yet%20to%20reach%20their%20country.>

^{xxvii} United Nations Digital Library, “Third periodic report submitted by Turkmenistan under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2020**,” United Nations: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Human Rights Committee, March 27, 2020. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3880737?ln=en>. Accessed December 20, 2022.

^{xxviii} Prove They Are Alive! Campaign, “List of the Disappeared in Turkmenistan’s Prisons,” page 2.

^{xxix} United Nations Digital Library.