

# KEY CONCERNS FOR TURKMENISTAN UPR

44<sup>th</sup> session of the HRC's UPR (4<sup>th</sup> cycle)

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**IPHR**  
International  
Partnership  
for Human Rights

# Turkmenistan's ongoing campaign against dissent

- Arbitrary detention and politically motivated imprisonment
- Torture and ill-treatment

**2018 UPR:** important recommendations to address problems of arbitrary detention, politically motivated prosecution, and imprisonment of individuals for their legitimate exercise of fundamental freedoms.

**2023:** pattern continues and the authorities have increased their repression against critical voices

# Arbitrary detention and politically motivated imprisonment

**Increasing risks for criticising the government, standing up for one's rights, being in contact with exile-based groups: arrest, prosecution and imprisonment on politically motivated charges**

- Context of government's increasing fear of popular discontent and protest
- Cases on trumped up charges: trials held behind locked doors

## **Crackdown on dissent outside of Turkmenistan**

- May 2023: first deportation of an activist from Turkey to Turkmenistan
- Increasing pressure on the relatives of critical voices abroad, including children

# Torture and ill-treatment

## **The use of torture and ill-treatment remains widespread in prisons**

- Individuals imprisoned on politically motivated charges are most vulnerable to prohibited treatment
- Impunity prevails despite criminalisation of torture
- “Confessions” obtained under duress are believed to be often used in trials
- Ovadan Depe prison, Ahal region

## **Lack of independent and effective monitoring of detention facilities**

- No ratification of the OPCAT
- No access to detention facilities for the ICRC

## **Practices of incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances continue**

- Prove They Are Alive NGO campaign, dozens of cases
- In retaliation for the legitimate exercise of fundamental freedoms

**We urge permanent missions to use the upcoming UPR to prominently raise concerns about the pattern of persecution of critical voices in Turkmenistan and the abuse of the criminal justice system for this purpose.**

# Recommendations to the Turkmenistani authorities

- Stop persecuting citizens because of their civic engagement and criticism on issues of concern to them; ensure that no one is detained, declared wanted, prosecuted, or imprisoned on such grounds; and promptly release anyone currently behind bars in retaliation for their civic activities and expressions of discontent.
- Take concrete measures to strengthen the independence of the judicial system and ensure that it is not used to hand down politically motivated sentences in trials violating international fair trial standards.
- Ensure that any allegations of torture and ill-treatment are promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigated, and the perpetrators prosecuted and penalised under the relevant Criminal Code provision.

# Recommendations to the Turkmenistani authorities

- Ratify the OPCAT and establish an effective national system for independent and regular monitoring of all places of detention; and grant the ICRC unhindered access to monitor detention facilities in accordance with its standard procedures.
- Put an end to the practices of prolonged incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances and provide information about the fate and whereabouts of all alleged victims of these practices documented by independent NGOs.

