

19 March 2009

Human Rights Council  
Tenth Session

Item 6  
"Consideration of UPR reports"

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International on Turkmenistan

Thank you Mr President,

Amnesty International welcomes Turkmenistan's express support of recommendations to guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly; to seek, receive and impart information; to allow independent non-governmental organizations to register and work freely; and to end harassment and intimidation of journalists.<sup>1</sup> We call on the government to give immediate effect to these recommendations.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about serious violations against human rights defenders, journalists and dissidents in Turkmenistan. We have received reports that Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev of the Turkmen Helsinki Foundation had their appeal for pardon rejected by the President in 2008. Both are reported to have been tortured while in custody. Amnesty International considers them as prisoners of conscience and urges their immediate release, as recommended during the review.<sup>2</sup>

We are also very concerned that there appears to have been no independent investigation into the unexplained death in custody of their co-defendant Ogulsapar Muradova in September 2006. We urge Turkmenistan to reconsider the recommendation to hold an independent inquiry into her death.<sup>3</sup>

Mr President,

Amnesty International notes that a number of key recommendations made during the review were to be examined by Turkmenistan, including calls to protect human rights defenders, to eradicate impunity for torture and other ill-treatment, and to guarantee freedom of the press.<sup>4</sup> We urge the government to indicate its full support of these key recommendations and ensure their prompt and full implementation. In this regard, Amnesty International regrets that Turkmenistan was unable to agree to release all political prisoners and human rights defenders, to review politically motivated trials, to account for those subjected to enforced disappearance, to lift travel bans on human rights defenders, and to abolish the "propiska" system.

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/10/79, paragraph 69, sub-paragraphs 13 and 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, paragraph 41 (a). This recommendations did not enjoy the support of Turkmenistan

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, paragraph 29 (d). This recommendations did not enjoy the support of Turkmenistan

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 70, sub paragraphs 7, 9, 10 and 11.

Earlier commitments of the new government to carry out reform to strengthen the protection of human rights have still to be realized. Amnesty International calls on the government to use the opportunity of its review under the UPR to live up to these promises.