



**To the President of the Turkish Republic  
Recep Tayyip Erdogan**

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## **APPEAL LETTER**

### **On the need to abolish visas for Turkmen citizens**

On September 5, 2022, at the request of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Turkey introduced entry visas for citizens of Turkmenistan.

We consider this step as direct discrimination against citizens of Turkmenistan in their right to freedom of movement, a violation of the principles of openness and unification of the Turkic peoples, as an important part of the foreign policy of the Turkish Republic. In fact, Turkmenistan involved the Republic of Turkey in its repressive policy towards its citizens, deciding at the expense of Turkey to prevent hundreds of thousands of Turkmen citizens from leaving the country. Here we also want to specifically point out that the visa regime for Turkmen citizens traveling to Turkey has been extended by the authorities of Turkmenistan to citizens who have a second citizenship - Russia. And these **actions of the authorities of Turkmenistan directly violate the Agreement of May 12, 2010 between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Turkish Republic**, which guarantees visa-free travel for citizens of the Russian Federation to the Turkish Republic. In order to better understand the problem that condemns hundreds of thousands of families of citizens of Turkmenistan to hunger, we would like to draw your highest attention to the following:

#### **Internal policy of the leadership of Turkmenistan:**

From the first day of Turkmenistan's independence, the country's leadership set a course for building a system of authoritarian-repressive power, providing for the aggressive destruction of civil society and political pluralism. As a result of this policy, thousands of Turkmen citizens were repressed, several hundred thousand representatives of national minorities left the country, and step by step the citizens of Turkmenistan were deprived of their fundamental rights. As a result, Turkmenistan, under the leadership of first President Niyazov and then Berdymukhammedov, turned into a totalitarian despotism, and the country fell below North Korea in the ranking of democratic freedoms.

#### **Economic crisis in Turkmenistan.**

The single-handed and illiterate management of the economy by the presidents of Turkmenistan, their unlimited enrichment, unlimited power and high level of corruption led to a crisis in the state's social policy

and mass impoverishment of the entire population of Turkmenistan. In a country with colossal world-class hydrocarbon resources, the average salary in cities is only \$70, and the average pension is \$27. Unemployment in the country, especially in rural areas, has become a massive and incurable phenomenon. This leads to a further decline in the standard of living of Turkmenistan citizens, which is already at a record low. Hunger and poverty are engulfing more and more layers of Turkmen citizens with low incomes, which is leading the country to a humanitarian catastrophe.

### **Mass migration of citizens of Turkmenistan to Turkey.**

The overwhelming majority of Turkmen labor migrants chose to migrate to Turkey in order to survive and feed their families. For Turkmen, Turkey is a fraternal country; our peoples are united not only by the similarity of languages and mentality, but also by common historical roots. The deteriorating economic situation in Turkmenistan determines the high level of labor migration to Turkey. Currently, there are approximately 230 thousand Turkmen citizens legally residing in Turkey. To stop the outflow of the working-age population from Turkmenistan, the authorities are taking illegal measures, which include both extrajudicial restrictions on leaving Turkmenistan and direct repressive measures - citizens are simply, without explanation, not allowed to fly to Turkey after checking in at the airport Ashgabat. But, since these measures are quite limited, the Turkmen government took an unprecedented step, turning to the Turkish Republic in 2022 to introduce visas for citizens of Turkmenistan. Unfortunately, the Turkmen government's request was granted and the Turkish Republic was involved in a flagrant violation of the international right of Turkmen citizens to freedom of movement.

**Concluding our appeal, we ask you, dear Mr. President, to cancel visas for Turkmen citizens and follow the policy of openness of the Turkish Republic. We believe that the brotherly people of Turkmenistan, which determined the historical beginning of your country, do not deserve to be discriminated against in comparison with other peoples.**

**We also ask you to demand from the government of Turkmenistan to immediately lift visa restrictions on travel to Turkey for citizens living in Turkmenistan and having dual citizenship - Russia and Turkmenistan.**

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